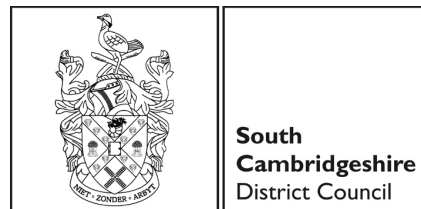


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5 April 2006

To: The Leader – Councillor SGM Kindersley
Deputy Leader – Councillor RT Summerfield
Members of the Cabinet – Councillors Dr DR Bard, JD Batchelor, Mrs JM Healey,
Mrs EM Heazell, Mrs DP Roberts and Mrs DSK Spink MBE

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **CABINET**, which will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER** at South Cambridgeshire Hall on **THURSDAY, 13 APRIL 2006** at **10.00 a.m.**

Yours faithfully
GJ HARLOCK
Finance and Resources Director

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CONFIDENTIAL ITEM

The press and public are likely to be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item in accordance with the provisions of Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended) (exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act)

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Thursday, 9 March 2006

PRESENT: Councillor SGM Kindersley (Leader of Council)
Councillor RT Summerfield (Deputy Leader of Council and Resources & Staffing Portfolio Holder)

Councillors:	Dr DR Bard	Planning & Economic Development Portfolio Holder
	JD Batchelor	Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder
	Mrs JM Healey	Conservation, Sustainability & Community Planning Portfolio Holder
	Mrs EM Heazell	Housing Portfolio Holder
	Mrs DP Roberts	Community Development Portfolio Holder
	Mrs DSK Spink MBE	Environmental Health Portfolio Holder

Councillors RF Bryant, NN Cathcart, Mrs A Elsby, R Hall, JA Hockney, Mrs CA Hunt, Mrs HF Kember, DC McCraith, Mrs CAED Murfitt, CR Nightingale, Dr JPR Orme, Dr SEK van de Ven and Dr JR Williamson were in attendance, by invitation.

Procedural Items

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Leader was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2006 as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

Disabled Facilities Grants: Child Adaptations Policy (Minute 9)

“Concern was expressed at the potential for an increase in applications for child adaptations as greater numbers of pre-term babies were surviving ~~in infancy~~ *infancy birth but having a disability...*”

9-Month (April to December) Corporate Performance Indicators (Minute 12)

“that the 49% target for single car users was ~~too high~~ ambitious...”

“Cabinet **AGREED**...

“(a) ...that there was nothing which could not be done...

“(c) that it might be impossible to...”

Cabinet **RECEIVED** the minutes of the 20 February 2006 meeting of the Transformation Project and noted that Mrs Spink had sent apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following personal interests were declared:

Dr DR Bard	As a governor of Sawston Village College (Minute 6 – Bassingbourn Dual Use Sports Facility Project)
JD Batchelor	As a governor of Linton Village College (Minute 6 – Bassingbourn Dual Use Sports Facility Project) and an elected Cambridgeshire County Councillor (Minute 8 – Children &

	Young People's Plan)
RF Bryant	As a former governor of Bassingbourn Village College, prior to his election as a District Councillor (Minute 6 – Bassingbourn Dual Use Sports Facility Project).
NN Cathcart	As a member of the Bassingbourn Dual Use Management Committee, although he noted that that body had not met for nine years (Minute 6 – Bassingbourn Dual Use Sports Facility Project)
Mrs JM Healey	As a governor of Linton Village College (Minute 6 – Bassingbourn Dual Use Sports Facility Project)
SGM Kindersley	As a governor of Gamlingay Village College (Minute 6 – Bassingbourn Dual Use Sports Facility Project) and an elected Cambridgeshire County Councillor (Minute 8 – Children & Young People's Plan)
Mrs CAED Murfitt	As the mother of former students of Bassingbourn Village College (Minute 6 – Bassingbourn Dual Use Sports Facility Project)
Mrs DSK Spink	As a governor of Gamlingay Village College (Minute 6 – Bassingbourn Dual Use Sports Facility Project)

**Recommendations to
Council**

3. INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder introduced the report and explained that the Council had to set its Investment Strategy annually. The proposed Strategy was unchanged from the previous year, except that the maximum limits for investment levels had been reduced due to the falling amounts of capital receipts.

Cabinet **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** that the Investment Strategy 2006/07 be approved.

4. ALARM SYSTEM SERVICE CHARGES

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) had indicated its preference for authorities to move towards a situation where Housing Revenue Account (HRA) services were paid for fully by the user, rather than subsidised by tenants in general. In February 2005 Council agreed to phase out over four years the reduced alarm system service charge for those in receipt of benefit. On 27 October 2005, as part of the General Fund savings exercise, Council agreed that, from 2006-07, all users would be asked to pay the full charge. When Council considered the housing rents and service charges on 23 February 2006, a decision on the setting of an alarm system service for owner occupiers and tenants not on a sheltered housing scheme pending additional options being considered. The Chief Executive confirmed that, although Council had made a decision on this issue within the past six months, Cabinet could recommend alternative arrangements and the full Council could revoke its previous decision.

The Housing Portfolio Holder explained that the estimates had been prepared using the 2.5% inflationary increase used throughout the Council's estimates, bringing the full charge to £3.61 per week and abolishing the reduced charge from 1 April 2006, but other Members expressed their disappointment, calculating that the increased costs to a household on benefit would amount to nearly £66 per year, which was significant to

those on reduced or fixed incomes. The Housing Portfolio Holder noted that she had expressed similar reservations in October and was pleased to see support for those in receipt of benefit, but asked Members to keep in mind when considering the estimates next year that the government was pushing for the abolition of reduced charges, and that any reduced charges were subsidised by other Council tenants.

Councillor Dr DR Bard proposed, seconded by Councillor Mrs DP Roberts, that Cabinet recommend to Council Option 4: increasing all charges by 2.5% for inflation and continuing with the reduced charge, with the resultant £11,570 approximate deficit against the General Fund being met by savings found through the closure of the Cambridge Office and the move to four-yearly District Council elections. Members were advised that it was premature to anticipate support for electoral change.

The Finance and Resources Director proposed Option 5: increasing charges for inflation, maintaining the reduced rate for all existing participants, but that any new tenants from 1 April 2006 pay the full charge regardless of receipt of benefit. Although not an aggressive approach, it would demonstrate the Authority's desire to implement the Government's recommendation to phase out subsidised charges. Unease was expressed as Option 5 could be seen as discriminatory against newer tenants.

Cabinet was minded to adopt Option 4 and, subsequent to the decision being made to close the Cambridge Office (Minute 13 refers), **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** that from 1 April 2006:

- (a) The reduced charge be maintained; and
- (b) All alarm system service charges be increased by 2.5% for inflation, bringing the full charge to £3.61 per week (where the Council supplies the alarm) and £2.92 per week (where the user supplies the alarm), and the reduced charge to £2.30 per week (where the Council supplies the alarm) and £1.63 per week (where the user supplies the alarm).

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

5. PROTECTION OF VULNERABLE ADULTS POLICY

The Housing and Environmental Services Director's report provided an update on the implementation of the Council's Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) Policy and recommended further actions. Cabinet was urged to lead by example and ask all District Councillors to be Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checked. It was confirmed that all Cambridgeshire County Councillors were CRB checked.

Members requested that POVA Councillor training sessions be scheduled in the early evening, perhaps following a full Council meeting, to enable working Members to attend.

On the proposal of Councillor JD Batchelor, seconded by Councillor Mrs DP Roberts, Cabinet **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** that all District Councillors be Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checked, with advice to be sought whether this should be standard or enhanced checking.

Cabinet **AGREED** that

- (a) Further training for priority staff and briefings for other staff and elected Members

- be arranged, the resources for which be allocated from departmental and corporate training budgets respectively from 2006/07; and
- (b) CRB checks continue to be undertaken for all new priority staff and reviewed every three years; and
 - (c) Consent is sought from all "priority" postholders for CRB checks to be undertaken in 2006/07 if they have not previously been checked under current procedures.

Cabinet **NOTED** the implementation progress of the Council's Protection of Vulnerable Adults policy.

Decisions made by Cabinet

6. BASSINGBOURN DUAL USE SPORTS FACILITY PROJECT

Cabinet welcomed Mr Scott Hudson, Principal of Bassingbourn Village College, Ms Barbara Isherwood, Community Education Manager, and Ms Pat Piggott, Youth Worker, who gave a presentation on the proposed sports facility, highlighting the benefits such a facility would bring to Bassingbourn and the surrounding villages, and demonstrating the local need for the project and the work already done on financial planning and to establish a management structure.

The Community Development Portfolio Holder commended the project, reminding Members of the very successful facilities provided at other Village Colleges in the District through the Dual Use scheme, and recommended that the grant be increased from £300,000 to £350,000 to enable the facility to have a Multi-Use Games Area (MUGA). The Cultural Services Manager circulated details on the Dual Use Budget, noting that the figures quoted for Impington, Cottenham and Gamlingay Village Colleges were still under discussion, and confirming that there was sufficient provision in the budget for the increased grant.

Clarification was given that:

- (a) The sports facility project was part of a larger project within the Village College, which included improved car parking arrangements behind the school;
- (b) The facility would be located between the music classroom and the pavilion;
- (c) The improved facilities could help reduce incidences of anti-social behaviour;
- (d) The final facility would have a kitchen / refreshment area and a classroom for coaching education;
- (e) The grant was conditional upon receipt of an acceptable Business Plan;
- (f) The Village College had approached other organisations, such as the Football Organisation, as well as Parish Councils within the catchment area for funding;
- (g) A local facility was more sustainable than one in Cambridge City or Hertfordshire; and
- (h) Lighting issues would be addressed as part of the detailed planning application and the Council's Design Officer would be asked for input.

There was widespread support for the project and local Members commended the proposals. Members with similar Dual Use schemes in their villages spoke highly of the positive impact the District Council's investment had on local communities.

Cabinet unanimously

AGREED to award a grant of £350,000 to Bassingbourn Village College towards a Dual Use sports facility project.

Cabinet thanked Mr Hudson, Ms Isherwood and Ms Piggott for their presentation, and wished them success with a project which would benefit not only the Bassingbourn local area but also the entire District.

7. **IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT: IEG STATEMENT**

The IEG Statement had been withdrawn from the agenda following indications from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) that a further updated version would be required.

8. **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN**

The Community Development Portfolio Holder presented the detailed requirements and implications for the District Council of the Cambridgeshire Children and Young People's Plan, the legal requirements of which had been presented to Cabinet in December 2005. She expressed her concern that the District Council could no longer have as great an input into the outcomes following the capping exercise, which had reduced the number of officers and finances available for youth provision, such as working with sports groups for young people, but promised that the Community Development staff would do their best within the current resources.

Councillor JA Hockney noted that the newly-established Community, Arts and Sport Advisory Group would oversee Youth Provision, and congratulated Community Development officers on their forward-looking and positive outlook, sentiments which were supported by the Cabinet and extended to all officers of the Council.

Cabinet **AGREED** to adopt the Children and Young People's Plan for Cambridgeshire.

9. **LITTLE GRANSDEN: ADOPTION OF DESIGN GUIDANCE**

Although the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder had delegated powers both to designate new Conservation Areas and to revise the boundaries of existing Conservation Areas, Conservation Area Appraisals now included design guidance and management proposals and had to be agreed as Council policy to add weight to determinations by the Development and Conservation Control Committee. Councillor Mrs A Elsby, local Member for Little Gransden, reported that she was delighted with the design guidance and Cabinet

AGREED to adopt the Design Guidance set out in the Little Gransden Conservation Area Appraisal as Council Policy, subject to the incorporation of changes outlined in the appendix attached to the report.

10. **FEN DITTON: ADOPTION OF DESIGN GUIDANCE**

Cabinet

AGREED to adopt the Design Guidance set out in the Fen Ditton Conservation Area Appraisal as Council Policy, subject to incorporation of the changes outlined in the appendix attached to the report.

11. HORNINGSEA: ADOPTION OF DESIGN GUIDANCE

Cabinet

AGREED to adopt the Design Guidance set out in the Horningsea Conservation Area Appraisal as Council Policy, subject to incorporation of the changes outlined in the appendix attached to the report.

12. STANSTED AIRPORT: CONSULTATION ON SECOND RUNWAY

The British Airports Authority (BAA) had issued a consultation paper on Masterplan options for a second runway at Stansted Airport. The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder explained that the proposal for two runways was contrary to the existing East of England plan and recommended that Cabinet support the East of England Regional Assembly's (EERA) view not to expand. The main issues for South Cambridgeshire were not noise-related, although there were villages for which this was noticeable, but concerned general development pressure and economic impact.

The District Council had made very strong representations against expansion through the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS14) process, but the Planning Policy Manager advised Members that the development pressures on the District would not ease if the expansion were refused: planners would site the additional housing elsewhere along the M11 corridor. He explained that his report had been written "without prejudice" and noted that the District Council might have to change its position in the future.

Concerns were expressed about the amount of additional road traffic generated in villages near Stansted and the government's recent movement on the issues of night flights as the number of flights increased. Expansion of the M11 to three lanes between Stansted and Cambridge was essential if a second runway were agreed.

Councillor Mrs DSK Spink asked the Leader and officers to chase BAA for promised regular meetings which had never taken place. The Leader explained that BAA had decided that South Cambridgeshire was too far away to be affected, a fact which he disputed.

Cabinet **AGREED** to respond to the British Airports Authority in the following terms:

- (a) South Cambridgeshire District Council supports the East of England Regional Assembly position that accepts the expansion of the airport up to the full capacity of its existing single runway (Policy ST5) but it does not support a second runway, which would create serious environmental damage to the surrounding area and contribute to global warming;
- (b) Without prejudice to that policy position and without prejudice to the Council being able to assess the overall impact of a fully worked up proposal to expand Stansted to a 2 runway airport, South Cambridgeshire District Council is concerned that the British Airports Authority has not provided sufficient information for the Council to assess the impact of additional aircraft movements over South Cambridgeshire, namely:
 - It is not possible to give a full opinion on the proposed options contained within the consultation document with regards to potential noise effects on South Cambs residents. The report is not detailed enough to make an adequate assessment.

- In order to make a proper assessment data is needed on predicted noise levels at South Cambs properties both at ground level and air noise. These figures would need to take into account stacking of aircraft which is likely to take place over South Cambs, not just take off and landings.
 - Noise contours should be provided for 54 dBA leq and 50 dBA leq in line with WHO recommendations. These noise contours should be mapped for the years preceding 2030 as well as just 2030
 - Information on the number of proposed night flights and day flights, including flight paths should also be provided.
 - As a general point there is no data on impacts of air pollution, the report should include: CO₂ emissions, NO₂, NO_x, SO₂, PM10, PM2.5 these should be referenced to Local Air Quality
- (c) However, on the basis of the evidence provided by the British Airports Authority, South Cambridgeshire District Council would have a strong preference for options operating in segregated mode which would have least environmental impact, including upon South Cambridgeshire, and would be more consistent with the Future of Air Transport White Paper requirement for stringent environmental limits than 2 runways operated in mixed mode.

13. CAMBRIDGE OFFICE

At its meeting of 9 June 2005, Cabinet had resolved that, due to the limited number of visitors, Cambridge City Council be asked to provide the Cambridge-based customer service facility, and that investigations be carried out into the possibility of removing the planning condition requiring the District Council to provide a Cambridge facility. It was confirmed that the planning condition had been satisfied in May 2004 and did not specify a length of time for the service to remain open. Cambridge City Council had kept a record of the number of customers visiting the office and over the period 18 July 2005 to 17 February 2006, the Cambridge Office saw an average of seven people per day.

The cashiering service provided by Cambridge City Council at Hobson House would be maintained, subject to review during 2006/07, and Members noted that residents could pay Council tax through local post offices.

Councillor JA Hockney proposed that any savings realised from closing the Cambridge Office, after covering any shortfalls in the General Fund from maintaining the alarm system service facility as agreed earlier by Cabinet, should be directed towards continued provision of footway lighting in the Parishes, explaining that residents of a sheltered housing scheme in Waterbeach were concerned about being mugged if their streets were unlit. The Leader reminded Councillor Hockney that such a proposal had to be made to full Council once six months had elapsed since the previous decision about footway lighting. The Finance and Resources Director explained that there was also a shortfall in the Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder, to which these savings could be applied, and other Portfolio Holders reported similar shortfalls in their budgets.

