

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Thursday, 9 October 2008

PRESENT: Councillor RMA Manning (Leader of the Council)
Councillor SM Edwards (Deputy Leader of the Council and Housing Portfolio Holder)

Councillors:	Dr DR Bard	New Communities Portfolio Holder
	Mrs SM Ellington	Environmental Services Portfolio Holder
	MP Howell	Staffing Portfolio Holder
	AG Orgee	Finance Portfolio Holder
	TJ Wotherspoon	Policy, Improvement and Communications Portfolio Holder, and Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee Chairman
	NIC Wright	Planning Portfolio Holder

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Susan Gardner Craig	Human Resources Manager
Steve Hampson	Executive Director
Greg Harlock	Chief Executive
Georgina Hayward	Communications Manager
Dale Robinson	Corporate Manager, Health & Environmental Services
Alison Talkington	Senior Planning Policy Officer

Councillors JD Batchelor, R Hall, SGM Kindersley, Mrs CAED Murfitt, JH Stewart and RT Summerfield were in attendance, by invitation.

Procedural Items

45. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Leader was authorised to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2008 as a correct record.

46. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor AG Orgee declared a personal interest in item 8, Minerals and Waste Plan – Response to County Council Consultation as he was a County Councillor. He stayed in the meeting room and took part in the discussions.

Councillor NIC Wright declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 8, Minerals and Waste Plan – Response to County Council Consultation as he had been informed that a barrow pit was to be dug on land he owned close to the A14. He left the meeting room when this item was being discussed and took no part in the debate.

Councillor SGM Kindersley declared a personal and prejudicial interest in item 8, Minerals and Waste Plan – Response to County Council Consultation as he was a member of the County Council's Development Control Committee, which had prepared this consultation document. He left the left the meeting room when this item was being discussed and took no part in the debate.

47. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

48. COUNCIL AIMS, APPROACHES AND ACTIONS

Councillor RMA Manning introduced this item on the adoption of new Council priorities to replace the current Corporate Objectives. He amended paragraph 5 of the report to read "... have been developed by the Conservative Group." He also corrected the figure for revenue cost in 2009/10 to £300,000 in paragraph 10. An amended version of the recommendation at paragraph 13 was circulated, which stated that the new Aims, Approaches and Actions would take effect from April 2009 instead of immediately.

Councillor TJ Wotherspoon emphasised that this report had the support of the entire Conservative Group.

Councillor SGM Kindersley suggested that these new priorities were insufficient both in terms of the development agenda and the threat of climate change. Councillor JD Batchelor stated that the Conservative leadership needed to deliver on these objectives and that it was his duty as Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee to hold them to account for these aspirations.

Councillor SM Edwards explained that whilst the current Corporate Objectives would be in place until April 2009, he expected that due consideration would be given to the new objectives when any new policies were being considered before then.

Concerns were expressed regarding the specific actions in the appendices of the report, in particular the relationship between parish councils and neighbourhood panels and the removal of litter on A roads. It was noted that specific concerns could be discussed when this matter was determined by Council.

Cabinet

RECOMMENDED to Council

- A)** That the Aims, Approaches and Actions, set out in the Appendix attached to the report, be adopted with effect from 1 April 2009;
- B)** That the Corporate Plan, existing service plans and strategies based on the current Corporate Objectives remain in force until they would normally be revised;
- C)** That, for the remainder of the current financial year, new and revised policies and strategies should be tested for compatibility with the Aims, Approaches and Actions agreed in (A) above, and also with the existing Corporate Objectives.

49. RECAP WASTE STRATEGY

Councillor SM Ellington, Environmental Services Portfolio Holder, presented this report which recommended that the Recycling in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Waste Partnership (RECAP) Revised Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough be adopted as Council Policy. Discussion focussed on two main concerns.

Setting a challenging target

The Chief Environmental Health Officer confirmed that the County was already meeting the target of 45-50% recycling to be achieved by 2010/11. However, he advised that increasing the County's recycling rate to 60% by 2020 would be a considerable challenge. It was noted that the Council would play a leading role in achieving these targets, being one of the top performing councils nationally in recycling. It was suggested that it would be useful to know the tonnage recycled as well as the percentage of waste being recycled, as an increase in waste could negate an increase in recycling. It was noted that an increase in home composting could actually lead to a decrease in the official recycling rate. It was understood that the Council could aim for a more challenging target, independently of the strategy under discussion.

Financial implications

It was noted that the cost of implementing the Strategy over the next 10 to 12 years was unknown and that any proposed increases in the budget would be dealt with through the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Cabinet

AGREED to adopt the RECAP Revised Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy as Council policy

Cabinet delegated authority to the Environmental Services Portfolio Holder to set a more challenging target in the recycling of waste for this Council than that agreed with local authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

50. GRANT POLICY FOR PHASE II OF PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY

Councillor SM Ellington, the Environmental Services Portfolio Holder, introduced this item which sought approval for the agreement of two policies to help implement phase two of the private sector housing renewal strategy. The first report sought to issue grants for replacement boilers and loans for properties with Category 1 hazards.

