



# SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING  
THURSDAY, 26 OCTOBER 2006

REPORTS AND MINUTES

South Cambridgeshire Hall  
Cambourne Business Park  
Cambourne, Cambridge  
CB23 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 (as amended) 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, 26 OCTOBER 2006**

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

**DATED WEDNESDAY 18 OCTOBER 2006**

**GJ HARLOCK**  
Chief Executive

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**AGENDA**

1. **APOLOGIES**  
Apologies have been received from Councillors Mrs PS Corney and Mrs DSK Spink.
  
2. **MINUTES**  
To authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the meetings held on 28 September 2006 as correct records.  

**(Pages 1 - 14)**
  
3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
  
4. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**
  
5. **REPORT OF THE RETURNING OFFICER - THE ABINGTONS WARD BY-ELECTION**  
To advise of the outcome of the by-election for The Abingtons Ward held on Thursday 19 October 2006.
  
6. **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND THE PUBLIC**
  
- 6 (a) **From Councillor Dr SEK van de Ven to the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder**  
In view of the themes emerging from the excellent 'Sustainable Community Strategy Workshop' held earlier this month, will the new Community Strategy be wide-ranging and aspirational, or will it focus on what is realistically achievable for South Cambs residents, given the Council's severe shortage of funds?
  
- 6 (b) **From Councillor SGM Kindersley to the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder**  
What steps are being taken to minimise the impact of a major increase in householder planning applications for domestic wind turbines given that they are now

available from companies such as B&Q for £1498 inclusive? As they require planning consent is there any developing policy to fastrack the applications and/or reduce the planning application fee to encourage sustainability?

**7. PETITIONS**

To note all petitions received since the last Council meeting.

**8. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**8 (a) ARBURY CAMPS: Section 106 Agreement**

Cabinet, having considered that there was not any urgency to make the payments and preferring that a formal legal agreement be drafted between the two authorities, **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that a decision be **DEFERRED** until after such time as Anglian Water adopted the drain.

**8 (b) Information & Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy 2006-2009 (Cabinet 10 October 2006)**

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that:

- (a) the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy 2006-2009 be adopted; and
- (b) authority be delegated to the Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder and Chief Executive for approval of any subsequent changes.

*Cabinet requested that inconsistencies regarding staffing figures be investigated and the detailed financial background provided. This information is being prepared and will be circulated to Members in due course.*

**8 (c) Thatch and Thatching in South Cambridgeshire**

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the document *Thatch and thatching in South Cambridgeshire* be adopted as Council policy.

**8 (d) Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2011: Draft**

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** approval of the posts previously approved in principle, with effect from 1 January 2007 where appropriate, otherwise from 1 April 2007.

**9. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO THE SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

Following the resignation of Councillor PT Johnson Council is requested to appoint a Member of the Conservative Group to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, to accord with the requirements of political balance.

**RECOMMENDATION**

That Council appoint a Member of the Conservative Group to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee to accord with the requirements of political balance.

**10. PROGRAMME OF COUNCIL MEETINGS FOR THE 2007-2008 CIVIC YEAR**

To determine the programme of Council meetings for 2007/08.

(Pages 15 - 18)

**11. REPORTS OF MEETINGS**

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

**11 (a) Cabinet, 12 October 2006**

(Pages 19 - 26)

**11 (b) Licensing Committee (2003 Act) 10 August 2006 \***

(Pages 27 - 32)

**11 (c) Licensing Committee, 19 September 2006 \***

(Pages 33 - 34)

**11 (d) Planning Committee, 6 September 2006 \***

(Pages 35 - 40)

**11 (e) Audit Panel, 14 September 2006**

(Pages 41 - 44)

**11 (f) Scrutiny and Overview Committee, 21 September 2006**

(Pages 45 - 52)

**12. QUESTIONS ON JOINT MEETINGS**

The draft minutes of the 11 September 2006 meeting of the South Cambridgeshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee were published in the [Councillors' Weekly Bulletin on 27 September 2006](#).

The draft minutes of the 18 September 2006 meeting of the South Cambridgeshire Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership were published in the [Councillors' Weekly Bulletin on 11 October 2006](#).

**13. UPDATES FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

**14. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS**

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

<b>Date</b>	<b>Venue / Event</b>
27 September	Opening of Meldreth Community Room
1 October	High Sheriff's Justices Service, Ely Cathedral
6 October	Best Kept Gardens Award Ceremony, Scotsdales
7 October	Cambridgeshire Red Cross AGM and Awards Ceremony, Cambridge
13 October	Visit to SCDC Hall of representatives from Poggio Mirteto, Italy, twinned with Shelford. Organised by Cllr Nightingale
14 October	Service to commemorate the 90 <sup>th</sup> anniversary of the South Cambridgeshire Regiment's storming of the Schwaben Redoubt, Ely Cathedral
16 October	Opening of Nene Housing Society Southern Region Housing Office, Cambourne
17 October	Visit to East Cambridgeshire District Council



## **GUIDANCE NOTES FOR VISITORS TO SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE HALL**

Whilst the District Council endeavours to ensure that you come to no harm when visiting South Cambridgeshire Hall you also have a responsibility to ensure that you do not risk your own or others' safety.

### **Security**

Visitors should report to the main reception desk where they will be asked to sign a register. Visitors will be given a visitor's pass that must be worn at all times whilst in the building. Please remember to sign out and return your pass before you leave. The visitors' book is used as a register in cases of emergency and building evacuation.

### **Emergency and Evacuation**

In the event of a fire you will hear a continuous alarm. Evacuate the building using the nearest escape route; from the Council Chamber or Mezzanine viewing gallery this would be via the staircase just outside the door. Go to the assembly point at the far side of the staff car park.

Do not use the lifts to exit the building. If you are unable to negotiate stairs by yourself, the emergency staircase landings are provided with fire refuge areas, which afford protection for a minimum of 1.5 hours. Press the alarm button and wait for assistance from the Council fire wardens or the fire brigade.

**Do not** re-enter the building until the officer in charge or the fire brigade confirms that it is safe to do so.

### **First Aid**

If someone feels unwell or needs first aid, please alert a member of staff.

### **Access for People with Disabilities**

All meeting rooms are accessible to wheelchair users. There are disabled toilet facilities on each floor of the building. Hearing loops and earphones are available from reception and can be used in all meeting rooms.

### **Toilets**

Public toilets are available on each floor of the building next to the lift.

### **Recording of Business**

Unless specifically authorised by resolution, no audio and / or visual or photographic recording in any format is allowed at any meeting of the Council, the executive (Cabinet), or any committee or sub-committee of the Council or the executive.

### **Banners / Placards / Etc.**

No member of the public shall be allowed to bring into or display at any Council meeting any banner, placard, poster or other similar item. The Chairman may require any such item to be removed.

### **Disturbance by Public**

If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Chairman will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the Chairman will order their removal from the meeting room. If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Chairman may call for that part to be cleared.

### **Smoking**

The Council operates a NO SMOKING policy.

### **Food and Drink**

Vending machines and a water dispenser are available on the ground floor near the lifts. There shall be no food and drink in the Council Chamber.

### **Mobile Phones**

Please ensure that your phone is set on silent / vibrate mode during meetings.



**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the Council held on  
Thursday, 28 September 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, AN Berent, NCF Bolitho, RF Bryant, EW Bullman, BR Burling, NN Cathcart, JP Chatfield, NS Davies, 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, Mrs HF Kember, SGM Kindersley, Mrs JE Lockwood, RMA Manning, RB Martlew, MJ Mason, RM Matthews, DC McCraith, DH Morgan, CR Nightingale, EJ Pateman, JA Quinlan, A Riley, Mrs DP Roberts, NJ Scarr, Mrs HM Smith, Mrs DSK Spink MBE, RT Summerfield, Mrs VM Trueman, Dr SEK van de Ven, Mrs BE Waters, JF Williams and NIC Wright

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor TD Bygott, Mrs PS Corney, Mrs SJO Doggett, R Hall, PT Johnson, R Page, RJ Turner and TJ Wotherspoon.

**1. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2006 were confirmed as a correct record to be signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

**Formal Recognition of an Opposition** (Minute 7c)

Councillors CR Nightingale and NIC Wright had voted in favour of the proposal.

**Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 2004/05** (Minute 11)

“...the auditors could charge up to +/- **30%** of the mid-range. The Council’s **external** audit fees were 3% above the mid-range figure...”

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

Councillor Dr DR Bard declared a personal interest in item 6(d), Climate Change Group, as the courses he taught through the Open University included modules on climate change.

Councillor Dr SA Harangozo declared a personal interest in item 6(d), Climate Change Group, as a scientist employed by the government to do work on climate change.

Councillor Mrs SA Hatton declared a personal interest in item 6(d), Climate Change Group, as her son was employed in climate change research.

Councillor SGM Kindersley declared a personal interest in item 11(a), Notice of Motion standing in the name of Councillor NJ Scarr, as his clients included branch operators of banks and building societies.

Councillor Mrs DP Roberts declared a personal interest in item 11(b), Notice of motion standing in the names of Councillors Mrs DSK Spink and Dr DR Bard, as her brother-in-

law was a doctor at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.

Councillor Mrs DSK Spink declared a personal interest item 11(b), Notice of motion standing in the names of Councillors Mrs DSK Spink and Dr DR Bard, as her husband had been the first Chairman of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.

### **3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

#### **Chartered Institute of Public Relations PRide Awards East Anglia**

The Council's PR team had been the only candidate shortlisted for the best small PR team award, the Environmental Health section's "Scores on the Doors" had been one of three candidates shortlisted for the award for best low budget campaign, and Communications Officer Kelly Quigley was one of two finalists for the best young communicator of the year award.

#### **Chariots of Fire**

The SCDC team had finished 32<sup>nd</sup> out of 385 entries, the highest placement of any local authority team. Runners could still receive sponsorship money, which was being raised for the East Anglian Air Ambulance.

#### **Health and Safety**

The Chairman congratulated Health and Safety Advisor Lawrence Green for the 97% pass rate for attendees from all departments who had taken their Level 1 Health and Safety at Work certification.

#### **South Cambs Golf Society**

The member/officer golf society had finished its 2006 season with David Hill, Accountant, as Society Champion and Councillor SM Edwards winning the last event.

#### **Service First**

The customer service standards would be launched on Monday 2 October 2006. The Executive Director had organised a briefing for members in the Monkfield Room at 2 pm on Monday 23 October.

#### **Corporate Governance Inspection**

Members were reminded of the briefing at 2 pm on Friday 29 September in the Council Chamber.

### **4. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND THE PUBLIC**

#### **4 (a) From Councillor Mrs A Elsby to the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Mrs A Elsby asked, "Does the arrangement for free bus transport for the elderly relate from Gamlingay into Bedfordshire?"

Councillor Mrs DSK Spink, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder, explained that there had to be a curb on how far the arrangements could be extended and that the service could not reach as far as Bedford. The partnership between authorities had done the best work possible within the financial restrictions, but a nation-wide, rather than county-wide, scheme was needed. The authorities were investigating the government proposals for free travel from 2008. She thanked Claire Spencer, Senior Planning Officer (Transport Policy), and the Planning Policy team for their work to include peripheral towns such as Newmarket, Royston, Haverhill, Saffron Walden and

Biggleswade.

Councillor Mrs Elsby urged authorities to continue to work towards the inclusion of Bedford in the scheme.

**4 (b) From Councillor SGM Kindersley to the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder**

Councillor SGM Kindersley asked, "What plans are in place to mitigate against the consequences of the loss of the Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) and what actions are being taken to prepare a clear exit strategy from reliance upon PDG?"

Councillor Mrs DSK Spink, Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder, outlined the background to the PDG and the posts it funded. She confirmed that the Council had sufficient revenue to meet costs until a point in the 2007/08 financial year, and, with judicious financial planning, would be able to meet costs to the end of the 2009/10 financial year. A government consultation paper had said that the PDG probably would end this year and that if this were the case there may be an increase in fees for planning applications, charges for services and fewer site visits made. The worst-case scenario would be a government increase in planning fees to cover the actual costs: there would be difficult decisions in the future and officers already were examining ways to replace the PDG. She agreed to discuss specific details with Councillor Kindersley after the meeting.

