

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in **COUNCIL CHAMBER, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2007** at **11:30 AM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-


Contact
(01480)

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 2)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th January 2007.

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. FINANCIAL STRATEGY, MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2008-2012 AND BUDGET 2007/08 (Pages 3 - 20)

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Financial Services to consider the 2007/08 Budget and Medium Term Plan.

S Couper
388103

4. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2007/08 (Pages 21 - 34)

To consider a report by the Head of Financial Services containing a proposed Treasury Management Strategy, which is required under the Council's Code of Financial Management.

S Couper
388103

5. QUARTERLY SUMMARY OF DEBTS WRITTEN-OFF (Pages 35 - 36)

To consider a report by the Head of Revenue Services summarising the debts written-off during the quarter ended 31st December 2006.

Mrs J Barber
388105

6. ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY (Pages 37 - 70)

To consider a report by the Head of Technical Services regarding the development of a draft Environment Strategy for Huntingdonshire.

R Preston
388340

7. NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT (Pages 71 - 76)

To consider a report by the Community Initiatives Manager regarding progress of the Neighbourhood Management

D Smith
388377

Initiative within the District.

8. CHOICE BASED LETTINGS (Pages 77 - 78)

To consider a report by the Head of Housing on the development of a Memorandum of Understanding for the Cambridge Choice Based Lettings Scheme.

**S Plant
388240**

9. CHOICE BASED LETTINGS (Pages 79 - 112)

To consider a report by the Head of Housing on progress to implement a sub regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme.

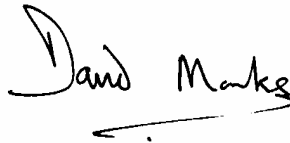
**S Plant
388240**

10. ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION ACT 2006 - RELEASE OF FUNDING (Pages 113 - 114)

By way of a report by the Head of Administration to consider a request for the release of funds for the introduction of changes to various electoral processes which must be in place for the elections 2007.

**R Reeves
388003**

Dated this 28 day of February 2007



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.

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HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Thursday, 11 January 2007.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.

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

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors L M Simpson.

135. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 21st December 2006 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

136. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

137. FINANCIAL MONITORING - REVENUE BUDGET

The Cabinet received and noted a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) detailing anticipated budget variations in the current year.

In considering the content of the report and the outturn assessment, Members' attention was drawn to a dispute with a previous insurer over liability for reimbursement for a claim that had been paid by the Council. It was reported that the Council was likely to pursue the matter through the courts, as a test case, the cost of which would be met by the current insurers. Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the spending variations estimated in the Revenue Budget be noted.

138. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - 2006/07

A report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) was submitted detailing variations in the Capital Programme in the current year.

Having discussed the impact of the variations described, Members expressed their concern over the pressure placed on local authorities following the Government's decision to cap its contribution towards expenditure on Disabled Facilities Grants. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the report be received and the expenditure variations and the consequent capital and revenue impact noted.

139. SMALL SCALE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES 2007

The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Technical Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining progress on small scale environmental improvement schemes in the current year and proposing a programme of schemes for 2007/08. Having been advised that the criteria for the prioritisation of schemes would be reviewed by a working group of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery), the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that funding be released from the Medium Term Plan for the small scale environmental improvements scheme programme for 2007/08; and
- (b) that the schemes listed in paragraph 4.1 of the report now submitted be approved.

140. ST IVES COMPOSTING FACILITY - SITE LIAISON FORUM - REPRESENTATION

Attention having been drawn to a request from Cambridgeshire County Council to nominate a representative to the St. Ives Composting Facility Site Liaison Forum, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that Councillor M F Newman be appointed.

141. FLOODING

The Executive Councillor for Housing & Public Health advised the Cabinet that the Emergency Incident Room had been set up overnight to deal with local flooding following recent adverse weather conditions.

Chairman

**2007/08 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
(Report by the Head of Financial Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** A Treasury Management Strategy ensures that the Authority has clear objectives for the management of its borrowing and investments. It is also needed to comply with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) Code of Practice, which is required by the Council's Code of Financial Management. The Government has also published Guidance which recommends that an Annual Investment Strategy is produced each year and approved by the full Council.
- 1.2** The Guidance emphasises that priority must be given to the security and liquidity of investments whilst the Code covers the same point by requiring the effective management and control of risk. This Strategy is intended to meet the requirements of the Code and the Guidance.
- 1.3** The Strategy addresses the following two issues in some detail:
- The decreasing level of reserves and therefore investments in 2007/08 will mean that the Council will need to reduce the number of Fund Managers from three to two.
 - The Council has the opportunity to borrow in advance of need if it is considered that long term borrowing rates are low and the funds will be needed for the approved MTP.
- 1.4** When the Government removed its controls on capital expenditure levels a few years ago it introduced the concept of the Prudential Code which pulled together a number of indicators related to capital expenditure, external debt and treasury management. Its purpose was to demonstrate that the Council's capital expenditure plans were affordable and to provide a set of limits, to be complied with, and indicators to be monitored during the forthcoming year. These indicators have previously been part of the budget report but as they have significant relevance to Treasury Management it is now considered that they best form part of this report which will be considered after the budget report.
- 1.5** The proposed strategy is attached as Annex A.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1** Cabinet is requested to recommend to Council that it approves this Strategy including the Prudential Code Indicators.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Background files in Accountancy Section: Treasury Management Reports
Reports on the 2007/08 Budget and Medium Term Plan to Cabinet and Council
CIPFA's Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice 2002
ODPM Guidance on Local Government Investments March 2004

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

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TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2007/08

This Treasury Management Strategy is intended to meet the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) Code of Practice and the Government's Guidance on Local Government Investments.

CASH FLOW

At any moment the Authority's investments will consist of two distinct elements - cash flow and reserves.

Cash flow is the day-to-day impact of managing the flow of funds into and out of the Council and is dealt with in-house. For instance, the dates on which the County Council is paid its portion of the council tax will be different to the days the money is received from those living in the District. These cash flows will sometimes leave the Council with several million pounds to borrow or invest for a few days. It is often in the Council's best interests to be a net-borrower for cash flow purposes as we would expect our Fund Managers to gain higher returns from their expertise and greater stability of the funds than the cost of the temporary borrowing. Generally the return of funds is only requested when there is an ongoing rather than intermittent need to borrow.

Reserves are more stable in that there will be a definite estimate of the amount that they will reduce or increase by during the course of the year but even this will fluctuate to some extent as a result of any variation in inflation, interest rates or general under or overspending.

GENERAL

Treasury Management actions will always, necessarily, be based on the market situation at the time which can fluctuate significantly from day to day. It is therefore inevitable that elements of this strategy are based on general intentions rather than on trying to guess, at this time, what will be good or bad interest rates in advance. The Council seeks advice from its professional advisors (Butlers) and its Fund Managers before making any major decisions. There is also a member advisory group, the Capital Receipts Advisory Group, that as well as meeting with the Fund Manager's periodically is kept informed and/or consulted on Treasury Management matters.

THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Council's Financial Strategy is based on the following figures for reserves and borrowing:

FORECAST	2006/ 2007 £M	2007/ 2008 £M	2008/ 2009 £M	2009/ 2010 £M	2010/ 2011 £M	2011/ 2012 £M	2012/ 2013 £M	2013/ 2014 £M	2014/ 2015 £M	2015/ 2016 £M	2016/ 2017 £M	2017/ 2018 £M	2018/ 2019 £M
Remaining reserves (End of year)	46.6	31.3	13.9	11.2	8.3	6.1	4.6	3.7	3.3	2.8	2.5	2.3	2.3
Need to borrow													
In year	0	0	2.1	11.1	4.2	4.5	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.7	3.8	3.9
Cumulative	0	0	2.1	13.2	17.4	21.9	25.0	28.3	31.7	35.2	38.9	42.7	46.6

CURRENT POSITION

Most investment activity is carried out by the Council's three Fund Managers who currently (January 2007) manage the following sums:

Investec	£21.5m
Alliance Bernstein (Alliance)	£21.5m
City Deposit Cash Managers (CDCM)	£20.0m
Total	£63.0m

The sums with Fund Managers will exceed the Council's revenue and capital reserves as a result of three factors:

- Temporary borrowing in-house
- Temporary cash-flow surpluses
- Other reserves that are earmarked (e.g. S106 and R&R Funds)

The Council had no long-term borrowing at the date this report was prepared.

LONG-TERM BORROWING

As the Council's reserves run out, as illustrated in the table above, there will be a need for long-term borrowing to finance the capital programme. The financial plan shows that this will not be until 2008/09 but effective treasury management involves borrowing when interest rates are judged to be at the best level, even if the funds have then to be invested until the money is required; borrowing in this way is allowed if it is for planned expenditure. The definition of planned expenditure is not precise and has therefore been discussed with our external auditor who is comfortable with the interpretation of it being included in our approved MTP. Hence, once Council has approved the MTP in February the figure will be £21.9M as highlighted above. Currently the equivalent figure is £10.8M.

The borrowing strategy includes the need to spread risk, so that the Council is never left with a high proportion of its debt becoming repayable at a single time or even in the same period of an interest rate cycle. When the Council borrows the repayment profile of the debt will need to be considered though this is not critical if the borrowing is from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) which is a Government Agency to provide funds to government bodies at wholesale market rates. This is because they allow a borrower to reschedule their debt during the course of the loan based on a prescribed financially neutral formula. The combination of these keen rates and the option to reschedule means that local authority borrowing is normally from the PWLB rather than commercial bodies.

Interest rates are already being monitored on a daily basis so that if rates become attractive some early borrowing can take place. If rates become sufficiently attractive up to £21.9M will be borrowed from the market or, much more probably, the PWLB for an initial period, probably, in excess of 45 years

MANAGING THE REDUCTION IN RESERVES

The first part of this section is based on the assumption that no advance borrowing will take place in the next six months.

In recent years there have been only modest reductions in reserves due to their limited use for financing revenue, and capital expenditure being partially offset by capital receipts and deferred spending. However the proposed budget/MTP shows significant reductions in reserves over the coming five years as shown in the table below:

RESERVES	MTP					
	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012
	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M
Forecast position at end of year	47	31	14	11	8	6

Investec and Alliance both utilise a broader and more volatile range of investments than CDCM. As our reserves fall we are less able to cope with such volatility so we will need to move our funds to managers such as CDCM or narrow our investment mandates to minimise volatility. As the level of investments reduces we also need to reduce the number of managers as there are clearly limits to the sizes of portfolios that are sensible or acceptable to fund managers.

The strategy has been to take funds equally from Investec and Alliance until the point is reached where there is insufficient to warrant two separate funds.

A change of policy at Alliance in recent months has led to this approach being reviewed as, whilst they are prepared to continue to manage our Fund as long as it exceeds £10M, they do intend to move out of the Local Authority market. Given their reduced interest in “our” market it would be appropriate to consider moving our funds away from them more quickly than would otherwise be the case. Therefore, after consultation with the Capital Receipts Advisory Group and the Council’s advisor, the £10M of funds required for return in February will all be taken from Alliance leaving their portfolio at £11.5m.

A further £5M is likely to be needed by about April and at that time it is proposed that we seek return of all the Funds from Alliance. In principle any funds not immediately needed by the Council would be added to CDCM’s portfolio but depending on the market situation at the time the flexibility to temporarily delay return of the funds or to temporarily transfer specific investments to Investec in order to optimise the Council’s position may be required.

Detailed consideration needs to be given to the Council’s mandates with Investec and CDCM over the coming months to begin to reduce volatility and long term commitments. This will take place in liaison with the Capital Receipts Advisory Group and the Council’s advisor. Whilst any change of this nature might reduce the Council’s overall medium term investment returns (volatility was only accepted in order to increase returns) there will be no increase in the risk of counterparties not repaying the Council’s investments.

Subsequently, as funds reduce further, the point will be reached where City Deposit Cash Managers, or an equivalent manager, looks after the whole fund based on a narrower more stable type of investments. This final reduction to one fund manager may not occur before 2008/09 but preparations may need to be made before the end of this calendar year in consultation with the CRAG.

If early borrowing takes place it is still proposed to move funds away from Alliance and close their fund during the year though the timing may be delayed if it is in the Council's interests. It may also mean, depending on the scale, that the preparations for moving down to one manager are deferred but there will still be a need to review and modify existing mandates during the course of the year.

CATEGORIES OF INVESTMENT

The guidance on Local Authority Investments categorises investments as 'specified' and 'non-specified'. This differentiation requires the types of non-specified investments that will be used to be defined in this Strategy

Specified investments are:

- in sterling
- due to be repaid within 12 months
- not defined as capital expenditure in the capital finance regulations 2003
- with a body that has a high credit rating or it is made with the UK Government (gilts or CDs), or a local Authority

Non-specified investments include all other types of investment and the types the Council proposes to use are described below:

- corporate bonds which are issued by companies to cover their debt
- sovereign securities which are bonds issued by non-UK governments
- floating rate notes, securities where the interest changes in step with market conditions
- securities issued by supranational organisations such as the World Bank
- money market funds

IN-HOUSE MANAGEMENT

The Fund Managers will be asked to return funds to the Authority as and when they are needed. There are significant changes in cash flow on a daily basis which result in the Authority moving from having funds to invest to a position of having to borrow. It will normally be financially advantageous to have some delay before funds are returned thus maximising the net return and minimising the need for in-house investment activity. It is expected that temporary borrowing will not normally exceed £20m at any one time.

The Council will need to approve a prudential indicator for the 'authorised limit for external debt'; this combines temporary and long-term borrowing and a maximum of £41.9m is being recommended (£20m temporary plus £21.9m long term).

The fluctuating balance of the fund is managed internally to ensure that whilst sufficient sums are available on a daily basis to meet payments to creditors the investment return is maximised on those days where a surplus is held. Because of these constant fluctuations the majority of these sums are inevitably invested for short periods as time deposits with low risk counter-parties. Appendix A outlines the mandate for the internal funds and lists the approved counter-parties though it should be noted that these will change during the course of any year as credit ratings or size of building societies change.

Temporary borrowing will be restricted to that necessary for:

- cash flow,
- the cost effective staged return of our investments as they are needed to finance Council spending,

INVESTMENT INSTRUMENTS USED BY FUND MANAGERS

In the shorter term, whilst the Authority still holds adequate reserves, it is not imperative that the investment returns are maximised in any one year thus allowing a medium term approach to fund management to be taken. Thus the current strategy is to accept fluctuations between years in return for greater returns. This in turn has an impact on the investment instruments permitted. No change to the investment instruments are therefore proposed immediately.

However, in order to ensure the Council will have the ability to recall funds as required in future years it is necessary to change the limits on CDCM's investments immediately so that 50% are redeemable within one year. The result will only be achieved in stages as existing investments become due for repayment and reinvestment.

As referred to above, there will be a need to narrow the mandates shown at Annex B during the course of the year.

ADVISORS

The Council appointed Butlers as Treasury Management Advisors to assist in the choice of Fund Managers, develop the mandates and assist in monitoring the Managers' performance. This has been beneficial given the large sums invested, the complexity of the wider range of instruments used and the ability to compare performance with that achieved by other Fund Managers. A tendering exercise was carried out in 2004/05 for the appointment of an Advisor, and Butlers was reappointed until December 2007. It is unlikely to be necessary to retain advisors once we have completed our moves to a single manager.

KEY POINTS

The Government Guidance recommends that certain aspects are highlighted. Most of these are covered within the mandates but they are listed below for convenience:

Definition of 'high credit rating' for specified investments

The Council's mandates require all specified investments to have a short-term rating of a minimum of F1, as defined by the credit rating agency FITCH or an equivalent rating agency

The frequency that credit ratings are monitored

Butlers monitor the credit ratings of banks and building societies and notify your treasury management staff of any changes. Unless the Authority is notified of a variation it is assumed that the credit rating has not changed. Where a credit rating is downgraded that bank or building society will be removed from the counter-party list if its new rating is outside of the defined limits.

The procedure for determining the allowed categories of non-specified investments

Council approve the Strategy that sets out the allowed categories and relevant constraints. These are kept under review during the year by your officers, the Capital Receipts Advisory Group and Butlers (the Council's professional advisor).

The categories of non-specified investments that can prudently be used during 2007/08

These are identified in the mandates at Appendix B.

The maximum amounts that can be held in each category, as a percentage of the total portfolio managed by each Fund Manager or as a sum of money

These are identified in the mandates at Appendices A and B.

Liquidity of investments

The time deposits managed by CDCM are the least liquid investments and their mandate specifies the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. The investments managed by Alliance Bernstein and Investec are all highly liquid. The procedure to ensure that there are sufficient funds to meet the cashflow needs of the Authority is for officers to maintain cash flow forecasts and to review the mandates of the Fund Managers with the Capital Receipts Advisory Group.

The minimum amount that will be held in 2007/08 in investments that are not long-term (over 1 year)

This requirement is stating the value of the investments that are short-term and therefore more liquid. Of the estimated temporary investments held as at 31 March 2008 of £33m, at least £19m will be for less than one year.

MANAGEMENT

The Director of Commerce and Technology and his staff, supported by the Council's professional advisor, together with the Capital Receipts Advisory Group, will monitor the performance of the funds and raise any issues and concerns with the Fund Managers.

The Cabinet will receive quarterly reports on the performance of the funds and an annual report on the performance for the year.

GENERAL

The strategy is not intended to be a strait-jacket but a definition of the upper limit of the level of risk that it is prudent for the Council to take in maximising its borrowing and investment activities during 2007/08. Any changes that are broadly consistent with this Strategy and either reduce or only minimally increase the level of risk, are delegated to the Head of Financial Services, after consultation with the Capital Receipts Advisory Group in certain cases. Any other proposal to change this strategy will be referred back to the Council.

The Council's Prudential Indicators are attached at Appendix C. They are based on

data included in the budget report and this Treasury Management Strategy. They set various limits that allow officers to monitor its achievement. These indicators must be approved by the Council and can only be amended by the Council.

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APPENDIX A

IN-HOUSE FUND MANAGEMENT

Duration of investments	Fixed deposits up to and including 1 year
Types of investments	Fixed Deposits Deposits at call, two or seven day notice Money Market Funds
Credit Ratings and Maximum limits	See below The credit rating is the short-term rating issued by FITCH unless otherwise indicated
Benchmark	LGC 7 day rate

COUNTER-PARTY LIST

LIMIT £2.5M	SHORT TERM RATINGS
BANKS (Rated F1 or better)	
Abbey National plc	F1+
Alliance and Leicester	F1+
Barclays	F1+
Bradford and Bingley	F1
Co-Operative	F1
HBOS	F1+
HSBC	F1+
Kleinwort Benson	P1*
Lloyds TSB Group	F1+
Northern Rock	F1
Royal Bank of Scotland	F1+
BUILDING SOCIETIES (Assets over £5 billion – Rated F1 or better)	
Britannia	F1
Chelsea	F1
Coventry	F1
Leeds	P1*
Nationwide	F1+
Portman	F1
Skipton	F1
West Bromwich	F1
Yorkshire	F1
ALL LOCAL AUTHORITIES, POLICE AND FIRE AUTHORITIES	N/A

* Moody's equivalent credit rating

LIMIT £1.5M	SHORT TERM RATINGS
BANK SUBSIDIARIES Wholly owned by F1 Rated banks	
RBS Trust Bank Ltd	F1+
Ulster Bank Limited	A1**
Ulster Bank Ireland	A1**
OTHER BANKS	
Allied Irish Bank	F1+
Anglo-Irish	F1
Bank of Ireland	F1+
Bank of Scotland (Ireland)	F1+
Bristol and West	F1
Close Brothers	F1
DePfa Bank	F1+
Dexia Banque Internationale a Luxembourg	A1+**
HFC Bank	F1
Irish Intercontinental Bank	F1
KBC Bank NV	F1+
Singer and Friedlander	F1
OTHER INSTITUTIONS	
3i Group Limited	A1**
Irish Life and Permanent plc	F1
BUILDING SOCIETIES (Assets over £2 billion)	
Cheshire	
Dunfermline	
Newcastle	
Norwich and Peterborough	
Nottingham	
Principality	
Stroud and Swindon	
LIMIT £1M	
SHORT TERM RATINGS	
BUILDING SOCIETIES (Assets over £1 billion)	
Scarborough	

** Standard and Poor's credit rating

EXTERNAL FUND MANAGER MANDATES

Alliance Bernstein and Investec

Duration of investments	Average duration of Fund must not exceed 3 years No individual investment shall exceed 10 years
Types of investments	Marketable securities issued or guaranteed by the UK Government (Gilts) Deposits made with or marketable certificates of deposit issued by approved banks (CDs) Sovereign and supranational securities, including floating rate notes (Bonds) Corporate, bank and building society securities, including floating rate notes, commercial paper, asset backed and perpetual securities (Corporate Bonds) Money Market Funds (MMFs)
Credit Ratings	CORPORATE INVESTMENTS Standard & Poors AA- or Aa3 or above or equivalent A- or A3 or better, maximum term 3 years NON-UK GOVERNMENTS AND SUPRANATIONALS AA- or Aa3 or above or equivalent for non-UK Governments AAA or Aaa for Supranationals SHORT-TERM INVESTMENTS Standard & Poor's A1/P1 or above or equivalent MONEY MARKET FUNDS AAA
Maximum limits	50% Corporate bonds 20% Supranational and sovereign securities 50% Floating rate notes 75% Gilts 75% Corporate bonds plus Gilts 75% Corporate bonds + supranational and sovereign securities + floating rate notes + Gilts 50% Corporate bonds + supranational and sovereign securities + floating rate notes 20% with any one counterparty (except UK Government) for fixed deposits and CDs 10% per issuer for corporate bonds and FRNs 10% per issuer for securities guaranteed by non-UK EU Governments and supranational securities
Benchmark	60% 3 month LIBID 40% 0-5 year gilt index.

