



SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING
THURSDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2006

REPORTS AND MINUTES

If the press and public are likely to be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item on the grounds that exempt information is to be considered, it will be necessary to pass the following resolution: "That under Section 100(A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph (quoting relevant paragraph) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A (as amended) of the Act."

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

TO: The Chairman and Members of the
South Cambridgeshire District Council

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that the next meeting of the **COUNCIL** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, FIRST FLOOR** at **2.00 P.M.** on

THURSDAY, 23 NOVEMBER 2006

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

DATED 15 November 2006

GJ HARLOCK
Chief Executive

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

2. MINUTES

To authorise the Chairman to sign the Minutes of the meetings held on 28 September and 26 October 2006 as correct records.

(Pages 1 - 8)

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

5. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND THE PUBLIC

5 (a) From Councillor NCF Bolitho to the Housing Portfolio Holder

"Has the Rent Service quango redefined the meaning of locality for such areas as Cottenham, Oakington and Bar Hill and restored them to the Cambridge locality rather than mid-Cambridgeshire with the result that fair rents paid to landlords have been put back on their former higher levels? If so, how much did the Council spend in terms of hardship payments to tenants in South Cambridgeshire District Council and will the Council be able to recoup these payments from the Rent Service or other Government agencies?"

5 (b) From Councillor NCF Bolitho to the Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder

"In respect of Unit J, Broad Lane, Cottenham:

"Now that the environmental protection team leader has recommended that statutory legal proceedings be initiated against the owners of the above property for non-compliance with an abatement notice, when will the legal department issue those proceedings? For almost 18 months the unit has been operating a number of air-conditioning and fume control extractor fans without obtaining planning permission. Consequently the residents living nearby have had to put up with a 24/7 loud hum,

punctuated with clangs when the units stop and start. The first complaint about this noise was made to the environmental protection team in October 2005. It's time for action and without delay."

5 (c) From Councillor MJ Mason to the Leader of the Council

"In view of statements made by the Leader of Council at Cabinet, in the Press and in an email to Members; concerning the possible re-organisation of the Planning Delivery Process for Major Developments at Northstowe, other areas within the District and the City of Cambridge will he now:

- (a) "make the necessary arrangements, in the public interest, fully and completely to inform Members, electors and taxpayers, of the circumstances leading up to those statements by publishing full details of:
 - (i) "All communications between the Minister, Yvette Cooper and Cambridgeshire Horizons, together with minutes of any subsequent meetings or discussions with her department.
 - (ii) "Any direct communications between her Department, Go East and this Council.
 - (iii) "Cambridgeshire Horizon's final written response to the Minister.

"Further, will he give a categorical assurance that Members will have the opportunity to debate fully at Council, these issues and take the final democratic decision on any proposals or options that may emerge in the coming months?

"Further, pending further legal clarification of the relationship between Gallaghers, English Partnerships and HM Government as a potential joint planning applicant, (as promised in an email to Members), will he now request the Executive Director to cease all unproductive work on the existing planning application which may be withdrawn?"

6. PETITIONS

To note the following petitions received since the last Council meeting.

- (1) A petition was received from the residents of Frog End, Shepreth, dated 31 October 2006. The petitioners express opposition to any proposals to build in excess of two residential units at 74 and 76 Frog End. This petition has been passed to Officers, who are in discussions with local residents regarding the issue. It is intended to submit the petition as an Appendix to the Cabinet report on the matter, due for consideration in December 2006.
- (2) A petition was received from the residents of Chaplins Close, Fulbourn, dated 14 November 2006. The petitioners wished to register their strong disapproval at the possibility of their Housing Officer being required to vacate the premises she currently occupied on site. It has been forwarded to the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee to determine at which forum it should be considered.

7. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 7 (a) Medium Term Financial Strategy 2007/08 to 2010/11 (Cabinet, 9 November 2006)**
Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:**

- (a) approval of a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) based on Appendix 3B, the full savings in Appendix 2 and the following issues:
 - (i) the financial context for the strategy and the future issues facing the Council, in particular the growth agenda;
 - (ii) how the Council compares with other councils in terms of spending, performance and value for money;
 - (iii) how well the Council manages its finances;
 - (iv) clear objectives for the strategy;
 - (v) how the Council will deliver a balanced MTFS;
 - (vi) how it will improve future planning and link planning with its priorities
 - (vii) the future policy for the level of the Council Tax;
 - (viii) the future policy for the use of capital receipts;
 - (ix) how the Council will continue to seek efficiency savings and value for money;
 - (x) how the Transformation Project will contribute to the delivery of the MTFS;
 - (xi) how the workforce plan will be linked to the MTFS; and
 - (xii) how the Council will monitor the MTFS and take action where financial targets are at risk;
- (b) approval of the spending plans in Appendix 1 for 2007/08 (based on the justifications in Appendix 5) for inclusion in the budget and to approve the spending plans for 2008/09 onwards as the basis for future planning;
- (c) approval of the capital programme in Appendix 5;
- (d) that officers be requested to investigate and report back on the "Other initiatives to be pursued / possible avenues for additional sources of finance" in Appendix 2 by June 2007, for consideration in the budget for 2008/09;
- (e) approval of the arrangements for consultation in paragraph 28; and
- (f) that the MTFS be reviewed formally twice a year (in the autumn and in February / March, in the light of the final budget), but that reports be made as part of the quarterly monitoring process at other times of the year when issues affective the deliverability of the MTFS occur.

(Note – Appendices identified in the above recommendation refer to the report submitted to Cabinet on 9 November 2006).

Cabinet agreed to authorise the Chief Executive and Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder to prepare the final strategy for submission to Council

In accordance with this recommendation Council is recommended to **RESOLVE** that the Medium Term Financial Strategy (report and appendices attached) be approved.

This item will be considered by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee at its meeting on 16 November 2006. Any alternative or additional recommendations to Council following this meeting will be reported.

(Pages 9 - 38)

- 7 (b) Licensing (Gambling) Policy (Cabinet, 9 November 2006)**
Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the Gambling Act 2005 Policy be adopted as Council Policy.
- 7 (c) FULBOURN: Windmill Estate Redevelopment Proposals (Cabinet, 9 November**

2006)

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that:

- (a) formal approval be given for a redevelopment scheme for the Windmill Estate, subject to necessary planning consents and Secretary of State approval;
- (b) the existing Council-owned properties and land be transferred to Nene Housing Association at nil cost;
- (c) the scope of any redevelopment scheme should, as far as possible, include all the existing area of the estate **subject to** existing tenants and owner-occupiers being willing and / or able to participate. Where necessary, plans should be amended over time to cater for changing needs and to provide flexibility to accommodate as far as possible the wishes of all the existing residents;
- (d) the preferred tenure mix and house types be as outlined in Option A which will provide 65% as affordable housing (comprising 124 rented and 52 shared ownership units) together with 35% as open market sales within an overall target of 270 homes;
- (e) the following conditions be attached to the approval of a redevelopment scheme:
 - (i) that Nene Housing Association meet all legal costs and home loss / disturbance payments incurred by the Council in respect of the Windmill Estate since 2004/05 to date as well as any future payments and liabilities;
 - (ii) that any amendments to the scheme mix in terms of tenure and / or house types / sizes be agreed in consultation with the Council;
 - (iii) that the Council be entitled to receive nomination rights of 100% of initial lets and 75% of subsequent lettings of all social rented units provided through refurbished and new build affordable housing on the sites and that the Council receive 100% nomination rights in perpetuity to any shared ownership and / or other intermediate tenures;
 - (iv) that the Council not seek to use compulsory purchase powers to facilitate the redevelopment and that as far as possible the wishes of all residents (tenants, owner-occupiers and leaseholders) should be accommodated without compromising the wishes of others on the Windmill Estate;
 - (v) that Nene confirm and make provision to meet contributions previously agreed in principle to the Special Projects Officer role for 2006/07 and 2007/08 and consider future contributions if this post were to be considered essential by both Nene and the Council to delivery of the project beyond 31 March 2008; and
 - (vi) that an acceptable "construction code of practice" be agreed with the contractor that takes regard of non-participating residents; and
- (f) the Council exercise its discretion to waive any discount repayment liability in respect of any Right to Buy sales caught within such provisions if this would enable affected owners to participate in the redevelopment scheme.

7 (d) Disabled Facilities Grant Policy and Funding (Cabinet, 9 November 2006)

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** to support further approval for up to £100,000 to be released if required to cover priority cases and cases where statutory duty may not be met, the release of the additional £100,000 to be delegated to the Environmental Health and Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holders.

7 (e) Second Tier Reorganisation (Transformation Committee, 21 November 2006)

The Transformation Committee, at its meeting on 21 November 2006, will be considering a report on the Second Tier Reorganisation. The report of the Senior Management Team recommends the adoption of a revised second tier structure from 1 January 2007.

Should this recommendation be agreed, Council is **RECOMMENDED** to note the revised structure agreed by the Transformation Committee and approve the associated budget variances for the 2006/07 and subsequent financial years, estimated at £60,000 General Fund (best case scenario) and £5,000 Housing Revenue Account for 2006/07 and, from 2007/08, ongoing revenue expenditure of £80,000 per annum and £45,000 per annum respectively.

The recommendation of the Transformation Committee will be reported to Council.

Update, 22 November 2006

The recommendations of the Transformation Committee are attached.

(Pages 39 - 40)

8. JOINT PLANNING SERVICES

To consider the report of the Executive Director.

(Pages 41 - 50)

9. DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME 2006-2009

A Disability Equality Scheme has been developed by the Head of Policy and Communication. Cabinet, at its last meeting, received a report outlining progress with the scheme, suggested amendments to the provisional action plan, identified the Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder as Lead Member for the scheme and noted the preparations being made for the final submission of the scheme to Council.

Council is **RECOMMENDED** to adopt the Disability Equality Scheme 2006-2009, circulated with the Agenda as a separate document.

10. RECORDING OF MEETINGS

To consider the report of the Chief Executive.

(Pages 51 - 56)

11. REAPPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE INDEPENDENT PANEL ON MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

At its meeting on 23 June 2005 Council resolved that appointments to the Independent Panel, established to review Members' Allowances, be made on a rolling three-year basis. Mrs Ruth Rogers, who is eligible for retirement from the Panel, has kindly indicated that she is willing to serve for a further term, therefore it is **RECOMMENDED** that Mrs Ruth Rogers be appointed to the Independent Panel on Members' Allowances for a three-year period to 23 November 2009.

12. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

(* indicates that the Minutes have already been confirmed as a correct record)

- 12 (a) Cabinet, 9 November 2006 (Pages 57 - 66)
- 12 (b) Licensing Committee, 16 October 2006 (Pages 67 - 70)
- 12 (c) Licensing Committee (2003 Act), 16 October 2006 (Pages 71 - 72)
- 12 (d) Planning Committee, 4 October 2006 * (Pages 73 - 78)
- 12 (e) Standards Committee, 8 November 2006 (Pages 79 - 88)
- 12 (f) Scrutiny and Overview Committee, 19 October 2006 (Pages 89 - 96)

13. QUESTIONS ON JOINT MEETINGS

14. UPDATES FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

15. NOTICES OF MOTION

15 (a) Standing in the Name of Cllr R Page: Sheltered Housing Wardens

In October 2005 this Council was assured by the appropriate portfolio holder that no sheltered housing warden, made redundant in the reorganisation, would be required to leave their council house. This Council confirms that position – that all those wardens made redundant, will be offered the tenancies of their present accommodation.

Note: this motion will require a seconder before it may be debated.

15 (b) Standing in the Name of Cllr R Page: Solar Panels and Photovoltaic Cells for New Houses

In the interests of responsible planning, truly sustainable growth and environmental awareness all new houses built in South Cambridgeshire will be required to have solar panels and photovoltaic cells built into their roof designs.

Note: this motion will require a seconder before it may be debated.

15 (c) Standing in the Name of Cllr R Page: Renewable Energy Schemes in New Buildings

In view of the urgent need to address the issues involved with global warming, particularly as they apply to the new developments imposed on South Cambridgeshire, this Council will require developers to incorporate 50% renewable energy schemes into all new building work involving groups of five houses or more – or their workplace equivalents.

Note: this motion will require a seconder before it may be debated.

15 (d) Standing in the Name of Cllr R Page: Reduction in Number of Council Meetings

In view of the reduction in the number of Council Meetings, this Council agrees to a proportionate reduction in the financial allowances paid to members to take account of this reduced work load.

Note: this motion will require a seconder before it may be debated.

16. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS

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

Date	Venue / Event
10 th November	Wreath laying: Madingley American Cemetery
10 th November	With the Chief Executive: Attended funeral of Keith Hodgkinson, former Chief Planning Officer
12 th November	Remembrance Sunday: Wreath laying, Normandy Landings Monument, Milton Country Park
13 th November	Swavesey Village College: Cambridge Music Festival Reception
16 th November	Swavesey Parish Church: Orchestra in a Village
17 th November	Mayor of Cambridge: Reception

PRESENTATION - KEEPING CAMBRIDGESHIRE MOVING

Following the Council meeting, Officers from the County Council will provide a briefing for members on the 'Transport Innovation Fund' and the Long-Term Transport Strategy.

It will begin with a presentation that will look at the transport issues arising as a result of the planned growth taking place in the County and the measures put in place to start addressing these issues. It will go on to look at further work being carried out as part of the Long Term Transport Strategy, including looking at the possibility of introducing road pricing, and at the support we are receiving from government through the Transport Innovation Fund.

The presentation will be followed by an opportunity to ask questions. For further information please contact **Jonathan Dixon**, Principal Planning Policy Officer, telephone 01954 713194, e-mail jonathan.dixon@scambs.gov.uk

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR VISITORS TO SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE HALL

Whilst the District Council endeavours to ensure that you come to no harm when visiting South Cambridgeshire Hall you also have a responsibility to ensure that you do not risk your own or others' safety.

Security

Visitors should report to the main reception desk where they will be asked to sign a register. Visitors will be given a visitor's pass that must be worn at all times whilst in the building. Please remember to sign out and return your pass before you leave. The visitors' book is used as a register in cases of emergency and building evacuation.

Emergency and Evacuation

In the event of a fire you will hear a continuous alarm. Evacuate the building using the nearest escape route; from the Council Chamber or Mezzanine viewing gallery this would be via the staircase just outside the door. Go to the assembly point at the far side of the staff car park.

Do not use the lifts to exit the building. If you are unable to negotiate stairs by yourself, the emergency staircase landings are provided with fire refuge areas, which afford protection for a minimum of 1.5 hours. Press the alarm button and wait for assistance from the Council fire wardens or the fire brigade.

Do not re-enter the building until the officer in charge or the fire brigade confirms that it is safe to do so.

First Aid

If someone feels unwell or needs first aid, please alert a member of staff.

Access for People with Disabilities

All meeting rooms are accessible to wheelchair users. There are disabled toilet facilities on each floor of the building. Hearing loops and earphones are available from reception and can be used in all meeting rooms.

Toilets

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

Recording of Business

Unless specifically authorised by resolution, no audio and / or visual or photographic recording in any format is allowed at any meeting of the Council, the executive (Cabinet), or any committee or sub-committee of the Council or the executive.

Banners / Placards / Etc.

No member of the public shall be allowed to bring into or display at any Council meeting any

banner, placard, poster or other similar item. The Chairman may require any such item to be removed.

Disturbance by Public

If a member of the public interrupts proceedings, the Chairman will warn the person concerned. If they continue to interrupt, the Chairman will order their removal from the meeting room. If there is a general disturbance in any part of the meeting room open to the public, the Chairman may call for that part to be cleared.

Smoking

The Council operates a NO SMOKING policy.

Food and Drink

Vending machines and a water dispenser are available on the ground floor near the lifts. There shall be no food and drink in the Council Chamber.

Mobile Phones

Please ensure that your phone is set on silent / vibrate mode during meetings.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 28 September 2006 at 5.27 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs CAED Murfitt – Chairman
Councillor JH Stewart – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: Dr DR Bard, RE Barrett, JD Batchelor, Mrs PM Bear, AN Berent, NCF Bolitho, RF Bryant, BR Burling, NN Cathcart, JP Chatfield, NS Davies, SM Edwards, Mrs SM Ellington, Mrs A Elsby, Mrs VG Ford, Mrs JM Guest, Dr SA Harangozo, Mrs SA Hatton, Mrs EM Heazell, JA Hockney, MP Howell, Mrs CA Hunt, Mrs HF Kember, SGM Kindersley, Mrs JE Lockwood, RMA Manning, RB Martlew, MJ Mason, RM Matthews, DC McCraith, DH Morgan, CR Nightingale, EJ Pateman, JA Quinlan, A Riley, Mrs DP Roberts, NJ Scarr, Mrs HM Smith, Mrs DSK Spink MBE, RT Summerfield, Dr SEK van de Ven, Mrs BE Waters and NIC Wright

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor TD Bygott, Mrs PS Corney, Mrs SJO Doggett, R Hall, PT Johnson, R Page, RJ Turner and TJ Wotherspoon.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors JD Batchelor, SGM Kindersley and DC McCraith declared personal interests as elected Cambridgeshire County Councillors.

2. MOVE TO FOUR-YEARLY DISTRICT COUNCIL ELECTIONS

Consultation on the District Council's electoral arrangements had resulted in 54% of the public supporting a move to "all-out" elections every four years, but 58% of the parish councils which had responded preferring the present system of "election by thirds".

Noting that any delay on a decision by the Secretary of State could result in the first opportunity for "all-out" elections being postponed until 2011, Councillor RMA Manning proposed, seconded by Councillor MJ Mason, that Council **DEFER** its decision and reconsider the issue in October 2007.

Council resolved, with no Members voting against, to **DEFER** to October 2007 a decision on whether or not to make an application to the Secretary of State to change the Council's electoral arrangements to "all-out" elections every four years.

Subsequent to the meeting it was confirmed that the Council's Electoral Arrangements Committee did not have the responsibility to make recommendations on this issue.

The Meeting ended at 5.30 p.m.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Council held on
Thursday, 26 October 2006 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs CAED Murfitt – Chairman
Councillor JH Stewart – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: Dr DR Bard, RE Barrett, JD Batchelor, Mrs PM Bear, AN Berent, NCF Bolitho, RF Bryant, EW Bullman, BR Burling, NN Cathcart, JP Chatfield, NS Davies, Mrs SJO Doggett, SM Edwards, Mrs SM Ellington, Mrs A Elsby, Mrs VG Ford, Mrs JM Guest, R Hall, Mrs SA Hatton, JA Hockney, Mrs CA Hunt, PT Johnson, SGM Kindersley, Mrs JE Lockwood, RMA Manning, RB Martlew, MJ Mason, RM Matthews, DC McCraith, CR Nightingale, AG Orgee, EJ Pateman, Mrs DP Roberts, NJ Scarr, Mrs HM Smith, RT Summerfield, Mrs VM Trueman, RJ Turner, Dr SEK van de Ven, Mrs BE Waters, JF Williams and NIC Wright

Officers:	Holly Adams	Democratic Services Officer
	Steve Hampson	Executive Director
	Greg Harlock	Chief Executive
	Richard May	Democratic Services Manager

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor TD Bygott, Mrs PS Corney, Dr SA Harangozo, Mrs EM Heazell, MP Howell, Mrs HF Kember, DH Morgan, R Page, JA Quinlan, Mrs DSK Spink MBE and TJ Wotherspoon.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2006 at 2.00pm were confirmed as a correct record to be signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

Minute 8(d) Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, 20 July 2006:

Amend second paragraph to read:

“The Housing Portfolio Holder undertook to respond in writing to Councillor Mrs SA Hatton’s **financial** concerns about the eleven bungalows at The Green Road, Sawston.”

Substitute **passes** for **tickets** in the fifth paragraph.

Minute 9 Questions on joint meetings

Amend the second paragraphs to begin:

“Councillor CR Nightingale reported that the Southern Fringe Member Reference Group had considered five **bridge** options...”

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2006 at 5.27pm were not agreed as a correct record. In response to a question, the Chief Executive advised that the deferral of a decision whether to proceed with four-yearly elections did not affect the validity of the consultation process which had taken place. Council **RESOLVED** that the Minutes be amended to reflect that the Motion had not been carried unanimously, and that a revised version be brought forward for approval at the next meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors JD Batchelor, SGM Kindersley, DC McCraith and AG Orgee declared personal interests as elected Cambridgeshire County Councillors.

3. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**Local Development Framework Core Strategy**

The Chairman announced that the Council had been the first in England to receive the Inspector's report on its Local Development Framework Core Strategy document and that the strategy had been declared sound. Members and Officers from the Planning Policy section were congratulated for their hard work in developing the strategy.

Disability Equality Scheme

The Chairman advised that the Council was required to have in place a Disability Equality Scheme by December 2006. Work on developing the scheme was being progressed, and Members who wished to have an input were requested to contact Tim Wetherfield, Head of Policy and Communication.

4. REPORT OF THE RETURNING OFFICER - THE ABINGTONS WARD BY-ELECTION

Council noted the result of the bye-election held in The Abingtons Ward on 19 October 2006 and formally welcomed Councillor Tony Orgee to the Council.

5. QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS AND THE PUBLIC**5 (a) From Councillor Dr SEK van de Ven to the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder**

Councillor Dr SEK van de Ven asked the following question:

"In view of the themes emerging from the excellent 'Sustainable Community Strategy Workshop' held earlier this month, will the new Community Strategy be wide-ranging and aspirational, or will it focus on what is realistically achievable for South Cambs residents, given the Council's severe shortage of funds?"

Councillor JA Hockney, Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder, replied that many individuals entered politics for aspirational reasons, and that the Council would be working with its partners to achieve as many of the Strategy's aims as possible.

Councillor Dr SEK van de Ven expressed the hope that the Community Strategy would be a credible document.

5 (b) From Councillor SGM Kindersley to the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder

Councillor SGM Kindersley asked the following question:

"What steps are being taken to minimise the impact of a major increase in householder planning applications for domestic wind turbines given that they are now available from companies such as B&Q for £1498 inclusive? As they require planning consent is there any developing policy to fasttrack the applications and/or reduce the planning application

fee to encourage sustainability?”

In the absence of the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder, Councillor Dr DR Bard, Leader of the Council, drew Councillor Kindersley's attention to a forthcoming article in the Council's magazine on the subject. He advised that, at present, domestic wind turbines required planning permission, however it was anticipated that the Government would produce legislation which would allow turbines to be constructed under Permitted Development Rights. Councillor Dr Bard did not anticipate that the Council would be inundated by requests for planning permission, given that there were likely to be few locations in the district where average wind speed was sufficient for the turbines to operate effectively. In many areas residents should be encouraged to invest in alternative energy-saving technologies which were likely to be less expensive and more effective.

As a Supplementary Question Councillor SGM Kindersley asked the Leader of the Council to focus on the question of fast tracking applications. In addition he requested that the Council develop a policy in respect of domestic wind turbines with a degree of urgency.

The Leader of the Council confirmed that the issue of domestic wind turbines would be considered in the development of local planning policy. He advised, however, that in due course he expected the majority of applications to be determined under Officers' delegated powers.

There followed a brief debate on the issue of domestic wind turbines; it was considered that the Climate Change group established at the last meeting would have a key role to play in encouraging the development of this and other energy-saving initiatives.

6. PETITIONS

The Chairman advised that a petition had been received on 26 October 2006 from the residents in Cottenham in respect of the manager's flat on the sheltered housing site at Franklin Gardens. The petition was referred without discussion to the Chief Executive for a response.

7. TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

7 (a) ARBURY CAMPS: Section 106 Agreement

Council **RESOLVED** that, Cabinet having considered that there was not any urgency to make the payments and, preferring that a formal legal agreement be drafted between the two authorities, a decision be deferred until after such time as Anglian Water adopted the drain.

7 (b) Information & Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy 2006-2009 (Cabinet 10 October 2006)

Council **RESOLVED** that:

- (1) The Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy be adopted.
- (2) Authority be delegated to the Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder and Chief Executive for approval of any subsequent changes.

7 (c) Thatch and Thatching in South Cambridgeshire

Council **RESOLVED** that the document *Thatch and thatching in South Cambridgeshire* be adopted as Council policy.

7 (d) Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2011: Draft

Council **RESOLVED** that the posts previously approved in principle be approved, with cash limits for the 2006/07 financial year being relaxed to provide funding for those posts being added to the authorised establishment from 1 January 2007.

8. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBER TO THE SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Council **RESOLVED** that Councillor AG Orgee be appointed to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee in place of Councillor PT Johnson.

9. PROGRAMME OF COUNCIL MEETINGS FOR THE 2007-2008 CIVIC YEAR

Council considered a report recommending a reduction in the number of Council meetings for the 2007-2008 Civic Year. The Leader of the Council urged Members to support the recommendations as they would aid more efficient decision-making and free up senior Officer time. Agreement of the recommendations could be seen as a step towards the adoption of new ways of working.

In response to other Members' concerns that the reduction would lead to backbench Members being increasingly isolated, the Leader advised that, should the recommendations be agreed, detailed work would be undertaken to review the Council's scrutiny arrangements to ensure a meaningful role for all Members.

Councillor Dr DR Bard proposed and Councillor JA Hockney seconded the recommendation set out in paragraph 15 of the report, subject to the dates of the meetings in July and October 2007 being reviewed to avoid clashes with school holidays.

Councillor NJ Scarr requested a recorded vote on the Motion. In accordance with Standing Order 16.5, the request was not supported by six Members of the Council and was therefore not allowed.

RESOLVED

That meetings during the 2007-2008 Civic Year be scheduled as follows:

24 May 2007
26 July 2007 (subject to alteration to avoid clashes with school holidays)
25 October 2007 (subject to alteration to avoid clashes with school holidays)
31 January 2008
28 February 2008
24 April 2008
22 May 2008

10. REPORTS OF MEETINGS

The Minutes of the following meetings were **RECEIVED**, subject to matters outlined in minutes 10(a)-10(f) below:

Cabinet	12 October 2006
Licensing Committee (2003 Act)	10 August 2006
Licensing Committee	19 September 2006
Planning Committee	6 September 2006
Audit Panel	14 September 2006
Scrutiny and Overview Committee	21 September 2006

10 (a) Cabinet, 12 October 2006

Councillor SM Edwards drew Council's attention to Minute 4 – Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Strategy 2006-2009. He advised that inconsistencies in the financial information had been identified, and that he had requested a Supplementary Paper clarifying the figures. The Supplementary report had been tabled prior to the meeting.

In response to a question regarding Cabinet consideration of the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Chief Executive advised that transfers between the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account could only be performed if provided for by legislation.

Some Members expressed concern that the Council's representations to the government in respect of the costs of the growth agenda might strengthen the case for the development to be handled by an urban development corporation. The Leader of the Council advised that, whilst the Council would be unable to finance the development programme entirely from its own resources and the Council Tax, he was hopeful additional funding could be secured without the creation of an urban development corporation.

With regard to Minute 15 – Matters referred by Scrutiny and Overview Committee, Council was advised that a meeting was shortly to take place between the Chairman of the Committee, Leader of the Council and Chief Executive, in order to review the Council's current scrutiny arrangements and investigate ways to increase the effectiveness of the process.

10 (b) Licensing Committee (2003 Act) 10 August 2006 *

The Chairman advised that the Appendix referred to on Agenda page 29 contained lists of Membership for Hearings Panels. The appendix had not been printed with the Agenda but was available on the Council's website or from Democratic Services.

10 (c) Licensing Committee, 19 September 2006 *

Noted without comment.

10 (d) Planning Committee, 6 September 2006 *

Noted without comment.

10 (e) Audit Panel, 14 September 2006

With regard to the Corporate Governance Inspection the reference to the 'Relations Manager' in the second paragraph should be amended to refer to the 'Relationship Manager.'

10 (f) Scrutiny and Overview Committee, 21 September 2006

Noted without comment.

11. QUESTIONS ON JOINT MEETINGS

There were no questions arising from the joint meetings referred to in the Agenda.

12. UPDATES FROM MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor NCF Bolitho advised that he was shortly to attend the next meeting of the Mepal Outdoor Centre.

Councillor R Hall advised that he would be attending the meeting of the Archives Advisory Group on 13 November 2006.

Councillor Mrs JM Guest advised that the Melbourn Community Sports Limited Group was working well and was seeking to recruit more members.

13. CHAIRMAN'S ENGAGEMENTS

The Chairman's engagements since the last meeting were **NOTED**.

The Meeting ended at 3.38 p.m.

South Cambridgeshire District Council

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) 2007/08 TO 2011/12

Purpose - Why a Medium Term Financial Strategy?

1. The Council has limited resources and many competing claims on those resources. The Council needs to maximise the benefit from its resources by careful planning and targeting. It also needs to ensure that spending reflects needs and that priorities are not being held back through insufficient resources. The Council's priorities and the issues it needs to address require investment programmes over a period of three years or more.
2. The Council increasingly works with partners on longer-term strategies (such as the Community Strategy, LAA, Crime and Disorder strategy) and needs to be able to demonstrate to partners what resources it can make available. Services and service managers need a clear financial framework in which to plan and develop services. Workforce issues, and in particular recruitment and retention issues, require longer-term approaches. The government is moving towards three year financial planning.
3. For all these reasons, a MTFS is required setting out the Council's financial position over a period of at least three years and guiding its investment and savings policies.

Context – Overall Financial Position

4. South Cambs has a history of being a low spending Council. Table 1 shows how, from an initially very low base, spending has grown in recent years. There are a number of reasons for this rise in spending, including population growth, the need to invest in necessary infrastructure such as ICT; and various pressures to improve the provision of services.

Table 1: South Cambs Net General Fund Spending in the last 10 years.

Year	1997/8	1998/9	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07
GF Net Revenue Spending (£m's)	6.4	6.2	6.7	7.3	8.6	10.5	11.7	12.2	12.6	13.9

5. However, South Cambs is still low spending compared with most other district councils. Audit Commission figures given in Table 2 show the Council in the lowest spending quartile per head of population for most services.

Table 2: SCDC spending per head in comparison with other district councils

Service	Spending per head (£)	Position out of 238 districts	Spending Quartile position (Note)
Planning	21.77	6	1
Community Housing (GF)	8.14	85	2
Environmental and Public Health	8.65	191	4
Local Tax Collection & Benefits	13.68	202	4
Central Services and Democratic Core	14.06	208	4
Waste Collection	13.38	212	4
Housing Benefits Administration	3.38	220	4
Street Cleaning and Litter	2.88	227	4
Cultural Services	10.77	233	4
Overall net expenditure	119.76	155	3

Note: 1 = Highest spending quartile and 4 = Lowest spending quartile of district councils. The figures above are for 2004/05 original estimates. For SCDC the outturn figures were lower. Figures for 2005/06 are now available, but for SCDC give the pre-capping estimates. Source: Audit Commission.

6. Again, historically, South Cambs has set a relatively low level of Council Tax, as demonstrated by Table 3.

Table 3: Council Tax at Band D – South Cambs compared with shire district average

	District - South Cambs	District - Average Shire
1996-97	0	82.57
1997-98	0	88.30
1998-99	0	94.08
1999-00	50.00	98.93
2000-01	50.00	102.83
2001-02	50.00	110.52
2002-03	70.00	120.29
2003-04	70.00	129.46
2004-05	70.00	136.70
2005-06	92.93	142.92
2006-07	97.48	147.29

7. For 2006/07 the Council Tax was set at a level which (excluding parish precepts) was the 9th lowest in the country (out of 238 district councils). This was the maximum tax increase that was likely to avoid Council Tax capping.
8. The Council's spending is financed by:-
- Government grant or Formula Grant
 - Council Tax
 - Balances
 - Interest from capital receipts;
 - Charges for services
9. Table 4 summarises the financing of the Council's General Fund budget over recent years.

Table 4: Financing of GF revenue expenditure

	2002/03		2003/04		2004/05		2005/06		2006/07	
	£m	%	£m	%	£m	%	£m	%	£m	%
External Support and Other Adjustments	5.8	55	6.3	54	5.9	58	6.2	52	7.0	50
Use of Balances	1.0	10	1.7	14	2.5	21	1.2	6	1.4	10
Council Tax	3.7	35	3.8	32	3.8	31	5.11	42	5.4	40
TOTAL:	10.5		11.7		12.2		12.6		13.9	

10. Income from charges for services is lower than for most councils because the Council has relatively few assets or income producing services such as car parking or directly managed leisure facilities because of the non-urban nature of the district.
11. The Council also receives relatively low levels of Government Grant. Table 5 compares support received by the Council in comparison with other councils.

Table 5: Government Grant to Cambridgeshire authorities for 2006/07

Local Authority	Redistributed Business Rates	Revenue Support Grant	Formula Grant	
			£m	Per head
	£m	£m	£m	
Cambridge	9.924	1.916	11.840	101.19
East Cambridgeshire	5.091	0.983	6.074	74.01
Fenland	6.913	1.334	8.248	92.66
Huntingdonshire	9.129	1.762	10.892	66.42
South Cambridgeshire	5.963	1.151	7.114	51.36

12. Historically, the real value of support received from government has fallen. Table 6 shows how government grant per head of population has fallen in real terms from levels in the mid 1990s

Table 6: Trends in External Support

Year	93/4	94/5	95/6	96/7	97/8	93/4	99/0
External Support (£m's)	6.1	6.4	6.3	6.1	5.8	6.1	5.4
External support per head of population at 2006/7 prices	70	72	67	63	57	70	49

Continued	00/1	01/2	02/3	03/4	04/5	05/6	06/7	07/8
	5.6	5.7	5.8	6.3	6.0	6.3	7.1	7.6
	48	48	48	53	48	48	51	53

13. In the past, the Council has kept Council Tax low by using reserves to finance expenditure. However, these reserves are finite and are running down. Also, capital receipts (and the interest on them) are diminishing as a result of the government decision to pool nationally 75% of housing receipts and the reduction in the sales of council houses under Right to Buy – see Table 7.

Table 7: Future Capital Receipts and Capital Programme (£m)

	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Year end capital receipts	13.9	8.3	3.2	0	0	0
Used for capital programme	9	8.6	8.2	6.2	3	3
Capital Programme	13.5	12.8	12.4	10.3	7	7

14. As these sources of income reduce, the only significant way to replace them is to increase Council Tax to a level comparable to other councils. However, the government has placed a cap of 5% on council tax increases. 5% of an already low tax does not provide a sufficient increase in income to allow for the reduction in reserves, future spending commitments or other factors. Currently a 5% increase in Council Tax brings in additional income of about £5 per annum per household which is equivalent to about £280,000 of income to the Council in total.
15. The only alternative left to the Council is to reduce its spending significantly or raise income. It needs to do this both to replace income lost (as reserves run down) and to meet further spending pressures. Already, the Council has made savings of £2.6m in response to capping and has built in plans to save the equivalent of £365k (at 2007/08 prices) pa as a result of the Transformation Project. In addition, the Council has met its Gershon efficiency targets.
16. The district of South Cambridgeshire is facing massive change in the next ten years or more. The new town of Northstowe and the major new developments around Cambridge will increase the population of the district from about 135,000 to 170,000 by 2016. The Council will have to make significant investment in terms of the planning and development of these new areas and in providing services to the new communities. The Council has reviewed the additional General Fund spending pressures that will need to be addressed over the next five years. The initial results were reported to Cabinet in October 2006 are given in Table 8. These pressures have been reviewed, resulting in the proposals in **Appendix 1**.

Table 8: Quantifiable additional GF spending pressures up to 2011/12

	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Revenue	588	1,048	1,426	2,100	2,083
Capital	260	70	950	870	960

17. The figures in Table 8 do not allow for a range of currently unquantifiable possible future spending pressures which may hit the Council in the next five years. These are included in Appendix 1.
18. There will be considerable time lag between incurring expenditure to plan for the new communities and the income from additional Council Tax from new residents. At present, the level of Council Tax charged does not meet the cost of services; hence the addition of new residents increases the deficit.
19. The financial position faced by the Council may change substantially as a result of the Lyon's review of local government finance, which is expected to report in 2007.

Context – The Council's Priorities

20. The Council has set the following priorities for the period 2005/06 to 2007/08:-

- a) To improve customer service
 - b) To improve the supply of affordable housing
 - c) To achieve successful, sustainable communities at Northstowe and other growth areas.
21. In addressing (a), the Council has incurred substantial spending in the last five years to update its ICT infrastructure and establish the Contact Centre to enable services to customers to be improved. The Council's ICT strategy now envisages a period of consolidation. Further additional spending will be required in 2007/08 and possibly later years to improve customer service, using the infrastructure now in place. This will be clarified in the Service First project review in 2007, but spending will be modest in comparison with previous major investment. Further spending will also be required towards the end of the five-year MTFS period to replace or update major ICT infrastructure dating back to 2001.
22. In relation to affordable housing (b), the Council is not using capital receipts to any substantial degree to support the building of additional housing. The approach adopted by the Council has been to develop an enabling role, working in partnership with other agencies, such as RSLs and neighbouring local authorities. As a result of this strategy, joint posts have been established with Cambridge City Council and supported by RSLs. The other elements of the strategy to achieve affordable housing are to maximise the use of planning powers and planning policies and the development of an affordable housing fund financed by commuted payments arising from Section 106 Agreements.
23. The Council has retained the direct ownership and management of its housing stock. However, the reduced availability of capital receipts and other financial pressures on the HRA will require the future of the housing stock to be kept under review.
24. In relation to the growth areas (c), the Council has already invested substantially with its partners in establishing the required capacity for the planning and development of these new communities. The major part of the future spending pressures identified in Table 8 is to meet the objective of planning and providing services for the growth areas. Where possible, the Council will seek outside funding for example, through Section 106 agreements, Growth Area funding, and contributions from other partners. Such an approach does have risks. Planning Delivery Grant has been used to finance a number of posts required for the planning of the growth areas and there are uncertainties about the future of Planning Delivery Grant and the form it will take.
25. The Council, working with LSP partners, is currently reviewing the Community Strategy, which may lead to different priorities from 2008/09. The current White Paper *Strong and Prosperous Communities* may also lead to different spending requirements – for example in relation to the priorities and national outcomes to be included in LAAs; and the requirements for greater public involvement and consultation.
26. The Council's ability to achieve its priorities depends on its workforce. In parallel with this strategy, the Council is preparing a Workforce Plan, covering a similar period. Much of the work in preparing the plan has already fed through into this strategy. The critical areas where staffing resources are affecting the ability of the Council to deliver statutory services or priorities have been addressed in the current year and built into the MTFS – ie:-
- a) A customer services project officer has been employed to support the implementation of customer service standards and improved complaints

- processes.
- b) The post of Web Services Officer has been made permanent in the recognition of the web-site as a central element of the Council's use of ICT to improve customer service.
 - c) The post of Growth Areas Project Manager has been established to provide co-ordination and project management support to the development and planning of the growth areas.
 - d) An Urban Design post has been agreed to provide this new skill for the planning of the new growth areas which will be more urban in character than current development in South Cambs.
 - e) The Corporate Projects Officer post has been made permanent to provide much needed corporate support.
 - f) The Procurement Officer post has been extended to help make savings and support the procurement activities of services.
 - g) ICT Projects officers to support the business process reviews and Transformation Project.
 - h) HR and Payroll support to meet essential requirements such as the payroll function and support the Transformation Project.
27. Appendix 1 includes provision for additional posts which are primarily to respond to the growth areas and the Council's priorities. The draft Workforce Plan Action Plan includes possible unquantified spending requirements. Other potential areas of spending – such as addressing retention and recruitment - are identified in the Workforce Plan, but are still too uncertain to build into the MTFS. No provision has been made for the restructuring of second tier management posts being progressed under the Transformation Project.

Context - Value for Money and Efficiency

28. Overall, the Council spends significantly less than the average district council and is in the lowest quartile of district councils for spending on most services. It also achieves a performance on national performance indicators which is about average and in some cases well above average. Table 9 shows how many South Cambs national performance indicators fall in each of the quartiles for all district councils for 2004/05. The Audit Commission takes a subset of these figures for comparison purposes.

Table 9: South Cambs performance indicators in each of the quartiles for all district councils (2004/05)

Quartile of district councils	Top	2nd	3rd	Bottom
% of South Cambs national PIs	32%	17%	30%	21%

Source: Best Value Performance Plan

29. This indicates good value for money in terms of a positive service quality to spending ratio. However, the Council is concerned to achieve greater consistency in performance. It will invest in a new performance management computer system in 2007/08 and will look to achieving greater integration of financial and performance management planning and monitoring.
30. The Council is progressively improving the value for money ratio by achieving its Gershon savings and by making the savings required to meet capping and balance the MTFS.