**4 (c) From Councillor JP Chatfield to the Environmental Health Portfolio Holder**

Councillor JP Chatfield asked, "Are there any plans to increase the collection of plastics?" He explained that his question arose due to the lack of facilities in Histon and Impington.

Councillor RMA Manning, Environmental Health Portfolio Holder, explained that, whilst he supported increasing the number of locations for plastics recycling collection, realistically it was unlikely that the Council would have the resources to do so. Informal discussions had been undertaken with neighbouring authorities, but the necessary funding might not be available even through partnership.

**4 (d) From Councillor Mrs A Elsby to the Environmental Health Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Mrs A Elsby asked, "With reference to the plastics collection contract, how is the contractor's performance monitored and what steps are taken if the contract is not fulfilled?" She added that plastics recycling facilities, particularly those in Gamlingay and Swavesey, were not being emptied regularly.

Councillor RMA Manning, Environmental Health Portfolio Holder, explained that the Contracts Officer currently had responsibility for monitoring the collections and relied on updates from the street cleaning team and councillors. He confirmed that the Council had been disappointed with the recent performance of the contractors, and had mentioned this in discussions with the contractors, but although the contract was renewable annually the Council had not yet found another contractor interested in tendering.

**4 (e) From Councillor Dr SA Harangozo to the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Dr SA Harangozo asked, "When will SCDC be signing the Nottingham

Declaration 2?" He added that his question arose from discussions at the July Scrutiny and Overview Committee meeting.

Councillor JA Hockney, Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder, explained that a report to Cabinet would be forthcoming once the Strategic Sustainability Officer post had been filled. He reminded members that the Council had signed the first Nottingham Declaration.

**4 (f) From Councillor Mrs HM Smith to the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Mrs HM Smith asked, "I would like to congratulate the Conservation and Sustainability sections on the Climate Plan and the small brochure which came out this month. Could the Portfolio Holder please tell me what progress has been made towards replacing the Strategic Development Officer who has done such a sterling job on this aspect of the Council's policies?"

Councillor JA Hockney, Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder, confirmed that the brochure would be made available to parish councils upon request to the Head of Policy and Communication. The Strategic Sustainability Officer post had been advertised in various publications, including the Councillors' Bulletin, and interviews would be held during October. In the interim, other officers were covering the duties of this post as best they could within limited resources.

**4 (g) From Ms D Bryce to the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder**

Ms D Bryce asked, "Can there be a specific reference in the biodiversity strategy to the need to protect traditional old orchards, especially to recognise them in the evidence base for the LDF?"

Councillor JA Hockney, Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder, confirmed that there were already two specific references in the strategy.

**4 (h) From Councillor CR Nightingale to the Chairman of Council**

Councillor CR Nightingale asked, "Can the Chairman of Council call on the Liberal Group Leader to retract the incorrect statement which appears in the latest Focus leaflet which has recently been delivered in the Shelford and Stapleford areas which reads as follows: 'Against the advice of all local District Councillors, and Great Shelford and Stapleford Parish Councils, that the July meeting of the Conservative led planning committee rejected the proposed new Hotel in Hinton Way. This Hotel should be a major new source of jobs in the area, and valuable to the whole community. We hope that the planning committee will see sense when the developers submit revised plans.' This is inferring that Planning Committee is politically led and should be retracted."

Councillor JD Batchelor, leader of the Liberal Democrat group, withdrew the statement unreservedly and apologised for the insinuation.

**4 (i) From Mr D Willingham to the Leader of Council**

Mr D Willingham, "In item 11 of the Council Meeting of 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2006, South Cambridgeshire District Council resolved that it would 'research, develop and support a strategy to facilitate the promotion and purchase of goods with the Fairtrade mark, as part of its commitment to the pursuit of sustainable development and to give producers a

fair deal. This will involve a commitment to serving Fairtrade tea and coffee at all council meetings and making Fairtrade products as widely available as possible. The Council will commit to working towards achieving Fairtrade status.' Could the Leader of the Council please detail what progress has been made in the six months since this resolution was passed?"

The Leader thanked Mr Willingham for attending the meeting and confirmed that Fairtrade products would be served during the afternoon tea break and that Fairtrade products were now available in the Council's vending machines. Also, Fairtrade advertisements had been included in *South Cambs Magazine*. He noted that provision of these products cost approximately an additional £2,000 per year and proposed installing a voluntary donation box in the Members' Lounge to help to defray the cost to the taxpayer.

In response to a request from Mr Willingham, the Leader undertook to have officers investigate running an event to promote Fairtrade fortnight from 26 February – 11 March 2007.

## 5. PETITIONS

None received.

## 6. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

### 6 (a) Adoption of Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 - Sex Establishments (Cabinet 14 September 2006)

Council **RESOLVED**

- (a) that Part 2, Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 in respect of the licensing of Sex Establishments be adopted;
- (b) that, subject to the following amendments, the standard conditions of licensing as stated in Appendix A of the covering report to the Licensing Committee be approved:
  - (i) the opening hours for premises should be Monday to Saturday 9am to 7pm (paragraph 11 of the licence conditions relate); and
  - (ii) paragraph 12 of the licence conditions be amended to read: The premises shall not, without the written consent of the Council, be opened and used for the purposes for which the licence is granted on Sundays, Good Friday or Christmas Day;
- (c) that the agreement of the policy for the setting of the fee for the application, renewal or transfer of a licence for a sex establishment be set at £3,500;
- (d) that the applications for sex establishment licences be put before a 5-Member Sub-Committee to be named 'Licensing Sub-Committee (Sex Establishments)'; and
- (e) that there be no restrictions on the numbers considered relevant for the district at this time.

### 6 (b) Treatment of Receipts from Repaid Capital Grants (Cabinet, 14 September 2006)

Council **RESOLVED:**

- (a) the existing treatment of repaid historic building grants, whereby income from this source is returned to the historic building grant reserve for reuse, be ratified;
- (b) income from the repayment of disabled facilities loans and from renovation grants and loans be made available to fund these grants and loans if, and only if,

- additional funds, over and above those in the budget, were needed in the year the repayment was received; and
- (c) income from repaid discretionary disabled facilities loans and from renovation grants and loans not required in the year, rather than being earmarked for any particular purpose, be returned to balances and thereby made available to support service expenditure in general in future years.

**6 (c) South Cambs DC Biodiversity Strategy (Cabinet, 14 September 2006)**

The Biodiversity Strategy would form part of the Council's overall area-wide green strategy and would feed into the Local Development Framework.

Council **RESOLVED** that the Biodiversity Strategy be adopted as Council policy.

Council thanked Rob Mungovan, Ecology Officer, and the Conservation and Design Advisory Group for their work on the strategy.

**6 (d) Climate Change Group (Scrutiny and Overview Committee 20 July 2006)**

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee, at its meeting of 20 July 2006, had reviewed Cabinet's decision not to establish a Climate Change Advisory Group and to disband the informal Climate Change Group. Following debate, it had referred the matter to Council with a recommendation that Council, rather than Cabinet, establish a Climate Change Meeting, with costs split proportionally amongst all portfolios to reflect the cross-cutting nature of climate change issues.

The recommendation was discussed at length:

- a Climate Change task force operating across departments and parties could work with community representatives to respond to climate change issues and progress the Council's Climate Change plan;
- the Council had responsibilities to educate residents on energy-saving measures and to include sustainability principles in all planning policies;
- it was important to consider the global picture, and some products which claimed to benefit the environment were produced overseas in factories which were not efficient; and
- a Climate Change Advisory Group could answer to the Leader rather than to an individual Portfolio Holder.

Councillor SGM Kindersley proposed that the Leader of Council be Climate Change Champion. There was no seconder and Councillor Kindersley **WITHDREW** his proposal.

Councillor JA Hockney explained that his original decision had arisen from concern about increasing the workload of individual officers when resources were already stretched. His offer to include a climate change meeting as part of his Portfolio Holder meetings would ensure that debate would be minuted, with briefing notes and minutes made available to all members. He proposed, seconded by Councillor Dr DR Bard, that:

- (a) Council should establish a Climate Change Meeting to be held on the same day as another meeting with a large attendance, within the Sustainability Portfolio Holder's meetings. This might assist in adhering to sustainability principles regarding transport costs and member and officer time; and
- (b) because of the important impact of climate change on all portfolios, a Green Think Tank that brings in speakers from related organisations to brief Councillors be set-up.

The Green Think Tank would expand the debate to include related issues such as waste management, recycling and water usage, and would be established in addition to the Climate Change Meeting. It was not intended that external speakers be paid.

Council considered the proposal:

- the Green Think Tank could dilute the intention of the original proposal, which would have established a strategic group with power and status;
- the existing climate change agenda was already large and there were neither resources nor time to expand it further;
- there had not been any support at the Scrutiny and Overview Committee meeting for inclusion of the Climate Change Group within the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder's meetings; and
- in light of the considerable financial pressures on the Council and the time and emphasis being placed on this particular issue, there were concerns that more important issues where the Council had a direct impact could be overlooked.

On a show of hands more than six members requested that a recorded vote be taken. The amendment was put to the vote and **LOST**.

The voting was as follows:

**For the amendment:**

Dr DR Bard	Mrs JM Guest	CR Nightingale	
RE Barrett	JA Hockney	EJ Pateman	
NCF Bolitho	Mrs CA Hunt	Mrs DP Roberts	
EW Bullman	RMA Manning	Mrs DSK Spink	
BR Burling	RM Matthews	Mrs BE Waters	
Mrs SM Ellington	DC McCraith	NIC Wright	
Mrs VG Ford	DH Morgan		<b>20</b>

**Against the amendment:**

JD Batchelor	Mrs A Elsby	MJ Mason	
Mrs PM Bear	Dr SA Harangozo	JA Quinlan	
AN Berent	Mrs SA Hatton	NJ Scarr	
RF Bryant	Mrs EM Heazell	Mrs HM Smith	
NN Cathcart	Mrs HF Kember	JH Stewart	
JP Chatfield	SGM Kindersley	RT Summerfield	
NS Davies	Mrs JE Lockwood	Dr SEK van de Ven	
SM Edwards	RB Martlew	JF Williams	
			<b>24</b>

**Abstained:**

MP Howell			<b>1</b>
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**Not voted:**

Mrs CAED Murfitt			
A Riley			<b>2</b>

The original recommendation from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee was put to the vote and Council **RESOLVED** that:

- (a) a Climate Change Group be established, meetings to be held on a set day at a set time, preferably on the same day as another meeting with a large attendance, as this might assist in adhering to sustainability principles regarding transport

costs and member and officer time; and

- (b) costs be split proportionally between all portfolios or borne by Council as a whole because of the important impact of climate change on all portfolios.

The voting was as follows:

**For the recommendations:**

JD Batchelor	Dr SA Harangozo	EJ Pateman	
Mrs PM Bear	Mrs SA Hatton	JA Quinlan	
AN Berent	Mrs EM Heazell	NJ Scarr	
RF Bryant	MP Howell	Mrs HM Smith	
BR Burling	Mrs CA Hunt	JH Stewart	
NN Cathcart	Mrs HF Kember	RT Summerfield	
JP Chatfield	SGM Kindersley	Dr SEK van de Ven	
NS Davies	Mrs JE Lockwood	Mrs BE Waters	
SM Edwards	RB Martlew	JF Williams	
Mrs SM Ellington	MJ Mason	NIC Wright	
Mrs A Elsby	DC McCraith		<b>32</b>

**Against the recommendations:**

RE Barrett	JA Hockney	CR Nightingale	
NCF Bolitho	RMA Manning	Mrs DP Roberts	
Mrs JM Guest	RM Matthews	Mrs DSK Spink	
			<b>9</b>

**Abstained:**

Mrs VG Ford			<b>1</b>
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**Not Voted:**

Dr DR Bard	Mrs CAED Murfitt		
DH Morgan	A Riley		<b>4</b>

**6 (e) Appointment of Independent Members to the Standards Committee (Standards Committee Appointments Panel 13 September 2006)**

In response to a query from Councillor Mrs EM Heazell, the Deputy Monitoring Officer clarified that the application form had asked candidates to state whether they had any party or political affiliation, and that all three candidates had stated on their application forms that they did not have any such affiliation. Independent members of the Council's Standards Committee were expected to be independent both of party politics and of local government.

