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6 April 2009

To: The Leader – Councillor RMA Manning  
Deputy Leader – Councillor SM Edwards  
Members of the Cabinet – Councillors Dr DR Bard, Mrs SM Ellington, MP Howell,  
AG Orgee, TJ Wotherspoon and NIC Wright  
Quorum: 4 plus the Leader or Deputy Leader

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **CABINET**, which will be held in the **SWANSLEY ROOM, GROUND FLOOR** at South Cambridgeshire Hall on **THURSDAY, 16 APRIL 2009** at **2.00 p.m.**

Yours faithfully  
**GJ HARLOCK**  
Chief Executive

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## AGENDA

## PAGES

### PROCEDURAL ITEMS

- 1. Apologies for Absence**  
To receive apologies for absence from Cabinet members.
- 2. Minutes of Previous Meetings** 1 - 8  
To authorise the Leader to sign the Minutes of the meetings held on 10 and 12 March 2009 as correct records.
- 3. Declarations of Interest**
- 4. Public Questions**

### RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL

- 5. Housing Rents Review (Key)** 9 - 14
- 6. Corporate Plan 2009/10 (Key)** 15 - 42

### POLICY ITEMS

- 7. Comprehensive Equalities Policy 2009-2012 (Key)** 43 - 80

**8. Land Charges Fees 2009-10 (Key) 81 - 112**

**OPERATIONAL ITEMS**

**9. Responding to the Economic Downturn and Review of NNDR  
Hardship Relief Policy 113 - 124**

**STANDING ITEMS**

**10. Issues arising from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee**

**11. Updates from Cabinet Members Appointed to Outside Bodies**

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on  
Tuesday, 10 March 2009

PRESENT: Councillor RMA Manning (Leader of the Council)  
Councillor SM Edwards (Deputy Leader of the Council and Housing Portfolio Holder)

Councillors:	Dr DR Bard	New Communities Portfolio Holder
	Mrs SM Ellington	Environmental Services Portfolio Holder
	MP Howell	Staffing Portfolio Holder
	AG Orgee	Finance Portfolio Holder
	TJ Wotherspoon	Policy, Improvement and Communications Portfolio Holder
	NIC Wright	Planning Portfolio Holder

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Caroline Hunt	Principal Planning Policy Officer
Gareth Jones	Corporate Manager, Planning & Sustainable Communities
Richard May	Democratic Services Manager

Councillors SGM Kindersley, RM Matthews and JH Stewart were in attendance, by invitation.

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**Procedural Items**

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**104. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**105. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Leader was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 12 February 2009 as a correct record.

**106. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

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**Recommendation from  
Council**

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**107. SITE SPECIFIC POLICIES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT (DPD) - RESPONDING TO A HOUSING SHORTFALL - RESPONSE TO PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND AGREEMENT ON SITES TO RECOMMEND TO INSPECTORS**

Cabinet considered the recommendations of the Council, made at its immediately preceding meeting, in respect of responding to the housing shortfall identified by the Site Specific Policies DPD Examination Inspectors.

Cabinet supported the Council's recommendations, subject to the Leader of the Council being requested to make representations to the Secretary of State setting out the Cabinet's dissatisfaction with the process the Council had been required to undertake, advising that the Council had undertaken the process reluctantly, and that, through it, the Cabinet considered that public confidence in the robustness of the plan-making process had been eroded.

Cabinet wished to record Members' grateful thanks to the Principal Policy Officer for her hard work in preparing and presenting detailed reports and recommendations to Council and Cabinet.

Councillor Dr DR Bard proposed, Councillor SM Edwards seconded, and Cabinet **RESOLVED** that:

1. The responses to representations included in Appendices B, C and D to the Council report be agreed, including changes to the preferred sites and policies.
2. The updated housing land supply position results in a residual housing shortfall of 1,120 dwellings
3. The capacity of the NW Cambridge Area Action Plan for the purposes of the housing shortfall be 65 dwellings but that discussions continue to explore the potential for provision to be up to 800 dwellings by 2016 in the district
4. That the following preferred sites be recommended to be allocated in the Site Specific Policies DPD examination Inspectors' report (subject to the changes set out in Appendix B and summarised in the report to Council):
  - i. 3 sites at Orchard Park, Cambridge, subject to the inclusion of a Grampian Condition to the effect that no residential development shall take place above the amount already approved until the A14 improvement programme relevant to the site has been completed.
  - ii. Land between Huntingdon Road and Histon Road (Council's revised boundary)
  - iii. Powell's Garage, Woollards Lane, Great Shelford
  - iv. Ida Darwin Hospital, Fulbourn
5. The Leader of the Council be authorised to write to the Secretary of State to express the Cabinet's dissatisfaction with the process South Cambridgeshire District Council has been required to undertake with regard to the current issue, that the Council has undertaken the process reluctantly, and that, through it, the Cabinet considers that public confidence in the robustness of the plan-making process has been eroded.

#### **108. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

There were no issues arising from the Scrutiny and Overview Committee.

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**The Meeting ended at 5.45  
p.m.**

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on  
Thursday, 12 March 2009

PRESENT: Councillor RMA Manning (Leader of the Council)  
Councillor SM Edwards (Deputy Leader of the Council and Housing Portfolio Holder)

Councillors: Dr DR Bard New Communities Portfolio Holder  
Mrs SM Ellington Environmental Services Portfolio Holder  
MP Howell Staffing Portfolio Holder  
AG Orgee Finance Portfolio Holder  
TJ Wotherspoon Policy, Improvement and Communications Portfolio Holder  
NIC Wright Planning Portfolio Holder

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting:

Holly Adams Democratic Services Officer  
Philip Aldis Community Safety Officer  
Gemma Barron Partnerships Manager  
Steve Hampson Executive Director  
Greg Harlock Chief Executive  
Jackie Sayers Scrutiny Development Officer

Councillors JD Batchelor, Mrs EM Heazell, JA Hockney, Mrs CAED Murfitt, Mrs BZD Smith and RT Summerfield were in attendance, by invitation.

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**Procedural Items**

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**109. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors JD Batchelor and AG Orgee declared personal interests in items 6 (Neighbourhood Panels) and 8 (Local Area Agreement Annual Refresh) as elected members of Cambridgeshire County Council.

**110. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

None received.

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**Decisions made by Cabinet**

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**111. INVESTMENT STRATEGY (TREASURY MANAGEMENT) 2009-10**

Cabinet considered the Investment Strategy for 2009-10, noting that the list of approved bodies with which the Council invested had changed to take account of those which had merged, which reduced the overall number of organisations. The Finance Portfolio Holder commended the strategy to Cabinet, highlighting the good returns made and its prudential and sound approach.

The Chief Finance Officer explained that the primary aim of the strategy was security of investment rather than maximisation of returns, adding that if two organisations offered exactly the same rates and one were local, the Council would prefer to support the local institution.

Cabinet **APPROVED** the Investment Strategy 2009-10 and congratulated officers in the Accountancy service for continuing to achieve good results at minimal cost.

## 112. PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

Cabinet had approved a strategy for the procurement of goods and services in January 2004. The revised strategy took account of events since the original strategy, and the increased expectations of the outcomes from procurement activities. The Finance Portfolio Holder urged that value for money be demonstrated wherever possible, and reminded members that it was essential to have a wide-ranging strategy to ensure the best deal for the Council.

Concerns were expressed that the requirements of the strategy could discourage smaller local businesses from bidding for contracts and Cabinet urged officers to adopt a sense of proportionality and use their best judgement not to overwhelm with paperwork and procedures any such businesses bidding on contracts just over Level 1 (£5,000). Councillor NIC Wright confirmed that, as part of the work to deal with the economic downturn, the Council would be running an event to support local businesses, including advice on the Council's procurement strategy.

The Chief Executive explained that, whilst e-auctions were still being investigated and the process appeared attractive, the procedure placed significant demands on officer time as every specification entered must be extremely precise to ensure that all tendering parties were bidding on exactly the same specifications. Non-electronic procedures allowed contractors options to provide details, method statements, in their tender documents as to how they would meet the contract requirements, allowing greater flexibility and innovation than available through an e-procurement system.

Cabinet **AGREED** to adopt the updated Procurement Strategy, subject to the following minor amendments:

- clarification of "service" at 3.5.1; and
- clarification of "termination of the provision in whole or part" at 3.6.1.

## 113. NEIGHBOURHOOD PANELS

Inspector Chris Savage of Cambridgeshire Constabulary was in attendance.

Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire Constabulary both had indicated that they would like to broaden the remit of neighbourhood panels to discuss issues over and above those relating to community safety, although community safety would remain the key focus at meetings. The Scrutiny and Overview Committee had considered the proposals in detail and had recommended that each panel be consulted as to whether or not it would like to broaden its remit, and that local ward members fulfil a liaison role between the panel and the District Council instead of nominating specific Member Champions for each panel.

The work of the panels was commended, particularly the improved relationships between communities and the police. Cabinet supported the recommendations made by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee, expressing concern that the panels could lose their focus if the remit was extended too widely. Cambridgeshire Constabulary had



suggested broadening the remit of the panels as fewer local priorities were being identified as the police responded to local demands and public understanding of police work increased. The aim was to ensure that representatives from various organisations were present at panel meetings so issues raised by the public could be addressed immediately.

Cabinet **AGREED** to:

- (a) consult each panel as to whether or not it would like to broaden the remit of panel meetings;
- (b) request that ward members:
  - (i) note district council issues relating to their ward and actions arising out of panel meetings, and bring them back to the council to ensure that they are considered; and / or
  - (ii) seek progress information prior to panel meetings where an issue or action relating to their ward has been raised previously.

Cabinet **NOTED** Cambridgeshire County Council's General Operating Procedures for Neighbourhood Panels.

#### **114. REPORT OF THE FINANCE TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

Councillor JA Hockney, Chairman of the Finance Task and Finish Group, presented the interim report to Cabinet, and thanked members of the Group and officers for their work, which was on hiatus pending appointment of the new Executive Director (Corporate Services). The Finance Portfolio Holder welcomed the recommendations, stating that he had attended the Task and Finish Group meetings and found that they were conducted with the intention of providing good and useful suggestions.

Councillor JD Batchelor, Scrutiny and Overview Committee Chairman, explained that that body had expected Cabinet to receive the interim report, consider it outside the meeting, and present its views to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee on 30 April; however, members of the Cabinet preferred to discuss the recommendations and form a view during the present meeting, culminating in the preparation of an appropriate action plan by officers to be submitted to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee in time for their 30 April 2009 meeting.

There was general agreement that the Council needed to improve public understanding of, and consultation on, financial matters and performance indicators, and it was noted that the summer edition of *South Cambs magazine* would feature how the Council provided good value for money and had the lowest council tax in the area.

Cabinet **AGREED** that:

- (a) the corporate cycle illustrated at Appendix B to the report be endorsed and used to inform future budget, consultation, service and scrutiny planning;
- (b) a closer working relationship be established between the accountancy team and cost centre managers to improve on-going financial control;
- (c) a procedure be adopted for budget variances of more than +/- 5% and more than +/- £2,500 (both conditions to apply) within individual service levels whereby the relevant cost centre manager and his / her Portfolio Holder must justify the variance to the Chief Finance Officer and the Finance Portfolio Holder;
- (d) a budget roll-over from the previous year be permitted only where the budget-holder can show that the current year's budget has been fully committed and that there were no other sources of funding;
- (e) it be ensured that all budget-holding officers receive at least one core skills training session to understand the procedures and processes relevant to their

- financial management role and that this be a feature of performance appraisals;
- (f) the Council presents its financial information more clearly and concisely electronically so that it could be more easily understood by residents providing this could be accommodated within existing budgets;
  - (g) the Chief Finance Officer and Finance Portfolio Holder discuss the level of detail presented in reports to Council bodies, other than full Council which must receive comprehensive information as part of its budget-setting process, to enable members' discussions to focus on strategic consideration linked to the Council's priorities;
  - (h) the Council present financial and performance information for residents in such a way that value for money can be more readily understood, with promotion of the low council tax level and high value for money provided;
  - (i) the Council's community engagement strategy include cross-cutting public involvement in the budget process, which should aim to include all sections of the community, business, parish council and voluntary sector partners and at times when it can genuinely have an influence, likely at an early stage in the budget-setting process; and
  - (j) the annual training programme for Members include at least one refresher session for all Members regarding their role in understanding and influencing the Council's budget and financial processes and that an annual refresher session be offered for scrutiny monitors.

Cabinet **DEFERRED**, until the new Executive Director was in post, making a response to recommendation 6: that officers examine whether budget proposals could be accompanied by more performance information showing comparative data and the potential impact that budget proposals could have on performance, to ensure a more accurate way of analysing spending and outcomes.

Cabinet thanked members of the Task and Finish Group for their interim report and recommendations.

#### 115. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT (LAA) ANNUAL REFRESH

The Leader introduced the Local Area Agreement (LAA) Annual Refresh and commended it to Cabinet.

The following comments were made:

- The reduced growth targets at NI 154 and 155 had been recommended to GO-East by Cambridgeshire Horizons to reflect the current situation, and had now been accepted by GO-East, but it was a temporary measure only and it was expected that the difference would be made up before the end of the Regional Spatial Strategy period in 2021;
- There had not been a previous target set for NI 159, so the new figures should reflect the recent Local Development Framework decisions;
- The Place Survey would add targets to many of the "to be confirmed" areas.

Cabinet acknowledged that the LAA would become more important from 1 April as the Comprehensive Area Agreement (CAA) regime took effect, but there were concerns expressed that the government's required approach focussed too much energy on processes and setting targets and not enough on providing services to improve life in South Cambridgeshire.

Cabinet **ENDORSED** the Cambridgeshire developing Local Area Agreement (LAA) annual refresh, understanding that amendments would need to be made by Cambridgeshire Together (LAA Board) before its final submission on 31 March 2009.

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**Standing Items**

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**116. ISSUES ARISING FROM THE SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE**

Nothing to report.

**117. UPDATES FROM CABINET MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES**

Nothing to report.

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**The Meeting ended at 3.46  
p.m.**

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet

16 April 2009

**AUTHOR/S:** Chief Executive/Principal Accountant (Housing)

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**HOUSING RENTS****Purpose**

1. To ask Cabinet to recommend to Council that the rent increase for the 2009-10 financial year be revisited in the light of a changed Government recommendation.

**Background**

2. Since the Council approved the rent increase for 2009-10, the Minister for Housing has proposed an alteration to the recommended level of increase for local authority rents and draft proposals for implementing a reduced level of increase have now been received from the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG).
3. In order to take up the opportunity to apply a lower level of increase and receive compensation for the loss of income to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) that this would imply, Councils must make a formal commitment to apply the revised level of rent increase for 2009-10 by the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2009.
4. Changes in HRA rent levels can only be agreed by Council after recommendation by Cabinet, and to meet the CLG's deadline the matter, therefore, needs to be considered at the Council's meeting on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2009.

**Considerations**

5. On 26<sup>th</sup> February 2009 the Council approved a rent increase from the first rent week in April 2009, based on an inflationary increase of 5.5%, plus or minus a maximum of £2.00 towards the phasing in of rent restructuring. This increase was in line with the original recommendation received from the CLG.
6. On the 6<sup>th</sup> March the Minister for Housing announced in the press that she proposed to halve the recommended increase for local authority rents from 6.2% to a national average of 3.1% and this intention was confirmed soon after by the Department of Communities and Local Government (CLG).
7. The draft proposal, which has now been received from the CLG, is that the inflationary increase would be 2.4% (instead of 5.5%), plus or minus a maximum of £2.00 towards the phasing in of rent restructuring. For South Cambridgeshire this would result in an estimated increase of around 3.2%, instead of the 6.3% previously agreed. At individual rent level, this would reduce the average rent from around £77.90 to £75.65.
8. As indicated in the previous paragraph the use of the formula recommended by the CLG would result in an increase in excess of the 3.1% that is given as a maximum in the draft proposal. Staff at the CLG have indicated that a

revision to the draft is likely to be issued in the next few days to resolve this anomaly. Should no revised draft be received, then to be able to take up the offer, a further reduction in rents may be required to ensure that the average increase is at or below 3.1%. In this event the average rent would become £75.55.

9. If the Council agree to reduce the 2009-10 increase in line with that now being recommended, the CLG has stated that compensation will be given, in-year, through the subsidy system, for the loss of income this would imply for the HRA.
10. The impact on the HRA of making this reduction would, therefore, be broadly neutral, because although rent income would be reduced, the negative housing subsidy payment to the government would also be reduced by a more or less equivalent amount.
11. In the event South Cambridgeshire Village Homes being established, the effect of receiving less rent income on the new organisation would be mitigated by the fact that the capital cost of buying the homes would have been reduced to reflect the lower level of rent income expected. This is because the valuation, for transfer purposes, is based on the income and expenditure over the first 30 years of the life of the new organisation.
12. If South Cambridgeshire Village Homes is set up and pay a smaller amount to buy the homes from the Council as a result of a reduction in rent levels, clearly, the Council will receive a smaller capital receipt and, consequently, have less funding available to offset any residual costs to the Council following the transfer. Savills (the lead consultants) have been asked for an estimate of the effect on the receipt and this should be available prior to the meeting.
13. When Members considered the rents for 2009-10 in February, increases in other charges were also considered alongside the rents and the same inflationary uplift used for rents was, incidentally, applied to both garage rents and a part of the sheltered housing service charge. However, whilst the CLG has agreed to provide compensation to Councils that revisit rent levels and apply the revised inflationary uplift of 2.4% rather than the 5.5%, such compensation will be solely for loss of rental income. The loss of garage rents and the relevant element of the sheltered housing service charge would be around £30,000 per annum, compounded. In the event of the HRA properties remaining with the Council then it is anticipated that there will be pressure to increase income from all possible sources. Any reduction in charges now would, therefore, give rise to the likelihood of an excessive uplift in future years.
14. A change to a 2.4% increase in garage rents would reduce these from £7.00 per week (for those rented to a Council tenant or leaseholder) and £9.67 a week (for other garages) to £6.86 and £9.47 respectively. The communal facilities element of the sheltered housing service charge would be reduced from £6.93 to £6.73 and the maximum equity shareholders service charge from £19.54 (for those on schemes without communal rooms) and £27.77 (for other shareholders) to £19.43 and £27.45 respectively. However, for the reasons outlined in the previous paragraph, it is not recommended that consideration be given to altering any charges other than rents.

15. The Head of Revenues has estimated that the additional administrative cost of implementing any change to the 2009-10 rent level will be around £10,000. The Government indicated that no compensation would be given for administration costs, however, as an estimate of the cost has been requested by the CLG it is possible that the matter is being reconsidered by the Department.
16. Should Members agree to revise the level of rent increase for 2009-10, following the final recommendation from the CLG, the change will be introduced as soon as it is practical to do so. It is unlikely that any change will be implemented before June and additional software requirements could lead to further delays

### Options

17. Not to revise rent levels in line with the CLG's new recommendation. This option would avoid the cost and effort of implementing a change and the adverse impact on the sale value of the Council homes in the event of a transfer. However, it could leave the Council open to criticism from the Tenants, Central Government and the Media.
18. To reduce the rent increase by a lesser amount than recommended by the CLG. This option has not been considered in this report because there would be no compensation from the Government for the loss of rental income and any such loss would be compounded in future years.
19. To revise the rent increase for 2009-10 financial year in line with the new recommendation from the CGL. This option would involve administrative costs to the HRA and reduce the capital receipt for the Council homes if they are transferred. The press coverage will have given rise to an expectation from tenants that the Council will reduce their rents and, as there will be little financial impact on the HRA, it could be difficult for Members to justify not implementing the revised 2009-10 rent increase now recommended by CLG.

### Implications

20.	Financial	The financial implications are contained in the body of the report
	Legal	There do not appear to be any legal implications
	Staffing	There do not appear to be any staffing implications
	Risk Management	There do not appear to be any risk management implications
	Equal Opportunities	There do not appear to be any equal opportunities implications

### Effect on Strategic Aims

21.	<b>Commitment to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all.</b>
	The members of staff currently involved in visiting tenants in connection with the Housing Futures Project have reported that tenants have expressed concern over the high level of the 2009-10 rent increase.
	<b>Commitment to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for all.</b>
	Nothing significant

<b>Commitment to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.</b>
Nothing significant
<b>Commitment to assisting provision for local jobs for all.</b>
Additional income for tenants could result in more spending in local shops and on local services.
<b>Commitment to providing a voice for rural life.</b>
Nothing significant

**Conclusions/Summary**

- 22. In line with the Government’s original recommendation for local authority rents, this Council’s rents were increased by 5.5% in addition to a maximum variation of £2.00 per week. Since Members approved the rent increase the CLG has offered Councils the opportunity to revise this rent increase to 2.4% in addition to the maximum variation of £2.00 per week, with in-year financial compensation being provided to Councils that firmly commit to applying the recommended revision by the 24<sup>th</sup> April 2009.
- 23. Whilst Councils are being asked to make commitment based on draft figures, the CLG has indicated that the final recommendations will not differ substantially.
- 24. Compliance with the newly released draft recommended rent increase for South Cambridgeshire would result in an average rent increase for tenants of around 3.2%.
- 25. If a commitment is made to revise rent levels in line with the final recommendation from the Government, then the Council will receive compensation for the reduction in rental income. The impact on the HRA will therefore be broadly neutral.
- 26. In the event of a transfer of the Council’s homes to South Cambridgeshire Village Homes the lowering of rent levels would have a negative impact on the capital receipt available to the Council to support the funding of other projects and residual costs. There should, however, be little impact on the financial situation of South Cambridgeshire Village Homes.
- 27. If the Council agree to revise the 2009-10 rents in line with the CLG’s recommendation, then, in order to take advantage of the compensation scheme this will have to be a firm commitment. Therefore, unless the final scheme is substantially different from that reported above, it is not proposed to come back to Members for a further decision once final figures and details are received from the CLG. Members will, however, be informed of the estimated impact of the final scheme on rent levels and budgets.

**Recommendations**

- 28. Cabinet is requested to recommend to Council that a commitment be made to revise rent levels for 2009-10 in line with the final recommendation from the CLG.



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

Housing Rents and Charges - Item 6, Cabinet 12 February 2009

The Draft Housing Subsidy Account Subsidy Determination 2009-10 Amending Determination 2009 - CLG

**Contact Officer:** Gwynn Thomas – Principal Accountant (Housing)  
Telephone: (01954) 713074

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Leader and Cabinet

16 April 2009

**AUTHOR/S:** Chief Executive

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**DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2009/10****Purpose**

1. The purpose of the report is to enable Cabinet to comment on the draft Corporate Plan for 2009/10 and approve arrangements for the finalisation of the Plan and recommendation to Council.
2. This not a key decision because it brings together matters already approved – including the 3As, Medium Term Financial Strategy, Workforce Plan and service plans

**Background**

3. The Corporate Plan is the culmination of the policy and financial planning process, beginning with the setting of Council priorities (through the 3As) and continuing with the budget and service planning processes. The Corporate Plan sets out the challenges facing the Council in the years ahead; how the Council will tackle those issues; and how it plans to deliver on its aims to improve services and quality of life.
4. The Corporate Plan is intended to provide a readable and accessible picture of the Council to Members, employees, partners and the public

**Considerations**

5. The draft Corporate Plan is attached as an **Appendix** to this report. At this stage it is not complete. Further information is required in a number of areas – for example national comparisons for Place Survey data. Further work is required in setting targets or smart outcomes for the measures in the appendices.
6. At this stage Members views are invited on issues such as:
  - a) Does the Corporate Plan provide an accurate overview of the issues and challenges facing the Council?
  - b) Does the Plan give a fair representation of Members' views of the aims and direction of the Council?
  - c) Do the appendices identify the most important things which Members would want to see delivered in 2009/10? As drafted, the appendices focus on Council Actions, LAA targets, and other important actions or NIs resulting from service plans.
  - d) Is the Plan realistic? Does it represent a programme that will be achievable by the Executive? The Plan will be used by the Audit Commission and auditors to assess progress by the Council and therefore it must be realistic.

