

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council held on  
Thursday, 23 June 2005 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs CAED Murfitt – Chairman  
Councillor JH Stewart – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: SJ Agnew, Dr DR Bard, RE Barrett, JD Batchelor, RF Bryant, EW Bullman, BR Burling, NN Cathcart, JP Chatfield, Mrs PS Corney, Mrs SJO Doggett, SM Edwards, Mrs A Elsby, R Hall, Mrs SA Hatton, Mrs JM Healey, Mrs EM Heazell, JA Hockney, MP Howell, Mrs CA Hunt, HC Hurrell, Mrs HF Kember, SGM Kindersley, RMA Manning, RB Martlew, MJ Mason, DC McCraith, DH Morgan, Mrs JA Muncey, CR Nightingale, Dr JPR Orme, R Page, EJ Pateman, A Riley, Mrs DP Roberts, NJ Scarr, J Shepperson, Mrs GJ Smith, Mrs HM Smith, Mrs DSK Spink MBE, RT Summerfield, Mrs VM Trueman, Dr SEK van de Ven, Mrs BE Waters, DALG Wherrell, JF Williams, Dr JR Williamson, NIC Wright and SS Ziaian-Gillan

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs J Dixon, Dr SA Harangozo, Dr JA Heap, JA Quinlan, RJ Turner and TJ Wotherspoon.

### 1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 May 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments

#### **Presentation**

Councillor RF Bryant reported that the actual amount collected and donated had been £7,401.

#### **Elections/Appointments**

On the initial request of Councillor A Riley, the following voting figures were **ADDED**:

##### *Appointment of Vice-Chairman of the Council*

Councillor JH Stewart 32 votes, Councillor RE Barrett 22 votes; abstentions 2

##### *Election of Leader*

Councillor SGM Kindersley 27 votes, Councillor Mrs DP Roberts 26 votes; abstentions 3

#### **Development and Conservation Control Committee – Boxworth and Conington**

(Minute 20(c))

Arising from a query from Councillor NN Cathcart on its relation to the remainder of the minute, the final paragraph was **DELETED**.

#### **Election of Chairman** (Minute 1)

Councillor R Page complained that the minute was not accurate in that it did not record the whole of Councillor Bryant's retiring speech, which he regarded as ungracious and felt referred to him directly.

The Chairman noted the comments and Councillor Bryant suggested that consideration of any complaints should be left to the Standards Board for England.

#### **Petitions** (Minute 7)

Councillor CR Nightingale reported a further incident at sheltered housing at Great Shelford, where a resident had had to get through a window to allow access for the

emergency services, and was asked to discuss this further with the portfolio holder.

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor NIC Wright	Prejudicial interest relating to the proposed route of the A14 (item 8)
Councillor J Shepperson	Prejudicial interest relating to the proposed route of the A14 (item 8)
Councillor SGM Kindersley	Personal and prejudicial interest in St Denis Church, East Hatley (Cabinet 9 June, minute 13)
Councillor NJ Scarr	Personal interest in redundancy issues (Cabinet 9 June, minute 8) as a Unison member
Councillor MJ Mason	Personal interest in the Histon and Impington recreation ground (Cabinet 9 June, minute 12) as a member of the Recreation Ground Committee

## 3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman

- expressed congratulations to Councillor Mrs VM Trueman for her Cambridge Evening News Community Award, for those who help others beyond the call of duty; for setting up the mobile warden scheme in Melbourn and being on call 24 hours a day for 50 residents; and
- thanked the staff and Ruth Leyshon in particular for their efforts to make the Duke of Edinburgh's visit a success.

## 4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None received

## 5. PETITIONS

None received.

## 6. WORKFORCE PLAN 2005/6 TO 2008/9

Council, as recommended by Cabinet on 9 June 2005,

**RESOLVED** that the Workforce Plan 2005/6 to 2008/9 (including the Action Plan) be approved as submitted to Cabinet.

## 7. FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2005/06

Council, as recommended by Cabinet on 9 June 2005,

**RESOLVED** that the Food Safety Service Plan 2005/06 be approved as submitted to Cabinet.

## 8. HEALTH AND SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2005-2006

Council, as recommended by Cabinet on 9 June 2005,

**RESOLVED** that the Health and Safety Service Plan 2005-2006 be approved as submitted to Cabinet

## 9. TRAVELLERS ISSUES: URGENT ITEM

Council agreed to bring this item forward on the agenda in order to have the benefit of the views of local Members.

The Leader thanked Council for agreeing to take this as an urgent item. He reported that the situation had changed since £450,000 had been allocated for clearing Victoria View at Smithy Fen. Injunctive action was now thought likely to be more effective and other illegal sites were causing problems locally. Flexibility in the use of the funds was needed so that legal or direct action could be taken at any site where this was urgently required. Furthermore, these funds would now be available for use at Pine View as well as Victoria View. It was important the Council should not be seen to be taking action against one ethnic group alone.

