

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee held on  
Thursday, 9 July 2015 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Sue Ellington – Chairman  
Councillor Charles Nightingale – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: David Bard  
Douglas de Lacey  
Raymond Matthews  
Bridget Smith

Simon Edwards  
Sebastian Kindersley  
Deborah Roberts  
Bunty Waters

Officers: Graham Watts  
Andrew Francis  
Fiona McMillan  
Gemma Barron

Democratic Services Team Leader  
Electoral Services Manager  
Legal & Democratic Services Manager and  
Monitoring Officer  
Sustainable Communities & Partnerships  
Manager

Advisors: Gillian Holmes  
Deputy Independent Person

Councillors Kevin Cuffley, Lynda Harford and David McCraith were in attendance, by invitation.

### **1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nigel Cathcart, James Hockney and Ray Manning. Councillor Douglas de Lacey attended the meeting as a substitute for Councillor Nigel Cathcart.

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

Councillor Sebastian Kindersley declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 4 as he chaired the working group at Cambridgeshire County Council regarding its boundary review. He also declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 5 in respect of Trumpington Meadows as he was a County Councillor for the Gamlingay Division.

### **3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 9 July 2015 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND ELECTORAL REVIEW - CONSULTING ON "ALL-OUT" ELECTIONS AND COUNCIL SIZE**

A report was considered which provided the Civic Affairs Committee, in response to confirmation of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's electoral review into South Cambridgeshire, with an opportunity to:

- consider whether it would like the Council to consult on a potential move to 'all-out' elections, where whole Council elections would be held every four years instead of the current system of elections by thirds;
- consider the Council's approach to submitting a preferred Council size to the Commission.

### ***'All-out' elections or elections by thirds***

The Committee was invited to consider whether the Council should enter into consultation on this issue. A suggested approach for a consultation exercise was set out in the report, which included Parish Councils, District Councillors, County Councillors, Members of Parliament and the Youth Council as consultees.

The following points were noted during discussion:

- it was important that the Council consulted on this matter and the consultation exercise should proceed as soon as possible;
- concerns were noted at the proposed timescale for a consultation exercise as it was likely to miss a significant number of Parish Council meetings. It was noted that the consultation could be extended to 18 September 2015 in order that the results could be reported to a meeting of the Council in October, which should give Parish Councils sufficient time to consider the consultation and provide a response;
- the consultation should be accompanied by sufficient briefing material to make it clear what the different types of election would mean for the electorate;
- an informal working group should be established to consider the best way of consulting on this issue.

The Civic Affairs Committee **AGREED** that a consultation exercise, as outlined at paragraph 25(a) of the report, commences on a proposal to move to a scheme of 'all-out' elections, with such elections to take place in May 2018 and every four years thereafter.

### ***Council size***

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England had published guidance to assist in submitting a proposal on Council size, which included three key areas that must be considered. The Council had been invited, as part of the preliminary stages of the review, to submit an evidence backed view on Council sizes. It was suggested that a questionnaire be sent to all Members of the Council, based on the questions set out in paragraph 16 of the report.

During discussion it was agreed that the informal working group should also consider this issue, following the above approach but also considering the forecast electorate for South Cambridgeshire in 2021.

The Civic Affairs Committee **AGREED** that an informal working group be established to consider submitting an evidence backed view on Council size based on:

- the results of a survey to all Members of the Council based on the questions set out in paragraph 16 of the report;
- the forecast electorate figures for South Cambridgeshire in 2021.

## **5. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS UPDATE - VERBAL REPORT**

Gemma Barron, Partnerships and Sustainable Communities Manager, provided the Committee with verbal updates on the following Community Governance Reviews:

### **Trumpington Meadows**

It had been previously agreed by this Committee that a formal Community Governance Review would commence once a reserved matters application for the part of Trumpington Meadows wholly within South Cambridgeshire had been registered. It was noted that the reserved matters application had been received, so a terms of reference for a Community Governance Review would be considered at the next meeting.

### **Darwin Green**

Ongoing informal discussions were taking place and work would continue with the respective Parish Councils.

### **Northstowe**

The Committee had previously agreed to the establishment of a Town Council and that this would be reviewed in 2016. A report would therefore be submitted to the Committee on this issue in due course.

### **Cambourne West**

The Chairman and Clerk of Cambourne Parish Council had written to the District Council on 30 June 2015 to request a Community Governance Review, in view of the fact that the proposed site for Cambourne West was within the boundary of Caxton. The Council had not yet formally engaged with Caxton Parish Council would be doing so in response to the letter received, with an update report being submitted back to this Committee in due course.

The updates were **NOTED**.

## **6. UPDATE ON CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS**

Fiona McMillan, Legal and Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer, presented a report which updated the Civic Affairs Committee on complaints cases regarding alleged breaches of the Code of Conduct.

The report was **NOTED**.

## **7. MATTERS OF TOPICAL INTEREST**

Fiona McMillan, Legal and Democratic Services Manager and Monitoring Officer, provided the Civic Affairs Committee with information on a case thought to be the first whereby a Councillor had been found guilty of an offence under the pecuniary interest provisions of the Localism Act 2011.

Councillor Sue Ellington, Chairman, reported her intention to have an item on the agenda to review the Council's Standing Orders at the next meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee.

## **8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting would be confirmed in due course.

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**The Meeting ended at 3.15 p.m.**

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