

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a meeting of **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **WEDNESDAY, 16 APRIL 2008** at **2:30 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

A G E N D A

PRAYER

The Reverend James Pullen, Vicar of St Ives will open the meeting with prayer.

APOLOGIES

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 16)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th February 2008.

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive from 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. REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION - ONLINE PETITIONS (Pages 17 - 18)

To consider a report by the Head of Administration.

4. REPORTS OF THE CABINET, PANELS AND COMMITTEES

(a) Cabinet (Pages 19 - 104)

(b) Standards Committee (Pages 105 - 106)

(c) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) (Pages 107 - 108)

(d) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) (Pages 109 - 112)

(e) Overview and Scrutiny (Service Support) (Pages 113 - 120)

(f) Development Control Panel (Pages 121 - 124)

- (g) Employment Panel (Pages 125 - 126)
- (h) Corporate Governance Panel (Pages 127 - 164)

5. MOTION ON NOTICE

Councillor P J Downes to move –

“that this Council, whilst welcoming the possibility of District Council funding to up-grade the A141/Kings Ripton Road junction to a light-controlled junction with pedestrian crossing, deplores the unconstitutional action of the Leader by announcing this ‘decision’ without authorisation and calls on him to act in future within Council procedures and protocols”.

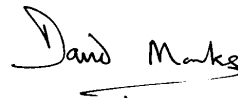
6. ORAL QUESTIONS

In accordance with the Council Procedure Rules (Section 8.3) of the Council's Constitution, to receive oral questions from Members of the Council

7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: SECTION 85

The Chief Executive to report on absences of Members from meetings.

Dated this 8th day of April 2008



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, their family or any person with whom they had a close association;*
 - (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 £25,000; 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 Ms C Deller, Democratic Services Manager, Tel No 01480 388007/e-mail: Christine.Deller@huntsdc.gov.uk 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 Council.

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.

Si vous voulez une traduction de ce document, veuillez nous contacter au 01480 388388 et nous ferons de notre mieux pour satisfaire à vos besoins.

Jeigu norite gauti šio dokumento išverstą kopiją arba atspausdintą stambiu šriftu, prašau kreiptis į mus telefonu 01480 388388 ir mes pasistengsime jums padėti.

Jeśli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać tłumaczenie tego dokumentu, wersję dużym drukiem lub wersję audio, prosimy skontaktować się z nami pod numerem 01480 388388, a my postaramy się uwzględnić Państwa potrzeby.

Se quiser uma tradução desse documento, por favor, contate o número 01480 388388 e tentaremos acomodar as suas necessidades.

This page is intentionally left blank

Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 20 February 2008.

PRESENT: Councillor P A Swales – Chairman.

Councillors J D Ablewhite, M G Baker, K M Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, I C Bates, J T Bell, Mrs B E Boddington, P L E Bucknell, K J Churchill, Mrs K E Cooper, S J Criswell, P H Dakers, J W Davies, D B Dew, P J Downes, J J Dutton, R W J Eaton, J D Fell, A N Gilbert, P M D Godfrey, Mrs C A Godley, J A Gray, A Hansard, D Harty, C R Hyams, Mrs P A Jordan, Ms S Kemp, L W McGuire, P G Mitchell, M F Newman, R Powell, D J Priestman, K Reynolds, T V Rogers, J M Sadler, T D Sanderson, L M Simpson, C J Stephens, G S E Thorpe, R G Tuplin, P R Ward, J S Watt and R J West.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors R W D Bailey, E R Butler, R S Farrer, J E Garner, D A Giles, I R Muir, Mrs D C Reynolds and P K Ursell and Mr D L Hall.

51. PRAYER

The Reverend D Busk, Vicar of Godmanchester, opened the meeting with Prayer.

52. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 5th December 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

53. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors Mrs K E Cooper, R W J Eaton, D Harty and G S E Thorpe declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No. 56 – Item No. 73 by virtue of their membership of St. Neots Town Council and as Trustees of St. Neots Outdoor Swimming Pool and left the Chamber at the appropriate time in the proceedings.

Councillor I C Bates, declared a personal interest in Minute No. 56 – Item No. 34 by virtue of his position as Board Member of Cambridgeshire Horizons.

54. PARISH COUNCIL ORDERS

Further to Minute No. 45 of the meeting of the Council held on 5th December 2007 and having regard to a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), Councillor D Harty, Chairman of the Elections Panel, reminded Members that the recently concluded review of parish arrangements

in Huntingdonshire had recommended changes to the size of membership of certain Councils and that the making of the necessary Orders was reserved to Council.

For clarity, Councillor Harty advised that those changes affecting County and District Council boundaries could only be made currently by the Secretary of State on the recommendation of the Boundary Committee and that it was not anticipated that a decision in this respect would be forthcoming for sometime.

Therefore, in accordance with the new scale of parish council representation, the Council

RESOLVED

that the appropriate Orders be made under the Local Government and Rating Act 1997 be made to –

- (a) decrease the membership of Catworth Parish Council from 9 to 7 councillors with effect from 5th May 2011;
- (b) decrease the membership of Tilbrook Parish Council from 7 to 5 councillors with effect from 5th May 2011;
- (c) increase the membership of Godmanchester Town Council from 15 to 17 councillors with effect from 1st May 2008;
- (d) decrease the membership of Holme Parish Council from 9 to 7 councillors with effect from 5th May 2011;
- (e) decrease the membership of Upwood and The Raveleys Parish Council from 11 to 9 councillors with effect from 5th May 2011;
- (f) decrease the membership of Elton Parish Council from 11 to 9 councillors with effect from 6th May 2010;
- (g) increase the membership of Yaxley Parish Council from 13 to 17 councillors with effect from 5th May 2011;
- (h) decrease the membership of Great and Little Gidding Parish Council from 8 to 7 councillors with effect from 1st May 2008;
- (i) decrease the membership of Great Staughton Parish Council from 11 to 9 councillors with effect from 5th May 2011; and
- (j) group the parishes of Offord Cluny and Offord D'Arcy under the common parish council of Offord Cluny and Offord D'Arcy Parish Council consisting of 11 councillors with effect from 1st May 2008.

55. FINANCIAL PLAN, MEDIUM TERM PLAN, 2008/09 BUDGET AND ASSOCIATED MATTERS

In conjunction with a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of

which is appended in the Minute Book) and Item Nos. 61 and 62 of the Report of the Cabinet, the Executive Councillor for Finance, Councillor T V Rogers, addressed the Council on the Financial Plan, Medium Term Plan for 2009/2013, 2008/09 budget and related Prudential Indicators contained in the Treasury Management strategy. In accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the Council also considered proposals as to the levels of Council Tax in 2008/09 for the various parts of the Huntingdonshire District.

In opening the debate, Councillor Rogers reminded Members that the Council continued to balance expenditure on service priorities against the requirement to set a Council Tax. He made reference to the implications on the budget of variations in interest rates and inflation and acknowledged the contributions made by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and members of the business community to the budgetary process which had originally commenced in September 2007.

In drawing Members' attention to the Council's decision at its meeting in December (Minute No. 47 (a) refers) to support a policy of limiting the increase in the budget requirement to 4.99%, Councillor Rogers explained that since then, alternative financial strategies had been considered. Given ministerial advice and to avoid the risk of capping, the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and the Cabinet had recommended the adoption of Option B contained in Section 4.10 of Appendix A to the report now submitted which, in their view, offered the best balance between minimising the level of spending adjustment required and the risk of capping in 2008/09. Councillor Rogers acknowledged that the adoption of this strategy would require further efficiency savings. He also referred Members to a letter that he and the Leader of the Council had sent to the Minister for Local Government seeking an indication of the principles which the Government would apply when exercising capping powers but to which a reply had yet to be received.

Although suggesting that he thought it unlikely that the Council would be threatened by capping, Councillor Rogers indicated that he foresaw a situation where services would need to be curtailed as the Council's reserves became depleted. He urged Members to recognise that the Council had to do all it could to raise revenue by other means such as the imposition of charges for services. Given that the acceptance of Option B would balance expenditure levels on the wide range of services offered by the Council against the desire to retain an affordable council tax, Councillor Rogers commended the recommendations by the Cabinet to Council as set out in the report of the Head of Financial Services.

In response to a question by Councillor Mrs M Banerjee, Councillor Rogers explained that the proposal to remove the general contingency of £144,000 from the budget would reduce still further the need to identify future spending adjustments, that the contingency provision had not been used for several years and that any unavoidable items of expenditure which might arise could be funded from the revenue reserves.

Councillor J D Fell expressed his disappointment at the level of under-funding provided by the Government, particularly in view of the performance and efficiency that the Council had demonstrated in recent years and Councillor A Hansard drew the Member's attention to the fact that only 8.4% of total council tax revenue was retained for expenditure by the District Council with the Council having no control over the remainder.

Having highlighted the variations in the precepts set by Parish Councils,

Councillor J A Gray congratulated the Cabinet for their hard work in presenting a balanced and reasonable budget capable of meeting the significant financial challenges which lay ahead. The Leader of the Council, Councillor I C Bates expressed the view that Cambridgeshire authorities should jointly make representations to Central Government to strongly underline how poorly funded local government was in the County.

In response to Councillor Rogers' address, Councillor P J Downes, on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Group, expressed his gratitude to Officers for the clarity of the budget documents and suggested that reforms were needed to the local government finance system if the Council was to receive the scale of Central Government funding to which it should be entitled. Councillor Downes indicated his support for Option B, welcomed the opportunity given to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels to contribute to the debate and envisaged that difficulties would increase for the Council over the next 4/5 years as the level of reserves continued to fall.

Councillor P J Downes also moved an amendment to the Motion and it was duly seconded -

“that the following words be added after the word “excluded” at the end of the first bullet point of the recommendation contained in paragraph 3.1 of the report of the Head of Financial Services – ‘subject to an increase in the budget for recycling sites on page 36 of the Council agenda to £57,000 with consequential adjustments to the Council’s final budget requirement and the additional expenditure met from reserves, in order to investigate potential retention of Buckden Household Waste Recycling Centre as a weekend amenity and a report submitted to Cabinet in due course when investigations have been completed’.”

Upon being put to the vote, the amendment was declared to be LOST.

Councillor Downes further moved and it was duly seconded –

“that in Annex D to Appendix A of the report of the Head of Financial Services, the following words/figure be added in columns two and three after Bid No. 363 in the Transportation Section – ‘Road Safety Scheme: A141, Huntingdon (column 2) and £150,000 in 2008/09 (column 3)’.”

The Leader of the Council, Councillor I C Bates, explained that this matter had been discussed at a meeting of Cambridgeshire County Council on the previous day when Councillor Downes had been advised that the matter was the subject of ongoing discussions. Councillor Bates suggested that it would be inappropriate for this matter to be discussed at this point in the proceedings and in accordance with Standing Order 11.10 (d), he moved and it was duly seconded -

“that the question be now put”.

On being put to the vote, the Motion was declared to be CARRIED.

Accordingly, the amendment proposed by Councillor Downes was put to the vote and declared to be LOST.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the proposed budget for 2008/09, Medium Term Plan for 2009/2013 and Financial Plan, as set out in Annexes C, D, E and F to the report now submitted be approved;
- (b) that the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators, as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Cabinet now submitted be approved;
- (c) that a Council Tax increase of 4.99% representing a Council Tax of £115.39 for a Band D property in 2008/09 be approved;
- (d) that the following amounts be calculated by the Council for 2008/09 in accordance with Sections 32 and 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992 (the Act):-

	£
(i) the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2) (a) to (e) of the Act Gross revenue expenditure including benefits and Town/Parish Precepts	71,005,662
(ii) the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (3) (a) to (c) of the Act Gross revenue income including reimbursement of benefits and use of reserves	48,470,515
(iii) the amount by which the aggregate at (b) (i) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) (ii) above in accordance with Section 32 (4) of the Act Budget requirement plus Parish/Town Precepts (item i minus item ii)	22,535,147
(iv) the aggregate of the amounts payable into the General Fund for the items set out in Section 33 (1) of the Act. Government support	12,156,971
(v) the aggregate of the amounts payable to the General Fund for the items set out in Section 33 (3) of the Act Collection Fund deficit	27,881

- | | | |
|--------|---|--|
| (vi) | the basic amount of Council Tax for 2007/08 in accordance with Section 33 (1) <i>District plus average Town/Parish Council Tax</i> | 180.07 |
| (vii) | the aggregate of special items referred to in Section 34 (1) <i>Total Town and Parish Council precepts</i> | 3,737,487 |
| (viii) | the basic amount of Council Tax for 2007/08 for those parts of the District to which no special item relates <i>District Council Tax</i> | 115.39
<i>per band D property</i> |
| (ix) | the basic amounts of Council Tax for 2008/09 for those parts of the District to which one or more special items relate in accordance with Section 34 (3) of the Act are shown by adding the Huntingdonshire District Council amount to the appropriate Parish Council amount in column "band D" set out in table 1 hereto. | |
| (x) | the amounts to be taken into account for 2008/09 in respect of categories of dwellings listed in the different valuation bands in accordance with Section 36 (1) of the Act are shown by adding the Huntingdonshire District Council amount to the appropriate Parish Council amount for each of the valuation bands in the columns "bands A to H" set out in table 1 hereto. | |
- (e) that the amounts of precept issued to the Council by Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Police Authority and Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Fire Authority for each of the categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands in accordance with Section 40 of the Act shown in table 1 hereto be noted; and
- (f) that, having regard to the calculations above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the figures shown in table 2 as the amounts of Council Tax for 2008/09 for each of the categories of dwelling shown.

TABLE 1	BAND A £	BAND B £	BAND C £	BAND D £	BAND E £	BAND F £	BAND G £	BAND H £
Cambridgeshire County Council	652.74	761.53	870.32	979.11	1,196.69	1,414.27	1,631.85	1,958.22
Cambridgeshire Police Authority	104.58	122.01	139.44	156.87	191.73	226.59	261.45	313.74
Huntingdonshire District Council	76.93	89.75	102.57	115.39	141.03	166.67	192.32	230.78
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Fire Authority	36.30	42.35	48.40	54.45	66.55	78.65	90.75	108.90
PARISH COUNCILS :-								
Abbotsley	39.36	45.92	52.48	59.04	72.16	85.28	98.40	118.08
Abbots Ripton	22.39	26.12	29.85	33.58	41.04	48.50	55.97	67.16
Alconbury	36.71	42.82	48.94	55.06	67.30	79.53	91.77	110.12
Alconbury Weston	18.85	21.99	25.13	28.27	34.55	40.83	47.12	56.54
Alwalton	13.33	15.56	17.78	20.00	24.44	28.89	33.33	40.00
Barham & Woolley	12.82	14.96	17.09	19.23	23.50	27.78	32.05	38.46
Bluntisham	78.49	91.58	104.66	117.74	143.90	170.07	196.23	235.48
Brampton	53.39	62.29	71.19	80.09	97.89	115.69	133.48	160.18
Brington & Molesworth	27.32	31.87	36.43	40.98	50.09	59.19	68.30	81.96
Broughton	26.82	31.29	35.76	40.23	49.17	58.11	67.05	80.46
Buckden	40.17	46.87	53.56	60.26	73.65	87.04	100.43	120.52
Buckworth	47.75	55.70	63.66	71.62	87.54	103.45	119.37	143.24
Bury	18.65	21.75	24.86	27.97	34.19	40.40	46.62	55.94
Bythorn & Keyston	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Catworth	36.98	43.14	49.31	55.47	67.80	80.12	92.45	110.94
Chesterton	11.11	12.97	14.82	16.67	20.37	24.08	27.78	33.34
Colne	31.84	37.15	42.45	47.76	58.37	68.99	79.60	95.52
Conington	10.81	12.62	14.42	16.22	19.82	23.43	27.03	32.44
Covington	20.63	24.07	27.51	30.95	37.83	44.71	51.58	61.90
Denton & Caldecote	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Diddington	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Earith	32.19	37.55	42.92	48.28	59.01	69.74	80.47	96.56
Easton	19.55	22.81	26.07	29.33	35.85	42.37	48.88	58.66
Ellington	27.07	31.58	36.09	40.60	49.62	58.64	67.67	81.20
Elton	22.87	26.69	30.50	34.31	41.93	49.56	57.18	68.62
Eynesbury Hardwicke	8.55	9.97	11.40	12.82	15.67	18.52	21.37	25.64
Farcet	31.03	36.21	41.38	46.55	56.89	67.24	77.58	93.10
Fenstanton	27.78	32.41	37.04	41.67	50.93	60.19	69.45	83.34
Folksworth & Washingley	35.57	41.49	47.42	53.35	65.21	77.06	88.92	106.70
Glatton	10.10	11.78	13.47	15.15	18.52	21.88	25.25	30.30
Godmanchester	33.95	39.61	45.27	50.93	62.25	73.57	84.88	101.86
Grafham	28.01	32.68	37.35	42.02	51.36	60.70	70.03	84.04
Great & Little Gidding	45.69	53.31	60.92	68.54	83.77	99.00	114.23	137.08
Great Gransden	21.88	25.53	29.17	32.82	40.11	47.41	54.70	65.64
Great Paxton	24.89	29.03	33.18	37.33	45.63	53.92	62.22	74.66
Great Staughton	23.65	27.60	31.54	35.48	43.36	51.25	59.13	70.96
Haddon	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Hail Weston	41.45	48.36	55.27	62.18	76.00	89.82	103.63	124.36
Hamerton	7.93	9.26	10.58	11.90	14.54	17.19	19.83	23.80

TABLE 1 Cont.	BAND A £	BAND B £	BAND C £	BAND D £	BAND E £	BAND F £	BAND G £	BAND H £
Hemingford Abbots	29.75	34.70	39.66	44.62	54.54	64.45	74.37	89.24
Hemingford Grey	25.99	30.33	34.66	38.99	47.65	56.32	64.98	77.98
Hilton	28.99	33.83	38.66	43.49	53.15	62.82	72.48	86.98
Holme	28.81	33.61	38.41	43.21	52.81	62.41	72.02	86.42
Holywell-cum-Needingworth	63.61	74.21	84.81	95.41	116.61	137.81	159.02	190.82
Houghton & Wyton	31.00	36.17	41.33	46.50	56.83	67.17	77.50	93.00
Huntingdon	58.80	68.60	78.40	88.20	107.80	127.40	147.00	176.40
Kimbolton & Stonely	52.88	61.69	70.51	79.32	96.95	114.57	132.20	158.64
Kings Ripton	36.53	42.61	48.70	54.79	66.97	79.14	91.32	109.58
Leighton Bromswold	30.00	35.00	40.00	45.00	55.00	65.00	75.00	90.00
Little Paxton	36.61	42.71	48.81	54.91	67.11	79.31	91.52	109.82
Morborne	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Offord Cluny	28.67	33.44	38.22	43.00	52.56	62.11	71.67	86.00
Offord D'Arcy	28.25	32.95	37.66	42.37	51.79	61.20	70.62	84.74
Oldhurst	11.58	13.51	15.44	17.37	21.23	25.09	28.95	34.74
Old Weston	7.57	8.84	10.10	11.36	13.88	16.41	18.93	22.72
Perry	17.61	20.55	23.48	26.42	32.29	38.16	44.03	52.84
Pidley-cum-Fenton	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Ramsey	28.47	33.22	37.96	42.71	52.20	61.69	71.18	85.42
St.Ives	56.69	66.13	75.58	85.03	103.93	122.82	141.72	170.06
St.Neots	55.55	64.80	74.06	83.32	101.84	120.35	138.87	166.64
St.Neots Rural	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Sawtry	54.22	63.26	72.29	81.33	99.40	117.48	135.55	162.66
Sibson-cum-Stibbington	35.77	41.74	47.70	53.66	65.58	77.51	89.43	107.32
Somersham	44.01	51.34	58.68	66.01	80.68	95.35	110.02	132.02
Southoe & Midloe	40.86	47.67	54.48	61.29	74.91	88.53	102.15	122.58
Spaldwick	26.37	30.77	35.16	39.56	48.35	57.14	65.93	79.12
Steeple Gidding	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Stilton	43.57	50.83	58.09	65.35	79.87	94.39	108.92	130.70
Stow Longa	33.33	38.89	44.44	50.00	61.11	72.22	83.33	100.00
Tetworth	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
The Stukeleys	14.91	17.40	19.88	22.37	27.34	32.31	37.28	44.74
Tilbrook	19.05	22.22	25.40	28.57	34.92	41.27	47.62	57.14
Toseland	7.89	9.21	10.52	11.84	14.47	17.10	19.73	23.68
Upton & Coppingford	19.61	22.87	26.14	29.41	35.95	42.48	49.02	58.82
Upwood & the Raveleys	20.94	24.43	27.92	31.41	38.39	45.37	52.35	62.82
Warboys	26.02	30.36	34.69	39.03	47.70	56.38	65.05	78.06
Waresley	10.42	12.16	13.89	15.63	19.10	22.58	26.05	31.26
Water Newton	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Winwick	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Wistow	38.18	44.54	50.91	57.27	70.00	82.72	95.45	114.54
Woodhurst	17.21	20.07	22.94	25.81	31.55	37.28	43.02	51.62
Woodwalton	20.39	23.79	27.19	30.59	37.39	44.19	50.98	61.18
Yaxley	47.61	55.55	63.48	71.42	87.29	103.16	119.03	142.84
Yelling	7.25	8.45	9.66	10.87	13.29	15.70	18.12	21.74

TABLE 2	TOTAL CHARGES							
	BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E	BAND F	BAND G	BAND H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Abbotsley	909.91	1,061.56	1,213.21	1,364.86	1,668.16	1,971.46	2,274.77	2,729.72
Abbots Ripton	892.94	1,041.76	1,190.58	1,339.40	1,637.04	1,934.68	2,232.34	2,678.80
Alconbury	907.26	1,058.46	1,209.67	1,360.88	1,663.30	1,965.71	2,268.14	2,721.76
Alconbury Weston	889.40	1,037.63	1,185.86	1,334.09	1,630.55	1,927.01	2,223.49	2,668.18
Alwalton	883.88	1,031.20	1,178.51	1,325.82	1,620.44	1,915.07	2,209.70	2,651.64
Barham & Woolley	883.37	1,030.60	1,177.82	1,325.05	1,619.50	1,913.96	2,208.42	2,650.10
Bluntisham	949.04	1,107.22	1,265.39	1,423.56	1,739.90	2,056.25	2,372.60	2,847.12
Brampton	923.94	1,077.93	1,231.92	1,385.91	1,693.89	2,001.87	2,309.85	2,771.82
Brington & Molesworth	897.87	1,047.51	1,197.16	1,346.80	1,646.09	1,945.37	2,244.67	2,693.60
Broughton	897.37	1,046.93	1,196.49	1,346.05	1,645.17	1,944.29	2,243.42	2,692.10
Buckden	910.72	1,062.51	1,214.29	1,366.08	1,669.65	1,973.22	2,276.80	2,732.16
Buckworth	918.30	1,071.34	1,224.39	1,377.44	1,683.54	1,989.63	2,295.74	2,754.88
Bury	889.20	1,037.39	1,185.59	1,333.79	1,630.19	1,926.58	2,222.99	2,667.58
Bythorn & Keyston	870.55	1,015.64	1,160.73	1,305.82	1,596.00	1,886.18	2,176.37	2,611.64
Catworth	907.53	1,058.78	1,210.04	1,361.29	1,663.80	1,966.30	2,268.82	2,722.58
Chesterton	881.66	1,028.61	1,175.55	1,322.49	1,616.37	1,910.26	2,204.15	2,644.98
Colne	902.39	1,052.79	1,203.18	1,353.58	1,654.37	1,955.17	2,255.97	2,707.16
Conington	881.36	1,028.26	1,175.15	1,322.04	1,615.82	1,909.61	2,203.40	2,644.08
Covington	891.18	1,039.71	1,188.24	1,336.77	1,633.83	1,930.89	2,227.95	2,673.54
Denton & Caldecote	870.55	1,015.64	1,160.73	1,305.82	1,596.00	1,886.18	2,176.37	2,611.64
Diddington	870.55	1,015.64	1,160.73	1,305.82	1,596.00	1,886.18	2,176.37	2,611.64
Earith	902.74	1,053.19	1,203.65	1,354.10	1,655.01	1,955.92	2,256.84	2,708.20
Easton	890.10	1,038.45	1,186.80	1,335.15	1,631.85	1,928.55	2,225.25	2,670.30
Ellington	897.62	1,047.22	1,196.82	1,346.42	1,645.62	1,944.82	2,244.04	2,692.84
Elton	893.42	1,042.33	1,191.23	1,340.13	1,637.93	1,935.74	2,233.55	2,680.26
Eynesbury Hardwicke	879.10	1,025.61	1,172.13	1,318.64	1,611.67	1,904.70	2,197.74	2,637.28
Farcet	901.58	1,051.85	1,202.11	1,352.37	1,652.89	1,953.42	2,253.95	2,704.74
Fenstanton	898.33	1,048.05	1,197.77	1,347.49	1,646.93	1,946.37	2,245.82	2,694.98
Folksworth & Washingley	906.12	1,057.13	1,208.15	1,359.17	1,661.21	1,963.24	2,265.29	2,718.34
Glatton	880.65	1,027.42	1,174.20	1,320.97	1,614.52	1,908.06	2,201.62	2,641.94
Godmanchester	904.50	1,055.25	1,206.00	1,356.75	1,658.25	1,959.75	2,261.25	2,713.50
Grafham	898.56	1,048.32	1,198.08	1,347.84	1,647.36	1,946.88	2,246.40	2,695.68
Great & Little Gidding	916.24	1,068.95	1,221.65	1,374.36	1,679.77	1,985.18	2,290.60	2,748.72
Great Gransden	892.43	1,041.17	1,189.90	1,338.64	1,636.11	1,933.59	2,231.07	2,677.28
Great Paxton	895.44	1,044.67	1,193.91	1,343.15	1,641.63	1,940.10	2,238.59	2,686.30
Great Staughton	894.20	1,043.24	1,192.27	1,341.30	1,639.36	1,937.43	2,235.50	2,682.60
Haddon	870.55	1,015.64	1,160.73	1,305.82	1,596.00	1,886.18	2,176.37	2,611.64
Hail Weston	912.00	1,064.00	1,216.00	1,368.00	1,672.00	1,976.00	2,280.00	2,736.00
Hamerton	878.48	1,024.90	1,171.31	1,317.72	1,610.54	1,903.37	2,196.20	2,635.44
Hemingford Abbots	900.30	1,050.34	1,200.39	1,350.44	1,650.54	1,950.63	2,250.74	2,700.88
Hemingford Grey	896.54	1,045.97	1,195.39	1,344.81	1,643.65	1,942.50	2,241.35	2,689.62

TABLE 2 Cont.	TOTAL CHARGES							
	BAND A	BAND B	BAND C	BAND D	BAND E	BAND F	BAND G	BAND H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Hilton	899.54	1,049.47	1,199.39	1,349.31	1,649.15	1,949.00	2,248.85	2,698.62
Holme	899.36	1,049.25	1,199.14	1,349.03	1,648.81	1,948.59	2,248.39	2,698.06
Holywell-cum-Needingworth	934.16	1,089.85	1,245.54	1,401.23	1,712.61	2,023.99	2,335.39	2,802.46
Houghton & Wyton	901.55	1,051.81	1,202.06	1,352.32	1,652.83	1,953.35	2,253.87	2,704.64
Huntingdon	929.35	1,084.24	1,239.13	1,394.02	1,703.80	2,013.58	2,323.37	2,788.04
Kimbolton & Stonely	923.43	1,077.33	1,231.24	1,385.14	1,692.95	2,000.75	2,308.57	2,770.28
Kings Ripton	907.08	1,058.25	1,209.43	1,360.61	1,662.97	1,965.32	2,267.69	2,721.22
Leighton Bromswold	900.55	1,050.64	1,200.73	1,350.82	1,651.00	1,951.18	2,251.37	2,701.64
Little Paxton	907.16	1,058.35	1,209.54	1,360.73	1,663.11	1,965.49	2,267.89	2,721.46
Morborne	870.55	1,015.64	1,160.73	1,305.82	1,596.00	1,886.18	2,176.37	2,611.64
Offord Cluny	899.22	1,049.08	1,198.95	1,348.82	1,648.56	1,948.29	2,248.04	2,697.64
Offord D'Arcy	898.80	1,048.59	1,198.39	1,348.19	1,647.79	1,947.38	2,246.99	2,696.38
Oldhurst	882.13	1,029.15	1,176.17	1,323.19	1,617.23	1,911.27	2,205.32	2,646.38
Old Weston	878.12	1,024.48	1,170.83	1,317.18	1,609.88	1,902.59	2,195.30	2,634.36
Perry	888.16	1,036.19	1,184.21	1,332.24	1,628.29	1,924.34	2,220.40	2,664.48
Pidley-cum-Fenton	870.55	1,015.64	1,160.73	1,305.82	1,596.00	1,886.18	2,176.37	2,611.64
Ramsey	899.02	1,048.86	1,198.69	1,348.53	1,648.20	1,947.87	2,247.55	2,697.06
St.Ives	927.24	1,081.77	1,236.31	1,390.85	1,699.93	2,009.00	2,318.09	2,781.70
St.Neots	926.10	1,080.44	1,234.79	1,389.14	1,697.84	2,006.53	2,315.24	2,778.28
St.Neots Rural	870.55	1,015.64	1,160.73	1,305.82	1,596.00	1,886.18	2,176.37	2,611.64
Sawtry	924.77	1,078.90	1,233.02	1,387.15	1,695.40	2,003.66	2,311.92	2,774.30
Sibson-cum-Stibbington	906.32	1,057.38	1,208.43	1,359.48	1,661.58	1,963.69	2,265.80	2,718.96
Somersham	914.56	1,066.98	1,219.41	1,371.83	1,676.68	1,981.53	2,286.39	2,743.66
Southoe & Midloe	911.41	1,063.31	1,215.21	1,367.11	1,670.91	1,974.71	2,278.52	2,734.22
Spaldwick	896.92	1,046.41	1,195.89	1,345.38	1,644.35	1,943.32	2,242.30	2,690.76
Steeple Gidding	870.55	1,015.64	1,160.73	1,305.82	1,596.00	1,886.18	2,176.37	2,611.64
Stilton	914.12	1,066.47	1,218.82	1,371.17	1,675.87	1,980.57	2,285.29	2,742.34
Stow Longa	903.88	1,054.53	1,205.17	1,355.82	1,657.11	1,958.40	2,259.70	2,711.64
Tetworth	870.55	1,015.64	1,160.73	1,305.82	1,596.00	1,886.18	2,176.37	2,611.64
The Stukeleys	885.46	1,033.04	1,180.61	1,328.19	1,623.34	1,918.49	2,213.65	2,656.38
Tilbrook	889.60	1,037.86	1,186.13	1,334.39	1,630.92	1,927.45	2,223.99	2,668.78
Toseland	878.44	1,024.85	1,171.25	1,317.66	1,610.47	1,903.28	2,196.10	2,635.32
Upton & Coppingford	890.16	1,038.51	1,186.87	1,335.23	1,631.95	1,928.66	2,225.39	2,670.46
Upwood & the Raveleys	891.49	1,040.07	1,188.65	1,337.23	1,634.39	1,931.55	2,228.72	2,674.46
Warboys	896.57	1,046.00	1,195.42	1,344.85	1,643.70	1,942.56	2,241.42	2,689.70
Waresley	880.97	1,027.80	1,174.62	1,321.45	1,615.10	1,908.76	2,202.42	2,642.90
Water Newton	870.55	1,015.64	1,160.73	1,305.82	1,596.00	1,886.18	2,176.37	2,611.64
Winwick	870.55	1,015.64	1,160.73	1,305.82	1,596.00	1,886.18	2,176.37	2,611.64
Wistow	908.73	1,060.18	1,211.64	1,363.09	1,666.00	1,968.90	2,271.82	2,726.18
Woodhurst	887.76	1,035.71	1,183.67	1,331.63	1,627.55	1,923.46	2,219.39	2,663.26
Woodwalton	890.94	1,039.43	1,187.92	1,336.41	1,633.39	1,930.37	2,227.35	2,672.82
Yaxley	918.16	1,071.19	1,224.21	1,377.24	1,683.29	1,989.34	2,295.40	2,754.48
Yelling	877.80	1,024.09	1,170.39	1,316.69	1,609.29	1,901.88	2,194.49	2,633.38

56. REPORTS OF THE CABINET, PANELS AND COMMITTEES

(a) Cabinet

Councillor I C Bates, Leader and Chairman of the Cabinet, presented the Report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 13th December 2007 and 31st January 2008.

