

CABINET – 2 MARCH 2005

PRINCIPAL SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 29 MARCH 2005

COUNCIL WEBSITE – INFORMATION ABOUT MEMBERS

REPORT OF CITY SECRETARY AND SOLICITOR

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RECENT REFERENCES:

CAB493 – Members Allowances – Update – 16 October 2002

CAB717 – Members Allowances – Third Report of the Independent Panel – 1 October 2003

CAB831 – Taking the Modernisation Agenda Forward – 3 March 2004

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The Council currently provides some information about Members on its website. However, it is limited in extent and relates to wards represented and bodies upon which Members serve.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) is encouraging Members to report on-line as a part of the wider approach to e-government. The Independent Remuneration Panel has also recommended that Member Activity Statements are used as one method for Members to report back to the local community on the work they do. Cabinet supported the principle of this approach at its meeting on 3 March 2004 and asked for more detailed work to be undertaken. This concept could be incorporated into the information to be shown on the website.

The guidance attached to the report would provide an initial approach. This can then be further developed in the light of experience. It is suggested that the facility is made available to those Members who wish to use it on a voluntary basis. Previously, it had been suggested that the narrower concept of activity statements should be compulsory.

The other aspects of the ODPM guidance, which recommends that Members should be able to have wider access to web facilities for public consultation purposes, will be considered as a part of the wider implementation of the Council's e-government programme. This could include direct Member input into the creation of the web pages or more frequent up-dating by officers which would have resource implications.

The Leader has discussed the proposals with the Chairman of Principal Scrutiny Committee and other Group Leaders. Although there are different views as to the way in the proposals should be implemented, comments made have been taken on board where possible.

The report suggests a phased introduction of the proposals during 2005/06 municipal year, with participation on a voluntary basis. Refinements can then be made in the light of experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 1 That it be recommended to Council
  - (a) that the Guidance on Member Information on the Website in Appendices 2, 3 and 4 be adopted and added to Part 8 of the Constitution – Local Guidance Notes.
  - (b) that the facility for Members to provide the additional information referred to in the guidance be introduced with effect from the 2005/06 municipal year, with the ability to up-date the report on activities undertaken on a quarterly basis.
  - (c) that a report on expanding the Website to provide additional ward information and for consultation purposes as outlined in the ODPM's e-government targets, (along the lines suggested in Appendix 5) be brought forward by Autumn 2005, taking account of experience gained from operation of the proposals in paragraphs (a) and (b) above.

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COUNCIL WEBSITE – INFORMATION ABOUT MEMBERS

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DETAIL:

- 1.1 The Council currently provides some information about Members on its website. However, it is limited in extent and relates to wards represented and bodies upon which they serve. An example is given in Appendix 1.
- 1.2 The Government has also suggested that it wants to see councils developing on-line information from and to councillors as a part of the development of the e-government programme. It envisages that in due course that this will include councillors having the ability to develop their own web-site information. This will have to comply with the legal requirements for publicly funded publicity and guidance in the Code on Publicity. This includes the publicity being non-political in nature and not using Council systems to campaign for a particular point of view. However, it is envisaged that public opinion could be canvassed on-line. This approach is being supported by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in a recent paper on expected outcomes for e-government by December 2005. This will require further detailed consideration as to how it can be implemented. However, an important first step will be improved Member information on the website. It is proposed that improvements be undertaken on a phased basis during 2005/06. This will assist both Members and officers in implementing the proposals. Refinements can then also be made in the light of experience.
- 1.3 Initial improvements could be made at the beginning of the 2005/06 municipal year – May 2005. This could include a section on appointments to outside bodies by the Council. A brief “biography” of the Member could also be added. In particular, this could explain current and past links with various organisations in the community. It could state the political party to which the individual is affiliated, but should not expand on personal political or other beliefs, nor seek to campaign on particular aspects of policy or decisions to be made.
- 1.4 Another initial improvement could be to include details of Members Surgeries for constituents. This section could be regularly updated by officers at a Member’s request.
- 1.5 Previous reports considered the idea of Member accountability or activity statements. These were seen as an important part of the modernisation process – so that Members can explain to the public what they are doing on their behalf. Including this information on the website would enable all Members, if they so wish, to report in a similar form upon the activities they undertake on behalf of the electorate. A number of councils have already adopted this approach. In some instances it is a requirement for all Members to use the system, but a voluntary approach is being suggested here. Discussion between group leaders has shown significant reservations about the introduction of a compulsory system.

