

CABINET

Thursday, 12 January 2006

10.00 a.m.

Conference Room 1, Council
Offices, Spennymoor

AGENDA and REPORTS

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

2. MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd December 2005. (Pages 1 - 4)

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

KEY DECISION

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

4. BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2006/07

Report of Director of Resources. (Pages 5 - 16)

OTHER DECISIONS

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

5. CONFERENCE

Report of Chief Executive Officer. (Pages 17 - 18)

MINUTES

6. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 29th November 2005. (Pages 19 - 22)

7. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 13th December 2005 (Pages 23 - 28)

8. AREA 1 FORUM

To consider the minutes of the meeting held on 12th December 2005. (Pages 29 - 34)

EXEMPT INFORMATION

The following item is not for publication by virtue of Paragraphs 7 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972.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.

REGENERATION PORTFOLIO

9. **ASSET MANAGEMENT - SURRENDER OF THE LEASE FOR OFFICES AND LAND SALE AT DALTON WAY, NEWTON AYCLIFFE**

Report of Director of Resources. (Pages 35 - 40)

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

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

N. Vaulks
Chief Executive Officer

Council Offices
SPENNYMOOR
4th January 2006

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 ggarrigan@sedgefield.gov.uk

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Item 2

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL CABINET

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Thursday,
22 December 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 and W. Waters

In

Attendance: Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, V. Crosby, A. Gray, B. Hall,
D.M. Hancock, J.E. Higgin, J.G. Huntington, J.P. Moran, G. Morgan,
Mrs. E.M. Paylor, A. Smith, Mrs. I. Jackson Smith and J. Wayman J.P

Apologies: Councillor J. Robinson J.P

CAB.104/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members had no interests to declare.

CAB.105/05 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8th December 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.106/05 CHOICE BASED LETTINGS (KEY DECISION)

The Lead Member for Housing presented a report regarding the development of Choice Based Lettings. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that the Government was of the view that choice of a home was essential to building sustainable communities and consequently had set a target for all local authorities to have a Choice Based Lettings scheme in place by 2010.

Members noted that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) was providing £4 million over three years (2005/06 – 2007/08) to support the development of regional and sub-regional strategies for Choice Based Letting schemes in England.

The report gave details of the guidance issued by the ODPM and the position with regard to the development of a Choice Based Lettings scheme for Sedgfield Borough.

RESOLVED : 1. *That the continued development of a sub-regional approach to Choice Based Lettings in partnership with other Durham Local Authorities and key partners as appropriate, including a second phase sub-regional*

bid to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister for funding the development and implementation of a Choice Based Letting Scheme, be approved.

2. *That a further report be submitted on the financial implications and the outcome of the bid to the ODPM when resource implications become known.*
3. *That the process and timetable outlined in the report for developing a Choice Based Letting Scheme be noted.*

CAB.107/05 REVIEW OF FACILITY ACCOMMODATION AT SHILDON SUNNYDALE LEISURE CENTRE (KEY DECISION)

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

Members were reminded that Cabinet had requested that all leisure centre accommodation within the Borough be reviewed and consequently a consultation exercise had been undertaken in August and September 2005 with the users of the Shildon Sunnydale Leisure Centre, Shildon residents and Shildon Town Council to gather views regarding the accommodation located on the first floor of the centre.

Appendix 1 to the report showed the proposed changes to the accommodation to reflect the findings of the research. The changes included the extension of the fitness suite to incorporate the space currently occupied by the second squash court and lounge, the redevelopment of the sauna suite into changing accommodation and the provision of a new fitness class activity area on the ground floor below the fitness suite.

It was pointed out that the bowling green would remain, subject to appropriate Heads of Term being agreed between the Borough Council and the Bowling Club.

- RESOLVED :*
1. *That the redevelopment proposals outlined in the report be approved in principle.*
 2. *That the Director of Leisure Services be authorised to negotiate appropriate Heads of Terms of a lease with the Bowling Club.*
 3. *That a further report be submitted to Cabinet outlining the development costs, funding partners and agreed Heads of Terms.*

CAB.108/05 AUTOMATED NUMBER PLATE RECOGNITION (ANPR)

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

It was explained that the Sedgefield Borough Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership had supported Durham Constabulary in a successful bid to roll out Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) in the Southern Force Area, including Sedgefield and Darlington.

It was explained that Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras allowed tracking of suspect vehicles and could determine within seconds whether a vehicle had been stolen, was known to be involved in a crime or was untaxed.

The capital cost of providing ANPR cameras at five sites throughout the Borough, the installation of ANPR technology in the Council's Control Room, together with additional hardware upgrades in the Control Centre would be £85,000, which would be met by Durham Constabulary. The funding would also support the Borough network of cameras by the addition of a new camera/location on the Chilton by-pass.

It was proposed that the Borough Council should support the addition of the new camera, which would utilise new wireless technology by £7,000 from its 2005/06 Community Safety Capital Programme.

Members noted that the Council's Control Room would undertake the monitoring of ANPR as part of the Borough's commitment to shared community safety objectives.

- RESOLVED :*
- 1. That the Council extends its partnership working with Durham Constabulary by the introduction of the ANPR initiative within the Borough.*
 - 2. That the sum of £7,000 be allocated from the 2005/06 Community Safety Capital Programme to provide wireless CCTV connection to the Chilton By-pass.*

CAB.109/05 COUNTY DURHAM MINERALS AND WASTE DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - MINERALS ISSUES AND OPTIONS REPORT

The Lead Member for Regeneration presented a report regarding the above upon which the Council had been invited to comment. (For copy see file of Minutes)

It was explained that the document had been produced by Durham County Council to help prepare a new range of documents to replace the existing Minerals Local Plan. The documents would follow the same format for preparation as the Council's Local Development Framework.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraphs 3.7 – 3.13 which provided commentary on the potential sites that had been included in the Minerals Issues and Options paper.

Concern was expressed that there was no mention in the report of the future working of Raisby Quarry and the traffic implications for the C24 road. Reference was also made to fact that the northern extension of

Aycliffe Quarry would bring quarrying operations closer to the Aycliffe Village Conservation Area and could adversely affect the quality of life of the residents of Aycliffe Village.

- RESOLVED :**
1. *That the comments made in the report be endorsed as a formal response of the Council to the County Council's consultation.*
 2. *That arrangements be made to meet with representatives of Durham County Council to discuss the future working of Raisby Quarry and the traffic implications for the C24 road and the impact that the northern extension of Aycliffe Quarry would have on the quality of life of residents of Aycliffe Village.*

CAB.110/05 BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2006/07 - TIMETABLE

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval of a timetable for making proposals to Council for the adoption of the 2006/07 budget and the arrangements for consultation in accordance with Part 4 Section C of the Council's Constitution. (For copy see file of Minutes).

