



PROSPEROUS AND ATTRACTIVE BOROUGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Tuesday,

11 March 2008

10.00 a.m.

Council Chamber,
Council Offices
Spennymoor

AGENDA

and

REPORTS



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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 پوچھئے۔

AGENDA

1. APOLOGIES

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To notify the Chairman of any items that appear later 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

(a) **24th January 2008** (Pages 1 – 6)

(b) **29th January 2008** (Pages 7 – 14)

(c) **18th February 2008** (Pages 15 – 18)

**4. PROGRESS TOWARDS CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE INDICATOR
CPPP 29**

To consider the attached presentation relating to progress on Corporate Plan Performance Indicator CPP 29 the number of people achieving NVQ Level 2 through Train 2 Gain. (Pages 19 - 20)

5. WORK PROGRAMME

Report of Chairman of the Committee. (Pages 21 - 26)

**B. Allen
Chief Executive**

**Council Offices
SPENNYMOOR
3rd March 2008**

Councillor G.C. Gray (Chairman)
Councillor B. Lamb (Vice Chairman)

Councillors Mrs. L. M.G. Cuthbertson, P. Gittins J.P., D.M. Hancock, Mrs. I. Hewitson, G.M.R. Howe, Mrs. E. Maddison, J. Robinson J.P, A. Smith, B. Stephens and A. Warburton.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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Item 3a

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

PROSPEROUS AND ATTRACTIVE BOROUGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Council Chamber,
Council Offices,
Spennymoor

Thursday,
24 January 2008

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, A. Smith, B. Stephens and
A. Warburton
- Invited to attend:** Councillors V. Crosby, A. Hodgson, Mrs. L. Hovvels
- In Attendance:** Councillors A. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray, Mrs. S. Haigh, J.E. Higgin, B.M. Ord
and T. Ward
- Apologies:** Councillors G.M.R. Howe and J. Robinson J.P

P&A.21/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members had no interests to declare.

P&A.22/07 COUNCILLOR J. WAYMAN J.P.

Members observed a minute's silence as a mark of respect to Councillor J. Wayman J.P. who sadly died on Saturday 19th January 2008.

P&A.23/07 BUDGET FRAMEWORK 2008/2009

Consideration was given to Cabinet's initial budget proposals in respect of the Environment, Planning and Development, Learning and Employment and Social Regeneration portfolios. Members gave detailed consideration to a report setting out the basis of the proposals and in particular the proposed changes in service provision for each portfolio. (For copy see file of Minutes).

The Cabinet Members with responsibility for the portfolios under consideration had been invited to attend to respond to questions from the Committee.

Members were reminded that as part of the budget setting procedure, Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been asked to consider the proposals with a view to making recommendations to Cabinet before it

made its final budget proposals to Council on 29th February 2008.

It was reported that the budget would be the last one to be determined by the Council before local government in County Durham was re-organised. It had been prepared on the basis of business as usual, with growth in service provision restricted to essential areas only and where they would not be to the detriment of the new council's arrangements.

It was explained that the Council had been provisionally notified that it would receive £9,791,348 of external Government support for 2008/09. The grant settlement, which was broadly in line with expectations, showed a year on year cash increase of 1.98% or £190,065, including the base adjustments in accordance with the distribution framework.

The budget framework for 2008/09 reflected the Council's key priorities set out in the Corporate and Transition Plans and took account of financial issues and pressures facing the Council, including pay related costs, fuel price inflation and the drawing to an end of some external funding streams.

The budget had been prepared on an outturn basis, which meant that the contingency sum had been eliminated. Any unforeseen issues during the year would be met from efficiency savings within the relevant Portfolio area to avoid the use of balances.

It was pointed out that several requests to enhance service provision had been excluded from the budget framework as a result of shortage of funds, however, if funding did become available during the year, those items could be allowed to commence on a prioritised and considered basis and subject to Cabinet approval.

Efficiencies been identified during the preparation of 2008/07 budget framework to produce a workable yet affordable budget. Savings amounting to £545,890 had been identified within the Prosperous and Attractive Borough portfolio budgets and had helped to offset the £627,380 unavoidable growth in services.

It was reported that careful planning of the budget meant that the commitment made in the Medium Term Financial Plan to restrict council tax increases to 3.0% could be delivered in 2008/09. The investment in Council services would only add £5.58p per year or 11p per week to the Band D Council Tax. The cost to the Band A taxpayer would be £3.72 per year or 7p per week.