CDCM

Duration of investments	50% must be repayable within 12 months Up to and including 5 years maximum maturity No more than 25% may be invested for longer than 3 years
Types of investments	Fixed Deposits Deposits at call, two or seven day notice
Credit Ratings	F1+ by FITCH IBCA or equivalent
Maximum limits	£5m per institution and group for English and Scottish Clearing Banks and their subsidiaries, and Overseas Banks on list of authorised counterparties. Building Societies With assets more than £2,000m £5m With assets more than £1,000m £3m Other building societies in the top 25 £2m
Benchmark	3 month LIBID

**CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities
Prudential Indicators for 2007/08**

Capital expenditure

1. Actual and Estimated Capital Expenditure

	2005/6 Actual £000	2006/7 Forecast £000	2007/8 Estimate £000	2008/9 Estimate £000	2009/10 Estimate £000
Gross	18,766	19,286	20,001	19,775	12,675
Net	15,868	14,806	15,352	19,192	12,201

Excludes investments treated as capital expenditure

2. The proportion of the budget financed from government grants and council tax that is spent on interest.

The negative figures reflect that the Authority is a net investor and so the interest earned is used to help fund the budget.

2005/6 Actual £000	2006/7 Forecast £000	2007/8 Estimate £000	2008/9 Estimate £000	2009/10 Estimate £000
-19%	-14%	-16%	-7%	-4%

3. The impact of schemes with capital expenditure on the level of council tax
This calculation highlights the hypothetical impact on the level of Council Tax from new capital schemes that the Council has approved in the budget/MTP. It must ignore changes already approved, slippage, inflation and savings and so is based on relevant capital schemes in the MTP categories of Savings, New Unavoidable and New Urgent. The unusual pattern results from the fluctuating lost revenue as major maintenance is carried out on the Leisure Centres.

The actual planned change in Council Tax is different because of the impact of other variations and the use of revenue reserves.

	2007/8 Estimate	2008/9 Estimate	2009/10 Estimate
Increase	£4.98	-£3.08	£1.09
Cumulative	£5.64	£2.56	£3.65

4. The capital financing requirement.

This represents the need for the Authority to borrow to finance capital expenditure. Whilst the Authority has capital reserves it will not have to borrow for capital purposes but may choose to do so:

31/3/06 Actual £000	2006/7 Forecast £000	2007/8 Estimate £000	2008/9 Estimate £000	2009/10 Estimate £000	2010/11 Estimate £000	2011/12 Estimate £000
0	0	0	2,050	11,101	4,227	4,562

It totals £21.9m over the MTP period.

5. Net borrowing and the capital financing requirement.
Net external borrowing must not be used to finance revenue spending except in the short term. In the short term there are legitimate uses of borrowing to cover cash flow e.g. funding salaries pending receipt of council tax income or return of investments.

The forecast shows that capital reserves are expected to run out in 2008/09 and the Authority will then need to fund most of its capital expenditure from long-term borrowing. However it is permitted to borrow a certain amount in advance of the need to fund capital expenditure (see paragraph 7 below).

External debt

6. The actual external borrowing at 31 March 2006
There was £14.5m of short-term borrowing for cash-flow purposes.
7. The authorised limit for external debt.
This is the maximum limit for borrowing and is based on a worst-case scenario. It reflects the proposed revision to the Treasury Management Strategy which allows the Authority to borrow up to £10.8m in 2006/7 and up to an aggregate of £21.9m in 2007/8 to finance capital expenditure shown as to be financed from borrowing in the Medium Term Plan period if it appears that long term rates are attractive. The remainder of the limit relates to temporary debt for Cash Flow Purposes.

	2006/7 Limit £000	2007/8 Limit £000	2008/9 Estimate £000	2009/10 Estimate £000
Short term	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Long Term	15,000	21,900	25,100	28,400
Total	35,000	41,900	45,100	48,400

8. The operational boundary for external debt.
This reflects a less extreme position. Although the figure can be exceeded without further approval it represents an early warning monitoring device to ensure that the authorised limit (above) is not exceeded. It allows the management of the Council's day to day cashflow and, in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy, temporary borrowing to delay the return of funds from the Fund Managers if this is in the Council's interests. The short term and long term elements of the operational boundary will be monitored separately

	2007/8 Limit £000	2008/9 Estimate £000	2009/10 Estimate £000
Short term	15,000	15,000	15,000
Long term	21,900	25,100	28,400
Total	36,900	40,100	43,400

Treasury management

9. Adoption of the CIPFA Code
The Prudential Code requires the Authority to have adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services. This has been adopted.
10. Exposure to investments with fixed interest and variable interest as a percentage of total investments.

The parameters currently set for our Fund Managers could theoretically result in a significant amount of the funds being at variable rates as gilts and corporate bonds are deemed to be variable rate investments for the purpose of this indicator. In practice the exposure to variable rates is likely to be less.

	2007/8 Limit £000	2008/9 Estimate £000	2009/10 Estimate £000
Upper limit on fixed rate exposure	100%	100%	100%
Upper limit on variable rate exposure	60%	50%	50%

11. Borrowing Repayment Profile
 The proportion of 2007/8 borrowing that will mature in successive periods.

The table refers to temporary borrowing for cash flow purposes; 100% will mature in less than 12 months. If long-term borrowing takes place it will all be for maturities in excess of ten years.

	Upper limit	Lower limit
Under 12 months	100%	100%
12 months and within 24 months	0%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	0%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	0%	0%
10 years and above	0%	0%

12. Investment Repayment Profile
 Limit on the value of investments that cannot be redeemed within 364 days.

The limits set below will relate to the time deposits held by CDCM which are the only investments that are not immediately repayable. These limits are based on estimates of when the Council needs to recall funds to meet its Financial Strategy.

	2007/8 Limit £000	2008/9 Estimate £000	2009/10 Estimate £000
Investments over 364 days	14,000	13,250	7,800

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CABINET

1 FEBRUARY 2007

2007/08 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (Report by the Head of Financial Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1** A Treasury Management Strategy ensures that the Authority has clear objectives for the management of its borrowing and investments. It is also needed to comply with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) Code of Practice, which is required by the Council's Code of Financial Management. The Government has also published Guidance which recommends that an Annual Investment Strategy is produced each year and approved by the full Council.
- 1.2** The Guidance emphasises that priority must be given to the security and liquidity of investments whilst the Code covers the same point by requiring the effective management and control of risk. This Strategy is intended to meet the requirements of the Code and the Guidance.
- 1.3** The Strategy addresses the following two issues in some detail:
- The decreasing level of reserves and therefore investments in 2007/08 will mean that the Council will need to reduce the number of Fund Managers from three to two.
 - The Council has the opportunity to borrow in advance of need if it is considered that long term borrowing rates are low and the funds will be needed for the approved MTP.
- 1.4** When the Government removed its controls on capital expenditure levels a few years ago it introduced the concept of the Prudential Code which pulled together a number of indicators related to capital expenditure, external debt and treasury management. Its purpose was to demonstrate that the Council's capital expenditure plans were affordable and to provide a set of limits, to be complied with, and indicators to be monitored during the forthcoming year. These indicators have previously been part of the budget report but as they have significant relevance to Treasury Management it is now considered that they best form part of this report which will be considered after the budget report.
- 1.5** The proposed strategy is attached as Annex A.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1** Cabinet is requested to recommend to Council that it approves this Strategy including the Prudential Code Indicators.

BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Background files in Accountancy Section: Treasury Management Reports
Reports on the 2007/08 Budget and Medium Term Plan to Cabinet and Council
CIPFA's Treasury Management in the Public Services Code of Practice 2002

ODPM Guidance on Local Government Investments March 2004

Contact Officer:

Steve Couper Head of Financial Services (01480) 388103

TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2007/08

This Treasury Management Strategy is intended to meet the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA's) Code of Practice and the Government's Guidance on Local Government Investments.

CASH FLOW

At any moment the Authority's investments will consist of two distinct elements - cash flow and reserves.

Cash flow is the day-to-day impact of managing the flow of funds into and out of the Council and is dealt with in-house. For instance, the dates on which the County Council is paid its portion of the council tax will be different to the days the money is received from those living in the District. These cash flows will sometimes leave the Council with several million pounds to borrow or invest for a few days. It is often in the Council's best interests to be a net-borrower for cash flow purposes as we would expect our Fund Managers to gain higher returns from their expertise and greater stability of the funds than the cost of the temporary borrowing. Generally the return of funds is only requested when there is an ongoing rather than intermittent need to borrow.

Reserves are more stable in that there will be a definite estimate of the amount that they will reduce or increase by during the course of the year but even this will fluctuate to some extent as a result of any variation in inflation, interest rates or general under or overspending.

GENERAL

Treasury Management actions will always, necessarily, be based on the market situation at the time which can fluctuate significantly from day to day. It is therefore inevitable that elements of this strategy are based on general intentions rather than on trying to guess, at this time, what will be good or bad interest rates in advance. The Council seeks advice from its professional advisors (Butlers) and its Fund Managers before making any major decisions. There is also a member advisory group, the Capital Receipts Advisory Group, that as well as meeting with the Fund Manager's periodically is kept informed and/or consulted on Treasury Management matters.

THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Council's Financial Strategy is based on the following figures for reserves and borrowing:

FORECAST	2006/ 2007 £M	2007/ 2008 £M	2008/ 2009 £M	2009/ 2010 £M	2010/ 2011 £M	2011/ 2012 £M	2012/ 2013 £M	2013/ 2014 £M	2014/ 2015 £M	2015/ 2016 £M	2016/ 2017 £M	2017/ 2018 £M	2018/ 2019 £M
Remaining reserves (End of year)	46.6	31.3	13.9	11.2	8.3	6.1	4.6	3.7	3.3	2.8	2.5	2.3	2.3
Need to borrow													
In year	0	0	2.1	11.1	4.2	4.5	3.1	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.7	3.8	3.9
Cumulative	0	0	2.1	13.2	17.4	21.9	25.0	28.3	31.7	35.2	38.9	42.7	46.6

CURRENT POSITION

Most investment activity is carried out by the Council's three Fund Managers who currently (January 2007) manage the following sums:

Investec	£21.5m
Alliance Bernstein (Alliance)	£21.5m
City Deposit Cash Managers (CDCM)	£20.0m
Total	£63.0m

The sums with Fund Managers will exceed the Council's revenue and capital reserves as a result of three factors:

- Temporary borrowing in-house
- Temporary cash-flow surpluses
- Other reserves that are earmarked (e.g. S106 and R&R Funds)

The Council had no long-term borrowing at the date this report was prepared.

LONG-TERM BORROWING

As the Council's reserves run out, as illustrated in the table above, there will be a need for long-term borrowing to finance the capital programme. The financial plan shows that this will not be until 2008/09 but effective treasury management involves borrowing when interest rates are judged to be at the best level, even if the funds have then to be invested until the money is required; borrowing in this way is allowed if it is for planned expenditure. The definition of planned expenditure is not precise and has therefore been discussed with our external auditor who is comfortable with the interpretation of it being included in our approved MTP. Hence, once Council has approved the MTP in February the figure will be £21.9M as highlighted above. Currently the equivalent figure is £10.8M.

The borrowing strategy includes the need to spread risk, so that the Council is never left with a high proportion of its debt becoming repayable at a single time or even in the same period of an interest rate cycle. When the Council borrows the repayment profile of the debt will need to be considered though this is not critical if the borrowing is from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB) which is a Government Agency to provide funds to government bodies at wholesale market rates. This is because they allow a borrower to reschedule their debt during the course of the loan based on a prescribed financially neutral formula. The combination of these keen rates and the option to reschedule means that local authority borrowing is normally from the PWLB rather than commercial bodies.

Interest rates are already being monitored on a daily basis so that if rates become attractive some early borrowing can take place. If rates become sufficiently attractive up to £21.9M will be borrowed from the market or, much more probably, the PWLB for an initial period, probably, in excess of 45 years

MANAGING THE REDUCTION IN RESERVES

The first part of this section is based on the assumption that no advance borrowing will take place in the next six months.

In recent years there have been only modest reductions in reserves due to their limited use for financing revenue, and capital expenditure being partially offset by capital receipts and deferred spending. However the proposed budget/MTP shows significant reductions in reserves over the coming five years as shown in the table

below:

RESERVES	MTP					
	2006/ 2007	2007/ 2008	2008/ 2009	2009/ 2010	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012
	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M
Forecast position at end of year	47	31	14	11	8	6

Investec and Alliance both utilise a broader and more volatile range of investments than CDCM. As our reserves fall we are less able to cope with such volatility so we will need to move our funds to managers such as CDCM or narrow our investment mandates to minimise volatility. As the level of investments reduces we also need to reduce the number of managers as there are clearly limits to the sizes of portfolios that are sensible or acceptable to fund managers.

The strategy has been to take funds equally from Investec and Alliance until the point is reached where there is insufficient to warrant two separate funds.

A change of policy at Alliance in recent months has led to this approach being reviewed as, whilst they are prepared to continue to manage our Fund as long as it exceeds £10M, they do intend to move out of the Local Authority market. Given their reduced interest in “our” market it would be appropriate to consider moving our funds away from them more quickly than would otherwise be the case. Therefore, after consultation with the Capital Receipts Advisory Group and the Council’s advisor, the £10M of funds required for return in February will all be taken from Alliance leaving their portfolio at £11.5m.

A further £5M is likely to be needed by about April and at that time it is proposed that we seek return of all the Funds from Alliance. In principle any funds not immediately needed by the Council would be added to CDCM’s portfolio but depending on the market situation at the time the flexibility to temporarily delay return of the funds or to temporarily transfer specific investments to Investec in order to optimise the Council’s position may be required.

Detailed consideration needs to be given to the Council’s mandates with Investec and CDCM over the coming months to begin to reduce volatility and long term commitments. This will take place in liaison with the Capital Receipts Advisory Group and the Council’s advisor. Whilst any change of this nature might reduce the Council’s overall medium term investment returns (volatility was only accepted in order to increase returns) there will be no increase in the risk of counterparties not repaying the Council’s investments.

Subsequently, as funds reduce further, the point will be reached where City Deposit Cash Managers, or an equivalent manager, looks after the whole fund based on a narrower more stable type of investments. This final reduction to one fund manager may not occur before 2008/09 but preparations may need to be made before the end of this calendar year in consultation with the CRAG.

If early borrowing takes place it is still proposed to move funds away from Alliance and close their fund during the year though the timing may be delayed if it is in the Council’s interests. It may also mean, depending on the scale, that the preparations for moving down to one manager are deferred but there will still be a need to review and modify existing mandates during the course of the year.

CATEGORIES OF INVESTMENT

The guidance on Local Authority Investments categorises investments as 'specified' and 'non-specified'. This differentiation requires the types of non-specified investments that will be used to be defined in this Strategy

Specified investments are:

- in sterling
- due to be repaid within 12 months
- not defined as capital expenditure in the capital finance regulations 2003
- with a body that has a high credit rating or it is made with the UK Government (gilts or CDs), or a local Authority

Non-specified investments include all other types of investment and the types the Council proposes to use are described below:

- corporate bonds which are issued by companies to cover their debt
- sovereign securities which are bonds issued by non-UK governments
- floating rate notes, securities where the interest changes in step with market conditions
- securities issued by supranational organisations such as the World Bank
- money market funds

IN-HOUSE MANAGEMENT

The Fund Managers will be asked to return funds to the Authority as and when they are needed. There are significant changes in cash flow on a daily basis which result in the Authority moving from having funds to invest to a position of having to borrow. It will normally be financially advantageous to have some delay before funds are returned thus maximising the net return and minimising the need for in-house investment activity. It is expected that temporary borrowing will not normally exceed £20m at any one time.

The Council will need to approve a prudential indicator for the 'authorised limit for external debt'; this combines temporary and long-term borrowing and a maximum of £41.9m is being recommended (£20m temporary plus £21.9m long term).

The fluctuating balance of the fund is managed internally to ensure that whilst sufficient sums are available on a daily basis to meet payments to creditors the investment return is maximised on those days where a surplus is held. Because of these constant fluctuations the majority of these sums are inevitably invested for short periods as time deposits with low risk counter-parties. Appendix A outlines the mandate for the internal funds and lists the approved counter-parties though it should be noted that these will change during the course of any year as credit ratings or size of building societies change.

Temporary borrowing will be restricted to that necessary for:

- cash flow,
- the cost effective staged return of our investments as they are needed to finance Council spending,

INVESTMENT INSTRUMENTS USED BY FUND MANAGERS

In the shorter term, whilst the Authority still holds adequate reserves, it is not imperative that the investment returns are maximised in any one year thus allowing a medium term approach to fund management to be taken. Thus the current strategy is to accept fluctuations between years in return for greater returns. This in turn has an impact on the investment instruments permitted. No change to the investment instruments are therefore proposed immediately.

However, in order to ensure the Council will have the ability to recall funds as required in future years it is necessary to change the limits on CDCM's investments immediately so that 50% are redeemable within one year. The result will only be achieved in stages as existing investments become due for repayment and reinvestment.

As referred to above, there will be a need to narrow the mandates shown at Annex B during the course of the year.

ADVISORS

The Council appointed Butlers as Treasury Management Advisors to assist in the choice of Fund Managers, develop the mandates and assist in monitoring the Managers' performance. This has been beneficial given the large sums invested, the complexity of the wider range of instruments used and the ability to compare performance with that achieved by other Fund Managers. A tendering exercise was carried out in 2004/05 for the appointment of an Advisor, and Butlers was reappointed until December 2007. It is unlikely to be necessary to retain advisors once we have completed our moves to a single manager.

KEY POINTS

The Government Guidance recommends that certain aspects are highlighted. Most of these are covered within the mandates but they are listed below for convenience:

Definition of 'high credit rating' for specified investments

The Council's mandates require all specified investments to have a short-term rating of a minimum of F1, as defined by the credit rating agency FITCH or an equivalent rating agency

The frequency that credit ratings are monitored

Butlers monitor the credit ratings of banks and building societies and notify your treasury management staff of any changes. Unless the Authority is notified of a variation it is assumed that the credit rating has not changed. Where a credit rating is downgraded that bank or building society will be removed from the counter-party list if its new rating is outside of the defined limits.

