

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in **COUNCIL CHAMBER, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2006** at **11:30 AM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-


Contact
(01480)

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 28th 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. TRAVEL PLAN (Pages 7 - 64)

By way of a report by the Head of Technical Services to consider the HDC Travel Plan.

R Preston
388340

4. GROWING SUCCESS - CORPORATE PLAN UPDATE
(Pages 65 - 66)

To consider a report by the Head of Policy.

I Leatherbarrow
388005

5. MONITORING OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2006/07
(Pages 67 - 78)

To consider a report by the Head of Financial Services outlining spending variations for 2006/07.

S Couper
388103

6. FINANCIAL MONITORING - REVENUE BUDGET (Pages 79 - 80)

To consider a report by the Head of Financial Services outlining spending variations.

S Couper
388103

7. MEDIUM TERM PLAN - REQUEST FOR THE RELEASE OF FUNDS (Pages 81 - 82)

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

S Couper
388103

8. PLANNING SERVICES - PROPOSED COMMUNITY LIAISON AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY (Pages 83 - 118)

With the assistance of a report by the Heads of Planning Services, of Policy and of IMD, to consider the Royal Town Planning Institute's Guidelines on Effective Community Involvement & Consultation and the Planning Services Community Liaison & Engagement Strategy.

**I Leatherbarrow
388005**

9. CAMBRIDGE SUB REGION CHOICE BASED LETTINGS SCHEME (Pages 119 - 122)

To consider a report by the Head of Housing Services on progress of the Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings project and the implications for the District Council.

**S Plant
388240
J Collen
388220**

10. NOTTINGHAM DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (Pages 123 - 126)

By way of a report by the Director of Operational Services to consider the Nottingham Declaration on climate change.

**R Preston
388340**

11. DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT: HUNTINGDONSHIRE DESIGN GUIDE (Pages 127 - 128)

By way of a report by the Head of Planning Services to consider the Huntingdonshire Design Guide Supplementary Planning Document and to approve it as a basis for further discussion and consultation.

**C Surfleet
388476**

12. HUNTINGDONSHIRE LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE ASSESSMENT (Pages 129 - 130)

To consider the draft Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment Supplementary Planning Document and to approve it as a basis for further discussion and consultation.

**C Surfleet
388476**

13. ST NEOTS CONSERVATION AREA: REVIEW, CHARACTER ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN (Pages 131 - 144)

To consider a report by the Planning Policy Manager on consultation responses received in respect of the Character Statement and Boundary review for St Neots and seeking approval for its adoption as Interim Planning Guidance.

**C Surfleet
388476**

14. EXCLUSION OF THE 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) and/or information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

15. SALE OF LAND FOR AFFORDABLE HOUSING AT CRANFIELD WAY, BUCKDEN (Pages 145 - 148)

To consider a report by the Heads of Housing Services and of Legal and Estates regarding the disposal of Council owned land at Cranfield Way, Buckden.

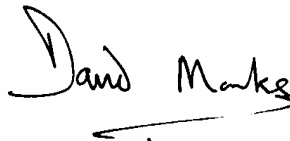
**F Mastandrea
388208**

16. UNIT 10, GLEBE ROAD, ST PETER'S INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, HUNTINGDON (Pages 149 - 152)

With the assistance of a report by the Heads of Legal and Estates and of Commerce and Technology, to consider the terms for the proposed sale of the freehold of the site to the occupier.

**C Meadowcroft
388021**

Dated this 11 day of October 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, 28 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, T V Rogers and L M Simpson.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds.

69. MINUTES

Subject to the inclusion of a reference as to the Cabinet's appreciation of the work of Mr Ray Palmer and the Friends of Paxton Pits Nature Reserve under item No 57, the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7th September 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

70. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

71. NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report by the Community Initiatives Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the possible introduction of neighbourhood management initiatives in two areas of the District.

Members were informed that the neighbourhood management model employed a focussed approach to distinctive areas comprising between 5,000 and 12,000 residents which exhibited relatively high levels of deprivation and which would benefit from a more co-ordinated and local approach to the delivery of services. In that respect Eynesbury and Huntingdon North (Oxmoor) had been identified as areas potentially suited to this approach having regard to indices of deprivation published by the Government. Having discussed the partnership contributions likely to be available from the agencies involved and the extent to which neighbourhood management might be addressed in the forthcoming White Paper on Local Government, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that further discussions be undertaken with other significant service providers to develop the

neighbourhood management proposals outlined in the report now submitted; and

- (b) that the areas of Huntingdon North (Oxmoor) and Eynesbury be developed as neighbourhood management initiatives reporting via the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership.

72. AUTOMATED FORMS PROCESSING IN HOUSING BENEFITS - SUPPLEMENTARY CAPITAL ESTIMATE

By way of a report by the Head of Revenue Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a request for the release of funding from the Medium Term Plan for the implementation of the automated forms processing project in the Housing Benefits division.

Whereupon, and having noted the potential for software to be adapted for other purposes, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the relevant funding be released for the automated forms processing project;
- (b) that supplementary capital estimate of £59,000 for the project be approved; and
- (c) that the estimated revenue savings in 2007/08 and 2008/09 be noted.

73. HOUSING AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFITS - INCREASE IN STAFF

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Revenue Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which reviewed the staff numbers in the Benefits Section of the Commerce and Technology Directorate, in light of a significant increase in caseload, the complexity associated with assessments and the potential loss of benefit subsidy if adjustments to claims were delayed.

Members were advised that in order to meet the Government's threshold for processing claims and to avoid £70,000 in subsidy penalties, it was anticipated that three additional Housing Benefit Assessment Officers would be required. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that an additional three members of staff be recruited to the Housing Benefits section on the terms outlined in paragraph 7.3 of the report now submitted.

74. MEDIUM TERM PLAN - REQUESTS FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

By way of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a request for the release of funding for two Medium Term Plan schemes.

Having considered the schemes involved, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the relevant funding be released for the replacement of play equipment and associated safety surfacing in play and activity areas throughout the District and for a contribution towards a partnership project for the provision of skateboard, inline skates, BMX and other similar outdoor activity park areas specifically aimed at teenagers and young people.

75. TREASURY MANAGEMENT INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE

A report by the Head of Financial Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which reviewed the respective levels of performance achieved during the period April to June 2006 by External Fund Managers in the matter of the investment of the Council's capital receipts.

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

76. CONCESSIONARY FARES

Further to Minute No. 05/176 and by way of a report by the Director of Operational Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were updated with progress on the new concessionary bus fare scheme introduced on 1st April 2006 together with details of proposed revised arrangements.

It was explained that since the introduction of the new scheme, discussions had been ongoing between Cambridgeshire principal authorities and Peterborough City Council to extend it so as to enable free travel across the county and city. Members were advised that the changes had arisen following a general assessment of recorded travel data which showed a decline in patronage and concerns about the perceived restrictions inherent in the new scheme. Having noted the financial implications of the revised scheme, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the revised concessionary bus fare scheme be approved for implementation from 1st October 2006 and the associated financial implications noted; and
- (b) that the Head of Environment and Transport be requested to report to Cabinet on progress of the revised scheme after 6 months operation.

77. BROUGHTON CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Further to Minute No. 05/2007, the Cabinet considered a report by the Planning Policy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the responses received to the consultation on the

Character Statement and Management Plan for the Broughton Conservation Area and suggested amendments as a consequence thereof.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the revised Character Statement for the Broughton Conservation Area as amended to reflect the content of the Annex to the report now submitted be approved;
- (b) that the Management Plan for the Broughton Conservation Area be approved as a set of proposals for the enhancement of the area and as the basis for discussion and project work; and
- (c) that the Head of Planning Services be authorised, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy to make any minor consequential amendment to the text and illustrations as a result of the amendments referred to in (a) above.

78. WARBOYS CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER ASSESSMENT AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

Further to Minute No. 06/21 and by way of a report by the Planning Policy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Cabinet considered the responses received to the consultation on the Character Statement and Management Plan for the Warboys Conservation Area and suggested amendments as a consequence thereof.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the revised character statement for the Warboys Conservation Area as amended to reflect the content of the Annex to the report now submitted, be approved;
- (b) that the Management Plan for the Warboys Conservation Area be approved as a set of proposals for the enhancement of the area and as a basis for further discussion and project work; and
- (c) that the Head of Planning Services be authorised, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, to make any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations as a result of amendments referred to in (a) above.

79. ST IVES MARKET TOWN TRANSPORT STRATEGY

With the aid of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the content of the St. Ives Market Town Transport Strategy.

Having noted the responses received to consultation on the Strategy and the steps to be taken to implement the schemes identified, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the St. Ives Market Town Transport Strategy, as appended to the report now submitted, be approved.

80. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to the personal circumstances of particular persons and parties.

81. NEW HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION PROJECT: CONSULTANCY SERVICES

Further to Minute No. 06/68 and by way of a report by the Director of Central Services and the Head of Technical Services (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book), the Cabinet considered proposals to effect savings in the cost of consultancy services retained in connection with the new headquarters and other accommodation project. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Director of Central Services be authorised to serve notice to terminate the consultancy services provided by the consultants referred to in the report.

82. HEADQUARTERS AND OTHER ACCOMMODATION PROJECT: UPDATE

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) outlining progress on negotiations with regard to the conclusion of a development agreement for the delivery of the Council's new Headquarters and other accommodation, together with current estimates of the capital cost and revenue implications.

Chairman

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CABINET

19TH OCTOBER 2006

TRAVEL PLAN – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION (Report by Head of Technical Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report should be read in conjunction with the report entitled Travel Plan on the agenda for the meeting of the Cabinet on 19th October 2006 and the report of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) which has the same title.

2. COMMENTS MADE BY THE EMPLOYMENT PANEL AND EMPLOYEE LIAISON ADVISORY GROUP

- 2.1 The Employment Panel and Employee Liaison Advisory Group considered the Council's draft Travel Plan at their meetings on 20th September 2006. Arising from which, the following comments were made:-

(a) Employment Panel

Members of the Employment Panel suggested:-

- ◆ that the provisions of the approved Plan should apply equally to Members and Officers;
- ◆ that consideration should be given to the scheduling of Member meetings in the evenings to allow use of the town centre car parks when they are least busy; and
- ◆ that further research be undertaken to ascertain why the majority of employees appear to have a preference for travelling alone by private car.

(b) Employee Liaison Advisory Group

The Group made the following comments:-

- ◆ that the planned provision for cycle parking did not meet the requirements of the Core Strategy, which the Council would apply to other developers;
- ◆ that the Plan represented a decrease in shower provision. More should be provided;
- ◆ more than the planned four spaces should be made available for motor cycle parking;
- ◆ there were implications for the proposals relating to essential user payments in terms of changing contractual conditions;
- ◆ that the provision of four/six pool cars was insufficient to replace the essential car user allowance;
- ◆ that the provision of loans for season tickets should be endorsed;
- ◆ that managers should be required to introduce home working across the Council;
- ◆ that, following a survey of staff, formal comments would be finalised on the Plan; and

- ◆ that notice of changes to the allocation of car parking could be given to employees via the intranet.

3. CONSULTATION PROCESSES

- 3.1 All Council employees have had the opportunity to participate in an annual travel for work survey since 1999 and the data collected provides a valuable resource indicating how use of different travel modes have changed over time. The survey is prepared and managed independently of the Council and provides reliable and objective data and will be used to monitor the year-on-year impact of the Travel Plan. Results of the 2006 survey, undertaken during the week ending 6 October, will be available shortly.
- 3.2 Concurrently with the travel for work survey the Employee Liaison Advisory Group has promoted a survey of employees based at Pathfinder House/Castle Hill House to elicit their intentions when parking is not available on the site. This follows the publication of an intranet notification that parking at the headquarters site will be progressively withdrawn from January 2007 to facilitate archaeological excavations.
- 3.3 The results of the Employee Liaison Advisory Group survey, when they become available, will provide a limited commentary on the Travel Plan because of the narrow target audience and the focus of the questions. The Pathfinder House site accommodates only 32% of the Council's employees and less than one in two of these employees, about 200, currently have access to on-site car parking.
- 3.4 The reasons why individuals chose to use a car, and prefer to travel alone, are well documented. For many, practical alternatives are available and it is considered more productive to promote those alternatives and encourage and support behavioural change rather than undertake further research as proposed by the Employment Panel.

4. TRAVEL ALLOWANCES

- 4.1 The Council retains the national schemes for casual and essential user car allowances. Any local variation to the scheme, and many councils have done this, will have to be negotiated with employees and the Head of Personnel and Payroll has initiated this process.
- 4.2 Payments to Members are based on the casual user rates. The Members Remuneration Panel may wish to review this at an appropriate time.

5. DESIGN ISSUES

- 5.1 The Employee Liaison Advisory Group identified a number of design issues relating to provision for cycle and motor cycle parking and shower facilities. The detailed design of the building is still in progress and when completed will comply with the standards required by the Council's planning policies.
- 5.2 Shower provision in the building is being reviewed and will be increased to a level appropriate to the anticipated cycle usage.

6. CAR SHARING

- 6.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel recommended that increased incentives should be given for car sharing. The most helpful benefit is the provision of parking, either through the allocation of spaces in 'private' car parks associated with the Council's premises, or through financial support for using charged public car parks.
- 6.2 The Panel acknowledged that it would not be appropriate for the Council to provide universal concessions to employees and Members within charged public car parks. However, if the principle of providing financial support for non-car travel modes is supported the provision of discounted car park season tickets for use by car sharers could be considered. The £175 annual cost of a five-day season ticket, for example, could be reduced to £150 for employees entering into a car sharing agreement.

7. CYCLE SCHEME

- 7.1 Although not reflected in the comments of the Panel and Advisory Groups the reference in the Travel Plan to the Cycle for Work scheme has generated considerable employee interest and would be well received.
- 7.2 It is proposed that the Council contract with Cyclescheme Limited who operate the scheme through local independent cycle retailers. The company administer the scheme and the cost to the Council would be –
- loss of interest on the capital provided to purchase the cycles
 - processing of invoices from the company
 - administering salary deductions.
- 7.3 Provide that individual purchases are capped at below £1,000 the Council would be covered by a group Consumer Credit Licence. However, it is proposed that purchases under the scheme be capped at £500. The lease arrangement is treated as a 'salary sacrifice' for the employee and is free of income tax and national insurance. The Council benefits from not paying the employer's national insurance contribution on the employee's salary sacrifice.

8. POOL CARS

- 8.1 The principle of pool cars has the support of the Panel and Advisory Groups and has previously been approved by Cabinet, subject to them being self-financing. The provision of pool cars will become an imperative as employees embrace the principles within the Travel Plan and stop using their private cars for travel to work.
- 8.2 Availability of pool cars will encourage reductions in financially supported business travel which will eventually make them self-financing. The Cabinet are requested to support the procurement of four pool cars on an 'invest to save basis'. The opportunity will be taken to have a mix of fuel type and size of vehicles.
- 8.3 It is proposed that virement from forecast under spending in the current year be used to provide £4,000 to enable four cars to be provided from January

2007. The vehicles would be procured on a six-month contract rental giving rise to a minimum unavoidable MTP bid for £4,000 in 2007/08 to support the residue of the six-month rental term.

8.4 However, Cabinet are requested to support a full year trial in 2007/08 requiring an MTP bid of £16,000 to enable an evaluation of take-up and reduction in mileage allowance payments.

9. INCENTIVES & CONCESSIONS

9.1 Mention has already been made of the Cycle for Work scheme which provides a tax efficient incentive that encourages reduced car usage. Tax concessions are also available for schemes which support employees' purchases of season tickets for public transport. Further work needs to be done on this and will be the subject of a report to a future meeting of Cabinet.

9.2 For those employees who cannot easily use alternatives to the private car and cannot car share there is a need to find car parking. In the medium term the need will be met by increased public car parking provision and the employees will be similarly placed to other employees of town centre businesses. In the short term possible sites for employee 'park & ride' or 'park & walk' sites are being investigated to compensate for the reduction of on-site parking.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 In the longer term, and subject to an agreement being achieved with regard to travel allowances, the potential exists for the Travel Plan to be self-financing. The preceding paragraphs have identified three areas that require financial support through to the end of 2006/07 –

	2006/07 Revenue	2007/08 Revenue	2006/07 Capital	2007/08 Capital
Car Sharing	£1k	£2k		
Cycle for Work	£1k	£3k	£20k	£30k
Pool Cars	£4k			
Pool Cars - Unavoidable		£4k		
Pool Cars – Year balance		£12k		
Total	£6k	£21k	£20k	£30k

10.2 Cabinet are requested to support the use of virement from existing budgets to fund capital and revenue expenditure in 2006/07. The 2007/08 expenditure will be the subject of an MTP bid.

11. CONCLUSION

11.1 Cabinet has received comments from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support), Employment Panel and Employee Liaison Advisory Group. Sections 3 to 10 of this report further develop the principal themes on which comments have been made and are provided to assist Cabinet in their deliberations on the draft Plan.

- 11.2 The need to start archaeological excavations on the Pathfinder House site in January 2007 brings forward the time when parking capacity on the site will be reduced. The phasing of the loss of parking will not be known until further planning is completed by the archaeologists. The consequence of not making an early start, however, is potential disruption to the development programme which could have significant financial implications.
- 11.3 Early implementation of the Travel Plan has its own financial implication requiring the use of virement in the current year and new provision in the MTP for 2007/08.

12. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 12.1 It is recommended that Cabinet approve
- (a) support and agree the measures proposed in Sections 6, 7 and 8 of this report; and
 - (b) note the use of virement from existing budgets to support the necessary expenditure in 2006/07.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Reports to Employment Panel and Employee Liaison Advisory Group – 20th September 2006.
Draft District Council's Travel Plan.

**Contact Officers: Richard Preston, Head of Technical Services
(01480) 388340.**

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE SUPPORT)	12 SEPTEMBER 2006
EMPLOYEES' LIAISON ADVISORY GROUP	20 SEPTEMBER 2006
EMPLOYMENT PANEL	20 SEPTEMBER 2006
CABINET	19 OCTOBER 2006

TRAVEL PLAN
(Report by Head of Technical Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The council is a signatory to the Local Transport Plan for Cambridgeshire and has contributed to a wide range of measures intended to encourage more sustainable modes of travel.
- 1.2 Carbon emissions is a major theme in the council's emerging environmental strategy and reducing the contribution that travel makes to those emissions will be a key objective.
- 1.3 Demonstrating good practice in a number of council policy areas is at the heart of planning the council's new accommodation. Not least will be the requirement to have in place a robust Travel Plan which will demonstrate that Members and employees share a vision of reducing unnecessary and inefficient car usage, of promoting healthier travel and, if possible, removing the need for travel by the use of technology.

2 DEVELOPING THE PLAN

- 2.1 Although the council has had a travel plan for a number of years only small changes in travel patterns have been observed. A combination of improved walking and cycling routes and encouragement to car-share has resulted in a downward trend in the numbers of employees using single-occupant car for travel to work (66% in 2003 to 62% in 2005). However, single-occupant car remains the preferred mode of travel for six out of ten employees (2005 Travel for Work Survey).
- 2.2 Refreshing and revitalising the Travel Plan was started in 2004 and has involved a process of formal and informal engagement with employees and Members. The plan is intended to bring about behavioural change and this is notoriously difficult and much painstaking work has been done in an attempt to raise awareness of why a new plan is needed. The plan has sought, where possible, to address the issues raised in the Employees' Liaison Advisory Group's April 2006 travel questionnaire. The survey results with a commentary are summarised at Annex A.
- 2.3 The Travel Plan is inexorably linked to the council's new operations centre and headquarters. As with all major employment sites the council, in its role as the local planning authority requires, a travel plan to be prepared demonstrating a commitment to promoting sustainable travel. Limited on-site parking is an inevitable consequence of higher site coverage to reduce demand for more development land and is a main plank of planning policies required to deliver sustainable development.

- 2.4 The travel issues associated with each of the council's sites will be different and would not be addressed properly by a single plan that did not differentiate between them. Accordingly, the plan now comprises content setting the overall corporate vision, objectives and targets and will include site specific plans as annexes. Each site specific plan will interpret the corporate plan for the local situation.
- 2.5 The Travel Plan is attached/has been circulated separately. It will be considered by cabinet at their meeting on 19 October 2006. In advance of that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) and the Employees' Liaison Advisory Group/Employment Panel on 12 and 20 September respectively are invited to comment on the plan.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The overall budget requirement cannot be determined until the site specific plans are fully developed. However, Section 8 of the attached plan identifies a number of corporate measures that could be pursued independently of the specific plans.
- 3.2 The full year budgetary implications of these measures identified in the Travel Plan are illustrated in the following table -

	£	
Promoting Cycling and Walking	3,000	
Cycle to Work – bicycle provision	7,500	
Working From Home	0	<i>Note (a)</i>
HQ Car Park Management	750	<i>Note (b)</i>
Provision of Pool Cars	17,200	
Reduced Car Allowances	-68,000	
Season Ticket Loans	19,500	<i>Note (c)</i>
Annual Cost/Saving	-20,550	

Notes to Table (a) all costs assumed in other budgets
 (b) enforcement from within existing resources
 (c) based on 2008 target for bus/train usage

- 3.3 It is evident from the table that the proposed measures would be funded from a reduction the payment of mileage allowances. The principle of moving expenditure from supporting car travel to more sustainable modes is to be encouraged. However, no provision has been identified for addressing the contractual issues associated with removal of the lump sum element of the essential user allowance from 120 employees.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Travel Plan provides a range of measures that will enable the council to engage in a dialogue with employees and Members with a view to reducing, over time, inefficient travel by private car where this can possibly be


avoided. Environmental and health benefits from such action are potentially considerable and are worthy of being pursued as an end in themselves.

- 4.2 As a community leader and a major employer the council should also be demonstrating good practice wherever possible. The Travel Plan provides an opportunity to encourage others to consider sustainable travel options and to promote the use of the infrastructure footways, cycleways and public transport facilities in which it has already invested.
- 4.3 Reviewing arrangements for reimbursing the cost of business travel could provide funding to support other, more sustainable, travel options whilst still compensating employees and Members for the cost of business travel.

RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is recommended that Cabinet –
- (a) consider any representations from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) and the Employees' Liaison Advisory Group/Employment Panel;
 - (b) authorise the Head of Technical Services, after consulting the Executive Councillor for Environment & Transport, to make any textual changes he considers appropriate in response to the representations received;
 - (c) approve the Travel Plan for publication.

Contact Officer: Richard Preston, Head of Technical Services

 01480 388340

<p>Future Travel Arrangements</p> <p>ELAG Questionnaire findings</p> <p>1/ Most staff – over 90% - of those who drive, say that that they will continue to drive into work and park elsewhere if they don't have a parking space at the new HQ.</p> <p>2/ Of those above, most – 61% would park at the free car park near the Godmanchester Depot.</p> <p>3/A large majority of staff responding feel that it would be a good idea if all HDC owned car parks could be subsidised for staff.</p> <p>4/ Nearly 39% of respondents said that the loss of the ability to park at the Council's HQ prompt them to seek employment elsewhere.</p>	<p>Response</p> <p>1/ Parking provision at Pathfinder House site will change with the development of the new HQ building. Parking will be reduced to some 33 spaces, meaning that most staff currently parking on site will be unable to do so in future.</p> <p>2/ It is likely that staff relocated to the Godmanchester Depot, whilst the new HQ is being built, will have an area of an extended depot car park (100 spaces) designated for their sole use.</p> <p>Additional public parking provision elsewhere in Huntingdon will become available in the medium term.</p> <p>3/ There is currently a mixture of pay and free parking in HDC owned car parks. The Car Parking Strategy may conclude that all HDC owned car parks should charge for parking.</p> <p>If all town centre parking becomes chargeable, ' Staff Car Park Permits' may be issued for some staff at designated HDC owned car parks.</p> <p>The criteria for granting permits would need to be laid out in an HDC Car Parking Procedure and such a policy may lead to claims of special treatment for HDC staff by members of the public who still have to pay to park.</p> <p>In public car parks, staff parking permits, are also likely to be considered to be a 'perk' with tax implications.</p> <p>4/ Although it will not be possible for the vast majority of staff to park at the new HQ, it is hoped that equitable and workable alternative arrangements will encourage staff retention.</p>
<p>Allocation of Parking Spaces in new Car Park</p> <p>ELAG Questionnaire findings</p> <p>1/ Respondents felt that those with Essential Car user Allowances, followed by 'first come, first served' should have priority in any new car park for work.</p>	<p>Response</p> <p>1/ With parking at the new HQ reduced to 33 spaces, the scope for officers to park on site will be minimal.</p> <p>It is likely that the only spaces available will be allocated for short stays of no more than half an hour, disabled badge holders and possibly designated Senior Officers (2) and senior Members (2)</p>

<p>2/ Just under 2/3rds of respondents felt that a pool car would be feasible for them to use.</p> <p>3/ Respondents were equally divided as to whether they felt safe walking to collect your car from the Riverside/other off-site car parks in the dark or later than normal working hours.</p> <p>4/ A large majority (87%) of respondents said that special provision for car parking should be made on those occasions when officers are required to work late in the office.</p>	<p>2/ It may be possible to allocate some spaces to a fleet of possibly 4 – 6 pool vehicles, which would be available for staff to book and use whilst at work.</p> <p>Such a fleet would have the dual benefit of providing transport for staff that have left their car at home and would also minimise disruption for those who have parked off site but need to attend site visits during the course of the working day.</p> <p>3/ A considerable number of staff already make the journey from outlying car parks to Pathfinder House and other HDC sites.</p> <p>The improvement of walking routes to Council sites is being considered, linked to the market town transport strategies. An example of a planned improvement is the construction of a pedestrian crossing between the Godmanchester Depot Car Park and the Town Bridge.</p> <p>If lighting improvements are needed, these can be investigated on recommended walking routes and these routes can be publicised through the Travel For Work section of the intranet.</p> <p>4/ Short stay restrictions at the HQ car park could be relaxed after 4pm for staff who know they need to work late or attend an evening meeting to retrieve their car from off site.</p> <p>However, with 33 spaces planned at the new HQ it is recognised that the natural capacity of the car park may still limit after hours parking.</p>
<p>Incentives to travel to work by alternate means</p> <p>ELAG Questionnaire findings</p> <p>1/ A quarter of respondents would be encouraged to use alternative modes of transport by free or subsidised travel.</p> <p>2/ Just under 80% of respondents were of the opinion that it would help if HDC could come to an agreement with local bus/train companies for a reduction in fares.</p>	<p>Response</p> <p>1/ The establishment of interest free season ticket loans for train and bus passes would cost the Council £150 per year per employee and can be undertaken without tax implications for the employee.</p> <p>Uptake would determine whether this proved to be a significant incentive for people to use alternatives to the car.</p> <p>2/ There are tax implications for employees taking advantage of concessionary fares, negotiated by the employer, with the transport provider. For this reason this becomes a comparatively unattractive option, even if the Council were to fund such a scheme.</p>

<p>3/ 2/3rds of respondents said that they would use a park and ride option from a car park on the outskirts of Huntingdon.</p> <p>4/ Just over 2/3rds of the respondents felt that working from home would be a real alternative to travelling into work each day.</p>	<p>3/ Evidence suggests that there is little incentive for staff to consider park and ride schemes, whilst free town centre parking provision remains. The motive behind the success of Park and Ride schemes invariably lies in the rising cost and limited availability of town centre parking.</p> <p>4/ The travel plan aims to increase the number of employees regularly working from home and also those routinely working a nine day fortnight.</p> <p>To do this it will be necessary to improve network connections for staff working at home and to promote home working to managers and staff so that it is not just accepted but actively encouraged.</p>
<p>General observations</p> <p>1/ A majority of respondents (72%) think lack of parking may discourage recruitment of people living in rural areas.</p> <p>2/ A majority of respondents (79%) felt that displaced employees parking in Huntingdon will cause parking difficulties for the public and affect local businesses.</p> <p>3/ Just over half of the respondents felt that there had not been sufficient consultation on the proposed travel plan.</p>	<p>Response</p> <p>1/ Travel to work from rural areas is inevitably problematic, other factors such as lack of frequent and affordable public transport are a more significant concern and it is important that the needs of rural settlements are addressed in transport planning in the district in future years.</p> <p>2/ The existing car parking provision in and around Huntingdon will be extended to allow for displacement from Pathfinder House</p> <p>3/ ELAG is represented on the Travel Plan working Group. The draft travel plan has been presented to meetings of ELAG and the group organised a travel plan consultation, which has informed the development of the travel plan .</p> <p>Continued ELAG involvement will be central to the development of the travel plan.</p>

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Annex B

EMPLOYEE LIAISON ADVISORY GROUP
EMPLOYMENT PANEL
CABINET

20TH SEPTEMBER 2006
20TH SEPTEMBER 2006
19TH OCTOBER 2006

TRAVEL PLAN (Report by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Support))

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report should be read in conjunction with the report entitled Travel Plan on the Agendas for the meetings of the Employee Liaison Advisory Group, Employment Panel and the Cabinet on 20th September and 19th October 2006 respectively.

2. COMMENTS MADE BY THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE SUPPORT)

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) considered the Council's draft Travel Plan at their meeting on 12th September 2006. The Panel acknowledged that the Plan applies also to elected Members who will need to lead by example. In addition the Panel made the following comments:-

- the proposals could have been firmed if the targets are to be met;
- there ought to be more incentives for staff to discourage their use of the private car for travelling to and from work;
- concessions should not be made available in town centre car parks for Members or staff who should be required to pay the same charge as members of the public;
- consideration should be given to providing concessions to staff for the use of alternative forms of transport (eg. concessions on season tickets for bus travel);
- the current mileage rates which favoured the use of larger engine cars and the opportunity should be taken to review travel allowances for employees and Members;
- there is a need for more references to Members in the draft plan;
- the Council should investigate the use of alternative types of fuel for 'pool cars'
- the Council should provide a greater incentive for car sharing; and
- that consideration be given to the medium-term use of the Bridge Place car park (Godmanchester depot) within the review of the car-parking strategy.

3. CONCLUSION

The Employment Panel and Cabinet are invited to consider the comments of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) as part of their deliberations on the draft Plan.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) – 12th
September 2006
Draft District Council Travel Plan

Contact Officer: Claire Bulman
Democratic Services Officer
☎ (01480) 388234.

Huntingdonshire District Council

TRAVEL PLAN



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Appendix: Travel Allowances 2005/06**Annex A: Site Specific Travel Plan - Pathfinder/Castle Hill House/New Headquarters**

i Executive Policy Statement**Executive Policy Statement**

Travel is an inescapable necessity. Minimising the damaging impact of travel on our health and environment, however, is something that we can all work towards. How quickly, and the extent to which each of us can make the required changes, will depend on many things, not least where we live and work.

This Travel Plan will help us to consider the travel choices that are available to us. Most importantly it encourages us to think about reducing the number of journeys we make as the only person in the car.

Use of the car is often unavoidable in a rural area like Huntingdonshire. Where there is no convenient alternative the challenge is to increase the efficiency of the work-related journeys we make by car, for example by travelling less frequently or by car sharing. And the council must consider of the potential offered by advances in information technologies and telecommunications to significantly reduce the need for people to travel into the office every day.

The council believes that wherever possible its services should be delivered from locations that are easily accessible by walking, cycling and public transport for the majority of its customers and employees. Town centre locations are ideal in this regard and also have the benefit of being close to public car parks, essential if the car is the only available travel option.

Where on-site car parking is limited the council accepts that its use must be sensitively managed, balancing the competing needs of all people using the site. Car users unable to park on-site must have confidence that the pedestrian routes from public car parks are convenient and safe.

Our vision is one of reduced reliance on the private car, but one that recognises that this will take time. Our vision is one of increased cycling and walking delivering health benefits from less car-derived pollution and from more active lifestyles. Our vision is one where technology reduces the need for travel and contributes to an improved work-life balance.

We invite you to be a part of this vision.

Councillor Ian Bates
Leader

David Monks
Chief Executive

1. Vision and Objectives

Vision

The vision of the Travel Plan is a reduced reliance on sole occupancy use of the car for journeys to and from work and for business journeys by both employees and Members.

Objectives

The overarching objective is to achieve a significant modal shift of employees and Members out of sole occupancy use of the car into alternative modes of travel and alternatives to travel

Supporting objectives are:

- To promote a healthy workforce through encouraging walking and cycling
- To promote work-life balance through facilitating alternatives to travel and new ways of working
- To reduce the number of cars parking at the council HQ site by promoting alternatives to sole use of the car
- To contribute to a decrease in traffic congestion around the council HQ sites at peak hours
- To contribute to reducing carbon dioxide emissions and to improving air quality in Huntingdonshire
- To make more efficient use of car travel where this is unavoidable
- To lead by example in implementing a successful Travel Plan

2 Actions

Actions required to implement the Travel Plan

There will be a detailed Action Plan for each of the council's sites. These will consider the following key actions.

Summary of the key actions

Walking and Cycling

- Promotion of walking to work through improving walking routes, promoting safer walking routes.
- Promotion of cycling to work through improving cycle routes, improving cycling facilities, promotional events, free bikes for employees.
- Promotion of cycling for business journeys through promotion of bicycle mileage and publicity events.

New ways of working

- Increasing the number of people regularly working a 9-day fortnight through a trial and promotion publicised through the staff intranet.
- Trialling and then promoting working from home including improving the facilities for doing so.
- Increasing wireless working through running a trial with revenues and benefits and then promoting to other relevant services.

Reducing the number of cars parking at Council premises

- Promoting the Cam Share database for car sharing
- Providing incentives for car sharing, including priority parking
- Establish a management regime for parking at Council premises
- Set up a pool car scheme for business journeys
- Review mileage allowances to reduce incentives for high mileages

Public Transport

- Establish interest free season ticket loans for buses and trains
- Improve public transport information available to staff
- Establish a staff mini bus using community transport buses
- Promote use of public transport for business journeys
- The prominent display and dissemination of up to date bus service information both on the intranet and also in communal areas.

Production of Site Specific Travel Plans

Site specific Travel Plans will be produced to the timescale outlined below, a draft of the site specific plan for Pathfinder House/Castle Hill House/New Headquarters building is included as Annex A.

Programme for producing Site Specific Travel Plans

Pathfinder/Castle Hill House/New Headquarters building
Operations Centre, Latham Road
Leisure Centre sites and Speke House–

October 2006
April 2007
2007/08

3 Corporate Considerations

Background Information

Policy Context:

A travel plan is a package of measures and initiatives that aim to reduce the adverse impact of travel on the environment by providing people with greater choice. This is done through:

- Providing realistic alternatives to the car
- Making alternatives to driving alone more attractive
- Reducing the need to travel
- Managing car parking provision and allocation
- Providing incentives to use alternatives to sole use of a private car

Traffic congestion costs the UK economy between £15 and £20 billion annually. Road transport accounts for more than a fifth of UK emissions of carbon dioxide, the main gas causing climate change.

Many of the journeys which contribute to this congestion and carbon dioxide emissions are employees going to, from and for work and, in many instances, these journeys are short enough for the car to be replaced by alternative modes of transport, such as cycling or walking. Others may be suitable for public transport or car sharing.

Around 60% of men and 70% of women are not currently active enough to benefit their health. Walking and cycling offer the opportunity to build moderate, pleasant exercise into people's routines and can counteract problems of obesity, coronary heart disease, stroke, diabetes and cancer as well as improving mental well being.

Huntingdonshire District Council recognises that employers have a key role to play in reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality within the district, and promoting healthier lifestyles, and that it should serve as an exemplar of good practice to other employers. The council has developed this Travel Plan accordingly.

The overall aim of this Travel Plan is to achieve a significant level of modal shift – that is cutting the number of single occupancy car journeys to and for work from 61% to 50% by either changing the mode of travel or reducing the need to travel (percentages based on travel for work survey 2005)

Organisation context:

Huntingdonshire District Council is a large employer in the district with around 1,300 employees. Around 480 of these employees are based in main council office site in Huntingdon town centre. The remainder are based at outlying sites, such as the five leisure centres at St Ives (236), Huntingdon (127), St Neots (125), Ramsey (79) and Sawtry (71), the depot at Godmanchester (169) and smaller offices in Ramsey, Yaxley and the other market towns.

The most recent travel to work survey (2005) showed that 30% of HDC employees live within 2 miles of their office base and -

- Over 60% travel to work as a single occupant in a private car
- 15% car share to work
- 5% come by bus or train
- 12% cycle or walk

Reason for a Travel Plan at HDC

National transportation policy seeks to improve travel choices and provide viable alternatives to the car where possible. The District Council as a planning authority has to require that all new developments incorporate a 'green' travel plan as part of their planning requirements. In turn the council has a responsibility to promote good practice and as a major employer it must lead by example by adopting a travel plan. Adopting a travel plan will also prepare the council for the move to its new accommodation starting in summer 2007 and ending in 2010. Key to this will be measures to reduce private car journeys by a single occupant.

A successful travel plan will help to:

- Reduce traffic congestion, particularly during the rush hour - The ring road in Huntingdon and the major routes on to it are almost at capacity during the morning peak. Some solutions are being developed through the market town transport strategy and reducing the number of HDC employees driving into work at peak times will help to reduce this congestion.
- Reduce pollution associated with cars - Air Quality Management Areas are to be declared on the ring road in Huntingdon and in St Neots. Reducing the traffic congestion will help to reduce the air pollution in these areas.
- Lower carbon emissions - Reducing the single occupancy use of the private car for work will reduce greenhouse gas emissions and assist in tackling climate change.
- Reduce the pressure on car parking at council sites – parking will be restricted at the new council headquarters site and so measures need to be introduced to reduce the requirement for parking. These measures need to be phased in before the move to the new building to prepare for the change.
- Save money by reducing business mileage – the cost of lease cars and reimbursement for business mileage costs the council around £490,000 a year. Reducing the need to travel will help to reduce this cost.
- Encourage employees and Members to lead healthier lifestyles through cycling and walking and encouraging them out of their car, where

appropriate - Increasing cycling and walking to work will improve the health of the staff and can help to reduce sick leave and improve morale.

- Improve the corporate image of the council as one that leads by example – If the council can successfully implement a travel plan it will serve as a good example to the other employers in the district. This is particularly important for the move to the new offices, as HDC can't be seen to have preferential treatment over other developers. Planning policy requires new developers to implement travel plans and HDC must, in turn, comply with this requirement.
- Deliver an annual reduction in carbon emissions as the plan targets are achieved.

1.3 Potential Benefits of a Travel Plan

For HDC

- Improved employee health and fitness through cycling and walking
- Savings in business travel costs by reducing the need to travel and through making changes to lease car arrangements and mileage payments
- Income from parking charges for charging for staff parking which can be used to fund sustainable transport measures
- Savings in maintenance of staff car park parking by reducing the size of the car park at the new headquarters
- Positive image for the council with other employees, government and developers
- Compliance with planning policy for having a successful travel plan at the new headquarters

For employees

- Improved access and information about travel choices such as car sharing, community and public transport
- Improved facilities for cycling and walking
- Fairer system for parking allocation
- Improved health and fitness through cycling and walking. For example, cycling four miles a day halves the risk of coronary heart disease
- Incentives for using travel choices, such as payments for bicycle mileage, subsidised travel
- The chance to take part in promotional activities such as bike to work week, free travel pass promotions and step-o-meters giveaways.
- Cost savings through using alternatives to the car or through car sharing
- Subsidised travel choices paid for by revenue from staff car parking
- Priority free car parking for car sharers
- Access to the CamShare database to find car sharers through some of the major employers in the district

For the environment and local community

- Reduced traffic congestion around the ring road at peak periods into Huntingdon
- Fewer cars going to HDC offices will help to improve air quality and reduce carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas emissions

4 Roles & Responsibilities

Travel Plan Co-ordination

Officers within Technical Services Division have prepared the plan and carried out or coordinated the preparatory work. The Director of Operational Services is the Champion of the Travel Plan on the Chief Officer Management Team.

Travel Plan Working Group

A cross-departmental working group of officers for implementing the travel plan was established in 2004.

At June 2006 the membership was:

- Phil Duerden – Personnel / Central Services
- Stuart Bell - Transportation
- Sonia Hansen – Community Safety/Health
- Chris Jablonski - Environment
- Rob Purkiss - IMD
- Oliver Colbert - Finance
- Chris Davidson – ELAG / Leisure
- Laura Burnell – Commerce and Technology

The purpose of the Travel Plan Working Group is to have a group of officers from across the organisation to assist in developing and implementing the Travel Plan.

Members of the group will act as representatives and advisors from their part of the organisation. They will also be a point of contact on travel plan issues for their department and may be required to feedback information to staff and gather information and views from their work area.

Members of the group may be asked to be involved in evidence gathering and testing ideas and schemes relating to the travel plan.

It will be important for the group to maintain its involvement during the implementation of the plan and to ensure that there is sufficient senior officer representation.

Member Involvement

The joint Executive Councillors for Planning and Environment and Transport – have been involved in the development of the Travel Plan.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance), Employment Panel and Cabinet have been consulted on drafts of the plan.

Employee Consultation

Lunchtime travel plan consultation sessions were held in Spring 2005 at Pathfinder House, the depot and Huntingdon Leisure centre to present the main themes from the draft Travel Plan and get feedback from employees.

Employees were also given the opportunity to feedback ideas and comments by e mail or by filling in a simple paper questionnaire. The draft Travel Plan was posted on the intranet inviting comments. Further employee consultation will be undertaken during the implementation of the plan to maintain support for the plans objectives.

Staff Side Involvement

The Employment Liaison Advisory Group (ELAG) has a representative on the Travel Plan working group. The draft travel plan has been presented to meetings of ELAG and the group carried out a travel plan consultation which has informed the development of the travel plan. (see appendix for summary of findings of the consultation).

Of the issues raised by the questionnaire, employees identified a number of key concerns including;

- Ensuring the equitable allocation of parking at the new headquarters
- Improving lighting on walking routes from car parks to offices
- Subsidising public transport to make it more viable
- Upgrading cycling facilities at the new headquarters building and operations centre
- Increasing opportunities for home working
- Staff retention issues resulting from loss of parking

Support from Partners

Huntingdonshire District Council is a member of the Cambridgeshire wide Travel for Work (TfW) partnership and receives their support and advice. Links have been made with Cambridgeshire Constabulary Headquarters and Huntingdon Police Station, Luminus and Hinchingsbrooke Hospital who are also developing travel plans and have joined the CamShare car sharing database.

5 Current Travel Patterns

5.1 Site Assessment

A review of each HDC Site looking at all the travel related issues and facilities e.g. bus routes, cycle routes, car parking, has been carried out and will inform site specific travel plans as they are produced.

Review of current HR and other policies

- **Flexible working** – the HDC flexi time system allows employees to work very flexibly. This can assist with sustainable travel options such as car sharing, or using public transport to enable staff to leave work together to car share or leave early to get a bus, for example. However not all staff can work flexible hours due to the nature of their job or due to commitments outside work. The flexi time system does allow staff to work a 9-day fortnight by building up hours and then taking 2 days off in every 4-week period. This can significantly reduce travel to work and needs to be promoted more as a recent audit report showed there is little take up of this option on a regular basis.
- **Working from home** – where it is appropriate for the individual and the service working from home can deliver significant benefits, both in terms of reduced travel and improved work-life balance. A plan will be produced to provide the appropriate technology, both data and telephony, to support effective home working.
- **Travel pass loans** – there is currently no policy to allow for loans for the purchase of bus or rail season tickets and yet officers can easily access loans or leases for cars. Interest free season ticket loans are proposed in the action plan later in this document.
- **Cycle loans** – cycle loans were negotiated in 2003 on the same basis as the current car loans which is at a competitive rate of interest. To date there has been no take up of the cycle loans. Consideration will be given to implementing the Cycle to Work scheme introduced as part of the Government's Green Transport Plan in 1999. This scheme allows employees to lease cycles from their employers and a basic rate tax payer will save 40% off the cost of a bike. Typically a bicycle and associated equipment valued at £500 would cost the employee £300, payable over twelve months.
- **Car parking** – All council sites have some level of off-street parking provision. This is controlled on a site specific basis.
- **Business mileage rates** – Business mileage is paid on variable rates dependent on the job role. Employees are either classed as 'essential' or 'casual' users and those with a leased car are paid on a much lower rate. Members using their car for council business are paid on the same rate as casual users.

