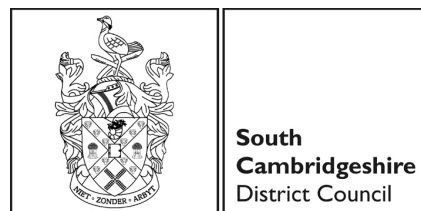


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6 December 2006

To: The Leader – Councillor Dr DR Bard
Deputy Leader – Councillor Mrs DSK Spink MBE
Members of the Cabinet – Councillors SM Edwards, Mrs VG Ford, JA Hockney,
RMA Manning and Mrs DP Roberts

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **CABINET**, which will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, FIRST FLOOR** at South Cambridgeshire Hall on **THURSDAY, 14 DECEMBER 2006 at 10.00 a.m.**

Yours faithfully
GJ HARLOCK
Chief Executive

AGENDA		PAGES
PROCEDURAL ITEMS		
1.	Apologies for Absence	
2.	Minutes of Previous Meeting To authorise the Leader to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2006 as a correct record.	1 - 10
3.	Declarations of Interest	
RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL		
4.	Workforce Plan	11 - 38
POLICY ITEMS		
5.	Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report The full version of the Annual Monitoring Report is available on the Council's website . (www.scambs.gov.uk)	39 - 42
6.	Sub-Regional Choice-Based Lettings Scheme: Draft Allocations Policy	43 - 78
7.	Amendments to Lettings Policy	79 - 84
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OPERATIONAL ITEMS

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| 9. | Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Minerals & Waste Development Plan Consultation Document
Copies of the full set of the appendices are made available to members of the Executive only, however they can be viewed on the Council's web site at www.scambs.gov.uk and are available in the Members' lounge. | 89 - 106 |
| 10. | Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) Checks for Councillors | 107 - 112 |
| 11. | SAWSTON: 57/59 High Street, Disposal of Council Property to Kelsey Housing Association Ltd | 113 - 120 |
| 12. | Local Government White Paper | 121 - 136 |
| 13. | SHEPRETH: 74-76 Frog End | 137 - 152 |
| 14. | MILTON Country Park - Improving Facilities / Future Management
This report contains a confidential appendix (A) and if Cabinet is minded to discuss, there will be a requirement to pass the following resolution.

The Cabinet is requested to consider the exclusion of the Press and public during consideration of appendix A of this item in accordance with Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that, if present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended. | 153 - 176 |
| 15. | Capital and Revenue Estimates for Staffing and Central Overhead Accounts
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| 16. | Internal Audit Service Tender Exercise | 193 - 194 |
| 17. | Local Area Agreements - Progress Towards Stretch Targets | 195 - 202 |
| 18. | Local Authority Finance Settlement 2007/08 | 203 - 208 |
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INFORMATION ITEM

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| 20. | Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Overview / Subsidy | 211 - 220 |
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STANDING ITEMS

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| 21. | Matters Referred by Scrutiny and Overview Committee |
| 22. | Updates from Cabinet Members Appointed to Outside Bodies |

CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

23. Exclusion of Press and Public (agenda)

The Cabinet is requested to consider the exclusion of the Press and public during the consideration of the following item in accordance with Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that, if present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act as amended.

24. Trade Waste Business Plan

The report contains recommendations to Council.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Thursday, 9 November 2006

PRESENT: Councillor Dr DR Bard (Leader of Council)
Councillor Mrs DSK Spink MBE (Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder and Deputy Leader of Council)

Councillors:	SM Edwards	Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder
	Mrs VG Ford	Community Development Portfolio Holder
	JA Hockney	Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder
	RMA Manning	Environmental Health Portfolio Holder
	Mrs DP Roberts	Housing Portfolio Holder

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Holly Adams	Democratic Services Officer
Steve Hampson	Executive Director
Greg Harlock	Chief Executive
Debbie Lewis	Senior Revenues Officer
Simon McIntosh	Head of Community Services
Dale Robinson	Chief Environmental Health Officer
Jane Thompson	Cultural Services Manager
Tim Wetherfield	Head of Policy and Communication

Councillors RF Bryant, Mrs SJO Doggett, R Hall, Mrs SA Hatton, Mrs EM Heazell, Mrs CA Hunt, SGM Kindersley, MJ Mason, Mrs CAED Murfitt, CR Nightingale, NJ Scarr, Mrs HM Smith, RT Summerfield and RJ Turner were in attendance, by invitation.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors JD Batchelor and Mrs A Elsby. Councillor JA Hockney apologised in advance for having to leave the meeting early to attend a funeral.

Procedural Items

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Leader was authorised to sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2006.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following personal interests were declared:

Councillor SGM Kindersley	As an elected Cambridgeshire County Councillor (item 4)
Councillor RJ Turner	As an elected Cambridgeshire County Councillor (item 4)

**Recommendations to
Council**

3. GAMBLING ACT 2005 - POLICY

The Environmental Health Portfolio Holder, explaining that the draft policy had been considered thoroughly by the Licensing Committee, commended it to Cabinet and Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the Gambling Act 2005 Policy be adopted.

4. FULBOURN: WINDMILL ESTATE REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The Housing Portfolio Holder welcomed Mr John Walton from Nene Housing Association to the meeting and expressed her gratitude to the previous portfolio holder, officers, Nene Housing, members of the Windmill Estate Steering Group and residents of the Windmill Estate, all of whom had been involved in the project over the previous years. She confirmed that Nene and officers had resolved to the satisfaction of the majority of residents the previous concerns about bungalow requirements, and commended the recommendations to Cabinet.

Councillor Mrs SJO Doggett, local member for Fulbourn, said the scheme did not address concerns from those homeowners who did not participate should there be any damage to their properties or other disturbance during the redevelopment works. The Head of Housing Strategic Services confirmed that the recommendations sought to include sufficient flexibility to adapt the scale of development and negotiations based on original conveyances would be undertaken with individual residents and through planning permission. The Council would work with tenants and owner-occupiers as much as possible if and when any such situations arose and Mr Walton understood that Nene Housing Association would bear any related legal costs incurred by the Council, including those as result of resolution of issues of non-participating residents.

Councillor NJ Scarr, local member, stated that he was happy to go along with the recommendations provided that it was always remembered that there were some residents who did not and might never wish to participate. The Housing Portfolio Holder assured the local members that the tender process for a contractor would ensure the needs of all residents would be met. It was imperative to begin the project for the benefit of the majority of residents, to remove the state of uncertainty over the redevelopment proposals under which they had been living. The redevelopment proposals had been initiated by the concerns of residents themselves, who had expressed their unhappiness with the existing dwellings which had limited, if any, potential for expansion and adaptation.

Negotiations were underway with Cambridgeshire County Council over the best use for their adjoining site and that owned by the Primary Care Trust, but if these were unable to be included, Nene could deliver 238 units across the footprint of the site of the Windmill Estate.

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that:

- (a) formal approval be given for a redevelopment scheme for the Windmill Estate, subject to necessary planning consents and Secretary of State approval;
- (b) the existing Council-owned properties and land be transferred to Nene Housing Association at nil cost;
- (c) the scope of any redevelopment scheme should, as far as possible, include all the existing area of the estate **subject to** existing tenants and owner-occupiers

- being willing and / or able to participate. Where necessary, plans should be amended over time to cater for changing needs and to provide flexibility to accommodate as far as possible the wishes of all the existing residents;
- (d) the preferred tenure mix and house types be as outlined in Option A which will provide 65% as affordable housing (comprising 124 rented and 52 shared ownership units) together with 35% as open market sales within an overall target of 270 homes;
 - (e) the following conditions be attached to the approval of a redevelopment scheme:
 - (i) that Nene Housing Association meet all legal costs and home loss / disturbance payments incurred by the Council in respect of the Windmill Estate since 2004/05 to date as well as any future payments and liabilities;
 - (ii) that any amendments to the scheme mix in terms of tenure and / or house types / sizes be agreed in consultation with the Council;
 - (iii) that the Council 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 that the Council receive 100% nomination rights in perpetuity to any shared ownership and / or other intermediate tenures;
 - (iv) that the Council not seek to use compulsory purchase powers to facilitate the redevelopment and 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;
 - (v) that Nene confirm and make provision to meet contributions previously agreed in principle to the Special Projects Officer role for 2006/07 and 2007/08 and consider future contributions if this post were to be considered essential by both Nene and the Council to delivery of the project beyond 31 March 2008; and
 - (vi) that an acceptable "construction code of practice" be agreed with the contractor that takes regard of non-participating residents; and
 - (f) the Council exercise its discretion to waive any discount repayment liability in respect of any Right to Buy sales caught within such provisions if this would enable affected owners to participate in the redevelopment scheme.

**Recommendations to
Council and Decisions
made by Cabinet**

5. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO 2011

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder presented the report, which focussed on the General Fund, and highlighted the approach towards achieving a balanced strategy, as agreed by Cabinet on 12 October 2006. Future spending pressures had been examined and it would be possible to meet the target of £400,000 in 2007/08, although there would be additional work to identify pressures in future years; necessary savings had been identified, with every effort taken to avoid impacting on front-line services.

Confirmations were sought and given:

- additional funding did not exist currently to extend the plastics recycling bank scheme to include growth areas, and that officers would be seeking to secure section 106 funding from developers to increase bank provision;
- the Internal Drainage Boards, Interest and Financing Charges in Appendix 3B did not allow for a substantial increase in the levy on account of Northstowe;

- contributions to Arts Development Officer posts in Village Colleges had always been phased to decrease over time.

Cabinet was asked to choose between two options for the basis for the MTFS, as set out in Appendices 3A and 3B. The first, 3A, with a further £793,000 savings to be identified in 2007/08, would result in the General Fund balances achieving their target reduction to £1.5 million by 2011/12, with the Council Tax levied equalling the underlying spend per household the following year; however, an additional £1.4 million savings would be required in 2012/13 to maintain the minimum General Fund balance. This option would see the amount of council tax collected meet the level of underlying council tax, or average spend per household, by 2012/13.

The other option, 3B, required £1.133 million savings to be identified in 2007/08, and would achieve the target reduction of General Fund balances to £1.5 million by 2012/13 without further savings to be identified during that time, but the council tax collected would not meet the underlying council tax until the following year and balances would be affected from 2013/14 onwards. Option 3B, however, allowed for greater flexibility in future years and the Portfolio Holder commended it to Cabinet, citing the number of unknowns during the life of the MTFS such as the forthcoming White Paper on local government, the outcome of the Lyons review and possibly a general election.

Councillor SM Edwards proposed, seconded by Councillor Mrs DSK Spink, that Option 3B be recommended to Council as the basis for the Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2011, and that the MTFS be reviewed twice annually, in the autumn and in February / March as part of the final budget. On a show of hands this motion was **CARRIED**.

Growth Area Delivery Arrangements

Although not strictly related to the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Leader allowed discussion of this issue at this time. He clarified that the recent article in the *Cambridge Evening News* had been incorrect and the Council was not having its powers of determination removed. A proposal was being considered through which planning powers would be shared between the relevant authorities, thereby retaining democratic input. This situation was not unique to South Cambridgeshire and did not represent an inability to cope with the planning demands; rather, it proposed to join planning services between local authorities as was common practice elsewhere in the country. If this proposed joint planning structure proved acceptable to the minister, Cambridgeshire Horizons would serve as the delivery vehicle to prepare a bid which it was hoped would cover the majority of the growth area development. All members had been e-mailed on 8 November Cambridgeshire Horizon's proposed response to the minister and Council would consider the issue on 23 November 2006.

Cabinet RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- (a) approval of a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) based on Appendix 3B, the full savings in Appendix 2 and the following issues:
 - (i) the financial context for the strategy and the future issues facing the Council, in particular the growth agenda;
 - (ii) how the Council compares with other councils in terms of spending, performance and value for money;
 - (iii) how well the Council manages its finances;
 - (iv) clear objectives for the strategy;
 - (v) how the Council will deliver a balanced MTFS;
 - (vi) how it will improve future planning and link planning with its priorities;
 - (vii) the future policy for the level of the Council Tax;
 - (viii) the future policy for the use of capital receipts;

- (ix) how the Council will continue to seek efficiency savings and value for money;
- (x) how the Transformation Project will contribute to the delivery of the MTFS;
- (xi) how the workforce plan will be linked to the MTFS; and
- (xii) how the Council will monitor the MTFS and take action where financial targets are at risk;
- (b) approval of the spending plans in Appendix 1 for 2007/08 (based on the justifications in Appendix 5) for inclusion in the budget and to approve the spending plans for 2008/09 onwards as the basis for future planning;
- (c) approval of the capital programme in Appendix 5;
- (d) that officers be requested to investigate and report back on the "Other initiatives to be pursued / possible avenues for additional sources of finance" in Appendix 2 by June 2007, for consideration in the budget for 2008/09;
- (e) approval of the arrangements for consultation in paragraph 28; and
- (f) that the MTFS be reviewed formally twice a year (in the autumn and in February / March, in the light of the final budget), but that reports be made as part of the quarterly monitoring process at other times of the year when issues affecting the deliverability of the MTFS occur.

Cabinet **AGREED** to authorise the Chief Executive and Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder to prepare the final strategy for submission to Council.

Cabinet commended staff and portfolio holders for identifying substantial savings without significant impact on services.

6. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT POLICY AND FUNDING

Additional funding was required for mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants and the Housing Portfolio Holder, at her 8 November 2006 meeting, had agreed to vire £81,000 from underspends. She undertook to investigate adaptation timescales to ensure equality between all service users, whether private homeowners or tenants. The Environmental Health Portfolio Holder commended the Housing Portfolio Holder for the virement as an excellent example of joined-up working.

Members with concerns about individual cases were encouraged to speak to the Portfolio Holder and Executive Director after the meeting.

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** to support further approval for up to £100,000 to be released if required to cover priority cases and cases where statutory duty may not be met, the release of the additional £100,000 to be delegated to the Environmental Health and Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holders.

Cabinet **AGREED:**

- (a) to restrict the discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant costs for adult clients to £15,000;
- (b) to limit Disabled Facilities Grants for housing association tenants to £25,000 mandatory limit;
- (c) to charge Home Improvement Agency fees to housing associations on grant-aided housing association adaptations; and
- (d) the use of means-tested discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant monies to provide disabled clients' access to their home and / or parking for it, from outside of the curtilage of the property, to include waiver of property charge.

Decisions made by Cabinet

7. DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder updated members on the work in progress on the Disability Equality Scheme, for which he would be happy to serve as lead member. The full scheme would be brought to Council on 23 November 2006.

Cabinet **AGREED**

- (a) that paragraph (w) of the provisional action plan be re-worded to read “Run a Member training session for all councillors, using speakers from local disability groups”; and
- (b) that the Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder be lead member for the Disability Equality Scheme.

Cabinet **NOTED** the preparations being made to present a full draft Disability Equality Scheme to the Council on 23 November 2006.

8. LOCAL MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION FOR NORTHSTOWE

The Northstowe Development Trust Working Group had recommended establishment of a Local Management Organisation as the way forward to help meet the needs of the new settlement and make it a vibrant and sustainable community, and the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder encouraged Cabinet to support the principle of a trust and the proposed action plan.

Councillor Mrs VG Ford asserted that the responsibility to develop a fully vibrant community rested with the Council and, whilst she believed that a trust could be successful, it was imperative that it be democratically accountable and not an unelected bureaucratic quango. The Leader confirmed that the trust would be accountable to electors, and that work was underway to establish a sound financial basis for it.

Cabinet **AGREED**, in principle, to the establishment of a Northstowe trust, including representation from the surrounding villages, in 2007/08 and **ENDORSED** the following further steps now required:

- (a) commissioning detailed financial advice including the development of a business plan for the trust;
- (b) commissioning legal advice on establishment and running of the trust;
- (c) engagement with existing communities in and around the site to consider the benefits to the wider area and to identify key individuals who may become involved in the trust;
- (d) further work on a number of key areas such as the Energy Supply Company and IT Networks and their potential links to the trust;
- (e) a visit to Milton Keynes to learn more about the Trusts there and the relationship with English Partnerships and possibly a visit to Caterham Barracks; and
- (f) production of a plan for establishing the Northstowe Town Council.

Cabinet **NOTED** that it was proposed to bring a further report to Cabinet in spring 2007, once the outcomes of the next steps have been considered by the Northstowe Development Trust Working Group.

9. OPTIONS APPRAISAL FOR RESIDUAL AIREY UNITS

Council had approved the Airey redevelopment programme in October 2004, leaving only small pockets of stock outstanding, and the Housing Portfolio Holder commended the Head of Housing Strategic Services for the options proposed to take forward modernisation and / or improvements for these properties. The redevelopment would take place within the existing planned maintenance programme and officers would liaise with affected tenants as soon as possible.

Cabinet **AGREED** that

- (a) a pilot refurbishment programme be agreed for the following Airey homes:

Location	Number of Units	Shared Ownership	Rented
Teversham	8	3	5
Sawston	3	2	1
Elsworth	1	1	
Totals	12	6	6

- (b) if the Capital Finance Regulations are not amended to allow for a retention of 100% of the capital receipts from shared ownership sales then this matter be referred back to Cabinet at a later date for further consideration of the available options, including open market sales; and
- (c) if the shared ownership model should prove successful within the pilot programme then, subject to the outcome of further local consultation, a wider programme for the remaining 17 Airey units at Bassingbourn, Fulbourn, Coton, Gamlingay and Impington be approved.

10. CAMBRIDGE CHALLENGE - AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Cambridge Challenge initiative was imperative to ensure provision of affordable housing on the larger sites in and around Cambridge and at Northstowe. Concerns were expressed at the difficulty first-time buyers faced to get on the property ladder and it was hoped that this approach could help more young people become homeowners.

Cabinet **AGREED** that

- (a) the approach to Registered Social Landlord selection as proposed through the Cambridge Challenge be supported in principle;
- (b) the selection criteria and proposed weightings be endorsed on behalf of the Council by the Housing Portfolio Holder in consultation with the Leader and Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder; and
- (c) a further report on the outcome of the Cambridge Challenge be brought to Cabinet for consideration upon conclusion of the project in March / April 2007 prior to approval of any preferred lead development partner for the three strategic sites included in the scope of the project.

11. PLANNING SERVICES INSPECTION ACTION PLANS

The Audit Commission, following its inspection of the planning service, had included five recommendations, work on which already had begun. The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder congratulated the planning section for the outstanding achievement of being the first authority to have its Local Development Framework Core Strategy approved and attention was drawn to the letter from Baroness Andrews describing the Council's progress as "excellent". The Leader added congratulations to officers for doubling the within a year the number of major applications dealt with within thirteen weeks. Members expressed dismay that, in light of these substantial achievements by a lean section compared to that of most authorities, there had been

suggestions that the government wanted to take over the Council's planning powers, implying that the government's own new planning system had failed. The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder reported that Chris Elliott of the *Cambridge Evening News* had expressed his view that the Council's expertise gained at Cambourne and Arbury Camps would be wasted if the government intervened.

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder also noted that the number of planning applications coming before the Planning Committee was dropping and it was hoped to rationalise that body in the future, for example, moving to half-day meetings to reduce costs. The procedures governing members of the public speaking at Planning Committee were being reviewed and consultations were underway with other authorities on their experiences of residents making representations at meetings.

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder explained that the Planning Advisory Service was unable to provide planning training as intended and that Democratic Services were sourcing another trainer.

Cabinet, acknowledging that work on the majority of the key actions identified was already underway, **AGREED** that the following summary conclusions be adopted as an action plan to address the key actions required in response to the audit reports:

- (a) that a revised workforce plan be produced;
- (b) that a service recruitment strategy be prepared;
- (c) that the transformation plan address the capacity of senior management;
- (d) that an officer working group be put in place to identify alternative areas of funding;
- (e) that a local agents' panel / forum be established;
- (f) that a wider satisfaction survey of service users be carried out;
- (g) that householder advice be made more accessible through the web and through other means including leaflets and use of *South Cambs Magazine*;
- (h) that Service First customer service standards be introduced;
- (i) that an officer / member working party be established to recommend on revised Planning Committee arrangements including public / applicants addressing the Committee;
- (j) that the Service Plan properly addresses maximising service delivery of corporate priorities and objectives;
- (k) that results of Premier Division on comparative costs be reported to Cabinet;
- (l) that benchmarking comparisons within the Premier Division be reported to Planning Committee;
- (m) that delegation protocol be reviewed at the end of the year; and
- (n) that the conclusion of both reports about the financial uncertainties threatening service delivery be made part of the Council's case in respect of next year's Council tax.

12. JOINT PLANNING SERVICES

The Leader explained that, prior to the recent article in the *Cambridge Evening News*, the local authorities had been negotiating joint planning services, but that the situation was changing daily and the report to Cabinet had been withdrawn from the agenda and would instead be presented to full Council on 23 November 2006.

Standing Items

13. MATTERS REFERRED BY SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

None.

14. UPDATES FROM CABINET MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Mrs DSK Spink reported that West Anglia Crossroads recently had moved to St Ives from Huntingdon and undertook to provide Democratic Services with the new address.

**The Meeting ended at 12.22
p.m.**

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Leader and Cabinet	14 December 2006
AUTHORS:	Chief Executive and Executive Director	

WORKFORCE PLAN 2006/07 TO 2008/09**Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to enable the Cabinet to recommend to Council the attached revision of the Workforce Plan.

Background/Financial Implications

2. The Council approved its first Workforce Plan in June 2005. Since then, many changes have taken place, including Council Tax capping and the Transformation Project, which have impacted and placed great demands upon the workforce. This is therefore an appropriate time to take stock and consider what action the Council needs to take to ensure that it has the appropriate workforce in terms of numbers, skills and motivation to take forward the Council's priorities and respond to the challenges facing the Council, particularly the growth areas and the improvement of customer service, over the next few years. The plan sets out actions to -
 - a) Enhance leadership and management (including improved clarity of vision and communication) through the Transformation Project
 - b) Enhance skills and motivation to meet the changing work environment and maximise performance
 - c) Improve flexibility and the ability to achieve organisational change
 - d) Work towards a staffing complement and structure which reflects the Council's objectives and future needs (also addressing recruitment and retention)
3. The plan has to address a changing environment. The new White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, was issued as this report was completed. The White Paper will require the Council and its workforce to adapt in a range of ways to new ways of doing things and the workforce implications will need to be taken into account as the requirements become clearer and will be reflected when the Workforce Plan is next revised next October.
4. The Workforce Plan has been prepared in parallel with the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which the Council approved in November; this has enabled essential staffing requirements identified in preparing the Workforce Plan to be included in the MTFS. It is intended in future for both strategies to be reviewed and presented to Members in the period October to November.
5. The Action Plan includes some potential spending requirements for 2008/09 onwards, which will be considered in next year's budget planning process.

Staffing Implications

6. The delivery of the Council's services and achievement of priorities would not happen without the skills and dedication of staff. The workforce plan is therefore an essential document for the Council. In considering the attached plan, Members are requested to

take into account the ongoing changes and uncertainties facing their employees (eg from capping, management restructuring, business process reviews, White Paper, CGI, housing options etc) and the impact this is having on morale.

Legal and Risk Management Implications

7. There is a body of legislation applying to employment matters. The Council has in place a Race Equality Scheme and a Disability Equality Scheme, as required by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. Both those schemes include workforce issues. In addition a Gender Equality Scheme will be required by April 2007. The major risks relate to the ability of the Council to maintain its services and progress its priorities if it is not possible to retain, develop and attract the necessary workforce and to failure to comply with the relevant legislation.

Recommendations

8. Cabinet is recommended to recommend the Council to approve the attached Workforce Plan.

Background papers: various papers including workforce statistics, results of staff surveys, guidance, Race and Disability Equality schemes; and medium term financial strategy papers.

Contact Officers: Susan Gardner Craig (HR Manager) – 01954 713285
Paul Swift (Policy and Review Manager) – 01954 713017

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Workforce Plan

2006/7 to 2008/9

(As submitted to Cabinet on 14th December 2006)

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The last twelve months have seen significant change and challenges for this Council, most of which has impacted on the current workforce and the development of future resources. In this context it is appropriate to review the original Workforce Plan, developed in June 2005, and to re-evaluate the Council's position and future workforce needs.

Purpose – Why a Workforce Plan?

- 1.2 Workforce planning is about looking to the future, being proactive and ensuring that the Council is fully staffed by appropriately skilled and qualified people now and in the longer term. The key purpose of South Cambridgeshire District Council's Workforce Development Plan is to draw together strategically all that the Council does to recruit, retain, support and develop employees, managers and elected Members. The plan must support the evolution of the Council as it undergoes considerable change to ensure that the services it provides and the influence it has within Cambridgeshire and the 'Growth Agenda' - and more increasingly within a wider regional and sub-regional context – are effective and responsive.
- 1.3 In order to meet the challenges over the next four years, it is critical that the Council **has the right people, with the right skills, in the right jobs, at the right time** to deliver its priorities and continuously improving services. The Council's current priorities are:-
- To improve customer service
 - To increase the supply of affordable housing
 - To achieve successful, sustainable communities at Northstowe and other major growth areas.
- 1.4 The Council must be able to attract and retain talent in a highly competitive employment market place and must develop and re-skill staff to respond effectively to the Transformation change programme. In particular, new ways of working, especially within partnerships, have reinforced the need for local community leadership skills for Councillors.
- 1.5 The Workforce Plan reflects the nature of the Council, the services it delivers, the results and recommendations following inspections and the culture of the organisation.
- 1.6 The plan covers the short and medium term and it will be reviewed on an annual basis, to ensure that it remains 'fit for purpose' and that the issues it covers and the priorities it sets are the right ones for the Council, its elected Members, its senior management, its employees and most importantly the communities of South Cambridgeshire.

2.0 Context - Workforce Size and Composition

- 2.1 **Appendix 1** gives statistics about the Council's current workforce. The key statistics and findings are:-
- a) Over 60% of the Council's workforce is over 40. This is a particular issue for all service areas.
 - b) 50% of the total workforce has service between 5 and 20 years, so we have a good record of retaining staff in terms of skills and experience, but we do have a profile of an ageing workforce. Our average age is 47 and 38% are over 50 years. This may result in a sudden loss of skills and experience in the next few years unless we start to succession plan for the future need for professional, technical and managerial staff. 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; Environmental Health; Accountancy

- c) Several categories of staff are in short supply (environmental health, planning, accountancy, trades). The Planning service is addressing this issue successfully by a policy of “grow your own”. Environmental Health teams are considering the same approach. There is also the issue of career progression for younger staff and this could be seen as a key reason for leaving. The introduction of a ‘Duty to Consider’ Policy in line with age legislation requirements could be seen as a positive step in managing retirements.
- d) The age profile of the workforce is not representative of the wider demography but is typical of local government generally. In respect of regional trends there is an ‘Age Bulge’ in the 40 – 64 age bands but an under-representation in the 16 – 30 age groupings.
- e) The district council is equally balanced in terms of gender composition with 51% being male and 49% female employees. There is predominantly more female part time employees than male. The top quartile of earners is dominated by males with only 30% of the top 5% of earners being female.
- f) Although there are 20% more females in the pay range scp 25 – 28 there are 30% less females than male in the pay range scp 29 – 36. This would indicate that although females are progressing their careers to supervisory levels they are less likely to progress into management roles.
- g) The percentage of employees declaring themselves with disabilities is 8.14% (of those who responded) compared with 10% of people who have disabilities and are economically active in the district. The 8.14% of those who responded is equivalent to 4% of the total workforce.
- h) Ethnic minority representation within the workforce (3%) is slightly lower than the estimate for the district (3.1%). However with over 100 employees not declaring their ethnic background it difficult to rely on the results.
- i) There are 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.

2.2 The Appendix shows the percentages of staff by service, which can be summarised as follows:-

Service	% of workforce
Housing	26
Environmental Services	23
Planning services	18
Corporate services	18
Revenues services	11
Community Services	4

2.3 We do not have direct comparisons to enable us to assess how the distribution of our workforce between services compares with other councils. Audit Commission spending comparisons show that the Council is in the lowest quartile of district councils for spending for all services except for planning (Development Services) and general fund housing. Our overall workforce is lower per head of population than neighbouring councils. Over the next

year we will carry out “business process reviews” for all major services and this will give us a more objective base for assessing the adequacy of our workforce to deliver the service standards required.

3.0 Context – Workforce Issues

3.1 The issues in the following paragraphs have been identified as a result of:-

- (a) Discussions with SMT, Service Heads and staff.
- (b) The results of recent staff surveys.
- (c) Information giving the composition of staff
- (d) The results of staff exit interviews.
- (e) Information from the East of England Regional Assembly and DCLG

External Factors

3.2 The Workforce Plan needs to take into account factors such as:-

- (a) The Council's medium term financial position, as a result of capping and other spending pressures facing the Council.
- (b) Planning for, and meeting the needs of, new communities at Northstowe and other growth areas both in terms of the skills required to ensure appropriate development and to meet the increased service provision needs of the new population
- (c) Responding to rising expectations about the quality of services provided by the Council – for example in seeking to improve satisfaction levels.
- (d) The changing nature of local government and different range of skill sets required – including: a greater range of service provision and management models; more project based; more partnership; community leadership; more cross-cutting work; mobile working and working from home.
- (e) The national agenda on pay, pensions, retirement, work-life balance, health and child friendly policies.
- (f) The continuing need to address recruitment and retention.
- (g) The Council was subject to a Corporate Governance Inspection in October 2006. The results may require us to strengthen various aspects of our corporate working.
- (h) Continuing pressures, financial and otherwise, on councils to externalise the ownership and management of their housing stock
- (i) Equalities requirements

Number and skills allocation of staff between services

3.3 Service Heads and managers have identified a number of areas where services are at risk because of shortages in numbers and/or skills of employees:-

- (a) Growth area agenda – Northstowe and other major developments, affordable housing and Section 106 agreements.
- (b) Improving customer service
- (c) 2nd and 3rd tier Management capacity
- (d) 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.
- (e) Capacity for corporate projects/joined up working/community strategy. Also seen as an issue by the CPA team and Peer review.
- (f) Business transformation and ICT project skills

3.4 The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and Transformation Project are addressing some of these issues. See below.

Succession Planning

- 3.5 Consideration has been given to a more positive approach to resource planning to prepare officers to take over senior or specialised posts which become vacant. Officers showing potential could be identified through the appraisal process and personal development plans could be written to enable them to be in a better position to compete for posts becoming available in the Council. Management and supervisory development programmes can be formulated to address individual learning needs.

Recruitment

- 3.6 Turnover rates are stable and much reduced from previous high levels (currently about 10%) and recruitment, into entry/junior level posts, is generally not the problem it was, although difficulties are being experienced in attracting and retaining street cleaning and waste management operatives. Serious problems remain in a limited number of areas – such as senior or experienced professional technical roles and experienced managers. 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 some technical/professional work areas are contributing to recruitment problems
 - (b) High housing costs in the area and the fact that key worker definitions do not apply to this Council.
 - (c) Competition from other employers in the area – eg from housing associations; other Councils; health sector etc.
 - (d) The possible impact of capping, transformation project, inspections and CPA reassessment.
- 3.7 The Council will continue to monitor recruitment and retention closely and review the pay scale and indexing arrangements on a regular basis.
- 3.8 Reliance upon Planning Delivery Grant and other external funding to support posts required to meet the extensive growth agenda is a continuing area of risk threatening future recruitment.
- 3.9 Another issue linked to recruitment difficulties, particularly in respect of recruiting more young people to Local Government, is the profile/image of local government. We are not generally attracting young people into the Council – we have little in the way of training/internship opportunities, work experience and apprenticeships.

Services facing service peaks

- 3.10 A limited number of services are under pressure at certain times of the year – eg Elections; Accountancy; and Planning Policy. The introduction of a more flexible workforce, certainly at administrative levels, is being considered. Greater use of annualised hours, casual contracts and other forms of flexibility is being encouraged.

Skills identified for the Local Government Workforce

- 3.11 The Local Government Employers have identified, nationally, the skills which need to be developed or acquired in the wider local government workforce are as follows:
- a) Organisational development and change management
 - b) Business Process re-engineering
 - c) Performance, productivity and people management
 - d) Customer relations management
 - e) Project and financial management

- f) Partnership working and community development
- g) Managing and promoting diversity
- h) Maximising the use of technology

3.12 These are skills which are very relevant to the needs of the Council and in many cases need strengthening.

Training and Skills

- 3.13 The Council spends a considerable amount on training. In 2004/05 the Council spent £347 per employee. However, training has been under pressure for financial reasons and spending per employee fell in 2005/06 to £250. In the recent staff survey 66% agreed that the Council ensures that their training needs are met.
- 3.14 The Council has a corporate training budget and also service-controlled training budgets. The corporate training budget has been reduced from £58K to £38K. A review of immediate organisational needs has resulted in this money being committed to the delivery of customer service awareness, bullying and harassment, ICT and basic supervisory/team leader training.
- 3.15 The Council has been successful in gaining Building Capacity East funding for "Top Team" development and for mentoring and leadership training for Members. A bid for second tier management development was not successful, but Building Capacity East will be looking to commission a project in this area which might be helpful to the Council. However, because of the urgent need to address this need, a sum of £25,000 has been included in the budget for 2007/08.
- 3.16 Recruitment difficulties in certain areas have also led to training needs. It has been necessary to employ officers who do not meet the full essential criteria for the job. In these cases additional development needs will be identified and extra burden will be placed on training budgets in service areas. Pressure will also be placed on existing staff who will be required to coach the new team member and cover for their shortfall in skills.
- 3.17 The areas where skills development is most needed relate closely to the skills needs identified by the Local Government Employers and include:-
- (a) General management skills – for example staff management; performance management; service analysis and review.
 - (b) Customer care – for example in terms of establishing a culture of customer care; development of customer care standards; identifying 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 and other technical skills.
- 3.18 In response to financial pressures, the Council has decided to reduce training budgets by a further £50,000 for 2007/08, but to centralise management of training budgets to improve effectiveness in addressing the skills shortages most relevant to the needs of the Council.

Capability

- 3.19 There are cases where staff are unable to perform to the required level or they have difficulty in changing or adapting if 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. A review of the Capability policy will be undertaken and recommendations for improvement implemented. Stronger emphasis will be placed on utilising the performance management and appraisal route to ensure early identification of capability issues.

Appraisals

- 3.20 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 achieving the IIP standard.

Management Capacity

- 3.21 This is a significant issue for the Council. It is 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, productivity and people management; management of financial resources; project management; and customer care.
- 3.22 A number of areas have been identified which need to be addressed to improve management capacity to tackle the future agenda of the Council:-
- (a) Robustness of current management structures.
 - (b) Providing greater clarity about the role of managers and what they are expected to deliver.
 - (c) Identifying key competencies and improving management skills.
 - (d) Reviewing the amount of time taken up with meetings and the democratic process.
 - (e) Achieving greater clarity of strategic direction and service outcomes.
 - (f) Applying a more consistent approach to performance management.
 - (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.
- 3.23 Improving management capacity is addressed in the Action Plan and is part of the Transformation Project.

Staff Survey

- 3.24 The Council undertakes a survey of its staff every two years and the most recent full 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 options
- e) Review and re-launch the lunchtime seminars to improve their effectiveness in addressing corporate issues and sharing ideas.

3.25 It has been decided that 'mini surveys' will be carried out to focus on key satisfaction areas such as communication. The first mini survey was undertaken in September 2006. The results are encouraging in that they indicate a positive direction of travel.

4.0 Council's Priorities and Workforce Requirements

4.1 Four key objectives set the long term direction of the Council for the next five to ten years:-

- High quality, accessible, value for money services
- Quality village life
- A sustainable future for South Cambridgeshire
- A better future through partnership

4.2 The Council has agreed the following more focused priorities for the three years 2005/6 to 2007/8:-

Improving Customer Service

4.3 The skills and workforce capacities that will be required include:-

- 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)
- Continuing to keep recruitment and retention under review to ensure that the Council has a continuity of skilled staff.
- Continuing to improve the skills and motivation of staff and to develop a diverse workforce which is in tune with the needs and outlooks of customers.
- Structures, capacities and flexibility to enable the Council to adapt to meet the changing needs of customers.

4.4 It is anticipated that as processes and structures change and staff are redeployed, new skills and changes in behaviours and attitude will be required.

Achieving Successful, Sustainable new communities

4.5 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 competitive 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.

Increasing the supply of Affordable Housing

- 4.6 This is a priority area for the Council. At this stage staffing levels in this area are sufficient through the establishing joint posts with Cambridge City Council and with funding from RSLs (Registered Social Landlords)

Working in Partnership

- 4.7 The ethos of partnership working is evident in South Cambridgeshire District Council. There is recognition that as a small district Council, delivering key improvement to local communities requires the synergy of working with neighbouring authorities, local agencies and the voluntary sector. Partnership working is a key element in ensuring the continued delivery of community services.
- 4.8 A new community strategy is currently being prepared, which will enable the Council to review its priorities from 2008/09 onwards. The new White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, will lead to greater emphasis on working through strategic partnerships which will require the Council to enhance capacity and skills in this area.

5.0 Current initiatives to address the workforce needs of the Council

South Cambridgeshire District Council – Moving forward: the Transformation Project

- 5.1 Over the last year South Cambridgeshire District Council has embarked on significant change. Some of the changes have been as a result of the Mouchel Parkman review in November 2005 which focused on organisational structure and supported the introduction of a revised service delivery model.
- 5.2 The Transformation Project will enable the Council to provide improving services through a more efficient and customer-focused structures, and in particular through more effective use and integration with the Contact Centre. In part these aims will be delivered through restructuring; in part through working differently; and in part through changes in culture. The key steps taken in the last year include:-
- a) The Council has streamlined its management team and has appointed a new Chief Executive and Executive Director.
 - b) A new second tier structure of 5 Corporate Managers with remits which will reflect the Council's priorities and allow more joined up work has been agreed. Steps are being taken to fill or assimilate to those posts through an assessment process. An Executive Management Team (EMT), comprising the current service heads, has been formed to achieve a more inclusive approach to strategic management. The new Corporate Managers will form the EMT.
 - c) Next steps will include a training and development programme for the Corporate Managers to enable them to give leadership to a changing culture based on customer service and performance management.
 - d) Business Process Reviews will be carried out for all major services to identify efficiencies and improve customer service, utilising the ICT infrastructure introduced by the Council and the Contact Centre
 - e) 7 principles have been agreed as a basis for organisational change:-

- One Council – an end to silo behaviour
 - A Clear Vision – including clearer priorities and targets
 - An Inclusive Council – where all staff and Members feel that they can contribute
 - A new “Member Contract”
 - Empowerment of staff – so that managers and their teams can take greater responsibility and control over their services
 - Service First – in everything we do, the question should be “How does this improve services to the public?”
 - A balanced medium term financial strategy
- f) Improved communications – with regular email bulletins from the Chief Executive to all staff and the re-launch of lunchtime seminars to spread learning.
- g) The development of customer service standards with staff and the launch of those standards by the Service First team.

5.2 A review of Sheltered Housing informed a change in support arrangements and partnership arrangements with the PCT. A reorganisation of the service followed with new job roles and an overall reduction in scheme managers. Given our financial position we will also need to focus on achieving savings and controlling spending.

Medium Term Financial Strategy

5.3 Council Tax capping and the future financial pressures that the Council will face as a result of the planned growth areas and other factors have come together to require the Council to make substantial savings over the medium term. The savings include:-

- a) Ongoing savings of £2.6m made to meet the requirements of capping
- b) Ongoing savings of £365k (at 2007/08 prices) from the Business Process Reviews and the streamlining of the senior management team
- c) Gershon savings which meet government targets
- d) Further ongoing savings of £1.13m from 2007/08 to meet the need to balance the future Medium Term Financial Strategy.

5.4 In achieving these savings the Council is focusing on efficiencies and internal services rather than service cuts. The Council will make use of its investment in ICT; business re-engineering; better utilisation of the Contact Centre; and procurement of goods and services. The Council has tried to minimise redundancies. However, inevitably, these savings impact either directly on staff or create pressures and morale problems across the organisation.

5.5 The savings have also allowed the Council to invest in new staff to pursue its priorities

- A customer services project officer has been employed to support the implementation of customer service standards and improved complaints processes.
- The post of Web Services Officer has been made permanent in the recognition of the website as a central element of the Council's use of ICT to improve customer service.
- The post of Growth Areas Project Manager has been established to provide co-ordination and project management support to the development and planning of the growth areas.
- An Urban Design post has been agreed to provide this new skill for the planning of the new growth areas which will be more urban in character than current development in South Cambs.
- The Corporate Projects Officer post has been made permanent to provide much needed corporate support.

- The Procurement Officer post has been extended to help make savings and support the procurement activities of services.
- ICT Projects officers to support the business process reviews and Transformation Project.
- HR and Payroll support to support the payroll system and the HR implications of the Transformation Project.

5.6 The MTFs for 2007/08 and future years include additional posts which are primarily to respond to the growth areas and the Council's objectives in relation to them.

- Environmental Health Officer to release staff to support for the growth areas.
- Assistant Urban design post
- Planning posts - up to five posts.
- Legal posts - up to three posts, funded from development.
- Community Development Officer
- Revenues and Benefits officers.

5.7 These posts will, for the time being, provide the Council with sufficient capacity to address the growth area agenda. However, further needs will arise in later years of the programme. The Council will continue to seek to redirect its resources to ensure that the workforce reflects changing requirements, and in particular the growth areas.

6.0 Principles Underlying the Plan

Importance of staff to the organisation

6.1 The Council recognises the heavy reliance placed on its employees in delivering services to the people of South Cambridgeshire. It appreciates the valuable contribution made by staff and their skills – to the success and stature of the authority. The plan recognises that staff who develop our long term plans and those who provide the frontline services to our customers will help to shape the future of our communities. It is essential that the plan underpins and facilitates the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives and priorities. There must be strong links to :-

- Individual service plans and personal development plans set by the appraisal process so that every employee can recognise how they can contribute to the achievement of the Council's objectives
- Medium term financial strategy
- Performance management framework

Driving cultural change

6.2 We recognise that changes to the way we work need to be supported by cultural change across and through the organisation. The first steps to cultural change have taken place with the formation of the new senior management team and executive management team structures. Incorporating new, open communication through the organisation; greater involvement of 2nd tier officers; and the adoption of the seven principles underlying the Transformation Project.

Smarter Working

- 6.3 The Council will need to investigate, consider and implement 'smarter' ways of working which will bring improvements in terms of service delivery, or greater efficiency, or cost benefits, taking every opportunity to secure staff involvement, motivation and encouragement for change, and a greater focus on the Council's priorities and objectives. We recognise that to be successful we need to must not make the change to people – change will only be successful by involving and working with people.
- 6.4 We recognise that partnership working is the way forward delivering key improvement to services for local communities. To do this we will need to identify skill gaps and develop employees to maximise opportunities to work in partnership with other organisations. This can be achieved by:-
- a) discussion with our partners (Cambridgeshire County Council; other County authorities; voluntary sector; public sector organisations) to identify potential areas of joint working
 - b) ensuring that the process is managed in such a way to ensure that relevant staff are fully involved and that managers and elected members have the necessary leadership skills to drive the change
 - c) 'One Council' approach with an end to narrow silo behaviour at departmental and portfolio level.
 - d) an inclusive Council where all staff and Members feel that they can contribute. In particular, involving 2nd and 3rd tier officers in strategy and policy development.

Achieving flexibility

- 6.5 The Council has recognised that it needs to be flexible and adaptable to enable it to be responsive to the change agenda. Our personnel policies, procedures and practices must support and facilitate flexibility in resourcing the Council's service areas.
- 6.6 The HR team, staff representatives and senior management will need to consider reviews to personnel policies to ensure that they encourage and enable the Council to be responsive to both the needs of its employees and customers.
- 6.7 Job roles should be reviewed as they become vacant to ensure that future service needs are considered, the right skills and competencies are recruited and that best use is made of temporary and fixed term contracts, partnership working and shared service initiatives. Greater emphasis placed on monitoring and review of job descriptions and person specifications, through the appraisal process, to ensure that they accurately reflect organisational needs.

