



SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING
THURSDAY, 27 JULY 2006

REPORTS AND MINUTES

South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne, Cambridge
CB3 6ES

If the press and public are likely to be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that exempt information is to be considered, it will be necessary to pass the following resolution: "That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph (quoting relevant paragraph) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act."

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: The Chairman and Members of the
South Cambridgeshire District Council

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the next meeting of the **COUNCIL** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, FIRST FLOOR** at **2.00 P.M.** on

THURSDAY, 27 JULY 2006

and I am, therefore to summon you to attend accordingly for the transaction of the business specified below.

DATED this 19 July 2006

GJ HARLOCK
Chief Executive

AGENDA

PRESENTATIONS

The following presentations will be made:

- Investors in People Award – to be presented to Environmental Services staff by the Environmental Health Portfolio Holder
- Municipal Journal Employee Wellbeing Achievement of the Year Award – to be received on behalf of all staff
- Planning and Regulatory Services Online (PARSOL) award for technical innovation for our "planning expert" on the web site – to be received by the Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder on behalf of staff

1. MINUTES

To authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on the 22 June 2006 as a correct record.

(Pages 1 - 6)

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

4. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND THE PUBLIC

4 (a) From Councillor Dr SA Harangozo

"In view of the imminent departure of our excellent Strategic Development Officer, could the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder explain how the ongoing work on the SCDC corporate priority of the sustainable design of Northstowe and other growth areas - including feasibility work for the Northstowe Sustainable Energy Partnership that is due for completion early next year - will continue to be fully progressed?"

5. PETITIONS

To note all petitions received since the last Council meeting. None received to date.

**6. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:
Cabinet 13 July 2006**

The Race Equality Scheme referred to in the recommendation is available on the web site. Paper copies can be made available to Members on request to Democratic Services in advance of the meeting day.

6 (a) Race Equality Scheme (Cabinet 13 July 2007)

Cabinet **RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL** that the updated Race Equality Scheme for 2005-2008, including the additions and amendments made by Cabinet, be approved.

6 (b) Renewal of Contract - Development Services (Cabinet 13 July 2007)

Cabinet **RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL** the renewal of the contract for the administrative post (D.6.9) in the Major Developments Team for a further two years, accepting the financial risk arising from the temporary nature of Planning Delivery Grant funding.

7. REVISIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION (CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING PARTY 13 JULY 2006)

7 (a) Textual Revisions to the Constitution

As some of the recommendations of the Working Party are being held for further deliberation for operational reasons, Council is asked, in addition to the recommendations of the Working Party in the attached report, to approve the following so that there are no problems in the operation of officer delegated powers in the interim:

“The Chief Executive may delegate any of his powers, functions and responsibilities in whole or in part that are capable of delegation to such other suitably experienced and qualified officer as he may think fit -but shall remain accountable and may himself continue to exercise or share those powers functions or responsibilities.”

(Pages 7 - 10)

7 (b) Revisions to the Constitution - Standards Committee (Article 9)

(Pages 11 - 12)

7 (c) Substantive Revisions to the Constitution

(Pages 13 - 14)

8. APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE (DISTRICT AND PARISH MEMBERS)

To make appointments to the district member vacancy / vacancies on the Standards Committee. The Independent Group has nominated Councillors A Riley and RF Bryant as their first and second appointees, respectively.

District members currently on the Standards Committee are:

EW Bullman	CON	to May 2008
NN Cathcart	LAB	to May 2008
Mrs VM Trueman	LD	to May 2009

In addition to the appointment of district members, Council is asked **TO NOTE** that Dave Kelleway of Teversham Parish Council was elected by the parish councils and meetings to the third parish member position on the Standards Committee, to serve until May 2010 or until he ceases to be a member of Teversham Parish Council, whichever is sooner.

9. APPOINTMENTS MADE BY THE COUNCIL TO EXISTING OUTSIDE AND JOINT BODIES

Outstanding vacancies:

Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document Member Reference Group –
1 IND / LAB member

Cambridge East Member Reference Group – it has been confirmed that Councillor RJ Turner is a Cambridgeshire County Council representative on this body

Mepal Outdoor Centre – Councillor SM Edwards is willing to stand down if another volunteer can be found

10. APPOINTMENT OF ELECTORAL REGISTRATION OFFICER AND RETURNING OFFICER

All District Councils are required to appoint an officer of the Council to be Electoral Registration Officer for the purpose of the registration of Parliamentary and Local Government Electors (Section 8(2)(a) of the Representation of the People Act 1983). Council is requested to appoint Gregory John Harlock as Electoral Registration Officer for this Council.

All District Councils are also required to appoint an officer of the Council to be the Returning Officer for the election of District and Parish Councillors (Section 35(1) of the Representation of the People Act 1983). Council is requested to appoint Gregory John Harlock as Returning Officer for this Council.

11. ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER 2004/05

To receive the Annual Audit Letter from the Council's external auditors.

The Audit Panel considered a draft of the letter on 30 June 2006 and the Panel's minutes are attached at the end of this agenda.

(Pages 15 - 42)

12. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(* indicates that the Minutes have already been confirmed as a correct record)

12 (a) Minutes of meeting Thursday, 13th July 2006 of Cabinet

(Pages 43 - 52)

12 (b) Minutes of meeting Monday, 17th July 2006 of Transformation Committee

(Pages 53 - 54)

12 (c) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 7th June 2006 of Development and Conservation Control Committee *

(Pages 55 - 60)

- 12 (d) **Minutes of meeting Thursday, 22nd June 2006 of Employment Committee**
(Pages 61 - 62)
- 12 (e) **Minutes of meeting Monday, 26th June 2006 of Licensing Committee**
(Pages 63 - 66)
- 12 (f) **Minutes of meeting Thursday, 15th June 2006 of Scrutiny and Overview Committee**
(Pages 67 - 74)
- 12 (g) **Minutes of meeting Friday, 30th June 2006 of Audit Panel**
(Pages 75 - 80)

13. QUESTIONS ON JOINT MEETINGS

Minutes of the 19 June 2006 South Cambridgeshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee meeting were published in the 5 July 2006 Weekly Bulletin.

14. UPDATES FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

15. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS

To note the Chairman's engagements since the last Council meeting:

Date	Venue / Event
Sunday 25 June	Huntingdon Civic Service.
Tuesday 27 June	The MJ Local Government Achievement Awards Presentation Evening, London, with the Chief Executive.
Thursday 6 July	High Sheriff's Reception, Wimpole Hall.
Saturday 8 July	Opening: Old Bakehouse, Haslingfield. Mrs Jane Healey, Cllr Mrs Heazell and Cllr Kindersley also attended.
Friday 14 July	Turf cutting: New industrial units at the Business Park, Papworth
Friday 14 July	Fenland District Council Civic Reception.
Saturday 15 July	Concert in celebration of local youth talent, Huntingdon.
Sunday 16 July	Civic Service, Peterborough Cathedral.
Sunday 23 July	Great Bustard London-Cambridge Charity Bike Ride: welcoming home the flock.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 22 June 2006 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs CAED Murfitt – Chairman
Councillor JH Stewart – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: Dr DR Bard, RE Barrett, JD Batchelor, Mrs PM Bear, NCF Bolitho, RF Bryant, EW Bullman, BR Burling, NN Cathcart, JP Chatfield, NS Davies, Mrs SJO Doggett, SM Edwards, Mrs SM Ellington, Mrs A Elsby, Mrs VG Ford, Mrs JM Guest, Dr SA Harangozo, Mrs SA Hatton, Mrs EM Heazell, JA Hockney, MP Howell, Mrs CA Hunt, PT Johnson, SGM Kindersley, Mrs JE Lockwood, RMA Manning, MJ Mason, RB Martlew, RM Matthews, DC McCraith, DH Morgan, CR Nightingale, Dr JPR Orme, R Page, EJ Pateman, JA Quinlan, Mrs DP Roberts, NJ Scarr, Mrs HM Smith, Mrs DSK Spink MBE, RT Summerfield, Mrs VM Trueman, RJ Turner, Dr SEK van de Ven, Mrs BE Waters, JF Williams and NIC Wright

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors AN Berent, TD Bygott, Mrs PS Corney, R Hall and TJ Wotherspoon.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors JD Batchelor, SGM Kindersley, DC McCraith and RJ Turner declared personal interests as elected Cambridgeshire County Councillors.

Councillor JA Hockney declared a personal interest as Mouchel Parkman Highways was a client of his.

Councillor Mrs DP Roberts declared a personal interest as the subject of a Standards Board investigation.

Councillor MP Howell declared a personal interest as an employee of the Papworth Trust.

3. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 May were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

- On page 6 the Conservative nomination for the Employment Committee was amended from EJ Pateman to CR Nightingale.
- On page 7 the Liberal Democrat nomination HM Smith was amended to JD Batchelor.

Councillor R Page asked whether the minutes should be amended to include comments alluded to in a letter sent to him by Councillor SGM Kindersley. Councillor Kindersley replied that the letter was written in a personal capacity announcing his resignation from the Countryside Restoration Trust and he saw no reason to amend the minutes.

4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced that it was the last meeting for both the Chief Executive and

the Development Services Director and on behalf of all Members she wished them both a happy, fulfilling retirement. Members paid tribute to both officers; in particular the following achievements were praised:

- Gaining Beacon Council status for recycling and waste management
- The overseeing of the Local Development Framework process
- Steering the Council through a period of unrelenting change
- The overseeing of huge improvements in the delivering of services to the community
- Dealing with one of the highest construction growth rates in the Country
- The invaluable support and advice provided to Chairmen and Leaders of Council
- The discreet and knowledgeable advice given to Chairmen of Development and Conservation Control Committee

On behalf of the Development Services Director and himself, the Chief Executive thanked Members for their kind words. He invited all Members to drinks after the meeting.

5. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND THE PUBLIC

None received.

6. PETITIONS

None received.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS:

7 (a) Performance Plan

As recommended by Cabinet on 8 June 2006, Council **RESOLVED**

- (a) that the 2006/07 Performance Plan be adopted; and
- (b) to authorise the Chief Executive and Finance and Resources Director, in conjunction with the Leader, to finalise the 2006/07 Performance Plan, in accordance with official requirement and publication deadline of 30 June 2006.

7 (b) Food Safety Service Plan

As recommended by Cabinet on 8 June 2006, Council **APPROVED** the Food Safety Service Plan 2006/07.

7 (c) Health and Safety Plan

As recommended by Cabinet on 8 June 2006, Council **APPROVED** the Health and Safety Service Plan 2006/07.

7 (d) Allocation of Services between Senior Management

Council considered the recommendations of the informal meeting of the Transformation Committee on 8 June 2006 on the revised allocation of services. In response to questioning Councillor Dr DR Bard explained that sustainability had been placed under the auspices of the Chief Executive because it was a cross-cutting issue. He also recognised the importance of planning policy and stressed that placing it under the responsibility of the Executive Director, along with development control, would in no way

lower its profile.

Council **APPROVED** the revised allocation of services between the Chief Executive and the Executive Director as set out in Appendix A to the agenda.

8. **APPOINTMENTS TO STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

On the request of the convenor of the group, Council agreed to provide the Independent group with more time to submit their nomination to the current vacancy on the Standards Committee.

Councillor R Page expressed his disappointment in the Council's continued co-operation with the Standards process, which, in his view, suppressed freedom of speech and vilified those who spoke in the public interest.

Councillor Dr Bard proposed and Councillor Mrs Spink seconded a recommendation to refer the size and composition of the Standards Committee to the Constitution Review Working Party for consideration. A vote was taken and by 23 votes against to 22 votes in favour, the proposal was **DEFEATED**.

Council

RESOLVED that political proportionality should not apply to the District Council members of the Standards Committee.

9. **APPOINTMENT OF TRANSFORMATION COMMITTEE**

Council **RESOLVED** that the Transformation Committee comprise 5 members:

Dr DR Bard and Mrs DSK Spink (Conservative)
 JD Batchelor and SGM Kindersley (Liberal Democrat)
 SM Edwards (Independent)

10. **APPOINTMENTS TO INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL BODIES**

Council **AGREED** the following appointments:

Cambridge Airport Relocation Study Member Reference Group

RM Matthews (Conservative)
 NJ Scarr (Independent)

Cambridge Area Bus Development Board

Mrs DSK Spink (Conservative/Portfolio Holder)
 Mrs SA Hatton (Independent)
 Substitute – JF Williams (Liberal Democrat)

Cambridge East Member Reference Group

Mrs CA Hunt
 Mrs DSK Spink
 RJ Turner (subject to his not being a County Council nominee)
 NIC Wright
 Substitute – Mrs HM Smith

Cambridgeshire County Council Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee

Substitute – Mrs EM Heazell

Employment Committee

Conservative nominations: RE Barrett
RM Matthews
CR Nightingale

Gypsies and Traveller Development Plan Document Member Reference Group

Councillor Howell explained that he would notify Democratic Services of the Independent's second nomination in due course.

It was noted that the nomination of Councillor Mrs Elsby to the Gamlingay Village College Sports Centre had had to be withdrawn.

11. WRITE OFF OF OUTSTANDING DEBTS

The Finance and Resources Director presented this report, which notified Council of debts written off during 2005/06 under powers delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Resources and Staffing and the Finance and Resources Director. He hoped that the Council would remain in the upper quartile for the collection of debts, when the latest figures were released. These would be reported to the Portfolio Holder.

Councillor SM Edwards, Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder, explained that the write offs were within budget and the debts being written off were unrecoverable. It was requested that the collection rate of Council Tax for travellers living in Smithy Fen be ascertained.

Council **NOTED** the amounts of debts written off under delegated powers during 2005/06.

12. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

The Minutes of the following meetings were **RECEIVED**, subject to matters outlined in Minute 12(a) below:

Cabinet	25 May 2006
Cabinet	8 June 2006
Transformation Committee	8 June 2006
Development and Conservation Control Committee	10 May 2006
Scrutiny and Overview Committee	25 May 2006

12 (a) Cabinet 8 June 2006**Member Training**

Councillor Mrs VG Ford praised the recent in-house training on Development and Conservation Control, but queried its cost effectiveness in view of the number of officers present. Councillor Mrs DSK Spink thanked Councillor Mrs Ford for her comments and stated that she had raised the member:officer ratio with the Director, but had been assured that each of the officers covered a different aspect. She did, however, express concern that only 6 members had turned up to the training, observing that the Audit Inspectors report on the planning service would recommend that development control training become mandatory for Development and Conservation Control Committee membership.

Climate Change Advisory Group (Minute 13(j))

It was understood that the decision regarding the disbanding of the informal Climate Change Group had been called-in and would be discussed at the next meeting of the

Scrutiny and Overview Committee on 20 July 2006. A number of members emphasised the importance of the challenge of climate change and the Portfolio Holder welcomed the opportunity to justify the decision to incorporate the work of the group into his portfolio holder meetings which, he believed, would be more effective.

It was noted that the Planning Policy Guidance referred to in the last paragraph should be PPG25.

Travellers' Needs Assessment (Minute 17)

The Leader confirmed that the 110-113 allocations referred to meant pitches, not sites. He acknowledged that there was always a risk of a double counting in surveys, but believed that the methodology was as robust as possible. There was provision for transit site allocation, but these had to be considered as part of the Development Plan Document.

The National Affordable Housing Programme (Minute 18)

Councillor DH Morgan expressed his concern about the way in which affordable housing in Cambourne was allocated and expressed the hope that lessons had been learned for Northstowe. The Chairman suggested that Councillor Morgan liaise with Councillor Mrs Roberts, the housing portfolio holder, over this issue, and Councillor Mrs Roberts stated that she was due to have a meeting with Cambridge City Council at which she would raise it.

Councillor EJ Pateman expressed his concern that, although housing in Cambourne was intended to meet the needs of the Cambridge sub-region, houses were being advertised in London.

Councillor Mrs VG Ford voiced her interest in looking at areas of Cambourne with the local members in order to see what lessons could be learned, and invited other interested members. Councillor JPR Orme commended an excellent booklet produced some 18 months previously by the housing directorate on lessons from Cambourne.

13. QUESTIONS ON JOINT MEETINGS

None received.

14. UPDATES FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Old West Internal Drainage Board

Councillor MJ Mason stated that a recent meeting of the Old West Internal Drainage Board had heard the results of the bi-annual inspection and a report on the effect of Northstowe drainage.

