

CABINET

Thursday, 11 October 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 27th September 2007. (Pages 1 - 6)

KEY DECISION

HOUSING PORTFOLIO

4. UPDATING THE STOCK OPTIONS APPRAISAL STUDY

Report of Director of Housing. (Pages 7 - 14)

MINUTES

5. PROSPEROUS AND ATTRACTIVE BOROUGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 25th September 2007. (Pages 15 - 18)

6. AREA FORUMS

To consider the minutes of the following:

(a) Area 2 Forum - 11th September 2007 (Pages 19 - 22)

(b) Area 3 Forum - 19th September 2007 (Pages 23 - 26)

7. 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
3rd October 2007

Councillor Mrs. A.M. Armstrong (Chairman)

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

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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

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Item 3

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL CABINET

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Thursday,
27 September 2007

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor Mrs. A.M. Armstrong (Chairman) and

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

In

Attendance: Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, Mrs. P. Crathorne, P. Gittins J.P., A. Gray,
B. Haigh, Mrs. S. Haigh, T. Hogan, Mrs. E. Maddison, Mrs. E.M. Paylor,
A. Smith, A. Warburton and T. Ward

CAB.65/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Mrs. L. Hovvels and D. A. Newell reported that they would be declaring a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 11e - Minutes of the meeting of Healthy Borough With Strong Communities Overview And Scrutiny Committee held on 11th September 2007 as they were board members of the Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust.

CAB.66/07 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13th September 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.67/07 COBBLERS HALL RE-DEVELOPMENT (KEY DECISION)

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

Members were reminded that Cabinet, at its meeting on 2nd November 2006 had considered a report regarding the redevelopment of the areas of land shown on the plan and had requested that public consultations be undertaken to provide a base from which to advance the project.

Since that meeting, approximately 1700 responses had been gathered and evaluated and it was clear that local residents valued the open space and wanted to be able to use the space informally for walking, cycling, sitting and relaxing. There was also a need to construct new and improve existing senior and junior soccer pitches and provide new changing accommodation.

It was proposed that a sum of £800,00 be allocated towards the project from the Council's Major Regeneration Initiatives Programme.

It was pointed out that in order to mitigate future revenue costs to the Borough Council, discussions were taking place with Great Aycliffe Town

Council to establish its willingness to take over the responsibility for maintaining the development, subject to a transfer of land on agreed terms.

- RESOLVED :**
- 1. That the Design and Build project team be commissioned, subject to a satisfactory outcome of discussions with Great Aycliffe Town Council regarding its contribution towards ongoing revenue costs.*
 - 2. That the sum of £800,000 be allocated towards the project from the Council's Major Regeneration Initiatives programme.*

CAB.68/07 NEWTON AYCLIFFE LEISURE CENTRE REFURBISHMENT (KEY DECISION)

The Lead Member for Leisure and Culture presented a report seeking approval for the sum of £200,000 to be allocated for additional capital works at Newton Aycliffe Leisure Centre within the 2007/08 financial year. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 3 of the report, which listed the works to be undertaken.

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

CAB.69/07 LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME (LIP) SPENNYMOOR SETTLEMENT REGENERATION PROJECT (KEY DECISION)

Consideration was given to a report regarding a Local Improvement Programme application from Spennymoor Settlement Association for funding to completely refurbish and modernise the existing facilities at the Everyman Theatre to enable extra arts and community based activities to be provided. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Members noted that Spennymoor Settlement had been very successful with its fundraising and could contribute £108,000 in matched funding to the project, reducing the percentage of LIP funding to 57% of the total project cost. The project met the Department for Communities and Local Government eligible 'Regeneration Definition' and demonstrated links to the key LIP criteria elements of the Community Strategy. It had also been supported by Area 1 Forum at its meeting on 3rd September 2007.

- RESOLVED :** *That the application for Local Improvement Programme funds based upon the information provided in the report be approved.*

CAB.70/07 COMMISSIONING OF AN AREA ACTION PLAN FOR SPENNYMOOR TOWN CENTRE (KEY DECISION)

Consideration was given a report seeking approval to commission consultants to undertake a master planning exercise to form a Area Action Plan for Spennymoor Town Centre to be adopted as part of the Borough Council's Local Development Framework. (For copy see file of Minutes).

The purpose of the Plan was to provide a comprehensive regeneration framework that challenged existing use, targeted change and inspired action to guide future investment and activity in Spennymoor town centre.

Members noted that the cost of engaging consultants would be met from monies received through the Government's Local Authority Business Growth Initiative, Enabling Capital Investment.

- RESOLVED :*
- 1. That the Area Action Plan brief be endorsed.*
 - 2. That suitably experienced consultants be commissioned to produce an Area Action Plan to meet the requirements of the brief.*

CAB.71/07 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW PROPOSALS - IMPLICATIONS - PROPOSED SINGLE TIER AREAS: PROTECTION OF HISTORIC TRADITIONS AND CEREMONIAL ARRANGEMENTS

Consideration was given to a report setting out the Council's approach to the retention of civic and ceremonial arrangements if local government review proceeded as announced. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was reported that the Government's latest consultation paper 'Councils' Proposals for Unitary Local Government: An Approach to Implementation' had invited comments from affected authorities regarding the preservation of ceremonial and civic traditions by 28th September 2007.

