

# CABINET

Thursday,  
20 January 2005  
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 meetings held on:

- (a) 6th January 2005 (Pages 1 - 4)
- (b) 13th January 2005 - To be circulated

**4. AUDIT COMMISSION - ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER**

Arrangements have been made for Catherine Andrew and Sarah Diggle from the Audit Commission to attend the meeting to report on the above. Copy of the letter is attached. (Pages 5 - 18)

### **OTHER DECISIONS**

#### **ALL PORTFOLIOS**

**5. SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE - AUDIT COMMISSION  
INSPECTION FINDINGS AND ACTION PLANNING**

Report of Head of Strategy And Regeneration. (Pages 19 - 30)

#### **COMMUNITY SAFETY PORTFOLIO**

**6. NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES - CCTV AND ALARM CONTROL ROOM**

Joint Report of Chief Executive Officer And Director of Neighbourhood Services  
(Pages 31 - 40)

#### **CULTURE AND RECREATION PORTFOLIO**

**7. OPERATION OF SCHOOL POOLS AT FISHBURN AND THORNHILL  
GARDENS, SHILDON**

Report of Director of Leisure Services. (Pages 41 - 44)

**8. CAR PARKING AT LOCOMOTION, NATIONAL RAILWAY MUSEUM AT  
SHILDON**

Report of Director of Leisure Services. (Pages 45 - 50)

## 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  
12<sup>th</sup> January 2005

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

This page is intentionally left blank

# Item 3a

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL CABINET

Conference Room 1,  
Council Offices,  
Spennymoor

Thursday,  
6 January 2005

Time: 10.00 a.m.

**Present:** Councillor R.S. Fleming (Chairman) and  
Councillors Mrs. A.M. Armstrong, Mrs. B. Graham, A. Hodgson,  
M. Iveson, K. Noble, J. Robinson J.P and W. Waters

**In Attendance:** Councillors Mrs. B.A. Clare, Mrs. K. Conroy, V. Crosby, G.C. Gray,  
D.M. Hancock, J.E. Higgin, Mrs. L. Hovvels, J.G. Huntington, G. Morgan,  
A. Smith, J.M. Smith, Mrs. I. Jackson Smith, Mrs. C. Sproat, T. Ward and  
J. Wayman J.P

**Apologies:** Councillors D.A. Newell

### **CAB.123/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

It was noted that the following Councillors would be declaring an interest:

Councillor R.S. Fleming – Prejudicial interest – Item 4 – CCTV Cameras – Great Aycliffe Town Park - Member of Great Aycliffe Town Council

Councillor M. Iveson – Prejudicial interest – Item 4 – CCTV Cameras – Great Aycliffe Town Park – Member of Great Aycliffe Town Council

### **CAB.124/04 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **CAB.125/04 MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS - DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PROJECT**

Consideration was given to a report regarding the above. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership had requested Sedgefield Borough Council to take over the management responsibilities for the Domestic Violence Project, including the employment of three staff that had contracts of employment up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006.

It was noted that there would be no financial implications for the Borough Council arising from the takeover as funding for the Project was made in full by the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, using Building Safer Communities grant, which was secure for 2004/05 and 2005/06.

It was pointed out that arrangements would be made via the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership for budgets for the service to take account of any possible redundancy costs should the service not be maintained beyond 2005/06.

*RESOLVED : That the Council takes over the management of the Domestic Violence Project, including the employment of staff on behalf of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.*

### **CAB.126/04 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3**

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting held on 14<sup>th</sup> December 2004. (For copy see file of Minutes).

*RESOLVED : That the minutes be received.*

### **CAB.127/04 AREA 1 FORUM**

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> December, 2004. (For copy see file of Minutes).

*RESOLVED : That the minutes be received.*

N.B. In accordance with Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillors R.S. Fleming and M. Iveson declared a prejudicial interest in the following item and left the meeting for the duration of discussion and voting on the item.

Councillor K. Noble in the chair.

### **CAB.128/04 CCTV CAMERAS - GREAT AYCLIFFE TOWN PARK**

Consideration was given to a report regarding a request received from Great Aycliffe Town Council for Sedgfield Borough Council to meet the capital costs associated with the provision of two CCTV cameras in Great Aycliffe Town Park. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that the Town Council had already made a significant investment in the Park facility and had entered into a Service Level Agreement with the Borough Council for the services of two additional Neighbourhood Wardens. The estimated cost of CCTV cameras was £48,400.

Members proposed that as the Council's CCTV arrangements were currently being reviewed, consideration of the request should be deferred pending the outcome of the review.

*RESOLVED :*                    *That consideration of the request for funding be deferred pending the outcome of the CCTV review.*

**Published on 6<sup>th</sup> January these Minutes contain no key decisions and will be implemented immediately.**

**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

This page is intentionally left blank



## Annual Audit and Inspection Letter

# **Sedgefield Borough Council**

### INSIDE THIS LETTER

#### PAGES 2 - 9

- Executive summary
- Key messages
- Council performance
- Accounts and governance
- Other work
- Looking forward
- Closing remarks

#### PAGES 10 - 13

#### **Appendices**

- Appendix 1 - Reports issued during 2003/04
- Appendix 2 - Scope of audit and inspection
- Appendix 3 - Audit and inspection fee

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>Reference:</b> | SE001 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter |
| <b>Date:</b>      | December 2004                            |

## Executive summary

### The purpose of this Letter

This is our Annual Audit and Inspection Letter for Members, which incorporates the annual audit Letter for 2003/04, and is presented by the council's relationship manager and district auditor. The Letter summarises the conclusions and significant issues arising from our recent audit and inspections of the council.

We have issued separate reports during the year. These reports are listed at Appendix 1 for information.

Appendix 2 sets out the scope of audit and inspection.

Appendix 3 provides information about the fees charged.

## Key messages

### Council performance

The council was assessed as a good Authority in the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) in 2003. It is addressing the weaknesses identified in CPA and is making good progress to deliver its corporate ambitions, which are now set out in a corporate plan. It has produced a number of strategies for improved performance. There have been improvements in service performance across the council's priorities. However the council is not yet able to measure its progress effectively against some of its objectives.

### Housing – large scale voluntary transfer

The council has made significant progress towards the large scale voluntary transfer of housing stock and chose a preferred landlord in May 2004. Ongoing consultation with tenants in advance of their vote was suspended in the run up to the referendum on an elected regional assembly and local government reorganisation but has now been restarted.

### Financial position

The council already has relatively high levels of useable reserves and significant capital receipts are expected. The council has developed a capital receipts strategy and is in the process of appointing consultants to advice on the development of three housing areas.

### Local government reorganisation publicity

We received a number of complaints about publicity issued by Durham councils in advance of the referendum on the proposals for local government reorganisation in Durham. The district auditor's overall view, after reviewing the publicity, was that some of the expenditure incurred may have been unlawful as it may have contravened the Publicity Code.

Following discussions the council put more robust arrangements in place to ensure that it did not contravene the Code.

### Action needed by the council

The council should:

- complete the development of measures based on outcomes for users and/or the community that will assist in monitoring and assessing progress on corporate ambitions and community outcomes;
- continue work to make communities safer by completing the community safety strategy and mainstreaming section 17 issues;
- continue efforts to lower the level of staff sickness and improve the capacity of the council to deliver improved services;
- address areas of low and mixed performance, such as processing planning applications;
- continue the process of consulting with tenants prior to the vote on large scale voluntary stock transfer;
- continue to develop the capital receipts strategy to ensure capital expenditure is clearly linked to corporate priorities.

## Council performance

### Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA)

On behalf of the government we undertook a classification of all local Authorities in England in 2002/04. Sedgefield was assessed as a 'good' council (out of five possible ratings: excellent, good, fair, weak and poor).

The key strengths of the council were effective community leadership through partnership, provision of quality services and improvements for the local community, and firm foundations for future improvement.

Key weaknesses were the absence of a corporate plan to focus the council's efforts, underdeveloped communications, inconsistent performance management, uneven service performance and incomplete plans for the future.

### CPA and improvement

*The council is addressing the weaknesses identified in CPA and is making good progress to deliver its corporate ambitions, which are now set out in a corporate plan. It has produced a number of strategies for improved performance. There have been improvements in service performance across the council's priorities. However the council is not yet able to measure its progress effectively against some of its objectives.*

Whilst we have not completed a formal assessment of progress this year, in this section of the Letter we comment on the progress the council has made so far.

Overall the council is making good progress. It is clear that the council is putting much effort into delivering improvements and steady progress is being made across most areas. A number of strategies have been developed to deliver improved performance. Developing sound and effective business and service plans will be the key to successfully implementing them.

The council is making good progress in implementing the actions which are set out in the new corporate plan to deliver its corporate ambitions and to address the weaknesses identified by CPA. However, measurement of the extent of progress and assessing the effectiveness of these actions is partially hampered by the lack of key and relevant measures that will demonstrate the success in achieving some of the community outcomes. There are links to detailed targets in some areas but the focus of performance measures is not always directly relevant to the desired outcome.

Against the four corporate ambitions there is evidence of positive progress in all, though some community outcomes, such as 'making communities safe', have some mixed results. Performance indicators in the main are rising although there are a number such as the number of days lost due to sickness which are deteriorating. Actions are being taken or are planned to address all the weakness identified in the CPA although it is difficult at this stage to make any definitive assessment of the impact they are having.

### Other Audit Commission inspections

#### Services for young people

We carried out an inspection of the council's services for children and young people in 2004. We judged the services to be fair with promising prospects for improvement. Key strengths included the council's understanding of the area and the needs of young people, its prioritisation of services for young people, its strong partnership working for the services and active involvement in the LSP young people's partnership, knowledgeable staff, and a good range of activities and projects for children and young people. However work to develop a single strategy and performance measures for these services was at a very early stage and there was no systematic approach to consulting young people.

