

**COUNCILLORS' BULLETIN
22ND SEPTEMBER 2004**

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1. To Award £3,000 to Harlton Parish Council for Extension to Village Hall
2. To Award the Following Dual Use Operation Grants for 2004/05:
 - £2,805 to Bottisham Village College
 - Nothing to Comberton Village College
 - £5,400 to Cottenham Village College
 - £2,000 to Gamlingay Village College
 - £9,672 to Impington Village College
 - £9,064 to Linton Village College
 - £10,678 to Melbourn Village College
 - £15,220 to Sawston Village College
 - £6,403 to Swavesey Village College

OFFICER DECISIONS

1. To award £4,000 to Friends of Comberton Village College to host "Indian Stories and Journeys"
2. To award £250 to Choir 2,000 for the "Mass for the Children" Event
3. To award £700 to Local Magazine Comberton Contact

MINUTES

1. Draft Minutes of the Housing Options Working Group 14th September 2004
2. Notes of Informal Arts Development Advisory Group 21st September 2004

COMMITTEE MEETINGS FROM: 27th September – 1st October 2004			
Monday 27th September 2004	2:30 pm	Area Joint Committee (run by County Council)	Council Chamber
Wednesday 29th September 2004	2 pm	Resources & Staffing Portfolio Holder Meeting	Finance & Resources Director's Office

Call in arrangements

The Chairman of the Scrutiny and Overview Committee or any five other Councillors may call in any executive decision recorded in this bulletin for review. The Democratic Services Manager must be notified of any call in by **Wednesday 29th September 2004 at 5pm**. All decisions not called in by this date may be implemented on **Thursday 30th September 2004**.

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 HOUSING PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Land at Magna Close, Great Abington

Reason	Decision
The owners had applied two years ago to purchase this land but had been advised that until the potential for redevelopment had been dismissed the Council would not agree to dispose of the land. Circle 33 have been asked to re-examine this site to see if it is possible to use it for affordable housing. Cllr Orme (local member) agrees that the land should not be sold at this time until all options have been examined.	Retain the land in Council ownership and reconsider the sale of the land when a scheme for affordable housing rear of 15-24 Magna close is finalised. In the meantime, offer a short-term lease or license to the owners of 22 Magna Close to use the land for parking.

Land at Church Street, Guilden Morden

Reason	Decision
The land was originally retained for an increased visibility splay which is now not required as an access for any future development in Church Lane would be from Thompsons Meadow to the south. Guilden Morden Parish Council are happy as long as any new fencing does not exceed 1 metre in height as it abuts the highway.	To offer the land for sale, subject to valuation, to the owners of 21 Church Street for the purpose of extending their garden as long as any replacement fence or boundary treatment does not exceed the height of the existing fencing. To offer the land under license fronting 17 Church Street for sale to the owners of this property.

DECISIONS MADE BY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER

Reason	Decision
The project would be unable to proceed without further funding.	To award an additional grant of £3,000 to Harlton Parish Council towards an extension and toilet facilities in Harlton Village Hall. This increases the total grant offer to £36,300. (CF06)

Reason	Decision
Towards the cost of employing a full-time Gym Instructor and Sports Manager (year 3).	To award a grant of £2,805 to Bottisham Village College. (DU01)
The 03/04 dual use grant was not claimed.	Not to award a grant to Comberton Village College
Towards the cost of new fitness classes.	To award a grant of £5,400 to Cottenham Village College. (DU02)
Towards the cost of fitness equipment for the Fitness 4 Health scheme.	To award a grant of £2,000 to Gamlingay Village College. (DU03)
Towards the cost of a duty manager and disabled access to the changing area.	To award a grant of £9,672 to Impington Village College. (DU04)
Towards the cost of an astro-turf pitch grounds manager and fitness equipment.	To award a grant of £9,064 to Linton Village College. (DU05)
Towards the cost of a sports facilities development manager (year 2).	To award a grant of £10,678 to Melbourn Village College. (DU06)
Towards the Inclusive Fitness Initiative programme and a full-time duty manager (year 2)	To award a grant of £15,220 to Sawston Village College. (DU07)
Towards improvements to the fitness suite, concession scheme for sports coaching and holiday courses and a full-time managerial post.	To award a grant of £6,403 to Swavesey Village College. (DU08)

DECISIONS MADE BY OFFICERS

Reason	Decision
To run a cultural festival involving the whole community of Comberton and the surrounding villages. Activities include a dance workshop, henna work, a Bollywood film screening and work in feeder schools. The festival encourages understanding and tolerance of other cultures.	To award £4,000 to the Friends of Comberton Village College to run a cultural festival: "Indian Stories and Journeys". (£2,000 from community development grant aid scheme and a £2,000 from arts project grant aid scheme.)
The choir aims to build bridges between adult choirs and junior choirs. This event will encourage young people to become involved in music and will give them the opportunity to work with a professional conductor.	To award £250 to Choir 2000 to run a Mass for the Children Christmas Concert.
The project will aid the continued improvement of Comberton Contact, which is for many residents their main point of contact with the Parish Council.	To award £700 to Comberton Contact for production of local magazine and purchasing of design equipment.

