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Wednesday 24 February 2010

To: Chairman – Councillor John Batchelor
Vice-Chairman – Councillor James Hockney
Members of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee – Councillors Val Barrett,
Janice Guest, Roger Hall, Liz Heazell, Mervyn Loynes, Mike Mason,
Deborah Roberts, Bridget Smith, Julia Squier and Bunty Waters

Quorum: 6

There is a pre-meeting session at 3.45pm for members of the Committee only, to evaluate 2009/10 performance and then plan their lines of enquiry, for this meeting.

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**, which will be held in the **BUSINESS SUITE - LINTON VILLAGE COLLEGE** on **THURSDAY, 4 MARCH 2010** at **5.30 p.m.**

Members are respectfully reminded that when substituting on committees, subcommittees, and outside or joint bodies, Democratic Services must be advised of the substitution *in advance of* the meeting. It is not possible to accept a substitute once the meeting has started. Council Standing Order 4.3 refers.

Yours faithfully
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

PAGES

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

- 1. Apologies**
To receive apologies for absence from committee members.
- 2. Declarations of Interest**
Please note that the Constitution requires that when considering any decision in respect of which a member of the Committee is subject to a party whip, the member must declare the existence of the whip. Under the Code of Conduct, any Councillor who has a personal or prejudicial

interest should declare this at the meeting.

3. Minutes of Previous Meeting

To authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2010, as a correct record.

4. Public Questions

5. Youth Participation Strategy (Key)

1 - 24

6. Presentation from the Housing Portfolio Holder

7. Scrutiny of Choice-Based Lettings (CBL) Policy (Key)

25 - 30

8. Monitoring the Executive

Members are invited to inform the Committee regarding portfolio meetings attended, specifically:

- issues challenged and the result
- issues where the scrutiny committee could add further value

Portfolio	Date of meeting	Monitor(s)
Finance & Staffing	17 February 2010	Cllr Roger Hall Cllr Mervyn Loynes
Housing	17 February 2010	Cllr Val Barrett Cllr Liz Heazell
Leader	19 February 2010	Cllr John Batchelor
Planning and New Communities	2 March 2010	Cllr Val Barrett Cllr Roger Hall Cllr Bridget Smith
Policy & Performance	8 February 2010	Cllr James Hockney

9. Draft Agenda Programme and Programme of Key Decisions

31 - 36

10. To Note the Dates of Future Meetings

2010: 1 April at Foxton Village Hall

All meetings will begin at 5.30pm.

Exclusion of Press and Public

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.

Children and Young People's Participation Strategy
2010 - 2013
(Draft)

Foreword

**By Cllr David Bard
Portfolio Holder for New Communities**

and

**Cllr Bridget Smith
Member Champion for Children and Young People**

To be written after the formal consultation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To be written after the formal consultation

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of the Strategy

Children and young people have the best appreciation of the strengths and weaknesses of the services that they use or that affect them. It is therefore vital to make best use of their knowledge and understanding when developing and providing services that most effectively meet their needs.

The Children and Young People's Participation Strategy will provide clear guidance for South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) to translate the good intentions, government guidelines and local authority strategies into meaningful and effective ways for children and young people to be heard and to influence the decision-making that takes place within SCDC. It is the intention that this Strategy will be adopted by the Cabinet to facilitate the achievements of its objectives across SCDC and the District for the benefit of children and young people and their communities.

As a District Council we do not have a statutory duty to involve young people in our decisions, however we do have a duty to cooperate with our Local Authority, Cambridgeshire County Council, to implement its Children and Young People's Plan, which this year is called 'The BigPlan2 for 2009-2012'. This Plan sets out the ambitions that Cambridgeshire County Council and the public bodies in Cambridgeshire have for children and young people in the County and has informed and influenced the Children and Young People's Participation Strategy for South Cambridgeshire.

South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) is committed to providing excellent services to all residents in South Cambridgeshire, including children and young people, to achieve SCDC's Vision, which is:

"To make South Cambridgeshire a safe and healthy place where residents are proud to live and where there will be opportunities for employment, enterprise and world-leading innovation. We will be a listening Council, providing a voice for rural life and first-class services accessible to all."

We recognise that children and young people have interesting and valuable opinions, which, if listened and responded to by SCDC and other decision makers, can improve service delivery as well as laying a long lasting foundation leading to participation in democracy. Research suggests that whilst some young people may not be interested in local party politics, they are very interested in issues that affect them and their communities.

SCDC seeks to embed children and young people's participation in all aspects of service planning which have an impact on their lives and this strategy supports and sits beneath the County Council's Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership (OCYPS) Participation Strategy's objectives, which are:

- To develop structures to facilitate children and young people's active involvement in service planning and delivery.
- To provide routes for children and young people's views to be fed into decision-making at all levels.
- To provide opportunities for children and young people to engage at a level they choose.

- To develop structures for monitoring children and young people's active involvement and measuring its impact on service provision.

South Cambridgeshire District Council already acknowledges the benefits of taking into account the needs of families and children in the planning and delivery of services through appropriate consultation and community engagement and through service plans.

This strategy seeks to build on existing good practice and to provide support and training to raise the skills and confidence of service providers and children and young people across the district. Support for SCDC can be provided through existing resources, including the Youth Participation Worker who is currently supporting Parish Councils and Community Organisations in South Cambridgeshire, but there is a need for extra resources to fully implement the action plan. It is therefore anticipated that a bid to the Big Lottery's 'Reaching Communities' programme will be applied for in early 2010, and, if successful, will fund extra staff, training and project costs for five years.

1.2 Background

In 2003, the Government published a Green Paper called *Every Child Matters* alongside the formal response to the report into the death of Victoria Climbié. After a thorough consultation process, the Children Act 2004 became law. This legislation is the legal underpinning for Every Child Matters, which sets out the Government's approach to the wellbeing of children and young people from birth to age 19.

The aim of Every Child Matters is to give all children the support they need to:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic well-being.

The Every Child Matters agenda has been further developed through publication of the nationwide *Children's Plan* in December 2007. The Children's Plan is a ten-year strategy to make England the best place in the world for children and young people to grow up.

In their first Big Plan (2006-2009) Cambridgeshire County Council organised their priorities under the five outcomes of 'Every Child Matters'. These outcomes are implicit within the CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL's Big Plan2 and are the foundation on which this Children and Young People's Participation Strategy is built.

