

Item 3

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council Chamber,
Council Offices,
Spenny Moor

Friday,
29 September 2006

Time: 11.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor Mrs. L. Hovvels (Mayor) and

Councillors W.M. Blenkinsopp, Mrs. B.A. Clare, Mrs. K. Conroy, M.A. Dalton, Mrs. B. Graham, A. Gray, J.E. Higgin, A. Hodgson, M. Iveson, M.T.B. Jones, J.M. Khan, B. Meek, J.P. Moran, D.A. Newell, K. Noble, B.M. Ord, R.A. Patchett, Ms. M. Predki, G.W. Scott, A. Smith, J.M. Smith, Mrs. I. Jackson Smith, Mrs. L. Smith, Mrs. C. Sproat, T. Ward and W. Waters

Apologies: Councillors Mrs. A.M. Armstrong, B.F. Avery J.P, D.R. Brown, J. Burton, Mrs. J. Croft, V. Crosby, Mrs. A.M. Fleming, R.S. Fleming, T.F. Forrest, G.C. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray, B. Hall, D.M. Hancock, K. Henderson, G.M.R. Howe, J.G. Huntington, G. Morgan, Mrs. E.M. Paylor, J.K. Piggott, Mrs. C. Potts, J. Robinson J.P, K. Thompson and J. Wayman J.P

C.51/06 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted.

C.52/06 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 28th July, 2006 and 14th September, 2006 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Mayor.

C.53/06 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor reported that since the last meeting she had attended 29 functions and events including diamond and golden wedding anniversaries, a 100th birthday celebration, charity nights, carnivals and shows as well as civic services including Sedgefield Borough's civic service at Trimdon Grange.

The Mayor also reported that she had attended the presentation of a Gold National Clean Air Award to the Grange Hair Salon, Trimdon, "Girls on a Mission Presentation Event" at Spenny Moor Leisure Centre", the official opening of the new care home at Chilton and the St. John Ambulance County Durham "Dedication Service" at Durham Cathedral.

C.54/06 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REPORT

Catherine Andrew from the Audit Commission attended the meeting to present the Annual Governance Report covering the audit of the Council for year ended 31st March, 2006 (for copy see file of Minutes).

The principal purposes of the report were :-

- To reach a mutual understanding of the scope of the audit and the respective responsibilities of the auditor and the Council

- To share information to assist both the auditor and those charged with governance to fulfil their respective responsibilities.
- To provide the Council with recommendations for improvement arising from the audit process.

Members' attention was drawn to the key messages detailed on Page 7 of the report. It was noted that work on the financial statement had been completed and an unqualified opinion would be issued.

With regard to the use of resources it was explained that the Code of Audit Practice required the Audit Commission to reach a conclusion on whether the authority had proper arrangements in place for securing the economy, efficiency and effectiveness on its use of resources (for value for money conclusion).

Members noted that there were no matters that the Audit Commission wished to draw to the Council's attention in relation to the use of resources and an unqualified conclusion would be issued.

It was pointed out that the Council had taken a positive and constructive approach to the audit and officers were thanked for their assistance and co-operation.

It was noted that the report had been considered by Audit Committee earlier that day and the report had been received.

A letter of representation needed to be signed by the Leader of the Council as part of the process.

- RESOLVED :*
1. *That the report be received.*
 2. *That the Letter of Representation be signed by the Leader of the Council.*

C.55/06

TREASURY MANAGEMENT

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Financial Services (for copy see file of Minutes) the purpose of which was to review the performance of the Council's Treasury Management activity during the 2005/2006 financial year.

The report set out details of the Council's performance and compliance with the Strategy approved by the Council in February, 2005 and detailed the effects of decisions taken and the transactions executed in the past year. The report also confirmed that the Council had fully complied with its approved Strategy, Treasury Management practices and Local Code in 2005/6.

- RESOLVED :*
- That performance and compliance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy in 2005/6 be noted.*

C.56/06

**SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH HOUSING STRATEGY 2006/7-2008/9
DEVELOPING A FIT FOR PURPOSE HOUSING STRATEGY**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services (for copy see file of Minutes) outlining a proposed Housing Strategy for 2006/7 to 2008/9.

It was explained that since the adoption of the last strategy, the Government had significantly changed its approach to the development of Housing Strategy. The Government wished to see all local housing authorities adopt a Housing Strategy which was "fit-for-purpose" i.e. met certain requirements in terms of key content and monitoring arrangements.

Members were informed that the proposed Strategy for 2006/7 to 2008/9 had been developed to take account of the national, regional and local policy issues and priorities. The Strategy had established clear links to the Council's Corporate Plan and Local Strategic Partnership's Community Strategy. It had been submitted to the Government Office for the North East for assessment against the "fit-for-purpose" standard and had been signed off as meeting the standard.

RESOLVED : That the Sedgefield Borough Housing Strategy for 2006/7 to 2008/9 be adopted.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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

This page is intentionally left blank