



# **SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL COUNCILLORS' BULLETIN – ISSUE DATE 11<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2003**

## **CONTENTS**

### **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR COUNCILLORS**

1. Forthcoming Committee Meetings
2. IT Training for Councillors
3. Training Courses:
  - Consulting your Communities
  - Refugee Integration – Ensuring Access to Community

### **CABINET 5<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2003**

#### **Decisions Made by Cabinet**

3. Linton Community Sports Centre: Dual-Use Capital Grant
4. Draft Best Value Performance Plan 2003/04 to 2005/06
5. SERAS, Airport Development in the South-East and East of England, Revised Consultation by the Government
6. New Housing Improvement Grant Policy
7. Equity Share Schemes for the Elderly
8. Uncommitted Grant Balances and Other Earmarked Reserve Balances Over Two Years Old at 31st March 2003
9. South Cambridgeshire Economic Development Strategy
10. Planning Delivery Grant
15. New Refuse / Recycling Collection Service – Additional Operatives
16. Minutes of Meeting of 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2003

#### **DECISION MADE BY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

1. Exclusion of Meat and Animal Products from the Green Bin Collection Scheme

#### **DECISION MADE BY PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

1. To Carry Forward £121,248 from 2002/03 to 2003/04 Cycleways Budget


#### **DECISION MADE BY CONSERVATION PORTFOLIO HOLDER**

1. To Carry Forward £8,500 from 2002/03 to 2003/04 War Memorials Budget

#### **INFORMATION ITEMS**

1. Call-in Arrangements

## **IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR COUNCILLORS**

<b><u>COMMITTEE MEETINGS</u></b>			
<b>FROM 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> JUNE 2003</b>			
	<b>WEDNESDAY 18<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2003</b>	<b>AT 2:30 PM JOINT STRATEGIC FORUM</b>	<b>COMMITTEE ROOM 1</b>
	<b>THURSDAY 19<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2003</b>	<b>AT 2:00 PM CAMBOURNE DEG</b>	<b>PROJECT OFFICE, CAMBOURNE</b>

### **IT Training for Councillors**

The Software Practice are running a number of IT training courses, which are available for all elected Members. These include a half day course in:

- Computer orientation (introductory level)
- Outlook (e-mail) (introductory level)

Full day courses in:

- Outlook (e-mail)
- Internet Usage
- Word
- Excel

Courses are set at three levels: introductory, intermediate and advanced and further details of these courses are available. It may be possible to arrange a skills assessment if needed.

Courses can either be held at Barrington or at South Cambridgeshire Hall if 4 or more Councillors are able to make the same date. Courses could also be run during the evening if there is the demand.

Please can Members who are interested in any of the above IT training courses contact the Patrick Adams on (01223) 443408 or [patrick.adams@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:patrick.adams@scambs.gov.uk) by Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2003.

### **Training Courses:**

<b>Name of Course</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Date and Venue</b>
Consulting your Communities	A day course facilitated by Braintree District Council on how to engage with communities and hard to reach groups.	15 <sup>th</sup> July at The Fennes Estate, Braintree, Essex
Refugee Integration – Ensuring Access to Community	A two day conference on integrating refugees into the community	23 <sup>rd</sup> & 24 <sup>th</sup> June at Robinson College, Cambridge

If you are interested in any of the above courses please contact Patrick Adams on (01223) 443408 or [patrick.adams@scambs.gov.uk](mailto:patrick.adams@scambs.gov.uk)

## CABINET

At a meeting of the Cabinet held on  
5<sup>th</sup> June 2003 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT: Mrs DSK Spink Leader and Conservation Portfolio Holder  
RT Summerfield Deputy Leader and Finance and Resources Portfolio Holder

Councillors: Dr DR Bard Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder  
CC Barker Environmental Health Portfolio Holder  
JD Batchelor Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder  
RF Collinson Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder  
Mrs EM Heazell Housing Portfolio Holder  
Mrs DP Roberts Community Development Portfolio Holder

Councillors RE Barrett, RF Bryant, R Hall, Mrs SA Hatton, SGM Kindersley, EL Monks, Dr JPR Orme, Mrs GJ Smith and Mrs BE Waters were also in attendance, by invitation.

