



SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

COUNCILLORS' BULLETIN

ISSUE DATE 3rd December 2003

CONTENTS

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR COUNCILLORS

1. Forthcoming Committee Meetings
2. Information on Printer Cartridge Recycling
3. Information on the Constitutional Working Party
4. Call-in Arrangements

OFFICER DECISIONS REPORTED FOR INFORMATION

1. Historic Building Grants issued:
 - G/14/03, The Shrubberies, 2 Duxford Road, **Whittlesford**.
 - G/21/03 Albany House, 33 High Street, **Swavesey**
2. Historic Building Grants (Returned monies):
 - G/28/99, Bourn Windmill, Caxton Road, **Bourn**
 - G/3/01, Barnwood, 3 High Street, **Comberton**
 - G/21/01, The Old Manse, 87 High Street, **Guilden Morden**
 - G/23/02, Churchyard Cross, St Johns Church, **Little Wilbraham**
 - G/29/02, Stables, River Farmhouse, Harston Road, **Haslingfield**
 - G/3/03 Farm Cottage, Field Farm, 104 High Street, **Great Abingdon**
 - G/7/03, Flendyshe House, 1 Ludlow Lane, **Fulbourn**
 - G/8/03, 1a Ludlow Lane, **Fulbourn**

CABINET MINUTES FROM 27th NOVEMBER 2003 REPORTED FOR INFORMATION

1. **7 Monitoring of council 2003/04 priorities second quarter: April to September 2003**

Cabinet AGREED

- (a) that Portfolio Holders and Chief Officers report to Cabinet on 18th December with proposals to ensure that targets where there is likely to be a problem can be met; and
- (b) that Chief Officers be requested to ensure that quarterly performance information is entered promptly onto the PIMMS system.

8 Bid through the private finance initiative (pfi) for credit funding for Waste Management infrastructure and services

Cabinet AGREED

- (a) that the Council join as a partner in the submission of the outline business case to DEFRA for PFI credits;
- (b) to authorise the Chief Environmental Health Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Health, to agree the information included in the business case in respect of the Council;
- (c) to defer a decision on the Council's involvement in any future joint procurement until it has received further information and report on the evaluation, governance and financial appraisal of the proposed joint procurement project; and
- (d) to the funding of objective expert advice on Value for Money issues up to a maximum of £20,000 from the Cabinet contingency budget.

9. Future Meetings

Cabinet AGREED

- (a) that Cabinet meetings from January to May 2004 be scheduled for 22nd January, 16th February, 4th March, 1st April (CPA), 22nd April and 20th May;
- (b) that monthly meetings be scheduled from July 2004 onwards.

SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNITY PLANNING PORTFOLIO HOLDER MINUTES FROM 24TH NOVEMBER 2003 REPORTED FOR INFORMATION

1.

3. TOURISM UPDATE

- **Trumpington** Park and Ride
- **Icknield Way** Corridor Study
- Chilford Hall, **Linton**
- East of England Tourist Board

4. Draft LSP Board Target Actions

5. Local Strategic Partnerships Board Meeting on 2nd of December 2003

6. Reports of the Strategic Development Officer

7. AOB

- **Coton** Countryside Reserve project

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR COUNCILLORS

COMMITTEE MEETINGS



FROM 8th to 12th DECEMBER 2003

MONDAY 8th DECEMBER 2003	10.30 am	Travellers Consultative Group	Committee room 1 or Council Chamber (dependant on numbers)
	2.30 pm	Area Joint Committee	Council Chamber
TUESDAY 9th DECEMBER 2003	5 pm	Business Management Briefing	Kreis Viersen Room, Shire Hall
WEDNESDAY 10th DECEMBER 2003	9.30 am	Home Improvement Agency Advisory Group	Committee room 1
	2 pm	Conservation Advisory Group	Committee room 1
THURSDAY 11th DECEMBER 2003	12.30 pm	Electoral Arrangements Committee	Council Chamber
	2 pm	Full Council	Council Chamber
FRIDAY 12th DECEMBER 2003	10 am	Waste Management Advisory Group	Council Chamber

