

## **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee held on  
Thursday, 12 November 2015 at 10.00 a.m.

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

Councillors: David Bard  
Simon Crocker  
Sebastian Kindersley  
Raymond Matthews  
Bridget Smith

Nigel Cathcart  
Kevin Cuffley  
Ray Manning  
Deborah Roberts  
Bunty Waters

Officers: Gemma Barron  
Andrew Francis  
Fiona McMillan  
Steve Rayment  
Graham Watts

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

Advisors: Gillian Holmes  
Deputy Independent Person

Councillor Grenville Chamberlain was in attendance, by invitation.

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

The Chairman took this opportunity to welcome Councillor Simon Crocker to his first meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee.

An apology for absence had been received from Councillor Simon Edwards. Councillor Kevin Cuffley had been appointed as Councillor Edwards' substitute for this meeting.

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

Councillor Simon Crocker declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 6 as he was the Chairman of Cambourne Parish Council.

Councillor Sebastian Kindersley declared a non-pecuniary interest in item 6 as he was the Cambridgeshire County Councillor for the Gamlingay electoral division, which included Haslingfield.

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

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 24 September 2015 were confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

### **4. FILMING AT PUBLIC MEETINGS**

The Civic Affairs Committee considered a report which provided Members with an overview of the technical options available to facilitate the filming or recording of the Council's public meetings. Options included:

- contracting a third party supplier and that webcasting be introduced for some or all of the Council's public meetings, so that the authority could film and stream its proceedings live on its website;
- internally filming or recording some or all of the Council's public meetings, so that the video and audio feed could be relayed to other parts of the building as an overflow arrangement in circumstances whereby the public gallery could not accommodate the number of people wishing to attend;
- internally filming some or all of the Council's public meetings and providing a link to the footage on its website after the meeting had been held, with the footage not being live. This option could also provide a video or audio broadcast relayed to other parts of the building to facilitate an overflow arrangement;
- not installing, contracting or providing any specific facility or system for the filming or recording of the Council's public meetings.

The following points were made by Members during discussion:

- the public now had the right to film meetings themselves, so the Council should retain its existing arrangements. Members of the public did already film meetings, with the Greater Cambridge City Deal Executive Board and Joint Assembly cited as examples;
- it would be difficult for the Council to choose which meetings it decided to film should any arrangements to facilitate this be put in place;
- it was difficult to justify the additional costs and officer time that would be required to introduce the recording or filming of meetings;
- the public appetite for watching Council meetings online was difficult to determine. A Member had searched on YouTube for a recent public meeting from another authority which had only received 50 'hits'. With such low viewing figures it would be difficult to justify the capital costs required;
- it was a matter of time before local authorities would be made to film their meetings, so the Council should introduce filming or recording at the earliest opportunity;
- a recent meeting of the Cambourne Police Panel was put forward as an example where filming took place and was live-streamed. If Police Panels could ensure that their meetings were recorded or filmed then the District Council should make the same provision;
- the Council should not rely on members of the public turning up to meetings to film them and should make its own arrangements;
- it would be preferable for the Council to have an official recording of meetings to signpost people to, rather than relying on a version that had been filmed from another third party. A problem with other people filming meetings and the Council not having its own version was that approach was that the external person would have full editorial control. The third option set out in the report was therefore a reasonable compromise;
- the Council should be open and transparent and the recording or filming of its meetings was a way of demonstrating this;
- some people in the district struggled to physically attend meetings and would welcome the opportunity to observe meetings online.

Councillor Deborah Roberts proposed option four set out in the report, to maintain the existing arrangement of not installing, contracting or providing any specific facility or system for the Council to itself record its public meetings. Councillor Ray Manning seconded the proposal.

Voting on the proposal, with 9 votes in favour and 2 votes against, the Civic Affairs Committee supported option four, as set out in the report, and **AGREED** to maintain the existing arrangement of not installing, contracting or providing any specific facility or system for the Council to itself record its public meetings.

Councillors Sebastian Kindersley and Bridget Smith requested that their votes against the proposal be recorded in the minutes.

## **5. REVIEW OF COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS**

Consideration was given to a report which suggested those areas within the Council's Standing Orders that could be reviewed to aid more effective decision-making and governance, further to a request by the Chairman of the Council to review Standing Orders.

Discussion ensued on the respective Standing Orders relating to Notices of Motion, consideration of the Council's annual budget, questions by Members, the cancellation of meetings and the quorum for the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and Partnerships Review Committee, as set out in paragraphs 8 to 21 of the report. In debating each area of Standing Orders identified in the report for potential review, the Committee agreed for a further report to be submitted to the Civic Affairs Committee with suggested amendments to the wording of those Standing Orders set out in paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 16, 18, 20 and 21 of the report. The report would include an additional Standing Order under the 'questions by Members' heading to mirror the system used by Cambridgeshire County Council whereby Members were not required to provide notice of questions and could ask questions at the meeting without notice during a prescribed period of time. It was proposed that this would be in addition to the practice of providing notice of questions, for a trial period of six months.

