

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 28 SEPTEMBER 2006** at **11:30 AM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-


**Contact
(01480)**

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 7th September 2006

**Mrs H Taylor
388008**

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive Members' declarations as to personal and/or prejudicial interests and the nature of those interests in relation to any Agenda Item. Please see notes 1 and 2 below.

3. NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT (Pages 7 - 12)

To consider a report by the Community Initiatives Manager on the development of neighbourhood management initiatives within the District.

**D Smith
388377**

4. AUTOMATED FORMS PROCESSING IN HOUSING BENEFITS - SUPPLEMENTARY CAPITAL ESTIMATE
(Pages 13 - 14)

To consider a report by the Head of Revenue Services regarding progress of the automated forms processing project

**Mrs J Barber
388105**

5. HOUSING AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFITS - INCREASE IN STAFF (Pages 15 - 18)

To consider a report by the Head of Revenue Services regarding the increase in complex benefits assessments, the loss of benefit subsidy and the implications for the Benefits section.

**Mrs J Barber
388105**

6. MEDIUM TERM PLAN - REQUESTS FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS (Pages 19 - 22)

By way of a report by the Head of Financial Services to consider the release of funds for Medium Term Plan schemes referred to.

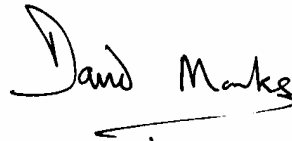
**T Day
388111**

- 7. TREASURY MANAGEMENT INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE**
(Pages 23 - 26)
- To consider a report by the Head of Financial Services on the performance of the Investment Fund, April to June 2006. **S Couper
388103**
- 8. CONCESSIONARY FARES** (Pages 27 - 32)
- To consider a report by the Director of Operational Services seeking approval to the revised county-wide scheme. **S Bell
388387**
- 9. BROUGHTON CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN** (Pages 33 - 38)
- By way of a report by the Planning Policy Manager to consider the responses received in respect of the draft Broughton Character Assessment and Management Plan and to adopt it as Interim Planning Guidance. **R Probyn
388430**
- 10. WARBOYS CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN** (Pages 39 - 44)
- To consider a report by the Planning Policy Manager on consultation responses received in respect of the Character Assessment and Management Plan for Warboys and seeking approval for its adoption as Interim Planning Guidance. **R Probyn
388430**
- 11. ST IVES MARKET TOWN TRANSPORT STRATEGY** (Pages 45 - 72)
- To consider the way forward for the St Ives Market Town Transport Strategy in the light of feedback received from public consultation. **S Bell
388387**
- 12. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**
- To resolve:
- that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to the financial affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information)
- 13. CONSULTANTS, HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION PROJECT** (Pages 73 - 74)
- To consider a joint report by the Director of Central Services and Heads of Technical Services regarding proposals for savings in the cost of consultancy services.

**14. HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION
PROJECT: UPDATE (Pages 75 - 78)**

To consider a report by the Head of Technical Services.

Dated this 20 day of September 2006



Chief Executive

Notes

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

Please contact Mrs H Taylor, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Tel No. 01480 388008/e-mail Helen.Taylor@huntsdc.gov.uk /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 and to make their way to the base of the flagpole in the car park at the front of Pathfinder House.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Thursday, 7 September 2006.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.

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

52. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20th July 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

53. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Bates declared a personal interest in Minute No 57 by virtue of his membership of Cambridgeshire County Council.

Councillor Bucknell as a Member of the Development Control Panel requested that it be recorded that his participation in the debate and voting on Minute nos 65 and 68 would be undertaken without prejudice to the consideration and/or determination of any relevant planning application subsequently by the Panel.

Councillor Hansard declared a personal interest in Minute No 64 by virtue of his membership of St Neots Town Council.

54. FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Further to Minute No. 06/41 and by way of reports by the Heads of Financial Services and of Administration (copies of which are appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with work on the preparation of the draft budget and Medium Term Plan (MTP) for the period to 2018/19, together with the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) thereon.

In discussing the content of the report and in particular the need to identify and implement savings to achieve a balanced plan, Members reiterated their disappointment that the Government continued to withhold some £547 k in grant due to the Council as a way of a safety net in light of future grant reductions. With regard to possible savings and in addition to those listed in Annex A, Members' attention was drawn to a "Reserve List" of suggestions made by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel. Having noted that Officers had been asked to review

the suitability of the Panel's suggestions as part of the ongoing review of budgets and Medium Term Plan schemes and in noting references by the Executive Councillor for Finance as to the extensive range of grants made available by the Council in addition to those for community initiatives, it was

RESOLVED

that full Council be recommended to;

- (a) support the saving items set out in Annex A to the report now submitted.
- (b) support the strategy for a steady profile of savings as represented by Annex B to the report now submitted; and
- (c) request Officers to review all budgets and Medium Term Plan schemes (revenue and capital) to identify any further opportunities for savings.

55. GROWING SUCCESS - PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Cabinet received a report by the Head of Policy (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) presenting performance management data for the period April to June 2006.

Having been acquainted with the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) on the document, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

56. THE SANCTUARY PROJECT

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding the role, development and funding of a county-wide sanctuary scheme aimed at providing home security measures for victims of domestic violence.

Having discussed financial and other issues associated with the proposed procurement of the service via the Luminus Group, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted and the Director of Central Services authorised to enter into an Agreement with partner authorities and the Luminus Group in relation to the Cambridgeshire Domestic Violence Sanctuary Project.

57. PAXTON PITS NATURE RESERVE

By way of a joint report by the Head of Legal and Estates and the Countryside Services Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a proposal to extend Little Paxton Nature Reserve from 240 to 700 acres by way of the acceptance by the District Council of leases of land adjacent to the existing reserve following the completion of gravel extraction operations.

Having considered proposed terms and conditions for the leases, and the sources of funding identified to finance key elements of the extended nature reserves, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Director of Central Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy, be authorised to approve detailed terms for leases of land, adjacent to the Little Paxton Nature Reserve, by the District Council.

58. GAMBLING ACT 2005: STATEMENT OF LICENSING PRINCIPLES

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Book) to which was attached a draft Statement of Principles under the provisions of the Gambling Act 2005.

Having regard to the timetable for consultation and in noting the endorsement of the principles by the Licensing Committee, it was

RESOLVED

that the draft Statement of Principles be approved for consultation purposes.

59. PROMOTING BETTER HEALTH IN OLDER PEOPLE THROUGH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

A report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which summarised the findings of a study by the Panel's Older Persons' Working Group regarding the needs of older people and the services available to them.

With regard to the Panel's recommendations, the Cabinet was informed that the District Council was represented on the Out and About Steering Group by the Leisure Centres' Co-ordinator . In discussing the scope for optimizing the availability and use of services for older people within available resources, Executive Councillors referred to the need for these to be compatible with the emerging financial strategy and accordingly, it was

RESOLVED

that the report be received and Officers requested to report further to a future meeting on the operational and financial implications of the Panel's

recommendations.

60. GODMANCHESTER (POST STREET) CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

Consideration was given to a report by the Planning Policy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a draft copy of the Management Plan for Godmanchester Post Street Conservation Area.

Having noted the main aims and objectives of the document, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the draft Management Plan for the Godmanchester Post Street Conservation Area be approved as basis for public consultation.

61. KEYSTON CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

With the aid of a report by the Planning Policy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a draft Management Plan for the Keyston Conservation Area.

Having been informed that the plan had been produced to clearly identify, co-ordinate and programme a series of specific projects for the enhancement of the conservation area, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the draft Management Plan for the Keyston Conservation Area be approved as a basis for public consultation.

62. GODMANCHESTER (EARNING STREET) CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

Consideration was given to a report by the Planning Policy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a draft copy of the Management Plan for the Godmanchester, Earning Street, Conservation Area.

Having noted the main aims and objectives of the document, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Draft Management Plan for the Godmanchester Earning Street Conservation Area be approved as a basis for public consultation.

63. STONELY CONSERVATION AREA MANAGEMENT PLAN

With the aid of a report by the Planning Policy Manager, (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a draft

Management Plan for the Stonely Conservation Area.

Having been informed that the Plan had been produced to clearly identify, co-ordinate and programme a series of specific projects for the enhancement of the conservation area, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the draft Management Plan for the Stonely Conservation Area be approved as a basis for public consultation.

64. URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK & MASTER PLAN: ST. MARY'S URBAN VILLAGE, ST. NEOTS

Further to Minute No. 06/12, the Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the responses received to the consultation on the Urban Design Framework and Master Plan for land to the west of St. Mary's Church, St. Neots and suggested amendments as a consequence thereof.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the revised urban design framework and master plan for St. Mary's Village as amended to reflect the content of Annex 1 to the report now submitted, be approved as Interim Planning Guidance; and
- (b) that the Head of Planning Services be authorised, after consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Strategy to make any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations as a result of the amendments referred to in the preceding resolution

65. CUSTOMER FIRST & ACCOMMODATION ADVISORY GROUP

A report of the meeting of the Customer First and Accommodation Advisory Group held on 26th July 2006 (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) was received. Having considered issues regarding call handling arrangements at the Call Centre, and the naming of the new Operations Centre, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for the new Headquarters and Information Technology, be authorised to determine an appropriate name for the new Operations Centre; and
- (b) that the continued use of call queuing arrangements be approved.

66. ST. NEOTS LEISURE CENTRE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE - REPRESENTATION

Having been advised of the resignation of Councillor R W Eaton from the St. Neots Leisure Centre Management Committee and in

considering the nomination from the Liberal Democrat Group, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that Councillor Mrs D E Collins be appointed to fill the vacancy on the St. Neots Leisure Centre Management Committee for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

67. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

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

68. NEW HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION - PROGRESS

Further to Minute No. 05/199 the Cabinet received and noted a report by the Head of Technical Services (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book). The report outlined progress on and recent developments in the procurement of new headquarters and other accommodation for the District Council and the opportunities which were to be taken to seek savings in the interests of containing the overall project cost within the provision made in the Medium Term Plan.

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

Chairman

Cabinet

21st SEPTEMBER 2006

NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT (Report by Community Initiatives Manager)

1. WHAT IS NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT

- 1.1 Neighbourhood Management is a key element of central government's national strategy for neighbourhood renewal. To date over 120 neighbourhood management initiatives are being developed and implemented across England. The level of interest reflects the extent to which neighbourhood management is being seen as a potentially effective approach to providing services in deprived/failing communities.
- 1.2 Neighbourhood Management is an approach that supports local communities and service providers to work together in partnership to improve local outcomes by improving and joining up local services (not just Huntingdonshire District Council services) and making them more responsive to local needs.
- 1.3 Unlike other area based initiatives Neighbourhood Management is **not** about distributing money but rather focuses on changing the relationship between service providers, improving their responsiveness to local needs and building a sense of shared responsibility on the ground.
- 1.4 The term 'Neighbourhood Management' is used to cover a variety of different approaches and initiatives being delivered through different partnership vehicles. However the basic criterion for a neighbourhood management initiative is that it:-
 - a) Operating at a neighbourhood level with capacity to follow through on agreed priorities (i.e. dedicated management resource, and more than a local forum or area committee with a purely consultative role);
 - b) Seeking to improve the delivery and provision of a range of services (i.e. not simply housing management or single authority services);
 - c) Engaging local people and reflecting locally identified priorities.

2. HOW IS NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT DELIVERED

- 2.1 A wide range of organisations are promoting Neighbourhood Management, Local Authorities and elsewhere Local Strategic Partnerships are the main/key sponsors. In many areas where a Neighbourhood Management is or has been developed it is part of the respective Local Strategic Partnership's Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.
- 2.2 Neighbourhood Management initiatives appear to be taking time at the outset to establish local priorities and establish strong base line information (most if not all this information is already available in Huntingdonshire and just needs collating).

- 2.3 The majority of Neighbourhood Management Initiatives have adopted the approach of having a single team, headed by a neighbourhood manager, responsible for the Neighbourhood. The Local Government Association recommends that the most successful approach to establishing successful neighbourhood management teams is to second staff from the partner agencies with one of the statutory agencies acting as lead agency. (Please see the attached diagram appendix B that sets out a possible management structure and reporting procedure).

3. WHERE DOES NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT FIT?

- 3.1 It is generally anticipated that in the forthcoming local government White Paper (expected October 06) issues including:

- Community neighbourhood empowerment,
- Neighbourhood level agreements,
- Local government as convenors of local services,
- LSPs to establish Neighbourhood strategies,
- Neighbourhood charters and action plans, and
- Enhanced roles for local councillors;

will all figure prominently. Increasingly neighbourhood working is also likely to figure in the achievement of Local Area Agreement targets.

- 3.2 In addition to the above the Local Government act 2000, gave local authorities a duty to consult local people on priorities for their local area when drawing up their community strategy and placed a responsibility on Councils to establish a single non-statutory multi agency body to tackle those issues that affect the lives of local people that require a multi agency response.

- 3.3 In addition, Police forces including Cambridgeshire Constabulary are increasingly moving to establish a neighbourhood policing model. The Primary Care Trust are moving towards developing a neighbourhood management approach to service delivery and the Office of Children and Young Peoples Services of the County Council are now to be delivered via locality teams.

4. WHAT WOULD NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT LOOK LIKE IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

- 4.1 The Neighbourhood management model is not an approach that can be applied district-wide recommendations from the Government's Neighbourhood Renewal Unit are that for a neighbourhood management programme to be successful target areas should be no less than 5000 and no more than 12000 residents.


- 4.2 In addition to the points outlined in 1.2 above, there is urgency for all statutory agencies to identify savings and economies of scale, policy imperatives are also leading local authorities and other service providers to examine more local approaches to the delivery of services. The development of local neighbourhood agreements within a neighbourhood management framework should meet both efficiency and service provision requirements and at the same time ensure services reflect the needs and requirements of local residents.

