

CABINET

Thursday,
17 February 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 meeting held on 3rd February 2005. (Pages 1 - 6)

OTHER DECISIONS

ALL PORTFOLIOS

4. POST CPA IMPROVEMENT PLANNING - PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS

Report of Head of Strategy and Regeneration. (Pages 7 - 20)

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

5. BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2005/06

(a) Treasury Management Strategy 2005/06. (Pages 21 - 32)

(b) Overview & Scrutiny Committee 1 - 25th January 2005 (Pages 33 - 36)

(c) Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 - 26th January 2005 (Pages 37 - 40)

(d) Overview & Scrutiny Committee - 27th January 2005 (Pages 41 - 46)

6. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2005/06

Report of Director of Resources. (Pages 47 - 58)

7. ASSET MANAGEMENT - FOUL WATER DRAINAGE SYSTEM, COUNCIL OFFICES, GREEN LANE, SPENNYMOOR

Report of Director of Resources. (Pages 59 - 62)

REGENERATION PORTFOLIO

8. SPENNYMOOR TOWN CENTRE - CONTRACT NEGOTIATION

Report of Director of Neighbourhood Services. (Pages 63 - 66)

MINUTES

9. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

To consider the minutes of the following:

(a) Overview & Scrutiny Committee 1 - 11th January 2005 (Pages 67 - 70)

(b) Overview & Scrutiny Committee 2 - 18th January 2005 (Pages 71 - 76)

10. AREA FORUMS

To consider the minutes of the following:

- (a) Area 2 Forum - 11th January 2005 (Pages 77 - 80)
- (b) Area 3 Forum - 12th January 2005 (Pages 81 - 84)
- (c) Area 5 Forum - 25th January 2005 (Pages 85 - 90)

EXEMPT INFORMATION

The following item is not for publication by virtue of Paragraph 7 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972. As such it is envisaged that an appropriate resolution will be passed at the meeting to exclude the press and public.

OTHER DECISION

REGENERATION PORTFOLIO

11. ASSET MANAGEMENT - LAND SALE AT DEAN AND CHAPTER INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, FERRYHILL

Joint report of Head of Strategy and Regeneration and Director of Resources.
(Pages 91 - 96)

12. 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.

- (a) Local Government Association Member Task Group - Gypsies and Travellers
Report of Chief Executive Officer (Pages 97 - 98)

N. Vaulks
Chief Executive Officer

Council Offices
SPENNYMOOR
9th February 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 3

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL CABINET

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Thursday,
3 February 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, D.A. Newell, K. Noble, J. Robinson J.P and W. Waters

In

Attendance: Councillors Mrs. B.A. Clare, Mrs. K. Conroy, Mrs. J. Croft, V. Crosby,
G.C. Gray, D.M. Hancock, J.G. Huntington, J.M. Khan, B. Meek,
J.P. Moran, Mrs. E.M. Paylor, A. Smith, Mrs. I. Jackson Smith, T. Ward
and J. Wayman J.P

CAB.138/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
No declarations of interest were declared.

CAB.139/04 MINUTES
The Minutes of the meeting held on 20th January, 2005 were confirmed
as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**CAB.140/04 CONSULTATION ON PRIVATE FINANCE INITIATIVE TO DEVELOP
NEW COMMUNITY FIRE STATIONS AND A REGIONAL LIFE
SKILLS CENTRE**

Consideration was given to correspondence received from County
Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue Service regarding the above
initiative. (For copy see file of Minutes)

It was reported that County Durham and Darlington Fire and Rescue
Authority had consulted the Council regarding its proposals to develop
two new Community Fire Stations in Spennymoor and Bishop Auckland
and build a Regional Life Skills Centre in the North East.

Members noted that if the proposals went ahead, it was intended that
Spennymoor Fire Station would be relocated to a new site on Green
Lane Industrial. As part of the relocation, one whole time appliance
and crew from Durham Fire Station would be relocated to the new
station at Spennymoor to provide whole time cover and one of the two
existing retained (part –time) appliances and crew from Spennymoor
would be removed.

It was pointed out that as the proposed new site offered easy access to
the A167, firefighters at the new Spennymoor station would be required
to respond to incidents in the Durham area when necessary and
greater use would be made of the existing retained appliance and crew
at Durham.

It was noted that Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3, at its meeting on the 1st February 2005, had as part of the consultation process received a presentation from George Herbert, Brigade Manager – Full Service and Allan Wood, Area Manager regarding the initiative and had recommended that the proposals be supported without prejudice to future planning applications.

RESOLVED : That the proposals be supported without prejudice to future planning applications.

CAB.141/04 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3

Consideration was given to the minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 held on 1st February 2005. (For copy see file of Minutes)

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

CAB.142/04 VIEW: SHAPING THE NORTH EAST - REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY CONSULTATION DRAFT

Consideration was given to a report regarding the formal response to be submitted to the North East Assembly in respect of the above consultation document. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that the consultation draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) set out a long-term strategy for spatial development in the North East to 2021. Once approved, the strategy would form part of the statutory development plan for the Borough.

Members noted that the Strategy sought to place most new development within conurbations and main towns within the Tyne and Wear and Tees Valley Way Growth Strategy. Both the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and Northern Way Growth Strategy placed Sedgefield Borough within the Tees Valley City Region.

The report gave details of the key issues raised by the draft strategy for Sedgefield Borough, which were the introduction of City Regions, development potential at NetPark, the need to provide for a stable population and the recognition and promotion of planned Housing Market Restructuring Programmes. A draft formal response to the consultation document was attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

RESOLVED : That the statement attached as Appendix 1 on the Regional Spatial Strategy, be approved as the formal response of the Council to the North East Assembly's consultation.

CAB.143/04 SPENNYMOOR TOWN CENTRE PROGRAMME - CONTRACT NEGOTIATION

The Lead Member for Regeneration presented a report regarding the above. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that the design work for the improvement of the pedestrian link between the Asda store and High Street had been completed and approval had been received from the County Durham Economic Partnership to progress the construction of the work.

It was pointed out that the immediate construction of the whole of the project had been prevented as a result of conflict with the construction of the gymnasium to the Leisure Centre. It was proposed that in order to maximise expenditure in relation to grant funding in the 2004/05 financial year, the works should be undertaken in two phases. Phase 1 to be carried out with immediate effect and phase 2 to commence in the 2005/06 financial year, upon the completion of external works to the Leisure Centre.

Members noted that Seymour (Civil Engineering Contractors) Limited had recently completed the Spennymoor High Street Improvement Scheme on behalf the Council. The contract had been secured in open competitive tender and the works were of a similar nature to those for the Asda/High Street Pedestrian Link.

It was therefore proposed that in accordance with Contract Procedure Rule 8, the Council should enter into negotiations with Seymour (Civil Engineering) Contractors Limited with regard to establishing terms and costs for the provision of the proposed pedestrian link.

RESOLVED : That the Director of Neighbourhood Services be authorised to enter into negotiations with Seymour (Civil Engineering Contractors) Limited to agree terms and costs for the construction of Phase 1 of the Asda/HighStreet footpath link

CAB.144/04 PROPOSALS FOR LAND REGISTRATION PROJECT FROM HM LAND REGISTRY, DURHAM

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval to commit to a project with HM Land Registry to register all of the Council's land title and property ownership records. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that HM Land Registry was committed to achieving total registration within ten years and had contacted large landholders, such as local authorities, to ascertain details of their landholdings that needed registering.

Members noted that most district councils in Durham had already concluded such a project.

The report gave details of the advantages of largescale registration and the cost implications.

RESOLVED : 1. That the scheme be approved and the Council's Solicitor be authorised to enter into terms with HM Land Registry for the project to be completed within the 2004/05 financial year.

2. *That £30,000 be transferred from contingencies to meet the cost.*

CAB.145/04 CONFERENCES

The Leader of the Council presented a report (for copy see file of Minutes) regarding the Council's representation at the following : -

- a) LGA Annual Cultural Services Conference 2005 "Broadening Horizons" to be held at West Ham United football stadium from 17th – 18th March 2005.
- b) Chartered Institute of Housing Conference 2005 to be held in Harrogate from 21st to 24th June 2005.
- c) LGA Annual Conference and Exhibition "Improving Life in Local Communities" to be held in Harrogate from 5th – 8th July 2005.

- RESOLVED :**
1. *That the Lead Member for Culture and Recreation, plus one officer represent the Council at the LGA Annual Cultural Services Conference 2005.*
 2. *That the Council be represented at the Chartered Institute of Housing Conference by the appropriate Lead Member together with a Member from the rota and one officer.*
 3. *That the Chief Executive Officer, Leader and, Deputy Leader represent the Council at the LGA Annual Conference and Exhibition.*

CAB.146/04 SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The Lead Member for Supporting People presented a report seeking approval to formally adopt the Sedgefield Borough Council Safeguarding Children Policy Procedures and Guidelines and to introduce a corporate training programme to support the implementation of the Policy. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was reported that the Policy sought to ensure that in discharging its functions, the Council would have full regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Policy outlined the roles and responsibilities of managers and staff in relation to the welfare of young children and young people with whom they came into contact through their work.

- RESOLVED :**
1. *That the Safeguarding Children Policy and Procedures be approved.*
 2. *That a Corporate Training Programme be introduced to support the implementation of the Policy.*

**CAB.147/04 SURE START LOCAL PROGRAMME: SHILDON AND NEWTON
AYCLIFFE WEST: CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval for the Council to make a financial contribution of £75,000 towards the building of two Children's Centres at Stephenson Way Primary School, Newton Aycliffe and Timothy Hackworth Primary School, Shildon. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members were reminded that the Sure Start Programme for Shildon and Newton Aycliffe which had been approved by the Government in May 2003, included a capital grant of £1 m to support the provision of two new Children's Centres to serve children and families from four of the most deprived wards in the Borough.

It was explained that the estimated building costs associated with the delivery of the two Centres, at the desired specification, was £1,517,200 inclusive of VAT, and existing funding commitments totalled £1,336,700, leaving a residential funding gap of £180,500.

It was pointed out that the Centres could go forward to the tender stage if the Council made a contribution of £75,000, linked to the provision of the two Centres' meeting rooms which would provide support to local communities and if £105,000 of the estimated £120,000 of furnishing and fitting costs for the Centres were met from the revenue budget.

Members supported the contribution as the scheme would help to address inequality, poor education attainment, social deprivation, poor health and low economic activity in the two communities.

- RESOLVED :**
- 1. That a financial contribution of up to £75,000 be approved to support the development of two Childrens Centres as part of the Local Sure Start Shildon and Newton Aycliffe West Programme.*
 - 2. That a planned capital programme of £1,517,200 (inclusive of VAT) be submitted to the Sure Start Unit on behalf of the Local Sure Start Shildon and Newton Aycliffe West Programme and agreement be sought from the Sure Start Unit to meet the non recoverable VAT on the expenditure supported by the Sure Start capital grant.*

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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

PUBLISHED ON 4th FEBRUARY 2005

These minutes contain no key decisions and will be implemented immediately.

This page is intentionally left blank

Item 4

REPORT TO CABINET

17 FEBRUARY 2005

REPORT OF HEAD
OF STRATEGY AND
REGENERATION

All Portfolios

POST – CPA IMPROVEMENT PLANNING PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS

1 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out the proposed approach to formalising the Council's partnership development and control arrangements, responding to concerns raised through audit and inspection.
- 1.2 The report seeks approval for an Action Plan that rationalises all current corporate activity in relation to partnership working and incorporates all recommendations from audit and inspection. It also seeks approval of a proposed corporate definition of 'partnership working'.
- 1.3 Approval of the action plan will necessitate the amendment of the Council's Local Code of Corporate Governance action plan and division of the Consultation, Community Involvement and Partnership working improvement plan into two separate plans, one covering consultation and the other partnerships.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that Cabinet...

- 2.1 Approves the Partnership Working Action Plan.
- 2.2 Approves the adjustment of existing corporate plans in line with this Action Plan, including the partition of the Consultation, Community Involvement and Partnership Working improvement plan into two separate action plans and delegates monitoring to the appropriate Scrutiny and Overview Committee.
- 2.3 Approves the proposed corporate definition of 'partnership working' as detailed in the report to guide the operation of partnership working in which the Council engages.

3 PARTNERSHIP WORKING

Background

- 3.1. Local authorities have become increasingly engaged in activities across a wide range of service areas that are commonly said to be 'partnerships' or to involve 'partnership working'. The term 'Partnership' is often used loosely to describe a number of different types of arrangements from informal coalitions of groups committed to working on a particular local issue or to access Government funding, to top-down, statutory and highly-structured bodies with a board and signed agreements on how partners will work together. There is also a spatial dimension, with some arrangements operating at a borough or wider level and others targeted at individual localities or communities.
- 3.2 'Partnership working' is at the heart of modern local government. The duty of community leadership imposed on councils by the Local Government Act 2000 requires the development of a Community Strategy to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of the area via a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) comprising all key stakeholders. The LSP is viewed as an 'umbrella' partnership, directing the rationalisation of current and development of new partnerships in accordance with the ambitions and targets set out in the overarching Community Strategy.
- 3.3 In addition, the wider local government modernisation agenda prioritises and encourages partnerships as an opportunity to secure best value by building consensus and capacity, increasing economies of scale and improving the delivery of services in the round. From 2005, CPA will place increased emphasis on the importance of managing partnerships well.
- 3.4 With greater opportunity however comes greater risk, and partnerships can represent a significant risk to the performance, reputation and resources of local authorities if they are not effectively controlled. Whilst the Council's partnership working was praised in its CPA report, the current corporate approach to partnership development and control has been continually cited as a weakness in external audit and inspection (see Appendix 1) and was identified by Marsh Risk Consultancy as the number one risk to the Council in its report of April 2004. This was confirmed by an Audit Commission report on the Council's partnership control arrangements, which identified clear areas for improvement in current policy and procedures.

Corporate improvement planning

- 3.5 Corporate governance issues dominate the Council's post-CPA High Level Action Plan. The Council has agreed with its Audit Commission Relationship Manger that due to the volume of work scheduled and the fact that slippage has ensued as a result, it will rationalise all current and planned improvement activity and develop a SMART improvement plan.
- 3.6 As a result of the inspections outlined above, several corporate improvement initiatives have identified partnerships as a priority area and consequently officers have been working separately on different aspects of partnership development. Post-CPA improvement planning has identified all actions in existing corporate

improvements plans relating to partnerships (see Appendix 2). Taken as a whole, these fully address the recommended actions set out in Marsh's Strategic Risk Assessment (to establish a database, map, review and appraise/risk assess key partnerships).

- 3.7 In accordance with the ongoing development of an improvement framework, these actions must be rationalised and realistically timetabled. Accordingly an outline Partnership Working Action Plan is attached at Appendix 3 for approval. Approval of this plan would necessitate the amendment (in terms of target dates) and rationalisation of existing corporate improvement plans e.g. the Consultation, Community Involvement and Partnership Working improvement plan would be downsized to deal solely with consultation issues in order to emphasise the distinction made between consultations and partnerships.
- 3.8 Activity set out in the Partnership Working Action Plan will also link to Sedgefield Borough LSP's work in promoting improved partnership working to deliver better services and outcomes for the Borough's communities. Progress against the Plan will be reported via the regular updates to Cabinet on the Local Code of Corporate Governance Action Plan. The Plan should also be added to the schedule of improvement plans monitored by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 3.9 The Action Plan prescribes the approval of a corporate definition of 'partnership', the rationalisation of the current corporate list of partnerships in line with this definition and a profiling of the refined list as the basis of an effective approach to partnership control. Proposals in respect of these actions are set out below for approval.