7. Once the Corporate Plan has been approved, the targets in the two appendices will be monitored and progress reported to SMT and Cabinet on a quarterly basis.

**Implications**

8. There are no significant implications which have not already been considered in the context of the budget and service plans.

**Effect on Strategic Aims**

9. As can be seen, the draft Plan is structured around the Council's Vision, Aims, Approaches and Actions.

**Recommendations**

10. The Cabinet is recommended to
  - a) comment on the draft Corporate Plan taking into account in particular the questions at paragraph 6
  - b) authorise the Chief Executive to finalise the Plan in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Policy, Improvement and Communications prior to recommendation to full Council.

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

Service Plans  
Medium Term Financial Strategy  
Various Cabinet reports

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## CORPORATE PLAN 2009

### Foreword

This Corporate Plan sets out the challenges that face the Council and our plans for addressing those challenges and achieving our objectives in the next year (2009/10) and the two subsequent years.

As all other organisations and individuals, we are facing the impact of the economic downturn. The Council's income has been affected, for example through a fall in planning fees and declining interest rates. At the same time there has been a greater demand for Council services, such as housing advice and benefits. The Council has allocated £150,000 to help local businesses and residents to weather the impact of the recession and has worked with partners to provide advice and guidance.

The most significant impact on the Council's plans has been the downturn in housebuilding and the implications for major new developments such as Northstowe. Working with developers and partners to adapt the development programme to the new economic situation will be a continuing challenge over the medium term.

Another major uncertainty going into next year is the decision on the future of our housing stock. We have worked hard in laying the foundations to enable tenants to take an informed view about the possible transfer the housing stock to a newly formed housing association, South Cambridgeshire Village Homes, in a ballot to be held early in 2009/10. There will be significant challenges in 2009/10 in implementing the ballot decision, whatever the outcome.

In 2007 an Audit Commission Corporate Governance Inspection identified a number of weaknesses in the running of the Council. We responded with an ambitious improvement programme with the result that a re-inspection in February 2008 recognised that the Council had made some real progress although there was still some way to go.

An Improvement Board was set up in 2007 to oversee and support our progress. The Board concluded at its meeting in January that the Council had now made sufficient progress to make its own way and the Board could disband. This signifies a major milestone in the Council's improvement journey and one of which everyone connected with the Council can be proud.

We are now well on the way to creating a Council that can move confidently forward to tackle the challenges mentioned above and focus on our core business of improving the quality of life for everyone who lives and works in the district. We have adopted a new Vision and five Aims to give a sense of direction and aspiration to the development of the services we provide. We have committed to over thirty specific Council Actions which we will deliver in 2009/10 to improve services.

This plan provides the basis to enable us to make a real difference in 2009/10 and we hope that everyone connected with the Council will read the plan and contribute to its achievement.

Ray Manning, Leader of the Council  
Greg Harlock, Chief Executive

## 1. Our Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan is a high level plan setting out our Council priorities and demonstrating our commitment to achieve them in 2009/10 and beyond. The corporate plan brings together proposals from various sources – including the Improvement Plan, service plans, the Sustainable Community Strategy, Medium Term Financial Strategy and other strategies and policies.

Each year the Council carries out an annual business planning cycle, starting with setting high level objectives in June/July; then continuing with service planning and budget planning in the Autumn; and ending with the final approval of budgets and service plans in February/March. The Corporate Plan is revised and rolled forward at the end of that process and reflects all the planning that has taken place before.



Diagram on the policy context of the Corporate Plan

## 2. Our Vision, Aims and Values

Councillors have developed a framework to give direction to the Council's long-term service delivery aspirations.

**Our Vision:**

**To make South Cambridgeshire a safe and healthy place where residents are proud to live and where there will be opportunities for employment, enterprise and world-leading innovation. We will be a listening Council, providing a voice for rural life and first-class services accessible to all.**

The following **Aims** set out how we will deliver the Vision.

**Our Aims.** We are committed to –

1. being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all
2. ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for you and your family
3. making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live
4. assisting provision of local jobs for you and your family
5. providing a voice for rural life

For each aim we have agreed –

**Approaches** – which provide a framework showing how we will achieve our Aims

**Actions** – which are specific actions which we will undertake to deliver the aims

These can be seen in more detail in Appendix A.

The Council has also adopted Values to guide the way that we work together and provide services to the public. The Values will help us work effectively together to achieve our aims. They govern every aspect of our working relationships within the Council, with the public and our partners.

**Our Values.**

- Customer Service
- A commitment to Improvement
- Mutual Respect
- Trust

We have initiated a programme to embed the values into the Council. We will ensure that we have a common understanding of what the values mean. Cabinet and senior managers will provide leadership on the values. Our aim is that the values guide our decision making; our training and skills development; our relationships; and our processes and procedures.

Diagram linking Vision, 3As, Values etc

### 3. How have we performed?

**Key Achievements in the Last Year.** In 2008/09 the Council's objectives were:-

**To Work in Partnership to manage growth to benefit everyone in South Cambridgeshire now and in the future** - our achievements have included –

- The Cambridgeshire Horizons partnership has become established as an effective vehicle for delivering sustainable growth in the sub-region, with joint development control committees for Northstowe and the Cambridge fringes
- A joint Urban Design team has been established
- The Council has developed a Council Vision for living in Northstowe
- Completions of affordable housing have continued despite the economic downturn
- The Orchard Park task and finish group worked with stakeholders to improve quality of life for residents and learn lessons to apply to future large-scale development.

**To Deliver high quality services that represent best value and are accessible to all our community** – our achievements have included -

- The introduction of a new service for kerbside collection of plastics for recycling has been successfully introduced.
- Key stages towards the tenants' ballot on transfer of the housing stock have been completed – including consultation with tenants and other stakeholders; creation of the Shadow Board for South Cambridgeshire Village Homes; approval of offer to be made to tenants for stock transfer.
- Training on complaint handling has been undertaken and improvements have been achieved in the time taken to process complaints.
- Continued high performance of our Contact Centre which was ranked as the best public sector contact centre in a wide-ranging independent survey.

**To enhance quality of life and build a sustainable South Cambridgeshire where everyone is proud to live and work** – our achievements have included -

- Using the Sustainability Innovation Fund for the Orchard Park housing development to deliver renewable energy technologies at the primary school (wind turbine and solar hot water heating) and run travel planning projects for residents
- Launching the Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership to build local leadership and ownership in delivering savings in energy costs and reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.
- Securing high sustainability standards within the draft Section 106 agreement for the new housing development at Trumpington Meadows.

We did not achieve all our plans - progress was slower than anticipated in a number of areas – such as in equalities, developing a community engagement strategy and service reviews. Progress on Northstowe was affected by the economic downturn.

**Performance Indicator Summary.** The latest complete year where comparisons are available for national indicators is 2007/08. For that year –

- 26.7% of Council performance indicators were in the top quartile (25%) of district councils
- 52% of indicators were in the top two quartiles



- 21.6% of Council indicators were in the bottom 25% of district councils.

This represents an overall performance better than the average. We are pleased that 65% of indicators had improved from the previous year showing an overall trend of improvement.

Some services are performing excellently and compare with the best nationally – these include Council Tax collection (99.1% collected); non-domestic rates (99.8% collected); Recycling (with 53.2% of waste recycled or composted) and low levels of violent crime.

In other cases we recognise that we need to achieve more consistency or improvement. For example, the proportion of major planning applications decided within 13 weeks fell (second quartile) and for other applications the percentage decided within 8 weeks improved but was still in the third quartile. Burglaries and robberies have increased and we are working with the police and other partners to address this.

On the basis of 2007/08 figures, some housing indicators compare unfavourably with other councils (for example, in relation to homelessness, the percentage of homes which do not meet the Decent Homes Standard, and the time taken to relet vacant housing). However, the Council has made significant improvements in homelessness provision and this will feed through into later years' figures. Great improvements have been made in the time taken to relet vacant Council housing from 46 days in 2006/07 to a current level of 12 days, which would put the Council among the best performing authorities.

We also perform very successfully in areas not covered by national performance indicators. For example, we have an outstanding track record in our provision of affordable housing and preparation of local plans.

Our aim is to provide consistently first class services and we have adopted a Council Value to pursue a commitment to improvement. To support this ambition, in 2009/10 we will –

- Ensure that our new performance management system – Corvu – is used effectively by Members and officers to improve performance.
- Establish a Performance Management Group to take the lead in establishing a performance management culture within the Council
- Embed a management competency framework within the Council to develop performance management skills.

For 2008/09 onwards, the Government has changed the national indicator set. The Best Value indicators have been replaced by a set of National Indicators, which are focused less directly on the services we provide and more on the impact that we and our partners are achieving in improving quality of life. These new indicators will enable us to assess the impact of our contribution to the Sustainable Community Strategy of the South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership and our contribution to the Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement.

**Place Survey.** In the autumn of 2008 all local authorities carried out a Place Survey to find the views of local people on quality of life their areas. The results for South Cambridgeshire show –

- A very high proportion of residents (90.5%) are satisfied with their local area as a place to live

- There are high levels of people who participate in volunteering (33%); feel that they belong to their local area (64%); and feel that their area is a place where people of different backgrounds get on well together (82.5%)
- There are low levels of concern about anti-social behaviour, but only 27% feel that the police and other local services are doing enough to address anti-social behaviour and crime.
- 34% of people feel that they can influence decisions in their locality.
- Among older people, 91% are satisfied with their home and neighbourhood, but only 30% feel that they receive the support they need to live independently.
- 77% of people feel that they are treated with consideration and respect by local services.
- 44% of people are satisfied with the way that the Council runs things (which is lower than previous surveys) and 33% feel that it provides value for money.

*[Commentary and more detail to be added when full results and national comparisons available.]*

*[Add relevant results from Housing Tenants survey and other consultations in 2008/09]*

**Inspection and Audit.** The Council has been successful in improving its score on the Audit Commission **Use of Resources** assessment for 2008/09. It has increased its overall score from 2 to 3. The detailed scores are as follows:

<b>Element of Scoring</b>	<b>Score</b>
Financial Reporting	3
Financial Management	3
Financial Standing	3
Internal Control	2
Value for Money	2

The Annual Audit and Inspection letter from the Audit Commission concluded ..... *[to be added when available]*

For 2009/10 onwards the existing inspection arrangements will be replaced by the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) which will consist of two parts:-

- The **Area Assessment** will assess how well the County Council and all its partners are doing in meeting the needs of local people through the Local Area Agreement.
- The **Organisational Assessment** will assess the capacity of the Council to provide improving services - focusing on financial management; governance arrangements; use of resources; and performance management.

**Our Progress since the Corporate Governance Inspection in 2007.** Following the 2007 Corporate Governance Inspection, a re-inspection was carried out and a report published in March 2008. The overall finding of the report was that the Council had made "some real progress ... since the original CGI report". The Council was said to have "well developed plans to build on its successes, but still have a long way to go". The report made three recommendations –

1. The Council must ensure recent improvements in political conduct and leadership are sustained, deepened and broadened

2. The Council must ensure that the process of improvement continues to aim for profound and sustainable change in the way it operates
3. The Council must ensure that, concurrent with improvements in processes and procedures, its policies and behaviours address the needs of, and promote the well being of, all sections of its community.

We have continued to make good progress in all these areas – for example in the following ways -

- We have developed and strengthened leadership through the adoption of a “strong” leadership model. Cabinet has enhanced its leadership role by developing the Vision ,Aims, Approaches and Actions which are the basis of this plan. Executive Member capacity has been improved through the Leadership Academy and mentoring. There has been emphasis on training for Members and a Member Development Strategy has been adopted and is being implemented.
- Scrutiny and Overview Committee has improved – through member training; the development of a more productive relationship with the Executive; and the successful completion of Task and Finish projects on Orchard Park and Financial Management.
- Senior management has been strengthened through the creation of an additional Executive Director post (with responsibilities for finance and support services). Corporate Managers and the Executive Management Team have developed their roles and effectiveness. Delegations have been reviewed and enhanced.
- Progress has been made in achieving cultural change. We have achieved Investors in People accreditation. The Council has approved Values and is developing a programme to embed them into the work of the organisation. Service planning has been improved, with over 200 staff involved in service planning away days and improvements to the quality and completion of plans.
- Achievement of Level 1 of the Equalities Standard for Local Government and good progress made towards Level 2. Equality Impact Assessments have been introduced; pilots have been completed; and a programme of assessments covering all services has been agreed. Firm plans are in place to adopt a Gender Equality scheme and revise our Gypsy and Traveller policy.

We are proud of what we have achieved. While progress has been slower than we would have wished in some areas (for example, equalities) we are now on course to make real progress in all areas identified by the CGI inspectors and we have firm plans to continue our improvement journey in 2009/10.

The Improvement Board was established in 2007 with representatives from a range of partners such as the Audit Commission, Go-East, the IDeA and Improvement East to oversee and support our post – CGI progress. After two years of meetings, the Board agreed in January 2009 to disband. The Board congratulated the Council on the progress made and felt that the Council was now in a sufficiently strong state to make its own way on its improvement journey within the normal audit and inspection framework.

#### 4. Challenges for the Council in 2009/10

**Working with Our Partners to achieve positive outcomes.** The Council works with a range of partners in the South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership to deliver improvements in quality of life. Partners include Cambridgeshire County Council, NHS Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, businesses, representatives of parish councils, third sector organisations and others. In the last year the LSP has –

- Adopted a new Sustainable Community Strategy
- Provided funding of £1.6m to a range of projects from LPSA “reward money” (examples to be given)
- Carried out a review of partnerships.

The Council is also an active partner in **Cambridgeshire Together**, a county-wide partnership set up to develop and deliver the Local Area Agreement, which is a three year agreement with the Government to deliver stretching quality of life targets. Challenges for the next year include –

- Achieving challenging LAA stretch targets in areas such as:-
  - anti-social behaviour
  - adult participation in sport
  - community cohesion
  - provision of affordable housing
  - enhancing the ability of people to influence decision making
- Performing well in the new Comprehensive Area Assessment
- Improving partnership work with parish councils through quarterly meetings; support for parish plans; and other means.
- Rolling out the Sustainable Parish Energy Partnership to establish a network of up to ten parish councils delivering local projects to reduce energy costs and greenhouse gas emissions.

**Delivering and Managing Growth.** South Cambridgeshire is one of the government’s major growth areas and is identified for substantial development over the next 10-12 years. The plan is for the population to grow to 162,000 by 2016. This plan includes the new town of Northstowe with a projected population of 24,000 by 2025, the first town in a district which is currently made up of over 100 villages.

The Council has put in place a dedicated team to deliver the growth agenda and has joined the City and Cambridgeshire councils in joint planning and delivery arrangements.

The challenges for the next year and beyond include -

- Working with developers to bring forward development sites in a difficult financial climate
- Continuing to strengthen partnership arrangements with Cambridgeshire Horizons and local authority and other partners
- Ensuring that the needs of local communities will be met.

**Supporting People through the Economic Downturn.** The current global financial position has impacted upon residents, businesses and organisations in the voluntary and community sector. Even in a relatively strong economic area such as South Cambs many people are affected by the recession. This is demonstrated, for example, by greater demands for services such as housing advice and benefits (a 32% increase in telephone enquiries to the homelessness team and a 22% increase in housing and Council Tax benefit claims). One of our top-level Aims is to provide and protect jobs. To address the situation the Council has -

- Set aside £150,000 to help people and businesses in the economic downturn during 2009/10 - for example by
  - funding specialist business support with Business Link or the Chamber of Commerce
  - freezing fees for taxi licensing, trade refuse collection and other environmental health services
  - publicise and review policy for Hardship Rate Relief to assist businesses at imminent risk of failure
  - Business Seminar/Workshop on surviving the economic downturn
- Lobbied Government departments to make a range of changes to support people and businesses through the recession.
- Continued to work with Cambridgeshire Horizons, the County Council and Cambridgeshire Together to explore ways to use the Housing Growth Fund to bring forward infrastructure projects and stimulate housing growth

Work to address the economic situation and pursue our aim to assist the provision of local jobs will continue in these and other ways during 2009/10

**Ensuring a sustainable future for the Council's Housing Stock.** The Council's housing stock comprises nearly 5,800 dwellings, and over 1,100 garage units, spread over most of the 102 villages of South Cambridgeshire. There is a relatively high proportion of sheltered accommodation across 43 schemes representing approximately 25% of the total homes. There are also around 500 leasehold households.

The national framework for housing finance will make it increasingly difficult for the Council to provide to tenants the standard of housing service that we consider appropriate. Restrictions on the use of capital receipts and the fact that about half of the rent that tenants pay is pooled nationally, will prevent the Council from maintaining Decent Homes standard and otherwise provide the service that tenants rightly expect and place continuing pressures on the Housing Revenue Account. Such restrictions would not apply to a housing association.

The Council has set up the Housing Futures project and in the last year has evaluated the options available; informed and involved tenants; and established a shadow housing association, South Cambridgeshire Village Homes, which has prepared an offer which will be the basis for a tenants' ballot in May/June 2009 on whether to transfer the Council's housing to the new association or retain ownership by the Council.

Key steps in 2009/10 will include –

- Hold the tenants' ballot

- If the ballot supports transfer of the housing stock, we will support the development of South Cambridgeshire Village Homes, arrange for the effective transfer of assets and functions to the housing association in a way which maintains services; and address structural and financial issues facing the remaining Council organisation.
- If the ballot supports retention of the stock, we will work to reduce costs and provide the best service we can to tenants within the reduced resources available.

**Achieving a sound medium term financial provision to support services.** The Council continues to face a difficult financial position, owing to its low level of Council Tax (the 7th lowest in the country); the pressures of meeting the needs of a growing population; and a low level of government grant. For 2009/10, the economic downturn makes the position more difficult as a result of lower income (from the lower number of new houses to be built; lower income from planning and land charges fees; and lower interest rates)

For 2009/10 the Council has set a Council Tax of £112.10, giving the following planned levels of expenditure:

<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Budget £m</b>	<b>%</b>
Environmental Services		
Resources		
Planning Services		
Housing (General Fund)		
Growth & Sustainable Communities		
Community Services		
Staffing & Communications		
Other		
<b>Total 2009/10 General Fund Budget</b>		

Within this budget, provision of some £500,000 has been made for expenditure to finance our Council Actions for 2009/10 and to meet additional essential new costs.

The Council has approved a medium term financial strategy for the period 2009/10 to 2013/14. The Council is a low spending authority, as confirmed by an independent diagnostic report in 2007. However, because of low levels of government grant and other sources of revenue, spending currently exceeds income. It is possible for us to maintain a balanced budget up to 2013/14 through the achievement of efficiency and other savings (£325,000 in 2009/10) and through the use of £1m to £1.2m per annum from reserves from 2010/11. However, at some point reserves will fall to a point where this is no longer possible. In 2009/10 we will face the challenge of meeting our efficiency savings target and of planning for 2010/11 with no planned provision for additional spending to finance Council Actions or other unforeseen new spending pressures for that year.

The Council's **capital programme** covers expenditure on maintaining or acquiring new assets such as housing, community facilities and equipment. The table below sets out the planned programme for 2009/10:

<b>Areas of spending</b>	<b>Budget £m</b>	<b>%</b>
Housing		
Information Technology		

Community Services Grants		
Recycling Initiatives		
Conservation Grants		
<b>Total 2009/010 Capital Budget</b>		

The major aspect of the capital programme is housing; mainly on the improvement and maintenance of the Council's own stock. The programme is financed largely from capital receipts, however these are decreasing largely as a result of the decision by the Government to require 75% of housing receipts to be paid into a national pool. As a result the capital programme will have to be significantly reduced from 2009/10 onwards.

*[Section to be added showing how the Council provides value for money.]*

**Engaging with the Community.** From April 2009 all local authorities have a legal duty to involve local communities in all their functions. This includes the provision of information; consultation on policies and priorities; involvement of customers in decision processes to determine how and to what standard services will be provided; and the empowerment of citizens to take a greater part the design and delivery of services. Two of our Aims are to be a Listening Council and to provide a Voice for Rural Life. The Council already involves the public in a range of ways – including –

- Arrangements for public speaking at Planning Committee
- Involving tenants in the management of the housing stock
- The Agents forum which meets to obtain feedback on the development control process
- Annual community safety consultation
- Holding Scrutiny and Overview Committee meetings in locations around the district
- Working with parish councils on clean up events
- Youth participation work
- Consulting local communities on proposals for growth areas.

In 2009/10 the Council will prepare, consult on and adopt a Community Engagement Strategy to build on what the Council already does and define priorities for further community engagement work. A number of Council Actions for next year also focus on community engagement – eg:

- Working with voluntary organisations to establish a relationship with hard-to-reach and vulnerable residents
- Setting up user groups of residents that will look at three areas of service delivery by 2010 to help guide service delivery in the future
- Setting up a forum of parish councils, housing associations and others to examine the workings of our exception sites policy
- Assisting parish councils to produce parish plans.

An important outcome of the Council's approach will be to achieve the LAA target to increase the number of people who feel satisfied at the opportunities available to influence decision making processes.

**Improving Customer Satisfaction.** Improving customer service and customer satisfaction are key elements of the Aims, Approaches and Actions. We want to provide first class services accessible to all. In 2005, the "Service First" project was initiated in order to drive improvement of customer service across the Council, and to embed and foster a culture of customer care. Much has been achieved since then –

- Customer service standards have been introduced and performance has improved against them.
- The complaints system has been standardised and publicised and complaints are now dealt with more speedily
- Customer stakeholder groups have been established for some services
- Customer service has been successfully promoted within the Council by participation in National Customer service week
- Our Contact Centre was ranked as the best public sector contact centre by an independent survey
- A range of service specific improvements have been achieved – for example the planning duty officer system; and the quicker processing of benefits and planning applications.

In 2009/10 Service First will take stock and review its approach and set long term goals to improve customer service. It will assess the Council against the national Customer Excellence Standard. It will place greater emphasis on developing a culture of customer care in support of the Council's values; and engaging with customer in accordance with the Community Engagement strategy. More emphasis will be placed on learning from complaints. The challenge will be to continue to improve customer service at a time of financial restraint.

**Achieving Equality and Diversity.** As an authority we are committed to delivering services to our diverse community and to developing a culture which values difference, both in employment and service delivery. In December 2007 we achieved Level 1 of the Equality Standard for Local Government and we expect to achieve Level 2 by June 2009. We will then put in place a work programme to achieve Level 3 (which equates to Level 2 "Achieving" in the new Equality Framework to come into effect in 2009).

Equality is an important element of our Aim to make our services accessible to all and our Value of Mutual Respect. In 2009/10 we have a challenging work programme to embed equality and diversity within the Council and to build networks with external communities around equalities issues. The main tasks to be addressed in 2009/10 include –

- undertaking equality impact assessments for high and medium priority services
- building the Equalities Consultative Forum
- Agreeing a new policy to direct our work with the Gypsy and Traveller community
- Adopting a Gender Equality scheme and revising our Race and Disability schemes.