.....

In connection with Item Nos. 61 and 62, it was noted that the recommendations had been considered previously under Minute No. 55 ante.

.....

In connection with Item No. 63 and following appreciation having been expressed to Members and Officers who had contributed to the successful outcome of the Overview and Scrutiny review of on-line petitions, the recommendation contained in Item No. 63 was declared to be CARRIED.

.....

In connection with Item No. 71 and in response to questions from Councillors T D Sanderson and R Powell, the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Environment and Transport, Councillor P L E Bucknell replied that consideration was being given to the provision of additional car parking for the town as part of current work on the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan, that poor access meant it was difficult to enhance facilities at Great Northern Street Car Park and that he would again raise the issue of the parking of commercial vans owned by Luminus in the Riverside Park. He indicated that he would respond to the questioner with regard to the latter question in writing when the outcome was known.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that, subject to the foregoing paragraphs, the Report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 13th December 2007 and 31st January 2008 be received and adopted.

(b) Standards Committee

Councillor T D Sanderson presented the Report of the meetings of the Standards Committee held on 6th December 2007 and 31st January 2008.

.....

Councillor Sanderson drew the Council's attention to the submission made by the Committee to the Secretary of State

for Communities and Local Government which had recommended that implementation of the new Code of Conduct regime should commence with effect from 1st September 2008 and not 1st April as planned.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Standards Committee held on 6th December 2007 and 31st January 2008 be received and adopted.

(c) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery)

Councillor S J Criswell presented the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny (Service Delivery) held on 4th December 2007, 8th January and 5th February 2008.

.....

In connection with Item No. 21 and in response to a question from Councillor P J Downes, Councillor Criswell undertook to respond to the questioner in writing regarding a suggestion that the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership should lobby the Government for Cambridgeshire to become an English for speakers of other languages targeted area,

.....

In connection with Item No. 26 (b) and in response to a question from Councillor R W J Eaton, Councillor Criswell acknowledged the appreciation of Councillor Eaton for the work of the Panel on the study on disability access and noted his request to raise the poor condition of pavements with Cambridgeshire County Council in the study final report.

.....

In connection with Item No. 26 (c) and in response to a question from Councillor P J Downes, Councillor Criswell acknowledged the progress achieved by the State of the District Consultation Working Group and indicated that he too was hopeful of a satisfactory conclusion to the study.

.....

In connection with Item No. 26 (d) and in response to a question from Councillor T D Sanderson, Councillor Criswell replied that although the work of the Adoption of Roads and Sewers Working Group was at an early stage, the Group might investigate the role of the various agencies in the adoption of roads and sewers with a view to shortening the timescale when such works were completed.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) held on 4th December 2007, 8th January and 5th February 2008 be received and adopted.

(d) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)

Councillor J A Gray presented the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) held on 11th December 2007 and 15th January 2008.

.....

In connection with Item No. 31 and in response to questions from Councillors T D Sanderson and J J Dutton, Councillor Gray advised the questioners that the Panel had established a working group to examine procedures for the negotiation, implementation, monitoring and expenditure associated with Section 106 Agreements and that whilst the terms of reference of the group had yet to be finalised, it was likely to investigate thoroughly the issues of concern to Members.

On the same subject and in response to a question from Councillor J S Watt regarding cycling routes, Councillor Gray assured the questioner that he would continue to liaise with Officers to secure the improvement and safety of cycle routes.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) held on 11th December 2007 and 15th January 2008 be received and adopted.

(e) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework)

Councillor S J Criswell presented the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) held on 29th January and 6th February 2008.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) held on 29th January and 6th February

2008 be received and adopted.

(f) Development Control Panel

Councillor P G Mitchell presented the Report of the meetings of the Development Control Panel held on 17th December 2007 and 21st January 2008.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Development Control Panel held on 17th December 2007 and 21st January 2008 be received and adopted.

(g) Corporate Governance Panel

Councillor C J Stephens presented the Report of the meeting of the Corporate Governance Panel held on 12th December 2007.

.....

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 20.2 and on being moved and seconded, it was noted that the recommendation contained in Item No. 11 now stood adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

.....

In connection with Item No. 15 and in response to a question from Councillor P J Downes, Councillor Stephens acknowledged that whilst there was insufficient participation locally in youth councils at town and parish level to justify a district youth forum as originally envisaged at this time, this did not preclude the opportunity to re-visit the idea of a District-wide forum in the future.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Corporate Governance Panel held on 12th December 2007 be received and adopted.

57. ORAL QUESTIONS

In accordance with the Council's Procedure Rules (paragraph 8.3 of the Council's Constitution), the Chairman proceeded to conduct a period of oral questions addressed to Executive Councillors and Panel Chairmen as follows:-

Question from Councillor P H Dakers to the Leader of the Council, Councillor I C Bates

In response to a question regarding suggested end times for agenda items and meetings, the Leader, Councillor Bates, replied that it would be difficult to anticipate the length of any meeting so that an attempt to estimate a closing time on agenda would be problematic and difficult to achieve in practice.

.....

Question from Councillor J J Dutton to the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Environment and Transport, Councillor P L E Bucknell

In response to a question regarding the incidence of parking on verges at Norfolk and Essex Road, Huntingdon and whether the verges in question were in the ownership of the District Council, Councillor Bucknell undertook to investigate the land ownership issue and to undertake a visit to the site to which he invited the questioner and Councillor Miss Kemp.

.....

Question from Councillor M G Baker to the Executive Councillor for Operations, Parks and Countryside, Councillor C R Hyams

In response to a question requesting that further consideration be given to the method of distinguishing properties occupied by the frail, elderly and vulnerable for refuse collection purposes in order to prevent distraction burglaries, Councillor Hyams replied that he was investigating the matter and had requested details of incidents of this nature from the Police.

.....

Question from Councillor T D Sanderson to the Leader, Councillor I C Bates

In response to a question requesting an update on plans for the future of Huntingdon Town Hall and the reason why a commuted sum of £8,000 had yet to be transferred to the Town Council for the provision of a play area at Stukeley Meadows, Councillor Bates undertook to provide a written response on both issues.

.....

Question from Councillor R Powell to the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Environment and Transport, Councillor P L E Bucknell

In response to a question requesting an update on the progress of the Tesco development at Ramsey, Councillor Bucknell confirmed that negotiations were continuing with regard to the submission of an application for planning permission but that he would write to the questioner in further detail on the current position.

.....

Question from Councillor G S E Thorpe, to the Executive Councillor for Operations, Parks and Countryside, Councillor C R Hyams

In response to a question in which it was alleged that there was a tendency for wheeled bins not to be returned to the curtilage of properties after refuse collections resulting in hazards for the elderly, disabled and parents with pushchairs, Councillor Hyams undertook to reply to the questioner in writing and to copy the reply to all Members of the Council.

.....

Question from Councillor Miss S Kemp to the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy, Councillor A Hansard

In response to a question regarding the need to update the tourist information leaflets and electronic Tourist Information Points to reflect the fact that the Library and Tourist Information Office were no longer located at Princes Street, Huntingdon, Councillor Hansard undertook to respond to the questioner in writing.

58. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: SECTION 85

The Chief Executive reported that there were no absences of Members from meetings for consideration in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

The meeting concluded at 4.20pm.

Chairman

Review of the Constitution – On-Line Petitions

Report by the Head of Administration

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Members may recall that at their February meeting, the Council considered a Report of the meeting of the Corporate Governance Panel (Minute No. 56 (g) refers) in which the Panel recommended a series of changes to the Constitution to enable on-line petitions to be processed. The use of information and communications technology to promote the work of the Council originally arose from a study undertaken by a Working Group appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support).
- 1.2 Of the recommendations made by the Working Group, one relating to on-line petitions required changes to be made to the Council Procedure Rules (Standing Orders) contained in Part 4 of the Constitution (Page 164).
- 1.3 Council Procedure Rule 20.2 provides that “any motion to add to, vary or revoke the Council Rules of Procedure will, when proposed and seconded, stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council”.
- 1.4 Therefore, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 20.2, the recommendation contained in Item No. 11 of the Report of the meeting of the Corporate Governance Panel, having been moved and seconded was adjourned, without discussion, to this meeting of the Council.
- 1.5 For completeness, the Council at their meeting on 20th February 2008 also endorsed a recommendation of the Cabinet that the constitutional changes necessary to enable the introduction of on-line petitions be approved.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Accordingly, the Council is recommended to approve the following changes to the Council’s Procedure Rules with effect from 14th May 2008 –

that in Part 4 of the Constitution the second and third paragraphs of 10A.4 be deleted to be replaced by:

“A written petition shall contain the name, address and signature of each person who signed it. The name and

address shall be in a legible format. An on-line petition shall contain the name and address of each person who is party to it. A petition shall indicate which one of the signatories is to present the petition.

The petition shall be sent to office of the Chief Executive who shall decide whether the petition concerns a matter on the Agenda for a full Council meeting and if it is not, it will be scheduled for inclusion on the Agenda for the next ordinary full Council meeting. A maximum of three petitions will be presented at any meeting.

If an on-line petition does not have the requisite number of signatories or the organiser is not prepared to present it to the Council, the petition shall be submitted for consideration to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel, subject to the petition containing the names and addresses of at least 10 persons who live or work or own property in the District.”

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Constitution.

Minutes of the Council meeting held on 20th February 2008.

Contact Officer: Christine Deller, Democratic Services Manager
☎ (01480) 388007

Cabinet

**Report of the meetings held on 21st February,
13th March and 3rd April 2008**

Matter for Decision

74. ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY AND 2008/09 ACTION PLAN

Reproduced as an Appendix is a proposed Environment Strategy for Huntingdonshire which sets out a series of aims to overcome the following three principal environmental challenges –

- ◆ tackling climate change;
- ◆ using resources efficiently; and
- ◆ protecting and improving the environment.

The Strategy has taken twelve months to develop which has allowed meaningful engagement with local communities and interested parties. In discussing the content of the Strategy proposals, Executive Councillors have stressed the importance of partnership working including the involvement of local traders and the need to promote and encourage sustainability within the home. In discussing the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) (Item No.10 of their Report refers) the Cabinet has acknowledged the benefits of linking the value of projects against national performance indicators and noted the Panel's concerns over the protection of agricultural land.

Having noted the requirement for further refinement of some proposals contained in the strategy, its priorities and project plan, the Cabinet has authorised the Director of Environmental and Community Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Environment and Transport, to approve the release of the relevant Medium Term Plan provision for that purpose. The Cabinet has also requested a further report identifying the linkages between the priorities in the Strategy, those in the Council's Corporate Plan, "Growing Success" and the provision available in the Medium Term Plan. In so doing, the Cabinet

RECOMMEND

**that the Environment Strategy be approved and adopted by
the Council.**

75. CAR PARKING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

Further to Item No. 71 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 20th February 2008, the Cabinet has been advised of the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) in relation to their call-in of the Cabinet's decision (Item No.38 of their Report refers).

The Panel had expressed its disappointment that the Cabinet had decided to accept the Car Parking Working Party's recommendation to introduce a 25% reduction in the cost of a car parking season ticket for vehicles with CO² emissions of 120g/km or less. The Panel was of the opinion that the Cabinet should have adopted a more innovative approach and introduced greater incentives to encourage motorists to purchase and use low emission vehicles. In response, the Cabinet has taken the opportunity to reconsider the level of charges to be introduced for car parking in the summer, given the financial implications of introducing a higher reduction for season ticket holders with low emission vehicles. With regard to the Panel's view that any surplus income generated by increased car parking should be ring-fenced to provide integrated, sustainable and accessible transport, the Cabinet has reiterated its view that this would be inappropriate in that the Council's expenditure on highways and transportation issues far exceeds any surplus that might be made from car parking charges.

In discussing arrangements to review the Car Parking Action Plan, Executive Councillors have recognised the need to consider climate change issues within the forthcoming Environment Strategy and have agreed that it would be appropriate to reconsider the implications for the action plan earlier than previously intended. Having thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) for their input into the subject, the Cabinet has

- ◆ noted the views expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support);
- ◆ agreed to introduce a reduction of 50% in the cost of a car parking season ticket for cars with CO₂ emissions of 120g/km or less as part of the implementation of the Car Parking Action Plan from 1st June 2008;
- ◆ requested that the wider issues of encouraging the use of low emission vehicles, public transport, cycling and walking be dealt with in the development of the Environment Strategy and in the next review of the Car Parking Action Plan;
- ◆ confirmed that surplus income from car parking charges would not be ring-fenced for integrated, sustainable and accessible transport;
- ◆ amended their previous decision to introduce car parking charges based on the first option contained in the Working

Party's report and agreed to introduce the second option instead;

- ◆ amended their previous resolution to review arrangements after twelve months and agreed that issues relating to climate change in the action plan should be reconsidered following a period of six months after the introduction of the revised charges; and
- ◆ requested that further consideration be given by the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Environment and Transport a representative of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) and relevant Officers to the initial scoping for the next review of the Car Parking Action Plan.

Subsequently, a Notice of Motion was submitted by seven Executive Councillors which enabled the Cabinet to reconsider their decision in respect of the introduction of car parking charges. In discussing the options available, the Cabinet has recognised the potential impact that option 2 charges will have on the overall delivery of the action plan, the environment strategy and the local economy in the District's market towns. Having considered a new hybrid option range of charges and in noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) thereon, the Cabinet has rescinded its previous decision to introduce the second option and has agreed to introduce a hybrid of option one instead.

76. CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY, COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING STRATEGY, CUSTOMER SERVICES STRATEGY

The Cabinet has approved the contents of the Customer Services, Communications and Marketing and Consultation and Engagement Strategies. The documents have been updated following the adoption of a revised version of "Growing Success" the Council's Corporate Plan in June 2007.

In considering the documents, the Cabinet has been advised that although some of the actions in the strategies overlap, the plans have been individually prepared for the purpose of inspection and external audit. Having referred to the need to identify savings within the plans and in view of the absence of measures/targets within the Customer Service action plan, the Cabinet has requested that a further report be submitted as and when the supporting action plans are developed.

77. RIVERSIDE PARK, HUNTINGDON: FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS

The Cabinet has approved the masterplan for the Riverside Park, Huntingdon as the basis for further discussion and consultation. The document details a scheme to enhance parking including new planting, footpath and cycleways, additional recreational areas, new hard surfacing, moorings and signage. In discussing the overall cost of the proposals, Executive Councillors have suggested that investigations be undertaken into the possibility of external funding for the scheme.

**78. MEDIUM TERM PLAN:
REQUEST FOR THE RELEASE OF FUNDS**

The Cabinet has agreed to release appropriate funding from the Medium Term Plan for the replacement of network and server equipment.

79. STATE OF THE DISTRICT ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the findings of a review by a Working Group appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) into the potential benefits of holding events to engage Huntingdonshire residents in discussing the Council's strategies and services. In noting the Group's proposals to hold four events per annum around the District, the Cabinet has recognised that these far exceed the original concept of a biennial "State of the District" half-day conference. Having queried the accuracy of the predicted resource and financial implications and the lack of any link to the Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy, the Cabinet has requested that a further report be submitted to a future meeting addressing these issues.

80. LOCAL PETITIONS AND CALLS FOR ACTION

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the implications for the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function of the Local Government and Public Involvement and Health Act 2007 and the Police and Justice Act 2006 which are likely to be implemented later this year. The Cabinet has noted that changes are intended to enhance the powers of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

At the same time, the Cabinet has been acquainted with a consultation paper from the Department for Communities and Local Government on local petitions and calls for action and, having discussed a suggested response, the Cabinet has authorised the Head of Administration to reply to the paper on behalf of the Council.

81. ENFORCEMENT POLICIES

The Cabinet has been informed of the publication of a Regulators' Compliance Code by the Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform. The new Code will form a central part of the Government's better regulation agenda with the aim of ensuring a risk based, proportionate and flexible approach to regulatory inspection and enforcement that allows and encourages economic progress. The Cabinet has authorised the relevant Heads of Service to review their enforcement policies having specific regard to the content of the new code and to approve any necessary changes after consultation with the relevant Executive Councillor.

82. CYCLING

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the findings of a Cycling Working Group appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel

(Service Support) to investigate the Council's expenditure on cycling in Huntingdonshire and its effectiveness in providing dedicated cycle paths and promoting cycling as a means of transport. In noting the Working Group's recommendations (details of which are contained in Item No. 44 of their Report) Executive Councillors have requested that a further report be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet addressing the wider issue of Section 106 funding and partnership working and that discussions be held with Cambridgeshire County Council regarding their offer to update the Huntingdonshire Cycling Strategy and the issue of partnership working for cycling provision.

83. TRAVEL PLAN

The Cabinet has received a report by a Working Group appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) to investigate the Council's Travel Plan. In considering the Working Group's recommendations, Executive Councillors have questioned the suggestion to change mileage allowances for Members only and not employees. Furthermore, Cabinet was of the opinion that further work should have been undertaken into alternative forms of travel to work. In the meantime, the Cabinet has approved the Group's recommendations and have requested that they be investigated in the context of the emerging Environment Strategy, the car parking action plan and travel plan.

84. GROWING SUCCESS

Having noted the Council's performance against targets within the Corporate Plan – "Growing Success", the Cabinet has been advised that the timing of the preparation of a new Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement will facilitate a review of the Corporate Plan in late summer for submission to Council in September 2008.

85. SHARED SERVICES

The Cabinet has noted progress being made in the development of a shared services initiative by Huntingdonshire, East Cambridgeshire, South Cambridgeshire and Fenland District Councils. Initially, two services, financial software and payroll, have been discussed by the Shared Services Project Board. Having recognised the possible scope for achieving efficiency savings and the potential for extending the concept to other services, the Cabinet has authorised the Director of Commerce and Technology, after consultation with the Executive Councillors for Finance and for Resources and Policy, to finalise arrangements for sharing financial accounting software and payroll services.

86. SUPPORTING COUNCILLORS: A MANIFESTO FOR COUNCILS

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the content of "Supporting Councillors: A Manifesto for Councils" which has been published by the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) to promote and enhance the role of councillors.

The manifesto sets out twelve actions that it is asking all Councils and Councillors to implement. In considering their introduction, the Cabinet has recognised that several of the actions already have been implemented by the Council and that there is likely to be resource implications in introducing the additional measures, some of which will be dependent on legislative change. Having discussed the recommendations of a Councillors Commission, established by the Department of Communities and Local Government, to investigate the incentives and barriers to serving on Council's, the Cabinet has :-

- ◆ recognised that Councillors have a valuable representative role which helps to ensure that local people have an active role in the development and delivery of council services;
- ◆ noted the recommendations of the Councillors Commission report and awaits with interest the Government's formal response; and
- ◆ welcomed the LGIU's document "Supporting Councillors: A Manifesto for Councils"; considers it important to support actions that will help make a real difference to existing and future Councillors; calls on Government to help people be active and effective Councillors; and agrees to support and act on the twelve action points set out in the manifesto so that local democracy is strengthened.

87. TOWN CENTRE INITIATIVES

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the outcome of a review by a Working Group appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) into the purpose, cost and achievements of the Town Centre Initiatives across the District (Item No. 50 of their Report refers). In acknowledging that the work of the Partnerships has been extremely beneficial to the District, attention was drawn to their funding arrangements. To ensure their long-term stability and effectiveness, the Cabinet has agreed to invite the Partnerships to enter into three year funding agreements which, in return for the maintenance of existing grants and other assistance from the Council, will require each Partnership to produce a three year business plan with annual action plans and targets designed to support delivery of the Local Economy Strategy and to sustain and encourage the economic viability of the town centres.

I C Bates
Chairman

**ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY
(Report by Head of Environmental Management)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members have previously considered the development of the Council's Environment Strategy on a number of occasions. Council at its meeting on 16 April 2008 will be invited to adopt the strategy.
- 1.2 This report outlines the final development of the environment strategy and its associated action plan reproduced at Annex A.

2. DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY

- 2.1 An initial draft of the environment strategy was approved by Cabinet at their meeting on 1 February 2007. Subsequently it was reviewed in full by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) and the 'greening the business' and 'service impacts' implications of the strategy were considered by the Service Support and Service Delivery Overview and Scrutiny Panels respectively.
- 2.2 Cabinet at their meeting on 17 May 2007 reviewed the Panels' comments and agreed a version of the strategy for a broader engagement with the public and key stakeholders. Through the summer of 2007 meetings were held with Town and Parish Councils and the organisations representing environmental interests on the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership (e.g. the Environment Agency, Wildlife Trust and CPRE).
- 2.3 The development of the strategy was highlighted in District Wide and comments invited from the public. Feedback confirmed that the broad thrust of the strategy was supported by local people.
- 2.4 The engagement confirmed widespread support for a strategy addressing the three themes of –
- tackling climate change;
 - using resources efficiently; and
 - protecting and improving our environment.
- 2.5 Working closely with the Member Working Group consideration was then given to developing an action plan that would demonstrate in our role as a community leader, how these themes would be pursued by the Council as a major employer and property owner; and secondly, in the wider context of the district as a whole.
- 2.6 It was also recognised that the strategy document would need to be accessible to a very wide audience. A substantial volume of work already has been completed to simplify the text and work is continuing with a creative agency to produce a document that is visually attractive. This work will be ongoing throughout the production of the document which will be formally launched during Environment Week 2nd – 8th June 2008.

- 2.7 Part of improving accessibility to the strategy will be to give it a name that reflects that vision. Again the creative agency working on the accessibility of the document has been retained to suggest a strap line that reflects the council's concern for, and commitment to, the environment.

3. DELIVERY OF THE STRATEGY

- 3.1 The strategy provides the context for the council's future actions and provides the framework for long term targets based on those agreed at European, national or regional levels.
- 3.2 Delivery against those long term targets requires an action plan which sets out what is to be achieved year on year. This action plan must have regard to available resources and its achievement will also be influenced by what is happening outside of Huntingdonshire. These are variables which require the action plan to be a live document which is regularly reviewed and updated (the current version may still be incomplete and further input is welcome). For this reason the action plan will be produced as an appendix to the main body of the strategy and will be reported on annually.
- 3.3 Individual projects within the action plan will need to be promoted through the MTP process. However, to allow projects to proceed in the first year of the action plan the MTP recently approved by Council provided £200k capital in 2008 and £50k revenue in 2008/09 and the subsequent two years.
- 3.4 The attached Environment Strategy Project plan (Financial Implications) reproduced at Annex B shows the projects proposed in Year 1 (2008/09), their associated costs and indicative projects for subsequent years. Research commissioned by SEA Renue has started to develop possible scenarios for reducing carbon emissions in future years. The completion of this work will inform a review of Years 2-5 of the annexed action plan to be completed later this year and which will influence projects promoted through the MTP process.

4. CONCLUSION


- 4.1 The strategy has been developed over a twelve month period that has allowed meaningful engagement with local communities and interests. The strategy's objectives have received enthusiastic support and will provide a basis of action both by the council on its own, with its partners and with local people.
- 4.2 The action plan identifies a range of projects and the Council is able to commit to those requiring expenditure in 2008/09. Further work is required to develop more fully those in future years and this will be completed during 2008.
- 4.3 This is a key document which together with the Local Development Framework and the Sustainable Community Strategy, will provide a vision for Huntingdonshire its residents and businesses. Work is continuing to ensure that all local interest can identify with that vision

and easily access the content of the strategy. The pre-publication draft will be available at the meeting on 16 April 2008 when Council adopt the strategy.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 It is recommended that –

- The Cabinet recommends the Environment Strategy to Council for approval and adoption.
- The Cabinet authorises the Director of Environmental Services after consultation with the Executive Member for Planning/Environment to agree minor textural changes and the final document format.
- The Cabinet approves the content and costs of the year one Project Plan.

Contact Officer: Paul Jose, Head of Environment & Transport
 01480 388332

This page is intentionally left blank

AN ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY FOR HUNTINGDONSHIRE

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

ONE - Tackling Climate Change

- Energy efficiency
- Renewable energy
- Travel & emissions to air
- Adapting to climate change

TWO - Using Resources Efficiently

- Purchasing
- Land use
- Water
- Waste

THREE - Protecting and Improving our Environment

- Contaminated & polluted land
- Biodiversity & open space
- Urban & rural character
- Clean & safe Huntingdonshire

FOUR – A Working Strategy

- Five year delivery action plan

This page is intentionally left blank

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Environment Strategy explains the challenges we face in safeguarding Huntingdonshire's local environment, whilst demonstrating how local action is vitally important to successfully addressing global environmental issues such as climate change and resource use.

At Huntingdonshire District Council we are uniquely placed to provide the vision and local democratic leadership to local communities and businesses, to raise awareness and change behaviours to address these pressing issues. Although we recognise the need to act as community leaders, tackling these environmental challenges is not something we can do alone. The council is responsible for promoting the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of our communities, so that we can all enjoy a good quality of life. Based on the issues that local people have told us are important to them, now and in the future, the Council has a vision for Huntingdonshire which is:

Huntingdonshire should be a place where current and future generations have a good quality of life and enjoy:

- *Continued economic success*
- *Opportunities for all*
- *An environment that is protected and improved*

Growing Success 2008

31

To work towards this overall vision for Huntingdonshire, the Council will look at its own actions as well as those of businesses, residents and other organisations in the district. The Council is committed to making continual, measurable progress in its environmental performance, to reduce its own environmental impact and to strive to improve the environment. Although there are many challenges to achieving this overall vision, we have identified the three main environmental challenges we need to overcome. These are:

- Tackling Climate Change
- Using resources efficiently
- Protecting & improving the environment

This Environment Strategy contains a series of aims relating to these three challenges, which will be considered during the five-year life of the Strategy. It will be reviewed annually and our progress will be reported and published each year. The annual report will inform the development of the following year's action plan to ensure the strategy remains current and up to date. To ensure the action plan targets are both workable and achievable, all stakeholders in Huntingdonshire, the Council, businesses, community groups and householders will need to be involved in their production.

The result will be a detailed but clear strategy and action plan, involving organisations and residents across the District, which will have an impact on the main environmental challenges facing Huntingdonshire. The final section of this document summarises in a series of tables, all the aims and strategic actions Huntingdonshire District Council will work towards over the following five years to deliver this strategy.

This page is intentionally left blank

INTRODUCTION

Huntingdonshire has accommodated rapid growth over the last four decades and is faced with even more significant growth in the next two. The challenge the district faces is to ensure that the prosperity and quality of life of Huntingdonshire's residents is maintained, the local environment is preserved and enhanced and that we minimise our use of, and damage to, irreplaceable natural resources. If all of these things can be achieved the development of Huntingdonshire will be sustainable. We will leave a legacy to future generations that will allow them to maintain the prosperity and quality of life we have enjoyed. If we fail we will have robbed them of that opportunity and, potentially, they will face risks and challenges to their existence that will make their lives much poorer.

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

On a global level the past 25 years have seen a growing realisation that the current model of development is unsustainable. In other words we are living beyond our means. From the loss of biodiversity in the UK and worldwide to the negative effect our consumption patterns are having on the environment and the climate. Our way of life is placing an increasing burden on the planet - this cannot be sustained. Perhaps the greatest risk to our environment is climate change. The weather is changing. Temperatures and sea levels are rising. Summers are getting hotter, winters wetter. What does this mean for Huntingdonshire? What will it be like to live here? What can we – Huntingdonshire District Council and you do about it? The environmental footprints of an individual, organisation, district or country are the result of many individual choices, activities and policies. This means that actions that lead to changes in policy and the ways products are produced are just as important as changing personal lifestyles.

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

OUR VISION - Huntingdonshire should be a place where current and future generations have a good quality of life and enjoy:

- *Continued economic success*
- *Opportunities for all*
- *An environment that is protected and improved*

Growing Success 2008

This strategy will encourage us to look at the environmental footprint of the district council and of the district of Huntingdonshire to identify where we can take action to create more sustainable communities that will not only benefit today's residents, through a better quality of life, but crucially help to secure our vision today and for future generations. This strategy will include clear actions to promote sustainability by involving people, leading by example and by demonstrating our commitment to deliver the Council's six strategic aims, all of which work towards ensuring a good quality of life in Huntingdonshire:

- A clean, 'green' and attractive place
- Safe, vibrant and inclusive communities
- Access to services and transport
- Housing that meets local need
- Healthy living
- A strong, diverse economy

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

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

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

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCILS COMMITMENT

The Council will make continual, measurable progress in its environmental performance, reduce its own environmental impact and strive to improve the environment. It will fulfil its statutory environmental responsibilities and ensure that all operations and activities carried out on its behalf, comply with, or exceed, relevant statutory environmental requirements.

The Council will foster a sense of responsibility for the environment amongst its employees, elected Members and the local community and ensure that both employees and contractors act in accordance with this policy and in compliance with its adopted Environmental Management System. The Council will provide regular and concise information regarding its environmental performance. Through this strategy and an effective Environmental Management System, the Council aims to:

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

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

This page is intentionally left blank

PART ONE

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE

This page is intentionally left blank

TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions

What is climate change?

Climate refers to the average weather experienced over a long period of time. This includes temperature, wind and rainfall patterns. The climate of the earth is not static and has changed many times in response to a variety of natural causes. The earth has warmed by 0.74 degrees over the last hundred years but around 0.4 degrees of this warming has occurred since the 1970's the majority of which is considered to be the result of human activity.

Climate change is possibly the greatest environmental challenge facing the world today. Rising global temperatures will bring changes in weather patterns, rising sea levels and increased intensity and frequency of extreme weather events.

The main human influence on the global climate is the increasing emissions of the key greenhouse gases – carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide.

What is the greenhouse effect & global warming?

The earth is naturally warmed by rays (or radiation) from the sun, which passes through the earth's atmosphere and is reflected back out to space again. The atmosphere is made up of layers of gases, some of which are called greenhouse gases. They're mostly natural and make up a thermal blanket over the earth. This lets some of the rays back out of the atmosphere, keeping the earth at the right temperature for animals, plants and humans to survive (60°F/16°C). Some global warming is therefore good, but as extra greenhouse gases are made, the thermal blanket gets thicker and too much heat is kept in the earth's atmosphere and the global climate begins to get warmer.

So how do our actions contribute to climate change?

Carbon dioxide has been identified as the main man-made contributor to the greenhouse effect and climate change. Increased industrial activity and the burning of fossil fuels like coal, oil and natural gas used to power our homes and vehicles, has resulted in a dramatic increase in the level of carbon dioxide released into the atmosphere. Coupled with the deforestation and the partial destruction of the earth's natural carbon sink, this human activity is now known to be disturbing the natural balance of greenhouse gases, which is causing our climate to change.

What does this mean to me?

The earth's climate has been changing throughout its history and, until now, this has been mostly due to natural causes.

Recent change, however, has been dramatic. According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the increase in surface temperature over the 20th century for the Northern Hemisphere is likely to have been greater than that for any other century in the last thousand years.

Global temperatures have increased by about 0.6°C since the beginning of the 20th century, with about 0.4°C of this change occurring since the 1970s. Nine of the 10 warmest years on record have occurred since 1990, including 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003.

Scientists now say that the average world temperature is rising by 0.15 degrees every decade and confidently predict many changes to the global and local environment as a result.

At a global level the following may happen:

- Water expands when it's heated and oceans absorb more heat than land, so sea levels would rise.
- Sea levels would also rise due to the melting of the glaciers and sea ice.
- Places that usually get lots of rain and snowfall might get hotter and drier.
- Lakes and rivers could dry up and there would be more droughts making it hard to grow crops.
- Less water would be available for drinking, showers and swimming pools.
- Some plants and animals might become extinct because of the heat.
- Hurricanes, tornadoes, high winds and other storms which are caused by changes in heat and water evaporation may become more common

The implications for Huntingdonshire's environment are likely to be:

- Progressively warmer and drier summers, wetter, windy and milder winters. More frequent extreme weather events resulting in flood or drought conditions
- A decrease overall in crop yield and a move by farmers towards crops such as maize, sunflowers and vines.
- Changes to river quality and biology, with some species of plant and animals migrating north or dying out. Native species may be replaced by migrating exotic species.

What is causing the increase in carbon dioxide emissions?

Government evidence suggests that the UK contributes about 2% to global man-made emissions. Although this may seem small, it is estimated to range between 22.8 and 25.3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent per year. Carbon dioxide accounted for approximately 84% of the UK's man-made emissions in 2005. Of total UK carbon dioxide emissions in 2005 37% came from the energy industries, 22% from road transport, 18% from other types of industry and 15% from residential fossil fuel use.