The procedure for determining the allowed categories of non-specified investments

Council approve the Strategy that sets out the allowed categories and relevant constraints. These are kept under review during the year by your officers, the Capital Receipts Advisory Group and Butlers (the Council's professional advisor).

The categories of non-specified investments that can prudently be used during 2007/08

These are identified in the mandates at Appendix B.

The maximum amounts that can be held in each category, as a percentage of the total portfolio managed by each Fund Manager or as a sum of money

These are identified in the mandates at Appendices A and B.

Liquidity of investments.

The time deposits managed by CDCM are the least liquid investments and their mandate specifies the maximum period for which funds may prudently be committed. The investments managed by Alliance Bernstein and Investec are all highly liquid. The procedure to ensure that there are sufficient funds to meet the cashflow needs of the Authority is for officers to maintain cash flow forecasts and to review the mandates of the Fund Managers with the Capital Receipts Advisory Group.

The minimum amount that will be held in 2007/08 in investments that are not long-term (over 1 year)

This requirement is stating the value of the investments that are short-term and therefore more liquid. Of the estimated temporary investments held as at 31 March 2008 of £33m, at least £19m will be for less than one year.

MANAGEMENT

The Director of Commerce and Technology and his staff, supported by the Council's professional advisor, together with the Capital Receipts Advisory Group, will monitor the performance of the funds and raise any issues and concerns with the Fund Managers.

The Cabinet will receive quarterly reports on the performance of the funds and an annual report on the performance for the year.

GENERAL

The strategy is not intended to be a strait-jacket but a definition of the upper limit of the level of risk that it is prudent for the Council to take in maximising its borrowing and investment activities during 2007/08. Any changes that are broadly consistent with this Strategy and either reduce or only minimally increase the level of risk, are delegated to the Head of Financial Services, after consultation with the Capital Receipts Advisory Group in certain cases. Any other proposal to change this strategy will be referred back to the Council.

The Council's Prudential Indicators are attached at Appendix C. They are based on data included in the budget report and this Treasury Management Strategy. They set various limits that allow officers to monitor its achievement. These indicators must be approved by the Council and can only be amended by the Council.

IN-HOUSE FUND MANAGEMENT

Duration of investments	Fixed deposits up to and including 1 year
Types of investments	Fixed Deposits Deposits at call, two or seven day notice Money Market Funds
Credit Ratings and Maximum limits	See below The credit rating is the short-term rating issued by FITCH unless otherwise indicated
Benchmark	LGC 7 day rate

COUNTER-PARTY LIST

LIMIT £2.5M	SHORT TERM RATINGS
BANKS (Rated F1 or better)	
Abbey National plc	F1+
Alliance and Leicester	F1+
Barclays	F1+
Bradford and Bingley	F1
Co-Operative	F1
HBOS	F1+
HSBC	F1+
Kleinwort Benson	P1*
Lloyds TSB Group	F1+
Northern Rock	F1
Royal Bank of Scotland	F1+
BUILDING SOCIETIES (Assets over £5 billion – Rated F1 or better)	
Britannia	F1
Chelsea	F1
Coventry	F1
Leeds	P1*
Nationwide	F1+
Portman	F1
Skipton	F1
West Bromwich	F1
Yorkshire	F1
ALL LOCAL AUTHORITIES, POLICE AND FIRE AUTHORITIES	N/A

* Moody's equivalent credit rating

LIMIT £1.5M	SHORT TERM RATINGS
BANK SUBSIDIARIES Wholly owned by F1 Rated banks	
RBS Trust Bank Ltd	F1+
Ulster Bank Limited	A1**
Ulster Bank Ireland	A1**
OTHER BANKS	
Allied Irish Bank	F1+
Anglo-Irish	F1
Bank of Ireland	F1+
Bank of Scotland (Ireland)	F1+
Bristol and West	F1
Close Brothers	F1
DePfa Bank	F1+
Dexia Banque Internationale a Luxembourg	A1+**
HFC Bank	F1
Irish Intercontinental Bank	F1
KBC Bank NV	F1+
Singer and Friedlander	F1
OTHER INSTITUTIONS	
3i Group Limited	A1**
Irish Life and Permanent plc	F1
BUILDING SOCIETIES (Assets over £2 billion)	
Cheshire	
Dunfermline	
Newcastle	
Norwich and Peterborough	
Nottingham	
Principality	
Stroud and Swindon	

LIMIT £1M	SHORT TERM RATINGS
BUILDING SOCIETIES (Assets over £1 billion)	
Scarborough	

** Standard and Poor's credit rating

EXTERNAL FUND MANAGER MANDATES

APPENDIX B

Alliance Bernstein and Investec

Duration of investments	Average duration of Fund must not exceed 3 years No individual investment shall exceed 10 years
Types of investments	Marketable securities issued or guaranteed by the UK Government (Gilts) Deposits made with or marketable certificates of deposit issued by approved banks (CDs) Sovereign and supranational securities, including floating rate notes (Bonds) Corporate, bank and building society securities, including floating rate notes, commercial paper, asset backed and perpetual securities (Corporate Bonds) Money Market Funds (MMFs)
Credit Ratings	CORPORATE INVESTMENTS Standard & Poors AA- or Aa3 or above or equivalent A- or A3 or better, maximum term 3 years NON-UK GOVERNMENTS AND SUPRANATIONALS AA- or Aa3 or above or equivalent for non-UK Governments AAA or Aaa for Supranationals SHORT-TERM INVESTMENTS Standard & Poor's A1/P1 or above or equivalent MONEY MARKET FUNDS AAA
Maximum limits	50% Corporate bonds 20% Supranational and sovereign securities 50% Floating rate notes 75% Gilts 75% Corporate bonds plus Gilts 75% Corporate bonds + supranational and sovereign securities + floating rate notes + Gilts 50% Corporate bonds + supranational and sovereign securities + floating rate notes 20% with any one counterparty (except UK Government) for fixed deposits and CDs 10% per issuer for corporate bonds and FRNs 10% per issuer for securities guaranteed by non-UK EU Governments and supranational securities
Benchmark	60% 3 month LIBID 40% 0-5 year gilt index.

CDCM

Duration of investments	50% must be repayable within 12 months Up to and including 5 years maximum maturity No more than 25% may be invested for longer than 3 years
Types of investments	Fixed Deposits Deposits at call, two or seven day notice
Credit Ratings	F1+ by FITCH IBCA or equivalent
Maximum limits	£5m per institution and group for English and Scottish Clearing Banks and their subsidiaries, and Overseas Banks on list of authorised counterparties. Building Societies With assets more than £2,000m £5m With assets more than £1,000m £3m Other building societies in the top 25 £2m
Benchmark	3 month LIBID

**CIPFA Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities
Prudential Indicators for 2007/08**

Capital expenditure

1. Actual and Estimated Capital Expenditure

	2005/6 Actual £000	2006/7 Forecast £000	2007/8 Estimate £000	2008/9 Estimate £000	2009/10 Estimate £000
Gross	18,766	19,286	20,001	19,775	12,675
Net	15,868	14,806	15,352	19,192	12,201

Excludes investments treated as capital expenditure

2. The proportion of the budget financed from government grants and council tax that is spent on interest.

The negative figures reflect that the Authority is a net investor and so the interest earned is used to help fund the budget.

2005/6 Actual £000	2006/7 Forecast £000	2007/8 Estimate £000	2008/9 Estimate £000	2009/10 Estimate £000
-19%	-14%	-16%	-7%	-4%

3. The impact of schemes with capital expenditure on the level of council tax
This calculation highlights the hypothetical impact on the level of Council Tax from new capital schemes that the Council has approved in the budget/MTP. It must ignore changes already approved, slippage, inflation and savings and so is based on relevant capital schemes in the MTP categories of Savings, New Unavoidable and New Urgent. The unusual pattern results from the fluctuating lost revenue as major maintenance is carried out on the Leisure Centres.

The actual planned change in Council Tax is different because of the impact of other variations and the use of revenue reserves.

	2007/8 Estimate	2008/9 Estimate	2009/10 Estimate
Increase	£4.98	-£3.08	£1.09
Cumulative	£5.64	£2.56	£3.65

4. The capital financing requirement.

This represents the need for the Authority to borrow to finance capital expenditure. Whilst the Authority has capital reserves it will not have to borrow for capital purposes but may choose to do so:

31/3/06 Actual £000	2006/7 Forecast £000	2007/8 Estimate £000	2008/9 Estimate £000	2009/10 Estimate £000	2010/11 Estimate £000	2011/12 Estimate £000
0	0	0	2,050	11,101	4,227	4,562

It totals £21.9m over the MTP period.

5. Net borrowing and the capital financing requirement.
Net external borrowing must not be used to finance revenue spending except in the short term. In the short term there are legitimate uses of borrowing to cover cash flow e.g. funding salaries pending receipt of council tax income or return of investments.

The forecast shows that capital reserves are expected to run out in 2008/09 and the Authority will then need to fund most of its capital expenditure from long-term borrowing. However it is permitted to borrow a certain amount in advance of the need to fund capital expenditure (see paragraph 7 below).

External debt

6. The actual external borrowing at 31 March 2006
There was £14.5m of short-term borrowing for cash-flow purposes.
7. The authorised limit for external debt.
This is the maximum limit for borrowing and is based on a worst-case scenario. It reflects the proposed revision to the Treasury Management Strategy which allows the Authority to borrow up to £10.8m in 2006/7 and up to an aggregate of £21.9m in 2007/8 to finance capital expenditure shown as to be financed from borrowing in the Medium Term Plan period if it appears that long term rates are attractive. The remainder of the limit relates to temporary debt for Cash Flow Purposes.

	2006/7 Limit £000	2007/8 Limit £000	2008/9 Estimate £000	2009/10 Estimate £000
Short term	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000
Long Term	15,000	21,900	25,100	28,400
Total	35,000	41,900	45,100	48,400

8. The operational boundary for external debt.
This reflects a less extreme position. Although the figure can be exceeded without further approval it represents an early warning monitoring device to ensure that the authorised limit (above) is not exceeded. It allows the management of the Council's day to day cashflow and, in accordance with the Treasury Management Strategy, temporary borrowing to delay the return of funds from the Fund Managers if this is in the Council's interests. The short term and long term elements of the operational boundary will be monitored separately

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Short term	15,000	15,000	15,000
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Total	36,900	40,100	43,400

Treasury management

9. Adoption of the CIPFA Code
The Prudential Code requires the Authority to have adopted the CIPFA Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services. This has been adopted.

10. Exposure to investments with fixed interest and variable interest as a percentage of total investments.

The parameters currently set for our Fund Managers could theoretically result in a significant amount of the funds being at variable rates as gilts and corporate bonds are deemed to be variable rate investments for the purpose of this indicator. In practice the exposure to variable rates is likely to be less.

	2007/8 Limit £000	2008/9 Estimate £000	2009/10 Estimate £000
Upper limit on fixed rate exposure	100%	100%	100%
Upper limit on variable rate exposure	60%	50%	50%

11. Borrowing Repayment Profile

The proportion of 2007/8 borrowing that will mature in successive periods.

The table refers to temporary borrowing for cash flow purposes; 100% will mature in less than 12 months. If long-term borrowing takes place it will all be for maturities in excess of ten years.

	Upper limit	Lower limit
Under 12 months	100%	100%
12 months and within 24 months	0%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	0%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	0%	0%
10 years and above	0%	0%

12. Investment Repayment Profile

Limit on the value of investments that cannot be redeemed within 364 days.

The limits set below will relate to the time deposits held by CDCM which are the only investments that are not immediately repayable. These limits are based on estimates of when the Council needs to recall funds to meet its Financial Strategy.

	2007/8 Limit £000	2008/9 Estimate £000	2009/10 Estimate £000
Investments over 364 days	14,000	13,250	7,800

**COMT
CABINET**

**15 January 2007
1 February 2007**

QUARTERLY SUMMARY OF DEBTS WRITTEN-OFF (Report by the Head of Revenue Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Head of Revenue Services, or in her absence the Head of Financial Services is authorised to write-off debts with an individual value of up to £4,000, or of a greater amount after consultation with the Executive Councillor, having taken appropriate steps to satisfy herself that the debts are irrecoverable or cannot be recovered without incurring disproportionate costs. A summary, detailing debts written-off, shall be submitted to the cabinet quarterly.
- 1.2 The summary of debts written-off during the quarter ended 31 December 2006 and during the 2006/07 financial year, is shown below with the comparative amount for the previous financial year shown in brackets.
- 1.3 Whilst these amounts have been written-off in this period of the 2006/07 financial year, much of the original debt would have been raised in previous financial years as the table at 4 demonstrates.

2. WRITE-OFFS UP TO £4,000

Approved by the Head of Revenue Services

Type of Debt	In Quarter		Financial Year Total		
	No. of Cases	Amount £	No. of Cases	Amount £	Previous Year (£)
Council Tax	315	47,583.90	737	146,338.12	(85,619.64)
NNDR	16	13,840.32	58	36,775.75	(38,809.82)
Sundry Debtors	84	27,572.61	141	45,446.03	(33,780.30)
Excess Charges	152	6,103.56	219	8,693.56	(7,006.18)

- 2.1 Please note that Council Tax write-offs for last year's charge were delayed by changes caused by Government capping. These have now been processed during this year. This has contributed to the significant difference between last and this year's totals.

3. WRITE-OFFS OVER £4,000

Agreed by the Executive Councillor
Approved by the Head of Revenue Services

Type of Debt	In Quarter		Financial Year Total		
	No. of Cases	Amount £	No. of Cases	Amount £	Previous Year (£)
NNDR	1	5,796.25	6	150,698.79	(56,753.88)
Sundry Debtors	0	0.00	0	0.00	(15,303.82)

- 3.1 In this quarter one NNDR case, valued at over £4,000, was written off after the company went into receivership.

4. DATE ANALYSIS

Year of Debt	Council Tax (£)	NNDR (£)	Sundry Debtors (£)	Excess Charges (£)
Pre 98/99	1,125.07	6,012.87	2,259.98	0.00
1998/99	651.34	0.63	0.00	0.00
1999/00	487.89	0.21	4,692.90	0.00
2000/01	4,661.58	331.43	688.39	55.78
2001/02	9,361.62	435.04	2,662.20	0.00
2002/03	16,103.62	1.33	5,038.52	0.00
2003/04	27,955.18	88,737.15	5,945.96	2,497.78
2004/05	39,060.75	55,838.26	10,313.02	0.00
2005/06	41,312.41	32,727.42	11,484.66	5,970.00
2006/07	5,618.66	3,390.20	2,360.40	170.00
Totals	146,338.12	187,474.54	45,446.03	8,693.56

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 Cabinet members are asked to note the content of this report

Contact Officer: Julia Barber, Head of Revenue Services ☎ [01480] 388105

CABINET

1 FEBRUARY 2007

ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY (Report by Head of Technical Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council will tomorrow sign the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change. In doing this the Council is committing itself to work to achieve environmental change.
- 1.2 Pivotal to delivering against its commitment will be the adoption of an environment strategy which will demonstrate how the Council will build on the excellent work it is already doing through its services, improve its own environmental performance as a major employer and property owner and encourage local residents and businesses similarly to reduce their adverse impacts on the environment.
- 1.3 The final adoption of an agreed strategy is still some six months away but this report outlines how the strategy will be developed through a broad-based consultative process leading to a comprehensive environment strategy supported by a detailed and costed action plan.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY

- 2.1 The document at Annex A provides a starting point for the development of the strategy. It is proposed that it is used as the basis for consultation with Members, our partners on the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership, and other local, county and regional public and private sector organisations, including, businesses, that have the greatest potential to impact on the environment.
- 2.2 In April 2007 the Cabinet will be asked to approve a version of the strategy for public consultation. This will have been informed by the feedback from the initial consultation outlined above. Concurrently with both these consultation processes service managers will be developing the action plans that will demonstrate how the strategy could be delivered. The draft action plans will provide the Council with an opportunity to balance its environmental aspirations with the cost of their achievement and to take an informed view on the pace with which progress can be made.
- 2.3 Through these processes the Council will be in a position to adopt a final strategy in Autumn 2007 for implementation from 2008/09, the financial implications of which will be available to inform the development of the 2008/09 to 2013/14 Medium Term Plan

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The environment strategy will provide a vehicle for celebrating the many areas of good work the Council is already doing. Its performance on recycling, home energy conservation, maintaining bio-diversity, increasing access to the countryside and sustainable land use and construction already make a significant environmental contribution. However, national and

regional guidance increasingly identifies the need for councils to lead their local communities in this essential area, both by example and by engagement and influencing individuals and groups.

- 3.2 Through the consultation processes the environment strategy will be circulated widely. To increase awareness it is proposed that an overview also be published as a small leaflet. The draft content of the leaflet is included at Annex B.
- 3.3 Formal Member consultation will be through the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework). However, the development and delivery of the strategy will be a major programme of work and Cabinet are invited to consider forming a small Member Working Group to support the process.

4 Recommendations

- 4.1 Cabinet are recommended to –
- (a) approve the draft Environment Strategy at Annex A as a basis for consultation with Members, organisations and businesses;
 - (b) note the intention to seek approval for a public consultation draft in April 2007;
 - (c) authorise the Head of Technical Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Environment, to publish a leaflet to publicise the development of the environment strategy; and
 - (d) establish an Environment Strategy Members' Working Group to assist with the development and delivery of the environment strategy.

Contact Officer: Richard Preston, Head of Environment & Transport

☎ 01480 388340

ANNEX A

Huntingdonshire District Council Environment Strategy

Introduction

- Environment Strategy for Huntingdonshire
- Huntingdonshire District Council's commitment

ONE - Tackling Climate Change

- Increasing Energy Efficiency
- Increasing the use of Renewable Energy
- Encouraging more Sustainable Travel
- Adapting to climate change

TWO - Using Resources Efficiently

- Reducing Waste going to Landfill
- Increase Water Efficiency
- Encourage Sustainable Purchasing
- Making Best Use of Land and Enhancing Landscape Diversity

THREE - Protecting and Improving our Environment

- Improving air quality in Huntingdonshire
- Minimising harm from contaminated or polluted land
- Protecting and enhance biodiversity
- Increasing access to green space
- Improving the cleanliness of Huntingdonshire's streets
- Creating a safer environment by reducing anti-social behaviour

Implementation – Developing a Working Strategy

- Developing delivery mechanisms
- Consultation process
- Two-year Delivery Action Plan

Environment Strategy for Huntingdonshire

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. 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.

Controlling our consumption of natural resources is pivotal to achieving sustainable development. Natural resources include the timber and minerals we use in construction, the land we build on, the fossil fuels used for energy production and travel, the water that we drink and the air that we breathe (but also pollute). These are not inexhaustible and our objective must be to ensure that Huntingdonshire consumes no more than its fair share of those resources. As an organisation the Council will review its own environmental footprint and that of the district of Huntingdonshire.

Where we cannot easily or immediately change what we are doing we must seek ways to mitigate the adverse impacts. A change to renewable energy can reduce our reliance on burning fossil fuels to generate energy but is unlikely ever to replace it entirely. We can reduce our demand for energy by making our homes and businesses as energy efficient as possible and we can help to mitigate the damage to the atmosphere caused by the carbon dioxide resulting from burning fossil fuels by planting trees that take carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. The link between carbon dioxide production and global climate change is irrefutable and local measures to reduce emissions are an imperative.

Tackling climate change is the first theme of this environmental strategy. It will complement the objectives in the Local Development Framework and the commitments already contained in the community strategy. Furthermore, it will support the achievement of the targets adopted by the Eastern Regional Assembly which already has acknowledged the risk that this low-lying region runs from climate change. The Council has already demonstrated its commitment by signing the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change.

The forecast growth in the district will generate massive demand for construction materials, increase local consumption and has the potential to detract from the council's achievements in reducing household waste. The Council will need to ensure that the efficient use of natural resources is a principal consideration in the delivery of growth and providing services to new residents of the district. The efficient use of resources will be the second key theme of this environmental strategy.