Council **RATIFIED** the appointment of Ms Georgina Butcher, Ms Melissa Good and Mr Eric Revell as Independent Members of the Standards Committee, to serve four-year terms to 2010 and to remain eligible for re-appointment thereafter.

**7. GYPSY AND TRAVELLER DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (GTDPD): ISSUES AND OPTIONS REPORT - GENERAL APPROACH**

The first Issues and Options report, which would form the basis of the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document (GTDPD), was presented and a revised recommendation (a) was tabled. The GTDPD would form part of the Local Development Framework LDF and set out policies and proposals as they related to Gypsies and Travellers in the District up to 2021.



Members supported the report, but concerns were expressed that the figures used as examples in Appendix 1 of the Issues and Options report (Example of Tier 3 Approach Scoring Sheet) could be misinterpreted by the public as the final scorings allocated to each criterion.

The definition of Gypsies and Travellers given in the glossary was the current government definition from Circular 01/2006, expanded to include Travelling showmen.

Members were urged to ensure that parish councils in their wards considered the consultation document carefully, as it set out a criteria-based policy which would inform site selection, and to attend the presentation at the Council offices on 5 October 2006. The deadline for responses was 24 November 2006.

Council **RESOLVED** to:

- (a) approve the Issues and Options Report 1: General Approach, as set out in Appendix 1, including:
  - (i) the amendments made by the Member Reference Group contained in Appendix 4;
  - (ii) the recommendations set out in the paper "Additional information for the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document Issues and Options Report 1: General Approach"; and
  - (iii) the inclusion of the words "and caravan count" to the conclusion of the definition of Gypsy and Traveller in the glossary;
- (b) approve the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal, a summary of which is appended to the Issues and Options report at Appendix 1;
- (c) approve that the Issues and Options Report 1: General Approach along with the Sustainability Appraisal can be taken forward for public consultation as set out in the timetable at paragraph 10; and
- (d) delegate to the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder any editing changes to the above consultation documents.

Councillor DH Morgan recorded his vote against the resolution.

## 8. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

The Chairman explained that the 3 July 2006 minutes of the Licensing Committee had been removed from the agenda as they referred to a hearing panel and not to a committee meeting, and thus were not presented to Council.

The minutes of the following meetings were **RECEIVED**, subject to matters outlined in minutes 8(a) – 8(d) below.

Cabinet	14 September 2006
Development and Conservation Control Committee	5 July 2006
Development and Conservation Control Committee	2 August 2006
Licensing Committee	10 August 2006
Standards Committee	9 August 2006
Scrutiny and Overview Committee	20 July 2006

### 8 (a) Minutes of meeting Thursday, 14th September 2006 of Cabinet

Councillor Mrs VG Ford commended the State of the Nation report and encouraged members to read it carefully, especially the important points about finances and cost controls.

**8 (b) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 5th July 2006 of Development and Conservation Control Committee \***

Item 3, S/2494/04/F – West Wratting, had been amended to remove the final paragraph, which duplicated wording from the first paragraph.

**8 (c) Minutes of meeting Wednesday, 9th August 2006 of Standards Committee**

A date for all councillors to receive mandatory Code of Conduct and ethical standards training had not yet been set.

**8 (d) Minutes of meeting Thursday, 20th July 2006 of Scrutiny and Overview Committee**

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee had approved these minutes at its meeting on 21 September 2006, subject to amendments which were available on the Council's website.

**Minutes of Previous Meeting (Minute 2)**

The Housing Portfolio Holder undertook to respond in writing to Councillor Mrs SA Hatton's concerns about the eleven bungalows at The Green Road, Sawston.

**Bus services (Minute 5, Draft Agenda Programme and Programme of Key Decisions)**

Councillor Mrs EM Heazell queried the apparent discrimination between provision of free bus travel at any time for blind or partially sighted people, and restrictions on free travel times for the profoundly deaf or epileptic, who were unable to use their pass to get to work using buses running before 9.30 in the morning. She intended to write to County Councillor John Reynolds and asked that any members who supported her letter speak to her after the meeting.

Councillor Mrs DSK Spink explained that this issue had been raised at a recent meeting at Cambridgeshire County Council, which she had not been able to attend, but that the County Council partially funded the free travel for the blind or partially sighted, up to a maximum of £61,000, as it had under the previous scheme. Councillor SGM Kindersley confirmed that this was done through a discretionary County Council fund.

Councillor Mrs Hatton reported that there were continuing concerns amongst parishioners about the lack of clear advice on which tickets were needed for the new concessionary fares scheme.

**9. QUESTIONS ON JOINT MEETINGS**

Councillor MJ Mason reminded members that the North West Fringe consultation documents were in the Members' Lounge for collection, but regretted that comments made by South Cambridgeshire members at the 23 June 2006 joint Member Reference Group regarding traveller site provision and drainage issues had not been included in these documents. Councillor Mrs DSK Spink noted that he had not raised these concerns at the 20 September meeting, but that he could make representations through the public consultation. Councillor NIC Wright stated that he had asked the City Council to proportion the traveller sites within the affordable housing provision, but had been advised that the affordable housing would be for key workers associated with the University.

Councillor CR Nightingale reported that the Southern Fringe Member Reference Group had considered five options, but that a sixth option had been presented for public consultation without having been seen by the Group.

**10. UPDATES FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

Councillor DH Morgan explained that Inland Revenue would allow members to offset tax expenses when attending functions on behalf of an outside body; however, members could claim travelling costs.

Councillor RB Martlew reported that the Cambridge Citizens' Advice Bureau (CAB), which was one of the leading CABs in the country, would shortly be opening a new advice hub in partnership with other advisory services, to bring together a wider range of services in one location. The CAB was ahead of its set targets for outreach work, which had a positive effect on the Council as it affected benefits and consequently increased the Council's income.

Councillor Mrs VG Ford had attended a meeting of the Children and Young People's Partnership, which focussed on the health and safety of young people and at which lines of communication amongst groups had been opened. She updated members on the September 2006 South Cambridgeshire Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership meeting, at which there had been a report on the success of the Connexions bus project, and the positive response to the recent Fire Service initiative in Linton teaching fire safety and prevention to young persons. The Partnership would be funding two further such initiatives in other villages.

Councillor Mrs EM Heazell had been asked to light a candle on behalf of the Council at the twentieth birthday ceremony of the Cambridge Women and Homelessness Group which, during its history, had helped over 240 women. She would convey the Council's congratulations to the next Group meeting.

**11. NOTICES OF MOTION****11 (a) Standing in the names of Councillor NJ Scarr and RMA Manning**

Councillor NJ Scarr explained that he sought to draw attention to the unjust impact the £50,000 licence arising from a new EU directive would have on smaller businesses like local credit unions, upon which many residents relied.

Council **RESOLVED** to write to local Members of Parliament and Members of the European Parliament for the East of England seeking their support and that of Her Majesty's Government to ensure the survival of credit unions in Britain.

**11 (b) Standing in the name of Councillors Mrs DSK Spink and Dr DR Bard**

Members expressed concern about the impact that the possible closure of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital would have on residents, and the increased demand on services at other nearby hospitals.

Council **RESOLVED** that the Leader and Chairman write to the Strategic Health Authority on behalf of the Council, deploring the possible downgrading of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital to the detriment of the present population, in view of the pressures brought by the large increase in housing in the Cambridge sub-region, and in view of the impact the downgrading would have on Addenbrooke's, Papworth and Peterborough Hospitals.

**12. RENT SERVICE BOUNDARY CHANGES**

*Urgent item with permission of the Chairman.*

Councillor NCF Bolitho drew Council's attention to recent changes in the boundaries set by The Rent Service, excluding villages such as Bar Hill and Cottenham from the Cambridge City region, resulting in an 8% cut to housing benefit. The Council had an emergency fund to help make up the difference, but this fund was not unlimited. The Housing Portfolio Holder undertook to contact The Rent Service about the change and to respond to all members with the outcome.

**13. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS**

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

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**The Meeting ended at 5.26 p.m.**

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the Council held on  
Thursday, 28 September 2006 at 5.27 p.m.

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

Councillors: Dr DR Bard, RE Barrett, JD Batchelor, Mrs PM Bear, AN Berent, NCF Bolitho, RF Bryant, BR Burling, NN Cathcart, JP Chatfield, NS Davies, 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, Mrs HF Kember, SGM Kindersley, Mrs JE Lockwood, RMA Manning, RB Martlew, MJ Mason, RM Matthews, DC McCraith, DH Morgan, CR Nightingale, EJ Pateman, JA Quinlan, A Riley, Mrs DP Roberts, NJ Scarr, Mrs HM Smith, Mrs DSK Spink MBE, RT Summerfield, Dr SEK van de Ven, Mrs BE Waters and NIC Wright

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor TD Bygott, Mrs PS Corney, Mrs SJO Doggett, R Hall, PT Johnson, R Page, RJ Turner and TJ Wotherspoon.

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

**2. MOVE TO FOUR-YEARLY DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS**

Consultation on the District Council's electoral arrangements had resulted in 54% of the public supporting a move to "all-out" elections every four years, but 58% of the parish councils which had responded preferring the present system of "election by thirds".

Noting that any delay on a decision by the Secretary of State could result in the first opportunity for "all-out" elections being postponed until 2011, Councillor RMA Manning proposed, seconded by Councillor MJ Mason, that Council **DEFER** its decision and reconsider the issue in October 2007.

Council unanimously **DEFERRED** to October 2007 a decision on whether or not to make an application to the Secretary of State to change the Council's electoral arrangements to "all-out" elections every four years.

*Subsequent to the meeting it was confirmed that the Council's Electoral Arrangements Committee did not have the responsibility to make recommendations on this issue.*

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**The Meeting ended at 5.30 p.m.**

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Council	26 October 2006
<b>AUTHOR/S:</b>	Chief Executive and Democratic Services Manager	

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**PROGRAMME OF COUNCIL MEETINGS FOR THE 2007-2008 CIVIC YEAR****Purpose**

1. To determine the programme of Council meetings for 2007/08.

**Effect on Corporate Objectives**

2. The scheduling of an appropriate number of Council meetings at which the policy and budgetary frameworks are established (and amended where necessary) and other business dealt with in accordance with Article 4 of the Constitution, is essential to the efficient and effective operation of the whole organisation. The proposal to reduce the number of Council meetings to six per year, if agreed, will free up senior Officer time to concentrate on the strategic and operational challenges facing the Council and to allow it to meet its medium and long term corporate objectives.

**Background**

3. In 2006/07 Council has been programmed to meet every fourth Thursday in the month, except for August and December, for normal Council business.
4. As part of its consideration of the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy at the meeting on 12 October 2006, Cabinet agreed in principle that the number of meetings be reduced to 50% of current levels. In accordance with this principle this report seeks a reduction of the number of Council meetings from ten to six (see paragraph 7 below).

**Considerations**

5. The monthly schedule could continue or, in the interests of reducing the number of meetings, alternatives could be considered. A number of our neighbouring Councils meet on a roughly two monthly cycle.
6. It is essential that Council meet in May to make its appointments for the following year (the 'Annual Meeting'). In years where elections are held the Annual Meeting must be held within 21 days of the retirement of outgoing Councillors (Schedule 12, Local Government Act 1972). Council must also meet in February to approve the budget and set the Council Tax. During the rest of the year the Council will conduct its ordinary business, largely consisting of consideration of recommendations from Cabinet in respect of plans comprising the policy framework, and any matters which would involve a departure from the budget and policy framework. The Council meeting needs also to retain its role as a forum for public and Member debate of the key issues affecting the district, through the submission of questions and Motions.

**Options**

7. It is proposed that ordinary meetings be scheduled quarterly during the 2007-2008 Civic Year, along with Annual Meetings in May 2007 and 2008 and a meeting to set the budget in February 2008.

<b>Date</b>	<b>Type of meeting</b>
24 May 2007	Annual (within 21 days of the retirement of outgoing Councillors)
26 July 2007	Ordinary
25 October 2007	Ordinary
31 January 2008	Ordinary
28 February 2008	Budget
24 April 2008	Ordinary
22 May 2008	Annual (within 21 days of the retirement of outgoing Councillors)

8. Whilst the number of ordinary meetings has been reduced from eight to four, it is worth noting that there is no restriction on ordinary business being conducted at the budget meeting. Furthermore, the Constitution allows the Annual Meeting to 'consider any business set out in the notice convening the meeting', which would allow items other than appointments to be considered.
9. If the option of fewer Council meetings is adopted, there will be a need for consideration of further delegated powers so that delays are not caused to essential projects. If the recommendation is agreed this issue would be considered by the Constitution Review Working Group, with recommendations to Council as appropriate.

