

COUNCILLORS' BULLETIN
27TH OCTOBER 2004

CONTENTS



**South
Cambridgeshire
District Council**

INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Committee Meetings
2. Councillor Training Sessions
3. New to the Internet and E-mail? Make sure you know your Netiquette!
4. Call in

DECISIONS MADE BY RESOURCES AND STAFFING PORTFOLIO HOLDER

1. Relief from Payment of Non Domestic Rates – Girton Golf Course

MINUTES

1. Draft Minutes of the Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holders meeting held on 29th September 2004

AGENDAS

1. Special meeting of the South Cambridgeshire Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee 8th November 2004

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FROM: 1st – 5th November 2004			
Monday 1st November 04		Planning Inspections	
Tuesday 2nd November 04			
Wednesday 3rd November 04	10 am	Development and Conservation Control	Council Chamber
Thursday 4th November 04			
Friday 5th November 04	2 pm	Scrutiny Committee Training	1 st Floor Meeting Room

Councillor Training Sessions – Please reply if you have not already done so

1. Training on Local Government Finance

Training on the Local Government Finance (General Fund) in order to acquire a basic understanding of Local Government Finance will be provided on 10th November 2004. This training is essential for Members to make a full and effective contribution to the policy and decision-making processes of the Authority. The Member Training Advisory Group has also specifically requested that any related training held, also covers:

- How budgets are set and what the CIPs process aims to do
- How apportionments of recharges happens and
- How Council Tax is set and money allocated to departments

The Seminar is expected to take about two hours. If you are interested in attending the training seminar, please respond accordingly, by e-mail or telephone to Lucie Edginton (lucie.edginton@scams.gov.uk - 01954 713026) by Monday 1 November 2004, stating your preference for a 5.30pm or 7.00pm start. Once Member preference has been determined, Members expressing an interest will be advised accordingly.

2. Training on Modern.Gov and using the Intranet

Training sessions for the intranet and Modern.Gov, the new Democratic Services minutes, agendas and decisions software, has been scheduled for Monday 15 November and Monday 22 November, with session at 10 am and 2 pm each day. Each session should last about 2 hours, with time for questions and answers. Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis, so please e-mail democratic.services@scams.gov.uk to book your place. If you have a chance to try out the intranet before the sessions, please bring your questions along to training!

New to the Internet and E-mail? Make sure you know your Netiquette!

What is Netiquette? It's etiquette for Internet and e-mail users. Log on to the Intranet, visit the Members' Info page and click on the Netiquette link for some tips and hints for using proper netiquette in your electronic communication. Topics include:

- Why you shouldn't type in all capital letters, and what you can use instead to emphasise a point
- The importance of the Subject line
- Checking e-mail daily and deleting unnecessary e-mail
- Replying promptly and editing replies and forwarded messages
- Ways to express emotion
- Dealing with nasty messages, jokes, chain letters, virus warnings or offers for free money from Bill Gates, ways to help sick children and more
- Large attachments
- Automatic spell checking before you send

Call in arrangements

The Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview 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 3rd November 2004 at 5pm**. All decisions not called in by this date may be implemented on **Thursday 5th November 2004**.

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.

Decisions made by the Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder

Decision	Applicant and Reason
Confirmed the Finance and Resources Director's decision not to grant Discretionary relief to Girton Golf Club against payment of the National Non Domestic Rate, in addition to their entitlement of 80% Mandatory relief	Girton Golf Club, a further award of Discretionary relief would not bring any additional benefit to the general public wishing to use the facilities.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder Meeting held on
Wednesday, 29 September 2004 at 2.00pm

Present: RT Summerfield Portfolio Holder
Mrs DSK Spink MBE Leader of the Council

Officers: John Ballantyne Chief Executive
Greg Harlock Finance and Resources Director

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 There were no absentees.

2. MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 24TH AUGUST 2004

2.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 24th August 2004 were agreed as a correct record.

3. MATTERS ARISING

3.1 Min 3.1 – rubber mats for vending machines – they had been ordered however delivery was still outstanding.

3.2 Min 3.2 – pigeonholes – they were in the process of being installed in the Members' lounge.

3.3 Min 3.4 – Fire alarm test - Following the full fire alarm test held on the evening of 24th August, it was noted that there were still outstanding problems regarding wiring on the ground floor and reduced audibility in Democratic Services on the first floor. The problems were to be rectified on 3rd October. It was also noted that the fire alarm was wired to the Fire Station.

3.4 General Security – All doors were now secure, however one of the high level windows in the ground floor meeting room was broken and as a result, a security guard was still employed by the developers.

3.5 Min 3.5 – microphones in the GFMR – no action had been taken as confusion had arisen about which microphones the request had related to; this had now been clarified.