- 4.3 It is essential within the neighbourhood management programme to have a very active strategy and process for involving a wide sector of the local community in the decision making process within the neighbourhood management catchments area a long term legacy objective of the neighbourhood management initiative would be to encourage and facilitate active citizenship in local issues.
- 4.4 The areas within Huntingdonshire most suited to developing a neighbourhood management approach initially would be the Oxmoor and Eynesbury areas of Huntingdonshire. In the document 'Huntingdonshire Today' only the Eynesbury and Huntingdon North (Oxmoor) fall in the worst 10% across categories including crime, education and skills, employment, Health and Disability. These two areas are of course the only two 'small' areas the Police have chosen for specific neighbourhood policing teams. Further analysis of data across variety of partners would be likely to confirm these localities as priorities. Appendix 'A' attached demonstrates in more detail why the above two areas have been identified as a priority.
- 4.5 A working party of partners is already working on the options for continued partnership working in the Oxmoor area following the end of the SRB Programme in March 2007. A progress report on this process has been presented to The County Council's Cabinet. Following consideration of this report it is proposed that a report be presented to HSP Board in October. The proposal is that we continue working towards a Neighbourhood Management model for the area. The various partners will continue existing budgeted levels of funding which could include the County Councils contribution of circa 78K which will pay for the neighbourhood manager and support charged with coordinating the on going programmes. It is also proposed that investigation of a Neighbourhood model for Eynesbury be undertaken, Hence HDC are already putting in dedicated resource through Community Initiatives.
- 4.6 Notwithstanding the comment above at 4.1 it is probable that the forthcoming White Paper in the autumn will seek to extend neighbourhood working more widely than just priority areas. As far as Huntingdon is concerned, a type of neighbourhood approach has been developed for Ramsey, the Ramsey Area Partnership reporting to the HSP. A more widespread approach might be developed in the way we work with local councils. This however can be left until the White Paper is published, whilst the work on the two priority neighbourhoods is more urgent and specifically in respect of Oxmoor, with the implication of SRB funding coming to an end.
- 4.7 Finally as neighbourhood management gets going more formally it will be necessary to develop a performance management framework through the Strategic Partnership where partners can be accountable for the delivery of their respective contribution and the outcomes for the communities can be monitored.
- 5. RECOMMENDATION**
- 5.1 It is recommended that discussions are continued with other significant service providers to develop the proposals as outlined in this paper.

5.2 Cabinet agree that the localities identified in 4.2 of this report be developed as neighbourhood management initiatives and that the reporting structure be via the HSP.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

- Huntingdonshire Today
- Neighbourhood management National Network, Scoping Study Summary Report
- ODPM Research Report 23, Neighbourhood Management – at the turning point review 2005-06

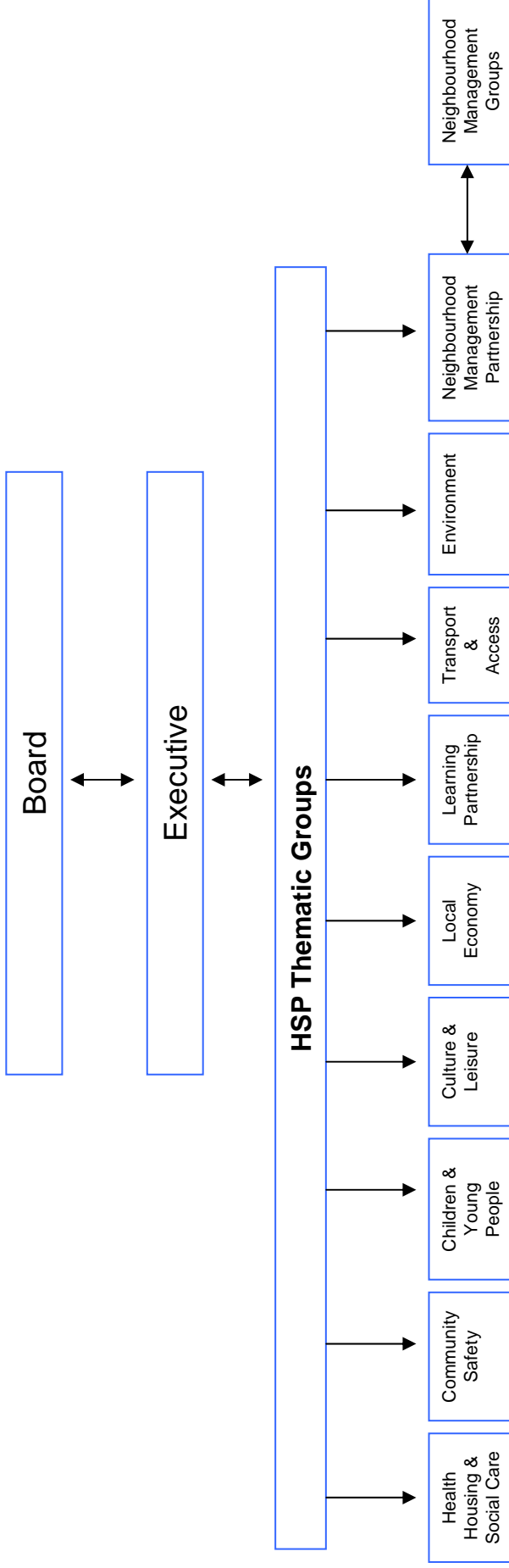
Contact Officer: Dan Smith
 **Extn 8377**

Proposed Reporting Structure for Oxmoor & Eynesbury Neighbourhood Management Initiative

Appendix A

via

Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership



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CABINET	28 September 2006
AUTOMATED FORMS PROCESSING IN HOUSING BENEFITS – SUPPLEMENTARY CAPITAL ESTIMATE	
(Report by the Head of Revenues Services)	

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This report explains that the Automated Forms Processing (AFP) project in Housing Benefits can be delivered at a lower revenue cost than in the MTP, despite the Government limiting its capital contribution.

2 Financial Implications

- 2.1 The table below shows the net impact of the changes resulting from the latest estimates of cost and the Government's decision to only fund part of the capital costs.

	2006/7 £' 000	2007/8 £' 000	2008/9 £'000
Included in MTP bid 668			
Capital	275	0	0
less grant	275	0	0
net capital costs	0	0	0
Revenue costs	0	21	21
financing costs	0	0	0
savings	0	-21	-21
net revenue costs	0	0	0
Latest Estimate			
Capital	224	0	0
less grant	166	0	0
net capital costs	59	0	0
Revenue costs	0	14	14
financing costs	1	3	3
savings	-1	-21	-21
net revenue costs	0	-4	-4
Net Impact			
Capital	+59	0	0
Revenue	0	-4	-4

- 2.2 Thus the Council will be able to implement the AFP solution in Housing Benefits and make a revenue saving on the existing MTP provision.
- 2.3 In addition, AFP software is designed to reduce the amount of time taken to key in information on Housing Benefit claims by 'reading' the data using Intelligent Character Recognition (ICR) and transferring it directly into the benefit assessment computer program.
- 2.4 It is anticipated that this software will reduce the time taken to process a new benefit claim from 30 days (2005/6) to 18 days by 2008/9 and the time taken to process a change in circumstances from 17 days (20005/6) to 15 days by 2008/9.
- 2.5 This software, once purchased, can be adapted to be used in other areas. It would be most useful where a large amount of data is collected on a form and that data is later input onto a computerised processing system (for example, Planning Applications or Housing Register).

3 Recommendation

- 3.1 It is therefore recommended that Cabinet
 - a) Approve a supplementary capital estimate of £59,000
 - b) Approve the release of funds to enable the project to commence
 - c) Note that the revenue saving which will be incorporated in this year's review of the MTP

Background papers : MTP bid number 668, DWP approval for £165,500

Contact officer : Julia Barber, Head of Revenues
01480 388105

CHIEF OFFICER MANAGEMENT TEAM
EMPLOYMENT PANEL
CABINET

29 AUGUST 2006
20 SEPTEMBER 2006
28 SEPTEMBER 2006

HOUSING & COUNCIL TAX BENEFITS INCREASE IN STAFF REPORT BY HEAD OF REVENUES SERVICES

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report outlines the increase in the Benefits caseload, the increased complexity associated with assessments and the potential loss of benefit subsidy if the number of assessment officers in the benefits section is not increased.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Housing and Council Tax Benefits are among the most complex and frequently changing functions of the Council. The current establishment allows for 10 staff who are directly involved with assessing benefit entitlement, together with two team leaders who work on specialist assessments (for example re-assessing a case following a fraud inquiry).
- 2.2 With the introduction of the Government's welfare reforms (particularly for pensioners and working parents), the Housing Benefit caseload is increasing month on month. As well as more claims, the complexity of assessments is increasing. This means that each claim is handled on more occasions before a final assessment is made and the claim is put into payment.
- 2.3 The Government provides financial support towards the benefits scheme in the form of Benefits Subsidy. Delays in revising existing claims can result in subsidy penalties. In 2005/6, the council lost £64,000 in subsidy due to this penalty.

3. CASE LOAD

- 3.1 The table below shows the increase in case load and the associated impact on the number of cases handled per assessor.

	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7 (est)
Total Caseload	7428	7869	8330
Per head of staff	619	656	694
Increase on 2004/5		6%	12%

By the end of 2005/6, the assessment team had a backlog of 1200 items of work. Two Temporary Agency staff have been engaged to clear the backlog. The backlog had been reduced to 850 items by mid August, but remains at this level, despite agency workers being employed.

- 3.2 Based on case load figures alone, the number of staff dealing with assessments would need to increase by 1.5 to prevent backlogs recurring.

4. COMPLEXITY OF ASSESSMENTS

4.1 As well as the increase in the number of cases, the complexity of assessments has increased a great deal. A case is handled many times before a final assessment can be made. For example we may need

- to write to the customer to request further information and evidence
- to ask the Rent Officer for a decision on the eligible rent figure to be used in the calculation
- to ask the Council Tax team to set up a council tax account
- to contact the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to clarify a customer's entitlement to state benefits.

All of these assessments are required under the government's benefit legislation. On each occasion a claim is handled this counts as a further assessment.

4.2 In addition, revised guidance and legislation changes continue to arrive regularly, with 72 circulars being issued to us in 2005/6. All of these require revised procedures, training, leaflets & forms and IT updates that need to be installed and tested.

4.3 The table below shows the increase in the number of assessments and the associated impact on the number of assessments handled per assessor.

	2004/5	2005/6	2006/7 (est)
Total Assessments	45,456	59,158	62,000
Assessments per head of staff	3,788	4,930	5,167
Increase on 2004/5		30%	36%

Based on the number of assessment figures alone, the number of staff dealing with assessments would need to increase by 4.3 to prevent backlogs recurring.

4.4 As their day to day duties involve a great deal of pressure, benefits assessment staff are loath to do overtime, with very limited take up when overtime is offered.

4.5 Agency staff can be employed, but cost in the region of £1,000 per person per week. This option is favoured for short term problems like clearing a backlog, but is not a financially sound option for long term staffing solutions.

5 SUBSIDY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Overpayments occur when a customer continues to receive too much benefit despite having had a change in their circumstances that means their entitlement should reduce or stop. If the Council makes such adjustments immediately, then there is no financial penalty to the council.

5.2 However, if the value of benefits relating to delays in these adjustments exceeds government thresholds, then the Council will be penalised.

	£' 000
Benefits expenditure 2005/6	£22,946
LA Error overpayments	£116

	£' 000	Penalty rate
Below lower threshold	Under £110	0%
Between upper and lower threshold (0.48% of expenditure)	£110	60%
Above upper threshold (0.54% of expenditure)	£124 or over	100%

The amount of LA error overpayments in 2005/6 was £116k. This means we exceeded the lower threshold by £6k, and as a result lost £70k (60% of £116K).

6 BENEFITS PERFORMANCE – THE BIGGER PICTURE

- 6.1 Huntingdonshire DC benefits team process new claims for benefits in around 30 days on average. Top quartile performance is around 26 days. The best performer among shire districts processes new claims in under seven days on average. 14 district councils process within 20 days, with a further 77 averaging less than 30 days. Huntingdonshire DC is placed 96th in the league table of the 202 councils who submitted data for 2005/6.
- 6.2 The Eastern Regional Centre of Excellence is undertaking a study to establish the feasibility of councils in the eastern region working in partnership to deliver Revenues Services. The RCE has yet to report on its findings.
- 6.3 Benefits management is a balancing act between competing demands. These include customer service, speed of processing new claims, processing other claims, accuracy, fraud etc. At present, this authority is in the second quartile for processing new claims and in the third quartile for processing changes in circumstances. Without more staff to assess benefits, this situation is likely to decline, with the corresponding reduction in customer service to some of the most needy members of our society.
- 6.4 This highlights the two main options available in the current situation; either to delay new claims processing and shift resource to other claims or have more staff to enable a better level of service to be provided. People who make new claims for benefits are often vulnerable or at risk of homelessness. Prompt Housing Benefit payments allow tenants to pay their landlord and so support the local economy.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The above tables demonstrate that more staff are needed to deliver the benefits service, which grants around £23 million each year. The Head of Revenues Services considers that the Council should appoint three more Housing Benefits assessment officers to deal with the increased workload, as we currently have two agency staff but have still not managed to clear the backlog of benefit claims.
- 7.2 The average cost of a HB officer (including on costs) is £23,000 pa. Costs of advertising, mileage etc can be met from existing budgets. It is not envisaged that extra desks, chairs or PC's will need to be bought as there are usually several empty desks in the benefits office each day, and a hot desk

arrangement can be set up. It is also anticipated that mobile and home working (when introduced) will reduce the need for desk space within the office.