The Big Plan2 priorities for 2009-2012 are:

- To help children and young people feel safe and happy in their communities.
- To narrow the gap in outcomes for children and young people.
- To improve outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities and complex needs.

- To meet the needs of children and young people in areas of growth or demographic change.

1.3 Strategic Context

South Cambridgeshire District Council is keen to continue to implement and develop their commitment to children and young people across the district. As a result of this commitment, on 12th November 2009, SCDC's Cabinet appointed Cllr Bridget Smith to be the member champion for children and young people. Cllr Smiths' role has already included heading a Scrutiny task and finish group focusing on effective partnerships in delivering services to children and young people across the district.

Big Plan2

Our partners include Cambridgeshire County Council, whose Big Plan2 sets out the ambitions that Cambridgeshire County Council and the public bodies in Cambridgeshire have for our children and young people. This includes the vision to have:

'High aspirations for children and young people in Cambridgeshire and want each and every child and young person to achieve their full potential.'

By this it means:

- To enjoy their childhood and teenage years.
- Be included and participate in their communities.
- Be healthy and safe.
- Be resilient.
- Be enabled to make informed choices about their life.
- Make the most of educational, training and employment opportunities.
- Make a successful transition to adult life.

The Big Plan2 priorities for 2009-2012 are:

- To help children and young people feel safe and happy in their communities.
- To narrow the gap in outcomes for children and young people.
- To improve outcomes for children and young people with learning difficulties and disabilities and complex needs.
- To meet the needs of children and young people in areas of growth or demographic change.

The objectives of SCDC's Youth Participation Strategy will support the delivery of the Big Plan2 as well as fulfilling our commitment to implementing the National Indicator (NI) 110 - Young people's participation in positive activities, SCDC's Corporate Objectives and Aims and the Local Area Authority (LAA) priorities.

South Cambridgeshire District Council's Corporate Objectives and Aims, which apply equally to all residents including children and young people, are:

- **AIM** - We are committed to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all.
- **AIM** - we are committed to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for you and your family.

- **AIM** - we are committed to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.
- **AIM** - We are committed to assisting provision for local jobs for you and your family.
- **AIM** - We are committed to providing a voice for rural life.

This Strategy will also help to deliver the Local Area Agreement's priorities, which are:

Growth – accommodating growth, creating flagship communities and ensuring that the benefits of growth and infrastructure are enjoyed by all communities.

Economic Prosperity – supporting the role of Cambridgeshire as a centre of knowledge and innovation, especially in low carbon technologies.

Environmental Sustainability – meeting the challenges of climate change whilst maintaining a high quality environment.

Equality and Inclusion – supporting vulnerable groups, enabling them to participate fully in community life, and encouraging healthier and more sustainable lifestyles.

Safer and Stronger Communities – engaging citizens in service planning and improvement and ensuring our communities enjoy good quality of life and health, with low crime, unemployment, discrimination and inequalities.

Local Area Agreements (LAAs) set out the priorities for a local area agreed between central government and a local area (the local authority and Local Strategic Partnership) and other key partners at the local level. They set out the local priorities that will make a village, town, city or community a better place to be. Some of the ideas behind them are to:

- give more flexibility to local authorities and other public sector organisations in the ways they deliver services
- enable local people to get more involved in decisions about local services.

The Children's Trust in Cambridgeshire is another partner and has a commitment to:

'Ensuring that the voices of children, young people and their parents/carers are at the centre of the decisions we make.'

The Children's Trust in Cambridgeshire is the commissioning body for the development and delivery of services for children and young people in Cambridgeshire and their mission is:

'To improve outcomes for all children and young people in Cambridgeshire and ensure effective safeguarding is in place.'

The Strategy has been guided by the other national and local policies, plans and strategies such as:

- SCDC's Sustainable Communities Strategy
- SCDC's Community Engagement Strategy
- Every Child Matters
- Every Disabled Child Matters
- Youth Matters 2005
- Aiming High for Young People 2007
- Children Act 2004

- Cambridgeshire Big Plan1 and Big Plan2
- Huntingdon District Council's Children and Young People's Active Involvement Strategy 2009
- SCDC's Statement of Community Involvement (draft) 2009
- SCDC's Safeguarding Children Audit 2009

1.4 Objectives

SCDC places a high value on encouraging residents to get involved in consultation and decision-making activities and is equally keen to provide opportunities for younger residents to contribute to the democratic processes through planning, service delivery and evaluation. This Strategy will provide a framework for children and young people's participation throughout SCDC to enable services and activities for young people to be more effective by providing opportunities for the views of young people to be heard.

The objectives of SCDC's Youth Participation Strategy are:

- To develop a commitment to effective involvement of children and young people within all levels at SCDC.
- To deliver training at all levels at SCDC to ensure officers know how to involve children and young people and to facilitate training to community and voluntary organisations in South Cambridgeshire.
- To increase young people's opportunities to have a voice in the delivery of services that affect them and to respond to ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure that their involvement is real and effective.
- To celebrate children and young people's involvement in their communities.

SCDC will facilitate, develop and support youth participation in South Cambridgeshire through:

- Recognising that all young people have a right to have a say in decisions that affect them.
- Recognising that young people's views are important.
- Working in partnership with Parish Councils, Community and Voluntary Organisations and Cambridgeshire County Council to embed youth participation in the delivery of services and activities for young.
- Developing the skills and confidence of children and young people and service providers working with them so that they can work in partnership when making decisions.

2. WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PARTICIPATION?

2.1 Definitions

There are many definitions and examples of youth participation which all place the views of young people at the heart of the services and activities that are provided for them. Cambridgeshire County Council states in its Children and Young People's Strategy that:

'Ensuring that children and young people are able to be active citizens from a young age and can engage in voluntary work forms an important aspect of their participation in the lives of their communities'.

In 2004 Every Child Matters (ECM) simply defined Participation as:

'Asking children and young people what works, what does not work and what could work better, and involving them on an ongoing basis in the design, delivery and evaluation of services'.

Internal workshop

An internal workshop was held on 19th October 2009, involving staff from departments across SCDC and Cllr Bridget Smith. Participants felt that there might not be the need to define an age group within the strategy, but to allow an approach that could be directed at any age within the broad spectrum of 0-19 (25 for young people` with specific needs). They also felt that in the short term there should be a focus on the last year of primary school, ages 10/11 – age 19 to take into consideration the areas of expertise already available within SCDC and to expand to involve age 0 – 10 year olds in the medium term.

