

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on  
Thursday, 15 January 2009

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

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Steve Hampson	Executive Director
Greg Harlock	Chief Executive
Jonathan Dixon	Principal Planning Policy Officer (Transport)
Keith Miles	Planning Policy Manager
Jackie Sayers	Scrutiny Development Officer
Claire Spencer	Senior Planning Officer (Transport Policy)
Jane Thompson	Cultural Services Manager

Councillors JD Batchelor, Mrs EM Heazell, SGM Kindersley, Mrs CAED Murfitt, Ms BZD Smith, RT Summerfield and Dr SEK van de Ven were in attendance, by invitation.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor TJ Wotherspoon and NIC Wright.

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### **Procedural Items**

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#### **80. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2008 were approved as a correct record.

#### **81. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor AG Orgee declared a personal interest as a County Councillor, as a number of items on the agenda included issues where this authority was working in partnership with the County Council.

#### **82. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

None.

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### **Recommendations to Council**

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#### **83. A VISION FOR THE COUNCIL**

Cabinet

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the following Vision for the Council be adopted, subject to a check for grammatical accuracy:

“To make South Cambridgeshire a safe and healthy place where residents are proud to live and where there will be opportunities for employment, enterprise and world-leading innovation. We will be a listening Council, providing a voice for rural life and first-class services accessible to all.”

#### **84. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT 2007**

The New Communities Portfolio Holder introduced this item regarding the Secretary of State’s invitation under the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 to receive proposals promoting the sustainability of local communities.

Members of Cabinet made the following points:

- The process needed to be handled sensitively to avoid raising unrealistic expectations.
- The most efficient solution was to ask the membership of the South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Board to set up the Panel to consider the proposals.
- Due to concerns about the process and its effectiveness it was agreed that Cabinet should review this issue at the end of the 2009/10 civic year.

It was suggested that the Scrutiny and Overview Committee would be a more suitable forum to consider the resulting proposals than the LSP Board, especially as it was meeting in the District’s villages. However, It was noted that the Panel could not be made up exclusively of District Councillors but had to include other representatives of the local community.

Cabinet

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the authority “opts in” to the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 by:

- A)** Publicising the process locally, including a deadline for proposals to be submitted to the Council for consideration by the Panel;
- B)** Asking the membership of the South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership Board to set up a Panel to consider proposals and try to reach agreement with the Panel as to the merits of a proposal and priorities between different proposals;
- C)** Consulting with those parties affected if the proposal involves the transfer of a responsibility from one public body to another;
- D)** Having regard to a list of matters set out in a Schedule to the Act;
- E)** Finally making a formal decision on whether to forward the proposal/s onwards to the Selector; and
- F)** Assessing the effectiveness of these arrangements at the end of the 2009/10 civic year.

**85. ECONOMIC DOWNTURN - SUPPORT IN SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

The Leader introduced this item which detailed how the Council currently supported its residents, businesses and staff during the current economic downturn and also suggested ways in which the authority could take further action to mitigate its effects.

**Championing economic development**

The Leader stated that he was allocating responsibility for economic development to Councillor NIC Wright's Planning Portfolio and he recommended that Councillor MB Loynes be made the Member Champion for Economic Development.

**The budget for 2009/10**

The Chief Executive reported that he had been instructed to draft a budget for the next financial year that would allocate approximately £150,000, to support South Cambridgeshire during the current economic downturn. It was proposed that this allocation would be funded by a 2.4% increase in the Council Tax, out of a total increase of 4.9%.

**Supporting businesses**

Cabinet resolved that the main focus of the Council should be to support businesses in the District and so they agreed that the authority should aspire to pay its suppliers within 20 days, instead of the current deadline of 30 days.

Cabinet agreed that serious consideration should be given to increasing rural rate relief as this would assist many of the District's businesses and the Government would subsidise three times the amount contributed by the Council. In response to questioning the Chief Executive stated that the Council might have to alter the scheme's criteria to ensure that enough businesses were eligible for the proposed relief.

**Supporting staff**

It was noted that staff could receive counselling and advice from the organisation PPC via the website or helpline.

