

**Item No 2a on Agenda**

**MINUTES OF THE STAFFORDSHIRE CONNECTS PARTNERSHIP  
JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17 JUNE 2011  
AT MARMION HOUSE, TAMWORTH**

Present:

**East Staffordshire Borough Council**

Mr. S. Khan

**Lichfield District Council**

Mrs. R. Booth  
Cllr. C. Greatorex (Chairman)

**Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough  
Council**

Mr. K. Turner

**South Staffordshire District Council**

Mrs. F. Cartwright  
Mr. S. Winterflood

**Stafford Borough Council**

Mr. N. Jones  
Cllr. K.S. Williamson

**Staffordshire County Council**

Mr. A. Edwards  
Mr. S. Kristel  
Mrs. H. Riley

**Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Authority**

Cllr. R. Reade

**Staffordshire Moorlands District  
Council**

Cllr T.D. Hall

**Stoke-on-Trent City Council**

Mr. S. Sankey

**Tamworth Borough Council**

Mrs. A. Goodwin  
Cllr. Mrs. M.E. Oates

**Also in Attendance:**

Mr. A. O'Brien – Staffordshire Leaders' and Chief Executives' Group  
Mr. P. Haywood – Technical Manager Staffordshire Connects Partnership  
Mr. A. Street – Director Staffordshire Connects Partnership

**Apologies:** Cllr. H. Brunt (Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association); Cllr. D. Dixon (Cannock Chase District Council); Cllr. B. Edwards (South Staffordshire District Council); Mrs. V. Evans (Staffordshire Parish Councils' Association); Cllr. A. Howells (Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council); Mr. D. Lerner (Staffordshire Moorlands District Council); Cllr. I. Parry (Staffordshire County Council); Cllr. B. Peters (East Staffordshire Borough Council); Cllr. P. Shotton (Stoke-on-Trent City Council); Mrs. N. Swan (Cannock Chase District Council).

## **PART ONE**

### **Appointment of Chairman**

1. On the invitation of nominations for the office of Chairman, Cllr. C. Greatorex (Lichfield District Council) was proposed and seconded.

2. **RESOLVED** – (a) That Cllr. C. Greatorex (Lichfield District Council) be appointed Chairman of the Joint Committee for the period up to the next Annual Meeting (June 2012).

(b) That the Joint Committee's thanks be extended to the previous Chairman, Cllr. B. Edwards (South Staffordshire District Council), for his work during his term of office.

### **Appointment of Vice-Chairman**

3. On the invitation of nominations for the office of Vice-Chairman, Cllr. Mrs. M.E. Oates (Tamworth Borough Council) was proposed and seconded.

4. **RESOLVED** – That Cllr. Mrs. M.E. Oates (Tamworth Borough Council) be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee for the period up to the next Annual Meeting (June 2012).

### **Minutes of the Staffordshire Connects Partnership Joint Committee Meeting held on 18 March 2011**

5. **RESOLVED** – That, subject to the following amendments, the minutes of the meeting of the Staffordshire Connects Partnership Joint Committee held on 8 March 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman:-

- (i) Page 3 paragraph 2 - delete "Chief Executives' projects" and insert "Leaders' and Chief Executives' projects";
- (ii) Page 8 paragraph 2 – delete "2011" and insert "2010".

### **Minutes of the Staffordshire Connects Partnership Strategic Advisory Board Meeting held on 2 June 2011 (Schedule 1)**

6. **RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the Staffordshire Connects Partnership Strategic Advisory Board meeting held on 2 June 2011 be noted.

## Use of CRM System in Service Delivery

7. The Joint Committee received an oral report and Powerpoint presentation from Mr. P. Haywood Partnership Technical Manager on the benefits of the current shared Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

At their meeting on 17 December 2011 the Joint Committee were notified of Tamworth and Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Councils' notice to terminate their participation in the Oracle CRM contract between Capula Limited and the County Council. In response to this development it was agreed that the Joint Committee should learn more about the benefits of the system to partners in the hope that those authorities which had given notice might choose to re-join at some point in the future.