They described children and young people's participation as:

- Young people's involvement in what goes on.
- The voice of children and young people should carry as much weight as adults in relation to areas of significance to them.
- A voice in things that affect them, a forum in which to influence decision-making.
- Understanding the wider concerns of young people e.g. safety, older people and facilities for all.
- Not to underestimate their say on any matters that concern/interest them.

There was a consensus that participation must include:

"Young people and adults have an equal right to be heard in decisions that affect them."

Participants emphasised that children and young people should be part of the consultation process, including agreeing the name of the Strategy.

2.2 What are the Benefits of Participation?

For children and young people:

- Recognition that they are major stakeholders in society with important contributions to make to their communities.

- Services and facilities that are more accessible and sensitive to their needs.
- An opportunity to take action on issues in the community that impact on them.
- Experience of how decisions are made and how to contribute to them.
- Experience of how rights and responsibilities go hand in hand.
- Opportunities to develop personal skills, confidence and aspirations.
- A more inclusive environment.

For service providers and communities

- More responsive and targeted services based on identified need.
- More effective use of resources.
- Community cohesion.
- Opportunities to engage with socially excluded groups of children and young people.
- More creative and innovative ways of engaging with children and young people.

Service providers at the internal workshop added the following benefits

- Developing long-term aspirations for children as well as teenagers.
- Involve children at a young age to help them raise their confidence and ability to give them a voice.
- Youth is part of the (valued) community.
- Quality of life objectives – to lead more productive and exciting lives.
- Civic duties – more likely to vote; go for positions of responsibility etc.
- Value what they are doing for themselves.
- Embedding the value of volunteering that throughout young people's learning lives.
- Expectations of youths may be raised – but need to understand that they may not get what they want... as long as this is made clear.
- Habit of being actively involved – volunteering etc.

2.3 How to involve children and young people in Participation

Participation should be seen as a way to nurture a sense of ownership and belonging within the wider context of community development. Informing alone is not participation. Participation should also enable young people to follow through and act on the decisions they make or at least support the process of implementing them.

To facilitate this SCDC needs to:

- Listen to what is important to children and young people.
- Be realistic about what is achievable and how much they can affect decisions that are made.
- Ask young people how they want to be involved and be clear about what methods can be used, including where, when and how they want to meet.
- Always let them know how you will feedback about how their views have been used and what difference they are making.
- Make sure it is interesting, enjoyable and relevant.

Participants at the internal workshop added:

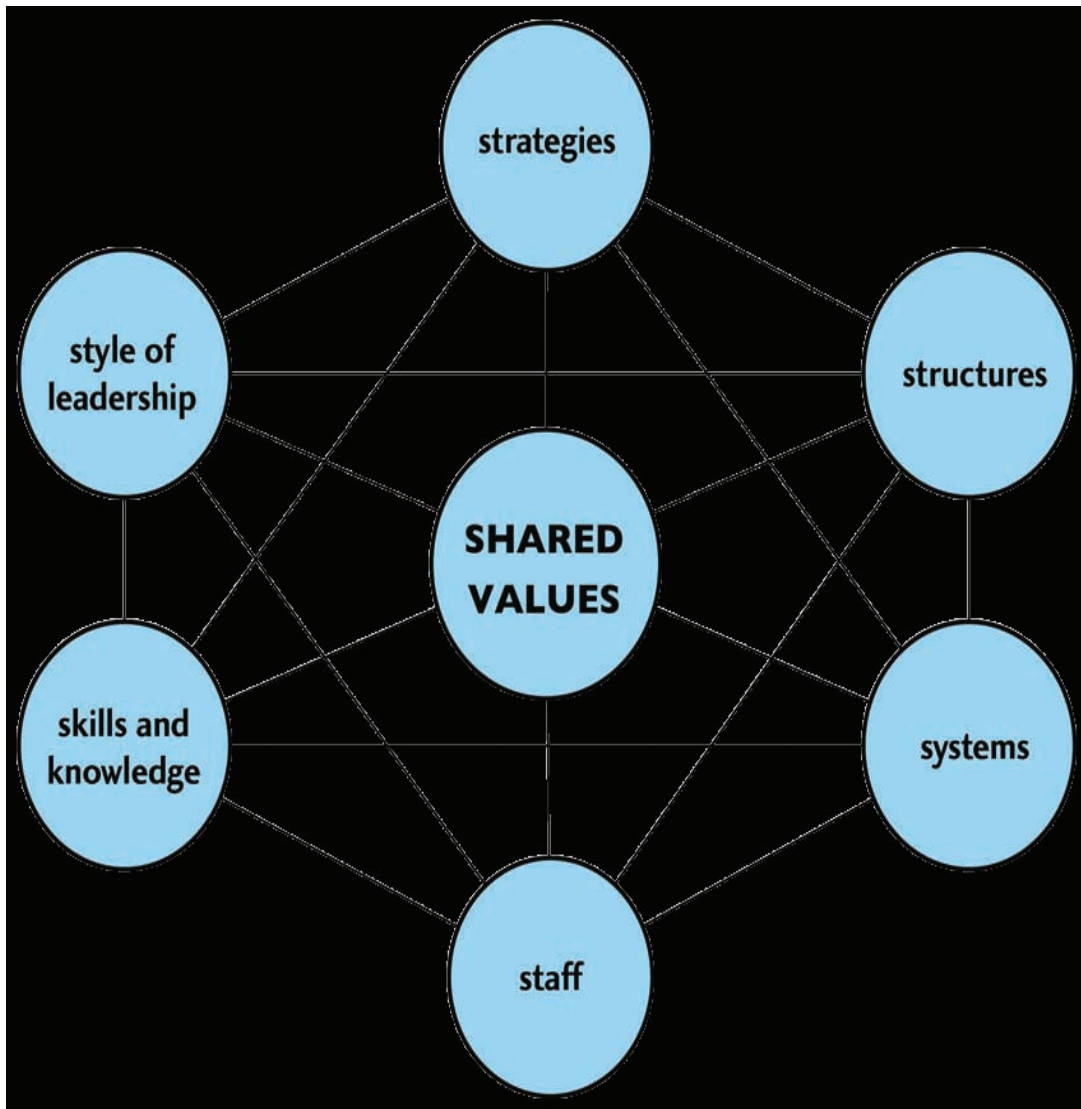
- Try to learn from models of good practice within SCDC, across South Cambridgeshire, from Cambridge City and Cambridgeshire County Councils and to embed them within SCDC.
- Training should be facilitated to bring groups together eg parish councils and/or community groups, to enable them to learn from each other's experiences and support each other in involving children and young people.

