

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in **COUNCIL CHAMBER, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 13 OCTOBER 2005** at **11:30 AM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

## **APOLOGIES**

**Contact  
(01480)**

**1. MINUTES** (Pages 1 - 8)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on the 15<sup>th</sup> September 2005.

**Mrs H Taylor  
388008**

**2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

To receive from Members declarations as to personal and/or prejudicial interests and the nature of those interests in relation to any Agenda item.

Please see Notes 1 and 2 below.

**3. DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF**

**(a) National Non-Domestic Rates Discretionary Relief-  
Brampton Park Golf Club** (Pages 9 - 12)

To consider a report by the Head of Revenue Services regarding an application for discretionary rate relief from non domestic rates from Brampton Park Golf Club.

**Ms J Barber  
388105**

**(b) Relief for Charities and Kindred Organisations: Policy  
Review** (Pages 13 - 24)

To consider a report by the Head of Revenue Services summarising legislation on discretionary rate relief and proposing a new policy and delegation arrangements.

**Ms J Barber  
388105**

**4. HUNTINGDON TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENTS REQUEST FOR  
RELEASE OF FUNDS** (Pages 25 - 28)

To consider a report by the Heads of Planning Services and of Financial Services regarding the funding of the Huntingdon Town Centre Medium Term Plan Scheme.

**S Couper  
388103**

**5. MEDIUM TERM PLAN: REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS**  
(Pages 29 - 32)

By way of a report by the Head of Financial Services to consider requests for the release of funding for Medium Term Plan Schemes.

**S Couper  
388103**

6. **RECYCLING CREDITS** (Pages 33 - 36)

To consider a report by the Development and Community Manager on impending changes to the Recycling Credits Scheme proposed by Cambridgeshire County Council, the Waste Disposal Authority.

**Ms S Hansen**  
**388341**

7. **REVENUE FUNDING OF CONEYGEAR COURT** (Pages 37 - 40)

To consider a report by the Housing Needs and Resources Manager regarding a request for additional revenue funding from Granta Housing Association to increase housing units at Coneygear Court, Huntingdon.

**J Collen**  
**388220**

8. **CHOICE BASED LETTINGS - RECOMMENDED OPTIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION** (Pages 41 - 44)

To consider a report by the Housing Needs and Resources Manager seeking approval in principle to negotiate a sub regional Choice Based Letting Scheme.

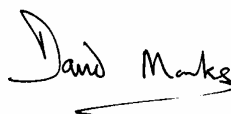
**J Collen**  
**388220**

9. **THE COUNCIL'S SCHEME OF DELEGATION: INTERIM VARIATION PENDING THE APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES** (Pages 45 - 46)

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Administration to consider interim arrangements relating to the Council's Scheme of Delegation pending the recruitment of a replacement Director of Operational Services.

**R Reeves**  
**388003**

Dated this 5 day of October 2005



Chief Executive

**Notes**

1. *A personal interest exists where a decision on a matter would affect to a greater extent than other people in the District –*
  - (a) *the well-being, financial position, employment or business of the Councillor, a partner, relatives or close friends;*
  - (b) *a body employing those persons, any firm in which they are a partner and any company of which they are directors;*
  - (c) *any corporate body in which those persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £5,000; or*
  - (d) *the Councillor's registerable financial and other interests.*
2. *A personal interest becomes a prejudicial interest where a member of the public (who has knowledge of the circumstances) would reasonably regard the Member's personal*

*interest as being so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.*

**Please contact Mrs H Taylor, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Tel No. 01480 388008/e-mail [Helen.Taylor@huntsdc.gov.uk](mailto:Helen.Taylor@huntsdc.gov.uk) if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Cabinet.**

**Specific enquiries with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.**

**Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business.**

*Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the District Council's website – [www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk) (under Councils and Democracy).*

*If you would like a translation of Agenda/Minutes/Reports or would like a large text version or an audio version please contact the Democratic Services Manager and we will try to accommodate your needs.*

#### ***Emergency Procedure***

*In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit and to make their way to the base of the flagpole in the car park at the front of Pathfinder House.*

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## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Thursday, 15 September 2005.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.

Councillors I C Bates, Mrs J Chandler, N J Guyatt, A Hansard, Mrs P J Longford, Mrs D C Reynolds, T V Rogers and L M Simpson.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor D P Holley.

### **57. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2005 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **58. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor Hansard declared a personal interest in Item No.73 by virtue of his membership of St Neots Town Council.

### **59. CONSULTATION ON CHANGES TO THE WAY THE GOVERNMENT PROVIDES FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

A report by the Director of Commerce and Technology (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) was submitted summarising the Government's suggested options for changing the way financial support to local authorities was calculated.

In discussing a basis for a District Council's response to the paper, Members concurred that any new arrangements should be fair should have regard for authorities ability to demonstrate value-for-money in the delivery of services and should avoid any resource equalisation which would result in a transfer of funds from low-spending to high-spending authorities. Having also recorded its apprehension as to the operational and practical implementations of the proposal free concessionary bus fare scheme, the Cabinet

#### **RESOLVED**

that the Director of Commerce & Technology, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Finance, be authorised to respond on the Council's behalf to the Government's proposals for changing the way financial support to local authorities is calculated.

## **60. FINANCIAL STRATEGY**

Further to Minute No.04/49, further consideration was given to a report by the Director of Commerce and Technology (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) setting out three potential options available in terms of adopting a strategy for managing the Council's finances in the period 2011/12. A report by the Head of Administration summarising the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance) on the matter was also circulated.

Having been reminded of the Cabinet's previous decision to delete option 2 from any future deliberations, the uncertainties of the Council's future commitments and in noting the views expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, it was

### **RECOMMEND**

that Council be requested to defer a decision on the Council's Financial Strategy until the winter cycle of meetings.

## **61. REVENUE OUTTURN 2004/05**

A report by the Head of Financial Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of the outturn of revenue expenditure 2004/05 and the variations between the original and revised budget provision for that year.

Having emphasised the need for managers to be realistic in the phasing of schemes during reviews of the MTP and within budget monitoring, the Cabinet

### **RESOLVED**

that the level of net outturn expenditure in the sum of £14,556 million as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2005 and together with the carry forward of £292,000 to the current year be noted.

## **62. TREASURY MANAGEMENT INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE**

A report by the Head of Financial Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which reviewed the respective levels of performance achieved during the quarter 1<sup>st</sup> April to 30<sup>th</sup> June 2005 by three external fund managers in the matter of investment of the Council's capital receipts.

### **RESOLVED**

that the content of the report be noted.

## **63. PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

Further to Minute No.05/19, a report by the Head of Policy was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which reviewed the Council's performance against targets within the Corporate Plan – "Growing Success" - during the period April to June 2005.

Having been acquainted with the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels on the document, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the report be noted

**64. COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT: USE OF RESOURCES**

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Policy (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was appended a draft Value for Money Self-Assessment which had been introduced as part of a amended "Use of Resources" judgement to be made by the Audit Commission in conjunction with changes to the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) process.

Having been informed that further work on the self – assessment would be required prior to its submission to the Commission before 1<sup>st</sup> October 2005, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

(a) that the contents of the report now submitted be noted; and

(b) that the Chief Executive be authorised, after consultation with either the Leader of the Council or Deputy Leader of the Council, to approve and submit the District Council's Use of Resources - Value for Money self-assessment.