Members noted that the privileges attached to the Council's Charter could be lost if the authority was abolished. The Local Government Public Involvement (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, which could lead to the creation of Charter Trustees.

- RESOLVED :*
- 1. That in response to the consultation paper issued in August 2007, the Council requests that, in the event that the single tier proposals in County Durham proceed, orders and regulations be made to preserve the privileges and rights belonging to the Council arising from the grant of the Royal Charter on 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.*

CAB.72/07 REVENUE BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT - POSITION AT 31ST JULY 2007

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

The report gave details of the approved budget for the main portfolios, profiled budget to 31st July 2007, actual income and expenditure, forecasted outturn for 2007/08 and the variance between the annual budget and projected outturn.

With regard to the General Fund, it was expected that balances amounting to £742,000 would be used, compared to a revised budgeted use of £760,000, a saving of £18,000. The Housing Revenue Account would require the use of revenue balances amounting to £110,000, compared a revised budgeted use of £160,000.

- RESOLVED :**
1. *That the position as at 31st July 2007 be noted.*
 2. *That further reports be submitted detailing the position as at the 30th September 2007, 31st December 2007 and the final outturn position as at 31st March 2008 in line with the Budgetary Control Monitoring Arrangements 2007-2008.*

CAB.73/07 BUDGETARY CONTROL REPORT 2007/08 CAPITAL PROGRAMME EXPENDITURE AND FINANCING POSITION TO 31ST JULY 2007

Consideration was given to a report detailing the progress made to date in meeting the Council's spending targets, the carry forward approved by Council of commitments unspent on the 2006/07 Capital Programme, the available capital resources for financing the programme and new developments that had occurred since the Council had approved the 2007/08 Capital Programme Budget in February 2007. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Reference was made to the table detailed in Paragraph 3.4 of the report, which showed the original approved budget for 2007/08, together with the carry forward commitment from 2006/2007. It also showed all external funding secured to date and the total gross budget reflecting the total capital resources available for the year.

It was reported that a gross total of £4.53m had been spent up to 31st July 2007 or 19% of the gross Capital Programme budget of £23,913 million.

- RESOLVED :**
1. *That the four month spend position to 31st July 2007 be noted.*
 2. *That further reports be submitted to Management Team, Cabinet and all Strategic Working Groups*

detailing the position as at 30th September 2007, 31st December 2007 and final outturn as at 31st March 2008 in line with the Budgetary Control Monitoring Arrangements 2007/08.

CAB.74/07 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the following:

| | | |
|---|---|------------------------------|
| Strategic Leadership Overview and Scrutiny | - | 12 th June 2007 |
| Healthy Borough with Strong Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee | - | 28 th June 2007 |
| Prosperous and Attractive Borough Overview and Scrutiny Committee | - | 10 th July 2007 |
| Strategic Leadership Overview and Scrutiny Committee | - | 28 th August 2007 |

NB. In accordance with Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000 and Members Code of Conduct, Councillors Mrs. L. Hovvels and D.A. Newell declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the following item and left the meeting.

| | | |
|---|---|---------------------------------|
| Healthy Borough with Strong Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee | - | 11 th September 2007 |
|---|---|---------------------------------|

(For copies see file of Minutes).

With regard to Healthy Borough with Strong Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11th September 2007, Members' attention was drawn to Minute No. H&S.9/07 – Formal Consultation on Tees, Esk and Wear Valleys NHS Trust plans to become a NHS Foundation Trust. It was pointed out that the Committee had agreed with the proposals put forward in the consultation document, however it had recommended that relevant Police Authorities should be represented on the Council of Governors, in addition to the key partner organisations identified in the document.

RESOLVED : *That the Committees' recommendations be approved and appropriate action be taken.*

CAB.75/07 AREA 1 FORUM

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd September 2007. (For copy see file of Minutes).

RESOLVED : *That the Minutes be received.*

CAB.76/07 EMPLOYMENT ISSUES PANEL

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the meeting held on 19th September 2007. (For copy see file of Minutes).

RESOLVED : That the Minutes be received.

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 Paragraphs 1 and 6 of Schedule 12a of the Act.

CAB.77/07 ESTABLISHMENT REVIEW NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES DEPARTMENT - APPLICATION FOR FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT (KEY DECISION)

Consideration was given to a report proposing changes to the structure of the Neighbourhood Services Department. (For copy see file of Minutes).

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

CAB.78/07 COMPULSORY PURCHASE AT HAIG, NELSON, WOLSELEY AND CLIVE STREETS, FERRYHILL STATION (KEY DECISION)

Consideration was given to a report seeking approval to implement compulsory purchase powers to facilitate the completion of land acquisition. (For copy see file of Minutes).

