



Date

To: Chairman – Councillor SGM Kindersley
Vice-Chairman – Councillor MP Howell
Members of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee – Councillors SJ Agnew,
RE Barrett, RF Bryant, EW Bullman, NN Cathcart, Mrs J Hughes, EL Monks,
WH Saberton, Mrs GJ Smith, PL Stroude, DALG Wherrell and LJ Wilson

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**, which will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER** at South Cambridgeshire Hall on **THURSDAY, 11 MARCH 2004** at **2.00 p.m.**

Yours faithfully
GJ HARLOCK
Finance and Resources Director

AGENDA

PAGES

PROCEDURAL ITEMS

1. **Apologies**
2. **Minutes of Previous Meeting**
To authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th February as a correct record.
3. **Declarations of Interest**
Please note that when considering the review of 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. Any Councillor who is a member of an Advisory Group which has discussed an item that is now being scrutinised cannot participate in that debate.

STANDING ITEMS

4. **Public Questions**
5. **Draft Agenda Programme and List of Recommendations**

REPORT ITEMS

6. **Advice on Section 106 Agreements** 1 - 8
7. **Economic Development Grants** 9 - 18

- | | | |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| 8. | Apportion of Recharges Between the Services | 19 - 24 |
| 9. | Draft Six Monthly Report | 25 - 30 |

FURTHER STANDING ITEMS

- | | | |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| 10. | Programme of Key Decisions | |
| 11. | To Note the Dates of Future Meetings
2004: 15th April & 13th May
All meetings will begin at 2.00pm. | |

Report Items

Item no.	Report Item	Relevant to Corporate Objectives?	Annual Priority?	Any Relevant Performance Indicators?	Who Requested This Report?
6	Advice on Section 106 Agreements	Section 106 agreements have the potential to impinge on all four Corporate Objectives:	Work towards a Development Plan framework which meets the Council's objectives		Committee on 23 rd October 2003
7	Economic Development Grants	Economic Development grants are relevant to achieving 'A Sustainable Future for South Cambridgeshire', as economic issues are a key aspect of sustainable development. The grants also promote effective partnerships with organisations providing services to the community and the economy.			Committee on 12 th February 2004
8	Apportionment of Recharges Between the Services	Accurately examining the budget has an impact on all corporate objectives	Accurately examining the budget is relevant to all annual priorities		Committee on 12 th February 2004
9	Draft Six Monthly Report				Under the terms of the Constitution this Committee provides a 6 monthly update

Agenda Item:

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Scrutiny and Overview Committee
AUTHOR/S: Finance and Resources Director

11th March 2004

ADVICE ON SECTION 106 AGREEMENTSPurpose

- 1 To respond to the Committee's request on 23rd October 2003 to provide advice for Parish Councils on Section 106 agreements. The Head of Legal Services proposes to deal with this matter by amending his guidance notes on Section 106 agreements that are sent out to all parties at the outset of instructions. These are included in appendix A and the proposed amendments are highlighted in text.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

- 2 Section 106 agreements have the potential to impinge on all four Corporate Objectives:
 - High quality, accessible, value for money services
 - Quality Village Life
 - A Sustainable future for South Cambridgeshire
 - A better future through partnership

This report is also relevant to the following annual priority for 2003/04:

- Work towards a Development Plan framework which meets the Council's objectives

Recommendation

- 3 That the Committee support the Head of Legal Service's proposal to send the amended notes to the relevant Parish Council.

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

Contact Officer: Chris Taylor – Head of Legal Services
Telephone: (01223) 443060

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NOTE IN RESPECT OF PROPOSED SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS1. What is a Section 106 Agreement?

Although it is possible to record planning obligations by the site owner giving a deed of unilateral undertaking, by far the most common form of obligation is by agreement with the District Council and/or, where the obligations concern education, waste or highways, the County Council under S.106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 which allows the Local Planning Authority to come to terms with any person interested in land in the district for the purpose of restricting the development or use of land, either permanently or during such period as may be agreed, requiring certain things to be carried out on the land, requiring the land to be used in a specified way or requiring money to be paid. Any Agreement may contain such incidental and consequential provisions, including provisions of a financial character, as appear to the Planning Authority to be necessary or expedient for the purposes of the Agreement. All outstanding obligations ‘run with’ the land and can be enforced against subsequent site owners, not just the original owners or developers, although the agreement may expressly limit the extent of future liability.

An Agreement can provide for something quite straightforward and simple, such as a requirement for the owner to provide a satisfactory means of foul water drainage before taking occupation of a new house, the subject of the planning application. In larger terms, a planning agreement may provide for substantial planning gain to the community, such as the provision of public amenity areas, a village hall, off-site highway matters and so on. In every case, the substance of the Agreement is referable to the development being contemplated.

2. Planning Conditions

It is sometimes the case that matters the subject of a Section 106 Agreement can also be dealt with by planning condition. More usually, however, a Section 106 Agreement provides for matters which cannot be attached by way of condition, even though the Section 106 provisions do relate to the proposed development. There are a number of reasons for this and they include, for example, that the provisions relate to off-site matters or they require some positive covenant on the part of the developer. Section 106 conditions are enforceable in contract, even against subsequent owners of the land, whereas enforcement of planning conditions is restricted to the relevant provisions relating to Enforcement Notices in Sections 172-179 of the 1990 Act (these are appealable to the Planning Inspectorate), Breach of Condition Notices under S.187A (which are not appealable) or Injunction under S.187B. It is usual to deal with money provisions in a Section 106 Agreement and not in planning conditions.

3. Common Form Agreements

The most common types of Agreement are as follows :

- (a) “Granny” or “Family” Annexe provision
- (b) Education Contributions by developers of larger residential developments
- (c) Provision of public open space or other community infrastructure
- (d) Restoration of land
- (e) Non-implementation of an earlier or conflicting permission
- (f) Particular restrictions on the use(s) or occupation of land
- (g) Provision of social/affordable housing
- (h) Travel for Work Plans

Total infrastructure contributions including education or other community contributions (for such purposes as proportionate funding for village hall, public art, off-site provision for car parking and so on) necessitated by the development, and commuted sums for maintenance or establishment, may be dealt with at the option of the Council by apportioning the aggregate amount on a per completed dwelling basis

4. **Plan**

It is the practice of this Authority to include a plan on every Agreement. Usually we will use a copy of the plan on the planning application. Unless it is an OS plan extract the copyright belongs to the person who prepared it, and we would seek permission to use the plan for this purpose, please. The Council will assume consent unless there is any objection.