RESOLVED : *That the timetable, as shown on the Appendix attached to the report, be approved.*

CAB.111/05 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to the minutes of the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 held on 22nd November 2005. (For copy see file of Minutes)

It was pointed out that the minutes of the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 held on 28th November 2005 had been considered at the meeting of Cabinet on 8th December 2005.

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

CAB.112/05 AREA 5 FORUM

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th November 2005. (For copy see file of Minutes).

RESOLVED : *That the report be received.*

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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Published on 23rd December 2005

The key decisions in these minutes will be implemented on Thursday 5th January 2006 unless they are called in by 5 members of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Item 4

KEY DECISION

REPORT TO CABINET

12TH JANUARY 2006

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

Portfolio: RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2006/07

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report sets out a budget framework for 2006/07 after taking into account the Government's proposed settlements in relation to Revenue Support Grant (RSG), Housing Subsidy and Capital Allocations. Detailed account has also been taken of the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP), which sets out the framework for developing annual revenue and capital budgets over the medium term. The MTFP will be fully updated in the light of the formally agreed Budget Framework for 2006/07.

The proposals are subject to consultation through Scrutiny Committees, through Council Tax Focus Groups for General Fund services and for the Housing Services through the Tenant's Housing Services Group.

- 1.2 The Budget Framework 2006/07 includes significant service growth in key priority areas in accordance with the approved Corporate Plan. The growth is funded from a mixture of a better than average RSG settlement, efficiency savings and the reallocation of resources to meet priorities and a proposed Council Tax increase of 3%.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Budget Framework 2006/07 be approved and be consulted upon in accordance with the timetable previously published.

3. BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2006/07

3.1 Background

- 3.2 The Government's proposed settlements in relation to the following key components of the 2006/07 budget have now been received although allocations through the Regional Housing Board will only be considered on 13th January 2006:-

Spending Area

*General Fund Services
Housing Revenue Account
Capital Spending Programmes*

Government Settlements

*Revenue Support Grant/Business Rates
Housing Subsidy
Supported Capital Allocation*

3.2.1 Management Team has carefully assessed the implications of the settlements and has examined all main spending areas particularly to consider:-

- The balance between spending on statutory services and discretionary services.
- The allocation of resources between priorities to achieve our strategic goals and performance targets.
- The needs of the public as expressed in previous consultation exercises, particularly through Council Tax Focus Group meetings.
- The balance between spending and taxation/rent levels.
- The sustainability of the Budget Framework in relation to its dependency both on the receipt of large sums of money from the disposal of land and external time limited grant funded streams.
- The impact of efficiency savings achieved and the overall need to demonstrate that value for money principles have been applied.

3.2.2 This report will look at each of the spending areas set out above and make proposals on levels of expenditure for 2006/07, together with their impact on Council Tax and rent levels.

3.2 General Fund Services

3.2.1 The Council has been provisionally notified that it will receive £9,131,583 of external Government support for 2006/07 after accounting for a claw back in grant of £30,067 for earlier years. This represents a very substantial increase of £1,551,133 over the 2005/06 settlement and takes into account the following key changes in the grant structure:-

- A major review of the grant framework has taken place to ensure that it focuses more on grant distribution and not on national measures of spending and council tax. The new system now consists of four separate funding elements as follows:-
 - *Relative needs amount (based on amount per head adjusted to reflect local circumstances including deprivation and area costs).*
 - *Resource amount (to take account of different capacities to raise council tax).*
 - *Central allocation amount (allocated on a per head basis).*
 - *Floor damping amount (to help ensure all authorities receive a minimum increase in grant).*
- The Council's share of the £350M made available nationally to improve the statutory minimum concessionary fares scheme from half fare to free fare.

(The above changes were reflected in base adjustments, which accounted for £1,085,000 of the extra grant and whilst it is impossible to break down the figures a very high proportion of the extra grant relates to the changes to the concessionary fares scheme for which provision will need to be made to meet the Council's statutory responsibilities).

- A year on year increase in grant of 5.4% or £467,000 above the base adjustments in accordance with the new distribution framework.

This latter increase i.e. the normal grant change, must be welcomed as it significantly exceeds the 'floor' increase of 3% which the Council has been used to receiving in previous years. Indeed authorities which receive more grant than the 'floor' increase have to contribute to the cost of maintaining the 'floor' which has meant that a further £214,000 has been withheld from Sedgefield which would have made the settlement more advantageous.

As part of the settlement the Council has also been notified of its provisional grant settlement for 2007/08. This shows a further 'above floor' increase of 4.7% and amounts to a year on year increase of £433,000. This advance notification is also to be welcomed and will allow the Council to plan its future spending with a greater degree of certainty and will be extremely useful as the MTFP is refined towards the end of this budget cycle.

- 3.2.2 Notwithstanding this relatively good settlement the Council does face some significant budget pressures not least that of pay inflation. The pay settlement effective from 1st April 2006 has already been agreed as part of an earlier 3 year deal at 2.95%, a similar sum has been set aside to meet the ongoing cost of job evaluation and the second stage of the stepped increases in our contribution to the Pension Fund will add a further 1.5% to the total pay bill. All in all an increase in pay costs of almost 7.5%. In addition a number of initiatives designed to build and maintain strong cohesive communities in order to tackle deprivation and social exclusion have relied on external finance streams many of which draw to a close in March 2006. Account has therefore had to be made of the fall out of grant/support in this important area. Fuel price inflation will also significantly add to costs particularly in the areas of high-energy use e.g. leisure centres.
- 3.2.3 Members will recall that the current budget framework 2005/06 included significant budget growth largely financed by an expected increase in investment income arising from major land sales. Whilst there were initial delays in receiving those receipts appropriate risk management measures were incorporated into the budget, which mitigated the impact in the current year. However the Council now faces further delays in the release of the next site at Cobblers Hall, Newton Aycliffe because investigations into the possibility of newts being present on the site will have to be undertaken in the Spring of 2006. As a result no major land disposal receipts are anticipated during 2006/07 and the revenue budget for investment income therefore reflects this.
- 3.2.4 The Budget Framework 2006/07 has been prepared to take into account the above financial issues and pressures and to reflect the Council's key priorities set out in the Corporate Plan. The key changes can be summarised as follows:-

Environment – Protection of the environment and the standard of ground maintenance has always been a high priority for members and continues to be a key concern of residents as raised in public consultation exercises. The budget reflects this and amongst other things extends the principle of Civic Pride teams and shows a further real term increase of £300,000 (or 6.8% in addition to inflation).

In contrast the loss of recycling credits in relation to the Council's pilot green waste collection service in Newton Aycliffe will mean that the scheme will have to be shelved and reconsidered as part of a fundamental review of our approach to waste/recyclable collections.