**65. AGEING WELL IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE - OLDER PEOPLES HOUSING, HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE STRATEGY**

By way of a report by the Housing Strategy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was acquainted with the contents of a draft of the Older Peoples' Health, Housing and Social Care Strategy "Ageing Well in Huntingdonshire", together with an associated action plan.

Having been informed that the Strategy had been produced to examine the issues and identify the actions that the District Council, the Huntingdonshire Primary Care Trust and other agencies and stakeholders would need to take to provide adequate services to older people, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Older Peoples' Health, Housing and Social Care Strategy together with the associated action plan be approved.

**66. STREET NAMING AND NUMBERING - SERVICE STANDARDS**

By way of a report by the Head of Environment and Transport (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the outcome of an asset survey reviewing the

standard of existing street name plates and numbering in Huntingdonshire.

In so doing, Members were advised of the problems and anomalies arising from street names and, particularly – rural areas and the National Street Gazetteer. Having been advised that the existing policy of not numbering all properties in the District had not resulted in a problem for the emergency services or the Local Land Property Gazetteer, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the progress of the asset survey and the repair of damaged plates from existing budgets be noted;
- (b) that, subject to the agreement of the relevant Parish Councils, action be undertaken to resolve the problems of inconsistent street naming;and
- (c) that the existing policy of not numbering properties in villages were established practices for households to provide house names be retained.

**67. DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

With the aid of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet received a draft Statement of Community Involvement which set out arrangements for involving stakeholders in the process of preparing the Local Development Framework and determining planning applications. Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the draft Statement of Community Involvement be approved for the purpose of public consultation.

**68. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK - LONGSANDS QUARTER**

A report by the Head of Planning Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a draft Urban Design Framework for land in and around Longsands College, the Regional College, the site of the open air swimming pool, the Almond Road surgery and Health Centre in St Neots. The framework was intended to present the planning policy context for the redevelopment of this area, which included the creation of a new health centre for this part of the town.

Having noted concerns expressed by Members representing wards in and around St Neots about car parking and the potential loss of a public amenity, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Urban Design Framework be approved as a basis for public consultation.



**69. DESIGN GUIDANCE - CAR COURTS - A GUIDE FOR DESIGNERS**

With the aid of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet received a draft copy of guidance notes prepared to accompany and extend the advice provided on the design of car courts within residential areas in Huntingdonshire.

RESOLVED

that the design guidance for car courts be adopted as Council policy.

**70. DEVELOPMENT BRIEF - THE GRAND CINEMA, RAMSEY**

A report by the Head of Planning Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a draft design brief for the Grand Cinema in Ramsey. The brief was intended to present the planning policy context and design parameters for the future redevelopment of the site and adjoining land.

Having emphasised the importance of maintaining a community facility for Ramsey, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the development brief be approved as a basis public consultation.

**71. HUNTINGDONSHIRE BIG GIG**

Arising from the absence of funding in the Medium Term Plan for a "Big Gig project" consideration was given to a report by the Arts Services Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) setting out alternatives either not to proceed with the event or to organise a ticketed event in 2007 underwritten by the District Council.

Having considered information contained in the report, the financial pressures which would need to be addressed by the Council in the near future, the risks associated with underwriting an event of this nature and views expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources) on the matter, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that no future Big Gig events be organised by the District Council.

**72. ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN - PROGRESS REPORT**

A joint report by the Head of Legal and Estates and of Environment and Transport was submitted (a copy of which is attached in the Minute Book) updating Members on the current position with regard to land and property management and new assets

Having considered the information contained in the report, the

Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy, be authorised to accept new assets, including sustainable urban drainage systems, where they are accompanied by satisfactory financial and management arrangements;
- (b) that the Director of Central Services be authorised to accept the transfer of amenity land, currently maintained but not owned by the District Council.

**73. CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU, ST. NEOTS**

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Legal and Estates (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining details of a request from the Citizens Advice Bureau for the Council to continue to act as a guarantor of a lease of premises in New Street, St Neots.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Executive Director of Central Services, after consultation with the Executive Member for Resources and Policy, be authorised to approve arrangements for the Council to act as guarantor of a lease of premises in New Street, St Neots to the Citizens Advice Bureau.

**74. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES ADVISORY GROUP - APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS**

RESOLVED

that Councillors Bates, Mrs Chandler, Guyatt and Mrs Longford be appointed to serve on the Public Conveniences Advisory Group for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

**75. SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP**

The report of the Safety Advisory Group held on 15<sup>th</sup> June 2005 was received and noted.

**76. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to terms proposed for the acquisition or disposal of property and/or the supply of goods or services.

**77. HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION - INITIAL TENDER EVALUATION**

Further to Minute No.05/56 and with the assistance of a report by the Director of Operational Services (a copy of which is appended in the annex to the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the initial evaluation of three tenders for the Council's future office and other accommodation requirements.

Having considered the deliberations of the Office Accommodation Members Advisory Group and Overview and Scrutiny Panels on the matter, the Cabinet

#### RESOLVED

- (a) that the outcome of the initial evaluation of tenders for the Council's future office and accommodation requirements be noted;
- (b) that Council be recommended to include tenders from the two companies referred to in paragraph 5.5 of the report in the final evaluation;
- (c) that, subject to (b) above, the Chief Executive be authorised to notify the remaining unsuccessful company that their bid will not be given further consideration;
- (d) that the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Deputy Leader, be authorised to agree payments as necessary, but not exceeding £20,000, to each of the two companies referred to in (b) above to support the presentation of more detailed information; and
- (e) that a final decision on the proposed awarding of a contract and consequential changes to the Medium Term Plan be taken by full Council at the meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2005.

Chairman

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CABINET

13 OCTOBER 2005

## NATIONAL NON DOMESTIC RATES – DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF BRAMPTON PARK GOLF CLUB

(Report by the Head of Revenues Services)

### 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of an application for Discretionary Rate Relief and to invite members to make a decision on this case.

### 2 LEGISLATION

- 2.1 S43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 allows for 80% mandatory relief from National Non-Domestic Rates for charities and kindred organisations. S47 of the same act permits a billing authority to grant discretionary rate relief to charities and other organisations of prescribed types.
- 2.2 One of the conditions to be satisfied before the authority can consider an application with regard to an occupied hereditament is that:-

“the property is wholly or mainly used for the purposes of recreation, and all or part of it is occupied for the purpose of a club, society or other organisation not established or conducted for profit”.

### 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 On 7 February 2005 Brampton Park Golf Club (“BPGC”) applied for discretionary Rate Relief from non-domestic rates. A reply was sent on 4 March stating that as a Private Limited Company, BPGC was not eligible for consideration of the relief as such a company, with share capital, balance sheet and profit & loss account could not be an organisation that was ‘not established or conducted for profit’, and hence fell outside the scope of the scheme.
- 3.2 It was suggested that BPGC apply for ‘Community Amateur Sports Club’ status (through the Inland Revenue), as CASCs are granted 80% mandatory relief.
- 3.3 BPGC responded on 16 March, stating that although they were a Limited Company, their Articles of Association state that the income of the company shall be applied solely towards the objects of the company and no part shall be paid to the members directly or indirectly by way of profit.
- 3.4 A reply was sent on 23 March stating that, although the company did indeed qualify as an organisation not established or conducted for profit, it did not gain sufficient points to obtain any relief under the scoring system approved by the Finance & General Purposes Committee on behalf of the District Council in 1996.
- 3.5 The company responded by making a request under the Freedom of Information

Act for:

- a list of all recipients of discretionary rate relief in the last two years;
- details of the amount of each award and the percentage of the rates that these amounts represented;
- a copy of the council's policy & guidance on how we assess applications for rate relief; and
- details of the points scoring system.

