

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 19 JULY 2007** at **11.00 AM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

## **APOLOGIES**

  
**Contact  
(01480)**

**1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 4)**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2007.

**Mrs H Taylor  
388008**

**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. HUNTINGDON LEISURE CENTRE - REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF MTP FUNDING (Pages 5 - 8)**

To consider a report by Chief Officers' Management Team requesting the release of funds for an extension to the Impressions Fitness Suite.

**R Reeves  
388003**

**4. REVENUE MONITORING 2006/07 OUTTURN AND 2007/08 BUDGET (Pages 9 - 22)**

To consider a report by the Head of Financial Services

**Mrs E Smith  
388157**

**5. CAPTIAL MONITORING: 2006/07 OUTTURN AND 2007/08 BUDGET (Pages 23 - 38)**

To consider a report by the Head of Financial Services.

**Mrs E Smith  
388157**

**6. CHOICE BASED LETTINGS - ADOPTION OF LETTINGS POLICY (Pages 39 - 40)**

To consider a report by the Head of Housing Services recommending the adoption of a draft new lettings policy. (A copy of the Policy document is enclosed with Members' copies only).

**S Plant  
388240/  
J Collen  
388220**

**7. AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING RENEWAL ASSISTANCE POLICY DOCUMENT (Pages 41 - 44)**

To consider a report by the Head of Housing Services regarding proposed changes to the Council's Housing Renewal

**Mrs J Emmerton  
388203**

Assistance Policy.

**8. HUNTINGDONSHIRE PLAY STRATEGY** (Pages 45 - 72)

To consider a report by the Head of Environmental & Community Health Services regarding a draft Play Strategy for Huntingdonshire.

**D Smith  
388377**

**9. OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND AUDIT** (Pages 73 - 80)

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Planning Services to consider the findings of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment and to adopt new standards for open space, childrens play areas, outdoor sports facilities and allotments.

**R Probyn  
388430**

**10. REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY SINGLE ISSUE REVIEW: PLANNING FOR GYPSYS AND TRAVELLERS ACCOMMODATION - CONSULTATION ON OPTIONS & ISSUES** (Pages 81 - 88)

To consider a report by the Heads of Planning Services and of Housing Services containing a suggested response to a consultation document published by the East of England Regional Assembly.

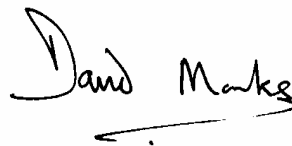
**R Probyn  
388430**

**11. REVIEW OF SMALL SCALE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS GRANTS SCHEME** (Pages 89 - 96)

To consider a report by the Working Group appointed by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources).

**A Roberts  
388009**

Dated this 11 day of July 2007



Chief Executive

**Notes**

1. *A personal interest exists where a decision on a matter would affect to a greater extent than other people in the District –*

(a) *the well-being, financial position, employment or business of the Councillor, a partner, relatives or close friends;*

(b) *a body employing those persons, any firm in which they are a partner and any company of which they are directors;*

- (c) *any corporate body in which those persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £5,000; or*
  - (d) *the Councillor's registerable financial and other interests.*
2. *A personal interest becomes a prejudicial interest where a member of the public (who has knowledge of the circumstances) would reasonably regard the Member's personal interest as being so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.*

**Please contact Mrs H Taylor, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Tel No. 01480 388008/e-mail Helen.Taylor@huntsdc.gov.uk /e-mail: if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Cabinet.**

**Specific enquiries with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.**

**Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business.**



Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the District Council's website – [www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk) (under *Councils and Democracy*).

If you would like a translation of  
Agenda/Minutes/Reports or would like a  
large text version or an audio version  
please contact the Democratic Services Manager  
and we will try to accommodate your needs.

***Emergency Procedure***

*In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit and to make their way to the base of the flagpole in the car park at the front of Pathfinder House.*

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## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Thursday, 28 June 2007.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.

Councillors P L E Bucknell, A Hansard,  
C R Hyams, Mrs D C Reynolds, T V Rogers  
and L M Simpson.

### **33. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7th June 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **34. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillors I C Bates and C R Hyams declared personal interests in Minute No 36 by virtue of their membership of Cambridgeshire County Council. Councillor P L E Bucknell requested that it be recorded that his participation in debate and voting would be undertaken without prejudice to the consideration and/or determination of any relevant planning application subsequently by the District Council's Development Control Panel of which he was a member.

### **35. MEDIUM TERM PLAN - REQUESTS FOR THE RELEASE OF FUNDS**

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

RESOLVED

that the relevant funding be released for the delivery of a choice-based lettings scheme, the installation of multi-functional devices and network software as part of the transfer of printing and postal arrangements to Eastfield House and the replacement of existing folder and envelope inserting equipment.

### **36. LAND AT HARRISON WAY, ST IVES**

The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Legal and Estates (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking approval to negotiate the disposal of three parcels of land in the ownership of the District Council, to Cambridgeshire County Council required in conjunction with the delivery of the guided bus way scheme.

Having considered the content of the report, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the current position regarding the guided bus way project be noted;
- (b) that the commencement of negotiations for the sale of land at Harrison Way, St. Ives, be approved; and
- (c) that the Director of Central Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillors for Resources and Policy and for Finance, be authorised to approve terms for the sale of land at Harrison Way, St. Ives.

### **37. HIGH DEPENDENCY TOILETS**

A report by the Head of Administration was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which summarised the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) in relation to toilet provision in the District.

In so doing, Members were advised of the general shortage nationally of high dependency facilities for people whose disabilities were so severe as to prevent them from using conventional toilets designed for the disabled. Given the extensive cost of providing these facilities and the expertise locally of the Papworth Trust, Executive Councillors were of the opinion that it would be worthwhile to seek their advice and, having thanked the Panel for their input, the Cabinet,

RESOLVED

that the report be received and the Papworth Trust approached as indicated for their advice, both generally and in particular on the possibility of extending the availability of facilities at Saxongate, Huntingdon for people with high dependency needs.

### **38. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of a company with which the Council is contracted.



### **39. HEADQUARTERS & OTHER ACCOMMODATION**

In conjunction with the report of the Customer First and Accommodation Advisory Group held on 11th June 2007 (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) and with the assistance of a report by the Head of Technical Services (a copy of which is also appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with progress on the new headquarters and other accommodation project.

Having considered issues associated with the proposed development of land fronting St Mary's Street and the future use of Castle Hill House, the Cabinet

#### **RESOLVED**

- (a) that work on the construction of Building A be deferred and the Chief Executive authorised, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, to approve a scheme for residential use for this part of the site;
- (b) that Castle Hill House be retained at least until the development options have been confirmed and the Chief Executive authorised to exercise the waiver in the Development Agreement for that purpose;
- (c) that the Chief Executive be authorised, after consultation with the Leader of the Council, to sign a variation to the Development Agreement to enable the options detailed in the report now submitted to be fully evaluated; and
- (d) that the expected additional cost in future years as outlined in the report now submitted be noted along with the requirement for these to be reflected in the forthcoming review of the Medium Term Plan.

Chairman

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**HUNTINGDON LEISURE CENTRE  
REQUEST FOR RELEASE OF MTP FUNDING**

**(Report by Chief Officers Management Team)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The Medium Term Plan approved by the Council contains a scheme to extend the Impressions suite at Huntingdon Leisure Centre. At their meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2006, the Cabinet deferred consideration of a request to release funding for design work for the scheme, pending the submission of a business plan and a report containing a further business plan for all the Leisure Centres and fitness suites and addressing issues associated with potential options for the future delivery of leisure services.
- 1.2 Progress is being made on the latter but it is anticipated that it will be some time before a detailed report can be submitted to Cabinet. In the interim, Cabinet are invited to consider the release of funds for the scheme for the reasons outlined in this report.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 At their meeting on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2007, Council approved the Corporate Plan 'Growing Success', one of the primary aims of which is Healthy Living with an objective of promoting healthy lifestyle choices by providing for and encouraging participation in active leisure pursuits. Statistically, British people are now the most overweight in Europe with growing levels of child obesity. The trend is unlikely to be reversed without positive action to encourage the population to become more active.

**3. IMPRESSIONS EXPANSION**

- 3.1 Of the 48 local authorities in the Eastern Region, Huntingdonshire rates 41<sup>st</sup> in terms of the number of pieces of fitness equipment per 1000 population. (2.94 compared with the regional average of 4.64). Nationally Huntingdonshire is 304<sup>th</sup> out of 354 (national average of 4.94). In addition to increasing the number of fitness stations however, the scheme has a much broader target audience and is designed to appeal to children and teenagers. It involves the conversion of one badminton court and the further internal re-configuration of the Sports Hall to provide -

- 'Vibro' training studio equipped with vibration training exercise equipment now growing in popularity and for use by medical referrals and the disabled;
- 2 treatment rooms for sports injuries and the provision of health services;
- dedicated and permanent soft play structure for young children;
- dedicated interactive play zone for teenagers between 13 and 16 years of age;
- relocation and upgrading of the sauna/steam area from the pool building to provide spa-type facilities;
- expansion of the fitness studio; and
- improved changing facilities.

- 3.2 Conversion of one badminton court will result in a loss of 1,400 attendances and £2,000 income per annum, while still retaining 4 out of the 5 original courts. The development forecasts an increase in attendances of approximately 45,000 per annum and income of over £200,000 in the first full

year of operation. A robust business case and financial analysis over a 15 year period predicts a net revenue surplus to the Council of £3.2 million, rising from £142,000 in year 1 to over £300,000 p.a. at the end of the period. The scheme has been subject to independent examination by consultants engaged by the Council who have endorsed the attendance projections.

#### **4. CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 A release request form is attached as Annex 'A'. The scheme will make a positive contribution towards achieving the objectives of Growing Success and improve attendance levels and the financial performance of the Leisure Centre.
- 4.2 The Council's Financial Strategy makes provision for a reduction in forecast expenditure in future years. The scheme is included in the approved MTP and the additional income predicted is incorporated in the budget for the current year.
- 4.3 The scheme is not subject to a contribution from the County Council as partner in the Leisure Centre dual use agreement and the development will enhance the value of the Centre, irrespective of any future decision by the Council on delivery options for the leisure service.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 It is therefore

##### **Recommended**

that the Cabinet release funding for this scheme as set out in Annex 'A' attached.

##### **Contact Officer:**

Roy Reeves, Head of Administration, Tel 388003  
Simon Bell, Leisure Centres Co-ordinator, Tel 388049

##### **Background Documents:**

Impressions Fitness Demand Analysis October 2005 – Matrix Consultants Ltd  
Sport England Active Places statistics  
Council budget and Medium Term Plan

## HLC Impressions Development - Bid Nos. 336 &amp; 661

Simon Bell

Financial Impact	Net Revenue Impact						Capital						
	2007/ 2008 £000	2008/ 2009 £000	2009/2 010 £000	2010/ 2011 £000	2011/ 2012 £000	2012/ 2013 £000	2006/ 2007 £000	2007/ 2008 £000	2008/ 2009 £000	2009/ 2010 £000	2010/ 2011 £000	2011/ 2012 £000	2012/ 2013 £000
Approved Gross Budget													
Approved Net Budget	-4	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	109	997					
Already released							0	0					
<b>Amount for which release requested</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>-88</b>	<b>-97</b>	<b>-106</b>	<b>-116</b>	<b>-126</b>		<b>1,106</b>					
<b>Net Variation</b>	<b>+32</b>	<b>-74</b>	<b>-84</b>	<b>-93</b>	<b>-103</b>	<b>-113</b>	<b>-109</b>	<b>+109</b>					

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### Summary of Scheme

- ❖ The scheme seeks to increase the admissions to Huntingdon Leisure Centre by the creation of new and expanded areas of the Sports Centre
- ❖ The scheme addresses issues of participation for specific target groups in line with Government health objectives
- ❖ The conversion and creation of facilities involves internal remodelling rather than external expansion
- ❖ New areas created will include soft play area, teen zone, spa facilities, increased fitness studio, improved changing rooms and vibration training area (of particular benefit to the elderly and disabled)
- ❖ Implementation of the proposal will involve the loss of one of the centre's 5 badminton courts.

