

## SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

Council Chamber,  
Council Offices,  
Spennymoor

Friday,  
27 July 2007

Time: 11.00 a.m.

**Present:** Councillor Mrs. S. J. Iveson (Mayor) and

Councillors Mrs. A.M. Armstrong, B.F. Avery J.P, W.M. Blenkinsopp, D.R. Brown, V. Chapman, D. Chaytor, Mrs. P. Crathorne, Mrs. L. M.G. Cuthbertson, T.F. Forrest, P. Gittins J.P., Mrs. B. Graham, A. Gray, G.C. Gray, Mrs. I. Hewitson, J.E. Higgin, A. Hodgson, T. Hogan, Mrs. L. Hovvels, G.M.R. Howe, 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, Mrs. C. Potts, J. Robinson J.P, A. Smith, B. Stephens, K. Thompson, T. Ward, W. Waters and Mrs E. M. Wood

**Apologies:** Councillors Mrs. D. Bowman, T. Brimm, J. Burton, Mrs. K. Conroy, V. Crosby, D. Farry, Mrs. J. Gray, B. Haigh, Mrs. S. Haigh, D.M. Hancock, D.A. Newell, A. Warburton and J. Wayman J.P

### **C.39/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were received.

### **C.40/07 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor. (For copy see file of Minutes).

### **C.41/07 MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Mayor reported that she had attended 25 functions and events since the Annual Meeting of Council held on 18<sup>th</sup> May, 2007. These included one diamond wedding, three golden weddings, an academic awards ceremony held at the Council offices, a welcome to delegation from Rheinhausen and the Annual Durham Miners Gala on 14<sup>th</sup> July.

The Mayor had also held a charity stall at Newton Aycliffe market, which had raised a total of £312.40 for her chosen charity appeal.

The Deputy Mayor had attended the Annual General Meeting of the County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals Patient and Public Involvement Forum, a CAVOS Volunteer Award Evening at Spennymoor Town Hall and the Mayor of Peterlee's charity night at Acre Rigg Social Club.

### **C.42/07 ARRANGEMENTS FOR REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION: CHANGES TO CONTRACT PROCEDURE RULES**

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive setting out revised Contract Procedure Rules that had been developed following meetings of a review group of departmental representatives from across the Council and advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that the Contract Procedure Rules provided a corporate framework for the procurement of all goods, services and works for the Council. They were an important part of ensuring value for money and the correct appointment of Contractors.

It was explained that the existing Contract Procedure Rules had been in place since the adoption of the Constitution in 2002. There had, however, been several significant influences impacting on Local Government Procurement activity since that time. The main influences were set out in the report.

It was reported that it was appropriate to review and improve the Contract Procedure Rules in order to further enhance the Council's ability to procure works, goods and services more effectively.

The review of the existing Contract Procedure Rules also ensured that the Council was fully compliant with recommended corporate governance arrangements issued by CIPFA and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLCE).

A summary of the key changes to the Contract Procedure Rules was set out in the report.

- RESOLVED :*
- 1. That the revised Contract Procedure Rules be approved.*
  - 2. That the Council's Monitoring Officer amend the Constitution accordingly, make all necessary and consequential amendments and publish an amended version on the Council's website.*

#### **C.43/07**

#### **ARRANGEMENTS FOR REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION**

Consideration was given to a report of the Chief Executive relating to a further review of the Constitution for the purposes of Article 16. (For copy see file of Minutes).

It was explained that the Council's Constitution must be kept under regular review to ensure that its operation provided an efficient and effective framework for delivering the Council's aims and objectives.

It was reported that the recommendations contained in the report were based on advice from the Council's Monitoring Officer and meetings of the Constitutional Review Group.

Those areas where it was considered appropriate to make further changes were set out in the report.

*RESOLVED : That the amendments set out in the Appendix be approved and the Council's Monitoring Officer be directed to: -*

*a) Amend the Constitution accordingly and make all necessary and consequential amendments.*

*b) Publish an amended version on the Council's website.*

**C.44/07**

**ANNUAL REVIEW OF CORPORATE GOVERNANCE 2006-2007**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Resources detailing compliance with, content of and progress against the Action Plans established to develop the Council's corporate governance arrangements during the 2006/07 financial year. (For copy see file of Minutes).

Reference was made to a framework document, "Corporate Governance in Local Government: A Keystone for Community Governance" and an accompanying guidance note which had been issued by the Chartered Institute of Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the Society of Local Authority Chief Executives. (SOLACE).

The guidance urged every Local Authority to: -

- Review its corporate governance arrangements against the framework.
- Prepare, adopt and maintain an up-to-date Local Code of Corporate Governance including arrangements for ensuring its implementation and application.
- Make a statement in its annual financial statement and refer to it in its Best Value Performance Plan (BVPP) on how the Council was complying with its local Code including how it monitored the effectiveness of its corporate governance arrangements in the year and any planned changes in the coming year.