Developing staff, Building capacity

- 6.8 Continued focus on the Council's commitment to developing staff with particular emphasis on ensuring that managers and staff have the necessary skills to manage change, manage projects, meet new roles, provide effective leadership and deliver high performance.
- 6.9 Focussing on:
- a) Assessing and addressing current and future skills needs
 - b) Introducing management and supervisory training and development based around core competencies
 - c) Delivering project management training
 - d) Arranging training awareness on cross crossing issues such as Equality/Diversity, ICT and Stress Management
 - e) Effective monitoring of Personal Development Plans set under appraisals

- f) Continually reviewing our job roles and focussing our job profiles on competencies

Barriers

- 6.10 The main barriers to achieving the workforce for the future include:
- a) Financial pressures – affecting the Council's ability to be an employer of choice in terms of salary and benefits
 - b) Financial pressures – affecting the Council's ability to deliver technical and managerial development programmes to ensure that staff have the right skills
 - c) Financial pressures – affecting the Council's ability to take advantage of apprenticeship initiatives to 'Grow Your Own'
 - d) Marketing/Branding/Media publicity – the Council's standing in the local government and employment market place could be adversely affected by continuing 'Bad News' stories.

Ensuring that the Council is 'fit for purpose'

- 6.11 The Council recognises that it is not a static organisation but one which must continue to evolve and develop in line with external and internal influences. This evolution means that it must ensure that it is organised and structured in the best way to meet both the strategic and service demands generated or influenced by:
- a) the local community – which influences the Council's overall priorities and objectives. The consultation strategy and public involvement provides the framework for continuous review
 - b) new legislation and central government requirements
 - c) 'best practice' and innovation
 - d) audit and inspection
 - e) Corporate governance arrangements to reflect the needs, and be supportive of the organisation

7.0 The objectives of the Plan

The most important issues to be addressed by the Plan

- 7.1 In summary, the most important issues which the Plan must address are:-
- a) The development of effective leadership and clarity of vision, together with communication and cultural change. This and the development of a whole Council approach around agreed values are essential if the Council is to remain focused on improving services and meeting future challenges such as the growth areas within limited resources.
 - b) Skills development – particularly generic and management skills such as project management, performance management, customer relations and partnership working. Supporting the development of effective management, particularly at the second and third tiers, is essential to achieving the Council's aims. However, a learning and developing approach across the whole workforce will be important in a changing work environment. It is the skills and abilities of the workforce on which the Council's future

depends.

- c) Addressing retention and recruitment will continue to be an issue. The Council's ability to keep and attract employees through competing on salary levels alone is limited because of the Medium Term Financial position. The Council's approach must therefore be one of training, development and making the Council an attractive place to work through the full package of working conditions and work satisfaction.
- d) A workforce which matches the demands upon it. This is particularly important in the context of the growth agenda, where a range of skills will be required for the planning and development of the new settlements and the workforce will need to grow in a planned and co-ordinated manner to provide services for the new residents.

The Objectives of the Plan

- 7.2 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:-

- **Enhancing leadership and management**
- **Enhancing the skills and motivation of staff to meet the changing work environment and maximise performance**
- **Flexibility and the ability to achieve organisational change to reflect changing needs**
- **Working towards a staffing complement and structure which reflects the Council's objectives and future needs**

- 7.3 These objectives reflect best practice guidance from the Government that workforce plans should address the following issues:-

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

Delivering the Objectives – Action Plan

- 7.4 The Council will deliver the above objectives through the **Action Plan** set out in Appendix 2. The principal vehicle of change will be through the implementation of the Transformation Project.
- 7.5 Through the Transformation Project the Council will develop leadership and strategic capacity at the head of the organisation to develop a clearer, shared vision about what this Council aims to achieve and what it will look like in five years time. This will enable the Council to reach a clearer view about a sustainable workforce which will enable the Council to discharge its statutory obligations and continue to make progress on its priorities.

- 7.6 The work to achieve a Medium Term Financial Strategy has enabled the Council to make financial provision for skills and posts which will be required in the future, but only by making savings in current costs – sometimes affecting the jobs of current employees. The Council will strengthen the links between service planning, the Workforce Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy.
- 7.7 The imminent business process reviews for all major services, as part of the Transformation Project, will also be an important step in shaping the structure of the workforce
- 7.8 The Council's vision is of a Council where individual services and teams take greater and responsibility for service delivery – within overall objectives and values. A large part of the Transformation Project and the Action Plan is to develop the structures, skills and culture to enable this to happen.
- 7.9 Over the next few months a number of developments will take place which may affect the future direction of the Council. These will include the government White Paper, the outcome of the Lyons review and the results of the CGI Inspection. It is possible, that these developments will require substantial changes to the Action Plan.

Measures of Progress

- 7.10 How will we know we are making progress? The principal means will be through the achievement of the Action Plan. 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.
- 7.11 Ultimately, the success of the workforce plan is measured by the effectiveness of the Council in delivering its objectives and performance in relation to performance indicators relating to service performance and service quality.
- 7.12 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. These and future targets are given in **Appendix 3**. The key indicators for the plan are:-
- Training
 - Turnover
 - Sickness
 - Satisfaction of employees with the Council as an employer
- 7.13 The regular staff survey is also a key indicator of workforce views and satisfaction.
- 7.14 It is not suggested at this stage that further performance indicators be added.

Reviewing the Plan

- 7.15 The Workforce Plan will be revised annually in the period July to November to enable:-
- the review to take into account the views of Members on priorities and those of service areas on workforce needs
 - the outcome of the review to feed into the annual update of the Medium Term Financial Strategy
 - the outcome and recommendations from any inspections and audits to be incorporated.

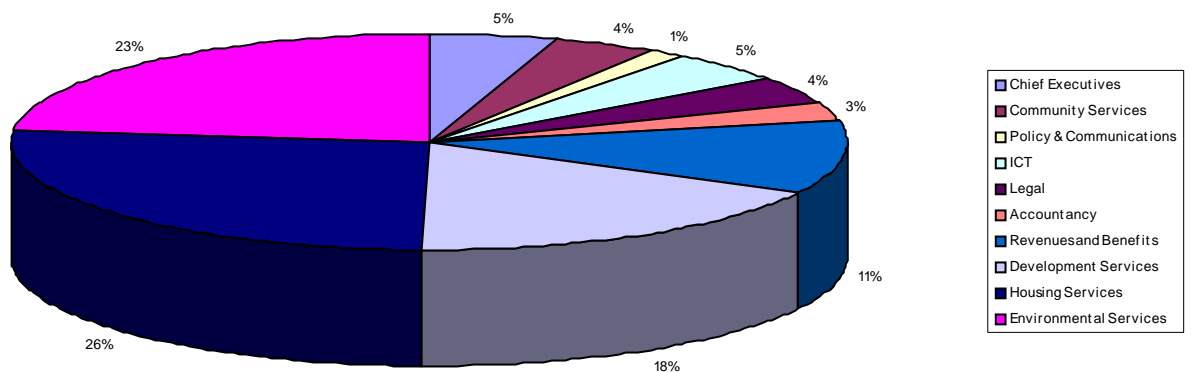
KEY WORKFORCE STATISTICS

Employee Numbers

The Council employs 452 people across a wide range of service areas. This figure excludes any casual employees. Department sizes show that almost half of the workforce is located within Environmental and Housing service areas and one fifth of staff are located in Planning.

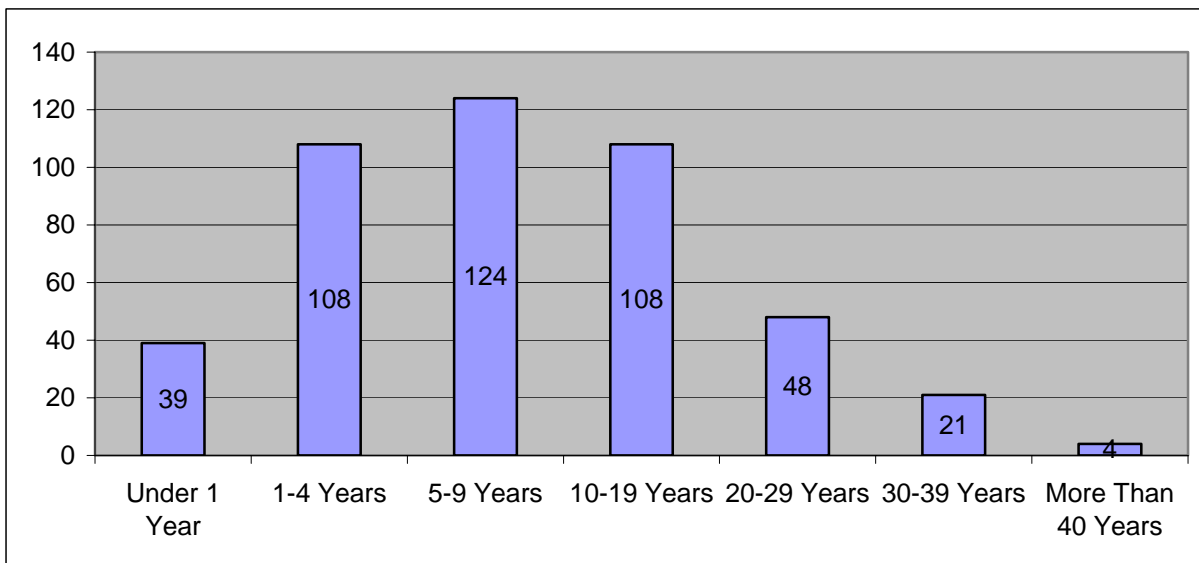
Department sizes

Number of employees by department

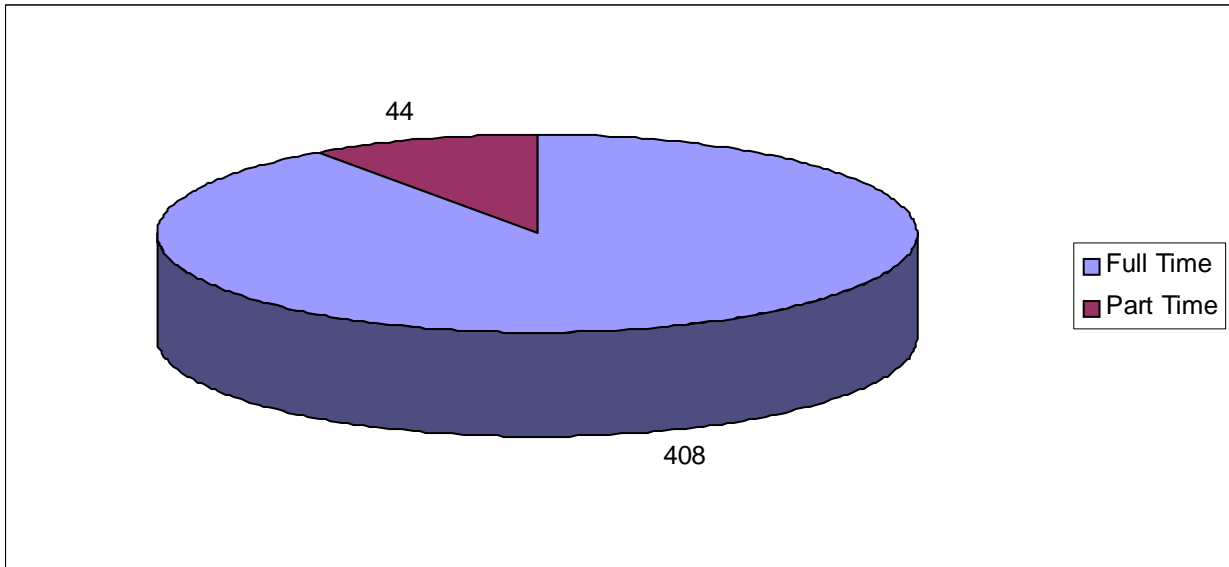


The largest department is Housing Services, with 26% of the workforce, this includes Sheltered Housing, Housing Options and property services and maintenance. The second largest is Environmental Services which provides front line services such as street cleansing, refuse collection and public environmental health. Support services represent 18% (Accountancy, ICT, Legal, Elections, HR).

Length of service of employees

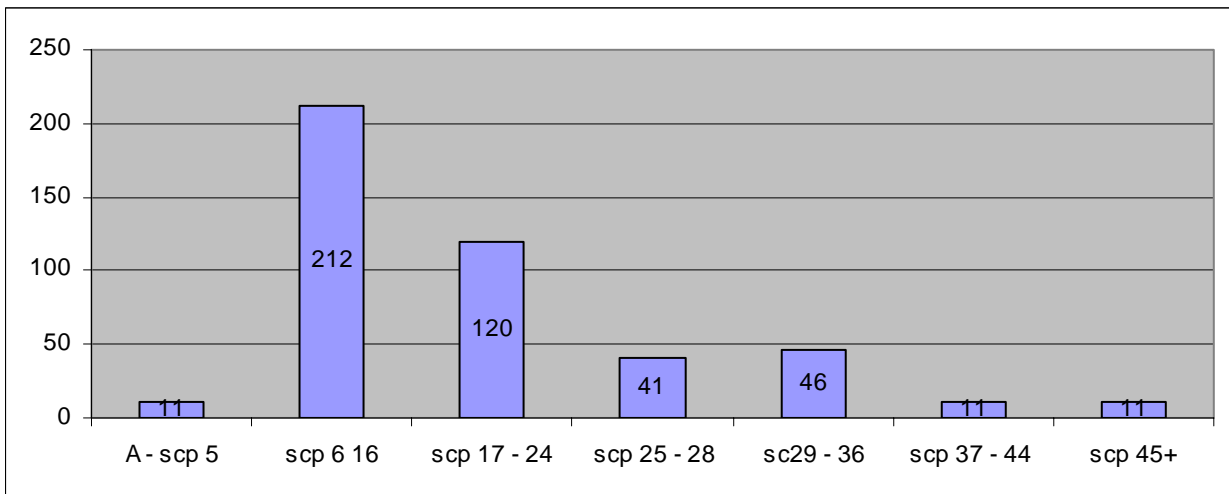


Breakdown of Full and Part time employees



There are 8 part time men and 36 part time women employed by the Council

Breakdown of number of staff in pay bands by spinal column point

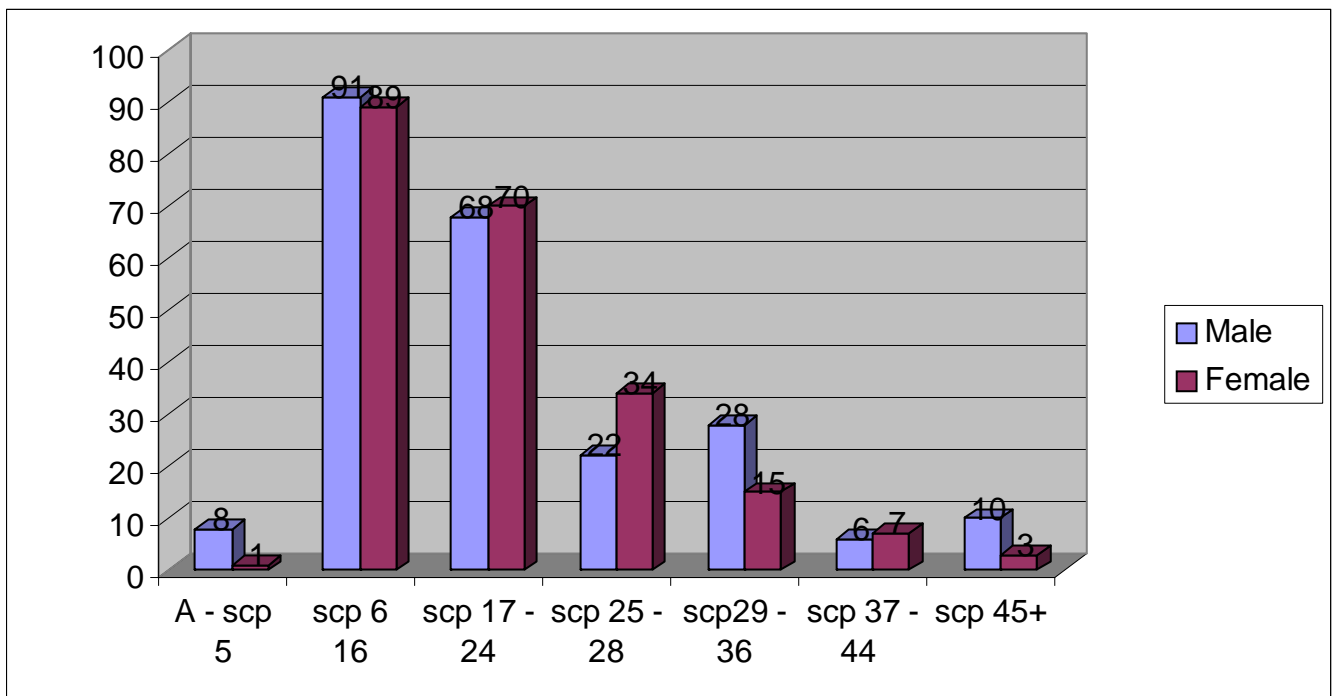


Breakdown of gender and age by pay bands

		Age range					
Male		16 - 19	20 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 +
Pay ranges							
A - scp 5				2	2	1	3
scp 6 16			22	13	21	29	6
scp 17 - 24	1	8	21	9	23	6	
scp 25 - 28		1	5	8	8		
scp 29 - 36		1	4	10	12	1	
scp 37 - 44				1	5		
scp 45+			2	2	6		

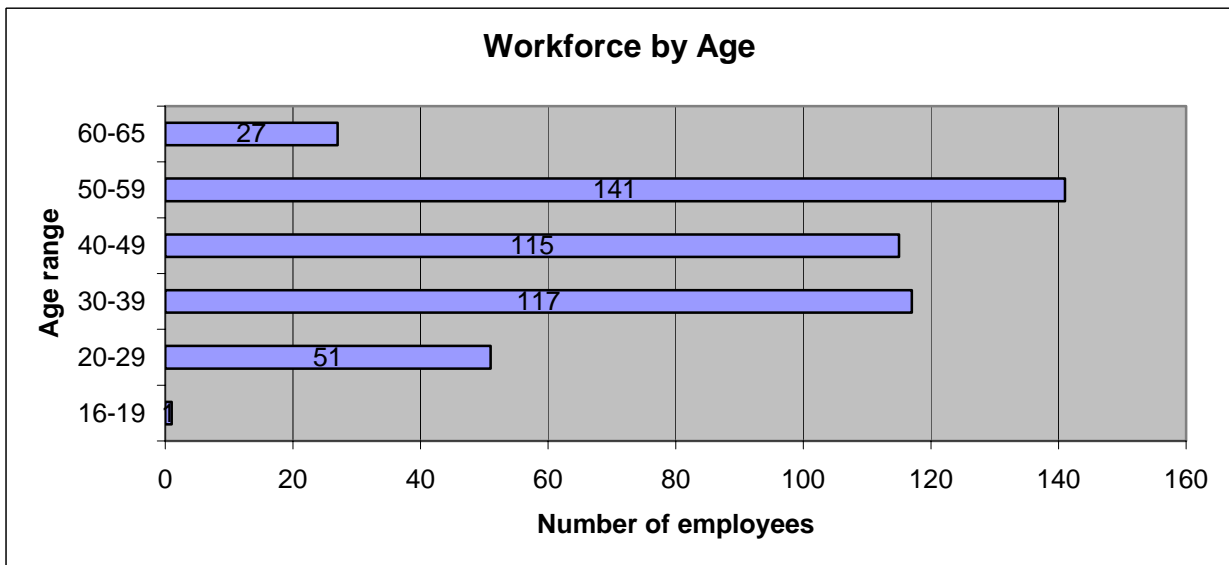
	Age range					
Female	16 - 19	20 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 59	60 +
Pay ranges						
A - scp 5	0	1				
scp 6 16	0	9	30	39	1	10
scp 17 - 24	0	2	22	12	34	
scp 25 - 28	0	6	9	3	16	
scp 29 - 36	0	1	8	4	1	1
scp 37 - 44	0			3	4	
scp 45+	0			1	2	

Comparison of pay ranges by gender



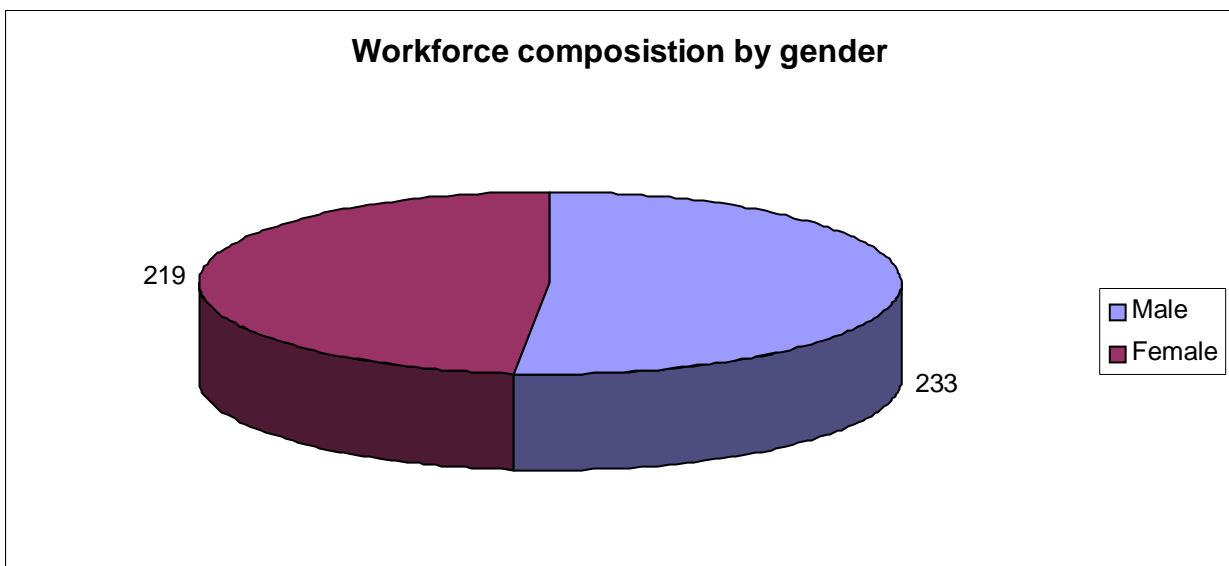
The data shows that SCDC has 39% males and 40% females in the pay range scp 6 – 16. This consists of predominantly waste management, general trades and sheltered housing staff. There is a greater percentage of females than males in the pay ranges 17 – 24 and 25 – 28. These pay ranges are generally populated with technical professional and team leader/supervisor roles. However, the number of females occupying some management and senior management pay bands is significantly less than males. This could be an indication that far fewer females are making the transition from team leader to management roles.

Breakdown of current workforce by age



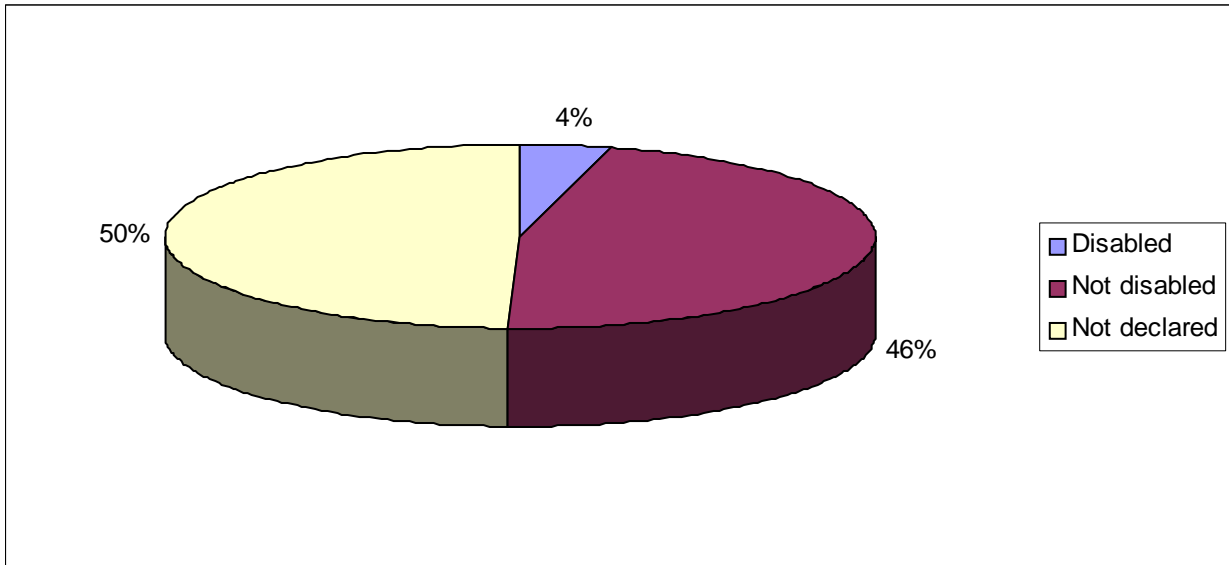
The table above shows the breakdown of employees by age, the highest being in the 50 years plus group where this represents 38% of the workforce. Employees in the 40 – 49 years group represent 25% and those in the 30 – 39 group account for 26%. Less than 11% of the workforce are below 29 years. A high number of retirements are predicted in the next 5 to 8 years. 62% of the workforce is over 40 years.

Gender composition



The total workforce is fairly evenly split in terms of gender (51.5% male and 48.5% female). There are predominantly more men in the following service areas: ICT, Housing Repairs, Environmental Health and Waste management. Women represent a high proportion of the workforce than men in Revenues and Benefits and Sheltered Housing service areas. This is a normal trend in these occupational areas.

Percentage of staff declaring that they have a Disability

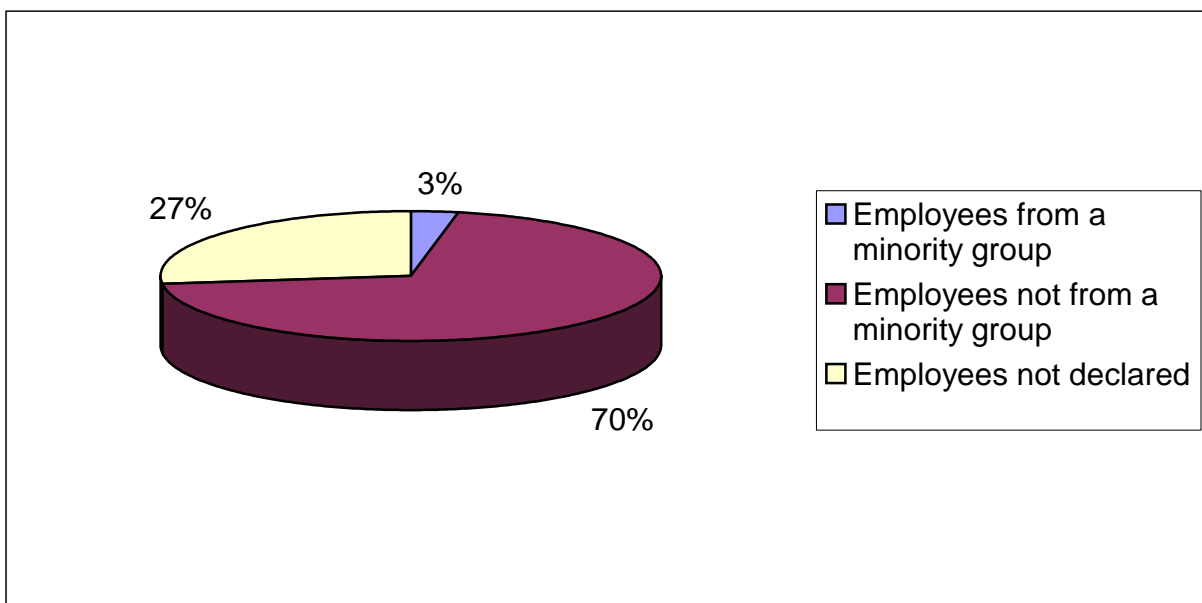


Employees are asked to declare whether they consider themselves to have a disability as defined under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995,

“a person has a disability for the purposes of this Act if he has a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities”.

19 Employees declared that they consider themselves to have a disability, 209 employees did not consider that they had a disability and 224 did not declare.

Ethnicity



The Council collects data on employee breakdown by ethnic group as defined by the census. Currently 14 employees have declared that they consider themselves to be from a minority ethnic group. 122 employees did not declare.

Turnover

Staff turnover Voluntary leavers is stable at 10%, this is an improvement on previous years. There are no particular trends for reasons for leaving. Voluntary leavers have, in the main, cited 'Career development' and 'personal reasons' for leaving. The majority of our leavers during the last twelve months have been for redundancy related reasons.

Workforce Plan 2006/7 to 2008/9 - Action Plan

The following action plan is based on the four objectives of the plan. The Action Plans in the Disability Equality Scheme and the Race Equality Scheme also include relevant actions.

Action		Who	When		Resources required
			06/7	07/8	08/9
Objective 1: Enhance leadership and management (including improved clarity of vision and communication) through the Transformation Project.					
1	Implement BCE bid for leadership development; councillor mentoring and Top Team development.	Geoff Bridgeman	✓	✓	Covered by BCE funding
2	Agree generic job descriptions with defined competencies for Corporate Managers and appoint second tier.	Greg Harlock Susan Gardner Craig	✓		-
3	Introduce management development programme, starting with Corporate managers.	Susan Gardner Craig	✓	✓	£15k pa; £25k allowed in 2007/08
4	Supervisor/Team leader development programme to be introduced for newly appointed or those aspiring to move into team leader roles. To include corporate membership to Institute of Leadership and Management (pilot in 2006/2007)	Susan Gardner Craig	✓		£10K per annum
5	Continue to improve clarity of Council's priorities and targets and links to service plan and appraisal process.	Paul Swift	✓	✓	-
6	Continue regular Chief Executive's email briefing to all staff, supplemented by face to face briefing sessions when appropriate.	Greg Harlock	✓	✓	-
7	All 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.	Service Heads	✓	✓	-
Objective 2: Enhance skills and motivation to meet the changing work environment and maximise performance					
8	Consolidate training budgets and develop a training policy to ensure a consistent approach to the allocation of training and value for money	Susan Gardner Craig		✓	-
9	Carry out a skills audit to identify current skills level across the organisation	Susan Gardner Craig		✓	

	Action	Who	When		Resources required
			06/7	07/8	
10	Improve induction for new starters, including by review and re-issue of induction checklist and the provision of a welcome pack	Jill Mellors	✓		
11	Revise and up date the capability policy and procedure	Susan Gardner Craig	✓		
12	Introduce flexible working practices (eg compressed hours, annualised hours and review of core hours) to aid diversity and recruitment/retention	Susan Gardner Craig		✓	
13	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.	Susan Gardner Craig			Potential cost. Will investigate
Objective 3: Flexibility and the ability to achieve organisational change					
14	Identify generic/core skills (competencies) for different posts within the Council for use at recruitment, appraisal and supported by a rolling training programme	Susan Gardner Craig		✓	-
15	Develop change management procedures and policies and develop change management capacity within the Council.	Susan Gardner Craig		✓	
16	Review of retirement policies and develop policy in the light of Age discrimination legislation	Susan Gardner Craig		✓	Potential cost. Will Investigate
17	Implement improved monitoring reports covering turnover, vacancies and departmental profiles to Directors and Management Team, made possible by the new HR system.	Susan Gardner Craig	✓	✓	
Objective 4 – work towards a staffing complement and structure which reflects the Council's objectives and future needs (including recruitment and retention)					
18	Identify service staffing requirements and structures through business process reviews.	Geoff Bridgeman	✓	✓	
19	SMT and Corporate managers to incorporate workforce planning as a key part of the service planning process and budget review. All Service Plans to include workforce requirements for service areas, including addressing issues of succession planning.	Corporate Managers	✓	✓	✓
20	Implement new posts/other staffing arrangements included in the MTFs for 2006/07 and 2007/08	Service heads	✓	✓	
21	Continue to assess workforce needs and include in reviews of Workforce Plan and Medium Term Financial Strategy	Paul Swift		✓	✓

	Action	Who	When		Resources required
			06/7	07/8 08/9	
22	Review the continuation of the pay and grading review, taking into account experience with recruitment and retention	Susan Gardner Craig	✓		
23	Keep under review the use of fixed term and casual contracts	Susan Gardner Craig	✓	✓	Potential implications if contracts replaced by permanent posts
24	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.	Susan Gardner Craig		✓	Potential costs, but depends on application
25	Develop a proactive approach to absence management, including support for healthy lifestyles in accordance with emerging government advice	Susan Gardner Craig		✓	Potential relatively small cost
26	Develop personal development plan aspect of appraisals, including the scope to develop individuals for succession planning purposes.	Susan Gardner Craig		✓	
Other					
27	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.	Susan Gardner Craig	✓		
28	Revise the Workforce Plan by November 2007 (and annually thereafter) to include:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three year projections of workforce requirements. • An assessment of future needs arising from the new settlements and more generally from population increase. • Staffing requirements to achieve performance indicator targets • Impact/requirements for Medium Term Financial Strategy 	Susan Gardner Craig /Paul Swift	✓	✓	

APPENDIX 3

Workforce Related Performance Indicators – From the Best Value Performance Plan 2006

#	PI Description	Past Performance				Future Targets		
		04/05		05/06		06/07	07/08	08/09
		Target	Actual	Upper Quartile	Target	Actual	Target	Target
BV12	Working days lost to sickness per FTE employee	8	13.1	8.48	11	10.75	10.5	10
SF713	Average spending on training per employee	£400	£347		£400	£250	£450	£450
SF714	% staff who think Council is good employer to work for	80%	80%		2 yearly		88%	2 yearly
SX5	% employees leaving voluntarily (turnover)	12%	8.1%		10%	10.1%	13%	13%
SX20	% staff with completed staff appraisal	100%	97%		100%	70% Note	100%	100%
BV2a	The authority's level of the CRE's Standard	0	0	No data	1	0	1	2
BV2b	Score against a Race Equality Scheme checklist	15%	11%	63%	15%	26%	35%	45%
BV11a	% top-paid 5% of LA staff who are women	18%	23.08	28.93%	30%	30%	35%	37%
BV11b	% top 5% of LA staff who are from an ethnic minority	0.2%	0%	1.98%	0.2%	0%	4%	4%
BV11c	% top-paid 5% of staff who have a disability			New 5/6	Not set	0%	4%	4%
BV14	% employees retiring early (excl: ill-health retirements)	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
BV15	Ill health retirements as % of total	0%	0.4%	0%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%	0.4%
BV16a	% staff meeting the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 definition	6.5%	8.45%	4.1%	9.75%	8.14%	9.5%	10%
BV16b	% economically active residents disabled as proportion of total	9.1%	9.1%	No data	10%	10%	10%	10%
BV17a	Ethnic minority community staff as % of total	1.6%	1.1%	2.5%	1.8%	1.36%	1.5%	1.8%

#	PI Description	Past Performance				Future Targets		
		04/05		05/06		06/07	07/08	08/09
		Target	Actual	Upper Quartile	Target	Actual	Target	Target
BV17b	% economically active ethnic community people		3.1%	No data	3.1%	3.1%	3.1%	3.1%

Note: - Some parts of the organisation had difficulty in completing appraisals by the end of April 2006, due mainly to workload and restructuring issues. Therefore the Chief Executive agreed that the deadline for completion should be extended to 31st May for 2006 only.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Leader and Cabinet	14 December 2006
AUTHORS:	Executive Director/Principal Planning Policy Officer	

**LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT**

Purpose

1. To agree the Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report for submission to the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG).

Effect on Corporate Objectives

Quality, Accessible Services	The Annual Monitoring Report provides detailed information on the impact of planning policies on the communities, services and environment of South Cambridgeshire.
Village Life	
Sustainability	
Partnership	The District Council has worked in partnership with other bodies, in particular with the County Council, to monitor the impact of planning policies.

Background

2. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced the requirement for District Councils to produce yearly Annual Monitoring Reports. The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) examines how successful South Cambridgeshire's planning policies have been in achieving their objectives and targets, and how successful the Council has been in achieving its programme of plan preparation. This is the second Annual Monitoring Report that the District Council has produced and it covers the period from 1st April 2005 to 31st March 2006.
3. The Annual Monitoring Report analyses progress against key milestones for plan preparation established in the Local Development Scheme. It monitors the impact of planning policies contained in the adopted Local Plan 2004 through the framework of indicators and targets established by the Local Development Framework. It also monitors a wider set of 'significant effect' indicators that were established through the Council's Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Development Framework.

Results

4. Detailed results and analysis is included in the Annual Monitoring Report. The AMR is a lengthy, technical report. A copy can be viewed in the Member's Room. The key points arising from the AMR are summarised in this report. The final AMR will be published on the Council's website. Cabinet is asked to delegate agreement of the AMR to the Planning Portfolio Holder.

Local Development Scheme

5. Progress against the milestones for the production of DPDs for the period to end March 2006 set out in the Local Development Scheme has been very good, despite the ambitious and demanding timetable, with submission of the first six DPDs in January 2006.
6. The approved LDS indicated that a Travellers DPD would have reached Regulation 26 public participation around the end of the monitoring period. However, the sub regional travellers needs survey that was a key part of the evidence base for the DPD was not finalised until May 2006. Due to officers being committed on progressing the submitted DPDs, the Council decided to appoint consultants to take forward work on this important issue for the district. Work started in May 2006.
7. GO-East has also advised Councils to include information in their AMRs to bring the position on performance against the Local Development Scheme up to date. The Council received a binding report on the Core Strategy from the independent Inspectors in November 2006. This was a major achievement, being the first such report in the country to find a Core Strategy "sound". The report allows the Council to proceed to statutory adoption and publication of the document; this is programmed to take place in January 2007. This is ahead of the LDS programme which anticipated receipt of the Inspectors' Report in March 2007 and adoption April – June 2007. However, a European Court of Justice Judgement has required the Government to introduce a new requirement for assessment of sites of European importance for nature conservation. The Council has done this but may now be required to carry a more complex assessment called "Appropriate Assessment". The introduction of the necessary Regulations has been delayed and it is therefore unclear whether the Council has to undertake an Appropriate Assessment. Legal advice is being sought.
8. Where the programme departs from that in the LDS May 2005 key milestones chart, results from the decision of the Inspectors appointed to conduct the examinations into the 6 submitted DPDs. They advised that they would be holding separate examinations in series with the report following each examination, instead of the examinations immediately following each other with the reporting period following. This had implications for the programming of all examinations after the Core Strategy and Development Control examinations, which took place as programmed in July and October 2006 respectively. Nonetheless, a programme of examinations is proceeding on the other submitted DPDs. The examination into the Northstowe Area Action Plan started on 5 December 2006. Examinations will take place on the other submitted DPDs as follows: Cambridge Southern Fringe Area Action Plan – starting on 19 June 2007, Cambridge East Area Action Plan – starting on 3 July 2007, and the Site Specific Policies DPD – not yet programmed but likely to be towards the end of 2007.
9. Additionally, the Council has undertaken issues and options consultation on two other DPDs. The Gypsies and Travellers DPD consultation has taken place later than the Scheme programme but due to a delay in the completion of the sub regional travellers needs assessment and the need to appoint consultants to undertake this work as the Policy Team is fully committed on the examinations in the submitted DPDs. The Northwest Cambridge Area Action Plan, being prepared in partnership with Cambridge City Council, is ahead of the adopted programme and a revised programme is contained in a draft revised Local Development Scheme submitted to GP-East in September.

LDF Indicators

10. Progress in relation to indicators and targets established by the Local Development Framework reflect the period of transition between the Local Plan and the LDF strategy. Some headline results are as follows:
- 888 dwellings were completed in 2005/2006 in South Cambridgeshire. This is a marked increase on the previous year's total of 547 dwellings. It is, however, still below the level required by the current Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan, and the emerging draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). It is anticipated this rate will increase substantially when the major developments planned for in the LDF begin to deliver dwellings.
 - 268 affordable homes were completed in the district during 2005/2006, or 30% of total completions. This was a significantly higher proportion than in the previous year, with only 94 affordable houses produced in 2004/2005, 17.2% of the total. This shows the impact of the Local Plan 2004 affordable housing policies.
 - 24.9% of dwellings were completed on Previously Developed Land. This is below the district target of 37%, but reflects the previous development strategy set out in the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 1995 and in the Local Plan 2004, where significant allocations of land were made on Greenfield land on the edge of existing villages and at the new village of Cambourne. The revised strategy of the LDF focussing more on brownfield housing delivery should result in higher figures in future years.
 - A particular issue of concern in last year's AMR was a rise in the level of nitrogen dioxide pollution in the district compared to 2002 figures. The figures for 2005/2006 show a reduction in recorded emissions, and a general improvement in air quality. However, vehicle flows across the urban boundary of Cambridge increased, with an extra 2,000 vehicles per day being recorded.

Financial Implications

11. Government is presently consulting on Planning Delivery Grant 2007/8 Proposed Allocations Criteria. This includes the way in which the AMR will affect the PDG award. The document sets out the proposed proportional split for the composition of the next PDG awards. It proposes that 50% of the plan making element will be awarded against meeting milestones in your original LDS with the remaining 50% awarded against sustainable development targets.

Legal Implications

12. None.

Staffing Implications

13. None.

Risk Management Implications

14. None.

Consultations

15. None.

Conclusions/Summary

16. The Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report demonstrates good progress against key plan making milestones, and achievement of the Council's development strategy for the district. Future Annual Monitoring Reports will allow the Council to continue to monitor progress.

Recommendations

17. Cabinet is recommended to note the contents of this report and delegate to the Planning Portfolio Holder, agreement of the Annual Monitoring Report for submission to the DCLG;

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

South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004
South Cambridgeshire Local Development Scheme
South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework

Contact Officer: Caroline Hunt (Principal Planning Policy Officer)
Telephone: (01954) 713194

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Leader and Cabinet	14 December 2006
AUTHORS:	Executive Director / Housing Advice and Options Manger	

CHOICE BASED LETTINGS – PRE CONSULTATION DRAFT LETTINGS POLICY**Purpose**

1. To seek approval of the draft lettings policy to accompany the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme, for the purpose of formal consultation.

Background

2. In the Housing Green Paper of April 2000 *Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All* the Government put forward its proposals for reforms to lettings policies to give tenants in social housing real choice over the house they live in.
3. The ODPM published targets for moving towards greater choice in spring 2002 as follows:
 - (a) 25% of local authorities are required to have CBL schemes by the end of 2005 and,
 - (b) 100% of local authorities to have a CBL scheme by 2010
4. Further the government have stated that they want to see CBL schemes developing on a regional or sub-regional basis.
5. Cabinet agreed in principle on 8th September 2005 to proceed to implement a sub regional choice based lettings (CBL) scheme in order to achieve compliance with CBL delivery by 2010. An application by the seven sub regional partner authorities to the ODPM for funding successfully attracted £181,000 which will be used to fund a sub regional project manager and purchase of software.
6. In September 2006, Cabinet noted the proposals for consultation and agreed to the setting up of a Members Advisory group.
7. The successful applicant under a CBL scheme will be the one that has the highest priority for the property for which they have made a bid. This will be determined by the Lettings Policy.
8. The main difference between the traditional approach to lettings and CBL is that applicants are required to be proactive in seeking a home rather than wait for a local authority or housing association to contact them about a property they can be 'allocated'. It is therefore important that the system is straightforward, understandable, transparent and fair.
9. For these reasons in many of the existing CBL schemes a banding system has been preferred as this is considered to be more simplistic and easier for applicants to understand than points systems.

Considerations

10. The CBL scheme will have a sub-regional framework and each partner organisation will have its own lettings policy, with the same sub-regional principles. This includes a banding system that will be used across the sub-region to assess housing need. This will help to achieve an understandable and transparent policy.

11. **Summary of the draft policy is outlined below:**

Equal opportunities

The service will be responsive, accessible and sensitive to the needs of all. We will not tolerate prejudice and discrimination and we will actively promote equality.