The inspection recommended that the council consults young people on the development of an action plan for services to children and young people, and that the council should set out clearly what young people can expect from the council; the inspection also recommended that the action plan sets challenging targets for improvement.

### **E-government**

All dealings with the public should be capable of being conducted electronically by December 2005. Sedgefield is part of the Durham e-government partnership, which consists of both county and district councils. We undertook a staged inspection of this partnership in spring 2004.

This inspection found that the building of a working partnership had been largely achieved, but the partnership now needs to focus on realising the benefits of e-government for the people of county Durham. It should develop an improvement plan with clear milestones, responsibilities, resources and improvement targets. This plan can then be monitored to ensure delivery within planned timescales.

When the improvement plan is available, we will complete our inspection work in this area.

### **Performance management**

*Overall performance management arrangements have improved with the development of the corporate plan and medium-term financial plan and review of strategic working groups.*

The council has improved performance management arrangements in the year by reviewing the existing strategic working groups, developing the corporate plan to focus on priorities and developing a medium-term financial plan to clearly link financial resources to corporate priorities.

Service planning is a key building block within any performance management system. The council acknowledges the need to strengthen its service planning arrangements to ensure clear links with the corporate plan. In order to help ensure quality and consistency there is a need for revised corporate guidance to inform the development of effective service plans.

The guidance should set out the need for service plans to:

- contain clear links to the delivery of corporate priorities set out within the recently revised corporate plan;
- set out clear priorities and non-priorities for each service area;
- contain measurable targets linked to service and corporate priorities;
- be informed by consultation with users and local residents;
- incorporate the council's approach to procurement; and
- incorporate the council's developing approach to risk management.

The development of service planning within the council will provide the opportunity to strengthen the link between service and financial planning.

### **People management**

*The council has recently completed a restructure which is intended to strengthen the human resources function. Work is continuing to develop a longer-term approach to human resources by developing workforce planning with clear links to the objectives in the new corporate plan.*

The council completed a restructure in September 2004 which aims to create a more strategic human resources section within the overall resources directorate.

Progress on introducing a longer term approach to human resources has been delayed whilst the overall corporate plan and medium-term financial plan have been developed. The council should now develop its approach to workforce planning to reflect new and emerging corporate and service issues. Recent development of job descriptions should be supported by an assessment of competencies to inform the council's approach to workforce planning.

It is important that staffs are clear about their individual contribution to the delivery of corporate priorities. The council's existing employee development programme includes individual targets but these need to be more clearly linked to the delivery of service and corporate priorities.

As part of the development of the performance management framework, and in order to utilise staff capacity more effectively, the council should set staff individual targets linked to service and corporate priorities.

## Community planning

*The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has a number of key measures in place to assist with effective partnership working. Recently introduced performance management arrangements should be strengthened to provide an increased focus on outcomes.*

The community strategy was developed in 2003 and the LSP has recently adopted a performance management framework. To strengthen the focus on outcomes the council should encourage the LSP to:

- develop a detailed action plan to support the community strategy and assist in monitoring and implementation;
- provide training for partners on using the new performance management framework;
- develop formal work programmes for the LSP policy groups to ensure focus on the priorities set out in the community strategy; and
- conduct a review of effectiveness of the partnership to identify areas with scope for improvement.

## Housing

*The council has made significant progress towards large scale voluntary transfer, appointing a preferred landlord in May 2004. Ongoing consultation with tenants had been suspended to avoid confusion with the referendum but has now been restarted.*

The council appointed Sunderland housing group as the preferred landlord for the large scale voluntary transfer of council houses in May 2004. A dedicated project team has been established in separate offices to oversee the actual transfer process. The team is made up of officers from Sunderland housing group and the council.

Ongoing consultation with tenants was temporarily suspended to avoid confusion between the tenants vote and the recent referendum on an elected regional assembly and local government reorganisation. The council has now restarted the process of consulting with tenants to ensure their views are taken into account prior to the vote on large scale voluntary transfer.

## Performance information

*The council has systems in place to collect performance information. Performance against targets is monitored by the strategic working groups. We found instances where performance indicators had not been calculated in-line with definitions.*

We reviewed the best value performance indicators as part of our best value performance plan work.

The council has systems in place to collect performance indicators and collate them centrally for audit. Performance information is regularly reported to Members through the strategic working groups and performance against targets is monitored.

We found a number of performance indicators that had been incorrectly calculated or were not in line with the set definitions. Changes identified were minor and performance information was corrected prior to publication of the best value performance plan.

The council should ensure that officers refer to the relevant guidance when preparing performance information to ensure that calculations are both correct and derived from quality systems.

## Accounts and governance

We gave your accounts an unqualified audit opinion on 25 November 2004. The accounts were again produced early to a high standard.

Your overall corporate governance arrangements are satisfactory in most key areas however we raised concerns with you about the council's spending on publicity relating to local government reorganisation in Durham.

### Audit of 2003/04 accounts

We gave an unqualified opinion on the council's accounts on 25 November 2004.

#### Matters arising from the final accounts audit

The published accounts are an essential means by which the council reports its stewardship of the public funds at its disposal and its financial performance in the use of those resources. Members approved the council's annual accounts on 28 July 2004.

Timeliness in producing the accounts will become increasingly important over the next few years as the deadline for completion of the accounts is brought forward in line with the government's requirement. Whilst the accounts have been prepared to meet the requirements this year and would meet next year's deadline if the same timetable is achieved, the deadlines become increasingly more difficult to achieve and will require early planning and scheduling of key meetings in the future.

#### Report to those with responsibility for governance in the council

We are required to report to those charged with governance (in this case Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1) any issues of concern before we give an opinion on the financial statements.

We are pleased to say that there were no significant issues that we needed to discuss with Members this year before issuing our opinion and this was confirmed in a Letter sent to the chair of Overview and Scrutiny 1 on 19 October 2004. The financial statements were again produced early to a high standard.

## Financial standing

*The council's financial position is healthy. Links are currently being developed between the new corporate plan and the medium-term financial plan. Significant capital receipts are expected and a clear investment strategy is being developed with Members to ensure spending is in line with council priorities.*

### General fund spending and balances

The general fund balance stood at £2.3 million at 31 March 2004 which represents 14 per cent of net operating expenditure. In addition the council hold £7.2 million of usable reserves (£4.2 million earmarked reserves and £3 million useable capital receipts) which represents 44 per cent of net operating expenditure This compares favourably with other districts nationally.

For 2004/05, based on figures to the end of September 2004, there is a projected under-spend for the general fund of £348,000 mainly due to savings from debt rescheduling and increased investment income. Savings have been set aside to assist the council in funding the expected costs of job evaluation.

### Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

The housing revenue account (HRA) balance stood at £3 million at 31 March 2004, which represents 9 per cent of HRA expenditure. This is comparable to other districts nationally.

For 2004/05 to the end of September there is no projected call on balances in-line with the approved budget.

### Capital receipts

The council held usable capital receipts of £3 million at 31 March 2004 and is expecting significant additional receipts from housing land sales in coming months.

A capital receipts strategy has been developed to ensure that capital expenditure is in-line with council priorities.

### Medium-term financial planning

The council has developed an overall corporate plan and medium-term financial plan which were reported to Cabinet and adopted by full council in November 2004.

This links financial resources and corporate objectives and now needs to be developed through budget setting and business planning processes.

### Systems of internal financial control

*We have not identified any significant weaknesses in the overall control framework however the introduction of the new financial management system on 1 April 2004 has caused delays in reconciling the bank account in the current year.*

*The council is not fully aware at a corporate level of all the partnerships that it has entered into either formally or informally and has agreed to identify the extent of joint working.*

### Internal Audit

Our assessment is that Internal Audit provides an effective service overall and met CIPFA standards. However the new CIPFA Code of Practice for Internal Audit, in place for 2004/05, expands the role of Internal Audit, placing particular focus on reporting to Members and providing an opinion on the council's internal control framework.

The new Code is an important development for Internal Audit and arrangements will need to be reviewed to ensure compliance with all of the standards. The new Code will form the basis for our review of Internal Audit in the 2004/05 audit.

### Current year bank reconciliation

The introduction of a new financial management system on 1 April 2004 has caused delays in reconciling the bank account in the current year.

The council has responded by designating an officer full time to resolving the problems and full reconciliation of four bank accounts has been achieved to the end of September 2004.

The general drawing account has been reconciled to the end of May 2004 and work is ongoing to ensure all accounts are reconciled to the end of November by Christmas. The council has maintained daily checks on all cash receipts and cheques to ensure that no unlawful or fraudulent transactions have occurred and to allow ongoing production of accurate budgetary control information.

### Partnership control arrangements

The council is not fully aware at a corporate level of all the partnerships that it has entered into either formally or informally. Consequently no comprehensive record exists of all partnerships entered into by the council.

The council has agreed to identify the extent of its joint working with other bodies. Members should ensure that any future commitments arising out of these arrangements are quantified and that appropriate controls are in place to monitor service delivery and the use of resources.

### Standards of financial conduct and the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption

*We have not identified any significant weaknesses in your arrangements for monitoring standards of conduct or the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption.*

Our review of the council's arrangements showed no major changes from the arrangements in place for 2002/03.

### National Fraud Initiative (NFI)

The council took part in the Audit Commission's national fraud initiative (NFI) 2002/03. The NFI, which is undertaken every two years, brings together data from local Authorities, NHS Bodies, government departments and other agencies, to detect a wide range of frauds against the public sector. Total savings from the 2002/03 exercise exceeded £83 million, of which over £15,100 savings were identified at this Authority.

The Commission is repeating the exercise this year and will again collect payroll, pensions, housing benefits, student loan and housing rents data from Authorities.

