

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council Chamber,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Friday, 29 June
2007

Time: 11.00 a.m.

Present: Councillor J. Robinson, J.P. (Deputy Mayor) and

Councillors Mrs. A.M. Armstrong, B.F. Avery J.P, W.M. Blenkinsopp, T. Brimm, D.R. Brown, V. Chapman, D. Chaytor, Mrs. K. Conroy, Mrs. P. Crathorne, V. Crosby, Mrs. L. M.G. Cuthbertson, T.F. Forrest, P. Gittins J.P., A. Gray, G.C. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray, B. Haigh, Mrs. S. Haigh, Mrs. I. Hewitson, J.E. Higgin, T. Hogan, Mrs. L. Hovvells, J.G. Huntington, Mrs. H.J. Hutchinson, Ms. I. Jackson, J.M. Khan, B. Lamb, Mrs. E. Maddison, C. Nelson, B.M. Ord, Mrs. E.M. Paylor, J. Robinson J.P, A. Smith, B. Stephens, K. Thompson, A. Warburton, T. Ward and W. Waters

Apologies: Councillors Mrs. D. Bowman, J. Burton, D. Farry, Mrs. B. Graham, D.M. Hancock, A. Hodgson, G.M.R. Howe, Mrs. S. J. Iveson, D.A. Newell, Mrs. C. Potts, J. Wayman J.P and Mrs E. M. Wood

MINUTES SILENCE

A minutes silence was held as a mark of respect for former Borough Councillor Tom Conley and Honorary Alderman Walter Nunn who had both recently died. Tributes were paid to both former Councillors.

C.30/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

C.31/07 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 18th May, 2007 and 20th April, 2007 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Deputy Mayor.

C.32/07 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Deputy Mayor reported that a civic delegation from Rheinhausen had visited the Borough from 20th June to 25th June, 2007. He had attended a function for the delegation organised by Sedgfield Borough Twinning Association held at St. Lukes Church Hall, Ferryhill on Sunday 24th June, 2007. He thanked all involved in helping to organise the evening and those involved in organising the programme of events for the civic visit.

The Mayor would report on other functions and events at the next meeting.

C.33/07

THE NOTTINGHAM DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services (for copy see file of Minutes) regarding a proposal to sign the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change.

It was explained that the Nottingham Declaration was a voluntary pledge to address the issues of climate change and represented a high level, broad statement of commitment. It acknowledged the increasing impact that climate change would have on communities during the 21st century and would commit Sedgefield Borough Council to tackling the causes and effects of a changing climate on the Borough.

Members were informed that the Declaration had originally been launched in October, 2005 and has now over 200 Local Government signatories and was supported by DEFRA, IDeA, LGA and the Environment Agency.

The strategy which was developed in consultation with senior managers, was based on the Council's current activities and service areas and reflected the Council's desire to make climate change an essential theme in future policy, strategies and activities.

RESOLVED : That the signing of the Nottingham Declaration by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive be endorsed.

C.34/07

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REVISED MODEL CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MEMBERS

Consideration was given to a report of the Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer (for copy see file of Minutes) regarding the Revised Code of Conduct for Members.

It was explained that the Revised Code of Conduct had been approved by the Government and had come into force on 3rd May, 2007.

The Code of Conduct had been amended so as to make it more effective and proportionate and clearer whilst maintaining a rigorous approach to the identification of serious misconduct.

All local authorities now had six months to adopt the revised Code. A brief presentation was given at the meeting outlining the main changes to the Code and the implications for the authority.

RESOLVED :

- 1. That the Revised Code of Conduct be adopted and that the ten General principles be adopted as an annex to the new Code.*
- 2. That Parish and Town Councils adopt the Parish and Town Council Model Code of Conduct.*
- 3. That consequential changes be made to the Council's Constitution.*

4. *That the Member's Planning Code of Good Practice be amended to take account of the changes and be submitted to the next Development Control Committee on 29th July, 2007.*

C.35/07

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 2007

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Resources (for copy see file of Minutes) dealing with the statutory requirements set out in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2003 for the production and publication of the Annual Statement of Accounts.

Under the Account and Audit Regulations 2003 Council was required to approve the Accounts of the Authority for the 2006/7 financial year by no later than 30th June, 2007 prior to publication and the formal signing off by the District Auditor.

The Director of Resources gave a short presentation outlining the key points in the Statement of Accounts and financial performance during 2006/7. Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and raise any concerns that they had in relation to the Accounts.

The Audit Committee had reviewed the Statement of Accounts and separately reviewed the contents of the Statement of System of Internal Control and Corporate Governance at its meeting on 25th June, 2007 and had recommended that Council approves both statements.

