

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in **COUNCIL CHAMBER, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 15 MARCH 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 - 4)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 22nd February 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. THE CORPORATE EQUALITY POLICY AND ACTION PLAN
(Pages 5 - 42)

To consider a report by the Head of Policy seeking approval for the Council's Corporate Equality Policy and associated Action Plan.

**Mrs L Sboui
388032**

**4. MEDIUM TERM PLAN - HOUSING MARKET
ASSESSMENT:REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF FUNDING**
(Pages 43 - 46)

By way of a report by the Head of Financial Services to consider a request for the release of funding for a Housing Market Assessment.

**Mrs S Martin
388107**

5. UPDATE TO THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME.
(Pages 47 - 76)

To consider a report by the Head of Planning Services on necessary revisions to the Local Development Scheme and to consider the related consequences for the submitted LDF Core Strategy.

**S Ingram
388400**

**6. USE OF COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDERS (CPOS) TO
ACQUIRE RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY** (Pages 77 - 82)

To consider a report by the Heads of Environmental and Community Health Services and of Housing Services regarding the acquisition of residential property by compulsory purchase powers.

**J Allan
388281**

7. TOWARDS A CAR PARKING STRATEGY FOR THE MARKET TOWNS (Pages 83 - 104)

To consider a report by the Head of Planning Services outlining the initial findings of the Council's consultants appointed to undertake a review of the Car Parking Strategy.

**S Bell
388387**

8. HEALTH ACT

(a) Implementation of the Act (Pages 105 - 106)

To consider a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services regarding the implementation of the Act.

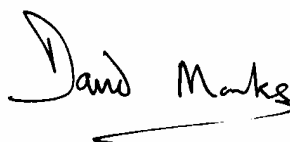
**C Lloyd
388290**

(b) Enforcement of Duties (Pages 107 - 112)

To consider a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Service regarding the enforcement of duties under the Act.

**C Lloyd
388290**

Dated this 7 day of March 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, 22 February 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, T V Rogers and L M Simpson.

154. COUNCILLOR N J GUYATT

In light of his anticipated forthcoming resignation as a District Councillor, the Chairman and Executive Councillors expressed their appreciation for the services rendered to the Council, latterly as Executive Councillor for Environment and Transport, by Councillor N J Guyatt who was attending his last Cabinet meeting prior to relocating to Luxemburg. The Cabinet extended their best wishes for the future to Councillor Guyatt and his wife.

155. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15th February 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

156. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors A Hansard and Mrs D C Reynolds declared personal interests in Minute No's 157 and 158 by virtue of their membership of St Neots and St Ives Town Councils respectively.

157. EXPANSION OF CUSTOMER SERVICES IN ST. IVES & ST. NEOTS

By way of a report by the Head of Revenue Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a proposal to re-model the cash offices in St. Ives and St. Neots as customer service centres and thereby expand the range of services available.

Having considered the information contained in the report, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the development of customer service centres at St. Ives and St. Neots cash offices be approved; and
- (b) that the associated budget adjustments, referred to in paragraph 6.3 of the report now submitted be noted.

158. CASH PAYMENTS

By way of a report by the Head of Revenue Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with a proposal to transfer the handling of cash payments at the Council's three cash offices to an alternative payment provider.

Having discussed the issues involved, the benefits of introducing additional payment locations and the associated financial implications, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the introduction of additional payment locations be approved and the payment of cash transactions at the Council's three cash offices withdrawn;
- (b) that the Director of Commerce and Technology be authorised to select the payment provider to handle cash payments; and
- (c) that the proposed use of under-spends and savings in the existing budgets to finance the net costs of the proposal be noted.

159. TREASURY MANAGEMENT INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE

A report by the Head of Financial Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which reviewed the respective levels of performance achieved by Fund Managers during the quarter 1st October to 31st December 2006 in managing the investment of the Council's capital receipts.

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report now submitted be noted.

160. DRAFT ISSUES AND OPTIONS FOR CORE STRATEGY DPD AMENDMENT

The Cabinet were advised that in the light of further information the item on draft issues and options which would amend the Council's core strategy DPD had been withdrawn from the Agenda and that it was anticipated a report by the Head of Planning Services would be submitted to a future meeting.

161. EAST OF ENGLAND PLAN - THE SECRETARY OF STATE'S PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE DRAFT REVISION OF THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY AND STATEMENT OF REASONS.

By means of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the details of the Secretary of State's proposed changes to the draft revision of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East of England and Statement of Reasons.

Having considered the conclusions emerging from the Secretary of State's proposals and the suggested response, the Cabinet emphasised that the latter should address their apprehension with regard to the ability of the proposals to achieve sustainable development, the intimation that a regional aspiration of 35% affordable housing provision would be sufficient and the lack of provision for improvements to the infrastructure given the proposed increase in new housing the district's demographic profile and the existing infrastructure deficit in the Eastern Region..

Having also recorded their concern with regard to the continued export by road of waste to Cambridgeshire landfill sites from the London area, Executive Councillors

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Leader and the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, be authorised to make appropriate representations to the Secretary of State in response to the draft revision of the Strategy and Statement of Reasons; and
- (b) that the Council's commitment to working with other Cambridgeshire Planning Authorities, and Regional and Sub-Regional partners, in order to submit appropriately co-ordinated responses to the strategic planning issues, be endorsed.

162. REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the timetable for the review of the Council's Constitution by the Corporate Governance Panel and seeking suggestions for any change to the present Constitutional arrangements.

Having being reminded of issues raised on the occasion of the last review and in recording its view that the Council's Constitution should continue not to permit substitution arrangements, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the report be received and noted.

163. GREAT FEN PROJECT STEERING GROUP

Having been advised of the resignation of Councillor N J Guyatt from the Great Fen Steering Group, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that Councillor P L E Bucknell be appointed to fill the vacancy on the Great Fen Steering Group for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

164. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.

165. LAND AT BURY ROAD INDUSTRIAL ESTATE RAMSEY

By way of a report by the Head of Legal and Estates (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book), the Cabinet considered proposed terms for the settlement of a claim against the Council by the purchaser of the freehold reversion of land at Bury Road, Ramsey.

Having been acquainted with the recommendations of Counsel on this matter, it was

RESOLVED

that the terms set out in paragraph 2.3 of the report now submitted be approved in full and final settlement of all claims by the Company in connection with this matter.

Chairman

THE CORPORATE EQUALITY POLICY AND ACTION PLAN (Report by Head of Policy & Strategic Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to a Corporate Equality Policy and associated Action Plan.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council recently underwent an (informal) external assessment of the Council's achievement against the Equality Standard for Local Government (Equality Standard). This is a standard against which the Council is judged (by the Audit Commission) in terms of meeting statutory equality and diversity responsibilities. The achievement against the Equality Standard is a statutory performance indicator.

- 2.2 A number of actions were identified which needed to be achieved if we were to attain Level 2 of the Equality Standard. The majority of these have been completed, one of the last things we need to do is to review and update our corporate equality policy (formerly Equality & Inclusion Strategy). The attached policy incorporates an action plan of issues to consolidate and develop further the council's achievement of the Equality Standard. This action plan is a dynamic document which will change as activities are achieved and new actions identified.

- 2.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) considered the draft policy at their meeting on 6th March 2007 and supported its adoption by the Cabinet. Minor changes to the policy have been made to reflect comments made by the Panel.

3 KEY FEATURES OF THE POLICY

- 3.1 The Policy is a statement on equalities and reflects the direction in which the Council is moving; including:

- Acknowledgement of and commitment to current equality duties and a commitment to improve equality practices (as they relate to disability, race and gender) at a directorate and service level;
- Commitment to monitoring services including equality action planning and target setting;
- Commitment to identify groups within communities whose needs are less well met.
- To ensure that the policy is comprehensive and consistent we have included the action plans from both the Disability & Race Equality Schemes. These have already been adopted by the Council (December 06 & July 06 respectively).

- 3.2 The policy is supported by an action plan that sets out how we are going to consolidate achievement of Level 2 of the Equality Standard, most of the activities in the plan have been or are about to be completed. In due course it will be updated to reflect the activities that the Council will be undertaken to work towards Level 3 of the Standard. The action plan

will form the basis of monitoring performance in the achievement of the Council's equality objectives and achievement against the Standard.

4. TRAINING

- 4.1 A briefing/training session is being offered to Members on 29th March 07, this will provide an opportunity to find out about the Equality Standard for Local Government, Corporate Equality Policy and Action Plan and Equality Impact Assessments.

5. RECOMMENDATION


- 5.1 The Cabinet is invited to adopt the Corporate Equality Policy and note the current Action Plan.

Background Papers

The Equality Standard for Local Government

Contact Officer: Louise Sboui
 01480 388032

Corporate Equality Policy



If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

Huntingdonshire
district council

Pathfinder House St Mary's Street Huntingdon PE29 3TN

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Further Information

For further information or clarification about the Council's corporate equality policy or if you would like to make any comments please contact:

Policy Division 01480 388032 Louise.Sboui@huntsdc.gov.uk

1. Introduction

The Council recognises that some people do not have equal access to our services or information about them. To ensure fairness and equity in the provision of our services, some services may need to be developed in the recognition of different needs.

To meet our priorities of providing high quality services and effective community leadership the Council understands that:

- Huntingdonshire is made up of many different groups of people who have different needs and aspirations
- Huntingdonshire comprises many different communities; some of these communities represent a geographical location others a shared interest or need
- equality does not mean doing the same for everyone
- to make progress we must target resources to meet the greatest needs

This policy sets out the Council's aims and objectives for equality, the accompanying action plan sets out the corporate and directorate actions and targets. This policy is supported by the more detailed policies of:

- Race Equality Scheme
- Disability Equality Scheme
- Gender Equality Scheme
- HR Employment Equality Policy

2. About Huntingdonshire

Huntingdonshire is a large rural district, which covers an area of approximately 910 square kilometres (approximately 350 square miles). Nearly 162,000 people live in the district, with about 45% of the population living in the 4 market towns of Huntingdon, Ramsey, St Ives and St Neots.

Overall we have a relatively low proportion of people from a black or minority ethnic background (BME) and levels of deprivation or social exclusion are generally low. We know that, generally:

- the local economy is strong
- unemployment is low
- educational attainment is above the national average (based on pupils obtaining 5 or more GCSE's grades A-C)
- income is above the national average (but below the regional average)
- our houses are in a good condition
- there are relatively low levels of crime.

More detailed information from the 2001 Census and other research can be found in appendix 4 and this suggests that deprivation and social exclusion does affect small sections of our communities. The Council therefore accepts the need to undertake further work to be able to understand the diversity of need within the district.

3. Our Commitment

This corporate equality policy shows how the Council will translate its statutory responsibilities into objectives and actions in respect of equalities. In particular it takes account of:

- Current and expected equalities legislation relating to gender, disability, race, religion, sexuality and age
- The Equality Standard for Local Government (Equality Standard) which has been adopted by the Council and the action plan to achieve Level 2 of the Equality Standard by March 2007
- The Council's existing Equality & Inclusion Strategy which this policy now updates and replaces.

This policy forms the basis of our commitment to the Equality Standard and allows the Council to take a coordinated approach. The Equality Standard will:

- Help us to mainstream equality with both service delivery and employment
- Help us to meet our obligations under the law
- Integrate equalities policies and objectives with Best Value/CPA
- Encourage the development of anti-discrimination practice appropriate to local circumstances
- Prevent institutionalised discrimination where it exists
- Provide a framework for improving performance over time

There are five levels to the Equality Standard and the Council is confident that it has achieved its target of reaching Level 2 by March 2007. An action plan for achieving Level 3 is currently being developed.

The Council recognises that discrimination or exclusion cannot always be dealt with as a single issue. Different strands, particularly those relating to race, disability, age, religious beliefs, sexuality orientation, rural isolation, gender and deprivation, may combine to cause inequality and social exclusion. Please refer to appendix 3 for an outline of the law relating to equality and inclusion.

This policy has incorporated a Corporate Equality Action Plan, which sets out clear targets and timetables for achieving these and shows how the Council's commitment will be translated into action.

The Council is committed to equality of opportunity in relation to employment and access to training and development. We achieve this equity and fairness by means of HR best practice which is detailed in our HR Equality Policy.

4. Council Objectives

Providing leadership in our communities is one of the Council's important roles. An important part of this leadership role is to promote equality, inclusion and the benefits that come from understanding and valuing diversity in our communities.

Our Corporate Plan ‘Growing Success’ includes an objective to “*strengthen our commitment and capacity to achieve equality, diversity and inclusion.* We intend to do this by:

- maintaining or establishing statutory equality schemes which consider gender, race and disability equality issues and the needs of disadvantaged groups at all levels of services, policies and practices
- ensuring that our employment practices provide equality of opportunity and do not discriminate against any individual

5. Activities to help us achieve our objectives

We also need to ensure that we understand the diverse needs of local people, that our services meet those needs and that they are provided in a fair and accessible way.

To contribute towards meeting these objectives we have set a target of achieving Level 2 of the Equality Standard by March 2007 and to have an action plan in place for the achievement of Level 3. This policy also identifies two outcomes that we need to achieve and two measures that will tell us how successful we are —

| Outcome | Measure | Achievement 2006 | Target (2008) |
|--|--|------------------|---------------|
| That our services are provided in ways that meet diverse local needs | % of local people who believe that Council services meet their needs | * | *75% |
| That the Council is recognised for promoting equality and inclusion in communities | % of local people who believe that the Council promotes equality and inclusion in their community. | 64% | 70% |

* This will be a re-worded question in our next Annual Survey (2008) therefore there is no baseline data, however we do have comparative data from previous years which has allowed us to provide a target of 75%

To help us achieve our overall objective, which is to strengthen our commitment to and capacity to achieve equality, diversity and inclusion in our communities and in the way we provide our services; we will measure our progress against the Equality Standard. To achieve this objective we have identified a number of activities to develop and improve the way we work. We will: —

- consult and engage with our communities
- plan and deliver appropriate services
- support our communities
- develop and support employees and Councillors
- monitor and evaluate our performance

Consult and engage with our communities, staff and stakeholder groups

To ensure that we understand the diversity of the needs of local people, we have identified the following actions. We will:

- use appropriate methods of communication and consultation to engage with different communities and individuals, in accordance with our Consultation and Engagement Strategy
- use appropriate methods of communication and consultation to engage with trade unions, staff associations and employees on all aspects of equality policy
- use national and local data, particularly from other local authorities and community or voluntary agencies, to increase our understanding of local need
- use information from our established complaints procedure

Plan and deliver appropriate services

To ensure that our services are available to all that need them and are delivered in an appropriate way we have identified the following actions. We will:

- ensure that each directorate and service area is committed to equality self assessment, scrutiny and audit
- use the information from listening, consulting and engaging with our communities to plan and deliver services
- avoid discrimination when designing, delivering or charging for services
- conduct an equality impact assessment each time the Council develops a new policy or changes an existing policy (a programme to impact assess existing policies, practices, services and functions has been developed)
- ensure that information about services is published widely and in ways that will help local people to use them
- continue to assess and review ways of making services more accessible
- ensure that our partners adopt the same approach to equality and social inclusion via our Partnership Framework

Support our communities

To ensure that we promote equality and inclusion in our communities we have identified the following actions. We will:

- ensure that our communities have access to and information about our services
- consult, when relevant, local people in planning for our services
- support democratically elected representatives to support communities and individuals
- ensure that Council policies do not discriminate directly or indirectly against any groups in our community
- identify and address unmet needs and gaps in services where appropriate
- identify socially excluded groups and develop measures to promote inclusion
- ensure that community and welfare rights information is easily available

- endeavour to engage with and support voluntary, community and charitable organisations and social enterprises where appropriate.

Develop and support employees and Councillors

To ensure that our employees and employment practices contribute to the outcomes of this strategy we have identified the following actions, we will:

- implement a separate HR Equality Policy, which promotes equality and diversity in our workforce. We will then be able to:
 - develop our employees and Councillors to help them promote equality and inclusion in our communities
 - identify clear responsibilities for equality within the Council (Appendix I)
 - provide guidance to help employees and Councillors ensure that policies, strategies and plans are fair
 - help employees and Councillors to recognise and prevent discrimination
 - allocate funds specifically for the purpose of equality training for employees so that they have the necessary knowledge and skills to implement this policy
 - help employees and Councillors comply with the requirements of all relevant legislation and good practice guidance.

Monitor and evaluate our performance

To ensure we are making progress we have identified the following actions. We will:

- monitor our performance against Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) and local measures
- use self-assessment, accreditation and the scrutiny process to measure progress against the Equality Standard and corporate equality action plan
- individual services and the Equality steering group will produce annual progress reports and update action plans to ensure continued progress against the various levels of the Equality Standard
- use the Council's comprehensive performance management framework to monitor performance against this policy and actions and targets that arise out of Equality Impact Assessments
- use the Equality Standard, and Equality Impact Assessments to collect and publish evidence of good practice throughout the Council.

Resources and Responsibilities

All Councillors, employees and others who work on behalf of the council have a duty or responsibility to implement the outcomes of this policy through the action plan. Particular responsibilities include:

Councillors

Councillors will support this policy and work towards the promotion of equalities and social inclusion in all council and community activities.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the implementation of the corporate equality policy and action plan for the Council as a whole.

Directors

Directors have a duty to promote the corporate equality policy and action plan throughout their directorates. They also have responsibility to ensure the implementation, review, monitoring and performance of departmental equality action plans and targets, self assessment and audit specific to services that fall within their directorate.

Services

Heads of service, activity managers and team leaders are responsible for implementing the policy and action plan in the day-to-day delivery of their service, including the collection of data. They will also be responsible for developing and implementing departmental action plans and targets that translate the corporate equality action plan into more detailed actions that link into the policies and services they deliver. They will also be responsible for self assessment and audit.

Employees

All employees have a responsibility to implement the policy and action plan and work towards the provision of services that meet the goals and objectives of the policy and action plan. Appropriate training will be provided to help employees achieve this.

Head of Policy

The Head of Policy will ensure that the policy is reviewed every 3 years and the action plan is reviewed regularly, and will evaluate and verify performance data that has been provided.

Procurement

As part of the development of the Equality Standard we will be reviewing our Procurement Strategy to ensure that contractors and others conform to the Council's expected standards.

Corporate Equality steering group

The cross-departmental equality steering group will co-ordinate the following action to support the achievement of this policy:

- promote a corporate perspective on equality issues including the implementation of new equalities legislation
- overseeing the progress of work against this action plan
- collecting information from each directorate on the progress being made
- produce regular reports to Chief Officers, Overview & Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet in relation to progress being made in relation to the action plan

Review of corporate equality policy

This policy will be reviewed fully every three years. The action plan will be reviewed on an annual basis; these reviews will be conducted by the corporate equality steering group. New legislative requirements will be incorporated and best practice recommendations considered at appropriate times.

Dissemination of the policy and action plan

- the policy will be published
- upon request a summary document will be made available in a range of formats and languages
- a copy of the policy and summary will be available for all staff
- applicants for Council posts will be made aware of the policy and it will form part of the induction programme for new members of staff

Definitions

The Council recognises that it is important to be guided by national definitions of discrimination and harassment and the terms used in this strategy have been defined below.

