

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Leader and Cabinet
AUTHOR/S: Management Team

10th March 2005

MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS)

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to enable the Council to approve the Medium Term Financial Strategy given in **Appendix 1**. The strategy is mainly a drawing together of decisions made by the Council over the last few months affecting the medium term outlook.

Effect on Corporate Objectives

2.	Quality, Accessible Services	The proposals in this report are all aimed at achieving the Council's objectives, primarily through making resources available to enable the Council to invest in its priorities over the next 3-5 years.
	Village Life	
	Sustainability	
	Partnership	

Background

3. One of the areas for improvement identified by the CPA Team was to produce a Medium Term Financial Strategy (CAP 3). The aim to approve a MTFS was included in the Performance Plan and in the CPA Improvement Plan (F5).
4. Throughout the last few months, the Cabinet has made a number of decisions laying the foundation for the strategy – eg:-
5. In **July** the Cabinet and Council confirmed previous policies to remain debt free and reduce the General Fund working balance to a minimum level of £1.5m
6. In **November** the Cabinet and Council -
 - (a) Agreed to draw up the MTFS on the basis that any capacity for new spending would be directed towards inescapable requirements and the three priorities of customer service; the new settlements; and affordable housing.
 - (b) Agreed that additional resources are unlikely to be made available corporately for any other service improvements.
 - (c) Adopted Option 4 for the future projection of spending levels and Council Tax up to 2009/10. (Option 4 has revised since then to reflect subsequent changes. The most recent version of Option 4 is given in **Appendix 2**).
 - (d) Agreed savings of £458,000 for 2005/6, rising to over £500,000 in 2006/7 onwards.
 - (e) Decided to meet General Fund capital spending from capital receipts.
 - (f) Agreed not to allocate £1m per annum for affordable housing; but agreed in appropriate instances to release sites at no cost for affordable housing schemes.

(g) Recognised the need to make at least £500,000 per year available for new revenue spending through the following means: the use of underspends; the redirection of resources from services of lower priority; the review of opportunities to maximise income; and continuing to press Government to recognise the needs of growth areas.

7. In **January** the Cabinet considered proposals put forward for the redirection of resources from lower priority areas and decided to defer the savings by one year in the light of a significant underspend in the current year projected at that time but subsequently reduced.

8. In **February** the Cabinet and the Council:-

(a) approved a Council Tax of £140 for 2005/06.

(b) made spending decisions for 2005/6 consistent with the previous decisions and took into account Gershon savings targets, resulting in a revised Option 4 (**Appendix 2**)

9. The projections in Appendix 2 set very challenging targets for the Council in terms of achieving cashable Gershon savings and assume a willingness to implement proposals to redirect resources from lower priority services. The overall savings assumed (in £000s) are reproduced below:-

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10
Cashable Gershon savings	259	551	833	854	875
Redirection of resources (with inflation added)	-	-	270	815	836
Total savings in cash terms	259	551	1,103	1,669	1,711

10. It can also be seen from Appendix 2 that the proposed level of Council Tax in 2009/10 is £175, which is equal to the shire district council average (excluding parish precepts), whereas the underlying rate (ie the level required to meet projected spending without the use of other sources of income such as balances) is £195. With no balances to meet this difference, expenditure would need to be reduced by £1.2 m in 2010/11. By the same time it would also not be possible to continue to finance GF capital expenditure from capital receipts

11. The purpose of this report is to enable the Cabinet to review the decisions made earlier in the year and bring together a formal MTFs for approval of the Council.

What is a Medium Term Financial Strategy and why do we need one?

12. Any large or medium sized organisation needs to plan ahead in order to achieve its objectives and to adjust to external changes. Medium term planning is important as the improvement or development of services often needs investment and change programmes over periods longer than one year. This is particularly so for South Cambs at present, as major programmes of change such as the modernisation of customer service and the new settlements at Northstowe are long term objectives, which will require investment and focus over a number of years.

13. A medium term financial strategy is a means by which the Council can ensure, as far as possible, that it will continue to have resources to meet its needs over, say, the next five years to provide a firm basis for future planning and service development. As well as a financial strategy, the Council needs to be working towards setting out in more detail how it will improve its services. This has started with the CPA Improvement Plan but needs to be developed further. A workforce plan, which will clarify how the Council will develop its workforce to support planned changes is also being prepared.

