



EAST
CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4

Minutes of a meeting of the Personnel and Corporate Services Committee held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Thursday 22 November 2012 at 4.30pm

PRESENT

Councillor James Palmer (Chairman)
Councillor Allen Alderson (as Substitute for Councillor Charles Roberts)
Councillor Will Burton
Councillor Colin Fordham (as Substitute for Councillor John Palmer)
Councillor Jeremy Friend-Smith
Councillor Lindsey Harris (as Substitute for Councillor Pauline Wilson)
Councillor Richard Hobbs
Councillor Tom Hunt
Councillor Joshua Schumann
Councillor Sue Willows

IN ATTENDANCE

Kathy Batey – Head of HR & Facilities Management
Allison Conder – Principal Community & Leisure Services Officer
Ann Hughes – Senior Accountancy Assistant
Andrew Killington – Deputy Chief Executive
Alistair McKie - Sport & Health Development Officer
Adrian Scaites-Stokes – Democratic Services Officer
Jeanette Thompson – Head of Legal and Democratic Services

15. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions received.

16. APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillors Sue Austen, John Palmer, Charles Roberts and Pauline Wilson.

Councillor Allen Alderson substituted for Councillor Roberts for this meeting.
Councillor Colin Fordham substituted for Councillor John Palmer for this meeting.

Councillor Lindsey Harris substituted for Councillor Wilson for this meeting.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of Interest were received.

18. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the Personnel and Corporate Services Committee meeting held on the 20 September 2012 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

19. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made the following announcement:

- The legal process was progressing relating to Wicken Fen toilets and they would be transferred to the National Trust shortly.

Councillor Sue Willows joined the meeting at this point, 4:32pm.

20. **MID-YEAR PERFORMANCE AGAINST AGREED KEY COMMITTEE INDICATORS**

The Committee considered a report, reference M162, previously circulated, which presented performance against key committee indicators.

The Deputy Chief Executive reminded the Committee that it had agreed its key indicators at its last meeting and the report showed how its services had performed over the year. The results were quite pleasing with more or less all indicators being on target.

It was resolved:

That the 2012/13 mid-year performance against key committee indicators be noted.

21. **REVIEW OF COUNCIL PETITIONS SCHEME**

The Committee considered a report, reference M163, previously circulated, which reviewed the Council's Petitions Scheme.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services advised the Committee that the current scheme had been reviewed with the view of achieving a level of engagement with the public without being overrun with petitions. The current regime had abolished the set petition scheme, so the Committee needed to consider whether its scheme worked. It could retain the current scheme and just review the signature limits. The 100 signatures limit for petitions to be presented to committees was too high for communities as it effectively exclude smaller communities, making it difficult for them to raise issues. This could be reduced to 50 local people or the Committee could decide to revert to the old petitions scheme.

Councillor James Palmer reminded Members that if they became aware of any issue it was part of their remit a Ward Councillors to put those issues forward.

Councillor Colin Fordham joined the meeting at this point, 4:44pm.

Councillor Tom Hunt equated the number of signatures requiring a parliamentary debate to that required by Council. Therefore he would like to see the Council's limit reduced from 2000 to 1000. The 100 signature limit for committees should be kept but any petition below that figure should be subject to a professional judgement as to whether it should be taken forward or not.

Councillor Richard Hobbs was content with the 2000 signature limit for petitions to go to Council but thought the other 100 signature limit was too high. If Councillors wanted to hear what was going on in small communities then this figure should be reduced to 50.

Councillor Joshua Schumann supported the reduction to 50, as the 100 limit might discourage engagement and would help people be actively involved.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services clarified that the Committee wanted to retain the current scheme, but delete the text as indicated on page 1 of Appendix A and reduce the signatures limit for committees to 50. On being put to the vote this was agreed.

It was resolved:

That the current petition scheme be continued with the following amendments:

- the e-petitions scheme to be excluded;
- deletions on page 1 (as indicated in Appendix A) be agreed;
- the number of petition signatures required for a petition to be presented to a committee be reduced to 50.

Councillor Allen Alderson joined the meeting at this point, 4:49pm.

22. **HR, IIP & EQUALITIES UPDATE INCLUDING REVISED SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME 2012-2015**

The Committee considered a report, reference M1643, previously circulated, which provided key management information for the period 1 September to 31 October 2012.

The Head of Human Resources and Facilities Management advised the Committee that the report provided details of the staff appointments, transfers and leavers for the period 1st September to 31st October 2012, together with an update on Investors In People (IIP) and Equalities work. Appendix 1 showed the staff changes with 6 staff leaving, 4 of which were voluntarily and 2 due to the end of their fixed term contracts. There was no change in the IIP

update since the last committee meeting, although the results of the Staff Survey were currently being analysed and the results would be presented to Management Team.

The publication of a Single Equality Scheme was a statutory requirement and the document must be reviewed and updated every three years to reflect changes in legislation and progress against equalities action plan. The updated version included some new statutory objectives for the Council and a revised action plan covering the next three year period.

Councillor Tom Hunt revealed that the Government would be looking to reduce the need for local authorities looking at equality impact assessments, so the legal position would possibly change.

Councillor Allen Alderson was pleased with the replies from the exit questionnaires, as it appeared there was a lot of satisfaction with the Council.

It was resolved:

- (i) That the content of the information report be noted;
- (ii) That the Council's revised Single equality Scheme 2012-2015 be adopted with immediate effect.