31. The Council's Use of Resources Judgement report indicated that the Council needs to take a more structured approach to assessing and improving value for money and in linking its financial planning with priorities.

What issues most need to be addressed by the Strategy?

32. The most pressing concerns arise from the difficult position facing the Council as a result of capping and the future needs of the growth areas. Related to this is the need for a balanced and sustainable financial position where the Council is not dependent on reserves and can plan and develop services in the context of greater stability.
33. Also of concern is the diminishing level of capital receipts and its impact on the General Fund (through the loss of interest and the ability to sustain future capital spending) and more importantly on the Council's future ability to maintain and improve its housing stock.
34. We also want to improve our use of resources in terms of better financial planning, value for money and financial control. Our processes in these areas are still improving and we are aware of shortcomings pointed out in the use of resources judgement and direction of travel statement.

What are we already doing to improve the Council's financial position?

35. The Council is currently engaged on a number activities to improve its financial position:-
- a) Improvements have been made in forward planning. The Council has identified spending requirements for five years' ahead to respond to the growth areas and other spending pressures and to progress its priorities.
 - b) Savings. The Council continues to achieve its Gershon savings. This strategy will set out requirements for substantial additional savings starting in 2007/08 which have already been identified. In identifying those savings, the Council has used a methodology which avoided savings which would impact on our priorities and impact in other ways directly on those who use or benefit from our services.
 - c) The Council is implementing a Transformation Project the aim of which is to streamline management and to develop systems and cultures which will support improving service delivery. One element of the transformation will be to establish second tier Corporate Managers with a stronger remit for financial accountability.
 - d) Business process reviews are being undertaken under the Transformation Project for all major services. The MTFS projections at Appendix 3 includes savings targets for the reviews, but the reviews are also charged with improving service delivery through the use of ICT, the Contact Centre and more focused working.
 - e) The Council monitors spending quarterly to improve financial control. Service managers use virement to maximise the effectiveness of their budgets.
 - f) The Council is currently undergoing an Audit Commission Corporate Governance Inspection. The onsite inspection week was carried out in October and the final report is expected in the new year. The outcome of the review will be taken into account in the revision of the MTFS in February.

Objectives of the Strategy

36. Based on the foregoing analysis, the objectives of the MTFS are:-
- a) To maximise the resources over the medium term to enable the Council to
 - maintain and improve its core statutory services
 - continue to improve service to customers in terms of responsiveness and service quality
 - achieve, with its partners, successful and sustainable communities at Northstowe and other growth areas
 - respond to other changing priorities
 - b) To achieve a balanced General Fund where future spending can be met from sustainable sources of income and the Council can plan from a stable financial base;
 - c) To continue to press government for a fairer financial system which reflects the growth pressures facing the district;
 - d) To develop a more structured approach to the achievement and demonstration of value for money; achievement of efficiency; and integration of financial and policy planning processes.

Issues/Risks

37. In developing this strategy there are a number of issues which the Council has had to determine:-
- a) How quickly should the Council try to move to a balanced financial position? Should the necessary savings be made earlier rather than later in the MTFS period? The Council has rejected an option to delay savings until 2009/10 by the quicker run down of reserves (option 3B considered by Cabinet on 12th October 2006). Cabinet favoured an approach of more equalised savings across the MTFS period to provide a more firm basis for planning. A further option which would delay savings (Option 3A considered by Cabinet on 9th November) has also been rejected in favour of the financial targets in Appendix 3 on which this strategy is based.
 - b) What balance should be made between projected spending on the growth areas and existing communities? Appendix 1 sets out the new spending plans for the Council on which the MTFS will be based. A high proportion of the new spending will be on the growth areas. There would be considerable risks involved in not adequately funding the growth areas.
 - c) Should spending patterns change? The future spending patterns in Appendix 1 and the savings proposals in Appendix 2 will produce a shift in spending patterns towards the planning and development of the growth areas and our other priorities. In identifying savings, greater emphasis has been placed on non-statutory services; internal support services; and other services which do not relate to our priorities. Services important to our priorities have been subject to a much lower level of savings.

- d) Should the current approach to the capital programme be changed? For example, should debt free status be relinquished? Should the capital programme be reduced to slow down the use of capital receipts - for example, by basing the housing programme on achieving only the minimum Decent Homes standards? This could make more interest from capital receipts available for the General Fund. The position on this issue will be reviewed in the light of a current housing stock conditions survey and the financial implications.
- e) What assumptions should be made about other funding for the growth areas (for example, resources from Section 106 money or growth area funding)? Future spending proposals in Appendix 1 are based on assumptions that Section 106 or other growth area funding will cover most the infrastructure and capital service provision costs of the growth areas. If this is not the case, the MTFS would need to be reviewed. Indeed, there are a range of risks applying to the MTFS and effective monitoring will be required.
- f) What assumptions should be made about future Council Tax levels and capping? Current expectations are that the government will continue to place a limit of about 5% on Council Tax increases. There is a possibility that this level will fall; but there is also the possibility that a quite different mechanism will apply following the Lyons review. Our previous policy, which is continued in this strategy, is that we will allow our Council Tax to go up to the shire district average, as far as that is permitted under the national financial framework.
- g) Should any change be made to the Council's policy regarding the running down of balances towards a minimum provision of £1.5m? At this stage no change is proposed. However, it will be important to keep under review the minimum level of reserves which would be adequate.

Consultation

- 38. Following consideration of this draft strategy, public consultation will be carried out through South Cambs Magazine and the Council's web-site. Results from the consultation will be reported to Cabinet and Council in February when the strategy is reviewed.

The Strategy: What we will do

- 39. **Future Spending.** In the light of projected population increases and the need to respond to changing priorities, it will continue to be necessary to finance additional General Fund spending pressures, in the region of up to £300,000 per annum over the medium term period. The Medium Term Financial Strategy will make provision for the following additional spending provision:-

Table 10: Planned Totals of new GF spending to be included in the MTFS

	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Revenue provision to be included in the MTFS for additional service costs due to population growth and other pressures (£000s)	400	700	1,000	1,300	1,500

- 40. In identifying additional spending and achieving savings to finance that spending, resources will be shifted towards maintaining essential statutory services and

meeting the Council's priorities.

41. In accordance with this approach, the spending plans for 2007/08 given in Appendix 1 will be included in the budget for 2007/08. The spending plans for 2008/09 onwards will be included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy for planning purposes, subject to detailed justifications of the proposals and subject to overall new spending plans not exceeding the planning totals in Table 10
42. In order to improve the planning of future spending, more detailed service plans will be drawn up showing growth area spending requirements.
43. Spending plans will be reviewed in October each year and the MTFS rolled forward a year, based on the needs of services, existing spending plans, Council priorities and the planning totals. At that time the Workforce Plan will also be rolled forward.
44. **Achievement of a Balanced, Sustainable General Fund position.** The Council will aim to achieve a balanced financial position within the medium term where revenue spending is not dependent on reserves, but with the retention of a £1.5m GF working balance. To this end the following savings will be made:-

Table 11: Planned Savings Totals

Savings (£000s)	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Business Process Reviews	221	227	232	238	244
Senior Management Team	144	148	152	155	159
General Savings	1,333	1,107	1,134	1,163	1,192
Savings at end of period	0	0	0	0	402
TOTAL	1,698	1,482	1,518	1,556	1,997

Note: Financial projections towards the achievement of a balanced MTFS, and based on the spending and savings totals in tables 10 and 11, are given in **Appendix 3**. This corresponds to Appendix 3B to the Cabinet on 9th November 2006

45. The Council will achieve the "General Savings" in Table 11, through the implementation of the savings given in **Appendix 2**.
46. In the light of the potential additional spending pressures on the Council, continued efforts will be made to achieve efficiency savings and increased income through the following measures:-
 - Maximising funding from partners and other sources for growth areas
 - Inviting developer contributions
 - Charging developers for advice
 - Maximising income through Northstowe – eg through car parks, energy generation
 - Agency staff and consultants – further consideration before employing
 - Appointment of staff and equipment costs – investigate means of reducing expenditure.
 - Savings in procurement
 - Business process reviews.
47. **Council Tax.** The Council will increase Council Tax to the maximum allowable under Government capping limits up to the district council average in order to achieve a Council Tax income commensurate with the needs and economic circumstances of the area.

48. **Capital Programme.** The Council will continue to be “debt free”, financing the capital programme from capital receipts.
49. For the foreseeable future, the Council will continue to use capital receipts to finance:-
- General Fund capital spending requirements which meet the same criteria as additional revenue spending (ie that they are required to finance essential statutory services and the Council's priorities)
 - the maintenance and improvement of the Council's housing stock.
50. The Council will review the housing capital programme in the light of the current stock condition survey. The capital programme given in **Appendix 4**, is approved, subject to detailed assessment and approval of growth bids.
51. **Value for Money.** The Council already provides good value for money, but will pursue this more systematically and transparently by greater use of unit costs, comparisons with other councils and performance summaries in the 2008/09 budget process, in order to assess and improve value for money provided by current spending.
52. **A Fairer Financial System.** The Council will continue to take every opportunity to press the government for a fairer financial system which reflects the growth agenda and other factors affecting this Council.
53. **Monitoring and Review.** The Council recognises the importance of keeping under review the factors which will affect the achievement of the financial targets given in this strategy. Any changes in circumstances which will affect the achievement of the MTFS will be brought to the attention of the Cabinet in quarterly monitoring reports. There will also be two formal revisions to the MTFS each year:-
- October - a review and rolling forward of the MTFS
 - February – a review and publication of the strategy in the light of final decisions on the budget and Council Tax.

Action Plan

54. Specific actions to deliver the above approach are given in **Appendix 5**

Note: Following consideration of the strategy by the Council a revised version will be published, based on the decisions of the Council and providing more graphical information about the Council's financial position.

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APPENDIX 1

SPENDING PRESSURES – 2007/08 TO 2011/12

This table sets out recommendations for additional spending over the next 5 years to address anticipated increases in demand for services. This takes account of the funding allocations for growth items (particularly for 2007/08) as set out in the provisional model to update the Medium Term Financial Strategy, considered by the Cabinet last month. Priority has been given to those bids that are absolutely essential in order to meet statutory requirements or avoid official sanctions.

The second column of the table indicates which Council priority/ies the spending bid will support:-

C = Customer Service
A = Affordable Housing
G = Growth areas

PART A: QUANTIFIABLE SPENDING PRESSURES

	Relevant Priorities	SPENDING PRESSURES (£000) Key: R = Revenue spending; C = Capital spending	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12	
			R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C
		Environmental Services										
1	C,G	New refuse collection rounds			160		160		320		320	
2	C,G	Dry recyclable kerb-side collection contract			100		100		300		300	
3	C,G	Contract renewal & letting					10					
4		Depot move			30		30		30		30	
5		Fuel costs	10		10		10		10		10	
6	C,G	Road sweeping equipment/labour	90		90		90		90		180	
7	C,G	Footway sweeping equipment/labour	30	60	30		30		30		60	60
8	C,G	Litter picking crew			60		60		60		60	
9	C	Disabled Facilities Grants		70		70		70		70		100

	Relevant Priorities	SPENDING PRESSURES (£000) Key: R = Revenue spending; C = Capital spending	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12	
			R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C
10		Air Quality monitors – replacement		80			80					
11	G	EH post to plan for growth	50		50		50		50		50	
		Planning										
12	G	Assistant Urban Design post	40		40		40		40		40	
13	G,A	Development Control – growth areas.			90		158		226		203	
		Housing										
14	A,G	Housing Market Assessment – SCDC contribution to sub-regional work	30		10		10		10		10	
15	A,C	Choice-based Lettings	10		10		10		10		10	
		Community Services										
16	G	Northstowe Community Trust	25		50		50		50		50	
17	G	Additional Community Development Officer					40		40		40	
		Revenues and Benefits										
18	G,C	Revenues Assistants (2 x PT)	11		23		24		25		26	
19	G,C	Revenues Inspectors (1 x PT)	5		9		10		10		11	
20	G,C	Benefits Assessors (3 x PT)	11		11		23		35		36	
21	G,C	Fraud and Visiting Officer (1 x PT)			13		13		14		14	
22	G,C	Other costs	7		6		8		10		13	
		Legal										
23	G,A	Up to 3 posts financed by S106 developer contributions	-		-		-		-		-	

	Relevant Priorities	SPENDING PRESSURES (£000) Key: R = Revenue spending; C = Capital spending	2007/08		2008/09		2009/10		2010/11		2011/12	
			R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C	R	C
		Electoral Registration/Elections										
24	G	Growth in costs with additional population	6		11		20		26		34	
		Policy and Communications										
25	C,A,G	New Performance Management system	10	50	10		10		10		10	
26		Equality issues (eg, training & translation needs arising from statutory Equalities Schemes)	10		10		10		10		10	
		ICT										
27	C,G	Replacement/Upgrade of Business systems					50	800	50	800	50	800
		Accountancy										
28	C	Part time post	15		15		15		15		15	
		Transformation Project										
29	C,A,G	Training/development of senior managers	25									
30	C	Service First: Development of customer satisfaction surveys, mystery shopping, training etc.	15									
		TOTALS										
31		Overall spending on growth bids	400	260	838	70	1031	950	1471	870	1582	960
32		Allocations for growth in MTFS	400		700		1000		1300		1500	
33		Difference between growth bids & MTFS allocations	0		138		31		171		82	

PART B: UNQUANTIFIABLE SPENDING PRESSURES / POTENTIAL COSTS

Below are listed some potential areas for new spending. At present many of these are too uncertain to be included in the table in Part A. However, if only a small number of these generate additional costs, the financial implications could be substantial. There is also the possibility of the totally unexpected.

1. **Planning Delivery Grant.** Currently £300,000 worth of key posts are financed through this means. Should be OK until 2009/10. After then will depend on impact of changes planned to the PDG system.
2. **Northstowe and growth areas.** No provision has been made for a range of other possible service requirements – eg: community centres; management of the country parks; maintenance of open space, play areas etc; maintenance of drainage; potential additional levy from Internal Drainage Board; public conveniences; design and management of the Northstowe Town Centre (which will commence building at the end of the five year period).
3. **Growth Areas: Homelessness and Housing Advice** – there is a possibility of further costs in providing housing advice and dealing with homelessness cases, particularly as there will be more owner occupation and people may overstretch themselves. However, the factors affecting the housing market are unknown and may overall be better, given the increasing number of affordable homes.
4. **Arbury Park** – assumes that no costs falling on SCDC when current three year agreements end.
5. **Northern Fringe – Chesterton sidings; North-West Cambridge** – No costs allowed for in the five year period.
6. **Southern Fringe** – still too early to tell. It might be possible to meet community services needs from facilities in the Cambridge City part of the development. On the other hand it might be necessary to meet the capital and revenue costs of a community building in the South Cambs part. Could be up to £100,000 revenue.
7. **Cambridge East and Southern Fringe.** Costs may depend on whether existing parishes accept or press for new parishes.
8. **Cambourne** – may need to finance RSL funded community development post when current fixed term post comes to an end.
9. **Voluntary Sector Services.** Possibly increased grant requests for voluntary sector to cover costs of providing services to growth areas – eg CAB
10. **2012 Olympics** – pressure to contribute/enhance sports provision
11. **Migrant workers** – as a result of EU expansion and the greatly increased demand for labour for the growth areas; London Olympics etc. Might need to provide specialist services.
12. **Legal Services** – potentially higher levels of income could be gained through Land Charges and by the Council taking on Section 106 work with charges to developers. Similarly for housing development schemes.
13. **Pressures arising from the LSP, LAA and new Community Strategy.**

14. **ICT costs.** No provision has been made for Government initiatives to improve the use of ICT (eg “Government Connect”); the potential ICT requirements for further partnership working; technology changes etc.
15. **Climate Change costs.** No continuing provision has been made for currently unforeseen requirements – for example future energy costs; initiatives required by the Government; further initiatives in the growth areas.
16. **Customer Service.** No provision included for initiatives to improve customer service; respond to new demands; involve users; or for the Contact Centre to respond to increased calls from an increasing population. Nothing for customer service points at Northstowe or other growth areas.
17. **Recruitment/Retention/Costs of Employment.** No costs provided to meet potential future recruitment problems (except in Environmental Services) or changes in employment provisions etc.
18. **New statutory requirements/government initiatives** – for example, the White Paper and any further changes arising from changes of leader and government.
19. **Housing Options.** Depending on the outcome of the Stock Condition Survey, a new housing options appraisal would have financial implications. These may be significant (see previous Housing Options Appraisal Summary).
20. **Employment costs.** Costs arising from changes in employment legislation; recruitment and retention needs etc

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APPENDIX 2

POTENTIAL SAVINGS

Savings Categorisation

(After adjustments to reflect the effect of the proposals on HRA and Other funds.)

No significant impact – efficiency saving

(Note: no allowance has been made for any redundancy etc costs)
 (Note: There may be race, disability or other equalities implications with regard to some of the proposals, which will need to be assessed before the proposals are implemented.)

#	Saving proposal	Service	Saving in 2007/8	Ongoing Full Year	Comment/Impact
1	Contact Centre - underspend	ICT	47.3	47.3	Lower level of calls resulting in less staff needed to deal with our services. Reduced telephony charges through negotiation with County Council and NTL re use of the 0845 number. Budget provision for transferring the ICT helpdesk to the Contact Centre not needed as the helpdesk is being delivered in-house.
2	Budget for 2% savings for vacancies	All	181.3	181.3	General Fund savings only - does not include HRA, DLO or DSO. Risk: if no vacancies, no savings.
3	Printing costs	R&B	3.9	3.9	Reduction from using the Print Framework Contract; however, this printing is demand-led, so there is a risk saving may not be achieved.
4	Legal costs	R&B	3.2	3.2	These costs are also demand-led; and, there is a possible knock-on effect on income (less costs incurred, less income recovered).
5	Northwest Cambridge – payment from Horizons	Planning	5.0	0.0	
6	Policy and Performance - general costs/expenses	Policy and Communications	0.2	0.2	Split between staffing budget and service budget - will need to find other ways to conduct some studies/surveys.
7	Salary budget/general costs/consultants	Sustainability	1.5	1.5	Split between staffing budget and service budget - will need to find other ways to conduct some studies/surveys.
8	Community Strategy consultation – not required again for three years	Community Planning	6.5	6.5	Will next be required in 09/10.
9	Reduced revenue budgets	Conservation	3.9	3.9	
10	Recharges for sheltered housing	Housing	30.0	30.0	Partly due to reduced expenditure on sheltered housing; partly dependent on outcome of survey on use of communal facilities etc.
11	Strategic Housing costs	Housing	1.2	1.2	
12	Accountancy – Postage	Accountancy	0.8	0.8	

13	Mobile phones – change tariff	Facilities	2.4	2.4	GF worst case scenario; add'l savings estimated on Hsg & DLO/DSO.
14	Grounds maintenance around Cambourne HQ	Facilities	2.4	2.7	i.e. reduce budget by 50% (this is not the management fee to the business park).
15	Review budget for training and centralise/ reduce to achieve £50k net GF saving	All	50.0	50.0	Will reducing the training budget run counter to a CGI comment that we should be spending more on training ?
16	GTPD and Sustainable Needs Assessment	Planning	28.0	26.0	£60k budget in 06/07 for GTDPD. SNA no longer funded via LDF.
	TOTALS (£000)		367.6	360.9	Phasing of spend over 06/07-08/09 (£34k, £32k, £34k, respectively).