Councillor Kindersley read out questions submitted by Councillor Mrs J Dixon, together with answers:

- 1) The £450,000 had been set aside for specific action at Smithy Fen only. Other enforcement action was funded from normal but limited budgets.
- 2) The Council did have to act on the findings of the ODPM and this had been put in train. At the end of the process the travellers would not remain. The Council would take action at any cost, but there was a funding implication.
- 3) The Council did have to take action over breaches of planning legislation and was doing so at a number of sites, not just relating to travellers. Action did not stop at a certain cost limit, but ultimately a request for further funds might have to be made.
- 4) At the moment the Council did not and could not know what would happen if there was no money remaining as a result of capping. The Council's job was to enforce the decision of the ODPM and if the travellers had not moved by the end of the injunctive process, Direct Action would be taken as the last resort.
- 5) The threat of capping made it even more important to be able to use the allocated funds and to use them wisely. The request was that they could be used for any site if judged appropriate.

Councillor SM Edwards, speaking for the Cottenham Members, made a plea for the funds to be retained for their original purpose, as he feared that extending their use would mean that money would not be available for direct action. Other sites should be considered as and when needed.

During lengthy debate, Councillor Edwards' view received support and calls were also made for a decision to be deferred for a more detailed report on other sites. The involvement of the Commission for Racial Equality was questioned and the rights of local residents were emphasised.

On the other side, the need to use limited funds carefully was urged and the possibility of urgent action being required at another site before any action could be taken at Smithy Fen was raised. Recent diversity training undertaken by Cabinet was noted.

On a vote being taken, Council, by 28 votes to 22,

**RESOLVED** that the £450,000, already authorised for direct action at the Victoria View traveller site, be made available for any form of appropriate planning enforcement action (including injunctive action) on any unauthorised traveller site in the District.

The Leader emphasised his commitment to work hard for Cottenham and hoped that Members would feel free to contact him at any time on the issue.

## 10. PERFORMANCE PLAN 2005

Council **RESOLVED**

- (a) to approve the draft Performance Plan 2005 as circulated;
- (b) to give authority to the Chief Executive and the leader of the Council to approve the final draft of the Plan for publication by 30 June 2005.

## 11. A14 IMPROVEMENTS - RESPONSE TO CONSULTATIONS

It was agreed to suspend Standing Order 14.5 for this item only, to allow Members to speak more than once.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer highlighted the main issues for the Council in the Highways Agency's proposed scheme for improving the A14 from Ellington to Fen Ditton, as set out in the report, and indicated that the Highways Agency might produce further changes to the proposals.

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder commended the report and emphasised the importance of a joint statement from the local authorities. He noted that there was a need for improved public transport, which had not been addressed fully in the Highways Agency's proposals.

Councillors A Riley and R Hall emphasised the potential road safety dangers of variations between single and dual carriageway on the local distributor road between Fen Drayton and Bar Hill and proposed changes to recommendation (f) to clarify what the Council was seeking. The changes were accepted.

Councillor MJ Mason highlighted the problems which would be caused at intersections by the Highways Agency's consideration of the A14 only as a trunk road and not taking account of its other function as a local road, and suggested that more work was needed on this aspect. The Principal Planning Policy Officer commented on the limited resources available to pursue projects such as this, but agreed with the point and reported that the County Council was taking the matter into account as part of the Long Term Transport Strategy, which it aimed to produce during the summer. It was **AGREED** that Councillor Mason should meet the Planning Officers and the Portfolio Holder to consider what additional supplementary comments might be made to the Highways Agency.

Opposition was voiced to the County Council's suggestion of an additional interchange at the A1198 since this would encourage additional traffic along the A1198 and create problems for villages which did not currently experience heavy traffic and did not have by-passes.

Further discussion generally supported the recommendations in the report, and it was noted that

- (a) Representations about the need for completion of the A428 improvements prior to construction work on the A14 had already been made
- (b) The Council no longer contributed to the East-West rail consortium of local authorities for budget reasons
- (c) Priority for the Bar Hill to Girton section was needed for planning purposes and should be specified so as not to allow contractors to choose phasing for their own

- convenience or cost
- (d) Unlocking the development potential of Huntingdon was to the Council's advantage given continuing development pressures on the Cambridge Sub-Region
- (e) The A1198 was designated as a heavy load road

The Principal Planning Policy Officer, Mr M Monk, was thanked for his excellent report and summary and wished well in his retirement.