When considering our use of resources it will be important to consider the role that water has already played in shaping Huntingdonshire. The flood plains of the Rivers Great Ouse and Nene and the fens give the district a unique character and were responsible for the rich agriculture that brought prosperity to the district in years gone by. Climate change brings with it the risk of rising sea levels and more intense rainfall and, therefore, a greater likelihood of flooding. However, winter rainfall will become less reliable and the area will become drier and less able to sustain the demand for water from new development.

The final theme for this strategy is protecting and improving our environment and will look at the existing and future contribution that the broad spectrum of Council services can make to the district. Communities must be free to enjoy and value their local environment. This is the essence of the national 'clean, green and safe' agenda. It is about people's perceptions and these are shaped by how clean the streets are, how easy it is for them to visit open countryside and how safe they feel in their homes and on the local streets. Street cleaning, waste collection, environmental health and community safety are all services provided by the Council that contribute to people's perceptions of their locality.

Major countryside initiatives such as the Great Fen Project, and country parks such as Paxton Pits and Needingworth provide accessible countryside as well as creating and enhancing habitat and increasing bio-diversity. They bring the added benefit of proving vegetation that takes up carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and help to mitigate the man-made discharges that contribute to climate change. This is just one example of how the themes within the strategy are inseparable and is a feature which will be increasingly apparent in the detail of the Council's environmental strategy.

On a global level the past 20 years have seen a growing realisation that the current model of development is unsustainable. In other words we are living beyond our means. From the loss of biodiversity with the felling of rainforests to the negative effect our consumption patterns are having on the environment and the climate. Our way of life is placing an increasing burden on the planet - this cannot be sustained. The most noticeable impact on our environment is climate change. The weather is changing. Temperatures and sea levels are rising. Summers are getting hotter, winters wetter.

What does this mean for Huntingdonshire? What will it be like to live here? What can we – HDC and you do about it?

The environmental footprints of an individual, organisation, district or country are the result of many individual choices, activities and policies. This means that actions that lead to changes in policy and the ways products are produced are just as important as changing personal lifestyles.

As part of the development of The Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire, consultation with local people and other organisations in Huntingdonshire established a vision and priorities for the District.

OUR VISION

“Huntingdonshire, where...

we make the most of opportunities that come from growth;
our local people can realise their potential;
we balance our social, economic and environmental needs; and
we have a good quality of life.”

This strategy will encourage HDC to look at the environmental footprint of the district council and of the district of Huntingdonshire to identify where we can take action to create more sustainable communities that will not only benefit today's residents, through a better quality of life, but crucially help to secure our vision today and for future generations.

This strategy will include clear actions to promote sustainability by involving people, leading by example and by demonstrating our commitment to deliver the Council's six key priorities, all of which work towards ensuring a good quality of life in Huntingdonshire:

- Safe & active communities
- A clean, green & attractive environment
- Housing which meets local needs
- A healthy population
- A strong & diverse local economy
- Accessible services & transport choices

In addition, the Environment Strategy will take into account national priorities and initiatives, issues that the Huntingdonshire Community Partnership has identified as its priorities, the Council's current ongoing programmes and the aims, objectives and targets of various council strategies already working towards sustainable development. All of which work together to achieve an overall vision of Huntingdonshire.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE

Although Huntingdonshire faces many challenges in the journey to achieving these six priorities/overall vision, this strategy identifies the main environmental challenges we need to overcome to achieve this vision.

These are:

1. Tackling Climate Change
2. Using Resources Efficiently

3. Protecting & Improving the Environment

Huntingdonshire District Council's Commitment

The Council will make continual, measurable progress in its environmental performance, reduce its own environmental impact and strive to improve the environment.

It will fulfil its statutory environmental responsibilities and ensure that all operations and activities carried out on its behalf, comply with, or exceed, relevant statutory environmental requirements.

The Council will foster a sense of responsibility for the environment amongst its employees, elected Members and the local community and ensure that both employees and contractors act in accordance with this policy and in compliance with its adopted Environmental Management System.

The Council will provide regular and concise information regarding its environmental performance.

Through this strategy and an effective Environmental Management System, the Council aims to:

- Review and understand the environmental impact of service delivery and office-based activities.
- Communicate the achievement of environmental and sustainable development objectives and targets.
- Promote sustainable development both within its own offices and in all of its activities by embedding sustainable development in the decision-making process and service delivery.
- Set strategic objectives and targets for this policy with regular monitoring, reporting and review of progress.
- Achieve continual improvement in environmental performance through the implementation of an Environmental Management System, for example ISO 14001 or EMAS
- Influence the culture of employees by communicating the policy and providing adequate training to achieve this policy.

Through the Council's various strategies, plans and policies, an integrated system will be created to drive forward environmentally aware initiatives in all service areas to achieve a significant impact on the environment.

Priority 1: Tackling climate change

Strategic Objective: Reduce Greenhouse gas emissions

This Strategy will develop through consultation with the Carbon Trust and other stakeholders, specific targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions in the council's own operations, in homes in the district and in the transport sector. These targets will be consistent with the Government's strategy, "Climate Change: The UK Programme 2006", of a CO₂ reduction target of 20% below 1990 levels by 2010 and to reduce emissions by 60% below 1990 levels by 2050. Our corporate strategy "Growing Success" now recognises the need to reduce greenhouse gases as one of its priority community objectives.

Strategic Aim (1a): Increase Energy Efficiency

"Huntingdonshire District Council will increase the energy efficiency of council owned buildings and encourage similar good practice in households and businesses in the District."

Energy use and production through the burning of fossil fuels is the major contributor to emissions of greenhouse gases. Using energy more efficiently is a factor in reducing our impact on climate change. Energy efficiency is not just good in terms of the environment; it also reduces fuel bills for residents and businesses.

Energy is used in Council buildings for space heating and cooling, hot water, lighting, and powering electrical equipment such as computers and the operation of other appliances such as lifts and automatic doors. Reducing energy used in Council buildings will save money and significantly reduce carbon emissions.

The Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) 1995 places a duty on the Council to identify and promote ways in which it will be possible to achieve a 30% reduction in the District's domestic energy consumption over the 15 years to 2010/2011. Based on energy efficiency measures installed to date, a reduction in energy consumption of 23.4% has been achieved against 1996 baseline figures.

Since April 2000, the Council has also reported to the Government its strategy and achievements to reduce fuel poverty amongst District residents. Fuel poverty arises when a household can't afford to pay for the energy they need to keep their homes heated to an acceptable temperature. This may arise from the poor energy efficiency of houses due to age, inefficient heating systems, the use of expensive fuels, lack of insulation, or the income of the householders. Those particularly vulnerable include the elderly and single occupancy homes. The recently published Stern Review suggests that, as a result of predicted climate change, there is likely to be a reduced demand for heating in winter but increased energy consumption for cooling homes in summer. A growing demand for relatively low cost, high energy, portable air conditioning units is already being satisfied by DIY outlets. It will be important to design homes to take account of this through encouraging the use of active ventilation systems.

Strategic Aim (1a): Actions

- Introduce improved standards to reduce carbon emissions
- Reduction in Council's energy consumption in all its buildings
- Raise awareness of and encourage the installation of energy efficiency measures by local businesses, institutions and householders
- Target the promotion of the most cost effective energy efficiency measures and those likely to achieve the greatest reductions in carbon emissions
- Achieve the Decent Homes Standard for housing stock managed by Registered Social Landlords and properties in the Private sector
- Develop and implement a Fuel Poverty Strategy to reduce fuel bills for vulnerable residents
- Improve energy efficiency through the Home Energy Conservation Act

Strategic Aim (1b): Increase the proportion of energy produced and used which comes from renewable resources

“Huntingdonshire District Council will increase the proportion of energy produced and used which comes from renewable resources in council owned buildings and promote and encourage renewable technology and energy tariffs to households and businesses in the District.”

Developing renewable technologies that can provide clean energy and reduce our ‘carbon footprint’ will significantly reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. The UK currently generates around 4% of its electricity needs from renewable sources, but significant growth is required if carbon emissions are to be reduced and if any future energy gap is to be bridged.

The UK Government’s target is for 10% of electricity to come from renewables by 2010, with an aspiration for this to rise to 20% by 2020. The East of England has a specific target within the Regional Spatial Strategy, for the installation of 821MW of onshore renewable electricity by 2010. The Red Tile farm wind farm recently installed within the district contributes 24MW towards this regional target and the council will support other such developments where appropriate within the District.

On a smaller scale the council will actively facilitate the introduction of renewable energy in individual homes in the district, seeking opportunities to grant fund where possible the installation of technologies likely to achieve the greatest reduction in carbon emissions.

Technologies encompassed by micro-generation include:

- solar (thermal) for hot water systems
- solar (photovoltaic) to provide electricity
- heat pumps
- micro-wind (including rooftop mounted turbines)
- biomass
- micro combined heat and power (CHP) schemes

Such ‘micro-generation’ technologies can be highly effective in communal dwellings and community facilities e.g. combined heat and power servicing leisure centres, can achieve relatively large potential carbon savings, which offset the high up front installation cost.

As part of the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough Growth Area, Huntingdonshire will see significant levels of new development by 2020. It is anticipated that this will amount to around 20,000 new homes.

It will be vitally important to encourage the installation of renewable technology in as many of these new homes as possible. The council will require developers to incorporate renewable energy sources on all major sites in line with recommendations within the East of England Regional Spatial Strategy. Where renewable technologies are not installed, ‘future proofing’ to facilitate the easy installation of renewable energy technologies during their design life of a property, will be encouraged through the planning process.

Strategic Aim (1b): Actions

- Increase the amount of the Council’s electricity procured from renewable sources.
- Carry out feasibility studies into the installation of renewable sources of energy at new council buildings and when replacing heating systems in existing buildings
- Raise awareness of and encourage the installation of renewable energy by local businesses, institutions and householders
- Require a minimum of 10% renewable energy generation from all major developments (50+ units)
- Work to support community scale renewable energy projects

Strategic Aim (1c): Encourage more sustainable travel

“Huntingdonshire District Council will encourage more sustainable travel for work practices amongst its own employees as well as promoting and encouraging the use and development of more sustainable modes of travel across the District.”

The transport sector is the third largest source of greenhouse gas emissions (Climate Change UK Programme). But more importantly it is the fastest growing source. Left unchecked, car traffic could grow by about 20% over the next two decades and van and lorry traffic is forecast to grow by about 22%. Fuel use in the transport sector is the fastest growing contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the UK and demand is increasing year on year.

Action to tackle the impacts of this growth on congestion and pollution and to reduce the impact of transport on the environment is being taken forward as one of the government's main priorities.

The council is committed to reducing transport related carbon emissions (particularly from road traffic) and will work with the transport authority (Cambridgeshire County Council) to achieve an integrated transport network and to develop and promote alternatives to the single occupancy use of the private car.

The council is working to reduce the impact of its own transport activities and will introduce site specific employee travel plans, designed to encourage employees to use cars only when absolutely necessary and to promote the use of alternative forms of transport, such as fuel efficient pool cars, car sharing, cycling, walking and using public transport.

The Council will investigate methods for reducing emissions from its fleet and will ensure that emissions are a key consideration when specifying new vehicles. This strategy will include options for advising employees how they can reduce transport emissions, by employing economical driving techniques for example.

Strategic Aim (1c): Actions

- Support more opportunities for residents to walk, cycle and use public transport
- Develop and implement site specific employee Travel Plans for each of the Council's main sites.
- Purchase a fleet of low emission pool vehicles for use by Council employees.
- Effective management of Council's own vehicle fleet to reduce vehicle emissions
- Encourage schools and businesses to develop travel plans by working in partnership with County Council, the Local Strategic Partnership and the planning process
- Ensure safe access for pedestrians and cyclists
- Promote the implementation of the Huntingdonshire Car Parking Strategy, to manage demand for car parking in town centre locations
- Take part in annual events to promote alternative modes of travel

Strategic Aim (1d): Ensure buildings, services and the community are able to adapt to climate change

“Huntingdonshire District Council will work towards ensuring buildings, services and the community are able to adapt to climate change”

Whatever action is taken now to mitigate climate change, it will take decades to bring emissions of greenhouse gases under sufficient control that the concentrations of the gases in the air stop rising. Significant climate change is now unavoidable and we have no choice but to begin adapting to changes in average weather and also preparing for extremes of weather.

These extremes of weather will have a number of implications for the built environment and spatial development, for example, warmer temperatures will effect the thermal comfort in buildings, while wetter winters may lead to increased risk of flooding. Therefore it is essential that new development is planned in such a way that it responds and adapts to these pressures.

Huntingdonshire District Council provides guidance to developers in relation to avoiding flood plains and areas at greater risk of flooding. Our Emergency planning Section has strategies for dealing with extreme weather events, flooding and drought. Huntingdonshire District Council, as a service provider at the core of the community needs to be prepared to deal with all possible outcomes.

Huntingdonshire District Council recognises households, businesses and communities in Huntingdonshire all have an impact on climate change and by addressing this issue and working on the aims of this strategy we can help reduce the impact Huntingdonshire is having on our climate.

Although we are working hard to reduce the human activity that contributes to climate change we also acknowledge that some amount of climate change is inevitable and we need to adapt to the consequences of climate change. This centres on protecting ourselves from the effects of hotter drier summers and wetter winters with more frequent storm and flood events.

This is best achieved by working in partnership with the range of agencies that are active throughout the District. These partners include the Environment Agency, Cambridgeshire County Council and the emergency services.

Strategic Aim (1d): Actions

- Improve awareness on flood warnings in conjunction with the Environment Agency
- Fully integrate climate change issues into the Emergency Plan
- Develop improvement plans for relief of particular flood areas
- Implement where possible Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS) to manage run-off rates.
- Encourage grey water recycling schemes in all major developments
- Work with Local Authorities to plan together for climate change impacts
- Develop accurate baseline data for greenhouse gas emissions

Priority 2: Using Resources Efficiently

Strategic Objective: Reduce the environmental impact of resource use

Everybody consumes resources. When people consume resources either by buying manufactured products, driving a car or turning on the tap at home, there are associated impacts on the environment.

As we have become more affluent we have bought more goods, travelled further and demanded greater convenience. If these demands on the Earth's resources continue to increase we will be causing irreparable harm to the environment. The use of resources can often be associated with the production of waste, air polluting gases, degradation of natural habitats and depletion in natural resources such as fossil fuels and water.

The UK Government have committed themselves to "encourage and promote the development of a ten year framework of programmes ... to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production".

Resource efficiency is an important area for the UK. It is one of the four priority areas for UK action set out in the new Sustainable Development Strategy, Securing the Future.

There are inefficiencies in the whole of the 'cycle of production'. From the impacts of mining the raw materials, the production and transporting of materials and products which result in emissions, to the waste products that end up in landfill from the production process as well as the disposal requirements of the product at the end of its life cycle. By addressing how we can use resources more efficiently, and promoting this to businesses and consumers in Huntingdonshire, everyone can save money as well as benefit the environment. By far the largest amount of waste that goes to landfill is produced by the industrial and commercial sectors, over which the council has little influence, which is where recycling should be encouraged to reach domestic levels, where the council has significant influence.

Strategic Aim (2a): Reduce the amount of waste disposed of to landfill

"Huntingdonshire District Council will reduce the amount of waste produced and sent to landfill and encourage similar good practice in households and businesses in the District."

Waste is a major environmental challenge, landfill space is scarce and many improvements and innovations in recycling need to be made to conserve the space available and meet European requirements to reduce dependency on landfill.

The Council has a crucial role in providing an effective waste collection and recycling service but it is also crucial that we emphasise the importance of reducing waste as a key component in becoming more resource efficient.

A successful waste management programme leads to major reductions in the problems associated with landfill disposal, reducing pollution, health hazards, impacts upon biodiversity and loss of amenity. Methane, a common landfill gas is also a potent greenhouse gas.

The amount we waste and the breakdown of waste products has a big impact on climate change. The products we throw away may have taken a significant amount of energy to produce and more often than not what we throw away can be re-used either for its original purpose or for something different.

When biodegradable waste breaks down in landfill sites it gives off a gas which is mainly a mixture of up to 65% methane and 35% carbon dioxide. As these are both potent greenhouse gases it is important to examine the impact of waste disposal to landfill.

Therefore we need to reduce the amount that we put in the bin in the first place and once we have decided we have finished with a product, we need to dispose of it in an environmentally responsible way.

Since 2003 the Council has improved the district's recycling performance substantially. A three bin alternate weekly collection receives high levels of customer satisfaction, high participation, and a 49% recycling rate in 2005/2006 (the sixth highest local authority recycling rate in the UK)

This success is yet to be replicated throughout all the Council's many sites. Day to day functioning of the council results in a great deal of waste, a large proportion of which is paper that is recycled, but there are still many waste streams that could be recycled that are currently heading straight for landfill. Much more can be done and this strategy will highlight necessary improvements to achieve even greater recycling performance within the Council as well as households and businesses in Huntingdonshire.

Strategic Aim (2a): Actions

- Enhanced domestic recyclable waste collection service to increase domestic recycling to 50%
- Development of Waste Minimisation Strategy in conjunction with the RECAP Partnership
- Waste minimisation and recycling education and promotion campaign
- Reduce amount of Council's own waste going to landfill by 20% over next 5 years
- Develop targeted promotions for key waste streams
- Facilitate the introduction of a trade waste recycling collection service for small to medium sized businesses in the District

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Strategic Aim (2b): Increase the efficiency of the use of water resources

“Huntingdonshire District Council will reduce the amount of water used by Council buildings and services and encourage similar good practice in households and businesses in the District.”

Water resources are of international and national concern and becoming ever more a significant environmental issue in the East of England, which is now officially classed as ‘semi-arid’ and has the lowest rainfall in the UK.

The council uses water for a wide range of functions such as in swimming pools, cleaning streets, grounds maintenance and general use within its own building. It is important that the council seeks to introduce measures to improve the council’s own water utilisation and ‘design-in’ water efficiency measures.

Many uses of water do not require that water be of drinking quality. Harvested rainwater and ‘grey water’ collected after it has been used for washing and showering, is adequate for uses such as watering gardens and flushing toilets. This not only makes wise use of a natural resource but can also have significant cost savings.

Domestic water use has risen year on year for the last 30 years. The extensive housing growth planned for Huntingdonshire to 2020 will place significant further pressure on water supplies. To combat this, the promotion of water efficiency will be critically important.

The Environment Agency has suggested that a 25% reduction in water consumption at all new properties and an 8% reduction at all existing properties, achieved against a 2004 baseline figures, will be required to avoid the need to the development of major new water storage resources.

Adopting a systematic approach to water reduction, through the installation of some or all of the measures listed below can typically result in a 20 – 50% fall in water consumption.

- Dual flush toilets
- Aerated or flow regulated taps
- Showers with low flow rates
- Best practice washing machines/dishwashers
- Rainwater collection facilities (e.g. water butts)

At larger developments (above 50 units) the council will require the specification of water saving appliances to a 25% reduction in water consumption.

Strategic Aim (2b): Actions

- Promote water saving measures such as Water Butts for domestic rainwater harvesting
- Introduce rainwater harvesting systems at all new Council sites.
- Require a 25% reduction in water usage at all major developments (over 50 units), against the 2004 baseline figure of 153 litres per household per day.

Strategic Aim (2c): Encourage Sustainable Purchasing

“Huntingdonshire District Council will implement and follow a code of sustainable purchasing and encourage similar good practice in households and businesses in the District.”

Everything we buy and use has an impact on the environment and can add to the effects of climate change. Products such as computers, stationery, vehicles and furniture have impacts throughout their life, and it's the same for the services we buy such as waste management, water and energy.

In some cases, we aren't aware of these impacts. They may happen in the early stages of a product's life (e.g. through mining the raw materials needed to make our computers, or cutting down the trees to make our paper), or after we have finished using it (e.g. when it is sitting in a landfill).