5. **Title**

The persons entering into the Agreement must be all the persons who own all the interests in the land – freeholders, lessees, mortgagees, persons who have entered into a contract to purchase all or part of the property and persons with rights of option or pre-emption. A full list of owners and all other such persons, together with their full names and addresses, should please be given. The mortgage or legal charge date(s) and parties should also be given.

In addition, Certification of Title is required from a Solicitor as to the nature of the title and any incumbrances. That should be given upon the footing that any changes prior to the Agreement being completed will be notified to the Council. The Certificate can be given in the form of a simple letter, or a modern Office Copy of the Land Registry entries.

6. **Maintenance of Public Open Space**

The Council is keen to ensure that where the provision of POS is a part of the development, somebody is made permanently responsible for its control and upkeep. Developers, who tend to lose interest once all houses are sold, can in a S106 Agreement formalise their proposals for permanent maintenance of POS by, for example, agreeing terms with the Parish Council. Although a condition of the planning permission can restrict development until a scheme for permanent maintenance has been approved by the Council, it is always preferable to agree a scheme from the outset before the application is decided. The amenity land will not remain in private ownership. Developers will therefore expect to negotiate terms directly with the Parish Council and undertake to pay the Parish Council's reasonable legal fees of agreement preparation and the costs and fees of later transfer of the land. Once the requirement for infrastructure is identified in the planning process, the District Council is not usually involved in process except to ensure that what the parties will have agreed is enshrined in the s. 106 deed. The Parish Council will be responsible for the land after transfer has taken place and will therefore need to ensure that its condition is satisfactory and meets the requisite standard. These principles will govern all community infrastructure adopted by the Parish Council.

7. **Costs**

It is the practice of this Council, in common with other Local Planning Authorities, to draw up the draft Agreement for submission to the applicants and all land owners, etc. or their agents or Solicitors for approval. The costs of the preparation of the Agreement are requested from the applicant. These are pitched purposely on the reasonable side and effectively amount to a reimbursement of the in-house cost. Because of this, no VAT is charged. The draft Agreement may include the suggested figure but the Council's costs after the first letter enclosing the draft Agreement (up to any amount suggested in the latest draft) will nevertheless be payable by the applicant in the first instance whether or not the Agreement is signed or completed. If the draft does not mention a figure then the amount will be such sum as is reasonable in the light of the amount of work done and its complexity. Parish Councils' legal costs are of course extra.

8. **Execution**

This simply means the signing of the Agreement. Individuals will, of course, sign with their usual signature in the presence of a witness, who will add his or her address and occupation. Corporate Bodies, however, will usually seal with the Common Seal and usually in the presence of a Director and the Secretary. That is a matter for the Company or Corporate Body concerned. Some Banks and larger Corporate Institutions do, however, prefer to execute documents by an Attorney executing under Power of Attorney. In such instances it would be helpful if the Council could be told at the draft Agreement stage, so that the appropriate wording can be entered in the testatum. In each such case a copy of the Power of Attorney, duly certified, should be provided when the document is returned duly executed.

9. **Duplicates**

A duplicate of the Agreement is always provided by the Local Planning Authority and the costs allows for this. The duplicate should be kept safely with the Title Deeds of the property to which the planning permission ultimately will refer. If there are Mortgagees holding the Title Deeds then the duplicate Agreement will be forwarded to the Mortgagees to place with the bundle.

If there are other parties, who will also require a copy of the Agreement for whatever reason, then provided this is made clear at an early stage the appropriate number of duplicates can be prepared.

10. **Timing**

The preparation of Section 106 Agreements is now quite common and an important part of the planning process. Because of the need to avoid delays in this process, it is considered by the Council that draft Agreements should be prepared as soon as possible. This will take a matter of only a few days before submission to the applicant for approval. The engrossments and execution will take a little longer, but the whole process could take as little as 10 days. No planning permission is usually given pending the completion of a Section 106 Agreement where one is required. The normal course of events is, however, for the Planning Committee to have approved the application subject to a Section 106 Agreement. The co-operation of the applicant, therefore, is sought in progressing the Agreement to completion. The Council has at least one Sealing session each week, usually on a Friday.

All Members of the Planning Committee and the Planning Officers are particularly concerned to provide a prompt and efficient service. However, in some instances inordinate delays are caused in the process of some applications because applicants, or their agents or advisers, hang on either because they are not sure whether the matter is going forward at all, or some other reason. In these cases – not the genuine instances where, for example, owners experience modest delays in securing mortgagee approval of the draft Agreement or inevitable delay in getting everyone in a multi-party agreement to sign the final document – it is advisable for applicants to consider whether it would be sensible to withdraw the application, save administrative delays and costs, and perhaps have another go later.

If any applicant/agent has to wait more than 4 working days before receiving from the Council a draft Agreement (from the date of instructions being given) or receiving any response to any letter, phone call or query, then the Head of Legal Services or Planning Director want to be told.

11. **No Agreement**

If for any reason it will not have been possible to come to terms on the provisions of an Agreement, either in principle or any substantial detail, then the matter would go back to Committee for further

consideration. On matters of substance the Committee is likely to take a view against the planning application.

12. **Registration**

The Agreement will be registered (no fee) in the register of local land charges and the details will remain on the register until cancelled. Unless otherwise specified in the Agreement, cancellation will be effected either upon request or upon the Head of Legal Services' own initiative when the substance of the Agreement has been effected and there is no continuing obligation under it.

13. **Tenants, Lodgers and Paying Guests**

A Section 106 Agreement which restricts the occupation of an annexe to members of the family occupying the (whole) dwelling does **NOT** stop the taking in of lodgers or paying guests of the family. That is common. But creating a tenancy of part of the dwelling (which might be the annexe) is not allowed under the Agreement. A tenancy gives separate rights of occupation of that part to the exclusion of the owner and, in effect, creates a separate unit even though some facilities may be shared. Whether a tenancy exists as such is very much a matter of fact and degree but owners should always bear in mind the "single dwelling" obligation.

14. **Commencement of Development**

The Agreement may be expressed to take effect only upon the commencement of development and refer to one or more of the material operations described in Section 56 (4) of the Act. The wording of that sub-section is as follows:-

"56 (4) "material operation means –

- (a) any work of construction in the course of the erection of a building;
- (aa) any work of demolition of a building;
- (b) the digging of a trench which is to contain the foundations, or part of the foundations, of a building;
- (c) the laying of any underground main or pipe to the foundations, or part of the foundations, of a building or to any such trench as is mentioned in paragraph (b);
- (d) any operation in the course of laying out or constructing a road or part of a road;
- (e) any change in the use of any land which constitutes material development"

15. **Modifications and Discharge**

Planning obligations can be modified or discharged by agreement with the Council or, after a certain period (usually 5 years), by application to the Council which will be determined by the Council in its discretion. It may decide to modify or not and can discharge an obligation if it serves no useful purpose. You can appeal to the Secretary of State where the Council do not decide to modify the obligation. The criterion as to whether the obligation serves a useful purpose is not solely a planning issue, although the Secretary of State will have regard principally to planning purposes of any such obligation.