Cabinet **AGREED** that the District Council should cease to provide the “one stop shop” facility in Cambridge, with effect from 31 July 2006, and that this Council’s appreciation be expressed to Cambridge City Council for their assistance with the Cambridge Office facility.

14. GREATER CAMBRIDGESHIRE PARTNERSHIP

The Greater Cambridge Partnership had reformed as a Company Limited by Guarantee. The District Council had been one of the founding partners in 1998 and was now asked

whether it would join the more formal partnership.

Cabinet **AGREED**

- (a) To apply for membership of the Greater Cambridge Partnership;
- (b) To appoint the Leader as the Council's representative to the Company; and
- (c) To delegate authority to the Head of Legal Services to sign the Application for Membership and Deed of Adherence on behalf of the Council.

15. **TIMETABLE OF MEETINGS**

Cabinet **AGREED** to continue meeting on the second Thursday of each month for the municipal year 2006/07.

16. **GERSHON EFFICIENCY SAVINGS - PROGRESS REPORT**

Good progress was being made in implementing planned efficiencies in 2005/06 and identifying additional efficiencies in 2006/07 and 2007/08.

Councillor JA Hockney, noting that he had expressed concern previously about an increase in postage costs, queried whether the Council had considered using the services of a professional postal company. The Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder confirmed that the increase had been due to a one-off situation when the Local Development Framework documents had been posted and that the Development Services Department had investigated alternative delivery methods should similar situations arise. Due to limited resources, investigation of professional postal companies was not possible.

Cabinet **AGREED** to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, with the Leader and Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder, to finalise the Council's Annual Efficiency Statements (Forward Look for 2006/07 and Backward Look for 2005/06).

Cabinet **NOTED** the progress in realising efficiency savings.

16 (a) **Contact Centre and e-Government**

Councillor JA Hockney stated that Councillor JD Batchelor had said during a radio interview on 8 March that the Contact Centre was costing £400,000 annually, a figure different from that given to full Council in February, and that savings would be realised from e-government, but the estimates agreed by Council had shown the project costs from 2001-08 without identifying any savings. In response, Councillor Batchelor clarified that he had given the Contact Centre annual cost as £457,000, the same as reported at full Council, and that the Authority could not begin to realise savings from the project until integration of the complete set of e-government tools was complete, which included more than just the Contact Centre element. The Council had made substantial investment towards its e-government targets and he guaranteed that the Council would lose money if it stopped the project at this late date.

In response to Members' comments that Councillor Hockney had raised the same issue at many previous meetings, the Leader challenged Councillor Hockney to suggest an alternative plan. Councillor Hockney replied that a substantial amount of taxpayers' money had been invested in a project that had not yet demonstrated savings, nor was it clear when savings would be realised, and that it was his role as a non-executive Councillor to criticise the Executive. The Leader confirmed that full Council had agreed the amount of investment and that criticism of the Executive should be made via the

Scrutiny and Overview Committee, of which Councillor Hockney was a member, but that it had to be constructive: if Councillor Hockney disagreed with spending to improve front-line services to South Cambridgeshire residents, he should put forward an alternative proposal, otherwise his implication was that the entire project was a waste of time and money.

Councillor Hockney responded that he had seconded a proposal by Councillor Dr DR Bard at full Council for a Business Plan and researching of how other authorities provided similar services, demonstrating a positive approach in learning from other authorities. Councillor Batchelor felt that it was insulting to imply that a decision had been taken by full Council prior to investigation of other authorities and preparation of a Business Plan. Councillor Dr Bard stated that there had been a Business Plan prepared and the project had been on time and within budget when he had been Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder, although he could not comment on the current situation.

Councillors who had visited the Contact Centre spoke highly of their trip and Councillor Dr van de Ven stated that she used its services regularly, especially after having sat with an agent and watched how quickly she had been able to accomplish everything asked of her. She had resolved to encourage her residents to use the Contact Centre in the first instance as the quickest way to access a professional in many Council services. Councillor Mrs Heazell reported having received many compliments on the Contact Centre and questioned why Councillor Hockney reported having received only complaints.

Councillor Mrs DP Roberts lamented a lack of patience and respect amongst Members and defended the right of all Councillors to question the Executive. Councillor Mrs DSK Spink agreed that Members were right to question costs, and supported the need to make a success of the Contact Centre without being extravagant. In response to Councillor Hockney's comments regarding footway lighting in Waterbeach (Minute 13 refers), she noted that if the Parish Council refused to take on responsibility for the lights, it would be discriminating against a group of residents.

Standing Items

17. MATTERS REFERRED BY SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

The 16 March 2006 meeting had been cancelled due to lack of business.

18. UPDATES FROM CABINET MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillors Mrs A Elsbey and Mrs EM Heazell reported that the Leader would be sleeping rough at Biggleswade bus shelter on Saturday night to raise money for Gamlingay Skate Park and Children's Hospice, and encouraged everyone to sponsor him. Councillor Mrs Heazell presented the Leader with a sleeping bag.

**The Meeting ended at 11.50
a.m.**

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet
AUTHOR: Finance and Resources Director

13 April 2006

COMPUTERISATION OF LOCAL LAND CHARGES SYSTEM

Purpose

1. To recommend to Council the procurement and development of a computerised Land Charges system to provide a cost effective and efficient system that complies with the requirements of NLIS (National Land and Information System) Level III.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2. Quality, Accessible Services	To ensure continued access to modern up to date information as required by the Land Charges service. To provide that information in the most cost effective manner.
Village Life	
Sustainability	Further commitment to electronic processing will reduce paper usage.
Partnership	In partnership with other local authorities, provide an efficient service.

Background

3. The Council continues to transform services by new business processes resulting from the successful e-Government approach. The land charges service needs to achieve and implement the Council's contribution to the National Land Information Service (NLIS). Consequently the computerisation of land charges is seen as fundamental to the Council's commitment to electronic government.
4. The pressure for change to computerise the Land Charges service is brought about by both internal and external sources, not least:
 - (a) The Council's IEG statement that identified the computerisation of the Land Charges function as fundamental to the implementation of e-Government.
 - (b) The NLIS initiative being promoted by IDeA, as the first service to be delivered under the Government's Information Age Concordat.
 - (c) Other local authorities computerising their Local Land Charges service.
 - (d) The need to resist personal search agents, which reduce Council income.
 - (e) To support the introduction of the Home Improvement Pack (HIP) initiative.
5. The current Local Land Charges/Local Search process is based on a manual system, requiring staff from various service areas (Local Land Charges, Planning, Building Control and Environmental Health), to research both manual and various computer-based systems in order to provide answers to the local search. This is labour intensive and very dependent on local knowledge.
6. During the conveyancing process, solicitors will request information from various organisations including HM Land Registry, Utility Companies and Local Authorities. The solicitor submits requests that require numerous sections within the authority to research by reference to various records and computer systems. There is a strong

link with Development Services, which contributes over 80% of the data for the LLC Register.

7. Computerisation will enable a 'bringing together' of these services to provide a comprehensive facility that has access to all required information via one single system.
8. It is essential that the Council act now to be able to implement NLIS in line with the Government's requirements for delivering services electronically.

Current Processes

9. The current Land Charges and Local Search processes are vulnerable. They are heavily dependent on a flow of paper documentation and as a result are susceptible to the effects of staff absences through leave, sickness or other more pressing duties. The processes require significant local knowledge and experience of managing the historical systems established in both Land Charges and Development Services.
10. The current local search process suffers from:
 - (a) Reliance on an exchange of paper documentation between Land Charges and other sections
 - (b) Being prone to error, due to heavy reliance on manual systems.
 - (c) Duplication of data and effort in recording, processing and compiling local searches.
 - (d) Reductions in service levels during staff absences.
11. While the Council has an excellent record managing to process 100% of searches within the recommended 10 day turn around, any staff absence, coupled with increases in search numbers, would have a detrimental impact on turn around times.

Search returns that exceed the 10 day turnaround incur fixed penalties:

Time taken to reply (Working Days)	Penalty Payment (Percentage of Fee)
11 – 15	25%
16 - 20	50%
21 - 25	75%
Over 25	100%

12. With implementation of the new system, the ten-day turn around time for searches will be reduced substantially. A three-day response is considered reasonable, although some unitary authorities already on NLIS Level III, are making same day returns to Solicitors through NLIS. Additionally, efficiency savings derived from this project can be counted towards the Council's Gershon objectives.

Considerations

13. In 2005 the Council processed 4,314 searches of which 3,193 were standard searches and 1121 personal searches. Private sector agents are therefore processing approximately 26% of searches. This figure appears to be rising. The Council is only able to charge £11 for this personal service, which resulted in an approximate reduction in income of £133,000 in the 2005/6 financial year.
14. Set against the increasing costs of supporting the current manual process, this upward trend will only further decrease the income that the Council obtains from the service.

15. Any computerised land charges system should address existing process deficiencies, meet ongoing market changes to the service and deliver a more effective service within a justifiable programme of expenditure and timescale. The implementation of a fully computerised system is a fundamental development of the NLIS initiative.
16. A number of suppliers provide computerised local land charges systems. The key to any system is its ability to integrate with existing systems. It is vitally important that the Council acquire a solution that integrates the various systems and component parts as required whilst ensuring full benefit is derived from our existing investments in GIS and other land and property based services.

Options

17. After having carried out a full market evaluation based on the Council's existing systems, a very sensible business case has been built around a proposal to upgrade and further develop the existing MVM ProActive system with the new MVM/Northgate M3 system.
18. The upgrade will ensure our existing investment is utilised to the full and provide the most cost effective route to providing the solution required, including:
 - (a) Integrated Property Gazetteer compliant to NLPG standards
 - (b) Integration with the Council's GIS
 - (c) Connection to NLIS
 - (d) Web enabled and integrated with Microsoft Office
 - (e) Links to the Anite@Work Document Management System
19. A detailed assessment of how well the product meets the combined integration requirements has indicated that development of the MVM/Northgate M3 product is the only viable route.

Financial Implications

20. Benefits can be attributed to two principal areas:
 - (a) Increased revenue through the applied search fees
 - (b) Staff time savings and reduced costs through increased productivity
21. Search fees vary nationally between £60 and £260. Local authorities are able to set their own search fees, however, this can only be an amount indicative of the requirement to cover operational costs. The Council's current fee for 2006/7 is £133, an increase of £3 on the £130 for the previous financial year (2005/6).
22. Delays in setting up the more efficient computerised system will encourage more use of external local agents and therefore significantly reduce the Council's income as a direct result.
23. The following budget is recommended for the computerisation of local land charges in 2006-07. An amount for ongoing maintenance of the licences is included.

Supplier		
MVM/Northgate M3		
Software and Implementation	£77,000	<i>Capital one-off</i>
Data Conversion/Additional Costs	£50,000	<i>Revenue</i>
Annual Maintenance	£2,500	<i>Revenue ongoing</i>
Total	£129,500	

24. The quoted figures for software and implantation have been confirmed with the system supplier. Data conversion and additional costs are based on those associated with similar projects, it is anticipated that it will take 12 months to successfully capture all the required data; however, initial benefits will be seen very early in the project.
25. As indicated in Staffing Implications (below), projections show a significant saving can be achieved through this initiative and it will in future years be self financing; it is proposed that Cabinet agree to increase existing cash limits imposed for 2006/7 to fund the implementation.
26. In order to progress this initiative, Cabinet are asked to waive Contract Standing Orders on the basis that it is desirable in the best interests of the Council to work with Northgate/ MVM as a contractor already engaged by the Council.

Legal Implications

27. The Council has a statutory obligation to provide a Local Land Charges service and public access to the Local Land Charges Register.

Staffing Implications

28. Following successful computerisation, efficiencies will allow for staff savings or redeployments to be made. The likely savings will result in the phased reduction of 3 full-time equivalents in the process:

Section	Current Level of Resource	Recommended Level of Resource
Local Land Charges	4.2	2
Planning	1.5	1
Building Control	0.2	0.05 <i>(indicative of the need to provide answers to any additional questions which may arise).</i>
Environmental Health	0.2	0.05 <i>(indicative of the need to provide answers to any additional questions which may arise).</i>
Total	6.1 FTE	3.1 FTE

29. The recommended level of resource reflects the need for the service to be robust and to provide cover during periods of absence. Given that the majority of data called upon to process a local search is held within the Development Services Department, consideration should be given to relocate the Land Charges service within this Department following the implementation of the new systems. This would then present opportunities for rationalisation of staff resources to help cover for absence and multi-tasking, while acknowledging gains to come from the Transformation project.

30. Savings would not be fully realised until implementation of the land charges system and data capture is complete, so should not be included in calculations until year 2 of the project. It should be noted that savings in staff time as indicated above, might need to be offset against the deployment of additional resources in areas such as LLPG and GIS data quality maintenance. Nevertheless, a net figure of £60,000 per annum is a modest assumption of what savings can be made. Taking account of the need to ignore the first year in terms of absolute savings, a figure of £240,000 would not be unreasonable for a five-year period.
31. The central ICT support team would manage requirements for the increased systems administration.
32. Any attempt to realise savings in staff time would have to be handled in a sensitive manner. It is recommended that UNISON be consulted.

Risk Management Implications

33. Failure or delays in introducing the required computerisation will increase the Councils' costs and could see a reduction in income if, as predicted, independent agents carry out more local searches.

Consultations

34. Land Searches Team
MVM/Northgate
Legal Services
ICT
Leader
Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder

Conclusions/Summary

35. The current process supporting the provision of local searches is not sustainable. It is inefficient, very costly and prone to possible error by virtue of the high level of manual input. The computerisation of the process will not only make it more accurate, much quicker and less expensive but also make best use of our existing investment and enable the Council to interact better with our partners in both the public and private sector.

Recommendations

36. Cabinet is recommended to:
 - (a) Determine to fully computerise the local land charges/local search process at the earliest opportunity, starting 1st May 2006.
 - (b) Approve a variance on cash limits and the budget as identified in paragraphs 21 & 23 (above) to implement and support an electronic Local Land Charges system.
 - (c) Waive Standing Orders to allow a contract to be placed with Northgate/MVM for the M3 system.
 - (d) Commend the proposal to full Council.

Background Papers: None

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet
AUTHOR: Finance and Resources Director

13 April 2006

**UNCOMMITTED GRANT BALANCES AND OTHER EARMARKED
RESERVES OVER TWO YEARS OLD AS AT 31 MARCH 2006**

Purpose

- To seek the approval of Cabinet to carry forward uncommitted balances on earmarked reserves that are over two years old.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2.	Quality, Accessible Services	The proposals in the report seek to ensure the continued availability of funding to support the spending plans of the Council.
	Village Life	
	Sustainability	
	Partnership	

Background

- The current budget and policy framework rules allow that any uncommitted reserve balance that is unused at the end of a financial year can be carried forward into the following year with the approval of the relevant Portfolio Holder, unless the balance is more than two years old, in which case the approval of Cabinet as a whole is required. This unused sum carried forward is then available in the new financial year in addition to the approved budget estimate.
- It should be appreciated that, in addition to the presented uncommitted balances, the Council's reserves also include amounts necessary to meet the payment of commitments already approved but not yet paid over. The period between approval of grant and final payments can be years in some cases. These amounts will be carried forward except where it is established that the grant is no longer required.

