



**COUNCILLORS' BULLETIN
14 DECEMBER 2005**

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South
Cambridgeshire
District Council

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Decisions Taken:

- Council Priorities in 2006/07 and 2007/08 Onwards (Recommendation to Council)
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COMMITTEE MEETINGS FROM: 19 December to 23 December 2005				Contact
Mon 19 Dec	10 am	South Cambridgeshire Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership	Swansley Room	Maggie Jennings
Tue 20 Dec	9 am	Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holders Meeting	Office of Finance & Resources Director	Vicki Barker
Wed 21 Dec				
Thu 22 Dec				
Fri 23 Dec	Offices Close at 3.00 PM			

CHRISTMAS CLOSING ARRANGEMENTS – CAMBOURNE OFFICE AND CONTACT CENTRE

Cambourne Office – will close on Friday 23rd December 2005 at **3.00 pm** and re-open again on Tuesday 3rd January 2006 at 8.30 am.

The Contact Centre hours during the Christmas Period are as follows:

Friday 23 December 2005 – Normal Working Hours (8 am to 8 pm)

Saturday 24 December 2005 – 8 am to 1 pm

Sunday 25 December 2005 - **Closed**

Monday 26 December 2005 - **Closed**

Tuesday 27 December 2005 - **Closed**

Wednesday 28 December 2005 – Friday 30 December 2005 – 8 am to 8 pm

Saturday 31 December 2005 – 8 am to 1 pm

Sunday 1 January 2006 – **Closed**

Monday 2 January 2006 – **Closed**

Tuesday 3 January 2006 – 8 am to 8 pm

DO YOU KNOW OF A YOUNG PERSON WHO HELPS OTHERS?

The Young People of the Year Award 2006 is looking for nominations.

Despite the often-unpopular image of young people, many are doing wonderful things for others. Your help is needed to give prominence to our positive role models and quash the bad behaviour of the well-publicised minority.

The sort of activities recognised for an award includes caring for family members, raising money for good causes, looking after neglected animals, voluntary work, showing spirit in adversity ... the list is endless.

Nominees must live, work or study in Cambridge, Ely, Haverhill, Saffron Walden, Soham, St Ives and surrounding villages. They can enter themselves, or be nominated as individuals or groups.

There are two age categories and first prize is £500 for the young person and £500 for their supporting organisation, plus other cash prizes.

Entry forms are available from Cambourne reception or online at www.youngpeopleoftheyear.org

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 21 December 2005 at 5 pm**. All decisions not called in by this date may be implemented on **Thursday 22 December 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 INFORMATION AND CUSTOMER SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Subject	Decision
Minuting of Portfolio Holder Meetings	With immediate effect, the Democratic Services Division are to withdraw support for the minuting of future Portfolio holder meetings.
Review of Number of Meetings	The Portfolio Holder and Leader will meet with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council to discuss ways of achieving a significant reduction in the number of meetings, perhaps by as much as half.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Action Points from the Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder Meeting held on Monday, 17 October 2005 at 10.00 a.m.

PRESENT: Councillor JD Batchelor Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder

Officers: John Ballantyne Chief Executive
Greg Harlock Finance and Resources Director

- | | Action |
|--|----------------------|
| 1. MINUTING OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER MEETINGS | |
| With immediate effect, the Democratic Services Division are to withdraw support for the minuting of future Portfolio holder meetings. | GJH /
SCM |
| 2. NUMBER OF MEETINGS - REVIEW | |
| The Portfolio holder and Leader will meet with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of Council to discuss ways of achieving a significant reduction in the number of meetings, perhaps by as much as half. | JB /
SGMK |
| 3. CONTACT CENTRE / TRANSFORMATION PROJECT | |
| The Finance and Resources Director will ensure that application is made as part of the 2006/07 capital estimates for funding sufficient to meet the costs of full integration as part of the Contact Centre / Transformation Project. | GJH /
SPR |
| 4. PANIC ALARMS | |
| Works necessary to ensure Panic alarm calls made from meeting rooms are, as the first point of contact, redirected from the Police to the main Reception and / or some other pre-identified contact point, are to be pursued with urgency. | JSB /
BT |