16. **Enforcement**

The District Council has an absolute discretion whether it wishes to enforce any obligation. Several factors may influence this decision. Obligations which affect only the Parish Council's interests may be pursued by the Parish Council (any agreement will provide for this) as those obligations will have been negotiated directly by the Parish Council with proper legal advice, and any default by the developers will normally have been picked up at an early stage within the parish concerned.

Developers should ensure that, to avoid default situations arising where there are trigger points for the provision of community infrastructure for which permission or approval of reserved matters needs to be obtained, arrangements are put in hand at a suitably early stage for those permissions or approvals to be applied for and granted, for contracts to be let and for the work to be completed **prior** to those trigger points. S. 106 agreements will be likely to include prohibition of further development until any default situation is remedied.

17. **Further Guidance**

The Government has given further guidance in the DoE Circular 1/97: "Planning Obligations" although the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published in November 2003 a consultation paper "Contributing to Sustainable Communities – A New Approach to Planning Obligations". The Council's position is fully set out in the 2004 District Local Plan Part I, Chapter 8: "Community Services and Infrastructure" an extract of which is available from the Planning Department price £12.50 and can be seen on the Council's website <http://www.scams.gov.uk>. In case of any doubt or difficulty the Council's Legal Office will be happy to advise.

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Agenda Item:

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO

Scrutiny Committee

11th March 2004

AUTHOR/S:

Planning Director

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GRANTS 2003/04Purpose

1. This report details the Economic Development Grants awarded by South Cambridgeshire District Council in the financial year 2003/4 as requested at the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 12th February 2004.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2. The grants meet the corporate objective of 'A Sustainable Future for South Cambridgeshire', as economic issues are a key aspect of sustainable development. Grants are also used to promote effective partnerships with organisations providing services to the community and the economy.

Background

3. The Council has a longstanding policy of supporting the local economy, by providing grants to training organisations in the Cambridge area, by supporting organisations which support business development, and by providing assistance to organisations which help disadvantaged groups to gain access to the labour market.
4. The principle of providing grants was endorsed in the South Cambridgeshire Economic Development Strategy, adopted in June 2003. The consultation process for the Strategy endorsed the importance of economic development grants. It indicated that many local organisations are highly dependent on grants from the District Council. A large amount of community benefit is derived from limited funds by supporting training, employment, and voluntary organisations.

Application Process

5. The Economic Development Budget for 2003/2004 is £63,140. In August 2003, following the adoption of the Economic development Strategy, grant application forms for the period 1st April 2003 to 31st March 2004 were sent to all organisations which applied for an Economic Development Grant during 2002/2003 irrespective of whether a grant was awarded. Availability of grants was also stated on the Council's website, and the Economic Development Strategy.

6. Information accompanying application forms made it clear that a fully substantiated case must be made by any organisation which decided to apply. Potential applicants were advised that they must demonstrate in their application how their organisation assists with business development, improving skills, or improving the employability of the disadvantaged in the local labour market. Applicants are also required to submit up to date audited accounts, which are reviewed by the Council's Finance and Resources Department to ensure that they are satisfactory.

Awarding Grants

7. Decisions on the amounts awarded are determined by the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economic Development, and recorded as portfolio holder decisions.
8. Applications were received in 2003/4 amounted to £78,155. The full budget available in 2003/4, £63,140, was awarded as grants. Many grant recipients state that South Cambridgeshire is a key source of funding, and their ability to provide services in the District may be compromised if grants were reduced.

2004/05 Budget

9. The budget for 2004/5 has been set at £59,220, a cut of £3,920 on the previous year. It was agreed through discussions with the portfolio holder that the focus of cuts would be on grants which aid firms (such as Invest East of England), rather than grants which more directly aid individuals and disadvantaged groups. The grants application process will begin in March.

2003/04 Applications

10. At its meeting on 12th February the Scrutiny Committee requested that "*a report detailing the Economic Development Grants awarded in the municipal year 2003/04*" be prepared for a subsequent meeting. These are detailed below.

Cambridgeshire Enterprise Services - Grant Awarded 2003/4: £8,000

11. Cambridge Enterprise Services aim to assist in the creation and development of new and existing small businesses, offering support through advice and guidance.
12. Services include one to one business start-up advice, existing business counselling, business skills training, prime fund allocations (a local fund for people aged 50+), business skills training for the long-term unemployed, DTI fund allocation to provide expertise for high growth companies, 'Technology Means Business' IT accreditation and IT training leading to the European Computer Driving License.
13. The Agencies have a projected income of £451,474 for 2003/2004. The grant is specifically sought to support their pre-start up counselling operations which help people determine whether their business idea is viable, and the research

and work required to assemble an effective business plan. In 02/03 1156 pre-start counselling sessions, and 1260 business training seminar places were filled. Approximately 15% of users came from South Cambridgeshire.

14. This application was submitted late, with limited funds available. However, the important role Cambridgeshire Enterprise services plays in supporting businesses warranted continued support through the grants process.

Cambridge ITEC Limited - Grant Awarded 2003/4: £4,000

15. Cambridge ITEC Ltd is a non-profit making company. Its aims/objectives are to provide advice, guidance, support and training in a range of occupation areas to young people aged 16 to 24 leading to nationally recognized qualifications. This includes seeking out training placements and employment with local firms and promoting a lifelong learning commitment with both individuals and employers.
16. The services provided are CV preparation, interview skills preparation, initial assessment (job and qualification matching), job search support and recruitment opportunities. Skills training is provided in a range of areas including Information Technology, Accounting, Customer Services, Administration and personal development. A great deal of Cambridge ITEC Ltd's activity provides one to one support for personal development, successful transition from unemployment to employment, and skills development and work experience to achieve work based qualifications. Cambridge ITEC Ltd operates flexible programmes designed for those with little or no academic qualification or those with a lack of relevant skills to ensure continual employment.
17. Cambridge ITEC Ltd has a projected income of £142,733 for 2003/2004. The grant sought will be used to develop a company web site, and Bulletin Board, for improved access to services in rural areas and to develop distance learning materials. It will also support continued counselling provision to young people.

