

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the Council held on  
Thursday, 22 June 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, 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, Dr SA Harangozo, Mrs SA Hatton, Mrs EM Heazell, JA Hockney, MP Howell, Mrs CA Hunt, PT Johnson, SGM Kindersley, Mrs JE Lockwood, RMA Manning, MJ Mason, RB Martlew, RM Matthews, DC McCraith, DH Morgan, CR Nightingale, Dr JPR Orme, R Page, EJ Pateman, JA Quinlan, Mrs DP Roberts, NJ Scarr, Mrs HM Smith, Mrs DSK Spink MBE, RT Summerfield, Mrs VM Trueman, RJ Turner, Dr SEK van de Ven, Mrs BE Waters, JF Williams and NIC Wright

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors AN Berent, TD Bygott, Mrs PS Corney, R Hall and TJ Wotherspoon.

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

Councillor JA Hockney declared a personal interest as Mouchel Parkman Highways was a client of his.

Councillor Mrs DP Roberts declared a personal interest as the subject of a Standards Board investigation.

Councillor MP Howell declared a personal interest as an employee of the Papworth Trust.

### **3. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 May were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

- On page 6 the Conservative nomination for the Employment Committee was amended from EJ Pateman to CR Nightingale.
- On page 7 the Liberal Democrat nomination HM Smith was amended to JD Batchelor.

Councillor R Page asked whether the minutes should be amended to include comments alluded to in a letter sent to him by Councillor SGM Kindersley. Councillor Kindersley replied that the letter was written in a personal capacity announcing his resignation from the Countryside Restoration Trust and he saw no reason to amend the minutes.

### **4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman announced that it was the last meeting for both the Chief Executive and

the Development Services Director and on behalf of all Members she wished them both a happy, fulfilling retirement. Members paid tribute to both officers; in particular the following achievements were praised:

- Gaining Beacon Council status for recycling and waste management
- The overseeing of the Local Development Framework process
- Steering the Council through a period of unrelenting change
- The overseeing of huge improvements in the delivering of services to the community
- Dealing with one of the highest construction growth rates in the Country
- The invaluable support and advice provided to Chairmen and Leaders of Council
- The discreet and knowledgeable advice given to Chairmen of Development and Conservation Control Committee

On behalf of the Development Services Director and himself, the Chief Executive thanked Members for their kind words. He invited all Members to drinks after the meeting.

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

None received.

## 6. **PETITIONS**

None received.

## 7. **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### 7 (a) **Performance Plan**

As recommended by Cabinet on 8 June 2006, Council **RESOLVED**

- (a) that the 2006/07 Performance Plan be adopted; and
- (b) to authorise the Chief Executive and Finance and Resources Director, in conjunction with the Leader, to finalise the 2006/07 Performance Plan, in accordance with official requirement and publication deadline of 30 June 2006.

### 7 (b) **Food Safety Service Plan**

As recommended by Cabinet on 8 June 2006, Council **APPROVED** the Food Safety Service Plan 2006/07.

### 7 (c) **Health and Safety Plan**

As recommended by Cabinet on 8 June 2006, Council **APPROVED** the Health and Safety Service Plan 2006/07.

### 7 (d) **Allocation of Services between Senior Management**

Council considered the recommendations of the informal meeting of the Transformation Committee on 8 June 2006 on the revised allocation of services. In response to questioning Councillor Dr DR Bard explained that sustainability had been placed under the auspices of the Chief Executive because it was a cross-cutting issue. He also recognised the importance of planning policy and stressed that placing it under the responsibility of the Executive Director, along with development control, would in no way

lower its profile.

Council **APPROVED** the revised allocation of services between the Chief Executive and the Executive Director as set out in Appendix A to the agenda.

#### 8. **APPOINTMENTS TO STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

On the request of the convenor of the group, Council agreed to provide the Independent group with more time to submit their nomination to the current vacancy on the Standards Committee.

Councillor R Page expressed his disappointment in the Council's continued co-operation with the Standards process, which, in his view, suppressed freedom of speech and vilified those who spoke in the public interest.

Councillor Dr Bard proposed and Councillor Mrs Spink seconded a recommendation to refer the size and composition of the Standards Committee to the Constitution Review Working Party for consideration. A vote was taken and by 23 votes against to 22 votes in favour, the proposal was **DEFEATED**.

Council

**RESOLVED** that political proportionality should not apply to the District Council members of the Standards Committee.

#### 9. **APPOINTMENT OF TRANSFORMATION COMMITTEE**

Council **RESOLVED** that the Transformation Committee comprise 5 members:

Dr DR Bard and Mrs DSK Spink (Conservative)  
JD Batchelor and SGM Kindersley (Liberal Democrat)  
SM Edwards (Independent)

#### 10. **APPOINTMENTS TO INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL BODIES**

Council **AGREED** the following appointments:

##### **Cambridge Airport Relocation Study Member Reference Group**

RM Matthews (Conservative)  
NJ Scarr (Independent)

##### **Cambridge Area Bus Development Board**

Mrs DSK Spink (Conservative/Portfolio Holder)  
Mrs SA Hatton (Independent)  
Substitute – JF Williams (Liberal Democrat)

##### **Cambridge East Member Reference Group**

Mrs CA Hunt  
Mrs DSK Spink  
RJ Turner (subject to his not being a County Council nominee)  
NIC Wright  
Substitute – Mrs HM Smith

##### **Cambridgeshire County Council Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee**

Substitute – Mrs EM Heazell

### Employment Committee

Conservative nominations: RE Barrett  
RM Matthews  
CR Nightingale

### Gypsies and Traveller Development Plan Document Member Reference Group

Councillor Howell explained that he would notify Democratic Services of the Independent's second nomination in due course.