**Achieving Organisational change.** In accordance with our Values we want to build a council where Members and officers are working positively together and with our partners and the public to achieve benefits for the district. We want those relationships to be characterised by respect and trust and to be focused on working towards improvement of services for customers and others. In the last year we have laid the foundation for this work. We have –

- Adopted our four values
- Improved internal communication by establishing and reviewing the Corporate Brief process; relaunched the in-house magazine SCene; promoted equalities and other corporate issues through internal communications.
- Achieved Investors in People Accreditation
- Set up a number of working groups to develop staff engagement and other issues to respond to the 2008 staff survey
- Provided a programme of equalities awareness training attended by most Council staff.



- Introduced an incremental programme of management competencies to build managerial capacity to support and deliver our objectives and values.

The challenge facing us is to maintain our improvement journey in a way which promotes cultural change and builds the foundation for continuous improvement in the years ahead. To do this we will build on the Council values and other initiatives started in 2008/09.

## **5. Delivering our Council Aims**

Appendix 1 sets out in detail our plans for delivering each of our Council Aims in 2009/10 and a summary is given below.

### **Aim A: We Are Committed To Being A Listening Council, Providing First Class Services Accessible To All**

*[Summary of plans for this aim to be added – based on Appendix 1]*

### **Aim B. We Are Committed to Ensuring that South Cambridgeshire Continues to be a Safe And Healthy Place for You and Your Family**

*[Summary of plans for this aim to be added – based on Appendix 1]*

### **Aim C: We are Committed to Making South Cambridgeshire a Place in which Residents can Feel Proud to Live**

*[Summary of plans for this aim to be added – based on Appendix 1]*

### **Aim D: We are Committed to Assisting Provision of Local Jobs for You and Your Family**

*[Summary of plans for this aim to be added – based on Appendix 1]*

### **Aim E: We are Committed to Providing a Voice for Rural Life**

*[Summary of plans for this aim to be added – based on Appendix 1]*

## **6. Enhancing our Capacity to deliver our Council Aims**

If we are to successfully achieve our service delivery aims, we need also to ensure that the Council is working effectively as an organisation. For example, we need to ensure that –

- We have effective governance arrangements
- We have an appropriately skilled and motivated workforce to deliver the Council's aims
- There is an organisational culture which supports our Aims
- Finances are effectively managed.
- Arrangements are in place to manage and improve performance.

Appendix 2 sets out key actions in 2009/10 to continue the Council's improvement journey, building on the progress made since the Corporate Governance Inspection.

**ACHIEVING OUR COUNCIL AIMS  
What we will do in 2009/10**

**Aim A: We Are Committed To Being A Listening Council, Providing First Class Services Accessible To All**

We will achieve this Aim in 2009/10 by –

**Approach 1: listening to and engaging with our local community**

- Setting up user groups of residents that will look at three areas of service delivery by 2010 to help guide service delivery in the future **(Council Action)**
- Preparing and consulting on a Statement of Community Involvement on planning issues **(Council Action)**
- Consulting on and adopting a Community Engagement Strategy.

**Approach 2: working with voluntary organisations, Parish Councils and Cambridgeshire County Council to improve services through partnership**

- Working with voluntary organisations to establish a relationship with hard-to-reach and vulnerable residents **(Council Action)**
- Actions to promote an environment for a thriving third sector (NI 7, **LAA target**)

**Approach 3: making South Cambridgeshire District Council more open and accessible**

- Working with voluntary groups to provide information and advice at events in 20 villages a year by 2010 **(Council Action)**
- Actions to increase the percentage of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality (NI 4, **LAA target**)
- Bringing forward proposals for potential improvements to full Council meetings as a forum for meaningful participation as a “community event”

**Approach 4: achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services**

- Establishing a system of satisfaction surveys by May 2010, that will be used to improve all the services that we provide **(Council Action)**
- Setting up user groups of residents that will look at three areas of service delivery by 2010 to help guide service delivery in the future **(Council Action)**

- Establish systems for collecting data on NI 14 (avoidable contact) and identify potential areas where avoidable contact could be investigated and reduced.
- Assessing the Council against the Customer Service Excellence standard and using the outcome to draw up a plan to identify improvements required.
- Producing an annual report on how we have handled and learnt from complaints.
- Achieving improved performance against key customer service indicators –
  - Time taken to process planning applications (NI 157)
  - Time taken to process housing/Council Tax benefits claims and change events (NI 181)
  - Customer satisfaction with processing of planning applications (SP944).
  - Percentage of customers who feel they have been treated fairly (NI 140)

### **Approach 5: ensuring that the Council demonstrates value for money in the way it works**

- Reviewing the current grant scheme by May 2009 with a view to reintroducing grants to talented performers, and promising competitors with an eye on London 2012 (**Council Action**)
- Achieving £325,000 of efficiency savings in 2009/10 and achieving targets on NI 179 (the total net value of ongoing cash-releasing value for money gains since 2008/09)
- Extending our use of benchmarking information to compare our costs and performance with those of other organisations - in particular in Affordable Homes and Revenues and Benefits.
- Produce, benchmark and investigate unit costs for key services and include in budget reports in order to demonstrate value for money.

**Aim B. We Are Committed to Ensuring that South Cambridgeshire Continues to be a Safe And Healthy Place for You and Your Family**

We will achieve this Aim in 2009/10 by –

**Approach 1: working closely through our Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to reduce crime and the fear of crime**

- Carrying out a Fear of Crime and Public Reassurance Survey in 2009 (**Council Action**)
- Supporting the CDRP to reduce the serious acquisitive crime rate (NI 16, **LAA target**)
- Supporting the CDRP to reduce assault with less serious injury (NI 20, **LAA target**)
- Supporting the CDRP to reduce repeat incidents of domestic violence (NI 32, **LAA target**)

**Approach 2: working with partners to combat Anti Social Behaviour**

- Setting up an Anti Social Behaviour Working Group by May 2009 to report on key areas of concern and identify areas for resources to be targeted accordingly (**Council Action**)
- Carrying out a review by 2010 of the provision and effectiveness of existing CCTV in the District (**Council Action**)
- Introducing a Member Champion for each Neighbourhood Panel by May 2009 (**Council Action**)
- Actions to reduce perceptions of anti-social behaviour by 3 % points (NI 17, **LAA target**)

**Approach 3: promoting active lifestyles and increasing opportunities for sport and recreation to improve the health of all age groups**

- Increasing the number of residents taking up sport or formal exercise by 1% in 2009 (**Council Action**)
- Increasing young people's participation in positive activities (NI 110, **LAA target**)
- Actions to reduce obesity among primary school children in year 6 (NI 56, **LAA target**)
- Increasing adult participation in sport (NI 8, **LAA target**)

**Approach 4: understanding where health inequalities exist and focusing on areas of need**

- Working closely with partners including NHS Cambridgeshire to identify and target key groups and provide increased opportunities for sport and recreation for the most vulnerable groups (**Council Action**)
- Supporting actions to reduce the prevalence of smoking (NI 123, **LAA target**)

- Tackling fuel poverty to ensure that reductions in CO2 emissions are achieved in the home and people live in warm homes (target yet to be set) (NI 187).
- In partnership with Cambridge City Council pilot Healthy Eating Award Scheme in South Cambridgeshire for completion by March 2010

**Aim C: We are Committed to Making South Cambridgeshire a Place in which Residents can Feel Proud to Live**

We will achieve this Aim in 2009/10 by –

**Approach 1: making affordable housing more available to local people**

**Approach 2: ensuring that affordable housing is in balance with the community**

- Setting up a forum of Parish Councils, housing associations and others to examine the workings of our exception sites policy in light of recent experience and current market conditions (**Council Action**)
- Including an appropriate proportion of retirement homes and accommodation designed for the elderly in the affordable housing allocation of each new major development (**Council Action**)
- Achieving our target for net additional homes provided (NI 154, **LAA target**)
- Achieving our target for 398 affordable new homes (NI 155, **LAA target**)
- Achieving our target for the supply of ready to develop housing sites (NI 159, **LAA target**)
- Actions to enable housing to be available to reduce delayed transfers of care from hospital (NI 131, **LAA target**)
- Adoption and publication of the Affordable Housing SPD by January 2010.

**Approach 3: achieving a sustainable future for the Council's housing stock**

- Holding tenants' ballot on the transfer of the housing stock to South Cambridgeshire Village Homes
- (If the ballot supports transfer of the housing stock) supporting the development of South Cambridgeshire Village Homes, arranging for the effective transfer of assets and functions to the housing association in a way which maintains services; and addressing structural and financial issues facing the remaining Council organisation.
- (If the ballot supports retention of the stock) working to reduce costs and provide the best service we can to tenants within the reduced resources available.

**Approach 4: working with local residents to promote community cohesion and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable in the community**

- Working with other agencies, adopt a revised Gypsy and Travellers policy by September 2009 (**Council Action**)
- Actions to increase the percentage of people who believe that people from different backgrounds get on well together (NI 1, **LAA target**)
- Public participation on preferred GTDPP options and sustainability appraisal report by November 2009.

**Approach 5: extending and encouraging the use of recycling opportunities**

- Extending plastic bottle recycling so that all villages and schools are served by 2010 **(Council Action)**
- Introducing further opportunities for businesses to recycle their waste **(Council Action)**
- Achieving a target of 55% for the percentage of household waste recycled and composted (NI192)

**Approach 6: working to improve the cleanliness of our villages**

- By 2009 establishing a programme of at least 10 Community Clean Up events per year throughout the District **(Council Action)**
- On top of our regular litter picks, improving the verges alongside the A14 and A11 by in depth Spring and Autumn litter picks **(Council Action)**
- Installing and emptying litter bins at our 10 dirtiest lay-bys on the major roads into and out of the District **(Council Action)**
- In addition to our regular street cleaning activities improving the appearance within 10 of our larger villages by increasing the amount of street cleaning that is undertaken **(Council Action)**
- Introducing our own Best Kept Village Competition **(Council Action)**
- Improving street and environmental cleanliness targets Litter 1%, detritus 30%, Fly posting 2%, and graffiti 3% (NI195)

**Approach 7: taking account of climate change in all the services that we deliver**

- Having a Climate Change Action Plan in place by 2010 **(Council Action)**

**Approach 8: promoting low carbon living and delivering low carbon growth through the planning system**

- Work with Parish Councils on schemes for renewable energy and low carbon living **(Council Action)**
- Reducing per capita CO2 emissions in the LA area (NI 186, **LAA target**)
- Adapting to Climate Change – achieving Level 1 (NI 188, **LAA target**)
- Adoption and publication of Sustainable Design and Construction SPD by 2010

**Aim D: We are Committed to Assisting Provision of Local Jobs for You and Your Family**

We will achieve this Aim in 2009/10 by –

**Approach 1: working closely with local businesses**

- Setting up a Business Forum and introduce a series of regular Business Breakfast meetings in the District by 2009 (**Council Action**)

**Approach 2: promoting economic development**

- **Supporting businesses to comply with the law while targeting those who flout it (Council Action)**
- Achieving 75% satisfaction level of businesses with local authority regulation (NI 182, LAA)
- Achieving 80% of undisputed invoices paid within 10 days (BV 8)

**Approach 3: using cultural activities effectively to promote tourism**

- Promoting the development and uptake of business space already allocated in the District (**Council Action**)
- Explore possible spin-offs from the London 2012 Olympics (**Council Action**)



**Aim E: We are Committed to Providing a Voice for Rural Life**

We will achieve this Aim in 2009/10 by –

**Approach 1: protecting existing communities, villages and the countryside**

- Assisting at least three Parish Councils to produce Parish Plans from 2009 (**Council Action**)
- Improving local biodiversity by the active management of 45% local sites target (NI197, **LAA target**).
- Number of historic buildings at risk taken off the register as a % of all buildings at risk target 3 (SP903)

**Approach 2: working more closely with Parish Councils and local Groups**

- Introducing a new system of quarterly meetings to which all parish councils will be invited to send up to 2 representatives from 2009 (**Council Action**)
- Ensuring that each Cabinet Member attend at least three Parish Council meetings a year from outside their ward from 2009 (**Council Action**)

**Approach 3: implementing planning policies to achieve successful new communities**

- By May 2009 assessing the need for provision of new premises for small businesses (**Council Action**)

**Approach 4: maximising planning gain for neighbouring communities**

- [Measures to be developed]

**Approach 5: playing our part in improving rural services including transport links**

- Working with other organisations to develop a Community Transport Plan for the District by 2010 (**Council Action**)



## APPENDIX 2

### **ACTIONS TO SUPPORT THE DELIVERY OF OUR COUNCIL AIMS - What we will do in 2009/10**

#### **Managing Finances**

(Planning and using financial resources to deliver our priorities and value for money)

In 2009/10 we will –

- (a) Improve our arrangements for consulting the public on our spending priorities
- (b) Others from Scrutiny Task and Finish report – eg
  - Clarify/confirm future annual corporate policy and financial planning process
  - Closer working between accountancy team and budget holders
  - Controlling over/underspends
  - Linking financial and performance information
  - Financial training for Members
- (c) Agree and implement an action plan to maintain a score of 3 on financial management aspects of Use of Resources assessment.

#### **Governing the Business**

(Demonstrating the principles and values of good governance; managing risk; sound decision making; and delivering services that meet local needs)

In 2009/10 we will –

- (a) Develop Council Actions for 2010/11 which will take forward Council Aims and Approaches
- (b) Take up Member Leadership Academy places for at least four members in order to broaden the base of leadership potential within the Council
- (c) Implement the Member Training and Development Plan
- (d) Continue to improve and develop the Scrutiny function - by –
  - developing a full annual programme of issues for scrutiny
  - initiating at least two task and finish groups, involving non-scrutiny members
  - implementing the scrutiny role in Call for Action
- (e) Continue to engage with Members and parish councils in relation to the ethical governance agenda
- (f) Revise the Member and officer Codes of Conduct.
- (g) Make an annual report to EMT on the effectiveness of decision-making structures.

- (h) Deliver a programme to deliver the Council's commitment to eliminate discrimination and prejudice, and develop a culture which values difference – by –
- completing Equality Impact Assessments for high and medium priority services
  - establishing an Equalities Consultative Forum
  - Achieving Level 2 of the current Equalities Standard (Level 1, "Emerging", of the new framework) and agreeing a programme to meet Level 2, "Achieving", of the new framework
  - adopting a Gender Equality scheme and revising the Race and Disability schemes.
- (i) Devise and deliver a programme to embed the Council's Values in decision making and other Council activities – by
- Running workshops with Cabinet and senior managers; key groups in the delivery of the values (eg Service First and the Equality and Diversity Steering Group); and other Members and officers to define behaviours which reflect the values.
  - Facilitating services in agreeing how they can embed the values
  - A programme to reflect the values in corporate processes such as decision making, training and development; etc
- (j) Further embed risk management within the organisation by the implementation of the CorRisk risk module.
- (k) Agree revisions to the constitution for the Council Leader to be elected for the remainder of his/her term of office (ie up to 4 years) and for all executive power to lie with the Leader of the Council (in accordance with recent legislation)

### **Managing Resources**

(Managing people, natural resources and physical assets)

In 2009/10 we will –

- (a) Build on the achievement of IIP accreditation with a programme to continue to improve and secure re-accreditation.
- (b) Formulate and implement a programme to respond to the 2008 staff survey and carry out a new survey in September 2009.
- (c) Establish and extend the Management Competency and Learning Framework
- (d) Review and report on corporate succession planning
- (e) Carry out a review of the HR/Payroll function and agree an action plan.
- (f) Carry out the Job Evaluation scheme with a view to the implementation of a revised pay and grading structure by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2010

### **Managing Performance**

(Managing and improving services; focusing on wider community outcomes; and ensuring capacity to deliver)

In 2009/10 we will –

- (a) Appoint a new Executive Director and a new Corporate Manager whose remit will depend on the outcome of the tenants' ballot on housing stock transfer
- (b) Continue to develop the staff appraisal scheme.
- (c) Launch the new performance management portal for Members and officers to provide a range of performance management reports
- (d) Put key actions and targets from service plans onto the new performance management system and arrange for effective monitoring
- (e) Establish a group to promote performance management within the Council.
- (f) Adopt a new Performance Management Strategy
- (g) Establish performance management notice boards in services across the Council

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Leader and Cabinet	16 April 2009
<b>AUTHOR/S:</b>	Chief Executive / Equality and Diversity Officer	

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**COMPREHENSIVE EQUALITIES POLICY 2009 – 2012****Purpose**

1. To recommend that Cabinet adopt the Comprehensive Equalities Policy 2009 – 2012 from April 2009, attached as an **Appendix** to the report.
2. This is a key decision because
  - it is likely to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in all wards of the District.
  - it raises new issues of policy, or is made in the course of developing proposals to amend the policy framework, or is a decision taken under powers delegated by the Council to amend an aspect of the policy framework.
  - it is of such significance to a locality, the Council or the services, which it provides that the decision-taker is of the opinion that it should be treated as a key decision.

and it was first published in the March 2009 Forward Plan.

**Background**

3. The Council has identified equalities as a priority area in which it must make progress because of the findings of the CGI inspection; the need to achieve compliance with statutory requirements; and deliver relevant Council Aims and Actions. The Improvement Board has also identified this as a key area for the Council. The Council also needs to be more in step with its partners in the LSP and LAA. Equality and diversity will be an area of focus for the CAA.
4. Progress has been held back over the last year because of the illness and subsequent passing away of the former Equality and Diversity Officer and the need to address other improvement priorities.
5. However, a new Equality and Diversity Officer, Paul Williams, has now come into post and approval has been given to the appointment of a one-year post, Equalities Project Officer, to support Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs). Further capacity is being provided through the services of a consultant to support the development and revision of the policy framework.
6. An essential part of the Equalities Standard for Local Government is for the authority to express its commitment to equality and diversity through the development of a Comprehensive Equalities Policy.

**Consultations**

7. Cabinet approved an earlier and substantially different draft at its meeting in December 2007.

8. The earlier draft was then used for consultation purposes at stakeholder meetings in April 2008. Following those meetings, the policy has been further revised and has been sent to a range of stakeholders and partners for their views.
9. The current draft of the policy has since been endorsed by the Equality and Diversity Steering Group and the Executive Management Team in February 2009.
10. The Staffing Portfolio Holder endorsed the policy on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2009 and recommended that Cabinet adopt the Comprehensive Equalities Policy 2009 – 2012 at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

### **Conclusions/Summary**

11. Much of the text of the previous draft has been retained, but the new version provides more detail in the Introduction, in the Statutory Obligations, and in the section about How we will deliver Change. The core of the document (The Council's commitment and the Equalities Objectives) remain largely as they were.
12. The major change is that the new draft strengthens the Council's commitment to go for Level 3 of the Equalities Standard. The previous version envisaged that the Council would decide whether to go for Level 3 after the achievement of Level 2. The new version commits to the achievement of Level 3 within the period of the policy (2009 – 2012). The revised Comprehensive Equalities Policy also includes an appendix setting out the Council's programme for EQIAs.
13. An Equalities Implementation Work Programme has been developed to meet the commitments outlined in the Comprehensive Equalities Policy. It addresses the most important things, which must be delivered, focusing particularly on compliance with statutory requirements. Key milestones include:
  - a) Cabinet adopt a new Race Equality Scheme in September 2009
  - b) Cabinet adopt a new Gender Equality Scheme in September 2009
  - c) Cabinet adopt a new Gypsy and Traveller Strategy in September 2009
  - d) Cabinet adopt a new Disability Equality Scheme in January 2010

### **Recommendations**

14. It is recommended that Cabinet adopt the new Comprehensive Equalities Policy 2009 – 2012 from April 2009.

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

Previous draft of Comprehensive Equalities Policy

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# COMPREHENSIVE EQUALITIES POLICY

2009 – 2012

## Contents

	Page
<b>Foreword by Chief Executive</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
What is this policy?	5
What are equality and diversity?	5
Why is a Comprehensive Equalities Policy important?	5
Who is this Policy for?	5
<b>The Context for our Comprehensive Equalities Policy</b>	<b>7</b>
A Profile of South Cambridgeshire	7
Equalities and the Council	8
Our Corporate Aims and Values	8
The Local Strategic Partnership for South Cambridgeshire (LSP)	9
Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement (LAA)	10
Our Equalities Schemes	10
Aims	11
Our Statutory Obligations	11
Race Equality	12
Disability Equality	13
Gender Equality	13
Age Equality	14
Sexual Orientation and Religion or Belief Equality	14
<b>Consultation: How we will Respond and Implement Equalities</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Our Commitment</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Our Equality and Diversity Strategic Objectives</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>How we will deliver Change</b>	<b>18</b>
Leadership and Corporate Commitment	18
Community Engagement and Accountability	18
Service Delivery and Customer Care	20
Employment and Training	21
<b>Monitoring Implementation</b>	<b>22</b>
The Equality and Diversity Steering Group	22

The Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG)	22
External Scrutiny	23
<b>Looking to the Future</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>More Information</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Appendices</b>	<b>25</b>
Appendix 1: Consultation: A Summary of key discussions and recommendations	25
Appendix 2: Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) Programme	32
Appendix 3: Equality and Diversity Steering Group Terms of Reference	34

## Foreword by Chief Executive

South Cambridgeshire District Council welcomes and supports the positive duty laid upon it by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Sex Discrimination Act as amended by the Equality Act 2006 to:

- Eliminate discrimination
- Promote equal opportunities
- Promote racial harmony and positive attitudes towards people with disabilities

We recognise that the potential for isolation, discrimination and unfair treatment can be far higher in communities such as South Cambridgeshire where there are relatively few people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds and where the rural nature of our community adds to the potential for disadvantage to people. This means that we have a greater challenge in ensuring that their voice is heard in the community. I am pleased that staff and external stakeholders attended consultation events to assist us in the formulation of this policy document and their views and concerns have shaped our action plan for change over the next three years.

We are pleased to publish this, our Comprehensive Equalities Policy, which sets out our arrangements for meeting the general and specific duties placed upon us by the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 and the Sex Discrimination Act as amended by the Equality Act 2006 for the period 2009 – 2012 and our commitment to other areas of potential discrimination including, gender, marital status, age, sexual orientation and religion or belief.

Throughout this policy, we have highlighted a number of key commitments that we will deliver over the next three years, which includes achieving Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG) by June 2009 and Level 3 within the period of this policy.

The Policy will be a working document linked to other performance management systems and will be reviewed annually.

I am convinced that this policy will empower the Council and its employees to make a real difference.

Greg Harlock  
Chief Executive

## Introduction

### What is this Policy?

This policy sets out our overall vision for equality and diversity. It says what kinds of things you will see us doing to address inequalities in our society.

Importantly, it is also the ‘umbrella’ for a number of different schemes and policies we need to have in place. This policy sets the general direction. The other schemes and policies set out the detail of how we will get there. These are listed at the end of this policy.

This Policy includes:

- **Our Commitment to Equality and Diversity** – which sets out our high level commitment to achieving equality and diversity.
- **Our Equalities Schemes** – which sets out the principles and aims which will guide the way that we deliver on our commitment
- **Our Implementation Programme** – which set out in more detail the actions we will undertake in the next 2-3 years to live up to the commitment we have made.
- **Our Monitoring** – how we will ensure that we are making sufficient progress.