How will the Environment Strategy help?

Climate change affects us all – but we can do something about it. We will develop, through consultation with other stakeholders, specific targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions in the council's own operations, in homes in the district and in the transport sector. This strategy recognises that reducing carbon dioxide emissions is a key priority and looks to tackle the issue in four ways:

1. Making Huntingdonshire more energy efficient
2. Increasing the proportion of energy produced and used in Huntingdonshire that originates from renewable sources
3. Encourage Huntingdonshire to use more sustainable modes of travel and effectively minimise the impact of transport emissions
4. Ensure buildings, services and the community of Huntingdonshire are able to adapt to climate change

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

“HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL INCREASE THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY OF COUNCIL OWNED BUILDINGS AND ENCOURAGE SIMILAR GOOD PRACTICE IN HOUSEHOLDS AND BUSINESSES IN THE DISTRICT.”

Most of the energy we use in our homes today is generated by the burning of fossil fuels, a process which results in emissions of carbon and other greenhouse gases. It is estimated that 25% of all UK carbon emissions are attributed to domestic energy consumption.

The fossil fuels we use for energy today originated in the growth and decay of plants and marine organisms that existed on earth millions of years ago. Through geological processes acting over aeons of time, this dead organic matter became the coal, oil and natural gas we access today by drilling through the earth's crust. The use of coal in UK homes and industry has now been largely superseded by natural gas, but it is still used for electricity generation. Huge worldwide coal reserves remain enough for more than 200 years use at current rates. At present, oil is the world's leading energy source. Proven world oil reserves are sufficient for about 40 years of use at current rates. Natural gas is currently the preferred source of energy for heating and electricity generation in Western Europe, but proven world gas supplies are sufficient for about 60 years of use at current rates. The massive use by our society of coal, oil and gas has had numerous adverse consequences. These include air and water pollution, mining accidents, fires and explosions on oil and gas rigs, conflicts over access to fuel resources and perhaps more profoundly, the changing global climate.

Climate change is one of the most important reasons why we need to be more efficient with our energy use and reduce our impact on the environment. By making simple changes in our behaviour such as the way we heat our homes and use electrical appliances we can all help to reduce the impact of climate change on the environment for future generations. Eventually fossil fuels will run out, they are after all a finite resource. For the first time, in 2006, Britain began importing much of the gas needed for heating and electricity generation. As a result of this, many people have seen their fuel bills rise significantly. Adopting an energy efficient life style will not only save money and reduce our contribution to climate change, it will ease the pressure on our UK energy reserves. Using energy more efficiently is a major factor in reducing our impact on climate change. Energy efficiency is not just good in terms of the environment; it also reduces fuel bills for residents and businesses.

Huntingdonshire District Council's Environmental Footprint

As a local service provider with a diverse range of functions, the Council operates from a wide variety of buildings across the district. The current Council headquarters is home to approximately 400 employees and as with any standard office site, energy is primarily used for lighting and heating the building itself. Powering computers, photocopiers and other office equipment also uses a great deal of energy on a daily basis. In 2006/2007 the gas and electricity used amounted to 1.9 million kWh's and resulted in approximately 425 tonnes of carbon emitted into the atmosphere.

In addition to the Headquarters site, other large energy consumers include the Council's Operations Centre, Eastfield House in Huntington and the five Leisure Centres across the district. Together the Leisure Centres represent the most energy intensive function within the Council's estate and are responsible for a large proportion of the carbon emitted each

year. When the requirement for outdoor lighting, electronic gym equipment and heating swimming pools is considered, on top of everyday heating and lighting, this is only to be expected.

Other functions such as Country parks, area offices and public toilets, complete the district council's estate. Together, leisure centres, public toilets and other facilities used 9.9 million kWh's of energy in 2006/2007 which resulted in 1890 tonnes of carbon. Looking at our energy use over previous years we have seen a definite increase in the Council's overall energy consumption pattern. Rigorous energy management to monitor consumption and reduce it where possible will be critically important during the life of the strategy. The Council is working with the Carbon Trust to audit energy use within the Councils estate and recommending energy saving measures.

Actions

Adopt an energy policy to reduce the Council's energy use in all its buildings and activities

Projects

Review of overtime & weekend working policy - which gives more efficient use of heating & lighting

Departmentalised metering of energy - to establish responsibility for energy use and encourage competition between departments to reduce energy use

Printer rationalization - to reduce number of machines required and energy used

Bream "excellent" rating for new office building

4

Huntingdonshire's Environmental Footprint

There are over 69,000 homes within Huntingdonshire and many other buildings, businesses and industries across the district which consume vast amounts of energy everyday. Not only do we want to make homes and businesses more energy efficient, we want to make sure people have access to , and can afford the energy necessary to meet basic requirements such as lighting and heating their homes. Those unable to afford these basic energy requirements are known as 'fuel poor'. The common definition of a household in fuel poverty is one that needs to spend in excess of 10% of household income on fuel costs in order to maintain a satisfactory heating regime. In Huntingdonshire it is estimated that 6% of households are considered to be fuel poor. Fuel poverty arises as a result of several factors, including low income, inadequate insulation, inefficient heating systems, size and age of the property, the type and price of fuel used and method of payment. Warm, safe housing has a major role to play in maximising people's well being, helping to maintain the elderly in their own homes and reducing the incidences of cold and damp related illnesses.

Since April 2000, the Council has reported to the Government on its strategy and progress in reducing fuel poverty within the District. The Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) 1995 placed a duty on the Council to identify and promote ways in which it can achieve a 30% increase in home energy efficiency over the 15 years to 2010/2011. HECA has served to focus the attention of local authorities more closely on the energy efficiency of residential accommodation, and on developing an integrated approach to their housing and energy efficiency strategies. Improvements achieved through HECA will contribute to meeting the UK's Climate Change commitments. There are many different sources of funding to help residents improve the energy efficiency of their properties and the home energy efficiency team at HDC work closely with the Energy Saving Trust Advice Centre Anglia (ESTACA) to make sure local residents are aware of what they can do to improve the energy efficiency of their home. The Warm Front Scheme is the Government's main grant-funded programme for tackling fuel poverty in vulnerable households. The Scheme provides home owners, or those living in privately rented accommodation, who are in receipt of an

income or disability related benefit, a grant of up to £2,700 for insulation and gas central heating, or up to £4,000 for oil fired systems. By repairing or replacing an inoperable heating system and/or insulating a property, the householder will then be more likely to achieve affordable warmth and therefore lifted out of fuel poverty.

This strategy aims to tackle energy use and efficiency in three ways.

1. Attempting to change people's attitudes to energy use
 - Turning your room thermostat down by just 1°C could save up to 10% of your heating bill
 - Always turn off lights when leaving a room and avoid leaving electrical appliances on standby.
2. Encouraging and facilitating residents & businesses in Huntingdonshire to make structural improvements to their properties to improve efficiency
 - Cavity wall insulation is one of the most cost effective ways to save energy. This measure can save you up to £150 a year on your fuel bills
 - Loft insulation can prevent approximately 30% of your heat from escaping through the roof. The current recommended depth for loft insulation is 257mm
3. Improve standards for thermal efficiency in all new dwellings built in Huntingdonshire
 - Encouraging builders to use the Code for Sustainable Homes when building in Huntingdonshire will mean that all new buildings achieve a high level of energy efficiency

Actions

Encourage improvements in thermal efficiency in **ALL** new homes built in Huntingdonshire by ensuring they are built to the **HIGHEST POSSIBLE LEVEL** of the Code for Sustainable Homes & identify the most cost effective energy efficiency measures, likely to achieve the greatest reductions in carbon and & facilitate their installation in existing buildings

Encourage improvements in thermal efficiency of all commercial properties with a floor space of 500sq m or more by ensuring they achieve at least a BREEAM 'very good' rating & facilitate their installation of energy efficiency measures by residents & businesses

Projects

New Local Development Framework (LDF) – To require all new dwellings to achieve high levels of thermal efficiency

Sustainable homes showcases (existing homes) project - Demonstrate how 3 properties representative of the housing stock in the district constructed in the 1970s and 80s, can be upgraded to make them more sustainable. Houses to include energy saving measures

Sustainable homes showcase (New build) - A development of 30 2, 3 and 4 bed exemplar homes in Hartford constructed code for sustainable homes level 5

Warmer Homes for life project - A home insulation project established by HDC for vulnerable residents

Warm front scheme - National government heating and insulation project

British Gas insulation scheme - Home insulation scheme for able to pay households

Peterborough Environment City Trust business audits - Encourage businesses in the district to undertake environmental audit offered by Peterborough Environment City Trust (PECT)

Business grant scheme – Look to introduce a £500 grant scheme for businesses to deliver energy efficiency measures

Fuel Poverty Strategy – Annual to increase the energy efficiency of homes for vulnerable residents

RENEWABLE ENERGY

“HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL INCREASE THE PROPORTION OF ENERGY PRODUCED AND USED WHICH COMES FROM RENEWABLE SOURCES IN COUNCIL OWNED BUILDINGS AND PROMOTE THE USE OF RENEWABLE TECHNOLOGY TO HOUSEHOLDS, BUSINESSES AND AT STAND ALONE SITES IN THE DISTRICT.”

Renewable energy describes energy occurring naturally in the environment, such as energy from the wind or sun. As these sources are essentially inexhaustible, developing renewable technologies can provide clean energy which will reduce our ‘carbon footprint’ and significantly reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. Renewable energy has the potential to provide around 40% of the UK’s total energy requirements through a range of technologies from directly using the energy from the sun to heat water, to using mechanical devices such as wind turbines, to convert the kinetic energy in the wind into electrical energy.

In 2006 the UK generated around 4% of its electricity requirements from renewable sources. The successful transformation of Huntingdonshire into a ‘low carbon’ economy will necessitate a wholesale change in the way in which we generate electricity, build new homes, heat and power existing buildings and harness renewable sources of energy for local use. Currently UK Government has set targets for 10% of electricity to come from renewable sources by 2010 with an aspiration for this to rise to 15% by 2020. The development of renewable energy is seen as integral to the achievement of the Government’s longer-term aim of reducing CO2 emissions by 60% by 2050. The main forms of renewable energy

~~4~~
4 include:

Solar - Many people believe that we don’t get much solar energy in the UK but solar power is already being used to provide essential power for many types of equipment being used in both remote and urban areas across the country. A solar photovoltaic (PV) module works by converting sunlight directly into electricity even on cloudy days. They can be integrated into buildings and even made into roof tiles virtually indistinguishable from normal tiles. Solar energy can also be used to heat water directly using specially designed collectors. Even in winter a useful amount of hot water can be produced from roof top collectors. A third way of using solar energy is simply by designing buildings to make maximum use of the sun. Using this so-called ‘passive solar’ approach, much of the energy that we currently use for heating, lighting and air conditioning can be saved.

Wind - The winds that blow across the UK can be harnessed by turbines to provide electricity. Wind turbines sited in suitable locations already provide a small, but growing percentage of the UK’s electricity, and are used successfully all around the world. In fact wind power is one of the world’s fastest growing energy sources. Wind turbine technology has greatly improved over the last ten years, making wind turbines quieter and more efficient.

Biomass - Agricultural waste or specially grown plants can be used as a fuel to run small power stations. Specially grown ‘energy crops’ provide not only an environmentally sound source of electricity, but also an important new opportunity for farmers. However, there are concerns about the sustainability of sourcing biomass from countries where forests are being cleared to make way for fast growing plants that are then used as biomass.

Geothermal - Geothermal energy taps the Earth’s internal heat for a variety of uses, including electric power production, and the heating and cooling of buildings.

Hydro - Water turbines have been used to provide electricity for over 100 years and presently provide over 1% of the UK’s electricity. Although most of the possible sites for large hydropower stations in the UK have already been developed, there is a large potential for smaller schemes.

Huntingdonshire District Council's Environmental Footprint

Renewable electricity generation in the UK has increased significantly since 2002 with the introduction of the Renewables Obligation. The Renewables Obligation requires all electricity suppliers in England and Wales to generate (supply) a growing proportion of their electricity from renewable sources. There is a major opportunity for the Council to show leadership in reducing carbon emissions through its buying choices and in particular the energy we buy for Council buildings. Therefore the Council has switched its electricity supply to a green tariff with 50% of its electricity coming from good quality Combined Heat and Power (CHP) and the other 50% coming from renewable sources.

In the same way that we can show a lead by purchasing renewable energy, it is equally important to utilise renewable energy solutions in Council Buildings. The Strategy will require the installation of renewable energy solutions for at least five council owned sites. When installed these will bring significant carbon savings, showcase technologies and provide an impetus for the development of the market for renewable energy locally.

Actions

To continue to review the Council's electricity supply to ensure that we procure as much as possible from renewable sources.

Where appropriate install renewable energy technologies at new council buildings and when replacing systems in existing buildings

Projects

Regular review of electricity supply contracts – Seek to increase the proportion of energy purchased from renewable sources when renewing supply contracts

Renewables at Huntingdon Bus Station - The installation of a ground source heat pump and solar photovoltaic panels at refurbished Huntingdon Bus Station, to contribute towards hot water and electricity generation

Godmanchester Nursery - Solar thermal (hot water) at the Godmanchester Nursery site.

Huntingdonshire's Environmental Footprint

As part of the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough Growth corridor Huntingdonshire will see significant levels of new development by 2020. Currently new build development increases the total housing stock of the district by around 1% annually and it is anticipated that by 2020 there will be 20,000 new homes in the district. As these homes are likely to be around for at least 100 years, it is extremely important to ensure that they are built to the highest possible thermal standards and for them to incorporate renewable energy systems. The government has set the ambitious target that all new homes in the UK should be carbon neutral by 2016 and intends stepped improvements in Building Regulations to achieve this:

- A 25% reduction in carbon emissions from 2010 (compared to 2006 Building Regulation standard)
- A 44% reduction in carbon emissions from 2013 (compared to 2006 Building Regulation standard)

Delivering zero carbon growth will require all new buildings to have electricity and heating provided by renewable energy. This can be achieved through installing 'on-site' micro-renewable energy installations or by facilitating large scale 'off-site' solutions such as wind farms. The Local Development Framework (LDF) will require developers to incorporate on site renewable energy sources sufficient to provide at least 10% of the energy requirement of the development. The Council will incorporate within the Master Planning process, work to identify suitable locations in the district for larger scale infrastructure to generate renewable energy.

A specific target has been set for the East of England to install 821MW (14% of our energy use) of onshore renewable electricity by 2010. The Red Tile Farm wind farm recently installed in the district contributes 24MW towards this regional target. The Council will support other such developments where appropriate and will, through continued engagement with the renewable energy industry (and local stakeholders) build a common understanding of the potential for further expansion.

Arguably the greatest challenge facing the district is to upgrade the thermal efficiency of the existing housing stock and retro-fit renewable energy systems to reduce the carbon footprint of the housing stock as a whole. The council will actively facilitate the introduction of renewable energy in individual homes in the district and seek grant funding opportunities where possible for installation of those technologies likely to achieve the greatest reduction in carbon emissions. Such micro generation technologies may include:

- Solar thermal – for hot water systems
- Solar (photovoltaic) – to provide electricity
- Ground source heat pumps – to transfer heat from the ground to heat water for space heating
- Micro-wind generators – employing a rotor to convert wind energy to electrical energy using a generator
- Biomass boilers – Biomass boilers produce hot water for heating and domestic hot water by burning biomass fuels. The most common fuel is wood.

Actions

Encourage the installation of renewable energy by local businesses, institutions and householders through promotional events, grant funding and support & advice

Support renewable energy proposals in Huntingdonshire where impacts on amenity, wildlife and landscape are acceptable

Require a minimum of 10% renewable energy generation from all developments of 10 or more units

Projects

Sustainable homes showcases (existing homes) project - Demonstrate how 3 properties representative of the housing stock in the district constructed in the 1970s and 80s, can be upgraded to make them more sustainable. Houses to include renewable technology such as Solar Hot Water and Solar PV

Solar Hot Water Scheme - £600 grant funding (per property) towards the cost of installing solar hot water systems at households in the district

Power to the People Renewable Energy Events - Renewable Energy showcase events organised in conjunction with Energy Saving Trust

New Local Development Framework (LDF) - The Local Development Framework to require all new developments to incorporate on-site renewable energy sources sufficient to provide at least 10% of the energy requirement of the development

Sustainable Homes Showcase (New Build) - A development of 30 exemplar 2,3 and 4 bedroom homes, constructed to achieve compliance with level 5 of the code for Sustainable Homes, incorporating renewable technology

New Local Development Framework (LDF) - A positive policy in the LDF supporting large scale renewable proposals in suitable locations within the district

Red Tile Farm Community Environment Fund - Community fund to encourage environmental improvements within a 5 mile radius of the Red Tile Farm Wind Farm

Glasmoor Community Environment Fund - Community fund run jointly with Fenland District Council to encourage environmental improvements within a 5 mile radius

TRAVEL & EMISSIONS TO AIR

“ENCOURAGE THE USE OF MORE SUSTAINABLE MODES OF TRAVEL ACROSS THE DISTRICT AND SEEK TO MINIMISE THE ADVERSE EFFECT ON AIR QUALITY RESULTING FROM TRANSPORT EMISSIONS.”

Transport is an integral part of our daily lives. An effective transport system is essential to the efficient movement of people and goods, benefiting our quality of life and the economy. However, the more we travel and move goods, the greater the impact on our environment and health, through our dependence on fossil-fuels. The transport sector is currently the third largest source of greenhouse gas emissions (UK Climate Change Programme). But more importantly it is the fastest growing source. Left unchecked, car traffic could grow by about 20% over the next two decades and commercial traffic is forecast to grow by about 22%. Fuel use in the transport sector is the fastest growing contributor to greenhouse gas emissions in the UK and demand is increasing year on year.

Increasing car usage and movement of goods by road has contributed to growing congestion in our towns and a loss of tranquillity in rural areas. Government sources attribute 10,000 annual premature deaths in Britain to vehicle emissions. Action to tackle the impacts of traffic growth on congestion and pollution and to reduce the impact of transport on the environment is one of the government's main priorities.

47

Huntingdonshire District Council's Environmental Footprint

Huntingdonshire has a widely dispersed rural population for which we have a wide range of responsibilities. Our refuse collection, recycling and street scene vehicles travel several thousand miles on a weekly basis to deliver our services. The Council's Environmental Health service carry out health and safety inspections on premises and our Planning and Building Control services carry out inspections across the district to ensure safe development of new and extended buildings.

The Council is working to reduce the impact of its own transport activities. Specific employee travel plans are being introduced, designed to encourage employees to use cars only when absolutely necessary and to promote the use of alternative forms of transport, such as fuel efficient pool cars, car sharing, cycling, walking and using public transport. The Council will investigate methods for reducing emissions from its fleet and will ensure that emissions are a key consideration when specifying new vehicles. Advice is being also given to employees as to how they can reduce their transport emissions by employing economical driving techniques.

Actions

Develop and implement site specific employee Travel Plans for each of the Council's main sites and reduce CO₂ emissions from leased and employee owned vehicles
Effective management of the Council's own vehicle fleet to reduce emissions

Projects

HDC Corporate Travel Plan and site specific Travel Plans – Provides the overall targets for changing the way we travel at work.

Review of employee lease car scheme and car user allowances - to provide incentives to drive smaller vehicles

Calculate accurate CO₂ emissions - for employee travel to provide baseline for reduction

Green Fleet Review - to be undertaken for the Council by the Energy Saving Trust to consider ways to reduce emissions such as increasing the percentage of biodiesel used in the Council's fleet from 5% to 30% and rescheduling refuse collection rounds to minimise miles travelled.

Rescheduling of refuse collection and recycling rounds - Rescheduling of Refuse collection rounds to reduce fuel use

Huntingdonshire's Environmental Footprint

Meeting the demand for housing growth in the district presents a number of distinct challenges from a transport perspective. Dealing effectively with issues such as congestion, widening travel choices and managing travel demand particularly in town centres is absolutely critical to ensuring that environmental impacts are minimised and the quality of life for residents is maintained.

There are a number of key transport projects currently being undertaken within Huntingdonshire all of which are designed to promote sustainable travel growth. These schemes are contained within the Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan 2006-11 and include:

- 48
- Cambridgeshire Guided Bus-way running from Huntingdon to Cambridge,
 - Huntingdonshire Car Parking Strategy,
 - Bus priority measures between Huntingdon and St Ives
 - The Market Town Transport Strategies
 - Realignment of the A14 route west of Fenstanton to Ellington.

The council is committed to reducing transport related carbon emissions (particularly from road traffic) and will work with the transport authorities (Cambridgeshire County Council and the Highways Agency) to achieve an integrated transport network. With these partners we will develop alternatives to the single occupancy use of the car and promote and aid the development of travel plans for schools and businesses, and residential travel plans for new developments to encourage more sustainable travel behaviour. The Council will also aim to ensure that all new development is in close proximity to the appropriate infrastructure requirements to limit the need to travel and ensure that the opportunities for walking, cycling and using public transport are increased.


Tackling Pollution

The main source of air pollution in Huntingdonshire is road transport. In certain areas of the district, pollutant levels are high enough that some of the air quality objectives of the National Air Quality Strategy are not being met. Under the Environment Act 1995, local authorities must designate such areas as Air Quality Management Areas if members of the public are exposed to levels of pollution that exceed these objectives.

Huntingdonshire District Council has declared four Air Quality Management Areas. Parts of Huntingdon and St Neots have been given this status due to congestion in the town centres, and Brampton and Fenstanton are now officially recognised due to their close proximity to the A14 corridor. These Air Quality Management Areas will be subject to an Air Quality Action Plan, exploring the measures available to the authority to improve air quality. Options included in the Action Plan will include opportunities to reduce emissions by working with local public transport providers on reducing their vehicle emissions. Pollutants such as nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), principally derived from vehicle exhaust emissions, have the potential to exacerbate asthma and other respiratory conditions.

Sustainable travel, reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, air pollution and health are all intrinsically linked. We can help reduce the problems of air quality by choosing more sustainable forms of transport, so we need to ensure that a wide choice of travel options are available, allowing us to live within easy reach of work, leisure and essential services. Only by doing this can we reduce reliance on the car and its associated impacts on air quality, pollution and health.

Actions

 Provide more opportunities for residents to walk, cycle, use public and community transport, and encourage schools and businesses to develop travel plans, with Cambridgeshire County Council, bus operators and other partners

New development to be accommodated in locations which limit the need to travel whilst catering for local needs

Manage demand for car parking in town centre locations and encourage the use of low emission vehicles and encourage alternative forms of travel

Develop and implement air quality action plans to facilitate prevention and mitigation of air pollution in Huntingdonshire

Work to reduce emissions from buses in the District and ensure taxis become less polluting through regular emissions testing and possible introduction of vehicle age limits

Projects

Delivery of Market Town Transport Strategy Action Plans

Support and promote the 'Cambridgeshire Travel for work partnership' - to encourage the uptake of travel plans by businesses and organisations in the District

Cycle Path improvements – Upgrade Cycleway between Huntingdon and St Ives

Huntingdonshire Car Parking Strategy – Designed to manage parking demand in town centres across the district

Council Emissions Inventory - To inform the Air Quality Management Strategy for Huntingdonshire

Guided Bus-way Project – Buses diverted from the A14, easing congestion and all buses using the guided bus way must be low emission

Amendment of taxi and private hire licensing regulations - Requiring age and emission limitations with variable charging based on road tax category

ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

“HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL WORK TOWARDS ENSURING BUILDINGS, SERVICES AND THE COMMUNITY ARE ABLE TO ADAPT TO CLIMATE CHANGE”

Whatever action is taken now to try to slow down or halt climate change, it will take decades to bring emissions of greenhouse gases down to sustainable levels. Even if we were to make significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions tomorrow, the inertia in the climate system means that we will need to cope with a changing climate for the next 40-plus years, due to emissions already in the atmosphere. As a result significant climate change is now unavoidable and we have no choice but to begin adapting to changes in average weather and also preparing for more extremes of weather.

Organisations and individuals must grasp the reality that we have to both reduce our emissions (Mitigation) and adjust to inevitable climate change (Adaptation). It is not a choice between mitigation and adaptation; they are complementary actions and must be pursued together. Successfully adapting to climate change is not just an environmental problem it is also an economic and social issue, as the changes to our climate have the potential to impact on the whole economy, from financial markets to individuals and businesses.

Climatologists predict significant climate change in the eastern region in the coming decades and we must adapt our lifestyles to cope. These changes can be summarised as:

50

- Hotter, drier summers – Summer droughts (maybe 3 consecutive droughts every decade over the next 50 –100 years)
- Milder, wetter winters
- More frequent heavy down pours of rain – leading to floods at unpredictable times of year
- Higher wind speeds – Unseasonable storms in summer and autumn

The UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) outlines several possible temperature and rainfall scenarios, with the main message that:

- Until about the middle of the century, the amount of climate change that will be experienced has largely already been set, due to emissions of greenhouse gases that are already in the atmosphere, highlighting the need for adaptation.
- The extent of changes towards the end of the century depends on present day and future emissions of greenhouse gases
- By the 2080s average annual temperature across the UK may rise by between 2 and 3.5 degrees, but some areas could warm by as much as 5 degrees
- Heavy winter rainfall events that occur every two years are expected to increase in intensity by between five and 20 per cent
- Relative sea level around the UK could rise by as much as 86cm in southern England by the 2080s and extreme high sea levels will occur more frequently

Huntingdonshire District Council's Environmental Footprint

The majority Council's building were constructed in 1970's with some dating back much further. At the time of construction, issues of carbon emissions and changing climate were not considered. As a result, most of the council's buildings were constructed with no thought of a changing climate. With the wide range of important services that the council delivers, we need to ensure that all our buildings remain fully operational during times of severe weather events, considering for example working with the Environment Agency to increase the resilience of our buildings to increased flood risk and modifying temperature control within our offices and Leisure Centres.

Actions

Undertake a comprehensive risk based assessment of the Councils estate to identify vulnerabilities to weather and climate and develop a series of measures to minimize the identified risks

Projects

Huntingdonshire District Council Climate Resilience Programme - Enlist consultants/work with the Environment Agency to produce a programme for climate-proofing council buildings and infrastructure

Huntingdonshire's Environmental Footprint

51 The greatest challenge facing Huntingdonshire is the ability of the district to adapt to extreme weather conditions leading to increased flooding and droughts. As a rural district in the driest region of the UK, stress on water resources is already an issue. The district is dominated by the Fens and the Great Ouse floodplain and farmland adjoining Holmewood Fen National Nature reserve the former site of Whittlesey Mere is at -4m the lowest point in England.

The implications of increased rainfall - Storm events and wet weather could lead to an increase in flash flooding resulting in severe damage and there are likely to be traffic management issues. Transport interruptions can in turn affect commuters and deliveries of goods and services. This will ultimately lead to increased business costs with impacts on the local economy. Drainage problems could also result in flash flood risks. With this comes a greater risk of injury and risk to public health. It also causes damage to property. River flooding causes similar problems to flash flooding, although the floods are more widespread and can last longer, causing greater damage and disruption. Other specific risks such as rising insurance premiums in high flood risk areas or even withdrawal of insurance cover also need to be considered. There are also considerable problems associated with the spread of pollution via flooding. In addition, currently acceptable levels of pollutants released as effluent into rivers may well become unacceptable if drier, hotter summers cause lower seasonal river flows.

The implications of rising temperatures - Climate change is leading to increasing temperatures. Higher average temperatures are being experienced and also many more hot days. Summer heatwaves are becoming more frequent and intense. Research by the MET office has demonstrated that temperatures experienced in the summer of 2003 heatwave will be about average by the 2040's and will be considered 'cool' by the 2060's. Business can be greatly affected by rising temperatures – UK employers lost an estimated £154 million a day in productivity during one week of the July 2006 heat wave, owing to travel disruption and staff arriving late, according to the Centre for Economics and Business Research.

It is estimated that work levels dropped by almost a third when temperatures soared to more than 30 degrees. Heat waves have many other significant effects including an increase in the number of deaths, especially amongst the elderly. More frequent heat waves increase the risks of heat stress, dehydration, heat-related mortality and skin cancer. There may well be an increase in demand for essential services such as social, health and emergency services to cope with these impacts. There may also be an increase in demand for environmental health services due to higher temperatures increasing the amount of vermin and incidences of food poisoning.

Transport can be disrupted as hotter summers cause damage to assets and infrastructure such as buckled railway lines and melting roads. Energy demands for cooling will increase in hotter weather, potentially causing overload of the electricity grid and black outs. Air quality is also a concern as increasing temperatures and prolonged hot periods are associated with summer ozone episodes. There is still some uncertainty regarding the link between climate change and air quality but reports from the summer of 2006 have certainly shown that asthma sufferers were particularly badly affected during the heat waves. Management of parks and open spaces will need to take account of the impacts of drier, hotter summers and warmer, wetter winters on trees and other vegetation. Warmer temperatures are also likely to result in more outdoor lifestyles, putting greater demand on our green and open space.

Huntingdonshire District Council provides guidance to developers in relation to avoiding flood plains and areas at greater risk of flooding. Our Emergency Planning Section has strategies for dealing with the consequences of extreme weather events, flooding and drought. Huntingdonshire District Council, as a service provider at the core of the community needs to be prepared to deal with all possible outcomes. This is best achieved by working in partnership with the range of agencies that are active throughout the District. These partners include the Environment Agency, Cambridgeshire County Council and the Emergency Services. One of the Environment Agency's key roles is in forecasting floods and warning the public. The Council also raises awareness of flooding in areas prone to it, and recommends that people living there make preparations in advance. The Environment Agency use the latest technology 24 hours a day to monitor rainfall and river levels along with weather data from the Met Office, they provide local area forecasts on the possibility of flooding and its likely severity. There are four established codes for warning people of flooding; indicating the level of danger faced and HDC use these codes when responding to floods.

Infrastructure Changes - As well as preparing our residents for emergency situations and severe weather events, this strategy also aims to encourage the long-term development of Huntingdonshire's infrastructure to be able to cope with the changing climate by encouraging the development of the following adaptation measures:

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) - offer an alternative to traditional approaches to managing runoff from buildings and hardstanding and include the use of:

- Rainwater harvesting, green roofs and water butts
- Permeable and porous pavements
- Vegetated landscape features with smooth surfaces and a gentle downhill gradient to drain water evenly off impermeable surfaces

Green Roofs are considered a SuDS technique - They are vegetated roofs, or roofs with vegetated spaces. Many of these benefits shown below help to address climate change:

- Creating natural green spaces in urban areas
- Benefits for biodiversity
- Reduced stormwater runoff
- Reduced energy consumption and fuel costs, since green roofs provide cooling in summer and thermal insulation in winter
- Extended roof life, since the green roof protects the roof's waterproofing membrane, almost doubling its life expectancy

Improving the flood resistance of your home

- Using flood-resistant materials
- Using removable flood barriers and other removable flood protection products
- Raising damp-proof courses
- Locating electrical services and boilers above likely maximum flood level
- Using one-way valves in drainage pipes to prevent back-up of water into buildings

Building design - can assist in reducing temperatures. Shading windows by installing shutters or blinds reduces solar gain and so internal heat build-up is reduced. Extending roofs can also provide shading to a building. Heavier weight building materials like concrete and stone have a tendency to keep buildings cooler in the day, by virtue of their thermal mass. Chilled ceilings and chilled beams can also be used.

Cool pavements - Many of Huntingdonshire's, streets and pavements are typified by dark surfaces. 'Cool pavements' are comprised of light coloured material with high solar reflectivity and good water permeability. This is potentially a very effective way of reducing high temperatures as the amount of solar energy absorbed is decreased.

Planting trees and vegetation - Trees can provide significant benefits in urban areas as they not only provide shade but can also reduce air pollution. Trees and vegetation are natural cooling systems as they convert water contained within their foliage into water vapour which is released into the atmosphere by evapotranspiration. However, trees will need to be selected very carefully in the face of climate change, for example drought-resistant trees should be planted.