Community Safety – The Council has gone through the process of transforming its community safety service following a fundamental review. The emphasis is now on the use of neighbourhood wardens across the Borough, targeting the areas most in need. The budget reflects the fact that community safety is a high priority for the Council and therefore 6 wardens previously funded by external finance have been fully incorporated. There is now a total provision of 22 wardens compared to 11 only 3 years ago.

Supporting People – Two major changes have been reflected here; benefits administration and the new responsibilities for concessionary fares. In terms of benefits the arrangements introduced two years ago that saw rent rebates removed from the Housing Revenue Account are fully reflected. Now that the transitional arrangements have unwound the budget anticipates that both the costs of administering benefits and cost of paying benefits have a cost neutral impact on the local Council taxpayer.

As previously mentioned the Government has extended the statutory minimum concessionary fares scheme from a one of half fare to free fare with effect from 1st April 2006. Members need to be aware however that the statutory scheme and therefore the funding to run it only relates to free fare within a local authority's boundaries. Sedgfield, along with all County Durham Districts currently offers a more generous scheme, which may prove difficult to fully replicate as we move to a free fare regime. Detailed discussions are currently being held with the other Districts and the Bus Companies to determine the level of scheme that can be offered within the finances available. An additional budget provision of £700,000 on top of the current £500,000 has been initially set aside within next year's budget framework.

Leisure – In accordance with the MTFP, leisure services has, in the main only been provided with an inflationary increase. In addition target spending figures have been established within the four leisure centres.

- 3.2.5 The Budget Framework 2006/07 shows another year of spending growth assisted by a relatively good RSG settlement and the reallocation of available resources to help achieve Council priorities. However, notwithstanding a reasonable indicative grant settlement for 2007/08, it should be noted that there will be little scope for further additional growth in spending in later years. Furthermore all areas of Council spending are expected to continue to contribute to the achievement of efficiency savings. By the end of 2007/08 efficiency savings of at least £500,000 must be achieved to maintain spending levels and keep council tax increases low, as the use of the budget support fund is withdrawn.

3.2.6 In addition to the key features set out above, the detailed budgets have been prepared on the following basis:-

- 2.5% anticipated savings from staff turnover.
- Increase in charges of 3% on average.
- Allowances for inflation have been restricted to the following areas of spending:-
 - *Salaries and wages*
 - *Business rates*
 - *Insurance premiums*
 - *Utilities costs i.e. gas, water, electricity and telephones*
 - *Other unavoidable costs which are of a contractual nature*

3.2.7 Detailed budgets, which will be circulated to Overview and Scrutiny Committee's have been prepared to meet the following target figures:-

<u>Portfolio</u>	<u>Current Budget 2005/06</u> £	<u>Target Budget 2006/07</u> £	<u>Change in Budget</u> £
<i>Resource Management</i>	(1,995,060)	(2,136,000)	(140,940)
<i>Performance Management</i>	1,327,700	1,635,990	308,290
<i>Welfare and Communications</i>	1,385,730	1,468,560	82,830
<i>Culture and Recreation</i>	3,797,340	3,799,870	2,530
<i>Environment</i>	4,597,820	5,192,350	594,530
<i>Housing</i>	505,750	547,360	41,610
<i>Regeneration</i>	1,564,050	1,473,480	(90,570)
<i>Community Safety</i>	703,840	808,100	104,260
<i>Supporting People</i>	1,023,370	1,511,290	487,920
¹ <i>Contingency</i>	519,460	503,000	(16,460)
<i>Salary Saving @ 2.5%</i>	(220,000)	(260,000)	(40,000)
	<hr/> 13,210,000	<hr/> 14,544,000	<hr/> 1,334,000
² <i>Use of Balances</i>	(800,000)	(500,000)	300,000
<i>Net Spending</i>	<hr/> <hr/> 12,410,000	<hr/> <hr/> 14,044,000	<hr/> <hr/> 1,634,000

3.2.8 It should be noted that the increase in net spending shown in the above table will be largely met by additional grant.

Notes:

1. *The inclusion of a contingency fund reflects good practice and provides an element of flexibility to help meet the key priorities in the Budget and Policy Framework. Within the figure provided for 2006/07, £350,000 has been specifically set aside to meet the costs of job evaluation in the General Fund.*
2. *The use of earmarked balances continues the policy to provide budget support in the medium term. Support in 2005/06 was increased by £300,000 to reflect the loss of potential investment income resulting from delays in major land sales. This has now been fully reflected in the budget allowing the use of balances to be reduced to the original target.*

3.2.9 Careful planning of the budget means that the commitment made in the MTFP to restrict council tax increases to 3% can be delivered in 2006/07. The substantial additional investment in Council services will add only £5.27 per year or 10p per week to the Band D Tax. The cost to the Band A taxpayer will be £3.50 per year or 7p per week. Overall since 2002/03 total net spending has increased

significantly in order to meet the Council's key priorities whilst Council Tax will have risen by around 15% over the full 4 years.

Risk Assessment – General Fund Budget

3.2.10 The Budget Framework 2006/07 has been prepared on a low risk basis. No account has been taken of any significant capital receipts that would lead to additional investment income, provision has been made for the anticipated costs of job evaluation and pay awards and account has been taken of the loss of external finance streams where appropriate. Whilst discussions continue in regard to the future shape of the concessionary fare scheme a substantial budget provision has been made within which any new scheme will have to be managed.

3.3 Housing Revenue Account

3.3.1 The structure of the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) has changed significantly in recent years with the introduction of the Supporting People Grant for Carelink services, rent restructuring and the transfer of rent rebates to the General Fund. In addition the subsidy settlement has undergone major methodology changes particularly with respect to how certain allowances are calculated.

3.3.2 For 2006/07 further significant changes have been made to the rent restructuring model which will lead to more substantial rent increases for most tenants over the next few years so that full convergence with housing association rents can be achieved by 2012. The impact of these changes is considered in some detail in paragraph 3.3.5 to 3.3.7 below.

3.3.3 In terms of spending, the Council's management and maintenance allowances have again been increased well above inflationary levels. The management allowance has gone up by 9.7% and the maintenance allowance shows an increase of 6.4%. In addition the Major Repairs Allowance has been increased by 4.1%, which gives a grant figure of £5.043M for 2006/07.

In contrast the level of Supporting People Grant continues its downward trend as part of the Governments drive for greater efficiency and partnership working. The Council's grant is expected to be reduced by around 12.5% and it is expected that grants will be reduced further in future years as sheltered housing costs become ineligible. Fortunately the Council has positioned itself so that it is able to respond to the partnership agenda and continues to actively pursue new agreements.

3.3.4 The extra spending capacity from increased allowances and the redistribution of monies previously committed to LSVT has allowed some budget growth to be included, particularly in terms of maintenance and adaptations to the housing stock. This can be achieved without the need to draw on reserves, which stand at a relatively healthy level. As a result it will allow some enhancement to the traditional capital spending programme and one-off resources to fund the Service Improvement Plan, which will be considered in due course.