In view of the favourable outturn position on the General Fund and the incorporated LABGI grant, the Council had been able to make a contribution of £280,000 to the Budget Support Fund as opposed to the budgeted use of balances of £500,000.

The financial outturn position on the Housing Revenue Account showed the use of HRA balances of £1,264,610.

In respect of reserves, the overall level of resources available to the Council had fallen by £1.422m compared with balances as at 31st March, 2006, largely in line with expectations and the need to establish an equal pay provision of £773,000 from the HRA.

The Medium Term Financial Plan anticipated that £1.5m of the Budget Support Fund would be used over the next three years.

In respect of the Capital Programme the Council had spent £15,454,000 against a target of £20,742,000 with commitments and matching resources rolled forward into 2007/08.

As a consequence of slippage and other savings on the 2006/07 Capital Programme and the Capital Receipts generated during the year, the Council had useable capital receipts available to finance future capital works amounting to £15.196m as at 31st March, 2007. In accordance with decisions taken at Council in July, 2004 £13.642m of those capital receipts

were being earmarked specifically for major Regeneration and Affordable Housing Schemes.

- RESOLVED :*
1. *That the Statement of Accounts for year ended 31st March, 2007 be approved.*
 2. *That the Statement on the System of Internal Control and Corporate Governance be approved.*

C.36/07 CORPORATE PLAN 2007-10

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive (for copy see file of Minutes) setting out arrangements for the development of the Council's Corporate Plan for the period 2007 to 2010.

Member's attention was drawn to the Corporate Plan which outlined the linkage between the LSP Community Strategy and the Council, the Corporate and Performance Management Framework and the priorities of the Council over the next three years.

The report set out Ambitions and Priorities for the mid term at a strategic, tactical and operational level and outlined how the Council would meet national performance targets and how it continued to progress towards organisational excellence.

The Corporate Plan was supported by five Delivery Plans, one for each of the Council's Ambitions and another for its Values. Each Delivery Plan provided detailed assessment of progress against aims, objectives and targets and explained any change and set out key activity the Council would undertake during the next three years to improve performance.

A Medium Term Financial Plan was developed in parallel to the Corporate Plan and defined resources available to deliver priorities and how they would be deployed.

- RESOLVED :* *That the Corporate Plan 2007 – 2010 be adopted.*

C.37/07 SEDGFIELD BOROUGH LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK

Core Strategy Preferred Options

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services (for copy see file of Minutes) regarding the above.

It was explained that the Core Strategy Development Plan Document provided the strategic planning direction and policies for the Borough to 2021.

The publication of the Core Strategy Preferred Options followed the publication and consideration of responses to the Key Issues Paper and Alternative Options. The Core Strategy Preferred Options Report had been subject to Strategic Environmental Assessment, Sustainability Appraisal and Appropriate Assessment. Following a round of consultation

the Borough Council would prepare its Submission Document for publication in 2008.

RESOLVED : That Council authorises publication of the Document.

Major Allocations Alternative

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services (for copy see file of Minutes) regarding the Major Allocations Development Plan. The Document would allocate new employment and housing sites across the Borough up to 2021.

A draft Search Sequence and Detailed Assessment was published in October 2006 which sought to develop a methodology helping to determine potential development sites. Following an assessment of the responses received, the Alternative Options Report had been developed considering the merits of each site. The responses received to this round of consultation would feed into the Preferred Options Report due for publication in July, 2008.

RESOLVED : That the Major Allocations Alternative Options Report be endorsed.

Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services (for copy see file of Minutes) regarding the above.

It was explained that the need for Affordable Housing within the Borough was becoming more acute and a key recommendation of a Scrutiny Review Group looking at Affordable Housing was the production of an Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document.

Members were informed that the Draft Supplementary Planning Document had been successfully screened against the EU Directive on Strategic Environmental Assessment 2001/42/EC. Furthermore a draft had undergone a comprehensive Sustainability Appraisal report.

RESOLVED : That the Draft Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document be published.

Incorporating a Renewable Energy Obligation into Developments Core Strategy Preferred Options

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services (for copy see file of Minutes) regarding the above.

It was explained that the report set out the case for the best practice guide to support the Local Planning Authority and required that all new development over 1,000²m should incorporate an on site reversible energy product capability.

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.

C.38/07

CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S DEPARTMENT ESTABLISHMENT

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive (for copy see file of Minutes) setting out details of proposed establishment changes.

RESOLVED : That the report be received and the recommendations contained therein 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