

CABINET

Thursday, 2 February 2006

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 19th January 2006 (Pages 1 - 4)
4. **FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 AND RE-USE OF PUBLIC SECTOR INFORMATION REGULATIONS 2005**
Joint report of Chief Executive Officer and Solicitor to the Council. (Pages 5 - 10)
5. **COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT - KEY LINES OF ENQUIRY CORPORATE GOVERNANCE INSPECTION: IMPLICATIONS FOR STANDARDS AND ETHICS, THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE AND MEMBER TRAINING - TAKING THE ETHICS AGENDA FORWARD**
Report of Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer. (Pages 11 - 16)

KEY DECISION

HOUSING PORTFOLIO

6. **PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2005/06 - EDEN TERRACE GROUP REPAIR SCHEME TENDERS**
Report of Director of Neighbourhood Services. (Pages 17 - 24)

OTHER REPORTS

HOUSING PORTFOLIO

7. **DURHAM COALFIELD HOUSING RENEWAL PARTNERSHIP - UPDATE ON PROGRESS**
Report of Director of Neighbourhood Services, (Pages 25 - 32)

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

8. **CONFERENCES**
Report of Chief Executive Officer. (Pages 33 - 34)

MINUTES

9. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**
To consider the minutes of the following:
 - (a) Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 - 10th January 2006 (Pages 35 - 38)
 - (b) Overview & Scrutiny Committee 2 - 17th January 2006 (Pages 39 - 42)

10. AREA FORUMS

To consider the minutes of the following:

- (a) Area 2 Forum - 10th January 2006 (Pages 43 - 48)
- (b) Area 3 Forum - 11th January 2006 (Pages 49 - 52)

EXEMPT INFORMATION

The following items are not for publication by virtue of Paragraphs 1, 7 and 9 of Part 1 of Schedule 12 A of the Local Government Act 1972.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

KEY DECISION

REGENERATION PORTFOLIO

11. PROTECTED SPECIES MITIGATION STRATEGY - AYCLIFFE INDUSTRIAL PARK

Report of Chief Executive Officer. (Pages 53 - 60)

OTHER DECISIONS

REGENERATION PORTFOLIO

12. ASSET MANAGEMENT LAND SALE AT ALL SAINTS INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, SHILDON

Joint report of Head of Strategy and Regeneration and Director of Resources. (Pages 61 - 66)

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PORTFOLIO

13. CHIEF EXECUTIVES DEPARTMENT - STAFFING ESTABLISHMENT - STRATEGY AND REGENERATION

Report of Chief Executive Officer. (Pages 67 - 70)

14. 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
25TH 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

Item 3

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL CABINET

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Thursday,
19 January 2006

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, J. Robinson J.P and W. Waters

In Attendance: Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, Mrs. B.A. Clare, V. Crosby,
Mrs. A.M. Fleming, A. Gray, B. Hall, D.M. Hancock, J.G. Huntington,
B. Meek, J.P. Moran, G. Morgan, Mrs. E.M. Paylor, A. Smith, T. Ward and
J. Wayman J.P

Apologies: Councillors K. Noble

CAB.121/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
Members had no interests to declare.

CAB.122/05 MINUTES
The Minutes of the meeting held on 12th January 2006 were confirmed as
a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**CAB.123/05 INDEMNITIES FOR MEMBERS AND OFFICERS: IMPACT OF THE
LOCAL AUTHORITIES (INDEMNITIES FOR MEMBERS AND
OFFICERS) ORDER 2004**
Consideration was given to a report which in addition to assessing the
impact of the above Order, provided advice on the steps to be taken to
afford appropriate protection for those Members and officers who might be
subject to civil claims and set out the basis for the terms of that protection.
(For copy see file of Minutes).

- RESOLVED :**
1. *That the report and the action of the Director of Finance in arranging insurance cover be approved.*
 2. *That the Standards Committee be appraised of the report as it relates to Local Hearings and Determinations under Part III of the Local Government Act 2000.*
 3. *That Council be advised to amend the Officer Scheme of Delegation in the Constitution to give the Director of Resources power to provide appropriate insurance cover.*

CAB.124/05 REPORT ON THE REVISED CONSTITUTION OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE FOR THE COUNTY DURHAM E-GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP (KEY DECISION)

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

Members were reminded that the County Durham e-Government Partnership of all eight Councils within County Durham, had been established to deal specifically with the joined-up development of electronic service delivery across County Durham.

It was explained that the Partnership's Joint Committee at its meeting on 30th November 2005 had agreed to revise its constitution to reflect the changes and inclusions detailed in paragraph 3.1.11 of the report, subject to the formal agreement of each Local Authority.

Members' attention was drawn to the change to the quorum from five councils represented to four and the implications for those authorities that were not represented when the key decisions were made.

RESOLVED : That the changes to the Joint Constitution which was supportive of Article 11 (joint working) of the Council's own Constitution be approved.

EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined by Paragraphs 7, 9, 12 of Part 1 of Schedule 12a of the Local Government Act.

CAB.125/05 PROGRESS REPORT - GYMNASTICS CENTRE - SPENNYMOOR LEISURE CENTRE (KEY DECISION)

Consideration was given to a report regarding the construction of the Gymnastics Centre at Spennymoor Leisure Centre. (For copy see file of Minutes).

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

CAB.126/05 ASSET MANAGEMENT - HOUSING LAND SALE - EAST OF BARRATT WAY, WEST CORNFORTH (KEY DECISION)

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval to sell 1.45 hectares of land to the east of Barratt Way, West Cornforth for residential development. (For copy see file of Minutes).

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

Published on 20th January 2006.

The key decisions contained in these Minutes will be implemented on Monday 30th January, 2006 five working days after the date of publication unless called in by five Members of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call in procedure rules.

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 ggarrigan@sedgefield.gov.uk

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Item 4

REPORT TO CABINET

2ND FEBRUARY 2006

REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 & RE-USE OF PUBLIC SECTOR INFORMATION REGULATIONS 2005

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This Report is intended to advise/update Members on the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (FOIA) since the date of commencement on 1st January 2005 both in relation to the procedures set up to handle and deal with requests and also the number of requests dealt with.
- 1.2 The Re-Use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005 (RPS) came into force on 1st July 2005 and as required by the Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI), Senior Management and Cabinet should be on notice of the requirements of the Legislation.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet consider this Report.
- 2.2 That the contents of Part A of this Report in relation to FOIA be noted and that further similar reports be made annually to Cabinet.
- 2.3 That responsibility for the operation of the RPS Regulations (Part B) be delegated to the Customer Services Manager and the Solicitor to the Council as more fully set out in Paragraph 4.11 and that the Constitution be amended accordingly.

DETAIL

3. PART A – FOIA

- 3.1 The FOIA received Royal Assent in November 2000, the provisions of the Act being phased in over a four year period. The final phase granting the public right of access to information came into force on 1st January 2005.
- 3.2 Responsibility for compliance with the Act rests with the Customer Services Manager in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council.
- 3.3 Cabinet and Council were presented with a Report on 29th June 2005 outlining the processes to deal with the Council's requirements under the FOIA. These recommendations were formulated by the Corporate Working Group set up to provide a structure to assist with implementation of the FOIA.

