

# CABINET

Thursday, 25 November 2004

10.00 a.m.

Conference Room 1,  
Council Offices,  
Spennymoor

# AGENDA and REPORTS

## AGENDA

**1. APOLOGIES**

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To notify the Chairman of any items that appear in the agenda in which you may have an interest.

**3. MINUTES**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2004. (Pages 1 - 4)

### **OTHER DECISIONS**

#### **RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO**

**4. REVENUE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT - POSITION AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2004**

Report of Director of Resources. (Pages 5 - 10)

**5. BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT 2004/2005 - CAPITAL SPEND POSITION TO 30TH SEPTEMBER 2004**

Report of Director of Resources. (Pages 11 - 16)

### **MINUTES**

**6. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1**

Minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> October 2004. (Pages 17 - 20)

**7. AREA FORUMS**

To consider the minutes of the following:

(a) Area 1 Forum - 25th October 2004 (Pages 21 - 26)

(b) Area 2 Forum - 2nd November 2004 (Pages 27 - 34)

### **EXEMPT INFORMATION**

**The following item is not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 8 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972. As such it is envisaged that an appropriate resolution will be passed at the meeting to exclude the press and public.**

**8. REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT 2000 (RIPA)**

Report of Solicitor to the Council. (Pages 35 - 40)

## 9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Lead Members are requested to inform the Chief Executive Officer or the Head of Democratic Services of any items they might wish to raise under this heading by no later than 12 noon on the day preceding the meeting. This will enable the Officers in consultation with the Chairman to determine whether consideration of the matter by the Cabinet is appropriate.

N. Vaulks  
Chief Executive Officer

Council Offices  
SPENNYMOOR  
17<sup>th</sup> November 2004

Councillor R.S. Fleming (Chairman)

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

### ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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

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# Item 3

## 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.89/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
No declarations of interest were made.

**CAB.90/04 MINUTES**  
The minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> October 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**CAB.91/04 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 of 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.92/04 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 26<sup>th</sup> November 2004.*

**CAB.93/04 EXTERNAL/EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES**

The Lead Member for Welfare and Communications presented 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.94/04 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.95/04 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3**

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

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

**CAB.96/04 AREA 5 FORUM**

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of Area 5 Forum held on 28<sup>th</sup> 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.97/04 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.*

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**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

Published on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2004

The key decision contained in these minutes will be implemented on Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2004, five working days after the date of publication, unless it is called in by five Members of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call-in procedure rules.



# Item 4

## REPORT TO CABINET

25<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2004

## REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

**Portfolio: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

### **REVENUE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT – POSITION AT 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2004**

#### **SUMMARY**

This report summarises individual spending forecasts for the seven portfolios for 2004/2005, which shows that:

- The General Fund is expected to contribute to balances by around £348,000 compared to a budgeted use of £300,000, which provides an opportunity to make some early provision for Job Evaluation costs.
- The Housing Maintenance Budget is currently overspent and if not corrected will require a greater use of capital receipts to replace revenue funding to the capital programme.
- The Training and Employment Service is anticipated to produce an operating surplus in the region of £100,000, against an original forecast break-even position.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- That the financial position for 2004/2005 be noted.
- That in view of the position on the General Fund, a sum of £350,000 be set aside to help meet the initial costs of Job Evaluation.
- That a further report be submitted to Cabinet, detailing the position at the 31<sup>st</sup> December 2004 (nine months position).

#### **DETAILED FINANCIAL POSITION AT 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2004**

##### ***General Fund***

The following table covers the first six months of 2004/2005 (April – September) and shows:-

- The approved budget for each of the main portfolios.
- The profiled budget for the first six months of 2004/2005.
- The actual income and expenditure as recorded in the Council's Financial Management System.
- Projected Probable Outturn for 2004/2005 based on spend to date and known commitments.
- Variance between the annual budget and the projected probable outturn.

Cabinet and Council subsequently reviewed the Budget Framework in July 2004, in light of the additional Capital Receipts being generated and the extra Investment Income being received. As a result, the Budget Framework was changed to provide an increased contingency provision of £300,000 taking the approved budget to £12,300,000.

The overall financial position for the General Fund is therefore as follows:-

	<b>Budget 2004/05 £'000</b>	<b>Budget To Date £'000</b>	<b>Spend To Date £'000</b>	<b>Probable Outturn £'000</b>	<b>Variance £'000</b>
<i>Resource Management</i>	3,737	2,179	3,346	3,341	(396)
<i>Culture and Recreation</i>	2,039	970	1,084	2,155	116
<i>Environment</i>	3,525	1,825	1,729	3,677	152
<i>Housing</i>	420	201	281	370	(50)
<i>Regeneration</i>	1,095	592	535	1,015	(80)
<i>Community Safety</i>	500	385	283	450	(50)
<i>Supporting People</i>	859	4,423	4,403	819	(40)
<i>Contingency</i>	425	-	-	425	-
	12,600	10,575	11,661	12,252	(348)
<i>Use of Balance</i>	300	-	-	(48)	(348)
<b>Budget Requirement</b>	<b>12,300</b>	<b>10,575</b>	<b>11,661</b>	<b>12,300</b>	<b>-</b>

On the basis that the whole of the contingency sum is fully utilised in 2004/2005 there will be an anticipated contribution to balances of £348,000 against a budgeted use of balances of £300,000. This represents a potential underspend of £648,000 to the General Fund.

In preparing the probable outturn position, no account has been taken of the possible impact of the Job Evaluation exercise, which will be concluded in Spring 2005. It is difficult to forecast what impact this may have on service costs but, bearing in mind the relatively healthy financial position set out above, it may be prudent to set aside some of the anticipated savings on the General Fund to help with initial costs. It is therefore proposed that a sum of £350,000 be identified for this purpose.

The main features that contribute to the overall underspend include:-

### **Resource Management**

The projected spend to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005 is £3,341,000, compared to an initial budget of £3,737,000; an estimated underspend of £396,000.

Cabinet has already approved use of the contingency fund during 2004/2005 amounting to approximately £200,000. It is anticipated that the whole of the contingency will be fully utilised during the remaining part of the year to help meet key priorities as identified in the Medium Term Financial Plan.