Definition of a Partnership

- 3.10 The following proposed definition is based on that set out in the Audit Commission's publication *A Fruitful Partnership* (1999) and reflects the most common characteristics of 'partnership working' in a local government context.

Partnership Definition
<p>Sedgefield Borough Council defines the terms 'partnership', 'partnership-working' or 'partnering' within the local government context as...</p> <p>A joint-working arrangement in which the Council agrees to co-operate and collaborate with one or more legally independent organisations to achieve a series of shared objectives and outcomes.</p> <p>This would usually involve the agreement of an organisational and governance structure for the Partnership, the commitment of resources, an agreed programme of action, the sharing of information and the management of risks and rewards.</p>

- 3.11 As such partnerships will include both statutory and non-statutory bodies, companies, partnering arrangements, trusts, charities, joint committees, joint boards, consortia and such other bodies as the Council may join or enter, from time to time, under or by virtue of its statutory powers and responsibilities. Significantly, this definition clearly distinguishes 'partnerships' from other arrangements such as...

- Groups set up to discuss and consider specific topics with the local community
- Groups where the Council has direct control over budgets or decision-making
- Appointments and/or financial contributions to outside bodies where the Council has no strategic or policy input
- Commercial partnerships with a view to make a profit, which are subject to the Partnership Act 1890
- Private Finance Initiatives and other commercial agreements
- Contracts and arrangements where the Council simply pays other organisations to deliver a service or goods and vice versa

Corporate Partnerships Database

- 3.12 A list of corporate partnerships was compiled by the Monitoring Officer in 2003 based on data provided by Departments. This list has been updated in accordance with the proposed definition of 'partnership working' and is attached at Appendix 4.
- 3.13 Following confirmation with Departments, this list will be further defined using a pro forma profiling document (attached at Appendix 5) and a database developed to provide a baseline of the Council's involvement in partnerships.

Corporate policy implications

- 3.14 Implementation of the action plan on partnership working supports the Council's commitment to partnership working as set out in its Key Value Statement and will strengthen the existing corporate policy framework by providing clarity in respect of current partnership working and direction in the development of new partnerships.
- 3.15 As a consequence, the Council will be better prepared to undertake its community leadership role in respect of participating in partnership working in all service areas to support the delivery of the Council's aims and priorities as set out in the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan.

4 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The skills necessary to deliver this action plan are available within the Council. As such, resource allocation for this project will be officer time only.
- 4.2 Whilst deadlines are viewed as reasonable, it should be noted that each officer is involved a variety of other corporate improvement activity and capacity issues may arise.
- 4.3 Additional expenditure may be incurred should the Audit Commission be engaged to re-examine the Council's partnership control arrangements as part of the 2005/2006 Audit and Inspection Plan, as recommended. Any costs would be met from the standard or contingency budget available set aside for such work.

5 CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 This project will necessarily involve at appropriate stages (e.g. correcting terminology, addressing gaps, evaluations etc.) communication of the revised approach to partnership working across the Council and may engender consultation

with a range of external partners to reshape current partnership working arrangements.

6 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The implementation of the action plan should minimise to acceptable limits the risks posed to the Council's reputation, performance and resources by potential partnership failure and by the lack of understanding across the Council of the impact and consequence of partnership working. As such it clearly supports aims and objectives set out in the Corporate Plan and corporate risk management and procurement strategies.
- 6.2 Implementation of training modules on partnership working will provide clarity for officers and members in respect of their respective responsibilities and accountabilities and enable them to undertake their roles with the necessary probity and professionalism as required by the Council's Constitution.
- 6.3 It should be noted that partnership working requires not only appropriate governance arrangements but also attention to development and learning to ensure the Council's contribution to delivering positive community outcomes remains effective.

7 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Council has successfully introduced a system for the monitoring of improvement plans arising from Best Value or performance reviews whereby Overview and Scrutiny Committees monitor progress at a bi-annual frequency and report views to Cabinet.
- 7.2 Approval of the Partnership Working Action Plan will impact on the current Scrutiny schedule by replacing the current Consultation, Community Involvement and Partnership Working improvement plan with two new plans, the Partnership Working Action Plan and another covering Consultation and Community Involvement.

8 LIST OF APPENDICES

- 1 Partnership Working – Schedule of external audit and inspection recommendations
- 2 Partnership Working – Schedule of current corporate activity
- 3 Partnership Working – Outline action plan
- 4 List of Corporate Partnerships
- 5 Partnership Profile Document

Contact Officer **Paul Stephens**
Telephone 01388 816166 ext. 4441
email pstephens@sedgefield.gov.uk

Wards: N/A

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

Background Papers

Internal		
1	Local Code of Corporate Governance Action Plan	December 2002
2	Corporate Procurement Improvement Plan	
3	Consultation, Community Involvement and Partnership Working Improvement Plan	February 2003
4	Risk Management Strategy	July 2003
5	CPA High Level Action Plan	March 2004
External		
6	A Fruitful Partnership	Audit Commission 1999
7	Local Government Act 1999	
8	Local Government Act 2000	
9	SBC Procurement BVR	Audit Commission May 2002
10	SBC Corporate Governance Arrangements	Audit Commission December 2002
11	National Procurement Strategy for Local Government	ODPM October 2003
12	SBC Procurement Fitness Check	I&DeA November 2003
13	Community Planning in Sedgefield Borough	Audit Commission December 2003
14	Rethinking Service Delivery, Volume 1 An introduction to strategic service delivery partnerships	ODPM December 2003
15	SBC, CPA - Final Report	Audit Commission March 2004
16	SBC Strategic Risk Assessment	Marsh Risk Consultancy April 2004
17	SBC Partnership Control Arrangements	Audit Commission June 2004
18	Releasing Resources for the Frontline: Independent Review of Public Sector Efficiency	HM Treasury July 2004
19	Proposals for CPA from 2005	Audit Commission December 2004

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"/>

APPENDIX 1
PARTNERSHIP WORKING

EXTERNAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION RECOMMENDATIONS

Report	Recommendation(s)
SBC Procurement BVR (Audit Commission 05/02)	(The Council should) determine an agreed approach to partnership activities that is used by all departments to deliver real savings and efficiencies to procurement activities.
SBC Corporate Governance Arrangements (Audit Commission – 2002/2003)	The Council needs to strengthen its arrangements with regard to partnership working and a protocol should be developed.
SBC Procurement Fitness Check (I&DeA 11/03)	The FC team would encourage a consistent approach to structured partnership working
Community Planning in Sedgefield Borough (Audit Commission – 12/03)	The Council should determine the effectiveness of the work of key partners across all LSP policy groups.
SBC Strategic Risk Assessment (Marsh Risk Consultancy – 04/04)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Develop and maintain a comprehensive database of existing and potential partnerships (names of partners, key objectives, key contacts both in-house and within partnership, financial bases, legal status etc.) ❑ Undertake a thorough review of partnership policies/procedures across the main stages, namely selecting partners, setting up a partnership, running a partnership and terminating a partnership. The reviews should cover, amongst others, policies, procedures, insurance covers, contracts, roles and responsibilities, resources, objectives and arrangements for monitoring etc. These reviews will enable SBC to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ Identify potential gaps in best practice for partnership ❑ Spread best practice across the organisation ❑ Provide the business case for additional resources ❑ Undertake comprehensive risk analysis of key partnerships to ensure allocation of risk is fair and equitable for the Council
SBC Partnership Control Arrangements (Audit Commission – 06/04)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Council should clarify the definition of a partnership. 2. The Council should prepare a corporate strategic statement or guidance on partnership working. 3. Following clarification of the partnership definition the Council should keep a register or database of partnerships. 4. The Council should prepare a protocol for sharing information. 5. Partnership working should be incorporated in the Council's medium term financial strategy. 6. Staff or member training should include a partnership dimension. 7. The Council should introduce robust procedures for monitoring partnership working.

APPENDIX 2
PARTNERSHIP WORKING
SCHEDULE OF CURRENT CORPORATE ACTIVITY

Plan	Action(s)	Responsibility
Local Code of Corporate Governance Action Plan (12/02)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a Partnership Protocol/Framework 2. Undertake a Self Appraisal of Key Partnerships 3. Establish Protocol for Joint Commissioning, Joint Funding and Joint Accountability 	Head of S&R Head of S&R Head of SI/ Monitoring Officer
Corporate Procurement Improvement Plan (09/02)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop partnership working with public, private and voluntary sector organisations, and promote collaborative procurement arrangements on behalf of the Council, via... <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.1 An audit of the Council's current contracts and projects to establish opportunities for further partnership working within the Council 1.2 A partnership guide to aid the process of partnership working for internal staff, contractors and suppliers. 	Head of SI Head of SI
Review of Consultation, Community Involvement and Partnership Working Improvement Plan (02/03)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Delegate responsibility for the development and monitoring of partnership working to the Regeneration Section. 2. Establish mechanism for assessing the effectiveness of existing partnership working and undertake assessments. 3. Build on the work already undertaken to establish the LSP and ensure it is operating effectively and is achieving its aims. 4. Promote examples of effective partnership working across the Council and encourage departments to adopt a partnership approach to service delivery. 	Head of S&R Head of S&R Head of S&R Head of S&R
Risk Management Strategy (07/03)	In order to recognise this potential risk to service provision from third parties, all such parties engaging in contracts, partnerships, or joint working with the Council, will be required to outline their approach to risk management and provide evidence that their arrangements are adequate.	Head of Financial Services

APPENDIX 3
PARTNERSHIP WORKING
OUTLINE ACTION PLAN

Ref	Action	Responsibility	Deadline
1	Develop a corporate definition of 'partnership'.	RJP	February 2005 (...within this report)
2	Determine categorisations for corporate partnerships and develop partnership profile document.	PS	February 2005 (...within this report)
3	Rationalise current list of corporate partnerships in line with agreed definition using profile document.	Departments PS to co-ordinate	April 2005
4	Ensure existing partnerships comply with partnership documentation checklist and address gaps where this is not the case.	Departments PS to co-ordinate	June 2005
5	Maintain partnership database holding data required gathered (with constitutions/T.O.R. are cleared and deposited with Legal Services) and ensure data held checked by key personnel at regular intervals.	Strategy and Regeneration	June 2005 onwards
6	Prepare a corporate strategic statement and guidance on partnership working, including frameworks for partnership development, governance, monitoring and evaluation.	Working Group	June 2005
7	Evaluate partnerships (including risk management element) not yet appraised and report findings to Cabinet.	Departments PS to co-ordinate and report	June 2005
8	Incorporate evaluation findings into MTFP including the range, extent and impact of partnerships, risk assessments and the impact of exit strategies etc.	Financial Services	June 2005 onwards
9	Incorporate training on partnership working into the Council's member and management development programmes, particularly in relation to probity issues.	AB with DH	June 2005 onwards
10	Invite Audit Commission to re-examine partnership control arrangements as part of 2005/2006 Audit Plan.	Management Team	June 2005

APPENDIX 4
LIST OF CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS

Lead – Chief Executive’s	Lead – Resources
Sedgefield Borough LSP	County Durham E-Government Partnership
SRB5 – Newton Aycliffe and Spennymoor	North East Connects
SRB6 – Ferryhill, Chilton, Trimdons, Fishburn, Cornforth	North East Procurement Organisation (NEPO)
Objective 2 Priority 4	Durham Procurement Partnership
Sure Start Ferryhill and Chilton	Lead – Neighbourhood Services
Sure Start Shildon and Newton Aycliffe West	Joint Committee for Concordat Environmental Services
Net Park Steering Group	Voluntary Partnership Board for Adult Services
Sedgefield Business Forum	Durham and Districts Supporting People Partnership
Spennymoor Town Centre Forum	Sedgefield National Service Framework Groups
Newton Aycliffe Town Centre Forum	County Durham Housing & Neighbourhoods Group
Sedgefield Borough Area Forums	LSVT Agreement – Sunderland Housing Group
Sedgefield Learning Borough	Walking the Way to Health
Lead – Leisure Services	Pioneering Care Partnership
Locomotion – the National Railway Museum at Shildon	Sedgefield Borough Community Safety Partnership
Lifestyle Fitness Suites – Competition Line	Heritage Line Community Rail Partnership

The above partnerships will be analysed using the pro forma at Appendix 5 in order to develop a corporate database. The database will facilitate improved corporate partnership control and development arrangements.

Partnership name

Statutory

Discretionary

Lead organisation

Council representation on partnership

Members

Highlight lead member

Officers

Highlight lead officer

Other bodies represented

e.g. other public sector bodies, businesses, community and voluntary organisations, individuals etc.

Start date

Prospective end date

Main function(s)

Strategic

Tick relevant box or rank in order of importance if more than one

Programme/project

Service delivery

Advisory

Other

Please specify

Geographical coverage

Euro/International

Tick relevant box

National

Regional

Sub-regional/County

Borough

Sub-borough

If sub-borough, specify which of the 5 areas of the Borough are covered i.e. Newton Aycliffe, Spennymoor, Shildon, Ferryhill area or Rural East.

Purpose

Tick relevant box(es)

Community outcome

Healthy...

- Safeguarding public health
- Promoting independent living
- Creating leisure opportunities
- Promoting cultural activities

Prosperous...

- Promoting business and employment opportunities
- Maximising learning opportunities

Tick relevant box or rank in order of importance if more than one

Attractive...

- Ensuring a cleaner, greener environment
- Improving towns, villages and the countryside
- Reducing waste and managing natural resources

Strong...

- Securing quality affordable housing
- Promoting safer neighbourhoods
- Engaging local communities and promoting local democracy

Corporate values

- Being open, accessible, equitable, fair and responsive
- Investing in our employees
- Achieving continuous improvement and innovation in service delivery
- Taking account of sustainability, risk management and crime and disorder

- Consulting with customers and partners
- Being responsible with and accountable for public finances
- Tackling disadvantage and social exclusion

Tick relevant box or rank in order of importance if more than one

Partnership vision

Please set out any vision or mission statement and terms of reference

Partnership activities

Please summarise principal activities within each broad area and key performance indicators

Resources

Dedicated partnership budget

Dedicated staff

Other (e.g. in kind)

Influence over other resources (approx)

Documentation checklist

NB The following should be in place for all of the Council's partnerships, any gaps should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

Partnership creation approved by Management Team/Cabinet	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clear decision making procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>
Partnership agreement specifying accountabilities and governance arrangements in place and approved by Legal Services	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clear dispute resolution procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>
Terms of reference in place	<input type="checkbox"/>	Clear reporting procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>
Roles and responsibilities agreed and clear to Council representatives	<input type="checkbox"/>	Risk Assessment undertaken	<input type="checkbox"/>
Resources set out in MTFP/Workforce Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	If no, date scheduled...	<input type="text"/>
Clear financial/performance management arrangements	<input type="checkbox"/>	Evaluation undertaken	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Date of next evaluation	<input type="text"/>
		Clear termination procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>
		Exit Strategy in place	<input type="checkbox"/>

THIS DOCUMENT FORMS PART OF THE COUNCIL'S CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS FOR PARTNERSHIPS. PLEASE COMPLETE AND RETURN TO STRATEGY AND REGENERATION SO THAT THE CORPORATE PARTNERSHIPS REGISTER CAN BE UPDATED.

Contact Officer: Paul Stephens
 Strategy Officer
 Strategy and Regeneration
 Ext. 4441



This page is intentionally left blank

Item 5a

REPORT TO CABINET

17TH FEBRUARY 2005

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

Portfolio: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2005/06

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Cabinet at its meeting on 13th January 2005, approved a budget framework for 2005/06 upon which the Council's three Overview and Scrutiny Committees and Council Tax Focus Groups were to be consulted in accordance with a timetable previously approved.
- 1.2 The consultation period has now ended and this report summarises the views expressed by the various consultees. Having considered these views and, in the light of the final grant settlement, Cabinet will be required to make recommendations to Council regarding the final Budget Framework for 2005/06.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That, following consideration of the views and comments set out in this report, Cabinet makes recommendations to Council in regard to the Budget Framework 2005/06.