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

Published on 28th September 2007.

Any key decisions contained in these Minutes will be implemented on Monday 8th October 2007 unless they are called in by five Members of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee in accordance with the call in procedure rules.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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

Item 4

KEY DECISION

REPORT TO CABINET

11TH OCTOBER 2007

DIRECTOR OF HOUSING

HOUSING PORTFOLIO

UPDATING THE STOCK OPTIONS APPRAISAL STUDY

1. SUMMARY

1.1 Sedgefield Borough Council was one of the first Councils to complete the Government requirement to undertake a Stock Options Appraisal on the future investment and management of its housing stock in 2003. The preferred option as a result of the study was to seek to transfer the ownership of the Council stock to a Registered Social Landlord. This option was subjected to a tenants vote in July 2005, which resulted in the Council retaining its housing stock.

1.2 On the 7th June 2007 Cabinet considered a report that recommended that it would be prudent to revisit the strategic options to consider how the future investment needs of its housing stock can be met whilst ensuring its ongoing effective management. The study has been set within the context of national and local policy changes over the last two years and builds on much of the intelligence available to the Council through the continuous updating of its information base around its housing stock and the wider needs of its communities. This report recommends a preferred option for the future management and maintenance of the Council's housing stock based on three key drivers:-

- The outcome of a financial modelling on the future investment needs of the housing stock set against the available resources over the next 5 years,
- The findings of the Council's Stock Options Appraisal Group,
- The findings of survey of all the Council tenants.

The other elements set out in the Stock Options Appraisal Guidance issued by the Government in 2003 have been considered as part of the research to support the outcome of the study.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 That Cabinet recommend to Council subject to further consultation with relevant stakeholders that Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) be endorsed, and pursued, as the preferred option for the future ownership and management of the Council's housing stock.

3. UPDATING THE STOCK OPTIONS STUDY

3.1 The Government in the Sustainable Communities Plan 2003 required each housing stock owning local authority to undertake a formal 'options appraisal' to determine

the preferred option to meet the investment needed to achieve the Decent Homes Standard, tenants aspirations and to support wider plans for delivering sustainable neighbourhoods and regeneration of the Borough. The Council recommended on 12th September 2003 that Large Scale Voluntary Transfer (LSVT) to a Registered Social Landlord (RSL) was the preferred option for the future ownership and management of its housing stock. Tenants support was sought for the LSVT by undertaking a formal ballot in June 2005, which resulted in the Council retaining its stock.

3.2 Since this date national and local policy changes have emerged that mean it is prudent to revisit our Stock Options Appraisal. The key issues that have emerged as part of this changing policy environment are:-

- Increasing construction costs and the impact on the delivery of the Decent Homes programme.
- Tenants aspirations remain at a higher level than the Decent Homes Standard and are closer to the asset management standard for our stock. This is resulting in increasing pressure from tenants to see investment in their homes and estates above the minimum Decent Homes standard.
- Changes to the housing subsidy system, which has seen increasing levels of resources withdrawn from the housing service. In the current financial year this is excess of £3 million and likely to continue to increase in future years.
- An increased focus on sustainable neighbourhoods and place shaping within Government policy.
- Addressing the issue of delivering more affordable housing across the Borough.
- Modernising and extending support services for vulnerable households and our tenants.
- Meeting the challenge of increasing further community involvement in the management of local services and assets.

3.3 The Options Appraisal Study completed in 2003 fully evaluated all 4 options available for the future ownership and management of the Council housing stock these are:-

- Retention,
- Arms Length Management Organisation (ALMO),
- Private Finance Initiative (PFI),
- Large Scale Voluntary Transfer,

The evaluation of these options looked at their ability to deliver a range of strategic and operational objectives. Two of the options, the establishment of an ALMO and PFI, were not considered suitable or appropriate options as they fail to deliver the capacity to address these strategic and operational objectives. The key elements of these two options remain the same as in 2003 and they have therefore been discounted as sustainable options for the future ownership and management Council's housing stock.

3.4 The updated stock options study three key elements considered were as follows: -

- The outcome of a financial modelling on the future investment needs of the housing stock set against the available resources over the next 5 years,
- The findings of the Council's Stock Options Appraisal Group,
- The findings of survey of all the Council tenants.

The findings from each of these areas of the study have been used to inform the decision on the preferred option for the future of the Council's Housing Stock.

4. STOCK OPTIONS APPRAISAL FINANCIAL MODELLING

4.1 One area of specialist work to support the Stock Options Appraisal Study was to carry out a financial appraisal to determine the available investment needs of the service set against income over the medium term. Price Waterhouse Cooper (PWC) were commissioned to conduct the study. The study took account of the following key elements:-

- The cost to deliver the Decent Homes Standard (the focus of the Councils Housing Capital Programme).
- The asset management costs for the housing stock (a standard that meets tenants' aspirations and the other investments needs of the stock).
- The predicted 'responsive' repairs investment requirements.
- The available capital resources to meet these costs.
- The revenue costs of providing the housing service.
- The available resources to meet these costs including the ongoing impact of the negative subsidy system.

