



SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING
THURSDAY, 17 JULY 2008

AGENDA AND REPORTS

The law allows Councils to consider a limited range of issues in private session without members of the Press and public being present. Typically, such issues relate to personal details, financial and business affairs, legal privilege and so on. In every case, the public interest in excluding the Press and Public from the meeting room must outweigh the public interest in having the information disclosed to them. The following statement will be proposed, seconded and voted upon.

"I propose that the Press and public be excluded from the meeting during the consideration of the following item number(s) in accordance with Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that, if present, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as defined in paragraph(s) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act."

If exempt (confidential) information has been provided as part of the agenda, the Press and public will not be able to view it. There will be an explanation on the website however as to why the information is exempt.

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, 17 JULY 2008

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

DATED 9 July 2008

GJ HARLOCK
Chief Executive

The Council is committed to improving, for all members of the community, access to its agendas and minutes. We try to take all circumstances into account but, if you have any specific needs, please let us know, and we will do what we can to help you.

AGENDA

PRESENTATION

Prior to the start of the formal meeting, the Chairman will present a certificate and gift to Juli Stallabrass, Assistant Licensing Officer, in recognition of her completion of 25 years' service with the Council.

1. APOLOGIES

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3. MINUTES

To authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 May 2008 as a correct record (**attached**).

(Pages 1 - 12)

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

5. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND THE PUBLIC

5 (a) From Councillor SGM Kindersley to the New Communities Portfolio Holder

'During the 2008 election campaign the Conservatives highlighted the importance of saving our Post Offices from closure. Now that the list of Post Offices selected for closure is in the public domain could the Conservative Executive please tell Council exactly what steps are being taken by the Conservatives to save the South Cambridgeshire Post Offices from closure? I would appreciate full timings and costings. In addition, an indication how much officer time the Conservatives intend to focus on this important issue (and election commitment) would be useful.'

5 (b) From Councillor Mrs HM Smith to the Environmental Services Portfolio Holder

I welcome the recent introduction of paper recycling at village colleges. Schools should be leading the way in recycling, and educating responsible citizens for the future. What are the council's plans for expanding recycling services for village colleges to include, for example, plastics, and kitchen waste?

5 (c) From Councillor Mrs BZD Smith to the Deputy Leader and Housing Portfolio Holder

This Council is presently engaged in an important and expensive consultation exercise with its tenants regarding the subject of possible housing stock transfer.

Surely sound communication must be at the heart of any credible consultation. Yet, we have seen an inconsistent manner of planning local drop-in sessions, in which the onus may be on the local community to request a drop-in session, and in which local members are not informed or consulted until invitations have gone out or indeed drop-in sessions have taken place. The announcement that the ballot for the shadow board was flawed and must be re-administered further undermines confidence in the council's ability to communicate effectively during this critical exercise. What reassurances can the PFH offer?

6. PETITIONS

To note all petitions received since the last Council meeting.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:

7 (a) Food Safety Service Plan (Cabinet, 3 July 2008)

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the Food and Safety Plan 2008/09 be approved.

The Plan, recommended for approval by the Cabinet, is available to view using this [link to the Council's website \(www.scambs.gov.uk\)](http://www.scambs.gov.uk) Alternatively, please contact Democratic Services to receive a copy, telephone (01954) 713016, e-mail democratic.services@scambs.gov.uk

7 (b) Member Development Strategy 2008-2011 (Cabinet, 3 July 2008)

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the Member Development Strategy 2008-2011 be adopted, subject to an amendment to Section one to reflect that consultation with group leaders on the development of the strategy had taken place on an informal basis.

The strategy, considered by the Cabinet, is available to view using this [link to the Council's website \(www.scambs.gov.uk\)](http://www.scambs.gov.uk). The final version will be included in the revised edition of the Members' Toolkit which will be distributed shortly to all Members. Please contact Democratic Services to receive a hard copy, telephone (01954) 713016, e-mail democratic.services@scambs.gov.uk

7 (c) Housing Futures: New landlord selection panel (Housing Portfolio Holder's meeting, 8 July 2008)

The Leader of the Council, exercising the powers of the Housing Portfolio Holder in his absence, **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the conclusion of the New Landlord Selection Process be supported and that a new standalone local housing association be **AGREED** as the preferred model of a new local housing association landlord, should tenants vote in favour of a housing transfer.

The papers considered by the Leader of the Council can be viewed using the following [link to the Council's website](#) (Agenda item 3 refers), www.scambs.gov.uk. Alternatively please contact Democratic Services to obtain a hard copy, telephone 01954 713016 e-mail democratic.services@scambs.gov.uk.

7 (d) Housing Futures - Managing conflicts of interest (Housing Portfolio Holder's meeting, 8 July 2008)

The Leader of the Council, exercising the powers of the Housing Portfolio Holder in his absence, **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the protocol to guide members and employees involved in a potential housing transfer, attached to the report submitted to the Portfolio Holder's meeting, be adopted subject to the following change:

Paragraph 4.1.5: Refer to 'commercially sensitive' not 'confidential' information.

The report and protocol considered by the Leader of the Council can be viewed using the following [link to the Council's website](#) (www.scambs.gov.uk). Please contact Democratic Services to obtain a copy of the protocol, telephone (01954) 713016 e-mail democratic.services@scambs.gov.uk

8. RECOMMENDATIONS FROM COMMITTEES

8 (a) Appointment of Independent Members to the Standards Committee (Standards Committee, 11 June 2008)

The Standards Committee **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that Article 9.02(c) of the Constitution be amended to provide for the size and composition of Appointments Panels of the Standards Committee to be determined by the Standards Committee and not by its Chairman.

8 (b) Review of Contract Standing Orders (Corporate Governance Committee, 30 June 2008)

The Corporate Governance Committee **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that revised Contract Regulations be adopted as set out at Appendix 1 to the report and incorporated into Part 4 of the Constitution, subject to the correction of minor typographical errors identified by the Committee.

The revised Contract Regulations recommended for approval by the Corporate Governance Committee are available to view using the following [link to the Council's website](#) (www.scambs.gov.uk) Alternatively please contact Democratic Services to

obtain a copy, telephone (01954) 713016 e-mail
democratic.services@scambs.gov.uk

8 (c) Call-in: Service Continuity Arrangements for December and January Holiday Period (Scrutiny and Overview Committee, 3 July 2008)

The Scrutiny and Overview Committee, at its meeting on 3 July 2008, considered the call-in of the following decision of the Staffing Portfolio Holder:

'The Staffing Portfolio Holder **AGREED** that for this year volunteers will be sought from service areas to provide a skeleton service during the Christmas period. The extra statutory days will be added to employee leave entitlement. The concessionary day will be used to close the offices on Friday 2 January 2009. For future Christmas periods, the offices will be open as normal, and application of the concessionary day will be decided annually by the Staffing Portfolio Holder.'

The Committee, *inter alia*:

- (1) **RESOLVED**, in accordance with Scrutiny and Overview Committee Procedure Rule 12.9.2, to refer the decision of the Staffing Portfolio Holder in respect of Service Continuity Arrangements for the December and January holiday period 2008-2009 to Council for consideration.
- (2) **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that an alternative recommendation be made to the Staffing Portfolio Holder that a decision on whether to open the Cambourne offices be deferred until 2009 to enable any subsequent proposal to be supported by a business case, based on firm evidence and subject to appropriate consultation with unions and staff.

Council is invited to consider the Portfolio Holder's decision and recommendation by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee. It may:

- (1) Not object to the Portfolio Holder's original decision, in which case it may be implemented immediately.
- (2) Refer the decision back to the Portfolio Holder with an alternative recommendation. The Portfolio Holder has arranged a meeting on 23 July 2008 at which he may re-consider the matter, amend or confirm his original decision.

Relevant papers considered by the Staffing Portfolio Holder and Scrutiny and Overview Committee are available to view using the following [link to the Council's website \(www.scambs.gov.uk\)](http://www.scambs.gov.uk) Please contact Democratic Services if you wish to receive a hard copy – telephone (01954) 713016 e-mail Richard.may@scambs.gov.uk

8 (d) Proposals for review of the boundary between South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council (Electoral Arrangements Committee, 8 July 2008)

The Electoral Arrangements Committee **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL**:

- (1) That the submission of a request for a review of the administrative boundary between Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council be agreed in principle, on the basis of the proposals outlined previously and

shown on the **attached** plan, subject to definitive assurances from central government that the housing targets fixed in the Regional Spatial Strategy will be readjusted to take account of the numbers of planned new housing going to the City as a result of a boundary review.

- (2) That delegated authority be granted to the Leader and Cabinet to determine the adequacy of any assurances that may be forthcoming and consequently the decision as to whether or not to submit the request.

The report and appendices considered by the Committee are available to view using the following [link to the Council's website \(www.scambs.gov.uk\)](http://www.scambs.gov.uk) - Agenda item 6 refers. Appendix 1 to the report is attached to this Agenda as the proposal recommended by the Committee for agreement (see above). For hard copies of any other relevant paperwork, please contact Democratic Services, telephone (01954) 713016 or e-mail democratic.services@scambs.gov.uk.

(Pages 13 - 14)

8 (e) Arbury Park Parish Review (Electoral Arrangements Committee, 8 July 2008)
Electoral Arrangements Committee **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that;

- i) A reorganisation order be made creating a new parish at Arbury Park with a Council thus amending the parish boundaries of Impington Parish and Milton Parish, by reference to the **attached** plan of the proposed changes;
- ii) The Parish created be called Orchard Park and the council created be styled Orchard Park Community Council;
- iii) Consultation take place on the following electoral arrangements for the new parish council for subsequent confirmation by South Cambridgeshire District Council:
 - The Parish created should not be warded.
 - The council created should consist of 9 councillors, to be elected as soon as is practicable.
 - No changes are required to the electoral arrangements of Impington Parish and Milton Parish.

