

# CABINET

Thursday,  
27 September 2007  
10.00 a.m.

Conference Room 1,  
Council Offices,  
Spennymoor

# AGENDA and REPORTS



**This document is also available in other languages, large print and audio format upon request**

**العربية (Arabic)**

إذا أردت المعلومات بلغة أخرى أو بطريقة أخرى، نرجو أن تطلب ذلك منا.

**বাংলা (Bengali)**

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

**(中文 (繁體字)) (Cantonese)**

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

**हिन्दी (Hindi)**

यदि आपको सूचना किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये तो कृपया हमसे कहे

**polski (Polish)**

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo uzyskać informacje w innym języku lub w innym formacie, prosimy dać nam znać.

**ਪੰਜਾਬੀ (Punjabi)**

ਜੇ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ, ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਥੋਂ ਮੰਗ ਲਓ।

**Español (Spanish)**

Póngase en contacto con nosotros si desea recibir información en otro idioma o formato.

**اردو (Urdu)**

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھیے۔

## 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 13<sup>th</sup> September 2007. (Pages 1 - 4)

### KEY DECISIONS

#### LEISURE AND CULTURE PORTFOLIO

**4. COBBLERS HALL RE-DEVELOPMENT**

Report of Director of Leisure Services. (Pages 5 - 12)

**5. NEWTON AYCLIFFE LEISURE CENTRE REFURBISHMENT**

Report of Director of Leisure Services. (Pages 13 - 16)

#### SOCIAL REGENERATION AND PARTNERSHIP PORTFOLIO

**6. LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (LIP) SPENNYMOOR SETTLEMENT REGENERATION PROJECT**

Report of Chief Executive. (Pages 17 - 22)

#### SOCIAL REGENERATION AND PARTNERSHIP AND LEARNING AND EMPLOYMENT PORTFOLIOS

**7. COMMISSIONING OF AN AREA ACTION PLAN FOR SPENNYMOOR TOWN CENTRE**

Report of Assistant Chief Executive. (Pages 23 - 42)

### OTHER DECISIONS

#### STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP PORTFOLIO

**8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW PROPOSALS - IMPLICATIONS - PROPOSED SINGLE TIER AREAS: PROTECTION OF HISTORIC TRADITIONS AND CEREMONIAL ARRANGEMENTS**

Joint report of Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council. (Pages 43 - 46)

**9. REVENUE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT - POSITION AT 31ST JULY 2007**

Report of Director of Resources. (Pages 47 - 60)

**10. BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT 2007/08 CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE AND FINANCING POSITION TO 31ST JULY 2007**

Report of Director of Resources. (Pages 61 - 70)

## **MINUTES**

### **11. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

To consider the minutes of the following:

- (a) Strategic Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 12th June 2007 (Pages 71 - 76)
- (b) Healthy Borough With Strong Communities Overview And Scrutiny Committee - 28th June 2007 (Pages 77 - 80)
- (c) Prosperous and Attractive Borough Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 10th July 2007 (Pages 81 - 84)
- (d) Strategic Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee - 28th August 2007 (Pages 85 - 88)
- (e) Healthy Borough With Strong Communities Overview And Scrutiny Committee - 11th September 2007 (Pages 89 - 96)

### **12. AREA 1 FORUM**

Minutes of the meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2007. (Pages 97 - 100)

**N.B. Whilst the following item does not contain any 'exempt' information, it should be noted that if members wish to raise any questions, it may be necessary to pass the appropriate resolution to exclude the press and public as the queries may involve the disclosure of exempt information.**

### **13. EMPLOYMENT ISSUES PANEL**

Minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2007. (Pages 101 - 102)

#### **EXEMPT INFORMATION**

**The following items are not for publication by virtue of Paragraphs 1 and 6 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.**

#### **STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP PORTFOLIO**

### **14. ESTABLISHMENT REVIEW NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES DEPARTMENT - APPLICATION FOR FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT**

Joint report of Director of Neighbourhood Services and Chief Executive. (Pages 103 - 110)

#### **HOUSING PORTFOLIO**

### **15. COMPULSORY PURCHASE AT HAIG, NELSON, WOLSELEY AND CLIVE STREETS, FERRYHILL STATION**

Report of Director of Neighbourhood Services. (Pages 111 - 134)

**16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

Lead Members are requested to inform the Chief Executive 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.

B. Allen  
Chief Executive

Council Offices  
SPENNYMOOR  
19<sup>TH</sup> September 2007

Councillor Mrs. A.M. Armstrong (Chairman)

Councillors Mrs. K. Conroy, V. Crosby, Mrs. B. Graham, A. Hodgson, Mrs. L. Hovvells, J.M. Khan, D.A. Newell and W. Waters

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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](mailto:ggarrigan@sedgefield.gov.uk)

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# Item 3

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL CABINET

Conference Room 1,  
Council Offices,  
Spennymoor

Thursday,  
13 September 2007

Time: 10.00 a.m.

**Present:** Councillor W. Waters ( In the Chair) and  
Councillors Mrs. B. Graham, Mrs. L. Hovvels and D.A. Newell

**In Attendance:** Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, T. Brimm, P. Gittins J.P., G.C. Gray, Mrs. S. Haigh, T. Hogan, Mrs. H.J. Hutchinson, Mrs. E.M. Paylor and T. Ward

**Apologies:** Councillors Mrs. A.M. Armstrong, Mrs. K. Conroy, V. Crosby, A. Hodgson and J.M. Khan

**CAB.57/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
Members had no interests to declare.

**CAB.58/07 MINUTES**  
The Minutes of the meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> August 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**CAB.59/07 UTILISING LOCAL AUTHORITY BUSINESS GROWTH INITIATIVE FUNDS (KEY DECISION)**  
The Lead Member for Learning and Employment presented a report regarding the above. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that the Local Authority Business Growth Initiative had been introduced by the Government in 2005 to reward local authorities for encouraging greater levels of economic growth. To date Sedgefield Borough Council had received £558,082 to reflect the growth in business rates during 2005/06 and 2006/07. A further award was anticipated for 2007/08.

The report proposed that the funding should be invested in the following four specific areas:

- **Enabling Capital Investment – Economic Regeneration (£300,000)**  
To support the preparatory work required to commence capital projects aimed at stimulating economic growth, coming forward through the Council's Major Regeneration Initiatives process.
- **Enabling Capital Investment – Community Regeneration (£100,000)**  
To support the preparatory work required to commence capital projects aimed at stimulating community regeneration, coming forward through the Council's Local Improvement Programme.

- **Stimulating Economic Growth – Project Fund (£100,000)**  
To enable non-capital activities such as research, marketing and promotion to be undertaken to maximise the impact of the above capital investments.
- **Economic Response Fund (£58,082)**  
Contingency funding to enable the Council to react to major redundancy or closure announcements.

- RESOLVED :*
1. *That the use of resources received through the Local Authority Business Growth Initiative to create four funds aimed at stimulating future economic growth be approved.*
  2. *That funding decisions be delegated to the Capital Programmes Team up to a limit of £75,000 for schemes identified through the Major Regeneration Initiatives process.*

**CAB.60/07      OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY RECYCLING SERVICES REVIEW GROUP  
- REVIEW OF FUTURE RECYCLING SERVICE OPTIONS**

Consideration was given to a schedule detailing Cabinet's Response and Action Plan to the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Review Group regarding future recycling options. (For copy see file of Minutes).

*RESOLVED :*      *That the schedule be agreed.*

**CAB.61/07      THE REPECT STANDARD FOR HOUSING MANAGEMENT**

The Lead Member for Housing presented a report seeking approval for the Council to sign up to the Respect Standard for Housing Management. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that the Standard had been launched in August 2006 as part of the Government's Respect Agenda. The Standard set out the key components that a social landlord should have in place to deliver an effective response to anti-social behaviour. Signing up to the Standard was voluntary, however, its core elements had been built into the Audit Commission's Key Line of Enquiry 6 (Tenancy and Estate Management) and applied to all inspections of social landlords by the Audit Commission.

- RESOLVED :*
1. *That the Council signs up to the Respect Standard, showing that it is committed to doing all that is reasonably possible to provide excellent services to tackle anti-social behaviour and create a culture of respect through its housing management role.*
  2. *That the Housing Department's Statement of Policy and Procedures on Anti-Social Behaviour be updated to reflect the changes set out in the report.*



3. *That the Service Improvement Plan (SIP) developed from the self assessment carried out against the Standard set out in Appendix 1, be implemented.*

**CAB.62/07 REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL FOR THE ROWS, FERRYHILL STATION**

Consideration was given to a report regarding the redevelopment of 'The Rows', Ferryhill Station. (For copy see file of Minutes).

The report proposed that Phases 1 and 2, shown hatched on the plan attached to the report, should be released for the provision of mixed tenure housing to Three Rivers Housing Group, the Registered Social Landlord who had significant ownership of property within Phase 3 of the site.

It was also proposed that following the acquisition and demolition of the remaining properties on Phase 3, shown cross-hatched on the plan, the site should be jointly marketed with Three Rivers Housing Group for speculative residential development.

*RESOLVED : That the approach to the release of land at 'The Rows', Ferryhill Station as set out in the report be adopted.*

**CAB.63/07 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW GROUP REPORT - REDUCING ECONOMIC INACTIVITY (INCREASING EMPLOYABILITY) REVIEW**

Consideration was given to a schedule detailing Cabinet's Response and Action Plan to the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Review Group regarding reducing economic inactivity (increasing employability). (For copy see file of Minutes).

*RESOLVED : That the schedule be agreed.*

**EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

*RESOLVED: That in accordance with Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Schedule 12a of the Act.*

**CAB.64/07      DISPOSAL OF PHASES 1, 2 AND 3 'THE ROWS' FERRYHILL STATION  
- HOUSING LAND CAPITAL RECEIPT**

Consideration was given to a report regarding the disposal of Phases 1, 2 and 3 'The Rows' Ferryhill Station. (For copy see file of Minutes).

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

**Published on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2007.**

**The key decision contained in these Minutes will be implemented on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2007 five working days after the date of publication unless it is called in by three Members of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call in procedure rules.**

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**ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

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# Item 4

## KEY DECISION

## REPORT TO CABINET

27 SEPTEMBER 2007

## REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES

**Portfolio: Leisure and Culture**

### **Cobblers Hall Re-development**

#### **1 SUMMARY**

Since 1991, the sale of land for development purposes within the Cobblers Hall area of Newton Aycliffe has realised for Sedgfield Borough Council in excess of £36m.

The 2000 development brief confirmed that the Borough Council would benefit from the full land value, that no section 106 monies would be sought from developers, but significant investment in the area would be made by the Council for sport and informal recreational purposes as the development site approached completion.

In November 2006, Cabinet noted the report written by LDA Consultants into how the areas shown at appendix 1 could be developed, but asked for public consultation to be conducted.

This report to Cabinet reflects those findings and provides recommendations to progress the scheme.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATION**

- Subject to a satisfactory outcome of discussions with Great Aycliffe Town Council regarding their contribution towards on-going revenue costs, that Cabinet agree to commission a “design and build” project team.
- That a sum of £800,000 be allocated towards the project from the Council’s Major Regeneration Initiatives programme.

#### **3 DETAIL**

In 2000, the Cobblers Hall development brief was written which confirmed the importance of allocating public open space in the Northern and Western areas of Newton Aycliffe. The brief stated that a third of land to be developed should remain as open space or for recreational use. It also identified the provision of playing pitches sufficient to serve the whole of the area known as Cobblers Hall. There was a firm commitment that as the Cobblers Hall development site approached completion, the Council would invest in these areas from the significant resources that were to be raised from land disposal.

At this time, it was suggested that consideration be given to providing for football, (to Northern League Standards), rugby and tennis.

An audit of existing provision of different types of open space, set against PPG17 has highlighted the Horndale football pitches as being of poor quality and the Borough's Play Strategy adopted by Cabinet on 2 November 2006 cites the Horndale and Byerley Park areas as needing investment to improve the quality of fixed play sites. More recently, the Open Space Needs Assessment adopted by Cabinet on 21 June 2007 states how much residents appreciate high quality, well maintained open space.

LDA Consultants in their June 2005 study concluded that the open space in question was an important gateway to the Town which is underused albeit valued highly by local people.

In November 2006, Cabinet gave due consideration to the Consultant's report and concluded that the scheme in principle was worthy of support subject to the outcome of further public consultation.

Officers within the department, together with help from local Elected Members, developed a consultation programme the findings of which are referred to in section 5 of the report.

#### **4 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Since 1991, Sedgefield Borough Council has been able to generate £36m from land sales, in the Cobblers Hall area.

Given that LDA were suggesting an investment of around £1m to realise their proposals, which incidentally included for significant works to the existing pedestrian underpasses, which are not included in current proposals, it may be appropriate to allocate £800,000 towards this project.

This will fulfil the Council's commitment to reinvest in the area in line with the 2000 Development Brief and on the back of the extensive consultation process that has recently been undertaken.

A sum of £800,000 has been based on the value of constructing new changing rooms with car parking facilities, improving drainage to existing soccer pitches, creating more junior sized pitches, building new fixed play areas, introducing soft landscaping and appropriate street furniture.

The scheme falls within the definition of regeneration i.e. bringing underused land back into public use, and is able to be accommodated from the Council's Major Regeneration Initiatives funding provision.

The revenue implications of any new development work clearly need to be carefully considered to avoid additional financial pressures being applied to existing revenue budgets.

The proposals for the Cobblers Hall site will generate some additional costs in respect of ground maintenance, play area maintenance and changing room management and maintenance.

In order to mitigate future revenue cost to the Borough, discussions have been held with Great Aycliffe Town Council to establish their willingness to take over the responsibility for maintaining the development area subject to a transfer of the land from the Borough to the Town Council on agreed terms.

Clearly there will need to be firm agreements in place between the Borough and Town Council before final project scope and designs are agreed and before the physical project commences.

The plan attached identifies the area to which this proposal relates. There will be a requirement of some off-site infrastructure works, landscaping and improvements to the "Moor" at the north of Burn Lane which will be the subject of a further report.

## **5 CONSULTATION**

What was clearly missing from LDA consultant's report in June 2005 was the extensive public consultation necessary when considering project costs of this nature. Cabinet requested officers to conduct consultation which was robust enough to provide a base from which to advance the project.

Between January 2007 and July 2007 a mix of consultation methods was conducted which included, 5 separate public meetings, written questionnaires, visits to schools, a meeting of Great Aycliffe Town Councillors. Altogether around 1700 responses were gathered and evaluated.

It is clear that:

- The education sector would like to be involved as part of the design and implementation team.
- Local residents really value this open space and would like safe road crossing points.
- There is a significant lack of high quality playing pitches in the area.
- New changing accommodation to service the playing pitches are required.
- People want to be able to use the space informally for walking, cycling, sitting and relaxing.
- There are concerns around vandalism and anti-social behaviour.

## **6 CONCLUSION**

After evaluating all the research data, a series of conclusions may be drawn from the public feedback which would form the basis of instructions to a design and build team who would see the project through to completion.

- There is a clear need to construct new and improve existing senior and junior soccer pitches.
- A new changing pavilion should be built.
- School children should be able to use the area during curriculum time as a valuable outdoor resource.
- Safe crossing routes are necessary.

- A number of fixed play sites are required.
- The area should have adequate seating, landscaping and planting to enable people to stay and relax.
- Improvements to signage are required to recognise its important role as a gateway to the town.

## **7 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **7.1 Links to Corporate Objectives/values**

Among its corporate ambitions, Sedgefield Borough is striving to make its environment one which is attractive to residents and visitors alike.

This significant area of open space located within Cobblers Hall should serve as an important gateway to the Town and onwards towards its industrial quarter.

Newton Aycliffe is reported to be the fastest growing town within the County of Durham and Cobblers Hall is one of the reasons for this.

An investment in the proposed site would send out a clear signal about the Borough's ambitions as Cobblers Hall nears development completion in its entirety.

As part of encouraging healthy lifestyles, bringing a significant area of public open space into use by a greater proportion of residents will add to the critical mass of facility provision in Newton Aycliffe.

From both a structured sport and informal recreation perspective, the Cobblers Hall project will contribute towards each of the Healthy and Attractive ambitions of the Council.

### **7.2 Risk Management**

The extensive public consultation has inevitably heightened awareness and expectations regarding the Borough's proposals to invest in this area of Newton Aycliffe subject to Cabinet's approval.

There are further and more formal discussions required to take place with Great Aycliffe Town Council regarding management and maintenance responsibilities of any future asset developments on site. In order to ensure that the project does not require a significant increase in the Borough's revenue costs, agreement with the Town Council for them to take on the management and maintenance costs on the site will be essential.

### **7.3 Sustainability**

Arising from the Consultant's findings, and communicating with many local residents, is the depth of feelings towards sustaining a significant piece of open space for their future enjoyment.

The process of taking the project forward should include putting the community at the heart of that process to further support the sense of ownership and value that they have for the area.

The direction in project delivery given to a design team will reflect our findings.

#### 7.4 Crime and Disorder

All elements of the project design must be assessed against agreed criteria for planning out potential for criminal damage and anti-social behaviour. However, it is felt that by ensuring the whole community have a real stake in the process, this sense of ownership and respect will be reinforced.

#### 7.5 Human Rights and Social Inclusion

The opportunity exists within the project to ensure special interest/needs groups are engaged in the design and implementation experience not simply as consultees. The uniqueness of what could be the project process should help in making the journey as important as the finished product.

#### 7.6 Health and Safety

Due consideration will be given to all health and safety issues in the design through the procurement stages to project completion, methods of use by the public and future management of the site.

#### 7.7 Procurement

The Council's procurement procedures will be adhered to in all aspects of project delivery.

