

## New Expenditure Proposals for the Medium Term Financial Strategy



South  
Cambridgeshire  
District Council

1. **Service:** Housing and Council Tax Benefit

2. **Submitted by:** Paul Smith

### 3. Brief Description of the proposal: Benefits Improvements

Additional resources to enable the section to meet the performance standards required of it by the Department of Works and Pensions and to address any issues identified as part of the Benefit Fraud Inspection.

### 4. Costs (£000s)

| Detail              | 2004/05 | 2005/06       | 2006/07       | 2007/8        |
|---------------------|---------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Staffing            |         | 56,000        | 50,067        | 51,687        |
| Training            |         | 6,490         | 5,000         | 6,000         |
| Software            |         | 6,500         | 6,000         | nil           |
| Consultancy         |         | 13,200        | nil           | nil           |
| Customer Service    |         | 3,000         | 3,000         | 4,000         |
| <b>Total Costs:</b> |         | <b>85,190</b> | <b>64,067</b> | <b>61,687</b> |

### 5. Reason for bid:

|                                     |
|-------------------------------------|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Inescapable

Related to one or more of the three priorities

6. **Policy Justification:** Bringing the benefits service to standard in all areas and maintaining it at that level will improve customer service and provide a high quality value for money benefits service available to all.

7. **Benefit for service users/public:** By bringing all elements of the Benefit service up to standard and maintaining that standard Members can be confident that our customers are receiving a high quality, value for money service.

### 8. Impact on Performance Indicators:

| Performance Indicator |  | Estimated performance in 2004/2005 | Estimated improved performance in 2005/2006 |
|-----------------------|--|------------------------------------|---|
| #                     | Description  |                                    |   |
| BV80G                 | Percentage satisfied with the benefits service overall | 84%                                | 90%   |
| BV76D                 | Prosecution/sanctions per 1,000 caseload               | 4                                  | 7   |

9. **Implications if not approved:** Whilst the performance standards are not mandatory it is a standard by which all Authorities will be measured and failure to reach standard will mean that the Council will find it difficult to improve on its CPA rating of fair. In the event that the Council does not address any issues highlighted by the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate during the inspection the Secretary of State can issue directions which the Council must adhere to or face having the service being taken away from the Authority.