

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

NEW OFFICES WORKING GROUP

At a meeting held in the Committee Room 1 on 13th January 2004 at 2pm

- Present:** Councillor RT Summerfield – Chairman
- Councillors:** SGM Kindersley, JA Nicholas & Mrs DSK Spink
- Officers:** GJ Harlock, Finance & Resources Director
P Barnes, Special Projects Manager
J Garnham, Finance Project Officer
A O’Hanlon, Arts Development Officer
- Lambert Smith Hampton:** Andrew Gordon & Matthew Williams

Apologies were received from Cllr Mrs J Hughes and John Ballantyne.

1. MINUTES

- 1.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 15th December 2003 were agreed as a correct record.

2. MATTERS ARISING

Cambridge Office (minute 2.1)

- 2.1 The Finance and Resources Director reported that he had met with senior officers from the City Council and the following offer had been forthcoming:
- The annual service costs had been estimated at £5,601.
 - The Capital Costs would be a maximum of £25,000, to be paid over five years.
 - The annual rent would be £22,500 (a reduction from the original £30,000).
- 2.2 It was understood that these costs were within budget. The Finance and Resources Director explained that the Council had an opt out clause that would allow the authority to withdraw from the Cambridge Office if there was insufficient demand; in this event, the outstanding capital costs would become payable.
- 2.3 Andrew Gordon confirmed that although he was commissioned by both Councils, on this issue he was working exclusively for the District Council. He commended the deal and suggested that annual rises in the charge should be indexed linked to protect the authority against any unexpected increases.
- 2.4 It was understood that the Council would be able to use the interview room facility at Mandela House and video conferencing could also be used.

Stain Guarded Seating (minute 2.5)

- 2.5 The Special Projects Manager confirmed that the chairs in the new offices would not be “scotch guarded” against stains as this would have affected the fabric company’s environmental credentials. The Group agreed that scotch guarding was unnecessary.

Removals and Disposal of Old Furniture (minutes 2.13)

- 2.6 It was suggested that village halls and parish offices should be offered the Council's unwanted furniture. The Finance Project Officer agreed to consider contacting parish councils regarding the availability of furniture after the relevant audit had been completed. It was suggested that Emmaus could receive the remaining surplus furniture. **JG**

3. NOTES FROM CAMBOURNE OFFICERS GROUP

- 3.1 The Finance Project Officer explained that the sub-groups of the Cambourne Officers' Group had been refocused to ensure that the crucial issues received adequate attention in the months before the move. The Staff Facilities and the Cambridge Office & Cambourne Reception sub-groups and the Cambridge Office & Cambourne Reception had been disbanded as they were no longer required; however, these would be re-convened if any issues arose.
- 3.2 The Finance Project Officer reported that he was aware that some departments were behind schedule with the shredding of paperwork.

Corporate Identity

- 3.3 It was noted that Cllr JD Batchelor, the portfolio holder for Information and Customer Services, was unaware of this Group's decision to refer the style and size of the lettering of the new office to the corporate identity group, which was under the auspices of his portfolio. It was agreed that this decision should be made at the next meeting of the NOW Group on 23rd February 2004 and Councillor Batchelor should be invited to attend.
- 3.4 Matthew Williams stressed the importance of making an early decision on the style of lettering on the outside of the new offices. It was understood that the current lettering could not be used on the new building as it was of a similar colour to the outside walls and so would not be visible.

4. ROOM LETTINGS POLICY

- 4.1 The Finance Project Officer presented this report which asked the Group to approve a policy on external room lettings at the new offices. He advised against a policy of refusing all lettings as this was not in the spirit of partnership, which was one of the Council's corporate objectives.
- 4.2 Concern was expressed at a recent article which warned that charging local organisations less for the use of public facilities, than other organisations, could be unlawful. The Finance Project Officer stated that he had not yet received confirmation of this law. It was understood that such a rule may have consequences for the leasing of public halls for local authorities throughout the country.
- 4.3 The Group agreed that only minor alterations to the current policy were required. This was to reflect the fact that the size of the relevant rooms would be different from the rooms at 9-11 Hills Road.
- 4.4 The Group **AGREED** to the charges shown in appendix B. These are summarised below:

