

CABINET

THURSDAY, 13 MARCH 2008

DECISIONS

Set out below is a summary of the decisions taken at the meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday, 13 March 2008. The wording used does not necessarily reflect the actual wording that will appear in the minutes.

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

RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

1. **COMMUNITY SAFETY 3-YEAR ROLLING PLAN**
Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** adoption of the Community Safety Three-Year Rolling Plan 2008-2011.
2. **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2008-2011**
Cabinet **RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL** adoption of the Sustainable Community Strategy 2008-2011, subject to the "signing-off" of the Strategy by the Local Strategic Partnership Board on 9 April 2008.

DECISIONS MADE BY CABINET

3. **WASTE DESIGN GUIDE**
Cabinet **AGREED**
 - (a) to adopt the RECAP Waste Design Guide as Council policy; and
 - (b) that, in the longer term, the RECAP Waste Design Guide should be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) under Cambridgeshire County Council's new Minerals and Waste Plan, once approved.

Other Options Considered: None.

Reason For Decision: The Waste Design Guide addresses the issue of waste management in new developments and redevelopments of a residential, commercial or mixed (residential and commercial) nature. It is to be used by:

- Developers and designers to ensure effective segregation, storage and collection of waste materials; and
- Planning Authorities in assessing each planning application

The Guide helps to address unique waste management problems presented by, for example, high-density developments. It highlights requirements for developer contributions to waste management infrastructure and the financial implications of waste management upon developers, whilst also providing examples of good practice and demonstrating what can be achieved.

The Guide puts significant emphasis on timely consultation with the Local Authority to ensure effective waste management design and offers a significant opportunity for innovation in waste management design, actively welcoming proposals from developers for alternative waste management solutions.

As Council policy the Guide will help to ensure that a more consistent waste management centred approach is adopted at the planning and design stage of developments resulting in the provision, as far as practicable, of integrated waste management infrastructure, which supports sustainable growth and development.

4. INVESTMENT STRATEGY (TREASURY MANAGEMENT) 2008/09

Cabinet **APPROVED** the Investment Strategy 2008/09.

Other Options Considered:

- (a) Continuing with the present policy, which has produced good results. The Council is a member of the CIPFA Treasury Management benchmarking club. The results for 2006/07 show that South Cambridgeshire achieved another creditable performance for the fourth year running with a return of 4.94% on combined investments (less than and more than 365 days) compared to 4.81% for its comparator group and 4.83% for the overall group. South Cambridgeshire was fourth highest in the comparator group of 12 other organisations and twenty-second highest in the overall group of 141 other organisations. These good results were achieved at minimal cost;
- (b) Increasing risk, which should produce a higher rate of return. This is not recommended;
- (c) With the rapidly declining level of capital receipts, outsourcing is probably no longer feasible as external fund managers often require at least £10 million for at least three years; and
- (d) An option would be to stop using lists of named counterparties and have a policy of investing only with counterparties with a AAA rating. This would be a radical departure from present practice and would probably result in investing with foreign banks and other commercial organisations (but with all investments and repayments still denominated in £ sterling). Most of these organisations will only accept a minimum of £5 million so the Council would, therefore, have fewer higher value investments with the consequent higher risk. With reducing balances, the opportunity for these large investments will be very limited. The trend with other local authorities seemed to be to move away from credit ratings in order to achieve a wider range of counterparties with the consequent greater flexibility and spread of risk. A policy of investing only with counterparties with a AAA rating would be heavily dependent on the credit rating being an accurate assessment. Standard & Poor's credit ratings on their website include the caveat that "any user of credit ratings ... should not rely on any such ratings ... in making any investment decision".

Reason For Decision: The Council may currently earn less interest on its investments by having a very restricted range of investments but this is considered to be more than offset by the reduced risk of default by counterparties. Any change to the use of credit ratings may involve additional time and expenditure with no guarantee of an increased rate of return on investments. Effective treasury management provides support towards the achievement of the Council's corporate objectives.

5. HOUSING FUTURES: AGREEMENT OF PROCESS FOR THE SELECTION OF MODEL FOR A NEW LANDLORD

Cabinet **AGREED**

- (a) that a new landlord selection panel be set up of five tenants, five staff and five elected Members that will evaluate the options and present their findings to the Housing Options Portfolio Holder who will make a recommendation to Full Council on the preferred model of new landlord, which will be either:
 - (i) a new stand-alone housing association or;
 - (ii) a new subsidiary of an existing or new group of housing associations;
- (b) the draft terms of reference for the new landlord panel as set out in Appendix 1

- to the report;
- (c) that tenant representatives on the selection panel be drawn from the various interest groups within the tenant population as follows:

| | |
|---|---|
| Sheltered Housing Forum representative | 1 |
| Leaseholder Forum representative | 1 |
| Representatives of other tenants by geographical area as follows: | |
| East | 1 |
| South | 1 |
| West | 1 |
 - (d) that an election be the agreed means of deciding on representation for non-sheltered housing tenants should there be more than one expression of interest in any of the three geographical areas;
 - (e) that the elected Member representatives be nominated in accordance with political proportionality and that invitations be extended to each of the groups;
 - (f) that staff representation on the new landlord selection panel comprise the Housing Services Manager, Property Services Manager, Supported Housing Manager, Property Sales Officer and a nominated union representative but that wider staff engagement form a key part of the process;
 - (g) that the Housing Options Portfolio Holder make a recommendation to Full Council based on the outcome of the work of the new landlord selection panel at the end of the initial activity within the process; and
 - (h) that a further competitive stage to the selection process be commenced only in the event that establishing a new subsidiary of an existing Registered Social Landlord (RSL) or establishing a new group of housing associations is the recommendation considered and agreed by Full Council.

Other Options Considered: Any local authority looking at housing transfer option is required to consider with its tenants what type of new landlord should take over its housing. The options are as follows:

- (a) an existing housing association;
- (b) a newly-established subsidiary of an existing housing association (either part of an existing group structure or through creation of a new group structure);
- (c) a newly-established free-standing housing association.

Reason For Decision: A housing transfer proposal would enable the council to make a more effective contribution to delivery of a new Sustainable Community Strategy and the growth agenda including increasing the supply of affordable housing.

The council's housing service carries out many thousands of transactions with tenants, leaseholders and those seeking housing every week and is therefore one of the most significant front line services.

Identifying aspirations of tenants and leaseholders for the future of the housing service and delivering them through a housing transfer proposal will help meet the aim to provide excellent services.

Deciding on the model of new landlord is a key first stage in developing a housing transfer proposal and the involvement of tenants, staff and elected Members in the process will help secure the support of these key stakeholders for the outcome.

A housing transfer could help ensure the sustainability and affordability of homes and services in the longer term through investment in energy efficiency measures and improvements above the Decent Homes Standard (DHS). Additional services could be delivered in line with tenant aspirations and priorities that could benefit the wider community.

6. DATA QUALITY STRATEGY

Cabinet **AGREED** to

- (a) approve the data quality strategy; and
- (b) request Corporate Managers to ensure that the requirements of the strategy be implemented in their areas of responsibility.

Other Options Considered: None.

Reason For Decision: The financial and performance information the Council uses to account for its activities, both internally and externally, to its customers, partners, government departments and regulators, must be appropriate for these purposes, providing the level of accuracy, reliability and consistency required.