**No other material considerations have been identified.**

**Background Papers:** LDA Consultants Report – July 2005  
Cobblers Hall Development Brief 2000  
Sedgefield Borough’s Play Strategy – November 2006  
Open Space Needs Assessment – June 2007  
Cobblers Hall Cabinet Report – November 2006

**Contact Officer:** Phil Ball  
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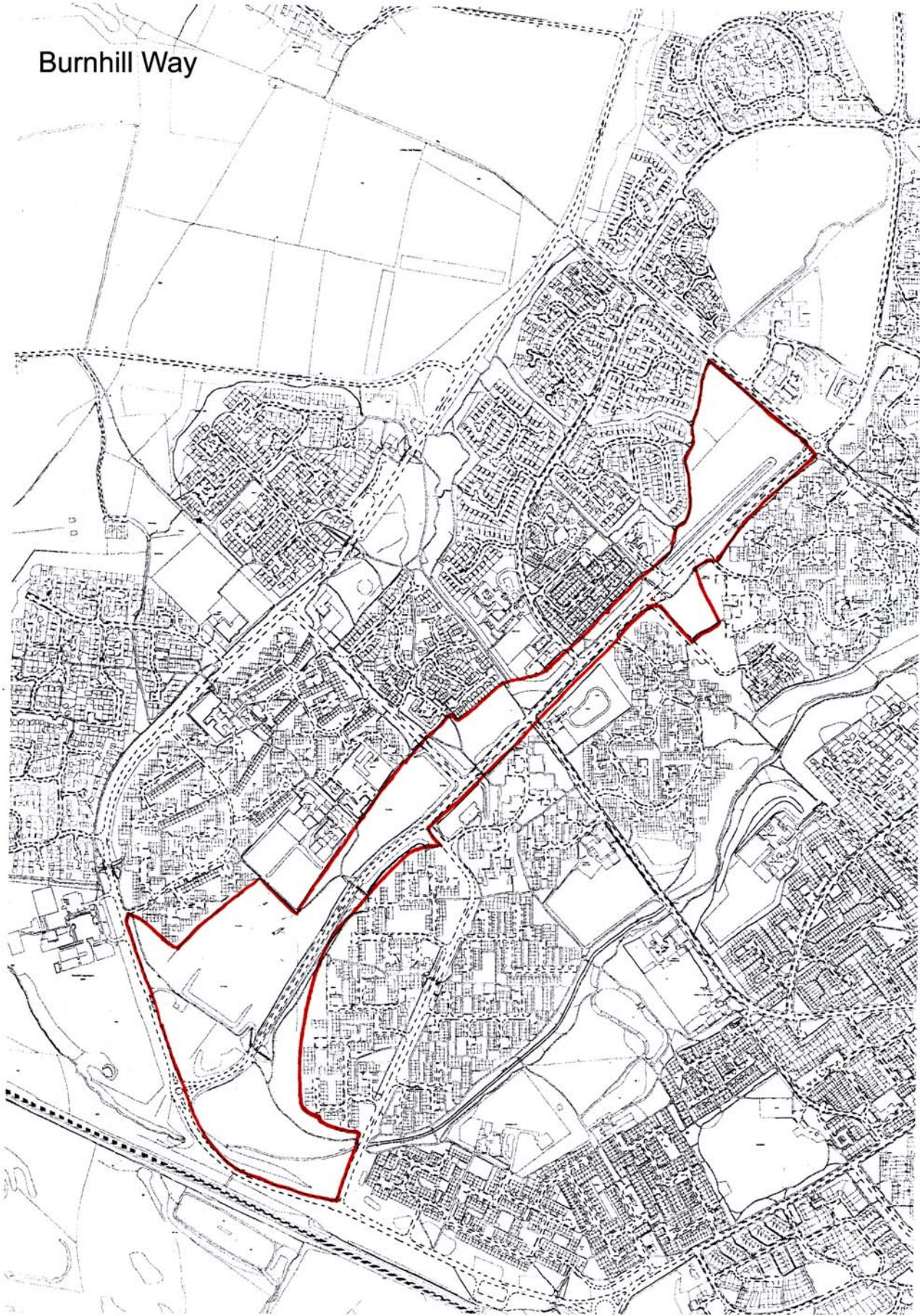
**Ward(s):** All  
**Key Decision Validation:**

**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"/>



Burnhill Way



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# Item 5

## KEY DECISION

## REPORT TO CABINET

27 SEPTEMBER 2007

## REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF LEISURE SERVICES

**Portfolio: Leisure and Culture**

### **Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre Refurbishment**

#### **1 SUMMARY**

The 2007/08 Capital investment programme for Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre will see the development of an 800 seat sports arena within the sports hall, the redevelopment of the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor function/activity suite, the refurbishment of the public bar and the creation of a fully equipped meeting/conference room.

The Borough's fitness suite partner, Competition Line, have invested significantly in the development of a new fitness suite which opened to the public on 4 September.

In an effort to complete areas of the leisure centre not covered by this years planned work programme, Cabinet are asked to increase Newton Aycliffe's capital allocation.

#### **2 RECOMMENDATION**

That a sum of £200,000 be allocated for additional capital works at Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre within the 2007/08 financial year.

#### **3 DETAIL**

At its meeting on 15 March 2007 Cabinet agreed a capital allocation of £389,000 to complete amongst other smaller projects the redevelopment/refurbishment works to the Sports Hall and Sycamore Suite. Previously an allocation of monies to refurbish the public bar had been agreed.

Competition Line, the Borough's fitness suite partner has recently completed a redevelopment programme for the fitness suite, female changing rooms and entrance corridor and part refurbishment of the male changing rooms.

As the main circulation areas of the facility are now looking very dated, and some areas including the main staircase have not been modernised for over 30 years it is suggested that a range of work be included in a facility refurbishment programme which will include:

- The modernisation of corridor/circulation areas to all 3 floor levels including decoration, renewal of floor coverings and replacement of lighting.
- A contribution towards the costs of refurbishing the male fitness suite changing rooms.
- Refurbishment of male and female toilets in the public bar.
- Replace fire damaged areas within the male toilets located on the first floor.

- Replace main stairway banister and guards.
- Replace the doors to the passenger and goods lifts on 3 floors.

#### **4 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

As work undertaken by Competition Line to the ground floor corridor leading to the fitness suite has cost them around £30,000, work required to other public circulation areas and toilets is valued at around £200,000.

Provision for this additional capital allocation at Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre can be made from the Council's existing capital resources.

#### **5 CONSULTATION**

Feedback from the department's Market Research, Customer Insight Programme reflects how important it is to continue our investment in leisure facilities and maintain a high level of cleanliness in all areas.

Improvements to facilities using modern materials help in being able to present activity/circulation areas in a way which reflects the demand of customers.

#### **6 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

##### **6.1 Links to Corporate Objectives/Values**

The attractiveness of facilities and the appropriateness of programmes combine together in an effort to encourage more people to become physically active.

The Council's ambition of a Healthy Borough is being delivered in part via the Leisure and Culture agenda within which Newton Aycliffe plays an important part.

##### **6.2 Procurement**

The Council's approved procurement practices will be adhered to in awarding contracts.

##### **6.3 Health & Safety**

All contractual issues will clearly take account of health and safety considerations in project delivery.

##### **6.4 Equality and Diversity**

The use of materials in the work programme will recognise the requirement of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

**No other material considerations have been identified.**

**Contact Officer:** Phil Ball  
**Telephone No:** (01388) 816166 ext 4386  
**Email Address:** [pball@sedgefield.gov.uk](mailto:pball@sedgefield.gov.uk)

**Ward(s):** All  
**Key Decision Validation:**

### 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

## REPORT TO CABINET

27<sup>th</sup> September 2007

## REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

### Portfolio: Social Regeneration & Partnership

#### LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME – Spennymoor Settlement Regeneration Project

#### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report highlights a Local Improvement Programme (LIP) application submitted to and appraised by the Strategy and Regeneration Section. Following endorsement of the project by the Area 1 Forum, this report provides information to Cabinet for their consideration.
- 1.2 The aim of the project is to completely refurbish and modernise the existing facilities at the Everyman Theatre to enable the Spennymoor Settlement Association to provide extra arts and community based activities and therefore ensure that the building can increase its usage and have its future safeguarded.
- 1.3 The project meets the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) eligible 'Regeneration' Definition. ✓
- 1.4 The project has also demonstrated links to the key LIP criteria of meeting elements of the Community Strategy and community consultation. ✓
- 1.5 The applicant has requested **£142,000** of LIP funding, which is 57% of the total capital project costs of £250,000. See information contained in Section 5.0 – Resource Implications.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Cabinet...

- 2.1 Approve the application for LIP Funds based upon the information provided in the report.

#### 3.0 LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

- 3.1 The purpose of this programme is to improve community assets and support community engagement in the regeneration of local areas. As part of this, local communities can propose projects against set criteria

agreed by Cabinet. Through this programme resources will be released to improve sites and improve the usability of community facilities and buildings across the Borough.

#### Background – Application and Applicant

- 3.2 The Spennymoor 'Settlement' was set up in 1931 to support unemployed miners and develop local creative talent. Due to its success it became known as the 'Pitman's Academy'. In 1939, a new theatre was built by out-of-work miners to provide a venue for the Everyman Theatre Company which became part of the wider Settlement Association based in O'Hanlon Street - Spennymoor. The building includes a theatre stage and main hall with sound and light equipment and dressing rooms. No major work has been carried out on the building since 1939. The building was granted Grade II Listed Building status in 2004.
- 3.3 The focus of the project is to improve the building and reconfigure the internal layout and exterior setting to expand the available use of the building to more community arts and also non-arts based organisations.
- 3.4 The building and grounds require considerable attention to bring them up to an acceptable standard and enable additional use to take place. Internal works will include a new layout providing modern male/female and disabled toilets, a new enlarged kitchen facility, new changing rooms with toilets and the relocation of the boiler room incorporating a new boiler and heating system. The Theatre will also benefit from new intruder and fire alarm systems and new security and emergency lighting.
- 3.5 External works include re-pointing the whole building, replacing rainwater goods, improving under-floor ventilation, replacing windows and improvements to the main entrance and signage.
- 3.6 The current derelict garden area adjacent to the main building will be completely revamped with new hard and soft landscaping, garden furniture and a sculpture feature. The planned level access will permit the Settlement to provide additional outdoor activities for elderly and disabled users. This element of the project is subject to a grant from CDENT.
- 3.7 The Settlement Association currently holds a range of activities based around visual and performing arts. The drama group performs at the Everyman Theatre on a regular basis. On completion of works, the Settlement Association anticipates an extra two drama productions per year, the creation of a new Youth Drama group, and an increase in the number of community groups using their facility. A local history group, a knitting group, and an art group have all stated a wish to use the refurbished premises for their activities. Age Concern has also expressed a wish to offer Tai Chi classes in the main hall, with the view to introduce further activities. Due to the condition of the building and the facilities available these can't currently be accommodated.



#### **4.0 CORPORATE POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 In developing the LIP project the Strategy & Regeneration Division have worked closely with the Leisure Services Department to ensure that the facility developed has clear linkages with the proposed Spennymoor Arts Resource. This project is very much a community focused facility, however by linking the Settlement's activity with the planned Spennymoor Arts Resource it is felt that the Settlement could act as a 'feeder' facility for local arts/ theatre and music groups and will compliment the programme of community participation activity that will take place in the new Spennymoor Arts Resource.
- 4.2 The settlement will therefore offer a community programme where as the Arts resource will be offering a more professional programme from trained teachers, facilitators and practitioners to professional touring companies.

#### **5.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Area Forum 1 has been allocated £836,000 of LIP Capital resources between 2006 and 2009. £278,000 has been allocated for each year's activity. In 2006/07 £54,882 of LIP funding was allocated to two schemes.
- 5.2 An initial report was presented to The Area 1 Forum held 6 November 2006 where the project was supported to a value of £118,106. Following the Forum meeting, the Settlement undertook a detailed Technical Study to examine the costs and establish a more accurate project budget.
- 5.3 The Technical Study, prepared by Sedgefield Borough Council's Property Services Team, has highlighted some additional areas of work to that identified in the original feasibility study undertaken by the Association in February 2005. This includes work to meet necessary disabled access requirements, appropriate electricity supply, security systems / emergency lighting, and building inflation. This has resulted in an increase in the anticipated project costs to £250,000
- 5.4 The first Spennymoor Settlement LIP application requested £118,106 (70%) from LIP for the initial project costing £168,106. Given the increased costs to £250,000, the Settlement is now seeking £142,000 of LIP funding. However, since the date of their first application, the Spennymoor Settlement has been very successful with their fundraising and can now contribute £108,000 in 'matched funding' to the project, reducing the percentage of LIP funding to 57% of total project cost.
- 5.5 A full breakdown of funder's is as follows:

Funder	Amount £
Pilgrim Trust	25,000
County Durham Environmental Trust (CDENT)	20,000
Sir James Knott Trust	5,000
Heritage Lottery (capital grant)	30,000
The Arts Council	18,000
Settlement fund raising	10,000
<b>External Funding Sub-Total</b>	<b>£108,000</b>
Local Improvement Programme	142,000
<b>Total Project Budget</b>	<b>£250,000</b>

5.4 The Association has a 70-year track record of managing activity of the Settlement and their fundraising covers their running costs. A pricing policy for room hire charges is in place to cover the core costs of heating, lighting, caretaking expenses and future maintenance.

5.5 Heritage Lottery has awarded the Settlement a grant of £50,000, £30,000 towards the refurbishment and £20,000 towards the creation of a book celebrating the history and art of the Spennymoor Settlement. An education programme for local schools will look at the social history of the Settlement and the nature of the art work that has originated from the settlement. The Council's Art Development Officer will be involved in the creation and delivery of the education programme.

## **6.0 CONSULTATIONS**

6.1 From September 2005 to March 2006 CAVOS carried out a feasibility study to ascertain the sustainability of the Spennymoor Settlement. This concluded that there was local support to expand activities provided and identified new user groups. Since that date the Settlement organisation have been actively working to further develop new user groups. This also includes the project funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund to work with local schools to examine the local history surrounding the Settlement Association.

## **7. AREA FORUM RECOMMENDATION**

7.1 Given the increase in costs since the previous November 2006 Area Forum, the project was presented to the 3<sup>rd</sup> September Area Forum meeting to ensure the Forum were still happy to continue with support to the project given the increased costs and a £24,000 increased LIP request.

7.2 A very positive response was received to the revised project by the Area 1 Forum and it was recognised how much additional funding the project had secured. The Area Forum agreed to support the progress of this project to the full revised amount requested.

## 8. **OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 8.1 The application has undergone a full appraisal against the Local Improvement Programme criteria. The application has met the key elements of the LIP criteria, and demonstrates clear links to the Community Strategy priorities.
- 8.2 **Planning** – As Sedgefield Borough Council's Property Services Section have carried out all technical work to date with regard to the building designs / adaptations, discussions are ongoing with Planning Services with regard to both a Planning and Listed Building Consent applications. Applications have been submitted and no grant will be paid until the project has received the appropriate approvals.
- 8.3 **Procurement** - The funding requested represents a grant to an external organisation. The grant is conditional upon applicants identifying a full quotation / and or tender process for the works. The project management is to be undertaken by the Council's Property Services who will carryout a full tender process for the works.
- 8.4 **Crime and Disorder** - In line with the Council's Community Strategy, this project has identified a link with providing activities and support services that hope to result in a fall in anti-social behaviour rates within this community.
- 8.5 **Children and Young People** - The Settlement intends to expand the current user groups to enable more young people to be involved in the organisation and use the building. They intend to facilitate a Youth Drama group to rehearse and perform at the Everyman Theatre. The Settlement also intends to provide rehearsal facilities for a range of music groups including young bands.

## 9.0 **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1 There has been no previous consultation or engagement with the Overview and Scrutiny Committees regarding this particular project.

**Contact Officer:** Chris Donaghy/Andrew Megginson  
**Telephone number:** (01388) 824002  
**Email Address:** cdonaghy@sedgefield.gov.uk

**Ward:** Low Spennymoor & Tudhoe Grange and Neighbouring Wards in Spennymoor

**Key Decision Validation:** Amount requested represents a grant of over £100,000 from LIP resources.

## Background Papers:

### Internal

- 1 Promotion Of The Regeneration Of The Borough  
Housing Land Capital Receipts To Support  
Regeneration And Affordable Housing Provision

June 2005

## Examination by Statutory Officers

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

# Item 7

**Key Decision**

**Report to Cabinet**

**27 September 2007**

**Report of Assistant Chief Executive**

**Portfolio: Social Regeneration and Partnership, Learning & Employment**

## **Commissioning of an Area Action Plan for Spennymoor Town Centre**

### **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The role and function of town centres have changed significantly over recent years and this is likely to continue. The town centres in Sedgefield are in direct competition with larger established town centres that are located close by. There is also increasing competition from Internet providers, and significant competition from out of town centres such as Teesside Park. As a consequence the traditional services provided by smaller town centres are in decline.
- 1.2 A Member and Officer workshop (the future role of town centres, 4<sup>th</sup> December 2006) highlighted that Spennymoor's future success must be built around a clear identity and sense of place. And that new thinking about the future role of our town centres, with serious thought given to the mix of development types.
- 1.3 It is necessary to appoint external assistance to provide a comprehensive regeneration framework that challenges current uses and provides action for future investment and activity in the town centre.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is therefore to seek Cabinet approval for the appointment of consultants to undertake a Master Planning exercise to form an Area Action Plan to be adopted as part of the Borough Council's Local Development Framework.

### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet:
  - a) Endorse the Area Action Plan brief
  - b) Approve the commissioning of suitably experienced consultants to produce an Area Action Plan to meet the requirements of the brief.

### **3. COMMISSIONING AN AREA ACTION PLAN FOR SPENNYMOOR TOWN CENTRE**

#### **Background**

- 3.1 With a population of nearly 19,000, Spennymoor is the second largest town in the Borough. Its shopping precinct offers a mix of traditional brick buildings, predominantly along the High Street and a 1970's shopping precinct known as Festival Walk.
- 3.2 Changes in shopping habits including the rise of out of town shopping complexes such as the Metro Centre and Teesside Park and the reduced purchasing power of local residents brought about by factory closures, had reduced the vitality and the viability of the town centre.
- 3.3 Various intervention programmes, as set out below, have been implemented. However the Council recognises that there is a need to continue supporting its town centres and have reflected this in its Corporate Plan 2007/8.
- 3.4 There is currently no document to guide regeneration of the town centres and no internal capacity within the Council to produce this document. It is therefore critical to appoint external assistance to provide information to enable the Council to move forward in supporting its town centres.

#### **Previous Intervention**

- 3.5 The opportunity to access SRB5 resource enabled a joint Town Centre Study to be commissioned for the Borough's town shopping centres, Spennymoor and Newton Aycliffe. EDAW were commissioned in February 2000 to undertake the town centre study.
- 3.6 Following the completion of the Town Centre Study, the Borough council in partnership with the Town Centre forums secured Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) resources to appoint a Town Centre Manager from 2001 to 2006 who was able to implement the core elements of the study's action plan.
- 3.7 The Town Centre Improvement Programme was developed to address major environmental improvements and was successful in attracting Single Programme funding for works to; improve the gateways; upgrade High Street; support shop front improvements; and improve pedestrian links.
- 3.8 The original Town Centre Improvement Programme is largely complete. Sedgfield Borough Council have continued to financially support the shop front grant improvement scheme through the Regeneration Services Mainstream Capital Programme.

### **Current Position**

- 3.9 In spite of the public realm improvements, an evaluation of the programme showed continuing concern for the lack of variety and quality of shops, particularly in some areas of the town.
- 3.10 Spennymoor has a major Greenfield housing allocation and has had a number of brownfield housing sites approved.
- 3.11 Town Centre are recognised as a priority for the Council and this has recently been reflected in the changes to the Corporate Plan.