This request was duly complied with.

- 3.6** On 8 June, BPGC sent in a scoring sheet that they had completed, which assessed the club as warranting sufficient points to qualify for 30% discretionary rate relief. The criterion which made the difference between this sheet and the one completed by HDC staff (see 3.4 above) was about 'restrictions on membership'. Officers believe that 'average restrictions' on membership exist, whilst BPGC assert that there are no restrictions.
- 3.7** Officers' assessment is based on the following factors:
- The club's membership pack advises that there are a 'small number of memberships available'.
  - Membership fees cost up to £697 per year (less for juniors, students and 5-day members). Although there is normally a joining fee as well, it is waived or reduced for some categories (juniors, emergency services personnel and teachers). It should be noted that there is a separate criterion on the scoring sheet which allocates minus points according to the level of membership fee(s).
  - On their website, BPGC state that by joining Brampton Park, 'you are among a privileged few'.
  - Applicants are required to attend a meeting with the manager of the club. This is intended to 'allow both parties to judge that the new member and existing members blend in together for the benefit of all'.
- 3.8** BPGC contend that there are no restrictions because there is no system of proposing and seconding, nor is there an interviewing panel or a requirement for members to be approved.
- 3.9** BPGC are unwilling to accept the Officers' decision in this case. They have been advised that, were they to change their membership procedure such that no meeting was required prior to accepting someone's application for membership, we would reconsider their situation. They declined that suggestion and simply reiterated their view that they have no restrictions on membership.

#### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Council Tax payers must bear the cost of 25% of the amount of any reduction, the remaining 75% being deducted from the Council's contribution to the National Non-Domestic Rates pool.

	£
The rates demand for 2005/6 is	35,448
30% rate relief would be	10,634

The net cost to the Council Taxpayers for the year 2005/6 would be £2,658.60 if the application were granted. Relief is usually granted for three years, with a review at the end of that period.

- 4.2 It should be noted that officers have now reviewed the discretionary rate relief scheme for the first time since 1996. A separate paper is included elsewhere on this Cabinet agenda.

#### 5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 In the light of the foregoing information and BPGC's unwillingness to accept the Officers' decision in the matter, Cabinet is invited to determine the Club's application for discretionary rate relief.

#### ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985

Finance & General Purposes Committee minutes from January 1996  
Discretionary Rate Relief files in Local Taxation office  
BPGC correspondence file in Local Taxation office

#### Contact Officer:

**Julia Barber**

Head of Revenues Services ☎ 01480 388105

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CABINET

13 OCTOBER 2005

## NATIONAL NON DOMESTIC RATES – DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF FOR CHARITIES AND KINDRED ORGANISATIONS

(Report by the Head of Revenues Services)

### 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of the legislation on Discretionary Rate Relief and to propose a new policy and new delegation arrangements.

### 2 LEGISLATION

- 2.1 S43 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 allows for 80% mandatory relief from national non-domestic rates for charities and kindred (philanthropic) organisations.
- 2.2 S47 of the same act permits a billing authority to grant discretionary rate relief to charities and other organisations of prescribed types. Relief may be awarded whether the property is occupied or not.
- 2.3 The conditions to be satisfied before the authority can consider an application with regard to an occupied property are that;-
- (a) the ratepayer is a charity or trustees for a charity, and the property is wholly or mainly used for charitable purposes; or
  - (b) the property is not an “excepted property” (premises occupied by a billing or precepting authority), and all or part of it is occupied for the purposes of one or more institutions or other organisations, none of which is established or conducted for a profit and each of whose main objects are charitable or otherwise philanthropic or religious or concerned with education, social welfare, science, literature or the fine arts; or
  - (c) the property is not an excepted property, it is wholly or mainly used for the purposes of recreation, and all or part of it is occupied for the purpose of a club, society or other organisation not established or conducted for profit.
- 2.4 The conditions to be satisfied before the authority can consider an application with regard to an unoccupied property are that it shall be treated as wholly or mainly used for charitable purposes if it appears that, when next in use, it will be.

### 3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In January 1996, the Finance & General Purposes Committee approved a new list of organisations qualifying for Discretionary Rate Relief for a three year period or until there was a material change in circumstances in qualifying organisations.

- 3.2** This approval has been relied on since then to grant Discretionary Rate Relief to organisations, using the assessment criteria approved at the time. The criteria, which are set out at Appendix A, are complicated and need to be updated each year to reflect changes in prices. They also involve a degree of subjectivity, as the dispute in relation to the application from Brampton Park Golf Club dealt with elsewhere on this agenda has shown. Delegation under the Constitution is currently to the Director of Commerce & Technology, Head of Revenue Services and Local Taxation Manager. There is no specified right of appeal.
- 3.3** As the policy has not been reviewed since 1996, it is felt that it should be reviewed to assess whether it still meets the Council's objectives and complies with new legislation.
- 3.4** Charities and Community Amateur Sports Clubs receive 80% mandatory relief. That relief is funded in its entirety by deduction from the Authority's contribution to the National Non-Domestic Rates pool ("the pool").
- 3.5** In these cases, Billing Authorities may award discretionary relief of up to all of the remaining 20% payable. The cost to the Authority of this 'top up' discretionary relief is 75% of the discretionary relief awarded. The remaining 25% is deducted from the contribution to the pool. There is currently no specific policy as to what criteria should be used to decide whether relief should be given.
- 3.6** The legislation further provides that other non-profit-making organisations which meet the criteria set out in paragraph 2.3 (above) can be awarded Discretionary Rate Relief up to 100% of their rate liability. The cost to the Authority of discretionary relief to these organisations is 25% of the relief given, the remaining 75% being deducted from the Authority's contribution to the pool.

#### **4. CURRENT COST TO THE COUNCIL**

- 4.1** The Charities currently in receipt of discretionary top-up relief are shown in Appendix B, and the organisations currently receiving discretionary relief only are shown in Appendix C. The cost of the relief in 2005/6 is:-

	Total Discretionary Relief £	Cost to HDC £	Cost to the National NNDR Pool £
Charitable Organisations top-up (Appendix B)	1,587	1,190 (75%)	397 (25%)
Other Organisations (Appendix C)	55,645	13,911 (25%)	41,734 (75%)
<b>Total Relief</b>	<b>57,232</b>	<b>15,101</b>	<b>42,131</b>

These figures exclude Discretionary Rate Relief awarded to Rural Post Offices.

## **5 POLICY REVIEW AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The policy needs to be changed because:
- There are no specific provisions to address top-up relief for charities
  - The assessment criteria for other non-profit-making organisations are unnecessarily complicated, need to be revised each year and include an undesirable element of subjectivity
  - The lack of a specified right of appeal is potentially in contravention of the Human Rights Act.
- 5.2 It is proposed that the scheme for relief to other non-profit-making organisations is simplified by scrapping the existing assessment mechanism and replacing it with a simple scheme based on the rateable value of the property, thereby also eliminating any subjectivity from the process. The financial impact on individual recipients of the revised scheme is shown at Appendix C, and the proposed revised policy is set out at Appendix D.
- 5.3 Existing cases were reviewed at the beginning of 2005 and the awards were granted for a period of three years so the effective date for cancellation or review would be 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008.