Internal impact

#	Saving proposal	Service	Saving in 2007/8	Ongoing Full Year	Comment
17	Library service - materials	ICT	7.9	7.9	Excluding statutory instruments and newspapers. Management will need to prevent multiple subscriptions.
18	Technology budget	ICT	7.9	7.9	Included in budget when ICT service brought back in house to provide specialist skills. Any computer room maintenance costs will need to be met from another budget; no external health checks on network management.
	TOTALS (£000)		15.8	15.8	

Internal impact – with staff implications

#	Saving proposal	Service	Saving in 2007/8	Ongoing Full Year	Comment
19	Staffing proposals		95.8	109.2	
20	Staff buses and extra travel allowance from move to Cambourne	Facilities	0.0	110.4	Due to terminate after 4 years, ie from 30/04/08.
	TOTALS (£000)		95.8	219.6	

Direct external impact

#	Saving proposal	Service	Saving in 2007/8	Ongoing Full Year	Comment/Implications
21	Web site enhancement	ICT	4.7	4.7	Improvements to enhance accessibility for visually impaired – not now government requirement. Accessibility issues included in additional service costs considerations.
22	Increase summons costs	R&B	23.7	23.7	Increase Council Tax from £52.30 to £65, NDR from £60 to £80. Requires approval from Magistrates Court. Could impact on those who are already income deprived. Could improve collection rates.
23	Phase out postal remittances as payment option	R&B	13.4	13.4	Not filling Rev Admin Asst post. Stop accepting postal remittances for some charges (e.g. council tax, rents) and phase out others. Reduced cash in transit costs.
24	Reduce Travellers funding or cap reserve	Planning	175.0	0.0	Cap reserve at £1m; assume ongoing full year costs match budget provision per MTFS, which from 08/09 is £138k pa.
25	Illegal encampments/Travellers	Community Services	3.9	3.9	Selling service/ staff time to neighbouring authorities.
26	Arts development (officers at village colleges)	Community Services	20.0	20.0	Arts support officers at colleges already on phased contribution.
27	Community services – holding back £100k of allocations to capital grant reserves in 06/07	Community Services			If less capital grants are paid out, there will be a slight increase in interest earned. The Portfolio Holder is reviewing future projects to identify further savings.
28	Museum Grant - Denny Abbey	Conservation	8.0	8.0	This portion of grant is re development costs; it does not affect the revenue support for the curator.
29	Reduce action on dogs	EH	17.3	17.3	Delete dog warden service except collection of stray dogs (statutory function, to be done by pest control operatives. Note: complaints of dog ownership, dangerous dogs, dog fouling, etc will no longer be dealt with.
30	Miscellaneous portfolio savings	EH	55.0	55.0	e.g. licensing income, refuse savings, recycling credits increase, various staffing cost savings.
31	Temporary Accommodation	Housing	60.0	60.0	Increased rents to meet management fee; reduced use of B&B; but, demand-led service, duty to provide.
32	Shopping Car Parks – charges?	Housing	11.5	11.5	1. Lease to PC at peppercorn; 2. PC has accepted lease (subject to terms); 3. sale of freehold to PC. (2 more in negotiation.)
	TOTALS (£000)		392.5	217.5	

Direct external impact - with staff implications

#	Saving proposal	Service	Saving in 2007/8	Ongoing Full Year	Comment
33	Milton Country Park – various measures to reduce costs or increase income	Community Services	75.0	75.0	Increase income through business sponsorship; increase visitor centre lettings; parking charges; reduce maintenance expenditure.
34	Conservation - ditto	Conservation	20.0	20.0	Additional areas for savings to be determined by Portfolio Holder
	TOTALS (£000)		95.0	95.0	

Direct external impact on priorities (customer service, affordable housing, growth areas)

#	Saving proposal	Service	Saving in 2007/8	Ongoing Full Year	Comment
35	Bin delivery charge for new householders	EH	82.9	86.6	Further legal clarification being sought. Dependent on actual number of completions and on customer acceptance
	TOTALS (£000)		82.9	86.6	
	SUB-TOTALS (£000)		1,049.6	995.4	

Other initiatives to be pursued/ Possible avenues for additional sources of finance

#	Proposal	Service	Saving in 2007/8	Ongoing Full Year	Comment
36	Seek funding from Horizons for growth area posts (arts, sports, conservation)	Planning and others			
37	Developer contributions to posts	Planning			Should be cost neutral, i.e. the relevant posts will only arise if developers fund them.
38	Charge developers for advice	Planning			
39	Potential future income from higher planning fees as a result of legislation	Planning			
40	CAB – swap grant for office space	Community Services			PFH suggestion - no work done yet to assess feasibility or quantify possible saving.
41	Agency staff	All			06/07 budget £189k, actual to date £165k, part funded by virement, other savings/efficiencies, grant support etc. Managers to consider all alternatives before incurring. To be investigated further.

42	Consultants	All				06/07 budget £2.0m, actual to date £0.4m. Includes Travellers Reserve £550k, Transformation Project £210k and ICT installation support £128k. Managers to consider all alternatives before incurring. To be investigated further.
43	Appointment costs (advertising, interview expenses, relocation expenses, recruitment fees)	All				06/07 budget £73k, actual to date £66k, part funded by virement, other savings/ efficiencies etc. To be investigated further.
44	Equipment costs (purchase, repair & maint, hire, lease etc)	All				05/06 budget £404k, actual £411k. 06/07 budget £398k, actual to date £228k. Managers to consider all alternatives before incurring. To be investigated further.
	DWP Admin Grant			56.0	58.0	
	TOTALS (£000)			56.0	58.0	
	TOTALS (£000)			1,105.6	1,053.4	at 2006/07 prices
	Re-base TOTALS to outturn prices			1,133.0		at 2007/08 outturn prices
					1,107.0	at 2008/09 outturn prices

Targets for 2007/08 are:-

- (a) Arrangements to allow service users to have a more active role in influencing service improvements.
- (b) A small number of realistic performance indicator targets to make incremental improvement in important customer facing services – eg planning applications; searches; benefits; environmental services; and housing repairs.
- (c) A Customer Service Review, six months after the introduction of customer service standards, incorporating complaints and a future programme for Service First
- (d) Realistic customer service targets for the continuing improvement of the Contact Centre.
- (e) A target for the number of affordable house completions
- (f) A target for the percentage of residential planning permissions which are for affordable housing.
- (g) A Community Development Trust for Northstowe.
- (h) Milestones for key stages of LDF, planning permission and Section 106 Agreement for Northstowe.

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MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Equalised savings but **further savings needed of £0.4 million in 2012/13 and £0.9 million in 2013/14** when balances are no longer available
EXCLUDING all the substantial costs for redundancy, early retirement and appointment of new staff resulting from the proposed restructuring of the second and third tier and the fixed term contract of the present Chief Executive

Base Budget	Actual 2005/06 £'000	Projected Estimate 2006/07 £'000	Projected Estimate 2007/08 £'000	Projected Estimate 2008/09 £'000	Projected Estimate 2009/10 £'000	Projected Estimate 2010/11 £'000	Projected Estimate 2011/12 £'000	Projected Estimate 2012/13 £'000
Transformation Project	15,428	16,803	17,012	17,443	18,319	18,818	19,288	20,102
Business Process Review (80% General Fund / 20% Housing Revenue)	0	324	(221)	(227)	(232)	(238)	(244)	(250)
Senior Management Team (80% General Fund / 20% Housing Revenue)	343	(108)	(144)	(148)	(152)	(155)	(159)	(163)
Savings Proposals to be approved at cash outturn prices, i.e.inc.inflation	0	0	(1,133)	(1,107)	(1,134)	(1,163)	(1,192)	(1,222)
Additional Savings required to maintain minimum balance	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	(402)
New posts - State of the Nation report, Cabinet 14/09/06		42	266	232	243	254	318	326
Provision for Spending Pressures due to population growth, etc.	0	0	400	700	1,000	1,300	1,500	1,700
Net Portfolio Expenditure	15,771	17,061	16,180	16,893	18,044	18,816	19,511	20,091
IDBs, Interest and Financing Charges	(3,832)	(3,531)	(3,026)	(2,612)	(2,284)	(2,106)	(2,042)	(2,038)
Net District Council General Fund Expenditure	11,939	13,530	13,154	14,281	15,760	16,710	17,469	18,053
Appropriations to/from Balances								
General Fund	(474)	(984)	339	(127)	(885)	(1,078)	(1,042)	(901)
Earmarked Reserves	0	0	(111)	(111)	(111)	(111)	(111)	0
ICT Reserve for nonrecurring revenue	(92)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Formula Grant amendment for population in earlier years	(24)	(60)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Budget Requirement for capping purposes (excluding parishes)	11,349	12,486	13,381	14,043	14,763	15,521	16,316	17,152
Formula Grant (2.5% inflation plus 50% of growth in tax base)	(6,266)	(7,114)	(7,562)	(7,830)	(8,108)	(8,396)	(8,690)	(8,994)
(Surplus)/Deficit on Collection Fund	34	82	0	0	0	0	0	0
Demand on Collection Fund	5,118	5,454	5,820	6,213	6,655	7,125	7,626	8,158
Tax Base for Tax Setting Purposes	55,076	55,954	56,909	57,921	59,143	60,365	61,587	62,809
Basic Amount of Council Tax	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
District only	92.93	97.48	102.26	107.27	112.53	118.04	123.82	129.89
Underlying Council Tax with no appropriations from the General Fund	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Balance or Earmarked Reserves	103.62	116.13	98.26	111.38	129.37	137.73	142.55	144.24
Balances at Year End	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
General Fund	(6,179)	(5,195)	(5,534)	(5,407)	(4,522)	(3,444)	(2,402)	(1,500)

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APPENDIX 5

Medium Term Financial Strategy – Action Plan

Action		Who	By When	Resources Required (See Note)
	Future spending			
1	All services to produce service plans showing the costs of providing services for the growth areas	Growth areas project team	April 2007	
2	Produce overall resource plan for the growth areas to assist future financial planning	Growth areas project team	June 2007	
3	All services to review spending needs as an input into the review of the MTFS	5 Corporate Managers	Sept 2007	
4	Review spending plans in the MTFS for 2008/09 onwards (Appendix 1) in the light of service needs, the Community Strategy and other changes	PS/AB	Sept 2007	
5	Review Workforce Plan to input into MTFS	SGC	Oct 2007	
6	First major review of the MTFS	PS/AB	Oct 2007	
7	All future strategies to include a resource summary	PS	From April 2007	
	Savings			
8	Identify realistic savings targets for Business Process Reviews for inclusion in 2007/08 budget (Jan 07) and achieve (March 08)	GB	March 2008	
	Investigate scope for the following savings and report to Cabinet by June 2007			
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximising funding from partners and other sources for growth areas 	Growth areas project team	June 2007	
10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inviting developer contributions 	Growth areas project team	June 2007	
11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charging developers for advice 	GJ	June 2007	
12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximising income through Northstowe – eg through car parks, energy generation 	Growth areas project team.	June 2007	
13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agency staff and consultants – further consideration before employing 	GJH/TBC	June 2007	

Action		Who	By When	Resources Required (See Note)
14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Costs of appointment of staff and equipment– investigate means of reducing expenditure. 	GJH/TBC	June 2007	
15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Savings in procurement 	SM	June 2007	
16	Achieve Council Gershon savings for 2006/07 and 2007/08	TW	To meet government deadlines	
	Value for Money			
17	Develop template for use in the 2008/09 budget process which enables value for money to be assessed with reference to unit costs, comparisons with other councils and performance standards achieved	PS	June 2007	
	Review, publication and monitoring of MTFS			
18	Consultation – consult on strategy using South Cambs Magazine and the web site	PS	Jan 2007	
19	Review MTFS in the light of the agreed budget and council tax and publish by March	PS	March 2007	
20	Report quarterly changes	AB	Ongoing	
21	Continue to press government for fairer system	GJH	Ongoing	
	Transformation project			
21	Identify and implement means of improving financial management through the 2 nd /3 rd tier review.	GJH		
	Capital programme			
22	Continue to review capital programme along with revenue spending in the MTFS	AB	October 2007	

Note: all the actions can be completed without additional resources – but may result in some cases in proposals which would require additional spending.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Council	23 November 2006
AUTHOR/S:	Chief Executive / Democratic Services Manager	

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE TRANSFORMATION COMMITTEE – 21 NOVEMBER 2006**Purpose**

1. To inform Council of the recommendations of the Transformation Committee in respect of the second tier reorganisation.

Background

2. All of the relevant issues are set out in the report to the Transformation Committee on 21 November 2006.

Options

3. Not to adopt, or to amend, the recommendations.

Implications, Consultations, Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

4. Information relevant to these sections is set out in detail in the report to the Transformation Committee on 21 November 2006.

Recommendations

5. Members are invited to approve the following recommendations:
 - (a) That Council note the revised second tier structure set out at Appendix A to the report to the Transformation Committee and approve the associated budget variances for the 2006/07 and subsequent financial years, estimated at £60,000 General Fund [best case scenario] and £5,000 Housing Revenue Account for 2006/07, and from 2007/08 ongoing revenue expenditure of £80,000 per annum and £45,000 per annum respectively.
 - (b) That, with effect from 31 December 2006, the combined post of Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer be made redundant as part of the Second Tier restructuring proposals and that the role of Monitoring Officer be reallocated to the Executive Director with effect from 1 January 2007.

Background Papers: None

Contact Officer: Richard May – Democratic Services Manager
Telephone: (01954) 713016

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Council

23 November 2006

AUTHOR/S: Chief Executive / Executive Director

JOINT PLANNING ARRANGEMENTS

Purpose

1. This report informs Members of the progress of local discussions about joint planning arrangements following Cambridgeshire Horizons' meeting with the Minister for Housing and Planning at the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on 11 October 2006.

Background

2. The Leader of the Council was invited, along with other Cambridgeshire local authority leaders to meet the Minister for Housing & Planning, Yvette Cooper MP, on 11 October 2006 to review progress on housing delivery and sustainable communities in the Cambridgeshire sub region, focusing on four key areas (see **Appendix A** attached):
 - a) Resources for growth – making the best use of available resources from public and private funding.
 - b) Recent progress on delivery in terms of (a) small sites; (b) medium sites up to 500 dwellings; and (c) the four or five major schemes.
 - c) Progress in strengthening capacity to deal with major housing applications in the local authorities as well as Cambridgeshire Horizons
 - d) Projected ability to deal with major planning applications over the next 5 years
3. At the meeting the interim findings of the review of Cambridgeshire Horizons were presented by consultant to the DCLG, John Walker. He identified three locally based issues for further consideration:
 - a) Lack of capacity and suitably focussed processes in South Cambridgeshire District Council when measured against the scale of the task ahead;
 - b) Shortages of resources and integrated processes between stakeholder authorities, particularly South Cambridgeshire District Council, but also English Partnerships; and
 - c) The need to be able to forward fund infrastructure commitments in advance of S106 receipts through a 'banker' mechanism.

The report goes on to identify seven options for action, ranging from the provision of additional resources, through to the imposition of an Urban Development Corporation.

4. Following the meeting the Minister wrote to Cambridgeshire Horizons on 20 October and said (see **Appendix B** attached):

' We will need to give further thought to how we achieve the quality and pace of delivery that will be needed. I want to be confident that we have the necessary structures, capacity (for example in progressing major schemes) and commitment to a shared leadership agenda...it is particularly important that we create arrangements

that allow public/private investment streams to be maximised...I recognise that authorities would prefer not to move to a statutory development corporation. The challenge...is for you and your colleagues to propose an alternative that is fit for purpose.'

5. The Leader of the Council subsequently received a set of proposals from Cambridgeshire Horizons for joint decision-making and joint working involving the Council, Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire Horizons. Those proposals were circulated to members by e-mail w/b 6 November 2006 and were referred to at the Cabinet meeting on 9 November 2006.
6. The Leader of the Council, Planning Portfolio Holder, Chair of Planning Committee, Chief Executive and Executive Director met informally with the City Council's Leader, Executive Councillor for Planning and Transport, Chief Executive and Director of Environment and Planning on 8 and 15 November 2006 to identify a number of mutual concerns with the Cambridgeshire Horizons proposals. These meetings and subsequent discussions and work by officers led the two district councils to present to Cambridgeshire Horizons' and Cambridgeshire County Council's Chief Executives a number of principles and objectives which any new joint arrangements must achieve. These are set out below:
 - a) The overall aim is to deliver the sustainable development strategy on time to achieve improvements to the quality of life in the district areas, by focusing development in strategic locations with key planning gain benefits such as affordable housing and sustainable transport.
 - b) The achievement of this aim is predicated upon there being sufficient resources available to facilitate and deliver growth, not only in relation to the planning process but also in relation to infrastructure and ongoing service delivery, with resources being drawn from both public and private sectors.
 - c) There must be democratic control and accountability not only in relation to development control decisions but in shaping the delivery of the whole growth agenda.
 - d) Joint working must offer the potential to use resources in the most cost effective and focussed way, based upon the skills and experience that exist within the district councils, especially those accrued as a result of planning previous new settlements.
 - e) Any new arrangements must ensure continuity of delivery and avoid uncertainty and disruption that could create delays in the implementation of imminent schemes.
7. In addition to these objectives and principles, there has also been discussion about the potential benefits of the County Council's engagement in joint planning arrangements. The nature of this engagement would depend upon the extent to which the County Council's planning powers could be brought into the arrangements. Further, it is recognised that Cambridgeshire Horizons have a valuable role to play as a non statutory local delivery vehicle, particularly in respect of coordination, commissioning and banking, and that those activities which add value to the growth agenda locally should be developed.

Implications

8.	Financial	The Council's medium term financial strategy sets out the current and future projected financial impacts of growth in the district. The successful conclusion of local discussions may lead the Minister 'to commit Government to provide greater certainty of support on investment for the future'
	Legal	Any changes to the decision-making structures of the Council will have to be agreed by the Council. S101 (5) of the Local Government Act 1972 and article 11 of the Council's constitution allows the establishment of joint arrangements with one or more local authorities and/or their executives to discharge non executive functions in any of the participating authorities. Under The Local Government Act 2000, the discharge of functions by another local authority are, in certain circumstances prohibited where that function is the responsibility of the executive. The Local authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Modification of Enactments and Further Provisions)(England) Order make the position clear.
	Staffing	Any proposals for joint working will have implications for the Council's staff in the Planning and other service areas.
	Risk Management	The delivery of growth in the district is a major challenge for the Council and is identified in the corporate risk management matrix. In respect of the current negotiations with Government there is a risk that the Government might impose a development corporation type model and relieve the Council of its development control functions in the growth areas.
	Equal Opportunities	None

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

9.	Affordable Homes	Future joint planning arrangements will have fundamental impacts upon all of the Council's annual priorities and corporate objectives
	Customer Service	"
	Northstowe and other growth areas	"
	Quality, Accessible Services	"
	Village Life	"
	Sustainability	"
	Partnership	"

Recommendations

10. Council is recommended to:
- a) note the contents of correspondence from the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) at appendices A and B, and to note that discussions with Cambridge City Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, and Cambridgeshire Horizons are ongoing and that any formal proposals arising from those discussions in relation to joint planning arrangements will be referred to the Council for decision.
 - b) delegate to the Leader, Planning Portfolio Holder and Chairman of Planning Committee the authority to continue discussions with the above partners, in consultation with the Leaders/Convenors of opposition groups and with all members of Cabinet.

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

Letters from DCLG attached as appendices

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Department for Communities and Local Government

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Leader
South Cambridgeshire District
Council
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
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HENRY CLEARY
Head of Growth Areas Division

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14 September 2006

Dear Cllr Bard

GROWTH IN AND AROUND CAMBRIDGE - BUSINESS PLAN AND REVIEW MEETING WITH CAMBRIDGESHIRE HORIZONS AND PARTNERS

I am writing to invite you to attend a meeting with Yvette Cooper MP, Minister for Housing and Planning, to review progress on housing delivery and sustainable communities in the Cambridgeshire sub-region. The meeting will be held here in Eland House at **4:30pm** on **Wednesday 11 October**. I am writing similarly to Sir David Trippier, the other local authority members of the Horizons board, and to John Lewis from English Partnerships. A full list of invitees for the meeting is attached.

Cambridge and its planning for growth have rightly achieved national recognition in terms of its commitment to sustainability, quality and forward planning for infrastructure such as transport. The scale of the challenge is unprecedented in recent decades - the new community at Northstowe is the largest development scheme since the 3rd generation new towns. The principal focus for the Minister's meeting will be to look, taking account of experience so far, at the challenge of the major housing sites such as Northstowe, and to consider whether the delivery arrangements are sufficient to generate confidence that these will be delivered to the planned timetable. There are four key areas that the Minister would like to focus discussion on:

- (i) Resources for growth - making the best use of available resources from public and private funding;
- (ii) Recent progress on delivery in terms of (a) small sites; (b) medium sites - up to 500 dwellings; and (c) the four or five major schemes;
- (iii) Progress in strengthening capacity to deal with major housing applications in the local authorities, as well as Cambridgeshire Horizons;

currently
running @ 882

Worshipful

- (iv) Projected ability to deal with major planning applications over the next 5 years.