- 7.3 It is anticipated that the benefits service can achieve savings of £35,000 per annum (in achieving more general benefits administrative subsidy than budgeted for). In addition, with three extra staff, it is anticipated that a further £70,000 subsidy penalty can be prevented.

Options		2006/7	Full year
		£' 000	£' 000
Do nothing	Extra cost of staff	0	0
	Subsidy penalty	70	70
	Identified saving	-35	-35
	Net cost	£35	£35
Take on three more staff	Extra cost of staff	35	69
	Subsidy penalty	0	0
	Identified saving	-35	-35
	Net cost	0	£34

8. CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 Members are therefore asked to approve an increase in establishment of three Housing Benefit Assessment Officers with immediate effect.
- 8.2 Failure to recruit these staff as soon as possible is likely to lead to the estimated loss of a further £70,000 in Benefit Subsidy in 2006/7 and in subsequent years.

9. RECOMMENDATION

- 9.1 it is recommended that
- Three new assessor posts be approved at an estimated cost of £35k in 2005/6 and £69k in subsequent years, to be partly funded by £35k per annum savings.
 - Members note that this is expected to avoid £70K per annum of subsidy penalties

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Housing Benefit financial accounts and Subsidy – papers with the Accountancy section.

Contact: **Julia Barber**
 Head of Revenues Service
 01480 388105

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CABINET

28 SEPTEMBER 2006

MEDIUM TERM PLAN REQUESTS FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

(Report by the Head of Financial Services)

1 PURPOSE

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

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council agreed in December 2005 *that, having regard to the implications for future spending and Council Tax levels, Directors review with appropriate Executive Councillors the need for schemes/projects included in the MTP but not yet started and that specific prior approval be sought and obtained from the Cabinet before such schemes/projects are implemented.*
- 2.2 Officers have identified the schemes that they wish Cabinet to consider releasing funding for and have discussed them with the relevant Executive Councillor.
- 2.3 Annex A summarises and the following Annexes detail these requests.

3. RECOMMENDATION

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

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985

None

Contact Officer:

Steve Couper

Head of Financial Services ☎ 01480 388103

ANNEX A

	Net Revenue Impact (£'000)						Net Capital (£'000)					
	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012
SUMMARY												
ANNEX B												
369												
4/B												
Play Equipment Replacement - 2006/07	1	3	3	3	3	3	54					
Activity Parks – 2006/07	1	2	2	2	2	2	50					
Total amount for which release now requested	2	5	5	5	5	5	104					

369 - Play Equipment Replacement - 2006/07

Robert Ward

Financial Impact

	Net Revenue Impact										Capital				
	2006/ 2007 £000	2007/ 2008 £000	2008/ 2009 £000	2009/ 2010 £000	2010/ 2011 £000	2011/ 2012 £000	2012/ 2013 £000	2006/ 2007 £000	2007/ 2008 £000	2008/ 2009 £000	2009/ 2010 £000	2010/ 2011 £000	2011/ 2012 £000	2012/ 2013 £000	
Approved Gross Budget	1	3	3	3	3	3	3	54							
Approved Net Budget	1	3	3	3	3	3	54								
Already released	0	0	0	0	0	0	0								
Amount for which release now requested	1	3	3	3	3	3	54								

Justification for Release

The council owns and maintains a wide range of play equipment and associated safety surfacing, in play and activity areas throughout the district. Each item of equipment has a finite working life and renewal is based on a combination of the age and condition of each individual item. The council makes provision for a rolling programme of renewals of equipment to spread the cost of replacement over a ten year period. Renewals are based on a combination of independent engineering inspection advice and the outcomes from regular in house inspections.

The play equipment and safety surfacing detailed in the previously agreed Play Equipment Replacement 10 year Programme, will have reached the end of the operational life in the current financial year and therefore a Capital provision is required for its replacement.

The replacement of the equipment will ensure our continued conformance to British and European Standards for play equipment and safety surfacing, and ensure that we continue to meet the very high health and safety standards applicable to these facilities.

4/B - Activity Parks – 2006/07

Robert Ward

Financial Impact

	Net Revenue Impact						Capital							
	2006/ 2007 £000	2007/ 2008 £000	2008/ 2009 £000	2009/ 2010 £000	2010/ 2011 £000	2011/ 2012 £000	2012/ 2013 £000	2006/ 2007 £000	2007/ 2008 £000	2008/ 2009 £000	2009/ 2010 £000	2010/ 2011 £000	2011/ 2012 £000	2012/ 2013 £000
Approved Gross Budget	1	2	2	2	2	2		50						
Approved Net Budget	1	2	2	2	2	2		50						
Already released	0	0	0	0	0	0		0						
Amount for which release now requested	1	2	2	2	2	2		50						

Justification for Release

The bid forms part of the councils ongoing programme to provide, in partnership with others, skateboard, inline skates, BMX and other similar outdoor activity park areas, specifically aimed at teenagers and young people. These partnership schemes are with voluntary groups and/or Parish/Town Councils and have proved to be very effective at developing community involvement and active local support for types of scheme that can bring with them, antisocial behaviour problems if not 'owned by the communities they serve. The capital release of this bid is to continue to provide funding for these partnerships and is based on a contribution of the lower 50% or £8,000 per scheme.

CABINET

TREASURY MANAGEMENT INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE (Report by the Head of Financial Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report comments on the performance of the fund from April to June 2006. At the beginning of the year the Fund Managers managed £73m of the Council's funds: £26.5m with Investec, £26.5m with Alliance Capital and £20m with CDCM. However in April 2006 £5m of funds were returned by both Investec and Alliance Capital to meet the cash flow requirements of the Council.
- 1.2. The Monetary Policy Committee held the base rate at 4.5% from August 2005 until August 2006 when it was increased to 4.75%.

2. PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Annex A provides comparative tables showing investment returns over various periods.
- 2.2 **April to June 2006**

The first quarter of the year did not get off to a good start for many fund managers due to the weakness in the market for gilts. The returns for Investec and Alliance Capital were disappointing; Alliance Capital exceeded the benchmark, as a result of investing in corporate bonds and floating rate notes, but the benchmark was low so that the real returns were poor; Investec's return did not reach the benchmark or the industry average. CDCM continues to outperform the other fund managers (as it did in 2005/06) and during the quarter made new investments at rates over 5%.
- 2.3 **July to August 2006**

Investec's performance improved in July and August, equalling the benchmark in July and beating it in August. Alliance Capital's returns have continued to be steady but uninspiring. They were below the benchmark in July and above it in August. As CDCM's investments are at fixed rates for up to 5 years, their returns do not significantly fluctuate from one month to another.
- 2.4 **Since start of new mandates (July/August 2000)**

The Authority appointed the three Fund Managers and gave them new mandates in 2000. It has always been accepted that our mandates and choice of managers will lead to fluctuations but that in the longer run higher overall returns should be achieved. Since 2000 this is still the case as they are all exceeding their benchmarks, the industry average and the 7 day rate. Overall returns are very similar but as at June 2006, CDCM was the best performing of the three Managers.

3. PERFORMANCE AGAINST BUDGET IN 2006/7

- 3.1 The latest estimated outturn of investment interest is £260k more than in the budget mainly due to the impact of the 2005/06 outturn and the beneficial impact on returns of the increase in the base rate.
- 3.2 The Capital Receipts Advisory Group will be discussing the poor results in the first three months of the year with the relevant fund managers at the next monitoring meeting in November.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 It is recommended that Cabinet note this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Working papers in Financial Services

CONTACT OFFICER

Steve Couper – Head of Financial Services Tel. 01480 388103

ANNEX A

PERFORMANCE FOR THE QUARTER APRIL 2006 – JUNE 2006					
	Performance %	Benchmark %	Variation from benchmark	Industry average %	Variation from average %
Investec	0.76	0.84*	-0.08	0.87	-0.11
Alliance	0.98	0.84*	+0.14	0.87	+0.11
CDCM	1.26	1.16**	+0.10	0.87	+0.39

CUMULATIVE PERFORMANCE SINCE JULY 2000					
	Performance %	Benchmark %	Variation from benchmark	Industry average %	Variation from average %
Investec	32.7	32.4	+0.3	30.8	+1.9
Alliance #	33.2	31.8	+1.4	30.2	+3.0
CDCM	34.1	30.4	+3.7	30.8	+3.3

The mandate with Alliance Capital started in August 2000

* Composite of 60% Merrill Lynch 3 month LIBID (London Inter-Bank Bid Rate) and 40% ML 0-5yr Gilt Index.

** 3 month LIBID

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CABINET

28TH SEPTEMBER 2006

**CONCESSIONARY FARES
(Report by Director of Operational Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet on recent discussions relating to the introduction of revised arrangements to the Concessionary Fares regime that was introduced on 1st April 2006.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Cabinet approved the new statutory minimum national Concessionary Fares travel scheme on 23rd February 2006 permitting free travel within Huntingdonshire between 09.30 to 23.00 Monday to Friday and all day weekends and Bank Holidays. The new scheme commenced on 1st April 2006 and replaced the previous countywide half-fare scheme.

- 2.2 In addition to the statutory minimum scheme, all authorities within Cambridgeshire, including Peterborough, agreed to permit travel outside their own District to other areas of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough at agreed flat-fare rates. This option was approved by Cabinet on 26 February 2006 at an estimated cost of between £560K and £600K for 2006/07. Cabinet were also informed that the estimated cost had been provided by the County Council based on a number of assumptions due to the lack of detailed information from the bus operators and so it was not possible to guarantee that the cost would not exceed £600k.

- 2.3 Some exceptions were permitted to the statutory minimum to allow those registered blind or partially-sighted to travel free across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough at any time, pass use on certain pre-09.30 services where the only bus departs before this time. Cambridge Park & Ride was excluded from the scheme.

3. REVISED SCHEME

- 3.1 Following the commencement of the new scheme, there has been general disquiet from the public regarding the perceived restrictions of the scheme and this led to the local press leading a campaign to have the scheme changed. The primary concern of those entitled to travel was that the scheme was too restrictive and did not provide free travel throughout the whole of the County and Peterborough. Within

Huntingdonshire, this was a particular issue for those living in the parishes in the north of the District where free travel was not available to Peterborough.

- 3.2 Since the introduction of the scheme, certain services have shown a decline in patronage, particularly on travel into Cambridge and on Park & Ride services generally. Such reductions affect the agreed targets set between Government and the County Council contained with the Local Transport Plan. This therefore limits the ability of the County Council to secure reward funding from Central Government which is based on generally increasing patronage levels on a year by year basis.
- 3.3 Following the introduction of the new scheme, discussions have been on-going between the County Council, the District and City Councils and bus operators into the options to widen the scheme to permit free travel across the County for the rest of the current year and next year until the Government's, already announced, national scheme becomes effective from April 2008 when it is assumed extra grants will be available to fund the extra cost. This focussed on the amount of funding that each District and City Council could commit to such a revised scheme and whether the Operators would accept a cap on their reimbursement in return for the resulting simplification of the scheme. To complete the picture, the County Council also agreed to consider a funding contribution via LPSA reward funding to make-up any shortfall.
- 3.4 Agreement in principle was reached between partners to widen the scheme from 1st October permitting free travel across the County from 09.30 to the last bus and all day weekends and Bank Holidays. As with the previous scheme, there would be some exceptions to allow pass use on services where the only bus is pre-09.30, allowances for certain journeys outside Cambridgeshire and the acceptance of passes on Cambridge Park & Ride services.
- 3.5 Formal agreement to widen the scheme has been possible by all parties agreeing new financial arrangements where District and City authorities have agreed a level of maximum funding they will commit to a scheme for the remainder of 2006/07 and a maximum for 2007/08. This is supported by bus operators agreeing to cap the level of reimbursement they receive from the scheme and the County Council agreeing to underwrite any additional costs over and above these figures.
- 3.6 A summary of the agreed funding levels is attached as Annex A.
- 3.7 It is understood that should LPSA funding be required, that the County Council will seek the approval of the relevant LSP Board to the use of such funds.

- 3.8 Patronage data from bus operators is beginning to emerge. While Stagecoach has relatively robust data for the early periods of the new scheme, for other operators this is much sparser although information from Cavalier/Huntingdon & District is indicating actual costs about 11% above previous estimates (similar to Stagecoach Cambridge). As such data becomes available in greater detail from Operators, this will allow current scheme costs to be more accurately estimated.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Due to the need to publicly announce a revised scheme from 1st October 2006 with other partners, it has previously been agreed that the Council would participate given the agreed objective to widen the scheme across the County if this could be achieved.
- 4.2 While actual scheme costs will become clearer over the coming weeks and months, the financial implications for the District Council are now fixed and agreed based upon them not exceeding the indicative limit of £600k reported to Cabinet in February. It has been assumed that inflation of 5% will need to be added for 2007/08 forming a maximum of £630k in that year. However it has also been made clear that if actual scheme costs within the District come in under these levels, then the Council will only meet those costs and that, under no circumstances, will the Council pay £600K regardless of actual costs.
- 4.3 This revised scheme only runs until March 2008 because a new national statutory travel scheme will be introduced from that date.

5. RECOMMENDATION

It is

Recommended that Cabinet endorse the revised scheme to operate as from 1st October 2006 and note the maximum cost of the scheme to this Councils.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Report to Cabinet, 23rd February 2006 – Concessionary Fares

Contact Officer: **Stuart Bell. Team Leader - Transportation**
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E mail stuart.bell@huntsdc.gov.uk

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Concessionary Fares – A Countywide Scheme (16 August 2006)

The following table prepared by the County Council identifies the funding implications for each of the Cambridgeshire District Councils and Peterborough. It is based on the principle that each council is prepared to commit as much funding to an enhanced scheme as they are already likely to need to provide under the current scheme. Estimates will be updated as new information becomes available up to the start of the enhanced scheme.

