



# **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL COUNCILLORS' BULLETIN – ISSUE DATE 22<sup>ND</sup> OCTOBER 2003**

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1. To Vire £5,381 to the Information Unit to Fund the Corporate Identity Project

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR COUNCILLORS**

<b><u>COMMITTEE MEETINGS</u></b>			
<b>FROM 27<sup>TH</sup> TO 31<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2003</b>			
			
<b>MONDAY 27<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2003</b>	<b>10 AM</b>	<b>CRIME &amp; DISORDER PARTNERSHIP</b>	<b>COMMITTEE ROOM 1</b>
<b>THURSDAY 30<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2003</b>	<b>10 AM</b>	<b>CABINET</b>	<b>COMMITTEE ROOM 1 COUNCIL CHAMBER</b>

### **Training Courses**

<b>Name of Course</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date and Venue</b>
Effective Scrutiny for Elected Members – Skills Development	This is an opportunity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Meet up with Councillors from across the country</li><li>• Profit from the experience of Frances Taylor</li><li>• Get up to date in terms of the latest research findings in this challenging role</li><li>• Practice and develop relevant skills</li></ul>	5 <sup>th</sup> December 2003 in Birmingham  Convenor: Frances Taylor

More details on the above course can be found by contacting Patrick Adams, on (01223) 443408 or [patrick.adams@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:patrick.adams@scambs.gov.uk)

### **Questions for MPs**

Please note that the region's two MPs will be attending a question and answer session at the Council on Friday 21st November 2003 at 10am in the Council Chamber.

The following members are invited to attend:

- Cabinet
- Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Council
- Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Scrutiny Committee
- Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Planning

All Councillors are invited to put forward questions for the MPs.

It would be helpful if Members who are not attending could identify which Chairman, Vice-Chairman or Cabinet member will be asking the question on their behalf.

The MPs' secretaries have requested that all questions be sent to them two weeks before the meeting. In view of this please can you ensure that all questions are sent to Patrick Adams, Senior Democratic Services Officer who can be contacted on (01223) 443408 or [Patrick.adams@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:Patrick.adams@scambs.gov.uk) by 10am on the 6th November 2003.

## **Blender – The Arts Buffet Group**

Councillors are invited to an arts event and workshop organised by visual artist Beverley Carpenter at building 2020 at 5.30 (for up to two hours) on 29 October at Cambourne Business Park. With Beverley will be writer David A. Lambert and composer Gabrielle Norland. It promises to be a lively event and refreshments are provided. Please come if you can!

For more details please contact Andy O'Hanlon, Arts Development Officer on (01223) 724143 or e-mail him on [andy.ohanlon@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:andy.ohanlon@scambs.gov.uk)

## **County Council Minutes**

The agenda for the above meeting has now been published on the Internet. Please click on the link below to access:

<http://www2.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/db/reprack.nsf/e0c624b01b2e9ade80256b14004eb73b/38c843f29dc1f3c980256dc000315008?OpenDocument>

If you experience any problems opening the link, the agenda can be found on the County Council's web-site:

<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/>

- About the Council
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- Agendas & Minutes

## **Call-In Arrangements**

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee or any five other Councillors may call in any executive decision recorded in this bulletin for review. The Democratic Services Manager must be notified of any call in by **Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> October 2003 at 5pm**. All decisions not called in by this date may be implemented on **Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> October 2003**.

*Any member considering calling in a decision made by Cabinet is requested to contact the Democratic Services Section to determine whether any relevant amendments have been incorporated.*

The call in procedure is set out in full in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution, 'Scrutiny Committee Procedure Rules', paragraph 12.

## **OFFICER DECISIONS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION**

### **Decisions by Community Development Partnerships Manager**

Applicant	Decision	Reason
Swavesey Library Group	To award a £1,000 Community Development Grant (CD06) for to set up a community library in the village of Swavesey.	The project will promote learning, and provide a valuable community resource for the village.

Applicant	Decision	Reason
Orwell Parish Council	To award a £262 Community Development Grant (CD07) to fund visits of the DEC youth bus to Orwell, giving temporary youth facilities to young people in the village.	Provides activities for young people over a period of time, to support a permanent youth facility being put in place in the village.

