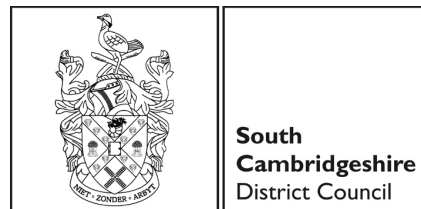


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1 June 2005

To: The Leader – Councillor SGM Kindersley  
Deputy Leader – Councillor RT Summerfield  
Members of the Cabinet – Councillors Dr DR Bard, JD Batchelor, Mrs JM Healey,  
Mrs EM Heazell, Mrs DP Roberts and Mrs DSK Spink MBE

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **CABINET**, which will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER** at South Cambridgeshire Hall on **THURSDAY, 9 JUNE 2005** at **10.00 a.m.**

Yours faithfully  
**GJ HARLOCK**  
Finance and Resources Director

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## AGENDA

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<b>PROCEDURAL ITEMS</b>	
1. <b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b> To authorise the Leader to sign the Minutes of the meetings held on 12 and 26 May 2005 as a correct record.	1 - 10
2. <b>Declarations of Interest</b> Members need only declare an interest in circumstances where there is an item on the agenda that may cause a conflict of interests.	
<b>RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL</b>	
3. <b>Housing Stock Options Appraisal</b>	11 - 70
4. <b>Workforce Plan</b>	71 - 84
5. <b>Food Safety Service Plan</b>	85 - 100
6. <b>Health and Safety Service Plan</b>	101 - 112
<b>POLICY ITEMS</b>	
7. <b>Anti-social Behaviour Act - High Hedges Provisions</b>	113 - 120
8. <b>Discretionary Compensation for Redundancy</b>	121 - 130
9. <b>Performance Plan</b>	131 - 132
10. <b>Affordable Housing - Commuted Sums</b>	133 - 138

#### **OPERATIONAL ITEMS**

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| <b>14.</b> | <b>East Hatley, St Denis Church</b>                                    | <b>157 - 162</b> |
| <b>15.</b> | <b>Broadband Project closure</b>                                       | <b>163 - 168</b> |
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| <b>19.</b> | <b>Matters Referred by Scrutiny and Overview Committee</b>      |  |
| <b>20.</b> | <b>Updates from Cabinet Members Appointed to Outside Bodies</b> |  |

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| <b>21.</b> | <b>Cottenham - High Street</b> | <b>189 - 196</b> |
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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the Cabinet held on  
Thursday, 12 May 2005

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs DSK Spink MBE (Leader of Council)  
Councillor RT Summerfield (Deputy Leader of Council and Resources & Staffing Portfolio Holder)

Councillors:	Dr DR Bard	Planning & Economic Development Portfolio Holder
	JD Batchelor	Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder
	Mrs JM Healey	Conservation, Sustainability & Community Planning Portfolio Holder
	Mrs EM Heazell	Housing Portfolio Holder
	SGM Kindersley	Environmental Health Portfolio Holder

Councillors RF Bryant, Mrs SJO Doggett, JA Hockney, Mrs CAED Murfitt, Dr JPR Orme, NJ Scarr, Mrs GJ Smith and Dr SEK van de Ven were in attendance, by invitation.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs DP Roberts.

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**Procedural Items**

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**1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Leader was authorised to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 April 2005 as a correct record, subject to the following amendment:

**Direct Labour Organisation Review** (Minute 19)  
Fourth paragraph, replace first sentence with:

“Given other pressures on the Housing Revenue Account, the DLO’s operating deficit needed to be reduced as quickly as possible; however given the DLO tender’s over ambitious assumptions, a deficit of £185,000 was included in the 2005/06 budget.”

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor SGM Kindersley declared a personal interest in St Denys Church, East Hatley, should the subject be discussed.

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**Recommendations to  
Council**

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**3. WINDMILL ESTATE, FULBOURN**

The Housing Portfolio Holder introduced the options for a long term housing solution for the Windmill Estate, commending a redevelopment scheme. Councillor NJ Scarr reported that the local members were happy to recommend the proposals as long as residents were permitted to change their views, as he felt that many of those currently opposed would do eventually. Councillor Mrs SJO Doggett added that if arrangements could be made concerning mortgage debt, some of those owner/occupiers who did not

want an equity share model might change their minds. It was noted that 18 households had not responded to the Council's survey of opinion on the options for the Windmill Estate but, if the scheme was approved, Nene Housing Society would work closely with all the residents since knowledge of all individual housing needs would be essential.

Responses to queries included:

- Scheme costs and potential funding were assumptions at this stage, as was the funding shortfall, as a scheme had not yet been prepared
- The Council would not bear any funding shortfall
- Nene Housing Society was in a good position to press for Housing Corporation funding
- It would be Nene Housing Society's option to acquire the freehold of the land under the terms of any leasehold disposal of the Council's interest at nil cost
- The future of occupied properties remaining in the Council's ownership would be part of the larger debate on the future of the housing stock at the next meeting
- Residents would always be given the opportunity to change their minds

Members commended the excellent report and thanks were expressed to the local Members, Fulbourn Parish Council, the officers involved and all who served on the project group for their hard work and commitment.

Cabinet

**RESOLVED** to endorse the policy that Council-owned properties on the Windmill Estate continue to be leased to Nene Housing Society in the short term as they become available following relocation of current tenants (on a temporary or permanent basis) until such time as a redevelopment scheme can be implemented. Any surplus income over expenditure in respect of any Council owned properties is to be reinvested in the estate.

#### **RECOMMEND TO FULL COUNCIL**

That once a redevelopment scheme has been approved and planning consent obtained, the properties held on a short term lease, together with any other Council properties that become vacant thereafter and any other land in the Council's ownership within the estate boundary (to be agreed), be disposed of to Nene Housing Society for redevelopment purposes subject to the following conditions:

- (i) that redevelopment will maximise the number of affordable homes to be provided with no more than 30% to be open market housing and,
- (ii) that the Council will only transfer the freehold interest in the land required for the open market dwellings at nil cost and,
- (iii) that the land on which any new affordable dwellings are provided (social rented and shared ownership units) will be leased under a 125 year term to Nene Housing Society at nil cost with the Council retaining the freehold interest. However, an option within the lease will enable Nene Housing Society to acquire the freehold interest at an independent open market valuation that reflects the use of

- (iv) the land is for affordable housing and, that Nene Housing Society will meet any legal costs and home loss/disturbance payments incurred by the Council in respect of the Windmill estate in 2004/05 and future years and,
- (v) that a value for money scheme can be developed to enable appropriate funding from external sources to be secured,
- (vi) that any new affordable housing is tailored to meet identified housing needs as agreed by the Council,
- (vii) that the Council will be entitled to receive nomination rights of 100% of initial lets and 75% of subsequent lettings of all social rented units provided through refurbished and new build affordable housing on the sites and,
- (viii) that the Council will receive 100% nomination rights in perpetuity to any shared ownership and/or other intermediate tenures provided through refurbished and new build affordable housing on the sites and,
- (ix) that the Council will not seek to use compulsory purchase powers to facilitate the redevelopment and,
- (x) that as far as possible the wishes of all residents ( tenants, owner-occupiers and leaseholders) should be accommodated without compromising the wishes of others on the Windmill Estate and,
- (xi) that Nene Housing Society will contribute towards the cost of any additional staffing resources that may need to be identified within Shire Homes to manage the redevelopment scheme.

#### 4. **END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE - APRIL 2004 TO MARCH 2005, CORPORATE ACTION PLANS, MILESTONES AND PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

The Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder introduced the end of year report, commenting that performance was reported by exception.

The improvement in the % of major planning applications decided in 13 weeks was noted but Members expressed their frustration at the Government's unrealistic expectations of performance by this Council given the number of very large developments for which it had to plan. It was also noted that a large development meant anything from 10 properties upwards.

Cabinet

**NOTED** Note the significant progress made on many corporate actions and milestones to improve corporate capacity and progress on priorities in 2004/05;

**AGREED** to

(a) Include realistic targets in the 2005 Performance Plan and continue to monitor the following areas to ensure progress is achieved:-

- Procurement Strategy

- Waste & Recycling Scheme
  - ICT
  - Northstowe
- (b) Continue to monitor the following priority PIs closely to ensure progress is achieved:-
- BV109a – Major Planning Applications
  - BV157 - ESD Delivery
- and note that Directors will monitor progress on these and other priority PIs monthly in 2005/06
- (c) Reduce the number of milestones in the final quarter, when preparing the 2005 Performance Plan.

## 5. STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT

The Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder updated Cabinet on progress on strategic risk management and the Finance and Resources Director highlighted the 4 corporate strategic risks felt worthy of more detailed report: capped Council Tax; travellers' influx; procurement and efficiency; and planning for growth. Efforts were being made to embed a risk management culture and training was taking place, although cascading it through departments had been delayed. Funding was available from the Council's insurers for training for Members, but it was not certain that this would be the most effective way of keeping Members advised. Councillor Summerfield was prepared to continue to carry the responsibility. Cabinet

### APPROVED

- (a) The risk scenarios provided at Appendix A, the prioritisation matrix provided at Appendix B and the management action plans provided at Appendix C;
- (b) The suggestions made to improve actions taken to embed risk management within the Council:
- Enhance use of the risk management implications section in reports to Members
  - Change use of mainstreaming risk management section in Service Plans
  - Include strategic risks in the Council's Performance Plan
- (c) The cascading of risk management down to departments

A note was circulated of decisions it was felt were required of Cabinet in relation to the threat of Council Tax capping. One, reviewing the business case in relation to an additional refuse collection round, was deleted since it was a service specific example of freezing uncommitted Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) bids, when all should be reviewed. Cabinet

### AGREED

- (a) To continue to fight capping this year;
- (b) To consider the extent of any cuts to be made in response to any capping decision and when they should be effective;
- (c) To use balances to cushion the effect in the current year if capping is imposed;

- (d) To consider any accounting treatment changes that might help, such as using capital receipts to fund capital projects, releasing earmarked revenue reserves, subject to a report on detail;
- (e) To freeze any uncommitted CIPs bids pending resolution of capping, and examine other bids for potential savings;
- (f) To require Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder approval before filling any vacancies, pending the resolution of capping;
- (g) To seek initial legal advice on the potential for judicial review;
- (h) To continue to seek support for the Council's case in challenging capping.

## 6. DELIVERING EFFICIENCY SAVINGS - UPDATE

The Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder introduced the finalised forward-looking part of the Council's first Annual Efficiency Statement, for which the comments from Scrutiny and Overview Committee had been taken into account. He outlined the next steps, highlighting the meeting to be arranged for developing the "front office-back office" approach; the recommendations from Scrutiny and Overview Committee for year two onwards; and staff shortages in the Policy and Performance team.

A call was made for further work on the Efficiency Statement to be deferred pending the appeal against capping but, although there was considerable sympathy with this view, it was noted that the forward-looking part of the Statement was already done and that there could be a spiral of intervention if the Statement were not completed. The advice of the external auditors had been sought on how efficiency savings could be shown as having a neutral effect on services if cuts in service were having to be made at the same time.

The Chief Executive asked Members to keep in mind that the Medium Term Financial Strategy already in place had built into it a need for savings to fund the growth in the District before the growth produced additional income. Added to this was the Gershon efficiency savings of 2.5% a year; then any cuts required by capping.

It was noted that

- the wording of the extract from the Minutes of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee had not yet been agreed by the Committee
- the forthcoming lettings review might produce savings in the more efficient use of housing accommodation
- structural change took time and was disruptive – it needed careful consideration

By 6 votes to 1, Cabinet

### NOTED

- (a) The feedback from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee set out in paragraph 11 and Appendix A to the report;
- (b) The contents of the finalised forward-looking part of the Annual Efficiency Statement, set out in Appendix B to the report; and

### AGREED

- (c) that the Leader, in conjunction with the Chief Executive and the Finance and Resources Director, be given delegated authority to finalise the backward-looking part of the Annual Efficiency Statement for 2005/06, in time for the official deadline of 15 June 2005;
- (d) That a meeting between the Information & Customer Services and Resources & Staffing Portfolio Holders and the Chief Executive and the

Finance & Resources Director in relation to developing the “front office-back office” approach be held within 1 month.

#### 7. WILLINGHAM - RIGHT OF WAY OVER BRICKHILLS

The Housing Portfolio Holder advised that the decision on the request for a vehicular right of way over Council land was before Cabinet because the local Members were not all in agreement with the recommendation of refusal.

The Leader reported that she had had a telephone conversation with the applicant but that she had not received an email from him. It was noted that Councillor RMA Manning had originally not wished to comment because of an interest, through an employee’s involvement, in other land nearby.

The main issue of concern was the future use of the land south of Brickhills should the request be granted, together with additional traffic generation and the proximity of the proposed access to the parking area. The value of the proposed right of way had not been assessed. In the light of these concerns, Cabinet

**REFUSED** the request for a right of way over Council land at Brickhills, Willingham.

#### 8. TRANSFER OF COUNCIL LAND TO REGISTERED SOCIAL LANDLORDS

The Housing Portfolio Holder commended the recommendation that Registered Social Landlords be granted long-term ground leases rather than freehold transfers since this gave the Council the opportunity for future review. The Head of Housing Strategic Services added that lease arrangements were now the more common approach and that agreement to the revised approach would permit review of earlier decisions to offer land at nil cost and establish a principle for the future. If leasing was not viable in any particular case a report would be brought to Cabinet, but it was noted that for some schemes a mixture of leasehold and freehold disposals would be necessary. Cabinet

**RESOLVED** to approve the disposal of Council property to Registered Social Landlords by long-term (125 years) ground lease at nil rent rather than freehold free of charge transfer; recognising that some schemes may include a freehold element where necessary.

#### 9. UNCOMMITTED GRANT BALANCES AND OTHER EARMARKED RESERVES OVER TWO YEARS OLD AS AT 31 MARCH 2005

On considering the report, Cabinet

**NOTED** that the War Memorial grant balance of £9,810 was to be returned to the overall General Fund Reserve; and

**RESOLVED** that the following uncommitted reserve balances that are over two years old be carried forward into the 2005/06 financial year:

Dual Use Capital Grants (£1,148,295 in total)	£972,195
Heritage Initiatives Grants	£16,800
Historic Buildings Preservation Fund	£152,990



Shopping Car Parks

£29,000

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**Information Items**

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**10. QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS**

The Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder introduced the quarterly monitoring report on actual income and expenditure against budget for 2004/05.

Cabinet **RECEIVED** the report, noting that income in all but one case was lower than expected, but not by a great amount proportionately

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**Standing Items**

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**11. MATTERS REFERRED BY SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

In accordance with the recommendations of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, Cabinet **AGREED**

- (a) That the current Freedom of Information Act process continue, with the Information Management Officer reporting monthly to the Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder; and that Members talk to either party for updates should they be required;
- (b) That the Information Management Officer's pursuit of funding from the Department of Constitutional Affairs for providing information under the Freedom of Information Act be strongly supported;
- (c) That every report to Council and its committees/constituent bodies, other than regulatory committees, must link to both the Corporate Objectives **and** Corporate Priorities.

**12. UPDATES FROM CABINET MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

None received

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**The Meeting ended at 12.35  
p.m.**

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the Cabinet held on  
Thursday, 26 May 2005

PRESENT: SGM Kindersley Leader of Council

Councillors: Dr DR Bard Planning & Economic Development Portfolio Holder  
JD Batchelor Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder  
Mrs JM Healey Conservation, Sustainability & Community Planning  
Portfolio Holder  
Mrs EM Heazell Housing Portfolio Holder  
SGM Kindersley Leader of Council  
Mrs DP Roberts Community Development Portfolio Holder  
Mrs DSK Spink MBE Environmental Health Portfolio Holder  
RT Summerfield Deputy Leader of Council and Resources & Staffing  
Portfolio Holder

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None

**2. APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY LEADER**

On the proposal of Councillor SGM Kindersley, seconded by Councillor JD Batchelor, Cabinet

**RESOLVED** That Councillor RT Summerfield be appointed Deputy Leader for the coming year.

**3. ALLOCATION OF PORTFOLIOS**

After a vote between Councillors Mrs DSK Spink and Mrs EM Heazell for the Housing portfolio, Cabinet, on the casting vote of the Leader,

**RESOLVED** That Councillor Mrs EM Heazell be the Housing Portfolio Holder for the coming year.

The remaining portfolios were allocated:

Resources and Staffing	RT Summerfield
Planning and Economic Development	Dr DR Bard
Community Development	Mrs DP Roberts
Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning	Mrs JM Healey
Information and Customer Services	JD Batchelor
Environmental Health	Mrs DSK Spink

**4. APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIVE MEMBER TO ATTEND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT CONFERENCE**

Cabinet

**AGREED** That, subject to decisions on expenditure, the Leader and Councillor Mrs DP Roberts attend the Annual Conference of the Local Government Association.

**5. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE TO EAST OF ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY**

Cabinet

**AGREED** That the Leader represent the Council on the East of England Regional Assembly in 2005/06.

**6. APPOINTMENTS TO ADVISORY GROUPS**

***Planning Policy Advisory Group***

Given that the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of Development and Conservation Control Committee were ex-officio members of the Advisory Group, Cabinet considered that 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> choices should be granted. It was therefore

**AGREED** That for 2005/06 the Planning Policy Advisory Group comprise the following:

RF Bryant	SM Edwards	R Hall
Mrs JM Healey	RB Martlew	MJ Mason
Mrs CAED Murfitt	CR Nightingale	Mrs DSK Spink

***Conservation Advisory Group***

Cabinet

**AGREED** To ask the Advisory Group to accept all those members having expressed a wish to be a member:

SJ Agnew	RF Bryant	NN Cathcart
Mrs PS Corney	Mrs SJO Doggett	Mrs A Elsby
R Hall	Dr JA Heap	Mrs CA Hunt
Dr JPR Orme	R Page	EJ Pateman
JA Quinlan	Mrs DSK Spink	JH Stewart
RJ Turner	Dr JR Williamson	NIC Wright

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**The Meeting ended at 4.35  
p.m.**

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## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet

9 June 2005

**AUTHOR/S:** Management Team

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**HOUSING OPTIONS APPRAISAL**
**Purpose**

1. To present to Cabinet the outcome of the housing options appraisal project; to advise Cabinet of Management Team's conclusions and to ask that Cabinet recommends to Council its preferred future housing option.

**Report structure**

2. The Housing Options Working (HOW) Group report to the Housing Portfolio Holder is attached as **Appendix A**, along with the Financial Analysis executive summary prepared by Tribal HCH (**Appendix B**) (copy of the full financial analysis is available from the Housing and Environmental Services Director), the report of the independent tenants' advisor, PS Consultants (**Appendix C**) and the ODPM housing options appraisal evaluation criteria (**Appendix D**).

**Effect on Corporate Objectives**

3. Quality, Accessible Services	The Council's housing service carries out many thousands of transactions with tenants each week and is among the most significant front line Council services. The options appraisal considers future funding pressures and tenants aspirations for future housing services.
Village Life	The Council owns and manages affordable housing in 94 out of 102 villages in the district and so makes a major contribution to village life.
Sustainability	The promotion of energy efficiency and sustainable procurement of materials depends upon there being adequate resources for future housing investment programmes.
Partnership	There has been a high level of tenant participation and consultation through the options appraisal project and partner agencies have been briefed and updated through the South Cambridgeshire Strategic Partnership.

**Background**

4. The HOW Group has presented a summary of its findings to the Housing Portfolio Holder, and has used nine evaluation criteria to assess the impact of stock retention and stock transfer (arms length management and PFI having been discounted at an earlier stage of the appraisal). Either option has significant corporate organisational and financial impact and this Management Team report highlights some of the issues to be taken into account alongside the broader enquiries of the HOW group.

### **Revenue effects**

5. The primary factor that enables a housing association to sustain a viable revenue position and secure additional investment resources is the impact of negative housing subsidy on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) effectively taking from the Council almost half its annual rental income
6. The HRA is viable in the medium term as long as significant savings (from £410,000 to £437,000 pa) can be achieved in the next 18 months and sustained thereafter. This years HRA budget savings should make a significant contribution towards that requirement.
7. Stock transfer involves funding about £750,000 in pre ballot costs in order to establish the new landlord organisation and negotiate with the Council to develop a formal offer to tenants. These costs would be split about £500,000 HRA / £250,000 General Fund and would be spread over two financial years. If the Council chose to pursue stock transfer with an existing social landlord rather than set up a new organisation, set up costs may be reduced. Management of this 'at risk' sum is usually by monitoring of tenant views so that the transfer can be aborted prior to the ballot if it becomes clear that tenant support for the proposal is not being consolidated.
8. If transfer proceeds the financial model suggests that interest on the capital receipt received by the Council could more than cover the additional costs to be borne by the Council so that there could be a net positive cumulative effect on the GF of about £7m over five years. This figure would be reduced if part of the transfer receipt was used by the Council to fund new affordable housing development. Interest income from the receipt would not be received by the Council until 2007/08 assuming an 18 month lead in time for the transfer.

### **Capital effects**

9. It is clear from the HOW Group's work that the expansion of the housing capital programme to include tenants' aspirations is not deliverable with retention, as the Council faces the full impact of Right To Buy (RTB) receipts pooling from 2007/08, reducing by 75% the Council's most significant capital funding stream.
10. In preparing for the threat of Council tax capping the Council is choosing to use its RTB receipts for a variety of non housing purposes and competition for diminishing funds between landlord and non housing activities could reduce resources available for housing investment further (the financial modelling assumes that beyond known non housing commitments, all RTB receipts will be applied to the housing investment programme).
11. At the most basic investment level (decent homes), investment requirements can be met until 2013/14.
12. If the Council chooses retention then the capital programme will need to be reviewed to ensure delivery of priorities in the short to medium term.
13. If the Council chooses transfer it will need to decide how the resulting receipt is deployed, either easing pressures in a number of service areas, or being targeted at the development of new affordable homes. Negotiations about the apportionment of any post transfer preserved RTB receipts will form part of the pre transfer preparations.

## **Tenants' views**

14. The overwhelming majority of tenants responding to the test of opinion wished to stay with the Council. However their stated reasons for doing so were rent levels and investment in homes, suggesting that there had been a failure to communicate the effect of the options or that tenants did not believe the content of the consultation material.
15. Transfer is not available to the Council unless it can demonstrate to the Secretary of State that the majority of tenants are not opposed to it, this usually being achieved by way of a ballot of secure tenants. If the Council wishes to transfer its housing then it must communicate to tenants the reasons for its decision and ensure that those reasons are well understood.
16. It is not clear from the tenant consultation already conducted how 'fixed' tenants views are and so what is the likelihood of those views changing over time. The advice from the Council's consultants who have experience from other areas is that tenants are likely to become more supportive of transfer when details of the transfer offer become clearer in the pre ballot negotiations.
17. The effects of the housing subsidy system in restricting the Council's ability to use all of its rental income to improve services and increase investment in its homes emerged as a significant topic through the face to face tenant consultation.
18. There has been little evidence of anti transfer activity in the district during the options appraisal project. This may change if the Council decides to pursue transfer, and its effect on tenant views would need to be assessed and managed. Similarly the views expressed in the Cambridge Evening News may be a factor in influencing tenants' views, and every effort would be required to ensure factual and balanced coverage.
19. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee requested that Cabinet pay particular attention to the low tenant turn out achieved through the consultation by the HOW Group and ensure that a meaningful consultation form the part of any balloting process.

## **Organisational issues**

20. Although retention is sometimes described as the 'no change' option, there are clear requirements to reduce staffing and service budgets significantly in 2005/06 and 2006/07.
21. Transfer would involve the transfer of approximately 150 staff to the new landlord organisation along with a small number of support staff who provide services to housing for more than 50% of their time. The majority of staff on the ground floor at Cambourne and half of the Waterbeach depot staff would have to be relocated to the transfer landlord's new office and depot accommodation. The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE) regulations would apply to transferring staff.
22. An independent health check of the Council's Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) will be required if it is to transfer with the landlord service. DLO transfer would increase the apportionment of some fixed costs to the Council's Environmental Services operation. The Housing Corporation would need to be satisfied that continued use of the DLO by the new landlord met its best value requirements. Contracts with other providers would generally need to be novated to the new landlord.

23. A degree of decoupling from Cambridgeshire Direct may be necessary as a transfer landlord establishes its own means of direct contact with customers.
24. Retained housing services (those remaining with the Council) would include the strategic housing team, housing advice and homelessness team, and the allocations function currently carried out by Neighbourhood managers.

### **Governance**

25. Significant resources have been invested in tenant participation and communication over the course of the housing options project, and whichever option is chosen by the Council should build on these foundations. In the case of transfer a 'shadow board' will be established comprising elected members and tenant representatives to negotiate the terms of the transfer with the Council.
26. If the Council chooses to retain its landlord function then it may wish to explore the establishment of a housing management board which could engage a small number of elected members and tenant representatives more closely in the management of the housing service.
27. A new tenant compact (which sets out the consultative relationship which the landlord will aim to have with its tenants) will be negotiated over coming months, providing an opportunity to review current tenant participation arrangements, and consider ways of all tenants being able to elect their tenant representatives.
28. It became clear early in the project that the fact that the 2002 SCS had not been commissioned for the options appraisal process was a significant weakness, and verification of its content was problematic.
29. The identification of changes in investment requirements towards the end of the project confirmed that a new SCS, designed to fulfil options appraisal requirements and future asset management needs is a priority whether the Council retains or transfers its housing. It is proposed that its commissioning should be undertaken at the earliest opportunity.
30. Since the options appraisal commenced the Council has decided to dispose of some Airey properties and has agreed in principle to proceed with the redevelopment of the Windmill estate in partnership with Nene Housing Society. These decisions need to be factored into the new stock condition database and financial projections.

### **Timing of decision and relation with other service reviews**

31. The Council is carrying out reviews in the following areas:
  - Sheltered housing – to address high cost of current service (£900,000 annual subsidy from the HRA) and improve service provision.
  - Responsive repairs procurement – to address issues of medium term DLO viability.
  - Allocations review – to consider the adoption of choice based lettings
32. Although all reviews will need to take into account the options appraisal, in the absence of a positive decision to transfer, then retention of the stock continues along with revenue savings required to balance the HRA. Within each review the effects of



future transfer can be modelled to identify the potential effects of the additional resources that transfer would provide.

### **Management Team Conclusions**

33. Management Team believes that transfer of the Council's housing to a housing association offers the greatest long-term benefits to the Council and its tenants.
34. The effect of the housing subsidy system, which takes out of the HRA almost half of the Council's rental income, and the loss of three quarters of house sale receipts through receipts pooling, combine to mean that the Council's housing business will only be viable in the short term if expenditure is cut and services reduced. Because of this unlevel playing field, retention by the Council is less able than transfer to support the achievement of the Council's broader corporate objectives and priorities, particularly in respect of the Council funding new affordable homes.
35. It is evident from the experience of authorities elsewhere that transfer is most likely to succeed if the Council is united in its support for such a proposal, recognises the potential benefits which transfer can offer to local communities, and is prepared to provide community leadership for its delivery. If elected members are not persuaded of the case for transfer it is unlikely that tenants will be.
36. The Council will have to invest up to £750,000 over two years before knowing whether its transfer proposals are supported through a tenants' ballot. This investment is 'at risk', and is recovered by the Council at a later date if transfer proceeds, but is lost if a tenants do not support the transfer proposals at a ballot.
37. If the Council does not choose to pursue transfer then it will continue to own and manage its housing. It should be stressed that although retention becomes the option of choice if transfer is not pursued, it will entail significant organisational change and reduction of expenditure in order for the housing service to remain viable in the short to medium term.
38. A further risk which the Council will need to assess is whether the housing finance system is likely to change in such a way to make the gradient of the unlevel playing field even steeper, and as a consequence the Council may have less flexibility to develop its own local proposals in future.

### **Recommendation**

39. Cabinet is asked to recommend to Council its preferred future housing option.

**Background Papers:** Options Appraisal Financial Analysis amended Final report June 2005, copy available from Steve Hampson, Housing and Environmental Services Director

**Contact Officer:** Steve Hampson, Director of Housing and Environmental Services  
Telephone: (01954) 713020

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## Appendix A

### HOUSING OPTIONS APPRAISAL – REPORT TO HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER

#### 1. Purpose

To present to the Housing Portfolio Holder the final report from the housing options working group, this includes a description of the options appraisal process, the evaluation of the options and the next steps for either staying with the Council or transferring the Council's homes to a Housing Association.

Attached as appendices are the Financial Analysis report by Tribal HCH (A); the Tenant Consultation report by PS Consultants (B); and the ODPM options appraisal sign off criteria (D).

#### 2. Housing Options Working Group

2.1 The first meeting of the housing options working group (HOWG) met on 20 July 2004. The following reports were presented to the group:

- Housing options appraisal project plan (appendix C1)
- Tenant empowerment strategy (appendix C2)
- Communications and consultation strategy (appendix C3)

2.2 The membership of HOWG was set at 6 tenant representatives; 6 elected councillors; Chief Executive and 3 Directors; and a Trades Union representative. However at the first meeting of HOWG this changed to 5 tenant representatives and 5 elected councillors. This change occurred as a tenant representative was elected as a councillor at the local elections in June, she then become a councillor representative. The members of the group are:

Chairman – Councillor NJ Scarr

Vice-Chairman – Mrs A Elsby

Councillors Mrs HF Kember, EJ Pateman and Mrs DSK Spink MBE

Tenant representatives – Helen Ballantyne, Andy Booth, Janice Curtis, Howard Renshaw and Georgina Smeaton

Officers – John Ballantyne, Steve Hampson, Greg Harlock and David Hussell

Trades union representative – Martin Williams

2.3 The project plan states that the terms of reference are *'To consider the district's future housing needs and investment requirements and evaluate each of the future housing options against the Council's priorities, and tenants views; to present to the Portfolio Holder the outcome of its work. The Group will not determine which housing option is most appropriate for the district but will set out the district's housing priorities, service aspirations, and investment needs before assessing how each of the options will deliver those priorities. That assessment will include information about each option financial, organisational, and staffing impacts and its' deliverability in real terms, taking account of tenant views and concerns.'*

2.4 HOWG have met 11 times throughout the options appraisal and have received presentations from the lead consultant, Tribal HCH and the Independent Tenant advisor (ITA), PS Consultants. All agenda papers and minutes are attached in appendix C4. They have also visited Hereward housing Association and had a

presentation from the ALMO, Colchester Borough Homes. The group have been serviced by the housing options project team made up of core officers providing expert policy and financial advice. The team have managed the project to ensure that agreed outcomes are achieved and that ODPM requirements have been met.

### **3. Tenant Empowerment**

3.1 The tenant empowerment strategy achieved sign off by the Community Housing Task Force (CHTF) on 23 July 2004, with a commitment to review it throughout the options appraisal. The objectives for this strategy are:

- To gather information about tenants' views on the current housing service and their priorities for future investment/development.
- To ensure that all tenants are provided with good access to accessible and clear information and have opportunities to let the Council know their views.

3.2 These objectives have been met by undertaking two phases of consultation. The first phase sought to raise the profile of the options appraisal and to identify tenants' aspirations for their homes and service development. Phase two provided tenants with detailed information on how each option could be delivered at South Cambs taking into account the issues identified in phase one. It is acknowledged that tenant empowerment is a fundamental part of all stages of the options appraisal and that the ITA, will support tenants to ensure that they are fully engaged throughout the process.

3.3 The ITA, PS Consultants was appointed on 1 April 2004 following a successful interview with the tenant representatives from HOWG. Prior to the first meeting of HOWG the tenants met with the ITA and the tenant participation officer (TPO) on 5 occasions. These sessions were an opportunity for the tenants to receive training and develop an understanding of the housing options process (appendix C5). Throughout the options appraisal the tenants have met with the ITA and TPO outside of HOWG to receive continued support, have an input into the planning of the consultation programme and visited Havebury Housing Association in addition to the planned trip to Hereward Housing Association.

### **4. Communications and Consultation**

4.1 The communications and consultation strategy achieved sign off by the CHTF on 23 July 2004, with a commitment to review it throughout the options appraisal. The strategy has informed the consultation programme and methods used to consult with tenants, staff and other stakeholders. The objectives for this strategy are:

- To gather information about tenants' views on the current housing service and their priorities for future investment/development.
- To ensure that all tenants are provided with good access to accessible and clear information and have opportunities to let the Council know their views.
- To ensure that all the Council's staff are well informed on the housing options project and able to answer questions or signpost people to appropriate advice.

4.2 The following paragraphs provide detail as to how these objectives have been met throughout the stages of the options appraisal project. The ITA has produced 3 newsletters (appendix C6), the first was in August 2004, and this also included a

questionnaire to identify tenant's priorities for their homes and future service investment/development. A high response rate of 36% was achieved. The most important elements identified for their home are an efficient central heating (61%), followed by modern kitchen (53.4%) and UPVC double glazed windows and doors (48.8%). Priorities for services were identified as ensuring all repairs and improvements are carried out (85.2%) and ensuring that existing services continue to be provided e.g. decoration and hedge cutting for the elderly and disabled (73.2%) and providing affordable housing in the district(44.4%).

- 4.3 In October 2004 four focus groups were held to test the quantitative data received via the postal questionnaire in respect of tenants' priorities for improvements to their homes and for the development of the housing service and to provide qualitative data in respect of the above e.g. how should the environment around council housing be improved, what are the perceptions of anti-social behaviour etc. These groups also identified tenants' concerns about the options, how the second phase of consultation would be undertaken and considered proposals for the test of opinion questionnaire. The findings from the focus groups can be found in appendix B as part of the full report from the ITA.
- 4.4 A second newsletter was sent out to tenants at the beginning of February 2005 to provide them with information as to what has been happening with the project, feedback from the questionnaire carried out in August and what the next steps would be. The newsletter also informed tenants of the future homes standard, which has been based on the results from the survey and focus groups.
- 4.5 The third newsletter was sent at the beginning of April 2005 prior to the second phase of consultation. It included information about each of the options, how each can be delivered at South Cambs and the test of opinion. This newsletter also advertised the consultation events planned for the first two weeks in April. This newsletter and the consultation programme had been presented and agreed by HOWG on 11 and 16 March 2005 (appendix C4 – all HOWG papers).
- 4.6 A detailed consultation programme was arranged and included coffee mornings at sheltered schemes, 'drop-in' sessions at the housing surgeries and at central locations in other villages, whilst volunteers from the housing department and tenant representatives knocked on doors in that village. Tenants were offered the opportunity to ask questions of the ITA and TPO at the 'drop-in' sessions. Display boards were set up at venues and fact sheets were available for tenants to take away (appendix C7). Three evening meetings were held with residents' groups in Cottenham, Waterbeach and Linton.
- 4.7 Tenants were also provided with information from South Cambs throughout the process via 'Key Issues', the tenant's newsletter (appendix C8). The Council's newsletter, South Cambs magazine for all residents of the district contained articles to ensure that it reached a wider audience than just the Council's tenants. The Council's website, [www.scambs.gov.uk](http://www.scambs.gov.uk) contained housing options appraisal pages, with copies of all HOWG papers, presentations to HOWG over the course of the project and links to relevant websites, for example the ODPM.
- 4.8 Regular staff briefings have been held to inform not only housing staff but all staff in the Council of the housing options appraisal, this included three lunchtime briefings and a briefing by the Housing and Environmental Services Director at the launch of the Council's 2004 performance plan in August. A council wide staff forum including officers from housing, finance, planning and policy teams was established in September 2004. They have met five times throughout the process and received

presentations from the lead consultant; officers from the project team and attended the visit to Hereward housing Association. In addition the project team officers have attended regular team meetings of housing staff to keep them informed throughout the options appraisal (appendix C9). Staff have also been kept updated throughout the process via information pages on the Council's intranet.

- 4.9 Consultation has been extended to include wider stakeholders, for example the Contact Centre, Local Strategic Partnership, and the Housing Partnership.

## **5. The Evaluation Matrix.**

- 5.1 The ODPM guidance on Option Appraisal states that authorities should take a number of factors into account and provides a guide to the range of issues that should be considered. It states that "*The output of such an appraisal should be an option that delivers sustainable decent homes, is value for money, separates landlord and strategic functions, improves services and is deliverable.*"

- 5.2 The guidance on delivering Decent Homes and Option Appraisal indicates that other factors beyond delivering Decent Homes and meeting national/regional priorities should be considered. These include tenant and leaseholder aspirations, the authority's statutory duties, wider housing market issues, and any appropriate regeneration/renewal strategies.

- 5.3 The guidance also notes that although the focus will be on the identified objectives, consideration should also be given to the impact on other factors ranging from protecting tenants rights and enhancing participation to the impact on the General Fund and resources for other capital programmes.

- 5.4 In order to allow all relevant issues to be considered as part of the eventual decision-making process a comprehensive evaluation format was prepared and presented to HOWG on 21.10.04. The content of the format draws on-
- ODPM guidance
  - Objectives from the initial Option Appraisal Project Plan
  - Issues from the Corporate Objectives, the Community Strategy, the Housing Strategy and the HRA Business Plan.
  - Feedback from tenant and leaseholder consultation.

- 5.5 The format was discussed and refined by the HOWG meeting on 21.10.04 and has subsequently been populated with information as results from the different strands of work have become available to HOWG. At each stage of summarising the base material, the key points that needed to be included have been discussed by HOWG.

## **6. Evaluating the Options - Summary**

- 6.1 The following notes outline the key points from the material that has already been presented to the HOWG to help structure the eventual decision, based on the nine critical issues identified at the start of the project. They are not a substitute for the mass of detail contained in the reports, which have been tabled, and they do not attempt to repeat the assumptions and caveats made in presenting those reports. This concise summary should be used in conjunction with that material and not in isolation, particularly the final Consultants Report and the ITA Reports on Consultation Feedback and the Test of Opinion

- 6.2 The material presented here does not detail the PFI, ALMO or Partial Transfer Option for the following reasons, which became clear following the financial analysis.

- 6.3 The **PFI Option** is not examined in detail because the consultants conclude that it does not provide the whole stock solution, which is needed. It is applicable for small regeneration projects where there is a resource shortfall to achieve the Decent Homes standard. It is therefore not appropriate in South Cambridgeshire because we can achieve the Decent Homes standard and therefore it would not attract extra funds. (PFI credit)
- 6.4 The **ALMO Option** is not outlined below because the consultants conclude that the authority can achieve the Decent Homes standard with its existing resources and therefore an ALMO would not deliver any extra resources. In relation to the evaluation criteria below, the ALMO would largely be a variation on the **RETENTION** option (and the comments below therefore apply) but with the unwelcome complication that it would cost up to £750K to set up. It would therefore make the HRA financial position worse rather than better. At the same time it would take a lot of Member/Tenant Rep./officer time and energy to set up and would therefore detract from the work needed to implement the required reduction in expenditure/increase in income whilst maintaining essential services. Advocates of arms length management would suggest that it is a more effective arrangement than in-house management.
- 6.5 **PARTIAL TRANSFER** is not covered here because again it could not contribute to a whole stock solution. The report looks at options for the Windmill Estate and this limited option is already being progressed outside of the Option Appraisal process, as is some limited redevelopment of Airey properties. However, this option only meets the needs of these small estates and does not address the issues facing the rest of the stock, namely the revenue and capital problems of the HRA overall.

**7. Structuring the Decision-Key Issues-Likely Options**

<b>1. Investment Needs of the Stock-Decent Homes +medium/long term needs</b>	
<b>STAYING WITH THE COUNCIL</b>	<b>TRANSFER TO A HOUSING ASSOCIATION</b>
This would meet the most immediate government deadline for Decent Homes but it would not be possible to carry out the work identified in the stock condition survey and maintain Decent Homes beyond 2012/13. It would not be possible to carry out all identified works long term and therefore it would also be impossible to achieve the Future Homes Standard.	This would meet the government deadline for Decent Homes and maintain a higher standard long term, provide for all identified long term needs from the stock survey and fund improvements to services with a 30 year business plan

<b>2. Viability of the HRA-medium/long term</b>	
<b>STAYING WITH THE COUNCIL</b>	<b>TRANSFER TO A HOUSING ASSOCIATION</b>
The HRA (which under retention only retains about 50% of rent income with the other 50% payable to central government) would be viable over the long term with either a cut in spending of up to £437K to be carried out by 2006/7 (planned reductions in 2005/6 will	The HRA would be closed and there would be a new landlord account, funded to be viable over the long term.

contribute to this) or a corresponding increase in charges to increase income or an equivalent combination of the two, providing that reduced spending /increased income is maintained.	
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<b>3. Tenant priorities-investment and development</b>	
<b>STAYING WITH THE COUNCIL</b>	<b>TRANSFER TO A HOUSING ASSOCIATION</b>
None of the tenants desired improvements to services (above existing service levels) would be possible and the HRA would have to be cut by up to £437K by 2006/7, thus reducing services (see separate notes on reductions already planned). Alternatively, charges and hence income could be increased by a corresponding amount without any improvement in services. It would not be possible to carry out work identified in the stock condition survey and maintain Decent Homes beyond 2012, even with no investment in new affordable housing.	Would protect current services and fund improved services. There would be a net capital receipt for the council after paying the government levy of 20% of the receipt, and the expenses associated with transfer. This could provide for some more affordable housing if that was a priority. The spending plans for the receipt would have to be agreed with government prior to them approving the transfer.