### What are equality and diversity?

**‘Equality’** is about providing everyone with equal access to council services, no matter where they live, whatever their background (sex, age, faith, race, sexual preferences or how able they are).

**‘Diversity’** is about providing services which respect, value and cater for the differences in the way people would like /need to have them delivered.

### Why is a Comprehensive Equalities Policy important?

As individuals, we all have different needs, backgrounds, expectations and opportunities. We expect these to be catered for by everyone with whom we come into contact – local authorities, other public services, education providers, shops and offices etc. But so often these needs are not met, because they are not thought about or possibly because they are simply ignored. This means that we do not all receive the same services or opportunities, which creates disharmony in our society.

### Who is this Policy for?

This policy is designed for everyone, regardless of their background and how they are covered by legislation, which sets out what they have a right to expect, from society and from us as a service provider and employer. We need to understand, respect and cater for their differing needs. The equality groups covered by legislation are:

Different genders:	Men, women and transgender people
Different ages:	Younger and older people, working age people, children
Disabled people:	Physically or mentally impaired people, people with a long term limiting illness and carers for these people

Different religions:

This can also include different faiths/value systems as well as formal religions.

Different sexual orientations:

Heterosexual, bisexual and gay/lesbian people

Different races:

People from different ethnic, cultural and geographical backgrounds

## The Context for our Comprehensive Equalities Policy

### A Profile of South Cambridgeshire

The District:

- a completely rural area set in 350 square miles of countryside
- a population of over 130,000 residents dispersed among 102 parishes
- consists of only rural settlements with no towns
- a prosperous area with high levels of economic activity and low levels of unemployment; but with increasing house prices and a shortage of affordable homes a healthy area, with high life expectancy compared with national rates
- an area with the lowest crime rate in Cambridgeshire

The population of the district is undergoing a transition. South Cambridgeshire has an ageing population. The percentage of the population aged 65 or above is expected to rise from 14.8% in 2001 to 21.3% in 2016. Conversely, the percentage of children and young people is forecast to decrease from 25% in 2001 to 22.6% in 2021. The aging of the population has implications for the number of our residents affected by disabilities.

Migration is becoming a major factor in South Cambridgeshire. Migration between South Cambridgeshire and the rest of the UK shows net in-migration, with the incoming population having a younger age profile. Recent immigration from outside the UK has included workers attracted by opportunities for employment in the food industry and in the local service economy. Migrant workers have traditionally formed an important sector of the seasonal labour force and recently, migrant communities are becoming more established and less 'seasonal'. There has been a distinct increase in migrant workers numbers since the last Census, particularly, after the accession to the EU in May 2004 of several European countries. However, whether migrant workers will remain as economic conditions change, remains to be seen.

The 2001 Census data shows that in South Cambridgeshire 93.2% of the population were White British, and a further 3.7% were White Irish and White Other, with 3,800 people identified as from minority ethnic groups. The largest identified minority ethnic groups were Indian, Chinese, and Other Ethnic group which overall do not represent more than 1% of the population.

Travellers are not identified separately in the 2001 Census although they are an ethnic group. The Cambridge Area Travellers Needs Assessment 2005 estimated that South Cambridgeshire's travellers estimate was 1,330 in 2005, which equates to 1% of the 2005 district population and makes them the largest ethnic minority group.

**Commitment: We will review our Gypsy and Travellers Strategy by September 2009.**

A growing elderly population, greater mobility, immigration and other social trends are making changes to the population we serve. These changes will accelerate as a result of the population growth facing the district in the next ten years or so, leading to a far more diverse society than previously. At the same time issues of equality, diversity and community cohesion are now high on the national agenda.

## Equalities and the Council

As a local authority we have statutory responsibilities to eliminate discrimination and promote good community relations. This is something we can address in our role as an employer; as a provider of services; and through our influence with partners and the community. The context in which we fulfil these obligations has been and will continue to change as a result of the legislative context, but the principles embodied in this policy will remain the same.

We want equalities to be at the core of our values and the way we provide services. We want to be sensitive to and meet the needs of all members of the community. We recognise that our record in promoting equality and diversity has not, in the past been strong. We have a lot to do to improve equalities awareness and practice within the Council and to demonstrate the progress we are making in order to give a lead to others.

We achieved Level 1 of the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG) at the end of 2007 and we are currently working actively to achieve Level 2 by June 2009. Much of the work we are carrying out will also contribute to the achievement of Level 3 of the standard and we will decide formally whether to go for Level 3 accreditation in 2010.

This Comprehensive Equalities Policy forms the basis of our commitment to equality in service provision, employment and community leadership. It sets out how the Council will embrace equality of opportunity and diversity in the services it provides and promote community cohesion within the district. It provides a focus on achieving consistent improvement against the requirements of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

In drawing up the policy we have consulted stakeholders (both within the Council and externally) who have contributed substantially to this document and we would like to thank all of those who have taken part and contributed to this policy formulation. Their comments have influenced this document.

## Our Corporate Aims and Values

Council has adopted the following Corporate Aims:

- A. We are committed to being a listening Council, providing first class services accessible to all.** We will do this by:
  - listening to and engaging with our local community
  - working with voluntary organisations, Parish Councils and Cambridgeshire County Council to improve services through partnership
  - making South Cambridgeshire District Council more open and accessible
  - achieving improved customer satisfaction with our services
- B. We are committed to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for you and your family.** We will do this by:
  - working closely through our Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership to reduce crime and the fear of crime
  - working with partners to combat Anti Social Behaviour
  - understanding where health inequalities exist and focussing on areas of need
- C. We are committed to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.** We will do this by:



- making affordable housing more available to local people
- ensuring that affordable housing is in balance with the community
- working with local residents to promote community cohesion and addressing the needs of the most vulnerable in the community

**D. We are committed to assisting provision for local jobs for you and your family.** We will do this by:

- working closely with local businesses
- promoting economic development
- using cultural activities effectively to promote tourism

**E. We are committed to providing a voice for rural life.** We will do this by:

- protecting existing communities, villages and the countryside
- working more closely with Parish Councils and local Groups
- playing our part in improving rural services including transport links

### **How do we ensure that we deliver our priorities?**

- We set out clear action plans to deliver our priorities in the Performance Plan.
- We ensure that the Medium Term Financial Strategy is linked with the achievement of our priorities.
- We actively monitor and manage our progress throughout the year through our performance management framework.
- We ensure that these plans are reflected in the plans of individual services.
- We ensure that all staff are working towards the priorities by agreeing objectives with them in their appraisals.

### **We have adopted the following Corporate Values:**

- Mutual Respect
- Trust
- A commitment to service improvement
- Customer service

In embedding these values within the organisation we will place particular emphasis on aspects that support our commitment to equality and diversity:

- ✓ Valuing people from all backgrounds (Mutual Respect)
- ✓ Developing effective working relations and openness within the council and with service users and community groups and with public sector partners (Trust)
- ✓ Meeting the needs of all service users (A commitment to service improvement and Customer service)

## **The Local Strategic Partnership for South Cambridgeshire (LSP)**

The South Cambridgeshire Local Strategic Partnership provides a framework for partnership working in the district. The Local Strategic Partnership is distinctive due to its wide focus. Anything that affects the social, economic or environmental well being of people in South Cambridgeshire can be covered.

The Sustainable Community Strategy is based on the vision people in South Cambridgeshire have for their district, and sets out how partner agencies aim to make things happen.

The long-term vision is for a place where the needs of existing and future generations are met and where communities are:

- Active, inclusive and safe;
- Well-run;
- Environmentally sensitive;
- Well-designed and built;
- Well connected;
- Thriving;
- Well-served; and
- Fair for everyone.

The partnership has four objectives for 2008-2011:

1. Active, healthy and inclusive communities;
2. Safe and clean communities;
3. Building successful new communities;
4. A sustainable infrastructure and environment.

## **Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement (LAA)**

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a way for local authorities and partner agencies to work together to improve services in the area. The LAA is a three-year agreement between Central Government – represented by the regional Government Office – and a local area – represented by local authorities, Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) and other key partners. The primary objective of an LAA is to set out the key principles for the area and deliver better outcomes for local people.

The Partnership of key stakeholder agencies delivering on LAA priorities in Cambridgeshire is called *Cambridgeshire Together*. A reference group of officers supports the Board. These groups emphasise the importance of joint multi-agency working in implementing the LAA's actions and improving service delivery. The LAA also brings together targets from key plans and strategies. Cambridgeshire's LAA has a total of 55 targets

Objectives, performance indicators and targets are grouped under the following priority themes:

- Managing Growth
- Economic Prosperity
- Environmental Sustainability
- Equality and Inclusion
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Educational Attainment (Economic Prosperity & Equality and Inclusion)

## **Our Equalities Schemes**

The Council currently have the following Equalities Schemes:

- Race Equality Scheme
- Disability Equality Scheme
- Gender Equality Scheme (due to be published in early 2009)

These are statutory requirements for the Council and are covered in more detail later on in this policy document.

## Aims

- To work towards the elimination of discrimination (either direct or indirect) and harassment
- To ensure that members and officers work towards mainstreaming equality of opportunity across all policies and functions
- To ensure equality, equity and consistency in working practices and conditions
- To ensure that the workforce represents the wider community of the District

## Our Statutory Obligations

A legislative framework to outlaw discrimination and promote equality in the UK has been taking shape for many years. The pace of change has been influenced by factors such as membership of the European Union and by the degree of recognition given to the needs of different groups in society. European and International Law also provide a framework for rights and remedies against discrimination. These frameworks and the forms of legal protection offer an important basis for promoting equality of opportunity. As an employer the authority must have regard to:

- Sex Discrimination Act 1975
- Race Relations Act 1976
- Equal Pay Act 1970
- Disability Discrimination Act 1995
- Human Rights Act 1998
- EU Employment regulations, covering:
  - Sexual Orientation December 2003
  - Religion or Belief December 2003
  - Age October 2006

In addition two pieces of equalities legislation relate specifically to public bodies in their dealings with employees and service users and elected members. As a listed public body, South Cambridgeshire District Council must comply with the statutory duties enshrined in the:

- Race Relations Amendment Act (2000)
- Disability Discrimination Act (2005)
- The Equality Act (2006)

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 outlaws racial discrimination by any public body and places upon them an anticipatory duty to:

- Eliminate unlawful racial discrimination
- Promote equality of opportunity
- Promote good race relations between people of different racial groups

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 places a further statutory duty upon public bodies to:

- Promote disability equality

- Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- Tackle all forms of harassment and bullying towards people with disabilities
- Promote participation in public life by people with disabilities
- Protect disabled councillors against discrimination

The Equality Act 2006 introduces a new positive duty for public authorities to promote gender equality. Under the new duty, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful sex discrimination
- Eliminate harassment
- Promote equality of opportunity between men and women

## **Race Equality**

Following the murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993, the Home Secretary set up an inquiry, the inquiry findings stressed that if racism is to be eliminated from society, there must be a co-coordinated effort to prevent growth. It also stated that it is incumbent upon every institution to examine the way it carries out its functions and policies to ensure that it does not disadvantage any sector of our community. The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 came into force in April 2001 and is the statutory response to the recommendations of the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry report.

### **The General Duty**

The Act, which strengthened the Race Relations Act 1976, places a general duty on most public authorities to promote race equality, and to eliminate institutional racism by eliminating unlawful racial discrimination and promoting good relations between people of different racial groups through all its services and activities.

The general duty is supported by specific duties, to which the authority must comply, and which will assist the authority to meet the general duty.

### **The specific duties**

a) Publish a Race Equality Scheme (RES)

This shall state:

- Those of its functions and policies, or proposed policies, which that person has assessed as relevant to its performance of the duty imposed by section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act, and
- That person's arrangements for:
  - i. Assessing and consulting on the likely impact of its proposed policies on the promotion of race equality
  - ii. Monitoring its policies for any adverse impact on the promotion of race equality
  - iii. Publishing the results of such assessments and consultations as are mentioned in (i) above
  - iv. Ensuring public access to information and services it provides, and
  - v. Training staff on the duties identified in the RES
  - vi. Reviewing the assessment at 3 yearly intervals

b) Monitor annually, by reference to the racial group to which they belong:

- The number of staff in post
- Applicants for employment, training and promotion
- And where there are more than 150 employees, the number who
  - i. receive training
  - ii. benefit or suffer detriment as a result of its performance

- iii. assessment procedures
  - iv. are involved in grievance procedures
  - v. are the subject of disciplinary procedures
  - vi. cease employment with the authority, and
- Publish annually the results of this monitoring

**Commitment: We will review our Race Equality Scheme by September 2009.**

## **Disability Equality**

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 widens the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, and acknowledges that if society is to improve the life chances of disabled people the public sector must take a lead. The Council must promote equality for people with disabilities, those with physical, visual or hearing impairments, those with learning difficulties, with long term medical conditions which adversely affect their day to day living, and those with mental illness. In promoting opportunities for these traditionally overlooked groups it must 'have due regard' to eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equal opportunities.

The Council must also consider the elimination of the harassment of disabled people, the promotion of positive attitudes and the need to encourage the participation of disabled people in public life. These duties relate to the provision of services, the employment of staff and in the buying of services. There is also a duty to publish a Disability Equality Scheme.

The Disability Equality Scheme, must:

- Involve disabled people in producing the scheme and developing the action plan
- Identify how the council will gather and analyse evidence to inform their actions and track progress
- Set out how they will assess the impact of their existing and proposed activities on disabled people
- Produce an action plan for the next three years
- Report on progress every year and review and make appropriate revisions to the scheme at least every three years

**Commitment: We will review our Disability Equality Scheme by January 2010.**

## **Gender Equality**

In Britain today women now make up almost half the work force, and this percentage is set to grow. Despite this, women make up just 11 per cent of directors at FTSE 100 companies, 20 per cent of MPs and 16 per cent of local authority leaders. Gender stereotyping in occupational areas such as construction, engineering, health and social care and childcare is rife. Thirty years after the Equal Pay Act came into force, women are still paid an average of 80 per cent of a man's wage or salary for comparable work.

The gender equality duty requires public authorities to pay due regard to promoting gender equality and eliminating sex discrimination. This means that service providers and public sector employers, will have to design employment and services with the different needs of women and men in mind

In support of the general duty there are a number of specific duties. These are to:

- Publish a Gender Equality Scheme
- Consult stakeholders in determining the objectives
- Consider the need to include objectives to address the causes of any gender pay gap
- Assess the impact of current and proposed policies and practices on gender equality
- Implement action points of the scheme and report against progress annually
- Review the entire scheme every three years

**Commitment: We will adopt a Gender Equality Scheme by September 2009.**

## **Age Equality**

The implementation of the European Employment directive in October 2006 makes it illegal for employers to force retirement before age 65, and age discrimination in recruitment, promotion and training will be banned. Employers will also have to consider requests from their employees to work after the age of 65. The Council is committed to ensuring that no employee is discriminated against in terms of age, and will include the implications of the new directive into all impact assessments, consultations, monitoring and positive action strategies.

## **Sexual Orientation and Religion or Belief Equality**

The Employment Equality (Sexual Orientation) regulations and the Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) regulations came into force on 1st December 2003. These regulations make it unlawful to discriminate in employment or training on grounds of sexual orientation or religion or belief.

These new laws provide protection against unfair treatment at work for lesbians, gay men and bi-sexuals, people of faith and those of no faith, which is similar to those already provided for women, disabled and black and minority ethnic staff. The Council's commitment to fair treatment, its policies and procedures include the implications of these regulations.

**Commitment: We will develop a Single Equality Scheme to cover all equalities in accordance with the requirements of the Equalities Bill**

## **Consultation: How we will Respond and Implement Equalities**

Two involvement and engagement workshops were held in April 2008 in connection with the development of our Comprehensive Equalities Policy.

The voluntary sector and other external stakeholders attended one workshop. Staff members attended the other workshop. A summary of key discussions and recommendations are highlighted in Appendix 1.

The input from staff, the voluntary sector and other external stakeholders have helped us develop our Equalities Implementation Action Plan, which is available on request. A summary of how we will deliver change is covered later in this policy.

## Our Commitment

### Our Commitment to Equality and Diversity

As an authority we are committed to eliminating discrimination and prejudice, and developing a culture which values difference, both in employment and service delivery, to a level at least as good as the national average. We will work in partnership with our staff, local communities and public bodies to achieve this. We will work to ensure that equalities and diversity becomes a central and essential element of our service planning and delivery, both as an employer and provider of services.

We will use our position as democratically elected community leader to promote equality and diversity to our partner agencies and to the community as a whole. We recognise that people may experience discrimination and disadvantage for many reasons, including but not limited to:

- Race or ethnic origin (including the gypsy and traveller community)
- Religion or belief
- Disability (physical, sensory and cognitive)
- Age
- Gender
- Sexual orientation

We will initially address all these causes of discrimination, which are statutory duties, but we will not neglect other sources of discrimination and social exclusion where they impact significantly upon residents of South Cambridgeshire or to reflect changes in national guidance or legislation.

**Commitment: We are committed to achieving Level 2 of the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG) by June 2009 and Level 3 within the period of this policy.**



## Our Equality and Diversity Strategic Objectives

Our Comprehensive Equalities Policy sets out specific principles and aims that we will follow in order to achieve our Commitment to Equality and the equality dimension of our Corporate Objectives and Values.

The Council has already adopted race and disability equality schemes and is in the process of developing a gender equality scheme. We have a number of relevant Human Resource policies, a strategy for our work with the Traveller community, which is currently being reviewed and other equality target groups.

Our approach to the delivery of our Commitment to Equality will reflect the following strategic objectives:

- Fairness and equity, while recognising that many people fall under more than one or our equality priorities.
- Being non-discriminatory in all areas and activities, including service delivery, staff recruitment and development and the purchasing of goods and services.
- Ensuring that the most disadvantaged and vulnerable sections of our community have equal access to all of our services, particularly those associated with our key equality themes
- Ensuring that elected members and staff at all levels are clear about their responsibility to challenge discrimination, promote diversity and social inclusion, and work towards equality for all members of the community.
- Encouraging 'real' participation in local democracy by people who may normally feel excluded from decision-making processes. In doing this, we will ensure that we seek the views of groups who are particularly vulnerable or at risk of social exclusion or have found it difficult to access our services or receive favourable outcomes from them.
- Promotion of community cohesion & good community relations.
- Working with partners in the statutory, voluntary, and private sectors to promote 'best practice' equality approaches throughout the community strategy, while ensuring the best outcomes from the strategy for all the people of South Cambridgeshire.
- Working towards a workforce which reflects the working-age population of the district and the county and conforms with 'best value' guidelines on staff diversity

## **How we will deliver Change**

We will deliver excellent equality and diversity practice by doing the following main things over the next three years in relation to the four key themes of the Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG):

- Leadership and Corporate Commitment,
- Community Engagement and Accountability,
- Service Delivery and Customer Care,
- Employment and Training

### **Leadership and Corporate Commitment**

#### **Having a working structure**

We need to make sure that our organisation is geared up to delivering equality and diversity. We need to have specific people who lead and deliver change. We need everyone to be involved.

This means:

- There is active commitment to discussing and tackling equality issues across the organisation
- Discussion and action at all management levels, from service teams through Executive Management Team meetings, Senior Management Team and our top level Steering Group and Cabinet.
- A network of equality and diversity champions, who actively promote, advise on and investigate the issues and keep themselves up to date with equality issues
- A corporate equality Champion sits on our Senior Management Team and an Equality and Diversity Manager provides the focus and direction for our efforts
- There is a Member Champion for equality and diversity
- Having clear lines of responsibility and accountability, including at member level

#### **Scrutiny and audit**

Our investment of effort needs to be matched by assurance that the outcomes are worthwhile and working. We need to review, scrutinise and audit what we have done, and continuously learn lessons from it.

This means:

- Corporate Managers evaluate and quality assure impact assessments or service work/proposals for change
- There is corporate quality assurance of equality work and impact assessments.

### **Community Engagement and Accountability**

#### **Consulting effectively**

To get the right outcomes, we must know what equality groups and the community think about where and what we need to change. We need to be open to this and respond.

This means:

- Maintaining up to date information on relevant voluntary groups and partnerships
- Consulting according to our Compact standard of 12 weeks, whether on equality impact assessments (EQIAs) or other service issues
- Using a wide variety of consultation and involvement approaches, times, venues, languages and formats, interpretation and translation services, designed thoughtfully to engage as many people as possible
- Having a consultation forward plan, so we coordinate our approaches and minimise consultation fatigue
- Sharing our results and action plans with the people we consulted.

## **Managing our partnerships**

Our partnerships bring together the rest of the public sector, the private sector and voluntary organisations. All of these have skills and knowledge we can use to deliver better equality and diversity. However, the partnerships can be used to discuss and spread good practice.

This means:

- Building relevant equality visions and objectives into partnership terms of reference
- Having shared equality and diversity targets, which are performance managed
- Partnership should remove barriers to different equality groups who want to or need to contribute
- Proposals to or by a partnership on new projects and key decisions should be supported by equality impact assessments
- Training for our representatives on partnerships as required to enhance their skills and knowledge (and therefore contribution to equality and diversity)

## **Going public**

Doing well with equality and diversity is only any good if people know about it. We need to tell people what's happening, and how they can contribute. This is not the same as consultation.

This means:

- Communicating effectively with the media about what we are doing, when and how well
- Having a website which champions equality and diversity, and where this information is easy to find
- Publishing our equality impact assessments and action plans in ways that are accessible to all
- Inviting comments and involvement in new events, projects and so on
- Visibly celebrating key equality and diversity events and calendar dates, with our community
- Building community cohesion and integration, taking action against harassment and victimisation

## **Service Delivery and Customer Care**

### **Assessing and reducing our impacts**

As a council, the way we deliver our services, the buildings we deliver them from, the opening times we have and the way we recruit can put up barriers. These are only a few of the areas where our 'normal' ways of doing things can exclude people. We need to think more widely about how we do things, what we do and whom it might affect adversely.

This means:

- A corporate training programme for equality and diversity, so people across the whole council understand their responsibilities and change the way they think and do business
- Having a rolling programme of formal Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) across all of our services (Our Equality Impact Assessments programme can be found at Appendix 2)
- Ensuring that outside this programme, all major changes, new policies, projects and key decisions are supported by an Equality Impact Assessment
- Looking critically at what we do and who this affects, and consulting on the issues
- Delivering action plans for change in the different service areas
- Identify common issues and impacts across the whole council which we can address corporately
- Setting our plans for making our organisation more attractive and accessible to other equality groups

### **Improving our data**

We need to know where to improve, if our people, time and money are to be well used.

This means:

- Improving our systems, collection processes and data analysis, so that services collect data which can be analysed by equality group
- Compare who is using the services with who we think should be and use this to make changes
- Setting equality objectives and targets (in our service and corporate plans) with action plans that support them
- Share the results of what we know and what we are doing with the community

### **Procuring goods and services**

We don't deliver everything ourselves. Many of our services use contracts with other companies to deliver some of their work. Our spending gives us significant power to influence others and improve their approaches to equality and diversity. We need to make sure that the companies we 'employ' also sign up to the same standards.

This means:

- Involving different equality groups and perspectives in the specification and design of our contracts (staff and external)
- Tendering processes, which do not place adverse barriers on employers and groups who want to bid

- A clear policy on what we expect from prospective companies and how we will assess and monitor that while tendering and afterwards
- Contract management, which reviews and enforces equality targets in the contract

## **Employment and Training**

### **Allocating resources**

Having people willing to do the job is not enough. We need time and money to deliver better practices.