The CRM system had first come into use across the partnership in 2004 and was now in place at all Staffordshire Authorities. The original vision was to enable seamless and joined-up services across all partners with the potential that other public bodies might eventually join. The system provided a means of dealing with customer interactions not only by staff at customer service centres, one stop shops etc but also by residents themselves through self service. In addition it provided a shared management system to support service areas such as environmental health, trading standards and waste management.

Members were given a summary of three CRM projects which had been implemented by partners and noted the significant savings made to date, including:-

Project	Lead Authority	Savings
Food hygiene, health and safety and pollution control.	East Staffordshire Borough Council	£30,000 direct cost savings plus on-going savings related to system licences and support.
Trading Standards	Staffordshire County Council and Lichfield District Council (Joint Public Protection project)	£24,000 direct cost savings projected during 2002-2012 plus ongoing savings related to system licences and system support.
Corporate Feedback	Staffordshire County Council	£35,000 direct costs plus ongoing savings relating to system licences and system support.

In addition, they were given details of various positive developments currently underway which would enhance the functionality of the system and provide a better, more efficient service to customers including (i) integration with Geographic Information System applications to provide a spatial representation ("dots on maps") of customer activity and service requests across the County relating to eg notification of defective street lights, reporting graffiti problems etc; (ii) implementation of alerts to notify staff of key pieces of information when customer records were accessed; (iii) linking to Short Message Service (SMS) text messaging to notify customers of updates or when their enquiries had been resolved; (iv) managing and integrating processes so that information about deaths were shared throughout partner organisations (Tell us Once Project).

During the discussion which ensued the Executive Director commented that the projects highlighted in the presentation illustrated clearly how the CRM system could be used by authorities to release significant savings. The ability to make such savings was becoming increasingly important given the current financial climate within the public sector. It was also important for Authorities to appreciate that by participating in the joint CRM project they not only had access to a powerful IT tool enabling them to streamline their own processes but also an effective means of sharing information with partners and gaining greater customer insight.

In response to requests from Members, the Director undertook to provide them with an indication of the on-going savings referred to above which were being released by individual projects.

8. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the presentation be noted.

(b) That the Joint Committee be provided with an indication of the on-going savings referred to in the presentation, at a future meeting.

### **Staffordshire Connects Projects Reports**

#### **(i) Public Protection** (Schedule 1)

9. The Joint Committee considered a report of Lichfield District Council's Director of Organisational Development, the Project Lead for the Connects' Public Protection Project setting out the progress which had been made to date.

The project vision was to support local businesses within Staffordshire in attaining higher levels of compliance with regulatory frameworks through improving the level of support, quality of information and service delivery processes. The project was structured into three key stages ie (i) Initiation; (ii) Common Business Information ((a) Analysis and design and (b) Decision to proceed and implementation planning) and; (iii) Implementation ((a) Introduction of solution to each partner and (b) Development of an Oracle LG 45 Customer Relationship Management (CRM) solution).

In presenting the report, the Director said that whilst the project initially involved four partners ie Staffordshire County Council, Lichfield District Council, South Staffordshire District Council and East Staffordshire Borough Council it was anticipated that there would eventually be solutions and opportunities available for wider roll-out to other partner authorities. The three stages referred to above were intended to run sequentially and stage 2a was now well underway with an analysis of current data used by District/Borough Environmental Health and County Trading Standards services having been completed. An assessment of the National and Local Land and Property Gazetteers was currently in progress in order to establish how this data might be engineered to provide meaningful assistance to Trading Standards.

In addition, future core business data had been identified for both Trading Standards and South Staffordshire District Council's Environmental Health service and a full data set for all Authorities was nearing completion. Confirmation that LG45 CRM was capable of replacing Trading Standards' current CIVICA Public Protection system had also been received.

10. **RESOLVED** – That the report be received and noted.

**(ii) Customer knowledge**  
(Schedule 2)

11. The Joint Committee considered a report of Tamworth Borough Council's Assistant Chief Executive, the project lead for the Customer Knowledge Project, setting out the progress which had been made to date.