Actions

- 51 Integrate climate change issues into the Emergency Plan and improve awareness of flood and severe weather warnings in partnership with relevant organisations
 - 53 Work with other Local Authorities to plan together for climate change impacts and ensure that adaptation is included in 100% of HDC's strategies, plans and policies
- Ensure where possible, development occurs on sites above potential flood level. Where development is essential below flood level, detailed risk assessments must be undertaken and adequate flood protection and mitigation measures put in place

Projects

- Cambridgeshire Climate Change Partnership** - Establish a partnership of all local authorities in Cambridgeshire to establish a county wide response to dealing with the changing climate
- Climate change adaptation service review** - Audit of all services delivered by HDC to identify all potential risks and opportunities and review plans and procedures in light of audit outcomes
- Emergency Plan Review** – Review of the emergency plan to incorporate response to climate change risks
- Great Fen Restoration** – Landscape scale restoration which will enable habitats to adapt to the long-term effects of climate change
- Severe weather text alert system** – Landscape Messaging system which sends text messages to resident's mobile phones to warn of severe weather events or other emergency planning issues
- New Local Development Framework (LDF)** – Development of policies to manage flood risk in new developments

This page is intentionally left blank

PART TWO
REDUCING THE
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF
THE RESOURCES WE USE

This page is intentionally left blank

RESOURCE USE – Reducing the environmental impact of the resources we use

What are natural resources?

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

We all need natural resources to live. The sun, water, air, soil, plants and animals provide humans with the tools we need to breathe, eat, drink to fuel our bodies and build our lifestyles. But, over time and as the global population grows, we have been using these resources much faster than the planet can replenish them.

Human demands on world resources have doubled over the last 40 years. As we have become more affluent we have bought more goods, travelled further and demanded greater convenience. If these demands on the Earth's resources continue to increase we will be causing irreparable harm to the environment. The use of resources can often be associated with the production of waste, air polluting gases and degradation of natural habitats.

How has our use of natural resources damaged the environment?

Human activity has led to many natural resources being depleted and created some major environmental problems:

- **Fossil fuels** - Increasing amounts of fossil fuels are burned to produce electricity and for transport, this produces carbon dioxide which causes climate change
- **Water** – Food production and manufacture of other products place demands on water supplies at home and abroad. For example, it takes around 4,000 litres of water to make a cotton T-shirt - some lakes in cotton-producing areas are drying up, causing the collapse of fish stocks. World populations of freshwater fish have nearly halved since 1970 due to increased demand for water in producing food, fibre and energy
- **Grazing land** - Demand for animal products is rising rapidly and it is estimated that the impact of grazing has doubled globally over the last 30 years - more land is being converted to grassland - reducing other wildlife habitats.
- **Forests** - Wood can be a great renewable resource. But the way people currently use it is causing the world's ancient forests to shrink. Trees are being lost at about an average of 36 football fields a minute because of the spread of urban development, illegal logging, agriculture and industry.
- **Fish** - Over-fishing is a threat to ocean-life and to the food and livelihoods of over a billion people. As many as 90 per cent of all the oceans' large fish have been fished out. More than ever before, responsible fisheries management is needed to help protect marine life and conserve habitats for future generations

What does this mean to me?

Our own wellbeing and quality-of-life, as well as the health of ecosystems, are becoming increasingly compromised by pollution and over-exploitation of resources. A situation created, in large part, by our enormous, collective consumer appetite.

Like most developed countries, the UK currently uses more than its fair share of resources like fuel, raw materials and water. As the things people buy are often made elsewhere, our lifestyles don't just affect us here in the UK, they damage the environment in other parts of the world too. Developed countries need to move towards using only their fair share of the world's resources – this idea has been described as one planet living.

Current consumption patterns similar to those of the UK could not be replicated worldwide. Some calculations suggest that this would require three planets' worth of resources. Instead we need to move towards 'one planet living'. Decisions people make in their everyday lives – what type of home to live in, how to travel and what products to buy – can help us move towards living within one planet's worth of resources. To live within our resources, we need to achieve more with less. This requires us to change the way we design, produce, use and dispose of the products and services we own and consume.

Current production practices are one source of many of the environmental challenges we face, requiring us to urgently develop products and services using fewer resources and to prevent waste. This will certainly mean using cleaner technologies, but it will also require new ideas to encourage us to meet our needs in different, less harmful ways. While Government has an important role to play in stimulating companies to act through incentives, rewards and the threat of penalties, it is ultimately businesses that will deliver a supply of goods and services that are less damaging to the environment and more resource efficient. We need to reach a situation where companies regard environmental care as important as customer care.

With rising energy and waste costs, tougher environmental legislation and higher stakeholder expectations, organisations are increasingly focusing their attention on improving production practices to both enhance performance and demonstrate responsible behaviour. There is huge potential for better products and production practices to deliver improvements without the need for behaviour change on the part of consumers. However, a sustainable society will require that all sectors - businesses, public sector and households - consume differently and more efficiently.

51 If we are to realise the vision of 'one planet living', without widening social inequalities, ever increasing demands on resources, and the waste associated with unsustainable levels of production and consumption, we need to learn to use resources much more efficiently.

How will the Environment Strategy help?

The UK Government has committed itself to "encourage and promote the development of a ten year framework of programmes to accelerate the shift towards sustainable consumption and production". Currently there are inefficiencies in the whole 'cycle of production'. From the impacts of harvesting raw materials, the production and transporting of materials and products which result in emissions, to the waste products that end up in landfill from the production process as well as the disposal requirements of the product at the end of its life cycle. By addressing how we can use resources more efficiently, and promoting this to businesses and consumers in Huntingdonshire, everyone can save money as well as benefit the environment.

This strategy recognises the need to use resources more efficiently and looks to tackle the issue in four ways:

1. Encouraging more sustainable purchasing
2. Making Huntingdonshire more water efficient
3. Making the best use of land
4. Reducing the amount of waste sent to landfill

PURCHASING

“HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL IMPLEMENT AND FOLLOW A CODE OF SUSTAINABLE PURCHASING AND ENCOURAGE SIMILAR GOOD PRACTICE IN HOUSEHOLDS AND BUSINESSES IN THE DISTRICT.”

Everything we buy and use has an impact on the environment. Products such as computers, stationery, vehicles and furniture have impacts throughout their life, from production, use, through to disposal. Frequently, we aren't aware of these impacts. They may happen in the early stages of a product's life (e.g. through mining the raw materials needed to make our computers, or cutting down the trees to make our paper), or after we have finished using it (e.g. when it is sitting in a landfill site). We all need to consider this 'hidden' environmental footprint when purchasing both for the Council and the district if we are to reduce our environmental impact.

As an organisation it is possible for the Council to show a lead by purchasing goods and services in a more sustainable way by, for example, specifying environmentally preferred products, looking at the whole life costing of a product, and, through our contracts with suppliers, to encourage them to operate green and sustainable procurement policies. Sustainable purchasing takes environmental, social and economic factors into account. The key questions are:

- 51
- Is the purchase necessary?
 - Where it comes from?
 - How are they made?
 - What is the product made of?
 - Who make them?

All purchasing decisions made by individuals are equally important in promoting sustainability. Terms such as 'food miles'; the distance our food travels from where it has been produced to where we buy it, are now in everyday usage and many consumers are adjusting their purchasing decisions to take account of the environmental impacts. In the UK the food system accounts for up to 40% of all road freight and the ingredients of a typical Sunday meal could have travelled 49,000 miles, equivalent to 2 trips around the world. Supporting local food production and consumption through farmers' markets and farm shops can drastically reduce food miles, benefiting the local economy and the environment at the same time. Evidence suggests that individuals can also have a significant effect on production, by for example, using their purchasing power to demand more energy efficient appliances or through ethical consumption choices, such as the rise in demand for free-range poultry products.

Huntingdonshire District Council's Environmental Footprint

Local Authorities are significant consumers. Huntingdonshire District Council purchases electronic equipment, food, paper, furniture, energy, cleaning equipment, waste services, accommodation, vehicles and much more. As a major purchaser the Council inevitably has a significant effect on the environment. Many things can be done to improve the sustainability of our purchasing. This can be done at a strategic level and also at a day to day level. Traditionally, environmental management dealt with problems once they had happened. For example, waste management traditionally dealt with waste that had already been generated. More progressive and forward thinking environmental management aims to minimise environmental problems before they occur. Huntingdonshire District Council will work towards the European, Eco-Management and Audit Scheme standard (EMAS).

Careful selection of products that are purchased and consumed is another way the Council can reduce its environmental impact, using its purchasing power to influence suppliers and help create a more reliable market for environmental and more ethical products. A good example is the Council's commitment to using recycled paper in its corporate printing policy. Whilst many organisations perceive themselves as acting responsibly by sending their waste paper for recycling, recycling will only be viable if end-markets are created for the products made from recovered waste paper, i.e. closing the recycled paper loop. By specifying papers with a high recycled content for print work, the Council will help create end-market demand for the waste paper that it collects for recycling, thus diverting it from landfill.

Sustainability can be incorporated into the whole procurement process: defining the need, evaluating options, design and specifying, supplier selection, tender evaluation, post-contract management and supplier development. Having a strong environmental policy which includes purchasing is the first step and then by translating this environmental policy into action, a large organisation like Huntingdonshire District Council, can significantly reduce its environmental footprint

Actions

Require all HDC tender specifications to include a section on sustainability and the environment to which weight will be given in the tender process
Seek accreditation to an Environmental Management System (EMS) by the end of the Strategy period

Projects

Green Champions Project – To ensure all employees are aware of the Councils environment policy and to encourage good practice in all our purchasing.

Environmental Management System - Initial work will be undertaken to examine the requirements of gaining accreditation to an Environmental Management System
Sustainable Purchasing Guidance – Develop and implement guidelines to ensure sustainable and ethical purchasing within the organisation
Godmanchester Plant Nursery Project – Returning a disused nursery to productive use, providing locally sourced trees and bedding plants

Huntingdonshire's Environmental Footprint

If everyone consumed the way we do in the UK we would need three planet earths to sustain our current lifestyles. Our purchasing decisions can make just as important a contribution to climate change as the way we travel and the way we heat our homes. In fact almost everything we do in our lives involves products or services that have consumed energy to be made or transported, thus emitting carbon dioxide and causing climate change. We can have a positive impact by aiming to live and consume in a "sustainable" way and we can all use our purchasing power to make sustainability a reality by changing our purchasing habits.

Simple things to make a difference:

- **Don't buy things you don't really need or want** - Every time you buy a product you're responsible for the emissions from its manufacture, packaging and transport.
- **Buy local food to avoid unnecessary "food miles" or grow your own** - When you buy food from overseas you're responsible for the "food miles" incurred by shipping that product to the UK. Buying locally grown produce is probably the most sustainable individual action we can make to reduce our environmental footprint.

- **Buy Fair-trade produce** – We do recognise not all items we buy can be grown locally, with produce like coffee and bananas coming from the third world where many growers face exploitation. Buying fair-trade helps to ensure a decent working conditions and a better quality of life for growers. Fair-trade produce tends also to less extensively farmed and therefore more sustainable.
- **Buy less packaged food** - The more packaging your food has the higher the energy that was required to make it. Try to buy produce and goods with less packaging and send a signal to manufacturers!
- **Use refill packs** - A great way to reduce on packaging for the products you use is to buy refill packs for items like soap powder - they use less packaging and therefore have lower carbon emissions from manufacturing.
- **Don't waste food** - Energy is used in packaging, transporting and heating food, so if we waste food rather than consuming it that's a lot of needless carbon dioxide emissions.
- **Drink tap water instead of bottled water** - Tap water is clean, fresh and free so why buy expensive bottled water? Energy is consumed for each bottle created, filled and transported, leading to unnecessary carbon emissions and yet more plastic in landfill sites.

Actions

Continue to develop and support the local farmers markets and promote further opportunities for the sale of locally produced food and other products in the district
 Lead in providing information about the most sustainable consumer choices, through press and publicity campaigns
 Actively encourage organisations in Huntingdonshire to implement an EMS & seek accreditation to recognised standard, e.g., ISO14001 or EMAS



Projects

Godmanchester Nursery Project – Returning the disused nursery to a productive demonstration site. A significant area of the nursery site will be cultivated as a small holding producing fruit and vegetables. Local schools and community groups will be invited to tend the site and share in the produce

Environmental Education Officer – To publicise and promote a broad range of environmental messages in line with the Council's role as a 'Community Leader' and to work with Schools and local community groups

Increasing Farmers Markets – Pilot project to increase frequency of Huntingdon farmers' market to weekly

Participation in the annual Huntingdonshire Food Festival – The festival celebrates the very best in local produce and is an excellent vehicle for education relating to healthy eating and sustainable purchasing

WATER USE

“HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF WATER USED IN COUNCIL BUILDINGS AND BY COUNCIL SERVICES AND ENCOURAGE SIMILAR GOOD PRACTICE IN HOUSEHOLDS AND BUSINESSES IN THE DISTRICT.”

New development, climate change and the simple fact that we are using more and more water every year is placing ever increasing pressure on the scarce water resources at our disposal. Each person in the region currently uses about 150 litres of water every day. Most of this is used for washing and toilet flushing, but it also includes drinking, cooking, washing cars and watering the garden. We use almost 50% more water than 25 years ago, partly because of the use of power showers and other water intensive household appliances.

Pressure on water resources is greatest in the summer, when it's hotter and drier. A wet winter will refill reservoirs providing enough water to last until the summer. But in 2004 and 2005, low winter rainfall meant that by July many reservoirs were almost completely dry. A hosepipe ban had to be imposed to conserve the remaining supply for essential use and water companies ran campaigns reminding people to be more careful with their water use. There was a huge public response and nationally water use dropped by about 84 million litres per day, so saving water makes sure that the water we do get lasts.

02

Water shortages don't just affect us they can also seriously harm our environment. When rivers and ponds run low on water, the fish, birds and other wildlife that rely on them struggle to survive. Continued consumption of water at current levels is not sustainable in the long term so it's vital that everyone uses water wisely, not just when there is a drought but all year round. There are many simple things we can do to reduce our water consumption to make sure that we have enough water now and at the same time protect our natural environment.

By cutting down our water use, we can:

- Save money, particularly if on a water meter
- Reduce the possibility of water shortages and summer water restrictions
- Cut emissions of the greenhouse gases responsible for climate change
- Reduce the amount of energy and chemicals used water treatment and pumping
- Sustain wildlife habitats in wetlands and rivers
- Maintain groundwater levels, thereby reducing stress on woodlands

Huntingdonshire District Council's environmental footprint

The council uses water for a wide range of functions such as swimming pools, cleaning streets, grounds maintenance and general use within its own buildings. There are opportunities in all buildings to provide fittings, components and installations that help reduce water consumption and it is important that the council introduces such measures wherever possible to improve its own water usage, by 'designing-in' water efficiency measures at new and existing sites.

Ultimately it is building users that have the biggest influence on water consumption and employees need to be encouraged to adopt responsible usage patterns, so that water conservation can be optimised. With the cost of water and the stress on resources continuing to rise, the widespread adoption of water saving technologies is likely to become a necessity and our approach to water use must become less blasé.

Actions

Accurately monitor water usage at all council sites and produce site specific Water Management Plans

Introduce rainwater harvesting systems and other water efficiency measures at new Council buildings and where feasible at existing sites

Projects

Introduction of water saving measures at Council's new headquarters building - A series of water efficiency measures are being incorporated into the design of the council's new headquarters building in Huntingdon, these include:

- A rainwater harvesting tank – Rainwater landing on the roof of the new headquarters to be collected in a 5,000 litre tank for reuse within the building.
- Water saving dual flush toilets (3 & 6 litres opposed to the standard 9 litres)
- Aerated flow taps to cut water usage by 50%
- Chilled mains water dispensers will be installed – to avoid the need to transport bottle water by road, remove the potential risk of back injury when lifting bottles and to save energy and waste.



Production of water management plans for Council sites – By auditing all Council sites it will be possible to assess areas where water savings can be made and to upgrade facilities where necessary

Rainwater harvesting and reed bed purification system at Little Paxton Nature Reserve – The Visitor Centre at Little Paxton Nature Reserve is not on the mains sewage system. We propose to introduce rainwater harvesting on site and to purify waste water using a reed bed system

Grey water system and water efficiency measures for the refurbished Huntingdon Bus Station

Huntingdonshire's Environmental Footprint

Rainfall Huntingdonshire is located in the driest region in the country with average rainfall of less than 570mm per year, only two-thirds the national average. In an average year only a quarter of the rainfall is available as a water resource after evaporation and use by plants. Long dry summers, during which evaporation exceeds rainfall, are a normal part of the climate in this region. Water is a renewable resource but is finite and the amount that is available each year depends upon rainfall. The regions main natural water resources are the rivers and groundwater, which are supplemented by artificial storage in reservoirs such as Grafham Water. This dry region is also one of population and economic growth. It is therefore important that we all use water wisely and continue to look for ways to conserve water to ensure that future demand can be met.

Domestic water use has risen year on year for the last 30 years. The extensive housing growth planned for Huntingdonshire to 2020 will place significant further pressure on water supplies. To combat this, the promotion of water efficiency will be critically important. The Environment Agency has suggested that a 25% reduction in water consumption at all new properties and an 8% reduction at all existing properties, achieved against a 2004 baseline figure, will be required to avoid the need to develop major new water storage resources. Evidence suggest that water metering is effective in reducing water consumption with 160 litres per head per day consumed in unmetered households in the Anglian Region, a 128 litres per head per day in metered households.

Adopting a systematic approach to water reduction, through the installation of some or all of the measures listed below can typically result in a 20 – 50% fall in water consumption. Many uses of water do not require it to be of drinking quality. Harvested rainwater and 'grey water' collected after it has been used for washing and showering, is adequate for uses such as watering gardens and flushing toilets. This not only makes wise use of a natural resource but can also have significant cost savings.

Simple water saving measures to make wise use of a natural resource, which can also produce significant cost savings include:

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

Actions

+ Increase awareness of water saving measures and promote water saving devices such as grey water systems and water efficient appliances

Encourage improvements in water efficiency in **ALL** new homes built in Huntingdonshire by ensuring they meet and where possible exceed the mandatory levels set within the Code for Sustainable Homes

Work with water companies, the Environment Agency and others as appropriate to produce a water cycle strategy for the district to assess water availability to meet required new growth

Projects

Environmental Education Officer - To publicise and promote a broad range of environmental messages in line with the Council's role as a 'Community Leader' and to work with Schools and local community groups

Water efficiency information on Council website - Content of the Council's website to promote water efficiency measures in line with the council's role as community leader

Sustainable homes Showcase (new build) - A development of 30 exemplar 2,3 and 4 bedroom homes, constructed to achieve compliance with level 5 of the code for Sustainable Homes (80 litres per person per annum).

Water Cycle Strategy - is in line with DEFRA's water Strategy "Future Water" (February 2008) through liaison with EERA (Environment & Resources Panel)

LAND USE

“HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL WORK TO MAKE MORE USE OF PREVIOUSLY DEVELOPED LAND AND EXISTING BUILDINGS, AND USE LAND MORE EFFICIENTLY, TO ACHIEVE MORE SUSTAINABLE GROWTH”

The East of England is one of the UK's most successful and fastest growing regions, making a significant contribution to the national economy. This also means it faces the pressures of growth, putting land availability for development at a premium. Land is a finite resource which is subject to increasing and competing demands from:

- Housing and other development
- Transport and utility infrastructure
- Agriculture
- Open space and wildlife habitats
- Flood management

Over recent years there has been widespread recognition - now reflected in national, regional and local planning policies - that development has been wasteful of limited greenfield land. We must focus on making the best use of previously developed land.

What are 'Brownfield' and 'Greenfield' Land?

Brownfield land is more commonly known as previously-developed land. Greenfield land has seen no previous development and there is general agreement that the new houses which we need should be built on the brownfield land. Unfortunately it is not always as simple as that. Some brownfield land is valuable as it is - perhaps as a wildlife sanctuary; or is impossible to develop - perhaps because it is contaminated or inaccessible. And sometimes greenfield land is not so valuable. Furthermore it is generally agreed that there is not enough brownfield land for all the houses we need. Regional Planning Guidance 6 sets an initial target for Cambridgeshire of developing at least 50% of housing on previously developed sites by 2008. Bringing previously developed land back into productive use eases pressure on valuable Greenfield or environmentally sensitive landscapes and is in accordance with the aims of sustainable development. Regional Strategies tell local planners how many houses they must provide and local authorities set out in their plans to find as much suitable brownfield land as they can. Almost always they can't find all they need and have to include some greenfield sites, highlighting the tension between development and environmental protection.

Huntingdonshire's Environmental Footprint

Huntingdonshire is at the centre of the Cambridge to Peterborough growth area and managing the opportunities and pressures from growth is a fundamental issue for Huntingdonshire's Core Strategy, which sets the framework for how Huntingdonshire will develop up to 2021 and beyond. It contains strategic policies to manage growth and guide

new development. Significant enhancement is proposed for the transport links between Cambridge and the market towns that surround it and high quality public services will be developed in the Cambridge to Huntingdonshire corridor.

How many new homes will be needed?

The draft Regional Spatial Strategy has confirmed an allocation of a minimum of 11,200 new houses to be built in Huntingdonshire for the period 2001-2021, this is the equivalent of 550 homes per year up to 2021. This new development will generate additional demands on Huntingdonshire's physical and social infrastructure. However necessary these developments are, each impacts upon the environment in a different way. The challenge is to ensure that this development enhances rather than degrades the environment. It is important to retain landscapes of value in the district that may be threatened by proposals to build houses, for example. We know where these places are and we can use the planning system to make sure they aren't damaged.

There are four main locations where housing development is planned in Huntingdonshire, which centre on the four market towns of Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey, with the majority of new development being located around Huntingdon and St Neots. Huntingdonshire's Spatial Strategy sets out how the area will develop over the next 20 years, whilst taking into account National and Regional policy. The approach is to develop sustainable brown field land first, but owing to the predominantly rural character of the district, there is insufficient well located brownfield land to achieve the national target.

Even so, wherever possible we need to promote high quality, mixed development on recycled land by:

- maximising the use of brownfield land and buildings for new development
- promoting high quality, mixed use development to include different house styles, close to jobs and services
- locate higher density development close to public transport routes and nodes by incorporating appropriate policies in development plans
- ensure new retail, leisure and cultural developments are located in town & rural centres
- encourage the provision of high quality health, education and care services close to where people live.

Housing Density

One result of this need to make best use of our land is pressure to try to accommodate more housing on a given area of land. Less than 30 homes per hectare of land is often considered unsustainable in terms of land use and in most cases will not support public transport or a good range of local services. Residential developments without associated facilities (such as schools, shops etc) only further encourage the use of the car for short local trips. For these and other reasons, higher density development – defined as being over 30 dwellings per hectare - is an essential feature of a sustainable community, alongside good public transport, a mix of decent homes for all, good quality public services, a sense of place and a safe and healthy environment. The phrase 'higher density' often brings to mind unpleasing pictures of high-rise flats and associated problems of overcrowding or 'town cramming'.

In fact, many of the 1960s high rise blocks were built at relatively low densities because of poorly used open space. Density is only a measure – it does not mean quality in itself, and it should not be used to dictate the design. Higher density in itself should not be seen as an aim of development. The aim should be to generate a local population large enough to

support local services such as transport, shops and schools. The Cambridgeshire Structure plan sets a target of achieving net densities of 30+ dwellings per hectare (dph) in new housing developments of 5+ dwellings.

Huntingdonshire is a predominantly rural district with just 6% of its total land use in urban use, mainly due to the fact that the district covers a vast area but none of the major towns and settlements is particularly large. Despite this, the district does contain a large amount of previously-developed land. Survey work carried out in 2006 showed approximately 904 hectares of previously-developed land in Huntingdonshire. Over three quarters of this land is made up of several large military airbases, two of which have become redundant, of which some development of employment use and warehousing has been approved. Beyond this, supplies of previously developed land are relatively limited, particularly in locations with the facilities and infrastructure to support new housing. Due to the scale of development required in Huntingdonshire over the next 15 years, the density of these new developments will determine whether further releases of greenfield land will need to be made.

Actions

Increase the proportion of housing development on previously developed land.

Where appropriate encourage developments with a higher density of dwellings per hectare

Avoid development of agricultural land grades 1, 2 and 3a

Increase the proportion of employment floor space on previously developed land



Projects

Encourage the sustainable design & construction of new developments to make optimum use of land through the LDF

Sustainable construction – A development of 20+ demonstration homes in Hartford constructed to achieve accreditation to the Code for Sustainable Homes and be built to sustainable density

Financial incentive schemes for sustainable construction - Considering giving sustainably built domestic and commercial buildings a reduction on council tax and business rates

WASTE

“HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF WASTE PRODUCED AND SENT TO LANDFILL AND ENCOURAGE SIMILAR GOOD PRACTICE IN HOUSEHOLDS AND BUSINESSES IN THE DISTRICT”

Waste or rubbish is everything that people throw away because they no longer need it or want it. As a society we are currently producing more waste than ever before. In the UK alone we produce more than 434 million tonnes of rubbish every year. This is the equivalent of enough rubbish to fill the Albert Hall every hour! Most of this rubbish is disposed of in landfill sites where it is buried in the ground and can take hundreds of years to decompose.

Not only are we rapidly running out of space and facilities to landfill all our rubbish; burying it in the ground has a negative impact on the environment. When buried rubbish decomposes, it produces carbon dioxide and methane which are both greenhouse gases contributing to climate change. Also, as the materials break-down they produce a toxic liquid called leachate that contains heavy metals. If this is not managed properly, there is a risk of the leachate leaking out of the landfill and polluting rivers and ground water supplies.

As consumers and producers, the way in which we use materials will affect whether we have a sustainable society that leaves resources available for future generations to use. We need to think about how we can use fewer resources (“get more from less”), how we can make products last longer (which means we use less and we throw away less) and how we can be more creative with our so-called “waste” rather than simply throwing it away.

So whether it's at home or at work, the fact that we produce waste, and get rid of it, matters for the following reasons:

- when something is thrown away we lose the natural resources, the energy and the time which have been used to make the product. The vast majority of resources that we use in manufacturing products and providing services cannot be replaced. The use of these resources cannot go on indefinitely – they will run out.
- when something is thrown away we are putting pressure on the environment's ability to cope - in terms of the additional environmental impacts associated with extracting the new resources, manufacturing and distributing the goods, and in terms of the environmental impacts associated with getting rid of our rubbish.
- when something is thrown away we are failing to see it as a resource. It is well understood that what is waste to one person may not be viewed as waste by another. A good example of this is scrap metal which has been recycled for many years. Increasingly people are realising that it makes economic sense as well as environmental sense to use "waste" rather than just throw it away.

The UK government promotes the concept of the 'waste hierarchy' which encourages us to see "waste" as a "resource" and specifies the following order of preference for dealing with our wastes:

1. Reduce
2. Reuse
3. Recover (Recycle, Compost, Recover energy)
4. Disposal

As shown by the hierarchy, the best way of managing our waste is not to produce it in the first place - waste prevention. After that we can think about reducing the amount of waste we do produce. Then there may be an option to reuse the material and if not, to recycle it. Recycling not only reduces the amount of rubbish we bury in landfill sites, it also makes better use of resources and raw materials. Much of what we throw away could be used to make something else and materials such as glass and aluminium can be recycled over and over again without losing any of their properties. Once buried in the ground we lose these resources for ever, some of which may have been mined and transported long distances, consuming a great deal of energy in the process, e.g. recycling an Aluminium can saves 93% of the energy it takes to make a new one as aluminium cans are made from bauxite ore which is mined in countries like Australia and New Guinea in West Africa before being transported for the aluminium to be extracted through an energy intensive smelting process.

Huntingdonshire District Council's Environmental Footprint

Despite much talk in recent years of the drive towards the paperless office, one of the major waste outputs from the council's day to day operation is still paper. The development of email and the internet has yet to completely replace some forms of written communication with residents in the district, a great deal of information is still better sent and received via letter, leaflet or other documentation, mainly through the post.

Aware that paper is a valuable resource the council has been recycling all its paper via confidential and non-confidential paper recycling processors since 2002. In 2003 a cardboard recycling collection was introduced and the scheme which has significantly reduced the amount of waste sent to landfill from the council's headquarters site. Waste levels have remained fairly constant over the past two years with almost half of the waste leaving the building being cardboard or paper for recycling. Before the recycling schemes were introduced all of this waste was being landfilled. Across all the council's site, the amount of waste produced by employees is rising and there is a need to look at the waste collection and recycling systems in place at all council owned premises and to unify the system at the same time as increasing the range of materials collected for recycling.

Actions

Reduce amount of Council's own waste going to landfill by 15% over next 5 years and encourage partner agencies to do the same

Projects

Recycling bin system - Introduction of dry recycling bins at all suitable office locations

Green champion's scheme - Staff awareness campaign to promote recycling and waste minimisation

Composting of HDC waste - Investigate the possibilities of introducing a compostable waste collection at Pathfinder House offices

Huntingdonshire's Environmental Footprint

As a waste collection authority, the Council has a responsibility to collect all household waste in the district. There are over 66,000 households in Huntingdonshire and we have a fleet of 150 refuse and recycling collection vehicles that visit every household in the district at least once a week. Government guidance and EU legislation gives district councils some very strict targets relating to how much waste can be sent to landfill and what materials should be recycled, including some firm restrictions on the amount of biodegradable waste that can be taken to landfill. In response to these strict targets, Huntingdonshire's waste collection system was totally restructured in 2003 over a period of 2 years, giving households in the district a three bin alternate weekly collection service. This involves the collection of green compostable waste (taken for composting) and normal refuse (taken to the local landfill site in Buckden) on alternating weeks. As an addition to these collections, a third wheeled bin is offered to residents for recycling materials such as paper, card, plastics, cans and tins.

The new collection system has dramatically increased the amount of household waste recycled in the District. Before the scheme was introduced around 15% of all waste was recycled and this rose to 53% in 2006/07. This amazing leap has enabled the Council to stay well ahead of its required recycling target and the national average local authority recycling rate of 31%. In recognition of its efforts, the council, along with other authorities in Cambridgeshire, has been awarded Beacon Status for waste and recycling. The Council continues to work closely with Cambridgeshire County Council who are currently implementing a project to deliver new waste treatment facilities through a long-term Private Finance Initiative (PFI) contract with a private sector waste management company – the Waste PFI Project. The government is supporting this project with £35m to help meet the costs of these new facilities to be in place for 2010. The project has the potential to virtually eliminate landfill as a means of waste disposal for household waste in the district.



More emphasis still needs to be placed on the importance of minimising and reusing waste as well as recycling. We have begun to address the changes necessary to combat the growing mountain of waste collected in the district each year from householders and schools with a new waste and recycling collection system, but as yet do not provide a huge amount of advice and support for businesses in the district

Actions

Ensure domestic recycling levels remain above 50% and explore the feasibility of adding additional materials to the kerbside collection, e.g., glass.

Development of Waste Minimisation Strategy in conjunction with the RECAP Partnership and introduced targeted promotional campaigns and education programmes for key waste streams

Facilitate the introduction of a trade waste recycling collection service for small to medium sized businesses in the District and support larger businesses in their effort to recycle their trade waste

Projects

Kerbside glass collection - Investigate the possibilities of including glass in the dry recycling bins

Waste minimisation education campaign - Education campaign for schools promoting the importance of reducing and reusing waste

Battery recycling scheme - Installation of battery recycling banks at some supermarket locations to encourage recycling of a hazardous waste

Kitchen waste campaign - Promotional campaign to further encourage the composting of kitchen waste in the green bin

Trade waste officers - Awarded BREW funding to cover the employment of officers to promote trade waste recycling

PART THREE
TO PROTECT & ENHANCE THE
ENVIRONMENTAL CAPITAL OF
HUNTINGDONSHIRE

This page is intentionally left blank

PROTECTING & ENHANCING THE ENVIRONMENT – To protect and enhance the environmental capital of Huntingdonshire

What is Huntingdonshire's environmental capital?

The basic idea is that the environment is a collection of assets which can provide a stream of benefits so long as they (the assets) are not depleted. For example, a woodland provides a stream of benefits/services in terms of biodiversity, sense of place, historical continuity, local cultural identity, recreation, and as an energy/timber crop, in just the same way as a savings account provides a steady stream of interest – provided the 'capital' is kept intact.

The Environmental capital of Huntingdonshire gives the district its unique character. Areas of outstanding natural beauty, a variety of diverse habitats, distinctive landscapes and sites of significant archaeological and historical heritage, all contribute to our environmental wealth and influence how we relate to and feel about the environment in which we live. A distinction is often made between 'critical' and 'constant' environmental capital.