It was pointed out that the Medium Term Financial Plan had allowed for a Capital Programme of £20m in 2008/09, subject to resources being available. The larger elements of the programme were outlined in the Council's Transition Plan and were detailed in the table set out in paragraph 4.3

Members' attention was drawn to the contingency sum of £2.5m which had been provisionally identified to meet other corporate projects such as the funding of planned maintenance of public buildings in accordance with the Asset Management Plan, Local Improvement Programme

funding and the replacement of obsolete ICT equipment. The schemes would be assessed and prioritised when funding became available and Cabinet approval would be sought at a future meeting, subject to the availability of resources.

Details of the Council's overall General Fund Revenue Budget and a full analysis of the budgets in respect of the services within the Prosperous and Attractive Borough Portfolios were attached to the report.

Environment

With regard to the protection of the environment and the standard of ground maintenance, the 2008/09 revenue budget would enable the Council to continue to provide a similar level of service to that being achieved in 2007/08, with an enhanced kerbside recycling service from 1st April 2008. The new enhanced service would deal with a broader range of recyclates, including cardboard and plastics, which would help the Council achieve its statutory recycling targets.

Concern was expressed regarding the amount of income the Council would receive from the re-cycling of waste materials.

It was pointed out that a detailed report regarding the contract for the kerbside recycling service had been submitted to Cabinet in December 2007 for consideration. The cost per tonne of delivering the service from 1st April 2008 was £54.57. The County Council had agreed to pay the recycling credit of £46.07 per tonne of recyclate collected through the contract to participating Borough and District Councils. The net revenue cost for the provision of the service for 2008/09 was therefore £51,000, which was considered good value for money.

Specific reference was made to the waste generated from the kitchens of schools etc. and commercial premises and whether the scheme could be extended to cover such premises. It was reported that discussions would be taking place with the contractor to assess the viability of extending the service.

With regard to the budgets for Street Cleansing and Grounds Maintenance clarification was sought regarding the agency costs. It was reported that agency costs of £28,000 for street cleansing related to the spraying of weed killer on roads and footpaths and the sum of £47,200 for grounds maintenance related to the cost of hedge maintenance. Both services were on behalf of the Durham County Council.

Members complimented the work of the Council's Countryside Management Team and the Civic Pride Teams/Street Cleansing Section.

Planning & Development

During 2008/09 the Planning Service would be enhanced to provide a more customer focused service. Consequently fee generation and Housing Planning Delivery Grant would be maximised as a result of improvements in planning performance.

It was noted that funds allocated during 2007/08 towards the cost of the

review of the Council's Local Development Plan had been redirected to provide new elements of the overall plan, to ensure it was sufficiently robust and evidence based to pass through the public examination process.

Social Regeneration and Partnership

The 2008/09 revenue budget would enable the Council to continue to provide a similar level of service to that being achieved during 2007/08, including the ongoing support to the Advice & Information Service, CAVOS and the Local Strategic Partnership.

It was noted that the level of grant support from the Department of Works and Pensions for the provision of the Housing Benefits Service, had for the second year running seen a real cut, thereby creating a risk that the level of performance could be adversely affected. Innovative ways of carrying out the service continue to be considered and efficiency measures, such as home working which was currently being piloted in the section, would need to be extended to maintain the existing level of performance. Preparations had commenced to introduce the new Local Housing Allowance Scheme from 1st April 2008 for tenants of private landlords.

It was explained that from 1st April 2008, the existing Concessionary Travel Scheme would be extended to allow older and disabled people to access off peak local travel anywhere in England. The Government had set aside a total £218m to fund the changes to the scheme. The money was being distributed as a specific grant and Sedgfield Borough had been awarded a £207,000.

Members were reminded that the existing scheme within County Durham, had operated for many years and provided users with half fare and now free travel, both within the County and adjoining areas, which actually exceeded the statutory minimum, outlined in the latest changes. Discussions were underway with the bus companies on the introduction of the new scheme, particularly around maintaining the existing benefits for those in the County Durham scheme. An estimate of the financial impact was incorporated into the report.

It was noted that the Neighbourhood Renewals Fund, which ended in 2007/08, was being replaced with the Working Neighbourhoods Fund. It was pointed out that the exact purposes for which the new funding could be used, was still being considered. The sum of £2,099,339 had been allocated to Sedgfield Borough Council for 2008/09. The additional allocations for 2009/10 and 2010/11 would be paid to the new Unitary Authority.

In addition, it would be still be necessary to maximise the potential funds available from the funding streams pooled through the Local Area Agreement, to allow the Council to continue its involvement in cross cutting initiatives such as employability and the economic regeneration of the Borough.