The report and appendices considered by the Committee are available to view using the following [link to the Council's website \(www.scambs.gov.uk\)](http://www.scambs.gov.uk) - Agenda item 7 refers. The document entitled 'Parish Review – Arbury leaflet' is attached to this Agenda as it contains the proposal recommended by the Committee for agreement (see above). For hard copies of any other relevant paperwork, please contact Democratic Services, telephone (01954) 713016 or e-mail democratic.services@scambs.gov.uk.

(Pages 15 - 16)

9. RECOMMENDATIONS BY THE CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING PARTY:

9 (a) Changes to Council Standing Orders (Constitution Review Working Party, 1 July 2008)
(A) COUNCIL STANDING ORDERS 7 AND 16 – ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN AND VOTING ON APPOINTMENTS

The Constitution Review Working Party **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that:

- (1) The following wording be added to Standing Order 7.1 (proposed additions marked in bold):

“The person presiding at the meeting may exercise any power or duty of the Chairman, **except where there is equality of votes on an appointment, in which case the provisions of Standing Order 16.7 below shall be followed.** Where these Standing Orders apply to committee or sub-committee meetings, references to the Chairman also include the Chairman of committees and sub-committees.”

- (2) The following wording be added to Standing Order 7.2:

“The Chairman of Council shall preside over the election of Chairmen of Committees and Sub-Committees of the Council. Where the Chairman of Council is not present, the Chief Executive or an officer nominated by him or her may preside at the election of the Chairman but **neither** shall be entitled to vote. In the event of a tie, the provisions of Standing Order 16.7 below shall be followed.”

- (3) The following wording be added to Council Standing Order 16.2:

“If there are equal numbers of votes for and against, the Chairman will have a second or casting vote. There will be no restriction on how the Chairman chooses to exercise a casting vote. **This Standing Order shall not apply to situations in which there is equality of voting between two candidates on an appointment. In such cases, the provisions of Standing Order 16.7 below shall apply.**”

(B) COUNCIL STANDING ORDER 14.6 – AMENDMENTS TO MOTIONS

The Constitution Review Working Party **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the following wording be added to Standing Order 14.6:

“14.6(b – subsequent paragraphs re-numbered accordingly):

The Chairman may request the mover and seconder of the original Motion to indicate whether they are prepared to accept the amendment through its incorporation into their Motion. If they are willing to do so, and the mover of the amendment gives their consent, the original Motion will stand altered accordingly, the amendment shall be deemed withdrawn and debate proceed on the original Motion, as altered. If they are not willing to do so, consideration of the amendment shall proceed in accordance with the normal rules of debate.”

9 (b) Amendment to Article 15 - Review and revision of the Constitution (Constitution Review Working Party, 1 July 2008)

The Constitution Review Working Party **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

- (1) That the following additional paragraph to Article 15.03 be agreed:

‘The Chief Executive is authorised, in consultation with the Chairman and Leader of Council and Monitoring Officer, to agree and incorporate:

- (a) Factual changes to the Constitution, for example to reflect changes in job titles or the management structure, and
- (b) Changes which are required by new legislation which the Council has

no choice but to make
A schedule detailed changes made under this provision shall be reported
to the Annual Meeting of the Council.”

- (2) That the following change to Article 15.04 (Constitution Review Working Party) be agreed:

“The Council may establish a Constitution Review Working Party to bring forward proposals **which, in the opinion of the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer, entail substantive** changes to the Constitution for consideration by the Council, **excluding matters which are specifically included within the remit of other bodies of the Council.**”

10. CONSULTATIONS ON MOVE TO FOUR-YEARLY ELECTIONS AND CHANGES TO EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS
Report and appendices **attached.**

Recommendations – Move to Four-yearly elections (from paragraph 18 of the report)

Council is recommended to consider the issues set out in paragraphs 1-9 of the report and resolve:

- (a) To consult on a move to four-yearly elections.
- (b) That, subject to additional information being included explaining why the issue is being revisited at this time, the consultation exercise be undertaken based on the methods and timescale used 2006, final details to be agreed by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman and Leader.
- (c) That the results of the consultation be submitted to an Extraordinary Meeting of Council in May 2009 for consideration.

Recommendations – Changes to Executive arrangements (from paragraph 19 of the report)

Council is recommended to resolve:

- (a) That an article explaining the proposed changes described in paragraph 13 of the report be included in the Winter 2008 issue of the Council's residents' magazine, and that the proposals be also publicised on the Council's website and available to view at the Council Offices.
- (b) That the revised proposals be submitted to the Annual Meeting of Council on 21 May 2009 for adoption, such changes to have effect from this date.

(Pages 17 - 32)

11. APPOINTMENT OF PARISH COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE 2008/09-2012/13

To note the appointments of Councillor Bob Bryant, Orwell Parish Council, and Councillor Chris Tomsett, Gamlingay Parish Council, to the Standards Committee as Parish Council Members to serve four-year terms ending 11 June 2012.

12. STANDARDS COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

At its Annual Meeting on 22 May 2008, Council resolved, *inter alia*:

‘That authority be delegated to the Standards Committee to make all necessary amendments to the "Procedure for Local Investigation of Referred Complaints" and "Procedure for Local Standards Hearings" currently contained in Part 5 Section M and N of the Council's Constitution to take effect as amendments to the constitution immediately after the meeting of the Standards Committee on 11 June 2008 with the new procedures to be reported back to the next meeting of Council for information.’

The Committee agreed the necessary changes to these procedures at its meeting on 11 June 2008. The Committee also agreed new procedures for the local assessment and review of complaints, which, for consistency, Council is recommended to approve for incorporation in the Constitution alongside the investigation and hearing procedures.

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

- (1) **NOTE** the incorporation of the new and revised procedures in Part 5 of the Constitution.
- (2) **APPROVE** the Procedures for the Local Assessment and Review of Complaints for incorporation into Part 5 of the Constitution.

The assessment, review, investigation and hearing procedure documents have been published with the electronic version of this agenda. To obtain a hard copy, please contact Democratic Services, telephone (01954) 713016 e-mail democratic.services@scambs.gov.uk

13. APPOINTMENT TO THE SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

To receive a request by the Convenor of the Independent Group to alter his group's representation on the Scrutiny and Overview Committee through the appointment of Councillor Mrs DP Roberts in place of Councillor NS Davies.

14. APPOINTMENT TO THE PAPWORTH HOSPITAL NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

Council, at its last meeting, deferred the appointment of a representative to the Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust pending clarification of meeting dates and times for the Board of Governors.

Meetings of the Board of Governors are scheduled to take place on **Thursday 18 September** and **Thursday 25 November 2008**, both at **10.30am**. Meeting dates for 2009 have yet to be confirmed, however it is anticipated that they will continue to be held on Thursday mornings at 10.30am.

Council is **RECOMMENDED**, in light of this additional information, to appoint a representative to the Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust for a 4-year period ending on the date of the Annual Council Meeting in May 2012.

15. UPDATES FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

16. NOTICES OF MOTION

16 (a) Standing in the name of Councillors PW Topping and RE Barrett

'Council considers that the current Standing Order 4.1(b) preventing substitution by Executive (Cabinet) members on committees is unduly restrictive and should be removed. The rule was introduced for consistency with the rule preventing Executive Members from sitting as ordinary members of committees. In several cases, application of this rule has prevented full attendance at committees which could otherwise have been achieved through substitution by experienced Councillors who have received the appropriate training. Such a situation is damaging for local democracy and has the potential to detract from the overall quality of decisions, therefore this Council resolves that Standing Order 4.1(b) be deleted.'

16 (b) Standing in the names of Councillors SGM Kindersley and JF Williams

'This Council deplores the appointment of a non-Executive Councillor to represent this Council's interests at the East of England Regional Assembly.'

16 (c) Standing in the name of Councillor Mrs DP Roberts

'This Council is greatly concerned about the effect on its reputation following the disclosures that Cabinet Members' very public pronouncements regarding its policy and procedures on bin collection have proven not to have been true.'

17. CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS

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

CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

Date

Venue / Event

23 May

Handover event at Milton Country Park

26 May

Laid wreath at American Cemetery, Madingley

27 May

Greeting HRH The Duchess of Gloucester at Papworth Hospital to celebrate 50 years of cardiac surgery

29 May

Cambridge City Council dinner in honour of the outgoing Mayor

25 June

Beating Retreat, Bassingbourn Barracks

27 June

Bourn Airfield to greet Swavesey Village College students receiving a community project award

1 July

Comberton Village College to greet the Earl of Wessex

VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL

Date

Venue / Event

23 May

Handover event at Milton Country Park

8 June

TA 100-year at Ely Cathedral with Councillor Richard Barrett

20 June

Annual Tea Party with Mayor of Cambridge

21 June

Opening of Moat, Stapleford Primary School

6 July

Civic Service at Huntingdon with the Town Mayor

15 July

Civic Reception with the High Sheriff of Cambridgeshire

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

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 22 May 2008 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor JH Stewart – Chairman
Councillor RE Barrett – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: Dr DR Bard, Mrs VM Barrett, JD Batchelor, Mrs PM Bear, AN Berent, D Bird, NCF Bolitho, FWM Burkitt, BR Burling, TD Bygott, NN Cathcart, Mrs PS Corney, NS Davies, Dr DR de Lacey, Miss JA Dipple, Mrs SJO Doggett, SM Edwards, Mrs SM Ellington, Mrs VG Ford, Mrs JM Guest, R Hall, Dr SA Harangozo, Mrs SA Hatton, Mrs EM Heazell, JA Hockney, MP Howell, Mrs CA Hunt, SGM Kindersley, MB Loynes, RMA Manning, RB Martlew, MJ Mason, RM Matthews, DC McCraith, DH Morgan, Mrs LA Morgan, Mrs CAED Murfitt, CR Nightingale, AG Orgee, A Riley, Mrs DP Roberts, NJ Scarr, Ms BZD Smith, Mrs HM Smith, RT Summerfield, PW Topping, RJ Turner, Dr SEK van de Ven, Mrs BE Waters, JF Williams, TJ Wotherspoon and NIC Wright

Officers:	Catriona Dunnett	Principal Solicitor
	Steve Hampson	Executive Director
	Greg Harlock	Chief Executive
	Richard May	Democratic Services Manager

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors JP Chatfield, PT Johnson and Mrs JE Lockwood.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

In accordance with Council Standing Order 7, the Chief Executive presided over the receipt of nominations for the position of Chairman of Council. Councillor JH Stewart left the room for the duration of the election.

