

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee held on
Thursday, 21 March 2013 at 6.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Ben Shelton – Chairman

Councillors:	David Bard	Jose Hales
	Roger Hall	Mark Hersom
	Roger Hickford	Douglas de Lacey
	Janet Lockwood	Bunty Waters
	Charles Nightingale	Tony Orgee

Councillors Dr David Bard, Charlie Nightingale and Tony Orgee were in attendance as substitutes for Lynda Harford, Alison Elcox and Ted Ridgway Watt respectively.

Councillors Mark Howell and Ray Manning were in attendance, by invitation.

Officers:	Graham Aisthorpe-Watts	Democratic Services Team Leader
	Stephen Hills	Director of Affordable Housing
	Maggie Jennings	Democratic Services Officer
	Tracey Mann	Lead Officer, Youth Council

Apologies for absence were received from Alison Elcox, Lynda Harford, Bridget Smith, Ted Ridgway Watt and David Whiteman-Downes.

50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

51. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 February 2013 were agreed and signed as a correct record.

Minute 45 – Update on the Mechanical Biological Treatment (MBT) Processing Plant

An update from AmeyCespa had been received immediately prior to commencement of the meeting which stated 'that work was progressing to bring the MBT plant at Waterbeach back to full working order. New compost turning machinery was now being manufactured that would replace the previous equipment which failed in September 2012. Work had already started in preparation for the installation of the new machinery, with the plant set to be up and running by the end of the year.'

It was understood that in the meantime, AmeyCespa was putting all black-bin waste straight to landfill as, since they own the landfill site, they are not charging themselves a 'gate fee' and so were only paying the landfill tax charge. This was a commercial decision based on it being more expensive to transport the black-bin waste elsewhere and pay to have it processed and then landfilled by someone else.

The Committee, in expressing its extreme dissatisfaction at this response and having noted that there was an on-going legal dispute between AmeyCespa and Bam Nuttall,

the sub-contractors,

AGREED that a letter be sent to AmeyCespa, copied to Cambridgeshire County Council stating the Committee's displeasure that the company was not seeking to send black-bin waste to an alternative processing plant and requesting that representatives from both AmeyCespa and the County Council attend the next Scrutiny & Overview meeting to account for this decision being taken.

52. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

53. YOUTH COUNCIL

Tracey Mann, Lead Officer for the Youth Council was in attendance for this item. Ms Mann informed the Committee that due to unforeseen personal circumstances, members of the Youth Council were unable to attend the meeting.

The Chairman thanked the Youth Council for its report. He added that having noted that some members of the Youth Council had been assigned to shadow SCDC councillors, he offered the opportunity for all the Youth Council to be able to do the same. Ms Mann responded that the Youth Council would be pleased to accept that offer.

A query was raised regarding regulations in respect of Child Protection, particularly when a member of the Youth Council and Councillors would be working together on a one-to-one basis. Ms Mann undertook to seek advice from the Council's HR and Payroll Manager on this matter. It was, however, noted that for example, visits by the Youth Council to meetings where several persons were present would not likely pose a threat.

A suggestion that a list of best practice when meeting with young people should be prepared and maintained for distribution to councillors and Parish Councils was agreed.

54. HEALTH SERVICE CHANGES AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS

Jane Belman, Cambridgeshire County Council's Scrutiny and Improvement Officer was in attendance for this item and in addition to the information provided in the agenda, gave the following update by confirming that the Clinical Commissioning Group had recently agreed 3 priority areas; these were:

- Frail elderly
- End of life planning
- Prevention and care of people with coronary heart disease

In responding to the information received, the following questions were raised:

Members cited some instances that had occurred including the case of an elderly resident who had allegedly not received satisfactory end of life care and wondered who should be informed? In response, Ms Belman said the Care Quality Commission and the County Council should be informed.

It was confirmed that spending on health provision was part of the Health and Well-being Strategy which had now been published. The priorities were listed at para 3.8 of Ms Belman's report on page 11 of the agenda papers.

It was explained that Local Health Partnership was a generic term and that all District Councils would have one.

'Specialist services' referred to in para 2.1 of the report related to rare conditions with treatment being funded nationally.

The remit of local Healthwatch would be to seek the public's views about health and care services by using volunteers to gather information from patients and service users. This would enable public influence to shape the way future services were commissioned and provided. It was noted that Local Healthwatch organisations would have 1 seat on its Health and Wellbeing Board; that was felt to be disproportionate given the expected volume of community involvement and the County should be requested to re-consider.

A question was raised on how GP-led Clinical Commissioning Groups would be scrutinised, given that local GPs would be representing their practice members? It was noted that that issue had been raised nationally and had not yet been resolved. However, GPs would not be covering GP services; that would be overseen by the Commissioning Board.

Concern was expressed about the quality of the care contracts and how they were supervised, particularly in respect of home care? It was noted that the County Council's Scrutiny & Overview Committee had recently reviewed care contracts and would continue to review them regularly.