Learning & Employment

The budget proposals for the Learning and Employment Portfolio should enable the Council to provide a similar level of service to that being achieved during 2007/08, especially in relation to economic development and industrial promotion.

The Council would continue to provide a training service for unemployed youths & adults to improve their skills to enable to help them to employment. The service, funded mainly from training contracts from the Learning and Skill Council and Job Centre Plus, was self-financing. The Council would also continue its close relationship with Bishop Auckland College to develop a merged service with the aim of providing significantly enhanced training facilities locally as identified in the Transition Plan.

A question was raised on whether the Council had sufficient resources to improve the economic wellbeing of the Borough.

It was reported that the Council's had to make the best use of its resources and officers ensured that they did not duplicate the work undertaken by other agencies such as ONE NorthEast with regard to economic development.

Specific reference was made to LEGI funding, which was targeted at the promotion and development of enterprise in economically deprived communities. It was noted that the Borough would also receive £7m of Working Neighbourhoods Funding over the next 3 years to improve employability.

It was reported that although there had been a number of job losses in the Borough, the employment rate was increasing, and officers were working strategically to ensure that residents of Sedgfield Borough were appropriately skilled and trained to take up any jobs that were available.

It was pointed out that the second largest industrial estate in the region was located in Borough at Newton Aycliffe.

Following specific issues being considered the Cabinet Member then left the meeting to allow the Committee to deliberate and consider its recommendations.

RECOMMENDED: That the budget proposals in relation to Environment, Planning and Development, Social Regeneration and Partnership and Learning and Employment portfolios for 2008/09 be supported.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION

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Item 3b

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

PROSPEROUS AND ATTRACTIVE BOROUGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Council Chamber,
Council Offices
Spennymoor

Tuesday,
29 January 2008

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, A. Smith, B. Stephens and
A. Warburton

**Invited to
Attend:** Councillor V. Crosby

**In
Attendance:** Councillors Mrs. D. Bowman, V. Chapman, Mrs. J. Gray, B. Haigh,
Mrs. S. Haigh, J.E. Higgin, J.G. Huntington, Mrs. H.J. Hutchinson and
Mrs. E.M. Paylor

Apologies: Councillors G.M.R. Howe and J. Robinson J.P

P&A.24/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were submitted.

P&A.25/07 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11th December, 2007 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

P&A.26/07 LOCAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME - IMPACT AND PROGRESS TO DATE

It was explained that Andrew Megginson, Capital Programme Manager, was present at the meeting to outline progress on the Local Improvement Programme. Councillor V. Crosby, the Portfolio holder for Social Regeneration and Partnership was also present at the meeting to answer any queries.

A briefing note was considered which outlined the main principles of the Programme and the criteria to be used in determining eligible projects. (For copy see file of Minutes).

The Committee was informed that £3.8m had been earmarked from the sale of land across the Borough for the Local Improvement Programme over a three year period, subject to budget approval. The Programme was due to finish in March 2009. The re-organisation of Local Government in County Durham would not change that timescale.

The purpose of the Programme was to tackle issues facing the Borough which were linked to aspects of the Community Strategy and intelligence from Community/Area Appraisals.

As part of the process, resources could be released to improve individual sites, buildings and community facilities throughout Sedgefield Borough. The funding was allocated on an Area Forum basis and related to the number of households in the area. The issue of deprivation and need was not an overriding factor in determining financial allocations across the Borough.

It was noted that local community/voluntary organisations and partner Town and Parish Councils could submit project proposals at any time. These were appraised and discussed at Area Forum meetings. The project was then considered at Council's Cabinet to assess the project and decide whether it should be supported.

It was explained that projects, eligible for support through the Local Improvement Programme, needed to meet a number of key criteria including :-

- Conformity to the Department for Communities and Local Government "regeneration criteria" which stated that the focus of activity should be on any land where the land or building on the land was vacant, unused, under-used, ineffectively used, contaminated or derelict; and that the works or activities carried out in order to secure that the land or the buildings would be brought into effective use.
- Clear linkages to the delivery of the Council's Community Strategy and its key aims and planned outcomes.
- The project also had to clearly demonstrated that strong local need backed through appraisals, measurable benefit, added value and appropriate consultation.

With regard to the success of the Programme the Committee noted that fifty one applications had been received to date, eleven of which were technical studies. Twenty six projects had been approved with a total value of £1,103,977. Fifteen applications were currently being appraised, seven of which had been considered by the appropriate Area Forum. Of the applications for Local Improvement Programme funding thirteen projects had been withdrawn or rejected and twenty two projects were in the pipeline across the Borough. It was explained that it was often a lengthy process to develop a project proposal. The timescale was dependent upon a number of factors including :-

- How well the project was developed before the application was submitted.
- The Area Forum timetable.
- Matchfunding timescale.
- Planning permission process.
- Tender process.

