

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

### **NEW OFFICES WORKING GROUP**

At a meeting held in the Council Chamber on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2003 at 2pm

**Present:** Councillor RT Summerfield – Chairman

**Councillors:** Mrs J Hughes & SGM Kindersley

**Officers:** JS Ballantyne, Chief Executive  
GJ Harlock, Finance & Resources Director  
P Barnes, Special Projects Manager  
J Garnham, Finance Project Officer

**Lambert Smith Hampton:** Andrew Gordon & Matthew Williams

Apologies were received from Cllr JA Nicholas, Cllr Mrs DSK Spink and Cameron Adams.

#### **1. MINUTES**

1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2003 were agreed as a correct record.

#### **2. MATTERS ARISING**

##### **Cambridge Office (minute 2.2)**

2.1 Andrew Gordon reported that two alternative locations for the Cambridge Office had been passed to the Council, both were in Regent Street. He added that it was too early to secure a venue without having to pay for an empty office until it was required.

2.2 The Finance and Resources Director reported that he had received an e-mail from the City Council, stating that space would be made at Mandela House for 5 staff working on behalf of the Council. However, the annual charge for renting this space would be £30,000. There would be an additional charge for adaptation costs. The Group agreed that this charge was excessive. It was noted that the rent for the offices at Station Road was £50,000 and this housed approximately four times the staff. Andrew Gordon informed the Group that there was little increase in the rental value for properties at Station Road compared to Regent Street. He added that the alternative locations on Regent Street were £12,000 per annum and £27,000 per annum. It was suggested that an extra cost would be due regarding the cash handling aspect that was required and it was suggested that different options be considered, such as going into partnership with a bank or building society on Regent Street.

##### **Partitions (minute 2.3)**

2.3 The Special Projects Officer reported that he was meeting with the developer on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December where the materials to be used for partitions and doors would be discussed.

##### **Furniture for Council Chamber (minutes 4.12 & 4.13)**

2.4 The Special Projects Officer reported that the Health and Safety Advisor had

confirmed that the current furniture used in the Council Chamber complied with health and safety legislation. The Special Projects Officer informed the Group that it had proved impossible to negotiate a new price with Breathe to allow new chairs for the Council Chamber within the budget. It was reported that Councillor Mrs DSK Spink was in favour of using existing furniture in the Council Chamber.

#### **Stain Guarded Seating (minute 3.4)**

- 2.5 The Special Projects Officer agreed to check with Alison Langford if the chairs would be "scotch guarded" against stains. **PB**

#### **Virement Regarding ICT Equipment (minute 6.4)**

- 2.6 It was understood that Council had agreed new rules regarding virement and this would allow the current ICT infrastructure to be replaced.

#### **Artwork (minute 7.2)**

- 2.7 The Special Projects Officer reported that there had been a positive visit by the Arts Development Officer and Anthony Green of the Building 6010 on 11<sup>th</sup> December. It was noted that there were power points that the art displays could use.

#### **Weather Proofing (minute 8.2)**

- 2.8 The Special Projects Officer reported that the developer had reported at the progress meeting on 11<sup>th</sup> December that the building was still on track to be weather proof by Christmas and to be complete by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004. He added that all the windows had now been delivered to site and that the only outstanding items are the doors, which were expected to be supplied shortly. This matter would be discussed at the meeting with the developer on 18<sup>th</sup> December.

#### **Partition Changes (minute 8.4)**

Matthew Williams reported that there had been no agreement on the re-design costs. He hoped this matter would be resolved at the meeting with the developer on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2003.

#### **Cash Office Protective Glass (minute 8.5)**

- 2.10 The Special Projects Officer reported that the cost of removing the protective glass from the current office and cutting it to the correct size was prohibitive and as a consequence new protective glass would be required for the new office. The Finance and Resources Director reminded the Group that the Council's insurers insisted that cash office staff had the same level of protection that they had currently. He expressed his dissatisfaction with the possibility that the developer could incur an extra charge on the Council for the provision of a cash office as the architect had inspected the Council and knew what facilities would be required. Matthew Williams reported that this issue would be discussed at the meeting with the developer on the 18<sup>th</sup> December.

#### **Rainwater Harvesting (minute 8.7)**

- 2.11 The Special Projects Officer reported that a 36,000 litre tank would be

installed and this would allow the staff toilets to be flushed with rainwater. However the public toilets would still be flushed with mains water. It was understood that if there were insufficient rainwater in the tanks, mains water would be used to flush staff toilets.