	Allocated budget for concessionary fares, 2006/07 £000	Estimates of what the current scheme will cost in 2006/07 £000	Maximum funding to be committed to an enhanced scheme in 2006/07 £000	Maximum funding to be committed to an enhanced scheme in 2007/08 (5% inflation) £000
Cambridge City	650	870	870	913
South Cambridgeshire	525	307	525	551
East Cambridgeshire	190	220	220	231
Huntingdonshire	450	485	600	630
Fenland	260	260	260	273
Peterborough	1,186	1,460	1,460	1,533
Totals	3,261	3,602	3,935	4,131

When officers discussed the latest estimate of the cost for the current year with County officers it became clear that the Huntingdonshire figure was much less reliable than those for other Councils as we had the highest proportion of routes where no reliable data had been provided by operators.

The next table summarises the overall estimated costs of a countywide scheme, and the sources of funding from which the cost will be met. Figures are £k.

	2006/07	2007/08
	£000	(5% inflation plus an allowance for extra routes) £000
Costs		
Agreed cap on operators' reimbursement * (includes on-bus revenue)	4,000 to 4,400	4,350 to 4,745
* still to be finalised		
Funding		
From District Councils	3,935	4,130
Difference (to be arranged by Cambs County Council, from LPSA money)	65 to 465	220 to 615

COMT
CABINET

12TH SEPTEMBER 2006
28TH SEPTEMBER 2006

BROUGHTON CONSERVATION AREA: CHARACTER STATEMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

(Report by Planning Policy Manager)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of the responses to the Broughton Character Statement and Management Plan consultation documents and to consider the Council's response.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The District Council is committed to the production of Conservation Area Character Statements to provide an analysis of the special interest of all the district's 63 Conservation Areas. These documents will be used to guide decisions on planning matters and other changes to the fabric of Conservation Areas to ensure that the character and appearance of Conservation Areas is not diminished. It is also hoped that the publication of these documents will help to increase the general public's awareness of the special qualities that make the District's Conservation Areas unique.
- 2.2 The existing Broughton Conservation Area Character Statement was adopted in July 2001 following a period of public consultation. Under the new Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs), all character statements should be reviewed in a five year rolling programme to ensure that the advice being offered is relevant and up-to-date. As the Broughton document only recently expired and already meets the latest guidance for the production of such material, it was considered appropriate to update its contents and repeat the public consultation procedure.

3. THE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 The contents of the Character Statement follows a previously-agreed pattern, which conveys the special architectural and historical interest of the Conservation Areas through maps, photographic illustrations and written text. Specific references are made to:-
- The historical development of the village
 - The essential characteristics of the Conservation Area including important views, focal points and landmark buildings.

- The green open spaces, trees and gardens in the Conservation Area.
- The architectural styles within the village.
- The distribution of construction materials.
- Examples of traditional local detailing.

3.2 This approach conforms with English Heritage's recent publication *Guidance on conservation area appraisals* 2006. It has been necessary to make only minor changes and updates to the original document.

4. THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

4.1 Since 2000, another recent English Heritage publication *Guidance on the management of conservation areas* 2006 has given further assistance to local authorities in the preparation of enhancement plans.

4.2 In response to this, a Management Plan has now been prepared for the Broughton Conservation Area. The Plan identifies potential weaknesses within the Area, as well as opportunities for enhancement.

4.3 The Plan also identifies the requirement to review the Conservation Area boundary as part of the rolling update of the material (ie within 5 years). This is considered to address the on-going management of the Conservation Area required by the new BVPIs but also honours the Cabinet's decision of April 2003 to support Conservation Area boundary reviews.

5. THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

5.1 8 written responses have been received from the statutory agencies, local organisations and members of the public consulted. The comments received are presented within Appendix 1 and the Council's response to them is also indicated.

5.2 All comments made relate to minor issues of fact or detail, or issues beyond the scope of the document. As a result of the responses, it has been necessary to make only minor amendments to the document.

5.3 On 19th June 2006, the Development Control Panel endorsed the Character Statement and Management Plan.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 That the Cabinet considers the responses to comments presented in Appendix 1 and agrees to:

1. Adopt the revised Broughton Conservation Area Character Statement (as previously circulated) with the amendments contained in Appendix 1 of this paper, which will become a material consideration in planning decisions.

2. Adopt the Broughton Conservation Area Management Plan as a set of proposals for the enhancement of the Conservation Area and as a basis for further discussion and project work.
3. Authorize the Head of Planning Services to make any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations necessary as a result of these changes, after consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Strategy.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Draft Broughton Character Statement and Management Plan

Contact Officer: Chris Surfleet
Design & Implementation Team Leader
☎ 01480 388476

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BROUGHTON CHARACTER ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT PLAN: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES **APPENDIX ONE**

- 1 – action taken
- 2 – not within the remit of this document
- 3 – no action taken

	Respondent	Comment	Response	Action
1	Development Control Team Leader HDC	(i) Minor text and graphic improvements	<i>Amendments made</i>	1
2	Urban Design Officer, HDC	(i) Minor text and graphic improvements	<i>Amendments made</i>	1
3	Conservation Team Leader	(i) Minor text and graphic improvements	<i>Amendments Made</i>	1
4	The Countryside Agency 2 nd Floor City House 126 – 128 Hills Road Cambridge CB2 1PT	(i) No comments. Does not fall into their criteria	<i>Noted</i>	3

5	Environment Agency Bromholme Lane Brampton Huntingdon Cambs PE28 4NE	(i) Advised that the Character statement should state that a flood risk assessment may be required for future development within the village.	Noted	2
6	Broughton Parish Council	(i) Broughton Parish Council generally agrees with the aims and intentions of the statement (ii) Had queries relating to anomalous references to buildings within the Conservation Area	Amendments made	1
7	Development Control Panel	(i) The Panel resolved that the content of the draft character statement and management plan for Broughton Conservation Area be endorsed and the cabinet recommended to adopt the documents as Council Policy.	Noted	3

COMT
CABINET

12TH SEPTEMBER 2006
28TH SEPTEMBER 2006

WARBOYS CONSERVATION AREA: CHARACTER STATEMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

(Report by Planning Policy Manager)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of the responses to the Warboys Character Statement and Management Plan consultation documents and to consider the Council's response.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The District Council is committed to the production of Conservation Area Character Statements to provide an analysis of the special interest of all the district's 63 Conservation Areas. These documents will be used to guide decisions on planning matters and other changes to the fabric of Conservation Areas to ensure that the character and appearance of Conservation Areas is not diminished. It is also hoped that the publication of these documents will help to increase the general public's awareness of the special qualities that make the District's Conservation Areas unique.
- 2.2 The existing Warboys Conservation Area Character Statement was adopted in July 2000 following a period of public consultation. Under the new Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs), all character statements should be reviewed in a five year rolling programme to ensure that the advice being offered is relevant and up-to-date. As the Warboys document only recently expired and already meets the latest guidance for the production of such material, it was considered appropriate to update its contents and repeat the public consultation procedure.

3. THE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

- 3.1 The contents of the Character Statement follows a previously-agreed pattern, which conveys the special architectural and historical interest of the Conservation Areas through maps, photographic illustrations and written text. Specific references are made to:-
- The historical development of Warboys
 - The essential characteristics of the Conservation Area including important views, focal points and landmark buildings.

- The green open spaces, trees and gardens in the Conservation Area.
- The architectural styles within the village.
- The distribution of construction materials.
- Examples of traditional local detailing.

3.2 This approach conforms with English Heritage's recent publication *Guidance on conservation area appraisals* 2006. It has been necessary to make only minor changes and updates to the original document.

4. THE MANAGEMENT PLAN

4.1 Since 2000, another recent English Heritage publication *Guidance on the management of conservation areas* 2006 has given further assistance to local authorities in the preparation of enhancement plans.

4.2 In response to this, a Management Plan has now been prepared for the Warboys Conservation Area. The Plan identifies potential weaknesses within the Area, as well as opportunities for enhancement.

4.3 The Plan also identifies the requirement to review the Conservation Area boundary as part of the rolling update of the material (ie within 5 years). This is considered to address the on-going management of the Conservation Area required by the new BVPIs but also honours the Cabinet's decision of April 2003 to support Conservation Area boundary reviews.

5. THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

5.1 8 written responses have been received from the statutory agencies, local organisations and members of the public consulted. The comments received are presented within Appendix 1 and the Council's response to them is also indicated.

5.2 All comments made relate to minor issues of fact or detail, or issues beyond the scope of the document. As a result of the responses, it has been necessary to make only minor amendments to the document.

5.3 On 19th June 2006, the Development Control Panel endorsed the Character Statement and Management Plan.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 That the Cabinet considers the responses to comments presented in Appendix 1 and agrees to:

1. Adopt the revised Warboys Conservation Area Character Statement (as previously circulated) with the amendments contained in Appendix 1 of this paper, which will become a material consideration in planning decisions.

2. Adopt the Warboys Conservation Area Management Plan as a set of proposals for the enhancement of the Conservation Area and as a basis for further discussion and project work.
3. Authorize the Head of Planning Services to make any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations necessary as a result of these changes, after consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Strategy.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Draft Warboys Character Statement and Management Plan

Contact Officer: Chris Surfleet
Design & Implementation Team Leader
☎ 01480 388476

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WARBOYS CHARACTER ASSESSMENT & MANAGEMENT PLAN: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES APPENDIX ONE

- 1 – action taken
- 2 – not within the remit of this document
- 3 – no action taken

	Respondent	Comment	Response	Action
1	Development Control Team Leader HDC	(i) Minor text and graphic improvements	<i>Amendments made</i>	1
2	Urban Design Officer, HDC	(i) Minor text and graphic improvements	<i>Amendments made</i>	1
5	Cambridgeshire County Council West Highways Division Box No ET 1031 Stanton House Stanton Way Huntingdon PE29 6XL	(i) Comments regarding the management of the trees on the verge along the High Street. Cambridgeshire County Council actively discourage the planting of trees within the highway environment They will not take responsibility for the maintenance or replacement of the trees along Warboys' High Street.	<i>Noted</i>	3
6	The Countryside Agency 2 nd Floor City House 126 – 128 Hills Road Cambridge CB2 1PT	(i) No comments. Does not fall into their criteria	<i>Noted</i>	3

7	Warboys Parish Council 2 Blenheim Close Warboys Huntingdon PE28 2XF	<p>(i) The Parish Council welcomes the content of the document, particularly the references to the trees in the highway verge along High Street and the condition of nos. 64 and 66 High Street. The Parish Council have had to accept responsibility for all future maintenance and public liability for the trees in this area.</p> <p>(ii) They are disappointed with the lack of progress in refurbishing 66 High Street, and are pleased that the Management Plan proposes that the District Council will use its statutory powers to repair both 64 and 66.</p>	Noted	3
8	Development Control Panel		Noted	3

CABINET

28TH SEPTEMBER 2006

**ST. IVES MARKET TOWN TRANSPORT STRATEGY
(Report by Head of Planning Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report represents the final stage in the preparation of the Market Town Transport Strategy (MTTS) for St. Ives. It gives feedback on the public consultation conducted during January 2006 and reports on the results of the questionnaire that was distributed as part of the consultation.
- 1.2 The report also outlines the way forward and how the schemes contained within the strategy will be implemented.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Since the first Local Transport Plan (LTP) was published in 2001, a key component has been the development of a MTTS for all towns across Cambridgeshire. Within Huntingdonshire, strategies are in place for St. Neots (2001) and Huntingdon & Godmanchester (2003) with Ramsey and area expected during 2007.
- 2.2 For St. Ives, the Huntingdonshire Area Joint Committee has been endorsing the framework and principles of the formulation of the draft strategy over the past two years. To take this work forward, a joint County/District Member/Officer working party has been overseeing this work which has also included representatives of South Cambridgeshire District Council as part of the MTTS study area falls within that district.
- 2.3 In December 2005, the Hunts AJC endorsed the carrying out of a public consultation during January 2006. This included the distribution of leaflets and questionnaires to all households and businesses in the study area. The consultation also included staffed and unstaffed exhibitions, letters sent to neighbouring parish councils, major stakeholders and interest groups and the use of the County and both District Council websites inviting comment.
- 2.4 General response to the consultation was reasonably good with over 200 questionnaires received back and over 100 people visiting the staffed exhibitions. As well as taking the opportunity to comment on the questions listed, almost half of the respondents took the

opportunity to comment on specific elements of the strategy. Of those who responded, there was a representative cross-section of population in terms of age and gender.

- 2.5 Table 1 shows the level of support for the key measures contained within the draft strategy and that a majority of respondents support the proposed schemes.

Table 1 - Support for draft strategy proposals

Measures	Fully or partly support	Fully or partly oppose	No view/didn't answer
Cycling and Walking	79%	5%	15%
Public Transport	66%	19%	14%
Road safety	70%	15%	15%

- 2.6 Respondents were also asked to prioritise the proposed schemes contained in the draft strategy. The highest priority was given to safety schemes on key routes and junctions, improvements to pedestrian and cyclist crossing facilities, safety schemes on residential roads, and a comprehensive cycle network. The lowest priority was given to additional cycle parking in the town.
- 2.7 In a number of cases, there were recurring themes to the comments made and these are listed as follows;
- Traffic calming on Needingworth Road will result in increased traffic on Pig Lane.
 - More bus services are needed to the surrounding villages.
 - Buses should not travel through the town centre.
 - Keep the bus station in the town centre.
 - Secure cycle parking is needed.
 - No further parking restrictions should be introduced.
 - The New Bridges/Flood Arches should be repaired rather than replaced.
 - Improvements to East Street and North Road are needed to allow easier access for pedestrians and buses.
 - Remove some disabled parking in the town centre.
 - Priority should be given to bypass traffic at the Meadow Lane roundabout.
 - The 20mph limit on Hill Rise should be during school hours only.
 - Traffic calming is needed on Pig Lane.