Considerations

- All uncommitted balances over two years old as at 31 March 2006 that are requested to be carried forward are summarised as follows:

Portfolio	Description	Balance Total £	Balance over 2 years £
Community Development	Dual Use Capital Grants	890,095	575,295
Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning	Heritage Initiatives Historic Buildings Preservation Fund (estimated balance)	9,511 54,390	9,511 54,390
Total		953,996	639,196

6. Dual Use Capital Grants: the total uncommitted balance of £890,095 at 31 March 2006 has been built up over a number of years by making annual contributions to the “fund” and carrying forward the balance to meet requirements into the future. The Dual Use Sports Facility Strategy for upgrading all village college sports facilities was approved in 1999. Subsequently, in 2001, Cabinet confirmed that the updated programme be completed. This required that all the remaining reserve balance be carried forward for the rest of the planned programme, which was likely to continue until 2007/08. During 2005-6, Cabinet agreed a grant of £150,000 to Swavesey and £350,000 to Bassingbourn Village Colleges. In previous years, grants of £313,000 to Sawston, £300,000 to Comberton, £310,000 to Linton and £275,000 to Melbourn Village Colleges had been approved. The latest updated programme was presented to Cabinet at the last meeting, in March. It indicated that the intended grant level of 40% for all schemes could be met, provided that the reserve and the annual budget provision in the capital programme was accumulated to the year 2007-08. The remaining schemes are for Impington, Cottenham and Gamlingay Village Colleges. It is recommended that the £575,295 figure that is over two years old be carried forward into 2006-07, in addition to the £314,800 balance under two years, which has already been approved by the Community Development Portfolio Holder.
7. Heritage Initiatives (£9,511, which is over two years old): This reserve was set up in 1996/97 with a one-off contribution of £200,000, for use over a number of years. The balance has reduced from £135,290 to the above in the last four years and is now very near to being fully committed. The Conservation and Design Manager has indicated that the balance would be used to facilitate more local partnership schemes, such as the continuation of the successful Village Greenspace projects, which are led by parish councils. Such initiatives will enable the Council to facilitate voluntary effort, which will enhance significantly both the natural and the historic build environment of the district. Therefore, it is recommended that the balance be carried forward.
8. Historic Buildings Preservation Fund (estimated at £54,390, which is over two years old): This was first established in 1982 to provide the means, in the last resort, to save buildings at risk. It has enabled the Council to use its statutory powers, which could lead to compulsory purchase, repair and resale of such property. More recently, most of the reserve has been used to carry out work at St. Denis Church, which is owned by the Council. Following the approval last June by Cabinet to carry out reproofing and general repair works to arrest the deterioration of the former church, the works are virtually all completed, but some expenditure could fall in the next financial year. Grants from English Heritage and Hatley Parish Council will fund part of this expenditure. The Conservation and Design Manager considers that the remainder of the fund would continue to enable the Conservation and Design Section to initiate action to secure the future of other key listed buildings at risk, encouraged in many cases by community led initiatives; its retention would make a substantial contribution to both securing the historic fabric of the district and support action to save cherished landmarks. Therefore, it is recommended that the estimated balance (which has not yet been finalised due to expenditure being made currently) be carried forward.

9. One uncommitted balance which is over two years old as at 31 March 2006 is to be returned to the overall General Fund Reserve, as below:

Portfolio	Description	Balance Total £	Balance over 2 years £
Housing	Shopping Car Parks	36,850	36,850

There has not been any annual budget provision for car parks in the last five years, but the remaining uncommitted balance in the reserve has been brought forward to cover any further possible expenditure. It has now been established that there are no plans for such expenditure at the current time, so it is intended to return the balance of £36,850 to central balances.

Options

10. The decision is simply whether or not to carry forward the balance over two years old in each case. The current Medium Term Financial Plan assumes that all uncommitted balances are carried forward until used for grant expenditure. The recommendations follow the wishes of the relevant cost centre managers, whose plans would be compromised by the loss of funds for anticipated future grants. In general, the recommendation is to carry forward the balances to ensure that current plans can continue. The outstanding balances brought forward could then be reviewed at any stage in the future, should the financial circumstances of the Council change.

Financial Implications

11. Balances carried forward overall will have nil effect on Council expenditure, in accordance with the Medium Term Financial Plan. However, the balances available towards grant approvals or relevant expenditure in the new financial year will be enhanced by the sums brought forward.
12. Any balances not carried forward will result in an under-spending in the old year and will add to the overall General Fund Reserve.

Legal and Staffing Implications

13. None.

Risk Management Implications

14. Failure to carry forward grant reserves would have a detrimental effect on the stated objectives of the Council. For example, the Dual Use Strategy could not be achieved and the village colleges' provision of facilities to the public would be affected.

Consultations

15. The comments and recommendations of the relevant spending officers have been incorporated into the considerations reported above.

Recommendations

16. It is recommended Cabinet note that the Shopping Car Parks balance of £36,850 will be returned to the overall General Fund Reserve and resolve that the following uncommitted reserve **balances that are over two years old be carried forward** into the 2006/07 financial year:

Dual Use Capital Grants (£890,095 in total)	£575,295
Heritage Initiatives Grants	£9,511
Historic Buildings Preservation Fund (estimated)	£54,390

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Schedules of Grants 2005/06
S.C.D.C. Budget Booklet 2006/07
Previous minutes and agenda

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet
AUTHOR: Development Services Director

13 April 2006

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH
 MINERALS AND WASTE DEVELOPMENT PLAN –
 ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION 2**

Purpose

1. The purpose of this report is to agree the Council's response to the County Council's consultation document on issues and options for the Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2.	High quality, accessible, value for money services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seeking the sustainable extraction of minerals and management of waste, including the provision of facilities for household waste in accessible locations. • Seeking opportunities to work in partnership with the County Council as the minerals and waste authority, on the planning for minerals and waste within the district.
	Quality village life	
	A sustainable future	
	A better future through Partnerships	

Background

3. The County Council is in the early stages of preparing a Minerals and Waste Development Plan Document (DPD) as part of its new Local Development Framework (LDF). This will replace the adopted Waste Local Plan 2003 and the Cambridgeshire Aggregates (Minerals) Local Plan adopted 1991.
4. The County Council has advised that the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan will comprise 3 documents:
 - (a) Core Strategy: a document setting out the strategic vision and objectives, and including a suite of development control policies to guide minerals and waste development
 - (b) Site Specific Policies: Document setting out site specific proposals for mineral and waste development and supporting site specific policies
 - (c) Earith / Mepal Area Action Plan
5. The Core Strategy (including development control policies), Site Specific Proposals and Area Action Plan will be developed broadly in parallel. This reflects the fact that

the County Council considers there to be an urgent need to prepare up to date and comprehensive minerals policies. This approach of parallel plan preparation is similar to that being pursued by this Council in the preparation of its own LDF.

6. Major issues for the Minerals and Waste LDF relate to the development strategy for the area as set out in the Structure Plan 2003 and the emerging RSS for the East of England. In terms of minerals and waste management planning, through the preparation of the new Plan, the County Council identifies that this raises major challenges including the need to ensure:
 - (a) that the raw materials ie. minerals, needed to support the level of growth are available at the right time
 - (b) that the waste generated in the plan area, including the new developments, is dealt with in a sustainable way through a network of waste management facilities with a reduction in the use of landfill.
7. The County Council undertook an initial Issues and Options consultation in June 2005 which sought views on key matters that will be considered in the Plan. It also included a number of possible locations for mineral extraction and waste management facilities that had been proposed by stakeholders.

Current Consultation

8. As a result of the June 2005 consultation, representatives proposed additional locations and the County Council is now seeking views on those additional proposed locations. The deadline for comments is 13 April 2006 (ie. the date of this meeting).
9. The County Council advises that the results of stakeholder consultation on the additional sites will be fed into the site selection exercise associated with the Preferred Options Plan for minerals and waste, to be published in summer 2006 for formal consultation. This will comprise of a Site Specific Proposals Plan and Area Action Plan (making allocations), alongside a Core Strategy setting out strategic and development control land use planning policies that will guide minerals and waste development until 2021.
10. The County Council stresses that inclusion of site specific proposals within this consultation should not be taken to imply support for the proposal by the County and/or Peterborough City Councils.

Issues for Consideration

11. The Council's response to the first consultation in June 2005 made the following comment in respect of waste management, although the principle applies more generally to the Minerals and Waste LDF:

“There is no clear strategy included in the WLP or proposed in the issues and options report for provision of major waste management facilities. A strategy is essential to provide a clear framework for site specific allocations for all scales of waste management facilities, from major waste management

facilities to household waste recycling centres, and also any supporting uses such as waste transfer stations. This should make clear the number, nature and scale of uses proposed and their intended catchment. It should also identify the broad locations for such facilities to meet the objectives of the strategy. This will enable a more detailed site selection process to be undertaken within the context of a clear strategy. “

12. This comment remains valid and it is particularly difficult to comment on site specific proposals without the context of a clear strategy for minerals and waste. It is to be hoped that the Minerals and Waste Core Strategy will include such a strategy. However, it would be preferable to have the opportunity to comment on a draft strategy before the Site Specific Policies DPD is prepared. Again, this point was raised in the June consultation:

“It is understood that the County Council intends that the next stage in the Waste LDF process will include preferred options for specific sites. The District Council is concerned that this is a big step from the general approach being explored here without an intermediate consultation stage on both the overall strategy and site options. The District Council would hope to be consulted on both the strategy and options for site specific allocations before preferred sites are identified that affect South Cambridgeshire, including the major developments.”

13. Notwithstanding this general concern, in considering the sites the subject of this consultation, there are a number of general and site specific observations that can be made.
14. This report has been prepared in consultation with Environmental Health, who endorse this general concern and make the following further comments:
- (a) Whilst fully endorsing the proposal to carry out a full sustainability appraisal of this plan in the future, all environmental impacts should be considered and any potential health impacts identified so that mitigation measures can be implemented where appropriate.
 - (b) As a waste collection authority the District Council would wish to ensure that the sites are suitably located in order that South Cambs can deliver it's waste collection responsibilities with minimal additional cost to the authority.
 - (c) The Plan should include a sufficient number of sites as is appropriate and those sites are located to enable effective delivery of the PFI contract.
 - (d) Combined Heat and Power plant using waste derived fuel from a local source, in line with government policy, has not been identified as a possible additional option. We would welcome the addition of this option in the growth areas within the policy.

Not all these issues are material planning considerations but they provide a context of wider corporate consideration for Members in deciding the Council's response to this planning consultation.

15. Comments on the individual sites are set out in **Appendix 1**.

Financial Implications

16. None.

Legal Implications

17. The Council will be obliged to show Minerals and Waste allocations on its own LDF Proposals Map once the Minerals and Waste LDF is adopted.

Staffing Implications

18. Staff have offered to discuss emerging policies and proposals with the County Council as the Minerals and Waste LDF is prepared.

Risk Management Implications

19. There is a risk that the Minerals and Waste LDF could include allocations for land not acceptable to the Council, for example waste management issues could prevail over amenity and other planning considerations.

Consultations

20. Internal consultations with Environmental Health.

Conclusion

21. There is concern that this consultation on specific sites is taking place in the absence of a clear strategy for minerals and waste, making comments on the suitability of some sites difficult. Also, these sites are put forward by the industry and there is no commentary from the minerals and waste authority to help provide a context for consultees to provide their comments.
22. Notwithstanding, comments are offered on those sites within South Cambridgeshire as set out in Appendix 1.

Recommendations

23. Cabinet is recommended to agree the responses to the Minerals and Waste Issues and Options consultation 2, as set out in paragraphs 11 to 14 and in Appendix 1.

Background Papers: Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Development Plan: Issues and Options Paper 2 (January 2006)

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**CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH
MINERALS AND WASTE DEVELOPMENT PLAN –
ISSUES AND OPTIONS CONSULTATION 2**

COMMENTS BY SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

TOPIC SS1: NEW AND ALLOCATED MINERAL SITES

Site 21: Station Quarry, Steeple Morden

Proposed Use: Chalk extraction

Comment: It is understood that this is a rare type of chalk. The proposal is an extension to an existing site. Whilst there are reservations in view of potential countryside impact, in view of its rare nature and as it can only be worked where it exists, no objection is raised, subject to appropriate mitigation being provided.

Environmental Health comments that there are several properties located around the site. Without details of vulnerable receptors and an environmental and health impact assessment it is difficult to evaluate this site.

Summary: No Objection subject to appropriate mitigation.

Site 25: Smithy Fen, Cottenham

Proposed Use: Sand & Gravel extraction

Comment: As for Topic SS2 site 1 in the June consultation, the site is detached from existing quarry which is north of Landbeach on A10. Although relatively remote from settlements, it raises the issue of how materials would be transported. It would not be acceptable through Cottenham village. This issue would need to be resolved if this site were to be identified.

Access to Smithy Fen is extremely limited, consisting of a single track concrete road with passing places; there is also a very narrow hump-backed bridge with limited visibility across Cottenham Lode. Such a proposal would not be supported.

Environmental Health comments that there are a number of sensitive receptors adjacent to the site; residential development including a travellers' site is in close proximity to the area identified. Without details of vulnerable receptors and an environmental and health impact assessment it is difficult to evaluate this site.

Summary: Object.

TOPIC SS4: NEW WASTE MANAGEMENT SITES

Site 21: Bridgefoot Quarry, Flint Cross

Proposed Use: Waste Recycling

Comment: This site is not well related to any concentrations of population that the use would be serving. It is difficult to see how would fit into any strategy which it is anticipated would be based on providing facilities close to where the waste arises.

Environmental Health comments that there is a private water supply close to this site and potentially sensitive receptors that could be affected by noise from the proposed facility. Mitigation measures or noise conditions could be used to prevent any issues arising.

Summary: Object.

Site 26: North of Newmarket Road, Cambridge

Proposed Use: Household Waste Recycling Centre & Transfer Facility

Comment: The Submission Draft Cambridge East Area Action Plan identifies Phase 1 of development on land north of Newmarket Road, which can come forward with the Airport still operational. The AAP identifies the considerable challenge that exists in creating a satisfactory residential neighbourhood ahead of the wider development and specifically adjoining the North Works site, and the relocation of some existing employment uses will be important to help provide a suitable residential environment. There will be no general employment area in Phase 1, which is the sort of location that a waste management facility could potentially be accommodated.

It would not be appropriate to locate a household waste recycling centre or transfer facility in Phase 1 in principle. It would significantly undermine the ability to create a successful residential area. This relates both to the nature and scale of the use and the type and level of traffic generation that would be created into an area with a single traffic access.

The specific site proposed in the consultation document compounds these problems by completely taking up the limited frontage that exists to Newmarket Road between the car showrooms and the employment uses adjacent to the Park and Ride site. The Area Action Plan makes clear that the limited extent of this frontage will require a very careful design approach to provide an appropriate face to the development and to enable it to integrate successfully with development south of Newmarket Road in the longer term.

It appears that this objection is very much opportunity led in view of the County Council's concern that there is an urgent need for a facility, rather than the good planning of this major new urban quarter. Achieving a high quality neighbourhood will be crucial to achieving a successful new development in the longer term and this proposal would seriously damage the ability for this to be achieved.

Environmental Health comments that there is a potential conflict with the proposal for large-scale residential development in close proximity to this site. The proposal should be subject to an environmental and health impact assessment.

Summary: Object.

Site 28: Girton

Proposed Use: Household Waste Recycling Centre & Transfer Facility

Comment: This site is likely to be part of an area of land that will be removed from the Green Belt as an exception specifically to meet the long term needs of the University. It is a sensitive site, particularly the southern part which extends into a very open, visible area that forms an important setting for Cambridge. The nature of land contours mean that the rear of the site would be on land sloping down towards the M11 and would be very visible and potentially difficult to screen.

If the alternative to provide a site in this sector were to be development in the more open Green Belt west of the M11, then consideration could be given to this site as an alternative subject to detailed consideration of its impact and potential for mitigation. The Council would not completely dismiss the site at this stage for HWRC, subject to further consideration of the waste strategy for this sector of Cambridge and sustainability appraisal of site options.

Environmental Health comments that there are several properties located around the site. Without details of vulnerable receptors and an environmental and health impact assessment it is difficult to evaluate this site.

Summary: Site could be considered as part of further development of strategy and site options.

Site 29: Milton

Proposed Use: Household Waste Recycling Centre & Transfer Facility

Comment: This site lies within an employment area where waste facilities could be appropriate in principle. The current access to the site running parallel to the A14 is basically single track, and improvements it would be essential to improve access to the site.

Environmental Health comments that this site is located within an industrial area and adjacent to the A14, there would be no objections in principle to a facility located here.

Summary: Support, subject to access improvements.