Council **RESOLVED** to

- (a) Support the proposed scheme in general terms in order to improve road safety, accessibility, air quality and economic development and reduce congestion and the impact of noise on existing communities; but require careful consideration to be given by the Highways Agency to mitigating the environmental impacts of the proposals through the development of strategies for spoil, landscape, noise, air quality and ecology;
- (b) Urge the Government and the Highways Agency to give the highest priority to the scheme and deliver it at the earliest opportunity;
- (c) Support the original CHUMMS proposal to provide a new 3-lane dual carriageway from Fen Ditton to the A1, but seek a minor realignment north of Conington, and reject the alternative which would reduce this new length of road to 2-lanes dual carriageway and keep the A14 north open as a Trunk Road;
- (d) Oppose the County Council's proposal for an additional interchange at the A1198 and suggest that the County Council must use other means of dealing with access to Huntingdon;
- (e) Support the Highways Agency's revised proposals for the Fen Drayton Interchange and Trinity Foot junction which would provide direct A14 access for the Swavesey Services Area;
- (f) Urge the provision of a dual 2 lane parallel local distributor road, without intermediate roundabouts, between Fen Drayton and Bar Hill so that it is of the same standard as elsewhere along the route
- (g) Seek a change to the Girton Interchange to enable all movements to be made to prevent traffic passing through villages
- (h) Require the Bar Hill to Girton section to be the first phase of the scheme in order to facilitate the new developments close to Cambridge especially the new town of Northstowe
- (i) Support the suggestion of a foot/cycle bridge over the A14 at Histon/Impington
- (j) Seek assurance that the access needs of the major development location of Cambridge East will be taken into account
- (k) Require additional work to be undertaken by the Highways Agency to ensure adequate provision is made for non-car modes including the need to establish network connectivity over the wider area
- (l) Authorise the Planning and Economic Portfolio Holder to make any additional comments in the light of further information from the Highways Agency or other stakeholders, including wording to be agreed with Councillor MJ Mason on the conflict between the A14 as a trunk road and as a local road;
- (m) Authorise the Planning and Economic Portfolio Holder to agree with the County Council and other key partners a joint statement of general support for the proposals

## 12. INDEPENDENT MEMBERS' REMUNERATION PANEL

The Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder recommended appointments to the Independent Panel on a rolling three year basis. He did not, however, consider that appointments should be restricted to certain groups. Council

**RESOLVED** that the Independent Members' Remuneration Panel be appointed on a rolling three year basis starting with the current year.

### 13. APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Council **RESOLVED** to make the following appointments:

<b>Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils</b>	Dr JR Williamson
<b>Circle 33</b>	Mrs HF Kember
<b>Cottenham Village College Sports Centre</b>	SM Edwards
<b>Management Group</b>	

### 14. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

The Minutes of the following meetings were **RECEIVED**, subject to matters considered at Minutes 14(a) to 14(d) below:

Cabinet	26 May 2005
Cabinet	9 June 2005
Development and Conservation Control Committee	13 May 2005
Licensing Committee	26 May 2005
Scrutiny and Overview Committee	19 May 2005

#### 14 (a) Cabinet 9 June 2005

##### **Discretionary Compensation for Redundancy** (Minute 8)

Councillor NN Cathcart commented on the problem for Unison of the short notice. He did not now propose to call in the decision, but asked that, in future, Management Team and the unions work together more closely.

In response to a query from Councillor NJ Scarr, the Leader reported that he had had a meeting with the unions and agreed the way forward. His words as reported in the Cambridge Evening News had been paraphrased, but the point remained that the media and readers must realise the seriousness of the potential effects of capping.

##### **IT Comms Room Air Conditioning** (Minute 11)

The Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder reported that the authorisation of the use of capital reserves if necessary was a decision which had to be made by Council, as it was asking for the budget to be exceeded if necessary. There was some opposition to this authorisation without a further report, but Councillor Summerfield stated that the order for a second air conditioning unit could not be placed without that assurance. The unit had to be purchased, but the intention was to fund this from the retention money.

It was noted that the Scrutiny and Overview Committee was to receive a report on the problem at its next meeting; that the temperature was being monitored, and that remote monitoring equipment was to be installed the following day.

Council

**RESOLVED** that the use of capital reserves for funding the purchase of a second

air conditioning unit be authorised in case this should prove necessary.

**Appointments to Advisory Groups – Northstowe Member Steering Group**  
(Minute 16)

Councillor A Riley questioned the expansion of this Group, but the Leader explained that Cabinet, after long debate, had felt that membership should be expanded to cover all areas which might have an interest, rather than deciding who should attend each meeting. Local Members were any whose ward bordered Northstowe or would be impacted by it.

The inclusion of a Cambridge City representative was also queried, but the Leader pointed out that this was a joint venture and would benefit from urban experience, and that this Council would be looking for seats on equivalent bodies for developments by the City Council.

Councillor Riley proposed, seconded by Councillor Mrs DP Roberts, that the Steering Group should be disbanded and all Northstowe matters dealt with by full Council at separate meetings. The vote was tied and the Chairman used her casting vote to maintain the status quo and make no change to the Cabinet decision.