This means:

- Setting aside staff and time to delivering equality – primarily through our working structure, but also by setting up special projects and project teams as necessary,
- Setting out budgets for equality work, such as special projects, training needs, conferences, our own local equality events and so on,
- Harnessing the capacity and skills of the voluntary groups to help us deliver our duties and meet their needs,
- Delivering equality through our existing partnerships

### **Developing our Equalities Capacities**

Equality and diversity will not become part of what we do overnight. People will need supporting to become confident and competent with this way of thinking.

This means:

- Appointing an Equality and Diversity Officer with the skills to help and support staff in the transition
- A programme of ongoing training to equip people with the skills they need
- Advice and support on specific projects or issues in a range of more informal ways, such as one to one meetings, workshops etc
- Advice about new government or regulatory body initiatives and legislation, snapshots of external studies and their implications, and advice on legal cases pending or determined
- Sharing information as an organisation
- Having a good quality intranet resources page for equality and diversity
- Having an equal pay policy for our employees for work of equal value, which is evidenced to be fair and irrespective of background
- Reviewing and revising all our employment practices, to make us an excellent example of equality and diversity, and an exemplar employer.

## Monitoring Implementation

### The Equality and Diversity Steering Group

South Cambridgeshire District Council has an established Equality and Diversity Steering Group whose aim is to support the development and implementation of policies and practices to enable the Council to meet its statutory obligations and achieve its commitment to equality and diversity given in the Comprehensive Equality Policy.

The terms of reference for the Steering Group can be found at Appendix 3.

### The Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG)

The Equality Standard for Local Government ('the standard') was established in 2001 and re-issued in June 2006. The rationale for the standard is basically:

- To help authorities keep up with the law on equality
- To help authorities break down barriers to discrimination, whether this is knowing or unknowing.

Local authorities are 'enablers' for the community and deliver important services. This is why they have often been identified in the legislation supporting equal opportunities.

The Standard is framed to help local authorities comply with their statutory duties but, at the same time to go beyond a merely "legislative" approach, by ensuring that all sections of the community have a genuine voice in shaping equality improvement plans.

The Standard has five levels of achievement. At each level the themes of Leadership & Corporate Commitment, Community Engagement & Accountability, Service Delivery & Customer Care and Employment & Training are emphasised.

**Level 1:** requires us to show a commitment by to developing and implementing a comprehensive equality policy

**Level 2:** involves engagement with stakeholders in reviewing and assessing our current equalities performance in each part of the organisation

**Level 3:** requires us to set objectives and targets for improving our performance (equalities action plans)

**Level 4:** entails data management and monitoring arrangements being in place to measure the progress of our action plans

**Level 5:** high and consistent level of improvement

**Use of this framework and other measures have enabled us to achieve Level 1 of the Standard at the end of 2007.**

**Commitment: We are now working towards achieving Level 2 by the end of June 2009 and we will seek to achieve Level 3 accreditation within the period of this policy.**

The Equality Standard for Local Government (ESLG) is currently under review and a new Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG) is likely to be launched in

April 2009. This is to complement changes to the improvement framework for local government.

## **External Scrutiny**

There are several bodies that check and regulate what we do on equality and diversity, as well as us. They are:

- Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR)
- The Audit Commission
- Benefit Fraud Inspectorate
- Housing Inspectorate

All of these look at equality and diversity in the way we deliver services. Our performance ratings (how well we serve our community) can be affected by how well we approach equality and diversity.

## Looking to the Future

The Council recognises the proposed changes to equality legislation and enhanced role for us in promoting community cohesion. This policy will be updated to reflect any new duties on an ongoing basis.

## More Information

If you would like more information or to comment about our Comprehensive Equalities Policy or if you would like a copy of this document in an alternative format or language, please contact:

Phone: 01954 713465

Email: [equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:equality.schemes@scambs.gov.uk)

Website: [www.scambs.gov.uk](http://www.scambs.gov.uk)

Or write to us at:

Equality and Diversity Officer  
South Cambridgeshire District Council  
South Cambridgeshire Hall  
Cambourne Business Park  
Cambourne, Cambridge  
Cambridgeshire  
CB23 6EA



## Consultation: A summary of key discussions and recommendations

### Stakeholder Workshop (Voluntary & Community sector) Comments

<b>Theme 1: Leadership and Corporate Commitment</b> <i>a) What role should leaders (members, senior management) be playing in promoting &amp; communicating equality?</i>	<b>Actions to be taken</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure wide consultation of individuals as well as groups when developing policy (remembering literacy and language needs).</li> <li>• Work harder to communicate with transitory communities.</li> <li>• Connect with communities and promote integration via service provision.</li> <li>• Promote cohesion yet celebrate diversity.</li> <li>• Officially recognise and pay tribute to the voluntary sector – ideally with resources that reflect the extent to which the organisation is supporting council responsibilities.</li> <li>• Members/Senior Officers could represent SCDC on the boards of appropriate groups.</li> <li>• Remember that groups do not organise themselves geographically –</li> <li>• There is a need for cross-boundary partnership working.</li> <li>• Lead and champion on diversity strands.</li> <li>• Dispel myths and promote positive and truthful information.</li> <li>• Challenge Racism.</li> <li>• Encourage and support groups in organising events within the SCDC area.</li> </ul>	<p>We need to make sure that we have a working structure, which is geared up to delivering equality and diversity. This will be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Championing equality issues at all levels of the organisation.</li> <li>• Developing links with new &amp; emerging communities.</li> <li>• Identifying clear and distinct roles for equality strands and wider issues at Member/Senior Management levels.</li> <li>• Developing active myth busting and awareness raising.</li> <li>• Developing collaborative and partnership events and activities with various groups in the SCDC area.</li> </ul>
<i>b) Outcomes of a 'good' Equality &amp; Diversity policy?</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wider experience base: some Equality and Diversity experts.</li> <li>• Greater participation and service take-up.</li> <li>• Greater harmony with community and workforce.</li> <li>• Council and partners achieve more together than separately.</li> <li>• People feel happier (quality of life)</li> <li>• Able to challenge inequality and be taken seriously/supported</li> <li>• Well informed about rights and services</li> <li>• Recognition of the difficulty of measuring outcomes, but ensuring that some key measurables are identified and monitored</li> <li>• Recognising the challenge presented by</li> </ul>	<p>Our investment and efforts need to be matched by the assurance that the outcomes are worthwhile and actually working. Through scrutiny and audit we will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clear, measurable and achievable targets are developed.</li> <li>• Communication barriers are dealt with as and when they arise.</li> <li>• Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) are evaluated and quality assured.</li> <li>• Web page accessibility is extended to all web-based documents.</li> </ul>

<p>equalities and diversity, and taking small steps in the right direction, tackling each pillar in turn.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Address challenges associated with access, to ensure that all groups are aware of how to contact the Council or access information.</li> <li>• Overcome the difficulties presented by language or technology barriers.</li> <li>• Ensure that everyone is aware of their entitlements and how to claim them.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Theme 2: Community Engagement and Accountability</b>  <i>How can the Council work effectively with community groups to achieve equality?</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Better understanding about communities and the work required around myth busting and awareness raising of different groups and communities.</li> <li>• Voluntary and Community groups – more influencing and involvement in the Council process.</li> <li>• Work more effectively with community and Ormiston Travellers Group for them to provide a mediation role between the Council and Gypsy/Traveller groups.</li> <li>• Accessibility issues for communities gaining access to their district council.</li> </ul>	<p>To get the right outcomes, we must know the views of what equality groups and the community think about where we need to change. By consulting effectively we will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a variety of consultation and involvement approaches and formats.</li> <li>• Maintain up to date information on relevant voluntary groups and partnerships.</li> <li>• Share our results and action plans with the people we consulted.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Theme 3: Service Delivery and Customer Care</b>  <i>a) What are your experiences as service users or deliverers?</i></p>	<p><b>Actions to be taken</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of data on current performance.</li> <li>• A lot of myths around e.g. travellers believe they don't get allocated a house because they are a traveller and non-travellers believe that they don't get houses because they are all going to travellers.</li> <li>• Poor service delivery around planning and generally real issues around planning.</li> <li>• Slow response to planning permission e.g. date given and then meeting not held and no explanation provided as to why date has been changed.</li> <li>• Important to introduce feedback mechanisms to find out if all people can access services.</li> <li>• Need to find out peoples future needs. As we have an aging population we need to send out information on different services as people age. Need to target people, as they get older with different services.</li> <li>• Those with poor or no literacy skills need to be considered. An assumption is made</li> </ul>	<p>As a local authority, we need to assess the way that we deliver our services. By assessing and reducing our impacts, we will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a formal programme of Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) across all of our service areas.</li> <li>• An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) supports all major changes, new policies, projects and key decisions.</li> </ul>

<p>that everybody is literate. Different mediums need to be considered to meet their needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve communication channels particularly for the Traveller community.</li> <li>• Faith Communities – Council have not been good at taking on board faith communities e.g. Northstowe and future developments there. The impact on different communities needs to be identified.</li> <li>• Silo Mentality – the Council needs to start working with groups across departments and not just regard a problem as belonging to one department.</li> </ul>	
<p><i>b) Barriers to delivering on policies</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of leadership – all levels of the organisation need to be supportive of any policy to make it work.</li> <li>• Lack of data – how do you know what needs to be addressed if you have no data.</li> <li>• Capacity – lack of staff to fulfil policy aims.</li> <li>• Equalities are seen, as an add-on as it is hard to measure success, as there is no immediate reward.</li> <li>• People tend to have the smallest voice and as a result their opinions are not listened to.</li> <li>• Geography – South Cambridgeshire is so spread out and some areas are very small and remote that it is hard to reach everyone.</li> <li>• Leadership issue – traditional demographics of predominantly white middle class in South Cambridgeshire influences decision making and voting in main groups. There needs to be some acknowledgement that a certain amount of demystifying is required.</li> <li>• Communications – it is vital to have regular reinforcement of the equalities message and not just one big push and then nothing.</li> <li>• Equality needs embedding in every policy and procedure so it becomes second nature.</li> <li>• Procedures must be in place to back up any policy.</li> <li>• Initiative fatigue – staff are tired of new policies being introduced and just see it as management latest ‘fad’.</li> <li>• Resistance to cultural change – staff have been here so long and many are just waiting for retirement.</li> <li>• Historical issues of distrust of officials</li> </ul>	<p>We need to know where to improve. By improving our data, we will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our systems, collection processes and Equality and Diversity Steering Group can use data analysis to effectively monitor our service provision.</li> <li>• There is an open and transparent process in place.</li> <li>• Set equality objectives and targets in our service plans with action plans that support them.</li> </ul>

<p>(police, social workers, council officer etc) for Gypsy/Traveller community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of community development activities to understand what the issues are for the various groups.</li> <li>• Lack of transparency in decision-making process.</li> </ul>	
<p>c) <i>Procurement</i> <i>How will diversity link into this important area?</i></p>	<p><b>Actions to be taken</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commissioning services should provide opportunities for smaller, local, voluntary &amp; community groups working in all areas of equality</li> </ul>	<p>Many of our services use contracts with other companies to deliver some of the work. By procuring goods and services, we will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct an Equality Impact Assessment on existing procurement policies and procedures (particularly in terms of commissioning).</li> <li>• Have a clear policy in place on what we expect from prospective companies and ensure that the tendering process does not place adverse barriers on employers and groups who want to bid.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Theme 4: Employment and Training</b> <i>Do you have any comments about the draft community leadership/employment/customer service policy?</i></p>	<p><b>Actions to be taken</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The policy is too long and needs separating into policy and strategy.</li> <li>• Provide staff training e.g. emptied bins strewn across pavements, are a hazard for some elderly or disabled people.</li> <li>• Stop using 'Disabled' signs on toilets – say 'Easy Access' instead.</li> <li>• Set up Member and Officer Champions for Equality and Diversity.</li> </ul>	<p>We need to ensure that our employment practices deliver our equalities commitments. By allocating resources effectively, we will ensure that there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structured and tailored training to make sure the equality and diversity message is disseminated across the organisation.</li> <li>• There is a Member Champion for Diversity and Officer/Champions roles will be developed.</li> </ul>

### Staff Workshop Comments

<p><b>Theme 1. Leadership and Corporate Commitment</b> <i>a) Ideal outcome of a good, Equality &amp; Diversity Policy?</i></p>	<p><b>Actions to be taken</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diverse workforce</li> <li>• Officers to 'represent' diverse groups (e.g. Traveller liaison officer)</li> <li>• A culture of mutual respect</li> <li>• EQIAs embedded across organisation</li> <li>• Action plan with timescales. Clear performance management of equalities</li> <li>• Councillors engaged with whole community and different groups in their area. Clear roles for themselves and senior officers.</li> <li>• Accessible Council meetings.</li> </ul>	<p>We need to have specific people who will lead and deliver change. This will be achieved by establishing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A network of equality and diversity champions, who actively promote, advise on and investigate the issues and keep themselves up to date with equality issues.</li> <li>• A Corporate Equalities Champion and a Member Equalities Portfolio Holder.</li> </ul>
<p><i>b) What role should leaders (elected members, senior management) be playing in promoting</i></p>	<p><b>Actions to be taken</b></p>

<p><i>and communicating equality? How should they do that?</i></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They must be seen as Diversity Champions in their areas</li> <li>• They must show compliance with corporate policy and ensure that council documents refer consistently to equalities</li> <li>• All members must receive awareness training</li> <li>• Officers need awareness training</li> <li>• Members and Officers need Impact Assessment Training – need to understand what it is about</li> <li>• Needs to be included in induction for new officers – and followed up with updates</li> <li>• Equality needs to be included in the Member Undertaking. Can this be mandatory?</li> <li>• Members and senior management must be prepared to challenge their peers on words used and other behaviours. This should be done more transparently.</li> <li>• Best practice should be rewarded – openly/publicly praised.</li> <li>• Managers at all levels need to communicate equalities.</li> <li>• Members need to take the view that they represent all the community - not just those who voted for them.</li> <li>• Need to have a day when senior managers can experience impairments (sight, hearing etc) to enhance awareness.</li> <li>• Need better joined up leadership between departments</li> <li>• Equality and Diversity should permeate all policy making.</li> </ul>	<p>Our investment and efforts need to be matched by the assurance that the outcomes are worthwhile and actually working. We will identify clear and distinct roles for equalities at Member and senior management level to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A commitment for training for all Members and staff.</li> <li>• Equalities implications on reports, policies and other documentation.</li> <li>• The Equality and Diversity Steering Group will have a role in publishing and disseminating equalities good practice.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Theme 2 Community Engagement and Accountability</b>  <i>How can we work effectively with voluntary and community groups to achieve equality and diversity?</i></p>	<p><b>Actions to be taken</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We must recognise the importance of voluntary and community groups, e.g. through funding and other support to maximise their impact – e.g.</li> <li>• Age Concern – improve arrangements to work with them.</li> <li>• Need to improve our capacity, e.g. Community Services has been weakened</li> <li>• More effective consultation, i.e. include them at the earliest possible stage</li> <li>• Improve our communications/access/support with/for Parish Councils</li> </ul>	<p>Doing things well with equality and diversity is only good if we tell people what's happening and how they can contribute. This will be achieved by going public to ensure that we:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communicate effectively with the media.</li> <li>• Have a website, which champions equality and diversity.</li> <li>• Visibly celebrate key equality and diversity events with our stakeholders and community.</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASK THEM HOW WE CAN HELP THEM!</li> <li>• They have limited funding – direct them to Equality and Diversity issues</li> <li>• Identify and reward/praise best practice e.g. South Cambridgeshire Magazine</li> <li>• Some good examples of working with Travellers community, e.g. production of CDs/cassettes for consultation in view of low literacy rates.</li> <li>• Working with Ormiston Trust. The training of travellers to carry out consultation in connection with Housing Needs survey.</li> <li>• Travellers Forum.</li> <li>• Planning documents often too long for effective consultation – need more face to face consultation (but resource issue)</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Theme 3 Service Delivery and Customer Care</b>  a) <i>What are your experiences in service delivery and/or employment</i></p>	<p><b>Actions to be taken</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We tend to stereotype or pigeon hole groups and treat them all the same.</li> <li>• Need to carry out a diversity audit.</li> <li>• Need more stakeholder analysis</li> <li>• Customers who shout loudest are listened to and undermine staff – managers should back staff.</li> <li>• The public often misunderstand Council policies and procedures, e.g. allocations.</li> <li>• Need training to enable staff to assert themselves.</li> <li>• Will need robust procedures to deliver the strategy.</li> <li>• Flexible working can work against equalities, e.g. carers.</li> <li>• The growing emphasis on technology can work against some service users.</li> <li>• Need to establish clear provision and policy towards translation and interpretation.</li> <li>• Need more consistent approach towards flexible working and car users.</li> </ul>	<p>As a local authority, we need to assess the way that we deliver our services. By assessing and reducing our impacts, we will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a formal programme of Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) across all of our service areas.</li> <li>• An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) supports all major changes, new policies, projects and key decisions.</li> <li>• A commitment to develop an equalities evidence base.</li> <li>• A commitment to train all officers in equalities and related skills</li> <li>• A clear policy on translation and interpretation.</li> <li>• A clear policy and officer training on web accessibility</li> </ul>
<p>b) <i>Barriers to implementing policy</i></p>	<p><b>Actions to be taken</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need equality impact assessments to identify issues</li> <li>• Policy needs to be embedded</li> <li>• Lack of understanding about the barriers people experience.</li> <li>• Tend to respond to those who shout loudest – need better evidence.</li> <li>• Educational backgrounds. Narrow range of reference – usually need University degree for jobs.</li> <li>• Culture of organisation – fear of change.</li> <li>• Managers not knowing how to tackle</li> </ul>	<p>If our people, time and money are to be well used, we need to know where to improve. By improving our data, we will ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our systems, collection processes and Equality and Diversity Steering Group can use data analysis to effectively monitor our service provision.</li> <li>• There is an open and transparent process in place.</li> <li>• There is a commitment to link equalities with our values and with customer service.</li> </ul>

<p>problems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Succession planning – need to train younger staff and encourage career development.</li> <li>• HR capacity - lack of data about workforce. Lack of consistent HR procedures</li> <li>• Inaccessibility of Cambourne. Overall geography of South Cambridgeshire - going into Cambridge and out again.</li> <li>• Possibly need more face-to-face contact – satellite offices, focus groups etc.</li> <li>• Contact centre – implications for equality of access</li> <li>• Different approaches to consultation - need more engagement and work with voluntary sector.</li> <li>• Sometimes lack of clarity about word, e.g. bidding in context of Choice Based Letting</li> </ul>	
<p><i>c) Procurement</i> <i>How will diversity link into this important area?</i></p>	<p><b>Actions to be taken</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suppliers should be encouraged to develop equalities practices in line with those of the Council.</li> <li>• Departments should consider the equalities profile of local suppliers, particularly in relationship to small value contracts.</li> </ul>	<p>Many of our services use contracts with other companies to deliver some of the work. By procuring goods and services, we will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct an Equality Impact Assessment on existing procurement policies and procedures (particularly in terms of commissioning).</li> <li>• Have a clear policy in place on what we expect from prospective companies and ensure that the tendering process does not place adverse barriers on employers and groups who want to bid.</li> <li>• Involve different equality groups and perspectives in the specification and design of our contracts.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Theme 4: Employment and Training</b> <i>Do you have any comments about the draft community leadership/employment/customer service policy?</i></p>	<p><b>Actions to be taken</b></p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vision statement missing – ½ a page which everybody can lift and use in reports etc</li> <li>• Need action plan with timescales</li> <li>• Everyone will need to understand the requirements of the policy</li> <li>• Not everybody will read it</li> <li>• Need to use different methods to communicate its key messages</li> <li>• Maybe bring this same group of people back together in 3/6/9 months to monitor success in embedding policy</li> <li>• However, diversity messages must be cascaded to everybody</li> </ul>	<p>Equality and diversity will not become part of what we do overnight. People will need the support to develop their confidence and competence. This will be achieved by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appointing an Equality and Diversity Officer with the skills to help and support staff.</li> <li>• A programme of ongoing training for staff.</li> <li>• Having a good quality intranet resource.</li> </ul>

## Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs) Programme

The Council will carry out the following Equality Impact Assessments (EQIAs):

<b>Environmental Services</b>	<b>New Communities</b>
<p>HIGH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improvement grants</li> <li>• Licensing</li> </ul> <p>MEDIUM (by end Sept 2009)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health improvement/inequalities</li> <li>• Food safety</li> <li>• Waste Collection</li> </ul> <p>LOW:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health and Safety</li> <li>• HMSO/Housing regulation</li> <li>• Environmental Control Complaints</li> <li>• Out of Hours service</li> </ul>	<p>HIGH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community engagement/development</li> <li>• Sports development</li> <li>• Arts development</li> </ul> <p>MEDIUM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Economic Development strategy</li> <li>• Sustainability</li> <li>• Grants</li> </ul> <p>LOW:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Play facilities</li> <li>• Open space</li> </ul>
<b>Planning and Sustainable Communities</b>	<b>Affordable Housing</b>
<p>HIGH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development control: processes, guidance notes, leaflets, application forms etc</li> <li>• DPDs – particularly travellers</li> <li>• Statement of Community Involvement – consultation/engagement in development plan process</li> </ul> <p>MEDIUM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concessionary fares</li> </ul> <p>LOW:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building control</li> <li>• Enforcement</li> <li>• Conservation</li> </ul>	<p>HIGH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Advice</li> <li>• Traveller sites</li> <li>• Anti-Social Behaviour</li> </ul> <p>MEDIUM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing Repairs</li> <li>• Housing Strategy/Development</li> <li>• Tenant Participation</li> <li>• Sheltered housing</li> <li>• Housing management policies and procedures</li> <li>• Floating support</li> </ul> <p>LOW:</p> <p>Already completed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choice based lettings</li> <li>• Homelessness strategy</li> </ul>
<b>Finance and Support Services</b>	<b>Community and Customer service</b>
<p>HIGH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Benefits service</li> </ul> <p>MEDIUM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Procurement</li> <li>• Web and intranet</li> <li>• Revenues</li> <li>• Rate relief policy</li> <li>• Democratic services</li> </ul> <p>LOW:</p>	<p>HIGH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Travellers Policy</li> <li>• Consultation and engagement</li> </ul> <p>MEDIUM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communications</li> <li>• Partnership framework</li> <li>• Access to Services/Customer Services</li> <li>• Community Safety</li> <li>• Reception service</li> </ul>



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fraud prevention</li> <li>• Accountancy/MTFS/capital and revenue estimates</li> <li>• Audit</li> <li>• ICT</li> <li>• Whistle blowing policy</li> </ul>	<p>LOW:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Elections and Electoral Registration</li> <li>• Performance management</li> </ul>
<b>HR</b>	<b>Legal Services</b>
<p>HIGH:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruitment and Selection</li> <li>• Management of Sickness policy</li> </ul> <p>MEDIUM:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Grievance procedure</li> <li>• Disciplinary procedures</li> <li>• Homeworking policy</li> <li>• Learning and development</li> </ul> <p>LOW:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relocation policy</li> <li>• Probation policy</li> <li>• Redundancy and Reorganisation procedure</li> <li>• Capability policy</li> </ul> <p>Already done: Family Issues policy</p>	<p>MEDIUM/LOW:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal Services</li> <li>• Land charges</li> </ul>

## Equality and Diversity Steering Group

### Terms of Reference

**Aim:** To support the development and implementation of policies and practices to enable the Council to meet its statutory obligations and achieve its commitment to equality and diversity given in the Comprehensive Equality Policy.