It was recognised that, while there was an agreement that the involvement of children and young people should be embedded within service plans and service delivery, this strategy is aspirational. It is however anticipated that existing resources, including Council officers and jointly funded youth participation officer, will be able to effect change within SCDC to support children and young people in having a say in service provision.

2.4 Measuring progress

A vital part of children and young people's participation is to measure the effectiveness of their involvement for them and the service providers. This includes ongoing self-assessment by children and young people and the service providers and responding to issues that are raised including requests for training and different ways of working eg not just using a paper questionnaire or holding meetings during office hours.

Recognising the need for a standard approach to assessing the level of Participation in an organisations, the Local Government Association and the National Youth Agency worked in partnership with councils and voluntary organisations to develop *Hear by Right*. The *Hear by Right* standards framework is an assessment framework based on 7 standards (below) and is a self-assessment tool to be used by all participants, including children and young people. It measures the involvement of children and young people at a number of levels, (emerging, established and advanced) and needs to be used regularly to measure progression and identify any development issues.



(Tom Peters and Robert Waterman, 1982)

Some organisations that are taking the first steps into children and young people's participation initially feel overwhelmed by the *Hear by Right* process. Partners in Cambridgeshire and other organisations are working together to develop a countywide kite-mark that would acknowledge organisations' commitment to children and youth participation. This would, in turn, provide a locally relevant framework through which the quality of participation programmes could be developed and improved.

Whatever the measurement framework that is used, all participants need to be involved to demonstrate:

- At which level the views of children and young people are actively sought and used in the planning, delivery and review of services.
- That the level of satisfaction with services provided has risen.

The success of children and young people's participation will require the impact of their involvement to be measured against specific indicators through a variety of

methods, developed with all participants, to include activity groups, formal and informal feedback forms and representative groups. Examples include:

- Benchmarking children and young people's perceptions of how much say they have in decisions made about service delivery by SCDC and/or in their own community.
- Evidence of how children and young people have had an impact on decisions affecting the planning of services that affect them.
- Evidence that the involvement of children and young people has become a routine element in service planning and delivery where they affect children and young people.
- Positive feedback from children and young people on having a greater understanding of the planning and delivery of services that affect them.
- Positive feedback from children and young people on the value of being involved, including how it has increased their feelings of confidence and self-esteem.

3. YOUTH PARTICIPATION PROJECTS IN SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE

3.1 South Cambridgeshire Youth Participation Officer

SCDC's recognition of the value of involving children and young people when planning and delivering services has led to important commitments been made by SCDC. This has included the joint funding of a youth participation post working with organisations across South Cambridge and Cambridge City. Cambridgeshire County Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council fund the part time officer, who is employed by Romsey Mill through the Compact's commissioning process and managed through a joint SCDC and Cambridgeshire County Council Service Level Agreement.

The youth participation officer (YPO), has now completed his first year in post and, through an increase in Cambridgeshire County Council funding, will extend his hours in his second year from 20 – 30 hours a week. His priorities for South Cambridgeshire in the first year were to:

- Carry out an audit of the levels and understanding of youth participation taking place in organisations across the district.
- Work with partner organisations, including Parish Councils and voluntary Organisations, to affect a culture change to develop effective participation of children and young people within their activities/services.
- Develop and build capacity in organisations across the district towards sustainable support of children and young people's active participation, in service/community planning and development.
- Identify training needs and facilitate training as required.

The YPO's end of year report included the five basic questions that he asked organisations to ascertain their level of understanding of youth participation:

- 1) Do you consult with the children and/or young people who use your service?
- 2) Does the consultation process allow the children or young people to fully express their opinions and give them the opportunity to actively follow through with their decisions or contributions?
- 3) How is the process of participation measured and what would success look like for your organisation and for specific projects?
- 4) Have you ever been offered support for the participation programme from the existing County and/or City participation teams?
- 5) What is the best way for the Participation Officer to support you?

The evaluation of responses showed that;

- There was little to no understanding of an overall/overarching participation strategy in South Cambridgeshire and City.
- Each organisation had its own interpretation of participation.

Out of the initial 67 parish councils that responded to the initial questionnaire, only 5 showed an interest in receiving further information and support from the YPO. However the officer is now working with 12 parish councils who are keen to involve children and young people in their Parish plans and/or other ways of being involved in decision-making in their communities. He has provided information to organisations such as the Connections Bus Project and Forward Gamlingay to

embed youth participation within the development and delivery of their activities and services.

3.2 Other existing participation projects

Youth Festivals in Cambourne (2008 and 2009)

Young people at a youth club complained that they wanted a special event for themselves but that it wasn't likely to happen. The voluntary youth workers discussed with them what they wanted it to be called (a youth fest), where, when and what they wanted and how they wanted it to be run. The young people said that they wanted the adults to organise it with their (the young people) help. The first youth festival took place in June 2008 with 15 young people acting as stewards. They worked in partnership to make the final decisions together about what took place and who was involved.

This project could be assessed at a high level of participation as it was initiated by young people and delivered through joint decision making with adults.

Village Colleges

Dual use colleges – Village colleges meet the needs of young people in their locality through various arts and sports initiatives. These include partnerships between SCDC and colleges to fund the Arts Development Managers, who deliver innovative and interesting arts projects in new and established communities in South Cambridgeshire.

artsMASH (2009-2011)

artsMASH is the name of Cambridgeshire County Council's (Children and Young People's Services) Youth Offer promoting arts and cultural activities for 13-19 year olds in the locality of South Cambridgeshire. The programme aims to:

- Establish a means by which young people will be involved in shaping proposals with active involvement in decision-making.
- Build the confidence of youth work staff.
- Work with Locality team to deliver taster sessions and holiday schemes.
- Promote accreditation through the Arts Award.
- Ensure positive images of young people.