3.0 BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2005/06

3.1 Feedback from Overview and Overview and Scrutiny Committees

- 3.1.1 The recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committees are set out in Appendix 1.
- 3.1.2 Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 approved the budget proposals for Resource Management, Performance Management and Welfare and Communications portfolios.
- 3.1.3 Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 considered the budget proposals in relation to Culture and Recreation, Housing and Supporting People portfolios. Members queried the decision to close the swimming pool at Thornhill Gardens, Shildon and after discussion it was concluded that the matter should be referred back to Cabinet with a request that the decision to close the pool be reconsidered. The Committee also expressed concern at the proposed removal of the budget provision for the Mobile Skate Park and requested that this be reconsidered. Specific reference was also made to the grant, which the Council provides to Sedgfield Advice and Information Service (SAIS). It was pointed out that at its meeting on 30th November, 2004 Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 had agreed that the Council should continue to fund the SAIS. During the discussion on this

issue, Members considered the recent recommendation of Cabinet that discussions should be held with SAIS with a view to reducing the contribution because of the implications of continuing to part-fund the grant from the Housing Revenue Account. Members discussed what level of funding should be provided for 2005/06 and felt that this should be maintained at the current level. Subject to the aforementioned issues, the budget proposals in relation to the three portfolios were otherwise supported.

3.1.4 Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 approved the budget proposals for the Regeneration, Environment and Community Safety portfolios.

3.2 Feedback from Council Tax Focus Groups

3.2.1 Consultation was held with Council Tax Focus Groups during December and January. The Council's market research consultant – Norma Wilburn Associates, has independently prepared a detailed report and Executive Summary. The Executive Summary is attached at Appendix 2.

3.2.2 As set out in the report, the main aim of the consultation was to:

- Review the key financial issues faced by the Council and to consider the Medium Term Financial Plan;
- Seek views on the importance and prioritisation of Council services;
- Consult on key changes proposed in the Budget Framework, together with the overall Council Tax increase.

3.2.3 Overall, 78% of the participants felt that the Council's proposed spending plans addressed most or all of the issues that they thought were important. When asked to explain their answers the majority accepted that the Council had to meet a variety of priorities, for different ages and for different areas of the Borough.

3.2.4 There was strong support for the budget proposals for individual portfolios, where agreement was around 80%. In terms of the Council's overall budget proposals nearly 85% of respondents agreed with the Council's budget proposals. The participants were complimentary about the Council's efforts to prioritise services, manage the budget and also keep the budget increases low. The target of 'regeneration through economic development' was perceived as the 'highest' priority for the Council. In second place was 'street cleansing', followed by 'waste recycling'.

3.2.5 Once again, in terms of further developing the Council's Corporate Plan and Medium Term Financial Plan, the consultation was an extremely valuable exercise. The views of the participants will be useful when finalising and publishing the Council's plans over the coming months. The organisation and operation of the consultation exercise was strongly supported by the participants, with a high level of satisfaction in the way that information was supplied and presented.

3.3 Feedback from Resident's Federation and Housing Services Focus Group

3.3.1 Consultation with these groups has been on an ongoing basis throughout the year. All key strategies and operational issues have been fully discussed and the Budget Framework for housing reflects views expressed through this process.

4.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Scrutiny Committee 2 has made a number of comments that could have implications for the Budget Framework 2005/06 and Cabinet will need to make firm recommendations in regard to these comments. The key elements of the draft Budget Framework approved by Cabinet on 13th January 2005 are attached at Appendix 3 for information. Full details of the 2005/06 budget will be set out in the final budget report to Special Council on the 25th February 2005.

5.0 CONSULTATION

5.1 Consultation on the Budget Framework 2005/06 has been comprehensive as indicated in the report.

6.0 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

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

7.0 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Full consultation and engagement has been undertaken with all three Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the implications for the Budget Framework 2005/06 have been noted in the main body of this report.

Contact Officer: Brian Allen (Director of Resources)
Telephone: 01388-816166 ext. 4003
E-mail: ballen@sedgefield.gov.uk

WARDS

All

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Final Revenue Support Grant Settlement, Housing Subsidy Settlement and Capital Allocations received from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
2. Feedback from Consultation.
3. Budget Framework 2005/06 Report to Cabinet 13th January 2004.

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"/>

**CONSULTATION WITH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES ON
BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2005/06**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1 HELD ON TUESDAY, 25TH JANUARY
2005**

**'RESOURCE MANAGEMENT, PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND WELFARE AND
COMMUNICATIONS PORTFOLIOS'**

RECOMMENDED:

1. *That the budget proposals in relation to Resource Management, Performance Management and Welfare and Communications Portfolios for 2005/06 be approved.*

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2 HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 26TH JANUARY
2005**

**'CULTURE AND RECREATION, HOUSING, AND SUPPORTING PEOPLE
PORTFOLIOS'**

RECOMMENDED:

1. *That Cabinet reconsider the following budget proposals:*
 - a) *The decision to close the swimming pool at Thornhill Gardens, Shildon.*
 - b) *The decision to discontinue operation of the Mobile Skate Park.*
2. *That Council continues to fund the Sedgefield and District Advice and Information Service at the current level.*
3. *That subject to recommendations 1 and 2 above, the budget proposals in relation to Culture and Recreation, Housing and Supporting People portfolios for 2005/6 be otherwise supported.*

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3 HELD ON THURSDAY, 27TH JANUARY
2005**

'ENVIRONMENT, REGENERATION AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PORTFOLIOS'

RECOMMENDED:

1. *That the budget proposals in relation to the Environment, Regeneration and Community Safety Portfolios for 2005/06 be approved.*

Consultation on Budget Proposals and Medium Term Financial Plan
2005/2006
Executive Summary

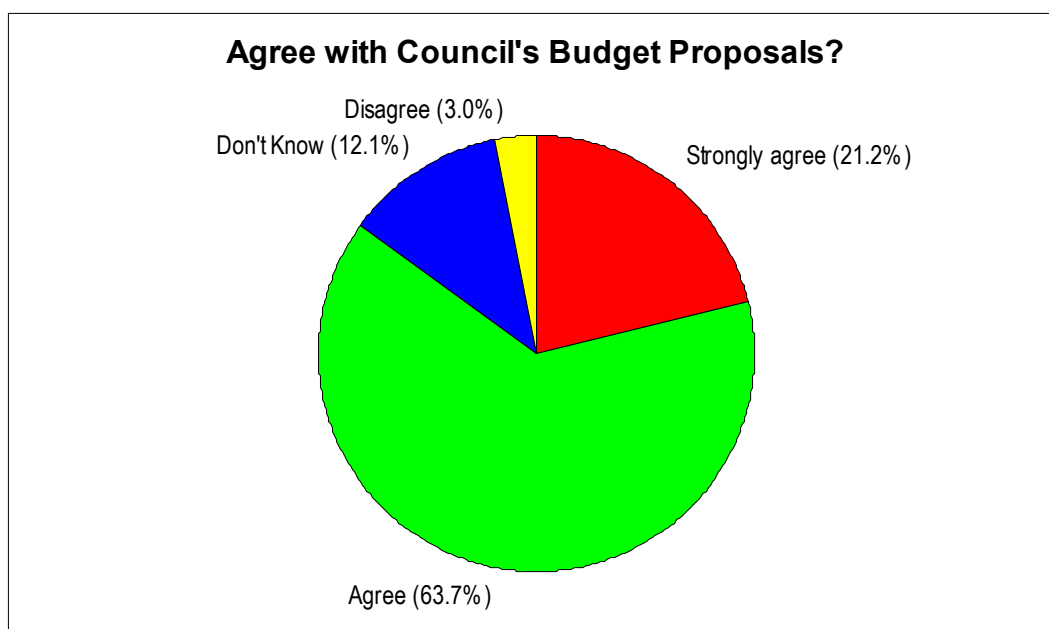
- 1 A broadly representative sample of residents from Sedgefield Borough, in respect of age, gender, geography and ethnicity, were recruited to take part in the Council's Consultation on its Budget Proposals and Medium Term Financial Plan. Participants in the groups attended two workshop sessions, the first workshop being held on 4th December 2004. The primary purpose of this workshop was to review the key financial issues faced by the Council and to consider the 'Medium Term Financial Plan'. Participants heard presentations from the Council's Director of Resources and also from the Director of Leisure Services, the Director of Neighbourhood Services and the Head of Strategy and Regeneration. At the close of this meeting participants expressed their views on the importance and their prioritisation of future plans for each element of the service areas discussed.
- 2 The second meeting, held on 22nd January 2005, met to consider the Council's draft spending proposals for 2005/2006; to review the extent to which the group felt that the Council's spending proposals addressed the issues they felt were important and the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the Council's budget proposals. In view of the immediacy of the requirement for information relating to budget proposals the consultation relating to the second meeting, that which directly discussed the draft spending proposals, has been summarised first.

Summary of Meeting of 22nd January 2005

- 3 The respondents were asked to what extent they felt that the Council's draft spending proposals for 2005/2006 addressed the issues, discussed at the previous meeting, which they felt were important. More than three quarters of respondents thought that that the Council's proposals covered all or most of the issues that they thought were important with less than a quarter saying that they covered only some of the issues which they thought were important.
- 4 When asked to explain their answers the majority accepted that the Council had to meet a variety of priorities, for different age ranges and for different areas of the Borough. Many said that issues were of varying levels of importance to themselves as individuals, recognising that others might consider important that which they did not. Issues mentioned here included the need to ensure that resources (e.g. ICT) are kept

up to date, that 'quality' was common to all services and that energy consumption reduction, economic regeneration and job creation were high priorities.

- 5 When asked how strongly they agreed with the draft budgets for individual services, in all but one area, agreement was 80% or above i.e. Resource Management 91%, Culture & Recreation 82%; Environment 88%; Regeneration 80%; Community Safety 82% and Supporting People 79%.
- 6 Having considered the individual potential service changes participants were asked the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the Council's overall budget proposals. Nearly 85%, of respondents agreed with the Council's budget proposals while less than one in eight respondents expressed a 'don't know' opinion and only one respondent disagreed with the budget proposals.



- 7 When asked to explain the reasons behind their decision the large majority were complimentary about the Council's efforts to prioritise services, manage the budget and also to keep the budget increases down. One respondent gave reluctant approval as he felt that the low level rise in Council Tax was only viable because of Capital Receipts that would not be available again. The person who disagreed with the Council's proposals said that being on a fixed income made it difficult to pay an increased charge. The need for strong budgetary control was stressed by another respondent who also commented that controls should not be so strong that in some years time the Council would have allowed services to have 'run down'.

- 8 The group was asked to comment on the operation of the consultation meetings, the clarity of presentations, opportunities to ask questions, whether they were clearly answered and the provision and clarity of information. The responses to all of these issues were very positive with agreement ranging from 80% for 'Presentation' to 94% for 'Questions answered clearly'.
- 9 Satisfaction with the 'arrangements for the meetings' was also very high at 91%. The remaining responses were 'opportunity to ask questions' 88%, 'supplied with requested information' 86% and 'clarity of supplied information' 88%.
- 10 The organisation of the meetings and the approach of the Officers were strongly praised. A number of respondents made comments on the proceedings and suggestions for future consultation exercises. A small number of participants felt a 'little overwhelmed' by the number of issues covered. Suggestions included receiving more information before the meetings, also, that the meetings could be extended with one on an evening and another to cover a full day. It was commented that the Director of Resources was 'exceedingly good' at answering the many questions, however, the number of questions asked sometimes led to presentations 'running over' and frustrations for those who still had questions at the end of the sessions. However, the opportunity to discuss issues over lunch was praised by one participant.

Summary of Meeting of 4th December 2004

- 11 Of those who attended the first consultation meeting and returned completed questionnaires 27% were under 45 years of age, 24% were '45 to 54', 28% were '55 to 64' and 21% were 'over 65 years'.
- 12 Respondents were asked, for each service area, to state their agreement with the Service's future plans and also how important the named services were. The responses to these questions are as follows:

Leisure & Cultural Services

Agreement with Future Plans

- 13 The most popular element of the Leisure Services' future plan was that of 'further investment in Youth Services' with the vast majority of respondents (93%) 'agreeing' with the proposal. Only two respondents indicated disagreement
- 14 This was closely followed by 'Investment in fixed play areas' where more than three-quarters of the respondents (86%) 'agreed' with the plan. Three respondents disagreed with the plan and 1 had 'no opinion'.

- 15 The third most popular element of the Leisure Plan was 'Partnership working' with 83% of respondents giving 'agreement'. 2 respondents 'disagreed', while 3 gave a 'no opinion' response.
- 16 The greatest percentage of 'disagreement' is to be found in the 'Locomotion Museum' proposal, where almost one in three respondents 'disagreed'. 5 respondents disagreed with the 'Smart Card Technology' proposals and 6 'disagreed' with the 'Railway heritage' proposals'.

Importance

- 17 The issue that was named as most important by the respondents with regard to 'Leisure Services' was that of 'Partnership Working'.
- 18 The second most 'important' issue was that of 'Further investment in Youth Services'. No respondents felt that this issue was either 'not very important' or 'not important at all' and no respondents expressed 'no opinion'.

Strategy & Regeneration Services

Agreement with Future Plans

- 19 In regard to the Regeneration Service's plan more than four out of five respondents 'agreed' with the proposal for 'Housing Land Capital Receipts'. 2 respondents 'disagreed' and 3 expressed 'no opinion'.
- 20 The vast majority of respondents (89%) 'agreed' with the general plan for 'Neighbourhood Housing and Community Renewal' while 1 respondent disagreed and 1 expressed 'no opinion'.

Importance

- 21 Respondents were also asked to indicate the 'importance' of 'Regeneration Service's plans. The issue that was named as most important by the respondents was that of 'Housing Land Capital Receipts'. This was closely followed by 'Neighbourhood Housing & Community Renewal' and 'Strategic Employment Sites'.

Neighbourhood Services

Agreement with Future Plans

- 22 For 'Neighbourhood Services', the most popular plans were 'Street Cleaning' 'Supporting People' and 'Waste Recycling' all at 93% 'agreement', and 'Horticultural Services' (90% agreement).

Importance

- 23 For 'Neighbourhood Services' the two issues that were noted as 'most important' by respondents were 'Street Cleaning' and 'Waste Recycling'.

Service Priorities

- 24 In the third part of the questionnaire, respondents were asked to indicate their priorities by ranking the various services areas. Those services that could be considered as 'high' priorities were:

- The highest priority was for 'Regeneration through Economic Development'.
- In second place was 'Street Cleansing'.
- This is followed by 'Waste recycling', and
- In fourth place, 'CARELINK'.

Proposed Council Tax Increase

- 25 Finally, at the end of this questionnaire, respondents were asked to state their agreement/disagreement with plans for a 'Council Tax increase of 3% for each of the next 3 years'. Almost two thirds (64%) of respondents agreed with this plan with the remainder, around one in three respondents, (36%) disagreeing.

SUMMARY OF 2005/06 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS

GENERAL FUND

<u>Spending:</u>	<u>Target Budget</u> £	<u>Financed by:</u>	£
Resource Management	72,570	Net Spending	<u>12,910,000</u>
Performance Management	1,327,700	<u>Less</u>	
Welfare and Communications	1,385,730	Non-Domestic Rates	2,520,677
Culture and Recreation	2,493,000	Revenue Support Grant	5,059,773
Environment	4,205,000	Collection Fund	250,000
Housing	624,000	Use of Balances	<u>500,000</u>
Regeneration	1,102,000		8,330,450
Community Safety	680,000		
Supporting People	1,065,000	Net Council Tax Demand	<u><u>4,579,550</u></u>
Contingency	<u>455,000</u>		
	13,410,000		
Use of Balances	<u>(500,000)</u>		
Net Spending	<u><u>12,910,000</u></u>		

This equates to an increase in Band D Council Tax from the current level of **£170.44** to **£175.60** - an increase of **£5.16** or **3.0%**.