### Justification for Release

- ❖ It is anticipated that the development will generate up to 45,000 additional visitors in its first full year of operation
- ❖ Projections further ahead indicate the potential revenue surplus to the Council of £3.2 million over 15 years with around £142k being generated in year one.
- ❖ The scheme has been independently examined by specialist consultants who endorse the projections.
- ❖ The scheme will elevate Huntingdonshire's status both locally and nationally as a fitness provider and assist in meeting the "Growing Success" objectives of promoting healthy lifestyle choices.

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CABINET

19 JULY 2007

**REVENUE MONITORING  
2006/07 OUTTURN AND 2007/08 BUDGET  
(Report by the Head of Financial Services)**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The 2006/07 accounts have now been approved by the Corporate Governance Panel so that they can be audited. This report compares the outturn with the original budget and the forecast outturn and explains the changes that emerged.
- 1.2 It then considers the implications of the outturn, together with any other variations that have been identified at this early stage in the current year.
- 1.3 The final section updates Cabinet on the progress made on the actions being taken to increase the robustness of budget monitoring proposed last year.

**2 GENERAL FUND OUTTURN 2006/07**

- 2.1 The original budget was based on a deficit of £1.527m (i.e. the sum that would need to be taken from revenue reserves to balance the budget). The forecast reported to Cabinet in April (based on the end of March) anticipated the deficit would become a surplus of £0.692m but at outturn this surplus increased to £1.164m which will be added to reserves, £0.426m to the Delayed Projects Reserve and £0.738 to the General Reserve.
- 2.2 The following table shows how the forecast outturn changed during the second half of the year:

Basis	Reported	Forecast Deficit(-) or Surplus (+) £000
<b>Approved Budget</b>		<b>-1,527</b>
End of September	Cabinet October	-1,095
	MTP/Budget Report November	-1,028
End December	Cabinet January	-1,173
End January	Officer monitoring (mid-February)	-158
End February	Officer monitoring (mid-March)	+228
End March	Officer monitoring (mid-April)	+543
Early April	Cabinet April	+692
<b>OUTTURN</b>		<b>+1,164</b>

- 2.3 The variations between the April Cabinet report and the Outturn amounted to £472k this year compared with £ 1,220k last year, which is a considerable improvement on forecasting accuracy.

2.4 The changes between the Approved Budget and the Outturn are summarised in the table below which also highlights the changes that emerged after the April Cabinet report:

	Expenditure	Income	Recharge to capital	Net Expenditure
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>59,421</b>	<b>-40,334</b>	<b>-782</b>	<b>18,305</b>
Less reimbursed expenditure	23,788	-23,788		0
Delayed Projects brought forward from 2005/06	139			139
Supplementary estimates				
<b>Adjusted Total</b>	<b>35,772</b>	<b>-16,546</b>	<b>-782</b>	<b>18,444</b>
<b>Variations reported to April Cabinet</b>	<b>-1,138</b>	<b>-834</b>	<b>-386</b>	<b>-2,358</b>
<b>Post April Cabinet Report</b>				
Public conveniences cleaning and repairs	-35			
Community safety – additional Police contribution		-12		
Car park extra income and delayed survey	-25	-10		
Development control increased income		-20		
Leisure Centres increased contribution from Cambridgeshire CC		-56		
Leisure Centres additional income from increased attendances since January 07		-100		
Saving on Mobile Home Park reinstatement	-22			
Housing benefits additional grant		-60		
Refund of NNDR met by the NNDR Pool which was not budgeted for	-140			
Printing Services additional income		-43		
Insurance claim – advised by Auditors to charge to 2006/7	177			
Investment income recharged to the S106 holding account offset by additional recharge to non- revenue accounts	-100	100		
Additional recharge to non-revenue accounts	-25			
Other variations	-101			
	<b>-271</b>	<b>-201</b>		<b>-472</b>
<b>Total variations</b>	<b>-1,409</b>	<b>-1,035</b>	<b>-386</b>	<b>-2,830</b>
	<b>-3.9%</b>	<b>-6.3%</b>		
<b>Net spending</b>				<b>15,614</b>

<b>FUNDING</b>	
Government Support	-10,891
Collection Fund adjustment	74
Council Tax	-5,961
Surplus taken to reserves	
Delayed Projects	426
General Reserve	738
	<b>-15,614</b>



**2.5** Last year's report explained the elements of the budget used for budget monitoring. These were:

- The various Management Units and Overhead accounts where most office based staff and their related costs are first charged to before they have to be allocated to particular services. e.g. costs of running Pathfinder House, the salary costs of the planning division.
- The element of these costs that is recharged outside the Revenue Account – mainly to capital schemes.
- The direct expenditure and income relating to services. e.g. payments for concessionary fares, income for land charges.

**2.6** Annex A shows the outturn results at these various levels.

**2.7** Once all the various recharges that are required by the Accounting rules are carried out the financial results at service level emerge. These are shown at Annex B together with comments covering the main variations.

**2.8** All variations will be discussed by Directors with their Heads of Service in order to further clarify any impact in the current year.

### **3. REVENUE MONITORING 2007/08**

**3.1** Various practical issues limit the amount of budget monitoring that can take place in April and May. These include:

- the fact that the accountancy section have to work to tight deadlines to have the final accounts completed so the Corporate Governance Panel can approve them for audit by the end of June.
- The various adjustments between financial years so that, for example, goods received by 31 March are charged to the old year even though they will be paid for in the new year, make it difficult to interpret true spending for the current year until all these old items have been paid.
- The difficulty of making assumptions from a short period of evidence.

**3.2** This first budget monitoring report for 2007/08 is, therefore, more of an introduction and sets the scene for the coming year by highlighting some of the elements that will be examined in coming weeks because they may have a significant impact.

**3.3** The table below is the first element of this process and highlights the adjustment for Delayed Projects brought forward, the adjustment to exclude the reimbursed items and the few minor variations identified.

	Expenditure	Income	Recharge to capital	Net Expenditure
	£000	£000	£000	£000
<b>Original Budget</b>	<b>64,110</b>	<b>-43,611</b>	<b>-965</b>	<b>19,534</b>
Delayed Projects brought forward from 2006/07	564			564
Less reimbursed expenditure (housing benefits)	-26,853	26,853		
<b>Adjusted Total</b>	<b>37,821</b>	<b>-16,758</b>	<b>-965</b>	<b>20,098</b>
<b>Forecast Variations</b>				
Additional housing benefits grant		-60		-60
<b>Total variations</b>		<b>-60</b>		<b>-60</b>
		<b>-0.4%</b>		
<b>Forecast net spending</b>	<b>37,821</b>	<b>-16,818</b>	<b>-965</b>	<b>20,038</b>

<b>FUNDING</b>	
Government Support	-11,649
Collection Fund adjustment	-7
Council Tax	-6,313
General Reserve	-1,505
Delayed Projects Reserve	-564
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>20,038</b>

- 3.4** Outturn reports were distributed to Heads of Service and Directors in June and discussion of the results will lead to discussion of any areas where variations are likely to emerge again this year. Reference was also made at the last Cabinet meeting to the Workshop being held on the creation of 5 year plans. The first stage of this work will be completed by the end of July and this will also consider any significant differences between the 2006/07 outturn and the current year's budget.
- 3.5** Interest earnings will need to be reviewed in the light of the capital deferrals from 2006/07 and the possibility of rates exceeding the assumptions included in the budget.
- 3.6** The Council should be receiving another LABGI grant later in the year but the amount may not be known until January 2008.
- 3.7** The budget includes various contingencies that either allow the funding of unexpected costs or require savings to be achieved. The following table lists these:

Contingencies	Amount		Comment
	Revenue	Capital	
	£000	£000	
General	140		To cover unexpected events
Turnover and increments for performance	-414		Saving on employee costs arising from vacancies and staff being replaced at lower points on grades.
Recharges to Capital	-153		The capital programme assumes that an additional £153k employee costs will be recharged to capital. £44k has already been identified
Capital deferral to 2008/09		1,000	The capital programme assumes that there will be deferral of £1m to 2008/09.
Savings	-136		General level of other savings assumed in the budget but not yet identified
Costs of the Call Centre	-123		Costs of the Call Centre not yet agreed as savings in service budgets

3.8 Any variations that emerge during the current year will first have to be set against any relevant contingency item before a net variation can emerge. Reports will therefore need to show progress on achieving these items.

3.9 Annex C reports on debts written off in the last period – previously a separate report on the Cabinet agenda.

#### 4. MONITORING PROCESS

4.1 Last year's report identified some proposed actions to improve the standard of budgetary control in the light of the large variation between the April 2006 Cabinet report and the 2005/06 outturn and the expectation that the Council will in future years need to have more rigorous monitoring as reserves reduce.

4.2 Annex D shows the items together with comments on what has been achieved to date.

4.3 There is however still a cultural issue whereby service managers have a reluctance to predict that under or over spending is likely

#### 5. CONCLUSION

5.1 The Council has been successful in not needing to use its reserves to fund last year's revenue spending. Indeed it has been possible to add to reserves giving increased flexibility for the future.

- 5.2 This was possible due to a combination of additional income, good management, efficiency improvements and an element of good fortune.
- 5.3 All budgets that were not fully utilised will be discussed between Heads of Service and Directors to identify any areas where budgets could be permanently reduced and/or transferred to higher priorities.
- 5.4 Significant effort has gone into improving the timeliness and accuracy of the monitoring process and there have been definite improvements on last year. However there is still a need to build on this with even more realistic judgements earlier in the year so that more of the impact can be built into the Councils financial planning process.
- 5.5 Other than the delayed projects being brought forward which will be funded from the reserve set up for this purpose, no major items have emerged in the current year. It should be noted that there are now additional contingency items in the budget that will have to be covered before a net spending variation emerges. Future reports will set emerging items against the relevant contingency.