As you may know the Government Office and ourselves have worked with Cambridgeshire Horizons to develop housing trajectories for the major growth locations, we will circulate the latest version to participants ahead of the meeting as background for the discussion.

You will also be aware that we have recently initiated the LDV Review for Cambridgeshire Horizons, undertaken by John Walker. An interim report should be available by mid-October. In common with other LDVs in the growth areas we are reviewing each, on a rolling programme, in terms of performance so far and whether this is the right model for going forward. John Walker has also been invited to attend the meeting to give a short summary of his interim findings, to aid discussion.

Please let me know if there are any other issues you wish to add to the agenda for the Minister's meeting. Please confirm your attendance to Bruce Collinson (Bruce.Collinson@communities.gsi.gov.uk) on 020 7944 8159.

I am copying this to Brian Hackland at GO-East.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JHCleary'.

HENRY CLEARY

GROWTH IN AND AROUND CAMBRIDGE -
BUSINESS PLAN AND REVIEW MEETING
WITH CAMBRIDGESHIRE HORIZONS AND PARTNERS

WEDNESDY 11 OCTOBER

4:30 PM - Eland House

Yvette Cooper MP	Minister for Housing and Planning
Andrew Wells	Director of New Housing and Communities
Henry Cleary	Head of Growth Areas Division
Brian Hackland	Regional Director, Government Office for the East of England
Sir David Trippier	Chairman, Cambridgeshire Horizons
Stephen Catchpole	Chief Executive, Cambridgeshire Horizons
Cllr John Reynolds	Deputy Leader, Cambridgeshire County Council
Cllr Ian Nimmo Smith	Leader, Cambridge City Council
Cllr Dr David Bard	Leader, South Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Valerie Leake	East Cambridgeshire District Council
Cllr Alan Melton	Fenland District Council
Cllr Ian Bates	Leader, Huntingdonshire District Council
John Lewis	Regional Director, Eastern England, English Partnerships
John Walker	

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Yvette Cooper MP
Minister for Housing and Planning

Department for Communities and Local Government
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E-Mail: yvette.cooper@communities.gsi.gov.uk

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Sir David Trippier
Chairman
Cambridgeshire Horizons
Endurance House
Vision Park
Histon
Cambridge CB4 9ZR

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Sir David", written in a cursive style.

20th October 2006

REVIEW OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE HORIZONS

Thank you to you and local authority colleagues for joining me to discuss the review of Cambridgeshire Horizons, based on John Walker's interim report.

We agreed that much good work had been done by Horizons and its member authorities in setting a framework for growth. However, it was clear that we are facing a major increase in the complexity and size of the task. Emerging conclusions from John's report highlighted significant concerns about current capacity and mechanisms for achieving delivery of the very challenging growth objectives set for Cambridgeshire, particularly in relation to the sites immediately around Cambridge, and including Northstowe. I was grateful for the open discussion of these issues, and for your positive response to the interim findings of John's report. I was encouraged by the shared views on the need for these major new schemes to achieve the very highest standards of design, environment quality, and services if we are to achieve our goals.

It is clear from our discussion that we will need to give further thought to how we achieve the quality and pace of delivery that will be needed. I want to be confident that we have the necessary structures, capacity (for example in progressing major schemes) and commitment to a shared leadership agenda. The review provides the opportunity for us to put this beyond doubt. Once we have reached that position, I am prepared to commit Government to providing greater certainty of support on investment for the future. While I valued the proposals you put forward at the meeting, I was not convinced that they were sufficient in themselves.

We also touched on Northstowe. It is particularly important that we create arrangements which allow public/private investment streams to be maximised. I am particularly keen that you discuss with John Lewis of EP how this can be best achieved.

I share your view on the importance of maintaining the valuable consensus among local authority partners which you have secured, and I hope that it will be possible to build on and strengthen that with arrangements which we can each support. I recognise in this context that authorities would prefer not to move to a statutory development corporation. The challenge, as we discussed, is for you and colleagues to propose an alternative that is fit for purpose. I am grateful for your agreement and that of local authorities to explore with John what this might be.

I look forward to hearing your further proposals after the work is completed. It would be helpful to have these by the end of November if possible.

Copies of this letter go to those who attended our meeting.



YVETTE COOPER

We should not be in any doubt about the importance of this.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO:	Council	23 November 2006
AUTHOR/S:	Chief Executive/Democratic Services Manager	

RECORDING OF MEETINGS**Purpose**

1. To consider whether Council meetings should be recorded electronically. In accordance with the Local Government Act 1972 and Standing Order 21.4, a Council decision is required if Members wish to take this step. Having previously agreed to pursue the recording of meetings in 2004, Council is now requested to consider this matter further.

Executive Summary

2. This report reconsiders the issue of electronic recording of meetings following the introduction of the Freedom of Information Act and in the light of the severe resource pressures facing the Council.

Background

3. On a notice of motion from Councillor Robin Page, Council on 26 February 2004 agreed that the legal, financial and practical implications of recording meetings should be investigated and a report made to Council (Minute 13.1). On 26 August 2004 Council agreed that sound recording, in the form of an MP3 player attached to the microphone system, at a cost of up to £1,000, be pursued. Following discussions in light of the previous Council decision, neither Management Team nor the Information and Customer Services portfolio holder were prepared to implement a recording system without detailed consideration of all the legal implications. For this reason the recording system has not thus far been introduced.

Freedom of Information Act

4. The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act came into force in January 2005. The Act allows members of the public and organisations to request transcripts of recorded meetings, should recordings exist. Tape recordings of meetings are, for the purposes of FOI, "information held in a recorded format" and would therefore be disclosable unless one of the exemptions applies.
5. Information is exempt if it is intended for future publication (FOI Act Section 22) but this can only apply if the whole of the taped recording is to be published. As a Minute is not intended to be a transcript of the tape, this exemption would not apply. FOI does deal with information due for destruction but great care has to be exercised before destroying information in accordance with an internal policy when an FOI request has already been made. In other words, even if the Council agreed that recordings should only be kept to assist in drafting the Minutes before being destroyed, it would be obliged to disclose the transcript of all or part of the meeting if a request was received before the tape was destroyed. Such recordings would not have the exempt status of the clerk's notes, therefore would be disclosable.

6. If Council was to agree to record meetings, the recording from Council meetings would be disclosable under the FOI Act for as long a period as Council chose to keep the transcript – the likely implications of this in terms of Officer time are explored below.

Consultation

7. This issue was raised at the August 2006 meeting of the Member Support Officer Network, to which all the relevant sections of local authorities in the Eastern region were invited. The following responses were made:
 - a. St Edmundsbury Council: record Council and Planning for reference while preparing minutes. Once the minutes have been confirmed, the tape is deleted.
 - b. Bedfordshire County Council: Stopped recording its meetings when the FOI Act came into force.
 - c. Cambridgeshire County Council: currently web casts its Cabinet meetings.
 - d. Only Peterborough City Council, a Unitary Authority, records its meetings and keeps those recordings. Peterborough regularly receives requests for transcriptions of its meetings, but it has the capacity to provide them.

Options should meetings be recorded

8. There are a number of options for the Council regarding how it uses recordings of meetings. **In all of the options that follow, the recording of the meeting would be disclosable under the Freedom of Information Act:**
 - (a) Use the recording only to assist with compiling the Minutes and destroy the tape once the Minutes have been drafted or approved (given that the Council does not produce verbatim Minutes of any parts of its meetings the use of recordings would, in the view of Democratic Services, be of limited benefit).
 - (b) Make the tape recording available to Members on loan. Council would need to consider for how long it will keep the recording of each meeting.
 - (c) Make transcripts of the meeting or a specific part of it on request. As with (b) above, Council would need to consider for how long it will keep the recording of each meeting.
 - (d) Make a full transcript of every meeting as a matter of course and destroy the tape once the transcript has been made. This would have a huge resource implication, as explained in paragraph 10 below.

Considerations in favour of recording meetings

9. The following reasons may be cited in favour of recording meetings in line with each of the options identified in paragraph 8 above:
 - Recording meetings encourages open government
 - Recording is not expensive, is quick and easy and takes little storage space
 - Full transcripts would prevent misrepresentation (specifically option 8(d))
 - In practice there are likely to be few requests for transcripts of meetings (specifically options 8a, b and c);
 - Recording would give an opportunity to make a defence against accusations
 - Situations in which more detail was required than could be included in the Minutes, for example investigations of allegations of misconduct

- Recording could assist the conduct of a meeting
- The tape recording of parliamentary debate acts as a precedent;
- Recording meetings in the absence of a web-casting service allows proceedings to be accessed by hard-to-reach groups who would not normally have the opportunity e.g. those without the means to attend the Council Offices in person.

Considerations against recording meetings

10. There are several reasons which may be cited against recording meetings. The following paragraphs should be read in conjunction with the options for the use of recordings identified in paragraph 8 above.

Resource Implications

11. As described above any transcripts held by the Council would be disclosable under the Freedom of Information Act. The Council is therefore likely to receive requests for part or all of meetings which have taken place which, unless the public was excluded from that particular part of the meeting, it would be obliged to disclose. This may have significant resource implications in terms of Officer time. According to Peterborough City Council it takes an officer about a day to transcribe an hour of meeting. Due to time taken finding the relevant point in the recording, it takes an officer about half an hour to transcribe a specific point made by a member. This Council does not have the resources to respond to a significant number of transcription requests and if Council does decide to record meetings, serious consideration should be given to how the extra work will be carried out. This problem is exacerbated if the Council chose to transcribe every meeting as a matter of course. Even if transcripts were only provided in response to FOI requests, there is some likelihood that individuals and organisations, for example the local media, would increasingly choose to request a full transcript rather than attend the meeting.
12. There are also concerns regarding the way in which transcripts disclosed under the FOI Act could be used to the detriment of the organisation, for example:
 - i. To allow requesters to quote selectively from officers and members in a misleading way;
 - ii. To leave Members liable to intimidation from pressure groups arising from comments attributed to them, for example regarding controversial planning applications;
 - iii. To lead to Members being selectively quoted by political opponents during election time;
 - iv. To erode collective responsibility;
 - v. The possible misuse of recorded information, especially by appellants following a planning decision or by political opponents during election time.
13. There is no available budget to meet installation and associated set-up costs. The price for the installation of a sound recording system would be a one-off cost of approximately £1,000. The potential cost in terms of staff time is explained above. Given the Council's financial position, the employment of additional staff to deal with the number of requests could be prohibitively expensive. Members may consider that officer and financial resources could be better directed elsewhere.

Storage

14. Although neither disks nor CDs take up a large amount of room, space is not limitless. Councillors will need to decide how long these records should be kept. Alternatively the records could be sent to the County archives.
15. It is possible that recordings of meetings could be held on the website, however, the size of the files may mean that only the most recent meetings can be held there.

Practicalities

16. If agreed, Council will need to decide which meetings will be recorded. Following discussions with the engineer who oversees the audio system in the Council Chamber, the officer suggestion is that only public meetings that are held in the Council Chamber be recorded. Any recordings will rely on the existing microphone system and so only meetings that are held in the Chamber could be recorded. There is a hearing loop which allows the use of microphones in other meeting rooms, and a second set of microphones, currently used in the Swansley Room. These facilities are not connected to the computer in the Council Chamber, however, so could not be used to record meetings using the equipment previously agreed by Council (see paragraph 3 above).
17. The recording will pickup a lot more information than what would be contained in the Minutes which would make the process of transcription more difficult, e.g. background conversations and noises. The clerk would also have to stop the recording if the meeting resolved to exclude the press and public to consider information which is exempt from publication.
18. The recordings would be unable accurately to attribute particular comments to particular Members. Whilst Members are on the whole invited to speak by the Chairman, there are occasions when they may interject during the course of a debate, for example to raise a point of order. The engineer has confirmed that it is not possible for the voting cards to identify which Member has spoken – the system identifies only that a particular microphone has been used. For the microphones to identify the speaker, each Member would be required to sit in the same seat for every meeting, and use the same numbered microphone. Given that the layout of the Council Chamber is constantly altered and the microphones removed, this would be difficult to achieve and would further increase the workload for the Officers concerned.
19. Another issue would be the need for the Chief Executive to interrupt the meeting to correct factual inaccuracies occasionally made by Members during speeches. Whereas factual inaccuracies can do not always need to be picked up, given that the Minutes do not provide a verbatim account of the meeting, the introduction of full transcripts as a public record would require the correction of any inaccuracies immediately.

Quality of Recording

20. There have been recent problems with the microphones. The inclusion of a recording system could have a detrimental influence on the system.

Summary of Implications

19.	Financial	The price for the installation of a sound recording system would be a one-off cost of approximately £1,000. Members should note that a budget would have to be identified. The employment of additional staff to deal with the number of requests anticipated would probably be prohibitively expensive.
	Legal	The implications of the Freedom of Information Act are discussed in detail above. Section 100 of the 1972 Local Government Act states that Councils are not obliged to record meetings. Should they decide to do so, a Resolution to that effect is required. Council Standing Order 21.4 provides that, "unless specifically authorised by resolution, no audio and/or visual or photographic recording in any format is allowed at any meeting of the Council, the executive (Cabinet) or any committee or sub-committee of the Council or the Executive."
	Staffing	Additional officers may be required if the Council is required to deal with frequent requests for transcripts of meetings or resolves to make full transcriptions of every recorded meeting as a matter of course. Under the Freedom of Information Act there are only limited circumstances in which requests for the transcript of a public meeting could be refused.
	Risk Management	Recording meetings could aid appeals against decisions made by the Council. There is the risk that comments that had little influence on the meeting could be taken out of context.
	Equal Opportunities	Recording meetings gives residents the opportunity to hear proceedings when they might not otherwise get the chance

Effect on Annual Priorities and Corporate Objectives

20.	Affordable Homes	Not applicable
	Customer Service	Would allow customers to hear a meeting, which they were unable to attend.
	Northstowe and other growth areas	Not applicable
	Quality, Accessible Services	Would make Council business more accessible to residents.
	Village Life	Not applicable
	Sustainability	Not applicable
	Partnership	Not applicable

Conclusions/Summary

21. The benefits and drawbacks of recording meetings have been explored above. Since the matter was last considered by Council in August 2004 the circumstances have changed through the introduction of the Freedom of Information Act and the need for the Council to identify savings as part of its future financial strategy. It is considered on balance that the drawbacks of recording meetings outweigh the benefits, therefore Council is requested to rescind its previous decision that the recording of meetings be pursued.

Recommendation

22. It is recommended that Council rescind its previous decision that the recording of meetings be pursued for the following reasons:
- a. The requirement under the Freedom of Information Act that recordings would be disclosable for the periods during which they are held.
 - b. There is no available budget to meet installation costs; Officer and financial resources could be better directed elsewhere.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report: Report to Council, 26 August 2004.

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

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Thursday, 9 November 2006

PRESENT: Councillor Dr DR Bard (Leader of Council)
Councillor Mrs DSK Spink MBE (Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder and Deputy Leader of Council)

Councillors:	SM Edwards	Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder
	Mrs VG Ford	Community Development Portfolio Holder
	JA Hockney	Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder
	RMA Manning	Environmental Health Portfolio Holder
	Mrs DP Roberts	Housing Portfolio Holder

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Holly Adams	Democratic Services Officer
Steve Hampson	Executive Director
Greg Harlock	Chief Executive
Debbie Lewis	Senior Revenues Officer
Simon McIntosh	Head of Community Services
Dale Robinson	Chief Environmental Health Officer
Jane Thompson	Cultural Services Manager
Tim Wetherfield	Head of Policy and Communication

Councillors RF Bryant, Mrs SJO Doggett, R Hall, Mrs SA Hatton, Mrs EM Heazell, Mrs CA Hunt, SGM Kindersley, MJ Mason, Mrs CAED Murfitt, CR Nightingale, NJ Scarr, Mrs HM Smith, RT Summerfield and RJ Turner were in attendance, by invitation.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors JD Batchelor and Mrs A Elsby. Councillor JA Hockney apologised in advance for having to leave the meeting early to attend a funeral.

Procedural Items

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Leader was authorised to sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2006.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following personal interests were declared:

Councillor SGM Kindersley	As an elected Cambridgeshire County Councillor (item 4)
Councillor RJ Turner	As an elected Cambridgeshire County Councillor (item 4)

**Recommendations to
Council**

3. GAMBLING ACT 2005 - POLICY

The Environmental Health Portfolio Holder, explaining that the draft policy had been considered thoroughly by the Licensing Committee, commended it to Cabinet and Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the Gambling Act 2005 Policy be adopted.

4. FULBOURN: WINDMILL ESTATE REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The Housing Portfolio Holder welcomed Mr John Walton from Nene Housing Association to the meeting and expressed her gratitude to the previous portfolio holder, officers, Nene Housing, members of the Windmill Estate Steering Group and residents of the Windmill Estate, all of whom had been involved in the project over the previous years. She confirmed that Nene and officers had resolved to the satisfaction of the majority of residents the previous concerns about bungalow requirements, and commended the recommendations to Cabinet.

Councillor Mrs SJO Doggett, local member for Fulbourn, expressed her continuing unhappiness with the scheme, which she felt did not address concerns from those homeowners who did not participate should there be any damage to their properties or other disturbance during the redevelopment works. The Head of Housing Strategic Services confirmed that the recommendations sought to include sufficient flexibility to adapt the scale of development and negotiations based on original conveyances would be undertaken with individual residents and through planning permission. The Council would work with tenants and owner-occupiers as much as possible if and when any such situations arose and Mr Walton understood that Nene Housing Association would bear any related legal costs incurred by the Council, including those as result of resolution of issues of non-participating residents.

Councillor NJ Scarr, local member, stated that he was happy to go along with the recommendations provided that it was always remembered that there were some residents who did not and might never wish to participate. The Housing Portfolio Holder assured the local members that the tender process for a contractor would ensure the needs of all residents would be met. It was imperative to begin the project for the benefit of the majority of residents, to remove the state of uncertainty over the redevelopment proposals under which they had been living. The redevelopment proposals had been initiated by the concerns of residents themselves, who had expressed their unhappiness with the existing dwellings which had limited, if any, potential for expansion and adaptation.

Negotiations were underway with Cambridgeshire County Council over the best use for their adjoining site and that owned by the Primary Care Trust, but if these were unable to be included, Nene could deliver 238 units across the footprint of the site of the Windmill Estate.

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that:

- (a) formal approval be given for a redevelopment scheme for the Windmill Estate, subject to necessary planning consents and Secretary of State approval;
- (b) the existing Council-owned properties and land be transferred to Nene Housing Association at nil cost;
- (c) the scope of any redevelopment scheme should, as far as possible, include all

- the existing area of the estate **subject to** existing tenants and owner-occupiers being willing and / or able to participate. Where necessary, plans should be amended over time to cater for changing needs and to provide flexibility to accommodate as far as possible the wishes of all the existing residents;
- (d) the preferred tenure mix and house types be as outlined in Option A which will provide 65% as affordable housing (comprising 124 rented and 52 shared ownership units) together with 35% as open market sales within an overall target of 270 homes;
- (e) the following conditions be attached to the approval of a redevelopment scheme:
- (i) that Nene Housing Association meet all legal costs and home loss / disturbance payments incurred by the Council in respect of the Windmill Estate since 2004/05 to date as well as any future payments and liabilities;
 - (ii) that any amendments to the scheme mix in terms of tenure and / or house types / sizes be agreed in consultation with the Council;
 - (iii) that the Council be entitled to receive nomination rights of 100% of initial lets and 75% of subsequent lettings of all social rented units provided through refurbished and new build affordable housing on the sites and that the Council receive 100% nomination rights in perpetuity to any shared ownership and / or other intermediate tenures;
 - (iv) that the Council not seek to use compulsory purchase powers to facilitate the redevelopment and that as far as possible the wishes of all residents (tenants, owner-occupiers and leaseholders) should be accommodated without compromising the wishes of others on the Windmill Estate;
 - (v) that Nene confirm and make provision to meet contributions previously agreed in principle to the Special Projects Officer role for 2006/07 and 2007/08 and consider future contributions if this post were to be considered essential by both Nene and the Council to delivery of the project beyond 31 March 2008; and
 - (vi) that an acceptable "construction code of practice" be agreed with the contractor that takes regard of non-participating residents; and
- (f) the Council exercise its discretion to waive any discount repayment liability in respect of any Right to Buy sales caught within such provisions if this would enable affected owners to participate in the redevelopment scheme.

