

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE 0.1A, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 13 DECEMBER 2012** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

APOLOGIES


Contact
(01480)

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November 2012.

Mrs H J Taylor
388008

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary, non-disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interests in relation to any Agenda item. See Notes below.

3. SAFEGUARDING POLICY (Pages 7 - 56)

To consider and comment on a revised Safeguarding Policy for the District Council.

C Davidson
(01480)
387801

4. UPDATE 2013/14 BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM PLAN
(Pages 57 - 66)

To consider a report by the Head of Financial Services.

S Couper
388103

A copy of the report – Controllable Budgets by Budget Holder has been circulated separately to the Agenda.

5. TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE
(Pages 67 - 74)

To consider a report by the Head of Financial Services reviewing the performance for the period 1st April to 30th September 2012.

S Couper
388103

6. LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT 1988 - PUBLICATION OF RURAL SETTLEMENT LIST (Pages 75 - 76)

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Customer Services to consider the revised rural settlement lists.

J Barber
388105

7. REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S LETTINGS POLICY (Pages 77 - 128)

- To consider a report by the Head of Customer Service regarding the Council's Lettings Policy. **J Barber
388105**
- 8. THE TECHNICAL REFORM OF COUNCIL TAX** (Pages 129 - 132)
- To consider a report by the Head of Customer Services on the Government's proposals to reform Council Tax. **J Barber
388105**
- 9. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT FROM 1ST APRIL 2013** (Pages 133 - 144)
- To receive a report from the Head of Customer Services on Council Tax Support from 1st April 2013. **J Barber
388105**
- 10. CARBON MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE** (Pages 145 - 156)
- To receive a report by the Head of Environmental Management on the Carbon Management Plan. **C Jablonski
388368**
- 11. ROUND RESCHEDULING** (Pages 157 - 162)
- To consider a report by the Head of Operations outlining the round rescheduling for the refuse, recycling and garden waste collection services which will be implemented in February 2013. **B Gordan
388720**
- 12. RISK REGISTER** (Pages 163 - 166)
- To consider a report by the Audit and Risk Manager. **Mr D Harwood
388115**
- 13. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**
- To resolve:
- that the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).....
- 14. DISPOSAL OF LAND, ST. MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON** (Pages 167 - 168)
- To consider a report by the Head of Environmental Management. **C Allen
388380**

Dated this 5 day of December 2012



Head of Paid Service

Notes

A. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

- (1) *Members are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and unless you have obtained dispensation, cannot discuss or vote on the matter at the meeting and must also leave the room whilst the matter is being debated or voted on.*
- (2) *A Member has a disclosable pecuniary interest if it*
 - (a) *relates to you, or*
 - (b) *is an interest of -*
 - (i) *your spouse or civil partner; or*
 - (ii) *a person with whom you are living as husband and wife; or*
 - (iii) *a person with whom you are living as if you were civil partners*

and you are aware that the other person has the interest.

- (3) *Disclosable pecuniary interests includes -*
 - (a) *any employment or profession carried out for profit or gain;*
 - (b) *any financial benefit received by the Member in respect of expenses incurred carrying out his or her duties as a Member (except from the Council);*
 - (c) *any current contracts with the Council;*
 - (d) *any beneficial interest in land/property within the Council's area;*
 - (e) *any licence for a month or longer to occupy land in the Council's area;*
 - (f) *any tenancy where the Council is landlord and the Member (or person in (2)(b) above) has a beneficial interest; or*
 - (g) *a beneficial interest (above the specified level) in the shares of any body which has a place of business or land in the Council's area.*

B. Other Interests

- (4) *If a Member has a non-disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest then you are required to declare that interest, but may remain to discuss and vote.*
- (5) *A Member has a non-disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest where -*
 - (a) *a decision in relation to the business being considered might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing of you or a member of your family or a person with whom you have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect*

the majority of the council tax payers, rate payers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the authority's administrative area, or
(b) it relates to or is likely to affect any of the descriptions referred to above, but in respect of a member of your family (other than specified in (2)(b) above) or a person with whom you have a close association

and that interest is not a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Please contact Mrs H Taylor, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Tel No. 01480 388008/e-mail Helen.Taylor@huntingdonshire.gov.uk /e-mail: 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 (*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.

Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in Room 01A, Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 22 November 2012.

PRESENT: Councillor J D Ablewhite – Chairman.
Councillors B S Chapman, J A Gray,
N J Guyatt, T D Sanderson and D M Tysoe.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor A Williams for Item No 62 and
Councillor T V Rogers for Item No's 64 and
66.

60. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18th October 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

61. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

62. HOUGHTON & WYTON CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER ASSESSMENT AND BOUNDARY REVIEW

(Councillor A Williams, local ward Member, was in attendance and spoke on this item).

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the responses received to the consultation on the Character Assessment and Boundary Review for the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area and suggested amendments as a consequence thereof. The report had been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

In reviewing the issues involved, the Cabinet considered a suggestion by Councillor Williams and the Panel that Area 2 of the map at Appendix 4 should be included in the Conservation Area. It was explained that an appraisal indicated that this area did not meet the Conservation Area criteria. The Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) added that it was best practice to keep boundaries under review. In that respect, the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning & Housing reassured Members that this was always the case for all conservation areas.

Having congratulated officers on the quality and high standard of the documents, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area Character Assessment and Conservation Area Boundary Review, as appended to the report now submitted, be approved.

63. THE CONTRIBUTION OF LOCAL AGRICULTURE TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF PLANNING POLICIES

With the assistance of a report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the findings of the Panel's study into how agriculture and its environmental work was reflected in the Council's policy framework. The Panel had formed the view that the importance of rural areas on agriculture should be reflected to a greater extent in the Council's Planning Policy Framework.

In considering the information contained in the report, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the need for community led growth in rural villages to contribute towards their sustainability be considered within the new Local Plan;
- (b) that definition of green field and brown field sites be constantly applied;
- (c) that reference to the National Planning Policy Framework's principles relating to the rural economy and agricultural land be included in the new Local Plan; and
- (d) that further investigations be undertaken into the Council's procedure for analysing and dealing with applications where agriculture is a factor and a report on the outcome submitted to the Development Management Panel.

64. ASSETS OF COMMUNITY VALUE

(Councillor T V Rogers, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Panel), was in attendance and spoke on this item).

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the arrangements to deal with applications for listing community assets, as required under the Assets of Community Value (England) Regulations 2012.

Members were advised that the legislation had been introduced in September 2012, to assist local community groups in preserving those buildings or land which they consider to be important to the social well being of their communities. Attention was drawn to the bodies which may make nominations, the proposed process for nominating an asset and the impact of land being listed when the owner wishes to dispose of the land.

The arrangements had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet. Having requested clarification on those bodies which could make a nomination and asked whether a disposal would be exempt from the moratorium arrangements in the case of an individual or organisation being placed into administration, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the responsibility for receiving and processing applications be delegated to the Corporate Team Manager;
- (b) that responsibility for determining whether an asset should be listed on the Register of Community Assets or not be delegated to a Panel of three appropriate Council Officers (who may be drawn from Planning and Housing Strategy, Environment and Community Services and Legal and Democratic Services supported by the Corporate Team), to be designated by Chief Officer Management Team;
- (c) that responsibility for determining reviews against listing of assets by the owners be delegated to the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy after consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (or their nominees);
- (d) that responsibility for putting in place appropriate arrangements for determining requests for compensation and any review requests be delegated to the Corporate Team Manager; and
- (e) that the Corporate Team Manager be requested to put in place arrangements for publishing how applicable groups can go about making a nomination.

65. CONTROLLED WASTE REGULATIONS

With the aid of a report by the Head of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with legislative changes affecting the disposal of waste from non-domestic premises, which had arisen from the Controlled Waste Regulations 2012.

Executive Councillors were advised that the 2012 Regulations give local authorities powers to charge for waste disposal from a wider range of non-domestic premises than the original 1992 Regulations allowed. As a consequence the County Council, as the waste authority, had set a local policy which clarifies who will be required to pay and who will receive transitional relief. Members were advised that the District Council collected waste from a number of previously exempt premises and would now be charged by the County Council for the disposal of that waste. Members were assured that the majority of customers would still enjoy free disposal if they were

Council customers prior to April 2012.

Having noted the views expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) on the changes, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the full cost of disposal be recovered by the Council from those non-domestic premises previously exempt under the 1992 Controlled Waste Regulations, except where they continue to be exempt under the County Council's local policy.

66. CHARGING FOR A SECOND GREEN BIN

(Councillor T V Rogers, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Panel), was in attendance and spoke on this item).

Pursuant to Minute No. 49, the Cabinet gave further consideration to the report of the Head of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) in light of comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) on the proposal to introduce an annual charge of £40 for an additional green waste bin. The report had been considered previously by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) who were of the opinion that the Council should not introduce a charge.

The Executive Councillor for Environment outlined the background to the proposal. He explained that the Council currently spends £1.3M on collecting green waste for which the Council does not receive any additional funding. Members' attention was drawn to 13 authorities who charge between £15 and £140 per annum for the collection of a second green bin and to 6 authorities who charge for all their green waste collections.

Having regard to the set up cost of the proposals, the Executive Councillor for Environment explained that efforts had already been made to reduce the capital costs and that unwanted second bins would be removed from those households not wishing to take up the premium service. He added that whilst there may be an immediate reduction in the green waste collected, he would be surprised if the level of green waste is reduced in the medium term.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor T V Rogers, Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) addressed the Cabinet. Councillor Rogers explained that whilst the Panel supported a charge for a second green bin in principle they were of the opinion that it should be considered in the context of a range of other options for achieving budgetary savings. In that respect, he added that an informal meeting of the Panel had been arranged for 29th November 2012 to discuss priority areas for savings.

Having reiterated that the Council was constantly reviewing all services to identify savings and that consideration would need to be given to a number of difficult budgetary decisions in the future, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the introduction of a charge for a second green bin be approved in principle but that the timing of the implementation be delegated to the Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) after consultation with the Executive Leader and the Executive Councillor for Environment and to be in association with a package of other savings measures to be decided no later than April 2013.

67. GAMBLING ACT - REVISED STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

Further to Minute No. 06/117, consideration was given to a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a revised Statement of Principles under the provisions of the Gambling Act 2005. A report had been considered also by the Licensing Committee whose comments were relayed to the Council.

Having noted that the updated statement had been the subject of a consultation exercise with interested bodies, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that full Council be recommended to approve the Statement of Principles under Section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005, appended to the report now submitted, with effect from 31st January 2013 for a period of three years.

68. HUNTINGDONSHIRE TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT AREA JOINT COMMITTEE

RESOLVED

that Councillor C R Hyams be appointed to replace Councillor S Akthar on the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee.

Chairman

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**EMPLOYMENT PANEL
CABINET**

**28th NOVEMBER 2012
13th DECEMBER 2012**

SAFEGUARDING POLICY
(Report by the Lead Safeguarding Officer)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider and ratify the attached reviewed Safeguarding Policy and subsequent introduction.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Safeguarding Policy was last reviewed in June 2011. Since that date, there have been significant changes to the previous 'Vetting & Barring Scheme'.

2.2 The first phase of changes concerning the 'Disclosure and Barring Scheme' came into effect on 10th September 2012. Changes impacting on HDC include:

- New definition of 'Regulated Activity'.
- Repeal of controlled activity.
- Minimum age (16) at which someone can apply for a CRB check.
- New definition of 'Vulnerable Adult'.
- Amendments to the CRB checking process.

- 2.3 The attached Policy document has been reviewed by the Lead Safeguarding Officer in consultation with the HDC Designated Safeguarding Officers and HR.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Employment Panel is requested to adopt the attached Safeguarding Policy for the purpose of its role as the employer and to delegate further changes to the Chief Officers Management Team and the Lead Safeguarding Officer until the next review in June 2014.

- 3.2 The Cabinet is recommended to approve the policy document in respect of its application to Members.

Contact Officer:

Chris Davidson, Lead Safeguarding Officer ☎ 01480 387801

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Safeguarding Policy

Name of Policy	Safeguarding Policy	Person/posts responsible	Lead Safeguarding Officer
Date approved/adopted	2006	Approved by	Employment Panel
Date last reviewed	June 2011	Date of last amendment	January 2012
Review approved by	Employment Panel	Date of next review date	June 2014

Safeguarding Policy

1. Introduction

Everyone has a responsibility for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults.

Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) is committed to delivering services that safeguard those who engage with them. HDC assures all professional and voluntary organisations that it will fully support and protect anyone, who in good faith (without malicious intent), reports his or her concern about a colleague's practice or the possibility that abuse or bullying is taking place. Please refer to HDC's whistle blowing policy for further information.

This policy outlines good practice to promote the safety of those using our services and to protect Employees, Volunteers and Councillors from false allegations.

2. References

It should be noted that this policy is not a stand-alone policy and should be used in conjunction with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) interagency procedures (see www.cambslscb.org.uk) and the Department for Children, Schools and Families document 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' (www.dcsf.gov.uk).

Please note that all employees, volunteers and Councillors including those who have not yet reached their 18th birthday are covered by this Safeguarding Policy which should also be read in conjunction with the following HDC policies:

- Recruitment and Selection Policy
- Employee Code of Conduct
- Whistle blowing Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Disciplinary Policy

3. Background

The Children's Act 2004, Childcare Act 2006, Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and HM Governments 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010' place a duty on key statutory agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. The 2004 Act embodies five principles that are key to the wellbeing of children, young people and vulnerable adults and are known as the 5 Every Child Matters outcomes:

- Be healthy;
- Stay safe;
- Enjoy and achieve;
- Make a positive contribution;
- Achieve economic well being.

In practical terms this means HDC has a responsibility to provide a safe environment for children, young people and vulnerable adults in which their welfare is of paramount importance and in which they can achieve their potential.

4. Aims

- 4.1 This policy aims to set out procedures for the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults protecting them from abuse (see Appendix 3 for definitions of types of abuse).
- 4.2 HDC will achieve this by:
- a) Respecting and promoting the rights, wishes and feelings of children, young people and vulnerable adults;
 - b) Promoting good practice that encourages a safe environment; protects all parties and avoids mistaken allegations of abuse;
 - c) Providing all Employees, Volunteers and Councillors who fall within HDC's regulated activities with instruction, training and information that will ensure that they:
 - are properly equipped to recognise abuse and mistreatment;
 - are clear about how to report and record concerns;
 - understand the need to take advice about concerns from relevant specialists when necessary;
 - work in a way which will protect them, as far as possible, from accusations of abuse.
 - d) Ensuring that all suspicions or allegations involving Employees, Volunteers and Councillors are dealt with effectively and efficiently and that appropriate criminal, disciplinary and appeals procedures are implemented.
 - e) Ensure Employees, Volunteers and Councillors who work with children, young people and vulnerable adults are subject to Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks and / or a satisfactory disclosure prior to taking up the post.
 - f) Following a decision taken by the HDC Employment Panel on 30th November 2011, CRB checks are to be carried out on appointment only, subject to unbroken continuous employment and undertaken in line with current best practice (see Appendix 2) as agreed by HDC.
 - g) Require all contractors and, where appropriate, their employees to adopt and abide by the processes laid out in the Safeguarding Policy.
- 4.3 Reviewing this policy at least once every 3 years or when major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation occurs.

5. Definitions

5.1 Children and Young People:

Anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday.

5.2 Vulnerable Adult:

Any person aged 18 or over for whom a 'regulated activity' is provided.

5.3 Employees, Volunteers and Councillors:

Include anyone working for, or on behalf of, HDC whether paid or voluntary.

5.4 **HDC Regulated Activity:**

Regulated activity is defined to focus on work which involves close and unsupervised contact with vulnerable groups including children. The definition of regulated activity is given in Appendix 5.

Regulated activity excludes family arrangements, and personal, non-commercial arrangements.

5.5 **Close and Regular Access:**

The term used to describe working or volunteering with children, young people or vulnerable adults:

- Where an individual is regularly caring for, training or supervising a child, young person or vulnerable adult;
- Where an individual has sole charge of children, young people or vulnerable adults.

6. Guiding Principles

6.1 This policy applies to all HDC Employees, Volunteers, Councillors and sub-contractors. Additionally, and where appropriate, this policy applies to contractors where a completed self declaration is held (see Appendix 9).

6.2 The guiding principles for safeguarding are:

- a) the welfare of the individual is paramount;
- b) everyone has the right to protection from abuse;
- c) Employees, Volunteers and Councillors should work in an open and transparent way;
- d) Employees, Volunteers and Councillors should avoid any conduct which would lead any reasonable person to question their motives or intentions (see Appendix 8).
- e) The same professional standards should always be applied regardless of culture, gender, language, racial origin, religious belief and/or sexual orientation reflecting the protected areas as outlined in The Equality Act 2010 of Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Race, Religion and Belief, Sex and Sexual Orientation.

6.3 Confidentiality shall be upheld in line with current data protection and human rights legislation. The information sharing protocol of Cambridgeshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board will be followed in circumstances where information is shared with other agencies in the interest of a child, young person or vulnerable adult.

7. Areas of Specific Responsibility

7.1 Each of the following roles within HDC has specific responsibilities (see Appendix 7).

- Lead Safeguarding Officer.
- Human Resources.
- Democratic Services.
- Heads of Service.
- Managers.
- Managers of Employees with Zero Hour Variable Contracts.
- Designated Safeguarding Officers.
- All Employees, Volunteers and Councillors.

A list of both these and other useful contacts can be found in Appendix 11.

8. Advice and Support

8.1 All reasonable steps will be taken to ensure unsuitable people are prevented from working with children, young people and vulnerable adults.

9. Support following allegations of abuse

9.1 Consideration will be given to the appropriate support to individuals, both those subject to, and those making, allegations of abuse.

9.2 HDC's First Contact, Counselling Services as well as help lines, support groups and open meetings will be encouraged to maintain as open a culture as possible and aid the healing process.

10. Training

10.1 Appropriate training will be provided to all HDC Employees, Volunteers and Councillors who work within the parameters of regulated activities. Additional activity specific guidance can be found in Appendix 6.

10.2 The level of required training is as follows in line with HM Government guidance and will be facilitated through Learning and Development.

- Group 1** – For Employees, Volunteers or Councillors who will work with children, young people and vulnerable adults or may come into contact with the public as a result of their role within HDC. As stipulated in the Cambridgeshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board competencies training will cover general safeguarding and to incorporate the promotion of well-being issues together with this policy. Refresher training will take place every two years or in line with alternative arrangements as determined by approved bodies or in the event of any significant change.
- Group 2** – Additional training for Designated Safeguarding Officers as stipulated in the Cambridgeshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board competencies will cover responsibilities of their roles and detailed consideration of the Safeguarding Policy. Refresher training will take place every two years or in the event of any significant change.

10.3 All training provided will be delivered by Local Safeguarding Children's Board accredited trainers or approved via the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

- 10.4 **Sports Coaches** - Employees, Volunteers and Councillors working in sport shall be required to attend the Sport Coach UK course 'Safeguarding and Protecting Children and other appropriate courses as identified by Huntingdonshire District Council' unless they are able to demonstrate that an alternative sport's governing body approved training course has been attended.

11. Monitoring and Appraisal

- 11.1 Employees whose roles include regulated activities will be reviewed in relation to the Safeguarding Policy on an annual basis via a supervision meeting as appropriate.
- 11.2 Managers whose roles include use of volunteers in regulated activities will be reviewed in relation to adherence to the Safeguarding Policy via a supervision meeting.
- 11.3 This policy will be reviewed at least once every three years. The review will be initiated by the Lead Safeguarding Officer.

12. Vulnerable person Referral Form

- 12.1 If an Employee, Volunteer or Councillor has a concern of poor practice or abuse or needs to report an incident concerning a child or young person, the form in Appendix 11 should be completed and passed to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or in their absence to another Designated Safeguarding Officer or the Council's Lead Safeguarding Officer.

This process is included in Appendix 1, Flowchart 1

- 12.2 If an Employee, Volunteer or Councillor has a concern of poor practice or abuse or needs to report an incident concerning an adult considered vulnerable by the activity they are participating within at a particular time, the form in Appendix 12 should be completed and passed to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or in their absence to another Designated Safeguarding Officer or the Council's Lead Safeguarding Officer.

This process is included in Appendix 1, Flowchart 1

13. Responding to disclosure

- 13.1 Within 24 hours of being informed of an incident the Designated Safeguarding Officer will report the incident or seek the appropriate advice. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will advise the referrer of the action they will take and provide further feedback as appropriate. Guidance on how to respond to disclosure is given in Appendix 4.
- 13.2 Designated Safeguarding Officers will ensure that all necessary information and completed forms are supplied to the Lead Safeguarding Officer. In One Leisure Designated Safeguarding Officers will ensure this information is supplied to the designated One Leisure Officer who will, in turn, ensure information is supplied to the Lead Safeguarding Officer.

This procedure is summarised in Appendix 1, Flowchart 1

14. Responding to an accusation of poor practice or abuse

- 14.1 **What if I am accused of poor practice or abuse?**
- a) You have a responsibility to contact your Line Manager immediately, or as soon as possible, and should provide a detailed written account of the circumstances.

- b) Within 24 hours of receipt of a written account a Designated Safeguarding Officer will report the incident or seek the appropriate advice from the appropriate Designated Safeguarding Officer in One Leisure or the Lead Safeguarding Officer.
- c) The Designated Safeguarding Officer will, maintain communication with and, advise the referrer of the action they will take and provide further feedback as appropriate.
- d) An investigation of the circumstances leading to the accusation should be undertaken by a Designated Safeguarding Officer and as appropriate further action be taken and a report submitted to the LSO.

This Procedure is summarised in Appendix 1, Flowchart 2

14.2 What if a member of my team is accused of poor practice?

- a) Consideration should be made, in consultation with the Lead Safeguarding Officer and HR, of withdrawing the employee from duty at the earliest opportunity.
- b) Working with the individual employee a detailed written record of the event should be made.
- c) Within 24 hours of receipt of a written account the Designated Safeguarding Officer will report the incident or seek the appropriate advice. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will advise the referrer of the action they will take and provide further feedback as appropriate.
- d) An investigation of the circumstances leading to the accusation should be undertaken by a Designated Safeguarding Officer and as appropriate further action be taken and a report submitted to the LSO.
- e) If such an investigation establishes poor practice, rather than abuse, then together with HR the following should be considered:
 - Appropriate training and supervision;
 - Review of general practice in relation to safeguarding;
 - Implementation of standard disciplinary procedures.

This Procedure is summarised in Appendix 1, Flowchart 3

14.3 What if an allegation of abuse is made against a member of my team?

- a) Consideration should be made, in consultation with the Lead Safeguarding Officer and HR, of withdrawing the employee from duty at the earliest opportunity.
- b) Working with the individual employee a detailed written account of the event should be made.
- c) Within 24 hours of receipt of a written account the Designated Safeguarding Officer will report the incident or seek the appropriate advice from the Lead Safeguarding Officer. The Designated Safeguarding Officer will advise the referrer of the action they will take and provide further feedback as appropriate.

- d) An investigation of the circumstances leading to the accusation should be undertaken within a reasonable timeframe as appropriate to the particular circumstances of the case and as appropriate further action be taken.
- e) If abuse cannot be ruled out then, in consultation with the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), the Police should be contacted.
- f) If abuse is confirmed:
 - The standard Disciplinary Procedure should be implemented;
 - A review of general practice in relation to safeguarding should be undertaken.

This Procedure is summarised in Appendix 1, Flowchart 4

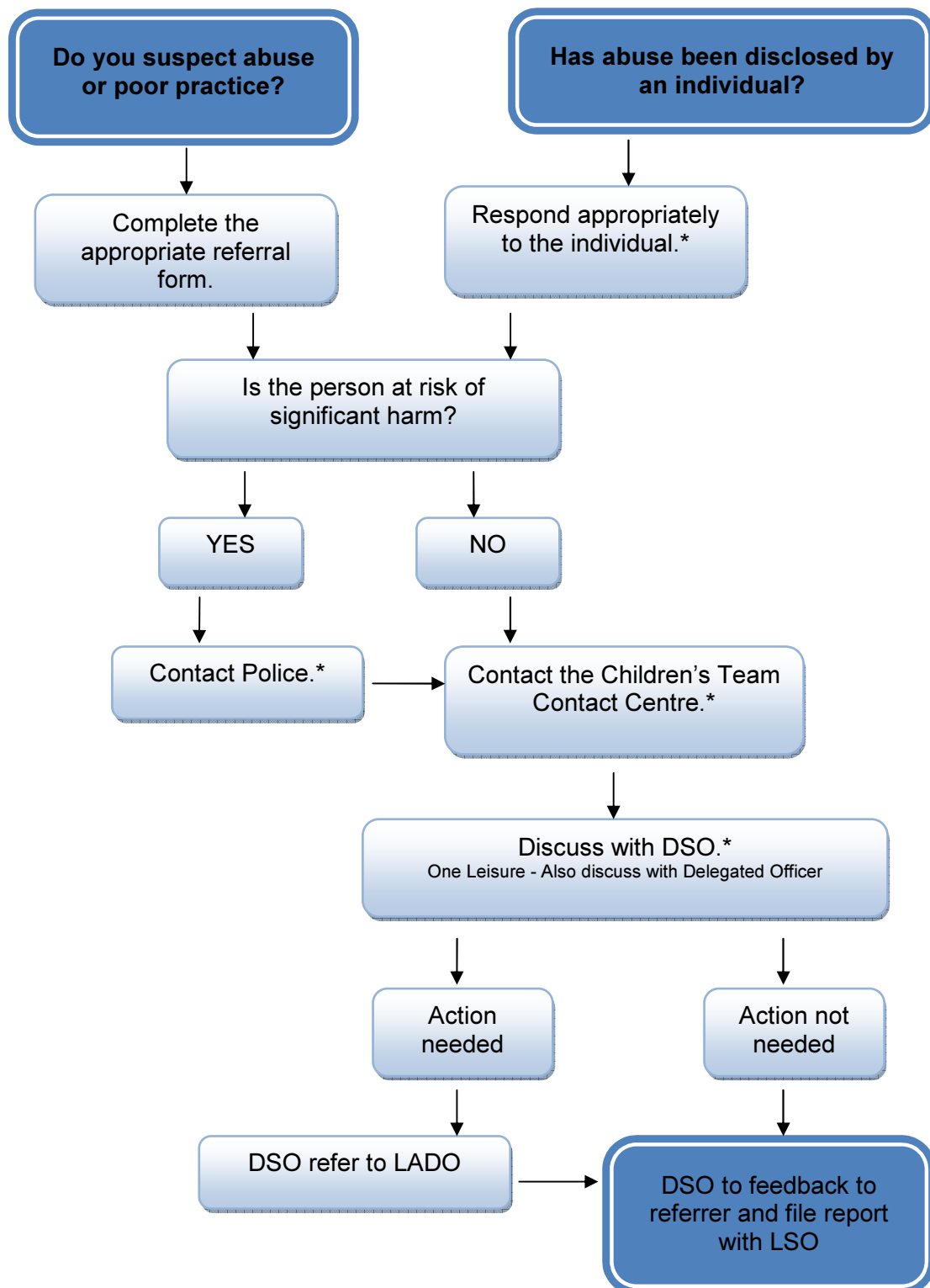
14.4 What if an allegation is made against an adult who works or volunteers in a childcare setting?

- a) The definition of a 'childcare setting' for the purpose of the Safeguarding Policy is a setting e.g. One Leisure crèche or children's club, registered with Ofsted either on the Voluntary or Compulsory Register.
- b) The process as prescribed in Flowchart 5 must be adhered to.