3. FINAL STRATEGY / IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 As well as delivering a number of local objectives and contributing towards improving the environment of the town, the final strategy will form an important part of the LTP. It contains an integrated package of combined measures that, taken together, will address the six key LTP objectives.
- 3.2 The final strategy is the result of a significant amount of study work that has identified the key transport problems facing St. Ives and developed the most appropriate schemes to address the problems. These have been prioritised to give an indication of the likely timescale for delivery of measures. The actual schemes included, and their priority order, reflect the views obtained through the consultation exercise combined together with an assessment of their deliverability.
- 3.3 The measures proposed will have positive environmental and safety benefits and improve accessibility needs of people living or working in, as well as visiting, St Ives. To maximise these benefits, it is vital that the measures are part of a package and are implemented as such. This is reflected in the prioritisation of the schemes to ensure that a balance between the modes will be achieved.
- 3.4 The strategy also aims to contribute towards other strategic objectives such as reducing social exclusion, improving health and maintaining economic vitality thereby making St. Ives a better place to live, work and visit.
- 3.5 A copy of the final strategy is attached at Annex A.
- 3.6 The Council has a financial commitment of £76K per annum for a 3-year period within the MTP between the period 2006/07 to 2008/09 to help deliver the actions contained in the strategy. As part of this year's consideration of the MTP, it will be suggested that due to the delay in the approval of this strategy, that this period be amended to cover the period 2007/08 to 2009/10. While this will have no additional financial impact on the Council at this stage, as we move towards the end of our funding commitment, it will be necessary for Cabinet to consider whether any extension to current funding levels should be considered.
- 3.7 In addition, the County Council will contribute financially through the LTP and any allocation for St. Ives will be dependant on the overall level of funding from Central Government to Cambridgeshire as part of its annual LTP settlement.
- 3.8 Finally, other sources of funding are likely to emerge through the development process with transport related S.106 contributions towards the MTTs to mitigate the effects of future development.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The measures contained in the final strategy are the responsibility of both the District and County Council and both are making a financial commitment to the delivery of the Strategy through their Medium Term Plans. In addition, the strategy will be a key tool to secure development related contributions through the S.106 process where appropriate.
- 4.2 The Area Joint Committee endorsed the final Strategy at their meeting on 4th September 2006 and it needs to be considered by Cabinet at both Councils before it can formally be adopted as part of the LTP.
- 4.3 The timescale for the delivery of the Strategy will depend on the levels of funding available as well as through development contributions. At present, the District Council has given a financial commitment through its MTP to cover the period 2006/07 to 2008/09. It is expected that works proper will commence from April 2007 although it is clear that future funding arrangements will have to be considered post-2008/09.
- 4.4 Based on actual funding levels, the Hunts AJC will be presented with an annual programme of works for approval and subsequent design and implementation, with each scheme itself being subject to detailed design and consultation.

5. RECOMMENDATION

It is

RECOMMENDED that Cabinet formally approve the St. Ives Market Town Transport Strategy as attached at Annex A.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Local Transport Plan 2006-2011
Hunts Area Joint Committee – Agenda and Minutes

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St. Ives Transport Strategy

Introduction

This is the St. Ives Transport Strategy. It forms part of the County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP). It has been drawn up following consultation with stakeholders, interest groups, residents of St. Ives and the surrounding villages. The strategy provides a programme of integrated transport schemes to be implemented from 2007/08 onwards. The programme is intended to support LTP objectives, and contribute towards the prosperity of the town and the well being of its residents. The strategy will be reviewed in 2010/11 when the LTP is revised.

Background

Located centrally within Cambridgeshire, St. Ives is one of the smallest market towns in the county. It has a population of approximately 16,500, and is situated on the banks of the River Ouse, in the district of Huntingdonshire. The area covered by the strategy, shown in Map 1, extends to Pidley in the north, Willingham in the east, Conington in the south, and Houghton and Wyton in the west, encompassing approximately 45,000 people. Some of the strategy area falls within the district of South Cambridgeshire.

St. Ives grew up as a stopping point for travellers and as an agricultural settlement. Tourism has flourished, and St. Ives has excellent recreational facilities along the river.

At the time of the 2001 Census:

- 71% of the St. Ives population aged between 16 and 74 were employed, compared to an average of 70% for Huntingdonshire, and 61% across England and Wales.
- The level of car ownership in Huntingdonshire is very high with 84% of households owning one or more cars.

In 2005:

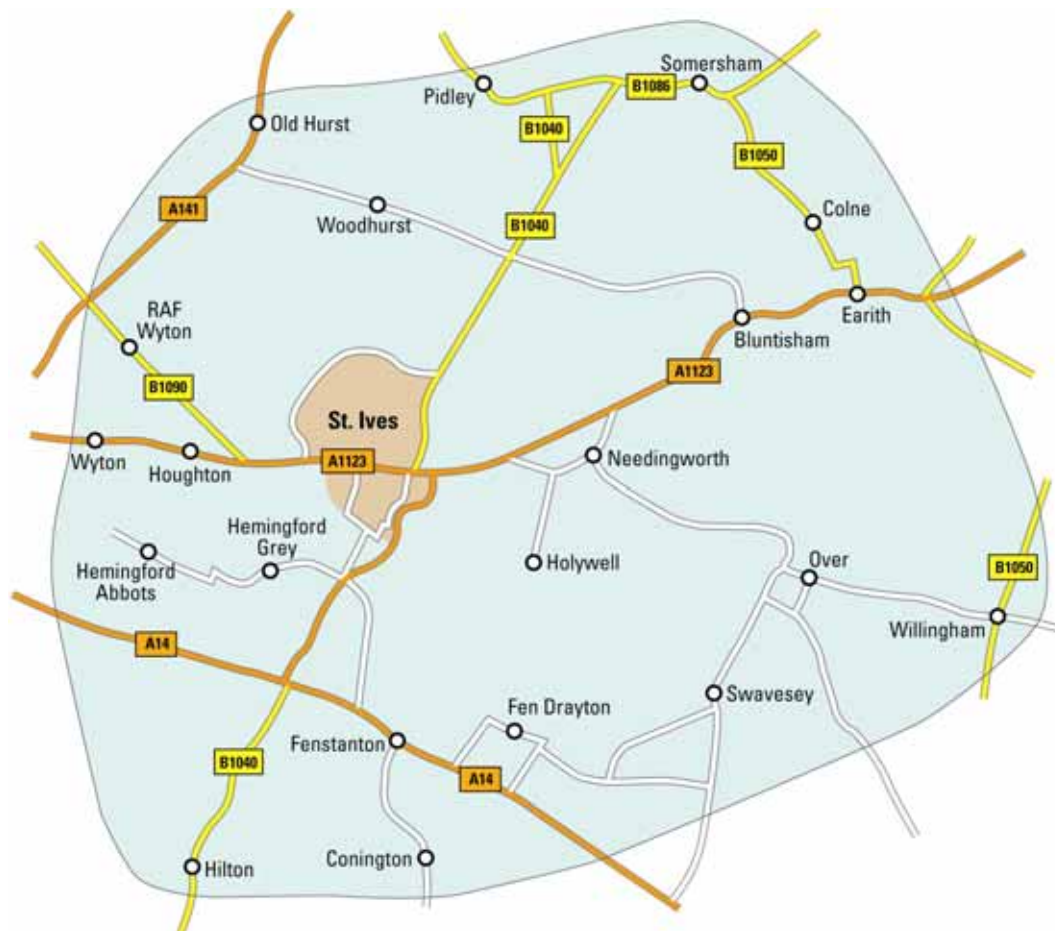
- Approximately 73% of journeys in St. Ives town centre were made by car, 9% by bus, 3% by cycle, 7% on foot and 8% by goods vehicles.
- In terms of the average for all market towns, St. Ives has comparable numbers of buses, goods vehicles and motorcycles, above average cars, and below average numbers of pedestrians and cyclists.

Transport Issues

St. Ives has good road links and is situated close to the A14 Trunk Road, the A141, the A1123 and the A1096. These roads link St. Ives to other nearby towns and cities, such as Huntingdon and Cambridge. While there is no railway station in St. Ives, the nearby town of Huntingdon is situated on the East Coast Mainline, providing direct trains to and from London (Kings Cross) and Peterborough, and regular links to Newcastle, Leeds and Birmingham. In addition, Cambridge station has excellent links to London. The bus links in most parts of the town are good, with regular services between Peterborough,

Huntingdon and Cambridge that are well used. However, these links could be improved further, particularly in the northern residential areas of the town. The more rural hinterland is served by a number of bus services, where frequency ranges from hourly to daily services. These services are adequate quality, but could be improved. Part of the ward of Somersham has particularly poor accessibility by public transport and has been designated as one of our nine priority areas for action as part of the Cambridgeshire Accessibility Strategy. Provision for cycling in the town is relatively poor. In St. Ives, the furthest distance one would have to cycle to get to the town centre is about 2.2 miles (3.5km) or about 20 minutes at a steady 6mph. On this basis, a higher level of cycling than the current 1% could be expected.

Map 1 St Ives study area



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The town has grown considerably over the past 15 years. Additional development is due to take place in the future, although this will be a relatively small amount for a town of this size. There are three new housing development sites allocated on and near to the St. Ives Golf Course, which is on the west side of town. Planning applications have been submitted for 300 dwellings on this site, which are being considered by Huntingdonshire District Council. In addition, there are plans to build approximately 100 dwellings off London Road and around 300 dwellings near the A1123/B1090 junction. These sites will contribute financially to measures that will help to mitigate the

additional travel demand generated by the developments. Additionally any further developments in the area will be expected to contribute financially to measures that will encourage low car use from the developments as part of Section 106 Agreements.

The strategy sets out how we propose to improve the transport infrastructure and services in St. Ives, and address the key transport problems affecting the town. These include the following.

- The rural nature of the surrounding area means that there is reliance on the private car for transport, illustrated by the fact that 70% of journeys to work in Huntingdonshire are made by car.
- A significant number of employees are located on the business park and employment area in St. Ives, and existing walking, cycling and public transport links to this area are poor.
- Although the number of pedestrians and cyclists are below average for the market towns, they were involved in 35%¹ of all accidents between 2002 and 2004.

Aims of the strategy

The St. Ives Transport Strategy aims to address the key issues outlined above and meet the LTP objectives. It has six fundamental objectives taken from the LTP, which reflect the Government Shared Priorities for Transport.

- To make travel safer.
- To develop integrated transport and to promote public transport, walking, cycling and other sustainable forms of transport.
- To maintain and operate efficient transport networks.
- To create a transport system that is accessible to all.
- To provide a transport system that supports the economy and the growing population of the county.
- To protect and enhance the built and natural environment.

Table 2 shows how the strategy will contribute towards meeting LTP objectives. The implementation of schemes within this strategy will contribute towards meeting LTP targets for reducing the number of accidents and stabilising traffic levels, and will help to address wider objectives such as reducing social exclusion, improving quality of life, air quality and health.

As well as forming part of the LTP, the strategy links in with a number of other plans, schemes and initiatives. These include the following.

- The Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi-Modal Study, including the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway route.
- The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan.
- Community planning through Local Strategic Partnerships.

¹ Comprising of 18% pedal cycle accidents and 17% pedestrian accidents.

- The current Local Plans of each district and the emerging Local Development Frameworks
- Cambridgeshire’s Long-Term Transport Strategy
- Cambridgeshire Accessibility Strategy

The following sections outline the schemes that form the St. Ives Transport Strategy by mode, and then link back to the overall objectives. In each case, these are prioritised, and indicative costs are stated. Detailed scheme costs will be prepared as each scheme is developed.

Table 2 How the strategy will help meet LTP objectives

LTP objective	Theme	Strategy measures
To make travel safer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce road accidents and improve personal safety for all transport users in St. Ives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement safety improvements to benefit all travel modes. This includes Safer Routes to Schools.
To develop integrated transport and to promote public transport, walking, cycling and other sustainable forms of transport.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ease interchange between modes of transport. • Help improve the health and well being of people across the whole community. Reduce the adverse impacts of traffic in the town. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement schemes that provide for easy interchange and encourage use of sustainable modes of transport. • Upgrade and implement new walking and cycling routes. • Public transport improvements. • Install cycle parking
To maintain and operate efficient transport networks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve path, cycle and road condition. • Reduce congestion and unnecessary delays on roads 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upgrade highway condition • Traffic management improvements • Car park management strategy
To create a transport system that is accessible to all.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise accessibility to jobs and services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking and cycling route improvements. • Public transport infrastructure improvements.
To provide a transport system that meets the needs of the economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and enhance the economy of the town. • Increase accessibility to and from, and within the town. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion and implementation of walking and cycling routes. • Public transport improvements to reduce journey times.
To protect and enhance the built and natural environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce impact of transport systems on the environment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion and implementation of walking, cycling and other sustainable forms of transport. • Increase cycle parking provision at shops and workplaces

Public Transport Improvements

Bus services

The bus is an important mode of transport as it enables people to access facilities and services that they may not otherwise be able to use. Furthermore, it contributes towards improving the environment, reduces car dependency and encourages walking. Map 4 shows current bus services in St. Ives. Services between St Ives and Cambridge are well used by local people.