<b>4. Impact on Corporate Objectives and Community Strategy</b>	
<b>STAYING WITH THE COUNCIL</b>	<b>TRANSFER TO A HOUSING ASSOCIATION</b>
Even with all available capital receipts going to housing, the Decent Homes Standard could not be maintained long term, thus jeopardising "Decent Homes in all Tenures" (Housing Strategy) and any other objectives needing capital receipts ("Quality Homes for All"- Community Strategy). Using capital on other services brings forward the date that the Decent Homes standard cannot be maintained. Within available resources, the council would control the housing service and align it with Corporate Objectives as closely as possible.	A fully funded housing association could improve housing services beyond current service levels and provide a capital receipt for the council to use to pursue other priority objectives. The Board that controlled the housing association would usually consist of 5 tenant members, 5 councillors and 5 "Independents". As a regulated social landlord it would be obliged to pursue objectives similar to local authorities e.g. Sustainable Communities, dealing with anti-social behaviour, etc

<b>5. Impact on the Councils' Housing Objectives</b>	
<b>STAYING WITH THE COUNCIL</b>	<b>TRANSFER TO A HOUSING ASSOCIATION</b>
The stock could use all of the unallocated capital resources and still not maintain Decent Homes beyond 2012 as well as meeting needs identified in the stock condition survey, thus leaving no	A transfer would protect existing services and allow for improvements above current service levels. The net benefits of the councils' capital receipt could be used for housing purposes if that is a



resources for other housing objectives. Any reductions needed in HRA spending (as an alternative to increased charges) would also reduce the ability to promote sustainable communities. A limited degree of separation between some strategic functions and landlord services could continue as at present.	priority. The separation of strategic and landlord functions would become complete and the council would need to include arrangements in the transfer agreement to enable it to carry out remaining duties-e.g. re-housing the homeless.
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<b>6. Results from Phase 2 Consultation and Test of Opinion</b>	
<b>STAYING WITH THE COUNCIL</b>	<b>TRANSFER TO A HOUSING ASSOCIATION</b>
<i>Although the public meetings were successful events (numbering 382 attendees), the overall return rate of completed forms was only 23.5% so only a minority of tenants expressed an opinion. Anecdotal evidence from the meetings suggests that the written consultation material has not fully succeeded in providing tenants with adequate, accessible answers to their questions but that these were better handled by personal contact. Evidence from the meetings suggests that there were “widespread misconceptions” about rents, rights and the future of the Councils staff. The fact that transfer was being considered to a new landlord who does not yet exist, or has not been chosen, was also seen as a complicating factor.</i>	
Of those who expressed an opinion, the majority (82%) were in favour of the council retaining the stock	A minority of those who expressed an opinion-18%- were in favour of transferring to a housing association and a further 99 respondents did not express a clear preference. Younger tenants were more in favour than older age groups.
<i>The issue that tenants most often quoted in their replies as a concern was rents even though rent convergence means that there is no effective difference between the options. The same is true for the issue of “rights” which was the 3<sup>rd</sup> most frequent issue-again with no significant difference between the options. The other main issues-repairs, improvements and better services- may be of concern but objectively the financial reality shows that these would be better funded under transfer than retention. The fact that the council is only allowed to keep about 50% of rent income to spend on services was not widely understood. However, tenants who replied to the consultation generally felt they had been given enough information.</i>	

<b>7. Deliverability</b>	
<i>For either option, Option Appraisal will have to be signed off by the Government Office who will need to be satisfied that it accords with government policy and that the process has followed published guidance. In contrast to PFI and ALMO, neither option requires discretionary resources from the government.</i>	
<b>STAYING WITH THE COUNCIL</b>	<b>TRANSFER TO A HOUSING ASSOCIATION</b>
Gaining sign-off might be problematic because of the inability to maintain Decent Homes or meet needs identified in the stock condition survey over the long term. The government office will	This would require government support, which would involve the council stating how it intended to deal with the capital receipt prior to transfer. The government office would also need to be satisfied

<p>need to see that there are plans in place for managing the reductions in expenditure.</p> <p>With retention, decisions would be under the control of the council who would have to make the necessary reductions in expenditure, or corresponding increases in charges, in consultation with tenants.</p>	<p>about the consideration being given to the overall feedback from the last round of consultation and the test of opinion. It would also require tenants to vote in favour and the result from the 23.5% who replied to the Test of Opinion and expressed a view shows retention as the preferred option at present.</p> <p>There is evidence from public contact that some tenants view transfer more positively once they receive direct factual answers to questions that concern them. The specific issues that concern tenants would objectively be easier to deliver under a housing association financial regime. The ITA concludes-“We would expect, and can see, that this level of interest and support (for transfer) would grow following further in depth consultation with tenants.”</p>
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<b>8. Implications for employees</b>	
<b>STAYING WITH THE COUNCIL</b>	<b>TRANSFER TO A HOUSING ASSOCIATION</b>
<p>Housing staff would continue to be employed directly by the council unless future reviews concluded that alternatives were appropriate. Any reductions in the HRA (as an alternative to increased charges), and reduced capital programmes, would almost certainly have implications for jobs.</p>	<p>Staff spending 50% or more of their time on landlord activities would be offered a transfer to the housing association under TUPE. New jobs created by the housing association would customarily be ring fenced for other housing related staff but the full implications for staff would be finalised in the run up to transfer.</p>

<b>9. Value for money issues</b>	
<b>STAYING WITH THE COUNCIL</b>	<b>TRANSFER TO A HOUSING ASSOCIATION</b>
<p><i>With Rent Convergence there would be no value for money issues concerning rent levels for transferring tenants because rent levels would be similar under both options. Transferring tenants would also have the Right to Buy with both options.</i></p>	
<p>Financial pressures would make achieving value for money more difficult with the balance between capital and revenue spending driven by the potential need to reduce both, rather than prudent, property related decisions. The council would have to pursue government efficiency savings.</p> <p>The needs of the stock would be in competition with other council objectives for scarce capital resources.</p>	<p>The new housing association would have fully funded revenue and capital budgets, vetted by risk averse lenders. Programmes could therefore be constructed on the basis of best practice, including value for money. The new landlord would have to pursue government efficiency savings.</p> <p>The council would have a capital receipt, which it could spend or invest depending on its view at the time, including value for money issues. The consultants suggest an indicative net gain to the council of up</p>

	to £7.4m over the first 5 years if receipts are invested (based on meeting half of the tenants aspirations for improved services)
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**8. Next Steps**

The Option Appraisal process has identified that there are two viable options for the future of the Council's housing stock. They are; staying with the Council and large-scale voluntary transfer. The tables below provide an outline of the actions that would have to take place for the implementation of each option, with estimated timescales.

**8.1 Next Step - Staying with the Council**

<b>Action</b>	<b>Commentary</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Complete Review of Technical Services	The Council is currently undertaking a review of the Technical Service to enhance partnership working and streamline processes through the integration of the Technical (Client) functions and the DLO (Commercial) operations. The management of this process of change has been geared to coordinate with the determination of the procurement arrangements for the repairs service and the determination of the Options Appraisal. It is anticipated that the changes will require the negotiation of new contract arrangements for a number of staff and will therefore need to meet the proper HR requirements. An outline action plan for this process has been given to staff as part of the consultation process already underway. A detailed action plan is due and further consultation will be arranged.	October 2005
Determine Procurement Arrangements for Response Repairs and the future of the DLO	A commitment was made in April 2005 to the Cabinet to evaluate a range of options for the procurement of repairs services and consider the future arrangements for the Council's DLO. The options are: (1) Maintain an in house DLO and build its business base. (2) Establish a long-term public private partnership. (3) Closer working partnership between the DLO operations and the City Council. (4) Re-tender the response repairs contract. It is intended that external consultants will be engaged to assist with the evaluation process, and quantification of the options. A brief has been drafted and prices will be sought for the completion of the work as specified. A report will be presented to the Cabinet in September 2005 detailing the results of the evaluation and financial appraisal.	September 2005

Action	Commentary	Timescale
Complete the Review and Reorganisation of Shire Homes	<p>The review of Shire Homes is underway in conjunction with the Sheltered Housing Review and the Allocations Review. These will be coordinated to enable an overview to be taken, ensure the recommended changes interrelate and that the best structural and working arrangements are achieved to serve all service areas. The target date for completion of the Shire Homes Review is November 2005, although it is recognised that full implementation may take a little longer.</p>	November 2005
Achieve Savings identified in the Repairs and Maintenance Budget	<p>The Council has identified approximately £0.5m worth of revenue savings in 2005/6 in order to achieve a balanced budget and sustain the HRA for future years. It is imperative that the budgets are managed and monitored to achieve the required outturn in March 2006 to reduce the level of pressure placed on the budget in future years. If this is achieved the model projects that the revenue spending can be continued at the new reduced level. Information regarding any potential overspend in 2005/06 will form part of the 2006/07 budget setting process and, as a consequence, a view will need to be taken on the situation this autumn. Details of the revenue account position for retention of the housing stock is included in a report, Options Appraisal Revenue Savings presented to the HOW Group on the 11<sup>th</sup> May.</p> <p>It is apparent from the modelling exercise carried out by Tribal HCH that on the basis of the Council's projected programme of capital expenditure the accumulated capital receipts run out in 2011/12. As detailed in the report to the HOW group in the Capital Expenditure Assessment report presented on 11<sup>th</sup> May from that time the available projected capital programme falls to £4m per year.</p>	Immediate  October 2005
Review and Revise the HRA Business Plan	<p>It is accepted that there is a requirement to review and revise the HRA Business Plan on an annual basis. The current Business Plan and the financial modelling completed by Tribal HCH have been completed using the best information currently available. But, changes in the housing financial regime and available grants and costs are subject to significant variation over time.</p> <p>Reviewing the Business Plan will require updating the business planning model and conducting consultation on tenants', leaseholders' and Members' priorities as well as communicating with other stakeholders.</p>	October 2005

<b>Action</b>	<b>Commentary</b>	<b>Timescale</b>
Update the Stock Condition Survey	<p>The Council's stock Condition survey is now 4 years old. During the validation process required for the Options Appraisal significant weaknesses were identified with the data recorded from the survey. Attempts to address these weaknesses with the contractor Stevens Scanlan produced some improvements but did not resolve all issues. During the Options Appraisal process an assessment was carried out of the areas of difference between the Base Model for capital expenditure developed from the stock condition data by Tribal HCH and a model developed by them from the Council's own data for the approved capital improvements programme, incorporating MRA expenditure. In order to achieve comparable data an indicative year was used, 2006/7. It should be noted that this is applicable for a period of approximately 5 years as the funding requirements for elements of expenditure tend to run in bands for 5 year periods. This is specifically the case for the parking and lighting figure.</p> <p>The analysis found significant variations under a number of headings, in particular; roads parking and lighting (£1.2m), re-roofing (£0.8m), rewiring (£0.68m), common rooms of sheltered schemes (£0.58m), and refurbishments (£0.48m). Closer examination of these differences suggests that of these illustrated differences the parking and lighting figure is referred to as 'improvements' in the stock condition survey but no further definition is given. This has been raised with the consultants Ridge to clarify why they felt it appropriate to include it in the figures for projected expenditure. Of the others mentioned the figures in the stock condition survey are all accurately represented. The Council's own programme has therefore been re-examined and only the figure for rewiring seems to be an underestimate for the achievement of decent homes. The figure should be revised up to £0.35m (from £0.045m), still £0.33m below the stock condition figure.</p> <p>The Repairs and Maintenance Service Plan gives a commitment that 20% of the Council's stock will be resurveyed each year. The information gained from these surveys will be input onto the attributes module of the Orchard System to improve the quality of existing data used for the development of the repairs and maintenance programme. It is expected that a full stock condition survey will be undertaken within the next 3 years in order to ensure that data is up to date and includes the elemental breakdown recommended in Government guidance.</p>	Before February 2008

Action	Commentary	Timescale
Tenant, Leaseholder and Other Stakeholder Consultation	As indicated previously consultation with tenants, leaseholders and staff is ongoing in relation to the reviews that are already underway. This would continue, and be developed in the event that the stock was retained. The financial position following retention would require that extensive consultation was undertaken with tenants and leaseholders to enable spending to be targeted to their priorities, and a communication exercise would be needed to ensure that tenants, leaseholders and other stakeholders understood the need to change policies and practices to reflect financial constraints. The tenants' compact to be re-launched in Autumn 2005 and this will take account of the tenants' and leaseholders' involvement with the budget setting process.	Autumn 2005

## 8.2 Next Step - Stock Transfer

Action	Commentary	Timescale
Identify provision in the budget in order to proceed towards transfer	The Lead Consultant identified substantial "at risk" resources that would have to be paid for by the Council, in the event of attempting to proceed with a stock transfer. As part of the budget setting process, it would therefore be necessary to locate where the funding for these resources could be found.	October 2005
Apply to the ODPM for a place on the Transfer List	The ODPM require Authorities to be on their approved list before any progress towards a transfer can be made.	In line with ODPM guidance
Appointment of Lead Consultants	The Council would be required to appoint lead consultants for the transfer process. This will involve tendering for a suitable consultant in accordance with the Councils contract standing orders and financial regulations.	October 2005
Completion of a Stock Condition Survey	It will be necessary to undertake a stock condition survey in order to have comprehensive accurate, up to date information for the transfer process. As the stock condition survey is 4 years old it is accepted that the survey would require updating within the next 3 years anyway.	To be advised by the Lead Consultant
Appointment of ITA to Tenants	An ITA would be appointed using a process similar to that employed to appoint PS for the Options Appraisal process. Tenants would be the drivers of the process, which would need to meet standing orders as to contracts and financial regulations requirements.	“

Appointment of PR Advisors	Consultation and information is key to the transfer process and therefore specialists are used for the project. A tender process would be employed as for the engagement of the other consultants.	“ “
Appoint Legal & Funding Advisors	Specialist advisors would be appointed to give guidance on the financial, and business arrangements for transfer. This would include securing the finances to purchase the housing stock from the Council.	“ “
Consultation with all Stakeholders	A Consultation Strategy for the transfer project would be developed and a major consultation exercise would be undertaken as part of the transfer process. This would involve all stakeholders and seek to engage every Council tenant. Hard to reach groups would be targeted, and as many different methods of involvement as possible would be utilised. Particular consultation would also be required with staff, both directly and through their Trade Union representatives.	“ “

Action	Commentary	Timescale
Conduct a Ballot	It is an ODPM requirement that there is a ballot of secure tenants to establish the support for a large scale voluntary transfer. It is usual to use the Electoral Reform Society to conduct the formal ballot.	Late 2006
Actual Transfer	In the event of a successful ballot, the ODPM expect a transfer to take place within a year.	Autumn 2007



## **9. Issues highlighted by HOW Group**

In concluding its deliberations, the HOW Group wishes to highlight the following issues to the Housing Portfolio Holder:

### **9.1 Finances**

The Group notes with concern that the current housing subsidy system results in the Council paying to the Government by way of 'negative housing subsidy' an annual sum equivalent to almost 50% of its annual rental income. In cash terms this amounts to £8m each year. Housing associations are not subject to the housing subsidy system and so are able to retain all their rental income and use it to improve and develop services.

A stock transfer receipt would be subject to a 20% Government levy after set up costs, equivalent to just over £6m in South Cambridgeshire's case.

Comparison of payments to central Government between the stock retention and stock transfer options using the above figures shows an £8m annual payment for retention (£80m+ over ten years) compared to a one off payment of £6m for stock transfer.

### **9.2 Repairs and maintenance**

While the Council can achieve the Decent Homes Standard for all its homes by 2010, it is unlikely to be able to maintain them at that standard beyond 2012/13, as building components are continually becoming 'non decent' through age.

It should be recognised that tenants' expectations of the Council's housing service are increasing, and the gap between tenants' aspirations and resource availability is increasing.

### **9.3 Tenant views / ballot**

The test of opinion suggests that the majority of tenants who expressed a view were not persuaded at this time of the advantages of stock transfer. If the Council decides to pursue transfer there is uncertainty about the result of a tenant ballot and up to £750k is at risk if that ballot does not provide a tenant majority to proceed.

The Group is concerned that equity sharers are not permitted to vote in the ballot on any transfer proposal, and recommends that they be offered an opportunity to express their views in the event that a transfer is pursued.

### **9.4 Affordable Housing**

The Group notes that only transfer can provide additional resources to increase the development of affordable housing in the district.

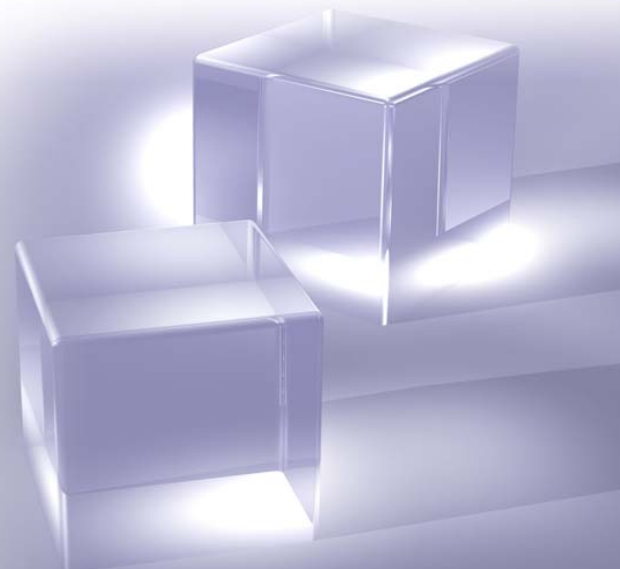
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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**OPTION APPRAISAL**

**FINANCIAL ANALYSIS: AMENDED FINAL  
REPORT – EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**JUNE 2005**



## 1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This report presents the outputs of the financial analysis of options for the future management of the housing stock for South Cambridgeshire District Council. This report concentrates on the financial aspects of each option including the assumptions made in the modelling and the related outputs.

## 1.2 Stock Retention

1.2.1 Our modelling suggests that on the basis of the stock condition database the revenue account (taking account of currently planned savings) will fall into deficit from 2007/8. To avoid this, an annual saving of approximately £410,000 per annum (2005/6 prices) would be necessary from 2006/7 onwards. The Council is unable to fund all of the necessary capital works, after 2008/9. There is thereafter a shortfall of resources, totalling £5.5m by 2010/11, and a cumulative £103.6m at the end of the thirty year modelling.

1.2.2 The Council could afford to meet the Capital expenditure necessary to achieve Decent Homes, but an annual revenue saving of approximately £437,000 per annum from 2006/7 would be necessary.

1.2.3 As the existing "South Cambridgeshire Standard" for repairs cannot be met, it is clear there will be insufficient resources to meet the additional costs of the tenants' aspirational investment programme.

1.2.4 Our modelling of the implications of the 4% increase in target allowances which may result from changes to the rent restructuring regime suggests that, with a saving of approximately £112,000 per annum from 2006/7, the HRA can be balanced by 2010, though at this level of saving the HRA balance falls below the minimum level, and to nil at one point.

## 1.3 Stock Retention – ALMO

1.3.1 As explained above, our modelling indicates that the Council has sufficient capital resources available to meet the Decent Homes Standard. As ALMO funding is intended to supplement the resources of Councils unable to achieve this, the Council would be highly unlikely to be able to successfully apply for this funding.

## 1.4 Stock Retention – PFI

1.4.1 PFI does not currently provide a whole stock solution but recent approvals for new build projects may offer potential for non HRA schemes to complement other management options

## 1.5 Stock Transfer

- 1.5.1 Our indicative valuation for the Council's stock, with 50% of tenants' aspirational works included is £47.606m. However, we have demonstrated how sensitive to the assumptions made the valuation is. For example, if no tenants' aspirational works were included, the valuation is £57.512m. The final valuation would be subject to negotiation around the assumptions made, and the results of a new stock condition survey.
- 1.5.2 Although we have modelled the valuation impact of undertaking Decent Homes only, in our experience it is highly unlikely that tenants would vote for a transfer unless it was providing additional works which the Council is unable to afford, such as reflected in the base valuation.
- 1.5.3 We have considered the impact on the General Fund as a result of transfer and our modelling suggests that at the base valuation, a net benefit of more than £7.4m could be achieved within 5 years of transfer, assuming capital receipts are not spent.
- 1.5.4 Transfer does allow the opportunity to provide additional affordable housing, although the full 300 units per annum identified as necessary is not affordable.

## 1.6 Partial Option Analysis

- 1.6.1 We have undertaken an analysis of the Windmill Estate, considering the two main options (of retention with a PFI contract or transfer) including the impact on the HRA.
- 1.6.2 There would be a requirement for a "PFI Credit" of £3.7m to support a scheme for managing and maintaining the estate.
- 1.6.3 For a partial transfer it is anticipated that a partnering arrangement with a local RSL could generate a receipt of £1.8m (less levy and set up costs) and could provide a future benefit to the HRA of £52,000 per annum.
- 1.6.4 Conclusions
- 1.6.5 The analysis in this report makes a number of assumptions about future resources, subsidy and expenditure. Many of these are based on the existing arrangements and the Council's budgets and strategy, though significantly, investment in the Housing Stock is based on the need to spend as assessed in the Stock Condition Database, rather than current practice.
- 1.6.6 Our modelling suggests that substantial revenue savings, in addition to those in management costs already budgeted, would be necessary to retain the Housing Stock. In this case, although it could afford to meet the Decent Homes Standard, the Council could not afford to undertake all necessary works.
- 1.6.7 Additional support for ALMOs is not available to the Council, on the basis of the analysis undertaken and PFI does not provide a whole stock option.

- 1.6.8 Stock transfer provides an option to fully provide for the investment programme and could also deliver additional resources to the General Fund.
- 1.6.9 In considering a partial option, both PFI and transfer require the agreement of the ODPM (and in the case of transfer, a “yes” vote from tenants) to proceed. In addition “PFI credits” are needed to support the PFI scheme and a recipient landlord, able to raise the necessary funding, is needed for transfer. It is anticipated that the impact on the HRA would be neutral with a PFI scheme and marginally positive with transfer.



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## Appendix C

### 1. Introduction

PS Consultants were appointed in March 2004 by tenants' representatives in South Cambridgeshire, to undertake the role of the Independent Tenants' Advisor (ITA) during the course of a Housing Options Appraisal exercise being undertaken by South Cambridgeshire District Council (the Council).

The Council had appointed Tribal HCH to act as its Financial Consultant during the course of the appraisal exercise and had established a Steering Group, known as the Housing Options Working (HOW) Group, consisting of tenant representatives, councillors, and representatives from the Council's housing staff, in order to manage the process on its behalf.

The HOW Group's role, supported by Tribal HCH and PS Consultants, was to ensure that the process of the appraisal of the four options for the future ownership and management of the Council's housing stock of approximately 6000 properties was undertaken in accordance with the Government's guidance on Options Appraisal that was issued in June 2003.

The four options that were under consideration were: -

- Stock retention by the Council with the existing financial and management arrangements
- Stock retention by the Council with management undertaken by an Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO)
- Stock retention by the Council through the Private Finance Initiative (PFI)
- Stock Transfer to one or more Registered Social Landlords

The Government's guidance provides detailed requirements for the way in which an Options Appraisal exercise must be conducted. This includes a requirement for tenants and leaseholders to be able to make meaningful contributions to the process through representation on working groups, and for tenants to be at the heart of the decision making process about the preferred option for the future ownership and management of homes.

As the ITA in South Cambridgeshire District therefore, PS Consultants' role was, essentially: -

- To support the tenants' representatives on the HOW Group, through the provision of detailed advice and training, in order to ensure that they were able to make a full and informed contribution to the process;
- To provide information to, and undertake consultation with, the wider tenant and leaseholder population with regard to the issues relating to the Options Appraisal process.
- To undertake further consultation with tenants to determine their aspirations for improvements to homes and housing services that lead to the development of the 'Future Homes Standard.'
  - To receive a report on the implications of each of the four options from the financial consultants, Tribal HCH
- To undertake detailed consultation with tenants to obtain an informed view with regard to their preferred option for the future ownership and management of the Council's homes.

In conducting the role of the ITA, PS Consultants' work was managed by the tenant representatives who had been responsible for their appointment to the role.

Their work relating to the consultation with the wider tenant and leaseholder population was, however, overseen by the HOW Group as a whole who considered and approved the methodologies that were employed and the consultation material that was produced.

This report outlines the work that has been undertaken by PS Consultants during the period April 2004 - May 2005 with regard to consultation with tenants in South Cambridgeshire, details the findings of the consultation that was undertaken and offers some initial conclusions.

In writing this report PS Consultants would like to acknowledge the contribution of all the people who assisted in both the planning and the delivery of the consultation programme, in particular, the Tenant Representatives on the HOW Group and Tracey Cassidy, Tenant Participation Officer.

## **2. The Consultation Programme**

### **2.1 Objectives**

The detailed objectives for the consultation exercise were

- To raise awareness amongst tenants and leaseholders about the Options Appraisal exercise that was being undertaken
- To advise tenants of the key Government policies that affect the process, including the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard, and of the four options under consideration for the future ownership and management of the Council's homes
- To obtain further, detailed, information about tenants' aspirations with regard to the improvement of homes and the future development of the housing service
- To provide detailed information to tenants with regard to the ability of each of the four options to provide the investment required to meet the investment requirements
- To provide tenants with a range of easily accessible opportunities to obtain further information about the Options Appraisal process and the implications of the different options
- To determine through consultation tenants' views with regard to their preferred option.

### **2.2 Methodology**

The consultation exercises were designed to incorporate the use of a range of consultation methods that were consistent with the Council's Tenant Empowerment Strategy and that would allow all tenants the opportunity to gain sufficient information to enable them to develop an informed view about their preferred option.

In order to ensure that all tenants received information about the options and were given the opportunity to comment the consultation exercise incorporated the use of the following methods: -

- Three newsletters
- A postal survey
- Four focus Groups
- A postal test of opinion
- Coffee mornings
- Drop-in information sessions
- Resident Group meetings
- Telephone Survey

## **Newsletters**

The first newsletter was distributed to all tenants during August 2004 and had the objective of raising the profile of the Options Appraisal process amongst tenants. It described the key government policies that would influence the Options Appraisal process in South Cambridgeshire, and sought to obtain further, detailed, information about tenants' aspirations with regard to the improvement of homes and the future development of the housing service. It explained the role of PS Consultants as the ITA, and provided details of the freephone number and email address that were open to tenants throughout the duration of the consultation exercise.

The second newsletter was distributed to all tenants in February. This explained the Future Homes Standard that had been established as a result of the survey carried out in August, and reiterated key Government policies, including the Decent Homes Standard.

The third newsletter was distributed to tenants in early April 2005 and provided, on the basis of the report that had been undertaken by Tribal HCH, an analysis of the ability of each of the four options to meet the investment required to meet the Decent Homes Standard and the Future Homes Standard.

The newsletter encouraged tenants to obtain further information by attending one of the series of information events or by contacting PS Consultants directly via either the freephone or email.

The third newsletter also contained the postal test of opinion that tenants were requested to complete and return in a pre-paid envelope that was also provided. In order to encourage a wide response PS Consultants sponsored a free prize draw into which all tenants who responded were entered.

All newsletters were written in consultation with the HOW Group and sought to highlight the issues that it considered would be of the most significant concern to tenants.

In order to support the consultation exercise a series of seven fact sheets were produced giving further details about the process and the implications of each of the options. These were available on request, at the consultation events and from the Council Office.

## **Information Events**

A total of 28 consultation events were held between 4 and 15 April 2005. In order to encourage the maximum attendance the sessions comprised a variety of events, including 16 coffee mornings, 1 afternoon tea, 8 'drop-in' sessions and 3 Resident Group meetings. These were held at a variety of locations and at different times of the day, including evenings.

A total of 382 tenants attended the meetings, including a number of shared equity tenants. This rate of attendance was higher than had been anticipated and compares favourably with PS Consultants' experience of conducting similar exercises elsewhere. It was noted, however, that those tenants who did attend were predominantly from older age groups, largely because the majority of the sessions were held at Sheltered Schemes.

Each meeting (other than the 'drop in' sessions) took the format of a detailed presentation by the ITA followed by the opportunity for questions and comments from the audience. The 'drop in' sessions, afforded people the opportunity to come along at any time during the session to pick up information or discuss relevant issues with the ITA.

## **Focus Group**

In addition to the wider consultation an additional four Focus Group type meetings were established in order to determine, in greater detail, tenants' views on various issues relating to the Options Appraisal process and the options that were being considered.

The Focus Groups comprised tenants who indicated on the first survey form that they would like to be more involved in the process. The Focus Groups began with a presentation from the ITA outlining the background to the Options Appraisal exercise, and the aims of these sessions. Tenants were then asked to break into separate groups to consider, in detail, the following: -

- Prioritisation of desired home improvements
- Prioritisation of desired service improvements
- Issues surrounding service improvements, e.g. repairs, tenant participation
- Preferred consultation methods and material
- Hopes and worries about the future of council housing with regard to the options.

The views of each group were fed back into a discussion of the whole group and collective views were made with regard to each of the subject areas.

## **3. The Survey Findings – Phase One**

PS Consultants received a total of 2075 completed surveys, which represented a response rate of approximately 36% of tenanted households in the District.

This response rate compares very well with other similar consultation exercises that have been conducted by PS Consultants during the first phase of consultation in the course of Housing Options Appraisal exercises.

### **3.1 Who responded?**

The survey sought first to identify the type of people who were responding by asking: -

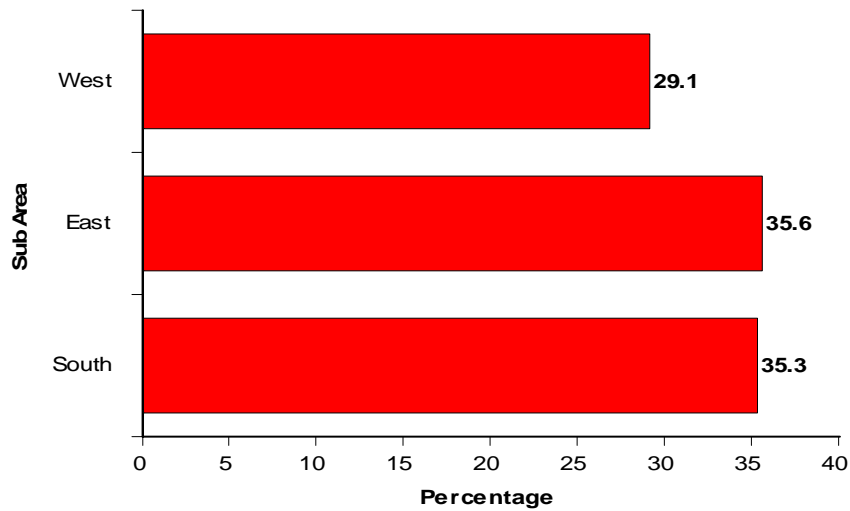
- The area in which they lived
- What type of property they lived in
- How long they had been a tenant

- How old they were

This information could then be considered in order to determine how representative the sample obtained was of the tenant population in general.

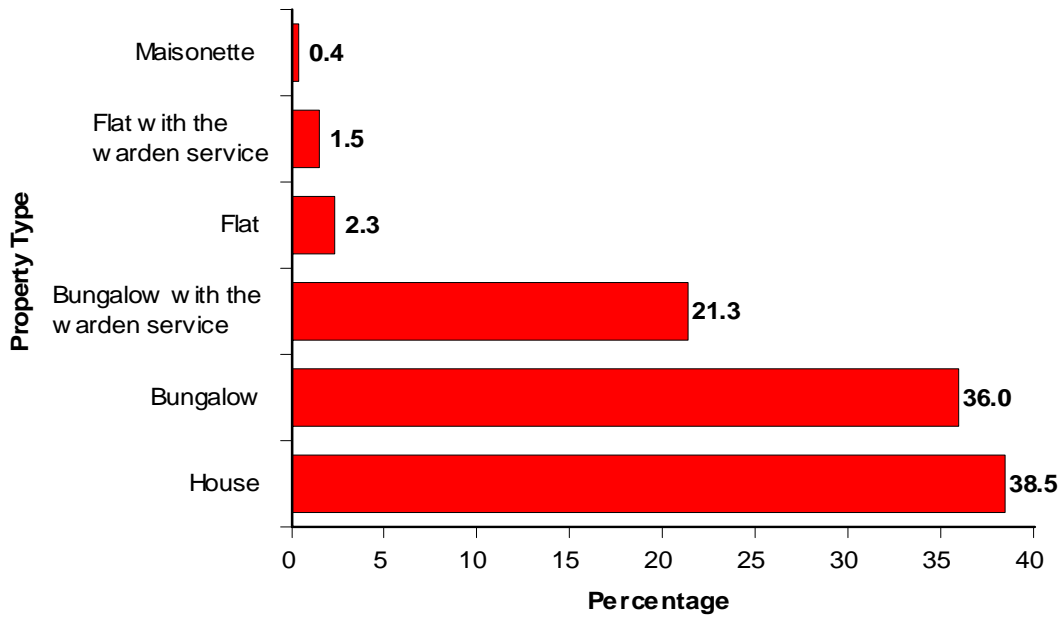
➤ **Area**

The table overleaf shows the percentage of responses that were received from each of the identified areas within the District and demonstrates that the sample obtained is reasonably representative of the overall distribution of the Council's homes in the District.

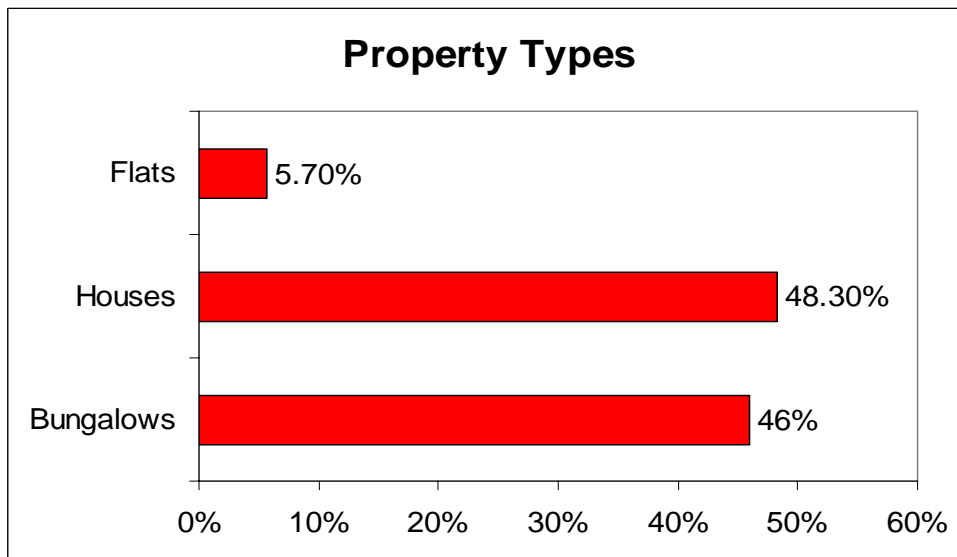


➤ **Property Type**

The graph below demonstrates the type of property in which respondents lived.



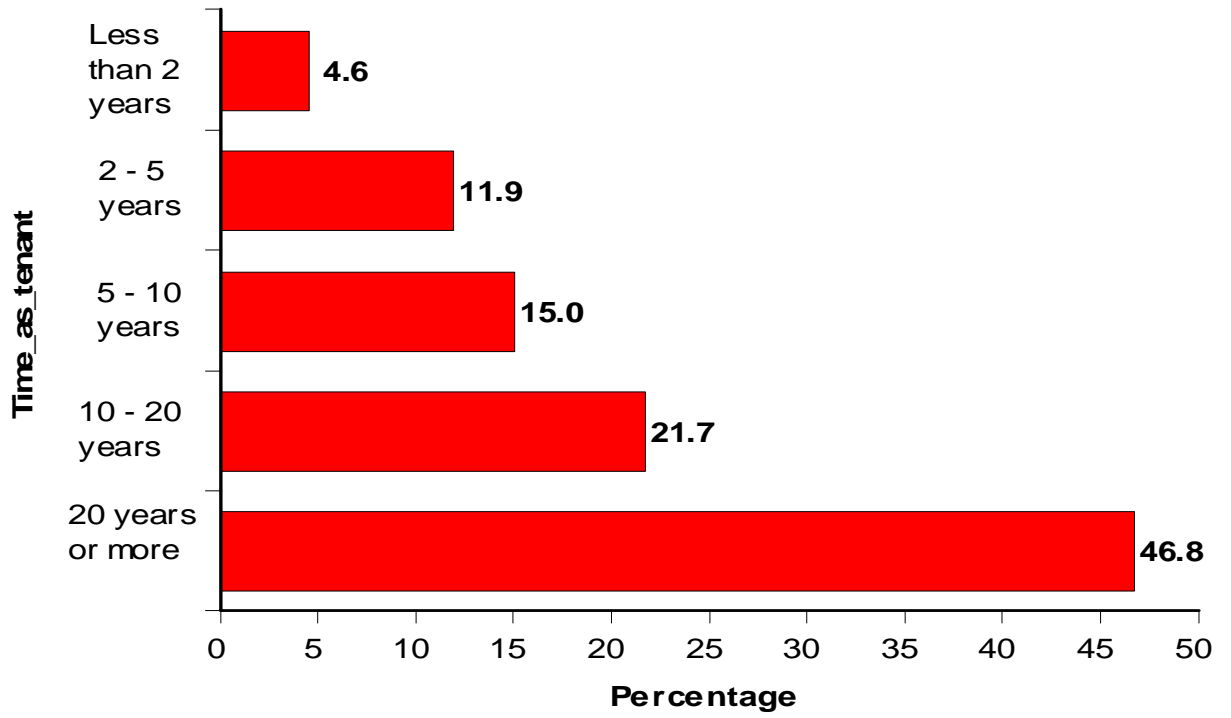
The graph overleaf illustrates the percentage of each property type within the Council's housing stock and demonstrates that the sample obtained was reasonably representative in this regard. However, the 57% response rate from people living in bungalows reflects the high percentage of responses from the older age groups, who are more likely to reside in this type of accommodation.



Source: 2004/5 Business Plan

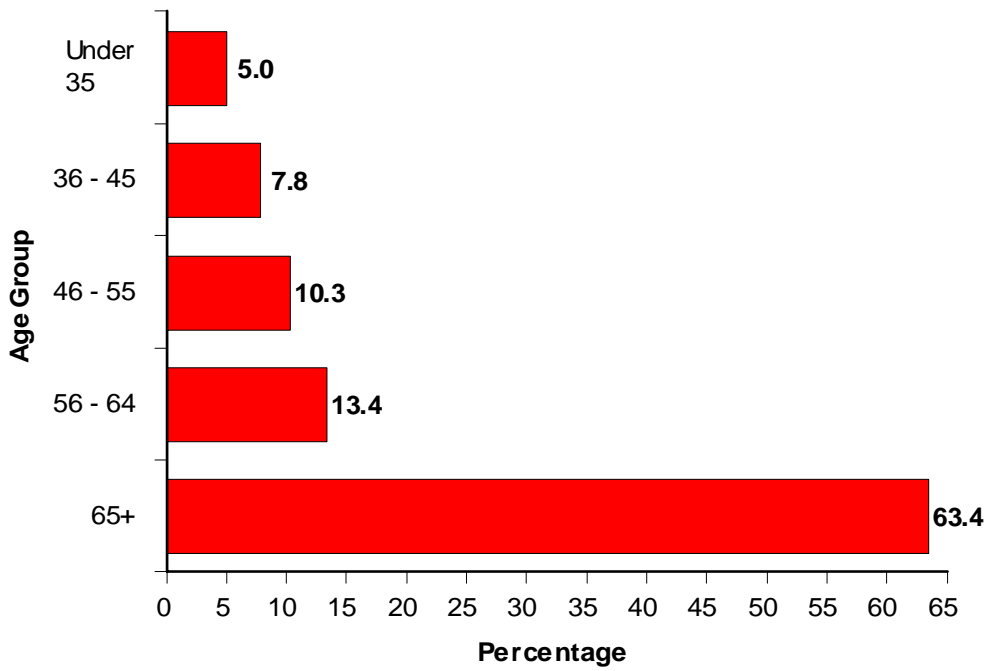
➤ **Length of Tenancy of Respondents**

The graph below demonstrates the length of tenancy of the respondents.



➤ **Age of Respondents**

The graph below demonstrates the age of respondents: -



The graph shows that respondents to the survey tended to be from older age groups and that the majority of respondents (over 63%) were aged over 65.

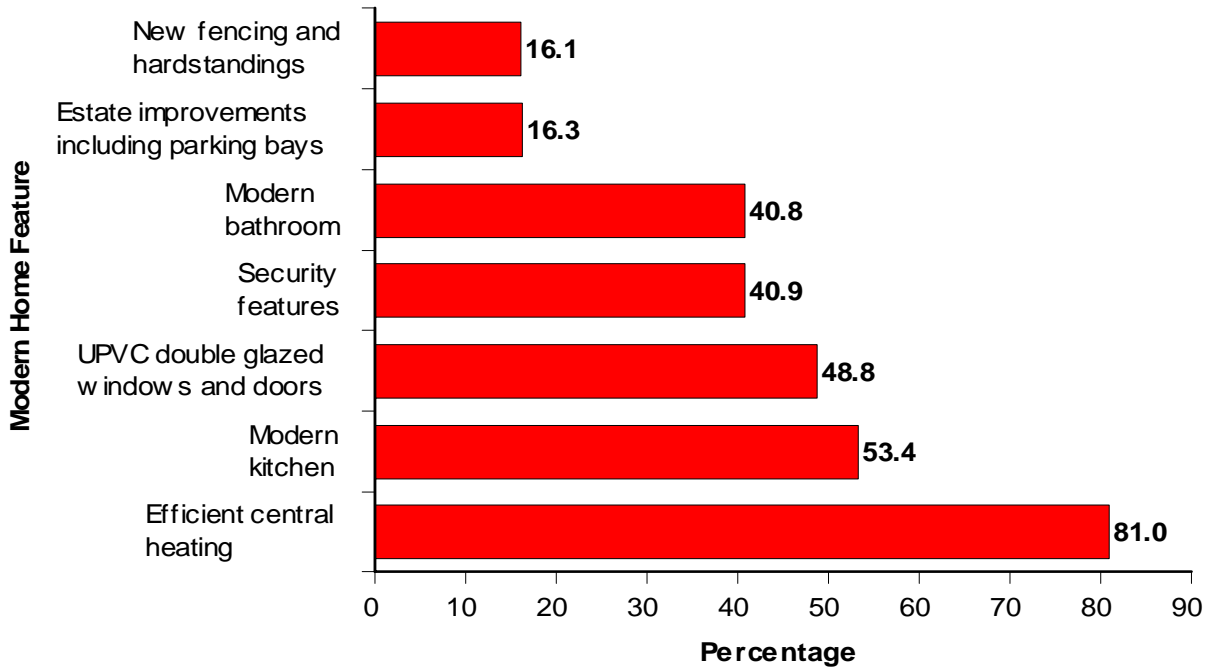
Without accurate information from the Council in respect of the ages of tenants it is impossible to give a direct comparison between the response rate and actual figures. However, a Best Value Performance Indicator survey carried out by the Council in 2003 had a response rate of 57% from the 65 and over age group.