The modelling of these elements was projected over a 5 year period with appropriate sensitivity analysis.

4.2 One key finding that was identified early in the study was the increasing impact of negative subsidy on the money available to invest in our housing and services. In 2007/8 the Council will 'pay back' to the Government £3.343 million or the equivalent of £7.49 per week for every tenanted property. The estimated levels of negative subsidy are predicated to increase over the next 5 years as shown below:-

- £3.343 million in 2007/08
- £4.075 million in 2008/09
- £4.835 million in 2009/10
- £5.650 million in 2010/11
- £6.509 million in 2011/12

The Council must also 'payback' to the Government 75% of the capital receipts it receives from Right to Buys in 2007/8 this amounted to some £5 million.

4.3 The study carried out by PWC considered the impact of two scenarios on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) and the resources available to invest in the housing stock and services. The scenarios were firstly maintaining balances at £2 million and secondly maintaining a contribution from revenue to capital (RCCO) of £1.6 million. However the Council has in the past take a decision to maintain its HRA balances at around the £2million, while attempting to deliver a housing capital

programme of some £8million per annum. This is therefore the main scenario considered in this report.

If the Council wishes to maintain its HRA balances at around a level of £2 million regarded as the appropriate level, the amount of revenue it can contribute to capital (RCCO) will reduce over the next 5 years due to the growing impact of negative subsidy as set out in paragraph 4.2 above. The impact of these changes on the housing capital programme over the next 5 years are set out below:-

| | 2008/09 | 2009/10 | 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 |
|--------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| MRA (£m) | 5.093 | 5.142 | 5.209 | 5.282 | 5.362 |
| Capital (£m) | 0.900 | 0.900 | 0.900 | 0.900 | 0.900 |
| RCCO (£m) | 1.318 | 0.791 | 0.417 | 0.043 | 0.000 |
| Total Spend | 7.311 | 6.833 | 6.526 | 6.225 | 6.262 |

This shows a reduction year on year and an increasing deficit between the actual investment and our normal capital programme level of £8 million per year. If the Council adopted second scenario of maintaining RCCOs at their current level of £1.6 million over the next 5 years this would see the HRA reserves exhausted by 2010/11.

- 4.4 The alternative approach is to consider the resources required to achieve the Decent Homes Standard compared to the asset management standard and identify the funding gap between the two. These figures are shown in the table shown below:-

| Projected Costs | 2006 to December 2010 |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Decent Homes | £25,628,781 |
| Asset Management | £56,096,182 |
| Total | £81,724,963 |
| Anticipated HRA Budgets | £36,688,000 |
| hortfall | £45,036,963 |

- 4.5 In simple terms over this period up to the end of the calendar year 2010 to meet the asset management needs the housing stock (including tenants aspirations) the Council face a shortfall of £45 million. Therefore the Council will be able to deliver the Decent Homes Standard only but not meet the aspirations of its tenants for their homes and estates.

5. THE STOCK OPTIONS APPRAISAL GROUP

- 5.1 A Stock Options Appraisal Group chaired by the Housing Portfolio Holder was established in July 2007. The group was made up of tenants drawn from the Tenants Housing Services Group, Tenants Conference and Leaseholder representation.
- 5.2 The Group was facilitated by consultants from Savills who have experience in conducting stock options appraisals, housing finance and other key related areas of

expertise. The Group were also supported by an Independent Tenants Advisor (ITA) Priority Estates Project as required by the guidance on Stock Option Appraisals. The Group met on a number of occasions over the summer to consider the options for the future management and maintenance of the Council's housing stock, the group received presentations, verbal and written reports and participated in workshop sessions covering the issues each option presented.

- 5.3 The Group's conclusion was that Large Scale Voluntary transfer was the preferred option for the future ownership and management of the housing stock to deliver both tenants aspirations and the Council's wider strategic objectives.

6. STOCK OPTIONS TENANTS SURVEY

- 6.1 In addition to the work of the Stock Options Appraisal Group a newsletter and survey was sent to all Council tenants, approximately 10,500 as joint tenants were consulted. A specialist market research company independently administered the survey on behalf of the Council. The ITA also provided a newsletter setting out their role and provided a freephone telephone help line. The Council's newsletter set out the challenges facing the Council in meeting the investments needs of the Housing Stock and tenants aspirations.

- 6.2 The survey asked 9 questions which focused on capturing tenants understanding of the housing related issues and gathering their views on the option of undertaking further work to develop a Housing Association for the tenants of Sedgfield Borough Council. A total of 2102 (20%) of surveys, however the key question was:-

Do you think it is worth looking again at the option to set up a housing association for Sedgfield Borough tenants?

The results were 74.5% would support this option, 23.7% would not and the question was not answered by 1.8% of respondents.