Cambridge Jobsearch/Connexions - Grant Awarded 2003/4: £9,500

18. Both organisations offer free one-to-one guidance sessions to unemployed adults. Both operate on a not for profit basis. They provide guidance and job-hunting advice at an early stage in their clients unemployment/need for employment. Cambridge Jobsearch/Connexions objective is the rapid movement of people back into employment or into training.
19. The particular services include careers guidance, CV compilation, interview skills, completing application forms, training needs analysis, motivation and confidence building, counselling and mentoring. All clients' progress is monitored three months after using their services. Between 1st April 2000 and 31st March 2001, 271 people used the service.
20. Cambridge Job Search/Cambs Career Guidance have a projected income of £17,500 for 2003/2004 for expenditure in South Cambridgeshire. The grant

will be used to pay for the staffing and associated overheads required for the continued delivery of the service to South Cambridgeshire residents.

Qest - Grant Awarded 2003/4: £9,074

21. Qest (Quest Employment Support Team) is a registered trust which was set up to help unemployed people with mental health problems and/or physical disabilities and those recovering from drug misuse to find suitable training or employment and to gain help needed in the workplace. Qest focuses on making individuals 'employable' and on making businesses more likely to employ people with mental and physical disabilities by giving advice on recruitment, retention or rehabilitation. About a quarter of the 140 people that Qest helped during 2002/2003 lived in South Cambridgeshire. Each year, Qest achieves one third of all its clients into paid employment and one third into training, education or work based activity.
22. The services provided by QEST for individuals include vocational advice and guidance; individual needs assessment/action planning; motivation and orientation counselling; pre-vocational training in employment skills, assertiveness and IT; core skills support; help into employment/self-employment; help into education and training. For employers, Qest provides information on good practice, government funded help at work and the Disability Discrimination Act.
23. Qest is part of the Richmond Fellowship which provide financial, personnel, payroll and management support. It has Investors In People status.
24. Qest has a projected income of £235,524 for 2003/2004. The grant will assist Qest's client group to access stable employment, education or training for work. It provides accredited training whilst building self-confidence and esteem. Its aims for the next year are:
 - To place one third of its clients into work and a further third into training, education or work based activity.
 - To offer outreach and work preparation.
 - To increase the quality of it's provision by ensuring it's staff are trained to NVQ level 4 in Guidance.

Prince's Trust - Grant Awarded 2003/4: £2,000

25. The Prince's Trust is a registered charity. It's main aim is to enable 18 – 30 year olds who are unemployed or under-employed, and of limited financial means, to start their own businesses.
26. The grant will fund Test Marketing Grants, which help young people develop an idea before they take the responsibility of a business loan. It will also fund Development Awards to enable people to access education, training and work. The trust particularly targets minority groups, people with disabilities, lone parents and people who experience difficulty in finding employment.
27. The Prince's Trust has a projected income of £398,940 for 2002/2003. They helped approximately 600 people in the year up to April 2002, including starting 56 businesses.

28. The Trust has a designated Business Development Worker for the Cambridge area who meets with all young people who express a firm interest in business start-up to discuss their business idea and the support that the Trust can provide. If the client decides to go ahead with a business, they will work on developing their business plan with the support of a voluntary Business Mentor who is provided by the Trust. The completed business plan is presented to a Prince's Trust Panel for approval for funding and if successful would continue to receive support from their Business mentor for a period of 3 years. The support provided by the Prince's Trust Business Programme is not offered by any other organization. The work of the Trust is monitored primarily through the setting of targets.

Castle Project - Grant Awarded 2003/4: £8,016

29. The Castle Project is a registered charity. It aims to provide vocational and rehabilitation opportunities for people with mental illness and to improve their ability to function in work settings. In collaboration with Qest, the Castle Project offers support in seeking, obtaining and managing further vocational training or suitable employment.
30. The Castle Project aims to identify and overcome barriers to the functioning of its clients in the workplace. It offers opportunities to obtain either a Vocational Access Certificate or an NVQ level 1 or 2 in Administration whilst at the Project. Recently, the Castle Project has been working with the South Cambridgeshire Primary Care Group in identifying the particular needs of the people of South Cambridgeshire and how best they can access existing services and how new services may be introduced into the more rural areas.
31. A range of activities are provided for the mentally ill including woodwork, furniture restoration, recycling, contract packaging, mailing services and leaflet distribution. Progress is monitored by the Project's staff who liaise with other agencies to ensure that the best all round package is available to its clients. The Castle Project takes up to 25 people per day who attend between one and five days per week.
32. The Castle Project has a projected income of £187,731 for 2003/2004. The grant will ensure that the service can continue to provide the employment training and support needed by the mentally ill. It will further establish the existing service and contribute to the increasing numbers who are involved in directed training and support general running costs.
33. On consideration of the application, Castle Project were asked to submit additional information, particularly relating to the number of residents in South Cambridgeshire who had received training and how many had gained employment. All clients undertake some form of training to enable them to move nearer work while at the project. This includes Intro to IT, Assertiveness, Certificate in Skills for Working Life, Certificate in Employment Skills. 11% of clients move into employment, and 7% go into voluntary placements of further training.

34. In 02/03 15.62% of clients were South Cambridgeshire residents. They hope to help more next year due to restructuring. They deal with the most disadvantaged groups, the long-term unemployed with the greatest difficulties to overcome. They need long periods of rehabilitation to return to work.
35. Given the budget constraints and competing worthwhile grant applications, and a large grant already awarded to the partner organisation Qest, the decision was taken to provide a slightly reduced grant.

Cambridge Women's Resource Centre - Grant Awarded 2003/4: £6,500

36. The organisation provides information, support and training to women in Cambridgeshire. Assists women of varying abilities to gain basic skills, progress onto further training, and enter the job market, or women returners to update their skills. Offers free onsite child care and appropriate transport to reduce barriers to training. Courses are provided free of charge. The CWRC also operates a work placement scheme, and support for women searching for employment opportunities. The service is operated from a drop in centre in Cambridge. CWRC are a charitable organisation, overseen by a board of trustees.
37. The CWRC has a projected income of £454,319 in 2003/4. Funding will be used to provide childcare and travel expenses, enabling women to access the CWRC services. Last year approximately 10% of women using the services came from the South Cambridgeshire area. Funding would also be used as match funding for European ESF funding.

Invest East of England - Grant Awarded 2003/4: £3,000

38. The Inward Investment Agency report to EEDA, aiming to help deliver the Regional Inward Investment Strategy. Objectives are to support companies considering Investment in the East of England, and to work with investors to ensure they grow profitably in the region. Support for foreign owned businesses in South Cambridgeshire, and attract additional investment. They have achieved 106 successes (7000+ jobs) in six years, including four in South Cambridgeshire.
39. Funding secures membership, benefits of which include detailed reports from visits made to local companies.
40. On consideration of the application, they were asked to submit additional information on numbers of visits undertaken, and successful foreign investment guided by the organisation. In 02/03 16 visits were undertaken to firms in South Cambridgeshire, and so far in 03/04 9 visits. Four foreign investors have set up in South Cambridgeshire: Adcore Ltd, Analysts International, Datalight Inc, Isogenica.