Review of the Strategy

14. The strategy will not be a static document. This strategy forms a starting point which will be reviewed on a regular basis, starting this July. There is never an ideal time to approve a

medium term financial strategy, as there are always unknowns which may make it necessary to adjust the strategy subsequently. The attached strategy sets out some of the currently known uncertainties. In some cases it is almost certain that different circumstances will apply by July.

Implications

15. There are no significant implications that have not already been addressed by the Cabinet or are not covered in the strategy.

Conclusions

16. The strategy given in Appendix 1 will be difficult and challenging to implement. In particular, finding the planned Gershon savings and redirecting resources from lower priorities will be challenging and difficult, but they are central to the delivery of this strategy and the ability of the Council over the next three years to continue to develop its priorities and meet spending pressures. It has also to be said that, on current projections, the strategy could lead to substantial problems in 2010/11 as outlined in paragraph 10 above, but many other factors could also come into play by then.

Recommendations

17. The Cabinet is recommended to recommend Council to approve the strategy in **Appendix 1**, agreeing specifically the 15 proposed policies.

Background papers: No unpublished background papers have been used in the preparation of this report. Previous reports to Cabinet are the main source documents.

Contact: Greg Harlock (01954 – 713081) on financial issues and John Ballantyne (01954 713011) on policy matters.

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Medium Term Financial Strategy 2005/6 to 2009/10

Context – Long term view of the Council's General Fund (GF) Financial Position

- A1. Seven years ago the Council was distinctive in having low levels of spending, staffing and Council Tax. In 1998/99, actual General Fund net expenditure (net committee spending) was about £8.5m and Council Tax was set at zero. The result was a comparatively low level of investment in services and the infrastructure required to run a Council serving a population of over 120,000.
- A2. In the last seven years spending has increased to a level of £18.14m (net Portfolio Expenditure) for 2005/6 and a projected £21m by 2009/10. This increase has been largely the result of government pressure through Best Value and other regimes for councils to achieve a certain standardisation in terms of services provided and the way those services are delivered. There have also been local factors such as the pressure for new development, Cambourne and the aspiration to improve customer service using new technology.
- A3. The financial effect of much of this growth in spending has been cushioned by the ability to use balances, capital receipts and the interest arising. As a result Council Tax has not risen commensurately. For the last few years the Council's Council Tax has continued as one of the lowest in the country, while its spending has been growing more quickly.
- A4. Over the next five years there is unlikely to be a let-up in pressures for new spending. Examples include:-
- a) The planning and provision of services at Northstowe and other growth areas.
 - b) Continuing spending on ICT (but at a lower level than in the last four years) to improve services and keep pace with technological change and users' expectations.
 - c) Long term plans to address improvements in recycling, waste minimisation and, potentially, other aspects of a growing climate change agenda.
 - d) Expectations for the Council to develop its community leadership role in particular in relation to the Community Strategy.
 - e) The need to make improvements in services identified as areas for improvement – for example street cleaning – driven by local expectations and CPA.
 - f) Other new government requirements or expectations.
 - g) Factors which are currently completely unknown and unexpected.
- A5. However, revenue balances and capital receipts will no longer be available to the same extent as in previous years to meet these pressures:-
- Capital receipts will run down as a result of the government decision to pool 75% of capital receipts for the sale of RTB housing. Current projections, based on the proposals in this strategy are that capital receipts will reduce to less than £1m by 2009/10 (See Appendix 2)
 - Revenue balances have fallen from a level of greater than £10m to a projected minimum level of £1.5m by 2009/10

- A6. As a result, throughout the period covered by this strategy, new spending will fall more directly on Council Tax; or will have to be met through other means such as:-
- efficiency savings;
 - transferring resources from areas of lower priority
 - increasing income.
- A7. New spending will also need to be increasingly well justified and prioritised and budgets controlled tightly. Similarly, the recent decision to fund GF capital spending from capital receipts will mean that, as capital receipts reduce, the Council will need to find new ways of financing that spending or will need to prioritise, reduce or taper its capital proposals.