Applicant	Decision	Reason
Curwen Print Study Centre	To award an £800 Arts Capital Grant (AC01) for an etching press	To provide equipment for community use at the Study Centre based at Chilford Hall

## **CABINET**

At a meeting of the Cabinet held on  
16<sup>th</sup> October 2003 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT: Mrs DSK Spink                      Leader and Conservation Portfolio Holder  
            RT Summerfield                      Deputy Leader and Resources & Staffing Portfolio Holder

Councillors: Dr DR Bard                      Planning & Economic Development Portfolio Holder  
                  CC Barker                                      Environmental Health Portfolio Holder  
                  JD Batchelor                                  Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder  
                  RF Collinson                                  Sustainability & Community Planning Portfolio Holder  
                  Mrs EM Heazell                                Housing Portfolio Holder  
                  Mrs DP Roberts                                Community Development Portfolio Holder

Councillors RF Bryant, R Hall, Mrs SA Hatton, SGM Kindersley, Mrs CAED Murfitt and RJ Turner were also in attendance, by invitation.

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### **Procedural Items**

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#### **1. MINUTES**

The Leader was authorised to sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2003, subject to the following amendments:

Policy on the Use of the South Cambridgeshire District Council Award Drain System for the Disposal of Surface Water Run-Off from Developments (Minute 7)

“...if they used the award drains. Income would be generated for their maintenance and would be in the form of a lump sum. The income would be ring-fenced for land drainage purposes.”

Supporting People Strategy Update 2003

“...This Council was likely to be vulnerable on sheltered housing as it had considerably more than the other Councils...”

#### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None declared.

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### **Recommendations to Council**

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#### **3. BEST VALUE STRATEGY FOR SERVICE PROCUREMENT**

In introducing this report, the Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder highlighted the differences between the Best Value strategy for Service Procurement and the more general procurement policy for consumables. Adoption of a strategy was mandatory and the one proposed provided clear procedures and criteria, as well as a list of the Council's Procurement Principles on which all items were of equal importance. A

flowchart to assist staff members would accompany the strategy and the Performance Improvement Officer would be available for any further assistance.

The following amendments to the report and strategy were made:

- Paragraph 7 would state that review periods would follow a pattern of between five and ten years, not every five years;
- The report would refer to service delivery throughout rather than service procedure; and
- Paragraph 23 would be altered to read the Council's Corporate Objectives.

Councillor JD Batchelor requested that all reports include sustainability implications.

Cabinet

#### **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

that the Best Value Strategy for Service Procurement be adopted.

#### **4. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES – INDEPENDENT PANEL**

A vacancy had arisen on the independent panel required to make recommendations on the level of members' allowances. The panel must have a minimum of three members but could be larger. This appointment was a matter of some urgency as the recommendations of the panel were to be presented for approval at the next Council meeting. Partners on the Local Strategic Partnership Board had been approached for nominations, but none were received. With the agreement of the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet accepted, as an urgent item, the recommendation of the Head of Legal Services that Lady Valerie Bright, JP, be appointed.

Cabinet

#### **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**

that Lady Valerie Bright, JP, be appointed to the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances.

*Following the Cabinet meeting and with the agreement of the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, the Chairman of Council approved the appointment of Lady Bright to the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances, under the provisions of the Access to Information Procedure Rules: Rule 16 (Special Urgency) of the Constitution.*

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#### **Decisions made by the Cabinet and reported for information**

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#### **5. PUBLIC ART POLICY**

The Community Development Portfolio Holder introduced Mr David Wright from Commissions East, a publicly funded public arts advisory organisation for the eastern region. Mr Wright gave a slide presentation of public art projects, including local examples from Comberton and Harlton. Councillor Mrs DP Roberts commended the policy, noting that public art could meet the Council's corporate objective to improve the quality of life for residents.

The acceleration of development within the District made it timely to introduce a public art policy. Members commended the 'Springboard' toolkit for community groups, especially its emphasis on local involvement. The 'Springboard' document was still in draft form and would be updated to refer to the Council's partner authorities.

Members discussed the policy at length and felt that the wording of the policy must be precise enough to stand up to legal scrutiny. There was considerable difference of opinion about the 1% minimum contribution from developers and whether it should be a mandatory requirement in the policy or an advisory paragraph in the emerging Local Development Framework (LDF). A 1% contribution could be an inappropriately large figure from developments such as Northstowe. The Conservation Officer stated that the Arts Council supported the 1% minimum contribution as a benchmark and that similar policies had been tested and tried successfully elsewhere in the country.