This Procedure is summarised in Appendix 1, Flowchart 5

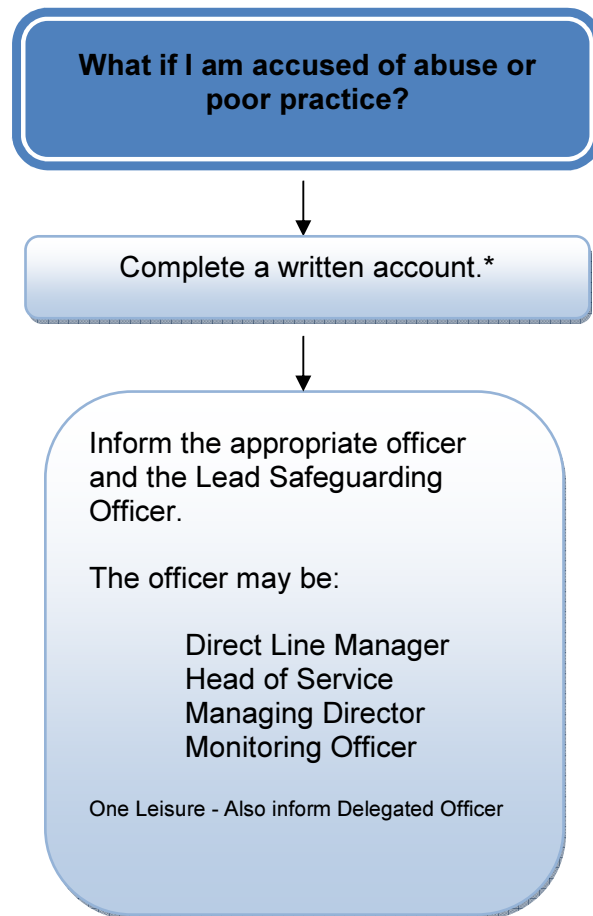
Appendix 1

Flowchart 1



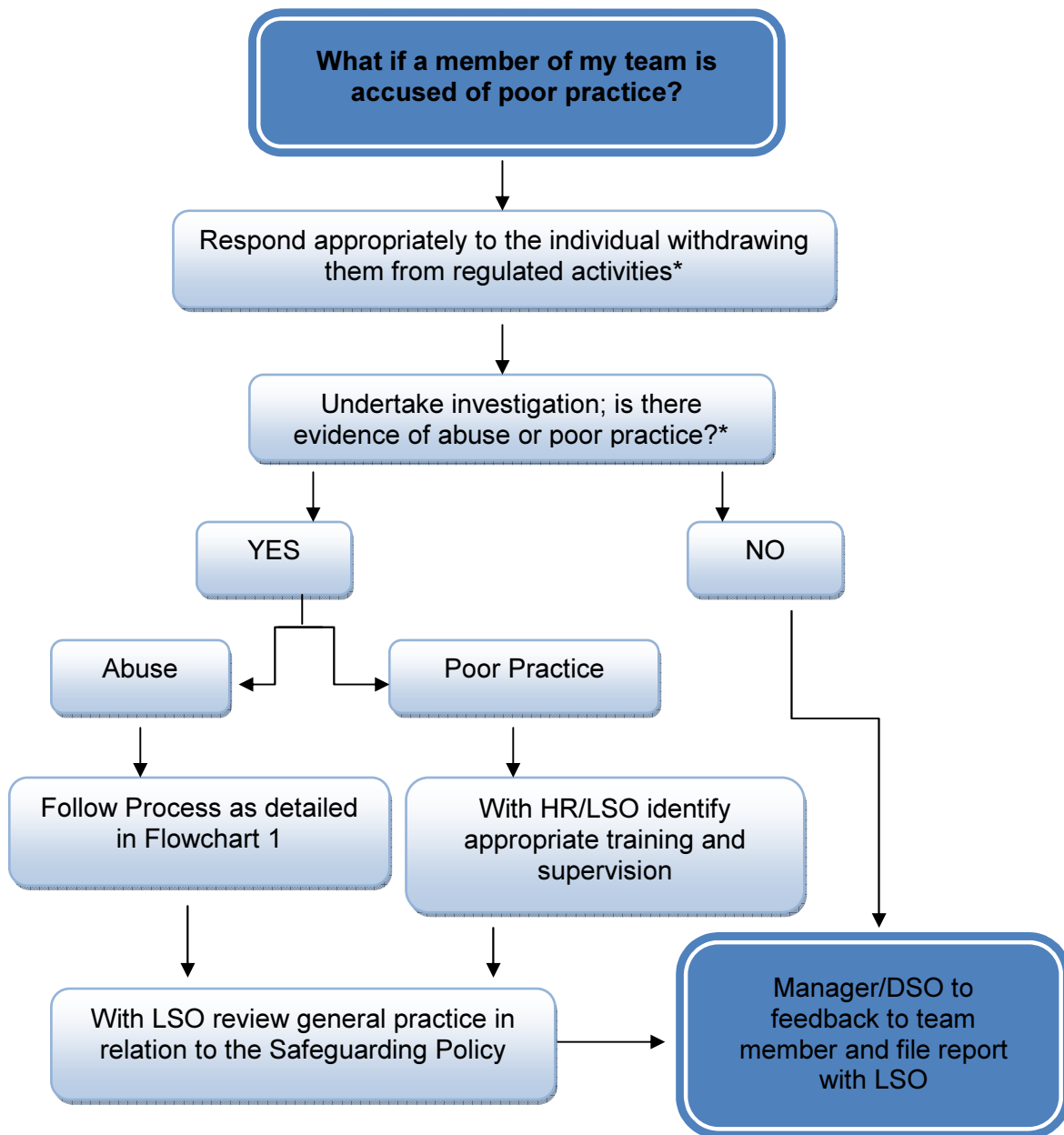
* Additional guidance within policy and procedure

Flowchart 2



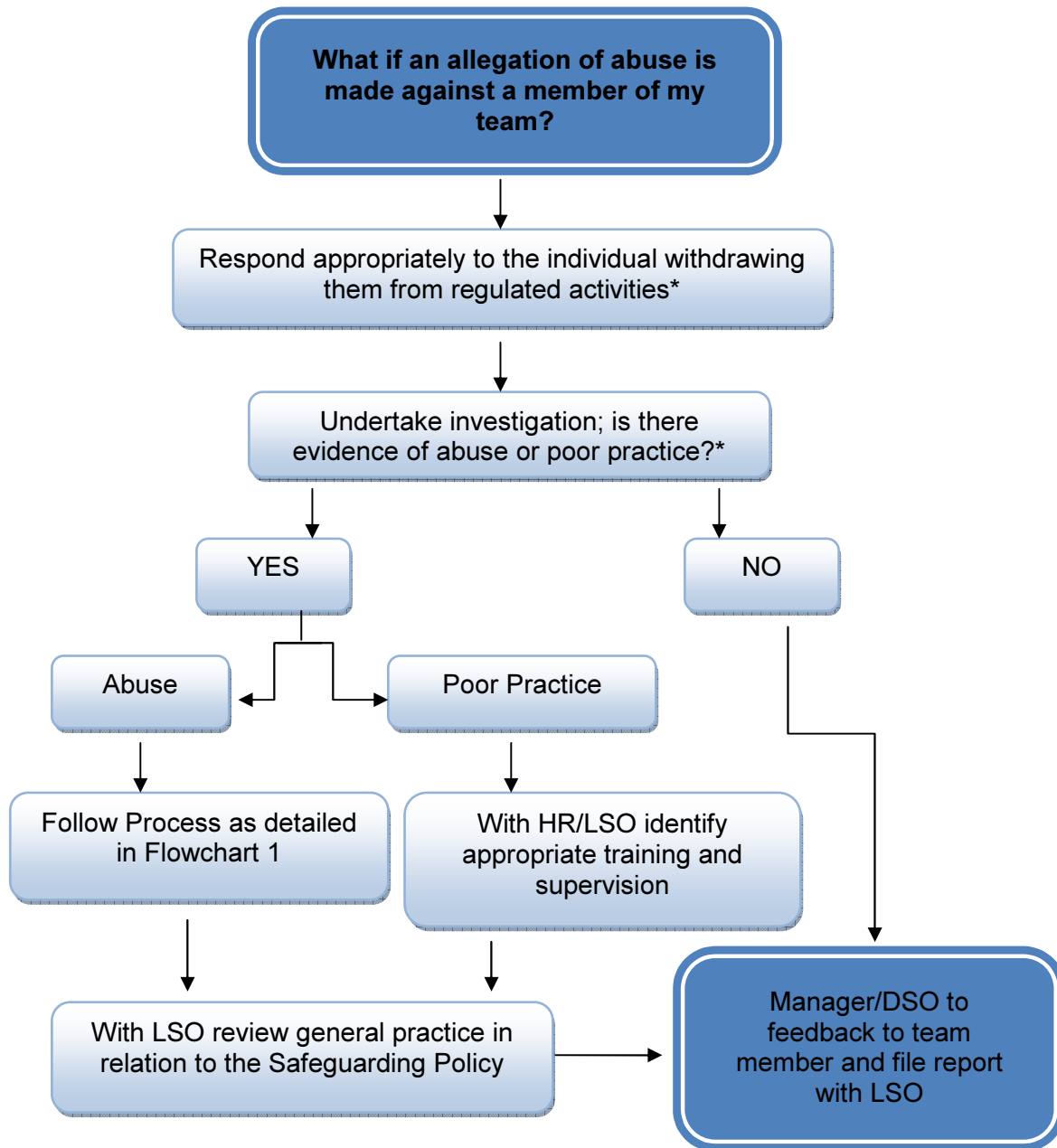
* Additional guidance within policy and procedure

Flowchart 3



* Additional guidance within policy and procedure

Flowchart 4



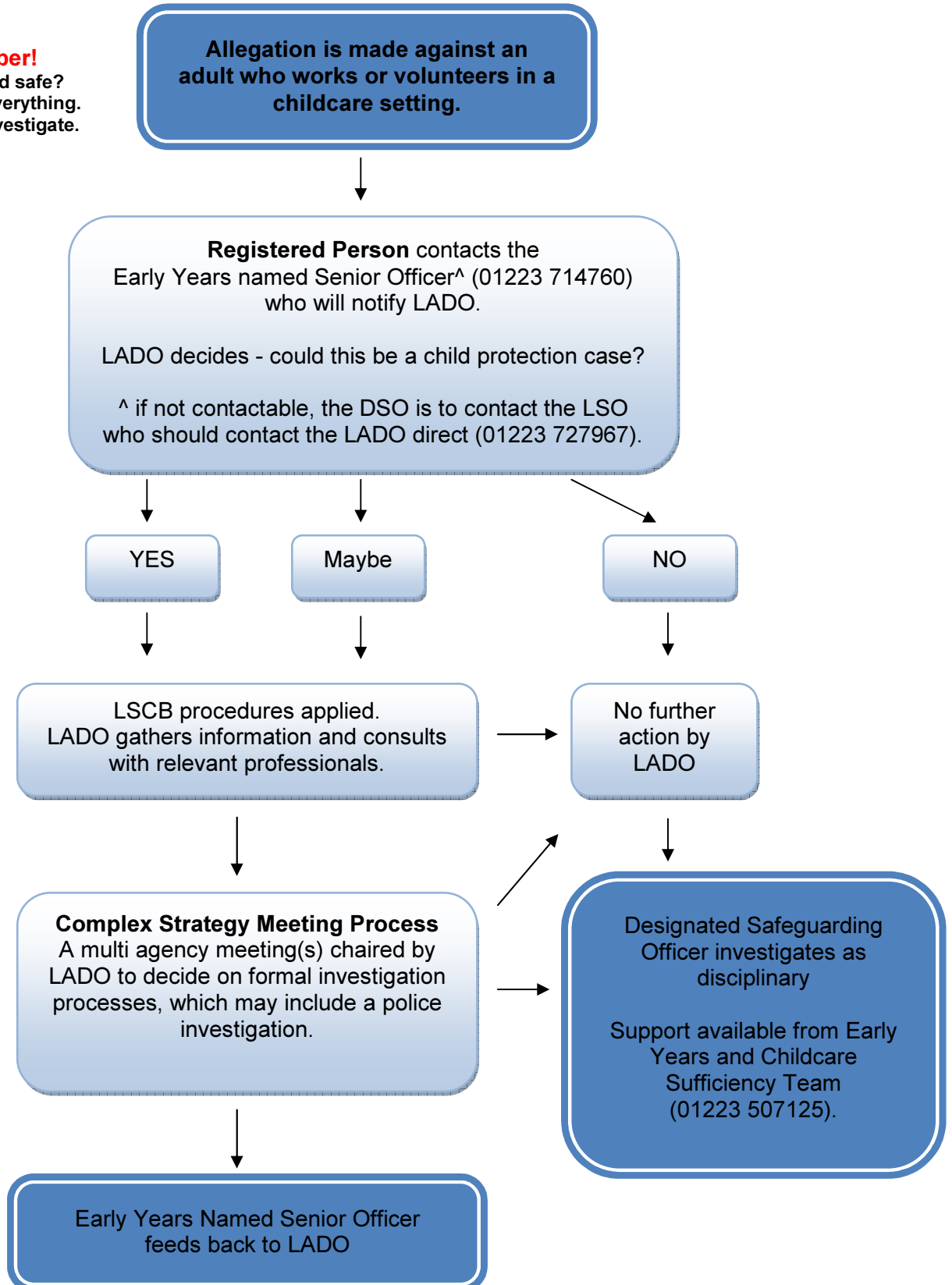
* Additional guidance within policy and procedure

Flowchart 5

This flowchart is a copy of the Early Years procedure for 'Allegations of abuse against adults who work or volunteer in a childcare setting'.

The childcare setting must inform Ofsted of any complaints or significant incidents and follow the procedure below:

Remember!
Is the child safe?
Record everything.
Do not investigate.



Appendix 2

Additional HDC CRB Procedure Guidance - HDC Employees Only

- Applications to become the Lead Signatory of a Registered Body or a Countersignatory can only be submitted where the person is aged 18 or over at the time of making the application.
- Applications can only be submitted to the CRB for Standard or Enhanced checks where the applicant is aged 16 or over at the time of making the application.
- Applications for controlled Activity positions can no longer be submitted (as of 10th September 2012).
- Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) checks are obtained on appointment to a role where it has been identified as required.
- Subject to unbroken continuous service, renewal of CRB Disclosures for HDC employees is not required, however all HDC Designated Safeguarding Officers will continue to renew CRB Disclosures on a three-year cycle.
- If service is broken for a period longer than one month but less than twelve months, the employee will be required to complete a CRB 'self-declaration' form (see Appendix 10) for each period of time exceeding one month.
- Employees who work intermittently throughout the year e.g. variable hour's staff (particularly students) and exceed a period of twelve months of no employment will be required to renew their CRB Disclosure before recommencing employment.
- The HDC Code of Conduct states that all employees are required to inform their Head of Service if they are convicted of any criminal offence while employed by the Council.
- Where a role has been identified as requiring a CRB Disclosure, the employee must complete pre-determined questions on a 6-month and annual basis. The questions will relate to any criminal offences and other issues affecting the outcome of a CRB disclosure occurring since their most recent CRB disclosure.
- A CRB Disclosure will search an individual's details against criminal records and other sources, including the Police National Computer. The check may reveal convictions, cautions, reprimands and warnings.
- If any such details would be disclosed through an authorised CRB check, these same details must be disclosed during the 6-month and annual process.
- Posts that require a CRB prior to commencement of employment will be determined by the Head of Service or the Designated Safeguarding Officer Group.

Portability of CRB Checks

- The CRB check is not portable as it is still only a snapshot of information available at the time of the disclosure.
- All staff appointed to a role where it has been identified a CRB check is required, will be subject to a suitable CRB Enhanced Disclosure prior to taking up post.

One Leisure CRB Guidance

- A leisure centre is not a listed establishment in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 and therefore all roles must be assessed on the nature of the duties the individual will carry out, i.e. training, teaching, instructing and supervising children, young people or vulnerable adults.
- Activities in a leisure centre which are open to the general public are not covered by any exceptions in legislation and, therefore, unless a class or event has been organised wholly or mainly for children, young people or vulnerable adults, the instructor / facilitator would not meet the criteria for a CRB check. For further information please refer to www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crb-eligibility and / or speak to the Council's Lead Safeguarding Officer.

Leisure Centre Scenarios:

➤ Scenario A

There is an aerobic class for young mothers with no childcare facility. Some mothers bring their children along and the children may join in.

This is classed as incidental contact with children and the instructor is therefore not eligible for a CRB check.

➤ Scenario B

There is a weekly dance class for children aged 18 and under.

The instructor meets the criteria and is eligible for a CRB check even if the children in the class may differ from week to week.

➤ Scenario C

An NHS trust makes arrangements with a leisure centre to provide weekly classes for children or adults as part of a care package in relation to their specific needs.

Where the same instructor takes the class, the instructor is eligible for a CRB check.

➤ Scenario D

The leisure centre allows members of the public to hire its premises A local football club hires a hall for eight weeks to carry out training for the 'under 15' team. The centre insists that they have to carry out a CRB check for insurance purposes before they can allow him to hire the hall.

There is no exemption which allows the leisure centre to insist on a check for insurance / hire purposes.

➤ Scenario E

A leisure centre wants to CRB check their administration, maintenance, catering and cleaning staff as they have opportunity for contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults and may wear the centre uniform so they are seen

as a 'person of trust'. The contact with these groups is of an incidental nature while they are carrying out their main tasks.

If the nature of their duties does not include direct teaching, training, supervising of children, young people or vulnerable adults as described above then it would be an offence under the police Act 1997 to submit a CRB check on their behalf.

Appendix 3

Recognition of Abuse

Whilst it is not the responsibility of Employees, Volunteers and Councillors to decide that abuse is occurring, it is our responsibility to act on any concerns by reporting suspicions that they have.

There are different types of abuse, and a person may suffer more than one type. The following definitions are based on those from the Department of Health Guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (2010).

- **Neglect** - a persistent failure to meet an individual's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse. Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to:
 - Provide adequate food, clothing and shelter (including exclusion from home or abandonment);
 - Protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger;
 - Ensure adequate supervision (including the use of inadequate care-givers);
 - Ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment.

It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, an individual's basic emotional needs.

- **Physical Abuse** - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to an individual. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in an individual within their care.
- **Sexual Abuse** - involves forcing or enticing an individual to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the individual is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving individuals in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging individuals to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming an individual in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can children.
- **Emotional Abuse** - the persistent emotional maltreatment of an individual such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on the individual's emotional development. It may involve conveying to an individual they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may include not giving the individual opportunities to express their views, deliberately silencing them or 'making fun' of what they say or how they communicate. It may involve age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on an individual. These may include interactions that are beyond the individual's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the individual participating in normal social interaction. It may involve seeing or hearing the ill-treatment of another. It may involve serious bullying (including cyber bullying), causing individuals frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of

individuals. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of abuse although it may occur alone.

Appendix 4

Responding to a Disclosure

If you receive information concerning disclosure you should:

- React calmly;
- Tell the individual they are not to blame and they were right to tell you;
- Take what the individual says seriously, recognising the difficulties inherent, in interpreting what is said by an individual who has a speech disability and/or differences in language;
- Keep questions to the absolute minimum to ensure a clear and accurate understanding of what has been said;
- Reassure the child or young person, but do not make promises of confidentiality that may not be feasible to maintain in the light of subsequent developments;
- The alleged abuser should not be approached;
- Make a full written record of what is said, heard and/or seen as soon as possible, ensuring that it is in the words of the speaker;
- Immediately refer to your Line Manager who will contact the Designated Safeguarding Officer or Lead Safeguarding Officer.
- Pass the referral to the Designated Safeguarding Officer in your Service immediately; reporting the matter should not be delayed by attempts to obtain further information;
- In circumstances where you believe the individual is in immediate danger of harm you should make contact with the Police ensuring that the Designated Safeguarding Officer in your Service is made aware. Where contact with the Police is made a record of the name and title of the Police Officer to whom the concerns were passed should be made together with the time and date of the call in case follow up is required;
- If immediate danger relates to suspected abuse by a parent/carer, do not allow the individual to go home with them without calling the Police to the scene.
- Refer to Flowcharts 1, 3, 4 or 5.

It may be that the individual making disclosure is unable to express him or herself verbally. Communication difficulties may mean that it is hard for them to make themselves understood. Sometimes it can be difficult to distinguish the signs of abuse from the symptoms of some disabilities or conditions. However, where there are concerns regarding the safety of an individual record what has been observed in detail and follow the procedures to report these concerns.

If you receive information concerning disclosure you should **not**:

- Panic;
- Allow any shock or distaste show;
- Probe for more information than is offered or ask leading questions;
- Speculate or make assumptions;
- Make negative comments about the alleged abuser;
- Approach the alleged abuser;
- Make promises or agree to keep secrets.

Appendix 5

Best Practice When Working Within Regulated Activities.

The criminal records and barring systems are controlled by the following legislation:

- Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006
- Protection of Freedoms Act 2012

HDC will still have a duty to make referrals to the Independent Safeguarding Authority, and it still must not knowingly engage a barred person in regulated activity.

Regulated Activities – Definition

This is work which a barred person must not do or work for which the organisation may obtain a Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check.

Everybody within the pre-September definition of regulated activity will remain eligible for enhanced CRB checks, whether or not they fall within the post-September definition of regulated activity.

From 10th September 2012, if an organisation considers that a role is within the new definition of regulated activity, then an individual is asked to apply for an enhanced CRB check, the organisation should request the appropriate barred list check (for children, adults or both). Enhanced CRB checks for work within regulated activity will state (where requested) if the person is on one of the ISA's barred lists.

Summary of the new definition of regulated activity (10th September 2012)

Regulated activity relating to children

The new definition of regulated activity relating to children comprises only:

- (i) Unsupervised activities: teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children, or provide advice / guidance on well-being, or drive a vehicle only for children;
- (ii) Work for a limited range of establishments ('specified places'), with opportunity for contact: for example, schools, children's homes, childcare premises. Not work by supervised volunteers.

Work under (i) or (ii) is regulated activity only if done regularly. There is statutory guidance about supervision of activity which would be regulated activity if unsupervised.

- (iii) Relevant personal care, for example washing or dressing; or health care by or supervised by a professional;
- (iv) Registered childminding; and foster-carers.

The new definition of regulated activity relating to children **no longer includes:**

- Any supervised teaching, training or instruction of children or the provision of any care or supervision of children by a person who is being supervised by another. The exceptions are where certain types of personal care or health care are provided to

children or where any of the activities take place in a specified place such as a child care setting.

Regulated activity relating to adults

The new definition of regulated activity relating to adults no longer labels adults as 'vulnerable'. Instead, the definition identifies the activities which, if any adult requires them, lead to that adult being considered vulnerable at that particular time. This means that the focus is on the activities required by the adult and not on the setting in which the activity is received, nor on the personal characteristics or circumstances of the adult receiving the activities. There is also no longer a requirement for a person to do the activities a certain number of times before they are engaging in regulated activity.

For more information please see the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012.

Categories include:

- (i) The provision to an adult of health care by, or under the direction or supervision of, a health care professional.
- (ii) The provision to an adult of relevant personal care.
- (iii) The provision by a social care worker of relevant social work to an adult who is a client or potential client.
- (iv) The provision of assistance in relation to general household matters to an adult who is in need of it by reason of age, illness or disability.
- (v) Any relevant assistance in the conduct of an adult's own affairs.
- (vi) The conveying by persons of a prescribed description in such circumstances as may be prescribed of adults who need to be conveyed by reason of age, illness or disability.
- (vii) Such activities –
 - Involving, or connected with, the provision of health care or relevant personal care to adults, and
 - Not falling within any of the above paragraphs, as are of a prescribed description.

Additional Information:

First Aid

- When any person administering the first aid is doing so on behalf of an organisation established for the purpose of providing first aid (e.g. St John Ambulance Service), it is regulated activity.
- A worker employed for another purpose who volunteers, or is designated, to be that organisation's first aider is not in regulated activity.

Creating the right context for Safeguarding

The Safeguarding Policy and procedures should be applied to all regulated activities undertaken within, or on behalf of, the Council.

Never leave children, young people or vulnerable adults with Employees, Volunteers or Councillors who do not have a satisfactory CRB check.

Allegations should always be investigated by the appropriate DSO or LSO; they should never go unchallenged, unrecorded and unreported.

Achieving good preparation for Regulated Activities

Activities should be planned to involve more than one person being present, in sight or hearing of others.

Where the nature of the activity does not facilitate the above then a record of circumstances should be maintained and others informed of location and proposed activities.

When organising and undertaking mixed gender activities, where possible, leadership should also be mixed gender.

Appropriate dress should be worn by all leaders and by those participating in proposed activities at all times.

Registers should be completed and attendees should be signed in and out (where under 8's are attending an activity they must be signed in and out by a parent/carer).

Where the use of photographic equipment (still photos or video) is involved in the activity the written permission of parents/carers must be obtained prior to the activity using a permission form.

Ensuring the right environment for Regulated Activities

In promoting the right environment for Regulated Activities set an example you would anticipate others following:

- Treat everyone with respect;
- Everyone should have the opportunity to participate equally;
- Favouritism should not be shown;
- Things of a personal nature, that individuals are able to do for themselves, should not be undertaken by anyone else;
- Where it is necessary to support the undertaking of things of a personal nature, for example toilet trips, this should be undertaken as a pair/group, or, first aid, where you can be seen.
- Inappropriate language should not be used;
- Attention seeking behaviour should be dealt with in a firm and fair manner;
- Sexually suggestive comments should not be made;
- Remember, even if your intentions are well intentioned they may be misinterpreted by someone else.

Avoiding allegations during Regulated Activities

A child, young person or vulnerable adult should never be restrained physically. The only exceptions to this are in order to:

- a) Prevent physical injury to either the individual or another person;
- b) Prevent damage to any property;
- c) Prevent an individual from committing a criminal offence.

Where transportation of a child, young person or vulnerable adult is unavoidable:

- a) Appropriate written consent from a parent or carer should be obtained;
- b) And use of your own car is unavoidable, appropriate insurance covering business use must be held;
- c) A valid CRB must be held;
- d) You should be accompanied by either an employee or councillor.

Where overnight accommodation is unavoidable a child, young person or vulnerable adult should never share accommodation with you and you should not allow them to stay at your home unsupervised.

Physical contact during activities should not be engaged in unless a clear explanation of the reasons is given.

Where an activity involves use of changing rooms, parents or carers should be encouraged to provide supervision.

In circumstances where children, young people or vulnerable adults need medication regularly a health care plan should be drawn up to ensure their safety and protection. With the permission of parents or carers children, young people or vulnerable adults should be encouraged to self administer medication or treatment including, for example any ointment, sun cream or use of inhalers.

If an employee is concerned or uncertain about the amount of medication being administered this should be discussed with their Line Manager at the earliest opportunity. When administering first aid, wherever possible, employees should ensure another member of staff is present, or aware of the action being taken. Parents and/or carers should always be informed when first aid has been administered and asked to sign the completed accident report form.

Summary of recommended Best Practice

Do:	Do not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Treat everyone with respect. • Provide an example you wish others to follow. • Plan activities with more than one other person present, or at least within sight or hearing of others. • Respect a young person or vulnerable adult's right to privacy. • Encourage young people and vulnerable adults to feel comfortable to point out attitudes or behaviour they do not like. • Avoid situations that compromise your relationship of trust. • Remember that someone else might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned. • Remember that caution is required in sensitive moments of counselling, such as when dealing with bullying, bereavement or abuse. • Ensure that all suspicions or allegations of abuse are reported and recorded. • Complete relevant accident/incident forms accurately and with as much detail as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Permit abusive initiation ceremonies or bullying etc. • Play physical contact games. • Have any inappropriate physical or verbal contact with others. • Jump to conclusions about others without checking facts first. • Show favouritism to any individual. • Rely on just your good name to protect you. • Believe 'it could never happen to me'. • Befriend a young person on Facebook or other social networking websites.

Appendix 6

Additional Activity Specific Safeguarding Policies and Procedures

Good practice for activities where parental supervision is not required

Where parents or carers are not required to remain with children, young people or vulnerable adults the following guidelines are, in addition to compliance with all other areas of this policy, to be followed:

- a) **Ratios** - comply with appropriate legal requirements / recommendations e.g. Ofsted, NGB etc.
- b) **Signing in and out** - the strict signing in and out procedure as laid out in this policy should be followed additionally if you are leading an activity you should be aware of the number, and names, of those you are expecting and how those taking part in the activity are getting home (i.e. on their own or being collected and if so by whom).
- c) **Photographs** - must not be taken by any individual (including the press) without obtaining the express and prior consent of parents using the HDC permission form (Appendix 7).
- d) **Introductions** - if you are leading an activity you must ensure that you introduce both yourself and your helpers ensuring you are instantly recognisable (in uniform) and that participants should come to you, as the leader, during the day if they have need of first aid or if they are not happy with part of the activity, or with the behaviour of someone else.
- e) **Set the scene** - you should make clear what is going to be happening, how, why and when. You should have a detailed plan of activities, supervise activities and ensure all activities are suitable, potentially dangerous equipment may require increased supervision by a competent person.
- f) **Explain** - to all participants that in order for everyone to have a good time unacceptable behaviour will not be tolerated (i.e. bullying, shouting, bad language, dangerous behaviour etc)
- g) **Excessive time** - must not be spent alone by staff and volunteers with children, young people and vulnerable adults, away from others. Doors should be left open if separating a group; where first aid is necessary, maintain a degree of privacy if necessary but have someone else with you. Where a participant requires escorting or asks for the toilet, do not go alone, and take more than one child. Participants should not be taken alone in a car, unless previous agreements have been made with the carer.
- h) **Physical contact** - should be avoided unless to treat an injury, prevent an injury or absolutely essential to the activity (e.g. holding the hand of a very young child on uneven ground). If a child is upset, reassurance may be appropriate; however this should be done in the open and in front of others.
- i) **Remember** - organisers are responsible for the participants once they are signed in and until they are collected by their parents/carers.
- j) **Collection** - where a participant is not collected within half an hour of the event end time relevant procedures should be followed.

Remember:

- a) Someone might misinterpret your actions, no matter how well intentioned.
- b) Adopt a common sense approach.
- c) Don't rely on your good name to protect you.
- d) Good practice will prevent false allegations against you.

Communications with children, young people and vulnerable adults

- a) In order to make best use of the many educational and social benefits of new technologies, children and vulnerable adults need opportunities to use and explore the digital world, using multiple devices from multiple locations. It is now recognised that that e-safety risks are posed more by behaviours and values than the technology itself.
- b) Electronic communication between children, young people and vulnerable adults and employees, by whatever method, should not take place under any circumstances. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs.
- c) Employees must not share any personal information with a child, young person or vulnerable adult. They must not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child / young person or vulnerable adult, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their job role.
- d) Employees should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.
- e) Employees should also be circumspect in their communications with children, young people and vulnerable adults so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give their personal contact details to any children, young people and vulnerable adults including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with the Manager and parents / carers.
- f) E-mail or text communications, including communications through internet based web sites, between an employee and a child, young person or vulnerable adult outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and/or criminal investigations.
- g) Employees should not establish or seek to establish social contact with children, young people and vulnerable adults for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If a child or vulnerable adult or parent seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her / his professional judgement in making a response.