On the nomination of Councillor RMA Manning, seconded by Councillor SGM Kindersley, and there being no further nomination, Council

RESOLVED that Councillor JH Stewart be elected Chairman of the Council for the 2008-2009 Civic Year.

Councillor Stewart took the Chair, accepted the office and signed the declaration of acceptance. He thanked Council for electing him as Chairman and advised that he considered it to be an honour and a privilege.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

Prior to seeking nominations for this position, the Chairman of Council expressed his disappointment that Councillor RE Barrett was not standing for reappointment as Vice-Chairman of Council. The Chairman took the opportunity to thank Councillor Barrett for his help and support over the past year.

Councillor RE Barrett thanked the Chairman for his kind words and Council's staff and Members for ensuring he had thoroughly enjoyed his term as Vice-Chairman.

Councillor CR Nightingale was proposed by Councillor RE Barrett and seconded by Councillor AG Orgee. Councillor Mrs CAED Murfitt was proposed by Councillor SGM Kindersley, seconded by Councillor A Riley. Both candidates left the room for the duration of the election. On a vote being taken by secret ballot, with the count showing

Councillor Mrs CAED Murfitt – 17 votes
Councillor CR Nightingale – 29 votes
Spoilt ballot papers – 5,

Council

RESOLVED that Councillor CR Nightingale be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council for the 2008-2009 Civic Year.

Councillor Nightingale accepted the office and signed the declaration of acceptance. He thanked his predecessor Council Barrett and Council for appointing him to the office of Vice-Chairman and advised that he looked forward to serving the Council and supporting the Chairman.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

4. **MINUTES**

Council **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2008 be approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

- **Minute 81 (Question by Mr. Corness):** 'Physical' not 'psychical' harm.
- **Minute 87b (Motion standing in the name of Councillor SGM Kindersley):** Clarification that the Principal Solicitor's advice related to Hanley Grange not Northstowe. Reference to Northstowe to be deleted.
- **Minute 87b (Motion standing in the name of Councillor SGM Kindersley):** Clarification that the Motion was passed unanimously.

5. **MINUTES OF THE POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 9 APRIL 2008**

Council **RESOLVED** that the Minutes of the Policy Development Committee held on 9 April 2008 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman of Council, subject to an amendment to Minute 58 (Operating Guidelines for Portfolio Holder meetings) to clarify that the Committee had not endorsed the report unanimously.

6. **REPORT OF THE RETURNING OFFICER**

The Report of the Returning Officer was **RECEIVED**. New members were welcomed to the Council and returning members congratulated on their re-election.

7. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman thanked Council for its generosity in raising £700 for Camsight, his nominated charity during the past year, before announcing that his nominated charity for 2008-2009 was Cancer Research UK.

8. **ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

Councillor RMA Manning was proposed by Councillor NIC Wright and seconded by Councillor SM Edwards. Councillor SGM Kindersley was proposed by Councillor JD Batchelor, seconded by Councillor A Riley. Both candidates left the room for the duration of the election. On a vote being taken by secret ballot, with the count showing

Councillor SGM Kindersley – 20 votes
 Councillor RMA Manning – 30 votes
 Spoilt ballot papers – 1,

Council

RESOLVED that Councillor RMA Manning be elected Leader of the Council for the 2008-2009 Civic Year.

Councillor Manning thanked Council for electing him Leader and advised that he looked forward to leading the Council's continuing improvement.

9. **QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND THE PUBLIC**

There were no questions from Councillors or the public.

10. **PETITIONS**

No petitions had been submitted since the last meeting.

11. **TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS**

11 (a) **Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2007-2010 (Housing and Environmental Services Portfolio Holder's meeting, 28 April 2008)**

Councillor RMA Manning moved, Councillor SM Edwards seconded and Council **RESOLVED** that the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan 2008/09-2012/13 be approved.

11 (b) **Appointment of District Council representatives to Shadow board for potential new housing association (Housing Options Portfolio Holder, 12 May 2008)**

Councillor SM Edwards moved, Councillor RMA Manning seconded and Council **RESOLVED** that five district councillors be appointed to the Shadow Housing Association Board, appointments to be in accordance with the rules of political proportionality, as follows:

Conservative (3)

RE Barrett
 NCF Bolitho
 PW Topping

Liberal Democrat (1)

Mrs EM Heazell

Independent (1)

Mrs SA Hatton

12. TERMS OF REFERENCE OF COMMITTEES 2008-2009

12 (a) Scrutiny and Overview Committee

Council **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the revisions to Article 6 (Scrutiny and Overview), Part 4 (Scrutiny and Overview Procedure Rules) and Part 5 (Procedural Guidance: Addressing Scrutiny and Overview Committee) be agreed as set out in the Agenda for incorporation into the Constitution.
- (2) That the Chief Executive be authorised to make other minor textual changes to the Constitution, removing references to the Policy Development Committee where necessary.

12 (b) Standards Committee

Council **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That a revised Article 9 be approved as set out in the Agenda for incorporation into the Constitution, subject to the quorum for Standards Committee meetings being three not four (Article 9.02g), amended to enable the Council's statutory obligations to be met and to remove the restriction preventing Executive (Cabinet) Members being members of the Standards Committee.
- (2) That revisions to Table One of Part 3 be approved as set out in the Agenda for incorporation into the Constitution, amended to enable the Council's statutory obligations to be met.
- (3) That authority be delegated to the Standards Committee to make all necessary amendments to the "Procedure for Local Investigation of Referred Complaints" and "Procedure for Local Standards Hearings" currently contained in Part 5 Section M and N of the Council's Constitution to take effect as amendments to the constitution immediately after the meeting of the Standards Committee on 11 June 2008 with the new procedures to be reported back to the next meeting of Council for information.

12 (c) Other Committees

Council **RESOLVED** that no changes be made to the Terms of Reference of the following committees:

- Licensing Committee, Licensing Committee (2003 Act), Licensing Committee (2005 Gambling Act);
- Planning Committee;
- Employment Committee;
- Electoral Arrangements Committee;
- Corporate Governance Committee.

13. **SIZE OF, AND APPOINTMENTS TO, COMMITTEES AND JOINT COMMITTEES OF THE COUNCIL**

Council considered the size of, and appointments to, Committees and Joint Committees for 2008-2009.

Councillor JD Batchelor moved and Councillor A Riley seconded a proposal to increase the size of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee from 12 to 15 Members. The Motion, on being put, was declared lost.

Council **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the membership of the Licensing Committee, Licensing Committee (2003 Act) and Licensing Committee (2005 Gambling Act) be increased from 12 to 15 Members.
- (2) That the following appointments to Committees and Joint Committees be made for the 2008-2009 civic year:

Licensing Committee, Licensing Committee (2003 Act), Licensing Committee (2005 Gambling Act)

15 Members

Conservative (8)

RE Barrett
Mrs VM Barrett
Mrs JM Guest
R Hall
Mrs CA Hunt
MB Loynes
RM Matthews
DC McCraith

Lib Dem (4)

Mrs PM Bear
Mrs EM Heazell
RB Martlew
JF Williams

Ind (2)

A Riley
NJ Scarr

Non-group (1)

Mrs CAED Murfitt

Planning Committee

14 Members

Conservative (8)

BR Burling
TD Bygott
Mrs PS Corney
Mrs JM Guest
Mrs CA Hunt
MB Loynes
CR Nightingale
RJ Turner

Lib Dem (4)

Mrs PM Bear
SGM Kindersley
Mrs HM Smith
JF Williams

Ind (2)

Mrs DP Roberts
Mrs SA Hatton

Scrutiny and Overview Committee

12 Members

Conservative (7)

Mrs VM Barrett
Ms JA Dipple
R Hall
JA Hockney
MB Loynes

Lib Dem (3)

JD Batchelor
Mrs EM Heazell
Mrs BZD Smith

Ind (2)

MJ Mason
NS Davies

PW Topping
Mrs BE Waters

Employment Committee

7 Members

Conservative (3)*	Lib Dem (2)	Ind (1)
RE Barrett	Mrs EM Heazell	A Riley
BR Burling	RT Summerfield	
RJ Turner		

*Plus the Portfolio Holder with responsibility for staffing matters

Electoral Arrangements Committee

7 Members

Conservative (4)	Lib Dem (2)	Ind (1)
NCF Bolitho	RT Summerfield	NJ Scarr
RM Matthews	JF Williams	
RJ Turner		
Mrs BE Waters		

Corporate Governance Committee

7 Members

Conservative (4)	Lib Dem (2)	Ind (1)
NCF Bolitho	JD Batchelor	Dr D de Lacey
FWM Burkitt	RT Summerfield	
Mrs JM Guest		
TJ Wotherspoon		

JOINT COMMITTEES

Northstowe Joint Development Control Committee

6 Members (plus 3 alternatives and one spokesperson)

Conservative (3)	Lib Dem (2)	Ind (1)
Mrs PS Corney	JD Batchelor	A Riley
SM Edwards	SGM Kindersley	MJ Mason (alt)
TJ Wotherspoon	Mrs PM Bear (alt)	
DC McCraith (alt)		

Fringe Sites Joint Development Control Committee

6 Members (plus 3 alternatives and one spokesperson)

Conservative (3)	Lib Dem (2)	Ind (1)
Dr DR Bard	SGM Kindersley	Dr D de Lacey
CR Nightingale	Mrs HM Smith	NJ Scarr (alt)
AG Orgee	JF Williams (alt)	
TJ Wotherspoon (alt)		

Joint Planning Policy Committee

3 Members (plus one substitute)

Conservative (2)	Lib Dem (1)
-------------------------	--------------------

Dr DR Bard
RMA Manning
SM Edwards (sub)

SGM Kindersley

SUBSTITUTE (1
per group)

14. DISTRICT COUNCIL APPOINTMENTS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Council **RESOLVED**:

- (1) That Councillor AG Orgee be appointed to the Standards Committee until 22 May 2012 or until he is no longer a member of the district council.
- (2) That Councillor NN Cathcart be appointed to the Standards Committee until 22 May 2012 or until he is no longer a member of the district council.
- (3) That Councillors R Hall (Conservative), Dr JE Lockwood (Liberal Democrat) and Mrs SJO Doggett (Independent) be appointed the Standards Committee. These Members to serve until 22 May 2012, or until they are no longer members of the district council.
- (4) That Councillor Mrs CAED Murfitt be appointed to the Standards Committee for a 4-year term expiring on 22 May 2012, or until she is no longer a member of the district council.

15. APPOINTMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION REVIEW WORKING PARTY

Council **RESOLVED** that the following Members be appointed to the Constitution Review Working Party for the 2008-2009 Civic Year:

Conservative (1)	Lib Dem (1)	Ind (1)
R Hall	RT Summerfield	NJ Scarr

(Plus the following appointments by office: Chairman of Council, Leader and Deputy Leader of Council, Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee)

16. APPOINTMENTS TO THE CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP 2008-2009

Council considered the appointment of Members to the Climate Change Working Group for the 2008-2009 Civic Year.

Councillor A Riley proposed and Councillor Dr SEK van de Ven seconded a proposal that the working group be increased from 9 to 15 Members. The proposal, on being put, was declared lost.

Council requested that the working group consider the co-option of non-voting Members during 2008-2009 in order to maximise contributions from non-group councillors.

Council **RESOLVED** that the following appointments be made to the Climate Change Working Group for the 2008-2009 Civic Year:

9 Members

Conservative (5)	Lib Dem (3)	Ind (1)
VG Ford	AN Berent	Dr D de Lacey
R Hall	Dr SA Harangozo	
JA Hockney	Dr SEK van de Ven	

CR Nightingale
PW Topping

17. **APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE, JOINT AND OTHER MEMBER BODIES**

Council **RESOLVED**:

- (1) That appointments to outside, joint and other Member bodies be agreed as directed within the **attached** schedule.
- (2) That the appointment of a representative to the Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust be deferred to the next meeting pending clarification of meeting dates and times for this organisation.
- (3) That table of appointments by office (attached to the Agenda), to be confirmed by Cabinet at its meeting on 12 June 2008, be noted.
- (4) That Councillor Mrs JM Guest be appointed as alternative Member to the North Hertfordshire and District Citizens Advice Bureau.

18. **NOTIFICATION OF APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO CABINET 2008-2009**

At this point in the meeting, the Leader of the Council announced the appointment of Members to the Cabinet and the allocation of Portfolio responsibilities as follows:

Deputy Leader and Housing	Councillor SM Edwards
Planning	Councillor NIC Wright
New Communities	Councillor Dr DR Bard
Staffing	Councillor MP Howell
Finance	Councillor AG Orgee
Environmental Services	Councillor Mrs SM Ellington

The Leader announced that he would be taking the Portfolio for Corporate Policy, Partnership Working and Communications.

19. **ANNUAL REPORT INTO SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW AT SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Council **RECEIVED** the Annual Report into Overview and Scrutiny at South Cambridgeshire District Council. Council welcomed the report and thanked the Scrutiny Development Officer for her hard work throughout the year. Members also took the opportunity to thank the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, Chairman of the Policy Development Committee and Chairman of the Arbury Task and Finish Group for their work, as well as villages which had hosted meetings and shown great interest in attending to ask questions about the Council's services and the Senior Democratic Services Officer for his efforts in arranging meetings around the district.

20. **MAJOR OPPOSITION GROUP LEADER'S ANNUAL REPORT**

Council **RECEIVED** the Annual Report of the Major Opposition Group Leader on the work of the Group during the past year. Councillor Kindersley introduced his report, paid tribute to the work of his predecessor, Councillor Batchelor, before requesting clarification in respect of the actual wording that may be used in a ballot of tenants to determine their support for the transfer of the housing stock.

Councillor SM Edwards responded to the report on behalf of the Controlling Group, as

part of which he confirmed that tenants would be asked whether they supported the transfer of the Council's housing stock, being invited to answer 'yes' or 'no'.

Councillor A Riley responded to the report on behalf of the Independent Group.

21. CLIMATE CHANGE WORKING GROUP ANNUAL REPORT

Council **RECEIVED** the Annual Report of the Climate Change Working Group. Councillor Dr SA Harangozo, Chairman of the Climate Change Working Group, presented the report, advising that the Council's key challenges for the future involved establishing how its carbon emissions could be lowered through reducing consumption and maximising the proportion obtained from renewable sources. Dr. Harangozo pointed to the Northstowe project as a successful example of development in which the aspirations of the working group had converged with those of the Local Planning Authority, resulting in robust sustainability targets for the developers. Despite successes such as this, a wider dialogue was still required regarding the implications of climate change for the authority, and to this end a number of presentations would be arranged during the coming year at which this issue could be explored in greater detail.

22. WRITE-OFFS: ANNUAL REPORT

Council **NOTED** the debts written off under powers delegated to the Resources Portfolio Holder and the Chief Financial Officer as required by the Constitution. Council took the opportunity to thank officers for their work in ensuring that the amounts written off represented tiny fractions of total amounts collected.

23. NOMINATION OF REPRESENTATIVE TO ATTEND THE LGA ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Council **RESOLVED**:

- (1) That no representative be nominated to attend the Annual Conference of the Local Government Association;
- (2) That the decision be delegated in future years to the Leader of the Council.

24. UPDATES FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor VG Ford advised that she had attended an event at Churchill College, Cambridge, to mark the launch of the sub-national review of regional governance to replace the existing East of England Regional Assembly. The proposal was to establish an unelected Regional Development Agency, thus diminishing the role of elected Members. Councillor Ford urged Council to respond to consultation on the proposal which was currently underway.

Councillor SM Edwards advised that an appeal panel had allowed an appeal to retain the Oakington and Girton school buses. Council joined Councillor Edwards in welcoming this development.

Councillor MJ Mason provided the following report from the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway Local Liaison Forum meetings:

'Further to my written report submitted to Council at its January meeting, I have to report that subsequent meetings of the forum have not seen any improvement in public relations and flow of information from the County Council, their managing agents, WS

Atkins, and the Contractors, Nuttalls. Indeed, I have found it necessary to deal with a number of complaints from residents and businesses as the construction proceeds through Histon and Impington in close proximity to dwellings and public rights of way. Problems have included excessive lopping of trees, diesel fumes from plant operating continuously, dust and noise from construction traffic. Whilst some of these problems have been addressed following visits from local Members and Environmental Health Officers, the continued refusal by the county and contractors to give proper advance notice of the work affecting public rights of way, and a total absence of design and method statements in advance of such work, continue to create unnecessary tension with local residents and elected members of all three authorities. I am copying with this note an e-mail sent earlier this week, following the forum meeting last Wednesday when members were presented with the draft design proposals for the Arbury Park section of the system. I quote from that e-mail as follows:

“Two years into the design contract, members were informed that the system will now be unguided for most of the distance around the new development. This represents a major departure and design change and is contrary to all previous information released at the public inquiry. This very late design change comes on top of the recent disclosures concerning Regional Social Landlords building homes in the wrong place. Please refer to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee’s interim report on Arbury Park. I informed the forum that Mr. Menzies is due to appear before the Committee, and have asked the Scrutiny Development Officer to expedite this.”

I ask that Council note these recent developments and give full support to Scrutiny and Overview Committee in order to try to ensure that residents of Arbury Park are not subjected to the inconvenience and disruption experienced by residents of the surrounding villages over the last few months. It is indeed somewhat ironic that the local press seem almost to discount the inconvenience to South Cambridgeshire residents when compared to the severe disruption on Hills Road over the next ten months.”

Councillor Mason went on to report on the recent meeting of the Old West Internal Drainage Board. He referred specifically to correspondence from the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, details of which would be circulated to all Members via the Weekly Bulletin.

Councillor DH Morgan requested that the parishes of Bourn, Eltisley and Croxton be named as part of the Council’s reply to the consultation by the National Air Traffic Service.