- 3.4 The processes and systems implemented to cover requests, application of exemptions, the public interest test and complaints have now been in use for 11 months.
- 3.5 As agreed by the Corporate Working Group, all requests are logged centrally by the Customer Services Manager and responses to such requests, required within 20 working days, are agreed between the Customer Services Manager and Assistant Solicitor. In addition, the Assistant Solicitor provides guidance in relation to exemptions which may be attached to certain classes of information and may result in them not being disclosable.
- 3.6 The Council had received 89 requests for information up to Monday 19th December 2005. Some requests have been complex and covered information held in more than one department and have taken several days to deal with. Appendix 1 to this report is a schedule setting out the requests received and responses to them.
- 3.7 In 55 requests the information was released in full and in only 14 requests was a refusal issued. In four instances this was as a result of the information already being available to the public (exemption under the FOIA) and in another four this was as a result of information not being held by the Council.
- 3.8 In three situations a refusal was issued as a result of information already being covered under the Data Protection Act (an exemption applied under the FOIA).
- 3.9 In the remaining three cases of refusal this was as a result of the information being seen as useable in criminal activities or as a result of pending Litigation.
- 3.10 Section 16 of the FOIA requires the Council to give as much assistance as possible however to a Requestor even if an exemption applies by explaining the reason for the exemption being applicable and referring the Requestor to any other organisation which may be able to assist.
- 3.11 There have been a further 19 requests for information which have resulted in a partial release of that information requested as where a request covers some disclosable information and some subject to exemptions then that which is disclosable has been provided. A full explanation was given in each situation for attaching any exemptions to requests and refusals. Requestors are also advised on each occasion of their rights of appeal.
- 3.12 Of the requests received, the most received for a single issue were four in respect of the LSVT vote concerning the Council's housing stock which raised questions about the cost of the advertising campaign.
- 3.13 In one case the Council sought clarification from the applicant, which was not forthcoming, so the case was closed and a letter sent confirming this course of action.
- 3.14 Of the 89 requests dealt with so far only 3 have not been answered within the timescale of 20 working days. Two of these were missed by one day and the other by 7 Days. The failures to respond within the timescale were because of the complex nature of the request and the work entailed in formulating the responses. The average time the Council takes to reply to requests is 9.40 working days

- 3.15 Since January 2005 there has only been one occasion when a Requestor was unhappy with the response the Council provided when that Requestor used the Internal Complaints Procedure (which is a requirement before reference to the Information Commissioners Office). The internal procedure was dealt with within the prescribed procedures and the information regarding the Council's vehicle fleet was released. No complaints have been referred to the Office of the Information Commissioner concerning requests made to this Council.
- 3.16 The Council is receiving an average of less than two requests per week and it does appear that the systems set up to help monitor the progress of individual cases work well. In 63% of cases the information requested by applicants has been released.
- 3.17 The Council on 29th June 2005 approved the incorporation of FOIA training into the training regime for members as it is of vital importance that members realise when a request has been made. Training has already taken place and will be an ongoing process.

4. PART B - RPS

- 4.1 RPS was implemented by Statutory Instrument on 1st July 2005.
- 4.2 The Regulations promote the Re-use of Public Sector Information and allow public bodies to investigate commercial opportunities in licensing the re-use of this information. The intention of the regulations is:
- i) To create a European framework for making the process easier and consistent across the EU Member States in order that they can realise the full economic value and benefits to customers of Public Sector Information; and
 - ii) To ensure the application is fair, consistent and non-discriminatory processes are in place.
- 4.3 The Regulations do not impose an obligation to re-use documents but provide a framework to make documents that are available more accessible (ie where Authority's Licence, sell, disseminate, exchange or give out information). The Regulations do not affect the intellectual property rights of third parties, nor do they affect the existence or ownership of intellectual property rights of public sector bodies. The Regulations encourage public sector bodies to exercise their copyright in a way that facilitates and encourages re-use.
- 4.4 The Regulations do not amend any existing Law or Regulation relating to the release and use of public information.
- 4.5 The Office of Public Sector Information (OPSI) oversees the new Regulations by setting standards and providing advice and guidance.

- 4.6 The Regulations encourage public bodies to take advantage of developing technologies such as Electronic Document and Records Management Systems, to make information easier to find, use and share.
- 4.7 The FOIA confers a general right of access to information held by public authorities and the RPS do not amend this regime. Access does not, however, give the recipient the right to re-use the information and copyright restrictions remain in place.
- 4.8 The Regulations encourage the use of standard and specific licences to allow the re-use of public sector information.
- 4.9 There is no obligation to permit re-use of information although where any instance of re-use exists for purposes outside the “public task” (even if it is the public sector organisation that owns the information) then the public body will need to consider requests from other parties to re-use this information. If the information is re-used by any external party it must be on an equitable basis as a private commercial company would need to be treated in the same manner as a registered charity if the intended re-use was the same.
- 4.10 The main obligations of the Regulations are:
- i) Standardisation of Licence terms – where information is provided for re-use public sector bodies have an obligation to publish licence terms.
 - ii) To publish a list of standard charges (where charges are applicable).
 - iii) To deal with requests for re-use within 20 working days.
 - iv) To produce a list of material available (published and unpublished) for re-use called an Information Asset Register.
 - v) To ensure a complaints procedure compatible with guidelines issued by OPSI.
- 4.11 The following measures should be implemented to ensure the Council is compliant with the new Regulations:-
- a) Responsibility for the operation of the Regulations be delegated to the Customer Services Manager in consultation with the Solicitor to the Council.
 - b) Standard Licences be developed by the Solicitor to the Council based upon the model licences produced by OPSI.
 - c) Establishment of an approval process be the responsibility of the Customer Services Manager (for granting licences for re-use to ensure that issue of licences is fair, transparent and non-discriminatory).
 - d) The Customer Services Manager establish and publish a scale of charges.
 - e) The existing FOIA complaints procedure to include complaints received about PSI Regulations.
 - f) The Customer Services Manager develop an Information Asset Register to be made publicly available through the Sedgefield Borough Council web site.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Failure to meet the requirements of the RPS Regulations as a result of operating discriminatory procedures in respect of re-use of public information or failing to realise income for the re-use of Council copyright information can result in OPSI dealing with a complaint if the complainant is dissatisfied with the Council's internal complaints handling procedures. A further appeal by either the Council or Requestor can be made by application for review to the Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information if there is further dissatisfaction with the recommendation of OPSI.
- 5.2 No guidance has yet been issued in relation to the sanctions which OPSI or the Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information can impose.
- 5.3 The fees/scale of charges to be established and published will be a source of income yet to be quantified. Any applicable charges should not exceed the cost of collection, production, re-production and dissemination of the documents requested plus a reasonable return on investment.

Background Papers

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Report to Council – 20th December 2002

Report to Council – 29th June 2005

Directive 2003/98/EC of the European Parliament

Regulations on the Re-Use of Public Sector Information from OPSI

Statutory Instrument 2005 No.1515 – The Re-Use of Public Sector Information Regulations 2005

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION SOURCES

Information Commissioners Web Site – www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk

Department of Constitutional Affairs Web Site – www.dca.gov.uk

Office of Public Sector Information Web Site – www.opsi.gov.uk

Contact Officer: Jerry Miller/Andrew Traynor
Telephone No: (01388) 816166, Exts. 4268/4281
Email Address: atraynor@sedgefield.gov.uk

Examination by Statutory Officers

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

Item 5

REPORT TO CABINET

2ND FEBRUARY 2006

REPORT OF SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL AND MONITORING OFFICER

COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: KEY LINES OF ENQUIRY CORPORATE GOVERNANCE INSPECTION: IMPLICATIONS FOR STANDARDS AND ETHICS, THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE AND MEMBER TRAINING – TAKING THE ETHICS AGENDA FORWARD

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report considers the impact of the forthcoming Corporate Governance Inspection component of the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. In particular the opportunity has been taken to examine those aspects that focus upon how the best authorities take forward their Ethics Agenda.
- 1.2 This report serves to recognise the issues involved and the appropriate steps that ought to be taken to deal with them.
- 1.3 This report recognises that the Government have now published a series of major proposals which will change significantly the role of the Standards Board, Local Standards Committees and the duties of the Council's Monitoring Officer, following the publication of "Standards of Conduct in English Local Government : the Future", December 2005.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Cabinet consider the report.
- 2.2 To note that Standards Committee will consider the report.
- 2.4 To note that full Council will be recommended to approve the report and also consequential changes to the Constitution as appropriate.

3. DETAIL

3.1 **Change Context:** in December 2005 the Government published its proposals on the changes to the arrangements for Standards of Members in Local Authorities in England and Wales, "The Standards of Conduct in English Government: The Future". The key changes envisaged are as follows:-

- Initial assessment of all allegations of misconduct will be undertaken by Standards Committees and no longer by the Standards Board.
- Local Monitoring Officers shall investigate most cases and Standards Committees shall determine most cases.
- The Standards Board for England will only investigate the most serious cases and the Board's role will be limited and redefined to supporting, monitoring and overseeing Authorities' performance in dealing with allegations.
- Intervention powers will be given to the Standards Board to ensure that Standards Committees are operating effectively.
- New provisions will be put in place to permit Standards Committees to impose higher penalties in the more serious cases.
- The composition of Standards Committees will change: the requirement for an independent chair will be made compulsory and numbers of independent members will increase.
- Monitoring and reporting requirements will be put in place for Standards Committees so that the Standards Board can check on their progress.

All of these changes will require primary and secondary legislation which the Government intend to roll forward during the year.