## **6 GRANT AID**

- 6.1 Members may wish to note that a number of recipients of discretionary relief also received grants in 2005/6. In particular, the Huntingdon Olympic Gymnastic Club, which would lose out under the proposed policy, receives significant support from the Council towards the wages costs of the staff running the centre.

## **7. CONCLUSIONS**

- 7.1 The current scheme and the delegation to officers are out of date and need to be revised.
- 7.2 Existing cases which will benefit from the revised scheme should have their rates account adjusted in the current year and for future years in line with the new policy.

## **8. RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that:

- a) The proposed Discretionary Rate Relief policy set out at Appendix D be approved
- b) Existing cases in receipt of this relief be reviewed as required following a change in Rateable Value
- c) Existing recipients or potential recipients of Discretionary Rate Relief be advised of the new scheme and the effect on their rate accounts
- d) New cases be assessed under the new criteria
- e) The Rateable Values mentioned in the policy be reviewed on the occasion of a new rating list (every five years)
- f) The Head of Revenues Services and the Local Taxation Manager be delegated to grant relief under the policy
- g) The Director of Commerce & Technology be delegated to deal with appeals from dissatisfied applicants

**ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985**

Finance & General Purposes Committee minutes from January 1996

Finance & General Purposes Committee minutes from 22 June 1998

Discretionary Rate Relief files in Local Taxation office

**Contact Officer:**

**Julia Barber**

Head of Revenues Services ☎ **01480 388105**

# HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF – ASSESSMENT FORM WITH EFFECT FROM 01-04-05

Name ..... SCORE

Rate Reference No .....

RESTRICTIONS ON MEMBERSHIP	ASSESSMENT METHOD	
	<b>0-3</b>	
Major Restrictions	0	
Average Restrictions	1	
Very Limited Restrictions	2	
No restrictions	3	.....

**Remarks:** Higher marks are awarded where no restrictions exist, e.g. you do not have to be of a certain playing standard.

<b>AGE GROUPS</b>	<b>0-5</b>	
Seniors Only	1	
Juniors Only	3	
All Ages	5	.....

**Remarks:** Higher marks awarded where the facilities are available to all age groups.

<b>MEMBERSHIP CHARGES</b>	<b>(-)2-5</b>	
Over £335	-2	
£225 to £335	0	
Above Average	1	
Below Average	3	
Average	5	.....

**Remarks:** A comparison will be made between clubs of a similar nature e.g. all cricket clubs.

<b>CATCHMENT AREA</b>	<b>0-5</b>	
Under 5 miles	1	
5 – 10 miles	3	
Over 10 miles	5	.....

**Remarks:** The higher mark should reflect the wider catchment area of the body concerned.

<b>PLAYING NON-PLAYING</b>	<b>0-3</b>	
Under 50% Playing	0	
50% - 74% Playing	1	
75%+ Playing	2	
All Playing	3	.....

**Remarks:** The larger the percentage of active members, the higher the mark awarded.

Score c/fwd .....

	<b>Score b/fwd</b>	
<b>FINANCES GENERAL</b>	<b>0-10</b>	.....
(Fund Balance as % of Yearly Expenditure)		
%		
Over 200	0	
Over 180	1	
Over 160	2	
Over 140	3	
Over 120	4	
Over 100	5	
Over 80	6	
Over 60	7	
Over 40	8	
Over 20	9	
Over 0-20	10	.....

**Remarks:** Marked to discourage large fund balances being held.

<b>NET INCOME FROM GAMING MACHINES</b>	<b>0-10</b>
(Income as % of Yearly Expenditure)	
%	
Over 15	0
11-15	3
6-10	5
1-5	7
NIL	10

<b>GROSS INCOME FROM BAR</b>		<b>(-)25-10</b>
£	£	
Over £35,960		-25
29,960	-	35,960
23,971	-	29,960
22,771	-	23,970
21,571	-	22,770
20,381	-	21,570
19,181	-	20,380
17,981	-	19,180
16,781	-	17,980
15,581	-	16,780
14,381	-	15,580
13,181	-	14,380
12,001	-	13,180
10,791	-	12,000
9,591	-	10,790
8,391	-	9,590
7,191	-	8,390
6,001	-	7,190
4,801	-	6,000
3,601	-	4,800
2,401	-	3,600
1,201	-	2,400
1	-	1,200
Nil		10

Signed: .....

Date:.....

**Total Score**

**Relief Awarded**

=====  
%

<b>Range % Relief</b>	<b>Range % Relief</b>
46 to 51    80	5 to 20    30
36 to 45    70	under 5    0
21 to 35    50	

**DISCRETIONARY RELIEF 20% TOP-UP**

Reference	Name	Address	RATEABLE VALUE £	FULL LIABILITY 2005/6 £	Relief %	CURRENT YEAR AMOUNT £
1	3124835 MAGPAS	Q8 House, 105 Needingworth Road, St Ives	15000	5,658.48	20%	1,131.70
2	3233367 East Anglia Children's Hospice	1st Floor, 7 The Quay, St Ives	5400	2,278.80	20%	455.76
2	CASES					£1,587.46

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## DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF UNDER CURRENT AND PROPOSED POLICIES

Name	RV £	Current	Current Liability £	Current	Proposed rate of Relief %	Proposed	Gainers/ Losers £
		rate of Relief %		Disc. Relief £		Disc. Relief £	
Paxton Lakes Sailing Club	8500	80%	3000	2400	80%	2400	0
Senior Citizens' Club	1525	50%	316	158	80%	253	95
Bluntisham Ex-servicemen's Club	1750	50%	209	105	80%	167	63
Elton Park Cricket Club	1250	70%	204	143	80%	163	20
Hunts Kart Racing Club Ltd	12000	70%	861	603	80%	689	86
Somersham Town Bowls Club	5100	70%	872	611	80%	698	87
Eaton Socon Bowling Club	1500	70%	148	104	80%	118	15
St Neots Tennis Club	3300	50%	537	268	80%	429	161
Fenstanton Bowls Club	2450	70%	469	328	80%	375	47
Grafham Sailing Club	18500	30%	8460	2538	50%	4230	1692
Wansford Cricket Club	1100	70%	80	56	80%	64	8
Huntingdon Olympic Gymnastic Club	22000	70%	9284	6499	50%	4642	-1857
Ouse Valley River Club	15000	50%	6330	3165	50%	3165	0
Fenstanton Cricket Club	1450	70%	222	155	80%	178	22
St Neots Sports Association	12000	30%	4980	1494	80%	3984	2490
Tenterleas Tennis Club	760	70%	105	73	80%	84	10
St Ives (Huntingdon) AMDS	1650	70%	321	225	80%	257	32
Buckworth Cricket Club	1675	30%	296	89	80%	237	148
St Ives Literary Institute	4050	50%	386	193	80%	308	116
Needingworth Bowls Club	3550	70%	426	298	80%	341	43
Somersham Town Football Club	8250	70%	2043	1430	80%	1635	204
Buckden Bowls Club	4400	70%	889	622	80%	711	89
St Ives Rowing Club	5500	70%	815	570	80%	652	81
Yaxley Broadway Bowls Club	3000	50%	407	204	80%	326	122
Sawtry Bowls Club	3350	50%	617	309	80%	494	185
St Neots Rowing Club	8700	50%	3142	1571	80%	2514	943
Ramsey Table Tennis Club	750	70%	202	141	80%	161	20
Hilton Cricket Club	1225	80%	197	158	80%	158	0
Gt Staughton & District Tennis Club	1100	70%	121	85	80%	97	12
Godmanchester Bowls Club	1450	70%	173	121	80%	138	17
Waresley Cricket Club	2750	70%	475	333	80%	380	48
Gt Gransden Lawn Tennis Club	500	70%	49	35	80%	39	5
Cambridge University Gliding Trust Ltd	40000	70%	16880	11816	0%	0	-11816
Sawtry Sports & Leisure Association	6400	80%	1343	1075	80%	1075	0
Yaxley Football Club	4750	50%	765	383	80%	612	230
St Ives Rugby Union Football Club	9600	70%	2748	1923	80%	2198	275
Gt Staughton Playing Field Committee	4500	70%	777	544	80%	622	78
Broughton Lodge Watersport Club	18750	70%	7913	5539	50%	3956	-1583
Nene Valley Gliding Club	12000	80%	4665	3732	80%	3732	0
White Hart Bowls Club	2700	70%	395	276	80%	316	39
St Neots Bowmen	360	80%	72	57	80%	57	0
Fenstanton Football Club	3750	70%	703	492	80%	563	70
Sport Huntingdon Ltd	8100	70%	1960	1372	80%	1568	196
Catworth Playing Field Cmtte	575	70%	111	78	80%	89	11
Godmanchester Town Cricket Club	4250	70%	753	527	80%	602	75
Huntingdon Football Association Ltd	9100	80%	3436	2749	80%	2749	0
Total				55645		48226	-7419
Cost to HDC				13911		12057	-1855