Not all of the terms defined below have been used in this strategy. However, it was decided that because some of these terms are often used without explanation in other documents or reports, it would be useful to provide a definition of them here.

Consultation and engagement

Asking for views on policies or services from staff, colleagues, service-users, general public or representatives from our communities. Different circumstances call for different types of consultation. For example, consultation includes public meetings, focus groups, surveys and questionnaires and meetings with experts.

Deprivation

People can be said to be deprived if they lack the types of diet, clothing, housing, household facilities and fuel, and environmental, educational, working and social conditions, activities and facilities which are customary. People are in poverty if they lack the resources to escape deprivation (Townsend 1979). Deprivation refers to unmet need, which is caused by a lack of resources of all kinds not just financial.

Discrimination

Discrimination can be both direct and indirect and it can occur in many ways. The council considers discrimination to be broadly defined as:

To discriminate is to treat a person more or less favourably on the basis of race, colour, nationality or ethnic origin, religion, culture, gender, disability, age, sexuality or other such category that is irrelevant to the individual's right to receive fair and equal treatment.

Discrimination on the basis of race, nationality, colour, ethnic origin, gender, age and disability is unlawful. Direct discrimination is deliberate. Indirect discrimination is where an act or failure to act, intentionally or inadvertently, has a disproportionate impact on an individual or a particular group.

Institutional discrimination

The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry Report (Macpherson, 1999) found that institutional discrimination could affect the way organisations operate and the way services are provided. Institutional discrimination is defined as 'the collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, ethnic origin, gender, disability or age. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness

and stereotyping which disadvantage on the grounds of ethnicity, gender, disability or age.’

Definition of Disability

The Disability Discrimination Act (1995) provides the following definition of disability:

‘A disabled person has physical or mental impairment which has a substantial, long-term, adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day to day duties’.

Disability Equality Duty

This term is used to refer to both the general duty and, where appropriate, the specific duties, placed on public authorities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 as amended by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005.

Diversity

No legal or universally agreed definition for diversity exists. Diversity has not replaced equality but has added a further layer of understanding to the statutory obligations about race, gender and disability. Diversity is about improving how people can work together by valuing people’s differences and similarities.

Equality Impact Assessment

An equality impact assessment is a way of systematically and thoroughly assessing and consulting on the effects that both proposed or current policy is likely to have on people, depending on their race, gender, disability etc.

Equality Standard for Local Government

The Equality Standard for Local Government is a framework that sets up a way of working within local authorities, which makes equality a central issue to all aspects of the council’s activities.

Using five levels, the Council will introduce a comprehensive and systematic approach to dealing with equality, which covers all aspects of service delivery, employment and community leadership. By applying the standard the Council will:

- develop a systematic framework for ensuring equality
- meet our obligations under the law
- integrate equalities policies and objectives with Best Value/CPA
- encourage the development of anti-discrimination practice appropriate to local circumstances
- provide a basis for tackling institutionalised discrimination
- provide a framework for improving performance over time

The Council will be able to assess progress based on 5 levels:

- Level 1:** Commitment to a corporate equality policy
- Level 2:** Assessment and Consultation (planning)
- Level 3:** Setting equality objectives and targets (doing)
- Level 4:** Information systems and monitoring against targets
- Level 5:** Achieving and reviewing outcomes

Ethnic monitoring

A process for collecting, storing and analysing data about individuals' ethnic (or racial) background to see whether all groups are fairly represented.

Functions

The full range of activities carried out by a public authority to meet its duties.

Gender Equality Duty

This term is used to refer to both the general duty and, where appropriate, the specific duties placed on public authorities under the Sex Discrimination Act 1975 as amended by the Equality Act 2006.

Monitoring

Monitoring is an activity designed to assess or measure progress against specific targets. Monitoring within the council may take the form of: self-assessment, performance management, scrutiny and audit arrangements.

Policies

Policies are the sets of principles or criteria that define the different ways in which an organisation carries out its role or functions and meets its duties. Policies also include formal and informal decisions made in the course of their implementation.

Poverty

People are in poverty if they lack the resources to escape deprivation, in other words a lack of money or material possessions. Townsend (1979) describes poverty as 'individuals, families and groups can be said to be in poverty if they lack the resources to obtain the types of diet, participate in the activities and have the living conditions and amenities which are customary, or at least widely encouraged or approved in the societies to which they belong'. A family can also be defined as being in poverty if their income is 60% lower than the average local earnings.

Procurement

Procurement relates to any process or action carried out by the council that results in the obtaining of goods or services.

Race Equality Duty

This term is used to refer to both the general duty and, where appropriate, the specific duties, placed on public authorities under section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976, as amended and the Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) Order 2001 & Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Order 2002.

Race Equality Scheme

Most public authorities bound by the general duty have a specific duty to produce a race equality scheme. This is a document setting out how the public authority plans to meet its statutory duties under section 71(1) of the Race Relations Act 1976 and in particular articles 2 (2) and 2 (3) of the Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) Order 2001 & articles 2 (3) and 2 (4) of the Race Relations Act 1976 (Statutory Duties) (Scotland) Order 2002.

Racism

This term is used to describe a range of ideas and attitudes, used to justify placing (a) particular racial group(s) in an inferior position to another. The Race Relations Act (1976) defines 'a racial group' as a group of persons defined by skin colour, race, nationality or ethnic or national origins. These negative attitudes often result in discriminatory or oppressive behaviour.

The Act defines direct racial discrimination as:

- treating one person less favourably than another on racial grounds. Direct discrimination is unlawful under the Race Relations Act 1976. This definition can be expanded to include other forms of discrimination such as age, disability and gender.

The Act defines indirect racial discrimination as:

- a rule or condition which is applied equally to everyone can be met by a considerably smaller proportion of people from a particular racial group
- the rule is to their disadvantage
- and the condition or rule cannot be justified on non-racial grounds.

All three conditions must apply. Again this definition can be expanded to include other forms of discrimination such as age, disability and gender.

Definition of Racial Harassment:

Racial harassment is unwanted conduct of a racial nature, or other conduct based on race affecting the dignity of women and men.

Definition of a Racist Incident:

Recommendation 12 of the Stephen Lawrence enquiry defines a racist incident as:

- any incident, which is perceived to be racist by the victim or any other person.

Sexism

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 declares that it is unlawful to treat a person more or less favourably than another on the grounds of sex. It is also unlawful to apply a requirement or condition, which discriminates against women because they are less able to comply with it than men are (or vice versa). The same protection applies to married people. It is also unlawful, in certain circumstances, to treat a person less favourably than another on the grounds that he or she intends to undergo, is undergoing or has undergone gender reassignment (sex change).

Sexuality

This term refers to the general preference of people. It is preferable to the alternative term 'sexual orientation'.

Social Exclusion

Social exclusion is a term used to refer to the experience of specific communities, neighbourhoods, families and individuals. They will have either, a combination of linked problems (such as unemployment, poor skills, low income, poor housing, high crime, ill health, cycles of early pregnancy, family breakdown and isolation) or particular characteristic (such as minority ethnic backgrounds, being in care, old age, drug dependency or abuse, mental illness or a disability). This may mean that their quality of life is significantly disadvantaged compared with the opportunities available to the majority. Social Inclusion encompasses all activities to combat social exclusion.

Outline of the law relating to equality and inclusion

The council has statutory obligations to promote equalities through the following key pieces of legislation:

- Disability Discrimination Act (1995) and its amendment of 2005
- Race Relations Act 1976 and its amendment of 2000
- Sex Discrimination Act 1975 and its amendment by the Equality Act in 2006
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Anti-discrimination in employment directive
- UN convention on the rights of the child

The council also has responsibilities to address specific aspects of equal opportunities or discrimination through other pieces of legislation

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)

The DDA introduces measures aimed at ending discrimination on the grounds of disability. The Act's provisions include employment, access to goods, services and facilities, and the buying and renting of land or property. The Act is being introduced on a staggered basis. The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 was amended in 2005 to place a duty on all public authorities to:

- promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the act
- eliminate harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disabilities
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled persons
- encourage participation by disabled persons in public life

The Race Relations Act 1976, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000

The Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 came into force in April 2001 and strengthens the 1976 Act. It arose in part due to the Stephen Lawrence Inquiry and has been targeted at the public sector. It places a new duty on all public authorities to:

- eliminate discrimination
- promote racial equality
- and promote good race relations

Sex Discrimination Act 1975

The Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (SDA) prohibits sex discrimination against individuals in the areas of employment, education, and the provision of goods, facilities and services and in the disposal or management of premises. It also prohibits discrimination in employment against married people. The SDA applies to women and men of any age, including children.

The Equality Act 2006 amended the SDA to place a statutory duty on public authorities to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination and harassment
- promote equality of opportunity between men and women

The Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act came into force in October 2000. The Act allows people to claim their rights under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in all UK courts and tribunals instead of going to the European Court in Strasbourg. The Act requires all public authorities in the UK to act in compliance with the Convention rights and has many implications for local government activity.

Anti-Discrimination in Employment Directive (Religious belief & sexual orientation and age)

The Anti-Discrimination in Employment Directive sets out a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation. One of the aims of this Directive is to outlaw discrimination against people at work on the grounds of their religion or belief or sexual orientation. The provision relating to sexual orientation and religion or belief came into effect in the UK in December 2003. It is now unlawful for any employer to discriminate against employees and potential employees because of their religion, beliefs or their sexuality. The approach taken to implement these provisions will largely mirror the existing sex discrimination and race discrimination legislation.

Definitions

- Sexual orientation includes orientation towards the same sex, the opposite sex or both sexes.
- Religion or belief is defined as, 'any religion, religious belief, or similar philosophical belief'. This excludes 'any philosophical or political belief unless that belief is similar to a religious belief'.

Factors to take into account when defining a religious belief include:

- Collective worship, or
- Clear belief system, or
- Profound belief affecting way of life, or work view

Similar provisions relating to age and employment were implemented on 2 December 2006. The Council also has responsibilities to promote equal opportunities on the grounds of age through working to the standards set out in the Government Statutory Code of Guidance on Age Discrimination in Employment (DFEE 1999) and the European Union Directive on eliminating age discrimination, when age discrimination in employment and vocational training became unlawful on 1 October 2006.

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The UK signed up to this convention in December 1991. It sets out 42 articles that define basic rights that all young people under the age of 18 years are entitled to. States that are party to the convention are obliged to develop and undertake all actions in light of the best interests of the child. Particular relevant articles to the work of a local authority are articles 9, 12, 15, 16, 19, 23 & 31.

About Huntingdonshire

Huntingdonshire is a large rural district within the county of Cambridgeshire. Huntingdonshire shares borders with Peterborough, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Fenland, East Cambs and South Cambs. Huntingdonshire has a population of 162,000 (MID 2005 Pop ONS estimates). Almost half of the population is concentrated in the four market towns of Huntingdon, St Ives, St Neot's and Ramsey. A large proportion of Huntingdonshire is predominantly rural with village settlements providing the main focus for community facilities outside the market towns.

Ethnicity

93.1% of the population was born in the UK; ethnic diversity in Huntingdonshire is low; 97.2% of the population are white in comparison to 90.9% nationally. The Black & Minority Ethnic population (2.9%) includes Black African, Black Caribbean, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese. (Source, Census 2001). The Cambridgeshire sub-region Traveller needs assessment (2005-10) stated that based on ODPM counts and TES school roll data, there were 192 Gypsy/Travellers in Huntingdonshire.

While Huntingdonshire does not face the same demands as an ethnically diverse inner city area, there are challenges to be met; engaging with Black and Ethnic Minority (BME) communities is one, as few representative groups have been established in the area.

The Diversity Forum (Huntingdonshire) was set up to share knowledge and resources on Huntingdonshire's Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) population. This is a multi-agency group comprising representatives from Huntingdonshire District Council, Luminus Housing Group, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust, Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service and Jobcentre Plus.

Migrant workers

In Autumn 2004 EEDA (East of England Development Agency) commissioned one of the most comprehensive and detailed reports to date on the contribution migrant workers make to the regional economy. The report estimates that in the last five years, between 50,000 – 80,000 migrant workers had arrived in the East of England region and that using the lower figure, migrant workers contribute somewhere in the region of £360 million per annum. In addition, the report found several companies in the region could not survive without the skills provided by migrant workers, yet many have inadequate access to basic support such as information on rights, childcare, finance and services. Migrant workers may face language barriers and other barriers, for example exclusion from local social and sporting events, hostility from the local community, and poor housing.

The following table shows the number of National Insurance Number Registrations (NNIR) to non-UK nationals from 2002/3 to 2005/06. The total number of NNIR increased significantly when ten additional countries joined the European Union (EU) on 1st May

2004. Nationals of Cyprus and Malta were granted full rights to work throughout the EU and nationals of the other eight countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia – known as the ‘Accession 8’ or ‘A8’) were given regulated access to the UK labour market.

Huntingdonshire experienced an increase from around 500 NNIRs in each of 2002/3 and 2003/4 to more than double this at 1,040 in 2005/6. This rise can be attributed to A8 nationals, with the level of people registering from these countries increasing from 10 in 2002/3 to 580 in 2005/6.

| Country | 2002/3 | 2003/4 | 2004/5 | 2005/6 | Total |
|----------------------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|-------------|
| Poland (A8) | 10 | 20 | 210 | 370 | 610 |
| Philippines | 90 | 60 | 30 | 40 | 220 |
| Portugal | 40 | 60 | 50 | 30 | 180 |
| South Africa | 40 | 40 | 20 | 50 | 150 |
| Republic of Lithuania (A8) | 0 | 0 | 50 | 90 | 140 |
| India | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 | 120 |
| USA | 30 | 40 | 20 | 30 | 120 |
| Australia | 20 | 20 | 20 | 20 | 80 |
| Pakistan | 20 | 20 | 10 | 20 | 70 |
| Republic of Latvia (A8) | 0 | 0 | 30 | 40 | 70 |
| France | 20 | 10 | 10 | 20 | 60 |
| Slovak Republic (A8) | 0 | 0 | 20 | 40 | 60 |
| Zimbabwe | 10 | 20 | 20 | 10 | 60 |
| Bangladesh | 10 | 10 | 10 | 20 | 50 |
| Germany | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 40 |
| Italy | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 40 |
| New Zealand | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 40 |
| Rep of Ireland | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 40 |
| Spain | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 40 |
| Thailand | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 40 |
| Canada | 0 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 30 |
| China Peoples Republic | 10 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 30 |
| Czech Rep (A8) | 0 | 0 | 10 | 20 | 30 |
| Ghana | 0 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 30 |
| Malaysia | 10 | 10 | 10 | 0 | 30 |
| Netherlands | 10 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 30 |
| Uganda | 10 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 30 |
| Zambia | 10 | 10 | 0 | 10 | 30 |
| Brazil | 0 | 0 | 10 | 10 | 20 |
| Finland | 10 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 20 |
| Turkey | 10 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| Cyprus | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| Denmark | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| Greece | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Hungary (A8) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 10 |
| Iran | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Jamaica | 0 | 10 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Nigeria | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 10 |
| Republic of Estonia (A8) | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 | 10 |
| Romania | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| Russian Federation | 10 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Sri Lanka | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| Sweden | 0 | 0 | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| Total | 510 | 500 | 720 | 1040 | 2770 |

1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest ten.

2. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

3. Numbers are based on 100% data from the National Insurance Recording System (NIRS).

4. Local Authorities are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant postcode directory.

5. Local Authorities counts are based on the most recently recorded address of the NINO recipient

Source: 100% sample at 17th June 2006 from the National Insurance Recording System (NIRS).

Disability

No single definitive figure exists in regard to the actual number of disabled people living in the district, although the following figures provide an indication that the numbers are significant:

- 4,795 people were claiming Disability Living Allowance in August 2005 (3% of all people in the district). This is below the national average of 4.4%. (source DWP)
- 3,935 people were claiming Incapacity Benefit & Severe Disablement Allowance (DWP August 05) 2.5% of all people in the district, this is below the national average of 4.5%
- 6.3% of people in the district (9,820 people) reported their general health to be 'not good' at the 2001 Census
- 2.9% of people aged between 16-74 in the district (3,269 people) consider themselves to be economically inactive due to permanent sickness or disability (Census, 2001)
- 13.6% of all people in the district (21,263) stated they had a limiting long term illness (2001 Census)

Age

Forecasts indicate that the number of older people (aged 65+) in Huntingdonshire is likely to increase by 50% between 2002 – 2016, a growth rate exceeding county and national levels. The Census also indicated that:

- nearly 6% of the population are aged 75 or over

Religion

Overwhelmingly, Christianity is the largest practised religion in Huntingdonshire. The table below shows the number of people practising each religion (2001 Census) and as the population of Huntingdonshire increases and diversity grows, the variety of faiths and number of people practising these faiths is likely to increase. It must be noted that according to 2001 Census nearly 26,000 people stated that they practised no religion; this reflects the national trend in the decline of religious belief.

| 2001 Census Religion | Numbers | Percentages |
|----------------------|---------|-------------|
| Buddhism | 266 | 0.2% |
| Christianity | 116,887 | 74.5% |
| Hinduism | 294 | 0.2% |
| Islam | 983 | 0.6% |
| Judaism | 205 | 0.1% |
| Sikhism | 185 | 0.1% |
| Other religions | 455 | 0.3% |
| Religion not stated | 11,744 | 7.5% |
| No religion | 25,935 | 16.5% |

A Faith guide has been produced to accompany the corporate equality policy. The guide provides basic and rudimentary information about religious and cultural norms. Its aim is to provide a better understanding of the religions practiced within the district.