- 1.6 The issue is also, in part, linked with the changes that took place in the Members Allowances Regulations. In the past, payment was based upon a fixed rate for actual meetings attended. The law has been changed to prevent this approach and now requires basic allowances to be paid to all Members at the same rate. The Independent Remuneration Panel takes likely average workload into account when the allowance is revised. However, there is no statutory provision to require repayment of the allowance if Members do not, without adequate reasons, attend meetings regularly. Suggestions made at national level to deal with any problem cases included voluntary repayment of the allowance – with transparency provided by the activity statements.
- 1.7 The Council already has a system where an annual statement of formal meetings attended is published in the press and Insight annually. This is linked with the annual publication of the amount of allowances paid to each Member. Some Members have complained that this does not allow a balanced picture of what they do to be presented to the public. The proposed system would allow complementary information to be presented.
- 1.8 The Independent Remuneration Panel has also indicated that it would want to see Member Activity Statements introduced before it next undertakes a review. It considers that such statements will assist its work in reviewing both basic and special responsibility allowances. It also supported the concept of Member role profiles to assist with public understanding – and to enable the Panel to undertake future reviews. Report CAB1021 elsewhere on this agenda deals with this aspect.
- 1.9 Activity Statements were last considered in detail in 2002. At that time an extended list of activities in a template prepared by the South East Employers was considered. At that stage this list was considered overlong and difficult to complete.
- 1.10 A shortened version of topics for the activity statement has been prepared which will be easier to complete.
- 1.11 This version, together with a short guidance note, is shown in Appendices 2 and 3. The statements could be included as the second stage of development of the website information on Members. This information would be updated and published quarterly – at the end of July, October, January and April. Members who want to participate would need to prepare the statements to take account of events from May 2005.
- 1.12 Appendix 4 gives examples of how both the short biography and activity elements could be completed. These have been prepared by the Leader and Chairman of Principal Scrutiny Committee.

#### OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

#### 2 CORPORATE STRATEGY (RELEVANCE TO):

- 2.1 Linked with the priority of making services more readily available through the internet. Also relevant to the aims of providing friendly and efficient services to residents and encouraging open debate and discussion with residents.

#### 3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 3.1 The use of improved Member information on the website in the form suggested can be achieved within existing resources. The information would be put on the web

quarterly for members by the Committee Section and checked that it accords with the Council's Guidelines. Member Surgery details could be updated more regularly on request.

- 3.2 It is not practicable for Members to input information directly onto the web. This is partly to ensure that the provisions of the Code on Publicity about impartiality are complied with. It is also because knowledge of the Content Management software is required. However, group leaders consider that Members should provide the information to officers in electronic form for efficiency reasons, unless a disability prevents them from doing so. Appropriate training can be provided.
- 3.3 The extension of Member on-line activities as envisaged by the ODPM in the recent E-government statement on target outcomes is likely to require additional resources, particularly if more frequent up-dating is required, and will be the subject of a further report by the Autumn. This could include Members having direct access to create their own webpage input, and capability for on-line consultation on local topics. Lessons learnt from experience with the current proposal could then be taken on board. However, Appendix 5 prepared by the Chairman of the Principal Scrutiny Committee shows how this concept could be taken forward. The text is based upon a report prepared by Denmead District Councillors for Denmead Parish Council.
- 3.4 The initial phase would be implemented from the Annual Council Meeting in May. However, the guidance and template would be issued in April so that Members and officers would have time to gain experience. Members could also experiment with the template at this stage and draw officers' attention to any problems they experience.

#### BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

1. Office of the Deputy Prime Minister – Defining e-government outcomes for 2005

#### APPENDICES:

- Appendix 1 – Example of current Member information page on the Council Website
- Appendix 2 – Guidance on the Use of the Individual Member Webpage
- Appendix 3 – Template for Members to complete – Report Back on Activities
- Appendix 4 – Examples of Completed Web Pages – New Style – Examples from the Leader and Chairman of Principal Scrutiny Committee
- Appendix 5 – Possible Next Stage - Additional Ward Information and Use for Consultation Purposes – Example prepared by Chairman of Principal Scrutiny Committee

Example of Current Member Information Page on the Council Website**Councillor Sheila Campbell**

Address West Lodge  
Broad Lane  
Swanmore  
SOUTHAMPTON  
SO32 2PD

Party Liberal Democrat - Leader

Ward Swanmore & Newtown

Telephone 01489-891838

Email [scampbell@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:scampbell@winchester.gov.uk)

Elected Until 2006

Committee [Cabinet](#)  
Chairman

Memberships Portfolio: Community Strategy  
[Statement of Accounts Committee](#)  
Chairman



### Guidance on the use of Member Pages on the Council's Website

1. The Council's Website includes pages providing details about each Member. This includes factual information about the Ward they represent; membership of Council bodies, Council appointments to outside bodies and membership of a political group (if any). This information is prepared by the City Secretary and Solicitor for all Members.
2. A brief "biography" of the Member (up to half a page of text) can also be included if the Member so wishes. In particular, this could explain current and past links with various organisations in the community. It could state the political party to which the individual is affiliated, but should not expand on personal political or other beliefs, nor seek to campaign on particular aspects of policy or decisions to be made.
3. Details of a Member's surgery for constituents can also be included on the web page.
4. The Council has adopted a policy to follow best practice to enable Members to report back to their electors on the activities they have undertaken on electors' behalf. A template for these statements is attached as an Appendix to this section of the Constitution. It is available for completion electronically at (insert link).
5. Completed examples of both the short biography and suggested content for the activity statement are also shown in Appendices to this Section. These have been prepared by the Leader and the Chairman of the Principal Scrutiny Committee.
6. The inclusion of activity statements is encouraged by the Independent Remuneration Panel. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Guidance on e-government also encourages Members to report back to their communities through web-pages – and the template provides a standard means of doing this.
7. The Council has agreed that all Members will have the opportunity to complete the statements for quarterly publication. Completion of the activity statements is voluntary. Drafts will be sent to the City Secretary and Solicitor to arrange for web publication and to check that they comply with this guidance.
8. The publication of the quarterly activity statements will be undertaken in addition to the annual list of formal meetings that Members have attended. This list is published in the press and the Council's newspaper by the City Secretary and Solicitor, along with the statutory statement of the financial allowances received by each Member for the year. The press statement will refer to the availability of the additional information prepared by Members on the website.
9. The activity statements provide an opportunity for each member to report back in greater detail on the work undertaken in or on behalf of the community.
10. In completing the statements Members should have regard to the following guidance:
  - (a) the content should be a statement of fact and not seek to promote a particular political party or other personal beliefs of the Member.
  - (b) the statement should not be used to campaign on a particular issue.

- (c) the statement should comply with the Council's Code of Conduct, local protocols on conduct, the ICT Security Policy and the Government's Code on Publicity.
  - (d) confidential information about individual cases dealt with in a surgery or correspondence should not be divulged – though a summary of numbers of cases handled can be given.
  - (e) reference to political group or other activities that clearly relate to the undertaking of the Member's role within the Council can be referred to if a Member wishes – as the law recognises the existence of groups on a council. However, such references should not seek to promote the views of that group or refer to activities that go beyond the conduct of the role of the Member within the Council. For example, reference to Member group meetings to discuss Council business could be acceptable. Training or seminars organised by parties on how to undertake the Member role could be acceptable. Business which involves the wider party outside the Council e.g. candidate selection, policy discussion or election strategy is not acceptable.
11. The City Secretary and Solicitor will issue reminders about the deadline for completing the forms. The Member who wants to participate should do this electronically unless though disability a paper copy has to be used. The Committee Section will place copies on the web-site. The press will be notified of the publication date. Paper copies will also be made available to local libraries and at the City Offices.