### **Corporate Policy Implications**

- 3.12 This Area Action Plan will provide a framework for action which will support the following Council priorities:

#### Corporate Plan: Prosperous Borough

Aim: Improved business and employment opportunities

Objective: Enhance the vitality of town centres

#### Community Strategy:

PO1 to promote a strong and sustainable business base

PO2 to develop the Borough's unique cultural and tourism attractions

AO1 to improve the design and environmental quality of our towns and villages

AO2 to ensure the efficient use of our resources

AO5 to develop and maximise the leisure and cultural facilities in the Borough

SO4 to promote safer neighbourhoods

## **4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 Sedgefield Borough Council is fully funding this commission and will be seeking to allocate £75,000.
- 4.2 This funding will come from monies received through the Government's Local Authority Business Growth Initiative (LABGI), Enabling Capital Investment, A framework for this fundings use was considered by Cabinet 13 September 2007.
- 4.3 The Council's Contract Procedure Rule 11, Selective Tendering – Select Lists, applies.
- 4.4 Commissioning of this Area Action Plan has manageable implications on officer resources.

## **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 All consultation will be undertaken, in accordance with the statutory consultation procedures as prescribed by The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004. Further details can be found in the Borough Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement (June 2006).
- 5.2 As part of the methodology the brief requires a phased approach and gives clear instruction to include opportunities for public exhibition and a stakeholder workshop.
- 5.3 Key stakeholders include:
- SBC Members
  - SBC Strategy & Regeneration
  - SBC Forward Planning
  - Festival Walk Owners
  - Local Business

## **6. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 In the preparation of the Area Action Plans full account will be taken of matters that will impact on the delivery against the preferred option.
- 6.2 There are no other significant material considerations arising from the planned recommended actions.

## **7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 There has been no previous scrutiny consultations or engagement with regard to this matter.
- 7.2 The Prosperous and Attractive Borough Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be engaged as appropriate following agreement of this report.

## **8. LIST OF APPENDICES**

- A. Spennymoor Area Action Plan Consultancy Brief
- 

**Contact Officer:** Graham Wood  
Corporate Policy and Regeneration Manager  
01388 816166 Ext: 7754  
E-mail: [gwood@sedgefield.gov.uk](mailto:gwood@sedgefield.gov.uk)

**Wards:** Spennymoor  
Low Spennymoor & Tudhoe Grange



**Key Decision Validation:** Significant Impact on two wards:

- Spennymoor
- Low Spennymoor & Tudhoe Grange

### **Background Papers**

The only previous report to Council, in respect of funding for this work, is *Utilising Local Authority Business Growth Initiative Funds*.

The Area Action Plan brief highlights various documents and policies that need to be considered by the successful tender. All these documents have some bearing on the expectations for our town centres at local, regional and national level.

Policy documents that need to be considered as part of the study are:

- Sedgefield Borough Council Corporate Plan (2007/2008)
- Sedgefield Borough Council Local Development Framework
- Sedgefield Borough Council Community Strategy (2004-2014)
- Sedgefield Borough Council Community Strategy Action Plan (2007/2008)
- Sedgefield Borough Council Economic Strategy (2007)
- Sedgefield Borough Council Open Space Needs Assessment (2007)
  
- County Durham Economic Strategy
  
- Regional Spatial Strategy
- Regional Economic Strategy
- Regional Housing Strategy
  
- Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres
- Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks
- The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) England Regulations 2004

Other Documents to consider are:

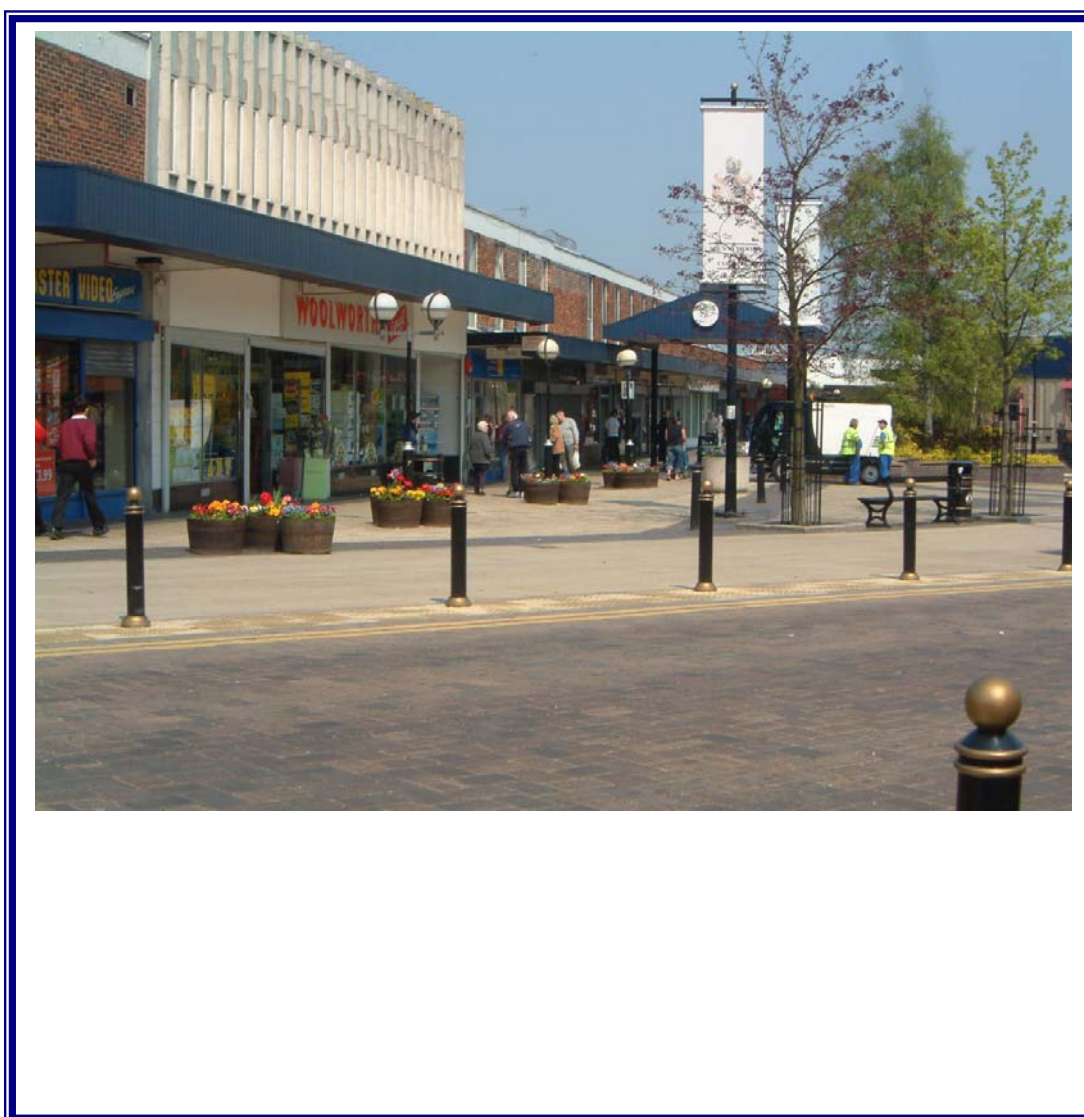
- Spennymoor & Newton Aycliffe Town Centre Study, September 2000, EDAW
- Spennymoor Town Centre Improvement Evaluation Final Report, ERS
- Baseline Information for Major Centres, May 2004, County Durham Economic Partnership
- Baseline Information for Major Centres – Update, September 2006, County Durham Economic Partnership
- Town Centre Retail Gap Study, May 2007, Sedgefield Borough Council
- Annual Centres Survey, SBC Planning (identifies town centre land use)
- Housing Led Town Centre Growth – Disposable Income Study, County Durham Economic Partnership

- The Future Role of Town Centres In the Borough of Sedgefield – May 2007, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Student Consultancy Project

### 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"/>
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4. The report has been approved by Management Team	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

# SPENNYMOOR TOWN CENTRE AREA ACTION PLAN BRIEF



## **Contents**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Purpose of the masterplan
- 3.0 Study area and development opportunities
- 4.0 Methodology
- 5.0 Roles and responsibilities
- 6.0 Tender requirements
- 7.0 Budget
- 8.0 Selection process and timescales

## 1.0 Introduction

1.1 Sedgefield Borough Council is seeking to appoint a suitably experienced and qualified consultancy team to undertake a comprehensive master planning exercise for the regeneration of Spennymoor town centre. Consultants will be required to undertake the master planning exercise as an Area Action Plan so that it can be adopted as part of the Borough Council's Local Development Framework.

1.2 With a population of nearly 19,000, Spennymoor is the second largest town in the Borough. There is a main shopping area offering a mix of traditional brick buildings, predominately along the High Street and a 1970's shopping precinct know as Festival Walk.

1.3 Changes in shopping habits including the rise of out of town shopping complexes such as the Metro Centre and Teesside Park, and the reduced purchasing power of local residents brought about by factory closures, have reduced the vitality and viability of the town centre. The town centre has been marred by a fall in footfall and customer spend and a rise in vacant units.

1.4 Sedgefield Borough Council has initiated an intervention programme, building on a study that was commissioned in 2000 and undertaken by EDAW. This was followed by the implementation of a Town Centre Management Initiative which ran until 2006.

1.5 Spennymoor has also benefited from over £1.5M of capital improvements to the public realm and introduction of art work. This was supported primarily through Single Programme funds delegated to the County Durham Economic Partnership by the Regional Development Agency.



1.6 2006 saw the completion of the £2m+ international gymnastics centre at Spennymoor Leisure Centre. This venue is on the list of facilities for the Northern Region 2012 Olympic training venues.

1.7 As one of the Borough's main towns Spennymoor has and will be experiencing significant housing growth following planning approvals for sites at Whitworth Park, Watson Court, Thorn Lighting, Merrington Lane and the former Greyhound Stadium (subject to the agreement of a Section 106). There have also been greenfield housing developments on land north of Grayson Road.

1.8 In spite of the public realm improvements, an evaluation of the recent improvement programme still showed concern for the lack of variety and quality of shops. There is a risk that this could contribute to further decline, particularly when there are several accessible major retail centres which are able to offer multi-sections of comparative goods.

1.9 There is no significant night time economy and no 'family friendly' public houses. There are no restaurants in Spennymoor and only one night club.

1.10 In view of Spennymoor's size, position and function the Borough Council would like to actively facilitate the diversification of land use including urban housing development in the town centre, both in identifying appropriate sites and by taking the initiative in reusing and converting derelict or underused buildings.

1.11 Sedgefield Borough Council recognises that the redevelopment of the town centre is a high priority for its residents and, as such, has committed capital resources to invest in this.

1.12 The brief is presented under the following sections:

2.0 Purpose of the masterplan

3.0 Study area and development opportunities

- 4.0 Methodology
- 5.0 Roles and responsibilities
- 6.0 Tender requirements
- 7.0 Budgets
- 8.0 Selection process and timescales

## **2.0 Purpose of the Spennymoor Town Centre Area Action Plan**

2.1 Our aspirations for Spennymoor, through an Area Action Plan, is to create a vibrant and progressive town centre, positioned to provide the facilities and services demanded by the growing population and capable of being sustained in the face of competition from surrounding centres. These issues are detailed further in paragraph 3.4 to 3.7.

2.2 The purpose of this Area Action Plan is to provide a comprehensive regeneration framework that challenges current use, target change and inspire action to guide future investment and activity in the town centre.

2.3 The Area Action Plan should:

- Provide a comprehensive development strategy for the area;
- Contain a comprehensive planning policy framework and where applicable propose amendments to the town centre boundary;
- Identify key sites with opportunities for development;
- Identify areas of the physical offer that can be reconfigured to maximise investor appeal;
- Identify practical opportunities to develop/re-develop the centre to best serve its current and future needs;
- Identify opportunities for increased employment within the town centre
- Include opportunities for promoting environmentally sustainable development and embedded renewable energy use;
- Provide practical initiatives and proposals for implementation;
- To identify improvements to vehicle and pedestrian movement in and around the town centre;

- Identify improvements to linkages between the town centre and existing/emerging residential developments;
- Provide a specific purpose to attracting/diversifying retail in the town centre; and
- Provide a comprehensive marketing proposal to promote the opportunities identified.

### **3.0 Study Area & Development Opportunities**

3.1 Figure 1 at the rear of this brief shows the designated town centre as allocated in the Local Plan and a secondary area that we believe influences the core area of interest.

3.2 However, if the study area needs to be expanded further, this will be encouraged where those areas are considered to have a regenerative benefit on the centre as a whole.

3.3 Consideration must be given to any proposed retail and housing developments at edge of centre locations and recommend how the Borough Council can utilise these to our advantage.

#### Development Opportunities

##### 3.4 A Place to Live

An early focus of consideration should be to explore the relationship between the town centre and the recent and future housing developments. The Study should also examine the feasibility and sustainability of promoting increased living within the immediate town centre.

##### 3.5 Retail Diversification

A strong focus of the study should be around retail in terms of redevelopment of areas, infill development sites, and diversification for the long term use of retail premises.



### 3.6 Non Retail Business Space

In line with the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy for the North East, consideration should be given to identifying opportunities to increase or improve non retail business space within the town centre to support its vitality and viability.

### 3.7 Leisure and Cultural Opportunities

A focus of consideration is expected to identify how best to enhance and develop the town's leisure and culture opportunities whilst maximising those that currently exist. It should also identify opportunities for introducing family based leisure to create a stronger evening economy.

## 4.0 Methodology

4.1 The methodology employed to produce the Area Action Plan will adhere to the requirements of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

### Phase 1 – mobilisation

4.2 An initial meeting with the client will be required to clarify the scope of work, the timescales, consultees and frequency of contract management meetings. The client will supply electronic copies of documentation and identify key contacts.

### Phase 2 – desktop assessment

4.3 A considerable amount of baseline work has already been undertaken over recent years. It is envisaged information provided within these documents will form a major part of this area of work.

Documents to consider are:

- Spennymoor & Newton Aycliffe Town Centre Study, September 2000, EDAW
- Spennymoor Town Centre Improvement Evaluation Final Report, ERS
- Baseline Information for Major Centres, May 2004, County Durham Economic Partnership
- Baseline Information for Major Centres – Update, September 2006, County Durham Economic Partnership
- Town Centre Retail Gap Study, May 2007, Sedgefield Borough Council
- Annual Centres Survey, SBC Planning (identifies town centre land use)
- Housing Led Town Centre Growth – Disposable Income Study, County Durham Economic Partnership
- The Future Role of Town Centres in the Borough of Sedgefield – May 2007, University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Student Consultancy Project

4.4 Policy documents that need to be considered as part of the study are:

- Sedgefield Borough Council Corporate Plan (2007/2008)
- Sedgefield Borough Council Local Development Framework
- Sedgefield Borough Council Community Strategy (2004-2014)
- Sedgefield Borough Council Community Strategy Action Plan (2007/2008)
- Sedgefield Borough Council Economic Strategy (2007)
- Sedgefield Borough Council Open Space Needs Assessment (2007)
- County Durham Economic Strategy
- Regional Spatial Strategy
- Regional Economic Strategy
- Regional Housing Strategy
- Planning Policy Statement 6: Planning for Town Centres
- Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks
- The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) England Regulations 2004

All identified documents will be supplied in electronic format where possible.

#### Phase 4 – Alternative Options

4.5 The outcome of this Area Action Plan is to identify and prioritise an improvement programme. Therefore the Borough Council does not want the options to include a 'do-nothing' scenario.

4.6 A range of options for the town centre will need to be developed. The options should focus on a range of housing, environmental, economic, retail, transport and community initiatives.

4.7 The options should be presented to the Borough Council in a clear and concise format and the policy justification for the proposals. These options should be presented in an Issues and Options Report which will be accompanied by a Sustainability Appraisal (including the requirements for Strategic Environment Assessment) Scoping Report.

4.8 The options should include clear definitions of proposals and projects, funding sources, outputs and outcomes, phasing, project management as well as considering the risk elements

4.9 The statutory consultation requirement for the Issues and Options Report and SA Scoping Report will be undertaken by the Borough Council.

#### Phase 5 - Production of the Preferred Options Document

4.10 This stage will involve the production of the Preferred Options document based on the consultation carried out under 4.9 and the Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment.

4.11 The preferred options document should contain detailed strategies for delivering the aspirations of the study. It should also contain the design principles for the town centre as a whole providing key coordinating design principles that need to be pursued alongside the environmental and development projects.

4.12 Consultants will be expected to present their findings to a meeting of Members and Senior Officers. The statutory public consultation requirement for the Preferred Options, Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment will be undertaken by the Borough Council.

#### Phase 6 – Production of the Submission Draft Document

4.13 This stage will involve producing the Submission Draft version of the Area Action Plan ensuring that it meets the tests of soundness as set out in Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks. The Submission Draft must be sound so that the Borough Council can formerly submit the Area Action Plan to the Secretary of State for Examination.

#### Phase 7 – Reporting

4.14 The consultants will need to report to the client set out The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 for producing an Area Action Plan.

4.15 The client will need to adhere to the reporting requirements set out for producing a Local Area Agreement document.

4.16 The consultants will supply four hard copies and two electronic copies of the final report which will be unrestricted in their further use.

### **5. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### Sedgefield Borough Council

5.1 The client for the study is Sedgefield Borough Council, Strategy and Regeneration Division.

5.2 The lead officer for the work will be Graham Wood, Corporate Policy and Regeneration Manager. The lead officer will provide details of other appropriate contacts as necessary. The lead officer will also ensure that copies of existing documents and information is made available.

5.3 A small steering group of officers will advise and oversee the study. The group will comprise of Regeneration, Planning and Housing Policy Officers.

### Consultant

5.4 The consultant will be responsible for undertaking the work outlined in the brief and as agreed on appointment.

5.5 The consultant will be responsible for all administration associated with the study and this should be included in the tender price.

5.6 Any assistance the consultants may require, from Sedgefield Borough Council, over and above that specified in this brief, should be stated in the submission.

5.7 The consultants will be required to provide an implementation plan that will include:

- Project summary sheets to include an outline of the project, indicative costs, risks, funding arrangements, lead organisation and timescales;
- An overarching phasing plan;
- Analysis of likely external funding support from public and private sectors;
- Advice on marketing and promoting the identified opportunities; and
- A monitoring framework for the Area Action Plan.

## **6. Tender Requirements**

6.1 Tenders should include:

- An understanding of the key issues;
- Overall methodology proposed;
- A statement of related experience;
- Details of the experience of the staff to be engaged in the contract and alongside a breakdown of the time envisaged to be spent on the project by each member of the consultancy team;
- A list of two referees including details of recently completed commissions;
- The proposed work programme and timescale for completing the commission, including key review points; and
- Full cost breakdown (excluding VAT) for the commission with a forecast cost including the estimated number of consultancy hours / days, for each stage of the commission – separately detailing likely expenditure

6.2 Should you be successful, these documents and any subsequent correspondence between you and the Council will form part of a binding contract between you and the Council.