Context – Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- A8. The Housing Revenue Account represents a substantial element of the Council's finances. The Housing Business Plan sets out the long-term financial position for the Council's housing finance. Like the General Fund, the HRA is also under pressure. The Council has been relying on the running down of working balances to balance the HRA, but those balances have now fallen to a level at which this is no longer possible. At the same time national rent restructuring proposals leave the Council with little control over rent levels. Also, Council house sales through RTB impact on the Council's finances. The overall result is a need to reduce running costs. The HRA and GF are interlinked, in particular in that many corporate services and systems support both the HRA and GF and savings in one area affects the other.
- A9. The Council is currently in the process of appraising options for the future of the housing stock. This will include the development of financial projections for each of the four options under consideration, with implications for both the HRA and GF. Decisions will be made by the Council in May and June to meet the deadline report to the regional office by July.

Context - The Council's Priorities

- A10. A fundamental aim of the MTFs is to enable the Council to progress its priorities and respond effectively to local and national changes. The Council has agreed the following priorities for the three years 2005/6 to 2007/8:-
- A11. **Improving Customer Service and ICT.** The Council has invested substantially in improving its ICT capacity to deliver more efficient and improved customer service. 2005/6 is a key year in this process as the Government has set targets of December 2005 and March 2006 to deliver electronic service delivery outcomes. Major investment is likely to level out after 2005/6, but continued spending at a reduced level is likely to be necessary to maximise the impact of the Council's investment in meeting customers' needs and in responding to changes in technology and customer expectations. To some extent this should be balanced by savings through efficiencies made possible by the ICT investment. At this stage the Council has not quantified in detail future spending requirements beyond 2005/6.
- A12. The major investment made by the Council in ICT has brought us up to current standards. However, these systems will need updating and replacement some time in the future. It is difficult to assess when this will be required. Future planning will be necessary to even out future spending on updating ICT systems to avoid the run down and major replacement exercise which has occurred over the last four years.
- A13. **New Settlements.** The Council is committed to achieving successful, sustainable communities at Northstowe and the new settlements around Cambridge. Additional resources have already been provided for planning, housing and community services posts in relation to Northstowe. However, further costs will be incurred in such areas as:-

- (a) The provision of leisure and community facilities at Northstowe and future settlements.

- (b) The provision of a Council presence at Northstowe and future settlements. Opportunities will be sought to work with other agencies to reduce the cost and provide a more co-ordinated service to residents.
- (c) Specialist staff such as planners, legal, retail, landscape and urban design, community facilities design, drainage and project management at Northstowe and future settlements.
- (d) The extension of services to meet a growing population – in particular in areas such as waste collection and recycling, street sweeping, environmental health and development control. Such costs are incurred largely because provision has to be made in advance of the receipt of Council Tax income from the new housing.

- A14. Where possible, the Council will continue to try to share costs with Cambridgeshire Horizons, developers and other partners. In time the new developments will bring increased Council Tax income to finance the services required, but this does not cover the substantial setting up costs of planning and developing the new settlements.
- A15. It will be necessary to review the costs of Northstowe and other new settlements in preparing future revisions of the Financial Strategy.
- A16. **Affordable Housing.** The financial context to enable the Council to provide affordable housing has changed dramatically in the last two years with the loss of Local Authority Social Housing Grant (LASHG) and the national pooling of 75% of capital receipts. The Council has considered its approach to financing affordable housing in these circumstances through a Best Value review and other means. It is recognised that a greater emphasis will now be required on maximising capacity to achieve affordable housing through planning policy, implementation, enabling and partnership work. In the last two years the Council has built up its officer capacity in these areas, including appropriate officers for the Northstowe development. Further investment may be necessary to have the right skills in place for subsequent new settlements.
- A17. In preparing this strategy, the Council decided not to make capital receipts available to provide a subsidy for affordable housing, in view of the limited impact that could be made by the level of resources that the Council could direct to this area and the disproportionate impact on the Council's other priorities. It has been decided, however, that the Council will make housing land available at nil cost for appropriate schemes providing affordable housing. This will not require specific provision to be made in the Financial Strategy.
- A18. **Future Priorities.** The Council has adopted the above priorities for the three years 2005/6 to 2007/8. However, it is important to continue to review and roll forward priorities, making adjustments and changes to reflect different local and national circumstances prevailing or expected.
- A19. The current three year Community Strategy continues up to April 2007. It would be appropriate to review the priorities of the Council and those for the Community Strategy in a process starting in 2005 to seek greater convergence for April 2007 onwards.