A combination of improvements to bus services and enhanced infrastructure will help to achieve Local Transport Plan targets to increase bus patronage. The current level of service in some parts of St. Ives is good, both in terms of where the buses connect to, and service frequency. However, there are poorer bus links in the north east of the town.

This strategy recognises the potential for local bus services, including those that feed into or are part of the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway, to use the rising bollard on Crown Street in order to provide access to the heart of the town centre. This issue is still being investigated. However, it should be made clear that:

- Buses using the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway are standard sized public service vehicles and would be easily accommodated within Crown Street
- Buses would pass only one way through Crown Street, from Broadway to Market Hill
- Before any measures are implemented consideration would be given to reconfiguring the market area to ensure safety and enhance provision for all markets e.g. Monday, Friday, Farmers etc. in consultation with traders and users

Alongside improvements to local bus services, the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway, due to open in late 2008, will enhance service levels to and from Huntingdon and Cambridge.

Public transport services to surrounding villages vary in frequency and quality. Measures to tackle these issues may be considered as part of the countywide accessibility strategy as well as regular reviews of tendered bus services.

Bus Infrastructure

The quality of bus stop facilities in St. Ives, while functional at present, need significant improvements. A number of bus stops in the town have been identified as lacking basic facilities such as timetable information, flags and hard standings. The strategy proposes to improve bus stop infrastructure and provide timetables at all stops in St. Ives where appropriate. Timetable information will be regularly updated and maintained when services change. The proposed bus infrastructure improvements are shown in Table 3.

Real Time Bus Information (RTBI) has the potential to further improve the quality of information provided at bus stops and other key locations. RTBI is due to be installed at key bus stops between Huntingdon and St. Ives, including both bus stations, during 2006/07. It may help to encourage

patronage and provide existing users with an improved service. The provision of RTBI is not included in this strategy as it is funded elsewhere.

The bus station is well located in the town centre. However, waiting facilities and timetable information could be improved. Improvements to the bus station will be considered as part of the possible redevelopment of the town centre. It should be noted that the Transport and Works Act order does not permit the bus station to be moved to the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway Park & Ride site.

Table 3 Bus infrastructure improvements

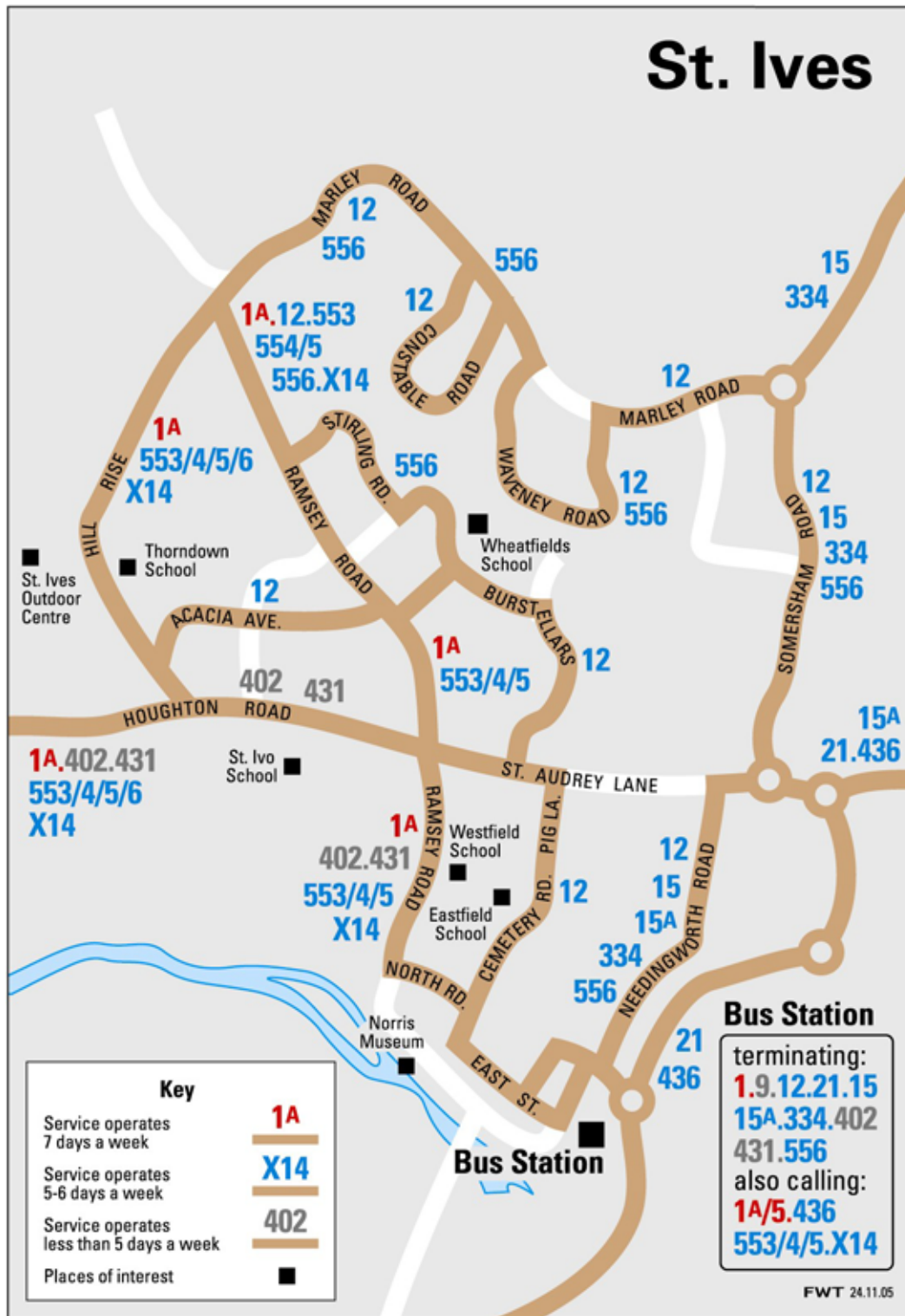
Priority	Scheme	Cost
1	<p>Rolling programme of improvements to bus stops in St. Ives and the strategy area</p> <p>Improvements at individual stops will include some or all of the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised kerbs at bus stops to allow easier access for passengers (particularly when used with low floor buses) • Resurfacing of pavements/new footpath where required in the vicinity of bus stops where the surface is particularly poor, with dropped kerbs to facilitate easy access to the stop • Bus stop infrastructure provision and up to date timetable information • Bus boarders (kerbs/footway built out into carriageway at locations where buses have difficulties pulling into the kerb) • Improved waiting facilities – seating and shelters (RTBI compatible) 	£200,000
Total		£200,000

On-street bus priority measures

To improve the reliability of bus services in the St. Ives area, several bus priority measures are proposed. These measures will increase reliability of local bus services as well as those provided as part of the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway (CGB). These measures have been publicly consulted on and were approved by Huntingdonshire Area Joint Committee in June 2005. These measures are summarised in Table 5 and shown on Map 6.

Cambridgeshire Guided Busway will also provide some bus priority measures (see separate box). Further issues concerning buses in the town centre are set out on page 11.

Map 4 Bus services in St. Ives



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Table 5 On street bus priority measures

Road / Area	Measures to be implemented
A bus lane for eastbound buses on the A1123 Houghton Road from the B1090 through to Hill Rise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Road widening to the existing highway. Between the B1090 and the start of the built up area the widening will be on the north side and will include some County Council owned land. Where there are existing houses on the north side of the road widening will be on the south side.
Provision of a full standard right turn lane on Houghton Road at Hill Rise for all traffic to reduce delays in traffic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This will require a continuation of the widening on the south side of Houghton Road.
Hill Rise and Ramsey Road junction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bus priority at existing traffic signals at the junction.

Map 6 On-street bus priority measures



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Cambridgeshire Guided Busway

As part of the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway the following measures are planned in St Ives.

- A new signalised crossing at the A1096 bypass to reduce travelling distance for buses, cyclists and pedestrians between the St Ives Park and Ride site and the bus station
- Highway works outside Waitrose on Station Road to accommodate the new bus priority and toucan crossing over the bypass
- A new Park and Ride site situated on the area of land east of Harrison Way and south of Meadow Lane. The site will cater for 500 parking spaces initially, with the potential to expand it to 1,000 spaces in total.

These measures, shown in Map 7, will be funded as part of the Guided Bus scheme and not through this strategy.

Map 7 Cambridgeshire Guided Busway proposals in St. Ives



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Road Safety

Road safety goes beyond reducing the number of casualties, important though this is. Safer roads encourage people to use other more sustainable forms of transport than the car for appropriate journeys and contribute towards making the town more attractive to all those needing to travel.

To help achieve the Local Transport Plan targets, there is a need for a comprehensive range of road safety measures. The measures set out in Table 8 have been chosen because, taken as a package, they will have the greatest impact in reducing accidents and will complement other initiatives that promote sustainable transport and safer communities.

The schemes have been drawn up using a combination of the County Councils ranking system (which looks at the worst accident sites in the county and grades them accordingly) and a system which examines the costs of the schemes, how quickly they can be delivered and, following consultation, their importance to the local community.

The schemes in the strategy with safety and traffic management as their primary aim are shown in Table 8. The locations of each of these schemes are illustrated on Map 10, along with the traffic management schemes set out in Table 9.

Safer Routes To School

The County Council's Safer Routes to School team will continue to work in partnership with schools in St. Ives and the surrounding villages. This will improve awareness of transport issues and encourage use of sustainable transport for journeys to and from schools. Many of the safety, cycle and

pedestrian improvements contained within this strategy will complement the work carried out by the Safer Routes to School team.

Furthermore, the council will work with local bus operators to provide a bus service for pupils from the St Ivo School to Needingworth, as current bus timetables will not cater for these pupils once changes to the school day come into force in September 2006.

School Travel Plans

During the lifetime of this strategy the council aims to work with schools in the area to produce individual school travel plans. School travel plans should include actions which should promote and encourage the use of safer sustainable transport on the journey to and from school. In addition, the plan should also address congestion and pollution around the school gate as well as along the main routes to the school.

Table 8 Priorities for safety schemes

Priority	Scheme	Cost
1	Houghton Road Upgrade and improve the existing pelican crossing at the southern end of Elm Drive to make walking and cycling journeys from the north to the south of St. Ives safer.	£80,000
1	St Audrey's Lane Upgrade and improve the existing pelican crossing between Burstellars and Pig Lane on the A1123 to make walking and cycling journeys from the north to the south of St. Ives safer.	£80,000
2	Somersham Road Improvements to the road, including additional lighting and signing, especially at the junction with Nuffield Road. Improvements to the existing roundabout at Somersham Road and Marley Road Roundabout with the introduction of anti-skid surface, signs and encourage lane discipline.	£150,000
Total		£310,000

Table 9 Traffic management measures

Priority	Scheme	Cost
2	Needingworth Road A study will be undertaken to consider traffic flows in the Needingworth Road, Pig Lane, and Meadow Lane area. The study will also consider the impacts of any measures on surrounding roads. Furthermore, a survey of HGVs will be undertaken to establish whether they are using appropriate routes.	To be determined
3	Marley Road Anti-skid surfacing at junctions on the middle section of the road between Ramsey Road and Constable Road.	£150,000
4	High Leys, Green Leys and Paragon Road Speed reducing measures and measures to discourage rat running.	£150,000

4	Burstellers and The Pound Speed reducing measures and measures to discourage rat running.	£180,000
	Total	£480,000

Map 10 Proposed safety and traffic management schemes



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Walking and Cycling

Increasing the opportunities for walking and cycling represents a key part of the Local Transport Plan's objectives for sustainable travel, and consequently forms a major part of this strategy. Between 2002 and 2004 pedestrians and cyclists were involved in 35% of accidents in St. Ives. Therefore it is clear that measures need to be introduced to ensure that safety is improved and that this trend does not continue. Consequently this strategy proposes the creation of a walking and cycling network linking the main centres of population, employment, schools and the town centre, with safer crossing points provided on the A1123. Improved lighting and signing will be provided, particularly on sections that pass through enclosed and poorly lit areas. The routes will actively encourage walking and cycling within and to the town, and meet the objectives of reducing the impact of traffic in the town, maximising accessibility by non-car modes, and helping to improve health.

The walking and cycling network is described in Table 11, and illustrated on Map 13 for the network within St. Ives and Map 14 for the network in the wider area. There is some additional infrastructure that we will implement, to complement the network. This supporting infrastructure can be seen in Table 12.

The priority of the schemes has been established working from the centre of town outwards towards the north/residential areas of town. The routes will link into and complement the National Cycle Network, and will benefit from other schemes in the strategy, particularly road safety.

