

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy, Improvement and Communications Portfolio Holder's Meeting  
held on  
Thursday, 12 March 2009 at 11.00 a.m.

Portfolio Holder: TJ Wotherspoon

### **Councillors in attendance:**

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitor: JA Hockney

Opposition spokesman JD Batchelor, substituting for SGM Kindersley

Also in attendance: SM Edwards, Mrs SM Ellington and RMA Manning

### **Officers:**

Maggie Jennings  
Denise Lewis

Democratic Services Officer  
Interim Corporate Manager, Community and  
Customer Services and Project Manager, Housing  
Futures

Richard May  
Paul Swift  
Denise Lewis

Democratic Services Manager  
Policy and Performance Review Manager  
Corporate Manager, Community and Customer  
Services and Project Manager, Housing Futures

Cllr JA Hockney left the meeting at 11.25am following the conclusion of item 12 relating to the Corporate Plan.

## **10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January were agreed as a correct record. There were no matters arising.

## **12. CORPORATE PLAN 2009/10-2011/12**

Paul Swift, the Policy and Performance Manager was in attendance for this item.

The Portfolio Holder considered the report concerning the Corporate Plan and noted the following information:

- Work on the Plan was ongoing
- The Improvement Plan would be appended to the Plan
- Discussions were in hand with the Auditors on the council's ability to achieve level 3 regarding the new *Use of Resources* test within the Comprehensive Area Assessment. A workshop for Members would be arranged to inform of the new outcome based test that would be applied for Use of Resources
- The need to avoid over surveying residents by sharing information between services
- Information would be sought from the Audit Commission on what areas it felt should be assessed; the outcome and how they were assessed could be

considered by the Scrutiny & Overview Committee

The Policy, Improvement and Communications Portfolio Holder,

**ENDORSED** the proposed content of the Corporate Plan and its development to date and noted that the final Plan would be considered again by himself, the Executive Management Team and Senior Management Team, prior to submission to Cabinet and Council in April.

### 13. **E-PETITIONS**

Richard May, Democratic Services Manager was in attendance for this item.

The Portfolio Holder considered the report proposing the introduction of e-petitions; issues arising from the resultant discussion were as follows:

- The small number of e-petitions received by other local authorities who had introduced the system
- Possible overloading of the system from political parties and members of the public outside the district
- Further clarification would be required on the appropriateness of public response to planning applications
- The regard for those members of the community that did not have access to a computer

The Policy, Improvement and Communications Portfolio Holder,

- (a) **REJECTED** for the immediate future, the proposal to implement e-Petitions at South Cambridgeshire District Council,
- (b) **AGREED** to review the position at a future date if the above issues could be addressed and/or that the Council was obliged to implement e-petitions in order to meet legislative requirements.

### 14. **SERVICE PLAN FOR COMMUNITY AND CUSTOMER SERVICES 2009/10 TO 2011/12**

Paul Swift, Policy & Performance Manager was in attendance for this item.

PS presented the Service Plan, stating that there were several Portfolio Holders responsible for different elements of the Plan; all of whom had been consulted. Issues raised during discussion related to:

- the loss of two fixed terms posts; the Communications Officer in particular, had been responsible for an improvement in internal communication and the promotion of the Council's values
- the proposed enhancement of the Scrutiny & Overview and Local Area Agreement (LAA) functions
- the appointment of an interim Corporate Manager for Community and Customers Services
- a review of the structure of the Policy and Performance team in 2009/10
- the appointment of a more senior officer to improve customer service and support Service First
- the amount of work in populating the data base in respect of CorVu had been underestimated, however, officers across the Council were now inputting the

required data. It was anticipated that Service Plans, together with Customer Service information would be included in the system with Members able to access the data from 1 April 2009

- Future Service Plans would be more outward facing and customer focussed

In conclusion, the Policy, Improvement and Communications Portfolio Holder,

**AGREED** the Service Plan for Community and Customers Services 2009/10 to 2011/12, subject to any amendments to be made by the interim Corporate Manager for Community and Customer Services.

**15. FORWARD PLAN**

The Portfolio Holder referred to the agenda item relating to 'Scoping of review of Council policies and procedures' and informed those present that the Partnerships Manager had given him a preliminary list. The remainder of the Forward Plan was **NOTED**

**16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, 14 May 2009 at 11am in the Jeavons Room.

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**The Meeting ended at 12.00 p.m.**

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