#### **Financial Implication**

10. A reduction in the number of meetings would reduce the costs of Members' travel by around £1500 (based on four fewer meetings and average costs of £375 per meeting), but other costs attributed to Council meetings would remain unless the reduction was such that the number of staff was reduced and/or the accommodation could be used for other purposes. As stated above the key savings would be generated through the freeing-up of Officer time to concentrate on delivering the Council's aims and objectives.

#### **Legal Implications**

11. As referred to above, there is a legal requirement for the whole Council to meet at certain times to carry out functions only it can perform such as appointing the executive and committees, deciding the budget and approving the Performance Plan. There is no laid-down number of other ordinary meetings.

#### **Staffing Implications**

12. Fewer meetings would release staff, Chief Officers in particular, to carry out other of their duties.

#### **Risk Management Implications**

13. As long as the programme allows Council to undertake its required duties, there is no significant risk associated with the proposed reduction. The main risk with a reduced



number of scheduled meetings is a higher likelihood of additional extraordinary meetings being required.

**Consultations**

- 14. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee has previously supported a reduction in the overall number of meetings in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness of decision-making.

**Recommendation**

- 15. Council is asked to resolve that meetings during the 2007-2008 Civic Year be scheduled as follows:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Type of meeting</b>
24 May 2007	Annual (within 21 days of the retirement of outgoing Councillors)
26 July 2007	Ordinary
25 October 2007	Ordinary
31 January 2008	Ordinary
28 February 2008	Budget
24 April 2008	Ordinary
22 May 2008	Annual (within 21 days of the retirement of outgoing Councillors)

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

Article 4 of the Constitution: the Full Council Meeting

**Contact Officer:** Richard May- Democratic Services Manager  
Telephone: (01954) 713016  
e-mail: [Richard.may@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:Richard.may@scambs.gov.uk)

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the Cabinet held on  
Thursday, 12 October 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)

<b>Councillors:</b>	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 JD Batchelor, RF Bryant, NN Cathcart, Mrs SM Ellington, Mrs SA Hatton, Mrs CAED Murfitt, A Riley, RT Summerfield and NIC Wright were in attendance, by invitation.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors SGM Kindersley and Mrs HM Smith.

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**Procedural Items**

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**1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Leader was authorised to sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2006.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following declarations were made:

Councillor JD Batchelor	As an elected Cambridgeshire County Councillor
Councillor Mrs DSK Spink	As the former Council representative on the board of Wysing Arts

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**Recommendations to Council**

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**3. ARBURY CAMPS: SECTION 106 AGREEMENT**

The Section 106 Agreement for Arbury Camps provided for drainage payment being made solely to South Cambridgeshire District Council, but a subsequent verbal agreement had been made between this Council and Cambridge City Council to share the sum proportionally according to the length of the drain. Local members had expressed concerns about the efficacy of the drain on the site and whether Anglian Water would adopt the drain.

Cabinet, having considered that there was not any urgency to make the payments and preferring that a formal legal agreement be drafted between the two authorities,

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that a decision be **DEFERRED** until after such time as Anglian Water adopted the drain.

**4. INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY (ICT) STRATEGY 2006-2009**

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder introduced the strategy, noting that it was difficult to produce such a document amidst constant developments in technology. It was key to have a robust, scaleable and flexible strategy to enable residents to carry out all District Council-related business electronically if they so wished. He felt confident that the strategy would be delivered on target as the majority of infrastructure was in place and the Council was no longer as dependent on third party suppliers.

Inconsistencies in the report regarding staffing figures would be investigated and reported to Council on 26 October 2006, and the Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder undertook to provide a detailed financial background on the agenda for that meeting.

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that:

- (a) the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy 2006-2009 be adopted; and
- (b) authority be delegated to the Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder and Chief Executive for approval of any subsequent changes.

**5. THATCH AND THATCHING IN SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

The document, *Thatch and thatching in South Cambridgeshire*, had been subject to wide consultation. No objections had been received and all relevant comments had been incorporated. The Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder confirmed that the complete document had cost about £1.50 per copy, but would have officers investigate whether a smaller, less detailed, leaflet could be produced for the general public. Members encouraged local growth of thatching materials where possible.

The Conservation and Design section was commended for its work on producing the policy.

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the document *Thatch and thatching in South Cambridgeshire* be adopted as Council policy.

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**Recommendation to  
Council and Decision  
made by Cabinet**

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**6. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO 2011: DRAFT**

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder introduced the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy, the final version of which would establish the basis for a sustainable budget over the next five years. Members' attention was drawn to the spending pressures in Appendix 1, which required further refinement.

**Priorities for 2007/08**

Concern was expressed at setting a target for affordable housing completions, into

which the Council had little input as the actual build rate was dependent upon developers and the current economic climate. The Council, however, had an influence upon the percentage of residential planning permissions for affordable housing and Cabinet supported setting a target for this area.

### **Position on Capital**

Two projections of capital spending were considered and the Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder advised Cabinet that restricting the housing repair programme to necessary spending to meet Decent Homes minimum standard and other statutory requirements would benefit the General Fund for the five-year period 2007/08-2011/12, but the subsequent negative impact on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) would leave the Council worse off financially.

### **Draft Medium Term Financial Strategy**

Cabinet acknowledged that the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) had a deficit which must be addressed. To balance the strategy, it was necessary to:

- (i) reduce future spending commitments;
- (ii) maximise savings / cost reductions across all services; and
- (iii) seek external help through partnership work, developer contributions, business sector, etc.

Members acknowledged that the amount of Council Tax raised did not meet the current cost of providing services to residents and that the Council was one of the lowest-taxing authorities in the country. The authority either could continue to draw down on its reserves, which would soon run out, or could review all services to see if there were ways to achieve better value for money. Cabinet was unanimous in its support of addressing the financial situation now, rather than waiting to see if there were any changes to local government finance regulations and / or withdrawal of the capping regime. It was felt that this approach would also remove much uncertainty from staff, although there would be redundancies.

The Leader, through Cambridgeshire Horizons, had been making representations to the government, demonstrating that the growth agenda, costs of which continued to rise, could not be done on the current levels of government funding.

Councillor Mrs SA Hatton asked that officers investigate whether savings could be achieved on empty Council properties, although it was pointed out that this would be advantageous to the HRA rather than to the General Fund.

### **Reducing the Number of Meetings**

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee previously had recommended replacement of the existing Advisory Groups with four cross-cutting panels focussing on larger service areas. Councillor NIC Wright, highlighting the increased use of delegation to reduce the Planning Committee agenda, suggested that further delegation could leave sufficient time to hold site visits and the Committee meeting on the same day. Cabinet welcomed the suggestion and noted that it was not only the number of meetings to be considered, but also their effectiveness.

Councillor A Riley expressed concern that a reduction in the number of meetings, especially proposals to halve the number of Council meetings, would leave non-executive members feeling marginalised. Councillor RF Bryant noted that, during the 2002-2003 municipal year, there had been five ordinary meetings of Council, and that the cost of meetings had been reported to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee in February of this year.

**Conclusion**

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder concluded that the MTFs was a working document of which the entire Council needed to take ownership as one Council working together towards a common purpose.

Cabinet urged all District Councillors to read the report and the recommendations and asked the group leaders to encourage their members to consider the seriousness of the situation. The final MTFs would be brought to Cabinet and Council in November 2006.

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** approval of the posts previously approved in principle, with effect from 1 January 2007 where appropriate, otherwise from 1 April 2007.

**Cabinet AGREED:**

- (a) to include in the Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2011 levels of future expenditure indicated in Table 2 of the report;
- (b) to retain current policies and programmes for the capital plan, as shown in Appendix 2a of the report, and to review the position further in the light of the outcome of the stock condition survey and the clarification of the future capital spending pressures in Appendix 1;
- (c) in principle, the targets in paragraph 16 (a)-(d) and (f)-(h) of the report to progress the Council's three priorities in 2007/08, to request service heads and portfolio holders to work up more quantified targets, and to seek to retain the Council's capacity to deliver these targets in the savings exercise;
- (d) adoption of the projections in Appendix 3A of the report as the basis for the Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2011;
- (e) to request portfolio holders and service heads to report to the November Cabinet with recommendations to meet the savings targets in Appendix 3A to the report, informed by the methodology devised last year;
- (f) to request that the further areas for savings identified in paragraph 28 of the report (together with any further suggestions from Members) be pursued;
- (g) to make approaches to the Government and Cambridgeshire Horizons as suggested in paragraph 30 of the report;
- (h) to request all service heads to produce service plans for growth areas to provide greater certainty in financial planning; and
- (i) in principle to reduce the number of council meetings to 50% of the current levels.

Cabinet **NOTED** the scale of future spending pressures on the Council as indicated in Appendix 1 to the report.

Senior Management Team was commended for its full, frank and honest report of the Council's current financial position.

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**Decisions made by Cabinet**

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**7. ADMINISTRATION OF THE LOW COST HOME OWNERSHIP REGISTER**

The Housing Portfolio Holder explained that transferring responsibility for the administration of the Low Cost Home Ownership (LCHO) Register to Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association would free up officer time for higher priority work and would enable residents searching for such housing to visit a "one-stop shop" to look for

suitable properties across local authority boundaries, rather than having to register separately with each authority. All other authorities in the Cambridge and Bedford sub-region had joined the scheme, and it was expected that all Registered Social Landlords would as well. Funding was guaranteed only for the first two years, but the Housing Portfolio Holder was confident that there would be future support and financing available, although the service could be taken back in-house if not.

Cabinet **AGREED** that:

- (a) responsibility for the administration of the Low Cost Home Ownership Register be transferred to Bedfordshire Pilgrims Housing Association as the Housing Corporation / Department of Communities and Local Government-appointed Homebuy agenda for the Cambridge Sub-region for the period 1 October 2006 to 31 March 2008;
- (b) the service level agreement attached as an Appendix to the report form the basis for the terms of the arrangement, subject to correction of grammatical errors; and
- (c) options for the administration of the LCHO Register beyond March 2008 be brought forward for consideration by no later than January / February 2008.

## **8. RISK MANAGEMENT**

The Council sought to eliminate or control significant risk to an acceptable level. Identified strategic risks had been translated into a matrix and action plans were in the process of being prepared for those falling above the "Risk Tolerance Line". Cabinet supported the forthcoming risk management training on 16 November, which was being provided free of charge by the Council's insurers, and urged all Members to attend the session.

Cabinet **AGREED**:

- (a) the risk management process in operation at the Council, including the requirement for Cabinet and other relevant Members to participate in associated training;
- (b) the Risk Scenarios provided at Appendix A to the report, the Prioritisation Matrix provided at Appendix B and the Strategic Risk Register provided at Appendix C; and
- (c) the utilisation of staff recently trained to assist service managers in compiling and managing future service area risk registers, which would incorporate any significant operational risk matters arising in those service areas.

## **9. BOURN: WYSING ARTS - ARTS CAPITAL GRANT 2006-07**

The Wysing Arts Centre at Bourn was within £40,000 of the £1.4 million required to complete phase 1a of their major building works project, to which the Council had already contributed £205,000. The Community Development Portfolio Holder confirmed that the director of Wysing Arts had secured match funding of £20,000, mostly through private donors, but that the project would fail without the contribution from the District Council. The building works were scheduled to begin in November 2006, and, with demolition of the derelict buildings already completed, Wysing Arts could not return to its previous operation. The Arts Council had undertaken a strict review and would not approve the progression of the development unless funding had been secured.

Following cuts to the arts revenue budget in the previous municipal year, Wysing Arts had become a major service provider for organisations which previously had received District Council funding. The Community Development Portfolio Holder emphasised that this would be a one-off grant and it would be made very clear to the recipient that no further grants could be expected. There was £80,000 allocated in the budget for arts

capital funding, from which it was likely over £40,000 would be unallocated by the end of the financial year even if this grant were approved.

