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Wednesday 17 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

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**, which will be held in the **SWANSLEY ROOM, GROUND FLOOR** on **THURSDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2010 at 10.00 a.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

Please note that substitute members need to notify Democratic Services before the start of the meeting of the intended substitution (see paragraph 4.3 of Council Standing Orders).

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. Public Questions**

4. Call-in: Shared Service for Delivery of the Revenues and Benefits Service (Key)

1 - 10

The Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee called-in the decision, taken by the Cabinet on 11 February 2010, to ask Uttlesford District Council to guarantee the payment of the first £350,000 of any savings generated by the proposed shared services arrangement to South Cambridgeshire District Council.

The call-in was taken on the basis of Article 13 paragraph 13.02 Principles of Decision-Making of the Constitution with the possible contravention of the following principles:

- (b) due consultation and the taking of professional advice.
- (d) presumption in favour of openness, helpfulness and consistency.
- (e) clarity of aims and desired outcomes.
- (f) consideration of available options and giving reasons for decisions.

Witnesses invited:

Councillor Jim Ketteridge, Leader of Uttlesford District Council
Councillor Ray Manning, Leader of South Cambridgeshire District Council
Councillor Simon Edwards, Finance & Staffing Portfolio Holder South Cambridgeshire District Council

5. To Note the Dates of Future Meetings

2010: March 4 & April 1

All meetings will begin at 5.30pm. Next meeting at Linton Village College.

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.

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR VISITORS TO SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE HALL

While the District Council endeavours to ensure that visitors come to no harm when visiting South Cambridgeshire Hall, those visitors also have a responsibility to make sure that they do not risk their own or others' safety.

Increased hygiene at South Cambridgeshire Hall

In light of the swine flu pandemic, we have intensified our usual cleaning routines in council buildings. We have also introduced hand gel dispensers throughout the offices, including public areas. When visiting South Cambridgeshire Hall you are encouraged to use these facilities if and when required to help limit the spread of flu.

Security

Members of the public attending meetings in non-public areas of the Council offices must report to Reception, sign in, and at all times wear the Visitor badges issued. Before leaving the building, such visitors must sign out and return their Visitor badges to Reception.

Emergency and Evacuation

In the event of a fire, a continuous alarm will sound. 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

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Toilets

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

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, sub-committee or other sub-group of the Council or the executive.

Banners, Placards and similar items

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

Since 1 July 2008, the Council has operated a new Smoke Free Policy. Visitors are not allowed to smoke at any time within the Council offices, or in the car park or other grounds forming part of those offices.

Food and Drink

Vending machines and a water dispenser are available on the ground floor near the lifts at the front of the building. Visitors are not allowed to bring food or drink into the meeting room.

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Visitors are asked to make sure that their phones and other mobile devices are set on silent / vibrate mode during meetings or are switched off altogether.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet
AUTHORS: Senior Management Team

11 February 2010

SHARED SERVICE FOR DELIVERY OF THE REVENUES AND BENEFITS SERVICE**Purpose**

1. To consider the introduction of a shared service for the delivery of the Council's Revenues and Benefits services with Uttlesford District Council
2. This is a key decision because it is:
 - (a) likely to result in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or *the making of savings* which are, significant having regard to the Council's budget for the service or function to which the decision relates; and
 - (b) of such significance to a locality, the Council or *the services which it provides* that the report author is of the opinion that it should be treated as a key decisionand it was first published in the October 2009 forward plan.

Background

3. Cabinet in October 2009, agreed that a shared service model be explored in more detail for the delivery of revenues and benefits services from October 2010 in partnership with Uttlesford District Council.
4. The Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder considered the issues arising in more detail at his November Portfolio Holder meeting subsequent to which, Scrutiny and Overview considered the Outline Business Case at its meeting in December 2009.
5. At Council in January 2010 the Leader sought and obtained leave for this item to be taken back to Cabinet to allow further consideration of the concerns articulated at Scrutiny and Overview Committee and elsewhere. To support this the Executive Director, Corporate Services has been instructed to consider what level of savings might be available through reorganisation of the Revenues and Benefits Service internally.
6. The full detail of the shared service business case and the Executive Director's comments thereto can be found on the agenda and minutes of Cabinet's meeting on the 14 January 2010; Councillors may find it helpful to refer to those papers in their consideration of this report.

Considerations / Options – Savings Available Internally

7. The Executive Director, with his senior management colleagues, has reviewed the staffing structure of the current revenues and benefits teams and has identified potential savings of circa £200,000 in a full year through the deletion of 4 to 5 current, or prospective, vacant posts. Temporary arrangements for covering some of these posts are currently in place and it is not anticipated that any redundancies or termination costs would result.