3.6 Min 3.6 – plaques – the outstanding signage in the car park had been completed.

3.7 Min 3.7 – road signage on the A428 – the Office Services Manager had been informed by agents for the County Council that there was sufficient signage for Cambourne on the A428, however if further signage off the A428 was required nearer to Cambourne, the County Council should be contacted. It was agreed that the County Council be requested to erect a direction sign in respect of the offices between the A428 and the Business Park roundabout. **Office Services Manager to action**

3.8 Min 3.9 – renaming meeting rooms – a competition for staff to suggest ideas was advertised in the final Grapevine and the Intranet, closing dates for entries was 4th October.

3.9 Min 3.10 – cleaning contract – Office Cleaning Services (OCS) had been awarded the

cleaning contract and would be commencing duties on 4th October.

- 3.10 Min 3.11 – competition to resolve the balustrade issue – Management Team would be discussing at their next meeting. It was noted that following a request made at Council, architects had been requested to investigate the possibility of inserting windows into the Council Chamber.

4. CRIMINAL RECORDS BUREAU POLICY AND PROCEDURE AND RECRUITMENT OF EX-OFFENDERS POLICY

- 4.1 The Portfolio Holder endorsed the CRB policy and procedure and noted that relevant posts would be identified in the Establishment List.

5. STAFF SURVEY 2004

- 5.1 The Portfolio Holder considered and noted the contents of the Staff Survey 2004 that would be issued to staff at the end of October.

6. THREE YEAR REVIEW OF RENT RESTRUCTURING

- 6.1 The Portfolio Holder was requested to consider and agree an appropriate response to proposals outlined in an ODPM consultation paper on changes to the Governments' rent restructuring policy. The proposed changes relating to 'Larger Properties' and 'Implementation' were agreed, however he was unhappy with the perceived outcome regarding 'Harmonisation' as insufficient information had been provided by the ODPM.

7. COUNCIL TAX SETTING PROCESS 2005/06 - ORAL REPOT

- 7,1 GJH requested any views of the Portfolio Holder as to options he wished to see considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. He also pointed out that the Best Value Review of Affordable Housing had made a recommendation that £1m per annum for new affordable housing should form part of the considerations in the financial strategy. GJH provided the Portfolio Holder with other background information covering the manner in which options could be presented. Provisional indications were that the CIPs bids for the 2005/06 financial year totalled approximately £800 to £900k which, coincidentally, equated to the 4% savings target. Although good progress was being made on identifying areas for savings, it was recognised that in some areas the proposals were likely to be unacceptable to Members. For this reason the Portfolio Holder supported a preference for one of the options in the Medium Term Financial Strategy to provide for a more realistic level of savings, together with all General Fund capital expenditure being financed from capital receipts. It was noted that Members had already indicated that it would be acceptable to use capital receipts for the capital expenditure, subject to a future report by the Housing and Environmental Services Director on the consequential impact on the Housing service.

A request for a briefing between the next Cabinet and Council for Members was made by the Portfolio Holder. RTS and GJH to decide on a suitable date. **GJH to action.**

8. REVENUE COLLECTION STATISTICS AT 31 AUGUST 2004

- 8.1 The Portfolio Holder, having noted the Revenue Collection Statistics as at 31st August 2004, requested that for future statistics, a 'Last Month' column be included in the Miscellaneous Income section. It was noted that the Assistant Director (Revenues) had already been requested to provide this information.

9. CPA INSPECTION OF BENEFITS - ACTION PLAN

9.1 The results of a recent Benefit Fraud Inspectorate inspection carried out as part of the Council's CPA inspection and the proposed action plan outlining the resources required in order to bring the Council's benefits service up to 'standard' by 31st March 2008 was considered and the following issues raised:

- The additional resources required had been included in the CIPs process
- Two additional staff may be required
- Known deficiencies must be addressed
- Concern was expressed about the number of standards to be addressed relating to Counter Fraud and Strategic Management

9.2 In conclusion, the Portfolio Holder supported the report and would recommend to Cabinet that it endorsed the action plan accompanying the report with the associated resource implications being included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for consideration along with other competing bids.

10. ANNUAL INSURANCE RENEWAL

10.1 The Portfolio Holder noted the information provided in the agenda.

11. STATISTICS RELATING TO NUMBER OF CALLERS AT THE CAMBRIDGE OFFICE

11.1 The statistics relating to the number of callers at the Cambridge office were tabled at the meeting. It was noted that average number of customers using the office had shown a gradual decline from 173 in the first week to 85 customers during the latter period. It was noted that the video conferencing unit, presently situated in the main office area was rarely used and it was agreed that it would be preferable if this was relocated into an interview room. However these facilities may not be available until after a refurbishment of Mandela House has been completed.

