

**SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
CABINET**

Conference Room 1,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Thursday,
14 February 2008

Time: 10.00 a.m.

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

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

In Attendance: Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, T. Brimm, D. Farry, P. Gittins J.P.,
G.C. Gray, B. Haigh, Mrs. S. Haigh, D.M. Hancock, T. Hogan, B. Lamb,
Mrs. E. Maddison, Mrs. E.M. Paylor and T. Ward

Apologies: Councillors Mrs. K. Conroy

CAB.143/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST
Members had no interests to declare.

CAB.144/07 MINUTES
The Minutes of the meeting held on 31st January 2008 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

CAB.145/07 BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2008/09 (KEY DECISION)
The Leader of the Council presented a report detailing the results of the consultations undertaken in relation to the Council's initial budget proposals, together with copies of the Minutes of the meetings of the Council's three Overview Scrutiny Committees that had been held to consider the proposed budget framework. (For copies see file of Minutes).

It was reported that Healthy Borough With Strong Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee had not supported the initial budget proposals and had requested Cabinet to further consider the Council's pension contribution, the percentage of the rent increase and the CCTV and Neighbourhood Warden elements of the Community Safety budget framework.

Accordingly, Cabinet had considered the above issues.

It was explained that the Council had to meet its financial obligations in relation to its contribution to the Local Government Pension Fund. With regard to the proposed rent increase, it was noted that the Council was working to the 2012 date for rent convergence as the later date of 2017 would cause problems for future years rent increases and make the

business plan process associated with Large Scale Voluntary Transfer, difficult.

In relation to CCTV, it was pointed out that Healthy Borough With Strong Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee had received a presentation regarding the Council's CCTV Service at its meeting on 23rd October 2007 and had expressed its satisfaction with the service.

It was also pointed out that since the initial budgets had been prepared, further refinements and identified improvements in cash flow had been confirmed, reducing the budget requirement and allowing for a lower than forecast increase in Council Tax of 2.1%, instead of 3%.

Cabinet was therefore of the view that the 2008/09 Budget Framework should be supported.

RESOLVED: That the 2008/09 Budget Framework, previously agreed by Cabinet on 10th January 2008, be recommended to Council for approval.

CAB.146/07 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2008/09 (KEY DECISION)

Consideration was given to a report detailing the Treasury Management Strategy for 2008/09 (for copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that the report outlined the strategy to be followed by the Council over the next financial year in relation to its Treasury Management activities and took account of guidance on investments issued by the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

The strategy covered the existing Treasury position, the expected movement in interest rates, the Council's borrowing and its strategy and investment strategy as well as local Treasury Management indicators.

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended to approve the Treasury Management Strategy for 2008/09, the Investment Strategy 2008/09 and the 'Authorised Limit' for borrowing as shown in Appendix B to the report and to adopt the Prudential Indicators and Limits for 2008/09.

CAB.147/07 OLDER PERSONS ACCOMMODATION AND SUPPORT STRATEGY EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS (KEY DECISION)

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

The report summarised the key elements of the older persons accommodation and support strategy and included recommendations to give strategic direction and inform future service delivery options.

RESOLVED: That the Older Persons Accommodation and Support Strategy and the recommendations set out in Section 4 of the report be approved.

CAB.148/07 TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS: IMPROVING PROCEDURES

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

It was reported that the Planning White Paper 2007 had outlined the Government's proposals for further reform of the planning system, which included making planning processes more efficient and more accessible to people who use the services. One of the outcomes of the White Paper was the publication of the document 'Tree Preservation Orders: Improving Procedures in November 2007.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 1.2 of the report, which outlined the main changes proposed and Appendix 1, which set out the Technical Officer's response.

RESOLVED: That Cabinet endorses the specific consultation responses as set out in Section 3 in the report and Appendix 1.

CAB.149/07 SEDGFIELD BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK - LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2006 (AMENDED JANUARY 2008)

The Lead Member for Planning and Development presented a report, which sought approval to amend the existing Local Development Scheme to include an Area Action Plan for Spennymoor Town Centre and a Supplementary Planning Document concerning the redevelopment of Windlestone Hall. (For copy see file of Minutes)

RESOLVED: That the Local Development Scheme attached to the report to be endorsed and formally submitted to the Secretary of State (represented by Government Office North East) for approval.

CAB.150/07 DRAFT PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT 12: STREAMLINING LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORKS

The Lead Member for Planning and Development presented a report regarding the above document. (For copy see file of minutes).

It was explained that the document followed the recommendations of the Planning White Paper issued in 2007 and focussed on improving consultation arrangements, formal representation, preparing documents, Local Authority Strategy making and infrastructure planning.

Members' attention was drawn to paragraphs 3.2 - 3.7 of the report, which outlined the Council's proposed response to the Draft Planning Policy Statement 12.

RESOLVED: That the response detailed in the report to Draft Policy Planning Statement 12 be endorsed.

CAB.151/07 DURHAM GROWTH POINT BID

The Lead Member for Planning and Development presented a report regarding the above bid, which had been co-ordinated through Durham Housing & Neighbourhoods Board and submitted to the Government at the end of October 2007. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that following the publication of the Housing Green Paper in July 2007, the Government had announced in a letter to Chief Executives on 2nd August 2007 that it would be inviting proposals for additional growth points in the North of England. The growth points would help the Government to meet its housing delivery targets and would be used to overcome worsening affordability in the housing market.

Members' attention was drawn to the briefing note attached to the report, which gave details of the bid.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the briefing report be noted.

CAB.152/07 LOCAL HOUSING ALLOWANCE

The Lead Member for Social Regeneration and Partnership presented a report regarding the Local Housing Allowance, which was to be introduced to all Councils from 7th April 2008. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that the Local Housing Allowance would replace the existing system whereby individual private sector rents were referred to the Rent Officer Service to determine the level of rent at which benefit was paid.

The report gave details of the new scheme and its impact on the Benefit Service.

RESOLVED: That the report be received and the changes to the Housing Benefit Scheme be noted.

CAB.153/07 HEALTHY BOROUGH WITH STRONG COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the Healthy Borough with Strong Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15th January 2008. (For copy see file of Minutes)

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

CAB.154/07 AREA FORUMS

Consideration was given to the Minutes of the following:

Area 3 Forum - 9th January 2008
Area 4 Forum - 15th January 2008
Area 5 Forum - 22nd January 2008

(For copies see file of Minutes)

RESOLVED: That the reports be received.

Published on 15th February 2008

The key decisions contained in these Minutes will be implemented on Monday 25th February 2008, five working days after the date of publication unless they are called in by three 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