3.2 **Achieving High Standards of Conduct: Assignment of Lead Responsibility to a Councillor:** Paragraph 4.3 of the Key Lines of Enquiry states that, as part of achieving high standards of conduct the Council should in effect assign lead responsibility to a Councillor for conduct and Standards issues as part of its arrangements. This could provide an opportunity to ensure recognition at the highest levels within the organisation of the key importance placed by the Council upon Ethics and Standards issues. In developing this aspect further the opportunity could usefully be taken to demonstrate the effectiveness of the Cabinet/Executive and overview and scrutiny relationship and other associated matters concerned with Corporate Governance.

3.3 The Leader of the Council whose responsibility concentrates upon resource management could be extended if he were to be assigned this role. Councillor Fleming has personally taken an interest in Standards issues within the Authority, has attended two nationally significant Standards Board for England Conferences and is keen to positively develop these aspects further. He has, since becoming leader, taken a lead role in moving the authority forward in its review of the Constitution.

- 3.4 In order to give effect to this arrangement it is suggested that: -
- * the Leader as Cabinet Chairman and Leader of the Council should be the member assigned with lead responsibility on Standards and Ethical Issues.
 - * the Leader's role be extended, and the Constitution amended accordingly, to put in place arrangements that require that he meet periodically with the Council's Statutory Officers that is to say the Chief Executive, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer for the specific purpose of regularly considering and developing further the Standards strategy of the Council.
 - * On advice from the Statutory Officers the Leader prepare and submit an annual report on Standards and Ethical Strategy and Corporate Governance related matters to the Standards Committee.
- 3.5 **Extending the Standards Committee Remit:** The current remit of the Standards Committee corresponds with the minimum required by legislation under the Local Government Act 2000. However, many Councils have developed the remit further as was reported at the National Conference of the Standards Board for England in Birmingham in September last year. Both the Audit Commission and the Standards Board for England accept that there is significant evidence to support the proposition that the best performing authorities are also those that demonstrate high standards of conduct across their functions. To this end they both support and encourage authorities where the remit of the Standards Committee has been extended.
- 3.6 It is, therefore, recommended that a widescale review take place within the Officer Constitutional Review Group with the object of focussing upon ways in which the remit of the Standards Committee can be appropriately extended and that they report further.
- 3.7 **Training:** The Audit Commission expects that training for Councillors on the Code of Conduct is made mandatory. Currently the Monitoring Officer advises the Standards Committee of forward plans for training of members at Borough, Parish and Town Council level as well as Officers and Clerks. The Standards Committee receives feedback reports on the training and also the performance of speakers and presenters is monitored. Information is retained about member/officer attendances at events.
- 3.8 The Monitoring Officer also maintains records of all training materials whether provided internally, externally or on a joint basis within the County Durham Area. The County Monitoring Officers Group which includes the Monitoring Officers of the County Council and all District Councils is chaired by him and meetings take place to discuss current topics and issues and areas for shared and joint working.

3.9 **Borough Councillors:** In view of the move towards mandatory requirements, it is recommended that, with effect from the start of the calendar year 2006 all members of the Council be notified that a mandatory requirement will be put in place hence forward that all members shall be required to attend at least one qualifying event per calendar year with effect from 2006; the details of attendances will be reported to the first meeting of the Standards Committee in the calendar year 2007. Qualifying events would include: -

- * Events conducted or organised by the Council's Monitoring Officer (at least three events will be conducted during the year at the instigation of the Monitoring Officer).
- * Conferences and events involving wholly or mainly standards and ethical Issues organised by local government associations and similar bodies, full details of which have previously been notified to the Council's Monitoring Officer.

Parish and Town Council Members: It is further proposed that Parish and Town Clerks be recommended to adopt a similar arrangement for their members and to maintain records accordingly. As the Standards Committee has a responsibility for those members also, Parish and Town Councils will be advised that information about their members' attendance will also be published as for Borough Council members.

3.10 **Monitoring Trends in Standards Board Complaints Nationally and Locally:** The inherent message of the Key Lines of Enquiry is that the Council can usefully go further to demonstrate how it reacts to complaints about member conduct. Currently complaints are monitored by the Council's Monitoring Officer concerning Borough, Parish and Town Council members. He reports on a monthly basis to the Chief Executive regarding current cases and whether they are likely to have an impact upon the Council's Constitution or Governance arrangements; whether change may be necessary. In some instances cases are discussed by the Statutory Officers at their regular meetings. However, in order to take the concept of transparency further forward in this area it is suggested that it would be appropriate in light of the current expectations of the Audit Commission that formal reports be made to the Standards Committee of statistical and other data regarding cases both at national and local level. This would enable the Council to gauge current trends and determine whether those trends have implications for this Council.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 This report has been considered by Management Team on 16TH January 2006 and, in particular, by the Statutory Officers, the Chief Executive, the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer and the Director of Resources, in his role as Section 151 Officer.

4.2 It is intended that Standards Committee be appraised of the terms of the report.

Contact Officer: Dennis A. Hall
Telephone No: (01388) 816166, Ext 4268
Email Address: dahall@sedgefield.gov.uk

Background Papers

Key Lines of Enquiry for Corporate Governance issued by the Audit Commission
Related Item Discussion Paper Constitution and View: Member Involvement
Report of the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer to Standards Committee dated
Thursday 7th July 2005
Standards of Conduct in English Local Government – The Future published by the Office of
the Deputy Prime Minister – December 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"/>

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Item 6

KEY DECISION

REPORT TO CABINET

2nd February 2006

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES**

Portfolios - Housing

Private Sector Housing Renewal Capital Programme 2005/6 – Eden Terrace Group Repair Scheme Tenders

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Borough has a number of areas of older terraced private sector housing, which are showing signs of housing market failure. These areas face issues of low demand and obsolete housing, unbalanced tenure pattern with high levels of privately rented properties, poor quality housing and environment often compounded by high levels of anti social behaviour.
- 1.2 Within the Housing Strategy, Community Strategy, Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and the Corporate Plan the Council has identified its key priorities for interventions at Ferryhill Station, Dean Bank, Ferryhill and the western part of Chilton.
- 1.3 Llewellyn Davies was appointed by the Borough Council to produce a master plan to deliver housing renewal and regeneration for these priority communities. A number of early projects have been commenced in the priority communities to show the Council's leadership in addressing the issues of housing market failure. Cabinet considered the Private Sector Renewal Capital Programme for 2005/6 on the 1st September 2005. As part of the programme it was agreed to develop and implement a Group Repair Scheme for Eden Terrace, Chilton. This report provides further details on the operation of Group Repair Schemes, the contribution they can make to improve the confidence in the housing market of a neighbourhood, the funding for such a scheme and details the outcome of the procurement process for this project.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the lowest tender submitted by Vest Construction to undertake the Private Sector Housing Renewal Capital Programme 2005/06 - Eden Terrace is accepted Group Repair Scheme in the sum of £829,459.25. The final contract amount will be reduced, to take account of the take up of the scheme by eligible participants.

3. **Strategic Context**

- 3.1.1 The Borough has a number of areas of older terraced private sector housing, which are showing signs of housing market failure. These areas face issues of low demand and obsolete housing, unbalanced tenure patterns with high levels of privately rented properties, poor quality housing and environment often compounded by high levels of anti social behaviour.
- 3.1.2 Within the Housing Strategy, Community Strategy, Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy and the Corporate Plan the Council has identified its key priorities for interventions at Ferryhill Station, Dean Bank, Ferryhill and the western part of Chilton. The Council is a member of the Durham Coalfield Housing Renewal Partnership which has carried out extensive research into the issue of housing market failure across County Durham. This research has confirmed the Council's priorities as key communities for intervention in County Durham; the Partnership is currently developing a funding bid to the Government as part of the next Comprehensive Spending Round in 2007. If successful this bid could attract significant additional resource to assist in regenerating the priority communities across County Durham. The approach to developing a bid on behalf of the Durham Housing Coalfield Housing Renewal Partnership is the subject of a separate Cabinet report.
- 3.1.3 The Borough Council has appointed Llewellyn Davies to produce master plans working with residents of these priority communities, to deliver housing renewal and regeneration. These master plans will potentially include a range of interventions including selective demolition, new build housing, group repair schemes and environmental enhancements.
- 3.1.4 The Council has had experience of the successful regeneration of an area of older private sector housing in New Shildon. Group Repair Schemes were a key tool in regenerating the area, with the Council completing 5 schemes over a period of 6 years. The Group Repair Schemes improved the individual housing stock included in the scheme, provided a visual improvement to the street scene and boosted confidence in the future of an area as a sustainable neighbourhood. This has resulted in attracting new build housing into the area and sustaining demand for the older private sector terraced housing.