- 2.12 The Special Projects Officer explained that the original plans had to be revised when it became clear that it was impossible to put a drainage tank on one side of the building. He added that the one drainage tank would receive more than half the rainwater fall off as it was on the side of the Council Chamber. It was expected that the actual saving would exceed the projected saving.

#### **Removals and Disposal of Old Furniture (minutes 8.12 & 8.13)**

- 2.13 The Special Projects Officer stated that Cheffins had advised against attempting to auction the Council's old furniture as there was no market for it. It was suggested that staff be invited to purchase any furniture for personal use and the remainder could be taken to charities. It was noted the Wildlife Trust in Cambourne required furniture. It was suggested that UCLES and Cambridge students should be invited to purchase the Council's surplus furniture.

#### **Council Crest (8.14)**

- 2.14 The Special Projects Officer reported that the developer had agreed to fix the existing Crest to the new building. It was noted that the Council would have to pay approximately £200 for the cleaning of the crest and £200 for its transportation. It was understood that £3,500 had been saved.

#### **Council Lettering on Building**

- 2.15 The Group agreed that the lettering on the new offices should state: "South Cambridgeshire District Council". The Chairman advised that the size and style of the lettering was a decision for the Information and Customer Services portfolio holder who was responsible for the Council's corporate identity.

#### **Gym (8.16)**

- 2.16 The Group expressed surprise at the cost of £500 per staff member offered by Marston Hotel for membership of their gym. It was noted that corporate membership of Hills Road Sports Centre was £2,500 per year, which ensured that staff were charged a reduced rate for use of their facilities. Andrew Gordon stated that it made good business sense for the Hotel to offer a more competitive rate.
- 2.17 The Special Projects Officer explained that other options were being investigated such as the scheme used by the Papworth NHS Trust and the facilities at Comberton Village College. Any further developments would be reported to a subsequent meeting of the Group.

- 2.18 It was understood that the showers and changing areas were for the benefit of staff that cycled to work and contribute to the building's BREEAM rating.

#### **Member Parking (8.23)**

- 2.19 The Group agreed that instead of a chain, a moveable sign should be used to

indicate which places would be available for Members. It was noted that it would be the responsibility of the caretaker to mark the Members parking area.

### **Projection Facilities (8.33)**

- 2.20 The Special Projects Officer stated that he had spoken to an audiovisual company who had confirmed that the projection system could display A1 size plans. He was investigating the possibility of using small monitors for the top table in the Council Chamber. He reported that the actual cost of this system would be determined at a meeting with the audiovisual company. The Finance and Resources Director warned that the draft estimates had been published and any subsequent virement of funds would need to be indicated in revised estimates.

### **External Lettings (8.35)**

- 2.21 The Finance Project Officer stated that a report on this issue would be discussed at the next meeting. The Chief Executive stated that there may be an opportunity for the Council to offer its meeting facilities at a commercial rate and so an official policy was important.

## **3. Council Chamber Voting System for Cambourne Office**

- 3.1 The Special Projects Officer presented this report on the different options for the voting system in the new Council Chamber. He announced that the new system which could record the way individual Councillors had voted was available at cost price which was a saving of almost 50%. However, with the completion of the new office in March, the Council would need to make a decision soon.
- 3.2 The Chairman reminded the Group that there was no budget for the new system and that Full Council would need to approve any expenditure over budget. It was not within the powers of the NOW Group to authorise the recording of votes.
- 3.3 It was suggested that the permission of Full Council was required to take this decision. It was noted that the next Council meeting was on 26<sup>th</sup> February. The Special Projects Officer agreed to check if this was too late to take advantage of the offered discount. **PB**
- 3.4 Councillor SGM Kindersley proposed that the NOW Group endorse the need for recorded votes. However, Councillor Mrs J Hughes countered that in some cases, such as voting on appointments, it was inappropriate to have recorded votes.

The Group decided not to endorse this proposal but pass this issue to the Constitutional Working Party for their views on the appropriateness of recorded votes.

## **4. Opening Hours**

- 4.1 The Finance Project Officer presented this report which advised the Group of the possibilities of longer opening hours at the new office. In paragraph 3 of the report, the time 8.00am was amended to 7.00am. The Finance Project Officer warned that if the Cash Office working hours were not extended to 5pm the balance could not be agreed until the following day as staff collecting

cash at the City Council Offices at Mandela House would be collecting cash until 5pm. The Finance Project Officer stated that the Assistant Director (Revenues) had asked the Chief Cashier to investigate the practicalities of opening until 5pm. UNISON had expressed the need to consult with management and staff before altering staff hours.