Greater Cambridge Partnership - Grant Awarded 2003/4: £5,000

41. The GCP was established in January 1998 as an alliance of public and private sector interests all working together to contribute to the growth of the region. It seeks to provide an identity to the Cambridge Area and thereby promote the area's interests in aspects such as becoming a world leader in learning and knowledge based businesses.
42. As well as Cambridgeshire, the partnership also covers parts of Suffolk, Essex and Hertfordshire in its recognition that issues for Cambridge extend beyond county boundaries. The area of Greater Cambridge is the scientific research and development capital of the UK with a cluster of more than 1,500 hi-tech businesses employing over 44,000 people. The area makes a significant contribution to the UK economy. South Cambridgeshire works with the partnership to strengthen the image of Cambridge and assist in maintaining a buoyant economy.
43. The GCP consider South Cambridgeshire District Council to be a key partner. Support for GCP is also an objective of the South Cambridgeshire Economic Development Strategy.

GET Group - Grant Awarded 2003/4: £550

44. The GET Group (Guidance, Employment and Training Ltd) is an umbrella group of some 27 organisations devoted to Guidance, Employment and Training. The group comprises a large number of not-for-profit/voluntary organizations who provide a 'one-stop-shop' approach which maximizes the efficiency of their services to their client groups.
45. The GET Group offers support to member organisations by winning contracts, running training programmes, information sharing and dissemination, and strategic input and advocacy with key economic partners. Serving the needs of its member organizations is the primary function – it does not have direct contact or offer services other than assist with developing the capacity of others through, for example, partnership and strategic developments. The GET Group membership help to address the critical issue of skills shortage and training of both the unemployed and those already in employment. Collectively, they attract substantial European Social Fund resources into Cambridgeshire.
46. The GET Group has a projected income of £32,300 for 2003/2004. The grant will used to promote the services provided by GET Group members, to extend the membership of the GET Group and draw further support form organisations as Friends of GET group, to seek out further funding opportunities, to continue working with the Job Centre Plus in the delivery of New Deal and to attract further European Social Fund monies into Cambridgeshire. They will also work with Learning & Skills Council to ensure voluntary / not-for-profit sector continues to be recognised.
47. The application stated that without the grant, the ability of the GET Group to provide comprehensive outreach and guidance would be curtailed. Its ability to draw down additional funds may also be reduced.

48. On consideration of the application, they were asked to submit additional information on why the grant requested had increased so much from the previous year. In response they stated that they support a wide variety of organisations and residents of South Cambridgeshire, helping them deliver services more effectively. Increase in funding requested reflects extra activity and the pull on resources. They play an important strategic role, particularly as part of the Cambridgeshire Learning Partnership. They feel they offer excellent value for money, for relatively limited funding. They also stated that they would appreciate a standstill budget if the increase was not possible.
49. Limitations on funds, and competing grant applications, made it necessary to only provide a standstill budget.

Global Grants - Grant Awarded 2003/4: £5,000

50. The Global Grants Scheme for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough is administered by the Peterborough Council for Voluntary Service which is a registered charity, a voluntary organization, company limited by guarantee and an umbrella group for the global grant scheme.
51. The Global Grants are a new scheme under the European Social Fund which draws down money from the European Union in proportion to the money contributed by the County and District Councils and the voluntary sector. Grants can be made up to a maximum of £10,000 in any calendar year for the express purpose of promoting 'employability', under the following objectives:
- Active labour market Policies;
 - Equal opportunities and promoting social inclusion;
 - Life-long Learning;
 - Adaptability and Entrepreneurship;
 - Improving the participation of women in the labour market.
52. It is a scheme specifically designed to allow smaller groups to access European Union money without going through a cumbersome bureaucratic process.
53. The Global Grants Committee is made up of representatives of all Council's and voluntary organizations that are members of the scheme. The Senior Planning Policy Officer (Economic Development) attends on behalf of the Council. In Cambridgeshire, all Districts are members of the scheme.
54. The Committee invites organizations and voluntary groups to apply for grants from a budget of approximately £215,000. Having made a grant award it then monitors the implementation of schemes with the express aim of promoting employability. Across the County 60 organisations have been assisted, for a total of £397,351 over the life of the scheme.

Cambridge Cooperative Development Agency - Grant Awarded 2003/4: £2,500

55. Supports the start up of new co-operative and social economy enterprises, and offers business counselling to those already up and running. Also runs trade fairs, training programmes, and a small loans services to support cooperatives. Training programmes encourage work based learning, and promote business growth in order to provide employment opportunities.
56. In 2002/3, the agency delivered support to 165 individuals and 25 different organisations and enterprises in the social economy. This included over 10,000 hours of direct support and training. The agency supported the establishment of four new social enterprises in 2002. Currently the agency supports seven incorporated social enterprises and a further five at pre start up and start up stages in South Cambridgeshire.
57. The grant will enable them to continue to support cooperatives and social enterprises, raising their profile and awareness of their needs with both the public and business support agencies.
58. On consideration of the application, they were asked to submit additional information on why the grant requested was so much greater than the previous year. £10,000 is the amount they need from Cambridge City to deliver their service free of charge to client groups from the city. Given that 17 users were in South Cambridgeshire compared to 47 in Cambridge, the figure for £10,000 may be unreasonable based on their justification. A stand still grant was agreed.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: None

Contact Officer: Jonathan Dixon – Senior Planning Officer (Economic Policy)
Telephone: (01223) 443194

Economic Development Grants	Expenditure	Expenditure	Expenditure	Applications	Expenditure
	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/4	2003/4
Cambridgeshire Enterprise Services	14,000	14,000	15,000	16000	8000
Cambridge ITEC Limited	0	17,000	8,000	4000	4000
Cambridge Jobsearch / Connexions	8,615	8,830	9,000	9500	9500
QEST	8,410	8,620	8,810	9074	9074
Princes Youth Business Trust	1,576	1,620	1,800	2000	2000
Castle/Cable Project	8,410	8,620	8,879	9056	8016
Camtrust Communications Design	5,384	5,520			
Cambridge Women's resource Centre	3,771	3,860		6500	6500
Invest East of England	3,000	3,000	3,000	3525	3000
Greater Cambridge Partnership	5,000	5,000	5000	5000	5000
GET Group	512	530	£550	1000	550
Village Shop Development Scheme	0	6,000	Closed		
Opportunities without Limit	0	5,000			
Global Grants			5,000	5000	5000
Cambridge Cooperative Development Agency			2,500	7500	2500
APPLICATIONS				78,155	
TOTAL	77,578	87,600	67,539		63,140

Agenda Item:

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Scrutiny Committee 11th March 2004**AUTHOR/S:** Finance and Resources Director

APPORTIONMENT OF RECHARGES BETWEEN THE SERVICES**Purpose**

1. This report outlines the process involved in recharging the cost of Staffing and Central Overhead Accounts (including ICT costs) to the portfolio services, as requested at the meeting of the Committee on 11th February 2004.