7. STOCK OPTIONS CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The Financial Appraisal, Stock Options Appraisal Group's findings and the results of the tenants survey indicated the preferred option for the future management and maintenance of the Council's Housing Stock would be to seek its transfer subject to a tenants ballot to a Register Social Landlord.
- 7.2 A place would have to sought on the Housing Transfer Round 2008/9 and it is recommended that delegated authority is given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Housing to seek such a place. It will be necessary to bring further reports to Cabinet on a range of issues to support the delivery of the preferred option.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 A further report will be present to Cabinet detailing the financial implications of taking forward the preferred option for the future of the Council's Housing stock.

9. CONSULTATIONS

- 9.1 Tenants, Leaseholders and other key stakeholders were consulted as set out in this report as part of updating the Stock Option Appraisal. The transfer of the Council housing stock to a Registered Social Landlord would be subject to a ballot of all tenants after a period of both informal and formal consultation. Early discussions have started with the Department of Communities and Local Government regarding the implementation of the Council's preferred option.
- 9.2 In the transition period leading up to the implementation of the proposed Local Government Restructuring that consultation is undertaken with key stakeholders to ensure broad support for the Council's proposals

10. OTHER MATERIAL CONSIDERATIONS

10.1 Links to Corporate Objectives/Values

The Community Strategy Outcomes include a Borough with Strong Communities where residents can access a good choice of high quality housing. The Council's ambitions, which are linked, to the Community Strategy outcomes and are articulated through the Corporate Plan and the Medium Term Financial Plan. Our ambitions include delivering a Borough with Strong Communities with good quality affordable housing in safe neighbourhoods. The preferred option would ensure the Council's housing stock can continue to support these objectives into the future.

10.2 Risk Management

The key risk associated with the report is delivering a successful ballot result, effective informal and formal consultation support by appropriate communications consultants will be key in reducing the risk of a negative result.

10.3 Health & Safety

No additional issues have been identified.

10.4 Equality & Diversity

Full account will be taken of the Council's obligation to promote equality and diversity in the development of this project.

10.5 Legal & Constitutional

Further detailed advice and support will be required from the Council's Legal Service in delivering the preferred options.

10.6 Sustainability

No additional issues have been identified.

10.7 Information Technology

No additional issues have been identified.

10.8 Crime and Disorder

No additional issues have been identified.

10.9 Human Rights

No additional issues have been identified.

10.10 Social Inclusion

No additional issues have been identified.

10.11 Procurement

No additional issues have been identified.

11. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 There are no Overview and Scrutiny Implications of this report.

12. LIST OF APPENDICES

12.1 No appendix are attached.

Contact Officer Colin Steel/Ian Brown
Telephone Number 01388 816166 Ext.4207
E-mail address csteel@sedgefield.gov.uk
ibrown@sedgefield.gov.uk

Ward(s) All

Key Decision Validation: (ii) Any decision made by the Cabinet in the course of developing proposals to the full Council to amend the policy framework.

Background Papers: Sustainable Communities Plan 2003
Sedgefield Borough Stock Option Study 2003
Stock Options Appraisal Group Assessment 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"/> |

Item 5

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

PROSPEROUS AND ATTRACTIVE BOROUGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Council Chamber,
Council Offices
Spennymoor

Tuesday,
25 September 2007

Time: 10.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor G.C. Gray (Chairman) and

Councillors Mrs. L. M.G. Cuthbertson, P. Gittins J.P., D.M. Hancock,
Mrs. I. Hewitson, B. Lamb, Mrs. E. Maddison and A. Smith

In Attendance: Councillors V. Chapman, Mrs. P. Crathorne, A. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray,
Mrs. S. Haigh, J.E. Higgin and Ms. I. Jackson

Apologies: Councillors G.M.R. Howe, J. Robinson J.P, B. Stephens and A. Warburton

P&A.5/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

P&A.6/07 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th July, 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

P&A.7/07 PROGRESS TOWARD THE ACHIEVEMENT OF BEST VALUE PERFORMANCE INDICATOR 204 - THE PERCENTAGE OF APPEALS ALLOWED AGAINST THE AUTHORITY'S DECISION TO REFUSE ON PLANNING APPLICATIONS

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Planning Services (for copy see file of Minutes) updating Members on progress towards Best Value Performance Indicator 204, which measured the number of appeals allowed arising from refusals of planning permission.

It was noted that the Indicator was only concerned with the number of appeals against refusal of planning permission. It did not include decisions on appeals against conditions imposed on planning permission, non-determination of planning applications and enforcement notice appeals.

The Committee was reminded that in December, 2006 a report had been presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee 3 informing that during the period April, 2005 and November, 2006, 47.5% of appeals determined had been upheld in favour of the applicant. This represented a dip in performance as a figure in the region of 35% would normally be expected, which was close to the national average. The Committee at that time, made recommendations to address the declining performance. This report reviewed the progress that had been made to date.

The Committee was informed that during the period December 2006 to August 2007 a total of 8 appeal decision letters had been received. An analysis of the outcomes showed that 5 of the appeals had been dismissed and 3 were upheld. This represented 37.5% of appeals being upheld, which was close to the national average.