Site 36: South of Newmarket Road, Cambridge (Area of Search)

Proposed Use: Waste Recovery and Recycling Centre

Comment: This area forms the major part of a high density urban extension to Cambridge, as proposed in the Structure Plan and the Cambridge East Area Action Plan. Whilst accepting the principle of providing waste facilities in close proximity to where waste arises, the difficulties in providing a waste facility here in an appropriate way should not be

underestimated because of the high density nature of the development and the fact that there are no proposals for a general employment area where waste facilities would normally be located.

Employment at Cambridge East is to be integrated into mixed use developments, particularly in the district and local centres. It is not considered that a major waste management facility would be appropriate in such mixed use areas. Whilst it is recognised that modern waste management facilities are very different from older operations, they nonetheless involve significant levels of heavy traffic and have some issues of noise, dust, and odours and in principle are not good neighbours to be placed in close proximity to residential uses. This will cause significant difficulties in identifying a suitable site for a major waste management facility, without taking large areas of land from other forms of development for both the facility itself and the amount of landscaping that would be required to act as a buffer to other uses in the new urban quarter. The incorporation of a household waste recycling centre to serve the urban quarter would be easier to accommodate and would be appropriately located in the development.

Environmental Health comments that there is a potential conflict with the proposal for large-scale residential development in close proximity to this site. The proposal should be subject to an environmental and health impact assessment.

Summary: No objection to a household waste recycling centre. Further detail is needed to demonstrate that a major waste management facility could be satisfactorily accommodated.

Site 38: Barrington Cement Works & Quarry

Proposed Use: Cement kiln using waste derived fuel and ancillary kiln dust disposal area

Comment: This site is poorly connected to the road network and would be unsuitable for significant movements of freighters by road, which would have to travel through Barrington, Haslingfield or Orwell to access the site.

The recent proposals from Cemex for such a facility demonstrate the greater visual impact of such a development in such a sensitive location, particularly through the need for a taller and wider chimney.

Environmental Health comments that there is great local concern over the proposals to increase capacity at this site. Any such decision should only be made in the light of a full Health Impact and Environmental Assessment with full public consultation at every stage.

Summary: Objection on environmental grounds, which may include on environmental health grounds once more information is available on this matter.

TOPIC SS5: WASTE WATER TREATMENT WORKS

Site 1: Honey Hill, Horningsea (Area of Search)

Proposed Use: Waste Water Treatment Works

Comment: This area lies in the Green Belt and is very open and visible, particularly from the A14. A site further from the A14 would provide better opportunities for screening, but may take it closer to other more local vantage points. With a modern facility that may well be enclosed within a building, the visual impact is a particularly important consideration in determining an appropriate location, notwithstanding that it may be acceptable to locate such a use in the Green Belt.

The relocation of the Waste Water Treatment Works is related to the proposed redevelopment of the Cambridge Northern Fringe, which includes land at Chesterton Sidings in South Cambs. If it is found that it is imperative that the use is relocated, this location should be consideration alongside other options. However, at this stage the Council has not been offered other site options for consideration. Consideration of alternatives will need to be a key part of the sustainability appraisal of site options as an integral part of the preparation of the Site Specific Policies DPD.

If the location was found to be the most appropriate following consideration of options, there would need to be very careful consideration of the detailed siting and design of the facility to minimise any impact on nearby communities, and mitigation measures would be required.

Environmental Health comments that this site is recorded on the land quality database as having a potentially contaminative use in that there was infill material deposited circa 1976 (extracted for A14). There is also a disused railway line across the site. Any potential development should ensure that the site is suitable for the proposed use (PPS23). There is concern locally about this proposal, however without details of vulnerable receptors and an environmental and health impact assessment it is difficult to evaluate this site further.

Summary: Pending the consideration of site options for the WWTW relocation, it is not possible to be definitive as to whether this is the least harmful site. However, there are clear reservations about this site.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet

13 April 2006

AUTHOR: Chief Executive

CITIZEN'S ADVICE BUREAUX
Purpose

1. To make a decision on the level of grant aid to be awarded to Cambridge and District CAB and to note the decision of the Portfolio Holder for Community Development on awards to North Hertfordshire and District, Uttlesford and Haverhill CAB's and also the Cambridge Independent Advice Centre. The total recommended budget available for 2006/07 is £85,630 (This allows for a 25% reduction in the total grants to these organisations as per the budget cuts agreed by Cabinet)

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2. Quality, Accessible Services	These grants support the advice organisations, which operate in South Cambridgeshire, providing direct services to some of our most vulnerable residents.
Village Life	These organisations all prioritise the need to provide services through a variety of means eg telephone, e-mail, face-to-face appointments system and outreach in order to reach as wide a population as possible in rural areas.
Sustainability	The benefits and debt advice provided by the CAB's, contributes to village sustainability and the sustainability of this organisation as they prioritise council tax and rent arrears debts.
Partnership	Through membership of the Community Legal Services Partnership to which all the CAB's belong the Council is seeking to develop a closer working relationship and increased understanding of the work of the CAB's and its outcomes.

Background

3. Funding of Citizens Advice Bureaux forms a major part of the Council's commitment to working with the Voluntary Sector in South Cambridgeshire. Regular annual meetings are held with all five of these agencies and their annual Service Level Agreements are reviewed. The SLA includes how their services to South Cambridgeshire residents will be monitored in the coming year; this information helps to inform decisions about funding allocation in future years.

Considerations

4. The SLA meetings with the advice agencies enable this organisation to build a picture of the level of advice and support that is provided to residents of South Cambridgeshire. For example in the last year Cambridge City CAB have been able to set up a benefit team and South Cambridgeshire has been a target area, with this benefit advice being particularly effective with older people. In addition the organisation has just received funding for extra debt work over a 2 year period and is part of a national demonstration project looking at improving access – particularly

phone, e.mail and web which is due to be launched in April. This project is particularly relevant to South Cambridgeshire where access to the service is a major issue.

Options

5. South Cambridgeshire is working with the County Council and Cambridgeshire Funders Group to look at joint funding arrangements for the voluntary sector. This is part of the undertaking under the Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Compact. This is an agreement between statutory agencies and voluntary organisations working in the same geographical area. They aim to provide a framework for improving relationships and enable each partner to:
- (a) Understand and value the roles, nature and contribution of different kinds of organisation
 - (b) Agree standards for communication, funding, partnership working and consultation

Funding and a clear understanding of how that funding contributes to the quality of life of residents in South Cambridgeshire is a key factor in maintaining a successful compact. The consequences of not funding the CAB's will be a cessation of the advice services in South Cambridgeshire with attendant consequences in increased debt and lower take-up of benefits in the area.

Financial Implications

	Grant Approved 2005/06	Proposed Reduced Grant 2006/07	Recommended Grant 2006/07
Cambridge CAB	66,625	52,060	52,060
North Hertfordshire and District	21,700	16,275	16,275
Uttlesford CAB	7,175	5,380	5,380
Haverhill CAB	7,175	5,380	5,380
Cambridge Independent Advice Centre	8,712	6,535	6,535
	111,387	85,630	85,630

Legal Implications

6. All five organisations detailed in this report have gained and work to the Community Legal Services Partnership Quality Mark for advice giving. This enables their workers to access quality advice and information at Level 4 on behalf of clients they are working with. A primary objective of CLSP is to prevent as many cases as possible going to court by the provision of this quality advice as early in proceedings as possible.

Equal Opportunities Implications

7. There are links between work with vulnerable and/or hard-to-reach sections of the community and the Council's approach to equal opportunities. In line with general and specific statutory duties under the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations

(Amendment) Act 2000, the Council operates a Race Equality Scheme (RES) in order to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote race equality and good race relations. Whilst the district's black and minority ethnic (BME) community represents only 2.9% of the population, three wards have much greater BME communities (Girton, 5.8%; Milton, 7.5%; and Teversham, 8.1%). In addition, estimates suggest that Travellers could make up 1.7% of the South Cambs population.

Staffing Implications

- 8. None.

Risk Management Implications

- 9. The risk management factors are the responsibility of the organisations concerned.

Consultations

- 10. Consultation meetings to review the annual Service Level Agreement have taken place with each of the five organisations concerned. The proposal to cut funding to the CABs and CIAC by 25% was agreed at Cabinet in October 2005. Ongoing discussions with Cambridge CAB and the other advice agencies that the Council fund will take place over the coming year to monitor the impact of the 25% reduction on service delivery to South Cambs residents. Discussions about the way South Cambridgeshire can work more effectively with voluntary sector partners is an ongoing item for the South Cambridgeshire Voluntary Forum and the Compact Steering Group.

Conclusions/Summary

- 11. South Cambridgeshire funds Cambridge and District CAB on an annual basis. Regular monitoring takes place of the individual benefits delivered by the CABs to South Cambridgeshire clients; monitoring this year will include assessment of the impact of the reduction in grants to the CAB. Grants to North Herts, Uttlesford and Haverhill CABs and CIAC have all been approved by the Portfolio holder for Community Development at the recommended 25% reduction on last years funding to meet reduced budget requirement imposed by capping. Figures from monitoring will also include the amount of benefits bought into South Cambridgeshire. Through their membership of Community Legal Services Partnership the CABs are able to access high quality legal advice for their clients with the aim of preventing costly court proceedings.

Recommendations

- 12. That Cabinet approves a grant of £52,060 to Cambridge CAB for 2006/07 and notes the grants awarded by the Portfolio Holder for Community Development to the other CAB's and CIAC for their work in South Cambridgeshire.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Service Level Agreements with the organisations concerned.

Contact Officer: Tricia Pope – Community Development Manager
Telephone: (01954) 713290

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet

13 April 2006

AUTHOR: Housing & Environmental Services Director

LEASE OF CAR PARK OFF COLES LANE, LINTON

Purpose

- To seek endorsement by Cabinet of the following decision made by the Housing Portfolio Holder on 8 March 2006:

“Subject to Cabinet approval, offer a long-term lease of the car park site off Coles Lane, Linton to Linton Parish Council at nominal rent, subject to the leaseholder being responsible for ongoing maintenance and payment of NNDR (rates).”

*Note that a condition of the lease would be that the site remains in use as a free public car park.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2.	Quality, Accessible Services	
	Village Life	The car park is a valuable asset to the village centre.
	Sustainability	Imposing car parking charges would increase parking and congestion in village streets.
	Partnership	To work in partnership with the Parish Council

Background

- The disposal of all the Council's public car parks is being put forward as part of the budget savings exercise following council tax capping.
- The car park has 35 parking spaces (see location plan attached at **Appendix A**).
- The Council has right of way over the access road owned by the Secretary of State for Social Services. Use and maintenance of the access is shared with the Health Centre who own the adjoining car park.
- Interest in leasing the car park site has been received from Linton Parish Council.

Considerations

- The car park is well used by local shoppers and business people and is a valuable asset to the village centre.
- Planning confirmed that they would strongly oppose any change of use of this car park. An application for affordable housing on this site would not be encouraged.
- Maintenance costs of the car park over the last 10 years and current National Non-Domestic Rates are shown at **Appendix B**.

10. A valuation of the car park site has been obtained from the District Valuer, based on a sale subject to a covenant restricting its future use to car parking only but not precluding the purchaser from charging for car parking use. The market value of the freehold interest with vacant possession has been assessed on this basis at £52,000. If a condition were imposed to preclude parking charges, the value of the site in its current use is nil.
11. There would be considerable opposition from local residents and problems arising if car parking charges were introduced, particularly in view of the fact that the Health Centre car park is free of charge. If parking charges were introduced, users would park in adjoining streets, causing congestion elsewhere in the village. Leasing the land to the Parish Council would ensure that the car park remains free of charge.
12. Leasing the site to the Parish Council would relieve the Council of future maintenance costs and payment of rates.

Options

13. To accept the decision of the Housing Portfolio Holder as above.
14. To offer the land on the open market, subject to a covenant restricting its future use to car parking only, at £52,000 (not precluding a purchaser from imposing charges).
15. To retain the land in Council ownership.

Financial Implications

16. Leasing the site would save the Council future maintenance costs and payment of rates.

Legal Implications

17. None.

Staffing Implications

18. None.

Risk Management Implications

19. None.

Consultations

20. Shire Homes have been consulted and support the Portfolio Holder's decision.
21. Councillor Mrs Smith and Councillor Batchelor have been consulted and support the Portfolio Holder's decision.
22. Linton Health Centre has been consulted and supports the Parish Council in their decision.

Conclusions/Summary

23. The car park is well used and is a valuable asset to the village centre. Change of use of the site would not be favourable. If the site were sold on the open market and parking charges were introduced, users would park in adjoining streets, causing congestion elsewhere in the village. Leasing the land to the Parish Council would ensure that the car park remains free of charge. Although there would be no capital return through leasing the site at nominal rent, the Council would be relieved of future maintenance costs and payment of rates.

Recommendation

24. Cabinet is recommended to accept the decision of the Housing Portfolio Holder as stated above.

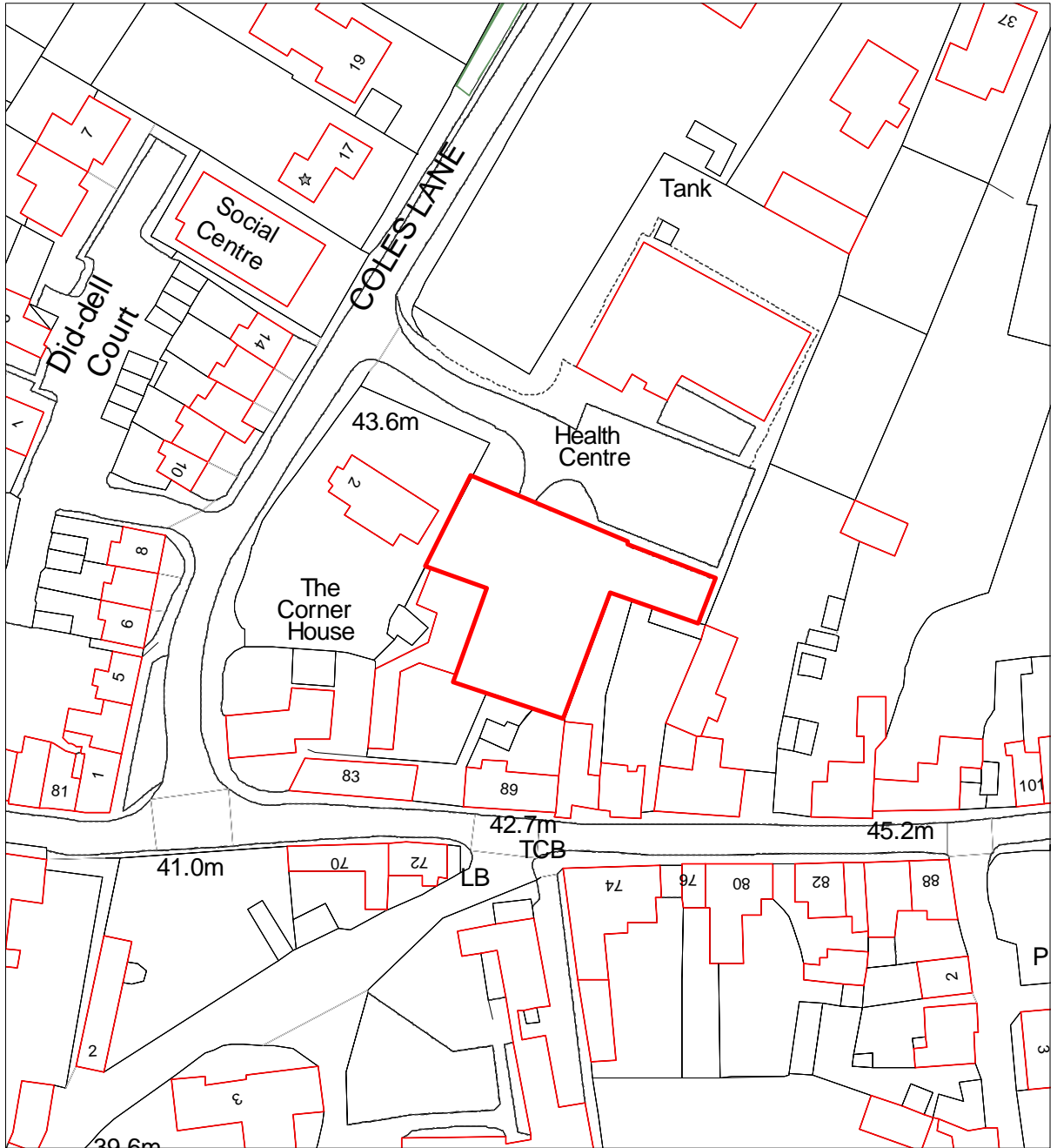
Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

1. Linton car park: maintenance costs over last 10 years and current annual rate.

Contact Officer: Jenny Clark – Lands Officer
Telephone 01954 713336

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SCDC CAR PARK OFF COLES LANE, LINTON



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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL LICENCE NO 100022500 2005

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EXPENDITURE CODED TO LINTON CAR PARK**REPAIRS & GROUNDS MAINTENANCE**

FINANCIAL YEAR	£
1995/96	0
1996/97	0
1997/98	133
1998/99	0
1999/00	159
2000/01	0
2001/02	0
2002/03	0
2003/04	502
2004/05	1,130
TOTAL	1,924

NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATE

2004/05	2,052
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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet

13 April 2006

AUTHOR: Housing & Environmental Services Director

SALE OF CAR PARK OFF HIGH STREET, MELBOURN

Purpose

- To seek endorsement by Cabinet of the following decision made by the Housing Portfolio Holder on 8th March 2006:

“Subject to Cabinet approval, offer the car park site off High Street, Melbourn for sale to Melbourn Parish Council at the price of £100,000 plus legal costs, subject to the following:

- that the portion of the site to be designated for parking is to remain in use as a free public parking area in perpetuity
- that the Parish Council is responsible for maintenance of the site and payment of NNDR (rates).”