The Civic Affairs Committee **AGREED** for a report to be submitted to its next meeting setting out proposed changes to the Council's Standing Orders, reflecting suggested areas for review set out in paragraphs 11, 12, 13, 16, 18, 20 and 21 of the report in respect of Notices of Motion, considering the Council's annual budget, questions by Members, the cancellation of meetings and the quorum for the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and Partnerships Review Committee.

## **6. REVIEW OF COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEWS AND REVIEW OF HASLINGFIELD PARISH**

The Civic Affairs Committee considered a report which updated Members with progress regarding Community Governance Reviews in the district.

The following points were noted during discussion for each review:

### **Cambourne West**

Since the last meeting of the Committee on 9 July 2015, where it was reported that a letter had been received from Cambourne Parish Council to request a Community Governance Review, Members noted that Caxton Parish Council had now been contacted by Cambourne Parish Council. The contents of the letter from Caxton Parish Council were included within the report.

Councillor Simon Crocker made the point that Cambourne Parish Council had requested a Community Governance Review based on planning applications being considered at this moment in time and not the proposed development as it appeared in the Local

Development Plan, which he felt was contrary to what Caxton Parish Council had referred to in the letter. Officers agreed to arrange a meeting with representatives from both Parish Councils to confirm their respective positions with regard to the Community Governance Review.

### **Darwin Green 2 and 3 and North West Cambridge**

At the previous meeting of the Committee it was agreed to consider North West Cambridge alongside Darwin Green 2 and 3. Members were informed that preliminary discussions with a local Councillor regarding governance at North West Cambridge had recently been held. No further discussions in relation to Darwin Green 2 and 3 had taken place since the last meeting.

### **Northstowe**

Members noted that a further report on Northstowe would be submitted to the Civic Affairs Committee in due course.

### **Trumpington Meadows**

As previously agreed by the Civic Affairs Committee, draft terms of reference had been prepared for a Community Governance Review for the parish of Haslingfield, which set out the matters on which such a review could focus. A copy of this document was attached to the report at Appendix A. Forecast housing trajectory for the South Cambridgeshire part of the Trumpington Meadows development in terms of estimated dwelling completion between 2015 and 2021 was set out in the report.

Depending on the timing of the review, it was noted that the Parish Council could be in a position where it had elections in 2016, 2017 and 2018. The point was made, however, that electors would be voting at the all-out County and District Council elections scheduled to take place in 2017 and 2018, respectively, in any case.

Members agreed that people in this community should be given the opportunity to build and develop their own communities and were of the view that the Community Governance Review should commence as soon as possible.

The Civic Affairs Committee:

- (a) **AGREED** to commence a Community Governance Review of the parish of Haslingfield based on the terms of reference set out in Appendix A of the report, taking into consideration the timing of such a review.
- (b) **NOTED** the current status of each Community Governance Review as outlined in the report.

## **7. REVIEW OF ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS - COUNCIL'S APPROACH TO MAKING A WARDING PROPOSAL**

The Civic Affairs Committee considered a report which updated Members on the next steps in the Council's electoral review.

Councillor Alex Riley, the Council's Boundary Review Member Champion, informed the Committee that he was determined to come up with the best possible warding arrangement for South Cambridgeshire and sought support of the following principles that he intended to follow:

- electoral wards to be single-Member wards, where possible and practical;
- small parishes not to form part of an electoral ward with large parishes, where possible and practical.

He emphasised that his role as Boundary Review Member Champion would be politically neutral and that politics would not feature at all as part of his consideration of the district's warding arrangements, reporting that he had already been working very closely with Members of the opposition. Councillor Riley reminded Members that the decision on Council size for South Cambridgeshire District Council had not yet been announced by the Boundary Commission and that a decision was expected later this month.

Members thanked Councillor Riley for the significant work he had already undertaken on the electoral review.

The Civic Affairs Committee:

- (a) **AGREED** that the Boundary Review Member Champion be asked to draw up a scheme for subsequent consideration by the Civic Affairs Committee and Council, in liaison with representatives of all political groups and the Elections Manager.
- (b) **SUPPORTED** the following principles in drawing up a scheme:
  - electoral wards to be single-Member wards, where possible and practical;
  - small parishes not to form part of an electoral ward with large parishes, where possible and practical.

## 8. UPDATE ON CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

The Civic Affairs Committee **NOTED** the progress of any outstanding complaints and the conclusion of cases resolved since the last meeting.

## 9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was **AGREED** that the next meeting of the Civic Affairs Committee would be held on 12 January 2016 at 2pm.

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**The Meeting ended at 11.38 a.m.**

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