Table 11: Proposed walking and cycling measures

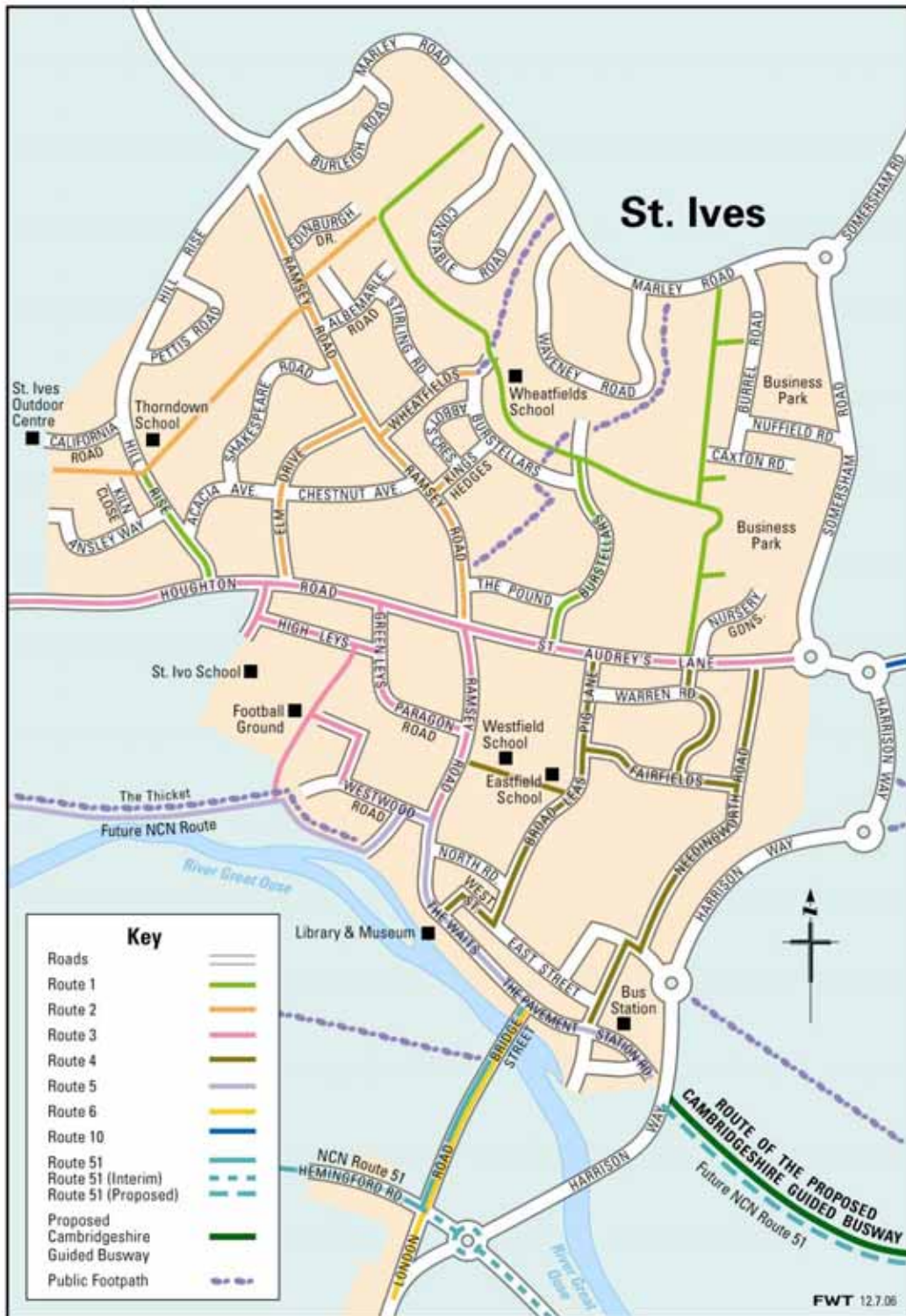
Priority	Scheme	Cost
1	<p>Route 4 – Saint Audreys Lane to town centre</p> <p>This scheme connects St Audreys Lane with the centre of town, Westfield School and Eastfield School. There will be improved crossings on the A1123 to ease movement across this road from the north to the south of town (See Road Safety section for details).</p>	£400,000
2	<p>Route 3 – Houghton Road and Saint Audreys Lane</p> <p>This route links the east of town with the west side, along the A1123. It incorporates links to the St Ivo School and the Recreation Centre. This scheme consists of mainly on road signed routes, but has small sections of segregated shared use paths. Existing path lighting, width and surfaces will be upgraded, along with the installation of high quality signing.</p>	£450,000
3	<p>Route 1 – Marley Road to Saint Audrey Lane</p> <p>This scheme links the northern residential area and the industrial estate to the A1123, and links in with the initiatives proposed on route 4, therefore enabling easy access to the town centre. This route is a predominantly shared use and segregated path. This scheme will upgrade the existing paths by providing lighting, resurfacing and widening.</p>	£520,000
4	<p>Route 2 – Hill Rise to Houghton Road</p> <p>This scheme links the residential north west of the town to the A1123, and connects to route 3, therefore enabling easy</p>	£430,000

	access to the town centre and St Ivo School. The route incorporates links to Thorndown School, with widening and resurfacing of the existing path that runs alongside the school. In addition, this route provides good access to the shops and facilities on Kings Hedges Road.	
5	Route 6 – St. Ives to the south This scheme runs from the south of St. Ives, from Bridge Street, across the bridge, and continues along London Road. The route then continues straight on, where there will be path and lighting upgrades and links in with the existing route on the A1096.	£225,000
5	Route 11 – St. Ives to The Hemingfords This on road route connects St. Ives to The Hemingfords, beginning at the end of route 6, passing through Hemingford Grey and ending at the west end of Hemingford Abbots. There will be additional lighting installed, surfacing improvements and signing installed to make this journey more user friendly.	£50,000
5+	Route 7- St. Ives to Houghton This route runs from the end of the Thicket Path from Route 4, along Thicket Road and into Wyton. There is a need for some surface improvements for this route.	£400,000
5+	Route 10 – St. Ives to Holywell and Needingworth Signing improvements between St. Ives, Holywell and Needingworth	£20,000
5+	Route 12 – St. Ives to Bluntisham This route is being considered and may form part of the strategy – dependent on cost and feasibility	£420,000
Total		£3,115,000

Table 12: Supporting infrastructure

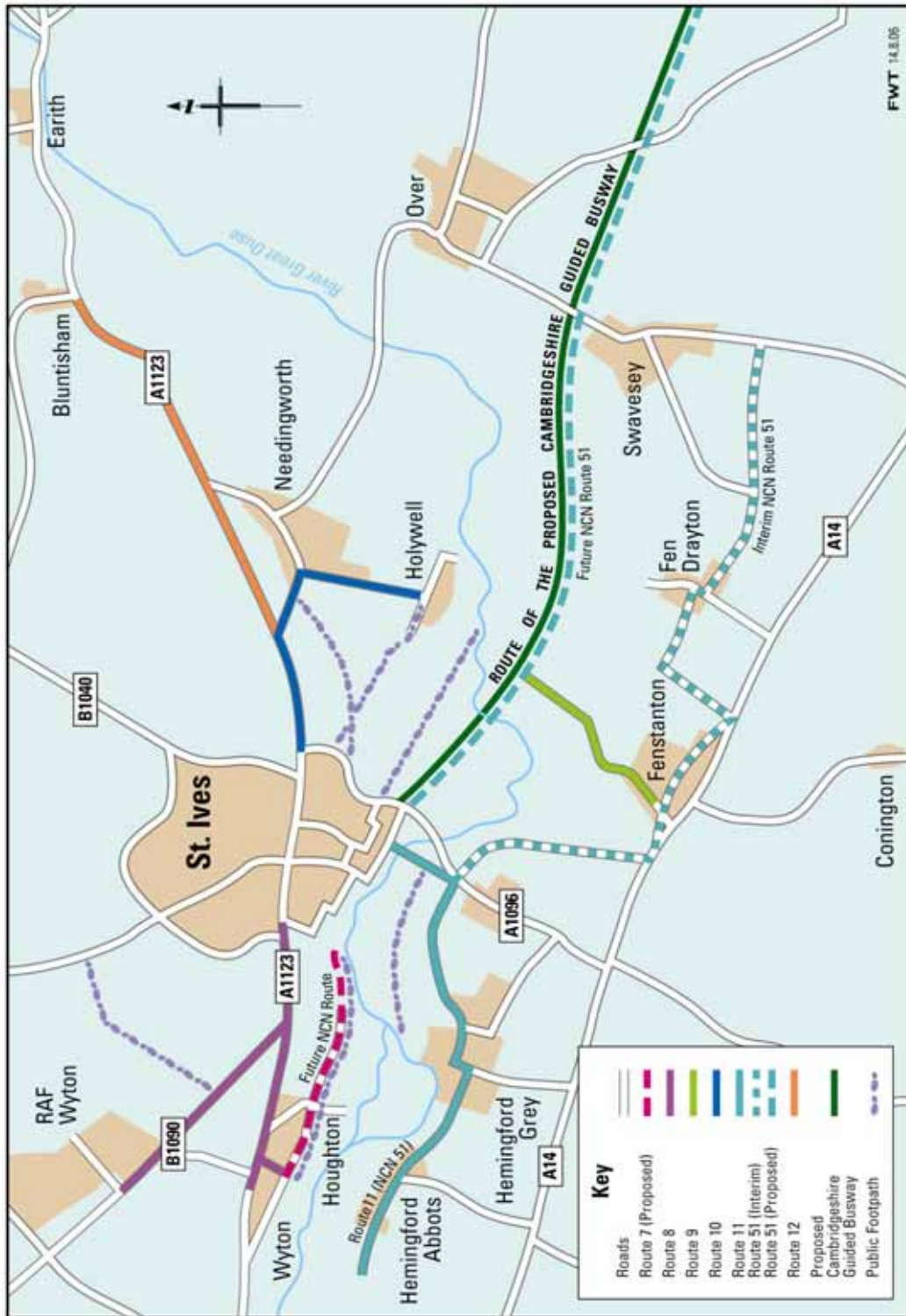
Priority	Scheme	Cost
	Cycle parking Additional cycle parking facilities in the centre of St. Ives, at the bus station and key locations such as at educational establishments.	£20,000 (To be a rolling programme)
	Signing The provision of signing along existing foot and cycle paths in northern residential areas	
	A1123 Crossing Implementation of a toucan crossing to allow safer access to and from the Compass Point Business Park.	£80,000
Total		£100,000

Map 13 Walking and cycling routes in St. Ives



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Map 14 Walking and cycling routes in the surrounding area



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Public Rights of Way

Footpaths, bridleways and byways are mainly used for recreation. However, demand for more functional use is growing. The Cambridgeshire Rights of Way Improvement Plan aims to manage, improve and promote a Public Rights of Way Network as an integral part of a wider transport system. Policies of particular relevance include:

- Selected surface improvements
- Safer road crossings
- Circular routes and improved bridleway network

The walking and cycling network planned as part of this strategy will complement and link into existing Public Rights of Way, including footpaths, bridleways and byways. These can all provide routes out in to the countryside with bridleways in particular catering for a wide section of the community, including cyclists, walkers and horse riders. Public Rights of Way in the area are shown on Map 15.

Transport Networks

Town Centre

Consultation has identified a number of issues concerning the town centre. These include the following.

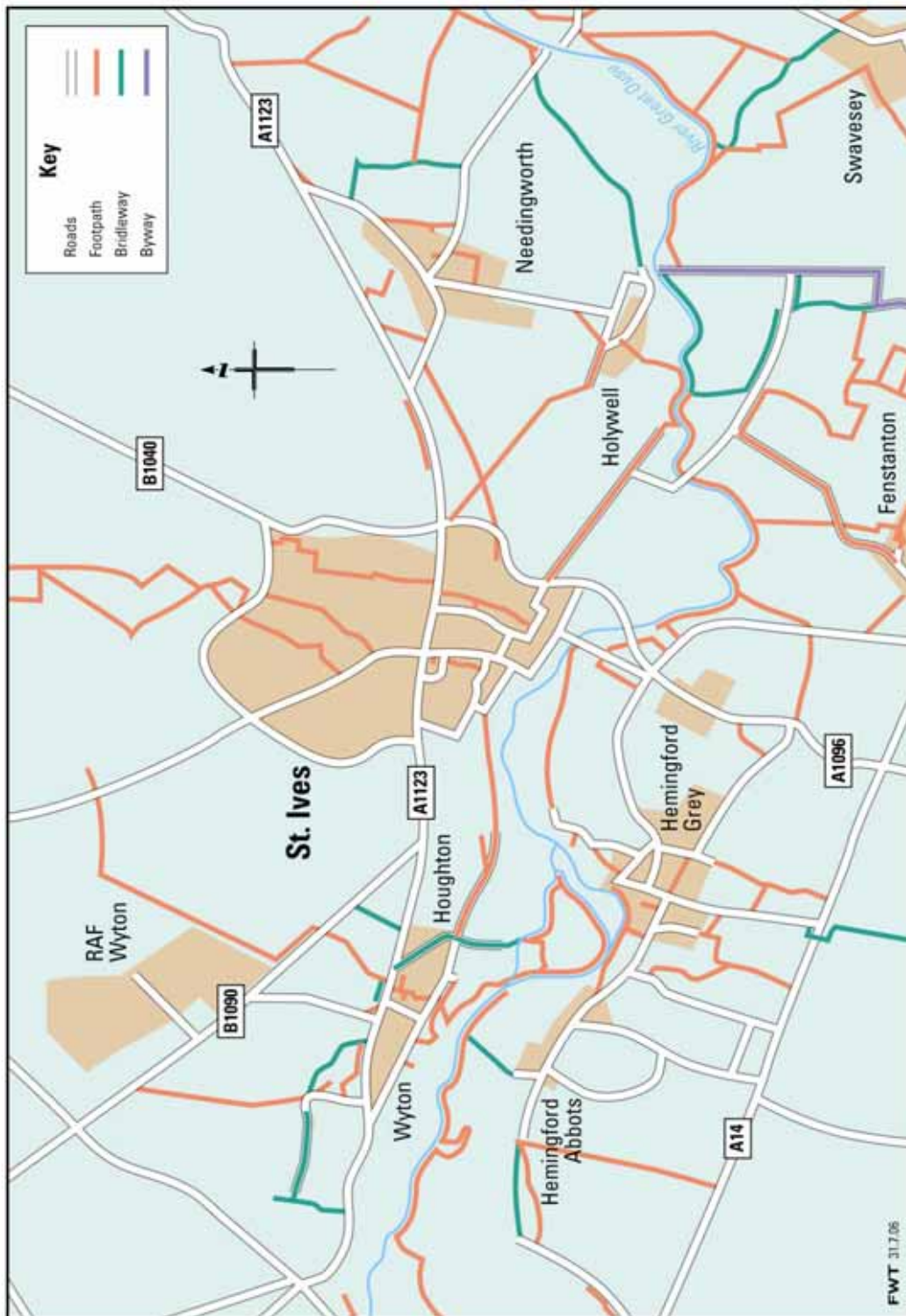
- Confusion over Traffic Regulation Orders in the Bridge Street area
- The layout of the market
- Parking in Market Hill and on the New Bridges/Flood Arches
- The route buses take through the town centre
- The quality of waiting facilities at the bus station

Associated with the routing of buses through the town centre are a number of issues. These include access through the rising bollard from Crown Street to Market Hill (see page 4 for further details) and an eastbound stop on Station Road alongside the bus station.