Context – Assumptions Made

- A20. The following are major uncertainties and the assumptions made in this strategy:-
- (a) **Capping.** No specific provision is made to address the consequences if the Council's council tax is capped by the government. The Council is required to submit its Council Tax decisions to the Secretary of State by 18th March. Last year, local authorities were notified by the end of April whether they fell into the capping category, but there is speculation that this may occur significantly later this year because of the prospect of a general election. South Cambs is in an unusual position both in terms of the size of its Council Tax increase and other financial circumstances applying. It is very difficult to reach any conclusion as to

how the ODPM will respond and there is a range of scenarios that might apply. Planning undertaken so far has been on the basis that it would be possible to meet the financial impact of any capping in 2005/6 from balances, which would give time to make spending reductions from 2006/7 onwards. However, this may not be the case. The effect of any capping would need to be taken into account when the strategy is next reviewed starting in July.

- (b) **Housing Options Appraisal.** No allowance has been made for the effects of any changes as a result of the stock options appraisal. Depending on the outcome of the appraisal process, this could have a significant impact on the Council's financial position. A decision to dispose of all or a major part of the stock could generate a substantial capital receipt which would be available for direct use or to provide interest which could be used by the General Fund to increase spending or reduce the need for savings or Council Tax increases. It would also be necessary to assess the impact on services which support both the GF and HRA. Large scale transfer would require the approval of tenants and the resulting capital receipt would not be available until 2006/7 at the earliest.
- (c) **Gershon.** An assumption has been made that the Council will achieve the savings which, at this stage, it is understood the Council will be required to make. However, no assessment has been made of the achievability or impact of the savings.
- (d) **Local Government Re-organisation and other potential changes as a result of the general election.** No assumptions or provision have been made.
- (e) **Council restructuring – front office/back office.** The Council plans to review its departmental structure, with a view to moving to a front office/back office arrangement. Again, no assumptions have been made as to the timing or the financial impact.
- (f) **Level of External Support.** No significant change has been assumed in future levels of government grant.

A21. It is planned that the Medium Term Financial Strategy will be reviewed and rolled forward annually, starting with an initial review process in June/July each year. The position in relation to the above uncertainties will be clearer by July of this year when the first review will begin.

Overall Aims of the Strategy

A22. In the light of the foregoing context, the following are the overall aims of this strategy:-

- (a) To provide the financial resources necessary to enable the Council to
 - make significant progress in relation to its Corporate Objectives and annual priorities and the aims in the Community Strategy in the medium term;
 - respond effectively to changes in local circumstances and national priorities, without putting valued services at risk;
- (b) To achieve (a) while ensuring that Council Tax remains at a level that is not out of step with other councils by maximising efficiency and value for money
- (c) To achieve sustainable budgets which are not dependent on reserves (for both the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account)
- (d) To exercise effective financial control and minimise risk

A23. Objective (b) will continue to be difficult for the Council in the light of the fact that growth area status places out of the ordinary requirements on the Council, while it receives comparatively

low government grant and has few opportunities to generate income because of its rural nature and absence of substantial settlements.

Policies for overall Financial Objectives up to 2009/10

- A24. Appendix 2 sets out projections for spending, Council Tax and use of balances/reserves which the Council will aim to achieve in the next five years. The projections reflect the following policies which will guide the Council's financial planning over the medium term:-
- A25. **Policy 1: Revenue Balances.** The Council will continue to run GF revenue balances down to a minimum level of £1.5m.
- A26. **Policy 2: Council Tax.** The Council will allow its Band D Council Tax to move up towards the district council average and then keep within that limit (subject to capping).
- A27. **Policy 3: Debt Free Status.** The Council will continue to preserve its debt free status for the foreseeable future. This policy will be reviewed when it is no longer possible to finance General Fund capital spending by using capital receipts (see Policy 4).
- A28. **Policy 4: The use of Capital Receipts.** The Council will finance General Fund capital spending from capital receipts, with the remaining capital receipts being available for Housing Revenue Account capital spending. This policy will be reviewed annually, but it is envisaged that it will continue until all accumulated capital receipts are exhausted and the only capital receipts available are those generated "in-year". From that point the Council will consider the allocation of capital receipts between the HRA and the GF depending on the circumstances at the time. The Council will need to review the options for meeting any shortfall, which could include the possibility of borrowing.
- A29. The running down of accumulated capital receipts to zero would involve some element of risk. For example, resources would not be available for certain risks which the Council does not currently insure against and in the event that demands for the equity share scheme could not be met by receipts in a given year. **Policy 5: Minimum Level of Capital Receipts.** The risks involved in the level of capital receipts will be reviewed annually and, if appropriate, a minimum level of capital receipts will be retained to cover necessary risks