Alongside the core exercise a number of pilot initiatives are being undertaken at selected sites. These are focused on risk areas that were highlighted by Authorities and include payments made to privately run care homes, abuse of blue badge parking permits, serial insurance claimants and duplicate payments to suppliers. These pilot areas, if they prove effective, will be incorporated into future NFI exercises.

### Legality of transactions

*We have not identified any significant weaknesses in the council's framework for ensuring the legality of its significant financial transactions however we were concerned about expenditure on publicity in advance of the referendum on local government reorganisation in Durham.*

We have not identified any significant weaknesses in the council's framework for ensuring the legality of its significant financial transactions. All reports are discussed at management team and formally signed off by the statutory officers prior to submission to Members.

### Local government reorganisation publicity

We received a number of complaints about publicity issued by Durham councils (including Sedgefield) in connection with the options for local government in Durham. The complaints alleged that there had been unlawful spending on publicity which did not comply with the guidance set out in the Code of Recommended Practice on local Authority publicity.

After reviewing the publicity issued by the Durham councils the District auditor's view was that some of the expenditure incurred may have been unlawful.

However, the district auditor decided not to take formal audit action because:

- the amount of expenditure involved was relatively minor and he did not wish to add expenditure to the public purse by taking formal audit action;
- the supporters of both options for the future configuration of councils in Durham may have acted, in some respects, outside the publicity Code so some balance was achieved overall;
- the restricted period (for publicity) was about to start and he did not wish to reopen the debate during that period.

Following discussions the council put more robust arrangements in place to ensure that it did not contravene the Code.

## Other work

### Grant claims

Over recent years the number of claims requiring audit certification has grown and audit fees have risen in line with this growth. In accordance with strategic regulation, the Audit Commission has adopted a more risk-based approach to the certification of grant claims. With effect from 2003/04 the smaller claims have not been subject to audit or have received a lighter touch. The approach to larger claims has been determined by risk and the adequacy of the council's control environment.

The council has arrangements in place for managing and quality assuring grant claims submitted for audit, however reliance on the control environment has been limited in the first year of the new grant arrangements as we sought to establish the controls in place for each specific grant.

Grant fees charged to the end of October totalled £22,300 and a further £8,000 is expected by the end of December 2004.



## Looking forward

### Future audit and inspection work

We have an agreed plan for 2004/05 and we have reported in this Letter those aspects that have already been completed. The remaining elements of that plan, including our audit of the 2004/05 accounts, will be reported in next year's Annual Letter.

We will seek to ensure, wherever possible, that our work relates to the improvement priorities of the council when planning our programme of work for 2005/06. We will seek to reconsider, with you, your improvement priorities in the light of the CPA assessment and your own analysis, and develop an agreed programme by 31 March 2005.

### Revision to the Code of audit practice

The Audit Commission has consulted on a revised Code of audit practice for application to the audit of the 2005/06 accounts. The new Code, which will be laid before parliament in January 2005, is designed to secure:

- a more streamlined audit, which is proportionate to risk and targeted on areas where auditors have most to contribute to improvement;
- a stronger emphasis on value for money, focussing on corporate performance and financial management arrangements (rather than individual services and functions); and
- better and clearer reporting of the results of audits.

Further details will be provided in the audit and inspection plan 2005/06.

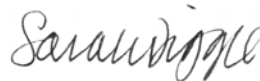
## Closing remarks

This Letter has been discussed and agreed with the chief executive and director of resources. A copy of the Letter will be presented at the cabinet on 20 January 2005.


The council has taken a positive and constructive approach to our audit and inspection we would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the council's assistance and co-operation.

### Availability of this Letter

This Letter will be published on the Audit Commission's website at [www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk), and also on the council's website.



**Sarah Diggle**  
Relationship Manager



**Steve Nicklin**  
District Auditor  
December 2004

## Status of our Letter to the council

*Our Annual Audit and Inspection Letter is prepared in the context of the statement of responsibilities of auditors and audited bodies issued by the Audit Commission. Annual Audit and Inspection Letters are prepared by relationship managers and appointed auditors and addressed to Members and officers. They are prepared for the sole use of the audited and inspected body, and no responsibility is taken by the Audit Commission or its appointed auditors to any Member or officer in their individual capacity, or to any third party.*

**Reports issued during 2003/04**

| Report  | Date issued    |
|---|----------------|
| Audit Plan  | July 2003 *    |
| E-government Stage 2 Inspection Interim Report      | April 2004     |
| Internal Audit Letter                               | May 2004       |
| Core Process Review Letter                          | June 2004      |
| Partnership Control Arrangements                    | June 2004      |
| Financial Aspects of Corporate Governance           | September 2004 |
| Best Value Letter (2004/05 Audit)                   | September 2004 |
| SAS 610 Letter                                      | October 2004   |
| Final Accounts Memo                                 | November 2004  |
| Audit Opinion and Certificate                       | November 2004  |
| Inspection of Services to Children and Young People | November 2004  |

\* Covers two years 2002/03 and 2003/04.

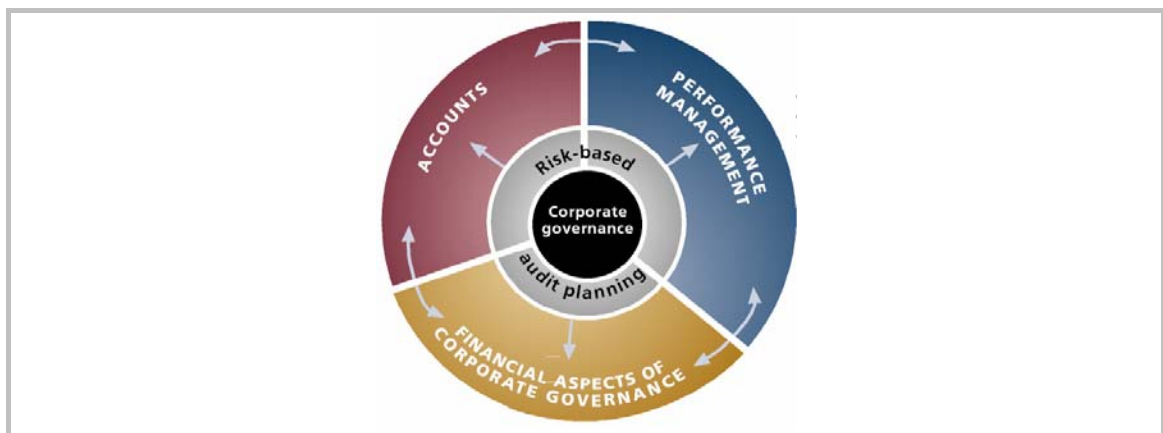
## Scope of audit and inspection

### Audit

Our main objective as your appointed auditor is to plan and carry out an audit that meets the requirements of the Code of audit practice. We adopt a risk-based approach to planning our audit, and our audit work has focused on your significant financial and operational risks that are relevant to our audit responsibilities.

Central to our audit are your corporate governance arrangements. Our audit is then structured around the three elements of our responsibilities as set out in the Code and shown in Exhibit 1.

#### EXHIBIT 1 THE THREE MAIN ELEMENTS OF OUR AUDIT OBJECTIVES



#### Accounts

- Opinion.

#### Financial aspects of corporate governance

- Financial standing.
- Systems of internal financial control.
- Standards of financial conduct and the prevention and detection of fraud and corruption.
- Legality of transactions.

#### Performance management

- Use of resources.
- Performance information.
- Best value performance plan.

## Inspection

Inspection work is based around section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999, which requires us to carry out inspections and deliver reports that will:

- enable the council and the public to judge whether best value is being delivered;
- enable the council to assess how well it is doing;
- enable the Government to assess how well its policies are being implemented; and
- identify failing services where remedial action may be necessary.

The Audit Commission has circulated to all audited bodies a statement that summarises the key responsibilities of auditors. Our audit has been conducted in accordance with the principles set out in that statement. What we say about the results of our audit should be viewed in the context of that more formal background.

## Audit and inspection fee

### Audit fee update

| Audit area                                   | Plan 2003/04<br>£ | Actual 2003/04<br>£ |
|--|-------------------|---------------------|
| Accounts                                     | 20,000            | 20,000              |
| Financial aspects of corporate governance    | 35,000            | 35,000              |
| Performance                                  | 30,000            | 30,000              |
| <b>TOTAL CODE OF AUDIT PRACTICE FEE</b>      | <b>85,000</b>     | <b>85,000</b>       |
| Grant claim certification                    | 32,000            | 30,300              |
| Additional voluntary work (under section 35) | 0                 | 0                   |

### Inspection fee update

The full year inspection fee is £17,856. The work reported in this Audit and Inspection Letter has been funded by an element of the fee covering 2003/04 and by an element of the fee covering 2004/05. In both years the actual fee will be in-line with that planned.

This page is intentionally left blank

# Item 5

## REPORT TO CABINET

20th JANUARY 2005

## REPORT OF HEAD OF STRATEGY AND REGENERATION

### All Portfolios

### SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AUDIT COMMISSION INSPECTION FINDINGS AND ACTION PLANNING

#### 1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the findings and recommendations of the Audit Commission (AC) in respect of the Council's Services for Children and Young People, as set out in its report of December 2004.
- 1.2 The report rates the Council's Services for Children and Young People as **fair** (one star), with **promising prospects for improvement** and recommends four broad improvement areas...
- Setting out formally the Council's approach in a Young People's Charter
  - Ensuring that services are focused on outcomes
  - Determining the value for money of the current approach
  - Developing a structured consultation framework
- 1.3 An Action Plan has been prepared addressing these four improvement areas and the report seeks approval for the establishment of an officer working group to develop and deliver the Action Plan in accordance with the AC's three month deadline.
- 1.4 In addition the report provides an estimate of the financial resources required to support the Action Plan.

