

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee held on
Thursday, 5 December 2013 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Tony Orgee – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: Kevin Cuffley Alison Elcox
Sebastian Kindersley Douglas de Lacey
Ray Manning Raymond Matthews
Jim Stewart Bunty Waters

Officers: Graham Aisthorpe-Watts Democratic Services Team Leader
Andrew Francis Electoral Services Manager
David Lord Senior Lawyer
Fiona McMillan Legal & Democratic Services Manager and
Monitoring Officer
Tracy Mann Development Officer
John Pym New Village Senior Planning Officer

Grant Osbourne (Independent Person) and Gillian Holmes (Deputy Independent Person) were in attendance, by invitation.

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Bard, Simon Edwards and Robert Turner.

26. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Sebastian Kindersley declared a non-pecuniary interest in minute number 32 as he was a County Councillor for the Gamlingay Electoral Division, which included the area of Trumpington Meadows.

27. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 20 September 2013 were confirmed and signed by the Vice-Chairman as a correct record.

28. REVIEW OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

The Civic Affairs Committee considered a report which set out the results of a recently undertaken review of parliamentary polling districts and polling places as required by the Electoral Registration and Administration Act 2013.

Details of the review had been sent by email to all District Councillors and Parish Clerks in South Cambridgeshire and no significant concerns were raised. An email from Councillor Hazel Smith was circulated which outlined her support of Milton Parish Council's view that it would need a larger polling station for the General Election in 2015 and that Milton Community Centre would be more appropriate. Andrew Francis, Electoral Services Manager, reported that he was aware of the issue at Milton and reassured Members that this would be considered in the lead-up to the 2015 General Election. Comments on specific polling stations had been received but it was noted that polling stations were not a formal part of the review into parliamentary polling districts and polling places. The District Council's Equality and Diversity Officer and the Acting Returning Officer at

East Cambridgeshire District Council had also been consulted as part of the review and their comments were set out in the report.

The Civic Affairs Committee **RECOMMENDED** to Council that no changes be made to the polling districts and places currently in place in South Cambridgeshire and **NOTED** that there would be a need for future local reviews in areas of concentrated development.

29. REPORTS FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

A report was considered which provided the Civic Affairs Committee with an opportunity to review the way in which Members reported information back to the Council following meetings of outside bodies they had been appointed to.

The Committee agreed that update reports from Members appointed to outside bodies should be submitted to the Partnerships Review Committee rather than full Council, other than Members of Cabinet who should continue to provide update reports to Cabinet.

Discussion ensued on the duration of update reports as to whether they should be submitted annually or after each meeting of the particular body. It was agreed that update reports should be submitted in line with the Partnerships Review Committee's schedule of meetings.

The Civic Affairs Committee **AGREED** that all Members appointed to an outside body should submit a written update report to each quarterly meeting of the Partnerships Review Committee, instead of Council, with the exception of those Members who already report to Cabinet.

30. UPDATE ON CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

Consideration was given to a report on complaints cases regarding alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct.

The Civic Affairs Committee **NOTED** the progress of outstanding complaints.

31. NORTHSTOWE COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

A report was considered which updated the Civic Affairs Committee on progress to date in relation to the Longstanton, Oakington and Northstowe boundary review.

It was reported that there were very different opinions locally regarding the changing of boundary lines, the timing of such changes and the establishment of a standalone parish or town council. Officers were in the process of having informal discussions with Longstanton and Oakington Parish Councils and were also organising public drop-in sessions to informally discuss potential boundary changes to Longstanton and Oakington in light of the Northstowe development. A number of suggestions had been put forward by Oakington and Westwick Parish Councils and local residents that had attended public events to date, details of which were set out in the report.

Taking these suggestions into account, an officer working group had recently met and recommended that the current boundary between Longstanton and Oakington be left in place until such time as there were 1000 electors within the Northstowe Development Framework Document framework outline. This could act as a trigger for establishing Northstowe Parish Council, based on the legislation for the number of residents there needed to be for a parish council to be created.

Councillor Sebastian Kindersley felt that it was important for a parish council to be established straight away, or as soon as possible, and reflected on lessons learnt at Bar Hill, Orchard Park and Cambourne regarding new communities and governance arrangements. He was of the opinion that residents currently living in the area affected by the Northstowe development should be given an opportunity to formally consider issues that would impact them in the years to come and that there should be enough people at Rampton Drift to set a parish council up immediately. Councillor Douglas de Lacey echoed these points and wanted to see more consultation with those new communities that had experienced similar governance issues.

Councillor Ray Manning reminded those present that Longstanton Parish Council had experienced problems in seeking expressions of interest from residents at Rampton Drift to stand as Parish Councillors. Taking into account the points raised regarding further consultation, he informed Members that no consultation had yet been undertaken with Willingham or Over Parish Councils and felt that it was appropriate to bring this issue back for reconsideration at a future meeting. He also emphasised the importance of contributions from local Members, two of whom were unfortunately unable to attend this meeting.

Councillor Alison Elcox suggested inviting people who were Parish Councillors at the time of similar reviews undertaken in the past, such as at Cambourne or Orchard Park, in order that they could share their knowledge having gone through this process. It was noted that the Community Governance Review procedure had changed significantly since Cambourne and Orchard Park and that Histon or Impington would be more appropriate from comparative purposes as they had followed the same process.

Councillor Jim Stewart proposed that this item be deferred to the next meeting so that local Members could be in attendance. It would also provide Members and officers with an opportunity to undertake more consultation and look into further information surrounding the issues discussed at this meeting.

The Civic Affairs Committee **DEFERRED** this item to its next meeting on 20 March 2014.

32. TRUMPINGTON MEADOWS COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Civic Affairs Committee considered a report which provided an update on progress to date in relation to the potential changes to parish boundaries at Haslingfield and Grantchester, in order to create a new parish for the development at Trumpington Meadows.

Members noted that Grantchester had agreed, in principle, to include a triangle of land known locally as Lingey Fen near to Bryon's Pool within its boundary. This meant that officers could begin informal consultation on full proposals, including the transferring of this land which was currently within Haslingfield. A new boundary line could be drawn at the same time to establish a new parish for Trumpington Meadows.

The Civic Affairs Committee **NOTED** the report.

33. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Civic Affairs Committee **AGREED** that that its next meeting would be held on 20 March 2014 at 10.00 a.m.

Councillor Tony Orgee, Vice-Chairman, closed proceedings by reporting that David Lord, Senior Lawyer, would be retiring later this month. He thanked Mr Lord for his service to the Council and in particular for the support he had provided to the Civic Affairs Committee, and congratulated him on his retirement.

The Meeting ended at 10.50 a.m.
