

**SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET**

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Thursday,
11 November 2004

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor R.S. Fleming (Chairman) and

Councillors Mrs. B. Graham, A. Hodgson, M. Iveson, D.A. Newell,
J. Robinson J.P and W. Waters

In Attendance: Councillors Mrs. K. Conroy, Mrs. J. Croft, G.C. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray,
D.M. Hancock, J.E. Higgin, J.G. Huntington, M.T.B. Jones, G. Morgan,
Mrs. E.M. Paylor, A. Smith, Mrs. I. Jackson Smith, Mrs. C. Sproat,
T. Ward and J. Wayman J.P

Apologies: Councillors Mrs. A.M. Armstrong and K. Noble

CAB.90/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
No declarations of interest were made.

CAB.91/04 MINUTES
The minutes of the meeting held on 28th October 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**CAB.92/04 COUNCIL TAX, BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL
PLANNING CONSULTATION 2005/06 - 2007/08**
Consideration was given to a report detailing proposals for engaging Council Taxpayers in the 2005/06 Council Tax and budget setting process and the development the Medium Term Financial Plan for the period 2005/06 to 2007/08. (For copy see file of Minutes)

It was proposed that Norma Wilburne Associates, Social and Market Research, who had facilitated the consultation process for the past two years for the Council, should be commissioned to undertake a consultation exercise in respect of the 2005/06 Budget/Council Tax setting process and to obtain feedback on the draft Medium Term Financial Plan 2005/06 - 2007/08, including priority investment areas and key actions over that period.

Members were given details of the proposed consultation methodology.

RESOLVED: 1. *That NWA Social and Market Research be commissioned to undertake a Council Tax and Budget consultation process in respect of the 2005/06 Budget cycle and draft Medium Term*

Financial Plan 2005/06 to 2007/08 as detailed in the report, for a fee of approximately £7,000.

2. *That a payment of £30 be made to those Council Taxpayers who fully participate in the Focus Group sessions.*

CAB.93/04 CORPORATE STRATEGIC PLANNING - CORPORATE PLAN AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN

Consideration was given to a report regarding the draft Corporate Plan and the Medium Term Financial Plan, which have been developed to help elected members, managers and employees focus on corporate ambitions whilst ensuring the delivery of continuously improving day-to-day services. (For copy see file of Minutes)

It was explained that the draft Corporate Plan, attached as Appendix 1 to the report, set out the Council's ambitions and priorities for the future. The document replaced the Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) and represented a significant shift from Best Value Performance Indicator compliance to customer-focused and needs based quality service provision by establishing the way forward for service provision and investment over a three year period and pulling together a strategic vision for the full range of Council activities.

The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), attached as Appendix 2 to the report, supported the Corporate Plan by establishing an overarching framework for the Council's financial strategy and annual capital and revenue budgets, over the same three year period. It set out how available resources would be allocated across Cabinet Portfolios and services in accordance with corporate priorities.

RESOLVED : That the draft Corporate Plan and the Medium Term Financial Plan be considered by Council at its meeting on 26th November 2004.

CAB.94/04 EXTERNAL/EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

The Lead Member for Welfare and Communications presented to a report summarising the details of the proposed External and Employee Communications Strategies, which were attached at Appendix 1 and 2. (For copies see file of Minutes)

It was explained that the proposed External Communications Strategy addressed the findings of the CPA report, which highlighted communication with the community as a weakness. The strategy identified the following three key objectives, each supported by an action plan:

- Develop a sense of corporate identity and the consistent application of key messages
- Raise public awareness of the Council's role as a provider of services.
- Determine the most cost-effective communication channels for

providing access and service to each customer group.

The proposed Employee Communications Strategy addressed the findings of the various external assessments, the annual staff survey and the requirements of the forthcoming Information and Consultation Directive. The aims of the strategy were to:

- Ensure a commitment to two-way communication with all staff, particularly those at the frontline.
- Develop and maintain a culture of effective communication.

- RESOLVED:*
1. *That the proposed strategies at Appendix 1 and 2 be approved.*
 2. *That the Employee Communications Strategy be reported to the recognised Trade Unions via the Joint Consultative Group.*
 3. *That the External Communications Strategy and the Employee Communications Strategy be reported to the Performance Improvement Group.*
 4. *That the existing secondment arrangement in respect of an Economic Development Officer be extended until further notice and the Head of Strategy and Regeneration considers any resulting implications for SBBS.*
 5. *That additional funding of £11,000 be met from contingencies to fund the customer and staff surveys, staff and elected member training and the production of guides and publicity material as identified in the action plans.*
 6. *That proposed employee recognition schemes be the subject of a separate report to Management Team.*

CAB.95/04 SUPPORTING INDEPENDENT LIVING POLICY

Consideration was given to a report detailing the conclusion reached by the Group regarding the provision of services to support independent living. (For copy see file of Minutes)

RESOLVED: *That the conclusion of the Policy Review Group be noted.*

CAB.96/04 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 held on 28th September 2004. (For copy see file of Minutes)

RESOLVED: That the Committee's recommendations be noted and appropriate action be taken.

CAB.97/04 AREA 5 FORUM

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of Area 5 Forum held on 28th September 2004. (For copy see file of Minutes)

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That in accordance with Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 13 of Schedule 12a of the Act.

CAB.98/04 SINGLE HOUSING INVESTMENT POT ALLOCATION FERRYHILL STATION DEAN BANK AND CHILTON (KEY DECISION)

Consideration was given to a report detailing proposals to use Single Housing Investment Pot resources, together with Borough Council funding to support a planned programme of intervention in Dean Bank, Ferryhill Station and Chilton. (For copy see file of Minutes)

RESOLVED: That the recommendations detailed in the report be adopted.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Gillian Garrigan, on Spennymoor 816166 Ext 4240