25. CHAIRMAN'S AND VICE-CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS

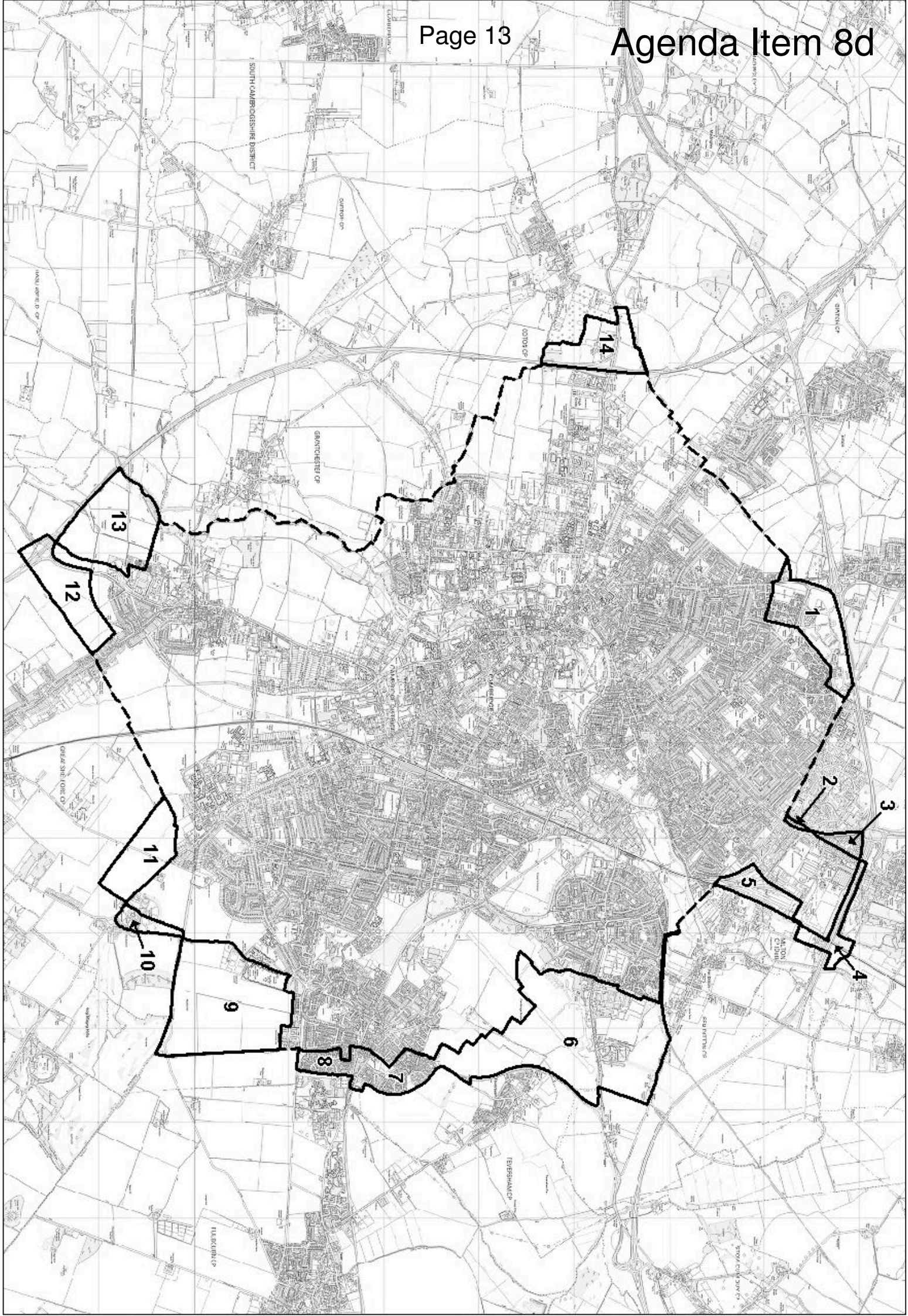
Council noted the list of engagements attended by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman since February 2008. Council was advised that the official opening of conference facilities had taken place at Duxford on 13 March, not Little Abington as stated in the Agenda. Council was further advised that the Chairman had attended the official opening of the Canmore Development at Bucking Way Business Park, Swavesey.

The Meeting ended at 5.29 p.m.

ANNUAL COUNCIL – APPENDIX TO MINUTE 17
22 MAY 2008
Outside, Joint and other Member Bodies
Appointments made

Body	APPOINTMENT MADE	Duration (years)
Addenbrooke's NHS Trust Local Authority Working Party	Mrs SM Ellington CR Nightingale	4
Age Concern	NCF Bolitho	4
Association of Impington Action for Sport (IMPACT)	Mrs HM Smith	4
Bassingbourn Village College Centre Management Committee	NN Cathcart	4
Cambridge Airport Relocation Study Member Briefing	RM Matthews	4
Cambridge East Joint Member Reference Group	Dr DR Bard Mrs CA Hunt RJ Turner NIC Wright Mrs HM Smith (reserve)	1
Cambridge Southern Fringe Member Reference Group	Dr DR Bard Mrs EM Heazell CR Nightingale AG Orgee	1
Cambridge Women and Homelessness Group	Mrs EM Heazell	4
Cambridgeshire Association of Youth Clubs (CAYC)	CR Nightingale	4
Cambridgeshire County Council Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee	R Hall	1
		1
Cottenham Village College Sports Centre Management Group	SM Edwards	4
Duxford Airfield Management Liaison Committee	PW Topping	4
Francis John Clear Almshouses, Melbourn	Mrs JM Guest	4
Gamlingay Village College (GVC) Leisure Limited	Mrs BZD Smith	4
Joint Strategic Growth Implementation Committee (JSGIC)	Dr DR Bard RMA Manning SGM Kindersley Subs: SM Edwards NIC Wright JD Batchelor	1

Body	APPOINTMENT MADE	Duration (years)
Joint Transport Forum	Dr DR Bard RMA Manning SGM Kindersley Subs: SM Edwards NIC Wright JD Batchelor	1
Local Area Agreement Joint Accountability Committee	Mrs EM Heazell JA Hockney (reserve)	1
Local Government Arts Forum: Arts Forum for Cambs and Peterborough Steering Group	Dr DR Bard (As Portfolio Holder)	4
Magog Trust	CR Nightingale	4
Melbourn Community Sports Ltd (MCSPLIM)	DC McCraith	4
North West Fringe Member Reference Group	Dr DR Bard TD Bygott Dr D de Lacey Mrs HM Smith	
Old West Internal Drainage Board	BR Burling MJ Mason J Shepperson TJ Wotherspoon	4
Over and Willingham Internal Drainage Board	RMA Manning	4
Papworth Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	<i>Deferred pending confirmation on meeting arrangements for this body</i>	4
Sawston Village College Sports Users' Committee	Mrs SA Hatton	4
	CR Nightingale	4
SOFA (Shifting Offered Furniture Around)	Dr JE Lockwood	4
South Cambs Magazine Editorial Panel	R Hall Mrs CAED Murfitt Dr SEK van de Ven (Plus the Leader of the Council as Portfolio Holder)	1
Swaffham Internal Drainage Board	MJ Mason	4
Swavesey Byeways Advisory Committee	PW Topping	4
Waterbeach Level Internal Drainage Board	MJ Mason	4
West Anglia Crossroads for Carers	Mrs SJO Doggett	4



This page is left blank intentionally.

A new parish for Arbury Park?

Have your say!



Consultation from now to 18 April 2008

The story so far:

Over the summer and autumn of 2007 we looked at options for changing the boundaries of Impington parish in the light of the large number of new homes being built at Arbury Park.

After listening to the views of parish councillors and of residents from Impington and Arbury Park, our Electoral Arrangements Committee recommended we create a new parish for the Arbury Park development.

The new parish of Arbury Park – where?

The proposal is to take all of Arbury Park out of Impington parish to form a new parish, with its own parish council.

If you look at the map on the back of this page, you'll see that the current boundary between Impington and Milton cuts the Cambridge Regional College campus in two. We'd also like to sort this out, so that the whole campus is in Milton parish. The Kings Meadow development, however, would remain part of Impington parish as this is not affected by the growth at Arbury Park.

Why make changes at all?

Residents have told us that Impington and Arbury Park are very different communities with distinct needs. With the growth of Arbury Park, it's felt that current parish arrangements do not properly represent both.

Is this new parish a good idea at the moment?

Some local residents, as well as parish and district councillors, have told us that a new parish with its own new parish council for Arbury Park will :

- allow councillors to focus solely on Arbury Park
- give residents a real say in influencing the future development of the area
- be best placed to influence decisions on community facilities
- decide allocation of resources in the community and set the parish element of the Council Tax
- reflect the identity and interests of the developing Arbury Park community

Also, Cambridge City Council and other parishes gave us their views on possible future adjustments to the boundaries between the city and South Cambridgeshire district. Although perhaps some time off, we should bear in mind that any future boundary changes will likely impact on the new parish.

Send us your views

We would like your views on:

- the creation of a new parish with the boundaries you see on the map overleaf
- whether the new parish should be created now, given the possible future district boundary changes

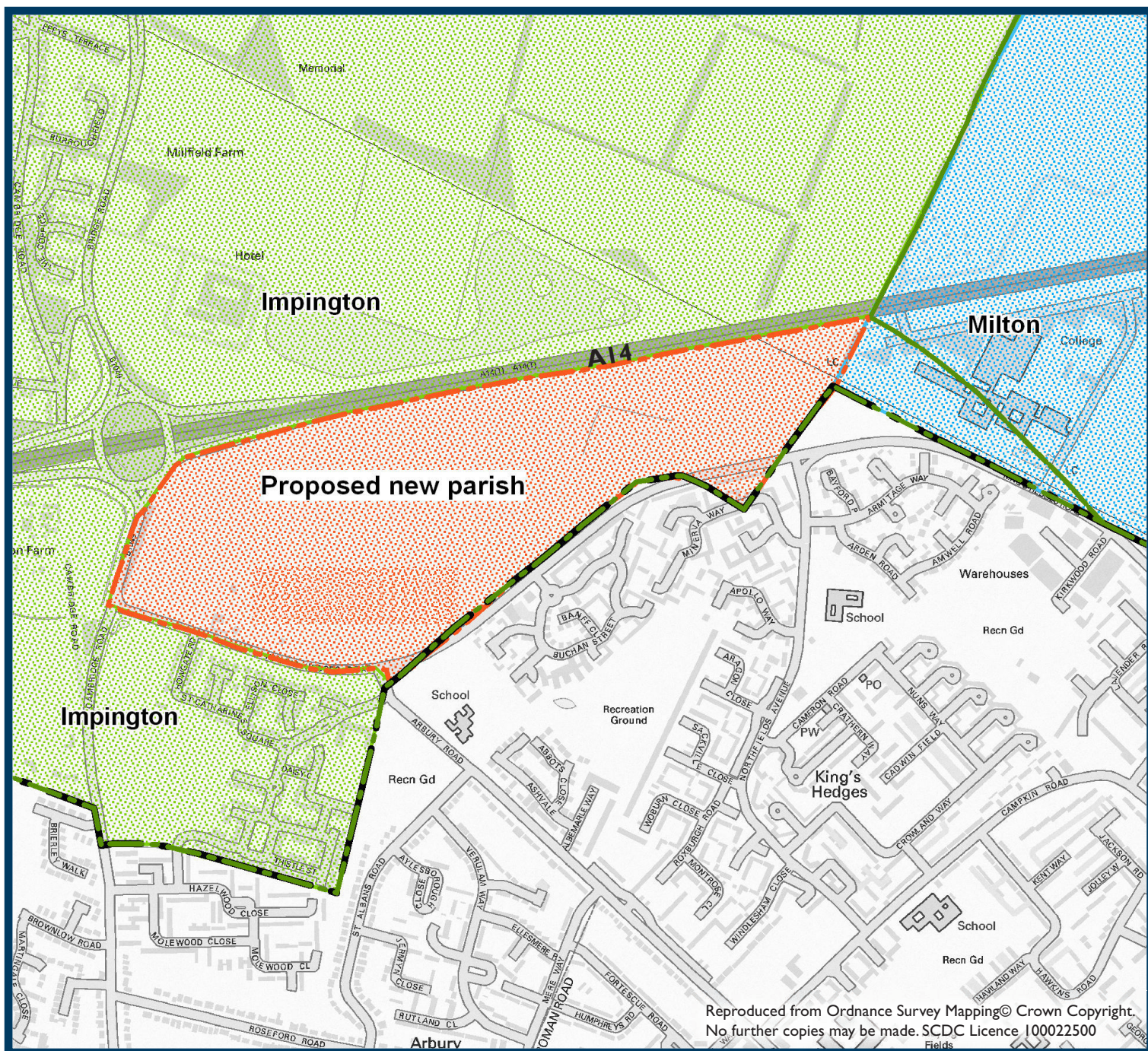
Comments are welcome between now and Friday 18 April 2008.