3.2 **The Operation of Group Repair Schemes**

- 3.2.1 Group Repair Schemes have been available as a housing regeneration tool since the introduction of the Housing, Grants and Regeneration Act 1996. The nature of the work that could be included in the schemes and level of assistance that a local authority could offer a participant was prescribed by the Act. The Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) (England and Wales) Order 2002 allowed local authorities great flexibility to offer assistance to participants of such schemes through the adoption of its own eligibility criteria.

3.2.2 A Group Repair Scheme as a regeneration tool would be used in the following circumstances:-

- where there is clear strategic reason for intervention including synergy with other programmes,
- to deliver improvement to the visual amenity of a block of properties,
- to boost community confidence in the future of an area as a sustainable neighbourhood,
- to improve the condition of repair of the individual properties in the scheme.

3.2.3 Group Repair Schemes are complex projects to deliver; as each property is usually owned by a different individual each with different financial circumstances and each property will be in differing states of repair. The eligible works for Group Repair Scheme are external only and must improve the visual appearance of the terrace and leave the properties in a reasonable state of repair. In delivering any Group Repair Scheme at least 75% of the residents in the terrace must agree to participate and agree to certain minimum works to their properties including:-

- Repairs to chimney stacks including re pointing and brick cleaning
- Re roofing where necessary
- Provision of new barge boards gutters and down pipes
- Re pointing and brick cleaning of external walls
- Replacement windows and doors where necessary
- Minor repairs to rear yard wall and gates

3.2.4 Each participant in the Group Repair Scheme will be subject to a test of resources and contribute a maximum of 25% to the cost of works to their property and 75% is funded by the Council. In the case of the Eden Terrace Group Repair Scheme the funding for this scheme is from resources awarded to the Council through the Single Housing Investment Programme (SHIP), this is discussed in greater detail later in this report. Each participant in a Group Repair Scheme signs a contract with the Council, which clearly identifies the work that will be carried out on their property and their contribution. An agreement is entered into with every participant, this is completed prior to the commencement of any work, furthermore the grant assistance and contribution of each participant is registered as a local land charge prior to the commencement of any work. This arrangement ensures the participant's contribution can be recovered following completion of the work and if the participant sells the property within 5 years of the scheme completion the Council's contribution to the cost of the scheme can be reclaimed on a sliding scale.

3.3 **Eden Terrace Chilton Group Repair Scheme**

3.3.1 The Durham Road Chilton Regeneration project linked to the identification of a possible Group Repair Scheme at Eden Terrace (1- 36 inclusive) as part of the master planning process presented an opportunity to begin some limited housing based regeneration in Chilton. The proposed scheme was evaluated in terms of the strategic relevance, synergy with other programmes, available resources and the capacity to deliver the scheme. Despite the benefits of a Group Repair Scheme to participants it is often difficult to generate sufficient interest in undertaking a scheme. Following a public meeting and home visits sufficient numbers of property owners indicated their interest

in participating in a scheme.

- 3.3.2 The development of the Eden Terrace Group Repair Scheme began in the summer of 2005, when the Council was still engaged in the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer, this limited the capacity in a number of service areas to develop the scheme. Therefore it was necessary to identify suitable consultants to provide additional support. The identification and evaluation of the consultants included an assessment of their skills, experience and costs against comparable schemes. When a suitable consultant was identified a full brief was issued setting the expected scope and role of the consultant including property surveys, production of tender documentation, project management including site supervision, health and safety requirements etc. The scheme has been developed in close liaison between the consultant and the Home Improvement Agency, and these arrangements will remain in place until scheme completion.
- 3.3.3 Each property in a Group Repair Scheme is subject to a full condition survey, a single Bill of Quantities is produced and subject to a normal tender process. On completion of the tender process each prospective participant is provided with a costed schedule of work. Each prospective participant can then determine, if they wish to take part in the scheme. If a number of owners decline to participate in the scheme this can mean the final cost of the project varying significantly from the submitted tender.
- 3.3.4 Due to the requirements of the SHIP funding, the potential impact on future SHIP bids and capacity to deliver of the project has required tenders to be sought from contractors with experience of delivering similar projects. Five contractors were requested to tender and all returned tenders. Tenders received are as follows exclusive of VAT:

Contractor

Harry Kindred
M & M Plasline Ltd
Sendrig Construction Ltd
Stephen Easten Ltd
Vest Construction

Tender Sum
£829,459.25
£830,000.00
£882,458.96
£909,896.35
£956,336.97

- 3.3.5 The lowest tender was submitted by Vest Construction for the sum of £829,459.25. The final contract price will be reduced significantly to take account of take up of the scheme by eligible participants and any savings in relation to contingencies. The successful company was subject to the normal checks in relation to Health and Safety, financial issues and references.

4. **RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Borough Council as part of the Durham Coalfield Housing Renewal Partnership was awarded Single Housing Investment Pot resources of £600,000 in 2005/6 of which £350,000 has been allocated to support the scheme in this financial year. These resources are currently administered on behalf of the Durham Coalfield Housing Renewal Partnership by Wear Valley District Council. These resources are paid as grant to the Council to support appropriate schemes on submission of a claim.
- 4.2 The Council has made a further SHIP bid for the period 2006/7 to 2007/8, which has resulted in the award of £962,000 over this period to support private sector renewal interventions. The resources are grant to the Council rather than borrowing approval. The remaining costs for the Eden Terrace Scheme will be met from the SHIP allocation for 2006/7 and client contributions estimated to be in the region of £50,000. Therefore the cost of Eden Terrace Group Repair Scheme is fully met from SHIP grant.

5. **CONSULTATIONS**

- 5.1 Consultation has been carried out with the residents of Eden Terrace, local members, Chilton Town Council and the residents association on the development of the Group Repair Scheme.

6. **OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 The Community Strategy Outcomes include a Borough with Strong Communities where residents can access a good choice of high quality housing. The Council's ambitions, which are linked, to the Community Strategy outcomes and are articulated through the Corporate Plan and the Medium Term Financial Plan. Our ambitions include delivering a Borough with Strong Communities with good quality affordable housing in safe Neighbourhoods. The delivery of a Group Repair Scheme at Eden Terrace will make a contribution to this ambition and support the early implementation of the master plan for Chilton West.
- 6.2 **Risk Management**
A number of risks exist with Group Repair Schemes including the following:-
Limited take up of the scheme from the owners of properties in Eden Terrace, the Home Improvement Agency is working with owners to maximise the take up of the scheme.
Failure of the contractor to complete the scheme, appropriate arrangements including a bond will be put in place to mitigate this risk.
Impact on the delivery of the scheme due to other works being carried as part of the Durham Road Scheme, regular liaison meetings have been established to prevent any potential conflicts.
- 6.3 **Health and Safety**
Suitable contract administration and management arrangements are in place to ensure that all health safety risks are managed appropriately.
- 6.4 **Sustainability**
The delivery of housing led regeneration of Chilton West can contribute to the delivery of sustainable communities in the Borough.

6.5 Information Communications Technology

There are no ICT implications of the proposals set out in the report.

6.6 Equality and Diversity

Full account will be taken of the Borough Council's obligation to promote equity and diversity in the proposals.

6.7 Crime and Disorder

The improvement of the security of doors, windows and other physical interventions in the terrace will contribute to the Council's duty under section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

6.8 Human Rights

There are no immediate Human Rights issues contained within the report.

6.9 Social Inclusion

Every effort will be made to ensure that the issue of social inclusion will be taken into account throughout the delivery of the group repair scheme

7. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 A sub group of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 has completed a review of the interventions available to deliver the regeneration of Neighbourhoods with older private sector housing. The review was accepted by Overview and Scrutiny 3 on the 8th November 2005 and was considered by Cabinet on the 8th December 2005. This report takes account of the recommendations of the review.

8. **LIST OF APPENDICES**

8.1 None

Contact Officer Ian Brown
Telephone Number 01388 816166 Ext. 4462
E-mail address ibrown@sedgefield.gov.uk

Background Papers:

[List other reports, publications documents and papers referred to in the preparation of the report. Include previous reports to Cabinet on the subject of the report.]