National Society for Clean Air and Environmental Protection

Councillor Morgan stated that this Group was to hold a seminar July and invited members to advise him if they had issues they wished him to raise.

15. NOTICES OF MOTION

15 (a) Standing in the name of Councillor JD Batchelor, seconded by Councillor SGM Kindersley

Councillors Batchelor and Kindersley had proposed the following motion:

"The belligerent and inaccurate response to the Pensioners Concessionary Fares

impasse by the leader of Fenland District Council is to be deplored. In particular, his attack on SCDC is both inaccurate and unhelpful. We urge the SCDC Executive to do all in their power to gain the cooperation of Fenland in meeting their obligations regarding the funding of the Concessionary Fares Scheme."

The Leader reported that the matter which had prompted the motion had been dealt with following his discussions with the Leader of Fenland District Council who confirmed that changes had been made to his Council's website statement. A joint press release from all district councils was imminent and he looked forward to working in partnership with Fenland District Council in the future.

In view of progress since submission of the notice of motion, the proposer Councillor JD Batchelor and the seconder Councillor SGM Kindersley withdrew the notice.

16. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Chairman's engagements since the last Council meeting were **NOTED**.

The Meeting ended at 3.40 p.m.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Council	27 July 2006
AUTHOR/S:	Chief Executive / Democratic Services Manager	

TEXTUAL REVISIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Purpose

1. To propose textual amendments to the wording of the Constitution required by changes in legislation or by the Council's structure, correction of errors or omissions, or minor amendments already agreed elsewhere.

Background

2. The Working Party met on 13 July 2006 to consider proposals for textual changes to the Constitution and to consider other issues referred to it.
3. Many of the proposed amendments to wording relate to changes in the Council's staffing structure. Some of these have been omitted from the recommendations to this Council meeting as they require further deliberation for operational reasons.

Recommendations

4. To agree the following recommendations of the Constitution Review Working Party:
5. Amendment to terms resulting from the change in management structure:
 - Change references to Finance and Resources Director to **Chief Finance Officer** throughout except as indicated below

6. **ARTICLE 6, SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

6.01 Composition and Terms of Reference (page B-9)

Combine the first two sentences to read: "The Council will appoint a Scrutiny and Overview Committee comprising between 14 and 16 councillors.

7. **ARTICLE 11: JOINT ARRANGEMENTS**

11.02(d) Joint Arrangements (page B-18)

Delete "if the Council approves" and insert "**...where the joint committee has functions for a part only of the district, smaller than two-fifths of the district by area or population. In such cases the executive may appoint any councillor who is a member for a ward which is wholly or partly contained in the relevant area.**

"In this case political balance requirements do not apply."

11.04(a) Delegation to and from other local authorities (page B-18)

Add "**non-executive**" before "functions"

11.05 Contracting Out (page B-19)

Add "**Council or**" before "executive"; and "**their respective**" before "functions"

8. **RESPONSIBILITY FOR EXECUTIVE FUNCTIONS:**

Table 2A (page C-9) and **Table 2B, Executive Delegations by Portfolio** (page C-17)

Combine Resources and Staffing and Information and Customer Services portfolios

Table 2B

Staffing Matters No 3 (page C-11)

Amend so that Portfolio Holder approves pay awards or allowance adjustments within budget provision; Cabinet recommends to Council if they fall outside budget provision. The Chief Executive could approve the implementation of national allowance adjustments provided they are within budget.

Financial matters 7 (page C-12)

Delete detailed reference to Rule 5, Budget and Policy Framework Rules and insert “**See Rule 5...**”

Housing (page C-18)

To delegate to officers, on a permanent basis, the following delegated powers of the Housing Portfolio Holder:

No 65	Management Transfers	Housing Services Manager
	Assignment of tenancies	Housing Services Manager
	Discretionary points award	
	Outside normal allocations policy	Housing Advice and Options Manager

Table 3

Pending a further review of officer delegated powers, insert the table agreed by Cabinet on 9 June 2005 for powers delegated to officers in relation to the provisions of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 for high hedges.

9. **COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS**

1.1, Annual Meeting – Timing and Business (page D-2)

Delete item (x) “approve a programme of ordinary meetings of the Council for the year;”

2, Ordinary Meetings (page D-4)

Amend first sentence to :

“Ordinary meetings of the Council will take place in accordance with a programme **agreed by** Council.” (i.e. delete “decided at the Council’s annual meeting”)

6, Notice of Summons (page D-4)

Second sentence – amend to “**the Chief Executive will send a summons....**”

10.3, Notice of Questions by the Public (page D-7)

Amend first sentence to:

“A question.....by delivering it in writing or by electronic mail to the proper officer no late than midday **6 3** days before the day of the meeting.”

10.4, Number of questions (page D-5)

Add “**at the meeting**” at the end of the 1st sentence

10.10, Reference of question to the executive or committee page D-8)

Replace first 2 sentences with “**Discussion can only take place on a question if the Chairman agrees.**”

18.1, Record of Attendance (page D-13)

Amend to: **“All members are required to sign the attendance sheet before the conclusion of the meeting to assist with the record of attendance.”**

22.1 Suspension of Standing Orders (page D-15)

Add **“SO17.2”** to the exceptions.

This is a required SO, previously omitted from this paragraph

10. **FINANCIAL REGULATIONS** (pages I-1 to I-13)

Amend references to the Finance and Resources Director to **Chief Executive** in paragraphs:

17.2 Land and Property, 19. Data Protection, 22. Information Technology and 23. Risk Management (pages I-10 – I-13)

1.2 General (page I-1)

Amend “Section 1(1) of the Local Government Act 1992” to **“Section 44(1) of the Audit Commission Act 1998 for the collection, recording and publication of information relating to standards of performance.”**

2.4 Accounting (page I-1)

Amend 1st sentence to **“The Chief Finance Officer shall be consulted...”**

3 Financial Control (page I-2)

3.2 Amend 1st sentence to **“The Chief Finance Officer shall be informed immediately...”**

3.6 Amend second sentence to **“The Chief Finance Officer shall be consulted...”**

Delete “(who shall in turn report as soon as reasonably practicable to the Management Team)”

16.3 Insurances (page I-10)

Delete “following consultation with the Chief Executive”

18 Internal Audit (page I-11)

18.2 Amend the last sentence to **“The Chief Finance Officer shall consider whether to refer any irregularity to the Police.”** (deleting reference to the Chief Executive)

18.4 Insert after “Chief Executive” at the end of the paragraph, **“and/or the Leader of the Council.”**

11. **CONTRACT STANDING ORDERS** (pages J-2 – J-11)

Amend references to the Finance and Resources Director to **Chief Executive** in paragraphs:

7.1 Submission, Receipt and Custody of Tenders, 8.3 Opening (page J-6),
19.1 & 5 Legal Services and 20.3 Form of Contract (pages J-9&10),

8.1 Opening (page J-6)

Amend first sentence to **“...by officers from the procuring service and a legal officer or an officer designated at the time for the purpose by the Chief Executive.”**

12. **DELEGATION RULES** (pages M-1 – M-5)
Add a new paragraph after the existing paragraph 1.2:
“The Leader and his/her absence, the Deputy Leader, shall have all the delegated powers, functions and responsibilities of any portfolio holder in their absence.”
13. **MEMBERS’ ALLOWANCE SCHEME** (pages Y-1 – Y-7)
Insert revised scheme as agreed by Council on 23 February 2006 – allowance rates only amended.

4. Renunciation (page Y-1)
Amend Finance and Resources Director to **Chief Executive**

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

SCDC Constitution

Contact Officer: Susan May – Democratic Services Manager
Telephone: (01954) 713016

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Council	27 July 2006
AUTHOR/S:	Chief Executive / Democratic Services Manager	

REVISIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION – STANDARDS COMMITTEE (ARTICLE 9)**Recommendations**

1. **Article 9.01, the Committee**
Add the words in **bold**:
The Council meeting will establish **and maintain** a Standards Committee. **Under the regulations, Standards Committees are not subject to the political balance requirements of sections 15-17 of the *Local Government and Housing Act 1989*. This is to allow the standards committee to be seen as being above party politics and comprised of representatives that command the support of the whole authority, regardless of party political loyalties. The Standards Committee should include an equal number of representatives from all parties represented on the council and should be constituted to ensure that no one political group dominates.**

2. **Article 9.02(a), Composition**
Amend to (amendments in **bold**): "The Standards Committee will be composed of **at least**:

 - 6** councillors, **excluding members of the executive**, (Council members)
 - 4** persons who are not councillors or officers of the council or any other relevant body (Independent members)
 - 3** members of parish councils in the Council's area; (Parish members)**At least 25% of the members of the Standards Committee must be Independent members."**

3. **Article 9.02(b), Council Members**
Amend to "**The Council will appoint the Council Members, an equal number being appointed from each recognised political group.**"

4. **Article 9.02(c), Independent Members**
Amend the wording of the second bullet point to:
"Their appointment shall be **ratified** by Council on the recommendation of the appointments panel **of the Standards Committee, its size and composition to be determined by the Chairman in consultation with the Monitoring Officer.**"

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

SCDC Constitution
Standards Board for England Guidance

Contact Officer: Susan May – Democratic Services Manager
Telephone: (01954) 713016

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Council	27 July 2006
AUTHOR/S:	Chief Executive / Democratic Services Manager	

SUBSTANTIVE REVISIONS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Recommendations

1. To agree the following recommendations of the Constitution Review Working Party:
 - (a) That amendments be made to the Constitution to:
 - (i) ensure acceptance of group nominations for appointments (except for the Standards Committee)

Suggested wording is:

Principles of Proportionality (page N-1)

Amend the First Principle to read:

“Appointments to all constituent bodies of the Council (except the Standards Committee) shall be in the same proportion as the numbers in each recognised political group are to the overall membership of the Council, members independent of the main political parties being recognised as a single group for this purpose. The nominations of the groups shall be accepted by Council (other than in the case of the Standards Committee).”

Delete the second principle

Amend the first sentence of the Third Principle to:

“If any political group or party withdraws from **any constituent body of the Council....**”

Amend the first sentence of the Fourth Principle to:

“If any member of **a constituent body of the Council** resigns.....”

- (ii) determine a mechanism for removing a group nomination where the nominee loses the confidence of the group or changes group allegiance during the year
Further consideration is required of what this mechanism should be
 - (iii) ensure that it does not obstruct the Cabinet holding informal meetings
 - (iv) permit the Chief Executive or an officer nominated by him/her to preside at the election of a chairman
- Suggested wording is:

Council Standing Orders

Add sub-paragraph (a) to SO7, Chairman of Meeting

“The Chief Executive or an officer nominated by him or her may preside at the election of the Chairman.”

- (b) That Councillor Batchelor, with his group, prepare a paper setting out the reasons why the Council should formally recognise the existence of an opposition, and the areas of the Constitution which would be affected.
- (c) That:
 - (i) the Constitution not provide for substitutes for committee meetings;
 - (ii) no formula be required for achieving “best fit” in the sizes of committees;
 - (iii) deciding between group nominations on outside bodies when representatives and 1 substitute are required be left to the groups;
 - (iv) no amendment to the Constitution be required to permit councillors who are not members of the relevant body to remain in a meeting when the public have been excluded, but that the chairman at the time invite members to remain where this is appropriate;
 - (v) the appropriate forum for raising concerns of a confidential or individual nature be left to the discretion of individual Members;
 - (vi) no further measures be required to encourage the public to ask questions;
 - (vii) consideration of further amendments to executive delegated powers be deferred to a later date;
 - (viii) portfolio holder meetings not be open to the public;
 - (ix) specific functions not be delegated to the Leader other than the existing overall responsibility for travellers issues;
 - (x) there be no requirement to make provision for a state of the area debate;
 - (xi) no decision be made on the size of the Development and Conservation Control Committee and that the ability to attend site visits not be mandatory for membership;
 - (xii) the Development and Conservation Control Committee should be renamed the Planning Committee;
 - (xiii) the Development and Conservation Control / Planning Committee not be divided into two; and
 - (xiv) consideration of the number of portfolios be deferred pending finalisation of the officer structure.

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

SCDC Constitution

Contact Officer: Susan May – Democratic Services Manager
Telephone: (01954) 713016

Last saved: 19/07/06 14:32

Annual Audit and Inspection Letter

**South Cambridgeshire District Council
March 2006**

Last saved: 19/07/06 14:32

The Audit Commission is an independent body responsible for ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently and effectively, to achieve high-quality local services for the public. Our remit covers around 11,000 bodies in England, which between them spend more than £180 billion of public money each year. Our work covers local government, health, housing, community safety and fire and rescue services.

As an independent watchdog, we provide important information on the quality of public services. As a driving force for improvement in those services, we provide practical recommendations and spread best practice. As an independent auditor, we ensure that public services are good value for money and that public money is properly spent.

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Author	Nigel Smith, Relationship Manager & RSM Robson Rhodes LLP, Appointed Auditor
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Status of our reports to the Council

Our reports are prepared in the context of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission. Reports are prepared by appointed auditors and addressed to members or officers. They are prepared for the sole use of the audited body, and no responsibility is taken by auditors to any member or officer in their individual capacity, or to any third party.

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Contents

Key messages	1
Council performance	1
The accounts	1
Financial position	1
Other accounts and governance issues	2
Performance work	2
Action needed by the Council	3
Council performance	4
Direction of travel report	4
Other performance work	8
Best Value Performance Plan	10
Best Value Performance Indicators	10
Other Audit Commission inspections	11
Accounts and governance	12
Audit of 2004/05 accounts	12
Financial standing	12
Systems of internal financial control	13
Standards of financial conduct and the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption	14
Legality of transactions	14
Use of Resources judgements	14
Other work	17
Additional voluntary work	17
Grant claims	17
National Fraud Initiative	17
Looking forward	18
Future audit and inspection work	18
Revision to the Code of Audit Practice	18
A new CPA framework	18
Closing remarks	19

Availability of this letter	19
Appendix 1 – Background to this letter	20
The purpose of this letter	20
Audit objectives	20
Inspection objectives	21
Appendix 2 – Audit and Inspection reports issued	22
Appendix 3 – Audit and Inspection fee	23
Inspection fee update	23

Key messages

Council performance

- 1 The quality of services delivered by the Council is mixed. However, the decline in performance experienced in both 2002/03 and 2003/04 was halted in 2004/05 during which 49 per cent of annual indicators were above average.
- 2 The Council is on track to implement the outstanding actions within the comprehensive performance assessment improvement plan.
- 3 The Council is placing significant reliance on its Transformation project to deliver improved customer service and to release significant savings from 2007/08. A key issue for the Council will be to manage the change programme effectively and ensure it has the capacity to enable improvement.

The accounts

- 4 The Council met the revised statutory deadline for accounts submission and the accounts were approved by Full Council on 28 July 2005. We presented our SAS 610 report on the audit accounts to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 October 2005 which highlighted only a small number of issues and presentational adjustments.
- 5 We issued an unqualified audit opinion on the Council's accounts by the statutory deadline of 31st October 2005. The Council is to be commended for meeting the earlier accounts submission and audit deadlines for 2004/05 despite a number of other challenges facing the Finance team. We received no questions or objections on the Council's accounts and therefore we have certified our 2004/05 audit as closed.

Financial position

- 6 The Council has continued with its policy of reducing its financial reserves. As a result The Council reported a General Fund deficit of £2.443m, and a Housing Revenue Account deficit of £0.901m in the 2004-05 accounts.
- 7 Following the Council's decision to raise Council Tax levels in 2005/06 the ODPM capped the rise. This represented a significant financial challenge to the Council. As a result of capping the Council is required to achieve savings of approximately £2.6million. There are significant risks to the Council achieving this level of savings in 2005/06 and in future years.
- 8 The Council also needs to manage its financial position in a context of delivering its corporate objectives and maintaining high levels of service performance.

Other accounts and governance issues

Governance arrangements and Use of Resources

- 9 The Council has a largely adequate internal control environment although there is scope for improvement in a number of areas. We reported our findings on financial aspects of corporate governance in our interim audit report in Summer 2005.
- 10 The Council has achieved an overall score of 2 (out of 4) in the Use of Resources judgements recently announced by the Audit Commission. This represents adequate performance, at minimum standards. Underpinning this overall score the Council achieved:
 - A score of 2 in financial management, financial standing, internal control and Value for Money in the Use of Resources Framework, representing adequate performance in these areas and
 - A score of 3 for Financial Reporting based on the accounts production processes in place, representing strong performance, above minimum standards.