#### 2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet...

1. Notes the findings and recommendations of the Audit Commission in respect of the Council's Services for Children and Young People, as set out in its report of December 2004.
2. Agrees that the Service Review Action Plan be developed and delegates authority to an officer working group to develop the Plan as appropriate to achieve the overall objectives, within the agreed resource parameters.

### **3 INSPECTION OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

#### **Background to Inspection**

- 3.1 The Council's CPA report, published in April 2004, identified Services for Children and Young People (the 5-19 group – the standard youth work age range) as presenting 'high risk of service failure'. As a result, a 'light touch' inspection of this crosscutting service area was agreed with the AC as part of the Council's post-CPA Improvement Plan.
- 3.2 The timetabling of this project dovetailed usefully with the Council's growing involvement in the development of children's services across the Borough via the LSP structure, particularly its Children and Young People's Partnership (CYPP). This was established to oversee strategic developments in respect of Services for Children across the Borough e.g. the integration of core services for children as set out in the Children Act 2004.
- 3.3 The Children's Act 2004 places a reciprocal duty on other organisations (including shire district councils) to enter into partnerships with the top tier and other local partners to improve the wellbeing of children and young people. The Council's leading role in the CYPP offers an opportunity to develop the contribution of its various services to the improvement of the overall outcomes for children and to explore joined up consultations with other organisations working with children in the Borough.

#### **Inspection Methodology**

- 3.4 The methodology agreed with the AC was akin to that used for service area diagnostics under CPA i.e. the preparation by the Council of a self-assessment against pre-determined 'Key Lines of Enquiry' and an Action Plan to address the gaps identified, followed by an on-site inspection testing the Council's findings through evidence checks, visits, focus groups and interviews. Inspection informs two judgements...
1. How good is the (crosscutting) service?
  2. What are the prospects for improvement?
- ...with each judgement scored on the Poor to Excellent scale.
- 3.5 Accordingly a self-assessment and outline Action Plan were produced by Strategy and Regeneration in consultation with the Council's key youth-focused services and submitted to the AC in advance of its on-site inspection (31 August – 3 September 2004), as agreed following Cabinet's discussion of an initial report on the inspection process in July 2004.
- 3.6 To support this work a short-term Members Panel, comprising relevant Cabinet Members and the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees, was established to oversee the final self-assessment and to help shape the Action Plan. The Panel concluded its work in October 2004.



## Inspection Findings

- 3.7 Published on 2 December 2004, the AC's Inspection report rates the Council's Services for Children and Young People as **fair** (one star), with **promising prospects for improvement**.

| PROSPECTS FOR IMPROVEMENT? |      |      |      |           |           |
|----------------------------|------|------|------|-----------|-----------|
|                            | Poor | Fair | Good | Excellent |           |
| Excellent                  |      |      |      |           | HOW GOOD? |
| Promising                  |      | ★    |      |           |           |
| Uncertain                  |      |      |      |           |           |
| Poor                       |      |      |      |           |           |

**Sedgefield Borough Council – CYP Services**

- 3.8 The identified strengths and weaknesses underpinning these judgements largely reflect the conclusions of the Council's self-assessment and are as follows...

### Judgement 1 – A Fair Service

#### **Strengths**

- Good knowledge of area, identifying broad local needs & baseline data for CYP
- CYP are cross cutting issue in Community Strategy and Corporate Plan
- Council actively involved in LSP's CYP Partnership
- Strong partnerships in place to improve range of opportunities
- Frontline staff knowledgeable and committed
- Good range of leisure activity at different locations and social pricing policy
- Good quality housing and training services for young people
- Some effective local projects working with disadvantaged CYP

#### **Weaknesses**

- Baseline information not used to set challenging targets
- CYP Partnership relatively new and at an early stage
- Information available to assist targeting activities poor
- Outcomes not systematically measured by the Council
- No clear statement of what CYP can expect from the Council
- No systematic, consistent approach to consultation and engagement with CYP
- Marketing not fully effective
- Council cannot demonstrate whether it obtains value for money

## **Judgement 2 – Promising Prospects For Improvement**

### **Strengths**

- Council has open, honest & accurate picture of its strengths & weaknesses
- Draft Action Plan proposes sound actions to address key improvement areas
- Officers & Members have good understanding of issues and are committed
- Council is open to external challenge and is acting on previous inspections
- Investment in buildings and staffing resources to enhance opportunities
- Corporate Plan 2005/2006 nearing completion – CYP crosscutting issue
- PMF is in place and improvements in establishing consistency are underway
- Council demonstrates track record of improvement in its services for CYP

### **Weaknesses**

- Some key strategies for CYP out of date or not in place
- Little work on developing local PIs & challenging targets relating to outcomes

The full report is available on the Council's website.

### **Audit Commission Recommendations**

- 3.9 Based on its findings, the AC recommends that within three months, the Council consults with children and young people and finalises Action Plan and in implementing it ensures that the following are given high priority...

- A structured approach to engagement & consultation which results in the Council listening to & acting on the views of CYP
- The production of a set of local PIs that: -
  1. Measure outcomes in relation to the issues most important to CYP
  2. Set challenging targets for service improvement
  3. Enable the Council's effectiveness to be benchmarked against others
- The completion of a charter that shows clearly what CYP can expect from the Council.
- Determine whether the Council is achieving value for money in CYP Services

- 3.10 Again, these recommended actions largely reflect those set out in the outline Action Plan appended to the Council's self-assessment. As a result the Council did not contest the report and suggested only minor amendments to the AC's report. The AC reports favourably on the inspection and the Council's approach in both its Annual Audit Letter and Direction of Travel report but stresses that further progress must be made in this area.

### **Next Steps – Action Planning**

- 3.11 The principal output of the self-assessment process was an outline Action Plan that sets out from the Council's perspective the key activity required to strengthen the strategic framework for the delivery and improvement of the Council's Services for Children and Young People and mechanisms for the participation of young people in the planning and delivery of services.

3.12 The AC inspection validates the outline Action Plan in recommending four broad improvement areas...

- Setting out formally the Council's approach towards services for Young People in a Young People's Charter
- Ensuring that services are more focused on outcomes
- Determining the value for money of the current approach
- Developing a structured consultation framework

...to these must be added two issues emerging from the self-assessment process – the co-ordination of services and safeguarding children.

3.13 The AC recommends that the Council develops and finalises the Action Plan by the end of February 2005 in consultation with children and young people. The current version of the Action Plan – addressing these issues – is attached at Appendix 1.

3.14 Properly resourced co-ordination is fundamental to achieving improvement in crosscutting areas, as evidenced by relative progress in the previously inspected areas of Procurement and Equality and Diversity. To this end it would appear logical to convene an officer working group, led by Strategy and Regeneration in line with its corporate role, to develop and deliver the Action Plan. Departments will be required to nominate relevant officers to the group, with these officers will be required to deliver change at a departmental level. The group will also serve as a service co-ordination and information-sharing forum.

3.15 Key to improvements in youth engagement is the ongoing research of the focus group of young people identified via County Durham and Darlington Investing in Children. This group has interviewed on behalf of the Council a variety of youth groups (over 100 young people) across the Borough to identify preferred methods of communication and involvement and will report in February 2005. Its recommendations will be considered alongside current arrangements and plans of partners to establish a sustainable participation framework for children and young people across the Borough. As key contributors, this group will be a valuable consultee on the Action Plan but additional options will be explored (e.g. a focus group of the Council's Modern Apprentices, School Councils or a case study exercise for school citizenship classes) to ensure the plan reaches as wide a range of young people as possible.

3.16 The LSP's CYPP will also be engaged in the Action Plan preparation process so that duplication of effort can be minimised and potential areas for joint working identified.

### **Corporate policy implications**

3.17 The Action Plan set outs activity to develop the Council's Policy Framework in respect of children and young people.

3.18 Children and Young People are identified as a crosscutting theme for LSP service delivery in the Community Strategy and is the subject of a significant workstream via the CYPP. As such, a Children and Young People's Strategy specific to the Council would serve little purpose. However, in consultation with local children and young people and the CYPP, the Council will develop a corporate Charter that will

set out its approach to working with children and young people and its contribution to priority outcomes. All corporate strategies and business plans should be consistent with this Charter.

- 3.19 In addition, the Action Plan prescribes the introduction of a corporate Safeguarding Children Policy. The purpose of this is to provide an overarching framework in which Departments can introduce service specific policies.
- 3.20 The delivery of this Action Plan will help to foster social inclusion, citizenship and community cohesion across the Borough and support corporate policy commitments to improving the wellbeing of local people and securing best value service delivery in consultation with users as detailed in the Corporate Plan.

#### **4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The delivery of the Action Plan will clearly require significant officer time. The majority of work will be undertaken by Strategy and Regeneration and has been factored into the Division's work plan. Service Departments will also provide inputs to deliver actions specified in the plan.
- 4.2 Commitment to service improvement must be backed by resources where necessary. Cabinet has identified youth development as a priority area for investment/improvement and as such actions set out in outline Action Plan were submitted for consideration during the preparation of the Council's draft Medium-Term Financial Plan in October 2004.
- 4.3 Given the status of youth development as a corporate priority, its audit status and contribution the Council's Direction of Travel assessment and the number of young people consulted throughout the development of the Action Plan to date, it is imperative from both a service improvement and a risk management perspective that the Council allocates appropriate resources to this area in determining 2005/06 service budgets.

#### **5 CONSULTATIONS**

- 5.1 The self-assessment and inspection process involved an array of consultees including Council employees, service users, partners and local community and voluntary groups, as well as the LSP's CYPP.
- 5.2 A short-term Members Panel, comprising relevant Cabinet Members and the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees, was established to oversee the self-assessment and outline Action Plan and signed off in October 2004.
- 5.3 As stated above, a focus group of young people identified via County Durham and Darlington Investing in Children has interviewed on behalf of the Council a variety of youth groups across the Borough to contribute to the development of the Action Plan and will report in February 2005.