Tenders submitted for the Eden Terrace Group Repair Scheme

Private Sector Renewal Capital Programme 2005/6 report to Cabinet 1 September 2005

Sedgefield Borough Housing Renewal Assistance Policy

Wards: **Chilton**

Key Decision Validation:

The Private Sector Housing Capital Programme will:

Result in the Council incurring expenditure, or making savings of £100,000 or above

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"/>

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Item 7

REPORT TO CABINET

2ND FEBRAURY 2006

REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF
NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

Portfolios - Housing

Durham Coalfield Housing Renewal Partnership - Update on progress

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 Housing market failure has been an issue facing some communities in the North East over the last 5 years and despite the recent changes in the housing market it is clear that this is still a real problem within some parts of County Durham and Sedgefield Borough. The evidence of this housing market failure was confirmed in research carried at a regional level by the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies "CURS Report" in 2002 and more recently in report by DTZ in 2004. The issue of failing housing markets in County Durham are predominately concentrated in former Coalfield communities. The establishment of the Durham Coalfield Housing Market Renewal Partnership ("the Partnership") was a sub regional response to this issue. As part of its work the Partnership commissioned a number of pieces of research to further develop an understanding of the issue and to inform any future strategic decisions in developing solutions.
- 1.2 The Borough Council has been a member of the Partnership since its establishment in 2003. It brings together all of the local authorities in County Durham, English Partnership (EP), the Government Office for the North East (GONE) and a number of other key partners. The focus of the Partnership has been: -
- To establish an evidence base around the issue of housing market failure in the Coalfield Communities of County Durham to help identify priority communities and develop effective models for intervention.
 - To examine the scope for effective joint working opportunities between the Partners.
 - To support the development of any funding submission from the Partnership to the Government.
 - To develop the capacity to take forwards the Partnership and joint working opportunities in delivering housing market renewal in the priority communities.

1.3 The Partnership in mid 2005, reached a point in its development that was considered necessary by all the local authority members with the support of EP and GONE to formalise the governance arrangements of the Group. A Memorandum of Understanding was developed for the Partnership and was the subject of reports to Management Team on the 20 June 2005 and Cabinet on the 30 June 2005. The Borough Council has become a signatory to the Memorandum of Understanding. The report also detailed progress in developing an evidence base through research carried out by the Partnership to support any funding bid to Government. This research consisted of three phases carried on behalf of the Partnership by Jacobs Bابتie, and where:-

- Phase 1 - Establish a strategic context in relation to housing investment and a sub regional settlement pattern
- Phase 2 – Assess settlement relationships in the Durham Coalfields and outline the rationale for intervention based on the wider opportunities of delivering and sustaining change in the priority communities, rather than purely focusing on addressing housing market failure.
- Phase 3 – Establishing a broad programme of settlement interventions to support changes through area based interventions and the identification of those communities where production of an Area Development Framework is an essential pre cursor to any funding bid for further resources.

1.4 The purpose of this report is to provide information in relation to the progress made by the Durham Coalfields Housing Market Renewal Partnership in relation to the Phase 3 of the Settlement Study undertaken by Jacobs Bابتie. EP has requested specifically that all district authority partners consider the final phase of the study and formal adopt its findings. This is to ensure that any funding bid to the Government that is made has clear and unequivocal support from members of the Partnership.

2. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. That the findings of Phase 3 of the Durham Settlements Study are adopted and the production of the Area Development Frameworks for the communities of Dean Bank, Ferryhill Station, Chilton West and Newton Aycliffe undertaken.

3.1 **Understanding the Durham Coalfields Housing Market**

3.1.1 Before developing any funding bid to the Government supported by EP it is essential to understand clearly the issues around housing market failure, what sustainable solutions exist for intervention and the potential cost to public resources to deploy these solutions. Therefore the production of an evidence based business case is essential as any funding bid will be subject to the full rigors of a Treasury economic appraisal. If the evidence, assessment of the options for intervention and costed solutions are not sufficiently robust then the bid is likely to be rejected. A fundamental building block of any bid to the Treasury is the production of Area Development Frameworks (ADFs) for each priority community across County Durham. This will facilitate the production of an economic assessment that is robust enough for scrutiny

by English Partnerships, the Treasury and ODPM to enable the allocation of resources for the proposals.

3.1.2 The purpose of an ADF is to establish the role and function of settlement (vision), settlement requirements to fulfill such a function successfully, settlement development patterns (physical concepts), and priorities for investment. The content of which is required to be based around land and property values, numbers and conditions of properties, housing needs and environmental uses. This content will ultimately inform a proposed investment programme for settlements. It is therefore essential that all the ADF for County Durham are produced to a common deadline, format and quality.

3.1.2 Since the Durham Coalfields Housing Partnership was established a significant amount of work has been undertaken to gain a better understanding of the issues within the Durham Coalfield Sub Region and develop an evidence base to support any proposed interventions. This has to varying degrees included work to understand the issues at the Neighbourhood level within some of the Durham Districts.

3.1.3 The feasibility work that has been undertaken to date has included the following, (the linkages and role of these studies is represented graphically at Appendix 1).

- CURS Report (David Cumbernauld Study) – Identifying areas at risk of low demand across the sub region.
- DTZ Piedad Study 2003 / 04 – Considered priority settlements within the 5 Districts of Derwentside, Durham City, Easington, Sedgefield and Wear Valley. This work recommended that local master planning exercises should be undertaken in priority areas to establish a better understanding of local conditions (baselines).
- Local master planning exercises have commenced in some of the priority areas within Easington, Sedgefield, Wear Valley and Derwentside. At present this work has progressed most comprehensively in Sedgefield Borough. These master plans will form the core elements of the ADFs but additional information will be required to support their complete development.

The Partnership has more recently commissioned (early 2005) Jacobs Babbie and Genecon Consultants to achieve the following: -

- Phase 1 - Establish a strategic context in relation to housing investment and a sub regional settlement pattern
- Phase 2 – Assess settlement relationships in the Durham Coalfields and outline the rationale for intervention based on the wider opportunities of delivering and sustaining change in the priority communities, rather than purely focusing on addressing housing market failure.
- Phase 3 – Establishing a broad programme of settlement interventions to support changes through area based interventions and the identification of those communities where production of an Area Development Framework is an essential pre cursor to any funding bid for further resources.

3.2 County Durham Settlement Study Phase 3

3.2.1 The primary purpose of the final study is to assist EP in developing a spatial rationale, which confirms the long term role and function of settlements within a sub-regional context. This included validating the existing list of priority intervention settlements, which have previously been identified on housing need only. The study also examined the function and role of the 12 major centres contained in the County Durham Structure Plan in terms of their potential role in supporting the future sustainability of any interventions in the communities.

3.2.2 Additionally the final phase of the study has entailed undertaking the following exercises: -

- Validation of previous studies undertaken by DTZ Pineda and CURS
- Establish which Area Development Frameworks require to be developed for the priority settlements and if ADFs are required for adjoining major settlements that can influence the sustainability of any proposed interventions.

3.2.3 The original timetable for the completion of the ADFs was by mid Autumn 2005. This, however, was optimistic and also dependent on a number of other critical factors. The major one being the requirement for a Sub Regional Housing Market Assessment for County Durham to be complete to inform the economic appraisal and ADF production. It would now be more realistic to assume that completion of this exercise will be towards mid to late 2006, this links into the proposed timetable for completing the Housing Market Assessment for County Durham. Irrespective of the completion date of the work it is not expected that significant resources could be obtained until satisfactory scrutiny of the proposal from agencies such as English Partnerships in consultation with ODPM and the Treasury and Government Office North East in relation to the work of the Regional Housing Board. It might be the case that this work will be subject to consideration as part of the Government's next Comprehensive Spending Review due to be completed for the start of 2007. The development of a bid to Government to support the Coalfield interventions should not delay the commencement of interventions in our priority communities.