Template for Members to complete – Report Back on Activities

**Time Period:**

**Council Meetings**

*Full Council / Cabinet / Scrutiny / Performance Improvement meetings / Regulatory Committees / Sub-Committees*

*Working Parties/Partnership Boards/Joint Arrangements etc.*

*Other Council Business*

*Representing the Council on Outside Bodies*

**Ward**

*Meetings*

*Issues dealt with/looked at*

**Learning & Development**


*Training/Seminars/Courses/Conferences*

**Other Activities**

*Within the Ward*

*Within the District*

Completed Examples**Councillor Sheila Campbell**

Address	West Lodge Broad Lane Swanmore SOUTHAMPTON SO32 2PD	
Party	Liberal Democrat - Leader	
Ward	Swanmore & Newtown	
Telephone	01489-891838	
Email	<a href="mailto:scampbell@winchester.gov.uk">scampbell@winchester.gov.uk</a>	
Elected Until	2006	
Committee Memberships	<a href="#">Cabinet</a> Chairman Portfolio: Community Strategy <a href="#">Statement of Accounts Committee</a> Chairman	
Council Appointments to Outside Bodies	Local Government Association (LGA) South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) Hampshire & Isle of Wight Association of Local Authorities (HIOWA) LGA Rural Committee (deputy Member)	

Members of the public are welcome to contact me on Council Business, either for help, advice or to express their views.

You can contact me at the above address, by email at [scampbell@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:scampbell@winchester.gov.uk), or in person at one of the local Surgeries held regularly in my Ward. The next Surgery is scheduled for.....

**Short Biography** (*this hyperlink will link to the text shown on page 10*)

**Report Back on Activities** (*this hyperlink will link to the text shown on pages 11-12*)

## Short Biography

Sheila Campbell has been a member of Winchester City Council since 1995. She has served on various committees including Planning Development Control, Personnel & Administration Sub Committee, Central & Support Services Sub Committee and Housing Committee as well as Assets, Property and Investment (API) Sub Committee. In 1999 she became Chair of API and the following year became Deputy Leader of the Council. She has chaired the ICT Committee and Housing Enablement Working Group. In 2002 she became Leader of the Council. She has a seat on the Local Government Association, and on South East England Regional Assembly (SEERA) where she is on the Executive Committee. She is joint Chair of the Winchester District Association of Parish Councils. She is also joint Chair of the Stanmore Community Action Group.

Sheila chairs the Hampshire Broadband Forum and is an active member of the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH). She also serves as SEERA's representative on the Rural Committee of SEEDA (South East of England Development Association).

As Leader she now chairs the Cabinet and the Statements of Accounts Committee.

Sheila has also represented the Council on the Board of East Hants Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and on Winchester Area Community Action. She was a Parish Councillor in Swanmore for eight years.

After a career in Information Technology Sheila took early retirement in 2002. Sheila and her husband, Johnstone, have lived in Swanmore since 1985, when they moved from Scotland, and where they have brought up their three sons.

## Report Back on Activities

Time Period: January 2005

### Description of activities

#### Council Meetings

##### Full Council/Cabinet/Scrutiny/Performance Improvement meetings/Regulatory Committees/Sub-Committees

5<sup>th</sup> Jan – Council  
19<sup>th</sup> - Cabinet

##### Working Parties/Partnership Boards/Joint Arrangements etc.

11<sup>th</sup> - Strategic Liaison Group  
24<sup>th</sup> – New Council Offices  
25<sup>th</sup> – Stanmore Action Committee - chairs meeting  
31<sup>st</sup> - Broadway/Friarsgate member liaison group

##### Other Council Business

3xRegular weekly meeting with Chief Executive (CX)  
Community Safety Strategy review and comments  
Audit Commission review of Partnerships - review of documents  
Review of member job descriptions and activity statements  
Preparation for Council questions and debates  
Pre Council Meeting with Mayor, CX and City Secretary & Solicitor (CSS).  
Pre Cabinet Meeting with CX and CSS  
3xRegular wkly meetg of Cabinet members  
2xComprehensive Spending Review

##### Representing the Council on Outside Bodies

5<sup>th</sup> - 3 mins silence and service @ Cathedral  
11<sup>th</sup> – HSP (Hants Strategic Partnership) Steering Group @ Worthy Down  
12<sup>th</sup> - Business Excellence Awards launch @ Cathedral refectory  
13<sup>th</sup> – LSP (Local Strategic Partnership) meeting @ Guildhall Winchester  
13<sup>th</sup> – PUSH (Partnership for Urban South Hants) meeting @ Fareham BC offices  
24<sup>th</sup> – Launch of South East Plan @ De Vere Hotel Southampton  
28<sup>th</sup> – HIOWLA (Hants & Isle of Wight Local Authorities) @ Southampton