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2.	Quality, Accessible Services	
	Village Life	The proposed new parish offices and community hall will be an asset to the village together with free car parking provision.
	Sustainability	Imposing car parking charges could increase parking and congestion in village streets.
	Partnership	To work in partnership with the Parish Council

Background

- The disposal of all the Council's public car parks is being put forward as part of the budget savings exercise following council tax capping.
- The car park has 48 parking spaces (see location plan attached at **Appendix A**).
- Melbourn Parish Council have requested to purchase the car park in Melbourn. They propose to use part of it to develop a building to house a small hall, Parish Council offices and Library Access Point plus necessary facilities. The remainder of the site will remain as a car park.

Considerations

- Planning officers have indicated that consent is likely to be granted for the Parish Council's proposal, subject to agreement on the scale and appearance of the building in the Conservation Area and effect on the setting of an adjacent Listed Building and provided sufficient car parking spaces are retained.
- Out of 14 existing garages at the rear of the car park, 10 are currently being rented and 4 are void. The garages are not in good condition and have cemented asbestos

roofs. Garage tenants will be consulted regarding use before any proposals for this area are finalised.

8. A right of access exists over the car park to the school and this will be retained.
9. Problems with youths have occurred in the car park on occasions and the Parish Council's proposals will provide closer monitoring of the site.
10. Planning have indicated that affordable housing on this site together with the Parish Council's proposals would not be feasible.
11. Maintenance costs of the car park over the last 10 years and current National Non-Domestic Rates are shown at **Appendix B**.
12. A valuation of the car park site has been obtained from the District Valuer, based on a sale subject to the proposed new offices and hall and a covenant restricting the use of the remainder of the site to car parking only but not precluding the purchaser from charging for car parking use. The market value of the freehold interest with vacant possession has been assessed on this basis at £185,000. If a condition were imposed to preclude parking charges, the value of the site is reduced to £100,000.
13. If parking charges were introduced, users may park in adjoining streets particularly at the peak times of school drop-off and collection.

Options

14. To accept the decision of the Housing Portfolio Holder as above.
15. To retain the land in Council ownership.

Financial Implications

16. By disposing of the site, a capital receipt will accrue to the Council and the Council will no longer be responsible for maintenance costs and payment of rates.

Legal Implications

17. None.

Staffing Implications

18. None.

Risk Management Implications

18. None.

Consultations

19. Shire Homes have been consulted and support the Portfolio Holder's decision.
20. Councillor Wherrell and Councillor Mrs Trueman have been consulted and support the Portfolio Holder's decision.

Conclusions/Summary

21. Planning officers have indicated that consent is likely to be granted for the Parish Council's proposal. The proposed new parish offices and community hall will be an asset to the village together with free car parking provision. By disposing of the site, a capital receipt will accrue to the Council and the Council will no longer be responsible for maintenance costs and payment of rates.

Recommendations

22. Cabinet is recommended to accept the decision of the Housing Portfolio Holder as stated above.

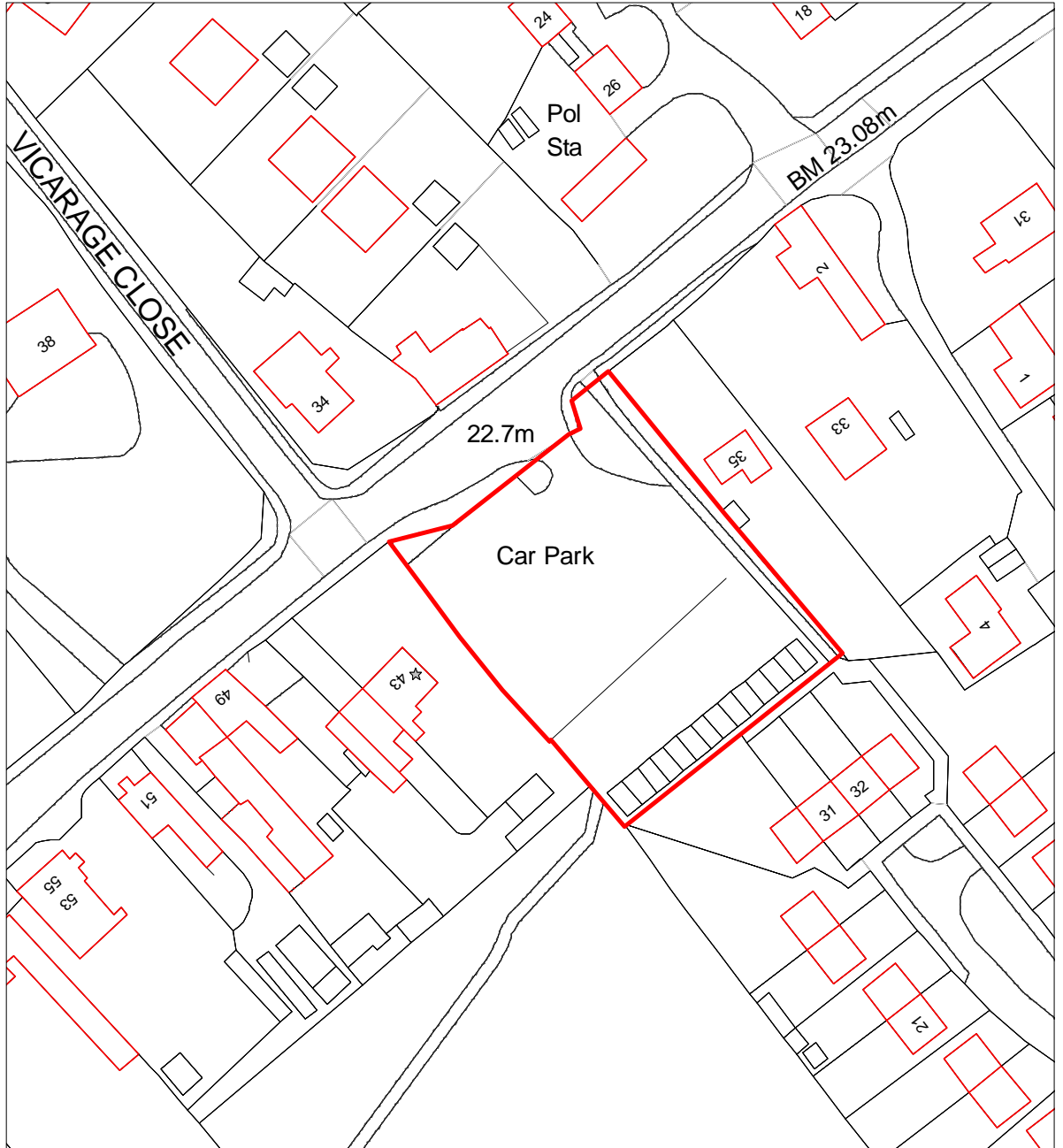
Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

1. Melbourn car park: maintenance costs over last 10 years and current annual rate.

Contact Officer: Jenny Clark – Lands Officer
Telephone 01954 713336

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SCDC CAR PARK, HIGH STREET, MELBOURN



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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL LICENCE NO 100022500 2005

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EXPENDITURE CODED TO MELBOURN CAR PARK**REPAIRS & GROUNDS MAINTENANCE**

FINANCIAL YEAR	£
1995/96	0
1996/97	84
1997/98	0
1998/99	8,408
1999/00	3,568
2000/01	0
2001/02	591
2002/03	31
2003/04	70
2004/05	74
TOTAL	12,826

NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATE

2004/05	1,467
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Cabinet – 13 April 2006

Agenda Items: 9 and 10

UPDATE ON FUTURE OF SCDC PUBLIC CAR PARKS**CAR PARK OFF HIGH STREET, HISTON**

1. Following discussions at meetings of the Housing Portfolio Holder, an offer was made to Histon Parish Council for a long-term lease of the car park site on similar terms as that to Linton Parish Council. The lease was offered at nominal rent with the lessee to be responsible for ongoing maintenance of the site and payment of National Non-Domestic Rates. This would secure the future of the site as a free public car park.
2. Histon Parish Council's response to this proposal is that they cannot commit to an undertaking to lease the car park at this time but that they wish to discuss and review the options for the site with SCDC.

CAR PARK OFF HIGH STREET, SAWSTON

1. Sawston Parish Council has recently held meetings with local businesses to discuss the future of the car park. A meeting has been arranged between SCDC, Sawston Parish Council and a local business to discuss the possibility of a lease of the site.

Contact Officer: Jenny Clark, Lands Officer, Tel: (01954) 713336

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Cabinet – 13 April 2006

Agenda Items: 9 and 10

UPDATE ON FUTURE OF SCDC PUBLIC CAR PARKS**CAR PARK OFF HIGH STREET, HISTON**

1. Following discussions at meetings of the Housing Portfolio Holder, an offer was made to Histon Parish Council for a long-term lease of the car park site on similar terms as that to Linton Parish Council. The lease was offered at nominal rent with the lessee to be responsible for ongoing maintenance of the site and payment of National Non-Domestic Rates. This would secure the future of the site as a free public car park.
2. Histon Parish Council's response to this proposal is that they cannot commit to an undertaking to lease the car park at this time but that they wish to discuss and review the options for the site with SCDC.

CAR PARK OFF HIGH STREET, SAWSTON

1. Sawston Parish Council has recently held meetings with local businesses to discuss the future of the car park. A meeting has been arranged between SCDC, Sawston Parish Council and a local business to discuss the possibility of a lease of the site.

Contact Officer: Jenny Clark, Lands Officer, Tel: (01954) 713336

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet

13 April 2006

AUTHOR: Chief Executive

QUALITY CHARTER WITH PARISH COUNCILS

Purpose

1. This report sets out the current position of the development of the Quality Charter with Parish Councils in South Cambridgeshire.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2. Quality, Accessible Services	A Charter could benefit the provision of local services by both Parish Councils and the District Council.
Village Life	
Sustainability	
Partnership	The development of a Charter is being progressed in partnership with the Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils (CALC).

Background

3. The 102 Parishes in South Cambs deliver a range of local services, alongside the district-wide services provided by this Council. Written agreements between some District Councils and their parishes have existed for at least a decade. Sometimes known as concordats, codes of practice, partnership agreements or charters, they set out the ways in which the two tiers of government work with each other.
4. In Cambridgeshire, CALC has been working with the District Council's to progress this agenda. A Model Charter, based on one from Cheshire, has been put forward as a suggested basis for a Charter in Cambridgeshire.

Considerations

5. Officers have considered a Model Charter put forward by CALC. It sets out a range of measures covering consultation processes, the provision of information, handling complaints, community planning, and delegating responsibility for service provision. The delegation provision would apply to Quality Parish Councils, who could choose to take on responsibility for some services.
6. Due in part to limited resources, a detailed analysis of the provisions within the Model Charter has not been undertaken. Indeed, it is clear that resource constraints will be a significant factor in considering these issues.
7. The Council's representative on CALC, Cllr Dr Jane Williamson, recently met with the Head of Community Services to review the best way forward. The outcome of this meeting was agreement on a different way to move forward. Instead of considering what the draft Charter document includes, which would be most likely to lead to arguments arising from the differing perspectives of the organisations, an alternative is to focus on the existing relationships between the parties.

8. The Head of Community Services has arranged to attend the next South Cambs District meeting of CALC. At this meeting it is proposed that CALC, Parish Council's representatives, and the District Council explore what they each expect of the others. Once we have clarified this mutual expectation, and what each can deliver, we may arrive at a firmer basis on which to consider the provisions within a Charter.

Options

9. The limitation of time and resources has meant that no other options have been explored.

Financial Implications

10. There is no financial implication in the course of action outlined in this report. However if the Charter includes provision for the delegation of responsibilities, this will have financial implication for the council.

Legal Implications

11. None.

Staffing Implications

12. None at this stage.

Risk Management Implications

13. None.

Consultations

14. As noted above, both CALC and the Council's representative of CALC have been consulted.

Conclusions/Summary

15. The Charter is the means of improving the working relationship between Parish Council's and the District Council. Starting the process to develop the Charter by an open discussion between the parties focuses on the current relationships and what may need to be changed for the future.

Recommendations

16. Cabinet endorses the approach to developing a Quality Charter with Parish Councils set out in paragraph 8.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Model Charter draft December 2005.

Contact Officer: Simon McIntosh – Head of Community Services
Telephone: (01954) 713350

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet

13 April 2006

AUTHOR: Housing and Environmental Services Director

IMPLEMENTATION OF HOUSING CHOICE BASED LETTINGS

Purpose

1. To request agreement of an 18 month fixed term post of Choice based Lettings Project Officer.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2. Quality, Accessible Services	Development of Choice based lettings scheme, which focuses on applicants for social housing having increased choice.
Village Life	As part of an options package allows those in housing need to exercise choice over their rehousing options.
Sustainability	As above
Partnership	This is a sub-regional scheme involving 5 Local Authorities in Cambridgeshire, St Edmundsbury and Forest Heath DC and local housing associations.

Background

3. Cabinet agreed in principle on 8 September 2005 to proceed to implement a sub regional choice based lettings (CBL) scheme in order to achieve the ODPM's requirement for CBL in all areas by 2010. An application by the seven sub regional partner authorities for funding attracted £181,000 which will be used to fund a sub regional project manager and purchase of software.
4. The transition from the current points based housing allocation system to a CBL model will require a fundamental review of current policies and systems; the introduction of new policies; procurement of new ICT infrastructure; consultation with 5000 housing applicants; and training and briefing for all stakeholders. In order to achieve delivery by November 2007 a need for additional project management capacity within the Council has been identified.
5. A sub regional project management infrastructure has been agreed and the Council's housing, strategic housing, ICT and Legal services are engaged in preliminary work. The Council now needs to develop a local implementation team and a project team has been established by the Head of Strategic Housing.

Considerations

6. Without this additional staff resource it is unlikely the Council will be successful in implementing the scheme by the required target date. It is evident from analysis of likely workloads that additional project management capacity is required to support local implementation.

Options

7. It is proposed that a full time project officer is appointed, initially for an 18 month term, to support the Housing Advice and Homelessness Manager in implementing CBL within South Cambridgeshire.

Financial Implications

8. A commitment has already been given to fund CBL implementation within existing budgets. The annual cost of the new post is likely to be in region of £32,000 and will be funded from Housing General Fund and Housing Revenue Account sources (23/77% respectively) through virements in 2006/07 and a budgetary provision will be made in 2007/08 for the remaining term of the contract.