Communication issues progress report: from Monday 17 October 2005

News releases

08 Dec 2005 Smithy Fen: Council welcomes Victoria View decision
07 Dec 2005 Cautious welcome for increased Government funding plans
06 Dec 2005 Christmas is coming to South Cambridgeshire
06 Dec 2005 Follow the stars at the Grantchester street nativity
29 Nov 2005 Winter magic at Milton Country Park
22 Nov 2005 South Cambs District Council wins Clean Air Award
21 Nov 2005 Injunction extended against development of land in Cottenham
18 Nov 2005 Star awards for local food business
18 Nov 2005 Debating competition gets off to a flying start
14 Nov 2005 Injunction granted against development of land in Cottenham
09 Nov 2005 Transformation in progress
09 Nov 2005 New Council Tax bills for South Cambridgeshire residents
08 Nov 2005 Turn over a new leaf
28 Oct 2005 Painful service cuts confirmed
27 Oct 2005 Pensioner pleads guilty to £18,000 benefit fraud
24 Oct 2005 South Cambridgeshire's ecological footprint survey
21 Oct 2005 Celebrating the classics - the finale
18 Oct 2005 Feed the birds at Milton Country Park

Media enquiries

October

18.10.05	Community Services	Sir Trevor Brooking visit	CEN
	Community Services	Sir Trevor Brooking visit	Cambs Town Crier
	Council Tax	I/V Cllr Kindersley re: budget cuts	Q103
19.10.05	Council Tax	Arts demonstration contact	CEN
	Community Services	Sir Trevor Brooking visit	Cambs Town Crier
20.10.05	Services	Sir Trevor Brooking visit	Crier
21.10.05	Planning	Mr Harlow - noise complaint at Over	CEN
			BBC Radio
24.10.05	Travellers	I/V Cllr Kindersley at Cottenham	Cambridgeshire
25.10.05	Planning	Pub at Cambourne	CEN
	Community Services	Firework displays in District	Cambs Town Crier
	Planning	Gamlingay planning application	Biggleswade

	Planning	Refusal of planning permission for rowing lake	Chronicle
26.10.05	Council Tax	Capping I/V request	CEN
	Community Services		BBC Look East
	Community Services	DPPO Bar Hill I/V request	Star FM
27.10.05	Council Tax	DPPO Bar Hill I/V request	BBC Radio
	Travellers	I/V Cllr Kindersley re: arts budget cuts	Cambridgeshire
28.10.05	Parish Councils	I/V Cllr Kindersley	BBC Look East
	Council Tax	Contact for Papworth PC Chair	Star FM
		Capping cuts	Anglia TV
			CEN

November

Date	Subject	Enquiry/Request	Media
01.11.05	Planning	East of England plan	Anglia TV
	Planning	Ickleton Riverside Barns garden centre	Saffron Walden Reporter
	Planning	Cambourne flood defences	BBC It's Your Money
02.11.05	Env Health	Amount spent on implementing the licensing act	Royston Crow
	Council Tax	Amount forecast for 2006/07	CEN
	Env Health	New pest charges	BBC Radio
03.11.05	Northstowe	Cllr Riley - personal and prejudicial interest comment	Cambridgeshire
	Env Health	Barrington cement works	CEN
04.11.05	Planning	Ickleton Riverside Barns garden centre	Star Radio
07.11.05	Env Health	Cockerels in Elsworth - noise complaint	Saffron Walden Weekly News
08.11.05	Council Tax	GMB report - rates of uncollected Council Tax	CEN
	Elections	Election consultation - when?	Haverhill Echo
	Planning	Northstowe: Cllr Riley - personal and prejudicial interest comment	CEN
09.11.05	Travellers	Land off Setchell Drove, Cottenham	BBC Look East
	Travellers	Land off Setchell Drove, Cottenham	Anglia TV
	Travellers	Result of injunction hearing at County Court	CEN
	Travellers	Result of injunction hearing at County Court	CEN
	Travellers	I/V Cllr Kindersley re: land off Setchell Drove	Mason's News
10.11.05	Planning	Northstowe I/V Mr Ballantyne re: Cllr Riley	BBC Radio
	Travellers	I/V Cllr Kindersley re: land off Setchell Drove	Cambridgeshire
	Travellers	Land off Setchell Drove, Cottenham	Star Radio
	Travellers	Land off Setchell Drove, Cottenham	Star Radio
	Planning	Mr Herbert Harlow, noise at Over industrial site	Daily Mail
		Cambridge wind farm - suspension of planning appeal	BBC
11.11.05	Planning		CEN
	Planning	Ickleton Riverside Barns garden centre	Saffron Walden Weekly News
	Council Tax	Effect of capping on Milton Country Park	CEN
14.11.05	Travellers	I/V Cllr Kindersley re: land off Setchell Drove	Q103
		I/V with Cllr Heazell and Steve Hampson re: sheltered housing review	CEN
15.11.05	Housing		CEN
	Travellers	Land off Setchell Drove, Cottenham	Star Radio
	Planning	Ickleton Riverside Barns garden centre	Walden Local
	Env Health	Shutting down of the Crayfish, Harston	CEN
	Travellers	Comment from Cllr Kindersley re: injunction at	CEN