There will be occasions when there are social contacts between children and vulnerable adults and staff, where for example the parent and employee are part of the same social circle. These contacts however, will be easily recognised and openly acknowledged.

Nevertheless, there must be awareness on the part of those working with children, young people and vulnerable adults that some social contacts, especially where these are not common knowledge can be misconstrued as being part a grooming process. This can also apply to social contacts made through outside interests or through the staff member's own family.

- h) It is recognised that staff can support a parent who may be in particular difficulty. Care needs to be exercised in those situations where the parent comes to depend upon the staff member for support outside their professional role. This situation should be discussed with the Manager and where necessary referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

Personal and Intimate Care

- a) Young people and vulnerable adults are entitled to respect and privacy at all times and especially when in a state of undress, changing clothes or undertaking any form of personal care. There are occasions where there will be a need for an appropriate level of supervision in order to safeguard young people and / or satisfy health and safety considerations. This supervision should be appropriate to the needs and age of the young people or vulnerable adult concerned and sensitive to the potential for embarrassment.
- b) Employees need to be vigilant about their own behaviour, ensure they follow agreed guidelines and be mindful of the needs of the children and vulnerable adults with whom they work.
- c) Some job responsibilities necessitate intimate physical contact with children on a regular basis, for example assisting young children with toileting, providing intimate care for children or vulnerable adults with disabilities or in the provision of medical care. The nature, circumstances and context of such contact should comply with professional codes of practice or guidance and / or be part of a formally agreed plan, which is regularly reviewed. The additional vulnerabilities that may arise from a physical or learning disability should be taken into account and be recorded as part of an agreed care plan. The emotional responses of any child or vulnerable adult to intimate care should be carefully and sensitively observed, and where necessary, any concerns passed to the Manager and parents / carers.
- d) All children and vulnerable adults have a right to safety, privacy and dignity when contact of a physical or intimate nature is required and depending on their abilities, age and maturity should be encouraged to act as independently as possible.
- e) The views of the child or vulnerable adult should be actively sought, wherever possible, when drawing up and reviewing formal arrangements. As with all individual arrangements for intimate care needs, agreements between the child, young person, vulnerable adult, parents / carers and Manager must be negotiated and recorded.

Advice and Support

Recruiting to Posts

Line Managers will review the role profile before recruiting to identify whether the post involves regulated activities. Where this is the case:

- a) Applicants will be sent a copy of the Safeguarding Policy as part of the application pack and the following additional information will be sought as part of the application process;
- b) The applicants consent to a CRB check being undertaken will be obtained;
- c) At least two references that comment on the applicants previous experience of, and suitability for working with children, young people and vulnerable adults (please refer to HR).

Working with Contractors and Partner Organisations

Any contractor or sub-contractor, engaged by the Council in regulated activities should:

- a) Have a Safeguarding Children, Young People and Vulnerable Adults Policy of their own;
- b) Agree, in the absence of a policy of their own, to comply with the terms of this policy;

This applies to all contracts, even those not requiring a formal tender.

Hiring of HDC Facilities

Where HDC facilities are hired to external groups the hirer will need to:

- a) Have a suitable safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults policy or agree to work to HDC's policy;
- b) Comply with the NGB Coach/Pupil Ratios or in absence of this with Social Services Coach/Pupil Ratios;
- c) Undertake risk assessments for individual activities.

And where specified by the HDC facility management:

- d) Have membership of a National Governing Body (NGB) or similarly recognised body;
- e) Have public liability insurance (£5million minimum);
- f) Maintain a register of participants including any medical conditions.

Using Volunteers

- a) Activities can be led by volunteers however if the activity falls within the parameters of a regulated activity then the requirements of the Recruitment and Selection Policy must be met as detailed above.
- b) The recruiting Manager is responsible for ensuring all volunteers are subject to the necessary checks.

Appendix 7

Details of Areas of Specific Responsibility

Lead Safeguarding Officer:

- a) Will have overall responsibility for safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults on behalf of HDC and be HDC's representative on the LSCB.
- b) Will be a first point of contact for HDC on issues relating to safeguarding children, young people or vulnerable adults for members of the public and other external contacts.
- c) Will maintain an up to date list of Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSO's) within HDC, and of local contacts who can provide specialist advice on safeguarding and contacts for Social Care and the Police.
- d) Will ensure all relevant information is communicated to DSO's.
- e) Will initiate a review of the Safeguarding Policy at least once every 3 years or when major change in the organisation or in relevant legislation occurs.

Human Resources:

- a) Will, through recruitment and selection processes, ensure CRB checks and references for all Employees, Volunteers (One Leisure, SALT and Countryside Services submit their own volunteer CRB applications) and Councillors (Democratic Services submit Councillor CRB applications) involved in HDC regulated activities are completed prior to taking up the post.
- b) Managers must inform HR (OWD) of any safeguarding training needs of employees at commencement of employment and on an ongoing basis.
- c) Will maintain a record of all employees that have completed a CRB check and are considered suitable for work involving substantial access to children, young people or vulnerable adults in consultation with the Lead Safeguarding Officer.
- d) Will ensure that CRB checks and references are kept secure and confidential.
- e) When a trace is disclosed on a CRB disclosure during the recruitment process, HR will take responsibility with the Head of Service to undertake a risk assessment if the recruiting manager wishes to continue with the employment of the candidate.
- f) When a conviction is disclosed on a CRB check during the recruitment process, HR will take responsibility with the Head of Service to undertake the appropriate Objective Assessment if the recruiting manager wishes to continue with the employment of the candidate.

Democratic Services:

- a) Will maintain a record of all Councillors that have completed a CRB check and ensure CRB checks are undertaken in line with current best practice as agreed by HDC for each term of office.
- b) Will ensure Councillors are aware of, understand and act in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy and guidance.
- c) Will include appropriate training in the Member Training Programme.

Heads of Service:

- a) Will determine posts that require a CRB prior to commencement of employment.
- b) Are responsible for the distribution of the Safeguarding Policy to Service Managers.
- c) Will ensure that all appropriate procedures and related guidance are implemented.
- d) When a trace is disclosed on a CRB disclosure, the Head of Service will be responsible for undertaking a risk assessment, advised by HR.
- e) When a conviction is disclosed on a CRB check, the Head of Service will undertake the appropriate Objective Assessment, advised by HR.

Managers:

- a) Are responsible for making sure that all employees are aware of, understand and act in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy and related guidance.
- b) Must inform HR (OWD) of any safeguarding training needs of employees at commencement of employment and on an ongoing basis.
- c) Must make sure that any contractors, agents or other representatives, whom they engage to undertake regulated activities are aware of, understand and act in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy and related guidance.
- d) Are responsible for ensuring that all employees that require a CRB disclosure to undertake their employment complete the CRB Self Declaration (Appendix 10) on 1st April and 1st October of each year.

Managers of Employees with Zero Hour Variable Contracts:

- a) Will, through recruitment and selection processes, ensure CRB checks and references for all zero hour variable contracted employees and volunteers involved in regulated activities are completed prior to commencement of Employment.
- b) Are responsible for making sure that all employees are aware of, understand and act in accordance with the Safeguarding Policy and related guidance.
- c) Will ensure that safeguarding training is part of the induction programme for all new employees having close and regular access or working within HDC regulated activities.

Designated Safeguarding Officers:

- a) Will provide a point of contact for Employees, Volunteers and Councillors who want advice regarding concerns about safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults or take forward a disclosure.
- b) Will deal with incident referral forms, deciding whether further action is necessary and advising the referrer of the action taken.
- c) Will provide a point of contact with all appropriate external contact(s).
- d) Within **One Leisure** only, a delegated officer will provide a single point of contact with external contacts.

All Employees, Volunteers and Councillors:

- a) Have a responsibility to protect children, young people and vulnerable adults, and report abuse without delay to the appropriate person.
- b) Should be aware of and act in accordance with this Safeguarding Policy and related guidance.
- c) Should not begin any regulated activity prior to satisfactory completion of the HDC recruitment and selection process and CRB checks.
- d) Should attend appropriate safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults training if their HDC Role Profile requires CRB check.

- e) Should be aware of appropriate and inappropriate behaviour for employees, volunteers and councillors in charge of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- f) Should know who their Designated Safeguarding Officer is.
- g) Have a responsibility to inform their manager (or the HDC LSO) of any allegation of abuse.
- h) That require a CRB disclosure to undertake their employment must complete the CRB Self Declaration (Appendix 10) on 1st April and 1st October of each year.

Appendix 8

Communication with children, young people and vulnerable adults (including the Use of Technology)

In order to make best use of the many educational and social benefits of new technologies, vulnerable groups including children need opportunities to use and explore the digital world, using multiple devices from multiple locations. It is now recognised that e.safety risks are posed more by behaviours and values than the technology itself.

Electronic communication between vulnerable groups including children and employees, by whatever method, should not take place under any circumstances. This includes the wider use of technology such as mobile phones text messaging, e-mails, digital cameras, videos, web-cams, websites and blogs. Employees must not share any personal information with an individual from any vulnerable groups including children. They must not request, or respond to, any personal information from an individual from any vulnerable groups including children, other than that which might be appropriate as part of their professional role. Employees should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.

Employees should also be circumspect in their communications with an individual from any vulnerable groups including children so as to avoid any possible misinterpretation of their motives or any behaviour which could be construed as grooming. They should not give their personal contact details to an individual from any vulnerable groups including children including e-mail, home or mobile telephone numbers, unless the need to do so is agreed with an HDC Manager and parents / carers. E-mail or text communications between an employee and an individual from any vulnerable groups including children outside agreed protocols may lead to disciplinary and / or criminal investigations. This also includes communications through internet based web sites.

Internal e-mail systems should only be used in accordance with HDC policy.

Further information can be obtained from <http://www.becta.org.uk/>.

This means that employees should:

- *ensure that personal social networking sites are set at private and no individual from any vulnerable groups including children are listed as approved contacts.*
- *never use or access social networking sites of any individual from any vulnerable groups including children.*
- *not give their personal contact details to any individual from any vulnerable groups including children;, including their mobile telephone number.*
- *only use equipment e.g. mobile phones, provided by HDC to communicate with any individual from any vulnerable groups including children making sure that parents have given permission for this form of communication to be used.*
- *only make contact with any individual from any vulnerable groups including children for professional reasons and in accordance with any HDC policy.*
- *recognise that text messaging should only be used as part of an agreed protocol and when other forms of communication are not possible.*
- *not use internet or web-based communication channels to send personal messages to any individual from any vulnerable groups including children..*

Social Contact

Employees should not establish or seek to establish social contact with any individual from any vulnerable groups including children for the purpose of securing a friendship or to pursue or strengthen a relationship. If any individual from any vulnerable groups including children seeks to establish social contact, or if this occurs coincidentally, the member of staff should exercise her / his professional judgement in making a response. There will be occasions when there are social contacts between an individual from vulnerable groups including children and staff, where for example the parent and employee are part of the same social circle. These contacts however, will be easily recognised and openly acknowledged.

Nevertheless, there must be awareness on the part of those working with vulnerable groups including children that some social contacts, especially where these are not common knowledge can be misconstrued as being part a grooming process. This can also apply to social contacts made through outside interests or through the staff member's own family.

It is recognised that staff can support a parent who may be in particular difficulty. Care needs to be exercised in those situations where the parent comes to depend upon the staff member for support outside their professional role. This situation should be discussed with an HDC Manager and where necessary referrals made to the appropriate support agency.

This means that employees should:

- *have no secret social contact with any individual from any vulnerable groups including children or their parents.*
- *consider the appropriateness of the social contact according to their role and nature of their work.*
- *always approve any planned social contact with any individual from any vulnerable groups including children or parents with an HDC Manager.*
- *advise an HDC Manager of any social contact they have with any individual from any vulnerable groups including or a parent with who whom they work, which may give rise to concern.*
- *report and record any situation, which may place an individual from any vulnerable groups including children at risk or which may compromise HDC or their own professional standing.*
- *be aware that the sending of personal communications such as birthday or faith cards should always be recorded and / or discussed with an HDC Manager.*
- *understand that some communications may be called into question and need to be justified.*

Photography and Videos

Working with any vulnerable groups including children may involve the taking or recording of images. Any such work should take place with due regard to the law and the need to safeguard the privacy, dignity, safety and well being of individuals from vulnerable groups including children. Informed written consent from parents or carers and agreement, where possible, from an individual from any vulnerable groups including children, should always be sought before an image is taken for any purpose.

Careful consideration should be given as to how activities involving the taking of images are organised and undertaken. Care should be taken to ensure that all parties understand the implications of the image being taken especially if it is to be used for any publicity purposes

or published in the media, or on the Internet. There also needs to be an agreement as to whether the images will be destroyed or retained for further use, where these will be stored and who will have access to them.

Employees need to remain sensitive to any individual from any vulnerable groups including children who appear uncomfortable, for whatever reason, and should recognise the potential for such activities to raise concerns or lead to misunderstandings.

It is not appropriate for employees to take photographs of any individual from any vulnerable groups including children for their personal use.

It is recommended that when using a photograph the following guidance should be followed:

- If the photograph is used, avoid naming the child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- If the child, young person or vulnerable adult is named, avoid using their photograph.
- The HDC Manager should establish whether the image will be retained for further use.
- Images should be securely stored and used only by those authorised to do so.

This means that employees should:

- *be clear about the purpose of the activity and about what will happen to the images when the activity is concluded;*
- *be able to justify images of children, young people or vulnerable adults in their possession;*
- *avoid making images in one to one situations or which show a single child, young person or vulnerable adult with no surrounding context;*
- *ensure the child, young person or vulnerable adult understands why the images are being taken and has agreed to the activity and that they are appropriately dressed;*
- *only use equipment provided or authorised by HDC;*
- *report any concerns about any inappropriate or intrusive photographs found;*
- *always ensure they have parental permission to take and / or display photographs.*

This means that employees should not:

- *display or distribute images of children, young people or vulnerable adults unless they have consent to do so from parents / carers;*
- *use images which may cause distress;*
- *use mobile telephones or any other similar devices to take images of children, young people or vulnerable adults;*
- *take images 'in secret', or taking images in situations that may be construed as being secretive.*

Access to Inappropriate Images and Internet Usage

There are no circumstances that will justify employees possessing indecent images of children. Employees who access and possess links to such websites will be viewed as a significant and potential threat to children. Accessing, making and storing indecent images of children is illegal. This will lead to criminal investigation and the individual being barred from working with children, if proven.

Employees should not use equipment belonging to HDC to access pornography; neither should personal equipment containing these images or links to them be brought into the workplace. This will raise serious concerns about the suitability of the employee to continue to work with children and / or vulnerable adults.

Employees should ensure that children, young people and vulnerable adults are not exposed to any inappropriate images or web links.

Where indecent images of children or other unsuitable material are found, the police and Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) should be immediately informed. Employees should not attempt to investigate the matter or evaluate the material themselves, as this may lead to evidence being contaminated which in itself can lead to a criminal prosecution.

This means that HDC should:

- *have clear e-safety policies in place about access to and use of the internet;*
- *make guidance available to both employees, children, young people and vulnerable adults about appropriate usage.*

This means that employees should:

- *follow HDC's guidance on the use of IT equipment;*
- *ensure that children, young people or vulnerable adults are not exposed to unsuitable material on the internet;*
- *ensure that any films or material shown to children, young people and vulnerable adults are age appropriate.*

Appendix 9

Self Declaration for Contractors Engaged in Work on Behalf of HDC

Name of Contractor:

.....

I have read and understand the Council's Safeguarding Policy and agree to abide by the procedures as set out in the document.

I confirm that I/we have in place a Safeguarding Policy that is available to view on request.

I confirm that all workers engaged by the above named contractor and who are likely to come in to contact with children, young people or vulnerable adults have been subject to the appropriate level of Criminal Records Bureau check as defined by the Criminal Records Bureau guidance.

Signature:

Name:

Position:

Date:

NB: Huntingdonshire District Council reserves the right to investigate the validity of the above declaration.

Appendix 10



CRB Self Declaration Form

(This form can be accessed via the intranet)

All HDC employees working with / or in contact with vulnerable people including children, must complete this form if one of the following reasons apply:

- If the service of an HDC employee is broken for a period longer than one month but less than twelve months, the employee will be required to complete this form for each period of time exceeding one month.
- All HDC employees that require a CRB disclosure to undertake their employment, will be required to complete this form on 1st April and 1st October of each year.

PLEASE RETURN THE FORM TO YOUR LINE MANAGER UPON COMPLETION

CONFIDENTIAL

1 Have you ever been convicted of a criminal offence or been the subject of a Caution or Bound Over Order?

YES YES (please tick)

If 'YES' please state the nature and date(s) of the offence(s):

2 Have you ever been subject to any disciplinary action or sanctions relating to child or vulnerable adult abuse?

YES YES (please tick)

If 'YES' please give details:

3 You are required to self-certify that:

- i. You have never been disqualified or prohibited from working with vulnerable people including children;
- ii. You are not known to ANY social services department as being an actual or potential risk to vulnerable people including children;
- iii. You have not been disqualified or prohibited from fostering vulnerable people including children;
- iv. You have not had any rights or powers in respect of any vulnerable people including children vested in you assumed by a local authority;
- v. You have not had a child or vulnerable adult ordered to be removed from your care.

Please complete the following in BLOCK CAPITALS:

Signed: Date:

Full Name:

Any surname previously known by:

Address:

..... Postcode:

Date of Birth: Place of Birth:

You are advised that under the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 as amended by the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Amendments) 1986, you should declare all convictions (including spent convictions).

HDC reserves the right to carry out checks to verify the information given on this form that may include the local authority social services department or police records. You may be subject to disciplinary action if any information is found to be false.

MANAGERS only:

If a disclosure is made by an employee, it is the responsibility of the employee's Manager to alert Human Resources and the Head of Service immediately. A risk assessment will then be carried out to determine whether there are any implications for continued employment.

Appendix 11



LOGGING A CONCERN ABOUT A CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON'S SAFETY & WELFARE

Name and address of setting:		
Child's Name:	Date of Birth:	Male / Female:
Today's Date;	Time:	
Your Name (BLOCK CAPITALS):	Your Signature:	
Your Role:		
Date of Concern / Incident:	Time of Concern / Incident:	
(continue overleaf if necessary)		

(Check to make sure your report is clear now and will also be clear to someone reading it next year)

(continuation)

Action taken:

Received by: Designated Safeguarding Officer

Date: Time:

Proposed action by the Designated Safeguarding Officer:

.....

Appendix 12



LOGGING A CONCERN ABOUT A VULNERABLE ADULT'S SAFETY & WELFARE

Vulnerable Adult Details:

Name:

Address:

.....

Date of Birth: Male Female

Ethnicity:

GP Name & Address:

.....

Responsible Authority:

Is the vulnerable adult self funding? Yes No

Does the alleged victim / adult at risk have capacity to consent to this referral?

Yes No Not Known

If the alleged victim / adult at risk does not have mental capacity there will be a need to consider the criteria for using an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA), if appropriate.

Please describe any additional needs the vulnerable adult has (e.g. sensory loss, dementia, communication, language, physical disability, etc) that should be taken into account of:

Mental Capacity and Consent of the Vulnerable Adults

Consider mental capacity and consent: The mental capacity and wishes of the vulnerable person will always be a factor when deciding on the course of action you may take. In determining this action, consideration must be given to the likely risk to others and the potential for re-offending to take place if the matter is not formally dealt with.

Referral Details:

Name:

Designation:

Establishment:

Contact Number:

Time / Date 'Referral' form completed:

Incident Details:

Date of Incident:

Type of Alleged Abuse:

Discriminatory institutional

Domestic Abuse & Violence Neglect

Emotional / Psychological Physical

Financial Sexual

For Completion by Line Manager / Supervisor:

Other Action Taken (To include any emergency medical treatment provided; evidence preserved; action taken to prevent further abuse)

Details of alleged perpetrator(s) involved if abuse is suspected:

(Please complete as much of this as is known)

Name:

Home Address:

..... Postcode:

Date of Birth: Male Female

Occupation / Position / Title:

Is this person known / related to the individual who is the subject of this concern, if so please describe relationship:

.....

.....

Are they aware of this alert: Yes No

Initial Action Taken:

Has a referral been made to Cambridgeshire Direct?

Yes No

If there is immediate danger / harm, have the police been called?

Yes No

Has the Care Quality Commission been notified?

Yes No

Has evidence been preserved?

Yes No

Has a body map been filled out?

Yes No

Please give details:

.....
.....

Additional Information and Comments *(For use of Line Manager and / or Supervisor ONLY)*

Fact and opinion should be clearly differentiated

Signed:

Position:

Date:

Please forward the completed form to Cambridgeshire Direct:

Email: referral.centre-adults@cambridgehsire.gov.uk

Tele. No.: 0345 045 5202

Where appropriate, please attach any additional information such as body map etc.

Details of this referral must be referred to your line manager without delay.

Appendix 13

Huntingdonshire District Council - Useful Contacts Summary

Lead Safeguarding Officer (LSO)	Chris Davidson (One Leisure)	01480 387801 / 07725 310136
One Leisure Delegated Officer	Chris Davidson	01480 387801 / 07725 310136
Designated Safeguarding Officers (DSOs)	<p>One Leisure:</p> <p>Jon Clarke</p> <p>Pete Corley</p> <p>Paul France</p> <p>Sport & Active Lifestyles:</p> <p>Jo Peadon</p> <p>Martin Grey (non DSO)</p> <p>Countryside Services:</p> <p>Alison Gray</p> <p>Judith Arnold</p>	<p>01480 388505 / 07810 637550</p> <p>01480 388269 / 07810 637556</p> <p>01480 388705 / 07919 110009</p> <p>01480 388048</p> <p>01480 388244</p> <p>01480 451568 / 07944 205839</p> <p>01480 451568 / 07810 637547</p>

Useful External Contacts:

NSPCC Child Person Protection Helpline	Western House 42 Curtain Road London, EC2A 3NH	020 7825 2500 Helpline: 0808 800 5000 www.nspc.org
Child, Young Person or Vulnerable Adult UK	Freepost 1111 London, N1 0BR	0200 1111 www.childyoungpersonorvulnerableadultline.org
Sports Coach UK	114 Cardigan Road Headingley, Leeds, LS6 3BJ	
UK Council for child internet safety (UKCCIS)		0870 000 2288
Cambridgeshire Area LSCB	LSCB Administrator 7 The Meadows Meadow Lane St Ives Cambs, PE27 4LG	01480 376699 www.cambslscb.org.uk
Cambridgeshire Constabulary		Emergency - 999 24 non-emergency - 0845 4564564
Cambridgeshire Children's Team Contact Centre	Buttsgrove Centre 38 Buttsgrove Way Oxmoor Huntingdon, PE29 1LY	0345 045 5203 Out of hours emergency number: 01733 234724
Vulnerable Persons (Adult Safeguarding concerns)	Cambridgeshire Health & Social Care Services @ Cambridgeshire Direct Adult Safeguarding Manager	0345 045 5202 (choose - Adult Social Services) 01223 715576

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CABINET

13 DECEMBER 2012

UPDATE - 2013/14 BUDGET AND MTP (Report by the Head of Financial Services)

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To enable Cabinet to consider those areas where the Council has enough information to make preliminary decisions in relation to the 2013/14 Budget and the updated MTP.
- 1.2 To update Cabinet on the latest position on various issues which will require decision in the February cycle of meetings.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council would normally expect to have enough information by the time this report was prepared in November to consider a final draft of the following year's budget and future MTP. However this year there are a number of very significant changes which have led to a later date for the Government announcement of the key financial data required.
- 2.2 The outlook appears to be bleak because a briefing paper for the LGA Executive Committee refers to additional grant funding cuts for local government of £1bn and that "in some authorities it appears possible that new cuts could amount to more than 10% of core funding from government". The Council's current plan is based on a reduction of 4.9% in cash terms, which is over 7% in real terms.
- 2.3 The Chancellor's "Autumn" statement is programmed for the 5 December and the details of the financial impact for individual local authorities may not be announced until 19 December and there has even been a recent suggestion that some of the information will be issued on 24 December.

- 2.4 This report therefore concentrates on the following topics:

Section 3

Service budgets including new MTP bids and variations to existing bids. This also includes commentary on the significant changes and any areas where further savings proposals are still being considered for this year or future years.

Section 4

Current proposals and the estimated impact of the changes from Council Tax Benefit to Council Tax Subsidy

Section 5

Retention of business rates – latest position

Section 6

New Homes Bonus – latest forecast

Section 7

Council Tax level – Secretary of State’s proposed limitation and reward grant.

Section 8

Inflation and Interest Rates – Current proposals.

3 SERVICE BUDGETS

- 3.1 Annex A shows the current year’s budget together with the proposals for the next 5 years for both capital and revenue items. At the start of each Head of Service’s section there is a commentary highlighting the most significant aspects and referring to any further savings areas being considered.
- 3.2 **It is important to note that there are still many adjustments to be made and so the variations at the bottom line of the annex are NOT a reliable indication of what the final Budget/MTP, to be presented in February, will be.**
- 3.3 The Council has already achieved significant savings and made improvements to its forecasting over the years. In February 2007 the 2013/14 budget was forecast at £31.2M with a savings target of £6.3M to get it down to £24.9M. This report is based on a figure of £22.8M.

4 COUNCIL TAX SUBSIDY

- 4.1 A separate report on your agenda deals with the approval of the scheme which the Council intend to apply for 2013/14. The table below summarises the impact of that proposal for 2013/14.

Impact on the Collection Fund

Benefit Subsidy changes	£737k
Council Tax Reforms	- £814k
Net	-£77k

Impact on Huntingdonshire

Share of above total	£31k
Loss of overpayment subsidy	£100k
Extra collection costs	£40k
Loss of admin subsidy	£30k
Cost of extra payments via post office	£25k
Total HDC Impact	£226k

- 4.2 There is a potential further increase in 2014/15 due to the loss of fraud team funding and extra preparation and software costs this year which will, at least partly, be met from grant.
- 4.3 These figures are still liable to change due to alterations in the basic scheme when it is finalised, the Government's final announcement on grant levels and the level of Council Tax rises for this Council and all precepting authorities.

5. RETENTION OF BUSINESS RATES

- 5.1 The Council agreed to support pooling of business rates subject to a final review once the government's proposed starting data is made available. The critical aspects are whether the starting base appears to a fair and realistic position, whether there might be any significant impact from appeals etc. that are yet to be resolved and, most importantly, what levels of business rates growth (outside the enterprise zone) are anticipated for each authority.
- 5.2 A conference of the relevant planning, economic development and finance staff is planned for early December so that each Council will be better able to respond promptly to whether they wish to stay in the pool when the final Government figures are known later in December.

6. NEW HOMES BONUS

- 6.1 The table below shows the funding included in the approved MTP and the current best forecast of the figure for 2013/14 assuming the rate per property is frozen at the 2012/13 level. There could be a small addition if the Government were to allow any inflation. It also shows an increase in later years because experience is showing that, on average, the homes being built are at a higher Council Tax band than originally assumed.
- 6.2 The risk provision includes a sum of £96k per year for the possible non achievement of this year's target. This has therefore been removed.

- 6.3 Forecast numbers built for future years have not been adjusted at this stage because they are based on the planning profile which is currently under review and should be available in early December. There are two risks for the Council. Firstly that growth is slower than forecast and secondly that the Government will have to reduce Formula Grant to fully fund the New Homes Bonus. Some provision for this is included in the current Risk provision which will be reviewed in finalising the February budget report.

NEW HOMES BONUS	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000
Approved MTP	-2,857	-3,704	-4,845	-6,095	-6,452
Draft Budget	-2,909	-3,791	-4,979	-6,281	-6,686
Removal of 2013/14 risk provision	-96	-96	-96	-96	-96
VARIATION (- = better)	-148	-183	-230	-282	-330

7. COUNCIL TAX LEVEL

- 7.1 The Secretary of State has proposed that the Council Tax level that will be allowed without a positive referendum result will be 2% for 2013/14. He has also offered a 1% reward grant for one year for any authority that makes no increase.
- 7.2 Obviously this is significantly less than the 3.5% per year increase that Council approved in the current plan.
- 7.3 The Leader met with Baroness Hanham at DCLG with a proposal that any limitation be based on the average Council Tax level for that class of authority so as not to benefit those already with a high tax level and disadvantage those with a low level like Huntingdonshire. Until the formal announcement is made it will not be clear whether this proposal was successful.
- 7.4 The table below shows the impact of various options compared with the current planned Council Tax increases of 3.5% per year. Any decision on Council Tax level needs to be left until February when we have all the Government financial data.

EXTRA SPENDING REDUCTIONS REQUIRED	MTP			
	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000
VARIATIONS FROM approved 3.5% Council Tax rise per year				
2% in 2013/14 then 3.5% per year	-100	-89	-78	-78
2% for three years and then 3%	-100	-193	-294	-343
2.6% for three years then 3.8% in 2016/17**	-60	-109	-165	-147
No rise in 2013/14 and then 3.5% per	-156	-152	-226	-234

Notes

Changes in Council Tax levels will now have an impact on the cost to the Council of Council Tax benefit support. These have been taken into account in a simplified manner in the table above.