- 5.4 To promote joint working developments in respect of the Council's approach to youth engagement will be shared with partners via the CYPP, which will also be a key consultee on the Action Plan.
- 5.5 Approaches and techniques developed in respect of youth engagement will form part of a corporate Consultation Strategy and its associated guidance.

## **6 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 A focus on outcomes for children and young people has now become an integral part of local government service delivery. The AC's proposed changes to CPA from 2005 suggest that achievement will be assessed against the following shared priorities agreed by central and local government...

- Sustainable communities and transport
- Safer and stronger communities
- Healthier communities
- Older people
- Children and young people

Activity set out in the Action Plan, properly resourced, will ensure that the progress in this area is ensured and a positive contribution is made to the Council's overall Direction of Travel.

- 6.2 Adherence to a corporate Charter will ensure that Council strategies and business plans are in line with the Community Strategy commitment to young people as a crosscutting theme in service delivery.
- 6.3 In addition, the Council is a partner in the County Durham and Darlington Investing in Children Partnership (IICP). The IICP's Statement of Intent supports the UK adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which asserts the right of children and young people to be involved in those matters that affect them and the Government's Children and Young People's Unit's *Learning to Listen* document, which sets out core principles for the involvement of children and young people in service development. The implementation of a sustainable corporate consultation framework for children and young people will enable the Council to meet its commitments in this area.
- 6.4 Where appropriate activity set out in the Action Plan will be subject to risk assessments and factored into corporate and service planning as appropriate.

## **7 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Once finalised, the Action Plan will be monitored by Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 in line with corporate procedures for the monitoring of service improvement plans.

## **8 LIST OF APPENDICES**

- Services for Children and Young People Action Plan

**Contact Officer** Paul Stephens  
**Telephone Number** 01388 816166 ext. 4441  
**E-mail address** [pstephens@sedgefield.gov.uk](mailto:pstephens@sedgefield.gov.uk)

**Wards:** N/A

**Key Decision Validation:** Involves no direct expenditure or impact on specific wards

**Background Papers:**

- Local Government Act 1999
- Local Government Act 2000
- Every Child Matters (DfES, November 2003)
- SBC CPA Report (AC, April 2004)
- CYPP Draft Terms of Reference (April 2004)
- SBC Services for Children and Young People – Self-assessment and outline Action Plan
- Sedgefield Borough Community Strategy 2004-2014
- SBC Corporate Plan 2005-2008
- SBC Medium Term Financial Plan 2005-2008
- Children Act 2004
- SBC Services for Children and Young People Inspection Report (AC, December 2004)

**Examination by Statutory Officers**

|  | Yes                                 | Not<br>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"/> |

**APPENDIX 1**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES ACTION PLAN**

| <b>1 CO-ORDINATING CYP SERVICES</b> |  |              |               |                               |                  |
|-------------------------------------|--|--------------|---------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| <b>REF</b>                          | <b>ACTION</b>  | <b>START</b> | <b>FINISH</b> | <b>RESOURCES</b>              | <b>LEAD</b>      |
| 1.1                                 | Provide corporate lead on Children and Young People's issues...<br><br><input type="checkbox"/> Represent the Council in its role as community leader on the LSP's CYP Partnership in order to progress the Every Child Matters agenda in the Borough.<br><input type="checkbox"/> Establish and co-ordinate corporate CYP Services Planning Group to develop and deliver Action Plan addressing areas for improvement identified via Audit Commission inspection process and to act as a data sharing forum on youth issues and service developments. | Ongoing      |               | Officer time                  | S & R            |
| 1.2                                 | Re-engineer Youth Development Fund, revising terms of reference, identifying potential funding sources and establishing appraisal framework that involves CYP in a meaningful way and is consistent with corporate and LSP arrangements  | July 2004    | January 2005  | Officer time<br>Financial TBE | Leisure Services |

| <b>2 DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC APPROACH</b> |  |              |               |                                       |                |
|--|--|--------------|---------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>REF</b>                               | <b>ACTION</b>  | <b>START</b> | <b>FINISH</b> | <b>RESOURCES</b>                      | <b>LEAD</b>    |
| 2.1                                      | Develop corporate Children and Young People's Charter setting out the Council's policy in respect of young people in conjunction with local CYP and promote to stakeholders. | January 2005 | July 2005     | Officer time<br>£500<br>Promotion TBE | S & R          |
| 2.2                                      | Ensure that all corporate strategies and business plans are consistent with the standards set out in the corporate CYP Charter.  | July 2005    | Ongoing       | Officer time                          | All Depts      |
| 2.3                                      | Monitor corporate strategies and business plans to ensure consistency with corporate CYP Charter.  | July 2005    | Ongoing       | Officer time                          | Planning Group |

### 3 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN

| REF | ACTION   | START        | FINISH       | RESOURCES                    | LEAD        |
|-----|--|--------------|--------------|------------------------------|-------------|
| 3.1 | Develop and disseminate Corporate Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures.   | October 2004 | January 2005 | Officer time                 | S & R       |
| 3.2 | Review existing CRB check policy in line with Corporate Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures, addressing transfers of check from previous posts outside of the Council.           | January 2005 | March 2005   | Officer time                 | Service Imp |
| 3.3 | Implement Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures across the Council and develop service specific procedures where appropriate, appointing departmental lead where appropriate.      | January 2005 | July 2005    | Officer time                 | All Depts   |
| 3.4 | Identify representative from each Department to train as trainers via DCC Child Protection Training Programme.   | March 2005   |              | Officer time<br>Training TBE | All Depts   |
| 3.5 | Implement induction and training programme for Members and staff, outlining Corporate Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures and setting out individual roles and responsibilities. | March 2005   | July 2005    | Officer time<br>Training TBE | Service Imp |



#### 4 IMPROVING PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

| REF | ACTION  | START        | FINISH        | RESOURCES                     | LEAD        |
|-----|---|--------------|---------------|-------------------------------|-------------|
| 4.1 | Improve current statistical baseline on the circumstances and needs of local CYP and audit CYP services and initiatives across the Borough in conjunction with County Durham Every Child Matters Partnership.   | October 2004 | March 2005    | Officer time                  | S & R       |
| 4.2 | Evaluate potential of commissioning LSP local Quality of Life Surveys, including specific youth surveys.  | April 2005   | July 2005     | Officer time<br>Financial TBE | S & R       |
| 4.3 | <p>Develop performance indicator suite for the Council's youth focused services in conjunction with managers...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify key service outputs and how these impact on priority outcomes for CYP.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that PI suite is set out in Corporate Plan and monitored in accordance with the Council's performance management arrangements.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Benchmark corporate arrangements, indicators and investment levels with other public, private and CV sector service providers to promote improvements.</li> </ul> | March 2005   | December 2005 | Officer time                  | Service Imp |
| 4.4 | Analyse service budgets to identify corporate expenditure by age group where possible and cross-reference with PI suite to produce value for money formula for corporate CYP Services.  | March 2005   | December 2005 | Officer time                  | Resources   |
| 4.5 | <p>Explore potential of developing standard skills matrix for staff working with CYP in conjunction with CYP Partnership and local children and young people. If viable...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Ensure that matrix is applied in preparation of job descriptions to ensure new joiners have the appropriate skills.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Develop and implement training programme to develop the skills of current staff working with CYP in line with the matrix.</li> </ul>   | January 2005 | July 2005     | Officer time                  | S & R       |

## 5 IMPROVING ENGAGEMENT

| REF | ACTION  | START         | FINISH        | RESOURCES                     | LEAD  |
|-----|---|---------------|---------------|-------------------------------|-------|
| 5.1 | Develop consultation standards and framework for local CYP in conjunction with Investing in Children group.   | July 2004     | February 2005 | Officer time<br>£500          | S & R |
| 5.2 | Incorporate CYP consultation framework within corporate Consultation Strategy, aligned to LSP Strategy to ensure consistency with partners' approaches. | February 2005 | July 2005     | Officer time                  | S & R |
| 5.3 | Update Corporate Consultation Guidance to include CYP consultation standards and approaches and issue to Service Heads.                                 | February 2005 | July 2005     | Officer time                  | S & R |
| 5.4 | Implement agreed CYP consultation framework in conjunction with all Departments.  | July 2005     | March 2006    | Officer time<br>Financial TBE | S & R |
| 5.5 | When framework implemented, develop rolling programme to ensure that all appropriate services achieve Investing in Children accreditation.              | July 2005     | Ongoing       | Officer time<br>Financial TBE | S & R |

# Item 6

## REPORT TO CABINET

20<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2005

JOINT REPORT OF CHIEF  
EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND  
DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD  
SERVICES

### COMMUNITY SAFETY PORTFOLIO

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES: CCTV AND COMMUNITY ALARM CONTROL ROOM.

#### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Carelink community alarm and the CCTV functions were brought together in 1999 under a common management structure within a joint control room facility. The facility itself is arguably the best within local authority community alarm / CCTV control rooms in County Durham, operational staff are trained in both disciplines and the quality of service has been recognised by further expansion and accreditation such as ASAP Part 1. ( Association of Community Alarm Providers )
- 1.2 Over this period, funding for the community alarms service has changed radically with the introduction of the Supporting People regime. Both services have continued to expand and are positively looking to further expansion, improved efficiency and increased capacity.
- 1.3 Commissioning arrangements regarding the community alarm service are such that the Carelink Service and in a sense the Council is a service provider. Community Alarm Services are commissioned by the County Durham Supporting People Partnership. Although existing contracts for community alarms are with local authority providers a current review of community alarm services by the Partnership is likely to result in radical changes to commissioning arrangements and the financial structure of those contracts. It is therefore timely that the Council considers its position in relation to being a provider of community alarm services. Previous investment in infrastructure and service standards has placed the Carelink service well, however, the future of this service area is not without risk and any further expansion in this area will need to be underpinned by financial arrangements which would mitigate against significant costs falling on the General Fund in the event of a situation arising, such as the loss of the Supporting People Contract for community alarms which could render the service financial unviable.
- 1.4 Additionally, although integration of the community alarms and CCTV services has proved successful it is questionable whether such an arrangement is the best and most sustainable option in the longer term, given the step changes explained in this report which are facing each of these service areas to meet changing and developing markets.