## **7. Budget**

7.1 Sedgefield Borough Council is fully funding this commission.

## **8. Selection Process and Timescales**

8.1 Timescales

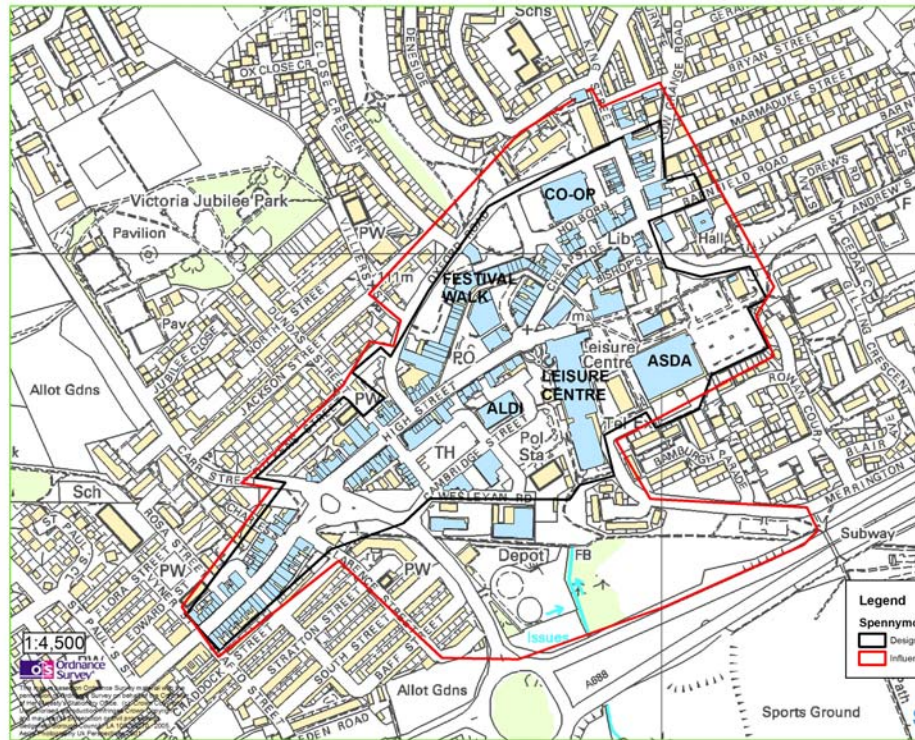
Closing date for tenders	26 <sup>th</sup> October 2007
Short listing	w/c 29 <sup>th</sup> October 2007
Interview by steering group	w/c 19 <sup>th</sup> November
Appointment of consultants	30 <sup>th</sup> November 2007
Inception meeting	w/c 3 <sup>rd</sup> December 2007

Scheduled contract management meetings	To be agreed at inception meeting
Initial consultation on Issues and Options and SA Scoping Report	June 2008
Consultation on Preferred Options and SA Report and AA Screening Report	January 2009
Submission of AAP to SOS for Examination	July 2009
Examination	February 2010
Adoption	September 2010

8.2 Tenders will be selected on the following criteria:

35%	Understanding of the requirements of the project brief including delivery and proposed methodology
25%	Track record of the tenderer and its staff in delivering similar projects and capacity allocated to this submission.
40%	Cost and value for money

8.3 Any queries should be directed in the first instance to Graham Wood, Corporate Policy and Regeneration Manager, on 01388 816166 ext 4205 or [gwood@sedgefield.gov.uk](mailto:gwood@sedgefield.gov.uk)





# Item 8

## REPORT TO CABINET

27TH SEPTEMBER 2007

## REPORT OF CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND SOLICITOR TO THE COUNCIL

### PORTFOLIO : STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP

#### LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW PROPOSALS – IMPLICATIONS – PROPOSED SINGLE TIER AREAS : PROTECTION OF HISTORIC TRADITIONS AND CEREMONIAL ARRANGEMENTS

#### 1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This Report sets out the Council's approach to the retention of civic and ceremonial arrangements if local government review proceeds as announced.
- 1.2 Government has invited responses to a Consultation Paper by 28th September 2007.

#### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 It is recommended that Cabinet resolve as follows :-
  - (1) To respond to the Consultation Paper, issued in August 2007, to indicate that, in the event that the single tier proposals in County Durham proceed, that the Council request that orders and regulations be made to preserve the privileges and rights belonging to the Council arising from the grant of the Royal Charter on the 24th October 1996.
  - (2) That the Solicitor to the Council be directed to liaise with the Department for Communities and Local Government, and the County Council, to give effect to this request.
  - (3) That further reports be received.

#### 3. KEY CONTENT

- 3.1 The Government's latest Consultation Paper "Councils' Proposals for Unitary Local Government : An Approach to Implementation" (August 2007), invites comment from affected authorities regarding the preservation of ceremonial and civic traditions.

- 3.2 The Consultation Paper states that “for those areas that are to be subsumed into a larger authority, or where an existing Local Government area becomes a single tier, ..... [steps need to be taken] “to ensure that the historic traditions associated with that area are protected so far as possible”. The Government is committed to making provision to ensure the preservation of privileges or rights belonging to an existing borough, which might become amalgamated into a larger area.
- 3.3 Clearly, the Borough Council has an interest in preserving the ceremonial arrangements and traditions that arose out of the grant by Royal Charter of borough status to this Council under the provisions of Section 245 of the Local Government Act 1972. The investiture of the first Mayor of the Sedgefield Borough Council took place on the 24th October 1996.
- 3.4 The Government have said in their Consultation Paper that local authorities should note that “where an existing local authority area is abolished, such traditions or status may disappear unless specific provision is made to retain them in secondary legislation”. Existing authorities must, therefore, consider these issues and advise the Government of any local privileges and rights which might be affected so that necessary steps can be taken to ensure their retention.
- 3.5 Where a District Authority has a Royal Charter, as in the case of this Council, the privileges attached to that Charter could well be lost if the authority is abolished. The Local Government Public Involvement in Health Bill would, however, allow the Government to establish Charter Trustees for an area within a new Unitary Authority by orders or regulations (clause 15 of the new Bill refers). This could lead to the creation of Charter Trustees for an area from the proposed re-organisation date, in May 2009.
- 3.6 Charter Trustees, the Consultation Paper states, would be formed from the members of the new authority and elected for the electoral areas covering the area to be abolished. Charter Trustees would be able to elect one of their number to act as a Town Mayor and hold historic and ceremonial property, eg the Charter Insignia, etc. Such Trustees might also be given the role of exercising historic ceremonial rights and issue a precept for that area for expenses that might arise.
- 3.7 It is important at this early stage, therefore, that the Council expresses its intentions to seek to protect its Royal Charter in the event that the re-organisation proceeds as announced.
- 3.8 This Report is, therefore, subject to the review proposals going forward, which were announced on 25th July 2007. These proposals are currently subject to several actions for judicial review yet to be determined in the administrative courts.
- 3.9 This Report, therefore, makes recommendations that a formal response be made to the Government Consultation Paper expressing this Council’s desire to protect and preserve the traditions associated with the Royal Charter which granted borough status to the Council.

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

- 4.1 No resource implications arise immediately but the Consultation Paper gives guidance regarding precept arrangements to cover expenses arising from the exercise of ceremonial duties undertaken by Charter Trustees.

#### **5. CONSULTATION**

- 5.1 Further consultations will be necessary with the Department for Communities and Local Government in order to take these proposals forward. Ahead of that, discussions will be necessary with the County Council, as it likely, under these arrangements, that they may emerge as the transitional authority and will be involved in the consideration of any new arrangements covering civic and ceremonial responsibilities within the area.
- 5.2 This Report has been considered by Management Team on the 10th September 2007.

#### **6. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- 6.1 **Legal Implications:** ultimately, the proposals considered in this Report will require secondary legislation under the Local Government Public Involvement in Health Bill.

#### **7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 None at this stage.

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**Ward(s)** Non-specific

#### **Background Papers**

1. Department for Communities and Local Government “Councils’ Proposals for Unitary Local Government : An Approach to Implementation” – August 2007.
2. Local Government (Public Involvement in Health) Bill (House of Lords Committee Stage : 27th July 2007 version refers).
3. Sedgefield Borough Council Inaugural Meeting : 24th October 1996 (Minutes).
4. Sedgefield District Council – Policy and Resources Committee : 12th September 1996 : Report of Management Team on Proposal for Borough Status.
5. Sedgefield District Council – Policy and Resources Committee : 18th April 1996 : Report of Chief Executive Officer on Proposal for Borough Status.

6. Sedgefield District Council – Special Council Meeting – 29th September 1995 : Report of Management Team on Proposal for Borough Status.
7. Sedgefield District Council – Policy and Resources Committee – 21st September 1995 : Report of Management Team Proposal for Borough Status.

**Examination by Statutory Officers**

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

# Item 9

## REPORT TO CABINET

27<sup>th</sup> SEPTEMBER 2007

## REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF RESOURCES

**Portfolio: STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP**

### **REVENUE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT – POSITION AT 31<sup>st</sup> JULY 2007**

#### **1. SUMMARY**

This is the first revenue budgetary control report under the 2007/08 Budgetary Control reporting arrangements.

This report summarises the projected outturn position on the Council's revenue activities that shows:

- The General Fund is expected to use balances of around £742,000 compared to a revised budgeted use of £760,000, a saving of £18,000.
- The Housing Revenue Account requires the use of revenue balances amounting to £110,000, compared to a revised budgeted use of £170,000.
- The Training and Employment Service made an operational surplus of £17,000, in the period April to July. It is expected that there may be a small operating loss by the end of the current financial year, depending on the success of securing training contracts from various providers.

Details in respect of significant Balance Sheet items are also included in Paragraph 9 in order to provide a wider perspective on the Council's financial standing.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that: -

- Cabinet note the position as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007.
- That further reports be submitted detailing the position as at the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2007, 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007 and the final outturn position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 in line with the Budgetary Control Monitoring Arrangements 2007-2008 reported to Management Team on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2007

#### **3. DETAILED FINANCIAL POSITION AT 31<sup>st</sup> JULY 2007**

##### ***3.1 Monitoring Arrangements for 2007-2008***

The budgetary control monitoring arrangements for 2007-2008 were approved by Management Team on the 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2007. Regular reports will be presented to Cabinet detailing the Council's financial position as at 31<sup>st</sup> July, 30<sup>th</sup> September, 31<sup>st</sup> December and the outturn position as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008. In addition more

detailed reports will be considered by the various Strategic Working Groups on a similar reporting cycle.

The expectation is that issues arising from any significant variances from approved budgets will be considered by the Groups who will instigate corrective action where necessary and ensure that their deliberations are reported back to Cabinet at the next budgetary review opportunity.

### 3.2 Volatile Budgets

An earlier report to this Cabinet introduced the concept of Volatile budget reporting and outlined the actions being taken to monitor those specific budgets that were susceptible to market forces and in particular some of the income streams. The following table shows those income types that are considered vulnerable and together with the outturn position.

Income Stream	Budget 2007-2008 £	Anticipated Outturn £	Variance £	Volatility Status
Land Charges	210,000	210,000	-	Green
Investment Interest	1,500,000	1,630,000	(130,000)	Green
Building Control Fees	205,000	155,000	50,000	Red
Planning Fees	395,000	460,000	(65,000)	Green
Trade Waste Income	250,700	240,000	10,700	Amber
Fixed Penalty Notices	40,000	15,000	25,000	Red
<b>Leisure Centres</b>				
- Catering	126,300	127,800	(1,800)	Green
- Bars	210,000	189,300	20,700	Amber
- Use of Facilities	1,332,800	1,300,000	32,800	Amber
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,269,800</b>	<b>4,317,100</b>	<b>47,300</b>	

The volatility status indicates the final outturn on the specific income stream, with **red** indicating that the target was not achieved, **amber** indicating that the target was not achieved but the overall variance is within acceptable tolerances and **green** indicating that the income target was achieved or exceeded.

All of the above income streams have been incorporated within the control figures for the relevant Portfolios and commentary has been included where appropriate within the relevant sections of this report, especially where Budget holders have taken account of falling income streams and reduced operating expenses accordingly, this particularly applies to the bar & catering activities within the Leisure Centres. The variances above will be taken into account when judgements about income streams levels for the 2008/09 budgets are being assessed.

### 3.3 General Fund

The following table covers the financial year 2007/08 and shows: -

- The approved budget for each of the main portfolios.
- Profiled budget to the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007 [i.e. what we expected to have spent]

- The actual income and expenditure as recorded in the Council's financial management system as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007
- Forecasted outturn for 2007-2008 based on spend to date and known commitments as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007
- The variance between the annual budget and the projected outturn.

The original approved budgets have been revised to take account of a full re-apportionment of capital financing charges across all Portfolios in line with the new SORP arrangements that eliminate any charges for notional interest. The overall financial position for the General Fund is therefore as follows: -

	<b>Budget 2007/08 £'000</b>	<b>Budget YTD £'000</b>	<b>Spend To Date £'000</b>	<b>Probable Outturn £'000</b>	<b>Variance £'000</b>
<b>Strategic Leadership</b>	1,962	1,164	877	1,796	(166)
<b>Healthy Borough</b>					
- Community Health	141	78	70	134	(7)
- Leisure & Culture	3,840	1,206	1,165	3,826	(14)
<b>Strong Communities</b>					
- Housing	601	178	209	694	93
- Safer Communities	829	446	470	907	78
<b>Prosperous Borough</b>					
- Learning & Employment	208	(30)	(57)	202	(6)
- Social Regeneration & Partnership	2,030	786	628	1,903	(127)
<b>Attractive Borough</b>					
- Environment	5,673	1,951	1,661	5,546	(127)
- Planning & Development	499	253	258	477	(22)
<b>Salary Savings</b>	(385)	-	-	(125)	260
<b>Other Efficiency Savings</b>	(20)	-	-	-	20
	15,378	6,032	5,281	15,360	(18)
<b>Use of Balances</b>	760			742	(18)
<b>Budget Requirement</b>	14,618			14,618	-

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

Salaries and Wages costs amount to approximately 30% of the gross spend on the Council's General Fund services, and as a consequence the relevant budgets are monitored very closely on a monthly basis. The Council set a savings target of

£385,000 equivalent to a turnover rate of 4%. Whilst the Council has already achieved some of the required savings with eight months of the financial year left it is difficult to predict with any accuracy the final outcome. It is anticipated however that the performance target set will be achieved by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008.

**The following section therefore concentrates on factors other than staffing that are having an impact on individual Portfolio budgets**

### **3.3.1. General Fund**

<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Area of Spend</b>	<b>Comment</b>
<b>Strategic Leadership</b>		<p>The main features that contribute to the overall change in the Portfolio's expected net spend [excluding the impact of salary savings] include: -</p> <p>Costs in respect of the Borough Elections were higher than expected as a consequence of all seats being contested. The actual cost of the elections was £21,000 higher than the budget.</p> <p>The Council continues to incur costs in respect of its vacant offices at Dalton Way in Newton Aycliffe, and will do so until demolition and redevelopment of the site commences. The estimated annual costs in respect of the vacant offices amounts to £34,600.</p> <p>As a consequence of some debt rescheduling last year the interest charges for the General Fund loan debt has fallen by £24,000.</p> <p>An increase in the investment income of £84,000 being received following an increase in interest rates and improved cashflow.</p>
<b>Healthy Borough</b>	<b>Community Health</b>	There are no areas that are currently causing budget concerns, a small underspend of £7,000 is anticipated.
	<b>Leisure &amp; Culture</b>	<p>The overall position for this Portfolio is a projected small underspend of £14,000.</p> <p>There are a couple of areas that are being monitored closely as they are considered to volatile and therefore subject to external user pressure, namely the use of the leisure centre facilities and bar /catering income. Some of the current shortfall of income predicted to be in the region of £51,000 can be offset against reduced operating costs and progress on this will be reported at each of the next monitoring reports.</p>
<b>Strong Communities</b>	<b>Housing General Fund</b>	<p>The main reasons contributing to the overall overspend of £93,000 are as follows: -</p> <p>Income from Selected Licensing budgeted at £61,150 is</p>



		unlikely to be received as the scheme has been unavoidably delayed and will not become operational until February 2008. In addition there is a projected overspend on homeless accommodation costs due to lower than anticipated rental income received.
	<b>Safer Communities</b>	<p>The main reasons for the overspend shown above of £78,000 are detailed below: -</p> <p>Several of the Safer Communities initiatives are partly funded through a grant scheme provided by the County Durham Local Area Agreement [LAA]. The initial expectations were that grants totalling approximately £160,000. Actual allocations now only amount to £138,000 and whilst one of the initiatives has now secured NRF funding a further cut in the region of 14% is expected to be announced shortly.</p> <p>An overspend on the Neighbourhood wardens relates to two issues. The first is in respect of pay enhancements granted to the wardens in respect of shift and weekend working which was not expected to be a feature following Job evaluation and therefore not budgeted for. The second issue relates to income from fixed penalty fines. The initial budget assumed income in the region of £40,000. Current projections indicate an income level nearer £15,000 for the year; the Director of Neighbourhood Services is reviewing the position and hopes to make operational savings to offset the income shortfall. Further progress on achieving these savings will be highlighted in the next report.</p> <p>The overspend on the CCTV control room relates to increased costs associated with the telephone links to the cameras and some set up costs relating to the split of the Carelink &amp; CCTV control operations.</p>
<b>Prosperous Borough</b>	<b>Learning and Employment</b>	The main reason for the underspend shown above revolves around vacancies within the staffing budgets
	<b>Social Regeneration and Partnership</b>	The main reason for the underspend of £127,000 relates to reclaimed Housing Benefit overpayments. As reported at the last meeting a revised monitoring procedure has been introduced in respect of Benefit Overpayments which allows an in year assessment to be made during the year of recovered sums rather than waiting to the year end when actual figures become available. It's anticipated that by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2008 £100,000 will be recovered from previous overpayments, either by deductions from ongoing entitlement or recovery through Accounts Receivable Invoices.

<b>Attractive Borough</b>	<b>Environment</b>	There are no budget areas that are currently causing budget concerns.
	<b>Planning and Development</b>	The main reason for the underspend shown above of £22,000 revolves around vacancies within the staffing budgets, use of Planning Delivery Grant is lower than forecast as a result of the reduced staffing costs.  However there is an expected shortfall of Building control fees amounting to £50,000. This follows a similar trend to what happened in 2006/07 where developers are using external service providers to undertake the necessary work rather than using the Council's in-house service.
<b>Efficiency savings</b>		The 2007/08 budget assumed an efficiency target of amounting to £406,000 of which £203,000 was "cashable". In addition further efficiencies were anticipated amounting to £20,000. A separate report is being prepared for Cabinet's consideration on the progress the Council is making towards achieving the 2007/08 Annual Efficiency target.