There was support for awarding the grant, as it was planned spending and within the budget, but concerns were expressed about the impression the public could form if they did not distinguish between revenue savings on services and capital expenditure on this grant. Queries were raised about contributions from other local authorities and Members were reminded that South Cambridgeshire residents used facilities in other districts which were funded wholly or partly by other authorities. The Community Development Portfolio Holder, in response to concerns that the funding could be used for village halls, explained that separate budgets existed for sports grants and for village halls but that few applications had been received for these funds.

Cabinet, with five in favour, one against and one abstention, **AGREED**, subject to match funding of £20,000 by Wysing Arts Centre being raised, to award a final contribution of £20,000, bringing the total grant award for Phase One to £225,000. It was emphasised that, in light of the Council's financial situation, this would be the last grant which could be made.

## 10. NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING PANELS

Cabinet received an update on the development of Neighbourhood Policing Panels, which had now been established in Histon and Sawston. Turnout had been high at the meetings and public feedback had been very positive. The Youth Parliament Representative on the Local Strategic Partnership had been very enthusiastic about the panel as a positive way for youth to be involved with setting policing priorities in their villages.

The police were very constrained in terms of available staff, and there was disappointment expressed that the third panel, for Cambourne, where there were a significant number of issues, likely would not be established until December 2006 or January 2007. The police had given an assurance that the full scheme would be rolled out by July 2007. At present, John Fuller, Community Engagement Officer, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, was leading the panels, supported by Inspector Paul Ormerod and the Head of Community Services.

Councillor RMA Manning was concerned that the panels could become a venue for discussion rather than action; the Head of Community Services explained that the meetings resulted in public-led policing priorities by allowing attendees to vote on the issues they felt were most important in their area, after which the police had the responsibility to address the priorities.

Cabinet **AGREED** to:

- (a) endorse the draft Terms of Reference for the Neighbourhood Policing Panels;
- (b) approve the programme for setting up the remaining three panels, in around November 2006, March and June 2007, with a proposal for Cambourne to be the next panel;
- (c) seek lead council officers to work with the police leads once each panel has been established; and
- (d) review neighbourhood policing and neighbourhood panels in Autumn 2007.

## 11. FLEXI-TIME

Cabinet supported reinstating the previous flexi-time entitlement, noting the effect its withdrawal had had on staff morale, recruitment and retention.



Cabinet **AGREED** that:

- (a) the decision to cap the number of flexi-days be reversed and, with effect from 1 November 2006, within the parameters of the scheme, entitlement of up to one flexi-day leave per four-week accounting period be reintroduced;
- (b) line managers adopt a more pro-active approach to the application of the scheme; and
- (c) the flexi-time scheme remain an integral part of the Council's commitment to flexible working practices in line with the recruitment and retention strategy.

## 12. **COTTENHAM: APPOINTMENT OF CONTRACTOR - PINE VIEW, SMITHY FEN**

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder confirmed that the Planning Sub-Committee had agreed, at its meeting on 11 October 2006, to take direct action pursuant to Section 178 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to enforce the provisions of an Enforcement Notice and High Court Injunction to remove sheds, caravans and hard standing from Pine View, Smithy Fen.

Cabinet **AGREED** that the agents used in previous direct action preparations be appointed as preferred contractors for the taking of enforcement action at Pine View, Smithy Fen, Cottenham, in accordance with Contract Standing Order 4.5.

## 13. **DISCRETIONARY COMPENSATION REGULATIONS**

The Chief Executive explained that the agenda item had been drafted in anticipation of the Government withdrawing the *Local Government (Early Termination of Employment) (Discretionary Compensation) (England and Wales) Regulations 2000* but, despite the Government having advised that this would be done on 1 October 2006 to remove the conflict with the new Age Discrimination legislation, the withdrawal has been postponed. It was unclear whether or not the withdrawal, when it did occur, would be retrospective to 1 October 2006. Members were advised that there were not any expected employment situations under which these regulations could be applied.

Cabinet **DEFERRED** until November 2006 a decision on Discretionary Compensation Regulations.

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### Information Item

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## 14. **QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT INCLUDING BUDGETARY CONTROL AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS**

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder provided an overview of the quarterly monitoring report and drew Members' attention to the significant increase in underspends since the previous quarter, arising primarily from vacancies, lower than expected energy bills, additional savings on refuse collection and street cleaning, higher than anticipated interest rates and interest on £7 million owed to the Council by the Government on the pooling of business rates. The refuse collection and street cleaning team was commended for identifying £50,000 additional savings. These additional underspends had been identified in time to inform the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

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.

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**Standing Items**

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

Concern was expressed that the Scrutiny and Overview Committee had not referred any strategic or policy issues, or matters raised by monitors attending portfolio holder meetings, but rather had made a recommendation on the seating arrangements for Cabinet. Cabinet hoped that there would be input from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on the Medium Term Financial Strategy and felt that there was scope for learning by example from other authorities whose Scrutiny Committees were well recognised.

To limit the amount of officer time spent setting up meeting rooms, Cabinet preferred that there not be any particular layout required for its meetings as long as the tables were positioned in such a way to allow Cabinet members to see one another.

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

None.

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**The Meeting ended at 1.04  
p.m.**

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the Licensing Committee (2003 Act) held on  
Thursday, 10 August 2006

**PRESENT:**

Councillors:	RE Barrett	Mrs PM Bear
	R Hall	Mrs SA Hatton
	Mrs H Kember	RB Martlew
	RM Matthews	DC McCraith
	A Riley	Mrs HM Smith
	Mrs DSK Spink	

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

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs SM Ellington, Mrs A Elsby and Mrs CAED Murfitt

**2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

On the proposal of Councillor Mrs DSK Spink, seconded by Councillor Mrs SA Hatton and there being no other nominations, it was unanimously

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

**3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

On the proposal of Councillor Mrs DSK Spink, seconded by Mrs H Kember and there being no other nominations, it was

**AGREED** that Councillor Mrs SA Hatton be elected Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the coming year.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**5. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the last meeting held on 3 March 2005 were agreed as a correct record.

In response to a query regarding training for sub-committee hearings, the Assistant Solicitor informed Members that if they had received Licensing Act 2003 training, together with Gambling Act 2005 training (to be held on 17 November 2006) that would be sufficient to sit on the hearing panels. Those Members with little or no experience were encouraged to attend future hearings, subject to informing the relevant Democratic Services Officer prior to the hearing.

Councillor Mrs DSK Spink, who had recently attended a training session in respect of the

Licensing Act 2003, informed the meeting that Members could be asked to represent their ward at hearings, but only with a letter of authorisation from the residents and not of their own volition.

**6. ESTABLISHMENT OF SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

The Democratic Services Officer informed Members that the names of Councillors Orme and Hockney that appeared in the appendix to the report should be replaced by Councillors Ellington and Smith in numbers 6, 27, 48 and 69 in the combination of sub-committees appended to the report.

The Licensing Committee (2003 Act)

- (a) **APPROVED** the combinations of Chairmen and Members for Sub-Committee membership for the purposes of carrying out hearings in respect of the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005, and
- (b) **AGREED** that once Councillor DC McCraith had been trained, he was authorised to attend Licensing Sub-Committee hearings as and when required.

**7. APPENDIX TO MINUTES**

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**The Meeting ended at 11.45 a.m.**

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**LICENSING (2003 ACT) AND GAMBLING ACT 2005  
SUB-COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

The six appointed Chairmen are: Councillors Mrs A Elsby, R Hall, Mrs SA Hatton, Mrs HF Kember, Mrs CAED Murfitt and A Riley. The available non-Chairmen Members to make up the Sub-Committees of three are: Councillors Mrs PM Bear, EW Bullman, Mrs SM Ellington\*\*, RB Martlew, RM Matthews\*\*, DC McCraith\*, Mrs HM Smith and Mrs DSK Spink.

Each Chairman has the following combinations of possible sub-committees (with reference number allocated) making a total of 126.

Elsby, Ellington** and Bullman	1	Riley, Ellington** and Bullman	43
Elsby, Ellington** and Spink	2	Riley, Ellington** and Spink	44
Elsby, Ellington** and Martlew	3	Riley, Ellington** and Martlew	45
Elsby, Ellington** and Bear	4	Riley, Ellington** and Bear	46
Elsby, Ellington** and Matthews**	5	Riley, Ellington** and Matthews**	47
Elsby, Ellington and Smith	6	Riley, Ellington and Smith	48
Elsby, Bullman and Spink	7	Riley, Bullman and Spink	49
Elsby, Bullman and Martlew	8	Riley, Bullman and Martlew	50
Elsby, Bullman and Bear	9	Riley, Bullman and Bear	51
Elsby, Bullman and Matthews**	10	Riley, Bullman and Matthews**	52
Elsby, Bullman and Smith	11	Riley, Bullman and Smith	53
Elsby, Spink and Martlew	12	Riley, Spink and Martlew	54
Elsby, Spink and Bear	13	Riley, Spink and Bear	55
Elsby, Spink and Matthews**	14	Riley, Spink and Matthews**	56
Elsby, Spink and Smith	15	Riley, Spink and Smith	57
Elsby, Martlew and Bear	16	Riley, Martlew and Bear	58
Elsby, Martlew and Matthews**	17	Riley, Martlew and Matthews**	59
Elsby, Martlew and Smith	18	Riley, Martlew and Smith	60
Elsby, Bear and Matthews**	19	Riley, Bear and Matthews**	61
Elsby, Bear and Smith	20	Riley, Bear and Smith	62
Elsby, Matthews** and Smith	21	Riley, Matthews** and Smith	63
Murfitt, Ellington** and Bullman	22	Hall, Ellington** and Bullman	64
Murfitt, Ellington** and Spink	23	Hall, Ellington** and Spink	65
Murfitt, Ellington** and Martlew	24	Hall, Ellington** and Martlew	66
Murfitt, Ellington** and Bear	25	Hall, Ellington** and Bear	67
Murfitt, Ellington** and Matthews**	26	Hall, Ellington** and Matthews**	68
Murfitt, Ellington and Smith	27	Hall, Ellington and Smith	69
Murfitt, Bullman and Spink	28	Hall, Bullman and Spink	70
Murfitt, Bullman and Martlew	29	Hall, Bullman and Martlew	71
Murfitt, Bullman and Bear	30	Hall, Bullman and Bear	72
Murfitt, Bullman and Matthews**	31	Hall, Bullman and Matthews**	73
Murfitt, Bullman and Smith	32	Hall, Bullman and Smith	74
Murfitt, Spink and Martlew	33	Hall, Spink and Martlew	75
Murfitt, Spink and Bear	34	Hall, Spink and Bear	76
Murfitt, Spink and Matthews**	35	Hall, Spink and Matthews**	77
Murfitt, Spink and Smith	36	Hall, Spink and Smith	78
Murfitt, Martlew and Bear	37	Hall, Martlew and Bear	79
Murfitt, Martlew and Matthews**	38	Hall, Martlew and Matthews**	80
Murfitt, Martlew and Smith	39	Hall, Martlew and Smith	81
Murfitt, Bear and Matthews**	40	Hall, Bear and Matthews**	82
Murfitt, Bear and Smith	41	Hall, Bear and Smith	83
Murfitt, Matthews** and Smith	42	Hall, Matthews** and Smith	84

\* Councillor McCraith has kindly agreed, for logistical purposes, not to be included in the combinations of the sub-committees, however once training has been completed for the Gambling Act 2005 he will then form part of the sub-committee hearing procedure.

Hatton, Ellington** and Bullman	85
Hatton, Ellington** and Spink	86
Hatton, Ellington** and Martlew	87
Hatton, Ellington** and Bear	88
Hatton, Ellington** and Matthews**	89
Hatton, Ellington** and Smith	90
Hatton, Bullman and Spink	91
Hatton, Bullman and Martlew	92
Hatton, Bullman and Bear	93
Hatton, Bullman and Matthews**	94
Hatton, Bullman and Smith	95
Hatton, Spink and Martlew	96
Hatton, Spink and Bear	97
Hatton, Spink and Matthews**	98
Hatton, Spink and Smith	99
Hatton, Martlew and Bear	100
Hatton, Martlew and Matthews**	101
Hatton, Martlew and Smith	102
Hatton, Bear and Matthews**	103
Hatton, Bear and Smith	104
Hatton, Matthews** and Smith	105

A similar operation is adopted for the substitute Chairmen comprising Councillors EW Bullman, RB Martlew, RM Matthews\*\* and Mrs DSK Spink, with available Members to make up the Sub Committees being Councillors Mrs PM Bear, Mrs SM Ellington\*\* and Mrs HM Smith. Each of the substitute Chairmen would have the following combinations (with reference numbers allocated) – see table below left.