**Recommendations to
Council and Decisions
made by Cabinet**

5. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY TO 2011

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder presented the report, which focussed on the General Fund, and highlighted the approach towards achieving a balanced strategy, as agreed by Cabinet on 12 October 2006. Future spending pressures had been examined and it would be possible to meet the target of £400,000 in 2007/08, although there would be additional work to identify pressures in future years; necessary savings had been identified, with every effort taken to avoid impacting on front-line services.

Confirmations were sought and given:

- additional funding did not exist currently to extend the plastics recycling bank scheme to include growth areas, and that officers would be seeking to secure section 106 funding from developers to increase bank provision;
- the Internal Drainage Boards, Interest and Financing Charges in Appendix 3B did

- not allow for a substantial increase in the levy on account of Northstowe; contributions to Arts Development Officer posts in Village Colleges had always been phased to decrease over time.

Cabinet was asked to choose between two options for the basis for the MTFS, as set out in Appendices 3A and 3B. The first, 3A, with a further £793,000 savings to be identified in 2007/08, would result in the General Fund balances achieving their target reduction to £1.5 million by 2011/12, with the Council Tax levied equalling the underlying spend per household the following year; however, an additional £1.4 million savings would be required in 2012/13 to maintain the minimum General Fund balance. This option would see the amount of council tax collected meet the level of underlying council tax, or average spend per household, by 2012/13.

The other option, 3B, required £1.133 million savings to be identified in 2007/08, and would achieve the target reduction of General Fund balances to £1.5 million by 2012/13 without further savings to be identified during that time, but the council tax collected would not meet the underlying council tax until the following year and balances would be affected from 2013/14 onwards. Option 3B, however, allowed for greater flexibility in future years and the Portfolio Holder commended it to Cabinet, citing the number of unknowns during the life of the MTFS such as the forthcoming White Paper on local government, the outcome of the Lyons review and possibly a general election.

Councillor SM Edwards proposed, seconded by Councillor Mrs DSK Spink, that Option 3B be recommended to Council as the basis for the Medium Term Financial Strategy to 2011, and that the MTFS be reviewed twice annually, in the autumn and in February / March as part of the final budget. On a show of hands this motion was **CARRIED**.

Growth Area Delivery Arrangements

Although not strictly related to the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Leader allowed discussion of this issue at this time. He clarified that the recent article in the *Cambridge Evening News* had been incorrect and the Council was not having its powers of determination removed. A proposal was being considered through which planning powers would be shared between the relevant authorities, thereby retaining democratic input. This situation was not unique to South Cambridgeshire and did not represent an inability to cope with the planning demands; rather, it proposed to join planning services between local authorities as was common practice elsewhere in the country. If this proposed joint planning structure proved acceptable to the minister, Cambridgeshire Horizons would serve as the delivery vehicle to prepare a bid which it was hoped would cover the majority of the growth area development. All members had been e-mailed on 8 November Cambridgeshire Horizon's proposed response to the minister and Council would consider the issue on 23 November 2006.

Cabinet RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:

- (a) approval of a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) based on Appendix 3B, the full savings in Appendix 2 and the following issues:
 - (i) the financial context for the strategy and the future issues facing the Council, in particular the growth agenda;
 - (ii) how the Council compares with other councils in terms of spending, performance and value for money;
 - (iii) how well the Council manages its finances;
 - (iv) clear objectives for the strategy;
 - (v) how the Council will deliver a balanced MTFS;
 - (vi) how it will improve future planning and link planning with its priorities
 - (vii) the future policy for the level of the Council Tax;

- (viii) the future policy for the use of capital receipts;
- (ix) how the Council will continue to seek efficiency savings and value for money;
- (x) how the Transformation Project will contribute to the delivery of the MTFS;
- (xi) how the workforce plan will be linked to the MTFS; and
- (xii) how the Council will monitor the MTFS and take action where financial targets are at risk;
- (b) approval of the spending plans in Appendix 1 for 2007/08 (based on the justifications in Appendix 5) for inclusion in the budget and to approve the spending plans for 2008/09 onwards as the basis for future planning;
- (c) approval of the capital programme in Appendix 5;
- (d) that officers be requested to investigate and report back on the "Other initiatives to be pursued / possible avenues for additional sources of finance" in Appendix 2 by June 2007, for consideration in the budget for 2008/09;
- (e) approval of the arrangements for consultation in paragraph 28; and
- (f) that the MTFS be reviewed formally twice a year (in the autumn and in February / March, in the light of the final budget), but that reports be made as part of the quarterly monitoring process at other times of the year when issues affecting the deliverability of the MTFS occur.

Cabinet **AGREED** to authorise the Chief Executive and Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder to prepare the final strategy for submission to Council.

Cabinet commended staff and portfolio holders for identifying substantial savings without significant impact on services.

6. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT POLICY AND FUNDING

Additional funding was required for mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants and the Housing Portfolio Holder, at her 8 November 2006 meeting, had agreed to vire £81,000 from underspends. She undertook to investigate adaptation timescales to ensure equality between all service users, whether private homeowners or tenants. The Environmental Health Portfolio Holder commended the Housing Portfolio Holder for the virement as an excellent example of joined-up working.

Members with concerns about individual cases were encouraged to speak to the Portfolio Holder and Executive Director after the meeting.

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** to support further approval for up to £100,000 to be released if required to cover priority cases and cases where statutory duty may not be met, the release of the additional £100,000 to be delegated to the Environmental Health and Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holders.

Cabinet **AGREED**:

- (a) to restrict the discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant costs for adult clients to £15,000;
- (b) to limit Disabled Facilities Grants for housing association tenants to £25,000 mandatory limit;
- (c) to charge Home Improvement Agency fees to housing associations on grant-aided housing association adaptations; and
- (d) the use of means-tested discretionary Disabled Facilities Grant monies to provide disabled clients' access to their home and / or parking for it, from outside of the curtilage of the property, to include waiver of property charge.

Decisions made by Cabinet

7. DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder updated members on the work in progress on the Disability Equality Scheme, for which he would be happy to serve as lead member. The full scheme would be brought to Council on 23 November 2006.

Cabinet **AGREED**

- (a) that paragraph (w) of the provisional action plan be re-worded to read “Run a Member training session for all councillors, using speakers from local disability groups”; and
- (b) that the Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder be lead member for the Disability Equality Scheme.

Cabinet **NOTED** the preparations being made to present a full draft Disability Equality Scheme to the Council on 23 November 2006.

8. LOCAL MANAGEMENT ORGANISATION FOR NORTHSTOWE

The Northstowe Development Trust Working Group had recommended establishment of a Local Management Organisation as the way forward to help meet the needs of the new settlement and make it a vibrant and sustainable community, and the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder encouraged Cabinet to support the principle of a trust and the proposed action plan.

Councillor Mrs VG Ford asserted that the responsibility to develop a fully vibrant community rested with the Council and, whilst she believed that a trust could be successful, it was imperative that it be democratically accountable and not an unelected bureaucratic quango. The Leader confirmed that the trust would be accountable to electors, and that work was underway to establish a sound financial basis for it.

Cabinet **AGREED**, in principle, to the establishment of a Northstowe trust, including representation from the surrounding villages, in 2007/08 and **ENDORSED** the following further steps now required:

- (a) commissioning detailed financial advice including the development of a business plan for the trust;
- (b) commissioning legal advice on establishment and running of the trust;
- (c) engagement with existing communities in and around the site to consider the benefits to the wider area and to identify key individuals who may become involved in the trust;
- (d) further work on a number of key areas such as the Energy Supply Company and IT Networks and their potential links to the trust;
- (e) a visit to Milton Keynes to learn more about the Trusts there and the relationship with English Partnerships and possibly a visit to Caterham Barracks; and
- (f) production of a plan for establishing the Northstowe Town Council.

Cabinet **NOTED** that it was proposed to bring a further report to Cabinet in spring 2007, once the outcomes of the next steps have been considered by the Northstowe Development Trust Working Group.

9. OPTIONS APPRAISAL FOR RESIDUAL AIREY UNITS

Council had approved the Airey redevelopment programme in October 2004, leaving only small pockets of stock outstanding, and the Housing Portfolio Holder commended the Head of Housing Strategic Services for the options proposed to take forward modernisation and / or improvements for these properties. The redevelopment would take place within the existing planned maintenance programme and officers would liaise with affected tenants as soon as possible.

Cabinet **AGREED** that

- (a) a pilot refurbishment programme be agreed for the following Airey homes:

Location	Number of Units	Shared Ownership	Rented
Teversham	8	3	5
Sawston	3	2	1
Elsworth	1	1	
Totals	12	6	6

- (b) if the Capital Finance Regulations are not amended to allow for a retention of 100% of the capital receipts from shared ownership sales then this matter be referred back to Cabinet at a later date for further consideration of the available options, including open market sales; and
- (c) if the shared ownership model should prove successful within the pilot programme then, subject to the outcome of further local consultation, a wider programme for the remaining 17 Airey units at Bassingbourn, Fulbourn, Coton, Gamlingay and Impington be approved.

10. CAMBRIDGE CHALLENGE - AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Cambridge Challenge initiative was imperative to ensure provision of affordable housing on the larger sites in and around Cambridge and at Northstowe. Concerns were expressed at the difficulty first-time buyers faced to get on the property ladder and it was hoped that this approach could help more young people become homeowners.

Cabinet **AGREED** that

- (a) the approach to Registered Social Landlord selection as proposed through the Cambridge Challenge be supported in principle;
- (b) the selection criteria and proposed weightings be endorsed on behalf of the Council by the Housing Portfolio Holder in consultation with the Leader and Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder; and
- (c) a further report on the outcome of the Cambridge Challenge be brought to Cabinet for consideration upon conclusion of the project in March / April 2007 prior to approval of any preferred lead development partner for the three strategic sites included in the scope of the project.

11. PLANNING SERVICES INSPECTION ACTION PLANS

The Audit Commission, following its inspection of the planning service, had included five recommendations, work on which already had begun. The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder congratulated the planning section for the outstanding achievement of being the first authority to have its Local Development Framework Core Strategy approved and attention was drawn to the letter from Baroness Andrews describing the Council's progress as "excellent". The Leader added congratulations to officers for doubling the within a year the number of major applications dealt with within thirteen weeks. Members expressed dismay that, in light of these substantial

achievements by a lean section compared to that of most authorities, there had been suggestions that the government wanted to take over the Council's planning powers, implying that the government's own new planning system had failed. The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder reported that Chris Elliott of the *Cambridge Evening News* had expressed his view that the Council's expertise gained at Cambourne and Arbury Camps would be wasted if the government intervened.

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder also noted that the number of planning applications coming before the Planning Committee was dropping and it was hoped to rationalise that body in the future, for example, moving to half-day meetings to reduce costs. The procedures governing members of the public speaking at Planning Committee were being reviewed and consultations were underway with other authorities on their experiences of residents making representations at meetings.

The Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder explained that the Planning Advisory Service was unable to provide planning training as intended and that Democratic Services were sourcing another trainer.

Cabinet, acknowledging that work on the majority of the key actions identified was already underway, **AGREED** that the following summary conclusions be adopted as an action plan to address the key actions required in response to the audit reports:

- (a) that a revised workforce plan be produced;
- (b) that a service recruitment strategy be prepared;
- (c) that the transformation plan address the capacity of senior management;
- (d) that an officer working group be put in place to identify alternative areas of funding;
- (e) that a local agents' panel / forum be established;
- (f) that a wider satisfaction survey of service users be carried out;
- (g) that householder advice be made more accessible through the web and through other means including leaflets and use of *South Cambs Magazine*;
- (h) that Service First customer service standards be introduced;
- (i) that an officer / member working party be established to recommend on revised Planning Committee arrangements including public / applicants addressing the Committee;
- (j) that the Service Plan properly addresses maximising service delivery of corporate priorities and objectives;
- (k) that results of Premier Division on comparative costs be reported to Cabinet;
- (l) that benchmarking comparisons within the Premier Division be reported to Planning Committee;
- (m) that delegation protocol be reviewed at the end of the year; and
- (n) that the conclusion of both reports about the financial uncertainties threatening service delivery be made part of the Council's case in respect of next year's Council tax.

12. JOINT PLANNING SERVICES

The Leader explained that, prior to the recent article in the *Cambridge Evening News*, the local authorities had been negotiating joint planning services, but that the situation was changing daily and the report to Cabinet had been withdrawn from the agenda and would instead be presented to full Council on 23 November 2006.

Standing Items

13. MATTERS REFERRED BY SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

None.

14. UPDATES FROM CABINET MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

Councillor Mrs DSK Spink reported that West Anglia Crossroads recently had moved to St Ives from Huntingdon and undertook to provide Democratic Services with the new address.

**The Meeting ended at 12.22
p.m.**

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a joint meeting of the Environmental Health Portfolio Holder
and Licensing Committee held on
Monday, 16 October 2006 at 10.00 am

PRESENT: Councillor RE Barrett – Chairman
Councillor R Hall – Vice-Chairman

Councillors:	Mrs PM Bear	EW Bullman
	Mrs SM Ellington	Mrs A Elsby
	Mrs SA Hatton	RMA Manning
	RB Martlew	DC McCraith
	Mrs CAED Murfitt	A Riley

Officers: Dale Robinson, Catriona Dunnett, Myles Bebbington and Maggie Jennings.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs HF Kember, RM Matthews, Mrs HM Smith and Mrs DSK Spink MBE

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 None.

3. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

- 3.1 The minutes of the meetings held on 10 August and 19 September 2006 were agreed as correct records.

4. GAMBLING ACT 2005 - ADOPTION OF POLICY

- 4.1 Members considered the Gambling Act draft Licensing Policy and covering report and noted that
- the Government had extended the timescale for the Council to approve and publish its policy; this was now 31 March 2007
 - the first date for accepting applications would be 30 April 2007
 - further guidance would be issued by the Gambling Commission regarding the suitability and layout of casino premises
 - this authority had not passed a 'no casino' resolution, but was aware that it had the power to do so
 - four letters had been received as a result of the consultation process
- 4.2 Some Members voiced their concern in reviewing the policy as training had not yet been given to Members on the Gambling Act, however on taking a vote it was agreed that consideration of the policy should continue. Members noted that training was scheduled for Friday, 17 November and all those present, except Cllr Mrs A Elsby who would be on holiday, indicated that they would be attending the training session. The Chief Environmental Health Officer informed Members that the policy could be re-examined if they felt it was necessary once they had received training, and reassured them that the policy before them complied with the appropriate legislation.

4.3 General discussion ensued relating to the following:

- Posters advertising GamCare Helpline should be *prominently* displayed
- Defer consideration of a 'no casino' resolution until regulations from the government had been received
- This legislation did not apply to Bingo premises unless the stake money was in excess of £2000
- Confirmation was given that it was the premises or land that were licensed and not the person
- Surprise was expressed that neither the Police nor the CAB had responded to the consultation

4.4 Careful consideration was then given to the contents of the policy and as a result, the following amendments were made:

- para 7.8 – delete *with* in the sentence named department *with* whom the Licensing Authority
- paras 6.4, 9.2 and 10.2 – delete *ordinarily* in the last bullet point ... cash terminals are *ordinarily* separate from
- para 8.1 – delete *both* and *and proportionate, or* in the sentence ... that door supervision is *both* necessary *and proportionate, or* if there is clear

4.5 In conclusion, it was agreed that a most frequently Question and Answer format regarding the Gambling Act policy be placed on the council's website and an information sheet to be provided for members in advance of the training session.

4.6 The Licensing Committee, subject to the amendments listed above,

RECOMMENDS to the Environmental Health Portfolio Holder that the Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Policy as attached as Appendix C to the agenda be approved and ratified and adopted by Cabinet and Council.

DECISION BY THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PORTFOLIO HOLDER

The Environmental Health Portfolio Holder

RECOMMENDS

to Cabinet and Council that the Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Policy be approved.

The Meeting ended at 11.20 a.m.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Licensing Committee (2003 Act) held on
Monday, 16 October 2006 at 11.20am

PRESENT: Councillor RE Barrett – Chairman
Councillor Mrs SA Hatton – Vice-Chairman

Councillors: Mrs PM Bear EW Bullman
Mrs SM Ellington Mrs A Elsby
R Hall RB Martlew
DC McCraith Mrs CAED Murfitt
A Riley

Officers: Myles Bebbington Catriona Dunnett
Maggie Jennings

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs HF Kember, RM Matthews, Mrs HM Smith and Mrs DSK Spink MBE.

2. MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

- 2.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 10 August 2006 were agreed as a correct record.

3. SUB-COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

- 3.1 The Committee

AGREED that the Vice Chairman of the Licensing Committee (2003 Act), Mrs SA Hatton should retain her Chairmanship on the Sub-Committee hearing panels, unless the Chairman of the Licensing Committee (2003 Act) becomes incapacitated for any length of time and she was required to undertake the duties of the Chair of that Committee.

The Meeting ended at 11.23 a.m.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Planning Committee held on
Wednesday, 4 October 2006 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor NIC Wright – Chairman
Councillor SGM Kindersley – Vice-Chairman

Councillors:	Dr DR Bard	RE Barrett
	JD Batchelor	Mrs PM Bear
	RF Bryant	TD Bygott
	Mrs PS Corney	Mrs A Elsby
	Mrs JM Guest	R Hall
	Mrs SA Hatton	RB Martlew
	Mrs CAED Murfitt	CR Nightingale
	JA Quinlan	A Riley
	Mrs DP Roberts	Mrs HM Smith
	Mrs DSK Spink MBE	JH Stewart
	JF Williams	

Councillors RMA Manning and Dr SEK van de Ven were in attendance, by invitation.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs VG Ford, Mrs CA Hunt, EJ Pateman and RJ Turner.

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Committee authorised the Chairman to sign, as a correct record, the Minutes of the meeting held on 6th September 2006, subject to:

- Deletion from Councillor A Riley's declaration of interest at Minute no. 9 (S/0625/06/RM – Longstanton) of the final sentence, namely "He was in any event considering the matter afresh at this meeting of the District Council's Planning Committee but, in order to avoid any possible conflict of interest, not vote" and substitution with the words, "Councillor A Riley further declared that he had attended a meeting at South Cambridgeshire Hall with officers and the developers of the site to resolve some of the outstanding finer details of the application and these were indeed resolved at that meeting. In order to prevent any possible allegation of bias or pre-determination on the part of Councillor Riley, notwithstanding that he was considering the matter afresh at this meeting of the District Council's Planning Committee, he did not take part in the vote."
- A correction to Minute 15 (S/0878/06/F - Great Shelford) in that Councillor R Hall's declaration related to no. 1 Woollards Lane rather than to no. 1 Spinney Drive.
- The deletion of the word "at" between Councillor CR Nightingale's name and the word "attended" in Councillor Nightingale's declaration in Minute no. 15

2. S/1669/06/F - GIRTON

The Committee **REFUSED** the application, contrary to the recommendation contained in the report from the Head of Planning Services, on the grounds of congested and overcrowded layout, loss of vegetation and lack of space for significant landscaping, adverse impact on the street scene, and the proposal being out of character with the immediate area. The application conflicted therefore with Policy 1/3 of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 and Policies SE3, HG10 and

HG11 of the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan 2004.

Councillor CR Nightingale declared a personal interest by virtue of his acquaintance with the developer, but remained in the Chamber and took part in the debate and voting.

Councillor Mrs HM Smith stated that she would not vote because she had entered the Chamber during the course of the debate.

3. S/1416/06/F - HARDWICK

The Committee gave officers **DELEGATED POWERS TO APPROVE** the application, as completed by ownership certificate and amended by plans received 18 September 2006, for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the completion (prior to 18 December 2006) of a Section 106 Legal Agreement relating to affordable housing, maintenance of public open space, provision of off-site surface water drainage facilities, and provision of public art, to agreement over access to the site compound, to the Conditions referred to in the report and to an extra Condition relating to the adequacy of visibility splays. If the Section 106 Agreement had not been completed by 18 December 2006, a Condition would be imposed requiring the same prior to the commencement of development works.

Councillor R Martlew declared a personal and prejudicial interest because his daughter is on the housing waiting list, withdrew from the Chamber, took no part in the debate and did not vote.

Councillor JH Stewart declared a personal and prejudicial interest because his son is on the housing waiting list, withdrew from the Chamber, took no part in the debate and did not vote.