Gender

The gender split in the district is similar to the national average (49.7% male and 50.3% female (Census, 2001)). However, there are gender differences, for example life expectancy where women in the district can expect to live to 80.8, while male life expectancy is only 77.9 years (National Statistics Website, 2005). Gender differences are noticeable in the workplace where traditional roles are well entrenched. The following table outlines some of the economic disparities between men and women:

| | Men | Women |
|---|---------|---------|
| Percentage of those aged 16-74 that are economically inactive (Census 2001) | 17.8% | 32.9% |
| Average full time gross weekly wages 2006 (Residence Median - ASHE, 2006) | £534.00 | £371.20 |

Differences in the occupations that men and women undertake are quite marked. Women are more likely than men to undertake lower paid occupations, often in a part-time capacity. The most notable differences exist in the following occupations :

| Census 2001 | Men | Women |
|---------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| Managers and senior officials | 23.1% | 11.9% |
| Administrative and secretarial | 5.1% | 23.9% |
| Skilled trades | 18.2% | 2.4% |
| Personal services | 1.3% | 12.3% |
| Sales and customer services | 2.9% | 10.7% |
| Process, plant and machine operatives | 13% | 3.6% |

Other Socio-economic Information

Overall, Huntingdonshire is a fairly prosperous district where people enjoy a good quality of life. According to 'Huntingdonshire Today August 2006':

- Deprivation in Huntingdonshire overall is relatively low although the ward of Huntingdon North has particularly high levels of deprivation indicators
- Average weekly earnings in Huntingdonshire are close to the national average (ASHE 2006). Economic activity is high, with every ward in Huntingdonshire having a higher level than the national average (ONS)
- Unemployment remains low at 1.2%, compared to the UK average of 2.6%. Huntingdonshire has a low overall level of people claiming income support, job seekers allowance and pension tax credit. However, it should be noted that there are a few wards with high levels of claimants
- Huntingdonshire has a high level of out-commuting at 35.3% and the 2001 Census showed there has been a 4% increase in out-commuting since the 1991 Census
- The average distance travelled to a fixed place of work for people living in Huntingdonshire is the 7th highest of all 48 local authority areas in the East of England
- Of those people who work in the district, 22.8% commute in
- Almost a quarter of people aged 16-74 in Huntingdonshire have no formal qualifications (this remains lower than the county and national average) however, 20% have a degree

or higher qualification

- 11% of the population is retired
- Life expectancy in Huntingdonshire is high compared to the national average
- 4.3% of households are without central heating, only 0.2% are without a bath or shower and 3.5% of households are overcrowded
- around a quarter of all crimes reported in Cambridgeshire, were in Huntingdonshire although the rates of crime per 1,000 population are below the average for England and Wales

Number of dwellings

According to the Housing Needs Assessment, there are 66,900 dwellings in Huntingdonshire and approximately 58,600 of these are within the private sector (owner occupation and private rented including tied accommodation). Of all of these households in the district, the 2001 Census indicated that:

- 24% are one-person households
- just over 14% have no vehicle

Tenure

The tenure split in the district is roughly as follows:

- Owner occupation: 76%
- Private Rented: 11%
- Housing Association: 13%

House prices

Huntingdonshire house prices have continued to rise rapidly:

- 8.4% in Q3 2003-4;
- 3.4% in Q3 2004/05
- and 9.0% Q3 in 2005-6

This is a rate that far outstrips earnings and the capacity of aspiring new owners to borrow. Presently, the average house price in the District as at Q3 of 2006 is £200,040.

The Shortage of Suitable Housing

The results of the 2002 District-wide Housing Needs Survey (and its update in January 2006) identified a need to build 585 new affordable homes in Huntingdonshire each year. The only effective way of meeting this need is social rented housing. However, there is a further tranche of people who can afford private sector rents (so they are not in 'housing need') but they cannot afford owner occupation. This forms an additional requirement for 470 homes of intermediate tenure for this group. The study identified housing need across the whole district with shortages being most acute in St Neots and St Ives.

The Housing and Special Needs Registers are important sources of information about

individuals' actual housing needs. As at the 30th November 2006, there were 2,146 households on the Housing Register, of whom 293 (12.4%) required special need housing.

Earnings and Affordability

In any local economy, a significant proportion of households (usually around 30%) will at any time be unable to afford to become or remain homeowners, and will need to be accommodated in social housing, or the middle-to-lower priced end of the private rented sector. This group priced out of owner-occupation has grown, and indicators exist to show that this trend will continue as:

- The earnings of younger, middle-income employees (i.e. “aspiring first-time buyers”) are not keeping pace with the rise in house prices
- Lower-end earnings appear to be growing only very slowly
- The availability of “entry level” housing is very low
- New “entry level” housing is not being built in sufficient quantity

Travel to work patterns

The 2001 Census results showed that 82,325 employed people live in Huntingdonshire and of those 64.7% work in the district; and 35.3% commute out of the district. Of those that commute out of the district for work, 3.4% commute to London; 5.2% commute to Cambridge (more than one in twenty workers); and 7.4% commute to Peterborough. Patterns of out commuting vary and people living in the north of the district tend to commute to Peterborough whereas those living in the south tend to commute to Cambridge or London. Almost twice the number of people travel out of Huntingdonshire for work than travel into Huntingdonshire for work.

**Corporate Equality Action Plan 2006/07
corporate equality policy (CEP)**

| Action | Target | Who is Responsible/ Resource | Progress |
|---|-----------------------|---|----------|
| Level I - Leadership and corporate commitment | | | |
| Formulate and adopt a corporate equality policy | March 07 | Policy and Research Service | |
| Make a corporate commitment to develop a corporate equality policy (CEP) CEP to be completed and signed off and taken through Member approval process by March 07 | March 07 | Equality steering group | |
| Consultation and community development and scrutiny | | | |
| Each division to commit to engage in consultation on it's service delivery Already occurs where appropriate – needs further investigation to ensure this occurs in an efficient manner | On-going | Equality steering group to provide guidance | |
| Service delivery and customer care | | | |
| Divisional commitment to corporate equality policy. Directorates to commit their services to take appropriate action to comply with corporate equality policy, Race Equality Scheme and Disability Equality Scheme | March 07 | Equality steering group | |
| Divisional commitment to setting equality targets Directorates to commit services to linking their service plans to the corporate equality policy | March 07 | Departmental Management Teams, Directorates and Equality steering group | |
| Divisional commitment to equality action planning Directorates to commit services to setting equality targets in their service plans where gaps identified | March 07 | Departmental Management Teams, Directorates and Equality steering group | |
| Organise corporate equality training | March 07 | HR and Policy | |
| Divisional commitment to allocation of specific resources for improving equality practice Divisions to investigate | From April 07 onwards | Departmental Management Teams & Equality steering group | |
| Employment and Training | | | |
| Adopt recruitment procedures which use non-discriminatory practices Any gaps will be included in an over-arching employment policy | March 07 | HR | |
| An equality objective will be built into management competencies and a mechanism for measuring effectiveness will be developed | March 07 | HR | |
| Commitment to an employment equality assessment of the Local Labour Market Area Consider whether an assessment of LLMA is required | March 07 | HR | |
| Commitment to establish a fair employment and equal pay policy. Produce an over-arching employment policy | March 07 | HR | |

| Action | Target | Who is Responsible/ Resource | Progress |
|--|----------|---|----------|
| Commitment to developing an equal employment and equal pay element of CEP incorporating the employment related issues from RES and including those assessments of organisation & individual requirements required for compliance with the DDA. Produce an over-arching employment policy | March 07 | HR | |
| Commitment to adopt procedures to ensure that publicity for vacancies does not unfairly restrict the range of applicants | March 07 | HR | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preliminary EIA already conducted on recruitment policy. HR need to translate findings into equality objectives and include in service plan | March 07 | HR | |
| Level 2 - Leadership and corporate commitment | | | |
| Publish corporate equality plan Steering group to sign off CEP by March 07 | March 07 | Equality steering group | |
| Develop corporate mechanism for assessing development of service level equality objectives and targets. Develop this via performance management framework | March 07 | Policy and Research Service and Equality steering group | |
| Create corporate structure for overseeing development of information and monitoring systems. Plan consideration of using CRM database | March 07 | Head of Policy | |
| Ensure mechanisms for responding to harassment on grounds of race, disability and gender are in place. Plan/scope how to review existing mechanisms e.g. Open Out, corporate complaints procedure, dignity at work, grievance and disciplinary. | March 07 | Equality steering group | |
| Consultation and community development and scrutiny | | | |
| Ensure draft CEP has been circulated for consultation. Ensure CEP & corporate equality policy is subject to internal and external consultation | March 07 | Equality steering group | |
| Establish mechanism for consultation with designated community, stakeholder groups and wider community on all aspects of equality policy | March 07 | Equality steering group | |
| Engage in consultation with Members, employee rep's and services on EIA and the CEP. corporate equality policy to be reported to Members & Employee Panel/ELAG as appropriate for comment | March 07 | Equality steering group | |
| Directorates to consider consultation/engagement with designated community, staff and stakeholder groups | March 07 | Directorates | |
| Produce a plan which enables Directorates to plan, consult and engage with community, staff etc | March 08 | Equality steering group | |

| Action | Target | Who is Responsible/ Resource | Progress |
|--|----------------------|--|----------|
| Each directorate to engage with equality self-assessment, scrutiny and audit on service delivery Produce a plan that details the following processes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that Members undertake scrutiny/audit of corporate/strategic equality issues Reporting issues emerging from EIA of services to Members | March 07 March 07 | Democratic Services Equality steering group | |
| Service delivery and customer care | | | |
| Engage in department and service area EIA Draft training plan and programme | March 07 | Equality steering group | |
| Engage in development of service level equality objectives and targets. Include in performance management framework and work with the service planning process | March 07 | Policy and Equality steering group | |
| Review of services should include the procurement function and all contracted services and partnership arrangements. Consideration of a plan to ensure that any review of services include the procurement function and all contracted services and partnership arrangements | March | Head of Policy and Head of Financial Services | |
| Employment and Training | | | |
| Develop fair employment and equal pay policy element of CEP Work to be completed by March 2007 | March 2007 | HR | |
| Engage in employment equality assessment of LLMA. Investigate if required | March 07 | HR | |
| Engage in workforce profiling and an equal pay review Equal pay audits completed annually for internal comparison. Investigate if required to compare against external comparators | March 07 | HR | |
| Adopt procedures to ensure that publicity for vacancies do not unfairly restrict the range of applicants Conduct full EIA if required. Policy to be defined in overarching employment policy. Adopt written procedure or document existing procedure | March 07 March 07 | HR | |
| Produce a standard range of application forms and job descriptions Already in place but HR to commit to review annually | Annual | HR | |

Huntingdonshire District Council Race Equality Scheme (RES) - Action Plan 2006 – 2009

| Action | Target | Who is Responsible | Progress |
|--|--|---|--|
| Year 1 May 2006 – April 2007 | | | |
| Initial listing and assessment of functions/policies for relevance to general duty | | Equality steering group | |
| Consultation of RES | August/September 2006 | Policy to lead | Complete |
| Process of impact assessments to begin | By April 2007 | Equality steering group to lead | |
| Development of guidance for assessment of proposed policies for impact on race and other equality areas | Prior to commencement of staff training - October 2007 | Policy to produce Equality steering group to approve | |
| Development of guidance for monitoring and assessment of existing policies | Prior to commencement of staff training - October 2007 | Policy to produce Equality steering group to approve | |
| Development of guidance for consulting on proposed policies | Prior to commencement of staff training - October 2007 | Policy to produce Equality steering group to approve | |
| Review of systems and procedures in relation to ethnic monitoring | By April 2007 | Equality steering group to lead | |
| Report on RES to Cabinet | Annually | Equality steering group | |
| Publication of RES | Annually | Policy Division | |
| Establish departmental equality working groups | By April 2007 | Equality steering group to lead on their development | |
| Evaluate equality training to date | Prior to commencement of staff training - October 2006 | Equality steering group and Personnel | |
| Development of training plan for employees (linked into equality standard training) e.g. For equality steering group For managers/general staff For Members | Commence training by October/November 2006 | Equality steering group and HR | Steering group training May 2006 commenced |
| Publication of results of equality impact assessments | | Policy Division | |
| Examination of previous years employment (equality monitoring) data | Annually | HR | |
| Publication of employment monitoring information | Annually | HR | |
| Annual Report on progress to date in achieving RES targets | A year from the date the RES adopted | Equality steering group and HR | |
| Publication of Annual Report on website | | Policy | |
| Review of procurement strategy in relation to race | Commence process by April 2007 | Equality steering group and Financial services | |
| Review of complaints procedure in relation to race, gender and disability | Commence process by April 2007 | Policy and Administration | |

Huntingdonshire District Council Disability Equality Scheme (DES) Action Plan 2006 – 2009

| Action | Target | Who is Responsible | Progress |
|--|---|------------------------------------|--|
| Year 1 May 2006 – April 2007 | | | |
| Initial listing and assessment of functions/policies for relevance to general duty | | Equality steering group | Complete |
| Consultation on DES | August/ September 2006 | Policy Division | Complete |
| Process of impact assessments to begin | By April 2007 | Equality steering group | Training arranged for January 2007 |
| Development of guidance for equality impact assessment of proposed policies | January/ February 2007 | Policy and Equality steering group | |
| Development of guidance for monitoring and assessment of existing policies | January/ February 2007 | Policy and Equality steering group | |
| Development of guidance for consulting on proposed policies | January/ February 2007 | Policy and Equality steering group | |
| Review of systems and procedures in relation to disability monitoring | By April 2007 | Equality steering group | |
| Report on DES to Chief Officers, Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet | Annually | Equality steering group | |
| Publication of DES | Annually | Policy | |
| Establish departmental equality working groups | By April 2007 | Equality steering group | |
| Evaluate equality training to date | October/ November 2006 | Equality steering group and HR | Initial evaluation with HR and Policy September 06. Final decision to be made by HR and Policy November/December 06. HR and Policy agreed approach – specific equalities training for staff with opportunity for more tailored training if required. Policy to fund & HR to manage training programme. HR & Policy to shortlist companies from January 07 onwards. Training to commence April 07 |
| Development of training plan for employees (linked into equality standard training) e.g. For equality steering group For managers/general staff For Members | Commence training by October/ November 2006 | Equality steering group and HR | Equality steering group commenced training May 2006. EIA training to commence January 07 |
| Assessment and publication of results of equality impact assessments | April 2008 | Equality steering group and Policy | |

| Action | Target | Who is Responsible | Progress | |
|--|--|--|---------------------------------------|--|
| Examination of previous years employment (equality monitoring) data | Annually | HR | | |
| Publication of employment monitoring information | Annually | HR | | |
| Annual report on progress to date in achieving DES targets to Chief Officers, Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet | A year from the date the DES adopted | Equality steering group and HR | | |
| Publication of Annual Report on website | Annually | Policy | | |
| Review of complaints procedure in relation to race, gender and disability | April 2008 | Policy and Administration | | |
| Recommendations from Disability Equality Scheme consultation – Actions | | | | |
| Recommendation | Action | Target | Who is Responsible | Progress |
| Consider findings from DES consultation | Each service to consider recommendations and findings of DES consultation and identify action | April 2008 | All services | |
| More education and training for council employees to raise awareness and attitude change to disabled people | Linked with development of training plan for employees Specific training for frontline staff on disability issues – to be assessed through Personal Development Reviews | General corporate equality training to commence by April 2007. Specific training to be considered by services by 2008 | Equality steering group and Personnel | |
| A dedicated department for disability issues that is accessible and widely publicised as a centre for information and consultation | HDC unable to support this however the Policy Division & the Equality steering group can partially fulfil this role | On-going | Equality steering group | |
| Improve physical access to HDC buildings | Improved access to buildings | New headquarters by 2010 New Operations Centre by 2007 | Technical Services | |
| Improved transportation in rural areas with adjustments to access for disabled people on buses | Refer to HSP Transport & Access Group | November 2006 | HSP Transport & Access Group | The Group has already identified this as an issue that needs to be addressed |

| Action | | Target | Who is Responsible | Progress |
|--|--|--|--|---|
| Dedicated parking, greater penalties for anti-social parking in disabled (accessible) bays and adjustments to roads and paving | Dedicated parking, considered as part of the Car Parking Strategy Issues relating to enforcement outside of car parks and on highways needs to be referred to Highways at Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire Constabulary | Underway | Planning Services Highways at Cambridgeshire County Council and Cambridgeshire Constabulary | Information sent on to CCC |
| A transparent complaints procedure, well trained staff with an understanding of the needs of disabled people | Considered as part of the review of HDC Complaints Procedure | April 2008 | Administration & Policy | |
| Better communication and flow of information on available funding and facilities for disabled people | Ensure information and communication requirements of disabled people are considered as part of the review of the Customer Service Strategy | 2007 | Customer Services Strategy Review team | Customer Services Strategy Review is underway |
| More dedicated leisure facilities with improved access and support available | Consider the extent to which suitable facilities at leisure centres can be provided | Undertake further research during 2007 | Leisure Services and Leisure Development | |
| Greater access to IT and Internet for dissemination of information | Each service to consider how to improve access to services and information about service using IT and the Intranet/Internet | April 2008 | Individual services and IMD | 98% of HDC Internet meets AA (W3C) accessibility standard |
| Long term involvement with disability support groups and individuals regarding consultation and engagement | HDC will commit to consultation and engagement with disability support groups and individuals | On-going | Equality steering group | |
| Consider how to consult with learning disabled in future DES and action plan consultation | Further work to ensure that groups/individuals representing the needs of learning disabled are included in any future consultation on disability | April 2008 | Equality steering group | |

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CABINET

15 MARCH 2007

MEDIUM TERM PLAN REQUESTS FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

(Report by the Head of Financial Services)

1 PURPOSE

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

2 BACKGROUND

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

3. RECOMMENDATION

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

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985

None

Contact Officer:

Steve Couper

Head of Financial Services ☎ 01480 388103

| | Net Revenue Impact (£'000) | | | | | | Net Capital (£'000) | | | | | |
|---|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | 2006/ 2007 | 2007/ 2008 | 2008/ 2009 | 2009/ 2010 | 2010/ 2011 | 2011/ 2012 | 2006/ 2007 | 2007/ 2008 | 2008/ 2009 | 2009/ 2010 | 2010/ 2011 | 2011/ 2012 |
| SUMMARY | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Annex B | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 70 – Housing Market Assessment (Housing Needs Survey) | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | | | | | | |
| Total amount for which release now requested | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | | | | | | |

70 – Housing Market Assessment (Housing Need Survey)

Steve Plant

| Financial Impact | Net Revenue Impact | | | | | Net Capital | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| | 2005/ 2006 £000 | 2006/ 2007 £000 | 2007/ 2008 £000 | 2008/ 2009 £000 | 2009/ 2010 £000 | 2010/ 2011 £000 | 2011/ 2012 £000 | 2012/ 2013 £000 | 2013/ 2014 £000 | 2014/ 2015 £000 |
| Approved Budget Already released | | | | | | | | | | |
| Amount for which release now requested | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 5 | | | |

Justification for Release

Housing Market Assessments are required by Government guidance, and by Planning Policy Statement 3(PPS3). They should be prepared collaboratively with stakeholders on a sub-regional basis. Although based around sub-regional housing markets, the findings of the Assessment should be capable of being disaggregated to a district level. They inform and support the Housing Strategy and Planning policies and should:

- Estimate housing need and demand in terms of affordable and market housing;
- Determine how the distribution of need and demand varies across the area;
- Consider future demographic trends and identify the accommodation requirement of specific groups, for example, older people, people with disabilities, first time buyers etc.

The value of housing assessments is in:

- Developing long-term strategic views of housing need and demand to inform regional spatial strategies and regional housing strategies;
- Developing a sound approach to planning for the mix of household needs in a market area;
- Assisting local planning authorities to justify a certain level of affordable housing, and to decide how housing need translates into different sizes and types of affordable housing; and
- Assisting local authorities with a variety of decisions on matters including social housing allocation priorities, private sector renewal options and the valuation of new-build low cost home ownership units. Such assessments are also used to inform the development of housing policies on stock conversion, demolition and transfer in areas where the quality of the housing available is inadequate. Assessments are therefore key to investment decisions.

Within the Cambridge sub-region, the seven authorities and Cambridgeshire County Council have joined together to jointly undertake the Housing Market Assessment. A Project Group has been formed, including officers from HDC's Housing and Planning Services. A dedicated officer has been employed by the County Council to undertake the work, which is being managed within the County Council's Research Group. Primary research (from an independent research company) will be commissioned as required. HDC's contribution towards the project is being met through this MTP bid and the Planning Delivery Grant. The total funding requirement is £57k over 5 years, broadly comparable to the cost of a 5-yearly Housing Need Survey, which is being incorporated into this work.