- **Contributory Car Leased Scheme**

The Contributory Car Leased scheme allows members of staff, who have a contract exceeding three years, to enter into an agreement with the Council to allow them to hire a new vehicle over a period of three or four years. During the leasing period the cost of major maintenance and servicing; road fund licence; comprehensive insurance cover; AA, or equivalent, membership and all administration costs will be included in the hire charge. The hire charge is based upon the number of business miles travelled each year. The higher the number of business miles travelled the lower the hire charge becomes. The hire charge is recoverable direct from the employee's salary. At the end of the lease the employee has the option to purchase the vehicle, take out a further application for a completely new vehicle, or simply withdraw from the scheme altogether.

- **Non-contributory company car scheme**

Chief Officers and Heads of Service are entitled to lease vehicles under the Non Contributory Scheme. From September 1999, the scheme has been amended to be more flexible and now allows Chief Officers and Heads of Service to elect for a Special Car Allowance in lieu of a vehicle. Furthermore, this Special Car Allowance can be modified to enable the Chief Officer or Head of Service to use this Allowance to wholly or partly fund a car obtained under the Contributory scheme.

5.2 Travel to Work Survey

Method

The travel to work survey is carried out annually by the Travel for Work Partnership. HDC as a partner take part every year and the results are analysed with a break down for each organisation. The survey is a snap shot survey carried out annually one week in October and asks about travel to work during that week. The survey is given to staff and members and is completed electronically. The number of people completing a survey in 2005 was 89 and the. The 2006 survey will be carried out in October, led by the Travel For Work Partnership.

Table showing Findings of Travel for Work Survey 2005

Mode	HDC Modal share October 2005 survey results (%)	Average from other Travel for Work Employers (%)	HDC survey results % Oct 2003	HDC survey results % (Oct 2004)
Car (single occupant)	61.92	44.49	65.89	71.43
Car Share	15.23	10.84	14.57	8.02
Bus	2.21	6.69	3.97	3.26
Train	2.21	3.42	4.97	3.76
Motorbike	1.72	1.34	2.32	1.50
Cycle	2.70	22.25	4.64	1.75
Walking	9.34	6.49	2.65	7.02
Tele work	3.19	3.12	0.99	2.25

The comparison with other Travel For Work employers gives an idea of how HDC is doing. A large percentage of the other TFW employers are based in

Cambridge and so this should be borne in mind. However it does give some idea of what HDC could aspire towards.

Comparing the 2005 data with the data from October 2004 shows that car sharing has increased as has walking.

There is scope for increasing all the alternative modes, in particular gains could be made in cycling, car sharing, public transport and tele-working.

5.3 Business Travel

There are 120 'essential users' in the organisation who receive a lump sum payment towards the cost of a car and claiming essential user mileage payments. There are around 230 employees claiming casual mileage rates for business travel.

The nature of the work of some divisions means that access to a car is an important part of the job, environmental health officers for example. The Council values this work and does not wish to make employees work more difficult by saying that they cannot use a car for work. However, some employees may be able to travel in to work by alternate means but then may require access to a car for a work related journey. At present there is no facility to enable staff to use a council vehicle for this purpose.

5.4 Analysis of survey

Travel to work

The travel to work survey of HDC employees, when compared to other TfW employees, shows that there is some potential for shifting the mode of travel through the implementation of the travel plan. The travel to work modes that should be promoted through the travel plan are:

- Car Sharing
- Cycling
- Walking
- Public transport

For business journeys there is also potential for modal shift for travel for work by promoting the use of pool cars.

Pool Cars

A small fleet of pool cars 4 – 6 would enable staff to use a council vehicle for business journeys and free them up to come into work without their car.

Such a fleet would have the dual benefit of providing transport for staff that have left their car at home and would minimise disruption for those who have parked off site but need to attend site visits during the course of the working day.

6 Corporate Travel Plan Targets

The table below shows the corporate travel plan targets and timescales, relating directly to the corporate travel plan objectives.

Objective	Targets	Timescales				
		Baseline 2005	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10
To promote a healthy workforce	To increase the % of employees and members who routinely walk as part of their journey to work	9%	9.5%	10%	10.5%	11%
	To increase the percentage of employees and members who routinely cycle to work (2% year on year increase)	2.7%	4.7%	6.7%	7.7%	9.7%
	To increase the percentage of business journeys carried out by bicycle	0.1%	0.25	0.5	0.75	1%
To promote work-life balance, new ways of working and alternatives to travel	To increase the number of employees routinely working a 9-day fortnight (2% year on year increase)	0%	2%	4%	6%	8%
	To increase the number of employees regularly working from home or tele working	3.2%	3.5%	4%	4.5%	5%
	To reduce business mileage (Two percent year on year reduction)	0%	2%	4%	6%	8%
To reduce number of private cars journey's to Pathfinder House by promoting alternatives	To increase the percentage of employees and members regularly car sharing to get to work	15%	16%	17%	18%	19%
	To reduce the percentage of employees who drive to work by sole use of own car	71%	68%	65%	60%	50%
	To increase the percentage of business journeys made using a pool car	0%	0%	3%	5%	10%
	To increase the percentage of employees routinely using public transport to get to work	9.34%	9.5%	10%	11%	11.5%
Decreased traffic congestion/ emissions	Reduce the tonnage of Carbon Dioxide emissions from motor vehicles used on Council Business by 3% per annum	0%	3%	6%	9%	12%
To lead by example	To increase positive press coverage of the HDC Travel Plan Number of media stories	1	2	3	4	4

Targets by Modal Share

MODE	Baseline 2004 modal share percentage from TFW survey	No. of employees all sites 2004 (projection from survey)	No. of employees HQ 2004 (projection from survey)	Target for 2008 % modal share by employees	Target No. of employees 2008 All sites	Target no. of employees HQ site 2008
Car (single occupant)	71.43%	929	349	50%	650	244
Car Share	8.02%	104	39	18%	234	88
Bus	3.26%	42	16	5%	65	24
Train	3.76%	49	18	5%	65	24
Motorbike	1.5%	20	7	1.5%	20	7
Cycle	1.75%	23	9	6.5%	85	32
Walking	7.02%	91	34	9%	117	44
Tele work	2.25%	29	11	4%	52	20
Other	1.01%	13	5	1%	13	5

7 Monitoring & Evaluation

- The Travel Plan will be monitored by the Travel Plan working group who will keep a regular check on progress against targets and actions plans.
- The Travel Plan will be reviewed annually and targets will be updated as appropriate. The annual Travel for Work survey will provide data to monitor progress of modal split. An annual progress report will be produced.
- Progress on the Travel Plan will be reported to Cabinet, as requested.
- Quarterly monitoring of the take-up of the staff car sharing scheme.

8 Financial Issues

There are a number of possible financial implications of the travel plan, these fall within the following categories:

- **Promoting Cycling and Walking** – There will need to be a small promotional budget associated with running regular staff events such as Bike Week and Clever Commuting Week. This would amount to £3,000 per annum.
- **Leased Bikes** – The ‘Cycle to Work’ scheme provides opportunities for employees to lease bicycles from the council saving 40% of the cost making payments over 12 – 36 months. The employee selects the bike and accessories they want; the council buys it and leases it back. Provided the employee uses it to commute from time to time repayments can be taken before tax is paid. Allow £7,500 net annually.
- **Working from Home** – Many employees already work at home on an ad hoc basis.

More structured home working, whereby employees work from home regularly e.g. for three days a week, every week, and have the capacity to access the council’s key business systems is likely in the short/medium term. Whilst this will deliver a reduction in travel its delivery will depend on other corporate decisions with regard to the technologies implemented.

- **Management of Parking at HQ** – With the limited spaces available at the new Headquarters building there will be a management cost associated with ensuring that parking spaces are used in accordance with the adopted management policy. Allow £750 per annum.
- **Provision of Pool Cars** – It will be possible for the council to hire fuel efficient pool cars at a cost of £3,100 per car per annum. Based on hiring Ford Fiesta 1.4 diesel cars the carbon dioxide emissions will be 119g/km and the fuel cost for each vehicle will be £1,200 per annum.

The total cost to the council to run a fleet of 4 pool cars would be £17,200 per annum

- **Mileage Allowance payments** – In 2005/06 there were 231 employees claiming casual car user allowance and 106 claiming essential user allowance. The respective average mileage rates per mile were 52p and 40p per mile. In addition to mileage allowance essential users are paid an average monthly allowance of £82.50. The total cost to the council in 2005/06 based on the above is as follows:

Casual users	(120,469 miles)	£ 62,644
Essential users		£ 227,524
	(306,460 miles + allowances of £104,940)	
	Total	£ 290,168

If essential user status were abolished and all mileage was paid at casual user rates the cost to the council in mileage related payments would have been £222,003.

- **Season Ticket Loans** - The establishment of interest free season ticket loans for train and bus passes would cost the Council £150 per year per employee and can be undertaken without tax implications for the employee.

Uptake would determine whether this proved to be a significant incentive for people to use alternatives to the car.

- **Staff mini bus** – The viability of a mini bus service cannot be determined without further to identify potential take up.

Appendix A: 2006/07 mileage rates for essential users including the lump sum allowance which is paid monthly into the salary

Mileage Bands	Vehicle Engine Size		
	451 to 999 cc	1000 to 1199cc	1200cc to 1450cc
Annual Lump sum	£ 702	£ 792	£ 1,023
Up to 8,500 miles	31.4p	33.8p	42.4p
Over 8,500miles	12.1p	12.0p	14.3p

2006/07 mileage rates for casual users and elected members

Mileage Bands	Vehicle Engine Size		
	451 to 999 cc	1000 to 1199cc	1200cc to 1450cc
Up to 8,500 miles	39.7p	43.1p	54.4p
Over 8,500 miles	12.1p	12.0p	14.3

2005/06 mileage rate for leased cars

Mileage Bands	All Mileage
1st February 2005	14.0p

The current scheme pays a higher mileage rate for a larger engine size which is a perverse incentive to drive potentially higher emission vehicles. Essential users are required to drive at least 1,500 miles otherwise the lump sum can be taken away from them. Therefore there is an incentive to ensure that this level of mileage is achieved during the year. There is no extra payment given for car sharing for business journeys and so no incentive to do this. Some councils pay an extra amount for car sharing.

Number of staff submitting travel claims in 2005/06 by user type

Casual	231
Essential	108
Leased	28

Huntingdonshire District Council

PATHFINDER/CASTLE HILL HOUSE/ NEW HEADQUARTERS BUILDING SITE SPECIFIC TRAVEL PLAN



Contents	Page
1 Background	1
2 Site Specific Ojectives and Targets	2
3 Current Travel Patterns	3
4 Travel issues	7
5 Action Plan	12

1 Background

Huntingdonshire District Council is a large employer in the district with around 1,300 employees. Around 490 of these are based in main council office site in Huntingdon town centre (Pathfinder House & Castle Hill House).

The issues facing Huntingdonshire District Council at the Pathfinder/Castle Hill House site are similar to those faced by most town centre based employers:

- Traffic congestion, particularly during the rush hour is a problem, the ring road in Huntingdon and the major routes on to it are almost at capacity during the morning peak
- On-site car Parking is limited and there is pressure on town centre car parks
- Work is due to commence shortly on the redevelopment of the site, will substantially reduce parking on site
- Public transport is perceived by many as being poor and expensive and this encourages employees to travel to work by car, which exacerbates congestion on the roads and parking problems in and around the town centre.

For individual employees the main work related travel issues at the Pathfinder/Castle Hill House site include a perceived lack of travel choices available to them, traffic congestion, parking issues on the site, pressure on town centre car parks and the need for a private car for use during the working day.

As the Pathfinder House Site is redeveloped for new office accommodation for the Council, Castle Hill House will be sold as part of the process and may eventually be converted for residential use. Work is due to commence on site in early 2007 and it is anticipated that the redevelopment will be complete by 2010.

The purpose of this site specific Travel Plan is to inform and influence travel choices in the three year period during the course of the redevelopment and after completion of the new headquarters.

On-site car parking will be significantly reduced during redevelopment and after completion of the new headquarters. It is necessary therefore that work is undertaken to implement the travel plan from winter 2006/07, to address travel issues associated with the existing site and to influence travel behaviour in preparation for occupation of the new headquarters building.

2 Site Specific Objectives & Targets

To achieve the objectives of the Council's overarching travel plan it will be necessary to achieve a significant modal shift away from the car into alternative modes of travel at the Headquarters site.

Specific targets have been set for increasing alternative modes of travel which are shown in the table below. Actions to achieve these targets are outlined in the site specific action plan (section 5) and the main focus for reducing the number of single occupant private car journeys at the Pathfinder/Castle Hill House Site will include:

- Promoting car sharing for both commuter and business trips
- The purchase of a fleet of pool cars for work related journeys
- Promoting walking and cycling
- Increased promotion of public transport
- Promoting and encouraging flexible working and working from home

MODE	Baseline 2005 modal share percentage from TFW survey	HQ employees 2005 (projection from survey)	Target for 2008 % modal share by employees	Target no. of employees HQ site 2008
Car (single occupant)	61.92%	349	50%	245
Car Share	15.23%	39	16.5%	81
Bus	2.21%	16	5%	24
Train	2.21%	18	5%	24
Motorbike	1.72%	7	2%	10
Bicycle	2.7%	9	6.5%	32
Walking	9.34%	34	10%	49
Tele work	3.19%	11	4%	20
Other	1.47%	5	1%	5

3 Current Travel Patterns

Home location of staff

Data from personnel records have been collated to analyse distance travelled to work by employees. This was done in 2004/05 prior to the implementation of the Call Centre at Speke House.

Distance travelled to work by employees at Pathfinder/Castle Hill House

Home to Work Mileage	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5+	Total
Pathfinder House	40	56	21	17	38	232	404
Castle Hill House	7	9	6	2	6	52	82
Huntingdon Cash Office	0	1	0	1	1	1	4
Totals	47	66	27	20	45	285	490
Percentage	9.6	13.4	5.5	4.0	9.2	58.1	

This shows that 23% of employees live within 2 miles of the site – a distance which is particularly suitable for modal shift to cycling, walking or public transport.

Large clusters of employees working at the Huntingdon site live in Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey. This may provide an opportunity to promote initiatives that benefit these groups e.g. an employee mini-bus.

Mode of Travel

The most recent travel to work survey (2005) showed that although 23% of HDC employees working at Pathfinder/Castle Hill House, live within 2 miles of the office, the proportion of employees travelling to work as a single occupant in a private car is high in comparison to other participants in the survey. This suggests that there is potential for shifting the mode of travel through the implementation of the travel plan, the full breakdown of modes of travel from the survey is:

- 62% travel to work as a single occupant in a private car
- 15% car share to work
- 12% cycle or walk
- 5% come by bus or train
- 3% tele-work
- 2% motorbike

Before considering the travel modes that should be promoted through the travel plan, it is useful to consider current travel patterns in more detail, broken down by individual mode of transport.

Travel by Car/Parking

The Pathfinder/ Castle Hill House site currently has 200 spaces for around 490 staff. With the exception of parking to the front of Castle Hill House, car parking is restricted at the Pathfinder House site by barrier and swipe card. Entry to the car parks is currently allocated to grade 7 employees

and above, essential users and to other staff on a waiting list basis. The current waiting list is about 4 years. There are also 10 free passes for the Princess Street car park issued to a small number of staff at the discretion of each directorate.

The back car park (46 spaces) is used by some grade 7 employees and by all those graded 6 and above. The front car park (139 spaces) is allocated to essential users and staff who have gained access for historical reasons or for length of service. The car park at the front of Castle Hill House (15 spaces) is for employees that work in that building and spaces are allocated according to need and hierarchy in the organisation.

Parking for staff on the Pathfinder House site is not currently charged. Staff without access to the car parks who drive in can park at long stay car parks free or pay to park closer in short stay or edge of centre car parks (currently £1.50 a day or £xxx for a five day annual season ticket).

Bus and Rail

The Pathfinder House site is within easy walking distance of Huntingdon bus and railway stations. There are frequent bus services to the local market towns and some intervening larger villages. Some of the bus services to smaller outlying areas are poor and may be unsuitable for regular commuting due to the frequency and timetabling of the services.

To encourage the more widespread use of public transport by employees, it will be important for relevant (see table below) bus and rail timetables to be made available on the intranet and for this information to be promoted and updated regularly.

Bus Services		
Main Services to Huntingdon <i>(Note: Services operating only on Sundays not listed). Correct at the time of writing</i>	1A	Huntingdon - St Ives - Cambridge
	X14	Huntingdon - St Ives - Cambridge
	3	Papworth - Graveley - Godmanchester - Huntingdon
	5	Cambridge - St Ives - Huntingdon
	7	Huntingdon - Godmanchester
	16	Huntingdon - Oxmoor Circular
	16	Peterborough - Sawtry - Huntingdon
	151	St Ives - Hemingfords - Godmanchester - Huntingdon
	330	Ramsey - Bury - Huntingdon - Hinchingsbrooke
	332	March - Chatteris - Warboys - Huntingdon
	436	Somersham - Earith - St Ives - Hemingfords - Godmanchester - Huntingdon - Hinchingsbrooke
	446/565	St Neots - L. Paxton - Brampton - Huntingdon
	476	Godmanchester - Huntingdon
	553/4/5	Cambridge - Fenstanton - St Ives - Huntingdon
	570	Huntingdon - Oxmoor Circular
	571	Hartford - Huntingdon - Brampton
	572	Huntingdon - Oxmoor - Tesco's
Villager	Huntingdon - St Ives	

Timetable enquiries	Traveline: 0870 608 2 608 of www.traveline.org.uk County Council Bus information line: 01223 717740 On-line bus timetables: http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/sub/eandt/highways/bustimes/ Bus Operators: Go Whippet – 01480 463159 www.gowhippet.co.uk Huntingdon & District – 01480 453159 www.huntsbus.co.uk
Rail Services	
Distance from Huntingdon Station	¾ mile (approximately 10 minutes walk)
Services to Huntingdon Station	To/from London Kings Cross - Direct To/from Peterborough – Direct
Fare and timetable enquiries	National Rail Enquiries: 08457 48 49 50 or nationalrail.co.uk
Train operating Companies serving Huntingdon Station	First Capital Connect – www.firstcapitalconnect.co.uk

Car Sharing

Car sharing is already quite popular (15% in 2005 TFW survey) with a number of staff who have informal car sharing arrangements.

In January 2006 HDC launched its membership of the countywide Car Sharing database CamShare. A new Huntingdon ‘hub’ has been established with Luminus and the Police launching at the same time. Car sharing will be actively promoted to increase the pool of car sharers.

Initially there will be no priority parking for car sharers, but a guaranteed ride home has been established to give peace of mind for those who car share that they could get home in a taxi in the event of an emergency. Arrangements for car sharers to access town centre parking will be kept under review.

Cycling

There are 3 pool bikes available for use for business journeys, which can be booked using Outlook diaries in the public folder and selecting Bertie, Betty and Freddie the folding bike. There are 3 showers at Pathfinder House, but no drying or changing rooms and very few lockers.

There is a bicycle mileage allowance (currently 20p a mile) for cycling for business journeys and bicycle loans are available on the same basis as staff car loans at a set interest rate. The potential of providing bicycles to staff without charge will be explored.

Walking

Around 9% of staff currently walk to work. It is a simple and healthy mode of travel for those living close by. A considerable number of employees already make the journey from outlying car parks to Pathfinder House and other HDC sites.

The improvement of walking routes to the Pathfinder house site is being considered, linked to the Market Town Transport Strategy. An example of a

planned improvement is the construction of a pedestrian crossing between the Bridge Place, Godmanchester car park and the Town Bridge.

Crime figures show that there is minimal risk using walking routes from car parks to the town centre in Huntingdon. However, the perception that they may be unsafe needs to be addressed. If lighting improvements are needed, these can be investigated on recommended walking routes and these routes can be publicised through the Travel for Work section of the intranet.

6 Travel Issues

Redevelopment of the Site

As the redevelopment of Pathfinder House takes place, parking on site will initially reduce with the loss of the rear car park and as redevelopment progresses the front car park will also be vacated. During redevelopment pedestrian access will change considerably with the construction of a new temporary Customer Service Centre.

Some of the key stages in the redevelopment process are outlined below:

April 2007

Construction of a temporary Customer Service Centre will commence. It will be located in the rear car park and will be accessed by pedestrians from St Mary's Street.

The rear car park at Pathfinder House will therefore be unavailable for car parking and residual spaces will be reserved for disabled parking and deliveries. Cycle Parking and motorbike parking will be unaffected at this stage of the redevelopment as will parking at the front of Castle Hill House.

June 2007

Redevelopment of Pathfinder House will commence with the demolition of the first wing of the old building. The front car park will be vacated and 100 additional off-site car parking spaces will be made available for employees at the current site of the Godmanchester Depot (which will by this date have moved to a new Operations Centre at Lathham Road, Huntingdon).

The current main reception will close and pedestrian access via this entrance will cease. Visitors will gain access to Pathfinder House via the temporary Customer Service Centre. Employees will be able to use this entrance and the rear entrance, which will be retained during redevelopment.

Huntingdon Cash Office will remain in its current location, with access through the new temporary Customer Service Centre.

September 2008

Occupation of the first of the new Headquarters buildings will take place. This building will incorporate improved facilities for cyclists and new shower facilities. There will be no reduction in shower facilities during the course of the redevelopment process.

Summary of On-Site Facilities - Now and During Redevelopment

The table below summarises on site-facilities and services affecting current travel choices at Pathfinder House/Castle Hill House and details on-site parking constraints during redevelopment.