*** Approximates to 2% and then 3% of average District Council.*

7.5 The exemplifications in section 10 of this report are based on 2% for 2013/14 and then reverting to 3.5% per year but this does not preclude other decisions in February.

8. INFLATION AND INTEREST RATES

CURRENT ASSUMPTIONS

(subject to review before February report)

INFLATION	for Apr 2013	for Apr 2014	for Apr 2015	for Apr 2016	for Apr 2017
<i>Pay award and Performance Pay ##</i>	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
<i>Prices</i>	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
<i>electricity</i>	6.0%	13.0%	6.0%	13%	6%
<i>gas</i>	19.0%	8.0%	11.0%	8.0%	11.0%
<i>fuel</i>	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%	5.0%
<i>car park charges \$\$</i>					
<i>planning fees</i>				10%	

see para 8.1 onwards

\$\$ see the Budget Commentary relating to Operations Division.(Annex A)

INTEREST RATES	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018
Temporary Borrowing	0.3%	0.4%	0.4%	0.76%	1.2%
Temporary Investments	0.7%	0.6%	0.6%	0.86%	1.3%
PWLB 20 year borrowing	3.63%	3.73%	3.8%	4.05%	4.3%

8.1 Members will be aware that a Pay Review is underway that is ensuring the robustness of the job evaluation system and scores for each post before considering changes to the number of grades and how long each grade will be. The final step will be to link this to pay levels that ensure the Council can continue to retain and attract good employees.

8.2 This work will not be completed until next year and so it is impossible to forecast any financial implications in relation to future provision for performance pay at this stage.

- 8.3 Although a 2% pay award has been agreed for April 2013 and that there will be no performance pay there will still need to be provision for more than 2% in the budget as it is normal practice to provide an element of protection to any staff who might have their pay reduced whilst immediately paying any increases to those staff affected. The pay assumption has therefore been reduced to 2% but an allowance has been made in the risk section for potential cost of protection, increases for changes to pay scales and future performance pay.
- 8.4 It is important to recognise that the provision of any particular sum in the MTP is not intended to imply or constrain the normal negotiation process for pay awards.
- 8.5 A full review of these figures can be undertaken once the review is completed, consultation has been concluded and the changes implemented next year.

9. TIMETABLE FOR BUDGET APPROVAL

- 9.1 The key dates in the process are shown below:

December	This Update Report
6	Overview & Scrutiny
13	Cabinet
19	Council
February	Final Budget, MTP and Council Tax Level for 2013/14
7	Overview & Scrutiny
14	Cabinet
20	Council

10. CURRENT POSITION

10.1 Starting Point

All of the MTP new items and variations have been identified and included in this paper. Provisional assumptions have been made on inflation and interest rates. The latest assessment of the current year's outturn has been included. **If the need to provide for uncertain risks was totally ignored** the Council would have a very positive position. The drawing on reserves would fall away without any additional savings being necessary. In addition, extra spending and/or reductions in future planned Council Tax increases could be considered. The table below exemplifies such a situation.

WITHOUT RISK PROVISION	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000
Total Spending	22,013	22,514	22,817	21,899	22,671
Use of Reserves	-1,729	-1,607	-307		
Unidentified Savings	0	0	0		
Available for extra spending or Council Tax reductions				1,206	1,542

10.2 Key Risks

However many risks remain. The biggest ones are:

- Reductions in central government grant funding for 2013/14 (available for February report).
- Reductions in central government grant funding for subsequent years (**may** be some narrowing of uncertainty by February).
- Final information on new Council Tax support scheme and levels of Government Subsidy (details of position for 2013/14 available for February but impact of the economy on applicant growth or reduction far from certain).
- Result of introduction of “Localisation of Business Rates” (a clearer position of some aspects by February but continued uncertainty on business rate variations especially in the light of the Enterprise Zone which is excluded).
- Position on New Homes Bonus will only be confirmed a year at a time plus some uncertainty about the long term continuation of the scheme.
- Implications of Pay Review on need for protection and provision for performance pay (details will emerge during 2013/14). The economic situation will also impact on future levels of pay award needed to ensure the Council can attract and retain good employees.
- Achievement of existing identified savings e.g. car park charge increases in 2015 and 2017.
- Impact of housing growth on the need to increase the volume of services provided.
- Impact of the economic situation particularly on income levels and the costs of homelessness.

10.3 The MTP has been adjusted to reflect some changes consequent on other adjustments or where the picture is clearer but otherwise no revisions have been made particularly on the grant situation. The items currently proposed are as follows:

CURRENT RISK PROVISION	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000
Reductions in grant	398	501	608	713	713
Business Rates Growth		-86	-177	-272	-372
New Homes – slower completions		85	199	324	360
Demographic Growth		101	203	315	316
Car Park Charges	50	60	150	160	200
MMI Drawdown		140			
Pay – Protection and Performance	320	640	960	1,300	1,600
Total	768	1,441	1,943	2,540	2,817

10.4 Given the likelihood of some significant elements of uncertainty beginning to clarify either by February or during 2013/14 the critical question at this stage is whether the risk provision for 2013/14 is excessive as it will directly influence any decisions on what further savings are required.

10.5 The LGA quote in paragraph 2.2 above suggests that the likelihood is that the risk level shown in the risk table above in relation to Government Grant reductions may well not be sufficient, especially in 2013/14.

10.6 Impact on the use of reserves and unidentified savings

The position including the risk proposals in section 10.3 above is shown below:

ILLUSTRATIVE SUMMARY	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000
Total Spending					
Before risk provision	22,014	21,375	21,689	21,899	22,671
Risk Provision	768	1,441	1,943	2,540	2,817
Total	22,782	22,816	23,632	24,439	25,488
Use of Reserves	-2,498	-1,909	-1,122	0	0
Unidentified Savings (-)					
Approved MTP	-337	-550	-616	-891	-846
Variation (+ = better)	+337	-564	-463	-370	-355
Potential Requirement	0	-1,114	-1,079	-1,261	-1,201

A summary giving further information is attached at Annex B

10.7 If no further savings can be identified in advance for 2013/14 then this table shows £2,498k of reserves being used. This is £544k more than assumed in the current MTP. (The figures for subsequent years have not changed). If the previous assumption were to be retained then this level of savings would need prompt

identification and agreement ready for inclusion in the February report.

10.8 Attempts could be made during 2013/14 to make savings in advance of the 2014/15 target. Members should consider their timetable for determining savings.

10.9 As already referred to earlier in the report, this position will change, possibly significantly, when the final elements of information are received in December. Therefore the figures must be regarded as **PURELY ILLUSTRATIVE** at this stage.

10.4 It is important that the Council focuses on the items that are relevant at this stage. The most significant aspects are:

- Agreement or otherwise of any optional variations in Annex A.
- Confirmation or otherwise of the retained target for car park charges (commentary pages for Operations in Annex A)
- Identification of any further acceptable savings that should be introduced anyway, or if there is any significant worsening of the situation emerging by February.

11.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is requested to:

Note the contents of this report

Consider any comments from the Overview & Scrutiny (Economic Well-being) Panel meeting on 6 December.

Determine any recommendations or comments it wishes to make to Council

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985

Source Documents:

Working papers in Financial Services

Financial Forecast (September 2012), 2011/12 Outturn, 2012/13 Revenue Budget and the 2013/17 MTP

Project Appraisals

Contact Officer: Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services ☎ 01480 388103

ANNEXS

A Controllable Budgets by Manager (separate document)

B Illustrative Summary

ILLUSTRATIVE SUMMARY	FORECAST 2012/13	BUDGET 2013/14	MTP			
			2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
2012/13 BUDGET/MTP	21,722	22,299	22,842	23,611	24,365	25,363
Proposed variations	199	483	-26	21	74	125
NEW FORECAST	21,921	22,782	22,816	23,632	24,439	25,488
FUNDING						
Use of revenue reserves	-2,747	-2,498	-1,909	-1,122	0	0
Remaining revenue reserves EOY	10,902	8,404	6,495	5,373	5,373	5,373
New Homes Grant	-1,913	-2,909	-3,791	-4,979	-6,281	-6,686
Special Council Tax Grant 2011/12	-184	-184	-184			
Formula Grant (RSG)	-9,288	-9,235	-8,630	-8,846	-9,067	-9,294
Collection Fund Deficit	-63					
Council Tax	-7,727	-7,955	-8,302	-8,685	-9,091	-9,508
COUNCIL TAX LEVEL	£128.51	£131.08	£135.67	£140.42	£145.33	£150.42
% increase	3.50%	2.00%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%
£ increase	£4.34	£2.57	£4.59	£4.75	£4.91	£5.09

Unidentified Spending Adjustments still required	0	0	-1,114	-1,079	-1,261	-1,201
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Forecast Capital Spending	7,278	8,720	2,789	3,647	3,866	3,967
Permitted capital borrowing EOY net of MRP	28,056	35,371	36,407	37,934	39,421	40,618
Average net borrowing in year	12,768	22,305	28,684	31,482	33,550	34,891
Net Interest and Borrowing Costs						
- total	827	1,485	2,053	2,431	2,792	3,302
- as % of total net spending	4%	7%	9%	10%	11%	13%

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
CABINET
COUNCIL**

**6 DECEMBER 2012
13 DECEMBER 2012
19 DECEMBER 2012**

**TREASURY MANAGEMENT
REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE: 6 Monthly Review
(Report by the Head of Financial Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In February the Council adopted the latest edition of the *CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice*, which requires full Council to approve a treasury management strategy before the start of each financial year and to receive a mid-year report and an annual report after the end of the year. This report covers the period 1st April to 30th September 2012.
- 1.2 In addition, the *Communities and Local Government Guidance on Local Government Investments* recommends that local authorities regularly review their investment strategy in the light of any changes in internal or external circumstances.
- 1.3 This report meets the requirements of both sets of guidance by reviewing the strategy, updating the Council on the performance of investments, and identifying any concerns over the credit-worthiness of counterparties.

2. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

- 2.1 The Council approved the 2012/13 treasury management strategy at its meeting on 22 February 2012.
- 2.2 On 4 July 2012 the Council approved an amendment to the 2012/13 Treasury Management Strategy that reduced the minimum credit ratings for Liquidity Accounts to F2 because general reductions in credit ratings had started to reduce the accounts that could be used. Liquidity accounts minimise the risk of investment not being repaid because repayment can normally be requested the same day.
- 2.3 All treasury management activity undertaken during the period complied with the *CIPFA Code of Practice* and relevant legislative provisions.
- 2.4 The investment strategy is to invest any surplus funds in a manner that balances low risk of default by the borrower with a fair rate of interest. The Council's borrowing strategy permits borrowing for cash flow purposes and funding current and future capital expenditure over whatever periods are in the Council's best interests.

- 2.5 Further, officers have started to invest in money market funds (MMF), which are AAA (the highest rating) investment vehicles. Since July 2012, the Council has invested up to £0.500m in the Public Sector Deposit Fund MMF and a further account has recently been opened with Ignis but as yet funds has not been used.

3. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY

- 3.1. Short-term investment and borrowing rates continue to be very low whilst long-term borrowing rates are significantly higher. Given the Council's financial pressures it is considered to be appropriate, for the present, to use the Councils own revenue reserves, supplemented by mostly short term borrowing, to temporarily fund the capital programme pending the return to a more "normal" interest rate structure. The challenge is to judge the appropriate moment to shift from short term to longer term borrowing. The inability of commentators for many months, or even years, to correctly forecast the timing of rate increases clearly makes this more difficult.
- 3.2 Therefore, during the last 6 months most activity has been in managing short term fluctuations in cash flow by borrowing or investing for short periods.
- 3.3 Much of the investment activity has been in liquidity accounts where the funds are accessible without notice, thus providing more security than term deposits, but also providing a good (in relative terms) rate of return.
- 3.4 There have also been deficits at other times which have required the Council to borrow temporarily from other Local Authorities at low rates (typically only 0.3%) and for less than a month.
- 3.5 As at the 30 September the Council had short and long term investments of £15.0m and borrowing of £10.0m. The following table summarises the transactions during the period and further detailed analysis is shown at Annex A.

		£m
Investments	- as at 31 st March 2012	10.4
	- matured in period	(101.6)
	- arranged in period	106.2
	- as at 30 th Sept 2012	15.0
Borrowing	- as at 31 st March 2012	(14.5)
	- matured/repaid in period	26.4
	- arranged in period	(21.9)
	- as at 30 th Sept 2012	(10.0)
	Net investments at 31st March 2012	(4.1)
	Net investments at 30th September 2012	5.0

3.6 The rise in net investments from April to September reflects the fact that the Council Tax is predominantly collected in 10 monthly instalments from April to January thus giving an improved cash flow from mid-April to mid-January each year with the worst position being around the 31st March.

4. PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

4.1 The portfolio comprises of a mixture of short-term investments and temporary borrowing to manage cash flow; £10m was borrowed from the PWLB in December 2008 at 3.9 and was temporally invested as follows:

Borrower	Amount £000	Investment Date	Repayment Date	Investment Rate
Royal Bank of Scotland	5.0	December 2008	December 2012	4.04%
Skipton Building Society	5.0	December 2008	December 2013	4.85%

4.2 The performance summary below, however excludes the above investments and borrowing to give a fairer comparison with the current benchmark of the 7 day rate.

SHORT-TERM PERFORMANCE FOR THE 6 MONTHS APRIL 2012 – SEPTEMBER 2012					
Net investments	Performance	Benchmark	Variation from benchmark	Managed Funds	
				1 April £m	30 Sept £m
Excluding RBS	0.69%	0.18%	+0.51%	4.1	(5.0)

5. PERFORMANCE AGAINST BUDGET IN 2012/13

- 5.1 The latest forecast outturn is for net cost of interest to be £11k against a budget of -£11k. The extra cost is due to actual interest rates and cash flow differing from the assumptions used in the budget.

6. TREASURY MANAGEMENT INDICATORS

- 6.1 The Council measures its exposures to certain treasury management risks with the following indicators which generally relate to the position as at 30 September.

6.2 Interest rate exposures

	Limit
Upper limit on fixed rate exposures	100%
Upper limit on variable rate exposures (all items on fixed rates for less than 12 months are defined as variable)	90%

The intention of this indicator was to highlight any risk from interest rate exposure. This is really only relevant on borrowing or investments for a period longer than one year as all items for less than a year are regarded as variable rate because the Council is only locked into them for a relatively limited period.

Unfortunately the target recommended is far from ideal in the Council's particular circumstances as it does not differentiate between long and short and borrowing and investing.

It is therefore proposed to replace it with the following indicators which better illustrate the position:

	Limits		Actual Sept 2012
	Max.	Min.	
Borrowing:			
longer than 1 year	100%	75%	100%
Fixed	25%	0%	0%
Variable			
Investments:			
longer than 1 year	100%	100%	100%
Fixed	0%	0%	0%
Variable			

All borrowing and investing for less than one year is variable by definition.

Control over the council's exposure to interest rates will be achieved as follows:

Long Term Borrowing

- Fixed
Fixed rate borrowing will only be undertaken when interest rates are deemed to be low in long run terms. This will also need to take account of current short term rates and historic trends. At some point the Council is likely to take further fixed rate borrowing.
- Variable
Variable rate borrowing is less likely, at least until there has been an increase in fixed rate borrowing, and then only to create some spread of risk in case the market does not follow long term trends. Limit set at 25% of long term borrowing.

Long Term Investments

- Fixed
Long term investment will be rare unless the conditions become attractive for borrowing in advance. This is not anticipated but if it did fixed rate investments would minimise the Council's financial risk and so the indicator is based on all long term investments being at fixed rates.

6.3 Maturity structure of borrowing

This indicator prescribes the limits within which the Council can borrow to either maintain effective cash flow or to cover capital expenditure.

Borrowing	Upper Limit	Lower Limit	Actual
Under 12 months	86%	0%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	86%	0%	0%
24 months and within five years	86%	0%	0%
Five years and within 10 years	86%	0%	0%
10 years and above	100%	14%	100%

6.4 Investment repayment profile – limit on the value of investments that cannot be redeemed within 364 days

The purpose of this indicator is to control the Council's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The total principal sums invested to final maturities beyond the period end were:

	2012/13 £m	2013/14 £m	2014/15 £m
Limit on principal invested beyond year end	32.0	25.0	24.7
Actual principal invested beyond year end as at 30 September 2012	5.0	0.0	0.0

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Cabinet is requested to recommend to Council:

- that it approves the revised targets in paragraph 6.2.
- it notes the contents of this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Working papers in Financial Services

CONTACT OFFICER

Steve Couper – Head of Financial Services Tel. 01480 388103

ANNEX A

Investments as at 30 September 2012

		£m	Investment date	Rate %	Repayment date
Term Deposits					
Royal Bank of Scotland	Temporary investment of PWLB borrowing	5.000	19/12/08	4.04	19/12/12
Skipton Building Society		5.000	19/12/08	4.85	19/12/13
Liquidity Accounts					
Cambridge Building Society		3.000	15/09/12	1.25	call
Santander		0.600	15/09/12	0.80	call
Public Sector Deposit Fund		0.500	15/09/12		call
NatWest		0.930	28/09/12	0.80	call
TOTAL		15.030			

Borrowing as at 30 September 2012

	£m	Borrowing date	Rate %	Repayment date
Long Term				
PWLB	5.000	19/12/08	3.91	19/12/57
PWLB	5.000	19/12/08	3.90	19/12/58
Short Term				
None	0			
TOTAL	10.000			

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**COMT
CABINET**

**3 DECEMBER 2012
13 DECEMBER 2012**

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT 1988 (as amended)
PUBLICATION OF RURAL SETTLEMENT LIST
(Report by the Head of Customer Services)**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Section 42 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 was amended by the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 to require billing authorities, such as Huntingdonshire District Council, to compile and maintain a rural settlement list.
- 1.2 The settlements referred to all those which appear to the authority to have a population of not more than 3,000 on the 31st December before the beginning of the chargeable financial year.
- 1.3 A rural settlement list must identify the boundary of each settlement, whether by defining the boundaries (for example, ward or parish boundaries) or referring to boundaries in a map or other document. This means that the Council can define the boundary of a rural settlement by reference to maps rather than accepting ward or parish boundaries to be the boundary of the settlement.
- 1.4 The purpose of the Rural Settlement List is to allow the Council to grant Rural Rate Relief to rural post offices, village shops, public houses and petrol stations.

2 CURRENT POSITION

- 2.1 Officers have undertaken a review of rural settlements and advise Members that no changes need to be made to the previously approved rural settlement list. This report is a formality to ensure compliance with legislation.
- 2.2 The rural settlement list, as proposed at Annex 'A', must be published and available for inspection by 31 December.
- 2.3 Where it is necessary to define boundaries, other than those of the respective parishes, these are illustrated by reference to maps and are unchanged since the last report. Members should note that these boundaries relate only to the application of Rural Rate Relief and not other matters (for example, planning development).

3 RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the District Council resolve that the rural settlement list shown at Annexes 'A' and 'B' be approved and made available for inspection as required throughout the three months preceding the beginning of the next financial year.

Contact Officer: Julia Barber – Head of Customer Services
☎ (01480) 388105

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT 1988
RURAL SETTLEMENT LIST**

Abbotsley	Hemingford Grey
Abbots Ripton	Hilton
Alconbury	Holme
Alconbury Weston	Holywell-cum-Needingworth
Alwalton	Houghton & Wyton
Barham & Woolley	Kimbolton & Stonely
Bluntisham	Kings Ripton
Brington & Molesworth	Leighton Bromswold
Broughton	Morborne
Buckden	Offord Cluny*
Buckworth	Offord D'Arcy*
Bury	Old Hurst
Bythorn & Keyston	Old Weston
Catworth	Perry
Chesterton	Pidley-cum-Fenton
Colne	Ramsey Forty Foot*
Conington	Ramsey St Mary's*
Covington	Ramsey Mereside*
Denton & Caldecote	Ramsey Heights*
Diddington	Sibson-cum-Stibbington
Earith	Southoe & Midloe
Easton	Spaldwick
Ellington	Stilton
Elton	Stow Longa
Farcet (village area only)*	The Stukeleys
Farcet (rural area)*	Tilbrook
Fenstanton (village area only)*	Toseland
Folksworth & Washingley	Upton & Coppingford
Glatton	Upwood & the Raveleys
Grafham	Waresley-cum-Tetworth
Great & Little Gidding	Water Newton
Great Gransden	Winwick
Great Paxton	Wistow
Great Staughton	Woodhurst
Haddon	Woodwalton
Hail Weston	Wyton-on-the-Hill
Hamerton & Steeple Gidding	Yelling
Hemingford Abbots	

The boundaries to be used are those which currently define the relevant parish with the exception of those marked by an asterisk (*)

Maps for these areas are available on request.

COMT	3 DECEMBER 2012
CABINET	13 DECEMBER 2012
COUNCIL	19 DECEMBER 2012

REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S LETTINGS POLICY (Report by the Head of Customer Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 As the local Housing Authority, the council is required by law to have an allocations scheme for determining priorities in the allocation of social rented housing. The Lettings Policy is the council's allocations scheme.
- 1.2 Although the council is no longer a stock holding authority it has a housing register of people wishing to be considered for the allocation of social rented housing and a choice based lettings scheme (the Home-Link scheme) which is the vehicle for letting the majority of these properties in the district. The Lettings Policy dictates how the housing register and the letting of properties operates.
- 1.3 The 2011 Localism Act introduced new legislation governing allocations schemes and the 2012 Welfare Reform Act also contains changes to the benefits system that have an impact on the letting and management of social rented housing. The council, together with the other local authorities that make up the Home-Link partnership, have reviewed their Lettings Policies in light of these legislative changes.
- 1.4 The council, together with the other Home-Link local authorities, have consulted Members, current housing register applicants and a wide range of stakeholder organisations on the proposed changes to their Lettings Policies. Feedback from that consultation exercise has been considered through the Home-Link Management Board, made up of senior officers from the Home-Link partners and incorporated into the Lettings Policy attached to this report as appendix B.
- 1.5 A full Equalities Impact Assessment of the Lettings Policy has also been carried and was included as part of the consultation exercise (seen appendix C). The outcome of this EIA is that the proposed Lettings Policy is not considered to disadvantage different groups of people covered by the equalities legislation or contravene human rights.

2. LEGISLATIVE CHANGES AND IMPLICATIONS

- 2.1 The Localism Act gives greater flexibility to allow councils to decide who should be prioritised for social rented housing, in terms of who should be

allowed onto the housing register and then what level of priority they should be awarded for housing. Although some flexibilities have been introduced there remains a legislative framework of the categories of households that should be given 'reasonable preference' for housing. In an area where demand for social rented housing outstrips supply the difficult task is achieving a Lettings Policy that meets the needs of those that must be given 'reasonable preference' balanced against any other local priorities that the new flexibilities may allow.

- 2.2 The Welfare Reform Act will introduce changes to the Housing Benefit system that will reduce the Housing Benefit entitlement for social rented tenants who are considered to be under-occupying their homes. This Lettings Policy review has therefore considered bringing the bedroom entitlement rate in line with Housing Benefit (HB) regulations so that those that are considered to be under-occupying can be helped to move and new tenancies created are in line with the HB bedroom entitlement rate.
- 2.3 Secondary legislation, via statutory instruments, will also introduce a requirement to give additional priority for social housing to ex-service personnel. Councils will also be prevented from excluding ex-service personnel from their registers on grounds of lacking a local connection.
- 2.4 The table at Appendix A gives details of the changes that are being suggested to the existing policy as a result of these legislative changes.
- 2.5 The under-occupation of social rented housing is an issue nationally and locally. Welfare reforms to be introduced from April 2013 will reduce the Housing Benefit entitlement of working age social rented tenants who are considered to be under-occupying their homes. The criteria to be used for assessing under-occupation are the bedroom entitlement rates that are currently applied to private sector tenants through the Local Housing Allowance regulations. Applying this criteria to social rented tenancies in Huntingdonshire in July 2013 shows that there were almost 1000 households claiming Housing Benefit that are considered to be under-occupying by at least one bedroom.
- 2.7 There are three mechanisms to help these households move to smaller accommodation:
 - a mutual exchange, where one tenant can find another social rented tenant to swap properties with;
 - direct lets where housing associations can offer smaller available properties to their tenants outside of the allocations scheme (so they do not have to bid through the Home-Link scheme); and
 - prioritising under-occupiers who apply to the housing register and wish to bid through the Home-Link scheme.
- 2.8 The new Lettings Policy suggests increasing the priority of those under-occupying tenants who wish to go through the Home-Link route for rehousing, although housing associations are being encouraged to assist these tenants

predominately through the direct let mechanism as this is often a more effective way of encouraging them to move.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The proposed changes to the Lettings Policy are the most significant in many years, making use of the flexibilities introduced by the Localism Act as well as changes necessitated by the implications of the Welfare Reform Act.
- 3.2 The proposed changes have been widely consulted on including with members of the Social Well-Being Overview and Scrutiny panel. The only material change to the policy in light of the consultation exercise introduces some flexibility that in effect allows housing associations to under-occupy a small proportion of properties that they advertise.
- 3.3 The revised Lettings Policy, if adopted by Cabinet, will lead to a full review of the council's housing register in the period January to March 2013 with the new policy being introduced from the beginning of April 2013.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 Cabinet is asked to adopt the revised Lettings Policy and approve its introduction from 1 April 2013.

Contact Officer: **Julia Barber**
 **01480 388105**

Lettings Policy Review – Current position and proposed changes

Appendix A

	Changes Implemented By Localism Act (LA)/Statutory Instruments/ welfare reforms	Current Policy Position	Proposed Revised Policy Position	Comments
1	Local decisions on classes of people that you should include or exclude from the allocations scheme. (legally able to define who are 'qualifying persons' for purposes of the allocation scheme)	Open housing register allowing anyone from anywhere in the UK onto the register apart from the most serious ASB or arrears cases	a) Only accepted onto the register if have a local connection to the district (no proposed change to definition of local connection) b) Continue to exclude the most serious ASB or arrears cases (different test under the Localism Act but with the same outcome)	'Eligibility' in terms of immigration status remains – not to be confused with 'qualifying persons' which is now introduced through Localism Act.
2	Members and former members of the Armed Forces provisions. a) Local connection requirements b) Additional preference for members of the armed forces	a) Although current and former members of the armed forces are allowed onto the register if they do not have a local connection they would have a lower priority than applicants that have a local connection. b) No additional preference is awarded for former members of the armed forces.	a) Statutory instrument has been introduced stating that former members of the armed forces, bereaved spouses or partners, or members of the Reserve Forces who need to move because of serious injury or disability sustained as a result of service, do not need to satisfy local connection criteria. This has been written into the policy. b) Additional preference awarded by back dating their 'date in band' by the total number of years of military service.	a) Local connection does not apply to 'former' members of armed forces where their application is made within 5 years of their discharge. b) Backdate applies to all former members of armed forces irrespective of how long ago they served
3	Determining priorities between households with similar levels of need (concept of additional preference)	Currently award 'low priority' to those with financial resources that are able to resolve their own need; and those whose behaviour makes them 'unsuitable to be a tenant' (low level arrears	New provisions allow greater priority to be given to anyone we wish to define – examples might be workers, model tenants or those who contribute to their local community. It is not proposed that we make use of these powers	Difficulty administering, assessing, and monitoring if introduce extra 'additional preference' categories.

		and ASB)	apart from retaining lower priority for those under the current policy and review again in 12 months once we are aware of how other allocations schemes have made use of this legal power.	
4	<p>Assessment of overcrowding for calculating overcrowding, under-occupancy and allocation of properties.</p> <p>Recommendation in Code of Guidance that all councils use the bedroom standard as a minimum measure of overcrowding for allocation purposes – a stricter measure than the Local Housing Allowance bedroom entitlement rates.</p> <p>To assist with issues brought about by HB welfare reforms</p>	<p>Currently have one set of criteria for calculating overcrowding (not as strict as LHA bedroom entitlement rates) and an even more generous bedroom entitlement rate in the allocations part of the policy – based on stock profiles in each district.</p>	<p>Proposal is to use the LHA bedroom entitlement rates for calculating overcrowding, under-occupancy and allocation of properties.</p>	<p>LHA bedroom rates are not as generous as our current overcrowding assessment calculation so households will have to be more crowded to be considered as ‘lacking a bedroom’.</p> <p>Using LHA rates will bring bedroom entitlements in line with private rented sector entitlements for HB claimants but will over time lead to a more crowded social rented sector. Issues with local stock profiles being able to meet needs.</p>
5	<p>Changes in priority banding (as a consequence of issues in 5 above)</p>	<p>Assessed as being overcrowded and lacking 2 bedrooms, or under-occupying by 2 bedrooms equates to a band B level of priority.</p> <p>Lacking or under-occupying by 1 bedroom equates to a band C priority.</p>	<p>Given the stricter bedroom entitlement rates proposal is to increase lacking or under-occupying by 2 or more bedrooms to a band A priority and the lacking or under-occupying by 1 or more bedrooms to a band B priority</p>	<p>If insufficient priority is awarded on this it will prevent applicants’ ability to successfully bid on properties through Home-Link.</p>

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Huntingdonshire District Council

LETTINGS POLICY

This document sets out how Huntingdonshire District Council, in partnership with Registered Providers (Housing Associations) with properties in the district, will allocate their properties through the
“Home-Link Choice Based Lettings Scheme”

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

- 1.1.1 This is the letting policy for Huntingdonshire District Council (“HDC”) and should be considered in conjunction with the Cambridge Sub-regional Choice Based Lettings scheme (“CBL”), framework document, which outlines how the CBL scheme will work. The Partnership Organisations (PO’s) to the Sub-regional CBL scheme are:
- a) Cambridge City Council
 - b) East Cambridgeshire District Council
 - c) Fenland District Council
 - d) Forest Heath District Council
 - e) Huntingdonshire District Council
 - f) South Cambridgeshire District Council
 - g) St Edmundsbury Borough Council
- 1.1.2 The CBL scheme and this lettings policy have been designed in collaboration with the sub regional PO’s listed above, with the aim of having as much consistency in the letting of social housing as is possible in a very diverse sub-region. The lettings policy aims to ensure that all people seeking social housing in Huntingdonshire are able to exercise choice in deciding where they wish to live and in the type of property they would prefer.
- 1.1.3 The policy enables Huntingdonshire District Council to consider the individual needs of its applicants whilst making best use of the scarce resource of housing stock. The policy sets out:
- a) How to apply for housing.
 - b) Who will qualify to be accepted onto the housing register.
 - c) How priority for housing applicants will be given.
 - d) What the decision-making processes are.
 - e) How homes will be let.