- online at www.scambs.gov.uk by following the links to 'parish review'
- by email at parishreview@scambs.gov.uk
- write to us at Parish Boundary Review, Community Services, South Cambridgeshire District Council, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6EA

New parish at Arbury Park

A green line graph with three data points. The line starts at a low point, rises to a higher point, and then remains horizontal at that higher level.

Current Impington/Milton boundary line



**South
Cambridgeshire
District Council**

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Council	17 July 2008
AUTHOR/S:	Chief Executive / Democratic Services Manager	

CONSULTATIONS ON:
(1) MOVE TO FOUR-YEARLY ELECTIONS
(2) CHANGES TO EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS

Purpose

1. This report considers significant variations to the Council's governance in respect of the following issues:
 - (a) The electoral cycle, revisited at this time following previous consideration by Council in October 2005, September 2006 and October 2007.
 - (b) The Council's executive arrangements, adopted in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Act (LGA) 2000 but required to be altered following the passing of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act (LGPIH) 2007.

Background – Electoral arrangements

2. The Council currently elects its Members by 'thirds' under a system which sees a third of Members elected in three years out of every four. Following a Resolution in October 2005, Council consulted on a move to all-out elections, under which the election of all 57 Members would take place once every four years. Following this consultation, Council convened an Extraordinary Meeting in September 2006, at which it resolved:

'To **DEFER** 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.'

The report summarising the consultation outcome is **attached** as Appendix A to this report.

3. Council revisited the issue at its meeting on 18 October 2007, at which the matter was again deferred on the grounds that the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Bill was shortly to become law. The Bill was duly passed in November 2007 as the LGPIH Act 2007. It removed the requirement for councils wishing to change their electoral schemes to seek an order by the Secretary of State, thus simplifying and hastening the process for authorities wishing to make changes. The relevant resolution provided for the matter to be brought 'for further consideration in due course', and it is appropriate to revisit the matter at the first Ordinary Council Meeting of the 2008-2009 Civic Year.

Considerations – Electoral arrangements

4. The key provisions of the LGPIH Act 2007 (references within this paragraph are to this Act) with respect to electoral arrangements are as follows:

- The Council may move to “all-out” elections by Resolution. The requirement to seek the consent of the Secretary of State is removed.
- Such a Resolution must be passed after the Council has “taken reasonable steps to consult on the change” (Section 32(4)), within a ‘Permitted Resolution Period’. The current period lasts until 31 December 2010. It is for the council to decide which persons it is appropriate to consult.
- Any Resolution before 31 December 2010 would lead to all-out elections in May 2011 and every four years thereafter. **The resolution must be passed by a majority of at least two-thirds of members voting at a specially convened meeting.**
- The 2010 local elections will take place regardless of the timing of a Resolution to move to all-out elections in order to ensure that the terms of office of Members elected in May 2006 remain four years and are not extended.
- The Council must produce an explanatory document, setting out details of the new electoral scheme as it applies to the Council, ‘as soon as practicable’ after passing the resolution (s35), which it makes publicly available at its offices and through other appropriate means e.g. website, libraries. The council must publicise the following matters:
 - (a) That it has become subject to the scheme for whole-council elections under section 34 of the LGPIH Act 2007;
 - (b) When elections will first take place in accordance with the scheme;
 - (c) How to access the explanatory document;
 - (d) The address of the council’s principal office.
- As soon as practicable after passing the resolution, the Council must give the Electoral Commission notice that it has done so.
- Should a proposal to move to all-out elections fail to gain the required two-thirds majority, the only restriction on the Council revisiting the matter in the future is that, after 31 December 2010, the next opportunities to pass a Resolution will be during further Permitted Resolution Periods between May-December 2014, 2018, and so on (the same consultation and two thirds majority requirements will apply).
- Should such a proposal be agreed, the Council is entitled to revert to electing by thirds at a future date.

Options – Electoral arrangements

5. The Council has two principal options in terms of its electoral arrangements:
 - (a) Resolve to consult on a proposal to move to a scheme of all-out elections, such elections to take place in May 2011 and every four years thereafter.
 - (b) Resolve not to pursue the matter at this stage, thus retaining the current system of elections by thirds.
6. If Council is minded to support option (a) above, it is required to consult on the proposal as required by the LGPIH Act. During 2006, a consultation was carried out via the Council’s quarterly residents’ magazine and letters to parish councils, local MPs and members of the Local Strategic Partnership. This was a relatively recent exercise; however, it is not considered that the previous exercise satisfies the requirements of the new legislation, therefore a further consultation process will be

required. Notwithstanding this, it is not considered that the issues for and against a change have changed significantly, therefore it is **recommended** that, subject to option (a) being supported and additional information being included explaining why the issue is being revisited at this time, the consultation exercise be undertaken based on the methods and timescale used in 2006, final details to be agreed by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman and Leader. It is further **recommended** that the results of the consultation be submitted to an Extraordinary Meeting of Council in May 2009 for consideration.

7. Copies of the consultation documents circulated to residents, parish councils, MPs and the Local Strategic Partnership membership in 2006 are **attached** as Appendices B and C respectively to this report.
8. In order to inform Members' debate whether to proceed to consultation on this matter, Council should note particularly that any subsequent resolution to move to all-out elections requires two thirds of Members voting in favour at the meeting. Given the Council's current political make-up, a high level of support from across the Council's political groups will be required, notwithstanding the results of any consultation exercise.
9. There are a number of arguments for and against a move to all-out elections which, based on the 2006 consultation document, can be summarised as follows:

The case for the present system 'Electing by Thirds'	The case for the proposed change 'All Out' elections
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps voters focus on local issues, which might otherwise be overshadowed by national issues and campaigning by political parties. • Allows more gradual change at the Council, rather than the possibility of big political change every four years. New councillors can learn from more experienced ones. • "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." • Keeps councillors responsive to local issues and accountable to their local electorate, particularly in wards with more than one district councillor. • The proposed change could confuse voters by holding all district and parish council elections at the same time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raises the local profile of the elections. Every voter could consider the local issues and choose their councillors at the same time. • Provides greater certainty in planning ahead over four years, with less risk of annual changes of power and policy. New councillors could still learn from more experienced ones. • Could save £80,000 every four years in the costs of running elections. • Increases accountability through greater public interest and higher voter turn-out, particularly in wards with more than one district councillor. • The present system can cause confusion and voter fatigue through frequent elections in multi-councillor wards.

Background and issues – Changes to Executive Arrangements

10. The Local Government Act 2000 prescribed three models of 'executive arrangements' and every principal authority in England and Wales was required to adopt either a Leader and Cabinet, Mayor and Cabinet or Mayor and Council Manager form. This Council chose to adopt the Leader and Cabinet model.
11. Under the present 2000 Act arrangements the Council has discretion about where the balance of power between the Council and the executive rests. The Council could establish executive arrangements that allowed it to determine:
 - (a) The size of, and make appointments to, the Cabinet or give the Leader of Council authority to do so. Council resolved, in February 2007, to adopt the 'strong leadership' model, authorising the Leader to determine the size of, and make appointments to, the Cabinet.
 - (b) The term of office of the Leader of Council, and how he/she may be removed. Article 7 of the Constitution provides for the Leader to be appointed annually by the Council, and includes provision for him/her to be removed by Resolution of the Council.
 - (c) The allocation of functions (portfolio responsibilities) to particular Cabinet members or leave this to the Leader of Council. As explained above, Council delegated this function to the Leader in February 2007.
12. The LGPIH Act 2007 abolishes the model in which the Council elects the Cabinet, requiring larger Councils¹ to adopt either a Mayor and Cabinet or Leader and Cabinet model. As explained in paragraphs 11 and (a) to (c) above, the Council has previously adopted the characteristics of the new-style 'strong' leader and cabinet form of executive, therefore no changes are required in these areas.
13. Under the LGPIH Act the following changes will be required, however:
 - (a) **The Leader of Council must be elected for the remainder of his/her normal term of office.** In practice, it is anticipated that the Leader will be elected by the Council, at the Annual Meeting following his/her election, to the Council, for a four-year term, or until he/she resigns from office, ceases to be a councillor, is suspended or disqualified from being a councillor or is removed from office by Resolution of the Council.
 - (b) **All executive power must rest with the Leader of the Council.** Council currently operates a scheme under which executive power rests with the Cabinet collectively. It is for the Cabinet to determine which matters will be determined by it collectively, and which will be delegated to individual Cabinet members. Under the new requirements, it will be for the Leader to decide which matters he/she will reserve for him/herself and which to delegate to the Cabinet collectively or to individual Cabinet members.

