

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Environmental Services Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on  
Tuesday, 24 March 2009 at 2.00 p.m.

Portfolio Holder: Mrs SM Ellington

### **Councillors in attendance:**

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitor: MJ Mason

Opposition spokesmen Mrs HM Smith and Dr SEK van de Ven

### **Officers:**

Dale Robinson	Corporate Manager, Health & Environmental Services
Pat Matthews	Drainage Manager
Richard May	Democratic Services Manager
Ian Senior	Democratic Services Officer

## **31. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following personal interests were declared:

- **Councillor Mike Mason** as a member of three Internal Drainage Boards – Old West, Swaffham and Waterbeach Level
- **Councillor Hazel Smith** as an observer of the Conservators of the River Cam
- **Councillor Susan van de Ven** as a member of Meldreth Parish Council's Flood Avoidance Sub-Committee and as a Friend of the River Shep

## **32. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING**

The Environmental Services Portfolio Holder agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2009 were a correct record, subject to

- Susan Walford's job description in the attendance list being corrected to read 'Health Protection Team Leader'
- Minute 23.2 (Draft Capital and Revenue Estimates - fourth bullet point – second line) – 'Milton tip' should say 'the Tesco store in Milton'
- Minute 28.2 (Member Training) – the first sentence should say 'Councillor Dr S van de Ven expressed concern that, although the mentoring session she had attended had been good, the follow up process had not been satisfactory.'

In respect of Minute no. 23.2 (Draft Capital and Revenue Estimates – fourth bullet point), the Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services) acknowledged that the dumping of plastic bottles at recycling collection points was a problem elsewhere in the District, and confirmed that he was considering a number of options for dealing with this, short of enforcement. By way of example, he thought it possible that those responsible for this fly-tipping were actually in favour of recycling: a simple re-wording of signs to indicate that material not placed in the bins provided would not be recycled might eliminate, or at least reduce, the problem. Improved education would also be key. The Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services) confirmed that he would present a report to the Environmental Services Portfolio Holder's meeting in May 2009 that would set out the options for improving waste management in 'hard to reach' parts of South Cambridgeshire. He stated that, while such options would each need to meet the Council's policy objectives, the methods used from site to site could well vary.

The Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services) undertook to make sure that those present received a link to the street cleansing schedules referred to in Minute no. 23.2 (Draft Capital and Revenue Estimates – sixth bullet point),

### 33. **AWARDED WATERCOURSES - NEW CONTRACT**

The Environmental Services Portfolio Holder considered a report seeking her authority to agree the tender documents in relation to the competitive tendering of the maintenance of Awarded Watercourses throughout South Cambridgeshire.

The Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services) highlighted a number of aspects in the documents attached to the report. He explained how each of the five organisations being invited to tender had satisfied officers at the pre-qualification stage. If, ultimately, the Council felt unable to award a new contract, its present arrangements would continue.

The Portfolio Holder was referred to the Award Criteria set out in paragraph 1.3.4 of the invitation to tender, against which each tender would be assessed objectively. Referring to the difference in weighting, the Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services) explained that this reflected the importance attached to the various aspects of the submissions.

Officers stressed that the specification had been drawn up so as to give tenderers as much flexibility as possible in responding.

In reply to questions, the Drainage Manager

- said that the successful tenderer would be asked whether they wished to acquire the Council's existing plant.
- confirmed that he would have responsibility for approving emergency cover.
- confirmed that he would be responsible for making sure that the successful tenderer acquired appropriate local knowledge as soon as possible.

In connection with paragraph 1.2.5, the Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services) summed up by saying that tenderers should consider the 'risks' involved in carrying out the contract, and incorporate into their bids an appropriate financial element. He noted the comment that parish councils should be able to help by sharing their local knowledge with the eventual contractor.

The Portfolio Holder noted the possible impact of the new contract on the Section 106 Infrastructure Fund.

The Environmental Services Portfolio Holder

- (a) **approved** the tender documents attached to the report for tendering,
- (b) **invited** the Contractors listed in the confidential appendix to tender for the works, and
- (c) **noted** the timetable for the tendering and evaluation process to be undertaken.