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

The approved budget for 2007/08 assumed that the HRA would require the use of £100,000 from Balances to support the Service Improvement Plan. Cabinet in June approved a further use of HRA balances of £60,000 to fund the review of the Council's Stock Option appraisal.

In addition there is a planned use of HRA balances of £843,000 to fund the HRA capital programme.

The projected position to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 is a use of HRA reserves for revenue purposes of £109,700 compared to an approved use of £160,000, a saving of £50,300

The main factors to take into account in considering this financial position are: -

- A significant proportion of the costs of providing the Housing Service are employee based. Each vacant post has been assessed to determine the likely date by which they will be filled and the overall impact on costs. Overall there are some savings anticipated amounting to approximately £140,000 in a full year.
- The budgetary position at the end of July 2007 indicates that the Housing Maintenance Budget will be overspent by around £43,000 However the Director of Housing is carefully examining the current spending profile in order to see what action can be taken to mitigate the overspend position, including capitalisation of relevant works.
- As part of the normal accounting practice the Government requires each Council in receipt of housing support to reassess its subsidy claim once the 2006/07 accounts have been closed to determine whether entitlement levels have changed. Following the review the overall amount the Council, has to pay over has increased by £119,000 to £3.459m. Part of the reasons for the increased payments are to do with capital financing charges which have reduced following

a debt rescheduling exercise in 2006/07 that resulted in lower costs to the Council. The overall impact of the subsidy review is a cost of £100,000.

- The Council has been awarded a Supporting People contract for delivering alarm monitoring and mobile response services within Teesdale, Wear Valley and Derwentside as well as this Borough that commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007. Now that the contract has been running a few months and the operation is beginning to bed down a review of the associated running costs and income streams is to be undertaken, the outcomes will be available to inform the next report.
- At this stage of the financial year it has been assumed that the whole of the contingency sum will be used in 2007/08 even though there has been no calls on it so far this year.
- It has been assumed that the full amount of the revenue contribution will be required to support the HRA capital programme

### **3.5 Training and Employment Services**

The initial budget prepared for 2007/2008 predicted that the trading account would make an operating loss of about £14,000 [excluding asset charges] during the year. The actual trading surplus for the first four months for the year was £17,000. It is anticipated that there will be a small operating loss by the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 but a lot depends upon the success in securing training contracts from the various providers.

## **4. Further revenue developments during 2007-2008**

Since the budget framework was approved the Council has been notified that it will receive some additional funds from a number of Agencies: -

- Youth Music has provided a grant of £20,000 to provide musical work shop activities in the community.
- The Department of Works & Pensions has allocated the council £119,000 towards the costs of implementing the new Housing Allowance scheme from April 2008
- The final allocation of Planning Delivery Grant [PDG] for 2007/08 has been announced by the DCLG with this Council being awarded £75,700. The total allocation to this Council amounts to £126,000 against a forecast sum of £240,000 when the budget framework was prepared. Whilst this shortfall will not have an impact on the current financial year, as unused resources from previous years are still available it will however cause some budgetary issues in 2008/09 as it had been expected that PDG resources would be carried forward to meet some ongoing commitments.
- Notification has just been received from the Department of Transport that funding will be provided towards the new Concessionary Travel pass scheme to be introduced from April 2008 amounting to £22,700.

The Council has just received a further allocation from the Government in respect of the Local Authority Business Grant Initiative for 2005/06 and 2006/07 amounting to £74,489. In addition we are expecting a further allocation for 2007/08 though the actual amount and timing is not yet known [2006/07 £410,000 received in March 2007]

The above developments have been factored into the various Portfolio probable outturns detailed above [with the exception of the LABGI funds].

## **5. Annual Efficiency Savings**

The Council in line with Government targets is pursuing opportunities to ensure that efficiency savings in the region of £400,000 per annum are achieved over the three-year period 2005-2006 to 2007-2008. The target saving for the current financial year is £406,000, half of which must be in 'cashable' form.

The Council has a strong track record of reviewing its spending in order to identify administrative and efficiency savings as a key element of the budget and tax setting process. As part of the 2007/08 budget framework, operational savings of £367,660 were identified in the revenue budget to provide support to achieving the 'cashable' savings target of £203,000.

In addition to the above cashable savings achieved through the budget framework, the Council will achieve wider efficiency savings throughout the year from administrative, transactional and procurement related activities.

The above savings have been integrated into the 2007-2008 revenue budget, the monitoring of which is undertaken as part of the normal budgetary control reporting arrangements to Members and senior management during the year.

A separate report is being prepared for Cabinet's consideration on the progress the Council is making towards achieving its' 2007-2008 efficiency targets. Further reports will be prepared on a six monthly basis.

## **6. Collection Fund Surplus**

The Council as billing authority for council tax and non domestic rates purposes maintains on behalf of the authorities which precept on the Council a separate set of accounts known as the Collection Fund.

Whilst these accounts are not part of our normal budgetary control reporting arrangements any surplus or deficit on the fund has a direct impact on future council tax levels in the Borough.

As at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 there was an accumulated surplus on the Fund of only £595,000, the Borough's share being £137,500. Whilst a higher level of funds is being distributed than is currently being held [£648,500] the shortfall will be collected during this year.

In December 2007 the Council will be required to estimate the likely surplus or deficit on the Collection Fund as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 and advise the Principal Precepting Authorities of their share that has to be paid out during 2008/2009, it is too early in the financial year to determine with any accuracy the likely surplus at this time.

## **7. Revenue Reserves 2007-2008**

The Council held reserves totalling £10.407m at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007 [excluding the Collection Fund] with the budget framework report in respect of 2007-2008 assuming that £1.841m would be utilised in this financial year. The current projection is a use of reserves amounting to £2.266m as indicated below: -

	<b>Planned</b>	<b>Revised</b>
<b>FUND</b>	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Balances at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007</b>	<b>10,407</b>	<b>10,407</b>
Revenue Purposes		
- Budget Support Fund	700	742
- Debt Management Fund	150	150
- Economic Development Fund	116	116
- Other Funds	75	75
- Housing Revenue Account	100	110
Capital Purposes		
- Housing Revenue Account	500	843
- Asset Management Fund	100	100
- Private Sector Housing Fund	100	100
<b>Anticipated Balance at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008</b>	<b>8,566</b>	<b>8,171</b>

The split of revenue reserves as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008 would be as follows: -

	<b>GENERAL FUND</b>	<b>HRA</b>
	<b>£'000</b>	<b>£'000</b>
<b>Balances at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007</b>	<b>7,025</b>	<b>3,382</b>
<b>Anticipated Use in 2007/08</b>	<b>1,283</b>	<b>953</b>
<b>Anticipated Balance at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008</b>	<b>5,742</b>	<b>2,429</b>

Members have previously been advised that the Council faces a number of equal pay claims that will need to be met from either General Fund or Housing Revenue Account reserves at some stage in the future. Experience at other Councils indicates that the cost of such claims continue to grow as claims are pursued through Employment Tribunals. Whilst it is difficult to assess the potential costs to be faced by the Council our reserves are being maintained at such a level that should allow the Council to meet its commitments without any impact on future service provision. The sum of £773,000 of the HRA balances has already been set-aside in 2006/2007 to meet some of these potential claims.

## **8. Revenue Provisions 2007-2008**

In view of the Council's favourable outturn position in 2006/07 provision was made to carry forward unused resources amounting to £223,600 into the current year to meet specific needs identified within the Budget and Policy Framework, this was in line with the Financial Regulations.

In addition the Council has received grant funding in respect of specific initiatives [such as Communities for Health & Planning Delivery Grant] that was unspent at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 amounting to £605,460. The budget framework already assumes that most of this grant funding will be utilised in 2007/08, however if the specific programmes do not need all of the funds in the current financial year unspent resources will be rolled forward into later years to meet specific requirements of the relevant initiatives. The use of the provisions is being monitored as part of these budgetary control arrangements.

## 9. Balance Sheet Management

Best practice recommends that Council's should report significant items from the "balance sheet", and in particular those items that may have a material impact on the Council if not reviewed on a regular basis.

CIPFA has issued some guidance and it is now considered prudent to report on at least the following items: -

- **External Loan Debt** – monies borrowed by the Council.
- **Short Term Investments** – surplus cash invested by the Council.
- **Current Debtors** – sums owed to the Council in respect of Rents, Council Tax, Overpaid Housing Benefits, Mortgages and Accounts Receivable.

Performance Management arrangements closely monitor the above areas on at least a monthly basis to ensure that the Councils Treasury Management strategy is being adhered to in respect of the first two items and in respect of the last item debt recovery action is instigated where debts are not settled within expected time scales.

- **External loan debt**
  - The value of loans outstanding at the 31st July 2007 was £18.624m, down from £18.641m at the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2007
- **Short Term Investments**
  - As at the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007 the Council had £27.06m on short-term deposit with Financial Institutions, compared with £27.26m at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007. The original budget forecast of investment income was £1.5m and the current projections as at 31<sup>st</sup> July indicate an increase to about £1.63m and this that has been taken into account in the forecast for Strategic Leadership Portfolio shown above.
  - The Council will however continue to actively pursue investment opportunities throughout the 2007-2008 in order to maximise investment returns taking into account in the Treasury Management Strategy.
- **Current Debtors**
  - Recovery of all sums due to the Council promptly can have a significant material impact on the cash-flow of the Council and lead onto higher than expected investment returns as indicated above if it is actively managed.
  - As at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 the Council recorded in its Annual Statement of Accounts that the amounts due from debtors amounted to £9.418m. [£9.899m for 2005-2006]. A proportion of this debt related to year-end grant claims, which is a normal position at this time of year and these will be certified and paid as an outcome of the external audit process.
  - However some of the outstanding debt has to be actively managed to ensure that it is eventually collected and is not written off as a "bad debt". As at the 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007 the following analysis is available.

		<b>Position @ 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007</b>		
<b>Type of Debt</b>	<b>Position @31/3/2007</b>	<b>Total Arrears</b>	<b>Current Arrears</b>	<b>Aged Arrears</b>
	£	£	£	£
Current Housing Rents	477,766	454,516	204,714	249,802
Former Tenants Housing Rents	870,733	736,624	-	736,624
Council Tax – Current year	1,593,375	3,707,271	2,094,781	1,612,490
Council Tax – Prior Years	1,961,055	2,681,481	127,908	2,553,573
Accounts Receivable	2,127,549	1,591,763	1,464,538	127,725
Housing Benefit Overpayments	393,011	498,585	173,607	324,978
Mortgages	81	197	197	-
<b>Total Outstanding debt</b>	<b>7,423,570</b>	<b>9,670,937</b>	<b>4,065,745</b>	<b>5,605,192</b>
<b>Position 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007</b>			<b>2,891,736</b>	<b>4,531,834</b>

Current arrears is debt less than 60 days old & aged arrears is debt older than 60 days

- Housing Rent is a weekly charge on the property. The five area Housing Management teams manage current arrears with former tenants being managed by a centralised debt recovery team. All Teams work to an approved policy document which involves a number of stages culminating in seeking repossession where a current tenant fails to make arrangements to pay and referral to a Certificated Bailiff in former tenant arrears cases.
- Council Tax is an annual charge and the arrears above reflect those accounts where no arrangements have been agreed to collect the initial charge by instalments. When accounts fall into arrears Liability Orders are obtained from the Magistrates Court. Where this procedure fails to obtain settlement of the debt a range of other recovery processes are initiated including use of Certificated Bailiff and committal proceedings. Whilst the level of arrears looks high it must be taken in the context of the overall total debit raised since the introduction of Council Tax now exceeds £317m, the Councils collection rate to-date is in excess of 99% of amounts due.
- Accounts Receivable debt can relate to any of the services that the Council provides. Debt recovery action is the responsibility of the department that provides the service and raises the initial invoice. If the department is unable to collect the debt the Director of Resources may refer the debt to a Certificated Bailiff for further recovery action.
- Housing Benefit overpayments usually arise where a person in receipt of benefit has failed to notify the Council of a change in circumstances that would affect their entitlement. If the claimant is still in receipt of benefit the overpayment can be recovered at the maximum rate of £9.00 per week. [£12.00 in cases of proven fraud]. Where the claimant is no longer in receipt of benefit or has vacated the property an accounts receivable invoice is sent to the person if a forwarding address is known. Where a former claimant moves back into the Borough and becomes eligible for benefit the debt is reinstated and recovered from on-going entitlement.
- Mortgages debt is all current arrears [i.e. less than 60 days old] and arrangements are in hand to recover the debt outstanding from the one debtor in arrears.

## 10. Training Issues

Financial training skill needs to be constantly reviewed and developed in respect of three specific areas: -

- *Users of the Agresso Financial Management System*
- *Budget Holders / Heads of Service*
- *Members*

The Account and Audit Regulations [2003] as amended introduce a requirement for Councils to ensure that those persons who have responsibility for budgets should possess the relevant skills to be able to manage them effectively. This is also a key requirement of the 2007 Key Lines of Enquiry [Use of Resources] and as a consequence discussions have been held with the Organisational Development team within the Chief Executives department to introduce an enhanced training scheme to supplement the in-house training currently provided.

Three training sessions provided by IPF are planned in October / November to ensure all budget holders are able to update their knowledge base and be able to apply that knowledge to the preparation of the 2008-2009 budget round and associated budgetary control monitoring. A similar course is planned for Members to enable them to update their knowledge about Local Government finance issues.

## 11. LINKS TO CORPORATE OBJECTIVES & VALUES

The details contained in the report support the Council's corporate value of being responsible with and accountable for public finances.

## 12. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no further resource implications arising from this report.

## 13. CONSULTATIONS

Comprehensive consultation has previously been held during the construction of the 2007/08 Budget Framework. This report does not contain any proposals or recommendations that require further consultation. The relevant Departments have been consulted in projecting the levels of spending during the current year.

## 14. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

### 14.1 *Links to Corporate Objectives/Values*

The Council's Corporate Objectives and Values have guided the preparation of the 2007/08 Budget Framework throughout. Resource availability has been fully re-assessed and directed to assist in achieving the Council's key priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan. Particular emphasis has been placed on the following Corporate Values: -

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

### 14.2 *Risk Management*

The budget framework report to Council on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2007 highlighted a number of risk areas that needed to be monitored to ensure the effective delivery of the 2007/08 spending plans.



There has been no further risks identified during the preparation of this report apart from the continued need by the relevant budget holders to monitor the budgets closely during the year to ensure that spending plans are met. Where potential overspends of expenditure or reduced levels of income are forecast early action should be taken to address the problems faced in order to achieve the performance targets set in the budget framework.

#### 14.3 **Health and Safety**

No additional implications have been identified.

#### 14.4 **Equality and Diversity**

No material considerations have been identified.

#### 14.5 **Legal and Constitutional**

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

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

### 15. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

Consultation and engagement with Overview and Scrutiny Committees has previously been held to develop and review the 2007/08 Budget Framework.

**Contact Officer:** John Hawes (Accountancy Services Manager)  
**Telephone:** 01388-816166 Ext. 4358  
**E-Mail:** jhawes@sedgefield.gov.uk  
**Ward(s):** Not Ward Specific  
**Background Papers:** ~ Report to Council 27<sup>th</sup> February 2007 – Budget Framework 2007-2008.  
 ~ Report to Council 27<sup>th</sup> February 2007 – Treasury Management Strategy 2007-2008.  
 ~ Report to Council 29<sup>th</sup> June 2006- Statement of Accounts 2006 -2007

#### 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 10

**REPORT TO CABINET**

**27th SEPTEMBER 2007**

**REPORT OF DIRECTOR OF  
RESOURCES**

## **BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT 2007/2008**

### **CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE AND FINANCING POSITION TO 31<sup>ST</sup> JULY 2007**

#### **1.0 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This report provides a review of the position on the 2007/08 Capital Programme as at 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007.
- 1.2 It includes an overview of progress made to date in meeting spending targets, details the carry forward approved by Council of commitments unspent on the 2006/07 capital programme, summarises the available capital resources for financing the programme and based on the estimated outturn sets out the proposed financing of the programme in 2007/08.
- 1.3 The report also outlines any new developments that have occurred since Council approved the 2007/08 Capital Programme Budget in February 2007.

#### **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

- (i) Cabinet notes the four month spend position to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007;
- (ii) Further reports be submitted to Management Team, Cabinet and all Strategic Working Groups detailing the position as at 30<sup>th</sup> September, 31<sup>st</sup> December and final outturn as at 31<sup>st</sup> March in line with the Budgetary Control Monitoring Arrangements 2007/08 reported to Management Team on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2007.

#### **3.0 CAPITAL SPEND AND RESOURCES MONITORING 2007/08**

##### **Initial Spending Targets / Revised Capital Programme Budget**

- 3.1 The Capital Programme for 2007/08 was approved by Council on the 27<sup>th</sup> February 2007 as part of the overall Budget Framework 2007/08. A total budget of £20,000,000 was set and allocated across all Council portfolios. The budget includes £5,160,000 for the General Fund Programme, £8,400,000 for the Council Housing Programme and a £6,240,000 special provision for Major Regeneration Initiatives, to be financed from capital receipts.

3.2 The Capital Programme outturn position for 2006/07 was reviewed by Cabinet on the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2007. That report identified an underspend of £5.216 million on the 2006/07 budget and a number of outstanding commitments totalling £3.81 million were identified for carry forward into 2007/08 and £209,000 to carry forward to 2008/09. These carry forward requests were subsequently approved by Council on 5<sup>th</sup> July 2007, when revised spending targets were agreed.

3.3 The approved Capital Programme shows the use of the Council's own resources towards capital spending along with any grants already secured when the Budgets were approved. However, the Council has traditionally been successful in securing significant levels of additional external funding towards its Capital Programme during the year in the way of government grant approvals, lottery funding and other grants and contributions. The total level of capital spending is therefore likely to be significantly higher once any additional external funding has been taken into account.