- 1.5 This report concludes that the Council maintains its commitment to the provision of community alarm services and proposes a process by which both services may be expanded and depending upon the scale of increased capacity may ultimately be separated and suggests staffing changes to facilitate this course of action.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 That the Council adopt Option 1 and enter into a 3 year agreement with Tunstall to operate a Hosted Services Technology Management System at a gross annual cost of £45,000 with a net cost, after savings, of £18,000 in year 1.
- 2.2 That the principles set out in the report regarding funding, expansion, development and management of the community alarm and CCTV service be agreed.
- 2.3 That in accordance with authority delegated to the Chief Executive Officer, the post of Neighbourhood Service Manager (POH) be re-designated Business Manager and the posts of Community Safety Manager and Carelink Services Manager be regraded from POC to POF.

## **3. INTRODUCTION**

### Carelink Community Alarm Service.

- 3.1 The Council aims to promote both a Healthy Borough and a Borough with Strong and Safe Neighbourhoods. Carelink Services provide support to vulnerable people in their homes and can as part of a package of measures prevent admission to hospital or residential care or facilitate early discharge from hospital back into the community. The service is made up of Community Alarms and Warden Services. For the most part these services are funded via Supporting People Grant.
- 3.2 The Sedgefield Borough Community Alarm Service which is currently the largest community alarm provider in the county with some 7,500 connections is commissioned by the Supporting People Partnership for County Durham. In addition to income from SP for clients within the Borough, the service has been expanded to take on SP services on behalf of another local authority area as well as securing business from the private sector. Prior to the introduction of the Supporting People regime the Council invested in the Community Alarm infrastructure to upgrade computer hardware and move to a substantially dispersed system of alarm devices. This investment has provided the service with a sound base from which to develop and expand service provision.
- 3.3 The Supporting People Partnership faces further significant cuts in SP Grant in 2005/06. Following a national 2.5% cut in 2004/05, a further 4.5% national cut has been notified for 2005/06 together with a 20% cut in SP Administration Grant. Additionally, given that SP allocations make no provision for growth or inflation, funding for new SP initiatives must be found from savings within the county SP pot. Consequently, a review process has commenced focusing initially on SP services which currently have the highest call on the budget,

one of which is the community alarm service. The Partnership has commissioned an independent review of community alarm provision in the County. The review is currently underway, however, initial findings suggest radical changes in the way community alarm services are commissioned and provided.

- 3.4 In order to meet these challenges, the Carelink Community Alarm Service continues to seek to increase capacity, which reduces costs, improve service standards, by achieving compliance for example with ASAP Part 1 accreditation and by developing opportunities within new markets, both private sector and other public sectors such as social care and health.
- 3.5 The role of the Council as a service provider for community alarms via the Carelink Service has changed since the introduction of Supporting People. We are now service providers as funding for our services is met in the most part by Supporting People Grant under contracts let by the County Durham Supporting People Partnership. Reference has already been made to cuts in grant planned for 2005/06 following cuts for 2004/05 and the radical change in commissioning arrangements which is likely to arise in the short to medium term following a review of community alarm services in County Durham. Being a provider of community alarm services is therefore not without risk. The challenge for community alarm providers is to rationalise the number of providers. This will mean some will leave the market whilst other must gear up to expand. The Sedgefield Borough Carelink Service has an excellent reputation locally, regionally and nationally; most importantly with our service users. However, the Council should consider the risk associated with the future of such services and given a commitment to continue with the service and strengthen our market position, put in place financial arrangements which would mitigate against significant costs falling on the General Fund in the event of a situation arising, such as the loss of the Supporting People Contract for community alarms which could render the service financial unviable. This will be particularly important should LSVT take place.
- 3.6 The challenge now facing the Borough as a community alarm service provider is to make a further significant step change in order to provide a platform for improved flexibility, competitiveness, service diversity and increased capacity by extending our partnership arrangements with Tunstall to include 'Hosted Services'. This would have benefits in terms of opportunities to reduce service costs, linked to increasing capacity, set a new service standard and offer new service opportunities within the region and certainly within County Durham ahead of any decision of the County Durham Supporting People Partnership to reduce the number of community alarm providers / control room facilities in the County.
- 3.7 Under a Hosted Services arrangement, based on a 3 year agreement, Tunstall would provide and manage the technology necessary to receive and process calls from individual Carelink alarm units and then deliver the call, together with the associated data on the nature of the call, client details etc to our own monitoring centre. Under this arrangement Sedgefield Carelink could determine periods within which monitoring on behalf of the Borough and its partners might be undertaken by Carelink or alternatively, by Tunstall on our behalf. Hosting would offer the Borough increased flexibility in the most cost effective ways of operating a 24 hour service and in offering the opportunity to

existing and new partner organisations, such as other local authorities, housing associations etc and would reduce costs as capacity increased. Under a hosting arrangement, partner providers could have calls monitored exclusively by Carelink for pre-determined periods. The new arrangement would also allow the Borough to re-route all calls to Tunstall Response if and when appropriate. This arrangement would offer the Council and its partners complete flexibility within a more secure technological environment.

- 3.8 Hosting would offer the Borough access to the latest technology, in a secure environment, without the need for the Borough to invest in purchasing and accommodating such technology and associated infrastructure and would also provide flexible options in terms of service continuity. Hosting would reduce the amount of computer hardware / software Carelink would require on site and consequently remove the requirement for an annual maintenance agreement for such equipment. As part of a hosting arrangement Tunstall would also provide database management and back-up.
- 3.9 Given the market changes facing community alarms, if Carelink is to exist it must expand. Remaining as we are will not give us the increased capacity to reduce costs, consequently we will lose business to competitors from both within and outside of County Durham.
- 3.10 Success of course brings its own challenges. If we can grow the service, then ultimately, the future of the community alarm service may be best served by it being established as a stand alone unit, separate from CCTV, in order that the service may focus on community alarms as its core business. Consequently, Hosting could provide the platform for building capacity within the service which could lead to that separation of community alarms and CCTV services in the medium term.

### The CCTV Service

- 3.11 The Council aims to promote a Borough with Strong and Safe Neighbourhoods. The CCTV service makes a significant contribution to this aim within the context of both the Boroughwide Crime & Disorder Reduction Strategic Partnership and the Council's corporate approach to Community Safety with the emerging SBC Community Safety Strategy having a particular focus on issues such as fear of crime and anti social behaviour.
- 3.12 The Council has undertaken to complete a review of its CCTV service by December 2004. Additional cameras continue to be added to the network in response to demand. The Council has invested in digital technology to both improve the service and make data analysis/review more efficient. Additionally, new maintenance contracts for CCTV equipment have been agreed which will produce cost savings. Early indications within the context of a service review suggest that scope exists for further expansion of the service, both in terms of fixed cameras and mobile facilities and that any such expansion could be developed in accordance with a fully developed business plan which could clearly demonstrate support for the proposal. Given such support for further expansion of the service other factors would need to be considered, such as:-
- Meeting the expanding accommodation requirements of the CCTV service.

- the development of criteria to establish the circumstances under which fixed CCTV cameras are seen as the most appropriate solution.
- Review of monitoring costs.
- Extension of mobile facilities
- The development of a sustainable strategy which includes private sector market opportunities and future technological opportunities.

### Ancillary Service Provision

- 3.13 In terms of setting out the future of the community alarm / CCTV control Room consideration must also be given to how arrangements will affect a range of other services currently supported from the control room, such as, out of hours emergency repairs, SHARP, out of hours homelessness, emergency planning etc.

### Managing The Process

- 3.14 The proposals within this report will provide a platform for development of both the community alarms and CCTV services. This platform can be established within a short time period subject to the purchase of Hosted Technology from Tunstall.
- 3.15 Once the platform is established however, success will depend upon marketing, service development and service reengineering. This will be a process and cannot be achieved simply by purchasing the Hosting platform. Combining the former community alarm and CCTV control rooms took some 2 years to achieve against a background of fixed internal markets. The challenge now facing both services is to re-engineer against a background of changing external markets. It is therefore important that change is driven forward and this will involve the application of new skills and approaches at a senior level within the Neighbourhood Services Division.
- 3.16 Within the Division, the post of Neighbourhood Services Manager, responsible for both Carelink and Community Safety Services is vacant. It is proposed that this post be re-designated Neighbourhood Services Business Manager POH with a clear emphasis initially on driving forward the desired changes as set out in this report and thereafter ensuring the services continue to respond to new and changing business opportunities. Community Alarms and CCTV Services are already big business for the Council however their future depends upon increased capacity. The role of the Business Manager will be to ensure the existing business is on a firm financial footing and then look to existing and new markets for expansion and even diversification. This role will require skills and experience more akin to those of the private sector than local government. Over an initial three year period we would expect the post holder to work within the existing management structure to facilitate service re-engineering which will put both community alarms and CCTV on a firmer financial and service quality footing and to achieve business growth in excess of 100% for community alarms and 25% for CCTV.
- 3.17 It is accepted that the reconfiguration of this role will place additional operational management responsibilities upon both the Community Safety Manager and the Carelink Services Manager.