Background

2. When the estimates of each portfolio were presented to Members as part of the estimate scrutiny process, some concern was expressed over the high impact of the central recharges on the total costs of each portfolio and the lack of current understanding with regard to their determination.
3. The recharges originate from the Staffing and Central Overhead Accounts of the Council. They consist of salaries, office accommodation and other office costs of running the departments, except for Warden costs, which are treated as a direct cost. Accounting codes of practice determine that all support costs must be recharged fully to the Services. The recharges are made to detailed accounts encompassing all areas of the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account, Capital and Holding Accounts. However, as specific areas of the recharges are largely inter-reliant on other recharges, the process is complex and can only be achieved through the use of a computerised 'model'.
4. The split of recharges between the different services of the Council depends mainly on the allocations of officer time submitted in respect of each individual officer. These are estimated for the Original Estimates and may be amended for the Revised Estimates and the Final Actual figures. All figures quoted in this report relate to the 2004-05 Estimates.

Considerations

COSTS TO BE RECHARGED (£16.5m in 2004-05 estimates)

Departmental (£14.6m): including ICT, but excluding wardens and Commercial Division manual workers.

5. These accounts consist of over 50 departmental divisions. The costs incurred are mainly those of employing the officers, agency staff and consultants. Other related costs include incidental items such as printing, postage, equipment, courses and travelling in connection with providing the relevant services. Salaries are the main cost within the departmental accounts (but note in paragraph 12 that further substantial indirect costs are also added before recharging). The revenue ICT costs for the whole Council, including the costs of new systems, are included within the ICT Division (£2.9m).

Administrative Buildings (£2.3m, including £0.8m capital charges)

6. These are the running costs of the premises occupied by the Council's officers. In 2004-05, there will be a total of six properties occupied at some point in the year, but in future, there will just be the Cambourne and Cambridge Offices.

Central Expenses and Support Services (£0.4m)

7. These are costs of the workforce overall, including employee insurance, central training, printing and health and safety.

Total Rechargeable Costs (£17.3m, the total of paragraphs 5, 6 and 7)

8. Although the total rechargeable costs above amount to £17.3m, only £16.5m is recharged within the 2004-05 estimates. The remaining £0.8m relates to the successful CIP bids for 2004-05, which were approved too late for the costs to be apportioned. Those recharges will be included in the Revised 2004-05 Estimates, to be completed next December.

APPORTIONMENT TO SERVICES

9. The main method of apportionment of the £16.5m central costs is through the analysis of each individual officer's time, by means of a staff cost allocation sheet (Appendix A). This is completed each September/October by the respective officer (or supervisor) by entering the percentage of time spent on each activity or service. The departmental costs are attributed to each individual on a huge recharge spreadsheet. Salaries and travelling are specifically identified but all other direct and indirect costs are apportioned to those individuals. The total cost of each individual is then recharged to services and activities according to the percentages entered on the staff allocation sheet.
10. Some of the more specific ICT costs (eg. Council tax and benefits systems) are recharged to the particular service, whereas most ICT expenditure is apportioned across individual officers as a charge per head and is therefore included in the staff allocation above.
11. The recharges originating from the officer allocations, ICT and some other more minor allocations are aggregated in the recharge spreadsheet to produce the overall recharges to each service. The summary of the recharges to services is shown in **Appendix B**. For example, the recharge to

Partnership Working, within the Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio, is estimated at £47,720 in 2004-05. For illustration, this figure is analysed in Appendix C between individual officers who allocated part of their time to that particular service.

12. The recharges to the services through the staff allocation sheet consist of considerably more expenditure than the officer's salary cost which on average only accounts for around 60% of the total. As well as the direct costs of an officer's division (paragraph 5), there will be apportionments of the cost of the administrative buildings (paragraph 6) and the other central costs (paragraph 7). Those support costs will also be further increased by allocations of staff time (eg. caretakers, receptionists, central post service). Furthermore, other central services (such as human resources, payroll and central accounting) are apportioned over individual officers when time is spent on overall services rather than on a specific one.

2004-05 INCREASE IN RECHARGES

13. The total 2004-05 estimated recharges of £16.5m represent an increase of £3.2m over the original estimates for 2003-04. There are a number of major factors that have contributed to the increase. The salary cost increases arising from the PWC review (£0.7m), new posts (£0.4m) and additional contact centre costs (£0.1m) agreed by Cabinet/Council have all now been included in the recharges. The anticipated pay awards and higher employer's contributions for national insurance and superannuation added 6% to the basic cost of pay (£0.5m) and the inflation allowance on other expenditure was 2.5% (£0.1m). The initial costs of the new Cambourne Offices in 2003-04 (£0.6m) were not recharged to services, but the 2004-05 costs will be, as they will be occupied. Finally, the amount of capital charges on ICT and the administrative buildings (mainly Cambourne) has increased substantially (£0.8m). However, although capital charges increase the recharges to take into account the use of the relevant capital asset, they are reversed out of the General Fund summary, so that they do not in fact increase the total expenditure of the Council.

OVERALL RECHARGES AND ALLOCATION

14. The level of recharges overall is mainly affected by the implementation of major corporate decisions made by the Council (such as the PWC salary review, development of ICT, introduction of the Contact Centre and the new offices) and the costs of resources required to carry out all the office functions of the Council (primarily staff). Additional costs can only arise from CIP bids or Council decisions and then have to be allocated. For new staff, this will be according to the relevant spending officers judgement on the allocation sheet. This may be to one portfolio, in which case the Portfolio Holder will have been involved closely with that decision, but in most cases there will be a range of duties, which may affect several portfolios.