Transformation Project

- 11 The Council is undergoing a review of its senior management structure with a view to reducing the number of chief officers from 4 to 2. A Transformation Committee has been established to take this project forward, with delegated powers to make decisions.
- 12 It is important that the Council ensures that it has taken the appropriate legal and other advice in making decisions on the future structure of the management team.
- 13 We will continue to monitor the progress with the transformation project as part of our 2005/06 audit work.

Performance work

- 14 We have undertaken a joint audit and inspection review of the Council's Prioritisation and Performance Management. The key findings of this review were presented to the Council in October 2005. We have agreed with officers that the Council should develop a joint action plan arising from the recommendations made in this review and the recommendations from the Use of Resources Auditor Judgements and Direction of Travel statements reported in this letter.
- 15 In addition we are in the process of finalising the findings from a County-wide review of procurement undertaken as part of our 2005/06 audit plan. The findings from our review will be reported to the Council in Spring 2006 and we have held a feedback workshop in the last few weeks.

- 16 We issued an unqualified opinion on the Council's Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP). There continues to be scope for improving the Council's arrangements with regards to the accuracy of the Best Value Performance Indicators produced included in the BVPP and presented for audit.

Action needed by the Council

- 17 The key actions required by the Council to address issues arising from the events of the last year include:
- identifying detailed savings plans to address the level of savings required as a result of capping and Gershon;
 - revising the Medium Term Financial Strategy to reflect the capping decision;
 - Ensuring that the appropriate legal and other advice has been obtained around issues relating to the Transformation Project;
 - Maintaining a focus on meeting the earlier accounts submission and audit deadlines during 2006;
 - Continuing to strengthen the overall financial and performance management framework to underpin the effective use of resources;
 - Further strengthening the arrangements for the preparation of the Best Value Performance Plan and the accuracy of the various performance indicators included in the plan;
 - Focus on service improvement whilst implementing the Council's change programme, and
 - Ensure the Council has the capacity to deliver service improvement.

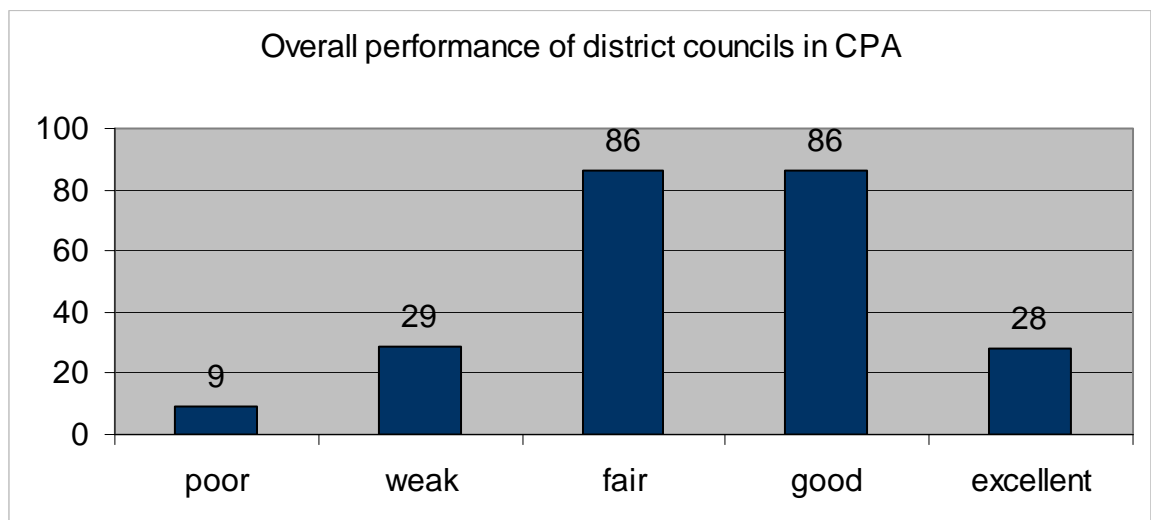
Council performance

Direction of travel report

- 18 South Cambridgeshire District Council was assessed as Fair in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment carried out in 2004. These assessments have now been completed in all district councils with the following results.

Figure 1 Overall performance of district councils in CPA

Three times as many district councils are rated Good or Excellent than Poor or Weak



Source: Audit Commission

Background

- 19 The Council was subject to an Audit Commission comprehensive performance assessment (CPA) in 2004 and was graded a 'fair' Council. A CPA Improvement Plan was agreed with the Council, comprising 116 items, each allocated to a particular portfolio holder and director. Where individual actions were not completed by April 2005, the outstanding actions were converted to 'milestones' and featured in the 2005/06 Performance Plan.
- 20 The Council has experienced a number of significant changes during the last two years. These include its successful transfer to new offices in Cambourne, and the opening of a contact centre which is leading to significant business process changes. The impact of the budget reduction required in 2005/06 is detailed below.

Findings

- 21** The Council's objectives and priorities are clearly stated. There are four long term corporate objectives;
- High quality, accessible, value for money services
 - Quality village life
 - A sustainable future for South Cambridgeshire
 - A better future through partnership.
- 22** For 2005/06 the Council reduced its immediate priorities from nine to three. These comprise:
- Improvement of customer services
 - Achievement of successful, sustainable new communities at Northstowe and other major new settlements
 - Increasing the supply of affordable housing.
- 23** The Performance Plan includes 105 milestones representing actions, some derived from the CPA improvement plan, intended to help achieve the priorities. These are linked to Council portfolios and individual services.
- 24** The Council has decided to adopt the relevant aims of the Community Strategy as the Council's broad strategic vision from 2007/08. These will be supported by a small number of targeted, quantified objectives which reflect the Community Strategy or other national or local priorities, including the LAA. The Council is also considering a more standard approach to the preparation of all corporate strategies, including provision for an action plan to demonstrate how the strategy contributes to Council objectives, milestones or other strategies of the Council, and the resources required. The Management Team has also approved changes to its corporate procedures to clarify a 'golden thread' between the Council's high level objectives, and the setting of personal objectives for staff through the appraisal process, incorporating corporate milestones, service plans and performance indicators.
- 25** The Audit Commission and the Council's external auditors undertook a study of prioritisation and performance management processes which reported in December 2005. A number of strengths and weaknesses were identified and for 2006/07 the Council is seeking to develop an integrated action plan to deal with issues arising from the prioritisation and performance management study, the Use of Resources judgement and the Direction of Travel statement.
- 26** Consultation is limited in quantity and its range. Councillors do not favour focus groups and much reliance is placed upon feedback derived from the Council's magazine, delivered to every household in the District. However, this approach potentially discourages responses from some sectors of the community. The Council's website encourages questions to the Leader but these tend to concern planning issues. The Council's approach is more toward communication rather than consultation.
- 27** The Council has undertaken an effective budget reduction process during 2005/06. In July 2005, the House of Commons approved an order setting a

maximum budget for South Cambridgeshire District Council for 2005/06 and required the Council to re-bill its council tax payers for a lower council tax for 2005/06. The Council's medium term financial strategy had to be significantly revised leading to a reduction in planned spending of £2.6m or 20 per cent of the planned 2005/06 budget. The budget reduction process required councillors and officers to focus on what the Council does well and what it should do in the future. Councillors scored priority and non priority services (acknowledging resources needed to be maintained on non-priority but statutory duties) to arrive at a hierarchy and inform decision making about expenditure reduction. .

- 28 The budget reduction process has had a significant impact on the activities of councillors and officers during 2005/06, further weakening the overall capacity of the Council. The additional activity required represented 3 or 4 months work for some officers. Councillors have had to defend the difficult decisions.
- 29 There are currently very weak links between finance and performance. In 2005 for the first time the Council's budget reduction process brought together consideration of both finance and performance. The Council has previously established processes to direct new spending to priorities. These processes need to be integrated for future years.
- 30 There is limited alignment between business aims, service planning and financial planning. However improvements have been achieved in aligning business aims or objectives with service planning, but not with financial planning. There is no clarity in service plans as to how improvement is to be achieved. The management team plans to introduce an additional but voluntary process in September/October where service managers identify their future service needs and development and where additional resourcing is required. Service plans will continue to be used to mainstream corporate priorities, risk management, race equality, community safety, climate change strategy and LPSA targets.
- 31 The monitoring of service plans is currently inconsistent. In some services, service heads report to portfolio holders on a monthly basis, discussing both progress against milestones and performance indicators. Service plan monitoring is less robust in the remaining services.
- 32 The quality of services delivered by the Council is mixed. However, the decline in performance experienced in both 2002/03 and 2003/04 has been halted in 2004/05 during which 49 per cent of annual indicators were above average. During that year, 64 per cent of the annual indicators showed improvement in service whilst 27 per cent declined, compared with the performance of the previous year.
- 33 During 2004/05, the Council's performance was above average in a number of areas. For example, the provision of affordable housing, the number of houses not decent, waste recycling, processing of housing benefit claims, fraud investigations undertaken and resulting in prosecution or sanction, satisfaction with arts activities and venues, parks and open spaces.
- 34 During 2004/05, the Council's performance was below average in a number of areas. For example, unfit private sector dwellings made fit, time spent by homeless households in hostels, littered land, staff sickness levels, and

response times relating to complaints made to the local government ombudsman.

The Council's performance in the speed of determining both major and minor planning applications within the standards set by the Government is poor. The Council has remained in the worst 25 per cent of councils during both 2003/04 and 2004/05. Whilst the comparative planning application performance of the Council remains poor, the Council is currently on track to achieve its own target for 2005/06. There has been a delay in the implementation of National Land Information on-line searches but work is currently underway to achieve this facility.

- 35** The Council experienced an inspection by the Benefits Fraud Inspectorate during 2005. The Inspectorate acknowledged that the Council gave a high priority to combating benefit fraud and the fraud team had been successful in securing several high profile prosecutions. However, several areas for improvement were identified and some of the Council's working practices gave rise to serious concerns. Forty two recommendations for action were made which the Council currently regards as 95% completed.
- 36** Considerable development work has taken place within the contact centre. However, the agreement of arrangements for the improvement in coordination of front and back office processes has yet to be achieved. This is being pursued through the Council's transformation project. In addition, the Council is seeking to maximise the potential of the contact centre through the transfer of further services to the centre. The Council has developed both its website and intranet and is currently developing a content management system to integrate the website and intranet to improve the creation and management of their content.
- 37** A robust performance management regime has yet to be established. A key corporate milestone to review and re-launch the performance management framework and provide performance management training for members and managers remains outstanding. This is awaiting the development of an action plan to implement the findings of the Prioritisation and Performance Management study and work to introduce a successor to the current performance management system. As a result, current performance reports are confined to monitoring rather than suggesting how poor performance will be managed. As part of its revision of performance management arrangements, the Council plans to rationalise the PI structure, dropping its 'priority PI's' and discarding those where the effort of data collection outweighs the benefit.
- 38** The majority of milestones arising from the CPA have been achieved or are on track to be achieved within the intended timeframe. They are monitored on a quarterly basis. The Council plans to continue to adopt milestones to ensure progress on the corporate challenges, but aim for fewer, higher level milestones covering a 2 – 3 year period. Corporate milestones will be reduced from 100 in 2005/05 to 28 in 2006/07.
- 39** Dealing with complaints effectively has become a high priority for the Council, Every department has a 'Service First' guide and effective response to complaints is championed by a management team member. The timeliness of

responses to the ombudsman remains an issue but delays are largely due to capacity.

- 40 The District continues to face significant difficulties caused by unauthorised traveller plots. The Council Leader has taken personal responsibility for dealing with traveller related issues, and resources are being invested in defending the District's interest in a planning inquiry, completing a travellers housing needs survey, identifying potential sites for authorised encampments and keeping residents informed of action being taken. The Local Development Framework requires developers to provide housing for all communities including travellers. Travellers planning issues have taken up much Council time and resourcing.
- 41 The Council is placing significant reliance on its Transformation project to deliver financial savings and improved services. The project, agreed by the Council in November 2005, aims to improve customer service and reduce the need for future cutbacks in services for residents. This is to be done through:
- streamlining the senior management structure, reducing the top-level management team from four to two and empowering 2nd level staff
 - a review of the roles and responsibilities of heads of service, integration of customer services and service areas to provide improved and customer focused services
 - application of business process reviews to all service areas to challenge what is being done and consider potential transfer to the contact centre
 - continued development of technology, including the web, to fully support an integrated customer service and ICT structure.
- 42 The project aims to release significant savings from 2007/08 amounting to £367 000, with slightly larger savings in the 3 subsequent years. A Transformation Committee has been set up with regular meetings planned. Successfully implementing these changes and focusing on service improvement represents a considerable challenge to the Council. It is important that the Council ensures it has in place the capacity to deliver sustained improvements for service users.

Other performance work

Priorities and Performance Management

- 43 This review arose from the action plan drawn up by the Council following the Comprehensive Performance Assessment in December 2004. The review focused on the way in which the Council establishes its priorities and its management of performance.
- 44 The prioritisation aspects of this review involved consideration of:
- Political processes around the council's priorities;
 - Public engagement which shapes the council's choices and decisions;
 - Examination of how the council's priorities balance national priorities;
 - How partnership objectives are incorporated into the council's priorities;

- Timetable which aligns processes; e.g. budget consultation, annual surveys;
- Degree to which the council adapts to change and redirects resources to priorities, and
- Flow through of priorities to budgets, departmental service plans and monitoring arrangements.

45 The performance management aspects of this review involved consideration of:

- The framework for performance management and how this aligns to form the council's main priorities and plans;
- The clarity and realism of the council's targets against priorities and process for agreeing targets;
- Member involvement in performance management and use of scrutiny;
- Management team role in monitoring and managing the performance of the council;
- Realism of performance management 'on the ground'. Samples of service approach to managing short term as well as long term performance, and
- Linkage of performance and financial management

46 Our findings were reported in detail to the Council in December 2005. The key issues identified in the review included:

Prioritisation

- The process of refining priorities and linking them to the Community Plan and financial planning is not complete
- The community plan is not yet fully incorporated within the corporate planning cycle;
- Whilst the Council is on target to meet key ODPM targets, integration of national targets into local priorities is incomplete;
- The Council is a key player in the local infrastructure partnership around sustainable communities, and
- The Council has a poor track record of matching resources priorities and redirecting resources to changing priorities.

Performance management

- The Council has a documented performance management framework. However this framework is not yet fully embedded;
- Whilst the Council has implemented a performance monitoring system this is not fully effective
- Target setting is undermined by a lack of suitable performance data;
- There is a lack of effective member involvement in performance management

- Whilst there is a closer link between finance and performance the integration of activity and budget data is not complete, and
- There is no integrated reporting and scrutiny of budget and performance variances.

47 We will work with management in developing an action plan addressing the key recommendations arising from this review. This action plan will form part of a joint plan along with actions arising from other key areas of work including Use of Resources judgements and the Direction of Travel assessment.

Procurement

48 We have undertaken, along with other auditors within Cambridgeshire, a County-wide review of Procurement Arrangements. The purpose of the review was to assess the progress of procurement arrangements in the Council in relation to good practice and to identify areas for improvement.

49 The fieldwork for this review has now been completed and we have recently provided formal feedback of our findings through a county-wide officers workshop. The next step we will be to report our findings to the Council and the development of an action plan for improvements.

50 This work has been undertaken as part of our 2005/06 audit and inspection plan and will be reported in detail in the Council's 2006/07 audit and inspection letter.

51 Our conclusion is that the Council has established strategies and processes for procurement which are in line with best practice. However there are several areas where implementation of these strategies in practice should be improved.

Best Value Performance Plan

52 There currently remains a requirement for all Councils to produce a Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) and for auditors to undertake a compliance audit.

53 We assessed the BVPP for compliance against the criteria specified in the ODPM circular 03/2003 and the related addendum as well as guidance from the Audit Commission.

54 Our audit confirmed that in all significant respects the Council prepared and published its BVPP in accordance with the law and regulations governing it. Accordingly we issued an unqualified audit opinion on the plan with no recommendations made to either the Audit Commission or the Secretary of State.

Best Value Performance Indicators

55 We performed a review of the Council's Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) and Audit Commission CPA indicators to ensure that they had been prepared accurately and in accordance with the guidance set out by the Audit Commission.