The response rate, in terms of the age of respondents, is similar to that obtained in other surveys that have been undertaken by PS Consultants and demonstrates the extent to which older and more longstanding tenants are prepared to engage in consultation regarding their homes and housing services.



### 3.2 Most Important Elements of a Modern Homes

Tenants were asked to select the three elements of a modern home that they felt were of most importance to them. The graph below shows the response.

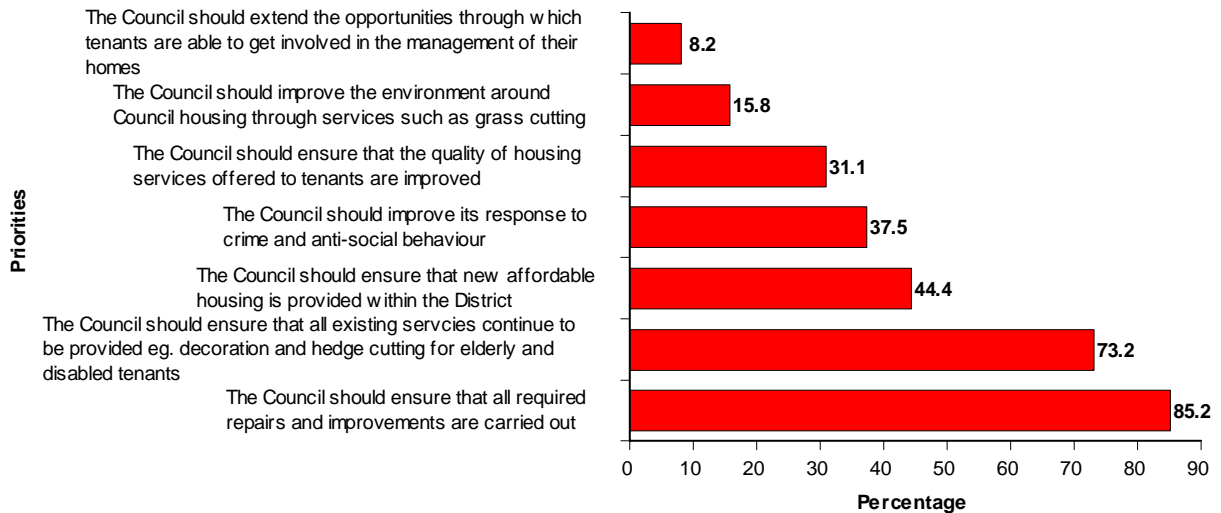


By far the most important element of a modern home was deemed to be an efficient central heating system. This was reflected in the focus groups, free phone calls, and the consultation in phase two, where many were concerned about whether storage heaters and warm air heating would be replaced with a more efficient and cost effective heating system.

Over half of the respondents indicated that a modern kitchen was important, and modern bathrooms, security features and double glazed windows and doors were important to a large proportion of respondents. None of these are a requirement of the Decent Homes Standard.

### 3.3 Improvements to the Housing Service

Tenants were asked to select their priorities for improvements to the housing service. The graph below shows the response.



Over 85% of respondents indicated that repairs and home improvements being carried out, were of the greatest priority, and over 73% felt that it was important for the Council to continue with existing services such as decorating and hedge cutting for elderly and disabled tenants. This could reflect the high response rate from the older age groups.

The provision of new affordable housing in the District was an issue for 44.4% of tenants, and improvements to the existing housing service, including an improved response to anti-social behaviour was important to many.

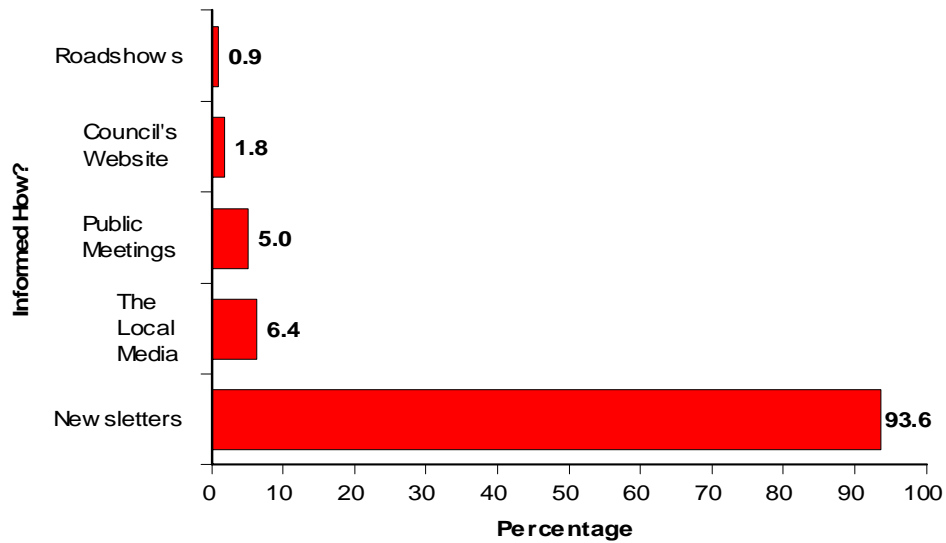
Further analysis of this table was undertaken in respect of the 65 and over age group, and the table below, shows the overall response compared to that of the 65 and over age group.

Service	General Response	65 and over
Repairs and Improvements	85.2%	84.5%
Continuation of Existing Services	73.2%	84.3%
Provision of New Affordable Housing	44.4%	38.4%
Improved response to crime and anti-social behaviours	37.5%	38.4%
Improve the quality of housing services	31.1%	24.7%
Improved environmental works	15.8%	17.8%
More tenant involvement	8.2%	5.6%

As can be seen in the graph above, the older age groups placed more emphasis on continuing existing services, such as decorating and hedge cutting for older and disabled tenants.

### 3.4 How to be kept informed?

Tenants were asked what was their preferred method of being kept informed about the Options Appraisal process. The graph below shows the response.



### 3.5 Who wanted to be more involved in the process?

169 tenants indicated that they would like to be more involved. These people were invited to attend and participate in the Focus Groups held in October 2004.

## 4. Conclusions of Phase One Consultation

The survey that was conducted by PS Consultants, as the Independent Tenants Advisor, during the course of the first stage of the consultation programme about the Stock Options Appraisal exercise received 2075 responses, representing approximately 36% of council households in the District of South Cambridgeshire.

This level of response compares extremely favourably with those which have been obtained in other consultation exercises undertaken by PS Consultants in terms of both its overall size in percentage terms and also in respect of its demographic breakdown. The sample can, therefore, be regarded as being a reasonably good test of opinion amongst council tenants in South Cambridgeshire, although it has been demonstrated that the older age group may be over represented.

With regard to the consultation programme's objective of establishing tenants' views with regard to their priorities for the homes, the environment and the service, the survey has demonstrated some clear findings. It has, for example, demonstrated the extent to which tenants regard the provision of a high quality repairs service as being the Council's greatest priority within the process. The findings also demonstrate that tenants view the continuation of existing services as being important, particularly amongst the older age groups.

With regard to the type of improvements that tenants would like to see to their homes, the survey demonstrates a clear desire for improvements to be undertaken which exceed the requirements of the Decent Homes Standard. 81% of respondents, for example, indicated that they thought that the provision an efficient central heating systems was important, with over 50% indicating that modern kitchens were a priority.

The findings suggested that there was merit in developing the 'Future Homes Standard', a standard above the Decent Homes Standard, and in excess of the requirements of the Stock Condition Survey, to which council homes should be improved.

The survey demonstrates that there is a desire, albeit to varying degrees, amongst tenants for an improvement in the quality of both the housing service, and the homes in South Cambridgeshire.

## 5. The Survey Findings – Phase Two

PS Consultants received a total of 1412 completed surveys, which represented a response rate of approximately 23.5% of tenanted households in the District.

This response rate compares well with other similar consultation exercises that have been conducted by PS Consultants during the course of Housing Options Appraisal exercises and is considerably in excess of the benchmark response rate of 10% that is considered to be acceptable by the Government's Community Housing Taskforce.

### 5.1 Who responded?

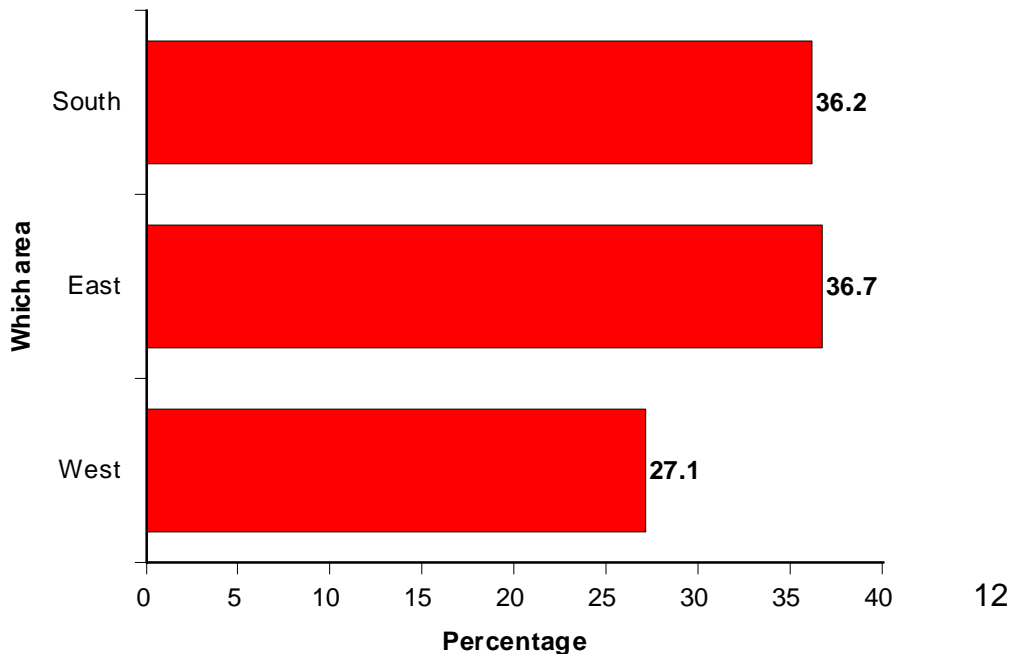
The survey sought first to identify the type of people who were responding by asking:

- The area in which they lived
- What type of property they lived in
- How long they had been a tenant
- How old they were

This information could then be considered in order to determine how representative the sample obtained was of the tenant population in general.

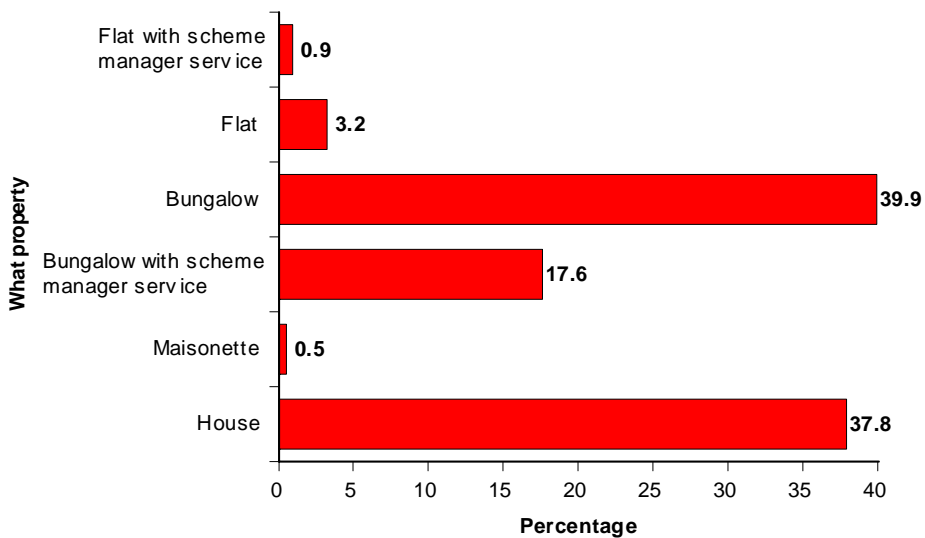
#### ➤ Area

The table below shows the percentage of responses that were received from each of the identified areas within the District and demonstrates that the sample obtained is reasonably representative of the overall distribution of the Council's homes in the District.



➤ **Property Type**

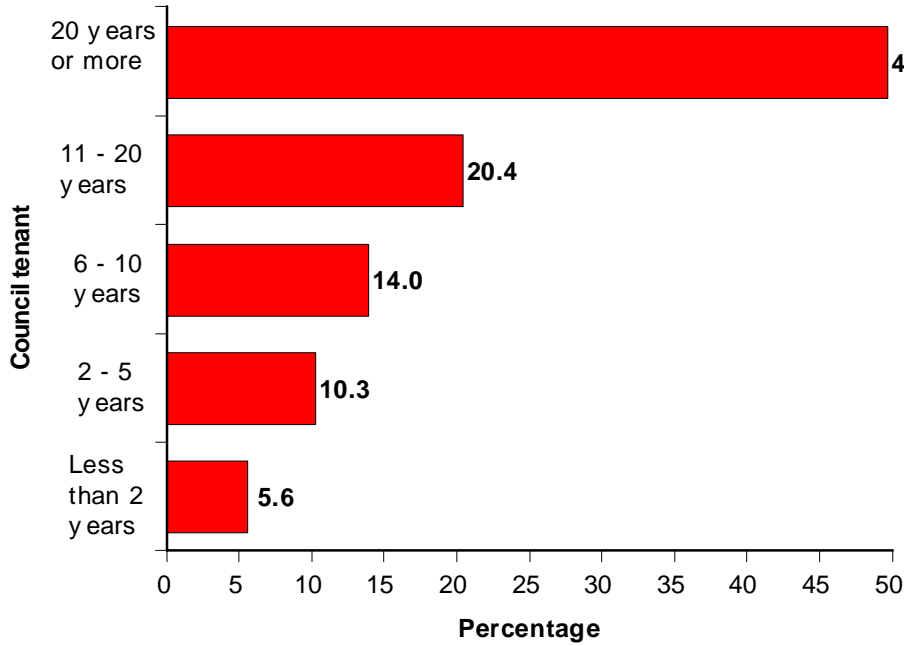
The graph below demonstrates the type of property in which respondents lived.



The graph below illustrates the percentage of each property type within the Council's housing stock and demonstrates that the sample obtained was reasonably representative in this regard. However, as with the first survey, there was a high response rate (57.5%) from people living in bungalows again, reflecting the high percentage of responses from the older age groups, who are more likely to reside in this type of accommodation.

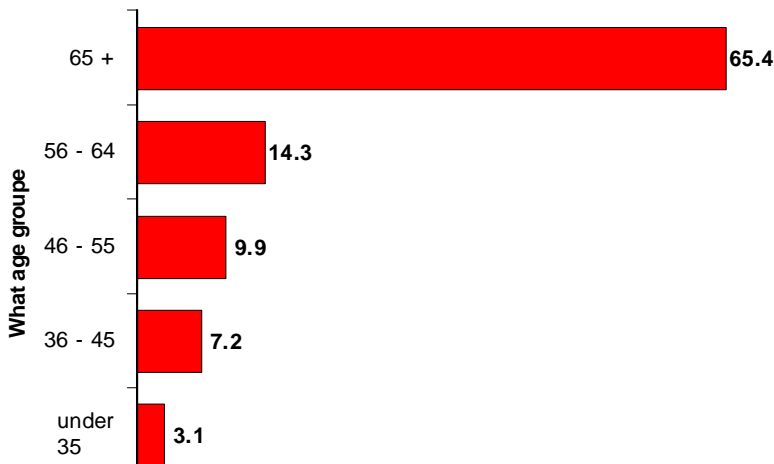
➤ **Length of Tenancy of Respondents**

The graph below demonstrates the length of tenancy of the respondents, and demonstrates that longer standing tenants are more likely to respond to a survey of this type.



➤ **Age of Respondents**

The graph below demonstrates the age of respondents: -



The graph shows that respondents to the survey tended to be from older age groups and that the majority of respondents (over 65.4%) were aged over 65. This is a slightly higher percentage than the response rate in the first survey, which was 63.4%.

Without accurate information from the Council in respect of the ages of tenants it is impossible to give a direct comparison between the response rate and actual figures. However, a Best Value Performance Indicator survey carried out by the Council in 2003 had a response rate of 57% from the 65 and over age group

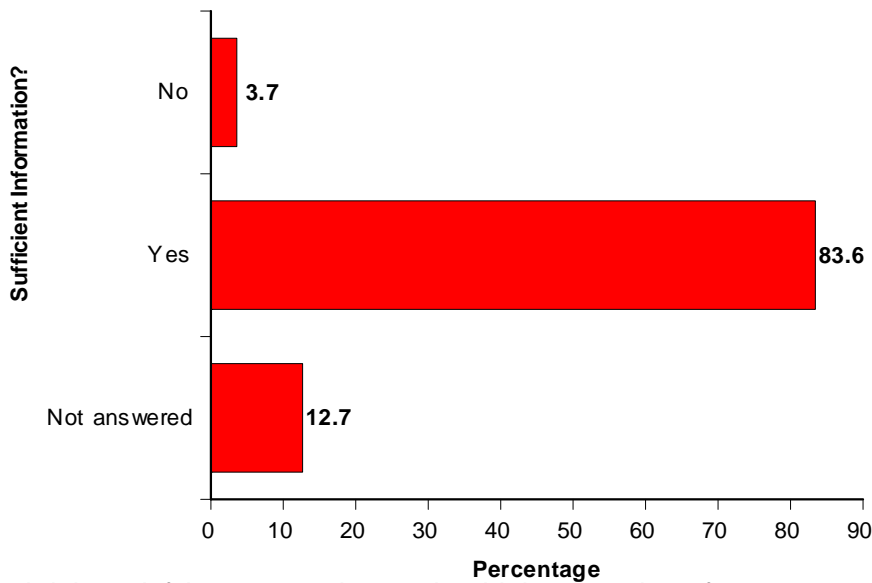
The response rate, in terms of the age of respondents, reflects responses in other surveys that have been undertaken by PS Consultants and demonstrates the extent to which older and more longstanding tenants are prepared to engage in consultation regarding their homes and housing services.

The overrepresentation of older tenants is, however, a factor that the Council may wish to take into account when considering the outcome of the consultation exercise as a whole.

➤ **Had Respondents Received Sufficient Information?**

Having identified respondents according to their geographic location, property type and age the survey sought to identify whether respondents considered that they had received sufficient information to enable them to make a decision about their preferred option for the future ownership and management of homes.

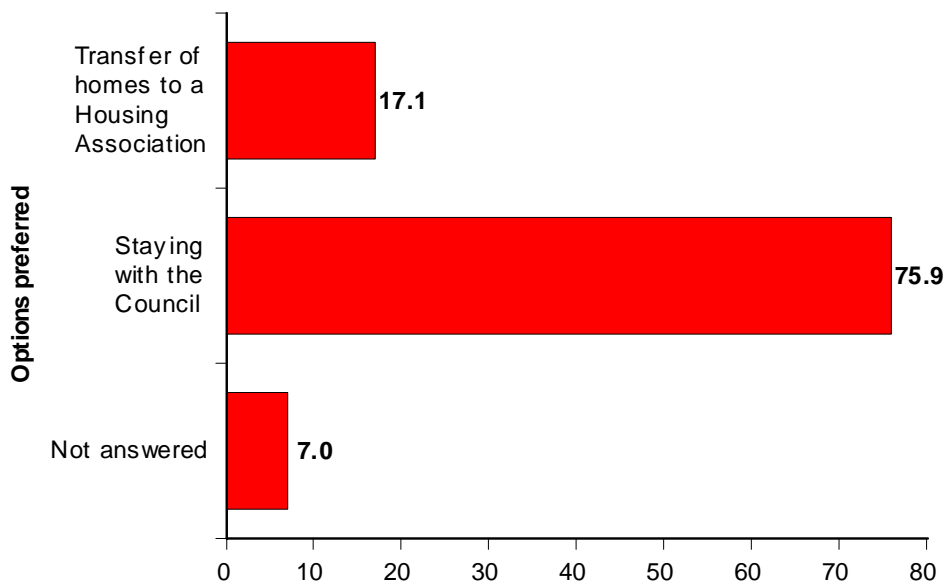
The graph below demonstrates that the vast majority of respondents considered that they had received sufficient information.



Although it is satisfying to note that such a high proportion of tenants considered that they had received sufficient information to enable them to develop an informed view about their preferred option, it should be noted that the answers to subsequent questions demonstrated that there were a number of misconceptions about the options.

**5.1 Tenants' Preferred Option**

Tenants were asked, which of the two options they would prefer for the future ownership and management of South Cambridgeshire District Council's homes.



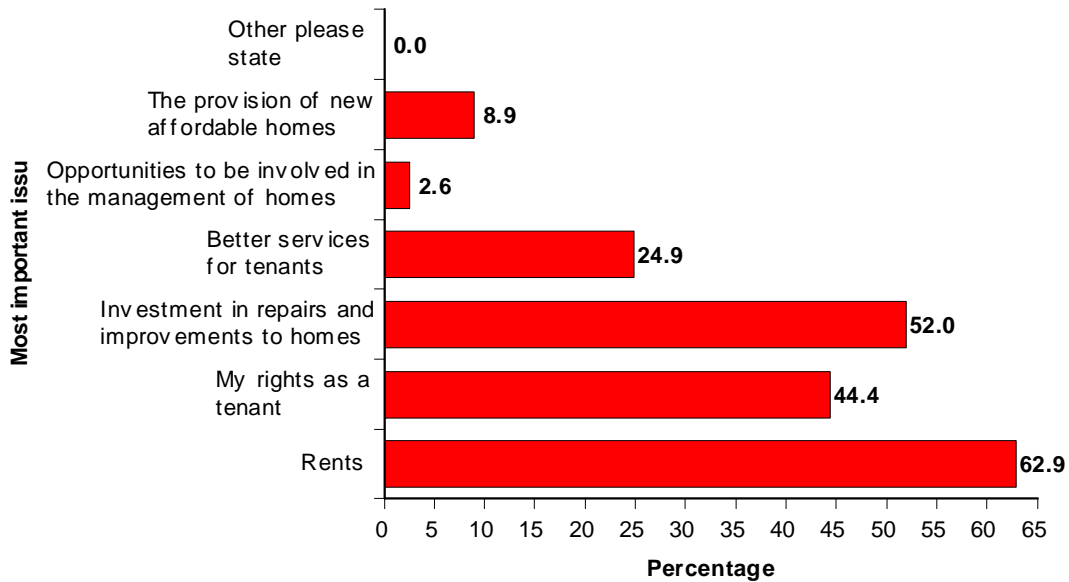
The graph demonstrates that the majority of respondents who expressed a preference, indicated that their preferred option was for the Council to retain the homes. Analysis of this field after the first 800 responses were entered, gave a slightly different response with only 2.9% being in favour of a transfer. This may indicate that opinions changed as people had opportunities to discuss the issues further at consultation events, by using the freephone service, or discussion between themselves.

In PS Consultants' experience it is unusual for a test of opinion, at this stage of an Options Appraisal exercise, to demonstrate support for any option other than Stock Retention by the Council with the existing financial and management arrangements.



## 5.2 Tenants' Concerns and Priorities in Considering the Future of Their Homes

Tenants were asked to indicate which two issues were of most importance to them. The graph below shows the response to this question.



The graph shows some inconsistency with the preferred option being that of stock retention.

Tenant's major concern proved to be that of rents. Under Rent Convergence, in the event of a stock transfer, the rent would be more or less that same as tenants would pay if the Council were still the landlord.

The second priority is that of investment in repairs and improvements to homes. This was fairly evenly reflected across the age groups, with it being a major concern for 59% of the under 35-age group. The amount of investment possible in homes and services varies substantially under each of the options, with stock transfer able to offer the greatest amount of investment.

44.4% of respondents indicated that tenants' rights were a major concern. As with rents, there would be very little difference between the two options, with secure tenancies, and protected assured tenancies being very similar.

## 6. Issues and Concerns Raised

The main concerns expressed at the consultation events and on the freephone help line were reflected by the findings of the survey. The main issues raised at these events were generally those of rents, tenancy rights, particularly the Right to Buy, and repairs and improvements.

In addition, many people queried the finances of RSLs and were concerned as to how improvements to homes and services could be offered if rents were no higher than the Council rents. People were interested in the different financial structures of RSLs and Councils, particularly in the issue of the housing subsidy.

Interest was expressed over the difference in the management structures, with tenants having greater participation and consultation opportunities in RSLs, including membership of the Board of Management.

Some expressed concern about the ability of the Council to continue to provide its current level of services to tenants within the context of the proposed revenue savings that would have to be made in the event of stock retention. Some questioned the extent to which the Government will support this option in the longer term.

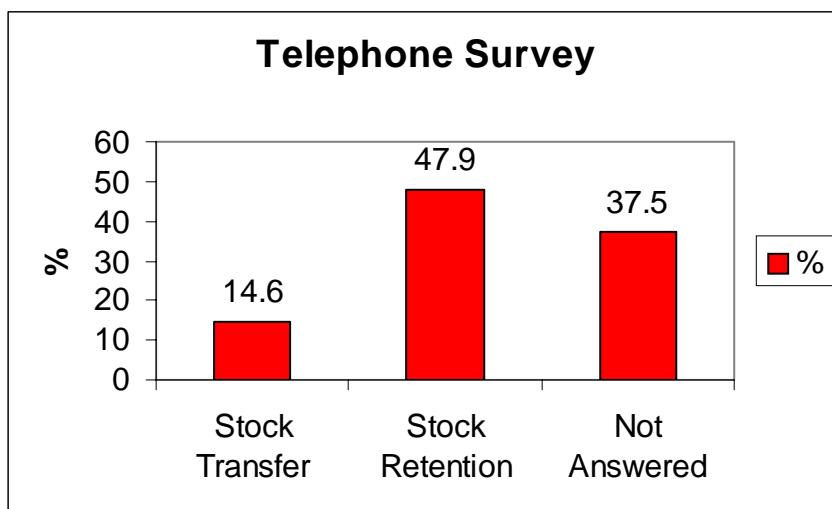
➤ **Equity Share**

There was a great deal of interest from those with an Equity Share property. Many of these appear to feel marginalized by the process because, in the event of the Council choosing to consider a Stock Transfer, they would not, under current legislation, have the right to vote in the formal ballot. Reassurance was made that they have right to be consulted throughout the process, and that their views should be considered throughout, and in particular, in the formal offer document. A copy of the lease agreements has been sent to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for clarification on the rights, and it is recommended that the Council seek further legal advice on how Equity Share property residents would be affected in the event of move towards stock transfer.

➤ **Telephone Survey**

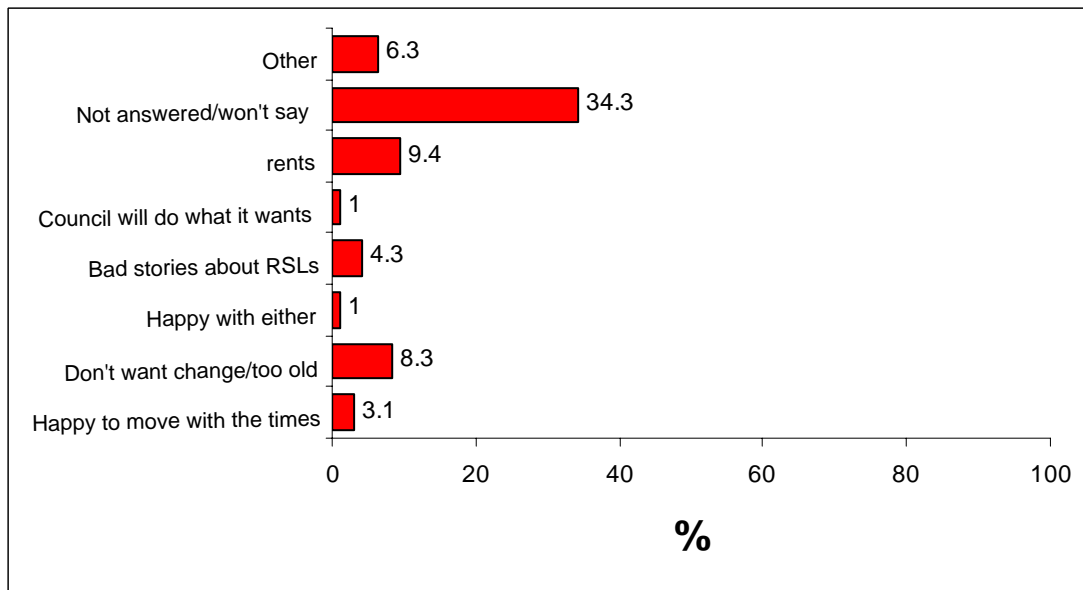
A telephone survey of 96 tenants under the age of 65 was undertaken, principally to identify the reason for a lack of response in this age group.

The survey asked for tenants' preferred option, and the graph overleaf shows the response.



People were asked to identify their main reason for voting as they did, or would do now.

The graph below shows that response



People were asked what their main concern was, and again the majority, 67.8% indicated that rents was a major concern for them, and 14.3% saying they didn't know anything about RSLs, so had general concerns about how they would be affected in the event of a transfer.

## 7. Conclusion

The consultation exercise that was undertaken with tenants in South Cambridgeshire by PS Consultants was successful in providing a range of opportunities for tenants to obtain information about the Council's Housing Options Appraisal exercise and to give their views with regard to their preferred option.

The test of opinion that was undertaken in April 2005 as part of the consultation exercise obtained a response rate of approximately 23.5%, which is in excess of the Community Housing Task Force's benchmark response rate of 10%. Although the sample that was obtained was broadly representative of the distribution of the Council's housing stock in the district it has been noted that tenants from older age groups were possibly over represented and that this could have had an impact upon the overall result.

The survey demonstrated that Stock Retention was the favoured option by 75.9% of tenants. It has been noted within the report that, in PS Consultants' experience, it is relatively uncommon for any option, other than Stock Retention, to receive support at this stage within the Options Appraisal process.

The principle reason for this is that during this stage of the process, people are being asked to consider a change to an unknown type of organisation, with no specific information about services, improvements, policies, rents, rights, and most importantly, who that landlord would be. We would expect, and can demonstrate that this level of interest and support would grow following further in depth consultation with tenants and leaseholders, where issues such as those listed below would be resolved:-

- The identity of the proposed new landlord
- Rents

- Tenancy conditions
- The Offer to tenants
- Investment levels and programming of improvement works

Although there appears to be little support amongst tenants for a Stock Transfer at this stage, it is recommended that, in making its decision, the Council should take the desire for continued investment in homes and services and demonstrated in the Future Homes Standard, into account during the course of the further consideration of the options.

**Housing Option Appraisal Action Plan  
South Cambridge District Council**

May 2005

Criteria	Evidence checklist	Progress to date
<p>1. <b>Tenant and leaseholder involvement</b> from the outset of the option appraisal process and consultation with all tenants throughout.</p>	<p>(a) Tenant empowerment strategy agreed with tenant representatives and CHTF</p>	<p>Tenant training commenced in January 2004 for the OA process including Decent Homes, housing finance and interview skills.</p> <p>The ITA, PS Consultants was appointed on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004 following a successful interview with the tenant representatives from HOWG. The Tenant Empowerment strategy has been drafted with tenants involved in the process supported by the ITA.</p> <p>CHTF approved the Strategy on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2004. The document is subject to ongoing development throughout the Option Appraisal Process as appropriate.</p>
	<p>(b) TP structure and level of representation at beginning and end of process (including BME groups and disadvantaged and other hard to reach groups)</p>	<p>The Council has a long running TP Group that includes tenants and residents.</p> <p>A further 10 local tenants and residents groups operate throughout the District. The composition of the groups represents the mixed nature of the tenure of properties within the villages.</p> <p>6 representatives from the Tenants Participation Group were identified to form the Options Appraisal Tenants Group and to be members of the Housing Option Appraisal Working Group (HOWG). One of the tenants was elected to be a local Member in May 2004 and therefore now attends the HOWG as a Councillor rather than a tenant. These individuals have played a prominent role in the OA process to date.</p> <p>The first phase of consultation for the OA generated contact information for tenants interested in greater involvement in the process. They were involved in a series of focus groups and included a group consisting solely of equity sharers.</p> <p>During the second phase of consultation, which includes coffee mornings, 'drop-in' sessions, door knocking and evening meetings the tenant representatives on the Housing Options Appraisal Working Group have been playing a key part throughout the two weeks. They are represented at the evening meetings and have been out door knocking with other council officers.</p> <p>Those who wish to will be encouraged to become involved in the local residents groups when the OA process is complete.</p>

Criteria	Evidence checklist	Progress to date
	(c) Input from tenants and authority's response	5 Members of the TPG have been identified to represent tenants on the HOWG.  Tenants were instrumental in the drafting of the Tenant Empowerment Strategy, and the Communications and Consultation Strategy.
	(d) Training and development – identifying gaps and provision	Training of tenants was completed on housing finance, decent homes, options appraisal and recruitment interviewing.  Training will continue as part of the work of the ITA. Members of the HOWG have attended briefings on housing finance, decent homes, the Councils own standard for its homes and housing options. They have also visited 2 other LSVT organisations and met tenants, Officers and board members.
	(e) Analysis of the quality of the tenant involvement criteria against Compact criteria e.g. Timeliness, accessibility, clarity etc.	As part of the OA process the Tenants Compact is being revisited and revised.  A workshop was held in January 05 with the tenant representatives, other tenants from local residents groups and council officers to review the tenant's compact and set targets for the forthcoming year. A further workshop with the above representatives and local councillors is planned for May/June 05. The compact will be re-launched in the Autumn to coincide with budget planning for 2006/07.
	(f) Arrangements for leaseholder consultation	During the first phase of consultation a series of focus groups were held, run by the ITA with the support of the Tenant Participation Officer. One of the groups comprised solely of equity share leaseholders and raised a number of issues and concerns that were specific to that form of tenure.  Equity sharers and leaseholders were included in the recent test of opinion during the second phase of consultation. A briefing paper will be produced for equity sharers in the summer 2005 to cover the issues they raised during the consultation sessions.
<b>2.Consultation</b> A communication strategy covering all stakeholders should be agreed with CHTF at the beginning of the	(a) Communications strategy covering quality and use of different methods of information giving needs to be agreed with stakeholders and CHTF	The communications and consultation strategy was drafted with the involvement of tenants.  CHTF approved the Strategy on 23 <sup>rd</sup> July 2004. The document is subject to ongoing development throughout the Option Appraisal Process as appropriate.

Criteria	Evidence checklist	Progress to date
process.	(b) Level of member/staff engagement and involvement	<p>Staff and Members are aware of the requirement for an Option Appraisal and the timetable.</p> <p>A stakeholder workshop event was held in January 2004 in association with the Housing Strategy and the Business Plan to seek views on the consultation process for the documents, and to give information on the housing strategy, decent homes, and the options appraisal.</p> <p>A report was presented to the Housing Portfolio Holder in May 2004 to outline the progress with the Options Appraisal project and to outline the timetable and organisations structure for the process. Members have continued to be regularly briefed. Reports have been presented at Cabinet meetings, Scrutiny and Full Council throughout the process. The Housing and Environmental Services Director has also held discussion sessions with the political groups at the Council.</p> <p>Housing staff have been briefed at their team meetings throughout the process. A council wide staff forum was set up in September 04 to enable other council officers to have an input to the process.</p>
	(c) Method for briefing all staff throughout the process and assessing the level of understanding	<p>Initial briefings have been given for staff on the decent homes requirements and on the options appraisal process. At the end of March 05 presentations on the financial position was given to all housing staff and the staff forum, with an opportunity for staff to ask questions.</p> <p>A staff forum was established in September 2004 including officers from housing, finance, planning and policy. They have met five times throughout the process and received presentations on the housing options, decent homes, and financial position. Staff took the opportunity to visit an LSVT housing association with members of the HOWG. There have also been Council wide Departmental and Shire Homes Staff Briefings.</p> <p>Three lunch time seminars have also taken place throughout the options appraisal.</p>

Criteria	Evidence checklist	Progress to date
	(d) Approach to identification of other stakeholders	<p>The Council appointed – HACAS Chapman Hendy, now Tribal HCH as lead consultants.</p> <p>A stakeholder analysis forms part of the Communications Strategy.</p> <p>Local housing associations have been informed of the Councils progress through the HA forum and the Housing Corporation have also been appraised of the Councils progress with the OA process.</p> <p>Information about the consultation events are posted on the Councillors bulletin, which is also sent out to all parish councils.</p> <p>Briefings have also been given to the Local Strategic Partnership.</p>
	(e) Level of understanding amongst stakeholders of financial situation (especially where consultants used)	<p>The Councils HRA Business Plan has been signed off by the Government Office and endorsed by Full Council. It has been published and is available on the Councils web site and on the Intranet.</p> <p>The Business Plan along with the base position identified by the Lead Consultant will form the substance of the second phase of consultation with stakeholders, and inform the test of opinion for tenants.</p>
<p><b>2. Financial Appraisal</b></p> <p>Clear information about the financial impact of each option is essential HRA and impact on the general fund. Where this is outsourced to consultants' tenants, staff and councillors should be aware of the implications and assumptions</p>	(a) Sensitivity analysis of assumptions and risks identified for all options or mix of options	<p>Tribal have completed the financial analysis for the options for the Council. The first phase of consultation clearly identified that LSVT and stock retention are the preferred options for tenants. These Options were the focus of the test of opinion in the second round of consultation.</p> <p>This follows a clear indication from the financial analysis that ALMO would not attract funding as the Council is able to achieve Decent Homes, and PFI has limited viability.</p>
	(b) Consistency between the investment appraisal and latest business plan.	<p>The HRA Business Plan has been published along with the Councils medium term financial strategy and they provide the base data for the investment appraisal by the Lead Consultant.</p>



Criteria	Evidence checklist	Progress to date
<p>behind these. The ITA will have a role in helping tenants understand and contribute to this process.</p>	<p>(c) Analysis and consideration of the application of usable receipts and management cost base including recharges to the HRA.</p>	<p>The Lead Consultant has now completed their analysis following delays experienced due to difficulties with the verification of the Stock condition survey (undertaken by Ridge consultants on behalf of HACAS).</p> <p>The full range of analysis has been completed including application of usable capital receipts, management costs and HRA recharges.</p>
	<p>(d) The reasonableness of the financial assumptions including impact of planned possible changes</p>	<p>The evaluation process will include examining and testing the assumptions underlying the business plan and the projected income and planned changes in service provision.</p> <p>The HOWG including members and tenants have had the opportunity to consider in detail the underlying assumptions for the financial analysis. They were discussed and challenged in sessions of Councils Management Team and HOWG.</p>
<p><b>3. Stock Condition Survey</b></p> <p>An authority must have robust, accurate and up to date data on which to base their appraisal. All stakeholders must be aware of this information and it should be externally verified. The level of backlog of repairs, major repairs and improvements to meet decent homes must be clear. The investment gap should be identified.</p>	<p>(a) A recent stock condition survey commissioned on the basis of good practice contained within the guidance</p>	<p>The Council commissioned a Stock Condition Survey in 2002 in accordance with the ODPM guidelines.</p> <p>It is recognised that there are weaknesses in the survey data, highlighted during the validation process. In addition now that the survey is almost 4 years old it is due for revision, and this would be a requirement for stock valuation should the Council decide to transfer the stock.</p>
	<p>(b) Collecting, Managing and Using Stock Information.</p>	<p>The Councils has established the software and hardware capacity to maintain and update the stock attributes database. The information has been transferred onto the Orchard Attributes module to enable it to form part of the housing integrated database.</p> <p>Most capital works and gas servicing will be automatically updated on the attributes system through the Orchard repairs and maintenance modules by July 2005.</p>
	<p>(c) A lead member of staff to work with external consultants to ensure quality and usefulness of outputs.</p>	<p>The Council has identified the Principal Technical Officer to ensure the standard of the property data.</p> <p>An agreement was reached with the Government Office that the Council would work with Ridge to provide the stock information they required and carry out some survey work and desktop analysis to supplement the stock condition survey data. This enabled Ridge to complete their work and sign off the validation of the stock information to enable the financial analysis to be completed.</p>

Criteria	Evidence checklist	Progress to date
	(d) A robust in house system and database for properly updated information	The Council has established the software and hardware capacity to maintain and update the stock attributes database. An ongoing programme of surveys will ensure the maintenance of the validity and accuracy of the stock condition information. These will supplement the information that will transfer electronically through the interface between the Orchard modules.
	(e) A clear picture of decency amongst the stock including newly arising need	The Council has a current clear picture of the level of decency within the stock, and is able to estimate newly arising need. This is achieved through the monitoring of works undertaken annually and the heating servicing data base, and relating this back to the survey data.
	(f) Testing of costings/assumptions against current tender prices and build cost inflation.	The cost information linked to the stock data has been updated as part of the validation process undertaken by Ridge so that it can accurately represent current prices.
	(g) Comparison of stock investment programme from the survey against total resources.	The stock investment programme has been compared with survey information to formulate strategy for the achievement of the decent homes standard by 2006.  This will be kept under review and revised as necessary to reflect financial budgetary decisions made by Members of the Council.
<b>4. Analysis of Demand</b>	(a) Future needs for affordable housing in the area	District-wide Housing Needs Study carried out in August 2002 indicate a net affordable housing requirement of 884 homes per annum over the next five years to meet identified housing needs.
	(b) Identification of low demand is it generic or localised? What are the key factors and possible solutions	Low demand only exists primarily in respect of bed-sit and certain one bedroom sheltered units. The bed-sit units on 5 sheltered schemes have been designated for redevelopment and re-designation. The process has now been underway for over 2 years with some scheme closures and others still being wound down as units are vacated. The redevelopment opportunities include provision of special needs accommodation for mental health clients. Further evaluation of individual sheltered schemes is on going.