**How will the aim be achieved?** The Steering Group will achieve its aim by -

- (a) Advising and commenting on relevant draft policies, strategies, equality schemes, practices and action plans
- (b) Co-ordinating, sustaining, monitoring and reviewing the Council's performance and progress in complying with equalities legislative requirements and good practice.
- (c) Monitoring the completion of EQIAs to assess whether the programme of planned assessments is on target; new policies and plans are appropriately assessed; and whether assessments are carried out to appropriate standards and their recommendations implemented.
- (d) Assisting with the communication and mainstreaming of equalities into Council policy and practice.
- (e) Advising on training needs and programmes to meet them.
- (f) Identifying and co-ordinating the development of initiatives aimed at promoting continuous improvement in service delivery and employment in relation to equality issues.
- (g) Advising other relevant working groups, such as Service First and the Travellers Strategic Officer Group, on equalities issues.

#### Membership

Core Membership:

- SMT Equalities Champion (Chair)
- Corporate Manager, Community and Customer Services (Vice Chair)
- Corporate Manager or representative from each of the other 5 corporate areas
- Equality and Diversity Officer
- HR representative
- Legal representative
- Representative/s of the two major unions recognised by the Council

Core members are expected to prioritise attending meetings of the Steering Group.

Circulatory Membership:

- Equalities Portfolio Holder
- EMT members not members of the steering group
- Policy and Performance Manager

- Communications team representative
- Chairs or representatives of Service First, Travellers SOG and other relevant working parties
- Any other officer on request

Circulatory members will receive copies of the agenda and minutes and may attend any meeting after prior notification to the Equality and Diversity Officer

**Quorum**

One member at no less than Corporate Manager level or above, plus at least three other core members.

**Meetings**

The Equality and Diversity Steering Group will meet every six weeks, but may vary this frequency depending on circumstances.

**Accountability**

The Steering Group will report to the Equalities Portfolio Holder and to EMT at least quarterly on progress with work plans and identifying areas for action and improvement. There will be a standard item on each agenda on reports to be made to the Portfolio Holder and EMT.

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**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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**REPORT TO:** Cabinet  
**AUTHOR/S:** Principal Solicitor

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16 April 2009

**THIRD PARTY ACCESS TO PROPERTY REGISTERS AND INFORMATION & REVIEW OF CHARGES FOR PROPERTY SEARCHES****Purpose**

1. The report explains the implementation of the Local Authorities (Charges for Property Searches) Regulations 2008 (the Charges Regulations) and how these legislative changes impact on the Council including the fees that can be charged for supplying property information.
2. The report explains the calculation of fees for searches and access to property data on a cost recovery basis and seeks authority to introduce these new fees in accordance with the Charges Regulations, and to amend the current land charges fees policy for 'official' searches dealt with by the Land Charges team.

This is not a key decision but involves a change in policy and fees charging as a result of legislation.

**Background**

3. There are 2 elements to any property search:
  - (a) a search, against an address, of the Local Land Charges Register (LLCR) and,
  - (b) enquiries about a particular property or piece of land that can be made of a local authority based on a statutory form known as 'CON29' enquiries.
4. There are 2 ways search are undertaken: searches by third parties, usually Personal Search Companies (PSCs); and 'official' searches further to requisitions submitted, usually by solicitors, for a search to be produced in a tailored report format by the Local Land Charges team (LLC) having searched the LLCR and collated information from planning, building control and health & environmental services relating to CON29 enquiries.
5. The key change in the law means that from 6th April 2009 third parties must be given access to such information as may be held by the local authority, in order for the third party to produce a fully informed search report for their client. This change is brought about by the Charges Regulations which came into force on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2008 and is an attempt by the government to introduce a level playing field following the OFT investigation into the property search industry and competition between the private sector and local authorities in the provision of property searches which are a key part of the conveyancing process.
6. There is no change to the way that 'official searches' are produced but there are changes which affect the way in which the fees for those searches are calculated.

## Considerations

7. Private search companies inspect the LLCR in the land charges department and make notes of any entries in the LLCR affecting the property which they are searching against. This arrangement and the statutory fee for inspection (£11) remain unchanged by the Charges Regulations. In relation to CON29 enquiries personal searchers have in the past, for properties within the South Cambridgeshire area, obtained a certain amount of planning information from the SCDC website, together with a certain amount of building control information direct from the Building Control team.
8. Personal searchers have had the benefit of insurance against claims for deficient searches i.e. where they could not access information. From 6<sup>th</sup> April this insurance is no longer available and personal searchers must obtain replies to those CON29 enquiries made by their clients.
9. The fee for an 'official' search of the LLCR is not fixed by statute. It has been fixed in the past at £6.00. SCDC continued to charge that level of fee and now seeks to revise it in accordance with the Charges Regulations.
10. In the majority of cases an 'official' search request is for a combined search (full search) of the LLCR and CON29 Enquiries. Some of the CON29 enquiries are required ('CON29R') and some are optional (CON29O). Occasionally requisitions for official searches are for a search of the LLCR only. The LLC impose further additional charges for additional enquiries; duplicate searches and where there are additional parcels of land searched against for a single transaction the costs of the search can be discounted. All of these charges have been reviewed in light of the Charges Regulations and are set out in the attached Table A for approval.
11. **Calculation of Fees:** The Charges Regulations provide for calculation of 'official' search fees to be done on a costs recovery basis. In relation to the costs for providing access to third parties the related Guidance issued by CLG outlines a complex methodology for calculating fair and transparent charges for providing access to property information/data held by the local authority. Any charges imposed, including internal recharges from departments to LLC must not exceed the costs to the authority of granting access to property records. Over a period of three years the Council must ensure that the total income from charges does not exceed their total costs. Where the authority has made an under or overestimate of the unit charge it must take this into account the following year.
12. Officers have found that currently there is no identifiable additional activity being carried out by planning, building control or health and environmental services to maintain and update baseline data specifically for the purposes of providing access to a third party to answer the CON29 enquiries. It appears that all maintenance and updating of data is being done in any event. Therefore, it would not be lawful to allow a charge for any element of that to be included in the charges for allowing access to third parties.
13. Officers have, in relation to personal searches, considered the time that will be taken up by staff in facilitating the access to property information by third parties. In accordance with the guidance officers have produced a menu of charges for access to individual date items. These are set out in the attached document "Schedule of Registers/Information for Local Enquiries Search." Members will note that these charges are minimal as much of the information is already free and publicly available on the SCDC website (eg planning records); some of it will be quickly accessed by

staff where the information has already been captured electronically (eg building control records from 1994 onwards) and other elements will be provided under the regime of the Environmental Information Regulations (see para 16 below).

14. In accordance with the Charges Regulations finance officers have worked up revised costs for official searches of the LLCR and CON29 enquiries by dividing a reasonable estimate of the likely total costs to the Council in granting access to property records during the financial year by a reasonable estimate of the number of requests for access to property records likely to be received over the same financial year.
15. "Costs" are defined as 'any costs to the local authority (including related salary costs and the costs of the creation and maintenance of records) reasonably incurred in connection with complying with a request for access to property records. Costs for granting access to free statutory information and the maintenance of such information are not recoverable in the charging regime.
16. **Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIR):** The Charges Regulations and related Guidance have no effect on the operation of EIR. The Guidance states "it is possible that some of the information required to complete a search may be 'environmental information'...in which case the EIR regime would apply." Officers have taken a view that some of the CON29 questions do concern EIR and this is reflected in the charging regime set out in the attached Schedule. Officers understand that a group of personal search companies have lodged an appeal with the Information Commissioner challenging an authority's failure to provide property information under EIR. The result of that appeal is expected shortly and may have a bearing on how some of the other property search information is provided. Officers will advise if further changes are needed to take account of this decision.

### Options

17. A review of the fees for an 'official' search is essential to comply with the Charges Regulations.
18. It is open to Cabinet to decide not to impose any charges for access by third parties however it is thought that the charges specified on the attached schedule can be justified as reasonable and fair in light of the principles set out in the Charges Regulations. There will be a cost to the authority in arranging for access by PSCs.

### Implications

20. There are difficulties in predicting with any certainty what the financial implications of this new schedule of charges will have on the annual revenue of the Land Charges service. The opening up of the search market to competition, the recent downturn in the economy and the resultant decline in the housing market have all played a part in determining search activity levels.
21. As a basis for calculating a unit charge it was decided to use the search activity levels between January and December 2008. Using these numbers along with the proposed schedule of charges, it is envisaged that an income level of circa £271,000 will be generated. This can be shown in direct comparison with what was estimated at the budget setting time - £244,000, calculated using the current pricing regime and activity levels, as an increase of £27,000 in revenue.
22. The table below shows a direct comparison between what is proposed will be charged on a cost recovery basis with what is currently being charged:

	Current Charge	Proposed Charge	Difference
LLCR1	6.00	62.10	> 56.10
Con29R	127.00	63.50	< (63.50)
Full Search Fee	133.00	125.60	< ( 7.40)

Bringing the constituent elements of the full search fee to an equitable level should result in increased levels of revenue to the Authority whilst not conflicting with the fundamental principle of cost recovery.

23. To demonstrate: between January and December 2008, there were 694 requests for an LLC1 certificate alone, which under current charging policy would produce an income to the Authority of £4,164 (694 x £6). Under the proposed new charging policy of cost recovery, it would produce £43,097 (694 x £62.10) an increase of £38,933. Set against this would be the loss of income from Con29R only requests at £63.50 per request. However in comparison these are few in number, just 39 in the same period which would equate to a loss of income of £2,477. The reduction in revenue by reducing the full search fee by £7.40 equates to approximately £12,800 based on the number of full searches between January and December 2008 so it can be seen that the increased level of fee income £27,000 quoted is reliant on the number of LLC1 only requests being comparable to those between January and December 2008.

24. Financial	Please see above.
Legal	The change to the regime is the result of legislation. Further legislation is expected to review the statutory fee for a personal search of the LLCR.
Staffing	No immediate implications. It is possible that the new regime will increase the number of personal searches being carried out which may impact on the level of work coming into the land charges team through NLIS. The position will be monitored.
Risk Management	The level of searches will need to be carefully monitored to ensure that cost recovery is maintained. Any changes to costs will need to be transparent and based on evidence.
Equal Opportunities	No implications

### Consultations

19. The Land Charges team have consulted with colleagues in finance, planning policy, development control, building control, health and environmental services and at the highway authority. In addition, the Principal Solicitor has met with one of the major PSCs to explain the menu of charges for access by third parties.

### Effect on Strategic Aims

20.	<b>Commitment to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all.</b>
	In producing a comprehensive menu of information available to third parties the Council is providing a first class service to PSCs.
	<b>Commitment to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for all.</b>
	The changes aim to make the costs more transparent and to ensure the consumer receives <b>all</b> information relevant to the property.



<b>Commitment to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.</b>
Type here
<b>Commitment to assisting provision for local jobs for all.</b>
Type here
<b>Commitment to providing a voice for rural life.</b>
Type here

**Conclusions/Summary**

- 21. The main changes are as follows:
  - (a) Local authorities must now provide access to all information required to complete a property search including information not found on public registers.
  - (b) Private search companies will no longer be able to obtain insurance cover where information is missing or they have not sought access to it.
  - (c) Third parties can only be charged on a cost recovery basis. This cost must be the same whether the information is supplied to the LLC or the PSC.
- 22. Officers will monitor numbers of enquiries being received in order to assess the need for any review of the charges within the three year period to ensure that charges do not exceed costs.

**Recommendations**

- 23. That Cabinet approve the menu of charges set out in the attached schedule of registers/information for local enquiries search being the charges payable by third parties for access to that information.
- 24. That Cabinet approve the changes to the charges for an 'official' search and CON29 enquiries with miscellaneous related charges set out in the attached Table A.

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

The Local Authorities (England)(Charges for Property Searches) Regulations 2008.  
Local Authority Property Search Services – Costing and Charging Guidance issued by CLG January 2009.

**Contact Officer:** Catriona Dunnett – Principal Solicitor  
Telephone: (01954) 713308

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## APPENDIX A

## LOCAL LAND CHARGES FEES FROM 16<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2009



**South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council**

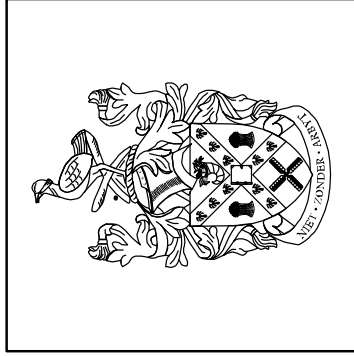
<b>POSTAL SEARCH</b>	
LLC1 Official Search in respect of one parcel of land	£62.10
CON29R	£63.50
<b>LLC1 and CON29R</b>	<b>£125.60</b>
CON290 Optional enquiry 4	£4.50
CON290 Optional enquiry 5 (County charge £9 + SCDC £4.50)	£13.50
CON290 Optional enquiry 6.1 and 6.2	£2.20
CON290 Optional enquiry 6.3 (a-e)	£2.30
CON290 Optional enquiry 7	£4.50
CON290 Optional enquiry 8	£4.50
CON290 Optional enquiry 9	£4.50
CON290 Optional enquiry 10	£5.00
CON290 Optional enquiry 11	£6.00
CON290 Optional enquiry 12	£4.50
CON290 Optional enquiry 13	£4.50
CON290 Optional enquiry 14	£4.50
CON290 Optional enquiry 15	£4.50
CON290 Optional enquiry 16	£4.50
CON290 Optional enquiry 17 (County charge £10 + £4.50)	£14.50
CON290 Optional enquiry 18	£4.50
CON290 Optional enquiry 19	£5.00
CON290 Optional enquiry 20	£5.00
CON290 Optional enquiry 21	£4.50
CON290 Optional enquiry 22 (County charge £7 + SCDC charge £4.50)	£11.50
Additional Enquiries	£15.00
Additional Parcels of Land	£20.00

<b>ELECTRONIC SEARCHES (NLIS)</b>	
<small>This does not include any additional charges that may be levied by your Service provider</small>	
LLC1 (Registers only)	£62.10
CON29R	£63.90
<b>LLC1 and CON29R</b>	<b>£125.60</b>

<b>PERSONAL SEARCH</b>	
Search in the whole or in part of the register	£11.00**
Search in respect of each additional parcel	£1.00 each**
CON29R – tailored report	£63.50
CON290 – tailored report as above	
Direct access per fees shown in the attached Schedule of Registers/Information for Property Enquiries Search	

\*\*Statutory fee

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**South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council**

# **SCHEDULE OF REGISTERS/INFORMATION FOR LOCAL ENQUIRIES SEARCH**

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ENQUIRY	Registers/Information Available	Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments	Cost of providing access
<b>ROAD PROPOSALS BY PRIVATE BODIES</b>			
<p>4. What proposals by others, still capable of being implemented, have the Council approved for any of the following, the limits of construction of which are within 200 metres of the property?</p> <p>(a) The construction of a new road;</p> <p>(b) The alteration or improvement of an existing road, involving the construction, whether or not within existing highway limits, of a subway, underpass, flyover, footbridge, elevated road, dual carriageway, the construction of a roundabout (other than a mini roundabout) or the widening of an existing road by the construction of one or more additional traffic lanes.</p> <p>This enquiry refers to proposals by bodies or companies (such as private developers) other than the Council (and where appropriate the County Council) or the Secretary of State. A mini roundabout is a roundabout having a one-way circulatory carriageway around a flush or slightly raised circular making less than 4 metres in diameter and with or without flared approaches.</p>	<p>This information is not publicly available on a register. The information can be obtained in writing from the planning department.</p>	<p>Please e-mail your written enquiries to <a href="mailto:matt.dean@scambbs.gov.uk">matt.dean@scambbs.gov.uk</a> Matt will respond by e-mail within 3-5 working days.</p>	<p>4(a) £0.80 4(b) £0.80</p>
<b>PUBLIC PATHS OR BYWAYS</b>			
<p>5.1 Is any footpath, bridleway, restricted</p>	<p>The definitive plan is held by Highways department at the County</p>	<p>Please telephone Julia Clifford: 01223 715644 or</p>	<p>Contact Highways for the charging</p>

ENQUIRY	Registers/Information Available	Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments	Cost of providing access
<p>byway or byway open to all traffic which abuts on, or crosses the property, shown in a definitive map or revised definitive map prepared under Part IV of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 or Part III of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981?</p> <p><b>5.2</b> If so, please mark its approximate route on the attached plan.</p>	<p>Council</p>	<p>Selwyn Turner: 01223 715646 Or e-mail <a href="mailto:julia.clifford@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">julia.clifford@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>information.</p>
<b>ADVERTISEMENTS</b>			
<p><b>Entries in the register</b></p> <p><b>6.1</b> Please list any entries in the register of applications, directions and decisions relating to consent for the display of advertisements.</p> <p><b>6.2</b> If there are any entries, where can that register be inspected?</p> <p><b>Notices, proceedings and orders</b></p> <p><b>6.3</b> Except as shown in the official certificate of search:</p> <p>(a) has any notice been given by the Secretary of State or served in respect of a direction or proposed direction restricting deemed consent for any class of advertisement</p> <p>(b) have the Council resolved to serve a notice requiring the display of any advertisement to be discontinued</p> <p>(c) if a discontinuance notice has been served, has it been complied with to</p>	<p>6.1 and 6.2 This information is publicly available and free of charge and available to view, by appointment, on a designated PC terminal at South Cambridgeshire Hall.</p> <p>6.3 (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) This information is not publicly available on a register. The information can be obtained in writing from the planning department.</p>	<p>Please contact our Land Charges department for an appointment. Appointments require 24 hours notice. Appointments are available at 10am, 11am and 2pm</p> <p>Eileen Swinton: 01954 713065 Denise Siwicka: 01954 713222 Jo Drake: 01954 713064 Matt Dean: 01954 713058 Or email: <a href="mailto:landcharges@scambbs.gov.uk">landcharges@scambbs.gov.uk</a></p> <p>6.3 (a),(b),(c),(d) and (e). Please e-mail your written enquiries to <a href="mailto:matt.dean@scambbs.gov.uk">matt.dean@scambbs.gov.uk</a> Matt will respond by e-mail within 3-5 working days.</p>	<p>6.1 and 6.2 Free and publicly available</p> <p>6.3 (a), (b), (c), (d) and (e) £0.60 for each element of the question for each property address</p>



	Registers/Information Available	Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments	Cost of providing access
<p><b>ENQUIRY</b></p> <p>the satisfaction of the Council</p> <p>(d) have the Council resolved to serve any other notice or proceedings relating to a contravention of the control of advertisements</p> <p>(e) have the Council resolved to make an order for the special control of advertisements for the area?</p>			
<b>COMPLETION NOTICES</b>			
<p>7. Which of the planning permissions in force have the Council resolved to terminate by means of a completion notice under s.94 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990?</p>	<p>This information is not publicly available on a register. The information can be obtained in writing from the planning department.</p>	<p>Please e-mail your written enquiries to <a href="mailto:matt.dean@scambbs.gov.uk">matt.dean@scambbs.gov.uk</a> Matt will respond by e-mail within 3-5 working days.</p>	<p>£1.60</p>
<b>PARKS AND COUNTRYSIDE</b>			
<p><b>Areas of outstanding natural beauty</b></p> <p>8.1 Has any order under s.82 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 been made?</p> <p><b>National Parks</b></p> <p>8.2 Is the property within a National Park designated under s.7 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949</p>	<p>There are NO such designated AONB or National Parks within South Cambridgeshire District as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009.</p>		<p>N/A</p>
<b>PIPELINES</b>			

ENQUIRY	Registers/Information Available	Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments	Cost of providing access
<p>9. Has a map been deposited under s.35 of the Pipelines Act 1962, or Schedule 7 of the Gas Act 1986, showing a pipeline laid through, or within 100 feet (30.48 metres) of the property?</p>	<p>This information is publicly available and free of charge and available to view, by appointment, on a designated PC terminal at South Cambridgeshire Hall.</p>	<p>Please contact our Land Charges department for an appointment. Appointments require 24 hours notice. Appointments are available at 10am, 11am and 2pm</p> <p>Eileen Swinton: 01954 713065 Denise Siwicka: 01954 713222 Jo Drake: 01954 713064 Matt Dean: 01954 713058 Or email: <a href="mailto:landcharges@scambbs.gov.uk">landcharges@scambbs.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>Publicly available and free of charge.</p>
<b>HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION</b>			
<p>10. Is the property a house in multiple occupation, or is it designated or proposed to be designated for selective licensing of residential accommodation in accordance with the Housing Act 2004?</p>	<p>i) A register maintained under s232 of the Housing Act 2004 is available to view at South Cambridgeshire Hall. This contains details of licensed HMO's in mandatory/additional licensing schemes and all properties licensed in selective licensing schemes and Temporary Exemptions Notices (TENs) and Management Orders (MOs) that are in force.</p> <p>ii.) Information about whether a property has been designated or</p>	<p>i) If you wish to view the Register please contact <a href="mailto:chris.evans@scambbs.gov.uk">chris.evans@scambbs.gov.uk</a> or <a href="mailto:duty.envhealth@scambbs.gov.uk">duty.envhealth@scambbs.gov.uk</a> to make an appointment. Appointments require 24 hours notice.</p> <p>Alternatively, please send your written enquiries to <a href="mailto:chris.evans@scambbs.gov.uk">chris.evans@scambbs.gov.uk</a> or <a href="mailto:duty.envhealth@scambbs.gov.uk">duty.envhealth@scambbs.gov.uk</a> and you will receive a written response within 3 working days.</p> <p>ii) Please send your written enquiries to</p>	<p>i) Free and publicly available.</p> <p>ii) The Council will impose a reasonable</p>

ENQUIRY	Registers/Information Available	Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments	Cost of providing access
	proposed to be designated for selective licensing is not on a public register. It is available in writing from the Health and Environmental Services department under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.	<a href="mailto:chris.evans@scams.gov.uk">chris.evans@scams.gov.uk</a> or <a href="mailto:duty.envhealth@scams.gov.uk">duty.envhealth@scams.gov.uk</a> and you will receive a written response within 3 working days.	charge based on the time taken to research and produce the response.
<b>NOISE ABATEMENT</b>			
<p><b>Noise abatement zone</b></p> <p><b>11.1</b> Have the Council made, or resolved to make, any noise abatement zone order under s.63 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974 for the area?</p> <p><b>Entries in register</b></p> <p><b>11.2</b> Has any entry been recorded in the noise level register kept pursuant to s.64 of the Control of Pollution Act 1974?</p> <p><b>11.3</b> If there is any entry, how can copies be obtained and where can that register be inspected?</p>	<p>11.1 There are currently NO noise abatement zones in the SCDC area.</p> <p>11.2 There is currently NO noise level register kept</p>	<p>If you wish further information on either questions please contact <a href="mailto:brian.heffernan@scams.gov.uk">brian.heffernan@scams.gov.uk</a></p>	N/A
<b>URBAN DEVELOPMENT AREAS</b>			
<p><b>12.1</b> Is the area an urban development area designated under Part XVI of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980?</p> <p><b>12.2</b> If so, please state the name of the urban development corporation and the address of its principal office.</p>	<p>There are NO urban development areas within the South Cambridgeshire District as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009.</p>		N/A
<b>ENTERPRISE ZONES</b>			