This programme offers a wide ranging menu of sessions in a variety of venues including stage make-up, stand-up comedy, samba drumming and digital arts for youth groups at Bar Hill, Cambourne, Cottenham, Gamlingay, Linton and Melbourn. The programme is delivered by the District's five local arts development managers (who are also known as stART and employed by the Village Colleges), under contract through South Cambridgeshire District Council.

School Planning Forums for New Communities (2009)

Planning days took place in Village Colleges to inform and consult with young people on what they would like to see in Northstowe. Professionals such as architects and planners held workshops to share knowledge and skills with groups of young people who had been selected by the schools. The young people then held a Dragons' Den style competition to present their results on their chosen topic

and the winners received a prize. The winning models were also presented to SCDC's planning committee who were interested in continuing the project.

This project could be assessed at medium level of participation as although this was adult led throughout, the young people gained new skills and knowledge to help them make informed decisions in the future.

Parish Plans

Parishes have been supported by several departments in SCDC and Cambridgeshire ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural England) to ensure that children and young people's opinions are included when developing, adopting and implementing Parish Plans and other service provision. These include Girton, Milton and Orwell.

Miscellaneous

- Voluntary Organisations – Forward Gamlingay, Cambourne Youth Partnership, Connections Bus Project – varying levels of children and young people's involvement in development and delivery of services.
- The Youth Innovation Project (YIP thing) in Cambourne – adult led project with young people deciding how they wanted to be involved and what the outcomes were.
- SCDC Community grants procedure is used to encourage community groups to include young people when identifying proposed benefits to children and young people. Funding has been given to support voluntary organisations to enhance children and young people's involvement.
- SCDC Youth Sports Initiative grants criteria have to show how young people have been involved in identifying the need for the project that funding is being asked for.
- Community safety projects.
- UK Youth Parliament – nation wide government led initiative where young people are chosen by their peers through local elections to represent them. The youth councillors receiving training to develop their skills and confidence and also decide on priority topics e.g. transport and bullying to seek solutions for.
- At a local level, members of the South Cambridgeshire and City Youth Parliament are elected by pupils at secondary schools in South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge.
- South Cambridgeshire District Council has also signed up to and subscribed to local and countywide events to celebrate children and young people's achievements, including Young People of the Year (YOPEY), which is like the Pride of Britain awards for young people and on a county and regional basis and the Duke of Edinburgh Awards.
- Play spaces - The open space supplementary Planning Document requires developer contributions towards play spaces for children and young people. The document also requires developers to consult with children and young people on the types and design of new play spaces.

The above and other projects have been delivered over a period of time, often on an ad hoc basis in response to existing projects, or where Council officers have identified a gap in the development and delivery of activities and/or services. It is recognised that colleagues both within New Communities and in other departments throughout SCDC, are involved in supporting children's and youth participation

when facilitating community projects and/or delivering services to residents. The consultation process for this Strategy will encourage partners and colleagues to include their examples of involving children and young people when delivering their activities and services.

4. EMERGING PRIORITIES

This strategy has identified the following priorities:

1. To develop a commitment to effective children and young people's participation within all levels at SCDC

- a. To have a common understanding of Children and Young People's Participation across SCDC and the District to involve children and young people in decision making in their communities.
- b. To consult with partners, including children and young people, on the draft Strategy.
- c. To facilitate the implementation of this Strategy through the Member Champion.

2. To deliver training at all levels at SCDC to ensure officers know how to involve children and young people and to facilitate training to community and voluntary organisations in South Cambridgeshire,

- a. To identify and deliver a programme of training and workshops across the District and all levels of SCDC.
- b. To work in partnership with internal and external colleagues to increase young people's opportunities to have a voice in the delivery of services to them.

3. To increase young people's opportunities to have a voice in the delivery of services to them and to respond to ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure that their involvement is real and effective

- a. To prioritise the implementation of the objectives of this Strategy with the available resources and to identify extra resources to further develop the objectives of this Strategy.
- b. To identify and apply to sources of funding to assist the implementation of the Children and Young People's Strategy.
- c. Develop children and young people's knowledge of SCDC's services through various media including leaflets and visits to schools.

4. To celebrate children and young people's involvement in their communities

- a. To celebrate the achievements of children and young people who have a say in how services are delivered to them.

5. APPENDIX 1 – ACTION PLAN 2010- 2013

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	MEASURE	RESOURCES	DATE	LEAD
To develop a commitment to effective Children and Young People’s Participation within all levels at SCDC	Draft Children and Young People’s Participation Strategy	Agreed by p/f holder to take forward	SCDC officer	December 2009	New Communities development officer
	12 weeks consultation on the draft strategy	Draft strategy circulated to internal and external consultees and posted on website. Different formats available	Admin support	January 2010 – April 23 rd 2010	New Communities development officer
		Strategy adopted	Member Champion/SCDC officer	June 2010	Cllr Bard
	Set up cross departmental Children and Young People’s group to co-ordinate youth participation and positive activities for young people	Lead officer from each service joins network	Admin support/SCDC officer	By June 2010	New Communities development officer And Member champion

<p>To deliver training at all levels at SCDC and support community and voluntary organisations in South Cambridgeshire, to ensure officers know how to involve children and young people</p>	<p>Identify and analyse good practice across SCDC and in other organisations</p>	<p>Develop training plan for members and officers with Youth Participation officer</p>	<p>SCDC officer and yp officer</p>	<p>July 2010 and ongoing</p>	<p>New Communities development officer</p>
	<p>Identify external funding bid and apply</p>	<p>Submit first phase of funding bid</p>	<p>SCDC officers</p>	<p>Feb 2010</p>	<p>New Communities development officer</p>
		<p>If above successful, submit second phase of funding bid</p>	<p>SCDC officers</p>	<p>May 2010</p>	<p>New Communities development officer</p>
		<p>3 training sessions a year delivered to total of 48 people – 2 sessions to Council service providers and 1 session to third sector.</p>	<p>SCDC officer and youth participation officer</p>	<p>July 2010 and ongoing</p>	<p>New Communities development officer Youth participation and officer</p>
		<p>New engagement and training with 5 Parish Councils/Voluntary organisations per year</p>	<p>Continued SCDC/Cambridgeshire County Council funding for SC/City post</p>	<p>July 2010 and ongoing</p>	<p>New Communities development officer</p>