- 56 Our audit of the Council's BVPIs identified two indicators which were reserved.
- 57 Amendments were required to 24 of the Council's indicators. Of these amendments three were material misstatements, that is, an error in excess of 15% was identified during the audit indicating a lack of checks being performed on the information being submitted. This compared to 22 amendments (of which 8 were materially misstated) in the previous year.
- 58 Guidance and definitions for the preparation and calculation of BVPIs had not been followed in all cases, leading to the amendment of indicators.

Other Audit Commission inspections

- 59 There were no other Audit Commission inspections undertaken during the year.

Accounts and governance

- 60 We issued an unqualified audit opinion on the Council's 2004/05 accounts.
- 61 The Council's overall corporate governance and financial management arrangements are adequate in most key areas subject to the comments below.

Audit of 2004/05 accounts

- 62 We gave an unqualified opinion on the Council's accounts on 28 October 2005 ahead of the statutory deadline.
- 63 The accounts were approved by full Council on the 28 July 2005 and presented for audit on the 19 August 2005.
- 64 We received no questions or objections from members of the public in relation to the 2004/05 accounts.

Report to those with responsibility for governance in the Council

- 65 We are required by professional standards to report to those charged with governance (in this case the Audit Panel) certain matters before we give an opinion on the financial statements. Our report was presented to the Audit Panel on 17 October 2005.
- 66 There were no significant matters arising as a result of our audit which we wish to highlight for your attention in this letter.
- 67 We identified a number of presentation adjustments and additional disclosures during the course of the audit, which we agreed with officers. None of these items resulted in a material adjustment.
- 68 In addition our report highlighted a small number of items which had not been adjusted by officers. The Audit Panel agreed that amendment was not considered necessary for these items.

Financial standing

- 69 The Council has continued with its policy of reducing its financial reserves. As a result the Council reported a General Fund deficit of £2.443m, and a Housing Revenue Account deficit of £0.901m in the 2004-05 accounts.
- 70 Whilst the financial position reported in 2004/05 indicated that the Council's financial position remained strong, the decision by the ODPM to cap the Council's level of Council tax has placed significant pressure on the financial position during 2005/06.
- 71 As a result of the capping announcement, the Council has been required to identify approximately £2.6million of savings in order to balance the 2005/06

budget and financial position. The Council has accordingly been required to revise its Medium Term Financial Strategy significantly during 2005/06.

- 72 We will formally assess the impact of capping on the financial standing of the Council as part of our 2005/06 audit and report our findings in due course.
- 73 2006/07 and beyond represents a significant financial challenge to the Council and we recognise that the Council faces a variety of factors that could impact on the financial position in the medium to long-term, including:
- the success of the DLO recovery plan;
 - the need to increase Council Tax levels in future years and possible central government intervention over levels of council tax increases;
 - future spending pressures;
 - the success of the transformation project in achieving savings which will assist the council in:
 - meeting the requirement to find cashable and non-cashable efficiency savings to comply with the findings of the Gershon review, and
 - identifying cuts and efficiency savings in addition to Gershon in order to meet the Council's financial strategy;
 - the outcome of the housing stock options appraisal;
 - implementation of E-government requirements, and
 - increased employer contributions to the Cambridgeshire County Council Pension Scheme as a result of the current deficit in this scheme.

Systems of internal financial control

- 74 Our findings in relation to financial systems should be viewed against a background that the Council has:
- a small accounting function leading to some inherent control weakness as proper segregation of duties cannot be maintained in certain areas, in particular in payroll;
 - centralised budget monitoring and control within the accountancy team which means that, due to resource constraints and sickness, certain controls are not undertaken on a timely basis;
 - new NNDR system which was implemented during the year, and
 - a new payroll system. We understand that pay slips were generated on the new system in March 2005. While this is not relevant to our audit of the 2004/05 accounts, this new system should automate many of the controls on which we would look to place reliance.
- 75 Our work has indicated that the Council's control environment could be enhanced in a number of areas. In many cases, the issues noted through completion of our procedures are the same as those raised by Internal Audit, or

those that we have previously communicated to the Council. A number of these weaknesses have remained extant throughout 2004/05.

- 76 The key areas requiring management attention include the need to ensure that regular reconciliation and independent review of all control accounts is undertaken on a regular and timely basis.

Financial systems – 2005/06 update

- 77 We are concerned to note that internal audit reporting to date during 2005/06 has identified an increased number of systems where internal audit have provided only limited assurance. These include a number of systems which in 2004/5 provided substantial assurance. Internal audit reporting has also identified an increased number of recommendations during 2005/06. It should be noted that the internal audit programme, at the time of writing this letter, has not been fully completed and reported for 2005/06.
- 78 Internal audit reporting to date in 2005/06 indicates that there is an increased level risk around systems of financial control which the Council will need to keep under close review to ensure that controls are not compromised in the future.

Standards of financial conduct and the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption

- 79 We have not identified any significant weaknesses in your arrangements to prevent and detect fraud and corruption which we wish to highlight for your attention.
- 80 We are pleased to note that the Council is taking steps to comply with the recommendations raised in the BFI counter fraud inspection, through preparing an action plan and monitoring this action plan regularly.

Legality of transactions

- 81 We have not identified any significant weaknesses in the framework established by the Council for ensuring the legality of its significant financial transactions which we wish to highlight for your attention.

Use of Resources judgements

- 82 The use of resources judgement assesses how well councils manage and use their financial resources. The assessment focuses on the importance of having sound and strategic financial management to ensure that resources are available to support the council's priorities and improve services.

- 83 The Use of Resources judgements will be carried out annually, as part of each council's external audit. We anticipate in future the Use of Resources judgements will form part of the CPA framework.
- 84 We have assessed the Council's arrangements in five areas as set out in the table below.

Table 1 Council's arrangements

Element	Assessment
Financial reporting	3 out of 4
Financial management	2 out of 4
Financial standing	2 out of 4
Internal control	2 out of 4
Value for money	2 out of 4
Overall	2 out of 4

(Note: 1=lowest, 4=highest)

- 85 In reaching these judgements we have drawn on the above work and supplemented this with a review against a detailed set of specified Key Lines of Enquiry.
- 86 Overall the Council has scored 2 out 4. According to the definition on the scale established by the Audit commission this means that the Council is *"At only minimum requirements which equates to adequate performance. A level 2 would be achieved where appropriate arrangements were considered to be in place but could not yet be demonstrated to be embedded in the culture of the Council and operating effectively."*
- 87 The most significant areas where further development would lead to improved scores under Use of Resources include:
- The MTFs should be enhanced by including clearer links to the Council's business and corporate planning processes, joint plans with other stakeholders and incorporating balance sheet items and cashflow projections;
 - The Council would need to ensure that the financial position is maintained without significant over/under spends being incurred in individual areas;
 - The Council needs to strengthen arrangements around risk management in a number of areas. Many of these arrangements are already under review and we understand that from 2005/06 the Council will be continuing to strengthen its risk management arrangements;

- The Council has not developed an assurance framework which maps the council's strategic objectives to risks, controls and assurances;
 - Enhancing proactive counter fraud measures, including enhancement of NFI and fraud investigation arrangements in response to BFI recommendations.
- 88** However it is important that the Council considers the costs and benefits of making the improvements required to enhance scores under the Use of Resources judgments, against any impact on services and the resources available.
- 89** The Council will be developing an integrated action plan to address the recommendations arising from our work on Use of Resources, Priorities and Performance Management and the Direction of Travel Assessment set out in this letter.

Other work

Additional voluntary work

- 90 We have not been requested by the Council to carry out any additional voluntary work.

Grant claims

- 91 In accordance with Strategic Regulation, the Audit Commission has continued with a more risk-based approach to the certification of grant claims. We have reduced our audit of these claims but our ability to reduce further depends on the adequacy of the Council's control environment.
- 92 We have certified six grant claims, of which five were amended as a result of our work. Two of those claims which were amended have also been subject to a qualification letter.

National Fraud Initiative

- 93 In 2004/05, the local authority took part in the Audit Commission's National Fraud Initiative. The NFI, which is undertaken every two years, aims to help identify and reduce fraud by bringing together data from NHS bodies, local authorities and government departments and other agencies, to detect a wide range of frauds against the public sector. These include housing benefit fraud, occupational pension fraud, tenancy fraud and payroll fraud as well as, new for 2004/05, right to buy scheme fraud and providing new contact details for former tenants with arrears in excess of £1,000.
- 94 There are no significant issues arising from the NFI which we wish to highlight for your attention.

Looking forward

Future audit and inspection work

- 95 We have an agreed plan for 2005/06 and we have reported in this letter those aspects that have already been completed. The remaining elements of that plan, including our audit of the 2005/06 accounts, will be reported in next year's Annual Letter.
- 96 We have sought to ensure, wherever possible, that our work relates to the improvement priorities of the Council. We will continue with this approach when planning our programme of work for 2006/07. We will seek to reconsider, with you, your improvement priorities and develop an agreed programme by 31 March 2006.

Revision to the Code of Audit Practice

- 97 The statutory requirements governing our audit work, are contained in:
- The Audit Commission Act 1998; and
 - The Code of Audit Practice (the Code).
- 98 The Code has been revised with effect from 1 April 2005. Further details are included in our Audit Plan, which has been agreed with the Audit Panel on 17 October 2005. The key changes include:
- The requirement to draw a positive conclusion regarding the Council's arrangements for ensuring value for money in its use of resources; and
 - A clearer focus on overall financial and performance management arrangements.

A new CPA framework

- 99 The Audit Commission is currently considering the results of the consultation on the proposals for revising the CPA framework for District Councils. The revised framework will be published in the early part of 2006 with implementation from April 2006.

Closing remarks

- 100 This letter has been discussed and agreed with the Chief Executive and Finance and Resources Director. A copy of the letter will be presented at the Audit Panel on **xx June 2006**.
- 101 The Council has taken a positive and constructive approach to our audit and inspection we would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the council's assistance and co-operation.

Availability of this letter

- 102 This letter will be published on the Audit Commission's website at www.audit-commission.gov.uk and also on the Council's website.

Signature

Appointed Auditor:

Relationship Manager:

March 2006

Appendix 1 – Background to this letter

The purpose of this letter

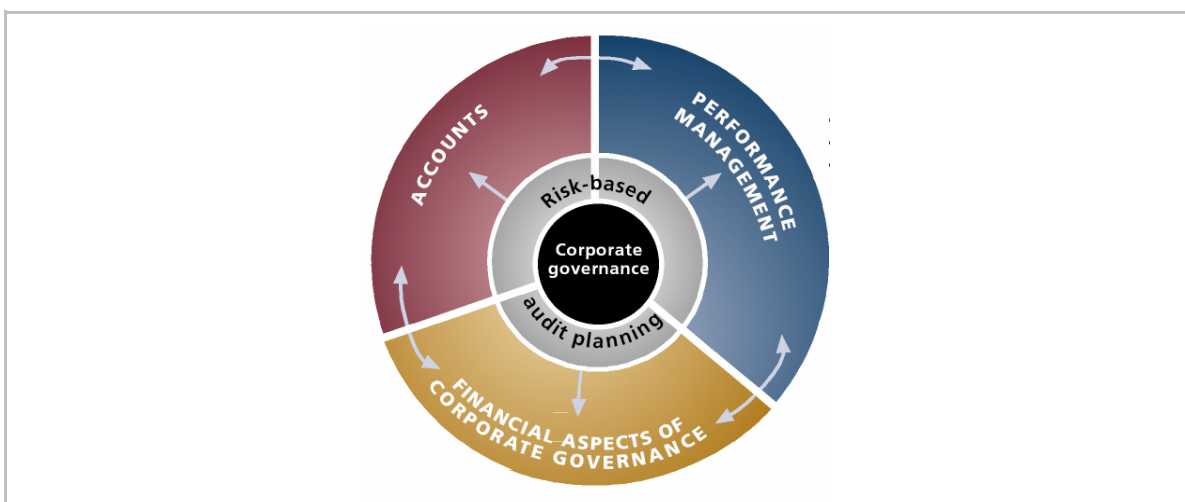
- 1 This is our audit and inspection 'Annual Letter' for members, which incorporates the Annual Audit Letter for 2004/05, which is presented by the Council's Relationship Manager and District Auditor [or Appointed Auditor – delete as appropriate]. The letter summarises the conclusions and significant issues arising from our recent audit and inspections of the Council.
- 2 We have issued separate reports during the year setting out the findings and conclusions from the specific elements of our programme. These reports are listed at Appendix 2 for information.
- 3 The Audit Commission has circulated to all audited bodies a statement that summarises the key responsibilities of auditors. Our audit has been conducted in accordance with the principles set out in that statement. What we say about the results of our audit should be viewed in the context of that more formal background.
- 4 Appendix 3 provides information about the fee charged for our audit and inspections.

Audit objectives

- 5 Our main objective as your appointed auditor is to plan and carry out an audit that meets the requirements of the Code of Audit Practice. We adopt a risk-based approach to planning our audit, and our audit work has focused on your significant financial and operational risks that are relevant to our audit responsibilities.
- 6 Central to our audit are your corporate governance arrangements. Our audit is then structured around the three elements of our responsibilities as set out in the Code and shown in Figure1.

Figure 2 Code of Audit Practice

Code of practice responsibilities



Accounts

- Opinion.

Financial aspects of corporate governance

7 Reviewing how effectively the Council ensures:

- Financial standing;
- Systems of internal financial control;
- Standards of financial conduct and the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption; and
- Legality of transactions with significant financial consequences.

Performance management

- Use of resources.
- Performance information.
- Best Value Performance Plan.

Inspection objectives

8 Inspection work is based around section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999, which requires us to carry out inspections and deliver reports that will:

- Enable the Council and the public to judge whether best value is being delivered;
- Enable the Council to assess how well it is doing;
- Enable the Government to assess how well its policies are being implemented; and
- Identify failing services where remedial action may be necessary.

Appendix 2 – Audit and Inspection reports issued

Report title	Date issued
Audit Plan	June 2004
Interim Audit Report	October 2005
Best Value Performance Indicator Report	October 2005
BVPP Opinion	November 2005
Report on the 2004/05 financial statements to those charged with governance (SAS 610)	October 2005
Audit opinion on Financial Statements	October 2005
Review of Priorities and Performance Management	December 2005
Annual Audit and Inspection Letter	March 2006

Appendix 3 – Audit and Inspection fee

Audit area	Plan 2004/05	Actual 2004/05
Accounts	16,000	16,000
Financial aspects of corporate governance	37,250	37,250
Performance	46,450	46,450
Total Code of Audit Practice fee	99,700	99,700
Additional voluntary work (under section 35)	0	0
Total	99,700	99,700

Inspection fee update

The full year inspection fee is £15,786. The work reported in this audit and inspection letter has been funded by an element of the fee covering 2004/05 and by an element of the fee covering 2005/06. In both years the actual fee will be in line with that planned.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Thursday, 13 July 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

Councillors RF Bryant, R Hall, Dr SA Harangozo, Mrs SA Hatton, Mrs EM Heazell, SGM Kindersley, DC McCraith, Mrs CAED Murfitt, RT Summerfield and Dr SEK van de Ven were in attendance, by invitation.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors JD Batchelor, Mrs PM Bear and Mrs HM Smith.

Procedural Items

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Leader was authorised to sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 8 June 2006, subject to the following amendment:

Climate Change Group (Minute 13(j))

“...Planning Policy Guidance 25 (PPG25) required authorities...”

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following declarations were made:

Councillor JA Hockney	One of the clients of his employers was Mouchel Parkman Highways
Councillor SGM Kindersley	As an elected Cambridgeshire County Councillor
Councillor DC McCraith	As an elected Cambridgeshire County Councillor

**Recommendation to
Council**

3. RACE EQUALITY SCHEME

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder commended to Cabinet the updated Race Equality Scheme (RES), which took into account progress made implementing the action plan, consultation responses and recommended practice

from the Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). He pointed out, that in addition to the consultation replies from parish councils in Appendix A of the report, Bar Hill Parish Council had also responded to the consultation and supported the RES.