Critical environmental capital is described as those things which are considered to be valuable and irreplaceable and therefore need to be strongly protected in their entirety. Examples of critical capital are archaeological artefacts and sites, historic parks and buildings and rare habitats that support species facing extinction

73

Constant environmental capital is described as the parts of the environment which, although they can cope with some management or change, need to be protected or enhanced to avoid damaging them or where any loss would have to be compensated for by similar provision elsewhere. Examples of constant capital are green and open space with lower biodiversity value, parks & gardens and other recreational open space

Environmental capital can also be considered in the context of how much value and sense of pride is given to the neighbourhoods and towns and villages in which we live. A neighbourhood free of litter and graffiti, with adequate provision of open green space and low fear of crime is generally considered to be a valuable environment in which to live. All these attractive environmental features, if managed, protected and enhanced to their maximum potential, bring high social and economic benefits, hence the use of the term, 'environmental capital'.

Why do we need to protect and enhance it?

The number of nature reserves in Huntingdonshire means we have a small amount 'protected' high value biodiversity on our doorstep. Not only does the protection of some of the rarer species of plant, insect and animal attract significant national status and attributed funding, it has huge tourism value as people travel from all over the country to visit these precious protected sites. However we have largely ignored the wider countryside in terms of biodiversity.

The distinguished character of the towns and villages in the district also lend themselves well to tourist market, with ornamental bridges and buildings of historic value making Huntingdonshire a great place to learn about English history, dating back to 1130. This tourist market, along with the high quality agricultural landscapes of the area have been key factors in building a prosperous district.

Of equal importance, the green and open spaces of Huntingdonshire contain some very rare and valuable habitats, which act as home to many species, several of which face extinction. Loss of this habitat due to development, inappropriate management or increased tourism damage, can mean that these plants, animals and insects are lost forever. Such habitats are a vital aid for research into the natural world and their decline would inevitably result in the loss of a valuable learning resource. The Great Fen project provides a pivotal example of how both protected sites can be protected and at the same time enhancing biodiversity in the wider countryside

There has been a historic loss of green and open space throughout the UK in previous decades. With ever-increasing pressure to build more homes and the infrastructure needed to support these, we have eaten our way through big sections of countryside, fragmenting habitats and losing valuable biodiversity along the way.

If new housing and infrastructure is placed carelessly and designed without the character of the area in mind, then the historic and aesthetic character of the district could well be diluted and if appropriate consideration is not given to investigating our archaeological past before development occurs, then little pieces of Huntingdonshire's history could also be lost forever.

Attractive, clean and safe neighbourhoods have positive impacts on the social, physical & mental wellbeing of residents and the provision of pleasant green and open space, located nearby plays a crucial part in this.

Loss of this important environmental capital would inevitably lead to a dramatic spiral of decline affecting both the economy of the district and the social wellbeing of the residents who live here.

74

How will the Environment Strategy help?

The pressure to find space for development is strong and it is therefore crucial that in a district with great environmental value, we look to guide and manage development in a way that doesn't impact adversely on the features that define Huntingdonshire as an attractive and prosperous place to live. The environment strategy looks to raise awareness of the important environmental features in the district and their protection by encouraging more learning and interaction with the natural environment.

Through increasing knowledge and understanding of our natural environment, we aim to increase the sense of pride residents have in Huntingdonshire as a place to live, and through the services we deliver in relation to street scene, cleanliness and crime prevention, we aim to make both our urban and rural environments of value to everyone.

This strategy recognises the need to protect and enhance our environment and looks to tackle the issue in four ways:

5. Protecting and improving biodiversity and greenspace
6. Protecting our urban and rural character
7. Minimising harm from contaminated and polluted land
8. Maintaining a clean and safe Huntingdonshire

BIODIVERSITY AND GREENSPACE

“HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL WORK TO IMPROVE THE BIOLOGICAL, VISUAL AND RECREATIONAL VALUE OF THE DISTRICT THROUGH THE APPROPRIATE MANAGEMENT AND INCREASED PROVISION OF GREEN AND OPEN SPACE”

Biodiversity is the genetic variety of life on Earth – all types of plants and animals. We should protect and conserve wildlife – our natural heritage – for its own sake, and for future generations. The desire for a sustainable world and one rich in wildlife amount to the same thing. The species, habitats and ecosystems that compromise our wildlife are also the building blocks that make up the healthy, functioning environment on which we all depend.

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

While conserving and enhancing habitats and species is of universal concern, Huntingdonshire contains many sites of species that are afforded special protection due to their particular importance. These Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. We need to protect and enhance the number of species of plants and animals and the quality of their habitats, including those which are internationally and nationally important and those which are characteristics of the district. Biodiversity Action Plans have been developed at national and local levels which set out action plans for habitats and species which are considered to be the most threatened. In the past, we have experienced a progressive loss of these sites of importance for biodiversity due to intensive agriculture, urbanisation and other human activities. This development has, over centuries, cut through woodlands and a variety of green spaces that are home to the vast majority of the wildlife and plants in the area. This urbanisation and loss of habitat acts as a barrier to movement, confining many species to tiny pockets of green space and inhibiting the ability of the species to grow and flourish. We need to protect and restore these green spaces, make them more resilient and encourage habitat linkage. Ensuring that intervening landscapes are more accommodating of species movement by linking habitats together in a series of ‘green corridors’ which connect ‘green hubs’, will form a network of connected, rather than isolated green space. The process of improving and linking these habitats is known as “strategic greenspace enhancement”

Other types of green and open space such as recreational land can also make an important contribution to biodiversity and the character and attractiveness of places, and are important in improving quality of life. Green and open space within settlements includes land such as parks, village greens, play areas, sports pitches, undeveloped plots, semi-natural areas and substantial private gardens. Many such spaces play a vital role in providing opportunities for formal and informal recreation, as do parks, sports pitches and allotments outside built up areas. Well designed open space contributes towards ecological diversity, supports environmental sustainability and helps to counter pollution. As well as providing important visual amenity benefits in built up areas, urban open space gives people the chance to experience and learn about nature and wildlife close to where they live. Access to green and open space for residents and visitors is therefore important, but we must ensure we seek the appropriate balance between access and the protection of the biodiversity to which these areas may be home. Protecting, improving and encouraging more green and open space in the district has numerous benefits.

HUNTINGDONSHIRES ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

Huntingdonshire has a range of wildlife sites, many of which are National Nature Reserves (NNR). The River Great Ouse runs for 26 miles through Huntingdonshire connecting the historic market towns of Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots. Much of the river valley has been dug for aggregate, leaving large areas of gravel pits. These have developed into fantastic wetland areas such as Paxton Pits Nature Reserve. The area is also well known for its extensive wet meadows, some of which are still botanically rich, e.g., Portholme Meadow. Remnants of vast ancient forest remain with Brampton Wood and Monks Wood being some of the finest examples. The Holme post at Holme Wood marks the lowest point in Britain. This area of the fens was drained in the 1850s and this is arguably where British nature conservation started.

The wetlands and rivers of the district support a range of biodiversity from wetland birds to invertebrates, aquatic plants and fish. However a legacy of intensive land drainage, navigation improvements and flood defence works mean that our river and wetland wildlife has been adversely impacted. Water abstraction can further adversely affect water levels and flow in our wetlands which support these species.

Organisations including Natural England, the Environment Agency and Middle Level Commissioners have a duty to protect our wetlands and rivers. However, we as water users we can play the most valuable role in reducing water usage to safeguard and reduce the threat to habitats.

Huntingdonshire contains vast areas of farmland which includes some of the most productive land in the country, but this is taking its toll on our natural environment. The peat soil which characterises this area is disappearing due to shrinkage and wind erosion. Huntingdonshire is lucky to contain two places which escaped the wholesale drainage of the fens: Woodwalton Fen National Nature Reserve (NNR) established in 1910, and Holme Fen NNR. The rich biodiversity and habitat here is under threat from crop spraying, uncontrolled water levels and nitrogen pollution. Along with the various recognised wildlife sites within the district, there are several that are partially within the area, and one of the most important habitat restoration projects in England lies to the north of the district. The Great Fen Project aims to restore over 3000 hectares of fenland habitat between Huntingdon and Peterborough. In doing so, it will connect Woodwalton Fen National Nature Reserve with Holme Fen National Nature Reserve to create a very large site with conservation benefits for wildlife and socio-economic benefits for people. The wetland will safe guard threatened habitats and wildlife whilst providing for leisure, tourism and business. As it develops, rare and declining species like Fen Violet, Bittern and Water Vole will spread into it. The project aims to combine nature conservation and management with tourism and other income generating activities. It could also play a strategic role by storing flood water and protecting surrounding land and properties. The reserve will be openly accessible by land and water and future generations could enjoy old Fen pastimes like boating, skating and angling. This is a long-term project managed in partnership by Natural England, the Wildlife Trust, Huntingdonshire District Council, The Middle Level Commissioners and the Environment Agency.

Wildlife Sites in Huntingdonshire (REPLACE WITH MAP)

Wildlife Site	Size	Status
Brampton Wood	132 Hectares	SSSI
Monks Wood	157 Hectares	NNR
Waresley and Gransden Woods	54 Hectares	SSSI
Holme Fen National Nature Reserve	266 Hectares	NNR
Houghton Meadow	8 Hectares	SSSI
Portholme Meadow	104 Hectares	SSSI
St Neots Common	32 Hectares	SSSI
Upwood Meadow	6 Hectares	/
Grafham Water	149 Hectares	SSSI
Hinchingbrooke Country Park	68 Hectares	/
Woodwalton Fen National Nature Reserve	208 Hectares	SSSI
Hanson-RSPB Wetland Project	Under development	/
Paxton Pits Nature Reserve	75 Hectares	SSSI
Barford Road Pocket Park	18 Hectares	/
Holt Island Nature Reserve	2.8 Hectares	/
Spring Common	5.2 Hectares	/
The Thicket	2.5 Hectares	/

Despite this apparent wealth of habitats, the general picture across Huntingdonshire's countryside is one of progressive loss in habitat quality and diversity. Intensive agriculture, urbanization and other human activities have all contributed to this process. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership has formulated action plans for important habitats and species which identify measures needed to increase the variety and vitality of habitats and species in the county, and some progress is being made. Particular opportunities have been identified by the Biodiversity Partnership in a 50 year Wildlife Vision for Cambridgeshire, as well as the Natural England and Environment Agency Great Ouse Vision. These highlight a number of priority areas in Huntingdonshire for habitat creation and enhancement. The Environment Strategy strongly supports the work of these visions and they will enable Huntingdonshire District Council to work with partners to protect both designated sites and influence the management of the wider countryside and all biodiversity.

Huntingdonshire is lucky enough to be the home of ten official nature reserves, containing a range of biodiversity as well as many other areas of green and open space, all of which need enhancement and protection from the pressure of growth we face in the next two decades. There are many benefits to protecting and enhancing this 'natural capital' of Huntingdonshire. Improving the biological, visual and recreational value of the district brings obvious social gains but also helps create an attractive environment in which to live, work, visit and invest, thereby assisting economic growth in the area.

Actions

Protect and enhance biodiversity and open space of international, national and local importance through legislation, policy, site purchase and awareness raising and create habitats and areas of strategic green space enhancement in line with UK BAP and County Targets

Ensure early involvement in master planning process and that biodiversity, open space and recreational objectives are included in development plans, structure plans, community strategies and other strategic documents, and that all development proposals adhere to wildlife legislation and good practice

Develop community involvement in green spaces and biodiversity enhancement projects and encourage experience of the natural world through environmental education

Protect and promote allotments and community gardens and provide further opportunities for those people who wish to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion

Improve the quantity and quality of publicly accessible open space and improve opportunities for people to access wildlife

Projects

Godmanchester Nursery Project - Tree nursery of local provenance, vegetable and orchard areas and greenhouses to provide some of HDC's own plant needs

Access to privately owned green space - Engage with private landowners in relation to using their land as access to green space

River Care Project - Working in conjunction with the partners to regularly clean up town centre river locations in the district

Sustainable homes showcases - A development of 20+ demonstration homes in Harford constructed to achieve a minimum of level four under the Code for Sustainable Homes

New Local Development Framework (LDF) - All new dwellings to achieve high levels of biodiversity and open space amenity in accordance with the biodiversity chapter of the Code for Sustainable Homes


Environmental education officer - To publicise and promote a broad range of environmental messages and projects in line with the Councils role as 'Community Leader' and to work with Schools and the local community

PROTECTING OUR URBAN AND RURAL CHARACTER

“HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL SAFEGUARD OUR RICH HISTORIC CHARACTER FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS; MAKE IT ACCESSIBLE TO ALL AND USE ITS ECONOMICAL POTENTIAL FOR THE BENEFIT OF VISITORS AND RESIDENTS ALIKE.”

Huntingdonshire's rich and varied heritage is everywhere around us; in its historic buildings, in the pattern of its settlements, fields and woodland, and in the archaeological remains still visible or buried beneath the ground. As a predominately rural district, Huntingdonshire's landscapes play a major role in shaping the character of our environment, stimulating leisure and tourism and supporting the overall 'quality of life'. It is an important component of the wider environment and economy with aesthetic, cultural, recreational and educational values which gives the district its sense of identity.

Development pressure can have a damaging impact on this often fragile and vulnerable resource. Natural erosion and agricultural processes can also harm archaeological sites and the historic landscape. Our challenge is to safeguard this heritage for present and future generations, make it accessible to all and use its economical potential for the benefit of visitors and residents alike.

 Within the landscape there remain many features from the medieval period, including deserted villages, green lanes, abbeys, churches, castles, bridges, numerous moats, manors and ridge and furrow fields. The majority of these features are now only visible as earthworks, but some, such as green lanes, churches and bridges remain in use. The vast majority of Scheduled Ancient Monuments within the district are from the medieval period. The post medieval period saw major changes in the landscape. The most significant of these was the comprehensive draining of the fens, transforming them from a vast wetland into a rich agricultural area with fields, roads and drainage ditches. The 17th, 18th and early 19th centuries had a significant impact on the landscape of parts of the district, transforming the field pattern from one of irregular strip fields to larger, regular fields edged with simple hawthorn hedgerows. The 19th and 20th centuries have contributed major changes to the Huntingdonshire landscape, including the introduction of railways, the construction and widening of roads such as the A1 and the A14, industrial scale gravel extraction along the Ouse Valley, the establishment of several large wartime airfields and the creation of Grafham Water in the 1960's.

The Huntingdonshire Landscape and townscape assessment identifies a number of landscape character areas across the district. These range from low-lying fen land in the North-East to the rolling uplands in the West. These landscape character areas have evolved and are continuing to change. It is important that both the quality and distinctive characteristics of these areas are conserved and enhanced when new development occurs. The landscape of Huntingdonshire covers an approximate area of 91,000ha (350 square miles) and embraces a diversity of landscapes from. It contains five very different market towns and over 80 smaller villages expressing a variety of architectural styles and materials.

Agricultural History

The clay soils which cover the vast majority of the district have traditionally been used for arable agriculture, and this continues to be the case today. The agricultural landscape includes both arable and pastoral farmland and farming still represents the predominant land use within the district. From the end of the Second World War until the mid 1990's the increased mechanisation and efficiency of farming led to changes in landscape character across the district with significant loss of hedgerows, ponds and drainage systems, and increased use of herbicides and fertilisers. The number and extent of apple and plum orchards (previously a distinctive feature of the eastern part of the district) has declined rapidly in the last fifty years as a result of increased competition from foreign imports and a reduction in locally available labour.

The quality of Huntingdonshire's agricultural land today is generally very good, and the district's soils represent a significant agricultural resource. However, the rich soils of the fens, found to the north east of the district, are at risk from the effects of drainage, peat shrinkage and wind erosion, with measurements from the great fen project showing a loss of up to 2cm a year, which could lead to a decline in the agricultural value of the soil. The drainage of the fens and their intensive agricultural management has also eroded their value as a habitat for wildlife.

The reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and government initiatives such as the Countryside Stewardship Scheme are encouraging farmers to adopt practices which will help conserve and enhance the distinctive character of the Huntingdonshire landscape. Under the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, farmers can secure financial assistance to help preserve locally important features such as ridge and furrow fields, and to manage and re-introduce landscape features including hedgerows, ponds, wetlands, woodlands and orchards. Such schemes are having a small impact in promoting land management that is more sympathetic to landscape and biodiversity but a significant amount of deterioration has already taken place. These issues are also targeted in the Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Action Plan, along with the protection and management of field boundaries, road verges, meadows and ditches.

Archaeological History

Huntingdonshire contains extensive archaeological remains dating from successive waves of settlement, reflecting its diversity of landscape types. Roman towns existed at Godmanchester and Water Newton, along the line of Ermine Street which cut across the district. Ramsey Abbey was established in 969AD with smaller monastic houses in St Ives, St Neots and Huntingdon leading to the growth of these towns. The two main threats to this archaeological history are agriculture and development and it is extremely important that provision is made for appropriate excavation, analysis, recording and preservation where development may affect an area of archaeological value.

Urban History

The visual quality of Huntingdonshire's towns and villages has suffered over recent decades. Similarly to the rest of the country, housing built during this period has often been of poor visual quality, characterised by standard house types with little relation to traditional building forms, materials and details. Commercial development was also subject to standardised design during this period and combined with extensive road building to service the development, the local character and distinctiveness has slowly been eroded. This strategy promotes a high standard of design in all new development, which is essential for the creation of attractive and successful places. Basic principles need to be assessed if developments are to display character, compliment their surroundings and provide attractive and sustainable environments for users. The character of streets and other public spaces has a major impact on the quality of our environment. Basic design criteria are fundamental, but so too are many other influences such as the nature of shop fronts, street furniture, lighting and signage.

How can we protect our Huntingdonshire's Character? - Conservation Areas and Listed Buildings

It is important vitally to retain landscapes of value and historical influences in the district that may be threatened by proposals to develop. We know where these places are and we can use the planning system to make sure they aren't damaged. There are two main mechanisms used to protect areas and features of high historical and archaeological value:

1. Listing buildings - A listed building is acknowledged by the Secretary of State to be of special architectural or historic interest. In the context of listing, the term 'building' is used very widely and includes not only buildings such as houses, churches, schools and barns, but also walls, tomb stones, milestones, ice houses, bridges and locks, telephone and post boxes. The responsibility for deciding which buildings have special architectural or historic interest falls to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, who has a statutory duty to produce a "list" of such buildings, known as Greenbacks. The part of the list covering Huntingdonshire can be inspected at our offices. Once listed, a building has special protection under the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and the Council has additional powers of protection. It is an offence to carry out works to a listed building without consent.
2. Conservation Areas - "an area of special architectural or historic interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance". Conservation Areas are normally centred on listed buildings, groups of buildings, open spaces or a historic street pattern. By assigning an area as a Conservation Area it seeks to preserve or enhance the character of the area, and not just individual buildings in it. Conservation Areas were introduced in 1967 when it was found that listed building legislation was failing to protect the overall character of cities, towns and villages. The district contains over 60 conservation areas – many of them covering large parts of villages – and nearly 2,800 listed structures. These areas and structures form a significant and vital part of Huntingdonshire's heritage.



Actions

Protect landscapes, heritage sites, archaeological sites and historic buildings and use the planning system to safeguard them and ensure development contributes to the character of the District
Conserve and enhance valuable landscape features by encouraging environmentally sensitive management in the agricultural sector
Encourage environmental improvement schemes within the district and ensure they are sympathetic to the existing characteristics of the area
Develop educational resource materials based on the historic environment and establish further tourism opportunities

Projects

Character statements - Production of character statements for all conservation areas in the district

Environmental education officer - To publicise and promote a broad range of environmental messages and projects in line with the Councils role as 'Community Leader' and to work with Schools and local community

CONTAMINATED AND POLLUTED LAND

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

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

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

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

81

Under Part IIA of the Environment Protection Act 2000, for land to be classed as officially ‘contaminated’, the local authority (which acts as the enforcing authority) must have identified whether substances present in, on, or under the land, may cause:

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

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

Huntingdonshire’s Environmental Footprint

The Council’s process for identifying potentially contaminated sites can be found in the Council’s Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy. The Council’s strategy identifies sites of potential concern within the district, highlighting land that may contain contamination. Once potentially contaminated land has been identified, an assessment is made as to whether a site poses any current or potential risk, and if so a programme of remediation must be undertaken.

It is important to understand that the purpose of remediation is to reduce any significant risks posed by contaminated land; it is not necessarily to decontaminate the land. In other words a programme of remediation may not eliminate all possible future risks or remove all the pollutants.

Fortunately, serious harm from contamination is rare. Many contaminated sites are cleaned up during the redevelopment process and as the Government has encouraged building on "brownfield sites" (previously used land) it is inevitable that land contamination will be a factor in some new developments. As a result the planning process still remains the main driver for dealing with land contamination, despite the introduction of the Part IIA legislation in April 2000.

Planning applicants, their agents, developers and consultants are therefore required by planning policy guidance (PPS23) to give routine early consideration to land contamination in development proposals. It is the developer's responsibility to ensure that their development is 'safe for its intended use'. Failure to do so can result in harm to human health and the environment, land blight, failure to sell properties and legal action. The Council therefore expects potential land contamination issues to be addressed fully and professionally in accordance with current best practice. An advice note has been produced by the Council that clarifies the current requirements. It is important that planning applicants follow this advice to ensure the efficient processing of their application or enable them to comply with any attached contaminated land planning condition.

Actions

Identify, prioritise and remove unacceptable risks to human health and the environment

Seek to bring contaminated land back into beneficial use



Seek to ensure that the cost of contaminated land clean up is undertaken in accordance with the polluter pays principle

Projects

Audit of potentially contaminated sites – The Council will continue to investigate sites identified as priorities in the Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy, to determine whether they pose a significant risk to human health

Provision of Guidance to Developers – To liaise with developers and planning consultants to assess the risk land contamination plays at potential development sites.


Investigation of liability for contaminated sites - Legal Action where necessary targeting the 'original polluter' to pay for any necessary 'clean up' works.

A CLEAN AND SAFE HUNTINGDONSHIRE

“HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL WILL WORK TO MAKE HUNTINGDONSHIRE A PLACE WHERE WE ALL LIVE AND WORK IN A HEALTHY, CLEAN AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT”

The quality of the local environment affects and reflects the well-being of the people living there. Whether it's the town centre, local park or street on which we live, we all want to feel that these are attractive, safe places to be. Residential areas are the spaces that are the nearest and among the most critical in terms of our immediate quality of life. If we step outside our front door into a safe, well-cared for residential area, with clean, well-maintained streets and open spaces, it has a positive impact on our quality of life.

Problems ranging from litter, fly-tipping, graffiti, abandoned vehicles through to dog fouling and chewing gum on our streets all have a detrimental impact on Huntingdonshire's street scene. Evidence suggests that a poor quality street scene can have far reaching social and economic impacts. Consultations undertaken as part of the Community Strategy with the people of Huntingdonshire have shown that residents' sense of pride in their community can be greatly reduced as a result of unclean streets, and the fear of crime can be increased as a result of graffiti and abandoned vehicles in their neighbourhood. This can impact on Huntingdonshire's attractiveness as a place to live and work, affecting the economic prosperity of the District.

 Local communities cannot engage in the broader environmental agenda if they are concerned with the more immediate problem of anti-social behaviour and low-level crime. Anti-social behaviour can be seen in a number of different forms, and may range from the dropping of litter to actual violence against people and property. Whatever the level of anti-social behaviour, its effects are the same, and in many cases areas will have experience of both crime and fear of crime, which in turn has a detrimental impact on the surrounding environment.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE'S ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINT

Huntingdonshire should be a place where we all live and work in a healthy, clean and safe environment. To achieve this we need to see our local environment well-maintained and free from litter, fly tipping, graffiti, crime, intrusive noise and other forms of antisocial behaviour. Environmental stewardship needs to be at the heart of public and private sector activity. The Council prides itself on keeping the streets of the towns and villages within the district clean and litter free. To do this we provide litter bins in public open spaces and on streets and pavements, mechanical street sweeping services and litter picking in towns and along major verges. These environmental measures coupled with effective street cleaning services help to make Huntingdonshire such a pleasant place to live and work. In order to record and monitor the cleanliness and safety of our streets the Council reports several indicators of performance in relation to the following areas:

Litter and graffiti

The streets in the district are cleaned using a number of specialised vehicles owned by our Operations Division. Different areas of the district are cleaned at different times and at different frequencies depending on how prone to littering they are. Litter accumulation is then monitored in accordance with the ENCAMS Litter monitoring regime which requires a

team of trained Officers and Inspectors to survey the streets in the district every four months. A different cross section is surveyed on each occasion covering both urban and rural areas. Similar surveys are carried out for graffiti and flyposting. The results of these surveys are reported to ENCAMS who give the district of Huntingdonshire an official grading for street cleansing and graffiti.

Fly-tipping

The Council's Operations Division collect all waste that has been reported by the public as fly-tipping. We aim to remove all waste reported as flytipping within three days of receiving the report. This is unless the waste reported appears to be hazardous in nature in which case we aim to collect it sooner. In some instances Huntingdonshire District Council are required to obtain a specialised waste transfer licence from the Environment Agency depending on the type of waste and this can sometimes result in a longer period of time between the original report and collection taking place. The Council monitors its performance in relation to flytipping in a number of ways:

- The number incidents reported monthly is recorded for the Environment Agency and DEFRA. This is recorded by grading the area from one to four with one being a decrease in flytipping and an increase in enforcement action, and four being an increase in flytipping with a decrease in enforcement action.
- The average time taken to collect fly-tipping is recorded and reported as a quarterly scorecard measure as part of the Councils internal performance monitoring system.

Monitoring in this way allows us to look at how successful our pro-active response to flytipping is by looking at the number of reported incidents, as well as our reactive response in relation to the time taken to clean up the waste.

Abandoned vehicles

All abandoned vehicles reported by the public are then investigated by the Council's Abandoned Vehicles Officer based within the Operations Division.

Abandoned vehicles reported must be investigated within 24 hours and if judged by the Council to have been abandoned can (if on public land) be authorised for removal within 24 hours. Removal is undertaken by a private company which then takes the vehicle to an Authorised Treatment Facility (ATF) for de-polluting. It is then crushed and recycled. The council monitors this area of work by recording how many reported abandoned vehicles are investigated within 24 hours of notification being received, and how many vehicles are removed within 24 hours from the point at which the Council is legally entitled to remove the vehicle.

Anti-social behaviour

Although Huntingdonshire is regarded as a safe place to live and work, residents concerns about anti-social behaviour have risen in recent years and people are more aware of being able to do something about it. Anti-social Behaviour is defined in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 as acting "in a manner that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as himself and which is not reasonable in all circumstances".

Anti-social behaviour does not have to be a criminal act. Behaviour such as litter or loud noise that puts people in fear of crime can amount to anti-social behaviour. Other types of problems experienced can include: abandoned vehicles, dog fouling, foul language and 'jobbish' behaviour. Often, taken in isolation, individual issues might not appear severe, but the impact on people's quality of life can be very upsetting for those experiencing the problems.

The Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership (HCSP) put together their first Community Safety Strategy in 1999 and has recently produced a new strategy for the period 2005-08. There is also a free standing Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy which supports action towards delivering the targets and objectives set out in the Community Safety Strategy. Huntingdonshire District Council has a Community Safety Team with two Anti-social Behaviour Caseworkers, who work with a variety of organisations as well as the community to

address problems. Their roles involve receiving and monitoring complaints and working in Partnership with other agencies and organisations to ensure that the most appropriate and effective solutions are in place.

Actions

Achieve a high level of street cleanliness and reduce levels of fly-tipping across the district

Reduce the amount of criminal damage and graffiti occurring in the district

Work to improve neighbourhood pride and reduce anti-social behaviour and fear of crime

Projects

Improve information on environmental best practice - Promote sustainability and environmental best practice relating to

Litter free market towns - Promotion campaign to make all market towns in the district litter free zones and use of street scene rangers targeting fast food outlets with litter problems & encouraging recycling of packaging

River Care Project - Working in conjunction with partners to regularly clean up town centre river locations in the district

Fixed Penalty Notices - To be issued if rubbish is left out on the wrong collection day

Environmental Education Officer - To publicise and promote a broad range of environmental messages and projects in line with the Councils role as 'Community Leader' and to work with Schools and local community delivering the cleaner, greener, safer lifestyles agenda

Graffiti prevention & clean up - Street Rangers Linking with Luminus Street Wardens, work with community groups to report and help clean up graffiti

This page is intentionally left blank



FIVE YEAR DELIVERY ACTION PLAN

This page is intentionally left blank

PRIORITY ONE – TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE Strategic Objective: To reduce greenhouse gas emissions

NATIONAL INDICATOR: NI 185 - Percentage CO₂ reduction in local authority's own operations. NI 186 - Percentage CO₂ reduction per capita in the community. NI 188 - Adaptation to climate change.
 NI 187 - People receiving income based benefits living in homes with a low energy efficiency rating

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Reducing the COUNCIL'S environmental footprint

Action	Indicator	Delivery Year
Adopt an energy policy to reduce the Council's energy use in all its buildings and activities	Amount of energy consumed per square metre in Council Buildings Amount of carbon dioxide emitted from HDC energy use	08/09 08/09
Contributory projects	Description	
Efficient use of premises	Review of overtime & weekend working policy which gives more efficient use of heating & lighting	08/09
Smart metering	Departmentalised metering of energy to establish responsibility for energy use and encourage competition between departments to reduce energy use	08/09
Multifunctional device project	Printer rationalisation to reduce number of machines required and energy used	08/09
New HDC Headquarters	Breem "excellent" rating for new office building	08/09 – 10/11

Reducing the DISTRICT'S environmental footprint

Action	Indicator	Delivery year
Encourage improvements in thermal efficiency in ALL new homes built in Huntingdonshire by ensuring they are built to the HIGHEST POSSIBLE LEVEL of the Code for Sustainable Homes & identify the most cost effective energy efficiency measures, likely to achieve the greatest reductions in carbon and facilitate their installation in existing households	Average amount of energy consumed per household in Huntingdonshire and carbon emitted as a result Amount of energy saved from efficiency measures installed via HDC schemes % of the households in Huntingdonshire considered to be fuel poor % of new dwellings built to levels of the code for sustainable homes	09/10 – 12/13 08/09 – 09/10 08/09 – 12/13
Contributory projects	Description	
New Local Development Framework (LDF)	To require all new dwellings to achieve high levels of thermal efficiency	09/10 – 12/13
Sustainable homes - Retrofit	Demonstrate how 3 properties representative of the housing stock in the district constructed in the 1970s and 80s, can be upgraded to make them more sustainable. Houses to include energy saving measures	08/09 – 09/10
Sustainable homes showcase	A development of 30 2, 3 and 4 bed exemplar homes in Harford constructed code for sustainable homes level 5	08/09 – 12/13
Warmer Homes for life project	A home insulation project established by HDC for vulnerable residents	08/09 – 10/11
Warm front scheme	National government heating and insulation project	08/09 – 12/13
Annually review our Fuel Poverty Strategy	To increase the energy efficiency of homes for vulnerable residents	Ongoing
British Gas insulation scheme	Home insulation scheme for able to pay households	08/09 - 09/10
Action	Indicator	
Encourage improvements in thermal efficiency of all commercial properties with a floor space of 500sq m or more by ensuring they achieve at least a BREEAM 'very good' rating & facilitate the installation of energy efficiency measures by business and industry	Amount of energy consumed by the industrial and commercial sector in Huntingdonshire Amount of carbon dioxide emitted by the industrial and commercial sector from energy use Amount of energy saved from efficiency measures installed via HDC schemes	08/09 – 12/13 09/10 – 10/11
Contributory projects	Description	
Peterborough Environment City Trust business audits	Encourage businesses in the district to undertake environmental audit offered by PECT	08/09 – 12/13
Business grant scheme	Introduction of a £500 grant scheme for businesses to deliver energy efficiency measures	09/10 – 10/11

PRIORITY ONE – TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE Strategic Objective: To reduce greenhouse gas emissions

NATIONAL INDICATOR: NI 185 - Percentage CO₂ reduction in local authority's own operations. NI 186 - Percentage CO₂ reduction per capita in the community. NI 188 - Adaptation to climate change.