Apologies for absence were received from the Chief Executive and from the Planning Director.

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### Procedural Items

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#### 1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

##### 15<sup>th</sup> May 2003

Subject to the addition of Councillors RF Bryant and SGM Kindersley to the attendance list, the Leader was authorised to sign the minutes of the meeting held on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2003 as a correct record.

##### 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2003

Councillor Mrs EM Heazell asked that her comments in the discussion on the New Organisation Structure – Implementation (Minute 12) on the cost of LSVT should be included and it was **AGREED** that the following addition be made to the preamble:

“Councillor Mrs EM Heazell warned that, in the event of a non housing specialist being appointed to head the third operational directorate, should the question of an LSVT (Large Scale Voluntary Transfer) or ALMO (Arms Length Management Organisation) arise in future, substantial extra costs would be incurred by housing to employ a specialist for about two years in addition to the main ballot costs. The Chief Executive expected a ballot to cost around £500,000 including the essential employment of consultants.”

Councillor RT Summerfield, referring to the same Minute, pointed out that for the revised structure to take effect, the current post of Housing and Community Services Director would have to be made redundant. This was implicit in the minute but not specified. The minute was declared accurate by other members of Cabinet, and it was **AGREED** to defer discussion until the confidential session.

## 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following personal interests were declared:

Councillor JD Batchelor Item 3 (Linton Community Sports Centre), as a governor of Linton Village College.

Councillor RT Summerfield Item 3 (Linton Community Sports Centre) as the Business Plan made reference to Cambridge United Football Club, of which he is a director.

Councillor RF Collinson Item 7 (Equity Share Schemes for the Elderly), as he had been a member of the Equity Share Advisory Group prior to his appointment to Cabinet.

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### Decisions made by Cabinet and reported for information

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## 3. LINTON COMMUNITY SPORTS CENTRE: DUAL-USE CAPITAL GRANT

Mr Clive Bush, Principal of Linton Village College, gave a presentation supporting the Business Plan and architectural drawings. Usage of the sports centre had grown steadily since 1992, and the continued assistance of the Council would allow this growth to continue. Mr Bush explained that the pitches and all-weather surface had become worn, the changing rooms were in a dilapidated condition and were too small for the number of visitors and the fitness facilities were over-crowded.

Linton Village College was seeking a further grant of £279,500 from SCDC, to be used towards expansion and improvements to the Community Sports Centre. This grant would bring the contribution of the District Council to £300,000. The proposed expansion, which aimed to make the Sports Centre a centre of excellence for South Cambridgeshire, would include:

- a full size artificial turf pitch with floodlighting, fencing and gates;
- refurbishment of existing changing areas used by the community to increase the area and provide disabled access; and
- extension of the fitness suite to include a separate daytime entrance for the community, air conditioning, and small changing rooms which could also be used by referees.

Questions were raised about the inclusion of a separate entrance close to the current entrance. It was clarified that the usage of the fitness centre during the day, both by members of the community and students from the Village College, would sustain two entrances, although only one entrance would be used during the evenings. The separate entrances would also address child protection issues by keeping separate the child and adult changing facilities.

The local members for Linton, Councillors JD Batchelor and Mrs GJ Smith, both gave their support to the proposal, noting the enormous contribution the Sports Centre had made to residents. Councillors RE Barrett and Dr JPR Orme, as members for adjacent villages, also commended the proposal and its accessibility to all sections of the community.

The Community Development Portfolio Holder commended the scheme and spoke of the enthusiasm of the principals of all the Village Colleges for developing schemes to benefit their local communities. She also added her congratulations to the Sports Development Officer for her work on this proposal. Councillor Mrs Roberts also

confirmed that budget provision was available and noted that, contrary to the report, no VAT was involved.

In answer to a query about funding from Linton Parish Council, Councillor Batchelor, a member of the Parish Council, explained that the £1,000 was initial funding for the scheme and that the financial support of the Parish Council would be on-going. He added that Linton Parish Council already supported other schemes at the Sports Centre.