Setchell Drove

16.11.05	Planning Travellers	Balsham wind farm - have we been contacted? Travellers at Swavesey Business Park	Saffron Walden Reporter CEN Saffron Walden
	Planning Housing Housing Housing	Ickleton Riverside Barns garden centre Mental health flats at Green Road, Sawston Airey homes project, Sawston Sheltered housing review and Green Road scheme	Weekly News Haverhill Echo Haverhill Echo Haverhill Echo
17.11.05	Travellers	Swavesey Traveller update	CEN BBC Radio Cambridgeshire
18.11.05	Council Env Health	I/V Cllr Kindersley re: Transformation Project Barrington cement works - pollution breaches	CEN Cambridgeshire CEN
21.11.05	Housing Council Tax	Sheltered housing review and Green Road scheme Cutting of museum grant	Haverhill Echo CEN
	Env Health	Number of licensing extensions and 24hr applications	BBC Saffron Walden
	Planning Community Services	Ickleton Riverside Barns garden centre Debating competition	Weekly News BBC Radio Cambridgeshire
22.11.05	Travellers	Injunction extension at Setchell Drove	CEN Heritage Magazine
	Conservation Env Health	Photo request I/V request for staff smoker kicking the habit	BBC Look East Saffron Walden Weekly News
	Planning Community Services	Ickleton Riverside Barns garden centre Results of debating competition	Linton News
23.11.05	Services		Daily Mail
24.11.05	Env Health	Licensing information	Saffron Walden Weekly News
	Planning Env Health	Ickleton Riverside Barns garden centre Licensing of Mexican takeaway van in Milton	CEN Saffron Walden
28.11.05	Env Health		Weekly News
	Planning	Ickleton Riverside Barns garden centre	Weekly News Saffron Walden
29.11.05	Planning	Ickleton Riverside Barns garden centre	Weekly News Saffron Walden Gazette
	Planning Planning Housing Housing Community	Ickleton Riverside Barns garden centre Mr Herbert Harlow, noise at Over industrial site Sheltered housing review Cabinet decision Car parks being sold to Parish Councils	CEN CEN Haverhill Echo BBC Radio
30.11.05	Services Env Health	Milton Country Park winter events Cockerels in Elsworth - noise complaint	Cambridgeshire CEN

December

01.12.05	Env Health	Footway lighting cuts	Cambs Town Crier BBC Radio Cambridgeshire
	Sustainability	Energy solar grants	BBC
02.12.05	Env Health	Food safety star awards	CEN
	Planning	Unwins appeal S/0321/05/O	CEN
05.12.05	Planning	Unwins appeal S/0321/05/O	CEN
06.12.05	Travellers	Lorry going to Water Lane, Smithy Fen	CEN
	Env Health	Flytipping at Setchell Drove	CEN
	Planning	Ickleton Riverside Barns garden centre	Saffron Walden

	Community		Reporter
07.12.05	Services	Future of Milton Country Park	Cambs Town
	Travellers	Outcome of Victoria View inquiry	Crier
	Planning	300 home planned for Bayer site in Hauxton	CEN
	Env Health	Collville Drain, Swavesey	CEN
	Transport	Traffic calming meeting for Histon and Impington	Star 107
	Env Health	Food safety star awards	Sunday Times
08.12.05	Travellers	Victoria View planning inquiry decision	CEN
	Community Services	Cambourne youth centre	CEN
	Community Services	MC Park consultation	Cambs Town
	Travellers	I/V Cllr Kindersley re: Victoria View decision	Crier
	Travellers	Victoria View planning inquiry decision	BBC Radio
	Travellers	I/V Cllr Kindersley re: Victoria View decision	Cambridgeshire
09.12.05	Travellers	I/V Cllr Kindersley re: Victoria View decision	Daily Mail
			Anglia TV
			Star 107

