

**COUNCILLORS' BULLETIN
16 MARCH 2005**

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**South
Cambridgeshire
District Council**

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COMMITTEE MEETINGS FROM: 21 March 2005 to 25 March 2005				Contact
Mon 21 Mar	1.30 pm	Training: Member / Officer Relations	Swansley Room	Carol Tyrrell
Tue 22 Mar	2.30 pm	Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder	Finance and Resources Director's Office	Kate Mercy / Susan May
Wed 23 Mar	9.30 am	Council: LDF – Northstowe Draft Area Action Plan	Council Chamber	Holly Adams
	12 pm	Lunchtime Seminar: Accessibility	Swansley Room	Reception
Thu 24 Mar	12.30 pm	Pre-Council Group Briefings • Conservatives • Independents • Liberal Democrats	Swansley Room Monkfield Room Mezzanine	Group Leaders
	2 pm	Council	Council Chamber	Susan May
Fri 25 Mar	Good Friday – Council Offices Closed			

2005/06 COUNCIL TAX BILLS: MEMBERS' GUIDE TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

LEVEL OF COUNCIL TAX

Does this mean that my overall council tax bill is going up by 100%?

No, just the District Council's component, which will represent around 11% of the overall bill for 2005/06. The rest of the bill is made up of charges from Cambridgeshire County Council, the police and fire authorities and your local parish council.

At what level has the District Council set its part of the Council Tax for 2005/06?

£140 for a "Band D" home, which is equivalent to only £2.70 per week in total for the District Council's full range of services. The exact amount that your household pays will depend on your home's value, which comes under one of the eight current valuation bands. 'Band A' represents 6/9ths of 'Band D' and 'Band H' is 18/9ths.

How much will I have to pay?

The average overall 'Band D' bill for 2005/06 in South Cambs will be £1215.57 (including an average parish council precept of £45.98). The size of your actual bill will depend on the specific amount charged by your parish council and the valuation of your home.

Is the District Council doubling its spending?

No. Although our charge is doubling, Council spending is set to rise by only 7% in 2005/06. This is in spite of the fact that the costs of extra service pressures - such as new housing, population growth and traveller issues - outstrip recent increases in government grants. This increase in spending takes account of: inflation; inescapable costs (such as additional waste collection rounds for an increased number of homes in the district); and spending on the Council's priorities of affordable housing, preparations for new settlements (eg Northstowe) and improving customer service.

At what level have other Cambridgeshire districts set their part of the council tax?

'Band D' levels: Huntingdonshire £106.54; East Cambs £115.47; Fenland £203.13; Cambridge City £136.92.

REASONS FOR THE INCREASE

Why has the District Council's charge increased?

The District Council's charge has to increase largely because we have to reduce the amount by which we subsidise the council tax. We have provided a subsidy for many years. This is currently around £4 million in 2004/05, and means that 'Band D' households pay only £70 whereas the actual cost of services to the Council is around £145. We can no longer afford to make this level of subsidy in future. Otherwise, this would reduce our reserves to below what is recognised as a safe minimum level.

Why has the Council not done something about this before?

Some years ago, external auditors told the Council that its reserves were too large, so we have eaten into these balances since then in order to reduce the council tax payable by local households. The Council has always made it clear to residents, both via its community publication 'South Cambs magazine' and the local media, that there would come a time when the council tax would have to go up.

How can the increase in the District Council's charge be justified?

It's important to look at this increase in the context of how much the District Council has charged previously. The increase to £140 in 2005/06 follows a three-year period during which the District Council's charge has stayed at the same low level (£70 for a 'Band D' home). 'Band D' households in average districts have had to pay £176 more to their district councils over the last three years, compared to those in South Cambs. In 2004/05, we currently have the fourth lowest charge of all district councils nationwide. Even with this increase to £140, we will still be below the national average 'Band D' charge for district councils, which is expected to be £143 in 2005/06.

Why aren't the other parts of the bill having to go up as much this year?

Whilst the District Council's part of the council tax has stayed at the same low level for each of the last three years, the other precepting authorities have had to increase their charges significantly during this period.

Why has the Council chosen to put the bill up so much this year rather than a gradual increase?

Previously, the Council was following a three-year strategy of keeping its charge at the same low level. This time last year, the Council made clear that the charge would need to rise significantly for 2005/06.

Did the District Council consult local people before increasing its charge for 2005/06?

Yes. A four-page consultation paper was sent to all households in the district in September 2004 along with the Autumn '04 edition of South Cambs magazine. The Council received around 2,500 replies, which is a very positive response rate to a postal questionnaire. 60% of respondents who chose from the viable council tax options offered stated their preference for a 'Band D' charge of £140 or more in 2005/06. These results were featured in the Winter '04 edition of the Council's magazine.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

Is the increase needed to pay for the Council's new offices or the Contact Centre?

The main reason why the District Council's charge has had to increase is because we have to reduce the amount by which we subsidise the council tax. Whilst the Council has incurred some extra costs by moving to new offices at Cambourne and through the introduction of the new Contact Centre, these are not the main reasons why our part of the council tax is going up. It would have cost the Council more to bring our old offices up to modern standards than the move to our new offices. Even then, our old offices would not have been able to accommodate all our service needs. Instead, we have opted for a new, fit-for-purpose and energy efficient building, bringing most services under one roof. The investments that we have made in forward-thinking technology will enable us to provide better and more efficient customer services.

Is the increase due to the £580,000 "missing" from the Direct Labour Organisation?

No. It is important to point out three things here. Firstly, the main reason why the District Council's charge has had to increase is because we have to reduce the amount by which we subsidise the council tax. Secondly, it is not the case that any money has gone missing; rather a shortfall in the recharges made by the Direct Labour Organisation – in carrying out the home repairs service – has been identified and is being addressed. Thirdly, the council tax is not affected by this shortfall. The housing repair service is funded from the separate Housing Revenue Account, rather than the Council's General Fund from which other Council services are funded.

Is the increase to pay for the money spent on legal action against travellers?

No. Whilst the Council has allocated some money for direct enforcement action in 2004/05 – if travellers in breach of planning regulations fail to comply - this is not the main reason for the increase. The key factor is that the District Council has to reduce the amount by which we subsidise the council tax.

Does this increase mean the Council must be wasting money?

No. The Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment of this Council last year reported that we are good at meeting the current needs of local people. The Council has far fewer staff than many councils serving a similar size of population. Even with an increase to a £140 'Band D' charge in 2005/06, the District Council's part of the council tax is still expected to be below the national average.

Why does the council keep sending out glossy magazines? Couldn't the money be put to better use?

Apart from the Council Tax leaflet, which is a statutory requirement, the only other Council publication to all households is the quarterly South Cambs magazine. This is largely funded by advertising. In our most recent readers' survey, around 83% said that it was their preferred means of receiving information about the Council.

POSSIBILITY OF COUNCIL TAX CAPPING**Is the District Council going to have its council tax capped by the Government?**

The Government has declined to announce what its capping criteria may be for 2005/06 before local authorities have set their council tax levels. In setting the 'Band D' charge at £140 for 2005/06, SCDC councillors did take account of a statement from Local Government Minister, Nick Raynsford MP, that this could leave the Council very exposed to the risk of capping. We are likely to hear by the end of April whether the Government intends to cap this District Council. If so, we would then have until the end of June to make our case.

What is the Council's view about council tax capping?

At the Council meeting on 24 February 2005, councillors expressed their concern that that the Council is being put in an invidious position. The Council has already asked the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to reconsider setting capping criteria based on a percentage increase without putting this in the context of the overall amount that the local authority is charging. At £140, the Council's charge is still due to be below the national average for district councils in 2005/06.

What would the District Council do if it were capped?

The Council would appeal against any capping measures. While we recognise the need for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to take a broad, national approach, the whole concept of local government recognises that there are important differences across the country. The District Council believes that there are exceptional circumstances in South Cambridgeshire at this time – not least, the requirement for the district's population to grow by 33% by 2016.