3.2.4 The recommended settlements (from the Jacobs Babbie study phase 3) where delivery of interventions would have greatest strategic impact in terms of establishing sustainable settlement patterns across the Durham Coalfield area are: -

Sedgefield Borough

Chilton West, Dean Bank, Ferryhill Station and Newton Aycliffe

District of Easington

Dawdon, Easington Colliery, Horden and Peterlee

Durham City

Bowburn

Wear Valley District

Coundon, Tow Law, Woodhouse Close / Bishop Auckland

Derwentside District

Stanley

- 3.2.3 The study confirmed the existing three priority communities in Sedgefield Borough as Dean Bank, Ferryhill Station and Chilton West and requires the production of ADFs for each community. The ADFs for Dean Bank and Ferryhill Station will take account of the economic and retail activity in the township of Ferryhill on the sustainability of interventions in these priority communities. The study also identified the strategic importance of Newton Aycliffe as a major economic centre in the Borough and the importance of its role in the sustainability of the interventions in Chilton but also the potential impact in the other communities. The study identified broad interventions for inclusion with the ADFs and these concur with the Councils priorities identified through the master planning exercise. A copy of the Durham Coalfield Settlement Study Phases 1 – 3 is available from the Director of Neighbourhood Services.

4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 It is not possible to estimate the level of funding required to address the issue of housing market restructuring across the whole of County Durham until all the ADFs are completed for the priority communities. However the indicative figures for the delivery of housing renewal with in our priority communities is estimated in at a round £57m, with predicted income from land values of £31m leaving a potential gap of £26m. We will therefore need to adopt an approach to identifying resources from a wide range of sources including the Council, Single Housing Investment Programme, Housing Corporation, and through a bid to the Government by the Durham Coalfield Housing Renewal Partnership based on the approach set out in this report. The use of innovative partnering arrangements with the private sector will also assist in the gap and is integral to the delivery process.

5. CONSULTATIONS

- 5.1 Consultation has been with the residents of the priority communities during the period of development of the master plans and these views have been incorporated into the work of the Partnership.

6. **OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

6.1 The Community Strategy Outcomes include a Borough with Strong Communities where residents can access a good choice of high quality housing. The Council's ambitions, which are linked, to the Community Strategy outcomes and are articulated through the Corporate Plan and the Medium Term Financial Plan. Our ambitions include delivering a Borough with Strong Communities with good quality affordable housing in safe neighbourhoods. The delivery of Private Sector Housing Renewal in the priority communities of Dean Bank, Chilton West and Ferryhill Station is a key objective of the Council.

6.2 **Risk Management**

The key risk is that the Treasury does not support the funding bid for intervention through the Durham Coalfields Housing Renewal Partnership. The Council will continue to look to other funding options to support its programme of private sector renewal to mitigate this risk

6.3 **Health and Safety**

There are no additional health and safety implications from this report.

6.4 **Sustainability**

The delivery of sustainable of communities is a priority for the Council and the development of stable housing markets can make a direct contribution to this ambition.

6.5 **Information Communications Technology**

There are no additional ICT implications from this report.

6.6 **Equality and Diversity**

Full account will be taken of the Borough Council's obligation to promote equity and diversity in the proposals.

6.7 **Crime and Disorder**

Delivering interventions in areas of failing housing can make a direct contribution to the Council's Section 17 duties under the Crime and Disorder Reduction Act 1984.

6.8 **Human Rights**

There are no immediate Human Rights issues contained within the report.

6.9 **Social Inclusion**

The areas for priority intervention in the Borough are some of the most deprived communities and the delivery of change will promote social inclusion.

7. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 A sub group of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 has completed a review of the interventions available to deliver the regeneration of Neighbourhoods with older private sector housing. The review was accepted by Overview and Scrutiny 3 on the 8th November 2005 and was considered by Cabinet on the 8th December 2005. This report takes account of the recommendations of the review.

8. **LIST OF APPENDICES**

8.1 Appendix 1 Hierarchy of Studies
Appendix 2 Findings of Phase 3 of the Durham Settlement Study 2005

Contact Officer Ian Brown
Telephone Number 01388 816166 Ext. 4462
E-mail address ibrown@sedgefield.gov.uk

Background Papers:

[List other reports, publications documents and papers referred to in the preparation of the report. Include previous reports to Cabinet on the subject of the report.]

Durham Coalfield Housing Renewal Partnership - Report to Cabinet
Durham Coalfield Settlement Study 2005 – Jacobs Batie

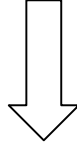
Examination by Statutory Officers

	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

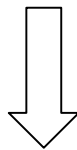
CURS Report (Centre for Urban and Regional Studies) 2002

Broad Study identifying areas at risk of housing market failure



DTZ Pieda Study 2004

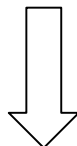
Refined the areas at risk into priority settlements within the 5 Districts of Derwentside, Durham City, Easington, Sedgefield and Wear Valley



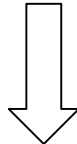
Jacobs Babbie Durham Coalfield Settlement Study 2005

Broad Study that had three phases

- Phase 1 - Establish a strategic context in relation to housing investment and a sub regional settlement pattern
- Phase 2 – Assess settlement relationships in the Durham Coalfields and outline the rationale for intervention based on the wider opportunities of delivering and sustaining change in the priority communities, rather than purely focusing on addressing housing market failure.
- Phase 3 – Establishing a broad programme of settlement interventions to support changes through area based interventions.

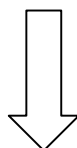


Master plans for Sedgefield Borough priority communities
Neighbourhood focused interventions and delivery plans



Area Development Frameworks

for Sedgefield Borough and other County Durham districts priority communities - a broad economic and spatial assessment of the opportunities for intervention



Combined Funding Submission to Treasury

Item 8

REPORT TO CABINET

2nd FEBRUARY 2006

**REPORT OF CHIEF
EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Portfolio: Resource Management.

CONFERENCES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To consider the Council's representation at the following:-
- a) The Centre for Public Scrutiny – Parliamentary Seminar – ‘Scrutiny: Transforming Local Democracy’ to be held at Portcullis House (House of Commons) London on 15th March 2006.
 - b) LGA Annual Cultural Services Conference to be held at Assembly House, Norwich, on 28-29 March 2006.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Chairman of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 represents the Council at the Parliamentary Seminar – ‘Scrutiny: Transforming Local Democracy’, together with one officer.
- 2.2 That the appropriate Lead Member represents the Council at the LGA Annual Conference, together with one officer.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1 The Parliamentary Seminar will include an outline of Parliamentary scrutiny from a member and officer perspective, as well as local authority case studies and CfPS – led discussion on how local authorities can move towards successful scrutiny as a key catalyst for transforming local democracy.
- 3.2 The LGA Conference will look at the changing local government environment and how it is likely to impact on culture over the next decade. Cultural services are a valuable resource for local communities and cut across services that councils provide. This conference will give delegates the opportunity to hear from a range of speakers on what the big issues are likely to be over the next decade.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Parliamentary Seminar – Transforming local democracy is free of charge. (excluding travel and subsistence)
- 4.2 The cost of the LGA Annual Conference is £310.00 plus VAT per delegate (excluding travel and subsistence)

CONSULTATION

5.1 Not applicable.

Contact Officer: Tom Dyer
Telephone No. (01388) 816166 Ext 4219

Background Papers

Notice from LGA: Cultural Services Conference, Working together to develop a vision for the future.
Notice from The Centre for Public Scrutiny

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 9a

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 1

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Tuesday,
10 January 2006

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor A. Gray (Chairman) and

Councillors Mrs. K. Conroy, B. Hall, D.M. Hancock, J.G. Huntington,
J.M. Khan, B. Meek, G. Morgan, Mrs. I. Jackson Smith and K. Thompson

Invited to attend: Councillor Mrs. B. Graham

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

Apologies: Councillors Mrs. A.M. Fleming, K. Henderson and J.M. Smith

OSC(1).29/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members had no declarations of interest to submit.

OSC(1).30/05 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on the 22nd November, 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes).

OSC(1).31/05 HALF YEAR REPORT ON COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY CORPORATE COMPLAINTS STAFF

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive Officer outlining the complaints/issues received by Corporate Customer Relations staff during the period 1st April, 2005 to 30th September, 2005. Figures were also provided for 1st April, 2004 to 30th September, 2004 to enable comparisons to be made. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members were reminded that the Council had adopted a revised complaints policy which was aimed at providing residents and other users of the Borough services with the opportunity to comment on/criticise Borough Services or service delivery.

It was reported that the number of complaints/issues dealt with by Customer Complaints staff had increased from 496 in the first month of 2004/05 to 561 in the same period in 2005/06. This was an increase of 13%. It was pointed out, however, that 30% of the increase was attributable to issues which were actually service requests.