15. It should be remembered that the total costs have to be allocated somewhere, so if a recharge is removed from one place it has to be charged elsewhere. If new work is requested from current officers on a particular service, their time will be allocated to that area, so such factors may influence the recharges to growing services. Any reduction in staff would result in salary savings, less any redundancy costs, but generally there would be no discernable decrease in other central costs (such as accommodation), so those costs would have to be redistributed to all other users.
16. It is continually emphasised to officers that the accuracy of their staff allocation percentages must be justified if necessary to the relevant budget officers. However, any consideration of real savings in recharges must be directed towards the source of the costs, which are the Staffing and Central Overhead Accounts. Those estimates are considered by the Cabinet in December each year.

Financial Implications

17. The original estimated recharges, including the unallocated items, are included in the consideration of the annual budget. The estimated proportions and figures are replaced by actuals in the final accounts.

Legal, Staffing and Sustainability Implications

18. None

Recommendations

19. The Scrutiny Committee is requested to note the contents of this report.

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

Estimate Working Papers and recharge model (parts of which are confidential)

Contact Officers: Peter Harris, Principal Accountant (General Fund & Costing)
Tel. No. (01223) 443073

POST REF : _____

NAME : _____

POST TITLE : _____

If part-time, number of hours per week	
If vacant - date post to be filled :	
If vacant - assumed starting scale point :	

2003/4	2003/4	2004/5
EST	REV	EST
%	%	%

2003/4	2003/4	2004/5
EST	REV	EST
%	%	%

CENTRAL ACCOUNTS (recharged to depts/services)

Admin Buildings - Hills rd			
Admin Buildings - Station Road			
Cambourne Offices			
Cambridge City Office			
Oakington Depot			
Waterbeach Depot			
Central Support Services :			
Central Printing Mailing & Post			
Tea and Coffee Service			
Receptionist/Telephonist			
Central Expenses - including central			
Health and Safety and training			

INDIRECT COST CENTRES (recharged to depts/services)

Salaries Admin (exc.DLO,Wardens)			
Wardens and DLO wages/salaries			
Cash receipting			
Creditors			
Debtors			
Travel loans / Contract Hire/Claims			
Central Personnel			
Central I.T. Development			
Insurance			
Central Accountancy			
CO's,Depts & Dept Admin - only used			
in exceptional cases (ring 3073 first)			

GENERAL FUND SERVICES:

Resources and Staffing Portfolio

Housing and Council Tax Benefits			
Corporate Management			
Cost of Collecting NNDR			
Council Tax			
Treasury Management			
Best Value (corporate only)			
Land Charges			

Environmental Health Portfolio

Awarded Watercourses (cl)			
Footway Lighting			
Refuse Collection (cl)			
Street Cleansing (client)			
Pests Act			
Environmental Health General			
Food Safety			
Licences -Misc Prov Act 1982			
Gaming Licences/House to House			
Taxi Licensing			
Waste Recycling			
Action on Dogs			
Dangerous Buildings			
Air Quality/Env.Protection			
Zoo & Wild animal licensing			
HECA			
Emergency Planning			

Information and Customer Services Portfolio

Elections			
Register of Electors			
Democratic Representation			
Public Relations,Library and Information			

Community Development Portfolio

Sports Development			
Arts			
Milton Country Park			
Community Safety			
Community Development/Facilities			
Illegal Encampments			
Travellers Sites: Whaddon			
Travellers Sites: Milton			
Museums			

Conservation Portfolio

Conservation Policy			
Tree Preservation			

GENERAL FUND SERVICES (cont)

Sustainability and Community Planning

Sustainability			
Tourism			
Partnership Working			
Community Strategy/LSP			
Awarded Land			

Planning and Economic Dev. Portfolio

Development Policy			
Development Control and Advice			
Enforcement			
Appeals			
Environmental Initiatives			
Building Control - fee earning			
Building Control - non-fee earning			
Street Naming & Numbering			
Cycleways			
Concessionary Fares Admin			
Footpath Diversions			
Economic Development Grants			

Housing Portfolio (GF)

Improvement Grant Validation			
Loans for House Purchase			
Housing Associations			
Housing Grants and Donations			
Homelessness - B&B,KingSt,Rent Dep.			
Housing Advisory Service			
Shopping Car Parks			
Needs Surveys			
Misc. Housing General Fund			
Home Improvement Agency			
Floating Support			

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

Applications up to allocation			
Lettings			
Tenant Management			
Other Council House Services			
Rent Collection & Accounting			
Rent Setting & Review			
Other rent (including recovery)			
Ordering of Repairs			
Supervision of Repairs			
Other repairs & maintenance			
Revenue Planned Maintenance			
Voids Control			
Service Strategy			
Study of Supply & Demand			
Research			
HRA Hostels			
Communal areas in Flats			
Outdoor Maintenance			
Sewage Disposal Housing sites			
Wardens Support Services			
Alarm Systems			
Tenant Participation			

TRADING ACCOUNTS

Purchasing			
D.L.O.			
Vehicle Workshop (Rep & maint)			
Awarded Watercourses (con)			
Cesspool Emptying (con)			
Refuse Collection (con)			
Street Cleansing			
Grounds Maintenance (con)			

OTHER ACCOUNTS

Capital : Housing Improvements			
Capital : New Build/Refurbishment			
Capital : Warden Schemes			
Rechargeable Housing Sites (Architects)			
Council House Sales			
Equity share sales			

TOTAL TIME (100%)	100	100	100
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DRAFT FOURTH SIX MONTHLY SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW
COMMITTEE REPORT – MARCH 04

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The Constitution requires the Scrutiny Committee to “report twice a year to full Council on its current programme of scrutiny performance review and the performance of the Executive based on the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) or other objective criteria, and confirm its scrutiny and performance review programme”.
- 1.2 This is the fourth six-monthly report and covers the period from November 2003 to April 2004. It will go to full Council on 29th April 2004.
- 1.3 The report:
- a) Summarises the issues considered by the Committee
 - b) Suggests options for improving the effectiveness of Scrutiny Committee
 - c) Comments on the overall effectiveness of the Cabinet and Council

2.0 THE ISSUES CONSIDERED BY THE COMMITTEE

2.1 Public Questions

- 2.1.1 Public questions have been heard on two subjects:

High Court Appeal: Planning Permission 307 Huntingdon Road

- 2.1.2 Background: The Council were being asked by representatives of X-Cape to help fund the High Court Appeal of the decision taken by the ODPM to overrule the verdict of the inspector and the District Council and allow planning permission for a primate laboratory at 307 Huntingdon Road.

- 2.1.3 Outcome: This issue was passed to the Chairman of the Development and Conservation Control Committee who was responsible for the decision. However, days after the meeting Cambridge University announced that they would not be developing 307 Huntingdon Road due to a lack of funds.