Interest on loans

It was suggested that instead of providing interest free loans of up to £20,000, for major renovations for houses with Category 1 hazards, the Council should charge an index linked interest rate on the loan otherwise the scheme could cost the authority a considerable sum in real terms. The Chief Environmental Health Officer agreed to investigate the feasibility of this suggestion and report his findings back to the Portfolio Holder.

It was believed that repayments of these loans were not subject to the pooling arrangements that effect capital receipts on the sale of council housing, although the Chief Executive agreed to confirm this.

Cabinet **AGREED**

A) The introduction of a Category 1 Hazard Loan, termed Major Renovation Loan, to vulnerable owner occupiers of properties identified as having Category 1 hazards under the Housing Health & Safety Rating System and the eligibility criteria for the Major Renovation Loan as set out below

- i) **Tenure:** The resident must be a homeowner (the term 'resident' includes the applicant's spouse, or partner, if they are living with the applicant). The loan will not be available to properties in part

ownership such as equity share or to a co-owner who lives elsewhere, nor will the loan be available to private tenants as this would become the landlords responsibility.

- ii) **Length of residency:** The resident must have lived in the property for at least 2 years (although if the reason for moving was to care for someone or to be cared for this requirement can be waived).
- iii) **Age of the Property:** The property must be at least 10 years old.
- iv) **Maximum amount of the loan:** The grant is 100% of the cost of the necessary work up to a maximum of £20,000. The loan will be registered as a land charge with the land registry indefinitely following the certified completion of the works. Any costs associated with registering the land charge condition will be an allowable fee within the maximum value of the loan as will the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) fee of 12%.
- v) **Number of Loans allowed:** Each application for the loan will be considered on its own merits and normally no more than one application per property will be allowed.
- vi) **Means Tested Benefit:** The resident must be in receipt of a MTB as per current Home Improvement Agency eligibility criteria.

B) The introduction of a Replacement Boiler Grant and the eligibility criteria for the replacement boiler grant set out in paragraph 17 (a to g) above

- i) **Tenure:** The resident (the term 'resident' includes the applicant's spouse, or partner, if they are living with the applicant) must be either a homeowner, (this includes part ownership such as equity share or co-owner who lives elsewhere), or a private tenant, (subject to maintenance responsibilities laid down in any tenancy agreement).
- ii) **Length of residency:** The resident must have lived in the property for at least 2 years (although if the reason for moving was to care for someone or to be cared for this requirement can be waived).
- iii) **In receipt of Means Tested Benefit (MTB):** The resident must be in receipt of a MTB as per current Home Improvement Agency eligibility criteria.
- iv) **Maximum amount of Grant:** The maximum award of the grant is £5000. This includes a HIA fee of 12% as per existing grants offered by the Council and administered by the HIA.
- v) **Energy efficiency measures already installed where appropriate:** The applicants home should be as energy efficient as possible before the replacement boiler grant can be considered. The property must have had loft insulation to the recommended depth of 270mm/10.5 inches and cavity wall insulation fitted, where appropriate. There will be no financial burden on the applicant as those in receipt of a Means Tested Benefit automatically qualify for free insulation work under current government grants.
- vi) **Boiler age:** The boiler to be replaced must be 10 years or older. Younger boilers may be replaced at the discretion of the Corporate Manager Health and Environmental Services.
- vii) **Replacement boiler type:** Replacement boilers must comply with Part L of the current Building Regulations.

C) That the Home Improvement Agency administer the Boiler Replacement Grant and Major Renovation Loan.

D) That delegated authority be given to the Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services), in consultation with the Environmental Services Portfolio

Holder, to approve loan assistance in exceptional cases falling outside the policy framework agreed in (A) and (B) above.

- E)** That authority to determine whether interest would be charged on the loan defined in paragraph A(iv) above be delegated to the Environmental Health Portfolio Holder.

The Environmental Services Portfolio Holder introduced the second report which sought approval to issue grants for renewable energy measures for private sector housing.

It was agreed that occupancy conditions were required to prevent a resident from increasing the value of their home through this grant scheme, immediately prior to selling it.

It was suggested that advances in technology were required to make small wind turbines profitable in South Cambridgeshire.

It was noted that the South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership Board issued similar grants.