In view of the CRE's "Common Ground" report, the portfolio holder also proposed the establishment of a small RES Member Working Group of two or three members to consider its implications in more detail. The Council needed to work towards an overarching strategy document for its approach to Traveller issues, albeit that the completed Strategy would not be published until after the adoption of the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document. At the same time, he considered that it was important that the Race Equality Scheme did not focus on any particular minority group. Members' attention was drawn to the relatively high levels of ethnic minorities working as taxi drivers and in local hotel and agricultural industries. He undertook to add cultural awareness training for all members to the Member Training Advisory Group work programme.

The following amendments were made to the Race Equality Scheme:

- Paragraph 1.3.2: "This updated version has now been produced in the light of...(b) new ODPM Circular 1/2006 on 'Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan sites' (February 2006). This circular aims to ensure that Traveller site provision is increased, Traveller needs are dealt with fairly and effectively, and that the traditional travelling way of life of Gypsies and Travellers is recognised, protected and facilitated";
- Paragraph 1.4.2 (also paragraph 10 of the Cabinet report be amended to highlight the role of all portfolio holders for promoting race equality and good race relations, through all Council services, particularly those for which they have responsibility";
- Paragraph 2.1.4: "The travelling community, including travelling showmen, has been a traditional part of rural life in South Cambridgeshire...";
- Paragraph 2.3.5 (Promoting good race relations): To include the Council's response to the Tsunami disaster during the 2004 Christmas break, when the Council offices were opened up as a collection point for donations and aid supplies, and both councillors and officers interrupted their holidays to help out. This initiative involved close liaison with the local Sri Lankan community;
- Action plan - section B.1 (Developing policies and strategies relevant to race equality): "Highlight to the Cabinet and the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document Member Reference Group findings and recommendations from ODPM Circular 1/2006 and the CRE's 'Common Ground' report which may be appropriate to the Council's strategic approach to Traveller issues and the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document. This will include consideration of how to strengthen the Council's practices on recognising, protecting and facilitating the traditional travelling way of life of Gypsies and Travellers, whilst respecting the interests of the settled community." This action should be actioned by the RES Member Working Group with a deadline of 31 October 2006;
- Action plan - section B.5 (Publishing results): Amend the public launch date to July 2006, not 2007; and
- All references in the Race Equality Scheme to "LDF supplementary guidance" be updated to "Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document".

Cabinet **RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL** that the updated Race Equality Scheme for 2005-2008, including the additions and amendments made by Cabinet, be approved.

Cabinet thanked officers for their hard work preparing the scheme.

Decisions made by Cabinet

4. SUB REGIONAL STRATEGIES FOR CAMBRIDGE SUB REGION: QUALITY OF LIFE

Mr Peter Studdert, Director for Sustainable Communities at Cambridgeshire Horizons, made a presentation to Cabinet, highlighting the amount of local authority work already underway which would be supported and extended by the four Quality of Life Strategies / Studies for the Cambridge Sub-Region. These strategies / studies had status in the Local Development Framework, being referred to in some of its policies, but, due to the time and costs involved, had been circulated widely for stakeholder input rather than being issued for formal public consultation.

The Community Development Portfolio Holder commended the strategies but cautioned about the financial considerations behind all the proposals and asked Cabinet to welcome the documents as a basis for partnership working rather than endorsing them at this stage.

Issues raised by members included:

- The number of organisations proposing to make temporary use of the existing buildings at Oakington Barracks and whether artists could be reminded of facilities at Wysing Arts;
- Whether the Olympic size pool proposed for the University West site would be owned by the University of Cambridge and whether the 25 metre pool proposed for Northstowe could be enlarged, although members noted the possible financial burdens of swimming pools;
- The importance of addressing arts and cultural provision very early on;
- The omission of the Botanic Gardens in the analysis of existing arts and cultural facilities; and
- The additional demands on the transport infrastructure that would be generated by the creation of regional and sub-regional Sports and Arts venues.

Queries were raised about funding, particularly with regard to officers, and Mr Studdert explained that many of the recommendations integral to the work were already underway as part of the regular planning process. Long-term proposals, such as a concert venue, could be submitted to Olympic Lottery bids.

The Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder reported that the Conservation and Design Advisory Group supported the development of the Green Infrastructure Strategy and urged Cabinet to support adoption of the Strategy as Council Policy.

Cabinet **ENDORSED** the Balanced and Mixed Communities: A Good Practice Guide and the Green Infrastructure Strategy, and **WELCOMED** the Major Sports Facilities Strategy and the Arts and Culture Strategy.

Cabinet thanked Mr Studdert for his presentation.

5. STANSTED AIRPORT - CONSULTATION ON APPLICATION (RE: USE OF EXISTING RUNWAY)

Cabinet was asked to respond to consultation on a planning application to Uttlesford District Council submitted by BAA and Stansted Airport Ltd for planning permission to

vary / remove conditions attached to its previous planning permission, allowing greater use of the existing runway. The Environmental Health Portfolio Holder had received on 12 July the Health Impact Assessment: any decision by Cabinet would be subject to his comments once that document had been reviewed.

The Leader drew Members' attention to the effects of air travel on carbon emission targets. The figures of 450ppm and 550ppm in the report referred to atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide, not emission rates as the wording seemed to imply. He pointed out that, even if atmospheric carbon dioxide levels were stabilised at 450ppm, the probability of global mean surface temperature (GMST) stabilising at 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels (the current EC limit for 'acceptable' climate change) was only 50/50, at 550ppm, this probability fell to 18%.

Members noted that the Examination in Public of the Regional Spatial Strategy had deleted suggestions for a new settlement at Great Dunmow, which was seen as a strong argument against development of a second runway. Concerns were expressed about the "honeypot" effect of the number of people who would want to live within commuting distance of Stansted but away from the airport noise. It was noted that the modest projections supplied by BAA for increased housing demand as a result of the expansion, took into account only people directly employed at the Airport, not the wider effect on the sub-regional economy.

Cabinet **AGREED** to respond to Uttlesford District Council in the following terms, subject to the addition of any comments from the Environmental Health Portfolio Holder on the Health Impact Assessment:

- (a) South Cambridgeshire District Council supports the East of England Regional Assembly position that accepts the expansion of the airport up to the full capacity of its existing single runway (Policy ST5) but it does not support a second runway; and
- (b) With regard to the current application, if Uttlesford District Council is minded to approve the application, it should be subject to appropriate conditions and obligations to mitigate the impact of the additional car trips generated.

6. NORTH WEST CAMBRIDGE AREA ACTION PLAN: ISSUES AND OPTIONS

The North West Cambridge Member Reference Group and the Cambridge City Council Environment & Scrutiny Committee already had considered the Issues and Options Report for the North West Cambridge Area Action Plan (AAP). The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder highlighted two key issues: the scale and location of development and its impact on the Green Belt, and transport. The County Council had commissioned a separate transport study which would be a supporting document to the Issues and Options report, to be published for a six-week consultation period starting in September 2006.

Mr Michael Monk, the planning policy consultant engaged on behalf of the Council for the North West Cambridge AAP, advised that the transport study would consider measures for public transport along Madingley Road and Huntingdon Road, which were both subject to congestion which could be made worse as a result of further development. The need for north-facing slip roads from Madingley Road to the M11 was also likely to be assessed. Members also raised the issue of access to the crematorium at Huntingdon Road / A14 although it was noted that this was a matter for the A14 improvements rather than the AAP. The transport study should aid in understanding and assessment of issues, assist in public participation and inform the preparation of Preferred Options. Mr Monk advised that the Issues and Options report would address in more detail that there was scope for innovative energy measures such as small-scale

community-based renewable energy provision, and that the University, having control over much of the development, could ensure a high level of renewable energy generation and a low-carbon development.

Members expressed concern about references to “appropriate” separation between Cambridge and Girton, and it was clarified that the separation would be appropriate to maintain village character and identity. A decision on the final wording was delegated to the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder with advice from officers.

Councillor Dr SA Harangozo asked Cabinet to request that the Sustainable Development Officer prepare a list of sustainability barriers faced at Northstowe and what has been achieved.

Cabinet **AGREED**

- (a) The draft Issues & Options Report, as amended by the recommendations of the Joint Member Reference Group and the changes agreed by Cambridge City Council's Environment Scrutiny Committee, for public participation;
- (b) The principles for Issues & Options consultation and the list of specific and general consultation bodies, as amended by the recommendations of the Joint Member Reference Group and the changes agreed by Cambridge City Council's Environment Scrutiny Committee;
- (c) That any editing changes, including any arising from the Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment, be delegated to the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder;
- (d) That a technical examination of the Sustainability Appraisal / Strategic Environmental Assessment be included.

Cabinet **NOTED** the North West Cambridge Landscape Study.

7. **REVIEW OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) SECURITY POLICY AND USAGE GUIDELINES**

The revised ICT Security Policy and Usage Guidelines were presented, incorporating changes following the return to an in-house support provision for ICT services. This policy was specific to officers and a separate policy for members would be produced in due course.

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder amended E-mail Policy No. 10 to include a prohibition on using e-mail or the Internet service to send or receive racist material, and E-mail Policy No. 11 to “Avoid responding to unsolicited mail *not relating to the Council's business*”.

Subject to the incorporation of these amendments, Cabinet **AGREED** the revised Information & Communications Technology (ICT) Security Policy and Usage Guidelines June 2006.

8. **LINTON: EXTRA HOUSING CARE AT FLAXFIELDS**

Cabinet, at its meeting of 14 October 2004, agreed to dispose of fifteen sheltered housing units and a communal facility at Flaxfields, Linton, to Hereward Housing Association on a free of charge basis to enable Hereward to provide a new facility of affordable extra care sheltered units. The scheme was unsuccessful in the 2006/08 National Affordable Housing Programme, but would be re-submitted to the Housing Corporation during its summer 2006 “mini bid round”.

It was hoped that £2 million Social Housing Grant (SHG) could be achieved through the mini bid round, funding the 100% extra care scheme as approved by Cabinet in 2004. The Housing Portfolio Holder explained that, to ensure that a scheme was provided even if the bid round were unsuccessful, officers were proceeding with an alternative option, to provide an extra care scheme of mixed tenure which could be made available without the SHG as long as the land were supplied to Hereward at nil cost. The Executive Director explained that the report considered the capital costs of conversion, and that, while the Primary Care Trust (PCT) had placed the scheme at the top of its priority list for revenue funding, such revenue funding was likely but not guaranteed.

Councillor Mrs EM Heazell reported that both local members, Councillors JD Batchelor and Mrs PM Bear, supported the schemes absolutely, and that an alternative scheme had become necessary because the government had changed the funding scheme after the Council had embarked upon this project.

Cabinet **AGREED** that

- (a) If Option One, to provide a 100% Affordable Housing Extra care scheme consisting of 24 rented units and 17 low-cost home ownership units, could not be achieved because of a lack of capital funds, the land be disposed of to Hereward Housing Association on a free of charge basis for Option Two, to provide an Extra care scheme of mixed tenure, consisting of 11 rented units, 14 low-cost home ownership units and 16 units for outright sale, subject to the Council's costs being met in line with Cabinet's existing decision of 14 October 2004; and
- (b) If Option Two were progressed and funds became available during the construction process because of the release by the Housing Corporation of resources from slippage elsewhere, then Hereward Housing Association amend the tenure mix to move as close to Option One as possible.

9. **CONCESSIONARY FARES - PAYMENT OF 'ADDITIONAL COSTS'**

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder explained that the purpose of this report was to agree to reimburse bus operators the 'additional costs' incurred for implementing the concessionary fares scheme. She confirmed that further negotiations would take place on 19 July at the Cambridge Area Bus Development Board, details of which contained commercially sensitive information which could not be discussed at a public meeting. All partners were working in the best interests of the community.

Following concerns about ticket information being unsubstantiated, as it did not include details of residents trying to use bus passes which were no longer accepted, the final sentence of paragraph 6 of the report was amended to refer to "early indicators" rather than "ticket information" from the first couple of months of operation of the scheme.

Cabinet **AGREED** payment of £21,375.83 for the 'additional costs' incurred by Whippet.

10. **APPOINTMENTS TO ADVISORY GROUPS, JOINT AND OUTSIDE BODIES**

Independent / Labour Group Nominations

Councillor Mrs CAED Murfitt offered to fill the Independent / Labour Group vacancies on the Milton Country Park, Planning Policy, and Waste Management Advisory Groups, subject to the agreement of the other Independent / Labour members.

Milton Country Park Advisory Group

The Community Development Portfolio Holder explained that it was imperative for this body to meet as soon as possible. She asked members to note that she had not been consulted before the Advisory Group Chairman had cancelled the meeting scheduled for

20 July.

It was clarified that vacancies on bodies to which seats had been allocated on a politically proportionate basis could not be transferred to other parties.

Cabinet **AGREED** that appointments to the Milton Country Park Advisory Group be done on a politically proportionate basis, rather than establishing it as an area body, and that its current size of seven members be maintained.

Cabinet **CONFIRMED** the following appointments to Advisory Groups, joint and outside bodies:

Advisory Groups

Community, Arts and Sports

CON RE Barrett, R Hall, RM Matthews, DC McCraith
 IND / LAB NS Davies, vacancy
 LD Mrs PM Bear, Dr SA Harangozo, Mrs HF Kember

Conservation and Design

CON Mrs JM Guest, R Hall, Mrs CA Hunt, RM Matthews, EJ Pateman, RJ
 Turner, NIC Wright (DCCC Chairman)
 IND / LAB RF Bryant, NN Cathcart, Mrs SJO Doggett, vacancy
 LD Mrs PM Bear, AN Berent, Mrs A Elsby, SGM Kindersley (DCCC Vice-
 Chairman), JA Quinlan, Dr SEK van de Ven

Housing for Older People

CON 4 vacancies
 IND / LAB RF Bryant, Mrs SJO Doggett
 LD Mrs EM Heazell, Mrs HF Kember, Mrs VM Trueman

Land Drainage

CON EW Bullman, BR Burling, Mrs PS Corney, NIC Wright
 IND / LAB MJ Mason, vacancy
 LD SGM Kindersley, Mrs JE Lockwood, Mrs HM Smith

Member Training

CON RE Barrett, Mrs SM Ellington, Mrs JM Guest
 IND / LAB Mrs SA Hatton
 LD Mrs EM Heazell, JF Williams

Milton Country Park

CON R Hall, PT Johnson, RJ Turner
 IND / LAB Mrs CAED Murfitt, vacancy
 LD Mrs HM Smith, RT Summerfield

Planning Policy Advisory Group

CON RE Barrett, Mrs PS Corney, R Hall, CR Nightingale, NIC Wright
 (DCCC Chairman)
 IND / LAB RF Bryant, MJ Mason, Mrs CAED Murfitt
 LD Mrs A Elsby, SGM Kindersley (DCCC Vice-Chairman), RB Martlew,
 JH Stewart

Waste Management Advisory Group

CON RE Barrett, EW Bullman, Mrs SM Ellington, CR Nightingale, EJ

Pateman, Mrs BE Waters
 IND / LAB Mrs SJO Doggett, Mrs CAED Murfitt, NJ Scarr
 LD JP Chatfield, Dr SA Harangozo, Mrs EM Heazell, RT Summerfield

Joint and Outside Bodies

Names in italics have been nominated since the 8 June 2006 meeting of Cabinet.

Cambridgeshire Councils' Association

CON Leader of Council
 IND / LAB *Mrs DP Roberts*
 LD *JD Batchelor*

County Council / Cambridge City / South Cambridgeshire Joint Strategic Forum

CON Leader of Council, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio
 Holder (substitute required)
 IND / LAB Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio
 Holder (*Mrs DP Roberts as substitute*)
 LD RT Summerfield (*JD Batchelor as substitute*)

South Cambridgeshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee

CON Leader of Council, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio
 Holder (*DC McCraith as substitute*)
 IND / LAB Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio
 Holder (*RF Bryant as substitute*)
 LD JD Batchelor, SGM Kindersley (*RT Summerfield as substitute*)

Information Items

11. REVIEW OF THE 2004-07 COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR SOUTH CAMBS

The Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder congratulated officers for progress made delivering the priority actions in the Community Strategy, and advised that more joined-up thinking between portfolios would be necessary for the 2007-10 Strategy.

The Head of Community Services explained that the Council was well advanced in some areas and must focus on completing the remaining targets and preparing the next strategy. He updated members on the Local Public Service Agreement target relating to increased road safety, which, if maintained would pass the 60% trigger to receive reward grant money. The reward grant would be paid to Cambridgeshire County Council and shared equally amongst all five Local Strategic Partnerships. Should the grant be achieved, he had proposed to the Local Area Agreement (LAA) board that 5-10% be 'top-sliced' to support the officer structure for Community Strategy work. He undertook to bring to Cabinet in September or October a report on progress towards, and possibility of achieving, reward grants.