RENEWABLE ENERGY

Reducing the COUNCIL'S environmental footprint

Action	Indicator
Increase the proportion of the council's electricity procured from renewable sources	
Contributory projects	Description
Regular review of electricity Supply Contracts	Seek to increase the proportion of energy purchased from renewable sources when renewing supply contracts. Currently 50% energy purchased from renewable tariff and 50% from Combined heat and power.
Action	Indicator
Where appropriate install renewable energy technologies at new council buildings and when replacing systems in existing buildings	% of energy from on-site renewables
Contributory projects	Description
Renewables at Huntingdon Bus Station	The installation of a ground source heat pump and solar photovoltaic panels at refurbished Huntingdon Bus Station, to contribute towards hot water and electricity generation
Godmanchester Nursey Project	The installation of a solar hot water and biomass stove in an ecologically sustainable training/classroom on site
	Delivery year
	08/09
	08/09 – 12/13

Reducing the DISTRICT'S environmental footprint

Action	Indicator
Encourage the installation of renewable energy by businesses, institutions and householders through promotional events, grant funding and support and advice	
Contributory projects	Description
Sustainable homes showcases (existing homes)	Demonstrate how 3 properties representative of the housing stock in the district constructed in the 1970s and 80s, can be upgraded to make them more sustainable. Houses to include renewable technology such as Solar Hot Water and Solar PV
Solar Hot Water Scheme	£600 grant funding (per property) towards the cost of installing solar hot water systems at households in the district
Power to the People Renewable Energy Events	Renewable Energy showcase events organised in conjunction with Energy Saving Trust
Action	Indicator
Require a minimum 10% of renewable energy generation from all developments of 10 units or more	% of new development in the District with at least 10% of energy derived from a renewable source
Contributory projects	Description
New Local Development Framework (LDF)	The Local Development Framework to require all new developments to incorporate on-site renewable energy sources sufficient to provide at least 10% of the energy requirement of the development
Sustainable Homes Showcase (New Build)	A development of 30 exemplar 2,3 and 4 bedroom homes, constructed to achieve compliance with level 5 of the code for Sustainable Homes, incorporating renewable technology.
	Delivery year
	08/09 – 09/10
	08/09 – 10/11
	08/09

Action	Indicator
Support renewable energy proposals in Huntingdonshire where impacts on amenity, wildlife and landscapes are acceptable	
Contributory projects	Description
New Local Development Framework (LDF)	A positive policy in the LDF supporting large scale renewable proposals in suitable locations within the district.
	Delivery year
	08/09
Action	Indicator
Support community environmental projects funded annually through community funds associated with large scale renewable projects in the District funded through S106 monies from renewable energy projects	
Contributory projects	Description
Red Tile Farm Community Environment Fund	Community fund to encourage environmental improvements within a 5 mile radius of the Red Tile Farm Wind Farm
Glasmoor Community Environment Fund	Community fund run jointly with Fenland District Council to encourage environmental improvements within a 5 mile radius
	Delivery year
	08/09 – 12/13
	08/09 – 12/13

PRIORITY ONE – TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE Strategic Objective: To reduce greenhouse gas emissions

NATIONAL INDICATOR: NI 185 - Percentage CO₂ reduction in local authority's own operations. NI 186 - Percentage CO₂ reduction per capita in the community. NI 197 – Level of air quality

TRAVEL & EMISSIONS TO AIR

Reducing the COUNCIL'S environmental footprint

Action	Indicator	Delivery year
Develop & implement site specific employee travel plans for the council's main sites and reduce CO₂ emissions from leased & employee owned vehicles	Number of HDC employees travelling to work by car	08/09 – 10/11
	Carbon emissions for HDC loan or lease vehicles	
	Targets are set within the corporate travel plan for reducing single occupant use of private cars and for promoting a modal shift to other forms of transport	
Review of lease car scheme and car user allowances	Currently car user allowances rise with engine capacity, amending the scheme to rectify this will remove incentives to buy larger vehicles	09/10
Calculate accurate CO ₂ emissions figure for all Council employee vehicles	* 06/07 baseline figure is the DEFRA average figure / Target emissions on completion of Strategy to average 160g/per km	08/09
Action	Indicator	
Effective management of the Council's own vehicle fleet to reduce emissions	Litres of fuel used in fleet travel	
	Tonnes of carbon emitted from fuel use	
	Level of NOx & PM10 emissions	
Contributory projects	Description	Delivery year
Rescheduling of refuse collection and recycling rounds	Rescheduling of Refuse collection rounds to reduce fuel use	08/09
Green Fleet Review to be undertaken	Review of fleet to be undertaken by the Energy Saving Trust to give advice on fleet efficiency savings	08/09

Reducing the DISTRICT'S environmental footprint

Action	Indicator	Delivery year
Provide more opportunities for residents to walk, cycle, use public & community transport & encourage schools and businesses to develop travel plans, with Cambridgeshire County Council and other partners	NI 177 local Bus Journeys originating in Huntingdonshire	09/10 – 12/13
	NI 198 Children travelling to school – usual mode of travel	08/09 – 12/13
	Number of Businesses developing travel plans	09/10 – 10/11
Contributory projects	Description	
Delivery of Market Town Transport Strategy Action Plans	Ramsey (& Chatteris) Area Market Town Transport Strategy to commence in 2008/09	
Support & promote the 'Travel 4 work' partnership	Encourage uptake of the scheme amongst businesses in the district	
Cycle Path Improvements	Upgrade cycleway between Huntingdon and St Ives	
Action	Indicator	
New development to be accommodated in locations which limit the need to travel whilst catering for local needs	% of housing completions in Market Towns and key service centres	
	Detailed travel planning to be integrated to master planning and during the development process	08/09 – 12/13
	To ensure new development is located in areas with established infrastructure to reduce the need to travel	08/09
Contributory projects	Description	Delivery year
Travel Issues considered through the planning process		
New Local Development Framework (LDF)		

Action	Indicator	
Manage demand for car parking in town centre locations and encourage the use of low emission vehicles and alternative forms of travel	Number of season tickets sold for vehicles with CO2 emissions under 120g/per km in HDC long stay car parks	
Contributory projects	Description	Delivery year
Huntingdonshire Car Parking Strategy	Designed to manage car parking demand in town centres across the district	08/09 – 12/13
Reduced Season Ticket Prices in long stay car parks for low emission vehicles	Proposed reduction in season ticket prices for vehicles with CO2 emissions under 120g/per km in HDC long stay car parks	08/09 – 12/13
Action	Indicator	
Develop and implement air quality action plans to facilitate prevention and mitigation of air pollution in Huntingdonshire	Successful implementation of Air Quality Management Strategy in the district	
Contributory projects	Description	Delivery year
Council Emissions Inventory	Work being undertaken in the district during 2008/09 which will inform the Air Quality Management Strategy	08/09
Action	Indicator	
Work to reduce emissions from buses and taxis in the District through regular emissions testing and possible introduction of age limits	Average emissions from buses and taxi operation in the District	
Contributory projects	Description	Delivery year
Guided bus way project	Buses diverted from A14 easing congestion. All buses using guided bus way must be to Euro 3 emissions standard	08/09
Amended taxi and private hire licensing regulations	Requiring age and emission limitations with variable charging based on road tax category	08/09

PRIORITY ONE – TACKLING CLIMATE CHANGE Strategic Objective: To reduce greenhouse gas emissions

NATIONAL INDICATOR: NI 188 - Adaptation to climate change.

ADAPTATION TO CLIMATE CHANGE

<i>Reducing the COUNCIL'S environmental footprint</i>		
Action	Indicator	Delivery year
Undertake a comprehensive, risk-based assessment of the Council's estate to identify vulnerabilities to weather and climate and develop a series of measures to minimise the identified risks	Disruption to service delivery in times of severe weather	
Contributory projects	Description	08/09 -12/13
HDC climate resilience programme	Enlist consultants to produce a programme for climate-proofing council buildings and infrastructure	

<i>Reducing the DISTRICT'S environmental footprint</i>		
Action	Indicator	Delivery year
Integrate climate change issues into the Emergency Plan and improve awareness of flood and severe weather warnings in partnership with relevant organisations	Average time taken to put flood alerts on HDC website	
Contributory projects	Description	Delivery year
Emergency Plan Review	Review of the emergency plan to incorporate response to climate change risks	Ongoing
Severe weather text alert system	Messaging system which sends text messages to residents mobile phones to warn of flooding, severe weather events and other emergency planning issues	08/09
Action	Indicator	
Work together with other local authorities to plan for climate change impacts and ensure that adaptation is included in 100% of HDC's strategies, plans and policies	Amount of external funding for climate change adaptation projects attracted as a result of partnership working	
Contributory projects	% of HDC plans which include service level responses to climate change	
Cambridgeshire Climate Change Partnership	Establish a partnership of all local authorities in Cambridgeshire to establish a county wide response to dealing with the changing climate	08/09 -12/13
Great Fen Restoration	Landscape scale restoration which will enable habitats to adapt to the long-term effects of climate change	08/09 -12/13
Climate change adaptation service review	Audit of all services delivered by HDC to identify all potential risks and opportunities and review plans and procedures in light of audit outcomes	09/10 -12/13
Action	Indicator	
Ensure where possible, development occurs on sites above potential flood level. Where development is essential below flood level, risk assessments and adequate protection & mitigation measures put in place	Number of planning permissions granted contrary to advice of the Environment Agency on either defence grounds or water quality.	
Contributory projects	Description	Delivery year
Policies in LDF	Development of policies to manage flood risk in new developments	08/09

PRIORITY TWO – RESOURCE EFFICIENCY Strategic Objective: Reduce the environmental impact of resource use

NATIONAL INDICATOR: N/A

PURCHASING

Reducing the COUNCIL'S environmental footprint

Action	Indicator
Require all HDC tender specifications to include a section on sustainability and the environment to which weight will be given in the tender process	% of returned tender documents including sustainability & environmental performance information
Contributory projects	Description Delivery year
Sustainable Purchasing Guidance	Develop and implement guidelines to ensure sustainable and ethical purchasing within the organisation 10/11
Godmanchester Nursery Project	Supplying locally sourced trees and bedding plants to reduce the Council's carbon footprint 08/09 – 12/13
Action	Indicator
Seek accreditation to an Environmental Management System (EMS) by the end of the Strategy period.	Successful accreditation to an Environmental Management System (EMS) by the end of the Strategy period.
Contributory projects	Description Delivery year
Green Champions Project	To ensure all employees are aware of the Council's environment policy and to encourage good practice in all our purchasing. 09/10 – 12/13
Framework to achieve accreditation to Environmental Management System	Undertake the necessary steps to gain formal EMS accreditation 11/12 – 12/13

Reducing the DISTRICT'S environmental footprint

Action	Indicator
Promote sustainable consumer choices and opportunities for the sale of locally produced food and in the district.	Number of distinct campaigns actively promoting sustainable purchasing choices
Contributory projects	Description Delivery year
Increased frequency of Farmers Markets	There are currently farmers markets operating with varying frequencies in the market towns. There will be a pilot project to increase the frequency of the Huntingdon Farmers Market to weekly. 09/10
Participation in the annual Huntingdonshire Food Festival	The festival celebrates the very best in local produce and is an excellent vehicle for education relating to healthy eating and sustainable purchasing 08/09 – 12/13
Environmental Education Officer	To promote a broad range of environmental messages in line with the Council's role as a community leader and to work with schools and community organisations 08/09 – 12/13
Godmanchester Plant Nursery Project	Returning a disused nursery to productive use. Providing locally sourced trees and bedding plants 08/09 – 12/13
Action	Indicator
Actively encourage organisations in Huntingdonshire to implement an EMS & seek accreditation to recognised standard, e.g., ISO14001 or EMAS	Number of organisations in the district receiving information about the benefits of accreditation to an EMS
Contributory projects	Description Delivery year
Business seminars promoting the benefits of EMS accreditation	Information about the benefits accreditation to EMS provided to local businesses 12/13

PRIORITY TWO – RESOURCES EFFICIENCY Strategic Objective: Reduce the environmental impact of resource use

NATIONAL INDICATOR: N/A

WATER USE

Reducing the COUNCIL'S environmental footprint

Action	Indicator	Delivery year
Accurately monitor water usage at all Council sites and produce site specific water management plans	Cubic metres of water consumed per employee in HDC buildings per annum	10/11
Contributory projects	Description	
Water Management Planning	By auditing all Council sites it will be possible to assess areas where water savings can be made and to upgrade facilities where necessary	
Accreditation to Environmental Management System	Systematic assessment of water use will be required for accreditation	11/12 – 12/13
Action	Indicator	
Introduce rainwater harvesting systems and other water efficiency measures at new Council buildings and where feasible at existing sites	Number of new sites with grey water systems	
Contributory projects	Description	Delivery year
Water efficiency measures at Council Headquarters	Package to include rainwater collection, low flush toilets, aerated flow taps, chilled mains water dispensers	08/09 – 09/10
Grey water system for Huntingdon Bus Station	Refurbishment to include rainwater harvesting and water efficiency measures	08/09 – 09/10
Reed bed system for Little Paxton Nature reserve	The Visitor Centre at Little Paxton Nature Reserve is not on the mains sewage system. It is proposed to introduce rainwater harvesting on site and to purify waste water using a reed bed system	09/10 – 10/11

Reducing the DISTRICT'S environmental footprint

Action	Indicator	Delivery year
Increase awareness of water saving measures and promote water saving devices such as grey water devices and water efficient appliances	Number of distinct campaigns actively promoting sustainable purchasing choices	
Contributory projects	Description	Delivery year
Environmental Education Officer	To publicise and promote a broad range of environmental messages in line with the Council's role as a 'Community Leader' and to work with Schools and local community groups	08/09 – 12/13
Water efficiency information on Council website	Content of the Council's website to promote water efficiency measures in line with the councils role as community leader	08/09
Action	Indicator	
Encourage improvements in Water Efficiency in ALL new homes built in the district by ensuring that they are built to the highest possible level of the Code for sustainable Homes	Proportion of new development complying with Code For Sustainable Homes and level of water efficiency achieved when assessed	
Contributory projects	Description	Delivery year
Sustainable Homes Showcase (New Build)	A development of 30 exemplar 2,3 and 4 bedroom homes, constructed to achieve compliance with level 5 of the code for Sustainable Homes (80 litres per person per annum)	08/09
Action	Indicator	
Work with water companies, the Environment Agency and others as appropriate to produce a water cycle strategy for the district to assess water availability to meet required new growth	Successful completion of water cycle Strategy for the District	
Contributory projects	Description	Delivery year
Water Cycle Strategy	Huntingdonshire District Council to take the lead in developing strategy and targets for completion of the work	08/09 – 10/11

PRIORITY TWO – RESOURCE EFFICIENCY Strategic Objective: Reduce the environmental impact of resource use

NATIONAL INDICATOR: NI 170 – Previously developed land that has been vacant or derelict for more than 5 years

BEST USE OF LAND

Reducing the DISTRICT'S environmental footprint

Action	Indicator
Increase the proportion of housing development on previously developed land	
Contributory projects	Description Delivery year
New Local Development Framework (LDF)	Wherever possible require all new dwellings to be built on previously developed land 09/10 – 12/13
Action	Indicator
Where appropriate encourage developments with a higher density of dwellings per hectare	
Contributory projects	Description Delivery year
New Local Development Framework (LDF)	% of new development with a density of 30 dph Wherever possible require all new dwellings to be built at a minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare 09/10 – 12/13
Sustainable homes showcase	A development of 20+ demonstration homes in Harford constructed to achieve accreditation to the Code for Sustainable Homes and be built to sustainable density 08/09 – 12/13
Action	Indicator
Avoid development of agricultural land grades 1, 2 and 3a	
Contributory projects	Description Delivery year
Action	Indicator
Increase the proportion of employment floor space on previously developed land	
Contributory projects	Description Delivery year
New Local Development Framework (LDF)	Wherever possible require all new employment floor space to be located on previously developed land 09/10 – 12/13
Financial incentive schemes for sustainable construction	Sustainably built domestic and commercial buildings receive reduction on council tax and business rates /

PRIORITY TWO – RESOURCE EFFICIENCY Strategic Objective: Reduce the environmental impact of resource use

NATIONAL INDICATOR: NI191Residual household waste per head. NI192 Household waste recycled & recycled. NI193 Municipal waste landfilled

WASTE

Reducing the COUNCIL'S environmental footprint

Action	Indicator
Reduce amount of Council's own waste going to landfill by 15% over next 5 years and encourage partner agencies to do the same	Amount of waste from HDC offices that goes to landfill % of HDC offices and service centres with access to recycling facilities
Contributory projects	Description Delivery year
Recycling bin system	Introduction of dry recycling bins at all suitable office locations 08/09 – 12/13
Green champions scheme	Staff awareness campaign to promote recycling and waste minimisation 09/10 – 10/11
Composting of HDC waste	Investigate the possibilities of introducing a compostable waste collection at Pathfinder House offices 08/09 – 09/10

Reducing the DISTRICT'S environmental footprint

Action	Indicator
Ensure domestic recycling levels remain above 50% and explore the feasibility of adding additional materials to the kerbside collection, e.g., glass	% of household waste recycled % of household waste composted
Contributory projects	Description Delivery year
Kerbside glass collection	Investigating the possibilities of including glass in the dry recycling bins 08/09 – 09/10
Action	Indicator
Development of Waste Minimisation Strategy in conjunction with the RECAP Partnership and introduce targeted promotional campaigns and education programmes for key waste streams	Amount of waste collected from households in Huntingdonshire which is sent to landfill
Contributory projects	Description Delivery year
Waste minimisation education campaign	Education campaign for schools promoting the importance of reducing and reusing waste 09/10 – 10/11
Battery recycling scheme	Installation of battery recycling banks at some supermarket locations to encourage recycling of a hazardous waste 08/09
Kitchen waste campaign	Promotional campaign to further encourage the composting of kitchen waste in the green bin 08/09 – 12/13
Action	Indicator
Facilitate the introduction of a trade waste recycling collection service for small to medium sized businesses in the District and support larger businesses in their effort to recycle their trade waste	Amount of trade waste recycled Proportion of businesses able to recycle trade waste
Contributory projects	Description Delivery year
Trade waste officers	Awarded BREW funding to cover the employment of officers to promote trade waste recycling 08/09 – 10/11

PRIORITY THREE – Protect & Enhance the Environment Strategic Objective: To protect and enhance the environmental capital of Huntingdonshire

NATIONAL INDICATOR: NI 197 Improved local biodiversity – active management of local sites

BIODIVERSITY & OPEN SPACE

Reducing the DISTRICT'S environmental footprint

Action	Indicator
<p>Protect and enhance biodiversity and open space of international, national and local importance through legislation, policy, site purchase and awareness raising and create habitats and areas of strategic green space enhancement in line with UK BAP and County Targets</p> <p>Contributory projects</p>	<p>% of SSSI's across the District in a favourable or unfavourable recovering condition</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Delivery year</p>
<p>Action</p> <p>Ensure early involvement in master planning process and that biodiversity, open space and recreational objectives are included in development plans, structure plans, community strategies and other strategic documents, and that all development proposals adhere to wildlife legislation and good practice</p> <p>Contributory projects</p>	<p>Indicator</p> <p>% of new homes achieving credits from biodiversity chapter of the Code for Sustainable Homes</p> <p>Delivery year</p> <p>09/10 – 12/13</p>
<p>New Local Development Framework (LDF)</p> <p>Sustainable homes showcase</p> <p>Action</p> <p>Develop community involvement in green spaces and biodiversity enhancement projects and encourage experience of the natural world through environmental education</p> <p>Contributory projects</p> <p>Environmental education officer</p>	<p>Description</p> <p>Require all new dwellings to achieve high levels of biodiversity and open space amenity in accordance with the biodiversity chapter of the Code for Sustainable Homes</p> <p>A development of 30 exemplar 2,3 and 4 bedroom homes, constructed to achieve compliance with level 5 of the code for Sustainable Homes</p> <p>Indicator</p> <p>Number of schools visiting HDC owned wildlife sites</p> <p>Description</p> <p>To publicise and promote a broad range of environmental messages and projects in line with the Councils role as 'Community Leader' and to work with Schools and local community</p> <p>Delivery year</p> <p>08/09-12/13</p>
<p>Action</p> <p>Protect and promote allotments and community gardens and provide further opportunities for those people who wish to grow their own produce as part of the long term promotion of sustainability, health and social inclusion</p> <p>Contributory projects</p> <p>Godmanchester Nursery Project</p> <p>Action</p> <p>Improve the quantity and quality of publicly accessible open space and improve opportunities for people to access wildlife</p> <p>Contributory projects</p> <p>Access to privately owned green space</p>	<p>Indicator</p> <p>Hectares of land used as allotments/community gardens</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Tree nursery of local provenance, vegetable & orchard areas and greenhouses to provide some of HDC's own plant needs</p> <p>Indicator</p> <p>Hectares of strategic open space per 1,000 people</p> <p>Description</p> <p>Engage with private landowners in relation to using their land as access to green space</p> <p>Delivery year</p> <p>08/09 – 12/13</p> <p>Ongoing</p>

PRIORITY THREE – Protect & Enhance the Environment Strategic Objective: To protect and enhance the environmental capital of Huntingdonshire

NATIONAL INDICATOR: N/A

URBAN & RURAL CHARACTER

Reducing the DISTRICT'S environmental footprint		
Action	Indicator	Delivery year
Protect landscapes, heritage sites, archaeological sites and historic buildings and use the planning system to safeguard them and ensure development contributes to the character of the District	% of conservation areas covered by an up-to-date character assessment	
	% of listed buildings considered 'at risk'	
	% of large scale development which meets equivalent 'silver standard' under 'Building for Life' criteria	
Contributory projects	Description	Delivery year
Character statements	Production of character statements for all conservation areas in the district	Ongoing
Action	Indicator	Delivery year
Conserve and enhance valuable landscape features by encouraging environmentally sensitive management in the agricultural sector	Number of successful agri-environmental stewardship schemes in the district	
Contributory projects	Description	Delivery year
Guidance for farmers	Production of guidance to farmers on the identification and protection of historic features on farmland	08/09 – 12/13
Action	Indicator	Delivery year
Encourage environmental improvement schemes within the district and ensure they are sympathetic to the existing characteristics of the area	% environmental improvement schemes completed which are sympathetic to existing characteristics of the area	
Contributory projects	Description	Delivery year
St Ives Town Centre Improvement Project	Refurbishment of the floorscape and townscape of St Ives town centre	09/10 – 10/11
Small scale environmental improvements plan	A schedule of minor environmental improvements as and when money becomes available	08/09 – 12/13
Action	Indicator	Delivery year
Develop educational resource materials based on the historic environment and establish further tourism opportunities	Number of educational visits to historic sites	
Contributory projects	Description	Delivery year
Environmental education officer	To publicise and promote a broad range of environmental messages and projects in line with the Councils role as 'Community Leader' and to work with Schools and local community	08/09 – 12/13

PRIORITY THREE – PROTECTING & IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT Strategic Objective: To protect and enhance the environmental capital of Huntingdonshire

NATIONAL INDICATOR: NI 17 – Perceptions of anti-social behaviour NI 195 – Graffiti, litter, detritus and flyposting NI 196 – Flytipping

CLEAN & SAFE HUNTINGDONSHIRE

Reducing the DISTRICT'S environmental footprint

Action	Indicator	Delivery year
Achieve a high level of street cleanliness and reduce levels of fly-tipping across the district	BVPI 199a / NI 196 – Improved street and environmental cleanliness (Flytipping)	08/09 -12/13
Contributory projects	BVPI 199b / 199c / NI 195 – Improved street and environmental cleanliness (Levels of graffiti, litter, detritus and flyposting)	08/09 – 10/11
Improve information on environmental best practice	Promote sustainability and environmental best practice relating to cleaner, greener, safer lifestyles	08/09 – 09/10
Litter free market towns	Promotion campaign to make all market towns in the district litter free zones and use of street scene rangers targeting fast food outlets with litter problems & encouraging recycling of packaging	09/10 – 12/13
River Care Project	Working in conjunction with the Environment Agency to regularly clean up town centre river locations in the district	08/09 - 12/13
Fixed Penalty Notices	To be issued if rubbish is left out on the wrong collection day	08/09 - 12/13
Environmental Education Officer	To publicise and promote a broad range of environmental messages and projects in line with the Councils role as 'Community Leader' and to work with Schools and local community delivering the cleaner, greener, safer lifestyles agenda	
Action	Indicator	Delivery year
Reduce the amount of criminal damage and graffiti occurring in the district	NI 195 – Improved street and environmental cleanliness (Levels of graffiti, litter, detritus and flyposting)	
Contributory projects	Description	Delivery year
Graffiti prevention & clean up	Street Rangers Linking with Luminus Street Wardens, work with community groups to report and help clean up graffiti	08/09 – 09/10
Action	Indicator	
Work to improve neighbourhood pride and reduce anti-social behaviour and fear of crime	% of residents feeling 'safe' or 'fairly safe' outside in the local area after dark	
	NI 17 – Perceptions of anti-social behaviour	
	% decrease of surveyed individuals stating ASB is a fairly big problem – E. Health scorecard & G/Success	
	% of residents who are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live	
Contributory projects	Description	Delivery year

This page is intentionally left blank

Environment Strategy Project Plan (Financial Implications)

Project	Year 1		Year 2		Year 3		Year 4		Year 5	
	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue	Capital	Revenue
Godmanchester Nursery	10,000	20,000		30,000		30,000		30,000		30,000
River Clean Up	10,000	5,000								
Litter Free Market towns			4,000	17,000		17,000		17,000		17,000
Graffiti Clean Up	1,500	8,500		8,500		8,500		8,500		8,500
Education Officer		15,000		30,000		30,000		30,000		30,000
Battery Recycling Scheme		1,600		1,600		1,600		1,600		1,600
Glass Recycling		60,000		60,000		60,000		60,000		60,000
Schools Recycling	10,000		10,000							
Smart Metering	3,000									
Efficient Use of Premises	0	0		0		0		0		0
Sustainable Homes - New Build	0	0		0		0		0		0
Solar Hot Water	10,000		10,000							
Sustainable Homes - Retro fit	75,000		75,000							
Office Recycling Scheme		600			110,000	40,000		40,000		40,000
Weekly Farmers Market Trial		1,500								
Reed Bed Demonstration Site		20,000			35,000					
Public Travel Information		100,000			20,000					
Cycle Path Improvements		15,000			1,500					
Hydro Electric Power							50,000			
Green Champions							5,000			8,500
Accreditation to EMAS										
Total Annual Cap & Rev costs	119,500	50,100	232100	130,100	180500	187,100	55000	187,100	5000	187,100

This page is intentionally left blank

Standards Committee

Report of the meeting held on 6th March 2008

Matters for Information

**15. APPLICATION FOR DISPENSATION –
PIDLEY-CUM-FENTON PARISH COUNCIL**

Following advice offered in response to an enquiry on the various interests held by Members serving on Pidley-cum-Fenton Parish Council, it had become apparent that Members of that Council required a dispensation to enable them to continue to consider applications for financial assistance received from the Village Hall Management Committee.

Having regard to the Parish Council's request, the Committee was satisfied that approval of the application in these circumstances was required to prevent the business of the Parish Council from being impeded. The Committee has, therefore, granted a dispensation to five Members of Pidley-cum-Fenton Parish Council to enable them to speak and vote for the period ending 30th April 2008, after which time an application for the newly elected Councillors will need to be submitted should this still be considered necessary.

16. SURVEY OF CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS

To comply with an Audit Commission requirement identified in KLOE 4.3 (Key Line of Enquiry), details of Code of Conduct complaints received by the Standards Board for England relating to Huntingdonshire and the parishes within the District are presented to the Committee annually.

As Members had commented on the usefulness of this information, the Monitoring Officer has produced an analysis of cases considered by the Board since the introduction of the ethical standards regime in 2001 which has been noted by the Committee.

17. LOG OF CODE OF CONDUCT ENQUIRIES

In Item No. 11 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 20th February 2008, the Committee reported that they had requested the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer to initiate a process which would record Code of Conduct enquiries received from town and parish clerks and councillors and inform the Committee of those areas of the Code which gave rise to the most enquiries.

Having noted details of the thirteen enquiries received by the Monitoring Officer since the process began in January, the Committee is of the view that the record could prove to be a valuable reference tool when the local assessment regime commences.

18. CODE OF CONDUCT

Standards Board Notification

In accordance with the procedure adopted by the Standards Board for England, the Committee has been informed that the Board has decided not to take any further action in relation to an allegation made against a Councillor serving on St. Neots Town Council.

Fact Sheets

The Committee has noted the content of two fact sheets produced by the Standards Board for England on sections of the Code of Conduct relating to gifts and hospitality and personal and prejudicial interests.

19. INDEPENDENT ADJUDICATOR: NEW ROLE FOR STANDARDS COMMITTEES

Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, the role of Independent Adjudicator is to be abolished and responsibility for the granting of and supervision of exemptions of certain local authority posts from political restrictions is to be transferred to local authority standards committees. Guidance on the precise duties to be undertaken by the Committee is still awaited from the Department for Communities and Local Government, as is any indication of the timing of the transfer of functions. In the meantime, the Committee has acknowledged that there will be a requirement to vary its terms of reference and to consider the necessity for a Member briefing or training on the new function.

20. LOCAL ASSESSMENT: EXERCISE

Having regard to early guidance published by the Standards Board for England to help prepare local government for the local assessment of code of conduct cases, the Committee has requested the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer to make arrangements for Members to engage in a training exercise to help prepare the Committee for the commencement of the new local assessment regime currently anticipated for implementation with effect from 1st April 2008.

D L Hall
Chairman

Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework)

Report of the meeting held on 1st April 2008

Matter for Information

10. ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY

Reproduced as an Appendix to the Report of the Cabinet (Item No. 74 refers) is a report by the Head of Environmental Management to which is attached the draft Environment Strategy. The Strategy identifies and addresses the three key environmental challenges of tackling climate change, using resources efficiently and protecting and improving the environment. The Strategy will provide a platform for the District Council to pursue environmental objectives, enable it to influence others and lever in funding from outside organisations. It also will assist the Council in becoming an exemplar for sustainable development and living.

The Panel has considered the financial implications of the Strategy and has questioned the carbon cost of some activities against the carbon savings that will be achieved. Members have formed the view that the Council should endeavour to measure the value of projects in terms of the carbon emitted and saved. This will enable the Council to take better informed decisions on the environmental impact of decisions and the value of the measures taken relative to their cost.

The Panel has stressed the importance of the advice provided by the Council to residents on improvements to their homes. An associated matter relates to the need for suitably trained engineers to install home improvement measures. In this respect Members have recognised the value of the Energy Saving Trust's accreditation scheme for installers.

The Panel has commented that the language of the Strategy should be more assertive by changing as many references to "encouraging" certain actions as possible. While it is recognised that many of the items described are not mandatory and that change is required at the national level before it can happen, Members are of the view that, where possible, the actions referred to should be compulsory.

Some of the measures in the Strategy designed to promote biodiversity occupy extensive areas of the District. Although Members are aware that these measures have the benefit of reducing

the impact of flooding on farm land, an observation has been made on the need to protect agricultural land.

Attention has been drawn to the importance of road transportation to the economy, which means that there is a need to balance these competing priorities. It has been suggested that technology should be used to make alternatives to fossil fuels viable in this and other respects.

The Panel has endorsed plans to launch the Strategy during Environment Week in June 2008, which include the production of a supplementary document that highlights the Strategy's key messages.

S J Criswell
Chairman

Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery)

**Reports of the meetings held on 4th March and
1st April 2008**

Matters for Information

30. STATE OF THE DISTRICT ENGAGEMENT EVENTS

The Panel has been acquainted with the Cabinet's response to the Panel's recommendations arising from the study on holding State of the District engagement events. In order to meet the request for further information, the Panel has requested the Working Group that undertook the study work to meet with the Head of Policy and Strategic Services with a view to submitting the information requested at the earliest possible opportunity.

31. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

In discussing the Council's performance against its priority objectives, the Panel has been acquainted with the conclusions reached by the Corporate Plan Working Group on the quarterly monitoring report. Having noted that a number of the key activities that contribute to the priority objectives allocated to the Panel fall outside its remit, Members have agreed to incorporate into the review of "Growing Success" suggested areas for further investigation, which include green energy generation, the promotion of the Council's leisure centres, grant aid and home improvement grants. A further suggestion that an opportunity to obtain grant funding for the acquisition of gypsy and traveller sites might contribute towards the objective of achieving a low level of homelessness also has been discussed.

The Panel has commented on the low level of funding available to registered social landlords and the delivery of social housing through the development control process.

Having reviewed the data presented, the Panel has expressed their satisfaction with the levels of performance achieved in the year to date.

32. DISABILITY ACCESS STUDY – UPDATE AND OTHER MATTERS

In pursuit of the Panel's current study on Disability Access in and around the District, the Panel has received a presentation by the

Forum Manager of Directions Plus on her organisation's work. Members have been acquainted with its background, various campaigns and achievements to date.