Provision has also been made within the contingency to meet the HRA's share of the anticipated cost of job evaluation.

3.3.5 As indicated earlier the major change in the housing subsidy settlement relates to rent restructuring. Members will recall that when the policy was first introduced in April 2002 the Council was well placed to meet target rents by March 2012. Indeed the average rent within the HRA at that time was very close to target and therefore the real focus was on moving individual rents up and down the scale so that individual target rents could be achieved. The policy adopted by the Council

has worked well and in the current year 4,905 tenancies are at current target rents which was expected to rise to 6,124 in 2006/07 had the current policy been retained.

However, under the new proposals only 174 tenancies are expected to be at target once the rent changes have been applied in 2006/07. Therefore many thousands of tenants who were looking forward to only the standard rent increase of inflation + 0.5% (which is retained under the new system) will now see further additional adjustments of + £2.00 per week per year for a number of years to come.

- 3.3.6 Basically the Government has realised that under the present restructuring model local authority sector rents will not converge with the Registered Social Landlord sector by 2012 and therefore the model has had to be adjusted to achieve this. The Government recognise that this will cause difficulties as a significant number of tenants face very substantial rent increases for many years to come and it therefore intends to cap the average rent increase within the Housing Revenue Account at 5% for the next two years.

What this means in practice is that whilst individual rents can rise by more than 5% under the formula "inflation + 0.5% (i.e. 3.2%) + £2.00" the average rent increase across the whole of the Council's stock cannot be more than 5% i.e. from the current £51.04 to £53.59. Any tenant whose rent should be reduced under the new policy can have the full reduction applied in April 2006 – it is anticipated that there will be 42 tenancies falling into this category.

- 3.3.7 Whilst this capping arrangement provides some cushioning of the impact of the changes for the first two years it is not sustainable in the long term if convergence is still to be achieved by 2012. In our case as many as 3,097 tenancies would not have achieved target rent by 2012 under the new proposals.
- 3.3.8 As a result of these proposals by the Government there is therefore the prospect of some very significant future rent increases for many of the Council's tenants. Applying the formula in 2006/07 will see rent changes ranging from – 4.9% to + 7.3% and as indicated earlier only 174 tenancies will have achieved target status.
- 3.3.9 So whilst the subsidy proposals will allow for increased investment in maintaining and managing the housing stock it will be at a cost of above inflation rent increases for many tenants and for many years to come. Overall the Housing Revenue Account remains in a negative subsidy position and indeed this has worsened under the new proposals. In 2005/06 £1.9M is being paid over to the Government and this increases to around £2.7M in 2006/07. So in effect £800,000 of the additional rent increase to be raised next year will be transferred to the Government to assist with social housing in other parts of the country.

Risk Assessment – Housing Revenue Account

- 3.3.10 The LSVT no ballot removed a great deal of uncertainty surrounding the future of the Councils' housing stock. The service is being fully reassessed and a Service Improvement Plan will be considered very shortly. This will inevitably require some short-term resource input but the Housing Revenue Account is in a relatively healthy position and it will be possible to make some short-term finance available. There will need to be a concentrated effort in achieving the Decent Homes Standard, which will need to be fully addressed in future capital programmes. However it is felt that this budget provides the right balance of revenue support to help meet that standard.

3.4 Capital Spending Programmes

3.4.1 Government allocations towards capital spending programmes for 2006/07 have unfortunately not all been confirmed. The largest of these, the Major Repairs Allowance, was mentioned earlier in the report and has been confirmed at £5,043,000. A Supported Capital Expenditure Allocation to assist in meeting Decent Homes has also been confirmed at £213,000. So far as Private Sector Supported Allocations are concerned, these are still subject to discussions at the Regional Housing Board and will not be known until the 13th January 2006. The figures included in this report therefore represent bids submitted in accordance with guidelines and scoring methodology issued by the Board.

3.4.2 The allocations from Government for 2006/07, together with current year comparisons, can be summarised as follows:-

<u>Type of Allocation</u>	<u>2005/06</u> <u>£000</u>	<u>2006/07</u> <u>£000</u>
Major Repairs Allowance	5,037	5,043
Supported Capital Expenditure	671	213
Disabled Facilities Grant	185	200*
SHIP Grant	600	1,200*
IEG Grant	150	0
	<u>6,643</u>	<u>6,656</u>

*Bids only at this stage**

3.4.3 In addition to capital allocations the Council also has access to capital resources from capital receipts from the sale of land and property and revenue contributions (housing).

3.4.4 Total capital receipts available next year, including £1.4M unused from the current year, are forecast to be £4.4M. The General Fund Capital Programme relies almost entirely on capital receipts being generated particularly in relation to Right to Buy sales. As these are subject to market forces it would not be prudent to commit all available resources next year and in line with previous programmes it would be appropriate to allocate £3M in 2006/07.

3.4.5 In addition to these resources, the Council has already resolved to make 100% receipts from housing land available to meet the regeneration and affordable housing initiatives. As previously indicated no significant receipts of this type are expected to be received during 2006/07. In view of this and the fact that the project team is still to be recruited it is felt that resources of around £3.75M should be made available to support spending on special regeneration projects in 2006/07 as opposed to the sum of £5m previously identified. A detailed report will be prepared setting out how the allocation will be used, but in accordance with policies previously agreed, it is anticipated that a further significant allocation will be made for Private Sector Housing Renewal. In addition, because of the need to achieve a smooth transition to the Council Housing Capital Programme, as discussed in para. 3.4.6 below, a sum of £300,000 should also be earmarked for this Programme.

3.4.6 For a number of years the Housing Capital Programme has been set at around £7M by using a mixture of Major Repair Allowance and revenue contributions. This can be achieved again in 2006/07 but as has previously been mentioned the programme now needs to focus on the Government's requirement of meeting the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. This will inevitably mean a reduction in

funding available to provide for some popular parts of the existing programme e.g. Tenant Led Improvements. It is felt that there needs to be a smooth transition from the current programme to a more decent homes orientated programme and to help this it is proposed that over the next 2 years initially a sum of £500,000 each year should be transferred from reserves. Together with the £300,000 identified in para. 3.4.5 above, this will take the Capital Programme to £7.8 million, which will help with this transition.