#### Ward

##### Meetings

10<sup>th</sup> - Swanmore Parish Council  
18<sup>th</sup> - Soberton Parish Council  
26<sup>th</sup> - Swanmore College of Technology – launch of community facilities management arrangements

##### Issues dealt with/looked at

Planning issue in Swanmore  
Enforcement issue in Swanmore reported  
Enforcement issue in Soberton progressed  
Cert of Lawful Use in Soberton  
Visit to site in prep for Planning (Viewing Sub) Committee in Soberton  
Article for Soberton Parish magazine

#### Learning & Development

##### Training/Seminars/Courses/Conferences

Preparation for Hampshire Debate – slides and speech  
South Down National Park Business Opportunities @ Botley (conf)

**Other Activities****Within the Ward**

8<sup>th</sup> - Tsunami collection @ shops in Swanmore

8<sup>th</sup> - Conservation group

29<sup>th</sup> – Lions Burns Supper fund raising

**Within the District**

Dealing with a complainant – about 2 days

Letters to correspondents from electorate – half day

Child Care International mtg

Members of the public are welcome to contact me on Council business, either for help, advice or to express their views at [scampbell@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:scampbell@winchester.gov.uk)

**Councillor Frederick Allgood**

Address	Cypress Point Uplands Road Denmead WATERLOOVILLE PO7 6HF
Party	Conservative
Ward	Denmead
Telephone	023-9226-1029
Email	<a href="mailto:fallgood@winchester.gov.uk">fallgood@winchester.gov.uk</a>
Elected Until	2006
Committee Memberships	<a href="#">Licensing and Regulation Committee</a> Member <a href="#">Personnel Committee</a> Member <a href="#">Principal Scrutiny Committee</a> Chairman <a href="#">Housing Performance Improvement Committee</a> Deputy
Council Appointments to Outside Bodies	Havant & District Citizens Advice Bureau Community Action Hampshire Solent Transport Strategy Panel (deputy Member)



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You can contact me at the above address, by email at [fallgood@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:fallgood@winchester.gov.uk), or in person at one of the local Surgeries held regularly in my Ward. The next Surgery is scheduled for.....

**Short Biography** *(this hyperlink will link to the text shown on page 14)*

**Report Back on Activities** *(this hyperlink will link to the text shown on pages 15-16)*

## **Short Biography**

Frederick Allgood has been a member of the Council since May 1983. He was Chairman of the Housing Committee before becoming Deputy Mayor in 1988 and served as Mayor of Winchester from May 1989 until May 1990. He was then appointed Chairman of the Local Economy Committee and Chairman of the Benefits Review Board. He was Leader of the Conservative Group from 1996 until 2003 and is currently Chairman of the Principal Scrutiny Committee. From 2000 until 2003 he was an Executive Member of the Local Government Association.

Councillor Allgood represented the Council on the Board of the Theatre Royal for nine years and on the Board of Trustees of Community Action Hampshire for 10 years. He is currently the council's representative on the Board of Trustees of Havant and District Citizens Advice Bureau.

Locally, he is Vice Chairman of Denmead Community Association and a Trustee of the Denmead Festival. He has been a Justice of the Peace for Hampshire since 1980. After a career in national newspapers, he worked in advertising and direct marketing until his retirement in 1998. He is married to Sheila. Their two sons, two daughters and eight grandchildren all live in Hampshire.

## Report Back on Activities

Time Period: October - December 2004

### Description of activities

#### Council Meetings

##### **Full Council/Cabinet/Scrutiny/Performance Improvement meetings/Regulatory Committees/Sub-Committees**

Attended the meeting of full Council on November 1, asked a question about curbing the activities of travellers on illegal sites and spoke about the corporate priorities.

Chaired two meetings of Principal Scrutiny Committee which examined the council's approach to risk management, the local strategic partnership, audit reports and complaints made against the council (Nov 1 and Dec 8).

Attended three meetings of the Licensing and Regulation Committee which approved the council's policy on liquor licensing when the new regime begins in February 2005 (Oct 5, Nov 5 and Dec 7).

Attended a meeting of Personnel Committee on Dec 1 to consider redeploying staff to make the organisation more effective.