Members were informed that the main area of complaint related to Housing Maintenance, Management and Improvements and Adaptations for the benefit of people with disabilities.

The main reason for complaints on maintenance related to repairs not being carried out within timescales. It was explained that on occasions the resources were not available to complete every job within the timescale. Also a number of low priority repairs had not been issued as the maintenance budget was overspent.

Members expressed concerns that the housing maintenance service had been affected, as adequate financial resources were not available. It was explained that the Housing Department was examining its budget provision in order to reduce the backlog of repairs.

Members were informed of the processes used for determining the budget for the Housing Revenue Account, especially subsidy settlements issued by the Government.

With regard to Housing Improvements it was explained that 20 complaints had been received although only two complaints were justified.

Members queried whether Housing Maintenance had a full compliment of staff. It was explained that all job vacancies had been filled by agency workers. Members suggested that Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 monitor staffing arrangements within housing maintenance section as part of the service improvement plan.

There had been 32 complaints received about adaptations for the benefit of people with disabilities, with 7 being justified.

It was reported that Customer Services had five complaints made against the service. The complaints all related to the failure of the existing switchboard. It was noted that alternative systems had been evaluated and it was anticipated that a new system would be installed by the end of the 2005/06 financial year.

The corporate complaints staff aimed to respond to 100% of complaints and enquiries within 10 working days. It was reported that 99.3% was achieved in the first half of 2005/06 compared with 95.5% in the first half of 2004/05.

Members were reminded that in the event of complainants not being satisfied after they had exhausted the Council's complaints procedure they were advised that they had the right to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman. In the first six months of 2005/06 18 cases were investigated and decided by the Ombudsman. The Borough Council was not found of maladministration in any of these cases.

RECOMMENDED : 1. *That the half yearly report be noted and a full year report for 2005/06 considered at a future meeting.*

OSC(1).32/05 AUDIT COMMISSION REPORTS

Consideration was given to the following reports prepared by the Audit Commission:-

- ❖ Review of Internal Audit 2004/05
- ❖ Internal Audit Protocol
- ❖ Review of Agresso Financial Management System – IT Controls
- ❖ Performance Management Arrangements
- ❖ Durham Partnerships

(for copies see file of Minutes)

Catherine Andrew, Audit Manager, was present at the meeting to respond to Members questions.

Discussion took place in relation to Agresso, the Council's Financial Management Information System. It was explained that although the Audit Commission had initially raised concerns, the Council had carried out further work and appropriate action had been taken.

Members queried what controls were in place with regard to the security of the system. It was explained that users had restricted access and could only access information relating to their area of work. Those employees who required access to all information had been set up as 'super users' and had full access to the system.

With regard to Internal Audit Protocols it was reported that new International Standards on auditing had been introduced. These had a direct impact on the statutory audit duty.

Reference was made to performance management arrangements. It was explained that although the Council had made progress on improving performance management arrangements, additional work was required on user and community focused and local performance indicators.

AGREED: That the information be noted.

OSC(1).33/05 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 updated on the progress of the ongoing reviews.

With regard to topics for future review it was explained that scoping documents would be presented at the next meeting. This would enable Members to determine which of the topics identified for future reviews should be undertaken.

AGREED: That the Committee's Work Programme as outlined in the report be approved.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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Item 9b

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Tuesday,
17 January 2006

Time: 10.00 a.m.

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

Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, Mrs. J. Croft, R.A. Patchett,
Mrs. E.M. Paylor, Ms. M. Predki, T. Ward and J. Wayman J.P.

Tenant Representatives

A. McGreggor and Mrs. M. Thomson

In Attendance: Councillors Mrs. B.A. Clare, Mrs. J. Gray, B. Hall, D.M. Hancock,
J.G. Huntington, B. Meek, J.P. Moran, G. Morgan and A. Smith

Apologies: Councillors J. Burton, M.A. Dalton, T.F. Forrest, Mrs. L. Hovvels,
G.M.R. Howe and G.W. Scott

OSC(2).24/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members had no interests to declare.

OSC(2).25/05 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29th November, 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

OSC(2).26/05 LEISURE CENTRE NO SMOKING POLICY

Further to the request by Committee at its meeting on 1st March, 2005 (Minute No: OSC233/4) the Director of Leisure Services attended the meeting to present a report to update the Committee on the impact of the introduction of the No Smoking Policy throughout the Borough Council's Leisure Centres. (For copy see file of Minutes.)

Members were reminded that the No Smoking Policy had come into effect on 2nd January 2005. Cabinet had agreed the introduction of the policy on health grounds, however, the attached report focused on the commercial implications of the introduction of the policy.

Members were informed that there had been a reduction in function bookings together with a reduction in the overall use of the bar facilities for the financial year at all the Leisure Centres.

Detailed discussion was held regarding the options to increase profitability.

It was suggested that the décor of all bars needed to be updated. The Director of Leisure Services explained that an investment plan had been

developed to refurbish the bars, which would reflect the demands, aspirations and lifestyle factors of the customers of the Leisure Centres.

With regard to the day to day running of the bars Members of the Committee made specific reference to the need to promote the ethos of a healthy lifestyle.

AGREED: That Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 approves the report and supports the conclusions outlined.

OSC(2).27/05 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN PROGRESS UPDATE

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Service Improvement detailing the progress to date on Equality issues within the Council against the Corporate Equality Plan Package (CEP). (For copy see file of Minutes).

The report included details of the work that had been carried out in relation to the Corporate Equality Group, the Impact Needs Requirement Assessments (INRAs), departmental Equality and Diversity Groups, service planning guidance and training.

Members were also informed of new legislation that would be implemented over the following twelve months. The legislation would require the Council to prepare new policies and revise existing ones. It would also have to report annually on the new policy documents.

RECOMMENDED: 1. That Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 supports the progress made to date.

2. That progress against the Corporate Equality Plan be reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2 on an annual basis.

OSC(2).28/05 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. The Value of Tourism Review Group had been completed and would be reported to Cabinet.

It was also pointed out that scoping reports would be presented to a future meeting in order that Members may determine which of the topics identified should be reviewed.

AGREED: That the Committee's Work Programme as outlined in the report be approved.

OSC(2).29/05 DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL HEALTH SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE

The Minutes of the meetings held on 3rd October, 2005 and 18th October, 2005 were considered and noted.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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Item 10a

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA 2 FORUM

Community Centre,
West Cornforth

Tuesday,
10 January 2006

Time: 6.30 p.m.

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

Councillor Mrs. K. Conroy	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor A. Hodgson	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor B. Meek	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor R. Patchett	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
M. de Dunewic	–	ASBUK
B. Hutchinson	–	ASBUK
K. Hutchinson	–	ASBUK
Councillor S. Drew	–	Chilton Town Council
Councillor Mrs M. Errington	–	Chilton Town Council
J. Usher	–	Dean Bank Residents Association
Sergeant K. Vincent	–	Durham Constabulary
Councillor J. Chaplin	–	Ferryhill Town Council
Mrs. A. Learmonth	–	Sedgefield Primary Care Trust
Mrs. S. Slaughter	–	Sedgefield Primary Care Trust
C. Jewitt	–	The Northern Echo
A. Espin	–	Local Resident
M. Espin	–	Local Resident
A. Matthews	–	Local Resident
M. Payne	–	Local Resident
K. Shears	–	Local Resident
B. Sheppard	–	Local Resident
M. Stephenson	–	Local Resident
J. Stephenson	–	Local Resident

In

Attendance: A. Palmer – Sedgefield Borough Council

Apologies:

Councillor B.F. Avery	-	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor B.F. Avery J.P.	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor T.F. Forrest	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor J.E. Higgin	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor G. Morgan	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor D.A. Newell	–	Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor Ms. M. Predki	–	Sedgefield Borough Council

AF(2)21/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
Members had no interests to declare.

AF(2)22/05

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1st November, 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

AF(2)23/05

DRAFT RESIDENTIAL EXTENSIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

R. Broadbank, Senior Development Control Officer, was present at the meeting to give a presentation on the above document. Copies of the document were distributed to the Forum.

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

AF(2)24/05

POLICE REPORT

Sergeant K. Vincent was present at the meeting to give details of the crime figures and local initiatives for the area.