The Forum Manager has outlined her perception that the Cambridgeshire County Council does not undertake adequate consultation prior to installing dropped kerbs, an issue of concern raised previously by the Panel. There are financial implications if dropped kerbs have to be altered if they are subsequently found to be defective.

The Panel also has discussed with the Forum Manager unauthorised parking in disabled bays and the misuse of Blue Badges. Particular concerns have been raised regarding the process for obtaining Blue Badges and the consequences of their illegal use. The Panel intends to investigate this matter further.

The Panel has considered an initiative to establish a coalition of disability groups. Having noted current proposals for a similar initiative in Essex to extend some of its work into Cambridgeshire, Members have commented that it would be more appropriate for this to be pursued by existing Cambridgeshire disability groups under the leadership of the County Council. In addition the importance of encouraging consultation of disability groups and individuals by the Council on its procedures, policies and planning issues was recognised.

The Panel has been acquainted with progress of various other aspects of the study. Following a disappointing response from the organisations approached, the Panel is to reconsider whether to recommend that a list of potential organisations to consult on the Council's policies is established. The Panel has decided to invite a representative of the Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations to a future meeting to discuss various matters, including the provision of advocacy services in the District.

33. PROMOTING BETTER HEALTH IN OLDER PEOPLE THROUGH PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The Panel has concluded its study on Promoting Better Health in Older People through Physical Activity. Members have been advised that the Council's Leisure Development Team has successfully acquired a grant funding from "Well Being in the East" to employ an Older Persons' Physical Activity Officer and to provide the necessary marketing, training and equipment associated with the post which would be advertised shortly. An MTP bid also has been approved by the Council to support this role. As a result, the Panel has concluded that a commitment has effectively been made to proceed with the programme of service for older people and that therefore, there is no longer any need to provide the information previously requested by the Cabinet. The Cabinet is to be formally notified accordingly.

34. OUTCOME OF CAMBRIDGESHIRE SUPPORTING PEOPLE HOME IMPROVEMENT REVIEW

The Panel has been acquainted with progress of a review of Home Improvement Agencies in Cambridgeshire. Members have noted the order of funding involved and the preliminary findings on variations between the District Councils on the services offered in terms of their cost and customer satisfaction. Huntingdonshire compares favourably against the other District Councils in both criteria. Having discussed the current position with regard to the Occupational Therapy service, the Panel has received details of the Council's budgetary provision for Home Improvement Grants.

35. WORK PROGRAMME AND ENGAGEMENT WITH THE EXECUTIVE

The Panel has reviewed the way in which it engages with the Executive. The Panel's attention has been drawn to the fact that in the current year fewer items in the Forward Plan have fallen under the remit of the Service Delivery Panel compared with the Service Support Panel and the implications of this for the Panel's role.

Having considered inviting Executive Councillors to future meetings to discuss their plans for the forthcoming year and to create a work programme in which the Scrutiny Panel constructively contributes to the Cabinet's business, the Panel has decided to await the outcome of discussions between the Scrutiny Panel Chairmen before taking any action on this matter.

36. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY) – PROGRESS

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies at each of its meetings. A report on Town Centre Cleaning Regimes is to be considered at a future meeting.

Councillor Mrs P A Jordan was appointed to the Adoption of Roads and Sewers Working Group to replace the late Councillor Mrs C A Godley.

Other Matters of Interest

37. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 – FORWARD PLAN

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the relevant Forward Plan of Key Decisions and has decided to examine an item on the Adoption of Local Standards for the provision of Sports Facilities in Huntingdonshire at a future meeting.

38. SCRUTINY

The Panel considered the latest edition of the Decision Digest and discussed matters contained therein.

S J Criswell
Chairman

Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)

**Report of the meetings held on 12th and
20th February and 11th March 2008**

Matters for Information

38. CAR PARKING STRATEGY

Following publication of the Cabinet's decision on 31st January 2008 regarding the development of a Car Parking Strategy Action Plan, the Panel called-in the matter for further consideration. The Panel was concerned and disappointed that its previous recommendations had not been accepted by the Cabinet and, at the Panel's invitation, Councillors I C Bates and P L Bucknell as Leader of the Council and appropriate Executive Councillor respectively attended the meeting when the call in was discussed. The Panel felt that the Cabinet should have adopted a more innovative approach to car parking and introduced greater incentives to encourage motorists to purchase and use low emission vehicles.

Following a wide ranging discussion, the Panel agreed that the decisions of the Cabinet on the Car Parking Action Plan should be referred back to the Cabinet for further consideration. In so doing, the Panel made the following recommendations in relation to incentives for low emission vehicles, the ring-fencing of surplus income and the commencement of the review of the Car Parking Action Plan -

- ◆ that a proposal to permit free parking for vehicles with CO² emissions of 120g/km or less in all Council car parks be introduced in the forthcoming car parking order;
- ◆ that the wider issues of encouraging the use of low emission vehicles be dealt with in the forthcoming Environment Strategy and in the next review of the car parking action plan;
- ◆ that the current inconsistency in the Car Parking Strategy vis-à-vis Council policy in terms of the ring-fencing of surplus income from car parking charges for integrated, sustainable and accessible transport be removed;
- ◆ that the car parking action plan proposals be implemented during the forthcoming summer; and
- ◆ that a review of the car parking action plan be commenced with effect from January 2009 to enable the impact of the forthcoming changes to be assessed for six months following their implementation.

The Panel also agreed to accept an invitation by the Leader of the Council for a representative of the Panel to consider with the appropriate Executive Councillor and relevant Officers the initial scoping of the next review of the car parking action plan.

The Panel's deliberations were considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 21st February 2008, details of which are set out in its Report to this meeting (Item No. 75 refers).

Subsequently a Notice of Motion submitted by seven Executive Councillors enabled the Cabinet to reconsider its decision in respect of the introduction of car parking charges. In advance of the Cabinet meeting, the Executive Councillor outlined a revised charging structure which was considered by the Panel at its meeting in March, when the Panel asked for further consideration of the proposed differential between the two hour/three hour charge in the "inner car parks" and the retention of a 50p charge for one hour on-street parking. The Panel reiterated its frustration with the situation whereby the policy contained in the car parking strategy for ring-fencing income from car parking conflicts with the Cabinet's recent decision and requested again that the anomaly be rectified to remove any confusion. The Panel also reiterated that it wished to encourage the Cabinet to consider the issues raised during the current debate as part of the review of the Action Plan.

39. PETITION BY ST. AUDREY LANE RESIDENTS, ST. IVES

A petition signed by 26 people has been presented to the Panel drawing attention to problems experienced by residents in the vicinity of St. Audrey Lane, St. Ives in times of heavy rainfall. The Panel has been informed that, in times of even moderate rainfall, the foul sewerage system backs up and discharges in gardens and inside houses.

Having regard to the discussions which have taken place to date with Anglian Water and in light of the difficulty in identifying the cause of the incidents and how this can be rectified, the Panel has asked for its concern to be conveyed to Anglian Water and for a report to be submitted outlining the respective responsibilities of the relevant agencies with a view to inviting a representative from Anglian Water to attend a future meeting to discuss the matter further.

40. SPEAKING AT DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PANEL MEETINGS

The Panel has considered the procedure for public speaking at meetings of the Development Control Panel which was implemented in January 2007 with the intention of the process being reviewed after twelve months.

The Panel feels that the system, which was introduced after a Scrutiny Panel investigation, has been successful in engaging the public in the decision making process on development control applications. However, Members were of the opinion that as the process was instigated by the Panel, they should co-ordinate any

review. The Panel has therefore agreed to invite comments from all Members for co-ordination and submission to the Development Control Panel.

A questionnaire will shortly be circulated to all Members for this purpose.

41. FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS TO RIVERSIDE PARK, HUNTINGDON

The content of a draft Management Plan for Huntingdon Riverside Park - Eastern End has been endorsed by the Panel for submission to the Cabinet. (Item No. 77 of their Report refers). The Plan, which will be subject to a wide ranging consultation exercise with residents and other users is intended to provide a co-ordinated approach to a number of changes affecting the park in the coming years.

In view of previous public concerns regarding changes to the football pitches at the park which it was now proposed to replace with two mini-soccer pitches, the Panel has been assured that research has indicated that there is sufficient capacity elsewhere in Huntingdon for full size pitches and that the demand for formal games can be met by the smaller pitches. However, the Panel has suggested that the current proposal for tree planting to separate the two pitches should be withdrawn so that, if the need were to arise, a larger pitch could be reinstated.

42. CYCLING WORKING GROUP

The Panel has received the final report of its Working Group which had been established to investigate the Council's expenditure on cycling in Huntingdonshire and its effectiveness in providing dedicated cycle paths and promoting cycling as a means of transport. In doing so, the Panel has noted that the Group had been unable to establish a clear link between Section 106 contributions for transport and its expenditure on individual cycleway schemes in Huntingdonshire. Arising from the report, the Panel has recommended to the Cabinet -

- ◆ that the offer by the County Council to update the Council's existing Cycling Strategy and to prepare an action plan for its implementation be welcomed and Officers requested to conclude this work within the next six months;
- ◆ that following completion of the strategy and action plan, specific contributions be sought in Section 106 Agreements for cycleway provision in Huntingdonshire in appropriate cases;
- ◆ that such contributions be retained by the District Council for expenditure on implementation of the Cycling Strategy Action Plan;
- ◆ that the District Council seek the allocation of specific funding through the Local Transport Plan for cycleway provision in Huntingdonshire; and

- ◆ that the approval of individual cycleway schemes continue to be the responsibility of the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee with District Council expenditure continuing to be allocated on a scheme by scheme basis.

Having subsequently noted the Cabinet's response to its recommendations (Item No. 82 of their Report refers) and its decision to request a further report addressing the wider issues of Section 106 funding and partnership working, the Panel has agreed to delay any response or further action until this has been circulated and discussed.

43. TRAVEL PLAN WORKING GROUP

The Panel has been acquainted with the outcome of the deliberations of its Working Group which had been established to investigate the Council's Travel Plan and the question of travel allowances and incentives/disincentives for Members and Officers to use more environmentally sensitive means of transport. In doing so, the Panel has endorsed the Group's belief that the Council should be innovative in its approach to the question of mileage allowances and that incentives should be made available for employees and Members to reduce the use of, in particular, heavily polluting cars as an example of good practice.

The Panel has subsequently approved the following recommendations for submission to the Cabinet –

- ◆ that an alternative form of mileage allowance be introduced for Members of the Council based upon exhaust emissions;
- ◆ that the new mileage allowance be optional for existing Members but compulsory for all newly elected Members with effect from 1st May 2008;
- ◆ that the Members Independent Remuneration Panel be requested to confirm their agreement to the changes to the mileage allowance for Members;
- ◆ that the necessary changes be made to the Members Allowance Scheme;
- ◆ that employees travelling to work by means of car share be permitted to park in Bridge Park Car Park at a concessionary rate if car parking charges are introduced for that car park by the Council and suitable arrangements be made to enable those who car share to travel home in an emergency if they are left without suitable means of transport;
- ◆ that enquiries continue to be made regarding potential funding for the implementation and publicity of the proposed changes to the mileage allowances to Members;
- ◆ that regular reports be produced highlighting the savings in both emissions and costs to the Council from the use of pool cars; and

- ◆ that further consideration be given to incentives for employees to use public transport, cycling and walking by the Working Group in the future.

Having noted that its recommendations were endorsed by the Cabinet at the meeting on 21st February (Item No. 83 of their Report refers), the Panel has asked the Corporate Governance Panel to consider those recommendations relating to Members Allowances. The Head of Environmental Management has also been invited to consider the implications of the remaining recommendations in conjunction with the preparation of the new Environment Strategy.

44. LOCAL PETITION AND CALLS FOR ACTION

The Panel has been acquainted with the implications for the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function of the Local Government and Public Health Act 2007 and the Police and Justice Act 2006 which are likely to be implemented later this year. Members have been informed that further information will be submitted to the Panel when guidance has been issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government.

The Panel has also considered the content of a consultation paper on local petitions and Councillors' "calls for action" which would enable them to place appropriate items on Committee agenda. In doing so, the Panel has endorsed a suggested response to the consultation subject to a number of specific amendments for incorporation in the reply.

45. CALL CENTRE, QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE: OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2007

The Panel has been acquainted with the Call Centre's quarterly report outlining performance by the service during the period October to December 2007.

The Panel has been pleased to note the recent achievement by the Call Centre team in gaining a Charter Mark in recognition of continuous improvement, value for money and investment in people. Members were also pleased to note that following their earlier comments, the introduction of weekly bulletins have improved communication throughout the Council and have enabled, in some instances, Call Centre staff to receive additional training in preparation for customer queries.

46. MONITORING SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS

The Panel has been updated on the receipt and expenditure of money negotiated under Section 106 Agreements by the Council.

The Panel has noted the concerns of Councillor T D Sanderson regarding the current monitoring of Section 106 Agreements and his view that further clarification and action is required in the expenditure of Section 106 money to prevent delays in the delivery of service. As

a result, Members have noted that the matter is currently being investigated by a number of Divisions throughout the Council in an effort to improve the present arrangements.

In relation to the question of funding for transportation, the Panel has welcomed the fact that a meeting has been arranged between a County Council representative and the District Council's Director of Environmental and Community Services to explore the current situation with regard to Section 106 expenditure.

47. GROWING SUCCESS: PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Council's performance against the targets within the Corporate Plan – "Growing Success" has been reviewed by the Panel.

48. SHARED SERVICES

The Panel has noted progress being made in the development of a shared services initiative by Huntingdonshire, East Cambridgeshire, South Cambridgeshire and Fenland District Councils with the assistance of a grant of £50,000 from the Regional Centre of Excellence.

Having discussed the financial implications of introducing the initiative, Members' attention has been drawn to potential savings to be made as a result of sharing software and the increased resilience of systems and staffing resources.

49. BUILDINGS OF SPECIAL ARCHITECTURAL OR HISTORIC INTEREST

The Panel has been acquainted with the consultation and notification procedure for the listing and de-listing of historic buildings which is currently being reviewed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) with English Heritage recently having become responsible for the administration of the listing system.

In discussing the implications locally for the de-listing of buildings, the Panel has identified a number of issues relating to the Pike and Eel Public House at Needingworth where the special interest of the building had been significantly eroded by numerous extensions and alterations which had meant that it no longer met the criteria for inclusion on the list.

50. TOWN CENTRE INITIATIVES WORKING GROUP

The Panel has been acquainted with the deliberations of its Working Group which had been established to investigate the purpose, cost and achievements of the town centre initiatives across the District.

Having agreed that the work of the Partnerships was extremely beneficial to the District, the Panel has noted their limited financial stability as the District Council's grant is determined on an annual basis which detracts from their ability to achieve their aims and

objectives. With this in mind, the Panel has recommended to the Cabinet that the District Council should enter into a financial agreement with the Partnerships over a five year period with a suitable clause that will enable the Council to terminate the agreement in appropriate circumstances. (Item No. 87 of their Report to Council refers.)

The Panel has also supported a continuation of the District Council provision of direct Officer support to the Partnerships.

51. WORKPLAN STUDIES

The Panel has concluded its studies on the Council's Travel Plan, Cycling in Huntingdonshire and Town Centre initiatives, arising from which recommendations have been made to the Cabinet for their consideration as summarised elsewhere in this report.

In order to progress a number of new issues, the Panel has agreed to establish two Working Groups to investigate aspects of the Council's Section 106 Agreements and Heavy Goods Vehicle parking throughout the District. Members of the former group have been asked to meet with the Leader of the Council to ensure that the work of the Group does not duplicate similar investigations by the Executive. Ideas for future studies will be discussed at the April meeting.

52. FORWARD PLAN

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the forward plan of forthcoming key decisions prepared by the Leader of the Council. In doing so, Members have identified a number of items for consideration at future meetings.

53. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE SUPPORT) – PROGRESS

The Panel has been apprised of progress on actions required as a result of previous decisions.

J A Gray
Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank

Development Control Panel

**Report of the meetings held on 25th February and
17th March 2008**

Matters for Information

**20. BOUNDARY REVIEW AND CHARACTER ASSESSMENT
STATEMENT: CONSULTATION DOCUMENTS FOR EARITH AND
THE HEMINGFORDS CONSERVATION AREAS**

The District Council is committed to the production of Conservation Area Character Statements which provide an analysis of the special interests of all 60 Conservation Areas in the District. These documents guide decisions on planning matters and other changes to the fabric of the Conservation Areas to ensure their character and appearance is not diminished. The boundaries of both the Hemingford and Earith Conservation Areas were first designated in the 1970s and, in each case, the proposed new boundaries will better reflect the historic interest of the settlements, the wider setting of the villages and significant views and vistas within the parishes. In terms of Earith, the boundary, when re-drawn, will include some later urban extensions.

Having commended the quality of all documents, the Panel has recommended the Cabinet to adopt the Hemingfords and Earith Conservation Area boundary reviews and character statement documents as Council policy.

**21. DESIGN BRIEF – FORMER PRIMARY CARE TRUST OFFICE
SUITE, PRIMROSE LANE, HUNTINGDON**

The Panel has been invited to comment on the content of a design brief which considers the development opportunities for a site to the south of Primrose Lane, Huntingdon formerly occupied as offices by the local Primary Care Trust. It is the purpose of the brief to establish principles for the development of the site and, in this respect, reference is made to proposed land use, site planning and building form with a view to achieving a high standard of design and sustainable development.

Given the opportunities presented by the site and its potential for development, the Panel has expressed a wish to have sight of the comments received on the brief from local and statutory bodies during the consultation period before drawing their own conclusions on preferred options for the site. Accordingly therefore, the design brief will be re-submitted to the Panel at a later date.

22. CONSULTATION – CREATION OF THE NEW TOWN OF NORTHSTOWE AND ASSOCIATED COMMUNITY AND HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS

Formal consultation is being undertaken by South Cambridgeshire District Council on the proposed development of the new town of Northstowe and the Panel has been apprised of the details of the development which proposes to deliver 9,500 new homes, new employment opportunities and related infrastructure. As the proposed new town was a key element in the growth strategy for the Cambridge Sub-Region and essential if the District also was to preserve the validity of its Core Strategy and avoid any additional growth pressures, the Panel has advised South Cambridgeshire District Council that this Council offers its support for the early delivery of the proposed development of Northstowe.

Whilst having been reminded that a transport and vehicle access strategy was intended to manage the traffic implications of the development, that the proposed scheme of improvements to the A14 would include transport management measures in the vicinity of Northstowe and that progress had been achieved in the construction of the Cambridge guided bus way which would route through the new town, the Panel has requested the Head of Planning Services to encourage South Cambridgeshire District Council to require, by condition, the submission of a construction traffic access scheme and, in the event that such a scheme is provided, that the District Council be invited to participate in any consultation on the scheme content.

23. SUMMARY OF ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY 2007

The Panel has noted the extent of enforcement activity undertaken by the Enforcement Team in the Planning Division during 2007 and has endorsed seven key objectives identified for the service in 2008. Of the objectives to be progressed, the Panel has welcomed the suggestion that work will commence on updating the enforcement website to raise the profile of the service and both awareness and understanding of enforcement issues. The Panel has indicated its support for the intention to provide greater feedback on the progress of cases to complainants. The Panel also has requested the reinstatement of the circulation to Members of the quarterly report of current enforcement cases via e-mail.

24. VALIDATION OF PLANNING APPLICATIONS – STANDARDISATION OF PLANNING APPLICATION FORMS

Further to Item No. 17 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 20th February 2008, the Panel has considered the response received from Town and Parish Councils, agents and statutory consultees to consultation undertaken on the local list of requirements necessary as part of the process for the standardisation of planning application forms (1APP). The Panel has endorsed the action proposed in response to the comments received from consultees and adopted the national and local list of requirements, definitions and guidance notes as the list of additional information which the District

Council can require to validate an application. The Panel also has authorised the Head of Planning Services, or in his absence, the Development Control Manager to vary the local list should this be necessary to reflect changes in Government guidance or local circumstances.

25. DIVERSION OF PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY

Having been advised that no objections had been raised by the Ramblers Association and Buckden Parish Council, the Panel has approved a proposal to divert parts of Public Footpath No. 1, Buckden to a new route under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to enable a proposed residential development to proceed for which planning consent had previously been granted. In authorising the making of the appropriate Order under the 1990 Act, the Panel has noted that the legal and advertising costs involved will be met by the developer.

26. PERFORMANCE MONITORING: DEVELOPMENT CONTROL

In receiving a statistical report on the performance of the Development Control Section over the period 1st October – 30th December 2007, the Panel was pleased to note that 82% of all applications received had been determined within the timescales required and is hopeful that the improved performance will result in the lifting of the designation of the Council as a “standards authority” for major applications in 2007/08.

27. ENFORCEMENT ACTION

Having been acquainted with the detailed circumstances of a case which related to unauthorised residential occupation of various lodges, houseboats, narrowboats, boats and flats at Hartford Marina, Wyton, the Panel has endorsed a general approach proposed by the Development Control Manager to further investigate and address the alleged breaches of planning control to seek to resolve the question of alleged unauthorised occupation of the various accommodations as a sole or main residence.

28. DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

Over two meetings, the Panel has determined a total of twenty three development applications of which nineteen were approved, three deferred and one refused.

Of interest to the Council will be the decision to approve both the creation of a skate park on land south of Stukeley Road, Huntingdon and residential development on the Pathfinder House site adjacent to St. Mary's Street.

P G Mitchell
Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank

Employment Panel

**Report of the meeting held on 6th February adjourned
and reconvened on 17th March 2008**

Matters for Information

16. ANNUAL PAY AWARD 2008/09

The Panel has agreed an increase of 3.3% in salary scales for District Council employees with effect from 1st April 2008.

17. STAFF INTEGRATION WITHIN CUSTOMER SERVICES TEAM

The Panel has approved a proposal to create a new Customer Services Team as part of the Commerce and Technology Directorate. The Team will evolve through the integration of existing customer services staff in the Call and Customer Services Centres, the Community Information Centres in Ramsey and Yaxley and the Visitor Information Centre in St. Neots. A Head of Service will be designated to lead the Team which will be tasked to ensure that Council services are promoted and made available to all groups and residents in the District.

Although there will be some minor changes to reporting lines and variations to the establishment, the proposals will not incur any additional cost and had the support of the Employees Side.

18. REQUEST TO FILL VACANT POST

Having been satisfied that it was necessary to appoint to a vacancy in the Environmental and Community Health Directorate, the Head of HR and Payroll Services has been authorised to recruit to the part-time post of Environmental Health Officer.

Mrs B E Boddington
Vice-Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank

Corporate Governance Panel

Report of the meeting held on 26th March 2008

Matters for Decision

16. CHANGES TO THE CODE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

By reference to a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is reproduced as Appendix A hereto) and after consideration of proposed changes to the Code of Financial Management, the Panel

RECOMMEND

that the Council approve the amended Code of Financial Management as appended to the report attached.

17. TRAVEL PLAN

By reference to a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is reproduced as Appendix B hereto) the Panel has been acquainted with the conclusions of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) and Cabinet following a review of the Council's Travel Plan and proposals for changes to the Members' Allowances Scheme, which forms part of the Council's Constitution. The Panel therefore

RECOMMEND

that the Council approve recommendations (a) - (d) of the report of the Travel Plan Working Group appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) as appended to the report attached.

Matters for Information

18. ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK AND ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Panel has endorsed the Council's assurance framework and noted the progress made to date in respect of the achievement of the Action Plan supporting the Annual Governance Statement.

19. EXTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORTS

(a) Data Quality Audit Report 2006/07

The Panel has been acquainted with a report on the Council's Data Quality arrangements for 2006/07 and has approved the Action Plan annexed to the report which has been devised to focus on areas designed to achieve a higher level of compliance to that already achieved by the Council.

(b) Use of Resources Report 2006/07

The Panel has been acquainted with the Council's Use of Resources Report 2006/07, in which the Council's external auditor has confirmed that the Council has consistently performed above the Audit Commission's minimum requirements. An Action Plan annexed to the report is designed to assist the Council in achieving compliance with the next level within the framework.

20. ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER

In receiving the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter, the Panel has been informed that the Council's rate of improvement in priority areas compared well with that of other District Councils. Attention was also drawn to the fact that the Council had consistently exceeded the Audit Commission's criteria for "performing well" and that views have been exchanged with the Audit Commission about the value of some Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPs).

21. RISK REGISTER UPDATE

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the high "red" risks taken from the Risk Register, the process by which the register has been compiled and how those risks are being reviewed. Future update reports will only include details of new or changed entries to the Register.

22. INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE: INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2008

The Panel has approved the Internal Audit and Assurance Plan for the four months period commencing 1st April 2008.

23. INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE: INTERIM PROGRESS REPORT

The Panel has been acquainted with progress by the Internal Audit Service against the Audit Plan for 2007/08 and noted the performance standards achieved.

**24. WHISTLEBLOWING:
ANNUAL REVIEW OF POLICY AND PROCEDURE**

The Panel has been informed of the outcome of the annual review of the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure, which has concluded that no changes are required.

C J Stephens
Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank

**PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CODE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
(Report by the Head of Financial Services)**

1. BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

- 1.1. The Code of Financial Management is that part of the Council's Constitution that regulates the financial management of the Council. It is important that this is a "live" document that adapts to the changing needs of the Council.
- 1.2. The purpose of this report is to allow the Panel to consider some proposed changes and invites the Panel to recommend them to the April meeting of the Council.

2. PROPOSED CHANGES

- 2.1. The proposed changes are not major and relate to the following issues:

Deletion of Contingency

The Council accepted the Cabinet's proposal to delete the general contingency and so references to its use now need to be deleted from the Code.

Rephrasing of Expenditure

Paragraph 3.7 has been amplified to clarify the circumstances in which revenue expenditure can be rephased to future years.

Change of Responsibilities and Post Titles

From April the Income section will be transferred to the Head of Financial Services from the Head of Revenue Services, who will be redesignated as the Head of Customer Services. Paragraphs 4.2 and 5.8 have been reworded accordingly.

Increased emphasis on achieving Efficiency Savings

Annex B has been reworded to highlight the need to Heads of Service to carefully consider all options before deciding to replace staff who hand in their notice.

3. CONCLUSIONS

- 3.1. The changes outlined above, included in the proposed Code at Annex A, will ensure that the Code reflects the current needs of the Council.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1. The Panel is asked to recommend the attached revised Code of Financial Management to the Council:

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985

Current Code of Financial Management

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

This page is intentionally left blank

Huntingdonshire District Council

CODE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

DRAFT 2008

This page is intentionally left blank

1. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1 General

Before any proposal that affects the Council's financial position is made the body or person(s) responsible for making that decision shall consider a written report, approved by the Director of Commerce and Technology, detailing the financial implications.

1.2 The Council

Will determine the Council's Financial Strategy, including a Medium Term Financial Plan (MTP), approve the annual budget and Prudential Indicators and set the level of the council tax.

Will approve the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

1.3 The Corporate Governance Panel

Will ensure that the financial management of the Council is adequate and effective.

Will ensure that the Council has a sound system of internal control including arrangements for the management of risk.

Will consider the Council's Code of Corporate Governance and approve the annual statement.

Will approve the terms of reference and strategy for internal audit and comment on the annual internal and external audit plans.

Will consider the external auditor's annual management letter.

Will approve the Council's tax base and final accounts.

1.4 The Cabinet

Will propose to the Council the Financial Strategy, the MTP, the annual budget and council tax level, after appropriate consultation which will include the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the Prudential Indicators and the annual Treasury Management Strategy.

Will set financial priorities, allocate and re-allocate resources in accordance with the limits in this Code, monitor and review financial performance and adopt a Treasury Management Policy.

1.5 Overview and Scrutiny Panels

Will contribute to the development of, and review the effectiveness of, the Council's Financial Strategy, MTP and annual budget.

1.6 Panels or Committees

Will ensure that all decisions within their remit are made within the resources allocated within relevant budgets and are consistent with achieving the Council's objectives. If they wish to make proposals that will require additional resources these will need to be subject to the Cabinet or Council making these available.

1.7 **Members and Employees**

Will contribute to the general stewardship, integrity and confidence in the Council's financial affairs and comply with this Code and any systems, procedures, or policies relating to the financial management of the Council.

Specifically, they shall bring to the attention of the Director of Commerce and Technology any act or omission that is contrary to the provisions of this Code or the maintenance of high standards of financial probity, and provide information or explanation on matters within their responsibility to him/her, the Monitoring Officer, Internal Audit Service or the Council's external auditors.

Any member or officer who is involved or who has an interest in a transaction between a third party and the Council shall declare the nature and amount, if material, as required by the Accounting Standards Body's Financial Reporting Standard on related party payments.

1.8 **The Director of Central Services, as Monitoring Officer** or, in his/her absence, the Head of Legal and Estates

Will report to the Council on any proposal, decision or omission that in his/her view is likely to result in the contravention of the law or any code of practice enacted under it, fails to comply with a legal duty, represents maladministration or is unjust, in accordance with section 5 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989.

For these purposes he/she shall have full and unrestricted access to all Council assets, systems, documents, information, employees and Members.

1.9 **The Director of Commerce and Technology, as Chief Finance Officer** or, in his/her absence, the Head of Financial Services

Will be responsible for the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs, prescribe appropriate financial systems, protocols, procedures and policies, maintain an internal audit service and report to the Council in the event of a decision or action leading to unlawful expenditure, a loss or deficiency or an unlawful accounting entry (in accordance with section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, section 114 of the Local Government Act 1988 and the Accounts and Audit Regulations).

Will be responsible for ensuring the final accounts are completed and published by the statutory dates and reporting the details of any material amendments specified by the external auditor to the Corporate Governance Panel.

For these purposes he/she shall have full and unrestricted access to all Council assets, systems, documents, information, employees and Members.

1.10 **The Head of Financial Services**

Will be responsible for detailed and operational aspects of the administration of the Council's financial affairs on behalf of the Director of Commerce and Technology, approving new financial systems and undertaking such duties as are set out in this Code.

1.11 Chief Officers and Heads of Service

Whilst Chief Officers will take ultimate responsibility for their employees' actions, the Council's management structure is based on Heads of Service or, in a few cases, Chief Officers taking prime responsibility for a service and its related budget.

The Manager responsible for a budget:

- may incur financial commitments and liabilities in accordance with this Code, the Council's Scheme of Delegation and resources allocated in budgets that have been released subject to Annex B. In particular they may make purchases of goods and services, subject to the requirements of the Code of Procurement, and employ staff, in accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules. They will normally delegate appropriate elements of this responsibility to members of their staff.
- will be responsible for regular and effective monitoring and forecasting of the financial position relating to their services.
- will be responsible for proper financial and resource management and the prevention of fraud and corruption within the services and functions under their control.
- will determine the inherent risks, within their services, to the achievement of the Council's priorities and establish, maintain and document adequate systems of internal control and financial monitoring, in consultation with the Internal Audit Service, and ensure that relevant employees or Members are familiar with such systems.
- will be responsible for providing in a timely manner, the information necessary to ensure that the final accounts can be completed by the statutory deadlines.
- will be responsible for reviewing and varying fees and charges at least annually for services under their control, after consultation with the relevant Executive Councillor(s) and/or Chairman of the relevant Panel. In doing so, they shall:
 - ensure that relevant legislation is complied with, particularly where it specifies the charges to be made or constrains them in some way.
 - having regard to the charges of any alternative service providers with whom the Council is competing, seek to maximise income, net of applicable costs, as far as is possible without compromising the Council's stated corporate priorities and objectives.
 - provide discounts where they are expected to stimulate demand and generate additional net income which would otherwise not be obtained and/or they are in the best interests of the service and its customers, particularly where they make the services available to those who could not otherwise afford them, provided that such discounts do not result in additional net cost to the Council.

1.12 Internal Audit

Will be responsible for providing an independent and objective opinion on internal control, risk management and governance systems. In accordance with its terms of reference it shall undertake audit reviews that focus on areas of greatest risk to the Council's control environment in accordance with a programme agreed annually by the Director of Commerce and Technology after consultation with Heads of Service.

For these purposes internal audit shall have full and unrestricted access to all Council assets, systems, documents, information, employees and Members.

2. FINANCIAL AND SERVICE PLANNING

2.1 In the Summer - Overall Review

The Cabinet shall review the financial performance of the Council in the previous year, compared with the annual budget, on the basis of a report prepared by the Head of Financial Services in conjunction with Heads of Service.

2.2 In the Autumn - Financial Strategy

The Cabinet, after consultation with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel and any appropriate organisations or bodies, shall recommend to the Council a Financial Strategy which will be used to determine the overall financial limits within which the annual budget and MTP will be prepared.