Media evaluation 2005

Media enquiries by type	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Type Totals
Cambourne	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	6
Community Services	8	5	9	4	3	7	1	2	1	8	3	3	54
Conservation	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	4
Council	3	3	1	4	10	3	7	2	6	2	1	0	42
Council Tax	1	22	15	5	1	0	14	0	7	8	4	0	77
Elections	0	0	0	6	6	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	14
Emergency Planning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	4
Env Health	5	6	5	7	1	12	1	9	1	1	11	5	64
Housing	2	2	13	3	5	4	5	16	1	4	7	0	62
Planning	8	9	14	13	11	15	8	12	11	8	20	4	133
Revs and Bens	0	2	2	0	0	4	2	1	1	0	0	0	12
Staffing	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	4
Sustainability	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Transport	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	4	0	0	1	6
Travellers	17	16	25	14	11	25	15	6	4	8	14	7	162
Monthly Totals	46	67	84	59	48	73	55	50	37	43	62	21	

Annual Total	645
Monthly average	54

Media highlights

Five star food awards photocall
Interest from national BBC, Sunday Times and featured in Env Health News

Debating competition – website and drive time feature by BBC Radio Cambridgeshire

Victoria View planning inquiry

Xmas recycling and out of hours news release

Milton Country Park future plans, front page Cambridge Town Crier

Projects

Climate plan leaflet. Public summary of full Climate Plan.

Cambridge Cred project, in conjunction with Cambridge City – meeting 20 December.

MJ Achievement Awards 2006 'Employee Wellbeing Achievement' deadline 20 January.

Stop smoking: Smoke Free South Cambs group
Clean Air Award
Stop smoking officer training
Stop smoking seminar, 16 December

Northstowe communciations group meeting, 21 November

Asbestos contamination holding statement, letters to members and residents to be issued week 12 December

Steelcase case study of Cambourne offices

South Cambs magazine

* Finalist, CIPR East Anglia Pride Awards for 'best newsletter'

* Winter distribution. Collating feedback. Much higher positive response from consultation with staff and members, but still a number of missed roads. Redistributing missed areas.

* Spring timetable (incorporating Key Issues)

Editorial meeting	5 January
Copy deadline	16 January
Delivery	from 3 March

Forward plan

Fly tipping conviction, CE News to be invited to attend, hopefully before Christmas

Scrutiny report for distribution of South Cambs magazine, winter edition. To include cost options for using Royal Mail. Deadline 10 January.

Meeting Hunts DC to share comms experiences on moving offices, late January

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Cabinet held on
Thursday, 8 December 2005

PRESENT: Councillor SGM Kindersley (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 JM Healey Conservation, Sustainability & Community Planning
Portfolio Holder
Mrs EM Heazell Housing Portfolio Holder
Mrs DP Roberts Community Development Portfolio Holder
Mrs DSK Spink MBE Environmental Health Portfolio Holder

Councillors RF Bryant, SM Edwards, Mrs A Elsby, JA Hockney, Mrs CAED Murfitt, J Shepperson
and Mrs GJ Smith were in attendance, by invitation.

Procedural Items

1. COTTENHAM: VICTORIA VIEW, SMITHY FEN

Urgent item with permission of the Leader.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) had dismissed all planning appeals relating to the unauthorised Traveller encampments at Victoria View, Smithy Fen, Cottenham and these unauthorised Travellers had been given twelve months to leave Victoria View. The Leader thanked officers and Members for their work on this issue and Cottenham Parish Council for contributing to the appeal to the ODPM to uphold the Planning Inspector's decision.

2. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Leader was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2005 as a correct record, subject to the following change:

Reducing Numbers In and Costs of Temporary Accommodation (Minute 8)

Resolution (a): "To let up to 10% of Council vacancies...for example, *one-bed units* let to families..."