## **6. RECOMMENDATION**

6.1 The Cabinet is requested to:

- note the variations summarised in this report relating to 2006/07
- note the comments relating to 2006/07
- note the action that has been taken and is planned to enhance the budget monitoring process.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 1 2006/07 Budget File  
2 2006/07 Closedown Files

### **Contact Officers:**

**Steve Couper**, Head of Financial Services, ☎ (01480) 388103

**Eleanor Smith**, Accountancy Manager, ☎ (01480) 388157

### Outturn for Internal and Direct Services and Recharges

	Original Budget £000	Updated budget £000	Outturn £000	Outturn variation from updated £000	
<b>Internal Services</b>					
Central Services Directorate					
Director	137	137	139	2	
Administration	1,656	1,472	1,332	-140	Printing & copying -£50k, Estimated phone charges -£13k, Salaries and overtime -£46k. Leisure Centre Business Generation -£21k Salaries -£37k. Additional income -£14k
Legal and Estates	423	423	362	-61	
HR and Payroll	611	723	711	-12	
Policy	403	450	489	39	Salaries funded from external income +£37k
	<b>3,230</b>	<b>3,205</b>	<b>3,033</b>	<b>-172</b>	
Commerce and Technology Directorate					
Director	126	111	115	4	
Revenues and Benefits	2,175	2,238	2,193	-45	Reduced debt chasing -£20k. Relief cashiers -£7k. Postage -£23k
IMD	2,440	2,484	2,296	-188	Deferring replacement of PCs -£54k. Equipment maintenance -£34k. Deferred appointment of staff -£100k
Financial Services	1,498	1,415	1,375	-40	Upgrading FMS deferred -£10k. Salaries -£23k.
	<b>6,239</b>	<b>6,248</b>	<b>5,979</b>	<b>-269</b>	
Operational Services Directorate					
Director and Operations Management	298	301	286	-15	Training -£5k. Salaries -£8k
Environmental and Community Health	1,484	1,376	1,306	-70	Vacancies -£49k. Car allowances -£9k. Equipment -£9k
Technical Services (including offices)	2,042	2,029	1,725	-304	NNDR on PFH -£168k. R and R fund contribution -£57k. Staff vacancies -£50k. Overtime -£11k. Training -£13k
Operations	1,872	1,914	1,955	41	Grounds maintenance: vehicle maintenance +£25k and hired staff +£12k
Housing Services	983	928	884	-44	Staff savings -£20k. Additional income -£8k. Travel expenses -£5k

	Original Budget £000	Updated budget £000	Outturn £000	Outturn variation from updated £000	
Planning Services	1,822	2,028	1,870	-158	Vacancies -£60k. Schemes funded by planning development grant slipped -£75k
<b>INTERNAL SERVICES</b>	<b>8,501</b>	<b>8,576</b>	<b>8,026</b>	<b>-550</b>	
	<b>17,970</b>	<b>18,029</b>	<b>17,038</b>	<b>-991</b>	
<b>Recharges outside Revenue Account</b>	<b>-1,407</b>	<b>-1,303</b>	<b>-1,858</b>	<b>-555</b>	
<b>Direct Services</b>					
<b>Environmental Services</b>					
Refuse Collection	1,991	2,007	1,843	-164	Reduced vehicle maintenance due to new fleet -£153k
Recycling	400	265	216	-49	Defra grant -£68k. Recycling credits -£27k. Increased gate fees +£14k. Reduced paper/glass income +£19k
Drainage & Sewers	384	386	329	-57	Drainage Board levies -£23k. Reduced response maintenance -£35k
Public Conveniences	209	228	171	-57	Savings on repairs due to capital projects -£30k. Town Council agency ended -£10k. Electricity and water -£15k
Environmental Health	233	218	196	-22	Private housing survey -£10k. Legal fees -£10k
Closed Churchyards	25	23	0	-23	Survey provided free of charge by Insurers -£15k. Works delay because awaiting permission from Church Commissioners -£10k
Street Cleaning & Litter	907	880	834	-46	Saving on equipment and supplies -£25k. Increased income -£14k. Reduced vehicle maintenance costs -£9k
<b>Planning</b>	<b>4,149</b>	<b>4,007</b>	<b>3,589</b>	<b>-418</b>	
Development Control	-703	-620	-748	-128	Increased fee income -£43k. Consultants -£36k. Schemes funded by planning development grant slipped -£47k
Building Control	-462	-462	-466	-4	
Planning Policy & Conservation	360	378	317	-61	Rural regeneration schemes -£21k. Schemes funded by planning development grant slipped -£35k
Markets	-175	-175	-142	33	Consultancy fees for Farmers' Markets +£12k. Advertising +£8
Economic Development	-1,138	-923	-938	-15	

	Original Budget £000	Updated budget £000	Outturn £000	Outturn variation from updated £000	
<b>Direct Services (continued)</b>					
Tourism	297	321	360	39	Employees pay +£45
Planning Delivery Grant	163	-661	-658	3	
	<b>-1,658</b>	<b>-2,142</b>	<b>-2,275</b>	<b>-133</b>	
<b>Community Services</b>					
Corporate Events	46	31	18	-13	Reduced spending on leisure grants -£20k
Countryside	389	373	388	8	
Community Initiatives	408	419	416	-3	
Parks	16	5	0	-5	
Leisure Policy	215	253	236	-17	Leisure and Arts development projects delayed -£12k
Leisure Centres	1,074	1,070	946	-124	Increased income -£130. Increased contributions from partners -£106k. Staff savings -£104k. Increased costs: NNDR +£57k, fuel +£41k, maintenance +£47k. Irrecoverable VAT +£87k
	<b>2,148</b>	<b>2,151</b>	<b>2,004</b>	<b>-154</b>	
<b>Community Safety</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>689</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>-56</b>	Vacancies -£35k. Consultants -£6k. CCTV mobile running costs -£5k.
<b>Housing Services</b>					
Housing Services	1	79	-25	-104	Choice based lettings scheme -£6k; Mobile home park reinstatement works slipped -£35k and lower costs -£40k. Income -£23k.
Private Housing Support	-12	-7	-9	-2	
Homelessness	207	207	185	-22	Provision for bad debts -£10k. Cost of hostel support -£9k
Housing Benefits	-599	-566	-585	-19	Subsidy -£19k
	<b>-403</b>	<b>-287</b>	<b>-434</b>	<b>-147</b>	
<b>Highways &amp; Transportation</b>					
Transportation Strategy	120	139	94	-45	Transfer to capital expenditure -£10. Cycle routes maintenance -£15k. Environmental projects -£12k. Consultants -£5k
Public Transport	512	685	654	-31	Rephasing of Huntingdon Bus Station survey -£26k. Cleaning -£5k

	Original Budget £000	Updated budget £000	Outturn £000	Outturn variation from updated £000	
<b>Direct Services (continued)</b>					
Highways Services	-6	31	47	16	Street name plates +£15k
Car Parks	-617	-676	-669	7	
Environmental Improvements	35	35	36	1	
	<b>44</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>-52</b>	
<b>Corporate Services</b>					
Local Taxation & Benefits	-575	-643	-934	-291	Refund of NNDR refund -£140k. Increased recovery of court fees -£106k. Income for council tax benefits -£51k
Corporate Management	731	691	667	-24	Audit fees -£37k
Democratic Representation	533	525	510	-15	Discretionary spending by Overview & Scrutiny -£5k
Central Services	-465	-336	-351	-15	Land Charges income £46k, Premises Licence income -£29k, Taxi survey deferred -£20k,
	<b>224</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>-108</b>	<b>-345</b>	
<b>Other Expenditure</b>					
Contingency	-798	-156	-3	153	Turnover contingency +£283k. General contingency -£140k
Other Expenditure	142	-2	0	2	
Investment Interest	-2,824	-2,865	-2,864	1	
	<b>-3,480</b>	<b>-3,023</b>	<b>-2,867</b>	<b>156</b>	
<b>DIRECT SERVICES</b>	<b>1,822</b>	<b>1,846</b>	<b>704</b>	<b>-1,142</b>	
Mesothelioma claim	0	0	177	177	Expected recovery from Insurers, but charged to revenue in 2006/7
Other adjustments	-80	0	40	120	Reduced commutation transfer
<b>Total</b>	<b>18,305</b>	<b>18,492</b>	<b>16,101</b>	<b>-2,391</b>	
<b>Funded from:</b>					
Government support	-10,891	-10,891	-10,891	0	
Council tax	-5,961	-5,961	-5,961	0	
LABG	0	0	-487	-487	
Collection fund deficit	74	74	74	0	
Reserves	-1,527	-1,714	1,164	2878	
	<b>-18,305</b>	<b>-18,492</b>	<b>-16,101</b>	<b>2,391</b>	



Service Spending 2006/07		Budget	Actual	Variation	Reason
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	
Refuse Collection	3,683	3,387	-296	Reduced vehicle maintenance due to new fleet -£153k. Reduced recharge from Call Centre -£84k. Waste disposal at Buckden -£47k	
Recycling	872	688	-184	Defra grant -£68k. Recycling credits -£27k. R and R contribution -£28k	
Street Cleansing & Litter	1,390	1,304	-86	Call Centre recharge -£29k. Saving on equipment and supplies -£25k. Increased income -£14k	
Drainage & Sewers	589	477	-112	Drainage Board levies -£23k. Reduced levels of response maintenance -£35k. Reduced recharges -£48k	
Public Conveniences	278	255	-23	Savings on repairs due to capital projects -£30k	
Environmental Health	1,816	1,667	-149	Staff vacancies and overtime -£92k. Private housing survey -£10k. Police stray dogs' service not transferred to HDC -£15k. Legal fees -£10k	
Closed churchyards	31	6	-25	Delay by Church Commissioners in completing survey, and funded by loss control contribution from Insurance Company -£25k	
<b>Environmental Services</b>	<b>8,659</b>	<b>7,784</b>	<b>-875</b>		
Development Control	1,152	1,044	-108	Reduced central recharges -£61k. Increased fee income -£43k	
Building Control	255	294	39	Increased central recharges +£11k. Additional costs not chargeable to fee account +£31k	
Planning Policy & Conservation	1,211	1,250	39	Increased staffing funded from Planning Delivery Grant +£70k. Saving on Conservation Grant -£35K	
Markets	-69	-36	33	Consultancy fees for Farmers' Markets +£12k. Advertising +£8	
Economic Development	300	155	-145	Reduced capital charges -£421k. Reduced rent income +£172. Oak Tree Health Centre costs +£67k	
Tourism	436	485	49	Increased costs of managing Tourism +£54k	
Planning Delivery Grant	163	-658	-821	Additional grant -£102k. Grant allocated to fund services -£474k. Changed accounting treatment of previous year's grant -£255k	
<b>Planning</b>	<b>3,448</b>	<b>2,534</b>	<b>-914</b>		
Corporate Events	220	117	-103	Reduced capital charges -£78k. Reduced spending on leisure grants -£20k wired to Community Initiatives grants	
Countryside	540	575	35	Increased capital charges +£32k	
Community Initiatives	842	811	-31	Reduced capital charges -£117k. Increased central recharges +£48k. Increased grant to St Barnabus project +£25k	
Parks	1,618	1,612	-6	Reduced capital charges -£43k. Additional income from CCC -£20k. Increase in grounds maintenance recharge to service +£55k	

Leisure Policy	405	355	-50	Reduced recharge form saving in Head of Community Services post -£72k
Leisure Centres	3,269	3,166	-103	Increased income -£130. Increased contributions from partners -£106k. Staff savings -£104k. Increased costs – NNDR +£57k, fuel +£41k, building maintenance +£47k. Irrecoverable VAT +£87k
<b>Community Services</b>	<b>6,894</b>	<b>6,636</b>	<b>-258</b>	
<b>Community Safety</b>	<b>1,185</b>	<b>1,089</b>	<b>-96</b>	<b>-£110k transfer of PCSOs to Police</b>
Housing Services	643	597	-46	Choice based lettings scheme -£6k. Reduced capital charges -£6k
Private Housing Support	3,216	2,539	-677	Reduced capital charges -£667k
Homelessness	614	474	-140	Reduced central recharges -£113k
Housing Benefits	759	655	-104	Increased subsidy -£58k. Increased admin subsidy -£31k. Reduced central recharges -£30k
<b>Housing Services</b>	<b>5,232</b>	<b>4,265</b>	<b>-967</b>	
Transportation Strategy	1,032	488	-544	Reduced capital charges -£469k. Staff savings -£45k
Public Transport	618	806	188	Concessionary fares +£155. Increased recharges +£40k
Highways Services	74	91	17	Street name plates +£15k
Car Parks	17	-170	-187	Increased income -£55k. Car park survey cf -£25k. Reduced recharges -£96k
Environmental Improvements	639	620	-19	AJC small scale improvements -£48k. Increased recharges +£25k
<b>Highways &amp; Transportation</b>	<b>2,380</b>	<b>1,835</b>	<b>-545</b>	
Local Taxation & Benefits	1,061	862	-199	Refund of NNDR refund -£140k. Increased recovery of court fees -£106k. Increased recharges +£43k.
Corporate Management	2,334	1,812	-522	Central recharges including the Call Centre reviewed during the year and allocated to services -£458k
Democratic Representation	1,145	1,058	-87	Reduced central recharges -£64k
Democratic Services	237	364	127	Reduced land charges income +£187. Taxi survey -£20k. Increased licence fee income -£37k
<b>Corporate Services</b>	<b>4,777</b>	<b>4,096</b>	<b>-681</b>	
Contingency	-694	-3	691	Savings contingency allocated to services +£651
Financing Adjustments and Other Expenditure	-10,790	-9,285	1,505	Reversal of items in service accounts - saving on capital charges in service spending +£2,187; increased pensions liability -£684k. Reduction in commutation adjustment +£120k. Irrecoverable VAT allocated to services -£293. Insurance claim +£177k.
Investment Interest	-2,786	-2,850	-64	Increased net interest received -£64
<b>Other Expenditure</b>	<b>-14,270</b>	<b>-12,138</b>	<b>2,132</b>	
<b>Council Total</b>	<b>18,305</b>	<b>16,101</b>	<b>-2,204</b>	

**AMOUNTS COLLECTED AND DEBTS WRITTEN OFF**

	April to 15 June 2007			
	Collected	Amounts written off		
		up to £4k	over £4k	TOTAL
Type of Debt	£000	£000	£000	£000
Council Tax	19,711	11.0	0.0	11.0
NNDR	15,364	12.2	0.0	12.2
Sundry Debtors	1,271	6.3	0.0	6.3
Excess Charges	31	1.7	0.0	1.7

**Collected**

The total amount of payments received, less customer refunds and transfers to other debts.