2.3 In the Winter - Annual Budget and MTP

The Cabinet shall, after consultation with the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel, recommend to the Council an annual budget for the next financial year and a MTP for the succeeding four years, incorporating both capital and revenue expenditure, which is consistent with corporate and service strategies and the Financial Strategy. This budget will include the allocation of resources to individual services and capital projects.

2.4 In the Spring - Service Financial Plans

Following approval of the annual budget each Head of Service shall update their Service Plan(s) to incorporate a Service Financial Plan, which sets out variations in the level of fees and charges and how the resources allocated will be used to meet service objectives in the forthcoming year.

3. CONTROLLING FINANCIAL PLANS

3.1 Financial Monitoring

Heads of Service will be responsible for regular and effective monitoring and forecasting of the financial position relating to their services.

The financial performance of each service and capital project will be reviewed by Chief Officers quarterly on the basis of monitoring statements prepared by Heads of Service in conjunction with the Head of Financial Services.

The financial performance of the Council will be reviewed by Cabinet quarterly on the basis of monitoring statements prepared by the Head of Financial Services in conjunction with Heads of Service.

Heads of Service will ensure that relevant Executive Councillors are regularly informed of the progress in delivering approved MTP schemes.

3.2 **Commitments to Expenditure in Future Years**

No new commitment to expenditure beyond the current budget year may be made unless it;

- is consistent with the achievement of the Council's objectives and other relevant Strategies, **and**
- is compatible with the Council's MTP and Financial Strategy, **and, either**
- can be met from within currently approved and released resources. If it is to be funded from savings, these must be defined, permanent and not already earmarked for the achievement of the Council's savings targets, **or**
- is funded from a budget transfer in accordance with section 3.5 below.

If the Head of Service has any concerns about their proposal meeting these requirements they must consult the Head of Financial Services.

3.3 **Grants, Cost Sharing and s106 agreements**

Where a Head of Service proposes to take advantage of grants from other organisations, or some other form of cost sharing, whereby they will be able to deliver additional or improved services, consistent with their Service Plan, without creating any current or future commitment to additional net expenditure they may do so subject to:

- the funds being dependent upon a particular project or service being provided but, in the case of S106 agreements, the location or some other aspect is at the Council's discretion.
- informing the Head of Financial Services of the details
- consulting the relevant Executive Councillor(s) if the proposal exceeds £30,000 revenue or £50,000 capital in any one year.

A Head of Service may utilise sums of money received under S106, or equivalent, agreements where the nature and location of the item/service is specified. The Head of Financial Services should be informed of the details.

3.4 **Approvals for additional spending with a net impact**

Proposals for increases to the total allocated to a budget in the current year (Supplementary Estimates) and their impact in future years may be approved by the Cabinet subject to the revenue impact not exceeding £300,000 in aggregate in any financial year. The impact of such approvals will be included in appropriate financial reports within the budget/MTP process and, once Council have noted these items, the Cabinet's limit will be re-set. A transfer of a sum from capital to revenue will have a revenue impact and so will count as a request for additional spending.

In all other cases the approval of the Council will be required.

3.5 **Approvals for additional spending with compensating savings**

Proposals that require initial funding but will then result in net surpluses or savings that are at least sufficient to produce a break-even position will be supported in principle if they are:

- consistent with increasing the achievement of the Council's objectives and compatible with relevant Strategies.
- achievable within the Council's Financial Strategy.
- supported by a robust business case which includes a risk assessment.
- supported by the Chief Officers' Management Team.

The Director of Commerce and Technology may approve such a scheme following consultation with the relevant Executive Councillor for the service and the Executive Councillor for finance. The relevant budget(s) and MTP will be appropriately adjusted.

3.6 **Budget Transfers**

The Council has five main types of budgets:

- Service Revenue Budgets
Service budgets relate to the provision of services directly to the public and are defined as the lowest level included in the report to Council when the budget is approved. They include depreciation relating to capital assets and recharges from Management Units and Overhead Budgets.
- Capital Scheme Budgets
These provide the funding to complete a defined capital project and are likely to include some recharges from Management Units and Overhead Budgets. When the project is completed a charge for depreciation is made to the appropriate Service Revenue Budget.
- Management Unit Budgets
Management Unit budgets collect together the costs of employees, and their ancillary costs that relate to supporting services, before they are recharged to service budgets or overhead budgets based on the degree of benefit that is being received.
- Overhead Budgets
Overhead budgets collect together a relevant portion of management unit costs together with other related costs before they are recharged based on the degree of benefit that is being received. Examples include the costs of office provision or of the Printing Service.
- Technical Budgets
These include items such as interest on investments and the reversal of depreciation charges and will not be available for transfer to other budgets except in meeting the specific purpose for which they were established.

Whilst most budgets will reflect a net cost, some will identify an expected surplus.

The transfer of resources within, or between, any of the types of budgets is supported in principle when it will make it more likely that the Council will

achieve its service objectives and targets or enhance value for money. There do, however, need to be some limitations for effective financial management and to ensure that Executive Councillors, Cabinet and Council are aware of, and involved in, the more significant changes or where there is a financial implication.

The limitations fall into three categories. The first relates to Technical Budgets and recharges and Annex A details the budget transfers that will not be permitted in relation to them. The second relates to budgets for pay, national insurance and pension contributions and Annex B explains why and how budget transfers relating to these items are limited. Finally, the required involvement of Members is defined below.

The Council's management structure is based on Heads of Service or, in a few cases, Chief Officers taking responsibility for these budgets.

The **Manager responsible for a budget** may approve a budget transfer within and between the budgets they are responsible for providing it is:

- Consistent with increasing, or at least maintaining the achievement of service objectives and compatible with the Council's Financial and other relevant Strategies.
- Not to or from a Technical Budget or a recharge or from a pay, NI or pension contributions budget unless permitted by Annexes A or B.
- Not from capital to revenue
- Supported by their Chief Officer
- Notified to the Head of Financial Services
- Within the following limits if between budgets (there shall be no financial limits within a budget):
 - Revenue to revenue £50k
 - Revenue to capital £50k
 - Capital to capital £50k

Similarly, a **Chief Officer** may, subject to the same criteria, approve budget transfers between any budgets that are their responsibility or the responsibility of their staff.

The **Chief Officers' Management Team** may, subject to the same criteria except for the enhanced limits shown below, approve budget transfers between any budgets:

- Revenue to revenue £100k
- Revenue to capital £100k
- Capital to capital £100k

Cabinet may approve budget transfers of up to:

- Revenue to revenue £250k
- Revenue to capital £250k
- Capital to capital £250k

Any previous transfers in the same financial year relating to those budgets shall be aggregated for determining whether the limit has been exceeded.

In all other cases the approval of the Council will be required.

3.7 Re-phasing of Expenditure

The re-phasing of expenditure and consequent transfer of budget between years may be made by the relevant Head of Service, following consultation with the Head of Financial Services, providing that it is consistent with service objectives and compatible with the Council's Financial and other relevant Strategies. Revenue expenditure can only, normally, be rephased to later years if it relates to a specific project with identified funding in the current year that has been delayed for reasons outside of the control of the relevant Head of Service. The amount is further limited by the net underspending on that Head of Service's budgets in the current year.

3.8 Price Changes

Allocation to individual Budgets of any provision for inflation or other purposes will be determined by the Head of Financial Services.

3.9 Project Appraisals

All proposals for changes to the MTP will require an explanatory appraisal, unless the Head of Financial Services considers that the item is of a technical nature. Appraisals for new and modified schemes must be made available to Members, via the Council's intranet, by the date on which the related reports are circulated.

4. CASH AND CREDIT MANAGEMENT

4.1 Banking

The Director of Commerce and Technology is responsible for all Council banking arrangements and shall maintain (an) account(s) with (an) appropriate bank(s) with a credit rating equivalent to 'Long Term AA' or better in the data published by Fitch IBCA. All transactions involving income or expenditure shall be dealt with through the Council's bank account(s).

4.2 Income

All employees receiving money (including cash, cheques, credit card payments etc.) must comply with the relevant procedures issued by the Head of Customer Services to ensure that the sums are properly recorded, receipted and banked.

The Head of Financial Services shall manage a debt collection service on behalf of the Council and all sums due must be registered by raising an invoice on the Council's Financial Management System or some other system or procedure approved by the Head of Financial Services.

4.3 Loans

All borrowing will be undertaken by the Head of Financial Services in accordance with the Code of Practice for Treasury Management in Local Authorities and the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, both published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), and the Council's Treasury Management Policy and Annual Strategy Statement.

A report shall be submitted to the Cabinet prior to the start of each financial year so that it can recommend to the Council the maximum borrowing limits for the forthcoming financial year.

4.4 Investments

Investments shall be made by the Head of Financial Services in accordance with the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities, Government guidance on Local Government Investments, the Council's Treasury Management Policy and Annual Strategy Statement, either directly or by utilising external fund managers.

Periodic reports shall be submitted to the Cabinet on Treasury Management and by 31st July each year an annual report shall be submitted on activities in the previous financial year.

4.5 Payments

Payments due to external suppliers of goods and services must be made through the Council's financial management system and in accordance with the payments procedures of that system, as determined by the Head of Financial Services. Payments shall be made direct to the supplier's bank account wherever this is practical.

5. ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES

5.1 The Council will follow the best practice guidance contained in the Accounting Code of Practice and other relevant publications produced by CIPFA in the preparation and maintenance of its accounts.

5.2 Statement of Accounts

The annual Statement of Accounts shall be presented to the Corporate Governance Panel for approval within the prescribed statutory timescale.

5.3 Records

Each Head of Service is responsible for maintaining records of financial transactions and commitments and employee time, in forms agreed with the Head of Financial Services, and for ensuring that all financial transactions are properly recorded in the appropriate financial period and to an appropriate account within the Council's Financial Management System.

5.4 Retention of Documents

Documents required for the verification of accounts, including invoices, shall be retained in a retrievable format for any statutory period, or otherwise for six years or such other time that is specified by the Head of Financial Services.

5.5 Contingent Liabilities

Any Officer who is aware of a material and outstanding contingent liability shall notify the Head of Financial Services, who shall include details in the Council's accounts or in a Letter of Representation to be presented to the Council's external auditors in respect of those accounts.

5.6 **Stock**

Where a formal stock account is used in connection with any service, the relevant Head of Service shall ensure that a certified stock-take is carried out in the last week of March each year, and that records of receipt and issue of all stock are maintained throughout the year in a manner agreed with the Head of Financial Services.

5.7 **Insurance**

The Head of Financial Services shall obtain insurance to protect the Council or minimise its potential losses from risks including those to employees, property, equipment and cash. Any decision not to insure significant risks must be based on a detailed risk assessment.

5.8 **Write-off of Irrecoverable Debts**

The Head of Customer Services, or in his/her absence the Head of Financial Services, is authorised to write-off debts with an individual value of up to £4,000, or of a greater amount after consultation with the Executive Councillor responsible for finance, having taken appropriate steps to satisfy himself/herself that the debts are irrecoverable or cannot be recovered without incurring disproportionate costs.

A summary report detailing debts written-off shall be submitted to the Cabinet quarterly.

6. **ASSETS**

6.1 **Definition**

An asset is an item of land, building, road or other infrastructure, vehicle or plant, equipment, furniture and fittings or information and communications technology, (hardware and software) with a life exceeding one year.

6.2 **Capital Expenditure**

The purchase or improvement of any asset will normally be treated as capital expenditure. However, expenditure of less than £10,000, or £5,000 in the case of vehicles, plant and equipment, will not normally be treated as capital expenditure unless the Head of Financial Services considers it is in the Council's interests to do so.

6.3 **Asset Register**

The Head of Legal and Estates will, after consultation with the Head of Financial Services, determine the procedures for maintaining the Asset Register, including the information that needs to be recorded. Heads of Service will provide the prescribed information for all relevant assets relating to their services in accordance with those procedures.

6.4 **Acquisition**

The purchase of assets must be in accordance with the procedures specified in the Council's Code of Procurement, having regard to the value of the asset.

The relevant Head of Service shall inform the Head of Financial Services within 10 working days of the acquisition of an asset which meets the definition for capital expenditure.

6.5 **Leases**

Finance and operating leases are to be used only if they are in the Council's financial interest and with the approval of the Head of Financial Services.

6.6 **Control of Assets**

Each Head of Service is responsible for ensuring that the assets relating to their services are properly safeguarded, managed and maintained, and used only to achieve the Council's objectives. This will include establishing and maintaining appropriate security, control systems and records. They will need to consult relevant officers in relation to specialist items and, where vehicles are concerned, the officer holding the Council's Operating Certificate who has specific statutory responsibilities.

6.7 **Disposal of Assets**

The sale of assets must be in accordance with the procedures specified in the Council's Code of Procurement, having regard to the current value of the asset.

The relevant Head of Service shall inform the Head of Financial Services within 10 working days of any disposal of an asset included in the Asset Register.

6.8 **Valuations**

Assets will be re-valued at five yearly intervals by an appropriately qualified person according to the type of asset. Where appropriate, interim valuations will be recorded on the Asset Register by reference to a suitable index.

This page is intentionally left blank

TECHNICAL BUDGETS

The following budgets cannot be reduced by officers in order to permit extra expenditure on another budget except where this is part of the specific purpose for which they were established.

- Any contingency, unless it complies with the approved rules for the use of the general contingency or is an adjustment to reflect the technical application of the contingency (e.g. allocation of inflation from an inflation contingency)
- Capital charges
- Commutation Transfer
- Pension Liabilities (as opposed to pension contributions)
- Interest paid
- Interest received
- Any recharge or allocation from a management unit or overhead account.

This page is intentionally left blank

BUDGETS FOR PAY
(Pay is deemed to include, NI and Pension Contributions
for the purpose of this Annex)

1. The Council does not provide for a 100% of the costs of its employees. This is because experience shows that it is generally impossible to avoid gaps when people leave and are replaced. It is also common for the new employees to be on a lower point in the grade than the person who left.
2. Obviously it is unlikely that each pay budget will be equally affected in any particular year and therefore, to simplify budget monitoring, each pay budget includes 100% of employee costs but there is a negative, centrally held, contingency that represents the saving that the Council's overall budget is based on. This contingency is based on 2.5% of the pay for most services less a sum for recruitment costs (advertising and interview expenses).
3. Therefore no use of savings, virement or rephasing relating to a pay budget, whether temporary or permanent, will be permitted unless this annex is complied with.

Employees Leaving

4. In order to maximise the likelihood of achieving this saving a Head of Service must, whenever an employee gives their notice, determine whether:
 - a. the post is kept vacant for a period before a decision is made,
 - b. the post can be deleted,
 - c. a restructuring should be proposed,
 - d. the post should be filled at the end of a defined period,
 - e. it should be filled as soon as possible,
 - f. it should be filled as soon as possible and temporary employees or consultants are engaged to provide cover in the meantime.
5. In deciding on which option to take the Head of Service should take appropriate HR and financial advice. The decision must include consideration of any need for temporary or permanent regradings, acting up allowances, honoraria, employees or consultants. Allowance must also be made for an appropriate saving, to help achieve the contingency budget, as determined by the Head of Financial Services.
6. Heads of Service will also need to liaise with HR to arrange recruitment advertising and ensure that the recruitment arrangements comply with the process agreed by Employment Panel.

Other Adjustments and Virement

7. If any other proposal is made to transfer (in accordance with paragraph 3.6) or rephase (in accordance with paragraph 3.7) a pay budget, a budget reduction, as determined by the Head of Financial Services, shall be made in order to allow the contingency budget to be reduced.

Exceptions

8. If the Head of Service can demonstrate to their Director the **critical** nature of maintaining immediate service cover in certain key work areas then the requirements of paragraph 4 above will not apply and the saving/budget reduction may be reduced or nil. Examples where this might apply would be if vacancies would result in insufficient employees with the necessary abilities or skills to run refuse rounds or to safely open swimming pools. Agency, or equivalent employees, must be available with the necessary skills and/or abilities.
9. If the Head of Service can demonstrate that a **critical backlog** of work has resulted from continuing vacancies such that the service to the public is seriously compromised or net additional costs would become unavoidable the saving/budget reduction may be reduced. Examples where this might apply would be dealing with benefit applications or collecting council tax income. Agency, or equivalent employees, must be available with the necessary skills and/or abilities.

**TRAVEL PLAN
(Report by the Travel Plan Working Group)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At their meeting held on 13th March 2007, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) decided to establish a Working Group to investigate the Council's Travel Plan and the question of travel allowances and incentives/disincentives for Members and Officers to use more environmentally sensitive means of transport.
- 1.2 The Working Group comprised Councillors M G Baker, J A Gray and R J West and has met on a number of occasions in the ensuing months. (Councillor D B Dew was initially appointed to the working group but was replaced by Councillor Gray when he ceased to be a member of the Scrutiny Panel).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council's Travel Plan was approved by the Cabinet in October 2006. It applies equally to employees and members of the Council and is intended to encourage them to make better travel choices by reducing inefficient car usage and promoting healthier travel. In discussing the Plan prior to its approval by Cabinet, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) doubted whether the actions proposed would be sufficient to achieve the targets identified. Members also felt that there was a lack of incentives for employees to discourage the use of private cars to travel to and from work and that there was a need for further consideration to be given to possible concessions to employees to encourage the use of alternative forms of transport such as reductions on season tickets for bus travel.
- 2.2 The Panel also discussed the current scheme for the payment of mileage allowances and was concerned that these tended to favour the use of cars with larger engine sizes. The Panel therefore felt that the Plan provided an opportunity to review both the employees and members schemes.
- 2.3 The employees' car mileage allowances form part of their contracts of employment with the Council. Although pay negotiations are determined locally, travel allowances are part of the wider national agreement approved by the National Joint Council for Local Government Services. Mileage rates are currently determined by engine size as shown in Annex A attached.
- 2.4 Allowances for members are set by the Council, having regard to the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel. The mileage rates currently are aligned with those of the employees. These were last reviewed by the Panel in their report of November 2006. The Panel had received representations that the mileage allowance for members be reduced to 40 pence per mile which is the rate above which income tax is payable to HM Customs and Revenues. The Panel concluded that the members' rate should be fixed to that of the employees on the

grounds of equity but should track the employees' rate if that should vary at any time in the future.

- 2.5 In establishing a study of the subject, the Service Support Panel asked the working group to look at ways of encouraging the use of more energy efficient vehicles and whether greater incentives could be made available to discourage the use of the car.

3. INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Working Group made extensive enquiries on the websites of other local authorities into their travel allowances and incentives and the content of their travel plans. Information was obtained on the estimated costs of running a car provided on the Royal Automobile Club's website and the taxable allowances operated by HM Customs and Revenues. Enquiries were made into the car sharing arrangements available for employees in Cambridgeshire.
- 3.2 Extensive use was made of the [vcacarfueldata](http://vcacarfueldata.org.uk) website which contains data on the emissions of all recently manufactured vehicles.

4. VEHICLE EMISSIONS

- 4.1 With the emerging Environment Strategy and a growing recognition of the importance of carbon footprints, the Working Group felt that the current mileage rates for employees and members based on engine size with no regard to emission values was becoming rapidly outdated. With only three engine bands and the highest being for vehicles with an engine size over 1,200 cc, the great majority of employees and members will be eligible for the maximum rate of 54.4 pence per mile. Tax is payable on that element of reimbursement over 40 pence per mile which HM Customs and Revenues regard as 'profit'.
- 4.2 The Working Group did not feel that it was within its remit to propose an alteration to the mileage rates paid to employees which, as mentioned above, forms part of their contracts of employment. Any change would have to be the subject of negotiation between the Council and the employees and could result in a move from the national to a locally determined scheme.
- 4.3 However, the Working Group did consider that Members could demonstrate their commitment to reducing emissions, reducing their carbon footprint and improving local air quality. By altering the mileage rate for members to one based on emission rates, the Working Group is of the opinion that this may set an example for others to follow.
- 4.4 Information on exhaust emission ratings or 'Euro' standards (expressed as the amount of grams per kilometre of CO₂ emitted) is readily available on www.vcacarfueldata.org.uk. These have been converted to bandings for the purposes of vehicle excise duty which are shown in the following table, together with the VED rates –

Vehicles registered on or after 1st March 2001		Diesel Car TC 49		Petrol Car TC 48		Alternative Fuel Car TC 59	
Bands	CO2 Emission Figure (g/km) *	12 months rate £	6 months rate £	12 months rate £	6 months rate £	12 months rate £	6 months rate £
Band A	Up to 100	<u>0.00</u>	-	<u>0.00</u>	-	<u>0.00</u>	-
Band B	101 to 120	<u>35.00</u>	-	<u>35.00</u>	-	<u>15.00</u>	-
Band C	121 - 150	<u>115.00</u>	<u>63.25</u>	<u>115.00</u>	<u>63.25</u>	<u>95.00</u>	<u>52.25</u>
Band D	151 - 165	<u>140.00</u>	<u>77.00</u>	<u>140.00</u>	<u>77.00</u>	<u>120.00</u>	<u>66.00</u>
Band E	166 - 185	<u>165.00</u>	<u>90.75</u>	<u>165.00</u>	<u>90.75</u>	<u>145.00</u>	<u>79.75</u>
Band F	186 - 225	<u>205.00</u>	<u>112.75</u>	<u>205.00</u>	<u>112.75</u>	<u>190.00</u>	<u>104.50</u>
Band G	226+	<u>300.00</u>	<u>165.00</u>	<u>300.00</u>	<u>165.00</u>	<u>285.00</u>	<u>156.75</u>

4.5 Exhaust emissions are not available for vehicles first registered before 1st March 2001. Some examples of the types of cars that fall in the various bands are shown in Annex B.

4.6 Taken together with the varying excise duty rates, the Working Group considers that the payment of mileage rates based upon emissions may influence Members to choose cars that have less impact on the local environment. A suggested alternative to a mileage allowance based on engine size is:

	First 8,500 miles	thereafter	Element of expense liable to tax
Band A	64.0p	32.0p	24.0p
Band B	56.0p	28.0p	16.0p
Bands C&D	40.0p	20.0p	0p
Bands E&F	36.0p	18.0p	0p
Band G	30.0p	15.0p	0p
Vehicles registered before 1/1/2001	30.0p	15.0p	0p
Motorcycles	24.0p	24.0p	0p

4.7 The allowance is intended to be attractive to those who drive a low emission car and penalise those with a heavy polluting vehicle. The rates are deliberately drawn much wider than the existing allowance based on engine size to provide a greater incentive to change.

4.8 The Working Group do not think that this should be mandatory for existing Members but would hope that most will opt to be paid on the new basis. All newly elected Members would be paid on the emissions rating allowance. This would mean that the Council would have to operate two systems of payment at a small additional administrative cost which the Working Group feels would be far outweighed by the benefits both to the Council and the local environment.

4.9 Any alteration to the Members mileage allowance would have to be agreed by the Independent Remuneration Panel. Enquiries have been made with the Chairman of the Panel as to whether it would be necessary to reconvene the Panel to approve the change but his view is

that this can be dealt with in a convenient manner without the expense of holding a meeting of the Panel.

5. INCENTIVES TO EMPLOYEES

- 5.1 Having regard to the nature of the public transport system and the impracticality of walking or cycling to work because of the distance involved and the lack of dedicated cycleways, the Working Group acknowledge that, for many of the Council's employees, the car will remain for some time the only viable means of travel to work.
- 5.2 That being the case, the Working Group feels that greater encouragement should be given to car sharing which has clear benefits in reducing pollution and improving air quality. The Working Group's attention has been drawn to a number of car sharing initiatives that have been developed with an ability to search on various websites for possible people with whom to share. Car sharing remains, however, a matter of choice for the individual and there is no incentive to encourage the Council's employees to share with colleagues or others travelling to the same location.
- 5.3 Circumstances will change if the Cabinet decide to accept the recommendations of the Car Parking Working Party and introduce car parking charges for the Riverside, Huntingdon and Bridge Place, Godmanchester car parks which will represent a negative incentive to car share for employees to avoid paying parking charges. The Working Group feels that the Council should take a more positive step by reducing charges for those who do car share. This could be limited to one car park only such as Bridge Place where charges currently do not apply. The loss of income that the Council would incur is difficult to predict as this would depend upon take up but, as no charge has been made for this car park in the past, this should not result in any reduction in income compared to previous years. As employees will no longer have the option of free parking in future, this may also help to cushion the impact of charging later in the year.
- 5.4 The Working Group is aware of a concern that an employee who has come to work by car share may encounter a problem in travelling home either during the day in an emergency or at the end of the day if the driver has had to leave early in similar circumstances. Such occasions are likely to be rare but in those isolated incidents, it is suggested that the Council meet the cost of a taxi for the employee to travel home if public transport is unavailable.
- 5.5 The Working Group has discussed how a concession for car sharing might be administered, bearing in mind that tickets will be dispensed by machine for the Bridge Place car park. Information has been presented to the Panel previously that ticket machine are likely to become more sophisticated in their programming which will create an opportunity for greater flexibility in the charging structure. Until that time, a concession for employees could simply be by way of a monthly claim for reimbursement by the driver of a vehicle who has carried a passenger. Verification, if considered necessary, could be undertaken by checking CCTV records with false claims being a disciplinary offence in the same way as any other allowances claim.

- 5.6 The Working Group also discussed briefly possible incentives for employees to use public transport or travel by foot or cycle. Further investigations will be necessary before any recommendations would be formulated and in order not to further delay this report, the Group will report to this subject at a future date.

6. POOL CARS

- 6.1 The Working Group investigated the use of the District Council's pool car status and the frequency/mileage of each car to date. The fleet comprises three diesel powered Toyota Yaris and a petrol/electric hybrid Toyota Prius. The pool cars have been specifically chosen for their low carbon emission output. The Toyota Yaris, tax band B, has an engine capacity of 1.3 and emits 119 g/km of CO₂ whilst the Prius, also tax band B, has an engine capacity of 1.5 and emits 104 g/km of CO₂. Although these were not actively promoted during their first quarter (April – June 2007), their usage has provided encouraging results:

Month	Mileage	Cost per mile – private car (54.4p)	Cost per mile – pool car (40p)	Saving £
May	1789	966.06	715.60	250.46
June	1430	772.20	572.00	200.20
July	3756	2,028.24	1,502.40	525.84
August	2714	1,465.56	1,085.60	379.96
September	2625	1,417.50	1,050.00	367.50
October	3616	1,952.64	1,446.40	506.24
November	3871	2,090.36	1,548.40	541.96

- 6.2 As anticipated, active promotion of the pool cars coupled with the loss of onsite parking has caused an increase in their usage in the second quarter reflecting the positive incorporation of the pool car into everyday work. The charge of 40p per mile includes the running costs of the vehicle and, as shown in the table above, highlights the increasing savings made by the Council through their use. The Group welcomes the use of the lower emission vehicles purchased by the Council and foresee their use to a greater extent in the future with increased publicity of their availability to employees and Members.
- 6.3 The Group felt that it would be useful also if it were possible to assess what the saving in CO₂ emissions was from the use of pool cars and in order to monitor the continuous use of the cars, the Group suggest that regular reports be made available highlighting the reductions in both costs to the Council and CO₂ emissions.

7. FINANCIAL PROVISION

- 7.1 As the concept of changing mileage rates to emission rates is an innovative approach, the group researched the potential availability of funding for publicity and the implementation of the scheme. To date no source has been identified but further enquiries may lead to possible opportunities for support.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The Working Group is firmly of the belief that the Council should be innovative in its approach to the question of mileage allowances and that incentives should be made available for employees and Members to reduce the use of cars in general and the more heavily polluting cars in particular.
- 8.2 By moving to a different basis for the payment of mileage allowances to members, the Working Group hopes that the Council will be seen as offering an example of good practice that will be followed by others. Positive incentives for car sharing by employees will help to make this more attractive as opposed to individual travel to work in single occupancy vehicles and again may be regarded as a step towards reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The working group therefore

RECOMMEND

- (a) that an alternative form of mileage allowance be introduced for Members of the Council as set out in paragraph 4.6 above based upon exhaust emissions;
- (b) that the new mileage allowance be optional for existing Members but compulsory for all newly elected Members with effect from 1st May 2008;
- (c) that the Members' Independent Remuneration Panel be requested to confirm their agreement to the changes to the mileage allowance for Members;
- (d) that the necessary changes be made to the Members Allowance Scheme;
- (e) that employees travelling to work by means of car share be permitted to park in Bridge Place car park at a concessionary rate if car parking charges are introduced for that car park by the Council and suitable arrangements be made to enable those who have car shared to travel home in an emergency if they are left without suitable means of transport;
- (f) that enquiries continue to be made regarding potential funding for the implementation and publicity of the proposed changes to the mileage allowances to Members;
- (g) that regular reports be produced highlighting the savings in both emissions and costs to the Council from the use of pool cars; and
- (h) that further consideration be given to incentives for employees to use public transport, cycling and walking by the Working Group in the future.

Background papers

See Annex C

Contact Officer: Miss N Giles
☎ 01480 387049

This page is intentionally left blank

MILEAGE RATES**Inland Revenue approved mileage rates**

Tax Year	Business Miles	Engine <1000cc	Engine 1001-1500cc	Engine 1501-2000cc	Engine >2000cc
2007/08	< 10,000	40 p/mile	40 p/mile	40 p/mile	40 p/mile
2007/08	> 10,000	25 p/mile	25 p/mile	25 p/mile	25 p/mile

Current Huntingdonshire District Council (Councillor)

Mileage Bands	451-999cc	1000-1199cc	1200-1450cc
< 8,500	39.7p	43.1p	54.4p
> 8,500	12.1p	12.0p	14.3p

This page is intentionally left blank

Examples of Vehicles within Tax Bands A – G

TAX BAND (emissions)	MAKE	MODEL	ENGINE CAPACITY	FUEL	CO2 (g/km)
A (up to 100)	Seat	Ibiza	1.4 TDI	Diesel	99
	Volkswagen	Polo	1.4 TDI	Diesel	99
B (101-120)	Citroen	C3	1.6 HDI	Diesel	118
	Peugeot	207	1.4 HDI	Diesel	120
	Fiat	500	1.2	Petrol	119
	Daihatsu	Sirion		Petrol	118
C (121-150)	Honda	Civic - Type S	2.2	Diesel	138
	Toyota	Avensis	2.2	Diesel	146
	Chevrolet	Matiz	1	Petrol	139
	Ford	Ka	1.3	Petrol	150
D (151-165)	Audi	A4 Saloon	1.9 TDI	Diesel	152
	Hyundai	Sonata	2	Diesel	159
	Renault	Clio	1.6	Petrol	160
	Suzuki	SX4	1.6	Petrol	165
E (166-185)	Mazda	5 series	2	Diesel	173
	Renault	Coupe	1.9	Diesel	180
	Chrysler Jeep	Sebring	2	Petrol	185
	Alfa Romeo	159	1.8	Petrol	181
F (186-225)	Skoda	Superb	2.5	Diesel	206
	Land Rover	Freelander 2	2.2	Diesel	224
	Kia	Sportage	2	Petrol	194
	Audi	Cabriolet	2	Petrol	197
G (226+)	Citroen	C6	2.7	Diesel	230
	Nissan	Patrol	3	Diesel	313
	Ford	Galaxy	2.3	Petrol	242
	Toyota	Land Cruiser	4	Petrol	291

This page is intentionally left blank

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Notes of the Travel Plan Working Group
- Reports and Minutes of meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)
- LGA Members' Allowance Scheme
- NJC Officer Mileage Rates
- HDC's Travel Plan
- RAC Report on Motoring 2006: Chapter 4 – Greener Motoring
- East of England Development Agency
- HM Revenue and Customs
- Manchester Green City Campaign
- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
- DVLA Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP) April 2007 – March 2008

Websites for the following Councils:

Birmingham City
Bristol City
Dundee City
South Bedfordshire District
Cambridgeshire County
London Boroughs of Bromley
Camden
Havering and Islington
Manchester City
Newcastle Upon Tyne City
North Lincolnshire
West Oxfordshire District
Sheffield City
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough
Southampton City
Warwickshire County

WEBSITES

www.vcacarfueldata.org.uk
www.huntsdc.gov.uk
www.rac.co.uk
www.lga.gov.uk
www.hmrc.gov.uk/green-transport/travel-plans.htm
www.camshare.co.uk
www.peterboroughcarshare.com
www.liftsharesolutions.com/carbudi.asp
www.globalactionplan.org.uk/transportfacts.aspx

This page is intentionally left blank