UNWILLINGNESS / INABILITY TO PAY**What would happen if I refuse to pay this increase? What would happens if I withheld £x because I disagree with how the Council is spending its money?**

You have a legal obligation to pay the council tax. If you did not pay the whole of each instalment when it is due, the Council would take its usual course of action to recover the unpaid money from you. First of all, you would be sent a reminder notice. If you still refused to pay, you would be summoned to the Magistrates Court. At this stage you would also have to pay legal costs.

If the council tax is likely to be capped, can I hold back paying my bill until a new, lower one is sent out?

Legally you must pay the bill that you receive in March. If you do not pay the Council will take normal action to recover the money you owe. If the Council is capped new bills will be sent to all households and will show the reduced amount to pay.

I am on a low income. I can't possibly afford to pay an extra £70 – what is the Council doing to help me?

If you are on a low income, you might be entitled to council tax benefit, and also housing benefit if you rent your home. You will need to complete a claim form to apply for benefit. If you have difficulty in completing a form, we can help you with it.

- If you live alone, you will be entitled to a 25% single person's discount
- If you have a disability, you may be entitled to a reduction in your bill

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Who is responsible for agreeing this increase?

The full Council of all elected councillors. The Council set its 'Band D' council tax charge for 2005/06 at the Council meeting on 24 February 2005.

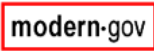
What was the result of the vote?

Thirty-two members voted in favour of the Cabinet's recommendation to set a 'Band D' charge of £140 for 2005/06. 16 opposed the proposal; two abstained and two didn't vote.

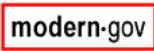
How did my local district councillor vote?

A recorded vote - of how each councillor voted - was not requested, so these details were not gathered at the time and are not available.

Who is my MP?

Visit www.scamb.gov.uk and click the  button on the right-hand side of the page. Follow the link at the top to Your MPs.

Who is my District Councillor?

Visit www.scamb.gov.uk and click the  button on the right-hand side of the page. Follow the link at the top to Councillors.

COMMENTS OR COMPLAINTS

Can I make a complaint to the District Council about this level of increase?

You can certainly write to the Council or contact your local councillor about your disagreement with the Council's decision. As it is not a complaint about a Council service or lack of services, it will be dealt with separately from the Council's complaints procedure.

- Call 08450 450 500 and ask for a copy of the complaints and comments form – also available online.
- Contact your local councillor.
- You can also write to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 26 Whitehall, London, SW1A 2WH.

LUNCHTIME SEMINAR: ACCESSIBILITY (SPEAKING THE RIGHT LANGUAGE)

Wednesday 23 March, 12pm in the Council Chamber

Kelly Quigley, communications officer will introduce the range of options available to help deliver our message to everyone including translations, large font, braille, signers and audio tapes/CDs. To ensure that there is sufficient parking and lunch, please confirm your attendance by contacting Reception by e-mail to reception@scamb.gov.uk.

SMOKE-FREE SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE ADVISORY GROUP – VOLUNTEERS SOUGHT

The Environmental Health Portfolio Holder has agreed to establish an Advisory Group to consider the complex issues surrounding tobacco control, smoking and second-hand smoke, and to outline the possible role the Council could or should play in a wider "Smoke-Free South Cambridgeshire". This task-and-finish group will bring a report to the Scrutiny and Overview Committee and make recommendations to the Portfolio Holder and Cabinet. A detailed report on the background to this

issue can be found on the modern.gov Intranet site under the agenda for the Environmental Health Portfolio Holder meeting of 3 March 2005.

If you would like to volunteer to serve on the Advisory Group, please contact Holly Adams on 01954 713030 or e-mail holly.adams@scambs.gov.uk before Monday 4 April. Cabinet will make appointments on 14 April 2005.

CALL IN ARRANGEMENTS

The Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee or any five other Councillors may call in any executive decision recorded in this bulletin for review. The Democratic Services Manager must be notified of any call in by **Wednesday 23 March 2005 at 5 pm**. All decisions not called in by this date may be implemented on **Thursday 24 March 2005**.

Any member considering calling in a decision made by Cabinet is requested to contact the Democratic Services Section to determine whether any relevant amendments have been incorporated.

The call in procedure is set out in full in Part 4 of the Council's Constitution, 'Scrutiny and Overview Committee Procedure Rules', paragraph 12.

DECISIONS MADE BY THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Subject	Decision	Reasons
Cambourne: Village Sports Facility Grant	To award a grant of £8,253 (VSF09).	To extend the tennis courts in Cambourne.
Weston Colville: Community Facility Grant	To award a grant of £7,725 (CF09) to Weston Colville Parish Council towards play equipment.	The new equipment will enable the facility to be used for many years to come.
Care Network	Agreed to award a grant of £3,500 to Care Network.	Towards the social care and mobile warden schemes and to encourage communities to develop new projects.
Royston Community Transport	Agreed to award a grant of £1,180 to Royston Community Transport.	The organisation promotes and develops a co-ordinated voluntary social car service for those who cannot use public transport due to disability or poverty. It is proposed a grant would be used towards core costs.

DECISION MADE BY THE CONSERVATION, SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNITY PLANNING PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Subject	Decision	Reasons
Toft Parochial Church Council: St Andrews Church, Church Road	To offer an additional grant of £5,000 to Toft Parochial Church Council towards the cost of repairing the roof, parapets, walls and porch using traditional materials and methods in accordance with the approved grant policy.	A grant would meet the aims of the grant policy, encourage the use of local materials and enhance the appearance of this historic building and the conservation area.

DECISION MADE BY PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Subject	Decision	Reasons
Building Regulation Scheme of Charges	To approve the scheme of charges for building regulation applications commencing 6 th	To ensure that the authority meets its self-financing building regulation

April 2005.

obligation.

DECISIONS MADE BY OFFICERS AND REPORTED FOR INFORMATION

Conservation Manager

Applicant	Decision and Reasons
Cambridgeshire Cottage Housing Society: Little Abington , 48 and 50 High Street	Awarded Historic Building Grant G/32/04 of £3,250 (25%) towards the cost of re-thatching, re-ridging and re-wiring the longstraw thatched roof.
Church of St. Mary Parochial Church Council, Church Lane, Sawston	Awarded Historic Building Grant G/33/04 of £4,621 towards the cost of re-slating the nave roof, repairing the parapet gutters replacing the rainwater goods to the south aisle and clerestorey and reconstructing the vestry parapet.
Mr A Farrow, Elsworth , Outbuilding, The Old Rectory, The Causeway	Awarded additional Historic Building Grant G/9/02 of £1,519 (25%) towards the cost of repairing the external fabric of the barn using traditional materials and methods.
Gamlingay , Barn, Charnock House, Church Street	£154 grant money recovered or not paid to be returned to the fund (G/22/04).

Community Development Manager

Applicant	Decision and Reasons
Castle Camps Neighbourhood Watch Scheme	Awarded £400 Community Safety Grant (CS01) towards a community information notice board. This will benefit the community through crime reduction and community empowerment.

Head of Community Services

Applicant	Grants Awarded
Mobile Warden Scheme Grants:	
(i) Comberton Village Help Scheme – Mobile Warden	(i) £500
(ii) Cottenham Mobile Warden Scheme	(ii) £1,000
(iii) Great Shelford Mobile Warden Scheme	(iii) £1,050
(iv) Harston and District Mobile Warden Scheme	(iv) £1,150
(v) Haslingfield	(v) £250
(vi) Melbourn Mobile Warden Scheme	(vi) £3,000
(vii) Meldreth Mobile Warden Scheme	(vii) £500
(viii) Community Care Scheme Milton	(viii) £750
(ix) The Mordens and Litlington Mobile Warden Scheme	(ix) £800
(x) Stapleford Mobile Warden Scheme	(x) no grant needed
(xi) Teversham (run by Age Concern)	(xi) £1,545
(xii) Linton ACE (run by Age Concern)	(xii) £2,765
(xiii) Small Villages (run by Age Concern: Shudy Camps, Castle Camps, Horseheath, Bartlow, West Wickham, West Wrating, Weston Colville and Balsham)	(xiii) £3,500
(xiv) Histon and Impington (run by Age Concern)	(xiv) £1,545

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Information and Customer Services
Portfolio Holder Meeting held on Wednesday, 23
February 2005 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT:	JD Batchelor	Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder
Officers:	Sally Carroll	Communications Manager
	Greg Harlock	Finance and Resources Director
	Steve Rayment	Assistant Director of Finance and Resources (ICT)
	Susan May	Democratic Services Manager

Action

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Mrs Spink and John Ballantyne

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2005 were confirmed as a correct record,

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

Contact Centre (min 3)

There was no known progress on the satisfaction survey. JB stated his expectation that a report would be made to the next E-government Board meeting.