1.2 Objectives of the lettings policy

- a) To meet the legal requirements for the allocation of social housing as set out in the Housing Act (1996) as amended by the Homelessness Act (2002) and the Localism Act (2011).
- b) To assist applicants in the highest assessed need
- c) To let properties in a fair and transparent way and provide a consistent lettings process
- d) To make best use of housing stock
- e) To ensure that applicants are not unlawfully discriminated against, whether directly or indirectly
- f) To support vulnerable applicants
- g) To provide increased choice and information to applicants
- h) To provide information and feedback on homes that are let through the CBL scheme
- i) To improve mobility across the sub-region
- j) To promote social inclusion and help achieve sustainable communities

1.3 Statement on choice

- 1.3.1 Huntingdonshire District Council is fully committed to enabling applicants to play a more active role in choosing where they live, whilst continuing to house those in the greatest need in Huntingdonshire.
- 1.3.2 The CBL scheme will enable applicants from Huntingdonshire to have access to a percentage of available homes from all the PO's across the sub region.

1.4 Legal context

- 1.4.1 All applicants for housing will be assessed to determine their eligibility to be placed on the housing register. This is to ensure homes are let to those in the highest assessed need and ensures that the Council meets its legal obligations as set out in the Housing Act (1996) as amended by Homelessness Act (2002) and the Localism Act (2011).

This policy has also had regard to:

- a) the Code of Guidance, Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England, June 2012, and
 - b) Huntingdonshire District Council's Homelessness Strategy, and
 - c) Huntingdonshire District Council's Tenancy Strategy (containing details of the types of social rented tenancies that may be offered by housing association landlords).
- 1.4.2 The law states that there are five groups of applicants where reasonable preference must be considered:
 - a) People who are homeless (within the meaning of Part VII (7) of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.)
 - b) People who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2), or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3)
 - c) People occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions
 - d) People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including grounds relating to a disability); and
 - e) People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others)
 - 1.4.3 The lettings policy has been designed to ensure applicants who fall into the above reasonable preference categories will be awarded reasonable preference.
 - 1.4.4 Every application received by Huntingdonshire District Council will be considered according to the facts unique to that application as the council recognises that every applicant's situation is different. Applications will be considered on an individual basis and individual circumstances will be taken into account. However, lettings will be made in accordance with this lettings policy.

1.5 Equal opportunities and diversity

- 1.5.1 The lettings policy will be responsive, accessible and sensitive to the needs of all. Huntingdonshire District Council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and will ensure that all applicants are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination on the grounds of race, gender, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or belief, pregnancy and maternity.

1.6 Monitoring and reviewing the lettings policy

- 1.6.1 Huntingdonshire District Council will monitor the operation of the lettings policy by regularly reviewing the policy to ensure that the policy meets its stated objectives and complies with legislative changes.

Chapter 2

2.1 How to apply for housing

- 2.1.1 To apply to go on the housing register, applicants are required to complete an on-line housing options form. This will allow the applicant's housing options to be assessed and determine which are most appropriate. If this includes social rented housing, they will then be required to complete a more detailed on-line register application form. Where applicants are unable to use these on-line facilities a paper form will be available on request.

Both on-line forms can be completed at www.home-link.org.uk. A paper form for those unable to use the on-line facilities can be requested from Huntingdonshire District Council as detailed in Appendix 1 on p.30.

- 2.1.2 An applicant may include anyone on their application who may reasonably be expected to live with them as part of their household.
- 2.1.3 Where two applicants wish to have a shared application they will be known as joint applicants. Although siblings and friends may jointly apply to the register, due to the level of demand for family sized accommodation from family households, they will not be prioritised for an offer of this size of accommodation ahead of families.
- 2.1.4 On receipt of the application the council will assess this and may request additional information and supporting evidence so that the applicant's eligibility and housing need can be confirmed. The council will verify the information provided which may include inviting the applicant for an interview or visiting them at home.
- 2.1.5 Applications will only be accepted onto the register where:
- a) The applicant is eligible within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act (1996) (see Chapter 3); and
 - b) The applicant qualifies for an allocation of accommodation. (See classes of persons that qualify for an offer of accommodation in s.3.3 and those that do not qualify in s.3.4).
- 2.1.6 After assessment the council will write to applicants to inform them whether the applicant has been accepted onto the housing register, or give reasons if they have not. Where accepted they will be informed of:
- a) Their unique reference number, which allows them to bid for homes through the CBL Scheme
 - b) The Housing Needs Band in which the application has been placed
 - c) The date that the application was placed in the band (the "date in band")
 - d) The size of property for which the applicant is likely to be able to bid

If they have not been accepted onto the housing register they will be given reasons why and information on the review process (see Chapter 6).

2.2 Date of registration

- 2.2.1 The registration date of an application will be the date the housing application form is received at the office of Huntingdonshire District Council, or any of the PO's. If the form is completed online the date the form is received electronically is the date of registration.

2.3 Date in band

2.3.1 The principle of the policy is that normally no applicant should overtake existing applicants in a band. Therefore applicants will be placed within a band in date order.

- a) **New applications:** the date in band will be the same as the applicant's date of registration.
- b) **Change of circumstances which results in a higher band assessment:** the date in band will be the date the applicant provides evidence of the change of circumstances leading to the award of a higher priority band.

2.3.2 When applicants move down bands due to a change in their circumstances the following applies:

- a) **Returning to a band that they were previously placed in:** the date in band reverts to the date that applied when the applicant was previously in that band.
- b) **Moving into a lower band they have not previously been placed in:** the date in band will be the date that the application was first placed into a higher band. In most circumstances this is likely to be their date of registration.

2.4 Armed Forces personnel – date in band.

2.4.1 Additional priority will be awarded to the following categories of people:

- (a) former members of the Armed Forces¹;
- (b) serving members of the Armed Forces¹ who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service;
- (c) bereaved spouses and civil partners of members of the Armed Forces¹ leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death of their spouse or partner;
- (d) serving or former members of the Reserve Forces² who need to move because of a serious injury, medical condition or disability sustained as a result of their service.

2.4.2 Additional priority will be awarded to the above categories of people by awarding their application the appropriate priority band, as set out in this lettings policy, and backdating their date in band by the total cumulative period of their length of military service. This will have the effect of raising their priority above applicants in similar circumstances who have not undertaken military service.

2.4.3 Current members of the Armed Forces¹ may also request that this additional priority be applied to their housing application six months prior to the date when they are due to leave military service. Appropriate evidence of the end to military service will be required.

¹ means the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the regular army or the Royal Air Force

² means the Royal Fleet Reserve, the Royal Naval Reserve, the Royal Marines Reserve, the Army Reserve, the Territorial Army, the Royal Air Force Reserve or the Royal Auxiliary Air Force

2.5 Multiple applications

- 2.5.1 An applicant can have only one active application as a main applicant on the housing register at any time.

2.6 Change of circumstances

- 2.6.1 Where an applicant registered with Huntingdonshire District Council has a change in their circumstances they must promptly inform the council. Applicants can obtain a change of circumstances form from any PO, but this must then be sent to the PO who is managing their application. Change of circumstances received by the council will be assessed based on the new circumstances. Examples of change of circumstances are detailed below, although this list is not exhaustive.

- a) Change of address
- b) People joining or leaving the household
- c) Pregnancy/birth of a child
- d) Relationship breakdown
- e) Change to the medical circumstances of anyone included on the application
- f) Death of a household member
- g) Death of a joint applicant
- h) Change of income and/or capital

2.7 Applicant's consent and declaration

- 2.7.1 When an applicant applies for housing, they will be required to sign a declaration to confirm that:

- a) The information they have provided is true, accurate and complete.
- b) They will promptly inform Huntingdonshire District Council of any change in circumstances.
- c) They understand that information will be shared with all the PO's.
- d) They consent to Huntingdonshire District Council making enquiries of any relevant persons to confirm the information on the application form is correct.
- e) They consent to the release of any relevant information either to Huntingdonshire District Council held by third parties, or by Huntingdonshire District Council to third parties.
- f) The information provided may be used to help in the detection and prevention of fraud.

- 2.7.2 Huntingdonshire District Council may take legal action against applicants who withhold or provide false information regarding their housing application. Where an applicant has been let a property as a result of providing false information, their landlord may take court action to obtain possession of the property.

2.8 Data protection

- 2.8.1 Huntingdonshire District Council's policy on Data Protection is available on request or can be obtained by clicking [here](#).

2.9 Application review

2.9.1 When an applicant has not bid for any available properties for one year, we will normally write to them to see if they still wish to be on the housing register. If there is no response within the required time limit, (28 days from the letter being sent) the application will be cancelled. We will write to the applicant to notify them of this. If an applicant contacts the council within 28 days of their application being cancelled and indicates that they still want to be considered for housing, the application will be reinstated from their last applicable date in band (see s.2.3 above).

2.10 Cancelling an application

2.10.1 An application will be cancelled from the housing register in the following circumstances:

- a) At the applicant's request.
- b) If the applicant no longer falls within a qualifying class of applicant (see s.3.1).
- c) If the applicant becomes ineligible for housing (see s.3.2).
- d) When the applicant has been housed through the Lettings Policy.
- e) When a tenant completes a mutual exchange.
- f) Where an applicant does not maintain their application through the review process, or where they move and do not provide a contact address.
- g) Where the applicant has died.

2.10.2 When an application is cancelled, we will write to the applicant or their representative to notify them. Where an applicant has been highlighted as vulnerable, the council will contact the applicant to check their circumstances before cancelling the application. Any applicant whose application has been cancelled has the right to ask for a review of the decision, (see Chapter 6).

2.10.3 Where an applicant wishes to re-join the housing register at a later date their new date of registration will be the date they re-apply.

Chapter 3

3. Who can be accepted onto the housing register?

3.1 Eligible applicants

- 3.1.1 Huntingdonshire District Council cannot, by law, allocate housing accommodation to anyone who is subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act (1996), unless they fall within a class exempted from this restriction by Government regulations. In addition, the council cannot allocate housing accommodation to other classes of persons from abroad if, by law, Government regulations dictate we cannot.
- 3.1.2 Applications whose immigration status makes them ineligible to be considered on the register will be notified in writing of the decision and the reason for the decision. If an applicant is accepted onto the register, but subsequently becomes ineligible, their housing application will be cancelled and the applicant notified. Applicants found to be ineligible have a right to ask for a review of the decision (see Chapter 6).

3.2 Qualifying categories of applicants

- 3.2.1 The Cambridge sub-region (the Home-Link area) is an area where the demand for social housing far exceeds the supply. For this reason only those applicants who meet the local connection criteria will qualify to join the housing register (see s.3.3).
- 3.2.2 Applicants will not qualify to join the housing register if they are considered to be unsuitable to be a tenant because of unacceptable behaviour (see s.3.4)

3.3 Local Connection

- 3.3.1 An applicant will be considered to have a local connection with Huntingdonshire District Council and accepted onto the housing register if they meet one of the following criteria:
- a. The applicant works in the local authority area for sixteen hours or more per week; or
 - b. The applicant has lived in the local authority area for at least 6 of the last 12 months, or 3 of the last 5 years; or
 - c. The applicant has family members who are resident in the local authority area. Family members are defined as parents, sons and daughters or brothers or sisters who have been resident in the local authority for a period of 5 years or longer. Other close family ties will be considered on a case by case basis; or
 - d. The applicant is owed a full housing duty under the relevant homelessness legislation by Huntingdonshire District Council; or
 - e. The applicant is a member of the Armed Forces³ or former member of the Armed Forces, and the date of their application is made within five years of discharge; or

³ means the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the regular army or the Royal Air Force

- f. The applicant is a bereaved spouse or civil partner of a member of the Armed Forces³ leaving Services Family Accommodation following the death in service of their spouse or partner; or
- g. The applicant is a serving or has served in the Reserve Forces⁴ and is suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability attributed to that service; or
- h. There are special circumstances that Huntingdonshire District Council considers give rise to a local connection.

3.4 Applicants with a history of unacceptable behaviour

- 3.4.1 Applicants with a history of unacceptable behaviour will not qualify to be accepted onto the housing register. Unacceptable behaviour can include tenancy related debt or other breach of tenancy conditions.
- 3.4.2 When considering levels of unacceptable behaviour the council will consider when this behaviour took place, the length of time that has elapsed since and whether there has been any change in circumstances which would show that the applicant had amended their behaviour so that they are considered suitable to become a tenant.
- 3.4.3 If considered to have a history of unacceptable behaviour applicants will be informed of this decision in writing. They will also be informed how they can become a qualifying person, for example, by agreeing an arrangement to make payments towards rent arrears and adhering to this, or by the applicant showing that the circumstances or behaviour that made them unsuitable to be a tenant, has changed.
- 3.4.4 If an applicant is accepted onto the register but a change in their behaviour means that they are no longer a qualifying person, their housing application will be removed and the applicant will be notified.
- 3.4.5 Applicants considered as not qualifying due to unacceptable behaviour have a right to ask for a review of the decision (see Chapter 6).

³ means the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the regular army or the Royal Air Force

⁴ means the Royal Fleet Reserve, the Royal Naval Reserve, the Royal Marines Reserve, the Army Reserve, the Territorial Army, the Royal Air Force Reserve or the Royal Auxiliary Air Force

Chapter 4

4.0 Assessment of housing need

4.1 Legal background

- 4.1.1 All eligible and qualifying applicants will be placed in a housing needs band following an assessment of their household's needs. This is to ensure that Huntingdonshire District Council meets its legal obligations as set out in the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011.

4.2 Advice and information

- 4.2.1 The council will ensure that advice and information on how to apply for housing in Huntingdonshire is available free of charge to everyone. If applicants are likely to have difficulty in making an application without assistance, then any necessary assistance they require will be made available by the council.

4.3 Assessment of housing need

- 4.3.1 Assessments of housing needs are based on an applicant's current housing circumstances. Assessments will be completed by housing officers of Huntingdonshire District Council.

4.4 Local connection criteria

- 4.4.1 To ensure local housing needs are met, 90% of properties advertised through the CBL scheme will be labelled as available to applicants with a local connection to Huntingdonshire. 10% of advertised properties will be open to bidding from applicants with a local connection to any authority in the Cambridge Sub-region. 25% of new growth homes will be made available for cross boundary mobility. The relevant local connection requirement will be clearly labelled on the property advertisement.
- 4.4.2 Where a property has local connection criteria attached to it through a local lettings plan or s.106 agreement, then these properties will be let in line with the criteria within the plan or s.106 agreement. This may differ from the local connection criteria contained within this lettings policy.

4.5 Housing needs bands

- 4.5.1 Eligible and qualifying applicants will be placed in one of the following four bands in date order. Applicants placed in Band A will have the highest assessed need, band D the lowest. When an applicant is placed in a housing needs band the same level of priority will apply with all PO's in the sub-region.

4.6 Band A: Urgent Need

Applicants with the following circumstances will be placed into Band A:

a) Urgent transfer

Where an existing council or housing association tenant needs to move urgently because of circumstances that could include:

- a) Major repairs are required on the property in which they live and which cannot be undertaken with the tenant living in the property.
- b) The property is being demolished.
- c) Urgent social need to move.

b) Current supported housing resident

Applicants leaving Social Services care or other supported accommodation, and are ready to move to a permanent home of their own. This will be subject to the council, Social Services and the landlord of the supported accommodation agreeing that the applicant is ready to move to their own home. If the applicant needs an on-going support package to allow them to live independently, confirmation that this will be put in place will also be required from the proposed support provider. The date that this priority is awarded (date in Band A) will be the date that the resident is ready to move to independent living, as recommended by their support worker.

c) Urgent health and safety risk

An applicant's current accommodation has been assessed by Huntingdonshire District Council or a PO as posing an urgent health and safety risk. This will apply where the assessment has classified the accommodation as unsafe, and where there is a risk of imminent harm as identified in the assessment, which cannot be remedied in a reasonable time and where the health and safety risk has not been caused intentionally by the applicant or a member of the applicant's household.

d) Urgent medical need

An assessment of medical need will be made by a medical professional or senior officer, using sub-regionally agreed criteria for assessment.

Urgent medical need priority will be awarded when an applicant's current housing conditions have been assessed as having a major adverse effect on the medical condition or disability of the applicant or a member of their household and this will be improved by alternative accommodation.

e) Lacking two or more bedrooms

Means the household is assessed as lacking two or more bedrooms (see s.5.5).

f) Under-occupancy by two or more bedrooms or release of adapted property

Means where an existing council or housing association tenant:

- a) Is assessed as having two or more bedrooms that are not required by the household (see s.5.5).
- b) Where a property has been adapted and the adaptations are no longer required. For example if the person requiring the adaptations has moved or died.

g) Homeless households (Full homelessness duty owed under s.193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002)

Means where an applicant is not homeless intentionally or threatened with homelessness intentionally, is eligible for assistance and has a priority need for accommodation, and Huntingdonshire District Council or a PO has accepted a duty

under s193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 (referred to as the full homelessness duty) and this duty has not been brought to an end.

h) Urgent multiple needs

This priority will be applied where an applicant is assessed as having two or more Band B needs. This may include an application where two household members have the same assessed need e.g. two high medical needs.

For multiple needs in Band A please see 'emergency housing status' (see Chapter 5)

4.7 Band B: High Need

Applicants with the following circumstances will be placed into Band B:

a) High health and safety risk

Applicants current accommodation has been assessed by Huntingdonshire District Council or a PO as posing a high health and safety risk to them or members of their household. This will apply where the assessment has identified that the applicant is living in a property, the condition of which places them or members of their household at a high risk of harm as identified in the assessment, which cannot be remedied in a reasonable time and where the health and safety risk has not been caused intentionally by the applicant or a member of the applicant's household.

b) High medical need

An assessment of medical need will be made by a medical professional or senior officer, using sub-regionally agreed criteria for assessment.

High medical need priority will be awarded where an applicant's current housing conditions have been assessed as having a significant adverse effect on the medical condition or disability of the applicant or member of their household and this will be improved by alternative accommodation.

c) Lacking one bedroom

This priority will be applied where the household is assessed as lacking one bedroom based on the bedroom calculation in Chapter 5.

d) Under-occupancy by one bedroom.

This priority will be applied where an existing council or housing association tenant is assessed as having one bedroom more than required by the household (see s.5.5).

e) Victims of harassment, violence or abuse

Where Huntingdonshire District Council or a PO has investigated and identified that the applicant or a member of their household is being subjected to harassment or other conduct causing alarm and distress that will be improved by a move to alternative accommodation. Harassment might be, but is not limited to, harassment due to, race, gender, sexual orientation, mental health, physical disability, learning disability, religion, domestic abuse or harassment by a former partner or associated persons.

Huntingdonshire District Council will offer advice and support to assist the applicant in identifying possible ways to resolve the situation.

f) Potentially homeless (prior to homelessness decision being made)

Where an applicant is threatened with homelessness within a period of more than 28 days, Huntingdonshire District Council will work with the applicant to try and prevent their homelessness. Those applicants, who appear likely to have a priority need in the event of a homelessness application, will be placed in Band B whilst the prevention measures are being pursued

Where homelessness prevention has not been possible and an applicant remains threatened with homelessness within the next 28 days, they may choose to make a homeless application which will be assessed under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

g) Sleeping Rough

This priority will be applied where it has been confirmed that an applicant is sleeping rough and has no other accommodation available to them. The council will verify that an applicant is sleeping rough before awarding this priority. Rough sleeping priority will not be awarded when accommodation is available to the applicant, including a placement at a direct access hostel, but the applicant chooses not to take up this offer of accommodation. Applicants assessed as 'Sleeping Rough' will not be awarded additional priority on any other accommodation related factors.

h) Multiple needs

This priority will be applied where an applicant is assessed as having three or more Band C needs. This may include an application where more than two household members have the same assessed need e.g. three medical needs.

4.8 Band C: Medium Need

Applicants with the following circumstances will be placed into Band C:

a) Medium medical need

An assessment of medical need will be made by a medical professional or senior officer, using sub-regionally agreed criteria for assessment.

Medium medical need will be awarded where an applicant's current accommodation is having a minimal effect on the medical condition or disability of the applicant or member of their household, but a move to different accommodation would be likely to improve their quality of life.

d) Need to move for social reasons

Means where Huntingdonshire District Council or a PO has assessed the applicant's need to move for social reasons. An applicant will only be awarded this factor once irrespective of the number of social needs that may apply to their situation.

Examples where a social need to move may apply may include where an applicant:

- a) Needs to move to or within an area of the sub-region to give or receive support, and a proven level of support is required and can be given

- b) Has found employment in the Huntingdonshire area and needs to move closer to work, or will otherwise lose their employment
- c) Has staying contact with a child/children and is living in accommodation where the child/children are not allowed to stay overnight.
- d) Is living in a first floor or above property and has children less than 10 years of age as part of their household, or is more than 24 weeks pregnant.

e) Housing conditions.

This priority will be applied where the applicant/s either lack or share one or more of these facilities with persons who are not members of their household. Facilities may include:

- a) A living room
- b) Kitchen
- c) Bathroom

f) Other homelessness.

Applicants who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and are:

- a) Intentionally homeless.
- b) Homeless or threatened with homelessness but not in priority need.
- c) Owed a main homelessness duty by a local authority that is not a PO in the sub-region.

Applicants assessed as 'Other Homelessness' will not be awarded additional priority on any other accommodation related factors.

Applicants given this priority will have their application reviewed on the anniversary of the decision, unless there is a change in their circumstances in the meantime.

4.9 Band D: Low Housing Need

4.9.1 Any applicant who does not meet any of the criteria in Bands A, B and C will be assessed as having a low level of housing need and their application will be placed in Band D.

4.9.2 Anyone assessed as having sufficient financial resources to resolve their own housing need (see s.4.12) will be placed in band D. These applicants will only be considered for an offer of a property once all other bidding applicants who do **not** have sufficient financial resources to resolve their own housing need have been considered.

4.10 Low priority

4.10.1 In certain circumstances, applicants will be accepted onto the housing register, but their application will be considered as low priority as a result of behaviour or circumstances that affects their suitability to be a tenant. In these circumstances their application will be placed in a housing needs band but they will not be actively considered for an offer of a tenancy or be able to express interest in available properties. Their application will remain in low priority until the applicant has shown that the circumstances or behaviour has changed so that they are considered suitable to be a tenant.

4.10.2 The following categories will be considered as low priority:

- a. Applicants with rent arrears, former rent arrears or other housing-related charges or debts, where these are not sufficiently high to class them as not qualifying to join the register (see s.3.4). Other than in exceptional circumstances, an applicant with outstanding rent arrears, former rent arrears or other housing-related debts will not be considered for an offer of a tenancy or be eligible to bid for housing until they have shown a regular repayment record.
- b. Applicants with a history of anti-social behaviour where this is not sufficiently severe to class them as not qualifying to join the register (see s.3.4).

4.10.3 All applicants who are considered low priority will be informed of this decision in writing, and how their application could be re-assessed, for example, by agreeing and keeping to an arrangement to make payments towards rent arrears, or by the applicant satisfying the council that the circumstances or behaviour that made them unsuitable to be a tenant have changed.

4.10.4 Huntingdonshire District Council expects applicants to clear any housing related debts owed to any registered social landlord before an offer of a tenancy is made, where it is clearly within their means to do this (for example where the debt is relatively low and the applicant has a reasonable disposable income or has sufficient savings available).

4.10.5 When a financial assessment shows that the debt cannot be cleared immediately then a realistic and affordable repayment arrangement should be agreed to clear the debt. The applicant may become eligible to bid for property as long as they have made regular payments in line with the agreement they have made.

4.10.6 Applicants found to be low priority have a right to ask for a review of the decision (see Chapter 6). A designated senior officer will undertake the review.

4.11 Intentionally worsening housing circumstances

4.11.1 If an applicant is assessed as having intentionally worsened their housing situation in order to improve their housing priority, their level of housing need will be assessed on the basis of their previous accommodation.

4.11.2 Applicants found to have intentionally worsened their circumstances have a right to ask for a review of the decision (see Chapter 6).

4.11.3 All applicants deemed to have intentionally worsened their circumstances will have their application reviewed on the anniversary of the decision, unless there is a change in their circumstances in the meantime.

4.11.4 If Huntingdonshire District Council has assessed and accepted the applicant is homeless or threatened with homelessness, has a priority need under the homeless legislation, but considers that they have become homeless intentionally; the applicant will be placed in Band C.

4.12 Financial resources

4.12.1 All qualifying applicants are entitled to apply for housing regardless of income levels. However if an applicant is assessed as having an income and/or capital, which will enable them to resolve their own housing need through other tenures they will not

receive any preference for rented housing and when bidding will appear on the shortlist after all other applicants that do not have the resources to resolve their own need.

This assessment will be based on the following:

- a) The total income of the applicant/partner
- b) Any capital available to the applicant/partner
- c) Average property prices in the area for the type of accommodation needed by the household
- d) The ability of the applicant/partner to acquire a mortgage and maintain required repayments based on a realistic assessment of their financial position and commitments.

4.12.2 Excluded from the above financial assessment will be the capital awarded to any member of the Armed Forces⁵ as compensation for an injury or disability sustained on active service.

4.13 Officer review for Band A applicants

4.13.1 Where an applicant has held Band A status for three months from their applicable date in band the council will carry out a review of their circumstances. This will result in either:

- a) A direct let – usually for statutorily homeless applicants living in temporary accommodation.
- b) Priority being maintained.
- c) Moving into a lower priority band if the circumstances under which they were placed in Band A no longer apply.

⁵ means the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines, the regular army or the Royal Air Force

Chapter 5

5.1 Assessment information and criteria

- 5.1.1 The following section outlines criteria taken into account when considering assessments of housing need.

5.2 Transfer applicants

- 5.2.1 Transfer applicants are those applicants who are tenants of a council or housing association property in the UK who wish to move to alternative accommodation.

5.3 Homeless applications

- 5.3.1 Applicants who are already on the housing register will remain in their existing housing needs band whilst a homeless assessment is carried out (unless the criterion in s.5.3.3 below applies).
- 5.3.2 When a decision has been made by Huntingdonshire District Council that an applicant is owed a full homelessness duty under s.193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) their application will be placed and remain in Band A until that duty is brought to an end (See s.4.6 (g)).
- 5.3.3 Where a person is threatened with homelessness within a period of more than 28 days, the Council will work with the applicant to try and prevent their homelessness. Those persons, who appear likely to have a priority need in the event of a homelessness application being made, will be placed in Band B whilst the prevention measures are being pursued.
- 5.3.4 A person who is threatened with homelessness may have an existing housing register application. Applicants already in Band A will retain their existing Band A status whilst homelessness prevention measures are pursued.
- 5.3.5 An applicant who is statutorily homeless or threatened with homelessness but deemed not to have a priority need will be placed in Band C (unless other circumstances are such that they are eligible for placement within a different band).
- 5.3.6 Applicants who have been assessed as being in priority need but are intentionally homeless will have their housing application assessed on their current accommodation, if an applicant has intentionally worsened their circumstances the housing needs assessment will take this into account (see s.4.11).

5.4 Split families

- 5.4.1 Where an application is made by family members who it would be reasonable to expect them to live together but they are unable to do so, the council will assess their particular circumstances to consider the best way of addressing their housing needs.

5.5 Bedroom requirement guidelines

- 5.5.1 Bedroom requirements are generally determined in line with the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) regulations and these regulations will be applied when calculating bedroom requirements in overcrowding and under-occupancy assessments. They will also be used when calculating the size of property (number of bedrooms in the property) that an applicant will be able to bid on and eligible to be offered through the letting process.

Bedroom requirements are determined by the applicant's size of household. Generally the LHA regulations allow one bedroom each for:

- a) Every adult couple
- b) Any other adult aged 16 or over
- c) Any two children (aged under 16) of the same sex
- d) Any two children, regardless of sex, under the age of 10
- e) Any other child aged under 16
- f) A non-resident carer (claimant/partner have disability and need overnight care)

Applicants requiring help in calculating their bedroom entitlement can use the Directgov online bedroom entitlement calculator at <https://lha-direct.voa.gov.uk/BedRoomCalculator.aspx>.