Provision for vehicles	Current Provision	During Redevelopment
Number of car parking spaces (Front Car Park)	139 (including 2 disabled parking spaces)	May 2007 - front car park vacated, 100 extra staff spaces at Godmanchester Depot site.
Number of car parking spaces (Rear Car Park)	46 spaces	March 2007 – Rear car park unavailable. No additional provision before May 2007
Number of dedicated motorcycle spaces	0 – but space in rear car park for 4 motorbikes to park undercover.	Motorcycle parking retained during redevelopment
Provision for cyclists		
Number of cycle parking spaces on-site	36 spaces in a covered and secure cycle storage compound.	Cycle Parking retained during redevelopment
Showers and changing facilities on-site	3 showers (including 1 unisex shower), 4 large lockers (2 in both men and women's 4 th floor toilets) 16 smaller lockers (8 in both men and women's 1 st floor toilets)	Current shower provision retained through redevelopment process.
Provision for walkers		
Number of entrances to Pathfinder House/Castle Hill House on foot	<p>Pathfinder House (2) – Main pedestrian access for visitors off St Mary's Street. Controlled access, employees only at rear of building.</p> <p>Castle Hill House (3) – Public access to Huntingdon Cash Office from St Mary's Street, controlled access for employees from St Mary's Street. Controlled access for employees from High Street.</p>	<p>Pathfinder House (2) - From May 2007 current main reception will close and pedestrian access will cease. Visitors and employees will gain access to the building from the temporary customer service centre, controlled access for employees in rear car park also will be retained.</p> <p>Castle Hill House (3) – Entrances unchanged, but Huntingdon Cash Office to be accessed through the temporary Customer Service Centre.</p>
Percentage of site that is lit	100% - all main pedestrian walkways/entrances fully lit	All pedestrian walkways on site to remain fully lit during the redevelopment process

On-Site Facilities at New Headquarters

Travel by Car/Car Parking

Permanent car parking provision at the new Headquarters will be reduced to 33 spaces, so the scope for Members and officers to park on site will be restricted. It is likely that the majority of spaces will be allocated for short stays of no more than half an hour, with the remainder allocated for disabled users, designated lead Members and senior officers.

The suggested allocation of spaces at the new Headquarters is;

Short Stay visitor/employee parking (half hour)	17
Disabled Badge holders	6
Pool Cars	4
Leader/Chairman of the Council/Cabinet Members	4
Chief Executive/Directors	2

Short stay restrictions at the new Headquarters Car Park will be relaxed after 4pm, this will allow staff who know they need to work late or attend an evening meeting, to retrieve their car from off site in the hours of daylight. There will also be (potentially 12 spaces) occasional parking associated with the new Civic building when it is in use.

Bus and Rail – A new bus interchange is already planned for Huntingdon railway station and together with the contraflow bus lane linking George Street with the bus station access from the town centre to the railway station will be greatly enhanced. The introduction of real time bus service information at the bus station and at other key locations on the network will make wider bus travel easier. The council's Medium Term Plan includes funding for the refurbishment of Huntingdon bus station to create a high quality facility for bus users.

Cycling

The 2005 Travel for Work survey found that 2.7% of Council employees cycle to work regularly. For Pathfinder/Castle Hill House this equates to 13 employees.

The Corporate Travel Plan (section 5) sets a target of increasing the percentage of employees travelling to work by bicycle to 9.7% by 2010. If this target is achieved, 48 Employees will be cycling to work regularly and the minimum requirement for on site cycle parking at the new Headquarters will be for 50 cycles.

Provision for vehicles	
Number of car parking spaces (Front Car Park)	33 permanent spaces and another 12 occasional
Number of dedicated motorcycle spaces	Subject to detailed design
Provision for cyclists	
Number of cycle parking spaces on-site	50 spaces in a covered, secure cycle storage compound.
Showers and changing facilities on-site	2 Showers, 20 lockers, Drying room (enhancement of shower provision to be considered in detailed design)
Access to site for Cyclists	Access from St Mary's Street
Provision for walkers	
Number of entrances to New Headquarters Site	4 pedestrian entrances (excluding fire exits)
Percentage of site that is lit	100% - all main pedestrian walkways/entrances fully lit

Travel plan links with the Huntingdon and Godmanchester Transport Strategy

The Huntingdon and Godmanchester Transport Strategy, which was adopted in 2003, includes a number of measures designed to encourage alternative modes of transport, many of which will be of direct benefit to employees of the District Council working at Pathfinder/Castle Hill House.

Some of the most current improvements are listed below and more detailed information about each will be made available on the Travel for Work Section of the Intranet.

Bus Priority Measures

The Transport Strategy includes a package of bus priority measures between Hinchingsbrooke and Huntingdon Bus Station, and an improved interchange at Huntingdon Railway Station. A further package of bus priority measures between Huntingdon and St Ives have been developed to extend the benefits of the Cambridgeshire Guided Bus way.

The main feature of the initial package which is due to be completed by March 2007 will be a contra-flow bus lane on the Huntingdon ring road from George Street to Prince's Street (bus station). This will allow buses to turn right from George Street and should significantly reduce journey times for bus commuters from Hinchingsbrooke, Brampton and villages to the west and south of Huntingdon.

Expansion of the Walking and Cycling Network

There is often perception that cycling and walking is too dangerous, however, over the past 3 – 4 years the walking and cycling network in and around Huntingdon and Godmanchester has been upgraded significantly and this has greatly improved the ease and safety with which cyclists can journey in and around Huntingdon and the surrounding villages.

The map provided shows current walking and cycling routes and those proposed for construction as part of the transport strategy. As new walking and cycle routes are established, it will become easier still for people to journey in and around Huntingdon, using designated routes.

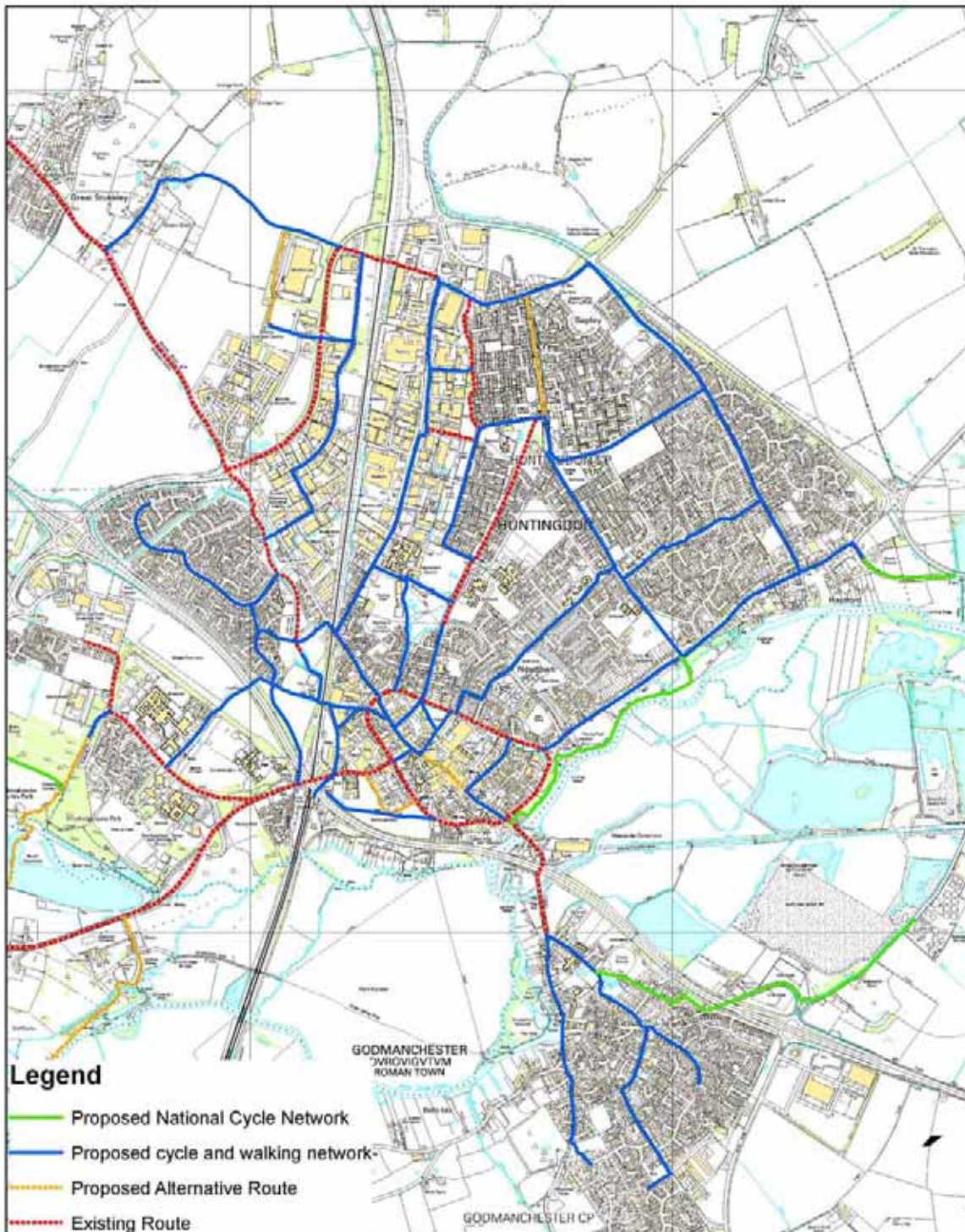
Promoting new walking and cycling routes will be an important part of the travel plan

Extension to Public Car Parks in Huntingdon

Demand for parking in Huntingdon is high. It is hoped that the travel plan in providing viable alternatives to the use of the private car will go some way towards managing the demand for car parking spaces in the town centre.

Further improvement in parking provision is already included in the approved Car Parking Strategy 2005 -2016. This document currently is being reviewed and will take account of the latest developments planned for Huntingdon Town Centre.

TRAVEL PLAN SITE ASSESSMENT
Walking & Cycling Network



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5 Action Plan

The following action plan provides an illustration of the schemes and initiatives to be developed and implemented to achieve the travel plans objectives in relation to Pathfinder/Castle Hill House and the New Headquarters.

Travel Plan Action Plan

Objective: To promote a healthy workforce through encouraging walking and cycling to work				
Target: Increase walking levels				
Action	Timescale	Lead	Measurement	Resources
Improve walking routes to council sites as part of market town transport strategies	Ongoing	Transportation Team	Through MTTs monitoring	HDC Funding contribution to MTTs
Promotion and awareness raising of 'safer' walking routes from council offices to car parks	2006 & 2007	Environment Team	Staff survey	Staff time Small budget for promotion £250
Promote low cost employee loan to enable purchase of bikes and cycling equipment	2007	Environment Tea	Staff survey – follow up to ELAG survey	Staff time

Objective: To promote a healthy workforce through encouraging walking and cycling to work				
Target: Increase cycling levels				
Action	Timescale	Lead	Measurement	Resources
Improve cycle routes to council sites as part of market town transport strategies	2006/07	Transportation Team	Through MTTs monitoring	HDC funding contribution to MTTs
Promote use of pool bikes and payment of bike mileage	Year on year increase	Environment Team	Through mileage claims data	Staff time 10 hours
Promote cycling through events and publicity – Bike to work week	Annual	Environment Team	Survey of participants	Small budget to pay for events £250 annually Staff time 10 hours
Promote low cost employee loan to enable purchase of bikes and cycling equipment	Ongoing	Environment Team	Number of loans arranged	Loss of interest Estimate £150

Objective: To promote work-life balance, new ways of working and alternatives to travel				
Target: increase the number of employees routinely working a nine day fortnight				
Action	Timescale	Lead	Measurement	Resources
Run a trial with a particular work area and publicise results in team talk	2007/08	Environment Team	Results of trial	Staff time
Promote use of 9-day fortnight to managers and staff	2006/07	Environment Team	Staff survey	Staff time

Objective: To promote work-life balance, new ways of working and alternatives to travel				
Target: To increase the number of employees regularly working from home				
Action	Timescale	Lead	Measurement	Resources
Run a trial across the organisation and publicise results	2007	Environment Team	Run trial monitor results of trial	Staff time
Promote working at home to managers and staff	2007/08	Environment Team	Staff survey	Staff time
Improve access to files and e-mails for staff working at home	2007/08	Environment Team	Staff survey	Staff time Funding for improving technology

Objective: To promote work-life balance, new ways of working and alternatives to travel				
Target: To increase the number of staff working remotely through wireless working				
Action	Timescale	Lead	Measurement	Resources
Run a trial in Revenues and Benefits of wireless working	2007/08	Environment Team	Run Trial - Evaluate results	Staff time Funding for technology Budget already established
Promote wireless working to other services if trial successful	2008 onward	Environment Team	Other services using wireless technology	Staff time Funding for technology

Objective: To reduce the number of private cars parking at council HQ by promoting alternatives				
Target: To increase percentage of employees and members regularly car sharing to get to work				
Action	Timescale	Lead	Measurement	Resources
Promote Cam Share car sharing data base to employees	Ongoing	Environment Team	Number of employees on database	Joining fee – from existing budget Staff time
Promote guaranteed ride home in emergencies for car sharers	Ongoing	Environment Team	Evidence of scheme	Estimate budget required £500

Objective: To reduce the number of private cars parking at council HQ by promoting alternatives				
Target: To reduce the percentage of employees and members who drive to work by sole use of own car				
Action	Timescale	Lead	Measurement	Resources
Promote alternative to the car and car sharing through events and publicity	Ongoing	Environment Team	Travel survey	Staff time

Objective: To reduce the number of private cars parking at council HQ by promoting alternatives				
Target: increase share of car sharing				
Action	Timescale	Lead	Measurement	Resources
Establish a small fleet of pool cars (Four in total)	2009/10	Environment Team	Pool Cars Available on moving in to	Approx £4,300 Per car per annum, £17,200

Objective: To reduce the number of private cars parking at council HQ by promoting alternatives				
Target: increase share of car sharing				
Action	Timescale	Lead	Measurement	Resources
			New Headquarters	in total
Promote use of pool cars	2007/08	Environment Team	Evidence of mileage and costs	Staff time
Review mileage payments and essential user allowance with aim of proposing a fair system which does not have perverse incentives for doing high mileage	2007/08	Head of Personnel	Review complete and proposals implemented	Staff time

Objective: To reduce the number of private cars parking at council HQ by promoting alternatives				
Target: Increase percentage of employees routinely using public transport to get to work				
Action	Timescale	Lead	Measurement	Resources
Establish interest-free season ticket loans for train and bus passes	2007/08	Head of Personnel	Policy in place, scheme established	Estimate £150 cost of lost interest
Improve information on buses and trains for staff in the intranet	2006 then ongoing	Environment Team	Number of hits	Staff time
Run a personalised travel planning promotion and clever commuting challenge	Annual	Number of people trying out public transport during promotion	Survey of participants	Staff time
Consider establishment of staff minibus service using community transport buses	2007	Scheme established and used by staff	Number of staff using service regularly	Revenue funding from charging for staff parking

Objective: To reduce the number of private cars parking at council HQ by promoting alternatives				
Target: Increase percentage of business journeys carried out by public transport				
Action	Timescale	Lead	Measurement	Resources
Promote use of public transport for business journeys with staff, managers and members through raising awareness of services and running promotional events	Annual	Environment Team	Increase in staff using public transport - Travel claims	Staff time and money for promotions (existing budget)

Objective: To lead by example by implementing a successful Travel Plan

Target: To increase positive press coverage of HDC Travel Plan and associated events

Action	Timescale	Lead	Measurement	Resources
To put out regular press release and articles in District Wide on HDC Travel Plan	ongoing	Positive press coverage	Number of stories printed	Staff Time

“GROWING SUCCESS” – CORPORATE PLAN: AN UPDATE

(Report by the Head of Policy)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide a progress report for the Cabinet on the updating of the Council’s Corporate Plan.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 Earlier this year, the Overview & Scrutiny Panels and the Cabinet endorsed a process for reviewing and updating Growing Success - the Council’s Corporate Plan.

2.2 At the suggestion of the Cabinet, the Overview and Scrutiny Panels have taken a lead on this process. Specifically they appointed a joint working group to undertake this work, comprising Councillors M G Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, S J Criswell, D B Dew, B Eaton and J A Gray.

2.3 To assist the working group in their role, training was given on the process of reviewing objectives and developing the performance management framework. The course was based one held previously for Executive Councillors. A training session was held also for all members of the two Overview and Scrutiny Panels to help them contribute to the review process.

2.4 Subsequently the Group has met on a number of occasions to undertake a detailed review of the plan, and particularly the associated objectives and targets. This review has been supported by similar considerations by the Chief Officer Management Team and officers generally.

3. REVIEW

3.1 During their deliberations the Group came to the conclusion that in view of the complexity of the process and importance in setting the future direction of the Council, it would not be possible to conclude the exercise within the original timetable while giving Members and adequate opportunity to contribute. The Corporate and Strategic Framework Panel at their meeting in September, considered a working draft of the Plan. This provided a preliminary opportunity to consider the Plan, prior to both Panels considering it individually at their meetings in October. To aid this process it was agreed that the “aims” and supporting objectives should be divided between the two panels, as follows –

SERVICE DEILVERY	SERVICE SUPPORT
Community Aims	
Healthy Living	A clean, ‘green’ and attractive place
Housing that meets local needs	Access to services and transport

Safe, active and inclusive communities	A strong, diverse local economy
Council Aims	
To continually improve systems and practices	To continually learn and develop To maintain sound finances

- 3.2 Both Panels generally support the objectives with the draft plan, and endorsed the associated targets as far as they had been proposed. Detailed comments have been referred to the joint working group to inform their considerations.
- 3.3 The final stage will be endorsement of the plan by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) and Cabinet in November, prior to adoption of the plan by the Council in December 2006.
- 3.4 An important aspect in the development of the Plan is the setting of short term priorities in areas where the council wishes to see significant progress. This will facilitate achievement in areas where there are identified local needs or in aspects of the Council's performance where development is necessary. The selection of the priorities will be discussed with Executive Councillors and the appointed Working Group prior to formal consideration by the Corporate and Strategic Framework Panel and the Cabinet.
- 3.5 During this process all members of the Council will be given the opportunity to comment on the Draft Plan, either directly, or via the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Members of the Cabinet are invited to note progress in the review of the Corporate.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Growing Success: Corporate Plan

Reports and Minutes-

- Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) - 5th September 2006
- Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Service Support - 10th October 2006
- Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Service Delivery – 3rd October 2006
- Cabinet – 8th June 2006

Contact Officer:

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CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING – 2006/07 (Report by the Head of Financial Services)

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1** This report highlights the variations from the currently approved Capital Programme (as updated for any member or officer decisions already taken in accordance with the Code of Financial Management).
- 1.2** More detailed information on specific schemes can be obtained from the relevant Head of Service.

2. MONITORING INFORMATION

- 2.1** The Budget approved in February 2006 together with subsequent adjustments is shown below. The current forecast of likely spending is also shown.

	2006/07 Capital Expenditure		
	Gross Budget £000	External Contributions £000	Net Budget £000
Approved (February 2006)	20,389	5,924	14,465
Deferrals from 2005/06	+3,110	+40	+3,070
	23,499	5,964	17,535
Approved Supplementary Estimate (June 2006)			
Mobile Home Park - Remediation	437	0	437
Definite Variations			
Additional Disabled Facilities Grant	0	+189	-189
Forecast Variations			
Additional revenue staff time recharged to capital	+94	0	+94
Disabled Facilities Grant not all required	-120	0	-120
Private Sector Housing Grants not all required	-33	0	-33
Social Housing Grant part deferred to 2007/08	-657	0	-657
Creative Industries Centre, St Neots major part deferred to 2007/08	-890	-600	-290
Huntingdon Leisure Centre – Impressions Expansion - deferred	-147	0	-147
CCTV at Leisure Centres - deferred	-34	0	-34
Pathfinder House Improvements and One Stop Shop - deferred	-2543	0	-2543
Total Variations	-4,330	-411	-3,919
Forecast	19,606	5,553	14,053

2.2 The table above includes the following variations identified since the last report in July;

	£000
Further expenditure expected to be deferred to 2007/08	
Pathfinder House Improvements and One Stop Shop	2,543
Huntingdon Leisure Centre – Impressions Expansion	147
CCTV at Leisure Centres	33
Social Housing Grant (reduction in deferral previously forecast)	-600
TOTAL	<u>2,123</u>

2.3 Capital schemes and their phasing will continue to be regularly monitored and the impact on the current year regularly assessed. All schemes are currently being thoroughly reviewed as part of the Medium Term Plan process and further deferrals are anticipated.

3 REVENUE IMPLICATIONS 2006/07

3.1 The impact of the deferrals and the other variations described above is to reduce net revenue expenditure by £165k in 2006/07 and £82k in 2007/08.

Para	2006/ 2007 £000	2007/ 2008 £000	2008/ 2009 £000	2009/ 2010 £000
Deferrals	-77			
Revenue transferred to capital	+2	+5	+5	+5
Supplementary Estimate	+11	+22	+22	+22
Additional Disabled Facilities Grant	-5	-9	-9	-9
Forecast 2006/07 variations	-96	-100	-8	-8
TOTAL FORECAST VARIATION	-165	-82	+10	+10

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that Cabinet:

- i) Note the monitoring statement at Annex A.
- ii) Note the latest variations and their estimated capital and revenue impact.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Capital programme and monitoring working papers.
Previous Cabinet and Committee reports on capital expenditure.