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following personal interests were declared:

Dr DR Bard	As a Governor of Sawston Village College (Item 9)
JD Batchelor	As an elected Cambridgeshire County Councillor (Items 5 & 10) and a Governor of Linton Village College (Item 9)
SM Edwards	By virtue of his professional involvement in supplying communications equipment to, among other places, Call Centres (Item 11)
JA Hockney	As a Council appointee to the Farmland Museum Trustees Board of Management (Item 9)
SGM Kindersley	As an elected Cambridgeshire County Councillor (Items 5 & 10)
Mrs CAED Murfitt	As a Council appointee to the Melbourn Community Sports Ltd (MCSPLIM) (Item 9)

Mrs GJ Smith As a Council appointee to Linton Village College (Item 9)
Mrs DSK Spink As a Council appointee to Crossroads Caring for Carers,
Gamlingay Village College and Wysing Arts (Item 9)

**Recommendation to Council and Decision
made by Cabinet**

4. COUNCIL PRIORITIES IN 2006/07 AND 2007/08 ONWARDS

The Cabinet considered the continuation of the Council's current three priorities into 2006/07 and a programme to carry out a major re-think of the Council's priorities for 2007/08 onwards to coincide with the development of the second Community Strategy. Financial and other pressures would make it necessary to be realistic and specific about what could be achieved in 2006/07 and future years.

Cabinet **RECOMMENDED COUNCIL** to continue the Council's current three priorities (customer service, Northstowe and affordable housing) into 2006/07.

Cabinet **AGREED**

- (a) To request Management Team to report back on a limited number of realistic outcomes and milestones to be achieved in the three priority areas in 2006/07 within existing planned resources; and
- (b) To support the proposals in the report for a substantial review of the Council's corporate objectives and priorities from 2007/08, combining the process with the review of the Community Strategy.

Decisions made by Cabinet

5. NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING

Inspector Paul Ormerod, South Cambridgeshire Sector Commander, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, gave a presentation on the establishment and role of neighbourhood panels, which aimed to prove a community with a means of engagement on policing priorities and performance, with regular meetings to consider the issues and the policing response.

Members were supportive of the neighbourhood panels, and explanations were given for the following matters raised:

- (i) Parish Councils had an important role to play and should be included on the panels. Parish Councils in the Histon area, where a pilot panel would be established, preferred to progress matters through their local District Councillors, but there would be scope for Parish Council involvement elsewhere. A copy of Inspector Ormerod's presentation was available on the SCDC website and Members were encouraged to discuss neighbourhood panels with their Parish Councils;
- (ii) There was reluctance to limit the size of the panels, but, at the same time concern about their becoming unwieldy. The Histon pilot panel would help identify an appropriate size;
- (iii) It was crucial to engage members of the general public to help identify local priorities, but there was a danger that frustrations could arise when police resources limited delivery of priorities. Panels would be limited to three realistic priorities per area and would not be a strategic talking shop, but a group which could bring about results and provide regular feedback to residents. It was hoped that once the panels were up and running and residents could see how they could have a voice in local policing, more members of the general public

- would attend panel meetings;
- (iv) Five meetings annually could be too few to pick up on "hot" local issues, so it was important to maintain contact such as informal police visits to local groups.

Members thanked Inspector Ormerod for his presentation and Cabinet **AGREED**

- (a) To work in partnership with Cambridgeshire Constabulary to establish a pilot Community Panel from around January 2006 in the Histon area; and
- (b) That, following an evaluation of the pilot above after the first two Panel meetings, terms of reference be drawn up for Community Panels and they be established across the District during 2006.

6. ESTIMATES FOR DEPARTMENTAL AND CENTRAL OVERHEADS BUDGET FOR 2006/07

The draft estimates for all services would be presented to Portfolio Holders in January for consideration and endorsement, including the budget reductions to meet capping requirements as agreed by Council in October 2005. Council would give final approval to the estimates on 23 February 2006. In order to start this process, Cabinet was asked to determine the estimates for staffing and central overheads.

Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning

Discussions were taking place through Cambridgeshire Horizons for funding towards the vacant Northstowe post, but there were sensitivities to consider before approaching developers for contributions towards a planning post.

Cambourne Office

The Council did not have the resources to undertake an external assessment of selling the Cambourne Office and leasing space; the Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder had refused the suggestion since selling the office would realise a large capital sum, which could then be spent only on capital projects, while requiring revenue savings to be identified elsewhere to cover rental payments. Councillor Mrs GJ Smith asked that the savings realised in relation to the costs of telephones, energy and rates be publicised.

The Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder undertook to liaise with the Housing and Environmental Services Director regarding heating in the Housing Department.

Cabinet **AGREED** to

- (a) Confirm the inflation figure of 2 ½% for both general expenditure and pay awards, on which all the estimates were being prepared;
- (b) Approve the revenue estimates and recharges as presented and shown at **Appendices A and B**; and
- (c) Approve the capital programme shown at **Appendix C**.

7. LOCAL AUTHORITY FINANCE SETTLEMENT

Urgent item with permission of the Leader.

The Local Authority Financial Settlement for 2006/07 had been issued: the government had changed the formulae again this year, making it difficult to analyse the information, but the Council had received a 13 ½% cash increase over the current year. This amount was the Shire District average and was the lowest amongst the rural Districts in Cambridgeshire: it did not take into account the Council's special circumstances as a high-growth area. Unlike previous years, the government had issued a 2-year provisional grant settlement, with promises of a 3-year forecast from 2006/07. This new information would be reflected in the Medium Term Financial Strategy when it came to

Cabinet in January 2006. Members welcomed the government's responding to requests to bring data up-to-date as it was now forecasting population figures forward from mid-year rather than using two-year old information.

The government had also announced that it expected Council Tax increases for 2006/07 to be under 5% and that when setting the 2006/07 Council Tax Authorities would include an indication of the expected 2007/08 Council Tax. Cabinet **SUPPORTED** an indicative figure of a 4.9% Council Tax rise on which to prepare the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

8. RESPONSIVE REPAIRS PROCUREMENT

Cabinet, at its meeting of 14 April 2005, had commissioned a full assessment of the operational, legal and financial impacts of future procurement options for the housing responsive repairs service. The review was now complete and the Housing Portfolio Holder thanked everyone who took part, especially Mathew Baxter of echelon consultancy ltd and Councillor Mrs DSK Spink, who attended all the meetings and visits. She also paid tribute to the workforce who, during a difficult period of transition, continued to receive high results in satisfaction surveys, in some areas even improving previous scores.

Cabinet **AGREED** to:

- (a) Note the content of the echelon consultancy ltd report attached at Appendix A to the agenda, its appraisal of the procurement options and its recommendations;
- (b) Retain its in-house direct labour organisation and implement the 22-point action plan as recommended in the report at Appendix A to the agenda; and
- (c) Request that the Housing and Environmental Services Director establish an implementation group, based upon the membership of the Responsive Repairs Core Group, to oversee delivery of the action plan and to report back to Cabinet within six months.

9. DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF FOR CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS

Council, at its meeting of 27 October 2005, had agreed that a policy on discretionary rate relief had to be adopted formally in order to implement the reduction in expenditure agreed. A formal policy would ensure that future awards of rate relief were allocated in a manner which maximised the benefit to local residents and assisted those organisations which contributed to the Council's Corporate Objectives.

Cabinet **AGREED** that

- (a) The criteria described in Appendix A to the report "Policy for the Award of 'Top-up' Discretionary Rate Relief to Charitable Organisations" as amended at the meeting be adopted formally as a policy for the award of 'top-up' rate relief with effect from 1st April 2006;
- (b) In order to minimise the administrative burden on both the Council and applicants, this policy only take effect where the award of relief to the organisation would cost the Council in excess of £1,000 per annum;
- (c) Authority to make decisions on awards within the criteria set out in the policy be delegated to the Finance and Resources Director;
- (d) Authority to make decision on appeals against the decision of the Finance and Resources Director be delegated to the Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder; and
- (e) A further report making recommendations for a policy to cover all other forms of discretionary relief be submitted to Cabinet during the 2006/07 financial year.

10. CHILDREN'S SERVICES: THE CONTRIBUTION OF DISTRICT COUNCILS

The Children Act 2004 set statutory duties on District Councils to work in partnership with other organisations to improve outcomes for all children and young people. The Community Development Portfolio Holder reminded Members that departmental resources had been much reduced and that the Council needed to be seen to do what it could within its limited resources. The Head of Community Services confirmed that it was anticipated that the Council would work with the County Council's locality teams, but the working relationship had yet to be defined.

Members highlighted the importance of preventative work on homelessness.

Cabinet **AGREED** that:

- (a) The Community Development Portfolio Holder be appointed as the lead member for children and young people; and
- (b) Any comments on the draft Children Plan be incorporated into a response to the consultation, including asking Parish Councils to consult with children and young people when drawing up Parish Plans.

11. IEG STATEMENT

The Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder confirmed that the Council was on schedule to meet its e-government targets, and corrected paragraph 2 of the report: the Council had received £900,000, not £750,000, in capital grants from the government from its four previous IEG Statements. Due to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's required format for the statement, it was not possible to change from red to green those services which the Council did not provide.

The Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder further confirmed that:

- (i) Training of Cambourne Office staff to co-ordinate with Contact Centre staff would be part of the Transformation Project;
- (ii) Training of Contact Centre staff was an on-going and continual part of their positions;
- (iii) With regards to Local e-Government Implementation Expenditure, although the 05/06 forward look for resources being applied from internal revenue and capital budgets to implement e-government had read £1 million in July, it had been revised since to £1.37 million which he thought was due to rollover expected during the year as Phase 2 had been moved out of the initial sequence. All the funding had already been approved by full Council and the actual explanation for the variance would be circulated to all Members as soon as available;
- (iv) Failure to meet e-government targets could result in the government reclaiming its £900,000 grant; and
- (v) The transfer of the Benefits service to the Contact Centre was delayed until the third week of January 2006 due to recruitment difficulties at the Contact Centre, but that this was still within the government's revised target deadline of 31 March 2006.

Councillor JA Hockney stated that the general public did not support e-government, failed to see its benefit to residents, and were confused by the Council's decisions to invest in new technologies, while Councillor SM Edwards voiced his support of the Council's commitment to new technologies.

Cabinet

- (a) **NOTED** the progress of the IEG Statement 2005; and
- (b) **APPROVED** the delegation and approval of subsequent changes to the Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder and the Finance and Resources Director prior to submission to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on 19th December 2005 with the final copy being distributed to all Members when available.

12. TRAVELLERS' HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

The provisional outcomes of the Travellers' Housing Needs Survey were presented to Cabinet, with a full report due later in the 2005/06 financial year. The Leader highlighted that South Cambridgeshire had more caravans on authorised private plots than anywhere else in the country and also that it was in the top 10% of all districts for the number of caravans on council-run sites.

The delay in the report had been due to other organisations requesting additional work not included in the contract: the Council had not requested anything outside the original brief. Details on the other organisations involved would be included in the full report.

Councillor SM Edwards highlighted the concerns of a member of Cottenham Parish Council, who had contacted him regarding Cabinet's conclusion in September 2005 that the Council did not own any land for land swap purposes, but was now selling off Council land. Cabinet emphasised that their conclusion in September 2005 was regarding land *suitable* for land swap, and the Housing Portfolio Holder confirmed that the Council owned odd pockets of land, often locked by other properties or of a size adequate for a garden extension, and it was land such as this being considered for sale. A report to Cabinet in January 2006 would publish the results of the recent survey of Council-owned land, which could identify some pockets of potentially suitable land, and there was an audit trail demonstrating that the Council's own policies had been applied to all Council-owned land to confirm whether or not it was suitable for travellers. The Leader emphasised that anything the Council could do, it would, and expressed his hope that Cottenham Parish Council felt that there was enough openness between the two authorities to contact the Corporate Project Officer for clarification of any of their concerns.

Councillor Mrs DP Roberts voiced her concern that a public report should indicate demand for a further 170-220 Traveller pitches over the next 5 years, which could cause distress in villages, especially if misreported in the local press as a definite figure. Any press releases would make it clear that the Council did not confuse demand with provision.

Cabinet **NOTED** the provisional findings of the Travellers' Housing Needs Survey as they related to South Cambridgeshire, as set out in paragraph 21 of the report and the appendix; and **AGREED**

- (a) To instruct officers to make the survey findings available to the Regional Housing Board and, at the same time, make the case as to why not all of the need currently found in the district should be met long-term within the South Cambridgeshire district, as set out in paragraphs 25-26 of the report;
- (b) To instruct officers to adopt the same approach as in (a) above in respect to the Examination in Public of the East of England Plan;
- (c) To use the results of the survey to support any future bids for capital or revenue funding for site provision;
- (d) To refer this report and the Travellers' Housing Needs Survey to the Development and Conservation Control Committee for its information; and
- (e) That the survey output inform the work of the Local Development Framework (LDF) including work on finding suitable locations for sites.

