

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on
Tuesday, 17 January 2012 at 6.00 p.m.

Portfolio Holder: Simon Edwards

Councillors in attendance:

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors: Tumi Hawkins

Opposition spokesmen: Edd Stonham

Also in attendance: Lynda Harford and Ben Shelton

Officers:

Patrick Adams	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Philip Bird	Revenues Manager
Adrian Burns	Head of Accountancy
Alex Colyer	Executive Director, Corporate Services
Susan Gardner Craig	Human Resources Manager
Dawn Graham	Benefit Manager

59. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

60. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 December 2011 were agreed as a correct record.

61. CAPITAL AND REVENUE ESTIMATES FOR THE FINANCE AND STAFFING PORTFOLIO 2012/13

The Head of Accountancy presented this item, which invited the Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder to consider the Revenue Estimates up to the year 2012/13 and the Capital Programme up to the year 2014. He explained that the Portfolio Holder had already agreed the Capital Programme at his previous meeting.

Recharges from staff from other areas

It was noted that recharges had increased from the 2011/12 estimate of £4,225,780 to the 2012/13 estimate of £4,560,980. It was understood that this was partly due to the Contact Centre coming under the auspices of Corporate Services.

Land Charges charges

The Head of Accountancy explained that as the Council was prohibited from making a profit through its Land Charges service, charges had been reduced.

Benefits

The Benefits Manager explained that the cost of Benefits had increased because the rate of reimbursement from the Government had decreased by 0.4%, which was significant as the total was approximately £34 million.

Staffing budget

It was noted that the 2.5% increase in the pay award and the 1% increase in the employers pension contribution were included in the estimates.

The Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder

AGREED The revised Land Charges scheme of charges.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET AND COUNCIL

The 2011/12 revised and the 2012/13 Revenue Estimates relating to services within the Finance and Staffing Portfolio.

62. FINANCE MONITORING REPORT FOR ALL SERVICES 2011/12

The Head of Accountancy presented this report, which provided the Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder with a monthly position statement on the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and Capital Expenditure. He explained that as of November 2011 there was a projected underspend of 1.32% on the General Fund, a projected underspend of 0.27% on the HRA and a projected underspend of 4.95% on Capital Expenditure.

Capital Expenditure

The Head of Accountancy explained that the £422,000 which had been allocated to putting photovoltaic cells on the roof of the Council's Headquarters had been carried over to 2012/13, awaiting to see if the Government's decision to reduce the tariff on electricity generated by renewable energy was lawful. It was noted that the expenditure had been agreed by Council on the understanding that it would generate income and so the cancellation of this project would not represent a budget saving in the long-term. It was suggested that improvements in photovoltaic cell technology could make this initiative profitable despite the Government's reduction in the tariff.

The Head of Accountancy explained that if the PC Virtualisation Project was delayed this would further increase this year's underspend on Capital Expenditure and would also impact on the projected savings the Project was due to deliver in 2012/13.

The Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder stated that he was not greatly concerned by the underspend on Capital Expenditure as it was mainly due to a postponement of the installation of photovoltaic cells, which had been caused by a decision taken by the Government, and the purchasing of Equity Share houses which was demand led and not something that the Council could control.

Car parks

It was understood that the Council had given notice to the landlords regarding the car park at Great Shelford and when this was concluded there would no longer be any car parks under this authority's ownership.

The Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder **NOTED** the report.

63. WELFARE REFORM

The Benefits Manager gave a verbal report on the progress of the Welfare Reform Bill through Parliament and the impact of the proposals with regard to service provision. It was noted that there had been little change since the last meeting on 20 December, due to the parliamentary recess. The Bill was in its third reading in the Lords.

The Benefits Manager expressed the hope that the Council would be in a position to set up its own scheme to implement the Government's changes by the summer.

The Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder **NOTED** the report.

64. TREASURY MANAGEMENT UPDATE - Q3

The Head of Accountancy presented this report on the Treasury Management Update. It was noted that deposits listed in the report that did not have an end date were in an instant access account as the Council would require these funds at short notice.

The Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder **NOTED** the report.

65. FORWARD PLAN

The Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder **NOTED** the report.

66. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday 21 February at 6pm.

The Meeting ended at 6.30 p.m.