Contact Officer – Steve Couper ☎ 01480 388103

MTP - CAPITAL SCHEMES MONITORING REPORT

Active Schemes 2006/07

	COMPLETION		Variation (weeks)	Approved for year	NET EXPENDITURE £000's		COMMENTS
	Approved /Actual	Forecast			Year End Forecast	Projected Variance	

PORTFOLIO: Environment & Transport**Car Parks**

02/166/B	Cambridge Street Car Park, St Neots - Ph 2		0	0	0	0	
480	Car Parking Strategy Implementation	31-Mar-07	31-Mar-07	380	402	22	Riverside Car Park - in for planning July 06.
480	Riverside Car Park, St Neots - Barriers	30-Jan-07	30-Jan-07	30	27	-3	

Environmental Health

02/235/A Herne Rd, Ramsey St Marys - STW Replacem

28-Feb-07	28-Feb-07	0	30	30	0	0	Ownership of the works being resolved. Monies may need to be transferred to Woodwalton STW
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Environmental Improvements

03/431.03 Area Joint Committee Small Scale Imps (05/06)

31-Mar-06	31-Mar-06	0	0	0	30	30	
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03/431.04 Area Joint Committee Small Scale Imps (06/07)

30-Mar-07	30-Mar-07	0	112	112	0	0	Schemes being designed by County
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02/050/A Great Whyte, Ramsey - Env Imp Ph 2

30-Sep-05	30-Nov-06	43	0	144	144	0	design continuing with start on site in October 06
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02/241/B Heart of Oxmoor

28-Jan-07	28-Jan-07	0	-2161	-1906	255	-1	Work commenced on St Benedicts Court 18 April 06 - completion August 2006
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01/049/A Huntingdon Town Centre - Phase 2

31-Jul-06	31-Jul-06	-6	485	484	0	0	Streetsighting complete
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02/051/A Little Whyte, Ramsey - Env Imps

30-Sep-06	30-Oct-06	52	0	20	20	0	Holme and Catworth works in progress.
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01/157.04 Small Scale Imps - District Wide (06/07)

31-Mar-07	31-Mar-07	0	72	66	-6	0	Ramsey and St Ives TC have withdrawn their applications.
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Public Conveniences

03/302/A New Public Conveniences

31-Dec-06	31-Mar-07	0	447	434	-13	0	APC's in villages being removed Cabinet approved scheme and design is starting on the work
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Public Transport Support

03/400.03 Bus Shelters - Extra Provision (06/07)

30-Mar-07	30-Mar-07	0	36	40	4	0	Discussion being held with parish Councils and County regarding new locations
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Transportation

00/003.04 Accessibility Improvements/Signs (06/07)

28-Feb-07	28-Feb-07	0	31	29	-2	0	
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03/366/A Cycle Route - Views Common, Huntingdon

30-Oct-03	06-Mar-06	122	29	1	-28	0	Complete.
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03/361.01 Huntingdon Market Town Transport Strategy

31-Mar-05	30-Oct-05	30	0	0	0	0	
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03/361.02 Huntingdon Market Town Transport Strategy

30-Mar-06	30-Mar-06	0	0	0	0	0	Complete
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Active Schemes 2006/07

	COMPLETION			NET EXPENDITURE £000's			COMMENTS
	Approved	Forecast /Actual	Variation (weeks)	Approved for year	Year End Forecast	Projected Variance	
03/361.03	30-Mar-07	30-Mar-07	0	146	146	0	
01/095.03	30-Mar-06	30-Mar-06	0 ****	0	17	17	
01/095.04	30-Mar-07	30-Mar-07	0	87	87	0	
02/132/A	28-Feb-05	28-Sep-06	82	5	15	10	Work planned to start in July 2006 subject to obtaining Network Rail agreement
02/132.01	30-Mar-06	30-Sep-06	13	15	15	0	Work planned to start in Sep 2006 subject to obtaining Network Rail agreement
02/132.02	30-Mar-06	30-Dec-06	0	16	16	0	Work planned to start in Sep 2006 subject to obtaining Network Rail agreement
03/363.02	30-Mar-07	30-Mar-07	0	0	0	0	Strategy not being carried out yet - delay by County
01/152.04	30-Mar-07	30-Mar-07	0	205	225	20	Schemes being designed by County.
03/362.01	30-Mar-07	30-Mar-07	0	76	71	-5	
03/351/A	30-Mar-08	30-Mar-08	0	262	262	0	Scheme being designed by County - monies are contribution to scheme
02/250.02	31-Mar-05	30-Dec-06	52	83	81	-2	Island Common cycleway - delay due to legal and Surface water disposal issues
Watercourses							
	30-Mar-04	30-Mar-07	156	0	43	43	Dependant on claim from insurance companies which has been received but refuted. Now passed to our insurers
PORTFOLIO: Finance							
Administration							
03/999.04				280	280	0	
				123	123	0	
Housing Benefits							
626	31-Mar-06	30-Sep-06	26	0	0	0	New Claims @eof August,06; COC's @eof October,06; Interventions @eof December,06
				386	891	505	
				403	403	0	

Active Schemes 2006/07

Active Schemes	COMPLETION	NET EXPENDITURE £000's			COMMENTS			
		Approved	Approved for year	Year End Forecast				
	Forecast /Actual	Variation (weeks)	Projected	Variance				
PORTFOLIO: Headquarters & Information Technology								
495	Corporate Electronic Document Management	31-Mar-08	31-Mar-08	0	307	475	168	Northgate have now resolved problems - progress happening on self-service
03/301.00	Customer First - Programme Wide	31-Mar-07	31-Jan-09	96	20	181	161	awaiting approval of new profile by Council. Changes reflect the changed priority due to the implementation of a Customer Service Centre in the new HQ
03/301.20	Customer First - People and Facilities	31-Mar-07	31-Jan-09	96	93	105	12	Changes reflect the changed priority due to the implementation of a Customer Service Centre in the new HQ building. Total expenditure for 05/06 on Call Centre into 06/07 and additional funds available relating to customer service centre and access points. Substantial completion linked to the timeframes for the delivery of the permanent customer service centre.
03/301.30	Customer First - Technical Infrastructure	31-Mar-07	31-Mar-08	52	461	579	118	A range of supporting projects are planned for 2006-07, incl. Back Office integration and CSC work
03/301.10	Customer First - Transaction Delivery	31-Mar-07	30-Jan-09	95	163	168	5	Key date 2 = release 2 into call centre Key date 3 = release 3 into the call centre Changes reflect the changed priority due to the implementation of a Customer Service Centre in the new HQ building. 2006/7 projects underway to deliver new services to the Call Centre
03/301.15	Cyclical Review of Business Systems (06/07)			0	150	150	0	
03/301.11	Leisure System Development	31-Mar-05	31-Dec-06	91	0	15	15	Purchase order was placed with Gladstone for Interface (£4k). Internal development work is underway (A James) - completion planned for Sept. Online bookings project will be managed by Joe Bedingfield, awaiting approval for start up but priority for completion in 06/07. This bid consisted of several projects and substantial competition has taken place.
	Operations Business System	31-Mar-05	31-Mar-07	104	0	86	86	Meeting scheduled with CAPS in August to finalise purchase order requirements
03/301.08	Personnel/Payroll System	31-Oct-05	31-Dec-06	60	0	22	22	Northgate have now resolved problems - progress happening on self-service

Active Schemes 2006/07

Active Schemes	COMPLETION Approved Forecast /Actual	Variation (weeks)	NET EXPENDITURE £000's			COMMENTS	
			Approved for year	Year End Forecast	Projected Variance		
03/301.04	31-Mar-04	31-Mar-06	104	0	25	25	Awaiting software enhancements to Uniform for listed buildings and
494	31-Mar-07	31-Mar-07	0	51	72	21	Delayed pending specification of requirements for new HQ building. Likely to be used for YOIP roll-out, which will be linked to Accommodation strategy. Phased implementation will take us through to completion of new HQ
Office Accommodation							
03/300/A	31-Mar-06	31-Mar-08	104	6707	4265	-2442	Council decided in December 2005 to carry on negotiations with lowest tenderer.
			Total for Portfolio	7952	6143	-1809	
PORTFOLIO: Housing & Public Health							
CCTV							
00/020.03	30-Mar-07	30-Mar-07	0	13	13	0	
03/312/A	28-Feb-07	28-Feb-07	0	52	52	0	
Crime Reduction							
00/036.04	31-Mar-07	31-Mar-07	0	23	23	0	
Housing Support							
03/309.00			0	995	676	-319	
03/381.00	31-Mar-07	31-Mar-07	0	233	200	-33	
			0	437	437	0	
			0	1846	1245	-601	
			Total for Portfolio	3599	2646	-953	
PORTFOLIO: Leisure							
Leisure Events and Facilities							
446			0	0	0	0	
02/058/A	31-Mar-05	31-Mar-06	0	10	20	10	
00/999.03	31-Mar-06	31-Mar-06	0	0	93	93	
00/999.04	31-Mar-07	31-Mar-07	0	114	114	0	

Active Schemes 2006/07

Active Schemes	COMPLETION		NET EXPENDITURE £000's		COMMENTS		
	Approved	Forecast /Actual	Approved for year	Year End Forecast			
Leisure Policy and Development							
00/001/B St Neots Tennis Initiative Partnership	01-Mar-02	30-Aug-06	212	30	0	NOF bid accepted Contractors on site Release request form submitted 25/07/06 No news received	
Parks and Open Spaces							
446 Football Improvements - St Neots	31-Mar-07	31-Mar-07	52	205	195	-10	Two schemes (St Neots & St Ives) St Neots - Priory Park Agreed in principle with Local Football Partnership, application for funding being prepared. Architect gained Planning Permission. St Ivo - Outdoor Centre On hold pending Planning Applications by Developers. Submissions to Football Foundation in March 06. Result due September
01/121/A Pilot Linear Park Development	30-Nov-03	30-Apr-06	126	0	33	33	Schemes being designed
03/369.03 Play Equipment (05/06)	31-Mar-06	31-Oct-06	0	0	44	44	
03/369.04 Play Equipment (06/07)	31-Mar-07	31-Mar-07	0	54	54	0	
01/107/A Various Parks - Signs	30-Dec-03	31-Jul-06	82	0	9	9	Order placed. Fabrication completed and galvanised, awaiting painting.
02/004.03 Young People's Activity Parks (05/06)	31-Mar-06	31-Mar-07	0	0	34	34	Schemes dependant on Partnership Funding.
02/004.04 Young People's Activity Parks (06/07)	31-Mar-07	31-Mar-07	0	50	50	0	
Recreation Centres							
00/022/A CCTV - Improvements at Leisure Centres	31-Jul-05	30-Jun-08	39	0	11	11	Expenditure on Sawtry - completion due July 06. Remainder allocated for improvements at St Neots when final scheme is approved. St Neots cannot be completed this year - carry forward until advised.
03/336/A Huntingdon Leisure Centre - Impressions	31-Mar-06	30-Sep-07	8	256	109	-147	Internal expansion plans being drawn up. Feasibility study complete. New equipment installed w/c 10/05/06. Remainder of capital to be invested 07/08. Carry forward required
01/135.01 Leisure Centres - Disabled Facilities (03/04)	31-Mar-04	30-Dec-06	78	0	6	6	£19k carried forward pending return of Disabled provision reports on all Centres. Any unused funds to be carried forward.

MTP - CAPITAL SCHEMES MONITORING REPORT

26 September 2006

Active Schemes 2006/07

	COMPLETION			Variation (weeks)	Approved for year	NET EXPENDITURE £000's		COMMENTS
	Approved /Actual	Forecast	Forecast /Actual			Year End Forecast	Projected Variance	
02/134.02 Leisure Centres - Future Maintenance (05/06)	31-Mar-06	30-Mar-07	0 ****	0	210	210	210	Delivery of programme (05/06) to be between Centre Management, Internal HDC teams, and external providers Full implementation of scheme delayed till all invoices received from year 2. Any residue to be carried fwd to 06/07 Estimated of 211k - essential spend required at St Neots
02/134.03 Leisure Centres - Future Maintenance (06/07)	31-Mar-07	31-Mar-07	0	251	251	0	0	Condition Survey procured and undertaken. Survey results received June 30 2006
02/262/B Sawtry - Fitness Studio	01-Apr-05	16-Jul-06	56 ****	64	395	331	331	Tenders complete Commenced 12th Sept 05. 40 week contract. Starts with replacement hard play area, then moves to building works. Still issues on car/coach park with no progress on College grant application. Completion on 07/07/06 Opened 16/07/06
PORTFOLIO: Operations					Total for Portfolio	1034	1658	624
Operations Services								
462 Godmanchester Nursery	31-Mar-05	31-Mar-06	52 ****	0	0	0	0	
02/192.04 Vehicles Fleet Replacement (06/07)	31-Mar-07	31-Mar-07	0	362	362	0	0	
Waste Management								
602 Optional Wheeled Bins for Dry Recyclables	31-Mar-06	31-Mar-06	0 ****	112	114	2	2	
PORTFOLIO: Planning Strategy					Total for Portfolio	474	476	2
Planning Policy and Conservation								
01/077/A Hunt Town Cent Dev - Planning Dev Issues	30-Mar-07	30-Mar-07	0	547	570	23	23	
03/358.01 Rural Renewal NE Hunts - Pump Priming (05/06)	30-Mar-06	30-Mar-06	0	0	24	24	24	
03/358.02 Rural Renewal NE Hunts - Pump Priming (06/07)	30-Mar-07	30-Mar-07	0	25	25	0	0	
02/224/A Town Centre Developments	28-Mar-07	30-Mar-07	4	149	169	20	20	
PORTFOLIO: Planning Strategy					Total for Portfolio	721	788	67

MTP - CAPITAL SCHEMES MONITORING REPORT

26 September 2006

Active Schemes 2006/07

PORTFOLIO: Resources & Policy

Economic Development

657	Creative Industries Centre, St Neots	30-Mar-08	30-Mar-08	0	300	9	-291	
03/365/A	Huntingdon Boatyard Improvements	28-Feb-04	28-Jan-07	152	33	66	33	looking at small schemes in the park for localised improvements
643	Oak Tree Health Centre Oxmoor Huntingdon	30-Mar-06	28-Jul-06	17 ****	0	920	920	

Information Technology

03/301.04	Land Charges Application Review (03/04)	31-Mar-04	31-Dec-06	117	0	26	26	Looking to complete by 31/12/06
450	Photocopiers Replacement	31-Mar-06	31-Mar-06	0	0	27	27	
01/124/A	Replacement of Printing Equipment/Systems	31-Mar-03	30-Nov-03	34 ****	0	0	0	
Total for Portfolio					333	1048	715	
Total all Portfolio					14902	14053	-849	

Active Schemes 2005/06 All schemes with approved funding (gross or net) in the year to which the report relates or which have a predicted 'current' or 'actual' completion date within the year.

		COMPLETION				NET EXPENDITURE £000's				COMMENTS
		Approved Date	Deferral (weeks)	Slippage (weeks)	Approved 2005/06	Approved Total	Projected Variance			
PORTFOLIO: ENVIRONMENT										
CCTV										
019	CCTV - Alarm Actuated Camera Position	31-Dec-02	0	0	40	40	0			
<i>Project appraisal reference</i>	<i>Name of scheme</i>	<i>The date given for the completion of the project in the original project appraisal or in a subsequently approved revised project appraisal.</i>	<i>The currently predicted or actual (for completed schemes) time in weeks by which completion will vary from the approved date.</i>	<i>The currently predicted or actual time in weeks by which completion will vary from the approved date or extend beyond the period for which a 'deferral' has been authorised.</i>	<i>Net amount included in MTP for the current year together any approved slippage from the previous year.</i>	<i>The overall net cost of the scheme based on historic actuals and future approved.</i>	<i>The projected difference between the approved total net cost of the scheme and the actual net expenditure to deliver the scheme.</i>	<i>Brief narrative describing any deferral, slippage or financial variance.</i>		
<i>Projects are allocated to portfolio holders and then grouped by function.</i>		<i>For appraisals that relate to an annually recurring sum the approved date is assumed as the end of March for the year being reported on.</i>	<i>To qualify as a 'deferral' the delay/acceleration must have been approved in advance by a project board (which includes a Chief Officer).</i>	<i>Schemes where deferral/slippage is based on an 'actual' completion date are distinguished in the report by ***.</i>		<i>For annually recurring sums this is the current year funding only. These are indicated in the report by #.</i>				

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CABINET

19 October 2006

FINANCIAL MONITORING – REVENUE BUDGET (Report by the Head of Financial Services)

1. 2006/07 Budget – As at September 2006

- 1.1 The Cabinet received a report on the latest position of the 2006/07 revenue budget at its meeting on 20th July 2006. When Cabinet met on 7th September 2006 the Director of Finance gave a presentation that highlighted changes to the revenue budget as at August 2006. The Cabinet report of 7th September 2006 on the financial strategy, identified variations to the budget in addition to the savings list.
- 1.2 This report brings these items together and updates the latest position on the forecast outturn on the revenue budget. These variations are in addition to the savings that were reported to Cabinet on 7th September 2006.
- 1.3 The main variations are shown in the table in Annex A.
- 1.4 Although the forecast outturn shows a saving of £571k on the original budget, it should be noted that £255k is a technical adjustment for planning delivery grant for previous years.

2 Budget Monitoring

- 2.1 In the report to Cabinet on 20th July 2006 there were recommendations as to how the budget monitoring process could be improved. It should be noted that all the Directors have met with their Heads of Service to review the outturn for 2005/6 and the spending to date and forecast expenditure in 2006/07. These meetings will continue to be held at least quarterly.

3 Recommendation

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Cabinet note the spending variations.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985

Source Documents:

1. Cabinet and Council Reports
2. Budgetary control files.

Contact Officers: Eleanor Smith, Accountancy Manager (01480 388157)
Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services (01480 388103)

Annex A

	Expenditure	Income	Recharge to capital	Net Expenditure
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Original Budget	59,421	-40,334	-782	18,305
Unspent budget brought forward from 2004/05	139			139
	59,560	-40,334	-782	18,444
Less reimbursed expenditure	23,788	-23,788		0
	35,772	-16,546	-782	18,444
Variations				
Increased recharges to capital			-219	
Sapley Square lost rent		126		
Reduced land charges income		141		
Loss of housing benefit grant		60		
Additional interest		-336		
Additional recycling grant		-69		
Additional car parking income		-49		
Planning delivery grant – prior year receipts		-255		
Planning delivery grant – additional grant		-102		
Increased fuel costs	70			
Increased NNDR costs for HDC properties	46			
Concessionary fares	155			
Additional housing benefits caseload and reduced arrears collection	55			
Turnover savings	-100			
Reduced precepts for Internal Drainage Boards	-23			
Reduction in costs for PFH building alterations	-85			
Implementation of car parking strategy	-58			
Local development framework strategy	-80			
Other variations	94			
Total variations	74	-484	-219	-571
	0.2%	-2.9%		-3.1%
Forecast net spending				17,873

CABINET

19 OCTOBER 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 scheme detailed in the attached annex.

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 scheme that they wish Cabinet to consider releasing funding for and have discussed it with the relevant Executive Councillor.
- 2.3 Annex A gives details of the scheme for an Environmental Health Officer, Health & Safety (Housing).

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

329 - EHO Health & Safety (Housing) – New Post

Sue Lammin

Financial Impact

	Net Revenue Impact					Net 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 Budget Already released	33 0	33 0	33 0	33 0	33 0	33 0	33 0							
Amount for which release now requested	13	33	33	33	33	33	33							

Justification for Release

The focus of the Housing Act 2004 Act is concentrated on housing conditions in the private rented sector principally through the introduction of a new Housing Health & safety Rating System (HHSRS), a mandatory licensing scheme for high risk Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) and discretionary licensing for other HMOs. The Act also includes new enforcement provisions for dealing with long term empty dwellings, selective licensing of other residential accommodation and overcrowding. The provisions of the Act have been introduced progressively and most of the private sector enforcement provisions have been effective since April 2006 and include measures designed to tackle long standing problems in the private housing sector in relation to repair, facilities, management and occupier safety.

At a time of increased housing demand due to market conditions and immigration the enforcement resources within Environmental Health have been stretched to cope with the increased number and complexity of private sector housing complaints brought about by the Act. It is now evident that our existing resources cannot cope with the increased demand and, in spite of prioritising complaints, we are now having to maintain a waiting list of possible Houses in Multiple Occupation that require inspection. This new post is necessary to meet the level of demand.

COMT
CABINET

10 October 2006
19 October 2006

**PLANNING SERVICES PROPOSED COMMUNITY
LIAISON AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY
REPORT BY HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES, HEAD OF POLICY AND
HEAD OF IMD**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet's endorsement of :
- the Community Liaison and Engagement Strategy for Planning Services which describes how the Council can deliver best practice in community involvement and consultation through the implementation of a series of eight actions. (Appendix 1)

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Government is demanding better community consultation and community involvement in the planning process and the Council has produced its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) on how it intends to consult the community during the preparation of Development Plan Documents, Supplementary Planning Documents and in the determination of planning applications.
- 2.2 Since the production of the SCI, The Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) has produced "Guidelines on Effective Community Involvement and Consultation" (Appendix 2). Planning Services in conjunction with the Council's Policy Division, intends to incorporate these best practice methods and standards into the way it consults with the local community via the Community Liaison and Engagement Strategy
- 2.3 The Community Liaison and Engagement Strategy also aims to increase the level of community involvement in the planning process and develop better links with neighbouring Authorities and organisations such as Planning Aid.
- 2.4 Planning Aid is a free service to qualifying individuals or groups and provides advice regarding planning matters to the local community. It is funded by the Government through the Planning Delivery Grant.

3. BEST PRACTICE CONSULTATION

- 3.1 The first three actions of the Strategy show how the Council can seek to improve its consultation standards and methods for Planning Services by incorporating the best practice advice contained within the RTPI Guidelines and by drawing on the experience and resources of the Council's Policy Division. This will help achieve a more corporate approach to consultation which would:

- support the Council's Communication and Consultation Strategy;
- ensure a consistent, high quality, corporate approach to the consultation;
- better utilise the consultation skills available within the Council;
- minimise the possibility of planning consultations being open to challenge under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and Race Relations Amendment Act 2000;
- ensure planning consultations are engaging hard to reach groups appropriately, including young people;
- help to avoid duplication, involvement overload and consultation fatigue in light of requirements for more community consultation;
- inform and help to deliver the environmental, economic and social objectives of the Community Strategy;
- inform and help to achieve the aims of Growing Success-the Council's Corporate Plan; and,
- enable the Council through co-ordinated feedback, to monitor and continually improve its systems and practices.

4 INCREASED COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

4.1 Actions Four, Five and Six of the Strategy show how the Council can seek to increase the level of community involvement in the planning process which should:

- strengthen the 'evidence base' for the Council's Local Development Framework, including the use and development of land;
- empower geographic and business communities, special interest and environmental groups, to influence decisions that have an impact on their everyday lives by working more closely with communities, neighbourhoods and parishes to help them understand how they can influence the planning process;
- enhance democratic credibility in the decision making process by providing an effective voice and clear routes of communication with the Council;
- support the role of local councillors in decision making as democratic representatives of the local community; and
- increase the transparency and understanding of the planning process within the community.