- 5.5.2 Single and joint applicants of pensionable age may be eligible to be considered for one and two bedroom older person/s and/or sheltered housing.
- 5.5.3 A pregnant woman expecting her first child will be assessed as requiring two bedrooms from week 24 of her pregnancy.
- 5.5.4 An applicant may be assessed as requiring an additional bedroom where Huntingdonshire District Council considers there are special circumstances.

5.6 Staying contact with children

- 5.6.1 A child, or children, living between parents at separate addresses will only be considered as having one main home unless there are exceptional circumstances that mean that both parents should provide a home. A Court Order allowing access to children, or confirming residence between separated parents does not mean that the council must consider that the child is part of an applicant's household for the purposes of a housing register application.
- 5.6.2 An assessment will be made by the council as to which parent's property is considered as the child's main home. If the council considers that an applicant does not provide the child with his or her main home then the child will not be considered as part of the register application. The child would then not be considered as part of the bedroom requirements when assessing overcrowding or under-occupation. They would also not be considered when assessing the size of property (number of bedrooms) that the application would be eligible to bid for and offered through the lettings process.

5.7 Medical assessments

- 5.7.1 Medical assessments will be carried out for any applicants who believe that their medical condition or disability is affected by their current accommodation. The applicant will be required to fill in a self-assessment medical form, or provide information from a medical professional, detailing the effect that their current accommodation has on their medical condition or disability. These forms will be assessed and where appropriate referred to a medical professional for their opinion of how the medical condition is affected by the applicant's housing circumstances.

5.8 Harassment and domestic violence

- 5.8.1 Where the applicant is a victim of harassment, domestic violence or anti-social behaviour, the council will offer advice and support to assist applicants in identifying possible ways of resolving their situation.

5.9 Applicant subject to Multi Agency Public Protection arrangements, (MAPPA)

- 5.9.1 Where an applicant is subject to Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA), Huntingdonshire District Council will liaise with the panel to ensure an appropriate housing solution to meet the needs of the applicant and the community as a whole.

5.10 Emergency housing status

- 5.10.1 An emergency housing status may be awarded to applicants in exceptional circumstances, where remaining in their current accommodation may cause risk of death or serious injury, or where an applicant has been assessed as having multiple needs that fall within Band A. An applicant with emergency housing status who bids for a home will be considered as a priority above all other applicants in any other band.

5.11 Direct Lets

- 5.11.1 Most properties will be advertised through the council's choice based lettings scheme, called Home-Link. However in certain circumstances some properties may be let directly to applicants and these properties will be let outside of the allocation scheme. Where an applicant is identified as requiring a direct let the case will be referred to a senior officer for approval. The list below gives some examples of where this may happen.

- a) Where the council has accepted a full homelessness duty towards a household but the household has not found suitable accommodation during a period of choice through the Home-Link scheme.
- b) Where an applicant and their household require a specific size, type or adapted property and the applicant has not been able to find suitable accommodation through the Home-Link scheme.
- c) Where an existing social housing tenant is required to move to make the best use of stock, and they have not been successful in finding a suitable property through the Home-Link scheme.

- 5.11.2 Information as to which properties have been allocated though direct lets will be made available through the Home-Link feedback mechanism.

- 5.11.3 Direct lets will be made on the basis of a suitable property becoming available. Where a property becomes available that is suitable for more than one applicant with a direct let status, the date applicants were awarded a direct let status will be used as a deciding factor in deciding to whom the property will be let.

5.12 Direct lets to homeless applicants

- 5.12.1 Homeless applicants who are owed a full homelessness duty by Huntingdonshire District Council (under s.193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002) will be placed in Band A and will be able to bid for properties via the Home-Link scheme. Their date in band will be the date they originally applied to the council as homeless.
- 5.12.2 Where homeless applicants in Band A have not been offered a tenancy through the bidding process within 3 months of their date in band, the council reserves the right to make a direct let of a property under the council's homelessness policy. The decision to make a direct let will depend on the extent to which homeless applicants have had the opportunity to bid for a property during the initial 3 month period of the full duty being accepted.
- 5.12.3 Where a homeless applicant bids for a property within the initial 3 month period of being owed the full homelessness duty, is offered the tenancy and subsequently refuses the offer, their application will remain within the same housing band and the s.193 (2) duty under the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, will continue.
- 5.12.4 The full homelessness duty will come to an end, and a homeless applicant loses their priority under this section, when any of the circumstances within s.193 (6) of the Act are met. This will include an applicant:
- a) Accepting an offer of accommodation made through the Home-Link scheme
 - b) Accepting an offer made via the direct let mechanism within the policy (see s.5.11 above), or
 - c) If, having been informed of the consequences and the right to request a review, refuses a reasonable offer of suitable accommodation made via the direct let mechanism
- S. 193(6) of the Housing Act 1996 Act gives the full circumstances under which the full homelessness duty comes to an end.
- 5.12.5 Where a homeless applicant is to be allocated a property through the direct let process the council has responsibility for determining the suitability of any allocation. They will do this by assessing the household's particular needs and circumstances within the context of the general housing conditions in the area as a whole.
- 5.12.6 Where a homeless applicant is offered accommodation via a direct let, but does not feel that this offer is suitable; they have the right to request a review of the decision that the offer is suitable. For details of the review process (see Chapter 6).
- 5.12.7 As the property does not have to remain available during the review of the suitability and reasonableness of a direct let, homeless applicants are advised to accept and move in to the accommodation pending the decision on review. If the review outcome is unsuccessful for the applicant they will still have accommodation to live in whilst they consider their further options.
- 5.12.8 If a homeless applicant refuses a direct let and it is then deemed suitable at review, the full homelessness duty will come to an end. They will also have to vacate any temporary accommodation that is being provided.
- 5.12.9 If, on review reviewing an applicant's refusal of a direct let, the property offered is considered to be unreasonable or unsuitable, the duty under s.193 (2) will continue and the applicant will be made a further offer of suitable accommodation.

5.13 Applicants who require a specific size, type or adapted property.

5.13.1 Where an applicant requires a specific size, type or adapted property, they will be placed in the appropriate housing needs band, but may be offered a direct let if Huntingdonshire District Council has a shortage of suitable properties. For example:

- a) An applicant requires a very large property to accommodate their household.
- b) An applicant requires a property of a specific type in a specific area of the district.
- c) An applicant requires a property with specific adaptations and such a property becomes available.
- d) Where an applicant is willing to move to release a family home.

5.14 Sheltered housing

5.14.1 Sheltered housing will be advertised through the Home-Link scheme. Sheltered housing is available to applicants over 60 years of age and prior to an offer of a tenancy applicants will be subject to an assessment by the landlord of the accommodation to establish their prospective support needs and suitability to living in sheltered housing.

5.15 Extra care homes

5.15.1 Extra care homes are properties for older people where additional support services are provided. Extra care homes will not be advertised through Home-Link but will be made by an allocation panel.

5.16 Refusals of direct let

5.16.1 Where an applicant (other than a person owed the full homelessness duty) refuses a reasonable offer of a direct let a senior officer will review the reasons for the refusal and the applicant may lose any housing priority they held, dependent on the reasons for the offer refusal. Applicants have the right to ask for a review of this decision (see Chapter 6).

5.17 Local lettings plans

5.17.1 Local lettings plans are used within the sub region to help create balanced and sustainable communities. Where a local lettings plan applies, it will be stated in the property details when advertised. Details of any local lettings plans will be available from the local authority in whose area the property is situated. Some local lettings plans may ask for an applicant to have a local connection to a specific parish or village. In those cases, the connection criteria will be stipulated in the legal agreement for that development.

Chapter 6

6.1 Reviews of decisions

- 6.1.1 A designated senior officer will carry out reviews of assessment decisions as required.
- 6.1.2 Examples of circumstances that may be reviewed include:
- a) Multiple need in band
 - b) Emergency housing status
 - c) Moving people up a band or down a band
 - d) Priority assessments in complex cases.
 - e) Housing people in different accommodation to designated need size
 - f) Low priority decisions
 - g) Direct lets

The above list is not exhaustive.

6.2 Statutory reviews

- 6.2.1 An applicant has the right to request a review of certain decisions made under part 6 of the Housing Act 1996. These are:
- a) Decisions about the facts of the applicant's case which are likely to be, or have been, taken into account in considering whether to accept onto the housing register or to allocate housing accommodation to the applicant
 - b) Lack of any reasonable preference based on previous behaviour s167 (2C) Housing Act 1996
 - c) Ineligibility for an allocation based on immigration status s160A (9).
- 6.2.2 Decision letters issued in respect of housing applications will advise the applicant of their right to request a review and provide appropriate guidance on how to do this. An applicant can obtain further details of the review procedure from the council.
- 6.2.3 A request for a review of a decision can be made in writing or verbally to a member of staff at the council. The request should be made within 21 days following the notification of the decision. Reviews will be considered within 28 days of the request being received and the applicant will receive a written response outlining the result of the review.
- 6.2.4 An applicant will only be entitled to one internal review. If an applicant is still unhappy following the review of a decision, they can make a complaint through the council's complaints procedures, contact the Local Government Ombudsman (see s.6.4) or seek to challenge the decision via a judicial review.
- 6.2.5 Reviews will be undertaken by a designated officer who was not involved in the original decision, and who is senior to the original decision making officer.

6.3 Homeless reviews

- 6.3.1 Homeless applicants have the right to request a review of certain decisions made by Huntingdonshire District Council in respect of their homeless application. Within the context of the council's lettings policy this includes the decision to bring to an end the full homelessness duty by making a suitable offer of permanent accommodation via the housing register through the direct let mechanism (see s.5.12).

- 6.3.2 If an applicant wishes to request a review of the reasonableness of an offer or the suitability of the property, this must be made within 21 days of notification of a decision to make the offer. Late review requests can be considered under exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the local authority.
- 6.3.3 Applicants who request reviews of decisions about suitability of accommodation will be advised to accept and move into accommodation pending the outcome of their review request. If the review goes in their favour alternative accommodation will be provided as quickly as possible. However if the reasonableness and suitability of the offer is upheld the applicant will still have accommodation to live in whilst they consider their further options.
- 6.3.4 The applicant has the right of appeal to the County Court if he or she is dissatisfied with the decision on a homelessness review.

6.4 The Local Government Ombudsman

- 6.4.1 The Local Government Ombudsman investigates complaints of injustice arising from maladministration by local authorities and other bodies. They can be asked to investigate complaints about most council matters including housing.
- 6.4.2 If an applicant is not satisfied with the action the council has taken, and has exhausted the council's own complaints procedure, they can send a written complaint to the ombudsman.
- 6.4.3 The Local Government Ombudsman can be contacted at:

Local Government Ombudsman
The Oaks No 2
Westwood Way
Westwood Business Park
Coventry CV4 8JB
Tel: 024 7682 0000
Website: www.lgo.org.uk

If an applicant wishes to make a complaint against a housing association, they should contact:

The Housing Ombudsman Service
Norman House
105 -109 Strand
London
WC2R 0AA
Tel: 08457 125 973
Website: www.ihos.org.uk

Chapter 7

7.1 Letting of accommodation

- 7.1.1 Properties will be advertised through the sub regional CBL scheme. The advertising will be carried out on a regular basis and for specific periods of time, known as advertising cycles.

7.2 Labelling property advertisements

- 7.2.1 All adverts will include a description of the property and any other relevant information, for example rent charge, property size, length and type of tenancy, local facilities, disabled adaptations or if the property is sheltered housing. The property will be labelled to show who is able to express an interest in it (known as bidding), for example, where a local connection is required, or if there is an age restriction on the property.
- 7.2.2 Applicants should check the information contained in the property advert labelling to see if they qualify to be considered for the property.

7.3 Bedroom requirements

- 7.3.1 Bedroom requirements will generally be determined in line with the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) regulations (see s.5.5).
- 7.3.2 Landlords may choose to allow the under-occupation of certain properties including those that they advertise. The property advert will explain this on those properties the landlord is willing to under-occupy. Where a landlord is willing to allow under-occupation this will generally be by allowing an applicant to be considered for one bedroom more than their assessed Local Housing Allowance (LHA) entitlement (for example allowing applicants with an assessed two bedroom LHA need to be considered for a 3 bedroom property). All households bidding for these properties and meeting the labelling criteria will be considered in line with the shortlisting criteria contained in 7.4.1 below.
- 7.3.3 Where a landlord is willing to allow under-occupation an affordability assessment will be completed to ensure that the applicant being considered for the property is able to meet rent payments. If the applicant is assessed as being unable to afford the rent payments the landlord may bypass them on the shortlist.

7.4 Shortlisting

- 7.4.1 After the end of an advertising cycle a shortlist of applicants bidding for the property and meeting the labelling criteria will be produced. Applicants will be ranked in order of their priority band with band A above band B, band B above band C, and band C above band D. Where more than one applicant in the same priority band appears on the shortlist they will be ranked in date order as determined by their date in band (see 2.3). In circumstances where there is more than one applicant in the same band with the same date in band, the applicant with the earliest registration date will appear higher on the shortlist. If there is more than one applicant with the same band, date in band and registration date a senior officer will make an allocation decision based on the best use of the housing stock and needs of the applicants.
- 7.4.2 When a shortlist of applicants is completed the landlord of the available property will offer an accompanied viewing of the property to the highest priority applicants. This is

to ensure that if the applicant who tops the shortlist decides not to take the tenancy, the property can be quickly offered to the next person on the shortlist.

- 7.4.3 After viewing the property the applicant at the top of the shortlist will be given 24 hours to accept or refuse the offer. If an applicant is offered a tenancy (verbally or in writing) and does not reply to accept that offer within the deadline given, the landlord will take this as a refusal of the offer. If the offer is refused the next person on the short list will be offered the property. The landlord will work down the shortlist in order.
- 7.4.4 In exceptional circumstances a senior officer may make a decision to bypass an applicant on a shortlist e.g. if, in doing so, the offer could put a vulnerable person at risk of any harm. Any such decisions will be explained fully to the applicant in writing by the landlord making the decision.

7.5 Formal offer of the property

- 7.5.1 Once the applicant has confirmed their acceptance of the tenancy the landlord of the property will write to confirm the formal offer of the tenancy. The Home-Link system will then not allow that applicant to be considered for any further properties and once the tenancy starts their housing register application will be cancelled.
- 7.5.2 Once the property is ready to let the landlord of the property will complete the tenancy sign up.

7.6 Withdrawal of offers

- 7.6.1 In exceptional circumstances an offer of a property may be withdrawn, for example:
- a) Where there has been a change in the applicants' circumstances
 - b) Where the successful applicant has rent arrears or other housing related debts that had previously not come to light
 - c) Following verification the applicant is not eligible for the property
 - d) Where an error has been made in the advertising criteria
 - e) Where an offer of accommodation could put a vulnerable person at risk of any harm.

7.7 Refusing an offer of accommodation

- 7.7.1 Usually, if an applicant refuses an offer of accommodation made through Home-Link, they will remain in their housing needs band. If an applicant refuses three offers of a property made through Home-Link, a housing officer will contact the applicant to offer support and assistance and verify their circumstances.

7.8 Allocations to staff, council members or their family members

- 7.8.1 Members of staff, their close family and elected members who require housing with Huntingdonshire District Council may apply for housing in the same way as other applicants. Their status should be disclosed on the application form at the time of applying.
- 7.8.2 If an applicant who is a member of staff, elected member or a member of their direct family, makes a successful bid for a property the Head of Customer Services will be informed and must approve the letting prior to the formal offer being made.

7.9 Tenancy management outside the scope of the lettings policy

7.9.1 The following tenancy management areas are not included as part of this lettings policy as they are not included within part 6 of the Housing Act 1996:

- a) Mutual exchanges
- b) Introductory tenancies converted to secure tenancies
- c) Where a secure tenancy of a property is assigned by way of succession to the same property
- d) Where a secure tenancy is assigned to someone who would be qualified to succeed to that tenancy if the secure tenant died immediately before the assignment
- e) Where court orders are made under one of the following:
 - i. Section 24 of the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973
 - ii. Section 17 (1) of the Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984
 - iii. Paragraph 1 of schedule 1 to the Children Act 1989

Chapter 8

8.0 Confidentiality and access to information

8.1 Applicants' Rights to Information

8.1.1 Applicants have the right to request such general information as will enable them to assess:

- a) How their application is likely to be treated under the Lettings Policy (including in particular whether they are likely to be regarded as a member of a group of people who are to be given preference by virtue of this Policy, (see Chapter 3))
- b) Whether housing accommodation appropriate to their needs is likely to be made available to them.

8.1.2 Applicants have the right to request information held about their application which is likely to be, or has been, taken into account when considering whether to allocate them housing.

8.2 Data protection

8.2.1 When an applicant applies to the Home-Link scheme the PO's will only ask for information that they need to assess their eligibility and housing needs. The PO's will collect and keep data in accordance with the council's guidelines on handling personal data.

8.2.2 These guidelines are in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 which covers both electronic and manual records and the Act governs everything we do with the personal data, including collecting, storing, using and disposing of it.

8.2.3 Confidential information held about applicants will not be disclosed to third parties apart from:

- a) Where the individual who is the subject of the confidential information has consented to the disclosure
- b) Where the council or a PO is required by law to make such disclosures
- c) Where disclosure is made in accordance with an information sharing protocol

8.3 Requesting information

8.3.1 Applicants are able to request copies of the information held regarding their application. This information is held in line with Data Protection Act guidelines. Please note that we cannot provide you with personal information about other people if doing so will breach the Data Protection Act 1998.

Appendix 1

Cambridge Sub regional Choice Based Lettings

Partner Organisation List

Local Authority

Cambridge City Council

PO Box 700
Cambridge
CB1 0JH
Email: CBL@cambridge.gov.uk
Website: www.cambridge.gov.uk

South Cambridgeshire District Council

South Cambridgeshire Hall
Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge
CB23 6EA
Email: cbl@scambs.gov.uk
Website: www.scambs.gov.uk

East Cambridgeshire District Council,

The Grange
Nutholt Lane
Ely
Cambs.
CB7 4PL
Email: customerservices@eastcambs.gov.uk
Website: www.eastcambs.gov.uk

Huntingdonshire District Council

Pathfinder House
St Mary's Street
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE29 3TN
Email:
housingservices@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Website: www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Fenland District Council

Fenland Hall
County Road
March
Cambridgeshire
PE15 8NQ
Email: info@fenland.gov.uk
Website: www.fenland.gov.uk

LSVT Landlord

Sanctuary Housing

Avro House
49 Lancaster Way Business Park
Ely
Cambs
CB6 3NW
Email: contactus@sanctuary-housing.co.uk
Website: www.sanctuary-housing.co.uk

Luminus Group

Brook House
Ouse Walk
Huntingdon
Cambridgeshire
PE29 3QW
Email: homes@luminus.org.uk
Website: www.luminus.org.uk

Roddons Housing Association

Beacon House
23 Hostmoor Avenue
March
Cambridgeshire
PE15 0AX
Email: roddensenquiries@circle.org.uk
Website: www.circle.org.uk/roddons/

Local Authority

Forest Heath District Council

College Heath Road
Mildenhall
Suffolk
IP28 7EY

Email: cbl@forest-heath.gov.uk

Website: www.forest-heath.gov.uk

St Edmundsbury Borough Council

West Suffolk House
Western Way
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
IP33 3YU

Email: home-link@stedsbcc.gov.uk

Website: www.stedmundsbury.gov.uk

LSVT Landlord

Flagship Housing Group

Keswick Hall
Keswick
Norwich
Norfolk
NR4 6TJ

Email: info@flagship-housing.co.uk

Website: www.flagship-housing.co.uk

Havebury Housing Partnership

Havebury House
Western Way
Bury St. Edmunds
Suffolk
IP33 3SP

Email: office@havebury.com

Website: www.havebury.com

Appendix 2

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Adapted properties – A property that has been adapted for an applicant with disabilities.

Advertising cycle – How often properties are advertised and available to make a bid on.

Advertised - Properties that are advertised and are available for applicants to bid for under CBL.

Age restrictions - Where a property is labelled, as only being available to applicants of a certain age.

Application number - A unique housing number generated by the computer system.

Bedroom eligibility - How many bedrooms a household is assessed as needing.

Bid – The process used by applicants in registering an interest in an available property.

Choice Based Lettings (CBL) - A method of allocating social and affordable homes which have become available for letting by openly advertising them, and allowing applicants to bid for these.

Customer/Applicant - Is either a tenant of a Partner Organisation (PO) (including those in temporary accommodation) or a housing applicant on the Home-Link sub-regional housing register.

Date of registration - The date an application form is registered with a PO

Date in band - The date an application is placed in a housing needs band and used as the applicable date when short-listing.

Decision making organization - The PO that made a particular decision with regard to a housing or homeless application.

Direct let - Property that is offered directly to an applicant, without them having to bid.

Domestic violence - Is threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (physical, psychological, sexual, financial or emotional) by a former partner or associated person.

Housing Associations - Also known as Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) and Registered Providers (RP's). These are landlords who also provide social and affordable rented homes for which applicants/ customers can bid for through the Home-Link CBL scheme.

Housing options - Looking at the number of ways in which an applicant or customer might be assisted and supported to find a solution to their housing needs. Housing options may include private rented accommodation, mutual exchange, or even a home-buy product.

Housing needs register - A list of those requesting and qualifying for housing.

Housing Related Debts - Are defined as current rent arrears, former tenant arrears, outstanding re-chargeable repairs, current and former housing related service charge arrears and court costs. They do not include Council Tax debts or Housing Benefit overpayments.

Joint Application - Where one or more applicant applies to join the housing register on one application form.

Labelling properties - Describing who is eligible to bid for a property

Local Connection - The connection an applicant has to a specific area within the sub region

Local elected members - Each local authority is governed by a group of elected member.

LSVT Landlord - Large Scale Voluntary Transfer, where a Local authority has sold its housing stock to a Registered Social Landlord

Mutual exchange - A scheme which allows two tenants to swap their homes.

Partner organizations (PO's) - All the organizations that are partners to the Sub regional CBL scheme these may be local authority or RSL organizations.

The Cambridge Sub Region - The seven Local Authorities that make up the sub-region.

Transferring tenant - An applicant who is currently a tenant of a local authority or housing association.

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Service area	Housing
Date of assessment	November 2012
Name of strategy/policy/function/service to be assessed	Lettings Policy
Is this a new or existing strategy/policy/function/service?	Amendments to existing Lettings Policy
Name of manager responsible for strategy/policy/function/service	Julia Barber
Names of people conducting the assessment	Jon collen
Step 1 – Description of strategy/policy/function/service	
Describe the aims; objectives and purpose of the strategy/policy/function/ service (include how it fits in to wider aims or strategic objectives).	<p>The lettings policy aims to ensure that all people seeking social housing in Huntingdonshire are able to exercise choice in deciding where they wish to live and in the type of property they would prefer.</p> <p>The policy enables Huntingdonshire District Council to consider the individual needs of its applicants whilst making best use of the scarce resource of housing stock. The policy sets out:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) How to apply for housing. b) Who will qualify to be accepted onto the housing register. c) How priority for housing applicants will be given. d) What the decision-making processes are e) How homes will be let. <p>The objectives of the Lettings Policy are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To meet the legal requirements for letting social housing

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- To assist customers in the highest assessed need
- To make the best use of existing housing stock
- To provide a consistent lettings process across the sub-region, so properties are let in a fair and transparent way
- To provide increase choice and information to customers in the allocation of social housing
- To support vulnerable customers accessing available homes
- To ensure that customers are not discriminate against, whether directly or indirectly
- To provide a wider housing options approach in supporting customers to meet their housing needs
- To improve mobility across the sub-region
- To promote social inclusion and help achieve sustainable communities.

The Equality Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations, the Council also needs to demonstrate its compliance with the Equality Duty. The Council therefore needs to understand how its decisions and activities impact on different people, specifically employees and how they are affected by policies and practices. An Equality Impact Assessment is the current method by which the Council can assess and keep a record of the impact of new or amended strategies, policies, functions or services.

Definition of Adverse Impact - occurs when a decision, practice, or policy has a disproportionately negative effect on a protected group. Adverse Impact may be unintentional

Adverse impact can be measured statistically:

Are there any (existing) equality objectives of the strategy/policy or function/**service**

See above objectives



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Who is intended to benefit from the strategy/policy/function/service and in what way?	Applicants on the Housing Register and those approaching the Council for advice, however potentially any resident or existing tenant in the district may apply for housing. Stakeholders include housing associations and both statutory and voluntary support agencies.
What are the intended outcomes of this strategy/policy/function/service?	See aims and objectives above
Step 2 – Data	
What baseline quantitative data (statistics) do you have about the strategy/policy/function/service relating to equalities groups (e.g. monitoring data on proportions of service users compared to proportions in the population), relevant to this policy?	<i>Monitoring from the Locata IT system, which holds the Housing Register and details from previous reviews of the Home-link scheme, Subscribers lists, assisted bidders lists, bid method information, etc. 23,300 households across the Home-Link partnership (7 councils) of which 2,662 are Huntingdonshire register applicants.</i>
What qualitative data (opinions etc) do you have on different groups (e.g. comments from previous consumer satisfaction surveys/consultation, feedback exercises, or evidence from other authorities undertaking similar work), relevant to this strategy/policy/function/service?	We have now consulted applicants and stakeholders on the proposed changes. <i>A full consultation plan was drawn up to cover the formal consultation covering a wide range of individuals including applicants, stakeholders, agencies, staff etc. A range of methods was used including individual letters to applicants, website promotions, events, etc.</i>



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Consultation with both customers and stakeholders was carried out between July-Sept 2012 through a questionnaire and events. Overall, the responses were positive and have helped to inform the final Lettings policy and implementation, and issues relating to access to the service and any problems with this will inform a review of the Access Strategy.

- *72% felt that improvements to the website will improve access to information.*
- *78% felt that the personalised property list will be a suitable replacement for the printed magazine.*
- *63% agreed that only people with a local connection to the area should be able to apply for housing.*
- *48% agreed with the method of using the date in service as a fair way of prioritising applications from former armed service personnel. (Most responses of a negative nature related to the issue of former armed service personnel having priority, as opposed to the method of awarding this – and this is a legal requirement).*
- *81% agreed with additional priority being awarded for over-crowding and under-occupation.*

The Equality Act 2010 requires us to consider the impact of our services on the protected characteristics of; Age, Disability, Gender, (including Gender Reassignment), Disability, Marriage /Civil Partnership, Sexual Orientation and Religion and Belief. Click on the link below for definitions of the protected characteristics listed.