SR

Communications Update (min 4)

A meeting had recently been held between community development and Fenland DC to investigate the potential of text messaging arts information. SR reported that use of text messaging was in his service plan and was a national project which would be Contact Centre driven. He asked that discussion should not proceed too far without knowing the implications.

SC

Customer Service Project (Min 7)

It was confirmed that the name was to be "Service First", but was for internal use at this stage. The name for external use would be considered later.

4. COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

SC circulated a communications issues progress report from 19 January 2005.

Council Tax

FAQs were being finalised for Members, officers and the public.

It was **AGREED** that it would be preferable for the explanatory Council Tax insert to be sent with the bills rather than with South Cambs Magazine.

SC

Lunchtime Seminars

A programme for March –May had been developed with refreshments to be provided by the speakers. Staff consultation was being done to assess whether they should continue.

South Cambs Magazine

JB requested a report on the financial position at the next meeting.

SC

5. SERVICE PLANS 2005/2006

Service Plans for services within the portfolio were reviewed and a number of matters raised.

ICT

- The delay in the re-launch of the web site (2g) was due to a change of plan – there was originally to have been a partnership with the County Council.
- SR was confident that on-line land charges applications (2i) would be available by December 2005. This was, however, dependent on the installation of the Oracle system and no further software being required.
- Investigations were continuing to see if there were gaps remaining in Broadband provision (2j)
- SR emphasised that business process re-engineering of back office services (S.5v) was not the same as re-organising the Council and should not be linked at this time, although they would come together eventually
- GJH stated that the review of library services (S.5x) must be completed by Q3 2005 at the latest
- SR undertook to let JB have the exact wording of BV157 (S.6). He confirmed that the 2004/05 target would not be met and that a more realistic aim was 100% compliance by December 2005.
- Contact Centre callers were to be telephoned in March to assess satisfaction (SF703)
- The E-Govt Board had agreed to wait until the ITNET service review on 19 May to review ICT support (S.8iv); there was some concern that this should be expedited and **AGREED** that the matter should be raised at the next Board meeting.
- JB queried whether anyone was home working (S.8v) and whether the implications were being checked

SR

SR

GJH

It was noted that the same arrangements were being put in place for Council Tax queries as for Building Control.

GJH reported that SR's previous post was to be reviewed to see if it was still needed in its present form.

Democratic Services

- JB queried the importance of carrying out a survey to identify member support needs (para 2f)
- Re CPA B10 and C3, briefings on the growth areas and affordable housing, Management Team had decided that further briefings were not needed
- JB/GJH suggested that PIs SX22 and NEW could be cut unless they were of importance to the service.

SM

SM

It was suggested that Members' diaries could be eliminated, but

JB

Members' views were needed.

Elections

- Noted there was no risk factor for staff shortages

Communications

- It had been felt best to develop welcome packs (2h) in conjunction with the County Council and other partner organisations
- District wide boundary signs were not considered a high priority by the head of Policy and Communications. **AGREED** revised date should be inserted – Q3 2006
- Q1 2006 was to be the cut off point for full implementation of the corporate identity (S.5iv) – not everyone currently complies
- Noted that "Know Your Councillor" (S.5v) was paid for by advertising

SC

GJH would pick up all risks identified at the next risk management group meeting to see if a comprehensive plan was needed.

6. FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUESTS AND PROGRESS UNDER THE ACT

Noted that 15 requests had been received. Agreed that a further column was needed for the number of requests on the same subject.

DH

7. FORWARD PROGRAMME - MARCH-JUNE 2005

Nothing for this portfolio on the current programme.

GJH commented that a report should be presented to Cabinet by 30 June on winding up the Broadband project as complete.

SR

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

ICT Advisory Group

First meeting arranged for 9 March at 2 pm, to consider terms of reference, rules etc.

Contact Centre Contract

This was now a workable document – final meeting to be held on 24 February. SR to check the document for references to accommodation.

SR

9. DATES OF NEXT MEETINGS

22 March 2005 at 2.30 p.m.
20 April 2005 at 2.00 p.m.

The meeting ended at 4.00 p.m.

**SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE
ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT
AREA JOINT COMMITTEE**

**Monday, 7th March 2005
2.30 p.m.**

**Council Chamber
South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
CAMBOURNE**

Cambridgeshire
Association of
Local Councils

DECISION SUMMARY

ACTION BY

Declarations of Interest – None Received.

1. MINUTES 13TH DECEMBER 2004 AND 28TH JANUARY 2005

Agreed to confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 13th December 2004 and 28th January 2005 subject to the following amendments:

28th January 2005

Move Councillor M Farrar to the list of CALC Councillors.

Minute 173, Page 2, Histon & Impington, delete "...but expressed doubt..." and replace with "He requested confirmation".

Delete "However, he recognised that because three schools were situated near Station Road the situation was complex" and replace with "He reported that all three local schools supported the scheme".

2. PETITION RECEIVED:

- a) Request for a 30mph Speed Limit in Barton Road, Comberton between Horizon Park and Long Road

Received a 72-signature petition requesting a 30mph speed limit in Barton Road, Comberton between Horizon Park and Long Road.

3. PETITIONS UPDATE REPORT - TWENTY PENCE ROAD, COTTENHAM; ERMINE STREET, CAXTON; NORTH END, BASSINGBOURN AND WIMPOLE ROAD, BARTON

Agreed to:

- i) note the concerns of petitioners regarding the Twenty Pence Road, Cottenham; Ermine Street, Caxton; North End, Bassingbourn; and Wimpole Road, Barton;
- ii) note the inclusion of the Twenty Pence Road, Cottenham as part of the County Council's Speed Limit Review Programme and the potential for a Jointly Funded Minor Highway Improvement bid;

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michelle.rowe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Michelle Rowe
(01223) 717293
michelle.rowe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

David Lines
01223 833717
david.lines@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

iii) note the decision made by County Council's Cabinet to reject the speed limit extensions in North End, Bassingbourn and Wimpole Road, Barton as they did not comply with the Council's current Speed Limit Policy; and

iv) to inform the petitioners accordingly.

4. A14 VILLAGE TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECT – PROGRESS REPORT

David Brace
(01480) 375663
david.brace@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Agreed to:

- i) note the progress made, and
- ii) approve the provision, on an experimental basis, of:
 - a) the short length of one-way operation in a northerly direction (except for cyclists) at the northern end of Station Road at its junction with High Street, and
 - b) the short length of one-way operation in a northerly direction (except for cyclists, buses and emergency service vehicles), on Station Road near the War Memorial.

5. JOINTLY FUNDED MINOR HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES 2005/06

David Lines
01223 833717
david.lines@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Agreed to:

- i) approve the following schemes for implementation in 2005/2006
 - a) the re-alignment of the Back Road/Balsham Road Junction in Linton;
 - b) the reduction of speed limit on the B1102 in Stow cum Quy with complementary speed reduction measures.
- ii) to inform all Parish Councils that submitted bids accordingly; and
- iii) the development of the Little Abington scheme, as a reserve scheme.