**Amounts written off**

Whilst these amounts have been written-off in this financial year, much of the original debt would have been raised in previous financial years.

**Authority to write off debts**

The Head of Revenue Services is authorised to write-off debts of up to £4,000, or more after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Finance, if she is satisfied that the debts are irrecoverable or cannot be recovered without incurring disproportionate costs. The Head of Financial Services deputises in her absence.

**ACTIONS PROPOSED TO IMPROVE FINANCIAL MONITORING**

- 1 COMT have stressed to Chief Officers and Heads of Service their accountability for financial management as stated in the Code of Financial Management. **Pre June 2006**
  
- 2 Directors will have regular review meetings with each of their Heads of Service to discuss the potential for under and over spending on both revenue and capital spending. These meetings will be at least quarterly, more frequently for more complex services (e.g. leisure, operations, IMD), and will also be attended by a senior financial manager. **November 2006**
  
- 3 Accountancy will introduce more robust systems to keep detailed track on:
  - recharges from revenue to capital. **System in place January 2007**
  - forecast interest earnings. **Commenced July 2006**
  - achievement of turnover assumptions. **Planned for September 2007**
  - aggregate variations (i.e. items that are not significant on individual budgets that may aggregate to a significant item when considered over the whole Council. **Commenced November 2006**
  
- 4 Accountancy will also introduce the following items already planned as part of the Use of Resources response:
  - A risk assessment to ensure all significant items are adequately covered. **Further refinement ongoing.**
  - Bringing forward, later this year, the production of monitoring statements to within ten working days of the end of the month. **Commenced August 2006**
  - Introducing new reports for COMT and developing reporting to Cabinet members. **New reports for COMT commenced November 2006. Format for Executive Councillor reports to be discussed with Executive Councillor for Finance during July.**

CABINET

19 JULY 2007

## CAPITAL MONITORING 2006/07 OUTTURN and 2007/08 BUDGET (Report by the Head of Financial Services)

### 1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report highlights the out-turn position for 2006/07, seeks approval to any adjustments required and adjusts the 2007/08 approved Capital Programme for deferrals. It also highlights any variations that are already forecast in the 2007/08 programme.

### 2. OUT-TURN 2006/07

- 2.1 The Budget approved in February 2006 and subsequent adjustments are shown below:-

	2006/07 Capital Expenditure		
	Gross Budget £000	External Contributions £000	Net Budget £000
<b>Approved Budget (February 2006)</b>	<b>20,389</b>	<b>5,924</b>	<b>14,465</b>
MTP Variations	-1,498	-1,719	221
<b>Approved Medium Term Plan – February 2007</b>	<b>18,891</b>	<b>4,205</b>	<b>14,686</b>
Forecast Variations in April Report	-1,942	-2,949	1,007
Variations now identified	-350	506	-856
<b>Total Variations</b>	<b>-2,292</b>	<b>-2,443</b>	<b>151</b>
<b>OUT-TURN</b>	<b>16,599</b>	<b>1,762</b>	<b>14,837</b>

- 2.2 Annex B provides comments about individual schemes. If more information on specific schemes is required it can be obtained from the relevant Head of Service.

- 2.3 As the outturn position results in a number of variations to the changes already forecast in April it is more meaningful to analyse the combined variations. These fall into the following categories and more information is provided at Annex A:

	2006/07 Capital Expenditure		
	Gross Budget £000	External Contributions £000	Net Budget £000
Changes in total cost of schemes	-562	51	-613
Changes in scheme costs matched by changes in partner contributions	-6	-6	0
Transfers from revenue to capital funding	187	0	187
Correction re 2005/06 capital receipt	0	-1,414	+1,414
Timing Changes	-1,911	-1,074	-837
<b>Total</b>	<b>-2,292</b>	<b>-2,443</b>	<b>151</b>

- 2.4 Within the figures in Annex A is the sum of £63k regarding the Shop Mobility Scheme in Huntingdon. This scheme was funded from the

capital grants to voluntary organisations and the accessibility budget held by Technical Services

- 2.5** The assumption included in the MTP review that there would be a further £1.5m of deferrals from 2006/07 to 2007/08 identified between the autumn and the end of the year masks the fact that the total deferrals in this period amounted to £2.3m (Annex A).

### 3 MONITORING OF THE 2007/08 PROGRAMME

	2007/08 Capital Expenditure		
	Gross Budget £000	External Contributions £000	Net Budget £000
<b>Approved Capital Programme (February 2007)</b>	<b>20,202</b>	<b>4,924</b>	<b>15,278</b>
Add deferrals from 2006/07 (in addition to £1.5m provision included in MTP)	1,911	1,074	837
	<b>22,113</b>	<b>5,998</b>	<b>16,115</b>
<b>Forecast Variations</b>			
Disabled Facilities Grants – forecast saving (Para 3.2)	-453	87	-540
Non-reclaimable VAT – forecast saving	-214	0	-214
<b>Net Variations</b>	<b>-667</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>-754</b>
<b>Current Forecast</b>	<b>21,446</b>	<b>6,085</b>	<b>15,361</b>
<b>Forecast Deferrals</b>			
<b>Provision included in MTP</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,000</b>
Social Housing Grant – forecast revision to programme	-563	0	-563
<b>Remaining provision</b>	<b>437</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>437</b>

- 3.1** The approved programme requires adjustment as follows:
- 3.2** The Government has now increased the amount the Council will receive in Grant for Disabled Facilities by £87k. It is also estimated that the spend on Grants in the year will be £453k lower as a result of the PCT's continued recruitment and retention problems with Occupational Therapists.
- 3.3** At the start of each year the Social Housing Grant programme is reviewed to reflect latest knowledge on individual schemes. As a result it is expected that £563k will not be required until 2008/09. This needs to be set against the general provision for deferrals of £1m included in the MTP £513k of this has been allowed for in the MTP.

### 4 REVENUE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** The impact of the deferrals and the other variations, described above, since the budget was approved in February 2007, reduce the net revenue expenditure by £147k in 2006/07 with further minor adjustments in future years, as shown below.

<b>Revenue Impact</b>		<b>2006/ 2007</b>	<b>2007/ 2008</b>	<b>2008/ 2009</b>	<b>2009/ 2010</b>
	<b>Para.</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
Changes in the total cost of schemes	Annex A	-15	-31	-31	-31
Revenue transferred to Capital	Annex A	-182	9	9	9
Correction re 2005/06 capital receipt	2.3	71	71	71	71
Changed timing – 2006/07 – 2007/08	Annex A	-21	-21		
Disabled Facilities Grants - saving	3.2		-14	-27	-27
Non-Reclaimable VAT - saving	3.1		-5	-11	-11
<b>Total Forecast Variation</b>		<b>-147</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>11</b>

## 4 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that Cabinet:

- i) Note the monitoring report at Annex B.
- ii) Note the latest variations and their estimated capital and revenue impact.
- iii) Confirm the virement relating to the Shop Mobility scheme.

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

Capital programme and monitoring working papers.

Previous Cabinet and Committee reports on capital expenditure.

**Contact Officer – Steve Couper ☎ 01480 388103**

## ANNEX A

	2006/07 Capital Expenditure		
	Gross Budget £000	External Contributions £000	Net Budget £000
<b>Savings and Extra Costs</b>			
Henbrook, St Neots – Retaining Wall – No longer required	-43	0	-43
AJC Small Scale Improvements – Saving	-61	0	-61
Disabled Facilities Grant	-323	48	-371
Repair Assistance Grants	-21	3	-24
Non-Reclaimable VAT – Not required	-147	0	-147
Huntingdon Tourist Kiosk – Supplementary estimate not included in MTP	30		30
Other minor variations	3		3
	<b>-562</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>-613</b>
<b>Scheme spending varied to reflect changes in contributions from partners</b>			
St Neots Skate Park	36	36	0
Play Equipment	34	34	0
Ramsey Rural Renewal	20	20	0
Creative Industries Centre St Neots	43	43	0
Small Scale Environmental Imps	-19	-19	0
Common Housing Register	8	8	0
Mobile Wireless Working – Housing Benefits	65	65	0
Local Transport Plan	-82	-82	0
Safe Cycle Storage Racks	-15	-15	0
Safe Cycle Routes	-105	-105	0
B&Q Cycleway, Eaton Socon	-37	-37	0
Cycleway, St Peters Rd Huntingdon	13	13	0
St Neots Transport Strategy	14	14	0
Views Common Cycle Route	17	17	0
Other Minor Variations	2	2	0
	<b>-6</b>	<b>-6</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Additional revenue costs charged to capital – mainly staff time – resulting in revenue saving</b>			
	<b>187</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>Virement</b>			
Shop Mobility, Huntingdon	65	0	65
Extra scheme funded by virement from:			
Local Leisure Project Grants	-45	0	-45
Accessibility Improvements/Signs	-20	0	-20
	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>



<b>Timing Changes</b>	<b>Gross Budget £000</b>	<b>External Contributions £000</b>	<b>Net Budget £000</b>
<b>Net timing changes from 2006/07 to 2007/08</b>			
Wood Walton Sewage Treatment Works	-42	0	-42
New Public Conveniences	-35	0	-35
CCTV – Digital Services	-52	0	-52
Sawtry Leisure Centre - Impressions	-36	0	-36
Leisure Centres Future Maintenance	-41	0	-41
Leisure Centres CCTV Improvements	-5	0	-5
Local Leisure Project Grants	41	0	41
Play Equipment Replacement	-11	0	-11
Activity Parks	-67	0	-67
Parks Signage	-9	0	-9
Riverside Car Park St Neots - Barriers	-25	0	-25
Linear Park St Neots	-26	0	-26
Grafham Water Centre Partnership Contribution	-20	0	-20
Football Improvements	-1,440	-1,219	-221
Photocopiers	-10	0	-10
Pathfinder House One Stop Shop	-110	0	-110
Business Systems	-119	0	-119
Corporate EDM	-6	0	-6
Customer First	-38	0	-38
Voice and Data Infrastructure	-104	0	-104
National Valuebill	-9	0	-9
Mobile Wireless Working in Benefits	-134	0	-134
Automated Form Processing in Benefits	4	0	4
Flexible Working	3	0	3
Town Centre Developments	-40	0	-40
Huntingdon Town Centre Development	-84	0	-84
Ramsey Rural Renewal	-29	0	-29
Huntingdon Boatyard Improvements	-65	0	-65
Heart Of Oxmoor	-13	-204	191
Oak Tree Centre	-31	0	-31
Bus Shelter Provision	-2	0	-2
Car Parking Strategy	-166	0	-166
Local Transport Plan	9	0	9
Safe Cycle Routes	-215	0	-215
Huntingdon Transport Strategy	-109	0	-109
St Ives Transport Strategy	15	0	15
Accessibility Improvements/Signs	-7	0	-7
Railway Stations Improvements	-46	0	-46
Huntingdon Bus Station – New layout	-14	0	-14
Mobile Home Park	-218	337	-555
Creative Industries Centre St Neots	-3	9	-12
Small Scale Environmental Imps – District Wide	5	0	5
Huntingdon Town Cent Environmental Improvement	-87	3	-90
St Ives Town Centre Environmental Improvement	9	0	9
Ramsey Great Whyte Environmental Improvement	-128	0	-128
Social Housing Grant	97	0	97
Other minor Variations	2	0	2
	<b>-3,411</b>	<b>-1,074</b>	<b>-2,337</b>
Less provision for deferral included in MTP	-1,500	0	-1,500
<b>To be carried forward to 2007/08</b>	<b>-1,911</b>	<b>-1,074</b>	<b>-837</b>