The significant savings within this portfolio largely relate to improvements in the Council's Treasury Management position. On the one hand, interest charges will fall as a result of debt rescheduling undertaken towards the end of last year and after the 2004/2005 budgets had been approved. On the other hand, additional income will be

received from the investment of the substantial capital receipts generated from recent land sales.

### ***Culture and Recreation***

The projected spend to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005 is £2,155,000 compared to the initial budget approval of £2,039,000, a net overspend of £116,000.

The main factors contributing to the current overspend projection are as follows:-

- The initial budgets for the swimming pools at Shildon and Fishburn were based on an operating cost of £10,500. The projected total outturn is £34,100, which whilst lower than the final costs for 2003/2004, still represents an overall additional cost of £23,600. The main concern relates to the income generating capacity of the pools. This is being carefully examined and a report will be prepared for future consideration.
- During the current financial year there have been significant alterations to Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor Leisure Centres, which resulted in large areas of the Centres being unavailable for use. This has had a major impact on income generation, amounting to £40,000.
- Staffing costs are likely to overspend by approximately £36,000 as a consequence of temporarily filling posts relating to maternity and redeployment of staff due to illness.
- The Director of Leisure Services is looking carefully at his current spending commitments and expects to make significant inroads into the current overspend position by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005.

### ***Environment***

Projected net expenditure to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005 is £3,677,000 compared to the original budget approved of £3,525,000 - an overspend of £152,000 (or 4.3%).

The main issues that are having an impact on the anticipated final position are:-

- Significant reduction in income in respect of licences, which, because of Government delays in introducing the new legislation, mean that fee income will be £55,000 lower than anticipated.
- During the time when the Council had a substantial window replacement programme, an internal skip service was established, which helped generate additional income for the Refuse Collection Service. Although it has been reducing over the last couple of years, the pace of the reduction in the skip service has increased in the current year and the outturn forecast reflects potential loss of income of £97,000.

### ***Housing General Fund***

Projected spend to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005 is £370,000, compared to the original budget approval of £429,000; an estimated underspend of £50,000 (or 12%), which is mainly as a result of delays in filling staff posts.

### ***Regeneration***

The projected spend to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005 is £1,015,000 compared to an original budget approval of £1,095,000; an estimated underspend of £80,000.

The main reasons for the underspend are salary savings resulting from the delay or non-filling of vacant posts within the Neighbourhood Services Department.

### **Community Safety**

The projected spend to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005 is £450,000 compared to an initial budget approval of £500,000 - an underspend of £50,000 (or 10%).

At the time the budget was prepared, the service was about to be fundamentally reviewed, following the Consultant's report into the service. At that time it was not clear what the outcome would be and as a consequence a provisional budget was set at £500,000.

The service has been fully reviewed and the new arrangements are now in place. Savings have largely been made as a result of delays in filling vacant posts whilst the review was being undertaken.

### **Supporting People**

The projected spend to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005 is £819,000, compared to an original budget approval of £859,000, an estimated underspend of £40,000 (or 4.7%).

The main factors which contribute to the underspend are:-

- The Government fundamentally changed the way Housing and Council Tax Benefit was funded for 2004/2005. For example, Rent Rebates, which was previously accounted for in the HRA, were transferred into the General Fund. This created some uncertainty and transitional arrangements were put in place to protect the General Fund. The full implications of these changes have now been assessed, resulting in additional subsidy of £83,000. It is pleasing to note that the overall levels of benefit payments have increased, along with the number of claimants receiving benefit during the course of this financial year.
- The Council is faced with additional costs of £19,000 in respect of the Concessionary Travel Scheme; resulting from an increased share of the passes issued across the scheme. An independent consultant is currently reviewing the present scheme and method of reimbursement to the Bus Companies.

### **Housing Revenue Account (HRA)**

- The budgetary position at the end of September 2004, shows that the Housing Maintenance Budget is currently overspent by around £200,000. If this is not corrected the overspend is projected to amount to £450,000 in a full year. In budget terms this can be offset by reducing the level of revenue support to finance the capital programme and replacing it with a greater use of capital receipts. In doing this there will be no call on the Housing Revenue Account working balance as anticipated when the original budget was prepared.
- The Director of Housing is carefully examining the current spending profile in order to see what action can be taken to mitigate the overspend position.

A number of other changes to the Housing Revenue Account are anticipated which, whilst being cost neutral overall, are summarised below:-

- Rental income is lower than originally budgeted due to the continued buoyancy in the Right-to-Buy sales market. The shortfall in rental income is partly offset by reduced void rent losses (£150,000).
- There is an anticipated shortfall in Supporting People income of £147,000, although this is partly offset by operational savings on the Carelink Budget.
- Significant savings on interest charges amounting to £180,000 have been achieved as a result of debt rescheduling undertaken towards the end of last year and after the 2004/2005 budgets had been approved.

### **Training and Employment Services**

The initial budget prepared for 2004/2005 showed that the trading account would break even by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005. Current projections indicate that as a consequence of significantly higher occupancy levels on the training schemes, there will now be an operating surplus in the region of £100,000 for the year; this is after additional expenditure on ICT communication lines between the Green Lane Offices and the Coulson Street Training Centre has been met.

### **CORPORATE POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

This report does not contain proposals that would require any changes to the Council's agreed policy framework and corporate objectives.

### **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

There are no further resource implications arising from this report. Planned spending commitments are in line with previously approved capital spending programmes set for the Council's portfolios.

### **CONSULTATIONS**

Comprehensive consultation has previously been held during the construction of the 2004/2005 Budget Framework. This report does not contain any proposals or recommendations requiring further consultation.

### **OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

There are no other significant material considerations arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS**

Consultation and engagement with Overview and Scrutiny Committees has previously been held in development and review of the 2004/2005 Budget Framework.

**Contact Officer:** Brian Allen (Director of Resources)  
**Telephone:** 01388-816166 Ext. 4003  
**E-Mail:** [ballen@sedgefield.gov.uk](mailto:ballen@sedgefield.gov.uk)

**Ward(s):** Not Ward Specific

**Background Papers:** ~ Report to Special Council 27<sup>th</sup> February 2004 – Budget Framework 2004/2005.  
~ Report to Council 28<sup>th</sup> July 2004 – Budget Framework 2004/2005 – Use of Capital Receipts.