Changes to Executive arrangements – timescale and publicity requirements.

14. The Council already operates a form of executive which is in line with the requirements of the 2007 Act, therefore it is only required to vary its executive arrangements in accordance with Section 33B of the Local Government Act 2000 as amended. As such, the Council must draw up proposals for the change (Section 33E,

¹ Defined as authorities with populations of 85,000 and above at 30 June 1999.

LGA 2000 as amended). The proposals must include a timetable for implementation and details of any transitional arrangements which may be necessary.

15. In order to comply with this requirement, it is **recommended** that an article explaining the proposed changes described in paragraph 13 above be included in the Winter 2008 issue of the Council's residents' magazine, and that the proposals be also publicised on the Council's website and available to view at the Council Offices. It is further **recommended** that Council resolve to introduce the revised proposals at its Annual Meeting on 21 May 2009, changes to take effect from this date. As such, no transitional arrangements will be required.

Implications

16. Financial	As projected in paragraph 4 above, moving to all-out elections will result in a substantial cost saving.
Legal	As set out in detail throughout the main body of the report.
Staffing	The consultation process and constitutional changes required to implement changes to governance arrangements can be carried out within existing resources.
Risk Management	Failure to vary executive arrangements in the manner described above by 31 December 2010 would result in a breach of the Council's statutory duty, a risk which may be eliminated by a resolution on this matter in May 2009.
Equal Opportunities	Subject to Council support for a consultation on all-out elections, innovative ways of reaching traditionally hard-to-reach sections of the community will be explored and put into practice, accepting that this report deals primarily with procedural matters which may not be as significant to the community as direct service provision.

Effect on corporate objectives and annual priorities

17. The new requirements of the LGPIH Act aim to strengthen local political stability and accountability through provision for the Leader to be elected for a term of up to four years and for all executive powers to be vested in him/her. Such strengthening should assist in enabling all the Council's corporate objectives and annual priorities to be achieved. Members may conclude that a move to four-yearly elections will further assist this process and allow a comprehensive four-year programme to be carried out by a strong and transparent administration held to account by robust opposition groups through constructive challenge and effective scrutiny and overview.

Recommendations – Move to Four-yearly elections

18. Council is recommended to consider the issues set out in paragraphs 1-9 above and resolve:
- (a) To consult on a move to four-yearly elections.
 - (b) That, subject to additional information being included explaining why the issue is being revisited at this time, the consultation exercise be undertaken based on the methods and timescale used 2006, final details to be agreed by the Chief Executive in consultation with the Chairman and Leader.
 - (c) That the results of the consultation be submitted to an Extraordinary Meeting of Council in May 2009 for consideration.

Recommendations – Changes to Executive arrangements

19. Council is recommended to resolve:

- (a) That an article explaining the proposed changes described in paragraph 13 above be included in the Winter 2008 issue of the Council's residents' magazine, and that the proposals be also publicised on the Council's website and available to view at the Council Offices.
- (b) That the revised proposals be submitted to the Annual Meeting of Council on 21 May 2009 for adoption, such changes to have effect from this date.

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

- South Cambridgeshire District Council Constitution
- Local Government Act 2000 (available at www.opsi.gov.uk)
- Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 (available at www.opsi.gov.uk)
- Relevant South Cambridgeshire District Council papers from Council meetings held on 27 October 2005, 28 September 2006 (**attached as appendices A-C**) and 18 October 2007 (available at www.scambs.gov.uk – Council and democracy section) .

Contact Officer: Richard May – Democratic Services Manager
Telephone: (01954) 713016
E-mail Richard.may@scambs.gov.uk

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Council	28 September 2006
AUTHOR/S:	Chief Executive / Head of Policy and Communication	

ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS: PUBLIC CONSULTATION FINDINGS**Purpose**

1. To report the findings of public consultation on the District Council's electoral arrangements and to consider the next steps.

Executive Summary

2. The consultation exercise found that 54% of all respondents who expressed a clear view supported the proposed change to 'all-out' elections for the District Council. That said, 15 of the 26 parish councils (58%), which replied with a clear view, preferred the present system of 'elections by thirds'. The Council could make a formal application to move to 'all-out' elections if two thirds of voting councillors support the proposals.

Background

3. Following the motion proposed by Cllr Bard at a special Council meeting on 27 October 2005, it was agreed, by 18 votes to 16, that the public be consulted on whether the District Council should seek to move from 'elections by thirds' (where elections for one third of SCDC seats are held in three years out of every four) to 'all-out' (or 'whole council') elections every four years. Under the proposed system:
 - (a) councillors' term of office would continue to be four years;
 - (b) elections would be held every fourth year;
 - (c) all existing councillors would retire from office together;
 - (d) all councillors would be elected at the same time;
 - (e) parish council elections would be co-ordinated to coincide with the district elections.
4. The public consultation was carried out during last spring in order to coincide with the next available edition of South Cambs magazine (the content of the Winter 2005 edition had been finalised prior to the special Council meeting in October 2005). Views were invited between 3 March – 28 April 2006, although replies received after the official deadline have been taken into account.
5. The consultation results have not been reported until now because the intention was to consider the findings in the light of the White Paper on local government, which had originally been expected in the summer. Although the White Paper is expected soon, officers do not wish the report to be delayed any further.

Considerations

6. **Consultation method:** A short consultation paper, including an equal number of arguments in favour of both alternative options, was developed with Cllr Bard, Cllr Batchelor (the Information and Customer Services portfolio-holder at the time), Cllr Mrs Hatton (the chairman of the Electoral Arrangements Sub-Committee) and Legal Services. It was publicised via:

APPENDIX A

- (a) a one-page article in the Spring 2006 edition of South Cambs magazine (Appendix A), distributed to homes throughout the district in March 2006;
 - (b) a feature on the front page of the Council's website; and
 - (c) a letter and fact-sheet (see Appendix B) to all parish councils, local MPs and members of the Local Strategic Partnership;
 - (d) a news release in mid-April 2006 to encourage residents to have their say.
7. In order to make it as easy as possible for residents and other 'stakeholders' to take part, responses were encouraged in the following ways:
- (a) via the 'freepost' reply slip featured next to the magazine article;
 - (b) via the electronic reply form on the website;
 - (c) via a new 24-hour voting line that was advertised in South Cambs magazine;
 - (d) by letter or email.
8. The Council's Legal Services have advised that, so far, the Council has observed the Sedley Rules through this consultation exercise. These rules state that:
- (a) consultation must be at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage;
 - (b) the proposer must give sufficient reasons for any proposal to permit intelligent consideration and response;
 - (c) adequate time must be given for consideration and response; and
 - (d) the product of the consultation must be conscientiously taken into account in finalising any proposals.
9. **Consultation findings:** Here is a summary of main consultation results, which show overall support for a move to all-out elections.

How replied?	Elections by thirds	All-out elections every 4 years	No clear preference
via SC magazine	36	49	0
via SCDC website	14	13	0
by phone	5	8	0
by letter / email	14	11	2
Totals	69	81	2

10. A further analysis of where individual respondents live (where this information was provided on the replies) reveals the levels of support for each option according to whether their ward has one, two or three elections for district councillors as part of the four-year election cycle.

Individual replies from wards with SCDC elections	Elections by thirds	All-out elections every 4 years
Once every four years	12	20
Twice every four years	22	18
In 3 of every 4 years	14	23
Totals	48	61

APPENDIX A

11. At the same time, it is important to note a different result amongst parish councils. Of the 28 replies received from parish councils, 15 supported the present system of 'elections by thirds', 11 called for 'all-out' elections, and 2 did not express a clear preference. As part of a move to 'all-out' District Council elections, elections to all parish councils in the district would take place at the same time, instead of being held in one of the three years that SCDC elections currently take place in each 4-yearly electoral cycle.

Parish council replies from wards with SCDC elections	Elections by thirds	All-out elections every 4 years	No clear preference
Once every four years	8	6	1
Twice every four years	4	2	1
In 3 of every 4 years	3	3	0
Totals	15	11	2

12. The approach to this consultation on electoral arrangements was along the same lines as the council tax consultation in 2004, which attracted in the region of 2,500 responses. The 152 replies to the latest consultation suggests that electoral arrangements, although important, do not attract the same level of public interest.

Options

13. The Council's needs to decide whether or not to make a formal application to the Secretary of State to change to the 'all-out' elections system. Section 7(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 allows a District Council to request the Secretary of State to provide for a system of either whole council elections or elections by thirds.
- (a) The resolution making the request must be passed by not less than two thirds of the members voting on the issue at a meeting of the Council specially convened for the purpose (please see paragraph 17 for clarification).
 - (b) A request under this section may not be made within ten years of a previous request.
 - (c) The Secretary of State may make an order for the ordinary elections of all of the district councillors to be held simultaneously on the basis of this request.
14. If the Council did agree to make a formal application, the next available opportunity for introducing 'all-out' elections in South Cambridgeshire would be May 2007, when other district councils that operate this model hold their elections.
- (a) Working back from this date, the Secretary of State would need to make a decision on the application before a notice of election under these new arrangements would need to be published in March 2007.
 - (b) For this to happen, informal discussions with the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) have suggested that the Council needs to ask the Secretary of State no later than next month (preferably, within the next week).

APPENDIX A

- (c) The DCLG has suggested that, to save time, an application should include a list of parish councils in the district and the timing of their elections.
15. If the Secretary of State's decision was to take longer than anticipated (and this is not unknown), this would mean that the opportunity for 'all-out' elections in South Cambridgeshire would probably not arise for another four years – that is, May 2011.
- (a) If it was not possible for 'all-out' elections to be introduced until May 2011, it is likely that, in the meantime, 'elections by thirds' would continue in 2007 and 2008 (although district councillors elected in this year might serve a three-year term).
- (b) To avoid one-third elections in 2010 for a single-year term prior to May 2011, an alternative would be for the term of office for councillors elected in 2006 to be extended for a year.