##### **Working Parties/Partnership Boards/Joint Arrangements etc.**

Chaired a scrutiny panel at Whiteley which met local businessmen and parish council leaders to discuss key issues in the new community (Oct 18). Chaired the first meeting of a scrutiny panel looking at affordable housing (Dec 4). Chaired the scrutiny liaison meeting when the chairs of all scrutiny committees meet quarterly to discuss current progress (Oct 18).

Attended a meeting with representatives from Havant Borough Council and Hampshire County Council to consider progress on the proposed West of Waterlooville development (Nov 1).

##### **Other Council Business**

Attended meeting of the Conservative Shadow Cabinet on October 11. Met Director of Health and Housing on October 18 to review affordable housing issues. Met Director of Personnel to discuss Communications Strategy (November 24). Met Leader of the Council to discuss progress of the Local Strategic Partnership (November 26).

Regular meetings with Head of Performance Management (October 19, November 24, December 14).

##### **Representing the Council on Outside Bodies**

Attended Annual General Meeting of Community Action Hampshire on Nov 24 as council's designated liaison member.

Spoke to General Manager of the Havant and District CAB on progress of Denmead Outreach branch.



**Ward****Meetings**

Held Local Government Surgery in village on October 1.  
 Attended meeting of Denmead Parish Council on October 6 to brief them on district matters.  
 Organised a Parish Liaison Meeting for county, district and parish councillors to meet informally to discuss local issues (October 21).  
 Attended meeting of Denmead Parish Council Planning Committee to speak on local matters.  
 Spoke at a village meeting on Dec 3 to discuss how to prepare a Parish Plan, Village Design Statement and Market Town Health-check.

**Issues dealt with/looked at**

Met a group of residents who had concerns over the noise emanating from the Skateboard Park (November 30). Met several residents concerned over planning applications for stables and other buildings on land to north of village (October 20). Met chairman of Tennis Club to discuss application for floodlights at the tennis courts. Met tenants of the council to discuss concerns over lorry parking on their estate.

**Learning & Development****Training/Seminars/Courses/Conferences**

Attended a briefing on the Broadway/Friarsgate plans (October 27).  
 Attended Regional Meeting of Conservative Councillors Association in Winchester to hear about major issues facing local government and a briefing on the Licensing Act from Chairman of LACORS (November 26).

**Other Activities****Within the Ward**

Attended the Denmead Junior School Fun Run as guest of Head Teacher (October 8). Attended two meetings of Denmead Festival Board of Trustees (November 4 and December 2). Attended annual lunch of 1989 Chain Gang (The Hampshire and IOW Mayors in office 1989-90) on December 11. Attended the Carols by Candlelight service in Denmead (December 17).

**Within the District**

Attended Law Sunday service on Oct 10 at Winchester Cathedral with Mayor and Councillors and afterwards a reception at the Law Courts to meet High Court judges in Winchester.  
 Attended the Conservative Group meeting on October 28.

Members of the public are welcome to contact me on Council business, either for help, advice or to express their views at [fallgood@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:fallgood@winchester.gov.uk)

Possible Next Stage - Additional Ward Information and Use for Consultation Purposes  
Example prepared by Chairman of Principal Scrutiny Committee

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**Draft Regional Plan Announced**

The South East Regional Assembly released its draft Regional Plan on January 24 and is calling for comments before April 15. The plan will guide economic, social and environmental development in the South East over the next 20 years. The plan outlines policies for economic growth, policies for the protection of the environment, options for more home construction and proposals for the infrastructure to underpin development.

It is planned to send a leaflet to all households in the region. Councils at all levels – county, district and parish – can assist the process by encouraging wide-scale discussion.

Winchester City Council is planning a briefing for Members on February 17 and will arrange public meetings in Denmead, New Alresford and Wickham in partnership with parish councils. It will also provide speakers for local groups such as the Denmead Village Association.

It is expected that the South East Regional Assembly will discuss the views it receives in July and submit a report to the Deputy Prime Minister in July. The Plan is expected to be finalised in 2006.

**Local Plan Inquiry**

The long-running inquiry into the Winchester District Local Plan was concluded in the middle of January. It covered a great number of important issues including several sites in Denmead on which developers wish to build against the advice of the District Council. It is expected that a report will be published by the Planning Inspector in July.

