



Eastern Branch Meeting

**Date – Friday 23 February 2007,
10.30am to 1.00pm (approx) – Coffee from 10.15am
Venue – Mid Suffolk District Council Offices, Needham Market,
Suffolk, hosted by Mid Suffolk District Council**

Please note that whilst this is not a joint meeting with the regional branch of Solicitors in Local Government, SLG members are invited to attend for item 2 (which will attract CPD time) and they are welcome to remain for the remainder of the meeting should they wish to do so.

Agenda

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Invited Guest

Does your complaints system meet the Local Government Ombudsman's "16 essential qualities of a good complaints system"? Suffolk County Council thinks that their new web-based system does. After a successful pilot scheme, SCC is implementing a single system for monitoring and responding to complaints, which meets the LGO's exacting standards.

The County Council's Monitoring Officer (and Eastern Branch Treasurer), Eric Whitfield, and Chris Pyburn from Customer Services Direct, the Joint Venture Company working with the County Council and Mid Suffolk District Council will be sharing their experiences with you.

3. Branch Minutes and Matters Arising

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 13 October 2006 (Previously circulated – further electronic copy attached)

4. Visit of the President of ACSeS – Meic Sullivan-Gould

5. Council Meeting – 19 January

To consider the Agenda for the Council meeting (electronic copy attached) and to receive reports on decisions taken. Sue Lyons, our Vice-Chairman, attended the Council meeting and she has referred two issues that were referred to branches for discussion and comment. These are:

1. The Strategy and Business Plan (Agenda Item 7 - Tony Kilner – copy attached) It was agreed that the Business Plan & Strategy be

circulated to members for consultation and discussion at Branch meetings with a view to the Council adopting it at the next meeting;

2. Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Bill (Agenda Item 8 – copy attached). Branch Secretaries were requested to ask their members if there is anybody interested in becoming involved with providing feedback on the Bill. Susan Tovey is the lead officer on the Council. Support is particularly needed on issues concerning governance, bye-laws and Parishes. This was promoted as a good opportunity for members to become involved with the DCLG in shaping and developing legislation, which affects Local Government. The President is involved and will no doubt wish to add more at the meeting.

6. Secretary's Report

(a) New Members

Mike White is the new Head of Legal and Democratic Services at Harlow District Council, and Tasnim Shawkat is the Assistant Director of Corporate Governance at Bedfordshire County Council. Eleanor Hoggart has moved from East Cambs to Boston District Council (and the East Midlands Branch)

(b) Meetings in 2007

Following receipt of the dates of the Council meetings in 2007, I consulted with our Chairman and we have fixed the dates for the remaining Eastern Branch meetings in 2007 as follows:

Friday 18 May – Cambridgeshire County Council have agreed to host;
Friday 13 July – Mid-Beds District Council to host in their new offices,
Friday 9 November (Annual Meeting) – We need a volunteer to host.

It has been suggested that for the meeting in Cambridge we try to arrange for a speaker to deal with the implications that the impending Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act will have for local authorities. Members are requested to consider possible topics/speakers for the July and November meetings. I have received requests from Microsoft, Rockpools and AD-ESSE Consulting. I will circulate details at the meeting.

7. Treasurer's Report

8. County Meeting Reports

9. Land Charges

10. Corporate Governance

11. CPD

12. Any Other Business