Cabinet

AGREED:

- A)** The introduction of Renewable Energy Grants for solar hot water heating and solar P.V. and the eligibility criteria for the renewable technology grant set out below:
- i) **Tenure:** The resident (the term 'resident' includes the applicant's spouse, or partner, if they are living with the applicant) must be either a homeowner, (this includes part ownership such as equity share or co-owner who lives elsewhere), or a private tenant, (subject to maintenance responsibilities laid down in any tenancy agreement).
 - ii) **Length of residency:** The resident must have lived in the property for at least 2 years (although if the reason for moving was to care for someone or to be cared for this requirement can be waived).
 - iii) **Maximum amount of grant:** The maximum award for each grant is:
 - i. £1500 for solar hot water heating
 - ii. £2000 for solar PV
 - iv) **Energy efficiency measures already installed where appropriate:** The applicants home should be as energy efficient as possible before the grant can be considered. The property must have had loft insulation to the recommended depth of 270mm/10.5 inches and cavity wall insulation fitted, where appropriate.
 - v) **Suitability for solar:** The property must be suitable for solar hot water heating and/or solar PV to be fitted, i.e. the building must be south facing, and planning permission where appropriate must have been granted prior to the award of the grant.
 - vi) **Solar hot water heating type:** The grant will be given for either evacuated tube or flat plate solar hot water heating systems.
- B)** That Environmental Services administer the Renewable Energy Grants.

51. **MINERALS AND WASTE PLAN - RESPONSE TO COUNTY COUNCIL CONSULTATION**

Councillor Dr DR Bard, New Communities Portfolio Holder, presented this item on this authority's response on the County Council's consultation document on Preferred Options 2 of the Minerals and Waste Development Plan.

London's waste apportionment

It was suggested that the Council should issue a press release highlighting the Council's concerns regarding the 5.1 million tonnes of London's waste that Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have been asked to accommodate. It was hoped that the 3 million cubic metres of waste referred to on page 91 of the agenda, could be expressed in terms of weight to identify the shortfall of dealing with the 5.1 million tonnes of waste referred to above.

Chalk extraction at Barrington

The use of a railway siding for the proposed chalk marl extraction at Barrington should be considered, although it was noted that Rail Track's charges could make this economically unviable.

By-passing villages

It was agreed that construction traffic for Northstowe should avoid the villages of Cottenham and Willingham, preferably through the construction of a by-pass, but failing that a haul road.

Concern was expressed regarding the environmental impact on Smithy Fen and Cottenham.

Hazardous waste

It was agreed to amend the response on page 65 regarding the selection of the Cottenham Business Centre as the location of a hazardous waste facility, to "no recommendation", as the advice from the Environmental Health and Conservation stated that the available information was insufficient to support or reject the proposal.

Local Recycling Centre

It was agreed that the paragraph in bold on pages 66-7 regarding the local recycling centre should be moved from the comments column into the proposed response column.

Cabinet

AGREED the responses to the Minerals and Waste Development Plan consultation contained within the report and in Appendices 1 and 2, subject to the above amendments, the exact wording being delegated to the New Communities Portfolio Holder.

52. **WORKFORCE PLAN**

Councillor MP Howell, Staffing Portfolio Holder, introduced this report on the Workforce Plan, which aims to ensure that the Council has the right people, with the right skills, in the right jobs, at the right time to deliver its priorities and to continue to improve services. It was noted that the reintroduction of flexible working had been a success.

Equalities

The Staffing Portfolio Holder reported that following the tragic death of our Equalities

Officer the Council had appointed a temporary Equality Officer until a permanent replacement could be found. He concluded that the authority would achieve level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government during the next calendar year, although it was doubtful if this would be before the end of this municipal year.

Job Evaluation Scheme

In response to questioning, the HR Manager explained that the Council was required to adopt a scheme that complied with equality legislation. She asserted that reports that these Schemes discriminated against professionals were unjustified and had been fuelled by biased articles in professional magazines.

The HR Manager agreed to examine the graphs on page 153 of the agenda giving the break down of the workforce by age, as the two graphs had a different total number of employees.

Cabinet

AGREED to approve the revised Workforce Plan and to request the Action Plan to be built into service plans and implemented by the officers concerned, with a particular focus on a review of the workforce and succession planning to ensure a corporate approach to this issue.

Standing Items

53. ARBURY PARK: SCRUTINY REPORT

Councillor JD Batchelor, Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, introduced this report which advised the Cabinet of the findings and recommendations of the Arbury Park Task and Finish Group. He thanked the two Chairman, Councillors EM Heazell and AG Orgee, the other members of the Group and Impington parish council for their involvement in compiling the attached reports with its 43 recommendations.

The report was praised by Cabinet, who recognised its value not just for Arbury Park but also for future developments.

Cabinet received the report of the Arbury Park Task and Finish Group and

AGREED

A) to provide a response and action plan to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

B) to aim to provide this response at its meeting on November 13 2008, to be reported to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on 4 December 2008.

54. UPDATES FROM CABINET MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

None.

**The Meeting ended at 4.20
p.m.**