Information on recycling of print cartridges

Please bring your old toner cartridges to Democratic Services for them to be recycled. If you require any further information, please contact Lucie Edginton, Democratic Services Officer lucie.edginton@scams.gov.uk 01223 443026

Information on the Constitutional Working Party

The Constitutional Working Party had its first meeting of this week which has provided much work for the group to do. The next meeting will be on the 13th of January 2004. If any Councillor has an issue regarding the constitution that they would like brought up at the next meeting, please contact Lucie Edginton, Democratic Services Officer lucie.edginton@scams.gov.uk, or Councillor RF Bryant, cilr.bryant@scams.gov.uk before the agenda deadline of the 6th of January 2004.

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 Democratic Services Manager must be notified of any call in by **Wednesday 17th December 2003 at 5pm**. All decisions not called in by this date may be implemented on **Thursday 18th December 2003**.

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 Committee Procedure Rules', paragraph 12.

DECISIONS MADE BY OFFICERS

Subject	Action Taken
Historic Building Grants issued: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> G/14/03, The Shrubberies. 2 Duxford Road, Whittlesford. 	Mr. & Mrs. D Eastwood - £347 (25%) of the increased costs of reconstructing the flint boundary wall in addition to the £694 approved in July 2003.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G/21/03 Albany House, 33 High Street, Swavesey 	Ms D Rushton - £664 (40%) towards the cost of reinstating two double hung sash windows and stone cills on the front elevation.
Subject	Action Taken
Historic Building Grants (Returned monies): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> G/28/99, Bourn Windmill, Caxton Road, Bourn 	Cambridge Preservation Society - £505.50 (balance following payment of grant)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G/3/01, Barnwood, 3 High Street, Comberton 	Mr. J Hendy - £779.19 (recovered on the sale of the property)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G/21/01, The Old Manse, 87 High Street, Guilden Morden 	Mr. P Orr - £1643.38 (recovered on the sale of property)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G/23/02, Churchyard Cross, St Johns Church, Little Wilbraham 	Parochial Church Council - £198 (balance following payment of grant)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G/29/02, Stables, River Farmhouse, Harston Road, Haslingfield 	Mr. B Sewell - £317 (balance following payment of grant)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G/3/03 Farm Cottage, Field Farm, 104 High Street, Great Abingdon 	Mr. W Tonks -£225 (works not in accordance with grant offer)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G/7/03, Flendyshe House, 1 Ludlow Lane, Fulbourn 	Mr. & Mrs. R White - £525(flint wall has suffered total collapse, now to be replaced by a fence)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> G/8/03, 1a Ludlow Lane, Fulbourn 	Sir William Wade - £1153 (details as above)
Contact Shona Smith for more information Shona.smith@scams.gov.uk 01223 443217	

CABINET

At a meeting of the Cabinet held on 27th November 2003 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT: 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
RF Collinson	Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder
Mrs EM Heazell	Housing Portfolio Holder
Mrs DP Roberts	Community Development Portfolio Holder

Councillors RF Bryant, R Hall, Mrs SA Hatton, SGM Kindersley and Dr JPR Orme were also in attendance, by invitation.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs DSK Spink (Leader and Conservation Portfolio Holder).

Procedural Items

1. MINUTES

The Leader was authorised to sign as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 13th November 2003, subject to the following amendments:

Expenditure / Income to End of September 2003 (Minute 8)

Paragraph 3: "...the £50,000 underspent in 'Central Overheads' towards new ICT and telecommunications equipment for the Cambourne Office."

Paragraph 4: First sentence deleted.

Paragraph 6: "...explained that Cabinet's approval for a 7.5% increase in fees had not been implemented due to various economic pressures..."

Paragraph 6: "It was hoped that the implementation of the 7.5% increase in charges, an amount competitive with that of neighbouring authorities, would resolve the shortfall."

Human Resources (HR) and Payroll System (Minute 13)

"...brought to Cabinet as the submission of the preferred supplier was not the lowest cost."

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Item 3: Council Tax Discounts and Exemptions

Councillors CC Barker and RT Summerfield declared personal interests in recommendation (a) of this item as owners of second homes. As neither owned a second home within South Cambridgeshire, their participation in the discussion was not felt to be inappropriate but both abstained from voting.