This MTP bid has already been approved by Cabinet and this form seeks release of the funds to enable HDC's contribution to be made.

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**COMT
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
CABINET**

**6th MARCH 2007
13th MARCH 2007
15th MARCH 2007**

UPDATE TO THE LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (Report by Head of Planning Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Cabinet of a necessary revision that now needs to be made to the Local Development Scheme and to consider the related consequences for the submitted LDF Core Strategy and thereby the Council's overall current planning policy position.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a specific requirement of the new policy making system with the scheme setting out the range of planning documents which the Council plans to produce in order to guide the future development of Huntingdonshire. As well as informing the community and other stakeholders of the proposed program for policy production the timetabling element of the LDS is intended to assist with the project management of the LDF process.
- 2.2 As Members will be aware the Council had submitted its Core Strategy in April 2006 but the planned examination into its soundness was subsequently postponed, in September 2006, by the Planning Inspectorate in order that the Council could consider submitting additional supporting information regarding the 'spatial elements' of the proposed strategy.
- 2.3 The Planning Inspectorate has now however indicated that in their opinion the adoption of that procedure, because of the complex procedural requirements of the new planning system, would still leave the Council position open to possible successful challenge on the grounds of procedural unsoundness. Accordingly GO-East and the Planning Inspectorate have advised the Council that we should therefore now request the withdrawal of the submitted Core Strategy, whilst we still have the opportunity to revise our Local Development Scheme, and look towards fast-tracking an upgraded resubmission.

3. THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE SUBMITTED CORE STRATEGY

- 3.1 Having regard to the advice received from GO-East and the Planning Inspectorate there appears to be no alternative but to follow their recommended course of action. Therefore it is recommended that the Council pro-actively indicates to GO-East/The Planning Inspectorate that we would wish the Secretary of State to direct us to withdraw the submitted LDF Core Strategy and subsequently resubmit an updated version in line with the latest emerging guidance regarding the spatial content of such documents.

4. THE REVISED LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

- 4.1 As a consequence of the above the Council now needs to resubmit a revised LDS (incorporating a robust timetable for delivering resubmitted Core Strategy and Development Control Policy documents) to the Secretary of State before the March 31st deadline.
- 4.2 The attached revised LDS therefore sets out our updated and projected timetable for the delivery of the Local Development Framework.

5. THE NEED FOR AN INTERIM PLANNING POLICY STATEMENT

- 5.1 Accordingly the Council, acting in respect of its role as the Local Planning Authority, needs to provide for effective continuity in terms of providing a framework for the operation of its Development Control function. Therefore it is intended that the Council would move to adopt an interim planning policy statement outlining HDC's current thinking regarding its planning policies. It is intended that this Interim Planning Policy Statement will in essence be based upon the already consulted upon, and previously approved for submission, Key Principles and related policies as set out in Chapters 3 to 9 of the previously submitted Core Strategy plus relevant supplementary advice regarding the local affordable housing delivery mechanism.
- 5.2 It is intended that a further specific report regarding this issue will be considered by the Cabinet, the Development Control Panel and the Full Council in April.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Therefore as a direct consequence of the issues outlined above it is recommended that the Cabinet:
- a. Approves the attached revised LDS for submission to the Secretary of State.
 - b. Authorises the Head of Planning Services to request the Secretary of State via GO-East to withdraw the submitted Core Strategy Development Plan Document.
 - c. Notes that the Council will therefore need to adopt an Interim Planning Policy Statement in order to provide for effective continuity in terms of its Development Control function.

Background Papers:

Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks, ODPM, 2004
Huntingdonshire's Submitted Core Strategy, 2006

CONTACT OFFICER - enquiries about this report to Steve Ingram, Head of Planning Services, on 01480 388400.

Local Development Framework
Local Development Scheme for Huntingdonshire

March 2007

Huntingdonshire
DISTRICT COUNCIL

Steve Ingram B.A.(Hons), BTP, DMS, MRTPI
Head of Planning Services

Further copies of this document can be obtained from:

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It can also be viewed on our web site at:

<http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk>

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PART A INTRODUCTION

1. Purpose of this document

- 1.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) outlines the programme for preparing and reviewing statutory planning documents in Huntingdonshire.
- 1.2 The LDS is required by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, which introduced new types of plans for guiding land-use change, and new procedures for preparing them. The **Local Development Framework** (LDF) will replace the Huntingdonshire Local Plan in setting out planning policies and proposals for the area.
- 1.3 The Local Development Framework will comprise a number of documents to be prepared over a period of time. The LDS sets out what will be produced and when, and explains what will happen to existing policies during the transition period. It focuses on the next three years, but also gives an indication of work that is proposed beyond that horizon. The LDS will be kept under review and updated when necessary.
- 1.4 Section 2 gives a brief overview of the new system and its associated terminology, followed in Section 3 by an explanation of the transitional arrangements. Part B then provides a summary of the proposed LDF for Huntingdonshire: its overall structure (Section 4); the production programme (Section 5); and details of resources, monitoring and review arrangements (Section 6). Part C concludes with profiles of key documents in the LDF. For ease of reference a glossary of terms is included at Appendix 1.

2. A guide to the new system

- 2.1 The **Development Plan** provides the main point of reference when planning applications are considered: decisions must be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless 'material considerations' indicate otherwise¹.
- 2.2 Under the previous system of plan production the Development Plan comprised **Structure Plans**, which set out strategic planning policies, and **Local Plans**, which contained more detailed guidance. The current Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan was adopted in October 2003. The Huntingdonshire Local Plan was adopted in December 1995, but was superseded in part by the Local Plan Alteration, adopted in December 2002.
- 2.3 Under the new system the Development Plan will instead comprise:
- The **Regional Spatial Strategy** (RSS) prepared by the East of England Regional Assembly; and
 - **Development Plan Documents** (DPDs) prepared by the local planning authority.
- 2.4 The range of Development Plan Documents to be produced must include a **Core Strategy** (setting out the spatial framework and key policies for the area) and one or more documents setting out site-specific allocations. **Action Area Plans** can be prepared for areas where more detailed guidance is needed. A **Proposals Map** illustrating the spatial

¹ Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, Section 38(6).

extent of policies and proposals must be produced to accompany the DPDs (to be updated as each DPD is adopted).

- 2.5 Supplementary Planning Guidance has in the past been used to expand upon the policies and proposals contained in the Development Plan. Under the new system such material will be known as **Supplementary Planning Documents**.
- 2.6 A **Statement of Community Involvement** is required to explain how the public and other interests will be involved in the process of preparing these various documents, and also in significant development control decisions. The current SCI was adopted on 30 November 2006.
- 2.7 Development Plan Documents, the Proposals Map, Supplementary Planning Documents and the Statement of Community Involvement are given the generic name **Local Development Documents** (LDDs) in the new arrangements. The particular set of these documents prepared by the local planning authority, together with the Local Development Scheme and an Annual Monitoring Report, make up the **Local Development Framework** as a whole. It should be noted that both 'Local Development Documents' and 'Local Development Framework' are umbrella terms rather than adding to the particular collection of documents to be produced.
- 2.8 A diagram showing how these various documents interrelate within Huntingdonshire is contained in Section 4.

3. Transitional arrangements

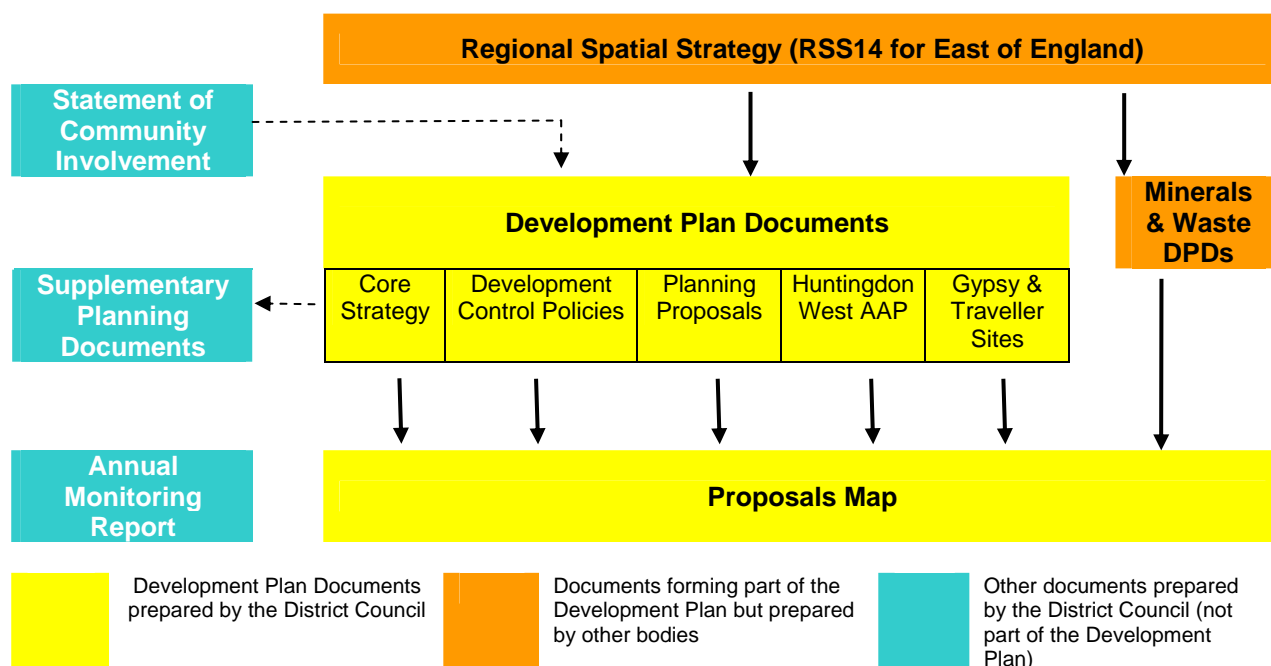
- 3.1 Most policies and proposals in the Structure Plan and Local Plan will remain in force until they are replaced by the Regional Spatial Strategy or a Development Plan Document. Under the new legislation existing plans are 'saved' automatically for three years until September 2007. The Council can ask the Secretary of State to extend the life of particular policies or proposals beyond this period if they have yet to be replaced (and they remain appropriate). A protocol was issued on 11 August 2006 detailing the procedures for reviewing and agreeing extensions to 'saved' Local Plan policies.
- 3.2 Appendix 2 shows how existing Local Plan policies will be replaced over time by the new DPDs. Existing supplementary planning guidance (SPG) will also continue to carry weight as a strong 'material consideration' in decisions, so long as the Local or Structure Plan policies to which it is linked remain in force. Appendix 3 shows what will happen to SPG as these 'parent' policies are replaced.
- 3.3 'Interim Planning Statements' will continue to be prepared as and when required. This provides guidance for sites or areas where development is proposed, but where a specific allocation does not exist in the Local Plan (or an emerging DPD). Such documents do not form part of the Local Development Framework, but are subject to public consultation and will be a material consideration in decisions relating to the sites or areas concerned.

PART B SUMMARY OF FRAMEWORK

4. Structure and interrelationships

4.1 Figure 1 gives an overview of the documents that will provide the new planning policy framework for Huntingdonshire, and the way in which they interrelate.

Figure 1 Overview of the new planning policy framework



*N.B The boxes shaded yellow and turquoise will together comprise the LDF for Huntingdonshire
The yellow and orange boxes are the elements that will form the Development Plan*

4.2 Within the strategic context provided by the Regional Spatial Strategy, the District Council intends to produce DPDs covering five areas:

- **Core Strategy:** This will provide the spatial framework for other DPDs produced by the Council
- **Development Control Policies:** This will provide guidance for development proposals and decisions
- **Planning Proposals:** Allocations for housing, business development and other uses.
- **Huntingdon West Area Action Plan:** to guide a wide range of land-use changes in this sector of the town.
- **Gypsy and Traveller Sites:** Allocations to meet identified needs in Huntingdonshire.

4.3 The Huntingdon West AAP will cover redevelopment proposals for the area west of the town centre, changes to the road system as a result of the A14 proposals, enhancement of

Views Common and a vision for the Hinchingsbrooke Community Campus including an extension to the Country Park.

- 4.4 A separate DPD for gypsy and traveller sites is proposed because of the RSS single issue review on this topic and the particular issues involved in identifying appropriate sites relating to the requirements of the travelling community and the difficulty of securing suitable sites.
- 4.5 Separate DPDs covering minerals and waste matters will be produced by Cambridgeshire County Council (which is the local planning authority for minerals and waste matters). The spatial extent of policies and proposals contained in all DPDs (including those for minerals and waste) will be illustrated on the proposals map, which will be updated as and when individual DPDs are adopted and will itself form part of the Development Plan.
- 4.6 In terms of Supplementary Planning Documents, priority is being given to guidance on the provision of developer contributions towards affordable housing and on planning contributions. The affordable housing SPD will need to be revised at an early stage in order for it to be compatible with the Core Strategy when that DPD becomes the Development Plan. The planning contributions document is likely to be complemented by a further document detailing strategic needs (such as strategic open space). This is intended to be produced on a joint basis with other councils in Cambridgeshire, but the approach requires further discussion and agreement between the authorities concerned and the Government's regional office. For this reason details of the proposed strategic document will be included in a future review of this Local Development Scheme when its production can be programmed with greater certainty.
- 4.7 In due course some existing guidance on other topics will be updated and re-issued as SPDs, as detailed in Appendix 3.

5. Production programme






- 5.1 Work to produce the documents making up the LDF will be phased over several years. This will make best use of resources, and also ensure that policies and proposals conform to principles established in the RSS and the Core Strategy DPD.
- 5.2 Table 1 lists the DPDs and SPDs that will be produced (together with the Statement of Community Involvement) and summarises the anticipated timetable for their production. It also shows the 'chain of conformity' for each document (i.e. the relationship with higher levels of policy-making). The information is presented graphically in Figure 2. More detailed profiles of each document are contained in Part C.
- 5.3 A Core Strategy including development control policies was produced and submitted to the Secretary of State in April 2006. After much discussion it was agreed that a 'direction to withdraw' be issued to avoid the risk of proceeding with the examination of a document likely to be found unsound. This version of the LDS incorporates fundamental changes to the production programme for the Local Development Framework.
- 5.4 The timetable takes into account the procedures required by law, the time required for research and public involvement, the resources available to the District Council and the need for approval at key stages by Council Members. However the timings are indicative,

as they rely upon a number of assumptions. Revisions to the LDS may be required if any of these assumptions do not hold true:

- a) **Staff turnover:** The timetable includes a degree of flexibility to accommodate normal staff turnover. However, the District Council has concerns that vacancies over an extended period of time may hinder progress against targets. This is due to a current shortage of qualified planning staff and related professionals.
- b) **Budgetary provision:** It is assumed that current levels of funding for development plan work will continue, including the contribution made by Planning Delivery Grant (or any funding scheme that succeeds this).
- c) **Availability of external resources:** Much of the research which feeds into the evidence base (Section 6 below) requires the use of specialist consultants, and consultants may also assist with the sustainability appraisal of emerging documents (Section 7). The timetable assumes that this expertise will be available at the appropriate times, but delays may be encountered if it is not. The greatest risk relates to sustainability appraisal, which is known to be placing considerable demands upon the consultancy sector. To limit this risk Council officers have developed expertise in sustainability appraisal so that as much work as possible can be undertaken in-house. This also has the advantage of integrating the sustainability assessment into the development plan process more effectively.
- d) **Timing of RSS:** The RSS is now well advanced and provides clear directions to the Core Strategy, Development Control Policies DPD, Planning Proposals DPD and Huntingdon West AAP. The Gypsy and Traveller Sites DPD has been reprogrammed to reflect the RSS single issue review on this topic.
- e) **Changes in government advice:** In the context of national consultation about reforms to planning obligations, there has been uncertainty about the appropriate vehicles for setting out different levels of policy and guidance on this issue (i.e. DPDs or SPDs).
- f) **Level of public engagement:** Based upon past experience the DPDs are likely to attract many representations at Preferred Options and Submission stages. The timetable accounts for this, but an abnormally large volume of comments at any stage would require some additional time for analysis and response.
- g) **Examination process:** The anticipated time required for arranging examinations into DPDs, and for the examinations themselves and subsequent reporting stages, take into account advice from the Planning Inspectorate. However they could be affected by any changes in the availability of Inspectorate resources, or by a larger than expected volume of appearances at an examination.

Table 1 Production programme

| Document title | Role & content | Chain of conformity | Timetable | | |
|--|---|---|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| | | | Participation on preferred options | Submission to Secretary of State | Adoption |
| Core Strategy DPD | Sets out the spatial vision, objectives and strategic directions of growth | Consistent with national planning guidance and in general conformity with Regional Spatial Strategy | November 2007 | April 2008 | June 2009 |
| Development Control Policies DPD | Sets out policies for managing development in the area | Consistent with national planning guidance and in general conformity with Regional Spatial Strategy | November 2007 | July 2008 | September 2009 |
| Planning Proposals DPD | Contains site-specific proposals for different forms of development up to 2021, plus policies relating to the overall scale and timing of growth | Consistent with spatial framework set out in the Core Strategy | February 2009 | September 2009 | January 2011 |
| Huntingdon West AAP | Contains site-specific proposals for different forms of development and redevelopment in a mixed area where significant changes in land-use are proposed | Consistent with spatial framework set out in the Core Strategy | December 2007 | September 2008 | December 2009 |
| Gypsy & Traveller Sites DPD | Contains site-specific proposals for gypsy and traveller sites to meet identified needs up to 2021, plus policies relating to the overall scale of site provision | Consistent with spatial framework set out in the Core Strategy | February 2009 | September 2009 | January 2011 |
| Developer Contributions Towards Affordable Housing SPD | Provides detailed guidance on the Council's requirements for developer contributions on affordable housing based on the existing Development Plan | Consistent with policies in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration 2002 and Cambridgeshire Structure Plan 2003 | June 2007 | Not required | November 2007 |
| Developer Contributions Towards Affordable Housing (Revised) SPD | Provides detailed guidance on the Council's requirements for developer contributions on affordable housing | Consistent with policies in the Core Strategy | January 2010 | Not required | July 2010 |
| Planning Contributions SPD | Details the district-specific standards for social and physical infrastructure that may be required with new development, including open space. | Consistent with policies in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration 2002 | November 2007 | Not required | June 2008 |
| Design Guide SPD | Provides guidance on the design process and key design principles for different forms of development | Consistent with policies in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan and Huntingdonshire Local Plan | December 2006 (draft SPD) | Not required | June 2007 |
| Landscape & Townscape SPD | Provides guidance on the distinctive qualities of Huntingdonshire's landscape character areas and market towns | Consistent with policies in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan and the Huntingdonshire Local Plan | December 2006 (draft SPD) | Not required | June 2007 |

| | | | | |
|------------|---|---|---|--|
| Key |  | Pre-production phase - from commencement of survey work to start of document production | C | Commencement of survey work |
| |  | Production phase - start of document production to submission (or adoption in the case of SPDs) | P | Consultation on preferred options (or draft SPD) |
| |  | Examination phase - from submission to adoption | S | Submission of draft document to Secretary of State |
| |  | Timetable for RSS14 (R = panel report; PC = proposed changes) | E | Commencement of independent examination |
| |  | Adopted Proposals Map (A = adoption of proposals map in parallel with adoption of a DPD containing site-specific policies or proposals) | A | Adoption |

Note: Commencement of survey work is regarded as the first key milestone in the preparation process. The subsequent production phase begins when policy issues and options start to be identified; informal consultation with key stakeholders can occur

6. The evidence base

6.1 To ensure that the policies and proposals in the documents forming the LDF are sound, a number of studies and data sources will be drawn upon during their preparation. The main studies include:

- Huntingdonshire Retail Study (September 2005)
- Housing Land Availability Assessment (forthcoming 2nd quarter 2007)
- 2002 Housing Needs Survey (April 2003)
- 2006 Housing Needs Survey Update (May 2006)
- Huntingdonshire Landscape & Townscape Assessment (July 2003)
- Huntingdonshire Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (October 2004)
- Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Traveller Needs Assessment (April 2006)
- Huntingdonshire Local Economy Study (forthcoming –2nd quarter 2007)
- Huntingdonshire Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment and Audit (September 2006)

6.2 In addition relevant research and analysis appears in the sustainability appraisal Scoping Report (see below) and a background paper on settlement hierarchy issues (produced to accompany the initial consultation on Core Strategy options).