It was noted that the nomination of Councillor Mrs Elsby to the Gamlingay Village College Sports Centre had had to be withdrawn.

## 11. WRITE OFF OF OUTSTANDING DEBTS

The Finance and Resources Director presented this report, which notified Council of debts written off during 2005/06 under powers delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Staffing and the Finance and Resources Director. He hoped that the Council would remain in the upper quartile for the collection of debts, when the latest figures were released. These would be reported to the Portfolio Holder.

Councillor SM Edwards, Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder, explained that the write offs were within budget and the debts being written off were unrecoverable. It was requested that the collection rate of Council Tax for travellers living in Smithy Fen be ascertained.

Council **NOTED** the amounts of debts written off under delegated powers during 2005/06.

## 12. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

The Minutes of the following meetings were **RECEIVED**, subject to matters outlined in Minute 12(a) below:

Cabinet	25 May 2006
Cabinet	8 June 2006
Transformation Committee	8 June 2006
Development and Conservation Control Committee	10 May 2006
Scrutiny and Overview Committee	25 May 2006

### 12 (a) Cabinet 8 June 2006

#### Member Training

Councillor Mrs VG Ford praised the recent in-house training on Development and Conservation Control, but queried its cost effectiveness in view of the number of officers present. Councillor Mrs DSK Spink thanked Councillor Mrs Ford for her comments and stated that she had raised the member:officer ratio with the Director, but had been assured that each of the officers covered a different aspect. She did, however, express concern that only 6 members had turned up to the training, observing that the Audit Inspectors report on the planning service would recommend that development control training become mandatory for Development and Conservation Control Committee membership.

#### Climate Change Advisory Group (Minute 13(j))

It was understood that the decision regarding the disbanding of the informal Climate Change Group had been called-in and would be discussed at the next meeting of the

Scrutiny and Overview Committee on 20 July 2006. A number of members emphasised the importance of the challenge of climate change and the Portfolio Holder welcomed the opportunity to justify the decision to incorporate the work of the group into his portfolio holder meetings which, he believed, would be more effective.

It was noted that the Planning Policy Guidance referred to in the last paragraph should be PPG25.

**Travellers' Needs Assessment** (Minute 17)

The Leader confirmed that the 110-113 allocations referred to meant pitches, not sites. He acknowledged that there was always a risk of a double counting in surveys, but believed that the methodology was as robust as possible. There was provision for transit site allocation, but these had to be considered as part of the Development Plan Document.

**The National Affordable Housing Programme** (Minute 18)

Councillor DH Morgan expressed his concern about the way in which affordable housing in Cambourne was allocated and expressed the hope that lessons had been learned for Northstowe. The Chairman suggested that Councillor Morgan liaise with Councillor Mrs Roberts, the housing portfolio holder, over this issue, and Councillor Mrs Roberts stated that she was due to have a meeting with Cambridge City Council at which she would raise it.

Councillor EJ Pateman expressed his concern that, although housing in Cambourne was intended to meet the needs of the Cambridge sub-region, houses were being advertised in London.

Councillor Mrs VG Ford voiced her interest in looking at areas of Cambourne with the local members in order to see what lessons could be learned, and invited other interested members. Councillor JPR Orme commended an excellent booklet produced some 18 months previously by the housing directorate on lessons from Cambourne.

**13. QUESTIONS ON JOINT MEETINGS**

None received.

**14. UPDATES FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

**Old West Internal Drainage Board**

Councillor MJ Mason stated that a recent meeting of the Old West Internal Drainage Board had heard the results of the bi-annual inspection and a report on the effect of Northstowe drainage.

**National Society for Clean Air and Environmental Protection**

Councillor Morgan stated that this Group was to hold a seminar July and invited members to advise him if they had issues they wished him to raise.

**15. NOTICES OF MOTION**

**15 (a) Standing in the name of Councillor JD Batchelor, seconded by Councillor SGM Kindersley**

Councillors Batchelor and Kindersley had proposed the following motion:

*"The belligerent and inaccurate response to the Pensioners Concessionary Fares*

*impasse by the leader of Fenland District Council is to be deplored. In particular, his attack on SCDC is both inaccurate and unhelpful. We urge the SCDC Executive to do all in their power to gain the cooperation of Fenland in meeting their obligations regarding the funding of the Concessionary Fares Scheme."*

The Leader reported that the matter which had prompted the motion had been dealt with following his discussions with the Leader of Fenland District Council who confirmed that changes had been made to his Council's website statement. A joint press release from all district councils was imminent and he looked forward to working in partnership with Fenland District Council in the future.

In view of progress since submission of the notice of motion, the proposer Councillor JD Batchelor and the seconder Councillor SGM Kindersley withdrew the notice.

## **16. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS**

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

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**The Meeting ended at 3.40 p.m.**

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