

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Policy, Improvement and Communications Portfolio Holder's meeting
held on
Monday, 26 January 2009 at 2.00 p.m.

Portfolio Holder: TJ Wotherspoon

Officers:

Denise Lewis	Interim Corporate Manager - Community and Customer Services
Richard May	Democratic Services Manager
Sally Smart	Principal Accountant Financial & Systems

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

6. NOTES OF LAST MEETING

The Portfolio Holder confirmed the Minutes of the meeting held on 13 November 2008 as a correct record.

7. COUNCILLORS SURVEY

The Portfolio Holder considered a report setting out the results of the recent survey of Members' communication needs and seeking agreement of a programme of actions to be taken in response to the survey.

The Portfolio Holder made specific comments relating to the following matters:

- Concern relating to the high number of Member meetings held at the Council Offices;
- Proposed actions to address Members' concerns with the website and Intranet, as part of which the primary requirement was to ensure accurate and up-to-date information.
- Ensuring effective communication of the new number for the Contact Centre.

The Portfolio Holder commended a thorough report and action plan and requested an update on progress against actions to be submitted in May 2009.

Councillor Wotherspoon advised that he welcomed the recent agenda alerts in which items of business were set out by bullet points in the covering e-mail; this was a simple and convenient way of alerting Members to items coming forward for consideration which should prevent subsequent claims of lack of notification.

The Democratic Services Manager drew Councillor Wotherspoon's attention to minor changes to the report and action plan required for consistency and to reflect feedback from officers, received since the publication of the report.

The Portfolio Holder:

- (a) **NOTED** the responses to the 'Communicating Excellence' Councillor survey, set out in Appendix A and in the commentary in the report;

- (b) **APPROVED** the action plan in response to the survey set out at Appendix B to the report, subject to:
- (i) Clarification of the lead officer in respect of action (8) (Members' Lounge);
 - (ii) Clarification of actions (12) and (13) in respect of the Contact Centre, following feedback from the Head of Revenues;
 - (iii) The inclusion of an additional action requiring the collation of demographic information regarding Members' employment, to inform future survey planning.
- (c) **REQUESTED** the submission of a report setting out progress with the action plan in May 2009.

8. REVENUE ESTIMATES FOR POLICY, IMPROVEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS PORTFOLIO

The Portfolio Holder considered draft 2009-2010 revenue estimates for the portfolio in respect of the communications, policy and performance services. The Principal Accountant advised that the revised figures set out in the report were in the most part due to changes in organisation structure and hence time allocation between services.

The Portfolio Holder **ENDORSED** the Revenue Estimates shown at Appendix A to the report, recommending them for consideration by the Cabinet.

9. FORWARD PLAN

The Portfolio Holder requested the inclusion of the following items on the Forward Plan for his future consideration, subject to indicative timescales being agreed in consultation with the Interim Corporate Manager for Community and Customer Services for inclusion on the Agenda for the next meeting:

Policy

- Corporate Plan 2009-2010 (subsequently to Cabinet and Council for approval).
- Scoping of review of Council policies and procedures.
- Investigation of available enabling powers not currently being exercised by the Council.

Improvement

- Portfolio Holder job descriptions, to support and inform the generic role responsibility set out in the Constitution.
- Comprehensive Area Assessment locality self-evaluation, setting out against which achievements the Council would wish to be judged.
- Revised ICT Strategy.

Communications

- Updated Communications Strategy.
- Progress on action plan approved at the meeting.

The Meeting ended at 2.30 p.m.