4.2 Action Five proposes the introduction of public speaking at Development Control Panel and will involve a change to the Council's Constitution, to be endorsed by Full Council. In addition, it is proposed that any planning application referred to Full Council will follow this new procedure for public speaking, further reinforcing the Council's commitment to improving the quality of public involvement with increased opportunities for public speaking.

5 BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

5.1 Action Seven and Eight of the Strategy indicate how the Council intends to build on existing relationships with community organisations and neighbouring authorities which should allow the Council to:

- exchange information with neighbouring authorities on consultation and community engagement and to offer the opportunity to Members of neighbouring Authorities to speak at the Council's Development Control Panel; and
- improve its links with Planning Aid, a free service to qualifying individuals or groups, that provides advice regarding planning matters to the local community, funded by the Government through the Planning Delivery Grant. The Government recently called on local authorities to appoint a Councillor or Officer to act as a champion to help individuals and groups play a greater role in shaping their communities.

6 IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 The Council intends to deliver these improvements through the implementation of the eight actions described in Appendix 1. These actions form the Planning Services Community Liaison and Engagement Strategy.
- 6.2 The Strategy will be a mechanism for co-ordinating consultation, improving community engagement and delivering high standards in community consultation and engagement, and will further enhance the integrity, visibility, accessibility and inclusiveness of the planning process in Huntingdonshire.

7 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The implementation of the Strategy can be achieved within existing financial budgets.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1.1 It is recommended that
- Members recognise the Royal Town Planning Institute's Guidelines on "Effective Community Involvement and Consultation", and
 - Members endorse the Community Liaison and Engagement Strategy for Planning Services.

REFERENCES AND BACKGROUND PAPERS:

HDC Statement of Community Involvement
HDC Community Strategy
Jones R. (2006), Managing Community Involvement. The Consultation Institute
Royal Town Planning Institute (2005) Guidelines on Effective Community Involvement and Consultation
TSO - The Stationary Office (2004) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act.
TSO - The Stationary Office (2004) PPS12- Planning Policy Statement 12
TSO - The Stationary Office (2004) PPS1-Planning Policy Statement 1

Contact: Jenny Thomas
Planning Implementation and Community Liaison Officer
01480 388392.

APPENDIX 1

COMMUNITY LIAISON AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY		ACTIONED BY WHOM	TO BE COMPLETED BY
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1. BEST PRACTICE CONSULTATION

ACTION ONE

- The Council will develop a best practice protocol for planning consultations, and utilise and develop existing in house consultation skills whilst also using RBA the appointed contractor through the Cambridgeshire Joint Consultation Project.

A corporate approach between Planning Services in conjunction with the Policy Division March 2007

ACTION TWO

- The Council will create a single database of consultees, including stakeholders and interest groups, which will allow important data to be shared within the Council.
- The Council will create a single consultation calendar to identify where consultations can be co-ordinated and to help to prevent overload and fatigue within the community.

A corporate approach between Planning Services in conjunction with the Policy Division March 2007

ACTION THREE

- The Council will make best use of existing on line consultation methods which will also respond to the Department of Communities and Local Governments new standards regarding the e-planning component of the planning delivery grant.

A corporate approach between Planning Services in conjunction with IMD. July 2007

2. INCREASING COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT		
ACTION FOUR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council will expect developers to work within this new climate of participation by conducting appropriate pre-application consultations with the local community when proposing significant developments. This will be fully explained in new guidelines to be produced by Planning Services on the amount and type of pre-application consultation required for significant developments. This guidance will be included as an appendix to the Statement of Community Involvement. 	<p style="text-align: center;">July 2007</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Planning Services</p>
ACTION FIVE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council will introduce public speaking at Development Control Panel. This change will enhance the opportunities for positive public engagement in the planning process and will mean a significant change to the current adopted procedures as it will give representatives of supporters, objectors, applicants and other interested parties the opportunity to address the Development Control Panel in person. It will require a change to the Council's Constitution, endorsed by Full Council. 	<p style="text-align: center;">Early 2007 and reviewed after 12 months</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Planning Services</p>
ACTION SIX	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Council will engage in 'capacity building' within the community to encourage public awareness and participation in the planning process. 	<p style="text-align: center;">On going</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Planning Services</p>

**COMMUNITY
LIAISON AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY**

ACTIONED BY WHOM TO BE COMPLETED BY

3. BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

ACTION SEVEN

- The Council has already acted positively to the Government's initiative and has appointed the Council's Planning Implementation and Community Liaison Officer as Planning Aid Community Champion.

**Planning Services
September 2006**

ACTION EIGHT

- The Council intends to set up a planning related consultation group with neighbouring Authorities. This will allow the Council and neighbouring Authorities to exchange information on consultation and community engagement where there are common issues, and to offer the opportunity to Members of neighbouring Authorities to speak at the Council's Development Control Panel.

**Planning Services
March 2007**

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Guidelines on Effective Community Involvement and Consultation

RTPI Good Practice Note 1

About these Guidelines

Professionals in all manner of disciplines are having to come to terms with the intricacies of consultation and effective community involvement.

In the case of planners and those in allied activities, recent legislation adds new obligations to existing, long standing commitments to public participation, and accordingly planning authorities in England are working on Statements of Community Involvement (SCIs). In Wales a similar document is being prepared under the title Community Involvement Scheme (CISs) and in Scotland the issues are being considered in the White Paper, Modernising the Planning System. Specific advice and guidance on the preparation of these documents is available from a variety of sources.

These Guidelines serve a wider purpose. They are intended to provide RTPI members with a corps of *best practice* guidance on key aspects of community involvement, in an easy to absorb format and capable of being amended and updated in the light of experience.

By working alongside The Consultation Institute, the RTPI has sought to leverage its knowledge of *best practice* in those many disciplines where public and stakeholder consultation is well established. It must be remembered that planners are not alone in seeking wider community involvement in the decision-making process, and that stakeholders are right to demand improved co-ordination and consistency between the various public bodies and functions who wish to hear their views.

These 22 Guidelines contain detailed advice under three generic headings – Public Involvement Issues, Enablers and Consultation Standards.

Comments and suggested improvements will be welcome and should be addressed to policy@rtpi.org.uk.



Introduction

One of the difficulties in coming to terms with the changes in culture and behaviour that is demanded of the planning profession is that some of the popular concepts of community involvement are still misunderstood by many people, both lay and professional.

In particular, it is important to be clear as to where ultimate responsibility lies for taking decisions on development plans and for processing planning applications. Whilst formal consultation will necessarily be required as part of effective processes in these contexts, there is scope for wider public participation in certain circumstances.

Both the Government, and the RTPI are keen to encourage this broader view of public engagement, but practitioners may need help to crystallise the concepts and make them meaningful in practice. For this reason, Guideline 1 on the use of terminology assumes a special significance.

It is also important to recognise the continuing and pivotal role of consultation in the new planning environment. Despite the growing popularity of interactions where decision-making and operational activities are shared between the parties, development plans and key planning decisions are ultimately taken by accountable bodies which bear the full responsibility for those decisions.

Effective consultation enables such decisions and plans to be approved in the knowledge that stakeholders and the public generally have had a full opportunity to express their views and make representations in a genuine and transparent dialogue. What has been absent in the past is a sufficiently robust framework of guidance so that planning authorities and others recognise if, and whether they are doing the job properly.

To help in this, in Category Three (Guidelines 16-22) we have followed the seven principles of, "The Consultation Charter". Since its original publication by The Consultation Institute in 2003, this has received widespread acceptance and forms a solid basis for measuring compliance with best practice in this area.

These Guidelines exist alongside other sources of guidance and assistance. The resources available on www.communityplanning.net include details of many organisations and contacts active in the subject of community involvement, and interested practitioners are urged to follow developments closely in what is a fascinating and rapidly evolving worldwide activity.

The Guidelines

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¹ For a full explanation of The Consultation Charter, see www.consultationinstitute.org

No 1 Using Terminology with Precision

The Issue

Much of the terminology used in the recent legislation and associated guidance refers to various kinds of public participation, and it is sometimes difficult to discern the precise intention behind the use of different terms. Superficially, words such as engagement, participation, involvement and even consultation appear almost interchangeable.

In reality, they are different, and for those working at the practical implementation of these concepts, it is important to understand the precise meaning and usage of each term.

The use of standard definitions will, in time, help professionals to communicate with each other with fewer misunderstandings. More significantly, it should encourage greater consistency in communications with the general public and the stakeholder base.

The RTPI Recommends

■ Public (or Community) Involvement

Effective interactions between planners, decision-makers, individual and representative stakeholders to identify issues and exchange views on a continuous basis;

■ Participation

The extent and nature of activities undertaken by those who take part in public or community involvement;

■ Public (or Community) Engagement

Actions and processes taken or undertaken to establish effective relationships with individuals or groups so that more specific interactions can then take place;

■ Consultation

The dynamic process of dialogue between individuals or groups, based upon a genuine exchange of views, and normally with the objective of influencing decisions, policies or programmes of action.

No 2 Community Engagement and Building Relationships

The Issue

The phrase “community engagement” causes considerable confusion for it is often used as an umbrella term to cover the whole range of public involvement and consultation. In fact it has a more precise meaning, and refers to those actions and processes which take place to establish an effective relationship with individual and organisational stakeholders.

This phase is critical, as the future conduct of consultations and other forms of interaction depend upon the nature of the relationship, and the expectations set at the beginning. From time to time, it is necessary to re-engage with those who have ceased to participate, and on every occasion, the basis of trust between the parties is of paramount importance.

It is especially important to ensure engagement with hard-to-reach and other community groups which have traditionally been neglected.

The RTPI Recommends

- Setting clear objectives for community engagement, recognising which sections of society already have a satisfactory basis for public participation, and where greater efforts are needed to engage successfully with specific groups;
- Understanding the key drivers and motivations of groups targeted for community engagement, and devising engagement strategies that recognise the unique and diverse characteristics of such groups;
- Measuring success in community engagement by evaluating the quality and quantity of subsequent interactions, and by periodically reviewing the relationship to determine whether further actions are necessary to engage more fully with all strands of opinion within a defined group;
- Allocating clear responsibility for engaging with particular groups, leveraging historic or issue specific specialist know how, and avoiding disruption of existing long term relations with inherited trust.

No 3 Community Involvement and Consultation Objectives

The Issue

Many forms of public involvement and participation suffer from a confusion of objectives. Whilst some processes can accommodate such vagueness, it is important to have a clearer view of the more formal stages such as a public consultation. Successful consultations depend upon a clear, shared understanding of their objectives.

Because consultation objectives can vary widely, and the outputs used for a wide variety of purposes, it is often tempting to adopt too wide a set of objectives.

But as the consultation objectives should also largely influence the choice of methods, the style of the consultation and the post consultation actions, it is important to focus on key objectives.

Isolating key objectives from peripheral benefits of the consultation process will help those planning public engagement exercises and assist in creating the right expectations.

The RTPI Recommends

- That every consultation exercise possesses a clear mandate which explains the aims of the consultation;
- Identifying precisely *who* are the decision-makers or *which* is the organisation to be informed by the consultation, and the purpose for which they will use the information and opinions gathered in the process;
- Acting in accordance with an approved Statement of Community Involvement² (SCI) to ensure consistency of approach;
- Developing a standard format for such mandates and ensuring consistency with other consultations undertaken in other departments of the authority, so that stakeholders' understanding is assisted;
- If a consultation is restricted to a closed list of alternative options, this should be made clear;
- If a consultation welcomes new ideas and alternatives to the proposals published for consultation, then this should also be made clear.

² Statements of Community Involvement are a requirement under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004; in Wales the equivalent document is called a Community Involvement Scheme (CIS)

No 4 Best Value and Consultation

The Issue

The concept of *Best Value* obliges public bodies to review at regular intervals, whether their methods of delivering services or undertaking essential tasks meet the criteria of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

As public engagement activities in general, and consultation in particular are resource intensive and are likely to involve increasing amounts of public money, it is appropriate that local planning authorities (LPAs) adopt a *Best Value* approach to their policies and their options for implementing them.

This means finding ways to observe the standard tests of Challenge, Comparison, Consultation and Competition in determining the ways in which to undertake public engagement.

The RTPI Recommends

- That LPAs should incorporate the *Best Value* tests into their Statement of Community Involvement (SCIs) or Community Involvement Schemes (CISs);
- Setting challenging targets for operational aspects of public engagement (e.g. advance notice to key stakeholders on time between closing date for consultation submissions and publication of output feedback);
- Establishing relationships with comparable authorities to exchange information for benchmarking purposes;
- Conducting a formal dialogue with stakeholders at least once a year to discover their perceptions of the consultation and public participation processes;
- Periodically seeking information about the likely costs and benefits of using third party or partnership based suppliers of specialist consultation related services;
- Discussing with *Planning Aid*³ appropriate ways to undertake a *Best Value* review of community involvement.

³ Planning Aid provides free, independent and professional advice and support on planning issues to people and communities who cannot afford to hire a planning consultant. See www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

No 5 Consultation with Hard-to-Reach Groups

The Issue

The social inclusion agenda has identified the need to redress the balance of public involvement and to make greater efforts to hear the views of people and groups that have been traditionally under represented.

The planning system can be inaccessible to such interest groups, and local planning departments may have limited experience of the particular skills and techniques of engaging with them.

Many *hard-to-reach* groups have a limited capacity for involvement and are facing engagement initiatives from several quarters. Making progress in this area therefore requires high levels of co-ordination with other local authority departments and strong working relationships with equality and diversity (where these exist) units or their equivalents.

The RTPI Recommends

- Working from an authority wide database of groups and organisations. Avoid the temptation to compile yet another list of target organisations;
- Identifying and leveraging existing authority relationships whenever possible;
- Avoiding a tick-box approach to the *hard-to-reach*. Engage them in dialogues which are significant and especially when they have specific interests;
- Taking account of *best practice* for the provision of special facilities required by disabled and other disadvantaged groups at public meetings, events or via e-consultation⁴ etc;
- Identifying issues and policies that are likely to be of particular concern and interest to specific *hard-to-reach* groups, or those in particular areas; addressing these on a one-to-one basis wherever possible;
- Encourage private sector developers and commercial interests to consider the *hard-to-reach* when responding to plans or making applications.

⁴ See the emerging Disability Equality Duty which comes into force in December 2006; see the Disability Rights Commission for details: www.drc-gb.org

No 6 Avoiding Consultation Fatigue

The Issue

The same people are being consulted, and the volume is such that many organisations are now complaining of consultation fatigue. Voluntary and community bodies, many of whom have limited resources are particularly badly affected.

The general public, on the other hand, appears not to have reached this saturation point, and appears ready and willing to engage with public bodies provided the subject matter is sufficiently relevant, and the public is approached in a professional and honest way.

In both cases, groups and individuals have a limited capacity for involvement. Good use must be made of their time, and results must be demonstrable if they are to continue to be motivated to participate.

The RTPI Recommends

- Engaging with key stakeholder groups well ahead of any formal consultation. Use this to reach a consensus on the form and methods of consultation, and its timing;
- Developing a *consultation programme* covering at least a year ahead, and publishing a *consultation calendar* so that key stakeholder organisation can prioritise and plan their involvement with an authority;
- Integrating the spatial dimension into consultations organised by other departments and other public services; ensuring better co-ordination with other departments and other agencies (see Guideline 7);
- Inviting groups with limited resources to identify those aspects upon which they wish to focus, and help them channel their activity to fewer, more relevant actions;
- Finding easy ways for some groups to participate (e.g. *e-consultation* tools and wider use of e-mail and SMS text messaging);
- Developing thematic or geographic panels of people or representatives able to devote time and willing to offer views and opinions;
- Using up to date stakeholder data from a single stakeholder database. Avoid obsolete or inaccurate lists.

No 7 Setting Stakeholder Expectations

The Issue

Making a success of public participation depends upon setting the right expectations.

The process of determining between competing interests will inevitably disappoint some stakeholders, so it is in everyone's interest that individuals and organisations understand how various processes work, and what they can expect from their operation.

Great care is needed in balancing the need to motivate participants so as to secure their involvement, and the need for them to have realistic expectations.

The RTPI Recommends

- That planners take every opportunity to explain that public consultation findings and individual objections are only *part* of the evidence base upon which decisions are taken;
- Building long-term relationships with key stakeholder⁵ organisations and their members so that they become more familiar with public engagement processes and are realistic about them;
- Using local authorities emerging role of community leadership to involve stakeholders more systematically and help them understand how the planning process works;
- Using Statements of Community Involvement (SCIs or CISs) judiciously by drafting them to avoid speculative or unrealistic commitments, by publicising them appropriately and by ensuring they are supported by adequate budget and capacity;
- Training all front line planning staff in the need to communicate the limitations as well as the potential of planning processes and the need for *realism* at all points in discussions with stakeholders and the public;
- Restricting the use of jargon and observing *Plain English*⁶ standards in documents.

⁵ *Key stakeholders* are organisations selected on the basis of their interest in relevant outcomes, and their history of participation and engagement.

⁶ See the Plain English campaign and its Crystal Mark scheme - <http://www.plainenglish.co.uk/> A Welsh language equivalent is now available - Plain Welsh or Cymraeg Clir.

No 8 Joined-Up Consultations

The Issue

Stakeholders complain that many consultation and other public participation exercises duplicate each other or seek views about similar or overlapping issues, albeit in different contexts.

Given the multi-disciplinary nature of so much planning work, it is inevitable that there is a risk that community involvement will be seen on occasions to cover similar subjects to those covered by other consultations.

Many stakeholders, especially those with good, long standing relationships with an authority will understand the different roles played by different consultation exercises. They may also appreciate that public bodies have to satisfy different statutory requirements and have to proceed with parallel engagement activities. But they are less tolerant of avoidable proliferation of work from autonomous departments within the same authority, and increasingly look for a co-ordinated approach.

The RTPI Recommends

- Ensuring that planning consultations are fully integrated into an authorities' overall strategy for community involvement and/or consultation;
- Assisting other departments and agencies to include the spatial dimension in their consultations;
- Establishing a mechanism to approve all formal consultations undertaken in the name of the local authority, and acting as a clearing house to co-ordinate similar or overlapping exercises;
- Working with other public agencies through Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) or similar mechanisms to exchange information about planned consultations and to co-ordinate as much as possible;
- Inviting relevant public bodies seeking similar feedback from citizens or stakeholder groups, to participate or attend key public engagement events;
- Drafting appropriate data protection clauses for use in consultation exercises to enable relevant external organisations to share access to the outputs of specific consultations.

No 9 Selecting Appropriate Dialogue Methods

The Issue

There are over 40 documented methods of community involvement with ample scope for innovation and a steady supply of imaginative consultants offering ever more sophisticated techniques.⁷

The choice of methods has traditionally been largely a product of custom and practice, and the availability of skills and relevant experience. With the advent of SCIs and CISs, and with greater emphasis on front end involvement and consensus building, planning authorities will need to be more consistent in their methods.

In particular, they will need to consider the most appropriate ways to engage with specific stakeholder groups at various stages of the plan preparation process. In common with other departments undertaking consultation, planning staff will need to understand the stakeholder base better so that the methods they use achieve the goal of better and deeper engagement.

The RTPI Recommends

- Carefully selecting a range of methods and ensuring that trained staff (either within planning departments or available for use by planning departments) can implement these techniques to agreed standards;
- Exploiting new technology - *e-consultation*, particularly for groups with high online access (e.g. young people or businesses) and statutory consultees;
- Building and deploying skills and capability in mediation, consensus building and negotiation to complement skills in formal consultation processes;
- Using specialist techniques for public engagement and involvement in planning environments; making use of *Planning Aid* to supplement in house resources;
- Maintaining an appropriate balance between qualitative techniques (e.g. focus groups or stakeholder conferences) and quantitative methods (e.g. surveys). Look for methods which people find enjoyable!
- Reducing the reliance on documentary (i.e. written) consultation and place increasing emphasis on participative methods where literacy standards are less of a barrier to participation.

No 10 New Technology and e-consultation

The Issue

The Government's 2005 target required local authorities and other public bodies to e-enable all services and make them available online. This includes all aspects of planning and also public engagement and consultation.

Many authorities have already invested in such a facility and others are experimenting. Usage by the public is still slow, but initiatives such as the National Projects for Local e-democracy⁸ and PARSOL⁹ are developing new ways to increase take up. Whilst public reaction is still uncertain, commentators expect that cost and speed advantages will stimulate wider use of specific applications in the coming years.

Among applications of particular relevance to planners are online consultation directories, e-surveys, online commentaries, e-discussion forums and vip-chat sessions. In addition stakeholder portals will be developed to enable consultees to register for participation in particular consultations.

The RTPI Recommends

- Building awareness of available new technology applications, and working alongside internal and external information and communications technology (ICT) specialists to understand the channel better;
- Finding ways to work with other departments and to share the costs of buying, configuring, deploying and supporting specialist *e-consultation* tools;
- Training *e-discussion* forum *moderators* and publishing clear rules of engagement before deploying such applications;
- Ensuring that the use of *e-consultation* is never such as to exclude those without digital access from participating in specific consultations;
- Publicising the use of *e-consultation* methods so as to increase public and stakeholder awareness and maximise take up of the channel.

⁸ See a full list of the e-government National Projects in www.localgovnp.org

⁹ Planning and Regulatory Services Online see www.parsol.gov.uk

No 11 Stakeholder Capacity-Building for Public Participation

The Issue

Many of those whose views are most critical for local authorities and other public bodies to understand are relatively less capable of expressing themselves. This situation is not confined to hard-to-reach groups, but they are often among those most inexperienced in responding to consultations.

Whilst part of the solution is to use methods which are more appropriate to such groups, there will still be an increasing need to help them understand community involvement processes and to participate to optimum effect.

Capacity building takes time and costs money, but results in a more inclusive dialogue. By hearing a wider range of opinions, planning can take account of issues and perceptions which have hitherto been relatively neglected.

The RTPI Recommends

- Identifying groups or categories requiring special assistance. Note these are not always *hard-to-reach*!
- Investigating precise requirements on a systematic basis; even handed treatment of stakeholder groups (some of them with opposing views) is essential to avoid suggestions of bias;
- Developing effective training or mentoring both to explain public engagement processes and to motivate groups to wish to participate, but also to provide groups with skills, capability or organisation required to respond and become fully involved;
- Convincing target groups that capacity building is a two way process with advantages for all concerned (e.g. planners learn more about community needs and community groups learn more about planning);
- Budgeting to provide assistance for voluntary and community groups; to fund meetings, facilitate child care or transport and associated costs;
- Working with other departments within a local authority and externally with other relevant public bodies to ensure a consistent approach to capacity building.