The spending proposals are subject to risk assessment and the spending growth provided in the budgets for Environment and Community Safety will only be implemented once capital receipts have been received.

HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

Total spending on Housing Revenue Account services amounts to **£26.087m**. This includes a contribution towards the Housing Capital Programme of **£6.912m** - consisting of the Major Repairs Allowance of **£5.037m** and a Revenue Contribution of **£1.875m**. In addition, a small element of capital receipts of **£0.088m** will be used to provide a total Housing Capital Programme of **£7.0m**.

Included in the spending total above is a payment of **£1.871m**, which will be made to the ODPM and used by the Government to support national housing priorities.

The increase in Housing Rents is in line with the Government guideline of **4.03% +/- £1** adjustment for rent restructuring. This will have the impact of increasing the average base rent, prior to the rent restructuring adjustment, by **£1.97** per week over 47 weeks.

CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The overall Capital Programme for 2005/06 has been set at **£15.8m** of which **£7.0m** is for the Housing Capital Programme and **£8.8m** is for General Fund projects. Of the General Fund element, **£5.0m** has been earmarked for Special Regeneration Initiatives.

The capital spending proposals are subject to risk assessment and the earmarked provision for Special Regeneration Initiatives will only be implemented once capital receipts have been received.

Item 5b

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

Council Chamber,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Tuesday,
25 January 2005

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor B. Meek (In the Chair) and

Councillors Mrs. K. Conroy, Mrs. A.M. Fleming, D.M. Hancock,
J.G. Huntington, J.M. Khan, G. Morgan and K. Thompson

Invited to attend: Councillors R.S. Fleming and Mrs. B. Graham

In Attendance: Councillors Mrs. B.A. Clare, V. Crosby, G.C. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray,
J.E. Higgin, T. Ward and J. Wayman J.P

Apologies: Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, A. Gray, B. Hall, K. Henderson, J.M. Smith
and Mrs. I. Jackson Smith

OSC(1).27/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members had no declarations of interest to declare.

OSC(1).28/04 BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2005/06

Consideration was given to the Cabinet's initial budget proposals in respect of Resource Management, Performance Management and Welfare and Communication portfolios. Members gave detailed consideration to a report setting out the basis of the proposals and in particular the proposed changes in service provision for each portfolio. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Cabinet Members with responsibility for Portfolios under consideration had been invited to attend the meeting in order to respond to questions from the Committee.

The Cabinet had agreed its initial budget on 13th January 2005 (Minute CAB 130/04 refers) and as part of the budget setting procedure Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been asked to consider the proposals with a view to making recommendations to Cabinet before it made its final budget proposals to Council.

The Committee noted that detailed budgets had been prepared, based on inflation and price increases as outlined in the report.

Resource Management

Members noted the overall position in relation to the Capital and Revenue proposals for the Resource Management Portfolio.

It was reported that as a consequence of major land sales in 2005/06 external investment income would significantly increase by

approximately £1m. These additional resources would allow the Council to invest in revenue services to deliver on its priority areas over the next few years.

Reference was made to the additional resources of £50,000 that had been provided to support the promotion of equality and diversity in particular the appointment of a Corporate, Equality and Diversity Officer.

Members' attention was drawn to the fact that the Council would receive £25,000 of external Government funding for Emergency Planning and Civil Contingencies.

Specific reference was also made to the major changes to the Standards framework for Members that enabled the Standards Board to refer cases to the Council's Monitoring Officer for investigation. The change would obviously involve expenditure, however, the amount could not be accurately quantified, as the number of referrals was unknown. A contingency provision of £50,000 had been made. It was, however, anticipated that reflecting the national position, 50% of the complaints could relate to Parish and Town Councils and £25,000 may therefore be recovered from those authorities.

Members questioned whether the average pay increase of 2.95% was subject to Union agreement. It was however, explained that this had previously been negotiated with the Unions as part of a 3 year pay agreement.

Performance Management

Members noted the overall position in relation to the Capital and Revenue proposals for the Performance Management portfolio.

It was explained that the ICT budget reflected the increased establishment approved by Cabinet in July 2004 and the ongoing revenue costs associated with maintaining existing computer equipment and systems.

It was also pointed out that an E Government Officer had been appointed to help deliver the ever increasing range of 'E' targets and initiatives.

Members were of the opinion that the implementation of E Government should lead to potential savings for the Council and questioned how this was reflected in the 2005/06 budget proposals.

It was explained that in accordance with the Councils Medium Term Financial Plan, all areas of Council spending were expected to achieve efficiency savings of £500,000 by the end of 2007/08. It was pointed out however, that efficiency savings in the 2005/06 financial year were limited. The Director of Resources emphasised that all Local Authorities must work together effectively in order for efficiency savings to be made.

With regard to procurement, Members queried when the Council would see any financial return. It was explained that the Council was working with other Local Authorities and was a member of the North East Purchasing Organisation and the North East Centre of Excellence.

It was reported that the Council had introduced a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) System, which provided the Customer Services Section with access to all systems throughout the Council. It was anticipated that the deployment of the CRM system would bring the Council closer to meeting its customer service objectives.

Welfare and Communications

Members noted the overall position in relation to the Capital and Revenue proposals for the Welfare and Communication portfolio.

It was explained that the increase in training costs reflected the Councils commitment to extend and enhance quality to the Member and Officer core. Some Members were of the opinion that a proportion of the training budget should be used to provide out of hours training for Members.

It was reported that following the comprehensive review of the Customer Services Centre, additional management posts had been included in the revised staffing structure, approved by Cabinet in July 2004. This would involve staff being transferred from benefits and council tax sections in order to improve customer services. Major building works were being undertaken within the reception area to provide suitable accommodation for staff and improve access.

Following detailed consideration of the budget proposals for the Welfare and Communications portfolio, Members were in full support of the proposals.

RECOMMENDED: That the budget proposals in relation to Resource Management, Performance Management and Welfare and Communications for 2005/06 be approved.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Item 5c

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Wednesday,
26 January 2005

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor J.E. Higgin (Chairman) and

Councillors B.F. Avery J.P, Mrs. J. Croft, M.A. Dalton, T.F. Forrest,
Mrs. L. Hovvels, G.M.R. Howe, Mrs. E.M. Paylor, J.K. Piggott, T. Ward
and J. Wayman J.P

Tenant Representative
A.McGreggor

Invited to attend: Mrs. A.M. Armstrong, R.S. Fleming, J. Robinson J.P and W. Waters

In Attendance: Councillors Mrs. B.A. Clare, Mrs. K. Conroy, V. Crosby, G.C. Gray,
Mrs. J. Gray, J.G. Huntington, Mrs. I. Jackson Smith, G. Morgan and
A. Smith

Apologies: Councillors J. Burton and G.W. Scott

OSC(2).28/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

OSC(2).29/04 BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2005/2006

Consideration was given to the Cabinets' budget proposals in respect of Culture and Recreation, Housing and Supporting People. Members gave detailed consideration to a report detailing the basis of the proposals and in particular the proposed changes in service provision for each portfolio. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Cabinet Members with responsibility for Portfolios under consideration had been invited to attend the meeting in order to respond to questions from the Committee.

The Cabinet had agreed its initial budget on 13th January 2005 (Minute CAB 130/04 refers) and as part of the budget setting procedure Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been asked to consider the proposals with a view to making recommendations to Cabinet before it made its final budget proposals to Council.

The Committee noted that detailed budgets had been prepared on the following basis: -

- Average pay and price increases of 2.75%
- Increase in charges of 3% on average
- Allowances for inflation had been restricted to the following area of spending: -

Salaries and wages

Business rates

Insurance Premiums

Utilities Costs

Other unavoidable costs, which were of a contractual nature

Culture and Recreation

The Director of Resources explained that in accordance with the medium term financial plan, in the main, Leisure Services had been provided with an inflationary increase. Additional resources had, however been provided for the full year running costs of Locomotion and the development and co-ordination of activities for young people.

Specific reference was made to a number of changes in service, which included provisions for GP referrals, mobile skate park, promotion and advertisement, leisure centre bars, Fishburn and Shildon pools, Locomotion, play equipment and leisure services department.

Members expressed concern at the Cabinets' 20th January 2005 decision to close the swimming pool at Thornhill Gardens, Shildon. Members queried the statement that the pool was underused and expressed concern that a number of groups, as well as school children used the facility and would now have to travel further a field to find such an amenity.

The Director of Leisure Services explained that since Sedgefield Borough Council agreed to be responsible for the pool running costs had increased significantly. The pool had had to be closed on a number of occasions, therefore no revenue was received at those times. Following recent leakage problems the pool was currently drained and out of use. It was pointed out that the user groups and Primary Schools had been relocated to a neighbouring facility.

It was concluded that the matter should be referred back to Cabinet with a request that the decision to close the pool be reconsidered.

The Committee also expressed concern at the proposed removal of the budget provision for the Mobile Skate Park. In response it was explained that although the Town and Parish Councils had initially made a financial contribution that had now come to an end. It was also pointed out that operational difficulties had been unable to be resolved.

Officers also explained that the provision of alternative facilities – to replace the Mobile Skate Park - for young people would be examined.

It was concluded that this issue should also be reconsidered by Cabinet.

Housing

It was reported that the proposed budget for Housing General Fund Services was £624,000 for 2005/06. In the preparation of the budget the following price increases were assumed :-

- Increase in garage rents by 20p from £4.90 to £5.10 per week.
- Homelessness charges would increase in line with DWP thresholds from £142.64 to £147.63, an increase of 3.5%.

Members' attention was drawn to the specific changes in service provision within Neighbourhood Services, Homelessness and Housing Advice and Private Housing Regeneration Initiatives.

Members also noted that the Housing Revenue Account had been prepared on the assumption that there would be no use of the Housing Revenue Account balances in 2005/06. It was pointed out that the budget did not include any cost implications, which might arise from the forth coming ballot relating to transfer of the Council housing stock.

Specific changes to the service provision were also outlined.

Members noted that the proposed rent increase for 2005/06 would be in line with the subsidy settlement of 4.03%. This would have the impact of increasing the average base rent by £1.97 per week (47 weeks). Rent restructuring would continue to be applied at the rate of + or - £1.

Following detailed consideration of the budget proposals and clarification of intended changes in service provision relating to the Housing Portfolio, Members endorsed the budget proposals.

Supporting People

Members noted the overall position in relation to the Capital and Revenue budget proposals for the Supporting People Portfolio.

The submitted report clarified the position in relation to a number of specific budget changes relating to benefits, training and employment services, Sure Start, independent living and financial assistant.

During the discussion reference was made to the new Sure Start Children's Centres that would be developed. It was requested that information be provided on location and development of the centres to Committee Members.

Specific reference was also made to the grant, which the Council provides to Sedgefield Advice and Information Service (SAIS). It was pointed out that at its meeting on 30th November, 2004 Overview and

Scrutiny Committee 2 had agreed that the Council should continue to fund the SAIS. During the discussions on this issue, Members considered the recent recommendation of Cabinet that discussion should be held with SAIS with a view to reducing the contribution because of the implications of continuing to part-fund the grant from the Housing Revenue Account. Members discussed what level of funding should be provided for 2005/06 and felt that this should be maintained at the current level.

RECOMMENDED: 1. That Cabinet reconsider the following budget proposals:

- a) The decision to close the swimming pool at Thornhill Gardens, Shildon.*
 - b) The decision to discontinue operation of the Mobile Skate Park.*
- 2. That Council continues to fund the Sedgefield and District Advice and Information Service at the current level.*
 - 3. That subject to recommendations 1 and 2 above, the budget proposals in relation to Culture and Recreation, Housing and Supporting People portfolios for 2005/6 be otherwise supported.*

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Miss S. Billingham Tel 01388 816166 ext 4240

Item 5d

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Thursday,
27 January 2005

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor V. Crosby (Chairman) and

Councillors D.R. Brown, Mrs. B.A. Clare, G.C. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray,
M.T.B. Jones, J.P. Moran, B.M. Ord, R.A. Patchett, Mrs. C. Potts,
A. Smith and Mrs. C. Sproat

Invited to attend: Councillors A. Hodgson, M. Iveson and K. Noble

In Attendance: Councillors A.M. Armstrong, Mrs. K. Conroy Mrs. J. Croft, R.S. Fleming,
Ms. B. Graham, D.M. Hancock, B. Meek, G. Morgan, Mrs. E. Paylor and
T. Ward.

Apologies: Councillor Mrs. L. Smith

OSC(3)20/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

OSC(3)21/04 BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2005/2006

Consideration was given to the Cabinet's initial budget proposals in respect of Environment, Regeneration and Community Safety portfolios. Members gave detailed consideration to a report detailing the basis of the proposals and in particular the proposed changes in service provision for each portfolio. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Cabinet Members with responsibility for Portfolios under consideration had been invited to attend the meeting in order to respond to questions from the Committee.

The Cabinet had agreed its initial budget on 13th January 2005 (Minute CAB 130/04 refers) and as part of the budget setting procedure Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been asked to consider the proposals with a view to making recommendations to Cabinet before it made its final budget proposals to Council.

The Committee noted that detailed budgets had been prepared on the following basis:-

- Average pay and price increases of 2.75%.
- Increase in charges of 3% on average.
- Allowances for inflation had been restricted to the following areas of spending:-

Salaries and wages.
Business Rates.
Insurance Premiums.
Utilities Costs.
Other unavoidable costs, which are of a controlled nature.

Environment

Members noted the overall position in relation to the Capital and Revenue proposals for the Environment Portfolio

Overall the budget for the protection of the environment was being increased by £223,000 in real terms to reflect the level of priority given to these services by the Council.

In relation to refuse collection the budget reflected the continuing reduction of the use of the skip service.

The budget also provided for an introduction of a second green waste round and assumed the recycling credits generated would be paid to this Council by Durham County Council.

An increase had also been included in the budget to assist in improving street cleansing standards and also improving standards in the horticultural service.

Other budget heads including Pest Control and Sustainable Communities would continue to operate on the same basis as previous years.

In response to a query raised by Members in relation to the operation and monitoring of the Horticultural Service, the Head of Environmental Services explained that during the current year there had been an increase in supervision and monitoring. There had also been additional bulb and tree planting together with substantial work to shrub beds. Next financial year the service would be looking to invest in grass cutting and shrub bed maintenance. The Committee was also informed that a report was to be prepared regarding the contract which was to expire this year and with a view to extend the contract. A Strategy was to be drawn up relating to the specification requirements etc., of the contract.

Members also raised a query regarding the standard of the grass cutting service and the need for it to be monitored closely if more money was to be invested in it. Officers explained that there had been significant reasons why there had been problems with the grass cutting service operation this year. However, those problems had been resolved towards the end of the year.

Clarification was also sought by Members in relation to the budget when compared to last year's. It was explained by the Director of Resources that the cost of last year's restructuring exercise had been

contained mainly in the Resource Management Portfolio. The base figures had therefore been adjusted to reflect this and to be more closely aligned with the service budgets.

In relation to Street Cleansing concerns were raised by Members regarding the need to monitor the service more rigorously to ensure that the additional investment was giving value for money. The Committee was informed by officers that as part of the restructuring exercise the number of supervisors involved in the Street Cleansing operation had been increased from 2 to 3. The service had also been involved in the cleaning of graffiti and the introduction of machines for the removal of chewing gum. The service had also worked in partnership with other agencies such as Police and Community Force to target particular areas. New geographical satellite equipment had also been purchased. Local residents were also to be involved in the monitoring of the service.