3.4.7 The total level of capital spending proposed for 2006/07 is therefore as follows:-

	<u>Housing</u>	<u>General</u>	<u>Total</u>
	<u>£000</u>	<u>Fund</u>	<u>£000</u>
	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>
<i>GOVERNMENT ALLOCATIONS / GRANTS</i>			
<i>Major Repairs Allowance</i>	5,043	-	5,043
<i>Decent Homes</i>	213	-	213
<i>Private Sector Renewal</i>	-	1,400*	1,400
<i>Revenue Contributions</i>	1,744	-	1,744
<i>Contribution from HRA Reserves</i>	500	-	500
<i>Capital Receipts</i>	-	3,000	3,000
<i>Capital Receipts earmarked for regeneration</i>	300	3,450	3,750
	<u>7,800</u>	<u>7,850</u>	<u>15,650</u>

*Bid only at this stage**

3.4.8 Careful examination has been made of the capital spending bids submitted on behalf of each portfolio area, taking into account asset management requirements, service needs, ongoing commitment, etc., assessed in accordance with agreed criteria. Individual service targets for each portfolio are set out in the Appendix attached. Grant funding from various sources may assist some schemes and, where this is the case, the grant will be fully additional to the resources earmarked to portfolio areas set out in the Appendix.

Risk Assessment – Capital Spending Programmes

3.4.9 The capital investment provisions set out in this report have been made in the light of known resources and a realistic assessment of capital receipts. The revenue impact of all Programmes have been fully accounted for.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The financial implications are summarised at each stage of this report and following consultation will be clearly set out in final budget report to Council on the 24th February 2006.

5. CONSULTATION

5.1 The Council's three Overview and Scrutiny Committees will be fully consulted on these proposals in accordance with the published timetable. In addition, a series of Council Tax Focus Groups, consisting of a representative sample of interested Council Taxpayers will be held during January. Similarly the Tenants' Housing Services Group has been consulted on all aspects relating to the Housing Revenue Account.

6. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

6.1 *Links to Corporate Objectives/Values*

The Council's Corporate Objectives and Values have guided the preparation of the 2006/07 Budget Framework throughout. Resource availability has been fully re-assessed and directed to assist in achieving the Council's key priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan. Particular emphasis has been placed on the following Corporate Values:-

- *Be responsible with and accountable for public finances.*
- *Consult with service users, customers and partners.*

6.2 *Risk Management*

The Budget Framework 2006/07 has been prepared on a low risk basis to ensure that the Council effectively balances levels of service provision/spending on services with sustainable income levels to assist in achieving the Council's ambitions. For clarity individual risk assessment statements have been set out in the main body of the report for all three major areas of spending.

6.3 *Health and Safety*

No additional implications have been identified.

6.4 *Equality and Diversity*

No material considerations have been identified.

6.5 *Legal and Constitutional*

The Budget Framework has been prepared in accordance with the Council's Constitution and full account has been taken of new statutory requirements, e.g. the new statutory minimum concessionary fares scheme. No other legal or constitutional implications have been identified.

6.6 *Other Material Considerations*

No other material considerations have been identified.

7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

7.1 As mentioned above, full consultation and engagement will be undertaken with all three Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Contact Officer:
Telephone:
E-mail:

Brian Allen
01388-816166 Ext. 4003
ballen@sedgefield.gov.uk

BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Revenue Support Grant Settlement, Housing Subsidy Settlement and Capital Allocations received from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
2. Detailed budget proposals.
3. Medium Term Financial Plan 2005/06 – 2007/08

EXAMINATION BY STATUTORY OFFICERS

	YES	NOT APPLICABLE
1. The report has been examined by the Council's Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Council's Section 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"/>

CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2006/07
PROPOSED TARGET SPENDING LIMITS

	<u>£000</u>	<u>£000</u>
HOUSING		
<i>Council Housing</i>	7,800	
<i>Private Sector Renewal</i>	1,800	
	9,600	9,600
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT		
<i>ICT</i>	900	
<i>Offices and Depots</i>	330	
	1,230	1,230
REGENERATION		
<i>Special Provision for Regeneration Initiatives</i>	3,450	
<i>Economic Development</i>	300	
<i>Town Centre and Other Works</i>	300	
	4,050	4,050
CULTURE AND RECREATION		
<i>Asset Management Plan works in Leisure Centres</i>	450	
<i>Other Leisure Initiatives</i>	150	
	600	600
ENVIRONMENT		
		70
COMMUNITY SAFETY		
		75
SUPPORTING PEOPLE		
		25
		15,650

Item 5

REPORT TO CABINET

12 January 2006

Report of Chief Executive Officer

Portfolio: Resource Management.

CONFERENCE

1. SUMMARY

1.1 To consider the Council's representation at the following:-

- a) Regenex Conference to be held at **Earls Court, London. On 22-23 February 2006.**

2. RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the appropriate **Lead Member** represents the Council at the Regenex Conference, together with the Chairman of Development Control Committee and one officer.

3. DETAIL

3.1 As well as debating the issues surrounding physical regeneration, particular attention will also be given to the multiple stakeholders in projects, and the social, economic and environmental impacts of urban regeneration. So the conference will examine the success and challenges presented in engaging the private, public and voluntary sectors and the local communities themselves in the process of transformation.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The cost of the Regenex Conference is £450.00 plus VAT per delegate (excluding travel and subsistence)

CONSULTATION

5.1 Not applicable.

Contact Officer: Tom Dyer

Telephone No. (01388) 816166 – 4219

Background Papers

Notice from Regenex: Delivering Sustainable Communities.

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Councils S.151 Officer or his representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
3. The content has been examined by the Council's Monitoring Officer or his representative	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Item 6

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Tuesday, 29 November
2005

Time: 10.00 a.m.

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

Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, M.A. Dalton, G.M.R. Howe, R.A. Patchett,
Mrs. E.M. Paylor, T. Ward and J. Wayman J.P.

In

Attendance: Councillors Mrs. A.M. Armstrong, Mrs. K. Conroy, V. Crosby,
Mrs. B. Graham, A. Gray, B. Hall, D.M. Hancock, J.G. Huntington,
B. Meek, J.P. Moran and A. Smith

Apologies: Councillors J. Burton, Mrs. J. Croft, T.F. Forrest, Mrs. L. Hovvels,
Ms. M. Predki and G.W. Scott

Tenant Representatives

Mrs. M. Thomson and A. Mcgreggor

OSC(2).18/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members had no interests to declare.

OSC(2).19/05 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25th October, 2005 were confirmed as
a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OSC(2).20/05 CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL FOR ACUTE HOSPITAL SERVICES IN TEESSIDE

M. Fordham, Director of Commissioning and Performance for Sedgefield
Primary Care Trust, together with E. Criddle, Head of Acute Strategy
Implementation and Delivery, attended the meeting to give a presentation
of Professor Ara Darzi's findings whilst undertaking a review of acute
services in Hartlepool and Teesside. (For copy see file of Minutes).

The presentation detailed the remit of the review, the areas that were
included in the review, the national and local factors that were proposed to
be altered, the proposed strategy for acute services and the difference
between Professor Darzi's review and the original Tees review. The
proposals for changes of services throughout each of the Hospitals within
the area affected, the work that was to be carried out and finally the
proposed changes that were rejected in the report were also detailed in the
presentation.