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## Discretionary Rates Relief Policy – Charities & Kindred organisations

1. This policy is to be used to calculate Discretionary Rates Relief for charities and kindred organisations. The Rateable Values mentioned relate to values in the 2005 Rating List.
2. Approval of 20% discretionary Rates Relief to top up mandatory charitable relief shall be considered for local charities, taking into consideration
  - the extent to which their activities meet the Council's corporate objectives
  - the extent to which Huntingdonshire residents benefit from their activities
  - the financial position of the applicant
  - the financial position of the District council.
3. Organisations which may qualify for mandatory relief under the Small Business Rates Relief scheme but have not applied for it shall be deemed to have up to 50% mandatory relief in accordance their entitlement under that scheme, and shall have their Discretionary Rates Relief calculated accordingly.
4. Qualifying organisations in occupation of premises with a Rateable Value of under £15,000 shall receive 80% discretionary relief.
5. Qualifying organisations in occupation of premises with a Rateable Value of £15,000 or more but below £25,000 shall receive 50% discretionary relief.
6. Qualifying organisations in occupation of premises with a Rateable Value of £25,000 or more shall not receive discretionary relief.
7. Unoccupied premises shall not qualify for Discretionary Rate Relief.
8. All applications will be considered on the merits of the individual case, and relief may be granted in exceptional cases where the rateable values exceed the above amounts.

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CABINET

13<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2005

**HUNTINGDON TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENTS  
REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS  
(Report by Head of Planning Services & Head of Financial Services)**

**1. PURPOSE**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to request Cabinet to:

- release part of the funding for the Huntingdon Town Centre MTP scheme
- allow the funding to be transferred from capital to revenue.

**2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 As part of the Medium Term Plan, Council approved a pump priming budget (Ref 01/077/A) to assist in the formulation and implementation of action plans in the town centre of Huntingdon.

2.2 The bid was intended for a series of studies followed by a budget for possible purchase of land to pump prime development the subject of Action Plans or for the provision of necessary infrastructure.

2.3 It is now more probable that the budget will be required for infrastructure work. Studies have already been carried out on designing some of the proposals illustrated in the Market Town Strategy. Consultants are currently producing more detailed plans on the proposed contra-flow sections of the ring road at Riverside Road and Nursery Road.

2.4 The Civic Trust has also been engaged in refreshing the Huntingdon Town Centre Vision that will provide an up to date land use strategy.

2.5 Further detailed work will be required on transportation matters to re-evaluate the impact of the retail proposals at Chequers Court of traffic on the ring road. A joint study with the County, Highways Agency and GO-East on the existing transport network in the Huntingdon area including travel patterns is planned. The impact for the town centre of the removal or retention of the A14 flyover once the road is de-trunked will be assessed as part of this study and provide the transport element to the land use strategy of the refreshed Vision.

2.6 These proposals would require revenue funding rather than the capital funding, which was included in the approved scheme.

### 3. FUNDING RELEASE AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The approved MTP scheme was as shown below.

	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Capital Spending	120	546	405		
Revenue implications (lost interest)	3	20	43	54	54

3.2 This report is seeking the release of £55k from 2005/06. The table below shows the revenue implications of transferring this money from capital (as approved) to revenue.

	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>APPROVED BASIS</b>					
Capital Spending		55			
<b>Revenue Impact</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>REQUESTED BASIS</b>					
Capital Spending		0			
Revenue Spending		55			
<b>Revenue Impact</b>		<b>55</b>			
<b>IMPACT OF REQUESTED CHANGE</b>		<b>54</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>-3</b>

3.3 Officers will endeavour to find the money from within their budgets but until the out turn figures of this years budget become clearer it will not be possible to determine the exact amount. Unless savings can be found in the existing revenue budgets to cover all of this amount a supplementary revenue estimate will be needed.

### 4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 The Cabinet is recommended to:

- (a) agree to the release of the funding for this scheme in 2005/06
- (b) should revenue savings fail to cover the impact of this change approve a supplementary revenue estimate of up to £55k in the current year and the inclusion of the variations in revenue impact relating to 2005/06 onwards in the MTP.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

**Contact Officer: Richard Probyn**  
**☎ 01480 388430**

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CABINET

13 OCTOBER 2005

## MEDIUM TERM PLAN REQUESTS FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

(Report by the Head of Financial Services)

### 1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request Cabinet to release funds for the MTP schemes detailed in the attached annexes.

### 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Council, at its meeting in December 2003, decided that specific prior approval be sought and obtained from the Cabinet before MTP schemes/projects are implemented.
- 2.2 Officers have identified which schemes that they wish Cabinet to consider releasing funding for at this meeting and have discussed them with the relevant Executive Councillor.
- 2.3 Annex A summarises and the succeeding Annexes detail, the schemes where release of funds is now requested.

### 3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Cabinet is recommended to release the funding shown in Annex A.

#### ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985

Budget and MTP reports  
Previous requests for releases

**Contact Officer:**

**Steve Couper**

Head of Financial Services ☎ 01480 388103

		Net Revenue Impact - £'000						Net Capital - £'000					
		2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	2004/ 2005	2005/ 2006	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010
Annex B C	Leisure Centres Future Maintenance Grafham Water Centre Partnership Contribution		9	17	17	1	1		2006	353			
<b>Total amount for which release now requested</b>			<b>9</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>20</b>		<b>373</b>	

## 134B &amp; 608 Leisure Centre Future Maintenance

Simon Bell

Financial Impact	Net Revenue Impact						Net Capital						
	2003/ 2004 £000	2004/ 2005 £000	2005/ 2006 £000	2006/ 2007 £000	2007/ 2008 £000	2008/ 2009 £000	2009/ 2010 £000	2003/ 2004 £000	2004/ 2005 £000	2005/ 2006 £000	2006/ 2007 £000	2007/ 2008 £000	2008/ 2009 £000
Approved Budget Already released		11 2	27 4	39 4	51 4	67 4			423 70	245 0	233 0	256 0	350 0
<b>Amount for which release now requested</b>		<b>9</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>17</b>			<b>353</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

**Justification for Release**

2005-06 is Year 3 of the 5 year Condition Survey work at the Leisure Centres. Progress in years 1 & 2 has been particularly successful and now that all work for year 2 has been completed this year's programme can commence.

