

SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio Holder 20 September 2011
AUTHOR/S: Executive Director (Operational Services) / Corporate Manager (Planning and New Communities)

SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS & FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT END OF FIRST QUARTER 2011/12

Purpose

1. This report outlines the progress made by the New Communities and Policy teams for the first quarter (April – June), and compares the actual and committed revenue and capital expenditure for the Northstowe & New Communities Portfolio with the working budget for 2011-12. It is not a key decision.

Recommendations and Reasons

2. This is the first monitoring report reported to the Portfolio Holder this year to ensure that good progress is being made against the Service plan and Council actions and remedial action taken, if necessary.
3. It is recommended that the Portfolio Holder notes progress made in this first quarter.

Background and Considerations.

Council Actions.

4. Six council actions lie within this Portfolio. Good progress has been made during Quarter 1 in respect of the six Council actions assigned to the Northstowe and New Communities Portfolio. A summary is provided in Appendix A.

Planning Policy.

5. The Team's prime focus is currently on preparing the Gypsy and Traveller Development Plan Document and the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan (as a review of the adopted Core Strategy, Development Control Policies and Site Specific Policies Development Plan Documents).
6. Progress on the Gypsy and Traveller DPD is behind the programme set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme. It had been intended to hold an Issues and Options 3 consultation in September/October 2011. Unfortunately, this has not yet taken place due to significant delays in the completion of the Cambridge Sub Region Travellers Needs Assessment Review, which will form part of the evidence base for that consultation. It is now anticipated that consultation will take place in early 2012. It is hoped that we may still be able to achieve the next milestone of Draft Submission Plan consultation in June/July 2012, depending on the scale and nature of responses received.
7. Work is under way on the evidence base for the South Cambridgeshire Local Plan, and it is anticipated that the milestone of Issues and Options Consultation in June/July 2012 can be achieved.

Growth sites.

8. Activity across all growth sites has increased in this quarter:

Northstowe

9. Discussions have now recommenced with Gallaghers and HCA, as joint promoters for Northstowe, with a view to submitting a revised planning application to the following provisional timetable:
- Submission for Phase 1 Outline Planning Application and site wide masterplan - January 2012
 - Determination of Phase 1 Planning Application - Autumn 2012
 - Issue of decision notice - June 2013
 - Amendments to existing outline planning application for whole site – 2014
10. During this first quarter period a number of workshops were held with the Joint Promoters including Northstowe Parish Forum to review and refresh the masterplan. Work is underway on various work streams including review of the master plan, the outline planning application for Phase 1 of the development, viability and affordability including public service provision and transport. It is anticipated that Phase 1 will deliver around 1,500 homes and significant employment.
11. The Rampton Drift Retro-fit project is running on time and within the budget set. This will see thirteen properties in the community of Rampton Drift (located within the perimeter of the proposed Northstowe new settlement) retro-fitted with essential energy saving and renewable energy measures and technologies. This is one of the very first projects in the country to be carrying out this work on owner-occupied dwellings with the owners in residence. The installations are averaging approximately £18k/property, include full monitoring and is being financed through the Government's Housing Growth Fund. The project is of both local and national importance as it will provide crucial evidence and experience in the run up to the launching of the Green Deal by the Government at the end of 2012.

North West Cambridge (University site)

12. There has been significant tri-partite work with the County and City Councils to progress pre-application discussions with the University. The project programme was revised following cancellation of the proposed A14 upgrade in October 2010 with a view to submitting the application in Autumn 2011. Recent work has focussed on the draft Transport Assessment working closely with the Highways Agency and County Highways.
13. The two applications (one to SCDC and the other to Cambridge City Council) are scheduled for submission on 19th September 2011. The proposals will comprise up to 3,000 dwellings; up to 2,000 student bedspaces; 100,000 sq.m. employment floorspace, local centre including supermarket, community facilities, hotel and associated open space and infrastructure. A member briefing by the applicant is being scheduled for early October.