Housing Needs Bands

By law the Council must ensure that customers with certain housing needs are given what is known as “reasonable preference”. To do this, customers will be placed in a housing needs band based on their current circumstances. Customers in a higher housing needs band will have a better chance of being rehoused than those in a lower band. In the new lettings policy, the sub-region is proposing there should be 4 Housing Needs Bands, with the following housing needs:

Band A: Urgent Need

- Emergency transfer
- Statutorily homeless
- Statutorily overcrowded
- Current Supported housing resident
- Urgent Health & Safety Risk
- Urgent medical need
- Urgent multiple needs

Band B: High Need

- High Health & Safety Risk
- High medical need
- Victim of harassment
- Lacking two bedrooms
- Threatened with homelessness
- Under-occupancy by two or more bedrooms.
- Multiple needs

Band C: Medium Need

- Insecure accommodation
- Medium Medical Need
- Under-occupancy by one bedroom
- Social Needs to move
- Poor housing conditions.

Band D: Adequately Housed

A customer will be assessed as being adequately housed when they do not fall into any of the other housing needs bands.

Emergency housing status

Where it is confirmed that a customer needs to move in emergency circumstances as remaining in their home may cause risk of death or serious injury. Customers with an emergency housing status will be short listed before all other customers. This status is time limited for three-months, but may be extended in exceptional circumstances.

Suspended applicants

In certain circumstances, customers will be accepted onto the housing register, but their application will be suspended. Their application will not be placed in a housing needs band and they will not be able to express interest in available properties.

A customer will be suspended if they (or a member of their household) have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant - based on s.160A of the Housing Act (1996) as amended by the Homelessness Act (2002). Unacceptable behaviour is behaviour by the customer or a member of their household that would have entitled the landlord to an outright possession order under s.84 of the Housing Act (1996) in relation to any of the grounds in Part 1 of Schedule 2 other than ground 8, had they been a secure tenant.

Reduced preference

Applicants, who have rent arrears or are responsible for anti-social behaviour not sufficient to fall into the definition of suspended applicants, will receive reduced preference. During the short listing process reduced preference may be given to these customers after taking into account the amount of debt outstanding, the date the debt was accrued, arrangements to clear these debts and adherence to these arrangements and/or current behaviour.

Intentionally worsening their housing situation

If, in the reasonable opinion of South Cambridgeshire District Council, a customer has worsened their housing circumstances deliberately, their housing needs will be assessed on the basis of their previous accommodation.

Financial resources

Due to the shortage of available housing in the sub-region, reduced preference will be given to customers who have sufficient financial resources, either through income or savings to purchase property.

Bedroom requirements

Where an applicant is assessed as requiring one or more additional bedroom(s), the assessment will be based on the assumption that:

- couples require one double bedroom;
- single adults require one bedroom (an adult for this purpose is classed as aged 18 or more);
- two children of the same sex under 10 years old require one double bedroom;
- if there are three children in one room they will be assessed as lacking one bedroom;
- two children of the opposite sex, where the oldest child is aged 6 years or over require two bedrooms; and
- a pregnant woman expecting her first child requires two bedrooms after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

Short listing

Unless the label states differently, advertised properties will be let to the person who bid for it who is in the highest housing band. If there is more than one person in that band, the property will be let to the person who has been waiting the longest for housing **in that band**. Former and current rent arrears, and any incidents of anti-social behaviour will be taken into account in the short-listing process.

Advertising and Labelling Properties

Customers are restricted to making three expressions of interest (or bids) per advertising cycle. It is important that they bid for properties for which they are eligible i.e. they meet the criteria outlined on the property label. Customers will not be considered for any property they are not eligible for. Participating organisations will label advertised properties to provide more information on who will be considered for the property. Criteria that can be applied when labelling properties include; local connection, transferring tenant, property size, property type, age restrictions, adapted properties and the housing band(s) that can apply.

Offer refusals

Usually, if a customer refuses an offer of accommodation through CBL, they will not be removed from their housing needs band. When a customer has refused three offers of a home made through CBL, their case will be reviewed.

Local Connection to a Local Authority

As this is a sub regional scheme 10% of advertised homes, (and 25% of new build homes in growth areas) will be available to anyone who has a connection anywhere within the sub-region.

One or both of the main or joint customers must fit the following criteria to be considered as having a local connection to a local authority within the sub-region;

- they live or work in the local authority area;
- they have lived in the local authority for at least 6 of the last 12 months, or 3 of the last 5 years;
- they are an ex-resident of the local authority and previously lived there for 5 years or longer;
- they have family associations who are resident in the local authority area. Family associations are defined as parents, children or brothers or sisters who have been resident in the local authority for a period of 5 years; or
- there are special circumstances which the partner organisation considers give rise to a local connection.

Area specific policies are used in specific areas to help create balanced and sustainable communities. Where this applies, it will be stated in the property label. Details of these schemes will be available from the housing advice and options team. Some schemes may ask for a customer to have a local connection to the specific parish or village. In those cases, the connection criteria may be defined as above for that specific locality or a different definition will be included in the policy.

Local Lettings Policy

Some areas of the sub-regional principles will allow for local policies to be adopted. This includes:

1) Direct lets, including the length of time to make a direct let to a homeless applicant;

Some homes will not be advertised through CBL, but let directly to customers without them having to bid for homes. This will be done in certain circumstances, such as where an allocation is required to ensure the protection of a member of the public, where a customer has been living in temporary accommodation for a period of time, or where a sensitive let may be required due to issues in a particular area.

In relation to homeless applicants, where a rehousing obligation has been accepted. It is proposed that the time limit is set at three months. This will mean that after this period of time, the Council can make a direct let offer to a homeless household to try to minimise the time spent in temporary accommodation. Consideration will be given to whether the applicant has had an opportunity to bid for a suitable property.

2) Bedroom eligibility for short listing;

It is proposed that this mirrors the Council's existing policy.

3) Whether an income restriction is in place.

It is proposed that this is similar to the Council's existing policy and a customers ability to access home ownership (including low cost home ownership) will be determined based on the income and capital of the customer. Customers with such financial resources will not received preference for rented accommodation.

12. The first meeting of the Members Advisory group met in November to discuss the principles of the draft lettings policy and proposals for consultation. At the meeting a number of suggestions/ comments were raised by members, which will be considered throughout the consultation period and discussed with sub-regional partners. This includes:
- (a) The name of the bands, in particular whether 'adequately housed' is an appropriate name.
 - (b) The local connection to be included in the labelling and whether this should be district or village connection.
 - (c) Whether the method for assessing overcrowding is appropriate, in particular the inclusion that 'a pregnant woman expecting her first child requires two bedrooms after 24 weeks of pregnancy'.

Implications

13.

Financial	<p>A commitment has already been given to fund the CBL local implementation costs within existing budgets. The cost of local consultation will be met through existing budgets, and sub-regional events/ consultation will be funded through the sub-regional consultation budget, to which the council has contributed.</p> <p>The Council is committed to meeting a share of the implementation costs of the Sub-regional scheme which is currently £17,000 based on estimated costs, the amount of DCLG funding made available and there being a minimum of 7 partners. This position could change over the course of its implementation e.g. due to unforeseen additional costs and/or increase/decrease in number of partners but the project is currently within budget.</p> <p>The Council's contribution of £17,000 is being accounted for over 3 financial years with £2,000 having been paid in 2005/06 and £9,000 provided for within the 2006/07 Housing General Fund Estimates.</p>
Legal	The scheme needs to meet the legal requirements for the allocation of social housing as set out in the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002).
Staffing	The Council have already agreed to the recruitment of a Choice Based Lettings Project Officer to enable implementation at a local level, the cost of which will be met from existing budgets. The development of this scheme requires commitment and input from various services across the Council, and a local corporate implementation group has been set up to facilitate and manage the project.
Risk Management	To reduce the risk that the policy will not address local housing need, extensive consultation will take place and the scheme will be monitored closely following implementation
Equal Opportunities	In line with general and specific statutory duties under the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Council operates a Race Equality Scheme (RES) in order to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote race equality and good race relations. This was last revised and agreed by the Council in July 2006, with an update of the 2005-08 action plan. The Council is committed to treating everyone fairly and justly, whatever their race or background. The proposed lettings policy will include a statement on equal opportunities and consultation will take place with the local community, including voluntary and statutory agencies that assist and support vulnerable groups. BME housing register applicants currently represents 4.3% of those aged under 60 and 1% of those aged 60 or over on our housing register and 1% of transfer applicants. Translation of leaflets and information will be made available when this is required.

Consultations

14. Consultation will take place with partner RSL's, statutory agencies, and other stakeholders including tenants, applicants, Parish Councils and other locally based organisations whose clients may be affected.
15. Formal consultation will commence in January for a period of 12 weeks.
16. Comments will be welcome on all areas however in particular stakeholders will be asked to comments on the following:

Housing needs bands

Are there any other housing needs, which should be considered in the above proposals?

Are any of the housing needs placed in too high a band?

Are any of the housing needs placed in too low a band?

Do you think the names of the bands are appropriate?

Short listing

Do you think the method of short listing is a fair way of letting the homes?

Suspended/ reduced preference applications

Should customers who are in significant arrears with a landlord, or have perpetrated anti-social behaviour be given reduced preference?

Financial resources

Do you feel that customers with either income or savings above a certain level should be prevented from being rehoused, unless other people are not interested in the home?

Offer refusals

Do you agree that where an offer is refused a customer keeps their housing priority?

Local Connection to a Local Authority

Do you agree with each partner letting a proportion of homes to customers with a connection anywhere within the Cambridge Sub-region?

Do you think the remaining 90% of properties should be labelled to require a local connection to the district (except where there is a legal agreement relating to the site which requires a more specific i.e. village connection)?

Direct lets

Do you agree that in certain circumstances direct lets may be necessary?

Are there any particular circumstances where you feel a direct let should be made?

Bedroom requirements

Do you agree with the proposals for determining overcrowding?

Labelling properties

What information would you like to see in the property labels?

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

17.	Affordable Homes	The lettings policy will determine who has priority for affordable rented housing
	Customer Service	As part of an options package allows those in housing need to exercise choice over their rehousing options
	Northstowe and other growth areas	25% of properties on new growth developments will be let to customers registered across the sub-region, as part of the sub-regional CBL scheme
	Quality, Accessible Services	Development of Choice based lettings scheme, which focuses on applicants for social housing having increased choice.
	Village Life	As part of an options package allows those in housing need to exercise choice over their rehousing options
	Sustainability	
	Partnership	This is a sub-regional scheme involving 5 Local Authorities in Cambridgeshire, St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath and local Registered Social Landlords.

Conclusions/Summary

18. The Council is working with partners across the sub-region to develop a choice based lettings scheme. This will fulfil the requirement by the government that all authorities are operating such a scheme by 2010. A new lettings policy is required that satisfies the Council's legal obligations, addresses the housing needs of households in the district and addresses the same principles across the sub-region, as well as being transparent to applicants.

Recommendations

19. It is recommended that Cabinet:
- Note the contents of the draft lettings policy
 - Approve this draft in order to commence consultation at the beginning of January 2007.

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

Housing Green Paper: *Quality and Choice: A Decent Home for All*
ODPM April 2000

Allocation of Accommodation: Code of guidance for local housing authorities
ODPM November 2002

The full draft lettings policy is attached as Appendix 1.

The Choice Based Lettings sub-regional framework document is attached as Appendix 2

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South Cambridgeshire District Council

LETTINGS POLICY

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Chapter 1: Introduction

South Cambridgeshire District Council aims to help as many people as it can to find a home that is right for them. The Council can provide advice on appropriate housing options for people seeking rehousing.

This document outlines the Council's lettings policy with regard to registering and assessing the priority of people who wish to access social rented accommodation. The assessment of need is based on a banding system. A customer's housing need band will be determined based on the household's current circumstances and the type of home they currently live in. The lettings policy has been designed in collaboration with the sub-regional partner organisation of the Choice Based Lettings scheme, with the aim of having as much consistency in the letting of social housing as possible.

The policy enables South Cambridgeshire District Council to consider the individual needs of its customers whilst making best use of our homes. The policy sets out:

- How to apply for housing
- How customers can apply to go onto the register for housing
- Who is eligible to be accepted onto the housing register
- How an assessment of housing need is undertaken
- What the decision making processes are
- How homes will be let.

South Cambridgeshire District Council will also publish procedures, which will be available to view at xxxxx.

The majority of Council properties are let through the xxxxxx Choice Based Lettings scheme that covers the Cambridge sub-region. You may view the sub-regional Choice Based lettings framework document at xxxxx or request a copy.

Objectives of the lettings policy

The lettings policy has the following objectives:

- To meet the legal requirements for the allocation of social housing as set out in the Housing Act (1996) and Homelessness Act (2002);
- To assist customers in the highest assessed need;
- To let properties in a fair and transparent way and provide a consistent lettings process;
- To ensure that customers are not discriminated against, whether directly or indirectly;
- To form part of a housing options approach and to provide realistic choices to help customers meet their housing needs;
- To provide customers with feedback on lettings;
- To improve mobility across the sub-region; and
- To promote social inclusion and help achieve sustainable communities.

Statement on Choice

South Cambridgeshire District Council is fully committed to enabling customers to play a more active role in choosing where they live, whilst continuing to house those in the greatest need, through the sub-regional scheme.

In making a decision about the choices available, customers need to consider their housing need band against the availability and level of demand for properties within South Cambridgeshire and the sub-region.

Legal context

All lettings will be made in accordance with the lettings policy. South Cambridgeshire District Council will ensure the lettings policy complies with all legislative requirements, related legislation, case law and local policies and strategies. All references to statutory material are by way of summary and for convenience only and are not to be used as substitutes for the details within the original.

This is not a blanket policy, all cases will be considered on a case-by-case basis, on their individual circumstances.

Monitoring and reviewing the lettings policy

South Cambridgeshire District Council will monitor the implementation of the lettings policy by monitoring lettings to ensure potentially vulnerable customers are assisted and that the policy does not discriminate against any groups of people. We will regularly review the policy to ensure it meets its objectives and complies with legislative changes.

Equal opportunities and diversity

Our service will be responsive, accessible and sensitive to the needs of all. We will not tolerate prejudice and discrimination and we will actively promote equality.

Chapter 2: How to apply

To apply for housing, customers are required to complete a housing application form. This can be obtained from any sub-regional partner organisation's (POs) office, or via the following internet address: www.XXX

A customer may include anyone that may reasonably be expected to live with them as part of their application.

On return of the application form, we will assess the form and may request additional information and supporting evidence so that the customer's eligibility and housing need can be confirmed. We will verify the information provided which may include inviting the customer for an interview.

We will write to customers to inform them of:

- their eligibility to join the housing register;
- their application number;
- their date of registration for the scheme;
- the housing needs band the application has been placed in;
- their date placed in the band;
- the size of property the customer is eligible for; and
- how to have a decision reviewed.

Date of registration

The customer's application will be registered from the date the housing application form is received at the office of South Cambridgeshire District Council, or any of the sub-regional offices. If the form is completed over the internet, the date the form is received electronically is the date of registration.

Applicable date in band

Upon registration, or following a material change of circumstances, customers will be placed into a housing needs band, based on an assessment of their current situation. The

applicable date will be the date that a customer is placed in one of the four housing needs bands.

Customers may move into different housing needs band, if their circumstances change. When moving from one housing needs band to another the applicable date will be the date that the customer moves into that band.

Joint applications

Where there is a joint application, permission from both customers will be required to cancel the application. If the customer wishes to re-apply for housing after their application is cancelled, the date of registration is the date they reapply.

Either customer may take their name off a joint application, and re-apply to the register. Under general circumstances we would then re-assess both applications except where doing so would place one of the customers at risk.

Multiple applications

A customer can have only one active application on the housing register at any time. The situation cannot occur where a customer is registered once as a main applicant and is named on another application as part of a family to be rehoused.

Change of circumstances

Where a customer has a change in their circumstances they must inform us. Customers can obtain a change of circumstances form from any PO. Their housing needs assessment will be based on the new circumstances. Examples of change of circumstances are detailed below, although this list is not exhaustive;

- people joining or leaving the household;
- pregnancy/birth of a child;
- a member of the household applying in their own right;
- relationship breakdown;
- change to your medical circumstances;
- death of a household member;
- change of income/ capital.

Customers moving home will be required to complete a new application form which will be treated as a change of circumstances with regard to the customer's original date of registration.

Customer's consent and declaration

When a customer applies for housing, they will be required to sign a declaration to confirm that:

- the information they have provided is true and accurate;
- they will inform us of any change in circumstances;
- they understand that information will be shared with all the POs; and;
- they consent to us verifying information they have provided. This could include checks with;
 - a credit reference agency to verify address, household and income details;
 - their previous and/or current landlord to establish whether tenancy conditions have been adhered to.

South Cambridgeshire District Council may take legal action against customers who withhold or provide false information regarding their housing application. Where a customer has been let a property as a result of providing false information, we may take court action to obtain possession of the property.

Application review

When a customer has not expressed an interest in any available properties for one year, we will write to them to see if they still wish to be on the housing register. If there is no response within 28 days the application will be cancelled. We will write to the customer to notify them of this. If a customer contacts us within 28 days of their application being cancelled and indicated that they still want to be considered for housing the application will be reinstated from their last applicable date.

Cancelling an application

An application will be cancelled from the housing register in the following circumstances:

- at the customer's request;
- if the customer becomes ineligible for housing (see chapter 3);
- when the customer has been housed by a local authority or housing association;
- when a customer purchases a property;
- when a customer has purchased a property via a shared ownership scheme;
- when a tenant completes a mutual exchange;
- where a customer does not maintain their application through the review process, or where they move and do not provide a contact address; or
- when we are notified by an executor or personal representative that a customer is deceased.

When an application is cancelled, we will write to the customer or their representative to notify them. Where an applicant has been highlighted as vulnerable, we will verify the customer's circumstances before cancelling the application. The customer has the right to ask for a review of the decision.

Where a customer wishes to re-join the housing register at a later date, their application date will be the date they re-apply.

Chapter 3: Eligibility to be accepted onto the housing register

Eligibility categories

Anyone 16 years of age and over can apply to the housing register if they are eligible to be housed. However, this does not guarantee housing under the scheme. We will not register people who are not eligible to be housed. Evidence of eligibility may be required to complete registration.

Under the Housing Act (1996), local authorities must consider whether applicants are eligible for housing assistance. This relates to some people who may have been living abroad or who do not have permanent permission to remain in the UK. Some people will be eligible, whether or not they are subject to immigration control. Those who are eligible for housing assistance are defined in SI 206 no 1294: The Allocation of Housing and Homelessness (Eligibility) (England) regulations 2006.

Who is not eligible

South Cambridgeshire District Council cannot, by law, allocate housing accommodation to anyone who is subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and

Immigration Act (1996), unless they fall within a class exempted from this restriction by Government regulations.

In addition, we cannot, by law, allocate housing accommodation to other classes of persons from abroad if Government regulations dictate we cannot.

Notifying an ineligible customer

Applications from ineligible customers will not be registered. The customer will be notified in writing of the decision and the reasons for the decision will be explained to them. If a customer is accepted onto the register, but subsequently becomes ineligible, their housing application will be cancelled and the customer notified. Customers found to be ineligible have a right to ask for a review of the decision (see chapter 14).

16 to 17 year olds

Any customer aged 16 or over can apply for housing, however a tenancy will not usually be granted to a person who is under 18 unless:

- the customer is found to be statutorily homeless; or
- under Section 27 of the Children Act (1989), housing authorities are required to respond to Social Services, who have duties towards children under the act; or
- the customer will be supported in the tenancy and we are satisfied with the level of support provided.

Some 16 and 17 year olds who cannot live with their parents, and who require social housing, may be offered semi-independent accommodation with support.

If a tenancy is offered to a customer who is under 18 an equitable tenancy will be offered and a rent guarantor may be required until the customer reaches the age of 18.

Chapter 4: Assessment of housing need

Legal background

All customers will be placed in a housing needs band based on an assessment of their household's needs. This is to ensure that councils meet their legal obligations as set out in the Housing Act (1996) amended by the Homelessness Act (2002).

Housing needs bands

There are four bands of housing needs. Customers will be placed in one of the following bands depending on their circumstances. Customers placed in Band A will have the highest assessed need, Band D the lowest.

Advice and assistance

We will make sure that advice and information is available free of charge to everyone in the district on how to apply for housing accommodation. If a customer is likely to have difficulty making an application without help, then help will also be made available free of charge.

Customers have a right to request general information about their housing application that will allow them to judge:

- a) how their application is likely to be treated under our lettings scheme;
- b) whether accommodation appropriate for their needs is likely to be made available and, if so, how long it is likely to be before it becomes available.

A range of information will also be available on request both district-wide as well as for individual villages, about our and housing association homes, numbers waiting for rehousing, numbers rehoused and likely new developments in the district. However, it will only be possible to give approximate timescales about when a customer can expect to successfully secure a property through the choice based letting scheme. This will be based on current trends in the availability of properties by size, type and location as well as the banding of a customer.

We will not give out information to other members of the public about a person being registered for housing without the customers consent. Personal information about any individual application will always be kept confidential.

The housing advice and options team can provide further advice about the lettings policy, the choice based lettings scheme and other housing options.

Band A: Urgent Need

Customers with the following circumstances will be placed into Band A

a) Emergency Transfer

Where a tenant of a PO needs to move urgently because of circumstances that could include:

- major repairs required on the property which cannot be undertaken with the tenant living in the property;
- the property is being demolished – those in private tenancies in clearance areas may also be considered;

b) Statutorily homeless:

Homeless applicants accepted as homeless (in priority need, not intentional and eligible to receive a full housing duty) by one of the POs, under Part VII of the Housing Act (1996), as amended by the Homelessness Act (2002).

c) Statutorily overcrowded

Customers who are statutorily overcrowded. The Housing Options Officer, will determine if a household is statutorily overcrowded.

d) Current supported housing resident

The resident has been assessed by South Cambridgeshire District Council and the supported housing provider as ready to move into permanent accommodation and local move-on arrangements are in place and have not been found to be homeless and in priority need. This will be confirmed by the Housing Options officer after consultation with the support provider.

e) Urgent health and safety risk

Where it has been assessed that the customer is living in a property that has conditions that are classified as unsafe, or there is a risk of imminent harm which cannot be remedied in a reasonable time and where the damage has not been a result of deliberate action by the occupant. The Housing Options Officer will assess whether this priority is appropriate in conjunction with the Environmental Health department.

f) Urgent medical need

Where a customers housing is having a major adverse effect on the medical condition or disability of the customer or member of their household, which will be significantly improved by alternative accommodation, they will be assessed as having an urgent medical need..

g) Urgent multiple needs

Where we have assessed the customer as having two or more Band B needs. The Housing Options officer will decide if a customer has multiple high needs.

Band B: High Need

Customers with the following circumstances will be placed into Band B.

a) High health and safety risk

Where it has been assessed that the customer is living in a property which has conditions which places them at a high risk of harm which cannot be remedied in a reasonable time and where the damage has not been a result of deliberate action by the occupant. The Housing Options Officer will assess whether this priority is appropriate in conjunction with the Environmental Health department.

b) High medical need

Where the customer's housing is having an adverse effect on the medical condition or disability of the customer or member of their household, which will be improved by alternative accommodation they will be assessed as having a high medical need.

c) Victim of harassment

Where the customer is a victim of harassment. This applies if the person is harassed due to their race, gender, sexual orientation, mental health, physical disability, learning disability, religion or because they are a member of another specific group not listed. An investigation into their circumstances will be undertaken and support options to resolve the situation will be considered.

d) Lacking two bedrooms

Based on the bedroom calculation in Section 4.5, the household is assessed as lacking two bedrooms.

e) Under-occupancy by two or more bedrooms

Where an existing social housing tenant in the district is living in a property which has two bedrooms more than is required by the household, or where a property has been adapted and the adaptations no longer required.

f) Threatened with homelessness

Where a customer has been assessed as being threatened with homelessness in more than 28 days time, is considered to be in priority need and has been through homeless prevention options with a PO and all other options have been exhausted.

Where a customer is threatened with homelessness within the next 28 days, they should approach the housing advice and options team who will undertake a housing options interview.

g) Multiple needs

Where we have assessed as having three needs from band C
The Housing Options officer will decide if a customer has multiple medium needs.

Band C: Medium Need

Customers with the following circumstances will be placed into Band C.

a) Insecure accommodation

Where a customer is living in insecure accommodation. This could be because the customer is:

- homeless or threatened with homelessness but not in priority need;
- sleeping rough or no fixed abode;
- has been found to be statutorily homeless but does not have a local connection to the sub-region;
- is living in a hostel which does not have a move-on agreement in place with us
- is living in tied accommodation and the employment is ending;

- is intentionally homeless.

b) Medical need

A medium medical need is awarded, where the customer's housing is having a minimal effect on the medical condition or disability of the customer or member of their household, and a move to different accommodation would improve their quality of life.

c) Under-occupancy by one bedroom

Where an existing social housing tenant in the district is living in a property, which has one bedroom more than is required by the household.

d) Social needs to move

Where it has been confirmed that a customer:

- needs to move to an area to give or receive support and a proven level of support is required and can be given;
- has found employment in an area and needs to move closer to work, or will otherwise lose their employment;
- has staying access to a child/ children whilst living in accommodation where children are not allowed to stay overnight,

This list is not exhaustive. The housing options officer will decide if customers have a social need to move.

e) Poor housing conditions.

Where the customer's home is lacking one of the following; or these are shared with people who are not part of their housing application.

- a bathroom;
- a kitchen;
- a living room;
- is lacking one bedroom (see section 6). or
- living above ground floor with children under 10 years of age.

Band D: Adequately Housed

A customer will be assessed as being adequately housed when they do not fall into any of the other housing needs bands.

Chapter 5: Decisions making processes

Decisions relating to the assessment of need will be made by the Housing Options Officer through the assessment process. These decisions will include:

- Emergency housing status
- Multiple needs
- Offers of accommodation outside the usual size criteria
- Suspension of applications
- Reduced preference through the shortlisting process
- Financial assessment

Emergency Housing

Where it is confirmed that a customer needs to move in emergency circumstances, as remaining in their home may cause risk of death or serious injury. Customers with an emergency housing status will sit in a housing needs band where they will bid for available properties, but their applications will be short listed before all other customers. Emergency

status is time-limited for three months and only in exceptional circumstances will it be extended.

An emergency housing status will be awarded to applicants with 2 or more identified needs in Band A.

Review for Band A customers

Where a customer has held Band A status for three months from their applicable date in band A, there will be a review of their circumstances. This will result in either;

- a direct let – usually for statutorily homeless customers living in temporary accommodation;
- priority being maintained;
- moving into a lower priority band if the circumstances under which they were placed in Band A no longer apply.

Decisions made outside the scope of the lettings policy

The following decisions are made outside of Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996, and are outside the scope of the lettings policy:

- mutual exchanges;
- persons transferring from introductory to secure tenancy in the same property;
- where a secure tenancy is assigned by way of exchange (succession) to the same property;
- where a secure tenancy is assigned to someone who would be qualified to succeed to that tenancy if the secure tenant died immediately before the assignment;
- creation of a joint tenancy from an existing sole tenancy; and
- where an existing tenant is moved on a temporary basis from their permanent property, to allow major work to be completed on the property.

Extra care homes

Extra care homes are properties for older people where additional services are provided. Allocation to extra care homes will not be made through CBL. Each local authority has its own process for dealing with such allocations, often based on referrals from the Social Services Department.

Chapter 6: Assessment information and criteria

The following section outlines criteria taken into account when considering assessments of housing need.

Harassment and domestic violence

Where the customer is a victim of severe harassment, domestic violence or anti-social behaviour, it is the policy of the South Cambridgeshire District Council to take action against the perpetrator (where the perpetrator is a tenant) and support the victim to continue living in their home wherever possible.

Bedroom requirements

The list below, will be used to assess overcrowding and therefore whether they are lacking any bedrooms in their current home;

- couples require one double bedroom;
- single adults require one bedroom (an adult for this purpose is classed as aged 18 or more);
- two children of the same sex under 10 years old require one double bedroom;
- if there are three children in one room they will be assessed as lacking one bedroom;
- two children of the opposite sex, where the oldest child is aged 6 years or over require two bedrooms; and
- a pregnant woman expecting her first child requires two bedrooms after 24 weeks of pregnancy.

The assessment will be made on the basis of what the family could reasonably be expected to live in. Customers will be assessed on the assumption that they are making best use of their existing property i.e. if a single parent is sleeping in a double room, but their two children are in a single room, they would be assessed as adequately housed.

Where a customer has written approval from the Social Services Department of their local authority to adopt a child, this will be taken into account when considering the bedroom requirements of the family.

Medical assessments

Medical assessments will only be considered for medical conditions that are affected by the customer's current home. Where there is a temporary medical condition, a medical assessment will not usually be undertaken.

When a customer's current home is affecting their health they may apply for a medical assessment. A customer should complete a medical form which asks for details of the medical conditions, or disability, giving reason why their current property affects that condition and the reason why they wish to move.

The housing options officer will decide the medical priority.

Staying Contact with Children

Where a customer has staying contact with children, the children will only be considered as part of that housing application if they live with the customer for the majority of the time (over 50%).

Where access has been shared equally between two partners, it is unlikely that accommodation of the same size will be made available to both parents. Usually, a parent with staying contact to children for less than 50% of the time will not be allocated an additional bedroom for that child.

Split families

Where family members who would normally be expected to live together are presently living separately, housing need will be assessed based on the circumstances of whichever home is more appropriate, assuming that it were available for the entire family to live in.

A customer intentionally worsening their housing situation

If, in the reasonable opinion of South Cambridgeshire District Council, a customer has worsened their housing circumstances deliberately, their housing needs will be assessed on the basis of their previous accommodation.

Financial resources

All qualifying customers are entitled to apply for housing, no matter how much they earn, but if a customer has an income and/or capital which will enable them to access suitable owner occupied accommodation (including low cost home ownership) , they will not receive any preference for rented housing. We will calculate a household's financial resources based on 100% of the customers (including partner) income and any capital. Assessments will be based on these financial resources, average property prices across the district and a customer's ability to obtain a mortgage. The ability to be able to fund a mortgage of a suitable property is based on three times the relevant household income.

The housing options officer will assess whether any applicant exceeds these financial limits and whether they may be considered for rented accommodation based on a financial assessment and evidence of their inability to fund a minimum share under the low cost home ownership schemes.

If any customer has significant capital available to them for example savings/ investments or a property that together with their income, would enable them to buy a home on the open market or would enable them to purchase a share of a suitable property under a low cost home ownership scheme, they will not be given any preference for rented housing.

The housing options officer will assess whether any applicant exceeds these capital guidelines.

The financial criteria may be reviewed at any time.

If a customer exceeds the financial limits and they can prove that they still cannot afford to pursue a low cost home ownership scheme the housing options officer will assess the application, taking into account the households particular circumstances before making a decision.

Customers aged over 60 who have sufficient capital through ownership of property and/or in savings at the time they apply, or have owned a property at any time within five years of their application, will normally be considered for sheltered housing only in villages with such schemes and will be expected to take part in our leasehold equity share scheme. If an applicant wishes to live in a village with no sheltered housing scheme, in order to receive support from family or other formal or informal care networks, then they may be offered a non-sheltered bungalow but will be expected to take part in the shared ownership scheme.

Full details of the equity share scheme are available from the housing advice and options team.

A person who would normally be required to take part in this scheme, but who does not have enough money to do so, for example they need to move from a part of the country where house prices are lower, then we may consider offering a home to that customer. A full financial assessment will be carried out by the housing options officer who will decide whether the customer is eligible or not for rented accommodation.

High Risk Offenders

Where a high-risk offender is subject to a Multi Agency Public Protection (MAPP) panel, we will liaise with the panel to ensure an appropriate housing solution to meet the needs of the customer and the community as a whole.

Chapter 7: Suspension

Introduction

In certain circumstances, customers will be accepted onto the housing register, but their application will be suspended. Their application will not be placed in a housing needs band and they will not be able to express interest in available properties. It will be the housing options officers' decision whether to suspend an application.

Suspension criteria

A customer will be suspended if they (or a member of their household) have been guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant - based on s.160A of the Housing Act (1996) as amended by the Homelessness Act (2002).

Unacceptable behaviour is behaviour by the customer or a member of their household that would have entitled the landlord to a possession order under s.84 of the Housing Act (1996) in relation to any of the grounds in Part 1 of Schedule 2 other than ground 8, had they been a secure tenant of South Cambridgeshire District Council at that time.

Informing customers of their status.

Customers who have been suspended will be notified of this in writing. They have the right to a review of the decision.

Suspension decisions will be reviewed regularly. Each case will be treated individually.

Customers will be notified how their application can be removed from suspension, for example, through agreeing an arrangement to make payments towards rent arrears, and maintaining regular payments for a specified time.

Chapter 8: Local connection criteria and sub-regional allocations

To ensure local housing needs are met, 90% of properties advertised through the CBL scheme will be labelled as available to customers with a local connection to South Cambridgeshire District Council. It has been agreed that 10% of advertised properties will be available to a customer who has a local connection to any authority within the Cambridge Sub-region. It has also been agreed that 25% of new growth homes will be made available for cross boundary mobility. The relevant local connection requirement will be clearly labelled on the property advertisement.

Local connection criteria

One or both of the main or joint customers must fit one of the following criteria to be considered as having a local connection to South Cambridgeshire District Council;

- they live or work in the local authority area; and/or
- they have lived in the local authority for at least 6 of the last 12 months, or 3 of the last 5 years; and/or;
- they are an ex-resident of the local authority and previously lived there for 5 years or longer; and/or;
- they have family members who are resident in the local authority area. Family members are defined as parents, children or brothers or sisters who have been resident in the local authority for a period of 5 years; and/ or;
- there are special circumstances, which we consider gives rise to a local connection.

The same criteria will be used by the other POs in the Cambridge Sub-region when assessing local connection to their areas. For the properties which are advertised on a sub regional basis, the successful customer must meet the above criteria for any Local Authority within the Cambridge Sub-region.

The housing register is open to anyone, irrespective of their local connection to South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Chapter 9: Area Specific Policies

Area Specific policies are used in specific areas to help create balanced and sustainable communities. Where this applies, it will be stated in the property label. Details of these schemes are available from the Housing Advice and Options Team. Some schemes may ask for a customer to have a local connection to a specific parish or village. In those cases, the connection criteria may be defined above for that specific locality or a different definition will be included in the policy.

Chapter 10: Making offers of accommodation

Properties that have been advertised through CBL will be allocated as follows.

A shortlist will be drawn up from customers who have bid for the property. Customers will be shortlisted based on whether they are eligible to be housed and if they meet the labelling criteria (see the scheme framework document for labelling criteria).

The property will be offered to the shortlisted customer in the highest housing need band. If there is more than one customer in that band, the property will be let to the customer who has been waiting longest in that band. If two or more customers are placed into the housing needs band on the same date, the property will be let to the customer with the earlier date of registration.

Former and current rent arrears, and any incidents of anti-social behaviour will be taken into account in the shortlisting process and reduced preference may be given to these customers, following consideration of the amount of debt outstanding, the date the debt accrued, arrangements to clear these debts and adherence to these arrangements and/or current behaviour

We will contact the highest prioritised bidders from the shortlist to arrange an accompanied viewing. Customers may be asked to provide additional information at this stage if further verification of the application is required.

When making a formal offer, we will set a deadline by which the successful applicant may accept or refuse the offer.

Whilst an offer of accommodation has not yet been accepted or refused, the customer will not be able to express interest in or be considered for other properties within the sub-region.

Withdrawal of offers

In very exceptional circumstances, we may withdraw an offer of accommodation:

- where there has been a change in the customers circumstances;
- following verification the customer is not eligible for the home; or
- where an error has been made in the advertising criteria.

Lettings in exceptional circumstances

To ensure that allocations are sensitively made, in exceptional circumstances, we may make an offer a property to a customer below the person who tops the shortlist. This may be to protect vulnerable customers or to make best use of housing stock. The housing options officer will decide when this is necessary.

Offer refusals through CBL

Usually, if a customer refuses an offer of accommodation through CBL, they will not be removed from their housing needs band. If a customer refuses three offers of a home made through CBL, their case will be reviewed.

Allocations to staff, family members of staff and elected members

Members of staff, their close family and elected members who require housing may apply for housing in the same way as other customers. Their status should be disclosed on the application form at the time of applying.

Before a customer who is a member of staff, their direct family or an elected member is made an offer, approval will be sought from the Executive Director.

Chapter 11: Direct lets

Introduction

Most properties will be advertised through the CBL scheme. However, in certain circumstances, we will allocate properties directly to customers and not advertise the property. These are known as direct lets.

Feedback will be provided showing all properties that have been allocated as a direct let.

Customers who are eligible for a direct let will usually be made one reasonable offer to meet their household's needs. The offer will, where possible, take into account their preferences, such as property type and areas. In certain circumstances, this will not be possible, for example where properties are in very short supply and we have a statutory duty to rehouse.

Customers may continue to bid for properties through the CBL scheme whilst waiting for a direct let.

Direct let examples

Illustrative examples of direct lets are as follows:

- where an allocation is required to ensure protection of the public, for example, following a decision made by a Multi-Agency Public Protection panel, or where a customer has been referred as part of the witness protection scheme;

- where an existing South Cambridgeshire District Council social housing tenant is required to move to make the best use of stock; for example, if they are under-occupying the property;
- where an existing social housing tenant in the district needs to move due to imminent risk to safety.
- where a sensitive let is required for a particular property, because of issues such as drug dealing, violence, public protection, or anti-social behaviour in the area;
- where a customer's property is being repaired and they need to be moved from the property on a temporary or permanent basis.
- Statutorily homeless applicants who have been in band A for more than three months.
- Properties let as temporary accommodation.

Customers in Band A will have their case reviewed regularly and may be given a direct let. Each authority has a local policy stating the length of time spent in Band A before a direct let may be made.

Refusals of direct lets

Where a customer refuses a reasonable direct let offer, they may lose any housing priority they held, and their application will be re-assessed, dependent on the reasons for the offer refusal. Customers have the right to ask for a review of this decision (see chapter 14).

Chapter 12: Statutorily homeless

The homeless application

If a customer is accepted by South Cambridgeshire District Council as being Statutorily Homeless and in Priority Need, based on the Housing Act (1996), as amended by the Homelessness Act (2002), their application for housing will be placed in Band A. The customer will remain in their existing housing needs band during the homeless assessment.

During the homeless assessment, we will establish areas in which it is reasonable for the customer to be housed. Customers will be expected to select 25 villages within the district once accepted as homeless. This information will be used to help us make a direct let to discharge our duty if a customer who has been found to be statutorily homeless has not been successful in bidding for available properties within three months.

Where customers do not select the required number of villages in line with the council's policy, we will select these villages automatically and may include the whole of the district. Customers are expected to consider a wider area than specific villages that they would ideally wish to be housed in. They may bid for properties outside these pre-selected villages.

Direct lets to homeless customers

Customers who have been found to be statutorily homeless are eligible for a direct let in addition to being able to express interest in available homes. Where a customer who is considered to be statutorily homeless refuses an offer of accommodation which they bid for through CBL, they will stay in the same housing band and duty will not be discharged. However, if a reasonable offer made as a direct let is refused, the council's duty towards the customer as a homeless household will be discharged and they will have to leave any temporary accommodation being provided.

The council will continue to review each customer's circumstances and property availability. The customer will be informed at what point they will be allocated a property via a direct let in order to resolve their homelessness.

Where a customer is allocated a property through the direct let process, we are responsible for determining the suitability of the allocation. We will do this by assessing the household's particular circumstances and needs and have regard to the housing conditions in the area.

Where a customer is offered a direct let, but does not feel that this is a suitable offer, they have the right to request a review of the offer. Details of the review process can be obtained from the housing advice and options team. Customers are advised to accept the direct offer whilst the review is carried out. If, after review, the property is felt to be a reasonable offer, no further offers of accommodation will be made, the council's duties will be discharged and the customer will lose Band A status. If the customer is in temporary accommodation provided by the council they will have to leave the accommodation. If, on review, the property is felt to be unsuitable then they will be made a further offer of suitable accommodation as soon as possible.

Chapter 13: Confidentiality and Access to information

When a customer applies for housing, we will seek only information that we require to assess the customer's application and housing needs. Information supplied by the customer will be shared amongst the POs and participating RSLs. The customer will sign a declaration to agree to this.

Information held about an application will be kept in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Freedom of Information Act (2000). Under the Freedom of Information Act/ Data Protection Act customers have the right to ask to view and receive a copy of any information held about them on computer or on paper records. This information must be provided within 40 days of a written request being made. In accordance with the Act, there will be a £10 charge for requests information.

Confidential information held about customers will not be disclosed to third parties apart from:

- where the individual who is the subject of the confidential information has consented to the disclosure;
- where we are required by law to make such disclosures;
- where disclosure is made in accordance with an information sharing protocol.

Chapter 14: Reviews of decisions

Statutory reviews of decisions

A customer has the legal right to ask for a review of certain decisions made regarding their housing application. These are:

- if the customer has been suspended
- any decision about the facts of the customer's case which has been taken into account in considering whether to make an allocation; or
- the customer has been found to be ineligible for rehousing.

If a customer requests a review of one of these decisions, they should contact us. All relevant letters notifying customers of a decision being made regarding their application will advise them of the right to a review and provide appropriate guidance on how to request a review.

The housing advice and options manager will usually consider your review unless they have had any involvement in the initial decision. In these circumstances, reviews will be considered by the housing services manager or another senior council officer.

A request for a review of a decision can be made in writing or verbally to a member of staff. The request should be made within a reasonable period since the customer was notified.

Reviews will be considered within 28 days of the request being received and the customer will receive a written response outlining the result of the review.

A customer may only have a decision reviewed once. If a customer is still unhappy following the review of a decision, they can make a complaint through the council's complaints procedures, contact the Local Government Ombudsman, or seek further advice from, for example, the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Homeless reviews

Homeless applicants have the right to request a review of certain decisions. This includes the decision to discharge duty through a reasonable offer of accommodation via the housing register for those accepted as statutorily homeless. Applicants are generally advised to accept the property and continue with their request for a review. If the review goes in their favour alternative accommodation will be provided as soon as possible, however, if the council's decision remains the same no further accommodation will be provided in relation to their homeless application. The review request must be made within 21 days of notification of a decision, although a late review request can be accepted under exceptional circumstances at our discretion. Please contact the housing advice and options team for further details of the homeless review procedure.

The Local Government Ombudsman

The Local Government Ombudsman investigates complaints of injustice arising from maladministration by local authorities and other bodies. They can be asked to investigate complaints about most council matters including housing.

If a complainant is not satisfied with the action the council takes, he or she can send a written complaint to the ombudsman. A complainant must give us an opportunity to deal with a complaint first, using its complaints procedure.

The Local Government Ombudsman can be contacted at:

Local Government Ombudsman
The Oaks No 2
Westwood Way
Westwood Business Park
Coventry CV4 8JB

Tel: 01904 380200 Website: www.lgo.org.uk

If a customer wishes to make a complaint against a housing association, they should contact:

The Housing Ombudsman Service
Norman House
105-109 Strand
London
WC2R 0AA

Tel: 020 7836 3630 E- mail: ombudsman@ihos.org

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The Cambridge Sub-regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme Framework Document

Draft 3

30th November 2006

1. Introduction

This document outlines the Cambridge Sub-regional Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme.

The Cambridge Sub-regional CBL scheme is a method of letting social housing across the sub-region. The partner organisations (as detailed in section 3) have agreed to operate one sub-regional CBL scheme. The scheme will operate through a shared IT system, whilst still allowing the partner organisation (PO) to let their homes in accordance with their individual lettings policy. Individual lettings policies are available from local housing offices.

Customers who join the housing register are placed in one of four broad bands of housing need. Most vacant homes are advertised for a set period of time on a regular basis called an advertising cycle. Customers can express an interest in an advertised property they wish to be considered for. Expressions of interest can be made either via the internet, the telephone or in person at a local office.

Once the deadline of the advertising cycle is reached, a shortlist of the customers who have expressed interest is taken from the IT system. The lettings policy is then used to determine who is housed from the shortlist. Feedback on lettings is made available after the homes have been let.

Customers can apply to the scheme via any PO who will process the application and undertake the initial assessment of need. Further assessment and verification may be undertaken by the PO where the customer has a local connection.