Concerns about road safety in and between villages were expressed, although it was understood that any improvements were for Cambridgeshire County Council to deliver.

Cabinet **NOTED** the progress made in delivering the priority actions in the Community Strategy 2004-07.

12. RESPONSIVE REPAIRS ACTION PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

The Housing Portfolio Holder introduced the report, which provided an update of progress made on the 22-point action plan adopted in January 2005 improve the responsive repairs service. She had been critical of the service in the past, but appreciated the work undertaken in the past few months and thanked the previous Portfolio Holder, former Housing and Environmental Services Director, the implementation group and all others involved for their efforts and determination to improve the situation. She expressed her confidence in the people involved in the project and highlighted the improvement in staff morale. Councillor Mrs EM Heazell singled out the Echelon consultancy staff and Matthew Baxter in particular for commendation.

The Executive Director was hopeful that the Direct Labour Organisation (DLO) would break even this year, and confirmed that monitoring of the situation would continue.

Cabinet **NOTED** progress in implementing the responsive repairs action plan to date.

13. EFFICIENCY SAVINGS UPDATE

Cabinet received an update on the main efficiency savings achieved in 2005/06 and the Council's forward-looking Annual Efficiency Statement (AES) for 2006/07, which set out plans for further efficiencies.

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder confirmed that the Council was above target for savings achieved in 2005/06 and projected to be above target for 2006/07. At the same time, the detailed official guidance meant that although further savings had been made by the Direct Labour Organisation and service improvements had been achieved via the fortnightly refuse and recycling collection scheme, unfortunately, these did not count as efficiencies.

He offered his thanks to officers for their work identifying savings and compiling the AES Backward Look and AES Forward Look documents in light of the government changing its guidance every few months.

Cabinet **NOTED** the progress outlined in the report, especially the 2006/07 Annual Efficiency Statement – Forward Look.

14. PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2005/06

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder commended to Cabinet the actual expenditure figures for 2005/06.

Cabinet **NOTED** the report.

15. QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS, INCLUDING TRANSFORMATION PROJECT COSTS / SAVINGS

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder presented the report on actual income and expenditure against budget, including the three-monthly report on savings arising from the Transformation Project.

Cabinet **NOTED** the projected expenditure position and the monitoring of prudential indicators, and **REFERRED** the report to the next meeting of the Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder for more detailed consideration.

Standing Items

16. MATTERS REFERRED BY SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Cabinet **NOTED** that the Scrutiny and Overview Committee would be reviewing on 20 July 2006 the decision not to establish an official Climate Change Advisory Group and replace it with a standing item on the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder meeting agenda.

17. UPDATES FROM CABINET MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Mrs DSK Spink reported that Crossroads Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire had merged with Peterborough to become West Anglia Crossroads. The merger should help reduce overheads as all staff would be located in the same office.

18. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) (exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act).

Confidential Item

19. RENEWAL OF CONTRACT - DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder reminded Cabinet of the financial risk associated with posts funded by Planning Delivery Grant (PDG), but noted that the post was essential for the Council to maintain its performance to justify further PDG.

Cabinet **RECOMMENDS TO COUNCIL** the renewal of the contract for the administrative post (D.6.9) in the Major Developments Team for a further two years, accepting the financial risk arising from the temporary nature of Planning Delivery Grant funding.

**The Meeting ended at 1.15
p.m.**

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Transformation Committee held on
Monday, 17 July 2006 at 2.30 p.m.

PRESENT:

Councillors:	Dr DR Bard	JD Batchelor
	SM Edwards	SGM Kindersley
	Mrs DSK Spink MBE	
Officers:	Steve Hampson	Executive Director
	Greg Harlock	Chief Executive

Councillors NN Cathcart, Mrs A Elsby, Mrs EM Heazell, Mrs CAED Murfitt, Mrs DP Roberts and RT Summerfield were in attendance, by invitation.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

On the proposal of Councillor Mrs DSK Spink, seconded by Councillor JD Batchelor, the Committee

RESOLVED that Councillor Dr DR Bard be elected Chairman of the Committee for the current year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was agreed that this position was not necessary as, given the small number on the Committee, meetings should not take place without all members present.

3. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2006 and the informal meeting held on 8 June 2006 were confirmed as correct records.

4. CUSTOMER SERVICES PROJECT OFFICER

The Committee considered the request for an additional permanent post of Customer Services Project Officer to project manage the Service First project plan; co-ordinate monitoring of the new customer service standards and liaison with the Contact Centre; and administer the corporate complaints system. It was emphasised that this was an ongoing co-ordinating role: the postholder would not take over investigating and resolving complaints from service managers and was not a customer services manager.

The post was needed because of the reduction in the number of personal assistants from four to two as a result of the senior Management Team restructuring, since the Chief Executive's personal assistant had previously undertaken some of the functions. The additional post would reduce the potential savings of £60,000 from the reduction in PA posts by approximately £30,000. The Committee

RESOLVED that a post of Customer Services Project Officer be added to the Council's authorised establishment.

5. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED that the public be excluded from the remainder of the meeting on the grounds that consideration is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended.

The Chairman invited Members of the Council to remain.

6. MOUCHEL PARKMAN CONSULTANTS

Mr Michael Gates, one of the directors of Mouchel Parkman but not directly involved with this project, took a record of the issues raised in relation to the firm's work on the transformation project. These centred upon the shortage of supporting evidence for the assertions made in the report to Council, advice that was later contradicted by others, and the style of the presentations to Members.

Mr Gates thanked Members for their comprehensive comments and undertook to carry out an internal investigation and arrange an independent peer review of the work. He would report back to the Chief Executive. Any matters which could be clarified or rectified would be.

7. ADDITIONAL ITEMS**(a) Date of next Meeting**

The Committee will meet as and when necessary.

(b) Review of Second Tier

Senior Management Team would progress this as soon as possible. Staff had been given September as the target.

(c) Business Process Reviews

The Project Manager had started work, but it had not yet been possible to appoint business analysts.

The Meeting ended at 3.40 p.m.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Development and Conservation Control Committee held on
Wednesday, 7 June 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT:	Dr DR Bard	RE Barrett
	JD Batchelor	RF Bryant
	TD Bygott	Mrs PS Corney
	Mrs VG Ford	R Hall
	Mrs SA Hatton	Mrs CA Hunt
	SGM Kindersley	Mrs CAED Murfitt
	CR Nightingale	EJ Pateman
	A Riley	NJ Scarr
	Mrs HM Smith	Mrs DSK Spink MBE
	JH Stewart	RJ Turner
	JF Williams	NIC Wright

Councillors Mrs SJO Doggett, Mrs EM Heazell and TJ Wotherspoon were in attendance, by invitation.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs PM Bear, Mrs A Elsby, RB Martlew, Dr JPR Orme, JA Quinlan and Mrs DP Roberts.

Councillor Mrs CAED Murfitt (Chairman of the Council) in the Chair.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor RF Bryant nominated Councillor NIC Wright as Chairman of the Development and Conservation Control Committee. This was seconded by Councillor Mrs DSK Spink and, there being no other nominations, it was

RESOLVED that Councillor NIC Wright be elected Chairman of the Development and Conservation Control Committee for the coming year.

Councillor NIC Wright took the Chair

The Chairman paid tribute to his predecessor, Councillor Dr JPR Orme, and, in particular, to his qualities of respect, good humour, and fairness. The Committee concurred with the Chairman's comments. The Chairman welcomed Councillors Mrs PM Bear and Mrs J Guest (in their absence) and T Bygott and Mrs V Ford as new members of the Committee.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Council Councillor CR Nightingale nominated Councillor SGM Kindersley as Vice-Chairman of the Development and Conservation Control Committee. This was seconded by Councillor RF Bryant and, there being no other nominations, it was

RESOLVED that Councillor SGM Kindersley be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Development and Conservation Control Committee for the coming year. llor SGM Kindersley

3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee authorised the Chairman to sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 10 May 2006, subject to the addition of Councillor JF Williams' Apologies

for Absence and, in Minute 22 (S/0562/06/RM – Ickleton), deletion of the reference, in the third paragraph, to Councillor JF Williams having been present in the Chamber.

4. TO RE-APPOINT THE DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION CONTROL (ADVISORY) COMMITTEE

The Committee appointed the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Development and Conservation Control Committee (Councillors NIC Wright and SGM Kindersley), and re-appointed Councillors Dr DR Bard, Mrs DP Roberts, and Mrs DSK Spink to the body formally known as the Development and Conservation Control (Advisory) Committee, but now to be a Sub-Committee with executive powers.

Councillor JD Batchelor nominated Councillor Mrs HM Smith as the sixth member of the Sub-Committee. This was seconded by Councillor CR Nightingale and, there being no other nominations, it was

RESOLVED that Councillor Mrs HM Smith be elected to serve on the Development and Conservation Control Sub-Committee during the coming year.

There had been some concern expressed in Cottenham that there had been no local representation on the Development and Conservation Control (Advisory) Committee. Councillor TW Wotherspoon (a local Member for Cottenham) noted that any Member was entitled to attend its meetings, and stated that he did not share that concern.

5. TO CONSIDER RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE DEVELOPMENT AND CONSERVATION CONTROL (ADVISORY) COMMITTEE

The Committee considered the following recommendation, made by the Development and Conservation Control (Advisory) Committee at its meeting on 26 May 2006.

“... that the Development and Conservation Control Committee

1. Resolves not to pursue the option of a district-wide Injunction;
2. instructs officers to compile a prioritised list of site-specific locations for enforcement action, with clear reasons for determining their position within the list; and
3. Delegates to the Development and Conservation Control Advisory Committee (suitably re-established and re-named), or an alternative, small Sub-Committee, the authority to take all action deemed necessary with regard to enforcement action on Travellers sites.”

The Draft Minutes of that meeting had been made available electronically prior to the meeting on 7th June 2006.

The Head of Legal Services reported that the Council had been successful in its High Court application seeking removal of travellers encamped at Smithy Fen, Cottenham in breach of planning control. The Court Order gave 7 September 2006 as the deadline by which the affected travellers had to vacate the site. The High Court had refused the travellers leave to appeal, but they had 28 days from the date of the Order (7 June 2006) to apply to the Court of Appeal for leave. If they did this, and were successful, a further report would be made to the Development and Conservation Control Committee. There had been no Order for Costs. The Head of Legal Services commended this success to Members, and referred to the manner in which officers had worked together in order to achieve it.

Councillor TJ Wotherspoon led Members' tributes to those officers involved in securing the Court Order.

- RESOLVED**
1. not to pursue the option of a district-wide Injunction;
 2. to instruct officers to compile a prioritised list of site-specific locations for enforcement action, with clear reasons for determining their position within the list; and
 3. to delegate to a small Sub-Committee, the authority to take all action deemed necessary with regard to enforcement action on Traveller sites.

6. S/0390/06/F - FULBOURN

APPROVAL for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein (the word 'weekends' at the beginning of the third line of Condition 3 being corrected to read 'weekdays') and an additional Condition requiring implementation of the submitted drainage scheme.

Councillors Mrs V Ford and RJ Turner declared personal interests as customers of the valeting operation.

7. S/0636/06/F - FULBOURN

REFUSED for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services, and for additional reasons relating to the adverse effect on trees, hedgerows and the adjacent Listed Buildings.

8. S/0430/06/F - GIRTON

REFUSED contrary to the recommendation in the report from the Director of Development Services on the grounds of the development being too cramped and therefore out of character with the street scene, and the inappropriate size and height of the properties, being overbearing to adjoining properties. The flooding implications for the immediate area would be an additional reason for refusal if the submitted Flood Risk Assessment was not acceptable to the Environment Agency and the Council's Drainage Manager.

9. S/0719/06/F - GIRTON

REFUSED for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services, and on the additional grounds of harm to the amenity of the neighbours by reason of traffic noise and of inappropriate design.

10. S/0740/06/F - IMPINGTON

DELEGATED APPROVAL / DELEGATED REFUSAL. Approval would be granted for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein, to additional Conditions and to outstanding issues, including vehicular access, being resolved. The application would be refused if such issues could not be resolved.

11. S/0706/06/F - BASSINGBOURN-CUM-KNEESWORTH

DEFERRED to enable officers to consider consultation responses

12. S/1569/02/F - BOURN

REFUSED for the reason set out in the report from the Director of Development Services, with an Informative to the applicant relating to the welfare of the local bat population.

13. S/0667/06/F – CALDECOTE

DELEGATED APPROVAL for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein and to expiration of the 21-day notice period for advertisements and site notices, and consultation with Cambridgeshire County Council's Definitive Map Officer, the Ramblers Association and Local Access Forum.

14. S/6340/06/RM - CAMBOURNE

Delegated approval, as amended, subject to the Conditions referred to in the report from the Director of Development Services.

15. CAMBOURNE SECTION 106 AGREEMENT: TRAILER COMPOUND PROVISION

RESOLVED that no further action be taken at this stage, but that officers monitor the situation and report back to Committee if the issue remains outstanding in three months' time.

16. S/0739/06/F - HARLTON

DELEGATED APPROVAL, as amended, for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein and to consultation about the revised plans. The Decision Notice would be accompanied by an Informative concerning issues relating to drainage onto a roof of the neighbouring property.

Councillor SGM Kindersley declared a personal interest as the County Councillor for Harlton.

17. S/0625/06/RM - LONGSTANTON

DELEGATED APPROVAL subject to the Conditions referred to in the report from the Director of Development Services in order to resolve outstanding design issues in conjunction with the local Member. Should the scheme not be amended satisfactorily within the statutory timescale, the application would be refused.

Councillor A Riley declared that he was considering this matter afresh, although he could not recall whether or not he had contributed to the debate when it had been considered by Longstanton Parish Council.

18. S/0669/06/O - MELBOURN

APPROVAL for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein.

19. S/0727/06/F - MELBOURN

DELEGATED APPROVAL for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services, subject to safeguarding Conditions and to resolution of car parking issues and design of some of the dormer windows.

20. S/0498/06/F - MELDRETH

REFUSED for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services.

21. S/0600/06/F – PAPWORTH EVERARD

APPROVAL contrary to the reason set out in the report from the Director of Development Services. Following a site visit by Members, and having received advice relating to the condition of the horse chestnut tree, the Committee felt that the need for accommodation should outweigh the implications for the horse chestnut tree. Approval was subject to Conditions relating to landscaping, details of proposed cladding, and removal of the building if and when no longer required for the intended use.

22. S/0542/06/RM – PAPWORTH EVERARD

APPROVAL of Reserved Matters in accordance with outline planning permission S/0203/04/O dated 1st October 2004, for the reasons set out in the report from the Director of Development Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein and a Grampian Condition requiring the relocation of a colony of cave spiders.

23. S/0902/06/F - STEEPLE MORDEN

DELEGATED APPROVAL subject to the completion of a Section 106 Legal Agreement prior to 3rd August 2006 or, if not, the imposition of a Condition requiring the completion of such an Agreement in respect of public open space and education contribution. Approval would be subject to safeguarding Conditions, including one requiring the carrying out of an ecological survey. In this instance, there would be no requirement for affordable housing, given the benefit to the village of the provision of a local amenity area and the development costs of the scheme.

Mr S Travers-Healy from Steeple Morden Parish Council addressed the meeting.

24. S/0754/06/F - GULDEN MORDEN

DELEGATED APPROVAL for the reason set out in the report from the Director of Development Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein and the receipt of outstanding consultation responses.

25. S/0528/06/F - STAPLEFORD

Members noted that this application had been **WITHDRAWN**.

26. S/0657/06/F - WHITTLESFORD

REFUSED for the reason set out in the report from the Director of Development Services, as amended by plans date stamped 31 May 2006.

27. S/0704/06/F – WILLINGHAM

APPROVAL contrary to the recommendation contained in the report from the Director of Development Services. Following a site visit by Members, the Committee considered that the proposal accorded with Policy HG13 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004 in that it had no adverse impact on the countryside, and was not out of scale with the existing

dwelling.

Councillor Mrs P Corney declared a personal interest by virtue of the applicant being a friend of her husband.

28. S/0743/06/O - WILLINGHAM

REFUSED for the reason set out in the report from the Director of Development Services.

