

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on
Tuesday, 20 March 2012 at 6.00 p.m.

Portfolio Holder: Simon Edwards

Councillors in attendance:

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors: Tumi Hawkins

Officers:

Patrick Adams	Senior Democratic Services Officer
Philip Bird	Revenues Manager
Adrian Burns	Head of Accountancy
Alex Colyer	Executive Director, Corporate Services
John Garnham	Principal Accountant (General Fund and Projects)
Dawn Graham	Benefit Manager

78. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

79. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 February 2012 were agreed as a correct record.

80. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

The Principal Accountant (General Funds and Projects) presented this report, which invited the Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder to review and approve a revised Procurement Strategy and recommend changes to the Contract Regulations to the Constitution Review Working Party and then to Council.

The Principal Accountant (General Funds and Projects) explained that there were no fundamental changes to the Procurement Strategy and the amendments recommended to the Contract Regulations resulted from the Internal Audit's contract services review.

The Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder suggested that the Procurement Strategy should only be reviewed once every two years instead of annually, unless there was a specific need to review it more frequently.

Using local businesses

The Principal Accountant (General Funds and Projects) agreed to consider whether the Council could afford to advertise individual contracts worth less than £500 in the local media. It was noted that contracts were advertised on the Council's website.

Level 1 Procurement

The Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder expressed concern regarding the requirement of only one estimate for procurement of up to £500 and the Principal Accountant (General Funds and Projects) agreed to examine whether officers could be encouraged to obtain more than quote, particularly for procurement close to the £500 threshold.

Clarification of wording to contract regulations

It was agreed that the wording of the final bullet point in paragraph 16.4 of revised contract regulations should be amended in order to clarify that it was the key performance indicator

that should be agreed at the first contract management meeting.

The Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder

AGREED The proposed revised Procurement Strategy, as set out in Appendix A.

RECOMMENDED The proposed changes to Contract Regulations, as set out in Appendix C, to the Constitution Review Working Party and Council.

81. STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER - Q4

The Principal Accountant (General Funds and Projects) introduced this report, which invited the Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder to perform the quarterly review and approve the Strategic Risk Register.

The Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder reviewed the Risk Register and the amendments suggested by EMT. He stated that:

- The "Depot Size" risk should remain on the register as the vehicles had not yet moved to their new location.
- The "Keeping up with technological development" risk should be kept under review and so should remain on the register.
- The "HRA Business Plan" risk should be included in the register.
- The "Major projects impact on small teams" risk should be removed from the register as it was covered in project plans prepared for major projects.

The Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder

AGREED the Strategic Risk Register and Matrix, with the amendments suggested by EMT detailed in the report, with the exception of the risks regarding "Depot Size" and "Keeping up with Technological Development", both of which the Portfolio Holder decided to keep on the Risk Register.

82. FINANCE MONITORING REPORT FOR ALL SERVICES 2011/12 - UPDATE

The Head of Accountancy introduced this report, which provided the Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder with a monthly position statement on the General Fund, HRA and Capital Expenditure.

It was noted that the latest figures were shown in appendix 1 of the report. These were an underspend of £129,700 in the General Fund, an underspend of £14,900 in the Housing Revenue Account and an underspend of £118,800 in the Capital Expenditure.

ICT Development

It was noted that the equipment had been delivered and the Council was expected to pay £425,000 out of this budget in the next few weeks. It was expected that £180,000 would have to be carried forward into next year's budget.

The Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder expressed his satisfaction with these figures, which were well within the 3% margins and he **NOTED** the report.

83. LAND CHARGES FEES

The Head of Accountancy introduced this report, which recommended that the Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder reduced the proposed land charges for 2012/13.

It was noted that charges for 2012/13 that had been agreed at the Portfolio Holder's meeting on 17 January 2012 had been based on the assumption that the County Council would freeze its fees for highways information. However, the fees had actually been reduced and to adhere to the requirement of cost recovery it was necessary for this reduction to be passed on to the customer.

The Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder

AGREED To amend the Land Charges scheme of charges, as laid out in Appendix A.

84. WELFARE REFORM

The Benefit Manager introduced this report, which updated the Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder on the progress of the Government's Welfare reforms and their impact on service provision. The Benefit Manager reported that the Welfare Reform Bill received Royal Assent on 8 March 2012.

Benefit Cap

The Benefit Manager explained that the cap of £500 per week for working age families would affect 8 families in South Cambridgeshire.

Social housing under-occupancy

The Benefit Manager reported that there were approximately 450 families in the District who lived in properties believed to be over-accommodated. This equated to a reduction in benefit for these families of 10-25%.

Localised Council Tax Benefit

The Benefit Manager stated that the draft regulations on Localised Council Tax Benefit were expected from the Government by the end of May 2012 and that a significant amount of work was required with regard to its implementation by April 2013.

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

85. LEARNING FROM CUSTOMER FEEDBACK (CELEBRATING SUCCESS AND SHARING BEST PRACTICE)

This item was withdrawn from the agenda.

86. FORWARD PLAN

The Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder **NOTED** the Forward Plan.

87. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday 15 May at 6pm.

The Meeting ended at 6.45 p.m.