- 3.18 Implementing the operational outcomes of the review of CCTV including the extension of the existing mobile CCTV service and the development of the Neighbourhood Warden Service and the Streetsafe initiative will bring additional responsibilities to the post of Community Safety Manager.
- 3.19 In terms of the Carelink Services Manager, management responsibility for the community alarm aspect of the control room has reverted to him from the Community Safety Manager and additionally the post holder will be responsible for all shift and rostering issues pertaining to the control room.
- 3.20 It is suggested that both posts should be regraded from POC to POF to take account of the respective increased levels of responsibility.

#### **4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 In terms of revenue costs, our target for both community alarms and the warden service is to operate within a combination of SP Grant and income from other private sector users, public sector partners and development of new markets.
- 4.2 The Council faces the challenge of a significant cut in Supporting People Grant either in straight percentage terms or in a reduction in unit charges Supporting People are prepared to pay for community alarm and warden services. Other Local Authority providers face the same challenges. The hosted services option gives us a basis upon which to generate the significant increases in capacity required to meet these challenges. It is possible that some Local Authority providers will not be able to function with further cuts in grant or SP Grant income at a reduced unit cost level. With hosted services we can target that business. Some Local Authority Providers may take the view that they are prepared to subsidise their community alarm service in order to retain it. If they have the financial wherewithal to do that then their service may be secure in the short term. They will however sooner or later face issues of equipment replacement costs and scrutiny via their CPA processes as to their approach to procurement and expectations on public services arising from the Gershon Review. The hosted services option will provide a platform for discussions with other providers around opportunities to increase capacity and thereby reduce costs within the Carelink Community Alarm Service to the mutual benefit of Carelink, the Supporting People Partnership and partner organisations. Costs can only be reduced significantly if capacity is increased significantly. We are currently in discussions with 3 local authority providers with a combined capacity of 11,500 connections. Establishing a partnership arrangement with any one of these potential partners will strengthen our position strategically and give us the capacity to generate significant levels of cost saving.
- 4.3 Currently, the combined community alarm / CCTV control room costs some £597,000 per annum, excluding income. A number of options have been considered in terms of moving forward.



## Option 1

- 4.4 To retain a combined control room, maintain 24 hour services for community alarms and CCTV from our own centre and commission the hosted services platform would cost an additional £18,000 in year 1 and £8,000 in subsequent years. This is made up of £45,000 pa for hosted technology plus £10,000 to meet additional ancillary IT requirements, less £37,000 pa saving on the Tunstall Maintenance Agreement given that we would no longer require our own PNC4 unit. Although from a capital perspective PNC4 will have no significant residual value in terms of Tunstall taking the unit back, they have agreed to waive a £10,000 set up cost associated with Hosted services. This option would give us the hosted technology as a basis for further developing the business with potential for Sedgefield being a regional hub for community alarm services, in partnership with and supported by the Tunstall hosted service.
- 4.5 As the number of connections managed by Carelink increases, so the technology management charge from Tunstall per unit decreases. For example, the current capacity is 7,500 connections hence the Tunstall technology management charge will be £45,000 or £6.00 per connection, per annum. 12,000 connections reduces the unit cost to £5.28, 16,000 connections to £4.22 etc. In addition to the reduction in charges for technology management the increased connections attract additional income from partner organisations for monitoring full time or during selected periods such as evenings or week-ends. In this way, generating additional connections further enhances our efficiency and competitiveness.
- 4.6 No increased accommodation costs would be associated with option 1, however, as service expansion is required this could be accommodated in the medium term by extending the control room into what is currently office accommodation. Provision is made for such an eventuality within the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 4.7 In terms of CCTV, there are no immediate additional revenue costs. The review of CCTV services will establish a framework for the further development of the service, provision for which is included within the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 4.8 Under this option ancillary out of hours services provided from the control room would be unaffected.

## Option 2

- 4.9 To retain a combined control room, commission the hosted services platform from Tunstall and transfer out of hours and week-end call traffic to Tunstall Response would cost an additional £53,000 per annum ( £123,000 for Tunstall costs less £70,000 SBC staff savings )
- 4.10 No increased accommodation costs would be associated with option 2, however, as service expansion is required this can be accommodated in the medium term by extending both sides of the control room into existing office accommodation. Provision is made for such an eventuality within the Medium Term Financial Plan.

- 4.11 In terms of CCTV, there are no immediate additional revenue costs. The review of CCTV services will establish a framework for the further development of the service, provision for which is included within the Medium Term Financial Plan.
- 4.12 Under this option ancillary out of hours services provided from the control room would be unaffected.

### Option 3

- 4.13 To establish the two services as separate entities in separate accommodation, commission the hosted services platform from Tunstall and transfer out of hours and week-end call traffic to Tunstall would cost an additional £245,000 per annum plus accommodation and ancillary costs.
- 4.14 Under this option ancillary out of hours services currently provided by the control room would be affected and alternative arrangements which could reduce income from these services would need to be put in place.
- 4.15 Whilst all three options provide the flexibility to enable us to generate income the costs associated with options 2 and 3 are prohibitive. Option 1 gives us the potential to trade competitively and to recover the associated marginal cost increase.
- 4.16 All of the 3 options would require the focus on business expansion and development outlined above. The proposal to introduce a post of Business Manager will assist with the process of change however there will also be increased responsibility for the Community Safety Manager and the Carelink Services Manager which have previously been referred to. It is therefore proposed to re-grade the posts of Community Safety Manager and Carelink Services Manager to POF. This would cost an additional £2,500 in 2005/06.

## **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 Extensive consultation has been undertaken on both a Borough-wide and Countywide basis regarding community alarm services. Consultation was undertaken as part of the independent investigation of the Council Community Safety Service which recommended a review of the CCTV Service. Workforce planning options regarding the future shape of community alarm and CCTV services will be subject consultation with staff.

## **6. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 Hosted services technology is unique to Tunstall. Consequently, commissioning this service directly from Tunstall is in accordance with Procedure Rule 6 of Part 4 – Rules of Procedure (G) of the Councils Constitution.

**Contact Officer:** D.Scarr

**Telephone No:** (01388) 816166 ext 4545

**Email Address:** dscarr@sedgefield.gov.uk

**Ward(s)** All

### Background Papers

1. Strategic Review of Community Alarm Services – interim Report 2004
2. Supporting People Strategy.

### Examination by Statutory Officers

|  | Yes                                 | Not<br>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"/> |

This page is intentionally left blank

# Item 7

## **REPORT TO CABINET 20 January 2005**

### **REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES**

#### **Portfolio: Culture and Recreation**

#### **OPERATION OF THE SCHOOL POOLS AT FISHBURN AND THORNHILL GARDENS SHILDON**

##### **SUMMARY**

Cabinet agreed at their meeting in September 2002 to the transfer of the School Swimming Pools at Fishburn and Shildon to Sedgefield Borough Council following Durham County Council's Pool Closure programme in 2002.

If the Council continues to operate the school pools with the current activity programme for the financial year 2004/2005 there will be collective projected expenditure of £23,620 against a budget of £10,590.

It is anticipated that the operating cost to the Council for both pools in the financial year 2005/6 will be £27,670.

The purpose of this report is to provide Cabinet with options that could reduce the overspend, but short of closure, both swimming pools will cost the Council more to operate than is budgeted for in the financial year 2004/5 and considerably more in 2005/6.

Problems with water leakage from the pool at Shildon has been discovered which led to the pool being closed and drained on 11 January. It is hoped that an engineer's report detailing the extent of the problem and cost implications will be available for consideration by Cabinet at the meeting.

##### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- That the future of the school pools at Shildon and Fishburn be considered

##### **DETAIL**

At their meeting in September 2002 Cabinet agreed the transfer of Shildon and Fishburn School pools from Durham County Council to Sedgefield Borough Council on the understanding that the running costs would be reasonable. It had been anticipated that income from the pools would at least cover direct staffing costs. Table 1 shows recent swimming pool usage levels and financial projections.

## **Table 1**

### Fishburn

|                             |                                | April 2004 – November 2004                     |  |                                       |                                   |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2004/05<br>Income<br>Target | 2004/05<br>Projected<br>Income | Numbers<br>Attending<br>Programmed<br>Sessions | Numbers<br>Attending<br>Casual<br>Sessions | % Usage for<br>Programmed<br>Sessions | % Usage<br>for Casual<br>Sessions |
| £19,450                     | £23,650                        | 19,300   | 1,100                                      | 90%                                   | 10%                               |
| Employee<br>Costs           | £21,875                        |  |  |                                       |                                   |

### Shildon

|                             |                                | April 2004 – November 2004                     |  |                                       |                                   |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|--|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 2004/05<br>Income<br>Target | 2004/05<br>Projected<br>Income | Numbers<br>Attending<br>Programmed<br>Sessions | Numbers<br>Attending<br>Casual<br>Sessions | % Usage for<br>Programmed<br>Sessions | % Usage<br>for Casual<br>Sessions |
| £12,000                     | £10,756                        | 14,802   | 792  | 85%                                   | 15%                               |
| Employee<br>Costs           | £13,000                        |  |  |                                       |                                   |

N.B. Shildon Pool was closed for 6 weeks during July and August for building repairs.

Given recent health and safety assessments and having now had some experience of pool operation, premises costs and supplies and services costs are greater than have been budgeted for in the financial year 2004/5 and these are expected to rise still further in 2005/6.

Over the Christmas and New Year period, it came to the attention of officers that the pool at Shildon was losing water. Tests have found that approx. 15 gallons of water are escaping from the pool each day. On 11 January, the pool was closed to the public and drained. Engineers were commissioned to produce a report locating the source of the leak and assessing the costs to repair. This report should be available for Cabinet's consideration at the meeting.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

When Cabinet agreed to take over the responsibility for operating Fishburn and Shildon pools, it set financial targets in 2004/05 of £6,000 and £4,590 respectively. Cabinet also considered that direct staffing costs should be met by income.