### **Examination by Statutory Officers**

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Council's Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Council's S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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# Item 5

## REPORT TO CABINET

25<sup>TH</sup> NOVEMBER 2004

## REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

**PORTFOLIO: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

### **BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT 2004/05 - CAPITAL SPEND POSITION TO 30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2004**

#### **1.0 SUMMARY**

1.1 This report provides a review of the position on actual capital spending to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2004. It includes an overview of progress made to date in meeting spending targets and outlines developments that have occurred during the year that have an impact on the overall capital programme.

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

- (i) Cabinet note the half-year spend position to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2004 (6 months);
- (ii) A further report be submitted to Cabinet showing progress to the third quarter to 31st December 2004 (9 months).

#### **3.0 CAPITAL SPEND AND RESOURCES MONITORING 2004/05**

##### **Initial Spending Targets**

3.1 The Capital Programme for 2004/05 was agreed by Council on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2004. Target spending plans totalling £10,200,000 were set and allocated across Council portfolios.

3.2 The actual out-turn position for the previous financial year was reviewed by Cabinet on the 15<sup>th</sup> July 2004 when considering the Statement of Accounts 2003/04. This identified an under spend of £1.4m on the 2003/04 capital programme and a number of schemes were identified for carry forward into 2004/05. Consequently, revised spending targets were set by the Director of Resources to reflect carry forward of resources. This is shown in the following table:

<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Initial Spending Target £'000</b>	<b>Carry Forward £'000</b>	<b>Revised Spending Target £'000</b>
Resource Management	770	210	980
Culture and Recreation	420	200	620
Regeneration	700	450	1,150
General Fund Housing	850	40	890
Community Safety	20	0	20
Environment	40	0	40
Supporting People	20	0	20
Housing Revenue Account	7,200	500	7,700
General Contingency	180	0	180
<b>Total</b>	<b>10,200</b>	<b>1,400</b>	<b>11,600</b>

### **Other Developments during 2004/05**

- 3.3 The Council is expected to receive significant capital receipts from the sale of housing land at Cobblers Hall, Newton Aycliffe. A report considered by Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2004 dealt with the detailed implications of this on the Councils 2004/05 Budget Framework. In terms of the specific impact on the capital programme, the increased resources would allow the Council to increase its spending significantly over the medium term.
- 3.4 So far as 2004/05 is concerned, it was recommended that the contingency provision be increased by £1m to provide resources earmarked for spending on affordable housing and regeneration projects should early commitment to schemes be obtained before the end of the year. As this proposal would involve a change to the Budget Framework 2004/05, Council subsequently considered and approved this recommendation at a meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2004.
- 3.5 The capital allocation for the Community Safety portfolio has been increased by £13,000 through use of the contingency fund. The additional funding is needed to allow for the purchase of communications equipment as reported to and approved by Cabinet on 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2004.
- 3.6 Following submission of the Implementing Electronic Government Statement for 2004/05 (IEG4) to the ODPM, the Council has been successful in securing an additional grant of £150,000 to support further spending in this area. As a consequence, the Council's spending on E-Government initiatives has been increased in line with the additional grant income.
- 3.7 The provision of a new earmarked contingency of £1m and additional E-Government Grant of £150,000 have allowed the net spending target for 2004/05 to be increased by a further £1.150m.

### **Revised Capital Programme and Actual Spend to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2004**

- 3.8 The adjustments explained above have resulted in a revised spending target of £12,750,000 for 2004/05. A summarised statement of actual spend to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2004 across portfolios is shown as follows:



<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Net Spending Target £'000</b>	<b>Actual Gross Spend £'000</b>	<b>Grants / Conts £'000</b>	<b>Actual Net Spend £'000</b>
Resource Management	1,130	186	0	186
Culture and Recreation	620	308	2	306
Regeneration	1,150	254	142	112
General Fund Housing	890	168	0	168
Community Safety	33	1	0	1
Environment	40	23	0	23
Supporting People	20	0	0	0
Housing Revenue Account	7,700	1,875	13	1,862
Earmarked Contingency	1,000	0	0	0
General Contingency	167	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	<b>12,750</b>	<b>2,815</b>	<b>157</b>	<b>2,658</b>

- 3.9 A total of £2.815m has been spent in the half-year to 30<sup>th</sup> September 2004, representing 22% of the total capital programme. Additional contributions of £157,000 have been received resulting in a net spend position of £2.658m.

### **Capital Project Initiatives**

- 3.10 Since the financial year 2001/2002 the Borough Council has been making financial provision for the development of a regional gymnastics centre based at the rear of the Spennymoor Leisure Centre to be developed in partnership with Sports Lottery funding. On 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2004 Sport England confirmed an award of £1,325,000 towards the total capital cost of the project and the Council has already agreed to contribute £170,000 towards the scheme. However, a funding gap had recently emerged on the delivery of the project and Cabinet at its meeting on 16<sup>th</sup> September 2004 agreed to contribute a further £285,000 towards the scheme to meet the shortfall. As this scheme clearly falls within the broad definition of regeneration it is proposed that the whole of the Council's contribution be met from the earmarked contingency of £1m in 2004/05. This is the first approved use of the earmarked receipts.
- 3.11 The Sure Start Programme for Shildon and Newton Aycliffe West was approved by the Government in May 2003. Approval of the Programme included a capital grant of £1 million to the Sure Start Partnership to be used to create Children's Centres across the Programme's area by a deadline of March 2006. Cabinet has recently endorsed the Sure Start Shildon and Newton Aycliffe Partnership in its decision to procure the capital works through Durham County Council, which as Agent to the Partnership, will build two Children's Centres, on the sites of Stephenson Way Primary School in Newton Aycliffe and Timothy Hackworth Primary School in Shildon. Through the Council assisting the Sure Start Partnership to procure these two Children Centres, it is apparent that there is an emerging funding shortfall. A report is being prepared to consider the justification for the Council to provide some financial assistance to the project, so that the benefits of the Centres to the two local communities can be maximised and so help to improve services for young children and their families and support the regeneration of some of the most disadvantaged wards in the Borough.