Whilst Ramsey and Sawtry have only relatively minor elements to complete, St Neots has a variety of outstanding issues, Huntingdon requires improvements to its pool building and St Ivo needs to continue its refurbishment initiatives commenced in 2003.

Management of the programme will be between the Centre Management, Environment and Transport and external specialists. Budget includes fees.

## 58 Grafham Water Centre Partnership Contribution

Jo Peadon

Financial Impact	Net Revenue Impact						Net Capital							
	2003/ 2004 £000	2004/ 2005 £000	2005/ 2006 £000	2006/ 2007 £000	2007/ 2008 £000	2008/ 2009 £000	2009/ 2010 £000	2003/ 2004 £000	2004/ 2005 £000	2005/ 2006 £000	2006/ 2007 £000	2007/ 2008 £000	2008/ 2009 £000	2009/ 2010 £000
Approved Budget Already released		0	1	1	1	1	1		10	10				
<b>Amount for which release now requested</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>			<b>20</b>				

**Justification for Release**

The Grafham Water Centre project is a partnership project with Cambridgeshire County Council and the New Opportunities Fund PE & School Sport programme. The HDC funding is a contribution towards a £750k project for an indoor activity hall providing facilities for archery and climbing as well as a range of other indoor sports.

Grafham Water Centre is a unique facility in Huntingdonshire providing a wide range of outdoor pursuits to schools, businesses and the general public and has worked with the Council's Leisure Development Team in providing subsidised access to Huntingdonshire residents as part of its summer activity programme for a number of years. This arrangement will be continued for a further period as a result of assisting with his project.

Building work is due to commence in the Autumn of 2005.

Contributors:	
NOF	£400k
CCC	£330k
HDC	£20k
Total	£750k

Overview and Scrutiny

4<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2005

Cabinet

13<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2005

## RECYCLING CREDITS (Report by Development and Community Manager)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of an impending change to the recycling credits scheme proposed by Cambridgeshire County Council, the waste disposal authority (WDA).
- 1.2 To seek Cabinet's authority to enter into a new agreement and note the financial implications.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Recycling credits are paid by the WDA to a District Council, as the waste collection authority (WCA), to provide an incentive to increase levels of recycling and hence divert waste from landfill.
- 2.2 Historically, the level of recycling credit paid in respect of dry recyclables (diverted from landfill) equates to the WDA's cost of land-filling waste. In Huntingdonshire the cost of land-filling at Buckden, where this Council's waste is tipped, is higher than at other landfill sites in the County. As a consequence the level of credit paid to the Council is higher than that paid to other districts in the county. This is illustrated in the table that follows –

	2004/05 £ per tonne	2005/06 £ per tonne
Cambridge City	29.09	30.09
East Cambridgeshire	29.09	30.09
Fenland	31.56	32.56
<b>Huntingdonshire</b>	<b>33.41</b>	<b>34.41</b>
South Cambridgeshire	29.09	30.09

- 2.3 The annual increase shown in the above table arises from the increase in the annual landfill tax escalator and annual inflation on the cost of landfill charges.
- 2.4 The legislative position at the present time is that waste disposal authorities are obliged to pay to waste collection authorities recycling credits that equal the saving the waste disposal authority makes through not having to dispose of recycled material. Government has indicated that it proposes to review the requirement and the likelihood is that a national scheme will be imposed if there are no local agreements in place. Initial indications are that this may result in less generous payments.

- 2.5 With the implementation of the WDA's PFI contract in 2010 the cost of residual waste disposal will be harmonised across the county i.e. there will be a single operator of residual waste disposal facilities contracted to the WDA for 25 years. For this reason the WDA wishes to move to a harmonised payment and they are offering a local agreement to pre-empt a potentially less attractive national scheme, likely to be introduced during 2006/07.
- 2.6 Prior to the current proposal the WDA have advanced a number of alternative local proposals for replacing recycling credits none of which have been acceptable to the WCAs in the county.
- 2.7 Green waste, and kitchen waste when it is added to the collection, currently is treated differently from dry recyclables. The WDA pays the gate fee levied by Marshalls for the receipt of the waste. Currently there is no indication that this will change.

### 3. CURRENT PROPOSAL

- 3.1 To achieve the required harmonisation the WDA had most recently proposed to freeze the level of recycling credit paid to Huntingdonshire at 2005/06 levels until the rates paid to other Cambridgeshire WCAs catch up through inflationary increases. It was forecast that parity in rates across all the WCAs would be achieved by 2011/12.
- 3.2 Following negotiation a revised arrangement now is proposed for 2006/07 with all WCAs receiving a 3% increase –

	2005/06 £ per tonne	2006/07 £ per tonne
Cambridge City	30.09	31.00
East Cambridgeshire	30.09	31.00
Fenland	32.56	33.54
<b>Huntingdonshire</b>	<b>34.41</b>	<b>35.44</b>
South Cambridgeshire	30.09	31.00

- 3.2 A further review of the recycling credit rate will be required when DEFRA's national proposals are known and when the implications for waste management of the current PFI procurement process is clearer.
- 3.3 In recognition of the joint promotional work undertaken on behalf of the CCA Waste Forum £1 per tonne was top sliced from all recycling credit payments in 2005/06 to provide an awareness fund. The proposal is to increase this to £2 per tonne from 2006/07 onwards when the landfill tax escalator increases from £1 to £3.

### 4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Applying the proposed recycling credit scheme (£34.41 in 2005/06 and £35.44 in 2006/07 and subsequent years) to the forecast level of recycling performance gives the following estimate of income –

	<b>05/06</b>	<b>06/07</b>	<b>07/08</b>	<b>08/09</b>	<b>09/10</b>
<b>Dry recyclables (tonnes)</b>	14,873	15,244	15,625	16,016	16,417
<b>Recycling credit</b>	£512k	£540k	£554k	£568k	£582k

- 4.2 The estimate of income included in the MTP currently assumes 2.5% annual growth in recycling income based on the initially forecast 2005/06 tonnage. As a consequence of the latest proposals by the WDA and an upgraded forecast of recycling performance in 2005/06 the Council's income will be greater than is currently estimated. This is illustrated in the table below where the figures are shown net of recycling credits paid to local councils and community groups which host mini-recycling sites -

	<b>05/06</b>	<b>06/07</b>	<b>07/08</b>	<b>08/09</b>	<b>09/10</b>
<b>Recycling Income</b>	£472k	£500k	£512k	£525k	£540k
<b>MTP provision</b>	£445k	£456k	£468k	£479k	£491k
<b>Increased Income</b>	<b>£27k</b>	<b>£44k</b>	<b>£44k</b>	<b>£46K</b>	<b>£49k</b>