Legal Implications

9. None.

Staffing Implications

10. There is not the capacity amongst current posts to undertake this work.

Consultations

11. None – although most other Cambridgeshire local authorities are also intending to seek an additional staff member for this purpose.

Conclusions/Summary

12. An extra member of staff is required to undertake the tasks required at a local level to ensure the successful implementation of the sub-regional Choice Based Lettings scheme.

Recommendations

13. That an 18 month fixed term post of CBL Project Officer be established to support the implementation of CBL, to be funded from a mix of Housing General Fund and Housing Revenue Account sources.

Contact Officer: Sue Carter – Housing Advice and Homelessness Manager
Telephone: (01954) 713044

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet

13 April 2006

AUTHOR: Housing and Environmental Services Director

PREVENTATIVE TECHNOLOGY GRANT

Purpose

1. To consider an offer of a grant to the Council for 2006/7 and 2007/8 of finance from the Preventative Technology Grant held by the partnership Cambridge City & South Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trusts.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2. Quality, Accessible Services	Preventative Technology is a major new development in service provision that will benefit residents of South Cambridgeshire.
Sustainability	Preventative Technology can significantly contribute to assisting adults to remain living independently in their own homes, enhancing a mixed and sustainable community.
Partnership	This is a proposal from the PCT for extending partnership working with the Council to provide a coordinated service that will meet the needs of residents of South Cambridgeshire.

Background

3. The Department of Health has made funding available for 2006/7 and 2007/8 for the development of Preventative Technology (also known as Telecare or Assistive Technology) solutions to assist in preventing admissions to hospital and residential care. The Preventative Technology Grant (PTG) will be paid to the County Council as the Social Services authority. The Department of Health has set a national target for telecare to be available in every home where it is needed by 2010. The two years PTG should benefit around 160,000 people across England.
4. Telecare will primarily benefit older people, but the PTG is not ring-fenced specifically for this and is available to assist other adults with disabilities or ill-health.
5. Use of the PTG in Cambridgeshire was considered by Adult Task Group (a standing group of officers from the County Council and the county PCTs that oversees adult social services) and it was agreed that it will be paid to the PCTs to facilitate the development of telecare services. The grant payable to the partnership Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire PCTs for 2006/7 will be £127,530.
6. Telecare devices can significantly contribute to maintaining an older or disabled person to live independently in their homes and reduce the need for intensive homecare and prevent admission to residential care. Examples of telecare equipment include:
 - (a) Falls monitors
 - (b) Flooding/fire/CO2 monitors

- (c) Vital signs monitoring
 - (d) Automatic medicine dispensers (with failure and reminder alerts)
 - (e) Cut-offs for cookers left on, baths left running, etc.
7. More recent innovations include telemedicine with on-line or videophone access for healthchecks.
 8. The PCT already employs an Assistive Technology Manager who was historically based in Cambridge City, but who has more recently been expanding her activity in South Cambs. The PCT strategy for use of PTG includes additional staffing resources within the PCT. These posts will focus upon assessing needs and specifying equipment, as well as expanding awareness of telecare and its opportunities across the health and social care professions.
 9. The majority of Telecare devices function through a lifeline system to ensure a response to the “triggering” of any of the monitors. The ability and capacity of SCDC to install lifelines is therefore a vital part of expanding this service.
 10. The review of sheltered housing has highlighted the need for the new Sheltered Housing Officers role to play a key part in expanding take-up of lifelines in the community. Within the structure there is also a 18.5 hours per week post to co-ordinate this activity.
 11. Experience has shown that having a dedicated officer within the housing service who has knowledge and skills of the additional Telecare devices and the ability to install them is a considerable advantage, freeing up the Telecare specialist(s) within the PCT to concentrate on the assessment and training roles.

Proposal

12. The PCTs are therefore making the offer to the Council of funding from the Preventative Technology Grant to enhance the planned part-time post to be a full-time post, 50% dedicated to working with the PCT's Telecare specialists on:
 - (a) installing lifelines and telecare equipment in Council and private sector homes
 - (b) providing training and assistance to other supported housing officers (and other organisations) on Telecare
 - (c) providing awareness sessions for other organisations and to residents of South Cambs
 - (d) acting as a link between the PCTs health and social care staff and the sheltered housing service, further enhancing the already high level of partnership working across the services

Considerations

13. The grant for 2006/7 would be in the region of £13,770 plus around £2,400 as a share of travel costs (based upon mid-point salary range). The exact amount of grant would depend upon the salary scale of the appointee and final travelling costs – the offer is for 50% funding of the costs of the post, rather than a fixed amount.

14. The grant could only be guaranteed for 2 years, so consideration needs to be given to making best use of the funds.
15. Line management of any post would be with the Supported Housing Manager, but advice and guidance from the PCT's Assistive Technology Manager will be available as required.

Options

16. One option would be to create an additional half-time post to focus upon the telecare role. The PCT has indicated that this would not be a preferred option as the roles of lifeline installation and telecare are so closely linked and this option would lose the advantages accruing from having a dedicated full-time position covering these roles. The second disadvantage is that a fixed-term half time post would not prove attractive to existing staff in permanent posts, full-time or part-time, as it would be a reduction in income and would have the disadvantage of splitting the linked lifeline/telecare role.
17. An alternative would be to accept the offer of finance to create a full-time post, initially fixed-term until March 31 2008, but with the potential of continuing if further funding is available. This would make the post significantly more attractive.

Financial Implications

18. None to the Council.

Legal Implications

19. None.

Staffing Implications

20. As set out in the report.

Risk Management Implications

21. The main risk is in potential future withdrawal of funding from the PCT. In this instance either additional funding/savings would need to be identified or the post would need to revert to a part-time post.

Consultations

22. Cambridge City & South Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trusts

Conclusions/Summary

23. The provision of PTG to the PCT presents a major opportunity to expand this service to the benefit of the residents of South Cambs. Telecare devices and other assistive technology equipment can help maintain independence and even simple devices and significantly improve the users' quality of life – a reminder to take medicines or a warning device if appliances are left on can make all the difference to a person's self-confidence.
24. A vital part of telecare is the link with the lifeline service - most telecare devices rely upon this link to function. The installation of some telecare devices is relatively simple, but a level of skill and understanding is needed which increases with the

complexity of the device. The creation of a joint lifelines/telecare post would allow this skill to be developed and, equally importantly, to be passed on across the sheltered housing service through training and awareness-raising.

25. One option would be simply to create an additional half-time post to concentrate on telecare, but this would lose the advantages of a post linking lifeline take-up and telecare installation. There would need to be further discussions with the PCT if this option were to be taken, as a half-time post within the PCT to provide this resource may be a preferred use of the funds available.

Recommendations

26. It is recommended that Cabinet accept the offer of grant from Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trusts for the purposes of creating a full-time post of Lifelines/Telecare Officer, initially on a fixed-term basis until March 31 2008.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Department of Health: "Building Telecare in England"

Contact Officer: Kevin Reynolds – Strategic Lead, Community Living
Telephone: (01954) 713370

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet
AUTHOR: Finance and Resources Director

13 April 2006

RENT SERVICE STAFFING STRUCTURE

Purpose

1. To request approval to increase the Rent Service staffing establishment by the equivalent of 0.6 full time posts (twenty two hours), funded through increased income, in order to improve rent collection levels and Best Value Performance Indicator scoring.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2. Quality, Accessible Services	An increase in experienced staff will improve customers' access to expert advice.
Village Life	Improved rent collection means more revenue available to spend on Housing needs. Earlier intervention will prevent arrears escalating to the stage of eviction, enabling tenants to remain in their home.
Sustainability	Rental income is essential to maintaining and improving the existing Housing stock.
Partnership	Additional resources will facilitate proactive working with the Citizens' Advice Bureau and other agencies on debt management issues.

Background

3. The Rent Service is responsible for the administration and collection of rents from approximately 5,300 Housing tenants and 1,200 garage tenants. The annual amount of rent charged for 2005/06 was £18 million and arrears at the end of the 2005/06 financial year are approximately £640,000 (including former tenant arrears).
4. The 2005/06 financial year has seen an increase in arrears levels, primarily due to long-term illnesses suffered by two employees. Both employees have now successfully returned to full time work and there has been a noticeable improvement in arrears since a high point of £793,000 in January 2006. However, the absences have highlighted the low resourcing levels for this service and its vulnerability to absence and staff turnover.
5. At the end of 2004/05 rent arrears were £549,000, of which £430,000 was owed by current tenants. This equated to a collection rate of 97.4%. Whilst the collection rate is still relatively high, it is disappointing when viewed in the context of a District Council with little deprivation, low levels of benefit claimants and a high proportion of rent paid through direct debit.
6. Indications are that arrears levels are mainly due to a small number of persistent non-payers who run up large debts. Managing persistent arrears cases requires greater investment of resources than managing low value arrears cases. Effective and regular intervention at an early stage of arrears is essential in order to break the debt

cycle, but current limited resources frequently mean that intervention is sporadic and limited to the issue of standard letters.

7. Management support for the Rent Service was improved during September 2005 with the appointment of an experienced person to a team leader position. Since the appointment there have been marked improvements in performance monitoring and working practices, however, this improved management of the Services has also highlighted inadequacies resulting from the limited resources employed on the team.
8. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister introduced a range of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) relating to rent collection from April 2005. The traditional measure of the percentage of rent collected is retained, but three new indicators were added; percentage of tenants more than seven weeks in arrears, percentage of tenants receiving notices seeking possession and percentage of tenants being evicted. The additional BVPI's are intended to encourage social landlords to achieve high collection rates, but also to limit the use of possession proceedings. Achieving top quartile performance across this range of indicators will mean there needs to be more emphasis on arrears prevention initiatives.
9. An informal benchmarking process was recently carried out with a local Housing Association with a good reputation for arrears management, in order to identify areas where recovery procedures could be improved. The Housing Association attributes much of its good performance to early intervention when arrears begin to accrue. The Council's Rent Service has adopted some initiatives identified from this exercise, but one striking fact to emerge from the benchmarking was the disparity between the staffing resources allocated to arrears collection between the two organisations. The Council employs just two full time equivalents, compared to six employed by the Housing Association, and the difference is even more pronounced when the number of rent accounts is considered.

10.

	No. of accounts	No. Arrears Officers	Accounts per Officer
Local Housing Association	5,000	6	833
SCDC	6,500	2	3,250

Considerations

11. There has been a considerable improvement in arrears levels since January 2006 but arrears are still significantly higher than in recent years. With current resources it is anticipated that arrears will be reduced to previous levels during 2006/07 but are unlikely to improve further.
12. A Rent Assistant has submitted a request to reduce weekly working hours to 22 hours per week due to childcare commitments. The request has been agreed in principle and will leave 15 hours per week vacant. This has presented an opportunity to review the current resourcing levels.
13. By utilising the vacant hours, and funding a further 22 hours per week from increased rental income, one additional full time post can be added to the establishment. Whilst this would not increase the resources to the level enjoyed by other organisations it would provide greater capacity for arrears collection and also improve the Service's resilience. An increase in income is necessary to fully fund the post, but the utilisation of vacant hours allows an opportunity to evaluate the effectiveness of investing in additional resource to improve income, whilst keeping the financial risk at a minimum.

Options

- 14. There are two options;
 - 1. Retain the existing staffing establishment and attempt to recruit a part-time employee on a job share basis to fill the hours left vacant due to reduced working hours.
 - 2. Utilise the vacant hours to create an additional full time post funded partly by the vacant hours and partly by increased rent income.

Financial Implications

- 15. Increasing the staffing establishment by twenty-two hours will incur an annual cost of approximately £12,200 based on current salary levels.

Rent Assistant salary	£21,800
Less saving from reduced hours	<u>£9,600</u>
Additional annual funding required	£12,200

The utilisation of an additional post in arrears collection is anticipated to result in additional income in excess of £12,200.

Legal Implications

- 16. None.

Staffing Implications

- 17. A current full time Rent Assistant post would be reduced to 22 hours per week and an additional full time Rent Assistant post created. This would facilitate a request from an existing post holder for part time working following maternity leave.

Risk Management Implications

- 18. Without investment in additional staffing resources, the Rent Service will remain vulnerable to staff absence and turnover. In addition it may prove difficult to recruit to the vacant hours, resulting in the team operating with further reduced capacity and the potential for deterioration in service levels and collection performance.

Consultations

- 19. The Leader and Portfolio Holders for Resources and Staffing and for Housing have been consulted and express support for a more robust approach to rent collection.

Conclusions/Summary

- 20. The current Rent Service is under resourced which leads to elevated arrears levels and a high vulnerability to sickness absence and staff turnover.
- 21. There are four Best Value Performance Indicators for the Rent Service and additional resources will lead to an improvement in performance as measured by these indicators.

22. A reduction in the level of arrears will improve the financial standing of the Housing Revenue Account.
23. Additional staffing resources will facilitate earlier intervention in developing arrears cases, which is consistent with good debt management practice promoted by organisations such as the Citizens' Advice Bureaux.
24. An increase in staffing resources by 22 hours per week can be achieved at nil cost by utilising vacant hours and offsetting the additional costs by increased rent income.

Recommendations

25. It is recommended that Cabinet approve an increase in the authorised establishment of the Finance and Resources Department to provide for an additional 22 hours per week to be worked on the Rent Collection Service.

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

Contact Officer: Greg Harlock – Finance and Resources Director
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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet 13 April 2006
AUTHOR: Finance and Resources Director

IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT**Purpose**

1. To note the success of the IEG programme and submission of the Council's *Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) Statement 2006*.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

- 2.

Quality, Accessible Service	The IEG Statement is the fundamental driver for electronic access to all our back office services and e-enabled interaction with the citizen.
Village Life	Improved access to information about public transport.
Sustainability	Reduced travelling and paper usage.
Partnership	Jointly with Serco, Cambridgeshire County Council and other 3 rd party suppliers/providers.

Background

3. Council has previously approved the *Implementing Electronic Government (IEG) Statements* in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005. These documents have resulted in the award to the Council of capital grants totalling £900,000 from central government (£200K in 2002, £200K in 2003, £350K in 2004, £150K in 2005). The Council has now been asked by central government (the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, ODPM) to produce its final statement, the 2006 version otherwise known as IEG6. This again builds on the successful submission of the 2005 statement and is consistent with its content. Utilising an on-line submission mechanism known as the ESD Toolkit, the Council has declared its electronic government status and its 100% compliance with the requirements and its priority outcomes. As in previous years, we have worked closely with representatives from the County Council and the other District Councils to ensure a common approach and demonstrate working in partnership.
4. The Council's ICT Strategy 2003-2006, which builds on the previous IEG Statements, is in the process of being updated and will now be known as the ICT Strategy 2006 – 2009, the IEG Statement 2006 is now a formal part of this strategy. The revised ICT Strategy will be brought to Cabinet June 2006.

Considerations

5. The IEG Statement continues to focus on the achievement of the priority outcomes and challenges councils to ensure that they are able to provide electronic access to all compatible services. One of the most significant elements is the continuing commitment to the Contact Centre and the integration of associated systems. This is consistent with Cabinet's resolution of 20th June 2002.
6. IEG6 is enclosed as a separate document or can be viewed via the following link:
<http://www.scams.gov.uk/CouncilAndDemocracy/Modernisation/ieg2index.htm>

The statement, as required, was submitted to the ODPM on 10th April 2006. Whilst the services continue to be developed, in terms of the BVPI 157 (Priority Outcomes), the statement is fundamentally no different to that which was submitted in December 2005. Continuing developments in the provision of ICT services mean there have been minor revisions to the descriptive text.

Financial Implications

7. The financing of IEG and ICT is not directly affected by these papers; any additional requirements will be reviewed during the normal budget setting process.
8. It should be noted that the expenditure declared for the 2005/6 financial year has been determined at £918,000 against a previously forecasted £1,260,000. This is entirely due to the ability to use reported 'actuals' rather than 'forecasts'.