	£000
Report total	15,798
Variation between report and annex	
Revenue staff recharged to capital	-141
Provision for deferrals	-13
Waste performance grant	+72
Other	-2
Annex B total	15,714

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## MTP - CAPITAL SCHEMES MONITORING REPORT

Active Schemes 2007/08

Report Date: 10 July 2007 Data Period: 30/06/2007

		COMPLETION			COMMENTS	NET EXPENDITURE £000's		
		Approved	Forecast /Actual	Variation (Weeks)		Approved for Year	Year End Forecast	Projected Variance
<b>Portfolio : Environment &amp; Transport</b>								
<b>Car Parks</b>								
480	Car Parking Strategy Implementation	31/3/2007				228	394	166
480	Riverside Car Park, St Neots - Barriers	30/1/2007	30/1/2007	0			25	25
<b>Environmental Health</b>								
02/235/A	Herne Rd, Ramsey St Marys - STW Replacemt	28/2/2007	30/1/2008	48		31	30	-1
701	Wood Walton Sewage Treatment Works	30/3/2007	30/1/2008	43			42	42
<b>Environmental Improvements</b>								
03/431.05/A	Area Joint Committee Small Scale Imps (07/08)		30/1/2008			84	84	0
03/392/A	Small Scale Imps - District Wide (07/08)		28/2/2008			75	70	-5
02/050/A	Great Whyte/Little Whyte, Ramsey - Env Imp Ph 2	30/9/2005	31/5/2007	86			128	128
03/383/A	Village Residential Areas Environmental Imps		30/3/2008			53	53	0
01/049/A	Huntingdon Town Centre - Phase 2	31/3/2007	31/5/2007	8		0	90	90
52	St Ives Town Centre Environmental Improvement - Phase 2					10	1	-9
02/241/B	Heart of Oxmoor	28/1/2007				-1434	-1625	-191
<b>Public Conveniences</b>								
03/302/A	New Public Conveniences	31/12/2006	28/2/2008	60		454	489	35
<b>Public Transport Support</b>								
03/400.04/A	Bus Shelters - Extra Provision (07/08)		30/1/2008			74	76	2
<b>Transportation</b>								
00/003.04/A	Accessibility Improvements/Signs (06/07)	28/2/2007	30/4/2007	8	****		7	7
03/361.03/A	Huntingdon Market Town Transport Strategy (06/07)	30/3/2007				0	109	109
03/389/A	Local Transport Plan (07/08)		30/3/2008			89	80	-9
01/152.04/A	Safe Cycle Routes (06/07)	30/3/2007					215	215

# MTP - CAPITAL SCHEMES MONITORING REPORT

Active Schemes 2007/08

Report Date: 10 July 2007 Data Period: 30/06/2007

		COMPLETION			NET EXPENDITURE £000's			COMMENTS
		Approved	Forecast /Actual	Variation (Weeks)	Approved for Year	Year End Forecast	Projected Variance	
03/390/A	Safe Cycle Routes (07/08)		30/3/2008		89	89	0	
02/132/A	Railway Stations - Improvements (04/05)	28/2/2005	30/7/2007	126		15	15	
03/351/A	St Neots Pedestrian Bridges	30/3/2008	30/3/2009	52	537	537	0	
03/362.02/A	St Ives Market Town Transport Strategy (07/08)		30/3/2008		78	63	-15	
00/003.05/A	Accessibility Improvements/Signs (07/08)				32	39	7	
02/132.01/A	Railway Stations - Improvements (05/06)	30/3/2006	30/7/2007	69		15	15	
02/132.02/A	Railway Stations - Improvements (06/07)	30/3/2006	30/7/2007	69		16	16	
361	Huntingdon Market Town Transport Strategy (07/08)		30/3/2008		76	76	0	
625	Huntingdon Bus Station		28/2/2009		70	84	14	
<b>Watercourses</b>								
	Henbrook, St Neots - Retaining Wall	30/3/2004					0	
W N	Hemingford London Road Culvert				37	37	0	
<b>Total for portfolio: Environment &amp; Transport</b>					<b>583</b>	<b>1239</b>	<b>656</b>	
<b>Portfolio : Finance</b>								
<b>Administration</b>								
	Commutation Adjustment (2007/08)				99	99	0	
<b>Council Tax</b>								
?	Council Tax Revaluation					0	0	
<b>Housing Benefits</b>								
626	Housing Benefits - Wireless Working	31/3/2006	30/9/2007	78	1	55	54	Revenue Services have completed Year End Billing process and resumed work on the Mobile Working Project. Now working to complete deployment of COC's(eof July) then Interventions(eof September) then the Push and Pull solution(tbd).
668	Housing Benefits - Automated Forms Processing				61	57	-4	Project is currently on hold. Decision to review this at end of June 2007. (Agreed by Julia Barber). As of 26/06 there is no prospect of resurrecting this project in the foreseeable future.

# MTP - CAPITAL SCHEMES MONITORING REPORT

Active Schemes 2007/08

Report Date: 10 July 2007 Data Period: 30/06/2007

COMPLETION			NET EXPENDITURE £000's			COMMENTS
Approved	Forecast /Actual	Variation (Weeks)	Approved for Year	Year End Forecast	Projected Variance	
Total for portfolio: Finance			161	211	50	

## Portfolio : Headquarters & Information Technology

### Administration

713	Postal Dispatch Arrangements				131	131	0	This is funded from the Accommodation project. Separate reporting risks duplication. Suggest this is reported as part of the accommodation project.
714	Multi-Functional Devices (07/08)				27	27	0	An office assessment is being undertaken of current document workflow to desktop printers. The results of this analysis will provide baseline information to feed into the procurement of multi-functional devices to replace the existing printers, photocopiers, scanners and faxes to ensure the provision of the correct size and type of MFD.



### Information Technology

03/301.08/A	Personnel/Payroll System	31/10/2005	30/6/2007	86		15	15	This will see completion of Phase 1 - decision on future of Phase 2 of project to be taken in 2007-08
03/301.001/B	Customer First - Programme Wide	31/3/2007	31/1/2009	96	124	180	56	COMT have approved a re-wrtie of the Customer Service Strategy which may lead to changes in the time scales for this project.
03/301.101/B	Customer First - Transaction Delivery	31/3/2007	30/1/2009	95	84	64	-20	Key date 2 = release 2 into call centre Key date 3 = release 3 into the call centre Changes reflect the changed priority due to the implementation of a Customer Service Centre in the new HQ building. 2006/7 projects underway to deliver new services to the Call Centre. Assumes that system replacement budget picks up on-line payments work. Also that Planning is the last release in to the call centre in 06/07 and that there is a reduction in effort into the call centre in Q1 of 2007. BA effort to be used by EDM, etc

# MTP - CAPITAL SCHEMES MONITORING REPORT

Active Schemes 2007/08

Report Date: 10 July 2007 Data Period: 30/06/2007

		COMPLETION				NET EXPENDITURE £000's			COMMENTS
		Approved	Forecast /Actual	Variation (Weeks)		Approved for Year	Year End Forecast	Projected Variance	
03/301.15/A	Cyclical Review of Business Systems (06/07)		31/3/2007		****		10	10	Project complete
03/301.16/A	Cyclical Review of Business Systems (07/08)		31/3/2008			153	153	0	
03/375.01/A	Desktop Rationalisation (07/08)		31/3/2007			108	108	0	Project Team is considering whether the best use of the current year's funding would be to purchase the Microsoft Enterprise Agreement which will then allow the more efficient roll out of future operating systems
03/301.17/A	Content Management System (07/08)					20	20	0	Project has now been deferred to 08/09
494	Voice and Data Infrastructure	31/3/2007	31/12/2009	143		84	188	104	Delays in the accommodation project have meant that the pilot project will be slipped.
495	Corporate Electronic Document Management System	31/3/2008	31/3/2009	52		376	382	6	Housing and Licensing are now complete. Feedback has been sought from heads of service as to the roll-out order for the next couple of years.
03/301.201/B	Customer First - People and Facilities	31/3/2007	5/12/2006	-16	****	7	50	43	M164 closed. New code for TCSC set up and carry over moved to that budget
03/301.301/B	Customer First - Technical Infrastructure	31/3/2007	31/3/2008	52		248	288	40	The programme manager is reviewing the budget for this project
	Operations Business System	31/3/2007	28/11/2007	34			74	74	Data migration preparation now taking place. Test data transfer taking place with CAPS in w/c 09/07. Bespoke development also required. Funding agreed(£ 700). Awaiting timescales for development and deployment from CAPS.
03/301.15/A	Uniform					24	35	11	Current Estates Management Module installation is on course. Street naming and numbering project to be started
733	Flexible Working (Broadband for Members)		31/12/2007			23	20	-3	Strategy has been sent to COMT and will go to O&S in early July
<b>Office Accommodation</b>									
03/300/A	Pathfinder House Imps and One Stop Shop	31/3/2006				5507	5669	162	



# MTP - CAPITAL SCHEMES MONITORING REPORT

Active Schemes 2007/08

Report Date: 10 July 2007 Data Period: 30/06/2007

			COMPLETION			NET EXPENDITURE £000's			COMMENTS
			Approved	Forecast /Actual	Variation (Weeks)	Approved for Year	Year End Forecast	Projected Variance	
<b>Total for portfolio: Headquarters &amp; Information Technology</b>						<b>6916</b>	<b>7414</b>	<b>498</b>	
<b>Portfolio : Housing &amp; Public Health</b>									
<b>Community Initiatives</b>									
03/423.02/A	Community Information Project (07/08)					12	11	-1	
<b>Crime Reduction</b>									
03/387/A	Crime and Disorder - Lighting Improvements (07/08)					24	24	0	
<b>Housing Support</b>									
03/309.01/A	Disabled Facilities Grants (07/08)					918	378	-540	Gross (000's): Approved For Year = 1253, Year End Forecast = 800, Projected Variance = -453
03/381.01/A	Housing Repair Assistance (07/08)					239	239	0	
03/443	Common Housing Register	30/3/2006				45	45	0	
03/443	Social Housing Grant (Contingency) (07/08)					2055	1395	-660	Gross (000's): Approved For Year = 2535, Year End Forecast = 1875, Projected Variance = -660
	Mobile Home Park - Remediation	30/8/2007			****	-695	-172	523	
<b>Total for portfolio: Housing &amp; Public Health</b>						<b>2598</b>	<b>1920</b>	<b>-678</b>	
<b>Portfolio : Leisure</b>									
<b>Leisure Events and Facilities</b>									
00/999.04	Local Leisure Project Grants (06/07)	31/3/2007						0	
02/058/A	Grafham Water Centre Partnership Contribution	31/3/2005					20	20	Official Opening held 01/06/07. Invoice received and paid.
00/099.05	Local Leisure Project Grants (07/08)					158	117	-41	
446	Football Improvements - St Ives						-4	-4	
<b>Parks and Open Spaces</b>									
01/107/A	Various Parks - Signs	30/12/2003					9	9	
01/121/A	Pilot Linear Park Development	30/11/2003					26	26	
03/369.04/A	Play Equipment (06/07)	31/3/2007					11	11	
03/369.05/A	Play Equipment (07/08)					73	73	0	