Reference was also made to employees costs in relation to the Pest Control Service and clarification was sought. Officers explained that the costs related to a Support Officer for a three month period and that full time Pest Control Officer costs were reflected in the environmental services budget.

Regeneration

Members noted the overall position in relation to the Capital and Revenue proposals for the Regeneration Portfolio

Specific changes in service under this heading included an increase in the industrial estates budget head to ensure that there was an increased occupancy of industrial units.

Members also noted that in respect of planning services the level of planning delivery grant was assumed at £114,100. It was noted, however, that additional grant may be allocated on the basis of the Council's performance within the service against national targets.

With regard to Single Regeneration Budget 5 Projects, initiatives were to be finished at the end of the financial year. The budget provision had been included for evaluation of the Programme which would be offset by SRB5 Grant.

Additional funding for the SRB Town Centre Management Initiative would enable the Council to support the final year of the Town Centre Management Initiatives and the delivery of One North East Major Centres Programme.

Following detailed consideration of the budget proposals and clarification of intended changes in service provision for the Regeneration Portfolio Members were in full support of the proposals

Community Safety

Members noted the overall position in relation to the Capital and Revenue proposals for the Community Safety Portfolio

The changes in service in this area included the funding of two new posts under Community Safety Management – Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator and Clerical Officer. It was noted that additional income of £5,000 had been secured in respect of management and administration of domestic violence posts.

The budget for Neighbourhood Wardens had been significantly enhanced and showed an increase in service of £107,680 for 2005/06. Provision for six additional Wardens and one Warden Co-ordinator had been included in the Budget. Two Wardens would be funded in full by Great Aycliffe Town Council.

It was noted that the Revenue Budget also included for annual subscriptions, maintenance etc., of equipment. Savings would be made by reducing the number of Warden vehicles from five to three. Members were also informed that the security check/alarm monitoring service had ceased and would not be included in the 2005/6 budget.

There was also a saving excluding inflation increases of £23,970 for the Control Room/CCTV. This was the result of savings achieved on the new CCTV Maintenance Contract additional monitoring and income from Wear Valley District Council as a result of winning a contract to monitor calls in respect of their out-of-hours service.

Members of the Committee queried the change in role from Community Force to Neighbourhood Wardens Service. The Head of Neighbourhood Services explained that there had been a fundamental change in the service in that it had become more community based. The issues were around fear of crime rather than actual crime therefore the service needed to be re-engineered to a high profile, visible service at times when the public perceived their presence was needed. Wardens had also undertaken specific training programmes and had recently received accreditation from Durham and Cleveland Constabularies in recognition of their joint working with the Police. The Wardens had enforcement powers and powers to issue fixed penalties. However, the service was more about educating the community.

A query was also raised by Members in relation to the increase in the domestic violence budget. It was explained that there had been a specific post created for dealing with the provision of accommodation for victims of domestic violence.

General Budgetary Questions

Members also raised concerns regarding the increase in Council Tax which could be a burden particularly to the elderly, who, through having small private pensions, may not qualify for benefits and therefore found it difficult to meet the increase. The Director of Resources explained that the increase for the Borough Council next year would be 3%. Of

course the impact of increase from precepting authorities would also need to be taken into account and the details would be reported to full Council on 25th February, 2005.

RECOMMENDED: That the budget proposals in relation to Environment, Regeneration and Community Safety Portfolios for 2005/06 be approved.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Item 6

REPORT TO CABINET

17TH FEBRUARY 2005

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

Portfolio: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2005/06

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 The Treasury Management function covers the borrowing and investment activities of the Council and the effective management of associated risks in relation to these activities. This report outlines the strategy to be followed by the Council over the medium term in relation to its Treasury Management activities and takes into account new Guidance on Investments issued by the ODPM, and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, which is now into its second year of operation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Following consideration of the issues set out in this report it is recommended that Cabinet make the following proposals to Council: -

- Approve the Treasury Management Strategy 2005/06;
- Approve the Investment Strategy 2005/06;
- Adopt the Prudential Indicators and Limits 2005/06 to 2007/08.

3.0 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2005/06

Background

3.1 The Treasury Management Service is an important part of the overall financial management of the Council's affairs. Its importance has increased as a result of the publication of the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy.

3.2 Treasury Management activities are strictly regulated by statutory requirements and a professional code of practice (the CIPFA Code of Practice on Treasury Management). The Council adopted a Local Code of Treasury Management Activities in December 2002, taking into account the Code of Practice and as a result adopted a Treasury Management Policy Statement. This adoption complies with one of the requirements of the Code.

3.3 The Council's Constitution requires an annual strategy to be reported to the Council outlining the expected Treasury activity prior to commencement of the new year. A further report will be produced after the year-end showing the actual activity for the previous financial year.

3.4 A key requirement is to explain both the risks, and the management of the risks, associated with the Treasury Management activities.

This strategy covers: -

- The current Treasury position.
- The expected movement in interest rates.
- The Council's borrowing and debt strategy.
- The Council's investment strategy (in compliance with ODPM guidance).
- Local Treasury Management Indicators.

The Treasury Management Limits are set out in Appendix A.

NOTE:

This strategy has been prepared on the basis of the Council's current debt and investment portfolio and current capital spending plans. Should the Council complete the transfer of its housing stock under LSVT arrangements, then this would have an impact on the strategy to be followed. The strategy is reviewed on an annual basis and as we progress with the transfer, these issues will become clearer and will be taken into account in future revisions to the strategy.

Current Treasury Position

3.5 The Council's detailed Treasury position is highlighted in the following table:-

<i>Actual</i>	<i>Actual 31.03.04 £m</i>	<i>Average Rate %</i>	<i>Estimate 31.03.05 £m</i>	<i>Average Rate %</i>
FIXED RATE DEBT				
Public Works Loan Board				
Annuity	2.69	8.62	2.56	8.60
Maturity	15.93	7.16	15.93	7.16
	18.62	7.38	18.49	7.36
Other Loans				
Annuity	0.65	8.51	0.49	8.29
	19.27	7.41	18.98	7.39
INVESTMENTS				
Various Banks & Building Societies	12.89	3.74	18.00*	4.70
NET BORROWING	6.38		0.98	

** at this stage, no account has been taken of the large scale capital receipts from the sale of land previously reported to Council because the receipt of these monies may not take place until after the 31st March 2005.*

Expected Movement in Interest Rates

- 3.6 The Council employs Butlers as its Treasury Management Consultants, to advise on the Treasury Strategy, to provide economic data and interest rate forecasts, to assist in planning and reduce the impact of unforeseen adverse interest rate movements.
- 3.7 In Butlers view, the housing market has finally begun to slow down and the Bank of England is hinting that house prices may fall. Significantly, the Bank suggests that the close relationship between house price inflation and spending growth has weakened. Consequently, falling house prices may not be accompanied by a sharp decline in consumers' expenditure. The continued strength of the labour market may have something to do with this.
- 3.8 Butlers also expect UK growth to decelerate, although the Bank doubts the accuracy of the official industrial production data, which has been very weak for a number of months. Nevertheless, it suggests that economic growth will slow more quickly than had been projected in August 2004. However, the extent of the deceleration may be more modest. The fall in the price of sterling currency should deliver a boost via an eventual improvement in the balance of trade with other countries.
- 3.9 On the inflation front, Butlers suggest that the annual rate of increase is expected to rise to 2% over the next two years. Some shortfalls in supply, higher energy prices and the adverse effects of currency depreciation are cited as principal reasons for this. Nevertheless, the Bank does not expect a marked pick-up in labour costs and suggest that some rise in manufacturing inflation is being countered by greater stability in the service sector.
- 3.10 As a result of the above economic forecast, Butlers see the expected movement in interest rates as follows:-

	<i>Average Base Rate (%)</i>
2003/04 (Actual)	3.7
2004/05	4.6
2005/06	4.6
2006/07	4.3
2007/08	4.8

This anticipates that the current Bank of England base rate will remain at broadly the same level until the last quarter of 2005, by which time interest rates are expected to fall. They are expected to fall further during the 2006/07 financial year, before increasing in 2007/08.

Risk Issues

- 3.11 The key risks to the forecasts surround the strength of the US recovery. Since this will be a key driver of world growth and like the UK, borrowing drives much of the growth, a fall in consumer confidence may see the US recovery falter and the pressure for higher short and long term fixed rates may cease.

- 3.12 On the other hand, the US recovery may ignite the world economy seeing strong and sustainable world growth, increasing inflationary pressures and higher than expected increases in short and long term rates.

Borrowing and Debt Strategy

- 3.13 The Prudential Code frees Local Authorities from central controls over the level of their borrowings. Previously, borrowing allocations issued by Government were used to control each authority. In recent years the Council has not needed to incur additional borrowing to finance the capital programme, instead utilising capital receipts, external grants and contributions and funding directly from revenue. However, the introduction of the Prudential Code will create an opportunity to consider alternative means of funding the capital programme, as long as they are affordable, prudent and sustainable.
- 3.14 Any financing costs of increased borrowing or leasing will have to be met within existing revenue budgets and therefore the Council will need to continue to take a prudent and cautious approach to its borrowing and debt strategy. This will include taking advice on the movement in interest rates and the relative costs of the alternative forms of capital financing.
- 3.15 Any debt restructuring is likely to take place early in the financial year, although rates will continue to be monitored throughout the year in order to be able to take advantage of any opportunity in favourable movements.

Investment Strategy 2005/06

- 3.16 The ODPM issued investment guidance on March 2004 which applies to the financial year 2004/05 onwards. In common with the relaxation of borrowing controls in the prudential system, the more flexible guidance replaces the former detailed prescriptive regulations.
- 3.17 The key intention of the guidance is to maintain the current requirement for Councils to invest prudently, and that priority is given to security and liquidity before yield. In order to facilitate this objective, the guidance requires the Council to have regard to the CIPFA publication Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice and Cross Sectoral Guidance Notes. This Council adopted the Code in December 2002 and will apply its principles to all investment activity.
- 3.18 This annual investment strategy states which investments the Council may use for the prudent management of its balances during the financial year under the heading of specified and non-specified investments. These are explained and listed in Appendix B along with proposed criteria for specified and non-specified investments.
- 3.19 The credit rating of counter parties will be monitored on a regular basis. The Council receives credit rating advice from Butlers on a daily basis and when ratings change, and counterparties are reviewed on an ongoing basis.
- 3.20 In the normal course of the Council's cashflow it is expected that both specified and non-specified investments will be utilised as both categories allow for short term investments. The Council will maintain a minimum of £5m of investments in specified investments.

3.21 The use of longer term investments (greater than 364 days) will fall in the non-specified investment category. These instruments will only be used when the Council’s investment requirements are safeguarded.

Risk Issues

3.22 Expectations on shorter term interest rates, on which investment decisions are based, show a likelihood of remaining stable during the first half of 2005/06, with a risk of falling after this. The Council’s investment decisions are based on comparisons between the rises priced into market rates against the Council’s and Butlers own forecasts. It is likely that investment decisions will be for longer periods with fixed investment rates to lock into good value and security of return. The Director of Resources, under delegated powers, will undertake the most appropriate form of investments depending on the prevailing interest rates at the time, taking into account the risks shown above.

Local Treasury Management Indicators

3.23 The Local Code requires the Council to set performance indicators to assess the adequacy of the Treasury Management function over the next three years. These are distinct historic indicators, as opposed to the Prudential Indicators, which are predominantly forward looking.

	2005/06 %	2006/07 %	2007/08 %
DEBT			
Average Rate Movement Year on Year	- 0.2	- 0.2	- 0.2
INVESTMENTS			
Return compared with the 7 day LIBID Rate	+ 0.1	+ 0.1	+ 0.1

3.24 In effect, what these performance indicators mean is that we plan to manage our affairs so that the average rate of interest paid on external borrowings will fall by 0.2% per annum over the next three years, whilst our investment returns will exceed the industry standard benchmark (the 7 day LIBID rate) by 0.1%. Actual performance against these indicators will be reported in the respective Annual Reports for those years.

Prudential Indicators and Limits 2005/06 to 2007/08

3.25 The Prudential Code sets out a framework of self-regulation of capital spending, in effect allowing Councils to invest in capital projects as long as they are affordable, prudent and sustainable. The Prudential Code came into force in 2004/05.

- 3.26 In general terms, the Council complies with the Prudential Code by:
- Having medium term plans (Medium Term Financial Plan, Corporate Capital Strategy, Revenue and Capital Budgets);
 - Having plans to achieve sound capital investment (Capital Strategies, Capital Project Appraisals and Asset Management Plans);
 - Complying with the Treasury Management Code of Practice.

- 3.27 To support capital investment decisions the Prudential Code requires the Council to agree and monitor a number of Prudential Indicators. The purpose of the indicators is to provide a framework for capital expenditure controls. It highlights through the indicators the level of capital expenditure, the impact on borrowing and investment levels and the overall controls in place to ensure that spending remains affordable, prudent and sustainable.

The specific indicators that Council is asked to approve are shown in Appendix A alongside the Treasury Management Indicators.

4.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The financial implications have been summarised at each stage of this report.

5.0 CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Consultation on the spending proposals contained in the Budget Framework 2005/06 has been comprehensive, which includes involvement of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

6.0 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

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

7.0 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 As mentioned above, full consultation and engagement on the Council's budget proposals has been made with all three Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Contact Officer: Brian Allen (Director of Resources)
Telephone: 01388-816166 ext. 4003
E-mail: ballen@sedgefield.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Code of Practice on Treasury Management.
2. Local Code of Treasury Management Activities.
3. Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.
4. Budget Framework 2005/06.

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"/>

TREASURY MANAGEMENT INDICATORS

The purpose of these Prudential Indicators is to contain the activity of the Treasury Management function within certain limits, thereby reducing the risk or likelihood of an adverse movement in interest rates or borrowing decisions, impacting negatively on the Council's overall financial position. Four Prudential Indicators are required under this category:-

Upper Limits on Fixed Interest Rate Exposure

This indicator provides the range within which the authority will manage its exposure to fixed rates of interest.

Upper Limits on Variable Interest Rate Exposure

This indicator provides the range within which the authority will manage its exposure to variable rates of interest.

Maturity Structure of Fixed Borrowing

This indicator measures the amount of fixed rate borrowing maturing at each period expressed as a percentage of total borrowing at fixed rate at the start of each period.

Maximum Principal Sums Invested for more than 1 year

The purpose of this indicator is to contain the exposure to the possibility that loss might arise as a result of seeking early repayment or redemption of sums invested, or exposing public funds to unnecessary or unquantified risk.

The Council is asked to approve these indicators, which have been calculated as follows:

<i>Treasury Indicators</i>	<i>2005/06 % of debt</i>	<i>2006/07 % of debt</i>	<i>2007/08 % of debt</i>
Upper Limits on Fixed Interest Rates	100	100	100
Upper Limits on Variable Interest Rates	50	50	50
Maturity Structure of Fixed Borrowing			
Under 12 months	50	50	50
12 months to 2 years	50	50	50
2 years to 5 years	50	50	50
5 years to 10 years	50	50	50
10 years and above	100	100	100
Upper Limit on Principal Sums Invested for more than 1 year	75	75	75

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE AND THE CAPITAL FINANCING REQUIREMENT

Capital Expenditure

This indicator shows the overall capital spending plans of the Council over the medium term and reflects planned investment levels in line with the Medium Term Financial Plan. The actual capital expenditure that was incurred in 2003/04 and the estimates of capital expenditure to be incurred for the current and future years that are recommended for approval are:

<i>Capital Expenditure</i>	<i>2003/04 Actual</i>	<i>2004/05 Est Outturn</i>	<i>2005/06 Budget</i>	<i>2006/07 Estimated</i>	<i>2007/08 Estimated</i>
	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>
Housing	6,738	7,700	7,000	6,500	6,500
Non-Housing	3,363	4,900	8,800	9,500	9,500
Total	10,101	12,600	15,800	16,000	16,000

Capital Financing Requirement (CFR)

This figure represents the Council's underlying need to borrow for a capital purpose, and the change year on year will be influenced by the capital expenditure in the year and how much of this is supported directly through grants, contributions and capital receipts. The CFR is essentially a replacement of the current 'credit ceiling' mechanism, which is also a measure of underlying borrowing need.