A small portion of available homes will not be advertised through the CBL scheme, but let directly to a customer who meets specific criteria. These are known as direct lets. A detailed explanation of who is eligible for a direct let and when one will be made is outlined in the PO's lettings policy.

2. Statement on choice

The POs are fully committed to enabling customers to play a more active role in choosing where they live, whilst continuing to house those in the greatest need, through the sub-regional scheme.

In order to maximise choice and mobility for customers within the sub-region, each PO will advertise a percentage of its properties as available to customers who have a local connection to any one of the seven local authorities.

3. Partner organisations

The following local authorities are participating in the scheme:

- Cambridge City Council
- East Cambridgeshire District Council
- Fenland District Council
- Forest Heath District Council
- Huntingdonshire District Council
- South Cambridgeshire District Council
- St Edmundsbury Borough Council.

East Cambridgeshire DC, Forest Heath DC, Huntingdonshire DC and St Edmundsbury BC have transferred their housing stock to the following housing associations:

- Havebury Housing Partnership – working with St Edmundsbury BC
- Hereward Housing Association – working with East Cambridgeshire DC
- Kings' Forest Housing Association – working with Forest Heath DC
- Luminus Homes – working with Huntingdonshire DC.

Contact details for all POs are available in Appendix 1.

Within each authority there are other local housing associations who will advertise their available homes through the scheme.

4. Governance

The scheme will be subject to a sub-regional partnership agreement and managed by the sub-regional board. All POs will contribute to the ongoing monitoring, development, funding and policy decisions regarding the scheme.

5. Objectives of the scheme

a) To meet the legal requirements for letting social housing as set out in the Housing Act (1996) and Homelessness Act (2002);

All assessments of need and lettings will be made in accordance with the PO's individual lettings policy. POs will ensure their lettings policies comply with all legislative requirements, related legislation, case law, local policies and strategies.

b) Partner Organisations' letting policies will be based on common principles and structure.

The POs will develop their lettings policies in accordance with the principles and structure agreed sub-regionally.

c) To assist customers in the highest assessed need;

All customers will have their housing needs assessed and be placed in a housing needs band according to their circumstances. This will take into account the reasonable preference criteria outlined in the Housing Act (1996), as amended by the Homelessness Act (2002).

Homes let through the scheme will be let to the customer in the highest housing need, who express an interest in the home and meet the property labelling criteria. Waiting time in the housing needs band will be taken into account when shortlisting.

d) Making best use of housing stock

Due to the significant shortage of housing stock across the sub-region, POs will label available homes to indicate who can express an interest in them. Generally, homes let through CBL will be let to the customer who tops the shortlist. In exceptional circumstances, either to protect vulnerable customers or to make best use of the housing stock, POs may need to offer the property to a person lower down the shortlist. Details of this can be found in PO's individual lettings policy.

e) To provide a consistent lettings process across the sub-region, where properties will be let in a fair and transparent way.

There are several ways in which the lettings process across the sub-region will be made consistent, fair and transparent. These include:

- comprehensive feedback on homes let;
- all lettings policies are based on common principles and structure;
- adoption of the same assessment of need and banding structure across the sub-region;
- sub-regional governance;
- clear labelling of properties;
- detailed procedures of how needs are assessed and homes let;
- availability of performance management information;
- a consistent review process.

f) To provide increased choice and information to customers

The scheme will provide customers with more choice and involvement in choosing the home and area in which they wish to live.

Customers will be provided with sufficient information to explain where homes are more likely to become available. This will allow them to make informed choices about where they are more likely to make a successful expression of interest.

g) Supporting vulnerable customers

POs will ensure vulnerable people are able to access the system. The assessment process will highlight customers who may be vulnerable.

A number of measures will be put in place to ensure that vulnerable customers are not disadvantaged, for example through:

- providing appropriate advice and assistance;
- translating key documents;
- providing information in other formats;
- ensuring there is appropriate support for customers using the system;
- partnership working with support agencies and professionals;
- publishing a sub-regional vulnerable persons strategy; and
- undertaking monitoring and regular reviews of the lettings policies.

h) To ensure that customers are not discriminated against, whether directly or indirectly;

Regular equality impact assessments will be carried out on the scheme. It will be monitored and reviewed on a regular basis by the sub-regional board.

i) To provide a wider housing options approach in supporting customers to meet their housing needs;

POs will adopt a wider housing options approach to provide advice and information on alternative housing options. This could include:

- adapting the customer's current home;
- low cost home ownership;
- mutual exchanges;
- rent deposit schemes;
- private sector renting.

j) To improve mobility across the sub-region;

In order to promote mobility across the sub-region, the POs have agreed that 10% of vacancies within existing stock from each PO will be let to anyone with a local connection to any authority in the sub-region. It has also been agreed that 25% of new growth homes will be made available for cross boundary mobility. This will be reviewed regularly by the sub-regional board.

k) To promote social inclusion and help achieve sustainable communities.

Homes may be labelled to ensure that a wide range of customers are able to contribute to the cohesion and sustainability of a community. POs will have area specific policies in place to help achieve this aim.

6. The lettings policy

Each PO will use its own lettings policy to determine who is housed from those who express interest in an available home. The lettings policies have been developed using common principals and the same structure. There will be consistency across the sub-region in:

- how customers access CBL, through using the same IT system across the sub-region;
- application for housing, as one application form will be used in the sub-region;

- the assessment of housing need, through a shared banding system. Once a customer is placed in a housing needs band by one PO, that applies across the whole sub-region;
- the shortlisting process used to select the successful customer;
- the local connection criteria for each authority.

To reflect local conditions, there are some variations in the lettings policies adopted by each PO. These include:

- whether a customer's financial resources will be taken into account;
- making direct lets;
- the size of property a person is able to express an interest in; and
- the decision making and review processes.

For more information, please refer to the lettings policy of the relevant PO.

RSLs who advertise their available homes will use their own lettings policy to determine the successful customer. Advertised homes will be clearly labelled to outline any local policy issues.

7. Choice based lettings

Step 1: Applying for housing

To be able to express interest in available homes, customers must be registered for housing with one of the POs. An application can be made to any PO. Where the customer has a local connection to a specific PO, that organisation will normally undertake any assessment of need. Once the application is registered, the customer will be placed in the appropriate housing needs band, and informed of this.

Step 2: Expressing interest in available homes

Available homes will be advertised through a range of media over the advertising cycle. Customers can make three expressions of interest per advertising cycle. Customers should only express an interest in properties where they meet the criteria outlined on the property label. Full details of how to express an interest in available homes is set out in the scheme user guide.

Customers with support needs will be assisted throughout the process.

Customers will not be considered for any property they are not eligible to express an interest in. This includes:

- if the household's bedroom requirement is different to the number of bedrooms in the property, for example a single person would not be considered for a three-bedroom home;
- where the customer does not meet the criteria of a PO's area specific policy;
- where there are disabled adaptations that the customer does not need;
- where there is an age restriction on the home.

Customers who regularly express an interest in properties they are not eligible for will be contacted and offered support.

Step 3: The shortlisting process

Once the advertising cycle for the property has closed, a shortlist of customers who expressed an interest in the home will be produced from those who met the advertising criteria for the property.

The home will be offered to the customer who expresses an interest in the property who is in the highest housing needs band who meets the advertised criteria. Band A is the highest housing needs band, Band D the lowest.

Where two or more customers who express interest are in the same housing needs band, the offer of accommodation will be made to the customer with the longest applicable date in band. If they also have the same applicable date, the offer will be made to the customer with the earliest date of registration.

8. Sub-regional allocations and assessment of needs

Improving sub-regional mobility is an important part of the scheme. As outlined in the objectives, 10% of each PO's available homes will be advertised as available to any customer with a local connection to any authority in the sub-region. It has also been agreed that 25% of new homes built as part of the 'growth' agenda will be advertised as available to anyone with a local connection criteria anywhere within the sub-region. Customers will be informed of which authority they have a local connection to when they apply for housing.

Where a PO makes an assessment of need and places a customer in one of the four housing needs bands, that is the customer's housing needs band for the entire sub-region. Customers will not be placed in different bands by different POs, even if they have a local connection to more than one authority.

The housing register is open to all customers who are eligible for housing even if they do not have a connection to the sub-region. They are able to express interest in advertised homes, but usually the property will be labelled as available to a customer with a local connection. If there is no local connection criteria required for the property, this will be stated on the property label.

9. Labelling properties

POs will label advertised properties to provide more information on who is eligible to express an interest in the property. Criteria that can be applied when labelling properties include:

a) Local connection: whether the property is only available to households with a local connection with a particular local authority or whether it is open to households with a local connection to any of the local authorities in the sub-region.

b) Transferring tenant: whether the property is only available to existing tenants of the PO.

c) Property size: the number of bedrooms in the property and the size of household that is likely to be offered it.

d) Property type and facilities: the property type, floor level and any other relevant details.

e) Age restrictions: whether there is a minimum age requirement (e.g. sheltered housing).

f) Adapted properties: whether the property has adaptations such as a level access shower instead of a bath.

g) Pets: whether pets are allowed.

h) Area specific policy : to promote sustainable communities, POs may introduce a specific policy in certain areas, which varies from the overall lettings policy of that PO. This could be, for example, where an age restriction is in place, there is a local connection criteria for a specific village or parish or more preference is given to a particular group. Where such a policy is in place, further details can be obtained from the relevant PO.

i) Housing needs band: properties may be labelled for customers within a specific housing needs band.

When a customer does not meet the criteria outlined on the label, they will not be considered for that home.

Re-advertising Properties

If a property has been advertised through CBL, but no eligible expressions of interest have been received, POs may re-advertise the property and relax the labelling criteria. The home will be allocated at the end of the advertising cycle to the customer in highest need who expressed interest in it.

10. Ongoing monitoring and development of the scheme.

To ensure the objectives of the scheme are being met, POs will:

- monitor expressions of interest and lettings outcomes to ensure vulnerable customers are supported;
- monitor lettings policies so that they do not prejudice or discriminate against any individual or group of people;
- make sure that the scheme is responsive, accessible and sensitive to the needs of all;
- publish an annual report on lettings across the sub-region;
- produce an ongoing development plan;
- undertake regular customer satisfaction surveys.

POs will regularly review the policy to ensure it meets its objectives and the scheme complies with legislative changes.

11. Reviews and complaints

Each PO's reviews and complaints procedures are outlined in their individual lettings policy. Reviews or complaints should be directed to the decision making PO.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Leader and Cabinet	14 December 2006
AUTHORS:	Executive Director/ Housing Advice and Options Manager	

AMENDMENTS TO THE CURRENT LETTINGS POLICY**Purpose**

1. To recommend minor amendments to the Council's lettings policy to address current targets and priorities. These will be interim measures until the new policy for the Choice Based Letting scheme is introduced next year. Proposed changes are:
 - (a) A more flexible approach to the award of additional discretionary points for occupants of temporary accommodation, in particular those in hostel accommodation.
 - (b) Introducing a further category of a need to 'move on' from supported housing within the Welfare Points.
 - (c) Formalising within the policy that applicants with former tenant arrears or existing arrears are not given priority for an offer of accommodation, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Background

2. In June 2005, the ODPM published a policy briefing entitled "Providing more settled homes". This highlighted the need to reduce households in temporary accommodation by 50% by 2010.
3. In November 2005, Cabinet agreed to amend the lettings policy to provide households in temporary accommodation with additional discretionary points after six months in temporary accommodation and homeless households are required to choose a minimum of 25 villages throughout the district as their rehousing request.
4. The Council is currently working with other local authorities and housing associations within the Cambridge Sub-Region to develop a Choice Based Letting scheme, which will incorporate a new lettings policy that will be implemented in November 2007.
5. There are a number of Best Value Performance indicators relating to homelessness. These include:
 - (a) Average length of time spent in B&B for families including a dependent or expected child.
 - (b) Average length of time spent in Hostel accommodation for families including a dependent or expected child.
 - (c) % reduction in the number of households with dependent or expected child in temporary accommodation.
 - (d) Reduction in the incidents of repeat homelessness.
 - (e) Number of homeless prevention cases.
 - (f) Reduction of rough sleepers
6. The Council's performance against these targets is good, except the average length of time a family with children lives in hostel accommodation.

7. The Supporting People review of homelessness services across the county identified a lack of move on arrangements. This has resulted in specialised supported accommodation being occupied on a long term basis by some residents, when adequate move on arrangements could free up these more specialised spaces. One of the recommendations from the report therefore was that all district council's seek to address this.

Considerations

8. **Additional priority points for occupants of temporary accommodation.**

- (a) In November 2005, Cabinet agreed to amend the lettings policy to provide households in temporary accommodation with additional discretionary points after six months in temporary accommodation (rather than after two years).
- (b) The changes to the allocations scheme, coupled with the homelessness prevention work has resulted in a decrease of households in temporary accommodation as the following table shows:

Quarter/ year	Q3 – 2004/ 05	Q4 – 2004/ 05	Q1 – 2005/ 06	Q2 – 2005/ 06	Q3 – 2005/ 06	Q4 – 2005/ 06	Q1 – 2006/ 07	Q2 – 2006/ 07
Households in temporary accommodation at the end of each quarter	147	153	152	149	147	137	132	128

- (c) The Council also has the following BVPI targets for shared temporary accommodation. The performance for bed and breakfast is slightly worse than the target, but this relates largely to historic information and includes families in B&B in previous years. Use of bed and breakfast accommodation has significantly reduced during this year, with £2,377 spent on this type of accommodation during the first six months of 2006/07 compared to expenditure of £41,078 for the full year 2005/06. Unfortunately the performance for average time spent by families in hostel accommodation is much worse than the target.
- (d) The following table shows that the Council is in the bottom Quartile of the Daventry benchmark group for these BVPI's:

	Target (weeks)	Performance at end of Sept 2006 (weeks)	Daventry benchmark group – Upper quartile	Daventry benchmark group – Lower quartile
Average time in B&B (families with children)	3.00	3.69	2.06	3.29
Average time spent in hostel accommodation (families with children)	24.00	42.43	8.25	25.18

- (e) The current allocation of additional points to homeless households after six months in temporary accommodation is not helping to reach this target, which itself is six months.
- (f) The majority of hostel residents who receive these additional points are subsequently well placed on the housing register. If some residents can be rehoused within the initial six-month period it will help to improve the average performance.
- (g) Research shows that living in shared temporary accommodation can have a negative effect on families and, in particular, children. Effects can include insecurity and lack of educational achievement due to a lack of space for privacy, play and homework.
- (h) It is also important that residents of hostels are rehoused relatively quickly to increase turnaround within the hostels and reduce the risk of bed and breakfast accommodation being used. Particularly at present whilst the homeless prevention work is being hindered by the rent restrictions in the district. Whilst a number of potentially homeless cases are still being prevented, increasing numbers are seeking housing advice. There has been a significant reduction in the numbers we have been able to assist through the rent deposit guarantee scheme, due to rent determinations being returned with restrictions that make the properties unaffordable. To illustrate this, we were only able to assist with 4 placements under the scheme in the second quarter of this year, compared to 15 in the first quarter.
- (i) In addition to the issues relating to hostel accommodation, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) does not favour the use of council owned stock as temporary accommodation. It is accepted that this reduces the amount of tenancies that can be let permanently, and many families are actually adequately housed in their temporary accommodation, but they have the insecurity of being in temporary accommodation because their turn has not been reached on the housing register.
- (j) In the ODPM's publication "Sustainable Communities: settled homes; changing lives", it identifies that 25,000 households nationally were living in temporary accommodation within council or housing association stock. In a recent letter from the DCLG sent to a number of local authorities with higher use of temporary accommodation within its own stock they state; "The Government wishes to maximise the use of housing stock in the social sector to meet long-term housing needs wherever possible.... However, the [statistical] returns indicate that a large proportion of households being provided with temporary accommodation in social sector stock are not owed merely an interim duty. This suggests that there are a significant number of cases where people are being provided with temporary accommodation in social sector stock for longer periods..... The Government would like to see local housing authorities with high numbers of homeless acceptances in temporary accommodation provided in social stock take steps to reduce these numbers, and wherever possible bring such accommodation back within the allocation scheme in order that long term offers can be made".
- (k) The council does try to minimise the amount of council stock being used as temporary accommodation, although, at times, this is necessary to prevent additional use of bed and breakfast accommodation. In view of the need to reduce numbers in temporary accommodation and taking on board the comments from the DCLG, it is proposed that the additional priority points for time in temporary accommodation are awarded earlier for families living in a council property, which would be suitable for them on a permanent basis, to enable them to have the security of a permanent home.
- (l) It is therefore proposed that temporary accommodation points continue to be provided in order to give appropriate priority to applicants on the housing

register. However there should be a more flexible approach (outlined below) to when these points are awarded to help address the needs of families living in insecure accommodation and help the council to achieve its targets, minimise the cost of temporary accommodation and reduce the numbers in temporary accommodation.

9. The provision of 'move on' accommodation

- (a) The Supporting People review of homelessness services across the county identified a lack of move on arrangements and this recommended that all district council's seek to address this.
- (b) This will be covered in the draft sub-regional lettings policy for use with the Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme, however, it is recommended that this is also addressed by councils prior to the implementation of CBL, as this is not anticipated to be until November 2007, at the earliest.
- (c) The Council does not have any specific move on arrangements, although priority may be awarded appropriately through the lettings policy.
- (d) It is therefore proposed that this should be formalised and made clearer through an additional category under welfare grounds of 'move on accommodation'.
- (e) These points would be awarded following discussion and agreement between the support provider and the Council, and would follow a housing options approach in terms of securing alternative accommodation. Support providers will include those who the Council currently refers to for supported housing and include the Young Parent Project, Railway House and other schemes operated by Cambridge Housing Society, the YMCA and Whitworth House.

10. Housing register applicants with debt to the Council.

- (a) Under Part VI of the 1996 Housing Act and related guidance for housing allocations, it is possible to make provision within a letting policy to determine priorities between applicants who would otherwise fall into a reasonable preference or additional preference category. This definition can include rent arrears and therefore applicants without rent arrears would receive priority for an offer.
- (b) In practice allocations are not generally made to applicants with rent arrears or former tenant arrears, unless there are exceptional circumstances (with the approval of the Executive Director, following new delegated authorities adopted in June 2006), however, this is not specifically contained within the Council's letting policy.
- (c) The issues that are looked at when considering exceptional circumstances include the date of the debt, the amount of debt outstanding, statutory obligations, arrangements made to clear the debt and adherence to these arrangements.
- (d) It is therefore proposed that this addition to the lettings policy should be included. However this should not be a blanket policy and exceptions should be considered based on individual circumstances, as outlined above.

Implications

11.	Financial	Potential use of B&B accommodation to provide emergency accommodation if the hostels are full for long periods of time.
	Legal	Consultation with applicants is only required when a major change in the allocations policy is proposed and therefore it is the officers opinion that this would not be necessary for these proposals. However, consultation will be required with RSL's with whom we have nomination arrangements in the district. Formalising the practice of reduced priority to applicants with arrears, will ensure the Council is not open to legal challenge.
	Staffing	Minor in terms of implementing the amendments.
	Risk Management	There is the risk that these amendments will not help to reduce the numbers in temporary accommodation, due to the increasing numbers of people who are seeking housing advice and who could potentially make a homeless application. Officers will, however, continue to work towards preventing homelessness wherever possible and schemes are being developed to help this.
	Equal Opportunities	The housing register provides a clear and consistent way of assessing the housing needs of applicants.

Consultations

12. A twelve-week consultation period has begun with RSL's with whom we have nomination arrangements in the district.
13. All households affected by these amendments will be advised in writing.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

14.	Affordable Homes	These amendments address the needs of those in the greatest need for affordable homes.
	Customer Service	The amendments will help to ensure that some of the most vulnerable applicants are appropriately housed.
	Northstowe and other growth areas	
	Quality, Accessible Services	These amendments address the needs of those in the greatest need for affordable homes. The amendments will help to ensure that some of the most vulnerable applicants are appropriately housed
	Village Life	
	Sustainability	
	Partnership	The amendments reflect concerns raised by partner agencies in respect of move on arrangements.

Conclusions/Summary

15. Amendments to the current Housing Register lettings policy are required to:
- (a) Reduce the average length of time residents spend in hostel accommodation.
 - (b) Address the concerns raised by the Supporting People team following the review of homeless services in respect of move on arrangements.

- (c) Formalise the practice of giving reduced priority to applicants on the housing register with current or former rent arrears.
16. The proposed changes will help the Council to achieve other targets, minimise costs of unsuitable temporary accommodation such as B&B and will form a short-term measure due to the introduction of a new lettings policy to accompany the Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings scheme, due in November 2007.

Recommendations

17. The Housing Portfolio Holder recommends to Cabinet that the Council's lettings policy is amended by the addition of the following paragraphs:
- (a) The additional points for residing in temporary accommodation are given;
 - (i) To hostel residents either when they move into hostel accommodation or when a rehousing obligation is accepted by the Council, whichever is later.
 - (ii) To other occupants of temporary accommodation if they are adequately housed in their current accommodation and this can be provided permanently.
 - (iii) Prior to six months in other exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the Housing Advice and Options Manager in line with the delegated authorities.
 - (b) Add an additional category of 'A need for move on accommodation' under the reasons for awarding welfare points.
 - (c) Formalise the practice of giving reduced priority to applicants with current or former tenant arrears to ensure this is covered by the policy, unless there are exceptional circumstances, through adding the following into the lettings policy: "Applicants with current or former tenant arrears or other outstanding debt to the Council will receive less priority for an offer of accommodation, unless there are exceptional circumstances. In these circumstances consideration will be given to the date and amount of the debt outstanding and any arrangements made to clear the arrears and adherence to these arrangements".

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

Cambridgeshire Supporting People review of services for homeless families
DCLG (formerly ODPM) Code of Guidance for the allocation of accommodation
DCLG (formerly ODPM) Sustainable Communities: settled homes; changing lives

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Leader and Cabinet	14 December 2006
AUTHORS:	Chief Executive/ Assistant Solicitor/HR Manager/Finance Project Officer	

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY**Purpose**

1. The purposes of this report are to request Cabinet to approve:
 - (a) the adoption of a revised Whistleblowing Policy for the Council; and
 - (b) the appointment of appropriate consultants to provide briefing sessions for existing staff and Members on the revised Policy.

Executive Summary

2. The Council's Whistleblowing Policy needed to be updated. A working group of nominees from Standards Committee and officers reviewed the policy. Standards Committee recommended to Cabinet a revised Policy for adoption. Cabinet agreed to adopt the revised Policy, subject to two points, which were referred back to Standards Committee. Standards Committee approved amendments to the Policy and have recommended to Cabinet that the amended Policy be adopted

Background

3. Standards Committee considered a proposed revised Whistleblowing Policy at its meeting on 9 August 2006 and decided to recommend to Cabinet that the revised Policy be adopted.
4. Cabinet considered the revised Whistleblowing Policy at its meeting on 14 September 2006 and agreed to adopt the revised Policy, subject to:
 - (a) the Internal Audit Manager's views being sought about becoming the first point of contact, rather than the Monitoring Officer;
 - (b) the Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder and Chief Executive determining the final wording of paragraph 3.1 of the Policy.
5. Cabinet also agreed to subscribe to the Public Concern at Work "starter package" (approximately £310 per annum).

Considerations

6. The Internal Audit Manager has agreed to become the first point of contact and the wording of the Policy has been amended where appropriate to reflect this.
7. Paragraph 3.1 of the Policy covers safeguards over harassment or victimisation. Some wording has been added to the end of the final sentence of the paragraph, so that it now includes Members, as follows (additional wording shown in ***bold italics***):

“The Council will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation of a whistleblower (including informal pressures) and will treat this as a serious disciplinary offence, which will be dealt with under the Disciplinary Policy and Procedure **(staff) or via the procedures under the Members’ Code of Conduct, as appropriate.**”

8. Standards Committee approved these amendments to the Policy at its meeting on 8 November 2006.
9. The revised Policy will need to be re-launched to existing staff and Members. This will be done through:
 - (a) inclusion in the next round of staff briefings to be held in early 2007 by the Chief Executive and Executive Director;
 - (b) promotion on In-Site, the Council's intranet; and
 - (c) a series of posters and handouts.

Options

10. Members could decide to approve the amendments to the Policy, or make other changes to the Policy.

Implications

11.	Financial	There are no direct financial implications resulting from this report.
	Legal	Any matters brought to the Council's attention under this Policy would be dealt with by the procedures outlined in it.
	Staffing	The Policy reflects responsibilities attributable to particular posts and offices. Staff raising concerns under this Policy will be aware of the safeguards available to them.
	Risk Management	The Policy is part of the Council's arrangements for ensuring that proper standards of financial conduct are maintained, and that fraud and corruption are prevented and detected.
	Equal Opportunities	The Policy is available for any member of staff, or contractors or Members to access.

Consultations

12. The previous version of the revised Policy was provided to Unison and GMB for their consideration. No comments have been received.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

13.	Affordable Homes	South Cambridgeshire District Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, honesty and accountability. The Whistleblowing Policy encourages Council employees, contractors and Members with concerns about any aspect of the Council's work, to report such matters without fear of intimidation or reprisal.
	Customer Service	
	Northstowe and other growth areas	
	Quality, Accessible Services	
	Village Life	
	Sustainability	
	Partnership	

Conclusions/Summary

14. The Internal Audit Manager has agreed to become the first point of contact with regard to the Policy. Safeguards over harassment and victimisation now include Members. The Policy has been amended accordingly.

Recommendation

15. Cabinet is recommended to approve the adoption of the revised Whistleblowing Policy.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: The Council's current Whistleblowing Policy
Whistleblowing policies from a range of other councils
"Speaking out without fear", Unison's guide to whistleblowing
"Whistleblowing Best Practice", Guidance from Public Concern at Work

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Leader and Cabinet	14 December 2006
AUTHORS:	Executive Director / Senior Planning Policy Officer	

CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH MINERALS AND WASTE DEVELOPMENT PLAN PREFERRED STAGE CONSULTATION

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to agree the Council's response to the County Council's consultation document on preferred options for the Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework. A copy of the full set of documents will be available in the Members' Lounge.

Executive Summary

- 2 This report outlines the comments made previously by South Cambridgeshire Council at the Issues and options stages of the Minerals and Waste Development Plan (MWDP). The current Preferred stage MWDP does not include a clear strategy for waste. The MWDP now includes an indication of the scale of the waste issue and the overall type and number of major waste facilities required but not a broad spatial strategy as to where they would be best located. (Para 12-16) The Waste Disposal Authority (WDA) is producing a strategy for Household Waste Recycling Centres, which should be included in the MWDP. (Para.17- 21) The issues and options stage should have included consideration of more sites. (Para 22-24) It is questioned whether the growth areas are the best locations for HWRCs. (Para 23) All the sites considered in the MWDP are shown on maps in **Appendix 1** and the recommended response is **Appendix 2**. A summary is included in the main report (Pages 6- 17). It is recommended that for the preferred sites for mineral uses at Cottenham, Barrington and Steeple Morden and the safeguarding of sites at Cottenham and Needingworth that there be no objection subject to certain issues being addressed. (Page 6-7). For waste recycling and recovery allocations the recommendation is to object to Cambridge North- West, Cambridge Northern Fringe, Hauxton, Flint Cross and Great Wilbraham since it is premature to consider these sites in advance of the development of a strategy for waste. (Pages 9-13) Waste sites in Northstowe and South of the Newmarket Road are supported in principle. (Pages 9-12) The relocation of the Waste Water Treatment Works is considered and the proposed site at Honey Hill is rejected (Page 14-15). More detailed comments on the Core Strategy and Site Specific DPDs is included as **Appendix 3**.

Background

3. Cambridgeshire County Council is preparing jointly with Peterborough City Council a Minerals and Waste Development Plan (MWDP) as part of its new Local Development Framework (LDF). This will replace the adopted Waste Local Plan 2003 and the Cambridgeshire Aggregates (Minerals) Local Plan adopted 1991. The Plan will have to conform to policies set out in the Structure Plan 2003 and Regional Planning Guidance 6 (2000), and have regard to the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England.

4. The MWDP will be vital in ensuring that construction materials are available to support planned growth in Cambridgeshire and that sustainable waste management is in place for existing and planned new communities. It sets out the County Council's preferred options in terms of policies that will guide minerals and waste development until 2021, and includes site-specific proposals.
5. The County Council consulted on the Issues and Options Paper 1 for the emerging MWDP in June 2005. That paper set out key issues and options, including aspirations for new sites for mineral extraction and waste management development, which had been put forward, by operators and landowners. A further Issues and Options Paper 2 was published in January 2006 containing additional site aspirations. These were suggestions, which had arisen during the first consultation period.
6. South Cambridgeshire Council responded to both these consultations. In April 2006 the Council responded as follows:

"There is no clear strategy included in the Waste Local Plan or proposed in the issues and options report for provision of major waste management facilities. A strategy is essential to provide a clear framework for site specific allocations for all scales of waste management facilities, from major waste management facilities to household waste recycling centres, and also any supporting uses such as waste transfer stations. This should make clear the number, nature and scale of uses proposed and their intended catchment. It should also identify the broad locations for such facilities to meet the objectives of the strategy. This will enable a more detailed site selection process to be undertaken within the context of clear strategy."
7. Also:

"It is understood that the County Council intends that the next stage in the Waste Local Development Framework process will include preferred options for specific sites. The District Council is concerned that this is a big step from the general approach being explored here without an intermediate consultation stage on both the overall strategy and site options. The District Council would hope to be consulted on both the strategy and options for site-specific allocations before preferred sites are identified that affect South Cambridgeshire, including the major developments."
8. Therefore:

"In view of these substantial and overarching concerns, the District Council feels it has no option but to make a holding objection to **all** the sites in South Cambridgeshire, pending the preparation by the County Council of options for a strategy for minerals and waste, either prior to or together with possible sites options for each strategy. This should include Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment of options as required as part of the LDF process. The District Council will then be in a position to provide considered views on the sites options then identified."

Current consultation on the preferred options stage

9. As a result of the representations received during the two issues and an options consultation the County Council has produced its preferred options. The Preferred Options Plan will be subject to consultation for a six-week period, from 6th November to 18th December 2006.
10. The MWDP comprises of three Development Plan Documents (DPDs). These are:

- The Minerals and Waste Core Strategy DPD (MWCS) which sets out the strategic vision and objectives, and includes a suite of development control policies to guide minerals and waste development
- The Minerals and Waste Site Specific Proposals DPD (MWSSP) which sets out site specific proposals for mineral and waste development and supporting site specific policies
- The Earith and Mepal Area Action Plan DPD, which is an area with inter-related waste and mineral issues that needed specific consideration (this plan does not cover any part of South Cambridgeshire district).

11. A Proposals Map will support these documents.

Issues for Consideration

A. Minerals and Waste Core Strategy DPD

12. A fundamental concern arising from the previous consultations was the lack of a strategy for minerals and waste. The Minerals and Waste Core Strategy DPD (MWCS) at this stage should include a clear spatial strategy for both waste and minerals. The Preferred Options stage of the MWCS disappointingly still does not provide a clear spatial strategy. It is therefore very difficult to provide informed comments on advantages and disadvantages of individual sites. This is particularly important for minerals and waste, which are often considered 'bad neighbour' uses and which may require strategic considerations to take precedence over site-specific concerns and to rely upon mitigation rather than avoidance of adverse impacts.

Waste

13. The Minerals and Waste Core Strategy DPD refers to four scenarios to consider different approaches to managing waste:

0. Do nothing
1. Meet targets
2. High minimisation and diversion
3. Integrated strategy with energy recovery

14. The MWCS indicates a preference for scenarios 2 and 3, but it is not clear, which one will be included in the adopted plan or how a choice will be made. Importantly, there has been no previous consultation on these scenarios, which should have been a fundamental part of issues and options consultation in the front loaded system. Scenario 2 maximises recovery and recycling of waste but with no energy from waste. Scenario 3 is similar but specifically includes energy from waste.

15. It is important for the MWCS to include a specific preferred option that is capable of sustainability appraisal. If it is not possible to make a decision at this time on which scenario is preferred, the Council could suggest that a scenario is pursued that seeks to maximise recovery and recycling but also allows for an Energy for Waste (EfW) option where this is demonstrated through studies to be an appropriate solution. This would provide a single preferred option but allow flexibility for EfW to be considered, particularly in the context of the major developments, if it proves to be a desirable solution within the overall objectives of the MWCS.

16. Whilst there is now an indication of the scale of the waste issue, and the overall type and number of major waste facilities required across the whole plan area, this is not contained in a preferred option in the Core Strategy. There is no indication of the

number of household waste recycling facilities required. There is also no broad spatial strategy for the type and number of facilities needed in different parts of the plan area and an indication of their intended catchments. For example, how many new facilities are required to serve Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire and in what broad locations should they be located to serve an appropriate population catchment? In the absence of this type of spatial element to the Core Strategy, there is no clear policy framework against which to judge the allocations in the Site Specific Policies DPD and assess whether there is an appropriate level of provision and whether it is in the right locations.

17. In 2002 the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Joint Waste Management Partnership (partnership of all Waste Collection Authorities in Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) as Waste Disposal Authority and the unitary Peterborough City Council) published its 'Strategy for dealing with Municipal Solid Waste 2002 – 2022 in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.' The strategy anticipates that new waste facilities may be required to deliver the strategy objectives but does not identify the types, locations or catchments of these, preferring to encourage the waste industry to bring forward innovative waste solutions through a waste Private Finance Initiative (PFI) process.
18. Cambridgeshire County Council's waste PFI project has now moved to the preferred bidder stage and it is likely that the provision of additional Household Waste Recycling Facilities (HWRC), required to deliver the municipal waste strategy objectives, will lie outside the PFI. The County Council, as waste disposal authority, is therefore now developing a HWRC strategy and delivery plan to assist delivery of these facilities. The draft HWRC strategy and delivery plan indicates that five new HWRCs will be required in the Cambridge area to serve existing and new developments. It assumes that the existing Thriplow HWRC, which has permanent planning permission and a lease until 2041, will remain open, and that even if the Milton HWRC remains open (it is due to close in 2010 when its temporary planning permission expires), four additional HWRCs will still be required. Further work is under way to identify where these facilities should be located to best serve both Cambridge and the rural communities in South Cambridgeshire.
19. It is essential that the MWDP is capable of delivering the facilities required to meet the municipal waste strategy objectives, including the provision of new HWRCs. The County Council has included with the deposited documents of the MWDP, a Position Statement for a Draft Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy and Delivery Plan 2006, but there is no explanation of its role or purpose within the MWDP process. It confirms that Cambridge and South Cambs will need in the order of a further 5 new sites. However, it still jumps straight to a conclusion that these should be in the new developments without any consideration of spatial options for the best way of serving both Cambridge and the rural communities in South Cambridgeshire. It also assumes that the existing sites at Milton and Thriplow will not be available in the long term. Thriplow HWRC has not been included as a preferred site in the Minerals and Waste Site Specific Policies DPD and no consideration has been given to Milton HWRC remaining open.
20. It is not clear why the MWDP does not include that level of detail in its preferred option for waste, particularly given that:
 - (a) The background work has identified a required number of different types of major waste facilities (albeit that this varies between 13 and 16 depending on which scenario is preferred), and

- (b) The Draft Household Waste Recycling Centre Strategy and Delivery Plan states a need for a specific number of HWRCs in the Cambridge area (5, if Thriplow is retained),
21. The role of the MWCS is to set the strategy for the provision of waste facilities. However it seems that this is in part being left for a non-statutory process, which is not subject to public consultation or sustainability appraisal. This is not appropriate in a plan-led system.
22. Therefore no document gives consideration to the appropriate spatial strategy for providing the identified number of waste facilities. Should they all be in or the edge of Cambridge? Does this best serve the rural area? If focused on Cambridge, should they be in the major developments? Also, the number of potential sites listed for the different types of major waste facilities is far greater than the number of sites stated as required under either scenario. It is not clear how a choice is to be made between the different sites and how, as facilities come forward, it will be identified whether particular allocations are no longer required.
23. The issues and options stage of the LDF should have considered a wider selection of sites in the context of an emerging strategy. For example, following the proximity principle, brownfield sites in Cambridge city could be suitable rather than locating waste facilities in the new growth areas. Whilst it may be possible to include facilities within the major developments on the edge of Cambridge, in view of their predominantly residential character and lack of general employment areas, they would need substantial buffer zones around them to mitigate their impact on surrounding areas. The question should be asked whether this is the most appropriate use of this scarce land resource on the edge of Cambridge, and in particular whether it is an appropriate location for all types of waste uses.
24. As a matter of strategy, if Glebe Farm on the Cambridge Southern Fringe has been rejected in part because of impact on residential amenity, and an alternative site proposed at Hauxton that is in the Green Belt, this must indicate the need for a similar assessment for all the urban extensions where a variety of waste facilities are proposed. It also raises the question whether the existing HWRC site at Milton, which is rejected because it is in the Green Belt, should be reconsidered within the context of the current overall development strategy for the Cambridge area and the most appropriate waste strategy to go alongside that. These principles are not grappled with in the Core Strategy and there is no clear spatial strategy to provide a framework for making these difficult decisions about the most appropriate sites in the Site Specific Policies DPD. It is considered that this should be a key function of the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy.

Minerals

25. Options for mineral extraction are much more constrained than for waste disposal as:
- Minerals can only be extracted where they are naturally occurring. Their geological location influences the minerals strategy.
 - The strategy is more likely to be determined by the location of minerals in relation to the proposed development areas and the implications of extracting minerals on amenity of neighbours, traffic generation through towns and villages etc. There are policies in the MWDP to consider this.

B. Site Specific Policies DPDPlan Preferred Sites

26. The following sites are allocated for minerals or waste facilities in the Site Specific Policies DPD. Maps are attached at Appendix 1 for Members' convenience.

Minerals site allocations:

27. No totally new areas have been allocated for minerals – instead the DPD proposes extensions of existing works (Policies SSP 1-6). No totally new locations have been identified as safeguarded to prevent the sterilisation of long-term mineral reserves – extensions are proposed to existing areas (Policy SSP7). The recommended response to the Preferred Sites is contained in Appendix 2 and summarised in the table below:

Nature of Mineral (Policy number from Site Specific DPD in brackets)	Site (Site reference number in brackets)	Recommended response (See Appendix 2 for full response)
Sand & Gravel Extraction (SSP1)	Cottenham (SS1 Site 4)	No objection provided that mineral traffic is routed via the A10 and subject to measures to mitigate the matters raised by Environmental Health and Conservation.
Brick Clay Extraction (SSP3)	None in S Cambs	
Chalk Marl Extraction: (SSP4)	Barrington Quarry, Barrington (SS1 Site 8)	No objection subject to measures to mitigate the matters raised by Environmental Health and Conservation.
Specialist Chalk Extraction (SSP5)	Station Quarry, Steeple Morden (SS1 Site 21)	No objection subject to measures to mitigate the matters raised by Environmental Health and Conservation.
Specialist Clay Extraction: (SSP5)	None in S Cambs	
Specialist Limestone Extraction (SSP5)	None in S Cambs	

Nature of Mineral (Policy number from Site Specific DPD in brackets)	Site (Site reference number in brackets)	Recommended response (See Appendix 2 for full response)
Mineral Safeguarding Areas (SSP7)	Cottenham (SS2 Site 1))	No objection provided that mineral traffic is routed via the A10 and subject to measures to mitigate the matters raised by Environmental Health and Conservation.
	Needingworth (SS2 Site 4)	No objection provided that buffer zones can be provided to ensure that appropriate separation and protection for Willingham and Over is provided and that mineral continues to be removed from the site via Needingworth.

28. The key points are:

- a. Barrington - The Council in June had been concerned about the size of the extension to the quarry and had requested that the proposal be reduced in size. The preferred site is considerably smaller now. The mineral safeguarding area is also considerably smaller being just around the existing quarry and the smaller extension site. In the MWDP the Barrington Cement Works Railhead has been designated as a Sustainable Transport Protection Zone in order that the in future consideration can be given to transporting minerals by rail. This is to be welcomed. Environmental Health has made comments regarding potential impacts of noise, dust and vibration on the health of residents and Conservation comments relate to landscape and biodiversity impacts. The issues raised are likely to be capable of being addressed through mitigation measures.
- b. Cottenham - This site is the same boundary as consulted on in June 2005. It would be largely a continuation of existing quarry north of Landbeach. Environmental Health and Conservation have made comments concerning impacts of noise and dust. Conservation comments relate to landscape impacts.

Waste site allocations:

29. Preferred option SSP10 in Site Specific DPD allocates a number of sites for waste recycling and recovery. This is followed by a list (Table 5) that identifies potential uses for sites. It appears that the table does not form part of the policy. This method of identifying sites is not considered appropriate. Not all sites will be suitable all waste recycling and recovery facilities. The appropriate uses for specific sites should form part of the policy to ensure that the policy does not provide for inappropriate scale and types of waste facilities in sensitive areas.
30. Many of the "sites" that are included in the policy are actually broad areas of search within which waste facilities should be provided. It is questionable whether they can be referred to as "allocations".

31. The list of sites is much longer than the number of sites indicated in either of the preferred scenarios (13-16 facilities compared with 27 sites in the policy). There is no indication how a choice will be made between sites. If there are more sites than required, how is a decision to be made in the context of determining a planning application for one of the urban fringe sites, for example, on whether it should be permitted or refused if there is no provision for a waste facility in the masterplan accompanying the planning application?
32. The site allocations for Waste Recycling and Recovery (Policy SSP10) and the potential uses identified for them are listed in the following table:

Sites allocated in Policy SSP10	Potential uses indicated in Table 5 of Site Specific DPD						
	1. Mixed Waste Stream Recycling Facilities	2. Single Stream Recycl- ing Facilities	3. In Vessel Composting Facilities	4. Inert Waste Recycl- ing Facilities	5. Energy from Waste facilities - if Waste Scenario 3 developed	6. Specialist Facilities (dealing with hazardous waste)	7. HWRC (& Bulking up transfer facility).
Cambridge North West (SS4 Site 8E)	Yes	Yes					Yes
Cambridge Northern Fringe (East) (SS4 Site 8B)	Yes	Yes					Yes
South of Newmarket Road, Cambridge (SS4 Site 36)	Yes	Yes					Yes
Former Bayer Crop Science (West), Hauxton (SS4 Site 51)							Yes
Northstowe (SS4 Site 8A)							Yes
Bridgefoot Quarry, Flint Cross (SS4 Site 21)				Yes			
Great Wilbraham (SS4 Site 18)				Yes			
Brookfield Business Centre, Cottenham (SS4 Site 5)						Yes (Malary Environmental facility managing waste oils and fuel)	

Note: Addenbrookes Hospital allocated for Clinical waste management facility, incorporating energy from waste

33. The recommended response to the **Preferred Sites** is contained in Appendix 2 and summarised in the table below with key issues identified. Environmental Health comments generally that in major new developments it would be possible to ensure minimal environmental impact at the design stage by incorporating mitigation measures into the development.