6. CAMBRIDGE NORTHERN FRINGE – FOR INFORMATION

Alistair Frost
01223 717585
Alistair.frost@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Agreed to note:

- i) the progress made; and
- ii) the feedback from the public information and comment programme.

7. EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER AND A1307 SCHEMES CONSOLIDATION - PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Alistair Frost
01223 717585

Alistair.frost@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Agreed to:

- i) approve the introduction of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) – High Street One Way from its junction with Balsham Road to a point 15m east of its junction with Coles Lane; and
- ii) note the public consultation and information programme encompassing:
 - i) the ETRO;
 - ii) introduction of new traffic signals at Linton Village College / SEN school;
 - iii) introduction of interactive road signing along the A1307; and
 - iv) investigation of traffic signal solution at Bartlow Crossroads.

8. ACCIDENT REMEDIAL SCHEME: JUNCTION OF A10 WITH DENNY END ROAD, LANDBEACH

Chris Creed
01223 717750

Chris.creed@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Agreed to approve the consultation for the proposals to install street lighting and automatic traffic signals as set out in the report.

9. AREA JOINT COMMITTEE – AGENDA PLAN

Michelle Rowe
(01223) 717293

michelle.rowe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk

Agreed to note the Agenda Plan for the South Cambridgeshire Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee.

Members of the Committee:

County Councillors: J E Coston, P D Gooden, S F Johnstone & L J Oliver
District Councillors: Dr D Bard, J D Batchelor, S G M Kindersley, D S K Spink and R Summerfield
CALC Councillors: G Everson, M Farrar, J McGregor and M Williamson

The Councils are committed to open government and the public are welcome to attend this meeting. For more information about this meeting, including access arrangements and facilities for people with disabilities, please contact Michelle Rowe at the County Council's Democratic Services Division on Cambridge (01223) 717293 or by email at michelle.rowe@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

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SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT AREA JOINT COMMITTEE: MINUTES

Date: 7th March 2005

Time: 1430h – 1600h

Place: South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambourne Business Park, Cambourne

Present: County Councillors

J E Coston, P D Gooden, S F Johnstone (Chairman) and
L J Oliver (substituting for J E Reynolds)

District Councillors

D Bard, J D Batchelor, S G M Kindersley, D S K Spink and
R Summerfield

CALC Councillors

G Everson, M Farrar, J McGregor and M Williamson

Also present

County Councillors R Martlew and A G Orgee

District Councillors R Bryant, S Edwards, Dr S Harangozo,
C Hunt, M Mason, E Pateman and Dr J Williamson

Apologies: Councillors T J Bear and J E Reynolds

174. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None made.

175. MINUTES – (a) 13TH DECEMBER 2004 & (b) 28TH JANUARY 2005

The minutes of the meetings held on 13th December 2004 and 28th January 2005 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

28th January 2005

First page - move Councillor M Farrar to the list of CALC Councillors.

Minute 173, Page 2, Histon & Impington, delete “..,but expressed doubt...” and replace with “ He requested confirmation”.

Delete “However, he recognised that because three schools were situated near Station Road the situation was complex” and replace with “He reported that all three local schools supported the scheme”.

176. PETITION

Request for a 30mph Speed Limit in Barton Road, Comberton between Horizon Park and Long Road

The Committee received a 72-signature petition, presented by Mr H Roscoe, requesting a 30mph speed limit in Barton Road, Comberton between Horizon Park and Long Road. The petition was supported by the Local Member District Councillor Harangozo and Comberton Parish Council.

The petitioner was informed that the Committee would consider the issues further at its next meeting. In accordance with the County Council's petitions procedure, a full response to the points raised would be sent to the petitioner following further consideration and consultation.

177. PETITIONS UPDATE REPORT – TWENTY PENCE ROAD, COTTENHAM; ERMINE STREET, CAXTON; NORTH END, BASSINGBOURN AND WIMPOLE ROAD, BARTON

Bassingbourn and Barton

The Committee was reminded that it had received, at its meeting on 27 September 2004, a 93-signature petition requesting the extension of the existing 30mph speed limit on North End, Bassingbourn, and a 65-signature petition requesting the extension of the village speed limit to cover Wimpole Road, Barton. Members had been informed that neither request complied with the County Council's Speed Limit Policy, as they both fell outside the village envelope, and that they were also unlikely to have the support of the Police. However, the Committee had resolved by a majority to support the extension of both speed limits. According to the Committee's operating conventions, this decision had then been referred for determination to the County Council's Cabinet, as it conflicted with agreed County Council policy. On 25th January 2005, Cabinet rejected the Committee's request for speed limit changes, and resolved to re-affirm its current Speed Management Policy.

District Councillors expressed extreme disappointment that the County Council was not prepared to amend its policy to reflect the current situation. Village Frameworks had been drawn very tightly to control development and not to manage speed limits. There was concern that the expectations of petitioners were being raised unnecessarily, as in practice there was little the Committee could do if a request was contrary to the County Council's Speed Management Policy. Members were aware that the report relating to the accident remedial scheme at Waterbeach allowed for traffic signals on a road designated at the national speed limit to be installed, which was contrary to Government guidelines. They therefore queried why an exception could not be made in this case.

The Chairman explained that the Speed Management Policy was a countywide policy, and the Council was not in a position to make any exceptions. Although District Councils did not like using Village Frameworks, they did provide consistency across the County and generally Village Frameworks did include the built up areas of a village. Potential petitioners were invited to talk to officers before preparing a petition so that they could be informed of the facts. Speaking as a Local Member, County Councillor Oliver explained that developing a petition did raise expectations locally. In the case of Bassingbourn, she reported that speed analysis had not supported a change to the Council's policy. She reminded Members that the County Council needed to consider the financial impact of any changes to its policy.

A1198 Ermine Street, Caxton

At its last meeting, the Committee had received a 185-signature petition requesting urgent measures to both prevent traffic using Caxton village as a shortcut alternative to the newly constructed bypass and also to assist in reducing the speed of traffic through the village by introducing a 30mph speed limit accompanied by appropriate traffic calming in Ermine Street and better signage throughout Caxton. Members were informed that since the opening of the bypass traffic travelling through Caxton village had reduced by approximately 40%. It was proposed to review the existing 40mph speed limit in Caxton in 2005/06, and subject to meeting the relevant criteria, to introduce a 30mph with complementary traffic calming features to reduce vehicle speeds and encourage higher use of the bypass.

Speaking as a Local Member, District Councillor Spink queried the new road number for Ermine Street, and was informed that a number had been applied for to GO-East. She also queried the protocol for the Speed Limit Review programme, and suggested that requests should be dealt with on a priority basis rather than in the order received. She was extremely disappointed that no action had been taken earlier to reduce traffic travelling through Caxton village following the

opening of the bypass in 2004 despite her urgent requests and the support of the local MP and County Councillor. She therefore pressed for appropriate action to be carried out urgently. Also speaking as a Local Member, District Councillor Pateman supported the views expressed by Councillor Spink. He expressed concern about the lack of forward planning, and requested signs to encourage traffic to use the bypass.

The Committee was informed that officers had met with the petitioner and the Parish Council a year ago to review the impact of the bypass and to consider speed management measures for the village. The Speed Limit Review programme was managed on a chronological basis and Caxton was next on the list for consideration. Officers would therefore be speaking to the Parish Council in early April to consider issues relating to Ermine Street with a view to appropriate action being taken in 2005/06. Measures would need to discourage regular users from travelling through the village. It was felt that temporary signage would not be effective. Some Members queried whether it was ethical for Caxton to have its speed limit reduced ahead of other villages given that the bypass had already reduced traffic in the village by 40%.