Criteria	Evidence checklist	Progress to date
	(c) Identification of gaps in affordable housing provision and what are the best options for dealing with them	<p>Gaps are mainly in smaller units for single people and other smaller households. Council policy seeks public sector funding to utilise Section 106 agreements to achieve planning gain particularly on larger sites.</p> <p>A new target of 50% affordable housing per site has been recommended by the Local Development Framework for approval following consultation. It also provides a policy framework to increase the number of smaller units on residential sites and to increase unit densities.</p> <p>Re-designation of sheltered units for other needs groups e.g. single people is also an option. This has been agreed in respect of one scheme at Gamlingay so far and may be looked at elsewhere for low demand units that are otherwise suitable to meet housing needs.</p> <p>Also a need to provide for Key Workers that is being addressed through implementation of the recommendations of Sub-Regional Key Worker Study completed in 2003. The Council is working closely with the Housing Corporation Zone Agents.</p>
<p><b>5. Mixed Solutions</b></p> <p>Authorities should as part of the process look at mixed model solutions and partial options but only as part of an overarching strategy for the whole stock.</p> <p>[NB will not apply to all LAs]</p>	<p>(a) Analysis of the impact of partial options within the</p> <p>(b) context of an overarching strategy</p> <p>(c) A method for desegregation of information to assess needs at a local level and right fit with options.</p>	<p>The council are seeking mixed solutions through consideration of appropriate solutions to issues of low demand and high cost repairs for certain types of properties. The sheltered bed sits are subject to redevelopment to address local need and hard to let voids. Non-traditional construction Airey properties are due for redevelopment to address inherent and substantial structural problems, causing high projected maintenance costs.</p> <p>All solutions will be evaluated against the strategic aims for the housing service and the corporate objectives for the Council.</p> <p>Consideration has been given to separating sheltered housing, but this is judged to limit future asset management options.</p> <p>It is intended to create an evaluation matrix that allows options to be assessed against predetermined criteria including deliverability.</p>

Criteria	Evidence checklist	Progress to date
	(d) Levels of service area based solution could provide	<p>The Fulbourn estate of non-traditional systems built PRC properties is under consideration for an area based solution to high projected future maintenance costs. The Council is working with tenants, Members and the Parish to consider how a local Housing Association may work with the Council to offer substantial improvements to the properties and the local environment. Cabinet in May 2005 will be asked to agree that the estate be transferred to Nene Housing Society for redevelopment.</p> <p>Consultation for the Fulbourn Project has included open meetings, published information and personal contact for tenants.</p>
	(e) Quality of the depth of consultation and involvement of tenants and other stakeholders in an area	<p>Focused consultation exercises have taken place and continue in relation to specific projects and local initiatives.</p> <p>The OA process has included area based focus groups. The second phase will include a programme of meetings at sheltered schemes.</p>
6. <b>Tenant Management and tenant led solutions</b>	(a) Engagement with existing and potential tenant management organisations	It is apparent from the first phase of consultation that there is no strong interest in TMO's among tenants in South Cambridgeshire.
	(b) Promotion and awareness of use of Section 16 funding to explore options for local tenant led options	The HOWG have received briefings on all the options including TMO's.
	(c) Information on stock condition and the housing market made available to local level organisations	The Business Plan and the Housing Strategy having been signed off and are widely available both as hard copies and through the Councils web site.
7. <b>Wider strategy for neighbourhood renewal</b>  An authority's option appraisal should show clear links to initiatives such	(a) Links with other initiatives and funding on neighbourhood level	The HOWG incorporates the Councils Management Team and Chief Executive, providing links to the Councils broad strategic agenda and county wide initiatives.
	(b) Awareness amongst key partners of option appraisal process	A presentation has been made to the LSP on the Councils OA process, and they are being kept informed of progress and the outcome of the project.

Criteria	Evidence checklist	Progress to date
as low demand pathfinders, Local Strategic Partnerships, Health Improvement Plan and New Deal for Communities.	(c) Details of wider consultation and methods, feedback	As above
	(d) Assessment of potential contribution of each option to local regeneration	Solutions to a range of asset management issues have been addressed through the redevelopment initiative for 5 sheltered schemes with bed-sitter accommodation.  The Council has agreed to dispose of 5 sites of Airey properties to Housing Associations for redevelopment following extensive local consultation. Cabinet will be asked in May 2005 to agree to dispose of the Windmill Estate to Nene Housing Society for redevelopment following extensive local consultation.
<b>8. Objective robust evaluation of options</b>  VFM, sustainable DH, improving services, tenants priorities, deliverability, local priorities, regional, national	(a) Establishment of clear, defined objectives with a balance of local and national priorities.	The Options Appraisal Strategy identifies the objectives for the project.  In December 2004 a detailed report was presented to Cabinet detailing the evaluation process and criteria for the OA project.
	(b) Early involvement of stakeholders.	Stakeholders have been engaged through the OA consultation process with the support of the ITA.  Briefings have been given to Management Team, Cabinet, all Council staff, the LSP, the HA forum, and the Housing Corporation.
	(c) Housing service priorities and current performance.	The Housing Strategy and the HRA Business Plan identify the priorities for the service and the financial resources available within the HRA. These documents have been widely available since August 2004.
	(d) Objective evaluation of costs and benefits of each option, including choice of landlord within the stock transfer option, against agreed criteria.	The evaluation process and criteria have been determined by the HOWG and endorsed by the Cabinet.  The process will be undertaken using an evaluation matrix that allows options to be assessed against various criteria.

Criteria	Evidence checklist	Progress to date
<p><b>9. Decision making process</b></p> <p>Tenants should be at the heart of the decision making process. Support should be demonstrated for the chosen option by tenants and councillors.</p>	<p>(a) Feedback from tenant representatives and other tenants involved in the process.</p>	<p>Tenants are an integral part of the process as members of the HOWG. The communications strategy details how the consultation process will be conducted.</p> <p>Tenants were sent newsletters in August outlining the options appraisal process and invited to complete a questionnaire informing us of their priorities for their homes and services. 170 tenants replied 'yes' to the question would you like to be more involved. They were written to and invited to attend 4 focus groups to test the results of the survey, expand on issues raised in the survey, list concerns and hopes and discuss the next round of consultation. The focus groups also commented on the design of the 'test of opinion' to be used during the second phase of consultation.</p> <p>The results from the first survey concerning priorities for services and homes and with further consultation with the tenant representatives has resulted in the 'future homes standard'.</p> <p>A third newsletter with a test of opinion has been sent out to all tenants and leaseholders at the end of March 05. Along side this consultation events will be taking place throughout the district so that tenants can access independent and impartial information and advice from the ITA.</p>
	<p>(b) Clear audit trails of tenant influence and involvement in decision making</p>	<p>Records of meetings and verification of tenant involvement has progressively been collected as the project progresses.</p> <p>Copies of all newsletters, fact sheets and display boards will be made available.</p>
	<p>(c) Political commitment to the outcome</p>	<p>Members have been involved in a Housing Strategy, Business Plan workshop event held in January to consult stakeholders on their views, particularly about means of consultation. Information was also given on the housing strategy, decent homes and the options appraisal process.</p> <p>The Option Appraisal has been considered in Cabinet and at the Housing Portfolio Holder Meeting in 2004, and 5 Members will form part of the Options Appraisal Working Group.</p> <p>Regular briefings have been given to the Housing Portfolio Holder, Cabinet, Scrutiny and Full Council throughout the process.</p> <p>Party Political Group briefings were given to Members in April 2005.</p>

Criteria	Evidence checklist	Progress to date
<p><b>10. Change management process</b></p> <p>Focusing on staff, unions, resourcing, leadership, capacity and skills.</p>	(a) Clear change management plan in place	An Action Plan with milestones has been developed and updated progressively to reflect the progress of the project. This allows the key elements of the project to be determined and projected forward within the overall timetable.
	(b) Work with CHTF and others to gather and implement best practice.	Meetings have taken place with CHTF and they have attended a selection of the HOWG meetings. She has also met the consultants engaged by the Council on the project. It is anticipated that she may also attend some of the tenants' events.
<p><b>11. Management of the process</b></p>	(a) Establishment of a project team and working group with representatives from stakeholders.	<p>An officer Project Team including the Head of Shire Homes, the Policy and Review Manager, the Housing Accountant and the Tenant Participation Officer.</p> <p>The HOWG includes Member and Tenant representatives and Corporate Management Team; the Chief Executive, the Director of Finance and Resources and the Director of Housing and Environmental Services.</p>
	(b) Level of resources made available, early assessment of capacity and skills to deliver.	<p>Request for consultancy funding agreed February 2004.</p> <p>(ITA and Lead Consultant)</p>
	(c) Timetable agreed with CHTF and GO.	The timetable has been revised to allow for the progress of the project.
	(d) Member involvement and engagement in the process.	<p>Member approval has been given for consultancy funding.</p> <p>A Cabinet report was presented to Members in April and December.</p> <p>A Portfolio Holder Report was presented in May 2004.</p> <p>Party Political Group briefings were given in April 2005.</p>

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Cabinet

9 June 2005

**AUTHOR/S:** Chief Executive and Resources and Staffing Director

**WORKFORCE PLAN 2005/6 TO 2008/9**

**Purpose**

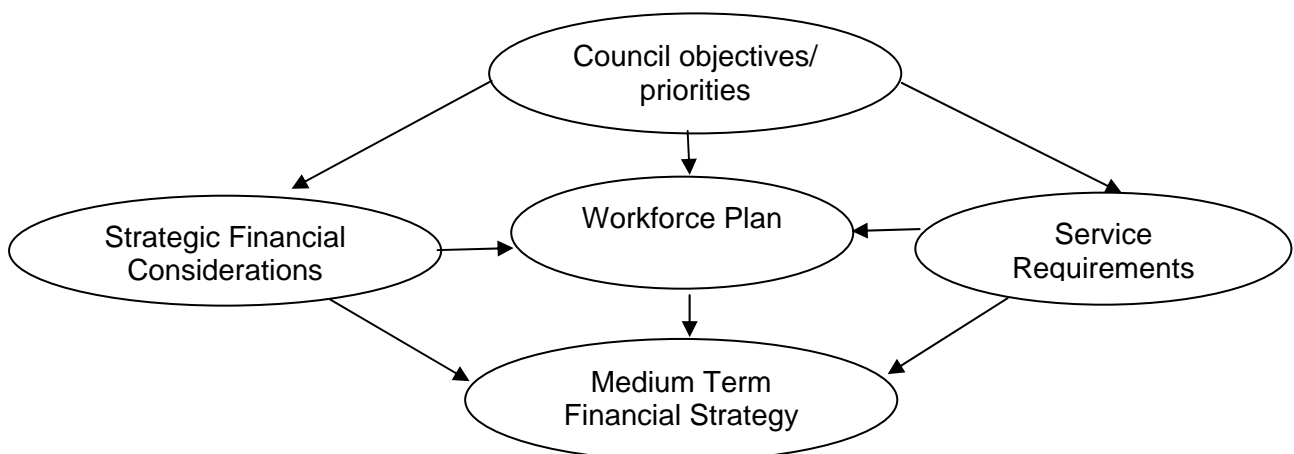
1. The purpose of this report is to enable Cabinet to consider the attached Workforce Plan for recommendation to Council.

**Effect on Corporate Objectives**

2. Quality, Accessible Services	The purpose of the workforce plan is to enable the Council to have in place the workforce which will enable it to address its long term objectives and priorities.
Village Life	
Sustainability	
Partnership	

**What is a Workforce Plan?**

3. A Workforce Plan should set out policies and actions to enable the Council to achieve the workforce it needs (in terms of numbers, deposition and skills) to deliver its current and future objectives. A workforce plan also needs to be closely linked with the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy and its Performance Plan.
4. The Council already has an HR Strategy, the emphasis of which is on actions and policies to be implemented by the HR team. A workforce plan is broader and is a more corporate document. Ownership of the workforce plan will lie more with Management Team and Cabinet. It should set a framework for HR policies, for resource decisions and decisions about staffing levels. It should answer the basic questions: What sort of workforce do we need to have in five years' time? How will that differ from now? What do we have to do to get there? The diagram shows how it would fit in with other Council documents and processes.



5. The attached Workforce Plan includes the relevant actions from the HR Strategy, hence avoiding the need for a separate strategy.

6. Guidance has been provided by the Eastern Region Employers' Organisation and there has been joint working between authorities in this area on the form and content of workforce plans. The areas to be covered by workforce plans are suggested as:-
- Organisational development and transformation
  - Leadership capacity
  - Workforce skills and capacity
  - Recruitment and retention
  - Pay and rewards

**Do we have to prepare a workforce plan and when?**

7. The ODPM expected all authorities to have a workforce plan in place by April 2005. It is not expected that this will have been achieved and many councils have not made substantial progress.
8. It is important for the Council to prepare a workforce plan both because of the expectation of the ODPM but more importantly to guide the Council in the major changes to be encountered in the next two years or so – including:-
- a) Possible changes as a result of capping.
  - b) Possible changes depending on the outcome of housing stock options appraisal
  - c) The effect of the efficiency agenda – Gershon and the Council's need to achieve savings to deliver the Medium Term Financial Strategy
  - d) The Council's agenda to achieve efficiencies and/or service improvements as a result of its investments in ICT and the new offices – from business re-engineering and restructuring into a front office/back office model.

**The scope of the Plan**

9. Ideally, a workforce plan would set out in detail the staffing requirements to deliver the Council's objectives. So, for example, it might indicate services where staffing resources will need to increase; those where resources will remain broadly the same; and services where it is planned to reduce staffing resources.
10. This is particularly difficult at the present time given the uncertainties facing the Council described above. Given this uncertainty, the attached plan focuses on adopting a co-ordinated managed approach to dealing with such issues as the response to capping; front office/back office restructuring; housing option appraisal etc. The plan, at this stage, is not as precise about desired outcomes for these issues as would be ideal. It will be important for Management Team and Cabinet to work over the next few months to achieve greater clarity over the service outcomes sought by the Council over the medium term and the workforce requirements to deliver those outcomes to give greater guidance for when the Plan is reviewed. To some extent this is an interim plan for the time being.

**Financial Implications**

11. The plan assumes the continuation of the current Medium Term Financial Strategy and makes no allowance at this stage for possible resource reductions as a result of capping. Clearly, it might have to be substantially revised if capping results in substantial budget cuts.

**Consultations**

12. The contents of the plan have been influenced by the recent two yearly staff survey and the recommendations of a group of officers brought together to put forward recommendations based on the survey. The trades unions have also been consulted.

**Risk Management Implications**

13. The principal risk to the achievement of the workforce plan is Council Tax capping. Other risks include uncertainties of the labour market. It is also important to apply a co-ordinated, risk managed approach to many of the changes that the Council is facing.

**Recommendations**

14. Cabinet is **recommended** to approve the attached Workforce Plan (including the Action Plan in Appendix 2) for recommendation to the Council.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Results of the staff survey and detailed information on the composition of departments.

**Contact Officers:** Deborah Pearson (HR Manager) 01954 713285 and Paul Swift (Policy and Review Manager) 01954 713017

## South Cambridgeshire District Council Workforce Plan - 2005/6 to 2008/9

### Context – Current and future changes

- A1. The Plan has been developed to take into account a number of factors – such as:-
- a) The growth of SCDC workforce in recent years.
  - b) The changing nature of local government and changes in the skills required – including: a greater range of service provision and management models; more project based; more partnership; greater change; more cross-cutting work; mobile working and working from home.
  - c) The national agenda for greater efficiency which will involve different procurement models and possibly greater co-operation with other councils, together with the Council's own Medium Term Financial Strategy objectives to achieve savings. The implications of Council Tax capping.
  - d) The challenge of the development of Northstowe and other major settlements, both in terms of the skills required to ensure appropriate development and to meet the increased service provision needs of the new population.
  - e) The national agenda on pensions, retirement, work-life balance, health and child friendly policies.
  - f) Housing stock options appraisal.

### SCDC Workforce – Current Issues

- A2. The issues in the following paragraphs have been identified as a result of:-
- Discussions with Directors.
  - The results of the recent staff attitude survey
  - Information giving the breakdown of staff by department, a summary of which is given in Appendix 1.
  - The results of staff exit interviews.
- A3. **Number and allocation of staff between services.** No serious shortfalls have been identified by Directors in terms of the numbers of employees – apart from:-
- a) Community Services, where the service is under continuing pressure to meet growing expectations from national and local agendas in areas such as community safety, community planning, health and the new settlements.
  - b) Capacity for corporate projects/joined up working/community strategy. Also seen as an issue by the CPA team and Peer review.
  - c) Travellers – continuing pressures in such areas as enforcement, community development; and co-ordination.
- A4. **Workforce composition.** Statistics such as numbers of staff by department by age, gender, ethnicity and disability are summarised in Appendix 1 and have been discussed with Directors. Some of the key issues identified are:-
- a) Analysis shows a workforce profile with disproportionately more staff in the older age ranges, with fewer younger people joining the Council. This reduces diversity and may lead to future skills problems. The Planning service is addressing this issue successfully by a policy of “grow your own”.

- b) There are a number of specific areas where the Council is likely to lose senior officers in the next 2-3 years – eg: senior management; Development Services; Accountancy.
  - c) There may be concerns about lack of diversity in the workforce in some services. Diversity is valuable because it enables individual services and the organisation as a whole to benefit from the different perspectives and ideas that diversity brings to the provision of services.
- A5. **Succession Planning.** Consideration has been given to more positive planning to prepare officers to take over senior or specialised posts which become vacant. There would be problems involved with identifying specific officers for specific posts and overall it has been concluded that it is better to continue to develop the potential of employees through appraisals and personal development plans to enable them to be in a better position to compete for posts becoming available in the Council.
- A6. **Recruitment.** Turnover has reduced from its previous high level and recruitment is currently not the problem it was. This is primarily the result of the pay and grading review undertaken by the Council in 2003. But problems remain in a limited number of areas – such as senior, experienced planning posts. There has also been difficulty in recruiting to fixed term posts. Over the medium to long term recruitment is likely to continue to be an issue which the Council needs to keep under review because of:-
- a) National shortages in areas such as planning and environmental health
  - b) High housing costs in the area and the fact that key worker definitions do not help the Council.
  - c) Competition in the area – eg from housing associations; other councils; health sector etc. Other organisations may leap frog SCDC recent restructuring in the medium term.
  - d) The possible impact of capping and CPA reassessment.
- A7. The Council will continue to monitor recruitment and retention closely and review the pay scale and indexing arrangements on a regular basis.
- A8. A number of current staff are **on fixed term contracts**. Also there is a reliance on Planning Delivery Grant.
- A9. **Efficiency agenda.** The Council will be under pressure to find efficiencies in the period of this workforce plan both to meet Gershon requirements, the effects of capping and its own Medium Term Financial Strategy projections. The Council's substantial investment in ICT together with business re-engineering could potentially achieve savings in a number of areas, with consequent impact on staff. There may also be scope to find efficiencies following the bringing together of services into one office at Cambourne.
- A10. **Services facing service peaks.** A limited number of services are under pressure at certain times of the year – eg Elections; Accountancy; Planning Policy. The possibility of moving staff to help out in these areas has been considered, but there are constraints in this approach in that the services under pressure are specialised in nature. Annual hours or some other flexibility is considered to be a possibility.
- A11. **Training and Skills.** Directors expressed no concerns about the level of professional skills. The Council spends a considerable amount on training and in the recent staff survey 66% agreed that the Council ensures that their training needs are met.

- A12. It has not been possible to undertake a detailed skills analysis to provide an input to this Plan. This will be undertaken before this Plan is next reviewed. However, the following have been identified as areas where skills could be improved:-
- a) General management skills – for example staff management; performance management; service analysis and review.
  - b) Customer care – for example in terms of development of customer care standards; finding out customer needs; dealing with their complaints and concerns and communicating with customers.
  - c) Financial skills among service managers.
  - d) Project management
  - e) Partnership skills
  - f) Procurement skills
  - g) ICT skills – skills need to continue to improve to maximise the benefits of ICT investment and continue to improve productivity – both at the level of the individual officer and the understanding of managers on how ICT can help achieve their business aims.
  - h) Some specialist skills - particularly in relation to the new settlements – eg urban design; landscape design; which the Council is trying to develop.
- A13. There are some cases where staff have reached their limit or have had difficulty in changing or adapting as the nature of their job has changed. It must be emphasised that this applies to a very small number of staff; however, these few capacity or capability issues can have a disproportionate impact on relatively small teams and can be a major distraction for their managers. Improved support arrangements or processes need to be in place to address these situations.
- A14. **Appraisals.** The Council has made considerable progress in developing its staff appraisal process and extending it to all employees. Links with performance management and priorities have improved. One area which would benefit from greater emphasis is the impact of appraisals in promoting personal development. Investors in People accreditation has been achieved for the Environmental Health service and current improvements being made in response to CPA are putting in place arrangements which will prepare the rest of the Council for IIP.
- A15. **Management.** This was a significant issue raised in interviews with Directors. It was felt to be important to raise management capacity at corporate and at service management level to meet the challenges facing the Council in the years ahead. Areas to be addressed included improvements in service planning; performance management; management of resources; and customer care.
- A16. A number of areas were identified which could be addressed to improve management capacity to tackle the future agenda of the Council:-
- a) Leanness of current management structures.
  - b) Providing greater clarity about the role of managers and what they are expected to deliver.
  - c) Reviewing the amount of time taken up with meetings and the democratic process.
  - d) Achieving greater clarity of strategic direction and service outcomes.
  - e) Applying a more consistent approach to performance management.
  - f) Improving management skills.
  - g) Reviewing the balance between the roles of support services (such as finance; communications, HR and policy) and the roles of service managers. Some

concerns were voiced that service managers were being asked to take on too many of these support roles and address cross cutting issues or corporate issues.

A.17 Improving management capacity is addressed in the Action Plan.

A18. **Staff Survey.** The Council undertakes a survey of its staff every two years and the most recent survey was undertaken in the autumn of 2004. The results of the survey were discussed with a panel of staff. There were many encouraging results from the survey. The following have been identified as the most important issues to be addressed and are included in the Action Plan:-

- a) Improving two way communication between staff and management.
- b) Ensuring greater consistency of the application of HR and management policies through the improvement of management capacity
- c) An improved and consistent approach to departmental induction for new starters.
- d) Bring forward a review of flexible working
- e) Review the lunchtime seminars to improve their effectiveness in addressing corporate issues and sharing ideas.

### **Council Priorities and Workforce Requirements**

A19. The Council has agreed the following priorities for the three years 2005/6 to 2007/8:-

**Improving Customer Service.** Many of the workforce requirements to achieve this priority have already been covered. For example:-

- a) Improving the capacity of managers to give leadership to a culture of customer service; and all aspects of its implementation (including effective performance management and use of ICT)
- b) Continuing to keep recruitment and retention under review to ensure that the Council has a continuity of skilled staff.
- c) Continuing to improve the skills and motivation of staff and a diverse workforce which is in tune with the needs and outlooks of customers.
- d) Structures, capacities and flexibility to enable the Council to adapt to meet the changing needs of customers.

**New Settlements.** The ability of the Council to respond to the challenge of the new settlements and develop its services to meet growing demands will depend on being able to put in place and retain the necessary skills, either by recruitment or training. Requirements will include:-

- a) A medium term financial strategy which provides the resources to recruit the planning, community services, housing, project co-ordination skills required.
- b) The ability to recruit and retain sought after skills, for example through attractive terms and conditions and opportunities for career development.
- c) The ability to develop or buy in specialist skills.
- d) The ability to plan and develop services to meet the service needs of a growing population.

**Affordable Housing.** In the last two years the Council has built up the capacity of the strategic housing team in order to address the challenges of significantly increasing the supply of affordable housing. Significantly greater staff capacity is unlikely to be required, except as project officers as the new settlements at Northstowe and edge of Cambridge progress.

- A20. **Council Values.** The Council has adopted values: Customer Service, Using initiative; doing what you say; simple processes; politeness and respect; and team working. There is a lack of awareness of the values; they need to be reviewed; to see if there is commitment to them; and if so, built more into what the Council does.

### The objectives of the Plan

- A21 In the light of the foregoing paragraphs, the following objectives reflect the needs of the Council in adapting to external pressures and meeting its objectives in the medium term:-

**Workforce Plan Objectives:** to enable the Council to achieve a workforce to deliver its objectives by:-

- a) enhancing leadership and management
- b) working towards a staffing complement and structure which reflects the Council's objectives and future needs
- c) enhancing the skills and motivation of staff to meet the changing work environment and maximise performance
- d) flexibility and the ability to achieve organisational change to reflect changing needs

- A22. The objectives also reflect best practice guidance that workforce plans should address the following areas:-

- Organisational development and transformation
- Leadership capacity
- Workforce skills and capacity
- Recruitment and retention
- Pay and rewards

### Strategic Change Principles

- A23. Over the next year the Council will potentially be required to make a number of substantial and radical steps which will impact greatly on the workforce. These may include some or all of the following: the implementation of the decision on housing stock options; the response to capping and Gershon; and changes to reflect new ICT systems, business re-engineering and the contact centre. It is recommended that the Council adopt the following strategic principles in responding to these pressures. The Council will -

- a) Adopt a comprehensive and joined up response to the various pressures facing the Council.
- b) Develop a clear view about a sustainable workforce required in three years' time which will discharge the Council's statutory obligations to an appropriate standard and continue to make progress on priorities – to inform the next review of the Workforce Plan.



- c) Ensure that changes made support the Council's priorities and the performance management structures and culture to deliver them.
- d) Take opportunities to strengthen strategic and service management.
- e) Ensure that changes in staffing structures and numbers are accompanied with corresponding clarity about what services are expected to deliver.
- f) Develop and apply consistent change management procedures and principles

### **Action Plan**

A24. The attached action plan addresses the issues raised in preceding paragraphs and is centred around the objectives of the plan given at paragraph 19.

### **Performance Indicators**

A25. The Council already has a number of national and local performance indicators relating to this plan and are valuable in measuring progress on key matters relating to workforce matters.– ie:-

- Training
- Turnover
- Sickness

A26. At this stage no further performance indicators are recommended.

### **Implementation, Review and Monitoring**

A27. The following approach will be taken to monitoring and updating the plan:-

- a) Actions in the Action Plan will be included within the Council's normal performance management framework – ie in Service Plans, appraisals and the Performance Plan and major actions included in the quarterly monitoring reports to Management Team and Cabinet.
- b) The Workforce Plan will be revised annually in the period July to December to enable:-
  - the review to take into account the views of members on priorities and those of services on workforce needs
  - the outcome of the review to feed into the annual update of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

### Summary of Departmental Statistics

#### Gender

Male	Female
245	255

#### Disability

Disabled	Not disabled	Not declared
24	249	226

#### Ethnicity

Employees from Minority group	Employees who are not from a minority group	Not declared
4	367	129

#### Age

16-19	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60-65
1	63	127	119	142	49

#### Working Pattern

Full Time	Part Time
457	43

#### Contract

Fixed Term	Permanent
26	474

#### Length of Service

Under 1 Year	41
1-4 Years	151
5-9 Years	108
10-19 Years	129
20-29 Years	48
30-39 Years	21
More Than 40 Years	2

## APPENDIX 2

## Workforce Plan 2005/6 to 2008/9 - Action Plan

The following action plan is based on the four objectives of the plan. Because service plans for 2005/06 have already been approved, the new actions for the current year have been kept to a minimum, with most new actions beginning in 2006/7 at the earliest.

The Action Plan has been extended to include actions:-

- actions from the HR Strategy (indicated by "HR" in the "Links" column)
- actions in response to the staff survey (indicted by "SS" in the "Links" column)

Action		Links	Director	05/6	06/7	07/8	08/9	Resources required
<b>Objective 1: Enhance Leadership and Management</b>								
1	Create clear three year service targets based on Council priorities as a basis for workforce planning		CEX	✓	✓	✓	✓	
2	Introduce leadership development, initially for all first and second tiers and then Cabinet Members, in a phased programme.	SS	F&R		✓	✓	✓	£20k pa (but will seek CPA capacity funding) £8k pa
3	Create improved strategic capacity through the National Graduate Development programme	HR	F&R	✓	✓			
4	Agree a generic job description with defined competencies for various tiers of management.	HR/SS	F&R		✓			
5	Introduce managers' development programme – compulsory for managers with more than 5 staff and available for managers with fewer staff or officers with aims to become managers – based on the job description in 4.	HR/SS	F&R		✓	✓	✓	£15k pa
6	Develop standards so that service managers receive a consistent and agreed level of support from support services.		F&R			✓		Potential cost if higher levels of support required
7	Include workforce plan review into the budget and service planning process.		CEX	✓				

Action		Links	Director	05/6	06/7	07/8	08/9	Resources required
<b>Objective 2: Work towards a staffing complement and structure which reflects the Council's objectives and future needs</b>								
8	<p>Agree and implement a project plan to apply a co-ordinated approach to the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the implementation of workforce elements of the outcome of the housing stock options appraisal</li> <li>workforce effects of capping</li> <li>the workforce implications of the Council's efficiency agenda (Gershon and savings in the MTFS)</li> <li>front office/back office structure</li> </ul> <p>in accordance with the strategic change principles in this plan (paragraph A23).</p>		CEX	✓	✓			There will be significant resource implications – but could be up or down.
9	<p>Revise the Workforce Plan by December 2006 (and annually thereafter) to include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Three year projections of workforce requirements.</li> <li>An assessment of future needs arising from the new settlements and more generally from population increase.</li> <li>Staffing requirements to achieve performance indicator targets</li> <li>Impact/requirements for MTFS</li> </ul>		CEX/ F&R	✓	✓	✓		
10	Review the continuation of the pay and grading review, taking into account experience with recruitment and retention		F&R		✓			
11	Review the use of fixed term contracts		F&R		✓			Potential implications if contracts replaced by permanent posts
12	Implement improved monitoring reports covering turnover, vacancies and departmental profiles to Directors and Management Team, made possible by the new HR system.	HR	F&R	✓	✓	✓		
13	Introduce a structured approach to career development ("grow your own") drawing on secondments, mentoring plus establishment of career grades and consider application to all appropriate areas where recruitment/retention has been a problem.	SS	F&R			✓		Potential costs, but depends on application
14	Review of retirement policies	HR	F&R	✓				Potential cost

Action	Links	Director	When			Resources required
			05/6	06/7	07/8 08/9	
Develop a proactive approach to absence management, including support for healthy lifestyles in accordance with emerging government advice		F&R		✓	✓	Potential relatively small cost
15 Introduce flexible working practices (eg compressed hours, annualised hours and review of core hours) to aid diversity and recruitment/retention	HR/SS	F&R	✓			
16 Investigate the feasibility and report on a flexible benefits scheme – ie enabling staff to choose from a range of benefits – including a career break scheme.	HR	F&R		✓		Potential cost
<b>Objective 3: Enhance the skills and motivation of staff to meet the changing work environment and maximise performance</b>						
17 Develop a training policy to ensure a consistent approach to the allocation of training and value for money		F&R	✓			
18 Carry out a skills audit to identify current skills level across the organisation	HR	F&R	✓			
19 Identify generic/core skills (competencies) for different posts within the Council for use at recruitment, appraisal and supported by a rolling training programme	HR	F&R			✓	
20 Improve induction for new starters, including by review and re-issue of induction checklist and the provision of a welcome pack	SS	F&R		✓		
<b>Objective 4: flexibility and the ability to achieve organisational change to reflect changing needs</b>						
21 Continue to work with and develop the officer group responding to the staff survey towards a staff forum to act as a sounding board on matters affecting the workforce.	HR/SS	F&R	✓			
22 Review and relaunch the Council's values		CEX		✓		
23 Re-launch lunchtime seminars – revised to give greater emphasis to the sharing of ideas and approaches; to be open to all employees, but with top 3 tiers normally expected to attend.	SS	CEX		✓		
24 Re-introduce regular briefings from the Chief Executive in an appropriate format.	SS	CEX	✓			
25 Request all Directors and service managers to ensure that all staff are covered by a team briefing process which enables staff to be informed of important corporate issues and to feed their views to management.	SS	CEX	✓			
26 Introduce mentoring and coaching policies to encourage career development and shared learning	HR/SS	F&R	✓			

	Action	Links	Director	When			Resources required
				05/6	06/7	07/8 08/9	
27	Introduce a secondment policy to encourage career development opportunities and learning from best practice.	HR	F&R		✓		Potential costs
28	Develop change management procedures and policies and develop change management capacity within the Council.		F&R /CEX	✓			
29	Revise and up date the capability policy and procedure		F&R		✓		
<b>All Objectives</b>							
30	Achieve IIP status for the whole Council	HR	CEX/ F&R			✓	Some potential limited cost

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet 9 June 2005  
**AUTHOR:** Housing and Environmental Services Director

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**FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT ON LOCAL AUTHORITY FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT  
FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN**

**Purpose**

1. To seek the Cabinet's approval and recommendation to Council of a Food Service Plan for 2005/06.

**Effect on Corporate Objectives**

This report is being presented by virtue of it being a requirement of the Food Standard Agency which will consider the Food Service Plan as part of its audit of the service.

2. Quality, Accessible Services	The plan refers to many ways in which the food service works towards this objective ie. Access to services through the Contact Centre and quality benchmarking.
Village Life	The plan supports the development and maintenance of small business through appropriate measured enforcement, advice and education.
Sustainability	The service has at its heart the protection of public health.
Partnership	The service involves liaison and partnership working with a variety of food businesses, organisations and agencies.

**Background**

3. Food aspects of the Department's work have been included within the 2005/06 Service Plan however, the Food Standards Agency in their Framework Agreement require the production of a specific Food Service Plan to a common format. The Food Service Plan attached as an **Appendix** to this report meets this requirement. Appendices to the Food Service Plan are available in the Chief Environmental Health Officer's office.

**Considerations**

4. The Food Standards Agency has stated the following in their framework documentation:  
.. "Service Plans are an expression of Local Authority's own commitment to the development of food service. However, it is also important to consider the use made of the plans by the Food Standards Agency which will need information about Local Authority food law enforcement activities in a *common format* to enable it to assess Local Authorities' delivery of the service."

Guidelines were then given as to the details and expected content of the Food Service Plan. The Service Plan simply documents in one single plan the work and structure of the Department relating to food safety.

This plan is included within the Policy Framework of the Council and as such the responsibility for agreeing the Food Service Plan lies with the Council.

**Options**

5. The production of a service plan for this area of work is a requirement of The Food Standards Agency (FSA).

**Financial Implications**

6. Referred to in the body of the report.

**Legal Implications**

7. None.

**Staffing Implications**

8. At this time it is anticipated that staff will meet the field work targets set for the Department in the food safety area.

**Risk Management Implications**

9. Failure to carry out the work identified would result in adverse media comment and publicity. The FSA could name and shame the local authority nationally. In extreme circumstances if we fail to carry out this work the FSA may take over our inspection and enforcement duties and charge the local authority for the work.

**Consultations**

10. None.

**Conclusions/Summary**

11. This service plan meets the FSA requirement under the Framework Agreement and is an update on previous agreed plans.

**Recommendations**

12. That Cabinet recommends Council to approve the Food Service Plan 2005/06, which is attached to this report.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement and other appendices are available from the Chief Environmental Health Officer

**Contact Officer:** Dale Robinson – Chief Environmental Health Officer  
Telephone: (01954) 713229  
Geoff Keerie – Principal Environmental Health Officer  
Telephone: (01954) 713133





# **FOOD SERVICE PLAN**

**2005/06**

## **FOOD SERVICE PLAN**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 This Service Plan is dedicated to the food law enforcement function that is the responsibility of the Environmental Health Department by virtue of the Food Safety Act 1990.
- 1.2 The Environmental Health Department, as a district authority, is responsible for food safety and food hygiene matters. Food standards and descriptions, and controls on animal feedstuffs are dealt with by the County Council's Trading Standards Department.
- 1.3 This Service Plan is a comprehensive document covering the entire food hygiene enforcement function set out in accordance with the requirements contained in the Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement, published by the Food Standards Agency.

### **2. SERVICE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

#### **2.1 Service Aims**

The aims of the Food Safety Team of Environmental Health Services are:-

- ❖ To ensure that food and drink in South Cambridgeshire is handled and produced hygienically, safe to eat and healthy.
- ❖ To secure the control of communicable disease, a reduction in preventable ill-health and to promote healthy life-styles.
- ❖ To fulfil the statutory duty as a Food Authority with particular attention to Acts, Regulations, Approved Code of Practice, LACORS guidance and Industry Guides to good hygiene practice.

#### **2.2 Links to Corporate Objectives and Departmental Plans**

2.2.1 The overall objective of the Environmental Health Service is:

- ❖ Minimise environmental damage, now and in the future.
- ❖ Enhance a sense of well-being within our villages, communities and businesses.
- ❖ Safeguard and improve public health.
- ❖ Improve the quality of life of citizens generally and for those disadvantaged specifically.
- ❖ Instil a sense of pride in being associated with Environmental Health at SCDC.

2.2.2 Service Plans are reviewed and compiled yearly. The current Service Plan is attached as Appendix 1.

3. **BACKGROUND**

3.1 **Profile of the Authority**

3.1.1 The area served by SCDC is approximately 350 square miles, much of which is farmland given to primary production of food, mainly cereals and vegetables. Villages range from small rural settlements to suburban and new village settlements such as Bar Hill and Cambourne. There are no large towns within the district, the largest village currently having a population of 7,150.

3.1.2 There is increasing pressure from development, particularly research and high technology industries and new housing. The population of approximately 133,000 is rapidly expanding. New build and new villages will take the population to over 150,000 within 5 years. It is anticipated that the 102<sup>nd</sup> village of Cambourne currently under development will have a new population of 10,000 persons within 3 years.

3.1.3 With this projected growth it is anticipated that there will be an increase in the number of food businesses in the District. This increase in business numbers has already started.

3.2 **Organisational Structure**

3.2.1 Council Members, Cabinet Members and Department structure are attached as Appendix 2(a), 2(b), 2(c).

3.2.2 The Chief EHO, Mr D Robinson has delegated specialist food safety control issues to Principal EHO, Mr J G Keerie.

3.2.3 The following food officers have additional expert adviser roles relating to the food service:

- ❖ Mr J Keerie - infectious disease
- ❖ Miss R Walkowiak - food premises inspection and complaints
- ❖ Mr A Greenwood - private water supplies
- ❖ Mrs J Power - infectious disease and outbreak control
- ❖ Mr W Duncan - food sampling
- ❖ Mrs C Archibald – Vertical Directive premises and imported foods

3.3 **Specialist Services  
Liaison Group**

Mr J G Keerie is the named officer designated to attend the Principal Officer Food Liaison group for the Cambridgeshire County and currently chairs this group. The group is attended by the six District Authorities, Trading Standards from County Council and Peterborough City Council (Unitary Authority).

The Food Team attends the CIEH Eastern Centre Food Group and CIEH Cambridgeshire Branch group meetings and training events. Carol Archibald is currently secretary of this group.

Other groups used for information exchange include CIEH, RIPHH, LACORS, FSA, CSCI and OFSTED and for infectious disease purposes the Health Protection Agency Central Surveillance Centre at Colindale. For infectious disease purposes the Health Protection Agency, the laboratory service at, Addenbrooke's Hospital and the University of Cambridge Veterinary School.

- 3.4 The Consultant in Communicable Disease Control (CCDC) is currently Dr Bernadette Nazareth, supported by Dr Kate King and a public health network based at Huntingdon Primary Care Trust, Kingfisher Way, Hinchingsbrooke Business Park, Huntingdon, Cambs PE29 6FH.

The food examiners are the Health Laboratory Service – main contact Dr Nick Brown or Bridget Walters of PHLS, Level 6, Addenbrooke's Hospital, Hills Road, Cambridge CB2 2QW. South Cambridgeshire District Council's samples are now processed by the HPA Labs at Chelmsford.

The Public Analysts are Lincoln, Sutton and Wood Ltd, Analytical and Consulting Chemists, 6 Clarence Road, Norwich NR1 1HG.

The Product Contamination Liaison Officer (☎ 01480 456111 or 01480 428018 Daniel Middleton) is the contact within Huntingdon Police Headquarters for criminal food adulteration.

### 3.5 **Scope of the Food Service**

- 3.5.1 The scope of the food safety service includes:

- ❖ Inspection programme of food businesses identified by hazard rating, including mobile food vendors.
- ❖ Investigation of food premises complaints.
- ❖ Investigation of food complaints.
- ❖ Undertaking a food sampling programme.
- ❖ Investigating all notified infectious diseases which are potentially food borne.
- ❖ Immediate response to National Food Hazard warnings.
- ❖ A food hygiene training programme for food handlers.
- ❖ Food safety promotional activities carried out in conjunction with the training programme, eg national food safety week.
- ❖ Inspection of food for fitness purposes.
- ❖ Provision of Food Health Certificates for export.
- ❖ Licensing of relevant food businesses, eg butchers shops.
- ❖ Imported Foods.

- 3.5.2 The food safety team is responsible for providing this service.

- 3.5.3 If food consultants are used to supplement the food team service for any food related purpose, those contractors will meet the competency requirements of The FSA Code of Practice and follow the documented policies and procedures of the Department. They would be appropriately authorised to carry out a limited range of duties involving food premises inspection.

### 3.6 **Demands on the Food Service**

- 3.6.1 Appendix 3 is a copy of the food businesses profile for the District, dated 1 April 2005. This profile is updated continuously. The growth and development of the district as identified in 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 results in significant coding changes. Registered premises on 1/04/2005 numbered 1047.

- 3.6.2 Currently there is one food business seeking authorisation under the vertical directive legislation. There are 16 licensed Butchers Shops and 13 licensed Game Dealers in the District.

- 3.6.3 The following specialist businesses are in the district:-

- a) A production plant for Chivers Hartley trading as Premier Foods producing preserves and pickles for national and international export (Histon). They also produce dried potato products and peanut butter.
- b) A cook-chill central production unit (CPU) producing cook-chilled foods for Regional Hospitals, NHS Trusts and Care Homes.
- c) A sandwich producer for regional distribution (Melbourn).
- d) A significant number of market garden units producing products under glass eg lettuces.
- e) Cambridge City Airport.