It was pointed out that all projects started at a different point and some needed more information than others.

A number of projects had been completed and some were in operation. The Local Improvement Team had a key role to play in monitoring projects to ensure outputs were achieved and evaluating the evidence of additional activities and local improvement.

With regard to matchfunding for projects it was reported that £703,000 of external matchfunding had been secured to date for approved projects. This equated to a ratio of £1 from Sedgfield Borough Council to 70p from external match funding. Local Improvement Programme Team were working with applicants to try to maximise external funding and identify matchfunding opportunities.

Issues facing the Local Improvement Programme were identified, particularly in relation to differing levels of activities across the respective Area Forum. It was noted that the role of the Area Forums were key to processing applications and the timescale of meetings was sometimes an issue.

Local Government re-organisation was also on the horizon and consideration needed to be given to a “cut-off date” for new applications to enable the Local Improvement Programme Team to assess the remaining funding, how many projects were still outstanding and to allow time for community groups and other organisations across the Borough to submit applications and assess resource implications. Reference was also made to the linkage with the Neighbourhood Enhancement Programme Member funding.

Members were given contact details in respect of Local Improvement Programme applications and informed that the Local Improvement Programme Team were happy to discuss individual project ideas/comments with Councillors or community groups.

Queries were raised in relation to match funding for projects. Members of the Committee questioned whether match funding was mandatory and whether Town and Parish Councils were requested to provide a certain ratio of match funding. In response it was explained that it had never been mandatory to provide match funding for a scheme. Each scheme was considered on its merits and advice given on match funding opportunities. The aim was, however, to attract a target match funding figure of approximately a third of project cost from Town and Parish Councils.

It was then questioned what form the Town and Parish Council contribution could take and whether the contribution had to be met from precepts. It was explained that the funding from Town and Parish Councils did not have to come from their precept. Other forms of match funding were considered. It was recognised that raising funding by precepts would be an issue for smaller Town/Parish Councils and therefore Parish and Town Councils were not automatically requested to pick up revenue costs of the schemes. The Policy was to maximise match funding whenever possible.

Clarification was also sought as to whether the Neighbourhood Enhancement Programme could provide an opportunity for Town and

Parish Councils to provide funding for projects other than through precepts and whether it could be linked to a bigger project. It was pointed out that the Neighbourhood Enhancement Programme and Local Improvement Programme did have differing criteria. In respect of the Local Improvement Programme the focus was on underused land and/or buildings. This criteria was, however, difficult to interpret and had Community Strategy implications. The criteria for the Neighbourhood Enhancement Programme funding was flexible as long as a strong local need had been demonstrated.

If those criteria were met there was a possibility that it may be an opportunity for an application to be linked to a bigger project. However, both the Local Improvement Programme was Borough Council funding and the Neighbourhood Enhancement Programme and as such project applications had to meet agreed criteria. A project that did not meet the criteria could not proceed.

In response to a query raised regarding the complexity and timescale of technical studies, the Committee was informed that technical studies were requested to assist Groups in identifying development opportunities. The process was often lengthy and increased the timescale of the of the project's development. However, a technical study did provide valuable information for groups on developing the project. The studies were usually completed in stages such as specialist surveys. Applicants were advised at each stage of the process on the viability of the project.

Clarification was sought on VAT issues and timescale for identifying those areas which were VAT zero rated. In response it was explained that HM Revenue and Customs had been requested to provide guidance in relation to those issues.

Members of the Committee queried the "cut off" date for LIP applications. It was explained that there was a need to provide information to applicants that a project had to reach a certain stage by a specific date to allow projects to be developed and progressed prior to the new authority coming into being.

- AGREED :*
- (1) That the Committee is satisfied with the progress on the Local Improvement Programme to date.*
 - (2) That the Committee reviews the progress of the Local Improvement Plan at a future meeting.*

P&A.27/07 BUILDING CONTROL SERVICE PERFORMANCE

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Planning Services (for copy see file of Minutes) relating to progress on Building Control Service Performance Indicators.

The Committee was reminded that at its meeting held on 6th November, 2007 the Committee had considered Performance Indicators relating to its ambitions for the period 1st April to 30th April 2007.

At that meeting concerns had been expressed regarding performance on the following Indicators :-

- LPI32 – Percentage of Applications Considering the Building Control Service Good or Better, and**
- LPI34 - Percentage of Building Control Plans Approved/ Responded to within 3 weeks**

The purpose of the report was to explain the current performance levels and identify actions to improve the performance of those Indicators.