Twenty Pence Road, Cottenham

At its last meeting, the Committee had received a 69-signature petition requesting an extension and reduction of the existing speed limit along with additional traffic calming features on the Twenty Pence Road, Cottenham. It was proposed to add this request to the County Council's Speed Limit Review list, and to invite Cottenham Parish Council to submit a Jointly Funded Minor Highways bid for a speed reduction scheme. The Chairman reported that this recommendation was supported by the Local Member, District Councillor Wotherspoon, and the Parish Council. The petitioner, who had been unable to attend the meeting, had wanted it made clear that his absence did not reflect a loss of interest or enthusiasm. Speaking as a Local Member, District Councillor Edwards supported fully the inclusion of the scheme but expressed concern about the timescale for delivery. It was noted that two schemes were implemented annually from a budget only established in the last four years. A scheme for Cottenham would take some time, as it was fifteenth on the list. However, it could progress more quickly, if successful, as a Jointly Funded Minor Highways bid.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- (i) note the concerns of petitioners regarding the Twenty Pence Road, Cottenham; Ermine Street, Caxton; North End, Bassingbourn; and Wimpole Road, Barton;
- (ii) note the inclusion of the Twenty Pence Road, Cottenham as part of the County Council's Speed Limit Review Programme and the potential for a Jointly Funded Minor Highway Improvement bid;
- (iii) note the decision made by County Council's Cabinet to reject the speed limit extensions in North End, Bassingbourn and Wimpole Road, Barton as they did not comply with the Council's current Speed Limit Policy; and
- (iv) inform the petitioners accordingly.

178. A14 VILLAGE TRAFFIC CALMING PROJECT – PROGRESS REPORT

The Committee was informed of progress in developing and implementing traffic calming schemes in selected South Cambridgeshire villages, along the A14 corridor between Cambridge and Huntingdon.

Histon and Impington

Members noted the outcome of the survey to determine the origins of vehicles turning right into Station Road from the High Street during the morning peak period. Approximately 38% vehicles had originated from outside of the Histon village centre. The experimental proposal for the Station

Road/High Street junction was likely to have a better chance of success as most of these vehicles were likely to divert onto alternative routes to avoid the High Street.

Speaking as a Local Member, District Councillor Mason welcomed the survey and expressed his support for the scheme, which was also supported by all those involved in the recent Safer Routes to School initiative. Also speaking as a Local Member, County Councillor Gooden reiterated his support and thanked the officers for undertaking the survey. He queried the proposed length of the pilot and was informed that it would last six months depending on the effect of the experiment. It was noted that comments and objections would be reported back to the Committee with any proposal to make the experiment permanent.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- (i) note the progress made, and
- (ii) approve the provision, on an experimental basis, of:
 - (a) the short length of one-way operation in a northerly direction (except for cyclists) at the northern end of Station Road at its junction with High Street, and
 - (b) the short length of one-way operation in a northerly direction (except for cyclists, buses and emergency service vehicles), on Station Road near the War Memorial.

179. JOINTLY FUNDED MINOR HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES 2005/06

The Committee had approved the priority list for scheme implementation next financial year, subject to budget allocation, at its last meeting. It had also requested that the priority list should be presented to the March meeting when budget allocations were likely to be available. The County and District Councils budget allocation, combined with Parish Council contributions, allowed for two schemes to be provided in 2005/06. Schemes at Linton and Stow cum Quy were recommended for implementation. The Committee was also asked to hold Little Abington as a reserve scheme. Both the Little Abington and Stow cum Quy schemes had scored 10 points each but the latter was recommended as a priority because of its accident history. However, this was subject to the scheme complying with the County Council's Speed Limit Policy within the budgetary constraints of the Jointly Funded Minor Highway Improvement scheme.

The Chairman proposed an amendment to the recommendation, seconded by Councillor Bard, to add the development of the Little Abington scheme, as a reserve scheme, in case it was not possible to proceed with the Stow cum Quy scheme. She reported that the Committee had received a copy of a letter from the Clerk to Little Abington Parish Council outlining the reasons for giving the scheme detailed consideration and support. Speaking as a Local Member, County Councillor Orgee expressed his strong support for the scheme. The concerns of local residents had already been highlighted to the Committee in a petition received in 2004. The issue was also rated as a high priority in the village's Parish Plan. He queried the personal injury accident statistics recorded for the village, as there had been one serious accident in Cambridge Road between 2001-03 and a major accident involving a heavy commercial vehicle in 2004. The Road Safety Score was one in the report and two in the appendix. He suggested an amendment to the criteria, which would involve combining road safety with traffic flow, to differentiate between the Stow cum Quy and Little Abington schemes.

Speaking as a Local Member, District Councillor Batchelor welcomed the scheme for Linton, which would form part of the project to mitigate the impact of traffic on the village. As part of this project, he queried whether interactive signs proposed for the A1307 would include Little Abington village, and was informed that it did not include the 40 mph speed limit in the village. Members queried whether the development of the Little Abington scheme in 2005/06 would allow it to be considered as a priority for 2006/07, and were reminded that all bids were reviewed on an annual basis.

County Councillor Oliver, speaking as a Local Member, was disappointed that the schemes proposed for Bassingbourn had not been successful. Also speaking as a Local Member, District Councillor Kindersley, was disappointed that the Longtowe scheme had not been successful particularly as the village had not been bypassed. He queried whether the Stow cum Quy scheme could be included as part of the A14 project, and was informed that the project had been based on the CHUMMS study, which only included the section between Ellington and Fen Ditton. Unfortunately, a supplementary bid to include more villages had been unsuccessful. It was noted that the expansion of Cambridge Eastern Fringe would allow for potential improvements in the Quy area in the future but this was unlikely to be in the next few years. Some Members expressed disappointment that the funding would only allow for two schemes. The Vice-Chairman reported that the Committee would be asked to consider a report on the division of District Council funding between cycleways and minor traffic improvements at a future meeting.

It was resolved unanimously to:

- (i) approve the following schemes for implementation in 2005/2006
 - (a) the re-alignment of the Back Road/Balsham Road Junction in **Linton**;
 - (b) the reduction of speed limit on the B1102 in **Stow cum Quy** with complementary speed reduction measures.
- (ii) inform all Parish Councils that submitted bids accordingly; and
- (iii) approve the development of the **Little Abington** scheme, as a reserve scheme.

180. CAMBRIDGE NORTHERN FRINGE – FOR INFORMATION

The Committee received a report detailing the development of projects associated with the Cambridge Northern Fringe East (CNFE), and feedback from the public information and comment programme. Speaking as a Local Member, District Councillor Summerfield, requested more information on the Initial Options Report (IOR) for the Park and Ride relocation in particular whether the Butt Lane site had been rejected. It was noted that there had been no rejection or inclusion of any sites. The IOR included an environmental assessment, which identified Butt Lane as the best site whilst the business case recommended keeping the site south of the A14. Additional feasibility work would therefore be needed, which would include the location of a site on the A10 corridor.

Also speaking as a Local Member, County Councillor Coston, reported that the Parish Council had requested that traffic lights at the Milton interchange should be operational 24 hours or at least between 7.00a.m. to 11.00 p.m. It was noted that the MOVA signals only operated on a 24-hour basis. She expressed concern regarding the non-signalisation of the Milton Village arm particularly for people not familiar to the area. MOVA traffic control specialists had confirmed that non-signalisation would significantly improve the capacity of the circulatory. However, it was proposed to provide a full set of ducting, pole housing and other engineering infrastructure on the Milton Village entry to allow for signalisation if necessary. There would need to be stage three safety audits and the monitoring of a problem by the Council's Accident Prevention Team before signalisation could be introduced. Councillor Coston was asked to address her concerns about this issue directly with the County Council's Director of Environment and Transport.

Councillor Coston welcomed the priority given to cyclists in the scheme, which included several changes proposed by the Cambridge Cycling Campaign. She queried the location of the footpath between Chesterton, Milton and Horningsea, and was informed that it referred to the Hayling Way towpath at Clayhithe. It was noted that Local Members would be kept informed of developments in the future. Members requested an update on the land negotiations for the scheme. It was noted that this involved many different landowners including the Colleges and was being dealt with on a case-by-case basis. The landowner on the western side had signed up but negotiations were still

taking place with leaseholders. All landowners on City land had signed up but again negotiations were taking place with leaseholders. A compulsory purchase order would be needed to extinguish ancient rights and transfer land back to the Highways Agency.