### 3.7 **Service Delivery Points**

- 3.7.1 Service is mainly delivered during office hours. Businesses which trade out of hours, at weekends or during evenings only, are inspected accordingly. An "Out of Hours" emergency service exists for dealing with food hazard warnings and emergency food related issues. Recently a Contact service has been implemented which provides access for the public and businesses 8am to 8pm Monday to Saturday inclusive.
- 3.7.2 The service is delivered proactively through programmed inspections and reactively by responding to complaints and requests received by the Department. Service delivery can take place at any food business or at people's homes or place of work.
- 3.7.3 Emergencies such as outbreaks of infectious disease will be responded to on an Emergency call out basis.

### 3.8 **Enforcement Policy**

- 3.8.1 SCDC is a signatory to the Enforcement Concordat. The Food Safety team follows an Enforcement Policy approved by the Portfolio Holder on 20 February 2004. A procedure note F006 is an annex to this policy. Also attached are documented policies on:
  - ❖ Service of Improvement Notices
  - ❖ Service of Emergency Prohibition Notices; and
  - ❖ Compliance with Regulation 4(3) of the Food Safety (General Food Hygiene) Regulations 1995

## 4. **Service Delivery**

### 4.1 **Food Premises Inspections**

- 4.1.1 Cabinet has endorsed a programme of food premises inspections which is in accordance with the FSA Code of Practice, Frequency of Inspection. Inspection achievement targets are 100% of high and medium risk premises (ie categories A, B & C) and 90% of categories D & E. Following advice from the FSA alternative contact or inspection methods will be used this year to monitor hazard and risk at category E premises.
- 4.1.2 General food premises inspections are running at a rate of approx. 600 a year. Statistics illustrate that up to 20% of the food business inspections arise from response work, eg new businesses opening, complaints from the public, requests

from the trade and change in type/management of existing food businesses, licence requirements e.g. butcher shop licensing.

- 4.1.3 General Food Hygiene Inspections (Practice and Procedure note F001) are given due consideration. The purpose of inspections is to ensure food and drink is safe to eat, is produced and handled hygienically and will not give rise to food poisoning. Officers carry out an assessment of the food safety hazards associated with the business and determine whether a satisfactory system of "hazard analysis" for assessing food hazards and controlling risks has been implemented.
- 4.1.4 The philosophy of the food team is to advise, educate and enforce depending on risk and the most appropriate course of action. Advice on compliance and good practice given to food business proprietors is in line with LACORs guidance and food industry guides. Officers seek confirmation and agreements on programmes of works with proprietors minimising the need for formal action.
- 4.1.5 An Inspection Report aide-memoire, the result of a Cambridgeshire inter-authority working group is utilised during the inspection. Following post inspection interviews, Officers report their findings to the proprietor on a Report of Visit form which is left at the premises. Details of the necessary works are outlined on the Report of Visit form or a letter will follow.
- 4.1.6 A variety of educative literature is available and relevant material is enclosed with inspection correspondence. To assist proprietors in running a safe food business, a guide for hazard identification for small businesses entitled "Safe Food Scheme" has been produced regionally by an officer working group. This guide is issued and explained to proprietors during inspections free of charge.
- 4.1.7 Revisits are made in accordance with the seriousness of contraventions and the judgement of the Officers. It is estimated that 20% of general inspections require a revisit.
- 4.1.8 In addition to the programme of inspections, specialist projects are carried out, eg market garden type premises, sheltered accommodation, joint visits with The National Care Standards Commission (CSCI) for residential homes and OFSTED, for children's nurseries etc.
- 4.1.9 Inspection of aircraft will be undertaken in line with the new code of practice/guidance.

## 4.2 **Food Complaints**

- 4.2.1 A documented policy relating to food complaints is adhered to (Procedure Note F005). The policy is in accordance with the requirements of the Food Safety Act 1990 and FSA Code of Practice. This policy has been adopted across the six Cambridgeshire food authority district councils. A performance indicator of response within 3 working days is a Departmental standard.
- 4.2.2 The scope of the procedure currently covers:-
- ❖ receiving food complaints
  - ❖ investigation of food complaints
  - ❖ action to be taken on completion of the investigation
  - ❖ transfer of food complaints
- 4.2.3 We currently receive approximately 70 food complaints a year. This is twice as many as last year. The trend in receipt is currently upward and at this time, the team appears to be appropriately staffed to meet demand.

**4.3 Home Authority Principle**

4.3.1 South Cambridgeshire District Council is not currently a Home Authority for any major food producer, manufacturer or retailer.

4.3.2 We are the Originating Authority for all food manufactures in the area, of which Premier Foods Chivers Hartley production unit in Histon is the largest. C Archibald deals with all enquiries regarding food complaints that relate to this production unit, currently about fifteen complaints a year. It is estimated that approximately ten days/year are devoted to the Chivers Hartley factory.

4.3.3 The Service supports the Home Authority Principle and Officers liaise with relevant home authorities regarding advice, guidance and information.

**4.4 Advice to Businesses**

4.4.1 In support of the departmental aims, the culture of the food team is to freely offer advice and information when required or when requested. Advice to businesses is disseminated through the following.

4.4.2 Officers respond positively to requests for advice from proprietors of food businesses within 4 working days. Requests for advice from food businesses currently number approximately 300 per year. It is estimated that 1 hour per enquiry of officer time is necessary to meet this demand. This demand is currently met.

4.4.3 A guide for hazard identification for small catering businesses entitled "Safe Food Scheme", designed to assist proprietors in running a hygienic food businesses, is issued and explained to proprietors free of charge.

4.4.4 New businesses are sent an information pack containing relevant FSA and local literature. This is also available on the web site.

4.4.5 A newsletter, "South Cambridgeshire News", is produced four times a year and distributed free of charge to the 55,000 households and businesses in South Cambridgeshire. This newsletter provides an opportunity to distribute Environmental Health information.

4.4.6 An extensive range of leaflets and advisory pamphlets from a variety of sources is available and is freely distributed during visits and accompanying correspondence.

4.4.7 When new legislation/guidance makes a significant change to food law or how the food safety service is delivered, advice/information and a contact point is distributed to relevant businesses. Web site information is also available.

**4.5 Food Inspection and Sampling**

4.5.1 A documented policy relating to food sampling is adhered to (Procedure Notes reference F002 and F003). For detailed food sampling guidance the Public Health Laboratory Service protocol is followed.

4.5.2 The scope of food sampling includes a yearly programme agreed through a meeting with representatives from adjoining Local Authorities and the hospital laboratory services. The number of samples submitted is between 240 - 400 per year. This years programme is attached as Appendix (4). The programme for 2005/06 will be endorsed in line with the LACORS sampling programme sometime in 2005.

4.5.3 Food samples relating to food and food premises complaints are processed by either the HLS at Chelmsford, the public analyst or where necessary, entomology experts at Cambridge University. The anticipated number of entomology type samples/year is approximately 15-20.

4.5.4 Appropriate funding for sampling purposes is built into the departmental budget.

4.5.5 The consultancy services used for sampling are referred to in section 3.4. Accreditation of laboratories and techniques used is confirmed prior to sampling.

#### 4.6 **Control & Investigation of Outbreaks & Food Related Infectious Disease**

4.6.1 A documented policy relating to infectious disease control is adhered to (Procedure Note ref F010). Officers commence investigation of all infectious disease notifications within 24 hours. This response time is a performance indicator included within the Council's Service Plan.

4.6.2 Officers follow a documented outbreak control plan when dealing with suspected or confirmed food poisoning outbreaks. The plan was formulated in partnership with the Principal Officer Liaison Group and the CCDC.

4.6.3 The Department received last year 45 notifications of infectious diseases and 222 food poisoning cases. Approximately 2 hours is allowed per investigation for food poisoning cases, making a total workload of approximately 534 hours. It is anticipated that demand can be met by current staffing.

4.6.4 Following a review of guidance relating to infectious diseases and enteric disorders, new pamphlets have been redrafted and printed and will be distributed to all infectious diseases/food poisoning cases within the district during 2005/06.

#### 4.7 **Food Alerts**

4.7.1 Officers respond to Food Alerts in accordance with guidance from the FSA and relevant section of the Code of Practice.

4.7.2 Officers are alerted to food alerts by a text message direct to their mobile phone from the Food Standards Agency.

4.7.3 Food alerts are now issued under two categories

For action (replacing A, B & C)

For Information (replacing Category D)

4.7.4 This year has been marked by food alerts in relationship to Sudan Dye in numerous foods. These have been in the 'For Action' category.

4.7.5 A large number of products were contaminated with Sudan 1 which gave rise to national publicity. All of our food businesses were sent a letter informing them of the problem and directing them to the food standard agency website for a full listing of contaminated foods. We also sent out this list on request from businesses. Businesses were also advised of the facility available on the FSA website to be able to have free food alerts direct to their mobile phones. This type of rapid response work can occur at any time and routine inspections are stopped temporarily in order to deal with the emergency work.



4.7.6 Inspection up to the end of March 2005 were used to check that businesses had received the information that we sent in relationship to Sudan 1 and proprietors questioned as to whether any food was found containing Sudan 1.

#### 4.8 **Liaison with Other Organisations**

4.8.1 The established Principal Officer Food Liaison Group collaborates well. Departmental procedures are shared County-wide to promote consistency. A yearly work-plan is produced and followed. The food officer sub-groups share allocated procedural tasks.

4.8.2 A Chief Environmental Health Officers Group functions at a strategic and management level. It approves the work-plan of the Food Liaison Group and monitors its work and output.

4.8.3 The Chartered Institute of Environmental Health Officers Eastern Centre (23 LA's - Suffolk, Norfolk, Cambridgeshire) has a specialist Eastern Centre food group which meets 3-4 times a year and concentrates on food training issues. This will assist in the specialist food training requirements of officers carrying out food safety duties.

4.8.4 Liaison with LACORS exists through the Principal Officer Food Liaison Group.

4.8.5 Regular updates of food premises registration information are provided to our Trading Standards and HSE colleagues.

4.8.6 Working groups in partnership with the South Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust and other NHS and voluntary sector groups are attended by the Chief EHO and the EHO (Public Health Specialist) with a view to implementing the South Cambridgeshire Improving Health Plan.

4.8.7 Close liaison exists inter-departmentally with Building Control and the Planning Department with reference to food businesses.

4.8.8 Resource allocation during the year 2005/06 will be monitored through a new computer system which has been installed in the Department.

#### 4.9 **Food Safety Promotion**

4.9.1 Food safety promotion work is undertaken by the following methods:-

- ❖ Basic food hygiene training courses are run 4 times per year and on request if a business has more than 12 delegates. Specialist groups, ie care home wardens and caterers whose first language is not English, are run as required.

4.9.2 The EHO (Public Health Specialist) considers other additional food safety promotional activities as part of his annual work plan.

### 5. **RESOURCES**

#### 5.1 **Financial Allocation**

5.1.1 The total cost of staffing the food service is £160,320.

5.1.2 Travel and subsistence for this service is estimated at £10,030.

5.1.3 Purchase/maintenance and calibration of equipment costs £7,270.

- 5.1.4 Cost of training is £2,370.
- 5.1.5 Investment in IT costs £28,930.
- 5.1.6 Sampling budget is £2,760.
- 5.1.7 Consultancy £6,880.
- 5.1.8 Total expenditure 2005/06 estimate is £218,560.
- 5.1.9 Legal action is pursued within Departmental budgets but with access to consultancy and contingency funds if required. If and when costs are awarded by the Courts, these monies are transferred back to the Departmental budget headings.
- 5.1.10 The breakdown of these costs are to some extent estimated as a refined time recording system is not in existence.

## 5.2 **Staffing Allocation**

- 5.2.1 The food team currently consists of the Principal Officer, Mr J Keerie and 3½ full time equivalent Officers, Miss R Walkowiak, A W Greenwood, Mrs C Archibald and Mrs J Power (part-time). In addition an EHO with responsibility for Public Health also has a time input into food related projects. Consultants are employed on an ad hoc basis to supplement the service offered. The 5 officers are all fully qualified EHO's maintaining their competence levels. Work relating to the food law enforcement service equates to 3½ full time equivalents.

## 5.3 **Staff Development Plan**

- 5.3.1 A personal development programme was introduced from 1 April 2001. This assisted in a departmental Investors in People Award in 2003. This has highlighted training needs identified by individual officers, their managers and service demands. These training requirements are built into officers work programmes and budgetary requirements are identified and allowed for in service plans. Both internal and external training opportunities will be utilised eg LACORS, CIEH, FSA and specialist consultants/expert advisers.

## 6. **QUALITY ASSESSMENT**

- 6.1 Performance Indicators have been identified within this Service Plan.
  - 6.1.1 Regular team meetings of the specialist food officers take place.
  - 6.1.2 Internal quality monitoring is undertaken in accordance with:
    - 6.1.2.1 The Internal Procedure Monitoring Note (Procedure note F011)
    - 6.1.2.2 Food Premises Inspections – Quality Control (Procedure Note F017).
  - 6.1.3 Environmental Health is currently awarded Investors in People (IIP) status.

## 7. **REVIEW**

### 7.1 **Review of the Service Plan**

- 7.1.1 The Service Plan will be reviewed January 2006.

7.1.2 The Standards for Food Law Enforcement including food policies and procedure notes will be reviewed in accordance with the review timetable in the Internal Monitoring Procedure Note.

7.1.3 The review will be facilitated by information from the newly introduced IT system and will include trend analysis from previous year performance data.

7.1.4 Departmental performance indicators are reviewed annually under the Service Plan process.

## 7.2 **Review of Previous Year's Performance against Service Plan**

7.2.1 At the end of this financial year, the intended actions as specified in the Departmental Service Plan will be compared with what was achieved in the areas relating to food safety. The reasons for any variance identified will be stated and next year's plan will take these into account as lessons to be learnt from the previous year.

7.2.2 Targeted outcomes are reviewed on a six monthly basis.

7.2.3 The Food Standards Agency Framework Agreement requires every local authority to review its previous years performance against its service plan. The review must identify where the authority was at variance from the service plan and, where appropriate, the reasons for that variance.

7.2.4 This review details the performance of the food service for the financial year 2004/05 and must outline any significant issues that impacted on the delivery of the service.

## 7.3 **Profile of the Authority**

7.3.1 The new village of Cambourne currently has six food businesses, including a large supermarket. The existing businesses and anticipated additional food businesses can be sustained within existing staffing levels.

## 7.4 **Food Premises Inspections**

7.4.1 In 2004/05 a total of 545 food business premises required an inspection of which 421 were classed as high risk (risk group A to C) and 124 were other risk (risk group D to F).

7.4.2 Target 2004/05 was a 100% of High Risk premises which was achieved. The target for other risk premises was 90% which was also achieved (i.e. 90.48%).

7.4.3 Revisits are carried out on an ad hoc basis to premises where significant remedial work is required, or "critical control points" are not adequately controlled.

7.4.4 By 31 March 2005, 31 Improvement Notices were served, all of which were complied with within the specified timescale.

7.4.5 In addition to routine food hygiene inspections, 16 butchers licences were issued and 13 premises licensed to sell game. There were no refusals or revocations.

## 7.5 **Food Related Complaints**

7.5.1 Up to 31 March 2005 the service received 71 food complaints and 40 complaints about food premises.

7.5.2 All complaints about food premises were investigated promptly and efficiently, with the response deadline of 3 working days being met in 105 out of 111 complaints (95%).

**7.6 Advice to Business**

7.6.1 Officers have continued to give free advice and assistance to both the trade and public throughout the year on food safety and hygiene matters. In addition to advice given during the inspection process various advisory leaflets were produced and distributed.

**7.7 Food Inspection and Sampling**

7.7.1 A total of 291 samples were taken and submitted to the HLS for analysis. The sampling programme formulated by LACORS and the Eastern Region programme as well as our own sampling program were followed. Nine food samples were considered to be unsatisfactory. These were raw meat, herbs and sandwiches and six water samples which were found to be unacceptable. All failed samples were followed up to ascertain the cause and necessary improvements were put in place to reduce the risk of a recurrence.

7.7.2 43 more samples were taken this year in comparison with last year and seven more samples failed in comparison. This increased the work load of the sampling officers.

7.7.3 Twenty-five Food Export Certificates were issued for consignments of food that was manufactured in the district and exported to non-EU countries.

**7.8 Food-related Infectious Diseases**

7.8.1 A total of 222 notified cases of food poisoning and suspected food poisoning were received up to 31 March 2005. Investigations were carried out within 24 hours of notification. In all cases where local food premises were potentially implicated, no conclusive evidence was found to confirm that either the food or the premises was the source of the illness.

**7.9 Food Safety Incidents**

7.9.1 The service received 87 'Food Alerts' food hazard warnings from the Food Standards Agency for 2004/05. Food Alerts received by this authority are notified to other local authority environmental health departments by the cascade system. Of the food alerts received, 46 were for information and 41 for action. This is a substantial increase over the previous years work.

**7.10 Liaison with Other Organisations**

7.10.1 All existing liaison arrangements have worked successfully throughout the year and there are no planned changes to these systems.

7.10.2 The Cambridgeshire Food Liaison Group produces a yearly work plan which is adhered to and outcomes reported annually to the Chief Environmental Health Officer Group. In order to achieve this work programme, sub-groups of specialist food officers from the six Local Authorities challenge individual projects.

**7.11 Food Safety Promotion**

7.11.1 4 food Hygiene Courses were successfully completed. The reduced number on the previous year was principally due to our move to Cambourne and staff shortages.

7.11.2 A selection of new leaflets for food hygiene for both the public and local businesses will be available on the website.

7.12 **Staff Development**

7.12.1 With officers personal development plans in place, training needs are identified at the beginning of the year. Both the officer and the Principal Officer responsible for training, source and access relevant training courses. All officers secured the necessary amount of CPD as required by the FSA.

7.13 **Staffing**

7.13.1 The team is up to full strength with one officer on extended sickness leave. In addition, consultants are engaged periodically to supplement the team output and a consultancy budget has been negotiated to continue this service.

7.14 **Quality Assessment**

7.14.1 A full review of each component of the food service has been carried out by officer groups which included consideration of the procedure and practice notes.

7.15 **Identification of any Variation from the Service Plan**

7.15.1 There were no significant deviations from the Service Plan.

7.16 **Areas of Improvement**

7.16.1 The Department for a number of years has produced a Service Plan. The requirement of the Service Plan is to increase yearly the achieved percentage of identified targets and identify where possible any improvements of a qualitative nature.

7.16.2 The review of the Service Plan enables foreseeable trends and known changes that may affect service requirements and service delivery to be considered.

7.16.3 To facilitate interpretation of the Service Plan and focus the food team's attention on relevant improvements, the Hampshire Matrix has been used since 2002 to monitor progress of the food team's improvements at six monthly intervals. Recent improvements in the last year to our scores on the matrix have included adoption of a food enforcement policy. Accreditation to Investors in People standard which improved the score in the staff competency matrix. Also there was improved communication with our stake holders due to the increased amount of training courses offered and consultation services by the Bostock Marketing Group.

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet 9 June 2005  
**AUTHOR/S:** Housing & Environmental Services Director

**HEALTH & SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2005-2006**

**Purpose**

1. To seek the Cabinet's approval and recommendation to Council of a Health & Safety Service Plan for 2005/06.

**Effect on Corporate Objectives**

2. Quality, Accessible Services	The plan refers to many ways in which the health & safety service works towards this objective ie. Access to services through the Contact Centre and quality benchmarking.
Village Life	The plan supports the development and maintenance of small business through appropriate measured enforcement, advice and education.
Sustainability	The service has at its heart the protection of public health.
Partnership	The service involves liaison and partnership working with a variety of businesses, organisations and agencies.

**Background**

3. Health & Safety aspects of the Department's work have been included within the 2005/06 Service Plan however, the Health & Safety Executive in their Section 18 Requirements on the Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 require the production of a specific Service Plan to a common format. The Health & Safety Service Plan attached as **Appendix 1** to this report meets this requirement. Appendices to the Health & Safety Service Plan are available in the Chief Environmental Health Officer's office.

**Considerations**

4. The Health & Safety Executive has stated the following in their Section 18 guidance:
 

Produce an annual Health & Safety Plan which is agreed by members and contributes to the Health & Safety Commission priorities.

Guidelines were then given as to the details and expected content of the Health & Safety Service Plan. The Service Plan simply documents in one single plan the work and structure of the Department relating to health & safety.

**Options**

5. The production of a service plan for this area of work is a legal requirement of the Health & Safety Executive under Section 18 of the Health & Safety at Work (etc) Act 1974

**Financial Implications**

6. Staffing costs only.

**Legal Implications**

7. None.

**Staffing Implications**

8. Referred to in the body of the report.

**Risk Management Implications**

9. Failure to adhere to the work plan could result in adverse media comment. The Health & Safety Executive could name and shame the Local Authority Nationally. In extreme circumstances if we fail to carry out this work the HSE may take over our inspection and enforcement duties and charge the Local Authority for the work.

**Consultations**

10. None.

**Conclusions/Summary**

11. This service plan meets the HSE requirements under relevant legislation and guidance.

**Recommendations**

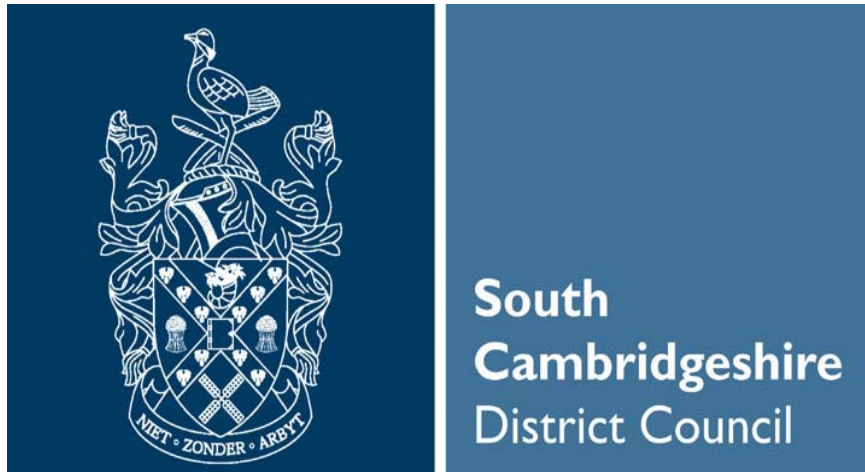
12. That Cabinet recommends Council to approve the Health & Safety Service Plan 2005/06, which is attached to this report.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Section 18 on Local Authority Health & Safety Enforcement (copy available from the Chief Environmental Health Officer)

**Contact Officer:** Dale Robinson – Chief Environmental Health Officer  
Telephone: (01954) 713229  
Geoff Keerie – Principal Environmental Health Officer  
Telephone: (01954) 713133





# **Health & Safety Service Plan 2005-2006**

Drawn up in accordance with HSC Section 18 Guidance

## **1.0 Service Aims and Objectives**

### **1.1 Aim**

The Council recognises that its Health and Safety enforcement function represents an important mechanism for reducing accidents and ill health in the workplace as well as contributing directly to economic success and a safe environment. The Council's aim is to ensure that all employees in the Local Authority enforced sector and the general public enjoy a working environment that is safe and without undue or unreasonable risk to health.

### **1.2 Our objectives include:**

- to enforce the Health & Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and the relevant statutory provisions under that Act, at premises within the Council's jurisdiction, having regard to the level of risk to workers.
- to take enforcement action according to a clear, published enforcement policy, based on the principles of proportionality in applying the law, consistency of approach, transparency in application of the law and targeting action based on risk and accountability.
- to promote the management of health, safety and welfare at work through education and advice (which form an integral part of the enforcement regime).

National and local performance indicators are set and those, which are statutory, are published each year in the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) and the local press.

There are no specific national performance indicators relating to health and safety enforcement.

## **2.0 Background**

### **2.1 Profile of the Local Authority**

The area served by SCDC is approximately 350 square miles, much of which is farmland given to primary production of food, mainly cereals and vegetables. Villages range from small rural settlements to suburban and new village settlements such as Bar Hill and Cambourne. There are no large towns within the district, the largest village currently having a population of 7,150.

**2.2** There is increasing pressure from development, particularly research and high technology industries and new housing. The population of approximately 133,000 is rapidly expanding. New build and new villages will take the population to over 150,000 within 5 years. It is anticipated that the 102<sup>nd</sup> village of Cambourne currently under development will have a new population of 10,000 persons within 3 years.

**2.3** With this projected growth it is anticipated that there will be an increase in the number of businesses in the District. This increase in business numbers has already started.

## **3.0 Premises Profile (as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005)**

### **3.1 Breakdown by Category**

A Category, number of high risk premises 15, Visit frequency not less than once per year.

B1 Category, Number of Intermediate risk premises 18, Visit frequency not less than once per 18 months.

B2 Category, Number of Intermediate medium risk premises 65, No Less than once per every two years.

B3 Category, Number of medium risk premises, 10, Use other intervention strategies but review rating after three years.

B4 Category, Number of medium risk premises, 10, Use other intervention strategies but review rating after five years.

C Category, low risk premises, Use other intervention strategies, for example questionnaire, and then 1% of the sample inspected.

### **3.2 Breakdown by Type of Business:**

Retail Shops 265

Wholesale, warehouse etc. 101

Offices 265

Catering, restaurants and bars 450 approx

Hotels, camp sites etc 63

Residential care homes 51

Leisure and cultural 151

Consumer services 151

Other 36

TOTAL 1,533 approx

### **3.3 Data Base**

It is appreciated that the database needs to be reviewed and updated. This work is to be pursued this year and it is believed that there are probably 3000 businesses in the district, for which we are the enforcing authority.

### **3.4 Demands on the Service**

The local authority is required to provide a balanced programme of enforcement activity, providing the resources for a range of different types of activity, identified in HELA circular 67/1(rev3) (See Appendix 1) it is expected to focus on the priorities set by the Health and Safety Commission which in turn reflect the Revitalising Health and Safety (RHS) initiative of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The specialist health and safety officer has been given a nominal target for preventive inspections; these will focus on nationally identified Revitalising Health and Safety topics. The implications of this are reflected in the target and anticipated levels of enforcement activity.

Because of the additional training and time implications, stress has not been included as a priority area for this year's enforcement activity, even though it is a nationally identified priority. It is intended that this will be included in next years targeted enforcement activity, subject to appropriate training being completed.

The current workload will consist of:

#### **3.4.1 Health and Safety Premises Inspections**

These will be largely joint inspections of food premises by Food Safety Officers and topic based inspections of high risk premises by the specialist Health and Safety Enforcement Officer. Two Technical Officers will intermittently assist with this planned inspection programme.

### **3.4.2 New Business Enquiries and Inspections**

All plans for new businesses and substantial alteration to existing businesses are submitted for comment. Advice is given and new businesses visited on opening to confirm compliance. New businesses will be subject to an overview inspection and inspection against the priority issues identified in section 4.4.1 below.

### **3.4.3 Health and Safety Complaints and Enquiries**

Complaints may relate to poor working conditions, welfare issues, working hours and a wide range of technical matters. They can arise from employers, employees, union and safety representatives and members of the public.

### **3.4.4 Injuries and Dangerous Occurrences**

It is proposed to draft a local procedure based on regionally agreed criteria and national guidelines for the selection and investigation of reported accidents and dangerous occurrences. They can range from minor injuries to fatalities

### **3.4.5 Licensing and Registration**

Applications or representation for New Premises Licences, or variations to the licenses are sent to us for consultation. Application for temporary events that are for over 500 people are also sent to us for action. We can comment or object if necessary. Temporary events for fewer than 500 people may also be drawn to our attention for us to take and necessary action under Health and Safety Legislation. Registration of skin piercing business is also carried out.

### **3.4.6 Formal Notifications**

The Council receives formal notifications from specialist engineers relating to lifting equipment, asbestos removal, pressure systems and location of cooling towers. Follow up work is often required in all of these areas to ensure safe working systems are in place.

### **3.4.7 Advice to businesses**

The Council is fully committed to give advice to businesses to enable them to comply with their statutory duties. It can include one to one advice during inspections or other contacts, response to telephone calls and other requests as well as more formal campaigns and media activity.

Support is given, subject to available resources, to national initiatives such as European Health and Safety week.

As well as the pro-active work of inspecting the above premises the department last year dealt with the following:

#### **2004/2005**

Accident notifications 58

Complaints 28

New business enquiries 58

Delivered Four CIEH Foundation Certificate in Health and Safety course.  
Two Foundation level courses in Risk Assessment and one Advance course in Risk Assessment

### **Enforcement Policy**

There is a corporate Enforcement Policy, which has been endorsed by the cabinet in 2004. Copies will be available on the Councils website, and by request to members of the public.

The Council has endorsed the central and Local Government Enforcement Concordat and is committed to complying with recognised standards for good enforcement practice.

Enforcement activity is monitored for compliance with the policy as part of an in-house quality management scheme.

## **4.0 Resources**

### **4.1 Staffing**

The Officer with overall responsibility for Health and Safety Service delivery is Mr Dale Robinson, Chief EHO.

Officers with specialist responsibilities for Health and Safety: Mr J G.Keerie and supported by Mrs Carol Archibald, Team leader.

Officers undertaking Health and safety Enforcement duties are:

1 Health & Safety Enforcement Officer  
3.5 EHO's (Food and Health and Safety Officers)  
1 Technical Officer  
1 Safety Officer  
Associated Admin support.  
This calculated at 2.6 full-time equivalent

### **4.2 The Underlying basis for the Inspection Programme**

In broad terms the target is based on the following approach:

- The inspection rating system will provide the basis for prioritising premises for visits, taking into account other relevant criteria such as Revitalising Health and Safety (RHS) priorities. The rating system will not be used to directly determine the number or type of inspections to be undertaken – primarily available resource will determine this.
- Cat A - visit those due for inspection, focussing on identified RHS topics.
- Cat B non-food premises – these will only be considered for a visit if time permits and all Category A premises have been visited, visits will focus on the HSC priorities outlined below and those with the highest score when the elapsed year factor is applied.
- Cat B food premises – these will be subject to a combined inspection where a food inspection is to be carried out and a health and safety visit is also due.
- Cat C food premises – where a food inspection is to be carried out and a health and safety visit has not been undertaken within the last five years, conduct visit against our protocol.

A proportion of B's and C's falling due will be in food premises and require combined inspections. On the basis of past experience this is likely to be in the order of 100 to 150 of premises due for food inspection.

No programme of special visits has been set for the coming year; the proposed inspection plan targets specific issues identified by the Health and Safety Commission and by HELA.

### **4.3 Enforcement Initiatives based on HSC Priorities and Key Issues**

It is intended to continue the move away from an approach to inspections, which simply chooses premises for inspection based on due date and score. There are a number of reasons for this:

- The inspection programme needs to incorporate issues and priorities identified by the HSC in its priorities for health and safety enforcement.
- The approach reflects changes in the HSE approach, with the emphasis being given to Revitalising Health and Safety Targets.
- Staff resources are insufficient to carry out an inspection programme based on the existing risk based programme. An approach that looks at priority areas will make better use of the available time, targeting those issues, which contribute most to achieving improvements in health and safety in the workplace.
- It will provide some flexibility towards enforcement activities. The single specialist Health and safety Enforcement Officer will primarily be involved with response work.

### **4.4 Allocation of Enforcement Tasks**

#### **4.4.1 Specialist Health and Safety Inspector**

During proactive inspections the Specialist Health and Safety Enforcement Officer will focus attention on the following priority topics identified by the Health & Safety Commission - workplace transport, falls from height, musculoskeletal disorders, slips and trips, as these represent the largest (or fastest growing) causes of injury and ill health in the British economy and have been identified as key target areas to achieve the Governments Revitalising Health and Safety strategy. Separate guidance will be prepared for these visits.

Prioritisation for such visits will be given according to the Risk Category rating and secondly according to the likely relevance of the topics to the premises. Thus premises will be considered for inspection from Risk Category A, then B1 etc. All Category A premises will be visited, premises in lower risk premises will only be visited if it appears relevant to the identified topics.

It is likely that the majority of the specialist health and safety inspector's time will be involved in reactive enforcement in response to complaints and accidents. Thus, proactive "Revitalising Health and Safety" topic based inspections will only be carried out where time becomes available. When relevant to the initial reason for a visit, the specialist inspector will carry out topic-based inspections at premises that have to be visited for other reasons.

#### **4.4.2 Environmental Health Officers**

For EHO's carrying out combined inspections at food businesses, key issues to consider will include:

- "Priorities for Health & Safety in Catering"
- Welfare

- Slips and Trips
- Manual handling
- Cellar Safety
- Ventilation of kitchens
- COSHH

Inspections will normally be carried out against the aide memoir checklist prepared for food businesses, based on these nationally identified priorities.

Complaints relating to safety and welfare issues in food premises, other than warehouses and residential homes, will be passed to an EHO for initial investigation.

The Team Leader will normally take decisions on the delegation of work.

#### **4.5 Reported Injuries and Dangerous Occurrences**

Accidents/Incidents may be formally notified to the authority or received by way of a complaint. Accidents/Incidents will be selected for investigation in accordance with the RIDDOR guidance, having given due regard to available resources to carry out investigations and the seriousness of each. Accidents/Incidents, which fall within the discretionary category, for investigation, will generally only be selected where the incident relates to one of the following topics: Falls from heights; Transport; Slips and trips; Manual handling. Targets for reducing accidents at work by 2010 are set out in the Revitalising health and safety document.

#### **4.6 Complaints and Requests for Service**

Subject to the exercise of professional discretion, the following guidelines will apply to the handling of complaints and requests for service:

- Where the matter is outside the jurisdiction of the enforcement team, the enquirer or complainant will be advised accordingly and redirected to the appropriate body.
- Reported incidents will be dealt with in accordance with the Incident Selection Criteria, subject to the need to ensure that all incidents notifiable under RIDDOR are so notified.
- So far as possible, advice will be given by phone or by letter. Visits will only be carried out in the first instance where the matter appears to involve one of the following:
  - Public concern and a serious breach of health and safety requirements
  - Serious breach of health and safety requirements
  - A priority area {manual handling, slips and trips, falls from height, transport}
- Anonymous complaints will be recorded. Further action will only be taken at the discretion of the Team Leader or Principal Officer.

#### **4.7 Inspector Development and Refresher Training**

It will be necessary to allocate time for relevant staff to undergo training on the following matters:

- Enforcement Management Model implementation

- Topic based inspections – (Once sufficient experience has been gained in topic based inspections, this may be extended to Food Safety Officers if it appears reasonable to do so)
- Legislative Changes

It is intended to provide refresher training on inspection issues that reflect the HSC priorities.

#### **4.8 Intra-authority Audit Programme for the Management of Health and Safety Enforcement**

The Health and Safety Commission requires enforcing authorities to periodically undergo independent audit of their arrangements to carry out enforcement activities, and to prepare improvement plans taking into account the outcome of such audits. This authority has taken part in an intra-authority audit programme organised by the Cambridgeshire Health and Safety Liaison Group.

A review will be carried out of the management of health and safety enforcement, having regards to findings of this audit.

#### **4.9 Data Base**

No planned survey work is to be undertaken. The data base will be updated from the following sources:

- Notifications of new businesses made under health and safety and food safety legislation.
- Notifications received of applications for Planning or Building Regulation approvals, where there is evidence of a change of occupier or change of use.
- Changes in the use or occupation of premises identified in the course of routine visits on the district.
- Complaints and enquiries that indicate the existence of new businesses or a changed occupation or use.
- Business rating list.

#### **4.10 Documentary Reviews**

The following documents will be subject to review and revision if appropriate:

- Policy in respect of Enforcement of Health and Safety at Work
- Incident Selection Protocol
- Incident Investigation Protocol
- At least five of our current practise and procedure notes will be reviewed.

#### **4.11 Joint Working**

It is intended to explore areas of joint working to include, the National Care Standards Commission for Social Care (CSCI) Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), Health and Safety Executive, (we now have an active budding system with them).

### **5.0 Performance Targets**

- 5.1** Elements of BV166 include issues relating to Health and Safety enforcement. Other indicators and information relating to health and safety is collected and published by HELA annually. They produce



comparisons on six indicators, which can be used to judge performance against other authorities. They are:

- (1) Number of preventive inspections per 1000 premises
- (2) Number of improvement notices per 1000 visits
- (3) Number of immediate prohibition notices per 1000 visits
- (4) Number of information's laid per 1000 premises
- (5) Number of premises per full time equivalent staff
- (6) Percentage of convictions per information laid

In addition, the following local indicators are recorded:

- i - Response times to complaints/requests for service and percentage within target of 3 days (same working day as receipt or the next)
- ii – Response times for accident notifications are the same day.

## **6.0 Liaison**

**6.1** In order to ensure that its activities are consistent with other local authorities and the HSE, regular liaison meetings are held with Local Authorities from Cambridgeshire. HSE representatives attend these meetings.

**6.2** Other bodies with which we consult/liaise include:  
Cambridgeshire Liaison Group for Occupational Health & Safety  
LACORS (Local Authority Coordinators of Regulatory Services)  
Trading Standards  
Chartered Institute of Environmental Health  
CSCI, Health Protection Agency (HPA) Police and Fire and Rescue.

## **7.0 Quality Control and Review**

**7.1** A documented quality management system is in place, which includes:  
Team Leader monitoring of correspondence  
Reviews of documentation and computer records  
Accompanied inspections/peer review  
In service training  
Inter-authority auditing  
Benchmarking of performance  
Regular team meetings

**7.2** In addition staff take part in a structured staff development programme, which amongst other things identifies training needs.

**7.3** The Department has reviewed and updated its enforcement policy in accordance with the format laid down in Section 18 guidance, the Enforcement Concordat, to which the Council is a signatory, and the Code for Crown Prosecutors. The policy will be available on the Council website. ([www.scams.gov.uk](http://www.scams.gov.uk))

## **8.0 Glossary**

HSC = Health and Safety Commission (National body whose job is to protect everyone in Great Britain against risks to health or safety arising out of work activities; to conduct and sponsor research; promote training; provide an

information and advisory service; and submit proposals for new or revised regulations and approved codes of practice).

HSE = Health and Safety Executive (The enforcement arm of HSC, HSE's job is to help the Health and Safety Commission ensure that risks to people's health and safety from work activities are properly controlled).

EHO = Environmental Health Officer (Enforcement officer employed by Local Authority).

LAC = Local Authority Circular (advice/guidance from HSE/HELA).

FSO = Food and Health and Safety Officer (Specialist Enforcement Officer employed by Local Authority).

RIDDOR = Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995.

RHS = Revitalising Health and Safety (The Revitalising Health and Safety strategy was launched jointly by the Government and Health and Safety Commission on 7 June 2000. This 10 year strategy seeks significant improvements in workplace health and safety by setting, for the first time, challenging targets aimed at reducing the incidence of work-related ill-health, the number of fatal and major injuries and working days lost caused by injuries and ill health).

HELA = Health and Safety Executive Local Authority Unit (A liaison body set up to ensure, amongst other things, consistent enforcement by both HSE and Local Authorities).

COSHH = Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations.

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet 9 June 2005  
**AUTHOR/S:** Development Services Director

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**ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003  
IMPLEMENTATION OF HIGH HEDGES PROVISIONS**

**Purpose**

1. To seek members approval for the process of administering the High Hedges Provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and to determine the appropriate fee.

**Effect on Corporate Objectives**

2. Quality, Accessible Services	The High Hedges regulations were enacted from 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2005 and will require the Council to implement the service, funded by a fee.
Village Life	N/a
Sustainability	N/a
Partnership	N/a

**Background**

3. A report was presented to the 13 May 2005 Development Control and Conservation Committee to consider and agree the Council's approach to the administration of the High Hedges regulations, summarised below. These provisions commenced from 1 June 2005.
4. The legislation makes it clear that high hedge complaints should only be made as a *last resort*. The authority does not have to accept complaints that do not demonstrate that both parties been able to consider the implications of Council's intervention.
5. Complainants should provide documentary evidence of:
  - At least three pieces of correspondence with the hedge owner,
  - A minimum of a three month period of communication between neighbours.
6. The complainant's evidence gathering period to *commence* with the date of the legislation on 1<sup>st</sup> June 2005. This will mean that completed complaints will not be accepted until September 2005. This will demonstrate that a minimum 3 month period has passed, during which attempts were made to resolve the issue between neighbours and will:
  - (a) Enable **both** neighbours to fully consider the implications and cost associated with a complaint being taken forward by the local authority, in the light of the published legislation.
  - (b) Enable the authority to undertake an initial assessment of staff resource implications.

7. **Appendix 1** is a summary of the administrative process to be established.
8. The legislation enables the Council to set its own fees with the intention of making the process 'self-financing'. The fee proposed is £450, which is comparable to other rural districts in the 'premier league' and could enable a "*High Hedges Enforcement Officer*" to be appointed, should demand require such a post.
9. The level of fee charged should not only recover the Council's reasonable costs, but also act as a practical deterrent to frivolous or vexatious complaints
10. It is proposed that the fee could be reduced:
  - (a) up to a maximum of £150, when the complainant is able to produce evidence that formal mediation has been undertaken
  - (b) at the discretion of the Director of Finance & Resources in the case of appropriately documented financial hardship.

### **Options**

11. The following options are relevant:
  - (a) To consider and confirm the above proposed fee level, administration process (Appendix 1) and Scheme of Delegation (**Appendix 2**) as the Council's initial approach to dealing with High Hedge Complaints, until the extent of the impact on resources can be fully determined.  
  
Or
  - (b) Not to confirm the proposed protocol as the Council's approach to dealing with High Hedge Complaints, suggesting amendments to the outlined scheme to enable these complaints to be considered using existing resources.

### **Financial Implications**

12. The full financial implications cannot be determined at this stage. A fee of £450 is deemed to be appropriate. This fee could enable a specific officer to be employed if demand from received complaints diverts existing resources, requiring a new post of "*High Hedge Enforcement Officer*" to be created, financed by the receipt of fees.

### **Legal Implications**

13. The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 requires the authority to implement these measures from 1 June 2005.

### **Staffing Implications**

14. The full extent is, as yet unknown. The initial assessment period will enable the demand to be determined and clarity be given to the need to recruit a specialist *High Hedges Enforcement Officer*.