It was explained that for some time the Building Control Service had been understaffed and there had been difficulty in recruitment and the pool of available, suitably qualified and experienced officers in the Durham County area had diminished. It was difficult therefore to provide an effective and efficient Building Control Service. The long serving Manager of the Building Control Team had also left the Council's employ during the specific period in question and this had exacerbated the situation.

Furthermore, the Service had to compete with the private sector which had made significant gains in recent years at the expense of traditional local authority Building Control services. To meet those challenges changes to the staffing structure of the Building Control team had been endorsed and principally pursued inter authority working with adjoining councils in order to safeguard the future of local authority led Building Control Services.

In respect of actions to address the issues it was noted that a new Building Control Manager had been recruited and was now in post. That Manager was eager to provide a new impetus to service delivery and to introduce different methods of working with a renewed emphasis on performance management. In particular new monitoring measures had been implemented within the team to enable the Manager to apportion workload more effectively.

The outsourcing of plan vetting to an external consultancy had also been reviewed and steps had been taken to assess the type of work to be kept in-house in order to improve performance. The new Manager had been in discussions with the consultants regarding their expected performance.

It was considered that the Building Control Manager should be allowed time to address the issues and a further report be given to the Committee in the middle of the next financial year.

- AGREED :**
- 1. That the Committee is satisfied with the progress in relation to Building Control Service Performance Indicators LPI32 – Percentage of Applications considering the Building Control Service good or better and LPI33 – Percentage of Building Control Plans approved/responded to within 3 weeks.*
 - 2. That a further update be given in nine months.*

P&A.28/07 PERFORMANCE IN RELATION TO THE PROVISION OF CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISALS

Consideration was given to a report of the Head of Planning Services (for copy see file of Minutes) regarding progress in relation to BV219(b) – Percentage of Conservation Areas in the local authority area with an up-to-date character appraisal.

It was explained that Charlie Walton, Head of Planning Services was present at the meeting to outline progress and answer queries.

The Committee was reminded that at its meeting on 6th November, 2007 consideration had been given to Performance Indicators relating to its ambitions for the period 1 April to 30th September 2007.

At that meeting concerns were raised and further information had been requested on performance in relation to BV219(b) – Percentage of Conservations Areas in the Local Authority Area with an up-to-date character appraisal.

Concerns were raised by Members that a target had been set to appraise 20% of the Borough's Conservation Areas and last years performance was 6.7% with current performance 0.6%. The report provided an explanation of current performance levels and actions to improve that performance.

It was explained that conservation area appraisals and management plans were required for the fifteen conservation areas across the Borough. The majority of which were designated in 1993. The only conservation area with a complete appraisal was Cornforth. This year work was continuing on conservation area appraisals for Shildon and Bishop Middleham.

Draft conservation area appraisals had been prepared by the Forward Plans Team in 2003/4. Subsequently Best Practice Guide had been issued by English Heritage on how to prepare the appraisals. This had involved revisiting all the draft appraisals with a view to having them revised. This was time-consuming and fell primarily to the Team Manager to oversee.

Work associated with conservation areas was not the only work undertaken by the Team. Other major pieces of work which had to be undertaken included, preparation of grant application and delivery plan for English Heritage in relation to building repairs and restoration, work allocated in the Capital Programme, planning statement and design brief, shop front improvement grant schemes and specialist advice on planning applications.

It was also acknowledged that some newer, less experienced staff in the Development Control Team had required more advice and guidance and conservation design, tree protection and landscaping matters than would have been the case in the past when the staffing situation was more stable.

It was clear that the nature and scope of appraisals had changed involving more work than originally anticipated and in that sense, targets had perhaps been too ambitious and over-optimistic. The Team Manager was therefore to produce a conservation appraisal action plan setting out realistic timescales for the production of the remaining appraisals. That action plan would be given priority status in the Team's work plan for 2008/9.

Reports would be prepared to update Members on the progress attained and presented to Development Control Committee.

- AGREED :**
- 1. That the Committee is satisfied with progress in relation to BV219(b) – Percentage of Conservation Areas in Local Authority area with an up-to-date character appraisal.*
 - 2. That a further update be given at a future meeting of the Committee.*

P&A.29/07 CORPORATE PLAN INDICATOR, CPA02 NUMBER OF PEOPLE SPECTATING IN A CULTURAL ACTIVITY

Katy Banner, Arts Development Officer, was present at the meeting to outline progress towards Corporate Plan Indicator CPA02 – Number of People Spectating in a Cultural Activity.

