

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 23 September 2004 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor RF Bryant – Chairman
Councillor Mrs CAED Murfitt – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: SJ Agnew, Dr DR Bard, RE Barrett, JD Batchelor, BR Burling, NN Cathcart, JP Chatfield, Mrs PS Corney, Mrs SJO Doggett, Mrs A Elsby, R Hall, Dr SA Harangozo, Mrs SA Hatton, Dr JA Heap, Mrs EM Heazell, Mrs CA Hunt, HC Hurrell, SGM Kindersley, RMA Manning, DC McCraith, CR Nightingale, Dr JPR Orme, EJ Pateman, JA Quinlan, Mrs DP Roberts, NJ Scarr, J Shepperson, Mrs GJ Smith, Mrs HM Smith, Mrs DSK Spink MBE, JH Stewart, RT Summerfield, Mrs VM Trueman, Dr SEK van de Ven, Mrs BE Waters, Dr JR Williamson and NIC Wright

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor EW Bullman, Mrs J Dixon, SM Edwards, Mrs JM Healey, JA Hockney, MP Howell, Mrs HF Kember, RB Martlew, MJ Mason, DH Morgan, Mrs JA Muncey, A Riley, RGR Smith, RJ Turner, DALG Wherrell, TJ Wotherspoon and SS Ziaian-Gillan.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of Council held on 28th August 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor JA Quinlan expressed a prejudicial interest in item 6, Local Development Framework Preferred Options Report, and left the Chamber during this item.

Councillor Ms SJO Doggett expressed an interest in item 9 as the applicant of planning application detailed in minute 13. Councillor NJ Scarr declared an interest in the same item as the husband of the applicant.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked those Members who had attended the recent Chairman's Reception.

The Chairman expressed his displeasure at a recent e-mail denigrating the prayer at the start of the meeting. He stated that Members were free to abstain from attending the prayer at the beginning of each meeting if they wished. Councillor Mrs DP Roberts stated that the e-mail had been a joke and was not intended to offend.

The Chairman reported that Sylvia Upshaw, a Councillor for the Sawston ward for 20 years, had died. Her funeral would be held at the Crematorium on Tuesday 28th September at 1:30pm. Councillor Mrs DSK Spink paid tribute to Sylvia as a dedicated Councillor and active member of the old Housing Committee.

The Chairman reported the death of Anthony Cartwright, a Councillor for the Sawston ward in the 1970s.

Cllr JH Stewart thanked the Chairman and other Members for their support following the

death of his wife.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None received.

5. PETITIONS

None received.

6. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK PREFERRED OPTIONS REPORTS - REVISIONS

The Chairman explained that this item was on the agenda to allow Council to discuss any recommendations from the recent Scrutiny and Overview Committee regarding the Rural Centres Preferred Options report or the Northstowe Preferred Options report. However, the Scrutiny and Overview Committee had not made any recommendations to Council. The Rural Centres Preferred Options report had not been called in and the Scrutiny and Overview Committee had agreed with Cabinet's original decision when discussing the call-in of the Northstowe Preferred Options report. It was understood that the draft minutes of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee would be available on 30th September 2004.

Council **NOTED** the report.

7. VOTE RECORDING

Councillor JD Batchelor, Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder, presented this item which sought to clarify the way in which Members wanted the automatic vote recording system to be used. He made the following recommendations:

- Where practical, votes taken at Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny and Overview Committee and Development and Conservation Control Committee should be recorded.
- Members' names only to be recorded in the minutes when a specific request has been made, as laid out in the constitution.
- The voting record should be available to the public through electronic means.
- These records to be retained for 6 years.
- Votes taken over confidential items would not be recorded.

It was understood that the electronic vote recording system could only operate in the Council Chamber, so it would not be practical to record votes taken at meetings in other rooms.

Councillor NJ Scarr stated that vote recording should be restricted to important matters so he saw no reason to change the current rules that a recorded vote should only occur if six members demand it. He stated that the electronic vote recording system existed to facilitate the recording of votes but its existence did not warrant a change in the rules.

Councillor Scarr expressed particular concern over the recording of votes at Development and Conservation Control Committee Meetings, as a voting record could be misleading without hearing the debate and being aware of planning law. He added that Members would be liable to intimidation from violent pressure groups regarding controversial planning applications if the voting record of members became a public record. Councillor JA Quinlan spoke in favour of Councillor Batchelor's

recommendations which would bring more transparency to the decision making process. He stated that the low possibility of Councillors being intimidated regarding a controversial decision was an insufficient reason to decide against the recording of votes. Councillor Mrs GJ Smith asserted that Members had a duty not to be intimidated by terrorist organisations.

Councillor Dr DR Bard agreed with Councillor Scarr and stated that the public could be misled if shown a voting record without a record of the debate or any other background information. Councillor Mrs DP Roberts stated that members of the public could attend Council meetings, where they could observe the debate and the way members voted. She expressed concern that Members' individual voting records could be used selectively by political opponents during election time.