Councillor Mrs P Corney was not present in the Chamber during the consideration of this item.

29. APPEALS AGAINST PLANNING APPLICATIONS AND ENFORCEMENT ACTION

Members noted this information report, which had been published on the Council's website.

The Deputy Director of Development Services highlighted the summaries of recent decisions of interest.

30. DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT CIRCULAR 8/93, AWARD OF COSTS IN PLANNING AND OTHER (INCLUDING COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER) PROCEEDINGS

Members noted this information report, which had been published on the Council's website.

The Meeting ended at 3.05 p.m.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Employment Committee held on
Thursday, 22 June 2006

PRESENT: RE Barrett
Mrs SJO Doggett
RM Matthews
RT Summerfield

JD Batchelor
SM Edwards
CR Nightingale
Dr SEK van de Ven

Councillor SM Edwards in the Chair

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor RE Barrett proposed, and Councillor RM Matthews seconded, Councillor CR Nightingale as Chairman of the Employment Committee. Councillor JD Batchelor proposed, seconded by Councillor Dr SEK van de Ven, Councillor RT Summerfield as Chairman of the Employment Committee. A vote as held and on the acting Chairman's casting vote, it was

AGREED that Councillor RT Summerfield be elected Chairman of the Employment Committee for the coming year.

Councillor RT Summerfield took the Chair

3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

On the nomination of Councillor RM Matthews, seconded by Councillor Mrs SJO Doggett, and there being no further nominations, it was

AGREED that Councillor CR Nightingale be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Employment Committee for the coming year.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chairman was authorised to sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2006.

5. APPOINTMENT OF AN APPEALS PANEL

The Human Resources Manager advised the Committee of an appeal and the Chairman undertook to appoint a panel of three from amongst those Committee members who had completed the relevant training.

6. TRAINING FOR EMPLOYMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder confirmed that there was a training budget and that the Member Training Advisory Group, once appointed, would prepare a training programme.

The Meeting ended at 1.58 p.m.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Licensing Committee held on
Monday, 26 June 2006

PRESENT:	RE Barrett	Mrs PM Bear
	EW Bullman	Mrs SM Ellington
	Mrs A Elsby	R Hall
	Mrs SA Hatton	Mrs HF Kember
	RB Martlew	RM Matthews
	DC McCraith	Mrs CAED Murfitt
	A Riley	Mrs DSK Spink MBE

Also in attendance was Councillor RMA Manning, Environmental Health Portfolio Holder.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

On the proposal of Councillor Mrs CAED Murfitt, seconded by Councillor Mrs HF Kember, and there being no other nominations, it was unanimously

AGREED that Councillor RE Barrett be elected Chairman of the Committee for the coming year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

On the proposal of Councillor Mrs A Elsby, seconded by Councillor Mrs HF Kember, and there being no other nominations, it was unanimously

AGREED that Councillor R Hall be elected Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the coming year.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs HM Smith.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

5. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2006 were agreed as a correct record.

Councillor Mrs CAED Murfitt referred to advice given at the meeting held on the 23 February regarding resources in respect of hearings relating to the 2003 Licensing Act. It was confirmed that resources would be allocated from the Revenue Support Grant; notification of the actual amount to be allocated was awaited.

6. GAMBLING ACT POLICY - DRAFT

Members considered the draft Gambling Act 2005 policy and the following queries were raised:

- The definition of the different gambling machines
- Would village halls require a licence to hold bingo sessions
- Would community rooms in Sheltered Housing accommodation be affected if holding bingo sessions
- Negative elements in the policy, eg does not indicate that the Council will help or support an applicant
- Nothing in the policy to say the Council will help applicants
- Would each operator of point-to-point races require a licence
- Re Travelling Fairs, do category D machines only apply in this instance
- Why is there no regard to the licensing objectives when deciding on an application
- Guests at gaming clubs are not presently allowed to play the machines, will this change
- Is there an appeal process if a licence is refused

The responses given were as follows:

- The prize money available is banded with prizes ranging from £10 to an unlimited amount
- Not unless the prize money exceeded £2,000
- No and raffles are subject to different legislation
- The policy was based on a draft issued by LACORS
- Applicants have to first apply to apply to the Gambling Commission to say how they will promote certain areas before applying to the Council; the Council will assume that criteria has been met
- An occasional use per event which covers 96 hours would be required
- The remainder of categories are for temporary use. That paragraph may alter when the regulations come in. An annex will be attached to the policy when it is known what the regulations are
- Is included in the Act
- Not yet known. **MB to ascertain**
- Yes, to the Magistrates Court

Other points raised were noted as follows:

- The Licensing Officer was awaiting a comprehensive list of Faith Groups for consultation purposes
- Members felt there should be representation by the Police at hearings; their attendance would be requested
- Concern was expressed that the Children's Services would be unable to cope with consultation requests. Once a designated person from Children's Services had been appointed, he/she would be invited to attend the Council's training session
- Major bookmakers were preparing their own in-house rules regarding the Act; there was concern that there may be variations across the country
- Account should be taken at hearings concerning how near the gambling premises were to schools
- Endeavours would be made by the officers to reach an agreement with applicants to try to avoid a hearing

In answer to a query whether there would be a large number of applications received as a result of the Act, Members were informed that the main area for applications would be for temporary use notices, eg race nights at village halls. An estimated 50 applications might be received by this authority, compared with the 460 applications received under the 2003 Act.

Having considered the draft policy, the following amendments were made:

- Delete *will especially* at 15.1 on page 16
- Substitute the word *gambling* for *gaming* at 3.4, 4th bullet point on page 21
- Where *South Cambridgeshire District Council* is stated throughout the Policy, substitute for *This Licensing Authority*

Councillor Mrs CAED Murfitt had proof-read the draft policy prior to the meeting and once all typos had been corrected and the above amendments incorporated, it was **AGREED** that the policy be sent to all members of the Licensing Committee.

Subject to the above amendments, Licensing Committee

RECOMMEND to the Environmental Health Portfolio Holder that the draft Gambling Act Licensing Policy document be approved for consultation purposes.

7. **SUB-COMMITTEE STRUCTURE FOR DETERMINING LICENSING HEARINGS UNDER THE LICENSING ACT 2003**

The Licensing Committee **AGREED** to appoint the following Members to Chair hearings under the Licensing Act 2003:

Councillors Mrs A Elsby
R Hall
Mrs SA Hatton
Mrs HF Kember
Mrs CAED Murfitt
A Riley

Four substitutes were also appointed, these were:

Councillors EW Bullman
RB Martlew
RM Matthews
Mrs DSK Spink

It was noted that in-house training would be arranged for the appointed Chairmen.

8. **ADVICE ON MEMBER TRAINING**

Licensing Act 2003

Training in respect of hearings under the Licensing Act 2003 was required for those members new to the Licensing Committee. Councillors Mrs PM Bear, RB Martlew and Mrs DSK Spink were able to attend a training course due to be held on 28 July in Bury St Edmunds; the Licensing Committee **AGREED** that those Councillors should attend.

Gambling Act 2005

It was noted that the Licensing Officer would arrange training for all members of the Licensing Committee during the latter part of the year.

9. DECISION BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Following a recommendation from the Licensing Committee, the Environmental Health Portfolio Holder

APPROVED the draft Gambling Act Licensing Policy for consultation purposes.

The Meeting ended at 11.20 a.m.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee held on
Thursday, 15 June 2006

PRESENT: Councillor MP Howell – Chairman
Councillor R Hall – Vice-Chairman

Councillors:	RF Bryant	Mrs SM Ellington
	Mrs EM Heazell	PT Johnson
	SGM Kindersley	MJ Mason
	DC McCraith	DH Morgan
	Mrs CAED Murfitt	CR Nightingale
	Mrs HM Smith	RT Summerfield
	Dr SEK van de Ven	

Councillors Dr DR Bard, SM Edwards, Mrs A Elsby, Dr SA Harangozo, Mrs DP Roberts, Mrs DSK Spink MBE and JF Williams were in attendance, by invitation.

Officers:	Patrick Adams	Senior Democratic Services Officer
	Claire Spencer	Senior Planning Officer (Transport Policy)
	Tim Wetherfield	Head of Policy and Communication

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor RE Barrett and Andrew Lansley MP.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 April 2006 were agreed as a correct record subject to the amendment of Jo Ungar's job title to Team Leader Housing Services.

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 May 2006 were agreed as a correct record.

Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils (CALC)

The Committee agreed to invite Keith Barrand, the County Secretary of the Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils (CALC), to the meeting on 21 September 2006. Mr Barrand will give a short presentation on the aims and objectives of CALC.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors SGM Kindersley and DC McCraith declared personal interests in item 7 as members of the County Council.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

It was noted that five public questions had been received, which all related to agenda item 7 on concessionary fares. It was agreed that these questions should be dealt with under agenda item 7.

It was understood that the large number of letters received by Members on concessionary fares was testament to the importance of this issue to the District's residents.

5. DRAFT AGENDA PROGRAMME AND PROGRAMME OF KEY DECISIONS**Presentation by portfolio holders**

The Committee agreed that no more than two portfolio holders should give presentations at each meeting.

CRB Checks and protection of children and vulnerable adults

The Committee agreed to combine its discussion on the possible development of a policy on CRB checks with an examination of the Council's policy on children and vulnerable adults.

Financial Management Strategy

It was suggested that an examination of the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy should take place after Cabinet had discussed it in October 2006.

Lettings Policy

It was agreed that discussion on the Council's letting policy should be delayed to allow the new portfolio holder to gain more experience in the role.

Road use

The Committee agreed to add an item onto the agenda programme on the overuse of roads in the District, although it was noted that this was not a responsibility of the Council.

Recommendations of the Sub-Group

The Committee agreed to discuss the recommendations of the Sub-Group at its next meeting.

The Committee **NOTED** the agenda programme.

6. APPOINTMENT OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBER OF HEALTH SCRUTINY PANEL

Councillors Mrs EM Hezell and Mrs SM Ellington both volunteered to represent the Council on the Health Scrutiny Panel in the absence of Councillor RE Barrett.

A vote was taken and Councillor Mrs Hezell was duly elected as the substitute member on the Health Scrutiny Panel.

7. CONCESSIONARY FARES

The Chairman introduced this item on the implementation of the concessionary fares scheme by welcoming County Councillor John Reynolds and Mark Kemp, Director of Highways and Access from the County Council. County Councillor John Reynolds explained that both he and Mr Kemp supported the report written by the Senior Planning Policy Officer (Transport).

Implementation of the new scheme

Councillor Mrs DSK Spink, portfolio holder for planning and economic development, stated that the Council had received government guidance on the new scheme on 22 November 2005, with instructions to inform the bus operators of the arrangements for the new scheme by 1 December 2005. This had been a considerable challenge as the scheme affects 56 bus operators. Councillor Mrs Spink concluded that the Government were responsible for the current unsatisfactory situation as they had imposed an unfair system with insufficient time for consultation and an inequitable apportionment of funding. It was understood that due to the timescales imposed by the Government, the

District Council's budget had been set prior to the announcement of the detailed Government funding of the scheme.

Councillor Mrs Spink accepted that the new scheme was inferior to the half-fare scheme that it replaced. She concluded that the new scheme would run for 12 months and it was unlikely that there would be any major changes to the scheme during that time. County Councillor Reynolds explained that the County Council had lobbied the Government in an effort to secure a similar scheme to the one that operated in Wales and Scotland, which allowed free travel across council boundaries.

It was noted that the scheme operating in the District provided a larger concession than the statutory minimum and that the Leaders of all the District Councils in the County would be making a joint statement. It was understood that a meeting was due to take place between the Council and the bus operators later this month.

Number of villages without a bus service

Councillor Mrs EM Heazell asked how many villages in the District had no bus service and which villages were eligible for a multi-user saver ticket. The Senior Planning Policy Officer (Transport) agreed to find out the answers to these questions and report back. It was suggested that all villages had some form of bus service, but for some villages this was only one bus a week.

Working with the bus operators

County Councillor Reynolds warned that a requirement of the scheme was to ensure that the bus operators neither profited nor incurred any loss. This meant that the bus operators could claim "additional costs" for setting up and operating the new scheme from district authorities. The total amount for these costs was not known. However, it was noted that the current scheme would end on 31st March 2008, when a national scheme would be implemented, so fears of year on year costs were unfounded. The Government had not specified what would replace the existing system.

The County's Director of Highways and Access explained that ticket information from bus operators would be forthcoming and would be shared with the other councils in the County. This would provide an indication of whether the estimated cost of the scheme was accurate. He explained that the statutory minimum imposed by the Government was for free travel within the District after 9:30am. It was noted that the District Council was providing a service above the statutory minimum. He assured the Committee that the County Council was working closely with the operators to get a uniform service throughout the District. It was understood that the bus companies were commercial organisations and local authorities could not dictate bus routes or services.

Councillor CR Nightingale asked whether action could be taken to ensure that all the bus companies implemented the scheme in the same way. County Councillor Reynolds explained that bus operator staff had been trained and any reports of bus operators failing to implement the agreed system were dealt with on a case by case basis.

Allocation of funding from the Government

In response to questioning County Councillor Reynolds suggested that the Government should have awarded funding directly to the County Councils, as the authority responsible for transport. He added that in his experience Government funding never matched the cost of the service to be implemented. It was suggested that the grant money from the Government should have been "ring-fenced" for concessionary fares. County Councillor Reynolds explained that this would require primary legislation, which would need to be introduced as a bill in parliament. The earliest this could happen was October 2006.

Work by the consultant

The consultant employed by the County Council had estimated that it would cost the District Council £559,000 to implement the scheme for this year. The Senior Planning Policy Officer (Transport) agreed to examine why the cost of a free countywide scheme was over three times the cost of a half-fare scheme, when layman's logic suggested it should only cost twice as much. In response to questioning County Councillor Reynolds praised the work carried out by the consultant, who had done his best with the information available.

Park & Ride

County Councillor Reynolds explained that Park and Ride carried over 1.6 million fare-paying passengers in 2005 and he remained committed to promoting public transport in Cambridge, as an alternative to travelling by car. It was understood that nationally some Park and Ride sites had free parking whilst others charged for the parking but had free bus travel.

It was noted that the bus stop for Trumpington Park and Ride was just outside the District's boundary.

Additional costs

It was understood that the local authorities were liable for the additional costs from the bus operators arising as a direct result of the implementation of the new scheme. The Committee expressed concern at how much this will cost the Council; the current cost was £21,000 and Stagecoach, the largest operator in the District, had not yet claimed.

Compiling statistics on concessionary fare usage.

It was suggested that many bus users were not bothering to use their concessionary fare bus passes when it offered no discount. It was therefore possible that the actual costs of implementing a county-wide scheme were being hidden. It was therefore suggested that all concessionary bus pass holders show their passes, even if it offered no discount, as this would allow accurate figures on concessionary bus pass use to be compiled. However, there was no evidence that the Government would use this information when awarding funding for future schemes.

Funding from parish councils

In response to a question from Ickleton Parish Council, Councillor Mrs Spink stated that while it would be possible in principle for parish councils to subsidise the concessionary fare scheme, in practice it would require all 101 parish councils to contribute £5,280 each to provide free travel for all residents in the District. It was very unlikely that all parishes would agree to such a scheme and it was equally unlikely that the bus operators would agree to a piecemeal scheme which offered different deals to residents of different parishes.

County Council budgets

In response to questioning County Councillor Reynolds explained that the County Council's efficiency savings of approximately £1 million, out of a total budget of £511 million, would not be spent on subsidising the concessionary fares scheme. He added that the County Council's reserves were well below average.

Calculating funding

On the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Ian Tyes from the COPE Transport Committee, addressed the Committee. He expressed doubt over the accuracy of the consultant's figures in table 1 on page 18 of the agenda and doubts over the fairness of the allocation of funding to each district. Councillor Mrs Spink stated that the local authorities did not

know how the Government had calculated the apportionment of funds to the local district authorities and she encouraged all interested parties to write to the Government to express their concerns over the scheme.

Alternative scheme

Mr Tyes suggested that all eligible residents should be given a free week's bus pass. However, it was understood that the local authorities currently had no option but to work within the parameters of the existing scheme.

In conclusion Councillor Mrs Spink stated that the lack of funding from the Government meant that the Council was unable to provide the level of service that it wanted to give.