Councillor Mrs DP Roberts stated that she would not vote because she had entered the Chamber during the course of the debate.

4. S/1158/06/F - SHEPRETH

The Committee gave officers **DELEGATED POWERS TO APPROVE** the application, the recommendation in the report being amended to enable officers to ask the applicant whether the wind turbine formed part of the application, as amended by letter dated 3rd August 2006 and amended drawing date stamped 15th August 2006. Approval, if granted upon confirmation that the wind turbine did not form part of the application, would be for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services and subject to the Conditions referred to therein. If the applicant wanted the wind turbine to be considered as part of the application, full details would be required, consultation undertaken and the application presented again to Committee for further consideration.

Councillor Mrs DP Roberts declared a personal and prejudicial interest because her husband's business is situated adjacent to the application site, withdrew from the Chamber, took no part in the debate and did not vote.

5. S/1663/06/F - SHEPRETH

The Committee gave officers **DELEGATED POWERS TO APPROVE** the application for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein, to consideration of the Flood Risk Assessment, and to any comments from the Trees and Landscapes Officer, that addressed the relevant issues.

Councillor Dr S van de Ven, the local Member in attendance but not a voting Committee member, declared that she was acquainted with a resident of Angle Lane. Upon the advice of the Head of Legal Services, she confirmed this to be a personal and prejudicial interest, withdrew from the Chamber and took no part in the debate.

6. S/1642/06/F - FEN DRAYTON

The Committee **APPROVED** the application for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein.

Councillor SGM Kindersley took the Chair for this item because Councillor NIC Wright was a local Member for Fen Drayton. However, Councillor Wright remained in the Chamber.

7. S/1406/06/F - STEEPLE MORDEN

The Committee **APPROVED** the application for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein.

8. S/1420/06/F - GREAT SHELFORD

The Committee **APPROVED** the application, as amended by drawing nos. 06032-01A and 06032-02 date stamped 1st September 2006, for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein and an additional Condition requiring the siting of external bat boxes.

Councillor CR Nightingale declared a personal interest as Chairman of Great Shelford Parish Council. He informed the Committee that he had taken no part in the Parish Council's discussion about this application, and was now considering the matter afresh.

Councillor Dr DR Bard had not attended the site visit on 2 October 2006, and abstained from voting.

9. S/1615/06/F - STAPLEFORD

The Committee **APPROVED** the application, as amended by drawing number 662/01A date stamped 25 September 2006, for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services and subject to the Conditions referred to therein, re-worded to specify landscaping requirements, to require agreement of the alignment of the fence, measures to guard against the incidence of honey fungus, and detailed measures to allow a degree of permeability at the base of the fence for small animals.

10. S/1603/06/F - WATERBEACH

The Committee **APPROVED** the application, as amended by letter and landscaping scheme received 25 September 2006, for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services and subject to Conditions 1 and 3 to 6 referred to therein, Condition 2 having been deleted.

11. S/0626/06/F - LANDBEACH

The Committee gave officers **DELEGATED POWERS TO APPROVE** the application for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the prior completion of a Section 106 Legal Agreement requiring a commuted sum in lieu of the provision of on-site affordable housing, and to the Conditions referred to in the report.

12. S/1539/06/F AND S/1668/06/CAC - THRIFLOW

The Committee **APPROVED** applications for planning permission and Conservation Area Consent for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein and an extra Condition removing Permitted Development Rights for walls / fences along the boundary of the site with the meadow to the north.

Upon advice from the Head of Legal Services, as the Monitoring Officer, Councillor JA Quinlan withdrew from the Chamber on the ground of perceived bias. He took no part in the debate and did not vote.

Councillor Mrs DP Roberts declared a personal and prejudicial interest because her husband's business relates to swimming pools, withdrew from the Chamber, took no part in the debate and did not vote.

Councillor NIC Wright declared a personal interest by virtue of his acquaintance with one of the objectors, but remained in the Chamber and took part in the debate and voting.

13. S/1653/05/F - WILLINGHAM

The Committee gave officers **DELEGATED POWERS TO APPROVE** the application, subject to the applicant agreeing to amend the application to one for consent for a temporary period of three years, subject to Conditions, including ones relating to drainage and fencing. Should the applicant refuse to amend the application in this way, it would be resubmitted to Committee for determination by Members. A proposal that the application be deferred was defeated upon the Chairman's casting vote.

Councillor SGM Kindersley declared a personal interest as a Cambridgeshire County Councillor, but remained in the Chamber and took part in the debate and voting.

14. S/1654/05/F - WILLINGHAM

The Committee gave officers **DELEGATED POWERS TO APPROVE** the application, subject to the applicant agreeing to amend the application to one for consent for a temporary period of three years, subject to Conditions, including ones relating to drainage and fencing. Should the applicant refuse to amend the application in this way, it would be resubmitted to Committee for determination by Members.

15. S/1238/06/F - OVER (PARISH OF WILLINGHAM)

The Committee **APPROVED** the application, as amended by plans date stamped 16 August and 6 September 2006, (drawings no. 2554/06/04a and site location plan) , for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein and an additional Condition requiring window glass in the southern elevation to be obscure.

Councillor A Riley declared a personal interest as a customer of the farm shop and pet shop currently on site, but remained in the Chamber and took part in the debate and voting.

16. S/0788/06/F - WILLINGHAM

The Committee gave officers **DELEGATED POWERS TO APPROVE** the application, subject to the applicant agreeing to amend the application to one for consent for a

temporary period of three years, subject to Conditions, including ones relating to drainage and fencing. Should the applicant refuse to amend the application in this way, it would be resubmitted to Committee for determination by Members.

17. S/0264/06/F - OVER

The Committee gave officers **DELEGATED POWERS TO APPROVE** the application, as amended by drawings QCO-PL-03 and QCO-PL-01B, for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein and to a meeting taking place between officers, local Members and the developer to resolve the car parking issues.

18. S/1308/06/F - CHILDERLEY

The Committee **APPROVED** the application for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein, an additional Condition requiring a scheme of noise attenuation, and any revision of the Section 106 Legal Agreement deemed necessary.

19. S/1560/06/F - CALDECOTE

The Committee **APPROVED** the application for the reasons set out in the report from the Head of Planning Services, subject to the Conditions referred to therein.

20. S/1548/06/F AND S/1547/06/LB - FOWLMERE

The Committee gave officers **DELEGATED POWERS TO APPROVE** applications for planning permission and Listed Buildings Consent, subject to the receipt of amended drawings relating to treatment of the west elevation and noise attenuation of the proposed accommodation block, and to Conditions referred to in the report from the Head of Planning Services.

Councillor Mrs DP Roberts declared a personal interest as a member of Fowlmere Parish Council, but was considering this application afresh.

21. APPEALS AGAINST PLANNING DECISIONS AND ENFORCEMENT ACTION

The Committee noted a report on Appeals against planning applications and enforcement action and, in particular, written summaries of decisions relating to:

- Mr and Mrs S Sharpe – Erection of dwelling and reorganisation of restaurant car park - 1 Church Street, Little Shelford – Appeal dismissed
- Persimmon Homes – Retention of Walls (temporary period 2 years) - High Street, Longstanton – Planning and enforcement appeals dismissed

22. ENFORCEMENT ACTION

The Committee noted a report on enforcement action ongoing as at 4th October 2006.

The Meeting ended at 2.05 p.m.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Standards Committee held on
Wednesday, 8 November 2006.

PRESENT: Mr D Gilbertson (Independent Member) – Chairman

Members:	Mr P Brindle	Independent Member
	RF Bryant	District Council Member, Independent Group
	EW Bullman	District Council Member, Conservative Group
	Ms G Butcher	Independent Member
	Mrs GM Everson	Parish Member
	Mr M Farrar	Parish Member
	Ms M Good	Independent Member
	Mrs CA Hunt	District Council Member, Conservative Group
	A Riley	District Council Member, Independent Group
	Mr E Revell	Independent Member
	Mrs VM Trueman	District Council Member, Liberal Democrat Group
	Dr SEK van de Ven	District Council Member, Liberal Democrat Group
Officers:	Holly Adams	Democratic Services Officer
	Fiona McMillan	Assistant Solicitor and Deputy Monitoring Officer
	Colin Tucker	Head of Legal Services and Monitoring Officer

Councillors JD Batchelor, Mrs DP Roberts and RT Summerfield and K Barrand (Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils) were in attendance, by invitation.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor NN Cathcart and Mr D Kelleway.

1. INTRODUCTIONS AND APOLOGIES

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, congratulated Ms G Butcher, Ms M Good and Mr E Revell on their appointment as Independent members of the Standards Committee and welcomed them to their first meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A Riley declared a personal interest in Item 15 as one of the members referred to in the case reports.

3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Committee, at its August 2006 meeting, had been asked to consider whether it would be necessary, in light of coming legislation making it mandatory to have an independent Chairman, also to have an independent Vice-Chairman. The Deputy Monitoring Officer explained that it was already mandatory in Wales to have both an independent Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Monitoring Officer advised that independent members did not need to declare an interest in the matter.

An independent Vice-Chairman was seen as a logical extension of having an independent Chairman, which would strengthen the focus and enhance the credibility of the Committee amongst residents by being seen to be distinct from the political aspects of the Council. On a show of hands the Committee **AGREED** that it supported the principle of an independent Vice-Chairman.

Some members of the Committee expressed concern that the background and experience of the newly-appointed independent members were unknown to them, and the Committee **AGREED** to appoint a Vice-Chairman *pro tem* to serve until the February 2007 Committee meeting.

Councillor RF Bryant proposed, seconded jointly by Mrs GM Everson and Mr M Farrar, that Mr P Brindle serve as Vice-Chairman *pro tem*. Councillor A Riley proposed, seconded by Councillor Mrs CA Hunt, that Councillor Mrs VM Trueman continue to serve as Vice-Chairman *pro tem*. A vote was taken and it was **AGREED** that Mr P Brindle serve as Vice-Chairman *pro tem*.

Mr Brindle thanked the committee and he and the Chairman individually thanked Councillor Mrs Trueman for her diligent service as Vice-Chairman.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Chairman was authorised to sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of 9 August 2006.

In response to a query from Mrs GM Everson, it was confirmed that district councillors who were not Committee members could speak at meetings with the agreement of the Chairman, but that members of the public could not.

5. PROCEDURE FOR LOCAL INVESTIGATION OF REFERRED COMPLAINTS

At the last meeting of the Standards Committee it had been agreed that the procedure for local investigations be referred to an extra-ordinary meeting but, when this had proven impossible to schedule, the procedure had been brought to this meeting. The Deputy Monitoring Officer thanked Councillor A Riley and Mr M Farrar for their comments and hard work reviewing this and the local hearing procedure, explaining that many of their comments had been incorporated into the revised draft. The Standards Committee currently had a remit to conduct an investigation locally only after an Ethical Standards Officer (ESO) referred a case, but in the future the Standards Committee would be managing all complaints. Two local investigations so far had been completed following the Standards Board for England (SBE) guidance, but a local procedure would draw together in one document both the SBE guidance and all relevant legislation.

At the request of the Standards Committee, the Deputy Monitoring Officer had written to the Chief Executive of the SBE, David Prince, and this letter and the response were included in the agenda. Attention was drawn to Mr Prince's comments that "proposals are currently being developed to transfer the responsibility for the initial filtering of allegations to standards committees", which the Chairman clarified as referring to upcoming draft legislation and statutory instruments. Members also considered Mr Prince's statement that "all reports which conclude that there has been a breach of the code of conduct will therefore require a hearing...", which seemed to curtail the authority of ESOs and which would have serious financial consequences for the District Council. The Deputy Monitoring Officer undertook to respond to Mr Prince seeking clarification of his statement about proposals being developed and to express the Standards Committee's surprise at the removal of the right of an ESO to determine that no action be taken. It was agreed that a draft of her letter would first be circulated to Standards Committee members.

The Chairman explained that the move to increase the number of local investigations had arisen from the 2004 review of the investigatory process, through which the majority of Standards Committees and Monitoring Officers requested the ability to conduct local investigations, rather than a change in policy by the SBE made purely for financial

reasons. The Chairman had raised with the Chief Executive in October 2005 the likely financial implications and the Standards Committee would be submitting a Business Plan to determine a budget to cover the likely workload, but there was no guarantee that a budget could be established.

There was no immediate urgency to adopt a local investigations procedure, as the existing SBE guidance could continue to be followed. Other than officer time already spent looking at a local procedure, there were no financial implications for deferring a decision until after the new legislation expected in early 2008. However, the Monitoring Officer confirmed that the nationally-issued SBE guidance was easy to follow, but lacked local insight into the role of parish councils. Councillor Riley proposed, seconded by Councillor Mrs CA Hunt, that a decision on a procedure for local investigation of referred complaints be **DEFERRED** until the new legislation had been published and further information from the SBE had been received. On a show of hands the proposal was **DEFEATED**.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer then addressed policy areas highlighted by Committee members:

The Final Report, paragraphs 6(b)(i) and (ii) of the draft procedure

This information was current law and could not be overruled, although aspects of it probably would be addressed in the forthcoming legislation.

Role of Investigating Officer / Monitoring Officer, paragraph 2(a) of the draft procedure

The Monitoring Officer could pass the investigation job to an "Investigating Officer", the job title of which was not derived from statute, but which covered the role. Although a delegation process existed, there were questions about resourcing and budgetary implications about appointing an outside firm. It was not necessary for the Investigating Officer to be legally trained and officers were consulting with other local authorities about their experiences with various organisations which provided investigatory services.

Withholding Name of Complainant

There were differing opinions on offering anonymity to the complainant: it could prevent a complainant from potential intimidation and harassment, but could disadvantage the subject member, making it difficult to prepare a defence and identify relevant witnesses. The Deputy Monitoring Officer clarified that the identity of the complainant could be kept anonymous only until certain safeguards were established to protect all parties, for example, ensuring that both parties did not attend the same meetings.

Response Time for Subject Member

There was general agreement that the subject member should have thirty days to respond to the Investigating Officer in writing, the previous timeframe of fourteen days being felt too short.

Conclusion

The Standards Committee, with ten in favour and two against, **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the Procedure for Local Investigations of Referred Complaints be adopted and included in the Constitution, subject to the following amendments:

- (a) Introduction and Summary, second sentence: "This procedure ~~applies~~ **will apply** to the investigation of allegations of breaches of the authority's Code of Conduct ~~for Members for both district and parish councils~~ **by elected and co-opted members of the authority and to breaches of the Parish Council Code of Conduct by parish councillors, and the word 'Councillor' is to be taken to refer to all such persons.**"
- (b) Paragraph 2(b)(ii): "The identity of the person making the allegation (unless **on the rare occasion at the outset of the investigation where** identification of the

- complainant might prejudice the investigation or put the complainant at risk, **this grant of anonymity being subject to constant review**”;
- (c) Paragraph 2(f): “In notifying the Councillor of receipt of the allegation, the Monitoring Officer shall request the Councillor to respond to the Investigating Officer within ~~44~~ **30** days of notification...”
 - (d) Paragraph 3(d): “Following notification **of the allegation** to the Councillor...”;
 - (e) Paragraph 3(f)(iii), additional sentence: “**All interviews will be tape-recorded.**”;
 - (f) Paragraph 3(g): “...~~such fees or allowances as he considers to be appropriate~~ all costs incurred, fees and professional charges subject to the maxima set by the authority”.
 - (g) The word “member” replaced with “councillor” throughout; and
 - (h) The word “shall” replaced with “will” throughout.

On behalf of the Standards Committee, the Chairman thanked the Deputy Monitoring Officer for the diligent and professional way in which she produced the draft procedure and associated report.

6. PROCEDURE FOR LOCAL STANDARDS HEARINGS

This local hearings procedure, like the local investigations procedure, had been referred to an extra-ordinary meeting of Standards Committee which had proven impossible to schedule and therefore the procedure was referred to this meeting. The Deputy Monitoring Officer explained that the Council had a local hearings procedure enshrined in the Constitution, but that this procedure had not been reviewed since the Constitution was written in 2001 and now required updating to incorporate more recent legislation. The draft procedure combined into one document the relevant legislation with Standards Board for England (SBE) guidance.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer, correcting a statement made by Councillor Mrs VM Trueman, confirmed that the previous Monitoring Officer had attended only as a witness at the first local hearing and had not fulfilled any other role during the pre-hearing process and subsequently; the Deputy Monitoring Officer had served as Monitoring Officer throughout that particular case.

The Democratic Services Officer agreed that she or her colleagues would present a pre-hearing process summary report if required.

With no members voting against, the Standards Committee **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** that the revised Procedure for Local Standards Hearings be adopted, replacing the existing Local Standards Hearings Procedure at Part 5 Section M of the Constitution, subject to the following amendments:

- (i) Paragraph 1(a), first sentence: “**‘Councillor’ is to be taken to refer to the elected or co-opted member of the authority or to the parish councillor** who is the subject of the allegation being considered by the Standards Committee, unless stated otherwise.”;
- (j) Paragraph 1(b), final sentence: “...(which may be the Monitoring Officer, ~~and~~ **or** his or her nominated representative).”;
- (k) Paragraph 9(b), first sentence: “The Chairman will ask the ~~legal adviser~~ **Monitoring Officer** or the Democratic Services Officer to present his report...”;
- (l) Paragraph 9(b), footnote 9: add “**continued overleaf**”;
- (m) Paragraph 9(c)(iii), final line: “...the Standards Committee **should** seek the advice of the Investigating Officer or the witness.”; and
- (n) To remove the division between the procedure following an ESO’s report and those which follow a local investigation.

Mr M Farrar requested that the Standards Committee at its next ordinary meeting review the membership of the Parish Council Standards Sub-Committee, acknowledging that the Sub-Committee had not met for four years due to lack of business.

7. ELTISLEY PARISH COUNCIL: REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION

The Committee had received a request for a dispensation from a recently co-opted member of Eltisley Parish Council who lived at Caxton End, Eltisley. At its May 2006 meeting the Committee previously had granted a dispensation to other Eltisley Parish Councillors who lived at Caxton End. The Chairman acknowledged some members' views that these requests rested upon hypothetical cases and could be construed by some as a waste of officer time and taxpayers' money, but defended the Monitoring Officer's advice to parish councils as being in line with the current legislation and the Committee being statute-bound to receive dispensation requests. The Monitoring Officer explained that he had a responsibility to all district and parish councillors to advise on the rules and that it was up to the councillors themselves to decide how to act upon the advice.

The Deputy Monitoring Officer confirmed that the forthcoming Code of Conduct review probably would amend these issues and it was noted that the Committee had received only three dispensation requests in four years.

The Standards Committee **AGREED**

- (a) to grant a dispensation to Mr John Pettifor of Eltisley Parish Council from any item concerning Caxton End, Eltisley, the dispensation to be in place initially until May 2007 and then reviewed by the Standards Committee; and
- (b) to require Parish Councillor Pettifor to declare an interest in matters in which he has been granted this dispensation and to declare the existence of this dispensation.

8. CROXTON PARISH COUNCIL: REQUEST FOR A DISPENSATION

The Committee considered this request in conjunction with the request from Eltisley Parish Council and **AGREED** to grant a dispensation to Mr A Lintott, Mr S Ingram and Mrs N Spenser from any item concerning High Street, Croxton, and to require Parish Councillors Lintott, Ingram and Spenser to declare an interest in matters in which they have been granted this dispensation and to declare the existence of this dispensation.

9. WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

Cabinet had considered and supported the Whistleblowing Policy at its 14 September 2006 meeting, but had referred it back to the Standards Committee for comment on two changes:

- (a) the Internal Audit Manager's becoming the first point of contact, rather than the Monitoring Officer; and
- (b) the re-wording of paragraph 3.1 to include a reference to Members.

Councillor SM Edwards reassured members that the Council currently was tendering to appoint the internal auditors for a three- or four-year appointment, therefore the Internal Audit Manager would not be changing frequently.

The Standards Committee approved the two changes previously made and **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that the revised Whistleblowing Policy be adopted as Council policy, subject to:

- (a) the inclusion of an additional example at paragraph 2.5: "discrimination against or favouritism towards clients, customers or members of staff";

- (b) the Standards Committee being involved in the re-launch of the policy.