- 3.12 The Council has been working with partners to attract resources for tackling private sector housing suffering from market failure. A joint bid with other South Durham Coalfield Councils has been made to the Regional Housing Board and an indicative allocation of £300,000 has been made from the Single Housing Investment Pot (SHIP) for 2004/05. This allocation is a supported borrowing approval and not a capital grant. Cabinet considered a report on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2004 that identified how these resources could be applied to the General Fund Housing Capital Programme. In terms of tackling market failure in older private sector housing, Ferryhill Station, Dean Bank and Chilton have been identified as three priority areas.
- 3.13 One Northeast has now approved the Council's Spennymoor Town Centre Improvement Programme with a grant of £2.186m to support total project costs of £3.4m. This is subject to a number of conditions including the submission of detailed costed proposals for works planned in the latter part of 2004/05 and 2005/06. Provision has already been made within the Regeneration Services Capital Programme to implement the Town Centre Improvements as previously reported to Cabinet on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2004.
- 3.14 A further supported borrowing approval of around £10,000 has been obtained during the year to assist in a contaminated land project at Timothy Terrace Allotments, Spennymoor. This supplements the earlier allocation of £655,000 taking total supported borrowing available to support capital spending to £665,000.
- 3.15 The Council continues to make progress in achieving the Decent Homes Standard through its major Housing Capital Programme. Financial forecasts currently indicate that the spending target of £7.7m will be achieved by the end of the year. This is based on information currently held and could be subject to change as contracts are awarded later in the year.
- 3.16 Due to the nature of capital projects it is difficult to predict exactly when financial payments will be made, unlike revenue budgets that can be profiled accurately, and therefore an accurate assessment of expected spending at a point in time cannot be made. Capital spending has traditionally been concentrated in the latter half of the year, particularly in the last quarter, and it is expected that this will again be the case for 2004/05. As Members will appreciate some capital projects have significant lead-in times and in other cases there is a need to secure funding approval from other agencies before expenditure is incurred, which can all lead to delays. However, as in 2003/04 underspending on key projects which have commenced during the year can be carried forward into 2005/06.
- 3.17 Indications are that overall spending across most portfolios at the end of the year will be in line with the revised spending targets set out above. Clearly, the substantial increase in capital spending programmes arising from the additional capital receipts requires careful planning in terms of management and delivery of projects. Cabinet has already considered reports outlining a strategy for dealing with housing land capital receipts and the promotion of regeneration in the Borough.

## Financing the Capital Programme

- 3.18 Assuming that revised spending targets are achieved at the year-end, resources for financing the capital programme are as follows:

	<b>Initial 2004/05 £'000</b>	<b>Revised 2004/05 £'000</b>
<b>Net Capital Spending Target (1)</b>	<b>10,200</b>	<b>14,600</b>
Financed by		
Government Allocations:		
- Supported Capital Expenditure	655	665
- Capital Grants and Contributions (2)	382	2,385
- Major Repairs Allowance	4,923	4,923
Capital Receipts	2,490	4,877
Direct Revenue Financing:		
- Housing Revenue Account	1,750	1,750
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>10,200</b>	<b>14,600</b>

(1) The target has been increased to reflect phasing in of works regarding the Spennymoor Town Centre Improvement Programme and the Gymnastic s Centre at Spennymoor Leisure Centre.

(2) This reflects phasing in of grants and contributions in respect of the above two schemes.

- 3.19 Assuming the spending targets are achieved and expected capital receipts are realised, there will be unused capital receipts of around £15m at the end of the financial year. Of this amount, £14m relates to spending in accordance with Council resolutions earmarked for affordable housing and regeneration initiatives in later years. As mentioned earlier, strategies and plans are currently being developed to apply these resources to major regeneration initiatives within the Borough and Cabinet will be kept fully informed of future progress.

## Corporate Policy Implications

- 3.20 This report does not contain proposals that would require any changes to the Council's agreed policy framework and corporate objectives.

## 4.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no further resource implications arising from this report. Planned spending commitments are in line with previously approved capital spending programmes set for the Council's portfolios.

## 5.0 CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Comprehensive consultation has previously been held during the construction of the 2004/05 Budget Framework. This report does not contain any proposals or recommendations requiring further consultation.

## 6.0 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 There are no other significant material considerations arising from the recommendations contained in this report.

## 7.0 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Consultation and engagement with Overview and Scrutiny Committees has previously been held in development and review of the 2004/05 Budget Framework.

**Contact Officer:** Brian Allen (Director of Resources)

**Telephone No.:** 01388-816166 ext. 4003

**E-Mail Address:** [ballen@sedgefield.gov.uk](mailto:ballen@sedgefield.gov.uk)

**Ward(s):** Not Ward Specific

### Background Papers:

1. Report to Special Council 27.02.04 Budget Framework 2004/05
2. Report to Cabinet 15.04.04 Leisure Services Capital Programme 2004/05
3. Report to Cabinet 15.04.04 Surestart Wave 6 Programme Shildon and Newton Aycliffe West Capital Works
4. Report to Cabinet 29.04.04 Leisure Services Capital Programme 2004/05
5. Report to Cabinet 03.06.04 Housing Capital and Improvement Works 2004/05
6. Report to Cabinet 17.06.04 Leisure Services Capital Programme 2004/05
7. Report to Cabinet 01.07.04 ICT Capital Programme 2004/05
8. Report to Cabinet 01.07.04 Regeneration Services Capital Programme 2004/05
9. Report to Cabinet 01.07.04 Asset Management– Housing Land Sale, Site J
10. Report to Cabinet 15.07.04 and Council 28.07.04 Budget Framework 2004/05 – Use of Housing Capital Receipts
11. Report to Cabinet 15.07.04 and Council 28.07.04 Statement of Accounts 2003/04
12. Report to Cabinet 29.07.04 Private Sector Grants Budget 2004/05
13. Report to Cabinet 02.09.04 Community Safety Capital Programme 2004/05
14. Report to Cabinet 16.09.04 Leisure Services – Gymnastics Centre Spennymoor Leisure Centre 2004/05
15. Report to Cabinet 30.09.04 Promotion of Regeneration in Borough – Housing Land Capital Receipts Strategy
16. Report to Cabinet 14.10.04 Housing Land Capital Receipts Strategy – Neighbourhood Renewal
17. Report to Cabinet 11.11.04 Single Housing Investment Pot (SHIP) Allocation

### Examination by Statutory Officers

	Yes	Not Applicable
1. The report has been examined by the Councils Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Councils S.151 Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# Item 6

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

Conference Room 1,  
Council Offices,  
Spennymoor

Tuesday,  
12 October 2004

Time: 10.00 a.m.