Some Members expressed disappointment at the poor response to the 12,000 leaflets circulated to residents and key stakeholders. It was suggested that the County Council might wish to consider using the South Cambridgeshire magazine as part of a future consultation exercise. The Chairman reminded the Committee that the main purpose of the campaign had been to give information about the scheme and raise awareness. The Council had therefore not been looking for responses.

It was resolved unanimously:

- i) the progress made; and
- ii) the feedback from the public information and comment programme.

181. EXPERIMENTAL TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER AND A1307 SCHEMES CONSOLIDATION – PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Members received a report setting out the delivery of schemes approved by the County Council's Cabinet and supported by the Committee for the next financial year for the Linton area. Officers thanked Linton Parish Council and the Linton Steering Group for their assistance in promoting schemes for mitigating the impact of traffic on the village of Linton. The trial of a one-way system was proposed for the High Street to alleviate congestion during peak periods. It was also proposed to investigate the possibility of making Back Road, between Coles Lane and Balsham Road, one way for the second half of the trial period. This would involve speed reduction measures if introduced.

Other proposals included the introduction of temporary protected parking bay build-outs to slow traffic in the High Street. Temporary engineering measures would also be required to allow larger vehicles to negotiate safely the bend of Back Road/Balsham Road. Officers were currently considering measures to address the loss of parking in this area, which included negotiations between the Parish Council/Steering Group and local businesses to provide other parking. Initial consultation had taken place with statutory consultees who had expressed no objections. A full consultation and information programme would be undertaken, to make the public aware of all the schemes, with Linton residents and neighbouring villages. It was noted that the trial would take place in April with an evaluation report back to the Committee at its September meeting.

The Chairman reported that she had received letters objecting to the introduction of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) from residents of Numbers 1 & 3 Back Road. She highlighted the concerns raised relating to the likely increase in speeding resulting in the possibility of serious accidents, the increase in pollution, and the impact on the character of the village. It was noted that ten letters had been received from local residents either objecting or supporting the Order. Speaking as a Local Member, County Councillor Orgee, welcomed the proposal to consult outlying villages. He was pleased that this work and the provision of interactive signs was likely to be completed before the start of the programme of works for Granta School (Special Educational Needs school).

Also speaking as a Local Member, District Councillor Batchelor, thanked officers for the significant amount of work involved in progressing these schemes. He had a number of concerns relating to the loss of parking facilities and the narrow width of the pavement on the south side of Back Road, and he urged officers to keep these issues under review. He queried whether loading and unloading would be permitted on double yellow lines particularly in relation to deliveries to the Post Office sorting office. He reported that the Veterinary Surgery near the junction of Balsham Road/High Street had expressed concern about the impact of the one-way system on customer access to its business. He therefore queried whether it was possible to introduce the one-way system further up the High Street. He also queried whether the crossing on the A1307 near the

top of the High Street would be in addition to the installation of a signalised junction for the Granta School. Finally, he welcomed the extensive consultation, and along with the Parish Council and Steering Group, he supported the ETRO.

Members were informed that there was no funding to increase the width of the pavement during the experiment but it might be possible to widen if the trial was made permanent. Officers would be speaking to representatives from the Post Office on 8 March 2005. However, it was possible to load and unload only on double yellow lines. It was noted that the location of the start of the one-way trial on the High Street provided the public with a clear indication of where it started, and consequently, it would therefore be very difficult to relocate. However, officers would be talking to the Veterinary Surgery about its concerns. The crossing on the A1307 was not programmed in the current works but the design works associated with the Granta School provided the opportunity to consider improvements to the access.

It was resolved unanimously:

- (i) approve the introduction of the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) – High Street One Way from its junction with Balsham Road to a point 15m east of its junction with Coles Lane; and
- (ii) note the public consultation and information programme encompassing:
 - (i) the ETRO;
 - (ii) introduction of new traffic signals at Linton Village College / SEN school;
 - (iii) introduction of interactive road signing along the A1307; and
 - (iv) investigation of traffic signal solution at Bartlow Crossroads.

182. ACCIDENT REMEDIAL SCHEME: JUNCTION OF A10 WITH DENNY END ROAD, WATERBEACH

The Committee was reminded that it had supported a successful bid for funding for accident remedial measures at the junction of A10 with Denny End Road, Waterbeach from the Traffic Management and Safety Schemes Programme 2005/06. Various measures had been investigated for the junction but only the installation of street lighting and automatic traffic signals had been considered suitable. Although, the installation of traffic signals on a road designated at the national speed limit ran contrary to Government guidelines, the introduction of signals at a similar junction on the A10 at Butt Lane, Milton had successfully reduced the accident rate. Members had received a copy of a letter from the Clerk to Waterbeach Parish Council strongly supporting the scheme and hoping it would be completed as soon as possible.

Speaking as a Local Member, District Councillor Williamson welcomed the consultation. She hoped that signalisation would encourage motorists to leave the village at the northern end therefore reducing the volume of traffic through the village. This was particularly important in the light of the new large development to the north of Bannold Road. Also speaking as a Local Member, County Councillor Coston expressed her delight at the proposal, which she hoped would reduce the accident rate significantly at this very dangerous junction. She also hoped that the work would be carried out as soon as possible.

It was resolved unanimously:

To approve the consultation for the proposals to install street lighting and automatic traffic signals as set out in the report.

183. AGENDA PLAN

The Committee noted its agenda plan up until the 2006 spring cycle. Members were reminded that the next meeting would commence at 2.00p.m.

Chairman

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Advisory Group held on
Wednesday, 9 March 2005 at 2.00 p.m.

PRESENT: Councillor JH Stewart – Chairman

Councillors:	SM Edwards	JA Hockney
	Mrs HF Kember	MJ Mason
	Mrs HM Smith	

and Councillor JD Batchelor (Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder).

Officers: Steve Rayment Assistant Director of Finance and Resources (ICT)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dr JPR Orme.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

On the nomination of Councillor Mrs HM Smith, seconded by Councillor Mrs HF Kember, it was

AGREED that Councillor JH Stewart be elected Chairman for the current year.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

The Advisory Group **AGREED** not to have a Vice-Chairman.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared.

4. PUBLIC EXCLUSION FROM MEETINGS

The Advisory Group **AGREED** that meetings would be open to the public, although the public would be excluded from confidential items as described in the Access to Information Rules in the Constitution. Members noted that agendas and associated reports would be available in the public domain five clear working days before each meeting.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Advisory Group **AGREED** the Terms of Reference. The Group would serve as a forum to ensure that Members were fully engaged in ICT work within the authority, to advise the Portfolio Holder and Cabinet, and to take advice on ICT projects for dissemination to other Members.

6. OVERVIEW OF INFORMATION & COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY SECTION

The Assistant Director of Finance and Resources (ICT) outlined the staff in the ICT division and described their roles. A number of the existing staff were on fixed-term contracts to complete specific projects, which allowed for regular budgetary review of the positions. Certain tasks were outsourced to external companies.

7. OVERVIEW OF ITNET PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

The Assistant Director of Finance and Resources (ICT) explained that the ITNET contract was output-based: ITNET must deliver a required level of service and could set its own

staffing arrangements as it felt necessary to complete their contractual obligations. He confirmed the following:

- A Best Value Review had recommended that the service be outsourced and ITNET had been selected as the contractor following tender;
- ITNET assisted the Council in aspects of procurement, such as sourcing of technology, but the Council did the actual procurement order and retained the freedom to procure hardware and services either through ITNET or independently;
- The inventory element of the contract was variable depending on the number of units of equipment and the associated charges would rise or fall accordingly;
- All the servers supported by ITNET for SCDC were located at the Cambourne offices. When services were more fully integrated with the Contact Centre, it was possible that an additional server could be located at Speke House or Shire Hall, depending on the business model, for which ITNET may have a role to support, but this was not part of the current contract;
- Links to external sites were all maintained by third parties such as BT, NTL or similar;
- Open Book accounting and 50/50 profit share meant that a declared business case is included in the Council's contract with ITNET. If the three-monthly accounts showed a greater return than that originally projected, the Council would receive 50% of the profit as service credits; and
- An ITNET 'aide memoire' sheet was being prepared for Members and officers to remind of the contracted service levels.