It was reported that the crime figures for the area over the following months were as follows: -

	<u>November:</u>	<u>December:</u>	<u>January Up to 10.1.06</u>
Total No. of crimes (regarding below)	102	107	27
Burglary	16	22	3
Violence Against Persons (Assaults)	18	7	2
Vehicle Crime	14	20	0
Theft - General	11	32	6
Drug-Substance Misuse	7	3	0
Criminal Damage	36	23	16
Rowdy Nuisance Behaviour	128	125	12
Motorcycle complaints (Total for 2003 – 43) (Total for 2004 – 73) (Total for 2005 – 185)	3	4	1
Total No. of Incidents	511	629	
Total No. of Arrest	67	57	

Sergeant Vincent informed Members of the Forum that Operation Ballade which targeted racial problems in the Chilton area, Operation Pelmet which focussed on anti-social behaviour within West Cornforth, Operation Darc which promoted household security and Operation Hawkeye which was launched in Ferryhill to highlight insecure vehicles were all ongoing and continuing to prove successful. Pedal cycle marking would also take place on 28th January 2006 between 10.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. at the e-Café in Ferryhill.

Reference was made to an operation, which had been developed by Durham Constabulary Road Policing Department to target uninsured vehicles. It was reported that there had been a number of vehicles in Area 2 that had been seized and crushed for the above reason.

Members of the Forum were reminded of the various ways contact could be made with the police in reporting problems/crimes. Contact could now be made via the non emergency telephone number 08456060365, the confidential reporting boxes which were situated within Area 2, the text a cop scheme 07981992242, the confidential hate crime hot line 01388722481 and crime stoppers 0800555111.

Members were also informed of the Pub Watch and Allotment Watch schemes that had been implemented together with the involvement of the police in the safer route to schools project and formulation of the school travel plan.

Detailed discussion was held regarding the number of incidents that had occurred around the local schools. Questions were also raised regarding the installation of speed humps. It was explained that it was a Durham County Council matter.

Concerns were also raised regarding the use of a right of way between Lindon Road, Salisbury Crescent and The Oval at West Cornforth. Residents of West Cornforth had raised the issue due to problems of anti-social behaviour and criminal damage to residents' homes.

It was pointed out that a number of meetings had been held to discuss how the problems could be resolved. It had been suggested that the right of way be closed off. Copies of e-mails that had been sent to officers within the Borough Council and a copy of the letter sent with the petition developed by local residents were submitted to be passed to the relevant officer. It was explained that all concerns raised would be taken back to the Council and reported back to the Area Forum. Sergeant Vincent also re-assured residents that the police were aware of the problems and were updated regularly on any problems that arose.

Residents expressed their concerns as they felt that there had not been sufficient progress in targeting the above problems, which had been raised over a year ago.

A letter was also read out and distributed to various parties detailing the problems of anti-social behaviour within the area of West Cornforth.

AF(2)25/05

SEDGEFIELD PRIMARY CARE TRUST

A. Learmonth, Director of Public Health and Health Improvement, Sedgefield Primary Care Trust, attended the meeting to present an update on local health matters and performance figures.

A. Learmonth explained that since the meeting held on 1st November 2005 meetings had taken place between the members of the Workingmen's Club at Chilton and the Chief Executive Officer of Sedgefield PCT regarding the development of the new health centre.

Consideration was given to the performance management report, which was attached with the agenda for members' information. Copies of Sedgefield Primary Care Trust's Your Local NHS together with notes from Sedgefield Primary Care Trust's core team briefing were also distributed to the Forum. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members of the Forum were finally invited to a public meeting regarding their proposed reconsideration of the Primary Care Trusts in the North East which would be held on Tuesday 24th January, 2006 at 6.30 p.m. in Spennymoor Town Hall.

Concerns were raised regarding the decrease in the number of dentists, as they were choosing to go private. It was agreed that the appropriate officer would be invited to a future meeting to answer any questions.

AF(2)26/05

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.

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 schemes and would score applications received against the criteria.

AF(2)27/05

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

21st February, 2006 at 6.30 p.m. at Dean Bank and Ferryhill Literary Institute.

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Item 10b

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA 3 FORUM

Tremaduna Grange,
Trimdon Village

Wednesday,
11 January 2006

Time: 7.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor T. Ward (Chairman) – Sedgefield Borough Council and

Councillor D.R. Brown	– Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor Mrs. L. Hovvels	– Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor J. Robinson J.P	– Sedgefield Borough Council
Mrs. C. McVay	– Community Empowerment Network
Sergeant B. O'Connor	– Durham Constabulary
J. Irvine	– Fishburn Parish Council
R. Clubley	– Sedgefield Development Trust
D. Halladay	– Sedgefield PCT
P. Irving	– Sedgefield PCT
Councillor Mrs. L. Goddard	– Sedgefield Town Council
Councillor Mrs. M. Robinson	– Sedgefield Town Council
Mrs. A. Oliver	– Sedgefield Village Resident
Councillor R. Passfield	– Trimdon Parish Council
Mrs. M. Hughes	– Trimdon Resident
Mrs. G. Norton	– Trimdon Resident
M. Sirrell	– Trimdon Resident

In

Attendance: A. Palmer and Mrs. L. Walker – Sedgefield Borough Council

Apologies:

Councillor J. Burton	- Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor K. Noble	– Sedgefield Borough Council
Councillor J. Wayman J.P	– Sedgefield Borough Council
J. Parkinson	- Mordon Parish Council
Councillor Mrs. L. Burton	- Trimdon Parish Council

AF(3)25/05 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
No declarations of interest were submitted.

AF(3)26/05 MINUTES
The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th November, 2005 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes).

AF(3)27/05 POLICE REPORT
Sergeant B. O'Connor was present at the meeting to give details of crime statistics in the area. It was reported that crime statistics were as follows:-

<u>Type of Crime:</u>	<u>Sedgefield:</u>	<u>Fishburn:</u>	<u>Trimdons:</u>
Theft	4	1	4
Criminal Damage	9	4	18
Burglary (Dwelling)	0	0	1
Burglary (Other)	3	1	0
Assault	3	9	2
Theft from Motor Vehicle	1	1	6

Reference was made to underage persons consuming alcohol in public houses. It was explained that the police together with the principal licensing officer from the Borough Council had visited a number of public houses with regard to this issue.

Members were informed that the Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) for the Trimdon area had recently left their post. A replacement PCSO would be appointed as soon as possible.

It was also reported that Special Constables had been deployed in Sedgefield Village.

AF(3)28/05

SEDGEFIELD PRIMARY CARE TRUST

P. Irving and D. Halladay were present at the meeting to update the Forum on local health matters.

Reference was made to achieving access targets, which were submitted to the Board Meeting each month.

It was explained that patients who wished to do so should have access to a Primary Healthcare professional within 24 hours and a GP within 48 hours. Patients should also be able to make an appointment to visit a GP a week in advance.

Discussion took place in relation to the problems that Trimdon residents encountered in trying to access a GP. It was explained that it was often difficult to contact the surgery via telephone and appointments could not always be made in advance. It was agreed that this issue would be raised with leaders on access to GP's at the PCT.

It was pointed out that the practice manager at the Trimdon surgery held patient expression groups to enable patients to express their concerns.

Members were updated on the financial position of the PCT.

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 compared well with other PCTs in relation to the Choose and Book Service.

With regard to the implementation of the dentist contract it was noted that 6 out of 11 dentists had accepted that contract.

Specific reference was made to the proposed re-organisation of the NHS. Members were informed that a public meeting regarding the future PCT configuration would be held on 24th February, 2006 at Spennymoor Town Hall. Documentation regarding the proposal would also be available from the PCT and Strategic Health Authority.

AF(3)29/05 LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

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 3 locality would receive between £160 and £170 thousand per year for a period of five years.

It was emphasised that there was no pressure to spend allocated budgets within any one financial year as unspent money would be rolled forward into the next financial year and protected 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 proceed, would be made by Sedgefield Borough Cabinet.

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

AF(3)30/05 COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT NETWORK

Councillor Mrs. L. Hovvels was present at the meeting to give details of the work of the Community Empowerment Network (CEN).

It was explained that the Forums held by CEN had been developed to allow communities to discuss their views, the results of which would then be passed to the LSP Board.

CEN aimed to engage with the wider community in order to improve the area and local services

Reference was made to 'sharing of ideas' days that had been held throughout the Borough. It was reported that these events had been very successful.

AF(3)31/05 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Wednesday 1st March 2006 at Trimdon Colliery Community Centre.

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