

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Finance Portfolio Holder's Meeting held on  
Tuesday, 21 April 2009 at 3.00 p.m.

Portfolio Holder: AG Orgee

### **Councillors in attendance:**

Scrutiny and Overview Committee monitors: R Hall

Opposition spokesmen RB Martlew and RT Summerfield

### **Officers:**

Adrian Burns Head of Accountancy

#### **46. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received from Greg Harlock, Chief Executive.

#### **47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

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

Subject to the amendment of Minute 39 (Finance and Support Services Service Plan), paragraphs 2 and 5, to read 'The Head of Revenues', and not 'The Revenues Manager', the minutes of the meeting held on 19 March 2009 were agreed as a correct record.

##### **Matters Arising**

Minute 40: Capital Strategy and Asset Management Plan.

Car Parks. It was confirmed that the Council owned four car parks and rented the fifth.

Allotments. It was confirmed that the Council owned a small number of allotment plots and that the revenue was allocated to the Housing Revenue Account.

#### **49. CHAIRMAN'S ALLOWANCE**

The Portfolio Holder considered a report prepared by the Principal Accountant, Financial Systems, requesting agreement to criteria for the appropriate use of the Civic Allowance in supporting the promotional work of the Chairman of the Council.

In reply to a question the Portfolio Holder was advised that it was unlikely that the current Chairman had seen the report.

It was confirmed that an office at South Cambridgeshire Hall was not provided for the Chairman, and it was believed that secretarial support was met from within the Council's secretariat by way of a salary allocation.

Subject to confirmation that secretarial support to the Chairman is met from within the Council, the Finance Portfolio Holder **APPROVED** the criteria for the use of the Civic Allowance as shown in paragraph 4 of the accompanying report.

Using these criteria, the areas of expenditure for which it is considered that the allowance can be used include:

- (a) Civic functions:
  - (i) Providing civic and Council functions, e.g. annual Chairman's Reception (catering, entertainment, flowers etc), on behalf of the Council in the official capacity of Chairman
  - (ii) Attending civic and Council/other councils functions on behalf of the Council in the official capacity of Chairman
  - (iii) Tickets for attendance at civic functions
  - (iv) Donations to charities equivalent to the attendance fees where unable to attend civic functions
  
- (b) Miscellaneous expenditure
  - (i) Repair and maintenance of Chairman's Chain of Office
  - (ii) Memorial/commemoration wreaths
  - (iii) Reasonable travelling expenses incurred during civic duties (excluding 'normal' mileage which is reimbursed from the general budget for Members' travel and subsistence)

## 50. REVENUES QUARTERLY UPDATE

The Head of Accountancy presented the Revenues Service Quarterly Performance Report for Quarter 4, 2008/09.

The Portfolio Holder was advised that the current economic climate had been determined to be the underlying factor in the reduction in collection levels of non-domestic rates and for the increase in the number of days to process benefits applications.

### Questions and comments

The Portfolio Holder commented that as targets had been set in 'good times', failure to achieve targets should not be seen in a negative way and that a positive message should be sent out to staff.

The Portfolio Holder requested that the wording be clarified in future reports to show that the percentage of tenants receiving notices of seeking possession was of those in arrears, and not of all tenants.

It was confirmed that the number of benefits staff had remained the same despite the number of claims increasing. The Portfolio Holder requested that the situation be monitored.

The report was **NOTED**.

## 51. FINANCIAL POSITION (APRIL - MARCH)

The Head of Accountancy presented a report indicating the provisional outturn under / overspends for 2008/09 as compared to the working estimates as an update to the February position.

### **General Fund**

The Portfolio Holder was advised that the projected underspend had reduced by £11,200 since the February estimate.

The Portfolio Holder was further advised that the reduction in income from Development Control might have implications for the 2009/10 budget.

### **Housing Revenue Account**

The Portfolio Holder was advised that the projected underspend had increased by £103,100 since the February estimate.

### **Capital**

The Portfolio Holder was advised that the projected underspend had reduced by £209,900 since the February estimate.

The report was **NOTED**.

## **52. CONFIRMATION OF 2009/2010 SERVICE TARGET**

The Head of Accountancy presented a report to request that the Portfolio Holder agree revised targets for a number of performance indicators contained in the service plan for Finance and Support Services.

The Portfolio Holder commented that he believed targets should be demanding, but achievable and that should be the message that accompanied the service plan.

The Portfolio Holder **AGREED** that the performance targets shown in Appendix A to the report be incorporated into the 2009/10 Service Plan for the Finance and Support Service.

## **53. FORWARD PLAN**

The Integrated Business Monitoring report was moved to the June meeting.

## **54. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Tuesday 9 June 2009. The meeting will be held at 10am in the Jeavons Room.

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**The Meeting ended at 3.45 p.m.**

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