Implications

16.	Financial	The proponents of 'all-out' elections have estimated that the change could save the Council £80,000 over a four-year electoral cycle. Under the Gershon requirements, this could represent an annual cashable efficiency saving of £20,000 (the official annual target is £415,000).
	Legal	These considerations are set out in paragraphs 13 and 17.
	Staffing	The work involved in making a formal application to the Secretary of State has not yet been factored into the Council's corporate milestones and service plans for 2006/07. Whilst it could be done, there might need to be some slippage in taking forward other projects as a result.
	Equal Opportunities	Equal opportunities are not adversely affected by either 'elections by thirds' or 'all-out' elections.
	Risk Management	These electoral arrangements do not present a strategic risk.

Consultations

17. The consultation methods and findings are set out in paragraphs 6 – 12 above. As mentioned above, informal discussions have also taken place with the Department for Communities and Local Government. Whilst the DCLG contact has had nothing to add to this Council report (which has been described as "comprehensive"), the informal discussions have helped to clarify a query on a point of law.
- (a) When the Council considered the electoral arrangements issue in October 2005, reference was made to Section 86 of the Local Government Act 2000, which gives the Secretary of State power to specify a particular scheme of elections to apply to a particular council. This has prompted the question about whether a two-thirds majority amongst councillors voting on the issue is really necessary and whether a simple majority would suffice.
- (b) The informal advice from the DCLG is that if the Council vote did not secure the level of support required by Section 7(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, then it was highly unlikely that the Secretary of State would exercise his power under Section 86 of the Local Government 2000.

APPENDIX A

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

18.	Affordable Homes	No direct effect
	Customer Service	No direct effect
	Northstowe and other growth areas	No direct effect
	Quality, Accessible Services	In responding to the consultation, respondents have cited the benefits of their favoured option in terms of the effects on quality of decision-making and accountability.
	Village Life	No direct effect
	Sustainability	No direct effect
	Partnership	No direct effect

Conclusions

19. When debating whether or not to make a formal application to move to concurrent, 'all-out' four-yearly elections for both the District Council and all parish councils in the district, Members are asked to consider not just the consultation findings in this report, but the wider context. This is not just about which option is more popular, but the relative importance of the electoral arrangements process alongside the Council's objectives, priorities, services and financial constraints. In addition, whilst the contents of the long-awaited Local Government White Paper are not yet known, it is not beyond the bounds of possibility that this might also have a bearing on future electoral arrangements.

Recommendations

20. Members are invited to consider whether, in the light of the consultation exercise earlier this year, they wish to propose making a formal application to the Secretary of State to change the Council's electoral arrangements to 'all-out' elections every four years, with elections to all parish councils in the district taking place at the same time. Members' attention is drawn to paragraph 13(a).
21. If the Council did agree such a proposal by not less than two thirds of the members voting on the issue, Members are asked to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to finalise the details of the formal application.

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

- Report to Special Council meeting, 27 October 2005;
- Consultation paper and article in South Cambs magazine (Spring '06);
- Folder on Electoral Arrangements consultation responses, held by the Head of Policy and Communications;
- 'State of the Nation' report to Cabinet, SCDC, 14 September 2006.

Contact Officer: Tim Wetherfield – Head of Policy and Communications
Telephone: (01954) 713200

This page is left blank intentionally.



Have your say on local elections

We would welcome your views on whether changes should be made to the way that future SCDC elections are held. The Council is also consulting all parish councils about the proposals. This consultation will not affect the 2006 local elections.

The present system - 'electing by thirds'

Currently, elections for one third of SCDC seats are held three years out of every four (in May). This means that all seats are elected once during that period. Wards with a single district councillor have an election once every four years. Residents in wards with more than one seat get to choose a representative two or three times during the four-year cycle. In every ward, elections to parish councils are held at the same time as an election to SCDC.

The proposed change - 'all out' elections

Some councillors have suggested that it would be better if elections to all seats on SCDC took place together at the same time, once every four years. The timing of elections to some parish councils would be changed so they would still coincide with the SCDC elections. The district and parish council elections would be kept separate from the four-yearly elections to the County Council (probably two years apart).

Pros and cons

Councillors have already had some initial discussions about the merits of each case. Here are some of the points that have been made.

The case for the present system 'electing by thirds'

- It can help voters to focus on local issues, which might otherwise be drowned out by national issues and campaigning by political parties.
- It can allow more gradual change at SCDC, rather than the possibility of big political change every four years. New councillors can learn from more experienced ones.
- "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."
- It can keep councillors on their toes and accountable to their local electorate, particularly in wards with more than one district councillor.
- The proposed change could confuse voters by holding all district and parish council elections at the same time.

The case for the proposed change to 'all out' elections

- It could raise the local profile of the elections. Every voter could consider the local issues and choose their councillors at the same time.
- It could provide greater certainty in planning ahead over four years, with less risk of annual changes of power and policy. New councillors could still learn from more experienced ones.
- It could save £80,000 every four years in the costs of running elections.
- It could increase accountability through greater public interest and higher voter turn-out, particularly in wards with more than one district councillor.
- The present system can cause confusion and voter fatigue through frequent elections in multi-councillor wards.



Did you know?

The District Council is made up of 57 councillors, representing different parts of South Cambridgeshire. A councillor's normal term of office is four years, unless elected in an unscheduled by-election. Whilst some wards have one councillor, others are represented by two or three. These arrangements will continue whether the Council keeps the present system or makes the proposed change.

Local elections system: reply slip



Please tick one box below.

- ☐ I support SCDC's present system of 'electing by thirds' (electing a third of SCDC's seats in three years out of every four).
- ☐ I support the proposed change to 'all out' elections for SCDC (so that all district councillors would be elected together at the same time, once every four years).

Any other comments:

Name:

Address:

.....

Please return this form in an envelope no later than Friday 28 April 2006 to: Electoral Services, South Cambridgeshire District Council, FREEPOST (CB860), Cambridge CB3 6BR. Your personal details will be kept confidential.

Next steps

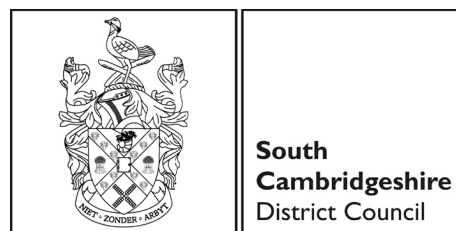
Please let us know your views by completing the reply slip and returning it to SCDC (free of charge) by Friday 28 April 2006. You can also tell us your preference by calling 08450 455 213 (24-hour voting line) or replying via the website at www.scambs.gov.uk.

Following this consultation, the views received from residents and parish councils will be taken into account this summer, when SCDC will decide whether or not to go forward with the proposed change. If SCDC agrees to support the proposals, it would then make a formal application for this change to the Secretary of State.

This page is left blank intentionally.

CONSULTATION PAPER SENT TO ALL PARISH COUNCILS, LOCAL MPS AND MEMBERS OF THE LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Consultation on proposed changes to the Local Elections system



1. We would welcome your views by Friday 28 April 2006 on whether to move from the present system of electing the District Council by thirds to proposals for all-out elections so that all SCDC councillors would be elected together at the same time, once every four years. This consultation will not affect the local elections in May 2006.
2. The views received from residents, parish councils, MPs and other partners will be taken into account this summer, when the Council will decide whether or not go forward with the proposed change. If a significant majority of district councillors agree the proposals at that time, the Council would then formally apply to the Secretary of State to make this change under section 7(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

About the District Council

3. The District Council comprises 57 councillors, representing different parts of South Cambridgeshire. A councillor's normal term of office is four years, unless elected in an unscheduled by-election. Whilst some wards have one councillor, others are represented by two or three. These arrangements will continue whether the Council keeps the present system or makes the proposed change.

The present system – 'Electing by Thirds'

4. Currently, elections for one third of the Council's seats are held three years out of every four (in May). This means that all seats are elected once during that period. Wards with a single district councillor have an election once every four years. Residents in wards with more than one seat on the District Council get to choose a representative two or three times during the four-year cycle. In every ward, elections to parish councils are held at the same time as an election to the District Council.

The proposed change - 'All Out' elections

5. Some councillors have suggested that it would be better if elections to all seats on the District Council took place together at the same time, once every four years. (For those district councils that already have 'all-out' elections, the next ones are currently scheduled to take place in May 2007). The timing of elections to many parish councils would be changed so they would all coincide with the District Council elections. The

district and parish council elections would be kept separate from the four-yearly elections to the County Council, which are due next in 2009.

Pros and Cons

6. The Council agreed to carry out this public consultation on 28 October 2005 (the minutes of the meeting can be found on our website at www.scambs.gov.uk). Councillors have already had some initial discussions about the merits of each case. Here are some of the key points.

The case for the present system <i>'Electing by Thirds'</i>	The case for the proposed change <i>'All Out' elections</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It can help voters to focus on local issues, which might otherwise be drowned out by national issues and campaigning by political parties. • It can allow more gradual change at the Council, rather than the possibility of big political change every four years. New councillors can learn from more experienced ones. • "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." • It can keep councillors on their toes and accountable to their local electorate, particularly in wards with more than one district councillor. • The proposed change could confuse voters by holding all district and parish council elections at the same time. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It could raise the local profile of the elections. Every voter could consider the local issues and choose their councillors at the same time. • It could provide greater certainty in planning ahead over four years, with less risk of annual changes of power and policy. New councillors could still learn from more experienced ones. • It could save £80,000 every four years in the costs of running elections. • It could increase accountability through greater public interest and higher voter turn-out, particularly in wards with more than one district councillor. • The present system can cause confusion and voter fatigue through frequent elections in multi-councillor wards.

Have your say

Please let us know your views about the proposals **by Friday 28 April 2006**. As well as indicating which option you or your organisation prefers, please briefly explain the reasons for this. (If you would not be prepared for your views to be reported to a future Council meeting, please let us know.) Replies should be made in writing to "Electoral Services, South Cambridgeshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge CB3 6EA" or by e-mail to consultation@scambs.gov.uk.

March 2006