3.4 The following table shows the original approved 2007/08 Capital Programme, together with the carry forward commitments from 2006/07. The table also shows all approved external funding secured to date and the total Gross Budget reflecting the total capital resources available for the year:

<b>Portfolio / Capital Programme</b>	<b>Original Approved Net Budget £'000</b>	<b>Approved Carry Forward £'000</b>	<b>Revised Net Budget £'000</b>	<b>Additional External Funding £'000</b>	<b>Gross Budget £'000</b>
<b>Strategic Leadership:</b>					
- ICT	770	829	1,599	-	1,599
- Green Lane	350	-	350	-	350
- Chilton Depot	80	6	86	-	86
<b>Healthy Borough:</b>					
- Community Health	70	14	84	-	84
- Leisure and Culture	715	164	879	-	879
<b>Prosperous Borough:</b>					
- Social Regeneration	400	388	788	82	870
- Learning & Employment	200	162	362	-	362
- Major Regeneration #	6,240	1,772	8,013	-	8,013
<b>Attractive Borough:</b>					
- Environment	20	18	38	-	38
- Planning & Development	120	-	120	20	140
<b>Strong Communities:</b>					
- Housing (HRA)	8,400	343	8,743	-	8,743
- Housing (General Fund)	2,335	83	2,418	-	2,418
- Safer Communities	100	31	131	-	131
Contingency	<b>200</b>	-	<b>200</b>	-	<b>200</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>3,810</b>	<b>23,811</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>23,913</b>

3.5 The approved net budget already takes into account the following capital grants:-

	<b>£'000</b>
Major Repairs Allowance	5,061
Supported Capital Expenditure Allowance	213
Disabled Persons Facilities Grant	150
SHIP Grant	1,300
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,724</b>

### **Progress on Capital Programme / Developments during 2007/08**

3.6 This section of the report summarises all known developments on each Portfolio's Capital Programme Budgets that have arisen since the original spending targets for 2007/08 were approved.

#### **3.6.1 Strategic Leadership**

A full breakdown of the ICT and Green Lane Capital Programme Budgets for 2006/07 was reported to Cabinet on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2007.

In addition to the ICT approved budget of £770,000 there is a carry forward of £829,000 to meet ongoing commitments from 2006/07.

The Capital Programme budget for Council Offices, Green Lane is £350,000 and the plan of works includes mechanical and electrical improvements, window replacements, the refurbishment of the boiler house, and refurbishment of the toilets.

The budget for Chilton Depot Capital Programme 2007/08 consisting of £80,000 approved for 2007/08 and a carry forward of £6,000 from 2006/07, has been allocated to works to the depot and miscellaneous plant and equipment replacement.

#### **3.6.2 Healthy Borough - Community Health**

The Community Health Capital Programme Budget of £70,000 is set aside for initiatives which will support older person and vulnerable adults living an independent life.

In addition to the above budget an approved carry forward of unspent resources from 2006/07 of £13,700 will be used to provide match funding in respect of the County Assistive Technology Programme to Support Independent Living.

#### **3.6.3 Healthy Borough - Leisure & Culture**

A detailed breakdown of the Leisure and Culture Capital Programme Budget was reported to Cabinet on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2007.

The Gymnastics Centre at Spennymoor Leisure Centre was successfully completed and opened in 2005/06. However, the project is not yet financially complete and there are a number of outstanding costs and retentions due to be

paid during 2007/08. Cabinet have previously been made aware of the cost overrun on this scheme and legal advice continues to be sought as regard the recovery of such costs.

The Playground Equipment Programme, funded from the Major Regeneration Initiatives Budget, will continue throughout 2007/08 and a further £100,000 has been allocated to play sites in Bishop Middleham and Middridge.

An application for a Big Lottery Grant of £210,000 has been made and sites at Dean Bank, Fishburn and West Cornforth have been identified in the play strategy should this application be successful.

### **3.6.4 Prosperous Borough - Social Regeneration & Learning & Employment**

A detailed breakdown of the Social Regeneration and Learning and Employment Capital Programme Budgets (formerly the Regeneration and Economic Development Capital Programmes) was reported to Cabinet on 7th June 2007.

This Programme continues to benefit from significant levels of external funding. Single Capital Programme Grant totalling £81,700 has been brought forward from 2007/08 in respect of the major schemes currently being undertaken in Spennymoor Town Centre.

Investment has been prioritised towards the maintenance of an attractive supply of industrial land and premises and inward employment generating projects.

### **3.6.5 Prosperous Borough - Major Regeneration**

The Programme Budget for 2007/08 has been broken down into the following broad areas:-

Other Portfolio Schemes*	£860,000
Housing Market Renewal	£3,000,000
Local Improvement Programmes	£1,265,000
Capital Programme Team	£221,000
Area Programme & Strategic Investments	£894,000
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>£6,240,000</b>

Further details on the Local Improvement Programme and Area Programmes and Strategic Investments were detailed in the reports to Cabinet on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2005 and 8<sup>th</sup> December 2005.

*\* Playground Equipment Programme, Gymnastics Centre, Arts Resource Development and Locomotion Derelict Land Schemes.*

### **3.6.6 Attractive Borough – Environment**

The Environment Capital Programme Budget of £38,000 is expected to be utilised mainly on the replacement of domestic and trade waste bins and the purchase of additional dog and litter bins.

### **3.6.7 Attractive Borough – Planning and Development**

The Planning and Development Capital Programme for 2007/08 has an approved budget of £120,000 which is split between Countryside Management and Planning and Conservation Schemes.

### **3.6.8 Strong Communities - Council Housing**

The significant areas of the Council Housing Capital Programme in 2007/08 were all designed to help the Council achieve the Government's Decent Homes standard.

A report outlining how available housing capital resources are to be aligned to spending programmes in order to achieve the decent homes targets by 2010 was considered by Cabinet on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2007.

### **3.6.9 Strong Communities – Private Sector Housing**

A detailed breakdown of the Private Sector Housing Capital Programme Budget was reported to Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2007.

The General Fund Housing Capital Programme was significantly boosted this year by the approval of £1,600,000 from the Regional Housing Board's Single Housing Investment Pot (SHIP). The Council has also been awarded Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) totalling £150,000. These grants were built into the original approved net budget of £2,335,000.

A detailed report was presented to Management Team in June 2007 highlighting how these resources will be utilised in tackling private sector housing suffering from market failure. Ferryhill Station, Dean Bank and Chilton have already been identified as three priority areas.

The programme has since been increased by a further £83,000 brought forward from 2006/07 to meet ongoing commitments relating to Strategic Interventions.

### **3.6.10 Strong Communities – Safer Communities**

A report outlining the Safer Communities Capital Programme for 2007/08 was reported to Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2007.

The approved budget for the 2007/08 Capital Programme is £100,000 which will be used to improve the CCTV coverage within the Borough in order to reduce the fear of crime and promote safer communities.

In addition, £31,000 representing the unspent element of the £50,000 contribution from the Public Transport Group in respect of the installation of CCTV cameras at Newton Aycliffe and Bishop Auckland Rail Stations has been carried forward from 2006/07.

## Revised Capital Programme and Actual Spend to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007

- 3.7 The adjustments explained above have resulted in a revised spending target of £23.913 million for 2006/07. A summarised statement of actual spend to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007 across all portfolios is shown as follows:

Portfolio	Revised Gross Budget £'000	Actual Gross Spend £'000	% Gross Budget Spent
<b>Strategic Leadership:</b>			
- ICT	1,599	192	12%
- Green Lane	350	25	7%
- Chilton Depot	86	1	1%
<b>Healthy Borough:</b>			
- Community Health	84	22	26%
- Leisure and Culture	879	412	47%
<b>Prosperous Borough:</b>			
- Social Regeneration	890	131	15%
- Learning & Employment	362	130	36%
- Major Regeneration	8,013	1,003	13%
<b>Attractive Borough:</b>			
- Environment	38	22	58%
- Planning and Development	120	50	42%
<b>Strong Communities:</b>			
- Housing (HRA)	8,743	1,857	21%
- Housing (General Fund)	2,418	662	27%
- Safer Communities	131	23	18%
Contingency	<b>200</b>	-	
<b>Total</b>	<b>23,913</b>	<b>4,530</b>	<b>19%</b>

- 3.8 A gross total of £4.53 million has been spent in the first four months to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007 or 19% of the gross capital programme budget of £23.913 million.
- 3.9 Due to the nature of capital projects it is difficult to predict exactly when financial payments will be made, unlike revenue budgets which can be profiled accurately. Therefore an accurate assessment of expected spending at this point in time cannot be made. Capital spending has traditionally been concentrated in the latter half of the year, particularly in the last quarter, and this is again likely to be the case for 2007/08. Some capital projects have significant lead-in times, major programmes of works may require a dedicated staffing resource and in other cases there may be a need to secure funding approval from other agencies before expenditure is incurred. All of these issues can all lead to delays in capital projects. The Budgetary Control Reports later in the year will be able to provide a clearer picture of progress on the 2007/08 Capital Programme.
- 3.10 In light of the substantial capital resources available as highlighted in paragraph 3.12 below, the Council will be able to maintain its flexible approach to managing the capital programme. As in 2006/07, underspends on key capital projects, which have commenced or been committed to during the year, will be able to be carried forward into the next financial year.



## Capital Resources

3.11 Based on current projections the total level of capital resources likely to be available to finance this year's (and future years) Capital Programme are summarised in the table below. Capital resources are split between those brought forward from 2006/07 and those expected to be received in 2007/08:

<b>Available Capital Resource</b>	<b>Brought Forward Resources £'000</b>	<b>Received/ Anticipated In Year £'000</b>	<b>Total Anticipated Resources £'000</b>
<b>Capital Receipts:</b>			
- Right To Buys	1,538	1,500	3,038
- Housing Land Sales	13,568	12,954	26,522
- General Fund Receipts	17	1,329	1,346
- Section 106 Agreements	300	-	300
<b>Total Capital Receipts</b>	<b>15,423</b>	<b>15,783</b>	<b>31,206</b>
<b>Capital Grants:</b>			
- Single Programme	-	82	82
- SHIP	-	1,300	1,300
- DFG	5	150	155
- Other Grants	265	56	321
<b>Total Capital Grants</b>	<b>270</b>	<b>1,588</b>	<b>1,858</b>
<b>Capital Contributions</b>	<b>226</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>266</b>
<b>Supported Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>213</b>	<b>213</b>
<b>Major Repairs Allowance (HRA)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>5,061</b>	<b>5,061</b>
<b>Direct Revenue Financing (HRA)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>1,637</b>	<b>1,637</b>
<b>Use of Asset Management Fund</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Use of Private Sector Housing Fund</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Use of HRA Balances</b>	<b>343</b>	<b>500</b>	<b>843</b>
<b>Total Available Resources</b>	<b>16,262</b>	<b>25,022</b>	<b>41,284</b>

## Financing the Capital Programme

- 3.12 Assuming that revised spending targets are achieved at the year-end, and that the above capital resources are realised, the financing of the 2007/08 capital programme is likely to be as follows:

	<b>Initial 2007/08 £'000</b>	<b>Revised* 2007/08 £'000</b>
<b>Gross Capital Spending Target *</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>23,913</b>
<b>Financed by:</b>		
Government Allocations:		
- Supported Capital Expenditure	213	213
- Capital Grants	1,450	1,640
- Major Repairs Allowance	5,061	5,061
Capital Receipts		
- General Fund	1,555	1,329
- Housing	2,049	3,038
- Regeneration	7,083	9,874
Capital Contributions	-	78
Direct Revenue Financing – HRA		
Use of HRA Balances	1,637	1,637
Use of Private Sector Housing Fund	500	843
Use of Asset Management Fund	100	100
<b>Total Resources</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>23,913</b>

*\* The target has been increased to reflect the approved carry forward from 2006/07 and the phasing in of additional grants and contributions secured in respect of specific capital schemes*

- 3.13 Assuming the revised spending targets are achieved, there will be unused capital receipts and other resources of around £17.9 million available at the end of the financial year which can be used to support future spending commitments in line with estimations made in the Medium Term Financial Plan. However, it should be noted that all of this figure relates to Housing Land Sales and must therefore be ring-fenced against capital schemes meeting the Regeneration or Affordable Housing definitions. There are no other resources available to support the General Fund Programme in later years and in fact 2007/08 relies on the use of £957,000 Major Regeneration receipts to finance the programme.

## 4.0 CORPORATE POLICY CONSIDERATIONS

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

## 5.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no further resource implications arising from this report.

## 6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 Comprehensive consultation has previously been held during the construction of the 2007/08 Budget Framework. This report does not contain any proposals or recommendations requiring further consultation.

## **7.0 OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS**

### **7.1 *Links to Corporate Objectives/Values***

The Council's Corporate Objectives and Values have guided the preparation of the 2007/08 Budget Framework throughout. Resource availability has been fully re-assessed and directed to assist in achieving the Council's key priorities as set out in the Corporate Plan. Particular emphasis has been placed on the following Corporate Values:-

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

### **7.2 *Risk Management***

The major risks of the overall capital programme can be identified and mitigated within the process of effective budgetary monitoring and control.

The efficient delivery of the capital programme can be facilitated by the reporting of financial issues and progress reports which can identify overspends or delays within a project.

The council pursues value for money through quarterly financial/progress reports and these can highlight delays which may result in less effective purchasing in the last quarter of the financial year.

### **7.3 *Health and Safety***

No additional implications have been identified.

### **7.4 *Equality and Diversity***

No material considerations have been identified.

### **7.5 *Legal and Constitutional***

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

## **8.0 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 Consultation and engagement with Overview and Scrutiny Committees has previously been held in development and review of the 2007/08 Budget Framework.

**Contact Officer:** Joanne Smart (Principal Accountant)  
**Telephone No.:** 01388-816166 ext. 4673  
**E-Mail Address:** [jsmart@sedgefield.gov.uk](mailto:jsmart@sedgefield.gov.uk)

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

**Background Papers:**

1. Report to Council 27<sup>th</sup> February 2007 – Budget Framework 2007/2008.
2. Report to Management Team 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2007 – Budgetary Control Monitoring Arrangements 2007/08
3. Report to Council 5<sup>th</sup> July 2007 – Statement of Accounts 2006/07
4. Report to Cabinet 15<sup>th</sup> March 2007 – Leisure and Culture Capital Programme 2007/08
5. Report to Cabinet 26<sup>th</sup> April 2007 - Council Offices, Green Lane, Spennymoor Capital Programme 2007/08
6. Report to Cabinet 26<sup>th</sup> April 2007 - ICT Capital Programme 2007/08
7. Report to Cabinet 14<sup>th</sup> May 2007 - Regeneration Services Mainstream Capital Programme 2007/08
8. Report to Cabinet 21st May 2007 - Community Health Capital Programme 2007/08
9. Report to Cabinet 16<sup>th</sup> March 2006 - Housing Capital Programme and Repairs and Maintenance Service – Review of Future Programmes of Work and Procurement of Service 2006-2010
10. Report to Cabinet 26<sup>th</sup> April 2007 – Housing Capital and Improvement Works 2007/08
11. Report to Cabinet 7th June 2007- Private Sector Housing Capital Programme 2007/08
12. Report to Cabinet 7th June 2007 – Community Safety Capital Programme 2007/08
13. Report to Cabinet 14<sup>th</sup> July 2005 - Children’s Fixed Play Equipment 2005-07

**EXAMINATION BY STATUTORY OFFICERS**

	<b>YES</b>	<b>NOT APPLICABLE</b>
1. The report has been examined by the Council’s Head of the Paid Service or his representative	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The content has been examined by the Council's S151 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 11a

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Council Chamber,  
Council Offices,  
Spennymoor

Tuesday,  
12 June 2007

Time: 10.00 a.m.

**Present:** Councillor A. Gray (Chairman) and  
Councillors B.F. Avery J.P, D. Farry, T.F. Forrest, B. Haigh, T. Hogan,  
Ms. I. Jackson and B.M. Ord

**In Attendance:** Councillors Mrs. S. Haigh, Mrs. E.M. Paylor, Mrs. C. Potts, A. Smith,  
B. Stephens, A. Warburton and J. Wayman J.P

**Apologies:** Councillors D.R. Brown, V. Chapman and Mrs. J. Gray

**SL.1/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
Members had no declarations of interest to submit.

**SL.2/07 MINUTES**  
The Minutes of the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes).

**SL.3/07 ANNUAL REPORT ON COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY CORPORATE COMPLAINTS STAFF**  
Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive outlining the number of complaints/issues received by the Corporate Complaints staff in the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007. Figures were also provided for the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006 to enable comparisons to be made. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was reported that the total number of complaints/issues dealt with by the Corporate Complaints staff had decreased from 1,053 in 2005/06 to 679 in 2006/07. This was a decrease of 35%.

It was pointed out that the work carried out by staff within the Customer Service Centre had contributed to the reduction in the number of complaints dealt with by the Corporate Complaints staff.

Members expressed their appreciation of the work carried out by Customer Services staff and praised their ability to effectively deal with comprehensive complaints.

The report identified the number of complaints received within each service area and the nature of the complaints.

The main area of complaint (40% of the total) related to housing maintenance, management and capital improvement. It was pointed out, however, that the total number of complaints about these services had fallen from 545 to 269 with justified complaints reducing by 77%.

The main reason for complaint in connection with housing maintenance related to repairs not being carried out within specified timescales. It was explained that on occasions the resources were not available to complete every job within the timescale.

In order to address this problem the budget for 2006/07 financial year had been increased with £240,000 additional revenue funding being allocated. This had helped clear the backlog and generally had enabled new jobs to be completed within the target.

Members were informed that although 104 complaints were made in relation to the Housing Management Service, only 3 complaints were found to be justified.

With regard to complaints made about capital improvements, it was noted that none of the 18 complaints were found to be justified.

It was explained that the Corporate Complaints staff aimed to respond to 100% of complaints and enquiries within ten working days. It was reported that 98.5% had been achieved in 2006/07 compared with 98.8% in 2005/06. The average time to respond to an enquiry in 2006/07 was 1.5 days compared with 1.95 days in 2005/06.

The Committee was also advised of the complaints procedure whereby complainants had the right to complain to the Local Government Ombudsman if they had exhausted the Borough's complaints procedure.

In 2006/07 21 cases were investigated and decided by the Ombudsman. The Borough had not been found guilty of maladministration in any of these cases. In 3 cases the Council was able to reach a local settlement to the Ombudsman's satisfaction.

It was pointed out that there were no complaints made relating to any of the six strands of the Equity and Diversity standard for local government.

Specific reference was made to adaptations for the benefit of people with disabilities.

It was queried whether funding was available for all residents of the Borough. In response it was explained that all residents could apply for funding for disabled adaptations through the Sedgfield Home Improvement Agency. Durham County Council would also provide relevant support and advice.

Members queried how a member of the public should make a complaint. It was explained that although the majority of complaints were received by telephone a variety of communication mechanisms were in place. These included letters, e-mails, on-line feedback forms and home visits where appropriate

In response to Member's questions regarding procedures for dealing with complaints, it was explained that the Council aimed to resolve complaints at an early stage at the first point of contact. It was hoped that by learning from previous complaints, managers would be able to effectively deal with complaints/issues.

It was recognised that not all customers would accept the response given to them by the department. In these circumstances the Corporate Complaints staff would investigate the complaint/issue on behalf of the complainant.