13. APPOINTMENT OF WINDMILL ESTATE STEERING GROUP

The Windmill Estate Project Steering Group had been meeting since August 2004 to develop proposals for the redevelopment of the estate; however, despite Council agreeing in May 2005 to support the project in principle, the Steering Group had not been included in the formal list of bodies for which nominees were sought. The Housing

Portfolio Holder noted that Nene Housing Association had already contributed financially towards the administration of meetings.

Cabinet **AGREED:**

Terms of Reference

That the Windmill Estate Project Steering Group:

- (a) Provide key stakeholders with periodic reports on project progress and issues;
- (b) Provide an opportunity for key stakeholders to raise issues of strategic significance for discussion;
- (c) Allow key stakeholders the opportunity to advise the Project sponsor (Housing Portfolio Holder) on how the project can be delivered most efficiently and effectively at a strategic level; and
- (d) Work together to put forward a redevelopment scheme proposal for consideration by Cabinet / Full Council.

Membership

That the formally constituted Steering Group comprise:

- (a) Housing Portfolio Holder
- (b) Leader of Council
- (c) SCDC Fulbourn Members (x 2)
- (d) Fulbourn Parish Council representative
- (e) Local County Councillor
- (f) Tenant representative
- (g) Owner-Occupier representative

Attended by Nene Housing Society:

- (a) Director of Development
- (b) Housing Operations Manager
- (c) Regeneration Manager
- (d) Resident Involvement Officer

Supported by the following Council officers:

- (a) Housing and Environmental Services Director
- (b) Head of Housing Strategic Services
- (c) Housing Services Manager
- (d) Housing Services Officer
- (e) Community Development Manager
- (f) Principal Housing Accountant
- (g) Special Projects Officer

14. RE-ORGANISATION OF HOUSING SERVICES

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented a report on the progress of the re-organisation of Housing Services and sought delegated authority to proceed with the project. It was confirmed that:

- (i) The net reduction of 4.8 posts would include staff at the Cambourne Offices as well as wardens;
- (ii) Housing Services currently employed approximately 150 staff, over half of whom were wardens. Members could view an organisation tree on the Intranet or contact the Housing and Environmental Services Director for more detailed information;
- (iii) The Council employed the fewest Housing Services staff within its audit group of similar local authorities but it was difficult to make a like-for-like comparison with the private sector;
- (iv) Market trends rather than Council policies had caused reductions in Right To Buy sales and assisted grant schemes to enable tenants to buy privately, although the Council continued to publicise through *Key Issues Magazine* ways tenants could buy their own house.

Cabinet **AGREED**

- (a) The next stage of the Housing Service re-organisation as set out in the report; and
- (b) That detailed process, assimilation and redundancy issues, including the deletion and creation of posts, arising from the review of Housing Services be delegated to the Housing and Environmental Services Director with Human Resources advice, in consultation with the Housing and Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holders.

Information Items

15. TRAVELLERS COSTS QUARTERLY UPDATE

Cabinet **NOTED** the Travellers Costs Quarterly Update and that there remained £10,000 in outstanding invoices.

Standing Items

16. MATTERS REFERRED BY SCRUTINY AND OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

Cabinet **NOTED** the Scrutiny and Overview Committee's:

- (a) Congratulations on Cabinet's work on the Traveller issue; and
- (b) Recommendation that Cabinet continue to strive towards meeting the Council's targets on affordable housing, as there was currently an annual shortfall of 870 houses.

17. UPDATES FROM CABINET MEMBERS APPOINTED TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Cambridgeshire Women and Homelessness Group had spoken to Councillor Mrs EM Heazell about their sadness with the diminution in the Council's grant, but emphasised that they did not blame the Council for the situation.

Councillor Mrs DSK Spink reported that South Cambridgeshire Crossroads Caring for Carers had cut overheads through amalgamation with the Huntingdonshire Branch and was considering further amalgamation with Fenland. She also reported the Wysing Arts Centre's success in their recent fund-raising and that Mary Archer had expressed an interest in becoming involved with the organisation.

The Meeting ended at 12.20 p.m.