**Present:** Councillor A. Gray (Chairman) and  
  
Councillors Mrs. K. Conroy, B. Hall, D.M. Hancock, J.G. Huntington,  
J.M. Khan, B. Meek, G. Morgan and Mrs. I. Jackson Smith

**In Attendance:** Councillors Mrs. B.A. Clare, Mrs. J. Croft, V. Crosby, G.C. Gray,  
Mrs. J. Gray, Mrs. L. Hovvels, J.P. Moran, Mrs. E.M. Paylor, A. Smith and  
T. Ward

**Observer  
with  
Chairman's  
Consent** Councillors W. Waters

**Apologies:** Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, Mrs. A.M. Fleming, K. Henderson,  
J.M. Smith and K. Thompson

### **OSC(1).13/04 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman (for copy see file of Minutes).

### **OSC(1).14/04 REVIEW OF PARTNERSHIP CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS**

Consideration was given to a report prepared by the Audit Commission, regarding a Review of Partnership Control Arrangements within Sedgefield Borough Council. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that the objectives of the review were to:

- Identify the current range of partnerships the Council was involved in
- Confirm whether the Council was applying good practices

Detailed consideration was given to the Audit Commission's key findings and recommendations, together with the Council's response.

Members queried what arrangements would be made in relation to Town and Parish Councils, who gained Quality Status, delivering services on behalf of the Borough Council. It was explained that the partnership principle would apply when working with Town and Parish Councils.

Member's queried partnership arrangements relating to procurement. Members were informed that the principle of procurement was to work with others to provide best value. It was explained that sound principles of procurement were applied in order for the Council to progress forward.

CONCLUDED: That the report be noted

#### **OSC(1).15/04 HUMAN RESOURCES BEST VALUE REVIEW SERVICE IMPROVEMENT PLAN - PROGRESS UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a joint report of Head of Service Improvement and Head of Financial Services setting out progress to date on the implementation of the Human Resources Service Improvement Plan (for copy see file of Minutes).

The report set out progress to date on the following key strategic aims:-

- HR Strategy
- Corporate Policies and Procedures
- Single Status
- Sickness Absence
- Flexible Working Arrangements
- Payment of Creditors
- Communication and flow of information between Payroll/HR
- Unit costs of HR/Payroll
- Performance Management and Performance Indicators
- Electronic Service Delivery
- Central Training and Development
- Health, Safety and Welfare
- Industrial Relations

Members noted that 27 of the 51 actions in the revised Service Improvement Plan (SIP) were complete and 13 were on schedule. SIP Ref. 12.11 – Implement an Occupational Health Strategy was behind schedule as a result of recent staff turnover in this service.

Members expressed concern in relation to Members receiving different levels of training. It was felt that all elected Members should receive the same standard of training.

It was explained that the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) had stated that training needed to reflect training needs. Therefore all Members would receive corporate training and individual specific training would be identified through a training needs analysis.

Discussion took place in relation to the level of sickness within the Council. It was explained that Sedgefield Borough Council was in the bottom quartile with regard to sickness absence. The Doctor had withdrawn her services from the Council and the Nurse had taken employment at another authority.

Consideration was being given to outsourcing the Occupational Health

Service. If this service was outsourced the new service provider would be given targets to reduce the level of sickness within the Council.

Members questioned when single status would be fully implemented. It was explained that single status terms and conditions of employment had been agreed for several groups of workers although it could not be fully implemented until the pay and grading review had been completed.

With regard to the payment of creditors Members requested that an update report be given at a future meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1.

CONCLUDED: That progress made on the Human Resources Best Value Service Improvement Plan be noted.

**OSC(1).16/04 AREA FORUMS SCRUTINY REVIEW GROUP - SCOPE AND REMIT**

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive Officer seeking approval for the scope and remit relating to the Area Forums Review Group (for copy see file of Minutes).

The Chairman of the Review Group outlined the proposed Scope and Remit of the Review Group.

AGREED: That the scope and remit as outlined in the report be approved

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**ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Miss L. Moore Tel 01388 816166 Ext 4237

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# Item 7a

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA 1 FORUM

Council Chamber,  
Town Hall,  
Spennymoor

Monday,  
25 October 2004

Time: 6.30 p.m.

**Present:** Councillor J.M. Khan (Chairman) – Sedgefield Borough Council and

Councillor Mrs. A.M. Armstrong	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor Mrs. B. Graham	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor M.T.B. Jones	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor Mrs. C. Sproat	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Ms. C. Hardy	-	Durham Constabulary
Inspector S. Winship	-	Durham Constabulary
Sergeant S. Steen	-	Durham Constabulary
Councillor E. Foster	-	Durham County Council
Mrs C. Bell	-	Eden Residents Association
Mrs. P. Freeman	-	Eden Residents Association
R. Irving	-	Eden Residents Association
A. Stapleton	-	Eden Residents Association
Mrs. M. Khan-Willis	-	Police Authority
Mrs. E. Croft	-	Neighbourhood Watch
Mrs. M. Fordham	-	Sedgefield PCT
B. Parker	-	Sedgefield PCT
Mrs. G. Wills	-	Sedgefield PCT
Councillor S. A. Fleetham	-	Spennymoor Town Council
Councillor E. Summerson	-	Spennymoor Town Council
J. Smith	-	Tudhoe Community Centre
S. Bowes	-	Tudhoe Grange School
I. Geldart	-	Tudhoe Grange School
R. Jones	-	Tudhoe Grange School
N. Wood	-	Tudhoe Grange School
E. Hodgson	-	Local Resident
E. Mason	-	Local Resident
Mrs. E. Maddison	-	Local Resident
J.A. Ramsey	-	Local Resident
R. Stout	-	Local Resident

**Apologies:** A. Gray, B.M. Ord, G.W. Scott, K. Thompson and W. Waters (Sedgefield Borough Council)

**AF(1)16/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
Members had no interests to declare.

**AF(1)17/04 MINUTES**  
The Minutes of the meeting held on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes).

**AF(1)18/04**

**POLICE REPORT**

Inspector S. Winship was present at the meeting to give details of crime figures for the area.