Type of Fee/Charge	Proposed Fee			Effective Date
	A £	B £	C £	
a) Monday - Friday (normal working hours) - Council Chamber (1st floor)	Free	Free	275 (full day) 145 (half day)	4th May 2004
b) Saturdays/Evenings (per session) - Council Chamber (1st floor) - Meeting Room (ground floor) - Mezzanine Room (2nd floor), or - Committee Room (1st floor)	A £ 65 50 45	B £ 165 65 50	C £ 215 90 65	4th May 2004

Where:

A: Organisations where the Council has a particular involvement (eg officers' professional groups)

B: Organisations that provide facilities, support or advice for the benefit of the Council or residents (eg Citizens Advice Bureau)

C: Other organisations (eg commercial businesses)

5. RISK REGISTER AND PROJECT PLAN UPDATE

- 5.1 The Special Projects Manager announced that the December payment to Wrenbridge had been withheld because the building had not been made weather tight before Christmas. The Council's representatives had met with the developers on 11th December who had given assurances that the office would still be complete by 31st March 2004. It was noted that the Council's representatives would meet again with the developers on 15th January 2004 and then again on 22nd January 2004 where these issues would be discussed.

Cambourne Floor Plans

- 5.2 It was understood that the floor plans for the planning department on the 1st floor were in the process of going through another revision. This was to ensure the space meets current requirements as well as remaining flexible for possible future Area Team structures.

Council Crest

- 5.3 The Council Crest will be removed from 9-11 Hills Road at the end of February, for installation at the new offices.

Partition Changes

- 5.4 It was understood that the partition changes proposed by the Group had been agreed with the developers at no extra cost. However, the savings made by using the existing Council Crest were expected to compensate the developers

for these changes.

Cash Office

- 5.5 Concern was expressed over the Developers insistence at charging extra for the ballistic resistance glass for the cash office. It was noted that this issue would be raised at the next meeting with the developers.

Utilities

- 5.6 The Special Project Manager stated that the electricity should be connected to the building by the end of the month.
- 5.7 The Special Project Manager announced that under a package offered by NTL, staff would be able to keep their extension numbers. He was contacting BT to ascertain whether they could offer a similar deal. It was unclear whether the new office would have a 01223 or 01954 area code.

Travel Plans

- 5.8 The Special Projects Officer explained that the Council was awaiting the outcome of the Rural Bus Challenge fund bid which, if successful, would result in a service frequency to Cambourne every 15 minutes. There is also the possibility that the service may be extended to the railway station, which could affect how the Council runs its service for staff from the station. It was agreed that the Council's bus service for staff would only continue if the staff used it.

6. ART UPDATE

- 6.1 The Arts Development Officer presented this report that proposed an exhibition programme from June 2004 to February 2005. It was proposed that Whitcombe Associates would manage the first exhibition programme featuring local artist Anthony Green. The second exhibition would be organised through Art Contact, based at the Limberhurst Arts Centre in Horseheath. The estimated cost of this programme would be £3,950 to be funded by the 40% commission paid to the Council for the artwork sold.
- 6.2 The capital cost of displaying the artwork would be £3,000 to be paid from unallocated funds from the current financial year.
- 6.3 The Group agreed that although the Council should use the space in the new office to promote the work of local artists, it would be inappropriate to have a commercial involvement to fund the revenue costs of the exhibition programme.
- 6.4 Andrew Gordon suggested that local artists connected to Comberton Village College or other educational institutions would be prepared to display their art for free. The Arts Development Officer replied that these artists would not have the same reputation as artists such as Anthony Green and an exhibition by Art Contact would have the advantage of including a wider selection of work by local professional artists, based on quality and suitability, undertaken by a professional third party.
- 6.5 The Group recommended that the first exhibition of 4th June be delayed as this was too soon after the move in May.

6.6 It was suggested that the art displays could form part of the official opening ceremony. It was hoped that a member of the royal family would be available for the opening ceremony. The Group requested an update report on this issue from the Chief Executive. **JSB**

6.7 The Group agreed that the Arts Development Officer should suggest to Art Contact that they meet the cost of the exhibition programme in return for which the Council would forgo the 40% commission on artwork sold. **AOH**

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

UNISON

7.1 The Group agreed that minutes and agendas of this Group should be sent to a UNISON representative to ensure that they were informed of all developments. **PA**

8. DATES OF NEXT MEETING

- 8.1 The next meetings of the Group will be held on:
- 23rd February 2004 at 2pm in Committee Room 1
 - 19th March 2004 at 2pm in Committee Room 2

The meeting ended at 3.45 pm