<p>To increase young people's opportunities to have a voice in the delivery of services to them and to respond to ongoing monitoring and evaluation to ensure that their involvement is real and effective</p>	<p>Establish baseline information from SCDC service providers on existing involvement with children and young people</p>	<p>Benchmarking project for service providers, children and young people to say how involved</p>	<p>SCDC officer time/venue/youth worker/incentives' costs</p>	<p>July 2010 to end September 2010</p>	<p>New Communities development officer</p>
	<p>Establish baseline information from children and young people on their perception in being involved in services delivered by SCDC</p>	<p>Number of children and young people involved in project provide feedback to set benchmark. Targets to be agreed by cross-departmental group</p>	<p>SCDC officers time, printing leaflets, positives activities etc, visiting schools/youth groups</p>	<p>April – July 2010</p>	<p>New Communities development officer</p>
	<p>Develop systems to monitor, evaluate and respond to children and young peoples' perceptions being involved in services delivered to them by SCDC</p>	<p>Standard process agreed across departments in SCDC</p>	<p>SCDC officers time</p>	<p>September 2010 - ongoing</p>	<p>New Communities development officer</p>
	<p>Information cascaded to children through a variety of formats including focus groups, schools, informal activities</p>	<p>Number of children and young people receiving information so they have a greater understanding of the Council's services and how they are affected by them.</p>	<p>Ypo time</p>	<p>September 2010 and ongoing</p>	<p>New youth participation officer post through external funding/ New Communities development officer</p>

	Service providers in SCDC include opportunities for youth participation in their service plans	<p>Targets to be agreed by cross-departmental group</p> <p>Number of children and young people who agree that opportunities for youth participation are included in service plans. Targets to be agreed annually by cross department group</p>	Ypo time	April 2010 and ongoing	Ypo/Parish Liaison officer/SCDC officer
	Ongoing Parish Council Support	75% of Parish Councils supported join Parish Council Participation Network	Ypo time	September 2010 Ongoing	Ypo/SCDC officer
	Support Participation in community and voluntary organisations in South Cambridgeshire	50% of Community and Voluntary Organisations supported join Participation Champions Network	Ypo time	September 2010 Ongoing	Ypo/SCDC officer
		Ongoing 1:1 progression through levels of participation	Ypo time		

To celebrate children and young people's involvement in their communities	Annual celebration event to share and promote good practice	Organise event in partnership with children and young people and organisations involved in progressing through levels of Participation	Participation budget	July 2010 and annually	New Communities development officer
	Celebration for individual projects	Positive publicity in media	Participation budget	June 2010 and ongoing	Participation Officers, CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL (Big Plan2)
	Achievement of Participation Projects	Annual Participation newsletter	Participation budget	September 2010, then annually	SCDC officer/children and young people/Participation Officers

6. APPENDIX 2 – ACTIONS AND TIMESCALES

Short-term Actions:

- Housing – research into ways other organisations have engaged with young people.
- Each area to identify existing involvements to provide Benchmark.
- Representatives of SCDC to organise school seminars/workshops to seek views from young people as to what and how they would like to be involved e.g Young Persons 'exchange' or discussion forums:
 - Rights.
 - Understanding of YP policies at local govt and associated agencies.
 - Communication and Engagement.
 - Key Messages/Issues e.g Environment.
 - What's on, where and what's on offer and what YP do.
 - How to get involved.
 - Manage expectations.
- Link to Voluntary orgs and AC County Strategy.
- Use Cambs ACRE to build YP involvement into Parish Planning.
- Use Gamlingay activity as example, and replicate.
- Use the VCS expertise and their 'menu' of inducement methods to do this with us – we haven't the resources otherwise.
- Leave the title of the Strategy Open (call it something that allows you the opportunity to take action at all points of the age spectrum.
- Make sure CYP needs and views lead this work – don't do it for the sake of it.
- Focus on 11-19 (25) to start with.
- Arts Development Managers could nominate YP specialist to rep.
- Resources – support for services/Parish Councils etc to identify and provide training/ to engage with YP and ask how they want to be involved and what with.
- Political buy-in.

Medium-term actions

- Embrace new technologies to open more avenues of communication (2-way) – requires cultural change and political will on SCDC's part (IT already in place).
- Include statement of intention into resident involvement strategy to be adopted April 10 – SMART actions in Action Plan.
- Parish Council 'clusters' (of 10) annual meeting (where they have designated youth reps) to feed back on Youth issues.

Long-term actions

- Section on YP in each Service Plan.
- Extend to include children's menu of involvement for youth/young people within affordable homes – Resident involvement strategy.

7. APPENDIX 3 – CONSULTATION PROCESS

South Cambridgeshire District Council and other organisations in the district work towards the greater inclusion of children and young people in local decision-making in their communities and organisations and there are many good examples of their involvement. However much of this work has been completed in isolation and involvement has not been consistent across SCDC or the district. To ensure that this is a crosscutting Strategy that is supported across all departments in SCDC and relevant organisations in South Cambridgeshire, a consultation period of 12 weeks will take place from **January 29 – April 23 2010** and will invite contributions and comments from (but not limited to) the following partners:

South Cambridgeshire District Council, Members and staff
Cambridgeshire County Council, Members and staff
Romsey Mill
Young Lives
Children and Young People
Parish Councils
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Association of Local Councils
Cambridgeshire NHS
Community and Voluntary Organisations in South Cambridgeshire
Huntingdon District Council, Youth Participation Officer
Cambridge Horizons
Residents in South Cambridgeshire
Police Services
Fire Services
Ormiston Children and Families Trust
Cambridgeshire Acre
Arts Development Managers
Secondary Schools in South Cambridgeshire
Community Development Workers
Locality Managers

Copies of the draft strategy will be available to consultees through the following media:

- SCDC's website
- Parish Council Bulletin
- SCDC Member Bulletin
- Electronic versions
- Paper and/or cd versions where requested
- Schools and formal/informal youth groups

After a period of 12 weeks the responses will be collated and will inform the final draft of this Strategy. Feedback on the consultation will be available on SCDC's website and in other formats where requested.

This Strategy will be taken to SCDC's New Communities PFH for adoption in July 2010.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Scrutiny and Overview Committee 4th March 2010
AUTHOR/S: Corporate Manager – Affordable Homes / Housing advice
and options manager
Portfolio Holder: Cllr Mark Howell

CHOICE BASED LETTINGS – ACCESS TO THE SCHEME**Purpose**

1. To review the actions already in place under the Home-Link scheme to ensure all applicants are able to access the scheme.