Nature of Waste Facility (Policy number from Site Specific DPD in brackets)	Site	Recommended response (See Appendix 2 for full response)
Waste Recycling and Recovery (Policy SSP 10)	Cambridge North West (SS4 Site 8E)	<p>There is concern as to which of the potential waste facilities can be located on this site and whether the major waste facilities are suitable for this primarily residential area? It is not intended that there be an employment area in this urban extension. Conservation comments it would be difficult to integrate into the existing landscape.</p> <p>Object. It is premature in advance of the development of a strategy for waste management to support the possibility of providing a Household Waste Recycling Facility in the North West Cambridge. However, the County Councils Supplementary Planning Document "The Location and design of Major Waste Management Facilities" 2006 shows that such facilities can be planned into urban extensions.</p>
Waste Recycling and Recovery (Policy SSP10)	Cambridge Northern Fringe (East) (SS4 Site 8B)	<p>Object. It is premature in advance of the development of a strategy for waste management to support the possibility of providing a Household Waste Recycling Facility in the Cambridge Northern Fringe, which will be a relatively small, but high-density development. However, the County Councils Supplementary Planning Document "The Location and design of Major Waste Management Facilities" 2006 shows that such facilities can be planned into urban extensions.</p>
Waste Recycling and Recovery (Policy SSP10)	South of Newmarket Road, Cambridge (SS4 Site 36)	<p>Whilst accepting the principle of providing waste facilities in close proximity to where waste arises, the difficulties in providing a waste</p>

Nature of Waste Facility (Policy number from Site Specific DPD in brackets)	Site	Recommended response (See Appendix 2 for full response)
		<p>facility here in an appropriate way should not be underestimated because of the high density nature of the development and the fact that there are no proposals for a general employment area where waste facilities would normally be located.</p> <p>Support. Cambridge East will be the largest single development in the Cambridge Sub-Region over the next 15 years. To be planned at high densities, whatever the overall strategy for waste management the opportunity to make the development more sustainable by providing Household Waste Recycling Facilities on site is supported.</p>
Waste Recycling and Recovery (Policy SSP10)	Former Bayer Crop Science (West), Hauxton (SS4 Site 51)	<p>This site was not considered at the issues and options stage having been proposed by objectors to the Glebe Farm proposals. It is considered by the County Council to be the best location to serve the needs of Cambridge southern fringe and surrounding villages.</p> <p>The County Council has considered other land in the southern fringe and the site selection process indicated that this was on balance, the best site for this use in relation to a number of key factors including –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of previously developed land • Avoiding residential areas as near neighbours • Minimising conflicts with emerging planning policies of other local councils • Land benefits from a good level of existing landscaping • Relatively easy access from an A class road • A good proximity to existing future demand for a waste recycling service for existing and new households.

Nature of Waste Facility (Policy number from Site Specific DPD in brackets)	Site	Recommended response (See Appendix 2 for full response)
		<p>The County Council consider that given the significant advantages of the site that an exception should be made for it to be located in the Green Belt. The alternative to the Green Belt would be to take up an area designated for new homes. This dilemma is one that could also be addressed in the Northern Fringe, Northwest Cambridge and South of the Newmarket Road areas and yet the County has come to different conclusions in these areas- allowing an HWRC to be alongside houses.</p> <p>The site is already being used as an effluent treatment works however unlike a HWRC this does not generate a significant amount of traffic.</p> <p>Environmental Health comments that this site is designated as a special site under Part IIa EPA 1990, the land having been contaminated by previous industrial use. Any proposed development would need to account for on-going remediation works and whether the site was suitable for the proposed use without risk to the environment or human health. There are residential properties within 200 metres and new dwellings are proposed for the Eastern Bayer site, therefore the impact of the new development would need to be assessed accordingly.</p> <p>Object. It is premature in advance of the development of a strategy for waste management to propose a Household Waste Recycling Facility at Hauxton. The present waste water treatment plant is an inappropriate use within the Green belt which has proven acceptable only because of the direct link with the former uses on the Bayer Site. The cessation of the industrial activities on the Bayer site and its</p>

Nature of Waste Facility (Policy number from Site Specific DPD in brackets)	Site	Recommended response (See Appendix 2 for full response)
		<p>replacement with a mixed housing/employment development as proposed in the South Cambridgeshire Local Development Framework provides an opportunity to secure improvements to the Green Belt by securing a future use which will have less impact. The current waste water treatment plant does not generate any traffic but is prominent in views and detracts from the openness of the Green Belt on this important approach/exit from Cambridge.</p>
Waste Recycling and Recovery (Policy SSP10)	Northstowe (SS4 Site 8A)	<p>In the Northstowe Area Action Plan it is suggested that an HWRC and bulking up facility be located on the general employment area proposed adjacent to the Park & Ride site. This allocation could therefore be more specific.</p> <p>Environmental Health comments that there is the potential for a Combined Heat and Power plant at Northstowe and this should be included in the list of preferred uses. As this is a new development it would be possible to ensure minimal environmental impact at the design stage</p> <p>Support in principle but object to the inclusion of the proposed Green Separation within the area of search. Northstowe will be a new town and it is likely that whatever the strategy for household waste recycling that a site at Northstowe would be appropriate. The Northstowe Area Action acknowledges the suitability of a proposed general employment area at the northern end of the new town site (adjoining the proposed Park & Ride site). Also forward the comments on Energy from Waste.</p>

Nature of Waste Facility (Policy number from Site Specific DPD in brackets)	Site	Recommended response (See Appendix 2 for full response)
Waste Recycling and Recovery (Policy SSP10)	Bridgefoot Quarry, Flint Cross (SS4 Site 21)	Object. It is premature in advance of the development of a strategy for inert waste management to support the use of this site at Flint Cross. Much of the inert waste that is likely to be generated will arise from development, which is located in and on the edge of Cambridge or to the north of the city.
Waste Recycling and Recovery (Policy SSP10)	Great Wilbraham (SS4 Site 18)	Object. It is premature in advance of the development of a strategy for inert waste management to support the use of this site at Great Wilbraham. Much of the inert waste that is likely to be generated will arise from development which is located in and on the edge of Cambridge or to the north of the city.
Waste Recycling and Recovery (Policy SSP 10)	Brookfield Business Centre, Cottenham (SS4 Site 5)	<p>Environmental Health comments that this is a proposed extension to an existing facility but it is within 100m of residential premises therefore noise/pollution impact would need to be assessed.</p> <p>Conservation comments that large areas of scrub and wildlife cover would be lost in a very open area and is directly adjacent to Cottenham Lode with potential for pollution. It is probably reasonable to assume that great crested newts might be present associated with the open water habitats due to their general presence in parts of Cottenham.</p> <p>On the basis of the advice from Environmental Health and Conservation that there is insufficient information to object or support to this proposal.</p>

34. The recommended response to the Preferred Sites for other site allocations for waste and other facilities is contained in Appendix 2 and summarised in the table below:

Nature of Waste Facility (Policy number from Site Specific DPD in brackets):	Site	Recommended response (See Appendix 2 for full response)
Stable Non- reactive Hazardous Waste Landfill (SSP13)	None in S Cambs	
Waste safeguarding area (SSP14)	Pet Crematorium A505, Thriplow	No assessment of this site given by the County Council and it is already in use for waste.
	Waste Management Park Landbeach	No assessment has been given on this site either and it is already in use for waste.
Waste Water Treatment Works (SSP15)	Honey Hill, Horningsea / Fen Ditton (SS5 Site4)	<p>The site is the eastern part of the area considered in January.</p> <p>The County Council has responded to the District Council's objection at the earlier consultation stage when only a Honey Hill option was being consulted upon. (See SSP5 Site 1)</p> <p>The only advantage of this site over the rejected larger area of search is that it is further from Horningsea and Fen Ditton</p> <p>The disadvantages are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An inappropriate development in the Green Belt • Greatest impact on public rights of way • Greatest impact in the expansion plans for Cambridge East • Greatest impact on the proposed Bridge of Reeds and the Wicken Fen Vision • The area is rural and open in character • Effects on nature conservation, archaeology and water supply (aquifer)

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Considerable local opposition. • Traffic generation on High Ditch Road, which would need to be routed to avoid Fen Ditton village. <p>The County Council's preference for this location at Honey Hill is not supported by its own assessment. Indeed the County Council's Sustainability Appraisal Report identifies "no significant positive effects" for any of the areas (Para 7.204) and significant negative effects on health, amenity, landscape, water quality, biodiversity as well as best and most versatile agricultural land. The extensive reference in its assessment to mitigation could equally apply to those of the other options, which lie outside the flood plain of the River Cam.</p> <p>The County Council needs to consider alternative locations for the relocation of the Cambridge Waste Water Treatment Plant, which will have less impact on local communities and the natural environment. This may mean considering locations more distant from the current Waste Water Treatment Plan, which will add to the costs of the relocation.</p>
Safeguarding railheads/ Transport Protection Zones (SSP16)	Barrington Cement Works railhead	In the MWDP the Barrington Cement Works Railhead has been designated as a Sustainable Transport Protection Zone in order that the in future consideration can be given to transporting minerals by rail. This is to be welcomed.

Safeguarding railheads/ Transport Protection Zones (SSP16)	Cambridge Northern Fringe(Aggregates Railhead)	The Council supports this safeguarding.
Temporary facility for recovery and recycling of construction and demolition waste (Table 5)	All Strategic Development Areas	The Council supports this as long as there is some clarification of what is meant by the Strategic Development Areas.
New Technology - (Table 5)	The accommodation of new technology is not precluded, but until the nature of any technology is known potential sites cannot be identified.	

Non-Preferred Sites

35. The following sites were considered for minerals or waste but were rejected. The recommended response to the **Non-Preferred Sites** is contained in Appendix 2.

Minerals:

Sand & Gravel Extraction (SSP 1)	Smithey Fen, Cottenham (SS1 Site 16)
Brick Clay Extraction: (SSP 3)	None in S Cambs
Chalk Marl Extraction: (SSP4)	None in S Cambs
Specialist Chalk Extraction: (SSP5)	None in S Cambs
Specialist Clay Extraction:	None in S Cambs
Specialist Limestone Extraction:	None in S Cambs
Minerals Safeguarding Area:	Hauxton (SS2 Site 2)

Waste:

36. Waste (Policy SSP 10):

Sites not preferred to be allocated in Policy SSP10	North of Newmarket Road (Cambridge Airport)(SS4 Site 26) Glebe Farm, Trumpington (SS4 Site 27) Cambridge University Farm, Girton (SS4 Site 28) Crane Industrial Site, Milton (SS4 Site 29) Gamlingay (SS4 Site 41) Milton HWRC (SS4 Site 45) Thriplow HWRC (SS4 Site 46) Area of search near M11, Cambridge (SS4 Site 47) Bayer Crop Site area of search (SS4 Site 48) Oakington Area of Search (SS4 Site 49) Cambridge East (SS4 Site 8C)
Inert Waste Landfill (SSP11)	None in S Cambs
Stable Non- reactive Hazardous Waste Landfill (SSP13)	None in S Cambs

37. Other waste sites and other facilities not preferred:

Waste safeguarding area (SSP14)	None in S Cambs.
Waste Water Treatment Works (SSP15)	Honey Hill, Horningsea / Fen Ditton (SS5 Site 1) Milton HWRC area of search (SS5 Site 2) Milton/Landbeach area of search (SS5 Site 3)
Safeguarding railheads/ Transport Protection Zones (SSP16)	None in S Cambs

38. More detailed comments on the Core Strategy DPD and the Site Specific DPD are set out in Appendix 3.

Implications

Financial	None
Legal	The Council will be obliged to show Mineral and Waste allocations on its own LDF Proposals Map once the Minerals and Waste Development Plan is adopted
Staffing	Staff have offered to discuss the emerging policies and proposals with the County and the MWDP is prepared
Risk Management	There is a risk that the MWDP could include allocations for land not acceptable to the Council for example waste management issues could prevail over amenity and other planning considerations
Equal Opportunities	None

Consultations

39. Internal consultation with Development Control, Conservation and Environmental Health.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

Affordable Homes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seeking the sustainable extraction of minerals and management of waste, including the provision of facilities for household waste in accessible locations to serve existing and planned new communities Seeking opportunities to work in partnership with the County council as the minerals and waste authority, on the planning for minerals and waste within the district.
Customer Service	
Northstowe and other growth areas	
Quality, Accessible Services	
Village Life	
Sustainability	
Partnership	

Conclusions/Summary

40. The Council commented at earlier stages on the absence on a clear spatial strategy, particularly for waste. The current Preferred Options documents still do not contain a spatial strategy and it has been difficult to assess the best locations for these 'bad neighbour' uses and recommend which could be supported. Only where there it is

clear that a site will form part of any strategy has it been possible to recommend support e.g. at Northstowe and Cambridge East.

Recommendation

41. Cabinet is recommended to agree the responses to the Minerals and Waste Development Plan consultation contained in Appendices 2 and 3.

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

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan Documents - Preferred Options (November 2006)

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet

14 December 2006

AUTHORS: Chief Executive / HR Manager

REVIEW OF CRIMINAL RECORDS BUREAU POLICY AND PROCESSES**Purpose**

1. The purpose of the report is to provide an update on the proposed development of a policy for undertaking Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks on Councillors. This report has been informed by a CRB Assurance visit at the end of August 2006 and the report analyses the implications of that visit.

Executive Summary

2. Scrutiny and Overview Committee considered a report, drafted by the Senior Democratic Services Officer, at its meeting of 20 July 2006. The committee, having regard for issues and sensitivities outlined within the report, recommended that Cabinet develop a policy on CRB checks for Members.
3. The development of a policy and procedure had been postponed pending the outcome of a CRB Assurance visit. The visit took place on 31 August 2006 and the inspectors report and recommendations have now been received.
4. The assurance report requires a number of changes to be made to the Council's current processes in relation to CRB checks. The recommendations and advice provided by the inspector has also informed the Council in relation to CRB checks for Councillors.
5. The main impacts of the recommendations, which will influence a decision to develop a CRB policy and procedure for Councillors, concern eligibility for requesting a CRB check and the nature of the information received from the CRB.

Background

6. The Council as a registered body is bound by the "Code of Practice and Explanatory guide for Registered Persons and other recipients of Disclosure Information" and other guidance issued on the workings of the Code of Practice by the CRB.
7. CRB checking on prospective and current employees has been carried out since 2003. A review and update of the policy was carried out in 2004. A further review is planned for 2006/2007 to check that policy and procedures had kept pace with changes in CRB guidance.
8. The CRB carries out random assurance checks on registered bodies. The CRB carried out such a visit on 31 August 2006. During the assurance visit, the CRB assurance manager considered the Council's proposal to introduce a policy of checking elected members.

9. In March this year Council agreed that all members should undergo mandatory CRB checks. Scrutiny and Overview examined the issue in July and recommended that Cabinet develop a policy on CRB checks for members. A report was subsequently prepared for Cabinet in September. The report to Council was withdrawn pending the outcome of the assurance visit report.
10. The assurance report has now been received and the recommendations and implications have been considered by the lead counter-signatory (currently the HR Officer) and officers of the Council. The assurance report recommends a number of changes to be made to staff recruitment practices and policies.
11. The assurance report also draws the Council's attention to the importance of ensuring that the organisation only countersigns disclosure applications in respect of positions that genuinely entitle the Council to ask an exempted question. For Councillors, this means that the position that they hold must meet the CRB's eligibility criteria to enable the Council to request that a disclosure check is undertaken.

Considerations

12. The CRB advises that:
 - (a) Standard checks are primarily for posts that involve directly working with children or vulnerable adults. Standard checks may also be issued for people entering certain professions, such as members of the legal and accountancy professions. The Standard check contains details of all convictions held on the Police National Computer including current and 'spent' convictions as well as details of any cautions, reprimands or final warnings. If a position involves working with children, the CRB check will indicate whether information is held on three government lists of those who are banned from working with children or the vulnerable.
 - (b) Enhanced checks are for posts that involve a far greater degree of contact with children or vulnerable adults. In general the type of work will involve regularly caring for, supervising, training or being in sole charge of such people. Examples include a Teacher, Scout or Guide leader. Enhanced checks are also issued for certain statutory purposes such as gaming and lottery licences. This level of check involves an additional level of check to those carried out for the Standard CRB check; a check on local police records. Where local police records contain additional information that may be relevant to the post the applicant is being considered for, the Chief Officer of police may release information for inclusion in an Enhanced check. Exceptionally, and in a very small number of circumstances (typically to protect the integrity of current police investigations), additional information may be sent under separate cover to the Counter signatory and should not be revealed to the applicant.
13. The main impact of the assurance guidance that will affect the CRB policy and procedure is that of 'Eligibility'.

Eligibility

14. The effect of asking for a disclosure is to ask exempt questions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. If a person is sentenced to more than 2 years in prison, the conviction can never be considered as spent and would have to be declared whatever the job role. Sentences of less than 2 years can be rehabilitated and considered as spent and therefore there is no need for this information to be

disclosed. The exemption orders to the Act allow for questions to be asked about previous convictions for certain roles and appointments.

15. The Assurance Manager provided guidance in respect of elected members within the miscellaneous section of the report which highlights that the organisation needs to show why it is asking the exempt questions and the importance of only countersigning Disclosure applications in respect of positions that genuinely entitle the organisation to ask an exempt question. Access to sensitive information about vulnerable people and children is not an 'entitlement' nor is the election of a councillor. The CRB eligibility guidance was updated in August 2006.
16. For members, the guidance specifies that a person can only be asked to make a disclosure in a local government context if they are:
 - (a) a member of a governing body of an educational institution or
 - (b) a member of a relevant local government body which is involved in discharging any education or social service functions of a local authority or committee which discharges any such function.
17. The Council does not discharge any social service or education function and it is difficult to find another reason in the eligibility guidance that gives the Council the right to ask any member to undertake a check.
18. There is currently a tension between the CRB guidance and the current "Safeguarding Children" agenda, which seeks to ask for a check on almost anyone coming into contact with children.
19. The reasoning for checking members was the establishment of public confidence rather than meeting the eligibility requirements.

Options

20. The Council could implement a policy to require all elected members to undergo CRB disclosure checks. However, this would not be in the spirit of the legislation and would be open to legal challenge by individuals and it would be up to the Council to prove it had the right to ask an exempt question under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. This approach might be difficult to maintain given the current guidance. Sufficient successful challenges could affect the registration status of the Council and this would be costly to defend.
21. There would be cost implications following the introduction of such a policy. The cost of an initial standard check for 57 members will be £1767.00 and a budget would need to be identified, re-checks would be needed periodically and certainly upon the election of a new councillor, therefore there would need to be ongoing budget provision.
22. A process for member applications and handling returned information from the CRB would also be required. This would involve an appropriate officer administering applications and returned CRB checks. Any checks showing a 'trace' would need to be handled within confidentiality guidelines.
23. The Council could consider the risks associated with not undertaking checks on all members to be limited. Some district council members have already been checked in connection with their other roles and outside interests such as school governors or as

part of their role as county councillors. However the CRB advises against 'portability' and does not recommend that checks are transferred between organisations.

24. The roles of individual councillors may develop in such a way as to qualify them for a CRB check under the eligibility criteria, for example, a councillor may be appointed onto a committee or body which has a direct involvement with children or vulnerable adults. In these circumstances the Leader of the Council or a member of Democratic Services should advise the council's CRB lead counter-signatory and arrange for a CRB check to be undertaken. The reasons for the Councillor being CRB checked would need to be clearly documented against the eligibility criteria.
25. Legislation in relation to CRB checking is updated periodically and the guidance/advice to local authorities changes from time to time. In the event of a significant change affecting the guidance on Local Authority or Councillor roles, a further report will need to be brought to Cabinet to consider the implications at that time.

Implications

26. The legal and risk management implications have been highlighted under Considerations.

27.	Financial	The cost of a standard check for 57 members will be £1767.00, a budget does not currently exist for this. There would be financial implications if a challenge to the right to ask for a disclosure were made (legal costs and possible compensation and fine).
	Legal	See body of report
	Staffing	See body of report
	Risk Management	See body of report
	Equal Opportunities	The request for a disclosure relates to the post and role and not individual.

Consultations

28. The Criminal Records Bureau has been consulted.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

29.	Affordable Homes	None
	Customer Service	
	Northstowe and other growth areas	
	Quality, Accessible Services	
	Village Life	
	Sustainability	
	Partnership	

Recommendations

30. It is recommended that Cabinet:
- a. note the guidance provided by the CRB Assurance Manager, as referred to in paras 16 and 17 above;
 - b. do not take forward the proposal to introduce a policy to check all elected members but;
 - c. in the event of a councillor commencing in a role which does meet the CRB criteria for eligibility, that the Leader or Democratic Services Manager advises the council's CRB lead counter-signatory and that a CRB check is undertaken and the reasons for the Councillor being CRB checked are clearly documented against the eligibility criteria.

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

CRB Code of Practice and associate guidance

Report to Leader and Cabinet dated 9th March 2006 "Implementation of Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy"

Report to Scrutiny and Overview Committee – 20th July 2006

Report to Cabinet 14th September 2006 "Developing a Policy on CRB Checks"

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet
AUTHOR/S: Executive Director / Lands Officer

14 December 2006

DISPOSAL OF 57/59 HIGH STREET, SAWSTON**Purpose**

1. To seek Cabinet's decision on the disposal of 57/59 High Street, Sawston following the decision of the Housing Portfolio Holder on 9th November 2006:

In the event of no further RSL interest in the redevelopment of 57/59 High Street, Sawston and subject to further local consultation and to independent valuation advice that supports an expectation of a higher capital receipt with residential planning permission for no. 57:

- i) **obtain planning consent for change of use of 57 to residential and**
- ii) **place whole property for sale on open market, valued for retail use (no 59) with potential for residential use above (no 57).**

Executive Summary

2. The leases for 57 and 59 High Street have expired and both premises are vacant. Potential exists to redevelop no 57 for residential use but investigation of RSL interest in using this potential to create affordable housing has been exhausted. Should Cabinet approve the sale of this site on the open market, this would enable a capital sum to be realised by the Council. Obtaining planning permission for change of use of the upper floor to residential will increase the value of the site. Cabinet is recommended to endorse the decision of the Housing Portfolio Holder.

Background

3. 57 High Street, Sawston is a first floor premise that was leased to Sawston Parish Council as office accommodation until 20th May 2006. Annual rent to the Council was £4,725.
4. 59 High Street is a ground floor premise that was leased to Unwins Wine Group Ltd (now in liquidation) for retail purposes until 20th May 2006. Annual rent to the Council was £9,000.
5. The land in Council ownership adjacent the premises includes parking spaces for 6 cars and a grassed rear 'garden'.
6. Earlier this year interest was sought from a number of RSLs in the possibility of redeveloping the premises for affordable housing.
7. Kelsey Housing Association expressed interest in redeveloping the upper floor for affordable housing and on 23rd January 2006, the following decision was made by the Housing Portfolio Holder:

Subject to planning permission for change of use, on expiry of both leases, offer the first floor to an RSL for redevelopment as affordable housing. Offer

the ground floor for sale on the open market, subject to valuation for commercial use.

8. A valuation was obtained from the District Valuer in June 2006 based on the existing uses of the building, as follows:

57 High Street

Market rental value as offices	£6,000 pa
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59 High Street

Market rental value as retail	£10,500 pa
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Open market value of both together as existing use	£190,000
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9. After investigation Kelsey confirmed that it was not cost-effective for them to take on the project. Similar interest was received from Hundred Houses Society and after consideration they too declined to take on the project.
10. Considerable interest has been received from other sources in purchasing or leasing the premises, including that from developers who would look to convert the upper floor to residential accommodation.

Considerations

11. 57 and 59 High Street are the only commercial premises owned by the Council.
12. Advice from Planning regarding a possible change of use of these premises is as follows: “ Policies in the development plan seek to resist the loss of retail premises where the loss would result in a significant reduction in the level of retail provision locally available (Local Plan Policy SH6 and Structure Plan Policy P3/4) and state that the loss of commercial premises will be resisted unless the existing use is generating environmental problems such as noise, pollution or unacceptable levels of traffic or where it is demonstrated that the site is inappropriate for any employment use to continue having regard to market demand. One exception to this may be for the redevelopment of the site for affordable housing under the exceptions policy (Local Plan Policy HG8).”
13. 57/59 High Street is not a Listed Building but the adjoining building at no. 61 is Listed. Advice from Conservation regarding a proposed change of use of 57/59 is as follows: “This building was originally a public house before its conversion to a shop, and makes a positive contribution to the streetscene in the Conservation Area. The conservation section would have no objection to the idea of using the first floor of this building for residential accommodation. However, we do have some concerns over the ground floor. The ground floor windows are still essentially unchanged and we are keen that they remain in this form. We can foresee a potential conflict between the need for privacy in a ground floor flat and our desire to keep the windows at their current size and form. Also, we are keen that Sawston High St remains a vibrant commercial street.
14. Therefore our preference would be to retain the existing building, but with appropriate alterations (eg the flat roofed extension to the rear could be removed and possibly a new extension added to provide independent access to the first floor) to enable some form of commercial use to be retained on the ground floor, with residential use (one or two flats) above.”

15. The potential open market value of the premises with planning consent for no 57 for change of use to residential and retaining no 59 in retail use has been assessed by external valuers at approximately £300,000.

Options

16. Obtain planning consent for change of use of 57 to residential and place whole property for sale on open market, valued for retail use (no 59) with potential for residential use above (no 57).
17. Place both premises for sale on the open market, subject to valuation for office/commercial use only.
18. Retain the property in Council ownership and offer both floors for commercial lease.

Implications

Financial	By disposing of this site on the open market for commercial and residential use, a capital receipt could accrue to the Council.
Legal	The sale of this site is not subject to the Right to Buy legislation.
Staffing	None
Risk Management	None
Equal Opportunities	None

Consultations

19. Sawston Parish Council have been consulted and agree to the sale and change of use of 57/59 High Street. They also request that the following condition of sale could be made: if during refurbishment the Cross Keys pub sign and Lacons Brewery tile are to be removed that they are given to the Parish Council to be kept in the proposed new village museum.
20. Councillors Bard, Hatton and Matthews have been consulted. Councillors Bard and Hatton have confirmed that they agree with the views of the Parish Council.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

Affordable Homes	The first floor of the building offers potential for redevelopment for affordable housing under the exceptions policy but there is no further RSL interest in the site.
Customer Service	None
Northstowe and other growth areas	None
Quality, Accessible Services	None
Village Life	Redevelopment of these premises could increase the supply of low cost housing in Sawston
Sustainability	The first floor of the building offers potential for redevelopment for low cost housing.
Partnership	None

Recommendations

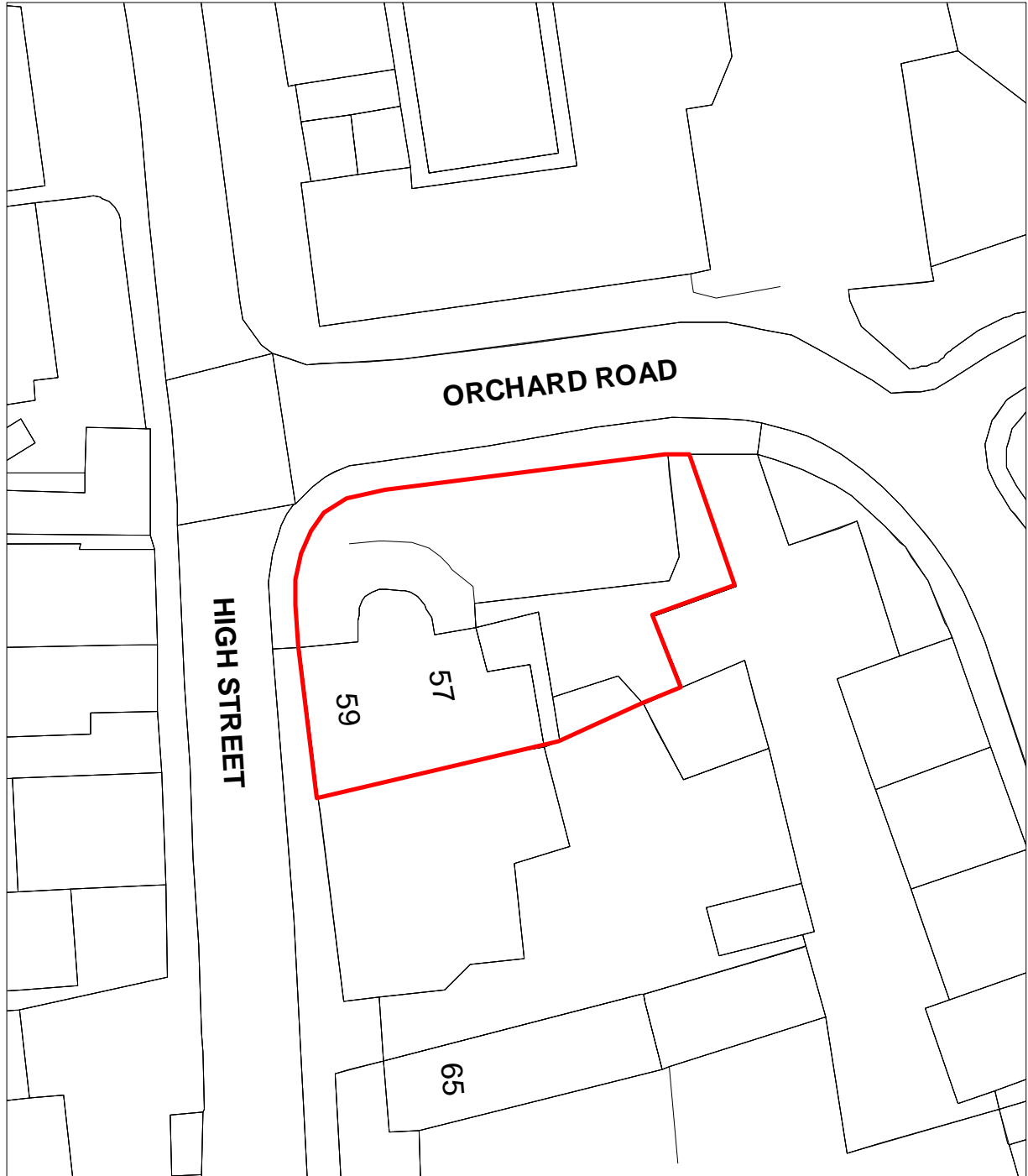
21. It is recommended that planning consent be sought for the change of use of 57 to residential and place the whole property for sale on the open market, valued for retail use (no 59) with potential for residential use above (no 57).

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

1. Site plan showing boundary of SCDC ownership, **Appendix A**
2. Photograph of premises, **Appendix B**

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57/59 HIGH STREET, SAWSTON



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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Leader and Cabinet	14 December 2006
AUTHOR/S:	Chief Executive / Finance Project Officer	

**THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT WHITE PAPER
STRONG AND PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES****Purpose**

1. The purposes of this report are:
 - (a) to inform Members of the broad contents of the local government white paper;
 - (b) to advise Members of matters which they will need to consider and make decisions on when the enabling legislation etc is forthcoming;
 - (c) to seek Members' agreement not to make a proposal for unitary local government, nor to support a partnership to pioneer as pathfinder authorities new models of two-tier local government working.

Executive Summary

2. Making a proposal for unitary local government or supporting a partnership to pioneer new models of two-tier local government working are not considered appropriate for the authority at this time; accordingly, Members are recommended not to follow either option.
3. The white paper makes the point that maintaining the status quo in two-tier areas is not an option; authorities need to find new governance arrangements to overcome risks of confusion, duplication and inefficiency between tiers and also develop new models of working in collaboration between councils and other public bodies. This authority therefore needs to seek to enhance existing partnership arrangements and develop appropriate other arrangements, to ensure that these are "fit for purpose" and thus able to shape any future local solution.
4. As the white paper is a statement of intent, the authority does not need to make detailed decisions on the white paper's proposals; however, this report advises Members of potential matters which they may need to consider and make decisions on when the enabling legislation, regulations and guidance are forthcoming.

Background

5. Since the Labour government came to power in 1997, local authorities and other public bodies have worked within a central framework of investment and reform to improve service delivery. The government has recognised that it now needs to give local authorities and their partners more freedom and powers to meet the needs of their residents and communities. The white paper aims to empower people and communities, create stronger and more visible leadership and establish a new framework for local authorities and their partners to work within. The Summary element of the white paper outlines the government's thinking and proposals.
6. Members should bear in mind that proposals in the white paper may be subject to amendment before the enabling legislation etc is forthcoming.

Considerations

7. Set out below under a series of sub-headings are the areas of the white paper which Members will have to consider, either immediately or in the future. Some of the key issues include:
 - (a) To engage more effectively in the development of the Local Area Agreement (LAA). There is a need to influence the local priorities that go into the LAA as there will be a significant 'pooled' budget to fund the LAA, some of which directly funds South Cambridgeshire District Council services at present and could be diverted to other service areas if our priorities do not feature in the LAA (e.g. Supporting People, a £10 million plus pot county-wide).
 - (b) To develop more effective and new ways of partnership working, including exploring shared services and/or front/back office systems, as well as working more collaboratively on common priorities such as climate change and the growth agenda.
8. References in square brackets [] in the remainder of this report are to the relevant paragraphs in the white paper.

Unitary status/ enhanced two-tier working

9. The government considers that there can be difficulties in delivering cohesive services in areas where there are two tiers of local government. Accordingly, local authorities in shire areas are invited to make proposals by 25 January 2007, either for unitary local government or to be pathfinders pioneering new governance arrangements between authorities in a county area. [More information can be found in paragraphs 3.50 to 3.66 of the white paper and in the accompanying "Invitation", which also gives full details of the criteria and how to submit proposals.]
10. The Chief Executive of Cambridge City Council has written to his counterparts at Cambridgeshire County Council and this authority, enquiring whether there is any interest in discussing possible unitary government for the Cambridge sub-region. A unitary council consisting of the areas of South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City could bring a number of benefits to the district. The combined population would be sufficient to make a viable unitary authority, particularly when planned population growth is added. A unitary structure would bring greater clarity and accountability. It would greatly assist the planning and provision of services to the growth areas around Cambridge and other planning issues. There are likely to be efficiencies to be gained in overheads and the costs of partnership. It would overcome current problems of operating two tier Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and LAAs. Potentially, it would also assist in addressing the Council's medium term financial outlook. Many residents of South Cambridgeshire currently look to Cambridge City for services and facilities, but currently have no say or representation over how these are provided.
11. On the other hand there could be disadvantages. There are significant differences in terms of needs and service delivery between the urban character of Cambridge City and the rural nature of South Cambridgeshire. These differences may become less important, as more parts of the district become "urbanised" through the growth areas, although they will still be significant. Those parts of South Cambridgeshire that look to surrounding market towns as their local centres could feel that their concerns carry less weight in a Cambridge-focused district. When local government re-organisation was last considered in the 1990s, there was little support from residents for proposals that linked the two districts, particularly from villages around Cambridge who were concerned about potential loss of identity. There would not be sufficient time

between now and 25 January 2007 to carry out a realistic assessment of the public's views. To proceed to unitary status at this stage would be a major distraction over the next 2-3 years. This is a critical time for the planning and development of the growth areas.

12. Although it is recognised that there could be long-term benefits from unitary status, overall it is felt that with such important issues currently facing all three councils and with insufficient time to allow informed public debate, the better approach would be to build on existing and emerging joint working arrangements between the City and County councils and this authority as the way forward in enhancing service delivery to their respective communities. The authorities should also explore other opportunities to enhance such arrangements and pursue other improvements and efficiency gains. Similar arguments apply to the possibility for applying to be a pathfinder authority to pioneer new governance arrangements to enhance two-tier working. This would be a long-term commitment as the pathfinders will be evaluated at 2, 4 and 6 years. Overall, given the pressures on the Council and its resources, the recommended approach is to continue to build existing partnership arrangements, while learning from the outcome of the pathfinder scheme.

Improve participation and electoral arrangements

13. Local government's representative mandate and leadership legitimacy is sometimes weakened by low electoral turnout. The Electoral Commission considers that whole council elections could increase participation and bring clearer accountability; however, the government believes requiring every council to adopt whole council elections would be contrary to the overall devolutionary theme of the white paper, but it will remove the requirement to get the Secretary of State's permission to move to whole council elections. [paragraphs 3.38 to 3.43] The authority would therefore need to consider whether it wishes to move to whole council elections, although Members will recall deferring a report on this subject in September 2006.
14. Similarly, there have been calls for single member wards, which can provide a simple, strong link between the councillor and their electorate and give clarity of leadership to the area; however, the government accepts that there is no consensus on this and recognises that single member wards are not a sound electoral option where there are elections by thirds. The government will not require single member wards, but it will enable any council that holds whole council elections to request an Electoral Commission review of re-warding the area with single member wards. [paragraphs 3.44 to 3.45] Members would therefore need to consider whether they wish to request such a review.

Political management

15. The Local Government Act 2000 changed decision-making and accountability in local government. Central to this was the separation between executive councillors and the majority of council members. However, only 12 local authorities have introduced an elected mayor; 80% of local authorities have opted for the leader and cabinet model, of whom only a relatively small number give the leader authority to act alone, rather they act collectively with other cabinet members. In addition, in most authorities, leaders face election every year, which can make it difficult to take and see through essential decisions.
16. The government considers it important that councils move towards more stable and more visible political leadership, leadership being a significant driver of change and

improvement in local authorities. The government therefore intends to legislate for three models of executive arrangements:

- (a) a directly elected mayor with a 4 year term;
- (b) a directly elected executive with a 4 year term;
- (c) an indirectly elected leader with a 4 year term.

17. In each model:

- (a) all executive powers will be vested in the mayor or leader, who will be responsible for deciding how those powers should be discharged – either by themselves or delegated to members of cabinet individually or collectively;
- (b) the mayor or leader will be responsible for appointing cabinet members, or (in the case of the directly elected executive) will have agreed that they are on their “slate” of candidates standing for election (note: there is already scope for the leader to be responsible for appointing and removing cabinet members - many authorities operate this method);
- (c) the mayor or leader will allocate portfolios to cabinet members.

18. There is no mention in the white paper as to whether the appointment of cabinet members will need to be proportional to the political population of the Council – clarification will be sought on this, although not every council follows this approach.

19. The intention to have leaders elected for a 4 year term (through whichever mechanism is preferred locally) could prove helpful in terms of providing stability for an authority in terms of policy direction, etc. Once an authority has opted for a directly elected mayor or executive, the presumption will be that it should not move back to an indirectly elected model.

20. The table below summarises the arrangements under each model. [More information can be found in paragraphs 3.15 to 3.28 of the white paper.]

Directly elected mayor	Directly elected executive	Indirectly elected leader	
		Whole council elections	Elections by halves or thirds
Councillors elected by whole council elections every 4 years, or otherwise by halves or thirds.	Councillors elected by whole council elections every 4 years, or otherwise by halves or thirds	Councillors elected by whole council elections every 4 years.	Councillors elected by halves or thirds.
Direct election of mayor every 4 years.	Direct election of a “slate” of the leader and executive every 4 years.	The council elects a leader by simple majority for a 4 year term.	The council elects a leader by simple majority for a 4 year term but leader would stand down if his/her term as a councillor ends.
		No confidence vote could end leader's appointment	No confidence vote could end leader's appointment.
Cabinet of 2-9 appointed by mayor from councillors.	Cabinet of 2-9, directly elected.	Cabinet of 2-9 appointed by leader from councillors.	Cabinet of 2-9 appointed by leader from councillors.

21. The Council would therefore have to adopt new executive arrangements; the timetable for this is dependent on the timing of the legislation for implementation, which the government intends to seek at the earliest opportunity.

Enhance the role of councillors

22. The government wants to reaffirm the importance of councillors' role as democratic champions and strengthen their influence by promoting [paragraphs 3.1 to 3.12]:
 - (a) a clearly defined role for local councillors in championing the interests of their communities;
 - (b) greater diversity of councillors, making them more representative of their community;
 - (c) capacity-building and support for councillors to take on their enhanced role.
23. In addition, the government proposes powers for councillors to respond to Community Calls for Action (CCfAs) on local issues and greater freedom for councillors to speak up on planning and licensing issues affecting their wards.
24. When people make proposals about how things could be done better, or raise problems or issues that affect their quality of life, they need to be sure that they will be listened to. Communities have traditionally had two ways to raise concerns: raise a petition; or seek help from their local councillors. Authorities should consider their system for dealing with petitions as part of their wider policy of engaging with communities. (modern.gov has an on-line petition module which could be trialled.) Where petitioners are not happy with the response to their petition, or otherwise wish to raise a matter of local concern, they will be able to ask their councillor to take the matter up as a CCfA. As well as seeking to resolve problems informally, councillors will be able to take CCfAs to the council executive and if necessary to its overview and scrutiny committee. In addition, authorities will be expected to consider what powers or budgets it may be appropriate to devolve to their councillors to help them solve minor problems. [paragraphs 2.23 to 2.34]
25. There is concern that the government is imposing extra layers of bureaucracy through the introduction of a duty for local concerns to be brought forward using overview and scrutiny committee, referral to cabinet then possible referral back to scrutiny or onwards to council or a partnership body. The overview and scrutiny committee would need to establish rules for ensuring that this is well managed and not abused. The question has been raised as to why councillors should need this duty anyway - surely it is already part of their role to represent the community; equally, residents are entitled to raise concerns with the Council through normal avenues.
26. The government intends to amend the rules on personal and prejudicial interests to remove current barriers to councillors speaking up for their constituents or the public bodies they have been appointed to serve. For example, members of a planning or licensing committee will have more opportunities to represent their constituents on such issues affecting their wards (unless their interests in the matter concerned "are greater than those of most other people in the ward".) [paragraph 3.49]

Devolution of powers

27. The government considers that communities and their representatives should be able to set and enforce standards of behaviour and rules affecting their localities. One way that councillors can enable this is by enacting byelaws, allowing communities to improve the quality of their environment and create pleasant, safe local public spaces for the enjoyment of all. At present the Secretary of State has a role in confirming

byelaws, but as they deal with matters of specifically local interest the government is to end this. The government is going to make it possible for district councils to enforce byelaws through fixed penalty notices instead of imposing fines through the magistrates' courts, thereby increasing the effectiveness of byelaws. [paragraphs 3.13 to 3.14] Members would therefore be able to consider the use of byelaws in appropriate circumstances and their enforcement. (The question will arise, however, as to who will monitor compliance with any such byelaws – this could end up being more costly to do than the benefits derived, but if the byelaws are not policed then they might not meet the customer expectations they may raise.)

28. Parish councils already have powers to provide a variety of local services important to their communities and local authorities can delegate additional functions and budgets to parish councils. The government intends to extend the powers of well-being to all parish and town councils that satisfy criteria based on the Quality Parish scheme. The government also intends to devolve the power to create parishes to district and unitary authorities. [paragraphs 2.53 to 2.59] Members would therefore need to consider devolving further functions to parish councils and the setting up of new parish councils.
29. The government also wants to support local government to deliver more responsive services, extend people's choice and control over services and strengthen their role in shaping the places where they live [paragraphs 2.1 to 2.7]:
 - (a) by promoting greater choice for people in local services by a variety of means, e.g. meeting the target for local authorities to offer choice-based letting schemes to their tenants by 2010 and extending this to social housing, shared ownership, low cost homes and private rented accommodation [paragraph 2.8] (note: the authority is already working to achieve this), or expanding the scope of existing direct payment schemes and piloting arrangements for individuals to have their own individual care budgets (including for Supporting People services);
 - (b) by reforming aspects of the best value regime, to require authorities to ensure appropriate participation of local citizens and other key bodies, such as voluntary and community groups and local businesses, in their activities, including informing, consulting, involving and devolving responsibility [paragraphs 2.9 to 2.21];
 - (c) by promoting simple and easy ways for people to obtain information about their local authority and other service providers [paragraph 2.22];
 - (d) by modernising and clarifying the role and working practices of the Local Government Ombudsman, to ensure they can operate effectively and continue to be accessible to everyone [paragraph 2.35];
 - (e) by empowering local people to manage neighbourhoods and own community facilities, including [paragraphs 2.36 to 2.52 and 2.60]:
 - (i) neighbourhood management;
 - (ii) community management and ownership of assets (note: Barry Quirk, Chief Executive of the London Borough of Lewisham, is leading a review of existing and any additional powers and policies needed, due to conclude in spring 2007);
 - (iii) tenant management;
 - (iv) local charters for neighbourhoods (these could build on Parish Plan initiatives and therefore minimise additional work/capacity requirements while incentivising Parish Councils to participate in the process);
 - (v) support for community groups to play a bigger role.

30. The white paper is not clear as to which of these proposed devolved powers will be statutory and which may be discretionary. If some are discretionary, Members and officers will need to consider in detail which proposals are the most appropriate for this authority to adopt and how they are best implemented, when the enabling legislation, regulations and guidance are forthcoming. However, Members could begin to consider now, which of these they are minded to support in principle.