Members questioned what would happen to the relationship between a patient and their consultant, if services were moved between hospitals. It was explained that due to the nature of the relationship the whole team, including the consultant would move with the service and the patient to the appropriate hospital.

With regard to appointments with consultants, Members were concerned that the length of time patients were given for appointments were too short, which resulted in running over the allocated time. It was suggested that if appointments were made longer then they would not run over time and waiting time targets would be met. It was explained that waiting times and appointments were being reviewed, with consideration being given to various ways of changing methods of conduct and procedure. The procedure for Consultant check-ups was also being reviewed, in an attempt to reduce the number, which again would aid in targets being met and improving customer satisfaction.

Members also commented on the level of consultation with transport companies. Members were informed that discussions were ongoing with transport companies together with the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee to improve the service. The topic was an important part in providing health services. Access to health was also now a target for the NHS therefore the service was under constant review.

AGREED: That Professor Ara Darzi's findings be supported and the Committee continue to be updated on the proposed changes outlined in the presentation.

OSC(2).21/05 ALLOCATIONS, HOMELESSNESS AND HOUSING ADVICE SERVICES

Further to a request from the Committee at its meeting on 13th September, 2005 (Minute No: OSC2.13/05 refers), I. Brown, Housing strategy Manager and G. Scanlon, Head of Housing Management attended the meeting to give a presentation regarding the allocation of housing, homelessness and housing advice services. (For copy see file of Minutes).

The presentation provided details on the Homelessness Service including the legislation to follow in undertaking a homelessness assessment, figures that identified an increase in homelessness, what impact the increase would have and the reasons for the increase. It continued to consider what preventative measures could be developed and what the Council was required to do in dealing with the issue. In outlining the prevention agenda Members were informed of the Government target for Local Authorities to have a Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme and informed them of the background to CBL, what CBL meant, what would be involved in the development of the scheme, such as partnership working and the proposed timescale.

It was also explained that Members were invited to comment on the proposed scheme to ensure it was developed in a direction that would benefit both the Council and its residents.

Detailed consideration was given to the current method of allocating houses together with the duty of the Council in assessing homelessness applications.

Members questioned what protection the Council would have in place once the CBL scheme and partnerships were agreed. The Committee pointed out that each Council had different standards and although the scheme benefited from residents being able to move between the Council boundaries, Members were concerned regarding the amount of residents that could potentially move into the Borough.

Members made reference to residents who lived within the Borough for a number of years and who had managed their tenancy successfully, whether they would receive any priority. Members were informed that the contents of the scheme had not been finalised, therefore all comments would be considered in the development of the scheme.

It was also suggested that the scheme should be considered in greater detail throughout its development.

AGREED: That the Committee reviews the progress of the development of choice based lettings.

OSC(2).22/05 VALUE OF TOURISM REVIEW GROUP

The Chairman of the Value of Tourism Review Group presented a report of the Review Group, which was established to ascertain what part the Council played in tourism locally what it could play in the future and what could be developed to maximise economic benefits via visitors to the Borough. (For copy see file of Minutes.)

The Review Group considered a number of documents and received presentations from various sources, including: -

- One North East - North East Tourism Strategy
- Durham County Council - Tourism Strategy for County Durham
- C. Myers, Forward Planning Manager, Sedgefield Borough Council - Regional Planning Guidance for the North East

Discussions were also held with a number of Officers from the Councils Leisure Services Department and Regeneration section.

During the review the group identified the local economic benefits, what Sedgefield Borough offered to tourism, including its attractions and facilities, the existing and future markets, the links between the Council and the Private Sector regarding Tourism, partnership and joint working, the promotion of tourism and the resources that were available to the Council for tourism. The Review Group's final recommendations were also detailed within the report.

AGREED: That the report and the recommendations contained therein be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

OSC(2).23/05 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 informed that the Review of Cultural Facilities within the Borough had been completed and would be reported to a future meeting of the Committee.

Members requested that the topic of choice based lettings be placed on the Work Programme for future review.

AGREED

- 1. That choice based lettings be included on the Committee's Work Programme as a future review topic.*
- 2. That the Committee's Work Programme as outlined in the report 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. S. Billingham, Spennymoor 816166, Ext 4240, sbillingham@sedgefield.gov.uk

Item 7

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 3

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Tuesday, 13 December
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, Mrs. C. Potts and Mrs. C. Sproat

Invited to attend: Councillor M. Iveson

In

Attendance: Councillors Mrs. K. Conroy, A. Gray, B. Hall, D.M. Hancock, J.E. Higgin,
J.G. Huntington, B. Meek, G. Morgan and T. Ward

Apologies: Councillors B.F. Avery J.P and Mrs. L. Smith

OSC(3)18/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
No declarations of interest were received.

OSC(3)19/05 MINUTES
The Minutes of the meetings held on 8th November, 2005 and 28th November, 2005 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chairman.

OSC(3)20/05 STREETS SAFE
The Chairman of the Streetsafe Initiative Review Group presented the report of the Review Group which had been established to look at the Streetsafe Initiative and the Council's role in supporting the scheme. (For copy see file of Minutes).

The Cabinet Member for Community Safety was also present at the meeting to answer any queries.

It was explained that the Streetsafe Initiative had been launched by Durham Constabulary as a means of challenging the perception of fear of anti-social behaviour and crime and disorder.

The Streetsafe Strategy highlighted the need for the Constabulary to work effectively with the extended policing family, including Special Police Constables, Police Community Support Officers, Neighbourhood Wardens, Neighbourhood Watch and Community Volunteers, as a means of delivering re-assurance. It also emphasised the need for signal crimes to

be tackled in partnership with members of the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 recognised the important role of the Council in the Initiative and the review was established to evaluate partnership arrangements.

The review particularly examined :-

- Streetsafe Strategy
- Sedgefield Borough Council's role in Streetsafe
- Costs and benefits
- Opportunities for joint working

It was explained that the Review Group had gathered evidence and information in several ways including meetings, contributions from Durham Constabulary and officers from Neighbourhood Services, Community Services and Environmental Services and consideration of the Streetsafe Strategy document.

When considering the Borough Council's support, commitment and contribution, it was noted that the authority contributed significantly to the success of the scheme and recognised its commitment to the aims of Streetsafe by increasing associated revenue budgets for 2005/6.

The importance of a partnership approach was recognised as essential in ensuring the success of Streetsafe. In addition, the partnership needed to ensure that everyone involved had the opportunity to make an active contribution including Town and Parish Councils, County Council and local communities.

The Review Group concluded that in order to measure the success and effectiveness of the scheme the development of national and local targets was required.