<u>Type of Crime :</u>	<u>August 2004</u>	<u>September 2004</u>
Total Crime	107	89
Overall detection rate as percentage	30.8	33.7
Dwelling burglary	6	5
Burglary other	4	3
Vehicle crime	15	9
Criminal damage	38	34
Violent crime	28	17
Theft	30	27

Specific reference was made to the problems caused by the misuse of fireworks and the effect this had on anti-social behaviour. It was explained that the police had an action plan in place and had worked alongside retail outlets to minimise potential problems.

Inspector Winship informed Members that good intelligence was required to reduce the problems associated with fireworks and encouraged the public to report incidents.

Members of the Forum were given details of The Licensing Act 2003. It was reported that the Licensing Act 2003 would transfer the entire role of the administration of Licensing from the Licensing Justices Magistrates Courts to Local Authorities. The Council would therefore become the Licensing Authority in Sedgefield Borough.

Members of the Forum were made aware that Beat Surgeries would be held in Asda and Co-op Supermarkets throughout November, 2004. The surgeries would be advertised when final dates were announced.

**AF(1)19/04**

**SEDGEFIELD PRIMARY CARE TRUST**

Gloria Willis, Melanie Fordham and Bob Parker attended the meeting to give an update local health matters and performance figures.

Reference was made to the PCT Third Listening Event which was held on 18<sup>th</sup> October, 2004 in Newton Aycliffe Youth Centre from 10.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. It was explained that this event had been a success with a number of people attending.

With regard to the report, "Achieving Patient Access Targets and Baseline Performance Requirements" it was noted that targets in respect of Access to a GP within 2 working days and a Primary Care Professional within 1 working day had continued to be met. It was explained that under the Access Initiative Scheme, Sedgefield PCT had been awarded £77,600 for the progress made towards improving access across all primary, acute and mental health services. This money had been spent on improving IT services.

With regard to practical development within the PCT, it was reported that five GP's had been appointed and posts for two part time equivalents had been advertised.

Detailed discussion took place in relation to the development of Spennymoor Health Centre under the LIFT Programme.

It was explained that the PCT had partnered with an organisation called Bradford Northern to complete the project.

It was reported that the development of the Health Centre was a highly ambitious and complex scheme and was therefore running approximately ten months behind schedule. Spennymoor Health Centre did however, remain a high priority.

Members were informed that the PCT were carrying out feasibility studies on all development sites. It was anticipated that these results would set the schemes for the next few years.

It was pointed out that public, formal and statutory consultation would be carried out when the feasibility studies were complete.

**AF(1)20/04**

#### **CRIME AND DISORDER AUDIT**

Miss C. Hardy, Community Safety Partnership analyst and Sergeant S. Steen attended the meeting to give an interactive presentation in relation to the above.

Members were informed that the Crime and Disorder Audit took place every three years. The last Audit took place in 2001 and the Sedgefield Borough Community Safety Strategy 2002 – 05 was developed from the findings.

The Sedgefield Community Safety Partnership had undertaken a review of Crime and Disorder between April 2001 and March 2004.

Reference was made to the following: -

#### **Findings**

Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2001 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004 crime in Sedgefield Borough went up by 10%. This was mainly as a result of changes in the National Crime Recording Standards.

The findings indicated that the majority of crime in Sedgefield Borough was Criminal Damage and Violence against a Person.

#### **Criminal Damage**

Criminal Damage had gone up in Sedgefield Borough between 2001 and 2004 by 19%.

Sedgefield Borough had a higher rate of Criminal Damage per 1,000 population than the rest of County Durham and across England and

Wales.

Criminal Damage made up the largest proportion of all crime in Sedgefield Borough.

### **Theft**

Shoplifting in Sedgefield Borough had reduced by 42% since 2001-02. Other theft crimes, such as theft of pedal cycles or cash had increased by 10%.

### **Violent Crime**

In Sedgefield, Violence against a person had risen by 38% since 2001.

This was mainly as a result of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standards, which had led to a 47% rise in violence against a person across England and Wales.

### **Vehicle Related Crime**

Members noted that theft from motor vehicles had decreased by 1% since 2001 and theft of motor vehicles had decreased by 9%.

It was pointed out that out of 15 Community Safety Partnerships, Sedgefield Borough had the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest rate of vehicle related crime.

### **Burglary**

Dwelling burglary had reduced by 15% in Sedgefield Borough from 2001 and non-dwelling burglary had reduced by 30%.

Sedgefield Borough had the 4<sup>th</sup> lowest rate of burglaries when compared to other Community Safety Partnerships.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour**

Members noted that incidents of anti-social behaviour had decreased by 6% since 2001.

Youths Causing Annoyance was the single largest category that made up anti-social behaviour in Sedgefield Borough with 3,310 incidents being recorded by the Police in 2003/04.

It was emphasised that Anti-Social Behaviour was high on the Government's agenda.

### **Misuse of Drugs and Alcohol**

Drugs and alcohol related crime in Sedgefield Borough was low. The majority of crime and anti-social behaviour, however, was linked to drugs and alcohol misuse.

The Government had published a national alcohol strategy to address the impact of alcohol on our communities and Community Safety Partnerships had been asked to consider including the misuse of alcohol within their 2005/08 strategies.

After the presentation, Members of the Forum were asked nine questions which they answered through an Audience Response System.

It was explained that the nine questions would be asked at all five Area Forums throughout Sedgefield Borough and the findings would form part of the strategy for 2005/08.

**AF(1)21/04 YOUTH ENGAGEMENT SERVICE**

Apologies were received from Michael Robinson from the Youth Engagement Service.

**AF(1)22/04 NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN STEERING GROUP**

It was agreed that Councillor J. Khan be appointed as representative for the above Group.

**AF(1)23/04 LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting of the Local Strategic Partnership held on 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2004 (for copy see file of Minutes)

**AF(1)24/04 LOCAL ROAD SAFETY ISSUES**

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the Spennymoor Road Safety Local Working Party held on 8<sup>th</sup> July, 2004. (For copy see file of Minutes).