There was also discussion about the size of developments covered by the policy and whether the definition of a "large development" as 10 or more dwellings was suitable. Public art contributions could be negotiated at the Design Guide stage and "public art" included the interpretation of the landscaping and architecture the developer was already required to provide. A mandatory commitment to public art could add considerable cost to Housing Association developers and Councillor Mrs EM Heazell asked that they be exempted from the policy.

The Arts Development Officer assured Cabinet that the policy was not a mandatory obligation being placed on developers and parishes, but aimed to create clear benchmarks and to serve as a shadow document to the Supplementary Planning Guidance in the LDF. It had to encompass a wide range of circumstances, from historic settlements to new towns. The Council could interpret the public art guidelines sensitively for each new development during the drafting of precise plans and budgets.

It was suggested that the policy be redrafted, taking into account the points raised by Cabinet and conforming to the LDF timescale. A working group would be established, involving officers from Arts, Conservation, Development Services and Legal Services. The appendix would be corrected to refer to the Harlton Village Sign rather than the Harlton Wayside Marker

Cabinet **AGREED**

- (a) to establish an Arts Policy Working Group, to be comprised of the Portfolio Holders for Community Development, Housing and Planning and Economic Development, the Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee, the Head of Legal Services and relevant officers from Arts, Conservation and Development Services, to re-draft the Public Art Policy and report back to Cabinet; and
- (b) the publication and distribution of guidance to parishes and community organisations wishing to incorporate public art into village enhancement projects.

## **6. CAMBRIDGE OFFICE: STAFFING ISSUES**

Extensive consultation had been conducted with visitors to South Cambridgeshire Hall, through which it was predicted that four staff members would be adequate to serve that the number of visitors expected to visit the Cambridge office. A verbal agreement had been reached with another authority to base the office in the

Cambridge city centre, but written confirmation was awaited. Whilst the staffing should be achieved on a cost-neutral basis, the report included a worst-case scenario where additional salary and related costs could be incurred.

Members were assured that full telephone and computer links between the Cambridge and Cambourne offices, including at least one video link, would be established. Cross-service training would be essential to the staff and, for most services, members of the public could expect the same level of service at either office. Members of the public could also book appointments at the Cambridge office to speak to officers in Cambourne via the video link.

Councillor Mrs Heazell asked that all redundancies resulting from these issues be considered by Cabinet, as a courtesy to any individuals involved, but it was noted that Cabinet had already given the Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder delegated authority to deal with redundancies arising from the Contact Centre.

**Cabinet AGREED**

- (a) that, to ensure that the right people are appointed for the Cambridge Office posts, the posts be advertised internally and any member of SCDC staff can apply, but if the posts could not be filled through this process then the posts would be advertised externally;
- (b) to the principle of "backfilling" posts as necessary until the offices relocate to Cambourne and the situation can be rationalised; and
- (c) to give the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Staffing delegated authority to deal with the various associated staffing issues arising from this initiative, including, if appropriate, declaring posts as redundant.

**7. RELOCATION OF TELEPHONE DEBIT CARD PAYMENT SYSTEM**

The Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder explained that the telephone debit card system introduced in 2001 had taken 15,500 transactions in the past year, collecting £2.1 million. The latest version of the software could be installed at Cambourne, and be tested and operational prior to the office relocation, thus ensuring a seamless service to customers. This upgrade could be financed from the Cabinet's Contingency Sum.

**Cabinet AGREED**

- (a) to approve the increase in the Finance and Resources budget for the current financial year by £30,000, financed from the Cabinet's Contingency Sum;
- (b) to bring forward the moving of the Council's 24 hour payment hotline to Cambourne to ensure that it is tested and operational in time for the Council's move to its new headquarters; and
- (c) to the suspension of Standing Orders as to Contracts to allow for the associated contract to be placed directly with Trintech Limited without competition.

The Portfolio Holder for Resources and Staffing and the Finance and Resources Director agreed to discuss the financial implications with the Chairman of Council after the Cabinet meeting.

**8. AUTHORITY TO APPEAR IN COURT**

On 1<sup>st</sup> October 2003, the Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder granted authority to the Senior Revenues Officer to appear in the County and Magistrates Courts under



the County Court Act 1984 and the Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000. This urgent decision had to be taken independently as the court date was prior to the next meeting of Cabinet.