Councillor Edwards stated that the Council's homelessness section had experienced a huge increase in the number of enquiries due to the current economic situation and he praised the staff in this section and their managers for the excellent work they were carrying out in challenging circumstances.

**Citizen Advice Bureaux (CABs)**

In response to suggestions from opposition members, Cabinet rejected extra funding for CABs on the grounds that this was the primarily the responsibility of the County Council, but agreed to consider whether the Council could let out its office space at Cambourne to CABs.

**Cabinet NOTED**

- A)** The support already being provided by this Council to support local residents, businesses and staff during the economic downturn.
- B)** That the Leader was allocating Economic Development to Councillor NIC Wright's Planning portfolio.

Cabinet

**AGREED to**

- A) Appoint Councillor MB Loynes as the Member Champion for Economic Development.
- B) Allocate £15,000 for immediate remedial work at Orchard Park.
- C) Aim to pay all suppliers within 20 days.
- D) Receive a report at its next meeting, setting out in greater detail any further actions that might be possible, as well as the unfolding impact on the Council itself.
- E) Instruct the Chief Executive to draft a budget for the next financial year that would allocate a 2.4% increase in the Council Tax (almost half of the total 4.9% increase) or approximately £150,000, to support South Cambridgeshire during the current economic downturn.

## 86. SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Councillor Dr DR Bard, New Communities Portfolio Holder, introduced this report which detailed the results of a public consultation exercise carried out on four Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and sought approval for these documents to be formally adopted, where they will form part of the Local Development Framework and be used to help determine planning applications.

The Planning Policy Manager explained that the reference to the possible setting up of a Public Art Support Group had been removed from the relevant SPD with the agreement of Cabinet and its inclusion in paragraph 17 of the report should be disregarded. It was noted that the appendices mentioned in paragraph 21 of the report should be 3, 5, 7 and 9 instead of 2 to 5 and the appendices in paragraph 32 a) should be 2, 4, 6 and 8 instead of 6 – 9.

Cabinet noted that guidance on Conservation Areas would be included in the revised version of the Cambridgeshire Design Guide, which would be published later this year.

Cabinet

### AGREED

- A) To adopt the Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) relating to Development Affecting Conservation Areas, Open Spaces in New Development, Public Art, and Trees & Development Sites, as contained in Appendices 2, 4, 6 and 8 and proceed in accordance with Regulations 18 and 19 (for ease of reference, **Appendix 1** lists the changes made to the draft SPDs following the consultation process);
- B) That no changes be made to the Sustainability Appraisals for each SPD and these be published in their final form alongside the SPDs.

## 87. NEIGHBOURHOOD PANELS

The Leader introduced this report on the County Council's General Operating Principles for Neighbourhood Panels, by recommending that Cabinet defer this item to allow the Council to liaise with the County Council on this matter before making a final decision. Deferral would also allow the Cabinet to receive a formal recommendation from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, which had discussed this matter at their meeting earlier in the month.

Cabinet **DEFERRED** this item.

**88. CABINET MEETING SCHEDULE 2009-2010**

Cabinet

**AGREED**

**A)** A meeting schedule for the 2009/10 Municipal Year as detailed in paragraph 5 of the report.

**B)** That Cabinet should meet at the times detailed in paragraph 4 of the report.

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**Information Item**

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**89. EFFICIENCIES UPDATE**

Councillor AG Orgee introduced this update on the Council's efficiency savings project, by explaining that although substantial savings had been made, there was a still a funding gap and it was becoming increasingly difficult to find further efficiencies and savings of the levels required to bridge this gap in the General Fund.

The Chief Executive reported that the Council's Internal Auditors, RSM Bentley Jennison, had proposed that they ascertain whether further savings could be made through an E-auction process, whereby all contracts would be put out to tender. This suggestion had the potential to identify significant savings and would be considered by the Executive Management Team.

Cabinet **NOTED** the funding gaps and the actions being taken to address them.

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**Standing Items**

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**90. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

None.

**91. UPDATES FROM CABINET MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

None.

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**The Meeting ended at 3.25  
p.m.**

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