- 4.3 If the Council accepts the revised recycling credits scheme, which is being proposed by the County Council to the CCA Waste Forum meeting on 30 September 2005, the above table illustrates that income is forecast to be well above the levels included in the MTP.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

- 5.1 The legislation establishing the recycling credits scheme is being reviewed and is likely to change in a way that will make it less favourable to waste collection authorities. The County Council is seeking a local agreement and its most recent proposal appears generally to be supported by the Cambridgeshire districts, insofar as it remains a tonnage based scheme.
- 5.2 Harmonisation in the recycling credit between Cambridgeshire districts is inevitable because of the PFI contract and the potential for a new nationally imposed scheme. The Council has benefited from a higher rate only because the charge per tonne to the County Council made by the operator of the Buckden landfill site is greater than charges elsewhere in the county.
- 5.3 Accepting the current proposal, however, result in the Council receiving a recycling credit slightly below the County Council's actual cost of disposal which includes Landfill Tax. However, advice from the Local Government Association is that waste collection authorities should not expect to receive increases in recycling credits in line with the £3 landfill tax escalator introduced in 2006/07.
- 5.4 The Council benefits from promotional and public awareness raising activities undertaken by the waste partnership. Although the proposed contribution to the joint fund is tonnage based and the Council contributes at a higher level than other districts this would also be the case if funding of this joint work was on per capita or household basis. The joint awareness raising work will substantially replace any specific activity by the Council and will be essential to maintaining participation rates.

- 5.5 The CCA Waste Forum will be asked to endorse the proposals for 2006/07 at its next meeting. It appears that it will be supported by other Waste Forum members.

## 6. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- (a) authorises the Head of Environment & Transport, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Environment & Transport, to agree a draft revised recycling credit scheme substantially as outlined in this report;
- (b) authorises the Executive Councillor for Environment & Transport to confirm the Council's agreement when the scheme is considered by the CCC Waste forum; and
- (c) notes the increase in income forecast in section 4 of this report.

## BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Notes of Joint Waste Officers Group

**Contact Officer: Sonia Hansen**  
Development and Community Manager  
**☎ 01480 463618**



**CABINET**

**13 OCTOBER 2005**

## **REVENUE FUNDING OF CONEYGEAR COURT (Report by the Head of Housing Services)**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To request approval to increase the revenue funding to Granta Housing Association for Coneygear Court.

### **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 Coneygear Court is owned and managed by Granta Housing Association. It provides 21 units of temporary accommodation for homeless households which the Council is able to nominate to whilst investigating what duties are owed under the homelessness legislation, and whilst we are attempting to assist with more permanent housing.
- 2.2 The Council has a statutory duty to provide temporary accommodation for certain homeless households. First stage emergency temporary accommodation tends to be bed and breakfast or Coneygear Court. Given the level of homelessness within the district and the difficulties helping households move into more permanent housing, Coneygear Court is fully occupied. Bed and breakfast, therefore, remains a common source of emergency temporary accommodation. Throughout 2004/05 there was an average of 18 households in bed and breakfast at any one time. This accommodation is sometimes provided outside the district, causing difficulties with families continuing to access schools, employment and support networks.
- 2.3 Bed and breakfast is seen as the most inappropriate type of temporary accommodation and the government has set a legal limit of families with children remaining in bed and breakfast for a maximum of six weeks. The Council's performance in this area is measured through a Best Value Performance Indicator. Although the Council currently achieves this six week target there is a concern that this may worsen in the future if we do not continue to address the levels of homelessness and provide alternatives to bed and breakfast.
- 2.4 The Council wishes to support a Granta Housing Association bid for capital funding from the Housing Corporation to extend Coneygear Court. If successful this will provide a further six self contained two bedroom flats.

### **3. IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 Granta Housing Association have advised that the current level of staffing at Coneygear Court would be unable to cope with the additional support issues of a further six families. They would therefore increase the staffing level and request an increase in the level of revenue funding the Council provides for the scheme. Granta have estimated that this would result in an increase of £30,000 per annum in the revenue funding requested from the Council.

- 3.2 This possible increase in costs must be considered against the cost of the continued use of bed and breakfast. The Council is able to reclaim bed and breakfast costs from homeless applicants through their earned income or Housing Benefit entitlement. However, as the majority of applicants are reliant on Housing Benefit to a greater or lesser extent the real cost to the Council is through expenditure that cannot be reclaimed through the Housing Benefit subsidy regulations.
- 3.3 The amount of Housing Benefit subsidy that the Council can claim from central government for a family in bed and breakfast is capped, whereas the amount claimable for families in Coneygear Court is not as they are restricted to affordable rent levels. The variations in the Housing Benefit subsidy regulations mean that the Council would save between £2,700 and £7,800 per year for each family that is placed in one of the new flats at Coneygear Court, compared to a placement in bed and breakfast. The level of savings depends upon the level of Housing Benefit entitlement of the individual. The potential savings by having an additional six extra flats at Coneygear Court would be between £16,200 and £46,800 per year depending on the level of Housing Benefit entitlement of the households placed there.
- 3.4 In 2004/05 85% of households that were placed in bed and breakfast were entitled to full Housing Benefit. The remaining 15% were required to make some contribution from their earned income. On this ratio the potential savings of the Coneygear Court option will be closer to the top end of the range quoted above.
- 3.5 The Council also has a bad debt provision of £52,500 for the current year that could be reduced in time if bed and breakfast usage reduces. As there would be fewer households in bed and breakfast as a result of the new flats it is likely that the same level of bad debt provision may not be required in the future and is a further potential saving that could be made.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 Granta Housing Association has the opportunity to bid for capital funding through the Housing Corporation to extend Coneygear Court. Increasing the number of units at Coneygear Court would reduce the Council's reliance on bed and breakfast as a form of temporary accommodation. This has two benefits:
- (a) Helping the Council achieve the target of not having families in bed and breakfast for more than the six week legal limit and reducing the reliance on the least satisfactory form of temporary accommodation, sometimes provided outside of the district.
  - (b) Reducing the overall cost to the Council of placing families in temporary accommodation.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 The Cabinet is recommended to:
- (a) support the bid of Granta Housing Associations for capital funding from the Housing Corporation to provide an additional six units at Coneygear Court; and

- (b) approve the necessary budget transfer from the Housing Benefit budget to the homelessness budget for the increased revenue funding of Coneygear Court, but note that fluctuations in demand for Housing Benefit may, despite these proposals, still result in unavoidable overspendings.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Housing Corporation bidding guidance

**Contact Officer: Steve Plant, Head of Housing Services**

**☎ 01480 388240**

**Jon Collen, Housing Needs & Resources Manager**

**☎ 01480 388220**

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CABINET

13 OCTOBER 2005

## CAMBRIDGE SUB REGION CHOICE BASED LETTINGS SCHEME (Report by the Head of Housing Services)

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To request approval for in principle agreement to negotiate a sub regional Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme.