**West of Waterlooville**

The prime developers involved in the West of Waterlooville major development area have not yet lodged planning applications with either Winchester City Council or Fareham Borough Council, although a draft application has been reviewed by planners.

Meanwhile the next meeting of the West of Waterlooville Forum scheduled for February 2 has been postponed until March 9 and will be held at the D-Day Hall in Southwick, starting at 2pm.

**Solent Travel Card**

An improved Solent Travel Card was launched at a meeting on January 28 of the Solent Transport Strategy Panel of which Councillor Allgood is a member. The area of travel now includes Winchester and Waterside as well as the area between Portsmouth and Southampton. For a charge of £5 a day or £20 a week there is unlimited travel on any bus. Negotiations are taken place with South West Trains to see how the train service can enter the scheme.

At the same meeting it was announced that Government officials will be visiting Hampshire next week for detailed talks about the proposed Rapid Transit System for South Hampshire. Although this seemed dead and buried last June, some new proposals have been made and a revised cost/benefit analysis makes it eligible for funding. A decision is expected in July 2005.

### **Low Level Buses**

The bus companies have informed local authorities that they hope to introduce low-platform entry buses on Service 45 later this year. Councillor Stallard has been pressing the bus companies for this service to benefit residents of Denmead, particularly elderly residents who find it hard to use high-step entry buses.

### **Swanmore College MUGA**

Councillors Allgood and Stallard visited Swanmore College of Technology last month at the invitation of Head Teacher Mrs Ann Hiller to view the new flood-lit Multi-Use Games Area and hear about progress of the new sports facilities to be provided in partnership involving the school, the district council and many parish councils in the area. The new facilities will be available for Denmead sports teams from July.

### **Grant for Memorial Hall**

The Cabinet of Winchester City Council is expected next Tuesday to endorse a grant of £3340 towards improvements at the Denmead War Memorial Hall, provided that the parish council makes a contribution of £1670. The application for a second grant for storage containers to fit under the stage has not been successful, but Winchester's Community Chest is offering a grant of £250 to assist.

### **Grant to aid Denmead Future**

The Planning Department at Winchester has confirmed it will aid the work of the Denmead Future group with a grant of £1300. Winchester has proposed handing the money to the Denmead Parish Council to disburse to the Denmead Future group as needed and keep an account of money spent. It is hoped that the Parish Council will accept this responsibility.

### **Future of Local Authority Housing**

A group of Winchester councillors is considering whether the houses owned by Winchester City Council should remain in council ownership or be sold to a housing association. All tenants, including those resident in Denmead, are being consulted on their views which will be carefully considered before a decision is made. The Labour Government has instructed all local authorities to carry out a similar exercise this year,

### **Changes in Management**

Robin Cooper has left his job as Director of Development Services at Winchester City Council for a new post at Medway, a unitary authority in Kent. He is being replaced pro tem by Steve Tilbury, currently Director of Community Services, until a decision is made on the structure of senior management.

**Cowplain School**

Cowplain School to which the majority of Denmead secondary school children attend has been granted a specialist school status. It has become a business and enterprise school and will receive a major injection of new funds. The head teacher, Mr David Rowlinson, said the extra cash would buy new computers, video conferencing facilities and a new meeting room for pupils.

**Police Changes**

Hampshire Constabulary has drawn up plans to merge some of its 11 basic command units into six operational command units. Denmead would be part of a Central Unit that would include the Winchester district, Fareham, Gosport and Havant. One reason is to align police operations units with local authority boundaries. A decision on whether to go ahead with the plans is to be taken in March.

**A Site for Travellers**

For some time now the district council has been taking part with other local authorities in the county to try to find solutions to the problems of unauthorised encampments by travellers. The aim is to find by April of this year sites where travellers can stay. In addition the Housing Act of 2004 imposes a duty on all local authorities to assess the needs of travellers and to produce a housing needs strategy. A likely outcome of such a needs study would be to identify possible sites for use. A new circular from the Deputy Prime Minister also indicates that local authorities must include the identification of sites in a development plan document.

**Members of the public are welcome to contact me on Council business, either for help, advice or to express their views at [fallgood@winchester.gov.uk](mailto:fallgood@winchester.gov.uk)**