In conclusion, the Chairman thanked Ms Belman for attending the meeting.

Councillors Jose Hales and Mark Hersom left the meeting following this item.

55. AFFORDABLE HOMES SERVICE: UPDATE

Councillor Mark Howell, Housing Portfolio Holder and Stephen Hills, Director of Affordable Housing were in attendance for this item.

The following issues were raised in response to the information provided in the briefing note:

Mears – Responsive Repairs Contract

Councillor Howell reported that there had been teething problems since Mears won the contract tender in 2011, however, since commencement of the contract in April 2012, performance targets had been reached in all but one area. The inspection of empty properties had been brought back in-house as a temporary measure and it was noted that should this continue in the long-term, some recompense would be sought on the terms of the contract.

In response to a question raised on the number of formal and low-level complaints that had been received, the Committee were informed that of the 1600 jobs undertaken so far, 13 complaints has been received that required channelling through the official complaints procedure. Mears employed a dedicated officer who responded to the general day-to-day complaints, eg late for an appointment. It was also noted that 96% of customers completing a satisfaction survey had rated Mears as either excellent or good.

Councillor Douglas de Lacey left the meeting at this juncture.

Councillor Howell was questioned on the perceived notion that Mears required constant guidance on the processes required. In response, Members noted that that practice was necessary with the former Direct Labour Organisation too. Councillor Howell added that Mears was a provider with a good national reputation.

In conclusion, it was noted that Mears provided a quarterly progress report for consideration by the Portfolio Holder.

New Built Strategy Update

The Committee noted the following information provided by the Portfolio Holder:

- There had been several offers of land from owners within the district that could be used for building purposes
- Rural exception sites would be used for new build
- South Cambs Homes Ltd, was set up by the Council to purchase land to build properties for mixed tenure. Any profits made from the sale/rents would be ploughed back into the Council's General Fund
- Following a procurement process, a firm in Leeds had been awarded the contract to oversee the legalities of the project
- The existing stock is regularly checked to comply with minimum standards, through, for example, the stock condition survey. Electrical checks are conducted between every change in tenancy
- Solar roof panels can easily be lifted off and replaced from those properties requiring roof repairs. The capital costs involved in providing solar roof panels had been borne entirely by Savills.
- Carbon Monoxide (CO) detectors would become standard in all properties; the compliance date to be advised. *(Post meeting note: **Properties with Gas** – CO detectors were installed in all 'At Risk' properties that have open flued appliances, such as gas back boilers/gas fires, etc. The majority of the Council's gas properties do not have this type of appliance and are room sealed. In addition these are tested annually and every time a gas engineer enters the property. If the CO detector has an end date before the next due service it is replaced when the annual inspection is undertaken.*

Properties with Solid Fuel appliances – All properties with a solid fuel appliance or open fire have a CO detector installed in every room the chimney passes through including the loft area. This is to safeguard against a leak to another room from the chimney.

Properties with Oil Fired Boilers – All oil boilers with open flues are deemed 'At Risk' and have a CO detector installed.)

Sheltered Housing

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the Lifeline personal alarm worked in tenants' gardens. He also read out several quotes from satisfied customers of the support service provided by SCDC.

Councillors Roger Hall and Bunty Waters left the meeting at this juncture.

56. COUNCIL'S FORWARD PLAN

The Committee **NOTED** the following changes to the Council's Forward Plan since

publication of the agenda:

- Cross-border Waste Collection – deferred until 30 April 2013
- Risk Management Strategy – deferred until 28 June / 25 July 2013
- Health and Well-being Strategy – deferred until 12 September (to be considered by S&O Committee on 4 July 2013)
- Community Safety Plan 2013/13 – New non-key decision to be taken by Cabinet on 11 April 2013
- Council Tax Discretionary Relief Policy – New key decision to be taken by the Finance & Staffing Portfolio Holder on 16 April 2013

57. WORK PROGRAMME 2013

The Committee noted that,

- Sir Graham Bright was unable to attend the next meeting on 23 April 2013 as scheduled and requested officers to re-arrange the meeting when Sir Graham's future availability was known
- The SCDC Health and Wellbeing Strategy would be considered on 4 July 2013
- On Wednesday, 27 March 2013 Councillor Janet Lockwood would be attending a meeting of Cambridgeshire County Council's Overview & Scrutiny Committee that would be discussing issues concerning transport.

58. MONITORING THE EXECUTIVE

Nothing to report.

59. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The date of the next meeting will be advised.

Meetings for 2013/14 are scheduled as follows:

Thursday, 04 July 2013
Thursday, 05 September 2013
Thursday, 07 November 2013
Thursday, 16 January 2014
Tuesday, 11 February 2014
Thursday, 03 April 2014

All meetings to commence at 6pm.

The Meeting ended at 7.32 p.m.