### **Risk Management Implications**

15. Hedges are a potentially sensitive issue that can cause great distress and anxiety to the parties involved. The proposal is, therefore, to encourage the resolution of these

complaints by neighbours, backed by the knowledge that the Council ' could' intervene if an accord can not be reached by agreement.

16. If a complaint is accepted, officers' will focus efforts on the objective assessment of 'nuisance' to determine whether a Remedial Notice should be issued. It is **not** the Council's role to undertake any form of mediation between neighbours.

### **Consultations**

17. A more detailed report on this matter was considered by the 13 May 2005 Development Control & Conservation Committee, who agreed the above general approach.
18. The Head of Legal Services and Director of Finance and Resources were consulted.

### **Conclusions/Summary**

19. The full implications of the enactment of Part 8 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Bill cannot be determined at this point. However, it is evident that, should the number of cases require more than 1 day a week, being devoted to dealing with these cases, over a sustained period, then it is likely that the appointment of a "*High Hedges Enforcement Officer*" would be justified. The post would be financed by the receipt of fees at the proposed rate.

### **Recommendations**

20. That the protocol for dealing with complaints about High Hedges, under Section 8 of the Anti-Social, as outlined above is adopted and:
  - (a) That the proposed administration process (Appendix 1) is adopted.
  - (b) That the scheme of delegation of powers to officers (Appendix 2) is approved.
  - (c) That the fee charged in respect of complaints under these provisions is initially established at £450, where there has been no formal mediation.
  - (d) In the event that formal mediation has been undertaken there will be a reduction in the fee, equivalent to the costs of the mediation, upto a maximum reduction of £150, subject to provision of evidence that formal mediation has been tried and failed and the cost of this exercise.
  - (e) That in event of the number of received cases exceeding the equivalent of 1 day per week, assessed during an initial six month period, that authorisation is given to the establishment of a new part-time post of a "*High Hedges Enforcement Officer*", financed by the receipt of fees.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

1. Reports on the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 – High Hedges. May 2005. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. [WWW.ODPM.Gov.uk](http://WWW.ODPM.Gov.uk)
2. Report to the 13<sup>th</sup> May 2005 – Development Control & Conservation Committee.

**Contact Officer:** Nick Grimshaw – Conservation Manager  
Telephone: (01954) 713180

## Appendix 1

**PROPOSED - HIGH HEDGE ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURE  
May 2005**

No.	Task	Action
1.	<p><b>Response to initial inquiries</b> (by tel, fax, e.mail. letter etc). Send out information pack inc.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Standard SCDC</li> <li>(ii) ODPM guidance booklets</li> <li>(iii) Application</li> <li>(iv) ODPM appeal guidance booklet.</li> </ul>	<p>Contact centre staff. Planning Administration</p>
2.	<p><b>Applications received.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Standard acknowledgement within 3 days.</li> <li>(b) Applications checked for validity</li> <li>(c) Invalid applications returned.</li> <li>(d) Valid applications acknowledged – standard letter to complainant, hedge owner &amp; local member noting : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) consideration - approx. 12 weeks.</li> <li>(ii) 28 days for hedge owner to view file and respond.</li> <li>(iii) 28 days for local member to respond.</li> <li>(iv) Site visit <i>after</i> 28 day period has elapsed.</li> <li>(v) Outline process for making decision.</li> </ul> </li> <li>(e) Case file made up for enforcement officers.</li> <li>(f) Fee banked in specific “High Hedges” account.</li> <li>(g) Case passed to Enforcement officer</li> <li>(h) Case entered on monitoring system.</li> </ul>	<p>Planning administration.</p>
3.	<p><b>Case assessment .</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Desk based assessment to initially check whether hedge meets definition of nuisance. And whether specialist arboricultural or ecological advice is required.</li> <li>(b) Site visit arranged to inspect from both properties.</li> <li>(c) Report on site assessment drafted, recommendation to either : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) serve Remedial Notice .</li> <li>(ii) take no further action.</li> </ul> </li> <li>(e) Report considered by Senior Officer for confirmation of recommendation.</li> </ul> <p><b>or</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(f) Report presented to 2<sup>nd</sup> Delegation meeting for discussion and referral to DCCC Chairs Delegation, where local member disagrees with case officer’s recommendation.</li> </ul>	<p>Enforcement officers</p> <p>Enforcement officers</p> <p>Enforcement officers</p> <p>Conservation Manager or Development Control Quality Manager or Deputy Director of Development Services or other.</p> <p>Enforcement Officers.</p>

	<p>(g) Standard memo to Head of Legal Services to serve Remedial Action Notice once recommendation confirmed, copied to: complainant and local member.</p> <p><b>Or</b></p> <p>(h) Letter to complainant to advise that no further action to be taken, copied to hedge owner and local member.</p> <p>(i) Date for implementation of works monitored. If no action then advise hedge owner that prosecution may be commenced.</p> <p>(j) If complainant or applicant appeal, decision to Planning Inspectorate then appeal process to be handled by Appeal Officers.</p>	<p>Enforcement Officers</p> <p>Enforcement Officers.</p> <p>Enforcement Officers</p> <p>Appeal Officers.</p>

## APPENDIX 2

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR ACT 2003 – HIGH HEDGES  
DELEGATION OF POWERS

SOURCE	POWER DELEGATED	DELEGATION TO
Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 s68 (2)	To determine whether or not to proceed with a complaint.	Director of Development Services or; Deputy Director of Development Services; or Development Control Quality Manager; or Area Planning Officers; or Senior Enforcement Officer; or Area Planning Officers; or Planning Policy Manager; or Conservation Manager.
Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 s 6 (3) (4) and (5)	To decide whether a high hedge is affecting the complainant's reasonable enjoyment of a domestic property and, if so, what action (if any) should be taken to remedy the adverse effect or prevent its recurrence.  To issue such notifications, other than remedial notices, required by these sections to give effect to that decision.	Director of Development Services or; Deputy Director of Development Services; or Development Control Quality Manager; or Area Planning Officers; or Senior Enforcement Officer; or Area Planning Officers; or Planning Policy Manager; or Conservation Manager in consultation with the local SCDC ward councillor(s) *  * Where the ward Member disagrees with the assessment by officers, the matter may be referred to the DCCC Chair's Delegation Meeting.
Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 s 68 (4) and s 69	To issue Remedial Notices.	Director of Development Services or; Deputy Director of Development Services; or Development Control Quality Manager; or Area Planning Officers; or Senior Enforcement Officer; or Area Planning Officers.
Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 s 68 (1)	To determine the level of fee to be charged.	Director of Finance & Resources.
Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 s 68 (8)	To refund the fee paid when a Tree Preservation Order is placed on the hedge subject of the complaint.	Director of Development Services or; Deputy Director of Development Services; or Development Control Quality Manager.
Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 s 70	To withdraw a Remedial Notice , waive or relax a	Director of Development Services or; Deputy Director



	requirement of a remedial notice.	of Development Services; or Development Control Quality Manager; or Area Planning Officers; or Senior Enforcement Officer; or Area Planning Officers; or Planning Policy Manager; or Conservation Manager.
Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 s 75	To institute proceedings where action has not been taken to comply with a remedial notice	Development Services or; Deputy Director of Development Services; or Development Control Quality Manager; or Area Planning Officers; or Senior Enforcement Officer; or Area Planning Officers; or Planning Policy Manager; or Conservation Manager.
Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 s77	To execute works required by a remedial notice	Director of Development Services or; Deputy Director of Development Services; or Development Control Quality Manager; or Area Planning Officers; or Senior Enforcement Officer; or Area Planning Officers; or Planning Policy manager; or Conservation Manager in consultation with Head of Legal Services.
Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 s77	To take appropriate action to recover costs reasonably incurred by the Council in securing compliance with a remedial notice	Head of Legal Services, or Solicitors, or employed barrister.

#### **AUTHORISATION TO ENTER PREMISES**

Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 s 70	To enter land for the purposes of the Act and any amending statutes or regulations made pursuant to the Acts	Director of Development Services or; Director of Planning; or Deputy Director of Development Services; Control Quality Manager; or Area Planning Officers; or Senior Enforcement Officer; Enforcement Officer; or Area Planning Officers, Enforcement Officers, Tree & Landscape Officers, Landscape Design Officer; High Hedges Officer, Planning Officers, Assistant Planning Officers.
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## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet  
**AUTHOR:** Finance & Resources Director

9 June 2005

## DISCRETIONARY COMPENSATION FOR REDUNDANCY

**Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to remind Members of the Council's current provisions regarding redundancy payments and to seek Members' approval to revising the discretionary compensation for employees aged under 50.

**Effect on Corporate Objectives**

2. Quality, Accessible Services	Revising the discretionary compensation will mean that the Council will generally be paying less money out in redundancy payments, which will mean that more money will be available to finance services.
Village Life	
Sustainability	
Partnership	

**Background**

3. In the mid 1990's, the Council, recognising the threat of local government reorganisation then pertaining, and that staff under the age of 50 whose employment was terminated would not have access to their pension entitlement, agreed to make enhanced redundancy payments to employees so affected under the "Discretionary Compensation Regulations", instead of the standard amounts payable under the Employment Rights Act 1996 (ERA96). Tables showing the amounts payable under the two schemes are provided in **Appendices A and B**.
4. In common with other authorities, the Council has previously adopted a policy of calculating redundancy payments based on the actual remuneration enjoyed by the officer(s) affected, rather than the statutory amount.

**Considerations**

5. A comparison of the two schemes shows that, by paying the maximum allowed under the Discretionary Compensation Regulations, the Council is very generous to eligible staff in making these enhanced payments. **Appendix C** shows the difference in payments between the two schemes for relevant ages and periods of service.
6. Above 20 years service, the differences become large, as the standard scheme only goes up to 20 years service, while the Discretionary Compensation Regulations go up to a maximum of 28 years service.
7. In the East of England Region's most recent survey, 6 out of 7 of the County/Unitary authorities and 12 out of 21 of the District authorities who responded had exercised their discretion to make enhanced payments. Of those who make enhanced payments, 5 out of 6 of the County/ Unitary authorities and 10 out of 12 of the District

authorities apply the maximum payments set out in the formula. (The alternative approaches were: that each payment was analysed on its own merits; that there is a maximum of 45 weeks paid; and that no such payment has been needed to date.)

8. However, of the authorities in Cambridgeshire:
- the County do not apply the discretionary scheme (they only did for a short period during re-organisation when Peterborough became unitary);
  - Peterborough only ever pay the statutory redundancy entitlement (they did pay enhanced when the Council was undergoing reorganisation to a Unitary Authority in 1998 but have not done so since);
  - Huntingdonshire have used it on rare occasions (they do not have a policy on the number of weeks' pay they give, other than to treat each case on its merits and taking all costs into account);
  - the City do not use this part of the provisions (the only exception they make is to use actual salary when calculating payments).
- Although all local authorities in Cambridgeshire were asked, replies are outstanding from the remainder.
9. The Council could make considerable savings by revising or rescinding the discretionary compensation payments.

### Options

10. Members could decide to
- maintain the current redundancy compensation payment schemes; or
  - rescind the discretionary compensation payments scheme; or
  - revise the discretionary compensation payments scheme, e.g. by restricting payments to say 50% of the difference between the standard scheme and the Discretionary Compensation Regulations, instead of the maximum allowed.

### Financial Implications

11. The incidence of redundancies at the authority to which the enhanced provisions have applied is extremely low and in recent times have arisen mainly as a result of either the relocation to Cambourne or the implications of the fixed term employment regulations.
12. It is not possible to assess the overall financial implications for the Council, as the amounts will depend on the salary, age and service of the individuals whose posts are being made redundant. However, apart from a few exceptions for ages 20, 21 and 22, the differences between the two schemes are at least 50%, increasing to 70% at the upper ages and to 100% where there is no standard scheme above 20 years service.
13. As an indication of the savings available, the comparative figures applied to 3 recent cases are:

<b>No.</b>	<b>Salary</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Service</b>	<b>Enhanced payments given</b>	<b>Payments if discretionary scheme rescinded</b>	<b>Payments if restricted to 50% of difference</b>
1	£19,828	49	21	£25,096	£9,126 (36%)	£17,111 (68%)
2	£37,852	48	15	£37,022	£13,429 (36%)	£25,226 (68%)
3	£8,125	39	17	£5,298	£2,649 (50%)	£3,973 (75%)
<b>Totals</b>				<b>£67,416</b>	<b>£25,204 (37%)</b>	<b>£46,310 (69%)</b>
<b>Savings</b>					<b>£42,212 (63%)</b>	<b>£21,106 (31%)</b>

N.B. The percentages are the amounts to which they refer, expressed as percentages of the enhanced payments given.

**Legal Implications**

14. The views of the Head of Legal Services have been requested. His views will be reported orally to the meeting.

**Staffing Implications**

15. There are no direct staffing implications resulting from this report.

**Risk Management Implications**

16. There are no direct risk management implications resulting from this report.

**Consultations**

17. Unison are in the process of being consulted.

**Conclusions/Summary**

18. The view of Management Team is that, in the light of the changing employment and financial position of the Council, the authority should revert to the previous practice of calculating redundancies by reference to the Employment Rights Act 1996 model scheme, based on actual remuneration at the date of termination.
19. The Discretionary Compensation Regulations were adopted at a time when there was a significant possibility of reorganisation in local government. This situation does not apply at present and the Council could return to providing compensation for redundancy under the statutory scheme only.

**Recommendations**

20. Cabinet is recommended to approve the Council returning to providing compensation for redundancy under the statutory scheme only, but by reference to actual remuneration at the date of termination.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

The Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2000, Statutory Instrument 2000 No. 1410 (the "Discretionary Compensation Regulations") (N.B. These update and supersede various previous regulations, including the Local Government (Compensation for Redundancy) Regulations 1994, Statutory Instrument 1994 No. 3025.)

The Employment Rights Act 1996.

**Contact Officer:** John Garnham – Finance Project Officer  
Telephone: (01954) 713101

**APPENDIX A**  
**COMPENSATION UNDER THE ERA 1996**

Age	Completed Years of Service																			
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	
18																				
19																				
20	1	1	1	1																
21	1	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5															
22	1	1.5	2	2	2	2														
23	1.5	2	2.5	3	3	3	3													
24	2	2.5	3	3.5	4	4	4	4												
25	2	3	3.5	4	4.5	5	5	5	5											
26	2	3	4	4.5	5	5.5	6	6	6	6										
27	2	3	4	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7	7	7									
28	2	3	4	5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8	8	8								
29	2	3	4	5	6	7	7.5	8	8.5	9	9	9	9							
30	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	8.5	9	9.5	10	10	10	10						
31	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	9.5	10	10.5	11	11	11	11					
32	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	10.5	11	11.5	12	12	12	12				
33	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	11.5	12	12.5	13	13	13	13			
34	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	12.5	13	13.5	14	14	14	14		
35	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	13.5	14	14.5	15	15	15	15	
36	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	14.5	15	15.5	16	16	16	16
37	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	15.5	16	16.5	17	17	17
38	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	16.5	17	17.5	18	18
39	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	17.5	18	18.5	18.5
40	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	18.5	19	19
41	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	19.5	19.5
42	2.5	3.5	4.5	5.5	6.5	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	20.5

43	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21
44	3	4.5	5.5	6.5	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5
45	3	4.5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
46	3	4.5	6	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5
47	3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
48	3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5
49	3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
50	3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5	24.5
51	3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
52	3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5	24.5	25.5
53	3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
54	3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5	24.5	25.5	26.5
55	3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22	23	24	25	26	27
56	3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	23.5	24.5	25.5	26.5	27.5
57	3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	24	25	26	27	28
58	3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	24	25.5	26.5	27.5	28.5
59	3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	24	25.5	27	28	29
60	3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	24	25.5	27	28.5	29.5
61	3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	24	25.5	27	28.5	30
62	3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	24	25.5	27	28.5	30
63	3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	24	25.5	27	28.5	30
64*	3	4.5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	22.5	24	25.5	27	28.5	30

Expressed in numbers of weeks pay. Maximum 20 years applies.

\* The redundancy payment is reduced by 1/12th for each complete month the employee has remained in employment beyond age 64.

**APPENDIX B  
COMPENSATION UNDER THE DISCRETIONARY PAYMENTS REGULATIONS**

Age	Completed Years of Service																													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28		
18																														
19																														
20			0.5	1	1																									
21		1.5	2	2	2																									
22		2	2.5	3	3	3																								
23		4	6	8	10	10	10																							
24		4	6	8	10	12	12	12																						
25		4	6	8	10	12	14	14	14																					
26		4	6	8	10	12	14	16	16	16																				
27		4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	18	18																			
28		4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	20	20																		
29		4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	22	22																	
30		4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	24	24																
31		4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	26	26															
32		4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	28	28	28													
33		4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	30	30	30												
34		4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	32	32	32	32										
35		4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	34	34	34	34									
36		4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	36	36	36	36								
37		4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	38	38	38	38							
38		4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	40	40	40	40						
39		4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	42	42	42	42					
40		4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	44	44	44	44				
41		4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28	30	32	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	46	46	46	46	46	46	46
42	7	9	9	11	13	15	17	19	21	23	25	27	29	31	33	35	37	39	41	43	45	47	49	51	51	51	51	51	51	





**APPENDIX C**

**DIFFERENCES: DISCRETIONARY COMPENSATION REGULATIONS, to ERA 1996**

Age	Completed Years of Service																											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
18																												
19			0.5																									
20			0	0																								
21			0.5	0.5	0.5																							
22			1	1	1	1																						
23			2.5	4	5.5	7	7																					
24			2	3.5	5	6.5	8	8																				
25			2	3	4.5	6	7.5	9	9																			
26			2	3	4	5.5	7	8.5	10	10																		
27			2	3	4	5	6.5	8	9.5	11	11																	
28			2	3	4	5	6	7.5	9	10.5	12	12																
29			2	3	4	5	6	7	8.5	10	11.5	13	13															
30			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9.5	11	12.5	14	14														
31			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10.5	12	13.5	15	15													
32			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11.5	13	14.5	16	16												
33			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12.5	14	15.5	17	17											
34			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13.5	15	16.5	18	18										
35			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14.5	16	17.5	19	19									
36			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15.5	17	18.5	20	20								
37			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16.5	18	19.5	21	21	38						
38			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17.5	19	20.5	22	40	40					
39			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18.5	20	21.5	42	42	42				
40			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19.5	21	42	44	44	44			
41			2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20.5	42	44	46	46	46		
42			4.5	5.5	6.5	7.5	8.5	9.5	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	45	47	49	51	51	51	

43	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	48	50	52	54	56	56	56	
44	7	10.5	11.5	12.5	13.5	14.5	15.5	16.5	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5	24.5	25.5	26.5	27.5	51	53	55	57	59	61	61	
45	7	10.5	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	30	54	56	58	60	62	64	66
46	7	10.5	14	17.5	18.5	19.5	20.5	21.5	22.5	23.5	24.5	25.5	26.5	27.5	28.5	29.5	30.5	31.5	32.5	57	59	61	63	65	66		
47	7	10.5	14	17.5	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	35	60	62	64	66			
48	7	10.5	14	17.5	21	24.5	25.5	26.5	27.5	28.5	29.5	30.5	31.5	32.5	33.5	34.5	35.5	36.5	37.5	63	65	66					
49	7	10.5	14	17.5	21	24.5	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	66							

Expressed in numbers of weeks pay difference between the two schemes.

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet

9 June 2005

**AUTHOR:** Chief Executive

**PERFORMANCE PLAN 2005**

**Purpose**

1. To enable the Cabinet to consider arrangements for the approval of the 2005 Performance Plan.

**Effect on Corporate Objectives**

2. Quality, Accessible Services	The principal purpose of the Performance Plan is to enable the Council to achieve its objectives. In particular the Corporate Action Plan and Performance Indicators sections of the Plan set out how the Council will improve services and deliver on its priorities.
Village Life	
Sustainability	
Partnership	

**Background**

3. The Performance Plan is a statutory document which must be published by 30<sup>th</sup> June each year.
4. The plan is currently in course of preparation and it had been intended that a full copy would be available for this meeting for consideration by the Cabinet. However, progress has been delayed because of the non filling of a post in the Policy and Performance Team, as a precautionary measure against the possibility of capping and other competing priorities.
5. The Plan is based on a number of decisions that have already been made. It reflects:-
  - a) The three priorities adopted by the Council (Improving Customer Service, Northstowe and affordable housing)
  - b) The CPA Improvement Plan approved by the Council in January.
  - c) The Medium Term Financial Strategy and budget for 2005/06.
  - d) The performance indicator targets set in service plans and approved by portfolio holders.
  - e) The aims and actions agreed in the Community Strategy.
  - f) Other plans and policies such as the IEG statement, the timetable for the LDF, the results of the Affordable Housing Best Value review, the plans for developing risk management, and the workforce plan.

**Recommendation**

6. In the light of this position, Members are requested to approve the following arrangements for the consideration and approval of the plan:-
- (a) Copies of the draft plan will be completed and distributed to portfolio holders as soon as possible.
  - (b) Portfolio holders will be invited to give their comments on the draft plan.
  - (b) Full Council on 23<sup>rd</sup> July will receive copies of the draft plan and invited to approve its contents with approval of the final version being delegated to the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council.

**Background Papers:** all background papers are already published.

**Contact Officer:** Paul Swift – Policy and Review Manager  
Telephone: (01954) 713017

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet  
**AUTHOR:** Development Services Director

9 June 2005

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**EXAMPLE OF COMMUTED SUMS FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING**
**Purpose**

1. To provide information, by way of example, on the possible acceptance of commuted sums in lieu of the provision of land for affordable housing development.

**Effect on Corporate Objectives**

2. Quality, Accessible Services	To provide additional affordable housing
Village Life	To provide a variety of affordable housing options
Sustainability	To provide funding for additional affordable housing
Partnership	Working with Housing Association partners and developers to provide an acceptable alternative to the provision of affordable housing land in certain restricted circumstances. The money realised from commuted payments will be used to fund affordable housing with our housing association partners.

**Background**

3. This report follows on from the report presented to the Cabinet meeting on 10 March 2005 which detailed specific circumstances under which commuted sums could be considered as an alternative to the provision of land for affordable housing under section 106 agreements.
4. Members requested specific examples of cases involving commuted sums and details of two cases are attached for consideration (**Appendix 1 and 2**).
5. The first example relates to the proposed conversion of former barns to residential use, which is a situation highlighted in the earlier report as being particularly suitable for the acceptance of commuted sums.
6. The second is a proposal for two detached houses on an in-fill site where the applicant does not wish to meet the on site provision but has offered to pay a commuted sum instead.

**Considerations**

7. As highlighted in the report of 10 March 2005

**Options**

8. As detailed in the earlier report.

**Financial Implications**

9. A number of affordable housing schemes are unable to attract grant funding through the Housing Corporation. The acceptance of commuted payments, in certain specific circumstances, would allow the Council to financially support some of these schemes.
10. The amount of commuted sum, which the Council would be prepared to accept, will vary considerably from site to site but will be calculated using the document attached to the report of 10 March.

**Legal Implications**

11. None.

**Staffing Implications**

12. None.

**Risk Management Implications**

13. None.

**Consultations**

14. In addition to the consultation detailed in the earlier report housing association partners have also been consulted and agree that there are certain circumstances in which the requirement for on-site provision brings forward sites which are difficult and expensive to develop for affordable housing.

**Conclusions/Summary**

15. The attached examples, together with the report of 10 March, illustrate how the acceptance of commuted sums, in certain discretionary circumstances determined by the Council, can assist with the provision of affordable housing.

**Recommendation**

16. The acceptance of commuted sums, at the Council's discretion, should be adopted as Council practice.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Report to Leader and Cabinet 10 March 2005

**Contact Officer:** Mike Sugden Development Manager  
Telephone: (01954) 713356



**COMMUTED SUM PAYMENT EXAMPLE ONE**

**Conversion of Barns Into 7 Dwellings at Lordship Farm, Mill Lane, Hinxton**

These barns lay outside the village framework and the applicants considered a range of alternative uses prior to the application for residential conversion.

The current policy requires 50% of new residential development to be affordable and therefore required 3 of the newly converted units to be available as affordable housing. However, due to the cost of converting such buildings, the high level of on-going maintenance and repair and general non-compliance with Housing Corporation Scheme Design Standards, the Council's housing association partners are not able to accept such buildings for affordable housing. In addition Housing Corporation will not grant fund such schemes.

For this reason it is considered that this is one specific area where the acceptance of an agreed commuted sum is an acceptable alternative to on-site provision.

In the absence of funding and a grant rate calculator for such schemes it is considered that the commuted sum should be based on the cost of providing plots for three affordable houses in a similar location to the subject property.

Unlike example two, where the site falls within the village framework, in this particular instance the site is outside the framework and any form of affordable housing development in these circumstances falls within the Council's exception site policy.

For such exception sites the Council maintains a policy of restricting the amount that our housing association partners will pay for each affordable housing plot, the amount is currently £8,000, having recently been increased from £6,000. Therefore in this particular case the amount of commuted sum is £24,000, although of course had the subject site been within framework the cost of providing suitable alternatives, and hence the commuted sum, would be considerably higher.

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## Appendix 2

**COMMUTED SUM PAYMENT EXAMPLE TWO****Land at 77 Station Road, Stow-cum-Quy**

This is an in-fill site where an application was made for two dwellings which was refused by this Council and the decision upheld on appeal. One of the issues before the appeal was the need to provide one of the units as an affordable unit, and the applicants offer to pay a commuted sum in lieu of that provision.

Although the Council resisted the payment of a commuted sum a figure was agreed with the applicant on a "without prejudice" basis and the agreed figure was arrived at with the assistance of Anglia Housing Association, which is working on a scheme for affordable housing elsewhere in the village.

Based on identified housing need it was agreed that if an affordable home were to be provided on site it would be a two-bedroom house available for rent. In addition in view of the current funding regime set out by Housing Corporation it was agreed it would be unlikely that grant funding would be available.

On this basis and the information available to Anglia Housing the commuted sum payment calculation is as follows:

Cost of plot for two bedroom house	£ 50,000
Construction cost	£ 75,000
On costs (fees, interest etc)	£ 10,000
Total Cost	£135,000

Current value of rental income over a 30 year period after deducting maintenance, repair and management costs	£ 66,000
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Grant equivalent commuted sum	£ 69,000 (Cost minus income)
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It was agreed that in terms of open market value the house would have a value of approximately £160,000 and if it were to be available as a shared ownership home the grant equivalent commuted sum would be approximately half of that calculated for a rented unit.

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet  
**AUTHOR:** Finance and Resources Director

9 June 2005

**ICT COMMS ROOM AIR CONDITIONING**

**Purpose**

1. To advise Members of the recent incident in the ICT Comms Room and seek approval to proceed with measures to prevent similar failure in future.

**Effect on Corporate Objectives**

2. Quality, Accessible Services	To maintain the accessibility to Council systems and services for both staff and the public.
Village Life	
Sustainability	
Partnership	To maintain the accessibility to Council systems and services for the Contact Centre.

**Background**

3. The Council experienced a serious problem in its ICT Comms Room on Monday morning, 16 May 2005. The ambient temperature in the room at 8am was 46 degrees C and the air conditioning unit was not providing the cooling function required. The recommended ambient temperature is 18 – 20 degrees. This increased ambient temperature led to a systems overheat.
4. To protect the systems from total failure, under instruction from the Assistant Director F&R (ICT), Serco, the Council's ICT support company, closed down all ICT systems in accordance with previously defined procedures. Additionally, the Disaster Recovery service was placed on standby. Systems were successfully brought back into operational use once the temperature in the ICT Comms Room had returned to an acceptable level.
5. The staff entrance doors were opened in order to assist the lowering of the temperature in the ICT Comms Room. Although that secure access was thereby taken out of commission, it was considered that the security risk was minimal due to the number of staff in the area during the period who would have been able to challenge any perceived attempts at unauthorised access.
6. The total outage time was approximately 4 hours (8am – 12pm) during which there was no service for staff or the Contact Centre.
7. The Contact Centre used previously agreed manual procedures to ensure all calls for SCDC services were handled appropriately; a process of updating systems was brought into play once normal service was resumed.
8. It was at first thought that there might have been a problem over the weekend period with a power failure to the building, which might have caused the air conditioning unit to trip over. This has been checked with various parties as follows:

- the alarm log on the air conditioning unit did not record any event over the weekend period;
- none of the ICT UPS (uninterrupted power supply) units showed a power problem over the weekend period; and
- none of the other businesses on Cambourne Business Park experienced a problem over the weekend;
- the electricity supply company had not received any reported problems in the area over the weekend period.

The conclusion drawn is that there was no power failure attributable to this incident.

9. Engineers from the company which service the air conditioning unit attended site at approx 12pm, the air cooling system was reset and restarted but they could not identify what had caused the problem.
10. On Friday 20 May 2005, there was a recurrence of the problem – at 1pm the ambient temperature in the ICT Comms Room was observed to be 31 degrees C and climbing. The air conditioning unit service company was immediately contacted to send an engineer to investigate.
11. The engineer who attended found that a condenser had tripped out. He reset the system and monitored the unit, which tripped again after a few minutes. He reset the system again and monitored pressures at the condenser and the fan speed controller finally cut in and stabilised pressures. He monitored the unit and pressures for a further hour and found no other faults. He thought that the unit may have had an intermittent fault with the fan speed controller.
12. Due to the unreliable nature of the system, the Finance & Resources Director agreed to hire in 3 commercial mobile air conditioning units and put these in the ICT Comms Room to cover the weekend period, to avoid the risk of computer systems not being available on the following Monday morning. Arrangements were made to ensure the position was monitored and the ICT Comms Room was visited on 4 separate occasions over the weekend, to ensure that the ambient temperature was within limits.
13. Although at the time of writing this report the temperature is now stable and the building installed air conditioning unit still running, the mobile air conditioning units that were hired in are still being utilised, to avoid the risk of the installed air conditioning unit failing again.
14. A number of issues resulting from this occurrence have been raised with the developer (outlined in the Considerations section below), but at the time of writing this report no response has been received from the developer. Efforts are being made to escalate these.

### **Considerations**

15. The air conditioning service company engineer advised that the installed air conditioning unit be monitored over the weekend and that if the unit cut out a new fan speed controller would be ordered. As this seems to be an intermittent fault with the system, the developer has been requested to immediately instruct the order of a new fan speed controller, as recommended.
16. Concerns were raised back in August 2003 when information about the proposed air treatment in the ICT Comms Room was first received, even though comments had previously been made that (a) the air conditioning should be ceiling mounted and (b)

there should be two units, to ensure sufficient capacity to cool the ICT equipment and allow for maintenance or the failure of one of the units. Despite continued debate, the developer and their contractors were sure that their proposed solution would be adequate.

17. Since occupying the premises in May 2004, there have been continual problems with the air conditioning unit, for example:
  - the unit failed on the May 2004 bank holiday weekend over which the Council moved in and an engineer had to be called out to it;
  - when a water leak from the humidifier/ bottle had to be dealt with, it was discovered on lifting the floor that some of the pipework had not been connected and the unit was flooding the floor void - fortunately most of the water had drained away through service holes in the concrete base;
  - there is an ongoing problem with the humidifier/ bottle (recently advice has been that the bottle size installed and originally maintained did not match the size required for the unit);
  - the ambient temperature in the room has never got down to the level required for an ICT Comms Room, the best achieved being 24 degrees C against a recommended 18 – 20 degrees
18. The developers have continued to insist that these are maintenance rather than installation issues and that the unit installed is adequate for the purpose.
19. The air conditioning service company engineer expressed surprise that there was only one air conditioning unit in the ICT Comms Room. The Council's mechanical and electrical (M&E) maintenance company, on their regular visit on Tuesday 24 May 2005 also expressed the opinion that there should be 2 air conditioning units in the ICT Comms Room. In addition, the M&E maintenance company have advised that the air conditioning unit installed is of 9kW capacity, compared to the 12kW air treatment proposed in August 2003. The developers have been advised that the air conditioning unit in the ICT Comms Room is considered not fit for purpose and their comments on how they propose to rectify this problem have been requested.
20. The air conditioning unit does not appear to be covered by the Building Management System (BMS). The ICT Comms Room will necessarily operate under a separate environment from other parts of the building, but it is unclear why the air conditioning unit in the ICT Comms Room, being an item of plant that is essential to the Council's systems and operations, was not included in the plant and equipment to be monitored by the BMS system. The developers have been advised that the air conditioning unit in the ICT Comms Room should be alarmed and added to the list of critical alarms for the Council/ the M&E maintenance company to be notified of.

### **Options**

21. Given the critical nature of the problem, the Council has two options to consider:
  - (a) Continue the hire of the mobile units until such time as the developer is able to propose and implement an agreed resolution. This could take a considerable length of time and would result in ongoing disruption to the facilities on the ground floor. This also has attendant costs, the units being hired in under the Council's instruction, all costs will have to be met by the Council and claimed back subsequently from the developers. There is a risk that they may not agree to fund these.
  - (b) Implement the installation of a second air conditioning unit at the earliest opportunity. As above, this will involve additional upfront investment from the Council which will the developer may or may not agree to fund.

- (c) Install adequate warning and alarm systems to ensure any future events are notified to the appropriate staff to enable them to be dealt with as a matter of utmost priority.

### **Financial Implications**

- 22. Maintaining the current status quo
  - (a) Hire of the mobile air conditioning units: 3 units @ £200 per unit per week (£600 per week for the current solution)
- 23. Installation of a second air conditioning unit
  - (a) This not been costed but early estimates indicate a possible £25,000 - £30,000.
  - (b) Other, as yet unknown, associated costs as a direct result of the installation work.
- 24. Staff time
  - (a) Owing to the dependency on the use of the ICT systems, non-availability on such a wide scale has significant impact in terms of lost productivity. It has been estimated that such failure has an associated cost of approximately £8,000 per hour.

### **Legal Implications**

- 25. The views of the Head of Legal Services have been requested, in particular concerning possible litigation with the developers. His views will be reported orally to the meeting.

### **Staffing Implications**

- 26. None

### **Risk Management Implications**

- 27. Total failure of the Council's business systems would result in major risk to the ability of the Council to deliver its statutory services and would greatly impact on its ongoing financial position.
- 28. If the problem had continued for a longer period, it is possible that there could have been a fire risk to the ICT Comms Room, which could also have affected other parts of the building. This would also result in substantial disruption to the Council's delivery of its services and impact on its financial position.
- 29. The Council's Disaster Recovery plans (operated by Serco as part of the ICT Outsourcing Partnership Agreement 2002) cover all the major systems in use and in particular, those that deliver the business critical services. This plan is tested on two separate occasions per year and allows some confidence in the ability to recover from a disaster affecting the ICT provision. However, this has never been invoked 'for real' and although the service was put on stand by whilst actions to reinstate the cooling were being taken, it cannot be relied upon to provide an instantaneous recovery. The service is designed to provide a short to medium term provision with a lead time of approx 4 – 8 hours depending on system complexity.
- 30. An event such as the air conditioning failure could result in damage to the ICT computer equipment and associated peripherals. In this instance, no damage



occurred but further exposure to high temperatures could result in the requirement to replace equipment. Funding for such replacement is likely to be covered by the Council's own insurance but interim funding from capital reserves will be required. Added to this is the complication that may arise from equipment unavailability, most units are built to spec so as to service the specific requirements, any attendant delays would impact on service availability.

### **Consultations**

31. The following have been apprised and consulted as appropriate:
- (a) Chief Executive
  - (b) Finance & Resources Director
  - (c) Serco
  - (d) The Council's M&E maintenance company
  - (e) The air conditioning engineers
  - (f) The developers and their agents

### **Conclusions/Summary**

32. The environmental controls for the ICT Comms Room have always been in question. Previous discussions and representation with the developers at building design stages were largely ignored and the net result is unacceptable systems failure and service impact. The installed unit is inadequate and the situation needs to be addressed at the earliest opportunity.

### **Recommendations**

33. Notwithstanding the possible legal issues, it is recommended that Cabinet agrees to proceed with the procurement and installation of a second air conditioning unit at the earliest opportunity. The costs of this and the ongoing costs of the hire of the mobile units to be funded either from:
- (a) The retention monies held back subject to successful completion of building snagging issues, or subject to Council approval,
  - (b) Capital reserves, with a separate case then to be made to the developer for reimbursement of all costs incurred.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Previous correspondence (email and minutes) with developers during building design stages.

**Contact Officers:** John Garnham - Finance Project Officer  
Telephone: (01954) 713101

Steve Rayment – Asst. Director Finance & Resources (ICT)  
Telephone: (01954) 713010

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet

9 June 2005

**AUTHOR:** Chief Executive

THE CURRENT BALANCE FOR VILLAGE SPORTS FACILITY GRANTS 2005/6 IS  
£100,510.

**APPLICANT: HISTON AND IMPINGTON RECREATION GROUND MANAGEMENT  
COMMITTEE**

**Purpose**

1. To consider the following request for grant aid and make a decision on the level of award.

**Effect on Corporate Objectives**

2. Quality, Accessible Services	A new sports pavilion and multi-use games area would ensure the facility is available to all members of the community and will increase physical activity levels.
Village Life	Village facilities help improve the sense of community and enrich rural community life for everyone.
Sustainability	The new sports pavilion and multi-use games area will ensure the facility will be available for future generations to use and will allow sports clubs the opportunity to develop.
Partnership	Working with the community enables residents to identify local needs and achieve improvements in their quality of life.

**Proposal**

3. To increase the grant offered to Histon and Impington Recreation Ground Project to build a new sports pavilion (including kitchen and community room), multi-use games area/new hard tennis court and improvements to the current car park.

**Background**

4. On 13th November 2003 Cabinet awarded the Histon and Impington Recreation Ground Project £75,000 towards a new pavilion and £15,000 towards a new multi-use games area. The project group have since been working hard to raise local funds and have been successful in securing grant aid from the Football Foundation and WREN.
5. Tenders for the project were received in April 2005 for the proposed project. Under the lowest tender the project cost has increased from the budgeted £636,000 to £797,000 a rise of £161,000.
6. The following additional requirements have been identified:
  - Football Foundation – two officials changing rooms
  - Pathing to sports courts to ensure DDA compliant
  - Additional gravel parking by side of tennis courts
  - Extent of paving around pavilion
  - Landscaping

- Additional section columns for building
- Others from structural, mechanical and electrical engineer, building control, planning approval and development of design

### Considerations

7. The tenders for the project have been examined in detail and whilst some small savings have been identified the project group feel that further cuts cannot be made to the project without seriously compromising the project. The proposed new pavilion is very much a basic functional building, which they would like to retain as designed, and the two new sports courts are desperately needed as there are no similar adequate public facilities in the two villages.
8. After allowing for direct project expenditure to date the shortfall for the project is about £125,000 and the project group are determined to raise at least 50% of this shortfall to reduce the burden of the increase on Histon and Impington Parish Councils. Both Parish Councils will be approached to increase their support by a further £60,000 increasing their commitment to the project to £362,000.
9. The project group are hopeful of securing new grant funding from Sport England Community Investment fund and from the Foundation of Sports and Arts. Further community fundraising of £30,000 from Friends of Histon & Impington Recreation Ground will hopefully total over £50,000 but this still leaves a shortfall.
10. If the project group are successful in securing further funding to meet the shortfall, building work could start in August 2005 with completion by the end of March 2006. The project group are going to present their final report to both Parish Councils on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> June at which they are hopeful that the project will get the final go ahead.
11. There are also plans to employ a Recreation Ground Activity Coordinator funded by Sport England to promote and develop sport and community activity on the recreation ground.

### Options

12. To offer a grant will help assist with the additional funding required to meet the tenders deadline. This will then ensure that the new sports facilities will be provided on schedule. The new facilities will provide increased access and benefit the health of all members of the community.
13. A decision not to offer a grant will increase the possibility of further delays to the start date and a chance that the project will incur even more increases in the overall costs.

### Financial Implications

14.	Total cost	£797,000	
	Pavilion and external works	£703,000	
	Sports courts	£94,000	
	Amount raised	£250,000	Parish Councils
		£216,000	Football Foundation
		£90,000	SCDC
		£31,000	WREN

	£25,000	Enventure
	£16,000	Friends of Histon and Impington
	£5,000	Sports Clubs
	£5,000	Histon Feast
Total Raised	£638,000	
Population	4,420	Histon
	4,010	Impington
Total Grants since 77/8	£20,500	Histon (excluding the £90,000
	£14,000	Impington offered previously)

### Legal Implications

15. None.

### Staffing Implications

16. None.

### Risk Management Implications

17. The building would be the responsibility of the Parish Councils.

### Consultations

18. Both Parish Councils have been kept fully up to date as the project has developed and residents have been notified via their village newsletters on the progress and the opportunities to support the project by becoming involved in fundraising activities.

### Local Councillor Consultation

19. **Councillor A Muncey** "I fully support the application for the recreation ground. We are one of the largest villages in the district and the only one that has not got a proper village hall or community centre. This will be a very great asset to both villages. The fundraising committee have done a tremendous amount of work to get this project of the ground. They have run have lots of events and are still planning more which attract all sections of the community. Both Parish Councils are fully committed to the project"
20. **Councillor J Chatfield** "I support this application for an additional £10,000 towards the increased costs of the recreation ground project. There is much local fundraising taking place within the villages of Histon and Impington and this grant will help significantly towards the achievement of the project "
21. **Councillor M Mason** " I support the application from the Histon and Impington recreation ground project for an increase in grant from SCDC. I am sure you are aware of the financial situation in regard to the tenders and other fundraising which has been very well supported within the parishes"

**Conclusions/Summary**

22. Histon and Impington recreation ground is the home to four large sports clubs (Cricket, Football, Tennis and Bowls). The clubs have identified the need for these new facilities to ensure their development work can continue. The club development plans identify how the new facilities will provide opportunities for all ages and abilities to take part in sport and become physically active.

**Recommendations**

23. The Portfolio Holder for Community Services and officers recommend that Cabinet approves an increase of £10,000 towards the project making the total grant award £100,000.
24. Please note that the maximum grant for 1 village for a new pavilion is £50,000. This project offers very good value as it is for 2 large villages with a joint population of over 8,000 people and is providing a new pavilion and a multi-use games area.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Application form and attached information.