Bullman, Bear and Ellington**	127
Bullman, Bear and Smith	128
Bullman, Ellington** and Smith	129
Martlew, Bear and Ellington**	130
Martlew, Bear and Smith	131
Martlew, Ellington** and Smith	132
Matthews**, Bear and Ellington	133
Matthews**, Bear and Smith	134
Matthews**, Ellington** and Smith	135
Spink, Bear and Ellington**	136
Spink, Bear and Smith	137
Spink, Ellington** and Smith	138

Kember, Ellington** and Bullman	106
Kember, Ellington** and Spink	107
Kember, Ellington** and Martlew	108
Kember, Ellington** and Bear	109
Kember, Ellington** and Matthews**	110
Kember, Ellington** and Smith	111
Kember, Bullman and Spink	112
Kember, Bullman and Martlew	113
Kember, Bullman and Bear	114
Kember, Bullman and Matthews**	115
Kember, Bullman and Smith	116
Kember, Spink and Martlew	117
Kember, Spink and Bear	118
Kember, Spink and Matthews**	119
Kember, Spink and Smith	120
Kember, Martlew and Bear	121
Kember, Martlew and Matthews**	122
Kember, Martlew and Smith	123
Kember, Bear and Matthews**	124
Kember, Bear and Smith	125
Kember, Matthews** and Smith	126

In addition to the combinations numbered to 138, there are additional combinations made up with the six Chairmen in circumstances where particular experience and expertise might be required at hearings. These combinations (with reference numbers allocated) are produced in the table below right.

Elsby , Hall and Hatton	139
Elsby, Hall and Kember	140
Elsby, Kember and Murfitt	141
Elsby, Murfitt and Riley	142
Hall, Hatton and Kember	143
Hall, Kember and Murfitt	144
Hall, Murfitt and Riley	145
Hall, Riley and Elsby	146
Hatton, Kember and Murfitt	147
Hatton, Murfitt and Riley	148
Hatton, Riley and Elsby	149
Kember, Murfitt and Riley	150
Kember, Riley and Elsby	151
Kember, Elsby and Hall	152
Murfitt, Hall and Hatton	153
Murfitt, Elsby and Hall	154
Murfitt, Hall and Hatton	155
Riley, Elsby and Hatton	156
Riley, Hall and Kember	157
Riley, Hall and Hatton	158

\*\* Denotes not yet trained in the Licensing hearing procedure



**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the Licensing Committee held on  
Tuesday, 19 September 2006 at 10.00am

PRESENT: Councillor RE Barrett – Chairman  
Councillor R Hall – Vice-Chairman

Councillors:	Mrs PM Bear	Mrs SM Ellington
	Mrs A Elsby	RM Matthews
	DC McCraith	Mrs CAED Murfitt
	Mrs HM Smith	Mrs DSK Spink MBE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors EW Bullman, Mrs SA Hatton, Mrs HF Kember, RB Martlew and A Riley.

**1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**2. CALDECOTE - DESIGNATION OF CONSENT STREETS**

The Committee considered a report seeking the designation of all the streets in the Parish of Caldecote as Consent Streets under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982.

The Licensing Officer confirmed that the Council had given appropriate statutory Notice of the Committee's resolution of 23 February 2006 that such a designation be made. No objections or other comments had been received. Caldecote Parish Council remained in support of designation.

The Licensing Officer confirmed that the Consent street designation would apply to all streets within the Caldecote parish boundary.

Upon the proposal of Councillor Mrs CAED Murfitt, seconded by Councillor Mrs A Elsby, it was

**RESOLVED**

1. that all the streets within the Parish of Caldecote be designated as Consent Streets under the terms of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982; and
2. that due statutory Notice of the resolution be given.

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**The Meeting ended at 10.05 a.m.**

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the Planning Committee held on  
Wednesday, 6 September 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor NIC Wright – Chairman  
Councillor SGM Kindersley – Vice-Chairman

Councillors:	Dr DR Bard	RE Barrett
	JD Batchelor	Mrs PM Bear
	RF Bryant	Mrs PS Corney
	Mrs VG Ford	Mrs JM Guest
	R Hall	Mrs SA Hatton
	Mrs CA Hunt	RB Martlew
	Mrs CAED Murfitt	CR Nightingale
	EJ Pateman	JA Quinlan
	A Riley	Mrs DP Roberts
	Mrs HM Smith	Mrs DSK Spink MBE
	JF Williams	

Councillors NN Cathcart, Mrs JE Lockwood, MJ Mason and RT Summerfield were in attendance, by invitation.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mrs A Elsby, JH Stewart and RJ Turner.

#### Member Training

At the Chairman's request, the Head of Planning Services briefed Members about on-going discussions in relation to Member training for those on the Planning Committee. It was anticipated that a programme should be agreed by the end of September. Councillor Mrs DSK Spink commented that such training should be mandatory for all those on the Committee.

#### 1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee authorised the Chairman to sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting of the Development and Conservation Control Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2006, subject to an amendment in Minute no. 5 (S/1195/06/F – Steeple Morden) to show that the local Member (Councillor Mrs CAED Murfitt) had declared a personal interest having attended a meeting with the Divisional County Councillor, and a representative from each of Guilden Morden, Steeple Morden and Ashwell Parish Councils.

#### 2. S/0824/06/F – BASSINGBOURN-CUM-KNEESWORTH

**DELEGATED APPROVAL** for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to investigating revised options for onsite parking and also to safeguarding Conditions, including the requirement, if appropriate, for a commuted sum in lieu of the provision of an affordable unit.

#### 3. S/0706/06/F - BASSINGBOURN

**APPROVAL** for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein.

#### 4. S/1348/06/F - OAKINGTON

**APPROVAL** for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the Condition referred to therein.

**5. S/1168/06/F - HARSTON**

**DELEGATED APPROVAL** for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the submission of correct ownership certificates.

Councillor Mrs DP Roberts did not vote.

Mrs E Funnell, Chairman of Harston Parish Council's Planning Committee, addressed the Committee on behalf of the Parish Council.

**6. S/1489/06/F - HARSTON**

**REFUSED** for the reason set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services.

Councillor CR Nightingale declared a personal interest by virtue of his acquaintance with the applicant's son.

Mrs E Funnell, Chairman of Harston Parish Council's Planning Committee, addressed the Committee on behalf of the Parish Council.

**7. S/1345/06/F - LINTON**

**APPROVAL** for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein and an additional Condition requiring the submission of details of the drainage channel on the access road to Plot 2.

**8. S/1360/06/F - LINTON**

**DELEGATED APPROVAL** for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the receipt of an amended plan addressing the comments of the Local Highway Authority about dimensions of the access, junction radii and re-positioning of the traffic calming measures, the prior completion of a Section 106 Legal Agreement requiring that two of the dwellings are affordable, an education contribution prior to issue of the Decision Notice, the Conditions referred to in the report, and to informatives regarding protection of landscaping along the northern and eastern boundaries, height of buildings and gradient of the access road.

Councillor Mrs DP Roberts was not present for the first part of the debate and did not vote.

**9. S/0625/06/RM - LONGSTANTON**

**DELEGATED APPROVAL**, for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the revisions required by the Local Highways Authority and the submission of accurate plans (if necessary following a detailed consideration of the concerns of the occupiers of Old Farm, 155 High Street) and subject to Conditions relating to the details of siting, design, means of access and the landscape structure without the need to further consult statutory consultees, residents or other interested parties.

Councillor A Riley declared a personal interest by virtue of having chaired the meeting of Longstanton Parish Council when this application was discussed there, but believed that he took no part in the debate or vote at that time. Councillor Riley further declared that he

had attended a meeting at South Cambridgeshire Hall with officers and the developers of the site to resolve some of the outstanding finer details of the application and these were indeed resolved at that meeting. In order to prevent any possible allegation of bias or pre-determination on the part of Councillor Riley notwithstanding that he was considering the matter afresh at this meeting of the District Council's Planning Committee he did not take part in the vote.

**10. S/1415/06/F - MELBOURN**

**APPROVAL** for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein.

Councillor JA Quinlan declared a prejudicial interest by virtue of having advised a number of local residents professionally on unrelated subjects. He withdrew from the Chamber, took no part in the debate, and did not vote.

**11. S/0032/06/F - LANDBEACH, MILTON AND WATERBEACH**

**DEFERRED** pending receipt of drainage and hydraulic information from the Phase 2 Flood Risk Assessment and further transportation, ecology and landscaping information, but minded to approve subject to the information contained therein being satisfactory to the Local Planning Authority.

Councillor JA Hockney (not a Committee member but in attendance as a non-voting Member of Council) declared a personal interest by virtue of his membership of Landbeach Parish Council. He had not voted on the application when it had been considered by that Council.

Councillor R Martlew declared a personal interest by virtue of his involvement in early negotiations with the Cambridge Sport Lakes Trust as a former Cambridgeshire County Councillor.

Councillor MJ Mason (not a Committee member but in attendance as a non-voting Member of Council) declared a personal interest as South Cambridgeshire District Council's representative on the Old West and Waterbeach Internal Drainage Boards.

Councillor A Riley declared a personal interest by virtue of having a stepson who rows.

Councillor Mrs HM Smith informed the Committee that she had taken a close personal interest in the Cambridge Rowing Trust's (now known as the Cambridge Sport Lakes Trust) 1992 application in respect of a larger site, submitting two letters outlining her concerns. At no point had she expressed an opinion, either for or against, regarding that scheme. Subsequent to that application receiving outline planning permission, Milton Parish Council appointed her as an observer at Cambridge Rowing Trust Board meetings in order to protect the public interest recognised in the Section 106 Legal Agreement which was never actually completed. Mrs. Smith assured the Committee that she had not been involved in the Board's decision-making process, and that she had no personal friends on the Board. Her involvement with the Board had come to an end in 1999, when observers were no longer invited to attend Board meetings. Councillor Mrs Smith declared a personal interest as a member of King's College, and explained that, as an Undergraduate there, she had coxed a boat on the River Cam for three years, but had not been involved with rowing since then. Councillor Mrs Smith declared a further personal interest by virtue of her membership of Milton Parish Council, and of contributing to that Council's discussion about, but not the voting on, the current planning application, which she was now, in any event, considering afresh as a District Councillor.

Councillor RT Summerfield (not a Committee member but in attendance as a non-voting Member of Council) declared a personal interest by virtue of his membership of Milton Parish Council, and having been involved in the past in negotiations on behalf of South Cambridgeshire District Council.

Jane Coston, Chairman of Milton Parish Council, addressed the meeting, having declared a personal interest by virtue of her involvement with the application on behalf of both the Parish Council and, previously, as a Cambridgeshire County Councillor.

Councillor R Hall had not attended the Committee site visit on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2006, and did not vote.

Councillor Mrs DP Roberts had not attended the Committee site visit on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2006 and, accordingly, did not contribute to the debate and did not vote.

**12. S/1349/06/F - MILTON**

**APPROVAL**, as amended by plans date stamped 15<sup>th</sup> August 2006, for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein and an additional Condition removing Permitted Development Rights relating to boundary treatment.

**13. S/1485/06/F - MILTON**

**APPROVAL** for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein (Condition 2 being reworded to indicate that the scheme had now been approved) and additional Conditions relating to pollution control and canopy colour.

**14. S/1235/06/RM – ORWELL**

**DELEGATED APPROVAL / REFUSAL.** Reserved Matters consent would be refused as submitted for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, unless satisfactory revised drawings were received in time to enable the application to be determined within the 13 week deadline (21 September 2006). Approval would be subject to comments on the revised drawings from the Local Highways Authority, and to input from the Trees and Landscape Officer.

Councillor SGM Kindersley declared a personal interest as the Cambridgeshire County Councillor for the Gamlingay Electoral Division, which includes the parish of Orwell.

Councillor Mrs DP Roberts declared a prejudicial interest as the applicant is a resident of Fowlmere, for which she is District Councillor. Councillor Mrs Roberts withdrew from the Chamber, did not take part in the debate and did not vote.