Cabinet, with one abstention,

**AGREED** to award a grant of £279,500 to Linton Village College towards expansion and improvements at the Community Sports Centre, subject to the completion of a dual use service level agreement.

#### **4. DRAFT BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE PLAN 2003/04 TO 2005/06**

The Policy and Performance Review Manager explained that the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) had to be published by 30<sup>th</sup> June, including financial and performance information from the year just ended. Portfolio Holders were asked to forward their service priorities to him as soon as possible for inclusion. These would be forwarded to all Cabinet to show the cumulative impact on the BVPP.

The Scrutiny Committee had considered the BVPP in detail and their comments were circulated. They had highlighted several performance indicators where targets had not been met, and expressed their concern that in some of these cases the targets for the coming year were higher still. The Committee had asked Portfolio Holders and senior officers to consider whether the targets being set were realistic.

Cabinet **AGREED**

- that the Scrutiny Committee comments on targets be reviewed with Portfolio Holders;
- to approve the BVPP for publication, including the approach to future Best Value reviews outlined in paragraph 12 and with the inclusion of reviewed targets and priorities for Portfolio Holders; and
- to authorise Cllr RT Summerfield (Portfolio Holder for Resources and Staffing, with responsibility for service continuous improvement) to approve the final detailed wording of the Plan.

#### **5. SERAS, AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT IN THE SOUTH-EAST AND EAST OF ENGLAND, REVISED CONSULTATION BY THE GOVERNMENT**

Cabinet had previously considered this item in November 2002. A successful High Court challenge by Kent County Council had since led to the inclusion of Gatwick and thus further consultation was required. The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder emphasised that the main issue for this authority remained Stansted Airport expansion, which would put significant development pressure on this district. The SERAS study was limited to the South East and did not consider the possibility of development elsewhere, such as the North, which could provide suitable locations for transfer hub facilities, although it was noted that there had been separate consultations for each of the other regions. The study neither made much reference to the fact that flight was the least energy efficient form of travel, nor suggested moving internal flights to surface transport such as high-speed rail.

Contrary to recent reports on local radio, this authority was not putting pressure on Marshall Aerospace to move from Cambridge. Councillor Dr Bard added that the Council would consider development on the Cambridge Airport site only if Marshall Aerospace wished to relocate and was able to do so. Some disappointment was expressed at the prospect of development on the airfield site, but it was confirmed

that this was already the Council's long term policy. It was again emphasised that the comments listed were responses to Government consultation and that the location of Marshall Aerospace was a matter for the company and, in view of the apparent misinterpretation of the comments, agreed that reference to the company in relation to Alconbury should be deleted.

It was felt that the paper had been based on the assumption of unrestricted growth in air travel. The references to environmental costs were queried and it was confirmed that these references were to local, rather than global, environmental costs. Cabinet members felt that comments on environmental impact should be at the beginning of their response to emphasise their importance.

Concern was expressed about the impact of the Alconbury option put forward in SERAS which, if it included facilities for a national budget carrier and commercial air freight, could have an adverse impact on the Cambridge Sub-Region especially in terms of road traffic and night flying. Councillor Dr Bard explained that the response of this authority was that Alconbury should not become a freight facility, nor should it be expanded beyond the size of a regional facility. Greater emphasis could be given to this point.

Councillor SGM Kindersley asked for the addition of a reference to the Luton-Dunstable bypass in the response to the government on Luton airport, noting that the Council had supported its construction.

Cabinet **AGREED** to make the following comments to the Department for Transport, the final revised wording of the response to be agreed with the Leader and the Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder:

- (a) Government should consider environmental impacts and tax fuel properly to reflect the true cost, which would manage future demand in a way consistent with Government objectives on sustainable transport.
- (b) Government should take into account the findings contained within the consultation document 'Aviation and the Environment' and the results of the public consultation, which may reduce demand for air travel by 10%.
- (c) Object to major additional capacity at Stansted, which would impact on carefully planned strategy in RPG/Structure Plan and have serious implications of noise, urbanisation, development pressures and traffic implications.
- (d) If the Government proposes significant additional capacity at Stansted it is essential that RPG14 acknowledge that any resultant development pressures for housing be accommodated close to the airport and not jeopardise the agreed strategy for the Cambridge Sub-Region.
- (e) There would be significant advantages, in terms of regeneration, in giving priority to the development of regional airports outside the South East. Manchester in particular has the potential to develop further as a hub airport. Whilst it is accepted that this could not totally substitute for additional capacity in the South East, it would reduce the overall additional capacity needed in the south-east with there being less environmental problems as a result.
- (f) Support the maximisation of existing runway capacity, at least in the short-term.
- (g) Support further expansion of Luton because of its employment regeneration opportunities and the ability to support additional support housing, subject to the Luton-Dunstable bypass being in place.
- (h) Support the development of one new runway at Gatwick (close parallel) after 2019 as the impacts are considerably less than other options, whilst delivering considerable regeneration benefits.
- (i) If major capacity has to be provided in the South East, then Cliffe (or an alternative Thames Estuary site) offers the best opportunity to develop an

international hub airport with significant opportunities for regeneration in the Thames Gateway.

- (j) Government should consider offshore airport proposals submitted to ministers for sites in the Thames and Severn Estuaries.
- (k) Support the development of regional air facilities at the Alconbury site subject to the A14 improvements being in place and subject to further feasibility and transport studies. The priority for Alconbury should be the potential to develop an aerospace business cluster together with a regional airport instead of a small national budget carrier or freight facility, which would serve national rather than sub-regional needs.
- (l) Support there being little scope for further development at Cambridge Airport and that, subject to Marshall Aerospace wishing to find an acceptable alternative location, this presents a long-term opportunity for the urban expansion of Cambridge.

## **6. NEW HOUSING IMPROVEMENT GRANT POLICY**

The Housing Portfolio Holder outlined the proposals for a new Improvements Grants policy, highlighting the need for a new policy before the repeal of existing legislation on 18th July 2003 and other salient points of the report. She expressed her reservations about the suggestion of assistance for respite care and emphasised her belief that additional staff would have to be considered.

The Assistant Director Community Services reported, as a matter likely to impact on the workload of the Home Improvement Agency Team, the revised targets for the Occupational Therapy service. There had, for some time, been a waiting list for assessment of 16 months and the number of referrals was rising. The new targets were to reduce the waiting time to 5 months by October 2004 and 3 months by March 2005.

He also reported the comments of Age Concern, who were keen for small works which might aid safety to be supported; pointed out that many elderly people were just outside means testing limits; and would like to be part of any future review of policy. Mr McIntosh added that the current proposals would be appropriate for the next 12 months, but that the private house condition survey results would then need to feed into a thorough review.

Reservations were expressed about the proposals for interest free loans for owner-occupiers and landlords and Councillor RT Summerfield queried whether repayment could be linked to the increase in value of the property at the time of sale. It was also suggested that some form of indexing might be applied to the repayment of other loans. The manner in which repayment of loans could be ensured was also discussed and it was noted that the intention was to register the loans as a charge against the property in the Local Land Charges Register. It was not possible to make a registration with the Land Registry.

In answer to queries, Mr McIntosh advised that the proposed loans would replace grants given under current legislation, as Council had indicated a preference for loans; means testing would be retained where it already existed and that assessment for relocation grants would have to be made case by case. It was expected that the budget would be fully used, but the timing of the effect of the new legislation and the revised OT target was unknown.

Officers were asked to make energy efficiency a priority and included in any assessment of grant applications and to investigate working with the utilities in this field.

There were continuing reservations about proposals for renovation loans for owner-occupiers and landlords, and it was

**RESOLVED**

(a) that the following grants and loans be approved for introduction on 19th July 2003, subject to the conditions outlined in the report:

Disabled Facilities	grant up to £25,000 zero interest loan above £25,000
Home Repairs Assistance	grants up to £5,000 max within 3 year period
Relocation grant	grant up to £5,000 for removal costs to move to a more suitable home
Returning home	“fast-track” grant up to £2,000 for adaptations

(b) that proposals for loans to owner-occupiers and landlords to bring homes up to standard to meet current legislation be deferred for further investigation.

**7. EQUITY SHARE SCHEMES FOR THE ELDERLY**

Councillor RF Collinson confirmed that he considered it inappropriate for him to take part in any Cabinet decision as he had been a member of the Advisory Group investigating this issue, and would therefore not speak or vote.

The Housing Portfolio Holder thanked Councillor Monks and the Equity Share Advisory Group and the officers concerned for their successful work on a difficult problem.

Councillor Monks, as Chairman of the Advisory Group, introduced the report of the Group, noting that investigations had brought out that some tenants were subsidising leaseholders in equity share properties. He then offered to answer questions.

In discussion it was suggested that the Council's generous provisions might have affected the market for similar properties in the private sector. Sudden withdrawal from equity share would not, however, be financially viable, although higher charges might cause a natural lessening of the Council's role. Written confirmation had been received from the Government that proceeds from equity share sales would remain exempt from the pooling arrangements for capital receipts, expected to be introduced from April 2004.

The additional administrative costs of keeping separate records for each sheltered housing scheme and the possibility of different charges at different schemes in the same village were raised. In explanation, the Housing and Community Services Director reported that the law did not allow one overall charge to be made as leaseholders had the right to challenge them on a block by block basis. When the equity share scheme was first introduced, the decision had been made to set the charges so low that there would be no challenge, but there were now so many leaseholders that it was essential to pass on the full cost of the warden and other special services. The Director confirmed that his staff already maintained some records of costs on a scheme by scheme basis.

It was emphasised that the proposals would rectify the situation of ordinary tenants subsidising leaseholders and Members asked that this aspect should be emphasised in contact with those affected. It was also suggested that meetings should be used to explain the decision and that care be taken that the burden of explanation did not fall on the scheme managers.

**RESOLVED**

(a) that the Equity Share system continue;



- (b) that all new Equity Share leaseholders be charged the proportionate share of the full costs of sheltered housing special services at the relevant development;
- (c) that existing Equity Share Leaseholders: pay an extra £2 per week with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2004, to be increased annually until the full cost is reached; the new charging procedure to be reviewed after 5 years;
- (d) that the age limits for the system remain unchanged;
- (e) that the Housing and Community Services Director ensure that from April 2003 all Equity Share leaseholders be required to prove their heating boiler has been serviced by a registered heating engineer;
- (f) that a resume of the impact of the new system be presented to Cabinet.

**8. UNCOMMITTED GRANT BALANCES AND OTHER EARMARKED RESERVE BALANCES OVER TWO YEARS OLD AT 31ST MARCH 2003**

The Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder reported on the uncommitted earmarked balances over two years old, commenting that the sums were much reduced from a few years previously. The reasons for requesting that the various sums be carried forward were noted, and Cabinet

**RESOLVED** that the following uncommitted reserve balances over two years old be carried forward into the 2003/04 financial year:

Dual Use capital grants	£1,074,395
Heritage Initiatives grants	£64,300
Historic Buildings Preservation Fund	£174,842
Enforcement of unauthorised developments	£59,675
Hired and contracted Legal Services	£104,687
Car parks (capital)	£33,000

**9. SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder commended the Strategy, which had been in preparation for some time. In response to concerns about supporting the EEDA target of being a top 20 European Region (suggested by a consultee), Councillor Bard reported that this was no longer an absolute priority and that the Strategy tried to resist excessive economic development in the Cambridge area.

Noting the consultations undertaken and the amendments made to the original draft Strategy, Cabinet

**RESOLVED** that the Economic Development Strategy dated June 2003 be adopted.

**10. PLANNING DELIVERY GRANT**

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder outlined the possible uses of the Planning Delivery Grant of £116,667 for 2003/04 received from the Government to facilitate the delivery of planning issues important to it. Grants would be available in future years subject to meeting criteria on improved performance. All the projects were already planned, but could be brought forward.

The quality of plans available for the Development and Conservation Control Committee was raised and concern expressed if the public were expected to make decisions themselves on the basis of inadequate plans available electronically, rather than by personal contact.

All the projects were thought to be worthwhile, but the strategic flood risk assessment appeared to be at possible risk of deferment on the sequence listed and was believed to have the potential for greater direct effect on residents than some of the others. Cabinet consequently

**RESOLVED**

- (a) that scheme A (informals), B (the Planning Portal) combined with scheme C (electronic plotting), and scheme F (strategic flood risk assessment) be implemented immediately;
- (b) that the Planning Portfolio Holder, the Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder, the Chief Executive and the Planning Director be authorised to buy schemes D (data capture and DIPS A0 scanner) and E (Local Plan sustainability appraisal) in that order as the exact costs of the schemes emerge and the financial capacity can be assessed.

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**Standing Items**

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**11. MATTERS REFERRED BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Committee had considered the Cabinet decision of 8th May 2003 on contaminated land at Hauxton, which had been called-in, and had agreed with that decision.

**12. RE-LOCATION OF OFFICES TO CAMBOURNE**

The New Offices Working Group would be meeting that afternoon.

**13. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL BY CONSULTANTS**

All staff had been advised of Cabinet's decision on the pay review and much of the feedback was positive except where there were protected or capped salaries. The Finance and Resources Director had a meeting with the full time Unison representative the following morning, and that was to be followed by a Unison Branch meeting.

On the second part of the review, an agreed programme of work was being carried out in the Chief Executive's absence.

**14. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**RESOLVED** that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 11 and 1 respectively of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

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**Confidential Items**

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**15. NEW REFUSE / RECYCLING COLLECTION SERVICE – ADDITIONAL OPERATIVES**

Cabinet considered the request for additional refuse/recycling collections service operatives, noting that the financial implications had already been agreed, and

**AUTHORISED** the addition to the establishment of the Commercial Department from the current financial year of

Four HGV Drivers spinal column points 13 to 20 (new scheme)  
Seven Loaders spinal column points 2 to 8 (new scheme)

**16. MINUTES OF MEETING OF 22ND MAY 2003**

The Housing and Community Services Director and other lead officers left the meeting.

Cabinet resumed the deferred discussion from Minute 1 and it was noted that, in order for the new structure to be put in place, the redundancy of the post of Housing and Community Services Director must follow the decisions made at the last meeting. Members considered whether the Minutes should be amended but, other than the addition recorded at Minute 1 above and that noted below, concluded that the Minute accurately recorded what was said and authorised the Leader to sign the Minutes of the meeting of the 22<sup>nd</sup> May 2003 as a correct record.

Paragraph (d) of the resolution was **AMENDED**, the first phrase to read “that the third post, of....”

It was recognised that the potential redundancy was implicit in the decisions of the last meeting and Cabinet considered whether a resolution to that effect could be passed at this meeting. On legal advice the resolution to this effect will be put to the next Cabinet.

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**The meeting closed at 1.05 p.m.**

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## **DECISIONS MADE BY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

### **Decision Made By Environmental Health Portfolio Holder**

Subject	Decision	Reason
Materials for Inclusion in Green Bin Collection Scheme	To exclude meat and other animal products from the materials to be collected for composting as part of the new Green Bin collection service until such time as the composting facility is approved by the State Veterinary Service.	Excluding such material will enable all material collected for composting to be included in the Council's recycling performance immediately without having to wait for the composting facility to be approved by the State Veterinary Service.

### **Decision Made By Planning & Economic Development Portfolio Holder**

Subject	Decision	Reason
Cycleways Budget for 2003/04	To carry forward £121,248 to 2003/04 budget. Assuming a commitment of £113,050 for 2002/03.	The cycleways programme has been implemented slower than expected, largely due to delays in consultation.

### **Decision Made By Conservation Portfolio Holder**

Subject	Decision	Reason
War Memorials Budget for 2003/04	To carry forward £8,500 to 2003/4 budget	To facilitate launch of this new grant programme and schemes under development.

## **GENERAL INFORMATION ITEMS**

### **Call-In Arrangements**

The Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee or any five other Councillors may call in any executive decision recorded in this bulletin for review. The Committee Manager must be notified of any call in by **Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2003 at 5pm**. All decisions not called in by this date may be implemented on **Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> June 2003**.

*Any member considering calling in a decision made by Cabinet is requested to contact the Committee 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 Committee Procedure Rules', paragraph 12.