'Cambourne 950'

14. During this first quarter, officers were working closely with the developers and parish council to resolve a list of items that need to be addressed before the the outline planning permission can be issued, aiming for the end of September 2011. These included: (a) resolution of drainage issues relating to Cambourne and a programme to upgrade Uttons Drive; (b) finalisation of planning conditions; (c) completion of Section 106 Agreement; and (d) resolution of renewable energy strategy. On-going

pre-application work also focussed on the application for the Secondary School (expected mid September 2011) and next phase of the High Street.

Orchard Park

15. Pre-applications commenced on two of the remaining undeveloped sites (Corner site on the junction of Kings Hedges road and Histon Road and Local Centre). A project plan has been agreed with applicant to ensure the submission of a hybrid planning application in October 2011 (part outline, part full, for 140 dwellings with 840sqm retail floor space). Parallel discussions have been held in relation to the expected S106 obligations and the last outstanding area of open space (POS 2).
16. Permission has recently been granted for a further 36 dwellings (H1) and detailed discussion began in relation to K1 (Self-Build site) and the issuing of tenders took place in May for appointment later in the year.

'NIAB1'

19. In this quarter, NIAB 1 detailed discussion took place to discuss (a) alterations to the parameter plans to allow more flexibility in the development process (b) transport modelling to explore whether the limit on numbers of dwellings that could be built prior to improvements to A14 should remain.
20. An amended scheme has since been considered and approved by the Fringes Joint Development Control Committee.

Sustainable Communities: Community & wellbeing

21. Much of the work programme in these area falls within the Council's action, progress for which is summarised in appendix A. Other areas to highlight include:

Children and Young People

22. In March Cabinet endorsed Young Person's Plan and accompanying action plan. Progress made in respect of those actions is summarised in Appendix C. One or two of the actions have been delayed during the first part of the year but it is expected that all actions, with one exception, will be met by the end March 2012: An extended framework agreement was proposed with the Village Colleges, but at the present time the Heads of the colleges have indicated they do not wish to proceed with this. They do however wish retain the service agreements for the Arts Development Managers, which add significantly to the 'community offer' that jointly SCDC & the colleges make to our local communities and children and young people in particular.
23. Actions over and above those contained in the Action Plan include the addition of a 'Young Voice' page in the South Cambs Magazine, which has been very much welcomed. We have received more responses (articles, information, recipes) than we are able to print at the present time.
24. The Rampton Drift Retrofit Project was used at Swavesey Village College for this year's Design Days. Over 200 young people had the opportunity to hear about the project and then design their own retrofitting schemes; the design days included a visit to Rampton Drift to meet the contractors working on the houses, presentations from the Design Team and South Cambs Officers and was very much welcomed by students and teachers.

25. Since the Young Person's Plan was agreed, the Council has also agreed to the establishment of a Youth Council, which demonstrates the Council's commitment to effective involvement of children and young people living in our District.

Older people's activities

26. Officers attended the Natural England walking leaders course in order to start our own network of walks in the district. The first ones started in July at Bar hill and Sawston to complement those already supported at Milton Country Park and Wandlebury Country Park.
27. Discussions started with Cambridge City Council about the possibility of SCDC joining the Forever Active (activities for the over 50;s) Scheme. In this quarter a six-month Service Level Agreement was put in place with the dual use sports centres supporting Fitness4Health, (GP Referral Scheme). This was to allow time to tender for the Health and Exercise Coordinator to oversee the scheme. Since June we have been out to tender and a new three year contract is now in place.
28. We continue to support Cambridgeshire Celebrates Age and attend the steering group meetings. This year it is planning to produce ongoing activities for the over 50's as well as the one off events in October. For SCDC this will bring to the attention of many residents the activities taking place in their village.

Sports and arts

29. The final £200,000 dual use capital grant for Gamlingay Village College was agreed and work began on improvements to the fitness suite and has since begun on the Multi-Use games Area (MUGA).
30. Annual agreements 2011-12 with seven Village College for community arts development services completed and signed. During this first quarter, the Council was involved directly in six public art projects (at Impington, Landbeach, Milton, Orchard Park, Teversham and Waterbeach). Ten other developer-led public art initiatives at Cambourne, Fulbourn, Girton, Great Shelford, Impington, Linton and Orchard Park were monitored by the Council.
31. The team has also been involved in providing training sessions for staff across the planning and New Communities Department (Economic Development, Arts and Sustainable Construction).