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE HOUSING OPTIONS WORKING GROUP

At a meeting held at South Cambridgeshire Hall, Cambridge on
Wednesday 8th September 2004

PRESENT:	Councillor Mrs EM Heazell	Portfolio Holder for Housing
	Councillor Neil Scarr	Member for Fulbourn ward
	Councillor Ann Elsby	Member for Gamlingay ward
	Councillor Helen Kember	Member for the Shelfords and Stapleford ward
	Councillor Ted Pateman	Member for Bourn ward
	Mrs DSK Spink	Leader of the Council
	Helen Ballantyne	Tenant Representative
	Andy Booth	Tenant Representative
	Janice Curtis	Tenant Representative
	Howard Renshaw	Tenant Representative
	Georgina Smeaton	Tenant Representative
	Steve Hampson	Director of Housing & Environmental Services
	Tracey Cassidy	Tenant Participation Officer
	Kari Greaves	Head of Shire Homes
	Mike Knight	Housing Strategy Manager
	John Ballantyne	Chief Executive
	Greg Harlock	Finance and Resources Director
	Sarah Lyons	Unison Representative
	Gwynn Thomas	Principal Accountant (Housing)
	Lucie Edginton	Democratic Services Officer
	Jon Holden	Independent Tenant Advisor
	Robin Tebbutt	Lead Consultant
	Solma Ahmed	Community Housing Task Force

1. INTRODUCTIONS AND WELCOME

- 1.1 The Director for Housing and Environmental Services opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking them for giving up their time to attend. All attendees to the meeting should feel free to make suggestion and comments at any time.

2. APOLOGIES

- 2.1 There were no apologies received.
The following apologies were given in advance for forthcoming meetings:
- 2.2 Andy Booth, 23rd of September 2004
Lucie Edginton, 23rd of September 2004 (Maggie Jennings would take the minutes)
Cllr Ted Pateman, 23rd of September 2004
Cllr Helen Kember, 23rd and 30th of September 2004
Janice Curtis, 23rd and 30th of September 2004
Cllr Liz Heazell, 30th of September 2004
Sarah Lyons, 30th of September 2004 (another representative _ would attend instead)
Cllr Ted Pateman, 19th October 2004
Cllr Ted Pateman, 17th January 2004

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

- 3.1 The minutes of the last meeting held on the 20th of July 2004 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 4.1 Councillor Helen Kember declared an interest as an existing Council tenant and as a previous member of the Tenant Steering Group
Councillor Neil Scarr declared an interest as a Member of Unison (Health)

5. MATTERS ARISING

Minute 5

- 5.1 3.2 Arms Length Management Organisation
The Unison representative asked that it be made very clear that an ALMO would be separately constituted body although retained within the Council.

Hereward Housing

- 5.2 The Housing and Environmental Services Director informed Members that he had arranged for HOWG committee members to meet with their counterparts at Hereward. The Members agreed this would be helpful as long as the meeting was informal. **SH**

6. PROJECT PLAN UPDATE

- 6.1 The Housing and Environmental Services Director introduced the Project Plan Progress report commenting that it was very encouraging to see so much progress and tasks completed. A range of sub tasks is also happening behind these top-level tasks, over the coming weeks more detail and actions will be added for the on-going programme of work.
- 6.2 Cllr Liz Heazell asked if copies of fact sheets 1, 2 and 3 that had been produced for the Tenants Open day be copied to all elected members. The Tenant Participation officer agreed to do this via the pigeon holes held in Democratic Services. **TC**
- 6.3 The Unison representative asked if there was a shortage of staff coming forward to attend the Staff Forum meetings. The Housing and Environmental Services Director commented that 12 members of staff had put their names forward to date that was more than the corporate process required. They appeared to be well spread across all the divisions.
- 6.4 The Chairman reminded all Members that the appraisal was one more change for staff to take on in what had already been a difficult and challenging year. He asked Members to bear the extra work and resulting pressure in mind when dealing with staff.