**14 (b) Development and Conservation Control Committee 13 May 2005**

**S/2379/01/O – Impington** (Minute 3)

In response to Councillor MJ Mason's request for the Committee to be kept up to date on outstanding matters, the Chairman of the Committee reported his understanding that an item was to be published in the bulletin for the information of all Members.

**S/0393/05/F – SAWSTON** (Minute 14)

Councillor Mrs SA Hatton declared a personal interest in this item.

**S/2193/01/F – GAMLINGAY** (Minute 35)

The Chairman of the Committee noted that the reason for refusal was the same as for the previous item and that the Minute would be completed at the next meeting.

**14 (c) Licensing Committee 26 May 2005**

Thanks were expressed by several Members to the Licensing Officer and his team for their help in resolving licensing problems.

**14 (d) Scrutiny and Overview Committee 19 May 2005**

**Guide to the Voting System** (Minute 2)

Councillor MJ Mason expressed thanks to Democratic Services for obtaining notes on the use of the voting system and commented on the value of the hearing device.

**Update on Housing Option Appraisal Process** (Minute 7)

Councillor Mrs VM Trueman reported the views of tenants against the option of transfer of the housing stock to a housing association and expressed her own opposition. Councillor NJ Scarr pointed out that the Government was making the housing association option more attractive only by taking about 50p of each £1 of rent paid to the Council; and Councillor RB Martlew cautioned care over the externalisation of the service.

**15. TO RECEIVE QUESTIONS ON JOINT MEETINGS**

Councillor MJ Mason asked for support in persuading the County Council to bring forward the item on the guided bus – Histon Road measures, which kept being deferred from the Traffic Management Area Joint Committee agenda. The Chairman requested the Council's representatives to pursue this.

**16. UPDATES FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

Councillor Mrs DSK Spink reported that South and East Cambridgeshire Crossroads had combined with Huntingdonshire Crossroads, but that this did not affect representation.

**17. NOTICES OF MOTION****Notice of Motion standing in the name of Councillor NJ Scarr**

Councillor Scarr proposed his motion, seconded by Councillor SGM Kindersley, explaining that he was not suggesting that the Council was unduly secretive; rather that reports might be prepared in such a way that any confidential information was separated out from the main body of the report so that even more debate could be open. Several Members stated their belief that openness was the Council's practice, and, on the proposal of Councillor Mrs GJ Smith, seconded by Councillor DC McCraith, it was agreed that the Motion should be put to the vote. Council, accepting Councillor Scarr's motion,

**RESOLVED**

That South Cambridgeshire District Council is aware of the need to conduct as much as possible of its business in public, and to be seen to do.

Council therefore resolves that when agendas and reports are prepared for meetings, confidential material will be gathered into an appendix or separate section, so that as much as possible of the agenda, item or report can be debated in public.

Council believes that this commitment is essential to re-assure the public that only legally exempt material is being withheld, and to maintain public confidence in the decision-making processes.

**Notice of Motion standing in the name of Councillor JA Hockney**

Councillor Hockney, seconded by Councillor NIC Wright, proposed that

*"This Council agrees that for future leadership elections candidates should each have an appointed observer during the count. The final result should then be confirmed with the candidates and Chief Executive before it is announced".*

Councillor Hockney stated that the aim of the motion was solely to ensure a clear and professional election procedure for the future and that he was happy for it to be referred to the Constitution Review Working Party. Council agreed with this suggestion by general consent.

Councillor A Riley, seconded by Councillor Dr DR Bard, had put forward an amendment:

*"This Council agrees that for future elections for Leader, **Chairman and Vice-Chairman**, candidates should each appoint an observer of the count. The final result should then be confirmed with the candidates and Chief Executive before it is announced. **In the event***



***of a tie the election is decided on the toss of a coin.”***

Councillor Riley explained that the purpose of the second part of the amendment was to relieve the Chairman of the burden of deciding whether to make a casting vote. The Chairman, however, believed that a chairman in that situation might want to use that alternative already allowed by the Constitution, but that tossing a coin was a rather crude way of deciding such important matters. Councillor Dr Bard endorsed Councillor Riley's comments, but considered that the matter would be more satisfactorily dealt with by the Constitution Review Working Party, which would then recommend to Council.

Views were expressed for and against the use of a coin or other similar method to decide in the event of a tied vote, and Council

**RESOLVED** that the Notice of Motion relating to the procedure for leadership elections, together with the amendment proposed by Councillor Riley, be referred to the Constitution Review Working Party for detailed consideration.

Councillor RF Bryant, as Chairman of the Working Party, welcomed all Members to its meetings and invited any Member to speak.

**18. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS**

The Chairman's engagements undertaken since the last meeting were **NOTED**.

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**The Meeting ended at 6.00 p.m.**

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