It was explained that the focus of Arts Development was in five areas:-

- Education
- Community Arts
- Cross Agency and Departmental
- Project Development
- Public Art

In relation to Education, it was explained that the focus of Arts Development was on people with low educational attainments and engaging with those people to try increase achievement through the arts.

With regard to Project Development it was noted that there was a £40,000 budget for Project Development. Fund raising raised around £200,000 a year.

In relation to Public Art it was noted that in 2006 the Culture 2006 award had been received in relation to the project at Spennymoor.

Examples were given of areas of Arts Development including :-

- Arts in Health – Dealing with GP Referrals and in particular Singing for Health Initiative
- Young People – dance initiatives, cultural programme
- Arts grants, festival support, performance and music initiatives

Figures were given in relation to participants and audiences in relation to the Arts Development priorities. It was noted that the Arts Council required a further breakdown of information such as the age range of participants along with the overall number of art sessions and professional artists employed.

It was pointed out that the Arts Development Team had measured the return on every £ invested in Arts Development and on average fund raised over £250,000 including capital per year.

The Committee was reminded that not only performance had to be taken into account but also the quality of projects, the amount of time spent and other factors.

- AGREED :**
1. *That the Committee is satisfied with progress in relation to Corporate Plan Indicator CPA02 – Number of People spectating in a Cultural Activity.*
 2. *That a further update be given at a future meeting.*

P&A.30/07 WORK PROGRAMME

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

- AGREED :**
1. *The report be noted.*
 2. *That the following be included on the Committee Work Programme :*
 - *Local Improvement Programme – Progress Update.*
 - *Progress towards LPI32 – Percentage of Applications considering the Building Control Service Good or Better and LPI 34 – Percentage of Building Control Plans approved/responded to within 3 weeks.*
 - *Progress towards BV219(b) – Percentage of Conservation Areas in Local Authority Area with an up-to-date Character Appraisal.*
 - *Progress towards Corporate Plan Indicator CPA02 – Number of People Spectating in a Cultural Activity.*

Item 3c

SEDGEFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL

PROSPEROUS AND ATTRACTIVE BOROUGH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Council Chamber,
Council Offices
Spennymoor

Monday,
18 February 2008

Time: 10.00 a.m.

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

Councillors P. Gittins J.P., Mrs. I. Hewitson and B. Lamb

In Attendance: Councillors Mrs. P. Crathorne, V. Crosby, Mrs. B. Graham, A. Gray, Mrs. J. Gray, J.E. Higgin, Ms. I. Jackson, B.M. Ord and T. Ward

Apologies: Councillors Mrs. L. M.G. Cuthbertson, D.M. Hancock, G.M.R. Howe, Mrs. E. Maddison, J. Robinson J.P, A. Smith, B. Stephens and A. Warburton

P&A.31/07 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No Declarations of Interest were received.

P&A.32/07 NEW KERBSIDE RECYCLING SERVICE

Gordon Lennon, Technical Services Manager gave a presentation in relation to the new kerbside recycling service. Councillor A. Hodgson, Lead Member for the Environment was also present at the meeting, along with Neil Rippon Managing Director and Kevin Lee Operations Manager from Greencycle, to answer any queries. (For copy of presentation see file of minutes)

It was explained that a new kerbside recycling service, operated by Greencycle, would commence on 1st April 2008. The purpose of the presentation was to provide members with the background to the service and recycling in general.

The Committee was informed that there were good environmental, financial and legal reasons for progressing the new contract for kerbside recycling.

Environmental reasons for recycling related to greenhouse gas emissions, energy conservation and diminishing natural resources. In respect of greenhouse gas emissions the Committee was informed that 50% of emitted methane came from landfill waste. There was therefore a need to reduce waste to landfill. Recycling could also assist in energy conservation. It was noted that reprocessing one plastic bottle would save enough energy to power a 60w light bulb for 6 hours. Bearing in mind the world's diminishing natural resources, there was a need to recycle to reduce the demand on raw materials. It was explained that reprocessing one tonne of recycled glass saved 30 gallons of oil used

when manufacturing from raw materials.

Since 2003 the Government had introduced Best Value Performance targets for recycling for each local authority in the country. The targets had increased year on year with the target for 2007/08 being 20%. The target remained unchanged for 2008/09. However by 2010 the target would reach 40%. The Council was achieving the current target and with Greencycle's assistance it was hoped that the 2010 target would be achieved.