Financial performance.

32. Appendix B summarises financial expenditure for Q1 which for direct revenue expenditure shows £45,401 spent or committed against a profiled budget of £77,865 (58%), with £32,464 in hand. The main areas of variance relate to timing difference in payment against how the budgets were profiled.
33. Community Development: £5,240 in hand generally due to timing differences in relation to the approval of expenditure against the profiled budget account for the variance of £5,240 in Quarter 1, however a Community Development Grant of £750 was paid out in Quarter 1, a further grant of £500 has been committed and two applications totalling a possible £3,200 are awaiting decision. A payment of £10,000 representing 50% of the annual budget for community development projects was

made to Cambridgeshire County Council in July 2011 for this authority's contribution towards the Area Partnership Agreement - this payment will bring the profiled budget in Quarter 2 back in line.

34. Sports Development: £3,828 in hand This variance is the result of similar timing differences in relation to the approval of grants toward funding elite athletes. Within the profiled budget in Quarter 1 there was an allocation of £5,000; however, commitments of £4,600 that would have been offset against this were not approved until July 2011. Officers have every confidence at this stage that the full budget will be spent.
35. Arts Development: £2,788 in hand. This variance is again due to commitments being out of step with the pre-determined profiled budget. The profiled budget for Arts Partnership support funding (£5,000) has not been spent yet. The annual budget in the 2011/12 original estimate was £10,000; this has been reduced to £6,000, pending a virement (if required) – officers hope to commit the whole of this in September 2011. The £4,000 has been reallocated to Arts Dual Use initiatives, along with a further £1,000 from Arts Development projects. Of the reallocated Arts Dual Use budget of £70,000, £15,550 has been spent or committed in Quarter 1, an over commitment of £2,550 compared to the profiled budget. £1,550 of this relates to an approved rollover request from the 2010/11 budget in connection with arts development projects in the Melbourn area; however, the rollover will only be released once all other budgets have been committed within the portfolio. A further £42,000 of the remaining reallocated budget is shown as commitments on the financial management system in Quarter 2.
36. Growth Agenda: £7,683 in hand. There has been less use of consultants than anticipated so far this year.
37. Planning Policy: £12,925 in hand. Less use has been made of consultants than expected so far this year, partly because the focus has been on preparing for the new Local Plan and conformity to the National Planning Policy Framework once that formally replaces planning policy statements. The budget may need to be adapted later in the year to fit new policy requirements.
38. Capital Grant Expenditure: £59,970 in hand. No capital grants were allocated in the first quarter of 2011/12 pending the grants review. The first tranche of Community Capital grants are due to be considered by the Leader's Portfolio in October 2011.
39. Other Capital Expenditure
 - a. Growth Areas (River Cam Project): £2,060 in hand – no expenditure was incurred or committed in Quarter 1.
 - b. Rampton Drift Demonstrator Project: £0 in hand – expenditure and commitments are in line with the project plan.

Implications

40. Financial	The need to ensure appropriate profiling of budgets at the start of each year has been identified as a future action.
Legal	None.
Staffing	None.
Risk Management	Risks associated with poor performance are included in and managed through the Planning and New Communities Risk Register which is reviewed quarterly by the service's management team and EMT.

Equality and Diversity	None arising directly from this report and recommendation
Equality Impact Assessment completed	No Equality Impact Assessments are completed for specific actions prior to implementation
Climate Change	

Consultations

41. Managers across New Communities and Planning and Finance have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

Consultation with Children and Young People

42. None in relation to this report, which is for monitoring purposes.

Effect on Strategic Aims

43. Ensuring that the service performs well and its programmes remain on target will help to ensure that the Council meets its strategic aims.

Conclusions / Summary

44. With one or two exceptions, all programmes of work are on schedule and good progress was made in the first quarter, and the team are working hard to ensure momentum is maintained.

Background Papers: the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

Planning and New Communities Service Plan 2011-2012.
Young Persons Plan and accompanying action plan.
Financial reports relating to Q1 (Appendix B).

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