The project had a single albeit far reaching objective of bringing together the many sources of insight and information to influence targets, service design and delivery and to achieve enhanced community outcomes. There were three aspects to this project ie (i) the investigation of discounts available to partners from purchasing customer profiling tools together; (ii) sharing best practice as to how partners undertook customer insight in relation to take-up campaigns for the 2011 Census and; (iii) identifying the needs and preferences of current and potential users of adult social care and health services.

Following the publication of the Invitation to Tender for the Customer Segmentation Toolset on 4 February 2011, four potential contractors submitted bids within the required timescale. An initial evaluation of the tenders took place and following further clarification from the two highest scoring suppliers, the contract was awarded to Experian. However, since that time, there had been delays in completing the necessary legal documentation and consideration was now being given as to whether the agreement with Experian should proceed. Members noted that if declared non-compliant, further work would also be required in order to appoint an alternative contractor, thereby resulting in considerable delays before individual projects reliant on the toolset could commence.

In response to concerns expressed by Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Head of Business Technology, the Assistant Director undertook to quantify the legal/administrative costs of both the options outlined above and report back to the Head as soon as possible.

12. **RESOLVED** – That the report be received and noted.

**Life Events**  
(Schedule 3)

13. The Joint Committee considered a report of South Staffordshire District Council's Director of Revenue and Customer Services, the project lead for the Life Events project setting out the progress which had been made to date.

The project had been initiated by the Government's 'Tell Us Once' programme which aimed to transform the ways in which people told both central and local government about changes in their circumstances. A key aim was that people should only have to give notification of a birth or death once then that information would be disseminated to all relevant agencies. The initiative would also help local authorities to meet a number of national indicators and service targets.

In addition, it was expected that successful implementation of the project would produce financial savings for authorities from (i) a reduction in the incidence of overpayment of benefits to deceased former residents; (ii) a reduction in postage costs from not having to request details of next of kin and; (iii) an improvement in back office procedures.

In presenting the report, the Director acknowledged the work which had been undertaken by the project champions in progressing this initiative. However, although the implementation phase was well advanced with no major issues emerging locally, the intended 'go live' date (16 June 2011) had been put on hold by the Government's Department of Work and Pensions owing to difficulties with the national IT system which had been designed to support the initiative. An announcement regarding a revised 'go live' date was expected on 21 June 2011 and a further meeting of the Project Board would be held to consider the way forward in the light of this announcement.

In the discussion which ensued Members expressed their great disappointment over the delay which had occurred particularly since the project had tangible benefits for vulnerable customers and partner authorities. However, they looked forward to the forthcoming announcement in the expectation that the difficulties with the IT system would be resolved without further protracted delay.

14. **RESOLVED** – That the report be received and noted.

### **Staffordshire Cares**

(Schedule 4)

15. The Joint Committee considered a report of East Staffordshire Borough Council's Head of Service Commissioning, the project lead for the Staffordshire Cares/Customer Access project, setting out the progress which had been made to date.

This was a two part project, the first part of which aimed to share the good/best practice which existed at individual District/Boroughs with regard to service areas including (i) Blue Badges; (ii) Appointeeships and; (iii) Disabled Facilities Grants, across Staffordshire. The second part aimed to ensure that partners had various arrangements in place which provided appropriate and improved access to information and advice enabling users of adult social care and health services to live independently.

Underpinning the initiative was a statement of shared access to "Staffordshire Cares" services which aimed to maximise potential benefits by making boundaries transparent, providing a multi-agency approach which was as joined up as possible.

In presenting the report, the Head said that a questionnaire had been circulated to all District and Borough Councils in Staffordshire in order to gain an understanding of the arrangements which already existed having regard to the service areas in question. To date three completed questionnaires had been returned indicating examples of good practice, the principles of which could be shared across other authorities. It was intended that a presentation on the findings would be made to the Partnership Strategic Advisory Board at a special meeting in early July 2011.

With regard to the questionnaires still outstanding, the expectation was that these would be returned to the project lead in the near future.

The Head then referred to a launch event being held in Lichfield District in support of the "Staffordshire Cares" initiative on the morning of the meeting.

16. **RESOLVED** – That the report be received and noted.

## **epayments** (Schedule 5)

17. The Joint Committee considered a report of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council's Executive Director, the project lead for the epayments project, setting out the progress which had been made to date.