No 12 Resources and Budgets

The Issue

The new emphasis on community involvement will require substantial investment in building and deploying the skills of public engagement and consultation.

Part of the rationale is the belief that a bigger effort made in the early stages of the planning cycle (e.g. the preparation of LDF documents) will result in savings later on. Whilst many experienced planners acknowledge this in principle, the lengthy time scales involved and the fear that wider participation may increase costs throughout the cycle, prompts a degree of caution with many planning departments anxious to avoid unrealistic expectations from the new regime.

This makes it even more critical for all concerned to take a fresh look at resource allocation and to make judgements about relative priorities. At all costs, planners must avoid commitments to public engagement that cannot or will not be funded.

The RTPI Recommends

- Statements of Community Involvement (SCIs and CISs) should be costed and an estimated budget calculated for at least three years ahead;
- Discussions with other departments (e.g. communications, marketing etc) using similar methods and committing to comparable projects to investigate cost sharing;
- Optimising the use of specialist public engagement and consultation skills by developing centralised services where appropriate;
- Making use of *Planning Aid* or specialist external consultants and other facilities when economic;
- Seeking opportunities to pass some of the relevant costs of consultation to private sector planning applicants where the exercises are directly related to specific major applications.

No 13 Effective Roles for Elected Members

The Issue

Elected members play an important part in taking decisions about community priorities and in approving or rejecting development applications. In practice however, many Councillors have questioned the value of lengthy consultation phases in the traditional development of local plans.

However, as the role of local authorities evolves towards that of community leadership, Councillors will probably play an even more active part in community involvement and in facilitating the transmission and interpretation of their constituents' views. There is an inherent tension between representative democracy and consultative democracy, and some local politicians will fear that wider consultation undermines their electoral mandates.

Developing an effective role for elected members therefore requires an understanding of these tensions and a search for complementary rather than competing activities.

The RTPI Recommends

- Involving Councillors fully in the preparation of Statements of Community Involvement (SCIs or CISs) and including within them, references to the role which members will play;
- Encouraging Councillors to play an active part in area committees and neighbourhood forums so as to help the local community to articulate its views;
- Discussing with Councillors the most appropriate methods for public involvement for their wards and for the authority as a whole;
- Provide awareness training for elected members on the most frequently used consultation techniques, and particularly how to interpret the results;
- Encouraging Members to attend selected consultation events (e.g. focus groups) as observers;
- Submitting the detailed outputs of key consultations to scrutiny committees.

No 14 Working with Representative Groups

The Issue

Civic society includes thousands of representative bodies and community associations of some kind of another.

Sometimes they exist as long-term, institutionalised bodies representing the interests of defined groups or professions. On other occasions they are transitory pressure groups springing up to campaign for or against specific proposals and mobilising grassroots opinion to participate in the many ways that a democracy allows.

Planners already deal with both types of stakeholders, but will now need to strengthen their capabilities in the context of community involvement. Building excellent relationships with representative groups is a high priority for all public bodies, but is particularly important if planners are to carry communities with them in the interests of sustainable development.

The RTPI Recommends

- Working alongside other departments and other agencies to build and maintain an accurate database of representative groups as part of a single stakeholder database;
- Gathering sufficient information about groups so as to identify which may need to be regarded as key stakeholders. Make a judgement as to how representative they are in reality!
- Exploring the links between various representative groups. Remember that many opinion leaders operate through several different bodies;
- Keeping detailed records of all interactions with representative groups. Consider an ICT solution (contact management for a simple application; CRM¹⁰ for a comprehensive one);
- Understanding how key representative groups determine their positions on key issues in a consultation dialogue;
- Identifying when representative groups need assistance to consider proposals or to participate fully in dialogue; offer capacity building initiatives where appropriate.

¹⁰ CRM means Customer Relationship Management and is the basis for most local authority investment in contact centres and one-stop-shop initiatives.

No 15 Training for Better Engagement and Consultation

The Issue

Although it has always been necessary to familiarise planning staff with the rudiments of consultation and associated processes, much of this learning has been on the job with few formal training opportunities.

In recent years, the body of expertise has grown in this area, and studies leading to the new planning legislation have assembled sufficient best practice to enable the development of training materials and courses on community involvement principles and techniques.

The recent creation of the Academy for Sustainable Communities¹¹ and initiatives by the RTPI and others will increase the availability of training, but the onus still remains on planning departments to identify and address their own specific training needs.

The RTPI Recommends

- Using the process of preparing and securing support for Statements of Community Involvement (SCIs or CISs) to analyse existing and emerging training needs;
- Collaborating with other departments and public bodies to identify parallel requirements and to share the cost of training provision. Help other service providers understand the spatial dimension of their work;
- Establishing internal self help learning and skills transfer networks so as to disseminate best practice faster;
- Placing a focus on skills required beyond formal consultation processes in particular:
 - stakeholder profiling and mapping
 - stakeholder relationship management
 - consensus building
 - mediation
 - conflict resolution
 - negotiation
- Looking for opportunities to undertake joint training alongside Elected Members and also alongside key stakeholders, as a confidence building measure.

No 16 Standards for Consultation - Integrity

The Issue

Greater emphasis on community involvement will prompt a requirement for a means to ascertain that consultation and other activities are being undertaken to an appropriate standard. The Consultation Charter provides for seven principles, adherence to which can act as an indicator of best practice.

The first Charter principle is **Integrity** and this means ensuring that the consultation has an honest intent. Whilst it is always open for local authorities to engage with stakeholders at any stage in the development of plans and policies, a formal consultation should not be undertaken if the decision has already been taken.

Great care is needed in scoping consultations properly and in providing the clearest possible indication of those matters where the consultor has discretion and is open to be influenced by the submissions and contributions made by those who respond.

The RTPI Recommends

- Authorities should emphasise their commitment to this principle in their Statements of Community Involvement (SCIs) or Community Involvement Schemes (CISs);
- Avoiding spurious consultation exercises where there is no scope to act upon consultee responses;
- Developing strong relationships with stakeholder organisations, based upon trust that their time and commitment will not be wasted on unnecessary consultations;
- Demonstrating how public and stakeholder views have been taken into account in previous engagement exercises;
- Using pre-consultation dialogues to discuss fully with potential consultees, how forthcoming involvement can be best used.

No 17 Standards for Consultation - Visibility

The Issue

Greater emphasis on community involvement will prompt a requirement for a means to ascertain that consultation and other activities are being undertaken to an appropriate standard. The Consultation Charter provides for seven principles, adherence to which can act as an indicator of best practice.

The second Charter principle is **Visibility** and this means that those most directly affected by plans and decisions have a reasonable awareness of such community involvement processes as will take place.

The onus is on consultors to ensure that this visibility is achieved, and that communications with identified stakeholders are such as to create a high level of awareness, particularly of formal consultations, highlighting the ways in which citizens and others can participate.

The RTPI Recommends

- Identifying the best methods of communicating with each stakeholder type;
- Ensuring maximum promotion for each individual consultation as well as the overall programme of community engagement and involvement;
- Engaging with key stakeholders and/or their representative groups in advance of specific consultations to provide them with adequate advance warning, and to seek their views on the most effective means of publicity;
- Publishing a comprehensive consultation calendar;
- Liaison with other local authority departments undertaking consultation and public involvement to reduce the likelihood of overlapping or duplicated exercises and thereby eliminate confusion.

No 18 Standards for Consultation - Accessibility

The Issue

Greater emphasis on community involvement will prompt a requirement for a means to ascertain that consultation and other activities are being undertaken to an appropriate standard. The Consultation Charter provides for seven principles, adherence to which can act as an indicator of best practice.

The third Charter principle is **Accessibility** and this refers to the ease with which potential participants can avail themselves of the opportunity. It means being aware of the greater propensity of some groups to respond to particular methods, and the barriers facing others.

Engaging with the disabled, racial, ethnic, linguistic or religious minorities all require special facilities, and ensuring equal access to the process for such groups is essential.

The RTPI Recommends

- Subjecting all consultation plans to the test of whether proposed methods will be accessible to the target audiences;
- Training all those involved with public engagement processes in *best practice* for meeting the needs of identified groups with difficulties;
- Ensuring that planning departments are involved in the production of Disability Equality Schemes;
- Discussing proposed involvement methods with key stakeholders at the pre-consultation stage to identify unforeseen difficulties;
- Using jargon free language when producing documents intended for non-professionals; observing Plain English and Plain Welsh standards (e.g. Crystal Mark scheme);
- Translating documents into other languages when this is necessary to fully engage specific linguistic communities, and following dialogue with their representative groups.

No 19 Standards for Consultation - Confidentiality and Transparency

The Issue

Greater emphasis on community involvement will prompt a requirement for a means to ascertain that consultation and other activities are being undertaken to an appropriate standard. The Consultation Charter provides for seven principles, adherence to which can act as an indicator of best practice.

The fourth Charter principle is **Confidentiality**, but the real issue is **Transparency**. There are occasions where stakeholder views are properly subject to confidentiality, but in the public sector, the Freedom of Information Act makes those circumstances few and far between.

Commercial undertakings and private individuals may be able to agree with planning authorities that aspects of their discussions may be confidential, but all parties need to be increasingly aware of the need to satisfy a public interest test.

The RTPI Recommends

- Encouraging a culture of maximum transparency, whilst observing the spirit and letter of data protection and freedom of information legislation;
- Advising participants in community involvement exercises on the presumption of transparency, and the duty on local authorities to make documents and information held by them available if requested under the Freedom of Information Act¹²;
- Providing a clear reference to the Act in surveys, questionnaires, documents and other materials used as dialogue methods to elicit the views of stakeholders;
- Drafting consultation documents and other materials used in community involvement processes with the citizen's right to know in mind; providing specific authority for statements and assumptions made with clear signposts for citizens to consult referenced sources;
- Providing a clear audit trail of analyses and recommendations so that the influence of consultations upon decisions can be followed.

No 20 Standards for Consultation - Full Disclosure

The Issue

Greater emphasis on community involvement will prompt a requirement for a means to ascertain that consultation and other activities are being undertaken to an appropriate standard. The Consultation Charter provides for seven principles, adherence to which can act as an indicator of best practice.

The fifth Charter principle is **Disclosure** and requires both consultors and consultees to be totally open with each other and not to conceal or withhold information which might be relevant to the dialogue.

Relevance is a difficult test to apply, but can be viewed as depending upon the view that one party to a discussion might reasonably take to the information's non-disclosure by the other party. If a stakeholder organisation feels that particular information being withheld by the consultor might have significantly affected the view it had of proposals or plans, then disclosure would appear to be necessary.

The RTPI Recommends

- Scoping a consultation to address those aspects which stakeholders have a reasonable expectation will be covered in the exercise;
- Using pre-consultation discussions with key stakeholders to establish their expectations of the nature and scope of information to be released in the course of a formal consultation exercise;
- Anticipating the most likely questions arising in a public involvement exercise, preparing and publishing comprehensive Q's and A's;
- Advising stakeholder organisations that they will be expected to disclose such aspects of their membership involvement, decision making and governance as would be relevant to an evaluation of their submissions to a consultation.

No 21 Standards for Consultation - Fair Interpretation

The Issue

Greater emphasis on community involvement will prompt a requirement for a means to ascertain that consultation and other activities are being undertaken to an appropriate standard. The Consultation Charter provides for seven principles, adherence to which can act as an indicator of best practice.

The sixth Charter principle is **Fair Interpretation** and this places a strict burden on consultors to analyse and interpret consultation output data objectively.

Clearly there are circumstances where the level of trust between consultor and consultees is high, and where good relations exist between all parties. On occasions, however, controversial proposals or a history of poor relationships can result in considerable scepticism and, in extreme cases, a clear lack of confidence in the impartiality of the consultor.

Public bodies need to be alive to these different scenarios and respond to this standard by taking steps to ensure not only that data is fairly interpreted, but that it is seen to be so interpreted.

The RTPI Recommends

- Publishing raw output data (e.g. public meeting minutes, focus group reports, survey results etc) whenever appropriate;
- Explaining how the data will be analysed, and clarifying the distinction between analysis and interpretation;
- Using established methods of analysis and statistically sound procedures;
- Considering the involvement of trusted third parties, either to advise on the analysis, to undertake the analysis, or to provide independent oversight of the interpretation;
- Discussing the need for independent verification with key stakeholders;
- Using accreditation schemes to demonstrate adherence to best practice standards.

No 22 Standards for Consultation - Publication

The Issue

Greater emphasis on community involvement will prompt a requirement for a means to ascertain that consultation and other activities are being undertaken to an appropriate standard. The Consultation Charter provides for seven principles, adherence to which can act as an indicator of best practice.

The final Charter principle is **Publication** and this refers both to the output of consultation as well as the eventual outcome. This is the practical application of the over riding requirement of transparency and is intended to ensure that everyone who takes part in community involvement activities can see what happened as a result of their participation.

It is not enough just to publish; the method chosen must be such that those with a significant interest can easily access the relevant information.

The RTPI Recommends

- Deciding upon a publication plan at the outset, and publicising this when the community involvement process begins;
- Selecting methods of publication which are appropriate for the participating consultees and also for others with an interest in the issue;
- Drawing a clear distinction between the publication of the *output* and the *outcome*. For *output*, it is helpful to indicate precisely how the data was gathered, and to use consultees' own submissions whenever possible;
- Avoiding crude summaries of complex arguments advanced by stakeholders; publish qualitative and quantitative analyses with explanations of the methods used;
- Showing how the *outcome* of consultation and public involvement has taken account of the contributions made by stakeholders and others;
- Making best use of new technology by posting relevant publications on the internet, whilst also providing a facility for non-digital organisations and individuals to obtain equivalent information.

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Email volunteers@planningaid.rtpi.org.uk

www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk



The principles contained in this Guidance Note are applicable to all planners.

It has been produced as part of the RTPI's Community Planning Project, funded by the ODPM's Special Grants Programme (SGP) which is designed, "To help develop the mainstream practice of community planning which is required if we are to deliver more sustainable communities."

Written in partnership with The Consultation Institute.



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CABINET

19 OCTOBER 2006

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

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the progress and implications of the sub regional Choice Based Lettings (CBL) project and request authority to negotiate a partnership agreement for the scheme.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Government announced through the ODPM publication *Sustainable Communities: Homes For All – A five year plan* its intention to introduce Choice Based Lettings throughout the country by 2010. Last year the Government announced a bid round for funds to assist with the costs of setting up regional or sub regional CBL schemes. This Council, in partnership with the six other councils in the Cambridge sub region, successfully bid for £181,000 to assist with establishing a scheme covering the whole of the sub region.
- 2.2 A Project Board has since been established and a Project Manager appointed, funded through the government grant. Officers are actively participating in the Project Board and sub groups have been created to progress the different parts of the project plan. A partnership agreement now needs to be negotiated. Once the agreement has been drafted and each partner's liabilities made clear, Cabinet approval will be sought to enter into the final agreement. This is likely to be at the end 2006 or beginning of 2007.

3. IMPLICATIONS

IT Implications

- 3.1 Cabinet previously approved an MTP bid for £53,000 to procure a new Common Housing Register IT system. That project was delayed in light of the government announcements on the introduction of CBL. The CBL IT system that the sub regional partnership will procure will provide a Common Housing Register for the sub region and therefore fulfil the requirements of our original project. Cabinet approved the release of £9,000 of this bid during the current financial year as our contribution towards the initial estimated costs of establishing the CBL scheme, including contributions towards a CBL IT system.
- 3.2 The final cost of the IT system procured will depend upon the tendering and procurement process planned for mid-2007. It is hoped that it will be possible to procure a system that provides unified Register and homelessness functions as well as administering the CBL scheme. This will then replace the several systems that are currently used to administer these processes. It is likely that additional capital funding above the £9,000 already released will be required to provide such a

system and a further Cabinet report will be provided once these costs are known in full.

- 3.3 The existing MTP bid also includes an estimated annual revenue cost of £5,000 towards the annual IT maintenance contract. Again, the actual cost will only become clearer after the tendering process.

Policy Implications

- 3.4 A sub regional CBL scheme will mean adopting an overarching Register policy so that there is consistency across the sub region as to who can apply for housing, how households are prioritised and how the CBL process works. This policy will allow for certain local policies to remain, to deal with specific housing circumstances within parts of the sub region and protect any local lettings policies that may currently be in place. As each Council is required to formally adopt and publish its lettings policy this new sub regional policy will go through each partner's approval process for formal adoption.

Advertising Costs

- 3.5 The main costs associated with running a CBL system are those incurred in the advertising process. Advertising will be through a variety of media, potentially including the local press or the production of a weekly or fortnightly sub regional pamphlet. As an example of advertising costs, Peterborough City Council, with a total social rented housing stock that is slightly larger than Huntingdonshire's, has implemented CBL and estimates it spends £30,000 per annum on advertising in the local press. The sub regional partnership would jointly negotiate advertising rates with the local press groups or through the joint production of a pamphlet for the sub region.
- 3.6 It is anticipated that advertising costs will be met by a combination of selling advertising space, contributions from those housing associations benefiting from the scheme and existing budgets.

Staffing Resources

- 3.7 CBL totally changes how social rented properties are let. Currently an applicant's choice is purely down to which areas of the district they wish to be considered for and if they have a high enough priority they will be offered an empty property in one of those areas. Under the CBL scheme applicants will be able to see which properties are available. Applicants will be able to 'bid' for a property of their choice. The property will then be let to the highest priority applicant bidding for the property. Many of the current processes to do with administering the Register will remain. However, the advertising and bid short listing processes will be additional work. It is anticipated that this new work area will be matched by a reduction in the current short listing and nomination processes.
- 3.8 The introduction of CBL will require a reassessment of all applications on the Register to accord with the new policy and priority system. This is a large administrative exercise that will have to be completed in the second half of 2007. In order to complete this exercise in the required timescale it is estimated that an additional temporary administrative assistant will be required.

Partnership Agreement

- 3.9 The sub regional CBL scheme requires that a partnership agreement be agreed between all parties. This agreement will establish the partnering principles for the project and set out the roles and responsibilities of the partners and their financial liabilities whilst implementing the scheme. The agreement will also include a break clause to allow partners to withdraw from the agreement. A further report will be made to Cabinet once this agreement has been negotiated to seek approval to enter into the agreement.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Government has indicated that the introduction of CBL by 2010 will become a statutory obligation in the near future compelling the Council to introduce such a scheme. Continuing to be a full and active party in this sub regional partnership allows the Council to benefit from any efficiencies that may be achieved, for example through joint procurement of an IT system. It also reinforces Huntingdonshire's partnership approach to the Cambridge sub region and will ensure that we meet the deadline of implementing CBL by the target date of 2010.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That Cabinet:
- a) note the progress on the introduction of a Choice Based Lettings Scheme for the Cambridge sub region; and
 - b) authorise officers to negotiate a Choice Based Lettings partnership agreement.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

Cambridge Sub Region Choice Based Lettings Cabinet report – 13 October 2005.

Contact Officer: Steve Plant, Head of Housing Services
☎ 01480 388240

Jon Collen, Housing Needs & Resources Manager
☎ 01480 388220

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CABINET

19TH OCTOBER 2006

THE NOTTINGHAM DECLARATION ON CLIMATE CHANGE (Report by the Director of Operational Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Huntingdonshire has accommodated significant growth over the last four decades and is faced with even more rapid growth in the next two. The challenge the district faces is to ensure that the prosperity and quality of life of Huntingdonshire's residents is maintained, the local environment is preserved and enhanced and that we minimise our use of, and damage to, irreplaceable natural resources.
- 1.2 If all of these things can be achieved the development of Huntingdonshire will be sustainable. We will leave a legacy to future generations that will allow them to maintain the prosperity and quality of life we have enjoyed. If we fail we will have robbed them of that opportunity and, potentially, they will face risks and challenges to their existence that will make their lives much poorer.
- 1.3 Work has commenced on developing an environmental strategy that will identify the positive contributions that the Council is already making through its services, policies, strategies and regulatory activity. It will also identify gaps and propose an action plan for dealing with those gaps. Climate change will be the most pressing of three key themes that will be addressed through the strategy.
- 1.4 This report proposes signing the Nottingham Declaration On Climate Change to demonstrate the Council's commitment in this area and highlights the contribution that the Council is making already in mitigating carbon emissions.

2. THE NOTTINGHAM DECLARATION

- 2.1 The Council can act in three main ways to reduce its emissions of green house gasses and help the local community adapt to the impacts of climate change. It can act:

As Community A Leader - through the Local Strategic Partnership, it can work with other public and private agencies and the wider community to help cut the overall emissions of the district and develop an integrated response to climate change adaptation. The Council can also form direct partnerships with others in the community to address climate change

As A Service Provider - For all the services the Council provides it can ensure that the impacts of climate change are properly taken into account and emissions are cut as far as possible.

As an Estate Manager – The Council is a large employers and major consumers of energy and other resources. Through better management of transport and buildings, the Council can cut emissions and save money. Consideration can also be given to how the Council's estate can be better adapted to the changing climate.

2.2 It is proposed that the initial focus is on the Council's estate and services before developing a community-wide strategy. The advantage of focusing on the Council's own estate and services is that there is more direct control over all the actions that are agreed and outcomes can be easier to determine. The new headquarters and operations centre provide an opportunity to demonstrate best practice in design, construction and building management.

2.3 Subsequently a Community-Wide Action Plan can be developed to encourage other organisations and residents to take action, maximising the impact of and fulfilling the community leadership role that Government has set for Local Authorities. The Community Strategy already contains targets for reducing carbon emissions and promoting the use of renewable energy –

“Reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 12.5% by 2010 (estimated to be 990,000 tonnes in 2000) and increase the amount of energy generated from renewable resources to 14%”

2.4 The Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change (see Annex A) commits the Council to preparing a two-year action plan to progressively address the causes and impacts of climate change. The Energy Saving Trust has prepared an Action Pack for signatories to the Declaration which explains how the Council can reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and adapt to the climate changes that are already underway. In excess of 130 local authorities are already signatories including, locally, Cambridgeshire County Council, Peterborough City Council, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils.