**Contact Officer:** Jane Lampshire, Sports Development Officer 01954 713349

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet  
**AUTHOR:** Development Services Director

9 June 2005

**ST. DENIS CHURCH, EAST HATLEY  
 REPORT ON THE TENDERS RECEIVED FOR THE UNDERTAKING OF RE-ROOFING  
 AND GENERAL REPAIR WORKS AND SUPPORT TO LET A CONTRACT**

**Purpose**

1. To advise Cabinet of the results of the recent tender process and seek support to let a contract.

**Effect on Corporate Objectives**

2. Quality, Accessible Services	The proposed project will secure the future of a 'building at risk', such action is an adopted performance indicator (SP903)
Village Life	The project will: enable the churchyard and County Wildlife Site to be restored to full accessibility; make possible the development of a community facility; make safe a semi-derelict building; lay the grounds to restore an important part of local heritage; thereby enhancing village life.
Sustainability	The restoration and re-use of historic buildings is a key sustainability measure.
Partnership	The scheme will be developed as a partnership project with the Parish Council , SCDC and English Heritage and will facilitate further partnership working with other national heritage bodies to secure an appropriate use for the building.

**Background**

3. Members will be aware of the report to the meeting of the 9<sup>th</sup> March 2005, Conservation Advisory Group, where it was agreed that as English Heritage had confirmed grant support of up to £61,000 to support the repair works, tenders would be sought to implement a programme of work to arrest the deterioration of the building.
4. The tenders report will be tabled at the meeting. In order to secure the grant offer, from English Heritage, the repair works must be completed by June 2006.
5. Further background details of the project are included as **Appendix 1**.

**Considerations**

6. In order to progress the project the English Heritage grant offer has been formally accepted and the design works are part of the repair programme and have commenced, funded from the Historic Buildings Preservation Fund.
7. The proposed funding to enable a building contract to be let would also be from the portfolio holder's, "*Historic Buildings Preservation Fund*". This is a capital sum made available to the portfolio holder to facilitate intervention to secure the preservation of historic buildings at risk. To date, at St. Denis, East Hatley, the budget has been utilised to erect the security/safety fencing and structural scaffolding to protect both

the building and the public. The 9<sup>th</sup> June 2005 Cabinet will also be requested to approve a 'roll forward' of the uncommitted balance from this budget to enable a contract to be financed in 2005/06.

8. The generous grant offer from English Heritage, of £61,000, estimated to be 75% of the costs of the works, will enable the fabric of the medieval church to be stabilised and protected. These works to the roof and walls will consequently:
  - (a) Address the health and safety issues;
  - (b) Remove the need for on-going costs for maintenance of the security fencing and scaffolding – approximating to £7,000 per annum.
  - (c) Re-open full access to the churchyard, which is in use as a burial ground.
  - (d) Provide the opportunity to examine options for a viable community use for the building, funded by other external grant or by identifying a new ownership.
9. Prior to letting a contract it will be a condition of the grant offer that a "Maintenance Plan" is agreed, this will largely require regular monitoring of the building and implementation of minor works, such as clearing out of gutters and control of vegetation on the elevations. It is understood that

#### **Options**

10. The Cabinet are asked to consider the following options:
  - (a) To note the tender report and authorise the letting of a contract to undertake these first phase repair works to St. Denis Church, East Hatley, subject to confirmation of final grant support from English Heritage.
  - (b) To declines to authorise the letting of a contract, rejecting the grant support form English Heritage and suggests alternative means to resolve the long-term future of this building.

#### **Financial Implications**

11. The costs of the necessary repair works will be set out in the tender report, to be tabled. The overall costs of the project exceed the portfolio holder's delegation expenditure, although grant support of £61,000 has been secured from English Heritage.
12. The English Heritage grant offer , is both cash and time limited (i.e will not be increased or extended) but is both generous and probably the only immediate source of external finance available to the Council to assist in the first stage of the restoration of the building.
13. English Heritage grant support for these phase 1 works does, however, indicate the importance of this medieval building as an item of the national heritage and could help secure subsequent funding from other bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund.
14. Resolution of the immediate structural problems and removal of the danger presented to the public, will also open the prospect of creating interest amongst other heritage bodies who might be approached to assist with the long-term management of the building. The completion of these works would then not only buy time to consider a community use it would also help re-establish the building as a possible asset.



### **Legal Implications**

15. SCDC is the owner of the building and has a duty to try to secure its future as a national heritage component. It also has duty of care to users of the adjoining churchyard.

### **Staffing Implications**

16. None specific. The project will be coordinated by the Conservation Manager and the project architect's Purcell Miller Tritton.

### **Risk Management Implications**

17. The building is in the ownership of the Council and is at present both a hazard and an on-going drain on resources. The main risk of not proceeding to implement these basic repairs is that the physical danger will increase along with on-going maintenance costs. The implementation of these works will remove the risk, on-going financial drain and the potential criticism of the authority.

### **Consultations**

18. The Parish Council have supported the action to date and have offered to contribute to the costs of the works (upto £2,000). Members will be aware that the issue has been subject to considerable debate in the authority over a number of years.

### **Conclusions/Summary**

19. The offer of generous English Heritage grant support to secure the structural stabilisation of the former church of St. Denis would appear to offer the potential to finally start to implement the restoration of this medieval church. The immediately proposed action is necessary to protect the offer of external funding. Successful implementation of these works will enable subsequent consideration to be given to an appropriate community based use for the building. Members are, therefore, requested to support this action to start the process of returning the building to active use.

### **Recommendations**

20. Cabinet are requested to authorise officers to let a contract to implement first phase repair works at St. Denis, East Hatley based on the receipt of satisfactory tenders as set out in the Tender Report and funded by grant support from English Heritage and funding from the '*Historic Buildings Preservation Fund*'.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

1. Grant offer letter from English Heritage – 10<sup>th</sup> January 2005
2. Report to Conservation Advisory Group - 15<sup>th</sup> September 2004.
3. Report to the Conservation Advisory Group & Conservation, Sustainability & Community Planning Portfolio Holder – 9<sup>th</sup> March 2005

**Contact Officer:** Nick Grimshaw – Conservation Manager  
Telephone: (01954) 713180

<b>Denis Church, East Hatley - Background Material</b>
--

1. The former parish church of St. Denis, East Hatley is a listed Grade II\* building which dates from the fourteenth century, although it was restored by the notable nineteenth century architect, William Butterfield, who also built the Chancel.
2. The church was made redundant for worship in 1959. The ownership of the former church was conveyed to the Council in 1983 to avoid the demolition of the former church by the Church Commissioners. It was conveyed by the Church Commissioners to South Cambridgeshire District Council *"for use as a nature reserve and for the study of natural history..."*. The conveyance was for the church building only, accessed by a right of way through the churchyard. Conditions applied to the conveyance prohibit any demolition or architectural or structural changes without the approval of the Church Commissioners.
3. The churchyard, which is designated as a *County Wildlife Site*, remains open for burials but its present access and use is restricted by the dangerous condition of the building. The churchyard is maintained by the St. Denis Local Nature Reserve Committee who organise working parties to maintain the grass, hedges, etc.
4. By November 2002 the church building had become almost completely overgrown by ivy, which combined with high winds to cause significant damage to the roofs and walls, such that parts of the structure were deemed unsafe.
5. Architects were commissioned in January 2002 and March 2002 to report on the condition of the fabric but were unable to complete the structural assessment due to the extent of the ivy growth.
6. Messrs E. Bowman & Sons Ltd were, therefore, appointed in early 2003 to remove the ivy from the fabric of the Church to enable the building to be surveyed and public safety works to be undertaken.
7. Subsequently, on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2003 Purcell Miller Tritton (Architects) revisited the site to carry out further inspections following the removal of the ivy. Their report is summarised below.
8. *Summary of key points by Purcell Miller Tritton, ARCHITECTS.*
  - Severe damage to part of the external walls discovered. Some of the walls are unstable and are in danger of collapse. Scaffolding was, therefore, retained to the east end of the church to prevent the wall from collapsing.
  - The roof tiles are insecure and are liable to fall off during windy weather. The perimeter security fencing has consequently been left in place to protect the public from injury by falling roof tiles.
  - The removal of the ivy has left voids in the fabric and has affected the integrity of both the roof and the walls leaving many of the tiles loose and much of the flint stone facing in a decayed condition.
9. *Key objectives:*  
It is evident that St. Denis East Hatley presents two main issues for the Council:  
(a) *The need to tackle the immediate public safety issue and re-open access to the churchyard.*

*(b) The need to find a viable use for the building, to secure its long-term future as a community asset.*

10. *Objective (a) – Public safety/use of churchyard.*  
A detailed summary of the issues and options raised in the architect's report were considered by the Conservation Advisory Group (CAG) on 28 May 2003. The conclusions of CAG and the Conservation Portfolio Holder were that the architects should be instructed to seek tenders based on a Specification and Schedule of Works to implement "holding repairs" to the building to tackle Objective (a) – Public Safety/Churchyard access, while future long-term uses were investigated.
11. Purcell Miller Tritton Architects were, therefore, instructed to seek tenders based on a specification for repairs which would:
  - (a) make safe the east and west gables and the south porch (west side) by means of stainless steel pins to stitch repair the walls.
  - (b) Strip the loose tiles off the roof (stored in church for later use) and carryout minimal repairs to the roof timbers.
  - (c) Recover roof with a corrugated sheet covering to create a robust roof covering with a lifetime of upto 10 years. (The material proposed by PMT is a brown corrugated material known as 'Onduline' which is very light as it made of bitumen soaked organic fibres).
12. The architect's Tender Report was received on 18 November 2003. The total cost of the contract would have been approximately £50,000. These works would have been entirely funded by SCDC as no grant support was on offer at this time. However, these works were not proceeded with due to serious objections by the Parish Council to the material used for the roofing and concern at ongoing maintenance of the temporary roof covering.
13. A submission was then made to English Heritage in May 2004 to seek grant support for a more extensive programme of repair works, estimated at approx. £85,000 plus fees. Confirmation of grant support was given in January 2005 of upto £61,000 on the basis of a scheme of works which includes re-roofing and wall repairs, although with use of a corrugated iron roof.
14. While the more extensive works programme was deemed appropriate, there were still concerns at the roof material. The additional cost of replacing the roof material with tiles was not considered to be extensive, consequently tenders were sought in April 2005 with undertake the repairs with a comparative prices sought for corrugated roof materials or tiles. The tenders are due to be returned on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2005.
15. *Objective (b) - Securing a long-term future.*  
Significant efforts have been made in recent years by SCDC members, the parish council and the St. Denis Local Nature Reserve management Committee to identify an appropriate use for the building. These have included discussion with the Wildlife Trust for Beds & Cambs. Exploration of future use has stalled while the basic repairs are addressed. The intention is that these discussions will continue once the contract to undertake the basic repairs has been let.
16. It is evident that any permanent use will require further investment to restore and convert the building. The estimates from Purcell, Miller Tritton (architects) to make the building habitable (structurally sound with power, water etc.) are in the region of £100,000. Significant external grant funding will, therefore, be required to be secured from organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund. The starting point to approach

such funding agencies is to have a viable and robust *Project Plan* founded on a clear vision for the use of the building.

17. It is estimated that it may take some 12 months to prepare such a project plan as it will need to include detailed architectural/business analysis and be subject to wide consultation. The usual time period for consideration of such grant proposals by the Heritage Lottery Fund is around 9 months. Consequently, it is essential that the 'breathing space' to develop a project is created by the implementation of the holding works.
18. To date no work has been undertaken on a project plan. As with all historic buildings the key to securing the long-term future is a viable use. To date a number of options have been considered and discounted at the preliminary stages. However, alternatives will be explored on completion of the immediate holding repairs , as the building will then become a convertible asset, rather than a ruinous drain on resources and public safety hazard.
19. To date works to the value of £15,971.56 have been completed, these include the cost of stripping the ivy, erecting supporting scaffold and security fencing and the architects report. These have been funded from the Council's Conservation Portfolio budget for *Historic Building's Preservation*. These were considered to be essential preliminary works to enable the potential way forward to be considered. A further sum of
20. *Legal Issues.*  
South Cambridgeshire is the owner of the building and therefore responsible for its maintenance and use.
21. Covenants apply to the building restricting its significant alteration or demolition and as it is listed Grade II\* building such consent can only be granted by the Secretary of State. Discussions to date with the Church Commissioners and English Heritage make it clear that such consent would not be granted, particularly in the light of grant support by English Heritage. Consideration would only be given to such a proposal after a public inquiry and evidence that all available alternative uses had been fully explored and found to be impractical or non-viable.
22. *Conclusion*  
It will be clear that any alternative use for the building must have local support and therefore the Parish Council and Local Nature Reserve Management Committee will need to work closely with SCDC to develop a viable project plan for a future use.
23. The target for completion of such a project plan would be need to be Spring 2006 to allow for full consultation, enabling grant submissions to be made during Summer 2006.

**Appendix 1 : St. Denis, East Hatley - Tender Report.**

**Item 11. Conservation Advisory Group 8.06.05 - Tender Reports - St. Denis, East Hatley.**

**Item 13. Cabinet 9.06.05 - Tender Reports - St. Denis, East Hatley.**

**Summary of Tender Reports received – 7<sup>th</sup> June 2005.**

**Key Points :**

**1. Tenders were sought for two options : -**

- Tender Option 1 : repairing the structure with a corrugated iron roof.  
(Approved by English Heritage but not favoured by Parish or CAG members prior to tender)
- Tender Option 2 : repairing the structure with replacement clay tiles.

**2. Tenders were sought from 4 companies - 3 were received as follows :**

	<b>Tender 1</b>	<b>Tender 2 (works only)</b>
<b>Lowest tender</b>	£93,659.05	£129,662.54
<b>Next</b>	£155,627.42	£211,699.24
<b>Highest</b>	£ 231,914.53	£265,161.88

**3. The tenders have been analysed by our project architects and are confirmed as meeting the requirements for tendering.** They recommend acceptance of the lowest tender price for either option, summarised below.

**4. Summary - Tender Option 1 : Corrugated iron roof (ex.VAT).**

Works	£ 93,659.05	
Fees	£ 16,188.97	
Total ex VAT	<u>£ 109,848.02</u>	(incs. Dayworks & Contingencies of £6,368)
Eng.Her. Grant	- 61,000.00	(based on EH project estimate of £81,544)
SCDC Contribution	£ 48,848.00	
less expended fees	- 7,586.00	(60% of Architect's fee)
SCDC commitment to let Option 1 contract.	<u>£ 41,262.00</u>	(Capital Programme - "Historic Building Preservation Fund")

**5. Summary - Tender Option 2 : Clay tile roof (ex.VAT).**

Works	£ 129,662.05	
Fees	£ 21,049.44	
Total ex VAT	<u>£ 150,711.49</u>	(incs. Dayworks & Contingencies of £6,368)
Eng.Her. Grant	- 61,000.00	(based on EH project estimate of £81,544)
Hatley PC Contribution	2,000.00	
SCDC Contribution	£ 87,711.49	
Hatley PC Contribution		
less expended fees	- 7,586.00	(60% of Architect's fee)
less		
SCDC commitment to let Option 2 contract.	<u>£ 80,125.00</u>	(Capital Programme - "Historic Building Preservation Fund")

**5. English Heritage have not yet commented on the tender report but are unlikely to increase their grant offer.**

**6. Funding of approx. £152k is currently available in the existing Capital Programme budget "Historic Building Preservation Fund" which was allocated to enable the authority to intervene and secure the future of historic buildings at risk.**

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet  
**AUTHOR:** Finance and Resources Director

9<sup>th</sup> June 2005

**CLOSURE OF BROADBAND PROJECT**

**Purpose**

1. To provide an update on the deployment of broadband across the District.
2. To advise on the formal closure of the project.

**Effect on Corporate Objectives**

3. Quality, Accessible Services	Access to broadband services to enable citizens to carry out their business with the council in an efficient manner. Easy access to information and council services.
Village Life	
Sustainability	Reduced travelling
Partnership	With Trilogy Telecom to ensure effective delivery of broadband services to the district in a cost effective manner.

**Background**

4. On 30<sup>th</sup> January 2003, Cabinet made the following resolutions:
  - a) that the Council submit an application to EEDA for funding of a District-wide broadband service and take the leading role in the application;
  - b) that further decisions regarding the project, including consideration of tenders in satisfaction of Standing Orders, be delegated to the Information and Customer Services Portfolio.
5. The application was developed by the Assistant Director (ICT), supported by Richard Jones of RDJ Consultants, and was submitted on 30<sup>th</sup> April 2003.
6. EEDA also received applications to the competition from the following communities within the District:
  - Cambridge Ring South East/Linton Broadband covering Babraham, Balsham, Bartlow, Castle Camps, Great Abington, Hadstock, Hildersham. Horseheath. Linton, Little Abington. Shudy Camps, West Wickham and West Wrating.
  - Virtual Cambridgeshire Communities Network covering Boxworth, Papworth Everard, Madingley, Lolworth, Elsworth, Connington and Hilton.
  - Broadband for Hinxton covering Hinxton.
  - The Mordens covering Steeple Morden, Guilden Morden and Odsey.
  - Papworth Broadband Action Group covering Papworth Everard.

- Surf Waterbeach covering Waterbeach, Landbeach and Cottenham.
  - Over and District Broadband covering Over, Swavesey and Longstanton.
7. The Council's application was successful, and a grant of £300,000 was offered (compared with a requested sum of £339,000). This was announced by EEDA on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2003.
  8. After several presentations and discussions with prospective partners, Trilogy Telecom was selected as the preferred technology partner for the deployment of broadband services across the district in areas not immediately supported by the more conventional providers, BT and ntl.
  9. The target for broadband coverage in the District is 99%.
  10. A voucher scheme, to be administered by the council, was devised to assist residents in the acquisition of a broadband service, these being funded from the EEDA grant at a level which meant the installation and setup costs were effectively free.
  11. The first connections to the sponsored broadband service via Trilogy were made in the Arrington, Steeple Morden, Crafts Hill, Swavesey and Willingham areas in July 2004.

### **Considerations**

12. Technology improvements, most notably the <sup>1</sup>BT Extended Reach Trials, have increased the availability of broadband from the mainstream suppliers and reduced the demand made of the Trilogy service to a level where some exchanges and areas became unviable. As a direct result, Trilogy were released from their obligation to broadband enable the exchanges of Linton, Royston, Sawston and West Wrattling.
13. Cambourne and the immediate area is still awaited, BT have indicated that this will be complete by August 2005 and in conjunction with the Trilogy service (now available to parts of Lower Cambourne) and the ntl service (available to a large part of Great Cambourne), will provide broadband services to all residents in the locality.
14. Through the rest of the district, connections continue to be made according to demand. Trilogy continues installing broadband services and make monthly claims against the grant. All claims are checked and verified.
15. However, BT continues to be the provider of choice. As the BT service has become more readily available, the demand for a Trilogy enabled service has decreased. Trilogy remain focussed on providing a quality service at bandwidth levels not available via BT.
16. The implication of the above is that the district now enjoys a greater than 99% (broad based) coverage for broadband services (**Appendix 1**), this figure being achieved well ahead of original expectations of the project.
17. The EEDA grant is substantially underspent and forecast for the continued deployment of broadband would indicate that the grant will remain underspent when the grant allocation period ends in 2006. EEDA are to be approached for consideration to extending the existing grant period for an additional 12 months, to terminate 2007.



18. Community Capacity Building initiatives are well underway, training for village representatives is ongoing and village websites are now appearing. Barton Parish Council (<http://www.eastspace.net/barton/home.asp>) and Castle Camps Village (<http://www.eastspace.net/castlecamps/home.asp>) are already making good use of the facility.
19. Other initiatives such as new business start-ups and new business attracted to the region are encouraged and regularly monitored.
20. Project management consultancy arrangements supporting the broadband project have been revised and will terminate July 2005. The Asst Director Finance & Resources (ICT) will continue to manage the project and the closure accordingly.

#### **Options**

21. None.

#### **Financial Implications**

22. Possible non-claim of grant monies awarded via EEDA, no direct effect on any SCDC Revenue or Capital monies.

#### **Legal Implications**

23. None.

#### **Staffing Implications**

24. None.

#### **Risk Management Implications**

25. None.

#### **Consultations**

26. The Finance and Resources Director  
I&CS Portfolio Holder  
RDJ Consultants  
The Broadband Project Management Group  
EEDA  
Trilogy Telecom

#### **Conclusions/Summary**

27. Increased availability of broadband services from the mainstream providers and the Council's technology partner, Trilogy Telecom, has now provided access to broadband services to in excess of 99% of the South Cambridgeshire District.
28. Continued management at board level is no longer a requirement, the basic requirements and targets having been met.

29. Further management of the voucher scheme can be carried out by the Asst. Director Finance & Resources (ICT), update reports to be made available on a 6 monthly or exceptions basis until funding ceases.

**Recommendations**

30. To note the success of the broadband deployment.
31. To support the formal closure of the project and the proposed arrangements for the continuing management of the EEDA funding.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

SCDC application to the EEDA competition  
Broadband Project Board Minutes – March 2005, May 2005.

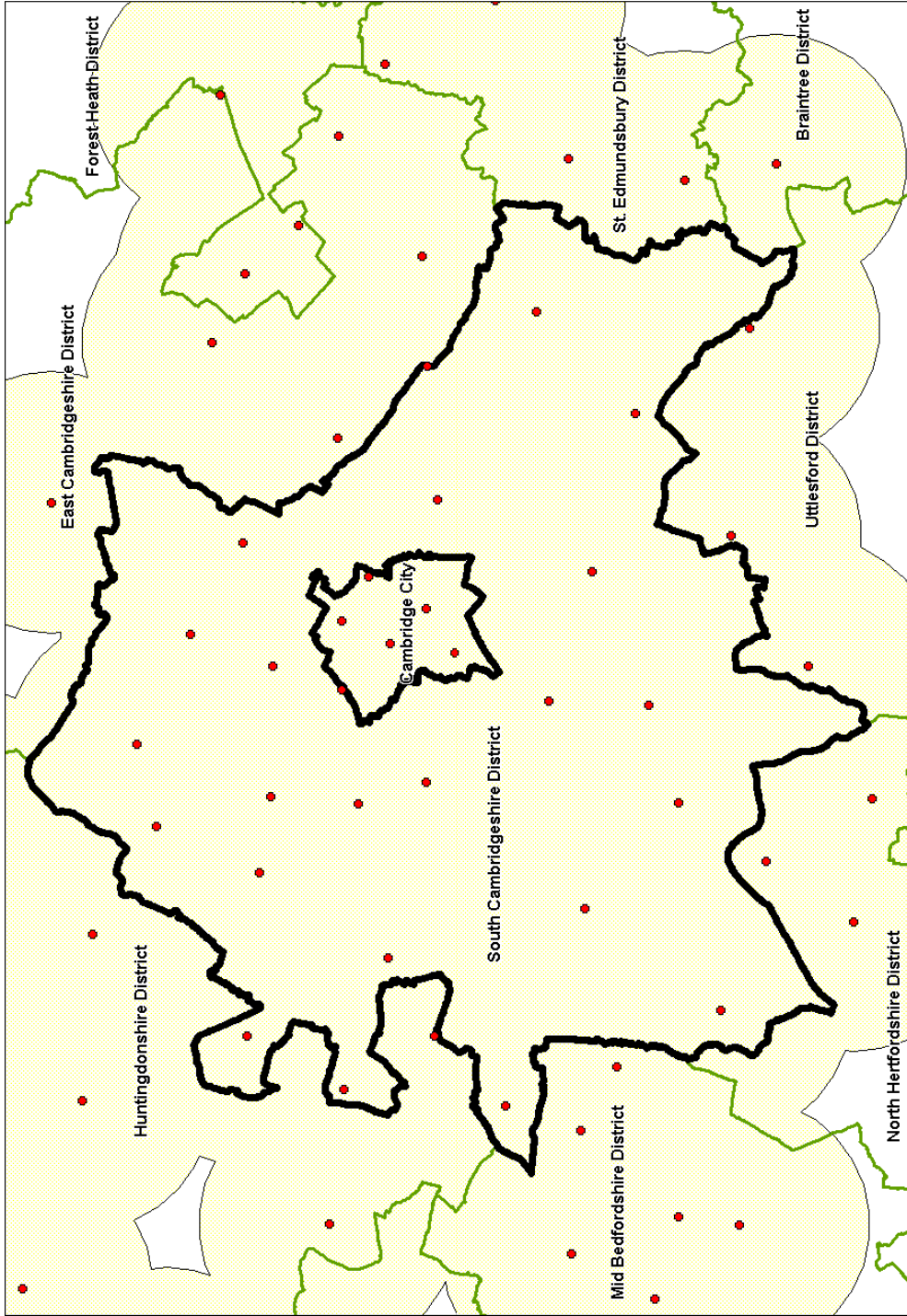
**Contact Officer:** Steve Rayment – Assistant Director Finance & Resources (ICT)  
Telephone: (01954) 703010

<sup>1</sup> BT 'Extended Reach Trials' - Following BT Wholesale trials in Milton Keynes and rural areas around Fort William and Dingwall in the Scottish Highlands, BT is confident a 512kb/sec ADSL service can now be provided to the vast majority of people beyond the former limit which was roughly equivalent to 6km distance from the exchange.

From September 6, 2004, the reach limit for the 512kb/s ADSL services will be removed. BT is also increasing the range for 1Mb/s premium services from 4km to approximately 6km - making 1Mb/s ADSL available to 96 per cent of homes and businesses connected to a broadband exchange.

The trial data indicates that removing the limit means 99.8 per cent of lines connected to a broadband exchange should now be able to get a 512kb/s ADSL service. To date approximately 96 per cent of homes and businesses connected to broadband enabled exchanges were within range for 512kb/s ADSL.

Broadband coverage for South Cambridgeshire District - 6km buffer per exchange



Key:

— SDCD District Boundary

● Site of telephone exchange

○ Coverage of 6km buffer

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet 9 June 2005  
**AUTHOR/S:** Chief Executive

**MEMBERS ADVISORY GROUPS FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND SPORTS DEVELOPMENT**

**Purpose**

- To agree on the setting up of two new members advisory groups to steer the development of the new Community Development and Sports Development Strategies. The proposal is to nominate seven Members to sit on two separate advisory groups, which will meet four or five times. The Groups will review the previous Strategies for these services and develop new Strategies and action plans for the coming years.

**Effect on Corporate Objectives**

2. Quality, Accessible Services	Both Community Development and Sports Development Services illustrate the Council's high quality and accessible approach to direct service provision.
Village Life	Both services directly benefit the quality of village life and the health and well being of residents
Sustainability	Both services aim to develop sustainable activities and opportunities in the community by developing local capacity encouraging good practice.
Partnership	Both services show SCDC best practice in partnership working

**Background**

- The previous Community Development Strategy, Growing Through the Community, covers two years work and finishes in 2005. The previous Sports Development Strategy covered 2 years and finished at end of 2004. Sports Development work has been continuing to develop and expand in 2005 however work on the replacement Strategy has been delayed due to maternity leave.

**Considerations**

- The two advisory groups would meet four or five times over a period of 4-5 months with each meeting focussing on different elements of the services. External agencies and professionals will be invited to attend appropriate meeting to help feed into the process.

This is similar to the current Arts Advisory Group, which has almost completed its work in developing the new Arts Development Strategy. This system has worked well.

**Options**

- It is suggested that both advisory groups should comprise the Community Development Portfolio Holder plus six other Members who have a particular interest in the Community Development Service and the Sports Development Service.

**Financial Implications**

6. The cost of producing these new Strategies is budgeted for within existing Community Development and Sports Development budgets.

**Legal Implications**

7. There are no legal implications

**Staffing Implications**

8. No new staff implications

**Risk Management Implications**

9. No significant risks

**Consultations**

10. Members of the Scrutiny Committee highlighted the need for more Member involvement in compiling community service strategies during the question and answer session for the Community Development Portfolio Holder in January 2005.
11. There are a number of key issues for consideration in both services; these include identifying future priorities and direction for staff and resources, further development of capital and revenue grant aid schemes and managing growth. There are substantial implications to both services relating to the planning for and implementation of Arbury Park, Northstowe, Cambridge East and other new developments across the district whilst maintaining a valued and quality service to existing residents.

**Recommendations**

12. That Cabinet approves the establishment of two new Advisory groups as outlined above and if approved that:
  - six Members plus the PFH for Community Development are nominated to sit on a Community Development Advisory Group
  - six Members plus the PFH for Community Development are nominated to sit on a Sports Development Advisory Group

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Previous Community Development and Sports Development Strategies

**Contact Officers:** Jane Thompson, Cultural Services Manager. Telephone: (01954) 713348 or Tricia Pope, Community Development Manager. Telephone (01954) 713290

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** Cabinet  
**AUTHOR/S:** Finance and Resources Director

9<sup>th</sup> June 2005

### Appointments

#### Purpose

- To make appointments to the Arts Development Advisory Group, Housing Older People Advisory Group, Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Advisory Group, Land Drainage Advisory Group, Member Training Advisory Group, Milton Country Park Advisory Group, the Waste Management Advisory Group and joint and outside bodies. Cabinet may also wish to consider the membership of the Northstowe Member Steering Group.

#### Effect on Corporate Objectives

- |    |                              |   |
|----|------------------------------|---|
| 2. | Quality, Accessible Services | Partnership work on joint bodies and through the Local Government Association can assist with the provision of Council services District-wide. The Member Training Advisory Group works to ensure elected Councillors have adequate training and support to provide quality services to their electorate. |
|    | Village Life                 |   |
|    | Sustainability               |   |
|    | Partnership                  |   |

#### Background

- Due to the imminent meetings of several of the Advisory Groups and other bodies, it is not feasible to make appointments at the July Cabinet meeting.

#### Considerations

##### ***Arts Development Advisory Group***

- The Arts Development Advisory Group was set up by Cabinet in September 2004 as a task-and-finish working group to review the current Arts Strategy, "*Lighting the Way: 2002-2005*" and developing the 2005-2010 strategy, *Creative South Cambridgeshire*. It advises the Community Development portfolio holder.
- It had seven members and the Community Development portfolio holder during the last municipal year. These members were appointed to this Advisory Group as they represented the Council on the following outside bodies: Arts in Cambs on Tour, Cambridge Arts Theatre, Cambridge Film Consortium, Cross Border Arts, Eastern Orchestral Board, The Junction and Wysing Arts
- All members were asked their committee preferences in priority order and the following expressed an interest in the Arts Advisory Group (numbers in brackets refer to the number of Advisory Groups for which each member expressed an interest).

7.

#### **6 Total**

##### **1<sup>st</sup> Choice**

\*SA Harangozo (2)

\*Mrs GJ Smith (1)

##### **2<sup>nd</sup> Choice**

\*Mrs JA Muncey (3)

##### **Not Prioritised**

\*JA Hockney (2)

\*JA Quinlan (2)

\*Mrs DSK Spink (5)

(\* indicates members from 2004/05).

8. All six of those who expressed an interest were on the Advisory Group last year. The seventh member, Councillor Mrs PS Corney (The Council's Board Observer on The Junction), did not include this Advisory Group in her preferences.

**Equity Share Advisory Group**

9. 10 members were appointed to the Equity Share Advisory Group in 2004/05. However, this Advisory Group has not met since April 2005. There are no immediate plans for a meeting.

10. The following members have indicated an interest in serving on the Equity Share Advisory Group:

**4 Total**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Choice</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Choice</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Choice</b>	<b>Not Prioritised</b>
*Mrs A Elsby	*Mrs SJO Doggett		*DALG Wherrell
*MP Howell			

(\* indicates members from 2004/05)

11. A further request for expressions of interest in this Advisory Group could be sent to all members, either through the Weekly Bulletin or by e-mail. Cabinet may wish to appoint those members who had already expressed an interest in serving, and delegate authority to the Housing Portfolio Holder to appoint as many additional members as is necessary to bring the Advisory Group membership to seven.

**Housing and Older People Steering Group**

12. The following members have indicated an interest in serving on the Housing and Older People Group:

**16 Total**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Choice</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Choice</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Choice</b>	<b>Not Prioritised</b>
*RE Barrett		RF Bryant	EJ Pateman (5 <sup>th</sup> choice)
*NN Cathcart		EW Bullman	*J Shepperson (4 <sup>th</sup> choice)
*Mrs A Elsby		Mrs SJO Doggett	Mrs DSK Spink (4 <sup>th</sup> choice)
MP Howell		*Mrs SA Hatton	
*Mrs HF Kember		*Mrs JA Muncey	
Mrs VM Trueman			
*Mrs JR Williamson			
SS Ziaian-Gillan			

(\* indicates members from 2004/05)

**Information Communications Technology (ICT) Advisory Group**

13. On 10<sup>th</sup> February 2005 Cabinet appointed eight members to the ICT Advisory Group.

14. The following members have indicated an interest in serving on the Information Communications Technology (ICT) Advisory Group:

**7 Total**

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Choice</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Choice</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Choice</b>	<b>Not Prioritised</b>
*SM Edwards	*JPR Orme	*MJ Mason	*A Riley



\*Mrs HF Kember      \*JH Stewart      \*Mrs HM Smith

(\* indicates members from 2004/05)

**Land Drainage Advisory Group**

15. The following members have indicated an interest in serving on Land Drainage Advisory Group:

**12 Total**

**1<sup>st</sup> Choice**

\*EW Bullman  
BR Burling  
\*Mrs J Dixon  
\*SM Edwards  
\*RMA Manning  
\*MJ Mason  
\*J Shepperson  
\*Mrs HM Smith

**2<sup>nd</sup> Choice**

\*NIC Wright

**3<sup>rd</sup> Choice**

**Not Prioritised**

\*EJ Pateman (4<sup>th</sup> choice)  
\*A Riley  
\*JR Williamson (4<sup>th</sup> choice)

(\* indicates members from 2004/05)

**Member Training Advisory Group**

16. The following members have indicated an interest in serving on the Member Training Advisory Group:

**5 Total**

**1<sup>st</sup> Choice**

SJ Agnew  
\*Mrs SA Hatton  
\*Mrs SEK van de Ven

**2<sup>nd</sup> Choice**

**3<sup>rd</sup> Choice**

**Not Prioritised**

Mrs DSK Spink (5<sup>th</sup> choice)  
\*DALG Wherrell

(\* indicates members from 2004/05)

17. There are five volunteers and so ideally two more are required.

**Milton Country Park Advisory Group**

18. The following members have indicated an interest in serving on the Milton Country Park Advisory Group:

**7 Total**

**1<sup>st</sup> Choice**

\*Mrs HF Kember  
\*Mrs JA Muncey  
\*RT Summerfield

**2<sup>nd</sup> Choice**

\*R Hall  
\*Mrs SA Hatton  
\*Mrs HM Smith  
RJ Turner

**3<sup>rd</sup> Choice**

**Not Prioritised**

(\* indicates members from 2004/05)

**Waste Management Advisory Group**

19. The following members have indicated an interest in serving on the Waste Management Advisory Group:

**14 Total**

**1<sup>st</sup> Choice**

\*SA Harangozo  
\*Mrs BE Waters  
\*Mrs JR Williamson

**2<sup>nd</sup> Choice**

RE Barrett  
EW Bullman  
\*Mrs CAED Murfitt  
J Shepperson  
Mrs VM Trueman

**Not Prioritised**

RF Bryant (4<sup>th</sup> choice)  
JP Chatfield  
Mrs SJO Doggett (4<sup>th</sup> choice)  
\*NJ Scarr  
Mrs HM Smith (4<sup>th</sup> choice)  
\*DALG Wherrell

(\* indicates members from 2004/05)

**Northstowe**

20. Cabinet may wish to discuss the possible memberships of the Northstowe Member Steering Group and the Northstowe Development Trust Working Group.
21. Cabinet, at its meeting of 31<sup>st</sup> July 2003, agreed that the membership of the Northstowe Member Steering Group be:
  - Leader of Council
  - Development and Conservation Control Committee Chairman
  - Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder
  - Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder
  - Local District Councillor(s)
  - Local County Councillor
  - 1 City Councillor
  - Shadow Portfolio Holder or Development and Conservation Control Committee Vice-Chairman to attend in absence of any SCDC Member
22. On 25<sup>th</sup> March 2004 Cabinet confirmed that the County Council membership be maintained at one seat, the County Councillors to decide amongst themselves who would attend.
23. Following the recent ward boundary changes and the subsequent elections, members representing parishes which could be affected by development in the Longstanton / Oakington area are:
  - R Hall and Mrs B Waters, Bar Hill Ward (bordering on the south side of the area and which could be affected by traffic proposals for the A14 junction)
  - Ms J Dixon, SM Edwards and TJ Wotherspoon, Cottenham Ward (including villages of Oakington and Westwick)
  - A Riley (Longstanton)
  - BR Burling, Ms PS Corney and RMA Manning (Willingham & Over Ward, which borders on the north side of the area)
  - Other wards with shared borders with the Longstanton / Oakington area include Girton (2 members), Histon & Impington (3 members), Papworth & Elsworth (2 members) and Swavesey (1 member), although members from these wards have not yet expressed any interest in membership of the Steering Group.
24. There are currently nine local members with immediate interests in the area, a number which could rise as high as seventeen. Cabinet could request that members in multi-member wards nominate one representative.
25. The following members have expressed an interest in serving on a Northstowe Member Group:
  - BR Burling
  - Mrs PS Corney

- Mrs J Dixon
- SM Edwards
- R Hall
- RMA Manning
- RB Martlew
- A Riley
- Mrs DSK Spink
- Mrs BE Waters

**Joint Bodies**

26. *South Cambridgeshire Environment & Transport Area Joint Committee* (5 members including Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder): the representatives for 2004/05 were the Leader, Deputy Leader, and Portfolio Holders for Environmental Health, Information and Customer Services, and Planning and Economic Development, with the Community Development Portfolio Holder as substitute.
27. *County Council / Cambridge City / South Cambridgeshire Joint Strategic Forum*: the representatives for 2004/05 were the Leader, the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of Development and Conservation Control Committee and Portfolio Holders for Information & Customer Services and Planning & Economic Development.
28. *Cambridgeshire Councils' Association*: the representatives for 2004/05 were the Leader, Deputy Leader, Community Development portfolio holder and the Housing portfolio holder as substitute.
29. *South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership Board*: the representatives for 2004/05 were the Leader and the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning portfolio holder.

**Portfolio Holders on Outside Bodies**

30. There are a number of Outside Bodies that have portfolio holders allocated to it. Cabinet are invited to make appointments to the following:
31. *Camb Sport*: The representative for 2004/05 was the Community Development portfolio holder.
32. *Cambridge Airport Relocation Study Member Reference Group*: The Planning and Economic Development portfolio holder was a representative on this Group for 2004/05.
33. *Cambridge City Centre Consultative Forum*: The Planning and Economic Development portfolio holder was a representative on this Group for 2004/05.
34. *Cambridgeshire Councils' Association Waste Forum*: The Environmental Health portfolio holder was a representative on this Group for 2004/05.
35. *Cambridgeshire Horizons*: Councillor Mrs DSK Spink is the Council's representative on this body and Sir David Trippier has requested that for the sake of continuity this continues to be the case.
36. *Cambridgeshire Transport Forum Reference Group*: The Planning and Economic Development portfolio holder was a representative on this Group for 2004/05.

37. *East Anglia Tourist Board*: The Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning portfolio holder was the Council's representative on this Group for 2004/05.
38. *East of England Regional Assembly*: The Leader was the Council's representative for 2004/05.
39. *The Home Improvement Advisory Group*: The Environmental Health portfolio holder was a member and chairman of this group.
40. *Northstowe Trust Development Group*: The Leader, the Planning & Economic Development and Community Development portfolio holders currently serve on this Group. It is possible that a Northstowe Trust Advisory Group will be established during this year (2005/06).

#### **Financial, Legal, Staffing and Risk Management Implications**

41. None.

#### **Conclusions**

42. There has been a large amount of interest in Housing Options Advisory Group, Land Drainage Advisory Group and Waste Management Advisory Group. It should be noted that those members who are not appointed are welcome to attend meetings and, subject to the discretion of the respective Chairmen, participate in debate.

#### **Consultations**

43. On 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2005 all candidates were sent a form by post and by e-mail asking for their Committee and Advisory Group preferences.

#### **Recommendations**

44.
  - (a) To appoint those members who have expressed an interest to the Arts Development Advisory Group, the Equity Share Advisory Group the Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) Advisory Group, the Member Training Advisory Group and the Milton Country Park Advisory Group from amongst those who expressed an interest in serving;
  - (b) To consider which nine members should serve on the Housing Options Advisory Group, the Land Drainage Advisory Group and the Waste Management Advisory Group.
  - (c) To appoint the local member(s) to the Northstowe Member Steering Group, from amongst those who expressed an interest in serving or who represent areas which may be affected by the development, bearing in mind the overall group size;
  - (d) To make appointments to the joint bodies and outside bodies listed in the agenda.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Cabinet minutes and agendas 24<sup>th</sup> June 2004.

**Contact Officer:** Patrick Adams – Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Telephone: (01954) 713408

**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet

9 June 2005

**AUTHOR/S:** Strategic Officer Group on Traveller Issues

**TRAVELLER ISSUES UPDATE**

**Purpose**

1. To update Members on actions taken by the Council in advance of the Deputy Prime Minister's deadline for unauthorised Travellers at Pine View, Smithy Fen to leave by 11 June 2005.

**Effect on Corporate Objectives**

2.	Quality, Accessible Services	Traveller Issues have implications for all four corporate objectives. In particular, the Council's commitment to firm, fair and consistent planning enforcement is central to maintaining Quality Village Life and treating all sections of the community equitably. This is also reflected in the Council's Policy on Traveller Issues, which was agreed in July 2004.
	Village Life	
	Sustainability	
	Partnership	

**Background**

3. Since the Deputy Prime Minister's decision last March, there has been a special Cabinet meeting on 28 April and a meeting of the Development and Conservation Control Sub-Committee on 10 May. Minutes of those meetings have been made available to the press and public, for consideration by Members. In addition, the Development and Conservation Control Committee (D&3C) has received reports on regulatory decision-making arrangements in relation to planning enforcement at traveller sites at its meetings on 6 April and 1 June.