**15. S/0878/06/F - GREAT SHELFORD**

**APPROVAL**, as amended by drawing nos. 4 Rev.A, 6 Rev.A, 7 Rev.A, 10 Rev.A and 821.1 Rev.A date stamped 26.7.06, for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services and subject to the Conditions referred to therein

Councillor R Hall declared a prejudicial interest by virtue of his acquaintance with the occupiers of no. 1 Wollards Lane,

Councillor CR Nightingale attended the Chairman's Delegation meeting that had discussed this application, but was now considering the matter afresh.

**16. S/1443/06/F - GREAT SHELFORD**

**REFUSED** in line with officers' amended recommendation, in view of the Local Highways Authority's concerns about highway safety.

**17. S/1353/06/F - WATERBEACH**

**DELEGATED APPROVAL** for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to receipt of amended plans addressing the points outlined in the report relating to the number and siting of windows, and to the Conditions referred to therein.

**18. S/1113/06/LB AND S/1114/06/F - OVER**

**REFUSAL** of both applications, contrary to the recommendations contained in the report from the Head of Planning Services. Following a Committee Site Visit, Members refused the application on the grounds of nature conservation, harm to the Conservation Area and to the setting of the Grade 2 Listed Building at 17 High Street.

**RESOLVED** that Enforcement Officers investigate the circumstances surrounding the residential caravan to the rear of 17 High Street.

**19. S/2010/04/F - WILLINGHAM**

**DELEGATED APPROVAL** subject to the applicant amending the application to a temporary application for three years.

**20. APPEALS AGAINST PLANNING DECISIONS AND ENFORCEMENT ACTION**

The Committee noted a report on Appeals against planning applications and enforcement action and, in particular, written summaries of decisions relating to:

- Marchfield Developments Ltd – Demolition of existing workshops and redevelopment to provide 6 no. dwellings – 15 Ashwell Road, Steeple Morden – Appeal allowed with a full award of costs to the appellant. The Head of Planning Services explained that the decision had been made contrary to the Officer's recommendation. The cost was likely to be in the order of £10,000 or more and details would be reported back to Committee for information after a figure had been agreed between the respective legal teams.

This case had illustrated the need for reasons that could be reasonably defended when decisions were made by the Committee.

- J Crickmore – Conversion of barn to dwelling – Chesterton Fen Road, Milton - Appeal allowed

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**The Meeting ended at 3.53 p.m.**

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the Audit Panel held on  
Thursday, 14 September 2006

PRESENT: Councillor MP Howell – Chairman

Councillors:	RE Barrett	RF Bryant
	R Hall	DC McCraith
	RT Summerfield	

Officers:	Greg Harlock	Chief Executive
	Steve Hampson	Executive Director

External:	M Jani	Internal Audit
	J Golding	External Audit

Councillors SM Edwards and NIC Wright were in attendance, by invitation.

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors SGM Kindersley and Mrs HM Smith from the Panel and from Councillors Dr DR Bard, Mrs DP Roberts and Mrs DSK Spink.

### 2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 30 June 2006 were accepted as a correct record subject to the removal of the following words from the first sentence of the first paragraph of minute 11:

- “that this constituted a personal interest in discussions involving internal audit but that”

**Minesh Jani** promised to respond to the following questions raised in the minutes:

- Why 5 audit days had been allocated for Outside Bodies for 2008/09.
- To ascertain whether the Audit Needs Assessment carried out in March 2001 had been updated.
- Whether the “littered land” described in paragraph 34 of the report referred to fly tipping or detritus which would be expected on rural roads.

John Golding reported that the issue of altering dates of the quarterly payments of the audit fee to three months later than currently scheduled would be discussed shortly with the Chief Executive.

#### **Tendering Process (Internal Audit)**

The Chief Executive explained that the Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Services portfolio holder had approved a request to alter the evaluation model to give more significance to quality instead of price.

### 3. INTERNAL AUDIT: QUARTERLY REPORT APRIL TO JUNE 2006

Minesh Jani introduced this report on internal audit’s quarterly assurance report for the first quarter, April to June 2006. He explained that 9 out of the 12 planned audits had been carried out, leaving more capacity for audits in the remaining three quarters.

**Income Management System**

Minesh Jani reported that out of the four reports, three had received substantial assurances, whilst the report on the Income Management System had received a limited assurance. The security regarding passport control was of particular concern as it permitted single digit passwords. The Chief Executive reminded the Panel that the Council had completely upgraded all its financial systems in two and half years. He expressed his dissatisfaction with the software provider, who had designed a system which allowed passwords of inappropriate length or degree of complexity.

**Performance Indicators**

Minesh Jani explained that 23% of the operational plan has been completed in the first quarter and he was confident that the annual target of 100% would be achieved.

**Percentage of FTE staff fully CCAB or IIA qualified**

**Minesh Jani** agreed to ascertain how many of the 60% of FTE staff who were either CCAB or IIA qualified were CCAB qualified. He added that the target of 35% had been met. It was understood that the newer IIA qualification was a recognised standard for auditors, but the internal audit contract only specified the CCAB qualification. The Chief Executive stated that the new contract would refer to the IIA qualification, although the minimum specification of 35% was likely to be increased.

**4. ACCOUNTS AND AUDIT REGULATIONS 2006**

The Chief Executive presented this report on the implication of the Accounts and Audit regulations and explained that the regulations were in the main concerned with improving corporate governance issues. He highlighted one specific addition which now provided for what action should be taken in the unlikely event that the accounts were not approved by the required date. Previously there had been no regulations in place addressing this situation.

It was noted that the Council already complied with the new regulations regarding the review of the Council's system of internal control.

The Panel noted the report.

**5. EXTERNAL AUDIT: AUDIT OF ACCOUNTS 2005/06: COMMUNICATION OF AUDIT MATTERS WITH THOSE CHARGED WITH GOVERNANCE**

John Golding introduced this report on RSM Robson Rhodes' audit of accounts for 2005/06. He explained that this was the first year of reporting under the international standard of auditing. He concluded that the external auditors anticipated providing an unqualified opinion on the Council's accounts, subject to the satisfactory completion of the outstanding audit work. The outstanding work included:

- Completion of audit work on the code criteria relating to securing strategic and operational objectives, performance management and consultation
- Completion of their review of the arrangements in place to secure adequate data quality
- A post balance sheet events review to update their findings in respect of the use of resources judgements and BVPP audit work completed in May 2006 and December respectively.

John Golding did not envisage any significant problems being uncovered by the outstanding audit work.

**Management Representation Letter**

John Golding explained that he expected the Council's Chief Executive to confirm in the above letter that there were no material risks and exposures at September 2006.

John Golding complimented the Council's officers on the standard of information provided to the auditors during the compiling of this report.

**Corporate Governance Inspection (CGI)**

The Chief Executive stated that the Panel were responsible for the Council's corporate governance but in external audit and other assessments there had been given no advance indication that a CGI inspection was likely. In light of this he asked Mr Golding why the external auditor's report before the Panel that day, made no reference to the inspection and gave no indication of why the CGI inspection was taking place. John Golding replied that he did not know what criteria was used by the Audit Commission to determine whether to send a Corporate Governance Inspection to a Council. He could only reiterate the positive conclusions of external audit's report.

The Panel expressed its disappointment at the absence of the Relations Manager who may have been able to explain why the Audit Commission deemed a CGI inspection to be appropriate. John Golding explained that after examining the agenda the decision had been made not to invite the Relationship Manager to attend this meeting.

The Chairman concluded that the Panel were unhappy at the decision taken to launch a CGI inspection at a time when, as external audit's report confirmed, the Council was responding well to the challenge created by capping. The inspection meant that officers had less time to deliver essential services.

**6. KEY ACTIONS FOLLOWING THE RECEIPT OF THE MAJORS' AND CPA AUDIT REPORTS**

In the absence of the Head of Planning Services, who was in another meeting, the Executive Director presented this report on the findings of two audits of the Council's planning process.

The Executive Director highlighted the five key actions listed in appendix 6, with timescales.

**Capacity**

The Executive Director was happy to report that the vacant posts in the planning section had been recruited to. Earlier vacancies had been filled via promotions, which kept skilled staff at the Council but obviously created vacancies elsewhere. The Executive Director explained that he was liaising with the Head of Planning Services as part of the transformation project to ensure that the strategic work that had been carried out by the Development Services Director was properly covered.

**Improve user focus**

The Executive Director explained that work was being carried out to ensure that user needs were met.

**Direct resources at priorities and need**

It was understood that the Planning and Economic Development portfolio holder, the Head of Planning Services, the Executive Director and the Chief Executive would be meeting to examine where the Council's resources could best be directed.

**Systematic value for money approach**

The Executive Director explained that the Council dealt with more applications than districts of a similar size, which made comparisons with other authorities difficult.

**Committee/councillor capacity**

Councillor NIC Wright, Chairman of Planning, stated that performance had improved especially in the processes of major applications. He added that the size of the Committee had been reduced and was likely to continue to do so following the introduction of mandatory training. However, he added that the Committee's size and depth were two of its strengths.

Councillor Wright stated that the aim of the Council was to sustain its recent achievements. He highlighted the fact that the Council had an 80% success rate on appeals, which was well above the national average.

Councillor Wright stated that in line with the auditor's recommendations, there had been an increase in the number of decisions taken under delegated powers, allowing the Committee to focus on major applications.

In response to questioning the Executive Director suspected that the blank space in the spreadsheet under the first two key actions for four months in 2007 was an aberration. The **Executive Director** agreed to confirm this.

**Planning Authority Service (PSA)**

The Executive Director explained that the PSA were part of the Department for Communities and Local Government (formerly ODPM) and they advised local authorities on how they can improve their planning service with the resources available.

The Panel expressed surprise at the differing conclusions of the two reports. The Executive Director informed the Panel that the portfolio holder shared this concern.

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**The Meeting ended at 4.15 p.m.**

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee held on  
Thursday, 21 September 2006

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

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

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

Officers:	Patrick Adams	Senior Democratic Services Officer
	Greg Harlock	Chief Executive
	Gareth Jones	Head of Planning Services
	Simon McIntosh	Head of Community Services
	Dale Robinson	Chief Environmental Health Officer
	Tim Wetherfield	Head of Policy and Communication

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors PT Johnson and DH Morgan.

**2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2006 were accepted as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

- The inclusion of Councillor MJ Mason's apologies for this meeting.
- The penultimate heading on page 6 be amended to read: "Housing staffing".
- The first sentence under this heading be amended to read: "In response to a question concerning whether Councillor Mrs Roberts, now she was housing portfolio holder, still felt that the Housing department was overstuffed, Councillor Mrs Roberts explained that ..."
- In the second paragraph under this heading the word McGuinness was amended to "Guinness" and expertise was amended to "knowledge".

The Committee queried the assertion made at the last meeting by the conservation, sustainability and community planning portfolio holder that Cabinet's decision not to establish a Climate Change Advisory Group and disband the informal Climate Change Group had been unanimous, as Councillor SM Edwards had proposed that a formal Climate Change Advisory Group be established, but with no seconder the motion had fallen.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Councillors declared a personal interest in item 7, as members of Parish Councils: Councillor RE Barrett (Balsham), Councillor Mrs SM Ellington (Swavesey), Councillor MJ Mason (Histon), Councillor CR Nightingale (Great Shelford), Councillor

Mrs HM Smith (Milton) and Councillor RT Summerfield (Milton).

Councillor DC McCraith declared a personal interest in item 7, as the Council's representative on CALC and as a County Councillor.

Councillor SGM Kindersley declared a personal interest in item 7, as the Clerk to Hatley parish council and as a County Councillor.

#### 4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

#### 5. DRAFT AGENDA PROGRAMME AND PROGRAMME OF KEY DECISIONS

##### **Bus Services**

The Committee welcomed the recent settlement regarding the concessionary fares bus scheme, but expressed the view that this was still a major issue and the following points should be discussed at the Committee's next meeting:

- Bus services to rural communities
- The bus service to towns outside the County such as Bedford or Letchworth
- The bus service before 9:30 am

Councillor Mrs DSK Spink, Planning and Economic Development portfolio holder, explained that the scheme, which had been agreed with other neighbouring authorities, was in place until 2008, full details of which were available on the Council's website. The Head of Policy and Communication suggested that the Committee focus on what the Council can achieve with its limited resources. The Chairman explained that the County Council would not be prepared to send either officers or councillors to a meeting of a District Council, which scrutinised a service that they provided.