23. **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2012/13**

The Committee considered a report, reference M165, previously circulated, updating on the Council's current financial position for 2012/13.

The Senior Accountancy Assistant advised the Committee that since the last report an underspend of £150,000 had been identified, meaning that overall there was an underspend of £174,000. The changes were detailed in the report and appendix.

Councillor Richard Hobbs was disappointed that the report only gave an update up until August and questioned why it was so far behind. It made it difficult for the Committee to oversee its budget if there was a time lag. The Senior Accountancy Assistant explained that the reports had to be produced early as they had to be run passed the budget holders for comment. Anything significant in the meantime would be reported.

It was resolved:

That it be noted that since the last report a projected underspend of £150,652 had been identified giving an overall underspend across the Committee's services of £174,991 against the original budget.

24. **PRESENTATION**

The Committee received a presentation on the Sport and Leisure function.

The Principal Community & Leisure Services Officer advised the Committee that the presentation gave an overview of the sports and leisure services. Its purpose was to enable residents to access high quality sports and leisure facilities. The key roles of the service were to deliver services relating to sport and physical activity, play, health and wellbeing, leisure and sports centres and the riverside.

Councillor Will Burton joined the meeting at this point, 5:03pm.

The Sport & Health Development Officer advised the Committee that key project work included partnership working, the Mature and Active Programme and providing technical advice to the district's leisure centres. It was hoped that the projects would continually improve and funding could be obtained to develop them.

The Principal Community & Leisure Services Officer informed the Committee that the new management had transformed the service for the Paradise Pool and the pool had also been refurbished. With regard the new leisure centre, work was proceeding and the results of market testing were awaited.

The main risks for future service delivery related to lack of external funding for services, particularly Play, the lifespan of the Paradise Pool and the tough market for the leisure centre due to the economic downturn.

The Sport & Health Development Officer further advised the Committee that the new targets for the service included the Summerdays programme, Youth Games, the new leisure centre, the development of the Mature and Active programme, a conference for sports clubs and coaches, and the sports pitches assessment for north Ely.

Councillor Joshua Schumann asked what the Play section included and who it was meant for. He was concerned that the term 'leisure' did not cover working with the arts. This is something that should be utilised more, rather than the service focussing on sport. The Principal Community & Leisure Services Officer explained that the programme was currently being refreshed and an audit was being undertaken to look for improvements. It was in three categories: for juniors, toddlers and infants.

Councillor Tom Hunt questioned whether Summerdays was for the hard-to-reach groups and how it was marketed. It was a successful scheme and was money well spent. Concern was expressed about helping isolated elderly people and wondered whether anything could be done. It was revealed that the Summerdays programme had involved around 50 youngsters from hard-to-reach groups. The idea was to engage with the youth and then provide coaching courses so they could develop. The County Council had an initiative to address the isolated people issue.

Councillor Allen Alderson queried whether the Diabetes Awareness programme worked with doctors surgeries. The Sport & Health Development

Officer acknowledged that the Council worked with the Wellbeing Partnership on this issue, and referrals were made to doctor's surgeries.

Councillor Richard Hobbs noted that there was a small team doing a huge amount of work. Looking forward, how much partnership working would be needed for the leisure village? The Principal Community & Leisure Services Officer stated that the Council would need technical expertise to help deliver the leisure centre.

It was resolved:

That the report be noted.

25. **LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY 2013**

The Committee considered a report, reference M166, previously circulated, updating on the issue of Local government Pay 2013.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised the Committee that the trade unions had put forward a pay claim and this was now in the process of being considered. This Council contributed to those negotiations but only as a consultee. As usual the unions had asked for a substantial increase. The employers' side of the National Joint Council felt it was probably appropriate to make a pay award in 2013. In light of this, the Head of Finance had made plans for an increase in the budget for this.

Councillor Lindsey Harris joined the meeting at this point, 5:29pm.

It was expected that there would be around a 1% increase in salaries, but 1½% had been budgeted for.

Councillor Allen Alderson would be quite disappointed if there were no award. People's costs had risen and some hardship was being faced. Last year bosses nationally had their salaries increased by 27% so maybe 1½% for the people at the bottom would help.

Councillor James Palmer thought the Council should look after its staff and if it could afford a small award then it should give it. People should be paid a fair rate. If it were decided to increase pay for the lowest paid workers then this should be decided on individual views rather than political views.

Councillor Richard Hobbs reminded the Committee that the staff had not had a pay increase for 4 years. The Council should expect an increase this year and if we could afford it then it will have to be managed.

Councillor Will Burton thought that any announcement on pay had to be handled carefully. Councillor Tom Hunt picked this point up and said that the public perception was important, so maybe there should not be an across-the-board increase.

Councillor Richard Hobbs left the meeting at this point, 5:37pm.

It was resolved:

That the report be noted.

26. **ANGLIA REVENUES AND BENEFITS PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE**

The Committee received the minutes of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Joint Committee meeting of 13 September 2012.

27. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS & PUBLIC**

It was resolved:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the remaining agenda item no. 14 because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Categories 1 - 3 of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

28. **HOUSING SERVICE**

The Committee considered an exempt report, reference M167, previously circulated, informing about urgent action taken by the Chief executive and Deputy Chief Executive in respect of the Housing Service.

The Deputy Chief Executive advised the Committee of the background to the issue and the actions taken.

It was resolved:

That the report be noted.

The meeting closed at 6:00pm.