It was noted that in the same period 5 decision letters had been received in connection with enforcement notice appeals. Whilst these decisions were excluded for the purpose of calculation performance against BVPI204 it was noted that 100% success rate had been achieved.

There had, therefore, been a marked improvement in performance during that period and the results demonstrated that more robust decisions were being made. It was, however, still intended to continue to monitor and review performance and to report appeal decisions to Development Control Committee together with the critique of the decision and lessons to be learnt.

During discussion of this item reference was made to the 'One Stop Shop' which was held on a weekly basis and particularly the effectiveness of the One Stop Shop and how it was advertised. It was explained that One Stop Shop meetings were held on a weekly basis to consider applications and informal enquiries and to offer advice on applications. This had the effect of reducing the number of refusals by identifying those which would need to be refused at an early stage. In relation to advertising details of the One Stop Shop were displayed on the Council's website and applicants were informed of the facility when making enquiries. It was also proposed to include an article in Inform to publicise the facility.

Reference was also made to the issue of staffing levels with the Section. It was explained that there was a still a vacant post. However, staff resources, following an operational review, were achieving improvements.

AGREED : That the report be received.

P&A.8/07

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY RECYCLING SERVICES REVIEW
GROUP- REVIEW OF FUTURE RECYCLING SERVICES OPTIONS**

Consideration was given to Cabinet's Response and Action Plan following its consideration of the recommendations arising from the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Review of future Recycling Services options. (For copy see file of Minutes).

A suggested timetable for the implementation of Cabinet recommendation was attached to the report.

It was suggested that an update be given on the Action Plan at the December meeting.

AGREED : 1. That the response of Cabinet and the

recommendations of the Review together with the implementation of the timetable outlined be noted.

-
2. *That progress on the Action Plan be reviewed by the Committee in December, 2007.*

P&A.9/07

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW GROUP - REDUCING ECONOMIC INACTIVITY (INCREASING EMPLOYABILITY) REVIEW

Consideration was given to Cabinet's Response and Action Plan following consideration of its recommendations arising from the Review of Economic Inactivity (Increasing Employability). (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was suggested that an update be given in December, 2007 on the progress in relation to the Action Plan.

- AGREED :**
1. *That the response of Cabinet and the recommendations of the Review together with the implementation of the timetable outlined be noted.*
 2. *That progress on the Action Plan be reviewed by the Committee in December, 2007.*

P&A.10/07 WORK PROGRAMME

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

It was noted that a workshop would be arranged for all Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members to identify future review topics in line with priorities within the Council's Corporate Plan.

AGREED : *That the Work Programme be noted.*

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

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Item 6a

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA 2 FORUM

Chilton and Windlestone
Community College

Tuesday,
11 September 2007

Time: 6.30 p.m.

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

| | | |
|------------------------------|---|---|
| Councillor B.F. Avery J.P | – | Sedgfield Borough Council |
| Councillor Mrs. K. Conroy | – | Sedgfield Borough Council |
| Councillor Mrs. P. Crathorne | – | Sedgfield Borough Council |
| Councillor D. Farry | – | Sedgfield Borough Council |
| Councillor T.F. Forrest | – | Sedgfield Borough Council |
| C. Hall | – | Castle Residents Association |
| C. Heal | – | Chilton Partnership |
| A. Rutherford | – | Chilton Partnership |
| M. Mitchell | – | Chilton West Residents Association |
| M. Taylor | – | Chilton West Residents Association |
| D. Bradley | – | Dean Bank Residents Association |
| D. Sheppard | – | Dean Bank Ferryhill Association |
| J. Weston | – | Dean Bank Ferryhill Association |
| Acting Sergeant J. Burdess | – | Durham Constabulary |
| A. Hall | – | Ferryhill Station Residents Association |
| G.F. Hall | – | Ferryhill Station Residents Association |
| W. Holdsworth | – | Ferryhill Station Residents Association |
| R. Greenwell | – | Local Resident |

Apologies:

| | | |
|------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| Councillor T. Brimm | - | Sedgfield Borough Council |
| Councillor J.E. Higgin | – | Sedgfield Borough Council |
| Councillor A. Hodgson | – | Sedgfield Borough Council |
| Councillor B. Lamb | – | Sedgfield Borough Council |
| Councillor D.A. Newell | – | Sedgfield Borough Council |
| Councillor G. Porter | – | Durham County Council |
| M. Errington | – | Local Resident |

AF(2)8/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs. K. Conroy declared a prejudicial interest in Item No : 6 – Sedgfield Borough Local Improvement Programme and left the meeting.

AF(2)9/07 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26th June, 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

AF(2)10/07 POLICE REPORT

Acting Sergeant J. Burgess attended the meeting.

She explained that Inspector A. Green had left the Spennymoor area of Durham Constabulary and had taken up a post as Detective Inspector within the Darlington area of Durham Constabulary. The new Inspector was William Bentham.

There were no crime figures to report as a result of the staff changes.