7. Sustainability Appraisal and SEA

7.1 All DPDs and SPDs will need to undergo sustainability appraisal (SA). This is a systematic process carried out during plan production; its purpose is to assess the extent to which emerging policies and proposals will help to achieve relevant environmental, social and economic objectives. The SA process incorporates the 'strategic environmental assessment' (SEA) required for plans and programmes that are likely to have a significant effect upon the environment².

7.2 At each stage of DPD or SPD production a sustainability appraisal will be carried out to inform the consultation process, assist in refining policies and proposals and support submitted DPDs during

² SEA is mandatory in these circumstances as a result of European Directive 2001/42/EC 'on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment'

the examination stage. The Council has produced a Scoping Report (January 2005) which identifies appropriate high-level objectives for appraising policies against, and examines 'baseline' conditions in the district. The Scoping Report has been designed to provide a foundation for the range of DPDs and SPDs that the Council intends to produce, but will if necessary be updated during the early stages of DPD or SPD production to ensure that the information and analysis it contains remain relevant.

- 7.3 Although sustainability appraisal is required for all DPDs and SPDs, they are not subject to the legal requirements associated with SEA if their content or geographical scope means that they are unlikely to have a significant effect upon the environment. The document profiles in Part C indicate whether the SEA requirements are considered to apply.
- 7.4 Amendments were introduced to the UK Conservation (Habitats &etc) Regulations 1994 in September 2006. These result in Appropriate Assessment under Article 6(3) and (4) of the Habitats directive 92/43/EEC being required for all land use plans likely to have a significant effect on a European site. To satisfy the requirements Appropriate Assessment should be undertaken before adoption of a DPD. It is anticipated that this will affect very few sites in Huntingdonshire but will be completed where necessary.

8. Resources, monitoring and review

- 8.1 The District Council's Development Plans Section (part of Planning Services) will take the lead in preparing all DPDs, some SPDs, the Statement of Community Involvement and the Annual Monitoring Report. The section can draw upon specialist skills elsewhere in the Council:
- The Implementation Section of Planning Services (see below)
 - Policy Division (which carries out corporate monitoring and research, and undertakes economic development work)
 - Housing Services Division (for inputs regarding housing policy)
 - Environment & Transport Division (specialist advice on traffic and highways matters)
 - Environmental Health Division (advice on air quality, noise and contaminated land)
- 8.2 Advice is also obtained from Cambridgeshire County Council in relation to socio-economic research, transport, countryside, biodiversity and archaeology. Where expertise is not available from these sources, other agencies may become involved (e.g. the Environment Agency) or consultants are employed. The budget for Planning Services makes allowance for anticipated consultancy costs, as well as for the other costs involved in plan production (such as consultation and holding examinations).
- 8.3 The Implementation Section in Planning Services offers professional advice in relation to urban design, conservation, landscape architecture, arboriculture and graphic design. Officers from that section will lead the preparation of any SPDs concerning these matters.
- 8.4 The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) will provide a regular review of progress in preparing and implementing the documents proposed in this Local Development Scheme and will relate to each financial year. The first AMR (for 2004-05) was published at the end of 2005. Document production will be assessed against the milestones set out in Part C of the LDS, while information on the implementation of policies will relate to key targets and contextual indicators. In the light of this review the AMR will indicate whether any revisions to the Local Development Scheme are necessary.

PART C DOCUMENT PROFILES

CORE STRATEGY DPD

| Overview | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Is this a Development Plan Document? | Yes |
| What is it for? | Sets out the spatial vision, objectives and key policies for managing development in the area. |
| What area will it cover? | All of Huntingdonshire |
| What documents will it conform with? | Consistent with national planning guidance and in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy. |
| Is SEA required? | Yes |

| Proposed timetable | |
|---|---------------|
| Survey work commences | April 2003 |
| Public participation on Preferred Options | November 2007 |
| Submission to Secretary of State | April 2008 |
| Pre-examination meeting | August 2008 |
| Independent examination | November 2008 |
| Receipt of Inspector's report | April 2009 |
| Modify submitted plan & adoption | June 2009 |

| How will it be produced? | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Organisational lead | Head of Planning Services / Executive Member for Planning Strategy. |
| Who will produce the document? | The Development Plans Section of the District Council. |
| Who will approve it? | The Council, prior to its submission to the Secretary of State. |
| How will the community be involved? | Opportunities to participate at key stages throughout the process in accordance with the basic requirements set out in the Regulations ³ , and the proposals contained in the Statement of Community Involvement. |

| Monitoring & review | |
|--|--|
| Document production and implementation (once adopted) to be reviewed annually, and reported in the Annual Monitoring Report. | |

³ This reference and those that follow refer to The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL POLICIES DPD

| Overview | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Is this a Development Plan Document? | Yes |
| What is it for? | Sets out local policies for managing development in the area. |
| What area does it cover? | All of Huntingdonshire |
| What documents will it conform with? | Consistent with spatial framework set out in the Core Strategy. |
| Is SEA required? | Yes |

| Proposed timetable | |
|---|----------------|
| Survey work commences | April 2003 |
| Public participation on Preferred Options | November 2007 |
| Submission to Secretary of State | July 2008 |
| Pre-examination meeting | November 2008 |
| Independent examination | February 2009 |
| Receipt of Inspector's report | July 2009 |
| Modify submitted plan & adoption | September 2009 |

| How will it be produced? | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Organisational lead | Head of Planning Services / Executive Member for Planning Strategy. |
| Who will produce the document? | The Development Plans Section of the District Council. |
| Who will approve it? | The Council, prior to its submission to the Secretary of State. |
| How will the community be involved? | Opportunities to participate at key stages throughout the process in accordance with the basic requirements set out in the Regulations, and the proposals contained in the Statement of Community Involvement. |

| Monitoring & review | |
|--|--|
| Document production and implementation (once adopted) to be reviewed annually, and reported in the Annual Monitoring Report. | |

HUNTINGDON WEST AAP

| Overview | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Is this a Development Plan Document? | Yes |
| What is it for? | Contains site-specific proposals for a mixed area where significant changes in land-use are proposed, including redevelopment proposals for the area west of the town centre, changes to the road system as a result of the A14 proposals, and a vision for the Hinchingsbrooke Community Campus including an extension to the Country Park. |
| What area will it cover? | Land in Huntingdon and Brampton, including west of the town centre, Views Common and Hinchingsbrooke |
| What documents will it conform with? | Consistent with spatial framework set out in the Core Strategy. |
| Is SEA required? | Yes |

| Proposed timetable | |
|---|----------------|
| Survey work commences | April 2003 |
| Public participation on Preferred Options | December 2007 |
| Submission to Secretary of State | September 2008 |
| Pre-examination meeting | February 2009 |
| Independent examination | May 2009 |
| Receipt of Inspector's report | October 2009 |
| Modify submitted plan & adoption | December 2009 |

| How will it be produced? | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Organisational lead | Head of Planning Services / Executive Member for Planning Strategy. |
| Who will produce the document? | The Development Plans Section of the District Council. |
| Who will approve it? | The Council, prior to its submission to the Secretary of State. |
| How will the community be involved? | Opportunities to participate at key stages throughout the process in accordance with the basic requirements set out in the Regulations, and the proposals contained in the Statement of Community Involvement. |

| Monitoring & review | |
|--|--|
| Document production and implementation (once adopted) to be reviewed annually, and reported in the Annual Monitoring Report. | |

PLANNING PROPOSALS DPD

| Overview | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Is this a Development Plan Document? | Yes |
| What is it for? | Contains site-specific proposals for different forms of development up to 2021, plus policies relating to the overall scale and timing of growth. |
| What area will it cover? | All of Huntingdonshire |
| What documents will it conform with? | Consistent with spatial framework set out in the Core Strategy. |
| Is SEA required? | Yes |

| Proposed timetable | |
|---|----------------|
| Survey work commences | April 2003 |
| Public participation on Preferred Options | February 2009 |
| Submission to Secretary of State | September 2009 |
| Pre-examination meeting | February 2010 |
| Independent examination | May 2010 |
| Receipt of Inspector's report | November 2010 |
| Modify submitted plan & adoption | January 2011 |

| How will it be produced? | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Organisational lead | Head of Planning Services / Executive Member for Planning Strategy. |
| Who will produce the document? | The Development Plans Section of the District Council. |
| Who will approve it? | The Council, prior to its submission to the Secretary of State. |
| How will the community be involved? | Opportunities to participate at key stages throughout the process in accordance with the basic requirements set out in the Regulations, and the proposals contained in the Statement of Community Involvement. |

| Monitoring & review | |
|--|--|
| Document production and implementation (once adopted) to be reviewed annually, and reported in the Annual Monitoring Report. | |

GYPSY & TRAVELLER SITES DPD

| Overview | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Is this a Development Plan Document? | Yes |
| What is it for? | Contains site-specific proposals for gypsy and traveller sites to meet identified needs up to 2021, plus policies relating to the overall scale of provision. |
| What area will it cover? | All of Huntingdonshire |
| What documents will it conform with? | Consistent with spatial framework set out in the Core Strategy and in general conformity with the RSS gypsy and traveller review. |
| Is SEA required? | Yes |

| Proposed timetable | |
|---|----------------|
| Survey work commences | January 2005 |
| Public participation on Preferred Options | February 2009 |
| Submission to Secretary of State | September 2009 |
| Pre-examination meeting | February 2010 |
| Independent examination | May 2010 |
| Receipt of Inspector's report | November 2010 |
| Modify submitted plan & adoption | January 2011 |

| How will it be produced? | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Organisational lead | Head of Planning Services / Executive Member for Planning Strategy. |
| Who will produce the document? | The Development Plans Section of the District Council. |
| Who will approve it? | The Council, prior to its submission to the Secretary of State. |
| How will the community be involved? | Opportunities to participate at key stages throughout the process in accordance with the basic requirements set out in the Regulations, and the proposals contained in the Statement of Community Involvement. |

| Monitoring & review | |
|--|--|
| Document production and implementation (once adopted) to be reviewed annually, and reported in the Annual Monitoring Report. | |

DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS AFFORDABLE HOUSING SPD

| Overview | |
|--|--|
| Is this a Development Plan Document? | No |
| What is it for? | Provides detailed guidance on the Council's requirements for developer contributions to affordable and social housing in association with development. |
| What area will it cover? | All of Huntingdonshire |
| What documents will it conform with? | Consistent with saved policies in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan alteration 2002 and the Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Structure Plan 2003. |
| Is SEA required? | Yes |
| Proposed timetable | |
| Survey work commences | November 2005 |
| Public participation on draft SPD | June 2007 |
| Adoption | November 2007 |
| How will it be produced? | |
| Organisational lead | Head of Planning Services / Executive Member for Planning Strategy. |
| Who will produce the document? | The Development Plans Section of the District Council (technical content produced by consultants). |
| Who will approve it? | The Council's Cabinet. |
| How will the community be involved? | Opportunities to comment on the draft SPD in accordance with the basic requirements set out in the Regulations and the Statement of Community Involvement. |
| Monitoring & review | |
| Document production and implementation (once adopted) to be reviewed annually, and reported in the Annual Monitoring Report. | |

(REVISED) DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS AFFORDABLE HOUSING SPD

| Overview | |
|--|--|
| Is this a Development Plan Document? | No |
| What is it for? | Provides detailed guidance on the Council's requirements for developer contributions to affordable and social housing in association with development. |
| What area will it cover? | All of Huntingdonshire |
| What documents will it conform with? | Consistent with the policies in the Core Strategy |
| Is SEA required? | Yes |
| Proposed timetable | |
| Survey work commences | July 2009 |
| Public participation on draft SPD | January 2010 |
| Adoption | July 2010 |
| How will it be produced? | |
| Organisational lead | Head of Planning Services / Executive Member for Planning Strategy. |
| Who will produce the document? | The Development Plans Section of the District Council (technical content produced by consultants). |
| Who will approve it? | The Council's Cabinet. |
| How will the community be involved? | Opportunities to comment on the draft SPD in accordance with the basic requirements set out in the Regulations and the Statement of Community Involvement. |
| Monitoring & review | |
| Document production and implementation (once adopted) to be reviewed annually, and reported in the Annual Monitoring Report. | |

PLANNING CONTRIBUTIONS SPD

| Overview | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Is this a Development Plan Document? | No |
| What is it for? | Details the district-specific standards for social and physical infrastructure that may be required in association with development, including open space. |
| What area will it cover? | All of Huntingdonshire |
| What documents will it conform with? | Consistent with policies in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration 2002. |
| Is SEA required? | Yes |

| Proposed timetable | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Survey work commences | January 2004 |
| Public participation on Draft SPD | November 2007 |
| Adoption | June 2008 |

| How will it be produced? | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Organisational lead | Head of Planning Services / Executive Member for Planning Strategy. |
| Who will produce the document? | The Development Plans Section of the District Council. |
| Who will approve it? | The Council's Cabinet. |
| How will the community be involved? | Opportunities to comment on the draft SPD in accordance with the Regulations, and the Statement of Community Involvement. |

| Monitoring & review | |
|--|--|
| Document production and implementation (once adopted) to be reviewed annually, and reported in the Annual Monitoring Report. | |

DESIGN GUIDE SPD

| Overview | |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Is this a Development Plan Document? | No |
| What is it for? | Provides guidance on the design process and key design principles for different forms of development. |
| What area will it cover? | All of Huntingdonshire |
| What documents will it conform with? | Consistent with policies in the Core Strategy and the Huntingdonshire Local Plan. |
| Is SEA required? | Yes |

| Proposed timetable | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|
| Survey work commences | May 2006 |
| Public participation on draft SPD | December 2006 |
| Adoption | June 2007 |

| How will it be produced? | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| Organisational lead | Head of Planning Services / Executive Member for Planning Strategy. |
| Who will produce the document? | The Implementation Section of the Council's Planning Services Division. |
| Who will approve it? | The Council's Cabinet. |
| How will the community be involved? | Opportunities to comment on the draft SPD in accordance with the basic requirements set out in the Regulations, and the proposals contained in the Statement of Community Involvement. |

| Monitoring & review | |
|--|--|
| Document production and implementation (once adopted) to be reviewed annually, and reported in the Annual Monitoring Report. | |

LANDSCAPE & TOWNSCAPE SPD

| Overview | |
|--|--|
| Is this a Development Plan Document? | No |
| What is it for? | Provides guidance on the distinctive qualities of Huntingdonshire's landscape character areas and market towns. |
| What area will it cover? | All of Huntingdonshire |
| What documents will it conform with? | Consistent with policies in the Core Strategy and the Huntingdonshire Local Plan. |
| Is SEA required? | Yes |
| Proposed timetable | |
| Survey work commences | May 2006 |
| Public participation on draft SPD | December 2006 |
| Adoption | June 2007 |
| How will it be produced? | |
| Organisational lead | Head of Planning Services / Executive Member for Planning Strategy. |
| Who will produce the document? | The Implementation Section of the Council's Planning Services Division. |
| Who will approve it? | The Council's Cabinet. |
| How will the community be involved? | Opportunities to comment on the draft SPD in accordance with the basic requirements set out in the Regulations, and the proposals contained in the Statement of Community Involvement. |
| Monitoring & review | |
| Document production and implementation (once adopted) to be reviewed annually, and reported in the Annual Monitoring Report. | |

APPENDIX 1 TERMINOLOGY

Within each definition links to other terms are shown in italics.

| | |
|--|---|
| Action Area Plan | A <i>Development Plan Document</i> setting out detailed policies and proposals for a small area. |
| Adoption | The point at which the final agreed version of a document comes into use. |
| Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) | Document produced each year to report on progress in producing the <i>Local Development Framework</i> and implementing its policies. |
| Core Strategy | The <i>Development Plan Document</i> which contains the overall vision, objectives and policies for managing development in Huntingdonshire. |
| Development Plan | The documents which together provide the main point of reference when considering planning proposals. Under the new system the Development Plan includes the <i>Regional Spatial Strategy</i> and <i>Development Plan Documents</i> . |
| Development Plan Document (DPD) | A document containing local planning policies or proposals which forms part of the <i>Development Plan</i> , and which has been subject to independent <i>examination</i> . |
| Examination | Independent inquiry into the soundness of a draft <i>Development Plan Document</i> (or draft <i>Statement of Community Involvement</i>), chaired by an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State. |
| Interim Planning Guidance | Informal guidance for sites or areas where development is proposed, but no allocation exists in a <i>Development Plan Document</i> . |
| Local Development Document (LDD) | The collective term for <i>Development Plan Documents</i> , the <i>Proposals Map</i> , <i>Supplementary Planning Documents</i> and the <i>Statement of Community Involvement</i> . |
| Local Development Framework (LDF) | The collection of documents to be produced by Huntingdonshire District Council that will provide the new planning policy framework for the district. |

| | |
|---|--|
| Local Development Scheme (LDS) | Sets out the Council's programme for preparing and reviewing statutory planning documents. |
| Local Plan | The existing document containing local planning policies and proposals for Huntingdonshire. Under the new system it will be phased out and replaced by <i>Development Plan Documents</i> . |
| Material Considerations | Factors that may be taken into account when making planning decisions. |
| Preferred Options | Public consultation on the intended content of a <i>Development Plan Document</i> , prior to the DPD itself being drafted. |
| Proposals Map | Shows the spatial extent of <i>adopted</i> planning policies and proposals affecting Huntingdonshire. |
| Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) | Plan covering the East of England as a whole, and setting out strategic policies and proposals for managing land-use change. |
| Saved policies | Policies contained within the adopted <i>Structure Plan</i> or <i>Local Plan</i> which remain in force pending their replacement by the <i>Regional Spatial Strategy</i> or a <i>Development Plan Document</i> . |
| Scoping Report | Report produced as the first stage of <i>Sustainability Appraisal</i> . It examines existing environmental, social and economic conditions in the district, and identifies appropriate objectives to appraise policies against. |
| Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) | Document setting out the Council's approach to involving the community in preparing planning documents and making significant development control decisions. |
| Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) | Process undertaken during plan production, to assess the potential environmental effects of emerging policies and proposals. It is incorporated within <i>Sustainability Appraisal</i> . |
| Structure Plan | The existing document containing strategic planning policies and proposals for the county. Under the new system it will be phased out and replaced by policies in the <i>Regional Spatial Strategy</i> and <i>Development Plan Documents</i> . |

| | |
|--|--|
| Submission | Point at which a draft <i>Development Plan Document</i> (or the draft <i>Statement of Community Involvement</i>) is published for consultation. At the same time it is submitted to the Secretary of State in advance of its <i>examination</i> . |
| Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) | Provides additional guidance on the interpretation or application of policies and proposals in the <i>Local Plan</i> or <i>Structure Plan</i> . Under the new system this will be phased out and replaced by <i>Supplementary Planning Documents</i> . |
| Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) | Provides additional guidance on the interpretation or application of policies and proposals in a <i>Development Plan Document</i> . |
| Sustainability Appraisal | Process undertaken during plan production, to assess the extent to which emerging policies and proposals will help to achieve environmental, social and economic objectives. It incorporates <i>Strategic Environmental Assessment</i> . |

APPENDIX 2 REPLACEMENT OF 'SAVED' POLICIES

This table shows how the issues addressed by existing Local Plan policies will be considered in preparing Development Plan Documents. For each existing policy (or group of policies) it indicates which DPD is likely to deal with the general subject matter. This does not mean the existing approach will necessarily be continued, as circumstances may have changed since the original policies were prepared.