# MTP - CAPITAL SCHEMES MONITORING REPORT

Active Schemes 2007/08

Report Date: 10 July 2007 Data Period: 30/06/2007

		COMPLETION			NET EXPENDITURE £000's			COMMENTS
		Approved	Forecast /Actual	Variation (Weeks)	Approved for Year	Year End Forecast	Projected Variance	
02/004.03/B	Young People's Activity Parks (05/06)	31/3/2006				17	17	
02/004.04/B	Young People's Activity Parks (06/07)	31/3/2007				50	50	
446	Football Improvements - St Neots	31/3/2007				225	225	About a week behind schedule. Due to complete early/mid September
<b>Recreation Centres</b>								
02/262/B	Sawtry - Fitness Studio	1/4/2005				36	36	
00/022/A	CCTV - Improvements at Leisure Centres	31/7/2005			34	35	1	
03/333/A	St Neots Leisure Centre - Creche & Kitchens	30/11/2003			11	11	0	
03/301.11/A	Leisure System Development	31/3/2005				16	16	
01/135.01/A	Leisure Centres - Disabled Facilities (03/04)	31/3/2004				5	5	
02/134.03/B	Leisure Centres - Future Maintenance (06/07)	31/3/2007				41	41	
02/134.04/B	Leisure Centres - Future Maintenance (07/08)	31/3/2008			1599	1599	0	
03/335/A	St Neots Leisure Centre - Impressions Expansion	31/3/2006			0		0	
03/336/A	Huntingdon Leisure Centre - Impressions Expansion	31/3/2006			1075	1075	0	
737	Huntingdon Leisure Centre - Energy Saving				75	75	0	
	St Ivo Leisure Centre - Rifle Range				540	540	0	
					<b>Total for portfolio: Leisure</b>	<b>3565</b>	<b>3977</b>	<b>412</b>
<b>Portfolio : Operations</b>								
<b>Operations Services</b>								
02/192.05/B	Vehicles Fleet Replacement (07/08)				221	221	0	
					<b>Total for portfolio: Operations</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Portfolio : Planning Strategy</b>								

# MTP - CAPITAL SCHEMES MONITORING REPORT

Active Schemes 2007/08

Report Date: 10 July 2007 Data Period: 30/06/2007

		COMPLETION			NET EXPENDITURE £000's			COMMENTS	
		Approved	Forecast /Actual	Variation (Weeks)	Approved for Year	Year End Forecast	Projected Variance		
<b>Planning Policy and Conservation</b>									
02/224/A	Town Centre Developments	28/3/2007			21	61	40		
03/358.02/A	Rural Renewal NE Hunts - Pump Priming (06/07)	30/3/2007				29	29		
03/358.03/A	Rural Renewal NE Hunts - Pump Priming (07/08)				26	26	0		
01/077/A	Hunt Town Cent Dev - Planning Dev Issues	30/3/2007			103	189	86		
<b>Total for portfolio: Planning Strategy</b>					<b>150</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>155</b>		
<b>Portfolio : Resources &amp; Policy</b>									
<b>Economic Development</b>									
03365A	Huntingdon Boatyard Improvements	28/2/2004				65	65		
43	Oak Tree Health Centre Oxmoor Huntingdon	30/3/2006	28/7/2006	17	****	31	31		
657	Creative Industries Centre, St Neots	30/3/2008			8	19	11		
?	St Neots Tourist Information Kiosk					0	0	Project in initiation phase	
02239B	New Industrial Units	28/2/2004	28/2/2009	261		295	294	-1	
<b>Information Technology</b>									
03301.04A	Land Charges Application Review (03/04)	31/3/2004	12/7/2007	171		15	8	-7	Went live on 24/05/07. Encountering occasional WAR related data issue. Usually quickly corrected. Currently completing NLIS testing. This should be complete and live by mid July(07).
450	Photocopiers Replacement	31/3/2006				10	10		
<b>Total for portfolio: Resources &amp; Policy</b>					<b>318</b>	<b>427</b>	<b>109</b>		
<b>Total for all Portfolios:</b>					<b>14512</b>	<b>15714</b>	<b>1202</b>		

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**CABINET**

**19 July 2007**

## **CHOICE BASED LETTINGS – ADOPTION OF LETTINGS POLICY (Report by the Head of Housing Services)**

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of the progress made on implementing a sub regional Choice Based Lettings (CBL) scheme and recommend the adoption of a draft new Lettings Policy.

### **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 Cabinet received a report on 1 February 2007 on the progress made and implications of the Cambridge sub regional CBL scheme, and also requesting authority to consult on a new Lettings Policy. The seven Councils making up the Cambridge sub region had agreed the broad principles of a lettings policy to ensure that there is consistency in who can apply for housing, how households are prioritised and how the CBL process will work.
- 2.2 Each partner has now finalised the consultation process on their individual policies. As a partnership we have also completed an exercise of comparing consultation responses to ascertain whether any of the broad policy issues required amendment in light of comments from stakeholders and service users, so as to maintain consistency across the seven lettings policies.
- 2.3 There were no substantial changes required to the policy as a result of this exercise. In the main consultation responses revolved around ensuring the scheme was accessible to all and easy to understand. These are issues that are important and will be addressed but do not affect the Lettings Policy document. The document has been reformatted and improved in terms of layout of the sections and some of the language used.

### **3. IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 In order to implement a CBL scheme and provide a clear and consistent approach to service users across the sub region each partner must adopt a new Lettings Policy. Each Council is required to formally adopt a 'lettings scheme' which sets out how properties will be allocated and this Lettings Policy is the legal document which fulfils this purpose. Without a new Lettings Policy which fits into the sub regional CBL scheme, the Council is unable to legally determine which households should be prioritised for the social rented homes in the Huntingdonshire area.
- 3.2 The legality of lettings policies operated under CBL schemes has recently been the subject of challenge via the Courts. The partnership has sought legal advice about the proposed policy and under current guidance it meets the requirements of legislation and precedents set by recent caselaw. As this is an area where further challenge or guidance is likely a review of the policy and the scheme will take place within the first twelve months of the operation of the scheme.

- 3.3 The new Lettings Policy will come into affect when the CBL scheme 'goes live'. The date of this will depend upon successfully introducing a new IT system to manage the housing register and carry out the CBL processes. Under the current project plan this is likely to be February 2008 at the earliest although as other CBL schemes have experienced delays with implementing the IT systems this date may slip if similar problems are experienced.

#### **4. CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 The partners to the sub regional CBL scheme are now each at the stage of formally adopting their own new lettings policies which will be formally implemented when the CBL system goes live.
- 4.2 This will then allow all the sub regional partnership to finalise the procurement of the IT system required to implement the CBL scheme and tailor the IT system to fulfil our policy requirements.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1 That Cabinet approve the adoption of the draft Lettings Policy and for it to be implemented when the CBL system goes live.
- 5.2 That Cabinet receive a report on the progress of the CBL scheme within 12 months of its implementation.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Cambridge Sub Regional CBL Scheme – Cabinet reports: 19/10/06 and 1/2/07

**Contact Officers: Steve Plant, Head of Housing Services**

**☎ 01480 388240**

**Jon Collen, Housing Needs & Resources Manager**

**☎ 01480 388220**

## AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING RENEWAL ASSISTANCE POLICY DOCUMENT

(Report by the Head of Housing Services)

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend three changes to the Council's Housing Renewal Assistance Policy.

### 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Council thoroughly revised its approach to housing renewal in light of changes introduced under the Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order (England and Wales) 2002 (RRO). The effect of the RRO was to repeal the duties authorities had to make renovation and home repair assistance grants and to introduce new permissive powers "to provide assistance" to acquire, repair, adapt or demolish living accommodation.
- 2.2 The Council adopted the Housing Renewal Assistance Policy in April 2003 and every year, the policy is reviewed. Major policy changes which affect the financial limits of existing powers have to be considered by Cabinet and Full Council. This report recommends two major changes.

### 3. EXEMPT DISPOSAL

- 3.1 The policy enables the Council to give loans to help home owners on low incomes to repair or improve their homes. The first policy change concerns the repayment of the loan. Usually, the loan is repaid when the property is sold. This is called 'Relevant Disposal'.
- 3.2 There are certain circumstances where the loan does not have to be repaid. These are called 'Exempt Disposal'. This where the property changes ownership but where it is not sold, assigned or a long lease granted. An example is inheritance. Where there is an exempt disposal, the loan would not be repaid.
- 3.3 It is recommended that, in the future, the loan should be repaid if the new owner of the property does not intend to live at the property as their main and principal home. The reason for this is that the beneficiary may intend to rent the property for profit without having to repay any loan granted by the Council and secured on the property.

### 4. DISABLED FACILITIES TOP-UP ASSISTANCE

- 4.1 Disabled Facilities Top-Up Assistance loans can be made to help an owner-occupier pay for disabled facilities that cost more than the maximum £25k Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG). The loan is for the difference between the maximum DFG and the full cost of the works and becomes a charge on their property. Before providing Top-Up Assistance the additional funding may be first sought from other sources such as charities and/or Social Services. Housing Association tenants are not entitled to Top-Up Assistance on the basis that there is no property

against which a charge can be placed and the Council can assist with re-housing if Top-Up Assistance is not available from elsewhere.

- 4.2 Occasionally, the Council receives an application to adapt the home of a family member who is not the disabled person, for example, adults adapting their home to facilitate an older relative living with them. In these cases, the disabled person is subject to the mandatory means test on the £25k DFG. However, through adapting the family member's home, we could be adding substantial value to the property. It is therefore recommended that, where a DFG exceeds the £25k maximum and Top Up Assistance is considered, that the Top Up should be subject to a further means test of the property owner's ability to pay. When the Government abolished the means test for children's mandatory DFGs, HDC approved a policy to means test the parents of the child on their ability to pay towards the Top Up. This will therefore bring this proposed policy stance in line with an earlier Cabinet decision.

## **5. DETERMINATION OF WHETHER TO AWARD A LOAN OR A GRANT FOR REPAIRS ASSISTANCE**

- 5.1 Repairs Assistance is financial assistance to help people to repair their homes e.g. roofing, electrical work etc. The policy currently states that where the owner has less than 25% of the market value of the property in equity, the Council should award a grant instead of a loan.
- 5.2 In order to maximise the Council's return on investment, it is proposed that this policy stance is replaced to state that it is only where the equity is insufficient to support a loan that the Council may offer a grant. Where the equity is insufficient to support the total cost of work, a grant can be considered for the remaining amount by the Private Sector Housing Officer or a more senior officer.
- 5.3 The usual eligibility and means test will continue to apply.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

It is recommended that the Housing Renewal Assistance Policy Document be amended:

1. That exempt disposal should only apply if the person who inherits the property in question intends to continue to live in the property as their principal home otherwise it should be deemed to be a relevant disposal and the loan repaid.
2. Property owners should be subject to the means test for Top-Up Assistance for adults DFG's where the disabled person is not the property owner but is the beneficiary of the DFG.
3. Where the equity is sufficient to support a loan, the Council will offer a loan for the cost of work, subject to the usual eligibility and means test. Where the equity is insufficient to support the total cost of work, a grant may be considered for the remaining amount by the Private Sector Housing Officer or a more senior officer.



## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- HDC's Housing Renewal Assistance Policy Document, April 2003 as amended in 2006
- HDC's Housing Strategy 2006-11
- Regulatory Reform (Housing Assistance) Order (England and Wales) 2002

**Contact Officer: Jo Emmerton, Housing Strategy Manager**  
 **01480 388203**

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**CABINET**

**19 JULY 2007**

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE PLAY STRATEGY  
(Report by Head of Environmental & Community Health Services)**

**1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to allow Members to consider both a Play Strategy for Huntingdonshire and the related spending plan prior to submission of a bid to the Big Lottery for funding.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 On the 26 April 2007 Cabinet members received a report that outlined the reasons behind the development of a Huntingdonshire Play Strategy and agreed that a Big Lottery bid should be prepared. Members requested a further report be presented to allow members to consider both the Play Strategy and spending plan for the monies allocated by the national Lottery for play development in Huntingdonshire, should the bid be successful.
- 2.2 The Big Lottery Fund announced details of its new £155 Million Children's play initiative in March 2006. The aim of the fund is to create, improve and develop children and young peoples local play spaces.
- 2.2 The Play Strategy, Annex 'A' attached, outlines the District Council's plan for the development of both play facilities and activities, over the next five years. The document sets out both the Council's vision for and definition of play. It acknowledges that play is an entitlement for children and young people who live in Huntingdonshire. The text complements the District Council's developing Culture Strategy [that includes plans for open spaces, arts and culture, leisure development and recreation services]. It also gives regard to: regional and national strategies; the Cambridgeshire Play Strategy; 'Every Child Matters' and the 2004 Health White Paper. Specifically it reflects current guidance from 'Play England' and the Big Lottery Fund in order to maximise the opportunity to attract external funding to support the delivery of the strategy. That guidance is still developing and it may be necessary to update the strategy before it is finally submitted as part of the grant application.

**3. IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The Play Strategy document identifies those areas within Huntingdonshire where additional investment and support for play facilities are required. It also provides a framework for future investment to ensure play initiatives are developed in line with the growth in the District and other plans and strategies.

- 3.3 The strategy acknowledges that the provision of play facilities and play activities is not something the Council can do alone. Therefore it is proposed to establish a play partnership which will include representation from both the statutory and voluntary/community sectors. The aim of the partnership will be to ensure that play developments planned by all agencies are co-ordinated to ensure optimum provision and value from investment.
- 3.4 Presently there is no single lead officer within Huntingdonshire District Council for 'play'. Also there is no capacity within the organisation to take on additional work to deliver the strategy. The associated action plan therefore includes a proposal to establish a post of Play Co-ordinator. Should the bid or other attempts to attract funding be unsuccessful it may prove impossible to establish this post. In the absence of necessary external funding it is intended the strategy should provide a vision and strategic approach will then serve as a guide to the development of play that can still be delivered as part of the Council's or our partners normal business, e.g. allocation of capital, via s.106 funding, or through grant aid.
- 3.5 The bid must be submitted to the National Lottery Board by the end of August 2007 and must include the Play Strategy and action plan setting out how the allocated lottery funds are proposed to be spent.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATION'S**

- 4.1 Members are requested to approve the Play Strategy for Huntingdonshire and associated action plan (Appendices A & B attached) and to authorise the Director of Operational Services to update the strategy and action plan prior to submission of the application for funding to the Big Lottery Fund.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Cabinet Report, 26 April 2007: Play Strategy Report  
Consultation documents set out in Appendix 1 of strategy document.

**Contact Officer: Daniel Smith, Community Manager**  
**☎ 01480 388377**

# **PLAY STRATEGY**

## **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**2007 - 2012**

## CONTENTS

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This strategy sets out the District Councils long term proposals for the development of both play facilities and activities for the next five years.

The strategy is written to complement and have regard to: the District Council's culture strategy [that includes plans for open spaces, arts and culture, leisure development and recreation services]; also regional and national strategies; the Cambridgeshire Play Strategy; 'Every Child Matters' and the 2004 Health White Paper.

The document sets out both the authority's vision for and definition of play. It acknowledges that play is an entitlement for children and young people who live in Huntingdonshire.

The strategy identifies those areas within Huntingdonshire where additional investment and support for play facilities are required. It also provides a framework for future investment to ensure play initiatives are developed in line with the authority's growth agenda and other plans and strategies.

Both during the development of this document and within the text it is acknowledged that the provision of play facilities and play activities is not something the authority can do alone. Therefore the council intends to establish a play partnership which will include representation from both the statutory and voluntary/community sectors. The aim of the partnership will be to ensure that play developments planned by all agencies are co-ordinated to ensure optimum value.

The ideas to be developed within the action plan include: appointment of a Play Co-ordinator; further engagement with children and young people in specific areas; continued support for successful established schemes; and an improvement programme for those areas identified as lacking suitable play equipment.

## INTRODUCTION

Huntingdonshire is predominantly a rural district, covering an area of approximately 350 square miles, and has a population of 156,958 based on the 2001 Census. Approximately half of the district's residents live in four market towns - Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey, with the remaining residents distributed within key settlements and rural villages.

Looking at the district's population in greater detail, over 25% of Huntingdonshire's population are aged between 0 – 19. This compares to 23% for East Cambridgeshire and Fenland, and just over 24% for South Cambridgeshire and Cambridge City.

Given the rural nature of much of the district, isolation is seen as a major issue. Indeed, rural areas often lack an adequate range of services and facilities in their immediate localities. Therefore, it is important that this strategy should look to address the negative effects of isolation ensuring that all children and young people, irrespective of their location, can access play facilities.

Since the early 1970's, Huntingdonshire has accommodated a large amount of new housing and employment growth. Huntingdonshire is at the centre of the Cambridge to Peterborough growth area and managing the opportunities and pressures from growth is a continuing focus for the council. Furthermore, it is expected that Huntingdonshire will continue to accommodate a large amount of additional housing and jobs. The council's Corporate Plan, "Growing Success", recognises the need to balance the needs of new or expanding communities which will require new infrastructure and services, with those of nearby communities which might be affected by growth but which don't have the same level of services and facilities, and this again is important when considering present and future provision of cultural services and facilities.

The majority of growth has been, and will continue to be, located within the district's largest towns of Huntingdon and St Neots. Lesser scale development is planned in other market such as St Ives and Ramsey. In rural areas new development will be limited and will be restricted to a number of key settlements. In villages there will be limited growth to meet local needs. The council's Corporate Plan also states that resources will be focused upon the need to reinvigorate all of the district's towns and to assist more deprived communities, including rural areas. When considering all of these different growth pressures, it is vital that all communities have access to, and can participate in, quality play provision

Huntingdonshire District Council is committed to the development of play and recreational opportunities in all localities.

Play provision in Huntingdonshire varies across the district depending on where children and young people live



Future development will be co-ordinated at district or town/parish level in order to secure the most appropriate, sustainable provision for local communities.

## **2. THE CASE FOR PLAY**

This Play strategy is intrinsically linked to the District Council's corporate plan & in particular the Culture Strategy. The Culture Strategy also includes action plans for Open Spaces, Arts and Culture, Recreation and Leisure Development and Recreation Centre Services.

This play strategy will also link to Cambridgeshire Play Strategy and "Every Child Matters". See appendix 2 for further details.

The Play strategy has been informed by a range of consultations with children, young people and parents (see appendix 1) and takes account of local and national policy initiatives and organisational priorities (see appendix 2). The map (Appendix 3) identifies the location of play facilities in Huntingdonshire.

It outlines priority targets for Huntingdonshire for 2007 – 2012 it will provide a clear framework for investment and ensure that play initiatives are developed in line with other relevant plans and strategies

## **3. A PLAY STRATEGY FOR HUNTINGDONSHIRE**

### **3.1 PURPOSE**

- To establish play as an entitlement for children and young people in Huntingdonshire;
- To identify priorities for development necessary to secure children and young people's entitlement to play;
- To set out aims and objectives for the short to long term;
- To ensure that children and young people's entitlement to play is embedded in service planning; and
- To ensure that potential funding opportunities link to the priorities and objectives of the strategy..

### **3.2 VISION:**

All Children and young people in Huntingdonshire are able to access a range of play opportunities suited to their needs and interests

### **3.3 PLAY DEFINITION:**

What children and young people do when they follow their own ideas and interests in their own way and for their own reasons.

Play is fundamental to children and young people's lives. It can happen any time, any place, anywhere.

People play to :

- to have fun
- be challenged
- be with others or alone
- relax
- feel free
- explore how they feel
- express themselves
- to deal with trauma and emotional health
- because they want and need to

### **3.4 PLAY PROVISION IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE**

A space, some facilities or equipment or set of activities intended to give children and young people as much choice, control and freedom as possible within reasonable boundaries. This is sometimes best achieved with adult support, guidance or supervision. The children and young people may themselves choose play involving certain rules or, in some cases, informal sport.

Children need and want to take risks when they play.

Huntingdonshire District Council aims to respond to these needs and wishes by offering children stimulating, challenging environments for exploring and developing their abilities. In doing this, the council will manage the level of risk so that children are not exposed to unacceptable risks of death or serious injury.

### **3.5 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE:**

In line with the definition adopted in the UN convention on the Rights of the Child, this strategy defines children and young people as being under the age of 18 years.

Local consultation with children and young people suggests that different provision is needed at different ages. Consequently, action plans to support this strategy will consider initiatives in 3 age groups

- Under 10 years
- 10 – 14 years
- 14 – 18 years

## **4. THE OBJECTIVES OF PLAY PROVISION IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE**

HDC is committed to the provision of good quality play opportunities that provide opportunities that take risks test boundaries, learn social interaction/social skills whilst following established health and safety.

For quality standards refer for Annex4

### **4.1 All play initiatives should:-**

- Include children and young people and parents where appropriate in planning and development
- Be accessible, taking account of the diverse needs of children and young people
- Maximise the range of good quality play opportunities
- Ensure sustainability by embedding in key strategies and plans of the council
- extends the choice and control that children have over their play, the freedom they enjoy and the satisfaction they gain from it
- recognises the children and young peoples need to test boundaries and manages the balance between risk and safety.

These objectives are based on consultations that have taken place in Huntingdonshire with children, young people and adults. A full list of consultations can be found at Appendix 1.

### **4.2 Key points from consultation**

- Overall provision of play grounds and equipment in Huntingdonshire for younger children is above average, however provision in specific areas is below average or non-existent
- Maintenance of play facilities was often sited as a problem, particularly misuse by older young people;
- There was an overall perception of insufficient facilities especially for young people (over 10 years of age);
- There are few quality facilities for children and young people in rural areas;
- Lack of public transport means children and young people can't participate in activities unless they are close to where they live;

- Children and young people identified personal safety eg bullying and intimidation, as key barriers to accessing play opportunities.
- It is acknowledged the children and young people in different age groups, under 10yrs, 10 -14yrs, 14 – 18yrs, require different interventions; and
- there is a need for targeted work to address special interests e.g. arts or specific community safety issues

## **5. EVALUATION AND MONITORING -**

A robust monitoring and evaluation process will be set up for all initiatives for further details refer to action plan annex?

## **6. PLAY PARTNERSHIP**

The council will establish a play partnership for Huntingdonshire that will include representatives from both the statutory and voluntary and community sector. The play partnership will ensure play developments planned by other agencies both statutory and voluntary are co-ordinated to ensure optimum value.

## CONSULTATIONS

### Accessibility in Rural Huntingdonshire

**Alice Watson. Huntingdonshire District Council Feb 2006**

Based on adult perceptions of what young people need.