Localise and simplify the conduct regime

31. The Graham Committee on Standards in Public Life reported in 2005 that continued high standards of conduct would be more likely to be guaranteed if decision making on conduct issues was devolved as much as possible to the local level.
32. Following consultation which showed broad support for proposals to improve the conduct regime, including a more local system for investigating allegations of misconduct, the government now intends to legislate [paragraphs 3.46 to 3.48] for:
 - (a) a more locally based regime, with local standards committees making initial assessments of misconduct allegations and most investigations and decisions made at local level;
 - (b) a revised strategic regulatory role for the Standards Board to provide supervision, support and guidance for local authorities and ensure consistent standards.
33. Following the legislation, local authorities will manage their own standards framework, deciding which allegations should be investigated. It is expected that standards committees will need to have independent chairs (note: this authority already has one). The balance of independent members of calibre and substance and experienced elected members acting in a non-partisan way will be essential for public confidence. There is likely to be an enhanced (and possibly onerous/time consuming) role for chief executives and monitoring officers.
34. The possible number of allegations which may need to be considered should not be underestimated; a recent letter from the Chief Executive of the Standards Board for England, circulated to Members, suggested that an authority such as South Cambridgeshire, with a large number of parish councils in its area, could receive 25-30 allegations a year. The legislation may give authorities an option to form joint standards committees or make other effective use of its standards resources.
35. Promoting right values and behaviours, for example through the Member training due in January/February 2007, should help to minimise the number of allegations arising. Such training should continue to be provided as part of the Council's induction process for new Members.

Strengthen overview and scrutiny

36. The proposed enhancement of the powers of council leaders (paragraphs 15 to 21 above) will require even more effective scrutiny arrangements [paragraphs 3.29 to 3.37]. The government intends to strengthen the role of overview and scrutiny committees to enable local authorities to carry out their place-shaping role, thereby enhancing councillors' ability to champion local people's interests. To do this effectively and responsibly, committees will need to focus on constructive challenge, with a view to improving outcomes for people and communities.
37. Overview and scrutiny committees can currently investigate any issue of importance to the local area and can compel members of the council's executive and senior

officers to appear before them and provide information. However, there is no requirement on those outside the authority, the subject of a committee's recommendation, to provide information to the committee; nor can the committee take further action if matters do not improve. The government therefore intends to require:

- (a) public service providers covered by a duty to co-operate in the white paper [see paragraphs 5.25 to 5.30] either to appear before or provide information to the committee, on their actions relating to functions or service delivery connected with the authority;
- (b) committees to copy to public bodies recommendations affecting them and those bodies to have regard to those recommendations when exercising their functions, to the extent that they are within the duty to co-operate;
- (c) the council to consider and publicise the public bodies' response to recommendations as soon as possible and within two months.

- 38. The above provisions should include Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) [paragraph 5.29], so will make it easier for them to be held accountable for issues. Recent experiences at Cambourne show this may be helpful as far as Members are concerned and will counter argument that RSLs are less accountable to local communities than local authorities. (This has been a potential issue against large scale voluntary transfer, for example.)
- 39. The government also intends to work with local authorities to develop new best practice guidance on overview and scrutiny, including encouraging local authorities to set up "area" overview and scrutiny committees, comprising local councillors and other members of the community, although care needs to be taken not to create more 'layers' of local government (more layers could mean less clarity over decision-making and more resource/capacity issues). It may be considered, therefore, that existing mechanisms, i.e. parish councils, would be the best means of effectively carrying out this function.
- 40. The government will also encourage authorities to focus overview and scrutiny on more strategic issues (e.g. the priorities agreed as part of Sustainable Community Strategies (see paragraph 48), LAAs and other key strategic plans), make greater use of overview and scrutiny committees in policy development and dedicate appropriate resources and support to scrutiny.
- 41. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee is receiving a report on the implications of the white paper for the scrutiny function at its meeting on 21 December 2006.

Strategic regions

- 42. The government outlines a number of proposals to support cities, towns and other places to drive regional and national economic growth [chapter 4]. For rural areas such as South Cambridgeshire, the government recognises that such areas provide economic and social distinctiveness, an attractive environment to support businesses and communities and a diverse choice of places for people to live and work in. (South Cambridgeshire was recently rated the fifth best place to live in the UK.)
- 43. Regional strategy is a huge area of local government involvement, including: spatial planning; economic development; employment and skills; housing demand and supply; transport; environment and climate change; culture; and deprivation and poverty. Alongside this, there is the particular impact on South Cambridgeshire of Northstowe and the growth agenda in this and other areas of the East of England and neighbouring regions. There are a number of incentive schemes and initiatives which local authorities can access to strengthen economic development; authorities can

also explore the benefits of working together to develop new approaches and drive sustainable economic development in their areas.

44. This authority is already working with one of its key partner authorities, Cambridge City Council, in conjunction with Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire Horizons, on the principles and objectives of any new joint arrangements for housing delivery and sustainable communities in the Cambridgeshire sub-region.
45. This authority also needs to continue to work closely with the East of England Development Agency, the East of England Regional Assembly and other partner organisations to ensure that its objectives and priorities are incorporated in Spending Reviews, the Regional Economic Strategy and the LAA, as well as any Multi Area Agreements that might be developed. Members will be aware of the substantial demand this places on the capacity of both officers and themselves in ensuring that the district is properly represented in all relevant forums.
46. Volume two of the white paper illustrates how the government sees its proposals applying to major local public service areas and cross-cutting issues, covering: community safety; health and well-being; vulnerable people; children, young people and families; economic development, housing and planning; climate change; and the third sector. Members and management will need to give detailed consideration as to how the government's proposals will affect this authority's involvement in such service areas and issues.

Strengthen local leadership

47. Communities need strategic leadership to help bring together various local agencies in order to address problems and challenges in a coordinated way. This is what Sir Michael Lyons meant when he talked about local authorities as 'place-shapers'. Local authorities discharge this role through partnership, using Community Strategies, the power of well-being, LSPs and LAAs to provide vision and leadership to local partnerships and to their communities. [paragraphs 5.1 to 5.10]
48. The white paper envisages a stronger role for local authorities in delivering quality of life improvements for their areas working in strategic partnerships. Under the proposals set out in the white paper, LAAs and LSPs would move to centre stage. There are proposals to strengthen community strategies, now to be called Sustainable Community Strategies (SCSs), which will be the strategic vision for the area and will link closely with the Local Development Framework (LDF) and other local strategies. LAAs will be a statutory requirement and will be the delivery vehicle for SCSs, but will also be the mechanism by which the government will agree with local authorities and their partners, targets which reflect national priorities. The government intends to keep those national targets to a "relatively small number" (no more than 35!), to give greater space to local priorities. One of the benefits of the LAA, as proposed, will be that various government departments' expectations on local authorities will all be required to be channelled through the LAA, bringing greater clarity and to some extent limiting those expectations.
49. Councils will be expected to take a prominent role in LSPs, which will be the overarching strategic partnership, bringing together a manageable number of thematic partnerships to deliver the priorities agreed in the LAA and SCS. Councils will be increasingly assessed (through an annual risk assessment, Direction of Travel statement and the new Comprehensive Area Assessment which replaces Comprehensive Performance Assessment) on the contribution they are making to this community leadership and strategic partnership role.

50. The government intends to issue one, new, streamlined piece of guidance on the place-shaping role, replacing existing statutory and non-statutory guidance [paragraphs 5.11 to 5.71], to:
- (a) reinforce the strategic leadership role of local government by:
 - (i) placing a duty on local authorities to prepare the LAA in consultation with others as already is the case with the Community Strategy;
 - (ii) expecting local authority leaders to play a leading role on LSPs – with an opportunity to agree the chair of the LSP (note: this authority sits on the current LSP board and has agreed to rotate its chair between the leaders of this authority and Cambridgeshire County Council);
 - (iii) expecting local authority executive portfolio holders to play a key role on relevant thematic partnerships;
 - (b) strengthen local partnership working by:
 - (i) placing a duty on the local authority and named partners to co-operate with each other to agree targets in the LAA;
 - (ii) making the SCS and other local and regional plans have regard to each other;
 - (c) put partnership working at the heart of local service delivery by:
 - (i) placing a duty on relevant named partners to have regard to relevant targets agreed between the Government and local partners in LAAs;
 - (ii) bringing more area-based funding streams into the LAAs to further improve the efficiency and delivery of outcomes;
 - (iii) removing the 4-funding block structure from LAAs (to be negotiated through 4 ‘themes’);
 - (iv) clarifying the role of district councils;
 - (d) strengthen and simplify local arrangements for delivering responsive services and involving local people by:
 - (i) streamlining procedures for involving communities in the creation of SCSs, LAAs and LDFs;
 - (ii) improving and integrating strategic planning procedures;
 - (iii) setting out the key principles of strategic commissioning and incentivising local authorities to focus on secure service outcomes in new and imaginative ways.
51. Local leadership and ‘place-shaping’ as outlined in this chapter of the white paper are seen as key roles of local government and Members and senior management will need to ensure that they give these appropriate focus.

Community cohesion

52. Local authorities are well placed to work with communities and other local partners to promote community cohesion. This authority is already committed to a range of equalities policies and is developing others; community cohesion will remain a core business principle of this authority. The Commission on Integration and Cohesion is consulting on community cohesion and will be producing proposals in June 2007. [chapter 8]

Performance and inspection

53. There is strong evidence of rising performance within local government across a wide range of services and functions; however, challenges do remain. The government therefore intends to implement, in the next three years, a new performance framework covering all the outcomes secured by local authorities working alone or in partnership with others. The new performance framework needs to bring together

coherently a range of factors to enable service commissioners and providers to be responsive, effective and innovative towards improving local outcomes. [paragraphs 6.1 to 6.6 and 6.8 to 6.16]

54. The new performance framework will [paragraph 6.7]:
- (a) strengthen accountability to people and communities [paragraphs 6.17 to 6.18], by:
 - (i) clarifying responsibilities to respond and report to people;
 - (ii) developing LAAs in securing national priorities locally, allowing more space for local prioritisation (but subject to around 35 priorities in total);
 - (iii) ensuring independent assessment and inspection reflect and respond to people's views more;
 - (iv) setting out clear support and intervention steps;
 - (b) give greater responsibility to local authorities and their partners for securing improvements in services [paragraphs 6.19 to 6.30] by:
 - (i) working with the Local Government Association to develop mechanisms to challenge performance and support improvement;
 - (ii) removing the requirements to prepare Annual Best Value Performance Plans and conduct best value reviews, while ensuring that best value authorities secure the participation of local people in their activities and strengthen their approach to competition;
 - (iii) supporting the development of local information systems to target activity, improve decision-making and improve delivery;
 - (iv) improving strategic commissioning and the use of alternative providers;
 - (c) provide a better balance between national and local priorities [paragraphs 6.31 to 6.43] by:
 - (i) identifying a single set of around 200 national indicators against which all relevant partners will report, reflecting priority outcomes from decisions in the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR07); these will replace other sets of PIs such as BVPIs and other programme-specific indicators, but there will be a need in some cases to report limited additional information, for example on financial reporting and data returns;
 - (ii) a revised LAA process through which central government and local partners will agree and manage a limited number of improvement targets for each local area (i.e. 35 priorities as above plus statutory targets around educational attainment and child care provision);
 - (d) improve the arrangements for external assessment and inspection by reforming the current performance assessment arrangements for local government, putting in place [paragraphs 6.44 to 6.55]:
 - (i) an annual risk assessment that identifies the key risks to outcomes or delivery;
 - (ii) an annual Use of Resources judgment drawn from the annual audit;
 - (iii) an annual Direction of Travel judgment assessing the effectiveness in driving continuous improvement;
 - (iv) inspection activity by relevant inspectors targeted primarily on the basis of risk assessment;
 - (e) streamline the process for providing improvement support and intervention for authorities struggling to deliver agreed outcomes for local people, tailored to the nature and severity of any problem [paragraphs 6.56 to 6.71].

Efficiency

55. People's expectations of public services are rising and the financial climate is changing, putting pressure on authorities to deliver services without massive investment from central government or excessive council tax increases. Authorities need to challenge traditional service delivery methods in order to drive efficiency. This could mean local authorities and other public bodies sharing assets, systems, data, skills and knowledge more effectively, reviewing activity and seeking to maximise the opportunities that LAAs provide for achieving efficiency and thus better outcomes for people. Transformation and efficiency are about delivering the right services to people, using contact centres and new technology as appropriate (which this authority is already utilising and seeking to develop further) and adopting a strategic approach to service delivery. [paragraphs 7.1 to 7.14]
56. The government intends to build on the Cabinet Office discussion paper *Transformational Local Government*, which set out a number of prerequisites for driving service transformation [paragraph 7.15], through:
- (a) business process improvement and flexible working – the government intends to share lessons learnt from a partnership project as part of an integrated Business Improvement Package in early 2007, including technology and collaboration, (b) and (c) below [paragraphs 7.16 to 7.19] (note: this authority is already undertaking business process reviews as part of the Transformation Project);
 - (b) collaboration between public authorities – the government intends to establish pathfinder projects to spread and extend best practice in joint working [paragraphs 7.20 to 7.24]:
 - (i) between authorities, with other local public bodies, or at a regional or national level;
 - (ii) in collaboration with other local service providers and the private or third sector;
 - (iii) for back office functions, transactional services and frontline services;
 - (c) use of technology, including information sharing – the government intends to incentivise joined-up access to services and their delivery and to develop a system enabling citizens to authenticate themselves once to support transactions with public organisations [paragraphs 7.25 to 7.33] (note: this authority made substantial use of e-government to transform access to and delivery of services);
 - (d) smarter procurement – the government intends to provide further advice to support effective procurement, building on three critical aspects [paragraphs 7.34 to 7.41]:
 - (i) the use of e-procurement: procurement cards, e-auctions and e-marketplaces (note: this authority is developing e-ordering and negotiating reduced transaction utility and other contracts);
 - (ii) understanding spend: identifying opportunities for efficiency (note: this authority already analyses its spending and has a contracts database and can also access regional spending and contracts databases to identify opportunities for savings and efficiencies);
 - (iii) aggregating demand: joint procurement can help secure efficiencies – the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) and the Regional Centres of Excellence (RCEs) are implementing a national procurement programme (note: this authority already makes use of appropriate joint procurement opportunities, e.g. through the OGC, other procurement organisations including the RCE, county-wide and other framework contracts, etc);
 - (e) competition [paragraphs 7.42 to 7.48]:

- (i) the government intends to issue revised best value guidance covering the commissioning role of councils, community participation and the regular testing of performance competitiveness;
 - (ii) the government intends to explore opportunities to develop the local government services market, to encourage a diversity of suppliers across the public, private and third sectors;
- (f) asset management – effective asset management helps improve service outcomes, e.g. disposing of or improving underperforming assets, modernising expensive to maintain assets, possibly transferring assets to community management or ownership – the government will consider asset management as part of the CSR07 [paragraphs 7.49 to 7.53] (note: this authority's main assets are:
 - (i) South Cambridgeshire Hall (Cambourne) – the authority moved in May 2004;
 - (ii) Milton Country Park – this has been the subject of a recent review;
 - (iii) its housing stock and sheltered housing schemes – the housing stock is being subjected to a further options appraisal process following completion of a stock condition survey carried out in 2004/05; however, there are a number of other things the authority can do to maximise its housing assets which are not related to any decision about the future of the housing stock, e.g. redevelopment of existing stock to increase the supply of Affordable Homes and/or meet Decent Homes targets, review lettings policies to make sure stock is making best contribution to meeting housing needs, minimise empty homes, etc);
- (g) stable finance – the government has reiterated that it will not allow excessive council tax increases; local authorities will therefore need to manage expenditure pressures, achieve efficiency gains and decide priorities. The annual cycle of grant allocations makes it difficult for local government to budget and manage expenditure; the government has already begun the move to three-year formula grant settlements (the first will cover 2008-2011), enabling local government to publish three-year council tax figures and providing an opportunity for more stable funding and procurement with the third sector [paragraphs 7.54 to 7.56] (note: this authority already publishes indicative council tax figures six years ahead as part of its Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS); three-year formula grant settlements will increase certainty over funding levels and help enable service delivery to be better planned in the medium term, which could also lead to efficiencies being achieved);
- (h) challenge – the government intends to strengthen the challenge to current standards of provision [paragraphs 7.57 to 7.65]:
 - (i) integrating efficiency within the performance framework – the CSR07 will reflect an ongoing ambitious challenge on efficiency, efficiency will be embedded in the new performance framework (for example, local partners could agree and work to achieve an efficiency target as part of their LAA), development of the 'Use of Resources' assessment to give assurance about increased efficiency, tailored support and intervention where necessary;
 - (ii) understanding and comparing costs – use of the Audit Commission's tool for measuring value for money; publication of guidance and toolkits as part of CSR07 to identify, measure and agree efficient, effective and overall best value service delivery;
- (i) support – review of the current support arrangements in order to create clear strategic direction, improve coordination and streamline available resources [paragraphs 7.66 to 7.68].

57. While the authority is active around procurement etc, it also needs to demonstrate that it has or will be exploring opportunities for combined/shared services and/or front/back office systems. There are some examples, e.g. Housing has a shared resource in terms of a team to work on the major new developments (funded by local authority and RSL partners).

Implementation

58. At the time of writing this report, a bill reflecting the proposals in the white paper is expected to be published in early December, with the parliamentary committee stage in January. At this point a fuller statement will be prepared, primarily as an aid to the legislative process. The act is expected to gain Royal Assent by next October/November, at which stage comprehensive guidance will be published.
59. Government advice is that councils and LSPs should continue with the current arrangements for LAAs, the preparation of sustainable community strategies etc in the interim. The Council and the LSP are currently revising the Community Strategy for the period 2007 to 2010 with a view to the new strategy being agreed by April 2007. The strategy is being prepared in the context of the draft guidance issued last year. Advice has been received that the final guidance in Autumn 2007 is unlikely to vary significantly from the previous draft guidance and councils should not delay their community strategies. It is suggested that work on the sustainable community strategy should continue, with a potentially later completion date of spring/summer 2007 and with the possibility of adjustment during 2007/08 in the light of final guidance.

Options

60. With regard to the invitations to apply for unitary status or to be a pathfinder authority (paragraphs 9 to 12 above), Members could:
- (a) decide to apply for either or both options; or
 - (b) decide not to apply for either option.
61. With regard to the remainder of the white paper, as this is a statement of intent, Members do not need to make any firm decisions at this stage. Members could request appropriate existing bodies (for example Constitution Review Working Party, Standards Committee, Scrutiny and Overview Committee) or appropriate lead officers to begin consideration now of the principles the authority might wish to adopt regarding some of the proposals in the white paper and the potential practical implications of some of the key proposals in the white paper, so that when the enabling legislation etc is forthcoming the authority has a basis for its detailed considerations; however it is recommended that this should wait until the enabling legislation, regulations and guidance are published.

Implications

62. Financial	The move to three-year formula grant allocations will require the Council to set three-year council tax figures; however, it is not clear whether these will be set for the three years concerned, or able to be reviewed on an annual basis. There are a number of potential areas for financial implications arising from the white paper, including: the proposals for greater public involvement; delegation of standards issues to local authorities; support for Members to fulfil an enhanced
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62.	Financial, continued	local role; greater support for LSPs; and pressures that might arise from targets in LAAs. The extent of any financial implications will become clearer as further guidance is issued. At present there is no provision in the MTFS - indeed the white paper is identified as a possible “unquantified” spending pressure.
	Legal	The Council will give proper consideration to the enabling legislation etc when this is issued.
	Staffing	Implementation of the white paper will place a number of staffing pressures on the Council – for example in enhanced participation of the public; the more localised standards regime; and support for scrutiny and overview. There will also be a continuing need to develop skills, on the part of Members and officers, to adapt to some of the different ways of working which will emerge. Perhaps the most significant staffing pressure will be in the area of support of the LSP, LAA and strategic partnerships. The Workforce Plan (also on this agenda) currently makes no provision for white paper proposals. Staffing implications will need to be taken into account (as they are clarified) in the further implementation of the Transformation Project (third tier) and the next revision of the Workforce Plan (next October/November).
	Risk Management	The white paper represents a number of significant changes in the way local government delivers services, which will have a substantial impact on the capacity of officers and Members to implement. The authority will need to make sure that it has appropriate decision making and delegation structures in place for these, while at the same time continuing service delivery.
	Equal Opportunities	Community cohesion and equality of service provision and customer participation are key themes in the white paper and the Council will ensure that its response gives appropriate consideration to equalities issues.

Consultations

63. None as yet. The Council could consult residents, parish councils and other partner organisations on the proposed changes, but this is not considered appropriate at this stage. The Council could undertake such consultations when the enabling legislation etc is forthcoming, indeed it would probably be expected to.
64. Any proposals for new political management arrangements are likely to be subject to a statutory consultation process, as was the case when the authority introduced executive arrangements under the 2000 Act.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

65.	Affordable Homes	The white paper will have an effect on all of the Council's corporate objectives and annual priorities and will influence its delivery and achievement of them. The white paper also has a significant impact in terms of the various partnerships with which the Council is involved.
	Customer Service	
	Northstowe and other growth areas	
	Quality, Accessible Services	
	Village Life	
	Sustainability	
	Partnership	

Conclusions/Summary

66. The white paper provides a time limited opportunity for the Council to seek unitary status. While there are potential benefits from a unitary approach, the limited time available to assess local support for such a move and the other pressing issues the Council has to address (in particular the growth areas) lead to the view that the needs of the community would be better served through enhanced co-operation and partnership. This view equally applies to becoming a pathfinder authority to pioneer new governance arrangements to enhance two-tier working.
67. Overall the white paper represents a continuing evolution of the government's thinking. The themes are familiar: greater public/democratic involvement; more customer influence and choice; performance improvement; efficiency; and the development of community leadership through the LSP. The white paper envisages a stronger role for local authorities to lead their communities, shape their areas and bring local public services together. It intends that local authorities should have more space to meet local needs (for example, through the reduction in national performance indicators, limitations in LAA targets, and greater public say). It is intended that there should be a lighter inspection regime, but tougher intervention when things go wrong.
68. There will be a significant challenge for the Council in implementing the white paper within its limited resources. The Transformation Project and accompanying culture change will play an important part in enabling the Council to respond effectively. The Council will have to prioritise its efforts. Although the final guidance will not be available until next autumn, the Council will need to start planning before then, including through the implementation of the Transformation Project, service planning, financial and workforce planning and involving partners and the public. The Corporate Governance Inspection recommendations may have a major influence on the Council's capacity to address the issues in the white paper.

Recommendations

69. Cabinet is recommended to
- (a) decide not to apply for unitary status, nor to become a partner pathfinder authority pioneering an enhanced two-tier local government model, and
 - (b) wait until the enabling legislation, regulations and guidance are published before requesting appropriate bodies and/or lead officers to consider the principles the authority wishes to adopt and the practical implications of implementing the legislative etc requirements.

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

Strong and prosperous communities, the local government white paper
Invitations to councils in England: to make proposals for future unitary structures; to pioneer as pathfinders new two-tier models. For more information, please click onto the following link: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1503999>
Letter from the Chief Executive of the Standards Board for England

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Leader and Cabinet	14 December 2006
AUTHORS:	Executive Director/ Head of Housing Strategic Services	

SHEPRETH: 74-76 FROG END**Purpose**

1. To consider the outcome of an options appraisal carried out in respect of two Council owned properties at 74-76 Frog End, Shepreth.

Executive Summary

2. A pair of semi detached three bedroom houses at 74-76 Frog End require both internal refurbishment and major structural and site clearance works that will cost in the region of £100,000 each to be brought up to the Decent Homes Standard. This is not considered financially viable unless both units are re-designated for shared ownership
3. In view of the anticipated costs of refurbishment a wider options appraisal has been carried out. In addition to refurbishment by the Council the following options were taken into consideration:
 - a) acquisition for refurbishment by a partner Registered Social Landlord (RSL)
 - b) sale on the open market
 - c) sale for general redevelopment purposes
 - d) disposal to an RSL partner to redevelop the site for affordable housing
4. Expressions of interest in the site have been sought from the Council's RSL development partners and responses indicating a level of interest in both refurbishment and redevelopment for affordable housing have been received. Some indicative schemes have been suggested ranging from a minimum of 4 to a maximum of 6 units. A number of unit types and tenure scenarios have been proposed.
5. As part of the options appraisal the needs and preferences of the tenants of the existing properties as well as the views of the Parish Council and Local Member were sought in order that these could be fully taken into account.

Background

6. These two properties are a pair of semi detached three bedroom houses that require both internal refurbishment and major structural and site clearance works. It is estimated that it would cost in the region of £100,000 for each property to be brought up to the DHS.
7. The estimated costs of the refurbishment of the above properties has been based on the following:
 - An independent qualified structural engineers report
 - Advice sought from specialist contractors on the costs of remedial structural works based on the structural engineers report

- An assessment of the other nature and costs of other elements of the property that need to be improved/refurbished in order to meet the Decent Homes Standard (DHS)
 - Existing and previous contract prices for works of a similar nature carried out on other properties in the district
 - Knowledge and experience of suitably qualified staff within the Council's Property Services Team
8. However, actual costs cannot be identified unless/until tenders are received in respect of the structural and refurbishment works to these specific which would only be the case if the preferred option should be for their refurbishment and retention by the Council, whether for rented or shared ownership units.
9. Whilst it is possible that a slightly lower cost can be achieved through a competitive tendering process it should be stressed that any refurbishment cost in excess of £50,000 for any single property would necessitate a wider options appraisal. At or above this level of expenditure refurbishment is not considered to be a cost effective or an affordable option to the Council - unless an element of cross subsidy can be achieved through designation of units as shared ownership for example.
10. Both properties are currently vacant, as the tenants have been relocated to alternative accommodation with an option to return to one of the properties if they are refurbished as rented units or to a new property if the site were to be redeveloped.
11. The properties occupy a large plot which has potential for redevelopment that could increase the supply of homes in the village. Further new build homes will achieve higher standards eg in terms of energy efficiency and amenities than refurbished older Council properties. A site plan and photographs are attached as **Appendix A** to this report for reference purposes.

Considerations

12. The full refurbishment programme for the Council's traditionally built housing stock is ongoing but costs have been reduced significantly from previous years due to the specification being brought in line with the DHS which is effectively a lower standard than that adopted in previous years.
13. The average cost of a full refurbishment is now around £25-£30,000 per unit compared to £40-£50,000 per unit 2 years ago. This is considered to provide value for money relative to the costs of providing a new affordable home which in terms of grant requirements is in the region of £35,000 to £60,000 for a rented unit and £10-£25,000 for a shared ownership home.
14. The estimated cost of refurbishment of the Frog End properties as rented units at £100,000 per unit is therefore considered not to offer best value for money and other options have, therefore, been investigated as part of an options appraisal for this site.

Options

15. The following options have been explored as part of the options appraisal all of which would enable the Council to meet the DHS and contribute to corporate objectives and priorities:
 - a) Refurbishment of the existing properties
16. In view of the estimated cost of the refurbishment this it is not considered to be an economically viable option for the Council unless the units were re-designated as shared ownership units in order that the costs involved could be recovered eg assuming a valuation of at least £200,000 for each refurbished property and sale of 50% initial shares the refurbishment costs could be fully recovered.
17. Expressions of interest in the refurbishment option have been invited from our RSL partners and 2 have indicated that 2 units of rented accommodation could be achieved if the properties were transferred at nil cost. A capital receipt could only be realised if either one or both of the units were to be re-designated as shared ownership units. In this scenario a capital receipt of between £40,000 and £80,000 could potentially be realised.
 - b) Sale on the open market as 2 individual units
18. This option would enable the Council to realise a capital receipt but in order to avoid the capital receipts pooling requirements they would have to be sold to a developer/individual who intends to carry out the necessary repairs and then offer for sale to prospective purchasers would occupy as their principal or only home.
19. The tenants of the existing properties would have to be permanently relocated either by being granted a permanent tenancy of the property they have relocated to or another suitable Council property through the Council's Lettings Policy.
 - c) Sale on the open market for general redevelopment purposes
20. This option would enable the Council to realise a capital receipt which would not be subject to capital receipts pooling requirements. However, such monies would need to be ring fenced for housing purposes.
21. This option would also enable some affordable housing to be provided to meet current and future housing needs. Under the Council's Local Plan (and the emerging LDF) 50% of any additional housing provided on the site should be affordable given the level of housing need in Shepreth as demonstrated by the most recent village housing needs survey and Housing Register statistics. Further the existing 2 units of affordable housing should be compensated for within any new scheme as part of the planning obligation for affordable housing. The table below illustrates the potential planning requirements:

Total No of Units	No of Affordable Units	No of Open Market Units
2	2	
3	2	1
4	3	1
5	3	2
6	4	2
7	4	3
8	4	4

22. The needs of the former tenants of the existing properties could be taken into account in any scheme design in the event that they express a wish to return to a new property. Alternatively they could be permanently relocated either by being granted a secure tenancy of the property they have relocated to or another suitable Council property through the Council's Lettings Policy.
23. As can be seen from the table above the site will prove to be relatively unattractive to private developers unless higher numbers of units can be achieved. This will be reflected in both the level of interest from private developers and also the land value.
24. A higher density scheme is not likely to be supported locally particularly given the existing character of this part of the village and the potential impact on both street scene and traffic flows.

d) Sale on the open market for redevelopment as an affordable housing scheme
25. The advantages of this option are that it could enable an increase in the supply of affordable housing within the village. Also, depending on which RSL is selected and the nature of the scheme proposed, the Council could realise a (small) capital receipt.
26. The needs and preferences of the tenants of the existing properties could be taken into account in any scheme design in the event that they express a wish to return to a new property. Alternatively they can be permanently relocated either by being granted a secure tenancy of the property they have relocated to or another suitable Council property through the Council's Lettings Policy.
27. Further, both the size and number of units to be provided could be influenced by the Council and could reflect identified housing needs and other local requirements/issues. For example there would be less pressure on an RSL to maximise number of units on the site in the same way as a private developer who is motivated by profit. That said the density and nature of any proposed scheme would need to accord with planning policy and would still need to be financially viable from an RSL perspective.
28. Expressions of interest in the site have been sought from the Council's RSL development partners and 5 responses have been received. Some indicative schemes have been suggested ranging from a minimum of 4 to a maximum of 6 units. A number of unit types and tenure scenarios have also been proposed.
29. A summary of the options and their respective advantages and disadvantages is set out in the table attached as **Appendix B** to this report.
30. At a meeting held on 8th November having considered the available options and taken fully into account locally expressed views on the options following a local consultation process the Housing Portfolio Holder agreed to recommend to the Executive that the retention and refurbishment of the existing units for shared ownership should be the preferred option. This was on the basis that this option had the most local support, was financially viable (as potentially all costs could be recovered with scope for future capital receipts from sale of further shares) and would retain 2 units of affordable housing to contribute towards meeting local housing needs.

Implications

Financial

31. The estimated cost of the refurbishment option is £200,000. Only if these were re-designated as shared ownership units could this prove a potentially financially viable option.
32. The sale of the units on the open market could generate a capital receipt but the amount receivable will be dependent on the number of open market sales that could be achieved. Our independent Valuer has indicated that the site would have an unrestricted open market valuation of between £300k and £400k depending on the number and size of units built on the site. However, the site valuation for affordable housing purposes is around £60k. The actual value of the site with the associated planning obligations for affordable housing is likely to be much closer to the £60k than the £300 to £400k valuation.
33. If the existing properties were sold on the open market our Valuer has estimated that they would achieve around £90-£100k each. However, unless the properties are sold to an individual or developer for onward sale once refurbished to a purchaser who intends to occupy as their principal or only home then any monies received could be subject to capital receipts pooling requirements. In 2006/07 75% of the full obligation of 75% of net receipts could be caught by these rules if the properties were not sold to a qualifying purchaser.

Legal

34. The General Housing Consents 2005 – Section 32 of the Housing Act 2005 enables the Council to dispose of vacant properties held for housing purposes at full open market value to:
 - any individual(s) who intends to use it as his only or principal home or,
 - where substantial works of repair, improvement or conversion are required to any individual(s) who intends to carry out necessary works and then dispose of the property to a person(s) who intend to occupy it as their principal or only home.
35. The General Housing Consents 2005 – Section 25 Local Government Act 1988 covers disposal of properties to a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) at less than best consideration for refurbishment purposes provided it remains as affordable housing accommodation once works are completed.
36. The General Housing Consents 2005: Section 25 of the Local Government Act 1988 for the Disposal of Land to Registered Social Landlords 2005 enables local authorities to provide financial assistance or any gratuitous benefit to RSL's including disposing of land for development as housing accommodation. This general consent is subject to the following conditions:
 - a) that any housing accommodation on the land when the disposal is completed is vacant and will be demolished after the disposal without being used again as housing accommodation and,
 - b) the disposal by the local authority is by transfer of the leasehold, assignment of a lease with an unexpired term of 99 years or more and
 - c) that the development of housing accommodation on the land will be normally completed not later than 3 years after the disposal and,
 - d) that any housing accommodation to be provided will be let on a periodic tenancy or a shared ownership lease or on a lease for the elderly or hostel or will be occupied mainly or wholly by persons who, on account of mental

illness or disability, are receiving supervision or guidance from a local social services authority and,

- e) the local authority is not entitled to manage or maintain any housing accommodation to be provided on the land and,
- f) any right reserved for the local authority to nominate tenants for housing accommodation on the land shall not, in respect of vacancies which arise after the initial letting of the accommodation, exceed 75% of vacancies (to exclude those arising by virtue of internal transfers).

37. Also it should be noted that the aggregate value of the financial assistance or gratuitous benefits provided by a local authority in any given year under this consent shall not exceed £10m.

38.	Staffing	None.
	Risk Management	The Council has set a target of 2006 to meet the DHS in respect of its housing stock and, in any event, needs to ensure that this national target of 2010 is met in line with the stock retention strategy signed off by GO-East in 2005. A financially viable solution to the investment needs of the properties at 74-76 Frog End, Shepreth, therefore, needs to be identified in order to help achieve these local and national targets.
	Equal Opportunities	None.

Consultations

39. A local consultation exercise was carried out as part of the options appraisal process with views having been expressly invited from the Local Member and Parish Council as well as the affected tenants. Representations were also received from the Frog End Residents Association (FERA) and a petition also submitted to the Parish Council and this was included for information on the agenda for the last meeting of Full Council.
40. A summary of the outcome of local consultations together with the views of FERA are as set out in the table below.

Respondents	Option 1 Refurbishment	Option 2 Sale on open market for refurbishment	Option 3 Sale for development purposes	Option 4 Affordable Housing Scheme
Local Member	Support			
Parish Council	Support			
Frog End Residents Association	Support	Support		
Tenants	Both tenants would like to return to Frog End, Shepreth if they are to be refurbished as rented homes.	One tenant is happy to be offered their temporary accommodation on a permanent basis and the other would be willing to be found suitable alternative accommodation if refurbishment as rented homes is not the preferred option.		

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

41.	Affordable Homes	Refurbishment and redevelopment options would enable retention of or increase in supply of affordable housing to meet local housing needs.
	Customer Service	Not Applicable.
	Northstowe and other growth areas	Not Applicable.
	Quality, Accessible Services	The Council is committed to ensuring that high quality housing services are provided to its tenants and to meeting the Decent Homes Standard (DHS). The current structural condition of this pair of semi-detached properties means that they will not meet the Decent Homes standard without considerable investment. Both refurbishment and redevelopment options could enable much needed affordable housing to be made available to help meet current and future housing needs.
	Village Life	
	Sustainability	
	Partnership	The Council has investigated with its partner Registered Social Landlord (RSLs) available options for both the retention of the existing units and also the redevelopment of the site.

Recommendation

42. Cabinet is recommended that retention and refurbishment of the existing units for shared ownership be the preferred option for the pair of semi-detached properties at 74-76 Frog End, Shepreth.

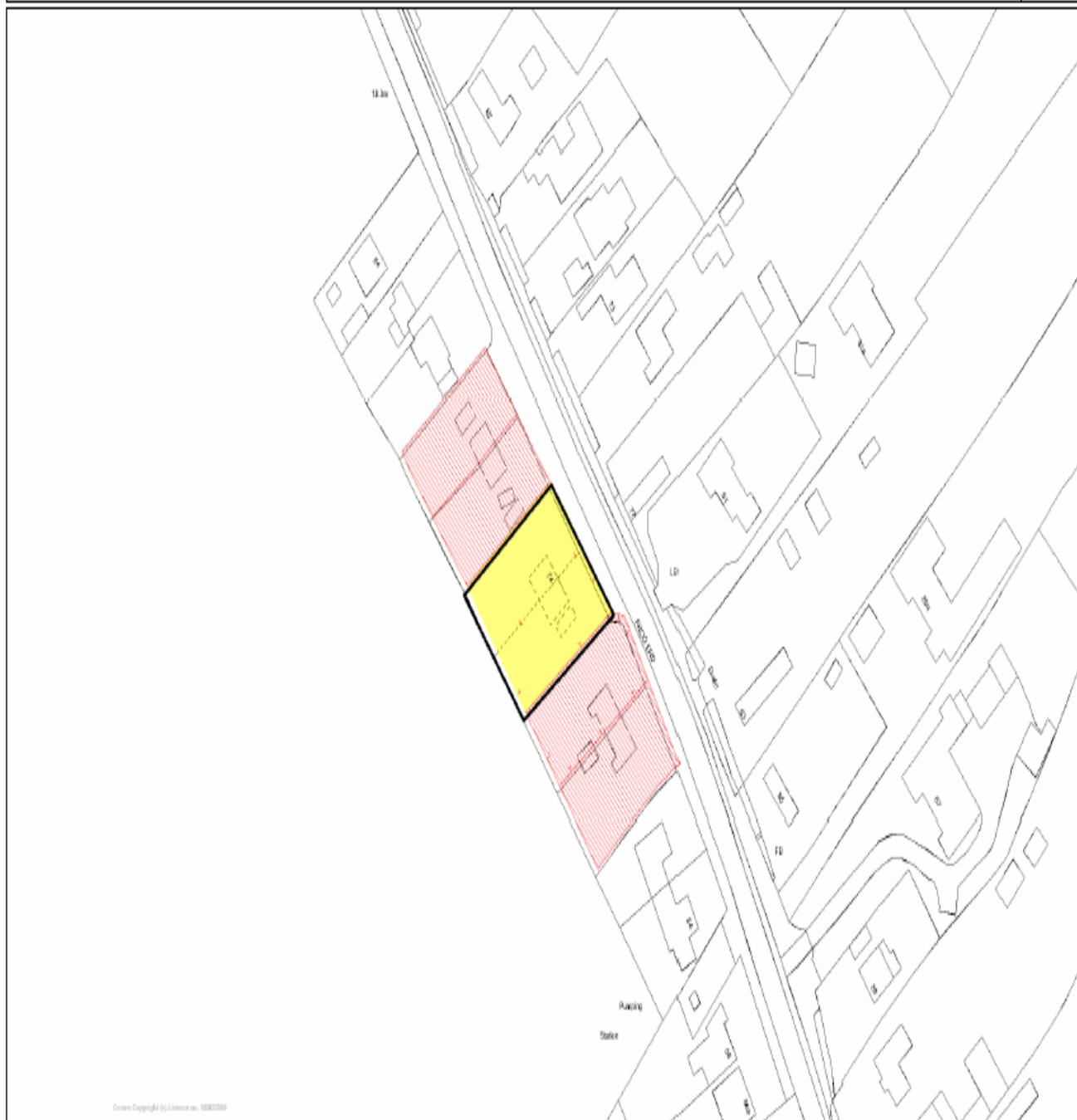
Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

None.

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74 & 76 Frog End, Shepreth



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Julie Fletcher

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APPENDIX B**SUMMARY OF OPTIONS**

Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
<p>Refurbishment by the Council:</p> <p>Rented</p>	<p>Retention of 2 affordable housing units.</p> <p>Existing tenants could opt to return to the refurbished units.</p> <p>Retention of housing stock.</p> <p>Future income through rents and potential future capital receipts through RTB.</p>	<p>Does not maximise potential of site to deliver additional affordable housing to meet local needs.</p> <p>Cost of refurbishment is not considered affordable within the housing capital programme or value for money as estimated costs cannot be recovered through rents over the period of the HRA Business Plan.</p>
Shared Ownership	<p>Retention of 2 affordable housing units.</p> <p>Cost of refurbishment could be recovered through initial share purchased (subject to valuation, etc).</p> <p>Future income through rents (on retained share) and potential future capital receipts through stair-casing.</p> <p>Capital receipts may be exempt from national pooling requirements.</p> <p>Future repairs/maintenance liabilities would fall on the purchaser through the terms of the lease.</p>	<p>Does not maximise potential of site to deliver additional affordable housing to meet local needs.</p> <p>Existing tenants may not wish to/be able to return to these properties if designated as shared ownership.</p> <p>The Council may have to include a buy-back option to exempt capital receipts from national pooling requirements.</p>
Option	Advantages	Disadvantages

Refurbishment by an RSL: Rented	<p>Retention of 2 affordable housing units for which the Council would receive nomination rights.</p> <p>Existing tenants could opt to return to the refurbished units as an RSL tenant.</p>	<p>The properties would need to be sold at nil cost.</p> <p>Loss of housing stock.</p> <p>No future income/capital receipts.</p>
Shared Ownership	<p>Retention of 2 affordable housing units for which the Council would receive nomination rights.</p> <p>Would enable a small capital receipt for the Council.</p>	<p>Loss of housing stock.</p> <p>No future income/capital receipts.</p>
Sale on open market for refurbishment	<p>A capital receipt will be realised by the Council which will be ring-fenced for housing purposes (subject to sale to a qualifying purchaser).</p>	<p>A capital receipt may be subject to national pooling requirements unless sold to a qualifying purchaser.</p> <p>Loss of 2 affordable housing units.</p> <p>Does not maximise potential of site to deliver additional affordable housing to meet local needs.</p> <p>Existing tenants will not be able to return to the properties.</p> <p>The properties have scope for extension/enlargement and may be 'lost' as smaller open market housing units and less affordable to local people.</p>
Sale for development purposes	<p>Could enable provision of affordable housing under planning policy.</p> <p>Will enable a capital receipt for the Council that should be 100% available for housing purposes.</p>	<p>Planning policy on affordable housing may well affect price that can be achieved for the land as well as level of interest in the site.</p> <p>Will not maximise potential of site to deliver additional affordable housing to meet local needs.</p> <p>Existing tenants will not be able to return to the properties.</p>
Option	Advantages	Disadvantages
Affordable Housing Scheme	Maximises potential of site to deliver more affordable	Loss of housing stock and future income/capital

	<p>homes.</p> <p>A (small) capital receipt could be achieved.</p> <p>Existing tenants could be offered a new property on the site that would meet their needs if they are willing to be an RSL tenant.</p>	<p>receipts.</p>
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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Leader and Cabinet	14 December 2006
AUTHORS:	Executive Director / Head of Community Services	

MILTON COUNTRY PARK**Purpose**

1. This report provides an update on measures to manage Milton Country Park at a lower cost to the Council and recommends steps to take this forward.

Background

2. Cabinet has considered the future management of the park at its meetings in February, June and September. These reports have put forward measures to increase income, to comply with the need to make reductions in the Council's net budget, and explored options for outsourcing the management of the park with a 'market –testing' exercise.
3. Car parking charges were not approved in February, but were subsequently approved in September, when members were informed that the measures to introduce the charges meant they were likely to be in place in January 2007. It was also agreed to: negotiate with the County Council about their land in the centre of the park; undertake a 3-month trial with the College of West Anglia for their students to carry out practical work in the park; explore options for the catering franchise; and for officers to review the appropriate levels of staffing for the park. A report back to the December Cabinet meeting was agreed.
4. Officers have pursued these measures, alongside other steps to improve the position for the park, which are reported below, and to plan further savings in line with the agreed budget for 2007/08. However, this work has stretched the capacity of the officers, alongside their other responsibilities; the explorations have been undertaken while continuing to provide and develop the services at the park and in the rest of Community Services.

Considerations: a) Negotiations with the County Council

5. There has not been a positive response from the County to suggestions that they should meet some of the costs of the park, as they own a section of the land; they have indicated that they also have significant budgetary pressures, and the current licence agreement between the two councils precludes any payments by them.
6. Officers have therefore made a new approach, with a different emphasis. The Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities', which is considered elsewhere on this Cabinet agenda, has a chapter on efficiency – transforming local services; one section of this highlights the vital role of asset management in achieving cost savings for local authorities. One of the Beacon Councils who are cited as offering a range of tailored support to help other local authorities "drive improvement in managing their assets" is Cambridgeshire. An approach has therefore been made to the County to seek their assistance in reviewing Milton Country Park, as one of the few assets managed by this Council, excepting our housing stock.