**AF(1)25/04 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2004 at 6.30 p.m. in the Council Chamber, Sedgefield Borough Council Offices, Spennymoor.

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ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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# Item 7b

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA 2 FORUM

Leisure Centre,  
Ferryhill

Tuesday,  
2 November 2004

Time: 6.30 p.m.

**Present:** Councillor G. Morgan (Chairman) – Sedgefield Borough Council and

Councillor R.A. Patchett	- Sedgefield Borough Council
C. Hall	- Castle Residents Association
G. Fortune	- C.A.V.O.S.
Sgt I. Rodgers	- Durham Constabulary
Councillor J. Chaplin	- Ferryhill Town Council
Councillor P. Crathorne	- Ferryhill Town Council
Councillor A. Denton	- Ferryhill Town Council
N. Porter	- Sedgefield PCT
S. Slaughter	- Sedgefield PCT
B. Hope	- Local Resident

**In**

**Attendance:** A. Blakemore, Mrs. G. Garrigan, G. Scanlon, T. Rix and S. Steen

**Apologies:**

Councillor B.F. Avery J.P.	- Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor Mrs. K. Conroy	- Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor T.F. Forrest	- Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor J.E. Higgin	- Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor A. Hodgson	- Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor B. Meek	- Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor D.A. Newell	- Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor Mrs. C. Potts	- Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor Ms. M. Predki	- Sedgefield Borough Council
S. Gater	- Ferryhill Business and Enterprise College
Inspector S. Winship	- Durham Constabulary

**AF(2)13/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
Members had no interests to declare.

**AF(2)14/04 MINUTES**  
The Minutes of the meeting held on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes).

**AF(2)15/04 POLICE REPORT**  
Sergeant Ian Rodgers was present at the meeting to give details of the crime figures and local initiatives for the Chilton, Ferryhill, West Cornforth and Bishop Middleham areas.

A report was circulated at the meeting giving details of total crime and overall detection rates for 2002, 2003 and 2004 for the Ferryhill Section.

It was reported that the crime statistics were as follows:

<u>Type of Crime :</u>	<u>August :</u>	<u>September :</u>
Total Crime :	126	121
Dwellinghouse Burglary	10	4
Burglary (Other)	20	17
Criminal Damage	52	45
Theft (General)	21	24

The Forum was given details of Operation Literature, which had been set up to tackle the problem of anti-social behaviour.

Specific reference was also made to the visits undertaken by the Police to all retailers of fireworks and schools in the Ferryhill area. It was noted that a number of fireworks had been seized from children.

**AF(2)16/04**

**SEDGEFIELD PRIMARY CARE TRUST**

Nigel Porter, Chief Executive, Sedgefield Primary Care Trust, attended the meeting to give an update on recent performance figures and local health matters.

He reported that there had been a meeting with representatives of Chilton Town Council to discuss the issue raised at the last meeting of the Forum regarding access to a GP in Chilton and a PCT manager was meeting with representatives of the Chilton Medical Practice the following day.

With regard to the response time for ambulance requests, it was reported that discussions were taking place between representatives of the North East Ambulance Service and the PCT with a view to improving performance.

With regard to the report, "Achieving Patient Access Targets and Baseline Performance Requirements" it was noted that the targets in respect of access to a GP within two working days and a Primary Care Professional within one day had continued to be met.

Specific reference was made to the NHS Improvement Plan, which set out the key commitments that the NHS would deliver to transform the patient's experience of the Health Service over the next four years. In four years time, the waiting time for treatment after seeing a GP, a consultant and diagnostic test, should have reduced to eighteen weeks for the whole journey.

It was pointed out that Primary Care Trusts needed to work closely with Local Authorities and depending on how the electorate voted on 4<sup>th</sup> November 2004 in North East Regional Assembly Referendum and Local Government Ballot, the Primary Care Trusts may need to be re-



organised to ensure they were aligned with the resultant local government structure.

The Forum was also informed that the PCT had held its third Listening Event on 18<sup>th</sup> October 2004 in Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre. The Event had been successful, with a number of people attending.

Reference was also made to the Annual Report for 2003/04, which had recently been launched, copies of which were available at the meeting.

#### **AF(2)17/04 CRIME AND DISORDER AUDIT**

Sergeant S. Steen and A. Blakemore attended the meeting to give an interactive presentation regarding the above.

It was reported that a Crime and Disorder Audit was undertaken every three years. The last Audit had been carried out in 2001 and Sedgefield Community Safety Strategy 2002-2005 had been developed from the findings. The main priorities of the current strategy were to tackle anti-social behaviour, drug-related crime, substance misuse, house burglary, vehicle crime and domestic violence.

It was explained that work had now commenced on a review of crime and disorder between April 2001 and March 2004 within Sedgefield Borough. The findings were as follows:

Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2001 and 31<sup>st</sup> March 2004, crime in Sedgefield Borough increased by 10%, which was mainly a result of the changes made to the National Crime Recording Standards in 2002, and led to a rise in recorded crime across England and Wales as a whole. The majority of crime in the Borough had been criminal damage, including criminal damage to vehicles. Theft and violent crime also made up a big proportion of the crime in the area.

#### **Criminal Damage**

Criminal damage had increased in the borough between 2001 and 2004 by 19%. Sedgefield Borough had a higher rate of criminal damage per 1,000 population than the rest of County Durham. Criminal damage to motor vehicles had increased by 33%.

#### **Theft**

Shoplifting in the borough had reduced by 42% since 2001/02, with only 372 offences being recorded in 2003/04. Other theft, including crimes such as handling stolen goods, theft of petrol, cycles, cash etc., had shown an increase of 10% from 1,819 crimes being recorded in 2001/02 to 905 in 2003/04 and in total those accounted for 100% of the category. Theft made up the second largest proportion of crime in the Borough.

#### **Violent Crime**

Violence against a person had increased from 816 offences in 2001/02 to 1,316 offences in 2003/04.

The percentage rates for sexual offences and robberies in Sedgefield Borough remained very low and the reported incidents of domestic abuse, involving partners and family members, had reduced by 1.3% between April 2001 and March 2004.