### 34. **GOVERNMENT GRANTS FOR HOUSEHOLD-LEVEL FLOOD RISK MITIGATION**

The Environmental Services Portfolio Holder considered a report detailing the latest Government initiative designed to provide funding for flood protection measures at a local level to protect households, and seeking approval for the Council to pursue an application

for grant funding to benefit appropriate South Cambridgeshire residents and their properties.

In response to an observation that South Cambridgeshire was a low-lying area with a history of flooding, the Portfolio Holder said that parish councils (and others) would need to identify, and present evidence in support of, specific areas and properties at highest risk. The amount of money available was not substantial, and there were parts of the United Kingdom with, arguably, greater need for funding.

The Environmental Services Portfolio Holder

- (a) **endorsed** the proposal that the Council should apply to obtain funding for property-level survey work and appropriate property protection and resilience measures under the Government's grant scheme,
- (b) **agreed** that, in order to enhance the application for funding, the Council should use the *South Cambs Magazine* as one method of communication demonstrating community engagement on flooding issues and of obtaining evidence of flooding from residents who historically had been affected by river or surface water flooding, and
- (c) **instructed** officers to contact parish councils and local Members in order to provide further evidence in support of the Council's application.

### 35. SERVICE PLANS 2009/10 TO 2011/12

The Environmental Services Portfolio Holder considered the Health and Environmental Services Service Plan covering the three-year period from 2009-10 to 2011-12.

The Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services) reminded the Portfolio Holder that she had considered an earlier version of the Service Plan at her meeting in October 2008. He highlighted the changes that had been incorporated into the document since then. In the main, these related to:

- a risk overview
- Implications of the Pitt Review
- Impact of the economic downturn
- The Council's Aims, Approaches and Actions
- A Value for Money analysis

The Corporate Manager (Health and Environmental Services) noted that, at paragraph 2.3E, the text in the middle box was incomplete. He highlighted paragraph 7 as Health and Environmental Services' contribution towards the Council's overall Equality and Diversity Strategy.

The Portfolio Holder noted Table 8, highlighting the actions proposed in managing identified risks.

The Environmental Services Portfolio Holder **approved** the Health and Environmental Services Service Plan for the period from 2009-10 to 2011-12.

### 36. MEMBER TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2009-2010

The Environmental Services Portfolio Holder, in her role as the Portfolio Holder responsible for Member Training, considered a report summarising the background work and consultations, which had informed the development of a Training and Development

programme for the 2009-2010 Civic Year.

The Portfolio Holder noted the proposal to amend the stipulation in respect to training for members of the Planning and Licensing Committees from being prescriptive to being as and when deemed appropriate. Wording might be, "...No member shall be eligible to sit on a regulatory committee unless and until they have undertaken suitable training *upon appointment to such* committee. No member shall be eligible to remain on a regulatory committee unless and until they have undertaken suitable refresher training as and when identified by the relevant Corporate Manager."

Those present discussed the report and its appendices. In particular, they hoped that planning training could be made available to all Members. Training about planning conditions should also be made available to parish councils. The Portfolio Holder expressed reservations about mandatory training. She said that proposed courses relating to planning, employment and licensing should specify what aspects they covered and indicate what delegates should have learnt by the end of them. The term "refresher training" should be defined.

It was acknowledged that the effective use of Information Technology remained an important aim of Member training.

The Environmental Services Portfolio Holder

- (1) **noted** the results of the 2008 survey of Members' training and development needs, as summarised in Appendix A;
- (2) **approved** the following:
  - (a) the Member Training and Development Programme for 2009-2010 attached at Appendix B;
  - (b) the draft criteria for responding to requests for councillor training attached at Appendix C; and
  - (c) The draft pre- and post-course evaluation form attached at Appendix D; and
- (c) **designated** the Executive Director for Finance and Support Services as champion for Member Training and Development and following their appointment, the duties of the champion in the interim being undertaken by the Democratic Services Manager.

### 37. FORWARD PLAN

The Environmental Services Portfolio Holder **noted** the items provisionally identified for the next meeting.

### 38. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Environmental Services Portfolio Holder **noted** that the next meeting, originally scheduled for 28 April, had been postponed to Monday 18 May 2009, starting at 2.00pm in the Jeavons Room.

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**The Meeting ended at 4.28 p.m.**

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