Recommendations to Council

3. COUNCIL TAX DISCOUNTS AND EXEMPTIONS

The Local Government Act 2003 granted local authorities new powers to amend the discounts and exemptions currently available to Council Taxpayers owning empty properties or second homes. Cabinet considered the recommendations separately. The proposal to reduce the discount on second homes from 50% of the full Council Tax charge to 10% of the full Council Tax charge, effective from 1st April 2004, was discussed first.

For reducing the discount on second homes:

- There was a shortage of housing for people who lived and worked in the District;
- There would be a financial benefit to taxpayers and to the Council through an increased tax base;
- Owners of second homes benefited from some services (e.g. fire, police) and from infrastructure (e.g. roads) even when resident elsewhere;
- Owners of second homes could not vote in the District and the Council's primary responsibility was to its electorate; and
- A reduced discount could indicate to holiday homeowners in the District that they were in competition with locals for services and should shoulder their share of the financial burden.

Against reducing the discount on second homes:

- Owners of second homes could only reside in one property at one time and should not have to pay tax near to or equivalent to those who were resident year-round;
- The number of second homes in the District was comparatively small and the financial benefits minimal; and
- Most holiday homeowners could afford the additional Council Tax and it was unlikely the reduced discount would encourage them to make the property available for purchase by local residents.

Councillor Mrs DP Roberts moved that recommendation (a) be deferred for further information. There was no seconder and the motion was **LOST**. A vote was therefore taken on recommendation (a) and Cabinet, with four in favour and two against,

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

that the discount on second homes be reduced to 10% of the full council tax charge effective from 1st April 2004.

Councillors CC Barker and RT Summerfield abstained from voting on this recommendation.

The second proposal was to withdraw the discount of 50% of the full Council Tax charge on long-term empty properties from 1st April 2004. The Finance and Resources Director acknowledged that there were competing demands in the Council's policies: by trying to meet the District's housing needs by withdrawing the Council Tax discount on empty homes and hopefully encourage the owners to bring the properties back into occupation, the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) would incur additional expense on its properties awaiting demolition and redevelopment. He explained that the Council had the power to designate any properties, including the HRA properties, as a "special case" class of dwelling exempted from Council Tax, but that the General Fund would have to accommodate the resultant reduction in revenue.

For withdrawing the discount on long-term empty properties:

- There was a high number of long-term empty properties in the District;
- Withdrawing the discount agreed with the Council's Empty Homes Strategy;
- It was difficult to ask residents to accept the amount of development scheduled for the District when nearly 1,000 houses were sitting empty.

Against withdrawing the discount on long-term empty properties:

- The HRA would be penalised;
- There was proposed legislation to empower local authorities to use a compulsory leasing scheme which could cater adequately for bringing empty properties back into occupation;
- There was no guarantee a reduced discount would bring the properties back into occupation;
- Further consultation with owners of empty homes should be conducted to determine why they have not sold or rented the properties; and
- It was unclear whether the number of empty homes included Ministry of Defence properties at Bassingbourn and Waterbeach.

Councillor RF Collinson, seconded by Councillor Mrs DP Roberts, moved that recommendation (b) be deferred. With two in favour and three against, the motion was **LOST**. A vote was therefore taken on recommendation (b) and Cabinet, with six in favour and one against,

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

that the current discount of 50% of the full council tax charge on long term empty properties remain.

Cabinet unanimously

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

that no new classes of discounts be introduced but that delegated powers be given to the Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder to determine the individual cases referred to him, for consideration, by officers.

4. LOCAL PLAN NO. 2: CONSIDERATION OF REPRESENTATIONS TO FURTHER PROPOSED MODIFICATIONS AND ADOPTION

The representations made to the Further Proposed Modifications for Local Plan No. 2 were considered. The process for Local Plan No. 2 was nearing its conclusion and members agreed that it was sensible to proceed to its adoption.