Some policies are listed as 'not included', meaning that their subject matter is unlikely to be addressed by one of the new DPDs. This is because the issues are covered by other policy areas or are dealt with more appropriately in other documents.

Most policies in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan will be superseded by those in the Regional Spatial Strategy. However, the draft RSS lists some Structure Plan policies that it will not replace, as they deal with relatively local issues. The table shows how these 'saved' Structure Plan policies will be considered.

| Policy area | Where will it be dealt with in LDF? | Policy area | Where will it be dealt with in LDF? | Policy area | Where will it be dealt with in LDF? |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|---|--|
| Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 | | Huntingdonshire Local Plan (continued) | | Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration | |
| LPS3 | Not included | T28 | Not included | STR1-STR6 | Core Strategy |
| H11-H12 | DC Policies | R1-R2 | DC Policies | HL1 | Not included |
| H17 | Not included | R3 | Contributions (local) | HL2-HL3 | Allocations |
| H21 | Not included | R4-R5 | Not included | HL4-HL10 | Core Strategy |
| H22-H35 | DC Policies | R6 | Allocations | AH1-AH2 | Core Strategy |
| H36 | Not included | R7-R8 | Contributions (local) | AH3 | Not included |
| H37-H38 | DC Policies | R9 | Allocations | AH4 | Core Strategy/ Affordable housing SPD |
| H39-H40 | Not included | R10 | Not included | AH5 | Core Strategy/ Affordable housing SPD |
| H41 | DC Policies | R11-R12 | Contributions (local) | OB1 | Core Strategy |
| H42 | Not included | R13 | DC Policies | OB2 | Contributions (local) |
| H43 | DC Policies | R14 | DC Policies | | |
| H44 | Gypsies/Travellers | R15-R18 | DC Policies | Cambs & Peterborough Structure Plan | |
| E1 | Core Strategy | En1-En3 | DC Policies | P1/3 | Core Strategy |
| E2-E3 | Proposals | En4 | Not included | P2/3 | Proposals |
| E4 | Not included | En5-En9 | DC Policies | P2/4 | Contributions (local) |
| E5 | Proposals | En10 | Not included | P4/4 | Core Strategy |
| E6 | Not included | En11-En20 | DC Policies | P5/2 | Core Strategy |
| E7-E11 | DC Policies | En21 | Not included | P7/3 | Core Strategy |
| E12 | Not included | En22-En25 | DC Policies | P7/10 | Not included |
| E13 | DC Policies | En26 | Not included | P8/2 | Core Strategy |
| E14 | Not included | En27-En28 | DC Policies | P8/3 | Contributions (strategic) |
| E15 | DC Policies | En29 | Not included | P8/6 | Not included |
| S1 | Not included | En30 | DC Policies | P8/7 | Not included |
| S2 | DC Policies | En31 | Not included | P8/9 | Core Strategy |
| S3-S5 | Not included | En32 | DC Policies | P8/10 | Core Strategy/Proposals |
| S6 | Proposals | To1-To3 | DC Policies | P9/1 | Contributions (local) |
| S7 | DC Policies | To4-To6 | Not included | P9/2a-P9/3 | Not included |
| S8-S9 | Not included | To7-To9 | DC Policies | P9/4 | Core Strategy/Proposals |
| S10 | DC Policies | To10 | Not included | P9/5 | Not included |
| S11 | Not included | To11 | DC Policies | P9/9 | Core Strategy |
| S12-S17 | DC Policies | CS1 | Not included | P9/10 | Not included |
| T1-T7 | Not included | CS2 | Proposals DPD | P10/3 | Core Strategy/Proposals |
| T9-T17 | Not included | CS3-CS4 | Not included | P10/5 | Not included |
| T18-T21 | DC Policies | CS5-CS6 | DC Policies | P10/7 | Core Strategy |
| T22-T23 | Not included | CS7 | Not included | Note: policies in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 that were superseded by the Local Plan Alteration are not listed. | |
| T24 | Proposals | CS8-CS9 | DC Policies | | |
| T25-T27 | Not included | CS10 | Not included | | |

APPENDIX 3 SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING GUIDANCE

This table lists adopted Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG), which will remain a material consideration in planning decisions until the Local Plan and Structure Plan are replaced. The table also shows what will happen to the SPGs once the new Core Strategy is adopted.

| Title | Date | How will it be dealt with in the LDF? |
|--|---------|---|
| Conservation Area Character Statements | Various | Will be retained and continue to carry weight by virtue of the legislation governing conservation areas ¹ |
| Cambridgeshire Landscape Guidelines | 1990 | Will be updated and re-issued as SPD. It will be produced jointly with other Cambridgeshire authorities, and a timetable will appear in the next edition of this Local Development Scheme |
| External Artificial Lighting | 1998 | Likely to be updated and reissued as an advice note |
| Trees and Development | 1998 | Likely to be updated and reissued as an advice note |
| Shopfronts | 1999 | Likely to be incorporated within Design Guide SPD |
| Hilton Village Design Statement | 2000 | Status and any future revision to be discussed with the Parish Council ² |
| Land to the East of St Neots | 2000 | Not required (development likely to commence before September 2007) |
| Retention of Shops, Post Offices and Public Houses in Villages | 2001 | Approach incorporated within Core Strategy DPD |
| Holywell-cum-Needingworth Village Design Statement | 2003 | Status and any future revision to be discussed with the Parish Council ² |
| Re-use and Redevelopment of Farm Buildings and Outbuildings | 2003 | Some parts incorporated within Core Strategy DPD; design elements likely to be included in Design Guide SPD |
| Market Housing Mix | 2004 | Approach incorporated within Core Strategy DPD |
| Huntingdonshire Design Guide | 2004 | Will be updated and re-issued as SPD |
| Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment | 2004 | Will be updated and re-issued as SPD |

Notes

¹ The Council does not intend to re-publish existing conservation area character statements as Supplementary Planning Documents, as they are produced to accord with the requirements of separate legislation. The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places a duty upon local planning authorities to formulate proposals for preserving and enhancing conservation areas.

² Although adopted by the District Council as SPG, Village Design Statements are produced by the town or parish council concerned.

CABINET

15 MARCH 2007

**THE ACQUISITION OF RESIDENTIAL PROPERTY BY
COMPULSORY PURCHASE**
(Report by the Head of Environmental & Community Health
and the Head of Housing Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the opportunity to consider the principle of using compulsory purchase powers available in Housing legislation to acquire long-term empty residential properties in order to bring them back into use.
- 1.2 Compulsory purchase powers can only be used in circumstances where there appears to be no other prospect of a property being brought back into residential use, in effect as a last resort.

2. SUPPORTING/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Section 17 of the Housing Act 1985 empowers local housing authorities to compulsorily purchase a house, or houses, for the provision of housing accommodation (whether by the local housing authority or someone else) and this power can be used to acquire empty houses. In practice the power involves the use of procedures set out in the Acquisition of Land Act 1981. Section 54 of the Housing Act 1985 provides a specific power of entry for the purpose of survey and examination and section 15 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 provides a similar general power.
- 2.2 Government advice on the procedure is available in Circular ODPM 06/04 which suggests that the acquisition must achieve a quantitative or qualitative housing gain such as bringing an empty property back into use, that other measures have not worked and that the disposal plans are realistic and can be achieved in the three-year period following compulsory purchase.
- 2.3 Circular 06/04 explains that compulsory purchase powers are seen as an important tool for local authorities to help deliver social and economic change. The acquiring authority must be able to justify its proposals and to defend them at an Inquiry (or through written representations) and, if necessary, in the courts. The process should only be used where there is a compelling case in the public interest and the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) must be confirmed by the relevant Minister.
- 2.4 The procedure can be summarised as follows:
- ◆ Establish the history and all available information regarding legal interests in the long-term empty property.
 - ◆ Attempt to convince the owner(s) to make the property habitable within a reasonable time or to sell the property on the open market.
 - ◆ Explain the possibility of the use of CPO to the owner, seek to acquire the property by negotiation and offer mediation via an independent third party.

- ◆ Obtain an open market valuation for the property by the District Valuer in order to establish the level of compensation* to be offered.
 - ◆ Establish how a CPO scheme will be financed.
 - ◆ Establish a timetable for carrying out CPO procedure.
 - ◆ Draft a report including a statement of reasons and a draft CPO for consideration by Cabinet.
 - ◆ Subject to Cabinet making a resolution declaring the Council's intention to make a CPO, initiate the CPO procedure.
 - ◆ If the owner has made no genuine effort to restore the property to a habitable condition for rent or sale and it apparently cannot be acquired by negotiations continue with CPO procedure.
 - ◆ Make the CPO by affixing the Council's Seal, advertising it in the press and serving copies upon all persons with legal interests in the land.
 - ◆ Consider any objections to the proposals made within 28 days.
 - ◆ If valid objections are received the Secretary of State will direct a CPO Inquiry to be held. On completion of the Inquiry the Inspector will report back to the Secretary of State and the CPO will be confirmed, modified or rejected. Compensation issues are not valid reasons for objection but are dealt with by the Lands Tribunal (website www.landtribunal.gov.uk).
 - ◆ If there are no objections the Secretary of State can confirm the CPO and the Council can serve a General Vesting Declaration, or a Notice to Treat/Entry which serves to transfer the legal interests from the then owner to the Council. After this the Council can arrange to formally dispose of the property in order to bring it back into use.
- * Compensation (Circular 06/04) = open market value + compensation for severance + compensation for disturbance and other losses based upon the value of the land (equivalent to 7.5% of the property's value).

3. IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Rather than bring a property back into use itself, the Council can make arrangements to sell a compulsorily purchased property immediately after it has been acquired by CPO. It would seem logical to agree in advance that the Council will seek to pay the open market value as determined by the District Valuer and offer the property to a developer or Registered Social landlord prepared to pay the same amount to acquire the Council's interest. In practical terms this arrangement would be in place before the Council adopted the legal interests in the property.
- 3.2 There are complex rules set out for compensating persons who have legal interests in a property that is compulsorily purchased. This is based upon putting the individual into a similar position as before they lost their interest by compensating them in monetary terms plus a home loss payment. Even if the Council acquires a property by agreement the owner is still entitled to the home loss payment.
- 3.3 The acquiring authority will normally be required to meet the costs of any Inquiry and any written representations and also the costs of valuing the property, advertising and legal costs, the owner's reasonable costs and it may be necessary to use specialist external legal services at least in

the first instance. The following table provides an estimate of the costs and compensation involved in procuring an empty property with an open market value of £125,001 by compulsory purchase where the owner appealed against the decision of the Council:

| Cost and Compensation Arrangements in Respect of a Property Valued at £125,001 | | |
|---|--|--------------------|
| Item | Comment | Amount |
| Market value | District Valuer's Valuation | £125,001.00 |
| Stamp Duty | Set By HM Revenue & Custom | £1,250.01 |
| District Valuer's fee | Set by District Valuer | £1,000.00 |
| Legal fees | HDC legal fees for CPO administration | £2,000.00 |
| Legal fees | HDC legal fees for administering the sale | £2,000.00 |
| Legal fees | Owner's reasonable fees for conveyancing | £1,000.00 |
| Surveyors fees | Owners reasonable fees for preparing and negotiating a compensation settlement | £1,000.00 |
| Inquiry Costs | If the owner objected to the CPO the Council has to pay the costs of an Inquiry estimated at one day plus travel and other costs for the Inspector | £4000.00 |
| Home Loss payment | Section 29 of the Land Compensation Act 1973 (as amended) entitles a person to a home loss payment when a CPO is made. In this case the payment is 7.5% of the open market value | £9375.00 |
| Total | | £146,626.01 |
| Recoverable costs | | £125,001.00 |
| Total Cost to HDC | | £21,625.01 |

3.4 The Council's policy relating to the use of the Repairs Assistance budget (£250k per year) would enable CPO to be funded from this source. The cost of the property would be reimbursed upon sale. The estimated cost of £21.6k would not be recoverable and would have to be met from the Repairs Assistance budget. The budget could fund the unrecoverable costs of 1 or 2 properties per year. There is insufficient funding (given the other demands on this budget) to fund any more than 1 or 2 properties per year.

3.5 Properties brought back into use in this way will not necessarily become 'affordable housing'. To change the tenure into social rented housing would require a further £70k+ per property. There may be scope to change the tenure to shared ownership, or intermediate rent at a lower additional cost. Each case will be appraised on its merits.

4. EMPTY PROPERTIES

4.1 Currently there are thought to be about four or five long term empty properties around the District that have defied the best efforts of Environmental Health and Housing Services to encourage the owners to return them to residential use.

- 4.2 These properties are known to have been empty for many years and have gradually fallen into a state of disrepair. The owners are known to Council Officers and have been contacted many times to encourage them to repair the properties for rent or sale. They have also been offered grant aid but apparently prefer to leave their properties as they are, unoccupied and in a state of increasing disrepair, some attracting vandals and blighting the local environment. As the properties are unoccupied they cannot be considered a priority for alternative housing enforcement action.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Empty properties represent a wasted and depreciating asset that cannot be justified at a time when there is a shortage of social housing, a lengthening Housing waiting list and increasing homelessness. Such properties can be put to good use and the threat of CPO in itself may be enough to encourage recalcitrant owners to actively manage their empty properties or to dispose of them on the open market. However, if the property is acquired by compulsory purchase there are considerable costs to the Council.

6. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is RECOMMENDED that members:

- 6.1 Consider the use of compulsory purchase powers as set out above for the purpose of acquiring empty property as a last resort when all other measures have failed.
- 6.2 Delegate authority to the Director of Operational Services to appoint authorised Environmental Health Officers and Environmental Health Enforcement Officers to exercise the powers of entry set out in section 54 of the Housing Act 1985 and section 15 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 for the purpose of survey or examination of property to determine if CPO powers should be exercised or progressed.
- 6.3 Authorise the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services and the Head of Housing Services to prepare joint reports for Cabinet in respect of properties considered suitable for CPO setting out the case for CPO, the statement of reasons and a draft CPO.
- 6.4 Authorise the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services to submit orders approved by Cabinet to the Secretary of State for confirmation and complete the CPO procedure.
- 6.5 Authorise the Head of Housing Services, to establish a developer prepared to take over any property acquired by CPO from the Council at the established market value and to transfer ownership on these terms.
- 6.6 Authorise the Head of Housing Services to use the Repairs Assistance budget for the purpose of acquiring property by CPO.
- 6.7 Note that the likely costs associated with the compulsory purchase procedure that are not all recoverable; an estimated £21.6k per property could be funded from the Repairs Assistance budget subject to a maximum of 2 CPOs per annum.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Housing Act 1985 section 17
ODPM Circular 06/04

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL 13TH MARCH 2007
(SERVICE SUPPORT)
CABINET 15TH MARCH 2007

TOWARDS A CAR PARKING STRATEGY FOR THE MARKET TOWNS **(Report by Head of Planning Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is for Members to consider the initial findings of the report by the Council's consultants Steer Davies Gleave (SDG), who were appointed in May 2006 to undertake this review.
- 1.2 Members will be asked their views on the setting-up of a working party of Members and Officers to develop a Strategy and Action Plan for the provision and management of car parking within the District's Market Towns.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Members will recall that the current Huntingdonshire Car Parking Strategy 2005-2016 was approved by Cabinet in October 2004. As a result, a revised regime for off-street car parking was introduced, together with revised charges, in June 2005. Revised on-street charges have yet to be implemented.
- 2.2 The current adopted Strategy covered a range of issues with respect to car parking and not just on and off-street arrangements. It also covered issues such as parking standards relating to development and the forecast of likely delivery of private sector development including additional car parking capacity.
- 2.3 Our current strategy provides for the charging policy to be reviewed at intervals of no more than three years. Given that new charging levels were introduced in the first-half of 2005, the next review would therefore fall to be considered in 2008.
- 2.4 The need for this review of our Car Parking Strategy is dictated by a number of emerging issues;
 - The need for up-to-date evidence of the requirements for car parking in the Market Towns and the need to consider possible locations to meet future needs

- Recent Vision, Spatial Strategy and Action Plans. For Huntingdon Town Centre, this identified that parking needs are a fundamental issue in maintaining the viability of the town centre
 - Slow take-up in developing retail opportunities in Huntingdon than were previously thought that would have provided additional public car parking spaces
 - Planned redevelopment of major sites with potentially less replacement parking. This is particularly relevant in Huntingdon
 - Increasing provision of residential development within town centres in accordance with government policy and the consequential impact of additional demand for parking on-street or within public car parks
- 2.5 As part of our existing strategy, a key issue in the consideration of additional parking provision, is the ability of the Council to potentially find land appropriate for that purpose, in the right location and to fund such provision. The existing strategy therefore identifies the need to continue to work with development-related schemes to secure additional parking provision, as well as within our own portfolio, to meet anticipated needs.
- 2.6 An example of this issue is within Huntingdon where a partnership was anticipated with town centre development at Chequers Court where our MTP was developed to deliver additional anticipated capacity in accordance with the developer's indicative timetable. The previous strategy had also highlighted the need for the early delivery of long-stay parking at Riverside and a vacated Godmanchester depot.
- 2.7 Additional parking provision at Riverside has been reconsidered and the planning application to extend the car park has now been withdrawn. Opportunities exist to reconfigure the car park and to provide better arrangements for long and short-stay users, within an enhanced Riverside Park and Leisure area if desired. As Members will know, while negotiations continue to secure new retail developments in Huntingdon town centre, the delay in the delivery of this new development has resulted in the failure to deliver any major additional car parking capacity. Options to utilise the vacated Godmanchester depot for car parking are on-going.
- 2.6 Due to pressures on finding suitable land for car parking and the high associated land values for acquisition, it is likely that the Council will continue to have to explore this type of potential partnership in association with development opportunities as part of this strategy review, as well as considering the use of land within our control.