Policies for Spending and Priorities

- A30. **Policy 6: Annual Provision for new spending.** The Council will make available £500,000 for new revenue spending in each of the years covered by this strategy (up to 2009/10). Based on past experience, this is likely to be a minimum provision to allow the Council to remain responsive to needs in a dynamically changing area and to make progress in service development and improvement in line with its objectives. All the £500,000 could be of a recurring nature, if appropriate (as allowed for in Appendix 2). This capacity for new spending will be created within the foregoing policies in this strategy by:-
- (a) The utilisation of virement between existing agreed budgets.
 - (b) The use of efficiency savings created in response to Gershon or otherwise. (See Policy 10)
 - (c) The re-direction of resources from low priority areas (See Policy 11)
 - (d) The maximisation of additional sources of income. (See Policy 12)
- A31. **Policy 7: Priorities for New Spending.** The resources made available for new spending by policy 6 will be used to meet the cost of:-

- (a) Inescapable spending pressures falling on the Council such as new statutory requirements and the provision of services to meet population growth.
- (b) Furthering the Council's priorities (currently: Improving customer service; affordable housing and the new settlements)

A32. **Appendix 3** identifies possible additional spending needs for 2006/7 onwards which are currently not provided for within the projections in Appendix 2. These potential areas of spending are for planning purposes only and specific proposals would need to be assessed (Policy 8) before inclusion in budgets.

A33. **Policy 8: Assessing new spending proposals.** All new spending proposals greater than £10,000 (GF and HRA) will be assessed in a structured manner (including consideration by the Scrutiny and Overview Committee) to ensure value for money and service impact before inclusion in budgets.

A34. **Policy 9: Future review of priorities.** The Council's current priorities (customer service, affordable housing and new settlements) have been agreed up to 2007/8. These will be reviewed annually and a fuller re-assessment will be undertaken to co-incide with the preparation of the second three-year Community Strategy which will come into effect in April 2007.

Policies for Savings

A35. The Government has required all councils to achieve 2.5% efficiency savings in each of the three years 2005/6 to 2007/8. At least half of those savings are to be cash savings which can be used to reduce spending or improve services. The other savings may be service improvements or greater productivity (for example more applications processed) with the same resources. The Council has a history of operating with lean levels of staff and other overheads. Although it will be challenging, the Council will adopt a positive approach to achieving efficiency savings, as this is a crucial component of its strategy to make resources available for priorities.

A36. **Policy 10: Efficiency Savings.** The Council will seek to maximise savings achieved in order at least to meet the Gershon targets set by the Government. Cashable efficiency savings will be used to contribute towards the £500,000 for new spending identified in Policy 6. This will require at least the following cash savings to be made (in £000s):-

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10
Cashable Gershon savings	259	551	833	854	875

[Note: Savings which the Council has already included in the estimates for 2005/6 might count against the Gershon target (if they can be shown to be genuine efficiency savings), but could not be counted again towards the savings required to meet the £500,000 new resources target.]

A37. **Policy 11: Redirection of resources.** To meet the £500,000 pa target for future investment in priorities and inescapable requirements, it will be necessary within the period of this strategy to re-direct resources from services of lower priority. The savings required (see Appendix 2) are as follows (in £000s):-

	05/06	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10
Redirection of resources (with inflation added)	-	-	270	815	836

A38. The savings will be achieved by making savings in the areas reported to Cabinet on 13th January 2005 – ie:

- Footway Lighting

- Recycling Credits
- Internal Library service
- Tourism
- Museums
- Arts development
- Front office/back office restructuring
- Sports
- Discretionary Rate Relief

or equivalent savings from other services. The Council will identify the areas for savings as soon as practical before the required implementation date to enable required notices to be given and consultations and other steps to be carried out to mitigate the impact.

- A39. **Policy 12: Increased Income:** The Council will review opportunities and policies for increasing income through charges, sponsorship, advertising and other forms of revenue.