Cabinet

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that

- (a) it agree the proposed response to representations to the Further Proposed Modifications;
- (b) it resolve to adopt the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan No. 2, incorporating the Proposed Modifications (October 2002) and the Further Proposed Modifications (September 2003);
- (c) a notice of the Council's intention to adopt Local Plan No. 2 be published;
- (d) subject to the local Plan not being called-in by the Secretary of State, a notice of adoption of the Local Plan be published and consultees and representors be notified;

- (e) it grant delegated authority to the Development Services Director to make necessary technical changes to the Plan to ensure that the Plan is consistent and up to date;
- (f) a final version of the Sustainability Appraisal of the Local Plan be published; and
- (g) it rescind the "Affordable Housing for Local People" Supplementary Planning Guidance (June 1993).

5. COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE

The Council had a duty to prepare a Community Strategy to improve the social, economic and environmental well-being of local people and to contribute to a sustainable United Kingdom. The South Cambs Strategic Partnership had produced a draft Community Strategy, which the Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder explained was not intended to replace current work but to provide a strategy of targets and monitoring mechanisms for a range of services provided by the Council and its partners.

Members queried the limited references to supporting young people, previously identified as a high priority. The Head of Community Services explained that that supporting young people could be included in other targets even if not specifically stated. Members also noted that there could be more references to health provision, especially for those communities far from Addenbrooke's. The Chief Executive felt that the Strategy should limit itself to those issues which could be best addressed in partnership and noted that there were issues already being catered for by individual organisations.

The Head of Community Services acknowledged the large number of targets in the Strategy, explaining that the Strategic Partnership Board included a wide range of partners, all of whom wanted their own issues addressed. He agreed to raise the possibility of reducing the number of targets at the Board meeting on 2nd December.

Councillor Mrs Heazell asked that the word "routemap" in the introduction be replaced with something less dated.

Members were asked to report any further concerns to the Head of Community Services before 1st December so that they could be considered at the Board meeting.

Members welcomed the Community Strategy and Cabinet

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL

its endorsement in principle of the Community Strategy for South Cambridgeshire, subject to the strategy being approved by the Strategic Partnership Board on 2nd December 2003.

6. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

The Independent Panel on Members' Remuneration had made recommendations for the rates of allowances. The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 provided for local authorities to determine their own travelling and subsistence rates, to pay an annual allowance to co-opted members and to offer pension entitlement to members. The new allowances scheme must be in place by 31st December 2003, but future schemes would run from 1st April to 31st March.

Members considered each recommendation separately.

Basic Allowance

The panel recommended payment for ward duties but legal advice was that this was included in the basic allowance.

Carers' Allowance

It was hoped that the proposed increase would expand the benefits of this allowance to current members, none of whom presently claimed it. Claimants would be required to demonstrate proof of care before receiving their allowance.

Travelling and Subsistence Allowances

The proposed increase would make members' allowances equivalent to the prevailing National Joint Council local government employee rates. Councillor RF Collinson highlighted that the travelling allowances rewarded people using private vehicles rather than sustainable transport and members noted that some organisations paid travelling expenses for private vehicle users only when it could be demonstrated that sustainable transport was not a realistic option.

Pensions

The Information and Customer Services Portfolio Holder recommended that full Council discuss a members' pension scheme in detail and explained the formula by which pensions could be calculated. Members agreed that provision of a pension scheme could encourage more residents to stand for election.

Withholding and Repayment of Allowances

The Standards Board for England could suspend a member and it was possible that the Standards Committee could be granted the power to withhold the allowance of a suspended member. Members noted that officers could continue to draw a salary whilst suspended and queried whether it would be appropriate for this power to be exercised. There was discussion about whether members with poor meeting attendance should receive a regular allowance, but it was noted that members could be involved in parish work even if not attending meetings. Cabinet chose not to make a recommendation and asked that these matters be referred to the Standards Board for England and the Head of Legal Services for clarification.

Allowances for members of the Independent Panel

It was felt appropriate to pay members of the Independent Panel an allowance of £200 per annum, equivalent to that of a parish member of the Standards Committee.