3. EXISTING ACTIVITY

3.1 In preparing the environmental strategy (which will be submitted to Cabinet in January 2007) the Council's activity in the following areas will be highlighted -

- Awareness Raising
- Energy (consumption and use of renewable sources)
- Transport
- Water Conservation
- Waste
- Education
- Procurement
- Land Use (Spatial) Planning

3.2 We are already being successful in the following areas

- High rate of recycling
- Bringing forward new Planning Policies in our LDF
- Our Home Energy Efficiency Service
- Specifying Excellent BREEAM rating for our new headquarters.
- Adopting a Travel Plan
- Our work on Biodiversity, including the major project of Paxton Pits and The Great Fen Project.

3.3 The Council's contribution to schemes such as Paxton Pits and The Great Fen Project also deliver real benefits for the climate. Offsetting carbon emissions by the planting of trees that take up carbon dioxide from the atmosphere is an acknowledged strategy for slowing climate change. By continuing to pursue its support for enhancing the countryside the Council is delivering real economic and environmental benefits.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 It is recommended that Cabinet –

- (a) Note that the Environment Strategy will be brought forward for consultation in January 2007; and
- (b) Authorise the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive to sign the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Energy Saving Trust Website

<http://www.est.org.uk/housingbuildings/localauthorities/NottinghamDeclaration/>

Contact Officers:

Richard Preston, Head of Technical Services - (01480) 388340.

The Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change

We acknowledge that

- Evidence shows that climate change is occurring.
- Climate change will continue to have far reaching effects on the UK's people and places, economy, society and environment.

We welcome the

- Social, economic and environmental benefits which come from combating climate change.
- Emissions targets agreed by central government and the programme for delivering change, as set out in the UK Climate Change Programme.
- Opportunity for local government to lead the response at a local level, encouraging and helping local residents, local businesses and other organisations - to reduce their energy costs, to reduce congestion, to adapt to the impacts of climate change, to improve the local environment and to deal with fuel poverty in our communities.
- Endorsement of this declaration by central government.

We commit our Council from this date _____ to

- Work with central government to contribute, at a local level, to the delivery of the UK Climate Change Programme, the Kyoto Protocol and the target for carbon dioxide reduction by 2010.
- Participate in local and regional networks for support.
- Within the next two years develop plans with our partners and local communities to progressively address the causes and the impacts of climate change, according to our local priorities, securing maximum benefit for our communities.
- Publicly declare, within appropriate plans and strategies, the commitment to achieve a significant reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from our own authority's operations, especially energy sourcing and use, travel and transport, waste production and disposal and the purchasing of goods and services.
- Assess the risk associated with climate change and the implications for our services and our communities of climate change impacts and adapt accordingly.
- Encourage all sectors in our local community to take the opportunity to adapt to the impacts of climate change, to reduce their own greenhouse gas emissions and to make public their commitment to action.
- Monitor the progress of our plans against the actions needed and publish the results.

_____ Council

acknowledges the increasing impact that climate change will have on our community during the 21st century and commits to tackling the causes and effects of a changing climate on our city/county/borough/district.

			
Leader of the Council	Chief Executive	Minister of State Climate Change and Environment	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

COMT
CABINET

3 OCTOBER 2006
19 OCTOBER 2006

**DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT:
HUNTINGDONSHIRE DESIGN GUIDE
(Report by Head of Planning Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report informs Cabinet of a draft Supplementary Planning Document, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide, and seeks Cabinet's endorsement of the document as a basis for public consultation.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Huntingdonshire Design Guide was adopted by Cabinet as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) in September 2004. It has now become necessary to review the document's content and status as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Provision for the SPD was made in the Council's Local Development Scheme, which was endorsed by the Government in April this year.

3. THE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

- 3.1 SPDs form part of the suite of new documents that local planning authorities may prepare as a result of the planning reforms introduced in 2004. Their purpose is to expand upon the policies contained in Development Plan Documents (such as this Council's emerging Core Strategy DPD).
- 3.2 The production of SPDs involves more rigorous procedures than those employed for SPG prepared under the previous system. In particular, a sustainability appraisal is required as part of the process to help gauge any potentially significant environmental, social and economic effects. A sustainability appraisal of the draft SPD is currently being produced and would form part of the future consultation documentation.
- 3.3 The SPD contains largely the same material as appeared in the SPG, although relevant updates have been made to technical and factual information. Furthermore, additional wording has been added to reflect more recent advances in policy and guidance, particularly in relation to community engagement, design and access statements, sustainable design and construction and contemporary design. Illustrations resulting from the successful operation of the SPG over the last three years have also been added.
- 3.4 The focus of the document remains the relevance of a proper and thorough design process as the key to achieving high quality outcomes.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Once approved by Cabinet, the draft SPD and accompanying sustainability appraisal will be issued for public consultation. The results of that consultation (and any amendments suggested in response) will then be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet, following which the document can be adopted as part of the Local Development Framework. An adopted SPD which has been through this process can be expected to be given considerable weight as a material consideration in planning decisions.
- 4.2 The proposed timetable for these remaining steps is as follows:
- Public consultation – November/December 2006
 - Development Control Panel consultation – 18th December 2006
 - Report back to Cabinet – February 2007

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 Cabinet is recommended to endorse the draft Supplementary Planning Document, the Huntingdonshire Design Guide, as a basis for public consultation.
- 5.2 Cabinet authorises the Executive Member for Planning Strategy to make minor consequential amendments to the documents arising from the sustainability appraisal, prior to the issue of the document for public consultation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 (Cambridgeshire County Council & Peterborough City Council, 2003)

Huntingdonshire Core Strategy: Preferred Options Report (HDC, 2005)

Huntingdonshire Landscape & Townscape Assessment (HDC, 2004)

Planning Policy Statement 1 (ODPM, 2004)

CONTACT OFFICER - enquiries about this report to Chris Surfleet, Design and Implementation Team Leader on 01480 388476.

**COMT
CABINET**

**3 OCTOBER 2006
19 OCTOBER 2006**

**DRAFT SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT:
HUNTINGDONSHIRE LANDSCAPE & TOWNSCAPE ASSESSMENT
(Report by Head of Planning Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report informs Cabinet of a draft Supplementary Planning Document, the Huntingdonshire Landscape & Townscape Assessment, and seeks Cabinet's endorsement of the document as a basis for public consultation.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Huntingdonshire Landscape & Townscape Assessment was adopted by Cabinet as Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) in September 2004. It has now become necessary to review the document's content and status as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Provision for the SPD was made in the Council's Local Development Scheme, which was endorsed by the Government in April this year.

3. THE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

- 3.1 SPDs form part of the suite of new documents that local planning authorities may prepare as a result of the planning reforms introduced in 2004. Their purpose is to expand upon the policies contained in Development Plan Documents (such as this Council's emerging Core Strategy DPD).
- 3.2 The production of SPDs involves more rigorous procedures than those employed for SPG prepared under the previous system. In particular, a sustainability appraisal is required as part of the process to help gauge any potentially significant environmental, social and economic effects. A sustainability appraisal of the draft SPD is currently being produced and would form part of the future consultation documentation.
- 3.3 The SPD contains largely the same material as appeared in the SPG, although relevant updates have been made to technical and factual information. In particular, a new chapter has been added relating to the on-going process of Conservation Area Boundary Review and Character Assessment. This will provide these documents with additional policy justification.
- 3.4 The focus of the document remains the identification of the district's local distinctiveness and opportunities for its enhancement.

4. NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 Once approved by Cabinet, the draft SPD and accompanying sustainability appraisal will be issued for public consultation. The results of that consultation (and any amendments suggested in response) will then be reported to a future meeting of Cabinet, following which the document can be adopted as part of the Local Development Framework. An adopted SPD which has been through this process can be expected to be given considerable weight as a material consideration in planning decisions.
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5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 Cabinet is recommended to endorse the draft Supplementary Planning Document, the Huntingdonshire Landscape & Townscape Assessment, as a basis for public consultation.
- 5.2 Cabinet authorises the Executive Member for Planning Strategy to make minor consequential amendments to the documents arising from the sustainability appraisal, prior to the issue of the document for public consultation.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan 2003 (Cambridgeshire County Council & Peterborough City Council, 2003)

Huntingdonshire Core Strategy: Preferred Options Report (HDC, 2005)

Huntingdonshire Design Guide (HDC, 2004)

Planning Policy Statement 1 (ODPM, 2004)

CONTACT OFFICER - enquiries about this report to Chris Surfleet, Design and Implementation Team Leader on 01480 388476.

COMT
CABINET

3RD OCTOBER 2006
19TH OCTOBER 2006

ST NEOTS CONSERVATION AREA: BOUNDARY REVIEW, CHARACTER ASSESSMENT 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 draft St Neots Boundary Review, Character Assessment and Management Plan Consultation Documents and to consider the Council's response.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 **St Neots Conservation Area Boundary Review:** Section 69 of the above Act imposes a duty on local planning authorities to designate as conservation areas any "areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". Planning Policy Guidance 15 (4.2) makes it clear that it is the quality and interest of areas, rather than that of individual buildings, which should be the prime consideration in identifying conservation areas.
- 2.2 St Neots already has three distinct conservation areas, designating discreet parts of the town centre, Eynesbury and Eaton Socon. Under Section 69 local planning authorities has a duty to review their conservation areas from time to time. This review is part of the ongoing programme previously approved by Cabinet and has been conducted according to the Council's Review Policy adopted in January 2003.
- 2.3 **St Neots Conservation Area Character Assessment:** This assessment covers the area included within the proposed conservation area boundaries. Section 71 of the 1990 Act places a duty on local planning authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its conservation areas. This document fulfils this requirement and links policy for St Neots to other existing planning guidance for Huntingdonshire, notably the Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPG (2004) and the Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPG (2004).
- 2.4 **St Neots Conservation Area Management Plan:** The Management Plan flows from the requirements of Section 71 and presents a series of proposal which, once implemented, will bring enhancement of the Conservation Area. The Plan makes suggestions for a number of projects which will be taken forward in conjunction with appropriate groups of officers and local people.
- 2.5 Cabinet approved these documents for a period of consultation on 20th July 2006. The consultation commenced on 7th August and expired on

22nd September 2006. During this time, in addition to the consultation with statutory organisations, a week-long public exhibition has been held in the Town Council offices, public notices have been posted and all homes in the St Neots area were leafleted via the free press.

- 2.6 The designation of the revised boundary for the St Neots Conservation Area and the adoption of the Character Assessment and Management Plan as material considerations in planning decisions would be important steps in protecting the historic environment. The guidance contained in the Character Assessment will ensure that any forthcoming development will be of a high architectural merit and urban design quality.

3. THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

- 3.1 On 21st August 2006, the Development Control Panel supported the proposals set out in the draft Boundary Review Document, Character Assessment and Management Plan.
- 3.2 Seven written responses have been received from statutory agencies, local organisations and members of the public. An additional 34 questionnaire responses were completed at the exhibition, some of which contained additional written comments. In all, 34 specific issues have been raised. A summary of the respondents and their comments is contained within Appendix 1. Suggested additional wording is contained with Appendix 2.
- 3.3 The large majority of respondents were supportive of the proposal to amalgamate and extend the conservation area boundaries. Two respondents objected to the inclusion of their property within the new boundary. Further review of the boundary in these areas has concluded that amendments to accommodate the views of the objectors would not be justified set against the Council adopted methodology and English Heritage guidance. Furthermore, omission of these properties would reduce the potential benefits deriving from the proposed boundary position. It is not, therefore, intended to amend the boundary in these locations.
- 3.4 Two further queries related to the inclusion of further land within the extended conservation area. These proposals have been assessed and it has been concluded that inclusion of these areas could not be justified. It is not, therefore, intended to amend the boundary in these locations.
- 3.5 No adverse comments were received in relation to the Management Plan, which was generally considered to indicate a positive approach to the enhancement of the Conservation Area.
- 3.6 If Cabinet agrees to adopt the revisions to the boundary, appropriate notices will be advertised in accordance with the provisions of section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings & Conservation Areas) Act 1990.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Designate the St Neots Conservation Area according to the boundary in the St Neots Boundary Review document without modification;
2. Adopt the St Neots Conservation Area Character Assessment (as previously circulated) with the amendments contained in Appendix 1 and 2 of this report, which will become a material consideration in planning decisions.
3. Adopt the St Neots 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.
4. 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

1. Conservation Area Boundary Review Policy Document, Huntingdonshire District Council, January 2003.
2. Draft St Neots Boundary Review, Character Assessment and Management Plan July 2006

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**ANNEX 1 ST NEOTS CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW, CHARACTER ASSESSMENT AND DESIGN CODE
CONSULTATION RESPONSES**

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

Resp no.	Respondent	Comm No.	Comment	Response	Action
1	CPRE	1	Welcome inclusion of river crossing, meadows, Island Common, Priory Park.	Noted	3
		2	Areas of gravel pit alongside A428 should be protected	Noted	3
		3	Street improvements need a higher profile	Agreed. Issue to be fed back to Management Plan	1
		4	Traffic calming in Eaton Socon is showing its age	Noted. Issue to be fed back to Management Plan	1
2	Clr A. Gilbert	5	Welcomes proposal to extend boundary in Eynesbury to protect historic parts of the town from increasing development pressures.	Noted	3
3	W. R. Wilkinson	6	Objects to the inclusion of his property in the conservation area. Recommends relocation of the boundary in front of property, as is the case further north along Crosshall Road.	The properties on the west side of this stretch of Crosshall Road are considered to form part of the wider setting of the meadow area, due to the nature of the topography and the openness of views. Development affecting these properties may affect the attractiveness of the meadows themselves. As such, it is considered appropriate to include the properties indicated on the proposed boundary.	3
				The exceptions in this frontage are the bungalows at 105-113 Crosshall Road. Due to their limited height, they do not contribute	

4	Questionnaire response	7	Concerned about flooding in the Eatons and the lack of maintenance of the water course	as strongly to the enclosure of the greenspace as the neighbouring properties. They also site back from the established building line, creating something of a 'gap' in the enclosure. Their exclusion from the proposed area is therefore justified.	1
5	Questionnaire response	8	Recommends that river corridor becomes a wildlife conservation area as part of management plan.	With regard to the point made about properties further to the north along Crosshall Road, there is a significant difference in the topography in this area and the road loses direct visual contact with the river. The spatial relationship is not the same and the boundary is dictated by different criteria. The boundary should therefore remain as originally drawn.	1
6	Questionnaire response	9	Recommends inclusion of fields opposite Brook Farm, Grt Paxton	Noted. Concern passed to Environment Agency for action.	1
7	Questionnaire response	10	St Mary's Urban Village should include a mix of uses to make best advantage of the town centre site	Noted. Issue to be fed back to Management Plan	1
8	Questionnaire response	11	Interested in preventing development in the western meadows	The fields north of Priory Park were originally part of Priory Common field. However, they lie beyond the defined extent of the settlement, and the topography is not such that they require to be included as a setting to the Conservation Area.	3
9	Questionnaire response	12	Keen to see meadows become a community recreational area.	Noted. The designation of the Conservation Area assigns greater value to the open nature of this land.	3
				Noted. Issue to be fed back to Management Plan	1

10	Questionnaire response	13	Boundary along St Neots Road is inconsistent and includes many new buildings and blocks of flats	It is acknowledged that the quality of buildings along St Neots Road varies; however, the boundary seeks to include the historic route and, through the management plan and future control of development, will aim to enhance the area's existing character.	
11	Questionnaire response	14	Long term local ownership of the area is needed	Noted	2
12	Questionnaire response	15	Support overall plan and welcome future information	Noted	3
13	Questionnaire response	16	There should be no parking in the market square	Provision of adequate parking is important to the viability of the town centre which, in turn, helps to boost its vitality and economic well-being. Parking in a central location is part of a wider strategy to ensure that St Neots remains a popular and well-used shopping environment	3
			Stop putting road humps in	Noted. In some circumstances, physical impediments to vehicles are the only means to ensure reduced speeds.	3
14	Questionnaire response	17	The north side of market square is let down by modern buildings	Agreed	3
15	Questionnaire response	18	Priory Centre is a disappointment. Does not use lovely river setting and difficult to find the entrance	Noted. Issue to be fed back to Management Plan	1
16	Questionnaire response	19	A St Neots Residents Association would be useful to represent the views of local people	Noted	2
17	Questionnaire response	20	Recognises the need to protect the river corridor	Noted	3
		21	Objects to control over personal property	The additional controls resulting from Conservation Area designation are relatively limited and are intended to prevent the most dramatic of interventions which might reduce the environmental quality of a place.	3
18	Questionnaire	22	Notification of the exhibition by post to affected	Noted. Due to the large number of affected	3

			properties would have been better		properties, it was considered appropriate to make press releases, a statutory notice and direct mailing via the free press.	
19	Countryside Agency	23	Recommends maximum public benefit is made of river frontages including alternative route for the Ouse Valley Way		Noted. Issue to be fed back to Management Plan	1
20	Environment Agency	24	Suggest that reference to the need for Flood Risk Assessments is clarified in Character Assessment		Noted but the character assessment is not considered to be the appropriate location for conveying this information	3
21	Questionnaire response	25	Correct reference to Anarchy Castle to 'Castle Hills'		Amended	1
22		26	Correct reference to 'Illand Common' to 'Islands Common'		Amended	1
23	Cambridgeshire County Council – Development Strategy	27	Insufficient justification for inclusion of Priory Park Infant school. Subsequent information provided by e-mail should be included in the final version of the document.		Additional wording will be included as per Appendix 2	1
24	Cambridgeshire County Council – West Highways	28	Household Recycling Site/Old Fire Station UDF – this scheme depends on the selection of any alternative site for this facility. As yet, a suitable alternative has not been found.		Noted	3
		29	There will be a cost impact for highway schemes falling within the proposed area.		This is not necessarily the case. The impact of the Conservation Area is not to bring radically new approaches to highway design or materials – just that schemes are looked at with a particular care to visual quality. There may be areas where alternative materials or detailing will be explored, but these would normally be supported by additional grant funds eg HDC Small Scale Environment Improvement Grant.	3
		30	The new area is vast compared with the existing		Noted, but the size of the area reflects the historic importance of the settlement and its wider setting	3
		31	Guidance is needed on acceptable materials for		Noted. Ideas about highway design can be	3

			roads, footpaths, street furniture etc.	addressed through projects associated with the Management Plan	
	32		Highways schemes for Island Common, Priory Road, Hen Brook, Avenue Road etc are included within the Market Town Transport Strategy	noted	3
	33		Would not wish planning policies to increase demand for on-street parking.	Noted, but not within scope of this document	2
	34		Trees in the highway in a Conservation Area will restrict development of new schemes.	Noted. The designation of the Conservation Area is intended to ensure that potential options for retaining such trees, or providing adequate compensatory measures are considered, in the interests of maintaining visual quality	3

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Total questionnaire responses: 34
 Responses tabulated below, where an opinion was expressed

	Strongly support	Support	No opinion	Oppose	Strongly oppose
Do you agree that the existing boundaries need to be reviewed?	24	9	-	-	1
Do you agree with the proposed extension to the conservation area boundary?	20	10	-	-	3
Do you think that the document properly represents the character of the conservation area?	13	15	3	-	2
Do you agree that the conservation area needs improvement?	18	12	1	-	1
Do you support the management plan?	16	10	2	1	2

Response statistics			
Male	19		59%
Female	13		41%
Under 20			
20-34	1		3%
35-49	3		9%
50-64	12		38%
65 and over	16		50%
Full-time work	5		16%
Part-time work	3		9%
Not working	1		3%
Retired	23		72%
Student	0		0
Other	0		0
St Neots resident	27		87%
YES			
St Neots resident	4		13%
NO			
Working in St Neots? YES	6		25%
Working in St Neots? YES	18		75%

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ANNEX 2

ST NEOTS CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY REVIEW, CHARACTER ASSESSMENT AND DESIGN CODE CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Item 27 in the response table (Annex 1) requests that further justification for the inclusion of Priory Park and Infant School area is provided in the Boundary Review and Character Assessment. This additional wording is provided below and will be added to the final documents:

A. In the Boundary Review Document, add the following on page 3 under 'Cd':

"The southern section, adjacent to and including part of area 'Ca' there are relict closes of an early date created prior to the main 18th century enclosure of the Common Fields. There was always a high degree of public access to this area, maintained to the present day despite the later development of the built environment. This area is historically significant as a transitional zone between the built environment and the open rural aspects surrounding the town."

B. In the Character Assessment, add on page 15 under Priory Park at the end of, or after paragraph one:

"The area to the north of the late 19th and early 20th century development of Kings Road remained undeveloped until the 1950s and allowed public access between the town and Priory Park. This site, now occupied by the primary school and Huntingdonshire Regional College, still provides a visual as well as a physical link which should be maintained.

The pattern of footpaths in this part of St. Neots has remained virtually intact since at least the 1750s. They not only survived the later expansion of the town in the 19th and early 20th centuries, but actually determined much of the pattern of development (for example, house plots were tailored to fit around Shady Walk and Piper's Path).

Shady Walk fed into the footpath that until the development of the close post 1950 cut diagonally across the site (when it was diverted along its western edge). It remains a significant element of the historic morphology of this part of St. Neots.

The curtilage boundaries in this area also have historic significance and were possibly determined originally following the redistribution of land at the Reformation. The site of the primary school and college of further education was part of the Earl of Sandwich's estate from 1631. It belonged to Longsands, part of Rowleside Open Field, and was enclosed (probably) about or just prior to 1770. The enclosure to the north of

it within which is now situated the fine avenue of trees was (in the 18th century) part of Sir Stephan Anderson's Estate and was known as Peacharles.

Both these areas are significant in terms of the wider landscape/townscape of St. Neots. Together they form an important transitional zone both in terms of actual access for pedestrians, but also visually. The post 1950's development did not materially detract from that and future development (if any) should maintain this element. Ideally, any future schemes for development of this area should be seen as an opportunity to strengthen and enhance these aspects.'

By virtue of paragraph(s) 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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