Members were reminded that Council, at its Special Meeting in December, 2002, had approved the Local Code of Corporate Governance which detailed the measures that the Council would take to demonstrate how it would meet the requirements of the five dimensions of Corporate Governance. Following this an action plan had been produced to ensure that any tasks that needed to be undertaken to fully comply with the Code were identified and regular monitoring of progress against these actions was carried out. Management Team had considered this action plan.

It was noted that CIPFA and SOLACE were still reviewing and updating the original framework. The key areas that were being addressed were set out in the report.

It was reported that a draft of the new framework had been drawn up and a consultation document had been issued giving local authorities and other interested parties and opportunity to influence the outcome.

- RESOLVED :**
- 1) *That the Annual Report for 2006/07 be approved.*
  - 2) *That following the review of compliance with content of and progress against the action plans established, the Local Code of Corporate Governance, as approved by Council in December 2002, remain unchanged.*
  - 3) *That the Chief Executive continues to monitor through Management Team progress against the Corporate Governance Action Plans and further reports be submitted to Cabinet on an annual basis.*

**C.45/07**

**ANNUAL REVIEW OF TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2006-2007**

Consideration was given to a report of the Director of Resources reviewing the performance of the Council's Treasury Management activities during the 2006/07 financial year. (For copy see file of Minutes).

The report confirmed that the Council had fully complied with its approved strategy, treasury management practices and Local Code in 2006/07.

Member's attention was drawn to the following key aspects of performance in 2006/07 :-

- The policy of ensuring that long-term borrowing and the capital financing requirement were at broadly the same level with figures of £18.640m and £18.983m respectively.
- Rescheduling of £9.618m of debt during the year, replacing loan debt at 5.16% with a lower rate of 4.40%, had resulted in revenue savings of approximately £73,000 per year on interest payments.
- Average rate of return achieved on investments was 5.01% - which was 0.19% greater than the benchmark comparator of 4.82%.
- Reduction in the average rate of interest paid on external debt from 7.20% to 6.34%.
- Compliance with all prudential indicators in accordance with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities.

**RESOLVED :** *That the performance and compliance with the approved Treasury Management Strategy in 2006/07 be noted.*

C.46/07

## NOTICE OF MOTION

Consideration was given to the following Notice of Motion which had been submitted by Councillor B. M. Ord and seconded by Councillor K. Thompson :-

*“We, the undersigned, are concerned about the reduction of the “Carelink” Services and understand that it now operates under the “Supporting People” Partnership.*

*The “Carelink” Service is often ‘a lifeline’ to both elderly and vulnerable people in both Council and private housing. Our leaflet says, “Sedgefield Carelink” Care and Re-assurance. Put yourself in safe hands. Your local 24 hour, 7 day a week, care and re-assurance service.*

*We are disturbed to find that elderly citizens, living on their own, may only receive a single visit per month and could receive telephone re-assurance calls. Users say they prefer to have a daily warden contact.*

*The risks to the elderly users are obvious and we request that a detailed report be authorised to outline the affects of these cutbacks and what can be done to restore the users confidence back into “Carelink”.*

A detailed presentation was given at the meeting identifying changes that had occurred to the Carelink Service, why the changes had been made, the impact of service changes on service users and providing a clear picture of the current position and where the service was going. The role of the County Council was explained.

Specific reference was made to the performance of the Carelink Monitoring and Response service over the first three months of the contract. It was reported that 2000 customer satisfaction surveys had been issued with 10% being returned. The returned surveys showed a 95-98% satisfaction rate with the service.

With regard to the emergency response rate it was noted that 95% of emergencies had been dealt with within 20 minutes and 100% had been dealt with within the contract response time of 60 minutes.

It was also highlighted that 98.5% of calls had been answered within 60 seconds.

Upon hearing the content of the presentation Councillor Mrs. E. Maddison felt it was necessary to declare a personal and prejudicial interest in this item as she was an employee of Durham County Council.

**NB :** In accordance with Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2002 and the Members Code of Conduct Councillor Mrs. E. Maddison declared a personal and prejudicial interest in this item as she was an employee of Durham County Council and left the meeting for the duration of the discussion and voting on the item.

The following amendment was moved by Councillor Mrs. A.M. Armstrong and seconded by Councillor Mrs. B. Graham.

‘That the detailed information given at the meeting be accepted as a report on the Carelink service.’

*RESOLVED: That the amendment be carried and the motion rejected.*

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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 Lynsey Walker 01388 816166 ext 4237 email: [lwalker@sedgefield.gov.uk](mailto:lwalker@sedgefield.gov.uk)