Cabinet

RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL that

- (a) The present level of basic allowance, and the levels of Special Responsibility Allowances other than those listed below, be held until 31st March 2004 and increased by 3% from 1st April 2004;
- (b) The Special Responsibility Allowance for the Licensing Committee Chairman be raised to £1,000 per annum from 1st April 2004 and to £2,000 per annum from January 2005, subject to discussions with the Chairman in the autumn of 2004 on the level of responsibilities;
- (c) The Special Responsibility Allowance for the Standards Committee Chairman be raised to £400 per annum;
- (d) A Special Responsibility Allowance of £400 per annum be paid to the Employment Committee Chairman;
- (e) The Carer's Allowance be increased to a reimbursement of actual cost up to a maximum hourly rate of £13.75;
- (f) The co-optees' allowance for independent members of the Standards Committee be £250 per annum from 1st April 2004;
- (g) The co-optees' allowance for parish members of the Standards Committee be £200 per annum from 1st April 2004;

- (h) The level of travelling and subsistence rates be maintained until 31st March 2004, after which they be made equivalent to the prevailing National Joint Council local government employee rates;
- (i) Actual expenses for bed and breakfast be payable, up to a maximum of £130, £150 for London, with an out-of-pocket allowance of £4 per night, with subsistence for meals to be claimed in addition;
- (j) The list of approved duties, as circulated, for which members could receive payment of travelling and subsistence be adopted;
- (k) The allowances scheme should specifically permit members to nominate a charity to which their allowances may be paid;
- (l) There be no backdating of any revised allowances;
- (m) Annual adjustments be automatically indexed for up to four years, subject to an annual review so that any changes in responsibilities could be reflected and anomalies minimised;
- (n) All councillors should be eligible for pensions and that it be up to the individual to decide whether they wish to join the pension scheme;
- (o) Both the basic and any Special Responsibility Allowance be counted for pension purposes;
- (p) The time limit for making allowance claims be by one month of the end of the relevant financial year to which the claim applies;
- (q) The terms and conditions of the panel be approved;
- (r) Each member of the Independent Remuneration Panel be offered an allowance of £200 per annum; and
- (s) The existing Members' Allowances Scheme be revoked from 30th December 2003 and that a new scheme be made under the 2003 Regulations including the elements agreed by Council on 11th December 2003, to operate from 31st December 2003.

Cabinet did not make any recommendation on withholding allowances if a member were suspended, nor on whether or in what circumstances allowances may be repaid, but asked that these matters be referred to the Standards Board for England and the Head of Legal Services.

Operational Items

7. MONITORING OF COUNCIL 2003/04 PRIORITIES SECOND QUARTER: APRIL TO SEPTEMBER 2003

The Policy and Performance Review Manager explained that the majority of the 10 identified priorities would have achieved their objective by the end of the current financial year. There were, however, a number of the Priority Performance Indicators (PPIs) which were unlikely to be achieved. The recent Comprehensive Performance Assessment Peer Review Team had criticised performance management and members agreed to send a strong message about the importance of the PPIs and to review the targets at their Portfolio Holder meetings.

Councillor JD Batchelor encouraged members to refer to the Performance Information Management and Monitoring System (PIMMS) on the intranet, but noted that some of the departmental information was out of date and requested that Portfolio Holders and Chief Officers ensure the information is current.

The Acting Head of Housing Strategic Services confirmed that only the Cambourne sites had been successful in its bid for Local Authority Social Housing Grant (LASHG) transitional funding, contrary to what had been printed in the appendix.

Cabinet

AGREED

- (c) that Portfolio Holders and Chief Officers report to Cabinet on 18th December with proposals to ensure that targets where there is likely to be a problem can be met; and
- (d) that Chief Officers be requested to ensure that quarterly performance information is entered promptly onto the PIMMS system.

8. BID THROUGH THE PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVE (PFI) FOR CREDIT FUNDING FOR WASTE MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

New government directives to increase recycling and decrease landfill were driving the need to investigate the Private Finance Initiative (PFI) as a means of gaining government support for the required capital investment. In order to be considered for PFI credit, the Council must be a member of the Cambridgeshire Councils' Association Waste Forum (CCAWF) bidding consortium. The Environmental Health Portfolio Holder felt that there was a strong chance of the CCAWF bid being accepted by the government in the current year, noting that several large bidding consortiums were planning to make bids in coming years which could use up the entire amount of the grant.