8. As previously identified, in the consideration of the shared service business case, the risk of such a course of action is maintaining the current high levels of performance of the team. To deliver this level of savings the Executive Director would seek to reorganise the management structure of the team, reconsider the balance of desktop driven and externally led fraud investigations and home visits and, by delivering efficiencies, improve internal workflow systems.
9. The final level of reductions would be subject to consultation with staff and the construction and delivery of an improvement plan to improve internal processes. It has been envisaged that the resultant improvement plan could be funded through various one-off grants available to the service in 2010/11, which would otherwise be used to part fund the shared service project.

Considerations / Options – Next Steps

10. The Medium Term Financial Strategy had previously assumed that a £350,000 reduction in cost from 2011/12 onwards would result from the shared service. This was calculated by reference to a broad 2/3, 1/3 allocation of savings in favour of SCDC, in line with relative populations. This principle has been agreed with UDC and would be contractually enshrined in the resultant partnership agreement.
11. In the light of the potential savings available internally, Cabinet may wish to consider the minimum level of savings that the Council should seek from any shared service proposal. Uttlesford DC have been requested to consider guaranteeing that the first £350,000 of any savings resulting from the shared service project should come to SCDC. The corollary of such an arrangement would provide UDC with the subsequent £175,000 savings with any balance being apportioned in line with the partnership agreement on 2/3, 1/3 split in favour of SCDC.

Implications

12. Financial	The Medium Term Financial Strategy had previously assumed that a £350,000 reduction in cost from 2011/12 onwards would be forthcoming. Implicit within this assumption is that any set up costs will be met from savings arising in 2010/11 together with any grant funding the Councils can secure from Improvement East. An internally focussed approach looks set to deliver £200,000 reduced cost from 2010/11 and the MTFs, elsewhere on this agenda has now been updated to reflect this assumption.
Legal	There are significant corporate governance implications arising from adopting a service delivery model principal among which are, the creation of a new Joint Committee and a robust Partnership Agreement.
Staffing	There are significant staffing implications arising. Informal consultations and briefings have already taken place; the detailed staffing implications will be considered as firmer proposals are put together.

Risk Management	Major reorganisation of services elevates the potential for service failure. The adoption of appropriate project management methodology to manage the change and robust performance management to manage the ongoing service delivery would significantly mitigate these risks. Taking an internally focussed approach would significantly reduce the quantum of these risks although at a much lower level of potential savings.
Equal Opportunities	None identified

Consultations

13. Staff employed by both Councils and the trade unions (GMB and Unison) have been informally briefed on the proposals to date. More formal consultations will take place as the direction of the project becomes clear.

Effect on Strategic Aims

14.	Commitment to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all. The shared service vision is to provide service excellence and to deliver improved services with wider access points. These aspirations are replicated in the draft 2010/11 Corporate Services Service Plan.
	Commitment to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for all. None identified
	Commitment to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live. None identified
	Commitment to assisting provision for local jobs for all. The shared service would be hosted within the district and could potentially act as a catalyst for expansion in the future
	Commitment to providing a voice for rural life. None identified

Conclusions / Summary

15. The outline business case highlights that there are clear financial and operational advantages to the Council in progressing with a shared service model for the delivery of the Council's Revenues and Benefits Services. There is potential for further savings by widening the partnership either between the two Councils or by admitting other partners to the proposed arrangement.
16. Taking an internally focussed approach, however, would provide £200,000 of cost reductions at considerably lower upheaval to services and at a lower risk to service delivery albeit a lower level than previously assumed.

Recommendations

17. That Uttlesford District Council be requested to guarantee that the first £350,000 of any savings secured through the shared service proposal be earmarked for South Cambridgeshire DC in line with the exemplification at paragraph 11 above.
18. That, subject to that guarantee, Council be recommended to:
 - (a) Enter into partnership with Uttlesford District Council to develop a Revenues and Benefits shared service for the two Councils
 - (b) Approve the procurement of a contractor for the change management aspects of the project.
 - (c) Approve the procurement of a supplier for a common software platform.

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

Report to Cabinet, including relevant appendices, dated 14th January 2010 {Note the main Business Case Appendix is an exempt item}

Contact Officer: Alex Colyer – Executive Director (Corporate Services)
Telephone: (01954) 713023

CABINET

THURSDAY, 11 FEBRUARY 2010

DECISIONS

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 11 February 2010. Decisions made by the Cabinet will be subject to call-in. Recommendations made to the Council are not subject to call-in. The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording that will appear in the minutes.