7. The aim is to secure the skills available from a Beacon Council in an arms-length review of our park land, including the section in the County's own ownership, in a way which has not been possible using our staff. This review should ensure that a thorough, professional examination of the value and costs of the park can be carried out, to enable us to arrive at a fully researched outcome, to meet the views expressed in both the Cabinet and the Scrutiny Committee. An oral update on the progress of this approach will be given at the meeting.

b) Car Parking

8. The ticket machine for parking charges is due to be delivered and installed this month, in time to start charging in January, as expected. Officers have been working on an extensive range of issues in order to achieve this, including the design and installation of signage, the tickets, the provision of season tickets for regular users, the processes for running the system, the security measures on handling the money generated, and enforcement processes. The details of these matters have, where appropriate, been dealt with through the Portfolio Holder.
9. The lack of experience of such charges at this council means that officers have been learning as they proceed, using the experience of other country parks who charge for parking. Further changes may be needed as our experience develops, and these will be considered by the Portfolio Holder or at whatever level is appropriate.

c) College of West Anglia

10. A programme of activities has been set up by the Rangers, working with the College tutor, for up to a dozen students; the work items are those which meet the curriculum needs, which has included ditch clearance, coppicing trees, tree planting and coppicing scrub on the edge of the lake. The visits take place once a week for two hours, although the actual working time appears to be considerably less.
11. A review meeting will be arranged for later this month or January, though initial feedback from the college tutor is that the work is meeting the needs of their students. From our viewpoint the amount of work completed is rather disappointing, and the Ranger staff have had to go back and tidy up/complete work on several occasions. The benefits of this collaboration are not what we had hoped for; while it has been a useful piece of joint work, its contribution towards the future management of the park looks to be marginal.

d) Catering arrangements

12. Notice has formally been given to Cambridge Mencap that the current catering agreement for the Swallows café will end on 31 March 2007, in line with the conclusions of the Advisory Group. The letter also thanked them for the service they have given in running Swallows, and indicating that they will be given an opportunity to tender for the service to start in the Spring. Further work is now needed to draw up a specification for the service and carry out this tendering process. Options for the future may include consideration of a mobile catering unit, and/or an ice cream van.

e) Establishing a Trust to take on the park

13. Officers have considered the practicality of establishing a Trust to take on the responsibility of managing or owning the park, and some initial discussions have been held. Experience from elsewhere indicates that the viability of a Trust is

increased with the wider scope it has, and opportunities to develop a wider Trust would be beneficial.

14. Consideration of these issues is taking place for the management of large-scale open spaces for the developments around the fringes of Cambridge, and at Northstowe, with colleagues from the City and county Councils. These discussions have been prompted by the need to agree the arrangements for managing the proposed county park on Trumpington Meadows as part of the Southern Fringe planning applications; it has been suggested that a Trust would be the best way to undertake this.
15. Officers are putting forward the proposal that Milton should be considered as part of any Trust arrangement, as it serves the same function as the proposed new parks. The expertise of the Rangers could be a useful resource to assist in the detailed planning of any proposals; the opportunity for existing staff to be available to oversee the early stages of new country parks could also be helpful. The outcome of a workshop examining these issues on 11 December will be reported orally.
16. At the same time officers continue to explore other possible options for the long-term future of the park. Some initial discussions have been held with another agency whose areas of expertise and interest fit with those of a country park; these discussions are being pursued, and if they develop into a viable option, officers will bring this in a future report to cabinet.

f) Lettings of the Visitors Centre

17. The options to increase the letting income from the visitors centre are being explored, as discussion at the Advisory Group have considered the under-used potential of the upstairs area of the building. In order to improve this situation, a set of doors is being installed in the hallway to provide an acoustic and closable demarcation from other uses within the building.
18. One aspect of the asset management review may focus on the use of this building, and it is hoped that it may provide guidance on options for the future. There may be considerable potential for lettings for private functions, but this may require further investment if it is to be realised.

g) Corporate Sponsorship

19. A sponsorship package is currently being drawn up, in order to approach businesses around Milton and in the science and business parks across the A14. While individual sponsorship has already been successfully used in a small way, for particular items such as benches or trees, corporate sponsorship has not previously been tried.
20. The offer to companies will focus on the health benefits of the park to their staff and perhaps their clients, as well as an enhanced service in terms of information and special events. The sponsorship will also emphasise the 'green' credentials of being associated with a country park. It is proposed to have a range of sponsorship levels, with additional benefits such as advertising within the park available for companies donating higher amounts.
21. Advice has been sought from the Head of Legal Services about establishing a charitable body whose purpose is the maintenance of the park, so that sponsorship could be charitable. At present there is insufficient capacity in the legal service to undertake the work need to set up such a charity; it may be necessary to seek outside professional help if this is to be pursued.

h) Budgetary savings

22. Savings from the current budgets are being planned for 2007/08 in a number of areas. Some of these areas will require changes in the procurement of services, and work is ongoing to consider alternative suppliers, or to reduce the specification of works from outside contractors. Formal negotiations with staff will be undertaken to review aspects of their current terms and conditions of service, including the out-of-hours arrangements.
23. A detailed investigation has been undertaken into the possibility of reducing the Ranger team from 3 to 2 staff; this is attached as **Appendix A**. The conclusion, based on the need for paid staff to open and close the park each day, is that 2 staff working alone would be insufficient to cover the annual hours the park is open, even before allowing for any sickness to be covered. The park has a considerable number of operations or events that require two Rangers working together; there is also the need for staff to meet together as a team on a reasonable regular basis.

i) Application for Local Nature Reserve designation

24. The Council's Ecology Officer, working with the Senior Ranger, has undertaken work to prepare an application for Local Nature Reserve (LNR) status from Natural England. In effect this designation would acknowledge and formalise the current position of the park as a haven for wildlife. The designation of LNR is supported by local plan policies and increasing the number of such reserves fits with Conservation policies.
25. The other benefits of LNR are that it may enable applications for funding to for work or projects in the park, and it provides some legal protection for the site. The other land owners and freeholder for parts of the site have been consulted; both the County Council and Milton Parish Council, who own parts of the northern end of the site, have given their consent for an application. However, the freeholder of the Southern end of the park, from whom the Council have a long lease, has not given consent, and so this land cannot be included in an application.
26. The issues are set out in the report in **Appendix B**, which was taken to the recent Portfolio Holder meeting and supported for bringing to cabinet. The proposal is to apply for LNR designation of all the land in the park north of the 13th Public Drain.

Options

27. Cabinet has two options with regard to applying for LNR status for the park:
 - (a) Approve an application to Natural England for designation
 - (b) Not to approve an application.

Implications

28.	Financial	The measures in this report are part of the steps to reduce the net cost of the park; there are no additional costs to the current budget. It should be noted that the budgeted income from parking this year will not be achieved, as the charges were approved in September, not February when they were first put forward.
	Legal	The advice of the head of Legal Services has been taken with regard to the enforcement of car parking charges.

Staffing	Dealt with in the body of the report.
Risk Management	The safe operation of the park has been a major consideration in the review of staffing levels in the park, and in the procedures for handling parking charges. The proposals made should ensure that risks can be appropriately managed.
Equal Opportunities	The operation of the park is undertaken to ensure that access is available to all. The park is regularly used by a number of groups who work with clients with learning or other disabilities.

Consultations

29. Consultation has taken place through the Advisory Committee, which includes representatives of the Friends of Milton county Park, and Milton Parish Council. There have also been discussions at the Portfolio Holder's meetings, which include Scrutiny Monitors and opposition spokespeople. Some consultation has taken place directly with appropriate organisations, such as the Parish council concerning a sign to be erected in the Community Centre car park.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

30.	Affordable Homes	None
	Customer Service	None
	Northstowe and other growth areas	The expertise of the Ranger team is a valuable resource for assisting in the detailed consideration of proposals for new country parks in Northstowe and on the fringes of Cambridge. The Senior Ranger is contributing to discussions of a possible new Trust to manage these parks.
	Quality, Accessible Services	The park provides a high quality, accessible countryside environment for residents of South Cambs and Cambridge.
	Village Life	The park is an important facility for many residents of Milton.
	Sustainability	Areas of woodland contribute to sustainability.
	Partnership	Aspects of partnership working are explored in the report.

Conclusions/Summary

31. Officers have been working on three related areas of work during the last year: making changes to the current service to increase income and reduce costs; exploring ideas and developing options for the longer-term management of the park; and maintaining the park as an attractive environment for people and wildlife. The first two of these tasks has had to be fitted in with other existing work, and progress has been difficult.
32. The approach to the County Council for assistance in an asset management review is therefore seen as a way forward using a level of expertise that is not available within this Council. Through this process we aim to be able to achieve a well-founded and largely independent analysis on which to base our longer-term decisions concerning the future of the park. The aim is to bring together the widely varying views of members and to establish a course that can command widespread support.
33. The application for LNR status is one measure on which the Ecology Officer has been working, with others, to enhance the standing of the park. If we are successful in our application, this may also enable us to apply for grants for which we are not otherwise eligible. In a difficult time, this step provides a positive note and it would boost both staff morale and the park's and the Council's public profile.

34. The other measures noted in the report are ongoing work to reduce the net cost of the park to the Council, in line with budgetary pressures, while maintaining a safe and attractive environment that receives 200 – 250,000 visits per year. The reduction of the Ranger team to 2 would not provide a safe operation, given all the duties currently undertaken, especially during the summer period when the car park and facilities are open for 11 hours each day.
35. During 2007 there are a range of demanding new responsibilities to be fulfilled, including management of the parking charges and attracting and providing a service to corporate sponsors. This is not a time when a reduced staffing regime could be sustained. This situation will need to be kept under review, in case the level of income from sponsorship and other sources proves insufficient, and it is proposed that September would be the right time to undertake such a review. If a decision were found to be necessary to reduce the staffing at the park, there would be a significant impact on the service provided: with less staff the park would provide less, and the environment would be less well maintained.

Recommendations

36. It is recommended that Cabinet
- (i) approves work to establish the medium/long-term future of the park through:
 - (a) Undertaking an Asset Management Review with the assistance of the County Council, and
 - (b) Seeking an appropriate external organisation to take on the management, and possibly ownership of the park, whether through a Trust or by another suitable agency.
 - (ii) approves the creation of a Local Nature Reserve covering the whole area of the park North of the 13th Public Drain, including Tompkins Mead.
 - (iii) Notes the proposals for reducing the current and future net cost of the park through:
 - (a) increasing income through car parking charges, retendering the catering operation, lettings of the visitor centre and obtaining sponsorship for the park,
 - (b) reductions in expenditure on services and
 - (c) retaining the current staff team of three Rangers, subject to review in/around September 2007.

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

- The local Government White Paper “Strong and Prosperous Communities”
- Report to Cabinet on 14 Sept 06 “The Management of Milton Country Park”
- Tuesday Work Plan for College of West Anglia to December 2006

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Telephone: (01954) 713350

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Appendix B**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

REPORT TO:	Community Development Portfolio Holder	23 November 2006
AUTHOR/S:	Head of Community Services / Senior Ranger	

APPLICATION FOR MILTON COUNTRY PARK TO BE DECLARED A LOCAL NATURE RESERVE.

Purpose

1. To provide the portfolio holder with information about a proposed application to Natural England for Milton Country Park to be declared a Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

Background

2. The rangers together with the council's ecology officer have been working on a management plan for the park for some time. This has been driven by a number of factors, the need for a formal plan to aid future management, the need for such a document to enable applications for various designations and awards, an example of which are Green Flag award and Local Nature Reserve (LNR) status.
3. The principle has been discussed informally with the previous portfolio holder in January 2006 who agreed that we should proceed with the LNR application.
4. Since that time we have written to all the other landowners and leaseholders informing them of our wish to apply for LNR designation. With the exception of the Stokes family from whom we lease almost the entire southern section of the park, they were supportive of an application. As a result the proposed LNR application will be for all the land north of the 13th public drain.

Considerations

5. There are a number of reasons why we believe it would be beneficial for the park to be declared an LNR as follows:
 - i) It would provide a level of legal protection for the site.
 - ii) It would acknowledge the park's status as a site with wildlife interest as well as community and educational usage.
 - iii) It may enable us to apply for funding for work and projects either directly or through a group such as the friends of Milton Country Park.
6. Milton Country Park currently has no formal designations despite its importance locally as an area of informal countryside access and its intrinsic value for biodiversity.
7. The designation of LNR is supported by local plan policies. In addition the draft SCDC Conservation Continuous Improvement Plan identifies the designation of LNR's across the district as an issue to be taken forward. If the park were declared an LNR

it would be a significant increase in the amount of land designated as LNR's in the district and be in-line with the relevant Best Value Performance Indicators.

8. Given the reduction in park funding due to take place in the financial year 2007/08 the involvement of the community in the management of the park will become more important. LNR status and the associated management plan will provide details of a minimum standard of work required to maintain it in a favourable condition.

Options

9. The portfolio holder has two options with regard to applying for LNR status for the park.
- a) To recommend that council officers complete the application process and apply for the park to be declared a Local Nature Reserve.
 - b) Not to recommend the above action.

Implications

10.	Financial	Management of the LNR would be the responsibility of SCDC as part of its ongoing funding of the park as a whole. The cost implications would form part of any specified future management regime required for the park if transferred to another managing organisation (i.e. any body taking over the park would have to deliver established management regimes).
	Legal	<p>The declaration of the park would be undertaken by SCDC under powers as afforded by Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949. This section of the Act gives local authorities the power to acquire, declare and manage nature reserves.</p> <p>Particular protocols have to be followed regarding the designation process including the advertisement of the intention within the local press. The process recently taken by the County Council should be followed.</p>
	Staffing	The day-to-day running and management of the site would be the responsibility of SCDC (unless delegated to another body). The management regimes proposed would not lead to an increase in staffing levels.
	Risk Management	The park does not currently have a comprehensive management plan. The adoption of the MCP management plan provides an excellent opportunity to get the site formally recognised as a locally important site for people and wildlife.
	Equal Opportunities	None specific. All abilities of people are welcome at the park.

Consultations

11. The preparation has been carried out with the council's ecologist. A discussion has also been held with an officer from English Nature, (since that meeting the name of the organisation concerned has changed to Natural England).
12. Positive responses have been received from Milton Parish Council and Cambridgeshire County Council as landowners of specific sections of the park area

concerned and from Histon and District Angling Society who lease part of the land included in the application. As mentioned earlier the Stokes family from whom we lease the majority of the land south of the 13 th Public Drain did not support the proposed application, their land is not therefore being included in the proposed application.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

13.	Affordable Homes	None specific
	Customer Service	The adoption of a MCP management plan will add clarity to the core tasks expected by MCP staff in providing for visitors.
	Northstowe and other growth areas	The park provides a locally important green space for South Cambs and City residents. The usage of the park can only be expected to increase in the future, thus a clear direction and status for the park is needed.
	Quality, Accessible Services	The designation of the site would provide additional opportunities to promote the park as an accessible site accessible easily within the district with an environment managed to improve physical and emotional wellbeing
	Village Life	The designation would help promote the park locally as a site to be enjoyed, where opportunities to work and learn occur for people of all ages and abilities.
	Sustainability	The designation of these sites as LNR's and their subsequent promotion will provide opportunities for the quiet enjoyment of the countryside. It may be possible for the City Council to produce guided walk leaflets to minimise people travelling to the sites by car.
	Partnership	None specific. However, the identification of particular tasks within the management plan may help to draw in future partnerships.

Conclusions/Summary

14. The total number of LNR's within the district would be increased without any further financial implications to the District Council other than those currently included within the park's maintenance budget. This would be a positive move forward to achieving Best Value Performance Indicators.
15. Local Plan policy EN10 objectives would be supported by the proposal.
16. A locally important site for people and wildlife would receive a greater level of protection from encroachment by development.

Recommendations

17. It is recommended that the portfolio holder supports an application for the designation of Milton Country Park as a Local Nature Reserve.

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

Report to Community Development Portfolio Holder in January 2006

Contact Officer: Malcolm Busby - Senior Ranger
Telephone: (01223) 420060

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Leader and Cabinet	14 December 2006
AUTHORS:	Chief Executive/Principal Accountant (General Fund and Costing)	

CAPITAL AND REVENUE ESTIMATES FOR THE STAFFING AND CENTRAL OVERHEAD ACCOUNTS

Purpose

1. To approve the Capital Programme up to the year 2009-10 and the Revenue Estimates up to 2007-08 for the Staffing and Central Overhead Accounts.

Executive Summary

2. These estimates form only the first part of the estimate process. All the savings and additional spending approvals relevant to the staffing and central overhead accounts have been incorporated and all areas reviewed in detail.
3. A summary of the revenue estimates for Staffing and Central Overhead Accounts is shown at **Appendix A** and the recharges to services at **Appendix B**.
4. The net estimated expenditure in 2007-08 for this area of the accounts is £16.412m, which is £0.448m (2.7%) less than the original estimate for 2006-07. The 2006-07 revised figure of £15.962m is £0.898m (5.3%) less than the original estimate. The recharges to portfolio services will reflect these decreases. However, there has been a change in accounting requirements that has resulted in a large reduction in capital charges within these estimates, but they have no effect on council tax, because the figures are reversed out on the final General Fund Summary.
5. The capital charges are £0.772m lower in the Revised 2006-07 and £0.718m lower in the Original 2007-08 estimates. This results in a significant difference compared with the headline cost comparisons. The net estimated expenditure excluding capital charges in 2007-08 is £15.533m, which is £0.270m (1.8%) more than the original estimate for 2006-07. The 2006-07 revised figure of £15.138m is £0.125m (0.8%) less than the original estimate.
6. The Capital Programme relating to the Staffing and Central Overhead Accounts is submitted for approval at **Appendix C**. The only capital expenditure relevant to these accounts relates to the new Cambourne Offices and ICT Development (including the Contact Centre).
7. Cabinet is recommended to:
 - (a) Confirm the inflation figure of 2½% both for general expenditure and pay awards, on which all the estimates are being prepared (paragraph 16).
 - (b) Approve the revenue estimates and recharges as presented and shown at **Appendix A and Appendix B**.
 - (c) Approve the capital programme as shown at **Appendix C**.

Background

8. The draft estimates for all the services of the Council will be presented to the relevant Portfolio Holders in January, for consideration and endorsement, and will then be examined by a scrutiny panel consisting of the Leader, Chairman and Vice Chairman

of Scrutiny and Overview Committee and the Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder. The estimates will include the savings and additional expenditure proposals that were agreed by Council in the Medium Term Financial Strategy on 23 November 2006. It is intended that those estimates will be brought together and presented to the Cabinet on 8 February 2007. The final approval of the estimates and the levels of Council Tax and Rents will be decided by the Council on 22 February 2007.

9. Before the above process can proceed, the estimates relating to the Staffing and Central Overhead Accounts need to be determined by the Cabinet, so that they may be fully recharged to all the services of the Council
10. The estimates presented today concern the Staffing and Central Overhead Accounts only. The staffing costs have been categorised according to Portfolio, by assigning each current staffing cost centre to one portfolio only. The Wardens' and DLO/DSO operatives' costs continue to be excluded, as they are charged directly to their services.
11. The Revenue Estimates are shown in summary at **Appendix A** and in detail in a pack accompanying the agenda. **Appendix B** summarises the recharges to each portfolio and the Housing Revenue Account, whilst the relevant Capital Estimates are shown at **Appendix C**.
12. These estimates incorporate all decisions made by the Cabinet up to and including the previous meeting. In particular, they include the staffing and central overhead cost implications of the approved savings and additional expenditure proposals agreed by Council in October and November. Any further approved changes could be subsequently added to these estimates, but the costs or reductions in 2007-08 would remain unallocated to services until the Revised Estimates are completed in December 2007.
13. The detailed estimates reflect the new corporate manager structure, in that recharges are now analysed in terms of the new services with effect from the revised estimates 2006-07 onwards, rather than in the old department structure. The staffing estimates in the separate estimates pack have also been analysed in the new structure with full comparative figures.
14. The general provision agreed by Council in respect of the 2nd tier review, has been included as a lump sum in the portfolio costs, but this has not been allocated across services at this stage. The detailed estimates reflect the current 2nd tier posts only.
15. Further savings may arise from future reviews by the Transformation Team. These estimates take no account of these, but an overall provision will be included in the Corporate Management estimates.

Considerations

INFLATION AND PAY AWARDS

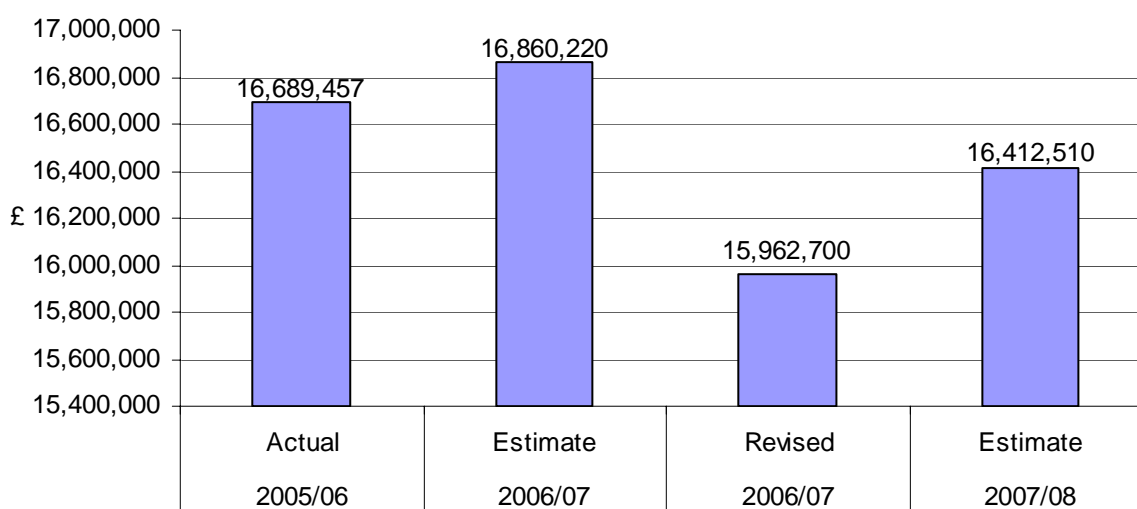
16. In 2006-07, the pay award and provision for inflation were both 2½%. Similarly, in 2007-08, a provision of 2½% has been applied to cover both the annual pay award and inflation on expenditure generally. Further provision is made for increases in local government pension costs (see paragraph 24 below).

REVENUE ESTIMATES: REVISED 2006-07 AND ESTIMATES 2007-08

17. A summary of the revenue estimates for Staffing and Central Overhead Accounts is shown at **Appendix A**.

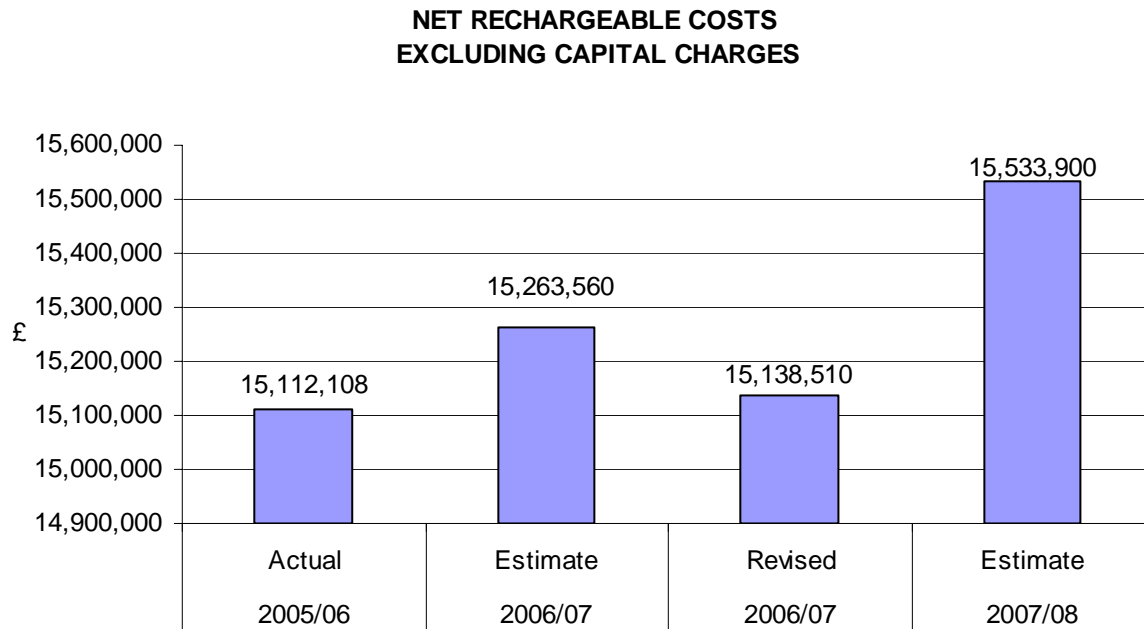
NET RECHARGEABLE COSTS (including unallocated)

18. All costs of the staffing and central overheads are recharged both between these accounts and to all the services of the Council.
19. The rechargeable expenditure has a significant impact on the total revenue expenditure of each service. The net estimated expenditure in 2007-08 is £16.412m, which is £0.448m (2.7%) less than the original estimate for 2006-07 and £0.277 (1.7%) less than the actual expenditure in 2005-06. The 2006-07 revised figure of £15.962m is £0.898m (5.3%) less than the original estimate and £0.727m (4.4%) less than the 2005-06 actual expenditure. These comparisons are shown diagrammatically below:

NET RECHARGEABLE COSTS

20. The above figures have been significantly affected by a recent change in local authority accounting practice that has been applied to the current estimates. This brings local authority accounting more into line with commercial practice with regard to capital charges. Previously, as well as charging depreciation on assets, a 'notional interest' charge was made. The requirement to make a notional interest charge has now been removed, resulting in substantial reductions in the capital charges, particularly in respect of the Cambourne Office. However, this does NOT affect the total costs of the Council or the level of council tax. Although capital charges must be included in recharges to services, they are reversed out on the General Fund summary.
21. The net rechargeable costs have been analysed on Appendix A, as a memorandum note, to show the costs excluding capital charges. Compared with the original estimates, the capital charges are £0.772m lower in the Revised 2006-07 and £0.718m lower in the Original 2007-08 estimates. This results in a significant difference compared with the headline cost comparisons. The net estimated expenditure excluding capital charges in 2007-08 is £15.533m, which is £0.270m

(1.8%) more than the original estimate for 2006-07 and £0.421 (2.8%) more than the actual expenditure in 2005-06. The 2006-07 revised figure of £15.138m is £0.125m (0.8%) less than the original estimate and £0.026m (0.2%) more than the 2005-06 actual expenditure. These comparisons are shown diagrammatically below:



22. The Net Rechargeable Costs are made up of Staffing Costs, which are referred to in paragraphs 23 to 37, and Central Overheads, which are dealt with in paragraphs 38 to 41.

STAFFING COSTS (including all ICT capital charges and other costs)

23. Provision was made in the 2006-07 original estimates for a local pay award from April 2006 of 2.5% for all staff. The revised estimates include the actual award of 2.5% and the estimates for 2007-08 continue to provide for a pay award of 2.5%.
24. Provision has also been made for a further increase of 2.1% in the employer's pension contribution rate, from 13.3% to 15.4%, with effect from April 2007. After taking this and the estimated 2.5% pay award increase into account, the estimated increased cost to the Council in 2006-07 of each employee at a given pay scale is therefore around 4.6%, before any increase due to incremental progression is taken into account. However, the majority of staff will still receive an increment in 2007-08, mainly as a result of the extended pay ranges introduced in the PricewaterhouseCoopers pay review. In these cases, the cost of the increment is on average another 3.4%, making an increase of 8% in total on those employees. The net effect of the resultant upward incremental drift on the current estimates is considered to be close to the provision of £190,000 that was included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2007-08. This leads to an average increase in salary cost of 6.2% in 2007-08.
25. The net estimated staffing expenditure in 2007-08 is £14.810m, which is £0.199m (1.4%) more than the original estimate for 2006-07 and £0.333m (2.3%) more than the 2005-06 actual expenditure. The 2006-07 revised figure of £14.389m is £0.222m (1.5%) less than the original estimate and £0.088m (0.6%) less than the 2005-06 actual expenditure.

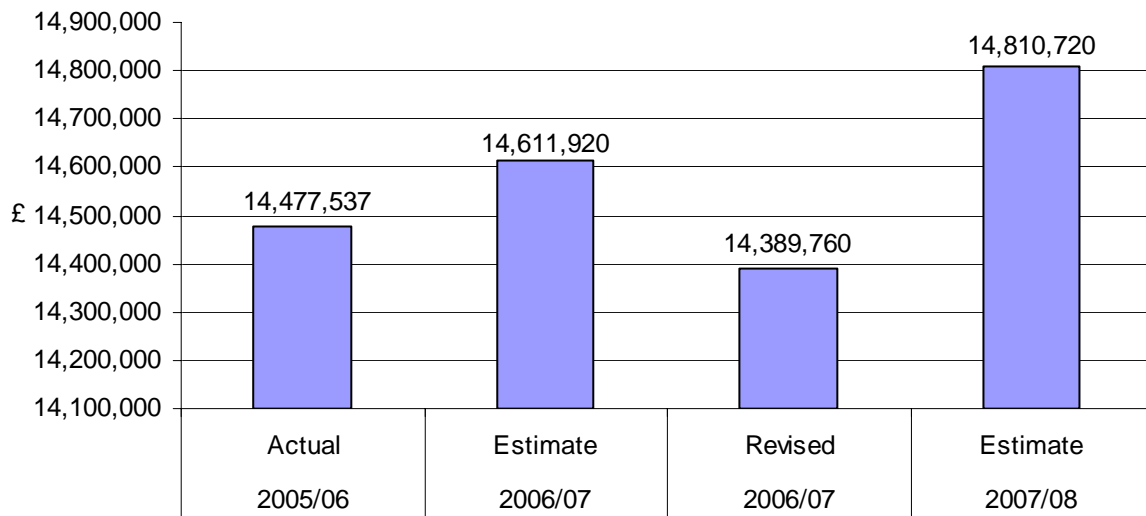
26. The staffing costs have been analysed by portfolio to reflect the areas of responsibility of each Portfolio Holder. Individual Portfolio Holders will have been given an analysis of their staffing costs, by cost centre. Complete sets of this documentation are held by the Leader and the Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder and can be made available to other Members on request.
27. The following table shows a comparison by portfolio of the original Estimate 2006-07 with both the Revised Estimate 2006-07 and the Estimate 2007-08:

<u>Staffing Costs by Portfolio</u>	Estimate 2006-07 £	Revised 2006-07 v Est.06-07 £	Estimate 2007-08 v Est.06-07 £
Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Services	6,607,250	- 182,640	+77,840 (1.2%)
Environmental Health	1,904,420	- 50,090	+107,240 (5.6%)
Housing	2,409,780	- 86,450	- 5,100 (-0.2%)
Planning and Econ. Development	2,584,320	+ 71,220	+ 95,270 (3.7%)
Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning	445,450	- 39,430	+ 56,810 (12%)
Community Development	660,700	+ 230	+ 33,740 (5.1%)
Unallocated expenditure	0	+ 65,000	- 167,000
TOTAL	14,611,920	- 222,160	+198,800 (1.4%)

Overall Total Figures	14,611,920	14,389,760	14,810,720
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28. The overall staffing figures are shown diagrammatically below:

STAFFING COSTS



29. The staffing costs (including all ICT costs) may also be analysed by officer structure, to reflect the responsibilities of the new Corporate Manager service divisions. These figures are included as Memorandum Accounts at the back of the estimates pack accompanying the agenda. All figures, including the comparative figures, reflect the proposed new structure
30. Comments on the figures for each portfolio are set out in paragraphs 31 to 37. Note that with reference to the progressive increases in payroll costs in paragraph 24 (up to 8%) and the inflation allowance on other costs (2.5%), the expected overall increase on the staffing accounts in 2007-08 before any savings would be around 5½%.
31. Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Services:
- (a) The estimated reduction of capital charges (see paragraph 20) on ICT amounts to £207K in 2006-07 and £152K in 2007-08. Without these reductions the figures compared with the original estimate are +£25,120 for the revised 2006-07 and +£230,120 for the estimate 2007-08.
 - (b) From the revised estimate onwards, verification framework (government) grant of £72K has been transferred to the Benefits service account, thus causing an increase in net expenditure in these estimates which will be compensated by a decrease within the Benefits Holding Account.
 - (c) In the current year, the reduction in the budget for the former Chief Executive and other savings are partly offset by the inclusion of the Transformation Team and a Rent Assistant and also the extension of the Procurement Officer and ICT posts.
 - (d) In 2007-08 there are anticipated savings of almost £200K, primarily in the area of ICT. Additional expenditure arises from inflation, new part time Revenues, Human Resources and Accountancy staff, a Section 106 solicitor, the extension of the Procurement Officer and Web Officer (permanent).

32. Environmental Health:
 - (a) The estimated reduction in 2006-07 of £50K is due to various vacancies.
 - (b) The increase in 2007-08 of £107K is around the overall level of expected pay and price inflation. There is provision for an additional Environmental Health Officer, offset by the deletion of the Dog Warden post and a fixed term post.
33. Housing:
 - (a) Two Housing ICT support posts have moved from Housing to the ICT Division. This is the main reason for the reductions in 2006-07 and 2007-8.
 - (b) There is a saving in 2007-08 in the Housing Development Division arising from the deletion of two previously partly funded posts.
34. Planning and Economic Development:
 - (a) The increase of £71K in 2006-07 is largely due to the one-off costs of data capture, which is being carried out prior to the introduction of the National Land and Information System (NLIS), and the temporary employment of Local Development Framework staff. These sums, totalling £110K, have been found from rollover, a cash limit resolution in April 2006 and virement.
 - (b) In 2007-08 the new post of Growth Areas Corporate Project Manager has been added and the Corporate Projects Officer post made permanent. There is a saving of one Land Charges post, in anticipation of the NLIS, and one Building Control fixed term post is funded to 31st March 2007 only. There are other fixed term posts that are due to end during this period, but as these are funded from Planning Delivery Grant, there will be no overall saving.
35. Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning:
 - (a) The decrease of £39K in 2006-07 is due to the vacancies of the Historic Buildings Officer, Trees and Landscape Officer and Assistant, and the Strategic Development Officer.
 - (b) In 2007-08 the new post of Urban Designer has been included and various savings of around £12K have been applied to the Conservation and Design estimates.
36. Community Development:
 - (a) In 2006-07, any savings have been offset by the costs of maternity cover, long-term sickness cover and the absence of income for work done by travellers officers for other authorities.
 - (b) Similarly in 2007-08, the proposed staffing saving is mostly offset by reduced income due to the discontinued secondment of the Community Development Manager and a lower level of work estimated as rechargeable to other authorities by travellers officers.
37. Unallocated:

In 2007-08, several items have been included as an overall lump sum, because the detail is not known. They are not recharged to services at this stage. The items consist of the 2% for vacancies and training overall savings and also the provisions for the 2nd tier restructuring.

CENTRAL OVERHEADS

38. Cambourne Office:
 - (a) The substantial overall reduction is mainly due to the change in accounting for capital charges (see paragraph 20). Excluding the capital charges, there is a reduction of £77K in 2006-07 and £76K in 2007-08 compared with the original estimate. The majority of this is due to lower business rates for the building. In addition there are reductions on staff travel payments, telephone maintenance and recharges from staff.

- (b) The quarterly monitoring report to Cabinet in October 2006 indicated that certain energy bills had not materialised. However, as there is still a significant risk that the Council will be billed retrospectively, the provision for the cost of these has been maintained for the period of these estimates. There is therefore no reduction at this stage, but there could be a one-off saving at some point in the future.
- 39. Cambridge Office:
The Cambridge Office was closed at the end of July 2006. There is no further expenditure after that time.
- 40. Central Expenses:
 - (a) The reduction of £37K in 2006-07 is mainly due to lower costs of employee related insurance, health and safety and recharges from staff.
 - (b) In 2007-8, provision of £10K has been made for Equality Issues, which was one of the approved spending pressure items.
 - (c) Provision for the use of security services has had to be continued for the time being. Other savings within Central Expenses cover the cost of this.
- 41. Central Support Services:
The reductions in both years compared with the original estimate are due to lower recharges from staff.

RECHARGES TO SERVICES

- 42. A summary of recharges to services is shown at **Appendix B**. These will be charged to the General Fund Portfolios, the Housing Revenue Account and capital accounts.
- 43. The 2006-07 revised estimate of recharges to General Fund services amounts to £12.823m, which is £0.696m less than the original estimate. In 2007-08, the estimated figure is £13.466m, which is £0.053m less than the 2006-07 original estimate. This will result in very favourable levels of recharges to most services. However, an element of these reductions is due to lower capital charges (see paragraph 20), which will be reversed out in the final general fund summary.
- 44. The revised estimate of recharges to the Housing Revenue Account amounts to £2.448m, which is £0.218m less than the original estimate. In 2007-08, the estimated figure is £2.451m, which is £0.215m less than the 2006-07 original estimate.
- 45. Details of the unallocated costs, which are provided for but not recharged at this stage, are also noted on Appendix B. Apart from the general provisions that could not be allocated (see paragraph 37), a late adjustment to account for the chosen internal audit tender was also not allocated.

CAPITAL ESTIMATES: REVISED 2006-07 AND ESTIMATES 2006-07 TO 2009-10

- 46. The Capital Programme relating to the Staffing and Central Overhead Accounts is submitted for approval at **Appendix C**. The only capital expenditure relevant to these accounts relates to the new Cambourne Offices and ICT Development (including the Contact Centre).
- 47. Comments concerning the items in the programme are included in the notes to Appendix C.

Implications

48.	Financial	1.The estimated central costs rechargeable to services, as shown in Appendix B , will be shown in all portfolio estimates as Central, Departmental and Support Services and will also be recharged to capital accounts, as appropriate. 2.The unallocated costs will be shown as separate items in the General Fund Summary and Housing Revenue Account Summary and will be incorporated in the Capital Programme. 3.The capital estimates in Appendix C will be included in the Council's Capital Programme. The funding of these initial capital payments will normally be financed from the available capital receipts. In future years, the relevant revenue accounts will be charged additional capital charges for use of the assets purchased.
	Legal	No additional implications. The estimates show the financial effect of decisions that have already been made.
	Staffing	As above
	Risk Management	As above
	Equal Opportunities	As above

Consultations

49. The relevant cost centre managers, who are responsible for setting the level of their respective budgets and controlling the expenditure within them, have been consulted extensively in the compilation of the estimate figures

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

50.	Affordable Homes	To determine detailed staffing and overhead budgets to provide the resources for the Council to continue and improve its services to achieve its corporate objectives as far as possible within the current financial constraints.
	Customer Service	
	Northstowe and other growth areas	
	Quality, Accessible Services	
	Village Life	
	Sustainability	
	Partnership	

Recommendations

51. Cabinet is recommended to:
- Confirm the inflation figure of 2½% both for general expenditure and pay awards, on which all the estimates are being prepared (paragraph 16).
 - Approve the revenue estimates and recharges as presented and shown at **Appendix A and Appendix B**.
 - Approve the capital programme as shown at **Appendix C**.

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

Estimate files within the Accountancy Division
Detailed estimates pack

Contact Officer: Peter Harris, Principal Accountant (General Fund & Costing)
Telephone: (01954) 713073

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APPENDIX A

Actual 2005/06 £	STAFFING AND CENTRAL OVERHEAD ACCOUNTS	Estimate 2006/07 £	Revised 2006/07 £	Estimate 2007/08 £
	SUMMARY OF EXPENDITURE RECHARGEABLE TO SERVICES OF ALL PORTFOLIOS			
	Portfolio Staffing Expenditure			
6,747,408	Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Services	6,607,250	6,424,610	6,685,090
1,710,489	Environmental Health	1,904,420	1,854,330	2,011,660
2,515,676	Housing	2,409,780	2,323,330	2,404,680
2,438,795	Planning and Economic Development	2,584,320	2,655,540	2,679,590
390,418	Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning	445,450	406,020	502,260
674,751	Community Development	660,700	660,930	694,440
0	Unallocated expenditure (vacancies, training, 2nd tier)	0	65,000	(167,000)
<u>14,477,537</u>	Staffing Expenditure excluding overheads	<u>14,611,920</u>	<u>14,389,760</u>	<u>14,810,720</u>
	Overhead Accounts			
121,005	Waterbeach Depot	126,630	127,370	129,530
1,814,939	Cambourne Office	1,858,880	1,210,840	1,217,800
45,423	Cambridge Office	43,210	15,840	0
338,736	Central Expenses	363,550	326,500	372,760
518,062	Central Support Services - Other	433,270	402,870	376,350
<u>17,315,702</u>	Staffing Expenditure and Overheads	<u>17,437,460</u>	<u>16,473,180</u>	<u>16,907,160</u>
(626,245)	Less Recharges included above from : Staffing to Overheads	(577,240)	(510,480)	(494,650)
<u>16,689,457</u>	Net rechargeable costs	<u>16,860,220</u>	<u>15,962,700</u>	<u>16,412,510</u>
(16,689,457)	Recharges to all Portfolio Direct Services from : Staffing and Admin Buildings (inc. Depot)	(16,860,220)	#####	#####
0	Unallocated cost/(credit) to General Fund/HRA/Capital	0	65,000	(182,920)
0	Less unallocated cost apportioned to:			
0	HRA	0	(5,000)	(1,160)
0	Capital	0	0	10,320
<u>0</u>	Net unallocated cost/(credit) to General Fund Summary	<u>0</u>	<u>60,000</u>	<u>(173,760)</u>

Effect of excluding capital charges from net rechargeable costs:**Staffing**

14,477,537	Staffing Expenditure excluding overheads	14,611,920	14,389,760	14,810,720
(692,074)	Less capital charges (ICT)	(720,550)	(512,790)	(568,270)
<u>13,785,463</u>	Net staffing costs excluding capital charges	<u>13,891,370</u>	<u>13,876,970</u>	<u>14,242,450</u>

Overhead Accounts

2,211,920	Overhead Expenditure excluding staffing recharges	2,248,300	1,572,940	1,601,790
(885,275)	Less capital charges (Admin Buildings))	(876,110)	(311,400)	(310,340)
<u>1,326,645</u>	Net overhead costs excluding capital charges	<u>1,372,190</u>	<u>1,261,540</u>	<u>1,291,450</u>

Total

<u>16,689,457</u>	Net rechargeable costs	<u>16,860,220</u>	<u>15,962,700</u>	<u>16,412,510</u>
(1,577,349)	Less capital charges (no overall effect on General Fund)	(1,596,660)	(824,190)	(878,610)
<u>15,112,108</u>	Net rechargeable costs excluding capital charges	<u>15,263,560</u>	<u>15,138,510</u>	<u>15,533,900</u>

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APPENDIX B

Actual 2005/06 £	SUMMARY OF RECHARGES TO SERVICES	Estimate 2006/07 £	Revised 2006/07 £	Estimate 2007/08 £
	Portfolios - General Fund			
4,400,648	Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio	4,485,030	4,303,200	4,486,740
2,430,529	Environmental Health	2,556,260	2,365,060	2,480,890
783,678	Housing - General Fund	859,400	857,260	898,950
4,039,853	Planning and Economic Development	4,267,220	3,977,490	4,218,780
547,395	Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning	641,390	649,650	687,430
849,257	Community Development	710,520	670,550	694,120
<u>13,051,360</u>	Total Recharges to Portfolios (General Fund)	<u>13,519,820</u>	<u>12,823,210</u>	<u>13,466,910</u>
2,894,277	Housing Revenue Account	2,666,080	2,448,520	2,451,410
743,820	Capital	674,320	625,970	677,110
<u>16,689,457</u>	Total Recharges to Services	<u>16,860,220</u>	<u>15,897,700</u>	<u>16,595,430</u>

UNALLOCATED COSTS**(rechargeable costs not allocated to services at this stage)**

	Unspecified unallocated costs			
0	Reduction for vacancies	0	0	(242,000)
0	Reduction for training underspendings	0	0	(50,000)
0	Provision for 2nd tier restructure	0	65,000	125,000
<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>	<u>65,000</u>	<u>(167,000)</u>
0	Internal Audit adjustment for reduced cost	0	0	(15,920)
<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>	<u>65,000</u>	<u>(182,920)</u>
	Analysis of Unallocated costs			
0	General Fund	0	60,000	(173,760)
0	Housing Revenue Account	0	5,000	1,160
0	Capital	0	0	(10,320)
<u>0</u>		<u>0</u>	<u>65,000</u>	<u>(182,920)</u>

TOTAL NET RECHARGEABLE COSTS

16,689,457	Total Recharges to Services	16,860,220	15,897,700	16,595,430
0	Unallocated costs	0	65,000	(182,920)
<u>16,689,457</u>	Total Net Rechargeable Costs	<u>16,860,220</u>	<u>15,962,700</u>	<u>16,412,510</u>

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APPENDIX C**CAPITAL PROGRAMME****Staffing and Central Overhead Accounts**

	Notes	Actual 2005/06 £	Estimate 2006/07 £	Revised 2006/07 £	Estimate 2007/08 £	Estimate 2008/09 £	Estimate 2009/10 £
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE							
Resources and Staffing Portfolio							
Administrative Buildings							
New Cambourne Offices	1	20,124	0	323,220	0	0	0
Cambridge Office		18,860	0	0	0	0	0
Information and Customer Services Portfolio							
Finance and Resources Department							
ICT Development (inc. Contact Centre)	2	386,131	603,750	835,850	125,000	75,000	875,000
TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE		425,115	603,750	1,159,070	125,000	75,000	875,000
FINANCED BY:							
Capital Receipts		49,975	511,500	1,066,820	125,000	75,000	875,000
Grants		375,140	92,250	92,250	0	0	0
General Fund		0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL FINANCING		425,115	603,750	1,159,070	125,000	75,000	875,000

Memorandum Note :

REVISED ESTIMATE COMPARISON WITH ORIGINAL ESTIMATE:

by adjusting for funding and other factors

Figures as above	603,750	1,159,070
Less ICT expenditure funded from grant	(92,250)	(92,250)

Authorisation to exceed Original Estimates in 2006/07:

Rollovers from 2005/06 -

ICT Development (inc. Contact Centre)	300,000
New Cambourne Offices	323,220

COMPARISON OF ORIGINAL AND REVISED ESTIMATE	1,134,720	1,066,820
after adjustment for funding and other factors 3	reduction of :	67,900

Notes:

- 1 The 2006/07 revised estimate in respect of the new Cambourne offices is the authorised rollover from 2005/06.
- 2 The 2006/07 revised estimate in respect of ICT is the original estimate and the authorised rollover from 2005/06 less savings of £67,900. These savings were mainly in respect of the Contact Centre.
- 3 The memorandum note shows the effect of the rollovers on the original estimate and confirms that the revised estimate is well within the adjusted original estimate.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Leader and Cabinet	14 December 2006
AUTHOR/S:	Chief Executive/ Finance Project Officer	

INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE TENDER EXERCISE**Purpose**

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the result of exposing the Council's Internal Audit Service to competitive tendering and to seek Cabinet's approval of the intention to award the resulting contract to Bentley Jennison for an initial four-year period from 1 April 2007, subject to conditions and to the mandatory "standstill" period required under EU procurement rules.