Fishburn pool is operating reasonably within the staffing costs to income framework whereas Shildon is not achieving this standard.

Cabinet also expressed its desire not to spend a significant amount of money on the fabric of the pool hall and buildings. Clearly with a leak to the Shildon pool, Cabinet will need to give due consideration to the future of the pool.

Within the 2004/05 revenue estimates, there is a total budget provision for both pools of £10,590. The anticipated overspend of some £13,000 was taken into account in assessing the Council's overall financial position in a recent budgetary control report considered by Cabinet.

## CONSULTATION

Once Cabinet has considered the Borough Council's future involvement in both pools, existing user groups will be consulted on alternative provision.

## OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Since September 2002, the Borough Council has operated the school pools under licence from the County Council.

The terms of the agreement allow the Borough Council to return the pools to the County Council having drained and made them secure.

There is no financial penalty placed on the Borough Council for returning either or both of the pools.

**Contact Officer:** Phil Ball  
**Telephone Number:** 01388 816166 ext:4386)  
**Email Address** [pball@sedgefield.gov.uk](mailto:pball@sedgefield.gov.uk)

**Ward(s)** All

## Key Decision Validation

## Background Papers

## Examination by Statutory Officers

|  | Yes                                 | Not<br>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 8

## REPORT TO CABINET

20 January 2005

## REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES

**Portfolio: Culture and Recreation**

**Car Parking at Locomotion, National Railway Museum at Shildon**

### SUMMARY

The success of Locomotion since opening to the public in September 2004 has seen the annual visitor number target of 63,000 being achieved by November, with anticipated visits by March 2005 reaching in excess of 90,000.

Car parking provision currently provides for 47 car parking spaces, 8 disabled spaces and 4 coach spaces located on the plan marked 1 attached.

A great deal of concern has been expressed by local residents about their inability to park outside their own homes because of the lack of parking for visitors to the museum.

It is possible to construct an overflow car park shown at plan 2 at an estimated cost of £65,000 which would help in providing an additional 48 car parking spaces and a further 4 coach spaces, bringing the total to 95 car parking spaces, 8 disabled spaces and 8 coach spaces.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

- That the land shown at plan 2 be developed into an overflow car park
- That monies be made available in the 2004/5 financial year from contingencies

### DETAIL

In September 2004, Sedgefield Borough Council agreed to allocate land at Redworth Road to develop a car park with provision for 65 cars and 8 coaches, bringing the total available parking spaces at Locomotion to 95 with 8 coach spaces.

External funding from ERDF of £163,000 was received but was only sufficient to provide an additional 17 car parking spaces and 4 coach spaces.

In the period 25 September 2004 to the end of December 2004, over 80,000 people have visited Locomotion. The average number of visitors on a weekday is 500 where-as at the weekend the average number of visitors is

2800 per day. Recent research has confirmed that 75% of visitors arrive at Locomotion by car.

Clearly demand for car parking spaces will always exceed supply but traffic management is a key issue for both visitors and local residents alike. At present there is a great deal of anxiety and anger by local residents as visitors are parking their cars in the narrow streets adjacent to Locomotion there-by preventing residents from getting access by car to their front door.

Completion of the car park project at Redworth Road will not prevent visitors from continuing to park as close to the venue as they can but with the provision of a total of 95 car parking spaces, this should cater fully for weekday demand.

Special events provide a further difficulty for Locomotion and discussions have been held with a town centre retail outlet to use, particularly on Sundays, hard standing within the town, which would be ideal as a park and ride facility.

Recent discussions at Officer and Elected Member level have been held with Durham County Council and the Police regarding residents permit parking in the narrow streets surrounding Locomotion, but there seems to be a reluctance to develop this idea on the part of the County Council on the basis of being able to have the resources to manage any such permit parking scheme. However, Durham County Council will be consulting with local residents regarding the provision of double yellow lines within the adjacent streets in order to prevent double parking which could restrict access for emergency vehicles.

## **FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

To develop the area of land marked on plan 2 into a permanent car park fully lined with the necessary landscaping requirements will cost in the region of £150,000 and be a permanent feature.

By contrast, to provide an over-flow car park on the same land with a substantial sub-base on the main spinal route will cost in the region of £65,000.

Although monies within the 2004/05 capital programme for Culture and Recreation have been allocated, the amount of money necessary to construct an over-flow car park would be available from contingencies.

## **OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The 2005/06 tourism season commences again at Easter. The Easter period starts at the end of March 2005 and therefore it is imperative that the over-flow car park is ready for visitors as soon as possible.

The report does confirm that even after the construction of the over-flow car park demand for car parking on weekends and special events will not be fully accommodated without alternative strategies, for example park and ride and highway restrictions within the streets adjacent to Locomotion. However the

importance of providing the over-flow car park cannot be under-estimated for local residents who can then see that the Borough Council is taking the issue of car parking very seriously.

By constructing an over-flow car park rather than a permanent car park also allows the Borough Council to keep its options open regarding future enquiries from developers who may wish to construct retail/business premises on this land as a direct result of the success of Locomotion as a visitor attraction.

## CONSULTATION

Following the real concerns expressed by residents living adjacent to Locomotion at the end of September, they have been kept informed of the strategy that is being developed by the Borough Council and by the County Council.

Durham County Council are currently seeking the views of local residents regarding restricted parking and should members of Cabinet agree with the recommendation contained in the report local residents will be informed of the construction time table.

**Contact Officer: Phil Ball**  
**Telephone Number: 01388 816166 ext: 4386**  
**Email Address pball@sedgefield.gov.uk**

**Ward(s) All**

## Key Decision Validation

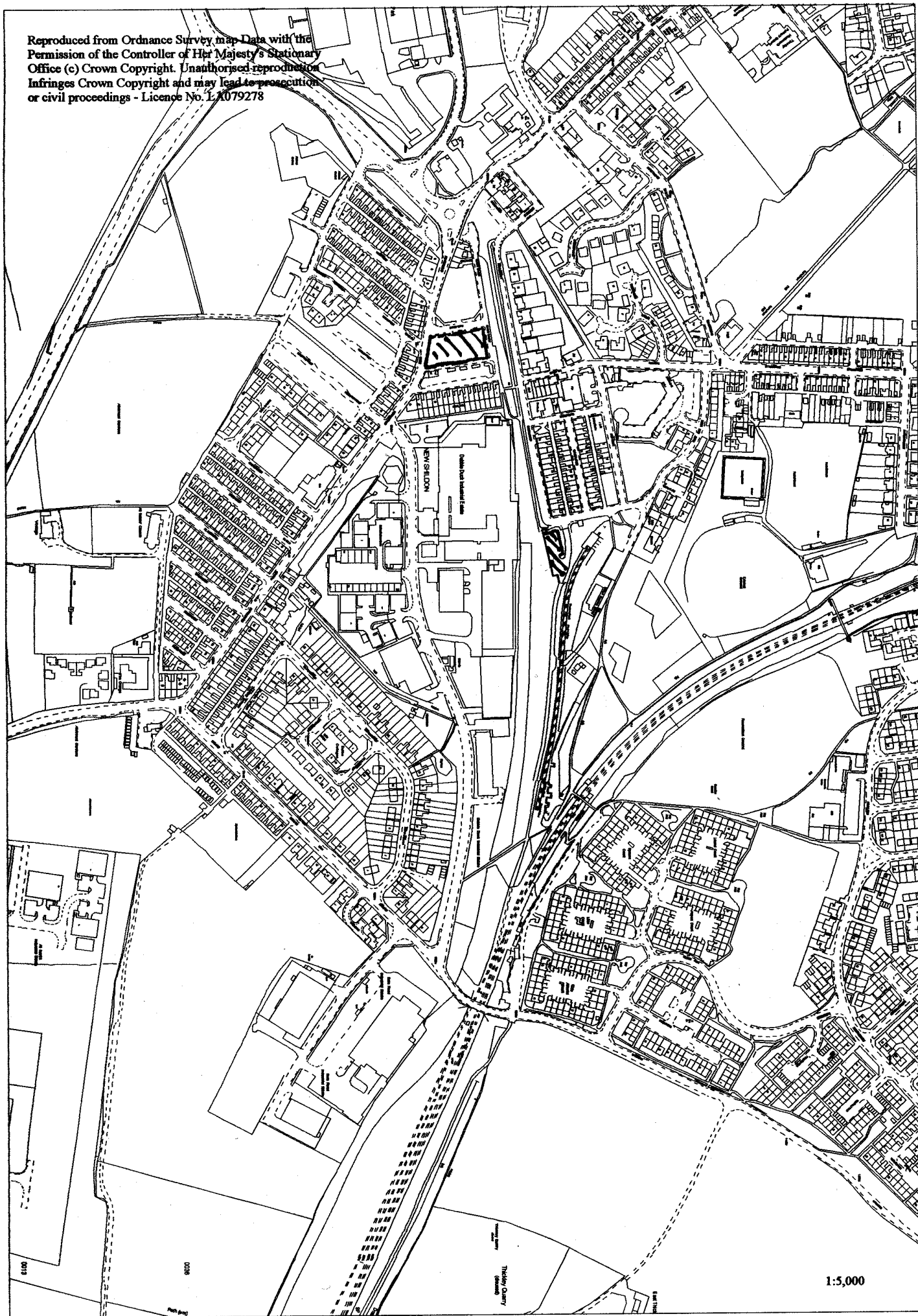
### Background Papers

### 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"/> |

This page is intentionally left blank

Reproduced from Ordnance Survey map Data with the  
Permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary  
Office (c) Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction  
infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution  
or civil proceedings - Licence No. LA079278



Reproduced from Ordnance Survey map Data with the  
Permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary  
Office (c) Crown Copyright. Unauthorised reproduction  
infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution  
or civil proceedings - Licence No. L1079278