It was explained that the success of the Streetsafe Initiative required the Council's assistance in raising public awareness of the Streetsafe scheme and in seeking to engage with local communities. The Borough Council also needed to increase understanding of its Section 17 responsibilities for crime and disorder and anti-social behaviour.

Recommendations had been formulated by the review group for consideration by Cabinet. Those recommendations were identified in the report.

During discussion reference was made to funding and the need to provide sustainable funding to support the initiative.

The Committee was informed that the review process had been very rigorous and well informed. It involved genuine partnership working and the issues were being responded to in a strategic manner. Streetsafe could not function in isolation. It involved an element of environmental

improvement as well as Neighbourhood Wardens and the use of CCTV etc. It was noted that additional Wardens had been recruited and this was resulting in improved services.

During discussion reference was also made to the issue of binge drinking and the creation of designated “no drinking” areas. It was noted that the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership was addressing the issue and would be looking at the possibility of creating designated “no drinking” areas.

The Committee also discussed funding and the need to ensure that there was adequate provision in the budgets to tackle issues associated with anti-social behaviour.

A query was also raised regarding the number of fixed penalties which had been issued. It was explained that enforcement was not the only means of dealing with the issues of anti social behaviour. Education and dealing with signal crimes was also important. It was considered that the increase in the number of Neighbourhood Wardens was having an impact.

Discussion took place regarding crime figures and, in particular, their accuracy. It was considered that a number of crimes were going unreported as a result of difficulties in contacting the Police. The Committee was informed that the crime figures were those produced by the Police and were the only statistical indicators of the level of anti social behaviour available.

Reference was also made to the value of the Authority’s Play Scheme and other initiatives as a means of dealing with the issues of community safety, community engagement and environmental issues.

AGREED : 1. *The report and recommendations contained therein be submitted to Cabinet for consideration*

2. *That the following recommendation be included :-*

The Authority considers ways to ensure sustainable funding is allocated to achieve the objectives of the scheme.

OSC(3)21/05 STRATEGIC FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

It was explained that Mr. Howard Keeble from Jeremy Benn Associates, consultants who had undertaken a strategic flood risk assessment on behalf of the Council, was present at the meeting to inform the Committee on the findings of the assessment.

Chris Myers, Forward Planning Manager, was also present at the meeting to answer queries.

It was explained that as part of the National Planning Policy Guidance Note 25 local authorities were required to manage flood risk. Jeremy Benn Associates had been commissioned to undertake an assessment to

comply with that guidance. The assessment had identified three issues: the extent and severity of flood risk in the area, providing a clear risk based approach to development control and contributing to the preparation of the Local Development Framework.

The presentation outlined the strategic Flood Risk Assessment process, the purpose of the assessment, the data included in the document and its use as a consultation document to develop the Local Development Framework. It was noted that there was information which the assessment did not include such as site specific data.

It was explained that at the heart of the assessment was a sequential test which was a process for local planning authorities to draw up or revise policies in development plans or in considering planning applications and permitting sites for development in order of acceptability in terms of flood risk.

The presentation also detailed the flood zone definition, a framework for the management of flood risk, how the risks were quantified and the concept of residual risk.

It was explained that the Flood Risk Assessment was a working document and a tool for planners and developers to use. The assessment included plans showing allocated development sites, categorisations etc as follows:-

- Zone 1 Having no flood risk (local issues to be checked)
- Zone 2 Generally suitable
- Zone 3 More difficult and better understanding was needed of flood risk. Development should be steered away from these high risk areas

Of the 90 sites allocated for development in Sedgefield Borough only 2 were (partially) located in flood zone 3 (the high risk zone). The rest were within flood zone 1.

Members of the Committee were given the opportunity to comment on and raise queries in relation to the assessment.

Reference was made to the flooding of sites and the need to determine responsibility, particularly in relation to the payment of compensation to those affected.

During discussion reference was made to the flooding of redundant mine shafts, the implications for new development and whether the assessment covered those issues. It was explained that the Flood Risk Assessment was a strategic document and any development site would need to have a specific assessment undertaken.

Discussion took place regarding flooding in localised areas and the Council's response. It was explained that the Council did monitor outflows and provided a service of sandbagging, which was the responsibility of "street scene". There was, however, a limited budget associated with this operation and the budget merely reflected a monitoring process.

Members also considered the issue of Woodham Burn, Newton Aycliffe, which was subject to flooding. It was pointed out that the Burn used to be cleaned out on a regular basis. It was however, a number of years since this had been done. It was queried whether this was a funding issue. It was recognised that there were areas which had historical flooding problems. It was not purely a funding issue but resources reflected the fact that historically the budget had been largely focused on maintenance. A different approach would be required to meet the needs of specific projects/issues. It was suggested that match-funding was needed from Town/Parish Councils to deal with specific issues.

- AGREED :*
- 1. That the recommendations detailed in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment be implemented.*
 - 2. That consideration be given to whether adequate funding has been allocated to tackle flooding issues identified for which the authority has responsibility.*

OSC(3)22/05 WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the current work programme for Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3. (For copy see file of Minutes)

Members were informed that the ongoing reviews had now been completed. It was anticipated that the scoping documents would be presented to the next meeting in order that Members may determine which of the topics identified for future reviews should be undertaken.

Discussion took place on items to be discussed at the January meeting of the Committee and in particular cars parked on verges. It was urged that a representative of the County Council be invited to attend.

- AGREED :*
- 1. That the position on Overview and Scrutiny Reviews be noted.*
 - 2. That Members support the inclusion of the item "car parked on verges" and that a representative from Durham County Council be invited to attend.*

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Liz North 01388 816166 ext 4237 email:enorth@sedgefield.gov.uk

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Item 8

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA 1 FORUM

Community Centre,
Middlestone Moor.

Monday,
12 December 2005

Time: 6.30 p.m.

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

Councillor Mrs. B. Graham	– Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor A. Gray	– Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor B.M. Ord	– Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor G.W. Scott	– Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor A. Smith	– Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor Mrs. C. Sproat	– Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor K. Thompson	– Sedgefield Borough Council
Inspector A. Green	– Durham Constabulary
Mrs. M. Fordham	– Sedgefield PCT
D. Rutherford	– Sedgefield PCT
A. Lamb	– Greenways Residents Association
Councillor E. Maddison	– Greenways Residents Association
S. Brown	– Middlestone Moor Community Centre
Councillor M. Smith	– Spennymoor Town Council
D. Gordon	– Spennymoor Town Centre Forum
F. Ryder	– Local Resident

In

Attendance: A. Farnie, Mrs. G. Garrigan and A. Palmer

Apologies:

Mrs. A.M. Armstrong	- Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor M.T.B. Jones	– Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor W. Waters	– Sedgefield Borough Council
D. Pattison	– St. Pauls Residents Association
Mrs. M. Khan-Willis	- Local Resident

AF(1)18/05 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24th October 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

AF(1)19/05 POLICE REPORT (LOCAL ISSUES AND ROAD SAFETY)

Inspector A. Green was present at the meeting to give details of the crime figures for the area.