##### **Staff Sickness**

With the agreement of the portfolio holder, it was decided that the Council's performance regarding staff sickness be examined at the next meeting.

#### 6. REPORTS FROM MONITORS

The Chairman introduced this item which allowed monitors of portfolio holders to report on items of interest. He invited Members to put items on the agenda in future.

##### **Assessing homelessness**

Councillor Mrs EM Heazell opposed the referral of decisions on whether residents were intentionally or unintentionally homeless to officers. Under the old political structures a panel of members resolved these cases before the meetings of the Housing Committee and Councillor Mrs Heazell suggested that a panel of non-executive members be set up to assess these cases. Councillor Mrs DP Roberts replied that officers had an overview of the facts and so were best placed to make ruling on this issue. The decision to refer these matters to officers had been made after consultation with the Executive Director. Councillor Mrs Roberts volunteered to bring a report to the Committee at a later date.

The Committee **AGREED** that an item on how the Council assessed whether tenants were unintentionally or intentionally homeless should be received by the Committee in 6 months time.

**Microphone system**

Councillor MJ Mason supported the resources, staffing, information and customer services portfolio holder in his investigation into the continued failure of the microphone system and added that the hearing loops picked up distracting background noise, especially when made close to the microphones and their connections.

**Plan-Web**

Councillor Mason expressed his disappointment in the continued unavailability of the plan-web system to Members. Councillor Edwards, resources, staffing, information and customer services portfolio holder, explained that the security to the intranet had to be improved before Members could access plan-web from their homes, although the system was accessible from the office. He explained that he delayed the presentation of the ICT Strategy to Cabinet because he wanted to ensure the quality of the final report and he could do so without any serious consequences for the Council.

**Milton Country Park**

Councillor Mrs HM Smith stated that the decisions being taken with regard to Milton Country Park were piecemeal and so it was unlikely that any one decision would be brought before the Committee. She pledged to keep the Committee updated on further developments.

**Choice based lettings**

In response to questioning, Councillor Mrs DP Roberts explained that an Advisory Group on choice based lettings was in the process of being set up.

**7. PRESENTATION FROM THE COUNTY SECRETARY OF THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (CALC)**

The Chairman invited Keith Barrant, Chief Executive of the Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils (CALC) to address the Committee.

Mr Barrant gave a presentation on what CALC does and its relationship with the Council and the District's parish councils. He concluded that both organisations could achieve more by working together in partnership.

**Contributions from District Councils**

It was understood that the Council paid £1,500 per year to CALC, which equated to £15 per affiliated parish council. This was lower than other adjoining districts such as Fenland who paid £2,000 a year and over £100 per parish council and East Cambridgeshire who paid £1,700 a year and over £40 per parish council. Mr Barrant suggested that the reason for the discrepancies were largely historic with each authority giving a percentage increase of the amount awarded in the previous year.

**Attendance at CALC meetings**

In response to questioning Mr Barrant stated that in order to improve the debate at CALC meetings the agenda and reports were circulated in advance. He asked Councillor DC McCraith to provide his e-mail address as it appeared that e-mails from CALC to the Council's representative were not getting through.

**Legal advice**

Mr Barrant stated that CALC had taken on the responsibility of giving legal advice to parish councils in October 2005 and as a consequence the Council were receiving 1,000 less calls a year.

Mr Barrant explained that the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) had found

it difficult to keep to the terms of their Service Level Agreement and as a consequence important requests had been prioritised.

### **Quality Parish Status**

Mr Barrand expressed his support for the Quality Parish Status scheme and he expressed pride in those Cambridgeshire parish councils who were applying for that status. He suggested that its importance may increase following the Government's white paper on "double devolution".

### **Training**

Mr Barrand suggested that training on the Code of Conduct could be best provided by working in partnership.

### **Cambridgeshire Horizons**

Mr Barrand explained that CALC had met with Cambridgeshire Horizons to improve communication and this should not be seen as an attempt to by-pass the proper planning authorities.

### **Footway lights**

Mr Barrand recognised that the Council had made a difficult decision regarding footway lights, but he suggested that earlier consultation with CALC could have been beneficial to all involved. Councillor Mrs Spink stated that as the Environmental Health portfolio holder at the time she ensured that a letter was sent out in October 2005 to all parish councils informing them of the situation regarding footway lighting. It was understood that it would have been impossible to inform the parish councils any earlier as the decision had not been made. Mr Barrand stated that with hindsight it may have been better if the Council had shared information regarding its financial predicament earlier.

The Head of Community Service reported that he had attended a CALC meeting at the invitation of Mr Barrand where it had been suggested that the Council consult on its budget in November/December time instead of February.

### **Future of CALC**

Mr Barrand explained that the number of enquiries received by CALC had increased by 50% in the last three years and that this justified the 4% increase in membership fees.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Mr Barrand for his attendance and informative answers.

## **8. PRESENTATION FROM THE PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

Councillor Mrs DSK Spink, planning and economic development portfolio holder, thanked the Committee for asking her to give a presentation on her portfolio. She reminded the Committee that the Council's planning section had recently gone through a change in management, two audits and were currently going through the LDF process.

### **Concessionary fares**

Councillor Mrs Spink listed the villages and towns for which residents could now travel to under a concessionary rate. It was noted that Letchworth, Bedford and Sandy were not included.

### **Financial constraints**

In response to questioning, Councillor Mrs Spink stated that the challenges facing her portfolio were complicated by the financial constraints now placed on the authority. The



Head of Planning expressed the hope that funds could be secured that would allow the Council to purchase new monitors for the displaying of plans at Planning Committee meetings.

### **Major developments**

The Head of Planning stated that the Council were proud of what had been achieved at Cambourne. Councillor Mrs Spink concurred and added that lessons had been learnt from Cambourne and the Council would work in partnership with other authorities in the delivery of major new developments. She also stated that the Council was benefiting from the experience gained by a youthful planning team.

In response to doubts over whether the Council had the resources to deliver the agreed development, Councillor Mrs Spink explained that the Council's aims were realistic and that efforts were being made to secure funding from Cambridgeshire Horizons and developers for additional staffing, without compromising the authority's independence. The Head of Planning added that the integrity and independence of officers was sacrosanct and that the current staffing levels were sufficient to deal with the existing pressures.

### **Traffic figures**

The Head of Planning explained that the County Council had a simulation model that predicted the likely impact an application would have on traffic figures. Clearly they have to be satisfied with the data fed into that model. In instances where members are concerned about the accuracy of these figures, this should be raised with the relevant case officer in the first instance.

### **Affordable housing**

In response to questioning, Councillor Mrs Spink concurred that local services and transport links influenced the location of low cost houses. The Head of Planning explained that under existing policies the Council could consider making exceptions to its planning policies if it meant delivering affordable housing.

### **Consultation by the County Council on the location of a recycling centre**

The Head of Planning agreed to speak to Councillor Mrs Hezell outside the meeting on the subject of consultation by the County Council regarding the location of a recycling centre within the District.

### **Political decisions**

In response to questioning, Councillor Mrs Spink explained that planning decisions taken by the Council were based on what was best for residents, not by manifestos drawn up by political parties.

### **Regional Spatial Strategy**

The Head of Planning explained that the Council had taken the initiative with the RSS and included a number of possible locations for traveller sites. The Council had enjoyed the co-operation of parish councils in this initiative including Cottenham. The Head of Policy and Communication added that an article on the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document had been included in the South Cambs Magazine.

### **Local Development Framework (LDF)**

In response to concerns that the Council's LDF would not be accepted, Councillor Mrs Spink stated that the LDF had been examined by experts and she was confident that it would be accepted by the Government.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Mrs Spink and the Head of Planning for their

presentation and informative answers.

## **9. PRESENTATION FROM THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor RMA Manning, environmental health portfolio holder, to the meeting. Councillor Manning explained that it was his responsibility to decide the priorities and the officers' responsibility to implement these decisions. He concluded that the overarching issue was a lack of resources and money to improve services and urged Members to accept that the Council had to get used to managing on less. He summarised the four priorities of his portfolio as:

- Collecting rubbish
- Street cleaning
- Drainage issues
- Food safety

### **Future challenges**

In response to questioning, Councillor Manning stated that the main challenge facing him was the lack of resources and funding which meant that he had to try and deliver better services for less money. However, Councillor Manning assured the Committee that he would meet his budget.

### **Recruitment of staff**

Councillor Manning stated that the recruitment of staff was a challenge facing the Council and in an attempt to tackle this, enhancements to in-house training for Environmental Health Officers, HGV drivers was being considered. The District was an area of low unemployment, which made it harder to recruit manual workers.

### **Street cleaning**

It was understood that budgetary constraints and the difficulty in recruiting staff was an issue with street cleaning, where the Council's performance was in the bottom quartile with a 63% satisfaction rating. It was noted that this survey was last carried out in 2003/04 and would be done again in 2006/07. It was noted that the Council was not responsible for cleaning "special" roads or Motorways.

### **Plastic Recycling**

Councillor Manning explained that the current contractor was struggling to collect from the plastic banks before they became full. This company was on a yearly contract but there were a limited number of organisations that could carry out this work.

### **Recycling**

The Council had achieved beacon status for waste collection and recycling. Councillor Manning stated that the recycling rates could be improved further by contacting the parish councils who had lower recycling rates and encouraging them to improve. It was noted that recycling waste was often more expensive than dealing with all waste as refuse.

### **Waste collection**

The Chief Environmental Health Officer explained that ideally the same teams would always collect waste from the same areas, which would ensure consistency of service. However, due to the constraint on resources, teams would sometimes have to cover different areas, which could mean that bins, which were overfilled and had been collected before were now being left. It was understood that the decision to collect an overfull bin was at the discretion of the loader, especially for health and safety reasons.

**Assisted collections**

The Chief Environmental Health Officer explained that residents who wanted an assisted collection would be visited by staff if the request was not straightforward. He advised against asking Members to make these visits as the Council needed to be consistent. It was noted that new development in the District could lead to an increase in the number of plastic sack collections.

**Enviro-Crime**

It was understood that the Council were focussing on prosecuting fly-tippers and this strategy was being publicised.

**Taxi-Licensing**

Councillor Manning expressed disappointment in a recent news article on taxi licensing which failed to recognise that this Council carried out targeted inspections which focussed on the older licenses, compared to other authorities who merely carried out random inspections.

**Street cleaning**

Councillor Manning explained that the Council was responsible for cleaning the streets in the District, but the County Council was responsible for clearing the gutters of weeds. It was noted that at a recent CALC meeting it had been stated that the strength of weed-killer used by the County Council had been reduced for legal reasons.

Councillor Manning remarked that the Council were liaising with parish councils on the Cleaner Neighbourhoods and Environment Act. He remarked that if there were sufficient funding the Council could ensure that only local people worked on local streets, as this would foster pride in the work carried out.

**Land drainage**

Councillor Manning stated that flooding was a complex issue involving many partners and he suggested that drainage systems were better where the Council had responsibility for the watercourse. The Chief Environmental Health Officer added that one of the challenges was to ensure that owners of land that required drainage work took their responsibilities seriously.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Manning and the Chief Environmental Health Officer for their presentation and informative answers.

**10. MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY SUB-GROUP**

Councillor R Hall, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee and Chairman of the Sub-Group introduced this item on the recommendations made to the Committee.

**Member Training**

The Committee

**AGREED** that modules of the LGIU training course be sent to members of the Committee in regular instalments.

**Webpage**

The Committee **noted** that Councillors Hall and Mrs HM Smith were liaising with officers on ways in which the scrutiny webpage could be improved.

**Committee layout**

The Committee **noted** the Sub-Groups recommendation, agreed to by the Chairman,

that the table layout for the Committee be in a U shape. The Committee agreed that this was a superior layout to the previous formation and it

**RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that the room layout for Cabinet be altered to a U shape.

**11. TO NOTE THE DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

The Committee **NOTED** the following future meeting dates:

**2006:** 19 October, 16 November & 21 December

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

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**The Meeting ended at 5.30 p.m.**

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