Reference was made to a complaint made by a Parish Council regarding the non operation of CCTV cameras. It was explained that in many cases complaints received by the Council were actually service requests.

Detailed discussions took place in relation to local authorities providing funding for CCTV cameras. It was agreed that this matter be referred to the Healthy Borough with Strong Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee for further consideration.

The Committee was informed that Member training based on the Complaints Procedure and the role of the Local Government Ombudsman was being arranged. All Councillors would be invited to attend.

- RECOMMENDED:*
- 1. That the Annual Report be received and published on the Borough's website.*
  - 2. That the Healthy Borough with Strong Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee be requested to consider funding of CCTV camera contributions as a future item on their work programme.*

**SL.4/07**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW GROUP REPORT:  
RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION - ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

Consideration was given to a report of the Chairman of the Committee detailing progress to date on the Cabinet's Response and Action Plan following its consideration of the recommendations arising from the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Review of Recruitment and Retention. (For copy see file of Minutes).

With regard to Recommendation 1 – **Turnover broken down by department be adopted as a Performance Indicator to be monitored by Human Resources and reported periodically to Members** - it was reported that corporate turnover 2006/07 was 11%. Turnover by department was set out in the report.

Specific reference was made to turnover in the Chief Executives Section. It was explained that although turnover in this Section was relatively high further monitoring of the Performance Indicator was required before it could possibly be identified as an area of concern.

It was noted that corporate turnover would be included in the Corporate Plan.

Members queried whether the proposed Local Government Review had an effect on turnover within the Council. It was explained that the issue of Local Government Review was referred to at exit interviews in order to measure the effect on turnover.

Reference was made to Recommendation 2 – **Vacant posts which had not been filled within six months of the first advertisement to be reported to Members.** It was noted that as at 31<sup>st</sup> March nine posts had remained vacant for six months.

It was noted that eight posts within the Housing Property Services division had not been filled due to the uncertainty surrounding housing partnering. The vacant posts had been filled by agency workers.

Although one post in the Valuation and Corporate Property Services Section was occupied by an agency worker, the cost was no greater than that of employing a permanent member of staff.

- RECOMMENDED :*
1. *That progress on the Action Plan for the Overview and Scrutiny Review of Recruitment and Retention be noted.*
  2. *That progress on the Action Plan be reviewed in 12 months.*

**SL.5/07**

### **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL: RECRUITMENT OF TWO SENIOR OFFICERS**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services regarding the recruitment of two senior officers to the Development Control Team. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members were reminded that following a request from Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3, the Director of Neighbourhood Services attended the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 1 on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2007 to discuss the pay structure within the Development Control Division and the plan to recruit two Senior Development Control Officers.

It was reported that the following three vacant posts had now been filled:-

- Principal Development Control Officer
- Development Control Officer
- Planning Enforcement Officer



It was noted that the successful recruitment to these posts addressed the staffing issues within the Development Control Team and would contribute to the improved performance and the quality of service the team aimed to deliver.

*AGREED: That the report be noted and no further action be taken.*

**SL.6/07**

**WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to the Chairman of the Committee setting out the Committee's current Work Programme for consideration and review. (For copy see file of Minutes).

The Committee reviewed the current Work Programme.

It was pointed out that topics for future reviews needed to be identified. It was felt that the Corporate Plan would assist Members when identifying topics for future review.

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

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**ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Mrs. L. Walker Tel 01388 816166 ext 4237 email [lwalker@sedgefield.gov.uk](mailto:lwalker@sedgefield.gov.uk)

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# Item 11b

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

### HEALTHY BOROUGH WITH STRONG COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Sedgefield Borough Council  
Council Chamber,  
Council Offices

Tuesday,  
26 June 2007

Time: 10.00 a.m.

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

Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, Mrs. D. Bowman, Mrs. P. Crathorne, Mrs. S. Haigh, Mrs. H.J. Hutchinson, Mrs. E.M. Paylor, T. Ward and Mrs E. M. Wood

Mrs. M. Thomson

**In Attendance:** Councillors Mrs. L. Cuthbertson, P. Gittins J.P., A. Gray, G.C. Gray, B. Haigh, Mrs. I. Hewitson, T. Hogan and B. Lamb

**Apologies:** Councillors J. Burton, K. Thompson and J. Wayman J.P

#### **H&S.1/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members had no interests to declare.

#### **H&S.2/07 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### **H&S.3/07 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW: REGENERATION OF NEIGHBOURHOODS WITH OLDER PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING PROGRESS ON ACTION PLAN**

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive detailing progress to date from Cabinet's Response and Action Plan following consideration of its recommendation arising from the Regeneration of Older Private Sector Housing Review Group. (For copy see file of Minutes).

G. Wood, Regeneration Manager, Mrs. D. Hedley, Housing Strategy Manager also attended the Committee to give a presentation regarding the progress. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members were reminded of the background and recommendations provided by the Review Group, the number of documents that had been identified and were important in supporting the recommendations and the scheme. The process the Review Group followed highlighting the number of proposals made and to which recommendation they supported. It also highlighted the various proposals and strategies to

deliver housing-led Regeneration specifically to Dean Bank and West Chilton and how the projects would be phased, identifying the funding needed and how the scheme would be delivered both internally and externally.

The Committee was informed that although a light touch approach had been agreed with regard to securing empty properties, it had not been successful. Consideration therefore needed to be given to boarding/ bricking up the properties.

With regard to options for those residents needing to be rehoused and issues regarding equity, it was pointed out that an independent financial adviser had been appointed. Staff were currently being trained and training would be available for Members in the future. With regard to equity issues it was agreed that Members be issued with a document to update them of the situation.

A question was raised regarding Three Rivers and whether they were involved in the scheme. Members were informed that they were involved mainly in Ferryhill Station.

Discussion was held regarding the Neighbourhood Management Scheme that was implemented with the Master Plan at Newton Aycliffe. It was pointed out that it had been an excellent scheme, however, as it was removed and not replaced after its three-year life span, the area had again begun to decline. It was suggested that it be taken into consideration during the Master Plan for Ferryhill.

Finally discussion was held regarding Selective Licensing and the need to consider selective tenants. It was explained that the legislation would be rolled out in the areas with most need, within the Master Plan, however, if it was successful then it could be rolled out to other areas.

- AGREED :*
- 1. That the Committee was satisfied with progress of the Action Plan for the Overview and Scrutiny Review for the Regeneration of Neighbourhoods with Older Private Sector Housing.*
  - 2. That the Committee reviews the progress of the Action Plan in six months.*

#### **H&S.4/07**

#### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW GROUP REPORT - THE PROVISION OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING**

Consideration was given to the progress to date from Cabinet's Response and Action Plan following consideration of its recommendations arising from the Provision of Affordable Housing Review Group. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members of the Committee noted the progress.

- AGREED :*
- 1. That the Committee note the response of Cabinet to the recommendations of the Review together with the implementation timetable outlined.*

2. *That the Committee reviews the progress on the Action Plan in six months.*

**H&S.5/07 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW GROUP REPORT - LEISURE CENTRE CONCESSIONARY PRICING SCHEME**

Consideration was given to the progress to date from Cabinet's Response and Action Plan following consideration of its recommendation arising from the Leisure Centre Concessionary Pricing Scheme Review Group. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members of the committee noted the progress.

- AGREED :**
1. *That the Committee notes the response of Cabinet to the recommendations of the Review together with the implementation timetable outlined.*
  2. *That Committee reviews progress on the Action Plan in six months.*

**H&S.6/07 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).

Consideration was given to an item referred from the Strategic Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider funding for CCTV camera contributions as a future item on their Work Programme. It was pointed out that the Committee had received a presentation in October, 2006 regarding CCTV which included funding arrangements. The Committee, however, requested that an update report be presented to a future Committee.

- AGREED :**
1. *That CCTV be included as a future item within their Work Programme.*
  2. *That the Work Programme be noted.*

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# Item 11c

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

### PROSPEROUS AND ATTRACTIVE BOROUGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Council Chamber,  
Council Offices  
Spennymoor

Tuesday,  
10 July 2007

Time: 10.00 a.m.

- Present:** Councillor G.C. Gray (Chairman) and  
Councillors Mrs. L. M.G. Cuthbertson, Mrs. I. Hewitson, G.M.R. Howe,  
B. Lamb, Mrs. E. Maddison, J. Robinson J.P, A. Smith, B. Stephens and  
A. Warburton
- In Attendance:** Councillors V. Chapman, A. Gray, B. Haigh, Mrs. S. Haigh, J.E. Higgin,  
Mrs. H.J. Hutchinson, Mrs. E.M. Paylor, K. Thompson and T. Ward
- Apologies:** Councillors P. Gittins J.P. and D.M. Hancock

**P&A.1/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
No declarations of interest were received.

**P&A.2/07 MINUTES**  
The Minutes of the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 held on 24<sup>th</sup> April, 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**P&A.3/07 DRAFT CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY**  
Members were presented with details of a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan (for copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that the Technical Services Manager, the Sustainable Communities Team Leader and the Energy Officer were present at the meeting to explain the Strategy, and answer any queries.

The Committee was informed that the draft Strategy and actions were being presented that day as part of the consultation process. Members comments would be taken into account and considered for incorporation within the Strategy which would then be submitted to Cabinet.

The Strategy covered the background and drivers for change, climate patterns, impact on service delivery, policy context, the role of local authorities, the current situation, aims and objectives and actions needed.

The Strategy was a medium term framework to cover until 2012. It was a framework for the authority, which needed to lead by example. A Borough-wide Strategy would be prepared the following year.

Members were reminded that at the meeting of Council in June 2007, the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change had been signed. One of the actions within the declaration was to publicly declare, with plans and strategies, the Council's commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from its own operations.

There was a need to consider how the Council could adapt to climate change, the impact on services and how the impact could be reduced. There was a need to ensure a sustainable infrastructure so that services were able to adapt to change and earlier effective action could be taken.

The Council's aim was to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 15% by 2012 meeting yearly 3% reduction targets to ensure the dependence on finite fossil were reduced. The Council also aimed to fully prepare services and communities for the potential impacts of climate change.

An Action Plan was drawn up to meet those aims and a number of key actions and objectives were identified in the areas of development and planning, housing, transport, sustainable procurement and awareness raising.

In respect of development and planning, the key actions identified were aimed at reducing the impact of development on climate change through the Local Development Framework, incorporating energy from renewable sources in new development and taking account of climate conditions in the design of new development.

The key actions suggested in respect of public buildings and consumption of natural resources were aimed at encouraging energy conservation initiatives and looking at on-site renewable technology for generating electricity.

Housing was the main area where residents could have an impact. The actions in relation to the Housing functions included providing energy efficiency and grants advice, reviewing heating systems in grouped accommodation and regular inspections of the housing stock in relation to the adverse impacts of climate change.

Green space and biodiversity key actions included the development of a green space strategy and incorporating potential climate change impacts into management plans.

In respect of transport key actions related to the Council's Travel Plan and the aim of reducing costs and fuel consumption of the Council's fleet.

Reference was then made to sustainable procurement and the key actions, suggested to achieve value for money whilst achieving the least impact on the community.

To make progress there had to be awareness-raising by creating a wider knowledge and persuading people to adopt a sustainable lifestyle and the key actions in this area were identified.



It was noted that the Council had a responsibility to ensure that each key action was improved and maximised where appropriate, the overall programme and actions within the strategy were being implemented effectively and that individual actions were meeting strategic objectives and leading Sedgefield Borough Council towards fulfilling their aims.

A query was raised regarding car sharing. In response it was explained that the Council was encouraging staff to car share and had established a Car Sharing Scheme.

Reference was made to partnership working and the need for the Council to work with other organisations and agencies such as the Environment Agency. It was explained that this particular strategy referred to the provision of Council services and did not provide a strategy for the Borough as a whole. The Borough Strategy would be produced the following year when partnership working with such organisations as the Local Strategic Partnership etc., would take place. Working with the Environment Agency would also be linked to the Borough-wide strategy and any specific issues would be dealt with at that time. The Borough Plan would also be a much wider strategy dealing with transport etc.

A query was also raised regarding funding and grants available to carry out the actions. In response it was explained that there were grants available from DEFRA to deal with renewable energy technologies and the Council worked with the Carbon Trust, which was Government funded, to draw up action plans to reduce emissions.

With regard to a query on the aim of all new developments achieving a 10% renewable energy source, it was explained that there were various innovative ways by which developers could meet the requirements. There was a need to work with those responsible for delivery to achieve an outcome which was acceptable.

In respect of targets towards achieving the figures and comparison with other local authorities, it was explained that each local authority compiled data in different ways and therefore comparison was difficult. The Council was meeting targets in most areas and reducing emissions. However, the Council needed to concentrate on electricity consumption. Information was received from other authorities in terms of draft strategies for comment. When the Council's Borough-wide Strategy was released it would be forwarded to other authorities for comment.

In respect of the Waste Management targets for 2007/8 the aim was to recycle 20% of domestic waste. The situation was that the Council was on target to achieve 25%.

In response to a query raised regarding an analysis of the cost of the exercise, it was explained that the cost over and above the salary of the Energy Officer was minimal.

Dealing with a query regarding information on energy ratings of properties, it was explained that there would be a database which would

record the energy efficiency of all housing. Information would be gathered from external sources. Software would be used which would allow the information to be assessed on a Ward basis.

Discussion was held regarding capping and whether capital charges would be ringfenced, in respect of Council houses, from the Housing Revenue Account.

- AGREED :*
- 1. That the Strategy and Action Plan be commended to Cabinet for approval.*
  - 2. That reports be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on a six monthly basis in respect of progress.*

**P&A.4/07      WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to the Work Programme for Prosperous and Attractive Borough Overview and Scrutiny Committee. (For copy see file of Minutes).

*AGREED :*      *That the Work Programme be approved.*

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## **SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Council Chamber,  
Council Offices,  
Spennymoor

Tuesday,  
28<sup>th</sup> August 2007

Time: 10.00 a.m.

- Present:** Councillor A. Gray (Chairman) and  
Councillors B.F. Avery J.P, D.R. Brown, D. Farry, T.F. Forrest, B. Haigh,  
T. Hogan, Ms. I. Jackson and B.M. Ord
- Apologies:** Councillors V. Chapman and Mrs. J. Gray

**SL.7/07            DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**  
Members had no declarations of interest to submit.

**SL.8/07            MINUTES**  
The Minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes).

**SL.9/07            OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW GROUP REPORT: REVIEW OF THE COUNCILS COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER INFORM - ACTION PLAN UPDATE**  
Consideration was given to a report of the Chairman of the Committee detailing progress to date on Cabinet's response and Action Plan following its consideration of the recommendations arising from the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Review of the Councils Community Newspaper Inform. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members were informed of the progress made on each of the recommendations, pointing out that a number of them were ongoing.

With regard to the distribution of Inform it was pointed out that there were still rural areas where it was not distributed. It was explained that the Northern Echo was responsible for distributing Inform along with the other free papers, however if there were any known addresses to inform the Press and Public Relations Officer who would look into the matter.

Discussion was held regarding Informs target audience and the need to further involve the community, specifically the young and the elderly. To inform them of local activities and issues that effect them, such as publishing what would be considered by the Development Control Committee the following month. It was pointed out that it had been suggested at a previous Development Control Committee. The matter would be looked into.

It was also pointed out that leisure activities and a 'what's on' column was published. A meeting between the Press and Public Relations Officer and A. Coulthard, Regeneration Officer (Community Participation) was scheduled to discuss the matter.

Comments were also received regarding the need to include comments from the Opposition Members, were the Leader of the Council had published a statement. The importance of publishing comments from the Leader of the Council was pointed out.

The importance of officers submitting articles or informing the Press and Public Relations Officer of areas of interest was reiterated. It was explained that the information needed to be submitted the month before to ensure publication for the following month.

*RECOMMENDED: That progress on the Action Plan for the Overview and Scrutiny Review of the Council's Community Newspaper Inform be noted.*

**SL.10/07**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW GROUP REPORT: REVIEW OF SICKNESS MANAGEMENT - ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

Consideration was given to report of the Chairman of the Committee detailing progress to date on Cabinet's Response and Action Plan following its consideration of the recommendations arising from the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Review of Sickness Management. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members of the Committee were reminded of the reason for beginning the review, to monitor the performance of sickness management as it had been identified as under achieving in its Performance Indicator.

Reference was made to the first recommendation, where it was explained that the procedures had been implemented in July 2007, with all employees receiving the new Code of Conduct, highlighting their new obligations. As it was a recent introduction there had been no improvement identified to the levels of sickness, however it was anticipated that the procedures would improve sickness levels.

Copies of the Code of Conduct were also available for Members.

It was suggested that a further report be submitted to the Committee in 6 months time.

Comments were received regarding the success York City Council had identified after implementing its changes. It was explained to the Committee that York City Council had employed a private company to be responsible for sickness. A Call Centre was introduced as the first point of contact for employees reporting sickness. It was pointed out that Durham City Council were now using the same system and a meeting was scheduled to view it.

Questions were raised regarding levels of stress related sickness, whether it was acknowledged and what systems were in place to support an employee. The Committee was informed that stress was acknowledged as a sickness and was one of the highest reasons. With regard to support mechanisms it was pointed out that there was an early referral procedure to Occupational Health, who would monitor the employee and refer to a stress counsellor, external to the organisation for a ten-week programme. If after the programme the employee had not returned to work they would be eased back into work over a two-month period while monitored by Occupational Health.

Questions were raised regarding figures and trends within sickness. It was pointed out that the average number of days an employee was absent through sickness was 11.2 days per year, with a total average of 954 days per year throughout the Council. Figures regarding employees who were never sick and those who were often sick were requested. It was explained that the information was not available immediately and would have to be prepared.

Trends regarding sickness absence between manual and administration staff were also requested and patterns between sickness taken on Friday and Monday. It was explained that there were higher levels of sickness within the manual workforce, however figures could be provided by department together with days taken.

- RECOMMENDED:**
1. *That progress on the Action Plan for the Overview and Scrutiny Review of Sickness Management be noted.*
  2. *That progress on the Action Plan be reviewed in 6 months.*

## **SL.11/07**

### **WORK PROGRAMME**

Consideration was given to the Chairman of the Committee setting out the Committee's current Work Programme for consideration and review. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members of the Committee suggested that consideration be given to reviewing the effects becoming a unitary authority would have on Sedgefield Borough Council. It was agreed to look into the matter and discuss with the relevant officer.

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

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#### **ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

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# Item 11e

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

### HEALTHY BOROUGH WITH STRONG COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Sedgefield Borough Council  
Council Chamber,  
Council Offices

Tuesday,  
11 September 2007

Time: 10.00 a.m.