It was noted that the current kerbside collection service recycled 12.5% of household waste in 2006/07. Other recycling services collected around 4,000 tonnes of waste which was around 10%. To achieve the Government's target of 40% by 2010 there was therefore a need to minimize the amount of waste produced and maximise recycling rates.

The Government, as a disincentive for local authorities to take waste to landfill, had introduced a Landfill Tax. The rate of Landfill Tax for 2007/08 was £24 per tonne of household waste taken to landfill sites. By 2010/11 this was to increase year on year to £48 per tonne.

There were therefore sound environmental and financial reasons for continuing to recycle materials.

An Overview and Scrutiny Review Group in 2006/07 had examined recycling services. The outcome of that review was an agreement to continue a kerbside collection scheme after the contract for the existing scheme ended in March 2008. However as the current contract could not legally be extended beyond that date, joint working with the other "Kerb-It" partners, Durham City, Easington and Chester-le-Street was undertaken. Officers from those authorities developed a new contract which was submitted for tender. The returned tender documents were evaluated and reported to Cabinet when it was agreed that Greencycle be awarded the contract.

It was explained that Greencycle was a company which had been formed in 2005. The company already undertook a similar contract for Congleton District Council and were currently investing in material processing plants.

The new service provided an opportunity to maximise recycling by increasing the range of materials to be collected. The company also had a local depot at TurSDale and would create local employment. A dedicated Recycling Education Officer would be provided, for each contract area, to talk to schools and community groups on recycling. As part of the contract £2 per tonne would be donated, by the company, to local environmentally aware organisations.

Members were informed that the recyclate to be collected included mixed glass, mixed cans and metals, mixed paper and card and plastic bottles. Households would retain the existing recycling box for bottles and cans with a bag being provided to each property for paper, newspaper and plastics. Collection would remain on a fortnightly basis.

In response to a query raised regarding the cost effectiveness of the contract it was explained that the cost of collection was £54 per tonne. Taking into account recycling credits which would be received it was anticipated that the service would be provided for approximately £10 per tonne.

A query was raised in relation to participation in recycling and it was noted that more people were recycling and there had been an increase in tonnage collected.

In relation to the provision of bags, in response to questions, it was explained that, if the bags were of insufficient capacity, plastic bags could be used for collection of plastics. It was noted that if bags were lost or needed replacement that would be done free of charge.

Members queried which companies would receive the financial benefits. It was pointed out that it was at the discretion of each local authority as to where the money was distributed.

With regard to publicity it was reported that leaflets and other publicity material would be distributed from 1st March 2008 and be included in the newly provided bags. An article would also be placed in Inform and other free newspapers.

Cabinet members then left the meeting to allow the Committee to deliberate and consider its recommendations.

AGREED: That the information be received and an update be given at a future meeting of the Committee.

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Item 4

Train to Gain

Prosperous and Attractive Borough Overview and Scrutiny Committee

11th March 2008

What does it aim to achieve

- A government initiative to engage employers in skills activity and enabling their employees to receive a range of training and support.

Train to Gain

- The government through the Learning and Skills Council provides free training to help employees gain their first full level 2 qualification and/or Skills for Life first numeracy and literacy qualification.
- The learning and Skills Council provide this training through a network of Training providers.
- Sedgefield Borough Council is an approved provider with the Learning and Skills Council.

Resources

- Train to Gain budget will grow by almost 50 per cent in 2008/09 and a further third in 2009/10.

What are the success criteria

- Number of employers engaged
- The number of Level 2 and basic skills starts and achievement.

Performance at SBC Contract year August 2007 to July 2008

- Starts – 9
- Leavers – 38
- Achieved qualification – 37
- Success Rate – 97.4%
- Still in Training - 29
- Projected starts March/April - 30



Qualifications

- Business Administration
- Customer Service
- Manufacturing
- Site Carpentry
- General Operative Construction
- Bricklaying



Employer engagement

- 19 employers engaged
- Sedgfield Borough Council
- Magnet
- PlasmO
- Specialist Coatings



Future developments

- Mears
- Service Direct – Durham County
- Wright Construction

Item 5

PROSPEROUS AND ATTRACTIVE BOROUGH OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

11 MARCH 2008

REPORT OF CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME

SUMMARY

This report sets out the Committee's current Work Programme for consideration and review.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Committee's Work Programme be reviewed.

