

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Notes of the Conservation, Sustainability and  
Community Planning Portfolio Holder Meeting  
held on Friday, 3 November 2006 at 9.00 a.m.

**PRESENT:** Councillor JA Hockney (Conservation, Sustainability and Community  
Planning Portfolio Holder)

**Councillors:** R Hall  
MP Howell

<b>Officers:</b>	Nick Grimshaw	Conservation and Design Manager
	Peter Harris	Principal Accountant (General Fund and Costing)
	Simon McIntosh	Head of Community Services
	Keith Miles	Planning Policy Manager
	Tim Wetherfield	Head of Policy and Communication

### **Action**

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Mrs SM Ellington and Dr SEK van de Ven.

#### **2. SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER**

The Head of Policy and Communications reported that interviews had been held for the vacant position of Sustainability Officer on 16 October. There had been a strong list of applicants and a conditional offer of employment had been made. It was understood that the successful applicant currently worked for another local authority and it had been agreed that the officer be allowed to carry out work at this Council, before the termination of his contract with his current employer. In return the officer would be permitted to finish work for his current employer following appointment at this Council.

It was noted that because the work of the Sustainability Officer did not involve unsupervised work with children, the post holder would not be subjected to a CRB check.

#### **3. VERBAL UPDATE ON CONSULTATION FOR 2007-10 COMMUNITY STRATEGY (ORAL)**

The Head of Community Services reported that RBA Consultants, who had been carrying out consultation on the Council's Sustainability Community Strategy had unfortunately gone into liquidation. However, RBA Consultants had sub-contracted out this work and so the Council were able to contract directly with the sub-contractor to get the work completed. It was understood that the payment to RBA Consultants were being made in stages and had now been halted.

Unlike other authorities, this Council's Community Strategy would not be delayed by RBA Consultants going into liquidation.

**White Paper on Local Government**

The Head of Community Services reported that the White Paper published by the Government on 26 October had serious implications for the Council's Sustainable Community Strategy because it recommended the strengthening of partnership links between district and county authorities and that the partnership process be led by the local authorities. The Head of Community Services concluded that the Sustainable Community Strategy for 2007-10 may not be finalised until the summer of 2007. This would mean that the end date for the 2004-07 Community Strategy would have to be extended into the summer of 2007. In the circumstances it was considered that this course of action would be acceptable and it was expected that Go-East would give their approval.

It was expected that a report on the Sustainable Community Strategy would be sent to Cabinet in December.

**4. FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT - EXPENDITURE TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2006**

The meeting examined this report which compared the actual revenue and capital expenditure to 30 September for the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio with the annual budget for the year ending 31 March 2007.

**Historical Buildings Grants**

The Conservation and Design Manager stated that he expected the money in Historical Building Grants to be spent by the end of the year, although it was noted that £5,500 had been recovered from Primrose Farm.

**War Memorial Grants**

The Conservation and Design Manager explained that a small amount of Council funding could allow organisations, such as the Friends of War Memorials, to access funding from other public authorities.

**St Denis Church**

It was noted that a local arrangement body, which was aligned to the Parish Council, will undertake day-to-day management of the church on behalf of the Council. The long-term objective is to enable the building to be managed and used by a wildlife trust, although the project design has yet to be developed.

**Wildlife Enhancement Grants**

It was understood that it was no longer possible to charge maintenance revenue expenditure for wildlife sites to the Wildlife Enhancement Scheme, as in previous years, because that budget was now specified as a capital grant scheme, and may be used for capital expenditure only. Moreover, it was noted that it was not possible to vire from this capital budget to revenue, because capital is funded from capital receipts, whereas revenue is funded from council tax.

**Recharging**

The Principal Accountant (General Fund and Costing) explained that the employee costs were only recharged to the service budgets at the year-end.

**Tourism**

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the tourism service is provided by Cambridge City Council and this authority pays for the employment of a member of staff at the tourism office. It was difficult to ascertain how much revenue this service brought into the District but it was understood that this service had been cut to a minimum, with the removal of two half-time posts. The Planning Policy Manager advised that the Council should have a presence in the Tourist Office.

**Mobile Warden Scheme**

It was noted that this was a useful service that allowed elderly people, who would otherwise require residential home care, to stay in their own homes. It was expected that money would have to be vired from another budget as the Council would be spending more than its original estimate. However the amounts that would be vired would not require a portfolio holder decision. The Head of Community Services estimated that a third of the villages in the District were covered by Mobile Warden Schemes. It was understood that although the PCT were supportive of these schemes they were not in a position to provide funding.

**Section 106 funding**

The Head of Community Services agreed to check whether the unspent section 106 funding was available for 3 or 5 years. It was understood that even if it were only available for 3 years there would be time enough to spend it.

**SMc****5. SOUTHERN FRINGE LANDSCAPE STRATEGY (ORAL)**

The Conservation and Design Manager explained that the Southern Fringe Landscape Strategy would be going to the Conservation and Design Advisory Group on 7 November. He explained that the City Council had proposed the setting up of a Country Park and this proposal would be scrutinised by the Group.

**6. WILLINGHAM CHURCHYARD (ORAL)**

The Conservation and Design Manager reported that the Council had to take on the responsibility of maintaining a churchyard if the parish council declined to do so and as a consequence the Council was now considering the implications of maintaining Willingham Churchyard. The Conservation and Design Manager explained that a number of factors, including the size of the Churchyard and the comparative costs, would determine whether the Council would use its own contractors to carry out the maintenance, or employ a local person.

It was noted that there may be funding available for the maintenance of grass around war memorials. It was agreed that grass around gravestones should be maintained.

The Conservation and Design Manager concluded that the Council needed a policy on the maintenance of churchyards and that this would be considered by the Conservation and Design Advisory Group before going to Cabinet.

## **7. CONSERVATION PERFORMANCE INDICATORS - FIGURES FOR THE SECOND QUARTER**

The Meeting examined the second quarter's figures for the corporately important performance indicators relevant to the Conservation section.

The Conservation and Design Manager stated that following the employment of a Landscape Assistant the Council was now on target to achieve SP931 "The number of landscape schemes implemented".

The Conservation and Design Manager explained that PI SP 901, the hectares of land designated as a local nature reserve per 1,000 population, was on target to be achieved and if a number of village greenspace projects went ahead this year, such as the RSPB project on Fen Drayton lakes, the hectares of land designated as a local nature reserve would greatly exceed this year's target.

The Group noted that the Conservation and Design section was on course to achieve all 9 of its corporately important performance targets.

## **8. FORWARD PROGRAMME**

The Meeting examined the forward programme of decisions and issues to be considered by the portfolio holder in the coming months.

The Head of Community Services explained that the Local Area Agreements would be going to Cabinet in December instead of November. The Sustainable Community Strategy would now be going to Cabinet in May/June and not January/February as originally planned.

The Conservation and Design Manager explained that reports on Archaeology and Historic Building Grants would be going to the portfolio holder meeting in January.

The meeting noted the portfolio's forward programme.

## **9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Friday 19 January at 9 am in the Second Floor Meeting Room.

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**The meeting ended at 10.40 a.m.**

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