The Chief Environmental Health Officer outlined the key points of the report, emphasising the financial and environmental drivers which were making the cost of landfill rise very quickly, the increase in waste production and the need for processing facilities. He explained that PFI could aid with the substantial investment needed to reduce waste and increase recycling over and above what had already been done and that doing nothing was not an option. He reported that the Waste Management Advisory Group and Management Team both supported the recommendations and he offered to establish a working party to steer the project. It was suggested that the Resources and Staffing Portfolio Holder and Finance and Resources Director be members of the working party to consider the financial implications to the Council.

Cabinet

AGREED

- (e) that the Council join as a partner in the submission of the outline business case to DEFRA for PFI credits;
- (f) to authorise the Chief Environmental Health Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Health, to agree the information included in the business case in respect of the Council;
- (g) to defer a decision on the Council's involvement in any future joint procurement until it has received further information and report on the evaluation, governance and financial appraisal of the proposed joint procurement project; and
- (h) to the funding of objective expert advice on Value for Money issues up to a maximum of £20,000 from the Cabinet contingency budget.

9. FUTURE MEETINGS

At the meeting held on 10th November to review preparations for the Comprehensive Performance Assessment, it was agreed that Cabinet meetings would be held once a month. It was anticipated that having more strategic and fewer procedural items on the agenda would allow meetings to be concluded in half a day.

Members decided not to schedule Cabinet dates from July 2004, preferring that the Council, Cabinet and Scrutiny Committee meeting dates be decided at the same time. Councillor SGM Kindersley requested that additional inserts for members' diaries be issued as soon as possible.

Cabinet

AGREED

- (c) that Cabinet meetings from January to May 2004 be scheduled for 22nd January, 16th February, 4th March, 1st April (CPA), 22nd April and 20th May;
- (d) that monthly meetings be scheduled from July 2004 onwards.

Information Items

10 LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE SETTLEMENT 2004/05

The provisional local government finance settlement 2004/05 was issued on the website of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on 19th November. The settlement showed an increase on a like-for-like basis of 2.4% to this authority, which was below the current rate of inflation, and no contribution was made to the costs of high growth areas such as South Cambridgeshire. The average shire district was likely to increase expenditure by more than 2.5%, which inevitably resulted in a disproportionate increase in Council Tax. Members expressed disappointment with the outcome of the settlement.

Cabinet **NOTED** the Local Government Finance Settlement 2004/05.

11 LOCAL AUTHORITY SOCIAL HOUSING GRANT (LASHG) TRANSITIONAL FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

The Housing Portfolio Holder introduced the report, noting the large problems which had arisen as only the Cambourne sites had received financing under the Local Authority Social Housing Grant (LASHG) transitional funding allocations. She emphasised that it was important for the Council to continue exploring all funding opportunities. She proposed that a detailed financial evaluation be undertaken as a matter of urgency to establish whether funding could be made available for Housing Association schemes in future years.

Members expressed disappointment with the demise of the LASHG and some felt that government policies were aimed at encouraging local authorities to transfer their housing stock to Housing Associations. The Housing Portfolio Holder encouraged members to be optimistic and offered to write to all debt-free authorities and report back on their housing programmes. She added that the results of the Stock Options Appraisal, to which the Council was committed, would be brought to Cabinet in due course.

Councillor Dr DR Bard explained that the "Growth Area Fund" could not be used as an additional source of funding as it was earmarked for infrastructure.

The Acting Head of Housing Strategic Services advised that it was common practice for Housing Associations to use their own finances to commence development on the assumption that funding would be forthcoming. Associations have done so at Linton and Waterbeach. If funding bids were unsuccessful, the development costs would be borne by the Housing Associations.

It was confirmed that the reference to transferring the £960,000 negative housing subsidy from the Housing Revenue Account to the General Fund had been proposed as part of the Affordable Housing Continuous Improvement Plan and was not a recommendation to Cabinet.

Cabinet **NOTED** the outcome of the LASHG Transitional Funding arrangements and their implications for South Cambridgeshire.