3. PROGRESS WITH REVIEW OF STRATEGY

- 3.1 SDG have been undertaking a policy review of all national, regional, county and district parking policies that will influence and support the review. This includes considering a diverse range of subjects such as air quality management, town centre development opportunities and housing provision. While the range of advice is diverse, the common theme is to provide adequate accessibility and the review must have due regard to the whole range of these applicable policies.
- 3.2 In tandem with this work, SDG have also been undertaking a related review of Council parking data (collected as part of our own monitoring regime), updating the work done in 2004 and carrying out validation surveys of usage and capacity in all town centre car parks prior to the school holidays in the Summer of 2006.
- 3.3 An Officer Working Group has been overseeing this work and this has included representatives of the County Council in their role as local highway authority and the body who currently control on-street parking policy.
- 3.4 A requirement of the Consultant's work has been to undertake Stakeholder Briefings with representatives from within and outside the Council to ensure full community engagement in the process and these were undertaken in October and December. The primary objective of such briefings was to provide information to those attending, particularly on the current situation, to request information and feedback, to achieve a consensus view and support for the aims of the strategy and to understand perceptions of problems and issues.
- 3.5 Stakeholder events were held in each Market Town and the key issues raised are as follows, broken down on a town by town basis. As will be seen from the information in Annex A, while there are common themes to be addressed, there are also individual issues specific to each town. It is therefore likely that for any strategy review to be fully effective, it will have to address this diverse range of issues.
- 3.6 At each consultation event, SDG outlined three broad strategic approaches that could be explored to manage future parking needs;
- Expansionist – building more spaces to meet increased car parking demand
 - Balanced – use pricing to keep demand at current levels and improved signage to improve parking distribution and encouraging different travel choices in the future

- Demand Management – control pricing and supply to reduce parking demand and supply below current levels and encourage shift to other modes of transport

3.7 For each workshop, SDG outlined the results of their survey work, current capacity issues and the three approaches to be considered as 3.6 above. Feedback from those workshops for each town is attached at Annex A.

4. OTHER RELEVANT FACTORS

4.1 The results of the public consultation exercise undertaken in conjunction with the Huntingdon Town Centre Vision were reported to Cabinet on 9th November 2006. As Members will have noted, there are many common themes emerging from that work and the issues that are now emerging through the car parking strategy, including;

- Support for more car parking
- Better places for car parking than Riverside Park. Other options should be explored before deciding to extend at Riverside
- Has Park & Ride been considered or Park & Walk ?
- Increase car parking at Chequers Court
- More short-stay parking
- Long-stay parking should be provided outside the defined town centre

4.2 In developing future options and recommendations for car parking in Huntingdon, it is clear that this will need to tie into the Centre Vision work.

4.3 A further issue that will need to be considered within any overall work across the District would be the extension of decriminalised parking enforcement (DPE) within Cambridgeshire, which currently operates only within Cambridge and Peterborough. This is where the control and enforcement of on-street parking would no longer be undertaken by the Police but would become locally administered at District level across the County.

4.4 While there is an over-riding aim of achieving better enforcement as a result of DPE with particular benefits leading to better town centres, there is a bigger picture to consider and a balance needs to be struck. Key issues emerging for Cambridgeshire include;

- If introduced, DPE would apply District (and County) wide and would include all towns and villages
- What levels of enforcement would apply across different areas?
- Would partial introduction of DPE undermine remaining Police enforcement regime?
- Would DPE be managed using District Council resources or would external contractors be appointed?
- What are the financial arrangements?

4.5 In their role as local transport authority, the County Council have just commenced a series of meetings with District Council's to discuss the options but it is clear at this stage that this will also need to be carefully linked to the District Council car parking strategy to ensure that it does not become out-of-date if DPE were to be introduced.

5. CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 SDG have now submitted their Final Report, which details the process by which they have made their recommendations on how a Parking Strategy should be developed for each of the market towns, together with key recommendations on the approach to take in each town. This includes the consideration of the overall issues in relation to parking under five key categories namely supply, location, price, quality and control.

5.2 The profile for each town includes the expected short, medium and long-term recommendations and outcomes and can be found in detail at Annex B.

5.3 A specific issue for Huntingdon, St. Neots and St. Ives is the recommendation that over a period of time, charges for long-stay parking should be introduced or applied consistently. The report highlights that there is a perverse differential between cheap or free all-day parking when compared to the price of day pass bus tickets. As well as meeting some immediate parking needs, SDG recommend that the Council should aspire to enacting a travel demand management policy by conferring a modal benefit to buses by the introduction of such charges.

5.4 Key recommendations made by SDG are briefly as follows;

5.4.1 Huntingdon –

- The need for immediate provision of short-term parking and the longer term balance of parking with the introduction of long-stay charging with an increasing scale of charge
- Provide 165 spaces within ring-road in the short-term, subject to land availability. Decking options at Sainsbury's and Princes Street. Together with long-term options, Mill Common is suggested to be re-designated from long to short-stay
- Long-stay parking provision at Bridge Place (Depot) and/or Brampton Road. Re-designate Mill Common to short-stay
- Park & Ride, while popular with stakeholders, unlikely to be economically viable at present
- Improved signage to all car parks to aid visitors and reduce search space
- Improved control/enforcement, particularly options around on-street parking to ensure parking is not shifted to residential streets which have been subject to previous investigation/representation

5.4.2 St. Neots –

- To cater for peak market day demand, a small increase of 50 short-term spaces and the longer term balance of parking with the introduction of long-stay charging with an increasing scale of charge
- Options for expansion are identified at Tebbutts Road by provision of decking. Cambridge Street is also identified for expansion, albeit further from the town centre. Riverside is not seen as an ideal location for expansion given its location. The lack of a suitable site for car parking on the south side of the town centre is a key issue. Re-designation of car parking within the town centre from long to short-stay is also identified
- Park & Ride, while popular with stakeholders, unlikely to be economically viable at present.
- Improved signage to all car parks to aid visitors and reduce search space
- Improved control/enforcement

5.4.3 St. Ives –

- If restrictions were to be placed on the Flood Arches at London Road, there may a requirement to consider a limited expansion in the town centre of around 30 spaces

- The proposed use of the Park & Ride site associated with the Guided Bus project needs to be determined and how this will impact on town centre parking. There appears to be a level of commuter parking within Cattle Market at present
- Parking within Market Hill is seen as having the potential to be removed once the effects of the Park & Ride site are known. This may allow pedestrianisation of the area to be considered
- The need to introduce a longer-term balance of parking with an immediate increase in long-stay charges and an increasing scale of charge over future years
- Improved signage to all car parks to aid visitors, reduce parking search and improve local congestion
- Control/enforcement is not seen as requiring any changes given general adequacy of parking supply

5.4.4 Ramsey -

- Parking availability is good with adequate supply to meet present and future demand. However location of parking is an issue requiring further consideration
- Free parking and the presence of just two small car parks at the centre of town results in high demand given their convenient location
- Any potential loss of off-street parking at New Road associated with redevelopment at 'The Grand' is of particular concern locally. While adequate overall capacity would still exist within the town, some on-street parking on Great Whyte is seen as remote, particularly to its northern end. Investigation into the expansion of parking at Mews Close by around 35 spaces needs to be considered
- Some local on-street parking problems on High Street and Great Whyte need to be explored in greater detail
- Given concerns relating to car park charging, specifically relating to the local economy, and that an adequate supply of car parking exists, there is no recommendation to re-introduce charging
- To manage off-street car parking, the introduction of a short and long-stay parking regime is recommended. This would specifically help to manage Mews Close and achieve a better use of under-utilised on-street parking in Great Whyte

6. CONCLUSIONS

6.1 The Officer Working Group has considered the work of SDG at some length and conclude that all the recommendations outlined in Section 5 and in more detail at Annex B, are worthy of further investigation. Of particular note is a tailored approach to future needs based on the specific requirements of each town rather than a more generic district-wide approach.

6.2 The range of issues raised are diverse and it is clearly apparent that any emerging Action Plan will need to carefully consider a structured programme of changes over the next few years. A financial strategy will need to be developed in partnership with the Medium Term Plan to ensure the recommendations can be properly programmed for future delivery.

6.3 Taking the recommendations of SDG and considering any immediate actions that need to be explored in the short-term and subject to funding availability, Officers consider that these are as follows;

6.3.1 Huntingdon –

- The provision of additional long-stay parking at Godmanchester depot following the relocation of Operations to Eastfield House in the second-half of 2007. This is likely to exceed the number of spaces recommended by SDG
- Possible introduction of long-stay parking at Brampton Road, opposite the railway station, in partnership with private development
- The introduction of long-stay parking charges on all car parks currently free of charge
- The re-designation of Mill Common from a mixed long/short-stay car parking to short-stay only and further investigation into decking options elsewhere, if demand dictates

6.3.2 St. Neots –

- The provision of a further 50 short-term parking spaces by decking options or the re-designation of town centre long-stay parking to short-stay and the extension of edge of centre long-stay parking
- The introduction of long-stay parking charges on all car parks currently free of charge

6.3.3 St. Ives –

- Discussions with the County Council on the future management of the Guided Bus Park & Ride car park to determine the impact on town centre car parking
- The increase of long-stay parking charges on all car parks

6.3.4 Ramsey –

- In tandem with development discussions at The Grand, to explore the extension of the Mews Close car park
- Subject to the above, to introduce a short and long-stay management regime for off-street parking

7. RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 At this stage it is recommended that the comments and emerging issues are noted and any feedback provided by Cabinet be incorporated into the emerging work.
- 7.2 It is now considered that it is necessary to take the Consultants Final report and recommendations, together with the conclusions contained in Section 6, and to develop a formal Car Parking Strategy and Action Plan during 2007. This will include reference to the Medium Term Plan and any proposed funding emerging from that work before this is brought back to Cabinet for formal approval.
- 7.3 It is also considered that a Working Party of Members should be constituted to develop the Strategy and Action Plan and the views of Cabinet are sought to this suggestion.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Huntingdonshire Car Parking Strategy 2005-2016
 Car Parking Study in Huntingdonshire 2006 – Consultants Brief
 Planning Policy Guidance and Statements
 Huntingdon Town Centre Vision – Cabinet report 9th November 2006
 SDG Market Town Stakeholder Feedback results – October 2006
 SDG Draft Final Report – January 2007

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ANNEX A – STAKEHOLDER MEETING FEEDBACK

Huntingdon –

- Off-Street car parking is above effective capacity at peak hours with market day peak demand. Saturday not as big an issue
- Demand will continue to grow over next 20 years and capacity is likely to be reached around 2015. Figures do not take account of town centre development
- General agreement expressed that the town is not yet ready for a demand management option from a practical point of view. Recognition that it works in Cambridge but not yet appropriate for Huntingdon
- While having the wish to see more parking space, acceptance that future site options are extremely limited and other options must be explored. Also recognise that new spaces would have to be linked to development
- Some form of Park & Ride was a very popular idea, possibly Racecourse or RAF Wyton. While acknowledging the difficulty of making this work without the type of demand management system operating in Cambridge i.e. increased pricing within Huntingdon, and making people use it, various stakeholders felt this is an important option. A P&R trial as part of HDC loss of parking at Pathfinder House was seen as a useful way to gauge effectiveness. Park & walk was also seen as a real possibility as part of new development
- General feeling that because parking space is at a premium, priority should be given to shoppers/short stay including some support for moving all long stay to edge of town sites and using a P&R system. If long stay remains in the town, fairly strong support was expressed to introduce charging, including as a mechanism to control parking. It was felt that people who work in the town should be expected to pay or use edge of town/P&R
- Enforcement is seen as a primary issue, particularly if charging were to cause an increase in illegal/on-street parking. Many felt that there cannot be a solution by whatever is introduced if enforcement is not sorted out. Police representatives present confirmed that there are insufficient resources to deal with the problem. Misuse of disabled bays and parking on yellow lines in St. Mary's Street and High Street and general parking in residential areas are seen as particular problems
- Commuter overspill into residential streets and even Riverside/other long stay car parks, from Rail Station seen as

another problem. Some concern that Hospital parking may also be being abused

- General view expressed that people don't know where spaces are available. It was felt that additional Saturday parking is not known about i.e. the majority head to Sainsbury's. Real support for a new signing strategy round the ring-road and better information, perhaps through leaflets and advertising
- The Fair at Riverside car park is considered to be a big problem. Given overall pressures, it was felt that this should be moved elsewhere

St. Neots –

- Off-Street car parking is above effective capacity with market day peak demand. Saturday not a big issue
- Demand will continue to grow over next 20 years and capacity is likely to be reached around 2015. Figures do not take account of town centre development
- Clear number of themes raised at the meeting – park & ride, growth of St. Neots, the rail station and enforcement
- Recognising difficulty of finding new sites for car parking due to space, support for park & ride to be developed. Rail station could be used as a transport interchange inc. bus & coach terminal, park & ride and feeder buses to all parts of St. Neots
- Retailers consider that possible large increase in population may result in greater retail development increasing parking needs over that predicted by SDG
- Recycling site could provide additional parking
- Parking at rail station is a serious issue. Charges are high, little capacity and overspill to nearby streets
- Some concern that too much town centre parking being used for long-stay parking to the detriment of spaces for shoppers. Poor use of space. Town centre spaces should focus on short-stay provision
- Support for long-stay parking out of town centre. Ten minute walk in seen as generally acceptable

- Parking solutions need to increase appeal of the town. Could Market Square be better used with no parking ? This might have a detrimental effect on businesses to the south of Market Square
- No public parking to the south side of town a problem
- Better cycle parking required
- Good enforcement within car parks but on-street arrangements are very poor. Specific issues in town centre locations, such as High Street/New Street
- Little support for using pricing to manage demand, especially for short-stay parking. There was support for changing the long-stay regime to include pricing and to introduce mechanisms for parking outside the town centre
- Signage was considered to be a definite problem and support for improvements was stressed

St. Ives –

- Off-Street car parking is above effective capacity with market day peak demand. Saturday not a big issue
- Demand will continue to grow over next 20 years and capacity is likely to be reached around 2020. Figures do not take account of town centre development or the impact of guided bus
- Parking not a major issue although Market days are busy but spaces can be found. More specific issues to certain areas i.e. Market Hill. Could this area be used differently ? Taking spaces away completely might be unpopular
- Parking on London Road and the Dolphin Hotel important to meet overall demand. Would restrictions to the Flood Arches create overall supply problems ?
- Could new Park & Ride site provide new parking options ?
- Population demographic – are more disabled spaces required ?
- Difficult to navigate the town and to find car parks. Also walking routes poorly signed. Better overall signage required
- Tourism very important for the town and must be accounted for
- Overflow parking to address busy times – St. Ivo car park with walking improvements and on-street parking considered ?

Ramsey –

- Off-Street car parking is above capacity but on-street considerably under-utilised
- Demand will continue to grow over next 20 years but capacity will continue to be available as a combination of on and off-street provision
- Not enough disabled parking
- Loss of New Road parking associated with development at The Grand
- Long-stay parking outside the shops, within Mews Close and New Road car parks and under-used parking on areas of Gt. Whyte
- General hazards and congestion
- Uncertainty regarding Northern Gateway development

Suggested solutions –

- HDC owned land at Mews Close/Health Centre should be used for parking
- Spaces being used in the wrong way i.e. too much long-stay parking in on and off-street car parks in town centre and under-use of Gt. Whyte
- Illegal parking – little enforcement
- Resistance to reintroduction of charging but support for time controls on off-street car parks to prevent all day parking

ANNEX B - CONSULTANT'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1) Huntingdon –

Key issues/recommendations are as follows;

- that general parking supply (the amount of parking available) is little changed since 2002
- at times of peak demand, there has been an approximate 4% increase in total demand (this is similar to predicted traffic growth levels)
- at times of peak demand, on and off-street parking were utilised at around 90% (effective capacity)
- Saturday parking is less pressured, although on-street parking is fully utilised
- With the expected loss of car parking at Pathfinder House and associated car parking with development at Princes Street Phases 1 & 2, including at the Library (now part-closed), this will place an immediate short-term problem on available public parking. On the assumption that the majority will transfer to public car parks, this will push peak hour parking demand well above the 'effective capacity' and close to or above the absolute number of spaces available
- Some form of increased parking provision was very popular amongst stakeholders, whilst recognising that limited space available would necessitate other options being explored. Such parking is recommended to meet short-term needs
- An 'Expansionist' approach to parking provision is suggested in the short-term whereby extra parking would be provided to meet the excess demand. In the longer-term, a 'Balanced' approach is recommended whereby pricing mechanisms would be introduced to control car parking. Over a 10-year period, this recommends maintaining short-stay parking charges at current levels, subject to inflation, but introducing a long-stay charging regime as follows;
 - Baseline (2007) - £1.50/day
 - Baseline plus 5 years - £3.00/day
 - Baseline plus 10 years - £6.00/day

SDG consider that this would bring charges in line with public transport costs and introduce a travel demand regime

- Without a short-term provision of additional parking, this will have immediate effects of people being unable to find a parking space and this will spread to longer periods of the day
- To address immediate needs, three Options are suggested;
 - Option 1 – Within ring-road. Provide an additional 165 spaces. Recognising land and space constraints, decking options are recommended, such as at Sainsbury's or Princes Street
 - Option 2 – Outside ring-road (new or existing sites). To explore provision at Bridge Place (Depot) and/or Brampton Road to the north of the railway station. The latter site would have to be achieved with a partnership agreement with the landowner and subject to a permit regime to restrict the use by rail commuters. West of Town Centre is also seen as a possible area short-term, subject to landowner negotiations and also as part of the longer term strategy for parking in this area. Also suggested that Mill Common be moved from mixed long/short-stay to short-stay only in order to re-balance overall provision
 - Option 3 – Provision at distance from town centre. Park & Ride is a popular suggestion amongst stakeholders but unlikely economically viable for Huntingdon at present. Needs to be supported by public transport improvements and a more restrictive parking regime within town centre. Might also be difficult to find appropriate site/s accessible or attractive to all. Need for a major transport corridor study to identify demand
- Quality is seen as high in all areas. Signage to car parks is seen as poor and haphazard. Improvements may be necessary to maximise usage and reduce parking space search
- Control/enforcement of parking is perceived by stakeholders to be poor, particularly due to rail commuters using town car parks and levels of on-street parking. The introduction of long-stay charges may necessitate on-street restrictions being explored to ensure that any long-term demand management approach does not shift parking onto residential streets

2) St. Neots –

Key issues/recommendations are as follows;

- 50% more parking is available on-street in 2006 than 2002
- although not directly comparable to 2002 data (Friday) demand for parking 2006 (Thursday) is very high (96% off-street, 76% on-street)