Concern was raised regarding the parking of cars, which were causing an obstruction at the junction at Grasmere Road and Darlington Road. It was pointed out that the issue had been reported to the Police in the past who targeted the problem by issuing warnings to the owners of the vehicles, however, the issue had become a concern again. Acting Sergeant Burgess explained that she would look into the matter and raise concerns with the officers in that area.

Discussion was held regarding Police attendance at the Area Forums and Town and Parish Council meetings.

A. Blakemore, Community Safety Manager, Sedgefield Borough Council, informed members of the Forum of the development of Neighbourhood Policing, where through discussions with all partners involved agreed that a Neighbourhood Inspector would attend all future Area Forums. It was also pointed out that regular updates on each ward across the Borough were available on the Council's website.

AF(2)11/07

COUNTY DURHAM PRIMARY CARE TRUST

There was no representative from the County Durham Primary Care Trust in attendance at the Forum.

With regard to Chilton Health Centre the Chairman of the Forum explained that a meeting had been held to discuss progress on the development. All partners involved in the development, who aired their concerns at the lack of progress, attended the meeting. I. Rooney, County Durham Primary Care Trust, was in attendance and assured attendees that their concerns would be taken to Y. Chaudry, Chief Executive, County Durham Primary Care Trust. A further meeting had been scheduled for 28th October 2007 to discuss the situation.

As a result of concerns by the Ward Members of Area 2 a meeting had also been held with P. Wilson, MP, who had also agreed to attend the meeting on 28th October.

Discussion was finally held regarding the provision of cancer drugs, where it was pointed out that a patient who had not been able to receive a specific drug as a result of cost and lack of funding from the NHS had won an appeal and would now be prescribed the drug via the NHS.

AF(2)12/07

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

NB : In accordance with Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000 and Members Code of Conduct, Councillor Mrs. K. Conroy declared a prejudicial interest in the following item and left the meeting.

Consideration was given to a report detailing an application submitted to be appraised by the Strategy and Regeneration Section for funding from the Local Improvement Programme. (For copy see file of Minutes).

An update was provided of projects received from Area 2. It was explained that the Chilton Environmental Improvements was nearing completion, while work on the West Cornforth Community Centre application was ongoing, as part of the funding had been requested from Northern Rock who had not yet confirmed their grant. The Ferryhill LADDER Centre Technical Study was still to claim the grant and officers were continuing to work on the application. Finally, consultants, S. Wells Associates had commissioned the Ferryhill Sports Facility Technical Study who were preparing a report, which would be completed in November, 2007.

Improvements to Mainsforth and District Community Association

A. Megginson informed the Forum of the proposals to renew the boiler and heating system within the Community Centre and Boxing Club. The improvements would enable the Centre to be more energy efficient and have selective heating. It would allow expansion and further use of the Centre to more community groups. The Forum welcomed the project and supported its submission to Cabinet.

AGREED: That Cabinet be recommended to support the improvements to Mainsforth and District Community Association.

AF(2)13/07

QUESTIONS

Applying for LIP Grants

Questions were raised as to who could apply for the Local Improvement Programme grants and whether they had to be applied for via the Town and Parish Councils. It was explained that it was not the case and that any community group association, residents association etc., could apply.

Duncombe Heritage Centre

An update on Duncombe Heritage Centre development was requested. It was explained that a more detailed project proposal was required for the £100,000 applied for.

Dean Bank Park

Discussion was held regarding play equipment at Dean Bank Park. Confusion was expressed as to whether work on the Park could be carried out at the same time as the Ferryhill Sports facility and whether a technical study would need to be carried out. It was suggested that contact be made again with the Town Council to clarify the proposals of introducing the play equipment.

AF(2)14/07

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

6th November, 2007 at 6.30 p.m. at West Cornforth Community Centre.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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

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Item 6b

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL AREA 3 FORUM

Fishburn Youth and
Community Centre

Wednesday,
19 September 2007

Time: 7.00 p.m.

- Present:** Councillor J. Burton (Chairman) – Sedgefield Borough Council and
- Councillor D.R. Brown – Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Councillor D. Chaytor – Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Councillor Mrs. L. Hovvels – Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Councillor T. Ward – Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Councillor J. Wayman J.P – Sedgefield Borough Council
 - Sergeant B. O'Connor – Durham Constabulary
 - J. Irvine – Fishburn Parish Council
 - R. Lumsden – Fishburn Parish Council
 - T. Jeanes – Sedgefield Town Council
 - A. Simpson – Sedgefield Town Council
 - S. Sutherland – Sedgefield Town Council
 - L. Swinbank – Sedgefield Town Council
 - R. Taylor – Sedgefield Town Council
 - D. Wates – Sedgefield Community Association
 - J. Bowles – Sedgefield Village Residents Forum
 - A. Coulthard – Trimdon Community College
 - L. Burton – Trimdon Parish Council
 - L. Oliver – Trimdon Parish Council
 - B. Thompson – Trimdon Parish Council
 - G. Wills – Local Resident
 - G. Norton – Local Resident
- Apologies:** Councillor J. Robinson, JP., - Sedgefield Borough Council
L. Ackland - Sedgefield Community College