7. EVALUATING THE OPTIONS

- 7.1 The Chairman introduced Solma Ahmed from the Community Housing Task Force who presented some ideas in what forms best practice when evaluating future housing options.
- 7.2 Solma explained to the Group that part of her role is to provide feedback to the ODPM from a local level on how Housing Policies are being received and delivered. One area that had been identified as lacking was that the information provided to stakeholders was not robust enough for decision making. Solma's role was to ensure that all stakeholders had equal access to the information they require and that the information was accurate, suitable for the purpose and accessible. She would also ensure that the appraisal process was being followed correctly and to look at evidence that all parties were involved equally.
- 7.3 The ITA has a very important role to play as a central and independent point for collecting, collating and receiving information from tenants and other stakeholders.
- 7.4 Best practice for collecting information and views include:

Set Standards

- 7.5 The Council agrees a set of standards by which they wish to operate the Housing Stock and each option is then appraised against these.

Test of Opinion

- 7.6 This method has been used extensively by Local Authorities. Members and tenants need to ensure the questions asked would yield relevant answers that can lead to decision making.

Market research

- 7.7 Specialist are employed to carry out Market Research into the preferred options

Aspirational Staff

- 7.8 Local Authorities can ask staff what they think would be the best option

- 7.9 These methods can be used independently or together to form part of the information gathering process. Other key information that is required is:

- The Stock condition information and likely forthcoming needs. This must be up to date, robust and independently validated.
- The Housing Needs Survey has to be updated as it was done several years ago and this identifies local stress on housing.
- Finance information, this is very complex and must be done by specialists. The finance information must show how sustainable each option is for at least 30 years into the future. Can the Council meet set standards with each option?

- 7.10 Mrs Daphne Spink apologised to Solma for the behaviour of some Members at the last Council meeting following her Options presentation. She also commented that “stress” on housing, supply and demand was one of the biggest issues for Local Authorities in the East of England.

- 7.11 Cllr Heazell thanked Solma for her presentation, in particular for recognising that SCDC does have housing stresses. The perception has tended to be that SCDC is an affluent area and so will not have any housing issues.

- 7.12 The Housing and Environmental Services Director explained the context and why the HOW Group were looking at methods for evaluating options so soon in the overall process. It is important to understand how we will evaluate options in order that we can collect the appropriate information upfront especially from the tenants. The papers presented by the Housing Strategy Manager start this process.

- 7.13 The Chairman asked that before all the work commences, was SCDC satisfied that all four options were viable, specifically the stock retention option? Tenant Representative Andy Booth asked if the HOW Group would be made aware of SCDC’s current financial position before looking at any option.

- 7.14 The Housing and Environmental Services Director explained that the stated position of SCDC was that retention was a viable option. The work that HACAS were doing would look at the stock condition in detail and verify that the information was correct. The Council would always wish to fulfil the Decent Homes Standard whatever option was chosen. We have to consider all four options equally, as the work progresses, we may find that shortcomings in some of the options become clear but each option still has to be considered fully.

7.15 A project team meeting was scheduled to decide the best way to present the financial information to the HOW Group. It was fundamental that the financial information was provided; the ITA would assist tenants in understanding it. Stock retention would be the first option to be financially modelled by HACAS.

7.16 The Housing Strategy Manager informed the Group that his work linked existing strategies to the options appraisal. Corporate strategy objectives will be linked to relevant options.

8. SECOND PHASE OF CONSULTATION

8.1 The Independent Tenant Adviser (ITA) introduced the report explaining that it should be read in conjunction with the empowerment and communications strategy. Information must be provided to tenants before any "Test of opinion" can take place so that the tenants have background information upon which to base their opinions.

8.2 The first phase of consultation has largely been based on the tenant newsletter which was sent recently, copies of which were provided to Members. It is not sufficient to simply repeat this exercise for 2nd round consultation. The report outlines other methods that can be used such as a series of road shows, fact sheets, briefing sessions at sheltered housing schemes etc... We have to recognise that the biggest problem will be our ability to contact a wide range of people.

8.3 The ITA explained that the initial survey will be able to take a view of those age groups who had replied and see if there were any age groups missing, if this was the case, alternative strategies for contacting these people would be formed.

8.4 Solma Ahmed explained that ODPM would be looking to see that many opportunities and methods had been used to contact people; if this could be demonstrated then the Options Appraisal would be signed off.

8.5 The Housing and Environmental Services Director commented that broad ranges of people do need to be consulted using a variety of methods. He agreed that this needed to be made more clear within the communications strategy and would ask the project team to include more detail in any amended documents.

SH

8.6 Cllr Ann Elsby asked about what wider consultation with people on the waiting list but not yet Council tenants would take place? The Housing and Environmental Services Director answered by saying that it would not be possible to consult that wider group

8.7 Tenant representative, Howard Renshaw asked what the figures on the current waiting list were.

8.8 Cllr Heazell explained that the figure was approximately 2,700 but that it can be a misleading figure as the total number of requests for each village was counted and not the number of people waiting. Some of those on the waiting list can have applied for places in several villages.