DETAIL

1. In accordance with Overview & Scrutiny Procedure Rule 8 of the Council's Constitution, Overview & Scrutiny Committees are responsible for setting their own work programme.
2. Each Overview & Scrutiny Committee should agree a realistic, achievable and considered work programme on the understanding that, from time to time, more urgent or immediate issues may require scrutiny. Issues may, for example, be raised by Cabinet reports, Members' constituency business or be referred to Scrutiny by Cabinet in advance of a Cabinet decision.
3. The current Work Programme for this Committee is appended to the report which details:-
 - Scrutiny Reviews currently being undertaken.
 - Scrutiny review topics held in reserve for future investigation.
 - A schedule of items to be considered by the Committee for the period to 31st March 2009.
4. **Scrutiny Review**

The Committee should aim to undertake a small number of high quality reviews that will make a real difference to the work of the Authority, rather than high numbers of reviews on more minor issues. Overview & Scrutiny Committees should normally aim to undertake two reviews concurrently. Any additional review topics that have been agreed by Members will be placed on a reserve list and as one review is completed the Committee will decide on which review should be undertaken next.

A workshop was held for Overview & Scrutiny Members on 20th February 2008 to discuss the role of the Committees within the period leading to the

establishment of a new Unitary Council in April 2009. One element of the workshop was to consider a number of options for undertaking scrutiny reviews within this period. Members supported undertaking a State of the Borough Review, which would look at achievements within each of the Council's ambitions. The Review would provide a benchmark for future assessment, highlight areas for improvement and make recommendations to the new council where appropriate.

It was proposed that Overview & Scrutiny Committees establish Review Groups to examine each of the Council's ambitions as follows:-

Committee	Review Groups
Healthy Borough with Strong Communities O&S Cttee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healthy Borough Review Group• Strong Communities Review Group
Prosperous and Attractive Borough O&S Cttee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prosperous Borough Review Group• Attractive Borough Review Group

The final reports from each of these reviews would be combined to form a single State of the Borough report.

Strategic Leadership O&S Cttee has responsibility for issues such as corporate governance and resource management rather than direct responsibility for scrutiny of the Council's ambitions. This Committee would therefore not be required to establish review groups to undertake the State of the Borough Review. However, Members were keen to ensure all scrutiny members had the opportunity to contribute to these important reviews.

The principle of co-option to review groups across committees is well established for crosscutting issues and it is proposed that this practice be extended to allow members to contribute to the Review of their choice. The following criteria would however apply to ensure a balance across the review groups.

- Only members of an Overview & Scrutiny Committee can be a member of a Review Group.
- A member can only be a member of 1 Review Group
- Review Groups would have a maximum of 9 members
- Review Groups should be chaired by a member of the parent committee
- Review Groups should be politically balanced in accordance with the number of Overview & Scrutiny members
- All 5 geographical areas should be represented in each Review Group

5. **Business for Future Meetings**

The Committees Work Programme for the period leading to the establishment of a new Unitary Council in April 2009 is attached for consideration.

Members are requested to review the Committee's Work Programme and identify, where necessary, issues that they feel should be investigated by the Committee. The Work Programme will need to be carefully managed to ensure that the most important issues are considered in the limited time available.

It will not always be possible to anticipate all reports which will need to be considered by an Overview & Scrutiny Committee and therefore a flexible approach will need to be taken to work programming.

4. **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None associated with this report.

5. **CONSULTATION**

Contact Officers: Jonathan Slee
Telephone No: (01388) 816166 ext 4362
Email Address: jslee@sedgefield.gov.uk

Ward(s): Not ward specific

Background Papers None

**PROSPEROUS & ATTRACTIVE BOROUGH
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

WORK PROGRAMME

Ongoing Reviews

No reviews currently ongoing

Future Reviews

There are currently no review topics identified by the Committee for future review. As one review is completed Members will decide which review should be undertaken next.

ANTICIPATED ITEMS

29th April 2008

- *Progress towards Local Plan Performance Indicator LPI 01*
- *Climate Change Strategy – Progress Update*
- *Local Improvement Plan – Progress Update*

2008/09 Municipal Year

July 2008*

- *Performance Indicators 2007/08 - Year End Performance*

September 2008*

- *Overview and Scrutiny Review: The Council's Contribution to Reducing Economic Inactivity (Increasing Employability) - Progress on Action plan*
- *Overview and Scrutiny Committee Review: Future Recycling Services Options – Progress on Action Plan*
- *Building Control Service - Performance Update*
- *The Provision of Conservation Area Appraisals – Performance update*

November 2008*

- *Half Yearly Performance Report*

December 2008*

- *Prosperous Borough Overview & Scrutiny Review Group Report*
- *Attractive Borough Overview & Scrutiny Review Group Report*

January 2009*

- *No items identified*

March 2009*

- *No items identified*

**Meeting dates subject to approval at Annual Council in May 2008.*

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