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

Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, Mrs. D. Bowman, Mrs. P. Crathorne,  
Mrs. S. Haigh, K. Thompson, T. Ward and Mrs E. M. Wood

Mrs. M. Thompson

**Present  
with  
Chairmans  
Consent:**

Mrs. K. Conroy

**In  
Attendance:**

Councillors D. Farry, P. Gittins J.P., A. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray, B. Haigh,  
T. Hogan and Mrs. I. Jackson

**Apologies:**

Councillors J. Burton, Mrs. H.J. Hutchinson, Mrs. E.M. Paylor and  
J. Wayman J.P

#### **H&S.7/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members had no interests to declare.

#### **H&S.8/07 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26<sup>th</sup> June, 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes).

#### **H&S.9/07 FORMAL CONSULTATION ON TEES, ESK AND WEAR VALLEYS NHS TRUST PLANS TO BECOME A NHS FOUNDATION TRUST**

The Committee was informed that Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust was undergoing formal consultation on their plans to apply to become an NHS Foundation Trust by April 2008. The formal consultation period ran from 9 July to 29 September 2007. The Trust had invited the Council to comment on their plans. D Kerr, Project Manager for the Trust, was in attendance at the meeting to give a presentation on the Trust's proposals, and respond to Members questions. The purpose of the item was to enable the Committee to consider the proposals and respond a number of questions included in the consultation document in order to assist the Cabinet formulate a formal response to the consultation exercise.

Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust provided a range of mental health, learning disability and substance misuse services for the 1.4 million people living in County Durham, the Tees Valley and North East Yorkshire. The Trust employed 5,000 staff, who work from over 100 sites as well as directly into local people's homes and held an annual budget of over £200 million to provide services.

The consultation document entitled 'Making a Difference Together' outlined the Trust's plans to apply to become an NHS Foundation Trust by April 2008. (For copy see file of Minutes). The Trust was not consulting on becoming a Foundation Trust (FT), as that was Government Policy, but were seeking views on their plans for the future and their proposals on how they intended operated as a Foundation Trust.

D Kerr explained that the Trust was committed to involving service users, carers and staff in planning and developing services and that becoming an FT would provide a new way of involving local people in what it did.

The Trust proposed to establish a membership that properly represented the communities they served and would make sure that everyone had an equal opportunity to contribute. The Trust would look for ways to recruit members from any underrepresented groups or areas of the trust.

The Trust provided services for many people who felt excluded from society because of their health problems or the stigma attached to them and therefore it was proposed that membership should be as inclusive as possible. All members would be asked to sign up to an agreed code of conduct. Members would be grouped into constituencies. Two elected categories of membership was proposed – public and staff. People could only be members of one constituency at a time.

### **Public Membership**

The Trust aimed to reduce the stigma attached to the services they provided, and the people they supported, and proposed not to isolate service users and carers into separate membership categories. Instead they wanted to integrate them into their public membership. The Trust did not want to differentiate between people who already used their services and those who may need their support in the future.

It was therefore proposed that the public constituency be open to anyone aged 14 or over who lived in the area. An alternative would be to have separate constituencies for service users and carers.

Members would be grouped depending on where they live eg Durham, North East Yorkshire, or Middlesbrough. Seven public constituencies were proposed, each one would be represented by governors on the Council of Governors, with one governor per 50,000 of population.



## **Staff Membership**

The Trust wanted their staff to be fully involved in the FT to influence how services developed in the future. It was therefore proposed that all staff automatically become members. They would have the right to opt out if they did not want to be members. If they decided to opt out of the staff constituency they could still be members of the public constituency if they lived in the area the trust serves.

It was also proposed that this constituency included staff who were not directly employed by them, but work closely with them and make a significant contribution to our services, including social care staff working in integrated teams and external contractors such as some catering and cleaning staff.

The staff constituency would be sub-divided into eight groups or classes, and each class would elect representatives to sit on the Council of Governors.

## **Council of Governors**

To ensure a wide representation a total of 54 governors was proposed. The Trust proposed that a Council of Governors be established rather than a Board of Governors. The title 'Council of Governors' better reflected the wide representation of organisations and groups that would make up the body.

The Council of Governors would have the following roles:

- *Guardianship* – making sure the trust complies with the terms of its authorisation by Monitor, the independent FT regulator, and that corporate objectives are met,
- *Advisory* – acting as a channel for the flow of information to and from the membership,
- *Strategic* – advising on the future strategic direction of the trust.

The Council of Governors would be made up of elected representatives of the members, and people appointed by local partner organisations.

Governors would not be responsible for the day to day running of the trust, but would, in the first year approve the trust's chairman and non-executive directors, and in subsequent years appoint people to these important posts.

It was proposed that the Council of Governors include elected Governors and Non-Elected Governors as follows:

## **Elected Governors**

28 Public governors based on population, with one governor per 50,000 people:

- County Durham (10)
- Darlington (2)
- Hartlepool (2)
- Stockton (4)
- Middlesbrough (3)
- Redcar & Cleveland (3)
- North East Yorkshire (4)

9 staff governors, one for each of the following classes:

- Older people's mental health services
- Children and young people's services
- Learning disability services
- Forensic services
- Corporate support services
- Medical staff
- Nursing staff
- Adult mental Health
- Substance misuse

Public and staff places on the Council of Governors would be filled by an election process where all members vote for their preferred representative. Elections would be by secret ballot arranged by an independent organisation. Elected governors would usually be appointed for a term of up to three years.

## **Non-Elected governors**

It was proposed that 17 Non-Elected Governors be appointed by the following key partners:

- County Durham Primary Care Trust (PCT) and
- Darlington PCT
- PCTs from across Teesside
- North Yorkshire and York PCT
- North East Mental Health and Learning Disability
- Commissioning Directorate
- Durham County Council
- Darlington Borough Council
- Hartlepool Borough Council
- Stockton Borough Council
- Middlesbrough Borough Council
- Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council
- North Yorkshire County Council

- University of Teesside
- Durham University
- Local acute NHS trusts
- Local prisons
- The local voluntary sector.

The Trust wanted to encourage people from all the communities they served to be involved as a member or governor, however there were legal restrictions that needed to be taken into account. Although it was proposed that people 14 years and over could become members, legally elected governors must be at least 16 years old. In addition, people who have been declared bankrupt or received a prison sentence of three months or more in the past five years are not eligible for election.

Members and governors were not paid, but governors would be entitled to receive expenses in connection with attending meetings in line with carrying out duties as a governor.

Following the presentation and questions D Kerr and the Cabinet Member left the meeting to allow the Committee to deliberate on its recommendations.

In relation to the appointment of non-elected governors, the Committee suggested that the Police Authorities that covered the Trust's area should be included as key partners.

- RECOMMENDED :*
1. *That the proposed age limit for membership be agreed.*
  2. *The proposed membership categories be agreed.*
  3. *The integration of service users and carers into the public constituency to promote inclusion and tackle stigma be agreed.*
  4. *That the Trust's staff should be able to opt out of membership rather than opt in.*
  5. *That the proposed categories for staff membership be agreed.*
  6. *That the Trust should have a Council rather than a Board of Governors.*
  7. *That the proposed structure of the Council of Governors be agreed.*
  8. *That the proposed number of public and staff members on the Council of Governors be agreed.*

9. *That in addition to the key partner organisations identified in the consultation document, relevant Police Authorities should be represented on the Council of Governors.*

## **H&S.10/07 CHOICE BASED LETTINGS**

I. Brown, Head of Housing Management and M. Ferguson, Area Housing Manager attended the meeting to give a presentation detailing the requirements for the Council to implement Choice Based Lettings. (For copy see file of Minutes).

The Committee was given an outline of Choice Based Lettings and were informed that it was a national policy requirement, to be implemented by 2010. The presentation detailed how Choice Based Lettings and Sub-Regional Choice Based Lettings worked including the procedure available for homeseekers. The current position of the scheme was provided, detailing dates for when the consultation on the draft Choice Based Lettings Statutory Guidance had been issued. It was pointed out that the finalised guidance had not yet been issued.

The benefits of adopting the scheme were pointed out detailing performance and cost, transparency and funding. The challenges were then outlined for introducing and implementing the scheme.

Concerns were raised regarding funding and the cost to local residents together with the possibility that they could be disadvantaged when bidding for a property as a result of people moving into the area. It was explained that all homeseekers would be required to complete the same application form and points would be awarded for meeting certain criteria.

It was pointed out that the Residents Association had visited Middlesbrough Council where the scheme had been successfully implemented.

It was suggested that the Committee be updated on the progress of implementing the scheme in six months time.

- RECOMMENDED :**
1. *That the information outlined in the presentation be noted.*
  2. *That the Committee receive an update on the progress of implementing Choice Based Lettings in six months time.*

## **H&S.11/07 DURHAM COUNTY COUNCIL HEALTH SCRUTINY SUB COMMITTEE**

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> April and 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2007 be noted. (For copy see file of Minutes).

## **H&S.12/07    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 of the Committee were informed that a workshop would be arranged with all Overview and Scrutiny Members to discuss the reorganisation of Local Government and to identify future review topics in line with priorities within the Council's Corporate Plan.

*AGREED:            That the Work Programme be noted.*

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Any person wishing to exercise the right of inspection, etc., in relation to these Minutes and associated papers should contact Miss. S. Billingham, Tel 01388 816166 Ext 4240, [sbillingham@sedgefield.gov.uk](mailto:sbillingham@sedgefield.gov.uk)

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# Item 12

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA 1 FORUM

Village Hall,  
Byers Green

Monday,  
3 September 2007

Time: 6.30 p.m.

**Present:** Councillor A. Smith (Chairman) – Sedgefield Borough Council and

- Councillor Mrs. A.M. Armstrong – Sedgefield Borough Council
- Councillor A. Gray – Sedgefield Borough Council
- Councillor J.M. Khan – Sedgefield Borough Council
- Councillor Mrs. E. Maddison – Sedgefield Borough Council
- Councillor C. Nelson – Sedgefield Borough Council
- Councillor B.M. Ord – Sedgefield Borough Council
- Councillor K. Thompson – Sedgefield Borough Council
- Councillor W. Waters – Sedgefield Borough Council
- Councillor Mrs E. M. Wood – Sedgefield Borough Council
- Inspector A. Green – Durham Constabulary
- Councillor E. Foster – Durham County Council
- A. Lamb – Greenways Residents Association
- E. Croft – Neighbourhood Watch
- D. Acock – Spennymoor Settlement
- M. Jackson – Spennymoor Settlement
- Councillor Miss S.L. Armstrong – Spennymoor Town Council
- Councillor C. Maddison – Elected Member – Tudhoe Grange and Low Spennymoor Ward, Spennymoor Town Council
- I. Lessiter – St. Pauls Residents Association
- I. Geldard – UK Youth Parliament
- D. Gordon – Local Resident

### In

**Attendance:** C. Donaghy and G. Garrigan – Sedgefield Borough Council

**Apologies:** Councillor Mrs. B. Graham - Sedgefield Borough Council  
Councillor J. Graham – SpennymoOR Town Council  
A. Inglis – County Durham PCT

### AF(1)7/07

#### DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillors indicated that they would be declaring an interest in Item 5 – Sedgefield Borough Local Improvement Programme – Application Report – Spennymoor Settlement Regeneration Project.

Councillor Mrs. A.M. Armstrong	-	Prejudicial Interest – Member of Sedgefield Borough Cabinet
Councillor J.M. Khan	-	Prejudicial Interest – Member of Sedgefield Borough Cabinet
Councillor W. Waters	-	Prejudicial Interest – Member of Sedgefield Borough Cabinet

**AF(1)8/07**

**MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**AF(1)9/07**

**SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME - APPLICATION REPORT - SPENNYMOOR SETTLEMENT REGENERATION PROJECT**

**NB : In accordance with Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Members Code of Conduct, Councillors Mrs. A.M. Armstrong, J. M. Khan and W. Waters declared a prejudicial interest in the above item and left the meeting for the duration of discussion on the item.**

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

D. Acock, Spennymoor Settlement, was in attendance to present the application.

The Forum was reminded that at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2006, it had supported the Settlement Project going forward for Local Improvement Programme funding to the value of £118,106. Following that meeting, a technical study had been undertaken by the Council's Property Services Team on behalf of the Settlement to examine the full scheme costs and establish a more accurate project budget. The study identified additional work in relation to disabled access, security systems /emergency lighting and building inflation, which resulted in the anticipated project cost increasing to £250,000. Consequently the Settlement was now seeking £140,000 of Local Improvement Project funding.

It was reported that the Settlement had been very successful with its fund raising and could contribute £110,000 in 'matched funding' to the project, reducing the percentage of LIP funding required to 56% of the project cost.

C. Donaghy, Regeneration Section, reported that Area 1 Forum had an LIP allocation of £278,800 for 2006/07, of which £54,882 had been allocated to two schemes – Tudhoe Grange School and Middlestone Moor Playground. Further funding of £278,800 was available during the 2007/08 financial year for other projects within the Area 1 Forum locality.

The Forum congratulated the members of the Settlement on their fund raising efforts and agreed to support the project.

**AF(1)10/07**

**NAMING OF DEVELOPMENT RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT ON LAND AT GRAYSON ROAD, SPENNYMOOR**

Consideration was given to a report of the Building Control Manager regarding a request from George Wimpey (North Yorkshire) Limited to officially name and number the above site, comprising of 159 dwellings. (For copy see file of Minutes).



The site was currently being marketed by the developer as “Moorcroft” and six street names were required.

After due consideration the Forum agreed to put forward the following names:

- Everson Way
- Skylark Crescent
- Snowdrop Drive
- Charhill Close
- Mulberry Drive
- Lavender Lane

**AF(1)11/07 POLICE REPORT (LOCAL ISSUES AND ROAD SAFETY)**

Inspector Adrian Green was present at the meeting and gave details of the crime figures for the area.

The reported crime figures for June and July 2007 were as follows:

	<u>June 2007</u>	<u>July 2007</u>
Vehicle Crime	10	10
Violent Crime	20	7
Burglary (Dwellinghouse)	13	5
Burglary (Other)	7	10
Rowdy/Nuisance Behaviour (Alcohol-related incidents)	86	106
Sex Offences	47	78
Criminal Damage	2	3
	29	36

It was reported that the total number of crimes in July was 304 compared with 245 for August. The detection rate was 39%.

With regard to road traffic accidents the figures were as follows:

	<u>June 2007</u>	<u>July 2007</u>
Damage only accidents	10	15
Minor injuries	8	8
Fatalities	0	0

Specific reference was made to the Anti-Social Behaviour Order, which had been granted that day in respect of Thomas John Andrew Kailofer of Spennymoor.

Concern was also expressed regarding the large number of travellers, who were illegally camped on the grounds of a former dog racing track at Merrington Lane, Spennymoor.

It was reported that the Borough Council as landowner was working with the County Council's liaison officer regarding the travellers and papers would be served the following day, if they had not left the site.

The Forum was informed that a meeting of the Police Community Consultative Group was to be held on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> September 2007 at Ferryhill Town Hall at 7.00 p.m. Members of the public could attend and ask questions about any police matter of concern or interest.

Inspector Green reported that he would not be the Police representative at future meetings of Area 1 Forum as he was taking up a post at Darlington. Members of the Forum congratulated him on his promotion and thanked him for his help and assistance.

**AF(1)12/07      CLEANING OF DRAINS, DURHAM ROAD, SPENNYMOOR**

Reference was made to the drains in the vicinity of 223, Durham Road, Spennymoor and the need to ensure that they were kept clear as they were prone to flooding.

**AF(1)13/07      LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW**

It was reported that Sedgfield Borough Council along with the six other District Councils in County Durham had agreed to challenge the Secretary of State's decision to impose a single unitary council across County Durham. It was felt that the Government acted unlawfully and had refused to take account of the views of people of County Durham. A number of other Councils were taking similar actions and the legal challenge by Shrewsbury and Atcham Councils would be the first case to be heard on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> September 2007. The outcome of that hearing would undoubtedly effect how the Durham District Councils progressed their challenge. In the meantime, the District Councils were working closely with Durham County Council.

**AF(1)14/07      DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 29<sup>th</sup> October at 6.30 p.m. at Tudhoe Community Centre.

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**ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

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

# Item 13

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

### EMPLOYMENT ISSUES PANEL

Conference Room 2,  
Council Offices,  
Spennymoor

Wednesday,  
19 September 2007

Time: 10.00 a.m.

**Present:** Councillor A. Hodgson (Chairman) and

Councillors A. Gray, G.C. Gray, Mrs. H.J. Hutchinson, Mrs. E. Maddison  
and A. Smith

**Apologies:** Councillor D.M. Hancock

#### EIP.4/07

#### **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

#### EIP.5/07

#### **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor A. Smith reported that he would be declaring a personal and prejudicial interest in Item No. 6 as he knew the applicant.

#### **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

*RESOLVED: That in accordance with Section 100(a)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they may involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 12a of the Act.*

#### EIP.6/07

#### **APPLICATION FOR FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT**

The Panel considered a joint report of the Chief Executive and Director of Neighbourhood Services regarding an application for flexible retirement. (For copy see file of Minutes)

Members were reminded that in accordance with the Council's adopted Flexible Retirement Policy, all applications for flexible retirement must be considered on an individual basis and decisions made on the merits of each case. Requested reductions in hours and / or grade must be compatible with the business requirements of the Council and should only be allowed in circumstances where the request did not adversely effect Council services.

The Panel considered the application, taking account of the evaluation criteria set out in Paragraph 3.3 of the report.

*RESOLVED: That application for flexible retirement be approved subject to full Council approving the necessary organisational re-structures.*

**EIP.7/07**

**APPLICATION TO RETIRE UNDER REGULATION 31 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSIONS SCHEME (LGPS)**

The Panel considered a report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services regarding an application to retire under Regulation 31 of the Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS).

It was explained that Regulation 31 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LPGS) allowed an employee, aged 50 or over to apply to the Council to retire early. Furthermore if age and contributory service, when added together total 85, the benefits could be paid on an unreduced basis.

The Panel considered the application taking account of the guidance set out in paragraph 3 of the report.

*RESOLVED : That the application to retire early under Regulation 31 of the LGPS be approved.*

**EIP.8/07**

**APPLICATION TO RETIRE UNDER REGULATION 31 OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSIONS SCHEME (LGPS)**

**N.B. In accordance with Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Members' Code of Conduct, Councillor A. Smith declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the above item and left the meeting for the duration of discussion and voting on the item.**

The Panel considered a report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services regarding an application to retire under Regulation 31 of the Local Government Pensions Scheme (LGPS).

It was explained that Regulation 31 of the Local Government Pension Scheme (LPGS) allowed an employee, aged 50 or over to apply to the Council to retire early. Furthermore if age and contributory service, when added together total 85, the benefits could be paid on an unreduced basis.

The Panel considered the application taking account of the guidance set out in paragraph 3 of the report.

*RESOLVED : That the application to retire early under Regulation 31 of the LGPS be approved.*

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**ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

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