The Council's expectations of the CFR in the next three years that Council is asked to approve are as follows:

<i>Capital Financing Requirement</i>	<i>2003/04 Actual</i>	<i>2004/05 Est Outturn</i>	<i>2005/06 Budget</i>	<i>2006/07 Estimated</i>	<i>2007/08 Estimated</i>
	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>
Housing	8,388	9,043	9,714	10,014	10,314
Non-Housing	10,973	10,846	11,006	10,566	10,126
Total CFR	19,361	19,889	20,720	20,580	20,440

Previous legislation required the Council to set aside a proportion of its capital receipts to repay debt, which meant that the Council's debt levels had traditionally been falling year on year. However, with the introduction of the 'pooling system' for housing capital receipts from 1st April 2004, it is expected that debt will remain at broadly the same level over the medium term.

LIMITS TO BORROWING ACTIVITY

Net Borrowing

The first key control over the Council's activity is to ensure that over the medium term net borrowing will only be for a capital purpose. The Council needs to ensure that net external borrowing does not, except in the short term, exceed the CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional capital financing requirement for the following three years.

The Council is asked to approve the following borrowing limits, which take into account current commitments, existing plans and the proposals in the Budget Framework:-

<i>Net Borrowing</i>	<i>2003/04 Actual</i>	<i>2004/05 Est Outturn</i>	<i>2005/06 Budget</i>	<i>2006/07 Estimated</i>	<i>2007/08 Estimated</i>
	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>
Gross Borrowing	19,270	18,987	18,678	18,512	18,332
Investments	12,890	18,000*	30,142*	37,940	33,255
Net Borrowing	6,380	987	(11,464)	(19,428)	(14,923)

* the timing of the receipt of major capital receipts is difficult to forecast with certainty at this stage and could fall in either 2004/05 or 2005/06.

A further two prudential indicators control the overall level of borrowing: **Authorised Limit** and the **Operational Boundary**. These limits separately identify borrowing from other long-term liabilities such as finance leases.

Authorised Limit

This represents the limit beyond which borrowing is prohibited and reflects the level of borrowing which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable. It is the expected maximum borrowing need with some headroom for unexpected movements. This is a statutory limit that the Council must determine in accordance with Section 3(1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

Operational Boundary

This indicator is based on the probable external debt during the course of the year; it is not a limit and actual borrowing could vary around this boundary for short times during the year. It should act as an indicator to ensure that the authorised limit is not breached.

The Council is asked to approve the following authorised and operational limits:

Authorised Limit	<i>2003/04 Actual</i>	<i>2004/05 Est Outturn</i>	<i>2005/06 Budget</i>	<i>2006/07 Estimated</i>	<i>2007/08 Estimated</i>
	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>
Borrowing	n/a	30,000	30,000	30,000	30,000
Long Term Liabilities	n/a	-	-	-	-
Total	n/a	n/a	30,000	30,000	30,000
Operational Boundary	<i>2002/2003 Actual</i>	<i>2003/2004 Est Outturn</i>	<i>2004/2005 Budget</i>	<i>2005/2006 Estimated</i>	<i>2006/2007 Estimated</i>
	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>	<i>£'000</i>
Borrowing	n/a	22,000	22,000	22,000	22,000
Long Term Liabilities	n/a	-	-	-	-
Total	n/a	n/a	22,000	22,000	22,000

AFFORDABILITY PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS

The previous sections cover the overall capital and control of borrowing prudential indicators, but within this framework prudential indicators are required to assess the affordability of the capital investment plans. These provide an indication of the impact of the capital investment plans on the Council's overall finances.

The Council is asked to approve the following indicators:

Ratio of Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream

This indicator expresses the amount of interest payable on external debt and other debt management expenses (i.e. financing costs) as a proportion of the amount of income received from Government and local taxpayers (i.e. net revenue stream). The definition of net revenue stream for the HRA is based on the statutory definition which incorporates charges to the account under Part 4 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

<i>Financing Costs to Net Revenue Stream</i>	<i>2003/04 Actual</i>	<i>2004/05 Est Outturn</i>	<i>2005/06 Budget</i>	<i>2006/07 Estimated</i>	<i>2007/08 Estimated</i>
Housing	34.7%	35.2%	33.2%	31.7%	30.2%
Non-Housing	7.2%	4.3%	-1.6%	-3.3%	-2.4%

Incremental Impact of Capital Investment Decisions on the Council Tax

This indicator identifies the impact of the Council's General Fund Capital Programme on revenue budgets and is expressed in terms of Band D Council Tax. As most taxpayers in the Borough pay at the Band A level of Council Tax, this figure has also been reported.

<i>Incremental Impact of Capital Programme</i>	<i>2005/06 Proposed Budget</i>	<i>2006/07 Projection</i>	<i>2007/08 Projection</i>
Council Tax at Band D	£0.78	£0.77	£0.76
Council Tax at Band A	£0.52	£0.51	£0.51

Incremental Impact of Capital Investment Decisions on Housing Rent Levels

Similar to the Council Tax calculation this indicator identifies the impact of the Housing Capital Programme on revenue budgets, expressed in terms of weekly rent levels. This reflects the revenue contribution that is made to support the Housing Capital Programme.

<i>Incremental Impact of Capital Programme</i>	<i>2005/06 Proposed Budget</i>	<i>2006/07 Projection</i>	<i>2007/08 Projection</i>
Weekly Housing Rent	£4.52	£5.00	£5.17

ANNUAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY
Schedule of Specified and Non-Specified Investments

Specified Investments

These investments are sterling dominated of not more than one-year in maturity, or those which could be for a longer period but where the Council has a right to be paid within 12 months if it wishes. These are low risk assets where the possibility of loss of principal or investment income is negligible.

Specified Investment Category	Credit Rating	Max Period
UK Government – including Debt management Office, UK Treasury Bills or gilts with less than one year to maturity	High security. No Credit rating criteria needed.	1 year
Supranational Bonds – 1) issued by a financial institution that is guaranteed by the UK 2) multi lateral development bank bonds aimed at economic development (e.g. European Investment Bank)	High security. No Credit rating criteria needed	1 year
Local Authority, Parish or Community Council	High security. No Credit rating criteria needed	1 year
Money Market Funds (Investment Schemes)	AAA rating by Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poors	1 year
Highly Credit Rated Body – investments made with a bank/building society from the Council's counterparty list	Short term rating of at least F1 (or equivalent) or minimum asset size of £200m.	1 year

Non - Specified Investments

Non –specified investments are any other type of investment (i.e. not defined as specified investments above). The identification and rationale supporting the selection of these other investments and the maximum limits to be applied are set out below.

Non -Specified Investment Category	Limit (£)
Supranational Bonds greater than 1 year to maturity – 1) issued by a financial institution that is guaranteed by the UK 2) multi lateral development bank bonds aimed at economic development (e.g. European Investment Bank)	£20m
Gilt edged securities greater than 1 year to maturity – Government bonds providing the highest level of security.	£20m
Building Societies not meeting the basic security requirements under the specified investments – the Council may use such building societies which have a minimum asset size of £200m .	£20m
Any Bank or Building Society that has a minimum long term credit rating of F1+ for deposits of greater than one year (including forward deals in excess of one year from inception to repayment) or minimum asset size of £200m.	£20m
Any Non rated subsidiary of a credit rated institution included in the specified investment category. These institutions will be included as an investment category subject to a guarantee from the parent company.	£5m
Share capital or loan capital in a body corporate – the use of these instruments will count as capital expenditure and will be an application of capital resources. Revenue resources will not be invested in corporate bodies.	£5m

Item 7

REPORT TO CABINET

17th FEBRUARY 2005

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR
OF RESOURCES**

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

ASSET MANAGEMENT –FOUL WATER DRAINAGE SYSTEM, COUNCIL OFFICES, GREEN LANE, SPENNYMOOR

SUMMARY

This report seeks approval to renew the foul water drainage system at the Council Offices, Green Lane, Spennymoor.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Council agrees to renew the foul water drainage system at the Council Offices, Green Lane, Spennymoor at an estimated cost of £69,000 inclusive of design and supervision fees.
2. That the Director of Resources in consultation with the Lead Member for Resource Management be authorised to let a contract for the works to the company who submit the lowest tender on condition that the tendered sum is within the budget provision of £69,000.

DETAIL

The drainage system serving the council chamber, conference rooms and the three-storey part of the building was installed when the original building was built. This drainage layout was modified slightly when alterations took place in 1989.

During September and October of 2004 it became apparent that the system was suffering from major defects when blockages required clearing on 12 separate occasions.

A CCTV Survey was organised to investigate the recurring blockages and this revealed the following problems:

- 1 No. Total collapsed pipe (which has now been repaired).
- 15 No. Partial collapsed pipes - 50% or less.
- 10 No. Partial collapsed pipes - 25% or less.

The CCTV Survey also revealed that the modified drainage which was laid in 1989 was laid at a flat gradient to allow connection to the existing system however this was laid in 100mm diameter pipe work, when ideally due to the flat gradient it should have been laid at 150mm diameter.

It is proposed to carry out the following works:

1. Replace the whole of the drainage system and divert the new pipes around the eastern boundary of the existing porta-cabins. This would allow the gradient to be made steeper allowing better flows within the system.
2. Increase the diameter of the pipe work to 150mm to allow better flows.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

The anticipated costs of £69,000 can be accommodated from the Green Lane Capital Programme Budget.

CONSULTATIONS

None considered necessary

OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

None

Contact Officer	John Wilkinson
Telephone Number	01388 816166 Ext. 4377
E-mail address	jwilkinson@sedgefield.gov.uk

Ward
The Tudhoe Ward

Background papers
None

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

Item 8

ITEM NO.

REPORT TO CABINET

17TH February 2005

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Portfolios: Regeneration

SPENNYMOOR TOWN CENTRE – CONTRACT NEGOTIATION

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 At their meeting on the 3rd February 2005 Cabinet gave approval for the Director of Neighbourhood Services to enter into negotiations with Seymour (Civil Engineering Contractors) Ltd. to agree terms and costs for the construction of Phase 1 of the proposed footpath link between the Asda supermarket and the High Street, Spennymoor.
- 1.2 Negotiations have now been completed with Seymour (Civil Engineering Contractors) Ltd. in the sum of £50,598.43. Seymour (Civil Engineering Contractors) Ltd. have very recently carried out similar paving works on behalf of the Council and therefore all of the negotiations for the provision of the proposed scheme have been based on the conditions and rates appertaining to this recent contract which was secured in open competitive tender.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the negotiated tender submitted by Seymour (Civil Engineering Contractors) Ltd. in the sum of £50,598.43 be accepted.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 An application to access £2.2 m of Single Programme resource to implement an improvement programme to enhance the environmental quality of Spennymoor Town Centre has been approved by One NorthEast.
- 3.2 Cabinet first considered the proposals for the Spennymoor Town Centre environmental improvement programme in December 2003. The extent and financial implications of the improvement scheme were then further considered by Cabinet in July 2004 in the report detailing the Regeneration Services Capital Programme 2004/05.
- 3.3 Proposals to improve links within the town centre and with other edge of town attractions/facilities form an integral part of the improvement programme. Current plans include upgrading the link between the town

centre and ASDA. Design work for this pedestrian link has been completed and approval has now been received to progress construction of this phase of works.

- 3.4 In order to progress construction of Phase 1 of this footpath scheme as expeditiously as possible it was considered that negotiation of the terms and costs of the works with a specific contractor would provide both financial and operational benefits. Negotiation would also allow early commencement of the works and obviously assist in maximising expenditure in the current financial year.
- 3.5 In accordance with Contract Procedure Rule 8 of the Council's Constitution permission was sought of Cabinet for the Director of Neighbourhood Services to enter into negotiations with Seymour (Civil Engineering Contractors) Ltd. with regard to establishing terms and costs for the provision of the proposed pedestrian link. Cabinet granted such permission at their meeting on the 3rd February 2005.
- 3.6 Bills of Quantities have been prepared and negotiations have been concluded with Seymour (Civil Engineering Contractors) Ltd. in the sum of £50,598.43 with a contract period of 5 weeks.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Regeneration Services Capital Programme report to Cabinet in July 2004 detailed the financial implications and funding arrangements for the whole of the Town Centre initiative.
- 4.2 Initial estimates for the cost of the hard landscaping works associated with the whole of the Asda/High St. link is £135, 000. Phase 1 of the works was estimated at £54,000. The negotiated cost of the works is within the agreed budget.
- 4.3 All costs associated with these works are to be met from Single Programme funding.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 Consultation in respect of the Town Centre proposals has focused on the Spennymoor Town Centre Forum. The Forum has been fully engaged in shaping the proposals. More focussed, detailed public consultations on specific elements of the initiative took place in October and November 2004.

6. SECTION 17, CRIME AND DISORDER ACT 1998

- 6.1 An important element of this initiative will be to ensure the town centre is safe and secure for users at all times of the day. This will be

achieved through the installation of additional CCTV and improving the environmental quality of the centre.

7. LA21 SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

- 7.1 The overall improvement programme is aimed at in strengthening the economic base and creating a more vibrant, vital and competitive Town Centre. Sustainable development will also be contributed to through improved transport links for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport within the town centre.

.....

Contact Officer: Gordon Lennon
Telephone No: 01388 816166 ext 4266
Email Address: glennon@sedgefield.gov.uk

Key Decision Validation: Not considered a key decision

Background Papers

Cabinet Report, Spennymoor Town Centre Programme - 11th December 2003
Cabinet Report, Regeneration Services Capital Programme 2004/05 – 1st July 2004
Negotiated Contract cost from Seymour (Civil Engineering Contractors) Ltd.
– 3rd February 2005

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

Item 9a

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Tuesday,
11 January 2005

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor J.M. Khan (In the Chair) and
Councillors D.M. Hancock, G. Morgan, Mrs. I. Jackson Smith and
K. Thompson

In Attendance: Councillors Mrs. B.A. Clare, V. Crosby, G.C. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray,
J.E. Higgin, Mrs. E.M. Paylor and A. Smith

Apologies: Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, Mrs. K. Conroy, Mrs. A.M. Fleming,
A. Gray, B. Hall, K. Henderson, J.G. Huntington, B. Meek and J.M. Smith

OSC(1).23/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members had no declarations of interest to declare.

OSC(1).24/04 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November, 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (F or copy see file of Minutes).

OSC(1).25/04 MODERN.GOV

A demonstration was given of Modern.Gov, the electronic Committee system which allowed access to Agendas, Minutes and other information via the Internet. Members also explored the possible efficiency savings, which could be achieved when the system was fully developed.

Specific reference was made to the following facilities which the system provided :-

- Calendar
- Search
- Meetings
- Forward Plans
- Committees
- Parish Councils
- Councillors
- MPs
- MEPs

Members were reminded that e-Government targets required all Councils to e-enable 100% of services by December 2005. The

following targets related to Democratic Services:-

‘**R5** Public access to outline reports, minutes and agendas from past council meetings, including future meetings diary updated’

‘**R6** Providing every Councillor with the option to have an easy-to-manage set of public web pages (for community leadership purposes) that is either maintained for them, or that they can maintain themselves’.