Options

2. The Committee may note the progress made with the Home-link scheme, in terms of joint working and actions in place to enable access onto the scheme, including the sub-regional actions within the development plan of the scheme.
3. The Committee may wish to recommend additional actions, outlined in the report that could be carried out, subject to sufficient additional funds being available.

Executive Summary

4. The home-link scheme requires applicants to actively bid for properties in order to be short listed for an offer of accommodation. A number of safeguards are in place to ensure that all applicants know how the scheme works and that assistance can be provided to those more vulnerable applicants who need help to bid on available properties. In addition, there is a large amount of joint working with other agencies and local authorities in the sub-region to raise awareness of the scheme and to provide assistance to the vulnerable people they support.

Background

5. SCDC are one of the partners in the Cambridge sub-regional choice based lettings scheme which replaced the points based waiting list system in Feb 2008. Instead of properties being allocated via a waiting list, SCDC properties are advertised every two weeks and applicants can express an interest or “bid” for up to 3 properties per advertising cycle. Priority is rated by band from A to D with A being the highest. Where 2 or more applicants within the same priority band bid, priority is given to the applicant with the longest date in band.
6. Under the Home-link scheme applicants can bid for properties through any of the following methods:
 - Via the home-link website;
 - By telephone
 - By text message
 - Through a postal coupon

7. The first year's review of the scheme showed that the proportion of non-bidding applicants registered with South Cambridgeshire District Council was 75.52%, across all priority bands.
8. Accessibility is recognised as being of primary importance amongst Home-link partners across the sub region. It remains a priority for the Home-link Management board to increase levels of accessibility for those who may be vulnerable or disadvantaged in using the system. This is being addressed through a number of strategies included in the Sub-regional development plan and supported locally by SCDC. Development actions completed and/or in progress so far include:
 - Awareness sessions for organisations working with disadvantaged clients
 - Forward training plan commencing in 2010 including RSLs, Local Authorities and service users
 - Development of Makaton guide
 - Increasing the number of partners signed up to the Access Strategy.
 - Review of the access strategy, including local reviews of the equality impact assessments.

Considerations

9. At the beginning of February 2010, the number of non-bidding applicants in South Cambridgeshire District Council was 2827, out of 4310 applicants (a proportion of 65.59% - an improvements on the previously reported 75.52%). Whilst this may initially still seem high, a further breakdown of non-bidders between the housing needs bands show that the majority of non-bidders are in bands C and D, who are not therefore recognised as having significant housing needs.

Non-bidding applicants

Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D	Total
79	157	1288	1303	2827

10. A number of safeguards are included within the scheme in order to identify and help any applicants who have difficulty accessing the scheme. Contact is made with applicants at the point when they make their initial application. At this stage information is sent to them about the scheme and officers check that they understand how the scheme operates and whether further assistance is required.
11. In addition to this regular checks are made of non-bidding applicants in Bands A & B and all applicants in these bands, who have not bid, have been written to twice. In many cases we are aware that applicants, whilst being awarded high priority, are making a conscious decision not to bid for properties as they have very specific preferences or do not currently wish to move. The most common housing need amongst non-bidding applicants is medical reasons, followed by under-occupation. In relation to medical need, many of these applicants transferred from the old points system into Band A or B, based on the points awarded to them under the old scheme. In many cases the applicants do not wish to move yet, but anticipate a future need as a result of their health. In relation to under-occupation, these are applicants wishing to move to a smaller property and, in many cases, are likely to be waiting for a specific type of property or have registered with a view to moving at some point in the future if the right property becomes available. In other cases we will contact the individual applicants to ask them if they understand how the scheme operates and whether they would like any assistance which can include:

- Personalised free sheet – a personalised list of properties suitable for the applicant is sent directly to them.
 - Assisted bidding – staff place bids on behalf of the applicant based on the applicants preferences for property type and location.
 - Providing a direct let - for statutorily homeless applicants who have not successfully bid after 3 months where this is appropriate, or other applicants who may be very vulnerable and/or those with an urgent need.
12. At present there are 27 applicants currently registered on the assisted bidders list and 32 have been housed, as a result of assisted bidding. In addition, personalised free sheets are sent to 16 applicants each bidding cycle (and 11 applicants have been rehoused as a result).
13. As a sub-regional scheme, there is much greater awareness of the lettings scheme across the county amongst other key agencies who offer support to vulnerable people, and joint working is in place to help enable access onto the scheme for vulnerable people. This includes:
- An access strategy which all partners and support agencies have been asked to sign up to.
 - A distribution list of support agencies, to which the fortnightly property magazine is sent.
 - Regular representation on, and updates provided to, the Disability Housing Strategic Network.
 - Awareness sessions held for support agencies.
 - Awareness and Q & A sessions planned for applicants as part of the sub-regional Home-Link forward training plan.
 - Raise awareness of the scheme and highlight ways to access the scheme via the planned introduction of newsletters later this year.
 - Cross training with other services/ support agencies.
14. Additional actions could be put into place, however, these are unlikely to be achieved within the existing staffing resources. This may include:
- A questionnaire to non-bidders in band A & B to establish and confirm their reasons for not bidding.
 - A reassessment of the priority banding of non-bidding applicants.
 - A more detailed review of non-bidding in bands C & D.
 - The permanent or temporary removal of non-bidding applicants from the housing register, following a re-assessment of their needs and reasons for not bidding.
 - The addition of another status for live applicants, who wish to remain on the list but have acknowledged that they do not currently wish to bid on properties (applicants with such a status would still be able to bid should they chose to, but this would help for monitoring purposes).

Implications

15. Financial	Potentially, additional expenditure on staffing resources, if additional actions, outlined in the report, are recommended.
Legal	None
Staffing	Additional short term staffing required to carry out additional actions suggested in the report.

Risk Management	Contained within the CBL policy document – above actions are in place to prevent the risk of applicants being unable to access the home-link scheme
Equal Opportunities	Sub regional Equal Opportunities issues are contained within the CBL policy document and an Equality Impact Assessment has been completed.

Consultations

- 16. A consultation exercise took place prior to adopting the home-link scheme and new lettings policy, and during the sub-regional review of the scheme after its first year of operation.