- Saturday parking demand has increased by 40% over 2002 levels
- at times of peak demand on Thursdays, parking was fully utilised just above effective capacity. Parking availability is lower on Thursdays due to the loss of parking space at Market Square
- pro-rata use of Thursday figures indicate that parking demand will still be at effective capacity levels for other weekdays
- some form of limited expansion would be popular with stakeholders in the immediate short-term but normal demand is such that spaces may go unused. Possible Park & Ride schemes dominated the stakeholder agenda
- An 'Expansionist' approach to parking provision is suggested in the short-term whereby extra parking would be provided to meet the excess demand. In the longer-term, a 'Balanced' approach is recommended whereby pricing mechanisms would be introduced to control car parking. Over a 10-year period, this recommends maintaining short-stay parking charges at current levels, subject to inflation, but introducing a long-stay charging regime as follows;
 - Baseline (2007) - £1.50/day
 - Baseline plus 5 years - £3.00/day
 - Baseline plus 10 years - £6.00/day

SDG consider that this would bring charges in line with public transport costs and introduce a travel demand regime

- Some stakeholders recognised that some form of pricing control may be necessary in the future to help control demand. The need for a more aggressive pricing policy was recognised by some, particularly with short-stay being made more attractive
- To cater for peak market-day demand, a small increase of 50 spaces would be necessary. However, peak demand only exists for a few hours per week, so it is recommended that it would be uneconomic to provide further spaces to meet such demand
- Without a structured approach, it is outlined that in the longer-term to 2026 it would become increasingly difficult to find available land to match demand with supply
- The report recognises that given the character and layout of the town, that there are very few attractive sites for car parking leaving three Options;
 - Option 1 – Increase parking within the town centre by 50 spaces. Given land constraints, decking options are recommended at Tebbutts Road. Cambridge Street is seen as

a further option, albeit further from the town centre. Re-designation of car parking is a further option

- Option 2 – Increase parking outside the town centre – Given the compact nature of the town, and mostly under-capacity town centre sites, there are no other obvious edge of or beyond the town centre sites. Riverside is not seen as an ideal option for expansion due to its location. There is currently no available site on the south-side of the town centre leaving Cambridge Street as an only possible option
- Option 3 – Provision at edge of town. Park & Ride is seen as a popular future option amongst local stakeholders. These need to be on the edge of an urban area utilising land of low amenity value and introduced in tandem with demand management techniques in the town centre and supported by public transport improvements. Unlikely to be economically viable or attractive to users at present. Stakeholder concern that long-stay town centre parking is provided to the detriment of short-stay needs, particularly at Tan Yard and Priory and possibly, Tebbutts Road. Re-designation to short-stay only would allow any additional parking provision at Cambridge Street to be long-stay
- Quality is seen as high generally but signage is in need of updating. It is considered that it is difficult to identify which car park to use for unfamiliar visitors. Improvements to reduce parking space search and to make the town more visitor friendly would assist
- Control/enforcement of parking is seen by stakeholders to be poor. Avoidance of charges at the railway station and lack of available spaces is seen as a specific problem

3) St. Ives –

Key issues/recommendations are as follows;

- That general parking supply is little changed since 2002
- Demand is highest within car parks on a Monday in conjunction with market days and at its peak, is at 93% of effective capacity. On-street levels are at 74%
- At other times, demand is significantly lower than effective capacity
- Demand has been assessed by adding an allowance of 50 spaces to the town centre to cater for possible restrictions on the Flood Arches

- Saturday parking is less pressured and below effective capacity
- Assuming a transfer of spaces from the Flood Arches to public car parks, it may be necessary to consider a limited expansion of parking supply by around 30 spaces, although a more balanced approach is recommended
- Stakeholders in St. Ives, more than any other towns, indicated that there was a desire to encourage different travel choices than the car
- Park & Ride associated with the Guided Bus project presents a degree of uncertainty to SDG projections. At the time of the Study, it was uncertain how this would be managed and how parking may be available to town centre visitors. Stakeholders also felt that a degree of all day parking was already taking place at Cattle Market by commuters to other destinations
- If parking at the Park & Ride site were to be available, SDG consider that a progressive demand management policy should be adopted to preserve the character of the town and that it would not be necessary to consider additional parking for the town
- Market Hill parking was seen as having the potential to be removed once the effects of Park & Ride are known with the possibility to pedestrianise the area
- As with Huntingdon & St. Neots, it is recommended that short-stay charging is kept at current levels but that long-stay charging is increased over a period of time to match public transport levels. This would match journey costs to Cambridge and other destinations and also influence those who may currently be parking in the town centre and travelling to Cambridge;
 - Baseline (2007) - £1.50/day
 - Baseline plus 5 years - £3.00/day
 - Baseline plus 10 years - £6.00/day

SDG consider that this would bring charges in line with public transport costs and introduce a travel demand regime. While this is a similar arrangement to that recommended for Huntingdon & St. Neots, it is strongly suggested that the pricing structure must be set with regard to the eventual pricing structure for the Guided Busway. It is also recommended that long-stay charging levels in the town centre must be significantly higher than the park & ride site and that in the early years of operation a constant review will be necessary to assess the effects on town centre parking demand

- Quality is seen as generally high. While signage directs drivers to the correct car park, there is little guidance for visitors on the most appropriate car park to use. Given that the road layout and limited access makes the town difficult to navigate, particularly the unfamiliar driver, a well-thought out and improved signage system could reduce parking search and local congestion
- Control/enforcement is not seen as an issue given that supply and capacity are not a problem. Given the introduction of park & ride, it is not seen that illegal parking is likely to be a future issue

4) Ramsey –

Key issues/recommendations are as follows;

- That general parking supply is little changed since 2002 although its usage profile has altered significantly given changes to the charging regime. Off-street parking is now more heavily used than on-street parking
- The small size of the two car parks makes the identification of a time/day of peak demand difficult to specify
- Taken as a whole (on and off-street), parking is well below the effective capacity although free off-street parking is fully utilised at times of peak demand, usually 09.00 to 14.00 on the busiest weekday. On the opposite side, there is very significant spare capacity for available on-street car parking
- Despite the above data, there was a strong focus from stakeholders on the availability of off-street car parking and despite the availability on significant on-street spaces, it was felt that some measures were needed to provide more off-street provision
- Discussion on this topic was particularly relevant to any proposed loss of off-street parking at New Road in association with adjacent redevelopment at 'The Grand'. While the loss of 23 spaces does not alter the overall conclusion that there is significant availability within the town centre, it will add further pressure to off-street availability
- While the recommendation process remains that there is sufficient overall parking now and in the future, consideration needs to be given as to whether off-street provision needs to be maintained. Stakeholders were of the opinion that off-street provision was very necessary and that they were against charging for parking within the town. There was a recognition that there may need to be some distribution of demand to ensure better use of on-street parking

- General observation was noted that parking on the High Street caused some obstruction to two-way traffic and that parking at its junction with Great Whyte blocked sight-lines causing a potential safety risk. Some additional parking on Great Whyte caused problems in relation to the traffic signals. On this basis, it is recommended that consideration be given to removing parking on High Street between Great Whyte and School Lane
- If New Road off-street parking is lost and consideration is given to replacement off-street parking, then stakeholders felt very strongly that land opposite Mews Close car park should be used for additional car parking. Stakeholders stated that this land was given for car parking purposes during the 1970's and that it should be used for this purpose.
- The location of this site is well related to the commercial centre of Ramsey and given the usage profile of the existing car park, users appear to regard the location as convenient. The site is currently overgrown and extremely unattractive and a well-designed high quality car park could improve the surrounding area. Initial scoping work indicates that around 35 spaces could be provided, including 3 spaces for the disabled. This would adequately replace any lost at New Road and provide a small additional amount of off-street provision
- The perceived parking problem is caused by the imbalance of people using the most convenient location to park and not the under-utilised areas of Great Whyte, particularly at its northern end. It is recommended that uncontrolled parking is re-designated into short and long stay areas with Mews Close car park and on-street parking on the southern end of Great Whyte designated short-stay up to 4 hours. Under-utilised areas to the northern end of Great Whyte should be designated long-stay in excess of 4 hours
- There are no recommended changes to parking charges. While nominal charges have applied in the past, there is a strong local view that Ramsey must be treated differently from other towns given its relatively remote location, public transport and local economy issues. Given the adequacy of supply to meet demand now and in the future, there is no strong need to introduce charging
- Quality of off-street car parking is seen as being of high quality and it is recommended that this is maintained
- Control/enforcement appears to be a local problem within Mews Close with illegal parking outside parking bays. As detailed above,

it is recommended that this is overcome by the introduction of short and long-stay measures

CABINET

15TH March 2007

**HEALTH ACT 2006.
DELEGATED POWERS
(Report by Head of Environmental and Community Health Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek member's approval for delegated authority for The Head of Environmental and Community Health Services and the Director of Operational Services to appoint authorised officers to carry out enforcement duties under The Health Act 2006 and associated regulations
- 1.2 The Government has proposed that first-tier local authorities will be the enforcement authorities for the new regulations. For this Council the relevant duties will be carried out by The Environmental and Community Health Services Division.
- 1.3 This report identifies the relevant powers and regulations and requests the approval of Members.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Health Act 2006 makes provision for prohibiting smoking in certain premises and from 1st July 2007 virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces (including vehicles) in England will become smokefree.
- 2.2 Smoke free legislation is set out in Part 1 of the Health Act 2006 and details the broad provisions for smoke free workplaces and public places. It provides a number of legal powers to enable more detailed aspects of smoke free legislation to be dealt with in smoke free regulations
- 2.3 Five sets of regulations have now been made
 - a. The smoke-free (Premises and Enforcement) Regulations 2006
 - b. The smoke free Signs Regulations 2007
 - c. The Smoke free (Exemptions and Vehicles) Regulations 2007
 - d. The smoke free (Penalties and Discounted Amounts) Regulations 2007
 - e. The smoke free (Vehicle Operators and Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007
- 2.4 The regulations identify legal requirements and list offences and penalties. Some offences can be discharged through the issue of a fixed penalty notice and others through summary jurisdiction. The Council will not be able to keep any monies arising from payment of fixed penalty notices

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 It is therefore RECOMMENDED that:

The Head of Environmental and Community Health Services and the Director of Operational Services be authorised to appoint suitably qualified, experienced and trained officers to carry out the duties and other matters arising under the Health Act 2006 and associated Regulations; and

The Head of Environmental and Community Health Services and the Director of Operational Services be authorised to institute legal proceedings after consultation with the relevant executive councillor.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Health Act 2006 and associated Regulations

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CABINET

15 March 2007

HEALTH ACT 2006.

(Report by Head of Environmental and Community Health Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members' approval for the release of funding allocated by the Department of Health to undertake the implementation and enforcement of the Health Act 2006 and associated regulations with regards to smoke free legislation.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The smoke free provisions of the Health Act 2006 (smoke free legislation) will come into force on 1 July 2007 when virtually all enclosed public places and workplaces (including vehicles) in England will become smoke free. It is seen as a significant piece of Public Health legislation and has received considerable public support.
- 2.2 The aim of the legislation is to reduce the risks to health from exposure to second-hand smoke, recognise a person's right to be protected from harm and enjoy smoke free air, and provide an environment where people are more likely to succeed in giving up smoking. It is also expected to save thousands of lives over the next decade by reducing both exposure to hazardous second-hand smoke and overall smoking rates.
- 2.3 The Government has proposed that first-tier local authorities will be the enforcement authorities for the new regulations. For this Council the relevant duties will be carried out by the Environmental and Community Health Services Division.
- 2.4 The Department of Health and Local Government Association have agreed a funding package to support local authorities undertake this new work and wrote to all Chief Executives on 21 December 2006 in the form of a Local Authority Circular, LAC (2006)17, confirming that grants will be paid under section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003 as a specific formula grant with no conditions attached.
- 2.5 The Council has been allocated a total of £80,431. The majority of this grant, £66,852, will be payable on or before 30 April 2007 for 2007/8 (the first year of smoke free legislation). However in recognition that authorities have already commenced preparations and spent resources, £13,578 of the grant was released in February 2006. It is not expected that the funding will be continued after the 2007/8 financial year.
- 2.6 The Regional Director of Public Health for the East of England (Strategic Health Authority) has identified tobacco control as a priority for the Region and identifies the key role that local authorities have in improving health and reducing health inequalities by the successful and effective implementation of smoke free legislation. Local Authorities will also be expected to demonstrate to the Government Offices for the East of England how the funding allocation will be used to support smoke free

legislation.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

- 3.1 In order to ensure the successful implementation of the new smoke free legislation significant preparatory work including both a comprehensive programme of education and an enforcement framework will be required. There is a need for a local publicity campaign, development and management of a database of premises likely to be affected by the changes and preparation of an inspection programme, which all needs to be done before undertaking practical inspections and enforcement work.
- 3.2 It is estimated in Huntingdonshire that over 4,200 premises and 500 vehicles will be covered by the scope of the regulations. Experience from local authorities in Scotland and Ireland has demonstrated that in the lead up to and during the first year of the legislation considerable resources were required to ensure that businesses, employees and members of the public were fully aware of the implications of the new regulations and that they were effectively implemented and enforced. It is in recognition of this that the Department of Health has made resources available to all local authorities in England. It is anticipated that initial demand for advice will be heavy but will drop away with time, hence funding is on a temporary basis.
- 3.3 Successful implementation of the new legislation will assist the Council in meeting its corporate aims as identified in Growing Success and the associated community aim of Healthy Living by protecting the health of individuals and promoting healthy lifestyle choices by discouraging smoking in public places. It will also support the Community Strategy aim of a healthy population and healthy living by supporting tobacco control and the Strategic Health Authority's strategy for tobacco control in the East of England.
- 3.4 The new legislation and release of funding also provides significant opportunities to further joint working with partner organisations such as the Cambridgeshire PCT and Smoke Free Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (Smoke Free Alliance) on smoking cessation and healthy living. It will also strengthen Huntingdonshire's role within the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Smoke Free Alliance.
- 3.5 It is anticipated that the legislation will also have an impact on other areas of the Council's service delivery such as planning and building control (applications for smoking shelters), licensing, litter and street cleaning (where smokers congregate outside venues), neighbourhood intervention and community safety (chance of increased late night noise and disturbance outside clubs and public houses where smokers congregate outside), and technical services (street furniture and obstruction of footpaths).

4.0 CURRENT POSITION

- 4.1 Current staffing and resources are not sufficient to ensure that the new legislation will be effectively implemented and enforced. Within existing resources a limited number of activities have taken place to support the lead in to the implementation of the new legislation. These have

primarily been carried out by the Lifestyles Manager and include:

- ◆ Information on new regulations placed on Council website
- ◆ Information for businesses included in departmental newsletters
- ◆ Article prepared for March edition of District Wide
- ◆ Attendance at Government training and briefing sessions
- ◆ In-house awareness sessions run for key service managers and environmental health staff
- ◆ Portfolio holder briefing
- ◆ Regular liaison with Smoke Free Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and Cambridgeshire PCT

4.2 In November 2006 Members agreed the release of £17,000 MTP funding as from 1 April 2007 for a 0.5 FTE Environmental Health Officer. The primary role of the post is to focus on Food Safety duties. However part of the post holder's remit will be to lead on the implementation of the smoke free legislation and develop the Council's strategy in relation to education and enforcement. It was envisaged this post would oversee the effective utilisation of the full funding allocated by the Department of Health.

5 PROPOSALS

5.1 It is proposed that the Department of Health total allocation of £80,431 be released to enable the following actions and activities to take place:

- ◆ **Employment of a fulltime Smoking Implementation Officer** for a fixed period of one year (Grade 9/10). Post holder will provide support, guidance and advice to businesses during lead in period as well as carrying out inspections, investigating complaints and where appropriate conducting surveillance and issuing fixed penalty tickets. Ensuring that businesses and employees are fully aware of their legal responsibilities will be critical to ensuring the successful implementation of the new regulations. It is anticipated that a significant part of the enforcement duties will take place during unsociable hours. The post holder will also be expected to give briefings and talks to local business groups and work closely with other local authority service providers, health partners and local media. It is also expected that the post holder will be able to carry out other educational and regulatory duties within the department to ensure efficiency and promote effective enforcement.

Salary plus on costs including NI, pension, car allowance etc
£30,200 - £35,200

- ◆ **Consultant fees and overtime payments.** Based on the experience of local authorities in Scotland and Ireland it is anticipated that a significant number of premises within the district (up to 800) will be classed as 'high risk ' and will require targeted educational and enforcement visits particularly in the weeks either side of the 1 July implementation date. Additional staff resources will be required to achieve these visits and therefore it is proposed that existing Environmental Health Enforcement Officers within the Lifestyles section be allocated this work and consultants employed to backfill their food and health and safety inspection duties for a

limited period. As some of the visits and response to complaints will have to be carried out during unsociable hours, overtime payments will be required

Consultant fees and overtime payments **£11,000**

- ◆ **Publicity and media campaign.** The development of a publicity strategy will be essential to support the implementation of the new regulations. Communication mapping with the Department of Health, NHS partners, Regional Government and Smoke Free Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (Smoke Free Alliance) will be an integral part of the Council's publicity strategy to ensure that the various bodies' promotional work in Huntingdonshire is co-ordinated. Funding will be required for design, printing, postage, web design, road shows and media training. Both the legislation and the funding arrangements will be heavily publicised with stakeholders

Allocation of **£10,000**

- ◆ **Partnership work with Cambridgeshire PCT** (Camquit stop smoking services) and the Smoke Free Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (Smoke Free Alliance) to promote smoking cessation within the local workforce and other target groups. Funding will be used to commission Camquit to deliver training and support for local businesses to enable employers to run smoking cessation classes for their employees. Higher level training will enable workplaces to deliver their own in-house smoking cessation classes thereby ensuring sustainability of the scheme. Workplaces with a high proportion of staff who live in areas of health inequalities will be targeted as a priority. It is anticipated that up to 24 stop smoking advisors will be trained and will work with local businesses across Huntingdonshire. Existing local business networks and partnerships will be involved in this process to assist in maximising the potential benefits. This proposal will support the Council's aims of Healthy Living and a Strong and Diverse Economy by supporting the improvement of access to training and development activities and promoting a healthy workforce.

Allocation of **£24,000**

6. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 6.1 It is RECOMMENDED that members agree to the release of funding from the £80,431, allocated by the Department of Health to support the Council in implementing and enforcing the provisions of the Health Act 2006 and associated smoke free regulations, for the following activities;
 - 6.1.1 Release £35,000 to cover the Employment of a Smoking Implementation Officer. (12-month fixed term. Grade 9/10);
 - 6.1.2 Release £11,000 towards Consultant and Overtime payments;
 - 6.1.3 Release £10,000 to fund a publicity and media campaign; and

- 6.1.4 Release £24,000 to contribute to partnership working for additional workplace smoking cessation and training services.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Health Act 2006 and associated Regulations
Department of Health Local Authority Circular. LAC (2006)17
Regional Director of Public Health, East of England Strategic Health
Authority Report. 'Tobacco Control in the East of England' (16/11/06)
Draft Job Description. Smoking Implementation Officer

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