The target had already been met, however further development was required to ensure that the full potential of the system could be realised and efficiency savings maximised.

Members queried whether Councillors could access the system from outside of the Council Offices. It was explained that as the site was still developing, Councillors could only access public documents via the Internet, until adequate security measures were in place. Access to all documents, including exempt pages, was available to Members on the Council Intranet.

It was hoped to develop Modern.Gov and encourage its use throughout the Council to ensure that efficiency savings could be maximised.

It was envisaged that a ‘subscribe’ service could be developed to enable users of the system to receive e-mails to notify them that a document within their area of interest had been published. This service could be beneficial to all involved with the Councils decision-making processes and would result in savings to the Council.

Members welcomed the development of the Modern.Gov system and the use of new technology to secure efficiencies. The use of the Modern.Gov system by Members would depend on the roll out of laptops to Members and associated training.

CONCLUDED: That the Modern.Gov system be welcomed

OSC(1).26/04 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report of the Chairman of the Committee setting out the Committees work programme for consideration and review. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members were updated on the progress of the ongoing reviews.

With regard to the Review of Area Forums, it was reported that a questionnaire had been distributed to each person on the mailing list for each Area Forum. The response rate had been good with approximately 50% of questionnaires returned. Members were also informed that consultation had commenced with Town and Parish Councils.

With regard to the review of Recruitment and Retention it was explained that an exercise was being carried out to assess how the grading of posts at Sedgefield Borough Council compared to the same posts at other local authorities. Although a number of authorities had been contacted only a small number of responses had been received.

With regards to future items for review, some Members were of the opinion that Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 should give consideration to Large Scale Voluntary Transfer. It was however pointed out that this item was within the remit of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2.

Reference was made to the Stewart Report relating to mobile phone masts. It was suggested that a report, advising the Committee of the health risks associated with the erection of mobile phone masts, be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 for consideration. However, it was noted that a training programme had been developed for Development Control Committee, which would include mobile telephone masts.

Reference was also made to the monitoring of Key Performance Indicators (KPI's). Members pointed out that at the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 held on 15th June 2004, it was suggested that Performance Indicator information should be reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committees on a regular basis to enable Members to monitor performance.

It was reported that the Head of Service Improvement was in the process of reviewing Performance Indicators. When this work was concluded, Performance Indicators would be reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committees on a regular basis.

RECOMMENDED: That the Committees work programme, as outlined in the report, be agreed.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Item 9b

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Tuesday,
18 January 2005

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor J.E. Higgin (Chairman) and

Councillors B.F. Avery J.P, Mrs. J. Croft, M.A. Dalton, Mrs. E.M. Paylor,
J.K. Piggott, T. Ward and J. Wayman J.P

Tenant Representative

A. McGregor

In Attendance: Councillors Mrs. A.M. Armstrong, Mrs. B.A. Clare, V. Crosby, G.C. Gray,
D.M. Hancock, J.G. Huntington, G. Morgan, K. Noble, A. Smith and
Mrs. I. Jackson Smith

Apologies: Councillors J. Burton, Mrs. L. Hovvels, G.M.R. Howe and G.W. Scott

OSC(2).23/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members had no declarations of interest to declare.

OSC(2).24/04 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30th November were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes).

OSC(2).25/04 SEDGEFIELD PRIMARY CARE TRUST

N. Porter, Chief Executive of the Sedgefield Primary Care Trust attended the meeting to give a presentation regarding the out-of-hours service and the Annual Report.

It was explained that the Director of Public Health's Annual Report 2003/04 provided an overall picture of health for the population including vulnerable groups, gave a snapshot of health-related issues in each of the five localities and acted as a stimulus to local action.

The Annual Report was organised around the four key pillars of the PCT, which were as follows: -

- Get closer to the public
- Improve health services
- Bring services together
- Improve the health of local people

Discussion took place in relation to the following topics: -

Factors influencing health

Members were informed that education, employment and housing all had an effect on health. It was noted that 38.4% of pupils in Sedgefield Borough gained five or more A-C's at GCSE level compared with 5.1% for England.

Unemployment benefit was claimed by 2.8% of the working population in Sedgefield compared with 2.5% in England.

Lifestyle Issues

It was reported that 9% of the population in Sedgefield Borough did not exercise, 20% of the population smoked with 34% of these thinking about trying to give up and 16% of the population ate five or more portions of fruit and vegetables every day. It was also pointed out that 28% of men drank excessively.

Health Protection

It was noted that immunisation and vaccination rates were above the national rate.

Big Killers

Members were informed that Sedgefield Borough was above the national average for deaths caused by heart disease and cancer. It was noted that 7.9% of the population reported pain or disability from heart disease and that standard hospitalisation for heart attacks was over twice the national rate.

In relation to cancer, it was noted that locally the overall standardised mortality rate was 114 although for lung cancer it was 146. The national average was 100.

Chronic Disease

It was noted that the percentage of the population reporting pain and disability were as follows: -

- Arthritis 25.9%
- Asthma 11.2%
- Depression and Anxiety 9.2%
- Stroke 2.4%
- Heart Disease 7.9%

Specific reference was made to a number of listening events, which the PCT had held throughout the Borough. These events had been successful with a number of people attending. It was hoped that through community engagement, the public would be encouraged to make simple changes to their lifestyle.

With regard to improving services, the Committee was informed that waiting lists for patients requiring hospital treatment had reduced and that no one should now wait more than 48 hours for access to a GP. It was also pointed out that Pharmacists could offer advice and issue

appropriate medication for certain illnesses.

Reference was made to the integrated teams based in Trimdon Village. It was anticipated that by the end of 2005 there would be five integrated teams based throughout the Borough.

With regard to financial performance it was noted that in 2004 the PCT had a budget under spend of 2%.

Members expressed concern in relation to reduced waiting times for those patients opting for private health care. It was explained that Consultants who signed the Consultant Contract could only work with a limited amount of private patients. It was also anticipated that as NHS waiting times reduced the amount of patients opting for private health care would also reduce.

With regard to out-of-hours services, it was reported that the implementation of the GP Contract had given GP's the opportunity to opt out of providing out-of-hours services. All out of hours services would be provided at the Urgent Care Centre at Bishop Auckland Hospital. The PCT had taken full responsibility for out-of-hours services on 1st December, 2004.

Members referred to a letter, which had been distributed to members of the public detailing the services that would be provided by the Urgent Care Centre. Some Members expressed concern that the letter did not publicise that, where necessary, the Urgent Care Centre would provide patients with transport to the Hospital.

Members' attention was drawn to the fact that the Doctors Surgery in Sedgefield would continue to open on a Saturday morning in order to assess if there was a high demand for the service.

Discussion took place regarding the positive health benefits that swimming provided and who should be responsible for the maintenance of these facilities.

AGREED: That the information be received

OSC(2).26/04 DEVELOPMENT OF OUTDOOR PLAY STRATEGY

Consideration was given to a Briefing Note regarding the development of an Outdoor Play Strategy (for copy see file of Minutes).

It was reported that an announcement was made in December, 2002 by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport/Department for Education and Skills/New Opportunities Fund that funding of approximately £200m nationally for improvements of Outdoor Play facilities would become available in 2003/04. Access to this funding would only be available to individual Districts developing a Play Strategy. The funding, however, had still not been allocated.

The Youth Development Officer had initially led the development of an

Outdoor Play Strategy within Sedgefield Borough. A report was submitted to Cabinet in July, 2003 and identified the scope and timescales for the Strategy. It was intended that the Council would adopt the final document in March, 2004. This timescale had not been delivered. The scope had been agreed, however, and was identified in the report. An Action Plan was yet to be fully developed.

It was reported that the Council had received a further recommendation from the National Playing Fields Association (NPFA) suggesting Best Practice with regard to the time spent on the inspection and maintenance regime that had been adopted. The NPFA had recommended that more time should be spent on the inspection of play sites. It was explained that a meeting had been held with partner Town and Parish Councils to discuss the funding of increased inspection regimes and it had been agreed that January, 2005 would see an increased contribution towards the cost from those partners who wished to continue in the scheme.

The Group was informed that running parallel with the Outdoor Play Strategy was the development of an Open Space Needs Assessment (OSNA). It was felt that this document would assess all of the omissions mentioned in the Outdoor Play Strategy without duplicating in particular the consultation aspect of both projects. It was recognised that the OSNA would take up to 18 months to complete and it was anticipated that the appointment of consultants would not take place until April, 2005. Conclusions from the OSNA would therefore be unavailable for approximately two years.

It was reported that there were 60 play sites within the Borough, 45 of which were owned by Town and Parish Councils. Discussion with Town and Parish Councils had identified a need to replace/increase existing play areas. It was pointed out that all play areas could not be replaced immediately and therefore a three-year programme was required based on the Audit of Fixed Play document 2004.

Members were informed that the Leisure Services Department had put a bid in to Regeneration for capital funding.

It was proposed that the Year 1 investment areas would include:

- Agnew
- Eldon
- Chilton
- Shildon
- Spennymoor (Tudhoe)

It was explained that this list was not exhaustive and provision could be made in Year 1 for investment in a further ten sites which would be identified in the near future. It was pointed out that Sedgefield was not identified as a priority area as a play area would be erected through the Winterton Park development.

Members were informed that there was a requirement for Sedgefield Borough Council to commission further studies to feed into the Outdoor Play Strategy regarding play for under 5s, 6 to 14 year olds and 15 years and above. It was explained that these studies were specialist in nature and required expertise, which was not available to the Council.

It was emphasised that the Outdoor Play Strategy required further work. The final Outdoor Play Strategy would be an overarching document with aspects of other plans and strategies feeding into it.

Members expressed concern in relation to the repaired/renewed play sites becoming vandalised and it was questioned what action the Council could take to prevent this. It was explained that best practice would be identified through the work of the Consultants.

AGREED: That the information be received

OSC(2).27/04 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report of the Chairman of the Committee setting out the Committee's work programme for consideration and review. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members were updated on the progress of the ongoing reviews.

With regard to the Value of Tourism Review Group, Members were informed that a further two meetings had been arranged. It was hoped a representative from Durham County Council would attend a meeting to present the Tourism Strategy covering County Durham.

With regard to the review of Cultural Facilities within the Borough, it was reported that this Review Group was to meet on 19th January, 2005.

Discussion took place in relation to the development of a Regional Gymnastics Centre attached to Spennymoor Leisure Centre. It was pointed out that the start date for the construction of the Gymnastics Centre would be delayed by approximately 3-4 months as a major electrical cable running through the site had to be diverted. The delay would result in additional contract costs of £99,750. It was suggested that the Director of Leisure Services be invited to attend a future meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 to answer Members questions relating to this matter.

RECOMMENDED : That the Committee's Work Programme as outlined in the report be agreed.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Miss L. Moore, Spennymoor 816166, ext 4240

This page is intentionally left blank

Item 10a

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA 2 FORUM

Chilton and Windlestone
Community College

Tuesday,
11 January 2005

Time: 6.30 p.m.

Present: Councillor Mrs. C. Potts (Chairman) – Sedgfield Borough Council and

Councillor T.F. Forrest	–	Sedgfield Borough Council
Councillor A. Hodgson	–	Sedgfield Borough Council
Councillor R.A. Patchett	–	Sedgfield Borough Council
Councillor G. R. Wood	-	Chilton Town Council
Councillor A. Bruce	-	Chilton Town Council
Councillor V. Collinson	-	Chilton Town Council
Councillor L. Dixon	-	Chilton Town Council
Councillor M. Errington	-	Chilton Town Council
Councillor J. Lee	-	Chilton Town Council
Councillor L. Potts	-	Chilton Town Council
Councillor B. Turner	-	Chilton Town Council
J. Cullerton	-	Chilton Partnership
C. Hale	-	Chilton Partnership
M. Taylor	-	Chilton West Residents Association
Councillor L. Ord	-	Cornforth Parish Council
Inspector S. Winship	-	Durham Constabulary
G. Porter	-	Durham County Council
Councillor J. Chaplin	-	Ferryhill Town Council
E. Bruce	-	Local Resident
D. Cullerton	-	Local Resident
L. Race	-	Local Resident
W. Race	-	Local Resident
Dr. A. Learmonth	-	Sedgfield PCT
Mrs. S. Slaughter	-	Sedgfield PCT

In

Attendance: Miss L. Moore

Apologies:

Councillor B.F. Avery, JP	–	Sedgfield Borough Council
Councillor Mrs. K. Conroy	–	Sedgfield Borough Council
Councillor J.E. Higgin	–	Sedgfield Borough Council
Councillor B. Meek	–	Sedgfield Borough Council
Councillor G. Morgan	–	Sedgfield Borough Council
Councillor D.A. Newell	–	Sedgfield Borough Council
Councillor Ms. M. Predki	–	Sedgfield Borough Council
S. Gator	–	Ferryhill Business and Enterprise College
Chief Inspector Hall	–	Durham Constabulary

AF(2)21/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
Members had no interests to declare.

AF(2)22/04 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd November, 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes).

AF(2)23/04 POLICE REPORT

Inspector S. Winship was present at the meeting to give details of the crime figures and local initiatives for the Chilton, Ferryhill, West Cornforth and Bishop Middleham areas.

It was reported that the crime statistics were as follows :-

	<u>Oct. 2004</u>	<u>Nov. 2004</u>	<u>Dec. 2004</u>
Total Number of Crimes	138	154	102
Dwelling Burglary	4	9	2
Att. Burglary - Dwelling	0	2	0
Burglary - Other	12	10	7
Violence Against Persons (Assaults)	10	7	11
Theft of Motor Vehicles	4	5	3
Theft from Motor Vehicles	7	10	5
Attempted Thefts from Motor Vehicles	0	0	0
Theft – General	25	22	20
Drug/Substance Misuse	3	6	4
Criminal Damage	75	91	50
Youths Causing Annoyance	87	89	63
Motorcycle complaints (Total for 2003 – 43) (Total for 2004 – 73)	7	6	3
Total Number of Incidents	677	650	523
Total Number of Arrests	69	69	60

The Forum was given details of a number of operations, which were ongoing throughout the area.

It was reported that two Anti-Social Behaviour Orders had been obtained in relation to two members of the same family who had been causing problems in the West Cornforth area. One Acceptable Behaviour Contract had been drawn up and signed by a young person causing problems in the Dean Bank area of Ferryhill and one individual was being closely monitored in the Chilton area with a view to criminal charges being brought and a possible Anti-Social Behaviour Order.

Specific reference was made to multi-agency working. Four confidential reporting boxes had been installed at locations in West Cornforth and beat surgeries had restarted in the village Primary School. A Text-a-Cop scheme had also been launched in the West Cornforth area.

The Forums attention was brought to a firearms incident in the Chilton area just after Christmas. It was explained that five persons were arrested and were on police bail pending further enquiries. The initial incident was brought to a safe conclusion.

With regard to drug misuse it was reported that a number of warrants had been executed throughout the area and a large quantity of drugs had been recovered, a substantial seizure being in Chilton.

Discussion took place in relation to the Street Safe Initiative, which was launched in May 2004. Inspector Winship explained that County Durham had a low level of crime. Despite this, however, Sedgfield Borough had one of the highest levels of Fear of Crime in the country. The aim of the Initiative therefore was to work with the community to address the issues of crime, fear of crime, anti-social behaviour and quality of life. The Initiative had four themes, which were:

- Police presence in the community
- Environment and physical factors
- Effective response
- Community and public engagement

Concern was expressed in relation to the perceived level of Anti Social behaviour and criminal damage in the western area of Chilton. It was explained that the possible cause of this was the high level of absentee social landlords in that area and the difficulty in managing tenancies.

Concern was also expressed in relation to punishments given for crimes relating to Anti Social Behaviour. It was explained that although the Courts were moving away from custodial sentences they were becoming more accountable to local communities.