The project aimed to procure a suitable replacement e-payments system for the five partner authorities who currently used the existing Civica system, with the option that the other authorities, not currently participating, could join at some point in the future.

In response to the publication of an Invitation to tender, three contractors submitted tenders for Lots 1 – epayments System and 2 – Merchant Acquirer Services ie Capita, Civica and COA. Following the appointment of tender scoring teams and agreement of a detailed scoring matrix, evaluation of the tenders commenced on 21 February 2011 with moderation being completed on 12 April 2011.

The Project Board met on 19 May 2011 and signed off the procurement evaluation process with Capita being the clear winner. All partner authorities were presented with detailed cost breakdowns provided by Capita across a range of partner take-ups and asked whether they would want to participate in the new system. At a further meeting of the Board on 26 May, the County Council, Newcastle-under-Lyme Borough Council, Stafford Borough Council, Cannock Chase District Council, Staffordshire Moorlands District Council and Lichfield District Council all confirmed their intention to participate.

Members noted the intention to formerly award Capita the contract for both Lots 1 and 2 following which the Company would be invited to commence implementation of the new system.

The Member representative of Staffordshire Moorlands District Council commented on the lengthy time it had taken from the original inception of the project to the appointment of a preferred contractor. There had been many delays in what should have been a relatively simple exercise and it was important that the Partnership learned lessons from this for the future. In addition, although it was anticipated that the new system would produce significant financial savings for Authorities, these would not take account of the considerable officer time involved in the procurement process over the previous three years.

In reply the Partnership Director acknowledged the comments which had been made and agreed that there was a need to ensure effective project management in the future. However, he was confident that the other projects now on-going would be delivered in a more-timely manner and looked to the Committee for their assistance in achieving this.

18. **RESOLVED** – That the report be received and noted.

## **CRM Replacement** (Schedule 6)

19. The Joint Committee considered a report of Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Head of Business Technology, the project lead for the CRM replacement project setting out the progress which had been made to date.

The project aimed to identify a replacement for the existing Partnership Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system. However, although it had originally been considered inappropriate to commence a procurement process at this time owing to the difficult economic climate, it had been decided to continue to examine the availability of suitable alternatives. These investigations subsequently revealed that various new CRM products were available whose cost could be contained within the Partnership's existing budget.

In presenting the report the Head informed Members that market testing of alternative products was now well advanced. Demonstrations of 'live' software had taken place and technical workshops held with a neighbouring Authority on the possibility of a collaborative project. The composition of a Project Board had been agreed between partners and consideration had been given to the resources which would be required to replace the existing system.

A 'Customer Access Strategy' questionnaire had been prepared and circulated to partners in order to gain an understanding of individual Authority's requirements and an initial draft of these requirements had now been collated. However, the security and technical specifications would be considered separately by the Security Forum, in due course.

In response to a request for clarification, the Head informed Members that the existing CRM contract expired in approximately two years time. However, consideration of alternative replacement products was required at this stage so that the chosen solution could be implemented in a timely manner. Also, there was an understanding that a phased approach would be required for the eventual roll-out having regard to individual partners' requirements.

The Chairman proposed that they receive a presentation setting out the key deliverables of this project to their next meeting together with a further presentation to a future meeting on best practice from other authorities nationwide, including possible areas for future development by the Partnership.

20. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That the Joint Committee receive a presentation to their next meeting setting out the key deliverables of the CRM project together with a further presentation to a future meeting on the best practice which can be gained from other authorities nationwide, including possible areas for future development by the Partnership.

### **Customer Relationship Management Replacement Project Budget** (Schedule 7)

21. The Joint Committee considered a report of Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Head of Business Technology regarding the use of the Partnership's reserves to provide an initial budget for the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) replacement project.

The project to replace the Partnership's current CRM system was underway and the Project Plan which had been approved by the Project Board highlighted the need for a dedicated Project Manager and resources for legal and other specialist advisory services. It was therefore proposed that £85,000 from Partnership reserves (currently standing at £253,001) be used to fund these items ie £60,000 for the Project Manager (up to the end on the current financial year) and £25,000 for professional services.

The Partnership Director commented on the importance of limiting the costs of these items, as far as possible.

22. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That £85,000 from Partnership reserves be used to appoint a dedicated Project Manager (£60,000) for the CRM Replacement Project, for the remainder of the current financial year and procurement of legal and other specialist advisory services (£25,000) for the project, as necessary.

**Linking Staffordshire Connects to the Transformation Initiatives of the  
Staffordshire Leaders' and Chief Executives' Group and the Wider Public Sector  
(Schedule 8)**

23. The Joint Committee considered a report of the Partnership Director updating them on the actions taken to progress Project Area 3 (Customer Access) of the Chief Executives' and Leaders' transformation initiative – Shared Services and Efficiencies. At the meeting of the Strategic Advisory Board on 2 June 2011 the Executive Director gave a presentation on the outcomes of the County Council's review of their customer services offer. The review had concluded that a one council approach was needed for customer services rather than the present arrangements whereby the majority of customer access, service and insight was devised and managed by individual services.

Accordingly, it was proposed that a new vision be adopted ie "A transformed customer services operation, at the heart of the Council, will improve our understanding of citizens and provide consistent high quality customer services and experience" and it was hoped that senior management would give their approval to this new vision in the near future.

In pursuing the transformation programme it was intended that the Authority would not be working in isolation. Therefore, approval was also being sought for a proactive approach which would engage with partners to achieve a shared vision for customer insight, access and experience.

The Director reminded the Committee that, in order to further the shared services and efficiency Agenda, The Leaders' and Chief Executives' Group had previously asked the Staffordshire Connects Programme Board to investigate individual partners' Customer Relationship Management (CRM) visions, timescales, technology and levels of commonality and to report back to their meeting on 23 June 2011. Therefore, a questionnaire had been circulated by Staffordshire Connects to all partners seeking information on their Customer Access Strategies and potential use of the replacement CRM. From this it was hoped to formulate a series of shared strategic objectives for customer access and identify the role of the CRM in their delivery.

With regard to the Staffordshire Connects Programme Board, it was considered that they were not yet fully effective in addressing the issues of sequencing, resource constraints and other barriers to implementing collaborative transformation which had been set them by the Leaders' and Chief Executives' Group. Therefore, the Group had agreed to establish a Sub-Group comprising representatives of the County Council, South Staffordshire District Council and Partnership Core Team, specifically to look at these issues. One effect of a successful outcome to this review would be that the Programme Board would be more effective.

In addition, the Director considered that the authority and work of the Programme Board could be reinforced by having high level support from the wider public sector in Staffordshire.

In pursuing this aim, the Director noted a purpose that the Staffordshire Connects Strategic Advisory Board should oversee a high level vision of transformation, including customer access across the public sector in Staffordshire. If accepted, then the Programme Board could oversee more detailed planning to achieve objectives in this respect. This oversight would remain light touch but would have authority from the sanction of the Staffordshire Strategic Board.

In presenting the report the Director informed Members that the County Council's new Customer Access Strategy had been positively received by the Staffordshire Connects Strategic Advisory Board at their meeting on 10 June 2011 and they had agreed to work closely with the Partnership in achieving an over-arching vision of transformation including customer access across the public sector in the County. The Director then undertook to keep the Joint Committee updated on developments in this respect, as necessary.

24. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That the necessity of having a deliverable and over-arching vision and strategy for customer access by partner authorities be supported.

(c) That Members actively seek to achieve the objective of having an overarching vision and strategy for customer access at their own authorities.

(d) That the decision to circulate the questionnaire referred to above be noted.

(e) That the Partnership Director report back on the findings of the questionnaire to the Leaders' and Chief Executives' Group at their meeting on 29 June 2011.

(f) That consideration of proposals for co-ordinated business planning by the Strategic Advisory Board be noted and the positive impact on the Partnership's Customer Access Strategy be supported.

(g) That the potential for increasing the effectiveness of the Partnership Programme Board by having the support of the Staffordshire Strategic Board, as set out above, be noted.

## **Budgets and Risk Log**

### **(i) Core Team 2010/2011 Final Outturn and Reporting Requirements (Schedule 9)**

25. The Joint Committee considered a joint report of the Partnership Director and County Council's Director of Finance and Resources regarding the financial outturn position for the Core Team and Projects budget.