<http://initiatives.huntsdc.gov.uk/Equality%20and%20Diversity/Equality%20Act%202010/Glossary%20of%20terms.doc>

Are there concerns that the strategy/policy/function/service could have

Ethnicity: *There appears to be a high percentage of White Other*



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<p>a differential impact on different racial groups; this refers to a group of people defined by their race, colour, and nationality (including citizenship) ethnic or national origins. Gypsy/Travellers are distinct group within this category.</p> <p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p><i>(10%) on the housing register on average across the seven authorities. This is likely to reflect the growing eastern European workers living in the area. This may highlight a need for translation services.</i></p> <p>Locally - the 2001 Census recorded nearly 4,500 Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) residents, accounting for 2.8% of the population. This was lower than the Cambridgeshire level of 4.1%, the regional level of 4.7% and the national average of 9.1%. Experimental statistics from the Office for National Statistics have estimated that the BME population more than doubled to 10,000 by mid-2007, increasing the proportion of BME residents to nearly 6% and reducing the proportion of White residents from 97.2% to 94%*. Information relating to ethnicity from 2011 Census is not yet available</p> <p>*Population Estimates by Ethnic Groups (experimental), © ONS, Crown Copyright 2008 www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=14238</p> <p>Appendix One (NINo registrations to adult overseas nationals entering the UK by Ward) indicates a higher proportion of these registrations are within the Huntingdon North Ward. Language barriers may well need to be considered as an issue for some residents in this area. However information can be made available in different formats.</p>
<p>Are there concerns that the strategy/policy/function/service could have a differential impact on younger or older people?</p> <p>What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>Age: <i>There is a broad spread of ages on the housing register with most customers in the 16-49 and over 65 age groups. Fewer customers are in the age group between 50 and 65 but this is likely to reflect a more stable period in people's lives with housing not</i></p>



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	<p><i>being an issue. Bidding by age shows that people under 60 are most likely to bid on-line with a range between 80% and 93%, with those over 50 bidding on-line reducing by age band from 64% at 60-69 to 44% from 90-99 years of age. Many family members are thought to bid on behalf of older relatives.</i></p> <p>Mid-2008 Population Estimates that 18.3% of residents are estimated to be of pensionable age (males 65+, females 60+), The Mid 2012 population projections – estimate that 17% of the Hunts population is aged 65+ (see Appendix One) therefore consideration of older people is essential. It is considered that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Older people may be at an advantage as they may be offered properties with a spare bedroom as they are not subject to the LHA rules. • Older people will also benefit from increased priority for downsizing should they wish to move • Older people on the subscribers list will be sent more personalised information than before. <p>However, Children may be disadvantaged by the new matching policy restricting the size of home offered.</p> <p>More officer time will be available to support people as more able customers will be able to apply on-line and information can be made available in different formats.</p>
<p>Are there concerns that the strategy/policy/function/service could have a differential impact on gender, including transgender people? What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>No adverse impact identified</p>



<p>Are there concerns that the strategy/policy/function/service could have a differential impact on part time/full time employees? What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>No adverse impact identified</p>
<p>Are there concerns that the strategy/policy/function/service could have a differential impact on disabled people? What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>Vulnerability: <i>There is a broad range of vulnerabilities reflected on the register, with physical disability and mental health problems being the highest. There has been an issue with the capture of disability information on the housing register so current data is incomplete. When the housing register is reviewed the inclusion of vulnerability data will be mandatory and a clearer picture should emerge.</i></p> <p>No single figure exists to record the total number of disabled people living in the area; however, there are a range of indicators from various sources that suggest there are a significant number of residents with disabilities living in Huntingdonshire (see Appendix One) therefore consideration on people with a disability is essential. It is considered that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>there will be an increased priority for people if a disability is affected by current housing</i> • <i>there will be more accessible on line options for applicants (along with support workers and family) to find information and access Home-link 24/7</i> • <i>If subscribe to Personalised Property list this will be a prompt to bid, and</i> • <i>Information can be made available in different formats.</i> <p><i>However, children with a disability will have to justify why they require separate bedrooms making applications take longer to process.</i></p>

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<p>Are there concerns that the strategy/policy/function/service could have a differential impact in terms of marriage and civil partnership</p>	<p>No adverse impact identified</p>
<p>Are there concerns that the strategy/policy/function/service could have a differential impact in terms of pregnancy and maternity (e.g. pregnant or breast feeding women)</p>	<p><i>Pregnant women will not be offered accommodation including a bedroom for the child until the child is born unless any HB shortfall in the rent can be met from other sources</i></p>
<p>Are there concerns that the strategy/policy/function/service could have a differential impact on lesbian, gay man, bisexual or heterosexual (straight) people?What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>No adverse impact identified</p>
<p>Are there concerns that the strategy/policy/function/service could have a differential impact on grounds of religion or belief? What evidence do you have for your answer?</p>	<p>No adverse impact identified</p>
<p>Are there concerns that the strategy/policy/function/service could have a differential impact in terms of specific characteristics of Huntingdonshire e.g. Rural isolation</p>	<p>Impact in terms of rural isolation have been considered for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Increased accessibility via on-line services</i> • <i>Personalised property sheets can be sent to individuals by post</i> • <i>Increased communication by email</i> • <i>Withdrawal of magazine/not available in local pick up points – this can be replaced by a personalised property sheet for those, for whom this would cause a disadvantage.</i>

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Findings

There are two areas where adverse impact have been identified:, one relating to children and the other, pregnant women:

- Children may be disadvantaged by the new matching policy restricting the size of home offered
- *Children with a disability will have to justify why they require separate bedrooms making applications take longer to process.*
- Pregnant women will not be offered accommodation including a bedroom for the child until the child is born unless any HB shortfall in the rent can be met from other sources

These are as a result of Government legislation. In addition the requirements for allocating social renting are the same as the size requirements for those renting privately. We can also consider how we apply Discretionary Housing Payments locally and whether or not these can be used to reduce some of the impact, at least in the short term.

Recommendations

- Monitor impact of the changes (how?)
- FAQ leaflet?



Appendix 1

NINo registrations to adult overseas nationals entering the UK, by year of NINO registration and ward
2003 Ward Boundaries

Ward Name	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012
Buckden	10	10	-	5	10
Earith	15	15	15	15	10
Ellington	15	10	10	15	5
Elton and Folksworth	20	5	10	5	5
Fenstanton	10	15	10	10	10
Godmanchester	35	30	15	35	30
Gransden and The Offords	20	10	10	15	20
Huntingdon East	115	95	85	90	75
Huntingdon North	305	305	235	240	260
Huntingdon West	135	140	95	110	95
Kimbolton and Staughton	15	10	5	10	10
Little Paxton	15	10	15	15	25
Ramsey	40	30	20	15	15
St Ives East	55	45	35	40	40
St Ives South	75	40	35	40	45
St Ives West	15	15	5	10	15
St Neots Eaton Ford	60	50	10	40	15
St Neots Eaton Socon	30	15	25	35	20
St Neots Eynesbury	50	60	25	50	45
St Neots Priory Park	35	50	25	70	55



Ward Name	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	2011/2012
Sawtry	10	10	10	5	10
Somersham	10	20	15	10	10
Stilton	10	5	5	-	-
The Hemingfords	10	20	10	15	5
Upwood and The Raveleys	5	10	5	5	10
Warboys and Bury	10	20	5	10	5
Yaxley and Farcet	15	20	10	20	15

Age

In the district, 18.3% of residents are estimated to be of pensionable age (males 65+, females 60+), which is lower than the county average of 18.7%*. 17% of those receiving Income Support in November 2009 were aged over 50**, and 45% of all Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance claimants were aged over 50***.

The projections also show reduced numbers of people in younger age groups, which would mean a much older population profile by 2021

* Mid-2008 Population Estimates, Office for National Statistics (ONS). Crown Copyright 2009 www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=15106

** Income Support Claimants at November 2009 www.nomisweb.co.uk

*** Incapacity Benefit / Severe Disablement Allowance at November 2009 www.nomisweb.co.uk

Ethnicity

Locally - the 2001 Census recorded nearly 4,500 Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) residents, accounting for 2.8% of the population. This was lower than the Cambridgeshire level of 4.1%, the regional level of 4.7% and the national average of 9.1%.

Experimental statistics from the Office for National Statistics have estimated that the BME population more than doubled to 10,000 by mid-2007, increasing the proportion of BME residents to nearly 6% and reducing the proportion of White residents from 97.2% to 94%*.

Information relating to ethnicity from 2011 Census is not yet available

*Population Estimates by Ethnic Groups (experimental), © ONS, Crown Copyright 2008 www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=14238



Disability

No single figure exists to record the total number of disabled people living in the district Council area; however, there are a range of indicators from various sources that suggest there are a significant number of residents with disabilities living in Huntingdonshire:

- 5,610 people were claiming Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in November 2009 (3.4% of all people in the district); this is below the national average of 5%*
- 3,380 people were claiming Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA) - 2.6% of all residents aged 16 or over in the district; this is below the national average of 4.3%**
- The 2001 Census results showed 13.5% (21,263) of all people in the district stated that they had a limiting long-term illness
- 6.3% of people in the district (9,820 people) reported that their general health had been 'not good' over the twelve months before the 2001 Census
- 2.9% (3,269) of people aged 16-74 in the district were recorded as being economically inactive due to permanent sickness or disability (2001 Census)

* Disability Living Allowance Claimants at November 2009 www.nomisweb.co.uk

** Incapacity Benefit / Severe Disablement Allowance at November 2009 www.nomisweb.co.uk

COMT

3 December 2012

CABINET

13 December 2012

The Technical Reform of Council Tax (Report by the Head of Customer Services)

1 FINANCIAL IMPACT

- 1.1 If members approve this change, then we can expect to collect an additional £814k pa in Council Tax from 2013 onwards.

2. INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 Cabinet on 13 September 2012 approved in principle the introduction of Council Tax Technical Reforms, the legislation for which had not been given Royal Assent. The Local Government Finance Act 2012 has now been passed, so Cabinet may now approve the proposed scheme.

3. THE CURRENT POSITION AND POLICY

- 3.1 Since the Council Tax (Prescribed Classes of Dwellings) (England) Regulations 2003 came into force on 1st April 2004 this authority has granted the minimum levels of discount to both "long term empty properties" and "second homes" i.e. 0% and 10% respectively.
- 3.2 There are provisions however for "job related" second homes where people are required to live in property provided by their employers for the requirements of their employment including service personnel, ministers of religion, managers of licensed premises etc. The discount is prescribed as 50% in those cases and will continue to be so under the new regime.
- 3.3 The effect of any decision to reduce the level of discounts is to increase the Tax Base and the income derived by all preceptors proportionately to the amount of their precept. In simple terms, as the District Council only accounts for 8.5% of the aggregated council tax charge in 2012/13 that is how much more it would benefit in respect of any increased charge (due to reduced discounts).

4. POTENTIAL CHANGES

- 4.1 Unoccupied and substantially unfurnished domestic properties are currently totally exempt from charge under Class C of the Council Tax (Exempt Dwellings) Order 1992 for up to six months. This exemption class is to be revoked from 1 April 2013 and replaced by a locally defined discount with the billing authority having complete discretion to remove or amend the discount.

- 4.2 Likewise uninhabitable domestic property that requires or is undergoing major repair or structural alteration is exempt (Class A) for up to twelve months. The billing authority will have complete discretion over the level of the discount.
- 4.3 Furnished domestic property that is no-one's main residence, commonly referred to as "second homes" (and not job related) currently receive the minimum 10% discount. From 1 April 2013 the billing authority will have complete discretion to remove the discount.
- 4.4 The legislation allows a billing authority to levy an empty premium on properties left vacant for over two years. The premium is 50% meaning that 150% of the full council tax liability could be charged in such cases.
- 4.5 The legislation permits taxpayers to have the right to request twelve instalments at the start of the year, but if they do not then the default scheme remains as now at ten instalments.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS OF DISCOUNT POLICY

- 5.1 It is never possible to accurately forecast the amount of income generated by a change of policy for future years as factors such as the housing market and number of long or short term empty properties will change. There will be an inevitable risk of "avoidance" and many small and irrecoverable debts caused by an aggressive policy, which would also cause administrative inefficiencies and appeals over liability for example, who was the "owner" on the date of the bill, and property developers challenging the validity of "completion notices".
- 5.2 We can say that the level of Exemptions/Discounts granted in the past year up to September 2012 has been approximately:

Type:	£
Class C (Unoccupied and substantially unfurnished)	1,303,000
Class A (Uninhabitable)	135,000
"Second Home"	39,000

- 5.3 The most straightforward and efficient change is to remove the second home discount as, whilst there will be some small element of avoidance (a single occupant will, and currently does, pay less than for a second home) the administration and monitoring costs will be largely removed and the 10% extra charge is unlikely to be an excessive burden for a second home.
- 5.4 With regards to unoccupied and substantially unfurnished properties we can confidently say that any move to charge council tax from "Day 1" would cause significant complications. Allowing a one month void period would allow most residents and landlords to hand over their property to the next occupant. Using best estimates of extra income (to be shared by each preceptor) is £775k pa from 2013 onwards (assuming 2% Council Tax increase).

- 5.5 Any Registered Social Landlord who is also a registered charity would be eligible to claim exemption for up to six months under the “Class B” (charitable) provisions.
- 5.6 There appears to be merit in continuing with the Class A (uninhabitable) exiting arrangements at least initially to encourage necessary improvement to housing stock and to return it to occupation.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 It is recommended that, subject to the enactment of the relevant legislation:
- 6.1.1. Unoccupied and unfurnished (Class C) properties be granted 100% discount for 1 month and then 0% thereafter.
- 6.1.2 Second Home Discount is reduced to 0%.
- 6.1.3 Uninhabitable properties (Class A) be granted 100% discount for a maximum of 12 months (no change).
- 6.1.4 Empty Homes Premium be levied after two years at 50% in addition to the 100% charge currently made.
- 6.1.5 Monthly instalments continue to be due on the 15th day of each month (extended to those requesting 12 monthly instalments) but managers be permitted to include an additional instalment date purely as an incentive for those opting to pay by direct debit.
- 6.1.6 that, in accordance with section 10 – 13 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012 the Head of Customer Services be authorised to calculate and award such discounts and the Council’s scheme of delegation be amended accordingly.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Background Papers:

- Technical reform for Council Tax: Summary of responses report
- Council Tax Information Letter 2/2012
- Cabinet report 12 September 2012

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**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
(SOCIAL WELL-BEING)**

4 DECEMBER 2012

CABINET

13 DECEMBER 2012

COUNCIL

19 DECEMBER 2012

COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT FROM 1 APRIL 2013 (Report by the Head of Customer Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The current national Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme is to be abolished on 31 March 2013 and will be replaced by a local Council Tax Support scheme on 1 April 2013. The Local Government Finance Act 2012 has now received Royal Assent.
- 1.2 The Council has undertaken a statutory consultation exercise on the Draft Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme, The results have informed the design of the final scheme and are included in this report for Members' consideration.
- 1.3 The scheme must be in place by 31 January 2013 and have received full Council approval. Failure to do so will result in the Government's default scheme being imposed which will follow Council Tax Benefit rules and therefore cost more.
- 1.4 Financial information is contained within this report. A separate paper is also on the Cabinet agenda regarding the Council Tax Technical Reforms which enable local authorities to amend some of the discounts currently granted on properties. These changes generate more income to the Council and will be used to mitigate the impact of the budget cuts in relation to the CTS scheme.
- 1.5 Pensioners must be protected from any changes and receive the same amount of support that they would under the current CTB scheme. They are not impacted by CTS.

2. FINANCIAL UPDATE

- 2.1 In October 2012, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced that transitional funding would be made available to councils whose schemes met three specific criteria. One of the criteria was to limit the amount of CTS to not less than 91.5% of the full council tax charge.
- 2.2 Assuming all criteria were met, HDC and its major preceptors would have been eligible for additional funding of £189K. This grant would be for 2013/14 only, and the Council would have to revert to an alternative scheme the following year.

2.3 The table shows the impact on the collection fund for both the HDC proposed scheme and the government transitional scheme.

	Proposed Scheme £'000	Transitional Scheme £'000
Impact on Collection Fund*		
Council Tax support	7721	8141
Council Tax Technical Reforms	<u>-814</u>	<u>-814</u>
	6907	7327
Government grants to HDC and precepting authorities	<u>-6984</u>	<u>-6984</u>
Extra transitional grant		<u>-189</u>
Net Impact	<u>-77</u>	<u>154</u>
Impact on individual authorities		
Towns / parishes	-42	-42
County	-54	109
Fire	-3	6
Police	-9	18
HDC **	<u>31</u>	<u>63</u>
	<u>-77</u>	<u>154</u>

* Assumes all preceptors increase Council Tax by 2%

** In addition, HDC faces additional costs of around £195k in either case

2.4 It is therefore proposed that HDC approve the HDC scheme and reject the transitional grant proposed by the Government.

3. SCHEME DETAILS

3.1 The following principles were at the core of designing the HDC draft Council Tax Support scheme and were the subject of the consultation:

- everyone of working age should pay something towards their Council Tax (although there was some protection for the most vulnerable)
- the scheme should provide some protection for the most vulnerable in society
- the scheme should incentivise and support people moving into work and help those on low paid work.

A summary of the differences between the current CTB scheme and the proposed CTS scheme which the Council consulted on is shown at [Appendix A](#).

- 3.2 CTS for pensioners will be worked out using a set of prescribed regulations which in effect mirrors the current CTB regulations.
- 3.3 In order to make the necessary savings and to be able to provide some protection for the most vulnerable claimants, the scheme for working age people will mean that the majority of claimants will have their CTS entitlement based on 80% of the Council Tax charge. Households with a child under the age of 5 will have their entitlement based on 85% of the charge and people in receipt of the Severe Disability or Disabled Child Premium will have their CTS based on the full charge.
- 3.4 This means that a large number of people who currently don't have to pay anything towards the Council Tax will have to; this includes people on Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance or Employment Support Allowance.
- 3.5 Officers have prepared an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) that shows the impact of the proposals on affected groups of people with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010. Members are required to have "Due Regard" to this assessment when making their decision. [The EIA is available on this link.](#)
- 3.6 In particular, members are requested to note the findings on page 11 of the EIA document, and have due regard to the comments about child benefit and child maintenance income.

4. CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The consultation took place between 20 August and 14 October 2012, and we received 424 responses. A complete report showing the analysis of the consultation and the comments received can be found [here](#). A summary of the responses is at [Appendix B](#)
- 4.2 In the main, responses to the consultation have been reasonably positive. As expected, groups who are to be most affected by the changes have been less inclined to support any reduction. Having considered the feedback received, the Project Board recommends that the draft scheme be (in the main) adopted.
- 4.3 However, the following exceptions to the draft CTS scheme are being put forward for the reasons set out below;
- Backdating of up to six months should be allowed as currently under the Council Tax Benefit scheme. This is to allow parity with the Housing Benefit scheme and to prevent small, hard to collect debts being created.
 - The capital limit should not be reduced to £10k but remain at the existing CTB level of £16k and include tariff income from capital. This will allow parity with the Housing Benefit scheme and should make administration easier once Universal Credit is implemented.
- 4.4 A full version of the proposed CTS scheme can be found via [this link](#).

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 That, having paid due regard to the Equality Impact Assessment, the HDC Proposed Council Tax Support Scheme be approved.
- 5.2 That, in accordance with Section 10 and Schedule 4 of the Local Government Finance Act 2012, the Head of Customer Services be authorised to administer the Council Tax Support Scheme and the Council's scheme of delegation be amended accordingly.'

Background papers:

<http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/Money%20and%20Benefits/Pages/CouncilTaxSupportConsultation.aspx>

**Contact
Officer:**

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Summary of the Main Changes between Council Tax Benefit and the Draft Council Tax Support Scheme 2013/14

The table below shows a brief overview of how certain rules in the current Council Tax Benefit scheme will be dealt with under Huntingdonshire District Council's draft Council Tax Support Scheme. For full details on the proposals of our draft scheme please refer to the 'Draft Council Tax Support Scheme' document.

Feature of Draft Scheme	Council Tax Benefit Scheme	Local Council Tax Support Scheme	Paragraph in Draft Scheme
Pension age customers	Assessed under a national set of rules.	No change.	2.2
Working age customers	Assessed under a national set of rules.	Entitlement will be assessed under locally defined rules.	2.4
Council Tax amount used in benefit calculation for most customers	Benefit entitlement assessed using 100% of the Council Tax charge.	No change for pension age customers but entitlement assessed using 80% of the Council Tax charge for most working age customers.	2.8
Council Tax amount used in benefit calculation for vulnerable customers	Benefit entitlement assessed using 100% of the Council Tax charge.	No change for pension age customers but entitlement assessed using 85% of the Council Tax charge for working age customers with children under the age of 5. Working age customers who receive a severe disability or disabled child premium in the assessment of their Council Tax Support, Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance (IB) or Employment Support Allowance (IR) to have entitlement based on 100% of the Council Tax charge.	2.8, 3.1

Feature of Draft Scheme	Council Tax Benefit Scheme	Local Council Tax Support Scheme	Paragraph in Draft Scheme
Child Benefit income	Not counted as part of the benefit assessment.	Child Benefit in respect of the eldest child will not be counted in the income assessment but all other Child Benefit will be included.	2.10
Child Maintenance income	Not counted as part of the benefit assessment.	Only the first £10 per week will not be counted in the income assessment.	2.11
Earned income disregards	Different amounts of earnings are not included in the benefit assessment depending on certain circumstances. The main earned disregards are £5 per week for single people and £10 per week for couples.	The first £10 received each week in respect of a single person and the first £20 received each week in respect of couples will not be counted in the income assessment. This doubles the amount currently disregarded under Council Tax Benefit.	2.12
	<p>An additional earnings disregard can also be awarded where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ It is included in Working Tax Credit, or ➤ Customers (or their partner) with children are working 16 hours or more each week, or ➤ Single people are aged 25 or more and work at least 30 hours each week, or ➤ Couples without children are working, and the person in work is aged at least 25 and working at least 30 hours each week 	Similar qualification rules for an additional earnings disregard will apply as under Council Tax Benefit but, customers (or their partner) with children must be working 24 hours or more each week.	2.13
Savings	No entitlement to benefit where savings are at or above £16,000. In addition, £1 per week is added to the income assessment for every £250 where savings exceed £6000.	No entitlement to support where savings are at or above £10,000. No additional income will be added to the income assessment.	2.15
Non-dependants (people who live in the customers)	A range of deductions from benefit can be made based on a non-dependants age, whether they are working and their level of income. No deduction is made where the non-dependant is	There will be two levels of deduction for working age customers - £5 per week for each non-dependant not in work, and £7 per week for each non-dependant in work.	2.16

Feature of Draft Scheme	Council Tax Benefit Scheme	Local Council Tax Support Scheme	Paragraph in Draft Scheme
household)	receiving Pension Credit, Income Support, Income Based Job Seekers Allowance or Income Related Employment Support Allowance.		
Second Adult Rebate	Rebate that assesses the income of second adult(s) in the property and allows for Council Tax reduction of up to 25%.	Second Adult Rebate will be abolished for working age customers.	2.17
Discretionary Support Fund	Additional benefit can be awarded in exceptional circumstances but is based on local discretion and limited funds.	We are considering the possibility of setting up a limited fund to provide additional help in exceptional circumstances. No details have been decided at this stage.	2.20

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

The detail supporting the summaries can be found in the appendices to the Consultation report which is available via this [link](#).

Q	To what extent do you agree or disagree that...	Strongly agree/ agree	Disagree/ strongly disagree	Summary
1	The most vulnerable people should not be affected by the reduction in funding to the same extent as other working age customers	85%	6%	A high proportion agreed that the most vulnerable people should not be affected. This high level of agreement was similar over all the categories. There were slightly higher levels of disagreement among those who pay CT but don't receive CTB and those with children aged under 5 in their households. Overall, c9% neither agreed nor disagreed.
3	Our local scheme should incentivise and support people moving into work, and help those in low paid work	78%	10%	A high proportion agreed with this principle. There were slightly higher levels of disagreement among female CTB claimants, CTB claimants with children under 5 in their households and working age CTB claimants. Overall, c12% neither agreed nor disagreed.
4	Child Benefit for all except the eldest child in a household should be included in the assessment of a claimant's income	53%	34%	Overall, there was a higher level of agreement than disagreement with this statement. However, results varied between different groups. The highest levels of support were from those not in receipt of CTB, in a pensioner only household or aged 60+. The highest levels of disagreement were from CTB claimants and households with children. Overall, c13% neither agreed nor disagreed.
5	Only the first £10 per week of any income from child maintenance payments should not be included	50%	33%	Overall, there was a higher level of agreement than disagreement with this statement. There was little difference in whether respondents were in receipt of CTB

Q	To what extent do you agree or disagree that...	Strongly agree/ agree	Disagree/ strongly disagree	Summary
	in the assessment of a claimant's income			or not. The strongest support came from pensioner only households while those with children under 5 in their households were most likely to disagree. Overall, c17% neither agreed nor disagreed.
6	Those with savings of over £10,000 should not be eligible for any Council Tax Support	67%	23%	A high proportion agreed with this principle. Households with children and pensioner only households were most likely to agree and those aged 16-34 were most likely to disagree. Overall, 10% neither agreed nor disagreed.
7	The Second Adult Rebate for working age people should be abolished	56%	25%	There was a higher level of agreement than disagreement with this statement. The highest levels of support were among those paying CT but not receiving CTB, males and those living in pensioner only households. The lowest levels of support were among those claiming CTB, single parents and disabled respondents. Overall, 19% neither agreed nor disagreed.
8	Deductions from Council Tax Support should be made where working age claimants have non-dependants living with them	57%	21%	There was a higher level of agreement than disagreement with this statement. The highest levels of support were among those paying CT but not receiving CTB, males, those in the 60+ age group and those from pensioner only households. The lowest levels of support were among those claiming CTB and those who said they are disabled. Overall, c22% neither agreed nor disagreed.

Q2a. Do you agree with the principle that everyone of working age should pay something towards their Council Tax bill?

	Do you agree with the principle that everyone of working age should pay something towards their Council Tax bill?	'Yes' 69%	
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Overall a high percentage agreed that working age people should pay something towards their council tax bill. The strongest support came from those who pay Council Tax but are not in receipt of CTB, those aged 60+ and pensioner households. Those on CTB, single parents and disabled respondents were closer to a 50/50 split between the numbers agreeing and disagreeing with this principle.

Q2b. If yes, how much is the minimum you think they should pay?

Q2b	If yes, how much is the minimum you think they should pay?	$\frac{\text{'10\%'}}{41\%}$	$\frac{\text{'20\%'}}{31\%}$	$\frac{\text{'30\%'}}{28\%}$
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If respondents agreed with paying something towards council tax we also wanted to understand at what level it was felt this should be set at – 10%, 20% or 30%.

Overall, 41% selected the lowest amount of 10% but 59% selected a higher amount than this.

Among those in receipt of CTB, not surprisingly, the lower 10% option received more support than average (61%) but nearly four out of ten selected a higher amount. Those paying CT but not in receipt of CTB were less likely to select the lowest amount (32%), with more than two-thirds selecting a higher amount.

Comparing results by age group shows that those aged 35-59 were most likely to select the lower 10% option (45%) but the majority still selected a higher amount. Those aged 60+ were most likely to select the higher 30% option (35%).

Nearly half of the respondents from households with children selected the lower 10% option (48%) although nearly a third of these selected the highest 30% option (30%). 60% of single parents selected the lower 10% option but more than a quarter selected the highest 30% option (27%). Pensioner only households were least likely to select the lower 10% option (29%), with 72% selecting a higher amount.

More than half of disabled respondents selected the lower 10% option (56%), nearly a third selected 20% (30%) and less than one in six opted for a 30% contribution (14%).

Summary of findings

- Some areas have provoked a clear trend, with the majority of people in all groups agreeing that we should protect the most vulnerable, encourage people back to work and not provide Council Tax Support to those with savings over £10,000.
- There are areas where there is a less clear response overall and where responses from different groups vary considerably. These are taking child benefit into consideration, ignoring the first £10 a week of child maintenance income, removing second adult rebate and making deductions where non-dependants are in residence.
- There is overall support for people to pay something towards their Council Tax bill. However, as would be expected there is a large difference between the views of those paying Council Tax but not in receipt of CTB and those who are in receipt of CTB. Similarly, views on the level of contribution vary considerably with those in receipt of CTB nearly twice as likely to select the lowest contribution level.
- The survey asked for comments and suggestions which have been categorised and reported at Appendix 11 and are also listed in full at Appendix 12. A wide range of comments were received, with some supporting our proposals and others posing arguments against particular elements of our scheme.

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COMT
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
(ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING)
CABINET

26 NOVEMBER 2012
11 DECEMBER 2012

13 DECEMBER 2012

CARBON MANAGEMENT PLAN UPDATE (Report by Head of Environmental Management)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 In June 2009 the Council approved the implementation of a Carbon Management Plan (CMP) with a target of achieving a 30% reduction in CO₂e emissions from the Council's estate over a five year period (2009-10 to 2013/14).
- 1.2 This report gives details of work undertaken in 2011/12 (year three) of the CMP, of progress made towards reaching the Council's overall 30% reduction target and makes recommendations for further implementation of the CMP to maximise financial savings from reduced energy use.
- 1.3 Three years into the Plan the Council **has achieved a 20% reduction** in overall carbon emissions, a saving of 1,391 tonnes of CO₂e from its buildings and fleet. This in itself represents a significant achievement and the Council **is on course to meet its 30% carbon reduction target** by the end of 2013/14.
- 1.4 In addition to the carbon savings the plan is also delivering significant financial benefits. Energy spending has fallen by 11% since 2009/10 delivering a saving of £72k. Had the council not implemented the plan and instead followed a business as usual (BAU) approach over the last three years, the total cost of energy at the Council's main sites would have risen from £1.8m to £2.1m giving a total saving against business as usual **to date of £300k**.
- 1.5 Further projects to reduce energy use in the Council's main buildings will continue as a priority for the remainder of the plan period. It is predicted that a further saving of £700k will be achieved against the business as usual scenario, **giving a total saving of over £1m during the life of the plan**.
- 1.6 The plan is therefore both on time, on target and delivering significant savings.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Annexe A attached lists the site by site the energy efficiency projects undertaken during 2011/12, funded predominantly through the Councils existing SALIX Energy Efficiency Fund and the Council's limited Environment Strategy capital budget.
- 2.2 Work to develop clearly defined energy strategies for each of the Councils nine main sites is now almost complete with tailored plans in place for seven of these sites. The plans prioritise actions making the greatest savings on energy bills and measures which generate long term revenue income through the installation of renewable energy. Energy saving measures being undertaken for the Carbon Management Plan are listed seen in Annexe B attached.