Legal Implications

9. None.

Staffing Implications

10. There are no staffing implications directly arising from these papers. However, there are two points to note:
 - (a) Continued implementation of the Contact Centre will move more of the front office operation from service departments into a corporate area as described in the Transformation Project
 - (b) The success of the IEG programme has been an ambitious and notable achievement. However, it will require continued support from within the user departments as well as from the ICT Division. This may be even more challenging than first thought especially under current financial pressures.

Consultations

11. Consultations have included the various ICT cross-departmental groups, neighbouring local authorities, Serco and other suppliers.

Recommendation

12. That Cabinet notes the success of the IEG programme and the IEG Statement 2006.

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

IEG Statement 2005
ICT Strategy 2003 -2006
Best Value Continuous Improvement Plan
Cambridgeshire County Council ICT Strategy 2004-2007

Contact Officers: Steve Rayment, Assistant Finance and Resources Director (ICT)
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Geoff Sissons, Applications and Information Manager (ICT)
01954 - 713282

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet

13 April 2006

AUTHOR: Strategic Officer Group on Traveller Issues

TRAVELLER ISSUES: UPDATE ON SPENDING

Purpose

1. To advise Cabinet of the provisional figures for the Council's spending on Traveller Issues between April 2005 – March 2006.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2.	Quality, Accessible Services	Traveller issues have implications for all four corporate objectives, especially 'Quality Village Life'. The Council's policy on Traveller Issues includes a commitment to: help to meet Travellers' needs; carry out fair and consistent planning enforcement of unauthorised sites; and strengthen relations between the settled and travelling communities.
	Village Life	
	Sustainability	
	Partnership	

Background

3. This is the latest monitoring report on the Council's spending on Traveller issues, which have been produced since the Cabinet requested regular updates in May 2004.
4. The Council's Traveller issues budget for 2005/06 includes £100,000 for legal costs and £450,000 for any form of appropriate planning enforcement action - including injunctive action - on any unauthorised Traveller site in the District.
5. Whilst these amounts were included in 2005/06 budget, expectations have been that spending would take place over a longer period given the unavoidable timescales involved in enforcing planning control and taking out injunctions through the courts. Indeed, Cabinet received a report on 12 January 2006, which estimated that around £350,000 might be unspent at the end of the current financial year.
6. This should not detract from the significant progress made in 2005/6, which includes:
 - a. applying for, and obtaining, injunctions against those persistently breaching enforcement notices and against anticipated unauthorised development;
 - b. responding to decisions made by planning inspectors and the Secretary of State;
 - c. working with neighbouring councils and the researchers to finalise the results of the Travellers' Housing Needs Survey;
 - d. making SCDC's case in planning inquiries and the Regional Spatial Strategy examination in public relating to Traveller sites;
 - e. carrying out initial searches of Council-owned (and other) land in terms of possible suitability for future Traveller site provision (as reported to Cabinet in January);
 - f. making preparations for a Development Plan Document on future Traveller site provision, as part of the Local Development Framework;

- g. raising awareness both amongst the public and within the Council of Travellers' needs and culture, including support for a play by the Romany Theatre Company and a tour for councillors of Traveller sites in the district;
- h. setting up a Traveller Liaison Forum and maintaining a dialogue with parish councils, the Travelling community, the Government Office for the East, the Commission for Racial Equality and other partners;
- i. producing an updated Race Equality Scheme, which places priority on Travellers' needs, as the largest ethnic minority in the district;
- j. running a second workshop for councillors on the way forward (this will be covered by a report to Cabinet in the next few months).

Considerations

7. The following table sets out spending on Traveller Issues in 2005/06. These figures are provisional - the accounts for 2005/06 will be finalised by the end of June 2006.

	2004/05 (£)	2005/06 (£)
Barrister costs	38,325	44,630
Solicitors costs	165,057	73,796
Bailiff costs	9,490	3,061
Hire of premises	2,770	0
Contractors	1,580	0
Cambs Travellers Initiative contribution	1,500	0
Miscellaneous costs	4,134	594
County-wide Travellers Survey	20,000	0
Foul Water Survey, Smithy Fen	0	1,185
Total costs	242,856	123,266

8. This table does not take account of staffing costs, projected to be £192,000 in 2005/06, because the actual allocations will not be known until after the financial year-end. Even so, it is worth noting - in the context of council tax capping – that more legal work has been carried out in-house this year.

Financial Implications

9. Of the £550,000 in the original budget for 2005/06, it now seems that around £425,000 has been unspent. The Council agreed in January 2006 that:
- a. "money from the 2005/06 Traveller Issues budget that is not spent in the current year be transferred into a specific ear-marked reserve for spending on any aspect of addressing Traveller issues in the District.
 - b. use of the £550,000 allocated in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for planning enforcement on any unauthorised Traveller site in the District in 2006/07 may be extended to all forms of enforcement action on such sites; and
 - c. use of the funding allocations in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for Traveller Issues for 2007/08 onwards be extended to cover all types of activity reflected in the Council's policy on Traveller issues."

Legal implications

10. The Council has powers pursuant to section 187b of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to seek injunctions from the courts to restrain breaches of planning control. It is a powerful tool in a local authority's armour as it enables the Council to seek an injunction against apprehended as well as actual breaches of planning control. However, it should be noted that, although the provisions enable such applications to be made to the grant of an injunction, it is entirely at the courts' discretion. That discretion is exercised taking into account all the factors relevant to the application (including human rights issues) and in accordance with the principle of proportionality.

Equal Opportunities implications

11. In line with duties under the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Council operates a Race Equality Scheme (RES) in order to eliminate unlawful discrimination and to promote race equality and good race relations. The Scheme gives priority to actions relating to Travellers as the biggest ethnic minority in the district (around 1.7% of the district's population).

Staffing Implications

12. There are no particular staffing implications arising from this report, although Traveller issues themselves take up a considerable amount of officer time across a range of Council services. This is co-ordinated by the Strategic Officer Group on Traveller Issues, which is currently chaired by the Director of Development Services.

Risk Management Implications

13. Risks associated with Traveller Issues are rated on the latest Strategic Register as 'High impact', with a '71% - 90% probability' of occurring in the next twelve months.

Consultations

14. None.

Conclusions

15. The Council is making good progress, albeit that taking planning enforcement and legal action and identifying future site provision to meet Travellers' needs takes time and is very expensive. In the context of equal opportunities requirements, it is important to make sure that, where money is spent on tackling unauthorised development by Travellers, the Council applies an equitable approach to breaches of control by anyone else, making appropriate provision for the associated financial implications. The Traveller issues encountered in South Cambridgeshire are a local example of a national problem. The Council continues to call on the Government to provide more practical and financial support to local authorities, like SCDC, which are already having to do more than their fair share to help meet Travellers' needs.

Recommendations

16. Members are asked to note this report.

Background Papers:

- Cabinet report on Traveller Issues and Future Site Provision, SCDC, 12 January 2006
- IBS Financial Management System Report
- Invoices awaiting payment

Contact Officer: Strategic Officer Group on Traveller Issues. Telephone: (01954) 713297

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet 13 April 2006

AUTHOR: Finance and Resources Director

HOUSING CAPITAL ALLOCATION 2006-07

Purpose

1. To inform Cabinet of the information received from the Government Office for the East of England (GO-East) regarding the Housing Capital Allocation for 2006-07.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2.

Quality, Accessible Services	To provide resources for the Council to continue and improve its housing services.
Village Life	
Sustainability	
Partnership	

Background

3. Annually, the government issues a Housing Capital Allocation which is used to arrive at the revenue support it will provide for the Authority's housing capital expenditure. A letter has recently been received from the Government Office for the Eastern Region (GO-East) informing the Council that the Housing Capital Allocation for 2006-07 is £356,000.

Considerations

4. Each year the government calculates the amount of additional resources (after taking account of anticipated in-year capital receipts, the Major the Repairs Allowance, and financial support for the provision of disabled facilities) that the Council would require in order to fund the level of housing capital expenditure that the government estimates is needed in the District and this calculation results in an authority's Housing Capital Allocation. In this context, it should be noted that, whilst the Council's expenditure on improvement grants is no longer the responsibility of the Housing Portfolio Holder it still falls within the government's definition of housing expenditure.
5. Over the last few years the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has moved from a largely formulaic approach to arriving at the amount of each authority's Housing Capital Allocation to one where a total amount is allocated for the region. The Regional Housing Board then recommends to the ODPM how the Region's allocation should be divided, in line with locally agreed priorities.
6. For 2006-07, the Regional Housing Board recommended that no authority's allocation should be less than half of their 2005-06 figure. This limit was set to give authorities time to adjust to the new, priority driven, funding arrangements outlined in the previous paragraph. South Cambridgeshire's allocation for 2005-06 was £712,000 and the £356,000 for 2006-07, being only half of the 2005-06 figure, is the lowest possible allocation. Unless, therefore, regional priorities and/or the Council's capital expenditure pattern change the Housing Capital Allocation for 2007-08 and future years is likely to be less than £356,000.

7. Prior to 2006-07 the revenue support received by the Authority in relation to the Housing Capital Allocation took the form of an allowance, mainly within the housing subsidy calculation, for the estimated interest that would be due on an interest only loan of a sum equivalent to the Capital Allocation. The allowance was received whether or not any borrowing actually took place.
8. The ODPM had indicated that a change to providing a capital grant rather than an allowance for notional interest as the support for housing capital expenditure was under consideration. When the estimates were being prepared contact was made with GO-East regarding this matter and the response was that a change was unlikely to take place in 2006-07. No housing capital grant was, therefore, included in the estimates approved by Members at Council on 23 March 2006.
9. GO-East has now notified the Council that for 2006-07 it will be given financial support for housing expenditure in the form of a grant to the value of the Housing Capital Allocation and this change in the way support for capital expenditure is provided will be of substantial benefit to the Authority.

Financial Implications

10. For 2006-07 a grant of £356,000 (which was not included in the estimates) has been awarded towards the funding of housing capital expenditure.

Legal Implications

11. There do not appear to be any legal implications.

Staffing Implications

12. There do not appear to be any staffing implications.

Risk Management Implications

13. There do not appear to be any risk management implications.

Conclusions/Summary

14. Notification that the Council will receive grant of £356,000 to support housing capital expenditure has been received from the GO-East. This funding has not been taken account of in the 2006-07 estimates and will, therefore, provide much needed additional resources to finance the capital programme.

Recommendations

15. Cabinet is requested to note this report and the associated variation to the capital estimates.

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

Regional Housing Pot Grant Determination 2006 - ODPM
Local Authority Housing Capital Allocations 2006-07 – letter from Martin Lutman of GO-East
Item 3 of the 9 February 2006 Cabinet Agenda

Contact Officers: G. Harlock – Finance and Resources Director Telephone: (01954) 713227
G. Thomas – Principal Accountant (Housing) Telephone: (01954) 713074

Agenda Item: 18**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL****REPORT TO**

Leader and Cabinet

13 April 2006

AUTHOR:

Finance and Resources Director

MONITORING REPORT AND PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS**Purpose**

1. To provide a commentary on the provisional income and expenditure out-turn against budget, for the General Fund, Housing Revenue Account and Capital Programme in relation to the 2005-06 financial year and to monitor the indicators under the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2.	Quality, Accessible Services	This report has no direct implications on any of the Corporate Objectives; however, the expenditure on individual services will have contributed to all of the Corporate Objectives.
	Village Life	-
	Sustainability	-
	Partnership	-

Background

3. This report indicates the preliminary outturn position for the 2005-06 financial year and updates the previous report to Cabinet on 12th January 2006.
4. The information necessary for the production of the monitoring report is not available until shortly before the scheduled Cabinet meeting; faced with this situation Cabinet has indicated their willingness to have these reports tabled rather than wait for the subsequent meeting, by which time the information would be six weeks out of date. Because of the short-time scale available to Members in which to examine the information contained in these reports, Cabinet have requested the Resources & Staffing Portfolio Holder to scrutinise the reports as part of his Portfolio Holder meetings.
5. Under the Prudential Code, the Chief Financial Officer is required to establish procedures to monitor performance against the prudential indicators and to ensure that any borrowing is for capital purposes. The indicators are primarily to show whether a local authority is entering into long-term commitments that it may not be able to afford in the future and they are, therefore, of less relevance to debt free authorities like South Cambridgeshire.
6. This year the Authority has faced the unusual situation of having to reduce the original budget, mid year, to satisfy the Government's capping requirement. This capped original budget has been used for comparative purposes in the remainder of this report and consists of the original budget approved by Council in February 2005, less the reductions in the budget approved by Council in October.

Considerations

7. This report concentrates on the largest expenditure and income budgets. The largest expenditure budgets are the departmental budgets, which now total £15.1 million. Other overhead budgets include office accommodation, the depot, central expenses and central support services. The departmental and overhead budgets are recharged to the General Fund and the Housing Revenue Account. When the recharges to the General Fund are added to budgets which have more than £200,000 charged directly, then this accounts for 98% of the total General Fund budget. For the Housing Revenue Account, expenditure on the Repairs Account is by far and away the largest single item. Monitoring expenditure against budget for this heading, together with Sheltered Housing and the recharges referred to above, effectively accounts for 90% of the Housing Revenue Account budget (excluding capital charges).
8. A summary position statement is provided at **Appendix A**, for the budgets referred to above. Comparisons have been made of actual income and expenditure to date with the capped original estimates. The inclusion of a column giving the projected out-turn for the year-end makes for a more meaningful interpretation. A brief commentary forms part of Appendix A and paragraph 11 below highlights those matters requiring Member attention.
9. In compiling this position statement the following factors have been incorporated in forecasting the projected under/overspendings to the capped original budget:
 - a) additional costs for re-billing, additional recycling service and consultancy costs relating to the Transformation Project;
 - b) agreed rollovers; and
 - c) the Revised Budgets agreed by Council which incorporate a) and b).
10. Of the areas identified, the following items are likely to be significantly different from the approved estimates:

Revenue

General Fund

- a) Departmental Salaries are underspent attributable to vacancies, predominately in the Environmental Health, Development Control, Building Control, ICT and Community Services Divisions. Some of these salary savings have been offset by additional spending in respect of Agency Staff and expenditure relating to appointment of staff. These together with additional approved expenditure give a net forecast underspend position of £540,000;
- b) Central Overheads are underspent by £112,000 due to reduced budgets for telephones and insurance.
- c) The Refuse Collection & Street Cleansing expenditure is predicted to be £37,000 less than originally expected due to slippage of purchase of software and a tracking system which has been offset by increased fuel prices/usage;
- d) Planning Services are expected to underspend by £200,000 owing to the slippage of the Local Development Framework programme into 2006/07, which will be required to be rolled-over into that year. Also additional Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) has been received, the revenue element of which is £77,746 and in addition there is an expected underspend of £40,000 on salary

costs associated with PDG work. Any unspent PDG will be transferred to a reserve for use in future years. Additionally, it is expected that there will be an underspend of £350,000 on enforcement action in respect of travellers sites. This will be required in future years and it is proposed to transfer any balance to a specific reserve;

- e) Planning Services income is currently £49,000 more than originally expected and has moved by £150,000 since the previous report due to receipts in January and March being significantly higher than previous trends indicated;
- f) Corporate Management is expected to be £134,000 more than the capped original budget mainly due to the additional costs relating to: capping; the Transformation Project and unfunded pension payments;

HRA

- g) The DLO on current trends will have a likely favourable variance of £80,000 which will offset the estimated deficit of £185,000 allowed for in the original estimates, giving a net deficit of £105,000 in total;

Capital

- h) Gross Capital Receipts are predicted to be £1.7m less than the original estimate because Right to Buy property sales are less than anticipated. Most of these capital receipts are subject to pooling with a proportion being paid to the Government;
 - i) On the basis of present predictions there is likely to be a £357,000 under spend on the acquisition of existing dwellings: and
11. With regard to the Prudential Indicators, see **Appendix C** for details, the Council has remained within the set limits for Treasury Management.