It is possible to purchase goods and services in a more sustainable way by for example specifying environmentally preferred products, looking at the whole life costing of a product, and, through our contracts with suppliers, to encourage them to operate green and sustainable procurement policies. Food miles, the distance our food travels from where it has been grown to where we buy it, has become an important issue.

The food system accounts for up to 40% of all UK road freight and a typical Sunday meal could have travelled 49000 miles, equivalent to 2 trips around the world. Supporting local food production and consumption through farmers' markets and farm shops can drastically reduce food miles and benefit the local economy at the same time.

Strategic Aim (2c): Actions

- Implement Green Purchasing Policy
- Purchase Council office furniture from sustainable forestry sources and implement a program of repair to damaged furniture where possible and feasible
- All Council's own computers, photocopiers and printers with high energy efficiency rating
- Promote the use sustainable construction practices through the planning process at all developments within the district
- Renewable energy use and energy efficiency measures are to be specified in all contract specifications where applicable
- Continue to develop and support the local farmers' markets
- Develop further opportunities for the sale of locally produced food in Huntingdonshire

Strategic Aim (2d): Making Best Use of Land and Enhancing Landscape Diversity

“The Council will work to make more use of previously developed land and existing buildings, and use land more efficiently, to achieve sustainable growth – whilst maintaining the landscape value of the District”

The eastern region is one of the UK’s fastest growing regions, making a significant contribution to the national economy. This also means that it faces the pressures of growth, putting land availability for development at a premium.

It is important to retain landscapes of value in the district that may be threatened by proposals to build houses, for example. We need to know where these places are so that we can use the planning system to make sure they aren’t damaged.

Bringing land back into productive use eases pressure on valuable Greenfield or environmentally sensitive landscapes and is in accordance with the aims of sustainable development.

Regional Planning Guidance 6 sets an initial target for Cambridgeshire of developing at least 50% of housing on previously developed sites by 2008.

The council will encourage developments with greater intensity of at locations accessible to good public transport services e.g. town centres and nodes along good public transport corridors,

Strategic Aim (2d): Actions

- Increase the proportion of housing development on previously developed land, to at least 50% by 2008.
- Identify and ensure the protection of landscapes of value and heritage sites in the district.
- Encourage developments with a density of 30 – 50 dwellings per hectare

Priority 3: Protecting & Improving our Environment

Strategic Objective:

To protect and enhance the environmental capital of Huntingdonshire.

Huntingdonshire benefits from a number of parks and green spaces which contribute significantly to the quality of life and wellbeing of those living and working in the District. The council is committed to protecting these green spaces and seeking to improve their value for wildlife and community leisure.

The rivers Nene and Great Ouse flow through the heart of the district and their species rich valleys are considerable environmental assets. Imaginative management and promotion of such sites will maximise their contribution to regional and national biodiversity, whilst encouraging the potential for tourism and for engaging the wider community.

The Great Fen Project is a habitat restoration scheme of international significance, which will restore over 3,000 hectares of farmland in the district to fenland wildlife habitat by connecting and enlarging the two vitally important National Nature Reserves of Woodwalton and Holme Fen.

Realising the full value of the environmental capital within the District is central to the Council's role as a 'community leader' and through working with schools, volunteers and community groups much valuable work has already been done to encourage involvement and foster environmental consideration.

Such work is complimented by the regulatory role of the Council in improving air quality and remedying land contamination.

Strategic Aim (3a): Improve air quality in Huntingdonshire

"Huntingdonshire District Council will minimise its own contributions to pollution arising from its activities and encourage similar good practice in households and businesses in the district."

Poor air quality can cause harm to people, plant and animal life, materials and structures. The main sources of air pollution are air and road transport, energy generation, industrial processes and domestic sources. Some pollutants can combine to form even more damaging secondary pollutants, for example to create low-level ozone, one of the major components of urban smog.

The UK's air has long been polluted. As recently as the 1950s, major cities in the UK were frequently engulfed in smog. Since then, government clean air regulations, the closure coal-fired power stations and increasing use of central heating rather than coal to warm our homes, has ensured that smog is no longer such a problem. Pollution is now less visible, but is still damaging our health. It is estimated that air pollution is responsible for around 20,000 premature deaths each year and the most vulnerable people are children, older people and those with heart and lung problems. There is also considerable impact in terms of corrosion and damage to buildings.

In 1995 The Environment Act was passed. This provided a new statutory framework for air quality management. In response to this, in 1997 the Government established a National Air Quality Strategy (NAQS). This demonstrated that good air quality was seen to be important to sustainable development and the creation of an environment where individuals and communities can thrive.

The NAQS set standards for eight air pollutants. These are:

Benzene	1,3-butadiene
Carbon Monoxide	Lead
Nitrogen Dioxide	Ozone
Fine Particles (PM ₁₀)	Sulphur Dioxide

The NAQS sets objectives and requires local authorities to take steps to review and assess air quality in a process known as Local Air Quality Management. This process helps ensure air quality is taken into consideration during local authority decision and policy-making processes and provides the basis for action where improvements are found to be necessary.

The Environment Agency regulates emissions from the most potentially polluting processes. The prevention of pollution from other sources is the responsibility of local authorities and we have a duty to review and assess local air quality so as to see if national air quality objectives are being met. We are also responsible for monitoring air quality. The UK Government has developed an Air Pollution Banding system to help interpret information about air quality and the likely healthy effects. A value of 1 to 3 is low while 10 (the maximum) is very high and this is the system we use to monitor air quality in the district.

A partnership of the five District Councils and the County Council was set up in 1997 to tackle air quality issues. Since 1997, two Air Quality Review and Assessment (AQRA) reports have been published.

Major sources of air pollution in the district are motor vehicle emissions, especially in more urban centres and along major trunk roads, together with a number of industrial processes. Pollution significantly affects the quality of people's lives, their health and the environment. The Council has a legal duty to identify, monitor and manage air pollution levels and manage statutory nuisances, e.g. fumes or gases emitted from premises.

The government's National Air Quality Strategy places responsibility for reducing pollution with local authorities, which are required to meet targets under the Environment Act 1995 but, we all contribute to pollution, and everyone has a role to play if our air is to get cleaner.

Strategic Aim (3a): Actions

- Testing new zero pollution buses.
- Ensuring taxis will become cleaner; and that the most polluting vehicles will not have their licences renewed.
- Reducing traffic growth by improving public transport and encouraging developers to make easy access to public transport part of new developments.
- Buy or lease cleaner vehicles.
- Use CleanUp and PowerShift grants to reduce pollution from vehicles
- Produce travel plans, to help staff to walk, cycle or use public transport to get to work: for example by putting in cycle racks and showers.
- Check that the goods and services purchased come from businesses that use less polluting vehicles and minimise their energy use.
- Design more energy-efficient, less polluting buildings that can be reached easily by public transport, by bicycle or on foot.
- Build homes, shops and leisure facilities close together so reducing the need to travel.

Strategic Aim (3b): Minimise harm from contaminated land and remediate where necessary.

“Huntingdonshire District Council will minimise the threat to health, controlled waters and/or the wider environment from land which is contaminated or polluted and ensure that where identified, appropriate remediation will be undertaken”

Contaminated land usually results from industrial pollution that adds substances to the ground that can cause harm to humans or ecosystems, or may be the cause of pollution to local water systems. Contamination, in most cases, arises from a previous use of the site, or an adjacent site, that had an industrial activity on it at one time or another.

The existence of contamination presents its own threats to sustainable development:

- it impedes social progress, depriving local people of a clean and healthy environment;
- it threatens wider damage to the environment and to wildlife;
- it inhibits the prudent use of land and soil resources, particularly by obstructing the redevelopment of previously developed land and increasing development pressures on green -field areas;
- the cost of remediation represents a high burden on individual companies, home and other land owners, and the economy as a whole; and
- the fear of contamination alone can have an adverse effect on property values and lead to blight.

Under Part IIA of the Environment Protection Act 1990, for land to be classed as officially ‘contaminated’, the local authority (which acts as the enforcing authority) must have identified whether substances present in, on, or under the land, may cause:

- significant harm;
- a significant possibility of such harm;
- pollution of controlled waters;
- or the likelihood of pollution of controlled waters.

A risk-based approach is used to identify contaminated land. A site is assessed on the current use of the land and the prevailing circumstances. To be considered a risk, there must be a source of contamination.

The Council’s process for identifying potentially contaminated sites can be found in the Council’s Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy. Identifying contaminated land however is only the first part. Once it has been correctly identified, the risk needs to be dealt with and a programme of remediation must be undertaken. It is important to understand that the purpose of remediation is to reduce any significant risks posed by contaminated land; it is not necessarily to decontaminate the land. In other words a programme of remediation may not eliminate all possible future risks or remove all the pollutants.

The Council has produced a Remediation Strategy to make it easier for residents and businesses to understand what the remediation process involves.

Strategic Aim (3b): Actions

- to identify and remove unacceptable risks to human health and the environment;
- to seek to bring damaged land back into beneficial use; and
- to seek to ensure that the cost burdens faced by individuals, companies and society as a whole are proportionate, manageable and economically sustainable.

Strategic Aim (3c): Protect and enhance biodiversity

“Huntingdonshire District Council will encourage the management, enhancement and further creation of green space within the district to stimulate biodiversity. It will also promote the appreciation of nature in partnership with community groups, households and businesses in the district.”

Biodiversity is the variety of life on Earth – the myriad plants and animals and the places where they live. We should protect and conserve wildlife – our natural heritage – for its own sake, and for future generations of people. They too should be able to enjoy wild places, just as we can today. Contact with the natural world is inspiring, and promotes good physical and mental health. They are great places for learning about nature too.

Huntingdonshire is predominantly a rural district with a variety of green spaces including rivers, gardens, parks, farmland, and woods which make up a large proportion of the district. The green spaces support a tremendous variety of plants and animals and some of the most important wildlife habitats in the area include woodlands, meadows, wetlands, rivers, parks, and the ‘urban’ habitats found, for example, on disused railway land or areas where buildings have been demolished and nature has taken over.

Important places for biodiversity may be threatened by proposals to build houses, for example. We need to know where these places are, so that we can use the planning system to make sure they aren’t damaged. They must also be looked after in the right way. For example, a meadow will gradually fill up with bushes if the grass is never cut nor grazed, and many wild flowers will die out.

We also need to keep an eye on changes in wildlife, so we notice when there are problems.

The UK Government published Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan in 1994. This sets out the broad strategy for conserving and enhancing wild species and wildlife habitats in the UK. It also initiated the production of detailed action plans (between 1995 and 1999) to guide the work needed to conserve the individual habitats and species most in need of conservation in the UK. These action plans contained targets for the maintenance, restoration and, in many cases, expansion of the priority habitat. Expansion of existing habitat extent is important in order to start to redress historical habitat loss, create more habitats for priority species and help wildlife withstand pressures and challenges.

The revised habitat targets for England were published in November 2006 as part of the update of the England Biodiversity Strategy

Strategic Aim (3c): Actions

- Develop Community Involvement in green spaces and Biodiversity Projects
- Enhance neglected green spaces with the local communities
- Enhance the condition of SSSI's and CWS
- Establish principles for the use and management of river water and the land beside it.
- Promote the conservation and enhancement of farmland biodiversity.
- Encourage greening of the built environment and the use of open spaces in ecologically sensitive ways.
- Encourage experience of the natural world and promote environmental education.
- Supports partnerships at District wide and local levels to produce and implement Biodiversity Action Plans.
- Encourage the business community to play a major role in implementing the programme for conserving biodiversity.
- Ensure that major new development projects include provision for biodiversity.

Strategic Aim (3d): Increase access to green space

“Huntingdonshire District Council acknowledges the importance of green space in contributing to the quality of life of those living and working in the district and supports the protection and enhancement of green spaces to encourage a diverse range of leisure and amenity uses”.

Enhancing the environmental value of major sites within the district will be considered with regard to the following:

- **Parks and gardens** - provide high quality opportunities for informal recreation and community events
- **Green Corridors** - popular for walking, cycling and horse-riding, whether for leisure purposes or travel, also provide opportunities for wildlife migration
- **Amenity Green Space** - provides opportunities for informal activities close to home or work and can enhance the appearance of residential or other areas
- **Outdoor Sports Facilities** - Participation in outdoor sports, such as pitch sports, tennis, bowls, athletics or countryside and water sports`
- **Allotments and Community Gardens**- provide opportunities for those people who wish to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion
- **Provision for Children and Young People** - in the form of equipped play areas, skateboard parks and teenage shelters enable safe play and social interaction

Strategic Aim (3d): Actions

- Increase quantity and quality of green space through Section 106 agreements
- Work with partners to increase the area of local public open space
- Work with partners to develop the Great Fen, Needingworth Wetland and Paxton Pits Nature Reserve into regional green space projects.
- Promote sites through national shows, website and promotional leaflets
- Develop footpath links to areas of population
- Enhance interpretation by provision of leaflets and information boards
- Support the Parish Paths Partnership
- Maintain key sites to Green Flag Award status

Strategic Aim (3e): Improve the cleanliness of streets

“Huntingdonshire District Council will continue to maintain the cleanliness of our street to the highest possible standards and educate residents, households, communities and businesses in the district about how they can maintain clean streets.”

The Council prides itself on keeping the streets of the towns and villages within the district clean and litter free. To do this we provide litter bins in public open spaces and on streets and pavements, mechanical street sweeping services and litter picking in towns and along major verges. These environmental measures coupled with effective street cleaning services help to make Huntingdonshire such a pleasant place to live and work.

Litter is not the only challenge we face when keeping Huntingdonshire clean. Problems ranging from fly-tipping, graffiti, abandoned vehicles through to dog fouling and chewing gum on our streets all have a detrimental impact on Huntingdonshire's street scene.

Evidence suggests that a poor quality street scene can have far reaching social and economic impacts. Consultations undertaken as part of the Community Strategy with the people of Huntingdonshire have shown that resident's sense of pride in their community can be greatly reduced as a result of unclean streets and the fear of crime can be increased as a result of graffiti and abandoned vehicles in their neighbourhood. This can impact on Huntingdonshire's attractiveness as a place to live and work, affecting the economic prosperity of the District.

In order to maintain the cleanliness of our streets the Council reports several indicators of performance in relation to the following areas:

- **Litter, Graffiti & Flyposting**

Litter accumulation is monitored in accordance with the ENCAMS Litter monitoring regime which requires the council to survey the streets in the district every four months. The survey grades streets from A to D on the level of litter and sediment built up on streets and grass areas.

- **Fly tipping**

The Council's Operations Division collect all waste that has been reported by the public as fly-tipping. We aim to remove all waste reported as fly tipping within three days of receiving the report. This is unless the waste reported appears to be hazardous in nature in which case we aim to collect it sooner.

- **Abandoned vehicles**

All abandoned vehicles reported by the public are then investigated by the Council's Operations Division. Abandoned vehicles reported must be investigated within 24 hours and if judged by the Council to have been abandoned can (if on public land) be authorised for removal within 24 hours.

Removal is undertaken by a private company which then takes the vehicle to an Authorised Treatment Facility (ATF) for de-polluting it is then crushed and recycled.

Strategic Aim (3e): Actions

- To achieve an 'A' rating for at least 92% of streets in the District by 2007/08
- To achieve 'Grade One' performance for fly-tipping removal across the District
- To investigate 98% of all vehicles reported as abandoned within 24 hours
- To remove 80% of all vehicles identified as abandoned within 24hours

Strategic Aim (3f): Create a safer environment by reducing anti-social behaviour

“Huntingdonshire District Council will work to address anti-social behaviour in Huntingdonshire in partnership with the Police, the local people and other public agencies.”

Anti-social behaviour can be seen in a number of different forms, and may range from the dropping of litter to actual violence against people and property. Whatever the level of anti-social behaviour, its effects are the same, and in many cases areas will have experience of both crime and fear of crime, which in turn has a detrimental impact on the surrounding environment.

In 1998 the Government brought into force the Crime & Disorder Act. The law was introduced in response to growing public concern about anti-social behaviour (ASB) from individuals or groups who cause alarm, distress or harassment within the community. In 2003 the Government launched the TOGETHER campaign and published an action plan called ‘Together: Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour.’

Following this, the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 was introduced to help the police and local authorities work together with local people to tackle ASB.

The Crime & Disorder Act 1998 also required the establishment of Community Safety Partnerships which bring together the Police, local authorities and other public agencies to reduce crime and help tackle its causes.

The Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership (HCSP) put together their first Community Safety Strategy in 1999 and has recently produced a new strategy for the period 2005-08. There is also a free standing Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy which supports action towards delivering the targets and objectives set out in the Community Safety Strategy.

Drug misuse and dealing; criminal damage and vandalism; teenagers hanging around and vehicle related nuisance are the issues that are highlighted as the most concern in consultation with the people of Huntingdonshire. Therefore the aim of the Huntingdonshire Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy is to identify and address anti-social behaviour by taking effective action to tackle anti-social behaviour in Huntingdonshire.

Strategic Aim (3f): Actions

- Target problem individuals, focusing on prevention and enforcement
- To use, where appropriate, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) to disrupt the behaviour of perpetrators of anti-social behaviour
- To carry out targeted work to reduce alcohol related anti-social behaviour in town centres in Huntingdonshire
- To reduce the number of malicious fires
- To reduce the amount of criminal damage occurring in the district
- To support and participate in, partnership working and information sharing through ASB problem solving groups to address anti-social behaviour

Implementation – Developing a Working Strategy

Developing Delivery Mechanisms

The council will establish both Member and officer groups tasked with ensuring the delivery of this strategy. Delivering the strategy will be a major work programme comprising many individual projects. Appropriate project management and governance arrangements will be established to ensure the planning, implementation, review and reporting of the strategy's delivery.

Consultation Process

The strategy will be developed through a comprehensive consultative process. During the Spring of 2007 the council will consult with key public and private sector partners, including governmental, non-governmental and commercial organisations and local councils. A broad-based public consultation will be undertaken during Summer 2007.

Two-Year Delivery Action Plan

The tables that follow summarise the existing and possible future actions of the council. During the period of consultation on the broad objectives of the strategy the council will develop detailed short-term action plans and less specific medium and long term action plans which will be incorporated in the final version of the strategy to be adopted in Autumn 2007.

When complete, this strategy will give comprehensive overview of environmental activity in Huntingdonshire over the next five years and also bring together and demonstrate the good environmental practice currently happening across the district. The final strategy will relate this activity to the strategic aims and, based on consultation and identified priorities, an action plan will be developed for the following year.

Once an annual action plan has been established, we will further its implementation by educating the community and staff about environmental sustainability and working with businesses and the community to promote environmental sustainability

The strategy will be reviewed annually and our progress will be reported and published each year. This annual report will inform the development of the following year's action plan to ensure the strategy remains current and up to date.

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PRIORITY ONE - TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

Strategic Objective: Reduce emissions of greenhouse gases that contribute to climate change, (carbon dioxide and methane).