### 2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Government announced through the ODPM publication *Sustainable Communities: Homes For All – A five year plan* its intention to introduce Choice Based Lettings throughout the country by 2010. It is understood that further statutory guidance from the ODPM is expected by the end of the year.
- 2.2 Choice Based Lettings shifts the onus from the local authority or housing association telling applicants which property they must take to applicants choosing properties. This would be through available properties being advertised and interested households bidding for properties of their choice.
- 2.3 A priority banding system, used to identify a household's priority for housing, will ensure that of those bidding for a property the one in most housing need will be offered the property. The de-personalised results of the bidding round are made available so that unsuccessful applicants can see what band the successful applicant was in. This provides a transparent system with people able to see what properties become available and the priority needed to be offered a particular property in a particular area. Applicants will therefore have information available to inform whether they have a realistic chance of successfully bidding for a property and allow them to decide which areas or properties they wish to bid for.
- 2.4 By offering people choice about where they live it is envisaged that they will be more satisfied, stay longer, pay their rent, look after their homes and invest in and engage with their local communities.
- 2.5 The Government has recently announced a £4m fund for the development of Regional or Sub-Regional Choice Based Lettings Schemes. This fund is to assist local authorities with up to 60% of the implementation costs. The fund is restricted to a maximum £100,000 per bid unless it can be shown that there are exceptional reasons for a higher bid.
- 2.6 Given the short deadline by the ODPM to make a bid (the deadline was 7 October), officers from each of the sub regional authorities have already begun to discuss the possibilities of establishing a sub regional scheme. Each authority is currently going through its member processes to obtain approval to negotiate a partnership approach to CBL. As officers did not wish to miss the opportunity to access ODPM funding to assist with set up costs, in principle agreement was sought

from the Executive Councillor for Housing and Public Health to jointly make the bid.

- 2.7 The potential for Government funding provides an opportunity for local authorities to work together to make overall savings and efficiencies with regard to set up and implementation costs; this would include joint procurement (especially of an IT system) and joint project management.

### **3. IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The Government has indicated that all authorities must provide Choice Based Lettings by 2010. Every authority, including strategic housing authorities that have transferred their housing stock, are expected to take an active role in implementing CBL in their own areas. Officers had already started discussions with housing association partners in this district about implementing CBL prior to the announcement of the ODPM bidding round. By not taking this opportunity to work with other authorities in the sub region and potentially access central government funding stream, the Council risks having to meet the total set up costs of a scheme, including the procurement of a stand-alone system at a later stage.
- 3.2 Estimates were obtained from IT providers currently supplying CBL software systems to other councils and housing associations. Estimates of project managing the implementation, together with consultation and promotion costs were also made, giving total set up costs of approximately £268,000. The bid made to the ODPM is for £161,000 (60% of these costs). The result of the bid should be known by the end of November.
- 3.3 If the bid is successful the sub regional authorities would then be required to negotiate a cost sharing agreement to cover the remaining set up costs. If the bid secures £161,000 from the ODPM the remaining set up costs, if distributed equally amongst the sub regional authorities, would be approximately £15,000. If the ODPM limits the funding to £100,000 the approximate set up cost to each partner would be £24,000.
- 3.4 Cabinet previously approved an MTP bid for £52,000 to procure a new Common Housing Register IT system in 2005/06, although this has yet to be authorised for release. The implementation of a Common Housing Register for the district had been delayed in light of the government announcements on the introduction of CBL. The CBL IT system that the sub regional partnership would procure will perform this function. The MTP bid also covered ongoing IT maintenance costs of £5,000 per annum. It is estimated that the sub regional CBL system would require an annual maintenance contribution of £5,500.
- 3.5 The ongoing revenue cost of operating a CBL scheme is currently unclear. The main costs will be those incurred in the advertising process. Advertising would be through a variety of media, including the local press. As an example of advertising costs, Peterborough City Council, with a total social rented housing stock that is slightly larger than Huntingdonshire's, has implemented CBL and estimates it spends £30,000 per annum on advertising in the local press. The sub regional partnership would jointly negotiate advertising rates with the local press groups.

- 3.6 Whatever our financial contribution is deemed to be, capital and revenue, we will be seeking to enter into cost sharing agreements with the housing associations with housing stock in the district that would benefit from the scheme.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 Government has set a target that all social rented housing in the country should be let through CBL schemes by 2010. It is likely that this will become a legal requirement. The Council had already taken a decision to implement a Common Housing Register system and this is the first step towards a CBL system. An MTP bid has been approved for the IT system to progress a Common Housing Register.
- 4.2 The opportunity has arisen to access ODPM funding on a sub regional partnership basis to assist with the set up costs of a CBL scheme. A bid has been made by the sub region with an announcement of the successful bids due at the end of November. If successful this will allow the sub region to progress negotiations to implement a partnership CBL scheme.
- 4.3 Once the outcome of the bid is known further negotiation will take place with sub regional partners in order to progress the scheme. This will include negotiations on a cost sharing agreements covering the set up costs and detailed analysis of the ongoing revenue costs of the scheme. A future report will be presented to Cabinet once these are known.
- 4.4 Initial costings indicate that joint procurement of a CBL IT system would achieve a saving on the MTP provision of £52,000 but the ongoing revenue costs would need to be identified and provision made.
- 4.5 By being part of this partnership the Council can benefit from the efficiencies that may be achieved, for example through joint procurement. It will also reinforce Huntingdonshire's partnership approach to the Cambridge sub region and ensure that we meet the deadline of implementing CBL by the target date of 2010.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 The Cabinet is recommended to agree in principle to work in partnership with other local authorities and housing associations in the Cambridge sub region on a sub regional Choice Based Lettings scheme.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Sustainable Communities: Homes For All – A Strategy for Choice Based Lettings (ODPM)

ODPM Choice Based Lettings Bidding Guidance

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**CABINET  
LICENSING & PROTECTION**

**13TH OCTOBER 2005  
19TH OCTOBER 2005**

**THE COUNCIL'S SCHEME OF DELEGATION: INTERIM VARIATION PENDING  
THE APPOINTMENT OF DIRECTOR OF OPERATIONAL SERVICES**

**(Report by the Head of Administration)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to invite the Cabinet and the Licensing and Protection Panel to consider interim arrangements relating to the Council's Scheme of Delegation pending the recruitment of a replacement Director of Operational Services.
- 1.2 As Members will be aware the current incumbent of the post of Director will leave the Council's employment on 13th November 2005.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Scheme of delegation comprises part of the Council's Constitution and consists of a schedule of powers delegated to Officers by the Council, by Cabinet and by various Panels and Committees, often after consultation with an Executive Councillor or a Panel/Committee Chairman. This report is concerned solely with the powers delegated by the Cabinet and the Licensing and Protection Panel to the Director of Operational Services.
- 2.2 Following the departure of the present incumbent, the Cabinet and Panel are invited to consider appropriate interim arrangements in the event that powers delegated to the Director need to be exercised pending the commencement of duty by the new Director.

**3. PROPOSAL**

- 3.1 Bearing in mind that the issue in any event will be time-limited by the appointment process for the Director and having regard to the relationships of Directors and Heads of Service in other instruments of governance, it is felt that the matter could be dealt with most conveniently as an interim measure by substituting the Chief Executive for the Director of Operational Services wherever the latter term appears or is suggested in the Delegation Scheme.

**4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 Interim arrangements are required to facilitate the discharge of responsibilities delegated to the Director of Operational Services until a new Director is recruited.
- 4.2 The most convenient way of addressing the matter in the interregnum would be via the appointment of the Chief Executive for that purpose.

4.3 Accordingly it is-

**RECOMMENDED**

that, with effect from 14th November and pending the recruitment of a new Director, the Chief Executive be authorised to undertake the powers delegated to the Director of Operational Services in the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

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**Background Papers:** The Council's Constitution