The Core Team outturn returned an underspend of £5,484, the main reasons for which related to (i) staffing costs - the Executive Director post having been vacant for the first three months of the year; (ii) Travel and subsistence costs having been less than budgeted owing to the vacancy referred to in (i) and provision for conference fees having not been required; and (iii) The transfer of the management of the CRM to the County Council having given rise to savings in internal and external audit fees (although these had been partially offset by other spending).

The financial outturn for 2010/11 was as follows:-

	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Outturn £</b>	<b>Net Core (under)/overspend £</b>
Core Team Staffing Costs	122,300	110,879	(11,421)
Premises	15,000	15,000	-
Travel and Subsistence	10,000	5,994	(4,006)
Legal Costs	10,000	3,972	(6,028)
Supplies and Services	40,700	56,671	15,971
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>198,000</b>	<b>192,516</b>	<b>(5,484)</b>

The total balance in reserves at 31 March 2011 was £253,001 and the uncommitted reserve balance was £181,249 of which £142,167 was in the General Reserve. Members noted that owing to the transfer of the responsibility for the management of the CRM system to the County Council, the total expenditure of the Partnership had fallen below the threshold for the production of an Annual Governance Statement (£1m) under the Accounts and Audit Regulations (Amendment) (England) 2006. However, it was necessary for the Joint Committee to submit a Small Bodies Annual return which included Accounting and Annual Governance Statements both of which were attached to the report (Appendix 1 and 2) for Members' consideration.

During his presentation, the Director informed Members that the required internal audit review of the Partnership's accounting records and financial procedures was nearing completion.

In the discussion which ensued the Partnership Director updated them on the future management arrangements for the existing CRM system. The County Council had indicated to Capula Limited, a desire to terminate the existing Agreement and alternative options were currently being investigated. These were expected to lead to significant cost savings over the current arrangements. It was expected that the new contract would be in place by September/October 2011.

In reply to a question from a Member, the Partnership Director said that the minimum acceptable level for Partnership reserves was £100,000 in order to provide a contingency for restructuring.

26. **RESOLVED** – (a) That the report be received and noted.

(b) That the Accounting and Governance Statements contained in the Small Bodies Annual Return for 2010/11 be approved.

(ii) **CRM 2010/11 Final Outturn**  
(Schedule 10)

27. The Joint Committee considered a report of the County Council's Director of Finance and Resources regarding the financial outturn position for the Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system.

The CRM outturn returned an under spend of £39,082, the main reasons for which related to (i) Staffing costs - the Technical Manager post having been vacant for the first four months of the year; (ii) The transfer of the management of the CRM to the County Council having given rise to savings in internal and external audit fees (although these had been partially offset by other spending).

The financial outturn for 2010/11 was as follows:-

	<b>Budget £</b>	<b>Outturn £</b>	<b>Net Core (under)/overspend £</b>
CRM Staffing Costs	206,300	183,324	(22,976)
Premises	10,000	1,640	(8,360)
Travel and Subsistence	7,800	6,952	(848)
Supplies and Services	37,600	24,064	(13,536)
Hardware	348,200	351,838	3,638
Oracle L45/GIS Integration	-	3,000	3,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>609,900</b>	<b>570,818</b>	<b>(39,082)</b>

The total balance in reserves at 31 March 2011 was £253,001 and the uncommitted reserve balance was £181,249 of which £39,082 was in the CRM reserve.

28. **RESOLVED** – That the report be received and noted.

(iii) **Risk Log**  
(Schedule 11)

29. The Joint Committee received a schedule detailing nine risks which had been identified in pursuing the current work programme and were updated on the measures aimed at mitigating these risks.

30. **RESOLVED** – That the report be received and noted.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

31. **RESOLVED** – That a further meeting of the Joint Committee be held on Friday 16 September 2011 at 10.00 am, County Buildings, Stafford.

**CHAIRMAN**

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Documents referred to in these minutes as Schedules are not appended, but will be attached to the signed copy of the Minutes of the meeting. Copies, or specific information contained in them, may be available on request.