Because Carbon Dioxide is the most important of the greenhouse gases (in terms of volume) the UK Government has set national targets for reducing CO₂ emissions. By moving away from our dependence on fossil fuels, it will be possible to limit the effects of climate change. This can be achieved by encouraging energy saving, 'designing-in' sustainability to our homes and workplaces and developing renewable technologies that can provide clean energy and reduce our 'carbon footprint'

AIM	HDC (Estate Management) Actions	Huntingdonshire (Policy) Actions
Increase energy efficiency	Reduction in Council's energy consumption in all its public buildings	<p>Raise awareness of energy efficiency to local businesses institutions and householders</p> <p>Develop an award scheme for energy efficient initiatives in local businesses</p> <p>Achieve the Decent Homes Standard for the Council owned housing stock</p> <p>Develop and implement a Fuel Poverty Strategy to reduce fuel bills for the Council owned properties</p> <p>Improve energy efficiency through the Home Energy Conservation Act</p> <p>Work towards the Decent Homes Standard for Private Housing</p>
Increase the proportion of energy produced and used which comes from renewable resources	<p>Increase the amount of the Council's electricity procured from renewable sources.</p> <p>Carry out feasibility studies of renewable sources of energy at new and existing Council buildings and when replacing heating systems in existing buildings</p>	<p>Raise awareness of and encourage the installation of renewable energy by local businesses, institutions and householders</p> <p>Minimum 10% renewable energy generation from all 'Major Developments'</p> <p>Work to support community led approaches to renewable energy projects</p>
Encourage more sustainable travel	<p>Develop and implement site-specific employee Travel Plans for each of the Council's main sites.</p> <p>Purchase a fleet of low emission pool vehicles for use by Council employees.</p> <p>Effective management of Council's own vehicle fleet to reduce vehicle emissions</p>	<p>Encourage schools and businesses to develop travel plans by working in partnership with County Council, the Local Strategic Partnership and the planning process</p> <p>Ensure safe access for pedestrians and cyclists</p> <p>Promote the implementation of the Huntingdonshire Car Parking Strategy, to manage demand for car parking in town centre locations</p> <p>Take part in annual events to promote alternative modes of travel</p>
Ensure buildings, services and the community are able to adapt to climate change		<p>Improve awareness on flood warnings in conjunction with the Environment Agency</p> <p>Fully integrate climate change issues into the Emergency Plan</p> <p>Develop improvement plans for relief of particular flood areas</p> <p>Encourage grey water recycling schemes in all major developments</p> <p>Seek funding for activities within the Climate Change Strategy</p> <p>Work with Local Authorities to plan together for climate change impacts</p> <p>Develop accurate baseline data for greenhouse gas emissions</p>

PRIORITY TWO – USING RESOURCES MORE EFFICIENTLY

The largest and fastest growing pressures on the global environment come from areas such as household energy and water consumption, travel and tourism. We now need to look at the life cycle of goods, services and materials we use and seek ways to minimise the environmental impacts of that life cycle.

AIM	HDC (Estate Management) Actions	Huntingdonshire (Policy)
Reduce the amount of waste disposed of to landfill	Reduce amount of Council's own waste going to landfill by 20% over next 5 years	Enhanced domestic recyclable waste collection service to increase domestic recycling to 50% Development of Waste Minimisation Strategy in conjunction with the RECAP Partnership Waste minimisation and recycling education and promotion campaign Develop targeted promotions for key waste streams Facilitate the introduction of a trade waste recycling collection service for small to medium sized businesses in the District
Increase efficiency of use of water resources	Introduce rainwater harvesting systems at all new council sites.	Promote water saving measures such as Home Water Butts for domestic rainwater harvesting Require a 25% reduction in water usage at all major developments (over 50 units), against the 2004 baseline figure of 153 litres per household per day.
Increase the efficiency with which the council uses other resources	Implement Green Purchasing Policy Purchase Council office furniture from sustainable forestry sources and implement a program of repair to damaged furniture where possible and feasible All Council's own computers, photocopiers and printers with high energy efficiency rating Renewable energy use and energy efficiency measures are to be specified in all contract specifications where applicable	Continue to develop and support the local farmers' markets Develop further opportunities for the sale of locally produced food in Huntingdonshire Promote the use sustainable construction practices through the planning process at all developments within the district
Making Best Use of Land and Enhance Landscape Diversity		Increase the proportion of housing development on previously developed land, to at least 50% by 2008. Identify and ensure the protection of landscapes of value and heritage sites in the district. Encourage developments with a density of 30 – 50 dwellings per hectare

PRIORITY THREE – PROTECTING & IMPROVING OUR ENVIRONMENT

The third priority in this strategy relates very much to the services we provide as a local authority and how we ensure through protecting and improving our environment, residents maintain a good quality of life.

AIM	HDC (Operations)	Huntingdonshire (Policy)
<p>Improve air quality in Huntingdonshire</p>		<p>Testing new zero pollution buses. Ensuring taxis will become cleaner; and that the most polluting vehicles will not have their licences renewed. Reducing traffic growth by improving public transport and encouraging developers to make easy access to public transport part of new developments. Buy or lease cleaner vehicles. Use CleanUp and PowerShift grants to reduce pollution from vehicles Produce travel plans, to help staff to walk, cycle or use public transport to get to work: for example by putting in cycle racks and showers. Check that the goods and services purchased come from businesses that use less polluting vehicles and minimise their energy use. Design more energy-efficient, less polluting buildings that can be reached easily by public transport, by bicycle or on foot. Build homes, shops and leisure facilities close together so reducing the need to travel.</p>
<p>Minimise harm from land which is contaminated and polluted</p>		<p>Develop Community Involvement in green spaces and Biodiversity Projects Enhance neglected green spaces with the local communities Enhance the condition of SSSI's and CWS Establish principles for the use and management of river water and land beside it. Promote the conservation and enhancement of farmland biodiversity. Encourage greening of the built environment and the use of open spaces in ecologically sensitive ways. Encourage experience of the natural world and promote environmental education. Supports partnerships at District wide and local levels to produce and implement Biodiversity Action Plans. Encourage the business community to play a major role in implementing the programme for conserving biodiversity. Ensure that major new development projects include provision for biodiversity.</p>
<p>Protect and enhance the landscape diversity and biodiversity</p>		
<p>Increase access to green space</p>		<p>Develop footpath links to areas of population Enhance interpretation by provision of leaflets and information boards Support the Parish Paths Partnership Maintain key sites to Green Flag Award status Increase quantity and quality of green space through Section 106 agreements Work with partners to increase the area of local public open space Work with partners to develop the Great Fen, Needingworth Wetland and Paxton Pits Nature Reserve into regional green space projects. Promote sites through national shows, website and promotional leaflets</p>
<p>Improve the cleanliness of streets</p>		
<p>Create a safer environment by reducing anti-social behaviour</p>		<p>Target problem individuals, focusing on prevention and enforcement To use, where appropriate, Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABCs) and Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs) to disrupt the behaviour of perpetrators of anti-social behaviour To carry out targeted work to reduce alcohol related anti-social behaviour in town centres in Huntingdonshire To reduce the number of malicious fires To reduce the amount of criminal damage occurring in the district To support and participate in, partnership working and information sharing through ASB problem solving groups to address anti-social behaviour</p>

Implementation - Educating & Enabling	
Educate the community and staff about environmental sustainability	
Work with businesses and the community to promote environmental sustainability	
Take account of environmental considerations on funding, contract, policy and purchasing decisions	
Monitor achievement of actions and objectives in this strategy in an annual published report to cabinet.	

ANNEX B

Our Environmental Commitment - Huntingdonshire's Declaration An Environment Strategy for Huntingdonshire

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. If all of these things can be achieved 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.

On a global level the past 20 years have seen a growing realisation that the current model of development is unsustainable. In other words we are living beyond our means. Our way of life is placing an increasing burden on the planet - this cannot be sustained. The most noticeable impact on our environment is climate change. The weather is changing. Temperatures and sea levels are rising. Summers are getting hotter, winters wetter.

What does this mean for Huntingdonshire? What will it be like to live here?

What can we – Huntingdonshire District Council and you do about it?

It is our careless use of the planet's natural resources that has led to changes in our climate and the need to protect our environment from the detrimental impact of such carelessness.

The first step towards addressing the environmental challenges is to acknowledge them and analyse their potential impact at a local level. Huntingdonshire District Council is fully aware of the ever-increasing threat to our local environment and has now committed itself to addressing environmental issues through the production and implementation of a five-year Environment Strategy.

The Environment Strategy is currently in the developmental stages but our vision and commitment is well established and clear. Although Huntingdonshire faces many challenges in the journey to achieving this long term vision, this strategy identifies the main environmental challenges we need to overcome.

These are:

1. Tackling Climate Change
2. Using Resources Efficiently
3. Protecting & Improving the Environment

Each environmental challenge has a series of related actions that will work towards addressing that challenge. The diagram "Turning Words into Actions", shown on the centre pages demonstrates these challenges and actions and shows how the Environment Strategy will work towards an overall vision of the quality of life in Huntingdonshire.

When completed in autumn 2007 the strategy will provide a detailed action plan by which the Council itself, with residents, businesses and community groups in the

District, can act towards protecting and improving our Environment, and subsequently our quality of life not only for ourselves, but for future generations.

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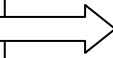
TURNING WORDS INTO ACTIONS

The Council is responsible for promoting the economic, social and environmental well being of our communities, so that we can all enjoy a good quality of life. The overall long term visions for Huntingdonshire is based on what local people have told us is important for them now and in the future. The Environment Strategy will work towards promoting the environmental wellbeing of Huntingdonshire and therefore contribute to achieving the long term vision for the community.

OUR VISION FOR HUNTINGDONSHIRE

"Huntingdonshire should be a place where current and future generations have a good quality of life and enjoy continued economic success, opportunities for all and an environment that is protected and improved." By promotion of:

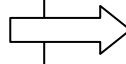
· Safe, active & inclusive communities A strong, diverse economy	Healthy living Housing that meets local needs	A clean 'green' & attractive place Access to services & transport
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HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S COMMITMENT TO BE ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE

To work towards this overall vision, Huntingdonshire District Council will make continual, measurable progress in its environmental performance, reduce its own environmental impact and strive to improve the environment.

- *We will fulfil its statutory environmental responsibilities*
- *We will foster a sense of responsibility for the environment amongst its employees, elected Members and the local community and ensure that both employees and contractors*
- *We will provide regular and concise information regarding its environmental performance.*
- *Through the Council's various strategies, plans and policies, an integrated system will be created to drive forward environmentally aware initiatives in all service areas to achieve a significant impact on the environment.*



THE ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGE

Although Huntingdonshire faces many challenges in the journey to achieving this overall vision, we have identified three main environmental challenges we need to overcome.



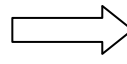
1. Tackling Climate Change

Increasing Energy Efficiency
"Huntingdonshire District Council will increase the energy efficiency of council owned buildings and encourage similar good practice in households and businesses in the District."

Increasing the use of Renewable Energy
"Huntingdonshire District Council will increase the proportion of energy produced and used which comes from renewable resources in council owned buildings and promote and encourage renewable technology and energy tariffs to households and businesses in the District."

Encouraging more Sustainable Travel
"Huntingdonshire District Council will encourage more sustainable travel for work practices amongst its own employees as well as promoting and encouraging the use and development of more sustainable modes of travel across the District."

Adapting to climate change
"Huntingdonshire District Council will work towards ensuring buildings, services and the community are able to adapt to climate change"



2. Using Resources Efficiently

Reducing Waste going to Landfill
"Huntingdonshire District Council will reduce the amount of waste produced and sent to landfill and encourage similar good practice in households and businesses in the District."

Increase Water Efficiency
"Huntingdonshire District Council will reduce the amount of water used by Council buildings and services and encourage similar good practice in households and businesses in the District."

Encourage Sustainable Purchasing
"Huntingdonshire District Council will implement and follow a code of sustainable purchasing and encourage similar good practice in households and businesses in the District."

Making Best Use of Land and Enhancing Landscape Diversity
"Huntingdonshire District Council will work to make more use of previously developed land and existing buildings, and use land more efficiently, to achieve sustainable growth – whilst maintaining the landscape value of the District"



3. Protecting & Improving the Environment

Improving air quality in Huntingdonshire
"Huntingdonshire District Council will minimise its own contributions to pollution arising from its activities and encourage similar good practice in households and businesses in the district."

Minimising harm from contaminated or polluted land
"Huntingdonshire District Council will minimise the threat to health, controlled waters and/or the wider environment from land which is contaminated or polluted and ensure that where identified, appropriate remediation will be undertaken"

Protecting and enhance biodiversity
"Huntingdonshire District Council will encourage the management, enhancement and creation of green space for biodiversity, and promote appreciation of nature in partnership with community groups, households and businesses in the district."

Increasing access to green space
"Huntingdonshire District Council acknowledges the importance of green space in contributing to the quality of life of those living & working in the District and supports the protection and enhancement of green spaces to encourage a diverse range of leisure and amenity uses."

Improving the cleanliness of Huntingdonshire's streets
"Huntingdonshire District Council will continue to maintain the cleanliness of our street to the highest possible standards and educate residents, households, communities and businesses in the district about how they can maintain clean streets."

Creating a safer environment by reducing anti-social behaviour
"Huntingdonshire District Council will work to address anti-social behaviour in Huntingdonshire in partnership with the Police, the local people and other public agencies."

From Nottingham to Huntingdonshire – A Declaration of our environmental commitment

The Nottingham Declaration is a voluntary pledge to address the issues of climate change. It represents a high level, broad statement of commitment that any council can make to its own community. The Declaration was originally launched in October 2003 at a conference in Nottingham and has now been signed by over 100 councils in the UK.

The Leader and Chief Executive of Huntingdonshire District Council signed the declaration on 2 February 2007 and confirmed our commitment to ensuring that tackling climate change is a cornerstone of the council's strategies.

Signing the declaration is an important starting point for developing the Environment Strategy and associated action plan.



If Huntingdonshire is to be at the forefront of environmental issues then we need to demonstrate community leadership on climate change and other environmental matters. Although we recognise the need to lead by example, tackling these environmental challenges is not something we can do alone.

The strategy will give strategic aims to be considered over a five-year period. It will be reviewed annually and our progress will be reported and published each year. This annual report will inform the development of the following year's action plan to ensure the strategy remains current and up to date.

To ensure the action plan and targets it sets out are both workable and achievable, all stakeholders in Huntingdonshire, the Council, businesses, community groups and householders, will need to be involved in its production.

By late spring 2007 a draft version of the strategy will have been produced for consultation with a variety of stakeholders including Anglian Water, The Wildlife Trust, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, and the East of England Development Agency amongst many other institutions working towards a better Huntingdonshire, that form the Environment Forum of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership.

Once we have integrated the relevant work of these agencies with the work of the Council and the aims and the strategy, we will then make it available for public consultation during summer 2007. The strategy at this stage should be a comprehensive action plan covering the work happening in Huntingdonshire over the next five years and also bring together and demonstrate current good environmental practice across Huntingdonshire. Through public consultation we hope to apply timescales and targets to the action plan based on what the public of Huntingdonshire see as their environmental priorities.

The end result, to be published in autumn 2007, should be a detailed but clear strategy and action plan involving organisations and residents across the district, which will have an impact on tackling the main environmental challenges faced by Huntingdonshire.

CABINET

1 FEBRUARY 2007

NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT – PROGRESS REPORT (COMMUNITY MANAGER)

1. Background

- 1.1 Cabinet received a report on the 21 September 2006 that outlined what neighbourhood management is, how it is delivered, where it fits and what neighbourhood management would look like in Huntingdonshire.
- 1.2 At the meeting on the 21 September members agreed that officers continue discussions with other significant service providers to develop the neighbourhood management proposal. And that the reporting structure for neighbourhood management to be via the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to inform members of progress to date and request members approval that Ramsey be included in the neighbourhood management initiative along with the Oxmoor and Eynesbury areas of Huntingdonshire.

2. PROGRESS TO DATE

- 2.1 In accordance with the recommendations set out in section 5.1 of the 21 September 2006 report Council officers have held several meetings with the agencies who are the significant service providers in the localities, and have agreed the following priority tasks.
 - i. In each of the identified neighbourhood management areas establish locality offices from where those staff (HDC and partner organisations) that are responsible for delivering local services can be co-located (as set out in section 2.3 of the 21 September report).
 - ii. Identify key staff from HDC and partner agencies that will be responsible for the development of neighbourhood management in each locality (this will result in the amendment of present job descriptions).
 - iii. Agree an action program for the first year with targets and a 3 year strategy and monitoring procedures for each neighbourhood management area plus agreed reporting procedures to HSP.
 - iv. The establishment of local neighbourhood partnership forums/management boards, agreement on delegated responsibilities and budget holding.
 - v. That in addition to the Oxmoor and Eynesbury localities the Ramsey town and immediate villages be included in the neighbourhood management initiative, building upon the existing Ramsey Area Partnership arrangements.

- 2.2 Locality offices have been identified for both the Oxmoor and Ramsey neighbourhood projects discussions are on going with Cambridgeshire County Council with regards accommodation located in the Eynesbury area. Costs for the Oxmoor neighbourhood office will be shared between Luminus and Cambridgeshire County Council, Ramsey neighbourhood office costs will be meet for existing resources by Huntingdonshire District Council.
- 2.3 Key staff have been identified from within HDC, Cambridgeshire County Council and Luminus Housing association existing staffing resources, (HDC Community Development Officer, CCC Oxmoor SRB Manager, Luminus Housing association Community Development Officer) who will take on the roles of neighbourhood development co-ordinators. Officers are currently reviewing the Job descriptions of the above post holders the aim is to have one Job Description for all three posts.
- 2.4 Action plans and 3 year strategies for each neighbourhood management area and reporting procedures to HSP have still to be fully resolved. However, strategic partnership board members are due to consider the recommendation at their meeting on 14 February, that Neighbourhood Management be a standing agenda item at HSP executive meetings, and that representatives from partner agencies involved in the neighbourhood management programme be entitled to attend executive board meetings for this item. Appendix A attached sets out a management model for Neighbourhood Management.
- 2.5 This initiative will require the establishment of local neighbourhood partnership forums/management boards in each of the three areas. In both Oxmoor and Ramsey areas a type of partnership board currently exists. The membership and terms of reference for both of these existing partnership arrangements will require review, as well as agreement on delegated responsibilities, in order to be fit for purpose in the new circumstances. In Eynesbury there will need to be completely new arrangements.
- 2.6 Members will be aware that as far as Oxmoor is concerned, the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) initiative comes to an end in March 2007. The Oxmoor Opportunities Management Team is completing a final assessment document of the SRB programme. Additionally, it is using some unallocated resources to finance research/consultancy advice regarding the process of moving to the new neighbourhood management initiative. This work will help inform the review of partnership forums/management boards and the development of neighbourhood charters.
- 2.7 Given the existing similarity of the current Ramsey Area Partnership and Neighbourhood Management initiative it is considered appropriate to include the work of the Ramsey Area Partnership as part of this initiative. If Members agree to the inclusion of Ramsey in the Neighbourhood Management initiative the present Ramsey Area Partnerships objectives will be included in the year 1 action plans and 3 year strategy plans for the Ramsey Neighbourhood initiative. The proposed neighbourhood management area will likely to be smaller than the area covered by the present Ramsey Area Partnership. Further discussions are required to bring forward proposals including the rationalisation of the current range of consultative groups which make up the current Ramsey Area Partnership.

- 2.8 Discussions are currently in progress with Cambridgeshire Constabulary to integrate the neighbourhood management initiative and the recently introduced neighbourhoods policing initiative and the operation of neighbourhood policing panels in the three target locations, in order to avoid duplication of effort and provide the community with a co-ordinated transparent approach.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is recommended that the Ramsey area be included in the neighbourhood management initiative.
- 3.2 Cabinet note the progress to date and recommend the initiative to the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership Board at its meeting on 14 February.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Cabinet report, Neighbourhood management 21 September 2006

Huntingdonshire Today

ODPM research report 23, Neighbourhood Management – at a turning point review 2005-06

National Neighbourhood Management Network report – The Case for Neighbourhood Management, November 2006

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CABINET

1 FEBRUARY 2007

CHOICE BASED LETTINGS – MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (Report by the Head of Housing Services)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To request authority to sign a Memorandum of Understanding relating to the Cambridge Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Cabinet received a report on 19 October 2006 on the progress made and implications of the Cambridge sub regional CBL scheme and gave authorisation for officers to progress with the project. That report highlighted the need for a partnership agreement between the councils involved with establishing the CBL scheme to 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.
- 2.2 The partnership agreement, or Memorandum of Understanding as it has been termed, has been produced by an independent solicitor with the final draft being approved by the Legal Departments of each of the councils. Each council is now required to sign and seal the agreement.

3. IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The Memorandum of Understanding includes the following clauses:
- 3.2 **Liabilities:** This requires each partner to contribute to any costs, expenses or losses incurred in connection with any approved contract. These are likely to be costs that will be incurred as part of the procurement of a new IT system to perform the CBL functions. 60% of these costs will be met through the grant funding received from central government. The remaining 40% are being met by the partners. This was originally estimated at £17,225 per partner. Those councils that have transferred their housing stock agreed to equally split this cost with the stock transfer housing association. The council and the Luminus Group have already paid these costs.
- 3.3 Additional costs may come from the procurement of an integrated system that performs the Housing Register and homelessness functions as well as the CBL processes. This is the preferred option for most partners rather than integrating several back office systems with a new CBL system. This will incur further capital costs. This has previously been highlighted in an approved MTP bid to deliver a fully integrated common Housing Register System. £44k of this bid remains to be released. A request to release funds will be made once the total cost has been identified through the tender process.
- 3.4 **Withdrawal and termination:** The memorandum contains a break clause that allows each partner to withdraw from the agreement.
- 3.5 **Governance and decision making structures:** A project board has been established to drive the project forward, monitor progress of the project plan and

make key decisions as required. Each partner has representation on the board and the council is represented by the Head of Housing Services.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 Good progress is being made with delivery of the project plan to implement the Cambridge sub regional CBL scheme. The purpose of the Memorandum of Understanding is to formalise the roles and responsibilities of the partners and agree the level of collaboration expected to successfully deliver the project.
- 4.2 Each council is required to sign and seal the agreement and so formal approval is required from Cabinet to enter into this agreement.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 That Cabinet gives approval for the Director of Central Services to sign and place the council's seal on the Memorandum of Understanding.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Cambridge Sub Regional CBL Scheme – Cabinet report 19/10/06

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CHOICE BASED LETTINGS – CONSULTATION LETTINGS POLICY (Report by the Head of Housing Services)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the progress made on implementing a sub regional Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme and request authority to consult with stakeholders and service users on a new Lettings Policy.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Cabinet received a report on 19 October 2006 on the progress made and implications of the Cambridge sub regional CBL scheme and gave authorisation for officers to progress with the project. That report highlighted the need for 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.

- 2.2 The partners to the scheme have jointly produced a consultation draft of this policy (appendix A). Each partner will have to formally adopt the new policy as their own lettings scheme but prior to this there is a need to consult with stakeholders and service users. As each partner will have to adopt the policy individually it allows for slight differences within the sub region but the broad principles outlined below will apply in each district.

3. IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 CBL totally changes the way in which residents will access social rented housing. However, the principles of who may apply for housing and how priorities are decided are very similar to the current policy. Although the scheme will not deliver more properties it will allow some cross boundary movement where people wish to bid for housing in another local authority area. The main principles of the scheme are:

3.2 Local Connection Criteria

As under their existing policies, each council will apply local connection criteria as to who they prioritise for housing in their own area. The local connection suggested remains the same as the council's existing policy apart from family connections with an area is extended to include young children living in an area (for example where a young child lives with the other parent). Under the current policy only the adult children of an applicant can give a local connection to an area.

3.3 Cross Boundary Moves

One of the purposes of the scheme is to allow a proportion of the available properties to be advertised to applicants from across the sub region. The policy suggests that 10% of each council's vacancies and 25% of new build properties delivered by Housing Corporation growth agenda funding, such as at Northstowe, are made available to applicants who have a local connection with any of the districts in the sub region. These properties would be randomly selected and made

available through the advertising process. Increased applicant choice is an underlying principle and a condition of grant funding.

3.4 Priority System

Each council currently has either a points or banding system that it uses to decide which applicant has the greatest housing need to be offered a property. The principles of these schemes are similar as legislation requires that 'reasonable preference' for housing be given to households living in certain housing conditions. To simplify the CBL system and provide a more transparency for applicants the consultation policy suggests one banding system to decide the level of housing need of each applicant. This will allow for the ease of comparing the housing needs of applicants from different districts applying for the properties available across the sub region.

3.5 The proposed banding system has four levels of priority (bands A to D) and applicants will be placed in a band depending upon their current housing circumstances. The bands have been devised to take account of the 'reasonable preference' groups and so in broad terms applicants awarded a high level of priority under the council's points system will be in a higher band under the new system.

3.6 When applicants within the same band apply for the same property the deciding factor will be the length of time someone has been waiting in that band. This means that applicants with a similarly broad level of housing need will be housed in date order and only those in a higher band will be housed ahead of them. This is a principle that has worked well with the pilot CBL schemes and provides greater clarity for applicants to understand the system. Every applicant will need to be reassessed under the new policy and advised of the band they have been placed in and the date they became eligible to be in that band.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The next stage of the project is to consult on the proposed policy for the CBL scheme. This policy will form the lettings scheme that each council is required to adopt and publish to show how properties will be let. A common policy will provide a simpler system for applicants to understand and will give consistency as to how people access and are prioritised for housing across the sub region.

4.2 The final policy will be produced following the consultation process. Cabinet will then be asked to adopt the policy and it will come into effect once the CBL scheme is formally launched. This is likely to be in early 2008.

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 That Cabinet gives approval to consult on the 'Consultation Draft' of the Lettings Policy Document.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Cambridge Sub Regional CBL Scheme – Cabinet report 19/10/06

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Jon Collen, Housing Needs & Resources Manager

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CONSULTATION DRAFT

Huntingdonshire District Council

LETTINGS POLICY DOCUMENT

This document sets out how Huntingdonshire District Council, in partnership with Housing Associations with properties in the district, let their properties through the
“Cambridge Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme”

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This is the letting policy for Huntingdonshire District Council, (“HDC”) and should be considered in conjunction with the Cambridge Sub-regional Choice Based Lettings scheme (“CBL”), framework document, which outlines how the CBL scheme will work. The Partnership Organisations (“PO’s”) to the Sub-regional CBL scheme are:

- Cambridge City Council
- East Cambridgeshire District Council
- Fenland District Council
- Forest Heath District Council
- Huntingdonshire District Council
- South Cambridgeshire District Council
- St Edmundsbury Borough Council

1.1.2 The CBL scheme and this lettings policy have been designed in collaboration with the sub regional POs listed above, with the aim of having as much consistency in the letting of social housing as is possible in a very diverse sub-region. The lettings policy aims to ensure that all people seeking social housing in Huntingdonshire are able to exercise choice in deciding where they wish to live and in the type of property they would prefer.

1.1.3 The policy enables HDC to consider the individual needs of its applicants whilst making best use of the scarce resource of housing stock. The policy sets out:

- How to apply for housing
- Who is eligible to be accepted onto the housing register
- Who is not eligible to be accepted onto the housing register
- ***How priority for housing applicants will be given***
- What the decision making processes are
- How homes will be let

1.1.4 You may view the CBL framework document and this lettings policy, at www.huntsdc.gov.uk, or request a copy from any of the PO’s offices. (See appendix 1)

1.2 Objectives of the lettings policy

- To meet the legal requirements for the allocation of social housing as set out in the Housing Act (1996) as amended by the Homelessness Act (2002)
- To assist applicants in the highest assessed need
- To let properties in a fair and transparent way and provide a consistent lettings process
- To make best use of housing stock
- To ensure that applicants are not discriminated against, whether directly or indirectly
- To support vulnerable applicants
- To provide increased choice and information to applicants

- To provide information and feedback on homes that are let through the CBL scheme
- To improve mobility across the sub-region
- To promote social inclusion and help achieve sustainable communities

1.3 Statement on choice

1.3.1 HDC is fully committed to enabling applicants to play a more active role in choosing where they live, whilst continuing to house those in the greatest need in Huntingdonshire.

1.3.2 The CBL scheme will enable applicants from Huntingdonshire to have access to a percentage of available homes from all the PO's across the sub region.

1.4 Legal context

1.4.1 All applicants for housing will be placed in the appropriate housing needs band, based on an assessment of their household's needs. This is to ensure homes are let to those in the highest assessed need and ensures that the Council meets its legal obligations as set out in the Housing Act (1996) as amended by Homelessness Act (2002).

1.4.2 The law states that there are five groups of applicants where reasonable preference must be considered:

- People who are homeless (within the meaning of Part VII (7) of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.)
- People who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2), or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3)
- People occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including grounds relating to a disability); and
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others)

1.4.3 The Lettings Policy has been designed to ensure applicants who fall into the above reasonable preference categories will be awarded reasonable preference.

1.4.4 Every application received by HDC will be considered according to the facts unique to that application as HDC recognises that every applicant's situation is different. Applications will be considered on an individual basis and individual circumstances will be taken into account. However, all lettings will be made in accordance with this lettings policy

1.5 Equal opportunities and diversity

1.5.1 The lettings policy will be responsive, accessible and sensitive to the needs of all. HDC will not tolerate prejudice and discrimination and we will actively promote equality.

1.6 Monitoring and reviewing the lettings policy

1.6.1 HDC will monitor the operation of the lettings policy by:

- Regularly reviewing the policy to ensure that the policy meets its stated objectives and complies with legislative changes.

Chapter 2

2. Applying for housing

2.1 How to apply for housing

- 2.1.1 Anyone can apply to HDC for housing. However, not everyone will be eligible for housing. HDC will not register people who are not eligible to be housed. Evidence of eligibility may be required to complete registration. (See chapter 3) Applicants are advised that due to a high demand for available housing in Huntingdonshire, not everyone who is eligible to be considered for housing is guaranteed housing from the register
- 2.1.2 To apply to go on the housing register, applicants are required to complete a housing application form. This can be obtained from any sub-regional POs office, or via the following Internet address: www.huntsdc.gov.uk. The form can be returned to Huntingdonshire District Council, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN or any of the POs offices as detailed in appendix 1.
- 2.1.3 An applicant may include anyone that may reasonably be expected to live with them as part of their application.
- 2.1.4 Where more than one eligible applicant wishes to have a shared application they will be known as joint applicants.
- 2.1.5 On receipt of the application form HDC will assess the form and may request additional information and supporting evidence so that the applicant's eligibility and housing need can be confirmed. HDC will verify the information provided which may include inviting the applicant for an interview or visiting them at home.
- 2.1.6 After assessment HDC will write to applicants to inform them:
- Whether the applicant is eligible for housing and if so:
 - Their unique reference number, which allows them to bid for homes through the CBL Scheme
 - The Housing Needs Band in which the application has been placed
 - The date that the application was placed in the band (the "date in band")
 - The size of property for which the applicant is able to bid
 - How to have a decision reviewed

2.2 Date of registration

- 2.2.1 The registration date of an application form will be the date the housing application form is received at the office of HDC, or any of the POs. If the form is completed over the Internet the date the form is received electronically is the date of registration.

2.3 Date in band

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

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

- Moving up a band

The applicable date in band will be the date that the applicant is moved into the higher band.

- Moving down a band

Where an applicant is returning to a band in which they have previously been placed, the applicable date in band reverts to the date that applied when the applicant was previously in that band.

Where an applicant is moving down into a band they have not previously been in, the applicable date in band will be the date that the application was moved down into that band.

2.4 Multiple applications

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

2.5 Change of circumstances

2.5.1 Where an applicant has a change in their circumstances they must inform HDC. Applicants can obtain a change of circumstances form from any PO, but this must then be sent to HDC. HDC will carry out a housing needs assessment based on the new circumstances. Examples of change of circumstances are detailed below, although this list is not exhaustive.

- People joining or leaving the household
- Pregnancy/birth of a child
- Relationship breakdown
- Change to the medical circumstances of anyone included in the application
- Death of a household member
- Death of a joint applicant

2.6 Change of address

2.6.1 Where an applicant changes address, but wishes to remain on the housing register, the applicant must complete a new application form. The applicant will retain their existing date in band unless their new assessment of need places them in a higher or lower band where they have not been previously, in which case the new assessment date will become their applicable date in band. (See section 2.3) Their housing needs will be assessed based on the new accommodation.

2.7 Applicant's consent and declaration

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

- The information they have provided is true and accurate
- They will inform HDC of any change in circumstances
- They understand that information will be shared with all the POs

- They consent to HDC making enquiries of any relevant persons to confirm the information on the application form is correct
- They consent to the release of any relevant information

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

2.8 Data protection

2.8.1 HDC policy on Data Protection can be viewed at www.huntsdc.gov.uk

2.9 Application review

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

2.10 Cancelling an application

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

- At the applicant's request
- Where an applicant does not respond to an application review, within the specified time limit
- If the applicant becomes ineligible for housing (see chapter 3)
- When the applicant has been housed by a local authority or housing association
- When an applicant purchases a property
- When a tenant completes a mutual exchange
- Where an applicant does not maintain their application through the review process, or where they move and do not provide a contact address
- Where the applicant has died

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

2.10.3 Where an applicant wishes to re-join the housing register at a later date their new date of registration will be the date they re-apply. Their date in band will be the date that they are placed in a housing needs band following assessment of the new application.

Chapter 3

3. Eligibility to be accepted onto the housing register

3.1 Eligibility categories

3.1.1 Under the Housing Act (1996), local authorities must consider whether applicants are eligible for housing assistance. This relates to some people who may have been living abroad or who do not have permanent permission to remain in the UK. Some people will be eligible, whether or not they are subject to immigration control.

3.2 Who is not eligible?

3.2.1 HDC cannot, by law, allocate housing accommodation to anyone who is subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act (1996), unless they fall within a class exempted from this restriction by Government regulations.

3.2.2 In addition, HDC cannot, by law, allocate housing accommodation to other classes of persons from abroad if Government regulations dictate we cannot.

3.3 Notifying an ineligible applicant

3.3.1 Applications from ineligible applicants will not be registered. The applicant will be notified in writing of the decision and the reasons for the decision will be explained to them. If an applicant is accepted onto the register, but subsequently becomes ineligible, their housing application will be cancelled and the applicant notified. Applicants found to be ineligible have a right to ask for a review of the decision (see chapter 6).

3.4 16 to 17 year olds

3.4.1 Any applicant aged 16 or over can apply for housing. However until the applicant reaches 18 years old they will not be eligible to bid through the CBL scheme without a guarantor for their tenancy. Applicants under 18 years old will be referred to a housing advisor for advice regarding their housing rights and options.

3.5 Civil partnership

3.5.1 Civil partnership is a new legal relationship, which can be registered by two people of the same sex, so that their relationship is legally recognised. The Civil Partnership Act came into force on 5 December 2005.

3.5.2 Civil partners will have equal treatment with married couples in the lettings policy, including:

- Parental responsibility for the other civil partner's child
- Succession and assignment of a tenancy agreement
- Protection from domestic violence
- Immigration and nationality purposes

Chapter 4

4. Assessment of housing need

4.1 Legal background

4.1.1 All applicants will be placed in a housing needs band following an assessment of their household's needs. This is to ensure that HDC meet their legal obligations as set out in the Housing Act (1996) as amended by the Homelessness Act (2002).

4.2 Advice and information

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

4.3 Assessment of housing need

4.1.1 Assessments of housing needs are based on an applicants current housing circumstances. These assessments are made by housing officers of HDC.

4.4 Local connection criteria

4.4.1 To ensure local housing needs are met, 90% of properties advertised through the CBL scheme will be labelled as available to applicants with a local connection to HDC. It has been agreed that 10% of advertised properties will be open to bidding from applicants with a local connection to any authority in the Cambridge Sub-region. It has also been agreed that 25% of new growth homes will be made available for cross boundary mobility. The relevant local connection requirement will be clearly labelled on the property advertisement.

4.4.2 The housing register is open to all customers who are eligible for housing even if they do not have a connection to HDC. They are able to express interest in advertised homes, but usually the property will be labelled as available to a customer with a local connection to HDC or the Sub region. If there is no local connection criteria required for the property, this will be stated on the property label.

4.4.3 To be considered as having a local connection to HDC one of the following must apply:

- Applicants must live in the local authority area
- Applicants must work in the local authority area for eighteen and a half hours or more per week
- Applicants have previously lived in the local authority area for at least 6 of the last 12 months, or 3 of the last 5 years
- Applicants are an ex-resident from the local authority area who previously lived there for 5 years or longer
- Applicants have family members who are resident in the local authority area. Family members are defined as parents, children or

brothers or sisters who have been resident in the local authority for a period of 5 years or longer

- There are special circumstances which HDC considers give rise to a local connection

4.4.4 The POs in the Cambridge Sub-region when assessing local connection to their areas will use the same criteria as above, when applying for a sub-regionally advertised property a local connection to any of the POs will enable applicants to bid

4.5 Housing needs bands

4.5.1 Housing need is assessed and applicants will be placed in one of the following four bands in date order. Applicants placed in band A will have the highest assessed need, band D the lowest.

4.6 Band A: Urgent Need

4.6.1 Applicants with the following circumstances will be placed into band A

a) Urgent transfer

Where the tenant of a housing association or PO needs to move urgently because of circumstances that could include:

- Major repairs are required on the property in which they live and which cannot be undertaken with the tenant living in the property
- The property is being demolished

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

Where an applicant is not homeless intentionally or threatened with homelessness intentionally, is eligible for assistance and has a priority need for accommodation, and HDC has accepted a duty under s193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 (referred to as the full homelessness duty).

c) Statutorily overcrowded

Applicants who have been assessed as being overcrowded as defined in Part X (10) of the Housing Act 1985. An Environmental Health Officer will carry out this assessment.

d) Current supported housing resident

Where someone leaving Social Services care, or other supported accommodation, is ready to move to a permanent home of their own. This will be subject the council, Social Services and the landlord of the supported accommodation agreeing that the applicant is ready to move to their own home. If the applicant needs an on going support package to be able to live independently confirmation that this will be put in place will also be required.

e) Urgent health and safety risk

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

f) Urgent medical need

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

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

g) Urgent multiple needs

Where an applicant is assessed as having two or more band B needs. This may include an application where two household members have the same assessed need. i.e. two high medical needs.

For multiple needs in band A please see emergency housing status (see chapter 5)

4.8 Band B: High Need

4.8.1 Applicants with the following circumstances will be placed into Band B.

a) High health and safety risk

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

b) High medical need

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

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

c) Victims of harassment

HDC's Housing Advice and Options Team and/or the Anti Social Behaviour Team will undertake assessment of harassment.

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

The Housing Options and Advice Team will offer advice and support to assist the applicant in identifying possible ways to resolve the situation.

c) Lacking two bedrooms

Based on the bedroom calculation in chapter 5, the household is assessed as lacking two bedrooms.

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

Where an existing social housing tenant living in Huntingdonshire is living in a property, which:

- Has two bedrooms more than are required by the household
- Where a property has been adapted and the adaptations are no longer required. For example if the person requiring the adaptations has moved or died.

e) Homelessness prevention (prior to homelessness decision being made)

Where an applicant is threatened with homelessness within a period of more than 28 days, the Housing Advice and Options Team will work with the applicant to try and prevent their homelessness. Those applicants, who would appear likely to have a priority need in the event of a homelessness application, will be placed in band B whilst the prevention measures are being pursued. Existing housing register applicants within band A will retain their band A status.

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

f) Multiple needs

Where an applicant is assessed as having three or more band C needs. This may include an application where more than two household members have the same assessed need i.e. three medical needs.

4.9 Band C: Medium Need

4.9.1 Applicants with the following circumstances will be placed into band C.

a) Other homelessness

Homeless applicants who are not owed a main homelessness duty by HDC. For example where the applicant is:

- Intentionally homeless
- Homeless or threatened with homelessness but not in priority need
- Where the applicant is owed a main homelessness duty but does not have a local connection with the Cambridge sub-region

b) Medium medical need

An assessment of medical need will be made by a medical professional or senior officer, using a sub-regionally agreed criteria for assessment. Medium medical need will be awarded where an applicant's current accommodation is having a minimal effect on the medical condition or disability of the applicant or member of their household, but a move to different accommodation would be likely to improve their quality of life.

c) Under-occupancy by one bedroom

Where an existing social housing tenant living in Huntingdonshire lives in a property, which:

- Has one bedroom more than is required by the household

b) Social needs to move

Where a delegated senior officer at HDC has assessed the applicants need to move for social reasons.