ENQUIRY	Registers/Information Available	Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments	Cost of providing access
<p>13. Is the area an enterprise zone designated under Part XVIII of the Local Government, Planning and Land Act 1980?</p>	<p>There are NO designated enterprise zones within the South Cambridgeshire District as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009.</p>		<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>INNER URBAN IMPROVEMENT AREAS</b></p>			
<p>14. Have the Council resolved to define the area as an improvement area under s.4 of the Inner Urban Areas Act 1978?</p>	<p>There have been NO Council resolutions to define such any improvement areas within the South Cambridgeshire District as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009.</p>		<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>SIMPLIFIED PLANNING ZONES</b></p>			
<p>15.1 Is the area a simplified planning zone adopted or approved pursuant to s.83 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990? 15.2 Have the Council approved any proposal for designating the area as a simplified planning zone</p>	<p>There are NO simplified planning zones adopted or approved within the South Cambridgeshire District as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009. The Council has NOT approved any proposal for designating such an area as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009.</p>		<p>N/A  N/A</p>

ENQUIRY	Registers/Information Available	Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments	Cost of providing access
<b>LAND MAINTENANCE NOTICES</b>			
<p><b>16.</b> Have the Council authorised the service of a maintenance notice under s.215 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990?</p>	<p>This information is not publicly available on a register. The information can be obtained in writing from the planning department.</p>	<p>Please e-mail your written enquiries to <a href="mailto:matt.dean@scambbs.gov.uk">matt.dean@scambbs.gov.uk</a> Matt will respond by e-mail within 3-5 working days.</p>	<p>£1.60</p>
<b>MINERAL CONSULTATION AREAS</b>			
<p><b>17.</b> Is the area a mineral consultation area notified by the county planning authority under Schedule 1 para 7 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990?</p>	<p>This information is held by the County Council.</p>	<p>Please telephone Julia Clifford: 01223 715644 or Selwyn Turner: 01223 715646 Or e-mail <a href="mailto:julia.clifford@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">julia.clifford@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>Cost information available direct from the County Council.</p>
<b>HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCE CONSENTS</b>			
<p><b>18.1</b> Please list any entries in the register kept pursuant to s.28 of the Planning (Hazardous Substances) Act 1990. <b>18.2</b> If there are any entries: (a) how can copies of the entries be obtained? (b) where can the Register be inspected?</p>	<p>This information is publicly available and free of charge and available to view, by appointment, on a designated PC terminal at South Cambridgeshire Hall.  Please ask Matt Dean if you require any copies of the entries.</p>	<p>Please contact our Land Charges department for an appointment. Appointments require 24 hours notice. Appointments are available at 10am, 11am and 2pm  Eileen Swinton: 01954 713065 Denise Siwicka: 01954 713222 Jo Drake: 01954 713064 Matt Dean: 01954 713058 Or email: <a href="mailto:landcharges@scambbs.gov.uk">landcharges@scambbs.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>Information publicly available and free. Copies will be charged in accordance with the Council's standard copying charges.</p>

ENQUIRY	Registers/Information Available	Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments	Cost of providing access

ENQUIRY	Registers/Information Available	Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments	Cost of providing access
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL AND POLLUTION NOTICES</b>			
<p><b>19.</b> What outstanding statutory or informal notices have been issued by the Council under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 or the Control of Pollution Act 1974? (This enquiry does not cover notices under Part 11A or Part III of the EPA, to which enquiries 3.12 or 3.7 apply)</p>	<p>This information is available under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 from the Health and Environmental Services Department.</p>	<p>Please send your written enquiries to <a href="mailto:duty.envhealth@scambbs.gov.uk">duty.envhealth@scambbs.gov.uk</a> and you will receive a written response within 3 working days</p>	<p>The Council will impose a reasonable charge based on the time taken to research and produce the response.</p>
<b>FOOD SAFETY NOTICES</b>			
<p><b>20.</b> What outstanding statutory notices or informal notices have been issued by the Council under the Food Safety Act 1990 or the Food Hygiene Regulations 2006?</p>	<p>This information is available under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 from the Health and Environmental Services Department.</p>	<p>Please send your written enquiries to <a href="mailto:duty.envhealth@scambbs.gov.uk">duty.envhealth@scambbs.gov.uk</a> and you will receive a written response within 3 working days</p>	<p>The Council will impose a reasonable charge based on the time taken to research and produce the response.</p>
<b>HEDGEROW NOTICES</b>			
<p><b>21.1</b> Please list any entries in the record maintained under regulation 10 of the Hedgerows Regulations 1997.  <b>21.2</b> If there are any entries:            (a) how can copies of the matters entered be obtained?            (b) where can the record be inspected?</p>	<p>This information is publicly available on a register and free of charge.             The record can be viewed, by appointment, at South Cambridgeshire Hall.             Please ask Matt Dean if you require any copies of the entries</p>	<p>Please contact our Land Charges department for an appointment. Appointments require 24 hours notice. Appointments are available at 10am, 11am and 2pm             Eileen Swinton: 01954 713065            Denise Siwicka: 01954 713222            Jo Drake: 01954 713064            Matt Dean: 01954 713058            Or email: <a href="mailto:landcharges@scambbs.gov.uk">landcharges@scambbs.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>Information publicly available and free.            Copies will be charged in accordance with the Council's standard copying charges</p>

ENQUIRY	Registers/Information Available	Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments	Cost of providing access
<b>COMMON LAND, TOWN AND VILLAGE GREENS</b>			
<p><b>22.1</b> Is the property, or any land which abuts the property, registered common land or town or village green under the Commons Registration Act 1965 or the Commons Act 2006?</p> <p><b>22.2</b> If there are any entries, how can copies of the matters registered be obtained and where can the register be inspected?</p>	<p>This information is held by the County Council</p>	<p>Please telephone Julia Clifford: 01223 715644 or Selwyn Turner: 01223 715646 Or e-mail <a href="mailto:julia.clifford@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">julia.clifford@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>Cost information available direct from the County Council</p>



Where reference is made to South Cambridgeshire Hall the address for this is Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6EA	Where reference is made to the Highway Authority the address is Cambridgeshire County Council, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge CB3 0AP	Copies can be provided and will be charged in accordance with the Council's standard charges (see attached sheet.)	
ENQUIRY	Registers/Information Available	Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments	
1: PLANNING AND BUILDING REGULATIONS			
<p><b>1.1 Decisions and Pending Applications</b></p> <p>Which of the following relating to the property have been granted, issued or refused or (where applicable) are the subject of pending applications –</p> <p>(a) a planning permission;</p> <p>(b) a listed building consent;</p> <p>(c) a conservation area consent;</p> <p>(d) a certificate of lawfulness of existing use or development;</p> <p>(e) a certificate of lawfulness of proposed use or development;</p> <p>(f) building regulation approval;</p> <p>(g) building regulation completion certificate;</p> <p>(h) any building regulations certificate or notice issued in respect of work carried out under a competent person self-certification scheme?</p>	<p>(a) to (e) This information is publicly available and free of charge on the Council's website and available to view, by appointment, on a designated PC terminal at South Cambridgeshire Hall.</p> <p>[Please note: PDF of plotting sheets for the whole district are available to view on the PC. However these have not been updated since 2005.]</p> <p>(f) - (h) Building control information is not currently available on a public register. The information is available by tailored report only from the building control team. Full building control information from 1994 onwards is held. Earlier records are incomplete and therefore information pre 1994 will not be provided.</p> <p>{If you wish to search for pre 1994 information please submit a request under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.}</p>	<p>(a) to (e) Please contact our Land Charges department for an appointment. Appointments require 24 hours notice. Appointments are available at 10am, 11am and 2pm</p> <p>Eileen Swinton: 01954 713065 Denise Siwicka: 01954 713222 Jo Drake: 01954 713064 Matt Dean: 01954 713058 Or email: <a href="mailto:land.charges@scambbs.gov.uk">land.charges@scambbs.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Enquiries can be submitted directly to Building Control by Email to <a href="mailto:building.control@scambbs.gov.uk">building.control@scambbs.gov.uk</a> or fax to fax no. 01954 713152 and response is normally within 5 working days. Please mark your fax or e-mail <b>FAO Building Control.</b></p>	<p>(a) – (e) Publicly available free of charge.</p> <p>£0.20 for each element (f), (g) and (h) of the question for each address searched against.</p> <p>{Fee for pre-1994 search is £5.00.}</p>

Where reference is made to the Highway Authority the address is Cambridgeshire County Council, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge CB3 0AP

Where reference is made to South Cambridgeshire Hall the address for this is Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6EA

ENQUIRY	Registers/Information Available	Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments	Cost of access
<p><b>1.2 Planning Designations and Proposals</b>                      What designations of land use for the property or the area, and what specific proposals for the property, are contained in any existing or proposed development plan?</p>	<p>Planning designations and proposals are available to view free of charge via our website or by appointment at our offices. Hard copies of the Local Development Framework (LDF) documents can also be purchased by contacting the planning policy team.</p>	<p>Please telephone the planning policy team with any requests for copies of LDF documents : contact Elaine Sargent on 01954 713183 or e-mail <a href="mailto:elaine.sargent@scambbs.gov.uk">elaine.sargent@scambbs.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>Publicly available online free of charge.</p>
<p><b>2. ROADS</b></p>			

Copies can be provided and will be charged in accordance with the Council's standard charges (see attached sheet.)

<p>Where reference is made to South Cambridgeshire Hall the address for this is Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6EA</p>	<p>Where reference is made to the Highway Authority the address is Cambridgeshire County Council, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge CB3 0AP</p>		<p>Copies can be provided and will be charged in accordance with the Council's standard charges (see attached sheet.)</p>
<p><b>ENQUIRY</b></p> <p>Which of the roads, footways and footpaths mentioned in the application for this search (via boxes B and C) are:</p> <p>(a) highways maintainable at public expense;</p> <p>(b) subject to adoption and, supported by a bond or bond waiver;</p> <p>(c) to be made up by a local authority who will reclaim the cost from the frontagers;</p> <p>(d) to be adopted by a local authority without reclaiming the cost from the frontagers?</p>	<p><b>Registers/Information Available</b></p> <p>For roads information please contact the Highways Authority</p>	<p><b>Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments</b></p> <p>Please telephone Julia Clifford: 01223 715644 or Selwyn Turner: 01223 715645 Or e-mail <a href="mailto:julia.clifford@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">julia.clifford@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a></p>	<p><b>Cost of access</b></p> <p>Cost information available direct from Highways department.</p>
<p><b>3. OTHER MATTERS</b></p>			
<p><b>3.1 Land Required for Public Purposes</b></p> <p>Is the property included in land required for public purposes?</p>	<p>Planning designations and proposals are available to view free of charge via our website or by appointment at our offices.</p>	<p>Please telephone the planning policy team with any requests for copies of LDF documents : contact Elaine Sargent on 01954 713183 or e-mail <a href="mailto:elaine.sargent@scambs.gov.uk">elaine.sargent@scambs.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>Planning designations and proposals are available to view free of charge on our website.</p>
<p><b>3.2 Land to be Acquired for Road Works</b></p> <p>Is the property included in land to be acquired for road works?</p>	<p>This information is not available from South Cambridgeshire District Council. For road works information please contact the Highways Authority.</p>	<p>Telephone Julia Clifford: 01223 715644 or Selwyn Turner: 01223 715645 Or e-mail <a href="mailto:julia.clifford@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">julia.clifford@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>Contact Highways Agency for details of their charges.</p>
<p><b>3.3 Drainage agreements and consents</b></p> <p>Do either of the following exist in relation to the property?</p> <p>(a) an agreement to drain buildings in</p>	<p>This information is not available from South Cambridgeshire District Council. Enquiries should be referred to Geodesys</p>	<p>Geodesys Spencer House, Spitfire Close Ermine Business Park Huntingdon, PE29 6XY Tel: 01480 323889</p>	<p>Contact Geodesys direct for information about charges</p>

Where reference is made to the Highway Authority the address is Cambridgeshire County Council, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge CB3 0AP

Where reference is made to South Cambridgeshire Hall the address for this is Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6EA

Copies can be provided and will be charged in accordance with the Council's standard charges (see attached sheet.)

ENQUIRY	Registers/Information Available	Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments	Cost of access
<p>combination into an existing sewer by means of a private sewer;</p> <p>(b) an agreement or consent for (i) a building, or (ii) extension to a building on the property, to be built over, or in the vicinity of a drain, sewer or disposal main.</p>			
<p><b>3.4 Nearby Road Schemes</b> Is the property (or will it be) within 200 metres of any of the following:-</p> <p>(a) the centre line of a new trunk road or special road specific in an order, draft order or scheme;</p> <p>(b) the centre line of a proposed alteration or improvement to an existing road involving construction of a subway, underpass, flyover, footbridge, elevated road or dual carriageway;</p> <p>(c) the outer limits of construction works for a proposed alteration or improvement to an existing road, involving (i) the construction of a roundabout (other than a mini roundabout) or (ii) widening by construction of one or more additional traffic lanes;</p> <p>(d) the outer limits of (i) construction of a new road to be built by a local authority; (ii) an approved alteration or improvement to an existing road involving construction of a subway, underpass, flyover, footbridge, elevated road or dual carriageway; or (iii) construction of a roundabout (other than a</p>	<p>This information is not available from South Cambridgeshire District Council. For roads information please contact the Highways Authority</p>	<p>Please telephone Julia Clifford: 01223 715644 or Selwyn Turner: 01223 715645 Or e-mail <a href="mailto:julia.clifford@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">julia.clifford@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>Contact Highways Authority for details of their charges.</p>

Where reference is made to South Cambridgeshire Hall the address for this is Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6EA	Where reference is made to the Highway Authority the address is Cambridgeshire County Council, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge CB3 0AP	Copies can be provided and will be charged in accordance with the Council's standard charges (see attached sheet.)	
ENQUIRY	Registers/Information Available	Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments	Cost of access
<p>mini roundabout) or widening by construction of one or more additional traffic lanes;</p> <p>(e) the centre line of the proposed route of a new road under proposals published for public consultation; or</p> <p>(f) the outer limits of (i) construction of a proposed alteration or improvement to an existing road involving construction of a subway, underpass, flyover, footbridge, elevated road or dual carriageway; (ii) construction of a roundabout (other than a mini roundabout) or (iii) widening by construction of one or more additional traffic lanes, under proposals published for public consultation?</p>			
<p><b>3.5 Nearby Railways Schemes</b> Is the property (or will it be) within 200 metres of the centre line of a proposed railway, tramway, light railway or monorail?</p>	<p>This information is not available from South Cambridgeshire District Council. For railway schemes information please contact the County Council.</p>	<p>Please telephone Pamela Bailey: 01223 715639 or e-mail enquiry to <a href="mailto:Pamela.bailey@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">Pamela.bailey@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>Contact County Council for details of their charges.</p>
<p><b>3.6 Traffic Schemes</b> Has a local authority approved but not yet implemented any of the following for the roads, footways and footpaths (named in Box B) which about the boundaries of the property:- (a) permanent stopping up or diversion; (b) waiting or loading restrictions; (c) one way driving; (d) prohibition of driving; (e) pedestrianisation;</p>	<p>For traffic schemes information please contact the Highways Authority.</p>	<p>Please telephone Julia Clifford: 01223 715644 or Selwyn Turner: 01223 715645 Or e-mail <a href="mailto:julia.clifford@cambridgeshire.gov.uk">julia.clifford@cambridgeshire.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>Contact Highways Authority for details of their charges.</p>

<p>Where reference is made to South Cambridgeshire Hall the address for this is Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6EA</p>	<p>Where reference is made to the Highway Authority the address is Cambridgeshire County Council, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge CB3 0AP</p>		<p>Copies can be provided and will be charged in accordance with the Council's standard charges (see attached sheet.)</p>
<p><b>ENQUIRY</b></p>	<p><b>Registers/Information Available</b></p>	<p><b>Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments</b></p>	<p><b>Cost of access</b></p>
<p>(f) vehicle width or weight restriction;                      (g) traffic calming works including road humps;                      (h) residents parking controls;                      (i) minor road widening or improvement;                      (j) pedestrian crossings;                      (k) cycle tracks; or                      (l) bridge building?</p>			
<p><b>3.7 Outstanding Notices</b>                      Do any statutory notices which relate to the following matters subsist in relation to the property other than those revealed in a response to any other enquiry in this Schedule:-                      (a) building works;                      (b) environment;                      (c) health and safety;                      (d) housing;                      (e) highways                      (f) public health?</p>	<p>(a) Building Control information is not currently available on a public register. Information is available by tailored report only. Full Building Control information from 1994 onwards is held. Earlier records are incomplete and therefore information pre 1994 will not be provided in the tailored report.                      (b), (c),(d)&amp;(f) This information is not on a public register and is held by the Health and Environmental Services Department and will be provided under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004.                      (e) Please contact the Highways Authority.</p>	<p>(a) Enquiries can be submitted directly to Building Control by Email to <a href="mailto:building.control@scambbs.gov.uk">building.control@scambbs.gov.uk</a> or fax to fax no. 01954 713152 and response is normally within 5 working days. Please mark your fax or e-mail <b>FAO Building Control</b>.                      (b), (c), (d) &amp;(f) Enquiries submitted in writing to Health and Environmental Services by email to <a href="mailto:duty.envhealth@scambbs.gov.uk">duty.envhealth@scambbs.gov.uk</a> will receive a written response within 3 working days.                      (e) Please telephone Julia Clifford: 01223 715644 or Selwyn Turner: 01223 715645 or e-mail</p>	<p>(a) £0.40                      (b),(c),(d) &amp; (f) A reasonable fee will be charged for providing a written response based on the time taken to provide the information.                      (e) Cost information available direct from Highways department.</p>

Where reference is made to South Cambridgeshire Hall the address for this is Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6EA	Where reference is made to the Highway Authority the address is Cambridgeshire County Council, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge CB3 0AP		Copies can be provided and will be charged in accordance with the Council's standard charges (see attached sheet.)
ENQUIRY	Registers/Information Available	Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments	Cost of access
<p><b>3.8 Contravention of Building Regulations</b> Has a local authority authorised in relation to the property any proceedings for the contravention of any provision contained in Building Regulations?</p>	<p>This information is not currently available on a public register. Information is available by tailored report only.</p>	<p>Enquiries can be submitted directly to Building Control by Email to <a href="mailto:building.control@scambbs.gov.uk">building.control@scambbs.gov.uk</a> or by fax to fax no. 01954 713152 and response is normally within 5 working days. Please mark your fax or e-mail <b>FAO Building Control</b>.</p>	<p>£0.40</p>
<p><b>3.9 Notices, Orders, Directions and Proceedings under Planning Acts</b> Do any of the following subsist in relation to the property, or has any local authority decided to issue, serve, make or commence any of the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) enforcement notice;</li> <li>(b) stop notice;</li> <li>(c) listed building enforcement notice;</li> <li>(d) breach of condition notice;</li> <li>(e) planning contravention notice;</li> <li>(f) other notice relating to breach of planning control;</li> </ul>	<p>(a)-(f) where a notice subsists this information is available to view free of charge, and by appointment, on the Enforcement Register which is held at South Cambridgeshire Hall *</p> <p>(a)-(f) where a decision has been taken to issue, serve, make or commence such a notice this information is not publicly available but the information can be provided in writing by Matt Dean in the Planning department **</p>	<p>*(a) to (n) please contact our Land Charges department for an appointment. Appointments require 24 hours notice. Appointments are available at 10am, 11am and 2pm</p> <p>Eileen Swinton: 01954 713065 Denise Siwicka: 01954 713222 Jo Drake: 01954 713064 Matt Dean: 01954 713058 Or email: <a href="mailto:land.charges@scambbs.gov.uk">land.charges@scambbs.gov.uk</a></p> <p>**please contact Matt Dean on 01954 713058 or e-mail <a href="mailto:matt.dean@scambbs.gov.uk">matt.dean@scambbs.gov.uk</a> . A written</p>	<p>* Publicly available free of charge</p> <p>** £0.53 for each element of the question for each address searched against.</p>

<p>Where reference is made to South Cambridgeshire Hall the address for this is Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6EA</p>	<p>Where reference is made to the Highway Authority the address is Cambridgeshire County Council, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge CB3 0AP</p>	<p>Copies can be provided and will be charged in accordance with the Council's standard charges (see attached sheet.)</p>	
<p><b>ENQUIRY</b></p>	<p><b>Registers/Information Available</b></p>	<p><b>Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments</b></p>	<p><b>Cost of access</b></p>
<p>(g) listed building repairs notice;                  (h) in the case of a listed building deliberately allowed to fall into disrepair, a compulsory purchase order with a direction for minimum compensation;                  (i) building preservation notice</p> <p>(j) direction restricting permitted development;                  (k) order revoking or modifying a planning permission;                  (l) order requiring discontinuance of use or removal of building works;</p> <p>(m) tree preservation order;</p>	<p>(g)-(i) where a notice subsists this information is available to view free of charge on the conservation/planning file, by appointment, at South Cambridgeshire Hall *</p> <p>(g)-(i) where a decision has been taken to issue, serve, make or commence such a notice this information is not publicly available but the information can be provided in writing.**</p> <p>(j), (k) and (l) where a direction or order subsists this information is publicly available and free of charge and available to view, by appointment, on a designated PC terminal at South Cambridgeshire Hall.*</p> <p>(j), (k) and (l) where a decision has been taken to issue, serve, make or commence such a notice this information is not publicly available but the information can be provided in writing**</p> <p>(m) This information is publicly available and free of charge and available to view, by appointment, at South Cambridgeshire Hall. *</p> <p>(m) where a decision has been taken to issue, serve, make or commence such a notice this information is not publicly available but the information can be</p>	<p>response will be provided in 3-5 working days.</p> <p>m)*and ** please contact the Council's tree and landscape officer <a href="mailto:rosalind.richardson@scambs.gov.uk">rosalind.richardson@scambs.gov.uk</a> to arrange an appointment under *                  A written response to an enquiry under ** will be provided within 3-5 working days.</p>	



Where reference is made to South Cambridgeshire Hall the address for this is Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6EA	Where reference is made to the Highway Authority the address is Cambridgeshire County Council, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge CB3 0AP	Copies can be provided and will be charged in accordance with the Council's standard charges (see attached sheet.)	
ENQUIRY	Registers/Information Available	Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments	Cost of access
<p>(n) proceedings to enforce a planning agreement or planning contribution?</p>	<p>provided in writing**</p> <p>(n) this information is available from the s106 Implementation Officer in writing</p>	<p>(n) Please contact our s106 Implementation Officer with your enquiry by e-mail <a href="mailto:iane.gifford@scambs.gov.uk">iane.gifford@scambs.gov.uk</a> or Tel: 01954 713257</p>	
<p><b>3.10 Conservation Areas</b> Do the following apply in relation to the property:- (a) the making of the area a Conservation Area before 31st August 1974; or (b) an unimplemented resolution to designate the area a Conservation Area?</p>	<p>(a) This information is publicly available and free of charge on the Council's website and available to view, by appointment, on a designated PC terminal at South Cambridgeshire Hall.</p>	<p>(a) Please contact our Land Charges department for an appointment. Appointments require 24 hours notice. Appointments are available at 10am, 11am and 2pm Eileen Swinton: 01954 713065 Denise Siwicka: 01954 713222</p>	<p>(a) Publicly available free of charge</p>

Where reference is made to South Cambridgeshire Hall the address for this is Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6EA	Where reference is made to the Highway Authority the address is Cambridgeshire County Council, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge CB3 0AP		Copies can be provided and will be charged in accordance with the Council's standard charges (see attached sheet.)
ENQUIRY	Registers/Information Available	Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments	Cost of access
		Jo Drake: 01954 713064 Matt Dean: 01954 713058 Or email: <a href="mailto:landcharges@scambs.gov.uk">landcharges@scambs.gov.uk</a>	
<b>3.11 Compulsory Purchase</b> Has any enforceable order or decision been made to compulsorily purchase or acquire the property?	(b) For information on unimplemented resolutions please contact the conservation team.	(b) Please contact the conservation team by e-mail <a href="mailto:shona.smith@scambs.gov.uk">shona.smith@scambs.gov.uk</a> or telephone: 01954 713429	(b) £1.60
<b>3.12 Contaminated Land</b> Do any of the following apply (including any relating to land adjacent to or adjoining the property which has been identified as contaminated land because it is in such a condition that harm or pollution of controlled waters might be caused on the property):- (a) a contaminated land notice; (b) in relation to a register maintained under	This information is not held on a public register. It can be obtained by submitting a written or verbal request from the Planning Department at South Cambridgeshire Hall.	Please contact <a href="mailto:matt.dean@scambs.gov.uk">matt.dean@scambs.gov.uk</a> Or Tel: 01954 713058 A written response will be provided within 3-5 working days	£1.60
	(a) and (b)(ii) This information is publicly available to view on the	(a) and (b)(ii) please consult the register when you are conducting a search of the Local Land Charges register having made an appointment with the Land Charges team.  Alternatively, and also in relation to enquiries under 3.12 (b)(i) and (c),	This information is publicly available free of charge.