The reported crime statistics for November 2005 were as follows:

Burglary dwelling	2
-------------------	---

Burglary (other)	14
Vehicle crime	17
Criminal damage	44
Violent crime	28
Theft	33
Total crime :	127
Overall percentage detection rate	27%

Total crime had decreased by 7% compared to the same period in the previous year.

With regard to drug related incidents, it was noted that there had been 46 for the whole of the Borough and 14 for the Spennymoor area.

In relation to vehicle crime, it was reported that the number of incidents mainly related to the theft of objects left in vehicles, such a satellite navigation systems.

With regard to road traffic accidents, it was noted that the figures were as follows:

Damage only accidents	12
Injury accidents	12
Hit and run	21
Dog (hit)	1
Fatal accidents	0

Concern was expressed regarding the design and positioning of the chicanes on Carr Lane, Spennymoor. Large vehicles often mounted the pavement in order to negotiate the chicanes and some motorists raced each other to get through them. There had been three accidents within a short period of time and the chicanes/barriers had been damaged.

The Forum was reminded that the chicanes had been installed following requests from local residents for traffic calming measures.

It was agreed that Councillor E. Foster, Durham County Council should be informed of the concerns, with a view to a report being given at the next meeting of the Forum.

AF(1)20/05 DRAFT RESIDENTIAL EXTENSIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

A. Farnie, Principal Development Control Manager, was present at the meeting to give a presentation on the above document.

It was explained that the Supplementary Planning Document: Residential Extensions had been prepared as part of Sedgefield Borough Local Development Framework, which would replace the Local Plan.

The Supplementary Planning Document on Residential Extensions had been prepared in advance of the Sedgefield Borough Local Development Framework as there was an urgent need for improved guidance on residential extensions as the existing guidance produced in 2000 was now out of date.

It was reported that final year students from the University of Newcastle had been commissioned to review the existing guidance and identify National Best Practice. Council officers had subsequently refined the work to suit local circumstances.

A Draft Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) was produced and presented to the Borough Council's Cabinet in September 2005 where it was approved for public consultation. The consultation period had now ended and it was anticipated that the document would be adopted by the Council in February 2006.

The Draft Supplementary Planning Document was more comprehensive than the existing Supplementary Planning Guidance and provided detailed advice and guidance on the following:

- General design principles
- Porches
- Forward, side, rear and rural extensions
- Conservatories
- Dormer windows and roof extensions
- Garages and outbuildings
- Walls and fences
- Other material planning considerations

It was noted that the document was available for downloading on the Council's website.

AF(1)21/05 SEDGEFIELD PRIMARY CARE TRUST - PROGRESS UPDATE

Mrs. M. Fordham and D. Rutherford attended the meeting to give an update on local health matters.

Consideration was given to a copy of the Performance Management Report that had been submitted to the Board meeting on 10th November 2005. (For copy see file of Minutes)

With regard to the future PCT configuration in County Durham, it was reported that the preferred options were as follows:

- A single county-wide PCT with Darlington included
- A single county-wide PCT with Darlington excluded

The options would be subject to consultation and a final decision would be made in April.

With regard to the re-provision of Spennymoor Health Centre, it was explained that the LIFT Company had been commissioned to undertake a feasibility study of possible sites within Spennymoor.

Specific reference was made to the availability of the Choose and Book Service, which offered patients the choice of time, date and 4 providers for their first outpatient appointment. It was noted that Sedgefield PCT had been ranked second in the country in October for the number of referrals made through Choose and Book.

The Forum's attention was drawn to the work of the Drugs Action Team within the borough. It was requested that a representative of Orbit be invited to a future meeting of the Forum to give details of the services provided.

Concern was expressed regarding the shortage of NHS dentists within the borough. It was noted that Sedgefield PCT was aware of the problem, particularly in Newton Aycliffe and had purchased a number of NHS dentistry sessions.

AF(1)22/05

LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME - PROCESS AND PROCEDURE

A. Palmer, Head of Strategy and Regeneration, was present at the meeting to give details of the above Programme.

It was explained that the Borough Council had received a substantial receipt from the sale of land and had agreed to use the money to support activities that fell within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's eligible expenditure definition of 'Regeneration' and 'Affordable Housing'.

It was pointed out that schemes to be advanced through the Local Improvement Programme would need to demonstrate the following:

- Conformity to the specified ODPM Regeneration and Affordable Housing Criteria.

Affordable Housing – 'the provision of dwellings to meet the housing needs, as identified by the local authority, of persons on low incomes, whether provided by the local authority or a registered local landlord.....'

Regeneration – 'any project for the carrying out of works or activities on any land where the land, or a building on the land, is vacant, unused, under-used, ineffectively used, contaminated or derelict; and The works or activities are carried out in order to secure that the land or the building will be brought into effective use.'

- Clear linkages to the delivery of the Council's Community Strategy and its key aims and planned outcomes.

- Appropriate levels of community consultation and reference to any Local Community Appraisal.
- Provision of sufficient level of detail in the project submissions to show a specific quantification of the benefits to be achieved by the investment and to explain the process by which the scheme would be delivered and over what time period.
- How any recurrent or revenue funding implications would be managed.
- Value for money should be clearly demonstrated to include any match funding from other grant sources.

Allocations were based on the local area's percentage share of households within the Borough. Area 1 locality would receive £253,000 in 2006/07, £253,000 in 2007/2008 and £253,000 in 2008/09.

It was emphasised that there was no pressure to spend allocated budgets within any one financial year unspent money would be rolled forward into the next financial year and projected for that Area Forum.

It was reported that Area Forums along with Town and Parish Councils community and voluntary sector stakeholders would be invited to consider schemes that would be eligible for support under the Programme. The final decision on which schemes would be made by Sedgefield Borough Cabinet.

A team of staff at Sedgefield Borough Council would be available to support the development of the scheme and would score applications received against the criteria.

AF(1)23/05 NAMING OF DEVELOPMENT - LAND REAR OF INSTITUTE STREET, BYERS GREEN

Consideration was given to a report of the Building Control Manager regarding a request to name and number the above development comprising of nine detached dwellings. (For copy see file of Minutes)

Councillor Thompson indicated that he wished to withdraw his suggestion of Thomas Wright and supported the proposal of Warwick Gardens.

The Forum agreed to support the name of Warwick Gardens for the development.

AF(1)24/05 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Monday 13th February 2006 at 6.30 p.m. at the Memorial Room, Spennymoor Town Hall.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Mrs. Gillian Garrigan Spennymoor 816166 Ext 4240 ggarrigan@sedgefield.gov.uk

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