Effect on Corporate Objectives and Service Priorities

17.	Being a listening Council, providing first class services to all
	Contact is made with new housing register applicants. A rolling review of housing register applicants is underway, and non-bidding applicants in band A and B are checked to ensure that are fully aware of the system and to check whether they require any assistance.
	Ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place
	Making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live
	One of the main principals of the home-link scheme is to give more choice to applicants about where they want to live.
	Assisting provision for local jobs
	Providing a voice for rural life

Conclusions/Summary

- 18. Whilst the non-bidding figures may initially seem high, a number of actions are being carried out by SCDC officers and in partnership with other agencies to try to ensure that vulnerable applicants receive any help they need in accessing the home-link scheme. In addition we are aware that many of the applicants, who are not bidding are those that historically held high medical points under the old scheme but are making a conscious decision not to bid for properties at the time being.

Options

- 19. The Committee may note the progress made with the Home-link scheme, in terms of joint working and actions in place to enable access onto the scheme, including the sub-regional actions within the development plan of the scheme.

20. The Committee may wish to recommend additional actions, outlined in the report, that could be carried out, subject to sufficient additional funds being available.

Contact Officer: Sue Carter – Housing advice and options manager (job share)
Telephone: (01954) 713044

Portfolio Holder: Cllr Mark Howell – Housing Portfolio Holder

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REPORT TO: Scrutiny and Overview Committee

4 March 2010

AUTHOR/S: Scrutiny Development Officer

SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Purpose

- 1 To update the committee on progress made on past and ongoing scrutiny work.
- 2 To enable the committee to plan its work programme for the remainder of 2009/10.

Options

- 3 The Committee may agree the work programme at Appendix A, subject to changes agreed at this meeting.

Existing Task and Finish Groups

- 4 The Finance task & finish group is making its final report to this meeting with an expectation of this being forwarded to the Cabinet on 8 April.
- 5 The task & finish group reviewing how well the Council works with partners on services for children and young people, aims to make a final report on 1 April 2010.

Progress on past recommendations and decisions

- 6 The committee made five recommendations at the meeting of 5 November regarding Orchard Park. An update on these was provided in February and the Committee agreed to request a fuller update later in 2010.

Planning the remaining 2009/10 work programme

- 7 The current work programme is at Appendix A.
- 8 The Council's Forward Plan for March 2010 will be available at the meeting and is at <http://scambsmoderngov.co.uk/mgListPlans.aspx?RPId=293&bcr=1>.
- 9 In choosing topics for the work programmes, Members are reminded of the agreed selection criteria as shown at Appendix B. Members will also wish to consider any impact on the Sustainable Community Strategy's priorities and targets as at www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/774C1C91-75A0-4D6C-8B5D-419380255C7D/0/ReworkedLAA_text2withcover.pdf

Planning the 2010/11 work programme

- 10 The process for developing a work programme for 2010/11 is now underway. Topics have emerged during this year as follows:
 - Performance Improvement Strategy's Action Plan
 - Progress on the Customer Service Excellence project
 - Performance of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership
 - Progress at Orchard Park
- 11 A news release has been issued, inviting residents to suggest potential topics, and the next *South Cambs Magazine* will carry a similar invitation.

- 12 The Cabinet, Members and senior officers will shortly be invited to identify areas in which the Committee could add value during 2010/11.
- 13 Members of the Local Strategic Partnership will be asked to suggest topics at their meeting in April.
- 14 Two other sources of potential topics will be considered at the meeting of this Committee on 1 April 2010:
 - [the Audit Commission's 2009 Corporate Area Assessment](#) and
 - Customer complaints
- 15 The Committee may wish to suggest other potential topics that have arisen through portfolio monitoring or speaking with residents.
- 16 The Committee will agree its 2010/11 work programme on 24 June 2010, following an informal workshop.

17 Implications

Financial	None
Legal	The Constitution states that the Committee will set its own work programme
Staffing/ capacity	The committee is supported by one scrutiny officer. Each item selected for scrutiny would require support by at least one lead officer. Capacity for scrutiny work is also dependent on the number of elected members available and willing to participate
Risk Management	The potential burden on the organisation of supporting scrutiny work must be balanced against the potential value it could add. External scrutiny carries the risk of affecting the Council's relationship or credibility with partners
Equal Opportunities	None

Consultation

- 18 Cabinet, elected members, senior officers and residents are invited to suggest potential topics. Parish councils will be consulted via the weekly bulletin.
- 19 Ongoing consultation, for example to explore joint scrutiny activities, is undertaken via the county scrutiny network.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

- 20 The Committee's selection criteria ensure that any topic selected for scrutiny will contribute to at least one of the Council's priorities.

Options

- 21 The Committee may agree the work programme at Appendix A, subject to changes agreed at this meeting.

Contact Officer: Jackie Sayers, Scrutiny Development Officer Tel: 01954 713451

Draft Work Programme 2009/10

	Topics	Portfolio	Venue
1 April	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complaints process • CAA report • Corporate Plan • Economic Development Strategy? decide when consultation process is known • Report of CYP services in partnership t&f • Draft annual scrutiny report • Environmental Services PFH 	Cllr Bygott Cllr Wotherspoon Leader Cllr Wright Leader Cllr Ellington	Foxton

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Topic Selection Criteria

When considering whether to adopt an item onto its agenda programme, the Committee will score the item using the following criteria:

1. **Public Interest:** the concerns of local people should influence the issues chosen for scrutiny
(1= low public interest, 2=medium public interest, 3=high public interest)
2. **Ability to change:** priority should be given to issues that the Committee can realistically influence
(1= little chance of changing, 2=reasonable chance, 3=good chance)
3. **Performance:** priority should be given to the areas in which the Council, and other agencies, are not performing well.
(1= good performance, 2=moderate performance, 3=low performance)
4. **Extent:** priority should be given to issues that are relevant to all or large parts of the District.
(1= only one ward, 2= multi-ward issue, 3=the entire District)
5. **Replication:** work programmes must take account of what else is happening in the areas being considered to avoid duplication or wasted effort.
(1= already well covered, 2=already partly covered, 3=not already covered)

Also of major importance is the extent to which any potential scrutiny issue has implications for the Council's priorities, as well as the overall vision:

“To make South Cambridgeshire a safe and healthy place where residents are proud to live and where there will be opportunities for employment, enterprise and world-leading innovation. We will be a listening Council, providing a voice for rural life and first-class services accessible to all.”

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