Councillor Mrs DSK Spink expressed her opposition to recording all votes at Cabinet as this would erode collective responsibility and was far less flexible than the existing system. Councillor Mrs EM Heazell stated that collective responsibility occurred after the vote and so Cabinet votes should be recorded as well as other public meetings held in the Council Chamber.

Councillor SGM Kindersley stated that in January the Constitution Working Party had recommended that Members' votes at public meetings should be recorded. He stated that a system should be in place to allow our residents to check the voting record of their local members if they so wished. Councillor JP Chatfield agreed and stated that like in the House of Commons, the way a Member votes should be in the public domain. Councillor RMA Manning stated that to understand the vote, people would need to understand the debate and the House of Commons achieved this through Hansard, which recorded the entire debate as well as the vote. He doubted that any Member advocated a verbatim record of the Council's public meetings.

It was clarified that voting records would be erased if not required for the minutes.

Councillor Mrs EM Heazell was supported in a request for a recorded vote.

On an amendment proposed by Councillor Scarr and seconded by Councillor Bard Council

RESOLVED that a recorded vote should only occur if six members or one quarter of those present at the meeting, whichever is the fewer, demand it, as per the Constitution.

For the amendment

RE Barrett	Ms CA Hunt	Mrs DP Roberts
BR Burling	HC Hurrell	NJ Scarr
Ms PS Corney	RMA Manning	J Shepperson
Dr DR Bard	DC McCraith	Mrs DSK Spink
Ms SJO Doggett	Mrs CAED Murfitt	RT Summerfield
R Hall	CR Nightingale	Mrs BE Waters
Mrs SA Hatton	EJ Pateman	NIC Wright

Against the amendment

JD Batchelor
JP Chatfield
Mrs A Elsby
Dr SA Harangozo
Dr JA Heap

Mrs EM Heazell
SGM Kindersley
Dr JPR Orme
JA Quinlan
Mrs GJ Smith

Mrs HM Smith
JH Stewart
Mrs VM Trueman
Dr SEK van de Ven
Dr JR Williamson

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Not voted

SJ Agnew
RF Bryant
NN Cathcart

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Council then voted on the amended proposal as the substantive motion and

RESOLVED that a recorded vote should only occur if six members or one quarter of those present at the meeting, whichever is the fewer, demand it, as per the Constitution.

For the resolution

RE Barrett
BR Burling
Ms PS Corney
Dr DR Bard
Ms SJO Doggett
Mrs A Elsby
R Hall
Mrs SA Hatton

Ms CA Hunt
HC Hurrell
RMA Manning
DC McCraith
Mrs CAED Murfitt
CR Nightingale
EJ Pateman
Mrs DP Roberts

NJ Scarr
J Shepperson
Mrs DSK Spink
RT Summerfield
Mrs BE Waters
NIC Wright

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Against the resolution

SJ Agnew
JD Batchelor
NN Cathcart
JP Chatfield
Dr SA Harangozo
Dr JA Heap

Mrs EM Heazell
SGM Kindersley
Dr JPR Orme
JA Quinlan
Mrs GJ Smith
Mrs HM Smith

JH Stewart
Mrs VM Trueman
Dr SEK van de Ven
Dr JR Williamson

16

Not voted

RF Bryant

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8. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

The minutes of the following meetings were **RECEIVED**, subject to the comments recorded in Minutes 9 to 12 below :

Cabinet
Development and Conservation Control Committee
Licensing Committee
Northstowe Member Steering Group

9th September 2004
4th August 2004
6th September 2004
6th September 2004

9. CABINET 9TH SEPTEMBER 2004

Minute 1 2004-05 Pay Award

Councillor Cathcart expressed his concern that a rigid adherence to the new flexi-leave provision could force the Council to hire more staff. The Chief Executive replied that other measures such as Time Off In Lieu (TOIL) and paid overtime provided more flexibility than was immediately apparent from the Cabinet minutes.

Minute 7 Housing Adaptation and Improvement Grants

It was noted that the first sentence of the penultimate paragraph should be amended to read "The Environmental Health Portfolio Holder appealed to Cabinet to approve the recommendations in the report, which it was hoped would address the backlog in the current year."

Minute 15 Treasury Management

It was noted that in the final sentence of this minute the word "treasure" be amended to read "treasury".

10. DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION CONTROL COMMITTEE 4TH AUGUST 2004Attendance

It was noted that Councillor NIC Wright was in attendance for this meeting.

Minute 9 S/1253/04/F – Babraham

It was noted that the final sentence had been duplicated and this should be remedied.

11. LICENSING COMMITTEE 6TH SEPTEMBER 2004End of Meeting

This meeting had ended at 11am and this fact needed to be recorded in the minutes.

12. NORTHSTOWE MEMBER STEERING GROUP 6TH SEPTEMBER 2004

No comments were made on these minutes.

13. SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT AREA JOINT COMMITTEE

Questions were invited, but none received.

14. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS

Council **NOTED** the Chairman's engagements.

The Meeting ended at 2.57 p.m.