4.2 It was agreed that the Council's current rules regarding flexitime should not be altered. The Chairman requested that steps be taken to ensure that the decision to review working hours was carried out and not forgotten.

4.3 The Group **AGREED** that

- a) Opening hours for staff working should be reviewed after the new offices have been open for some time, possibly as part of a wider ranging review of service delivery.
- b) The Cambourne Cash Office and Reception should remain open until 5pm.
- c) Officers provide a report on further extending opening hours for the public, to the appropriate forum, after new offices have been open for some time.

## **5. PROJECT PLAN UPDATE**

### **Builder Development**

5.1 This issue had already been discussed under paragraph 2.8 and will be raised again at the meeting with the developer on Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> December.

### **Cambridge Office**

5.2 This issue had already been discussed under paragraph 2.2. The City Council has promised to send a revised floor layout of the Cambridge Office. The ICT links have been ordered and no abortive costs have been incurred. Should the position arise where the City council is unable to provide suitable accommodation the City Council has agreed to cover any ICT installation costs incurred.

### **Cambourne Floor Plans**

5.3 The second revision of the floor plans was being examined by staff. The revised plans would be sent out in the new year, after the comments on the second revision had been received.

### **Cash Office**

5.4 This issue had already been discussed under paragraph 2.10. The developer needs to ensure that the cash office meets security requirements and complies with the Disability Discrimination Act.

### **Post Box**

5.5 A post box will be provided at the side of the building, not the front.

### **Utilities**

5.6 Electricity and Gas supplies for the building have been sourced using ESPO contracts, to ensure best value. The Council have been added to the BT Office of Government Commerce contract which has ensured savings of

approximately £9,000 per year compared to the existing service.

### **Travel Plan**

- 5.7 It was noted that the postcodes of only three staff were still required for the analysis of the travel survey results. The results of the bid for the County's Rural Bus Challenge for improvements to bus services along the A428 corridor will be known in January.

### **Removals**

- 5.8 The Special Projects Officer informed the Group that he had a meeting this week with a removals firm to evaluate the requirements in the light of the decision to purchase new furniture for open plan areas.

## **6. RISK REGISTER**

- 6.1 The Special Projects Officer presented this report to the Group and the following items were discussed.

### **Failure to Implement Corporate DIP System**

- 6.2 It was understood that paperwork which needed to be scanned before being disposed of might be transported to the new office. It was suggested that the gym area could be used to store this paperwork as this would protect the office carpets.

### **City Council Unable to Provide Space for Cambridge Office**

- 6.3 It was understood that recent communication from the City Council had reduced the probability of this occurring. This issue had already been discussed fully under paragraph 2.2.

### **Resourcing of ITNET Project Manager Poses Risk to Project**

- 6.4 The Special Project Officer explained that removals companies could be contracted to provide removal of desktop computers, allowing ITNET to concentrate on maintaining the servers.

### **Building Not Fully Watertight**

- 6.5 The Special Project Officer reported that the developer had confirmed that the building would be fully watertight by Christmas.

## **7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **Cambourne Officer Group (COG)**

- 7.1 It was understood that the last meeting of COG took place on 10<sup>th</sup> December where the terms of the sub-groups had been discussed. It was agreed that it was important that COG met regularly and that the communication links between the two organisations were maintained as the move was only a few months away.

### **Blinds**

- 7.2 Matthew Williams explained that a high level of manifestation would ensure a

level of privacy for meeting rooms and the rooms of Chief Officers. It was understood that the only room which would have blinds fitted before occupation was the mezzanine floor. The Finance and Resources Director asserted that confidentiality would also be required in the Directors' offices. The Group agreed to wait until after the move had taken place before deciding which rooms would require blinds. Matthew Williams volunteered to discuss this matter at the meeting with the developer later this week.

## **8. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS**

8.1 It was generally agreed that the Council office was a more appropriate venue for these meeting than the site office, although it would be beneficial for Members to visit the site. The Special Projects Officer agreed to provide Members with a list of the times of the site visits that they could attend.

8.2 It was agreed that the next two meetings should be held on:

- Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> January 2004 at 2pm in Committee Room 1
- Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2004 at 2pm in Committee Room 1

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The meeting ended at 3.50 pm

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