The service level requirements for desktop support were described and Members were reminded that issues affecting individual Members and officers were given a lower priority than cases which impacted the entire authority (business-critical services) or workgroups typically of twenty or more staff at one time. The 2004/05 Customer Satisfaction Survey would be circulated in the next few weeks and the Advisory Group asked that Members' views be included.

The Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder noted that Serco Solutions had recently purchased ITNET. The current contract made provision for reviewing the service in light of a significant change of control; the Assistant Director Finance & Resources (ICT) and the e-Government Programme Board were undertaking the review.

Members' passwords and network security were discussed and it was acknowledged that a balance had to be found between maintaining sufficient security whilst still assigning passwords which could be remembered. Other security arrangements would be investigated if current measures were deemed insufficient. Members' access to the Council intranet site was secure.

The Council's link to the DLO Depot at Waterbeach was currently routed through Mandela House in Cambridge as this was the least expensive option;

The majority of Members had Council-owned computers, which they would be given the option to purchase upon retirement or at the end of the computer's useful life. If the computer were returned to the Council, the hard drive would be wiped clean as per data protection requirements and the computer would be sent to a disposals company to comply with the EU Directive on the disposal of waste electronics and electrical equipment.

8. IMPLEMENTING ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT (IEG) / PRIORITY OUTCOMES / GERSHON

The Council had submitted its IEG statement at the end of December 2004. Its work on IEG targets had resulted in nearly £1 million of government funding over the previous years. Targets and milestones were set by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

(ODPM) and fell into three categories: "R" – required, "G" – good and "E" – excellent. The deadline for completion of all "R" targets was 31 December 2005, and March 2006 for "G" targets. The Council was on track to achieve the deadlines, but would not be focussing on achieving any "E" targets because in the main, these did not refer to services provided by District Councils.

Members noted the positions of neighbouring authorities and the advantages of having joined the Contact Centre project early, specifically in terms of progress towards IEG requirements.

Gershon

A return on the investment made in ICT was seen as a key driver and facilitator for the increased efficiencies and was a key area to deliver additional efficiency savings. It was important for managers to use ICT to facilitate identified efficiency savings. Members could benefit from training on how ICT could enable them to become more efficient in their work.

9. CONTACT CENTRE

Members **AGREED** to visit the Contact Centre on 12 April 2005, and would meet at the Cambourne offices at 10 am.

10. IDENTIFICATION OF FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Review of the ITNET / Serco Contract
- Results of the ITNET Customer Satisfaction Survey
- Update on PlanWeb

Any other suggested future agenda items to be forwarded to the Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder and the Assistant Director of Finance and Resources (ICT)

11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Wireless Network

Wireless access had always been part of the network arrangements for the Cambourne offices. Consultants had been employed and, pending delivery of a new security switch, installation should be within the next few weeks. There would be three different levels of access:

- Guest – offering visitors to the offices access to the Internet (filtered through the Council's SurfControl software);
- Member – offering Members access to the Intranet, Internet and E-mail; and
- Staff – offering staff access to the Intranet, Internet, E-mail and business applications.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 11 May 2005 at 12 pm in the Monkfield Room.

The Meeting ended at 3.55 p.m.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Thursday, 10 March 2005

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs DSK Spink MBE (Leader of Council)
Councillor RT Summerfield (Deputy Leader of Council and Resources & Staffing
Portfolio Holder)

Councillors:	Dr DR Bard	Planning & Economic Development Portfolio Holder
	JD Batchelor	Information & Customer Services Portfolio Holder
	Mrs EM Heazell	Housing Portfolio Holder
	SGM Kindersley	Environmental Health Portfolio Holder
	Mrs DP Roberts	Community Development Portfolio Holder

Councillors RF Bryant, Mrs A Elsby, Mrs SA Hatton, JA Hockney, Mrs HF Kember, DC McCraith, Mrs JA Muncey, Mrs CAED Murfitt, Mrs GJ Smith, Dr SEK van de Ven and Dr JR Williamson were in attendance, by invitation.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs JM Healey.

Procedural Items

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Leader was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2005 as a correct record.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following interests were declared:

Councillor Mrs EM Heazell	Personal interest in item 11 (Museum Grants) as an acquaintance of the Fitzwilliam Museum's Keeper of Admissions: she would neither speak nor vote on this item.
Councillor Dr JR Williamson	Prejudicial interest in item 11 (Museum Grants) as a Trustee of the Farmland Museum: she would withdraw from the Chamber during consideration of this item.

3. WINDMILL ESTATES

The Housing Portfolio Holder invited Cabinet to tour Nene Housing development sites at Caldecote and Pyrethrum Way, Willingham, as well as the Windmill Estate at Fulbourn, prior to Cabinet's consideration of the Windmill Estate Project. A short briefing paper would be circulated to all Members in advance.

Recommendations to Council

4. INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The previous year's strategy, having proven successful, had been updated for the

current year, taking into account the falling level of capital receipts.

Cabinet **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** that the investment strategy be approved.

5. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder introduced the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy, asking that he and the Leader be given delegated responsibility to make minor amendments prior to its inclusion in the 24 March 2005 Council agenda as he had not had the opportunity to review it before submission to Cabinet. He outlined the changes he felt were necessary at paragraphs A8, A20, A29, A43 and A44. Councillor Summerfield commented that the success of the Medium Term Financial Strategy was dependent upon achieving the challenging savings targets in the coming years.

Clarifications were sought and given:

- Forward plans were in hand for updating information and communications technology (ICT) (A12), although ICT developments were often driven by government demands;
- There were no plans for the Council to relocate to Northstowe: the proposal (A13 (b)) was intended to suggest consideration of a possible contact office, given the eventual size of the development. This could be combined with paragraph A13 (a) to refer to “the provision of leisure, community and public facilities” to avoid confusion;
- Work was underway to address the impact of potential capping (A20 (a)), although the capping criteria announcement was likely to be delayed until July or possibly the autumn: the wording would be amended accordingly;
- The list of potential savings areas at A38 had not been approved by Cabinet and was not definitive but suggested areas where cuts could be made to non-statutory services. Members supported replacing the list with a general statement that non-statutory services would be reviewed;
- There was a possibility of deriving income from increased collection of trade refuse;
- Many costs associated with new developments arose long before residents moved to the District, therefore current residents’ Council Tax had to be invested in service provision for future residents. It was hoped that the fledgling Northstowe Development Trust would succeed in making most public buildings in Northstowe self-financing;
- The increase in staffing costs in recent years resulted to a large extent from additional statutory requirements from central government: the Council employed half the staff of similar-sized neighbouring authorities yet received a lower government grant and retained responsibilities such as Housing;
- The Scrutiny and Overview Committee had already reviewed the medium term outlook and potential financial strategy, together with expenditure proposals, in December 2004.

Cabinet **AGREED** to delegate responsibility to the Leader and Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder to incorporate the requested amendments into the Medium Term Financial Strategy, copies of the final Strategy to be circulated upon completion.

Subject to the changes to be made, Cabinet **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** that the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved.

6. MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS TEAM - PERMANENT POST

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder explained that recent appointments to senior planning posts had left gaps in the Cambourne team. Short-term contracts were unattractive in the current competitive market, and the Council had been

unsuccessful in recruiting qualified candidates, hence the request for a permanent post. Short-term posts did not necessarily have any benefit for the Council. It was noted that internal appointments were published on the Council's Intranet, but names could not be included in public reports.