Standing Items

12 MATTERS REFERRED BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE: ACCESS TO SERVICES BEST VALUE REVIEW

The Scrutiny Committee had considered the recommendations of the Access to Services Best Value Review team and, whilst supporting the establishment of a Customer Services Manager post, queried whether a new Web Services Officer post should be a permanent or fixed-term appointment. Councillor Dr JPR Orme, a member of the Access to Services Best Value Review team, commended the report to Cabinet and explained that the team had recognised that the Council was facing great changes, including the move to Cambourne and the implementation of e-government, which must be adequately resourced to be successful.

Cabinet **NOTED** that the recommendations in the Access to Services Best Value Review would be considered through the Continuous Improvement Plan (CIP) process.

13 RE-LOCATION OF OFFICES TO CAMBOURNE

Nothing to report.

The meeting ended at 12.50

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNITY PLANNING PORTFOLIO HOLDER MEETING

At a meeting held on Monday, 24th November 2003 at 10.00am

PRESENT:

Councillor RF Collinson	Portfolio Holder
Cameron Adams	Strategic Development Officer
Chris Bethell	Planning Policy Officer (Tourism and Monitoring)
Lucie Edginton	Democratic Services Officer (trainee)
Nick Grimshaw	Conservation Manager
Maggie Jennings	Democratic Services Officer
Simon McIntosh	Ast Housing & Community Services Director

Apologies were received from Iain Green, Clare Roberts, Councillor Mrs DSK Spink and Jane Thompson.

1. MINUTES

- 1.1 The Minutes of the meeting held on 20th October 2003 were approved as a correct record, subject to the following amendments:

Minute 2.2 (Climate Change Menu Programme Workshop) delete the words *Council's forthcoming* and substitute with *conflicting Council Priorities including*.

Minute 3.3 (Website) – the address amended to www.visitcambridge.org.uk

2. MATTERS ARISING

- 2.1 Minute 2.6 (Self-build Solar Workshop) - The workshop had been re-scheduled for 23/24 January 2004 in order to obtain sufficient numbers for its viability to proceed. CA to liaise further with LiLi (Low Impact Living Initiative) who have a number of contacts that may be interested in attending.
- 2.2 Minute 2.10 (Rainwater harvesting for the new offices) – It was noted that the drainage outlets at the site for the originally proposed tank were unsuitable and therefore an alternative smaller tank was being considered. A decision on its suitability would be made in the near future.
- 2.3 Minute 3.7 (Park and Ride Signposting) – CB had contacted the County Council and had been assured that the outstanding matters would be remedied.
- 2.4 Minute 4.1 (Request for Grant Aid, Duxford Museum) – Nothing further to report – **SM to liaise with JT**
- 2.5 Minute 8.1 (Cambridge Real Nappy Network (CRNN)) – CA reported that £1000, obtained from unused funding from the re-cycling initiative, had been forwarded to CRNN in order that the service could continue to the end of March 2004.

2.6 Minute 8.5 (Sustainable Development at Fen Drayton) – It was noted that:

- a meeting had been arranged between officers and Fen Drayton Parish Council on 15th December. **NG to report on outcome to the next meeting**
- prior to development of the site, planning guidance would be produced that would require a low level density of innovative design, key worker housing and be sustainable
- a development similar to one at Hockerton, nr Nottingham could be considered

3. **TOURISM UPDATE**

Trumpington Park and Ride

3.1 The following was noted:

- Cambridge City Council had agreed to fund two full-time staff
- Preparations for a web kiosk was progressing

Icknield Way Corridor Study

3.2 CB reported that Beds County Council were undertaking a study of Icknield Way from Luton to Suffolk which included the South East part of South Cambs. The purpose of the study was to create an economic enhancement project to promote the Icknield Walk as a tourist area by promoting attractions in the vicinity of that area. It was noted that Beds County Council were seeking funds for the study.

3.3 It was noted that grants in respect of Parish Paths were granted by South Cambs and the question was raised if this particular study was part of the Parish Paths initiative or a separate study.