<p>Where reference is made to South Cambridgeshire Hall the address for this is Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6EA</p>	<p>Where reference is made to the Highway Authority the address is Cambridgeshire County Council, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge CB3 0AP</p>	<p>Copies can be provided and will be charged in accordance with the Council's standard charges (see attached sheet.)</p>	
ENQUIRY	Registers/Information Available	Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments	Cost of access
<p>section 78R of the Environmental Protection Act 1990;</p> <p>(i) a decision to make an entry; or</p> <p>(ii) an entry; or</p> <p>(c) consultation with the owner or occupier of the property conducted under section 78G(3) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 before the service of a remediation notice?</p>	<p>Contaminated Land Register at South Cambridgeshire Hall which is available to view in the Land Charges Department</p> <p>(b)(i) and (c) please submit a written request to <a href="mailto:claire.sproats@scambbs.gov.uk">claire.sproats@scambbs.gov.uk</a> in the Council's Health and Environmental Services department.</p>	<p>please contact <a href="mailto:claire.sproats@scambbs.gov.uk">claire.sproats@scambbs.gov.uk</a> or <a href="mailto:duty.envhealth@scambbs.gov.uk">duty.envhealth@scambbs.gov.uk</a> with your written enquiries and you will receive a response within 3 working days.</p>	
<p><b>3.13 Radon Gas</b> Do records indicate that the property is in a "Radon Affected Area" as identified by the</p>	<p>The council does not hold accurate up to date data from The British Geological Survey. The Council holds a</p>	<p>Please contact <a href="mailto:brian.heffernan@scambbs.gov.uk">brian.heffernan@scambbs.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>This information is currently available free of charge.</p>

<p>Where reference is made to South Cambridgeshire Hall the address for this is Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne, Cambridge CB23 6EA</p>	<p>Where reference is made to the Highway Authority the address is Cambridgeshire County Council, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge CB3 0AP</p>	<p>Copies can be provided and will be charged in accordance with the Council's standard charges (see attached sheet.)</p>
<p><b>ENQUIRY</b> Health Protection Agency?</p>	<p><b>Registers/Information Available</b> map which indicates that some areas in the district are in a " Radon affected area" as identified by The Health Protection Agency. Further information can be obtained from The Health Protection Agency Centre for Radiation, Chemical and Environment Hazards, Chilton, Didcot, Oxon OX11 0RG. The Council is considering updating its records.</p>	<p><b>Requirements for advance Notice or Appointments</b> Or <a href="mailto:duty.envhealth@scambs.gov.uk">duty.envhealth@scambs.gov.uk</a> with written enquiries and you will receive a response within 3 working days.  Further information may be obtained from <a href="http://www.ukradon.org">www.ukradon.org</a></p>
		<p><b>Cost of access</b></p>

**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	Leader and Cabinet	16 April 2009
<b>AUTHOR/S:</b>	Executive Director / Corporate Manager for New Communities	

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**UPDATE REPORT – RESPONDING TO THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN AND REVIEW OF NNDR HARDSHIP RELIEF POLICY**

1. This report is brought forward to provide an update to Cabinet on the progress made, prior to the start of the new financial year, on actions undertaken to alleviate the impacts of the economic downturn on South Cambs. The report, and its appendices also summarises the impacts being felt within the district.
2. The report also outlines additional measures that may be brought forward to mitigate the impacts being felt by residents, and to reduce pressure on the Council's services.
3. This is not a key decision.

**Background**

4. The impact of the national recession upon the businesses and residents of South Cambs has been investigated by the authority. The Council has budgeted for £150,000 directly to support people and business affected. Reports presented to Cabinet in 15 January and 12 February 2009 outlined the proposals for action to be taken by this Council, using its power of Economic Well-Being (Local Government Act 2000 pt.1) to support businesses and those who might be affected by the recession.

**Update on Actions being undertaken**

5. Good progress has been made to date in moving forward the recommendations agreed in February. Full details of these are included within Appendix A. Two South Cambs specific events will be run in June and July, with repeat events proposed for the second half of the year, focussing on competing for public sector contracts and business survival tactics (including managing liquidity and marketing). The first event, being held on conjunction with the Chamber of Commerce, will introduce local companies to the range of goods and services purchased by the public sector locally. Procurement officers will attend this event from a wide range of public sector organisations, including local authorities, housing associations and the PCT. Companies will have the opportunity to receive a 'masterclass' in how to compete for public sector contracts, and to meet and get to know the procurement officers.
6. The second event focuses on skills and tactics for business survival. Marshall of Cambridge will be providing insight into how they have survived a number of economic down-turns and the lessons which businesses, both large and small, can learn from their experience over the last 100 years. The event will provide attending businesses with skills and tools and contacts to help them over the recession period.
7. The proposal to fund specialist advice from business link is awaiting finalisation, in light of the latest recommendations from the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform for government support. This is to ensure that the Council does not duplicate central government support to the detriment of local concerns and priorities. It is anticipated that a report will be brought to the Portfolio Holder in early summer 2009.

8. The Economic Development Officer has been working closely with Business Link, the federation of Small Businesses, the Institute of Directors and the Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce to meet the needs of businesses throughout the Council's activities. Work is ongoing with the regional inward investment agency, Invest East of England, regarding the marketing and promotion of the district internationally as a location of choice. The economic development function continues to engage directly with a range of businesses throughout the Council to offer support and work with them in their growth and development. These activities range from direct assistance in areas such as planning applications to 'signposting' and specialist assistance such as the Manufacturing Advice Service or the Waste Exchange service.
9. The Council continues to work closely in partnership with a range of organisations to deliver its economic development aspirations locally, and is an active member of the county economic development partnership, the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP). These partnerships have been instrumental in the countywide response to the downturn. A co-ordinated response, branded by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) as "Weather the Storm" (the website is (<http://www.weatherthestorm.org.uk>), provides a hub for information to communities and businesses across the county on matters relating to Business advice, reducing running costs, employment issues, financing awards and grants, skills and legal advice. The site itself is a gateway ('signpost') to direct providers of assistance.
10. Specific actions being undertaken to support small businesses affected by the recession is additional to the work currently undertaken by the Council's Economic Development Officer. This includes the improved marketing of the district as a location and working with business link to deliver its range of activities in South Cambs. This has led to a full programme of events, targeted at new start-up companies, established small business and entrepreneurs. A series of twenty events to train companies in skills including business planning, regulations, book keeping, marketing and use of the internet will be held between in Cambourne and Villiers Park, Bassingbourn. Other ongoing projects include the promotion of Slivers of Time, a programme which assists businesses and organisations needing to access short term, flexible labour; the programme puts them in contact with agencies who are able to provide this for individuals who are often unable to engage fully in the labour market. The Council communicates directly with businesses in the district via its Economic News publication, which directs companies to other assistance available regionally and locally.
11. The economic development service is currently undertaking a detailed study of the local economic picture. It is intended that this work, the first phase of which will report in early June, is likely to influence the longer term direction of service. If a detailed change in the authority's policy is agreed, corresponding changes to the Council's Development Plan Documents (DPDs) would be required, especially the Core Strategy document, which will be reviewed over three years, from 2009/10. A further element of work that may be undertaken is to produce an economic development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) that would allow a single expression of the authority's priorities within existing policy, and bring together the existing elements of policy relating to economic development in a single place. An SPD is not the mechanism for creating new planning policy for the authority (this is the aforementioned DPD); rather, it would allow the existing policy to be set out in a single place and thus be more accessible for officers and businesses. Revised Government guidance relating to planning policy in economic development, a combination of PPS4 (planning for sustainable economic development) and PPS 6 (planning for town centres), is

emerging. The results of this work will assist the authority in defining its approach in this area.

12. The Environment Operations team is also providing assistance to businesses through the production of an A4 information leaflet, sent with the Business Rate (NNDR) bills. This leaflet contains information on the trade waste services this Council provides, recycling services, prices pegged at the 2008 level, legal obligations on organisations, and offers free advice and guidance. Between 15 and 31 March, this has resulted in 74 contacts from organisations the Council has not previously dealt with, giving it the opportunity to give free advice and support.
13. Following the meeting of 12 February, the Leader wrote to Government Ministers regarding support that could be made at a national level. Responses are still awaited; copies of the letters sent are available from the Growth Areas Project Manager (contact details set out at the end of this report).
14. Cabinet also asked officers to identify other initiatives that may be possible at the County Council level. Details have now been sent to the chairman of the Joint Accountability Committee, which meets on 28 April 2009, to scrutinise the actions of Cambridgeshire Together in response to the downturn. Ideas include a County Council Bank, an apprenticeship scheme, job-taster experience and innovative affordable housing programmes
15. The annual increase for NNDR bills is determined by the Government and is tied to the Retail Price Index (RPI) in the September of the previous year. This has resulted a rise of 5% for 2009/10 bills. In addition, the transitional phasing scheme that has protected businesses from large increases following the revaluation in April 2005 came to an end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. These two factors will contribute to increased pressure on the finances of local business in this financial year. However, the Government has now announced an intention to allow businesses the opportunity to apply for 60% of the increase in their bill to be deferred and repaid over the next two financial years.
16. The Council's current NNDR Hardship Policy does not favour applications made due to external economic pressures. It is proposed to change this to allow the policy to be more responsive to the needs of local businesses. Other significant areas of change proposed include that "The Council will not make unnecessary onerous requests for supporting information and will consider applications promptly to ensure businesses do not suffer further hardship during the application process."
17. The intention of the proposed changes, set out in a revised policy at Appendix B (**attached**) is to make the application process for hardship relief simpler and more responsive to the current economic situation, without exposing the authority to unnecessary risk or providing support to businesses for whom the receipt of NNDR relief is unlikely to make a difference in terms of future commercial success.

### **Considerations**

18. The current programme of support is targeted to improve business survival rates, thus mitigating the impacts of unemployment in the district. A range of external partners is also providing support to the South Cambridgeshire economy. The Cambridgeshire Together website, 'Weathering the Storm', provides a range of support to individuals and businesses.

### **Implications**

19. Financial	<p>It is recommended that the existing contingency budget is kept, and reviewed in subsequent reports as the delivery of support is rolled out over the year. That this fund be used to support the priority areas for business and community support directly.</p> <p>The use of existing budgets and the ability of the authority to support the local economy through its day to day actions are, in many ways, as important as the direct assistance being provided.</p>
Legal	None
Staffing	The development of additional planning policy documents will have an impact on the work programme of the Planning policy Team.
Risk Management	Support for local businesses and communities that are suffering as a result of the current recession will to an extent mitigate the financial risk to the Council from potentially lower tax receipts and increased default rates.
Equal Opportunities	All assistance offered by the authority will be to all small businesses equally.

### Consultations

20. Officers are engaged in ongoing consultation with local businesses, the Citizens Advice Bureau and other partners

### Effect on Strategic Aims

21.	<p><b>Commitment to being a listening council, providing first class services accessible to all.</b></p> <p>The ability of the Council to assist residents who have been affected by the recession is key to the delivery of this aim. It is on this basis that the option for additional expenditure to CAB is provided.</p>
	<p><b>Commitment to ensuring that South Cambridgeshire continues to be a safe and healthy place for all.</b></p> <p>The links between economic prosperity, well-being and community safety and health are well documented. Any significant change in the overall prosperity of the district is likely to impact negatively on this aim.</p>
	<p><b>Commitment to making South Cambridgeshire a place in which residents can feel proud to live.</b></p> <p>The provision of support for small businesses facing difficulty due to the economic downturn will, help maintain the vitality of South Cambridgeshire communities. Without this vitality, local places will not be able to offer the range of services demanded by residents, undermining this aim.</p>
	<p><b>Commitment to assisting provision for local jobs for all.</b></p> <p>This report is key to the delivery of this aim. Support to businesses is provided by the Economic Development Officer, working in partnership with direct providers of advice, guidance and support to businesses. Partners in the delivery of this aim include Job centre plus, Business Link, Invest East of England, ERBI and the regional development agency EEDA.</p> <p>A working group of officers, supporting the Member Champion for this area is drawn from across the authority. The whole Council is delivering the response to the recession and its impacts.</p>
	<p><b>Commitment to providing a voice for rural life.</b></p>



Small businesses in rural areas form a key part of the life of the rural community. In seeking to provide support to these businesses, the Council will support the fabric of rural life, and ensure that villages continue to provide a range of opportunities for residents.

### **Conclusions/Summary**

22. South Cambs communities are being affected by the economic recession. The support being offered by the Council to small businesses is being delivered to make best use of the resources available, and to ensure no duplication with support being provided by government, other agencies and organisations.

### **Recommendations**

23. It is recommended that Cabinet:
- (a) Note the work that is ongoing and that which will be delivered during the next financial year.
  - (b) Authorise the presentation of a report to the Planning and New Communities Portfolio Holder bringing forward options for the preparation of planning policy documents (SPD or DPD) to address the needs of business and economic development in the district.
  - (c) Approve the revised policy for NNDR hardship relief, as attached at appendix B
  - (d) Request that Councillor Loynes submit quarterly updates on the progress of actions to future meetings, including a year-end report in April 2010 evaluating the work undertaken.

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

Reports to Cabinet: 15 January and 12 February 2009

Letters sent to Government Ministers (referred to in paragraph 13 above)

**Contact Officer:** Tom Barrance (Growth Area Project Manager)  
Telephone: (01954) 713363

**Actions to support people and businesses in South Cambridgeshire  
in the economic downturn**

<b>Potential Actions</b>	<b>Delivery Timescale</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Progress</b>
1. Hardship Rate Relief: 2. Publicise the existing scheme 3. Review the existing policy to facilitate the award of rate relief to assist businesses at imminent risk of failure and to ensure a fair allocation process of an agreed budget	Available over 2009/10	£25,000	On Going. Revised Criteria attached.
4. 'How to Win Contracts' "event with other public authorities – the Belfry Cambourne.	4 June 2009	£3,000	On target
5. Business Seminar/ Workshop on surviving the economic downturn, including practical advice and tips Event to be held at Duxford, with presentations from Marshall Aerospace (on how they have grown organically over years and weathered a number of storms), representative of one of the major banks (TBC), as well as business link training. .	July 2009 and end of Q3 2009	£5,000	On target
6. Fund direct specialist business support for businesses affected by the recession. The delivery of such support to be via third party organisations to ensure that duplication of support is avoided.	Available over 2009/10	£50,000	Grant conditions currently being prepared, in response to central government assistance. To be reported to Portfolio Holder meeting. Partnership work on-going with GCP, Business Link and other agencies.
7. Improved property search and identification systems to help firms relocate to South Cambs	Available over 2009/10	£10,000	On Target. Improved working with local commercial agents and Invest East of England to attract businesses to South Cambs.
8. Develop financial options to help development continue at Orchard Park	Available over 2009/10	Horizons funding Confirmed	On going work anticipated by May on two plots – C3 and B1
9. Freeze fees for taxi licensing, trade refuse collection and other environmental health services as recommended by the Portfolio Holder 27 January 2009	Available over 2009/10	£15,500	In place
10. Provide rent-free space for CAB at SCDC	When requested	Within existing	Offered – additional funds proposed

Potential Actions	Delivery Timescale	Cost	Progress
		budgets	(Option1)
11. Contingency fund to be allocated to further projects building on learning from the first set of actions	Held in reserve	£39,500	N./A
12. SCDC staff: Financial wellbeing event to signpost staff to appropriate organisations who can offer counselling and practical advice for themselves and family members Offer short-term projects to existing staff rather than agency staff Revise the staff relocation terms so that the sums available can be used flexibly, without increasing the total claimed.	April 2009  February 2009  February 2009	£2,000  Potential saving  Potential saving if new staff can be retained whilst unable to sell former home	In place  In Place  Work on going
13. Aim to pay suppliers within 20 days	February 2009	Up to 10 days interest on sums paid	All staff advised, to be regularly reminded throughout the year via Greg's message
14. Lobby Minister for Local Government regarding NNDR and Minister for Energy regarding fuel poverty issues.	February 2009	-	Letters sent, awaiting responses

Proposed Additional Action	Timescale	Cost	progress
15. Investigate Planning Policy actions (DPD or SPD) to help deliver economic development.	After phase 1 study results (June)	In existing budgets	N/A

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## **South Cambridgeshire District Council**

### **Policy for the Award of Rate Relief due to Hardship**

**In accordance with Section 49 to the Local Government Finance Act 1988.**

#### **Overview**

**This policy was revised in April 2009**

This policy has been agreed by the South Cambridgeshire District Council to ensure all ratepayers making applications for this rate relief are treated in a fair, consistent and equal manner.

This policy;

- Sets criteria for the factors that should be considered when making a decision to award or refuse relief
- Seeks to safeguard the interest of local taxpayers by ensuring that funds allocated for the award of discretionary rate relief are used in the most effective and economic way and in a manner that contributes to the Council's Aims.
- Facilitates the award of discretionary hardship relief where such awards will enable businesses to continue as going concerns to the benefit of residents and employees, particularly during periods of economic downturn.

#### **Scope of the Policy**

1. This policy shall apply in respect of applications for discretionary rate relief due to hardship under Section 49 to the Local Government Finance Act 1988.
2. Applications for discretionary rate relief will only be considered once properly completed applications for any mandatory relief to which it appears the ratepayer may be entitled have been received and considered.
3. Where a statutory scheme for the deferment of payment is in force then payment shall be first deferred and any award of rate relief should be based on the amount due for the year less any amounts deferred to a future year.
4. Applications in respect of deferred amounts may be made, and will be considered, at the time that the deferred amounts become payable.
5. Where it appears that restructuring instalments within the current financial year will enable the amount of hardship relief requested to be reduced or eliminated then instalments shall be restructured (e.g. to allow payments over 12 months rather than 10 months).

6. Rate relief shall only be awarded under this policy in exceptional circumstances.
7. The maximum amount of relief awarded under this policy to any ratepayer shall be limited to a cost to the Council of £5,000 per year.
8. Applications must be in writing, and, as a minimum must contain the information specified in the Council's standard application form.
9. Applications will only be considered where signed by the ratepayer, or, where an organisation is the ratepayer, an appropriately authorised representative of the organisation.
10. Additional information deemed by the Council to be essential in order for a fair evaluation of the application to be made must be supplied on request.
11. The Council will not make unnecessarily onerous requests for supporting information and will consider applications promptly to ensure businesses do not suffer further hardship during the application process.
12. Ratepayers aggrieved with an initial decision made in respect of an application have a right of appeal. Appeals must be made in writing and will only be considered if received within six weeks of the Council notifying the ratepayer of the decision.
13. Determination of awards and appeals shall be processed in accordance with the Council's Constitution.
14. Awards shall be limited to the period ending at 31st March of the year in respect of which the application is made. New applications may be submitted each financial year.
15. Where the business ceases trading, enters into insolvency or vacates the property for which relief is awarded then the award will be terminated and the amount of hardship relief awarded shall be apportioned accordingly.
16. Awards shall be reviewed in the event of a change of liability for any other reason (e.g. change in rateable value) and the award may be adjusted in view of the change in liability.
17. In very exceptional circumstances where an application is considered to be particularly deserving, but falls outside the scope of this policy, the Council may choose to make an exception and award relief. Such awards will be determined in accordance with the Council's Constitution, will be strictly at the discretion of the Council and not subject to any right of appeal.

### **Essential Legislative Requirements**

The applicant must meet both of the following essential legislative requirements before an application can be considered

1. The applicant must evidence to the Council's satisfaction that it would suffer hardship, financial or otherwise, if it were required to pay the rates demanded.
2. The applicant must demonstrate to the Council's satisfaction that it would be in the best interest of local Council Taxpayers for an award to be made.

### **Criteria**

Where the above essential requirements are met the applications for hardship relief shall be evaluated against the following criteria. However, the criteria outlined below are intended simply to set out the minimum considerations and are not intended to be comprehensive.

Any other relevant factors should also be considered in evaluating an application.

### **Factors weighing in support of an award of hardship relief**

1. The business is suffering hardship as a direct result of unusual factors outside its control (for example natural disasters).
2. The business is beneficial to the local community and is unlikely to survive without assistance through hardship relief.
3. The business provides employment to local residents in an area where employment opportunities are limited.
4. Payment of rates is a significant proportion of the cost of running the business and it can be reasonably expected that an award of hardship relief will enable the business to continue as a going concern.
5. The business has taken steps to reduce costs, or increase revenue, or has a clear business plan to do so.
6. The factors creating hardship are of limited duration and it is reasonable to expect the hardship to end in the foreseeable future.
7. The business has a good record of paying non-domestic rates as they fell due in the past.

8. The proprietors or directors have reduced the amount of remuneration they take from the business to assist in reducing costs.
9. The business is well established.
10. The business is a going concern.
11. The business is proactive in addressing its financial difficulties and has sought independent business advice to assist in improving its trading position (e.g. through Business Link).

**Factors weighing against the award of hardship relief**

1. The business is suffering hardship due to inadequate financial management.
2. The amount of business rates is not a significant proportion of the organisation's running costs, and an award of relief is unlikely to affect the viability of the organisation.
3. The proprietors or directors have not adjusted their remuneration taken from the business to reflect its current financial position.
4. There are other organisations within the locality that provide the same services.
5. Other forms of rate relief are available to the organisation.
6. The organisation is unable or unwilling to provide detailed financial information to support the application.
7. The business has a poor record of paying non-domestic rates and it has proved necessary to take legal action to enforce payment in the past.
8. The property in respect of which the application is made is unoccupied.
9. One or more of the directors of a limited company have within the last three years acted as director or company secretary of a company that has entered into formal insolvency, or have entered into formal personal insolvency.
10. The proprietor has within the last three years entered into formal personal insolvency, or has acted as director or company secretary of a company that has entered into formal insolvency.