Should the Cambourne Enhanced application succeed on appeal, the developers could be asked to contribute money to a pool from which the post could be funded, but requiring the developers to fund the post directly could lead to a conflict of interest for the officer concerned.

The Development Services Director confirmed that the Planning Delivery Grant, through which several posts were funded, should continue in the near future, but that the government had announced plans to increase planning application fees as an alternative source of financing when it began phasing out the Planning Delivery Grant.

Cabinet **RECOMMEND TO COUNCIL** that the post of Senior Planning Assistant (Post D7.10) be re-advertised on a permanent contract with the Council accepting the risk that this implies.

**Decisions made by the
Cabinet and reported for
information**

**7. RESPONSE TO 'PLANNING FOR GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITES'
CONSULTATION PAPER**

The Head of Policy and Communications tabled an updated copy of the report and draft response to the consultation paper, including amendments requested by the Development and Conservation Control Committee at their meeting on 2 March 2005. The response emphasised the need for a national policy and the importance of a revised definition of "travellers".

Members raised the following issues:

- There was a need for a national travellers database, similar to the censuses carried out on settled communities;
- Residents of settled communities found it difficult to understand how some people could be defined as travellers when it was known that the travellers had extensive property holdings in the Irish Republic;
- Add the word "framework" to the conclusion of paragraph 6.3;
- Paragraph 9.2 should read "asylum seekers" rather than "immigrant workers";
- Paragraph 9.8 should refer to PPG3 housing density requirements;
- The needs of settled communities were at odds with the proposals from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM);
- Although travellers themselves spoke of incompatibility between groups of English and groups of Irish travellers, or with travelling showpeople, the Council's response should be re-phrased to avoid possible accusations of racism. The response would also raise the issue of public order problems which could result from mixing groups of travellers;
- Travelling showpeople should be included in the definition of travellers and were equally deserving of the same protections;
- Good Behaviour Bonds could only be applied at Council-owned sites, but the majority of problems had arisen at private sites;
- The government had to apply human rights equally to all people.

Cabinet discussed the cost to the authority of the traveller situation: officers' time and efforts on travellers' matters were diverting resources away from Council services for all residents, and requiring increasing amounts of overtime work. Members' time and

attention had also been diverted. The cost spent on traveller issues in 2004/05 and projected cost in 2005/06 came to the equivalent of £11 per household, or 15.7% of Council Tax collected, without any support from central government.

Subject to Members' comments being taken into account, Cabinet **ENDORSED** the Council's response to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister consultation paper.

Cabinet thanked the Head of Policy and Communications and the Deputy Development Services Director for their report.

8. AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Housing Portfolio Holder commended to Cabinet the policy for the payment of commuted sums by developers in lieu of on-site affordable housing provision in specified exceptional circumstances, but suggested that Members could request a greater emphasis be placed on individual village needs, and that nil contributions could be better defined. Similar schemes had already been achieved successfully without a set policy, such as at Papworth Everard.

The Head of Housing Strategic Services explained that the method of calculating grant was now less formulaic than in the past: there was no set grant rate for any particular type of development and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) had to compete for Housing Corporation funding, thus requiring them to put forward the most cost-effective case possible. All calculations would be made by RSLs through the Housing Corporation Grant Rate Calculator, access to which was not available to Local Authorities, on a site-by-site basis and the results forwarded to the Finance and Resources Director for approval.

It was important to seize on every opportunity to provide affordable housing where appropriate and needed, especially in smaller areas within villages rather than just in the large-scale proposals for major new developments.

Cabinet **AGREED** to test the proposals on one pilot scheme, with details to be brought to Cabinet to demonstrate its success, before making a decision on adopting a new policy.

9. GERSHON EFFICIENCY SAVINGS - AN UPDATE

The Chief Executive introduced the preparations being made to produce the first Annual Efficiency Statement (AES) and noted that, although the deadline for AES submission was 15 April 2005, the government had not yet published guidelines on the requirements and format. He outlined possibilities for tactical procurement by liaising with other authorities through the Regional Centre of Excellence, with savings projected to be as high as 20% in some areas. Procurement savings should be considered during this first year of Gershon as more sophisticated savings involving partnership work would require more time to become established. The only savings to be included would be genuine efficiency savings, where the quality would remain high but for less cost: there should not be any detrimental impact.

The proposal to examine the scope for reducing the number of meetings was just one potential area for savings: the new political structure had been intended to cut down on the number of meetings to free Members to undertake more democratic representation, but in practice there were more meetings than ever. There were good reasons for this, not least involving all Members, but meetings came at a cost and Members were asked to consider whether this was the best way of operating. The Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder was asked to revisit e-conferencing as a possible means of reducing mileage claims for Members travelling to meetings.

All staff and the Scrutiny and Overview Committee had been asked for their views on efficiency savings and it was noted that the management and maintenance of Council housing through the Housing Revenue Account would also form part of the AES. Members were asked to contact the Head of Policy and Communications with any further suggestions.

Cabinet **AGREED** that the Chief Executive, in conjunction with the Leader of the Council, be granted delegated authority to finalise the forward-looking part of the Annual Efficiency Statement for 2005/06, in time for the official deadline of 15 April 2005.

10. CITIZENS' ADVICE BUREAUX GRANT

The Community Development Portfolio Holder drew Members' attention to the other Citizens' Advice Bureaux (CABs) grants already awarded under delegated powers. The Community Development Manager was working closely with CABs, monitoring their scope for and use by South Cambridgeshire residents. Service Level Agreements were now in place. The Community Development Manager outlined the training undertaken by CAB volunteers, their processes and available services, and confirmed that the Cambridge CAB was considering moving to a joint advice hub with other services, but that details were not yet fully known.

Members noted that all grants were subject to the Council being capped.

Cabinet **AGREED** to approve a grant of £66,625 to the Cambridge Citizens' Advice Bureau for 2005/06.

11. MUSEUM GRANTS

Cabinet had deferred this item on 13 January 2005 until the 2005/06 budgets had been agreed. The Community Development Portfolio Holder asked that Cabinet continued to support the local museums, noting that smaller organisations were very dependent on Council grants. All organisations had been made aware of the Council's current financial position. The Conservation Manager updated Members on the new computer interactive outreach programme at the Fitzwilliam Museum and the success of the "family fun kits" provided by the Council.

Cabinet **AGREED** to approve the proposed Museum Grant funding arrangements for 2005/06:

<i>Museum</i>	<i>2005/06</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Farmland Museum & Denny Abbey	£36,000	Includes £8,000 towards the on-going capital development scheme.
Cambridge & County Folk Museum	£22,000	2004/05 revenue allowance only (capital development scheme complete)
Fitzwilliam Museum	£3,000	Funding to be prioritised for agreed educational outreach projects
<i>Total Museum Grants 2005/06</i>	<i>£61,000</i>	<i>Comprises 2004/05 minus 4%</i>

12. DELEGATED POWERS - LAND TRANSACTIONS

Cabinet on 11 November 2004 had referred proposed changes to delegated powers to the Constitution Review Working Party, who suggested that Cabinet might delegate to Portfolio Holders land transactions above Level 2 and up to and including Level 4 or some higher level, with transactions above that level reserved for Cabinet. It was also

suggested that paragraphs 35 and 68/69 of Table 2B of the Constitution could be amalgamated and that other adjustments might be made. It was confirmed that independent valuers conducted the valuations of land, so there could be no debate about the amount.

Cabinet **AGREED**

- (a) to leave paragraphs 35 and 68/9 of Table 2B separate; and
- (b) that Cabinet reserve to itself the approval of land transactions where the value is over Level 4 and delegate to the relevant Portfolio Holder approval of transactions where the value is over Level 2 up to and including Level 4.

Councillor Dr DR Bard recorded his vote against this decision.

Standing Items

13. MATTERS REFERRED BY SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

None.

14. UPDATES FROM CABINET MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

None.

The Meeting ended at 1.00 p.m.