**Considerations: The Council's approach**

4. In this interim period between the decision and the deadline, the Council is taking a two-track approach to the situation at Pine View. We are in negotiations with the Travellers, to help them comply with the decision, but we are also making plans in case they do not move.
5. The Cabinet has already reaffirmed its commitment to taking legal injunctive action against named individuals who are persistently in breach of planning enforcement notices. That said, it is also clear that legal processes inevitably take time. The Council cannot and will not be marching onto Pine View or any other unauthorised site immediately after official deadlines expire. The option of eviction and land clearance is a last resort, and the Council hopes that it will be possible to find alternative, acceptable solutions.
6. The Council is working hard to find a fair, realistic and consistent approach to Traveller sites across South Cambridgeshire. The problems presented by Traveller Issues are not limited to Cottenham, and neither are the solutions. Preparations are being made for different possible courses of action post-11 June, but it would be

premature and prejudicial for the Council to make firm decisions before the deadline has passed. Arrangements are being made for the new Development and Conservation Control Advisory Group to meet early in the week after 11 June, to be followed by further reports to the main D&3C Committee and the Council.

7. Actions taken by the Council over the last few months include:
- Liaison with the Police, other public bodies, external legal advice and bailiffs;
  - Consideration of the ideas and suggestions made by Members during the workshop on Traveller Issues on 18 March (see Appendix A). As a follow-up to this, the Cabinet will receive a report on the concept of land swaps once further legal advice has been received;
  - Meetings with the Commission for Racial Equality, Travellers at Pine View, Cottenham Parish Council and other community groups;
  - Cultural awareness training by the Ormiston Trust for members of the Cabinet and the Development and Conservation Control Sub-Committee;
  - A tour of traveller sites in the District, also for members of the Cabinet and the members of the Development and Conservation Control Sub-Committee;
  - Letter to partners serving Smithy Fen and Cottenham, plus local community groups, seeking their views on the way forward (see Appendix B);
  - Continuing fieldwork on the Travellers' Housing Need Survey, the results of which will be reported this Autumn;
  - News releases and a one-page feature in the latest edition of South Cambs Magazine (see Appendix C), setting out the Council's approach to Traveller Issues.

#### **Financial, Legal, Staffing and Risk Management Implications**

8. There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. These will arise, however, from the need for a consistent strategy to Traveller Issues across the District. This will have to be considered in the context of the Government's proposals for council tax capping.
9. There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. The Commission for Racial Equality states that "Gypsies and Irish Travellers are recognised ethnic groups for the purposes of the Race Relations Act (1976), identified as having a shared culture, language and beliefs".
10. Unfortunately, much time and effort has had to be spent by both Members and Officers correcting some inaccurate and emotive reports in the local media, which the Council would have preferred to have spent focussing on the main issues. The Council looks forward to more constructive and balanced working relationships with the Cambridge Evening News and Cottenham Residents Association in future.
11. Traveller Issues are highlighted as one of the key corporate risks facing the organisation (currently rated 'very high likelihood' / 'critical impact') on the Council's

Risk Register. The management action plan was included in the report to Cabinet on 12 May 2005 on Strategic Risk Management.

**Consultations**

12. Partners serving Smithy Fen and Cottenham, plus local community groups, are currently being consulted on the way forward

**Recommendation**

13. Members are asked to note this report.

**Background Papers:**

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Council's Policy on Traveller Issues, SCDC, July 2004.
- Reports to Cabinet, 28 April 2005
- Reports to Development and Conservation Control Committee, 6 April and 1 June 2005.
- Report to Development and Conservation Control Sub-Committee, 10 May 2005.
- Report to Cabinet on Strategic Risk Management, 12 May 2005.
- "Gypsies and Travellers: the facts", Commission for Racial Equality website, May 2005 ([http://www.cre.gov.uk/gdpract/g\\_and\\_t\\_facts.html](http://www.cre.gov.uk/gdpract/g_and_t_facts.html))

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## Member Workshop on Traveller Issues: 18 March 2005 Responses to Group Discussion Questions

### 1.1. What are the strengths and weaknesses of our current approach?

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Roller coaster learning curve – gaining experience</li> <li>• Starting to communicate on several fronts</li> <li>• We are taking action to correct things – e.g. pollution control</li> <li>• Team</li> <li>• Awareness much greater</li> <li>• Have needs assessment process under way</li> <li>• Member support</li> <li>• Travellers policy in LDF</li> <li>• Cooperation with other Councils</li> <li>• Support of LGA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Large number of unauthorised sites</li> <li>• The system – no central Government support</li> <li>• Nothing yet achieved and it is costing money all the time</li> <li>• Too tolerant – Honey pot effect</li> <li>• Too reactive, not proactive</li> <li>• Too sensitive to ethnicity</li> <li>• Too weighted against locals rights</li> <li>• Lack of resources (from potential partners)</li> <li>• Negative perceptions – unsupportive press</li> <li>• No clear overall strategy for unauthorised sites</li> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Manpower overstretched – Need lead Officer</li> <li>• Lack of identified alternative sites</li> <li>• Local prejudice</li> <li>• CRA and misinformation</li> <li>• Established fear of travellers within the settled population</li> <li>• Members need more information on traveller issues to make informed decisions</li> <li>• Needs of travellers have not been clearly addressed or tabled at Member meetings – may have made the decision to take direct action more clear cut than it should have been (needs/welfare issues only addressed by sub committee)</li> <li>• Some Members have not met or engaged with travellers</li> <li>• Some Members not considered what eviction/land clearance really involves – hearing first hand experience changes feelings on it</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't know how many pitches we are supposed to provide</li> </ul>



**1.2. How can we make our approach more effective? What should we do differently?**

- Cannot look a soft touch.
- Communication with the local people, communities and parishes.
- National need to monitor movements – who are they/where have they come from?
- Joint working with other councils (if not national then regional).
- Lack of in-house resources and manpower (traveller taskforce needed).
- Work with other agencies such as IRS or C of E to strengthen inter-agency work.
- Have more confidence in reporting crime and the outcomes of these reports.
- In partnership with other authorities provide more facilities – site provision in conjunction with other authorities, not all in one area.
- Deal differently with lobby groups – not giving them credence.
- Capacity of enforcement team needs to be reviewed.
- Land clearance isn't the answer until we know the approach of the SCDC strategy.
- SCDC now has so many sites where eviction/land clearance could be taken – money is very important.
- Land clearance not the answer for all. Smithy Fen is not the best site to start on.
- Clearer, stronger, more effective law.
- Greater consistency in planning appeal decisions.
- Find more sites.
- Have Members and travellers engage in a neutral environment.
- Send officers to other authorities to learn from them.
- Round robin letters to affected people.
- Balance resources in terms of funding enforcement and actions we can take – what is the priority?
- Keep information rolling out, especially to Members.

**1.3. What would a realistic outcome look like in the context of official requirements?**

- Clearly defined end game.
- Sufficient provision to provide authorised plots for all who need – has to be in the context of a national system that is proportionate.
- Temporary sites for peak needs.
- National database of all sites.
- Identity cards for all.
- Being able to identify possible sites within parishes.
- Government agency to move travellers on.
- Why not CPO vacant authorised plots?
- Have a holding site at Northstowe and all new settlements in the County/region
  1. Transit site – 2 weeks stay max
  2. If waiting for planning permission – 6 weeks (discuss with SCDC)
  3. Controlled by SCDC – fees, no burning, identity and history.
- Only have a holding site if other authorities provide the same.
- Travellers can only come onto the site under points 1 and 2 above.
- Only deals with transit or new arrivals, does not effect our duty under QNA.
- Complies with law, local plan and Government guidance.
- Find sites through LDF.
- Sites spread throughout the country but not in our control.
- Encourage integration, opportunities for the second generation to be more settled.
- Settled population of local travellers.
- If evicted they have to go somewhere – official requirements don't suggest eviction.
- Govt. requirements set before the requirement is known. Surveys not complete.
- Spend money on enlightenment not force.
- Doing nothing is still not a cheap option.

**1.4. How do we strike the balance between what we are trying to achieve and working within the resources available?**

- Government to fund peak expenditure – not planned.
- Look for cost effective solutions.
- Do it once, as it sets the scene for others.
- Find sites.
- Scale down what we are trying to achieve.
- Avoid land clearance. Use as negotiation.
- Judicial lead on enforcement.
- Negotiation with travellers – find a “common ground”.
- Does land clearance on one site mean land clearance on all unauthorised ones? Is this viable?
- Taking land clearance could leave us penniless – but doing nothing is not an option.
- Want opportunities to discuss the options.

**2.1 How could ‘land swap’ or ‘land bank’ suggestions be made to work?**

- Ask farmers to provide options on their land.
- Unfair – why should others profit? – Move on.
- Land should be sold at the going rate.
- Need to get agreement from local community and landowners.
- Got to be small – not Smithy Fen size.
- Need a formal consultation process.
- Look to the County Council for land.
- Won’t work. Too much money, takes time to identify land and provide, local issues, planning procedures, persuasion to swap, encourages further unauthorised incursion.
- Won’t work by CPO (compulsory purchase order).
- Lack of land/resources.
- Identify land suitable and encourage travellers to negotiate with land owner – encourage negotiation.
- CPO unauthorised sites at agricultural value and then have control of it.
- Allocate “Housing land” under PPS3 guidance for traveller sites.
- We need to know how many sites we have to provide before we look at buying more – we could provide enough already.
- Government need to put out a statement listing how many sites each authority needs to provide.

**2.2 Given that the Government is likely to require South Cambs to make more provision for travellers, where are the travellers going to go within the district?**

- Travelling community are their own community – look after themselves.
- Planned provision within growth areas but not honey pot – travellers plots within Northstowe and Cambridge fringe.
- Look to Novas group.
- Small sites – no over-provision.
- In some cases give permission for realigned, upgraded unauthorised sites – local support is crucial.
- Identify land which would meet our criteria.
- Get tough with parish councils.
- Contact the County Council – there must have been other sites identified at the same time as Blackwell and Whaddon, where were they?

**2.3 How do we strengthen community relations?**

- Liaison groups.
- Promote better media coverage.
- More police activity.
- Keep on with the Community Strategy.
- Commission a body to formally liaise with travellers locally.
- Cross-border liaison on traveller issues is also important.
- Reassure local community about Council Tax, VAT, and that they are being addressed.
- Involve the Church.
- Learn from visits elsewhere – Tewkesbury BC.
- Integrated work with partners e.g. health and education, key services.

**2.4 What are Member's top three priorities for the service they receive from officers on traveller issues?**

- Monitor and inform – provide regular updates. Keep up weekly bulletins.
- Legal and planning advice.
- Assess options and agree strategy.
- Need more officer resources on traveller issues.
- Cabinet need to address and discuss many of the issues discussed today
- Can we make cuts in other non-statutory/non priority areas to make savings?

## **Text of letter from Chief Executive to public bodies serving Smithy Fen and Cottenham, and local community groups**

26 May 2005

### **Pine View Travellers Site, Smithy Fen, Cottenham**

You will, no doubt, be aware of the Deputy Prime Minister's decision that illegally camped Travellers at Pine View, Smithy Fen must move by 11 June 2005. The Council is working hard behind-the-scenes to find a way forward, and is keen to liaise closely with its partners. As part of this, I am writing to public bodies serving Smithy Fen and Cottenham, plus a range of local community groups and neighbouring residents, in order to seek your views.

### **Background**

As you may know, the Travellers who own pitches 1-17 Pine View appealed against the District Council's decision to refuse planning consent for the use of this land as a Travellers' site. There was a planning inquiry into the appeal, culminating in a report by a Government planning inspector. Taking account of the report, the Deputy Prime Minister considered the Travellers' appeal and announced his decision on 11 March 2005.

The Deputy Prime Minister's decision was to dismiss the Travellers appeal. His letter concluded: *"The Secretary of State considers that the enforcement notice as amended should be upheld, and that the period for compliance with the enforcement notice should be 3 months."* The 3-month period expires on 11 June 2005, and by this time the Travellers living at Pine View should have complied and left.

### **The Council's approach**

In this interim period between the decision and the deadline, the Council is taking a two-track approach to the situation at Pine View. We are in negotiations with the Travellers, to help them comply with the decision, but we are also making plans in case they do not move.

The Council's Cabinet has already reaffirmed its commitment to taking legal injunctive action against named individuals who are persistently in breach of planning enforcement notices. That said, it is also clear that legal processes inevitably take time. The Council cannot and will not be marching onto Pine View or any other unauthorised site immediately after official deadlines expire. The option of eviction and land clearance is a last resort, and the Council hopes that it will be possible to find alternative, acceptable solutions.

The Council is considering what action it should take if Pine View is not vacated in compliance with the enforcement notice and the ODPM decision. Certainly, some of the Travellers at Pine View have indicated that they do not wish to leave, largely due to a lack of other sites to which they can go. They say that they want to remain in or near Cottenham, as they have become settled with children attending Cottenham schools etc. In contrast, the ODPM indicated that "there is limited evidence that the [alternative] site or sites must be in the Cambridge area".

The Council wants to take account of the needs and wishes of all sections of the community in and around Cottenham (both residents and Travellers).

To help us to take all relevant matters into consideration, we are writing to you and others to seek your views. We would like to hear from you on three points, in particular.

1. Are there any factors, concerning the needs of the Travellers or the needs of settled residents, which you think we should consider in our decision on action at this site? If so, please outline them.
2. Are you aware of any issues which would indicate a need for the Travellers to remain in or around Cottenham? Or any issues which you feel would indicate that their remaining in Cottenham is inappropriate?
3. Are there any other points, relevant to the situation at Pine View, which you would wish us to take into account.

I would be grateful if you could respond by Friday 10 June 2005, ideally in writing. Alternatively, you may prefer to telephone Simon McIntosh (Head of Community Services) on (01954) 713350. In replying, please indicate whether your views could be made public or if you wish them to be confidential, and whether these views are on behalf of an organisation or your own personal opinion. All replies received will be shared with members of the Council's Cabinet and the local district councillors for Cottenham.

In closing, it is perhaps worth reflecting on recent media coverage. There is a lot to be said for the adage "Don't believe all you read in the press". The Council is working hard to find a fair, realistic and consistent approach to Traveller sites across South Cambridgeshire. The problems presented by Traveller issues are not limited to Cottenham, and neither are the solutions. Preparations are being made for different possible courses of action post-11 June, but it would be premature and prejudicial for the Council to make firm decisions before the deadline has passed. Given that not all media coverage of Traveller issues is fair and balanced at the moment, you may like to keep an eye on the news releases on the Council's website in order to keep abreast of the Council's approach.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

**John Ballantyne**  
Chief Executive

## **Text of article in *South Cambs Magazine*, Summer '05**

### **Traveller Issues explained**

Hardly a day goes by without some media coverage about traveller sites, particularly Smithy Fen, Cottenham. Rumours and misunderstandings are rife. We would like to clarify the Council's position.

#### **The Council's approach**

South Cambs is working hard to:

- Enforce planning controls fairly, firmly and consistently;
- Strengthen community relations between local households and travellers;
- Lobby for changes in planning law.

The Cabinet is in favour of legal injunctions against individuals who continually flout the law. Travellers on unauthorised plots who persistently breach enforcement notices could face imprisonment by the courts.

#### **Difficult choices**

Tackling traveller issues is not easy. Smithy Fen is a local example of a national problem. The Council shares local residents' frustrations. As the table on the next page demonstrates, we face some difficult decisions as we try to strike a balance between conflicting demands.

#### **National approach needed**

The Council has called on the Government for a clear and co-ordinated national approach to Traveller Issues, backed up by national funding. We have also made clear that:

- All councils should be required to make provision for travellers, not just those (like South Cambs) that already do more than their fair share;
- Travellers should have to demonstrate their identity and proof of genuine need;
- Councils need stronger enforcement powers;
- Traveller sites should be kept to a sensible size.

We value our working relationships with parish councils in tackling traveller issues. We would welcome support from all sections of the community and local media as the Council continues to strive for a fair and realistic solution.

**Table: Difficult choices**

<i><b>On the one hand....</b></i>	<i><b>On the other hand....</b></i>
The Council needs to apply planning law and take enforcement action against breaches of planning control.	There have been appeals against some Council decisions to refuse permission for Traveller sites. In some cases, after lengthy inquiries, planning inspectors have found in favour of the travellers, citing the need to uphold their human rights.
Some people question why South Cambridgeshire should be a "honey pot" for Travellers.	Romany Travellers are a traditional part of life in the district. New official guidance could require the Council to make further provision for sites throughout the district to meet traveller needs.
There are understandable concerns about delays in taking action against illegal traveller encampments.	The High Court has ruled that the Council cannot clear unauthorised sites until outstanding planning appeals are heard. The legal process is complex and time-consuming. The fact is that the Council cannot simply march onto unauthorised sites as soon as official deadlines expire.
Some people ask why it is so difficult to remove Travellers from Smithy Fen, Cottenham when other councils have carried out evictions.	The situation at Smithy Fen is especially complicated because, unlike other sites, it contains a mix of both legitimate and unauthorised traveller plots.
There have been heart-felt calls from Cottenham for the Council to evict Travellers from Smithy Fen.	The Council has to take a fair and consistent approach to all unauthorised Traveller sites in the district. There are others at Swavesey, Histon and Chesterton Fen.
Some believe that the Council should spend whatever it takes to resolve the problems.	Others question how far costly action on traveller sites is prudent when South Cambs faces the threat of council tax capping and major service cuts.
Local communities are angered by anti-social behaviour by some travellers. The Council is committed to upholding community safety.	Travellers have themselves been the victims of hate crime and abuse, and are entitled to the same protection as anyone else.
It is unfair that the interests of local residents seem to count for less than those of Travellers.	The needs of Travellers cannot be ignored. They have a lower life expectancy and higher infant mortality rate than any other section of society.

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet

9<sup>th</sup> June 2005

**AUTHOR:** Housing and Environmental Services Director

**ADDITIONAL INTEGRATED REFUSE & RECYCLING COLLECTION ROUND**

**Purpose**

1. To seek the release of budget requirement for additional refuse collection round

**Effect on Corporate Objectives**

1) Quality, Accessible Services	Effective actions should lead to improvements in efficiency of the service thereby controlling budget increases to a minimum and in future years expansion of Trade services could lead to reductions in the net cost of the service.
Village Life	An effective refuse collection service would ensure that village life is maintained
Sustainability	Effective recycling service is at the heart of this Council's sustainability agenda.
Partnership	

**Background**

2. Cabinet was first informed in October 2004 of the need to introduce an additional integrated refuse & recycling round in 2005/06 to cope with expansion in the number of households within the district. This was part of a wider set of measures to control costs in the service as reported at that time. The costs of this additional round, estimated at £130,000, were agreed as part of the Council's normal budget setting process and included in both the 2005/06 budget estimates and the medium term financial strategy.
3. However, Council in February resolved that the revised revenue estimates for the year 2004-05 and the revenue estimates for 2005-06 be approved as submitted and that Management Team, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, delay or proceed with caution on new expenditure, as appropriate, until the capping announcement is made. Cabinet further tightened the requirement in May when it agreed to freeze any uncommitted CIPs bids pending resolution of capping, and examine other bids for potential savings.
4. Unfortunately the costs of the additional round were included within this list although this expenditure was not agreed via the CIP process. In May the Council had not placed an order for the additional refuse collection vehicle (RCV) or formalised the additional staffing establishment required and as a result officers have been unable to proceed with the procurement of the RCV or the recruitment of the requisite staff.

**Considerations**

5. Management Team have been monitoring the matter over the last two months and it has now reached the point where it would be unwise not to proceed with the permanent solution as originally planned.

6. Currently to cope with the expansion a RCV is being hired, agency staff employed and substantial overtime expended. In effect the 12 full time rounds are servicing 12.75 rounds and the Council is at risk of operating illegally with the overloading of vehicles a very real possibility. The costs of operating via these temporary arrangements have been estimated to be over the original £130,000 (i.e. £125,000 plus fuel and incidentals). In addition the robustness of this arrangement is called into question given it requires staff to agree to work overtime (especially problematic at holiday times) and the employment of agency staff whose loyalty to and knowledge of the service is not at the same level as the permanent workforce.
7. It is clear that the expenditure remains inescapable and that the best solution is to agree to the original proposal as per the report to Cabinet in October and thereby provide the opportunity for the service targets, collection rates and reduced sickness levels to be realised and reduce the risks of illegal operations which ultimately could lead to the loss of the Council's operating licence.

#### **Financial & Legal Implications**

8. As detailed above.

#### **Staffing Implications**

9. As detailed above. The additional crew to be added to the establishment would comprise of 1 HGV driver scale 13-20 and 2 loaders scale 6-13.

#### **Risk Management Implications**

10. The Council is currently at risk of operating illegally as detailed in the main body of the report. In terms of impact this would rank as at least critical with a high likelihood producing an overall risk management score of 15, above the Council's threshold of 10. Agreement to the recommendation would substantially manage this risk to well below the threshold.

#### **Consultations**

11. Management Team on the 16<sup>th</sup> May considered and agreed the recommendation.

#### **Recommendations**

12. It is recommended that: -
  - a. The £130,000 included in the 2005/06 original budget estimates is released.
  - b. Approval is given for the procurement of an additional refuse collection vehicle.
  - c. Approval is given to increase the establishment by 1 HGV driver, scale 13-20 and 2 refuse operative loaders scale 6-13.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Cabinet reports and minutes 14<sup>th</sup> October 2004, 10<sup>th</sup> February 2005 and 12<sup>th</sup> May 2005.

**Contact Officer:** Dale Robinson – Chief Environmental Health Officer  
Telephone: (01954) 713229

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

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**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet 9 June 2005  
**AUTHOR:** Housing and Environmental Health Director

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**THREE HORSESHOES, 135 HIGH STREET, COTTENHAM – PROGRESS REPORT****Purpose**

1. To update Cabinet on the progress being made in relation to the outstanding grant aided works at 135 High Street, Cottenham.

**Effect on Corporate Objectives**

2. Quality, Accessible Services	None
Village Life	The property is, at present, slightly unsightly. As it is on the High Street it will enhance the village when completed.
Sustainability	Environmentally friendly materials are being used and on completion the property will comply with the fitness standard
Partnership	None

**Background**

3. On 21<sup>st</sup> February, 2002, Cabinet resolved that the owner of 135 High Street Cottenham, which had benefited from grant aid, be granted a period of 2 years, with a possibility of 3 years, to complete to the satisfaction of the Council, works at the property. This was to bring it up to the Fitness Standard as set out in a report prepared in February 2002. The remaining grant element would only be paid on completion of the work. If the work were not completed in the maximum timescale, the Council would then demand repayment of any grant already given. In addition, Cabinet wished to see the house being brought up to a minimum standard of habitation within the shortest possible timescale, with kitchen and bathroom as priorities.
4. The two year period was extended by Cabinet in March 2003 until September 2004.

**Considerations**

5. An Environmental Health Officer inspected the property on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2005 to assess progress. The outstanding works at that time and the progress made are now shown in **Appendix A** to the current report.
6. Very little progress has been made in respect of the given schedule of works with one notable exception. A proper bathroom has been installed with hot and cold running water. This is in a ground floor room, not the one proposed previously, but the location is not significant.
7. Underfloor heating has been installed throughout the ground floor.
8. As previously reported, the Applicant's nominated contractor ceased trading in December 2002. The applicant claims that, contrary to information in the previous

report, he was tied into a contract and was unable to employ another contractor until the matter was resolved. This has now happened and a new contractor was working on site at the time of the officer's recent visit.

9. The Applicant has always insisted on carrying out his own, programmed schedule of works and his long-term aim is to bring the property up to a much higher standard than the basic fitness standard. To do this, he is following a logical sequence of programmed works. This has included additional works, not within the grant schedule and involves leaving the provision of a kitchen towards the end of the programme. This also means that the Applicant is unable to claim the outstanding grant sum, as this is dependent on the property reaching the fitness standard.
10. The Applicant has not complied with grant timescales, albeit those have been considerably extended. There have been mitigating circumstances as to why this has not happened, namely, since work started, 3 different contractors have ceased trading, the most recent one doing so while holding a sum of money from the Applicant.
11. If he is forced to pay back the grant sum already received, it may result in the property being left in its present unfit state or, worse still, being abandoned and left vacant, becoming a target for vandalism.

#### **Options**

12. (a) Deem applicant to be in contravention of grant conditions, declare grant null and void and claim back amounts already paid (£16,000)
- (b) Take the long-term view that, providing he sticks to the programme which he has submitted and periodically updates, a derelict property will have been brought up to a high standard and returned to full occupation, thus enhancing the neighbourhood. The applicant would be required to state in writing that he agrees to the new timescale and confirm that he has sufficient resources to complete the works. If this option were to be considered, it would be necessary to ensure that there is no precedent where another applicant was forced to pay back grant aid for similar reasons. This option would be in line with previous decisions of Cabinet.

#### **Financial Implications**

13. If amount is claimed back, the grants budget will have benefited by £20,000, i.e., £16,000 already paid and the outstanding amount of £4,000. However, lengthy legal action is possible which would be costly in financial and staffing terms and could outweigh the benefits.

#### **Legal Implications**

14. The Head of Legal Services has advised as follows: The applicant has given reasons for the further delay which are not unreasonable and largely beyond his control, bearing in mind the applicant's apparent lack of capital and his need to progress the works generally within his affordable income. Although the progress of works has not reflected the previously agreed timescale, the applicant has kept the Council fully informed with a recently submitted project plan and the desired result – barring unforeseen further difficulties – is clearly worth attaining in spite of the further period needed. The decision, under Article 13 principles, must be proportionate to the issues involved. This suggests that further time should be granted but this (further)

indulgence should be expressed, as before, to be without prejudice to the Council's right to reclaim the grant paid if the grant-aided works are not completed within the project plan timescale.

### **Staffing Implications**

15. Decision to reclaim would put considerable pressure on existing legal and environmental health staff.

### **Risk Management Implications**

16. Option (a) will almost certainly result in publicity. Whether this will be good or bad remains to be seen. On balance, it is likely that, if there is a lengthy, expensive, successful appeal, the publicity will be bad for the Council, given that the matter has been allowed to continue for 12 years.

### **Conclusions/Summary**

17. In summary:
  - The works at this property have been ongoing for 12 years. It is anticipated that it will be made fit for human habitation by March 2007.
  - The applicant is following a sensible and logical sequence of works.
  - If works are prevented from progressing due to lack of funds, the result will be an empty, unfit and derelict property in a prominent position in a South Cambridgeshire village.
  - If works progress according to the Applicant's plans the result will be a property that will enhance the village.
  - The applicant has had progress hampered over the years due to 3 contractors ceasing trading, with at least one holding a sum of money that had been paid up-front.
  - The applicant is now employing a reputable, long established local firm (Rattee & Kett)
  - Reclaiming grant funding is likely to result in a lengthy, expensive legal battle.

### **Recommendations**

18. It is recommended that Cabinet,
  - (a) Seeks written confirmation from the Applicant that, if he is allowed to follow his own logical programme of works, the property will be brought up to the fitness standard by March 2007, irrespective of any other desirable works still outstanding at that time. He must also confirm that he has the resources to do this.
  - (b) Allows the Applicant to complete works according to his own logical programme of works on the understanding that failure to achieve the fitness

standard by the due date will result in immediate action to reclaim grant funding.

- (c) Seeks provision of a new programme of works, showing only works essential to achieve the fitness standard under the Housing Act 1985 (see **Appendix B**), with achievable dates, which will be closely monitored by Environmental Health.
- (d) Considers whether or not a deferred action statutory notice under section 189 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended) should be served. This would have the effect that the Council would be empowered to carry out work in default in the event of non-compliance. The cost of works would then become a charge on the property and would accrue interest until settled. Where significant sums were involved, there would also be power to enforce sale of the property afterwards.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: None

**Contact Officer:** Dale Robinson – Chief Environmental Health Officer  
Telephone: (01954) 713229

Rosemary Simpson – Environmental Health Officer  
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## APPENDIX A

### THE THREE HORSESHOES, 135 HIGH STREET, COTTENHAM.

At a visit on 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2005, it was found that, since previous report, the following had been achieved:

- All services had been installed in the drive and the drive had been bricked over.
- A fully operational bathroom had been installed in the ground floor just off the "hall" area.

The previous contractor pulling off the job had slowed work down but, at the time of visit, work was being progressed by Rattee & Kett. The floor of the "Green Room" had been removed and the contractor was scarfing in new timber to defective joist above the Kitchen area and would be inserting additional joists for strengthening. When floor re-laid, adjoining "Red Room" contents to be moved into "Green Room", so that work could progress in the adjoining area.

Mr Wotherspoon hoped that the kitchen ceiling would be plastered over the Easter period.

An area of new plasterwork on the sloping ceiling of the Green Room had fallen off, as had an area of new render on the external front elevation.

The front elevation roof requires re-fixing/replacement of some tiles.

There was still no kitchen. This is explained within the main report.

There was still a problem of rain penetration at the rear roof valley.

As explained previously, windows are on site but not fitted for fear of vandalism.

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**APPENDIX B**

**Fitness Standard as determined by s 604 of the Housing Act 1985 (as amended)**

A dwelling house is fit for human habitation if it meets the following standard.

- (a) It is structurally stable
- (b) It is free from serious disrepair – Roofing, chimneys, external rendering, internal plasterwork (ceilings/walls) and floors.
- (c) It is free from dampness prejudicial to the health of the occupants.
- (d) It has adequate provision for heating, lighting and ventilation (includes natural lighting – windows)
- (e) It has an adequate piped supply of wholesome water.
- (f) There are satisfactory facilities in the dwelling house for the preparation and cooking of food, including a sink with a satisfactory supply of hot and cold water.
- (g) It has a suitably located water closet for the exclusive use of the occupants.
- (h) It has, for the exclusive use of the occupants, a suitably located fixed bath or shower and wash hand basin each of which is provided with a satisfactory supply of hot and cold water.
- (i) It has an effective system for the draining of foul, waste and surface water.

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**


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**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet  
**AUTHOR:** Finance & Resources Director

9 June 2005

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**CAMBRIDGE OFFICE**

**Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet on the operation of the Cambridge Office since it opened in May 2004 and to seek Members' agreement to an alternative means of providing the service.

**Effect on Corporate Objectives**

2. Quality, Accessible Services	The Cambridge Office provides District residents with a place to access Council services that is convenient for them to use while they are in Cambridge.
Village Life	
Sustainability	
Partnership	The Council has entered into an agreement with Cambridge City Council for the Cambridge Office to be located in the same premises as the City Council's customer services team. The two customer service teams expected to develop their level of cooperation and assistance.

**Background**

3. The Cambridge Office was established as an integral part of and to meet one of the conditions attached to the planning consent for the Council's relocation to Cambourne, i.e. of providing an access point in Cambridge to the Council's services.

**Considerations**

Staffing

4. An analysis of the number of staff required at the Cambridge Office was made in November 2002 and updated in July 2003. The analysis indicated that the Cambridge Office would require four staff: one Customer Service Supervisor and three Customer Service Officers. The posts were advertised internally, as there was a need for the staff appointed to have a degree of familiarity with Council services from the outset.
5. From the recruitment and selection process, a Supervisor and two full time and one part time Officers were appointed. Unfortunately, the person appointed to the part time Officer post has since been seriously ill and has not yet been able to take up their appointment. The team has therefore been working at below their originally assessed resource needs for the whole period.
6. Staffing costs had been estimated at £109,700 in the first year, including oncosts and other staff related costs. Actual staffing costs were £82,000, a saving of £27,700.

Accommodation

7. The Council asked consultants to search for suitable accommodation for the Cambridge Office and a number were considered in the Regent Street/ St Andrews Street area of Cambridge. At the same time, it was hoped that the Cambridge Office might be able to be located within some existing Cambridge City Council premises and this eventually proved to be the case, at Mandela House, Regent Street.
8. The annual rental cost of previous Council premises at Station Road was £50,000, together with running costs of approximately £60,000. The potential cost of renting premises in the Regent Street/ St Andrews Street area of Cambridge was considered to be approximately £27,000 per annum, plus business rates and running costs.
9. The agreed cost of the City Council premises in the first year consisted of: annual rent £22,500; annual service charge £5,600 (both subject to inflation); and £5,000 to cover the capital costs to a maximum of £25,000 over five years, a total of £33,100. The Council's running costs related to the Cambridge Office are approximately £18,500. This represents savings of approximately £17,000 and £41,500 respectively for the rental and running costs elements.

Number of customers

10. An analysis of the expected number of customers to the Cambridge Office was made in November 2002 and updated in July 2003. The analysis suggested that there could be a total of 40 callers per day, requiring the following services:
  - Planning & Building Control – 13 callers per day
  - Housing & Homelessness – 12 callers per day
  - Benefits, Council Tax & Rent – 11 callers per day
  - Environmental Health – 4 callers per day
11. A record has been kept of the actual number of customers and the services that they required. Over the period 4 May 2004 to 1 April 2005, the Cambridge Office had 4,680 customers, an average of 20 per day, as follows:
  - Planning & Building Control – 1 caller per day
  - Housing & Homelessness – 5 callers per day
  - Benefits, Council Tax & Rent – 9 callers per day
  - Environmental Health – 0 callers per day
  - Other – 5 callers per day (e.g. Bus Passes, Electoral Registration, Payments, Miscellaneous and non-Council matters)(Graphs of the average number of customers per day and the average number of customers per day by service are shown in **Appendix A** and **Appendix B**.)
12. It should be remembered that, although the number of customers calling at the Cambridge Office is half of those anticipated, the staff are still fully occupied as they have workloads related to their previous service areas (e.g. Benefits and Planning), in addition to their customer services responsibilities.
13. The number of callers for Planning related matters might have been higher if the Development Services department had made copies of plans for public inspection available at the Cambridge Office. However, the Development Services Director was reluctant to ask applicants for further copies of plans over and above those presently supplied. So far, copies of plans have only been provided at the Cambridge Office for major developments, e.g. the proposed wind farm.

Cost

14. The average cost per customer of the Cambridge Office in 2004/05 amounted to £28.55.

15. The City Council provides a cashiering service to the Council from its Cashiers Office at Hobson House, St Andrews Street, a few yards along the road from the Cambridge Office. This cashiering service handled 5,003 transactions in 2004/05 on behalf of the Council, which cost the Council £3,078.63, as follows:

<i>Type of transaction</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Unit cost</i>	<i>Total</i>
Cash	2,365	£0.49	£1,158.85
Cheques	2,036	£0.47	£ 952.22
Bus and rail passes	612	£0.60	£ 367.20
Standing charge		£0.12	£ 600.36
Totals	5,003		£3,078.63

### Options

16. The Resources & Staffing Portfolio Holder agreed at his meeting on 26 April 2005 that the Finance & Resources Director, together with other appropriate officers, examine alternative methods of delivering customer services from Cambridge city centre.
17. Possible options include:
- Continue with the present service, enhancing it (e.g. by the Development Services department making copies of plans available for public inspection at the Cambridge Office) and promoting it further to District residents and to staff, thereby increasing the number of customers and reducing the cost per customer. Examples of how this could be done are given in paragraph 19 below.
  - Close the office. However, the Council would then not be meeting one of its planning conditions. If the Council does not meet one of its own planning conditions, how can it enforce others to do so? (N.B. Should the Government enforce a cap on the Council's council tax for 2005/06 at the level they propose, the closure of the Cambridge Office would need to be considered alongside other options for identifying the required savings.)
  - Enter into an arrangement with the City Council regarding their provision of a service for both Councils. This would be another example of the Council working in partnership.
18. The opening of the Cambridge Office was publicised and it has since been featured in South Cambs Magazine. Even so, over a year on from opening, the Cambridge Office is still receiving customers who say they have only just found out about it. Examples of how the Cambridge Office could be promoted further to District residents and staff include:
- Advertising in the Cambridge Evening News and other local newspapers;
  - Advertising on local radio;
  - Advertising in local village magazines (the Cambridge Office staff had already contacted some village magazines about doing this and had heard back from some);
  - Mentioning availability in all relevant Council correspondence and documents;
  - Mentioning availability in staff corporate induction.
19. The City Council's customer service desk and Mandela House only deals with Revenues matters (Council tax and Benefits). City Council customers for other services have to go to different locations:
- Housing, Homelessness and Rents - Hobson House;
  - Environmental Health - first floor Mandela House;
  - Taxi licences - Mill Road;
  - Planning, Building Control, Electoral Registration and other services - the Guildhall.
- However, with computer links to the Council's services and telephone and video conferencing links to the Cambourne HQ staff, together with the availability of all relevant

literature, the City Council taking on the services of the Cambridge Office could still be seen as a 'one-stop-shop' provision.

20. The Finance & Resources Director has discussed with Cambridge City Council's Finance Director, the potential charging and staffing arrangements for the City Council providing the service. The City Council is reviewing its capacity for taking on the service and the charge it would seek for it. The City Council have indicated that the charge could be the equivalent of the cost of one post, depending on agreement regarding the level of service required.
21. The provision of the services by Cambridge City Council does constitute a TUPE transfer; however, this can be mitigated by identifying suitable alternative employment for the staff within this Council.
22. There are currently 3 posts vacant in the Finance & Resources Department, 2 Housing Benefits Assessors and one Revenues Assistant. It was considered that it would not be sensible for the Council to continue to recruit to these posts while at the same time Cabinet could decide to ask the City Council to provide the service, potentially making Cambridge Office staff redundant. The Council should take the opportunity of considering the Cambridge Office staff for these posts, especially as two of the staff have direct relevant experience and a third has some experience from the customer service role. The skills set on the person specification for these vacancies closely matches the Cambridge Office staff skills set. The recruitment process for these vacancies has therefore been frozen to allow the Cambridge Office staff to apply for the positions, pending Cabinet's decision. If they choose to apply for the posts then they will be given priority at interview. If they are successful, their salaries would be protected for a period of three years.
23. There may also be opportunities in other departments which could be considered as suitable alternative employment for the staff. This might involve the creation of a post in the department concerned; if so, this could be financed by virement from the Cambridge Office budget.
24. If Cabinet decide to ask the City Council to provide the service, the Cambridge Office staff would then be notified that they were under notice of redundancy and they would be included in the redeployment pool and guaranteed an interview for any suitable job they apply for.

### Financial Implications

25. The financial implications of the possible options are described below and summarised in the following table:
  - Continue with the present service:
    - no change to costs apart from inflation, increments etc;
  - Close the office:
    - immediate payment of the balance of the outstanding capital amount to the City Council and potential redundancy costs, the amount depending on the effective date; and
    - no ongoing costs;
  - Service provided by the City Council:
    - immediate payment of the balance of the outstanding capital amount to the City Council and potential redundancy costs, the amount depending on the effective date; and
    - ongoing cost of City Council provision.
26. The basic financial implications are summarised in the following table:

	<b><i>Continue</i></b>	<b><i>Close</i></b>	<b><i>City Council</i></b>
Immediate one off			

costs			
- redundancy	none	£27,500 *	£27,500 *
- capital	none	£20,000	£20,000
	£0	£47,500	£47,500
Ongoing costs			
- rental	£33,100	none	none
- staffing	£82,000	none	none
- running costs	£18,500	none	£30,000 **
	£133,600	£0	£30,000
Cost to the Council over remainder of the initial five year period	£534,400	£47,500	£167,500

\* Potential costs; this figure would increase with the April 2005 increments and the pay award.

\*\* Subject to confirmation and level of service required.

27. The option with the least cost to the Council over the remainder of the initial five year period is to close the Cambridge Office, but this would have adverse accessibility to services and planning implications.
28. As mentioned in paragraph 20 above, indications are that the City Council's charge for providing the service would be less than our existing costs for continuing the present service over the remainder of the initial five year period, in which case this would be the preferred option.
29. For the option of obtaining the service from the City Council, the issues of computer links to our services and telephone links to our Cambourne HQ staff would need to be resolved and there may be some costs associated with these.
30. If the Cambridge Office staff had relocated to Cambourne in May 2004, they would each have been eligible for the additional mileage supplement. This would therefore need to be paid in the light of their relocation to Cambourne. The additional cost would be £2,000 p.a.

### Legal Implications

31. The lease with the City Council includes the provision for early determination of the lease, subject to the payment of the outstanding capital costs.
32. There is a possibility of challenge by Cambridge Office staff if they consider that the posts offered are not suitable alternative employment.

### Staffing Implications

33. Obtaining the service from the City Council would have training implications, both for the City Council staff who would need to be trained and for our staff who would have to provide or coordinate the training.
34. Redeploying the staff as outlined above would mean that: (a) Benefits posts are filled, enabling that division to deliver its full service; (b) another department would benefit from staff resource being made available; and (c) the Cambridge Office staff would not be at risk of redundancy.

### **Risk Management Implications**

35. If the Council keeps the Cambridge Office open, it risks running a service that is taking funding away from front line services and of being criticised of providing a point of access to services that is expensive to its taxpayers, in spite of this being a condition of planning consent.
36. If the Council closes the Cambridge Office, it risks being criticised of failing to comply with one of its own conditions of planning consent, which could have implications for other enforcement cases, and of failing to provide a sufficient range of access to its services.

### **Consultations**

37. HR, Unison and the Cambridge Office staff have been consulted regarding the possible changes to the way the service is provided. The Cambridge Office staff consider that the City Council would not be able to provide the same level of customer service and they have suggested a range of ways in which the Cambridge Office could be enhanced and promoted further to District residents and staff.

### **Conclusions/Summary**

38. The choice is between:
  - retaining the present service, enhancing and promoting it further; and
  - transferring the service to the City Council.

### **Recommendations**

39. Cabinet is recommended to:
  - (a) ask Cambridge City Council to provide the Cambridge based customer service facility, transferring the Cambridge Office staff back to appropriate departments at the Cambourne HQ; and
  - (b) give delegated authority to the Leader and Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder to deal with any associated staffing matters, including redundancies and the transfer/establishment of posts as necessary.

**Background Papers:** the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Minutes of the NOW Group meetings of 15 December 2003 and 13 January 2004  
Revenue Estimates 2004/05  
Cambridge Office assessment of customer numbers and staffing requirements  
Analysis of customers from 3 May 2004 to 1 April 2005

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AVERAGE NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS PER DAY