The Committee **RECOMMENDED** that

- (a) The County Council continue to work with each district authority and start to look ahead to next year with the aim of implementing of a county-wide scheme under the auspices of the County Council.
- (b) All stakeholders continue to liaise with central government, in particular with regard to the allocation of funding, to attempt to implement a county-wide scheme.

The Committee **AGREED** that the appropriate officer liaise with Councillor Dr SEK van de Ven regarding a possible rewording of the FAQs on concessionary fares scheme displayed on the Council's web-site.

The Chairman thanked County Councillor John Reynolds and Mark Kemp, the County Council's Director of Highways and Access, for their attendance and comprehensive responses to the questions asked.

8. MONITORING THE EXECUTIVE

The Senior Democratic Services Officer presented this item by explaining that the Scrutiny Sub-Group had recommended that the Committee agree to a formal monitoring of the executive, with two members, ideally from different political groups, monitoring each portfolio. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman would deputise in the absence of one of the monitors. It was envisaged that the monitors would attend portfolio holder meetings.

Councillor DH Morgan expressed his opposition to this recommendation and asked for the notes of the Sub-Group meeting to be amended to register this fact.

Cabinet opposition to the scheme

Councillor Mrs DP Roberts, housing portfolio holder, asked how the monitoring of portfolios would benefit the Council and expressed concern that individual monitors could seek to unfairly influence the Committee by reporting issues out of context. She asserted that both monitors should attend portfolio holder meetings to prevent misrepresentation. Councillor Mrs DSK Spink, planning and economic development portfolio holder, informed the Committee that attending portfolio holder and Cabinet meetings was only part of the duties for a member of the executive. Councillor SM Edwards, resources, staffing, information and customer services portfolio holder, welcomed the attendance of non-executive members at his portfolio holder meetings, but could see no reason why a formal monitoring system should be introduced by the Committee.

Members of the Committee suggested the following benefits for a monitoring system:

- It suited the new political situation, with one group in opposition
- It was common practice in other authorities
- It would help to ensure that the work of every portfolio holder is scrutinised
- It would help to educate each monitor on the work of the portfolio holders
- The monitors would help to ensure that the Committee is better informed
- The empowerment of the monitors could lead to future positions on the Cabinet

Other Members of the Committee made the following comments against the Sub-Group's recommendations:

- It should be the responsibilities of each political group, not the Committee, to appoint monitors
- All members were able to attend portfolio holder and cabinet meetings
- The Weekly Bulletin informs Members of all the executive decisions taken
- The call-in procedure could be invoked if more discussion was deemed necessary
- A formal monitoring arrangement would constrain Scrutiny members on what they could scrutinise.

A vote was taken and on the deciding vote of the Chairman, after 6 votes were received both for and against the recommendation, the Committee

AGREED

- (a) to appoint two monitors to each portfolio, with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to deputise in the event of absence of the monitor.
- (b) That if possible the two members should be of different political groups
- (c) The decision to allocate the monitoring roles should be deferred to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

Members of the Committee were asked to contact the Senior Democratic Services Officer to express their preferences regarding the monitoring roles.

9. PRESENTATION FROM THE LEADER

The Chairman invited Councillor Dr DR Bard to give a ten-minute presentation on the challenges that he expects to face as Leader for the coming year. This was followed by a question and answer session.

Transformation Project

Councillor Bard stated that the duties of second tier managers were being reviewed and the Council needed to ensure that following the implementation of the project it continued to deliver value for money services.

Financial Management

Councillor Bard stated that the Council needed to try and improve its financial management. In response to questioning he explained that he had mentioned the audit score of 2 out of 4 for Financial Management as an example of the importance of this issue and he quoted a recent £339,000 underspend to illustrate this point.

Public Opinion

Councillor Bard expressed his concern regarding the cynicism of residents for the political process, as recent research showed that less people felt that they could influence local decision making now, than three years ago. He stated that communication had undoubtedly improved and praised the Communication Team for the production of the South Cambs magazine and the other work they carried out to

achieve. However, it appeared that better communication had led to an increase in expectations. He concluded that it was imperative that local people were included in the decision making process and cited the example of Green Road, Sawston where local residents felt that they had not been kept properly informed. He hoped that this breakdown in communication would not re-occur.

Councillor Mrs Heazell, as the former housing portfolio holder who had been involved with the decision at Green Road Sawston, asked for an apology from Councillor Bard, because nothing had been authorised before the Sawston residents had been consulted at a number of group meeting. Councillor Bard suggested that there had been a misunderstanding and explained that he was concerned with the public perception of the district's residents. He concluded that on this issue the public perception was that they had not been properly consulted on this matter.

Contact Centre

Councillor Bard recognised the Contact Centre as an effective way of communicating with residents. In response to questioning, he suggested that communication between officers in the Contact Centre and officers at the main office, needed to be improved.

Performance Indicators

Councillor Bard appealed to the Committee to assist the executive by scrutinising performance management. This task could become easier if the number of performance indicators was reduced.

Recycling

Councillor Bard praised the Council's record on recycling and suggested that more partnership working on this issue was required.

Sustainable Development

Councillor Bard stated that the Council should focus on the ways in which energy efficient features could be installed in new houses. In response to questioning he expressed the hope that this was an issue where there would be cross-party support.

Councillor Bard concluded by thanking the staff for their efforts.

10. TO NOTE THE DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee noted the future dates of the Committee:

2006: July 20, August 17, September 21, October 19, November 16 & December 21

2007: January 18, February 15, March 15, April 19 & May 17.

All meetings to be held at 2pm.

The Meeting ended at 5.50 p.m.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Audit Panel held on
Friday, 30 June 2006

PRESENT: Councillor MP Howell

Councillors: RE Barrett
RF Bryant
R Hall
SGM Kindersley
DC McCraith
Mrs HM Smith
RT Summerfield

Officers:	Adrian Burns	Chief Accountant
	Greg Harlock	Finance and Resources Director
	Paul Swift	Policy and Performance Review Manager

Auditors:	Mike Clarkson	Deloitte and Touche (Internal Audit)
	John Golding	Robson Rhodes (External Audit)
	Nigel Smith	Audit Commission

Councillors Dr DR Bard, JD Batchelor, SM Edwards, Mrs DP Roberts and Mrs DSK Spink MBE were in attendance, by invitation.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Councillor RT Summerfield nominated and Councillor Mrs HM Smith seconded Councillor SGM Kindersley for Chairman. Councillor RF Bryant nominated and Councillor RE Barrett seconded Councillor MP Howell as Chairman. A vote was taken and Councillor Howell was duly elected as Chairman.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2006 was accepted as a correct record.

3. APPROVAL OF STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS 2005/06

The Finance and Resources Director presented this item on the Statement of Accounts for 2005/06. He apologised to those members who had only just received their copy of the Statement of Accounts, but he thanked the Chief Accountant and his team for their sterling work in closing the accounts by 30 June, in accordance with the Government's new deadlines. This was the third year in a row that the deadline had been brought forward a month but it was expected that the deadline would remain the end of June for future years.

It was understood that the out-turn figures for the year would be reported to Cabinet in July in the traditional format, arranged by portfolio and compared to budget.

Corrections

The time pressures involved meant that there were a few errors that required correction:

- On page 36, the £6,697,010 for 2005/06 for "Other operating cash payments" under the heading of Cash Outflows was amended to £14,275,659 and the figure for "Cash received for goods and services" under the heading of Cash Inflows

was amended from £579,260 to £8,157,909.

- On page 42, the figure for "Employee Car Loans" was amended from £0 to £28,301, the figure for "Staff Salaries and Wages" was amended from £0 to £683 and the figure for Sundry Debtors was amended from £1,615,888 to £1,586,904.
- In the first sentence on page 49, the word "increase" was amended to "decrease".

The first two errors were re-classifications such that the subsequent totals remained the same.

Underspend

The capping of the Council Tax had led to the re-estimating of the budget originally approved in February 2005. The actual outturn for the General Fund was, therefore, compared to the revised estimate and there had been an underspend of £647,000 for 2005/06 in the amount needed from balances.

On the Housing Revenue Account, the out-turn was compared to original estimate. The DLO deficit of £185,000 had been reduced to £61,000, which was an underspend of £124,000.

In response to questioning the Chief Accountant explained that the £117,000 underspend in capital charges was due to more grant money being returned to the General Fund than expected.

Interest accrued and money in reserves

It was noted that the Council's investments had produced £1.8 million in interest. £6.2 million remained in the Council's general fund reserves while the reserves available for capital expenditure were £20.1 million.

Public questioning

It was understood that 29 August 2006 had been set aside as the day for the public to ask questions to external audit on the Statement of Accounts.

Reconciliation work

In response to questioning the Finance and Resources Director stated that in his view the Council would never have the capacity to ensure a full division of responsibilities or to complete all reconciliation work by the due dates at all times.

Orchard System

It was understood that out of the 14 outstanding recommendations for the Orchard System, 7 had been implemented, 4 were partially implemented and 3 were still to be done. The outstanding recommendations were now expected to be carried out, following the recent appointment of a new Property Services Manager. Councillor Mrs DP Roberts, the housing portfolio holder, expressed her satisfaction with the improvements in the DLO and expected that the newly appointed Property Services Manager would implement the outstanding recommendations.

Stock

It was understood that currently the DLO still had some stock and the Finance and Resources Director agreed to determine whether the figure of £0 for current value of stock referred to the DLO or DSO.

Pensions

The Chief Accountant explained that the £2 million increase in the pension deficit was due to the increase in liabilities which more than offset the increase in the value of the

assets, the increase in liabilities being due to the lower discount rate.

Provisions

It was agreed that the last sentence on page 20, regarding provisions, should be reworded for the sake of clarification.

Collection Fund

The Finance and Resources Director explained that the balance on the Collection Fund for the collection of Council Tax would be shared between the precepting authorities, proportionate to their precepts. It was noted that parish councils did not share in the balance.

Equity Share Housing

The Finance and Resources Director explained that he had met with a senior Civil Servants regarding equity share housing. It was expected with effect from 1st October 2006 pooling requirements for capital receipts from equity share housing would be eligible for reduction by the amount spent on affordable housing.

On the recommendation of the Finance and Resources Director, the Audit Panel **APPROVED** the 2005/06 Statement of Accounts, subject to audit, with no material changes.

4. STRATEGIC AUDIT PLAN 2006-09

Mike Clarkson introduced this item on the audit plan for 2006/07 to 2008/09. It was understood that the plan had been discussed by the Council's Management Team. The level of risk was determined by the robustness of the Council's processes and not necessarily the importance of the service.

Mike Clarkson agreed to find out why 5 audit days had been allocated for Outside Bodies for 2008/09.

5. ANNUAL AUDIT PLAN 2006/07

Audit Panel **AGREED** the 2006/07 Annual Audit Plan.

6. HEAD OF INTERNAL AUDIT OPINION 2005/06

Mike Clarkson introduced this item on the Head of Internal Audit Opinion 2005/06 by explaining that the purpose of the report was to meet the requirements set out in the CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit. It was understood that the increase in the number of limited assurance systems was higher than in 2004/05, which was to be expected following the Council's review of the way it delivered its services after the capping of its Council Tax.

Significant Control Issues

The Finance and Resources Director reviewed the 14 key issues raised by Internal Audit for 2005/06. He suggested that it was unnecessary to retain all budget working papers as the relevant records would be kept on computer. It was recognised that the segregation of key functions would not be possible without the recruitment of new staff but it was accepted that Internal Audit should continue to highlight this potential risk.

Audit Needs Assessment

Mike Clarkson agreed to ascertain whether the Audit Needs Assessment carried out in March 2001 had been updated.

Percentage of responses to draft reports on time

It was understood that the Finance and Resources Director ensured that staff prioritised their work to ensure that draft reports would be responded to if urgent. However, urgent work would take priority if the responses to draft reports was non-urgent. This explained the actual performance of 42% compared to the target of 95%. Mike Clarkson agreed with this assessment. The panel noted this but decided the target for this performance indicator should not be altered.

7. ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER 2004/05

John Golding presented the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter for 2004/05. He introduced Nigel Smith, Relationship Manager from the Audit Commission. John Golding summarised the report. He agreed that the date of the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter should be included on the title page.

Planning performance

In response to questioning Nigel Smith explained that the Council needed to balance the speed with which it processed planning applications with the quality of the work carried out. It was understood that the Council had remained in the lower quartile regarding the speed of processing planning applications for both 2003/04 and 2004/05. Councillor Bard reported that action had been taken to improve this aspect of the Council's performance.

Definition of littering

Mike Clarkson agreed to find out whether the "littered land" described in paragraph 34 of the report referred to fly tipping or detritus, which would be expected on rural roads.

Performance management

Nigel Smith explained that the Council needed to develop a consistent approach to performance management. Councillor Kindersley suggested that it was the responsibility of each portfolio holder to ensure that this was done. John Golding explained that external audit would work with management team to develop an action plan to address the recommendations made in this report.

Grant claims

It was understood that a qualification letter was issued due to a housing benefit grant claim where the Council had been unable to give a full analysis.

Audit and inspection fee table

It was noted that the table on page 57 of the agenda was incomplete, as an extra row on certification claims and returns was required.

The Panel **NOTED** the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2004/05.

8. AUDIT AND INSPECTION PLAN 2006/07

John Golding presented the Audit and Inspection Plan for 2006/07.

CPA

Nigel Smith stated that he expected that the pilot on the CPA framework for District Councils would be complete by August 2006. He also expected that the new methodology would not see the need for an immediate revised corporate assessment for this Council.

Audit fees

Councillor Summerfield highlighted the significant increase in the audit and inspection fees. John Golding explained that the Government set the parameters for what external auditors could charge Councils and the charge would be in the middle of those parameters for 2006/07. He asserted that given the pressures on the Council's services following capping it would be irresponsible of the external auditors to lower the charge as this would lower the external audit function to an unacceptable level.

John Golding agreed to discuss with the Finance and Resources Director the possibility of altering the dates of the quarterly payments of the audit fee to three months later than currently scheduled.

9. PROGRESS REPORT ON 2005/06 AUDIT TO DATE

John Golding gave an update on the 2005/06 audit and he circulated a progress report.

The Policy and Review Manager explained that due to a lack of staff resources external audit had been asked to carry out the work required for a self-assessment of the Council's services.

10. ORAL UPDATE ON PROGRESS TOWARDS FINALISING USE OF RESOURCES ASSESSMENT AND DIRECTION OF TRAVEL ASSESSMENT

The Policy and Review Manager circulated a report on the Council's recent audit and inspections. He explained that Management Team had decided that the Council should focus on:

- Clear corporate priorities which reflect the needs of the District
- Quantified targets which will deliver the priorities
- Programmes, strategies or actions to deliver the targets
- Resource strategies to underpin the programmes or actions
- Performance Management systems and culture

In response to a question about comparing the costs of South Cambs with other councils, the Policy and Review Manager commented that national comparative information was available from the point which enabled councils to assess their costs. Alternatively the Daventry Group, which consists of similar sized local authorities, could provide a more accurate indication in certain areas of service, but not a national basis.

In response to questioning the Finance and Resources Director explained that the Council Leader had declared stronger budgetary controls to be one of the Council's priorities and as a consequence resources would be directed to improve the authority's score on the Use of Resources Judgement from a 2 to a 3.

11. EXPOSURE OF INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE TO COMPETITION

Councillor RT Summerfield declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item, as he receives a pension from Deloitte and Touche: the Head of Legal Services had advised that this constituted a personal interest in discussions involving internal audit but that a prejudicial interest should be declared on any discussions of a tender from Deloitte and Touche for the Council's contract for internal audit. Councillor Summerfield left the meeting and took no part in the discussion. Mike Clarkson from Internal Audit also left the meeting.

The Finance and Resources Director presented this report which invited the Panel to

comment on the proposal to go out to tender to select the provider of the internal audit service.

It was understood that Deloitte had been appointed five years previously following a formal tender exercise. The contract had been for four years and was then extended for a further two years to 31st March 2007 without going out to tender.

The Finance and Resources Director explained that all tenders would be evaluated on cost and quality and the proposed evaluation model was shared with the Panel. It was understood that the possibility of going into partnership with another local authority was being considered.

Councillors Edwards and Spink spoke in favour of going out to tender and the Audit Panel formally endorsed this approach.

The Meeting ended at 12.55 p.m.