11.2 The Portfolio Holder noted the information provided and requested a statistical update at the end of April 2005. **Finance Project Officer to action**

12. AUDIT OF FINAL ACCOUNTS 2003/04 - ORAL REPORT

12.1 GJH informed the meeting that no significant items had arisen from the audit of the Final Accounts 2003/04. The auditors were proposing an amendment to the 'Statement of Internal Control', to make reference to the previous history of underspending and the managerial action taken to address this. On the Pension Fund part of the accounts, an error had occurred in apportioning income between the balance brought forward and receipts during the year. These minor changes to the Audit would not however require re-approval of the Accounts.

13. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT FOR PERIOD ENDED 31ST AUGUST 2004

13.1 The statistics relating to budget monitoring were tabled at the meeting. The contents were noted and the Portfolio Holder requested that the information be provided quarterly.

14. ACCOMMODATION

14.1 JSB reported that he had had an e-mail from Councillor Mark Howell concerning a

number of issues related mainly to use of equipment in the Council Chamber which had since been addressed.

- 14.2 Rainfall noise on roof – the contract for the building made provision that in the event of noise levels during periods of heavy rainfall were found to be unacceptable, the developers would install a noise suppressant free of charge. As it was apparent that there was a noise nuisance, the problem would be rectified.
- 14.3 Toilets – all problems had now been rectified. It was however subsequently noted that the loo roll holder in the gents ground floor toilet was not fixed to the wall.
- 14.4 External Louvres – Removal of the louvres had been considered and Management Team had noted that to remove the louvres would require Building Regulation approval. However JSB was concerned to ensure that the builders could not use any such change as a reason for the building not meeting its design temperatures. For this reason the louvers would not be removed until the first year had elapsed and then only with the understanding of the effect on energy consumption.

15. FORWARD PROGRAMME - OCTOBER 2004-JANUARY 2005

- 15.1 The contents of the Forward Programme were noted.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Vending Machines

- 16.1 GJH reported that the cost of providing free vend, estimated on the current use, would be £12,500 more than the previous trolley service and had not been budgeted for. A saving could be made of approximately £4,000 if the service was free on only two occasions during the day, this was being offered for consideration as part of the savings targets in the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Audit of Storage Cupboards

- 16.2 An audit had been conducted around the building to ascertain whether all storage cupboards were in use. A total of 8 cupboards were not required; 2 would be retained and the possible return of 6 discussed with the suppliers.

17. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- 17.1 It was agreed that the next meeting, due to be held on 26th October would commence at 9am and the following meeting would be held on 23rd November 2004 at 9.30am.

The Meeting ended at 4.30 p.m.

**SPECIAL MEETING OF SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT
AREA JOINT COMMITTEE – 8TH NOVEMBER 2004**

I am writing to give you advance notice of the items, listed on the draft agenda attached, which are likely to be considered at the special meeting of the South Cambridgeshire Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee at **2.30p.m. on Monday, 8th November 2004 in the Ground Floor Meeting Room, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne**. Local Members are welcome to attend and speak on matters concerning their electoral division/ward/parish. *(Clerks to Parish Councils please note that the agenda will be available on the County Council's Internet at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk from Friday 29 October).*

If you wish to discuss any item in detail before the meeting, could you please contact the appropriate officer as indicated.

Please note that the agenda is not final and there may be changes before it is despatched on 28 October.

**SPECIAL MEETING OF SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE
ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT AREA JOINT COMMITTEE**

**Monday, 8th November 2004
2.30 p.m.**

**Ground Floor Meeting Room, South Cambridgeshire Hall,
Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne**

Resources Directorate
Director: Mike Parsons
Shire Hall, Castle Hill,
Cambridge, CB3 0AP

Draft Agenda

1. Northern Fringe Transport Infrastructure
Alistair Frost
01480-375663
alistair.frost@cambridgeshire.gov.uk
2. The Development of the National Cycle Network in
Cambridge City
Patrick Joyce
01223 716025
patrick.joyce@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Members of the Committee:

County Councillors:

T J Bear, J E Coston, P D Gooden, S F Johnstone and J E Reynolds

District Councillors:

D Bard, J D Batchelor, S G M Kindersley, D S K Spink and R Summerfield

CALC Councillors

G Everson and M Williamson

The Councils are committed to open government and the public are welcome to attend this meeting. For more information about this meeting, including access arrangements and facilities for people with disabilities, please contact Michelle Rowe at the County Council's Democratic Services Division on Cambridge (01223) 717293 or by email at michelle.rowe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk