



SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL COUNCILLORS' BULLETIN – ISSUE DATE 6th AUGUST 2003

CONTENTS

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR COUNCILLORS

1. Forthcoming Committee Meetings

WASTE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

- Minutes of 31st July 2003

CABINET 31ST JULY 2003

Recommendations to Council

3. Cost Centre Update

Decisions Made By Cabinet

4. Homelessness Strategy
5. District-Wide Housing Needs Survey
6. Policy Options for Airey Properties: Update
7. Orwell – Land Off Town Green Road
8. Elsworth – Sale of Council Land Off Fardells Lane To Elsworth Parish Council For Amenity Purposes
9. Member Steering Group For The New Town
10. Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy
11. Travellers' Consultative Group – Terms of Reference
12. Disabled Facilities Grants

DECISIONS MADE BY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER

1. Awarding a Community Services Grant of £11,300 to Cambridgeshire ACRE
2. Awarding £4,500 to the Community Safety Partnership Pooled Fund

DECISIONS MADE BY ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PORTFOLIO HOLDER

1. To Replace Stolen Wheelied Bins Free of Charge

INFORMATION ITEMS

1. Historic Building Grants Awarded by Conservation Manager:
 - £225 for Re-Thatching Wheat Reed Thatched Roof at **Great Abington**
 - £1775 for Re-Thatching Longstraw Thatched Roof at **Guilden Morden**
 - £803 for Relaying Floor of Pump Shelter at **West Wratting**
 - £1365 for Re-Thatching Longstraw Thatched Roof at **West Wratting**
 - £694 for Repair of Flint Blundary Wall at **Duxford**
2. Grant Time Extensions Agreed by Conservation Manager:
 - 8 Month Extension for Window Replacement at **Horningsea**
3. Grant Monies Returned to Fund Agreed by Conservation Manager:
 - £734.17 Returned Due to Sale of Property at **Melbourn**
4. Call-in Arrangements

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR COUNCILLORS



COMMITTEE MEETINGS

FROM 11th AUGUST – 15th AUGUST 2003



NO MEETINGS

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

WASTE MANAGEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

Minutes of a meeting of the Waste Management Advisory Group held on
Thursday 31st July 2003 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT: Councillor DALG Wherrell (Chairman)
Councillor NJ Scarr (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor CC Barker (Portfolio Holder)
Councillor JP Chatfield
Councillor Dr SA Harangozo
Councillor DJ Regan
Councillor WH Saberton
Councillor Mrs GJ Smith

Councillors R Hall, Mrs CAED Murfitt, Mrs DP Roberts, Mrs DSK Spink and Mrs LM Sutherland were in attendance, by invitation.

Also in attendance were the Chief Environmental Health Officer, the Recycling and Waste Minimisation Officer, the Environment Services Officer and Mr Bernard Warr, Waste Strategy Co-ordinator, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Joint Waste Partnership.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

On the nomination of Councillor CC Barker, seconded by Councillor JP Chatfield, and there being no further nominations, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor DALG Wherrell be re-elected Chairman.

2. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

On the nomination of Councillor CC Barker, seconded by Councillor WH Saberton, and there being no further nominations, it was **RESOLVED** that Councillor NJ Scarr be re-appointed Vice-Chairman.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

4. TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF THE ADVISORY GROUP

Cabinet had asked the Group to determine whether it would be appropriate to raise the Group membership from seven to nine. The Chairman commended the suggestion as it offered an opportunity for backbenchers to become involved.

The Waste Management Advisory Group **AGREED** to increase the membership from seven to nine and asked the Cabinet to appoint two new members from the list of those interested in joining.

5. MINUTES AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 9th May 2003 were confirmed as a correct record.

The following matters were discussed briefly:

- It was confirmed that residents would be able to use sacks in the black bins, although some residents appeared unaware this was acceptable. Residents would have to purchase sacks to use in their black bins; and

- The bins would have explanatory stickers for what could go in each bin similar to that in the *South Cambs Magazine* pull out section and the raised dots on the bin lids to allow the visually impaired to distinguish between the two.

6. NEW INTEGRATED WASTE MANAGEMENT SERVICE – PROPERTIES TO REMAIN ON SACKS

The Advisory Group, at its meeting of 11th February 2003, had recommended a policy with regard to those properties which were to remain on a sack-based collection system. It was necessary, therefore, for collection operatives to be able to identify those properties through the provision of white plastic and paper sacks bearing the SCDC logo, easily distinguishable from store-bought sacks. Only sacks with the SCDC logo would be collected. The Chief Environmental Health Officer (CEHO) explained that households remaining on a sack-based collection would be supplied with a set number of sacks each year, with the opportunity to purchase more as required, in the same manner that households on the bin collection could purchase an additional bin. Anyone purchasing new sacks would have their address checked against a list of properties remaining on the sack-based collection.

Sacks would be provided on a replacement basis, up to a maximum of two plastic sacks per week (104 per year) and three paper sacks per week (156 per year). Households currently receive 60 black sacks per year. Residents could also request to have fewer sacks, for instance people in flats might not need a large number of paper sacks for garden waste. The Advisory Group was asked to consider how many sacks should be distributed to each household annually and the cost for purchasing additional sacks.

The Advisory Group considered the options and made the following points:

- The overall cost of the policy was dependent on the number of households remaining on sack-based collection. Officers had done comprehensive research and visits to all the villages to identify properties to remain on a sack-based collection. Parish Councils had also been contacted to report any such properties, although in this regard few replies had been received;
- It was estimated about 900 properties would remain on the sack-based collection, although this number could rise to approximately 1,000 once bin collections had begun. These numbers were still within the scheme parameters as planned for originally;
- There was some confusion between households remaining on a sack-based collection and those receiving an assisted bin collection. Officers already had a list of properties requiring assisted collections and would add to it as necessary;
- The policy regarding waste collection at church halls, village halls, bowling clubs and similar would be reviewed at a future date. Under the Controlled Waste Regulations 1992, waste from some village halls was designated “prescribed” and some “commercial”, both of which had an effect on waste collection costs, with the former paying for collection and the latter for both collection and disposal. The Council would continue to honour its current collection agreements for these establishments and would be contacting all village halls to ascertain their current collection arrangements;
- Grass clippings from village cemeteries fell under different collection arrangements depending on whether the cemetery were public or private, open or closed. The owner of a cemetery was responsible for ensuring rubbish was disposed of;

- Charges for additional sacks should be inclusive of VAT to reduce confusion. Collection operatives could deliver additional sacks during their regular rounds or residents could come to any Council office or the Depot to collect them. At present only cash or cheque could be accepted, but a corporate policy on using credit and Switch cards was being developed. Families on benefits or income support would qualify for free additional sacks;
- Every household to remain on a sack-based collection would be written to in the coming weeks; and
- All collection schedules were available on a database, which could be accessed through the Cambridgeshire Direct Contact Centre. This database would shortly be available through the SCDC website once personal details had been removed, in compliance with the Data Protection Act 1992. Residents would be able to enter their postcode and retrieve information about collection dates, whether a property was on a sack or bin collection and whether or not they would receive an assisted collection. SCDC could print the Information for a particular parish in a group, although information for the entire district would run to more than 8,000 pages.

The Advisory Group queried the weekly replacement of sacks. The proposals aimed to prevent people from either wasting sacks or having to store large numbers of unneeded sacks, and to remove the cost of a district-wide delivery, as collection operatives could make the replacement during their regular rounds. A similar replacement scheme was run in East Cambridgeshire and King's Lynn. Members proposed that a set number of sacks be delivered each week to each household, and residents would be free to advise if they wished for fewer sacks.

The Waste Management Advisory Group **RECOMMENDED TO CABINET** that:

- (a) For those households on the sack collection list, 104 plastic sacks per year be provided free of charge for residential waste and 156 paper sacks for green waste and cardboard;
- (b) Households on the sack collection database could purchase additional plastic sacks at £2.35 per roll of 30 collected or £3.50 delivered (charges inclusive of VAT);
- (c) Households on the sack collection database could purchase additional paper sacks at £1.75 per bundle of 10 collected or £2.35 delivered (charges inclusive of VAT); and
- (d) Households on the sack collection database who demonstrated that they were also on housing benefit, Council Tax benefit and/or income support could receive additional sacks free of charge by quoting their benefit number.

7. INTEGRATED RECYCLING AND REFUSE COLLECTION SERVICE: STOLEN BIN POLICY

The Waste Management Advisory Group, at its meeting on 11th February 2003, had recommended that a charge of £25 plus VAT should be made for any wheeled bins that were reported as lost, damaged or stolen. Following feedback from the public and consultation with other local authorities, this policy was returned to the Advisory Group for further consideration. The current policy had been adopted to prevent spurious claims being used as a means of obtaining additional bins. The new policy recommended asking claimants to quote their incident report number given by the police once their bin had been reported stolen. Other authorities had adopted a similar policy and did not report any difficulties with it.

Householders would still be charged £25 plus VAT for damaged bins unless the damage were caused by Council operatives. Deliberate damage to bins would be easily identifiable and Mr Warr cautioned that bins could be damaged if householders

used them to move rubble around their properties. Lost bins would be considered on a case-by-case basis.

The Advisory Group **RECOMMENDED TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH PORTFOLIO HOLDER** that the current policy in relation to stolen bins be amended as follows:

“Householders whose bins are stolen and who have reported the theft to the Police, obtaining an incident report number, are provided with a replacement bin at no charge to the householder.”

8. INTEGRATED RECYCLING AND REFUSE COLLECTION SERVICE: VERBAL UPDATE

The CEHO commended officers for their work regarding the new collection schedules and bin deliveries, noting that it was an exceptionally difficult task done extremely well. He encouraged members to provide officers with as much local information as possible, as early as possible, to help prevent difficulties or problems arising.

Bins – General

All the black bins and 27,000 green bins had arrived earlier than anticipated. The remainder of the green bins would arrive as deliveries to households began. The bins were of good quality and had a good contrast of colours. There had been an error in the bin dimensions published in *South Cambs Magazine*: the width and breadth had been reversed. The dimensions had been quoted directly from the manufacturer’s literature, which had been incorrect.

Bins – Numbers

Every bin would have a unique serial number clearly printed on the top and which could not be removed. Residents would be able to identify their own bin using the serial number rather than having to paint their house number on the side. Operatives would return each bin to the point where it was collected, so residents would receive their own bins back if it were collected from the front of their property, or could identify and retrieve their own bin if they had taken it to a common collection point.

The delivery company should record the bin serial numbers and properties to which they belonged at the time of delivery. This register could be used to identify abandoned or stolen bins.

Deliveries and Additional Bins

Deliveries to households would begin on 18th August and continue over a 14-week period, which included a 2-week contingency if deliveries fell behind schedule. The bins would be delivered approximately 2-3 weeks before the first collection. The Advisory Group would need to reconsider the supply and delivery of the smaller kitchen bins once the animal by-products issue had been resolved.

Residents would be asked to use the 240L bin at first, but it could be exchanged for a smaller bin if required. Additional bins would not be available to residents until the scheme had started in their area.

Collections

It was possible some people were still unaware of the scheme and the October issue of *South Cambs Magazine* would re-print the new collection dates. Officers were considering placing copies of the collection schedule under the lids of bins at the time

of delivery so it would be guaranteed that each household had a copy. The CEHO agreed to explore other opportunities for publishing the calendar through free weekly newspapers and distributing village-specific schedules to Parish Councils and sheltered schemes. Councillor Mrs LM Sutherland commended the four officers who were steering the scheme for doing a sterling job and suggested that elected members be used to broadcast the new collection dates.

The new collection days would begin in the first week of August and had been well publicised in local papers and *South Cambs Magazine*, which went to every household in the district. Bright yellow signs had been erected in parishes to draw attention to the day changes.

Operatives would be receiving health and safety training. Slightly different collection lorries would be used for the first few weeks until the regular vehicles were delivered. The delay in receiving the regular vehicles had been due to a chassis difference regarding weight distribution.

A report on the negotiations with the green box collection contractor would be brought to a future meeting of the Advisory Group.

Roadshows

The EHO (Promotions and Campaigns) had written to all Parish Councils offering roadshows to address residents' questions and concerns. Some Parish Councils had refused the offer outright, so Council officers were searching for venues near those parishes to ensure all villagers would have the opportunity to attend. Members were concerned about those Parish Councils which had refused the offer of a roadshow, which could lead residents to assume that the District Council was not informing the public about the new scheme. The EHO (Promotions and Campaigns) would write to the local members for those parishes concerned.

Roadshows would begin in September / October and would be prioritised to match the bin delivery schedule. The EHO (Promotions and Campaigns) would contact the local members to inform them of the roadshows scheduled in their villages.

Animal By-Products Order

Donarbon had applied to the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for approval to process animal by-products at their composting facility. The State Veterinary Service was required to investigate facilities within one month of receiving the application. Although Donarbon had requested application forms early on in the development of the new integrated recycling and refuse collection service, DEFRA had not sent the forms promptly. Mr Warr confirmed that the necessary composting technology was already being installed at Donarbon, so all that remained was for approval to be granted. Members expressed disappointment at the delay and noted that much of the opposition to the scheme stemmed from concern about disposal of catering waste. It was hoped that the collection of catering waste, including animal by-products, would begin in the New Year. The last bin deliveries would be approximately one month before this time.

Alternate Arrangements

A resident had asked if it were possible to use only one black bin and return the green bin. It was felt that using one bin for both refuse and recycling collection would be inappropriate. Members noted that the point of the scheme was to separate waste from recyclable and compostable materials and emphasised the importance of all residents taking responsibility for the amount of waste they produced. Garden

waste, kitchen waste and cardboard already comprised 38% of the current waste stream in the black sacks.

Under current legislation, if a resident could demonstrate alternate arrangements, such as private composting, to the satisfaction of the CEHO, they would be permitted to return their green bin.

The meeting ended at 16.20

PORTFOLIO HOLDER'S DECISION

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Health **AGREED** that the current policy in relation to stolen bins be amended as follows:

“Householders whose bins are stolen and who have reported the theft to the Police, obtaining an incident report number, are provided with a replacement bin at no charge to the householder.”

CABINET

At a meeting of the Cabinet held on
31st July 2003 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT: Mrs DSK Spink Leader and Conservation Portfolio Holder
 RT Summerfield Deputy Leader and Resources and Staffing 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
 Mrs EM Heazell Housing Portfolio Holder
 Mrs DP Roberts Community Development Portfolio Holder

Councillors RF Bryant, R Hall, Mrs SA Hatton, Mrs J Hughes, SGM Kindersley, RJ Turner and Mrs BE Waters were also in attendance, by invitation.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor RF Collinson, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder, and from the Finance and Resources Director.

Procedural Items

1. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Leader was authorised to sign as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 17th July 2003.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following personal interest was declared:

Councillor RT Summerfield Item 3 (Contact Centre Update), as a former employee of Touche Ross, as Deloitte and Touche were providing maintenance and support for the eGain system.

Recommendation to Council

3. CONTACT CENTRE UPDATE

(Urgent item with the permission of the Leader)

Cabinet, at its meeting on 24th July, had asked for further details of the Contact Centre revenue funding requirements, which required that discussions be held with the Cambridgeshire County Council. The Assistant Finance and Resources Director (ICT) expressed his disappointment that costs had not been received from the County Council until May, despite District Council requests for them since January. Officers had initially believed major on-going revenue cost elements would be limited to software licence support and salary-related costs.

The Assistant Finance and Resources Director (ICT) explained the following:

- The additional Sx3 technology and software support costs represented this Council's share, not the total for the entire Contact Centre;

- Line rental costs had been calculated by the County Council based on an estimate of the volume of calls the District Council would generate. The Assistant Finance and Resources Director (ICT) would confirm the total number of lines *[following the meeting it was confirmed there would be thirty lines in and thirty lines out]*;
- Further cost reductions had been identified through the recent discussions with the County Council, including the managed service revenue cost, given as £60,000 in the report for Cabinet on 24th July and which was now £50,000. The Assistant Finance and Resources Director (ICT) expressed gratitude that the County Council had been willing to make reductions.

The Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder urged Cabinet to recommend to Council the additional revenue spend, emphasising the importance of the Contact Centre, which would add value to Council services, benefit ratepayers, and which was essential for meeting e-government requirements and the IEG statement.

The Chief Executive reminded members that central government obliged all local authorities to pursue e-government and that a partnership approach with the County Council and other Cambridgeshire authorities was less expensive and more “joined-up” than pursuing a separate solution. He confirmed that Huntingdonshire District Council would be joining the Contact Centre by linking electronically to the St Ives location. There was also broad interest from the other Cambridgeshire authorities in the Contact Centre approach.

A call monitoring programme – “mystery shopping” – was being undertaken on the Wheeled Bin Hotline, which was the first District Council service to be handled by the Contact Centre and which was introduced in early July. The Chief Environmental Health Officer felt that the service had been a success, with some exceptions which were being dealt with internally. The Assistant Finance and Resources Director (ICT) explained that a deliberate decision had been made that, in the short term, information would be forwarded to Environmental Health officers via e-mail rather than a physical transfer of calls. In the long term calls would be transferred to the back office when the matter required officer expertise. Service Level Agreements would be established regarding issues such as call response time, the availability of District Council staff to take calls relating to this authority, and the number of calls transferred and dealt with within a set period.

There were suggestions that the Scrutiny Committee could consider investigating future developments of the Contact Centre, particularly if the overhead costs for this Council did not reduce when other authorities joined the partnership.

Cabinet, with five in favour and one against,

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

that, for the Contact Centre, an additional £40,000 revenue spend in 2003/4 and £110,000 in the base budget from 2004/5 onwards be approved.

Decisions made by the Cabinet and reported for information

4. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

The Housing Portfolio Holder introduced the Homelessness Strategy, publication of which was a condition attached to the Homelessness Directorate grant of £20,000

the District Council had received for 2003/04. The Homelessness Act 2002 required local authorities to publish a new homelessness strategy based on results of further homelessness reviews at least every five years. Thorough consultation with internal and external stakeholders had been conducted during the development of the Strategy. The Housing Portfolio Holder commended the Strategy to Cabinet. The Housing and Community Services Director reported that this Council's Strategy had been rated highly by Shelter when compared to other local authorities in the Eastern Region.

The Acting Assistant Director of Housing Development and Strategic Services noted that a section of the Strategy reported on the causes of homelessness and aimed to reduce the number of parental evictions, which was one of the main causes of homelessness in South Cambridgeshire.

Cabinet **APPROVED** the Homelessness Strategy and commended officers for their work.

5. DISTRICT-WIDE HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY

The Housing Portfolio Holder introduced the survey, which had been commissioned jointly with Cambridge City Council to assess the housing needs in the respective districts, and commended it to Cabinet. She noted that, while it had not been possible to show housing need by village, the survey did show need in 25 identified sub-areas comprised of groups of parishes. A demonstration of need was required for government funding and the survey results would help dictate future housing policy. The consultants, Fordham Research Services, would provide the survey data in order to facilitate regular updates for the duration of the contract. Copies of the survey would be available for free download from the Council website, or could be purchased for the cost of copying and postage. The additional work referred to in the report had been carried out between the first draft and the finalised survey.

The Principal Planning Policy Officer (Housing) explained that Local Plan 2 had been based on housing need statistics from 1998, resulting in a 30% affordable housing requirement. The new survey, which recommends an affordable housing target of 50%, would be very important in the new Local Development Framework and it was hoped that a draft housing chapter would be completed in the autumn. Approving the report would mean accepting a body of work from the consultants, but did not imply endorsement of the recommendations it contained.

Members commended the key worker chapter and the range of people it included and Cabinet

APPROVED the final report on the district-wide housing needs survey carried out by Fordham Research Services.

6. POLICY OPTIONS FOR AIREY PROPERTIES: UPDATE

The Housing Portfolio Holder, referring to the previous Cabinet decision for redevelopment of Airey properties at Great Abington, explained that Airey properties in six other villages were in need of similar consideration. A full consultation process had been carried out with affected tenants and private residents, Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and Local Members, with a variety of responses received. No pressure had been put on any respondents during the consultation and residents had been assured that the District Council had no desire to insist residents move from their current house if they did not wish to do so. She emphasised that these responses were the result of initial consultation.

The Housing Portfolio Holder noted the high cost per property and amount of refurbishment required to meet the Decent Homes Standard if redevelopment were not pursued. She highlighted that, given the current government proposals for national pooling of capital receipts, refurbishment of all Airey properties could severely impact on resources available to meet the Decent Homes Standard and to finance other capital priorities. Properties in Whitton Close, Swavesey had already been identified as being in more urgent need of redevelopment and the Guinness Trust had been asked to consider a scheme. It had been made clear to the Guinness Trust that the RSL bid submissions had been for the remaining sites excluding Swavesey.

The Acting Assistant Director of Housing Development and Strategic Services confirmed that the budget for 2003/04 should cover the removals costs and home loss payments likely to take place in the year, noting that there would be a limited number of moves per year as this would be dependent on suitable vacancies arising in preferred areas. Councillor Mrs DP Roberts queried whether the properties could be sold to the residents and, if necessary, whether the price could be lowered sufficiently to allow them to buy. It was explained that there had not been any interest in Right to Buy (RTB) expressed during the consultation. The Housing and Community Services Director explained that the properties were a public asset and their price could not be dropped.

The proposal to apply for an outline planning application to preclude tenants from exercising their Right to Buy was to protect the Council housing stock at change of tenancy. There was a need to retain the properties under Council ownership to continue to provide much-needed housing in the area.

Councillor Mrs J Hughes, local member for Coton, where the majority of respondents had opposed redevelopment, explained that the residents had strong village ties and preferred the larger rooms in the Airey houses. The Housing Portfolio Holder emphasised that residents were not being asked to leave the village on a permanent basis and noted that, of the families from Great Abington whose properties were redeveloped, housing for all but one had been found in that village. The remaining family had asked to be removed to a different village, having already planned to move there before the redevelopment scheme had been proposed.

Cabinet **AGREED** to:

- (a) Give reassurance that no pressure has or will be put on any council tenants or owner-occupiers of the properties identified for redevelopment to relocate from their present homes;
- (b) Confirm the decision to pursue the redevelopment option in respect of the sites at Coton, Elsworth, Girton, Sawston, Swavesey and Teversham;
- (c) Authorise officers to proceed with the selection of an RSL that the Council would prefer to work with on the re-development of all the remaining Airey sites in consultation with affected tenants and owner-occupiers and Local Members; and
- (d) Authorise officers to apply for an outline planning application to preclude tenants from exercising their Right to Buy on those sites where re-development would happen at some time in the future.

7. ORWELL – LAND OFF TOWN GREEN ROAD

The Housing Portfolio Holder introduced the report, which considered two adjacent areas of Council-owned land off Town Green Road, Orwell. The Housing Portfolio Holder recommended development of Area A as a “pocket park”, which had strong local support. She explained that further housing development in Orwell was not being ruled out, but that there was local opposition to housing at Area A, which did

not have any short-term affordable housing potential. The Deputy Planning Director felt that it was sensible to retain the land in Council ownership and keep it as an open space.

Councillor RF Bryant, local member for Orwell, reported that the “strong local support” referred to in the report had been based on a petition signed by only 20% of residents. It was his opinion that the Council should retain ownership of the land, given the long waiting list for affordable housing in the village. There were a number of existing village amenity areas in the village, all maintained through contractors as no volunteer labour was available. He was concerned that the addition of another green area would increase the financial burden upon the Parish Council in future years. It was confirmed that a grant to finance a pilot maintenance scheme, should the “pocket park” option be approved, would be considered through discussions with the Conservation and Community Development Departments.

There was concern expressed that disposing of Area A to the Parish Council would remove access rights to Area B, leading to difficulties for possible development at Area B. Members felt that it would be best to investigate the potential for developing Area B or else for exchanging Area B with a similar size area off Fishers Lane prior to making any decision about Area A. The local member expressed his preference for investigating Area B before reaching any conclusions about Area A.

Cabinet **AGREED**, with regards to the land off Town Green Road, Orwell,

- (a) That officers investigate the potential for developing Area B identified in the report for affordable housing, or else for exchanging Area B with a similar sized area off Fishers Lane owned by a private landowner with a view to developing that sites instead for affordable housing; and
- (b) That the Council retain Area A in its ownership, with any future decision conditional upon the outcome of the investigations for development at, or exchange of, Area B.

8. ELSWORTH – SALE OF COUNCIL LAND OFF FARDELLS LANE TO ELSWORTH PARISH COUNCIL FOR AMENITY PURPOSES

The Housing Portfolio Holder thanked the local member for Elsworth for her support of this proposal to sell the Council land off Fardells Lane to the Elsworth Parish Council for amenity purposes. The whole of the site was identified in the Local Plan as a Protected Village Amenity Area (PVAA) and it was thought sensible to dispose of the land to the Parish Council.

The Housing and Community Services Director explained that conditions would be attached to the sale so the District Council would benefit if a future Parish Council chose to sell the land for development. The conditions would be included in any deeds and kept in the Land Registry.

Cabinet

AGREED to dispose of the whole of the land off Fardells Way currently in District Council ownership to Elsworth Parish Council for a nominal sum on a similar basis to the recent transfer of Watts Wood to Comberton Parish Council, with Conditions to secure its future management as a natural village amenity and for the District Council to retain any value enhancement through future development.

9. MEMBER STEERING GROUP FOR THE NEW TOWN

The Planning and Economic Development Portfolio Holder outlined the proposed composition of the New Town Member Steering Group, explaining that the development of the new town would be the largest project facing this Council in the next 20 years. There was strong Cabinet support for the involvement of the local member(s). With the forthcoming boundary changes and multi-member wards, it was decided that the local members could decide amongst themselves whether they would all join or select one as their representative.

An e-mail had been received from the Cambridgeshire County Council asking that three of their councillors have membership on the Steering Group to oversee County services such as education and social services. There was concern that the group size would become unwieldy and it was thought that the local County Councillor would be adequate representation. The Steering Group would consult widely and seek input from many interested parties and stakeholders, and the County Council could be involved in this manner.

The Community Development Portfolio Holder was concerned that omitting Community Development representation on the group could lead to criticism from residents about a lack of amenities. Community Development and Housing were both extremely important aspects, and it was confirmed that the New Town Officer Steering Group would include senior representatives from both departments.

The involvement of a City Councillor was queried and the Chief Executive explained that the new town would be more urban than any other development in South Cambridgeshire and a City Councillor could bring expertise regarding urban development. The new town was being developed due to housing pressures within Cambridge City and the City Councillor would be expected to represent the views of the entire City Council, not an individual portfolio.

The possibility of creating a politically-balanced group, similar to the New Offices Working Group, was discussed. It was decided that there would be a core group, with membership based on roles rather than political groups, with other members asked to join when their expertise was required.

Cabinet, with four in favour and three against,

AGREED that a New Town Member Steering Group is established comprising:

Leader of the Council
Chairman of Development and Conservation Control Committee
Portfolio Holder for Planning and Economic Development
Portfolio Holder for Sustainability and Community Planning
Local District Councillor(s)
Local County Councillor
1 City Councillor
(with Vice-Chairman or Shadow Member to attend in absence of any SCDC Member)

10. ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN AND CAPITAL STRATEGY

Local authorities were required to update and submit annually an Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy. As the deadline for the 2003-04 response was 31st July 2003, the documents were considered and approved by the Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder at his meeting on 22nd July 2003. A draft Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy had been forwarded to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister together with a covering letter explaining that they were subject to Cabinet approval.

Cabinet was asked to give delegated approval of the Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy to the Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder for future years. Councillor SGM Kindersley asked that, in future years, a copy of the documents be forwarded to the Scrutiny Committee Chairman for information.

Cabinet

AGREED to delegate approval of the Asset Management Plan and Capital Strategy to the Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder in order to overcome the deadline for submission of the documents now and in future years, with copies sent to the Scrutiny Committee Chairman for information.

11. TRAVELLERS' CONSULTATIVE GROUP – TERMS OF REFERENCE

Cabinet, at its meeting on 27th June 2003, had asked the Group to decide its name and recommend terms of reference in detail for approval by the Cabinet. The inaugural meeting of the Group was held on 9th July 2003 and Councillor RE Barrett had been elected Chairman.

Cabinet **ADOPTED** the following Terms of Reference for the Travellers' Consultative Group:

- (a) To consider all issues in relation to Travellers, including any unmet demand, site provision, site enabling, site development, site control and other arrangements;
- (b) To advise the Cabinet on policy issues relating to Travellers;
- (c) To advise the Development and Conservation Control Committee on development control issues relating to Travellers;
- (d) To report annually to the Cabinet and Development and Conservation Control Committee on the number of caravans and Travellers' families on authorised and unauthorised sites, and upon relevant trends, on planning control issues arising during the previous twelve months, and on liaison arrangements with the travelling and ex-travelling communities; and
- (e) To consider all new case law and guidance, and new and proposed legislation.

12. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS

(Urgent item with the permission of the Leader)

This item was added to the agenda following information received on 30th July. The Chief Executive explained that there was an over-commitment on Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). The DFG budget was £450,000 but commitments for 2003-04 were nearly £600,000. The over-commitment was due to a spreadsheet error, which had not previously been identified as the budget had never been spent entirely in previous years. The error had since been fixed.

While in previous years the government would fund 60% of any DFG, a change in legislation meant that applications received from 18th July 2003 would be 60% funded up to £25,000 only. This had led to an increase in grant processing before 18th July. A large number of DFG applications continued to be received, partly through the Home Improvement Agency, increased input from Occupational Therapists (OTs), and from advertising the service in *South Cambs Magazine*.

The Chief Executive emphasised the following:

- The £600,000 was committed, rather than spent, although contracts were issued immediately after a commitment was made;

- Alternate accommodation, such as bungalows, rather than expensive adaptations should be a first consideration by OTs doing assessments;
- In view of the new legislation, the Council would need to exercise caution when giving grants over £25,000;
- The total cash limits must be impressed upon the Home Improvement Agency;
- Although nearly 60% of this year's costs should be refunded by the government, there were not sufficient funds to meet the current demand; and
- Delegated authority should be granted to any two of the following: Leader of Council, Deputy Leader and Housing Portfolio Holder, to make decisions on cases until a report could be prepared for Cabinet on 19th September.

The Housing Portfolio Holder commended the work of officers, who were working under a great deal of pressure, and reported that three more urgent cases had been received on the previous day. She stated that it was imperative the OTs promote a change of accommodation, which was not being done currently, although the number of people who were willing and able to move was small. A large number of applications were for adaptation works which would enable a person to live at home rather than in care. Until a full report could be brought to Cabinet, it was suggested that the members with delegated authority could agree grants up to a total of £750,000 of the 2003-04 budget.

Cabinet, with five in favour and one against,

AGREED to delegate responsibility to any two of the Leader, Deputy Leader and Housing Portfolio Holder to consider outstanding applications for Disabled Facilities Grants, with authority to agree grants up to a total of £750,000 of the 2003-04 budget, until the next meeting of Cabinet on 19th September.

Information Item

13. LETTING OF VACANT PROPERTIES 1ST APRIL 2002 TO 31ST MARCH 2003

The Housing Portfolio Holder presented the report, which advised of the performance of Shire Homes in letting Council houses and the paradoxical increase in average void period. A relaxation of the OAP only rule on empty flats had resulted in middle-aged and some younger people occupying the properties, with the result that, at the time the report was written, the Council no longer had any difficulty to let properties. The Housing Portfolio Holder commended the Housing Manager and staff for their work. The Housing and Community Services Director explained that there was no system for reporting this news to the CPA Inspectors, so he had written to the External Auditors for advice. He reported that all stock available to let was now in demand.

Cabinet **NOTED** the report.

Standing Items

14. MATTERS REFERRED BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

None.

15. RE-LOCATION OF OFFICES TO CAMBOURNE

The New Offices Working Group was exploring alternate financial arrangements to allow for incorporation of the rainwater harvesting system. The Strategic Development Officer had scheduled a visit to Loughborough on Thursday 7th August to a building with the system installed.

16. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL BY CONSULTANTS

Nothing to report.

The meeting closed at 13.35pm

DECISIONS MADE BY PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Decision Made By Community Development Portfolio Holder

Subject	Decision	Conditions
Community Services Grant to Cambridgeshire Acre	To award £11,300 to Cambridgeshire Acre	<p>1) The continued provision of officer support, when possible and appropriate, to the South Cambs Local Strategic Partnership</p> <p>2) Support for the development of the new South Cambs Voluntary Sector Forum</p> <p>3) The provision, at the end of each financial year, of information on the total number of organisations within South Cambridgeshire that have received services, each such organisation to be placed into one of the following categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary organisations • Village hall management committees • Parish Councils • Village service providers <p>4) Provision, at the end of each financial year, of information on the total number of organisations within South Cambridgeshire receiving training or attending training events.</p>

Subject	Decision	Reason
Community Safety Pooled Fund	To contribute £4,500 to the Community Safety Pooled fund for 2003/04 and consider contributing £5,000 to the Community Safety Pooled fund for 2004/05.	To match contributions made by other members of the Partnership.

Decisions Made By Environmental Health Portfolio Holder

(Included in Waste Management Minutes)

Subject	Decision
Replacing Stolen Wheeled Bins	Householders whose bins are stolen and who have reported the theft to the Police, obtaining an incident report number, are provided with a replacement bin at no charge to the householder.

GENERAL INFORMATION ITEMS

Historic Buildings Grants Agreed by Conservation Manager

Applicant	Location	Works
Mr W Tonks (G/3/03)	Farm Cottage, Field Farm, 104 High Street, Great Abington	£225 (10%) for repairing, reredging and rewiring the combed wheat reed thatched roof.
Mr J Golab (G/4/03)	Lantern Cottage, 57 High Street, Guilden Morden	£1775 (10%) for rethatching, reredging and rewiring the longstraw thatched roof.
West Wrating Parish Council (G/9/03)	Pump Shelter, High Street, West Wrating	£803 (75%) towards the cost of relaying the blue brick paviour floor surface of the pump shelter.
Ms T Jackson (G/12/03)	7 High Street, West Wrating	£1365 (10%) for rethatching reredging and rewiring the longstraw thatched roof.
Mr & Mrs Eastwood (G/14/03)	The Shrubberies, 2 Duxford Road, Whittlesford	£694 (25%) towards the cost of repairing and reconstructing the collapsed flint boundary wall.

Grant Time Extensions Agreed by Conservation Manager

Applicant and Location	Works	Extension
Ms A Porter (G/16/00 & G/17/00) Rose Cottage, High Street, Horningsea	Replacement and repairs to windows.	Both grants extended by 8 months until the end of March 2004 to allow for the completion of the project due to a change in personal circumstances.

Grant Monies Returned to Fund Agreed by Conservation Manager

Applicant	Location	Money Returned
Mr & Mrs S Edwards (G/23/00)	The Meetings, 101 High Street, Melbourn	£734.17 - property sold.

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 13th August 2003 at 5pm**. All decisions not called in by this date may be implemented on **Thursday 14th August 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.