Policies for Budgetary control

- A40. **Policy 13: Budgetary control.** The Council's aim is to ensure that outturn spending is within 2% of budgets which will be achieved by:-

- (a) Continuing to improve accuracy of estimates by cost centre managers, with support from the accountancy service.
- (b) Monthly reporting to Management Team in the second part of the year.
- (c) Quarterly reporting to Cabinet.
- (d) Continuing to improve budgetary control and use of the FMS by cost centre managers by the provision of support by the accountancy service

Policy for Monitoring and update

- A41. The Council works in a changing and dynamic environment and the Medium Term Financial Strategy will need regular review and updating to reflect changes in circumstances, while holding onto the core basic strategy.
- A42. **Policy 14: Annual Review.** The Council will review and roll forward the Medium Term Financial Strategy annually, continuing to plan up at least three and up to five years ahead. The Council will aim to establish clearer spending plans for years 2 and 3.

Policy for Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- A43. All the policies set out so far in this document apply equally to the General Fund and Housing Revenue Account, where appropriate, and in particular those relating to budgetary control, efficiency savings, priorities and the use of capital receipts. **Policy 15: HRA revenue balance:** The Council will maintain a revenue balance for the HRA of approximately £1m.
- A44. The Council will integrate the financial and policy planning processes for the General Fund and the HRA
- A45. More substantial policies relating to the Housing Revenue Account will be developed when this strategy is revised later in 2005, in the light of the stock option appraisal conclusion and financial projections.

Risks

A46. Major risks associated with this strategy are:-

- a) **Capping.** If the Council is capped, depending on the level, substantial changes may need to be made to the strategy when it is reviewed later in 2005. The Council will work to convince government of the special circumstances behind the major increase in Council Tax in 2005/6 to try to minimise this risk.
- b) **Not achieving efficiency savings targets.** The achievement of Gershon efficiencies are not only required to meet government imposed targets, but are central to the objective in this strategy of providing resources for future spending on priorities and inescapable commitments. The Council will minimise this risk by adopting a challenging approach to efficiency savings and by complying with the Government's deadlines for submitting annual efficiency statements and half yearly reviews.
- c) **Not achieving the redirection of resources from lower priorities.** The Council will take appropriate steps to ensure the achievability of the savings – for example, planning to minimise the implications, consultations and giving the necessary notifications. The risk will be managed by setting a target date of October 2005 for a progress report on this issue.
- d) **Over/underspends.** Significant overspends or the approval of additional mid year spending would jeopardise the delivery of this strategy and therefore in-year monitoring systems will take on greater importance. As reserves diminish it will be less of an option to use them to address additional spending pressures that arise.
- e) **Greater external pressures than envisaged.** The strategy is to achieve £500,000 resources for new spending each year. Recent years have indicated that this figure is unlikely to be sufficient. Difficult decisions on prioritisation may be necessary and it is possible that unexpected spending pressures may absorb all the Council's capacity leaving insufficient to allocate to priorities.
- f) **Long Term Financial Position.** The projections in Appendix 2 indicate a difficult financial position at the end of the five year period (ie for 2010/11) in that by that time the level of Council Tax will still not have reached the underlying rate required to meet the cost of services without the use of balances and that accumulated capital receipts will no longer be available to meet General Fund capital spending. There is a long term risk that at that stage the Council's financial position would not balance. It is necessary to continue to take into account the longer term implications of current policies, while at the same time reflecting that many current uncertainties may transform long term outcomes. The position will be reviewed annually as the Medium Term Financial Strategy is rolled forward.

Future Spending Pressures

Given below are possible future spending pressures from 2006/07 identified in the CPA Improvement Plan and other sources.

Priority: Improving Customer Service

- a) Potential extension of business analyst posts (should be self financing)
- b) Continued integration of systems with land/property based database
- c) Continuing improvement and development of web and responses to different media channels and changing public expectations
- d) Continuing improvements in mobile computing
- e) Changes to achieve improved customer service standards

Priority: Affordable Housing

- a) Additional housing project officer posts for new settlements on edge of Cambridge
- b) Potential requests for resources in relation to the development of small village sites for affordable housing

Priority: New Settlements

- a) Additional staff resources in planning, community services, specialist skills (such as legal, retail, design, project management etc) for Northstowe and future settlements.
- b) Additional direct costs of increased service provision (community development; governance, leisure services; waste collection, street sweeping etc)
- c) Costs of Council presence at Northstowe and future settlements

Other

- a) Community strategy and other priorities from 2007/8
- b) Other national priorities arising after 2005 General Election
- c) Additional services to meet population growth outside the major new settlements
- d) Additional investment in recycling and waste collection (potentially major)
- e) Service improvements following reviews and inspections (eg Street Cleaning)
- f) Proposals from the Workforce Plan