If you have any queries about any matters referred to in this decision sheet please contact Holly Adams.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

1. CAPITAL & REVENUE ESTIMATES, COUNCIL TAX, PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS AND REVIEW OF MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2010/11 INCLUDING SAVINGS PROPOSAL UPDATE

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

- (a) that the capital programme (Appendix A) and the associated funding (paragraph 15) up to the year ending 31 March 2015 be approved as submitted;
- (b) that the revised revenue estimates for the year 2009/10 and the revenue estimates for 2010/11 be approved as submitted in the General Fund summary (Appendix B);
- (c) that the Medium Term Financial Strategy (Appendix D) be approved based on the assumptions set out in the report to Cabinet;
- (d) that the District Council demand for general expenses for 2010/11 be £6,827,780;
- (e) that the Council sets the amount of Council Tax for each of the relevant categories of dwelling in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 on the basis of a District Council Tax for general expenses on a Band D property of £115.46 plus the relevant amounts required by the precepts of Parish Councils, Cambridgeshire County Council and the Cambridgeshire Police and Fire Authorities, details of those precepts and their effect to be circulated with the formal resolution required at the Council meeting; and
- (f) that the prudential indicators in Appendix F be approved.

Cabinet **NOTED** the update on the savings proposals (revised Appendix C) and **APPROVED** the list of precautionary items (Appendix E) to be used under delegated powers already given to the Finance and Staffing Portfolio Holder and the Chief Financial Officer.

2. HOUSING RENTS AND SERVICE CHARGES AND HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT (HRA) BUDGET 2010/11

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that:

- (a) from the first rent week in April 2010, rents for existing tenants be increased by an average of 2.7% based on a deflationary adjustment of -0.9%, with a maximum variation of £2.75 towards the phasing in of rent restructuring;
- (b) subject to written confirmation from the Department of Communities and Local Government that there will be no adverse impact on the negative housing subsidy, from the first rent week in April 2010, properties be let to new tenants at the target rent level;
- (c) new lifeline alarm users be charged £18 from 1 April 2010 for the installation of lifeline alarms;

- (d) tenants living in flats with communal areas and with door entry systems be charged £2 a week from 1 April 2010 towards the cost of these communal areas;
- (e) tenants living in flats with communal areas where there is no door entry system be charged £1 a week from 1 April 2010 towards the cost of the communal areas;
- (f) charges for other services and facilities be increased as follows from 1 April 2010:

Service or Facility	Current Charge per week	Proposed Charge per week	Increase / Decrease	
	£	£	%	£
Charges for Flats with Communal Areas				
Blocks with a Door Entry System	-	2.00	N/A	N/A
Other Blocks	-	1.00	N/A	N/A
Sheltered Housing Charges				
Tenants				
- support element	14.99	15.14	1.0	0.15
- communal facilities	6.93	7.14	3.1	0.21
Equity Shareholders				
Maximum Charge (exclusive of capital works)				
- schemes with communal facilities	27.77	30.32	9.1	2.55
- schemes without communal facilities	19.54	20.53	5.1	0.99
Alarm System Service Charges**				
Individual Alarms				
- Those not in receipt of benefit				
- where the Council supplies the alarm	3.83	3.98	2.6	0.10
- where the user supplies the alarm	3.09	3.22	2.5	0.08
- Those in receipt of benefit				
- where the Council supplies the alarm	3.49	3.98	12.4	0.44
- where the user supplies the alarm	2.75	3.22	15.0	0.42
Group Alarms	3.48	3.51	0.9	0.03
** plus VAT where appropriate				
Garage Rents				
Garages rented to a Council tenant or leaseholder	7.00	7.22	3.1	0.22

N.B. In excess of two garages will be subject to VAT				
Other Garages (subject to VAT)	9.67	9.97	3.1	0.30

- (g) the grounds maintenance budget be funded by an additional £20,000, with an equivalent amount to be met from the General Fund;
- (h) a £300,000 revenue contribution be funded to capital outlay to provide increased support to the disabled adaptation budget; and
- (i) the HRA budget as summarised in the revised Appendix A be approved.

Cabinet **AGREED**

- (j) not to proceed with the changes to the Sheltered Housing service; and
- (k) that the scheme-based sheltered housing service continue, subject to the Supporting People funding regime being maintained.