AF(3)7/07 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following Members declared an interest in Item 6 – Sedgefield Borough Local Improvement Programme: -

| | | | |
|----------------------|---|---|----------------------------|
| Cllr D.R. Brown | - | Personal and remained in the meeting as an observer | Sedgefield Town Councillor |
| Cllr Mrs. L. Hovvels | - | Personal and remained in the meeting as an observer | Member of Cabinet |
| Cllr J. Wayman J.P | - | Personal and remained in the meeting as an observer | Sedgefield Town Councillor |
| B. Thompson | - | Personal and remained | Community College |

| | | |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| | in the meeting as an observer | Management Committee |
|--|-------------------------------|----------------------|

AF(3)8/07

MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4th July, 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. (For copy see file of Minutes).

AF(3)9/07

POLICE REPORT

Sergeant B. O'Connor was present at the meeting to give details of the crime figures and local initiatives in the area.

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

| <u>Type of Crime:</u> | <u>Sedgefield:</u> | <u>Fishburn:</u> | <u>Trimdon Village:</u> | <u>Trimdon Grange/Trimdon Station:</u> |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|------------------|-------------------------|--|
| Theft | 11 | 3 | 7 | 3 |
| Criminal Damage | 12 | 5 | 8 | 2 |
| Burglary (Dwelling) | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Burglary (Other) | 5 | 2 | 1 | 0 |
| Assault | 1 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Vehicle Crime | 3 | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Rowdy Nuisance Calls | 39 | 22 | 39 | 9 |
| Total Incidents Reported : | 346 | 143 | 172 | 61 |

Members of the Forum were informed of the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour specifically at St. Edmunds Church, Sedgefield Village where a significant amount of criminal damage had been carried out. As a result the area was targeted by a number of officers and Neighbourhood Wardens. The CCTV re-assurance vehicle was also deployed in the area. There had also been problems within the Skerne Park play area.

Discussion was held regarding the problem of anti-social behaviour and underage drinking. It was explained that the development of a Youth Forum was under discussion and was ongoing with no progress to report. It was pointed out that there was a Local Childrens Board being developed, which included members from various authorities and would develop working groups for each area. The Board and working groups would consider ways of tackling youth issues. It was anticipated that it would be up and running within the next 6 months.

With regard to Skerne Avenue play area it was pointed out that funding had been secured to erect a security fence, which was anticipated to alleviate the problems in that area.

AF(3)10/07

COUNTY DURHAM PRIMARY CARE TRUST

There was no attendance by a representative of County Durham Primary Care Trust.

It was requested that a letter expressing disappointment at the lack of attendance be sent to the PCT. It was pointed out that a number of consultation periods for various issues were reaching an end and needed to be raised at the Forum. Members of the Forum were therefore concerned that they had not been able to raise any issues.

AF(3)11/07 SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

NB : In accordance with Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000 and the Members Code of Conduction Councillors D.R. Brown, Mrs. L. Hovvels, J. Wayman and Mrs B. Thompson declared a personal interest in the following item and remained in the meeting as an observer.

Consideration was given to a report detailing an application submitted to be appraised by the Strategy and Regeneration Section for funding from the Local Improvement Programme. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Sedgefield Parish Hall Refurbishment – Phase 2

A. Simpson and L. Swinbank, Sedgefield Town Council, attended the Forum to outline the proposals of the application to carry out Phase 2 of the refurbishment of the Parish Hal. The background to applying for Local Improvement funding was outlined.

It was explained that Phase 2 would tackle issues regarding sound transference, would reroof the hall, address damp proofing and rendering issues and install Solar Panels. It was anticipated that the refurbishment would expand the use of the Hall to more community and youth organisations.

The Forum welcomed the project and supported its submission to Cabinet.

Trimdon Community College MUGA Technical Study

A. Coulthard, Trimdon Community College, outlined the application and request for funding to undertake a technical study to develop plans for the construction of a floodlit Multi Use Games Area (MUGA). The MUGA would include the provision for football, tennis, netball and hockey, adhering to both the Football Foundation and Sport England standards.

The Forum welcomed the project and supported its submission to Cabinet.

AF(3)12/07 ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

Bolam G. Foods - Planning Application

Discussion was held regarding the above planning appeal which had recently been considered by Durham County Council. An appeal hearing would be held later in the year.

Marquees – Hardwick Hall Hotel

Concerns had been raised regarding the erection of two marquees over the summer months. It was pointed out that the marquees would be taken down, however, the largest one could be erected nearer to Christmas. Concerns were raised regarding planning permission.

Political Posters

Specific reference was made to the number of political posters that were still displayed around the Borough since the election.

L. Swinbank explained that she had written to Durham County Council and Sedgefield Borough Council and a number had been removed. It was requested that it be raised again with the relevant department.

AF(3)13/07**DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Wednesday 14th November, 2007 in the Fletcher Room, Parish Hall, Sedgefield at 7.00 p.m.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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