Green Box Collection of Recyclable Waste

- 2.1.4 Background: Residents from villages in the West of the District requested an explanation for the late collection of their green boxes after Christmas.
- 2.1.5 Outcome: Representatives from Cleanaway offered to attend Parish Council meetings to explain why collections had been delayed over the Christmas period and they also volunteered to write a short article for the various parish magazines. Cleanaway have been provided with the relevant contact information and the communication issue is under

discussion by our Information Section and Environmental Health Department.

2.2 External Scrutiny

Arts Council England, East – Rural Touring

2.2.1 Background: On 12th February 2004 the Committee discussed a report on Arts Council England, East (ACE) and the effect their change in funding policy would have on the Arts in Cambs on Tour(ACT).

2.2.3 Outcome: As a result the Committee:

- wrote a letter to ACE asking them to explain their new funding policy.
- Recommended that an Advisory Group be set up to discuss the next District Arts Strategy 2005-2010.
- Recommended that a letter be sent to the other local authorities who were part of the partnership project that formed ACT, to obtain their views regarding funding.

Update on the Council's Occupational Therapy Referral Process

2.2.4 On 20th November 2003 the Committee were given an update on the Council's OT referral process. The Committee unanimously supported the proposal

Presentation on the Disability Discrimination Act

2.2.5 On 20th November 2003 the Committee heard a presentation on the Disability Discrimination Act. Members were informed of the responsibilities of the local authorities and businesses within the District.

2.3 Other Ongoing Issues

Section 106 Agreement at Cambourne

2.3.1 Background: The Section 106 Agreement dated 20th April bound the developers to provide a range of facilities by the occupation of a 1,000 houses. At a meeting of the Committee on 20th November 2003 a verbal report was presented on a meeting with developers regarding the provision of ten facilities that were guaranteed under the Section 106 agreement, but were yet to be provided.

2.3.2 Outcome: The Committee fully endorsed the officer decision to withhold planning permission and approvals of details of reserved matters for market housing in Cambourne until completion or substantial progress was made on the facilities promised under the Section 106 Agreement. The Committee's recommendation that the Development and Conservation Control Committee decide all decisions on permissions and approvals at Cambourne was accepted.

Update Reports on Staff Sickness and Staff Turnover

2.3.3 Background: The Committee had asked for these reports a year before to monitor these two issues which the Council was underperforming in.

- 2.3.4 Outcome: It was noted that there had been an improvement in staff turnover and a feasibility study into immunisation jabs for staff was requested. This was discussed on 22nd January 2004 where it was recommended, on a split vote, that flu jabs be offered for staff in time for the winter of 2004/05.

New Waste Collection Scheme

- 2.3.5 Background: The Council implemented a new waste collection scheme, switching from the use of bags to wheeled bins, in late summer 2003 and this Committee continues to monitor the impressive progress made.
- 2.3.6 Outcome: The Committee received a detailed verbal report on 22nd January 2004, which highlighted the achievements of the scheme, the way in which complaints are dealt with and the prospects for extra recycling in the future. It is expected that the Committee will play a part in the formal review of the new scheme later in 2004.

2.4 Training And Other Strategies To Improve The Committee

Meeting Dates of the Council's Committees

- 2.4.1 The Committee decided to meet on the third Thursday in every month for the municipal year 2004/05. Cabinet will meet on the second Thursday and Council on the fourth Thursday. This should make it easier for Members, Officers, the public and all other stakeholders to remember when these meetings will be held.

Scrutiny Handbook

- 2.4.2 The Committee formally agreed the Scrutiny Handbook, which will be circulated to all Members and will form part of the induction pack for new members elected in June 2004.

Scrutiny Training

- 2.4.3 The Committee commissioned Mike Mosley, the Deputy Chief Executive of the East of England Regional Assembly to analyse the Committee's performance on 23rd December. This report was discussed at the meeting on 22nd January 2004. This resulted in the suggestion that the Committee should observe the Overview and Scrutiny Committees of other local authorities. This discussion resulted in:
- a new style agenda that provides summary information of each agenda item on the agenda front page.
 - Shorter reports and therefore shorter agendas.
 - A list of the dates and times of all the County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Grounds Maintenance Task and Finish Group

- 2.4.4 The Committee has set up its first Task and Finish Group. A questionnaire has been sent out to all 102 Parish Councils. So far 48 responses have been received and are being analysed by the Group.

Suggestions on how the Committee Could be Improved

- 2.4.5 One criticism of the Scrutiny Committee from Mike Mosley was that the Committee still debated issues as if the Council was under the old Committee system. It is possible that developing a report template for the Committee could resolve this situation.

2.5 Best Value Reviews

- 2.5.1 On 29th May 2003 it was agreed that the Committee should receive progress reports on Best Value reviews from the relevant Lead Officer 12 months after the conclusion of the review. The following progress reports were received:

- Update Report On Land Charges Best Value Review
- Update Report On The Community Safety Best Value Review
- Implementation Of The Sustainability Best Value Review

- 2.5.2 The Committee received a report on the Access to Services Best Value Review on 20th November 2003. This review recommended that the 2004/05 budget include provision for the following:
- A Website Development Officer.
 - A Customer Services Manager.
 - Joint work with the Local Strategic Partnership to develop customer services.

3.0 PROGRESS BEING MADE BY THE EXECUTIVE

- 3.1 Scrutiny Committee aims to make constructive and objective comments on the effectiveness of the Executive by playing the role of "critical friend".

3.2 Call-Ins

- 3.2.1 No call-ins have been made during this six month period. However, the issue of awarding grants for children's play equipment was discussed by the Committee as a result of Councillors expressing an interest in calling in a decision made by the portfolio holder for Community Development. The play equipment issue was fully discussed and the Committee decided, on a split vote, not to review the current policy any further.

Scrutinising the Budget

- 3.2.2 Background: The Review of the Continuous Improvement Plans (CIPs) took place on 27th November 2003 and a discussion on the Revenue and Capital Estimates took place on 12th February 2004.

- 3.2.3 Outcome: Although much useful information was forthcoming the Committee failed to exercise any real influence over Cabinet's subsequent decisions. Reasons for this need to be investigated and suggestions made.
- 3.2.4 The rise in the cost of recharges to the portfolio holders' budgets made it difficult to ascertain where savings had been made. As a result the Committee received a report on the recharging of staffing and central overhead account (including IT costs) to the portfolio budgets at its meeting on 4th March.
- 3.2.5 Suggestions for Improvement: The scrutiny of the budgetary process has come in for criticism. The Committee might wish to consider setting up a sub-Group to review this process and report back to the Committee.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Committee has now been in place for almost two years.

Councillor Sebastian Kindersley
Chairman, Scrutiny Committee

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