Financial Implications

12. As above.

Legal Implications

13. None.

Staffing Implications

14. Not relevant.

Risk Management Implications

15. The Council needs to ensure that it spends within its budgets, because of the impact on the level of balances and the implication for the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Consultations

16. None.

Conclusions/Summary

17. The figures produced at Appendix A can be summarised as:

General Fund

	£
Additional Departmental Savings (Includes £40,000 to be transferred to PDG Reserve)	(539,000)
Central Overheads	(112,000)
Planning Delivery Grant (to be transferred to reserve)	(78,000)
Local Development Framework (to be rolled over)	(200,000)
Enforcement on Travellers Sites (to be transferred to reserve)	(350,000)
Service Accounts	(58,000)
Services Roll-overs from 2004/05	30,000
Services Significant Additional approved expenditure	172,000
Recharge to HRA, Capital etc.	<u>140,000</u>
Predicted Net Underspending for 2005/06	(995,000)
Less Predicted Rollovers or transfers to Reserves	<u>668,000</u>
"True" Underspend	<u>(327,000)</u>

HRA

Recharged Departmental and overhead accounts	(80,000)
Sheltered Housing	(61,000)
HRA Services (Under spend)	<u>(80,000)</u>
Predicted Net Under spending for 2005/06	<u>(171,000)</u>

Capital

Capital Receipts shortfall in income	1,741,000
Shortfall in expenditure on acquisition of existing dwellings.	(357,000)
ICT Slippage into 2006-07	(120,000)
Improvement Grants Rolled-over Expenditure etc.	<u>92,000</u>
Predicted Net Overspending for 2005/06	<u>1,356,000</u>

18. Members will note that in aggregate, according to the forecast position, the Authority's General Fund is likely to underspend in the 2005/06 financial year by £327,000, net of predicted rollovers or transfer to reserves. This comprises further savings in departmental budgets, less approved additional expenditure and predicted net overspends in Service Accounts.
19. At the time of the last report, January 2006, Members were informed that net of predicted transfers to reserves and rollovers, there was likely to be an overall overspend against the capped budget of £317,000, a difference of £644,000 compared with the current net forecast. The following table analyses the movement between the two reports: -

	£
Departmental accounts increased underspend	(340,000)
Central Overheads underspend	(156,000)
Refuse Collection Slippage	(87,000)
Planning Fees	(158,000)
Reduction in other Income	12,000
Proportion of above attributable to HRA	85,000
Total	(644,000)

20. The favourable predicted out-turn on the Housing Revenue Account is largely a result of slippage of expenditure on redundancies and the DLO tracking system into 2006-07.
21. Available Capital receipts at the end of the current financial year are predicted to be £1,356,000 less than originally forecast.

Recommendation

22. Cabinet is requested to note the projected expenditure position and the monitoring of prudential indicators and to refer the report to the next meeting of the Resources & Staffing Portfolio Holder for more detailed consideration.

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

Estimate Book 2005/06 and reports from the Financial Management System

Contact Officers:

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Significant Budget Items**Appendix A**

	Capped Original Budget 2005/06	Revised Budget 2005/06	Payments/ Receipts to 31st March as at 07/04/06	Projected (Under)/ Over Spend Compared to Capped Budget	Narrative
	£	£	£	£	
Revenue					
Expenditure					
Departmental Accounts (note 1)	14,261,020	14,121,120	13,722,499	(538,500)	See Appendix B for Details
Central Overheads (note 2)	1,546,350	1,409,560	1,434,542	(111,800)	See Appendix B for Details
General Fund Direct Services (note 3)					
Refuse Collection & Street Cleansing	2,514,410	2,557,570	2,411,672	(37,000)	Tracking System & Software Slippage
Recycling	713,550	769,530	722,535	55,980	Additional re-cycling service £64,750 & Additional Savings £8,770
Planning Services excluding Income	1,053,720	1,033,600	402,053	(550,000)	LDF Expenditure slippage to 2006/07 £200k & Travellers Enforcement £350k to be reserved for spending in future years.
Corporate Management	246,520	419,830	298,242	134,180	Rollovers, Council Tax Re-billing, additional unfunded pensions and Transformation Project expenditure.
Democratic Representation	400,980	398,130	397,143	(2,850)	Additional savings £2,850
Homelessness	284,500	284,500	199,600	0	
Concessionary Fares	221,610	236,500	189,236	0	
Community Development	243,420	85,300	247,384	2,000	Rollovers
Arts & Museums	322,830	305,420	308,543	(7,010)	Saving on Arts Development Projects
Other	1,262,750	1,280,750	1,337,025	18,000	Rollover
Total	23,071,660	22,901,810	21,670,474	(1,037,000)	
Income					
General Fund					
Planning Fees and other income	(1,018,410)	(984,520)	(1,067,254)	(48,840)	Increased Income during January to March.
Planning Grants	(303,180)	(380,930)	(380,926)	(77,746)	Planning Delivery Grant higher than estimated
Building Control Income	(513,750)	(488,500)	(509,751)	4,000	
Land Charges Income	(493,180)	(484,500)	(482,898)	10,280	Income lower than expected.
Refuse Collection	(408,340)	(399,960)	(399,160)	8,380	Expected shortfall £8,380
Recycling Credits	(321,290)	(321,290)	(234,283)	0	
Other	(1,470,000)	(1,257,210)	(1,102,294)	0	
Total	(4,528,150)	(4,316,910)	(4,176,566)	(103,926)	
Interest on Balances	(1,900,000)	(1,900,000)	(1,893,617)	6,300	
Total	16,643,510	16,684,900	15,600,291	(1,134,626)	
Less Departmental/Overheads recharged to HRA & Capital	(3,555,758)	(4,098,500)	0	140,000	
Gershon Savings	(259,000)		0		
General Fund Total	12,828,752	12,586,400	15,600,291	(994,626)	
	Capped Original Budget 2005/06	Revised Budget 2005/06	Payments/ Receipts to 31st March as at 07/04/06	Projected (Under)/ Over Spend Compared to Capped Budget	
	£	£	£	£	
Housing Revenue Account					
Housing Repairs - Revenue	2,833,800	2,788,300	2,604,051	0	
Direct Labour Organisation (net less recharges)	(142,060)	(222,000)	(364,181)	(80,000)	Additional work re-furbishments £60k & Slippage of Purchase of Tracking system £20k into 2006-07.
Sheltered Housing	821,100	859,850	992,906	(61,250)	
Recharged Departmental & Overhead Accounts	3,655,758	3,679,335		(30,000)	
Housing Revenue Account Total				(171,250)	
Capital					
Capital Expenditure					
HRA Capital					
Housing Repairs - Capital	6,152,000	6,334,000	5,867,489	0	
Acquisition of Existing Dwellings	3,000,000	2,950,000	2,642,607	(357,400)	Anticipated Re-purchases have not materialised.
GF Capital					
ICT Development	515,000	720,300	407,646	(120,000)	Delay in full integration of Contact Centre.
Improvement Grants	800,000	891,000	892,147	92,100	
Capital Receipts					
Sale of Assets	(6,500,000)	(5,000,000)	(4,758,074)	1,741,000	
Capital Total				1,355,700	

Notes:

- This excludes sheltered housing and manual workers in the Housing and Environmental Services Department and capital charges which are reversed out in the General Fund summary.
- This includes office accommodation at Cambourne and the depot at Landbeach but it excludes capital charges, which are reversed out in the General Fund summary and departmental recharges as the cost is already included in Departmental Accounts. It also includes Central Expenses and Central Support Services.
- General Fund gross expenditure on services excluding recharges, capital charges and capital financing.

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Analysis of Department & Central Overheads Projected UnderspendingAppendixDepartmental Accounts

	£	£
<u>Salaries & Other Staff Related Costs</u>		
Community Services	-42,100	
Milton Country Park	-8,800	
Partnership Officers	-3,600	
Other	27,300	
Chief Executives Department Total		-27,200
Revenues	21,700	
Cambridge Office	-23,000	
ICT	-19,600	
Other	800	
Finance & Resources Department Total		-20,100
Housing Management Services (Recharged mainly to HRA/Capital)	-14,100	
Housing ICT & Administration (Recharged mainly to HRA/Capital)	-55,600	
Housing Property Services (Recharged mainly to HRA/Capital)	-32,300	
Home Improvement Agency - Environmental Health	-19,500	
Other	-6,400	
Housing & Environmental Services Department Total		-127,900
Development Control	-136,900	
Planning Policy	-36,800	
Conservation	-41,700	
Administration	-23,000	
Land Charges	-21,900	
Partnership Projects	-13,500	
Housing Strategic Services	-6,700	
Other	11,700	
Development Services Department Total		-268,800
Total Salaries		-444,000
<u>Other Costs</u>		
Travel Costs		-64,800
Other Costs		-97,500
Total Underspending against Capped Original Budget		-606,300
Development Salary Underspend relating to PDG		-40,000
Approved Rollovers		64,900
Rebilling Additional Expenditure		42,900
Total Underspending against Original Budgets & Significant Additional Approved Expenditure		-538,500
<u>Overhead Accounts</u>		
Cambourne		-120,800
Waterbeach Depot		-22,700
Central Expense		-40,000
Central Support Services		27,700
Total Underspending against Capped Original Budget		-155,800
Approved Rollovers		44,000
Total Underspending against Original Budgets & Significant Additional Approved Expenditure		-111,800

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Appendix C

Monitoring of Prudential Indicators

Estimate 2005/06	Projected Estimate 2005/06
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Prudential Indicators for Affordability

- the negative figures indicate that the Authority is an investor rather than a borrower

Estimate of the ratio of financing costs to net revenue stream		
General Fund	(13%)	(13%)
Housing Revenue Account	(0%)	(0%)
Estimate of the incremental impact of capital investment decisions	£ p	£ p
For a Band D Council Tax (General Fund)	(14.16)	(14.16)
For the average weekly housing rent (Housing Revenue Account)	(0.02)	(0.02)

Prudential Indicators for Prudence

Net borrowing should not be greater than the capital financing requirement except in the short term, i.e. no borrowing to finance revenue expenditure

Not applicable to debt free authorities

Prudential Indicators for Capital Expenditure, External Debt and Treasury Management

	Estimate 2005/06	Predicted Expenditure 2005/06
Estimate of capital expenditure	£ million	£ million
General Fund	2.150	3.068
Housing Revenue Account	10.421	10.162
Total	<u>12.571</u>	<u>13.230</u>
Estimate of capital financing requirement	£ million	£ million
General Fund	(5.694)	(5.694)
Housing Revenue Account	0.000	0.000
Total	<u>(5.694)</u>	<u>(5.694)</u>

External Debt

Any debt will be short term borrowing to meet unexpected cash flow requirements and will be of less than 12 months so that debt free status is not affected

Authorised limit	£ million	£ million
Borrowing	7.5	7.5
Other Long Term Liabilities	0.0	0.0
Total	<u>7.5</u>	<u>7.5</u>
Operational limit	£ million	£ million
Borrowing	0.0	0.0
Other Long Term Liabilities	0.0	0.0
Total	<u>0.0</u>	<u>0.0</u>

Treasury Management

Has the Authority adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services?

Yes Yes

Interest rate exposures - upper limit on gross investments

Fixed rate	100%	100%
Variable rate	20%	20%

Maturity structure of borrowing

	Upper limit	Lower limit	Upper limit	Lower limit
under 12 months	100%	0%	100%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	Not set as the Authority intends to remain debt free		Not set as the Authority intends to remain debt free	
24 months and within 5 years				
5 years and within 10 years				
10 years and above				

Investments

Principal sums maturing in

	Limit £ million	As at 31st March 2006 £ million
Less than one year	7.5 Minimum	20.5
1-2 years	7.5 }	3.5
2-3 years	6.0 } Maximum	2.0
3-4 years	5.0 }	1.0
4-5 years	5.0 }	-

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet

13 April 2006

AUTHOR: Chief Executive

REGIONAL ROUNDTABLE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**Purpose**

1. To report on the meeting held in Cambridge on 13 March 2006, arranged by the ODPM and attended by Leaders and Chief Executives from councils in the Eastern Region. The Leader and Chief Executive attended from this Council.

Background

2. A series of regional meetings were being held around the country in order to contribute to the white paper expected in the summer of 2006.

Considerations

3. The Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Jim Fitzpatrick was present and emphasised that this was a listening exercise as far as the ODPM was concerned. No decisions had been made as to whether there would or would not be a reorganisation of local government and the Minister was keen to hear views on the subject from local government representatives.
4. Paul Rowsell from the ODPM gave a brief presentation highlighting that the debate was about how to secure the best:
 - a. Community Leadership,
 - b. Community Engagement
 - b. Value Services.

He emphasised that this was not a sterile unitary v two-tier debate but was rather looking at innovative governance options.

5. In considering the best future governance arrangements, key questions were:
 - a. How to provide strategic leadership at the local level – strong visible accountable leadership is essential if places are to develop a vision for the future and achieve.
 - b. How to ensure that there is genuine neighbourhood flexibility – whatever governance arrangements, people need to be empowered as individuals and as local communities.
 - c. How to ensure value for money – integrated and co-ordinated high quality public services – need to be delivered efficiently no matter who provides the service.
6. Some of the issues and questions Mr Rowsell touched upon included:
 - a. Links to the city regions agenda
 - b. The optimum size for a future local area

- c. Coterminosity with other delivery partners
 - d. Efficiency and value for money
 - e. Financial issues – can the transitional costs be managed within existing resources – on this point the intention was fairly clear that no additional funding would be made available
 - f. Empowerment and participation – how can market towns, parishes and neighbourhoods be represented and empowered? This was not so much in the sense of parish councils delivering services but having influence over the services.
7. The White Paper on the future of local government would come out mid-2006. At the same time, the Government would finalise its position on reorganisation. If the debate provided a 'yes', proposals would be invited from local government for restructuring. Where proposals were agreed, they would be implemented by primary legislation.
8. After setting the debate in the context of the White paper being on the question of function and form and the Lyons Review coming forward with how to finance the functions and form, the subject was opened up for discussion. Specific questions posed were:
 - a. What is the debate in your area?
 - b. What are your ideas for future governance?
 - c. Is change worthwhile?
 - d. If so, how best to do it?
9. A large number of participants, covering all counties in the Eastern Region, gave views and comments in the discussion that followed. Comments included
 - a. Pleased to be engaged in the debate – at last.
 - b. Reminder that there are 3 tiers of local government in many areas, county, district and parish, rather than 2 tiers.
 - c. Some cities expressed strong support for unitary local government.
 - d. On the question of what the people thought, the minister made it clear that the councils could decide how to engage their communities in the debate.
 - e. On the question of boundary changes, the Minister's view was that boundaries should not be interfered with, but rather existing districts could be used as building blocks. This was countered by a view that there were a number of anomalous boundaries that should be addressed if a reorganisation was to make any sense.
 - f. The ODPM felt that there was benefit from coterminosity with partner agencies. It was pointed out that just as coterminosity with some partners had eventually been achieved, PCT boundaries were now being changed again.
 - g. On a specific question from Cllr Kindersley seeking assurance that any new arrangements would be properly funded, the Minister responded with the intention that any improved arrangements that emerged would be self-financing.
 - h. There was a strong view, from most counties and some districts, that reorganisation would be a major distraction for little benefit. The funding and the efforts would be more usefully directed to making the present arrangements work better.
10. ODPM had referred to there being an "opt in" approach where councils will be invited to submit proposals for their areas. Whilst it would be the choice of the local authorities whether or not to opt in, there was the question as to what would happen if some councils in an area wanted to opt in and others did not. On the issue of possible

timing for implementing any change, the ODPM response was that there is no certainty. The earliest any legislation could be brought forward would be end 2006/ early 2007. This could result in elections to shadow authorities in May 2008 and new authorities from April 2009.

11. In conclusion, the Minister reminded everyone of the 3 criteria for a solution i.e. strategic leadership, community engagement and value for money. The Chairman then summed up that the consensus appeared to be around improvement of the present 2/3 tier system, that boundaries and coterminosity were issues and that Local Area Agreements/ Strategic Partnerships offered a way forward.

Conclusions/Summary

12. Until the white paper appears in the summer and the governments thinking is known, there is little basis for carrying out any effective local work on the topic.

Recommendations

13. Cabinet is asked to note the report.

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

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
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