These issues are linked to the emerging Local Development Framework and the potential wider redevelopment aspirations in the bus station/Market Road/Station Road quarter, further planned Environmental Improvement schemes in The Broadway and Market Hill and the proposed Cambridgeshire Guided Busway. Therefore proposals will be put forward to address the transport issues and will be integrated into future plans for the town centre and incorporated into the Market Town Strategy.

Concerns have also been raised about the ease with which both pedestrians and vehicles are able to negotiate North Road. Footways are considered too narrow in places and the road alignment requires buses and larger vehicles to cross the centre line through bends in the mid-section of the road. Therefore Huntingdonshire District Council will investigate improvements in the area, especially if development in the area goes ahead.

Map 15 Public Rights of Way in the St Ives area



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Environmental improvements

Environmental improvements are planned in St Ives town centre as part of Huntingdonshire District Council's Medium Term Plan. When these are considered at a later date to be agreed, these will also investigate the traffic issues highlighted in the town centre.

Car parks

There are approximately 1,000 car parking spaces in St. Ives, most of which are maintained by Huntingdonshire District Council. For disabled badge holders, free parking is allowed in all council pay and display car parks, with no time limit, as long as the blue badge is displayed on the dashboard of vehicles. There are also a number of disabled parking spaces in Market Hill to allow easy access to the town centre. In addition parking is also available at the Dolphin Hotel on London Road. This car park is signed as a public car park and is frequently used by shoppers and visitors.

The Huntingdonshire Car Parking Strategy was adopted in 2004. The strategy, which covers the period up to 2016, sets out Huntingdonshire's policies and objectives for managing car parking in the district. It complements the Local Transport Plan, and therefore this transport strategy.

The Car Parking Strategy recognises that the essentially rural nature of the district makes the use of private cars unavoidable in the short to medium term, but acknowledges this is unsustainable in the longer term, and recognises the need to promote alternative modes of travel to the private car.

Objectives contained within the Huntingdonshire Car Parking Strategy that support the objectives of this transport strategy include the following:

- Secure measures to promote integrated, sustainable and accessible transport and direct surplus income from car parking charges to help meet this objective.
- Support the development of car parking provision serving villages on transport corridors where these will facilitate the use of public transport and support the economy of villages.

The strategy proposes increased charges for car parking in St. Ives, for both off and on street parking, and makes the amounts easy multiples with minimum coinage. In addition, it is proposed that the number of on-street parking spaces in the town be reduced, as this will help to reduce the number of traffic movements in the town centre where high numbers of pedestrians are present. In addition, parking issues on the New Bridges/Flood Arches will be considered as part of plans to refurbish or renew the structure.

Northern Bypass

Omitted from the strategy is a northern bypass for St Ives. However, this would be considered if major development takes place in the area.

New Bridges/Flood Arches

The New Bridges/Flood Arches is a Grade 2* Listed 55-span viaduct carrying the C121 over the river Great Ouse flood plain. The arches form a vital link for pedestrians and cyclists, including a large number of school children, as well

as vehicular traffic to a hotel and residential properties. In addition goods vehicles entering the centre of St Ives are able to exit the town only via the main river bridge and New Bridges/Flood Arches. The emergency services also use this route to the A14 and surrounding villages. Additionally, the New Bridges/Flood Arches are particularly important in environmental terms, allowing flood waters across the meadows while maintaining access between St. Ives and Hemingford Grey.

The structure is in a poor state, and is approaching a critical condition. The following extensive works are required to bring it up to current standards.

- Reconstruction of the parapets and spandrels
- Repairs to the arch barrels
- Brickwork repairs to the piers
- Waterproofing and resurfacing
- Strengthening of the arch barrels, piers and foundations

While the refurbishment and strengthening work would meet the requirements of the community, the ongoing maintenance liability is likely to be high due to the amount of ancient fabric being retained – the older fabric will deteriorate quicker than the new. The cost for refurbishment is similar to the cost of a new structure, around £4 million. The condition of the New Bridges/Flood Arches continues to be monitored as scheme options are still being considered. The scheme will be funded through the Local Transport Plan.

The issue of car parking, pedestrian and cycling facilities on the New Bridges/Flood Arches will be considered as part of the design for the refurbished or new structure.

Taxis

Taxis and private hire vehicles provide support to and complement other forms of public transport, and are an essential provision mainly for evening social journeys. The responsibility for taxi licensing lies with Huntingdonshire District Council. The *Huntingdonshire District Council Hackney Carriage Demand Study* states that there is little demand for taxis in St. Ives. The majority of people use private hire vehicles, and are satisfied with the current level of service.

Travel Plans

Through the Travel for Work Partnership the council works with local businesses to help them develop work place travel plans to encourage increased use of sustainable modes of transport for the journey to work. The Partnership will endeavour to work with new and existing businesses in the town to help reduce reliance on the private car. A travel plan is in place for the County Council Contact Centre at Compass Point Business Park and a plan will be developed for the Huntingdonshire District Council contact centre.

Accessibility and Social Exclusion

Improving accessibility is integral to meeting our aims and objectives, particularly those related to quality of life. In order to improve accessibility and reduce social exclusion there are three main areas that need to be addressed.

These are the cost of transport, the ease of using transport and the distance/time taken to make a journey.

As an integral part of the Local Transport Plan, the Cambridgeshire Accessibility Strategy has been developed in partnership with local service providers, such as the health service and the Local Education Authority to help improve access by public transport to key facilities. The objectives contained within the strategy are as follows.

- To decrease travel times to key services.
- To reduce the costs of journeys to key services.
- To increase the ease of making journeys to key services.

Measures contained within this strategy, such as walking and cycling improvements will assist in making the St. Ives area more accessible, both travelling within the town and to and from the town. This strategy provides support for public transport and community transport schemes through infrastructure improvements, service enhancements and improvements to information provision.

This transport strategy can help to improve the ease at which certain journeys are made, for example, improving bus stop facilities and pedestrian crossings will enhance access to the public transport network. Additional measures that will help to make St Ives more accessible are shown in Table 16. All measures implemented will be compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act.

Table 16 Accessibility measures

Scheme	Cost
Improved pedestrian crossings	£250,000
Dropped kerbs and tactile paving at key locations such as bus stops and the town centre	

Accessibility Action Plans

As part of the development of the Accessibility Strategy, nine priority areas have been identified. These areas were identified as having the poorest accessibility in the county. Somersham has been identified as one of these wards. The ward forms part of the study area for this strategy, and includes the villages of Pidley-cum-Fenton, Wood Hurst, Old Hurst and Somersham. This ward has been identified as having poor accessibility mainly because the ward lacks facilities to cater for its significant population. The ward has no leisure centre, no supermarket, no secondary school or Further Education establishment, resulting in extended travel times to these key services. In order to improve accessibility in this area, an action plan will be developed over the next year, separate to this strategy.

Promoting measures within the strategy

As schemes within the strategy are implemented, promotional material will be produced and distributed in the local area to ensure local residents and visitors are aware of the improvements and their benefits.

Implementing the Strategy

Programme

The programme of schemes within this strategy reflects, where practical, the priorities arising through initial stakeholder consultation, combined with a realistic timescale for implementation of such schemes. The overall programme, based on previous sections, is shown in Table 17 and illustrates how the measures will be delivered to provide an integrated package addressing the needs of St. Ives. It is important to note that it may be appropriate to deliver some schemes, or parts of schemes, earlier than prioritised in order to take advantage of external funding opportunities.

Table 17 Strategy Programme

1	Public transport	Commence rolling programme of bus stop improvements	
	Walking and Cycling	Route 4 Commence cycle parking infrastructure Commence tactile paving and dropped kerbs programme	
	Road Safety	Both Houghton Road pelican crossings	
Total phase 1			£654,000
2	Public transport	Rolling programme of bus stop improvements	
	Walking and Cycling	Route 3 Cycle parking infrastructure Tactile paving and dropped kerbs A1123 crossing	
	Road Safety	Somersham Road	
	Traffic Management	Needingworth Road area study	
Total phase 2			£774,000
3	Public transport	Rolling programme of bus stop improvements	
	Walking and Cycling	Route 1 Cycle parking infrastructure Tactile paving and dropped kerbs	
	Traffic Management	Marley Road	
Total phase 3			£764,000
4	Public transport	Rolling programme of bus stop improvements	
	Walking and Cycling	Route 2 Route 6 Route 11 Cycle parking infrastructure Tactile paving and dropped kerbs	

	Traffic Management	Burstellers/The Pound High Leys/Green Leys	
Total phase 4			£1,129,000
	Public transport	Rolling programme of bus stop improvements	
4+	Walking and Cycling	Route 7 Route 10 Route 12 Cycle parking infrastructure Tactile paving and dropped kerbs	
	All	Promotional material	
Total phase 4+			£944,000
Strategy Total			£4,265,000

The schemes contained in Table 18 will be implemented if new development occurs in St. Ives. These schemes, which are not in a priority order, may be funded by developers through Section 106 Agreements and therefore do not form part of the main programme contained in the strategy. This list may be re-examined in the light of additional forthcoming development in the area as part of the Local Transport Plan Annual Progress Reports. In addition, developer funding towards other schemes in the strategy will be sought if appropriate. However, it should be noted that at present there are few sites allocated for development in the area.

Table 18 Developer related schemes

Scheme
Harrison Way/Meadow Lane roundabout and Waitrose car park
Safety improvements to the existing roundabout, including lane discipline, signing and the introduction of anti-skid surfacing. Safety improvements to the exit near Meadow Lane roundabout, so that visibility is increased for both those exiting the car park and those on Meadow Lane can see who is exiting the car park. Changes may also be required at the exit on Station Road if the Guided Bus stopped there.
Bus station improvements
Improvements to waiting facilities and timetable information for passengers. This scheme is linked to the possible redevelopment of the town centre.
Improvements to the junction of Hill Rise and Houghton Road
Roundabout at the junction of Houghton Road and the B1090 (Sawtry Way)
Extend the 30mph zone on Houghton Road as far as the B1090 (Sawtry Way) junction
Harrison Way to Thicket Path cycleway (Route 5)
This route links the east of town to the west, travelling through the centre of town. This path complements the cycleway that runs alongside the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway scheme, and will ease travel across Harrison Way. The scheme connects cyclists with many employers in the town centre, and links to the routes 3 and 4, therefore enabling access through to the north of town.
St. Ives to Fenstanton (Route 9)
This route links Fenstanton to the cycleway that runs along the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway route, which continues onto St. Ives. The majority of the route from Fenstanton would be on a track, and then meeting with the bridleway along the Cambridgeshire Guided Busway route.

St Ives to Houghton and Wyton and the airfield (Route 8)

This shared use path route runs from Houghton Road, and branches to continue along Houghton Hill Road and Sawtry Way, therefore linking St. Ives with Houghton and Wyton and the airfield itself.

Somersham Road

Provision of a roundabout on Somersham Road

Funding

Funding for this strategy will come from a number of sources, mainly the Local Transport Plan. Funding may also be available from Huntingdonshire District Council and developers. The pace at which the strategy can be delivered will depend upon the availability of this funding. By providing a clear statement of the schemes for which there is public support in the town, this strategy aims to provide a clear platform for securing a wide range of funding sources.

Targets

The measures within this strategy are consistent with the LTP objectives to encourage a positive change in modal split in the market towns and to improve road safety for all modes. To measure the performance of this strategy a series of targets, in line with those in the LTP and the Shared Priorities for Transport, are included. These include the following.

- Increase public transport patronage in the county to 22.5 million boardings by 2011.
- Increase cycle modal share in the county by 10.6% by 2011.
- Increase the modal share for daily bus, cycle and pedestrian trips in the market towns as a whole to more than 23.9% by 2010/11.
- A reduction of all deaths and serious injuries in the county to 360 by 2010
- Reduce the number of children killed and seriously injured by 50% by 2010

Post scheme monitoring will also be undertaken to establish the impacts of schemes and measures implemented through the strategy.

Conclusion

This transport strategy will provide a number of benefits for St. Ives, which include the following.

- A clear programme of transport enhancements for the town and surrounding hinterland.
- Improved accessibility in St. Ives by cycle and bus.
- Significantly increase cycling and walking in the town.
- Safety measures that will reduce accidents.

The strategy gives a clear indication of the transport measures that we hope to introduce in St. Ives from 2007/08 onwards, and reflects responses from the consultation process. The measures in the strategy will contribute to the economic and environmental well being of St. Ives, thus ensuring that it

continues to be a pleasant place to live, work and visit. The strategy will be reviewed alongside the Local Transport Plan in 2011 to ensure the measures are still appropriate and will be updated where necessary.

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