AF(2)24/04

SEDGFIELD PRIMARY CARE TRUST

Doctor A. Learmouth and Mrs. S. Slaughter were present at the meeting to provide an update on local health matters.

Specific reference was made to the report, "Achieving Patient Access Targets and Baseline Performance Requirements" which had been circulated at the meeting. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was reported that the targets with regard to Access to a GP within Two Working Days and a Primary Health Care Professional Within One Day had continued to be met. It was also noted that no-one had waited more than 17 weeks for an outpatient appointment or 9 months for an inpatient appointment.

Reference was also to an assessment of Mental Health Services that had been undertaken by the Strategic Health Authority. It was noted that 40 out of the 43 required standards had been met.

The Forums attention was drawn to the fact that the performance of some hospitals outside of the Borough could have an effect of the PCT

as a whole and result in the current star rating remaining the same or falling.

With regards to the Urgent Care Centre at Bishop Auckland Hospital, it was reported that arrangements had been made to employ three emergency care practitioners to enhance the service offered. The PCT had taken full responsibility for out of hours services on 1st December 2004.

Reference was made to the development of Chilton Health Centre under the LIFT programme. It was explained that the LIFT Company became a legal entity last year. Although the project had started, the land in Chilton had not yet been purchased. The Chilton Health Centre did remain a high priority and it was emphasised that it was the Trust's intention to make more services available from the Centre.

Reference was made to the problems that Chilton residents encountered in trying to see a GP at their local surgery. It was pointed out that to see a doctor urgently patients often had to travel to the Ferryhill surgery, which was more costly and inconvenient especially for those relying on public transport.

The Forum was informed of a Workshop, which would be held in February 2005 regarding the Health and Well-being of People in Sedgefield Borough.

AF(2)25/04

STREET SAFE INITIATIVE

Apologies were received from Chief Inspector Hall from Durham Constabulary.

AF(2)26/04

NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN STEERING GROUP

It was agreed that Mrs. M. Taylor (Chairman of Chilton West Residents Association) and Mrs. C. Hale (Chairman of the Chilton Partnership) be appointed as the representatives for Area 2 Forum on the Neighbourhood Warden Steering Group.

AF(2)27/04

LSP BOARD MINUTES

The Minutes of the Board Meeting of Sedgefield Borough Local Strategic Partnership held on the 20th October, 2004 were considered and noted. (For copy see file of Minutes).

AF(2)28/04

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Tuesday 22nd February, 2005 at West Cornforth Community Centre.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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

Item 10b

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA 3 FORUM

Trimdon Colliery
Community Centre

Wednesday,
12 January 2005

Time: 7.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor Mrs. L. Hovvels (Chairman) – Sedgefield Borough Council and

Councillor D.R. Brown	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor J. Burton	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor T. Ward	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor J. Wayman J.P	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
G. R. Elliott	-	Trimdon Colliery Community Centre
Sergeant B. O'Connor	-	Durham Constabulary
P. Irving	-	Sedgefield Primary Care Trust
T. Speary	-	Sedgefield Borough Council – Neighbourhood Warden

Apologies: Councillor K. Noble - Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor J. Robinson J.P - Sedgefield Borough Council
Chief Inspector G. Hall - Durham Constabulary
Inspector A. Neill - Durham Constabulary
D. Halladay - Sedgefield Primary Care Trust
Councillor R. Passfield - Trimdon Parish Council
Councillor Mrs L. Burton - Trimdon Parish Council

AF(3)24/04 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th November 2004 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

AF(3)25/04 SEDGEFIELD PRIMARY CARE TRUST

P. Irving was present at the meeting to update the Forum on local health matters.

It was explained that targets relating to access to GPs and appointments for Cancer patients were being met, however, breaches had been identified at North Tees and Hartlepool Hospitals within the Orthopaedic Departments as well as in the Accident and Emergency Department of the University Hospital of Durham. It was reported that the performance of the above would have an effect on the performance of the PCT as a whole and may result in the current star rating remaining the same or falling.

Nationally, it had been identified through the Annual Report 2003/04 that the target of 100% relating to GP access was being met, waiting lists and waiting times had reduced and the number of people reported

to have stopped smoking was at record levels. A decrease in people suffering from chronic diseases and premature deaths had also been identified.

It was explained that the PCT had become responsible for the out-of-hours service, from 1st December, 2004. It was noted that 3 Emergency Care Practitioners posts had been established to aid in delivering the service.

Members questioned whether there was any evidence of people by-passing the service and going direct to the local hospital. It was explained that there had been no reports. The procedure for using the service was then outlined.

Reference was made to the compilation of the latest Budget Report and Delivery Plan. Members of the Forum were invited to attend a Health and Well Being of People in Sedgfield Seminar, which would be held at Trimdon Colliery Community Centre on 31st January 2005 at 7.00 p.m. The seminar would involve a presentation of Ward and Area based statistics by Public Health Specialists, a brief summary of the key issues that need to be addressed and a workshop to discuss local priorities with a range of frontline professionals together with members of the public and voluntary sectors.

AF(3)26/04 POLICE REPORT

Sergeant B. O'Connor was present at the meeting to given details of crime statistics in the area.

A report detailing total crime and incidents for the period 10th November, 2004 to 11th January, 2005 was circulated at the meeting. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was reported that the crime statistics were as outlined below :-

<u>Type of Crime</u>	<u>Sedgfield</u>	<u>Fishburn/ Trimdon Village</u>	<u>Trimdon Grange/Colliery</u>
Burglary (Dwelling)	2	2	0
Burglary (Other)	3	3	3
Damage	10	6	9
Theft	16	8	5
Arson	2	0	0
Assault	7	9	5

It was explained that Police patrols had been increased with the support of patrols by plain clothed Police officers and the use of the Mobile CCTV unit within the area, which had resulted in anti-social behaviour incidents being significantly reduced.

Specific reference was also made to the meeting held at Trimdon Village to discuss anti-social behaviour and the proposed youth shelter at the village. It was explained that various proposals were put forward and the Forum would continue to be updated at future meetings.

AF(3)27/04 STREET SAFE INITIATIVE

Apologies had been received from Chief Inspector Hall. It was explained that the above presentation would be delivered at the next meeting.

AF(3)28/04 LOCAL STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20th October, 2004 were noted. (For copy see file of Minutes).

AF(3)29/04 LOCAL AREA PARTNERSHIPS

It was suggested that contact be made with Local Area Partnerships and invite them to update the Forum of any community initiatives.

AF(3)30/04 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

2nd March, 2005 at 7.00 p.m. at Mordon and Bradbury Village Hall.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Miss S. Billingham Tel 01388 816166 ext 4240

This page is intentionally left blank

Item 10c

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA 5 FORUM

Town Council Offices
School Aycliffe Lane,
Newton Aycliffe

Tuesday,
25 January 2005

Time: 7.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor M.A. Dalton (Chairman) – Sedgefield Borough Council and

Councillor Mrs. B.A. Clare	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor V. Crosby	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor Mrs. A.M. Fleming	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor R.S. Fleming	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor G.C. Gray	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor Mrs. J. Gray	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor J.K. Piggott	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Mrs. D. Bowman	-	A.S.K. Dales Neighbourhood Watch
A. Robson	-	Burnhill Residents Association
M. Robson	-	Burnhill Residents Association
Mrs. M.J. Peterson	-	Burnhill Residents Association
M. Tomlin	-	Burnhill Residents Association
Chief Inspector G. Hall	-	Durham Constabulary
PC H. Plews	-	Durham Constabulary
Inspector E. Turner	-	Durham Constabulary
Councillor Mrs. M. Dalton	-	Great Aycliffe Town Council
Councillor Mrs. M. Gray	-	Great Aycliffe Town Council
Councillor Mrs. S. Iveson	-	Great Aycliffe Town Council
Councillor S. Mlatilick	-	Great Aycliffe Town Council
Councillor A. Tomlin	-	Great Aycliffe Town Council
J. Mlatilik	-	Member of the public

Apologies: Councillor W.M. Blenkinsopp - Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor Mrs. J. Croft – Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor B. Hall – Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor K. Henderson – Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor M. Iveson – Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor J.P. Moran – Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor Mrs. E.M. Paylor – Sedgefield Borough Council
Inspector A. Neal - Durham Constabulary
A. Clark - Sedgefield Primary Care Trust
N. Porter - Sedgefield Primary Care Trust

AF(5)23/04 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were given.

AF(5)24/04 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30th November, 2004 were

confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

AF(5)25/04 POLICE REPORT

Inspector E. Turner was present at the meeting to give details of the crime statistics for the Newton Aycliffe area.

Members noted that the crime statistics were as follows :-

Total Crime	↓	17%
Violent Crime	↓	18%
Sexual offences	↓	59%
Robbery	↓	40%
Burglary	↑	2%
Burglary other	↓	40%
Criminal Damage	↓	19%
Shoplifting	↓	17%
Total Theft	↓	5%
Anti-Social Behaviour	↓	10%

Members were informed of Operation Dulcify, based in the West Ward targeting youths causing anti-social behaviour where a number of Acceptable Behaviour Orders had been issued. Work was also ongoing in partnership with Sedgfield Borough's Tenancy Enforcement Team in identifying problem tenants in the area. Operation Formidable was based within the Town Centre and the Shafto St. Marys Ward where extra police patrols had been enlisted to target shop lifters as well as anti social behaviour.

It was also explained that Off-licence Watch, a new initiative similar to pub watch would be starting in the near future. Shop owners, Police and Sedgfield Borough Council would be working together to combat under-age drinking.

Inspector Turner also pointed out that the telephone number to contact the Police had now changed. The new telephone number was now : 0845 6060365.

AF(5)26/04 SEDGFIELD PCT - PROGRESS UPDATE

P. Irving was present at the meeting to provide an update on local health matters.

It was explained that the PCT had become responsible for the out-of-hours service from 1st December 2004. To aid in the delivery of the service it was noted that three Emergency Care Practitioners posts had been established as well as advertisements being posted for additional GPs and Doctors.

In relation to the integrated team based at Tremeduna Grange at Trimdon Village it was explained that the service was working successfully, therefore four more integrated teams would be developed and implemented around the Borough. It was also planned that within the next financial year an integrated accident and emergency service would also be developed. Members would continue to be updated at future Forums.

It was explained that the Local Development Delivery Plan 2006/2009 was being considered and would need to be finalised within the next few months. More information would be brought to a future meeting.

It was pointed out that the Patient Survey of 2003/2004 had been reviewed and Action Plan compiled that had identified three areas to work, which were:

- Access to GPs,
- Specialist information that needed to be made available during in and out patient appointments, and
- Access and information to dentists within the area.

A number of questions were raised regarding the new roles of Pharmacists as well as the GP Referral scheme held within Sedgefield Borough Leisure Centres and within Audiology Units. It was explained that all questions would be taken back to N. Porter and more information would be brought to a future meeting.

AF(5)27/04 STREETS SAFE INITIATIVE

It was explained that Chief Inspector Hall had been invited to meeting to give a presentation on the Street Safe Initiative and outline the background, aims, themes etc., and some success which had been achieved so far. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Chief Inspector Hall explained that there had been a significant reduction in crime in the area over the last year with a good detection rate. There were more Police officers than ever before and there had been significant achievements in fighting crime. However, despite this the area had one of the highest levels of fear of crime and in particular anti-social behaviour in the country.

The aim of the initiative was for the force to work with the community to address issues of crime, fear of crime, anti-social behaviour and quality of life. The Forum was informed that the initiative aimed to increase reassurance through visibility, accessibility and familiarity. It would recognise the contribution of prevention, investigation and detection of crime with successful apprehension and prosecution of offenders, increase confidence in the judicial system and address anti-social behaviour issues. It was also hoped that it would aid in gathering community intelligence from Residents Associations, use problem-solving initiatives to tackle anti-social behaviour and enhance community engagement.

The initiative had a number of themes including Police presence in the community, environment and physical factors, effective response and communication and public engagement.

For the initiative to be successful, there needed to be partnership working with other agencies such as local authorities, community groups etc.

A video was then shown detailing some of the areas where the initiative had been put in place.

In conclusion the initiative was about being responsive, professional, positive and doing the job properly. Chief Inspector Hall explained that the Forums would be an excellent facility to advertise the initiative and questioned whether the Members of the Forum would agree to continue to receive updates on it. It was agreed that the Street Safe Initiative would continue to be reported at Area Forums.

AF(5)28/04 NAMING OF DEVELOPMENT ERECTION OF 19 DWELLINGS ON LAND OFF BURNHILL WAY/SID CHAPLIN DRIVE NEWTON AYCLIFFE

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services regarding a request received from Broseley Homes Limited to name the above development. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members of the Forum suggested Merlin Court as a name for the new development.

AF(5)29/04 LSP PARTNERSHIP BOARD

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20th October, 2004 were noted.

AF(5)30/04 NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDEN STEERING GROUP

Mr. M. Robson be appointed as the representative for the Area 5 Forum at the Neighbourhood Warden Steering Groups.

AF(5)31/04 QUESTIONS

Blue Bridge

Members commented on the requirement that the redevelopment of the Blue Bridge needed to be completed to a high standard as it was positioned at the entrance to the town. It was explained that the County Council had started work to make it secure and progress would be monitored.

Burnhill Way

It was pointed out that at its meeting on 27th July 2004 (Minute number AF(5)6/04 refers) a request was issued at the Area 5 Forum regarding the maintenance of trees and shrubs in the above area. It was questioned whether work was planned to start. It was explained that

there were no plans for the immediate future, however, the Town Council would be the best place to submit the request.

Trees at Rylestone Close

Concerns were raised as to the size a number of trees had been allowed to grow to near the above residential area. It was questioned whether the trees could be felled because of their size. It was explained that the matter would be dealt with.

AF(5)32/04 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

15th March, 2005 at 7.00 p.m. at Town Council Offices, School Aycliffe Lane, Newton Aycliffe.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Miss S. Billingham 01388 816166 ext 4240

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 7, 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

By virtue of paragraph(s) 7, 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

This page is intentionally left blank

Item 12a

Supplementary Report to Cabinet

17th February, 2005

Report of Chief Executive Officer

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION MEMBER TASK GROUP – GYPSIES AND TRAVELLERS

1. Summary

This report seeks Authorisation for Councillor K. Noble to attend a meeting of the Local Government Association's Task Group on Gypsies and Travellers.

2. Background

2.1 The lack of suitable temporary and permanent sites for gypsies and travellers and the associated problems arising from unauthorised camping have emerged as issues of increasing concern for local authorities and residents in both rural and urban areas. Many authorities suggest the incidences of unauthorised encampments and unauthorised development have significantly increased and have in many cases led to mounting tensions between traveller and settled communities.

2.2 There has been a call from many local authorities for the Local Government Association (LGA) to take a stronger position on this problem, particularly in relation to enforcement issues, and to work with the Government to improve the current enforcement system.

2.3 The LGA Executive has therefore established a Task Group on Gypsy and Travellers issues. The Group is expected to review the current situation regarding traveller site provision, respond to enforcement concerns and to identify advice and guidance needed by local authorities.

3. Member Representation

3.1 Councillor K. Noble, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Regeneration has been invited by the LGA to join the Task Group and to attend its next meeting to be held on 23rd February 2005 at LGA Headquarters in London.

3.2 Councillor Noble has expressed a wish to accept the invitation to attend the meeting with a view to identifying what benefit the initiative will have for the region generally and Sedgefield Borough in particular.

4. Recommendation

That Councillor Noble be authorised to attend the meeting of the Task Group on 23rd February, 2005.

Background Papers

Letter from LGA dated 2nd February, 2005
Gypsy Task Group Scoping Paper

This page is intentionally left blank