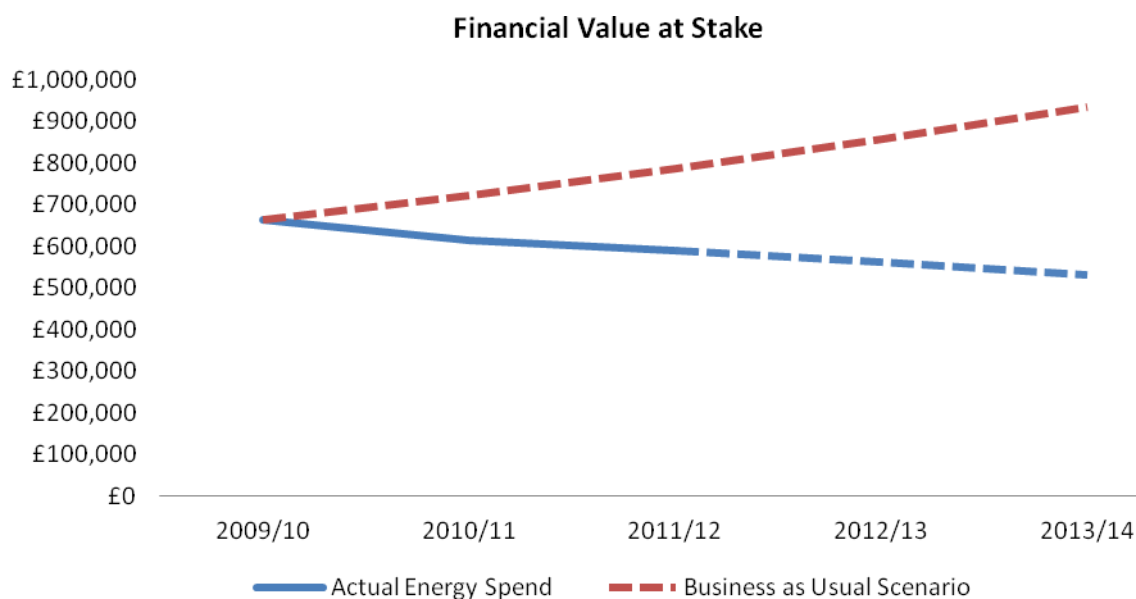
- 2.3 Analysis of current progress towards reaching a 30% reduction in CO₂e emissions has been carried out in line with guidance provided by DECC and DEFRA on reporting greenhouse gas emissions, and a 20% reduction has been made since the baseline year used for the CMP (08/09). This is a saving of 1,391 tonnes of CO₂e and is a significant achievement. For more details please see the Green House Gas Emissions report 2011/12 issued to DECC (Annexe C attached).
- 2.4 The Council's Environmental Resource Efficiency Group (EREG) continues to meet quarterly and close cross departmental working is now giving a much clearer picture of energy is being used and potential for energy savings.
- 2.5 A wide range of projects have now been implemented at One Leisure sites and two significant Renewable energy installations have also been completed. Projects to date include:
- Variable speed drives – for reducing the speed of pool pumps
 - Passive infrared lighting – sensing movement and light
 - Voltage optimisation – to reduce incoming voltages by up to 10%
 - Insulation – both cavity fill and roof fabric
 - Valve and pipe insulation – reducing heat loss in plant rooms
 - Pool covers – retaining heat overnight
 - Replacement of air handling units
 - Solar PV array - Eastfield House
 - Biomass boiler – Hinchingsbrooke Country Park
- 2.6 The most ambitious project completed in 2011/12 was undoubtedly the installation of a 237Kwp solar photovoltaic PV array at Eastfield House. The array is the biggest on a public building in East Anglia and one of the largest in the UK. Since its installation in March 2012 the system has generated over £20,000 income for the Council from the Government Feed-In-Tariff and in the summer months it reduced the use of grid electricity at Eastfield by over 50%.
- 2.7 The reduction of the Feed-In-Tariff in July adversely affected plans to install PV systems at other Council sites but as the prices of PV systems continue to fall we will periodically reassess viability going forward.
- 2.8 During the current financial year energy efficiency improvements primarily centre on the £2.1 refurbishment of One Leisure St Ives which will incorporate the installation of a combined heat and power unit export surplus electricity back to the grid. This project has been funded with a SALIX interest free loan. The refurbishment is also focusing on considerably upgrading the thermal efficiency of the centre, and modernising air handling units on site which alone will save over £10,000 per annum.
- 2.9 The main renewable energy project undertaken in the current financial year has been the installation of a biomass boiler at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park combined with 'smart' fan assisted radiators and draught proofing to reduce the requirement to heat the site. The heat generated by the biomass boiler will be eligible for payments under the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) which is due to come into force in 2013 and again will generate a revenue stream for the Council

3. FINANCIAL/ RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The value of the Carbon Management Plan to the Council is clearly shown by an analysis of billing data at the Council's 9 main sites (See table below). These sites account for 92% of the Council's total building energy use. Since 2009/10 energy spending at these sites has fallen by 11% delivering a saving of £72k.
- 3.2 Had the council not implemented its Carbon Management Plan and instead followed a business as usual (BAU) approach, energy usage would have increased by an expected 0.5% per annum and average energy prices increased by 8.5% per annum (Carbon Trust 2009). Factoring in these cost and usage increases, the total cost of energy under a business as usual scenario, would have risen from the actual total spend of £1.8m to £2.1m.
- 3.3 Therefore when you combine the actual savings made with the potential increase in energy costs had the council not acted, the total real saving to the council as a direct result of the Carbon Management Plan at its nine main sites is £305k since 2009/10.

Year	Actual Energy Spend	Business as usual Scenario	Total Saving against BAU
2009/10	£662k	£662k	-----
2010/11	£613k	£722k	£109k
2011/12	£590k	£787k	£197k
Total	£1.8m	£2.1m	£305k

- 3.4 Using actual data for the first three years (table above), the graph below illustrates the scale of savings that the Council will make if it continues to implement energy saving measures across its main sites as opposed to following a business as usual pathway.



3.5 Projects to further reduce energy use in the Council's main buildings will continue as a priority for the remainder of the plan period and it is anticipated that if project savings continue at the current rate then a further total £700k of savings will be achieved against business as usual.

3.6 Overall therefore the plan is set to deliver over £1m savings at the Council's main Sites.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Significant progress has been made to reduce emissions during year three of the Carbon Management Plan. A 20% reduction in CO₂e emissions has been made to date with the Council on course to achieve its target of a 30% CO₂e reduction over five years.

4.2 Financial savings of over £300k against a business as usual scenario have been made at the Council's nine main sites and there is the potential to deliver a further £700k savings during the remainder of the plan period.

4.3 A clear delivery pathway has been identified for the remaining two years of the plan with projected savings evidenced by the payback of highly successful, easily replicable projects that have been implemented to date.

4.4 Close working between One Leisure and Environmental Management has enabled energy efficiency and consequent cost savings to be central to the delivery of high quality leisure services. Energy efficiency is now routine 'designed in' to refurbishment opportunities at buildings such as One Leisure St Ives, resulting in significantly reduced running costs at what can be very energy intensive facilities.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Cabinet is recommended to:

(a) Note the excellent progress towards the implementation of the Council's Carbon Management Plan and the positive impact this has had to reduce energy use and energy spending.

(b) To support ongoing cross-departmental working to maximise cost savings and the continued use of the Salix ring-fenced funding and Environment Strategy Capital funding to implement further energy saving projects.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

HDC Carbon Management Plan

Contact Officer: Chris Jablonski (Environment Team Leader)
Tel: Ext. 8368

ANNEXE A: Savings from energy efficiency measures 2011/12 – At the Council's Main Sites

Site	Measures Installed	Delivery Year	Cost (£)	Saving (£pa)	Payback (yrs)	CO2e Saving (tpa)
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One Leisure Ramsey	Valve/pipe insulation	11/12	£2,600	£2,600	1	18.69
	Lighting controls (PIR's)	11/12	£4,157	£866	4.8	6.30
	Variable speed drives	11/12	£1,850	£1,020	1.8	6.12
	All Measures	11/12	£8,607	£4,486	1.9	31.11

Reduction against 10/11 energy bill - £8,990 (22.17%)

Explanation: The installation of lighting controls, predominantly in the sports hall, has significantly reduced unnecessary lighting, while the installation of variable speed drives has reduced consumption associated with use of the swimming pool pumps. Aside from Salix measures, the standard lighting replacement programme, undertaken as part of general maintenance, has contributed significantly to additional savings.

Pathfinder House	Saturday closing	11/12	Not possible to quantify the savings in CO2e and energy associated with these measures as we are currently undertaking full monitoring of the site.			
	Server virtualisation	11/12				

Reduction against 10/11 energy bill - £13,529 (11.10%)

Explanation: The implementation of Saturday closing, initiated in early 11/12, has contributed to a reduction in both electricity and gas consumption. Server virtualisation, which began in November 2011, has reduced electricity consumption in the server room by 5% compared with 10/11. Further savings in energy consumption are likely the result of a range of behavioural change campaigns led by the Environment Team.

One Leisure Sawtry	Valve/pipe insulation	11/12	£2,650	£2,650	1	18.49
	Lighting controls (PIR's)	11/12	£578	£145	4	0.8
	Pool covers	11/12	£2,514	£1,294	2	20.16
	Variable speed drives	11/12	£1,980	£1,329	1.5	7.97
	All Measures	11/12	£7,722	£5,418	1.4	47.42

Reduction against 10/11 energy bill - £6,073 (10.63%)

Explanation: The installation of lighting controls, predominantly in the sports hall, has contributed to a reduction in unnecessary lighting, valve/pipe insulation and pool covers have reduced heat loss and variable speed drives have reduced energy use associated with use of the swimming pool pumps. Further energy savings have been made by the increased efficiency of existing heating and ventilation systems.

One Leisure Huntingdon (Wet)	Pool covers	11/12	£3,455	£1,820	2	9.63
	Lighting controls (PIR's)	11/12	£4,409	£1,117	3.9	5.43
	All Measures	11/12	£7,864	£2,937	2.6	15.06

Reduction against 10/11 energy bill - £3,690 (8.05%)

Explanation: There has been a greater than expected reduction in the energy spend at this site, resulting from the installation of pool covers to limit heat loss and lighting controls to prevent unnecessary lighting. In addition, the closure of the energy intensive sauna and steam room has contributed to further savings across the site.

One Leisure St Ives (Indoor)	Valve/pipe insulation	11/12	£5,500	£5,500	1	37.23
	Lighting controls (PIR's)	11/12	£9,000	£2,907	3.2	17.43
	Pool covers	11/12	£3,458	£6,661	1.3	14.09
	All Measures	11/12	£17,958	£15,068	1.1	68.75

Reduction against 10/11 energy bill - £6,522 (5.49%)

Explanation: There has been a considerable reduction in energy spend and use at this site, largely the result of the installation of valve/pipe insulation and pool covers to reduce excess heat loss, and lighting controls to limit unnecessary lighting of less frequently utilised areas.

Eastfield House	Behaviour change	Not possible to quantify the savings in CO2e and energy associated with behavioural change measures.				
Reduction against 10/11 energy bill - £1,775 (3.22%)						

Explanation: The installation of Solar PV at this site in March 2011 is likely to be responsible for a small reduction in energy use, however, the relocation of a employees from the first floor, where rooms have individual temperature control panels, to the ground floor, where temperature is controlled centrally, has also reduced energy spend.

One Leisure Huntingdon (Dry Side)	Valve/pipe insulation	11/12	£1,260	£1,260	1	8.41
	Voltage optimisation	11/12	£16,635	£3,766	4.5	22.59
	Boiler replacement	11/12	£15,000	£3,092	5	16.36
	Lighting controls (PIR's)	11/12	£4,409	£1,117	3.9	5.43
	All Measures	11/12	£37,304	£9,235	4	52.79

Increase against 10/11 energy bill - £778 (1.5%)

Explanation: There has been a slight increase in energy spend at this site. Over the past year, the numbers of treatment rooms at the site have doubled, alongside an increase in external flood lighting of the football pitches. The change from sub-100 to half-hourly electricity metering has also contributed significantly to the increased energy spend. This is a result of both the higher standing charge, and higher cost per unit of electricity associated with half-hourly metering when compared with sub-100.

One Leisure St Ives (Outdoor)	Lighting controls (PIR's)	11/12	£3,480	£969	3.5	5.45
	All Measures	11/12	£3,480	£969	3.5	5.45

Increase against 10/11 energy bill - £2,270 (8.77%)

Explanation: The energy spend at this site has risen despite a 14.8% reduction in energy use. While gas consumption saw a 27% reduction in 11/12, electricity consumption increased by 5%. As electricity is both higher in cost per unit, and more carbon intensive per unit than gas, energy spend has increased, despite an overall reduction in energy use. The reduction in gas consumption over the period is due to a reduction in heating requirements, a result of a change in opening hours. In contrast, the increased electricity consumption is likely the result of floodlights and exterior lighting, installed in August 2011 as part of the Football Foundation and Lottery funded extension project.

One Leisure St Neots	Valve/pipe insulation	11/12	£1,876	£1,876	1	13.08
	Pool covers	11/12	£6,005	£2,775	2.3	11.15
	All Measures	11/12	£7,881	£4,651	1.6	24.23

Increase against 10/11 energy bill - £15,765 (16.97%)

Explanation: Although the measures installed are likely to have resulted in a significant reduction in energy consumption, the refurbishment and expansion of the site, and a subsequent increase in visitor numbers, has substantially limited their impact and increased energy spending at the site.

ANNEXE B: Energy Saving Measures for the remaining two years of the Carbon Management Plan

Site	Measure	Delivery Year	Cost (£)	Saving (£pa)	Payback (yrs)	CO2e saving (tonnes pa)
Pathfinder House	Reduction of overall ventilation rates	13/14	£20,000	£7,450	2.7	45
	Optimisation of night cooling strategy	12/13	£2,700	£1,350	2	10.4
	Improved hearing zone control	13/14	£16,500	£2,200	7.4	16..7
	Initiation of real-time monitoring programme	13/14	£1,200	£1,100	1.1	6.3
	All Measures	12/14	£40,400	£12,100	3.3	61.7
Predicted % saving on 11/12 energy bill - 11% reduction						

Eastfield House	Solar PV	12/13	£446,000	£15,000	11.5*	77
	Improved controls and provision of door interlocks	13/14	£6,400	£3,000	2.1	23.2
	Optimisation of operation and controls for heat pump systems	13/14	£10,200	£4,000	2.5	22.1
	Reduce use of electric heaters in hallways	13/14	Zero	£450	0	2.5
	Reduce exterior lighting density and hours of operation	13/14	£5,000	£1,700	2.9	9.5
	All Measures	12/14	£467,600	£23,700	9.9	134.3
Predicted % saving on 11/12 energy bill - 28.7% reduction						
*Payback inclusive of energy spend saving (£15k) and energy generation income (£23.5k)						

One Leisure Huntingdon Dry Side	Replacement of electrical heaters in ventilation systems	12/13	£13,000	£3,500	3.7	26.2
	Minimise use of electrical heating for entrance air curtains	12/13	£2,800	£1,300	2.2	9.9
	All Measures	12/14	£15,800	£4,800	3.2	36
Predicted % saving on 11/12 energy bill - 9.1% reduction						

One Leisure St Ives Indoor	Replace Neatafan AHUs	12/13	£18,000	£5,700	3.2	47
	Variable speed boiler house pumps	12/13	£15,000	£4,200	3.6	25.7
	Cavity wall insulation	12/13	£14,000	£2,600	5.3	26.1
	Combined heat and power	12/13	£116,343	£28,061	4.1	203.7
	All Measures	12/13	£163,343	£40,561	4	302.5
Predicted % saving on 11/12 energy bill - 33% reduction						

One Leisure St Ives Outdoor	Fix squash court air handling unit	12/13	£1,000	£1,230	0.8	6.8
	Interlock hot water pumps and boiler controls	13/14	£900	£310	2.9	2.4
	Improve changing room ventilation control	13/14	£3,800	£930	4.1	2.3
						4
	Provide/refurbish convector heaters	13/14	£1,900	£230	8.2	3.7
All Measures	12/14	£7,600	£2,700	2.8	19.2	
Predicted % saving on 11/12 energy bill - 9.6% reduction						

One Leisure Sawtry	Variable speed drives	12/13	£3,500	£2,100	1.7	12.6
	Monitoring & adjustment of heating/ventilation	13/14	£3,000	£3,350	1.8	38
	Use of free cooling for gym & activity area	12/13	£3,900	£6,400	1.6	9.1
	All Measures	12/14	£10,400	£11,850	0.8	59.7
Predicted % saving on 11/12 energy bill - 23.22% reduction						

ANNEXE C: Greenhouse Gas Emissions for Huntingdonshire District Council Estate – Financial Year 2011/2012

GHG emissions data for period 1 April 2011 to 31 March 2012				
	Global Tonnes of Carbon Dioxide equivalent (CO ₂ e)*			
	11/12	10/11	09/10	Base Year 08/09
Scope 1 – Direct emissions	2,488	2,761	2,760	3,205
Scope 2 – Energy indirect	2,857	2,954	2,970	3,510
Scope 3 – Other indirect	146	149	168	167
Total gross emissions	5,491	5,864	5,898	6,882
Carbon offsets	0	0	0	0
Green tariff	0	0	0	0
Total annual net emissions	5,491	5,864	5,898	6,882
Intensity measurement 'Tonnes of CO ₂ e per member of full time staff'	9.9	8.2	7.2	8.9

*CO₂e includes Carbon Dioxide, Nitrous Oxide and Methane emissions

Company Information

HDC is a District Council covering a geographical area of approximately 350 square miles and home to a population of over 160,000.

Reporting Period

1 April 2011 – 31 March 2012

Change in emissions

Scope 1 - This section of the table records all of HDC's gas, petrol and diesel consumption, used to heat Council-owned buildings and run the fleet of waste collection, street cleansing vehicles and pool cars.

There has been a steady reduction in CO₂e from the consumption of gas, petrol and diesel since the baseline year. These reductions can be attributed to the installation of energy efficiency measures, such as roof and fabric insulation, at our Leisure Centre sites, and the rescheduling of refuse and recycling rounds to reduce miles travelled by the fleet. Overall, CO₂e emissions from scope 1 sources have decreased by 717 tonnes since the baseline year (2008/2009).

Scope 2 - This section of the table records all of the electricity used to power HDC's Council-owned buildings.

There has been a small decrease in emissions from this source in the last year as a result of the installation of energy efficiency measures at One Leisure sites, including voltage optimisation and passive infrared lighting, alongside energy monitoring at HDC's headquarters. Overall, Scope 2 CO₂e emissions have decreased by 653 tonnes since the baseline year (2008/2009).

Scope 3 - This section of the table records CO₂e emissions from HDC's business travel. HDC have chosen not to report emissions from commuter travel as the data is incomplete and believed to be responsible for only a small proportion of total emissions. There has been a further decline in CO₂e emissions associated with business travel since the baseline year. The continued use of the Council's pool car and bicycle fleet, the take up of tele-working and changes

to the employee travel allowance scheme have all contributed to emissions reductions. Overall, scope 3 emissions been reduced by 21 tonnes since the baseline year (2008/2009).

Approach

We have followed the Governments guidelines (2011) on how to measure and report GHG emissions.

Organisational boundary

We have used the financial control approach.

Operational scopes

The Council has measured scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions where a monitoring system is in place to do so.

Overall, scopes 1, 2 and 3 together result in a decrease of 373 tonnes of CO2e emissions in the last year (6%) and a reduction of 1391 tonnes of CO2e emissions (20%) since the baseline year.

The work undertaken to achieve these savings has been supported by a ring-fenced Salix Energy Efficiency fund and has resulted in financial savings to the Council in energy and fuel costs.

	GHG emissions 11/12 in tonnes CO2e	Exclusions and % this represents
Scope 1		
Gas consumption	1,117	
Owned transport	1,371	
Process emissions	0	
Fugitive emissions	0	
Total scope 1	2,488	
Scope 2		
Purchased electricity	2,857	
Total scope 2	2,857	
Significant scope 3		
Business travel	146	By private staff vehicle only
Total significant scope 3	146	

Base year

Our baseline year is 2008/2009 which we set using a fixed base approach. We have recalculated our baseline year emissions to take into account the change in GHG emissions factors.

Targets

- Our emissions reduction target is to reduce our global GHG emissions, scopes 1, 2 and 3, by 30% from the baseline year 2008/2009 by the end of 2013/2014. The Environment Team and the Environmental Resource Efficiency Group is responsible for the achievement of the target.

Intensity measure

The Council has chosen 'tonnes of CO2e per member of full time staff' as the Council does not have a product output. Our intensity measure has increased this year due to a decrease in staff despite emissions reductions.

External assurance statement

None currently in place

Carbon offsets

The Council has not brought into any carbon offsetting schemes.

For more information please contact the Environment Team on 01480 388388 or email heet@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

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COMT

26th November 2012

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
(ENVIRONMENTAL WELL BEING)

11th December 2012

CABINET

13th December 2012

Round Rescheduling (Report by the Operations Manager)

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update members on the round rescheduling for the refuse, recycling and garden waste collection services which will be implemented in February 2013.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The last major rescheduling of the current waste collection rounds was in 2007, albeit smaller scale alteration to the rounds has taken place since that time. The rounds have changed significantly over the past 5 years, with changes to the recycling collections (the addition of glass and a wider range of plastics), changes in tipping points and housing growth. These changes have resulted in the rounds being out of balance on some days / weeks and as a result they are not very efficient. With housing growth increasing and large developments, for example at Loves Farm, St Neots, some crews are now struggling to complete the work on some days and a full review of the services is now necessary.

3. AIMS OF THE PROJECT

- 3.1 The aim of the project is to review the current refuse and recycling collection rounds, re-routing where necessary to enable the service to be provided in an efficient and balanced manner.

4. PROGRESS TO DATE

- 4.1 Work has been undertaken to survey all the assisted collection customers and households with two grey bins. This has been done to ensure that we have up to date information as part of the project. Meetings have been held with the refuse and recycling crews to obtain a range of information on their current rounds. The information on the existing rounds has been transferred into the round rescheduling software and updated with a range of information including time restrictions around schools, areas where collections can only be undertaken single sided, shared bins.
- 4.2 As part of the rescheduling there needs to be an element built in for future growth, so that the rounds will last a few years with only minor

amendments before a large rescheduling needs to take place again. Housing growth is fairly difficult to predict so known developments which look likely to be developed in the next 2-3 years have been included. However a number of major developments where timescales are uncertain have not and these include Alconbury, Bearcroft Farm and part of the St Neots expansion.

- 4.3 Currently modelling of the new refuse rounds is being undertaken with garden waste and recycling collections still to be done. Early indications are that the process will not save a round, however it has incorporated some of the predicted housing growth. With more efficient rounds it is hoped that there will be fuel savings by having crews working nearer to each other so they can assist each other without having to travel large distances.
- 4.4 Although the green waste and recycling routes have still to be modelled one option that will be considered is alternating refuse and recycling collections rather than green waste as is currently the case. This is to enable the green waste crews to run summer and winter routes due to the seasonal variations. If this option looks feasible then the green waste collections will be routed on the opposite week to the refuse bin to ensure the resident is still able to dispose of their food waste weekly. This will allow us to reduce the number of green waste vehicles in winter to allow for servicing, major repairs and to reduce our agency requirement. This has been trialed successfully with the current rounds and contributed to the fuel savings we have achieved.
- 4.5 As part of the project a number of identified issues are being addressed at the same time or will be done so following implementation. These include properties on bags for historical reasons when actually they could have a wheeled bin collection and also properties collected from private roads or areas. A number have already been dealt with but as each property or area requires individual assessment these are still ongoing and will continue.
- 4.6 The revised rounds will go live on 4 February 2013 with advance publicity to start in early December.
- 4.7 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and is available on request and the findings of this have been incorporated into the project.

5. COMMUNICATIONS

- 5.1 A project team made up of officers from a number of divisions across the Council has developed a communications plan for the project. A summary of planned communications is included at Annex A. There are still some options under consideration or being investigated which may be added to the plan if they are viable.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 As part of the Council's budget programme, a saving of £100,000 and one round was identified as part of this project. Early indications are that it will not be possible to reduce by one round due to incorporating the additional housing growth. Whilst a short term saving could be made it would require a new round within a year with a further wholesale change of the rounds once more. This is an expensive exercise, costing in excess of £60k plus it is also very disruptive to residents and therefore it is not considered that this is a feasible option. However, it is hoped by more efficient routing fuel savings will be achieved. Unfortunately until the new rounds are operating the level of saving is difficult to predict.

7. RISKS

- 7.1 The new rounds have been developed using software and local knowledge. Although every effort will be made to test these routes before they go live to identify any issues, with any major change to waste collection services there will always be some initial issues and some minor adjustments will be necessary. The communications group will be putting in place ways to identify any problems quickly and resolve these and ensure communications between different departments is kept up to date so the public are informed as to what is happening.
- 7.2 If some of the major housing developments not included are developed quicker than anticipated then there will be a need to consider a further rescheduling at an earlier date as the current resources would not be able to absorb this level of growth.


8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Work on this project is still ongoing and on schedule to be implemented in February 2013. The project will produce more efficient rounds absorbing some property growth and will give the council an opportunity to re-iterate some of the key messages for this service, particularly in relation to what can go in which bin.

9. RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 Members are recommended to note the report.

Contact Officer: Beth Gordon, Operations Manager

 01480 388720

Communications Plan

Direct Mail

Pack to every householder with wheeled bin collection in pre-printed envelope including

- individual letter detailing new days of collection
- bin sticker advising where to get current information about what can go in the bin
- new address labels for bins
- refuse and recycling leaflet

Pack to every householder with sack or shared wheeled bin collection in pre-printed envelope including

- individual letter detailing new days of collection
- refuse and recycling leaflet

Pack to all business customers including

- individual letter detailing new day of collection
- Duty of Care transfer notes and contract for 2013

Advertising / Press

- Agrippa boards on side of 12 refuse vehicles
- Press release
- Green News
- Posters (or general information) - for Parish / Town Council magazines & noticeboards, Customer Service Centres

Web / Internet / Phone

- added to Customer Services email signature
- Call centre message at the end of call
- web site
 - pop-up on go live date on front page
 - advert
 - top task on front page
 - recommended page
 - My Huntingdonshire
 - Web calendar updated
 - Get Involved
 - updated web pages
- information on Shape Your Place
- Facebook / Twitter

- email notification for customers who have used web forms

Staff / Members

- Intranet
- Team New / Team Brief
- Members briefing
- Members pack containing a set of the information sent to customers and frequently asked questions

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RISK REGISTER (Report by the Audit & Risk Manager)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In line with the Council's Risk Management Strategy, a risk register has been developed that holds details of the significant risks faced by the Council. Details of progress made in identifying and managing risks is reported regularly to the Corporate Governance Panel.
- 1.2 The Risk Management Strategy requires the Cabinet to consider each of the very high or 'red' residual risks to identify whether they should be further mitigated by cost-effective and affordable actions.

2. RISK 238 : OPTION FORM

- 2.1 One emerging 'red' risk that falls across the service areas of affordable housing and homelessness is attached for review and consideration.
- 2.2 The Heads of Planning and Customer Services have both considered the controls already in place as listed on the option form. They have also considered what, if any, cost effective controls could be introduced to further mitigate the risk.

The option form summarises the issues that these service areas are facing in trying to manage the risk. The Portfolio Holder's are aware of these issues and the challenges the Council is facing in successfully dealing with the risk.

- 2.3 The options to mitigate the risk of increasing homelessness and subsequent costs associated with an increase in the use of bed and breakfast are:
 - a) To prevent homelessness in the first instance including using a new power to discharge the homelessness duty in the private rented sector. This is limited by the lack of available/willing landlords coupled with the unaffordability of private sector rents which means that this is unlikely to have a significant impact on our ability to manage demand.
 - b) To increase other types of temporary accommodation so that the use of bed and breakfast is minimised. Officers are currently negotiating with housing association partners to develop schemes that provide properties that can be used as temporary accommodation. An example of this is a scheme with Stonham housing association to use of a number of their properties as temporary accommodation. Although this will increase the number of temporary properties available to the Council the use of bed and

breakfast is likely to continue at relatively high rates. This is due to the current climate of increasing homelessness and a reduced number of social rented properties being delivered through the new build programme.

- 2.4 The two Heads of Service consider that without a substantial injection of further targeted resources into this potentially highly emotive service area, that no further controls can be introduced.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Cabinet is recommended to note the option form for risk 238 and consider what action, if any, it wishes to take to further mitigate the risk

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Risk Register

Contact Officer: David Harwood, Audit & Risk Manager 📞 **01480 388115**

Risk Treatment Option Form - 238

Risk Treatment – Action Plan				
Description of risk from register:	Risk ID No: 238	Current residual risk score: Likelihood x Impact	5	5
<p>The economic downturn and emerging changes to Government Policy potentially weaken the Council's ability to seek affordable housing on new development sites. Whilst we continue to seek up to 40% affordable housing, if sites are found to be financially unviable to develop, we will increasingly have to accept a lesser contribution to enable development to proceed.</p> <p>In 2012/13 onwards, we already predict a downturn in the completions levels experienced in recent years (55 completions planned in 2012/13 compared to 288 in 2011/12 and 367 in 2010/11) due to where we are within the planning cycle.</p> <p>In turn this reduction in potential provision leads to a reduction in the numbers of people being housed, the need for longer stays in temporary accommodation and increased use of B&B becomes inevitable.</p>				
<p>Controls already in place as listed on the risk register:</p> <p><i>Increase supply:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify alternative provision opportunities on non-section 106 sites to boost the affordable housing programme. If a developer contends that their affordable housing requirement (Section 106) is not economically viable for them to deliver we would scrutinise the inputs to the development to assess overall site viability. If proven we would look to renegotiate an appropriate lower percentage of affordable housing, or we would revise the tenure split of the site to enable a viable development to proceed. Tackling under occupation and illegal sub-letting in partnership with housing associations. <p><i>Manage demand:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review and increase the provision of temporary accommodation as an alternative to B&B. Assist people to access private rented housing through the use of a rent deposit scheme and discretionary housing payments 				
Are these controls operating effectively? Yes/No				
Risk Action Plan (All actions listed in priority order)				
Proposed actions to reduce risk using existing resources	New residual risk score ¹			Extra resources required ²
	L	I		
a.				
b.				
c.				
Actions requiring additional resources				
1.				
2.				
3.				
Decision				
Agreed Option:	Implementation Date		Risk Owner	
Decision taken by:	on:			

¹ **New Residual Risk Score:** after the action has been introduced

² **Extra Resources:** only complete if extra resources will be required to allow the proposed action to be introduced e.g. financial costs and staff time

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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