8.9 Cllr Scarr, Elsby and Heazell undertook to produce some general housing information for all Members, it was important not to swamp them with too much detail in one go.

**NS
AE
LH**

8.10 The Democratic Services Officer would also place the minutes of the HOW Group onto the weekly bulletin.

LKE

9. HOUSING OPTIONS – HOUSING FINANCE EXPLAINED

9.1 Robin Tebbut, Lead Consultant from HACAS and Gwynn Thomas, Principal Accountant, Housing gave a presentation on how housing finance works. This covered:

- The Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
- Revenue, income and expenditure
- 2004/2005 estimates
- Capital Programme
- Capital Receipts
- Rent restructuring
- Housing Subsidy
- The reducing stock problem
- The HRA Business Plan

9.2 Members of the Group were asked
“What factors do you think are likely to exert financial pressure on the HRA in the future?”

9.3 Replies were:

- Receipts Pooling
- Revenue impact of sales
- Ongoing repairs – not just meeting Decent Homes Standard
- Expectations
- Rent restructuring
- Lower working balance
- Loss of interest
- Ring fence scrutiny
- Aging Tenant population
- Future Government Initiatives

9.4 Cllr Heazell sincerely thanked both parties for making such clear presentations of what is clearly a complex subject. Their contribution to the meeting was much appreciated. The Housing and Environmental Services Director also thanked both Robin and Gwynn for their time and clear explanations.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10.1 The Democratic Services Officer asked if a glossary/abbreviations list especially with regard to financial terms could be produced as an aide memoir giving a brief explanation of meaning. **KG**

10.2 Cllr Heazell asked if any relevant Options Appraisal documents could be placed on both the Councils Intranet and Internet. This would be useful to officers, Members and the public. It was noted that only 2 of the Tenant Representatives had access so this should not be a primary way to communicate HOW Group information. **KG**

11. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

11.1 10 am 23rd Sept in the 1st Floor Meeting room

11.2 9 am 30th Sept in the Grd Floor Meeting room for a presentation from the Independent Tenant Advisor on the Phase 1 consultation, plus more detailed information on Phase 2. 10 am, coach will leave, lunch will be provided, return to Cambourne 2.30pm.

11.3 2 pm 19th Oct in the Grd Floor meeting room

11.4 2pm 16th Nov in the First Floor meeting room

11.5 2pm 10th Dec in the Grd Floor meeting room

11.6 2pm 17th Jan 2005 in the Council Chamber

Meeting closed at 12.30pm

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

At the inaugural meeting of the Arts Development Advisory Group held on
Tuesday, 21 September 2004

Councillors: Dr SA Harangozo
Mrs GJ Smith

Mrs DP Roberts

Officers: Nigel Cutting
Nick Grimshaw
Stephanie Hogger
Andy O'Hanlon
Jane Thompson

Head of Arts, Cambridge City Council
Conservation Manager
Arts Project Officer
Arts Development Officer
Cultural Services Manager

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Mrs PS Corney, JA Hockney, Mrs JA Muncey and Mrs DSK Spink MBE.

1. CANCELLATION OF MEETING

1.1 Whilst awaiting other members' arrival, Councillor Mrs GJ Smith made the following comments:

- She hoped long-term funding could be found to arrange touring productions within the district and asked the Community Development Portfolio Holder to consider re-directing some funding from capital expenditure towards touring companies to help balance amateur and professional arts productions across the District;
- Residents enjoyed receiving information about local productions and she asked that an area-specific event guide be considered. With the coming of broadband provision across the District, it could be possible to hire electronic advertising screens in village shop windows to promote events in the local area. The Arts Development Officer explained that the Arts Co-ordinator for Sawston, Linton and Fulbourn Village Colleges had organised a meeting for 6 October to discuss promotion of local events;
- There could be scope for performances at local pubs, such as poetry readings or guitar concerts, and pubs could be approached for some funding and publicity;
- She would like to see smaller arts centres in the District, such as the Curwen Print Centre, be developed in a similar way to Wysing Arts, which the Community Development Portfolio Holder noted was already being considered;
- The Cambridgeshire County Council was appointing archaeological wardens to conduct village walks, usually done with local volunteers being trained by County Council officers, and a similar scheme could be funded through combined Conservation and Tourism grants.

1.2 It was noted that the meeting remained inquorate. The Community Development Portfolio Holder thanked those members and officers, including an officer from Cambridge City Council, who had taken the time to attend, and declared the meeting closed. She extended particular thanks and best wishes to the Arts Project Officer, who would be leaving South Cambridgeshire District Council for the Arts Council, doing arts work with young people across the Eastern Region.

The Meeting ended at 2.15 p.m.