Executive Summary

2. Following a comprehensive evaluation of tenders using criteria set out in the invitation to tender, the tender submitted by Bentley Jennison ranked 1st for both three- and four-year contract periods.
3. Cabinet is asked to approve the intention of awarding the contract to Bentley Jennison for an initial four-year period from 1 April 2007, subject to conditions and to the mandatory "standstill" period required under EU procurement rules.

Background

4. Following the decision made by the Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder at his meeting on 12 September 2006, invitations to tender were issued to five organisations for return by 2 November 2006. In order to evaluate whether differing contract periods might have a material effect on the tenders submitted, bids were invited for both three- and four-year periods, each extendable by up to two years. Four organisations submitted tenders:

<u>Tender</u>	<u>3-year contract</u> <u>extendable by up to 2 years</u>	<u>4-year contract</u> <u>extendable by up to 2 years</u>
A	£98,315 p.a. (371 days p.a.)	£96,460 p.a. (371 days p.a.)
B	£82,600 p.a. (280 days p.a.)	£80,535 p.a. (280 days p.a.)
C	£132,883 p.a. (354 days p.a.)	no bid
D	£143,000 p.a. (345 days p.a.)	£136,500 p.a. (345 days p.a.)

Considerations

5. The tenders were evaluated using criteria set out in the invitation to tender: price; skills mix; other quality criteria; and presentation and interview. The evaluation resulted in two of the four organisations being unable to gain enough points from the presentation and interview element of the evaluation, to match the scores of the other two organisations. Only two organisations were therefore invited to support their tenders in the form of a presentation and interview, held on 22 November 2006.
6. The presentation and interview panel comprised the Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder, the Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and the Chief Executive. Following the presentations and interviews, the panel concurred with the results of the evaluation exercise, that the tender submitted by Bentley Jennison ranked 1st for both three- and four-year contract periods.

7. Following the judgement in the European Court of Justice in the case of Alcatel (C81-98) and to comply with The Public Contracts Regulation 2006, all awards of contracts that are subject to European Procurement Directives are subject to a mandatory 'standstill' period of at least 10 days between the award decision and contract conclusion. The standstill period is solely to allow unsuccessful bidders the opportunity (should they wish to do so) to apply to the Courts for the award decision to be reversed or set aside.

Implications

8. Financial	Budgetary provision has been made in the draft 2007/08 estimates to meet the anticipated costs of awarding this contract.
Legal	The provision of the Internal Audit service with effect from 1st April 2007 will be subject to a detailed service specification and defined contract conditions.
Staffing	With the appointment of a new contractor, there will be a period of transition, which may have a temporary impact on some officers' time.
Risk Management	The requirement for this authority to maintain an adequate and effective internal audit of all the activities of the Council will be met by the contractor fulfilling the service specification.
Equal Opportunities	The contractor will be expected to comply with a number of policies to which the authority subscribes, including equal opportunities, race equality, etc.

Consultations

9. Advice regarding the tender process has been sought from the Procurement Officer and from his counterpart at Cambridgeshire County Council, who has considerable experience in this area.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

10. Affordable Homes	The Internal Audit service has a key role to play in support of the corporate management of the Council, in: (a) objectively examining, evaluating and reporting on the adequacy of internal control within the Council; and (b) assisting management in its pursuit of greater value for money through the economic, efficient and effective use of resources.
Customer Service	
Northstowe and other growth areas	
Quality, Accessible Services	
Village Life	
Sustainability	
Partnership	

Conclusions/Summary

11. The outcome of the evaluation exercise is that the tender submitted by Bentley Jennison ranked 1st for both three- and four-year contract periods.

Recommendation

12. Cabinet is requested to approve the intention of awarding the contract to Bentley Jennison for an initial four-year period from 1 April 2007, subject to conditions and to the mandatory standstill period required under EU procurement rules.

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

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

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet 14 December 2006
AUTHORS: Executive Director / Head of Community Services

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT (LAA): SIX-MONTH REVIEW AND
 PROGRESS TOWARDS THE ANNUAL REFRESH**

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the progress shown in the first six-month review of the LAA and to highlight areas to be included in the first annual refresh.

This report is a summary of the six-month review and the refresh of the LAA; more detailed papers can be obtained from the contact officers named at the end of the report.

Six-Month Review

2. The Cambridgeshire LAA is a three-year agreement for the period 2006 to 2009 between the Government and the County Council and its partners, setting out agreed targets which provide a framework for partnership working to improve quality of life. The process includes a six monthly review of progress, which is shared with the regional government office, and an annual refresh.
3. The first six monthly review has been completed and submitted to GO East. Overall progress on performance, at county level, can be summarised as follows:-

	% PIs on course	% Interventions on course
Block 1: Children and Young People	47	100
Block 2: Safer and Stronger Communities	42	42
Block 3: Healthier Communities and Older People	34	76
Block 4: Economic Development and Enterprise	33	44
TOTAL for LAA	40	64

4. The majority of LAA interventions, or actions, are on track with nearly two thirds (64%) being delivered to plan. Overall progress on targets is less good with less than half (40%) being delivered to plan. Significant data is still not available for Block 2. Information on performance indicators relevant to SCDC is given in **Appendix 1**.
5. This is still relatively early days for the LAA and there has been other progress over the last six months in terms of strengthening partnership work; establishing the LAA Board; putting the mechanisms in place; and involvement of the voluntary sector; etc. The achievement of LPSA reward grant will be a key element in providing finance for LSPs. Joint projects such as a county-wide approach to community cohesion and the commissioning of demographic predictions in relation to the growth areas are also being initiated by LAA work.
6. There is still a great deal to do in terms of rationalising partnership structures;

development of the LAA Board; performance management mechanisms; and establishing scrutiny arrangements.

7. In terms of SCDC involvement, the district council is represented on the LAA Board (by the Leader of the Council) and on the officer-based LAA Reference Group. A South Cambs LAA Officer Group has been established to brief our LAA representatives; to co-ordinate the Council's contribution to LAA targets; and to develop links between the Council, the LSP and LAA structures.
8. The Council has contributed significantly to LAA targets in a number of areas including: street sweeping, recycling/waste minimisation; improvements in quality of life for older people; workplace smoking; and anti social behaviour. Many of these are relevant to LAA Stretch (LPSA) targets and the position on the amount of reward grant that this will attract for the LSP will become clearer over the next few months.
9. There is still progress to be made in developing arrangements to enable the Council better to influence and deliver LAA targets and this will become increasingly important given the enhanced role of LAAs envisaged in the recent White Paper, see below.

Annual Refresh

10. The process towards the annual refresh is continuing. The LAA Board received a draft on 22nd November with a view to a re-submission to central government in early January 2007. Deadlines remain very challenging. The draft refresh of the LAA –
 - a) Includes a number of new mandatory indicators
 - b) Omits some former LPSA targets, as the three year LPSA will come to an end at the end of 2006/07
 - c) Makes changes to reflect the questions in the 2006/07 BV three yearly surveys.
 - d) Adds new indicators in the following priority areas:-
 - Affordable housing
 - Sustainable Communities and Climate Change
 - Community Cohesion
 - Sport
11. **Appendix 2** summarises proposals for new indicators and those to be dropped in the refresh. Work is continuing to agree specific targets and interventions for the new targets. It will be seen that in particular there are new indicators covering Council services such as homelessness, sports, arts sustainable development and tourism. There are some areas where new indicators would have been a benefit (such as enviro-crime) and this will be discussed with LAA officers.
12. The refresh also presents an opportunity to look further ahead over the next two-year period and examine the potential outcomes, targets, funding streams and enabling measures for the remaining years of the LAA. To this end, aspirations will be incorporated into the new document under the following headings:-
 - Growth (building on recent discussions about sharing demographic forecasts to focus joint planning)
 - Migrant workers
 - Transport and Access
 - Culture

13. Some of the new indicators in **Appendix 2** reflect Council priorities (customer service, affordable housing and growth areas) and some do not. There are no additional resources within the Council to help the Council to contribute to these targets. However, other funding, such as LPSA reward money and external funding may be available. For example, the newly formed Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Sports Partnership, LIVING SPORT, has access to funding which might benefit South Cambs. In other case, the Council might be able to better direct the resources it does have towards LAA targets.
14. The new White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, will introduce a duty for councils to have regard to LAA targets and accordingly, LAA targets will need to become an increasing consideration in the Council's financial and other planning processes. It also suggests that the Council needs to maintain and enhance its capacity to contribute towards the development and agreement of LAA targets.
15. For 2007/08, it is recommended that Portfolio Holders and services be requested to give realistic consideration as to how they can contribute towards LAA targets through the 2007/08 service plan process (in January, February and March) while still giving priority to the three Council priorities.

White Paper

16. A separate report on the Cabinet's agenda outlines the proposals in the White Paper, *Strong and Prosperous Communities*, to enhance the role of LAAs – including making them a statutory requirement; enhancing the role of LSPs in the development and implementation of LAAs; and focusing more strongly on councils' contribution to LAAs in the inspection and audit regime. As mentioned above, a duty will be placed on councils, and other major partners, to have regard for LAA targets.

Financial and Staffing Implications

17. The Council has made no specific provision in the MTFS for LAA targets in 2007/08 and future years. In many cases provision made for our priorities will also enable us to contribute to LAA targets. The Council will need to maximise resources from other sources and direct its resources to LAA targets where possible. The use of LPSA reward money may be of particular help in addressing the LAA. Whether the availability of LAA reward money will continue beyond existing agreements, will be considered by the government as part of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review.
18. As Members will be aware there is acute pressure on staff in delivering services within reduced resources and expectations on contributing to LAA targets will need to be focused and realistic.

Legal and Risk Management Implications

19. No specific legal implications other than, as mentioned above, councils will have a statutory duty to have regard for LAA targets, when/if legislation implementing this aspect of the White Paper comes into force. The major risks concern our relations with our partners and potential loss of funding opportunities through not engaging sufficiently in the LAA process – this will be particularly the case as the role of LAAs as a vehicle for redirecting government funding streams to local priorities at a County level develops.

Recommendations

20. Cabinet is recommended to:

- (a) note progress on current LAA targets and request portfolio holders and service heads to continue to maximise performance on LAA targets in general and in particular on those which will earn reward grant;
- (b) support the direction being taken by the LAA refresh and to comment on and give advice to the Leader of the Council (SCDC representative on the LAA Board) on the changes in targets in the draft annual refresh; and
- (c) request Portfolio Holders and service managers to give realistic consideration as to how they can contribute towards LAA targets through the 2007/08 service plan process (in January, February and March) while still giving priority to the three Council priorities.

Background papers:

- LAA six month review submitted to GO East
- LAA draft refresh

Contact Officers: Simon McIntosh (Head of Community Services) – 01954 713350
Paul Swift (Policy and Review Manager) – 01954 713017

APPENDIX 1**Progress On Performance Indicators Relevant To District Council Functions ✕**

The progress reported is for the county as a whole.

Ref	Performance Indicator	LPSA?	Progress	
			PIs	Interventions
	Block 1			
1.3.2	Young people exercising at least 3 times per week		✓	✓
	Block 2			
2.1.1	Number of police recorded BCS comparator crimes		✓	✓
2.1.2	Number of police recorded violence against the person offences		✓	✓
2.1.3	Proportion of police recorded crime with a DV marker that are incidences of repeat victimisation		↔	n/a
2.1.4	Premises selling alcohol to under 18 year olds	✓	↔	✓
2.1.5	% of Year 10s who had consumed alcohol in a public space in last 7 days	✓	✕	n/a
2.2.1	% of people who think that vandalism, graffiti or other deliberate damage is a problem	✓	✓	n/a
2.2.2	% of people who think that teenagers hanging around streets is a problem	✓	✓	n/a
2.2.3	% of people who think that being drunk or rowdy in public places is a problem	✓	✓	n/a
2.3.1	Satisfaction with opportunities to participate in decision making processes which affect planning and other issues facing the area.		↔	n/a
2.3.2	Number of parish plans		✓	✓
2.3.3	Parishes with Quality status		✓	✓
2.4.1	% who agree that local community is a place where people from different backgrounds can live together harmoniously		n/a	n/a
2.4.2	Racial incidents recorded		✓	↔
2.4.3	Racial incidents reports acted upon		✓	✓
2.6.2	% of adults participating in at least thirty minutes of moderate intensity exercise three or more days a week		n/a	n/a
2.6.3	Satisfaction with arts		↔	↔
2.7.1	Bus journeys into, out of and within Cambridge	✓	✓	✓
2.7.2	% of household waste going to landfill	✓	✓	✓
2.7.3	Street cleaning (South Cambs)	✓	✓	✓
2.7.4	Footway maintenance	✓	✓	n/a
2.8.5	Receipt of training/learning in communities through Community Access		✕	✓

Ref	Performance Indicator	LPSA?	Progress	
			PIs	Interventions
	points or Learning Centres			
	Block 3			
3.1.2	Smoke free workplaces	✓	✓	✓
3.1.3	Smoke free licensed premises	✓	✓	✓
3.1.5	Mortality from circulatory diseases		✓	
3.4.1	Number of older people participating in the community		↔	✓
3.5.1	Burglaries of people aged 60+	✓	✗	✓
3.5.2	Improving the quality of life of older people (fear of crime related)	✓	↔	n/a
3.6.1. i	Increase the number of people over 65 helped to stay at home	✓	✗	✓
3.6.1 ii	Reduce number of people aged 65+ supported in residential care	✓	↔	✓
3.6.2	Improving the quality of life of older people	✓	✓	✓
	Block 4			
	No targets currently relevant to functions of the district council.			

APPENDIX 2**LAA REFRESH – CHANGES IN TARGETS**

Given below are the proposals for new indicators and those to be dropped for the LAA refresh. Indicators which are most relevant to the Council and its functions are identified.

Block 1 – Children And Young People

Relevant indicators to be dropped:-

- a) Educational attainment of vulnerable children (LPSA)
- b) School attainment (LPSA) – but retained for Travellers children

Relevant indicators to be added:-

- a) Number of 16-18 year olds who consider themselves as homeless who approached the LA housing advice service and for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation.

Block 2 – Safer and Stronger Communities

Relevant indicators to be dropped:-

- a) Year 10 children consuming alcohol in a public place (LPSA)
- b) Pls relating to drug treatment and bringing drug supply related offences to justice (LPSA)
- c) % of people satisfied with opportunities to participate in decision making processes which affect planning and other issues in their area.
- d) Bus journeys into, out of and within Cambridge (LPSA)
- e) Street cleaning (LPSA)
- f) Footway maintenance (LPSA)

Relevant indicators to be added:-

- a) Proportion of adult and young offenders who re-offend
- b) % of people who feel that local drug dealing or use is a problem
- c) % of retail premises selling alcohol to under 18s
- d) % of people who feel informed about what is being done to tackle anti social behaviour in their area.
- e) % of people who feel that parents take responsibility for their children in their area.
- f) % of people who feel that people in their area treat them with respect and consideration.
- g) Public perception of ASB (using 7 issues in the 2006/07 BV survey)
- h) % of residents who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area
- i) Number of voluntary and community organisations networked together through the Cambs and Peterborough Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Forum
- j) Number of people engaged in formal volunteering of at least 2 hours per week.
- k) Attendance and participation in arts activities
- l) Adult participants in Vital Communities Programme arts activities.
- m) Citizen participation in heritage outreach and learning events
- n) % of 5-16 year olds in school sports partnerships engaged in two hours a week minimum on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum
- o) % of population within 20 minutes travel time of a range of three different sports facility types, of which one has achieved a specified quality assured standard
- p) Increase in the % of municipal waste recycled or composted.
- q) Number of employers working on workplace travel initiatives

- r) CO2 emissions from road traffic in Cambridgeshire
- s) Local renewable energy generation capacity
- t) Numbers of dwellings in new developments that incorporate sustainable drainage principles
- u) Number of local development documents incorporating SUDs principles
- v) New developments or floorspace meeting BREEAM/Econhomes standards
- w) Adoption of energy efficiency/carbon reduction programmes

Block 3 – Healthier Communities and Older People

Relevant indicators to be dropped:-

- a) Smoke free workplaces and licensed premises (LPSA)
- b) Road casualties (LPSA)
- c) Improving quality of life for older people (LPSA)
- d) Recorded burglaries of people aged 60+ (LPSA)
- e) Promoting independence of older people (various) (LPSA)

Relevant indicators to be added:-

- a) % of retail premises selling cigarettes to under 16s
- b) Number of “no cold calling” zones
- c) Use of registered trader schemes
- d) Number of older people receiving falls assessments
- e) Number of people receiving Assistive Technology
- f) Number of extra care places in sheltered schemes
- g) Increased number of older people involved in physical activity
- h) Reduced number of disabled people unintentionally unemployed.

Block 4 – Economic Development and Enterprise

Relevant indicators to be dropped:-

- a) Carry out research into job growth
- b) % of population with access to main centres and key services by public transport and cycling
- c) LPSA targets (4) relating to adult skills and qualifications
- d) Number of employers in IIP

Relevant indicators to be added:-

- a) Indicators relating to assistance to start up and other companies
- b) Social Enterprise schemes assisted to improve performance
- c) % of programmed visits to business premises conducted jointly with at least one other agency (to lessen the time spent by businesses with local regulators)
- d) Increase in the number of overseas visitors staying in the area and the amount of money spent by them.
- e) Travellers of working age assisted in skills development
- f) Number of construction trainees.
- g) Increase in % of adults holding qualifications across NVQ levels 2,3 and 4 and various other indicators relating to adult skills.
- h) Completion of the Guided busway by February 2009 and a 40% increase in PT patronage in the sector by February 2010.
- i) Number of new affordable homes with and without Housing Corporation grant
- j) Average length of stay in temporary accommodation of households that are unintentionally homeless and in priority need.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet
AUTHOR/S: Chief Executive / Chief Accountant

14 December 2006

PROVISIONAL LOCAL AUTHORITY FINANCE SETTLEMENT 2007/08**Purpose**

1. To ascertain whether Members wish to respond during the consultation period on the provisional local authority finance settlement.

Background

2. The provisional settlement was announced on Tuesday, 28 November and Members were informed of the settlement by e-mail on the same day. The provisional settlement is summarised in **Appendix A**.

Considerations

3. The settlement for 2006/07 determined the formula grant for 2006/07 and gave provisional figures for 2007/08. The announcement at the end of last month was nothing more than confirmation of the provisional figures for 2007/08 which were already known almost twelve months ago.
4. The much heralded three year financial settlement will not start until next year to coincide with the Government's three year Comprehensive Spending Review 2007. However, on the basis of the recent announcement, it would seem that these three year settlements are not for three year rolling periods whereby there will always be indicative grant allocations for three future years. The three-year periods seem to be fixed so that, in the last year of the three, local authorities are back in the position of only knowing their grant allocation for one year ahead.
5. Responses to the provisional settlement have to be received by 5pm on Friday 5th January 2007. A draft response is attached as **Appendix B**.

Implications

6.	Financial	The announcement confirmed the figures for formula grant and council tax for 2007/08 in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)
	Legal	None
	Staffing	As set out in the MTFS appendices on spending pressures and potential savings (internal impact with staff implications and direct external impact with staff implications)
	Risk Management	There is a risk that the projections for formula grant in the MTFS from 2008/09 onwards may prove to be too high or too low
	Equal Opportunities	None

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

7.	Affordable Homes	The setting and achievement of annual priorities and corporate objectives is restricted by the lack of available finance in the form of low Government grant and restricted increases in the council tax.
	Customer Service	
	Northstowe and other growth areas	
	Quality, Accessible Services	
	Village Life	
	Sustainability	
	Partnership	

Recommendations

8. That Cabinet decide whether a response should be made and, if so, either agree to the draft set out in Appendix B or specify any amendments, additions, etc., which they wish to make.

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

<http://www.local.communities.gov.uk/finance/0708/grant.htm>

Contact Officer: Adrian Burns – Chief Accountant
Telephone: (01954) 713072

APPENDIX A**South Cambridgeshire****a) In cash terms**

The figures for 2007/08 are exactly the same as issued last January 2006:

LA Settlement January 2006 with the provisional figures for 2007/08 being confirmed on 28 th November 2006		Final 2006/07 £m	Prov. 2007/08 £m
Department of Communities and Local Government			
Relative Needs Amount	To meet relative needs in providing services	2.464	2.493
Relative Resources Amount	To take account of Council Tax that can be raised	-4.047	-4.322
Central Allocation	Distributed per head of population	8.932	9.558
Floor Damping	Transfer from gainers to losers to ensure losers receive minimum increase	-0.235	-0.167
Total Formula Grant		7.114	7.562
		Number	Number
Population		138,529	140,139
Tax base		55,942	56,624
SCDC Financial Strategy		£m	£m
Total Formula Grant		7.114	7.562

b) On a like for like basis

With the 2006/07 figure adjusted on the assumption that the same services are provided in both years, there is an increase in Formula Grant of £0.459 million, an increase of 6.5% compared to a floor of 2.7% and an average increase of 4.7% for shire districts:

	Adjusted 2006/07 £m	Provisional 2007/08 £m
Total Formula Grant	7.103	7.562

In 2007/08, the increase in Formula Grant of £0.459 million on a like for like basis needs to cover inflation, increased pension contributions, planning pressures and population growth. Inflation at an assumed rate of 2.5% would account for £0.178 million of the increase whilst increased pension contributions were roughly estimated in the financial strategy to cost £0.230 million (General Fund element only), leaving little for planning and growth.

c) Council Tax

The Minister stated that "... we expect to see an average council tax increase in England in 2007/08 of less than 5%. We will not allow excessive council tax increases. We have used our reserve capping powers in previous years to deal with excessive increases and won't hesitate to do so again if that proves necessary". There, therefore, seems no prospect of the capping legislation being revoked in the near future as part of the Lyons inquiry in to local government funding.

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APPENDIX B

To be e-mailed as a Word document with read receipt to
settlement.consult@communities.gsi.gov.uk

Ms Nikki Hinde
Zone 5/H3
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW1E 5DU

Dear Ms Hinde

Response to the consultation on the Local Authority Finance Settlement 2007/08

Background

For 2006/07, South Cambridgeshire set the ninth lowest shire district council tax in the country. The Council was, prior to being capped, in the lowest spending quartile per head of population for most services and, after being capped in 2005/06 with nearly a 20% budget reduction, is probably now in the lowest percentile. The provisional increase in Formula Grant for 2007/08 just covers inflation and increased pension contributions with no additional money to provide for increasing Government and public expectations and population growth.

My general responses to the provisional settlement are:

- i. As the Minister referred to capping in his statement on the settlement, this again raises the issue of what is the justification for threatening to cap low spending and low taxing local authorities such as South Cambridgeshire.
- ii. The Minister also referred to the stability provided by multi-year settlements but such stability was totally lacking in the one year's figures provided. To give stability to local authorities, will the Government move to three year rolling forward periods instead of the fixed three years which ends in 2010/11 and gives no stability in the final year?
- iii. If I understand the grant system correctly, the relative resources amount divided by the tax base for South Cambridgeshire for 2007/08 is £76.33 per band D dwelling and the resources threshold in the central allocation is £53.07 per head of population, both of which reduce South Cambridgeshire's grant. With population and tax base figures of 140,139 and 56,624 respectively, the sum of £53.07 per head converts to £131.34 per band D dwelling. The total by which formula grant is reduced is, therefore, £207.67 per band D dwelling when the Council is only likely to be setting a Council Tax of £102.26. Any reduction in formula grant to take account of resources that can be raised locally should be based on the local council tax that is likely to be set and not on an inflated notional figure.

Growth Areas

South Cambridgeshire is in the designated London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough growth area and is projecting a population increase of 30% from around 138,000 in 2006 to around 180,000 in 2021 with most of the increase in the earlier part of the period. The settlement should take account of:

- iv. The projected population figures in the provisional settlement are based on historic growth rates and should take account of projected growth rates for local authorities which have a rapidly increasing rate of population growth.
- v. The floor damping mechanism takes money away from growth areas. Any floor damping should be met from additional Government funds and not taken off other local authorities. At present, there is a four block system whereby the first three blocks (relative needs, relative resources and central allocation) determine an authority's grant entitlement and a fourth block (floor damping) which ensures they don't get it!
- vi. The growth in South Cambridgeshire includes a new town of 8,000 dwellings with associated community and commercial developments. With the cap on planning fees, then, in an extreme case, the fees receivable by the Council could be a maximum of the capped £25,000 outline fee and maximum capped £50,000 fees for reserved matters for a new town development costing the Council millions of pounds over several years. The Minister in his speech stated that "the Department is indeed looking into this matter". Do you have any details as to how and when this issue is going to be addressed?

I would be grateful to receive your comments on each of the above points and for their inclusion to be considered as part of the final settlement.

Yours sincerely

G J Harlock
Chief Executive and Chief Financial Officer

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet
AUTHORS: Chief Executive / Chief Accountant

14 December 2006

BANKING SERVICES**Purpose**

1. To seek the Cabinet's approval to accept a single tender for the execution of work in accordance with Contract Standing Order 4.5.

Background

2. The present five-year contract with the Council's current bankers, HSBC Bank plc, expires on 31 March 2007.
3. The Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder considered at his meeting on 12 September 2006 the following options:
 - (a) Going out to tender which would involve a significant amount of senior staff time in tender preparation and evaluation and, in the event of changing banks, a significant amount of senior staff time in setting up the new banking arrangements and changing computers programs and stationery. At the same time, just under half of our present bank charges relate to direct debits and credits which go through the Bankers Automated Clearing System (BACS) and HSBC simply pass on BACS charges to us. There should, therefore, be little, if any, variations in the charges for direct debits and credits between one bank and another.
 - (b) Negotiating with our present Bank.
4. The Portfolio Holder decided that negotiating with our present Bank was the best way forward but subject to the use of banking consultants who have worked with other local authorities and have detailed knowledge of the charges of various banks. The consultants would benchmark the proposed charges from HSBC to provide a basis for negotiation to ensure that the terms are competitive. This is the same procedure as used previously in 2002 when the consultants cost £1,000.

Considerations

5. The service provided by HSBC is considered to be satisfactory and good working relationships have been established between Council staff and the Bank.
6. Based on present charges, the expected cost of a five year contract is expected to be between £110,000 and £120,000, i.e. about £23,000 per annum. As the total value of the contract exceeds level 2 (£25,000), contract standing order, paragraph 4.5, in the Constitution requires Cabinet or Council approval where a tender is negotiated with a contractor already engaged by the Council and Cabinet/Council consider it desirable in the best interests of the Council.

Options

7. As set out above.

Implications

8.	Financial	Costs to be incorporated in the 2007/08 estimates
	Legal	None
	Staffing	Not significant if the Council negotiates with its present Bank
	Risk Management	None if the Council negotiates with its present Bank
	Equal Opportunities	None

Recommendation

9. That Cabinet approve a five-year contract being negotiated with the Council's current bankers to comply with Contract Standing Order 4.5.

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

Contact Officer: Adrian Burns - Chief Accountant
Telephone: (01954) 713072

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Leader and Cabinet	14 December 2006
AUTHORS:	Executive Director / Principal Accountant (Housing)	

**HRA – A FORWARD LOOK
2007/08 TO 2011/12**

Purpose

1. To indicate to Cabinet the anticipated medium term financial position of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

Background

2. At the meetings held on the 12 October 2006 and the 9 November 2006, Cabinet considered the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). These two reports focused mainly on the General Fund rather than the HRA. However, the HRA will also face financial pressures over the next few years and this report has, therefore, been prepared in order to keep the Cabinet abreast of the likely financial position in relation to the HRA.

Considerations

3. The need for the HRA to make revenue savings was highlighted in both the HRA Business Plan and during last year's Options Appraisal exercise. As a consequence, savings were achieved in 2005/06 and 2006/07 through service reorganisation and the revenue spending of the HRA has been put on a more sustainable footing. However, as was pointed out in the Interim Report on the MTFS the major financial issue for HRA is the funding of the capital programme.

Revenue Expenditure

4. **Appendix A** gives a ballpark projection of the HRA budget to the year 2011/12. This is based on information currently available and is at out-turn prices. Several items included in the projections are very difficult to predict with any degree of certainty and therefore the forecasts should be viewed with extreme caution. Two examples of areas where the reliability of estimates are especially questionable are the transfer to central government and repairs and maintenance.
 - (a) Transfer to Central Government
 - (i) Estimating amount to be transferred to central government by way of "negative subsidy" is particularly problematic as not only does it make up around half of the HRA expenditure but is also very difficult to predict, mainly because the basis for the calculation is decided each year.
 - (ii) A provisional notification of the transfer for 2007/08 has already been received from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and this has been used in the HRA projection at **Appendix A**. However, in view of previous experience, Members should be aware that the final notification could vary by several hundred thousand pounds and that this item of expenditure is almost totally outside of the control of the Council.

- (b) Repairs and Maintenance
 - (i) It is now some years since the last full Stock Condition Survey was undertaken and the Survey now in progress may well provide information on the state of the Council's housing stock that could alter the financial picture. Reaching and maintaining the Decent Homes Standard is one of the objectives included in the HRA Business Plan and the new Survey may impact on the expected cost of achieving this.
 - (ii) The need for expenditure on repairs and maintenance is influenced by many unpredictable factors such as the weather.
- 5. The HRA will benefit financially from the savings being made as part of the MTFs and the transformation project because some of these relate to corporate expenditure; an appropriate portion of which is charged to the HRA.
- 6. Whilst, as already mentioned, considerable reductions in expenditure have already been achieved as a consequence of reorganisations within the housing service (including a major reorganisation of the Sheltered Housing service), the forecasts at **Appendix A** indicate that some further opportunities for reductions in net revenue expenditure may need to be identified. The minimum level of working balance considered acceptable is £1 million and the forecasts show that this may not be achieved in 2011/12.
- 7. The figures included in Appendix A show expenditure being greater than income and reliance being placed on balances from 2009/10. This situation is expected to arise because unless some changes are made, expenditure is likely to increase at a higher rate than income mainly because of the labour intensive nature of the service, the reduction in stock numbers and restrictions on income.
 - (a) The annual increase in staffing costs is expected to be far higher than inflation owing to the impact of increments and additional employee pension contributions. The uplift used by the DCLG to calculate this year's transfer figure does not take account of either of these factors.
 - (b) The stock numbers are expected to reduce year on year as a consequence of Right to Buy and other sales and/or demolitions for redevelopment (such as the proposals for the Windmill Estate). The decreasing stock numbers are unlikely to be sufficient to merit an equivalent reduction in staffing levels over the next few years, however, the DCLG transfer calculations are based on stock numbers.
 - (c) The DCLG has requested that average rent increases are limited to 5% and has put in place financial penalties to reinforce this request.
 - (d) From April 2003 housing benefit in relation to part of the service charge for sheltered housing was replaced by financial assistance in the form of Supporting People Grant. Under the Supporting People Regime an amount made available to County's Supporting People Team is distributed according to agreed priorities between the various agencies providing "support" (including sheltered housing) throughout the County. Therefore, not only is there competition for funding, but in addition the total available is expected to be reduced by around 5% in 2007/08 compared to the current year. Whilst it is no longer considered likely that the Council will be expected to lower the support element of the Sheltered Housing service charge by 5% in 2007/08 there is still expected to be pressure to reduce this charge in future years and by implication the cost of providing the service.
- 8. The DCLG expect Authorities to move to a situation where costs of services only enjoyed by some tenants are not paid for by rents in general but are wholly recovered

from the beneficiaries of the service and the calculations for the transfer to the DCLG are based on this assumption. The forecasts in **Appendix A** anticipate that there will be a higher proportion of costs recovered from users in future, however, this area may present further opportunities to increase HRA income.

9. The HRA Business Plan is now over two years old and this, together with the possible need to reduce expenditure and/or increase income in future years, means that Housing Officers are intending to review the Business Plan in 2007 and to reconsider the priorities and objectives of the HRA service in order to be in a position to prioritise expenditure and, thereby, make the best use of the limited resources available.

Capital Expenditure

10. **Appendix B** is a copy of the appendix to the report on the MTFS illustrating the projected Capital Programme if expenditure continues at the existing level and taking account of "growth bids" for 2007/08 and beyond. The projected reduction in the programme that will be needed, unless additional grants and/or contributions become available or the Council makes recourse to borrowing as a funding source, is highlighted in this Appendix.
11. **Appendix B** covers the Capital Programme for the Authority as a whole and, therefore, includes both General Fund and HRA expenditure. **Appendix C** is an extract of the projected figures that relate only to the HRA expenditure included in **Appendix B**. The HRA projections show that there may be a problem in 2009/10 and that by 2010/11 there is likely to be a funding shortfall in region of £4 million to £5 million a year.
12. Wherever possible, HRA capital expenditure is funded from capital receipts, the major repairs allowance, grants and contributions rather than from revenue. Whilst it is legal to pay for capital projects from the HRA, the forecasts shown at **Appendix A** suggest that there is unlikely to be sufficient revenue available to support capital expenditure from this source.
13. The information obtained so far from the Stock Condition Survey appears to indicate that expenditure at around the current level will be needed if the Council is to maintain decent homes standard for all its stock, keep the infrastructure in a safe condition and continue to undertake disabled adaptations.
14. Whilst there may be some scope to reduce HRA capital expenditure, it is unlikely that a level of expenditure that maintains the decent homes standard and achieves health and safety requirements for the infrastructure and housing stock, can be funded from the sources currently used.
15. A large cut in the HRA capital programme would probably have an adverse financial effect on the HRA in relation to responsive repairs and staffing recharges. If there is a reduction in capital expenditure on major repairs and improvements then, as a consequence, there is likely to be an increase in the need for HRA revenue funded responsive repairs. Unless staffing levels are reduced alongside any cut in the capital programme, then additional staffing recharges, that are currently included in the capital programme, would fall on the HRA.

Implications

16.	Financial	The financial implications are contained in the body of the report
	Legal	There is a statutory obligation for the HRA to be in balance

Staffing	A considerable cut in the major repairs and improvements programme may impact on staffing levels
Risk Management	A significant reduction in repairs to homes and infrastructure, such as paths, could have safety and insurance implications for the Council. The decent homes standard may not be fully maintained if there is a substantial shortfall in funding for the HRA capital programme.
Equal Opportunities	There do not appear to be any equal opportunities implications

Consultations

17. Following consideration of this report by Cabinet a presentation on this forward look at the HRA will be made to the district wide Tenant Participation Group.

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

18.	Affordable Homes	The Council's properties make up the majority stock of affordable rented homes in the District.
	Customer Service	Planning for the future should enable a better service to be provided to the residents in Council property
	Quality, Accessible Services	The Council's housing service carries out many thousands of transactions with tenants and leaseholders each week and is one of the most significant front line Council services.
	Village Life	The Council has HRA properties 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 the procurement of sustainable materials in relation to the maintenance and improvement of HRA properties is dependant upon there being adequate resources in the future
	Partnership	Part of HRA service is now run in partnership with the PCT.

Conclusions/Summary

19. The forward look at the HRA suggests that, whilst the required reduction in revenue expenditure already identified has been achieved; some further reduction may be needed in future years. It is, therefore, unlikely that there will be an opportunity to make up the anticipated substantial shortfall in funding for capital expenditure from revenue.
20. The information obtained so far from the Stock Condition Survey appears to indicate that significantly more funding than is likely to be available in 2009/10 and beyond will be needed to undertake the level of work required to meet statutory requirement and to maintain the decent homes standard.

Recommendation

21. It is recommended that Cabinet note the content of this report.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Item 6 of the 12 October 2006 Cabinet Agenda - Medium Term Financial Strategy – Interim Report; Item 3 of the 9th November 2006 Cabinet Agenda - Medium Term Financial Strategy – 2007/08 to 2011/12; Item 3 of the 9th June 2006 Cabinet Agenda – Housing Options Appraisal; HRA Business Plan 2004/05 to 2008/09 - June 2004

Contact Officer: Gwynn Thomas –Principal Accountant (Housing), Tel: (01954) 713074

HRA BUDGET PROJECTION

EXPENDITURE															INCOME		
Year	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	
	Rent £000	Contributions £000	Other Inc. £000	Total £000	Gen. Man. £000	Special Serv. £000	Depreciation £000	Maintenance £000	Other Exp £000	Transfer £000	Total Exp. £000	(Inc)/ Exp £000	Interest £000	(Surp.)/Def. £000	Bal.b/f £000	Bal c/f £000	
2006/07	18,570	398	1,827	20,795	2,240	2,681	3,211	2,848	148	9,200	20,328	(467)	(96)	(563)	(1,900)	(2,463)	
2007/08	19,400	388	1,559	21,347	2,279	2,416	3,243	2,869	152	10,165	21,124	(223)	(116)	(339)	(2,463)	(2,802)	
2008/09	20,200	368	1,815	22,383	2,276	2,702	3,200	2,916	144	11,200	22,438	55	(125)	(70)	(2,802)	(2,872)	
2009/10	21,000	381	1,851	23,232	2,384	2,794	3,200	2,952	135	12,200	23,665	433	(120)	313	(2,872)	(2,559)	
2010/11	21,800	394	1,885	24,079	2,502	2,900	3,200	2,994	135	13,100	24,831	752	(98)	654	(2,559)	(1,905)	
2011/12	22,600	407	1,920	24,927	2,617	3,019	3,200	3,030	135	14,000	26,001	1,074	(62)	1,012	(1,905)	(893)	
Notes																	
a	Rent	from dwellings															
b	Contributions	mainly from the General Fund															
c	Other Income	mainly from garage rents and service charges															
d	Total Income	sum of columns a - c															
e	General Management	cost of tenant management, rent collection etc															
f	Specialised Services	cost of special services such as sheltered housing															
g	Depreciation	equivalent to the Major Repairs Allowance															
h	Maintenance	cost of revenue funded repairs															
i	Other Expenditure	mainly on rates, council tax & water charges															
j	Transfer	amount transferred to DCLG as a contribution to the National Pool (i.e. negative housing subsidy).															
k	Total Expenditure	sum of columns e - j															
l	Net (Income)/Expenditure	column k minus column d															
m	Interest	mainly on the HRA balance															
n	(Surplus)/Deficit in Year	column l adjusted for income from interest in column m															
o	Balance Brought Forward	balance at the start of the year															
	Balance Carried Forward	balance at the end of the year - column n plus column c															

Notes

a Rent from dwellings
b Contributions mainly from the General Fund
c Other Income mainly from garage rents and service charges
d Total Income sum of columns a - c
e General Management cost of tenant management, rent collection etc
f Specialised Services cost of special services such as sheltered housing
g Depreciation equivalent to the Major Repairs Allowance
h Maintenance cost of revenue funded repairs
i Other Expenditure mainly on rates, council tax & water charges
j Transfer amount transferred to DCLG as a contribution to the National Pool (i.e. negative housing subsidy)
k Total Expenditure sum of columns e - j
l Net (Income)/Expenditure column k minus column d
m Interest mainly on the HRA balance
n (Surplus)/Deficit in Year column l adjusted for income from interest in column m
o Balance Brought Forward balance at the start of the year
p Balance Carried Forward balance at the end of the year - column n plus column c

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Illustrating the projected Capital Programme if expenditure continues at the existing level and taking account of "growth bids" for 2007/08 and beyond

NB a Unless additional grants and/or contributions become available or the Council makes recourse to borrowing as a funding source.

Since the estimates were approved, the Government has changed the method by which it provides financial support for housing Capital expenditure. As a consequence, additional grant income of £356,000 will be available in the current year and this sum has been added to the grants funding. It is anticipated that there may be further grant funding from this source in future years (although this is likely to be at a lower level).

c It has been assumed for the purpose of these estimates that a legislative change to allow the Authority to retain 100% of receipts from equity share sales (provided they are used for housing purposes) is made by April 2007, with pooling having to be complied with for 2006/07.

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HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - CAPITAL PROGRAMME
(at outturn prices)

Actual 2005/2006 £000		Estimate 2006/2007 £000	Rollovers, Virements & other adjs £000	Adj Estimate 2006/2007 £000	Estimate 2007/2008 £000	Estimate 2008/2009 £000	Projection 2009/2010 £000	Projection 2010/2011 £000	Projection 2011/2012 £000
2,643	Acquisition of Existing Dwellings	3,000	0	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
7,584	Other	7,459	(29)	7,431	7,311	7,434	7,434	7,434	7,434
10,227	HRA Capital Expenditure	10,459	(29)	10,431	10,311	10,434	10,434	10,434	10,434
	Less								
(6,980)	Financed from Capital Receipts	(7,226)	29	(7,200)	(7,091)	(7,214)	(4,146)	(2,400)	(2,400)
(3,200)	Financed from Major Repairs Allowance	(3,211)	0	(3,211)	(3,200)	(3,200)	(3,200)	(3,200)	(3,200)
(47)	Financed from Grants & Contributions Receivable	(22)	0	(20)	(20)	(20)	(20)	(20)	(20)
0	Shortfall in Capital Funding	0	0	0	0	0	3,068	4,814	4,814

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