For example, where it has been confirmed that an applicant:

- Needs to move to the Huntingdonshire area to give or receive support and a proven level of support is required and can be given
- Has found employment in the Huntingdonshire area and needs to move closer to work, or will otherwise lose their employment
- Has staying contact with a child/children and is living in accommodation where the child/children are not allowed to stay overnight
- Is living in a first floor or above property and has children under 10 years of age as part of their household

This list is not exhaustive.

e) Housing conditions.

Where the applicant/s share facilities with persons, who are not members of their household. Facilities may include:

- A living room
- Bedroom
- Kitchen
- Bathroom

4.10 Band D: Adequately Housed

4.10.1 Any applicant assessed as being adequately housed will be placed in band D. Applicants in this band would be able to bid for properties that are labelled as being available to applicants from band D and above.

4.11 Low priority

4.11.1 In certain circumstances, applicants will be accepted onto the housing register, but their application will be considered as low priority. Their application will not be placed in a housing needs band and they will not be able to express interest in available properties.

4.11.2 All applicants who are considered low priority will be informed of this decision in writing, and how their application could be re-assessed, for example, by agreeing an arrangement to make payments towards rent arrears, see (section 5.9.2) or by the applicant showing that the circumstances or behaviour that made them unsuitable to be a tenant, has changed.

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

4.11.4 The following categories will be considered as low priority:

- Where the applicant (or a member of their household) has been guilty of unacceptable behaviour serious enough to make them unsuitable to be a tenant and in the circumstances at the time the application is considered, the applicant is unsuitable to be a tenant by reason of that behaviour - s160A (7) and (8) of the Housing Act (1996) as amended by the Homelessness Act (2002).
- Unacceptable behaviour for these purposes will be any where the council would have been entitled to a possession order under s.84 of the Housing Act 1985 on any ground mentioned in Part 1 of Schedule 2 to that Act (other than ground 8), if that person had been a tenant of the council. This includes rent arrears and other breaches of tenancy conditions.
- HDC will regard a failure to pay rent or other housing-related charges or debts as behaviour affecting the suitability of applicants to be tenants. Other than in exceptional circumstances, an applicant with outstanding rent arrears or other housing-related debts owed to any social landlords in the sub region will not be eligible to bid for housing until they have shown a regular repayment record. (See section 5.9.2)
- Applicants who have intentionally worsened their housing circumstances. For example, by deliberately moving into accommodation that enables them to be assessed in a higher housing needs band

4.11.4 All low priority applicants will have their application reviewed after one year on the anniversary of their application.

4.12 Officer review for band A applicants

4.12.1 Where an applicant has held band A status for three months from their applicable date in band, a housing officer will carry out a review of their circumstances. This will result in either:

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

Chapter 5

5.1 Assessment information and criteria

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

5.2 Transfer applicants

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

5.3 Homeless applications

- 5.3.1 Applicants who are already on the housing register will remain in their existing housing needs band whilst a homeless assessment is carried out.
- 5.3.2 When a decision has been made by HDC that an applicant is owed a full homelessness duty under s.193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) their application will be placed in band A. (See chapter 4 section 4.7.1 b)
- 5.3.3 Where a person is threatened with homelessness within a period of more than 28 days, the Housing Options and Advice Team will work with the applicant to try and prevent their homelessness. Those persons, who would appear likely to have a priority need in the event of a homelessness application, will be placed in band B whilst the prevention measures are being pursued.
- 5.3.4 A person who is threatened with homelessness may have an existing housing register application. Applicants already in band A will retain their existing band A status whilst homelessness prevention measures are pursued.
- 5.3.5 An applicant who is statutorily homeless or threatened with homelessness but deemed not to have a priority need will be placed in band C (unless other circumstances are such that they are eligible for placement within a different band).
- 5.3.6 Applicants who have been assessed as being in priority need but are intentionally homeless will have their housing application assessed on their current accommodation, if an applicant has intentionally worsened their circumstances the housing needs assessment will take this into account. (See section 4.11).
- 5.3.7 Applicants owed a full homelessness duty under s.193 (2) will be expected to bid for permanent accommodation.

5.4 Split families

- 5.4.1 Where family members who would normally be expected to live together are unable to do so, they will be referred to the Housing Advice and Options Team, and have their particular circumstances assessed by a housing officer to assess the best way of addressing their housing needs.

5.5 Bedroom requirements

5.5.1 Table 1 below will be used to assess applicant's/household bedroom requirements.

5.5.2 Housing assessment for bedroom requirement will be made taking into account the size of the property and the best use of the available space. For example if a household is using a bedroom as a study they would not be assessed as lacking a bedroom.

5.5.3 Table 1 below shows the size of property that applicants may be considered for based on their household composition, either when expressing interest for an advertised property or for a direct let. (See section 5.11)

Table 1

Key; Bungalow = B Maisonette = M House = H

	Studio Flat M	1 Bed Flat or H or B or M	2 Bed Flat or M.	2 Bed H or B	3 Bed H or B	3 Bed Flat or M.	4 Bed H	4 Bed Flat or M	5 Bed+
Single Person	√	√							
Single Person with overnight contact to 1 or more children		√							
Couple or 2 Adults		√							
Household with 1 child			√	√					
Household with 2 children of same sex; or 3 individual adults			√	√	√	√			
Household with 2 children of opposite sex; or 3 or more children					√	√			
Household with 4 or more children; or household of at least 6 people in total					Large √	√	√	√	
Household with 5 or more children; or household of at least 8 people in total					Large √	√	√	√	√

5.5.4 Please note that these are general guidelines. All properties that are advertised through the CBL scheme will be clearly labelled to identify the household size eligible to bid for each property as some landlords may have different policies on the different property sizes offered to the various household sizes. Applicants should check the information contained in the labelling to see if they are able to be considered for the property.

5.5 Bedroom requirement guidelines

- 5.5.1 The following guidelines will be used when assessing the overcrowding in an applicant's own home:
- Couples require one double bedroom
 - Single applicants require one bedroom
 - Two children of the same sex under 10 years old require one double bedroom
 - Three children share a bedroom because they have no other option they will be assessed as lacking one bedroom
 - Two children of the opposite sex, where the oldest child is aged 6 years or over require two bedrooms
 - Two children of the same sex over 10 years old require two bedrooms
 - A woman expecting her first child and over 24 weeks pregnant requires two bedrooms

5.6 Staying contact with children

- 5.6.1 Where an applicant has staying contact with children for less than 50% of the time the children will not be counted as part of the applicant's household when assessing bedroom requirements.

5.7 Medical assessments

- 5.7.1 Medical assessments will be carried out for any applicants who believe that their medical condition or disability is affected by their current accommodation. The applicant will be required to fill in a self-assessment medical form, detailing the effect that their current accommodation has on their medical condition or disability. These forms will be assessed by either a medical professional or senior officer.

5.8 Harassment and domestic violence

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

5.9 Financial resources

- 5.9.1 Applicants who own their own property or have other financial resources which would enable them to resolve their own housing needs will be offered advice and assistance by the Housing Advice and Options Team.

5.9.2 Housing Related Debts

- 5.9.3 HDC expects applicants to clear any housing related debts owed to any registered social landlord before an offer of a tenancy is made, where it is clearly within their means to do this (for example where the debt is relatively low and the applicant has a reasonable disposable income or significant savings to draw on).

- 5.9.4 When a financial assessment carried out by the Housing Advice and Options Team, shows that the debt cannot be cleared immediately then a

realistic and affordable repayment arrangement should be agreed to clear the debt.

5.9.5 The applicant shall become eligible to bid for property as long as they have made regular payments in line with the agreement they have made.

5.9.6 Applicants will be placed in the band appropriate to their current circumstances whilst addressing any housing related debt, but bids will not be considered until the conditions in 5.9.3 or 5.9.5 have been met.

5.10 Emergency housing

5.10.1 An emergency housing status may be awarded to applicants with two or more identified needs in band A, or where there is no suitable temporary accommodation available for the applicant's household. Applicants awarded Emergency housing status will be allocated the next available suitable property. The award of Emergency housing status will be assessed by a delegated senior officer.

5.11 Direct lets

5.11.1 Most properties will be advertised through the CBL scheme. However in certain circumstances some properties may be let directly to applicants. Where an applicant is identified as requiring a direct let the case will be referred to a senior officer. The list below gives some examples of where this may happen. This list is not exhaustive.

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

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

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

5.12 Direct lets to homeless applicants

5.12.1 Homeless applicants who are owed a full homelessness duty by HDC (under s.193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002), will be placed in band A and will be able to bid for properties via the CBL scheme. Their date in band will be the date they are advised that they council has accepted the full homelessness duty.

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

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

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

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

5.14 Extra care homes

5.14.1 Extra care homes are properties for older people where additional services are provided. Allocation to extra care homes will not be advertised through CBL but will be made by an allocation panel.

5.15 Refusals of direct let

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

5.16 Area specific policies

5.16.1 Area specific policies also known as local lettings policies and are used in some areas within the sub region to help create balanced and sustainable communities. Where an area specific policy applies, it will be stated in the property label. Details of area specific policies in place will be clearly stated on the property label.

Chapter 6

6.1 Reviews of decisions

6.1.1 A designated senior officer will carry out reviews of assessment decisions as required.

6.1.2 Examples of circumstances that may be reviewed include:

- Multiple need in band
- Emergency housing required
- Moving people up a band or down a band
- Priority assessments, in complex cases.
- Housing people in different accommodation to designated need size
- Low priority review decisions
- Direct lets

This list is not exhaustive.

6.2 Statutory reviews

6.2.1 An applicant has the right to request a review of certain decisions made under part 6 of the Housing Act 1996. These are:

- Decisions about the facts of the applicant's case which are likely to be, or have been, taken into account in considering whether to allocate housing accommodation to the applicant
- Lack of any reasonable preference based on previous behaviour s167 (2C) Housing Act 1996
- Ineligibility for an allocation based on immigration status s160A (9).

6.2.2 Decision letters issued in respect of housing applications will advise the applicant of their right to request a review and provide appropriate guidance on how to do this. An applicant can obtain further details of the review procedure from HDC.

6.2.3 A request for a review of a decision can be made in writing or verbally to a member of staff at HDC. The request should be made within a reasonable period following the notification of the decision. Reviews will be considered within 28 days of the request being received and the applicant will receive a written response outlining the result of the review.

6.2.4 An applicant will only be entitled to one internal review. If an applicant is still unhappy following the review of a decision, they can make a complaint through the council's complaints procedures, contact the Local Government Ombudsman (see section 6.5) or seek to challenge the decision via a judicial review.

6.2.5 Reviews will be undertaken by an officer who was not involved in the original decision, and who is senior to the original decision making officer.

6.3 Homeless reviews

6.3.1 Homeless applicants have the right to request a review of certain decisions made by the local authority in respect of their homeless application. Within the context of the council's lettings policy this includes

the decision to bring to an end the full homelessness duty by making a suitable offer of permanent accommodation via the housing register (through the direct let mechanism).

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

6.4 The Local Government Ombudsman

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

Local Government Ombudsman
The Oaks No 2
Westwood Way
Westwood Business Park
Coventry CV4 8JB

Tel: 024 7682 0000
Website: www.lgo.org.uk

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

The Housing Ombudsman Service
Norman House
105 -109 Strand
London
WC2R 0AA

Tel: 08457 125 973
Website: www.ihos.org.uk

Chapter 7

7.1 Letting of accommodation

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

7.2 Short listing

7.2.1 After the end of an advertising cycle a shortlist of applicants bidding for the property will be taken from the CBL computer system. The shortlist will identify the order of applicants based on who has been in the highest housing needs band for the longest time. In circumstances where there is more than one applicant in the same band and they have the same date in band, the computer system will give priority to the applicant with the earliest registration date. If there is more than one applicant with the same band, date in band and registration date a senior officer will make an allocation decision based on the best use of the housing stock and needs of the applicants.

7.2.2 When a short list of applicants is completed the landlord of the available property will offer an accompanied viewing of the property to the highest priority applicants. This is to ensure that if the applicant who tops the short list decides not to take the tenancy, the property can be quickly offered to the next person on the shortlist.

7.2.3 After viewing the property the applicant at the top of the shortlist will be given 24 hours to accept or refuse the offer. If the offer is refused the next person on the short list will be offered the property.

7.3 Formal offer of the property

7.3.1 Once the applicant has confirmed their acceptance of the tenancy the landlord of the property will write to confirm the formal offer of the tenancy. The CBL system will then not allow that applicant to be considered for any further properties and once the tenancy starts their Register application will be cancelled.

7.3.2 Once the property is ready to let the landlord of the property will complete the tenancy sign up.

7.4 Withdrawal of offers

7.4.1 In the following very exceptional circumstances an offer of a property may be withdrawn:

- Where there has been a change in the applicants circumstances
- Following verification the applicant is not eligible for the property; or
- Where an error has been made in the advertising criteria
- Where an offer of accommodation could put a vulnerable person at risk of any harm

7.5 Refusing an offer of accommodation

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

7.6 Allocations to staff, council members or their family members

7.6.1 Members of staff, their close family and elected members who require housing with HDC may apply for housing in the same way as other applicants. Their status should be disclosed on the application form at the time of applying.

7.6.2 If an applicant who is a member of staff, elected member or a member of their direct family, makes a successful bid for a property the Head of Housing Services will be informed and must approve the letting prior to the formal offer being made.

7.7 Tenancy management outside the scope of the lettings policy

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

- Mutual exchanges
- Persons transferring from introductory to secure tenancy in the same property
- Where a secure tenancy of a property is assigned by way of succession to
- Where a secure tenancy is assigned to someone who would be qualified to succeed to that tenancy if the secure tenant died immediately before the assignment
- Where court orders are made under one of the following:
 - Section 24 of the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973
 - Section 17 (1) of the Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984
 - Paragraph 1 of schedule 1 to the Children Act 1989

Chapter 8

8 Confidentiality and access to information

8.1 Applicants' Rights to Information

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

- How their application is likely to be treated under the Lettings Policy (including in particular whether they are likely to be regarded as a member of a group of people who are to be given preference by virtue of this Policy, (see chapter 4)
- Whether housing accommodation appropriate to their needs is likely to be made available to them.

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

8.2 Data protection

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

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

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

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

8.3 Requesting information

8.3.1 Applicants are able to request copies of the information held regarding their application. This information is held in line with Data Protection Act guidelines. More information about Data Protection can be found at XXXXXX

Please note that we cannot provide you with personal information about other people if doing so will breach the Data Protection Act 1998.

Cambridge Sub regional Choice Based Lettings

Partner Organisation list

Local Authority

LSVT Landlord

Cambridge City Council

Hobson House
44 St Andrews Street
Cambridge City Council CB2 3AS

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge, CB3 6EA

East Cambridgeshire District Council,

The Grange,
Nutholt Lane,
Ely, CB7 4PL

Hereward Housing

St Mary's Lodge
St Mary's Street
Ely
Cambridge
CB7 4EY

Huntingdonshire District Council

Housing Services
Pathfinder House
St Mary's Street
Huntingdon
PE29 3TN

Luminus Group

Brook House
Ouse Walk
Huntingdon
Cambs
PE29 3QW

Fenland District Council

Fenland Hall
County Road
March
Cambridgeshire
PE15 8QN

Forest Heath District Council

District Offices
College Heath Road
Mildenhall
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
LP28 7EY

Kings Forest Housing Association

College Heath Road
Mildenhall
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
LP28 7EY

St Edmundsbury Borough Council

Borough Offices
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
1P33 1XB

Havebury Housing Partnership, Havebury House, Western Way
Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 3SP
and also Manor Road, Haverhill, Suffolk CB9 OEP.
Email is Office@Havebury.com

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Adapted properties

Property that has been adapted for an applicant with disabilities.

Advertised

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

Age restrictions

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

Application number

A unique housing number generated by the computer system.

Bedroom eligibility

How many bedrooms a household is assessed as needing

Choice Based Lettings (CBL)

A method of letting social housing through openly advertising property, and allowing applicants to bid for those advertised properties.

Customer/Applicant

Is either a tenant of a PO (including those in temporary accommodation) or a housing applicant on the housing needs register

Date of registration

The date an application form is registered with a PO

Date in band

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

Decision making organization

The PO that made a particular decision with regard to a housing or homeless application

Direct lets

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

Domestic violence

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

Bid

The process of applicants saying which property they would like to live in

Housing Associations

Also known as Registered Social Landlords. These are landlords who also provide social rented housing for which applicants/ customers can bid through the CBL scheme.

Housing options

Looking at what housing might be available to an applicant, including private rented accommodation and other solutions.

Housing needs register

A list of those requesting and eligible for housing

Housing Related Debts

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

Joint Application

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

Labelling properties

Describing who is eligible to bid for a property

Local Connection

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

Local elected members

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

LSVT Landlord

Local Stock Voluntary transfer, where a Local authority has sold its housing stock to a Registered Social Landlord

Mutual exchange

A scheme which allows two tenants to swap their homes.

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

The Cambridge Sub Region

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

Transferring tenant

An applicant who is currently a tenant of a partner organization

CABINET

1ST FEBRUARY 2007

ELECTORAL ADMINISTRATION ACT 2006 RELEASE OF FUNDING

(Report by Head of Administration)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Electoral Administration Act came into force at the end of last year, introducing changes to various electoral processes which must be in place for the elections to be held in May 2007. The Act is intended to prevent electoral fraud and malpractice after a number of high profile incidents in recent elections involving voter personation and postal voting.
- 1.2 This provides an extremely short preparatory stage and action has to be taken with immediate effect to comply with the legislation. This will involve the purchase of computer hardware and software as a matter of urgency.

2. The Changes

- 2.1 The Act requires all persons who have registered as postal voters to provide their dates of birth and signatures. The only practical way for the information to be held by the Council is electronically. When voting by post in future, a voter must supply this information again with their ballot paper which then must be verified against the record held by the Council. With 15,000 persons currently registered with the Council to receive a postal vote, this is a significant logistical exercise which can only be undertaken with the use of an extension to the Council's existing elections software programme.
- 2.2 Coincidentally, this is also likely to result in changes to the way in which the Council has conducted counts at the close of poll on the day of election at separate venues in the past.

3. Costs

- 3.1 As a Bill was already before Parliament when the MTP bids for 2007/08 were being prepared, an estimate was made of the likely cost of the additional hardware and software required and the additional work that would be required in capturing the data and verifying returns at the time of future elections. A bid has been included in the draft programme that will be considered by the Council at their meeting to be held on 21st February. Regrettably, the hardware and software needs to be ordered prior to that time if the necessary work is to be completed in time for the May election.

3.2 The original MTP bid considered by the Council on 6th December 2006 was drafted before detailed costs could be obtained from software suppliers. This envisaged expenditure in the current year of £10,000 plus £2,000 in subsequent years. The costs are now forecast to be £22,000 in the current year and £10,000 in subsequent years, the increases being wholly due to the higher than anticipated cost of software maintenance. A start up grant of £12,000 from the Department for Constitutional Affairs has been promised in the initial year which will reduce expenditure to the originally forecast amount of £10,000 but without grant in future years from the DCA which is not anticipated, the cost will remain at £10,000 per annum.

	2006/07	2007/08 and subsequent years
	£000	£000
MTP Bid	10	2
Updated estimate (net of grant)	10	10
Shortfall assuming bid approved	0	8

3.3 Assuming Council approve the MTP bid on the 21 February then a supplementary estimate in 2007/08 and subsequent years of £8k per year will be required.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Orders need to be placed as a matter of urgency if the necessary work is to be completed to comply with the Act in time for the May elections. The costs involved are unavoidable.

5. Recommendation

5.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- stress to Council the unavoidable nature of the MTP bid, and
- approve a budget transfer for the additional costs in 2007/08 and subsequent years.

Background Papers:

DCA elections Policy Division Update dated 19/12/06
Northgate estimates of software costs

Contact Person:

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