Cabinet **AGREED**

to delegate authority, both retrospectively and in the future, to the Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder to nominate officers to appear in the County and Magistrates Courts under the County Court Act 1984 and the Local Government Acts 1972 and 2000.

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**Standing Items**

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**9. MATTERS REFERRED BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

None.

**10. RE-LOCATION OF OFFICES TO CAMBOURNE**

Nothing to report.

**11. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

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**Confidential Item**

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**12. SALE OF OAKINGTON DEPOT**

The Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder announced that negotiations had not concluded at the time the report was written, but had since been completed and a reduction of £31,000 in the sale price had been agreed. The deadline for completion of the sale was April 2004.

Cabinet **NOTED** the action taken by officers to progress the sale of Oakington Depot and the slightly lower sale proceeds.

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**Any Other Business**

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**13. NEW INTEGRATED RECYCLING AND REFUSE COLLECTION SERVICE:  
VERBAL UPDATE**

The Chief Environmental Health Officer explained that a recent report on “Today” had been misleading: the report had announced that by 2010 all local authorities would be required to collect two recycling types and neither could be garden waste. This was incorrect: in fact, green waste is included as one of the items in the Bill. South Cambridgeshire District Council was already far above this minimum requirement. The Leader asked that consideration be given to a press release being issued clarifying the statement made in the media and reporting the Council's achievements.

The Chief Environmental Health Officer reported that permission from the licensing authorities to enable the recycling of kitchen waste was still awaited. The Environmental Health Portfolio Holder would send another reminder to DEFRA informing that the Council was anxious to begin offering this service to its residents and was frustrated by the repeated delays. Members would also raise the matter with the local MPs.

**14. MEETING TO DISCUSS CPA PEER REVIEW REPORT**

There was not a suitable meeting date for members and officers to meet to make practical suggestions to the issues raised by the CPA Peer Review report, so the Policy and Performance Review Manager would circulate information by e-mail and collate responses. A report would be brought to Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> November.

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**The meeting ended at 12.00 pm**

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## **UK YOUTH PARLIAMENT – LOCAL DEMOCRACY WEEK QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION WITH THE CABINET**

Representatives from the UK Youth Parliament had been invited to the Cabinet meeting as part of Local Democracy Week. A question and answer session with the Cabinet was held following the conclusion of business.

### Public Art

The UK Youth Parliament representatives asked a number of questions about public art and heard that public art provision was only one part of the services offered by the District Council, for instance, there was a separate strategy for sports provision. The Council, as a planning authority, also placed requirements on developers to contribute to communities in a number of ways, including affordable housing provision, open spaces and community facilities.

The representatives asked Cabinet about consultation on public art schemes and the balance between primarily contemporary art and the rural character of the villages. It was remarked that certain groups, such as young people or older people, were sometimes overlooked in the consultation process. Public art schemes were usually suggested by the villages based on their own determination of what best fits the area and what they would like to see; the Council helped through expert advice and funding opportunities. The Public Art Policy was pro-active: communities like Northstowe would not exist for years so the Council would need to anticipate what future residents would like to see.

Also discussed was the way villages evolve organically and how public art features eventually became a part of the village scene.

### New Integrated Recycling and Refuse Collection Scheme

Councillor SGM Kindersley asked the UK Youth Parliament representatives their opinion on the new wheeled bin scheme and recycling in general. Not all the representatives lived in villages which had started on the new system yet, but there was strong support for recycling initiatives and the environment was described as a very important issue for all residents. The representatives reported having seen similar schemes work in other countries and felt that the Council was being “forward-thinking” in introducing the system. Packaging was not always taken into account when purchasing goods, especially on convenience foods. The UK Youth Parliament representatives asked for more information about what happens to garden waste after collection and the Chief Environmental Health Officer explained the composting process and outlined some ambitions for the future.

The Chairman of Council concluded the session with a brief speech on the importance of democracy and his hopes that the UK Youth Parliament representatives remain involved in the democratic process and possibly return to South Cambridgeshire District Council as Councillors.

## **DECISIONS MADE BY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

### **Decision Made By Portfolio Holder For Information and Customer Services**

Virement made on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2003

Virement From:	Amount	Reason
Democratic Services Section, Chief Executive's Department	£5,381	Salary allocated for July, August and September for the Democratic Services Assistant, which has not yet been filled
Virement To:	Amount	Reason
Information Unit, Chief Executive's Department	£5,381	For the Corporate Identity Project