3. COMMUNITY SAFETY 3-YEAR ROLLING PLAN 2008-2011: REFRESH

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** adoption of the refreshed Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership Rolling Plan 2008-11.

DECISIONS MADE BY CABINET

4. SHARED SERVICE FOR DELIVERY OF THE REVENUES AND BENEFITS SERVICE

Cabinet **AGREED** that Uttlesford District Council (UDC) be requested to guarantee that the first £350,000 of any savings secured through the shared service proposal be earmarked for South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) in line with the exemplification that the corollary of such an arrangement would provide UDC with the subsequent £175,000 savings with any balance being apportioned in line with the partnership agreement on 2/3, 1/3 split in favour of SCDC.

Cabinet **AGREED** that, subject to the above guarantee being given by Uttlesford District Council, **TO RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** that South Cambridgeshire District Council:

- (a) enter into partnership with Uttlesford District Council to develop a Revenues and Benefits shared service for the two Councils;
- (b) approve the procurement of a contractor for the change management aspects of the project; and
- (c) approve the procurement of a supplier for a common software platform.

Reason For Decision: The outline business case highlights that there are clear financial and operational advantages to the Council in progressing with a shared service model for the delivery of the Council's Revenues and Benefits Services. There is potential for further savings by widening the partnership either between the two Councils or by admitting other partners to the proposed arrangement.

Taking an internally-focussed approach, however, would provide £200,000 of cost reductions at considerably lower upheaval to services and at a lower risk to service delivery albeit a lower level than previously assumed.

5. GYPSY AND TRAVELLER COMMUNITY STRATEGY

Cabinet **AGREED** to adopt the final draft of the Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy, as amended and endorsed by the Housing Portfolio Holder on 20 January 2010.

Other Options Considered: None considered.

Reason For Decision: The Gypsy and Traveller Community Strategy meets the

commitment set out in the Comprehensive Equalities Policy 2009-2012 to eliminate discrimination and prejudice and to develop a culture which values difference, both in employment and service delivery.

6. COMMUNITY TRANSPORT STRATEGY 2010-2012

Cabinet **AGREED** to adopt the Community Transport Strategy 2010-2012.

Other Options Considered: Option: To adopt the Community Transport Strategy with amendments as the basis for future work undertaken to achieve South Cambridgeshire District Council's aims.

Option: To reject the Community Transport Strategy and make recommendations for improvement.

Both rejected because: the strategy has been written following wide-ranging public consultation and endorsed by the South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership as something they would like to support and collaborate on. A number of the individual members of the board have also contributed the views of organisations they represent which have, where appropriate, been incorporated into the final version.

Reason For Decision: The implementation of this strategy in collaboration with partners is fundamental to the delivery of South Cambridgeshire District Council's aims and objectives for 2010-11 and to a comprehensive approach to transport planning for the district.

7. JOINT LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FOR SOUTH CAMBS AND CAMBRIDGE CITY

Cabinet **AGREED** to merge the South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City Local Strategic Partnerships and to support the following principles of a joint Local Strategic Partnership:

- (a) The size of a combined LSP Board will need to be manageable and membership and voting arrangements made clear;
- (b) Agendas should be balanced between issues that are relevant for each local authority area;
- (c) A common performance management system for assessing progress towards the LAA targets and the monitoring of Reward Grant projects should be put in place;
- (d) The LSPs should keep their separate Sustainable Community Strategies for now but look to develop a joint strategy when these come to an end (March 2011);
- (e) Local thematic groups that are relevant to the strategies and their action plans should be retained for the life of the strategies;
- (f) Local partnerships should have clear reporting arrangements to the new Board; and
- (g) The new Board will be subject to scrutiny by each local authority's overview and scrutiny arrangement.

Other Options Considered: Rejected options: to merge the South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge LSPs but amend the principles set out in the report; to reject the case for a merger allowing more time for consideration of the issues; or to reject the case for a merger at this present time.

Rejected because: The proposed merger and principles set out in the report already have the support of the South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge Local Strategic Partnerships, and the South Cambridgeshire District Council Scrutiny and Overview Committee, whilst expressing concerns regarding the governance arrangements, generally supported the proposed merger.

Reason For Decision: Much joint work already occurs between the South

Cambridgeshire and Cambridge LSPs, with occasional joint workshops, a number of joint theme groups and a few joint projects funded through the Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) Reward Grant. Less duplication of meetings would result in more time for members and officers to progress delivery.

8. **ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2008/09**
Cabinet **RECEIVED** the revised Annual Audit Letter 2008/09.

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