The Chairman noted that the policy, as drafted, preserved the Standards Committee's responsibility of overview (Paragraphs 12.1 and 12.2 of the policy) and thanked those members and officers on the working group who had prepared the revised policy.

10. **APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT MEMBERS TO THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE**

The Council report on the appointment of independent members was included in the agenda for information. The Deputy Monitoring Officer drew attention to the best practice guidance which had been distributed at the Fifth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees in October and which followed closely the procedure of the recent appointments exercise.

Mrs GM Everson and the Chairman regretted that a number of e-mails sent by committee colleagues and others prior to the interview process had, by implication, impugned the integrity and fairness of the interview panel members. The Chairman urged such individuals to consider the words that they use and the impact that they might have.

The Standards Committee **AGREED** to establish an Appointments Procedure Task and Finish Group to consider the manner in which independent and parish members were appointed to the Standards Committee and to make recommendations to the Committee, the membership to be:

- Ms G Butcher;
- Mrs GM Everson;
- Mr E Revell;
- Councillor A Riley; and
- Councillor Mrs VM Trueman.

11. **BRIDGING THE GAP: STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND FIFTH ANNUAL ASSEMBLY, BIRMINGHAM, 16-17 OCTOBER 2006**

Due to the high demand for places at the Fifth Annual Assembly of Standards Committees, and limited Council resources, only the Deputy Monitoring Officer had been able to attend. Copies of all the papers issued were available to members for collection and for download from the Standards Committee's website.

Key points from the conference were:

- the revised Code of Conduct would be issued for consultation within the next few weeks with a consultation deadline of the end of December 2006. An extraordinary meeting of Standards Committee would be arranged, almost certainly at short notice, to which all members were urged to attend. Parliamentary approval was expected in January or February 2007 with the revised Code of Conduct in place in time for May elections and all local authorities would be expected to adopt it shortly afterwards;
- the Standards Board for England would be holding a series of twelve roadshows across the country in 2007 to re-launch the Code of Conduct and would be issuing a new training DVD;
- the Standards Board for England was lobbying the government for resources and the percentage of funds available to County and Metropolitan authorities was disproportionately high for the smaller number of cases involving their members compared to those involving District or Parish Councillors;
- guidance was expected on a local filtering process for complaints; and
- there was a perceived conflict of interest between the Standards Committee receiving notification of all complaints and also conducting hearings, which could

be settled by establishment of separate sub-committees to filter and hear cases.

The Standards Committee's first newsletter would be published shortly. It would include a general advice page addressing the most common areas of concern raised by parish councillors and would invite questions, including anonymous questions, from district and parish councillors seeking guidance on planning issues, the Code of Conduct, declaring interests, etc.

The Standards Committee **NOTED** the comments made by the Deputy Monitoring Officer.

12. OPERATION OF MEMBERS' CODE

The Chairman read the following statement: "In the light of recent comments by elected members in the press, and in e-mails circulated to elected members, officers and others in this authority, I feel that it is important that clarification be given in relation to the Members Code of Conduct, particularly those elements of the statutory framework which deal with 'Personal Interests'; 'Prejudicial Interests', 'Pre-Determination' and 'Bias'.

"Part of the role of the Standards Committee is to actively promote and maintain the highest standards of conduct by members and co-opted members of the authority, and, to monitor and advise the Council of the operation of the Members Code. Implicit in this obligation is the requirement placed upon us, as a Committee, to ensure that errors of interpretation are promptly corrected. References to 'gagging orders' and the like, which have no basis in fact or practice, are particularly unhelpful and present a distorted and inaccurate picture to colleagues and local people.

"At my request, the Monitoring Officer has prepared a note which sets out the legal position, a copy of which has been given to all committee colleagues. It will also form part of the Minutes of this meeting. I would urge all elected members, and others, to read it. I draw particular attention to the final paragraph in which the Monitoring Officer confirms that he is always willing to provide advice and assistance to Members and Officers on issues related to interpretation of the Code, should such individuals be unsure of the extent to which the statutory framework applies to them."

Copies of the statement and the Monitoring Officer's note were circulated and published in the 9 November 2006 SCDC Councillors' Weekly Bulletin. The Monitoring Officer explained that the legal team found they often had to advise on the same issues and, while he acknowledged that some members did not like the Code of Conduct and found it restrictive, he asked that it be understood that he was bound by statutory requirements as Monitoring Officer to give specific advice and to take specific actions. He could advise on the Code of Conduct, but it was up to members to decide how to act upon that advice. Members who breached their obligations under the Code of Conduct, to which they agreed upon election, risked bringing additional difficulties to the entire Council, for example, if a significant piece of work were to be set aside by the courts because action by an elected member had been considered to be in breach of the Code and thereby maladministration.

The Monitoring Officer clarified that rules of pre-determination and bias were not statutory but created by judges; he cautioned that courts were taking action of "anxious scrutiny" and were quick to intervene where they feel there could be implications of pre-determination and bias. He encouraged members to contact him if they wanted further details of the cases summarised in his note.

The Standards Committee **NOTED** the statement of the Chairman and the note of the Monitoring Officer.

13. ADVICE TO, AND TRAINING OF, DISTRICT AND PARISH COUNCIL MEMBERS IN RELATION TO THE MEMBERS' CODE

Following consultation with, and the agreement of, the Resources, Staffing, Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder, the Deputy Monitoring Officer had engaged Peter Keith-Lucas of Bevan Brittan Solicitors to conduct Code of Conduct and Standards Committee training sessions. The training schedule had been revised to hold both sessions each on Tuesday 30 January 2007 and Thursday 1 February 2007 to better enable members to attend. Members were encouraged to contact the Democratic Services Officer on or before 8 December 2006 to confirm their attendance as the remaining places would be offered for sale to other authorities: South Cambridgeshire District Councillors could not turn up on the day without previously booking a place.

The Code of Conduct training would cover the revised Code of Conduct, including new issues such as:

- a new definition of interests;
- a new category of interest: "public service interest";
- allowing disclosure of confidential information if it can be determined that it was in the public interest to do so;
- amended guidance on disrepute if the alleged behaviour was conducted outside of official council business;
- a new definition of bullying; and
- an amended requirement for elected members to report breaches.

The Chairman urged Committee members to attend one or the other of the Standards Committee training sessions, which were mandatory for participation in local investigations and hearings.

The Standards Committee **AGREED** the revised training session dates.

14. FEEDBACK FROM PARISH COUNCILS

None received.

15. CASE TRIBUNAL REPORTS AND REFERENCES MADE TO ETHICAL STANDARDS OFFICERS

The Deputy Monitoring Officer outlined recent case summaries and, in keeping with the Standards Committee's usual practice, names and other identifying details were not mentioned. The Monitoring Officer reported that he recently had completed two local investigations involving parish councillors; it was likely that one would be recommended to go forward to a panel hearing.

The Standards Committee **AGREED** the format of, and amount of detail included in, the written report.

16. OPERATION OF NATIONAL CODES OF CONDUCT AND OTHER STATUTORY FUNCTIONS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

This item had been covered under "Operation of Members' Code" above.

17. THE HANDLING OF COMPLAINTS AND INVESTIGATIONS BY THE OMBUDSMAN

Nothing to report.

18. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

The Standards Committee, noting that the 14 February 2007 meeting would fall during half-term, **AGREED** that its February meeting be re-scheduled for Thursday 22 February 2007 before full Council.

The Committee **NOTED** the dates of future meetings:

- Wednesday 16 May 2007
- Wednesday 8 August 2007
- Wednesday 14 November 2007

Members were reminded that an extra-ordinary meeting of Standards Committee would be scheduled at very short notice and encouraged to check their e-mails regularly for notification of possible dates.

The Meeting ended at 1.20 p.m.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee held on
Thursday, 19 October 2006

PRESENT: Councillor MP Howell – Chairman
Councillor R Hall – Vice-Chairman

Councillors:	RF Bryant	Mrs SM Ellington
	Mrs EM Heazell	MJ Mason
	DC McCraith	Mrs CAED Murfitt
	CR Nightingale	RT Summerfield
	Dr SEK van de Ven	

Councillors Dr DR Bard, SM Edwards, Mrs VG Ford and Mrs DP Roberts were in attendance, by invitation.

Officers:	Patrick Adams	Senior Democratic Services Officer
	Richard May	Democratic Services Manager
	Simon McIntosh	Head of Community Services
	Claire Spencer	Senior Planning Officer (Transport Policy)
	Tim Wetherfield	Head of Policy and Communication

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors RE Barrett, PT Johnson, SGM Kindersley, DH Morgan and Mrs HM Smith.

It was noted that Councillor PT Johnson was resigning from the Committee and that the Conservative Group would be invited to nominate a replacement at the next meeting of Council on 26 October 2006.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2006 were agreed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:

- Councillor DH Morgan's name was included in the list of Members who had sent their apologies and Councillor MJ Mason's name was removed.
- Councillor Mrs SM Ellington declared interest as a member of Swavesey parish council was included.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor DC McCraith declared a personal interest as a County Councillor.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS

None.

5. DRAFT AGENDA PROGRAMME AND PROGRAMME OF KEY DECISIONS

Land drainage

Councillor van de Ven agreed to speak to the Chairman of the Land Drainage Advisory Group regarding a risk of flooding in Meldreth. She would bring this matter back to the

Committee if necessary.

Use of IT

In response to questioning Councillor SM Edwards explained that work needed to be carried out to the Virtual Private Network (VPN) to allow Councillors to access the links sent to them informing them of reports and minutes which included key words of their choice. He hoped this would be carried out shortly, but warned that he did not consider it a priority. It was noted that Councillors could access the information on the intranet that the link related to.

Council's letting policy

It was understood that a working group had been set up to examine the Council's letting policy. Councillor Mrs DP Roberts, Community Development portfolio holder, agreed that the working group should report its findings to this Committee. The Democratic Services Manager stated that the working group was likely to report in the spring.

Medium Term Financial Strategy

It was understood that the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy was due to go to Cabinet in November, with the final report to be discussed by the executive in December. In the past the Committee had scrutinised this matter prior to its discussion at Cabinet. The Committee

AGREED to discuss the Medium Term Financial Strategy at its next meeting in November.

Member/officer contract

The Committee understood that research on this matter was currently being carried out. The Committee

AGREED to discuss the member/officer contract at its meeting in January.

6. REPORTS FROM MONITORS

The Chairman presented this item which allowed monitors of portfolio holders to report on items of interest. It was agreed that the monitors should inform the Committee if their portfolio holder had not held a meeting in this reporting period.

Community Development

Councillor DC McCraith expressed his support for the decisions taken at the recent Community Development portfolio holder meeting. It was understood that due to the urgency of the decision, the awarding of a £20,000 grant to Wysing Arts had been published on the same day as the Cabinet meeting to ensure that the funding could be awarded on time.

Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning

It was understood that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning portfolio holder had not held a meeting in the last month. The next meeting would be held on 3 November at 9am. Unfortunately neither of the Committee's monitors would be able to attend, so it was hoped that either the Chairman or Vice-Chairman would be able to act as a substitute in this instance.

Environmental Health

It was noted that the Environmental Health portfolio holder had not held a meeting in the last month. The next meeting would be held on 24 October 2006.

Housing

It was understood that the Housing portfolio holder meeting had not held a meeting in the last month. The next meeting would be held on 8 November 2006.

Planning and Economic Development

It was noted that the Planning and Economic Development portfolio holder had not held a meeting in the last month. The next meeting would be held on 21 November 2006.

Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Services

The Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Services portfolio holder had last met on 17 October and had been attended by both of the Committee's monitors. It was understood that any relevant matters would be brought up by the monitors after the portfolio holder's presentation.

7. SCRUTINISING OF THE BUS SERVICE

The Senior Democratic Services Officer introduced this item by inviting members to consider where they would like to direct their recommendations.

Concessionary fares scheme

It was understood that not all post offices had application forms and bus passes. This was due to a supply problem from the central depot at Swindon. The Senior Planning Policy Officer (Transport) explained that officers were aware of the problem and had been sending forms and passes out to post offices that required them. Members were asked to contact the Office Manager in the planning section if they knew of any post offices that required forms or bus passes.

Frequency of buses

Concern was expressed at the inequity of the bus service throughout the District, as it appeared that the frequency of the service was not necessarily determined by the size of the community. It was understood that the County Council had details of all the bus routes in the District. However, it was noted that it was the bus companies who were responsible for the bus routes. It was also suggested that the improvements could only be made to bus services with more money from Government.

Councillor CR Nightingale stated that he had contacted both members and officers from the County Council about the change to the bus route in Shelford without success and the bus operator had flatly refused to change the route back. He explained that only 17 days notice had been given, when the statutory number was 58. The Senior Planning Policy Officer (Transport) agreed to investigate the change to the Shelford bus route.

Cambridge Area Bus Development Board

Concern was expressed at the cancellation of the meeting of the Board on 19 July 2006 due to a lack of business, even though the concessionary fares issue was headline news at the time.

The Committee **agreed** to form a Sub-Group to liaise with the Senior Planning Policy Officer (Transport) on the issue of bus services in the District. Councillor CR Nightingale, Mrs EM Heazell and Dr SEK van de Ven agreed to serve on the Sub-Group.

8. PRESENTATION BY THE RESOURCES, STAFFING, INFORMATION AND CUSTOMER SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

The Committee received a presentation from Councillor SM Edwards, Resources, Staffing, Information and Customer Services portfolio holder. Councillor Edwards

explained that he had asked his officers not to attend the Committee as this was his presentation and the Committee should be asking him questions and not his officers.

Councillor Edwards stated that he had taken control of two well-run portfolios and he paid tribute to his two predecessors, thanking them for their advice in his portfolio holder meetings.

Section 151 Officer

Councillor Edwards asserted that the responsibilities of the Chief Executive and the Section 151 Officer should be separated, as it made the Council too dependent on one individual.

Third tier capacity

Councillor Edwards explained that downsizing the first tier from four to two and the second tier from nine to five, inevitably meant a strengthening of the capacity of the third tier.

Performance Indicator ownership

Councillor Edwards hoped that all staff could be made aware of how their jobs affected performance indicators, which would encourage them to take pride in the Council's achievements and strive to raise standards in areas that needed to be improved.

Staff training

Councillor Edwards advocated the employing of younger staff and the training of existing staff as part of succession planning. He suggested that some form of apprenticeship programme could be considered.

Office space

Councillor Edwards reported that unfortunately due to security issues the possible renting of office space by the Police was not being pursued. It was understood that Councillor Mrs Ford was negotiating with Citizen Advice Bureaux with a view to hiring out office space in lieu of grants.

Customer relations

Councillor Edwards agreed that the letter sent to tenants who were in arrears was discourteous and he had brought this matter up with the Chief Executive, who had warned that a more polite missive would lead to more tenants getting into debt, which could lead to more evictions and threaten the excellent record the Council had in debt collection. In response to concerns about the number of errors with regard to rent arrears, Councillor Edwards expressed pride in the Council's Council Tax section which, in a recent audit, had scored either a 3 or a 4 out of 4 for the majority of its services. The section had scored a 2 with regard to rent arrears, but the majority of these were for amounts lower than £1. Councillor RT Summerfield added that a number of authorities disregarded errors of this size in their performance figures.

Size of portfolio

Councillor Edwards explained that combining the two portfolios had made sense and although the new portfolio was a huge undertaking he was in a position to be able to dedicate enough time to this responsibility. He added that in his view it would take him a year to learn all the responsibilities of the new portfolio.

Delivery of South Cambs Magazine

The Communications Manager had sent a strongly worded letter to the delivery company warning that unless their performance improved the Council would employ an alternative organisation. Councillor Nightingale explained that residents of Great

Shelford and Stapleford were willing to provide temporary storage locations for the magazine, to aid its delivery.

Reduction of meetings

Councillor Edwards explained that he aimed to oversee a 50% reduction in the number of Council meetings.

Member training

Councillor Edwards hoped to focus on member training in the coming months. He explained that an overspend in the member training budget was likely and would have to be vired from elsewhere in his portfolio.

Staff sickness

Councillor Edwards presented the data on BV 12, number of days sick per member of staff. He stated that the annual figure for the end of year estimate for 2005/06 should be 10.75, the same as the actual figure and not N/A as shown on page 41 of the agenda. The Committee noted that the Council's performance had improved since 2004/05, although it was too early to determine what the Council's performance would be for this municipal year. It was understood that sickness tended to increase in the winter months. Councillor Edwards stated that a clear and firm approach to long-term sickness was preferable to allowing staff to be off sick indefinitely.

Conclusion

Councillor Edwards stated that he saw the Council as one team and as an Independent member he did not have any political affiliations. He conceded that financial constraints limited what he could achieve, but he could vire money from different budgets, which he intended to do, to fund member training.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Edwards for his impressive presentation and his honest informative answers.

9. PRESENTATION BY THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER

This item was discussed after item 4.

Councillor Mrs VG Ford, Community Development portfolio holder, circulated a handout of her presentation, and thanked the Head of Community Services for his input whilst she compiled her report.

Portfolio holder meetings

Councillor Mrs Ford thanked the monitors for attending her portfolio holder meetings and requested that they raised any objections at that meeting instead of waiting several weeks and then raising it at this Committee.

Milton Country Park

In response to questioning Councillor Mrs Ford explained that she remained committed to keeping the Park open because it welcomed a quarter of a million visitors every year and due to continuing liabilities it would continue to cost the Council money, even if the Council took the decision to close the park. She announced that her aim was to reduce the cost of the park from £200,000 to just over £100,000 in a time period of approximately a year and a half. It was expected that revenue from car parking charges would help to reduce the costs of the park. Councillor Mrs Ford reminded the Committee that although many city residents visited the park, a large number of the District's residents visited facilities in the City and surrounding Districts.

Councillor Mrs Ford explained that a Country Park was planned for Northstowe and there were certain economies of scale that made it more cost effective to run two parks instead of one, as the parks could share officer time and equipment.

Community safety

In response to concerns regarding priorities, Councillor Mrs Ford explained that the South Cambridgeshire Crime & Disorder Partnership focused on the concerns of residents as well as Government targets.

Funding community initiatives

It was understood that a relatively small amount of funding for a community initiative from the Council could encourage funding and support from other bodies.

New development

Councillor Mrs Ford stated that the Community Development team were doing an excellent job with the resources available. It was understood that through a Section 106 agreement, negotiated by the Council, the developers had agreed to fund a full time community development officer for three years to work on the Arbury Camps site. The Head of Community Services reminded the Committee that the Community Services budget had been cut by a third, which had forced an increased dependence on the Council's partners. While the delay was regrettable, the forthcoming appointment of a community development officer, at zero cost to the Council, was a considerable achievement. On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman expressed his admiration for the Community Services team and the work they carry out.

Public arts

Councillor Mrs Ford reminded the Committee that the budget for public art had been substantially cut and an officer had been made redundant. It was clear that there was extensive support for the Arts in South Cambridgeshire and the Council worked with organisations such as Wysing Arts and with schools, in an attempt to meet this demand.

Budget

Councillor Mrs Ford explained that although the Council had to reduce spending, the Community Service budget would not be reduced this year.

Youth debating competition

It was understood that there was insufficient officer time to organise this event and despite generous offers to provide the prizes it was unlikely to take place this year.

Working with schools and youth

Councillor Mrs Ford explained that the Council needed to work in partnership to deliver its strategies and this included working with schools to tackle anti-social behaviour. The Head of Community Services informed the Committee that the Council had a new statutory responsibility regarding youth participation and as a consequence the County Council could request the presence of a Council representative on a partnership body.

Difference

Councillor Mrs Ford paid tribute to her predecessor, who was clearly respected in the community as well as by officers and members of the Council. Councillor Mrs Ford saw the installation of community projects in new development in the District, as the single biggest challenge facing her portfolio.

10. SCRUTINY TRAINING: CONFERENCE AT NEWMARKET RACECOURSE ON 20/11/06

The Committee

AGREED to book 11 Councillors on the Scrutiny Conference at Newmarket Racecourse on Monday 20 November at a cost of £550.

The £550 for this training will come out of the budget for member training, which will be compensated by the Scrutiny Contingency fund. The net cost to the training budget will be £0, but the expenditure will appear in the budget figures.

11. TO NOTE THE DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The Committee **NOTED** the following future meeting dates:

2006: 16 November & 21 December

2007: 18 January, 15 February, 15 March, 19 April & 17 May

The Meeting ended at 4.45 p.m.

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