3.4 It was requested that CB liaise with CR on the tourism implications of the study and report back to a future meeting if necessary. **CB to action**

Chilford Hall, Linton

3.5 RC informed the meeting that he, together with Clare Roberts and her manager had met with Simon Alper (Minute 3.1 – 17th September 2003 refers) to discuss possible tourism initiatives in South Cambridgeshire and consideration was to be given to those suggested.

East of England Tourist Board

3.6 It was noted that RC had been appointed a Director of the East of England Tourist Board.

South Cambs Magazine – January 2004 edition

3.7 It was noted that an article concerning the Council's support for farmland museums would be included.

4. DRAFT LSP BOARD TARGET ACTIONS

- 4.1 Consideration was given to the 6 aims formulated by the Board contained in the action sheet included in the agenda. The aims to be achieved during the following three years formed part of the Community Strategy. The draft Strategy would be considered by Cabinet on 27th November and the South Cambs Strategic Partnership meeting on 2nd December. A final strategy was expected to be approved in February 2004.
- 4.2 In order to achieve the aims contained in the action sheet, lead officers and Board 'Champions' were still required in some areas. CA confirmed he would be lead officer relating to 17/4 (tackling climate change). NG suggested that Jane Green be approached as lead officer concerning no 23/6 (high environmental quality in the design of new developments). **SM to action.**
- 4.3 Other issues considered and noted were:
- reducing commuting by encouraging residents to live and work locally; truly sustainable developments met all those requirements, eg Bedzed. **SM to strengthen wording in the Strategy**
 - Cambridge Real Nappy Network contributed to achieving Aim 4 (a high quality and healthy environment)
- 4.4 It was agreed that action was required on the following:
- the inclusion of Local Food Provision be included in Aim 5 (Sustaining the local economy) by encouraging Farmers Markets, subject to a lead officer willing to oversee
 - re-wording of no 23/6 to include self-sustainable development, i.e. breaking dependence on others. **CA to liaise with SM** on final wording

5. LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS BOARD MEETING ON 2ND DECEMBER 2003

- 5.1 SM distributed the agenda page for the board meeting and the contents were noted.
- 5.2 NG commented that it would be useful to have an environmental representative on the Board and suggested an approach be made to either the English Heritage or National Trust.

6. REPORTS OF THE STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Sustainability Continuous Improvement Plan 04/05

- 6.1 The following points were raised:
- CA stressed the importance of the need for the European Climate Change Menu Programme to proceed
 - RC had had discussions with the Development Services Director concerning the post of a Sustainability Planning Officer and had written to the DSD confirming the importance of the post
 - SM reported that the Infrastructure Partnership led by the County Council had received funding from the Sustainable Communities Fund for the Cambridge Sub-region to increase the capacity to undertake large scale new development. It is proposed to use this funding, which has been initiated by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, for posts for this purpose; the post mentioned above may therefore be eligible for this funding.

- should the Portfolio Holder be requested to state his priorities in the CIPs bid it was agreed that the following bids be raised:
 - (a) European Climate Change Menu Programme
 - (b) Sustainability Planning Officer Post
 - (c) Community Strategy Project Officer

Visit to Beddington Zero Development (Bedzed), 6th November 2003

- 6.2 The contents of the report were noted and in particular that CA would be arranging a staff/Member visit to the development in February 2004. **CA to action**

Joint local authority feasibility study 'Delivering Renewable energy in the Cambridge Sub Region' – update

- 6.3 The contents of the report were noted.

Cambourne Travel to Work Plan

- 6.4 CA reported that he was in the process of updating the 2002 Plan, however as it was part of a Section 106 Agreement he was anticipating that an officer from the Planning Department would finalise the document.

Wind Power Presentation

- 6.5 It was noted that a Wind Power staff/Member presentation would take place in the Council Chamber on 26th November at 2pm.

7. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Coton Countryside Reserve Project

- 7.1 NG reported that the Cambridge Preservation Society had approached this Council for funding in respect of the above project, however the amount of funding required had not been stipulated. A letter in response had been sent by NG on behalf of the Leader supporting the project and NG would report further progress on the project to a future meeting. **NG to action.**

8. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 8.1 The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, 14th January 2004 in CR1 at 10am

The meeting closed at 12.09pm