### **Vehicle Related Crime**

Vehicle related crime was made up of the categories of theft from a motor vehicle, theft of a motor vehicle and vehicle interference.

Theft from motor vehicles had decreased by 1% from 510 crimes in 2001/02 to 502 crimes in 2003/04.

Theft of motor vehicles had also decreased by 9% from 318 crimes in 2001/02 to 292 crimes in 2003/04.

Theft of and from vehicles was low compared across England and Wales. There were only 3.4 people for every 100,000 that live in Sedgefield who have had their vehicles stolen compared to the figure of 5.6 across England and Wales.

Vehicle interference had been reduced from 68 offences in 2001/02 to 31 in 2003/04.

### **Burglary**

House burglary had decreased by 15% in the borough from 405 in 2001/02 to 351 in 2003/04. Sedgefield Borough had the fourth lowest rate of burglaries when compared to other similar Community Safety Partnerships.

### **Misuse of Drugs and Drug-related Crime**

Drug-related crime in the borough was low. The majority of crime and anti-social behaviour, however, was linked to drugs and alcohol misuse.

The Government had recently published a National Alcohol Strategy to address the impact of alcohol on communities and the Community Safety Partnerships had been asked to consider including misuse of alcohol within their 2005-08 strategies.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour**

Incidents of anti-social behaviour had decreased by 6% since 2001.

Youth Causing Annoyance was the single largest category that made up anti-social behaviour in the borough, with 3,310 incidents being recorded by the Police in 2003/04. The category related to behaviour stemming from youths simply being in groups to abuse and intimidation.

It was pointed out that reducing anti-social behaviour was high on the Government's agenda as it affected the lives of many people across the country.

Following the presentation Forum members were asked nine questions which were answered through an audience response system. The nine questions were to be asked at all five Area Forums and the findings used to form the Sedgefield Community Safety Strategy for 2005-08.

**AF(2)18/04      LARGE SCALE VOLUNTARY TRANSFER - UPDATE**

Graham Scanlon, Sedgefield Borough Council, and John Craggs, Sunderland Housing Group were present at the meeting to update the Forum on the proposed housing stock transfer.

Graham Scanlon gave background information in respect of the Council's decision to transfer its housing stock.

It was explained that the Government required all Local Housing Authorities to achieve the minimum Decent Homes Standard by 2010 for all of their Council housing stock. Sedgefield Borough Council would have sufficient resources to meet the Decent Homes Standard, however, not sufficient to deliver the higher standard required by tenants, known locally as the 'Sedgefield Standard'. The Council had therefore decided to consider the following options to secure the necessary additional investment:

- Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT)
- Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO)
- Private Finance Initiative (PFI)

Following a study of the options, the Council selected LSVT as the way forward to generate sufficient investment to deliver a high standard of modernisation and estate improvement, better housing services and wider regeneration initiatives throughout the Borough. Large Scale Voluntary Transfer would mean that the Housing Service would be run by a new Local Housing Company, which would be a not for profit making organisation and would be regulated by the Housing Corporation.

Stock transfer could however only proceed once tenants had said yes to transfer through a vote at a ballot carried out independently by the Electoral Reform Service.

It was explained that in December 2003 the Council agreed a process and established a 'Choice of Landlord Stakeholder Panel' to make recommendations regarding the most suitable landlord for the proposed transfer of its housing stock. The Panel was made up of councillors, staff and tenants and received independent advice from consultants. Five formal expressions of interest were received and three applicants were short-listed.

Following consideration of the detailed submissions and all other evidence gathered during the process, including site visits and presentations, the Panel concluded that the proposal from Sunderland Housing Group offered the best value to the Council and its tenants. This recommendation was accepted by both Cabinet and Council. It

was felt that Sunderland Housing Group would assist the Council in delivering its strategic aims, supporting the delivery of the stock transfer process and the setting up of Sedgefield Housing Company.

John Craggs from Sunderland Housing Group then gave a presentation to the Forum on the benefits of transferring the stock to Sunderland Housing Group and setting up the 'Sedgefield Housing Company'.

It was reported that the new company would develop the 'Sedgefield Standard' that offered a range of improvement works, including fencing, boundary treatment, environmental works and security measures. Sedgefield Housing Company would have £115m available over the next 10 years for investment in the housing stock in the Borough, compared with £62m that the Council would have.

Slides showing new kitchens, bathrooms and new houses constructed by Sunderland Housing Group were shown. It was noted that Sunderland Housing Group had already modernised 10,000 properties.

Specific reference was made to rents and tenants' rights. It was pointed out that under the Government's ten year rent restructuring programme existing rents were to be moved towards target rent levels, thereby removing the differences in rents set by local authorities and Registered Social Landlords. The application of the new formula meant that local discretion in setting rents to generate income for housing stock improvements was reduced. The only variable element in the formula was the individual property valuation, which was a reflection of trends in the wider market. The Government expected Local Authorities and Registered Social Landlords to have the same target rents by 2012.

It was pointed out that if tenants could buy their homes now with the Council, they would still be able to buy their homes under the preserved Right to Buy scheme. The new Local Housing Company would continue tenants' discount entitlement. All the main rights the tenants had with the Council would be protected and written down in a new legal binding assured tenancy agreement.

The new company would be managed by a Management Board, consisting of five councillors, five tenants and five independent representatives. It would be able to build new houses, however the type and location of houses would depend on local need. The staff and the workforce would transfer to the new company and would continue to provide services to tenants in the same way as they did at present.

Specific reference was also made to the consultations that were to take place prior to the ballot. Various ways would be used to communicate information to tenants such as home visits, public meetings, newsletters, posters, mobile display units and Resident Group meetings. It was also noted that an Independent Tenant Advisor had been appointed to offer independent and impartial advice to tenants.

Members of the Forum were given the opportunity to ask questions and invited to visit properties managed by Sunderland Housing Group.

**AF(2)19/04 LSP BOARD MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Board Meeting of Sedgefield Borough Local Strategic Partnership held on 21<sup>st</sup> July, 2004 were considered and noted.

**AF(2)20/04 DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> January 2005 at 6.30 p.m. at Chilton and Windlestone Community College.

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**ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Mrs. G. Garrigan Tel 01388 816166 Ext 4240

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