

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Notes of the Housing Portfolio Holder Meeting
held on Monday, 29 January 2007 at 11.00
a.m.

PRESENT:	Councillor Mrs DSK Spink MBE (Portfolio Holder)	
Councillors:	Mrs A Elsby Mrs EM Heazell	Opposition Spokesman Opposition Spokesman and Scrutiny & Overview Monitor
Officers:	Susan Carter Pauline Gardner Steve Hampson Denise Lewis Brent O'Halloran Gwynn Thomas	Housing Advice and Options Manager Housing Services Manager Executive Director Head of Strategic Housing Property Services Manager Principal Accountant (Housing)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor RE Barrett.

Action

1. CONSIDERATION OF PORTFOLIO ESTIMATES

Gwynn Thomas, Principal Accountant (Housing), presented the Revenue Estimates up to the year 2007-08 and the Capital Programme up to 2009-10.

The report was dealt with under the headings of:

1. The Housing General Fund
2. The Housing Revenue Account
3. Capital Estimates

The Housing General Fund

Key points:

A net saving in excess of £100,000 was expected in respect of the need for, and the cost of, temporary accommodation for the homeless.

It was believed that raising charges in shoppers' car parks in the villages had not been pursued out of concern for the effects on businesses in those villages.

An update on the sale of village car parks was given by Pauline Gardner, Housing Services Manager, who reported that several sales were expected to be completed by April:

- Melbourn - expected to raise £100,000
- Linton - awaiting a response from the parish council
- Sawston – discussions with Budgens regarding the lease
- Histon – waiting feedback from Tesco.

Overall, it was expected that all savings identified in the Medium Term

Financial Strategy (MTFS) would be achieved in the year 2007/2008.

Housing Revenue Account

Key points:

The Housing Revenue Account would show a surplus in the years 2006/2007 and 2007/2008.

There would be a one-off benefit in the reduction of funds to the National Pool of £300,000 reflected in the revised estimate for 2006/2007.

The reduction in the level of subsidy for sheltered housing was currently running at about £300,000, however the supporting people team had indicated that they wished to review their contract, which might have a negative impact on this figure.

In 2005/06 the DLO made a loss of over £60,500 and, because the service is almost entirely used by the HRA this deficit had to be charged to the HRA. Following a review and the implementation of various operational and management improvements the DLO is expected to break even this year and may make a small surplus in 2007/08.

Cabinet approved £1,040,000 of allocated works for the DLO in 2006/2007 and 2007/08 at the meeting held on 11 January.

It was proposed that garage rents would be increased in line with Government guidelines (4.1%) but concerns were expressed that this could lead to increased voids. It was suggested that garage areas could be sold for housing. The question was asked if garages should be let to non-council tenants, but again the issue of increased voids was raised. The Portfolio Holder requested that the subject be reviewed.

Capital Estimates

Key points

It was identified that there was insufficient funding after 2009/2010, however as agreed during the consideration of the MTFS no attempt to identify where reductions could be made had been identified at present.

No new build projects had been planned.

The budget for the acquisition of existing dwellings would be very difficult to forecast accurately.

£116,000 had been vired from the Cash Incentive Grants budget to increase the funding available for the Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants. It was agreed that this was a good use of the money.

The Portfolio Holder ENDORSED the recommendations of the report as listed, subject to review by Scrutiny and Overview to:

1. Confirm the proposals for the capital expenditure shown at

- Appendix E(1-10), for inclusion in the capital programme.
2. Endorse the Revenue Estimates and Capital Programme shown at Appendices A, B and C and recommend them for consideration by the Cabinet.
 3. Request that Cabinet include £30,000, for possible additional expenditure on accommodation for homeless people, on the list of precautionary items.

2. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Portfolio Holder meeting will be at 10:00am on Tuesday 6th February in the Monkfield Room.

The meeting ended at 12.00 p.m.