Few facilities for young people in most villages especially for teenagers

- Proposed solution is community transport service but adults split on whether this would be a good idea
- There is an assumption by those with children and about those who have children that parents who live in rural areas expect to provide lifts to their children but these are exclusively to organised activities eg sports clubs there is no mention of lifts purely to 'play'. Linked to this there seems to be an assumption that young people want or need to do 'organised' activities rather than just hang out

### Extended Schools Survey

**Allan Whyte. Office of Children and Young People's Services**

512 young people participated - 9% from Hunts (St. Neots)

#### Top Sports

Trampolining  
Gymnastics  
Football  
Badminton  
Using the gym

#### Top arts and learning

Outings  
Drama  
Dance  
Internet  
Making videos

### Barriers to Participation

- Young people living in rural areas had problems accessing activities after school as they rely on the school bus and there are no other public bus routes that would get them home
- Being forced to do it – 28%
- Cost – 21%. 50% thought £2 was a reasonable cost.
- Who runs the activity – 15%
- Activities being competitive – 10%. There is a fear of bullying and intimidation both in group activities and in terms of going to places where there might be unfamiliar people. Prefer some kind of adult supervision

Young people with disabilities want same activities as other young people

### Annual Consultation.

**Claire Sides. Huntingdonshire District Council. April 2005**

18 young people aged 11-18 participated in a day of consultation activities based on HDC priorities

11-13 yr olds thought litter, dog fouling, graffiti and abandoned cars were a big problem in the area

14-18 yr olds thought there were not enough parks and open spaces

There was a perceived threat from 'druggies' particularly in relation to the Oxmoor area of Huntingdon

11-13 yr olds want opportunities to do constructive graffiti

14-18 yr olds want more opportunities to play, watch and listen to live music

## **Make a Difference Consultation January 2004**

### **Claire Keck for Ramsey Area Partnership**

Several initiatives designed to gain views and ideas of young people were included.

Young people want to see a reduction in crime and named specific places where they do not feel safe especially at night

Street lighting needs improving

Public transport is poor and young people cannot access leisure, education and employment opportunities

There are few facilities for young people in the Ramsey area

## **Smart People Like Arty Things.**

### **Viv Peters, Huntingdonshire District Council. March 2003**

127 young people aged 11-19 were interviewed by Peer Researchers about arts provision in Hunts

- Want more arts opportunities in the district
- Access to existing provision needs to be better
- Arts provision needs a targeted approach
- Access to information about arts provision needs to be improved

## **Youth Matters consultation –Hunts Information. Summer 2005.**

### **Office of Children and Young People's Services**

Completed by 11-19yr olds

Activities they want to do

- Ice skating
- Bowling
- Cinema

Where they currently meet friends

- Town Centre
- Youth Club
- Mate's House
- Park

Where they would like to meet friends

- Town
- Park

### Surveys including young people under 14

HuntsNet (1) Primary Schools in Huntingdon – Approx 400 young people	Changing the Landscape (2) Cams wide – 448 young people, 40 from Hunts	Speaking Up 6-11yrs (3) Young people with disabilities, Cams wide – 64 young people	Getting it Right (4) 5 – 19 yrs Cams wide 1,800 young people
<b>Top 5 activities they want at leisure centre</b> Swimming Football Trampolining Arts/crafts Gymnastics	<b>Top 5 sports and arts activities they want after school</b> Trampolining Gymnastics Football Badminton Using the gym  Outings Drama Dance Internet Making videos	<b>Top interests for after school activities</b>  Music Keyboards Karaoke machine CD's Dancing Disco  Playing Dolls Postman pat toys Tweenies toys Cars Teletubbies Party Play  Skills Cooking Computers	<b>Enjoy and Achieve</b>  More things to do for all ages  More things for families to do together  Improved access to existing or nearby facilities (cost and transport)

#### Barriers to participation

- Transport
- Feeling they have to do it
- Cost
- Activity leaders
- Fear of bullying or intimidation

#### Structured or unstructured activities?

- Many want adult supervision

## **Getting It Right.**

### **Office of Children and Young People's Services. October 2005**

Young people were consulted on the key themes from the Children and Young People's Plan.

- Cheaper or free public transport
- Transport at more regular and appropriate times
- Transport that goes to entertainment venues
- Independent travel for young people with disabilities
- Alternative activities (will reduce drug and alcohol use)
- Reduce stress by providing more places to go and things to do
- More things for all ages to do
- More things for families to do together
- Improved access to existing or nearby facilities eg cost, transport
- Safe and secure environments – lighting CCTV adult presence, absence of traffic
- Reduce bullying by providing more things to do
- Better equipment in schools

## **What Children and Young People want to do at Huntingdon Leisure Centre. Louise Clewes and Bevis Moynan.**

### **Huntingdonshire District Council. July 2006**

299 surveys completed with children and young people in Huntingdon schools

Most popular activities primary school children wanted to do

- Swimming
- Football
- Trampolining
- Arts and crafts

Most popular activities that secondary school students wanted to do

- Football
- Trampolining
- Dancing
- Swimming
- Badminton

## **PMP August 2006**

An overall perception of insufficient facilities particularly for children and young people. Size of facility is relatively consistent across the district although average size of provision in Huntingdon and Yaxley is smaller than in other areas

Quality of provision is perceived to be good on 45 sites but misuse, vandalism and graffiti are main quality issues. In some areas over 50% of sites suffer from vandalism. Generally maintenance is good

Geographical distribution of facilities is good although there are localised accessibility deficiencies in some market towns and key centres for growth. There are also indications of demand for facilities in some smaller settlements.

Partner consultation group event January 2007

Action points agreed:-

1. Develop the capacity of providers to work with children and young people:



2. encourage adults in the community to understand the benefits of children and young people participating in play activities:
3. ensuring play opportunities are included in specifications for all projects:
4. ensuring external funding agreements are developed in line with the play strategy:
5. increase accessibility of play facilities; and
6. develop facilities/opportunities in specific areas of need
  - high population of children and young people and few facilities
  - areas of deprivation
  - rural areas with limited access to facilities and no plans for development
  - areas with high incidents of ASB.

## Key Local and National Policy Documents

**The UN Convention on the rights of the child 1989** “gives all children the right to rest and leisure; to engage in age appropriate play and recreational activities”.

**The Children Act 2004** “recognised the need to make better provision for children’s play as a theme that cuts across a range of policy areas, from planning, open space and transport to health, education and childcare. Most significantly the enjoyment of recreation, including play is one of the outcomes for children that authorities are required to consider in drawing up co-ordinated children and young peoples plans”.

**Getting Serious About Play 2004** A review of children’s play to advise central government on the use of lottery funding for play “recommended that authorities should take the opportunity to improve the planning and operation of play facilities across their respective areas in partnership with other local agencies”.

**2004 Health White Paper** noted that “many children appear to have less time been physically active and that this inactivity is a contributing factor to the rise in obesity among children and young people”

### **Every Child Matters. 2003**

Sets out 5 outcomes which services should work towards, based on consultation with children and young people – being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and economic well-being.

### **Youth Matters. 2005**

Proposes integrated services around young people’s needs. Advocates national standards that would require local authorities to provide

- Access to 2 hours per week of sporting activity
- Access to 2 hours a week of other constructive activities in clubs, youth groups or classes
- Opportunities to contribute to their communities through volunteering
- A wide range of other recreational, cultural, sporting and enriching experiences
- A range of safe and enjoyable places in which to spend time

### **Huntingdonshire Children’s and Young Peoples Plan**

Increase number of yp participating in sport and physical activity each week

1.1H Implement the play strategy with a focus on creating more physical play opportunities for children and their families

3.1 ensure that the development of new communities in Cambridgeshire is accompanied by the supply of high quality facilities for cyp

3.4 increase the range of extended services provided by schools and other providers

4.1 develop and implement a comprehensive sports, arts and cultural strategy

4.2 improve provision for young people in response to 'Youth Matters' including sport and recreation

4.7 Increase accessibility of services through better use of existing transport resources

### **Huntingdonshire District Council Corporate Objectives**

Corporate Aim – Healthy Living, Objective:- To promote healthy lifestyle choices

Corporate Aim - Safe, vibrant and inclusive communities, Objective:- To enable residents to take an active part in their communities.

### **Huntingdonshire Community Strategy**

Increase the number of people using cultural and leisure services

#### **OBJECTIVES:**

- Develop existing and new opportunities for cultural and leisure activities
- Improve access to opportunities for physical activity and cultural enrichment that promote good health and mental well being
- Increase the number of cultural and leisure opportunities for young people
- Improve the understanding of and access to the countryside and the heritage of the landscape
- Increase opportunities for pursuing healthy lifestyles through culture and leisure, including encouraging walking and cycling

## **ANNEX 4**

### **Quality Standards**

All new play area/site the design will be in accordance with the general principles of the national Playing Field Association's Six Acre Standard 2001 (NPPFA), the Local Plan and other planning requirements.

#### **Design:-**

When planning and designing new fixed facilities the council will ensure they meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the equipment will conform to European Standard BSEN 1176 and any surfacing be certified to European Standard BSEN 1177.

All fixed play facilities will have a post installation inspection report from RoSPA to check that it all conforms and are safe.

All fencing at fixed sight facilities must be dog proof- galvanised steel bow top with a hydraulic self-closing gates.

### Current position

6.1 The provision for children and young people across Huntingdonshire is summarised in Table 6.1 below:

**Table 6.1 – Quantity of provision for children and young people**

Analysis Area	Quantity of Provision	Provision per 1000 population	Average size of facility	Key Sites
St Neots	27 sites	0.71	7.7 pieces of equipment	Skate park is well used site and example of good practice. Large sites also in Priory Park and Riverside Park. Nine sites with over 10 pieces of equipment, the largest of which is Rocket Park. Over 50% of provision is located in St Neots town.
Huntingdon and Godmanchester	40 sites	0.99	5.5 pieces of equipment	Central site in Riverside Park for teenagers. There are seven sites with over 10 pieces of equipment which are significant sites despite this, a number of facilities only have one piece of equipment. Scale of facilities is therefore not consistent. The largest site is on Nursery Road. 50% of the sites are located in Huntingdon Town.
St Ives	19 sites	0.62	7.5 pieces of equipment	Central locations in Hill Rise Park and Warners Park. There are five sites with over 10 pieces of equipment, the largest of which is in Hilton. Eight of the facilities are focused in the market town of St Ives.
Ramsey	15 sites	0.75	7.5 pieces of equipment	Two larger sites in Ramsey (Mill Lane) and Warboys. Six facilities are in Ramsey.
Yaxley and Sawtry	16 sites	0.58	5.6 pieces of equipment	Yaxley Skatepark is important provision for teenagers. Two sites have over 10 pieces of equipment – one in Yaxley and one in Sawtry.

6.2 Key issues arising from the analysis and assessment of the quantity of provision for children and young people include:

- assessment of the provision per 1000 population across the district highlights that there are variations in provision, although the overall level of provision is good
- as may be expected, with the exception of St Ives, provision is higher in the more urban areas of the district. Huntingdon and

Godmanchester has the highest level of provision in the district and provision is also high in St Neots. St Neots also contains the skate park, which consultation suggests that people travel significant distances to use.

- reinforcing the rural more dispersed nature of Yaxley and Sawtry and Ramsey, provision is lower in these areas, particularly in Yaxley and Sawtry. This suggests that not all villages have provision.
- size of facilities is consistent across the district, although facilities in Yaxley and Huntingdon and Godmanchester are much smaller than in the other three areas. The variation in sizes of facilities is particularly noticeable within Huntingdon and Godmanchester, where despite there being 10 facilities with over 10 pieces of equipment, there are many with only one piece.

6.3 Findings from the consultation regarding the quantity of provision include:

- analysis of the household survey indicates that there are mixed opinions regarding the quantity of provision. There were strong opinions that provision for teenagers was insufficient, a perception shared by 61% of residents. Residents at some drop in sessions also felt there to be some areas of deficiency, in particularly areas mentioned at drop in sessions as being deficient in provision for children and young people included Bury, Ramsey, St Ives, St Neots and Yaxley.
- Parish Councils also highlighted deficiencies in provision, with only 33% feeling that the quantity of provision was good or excellent
- these mixed opinions are reinforced by the varying spread of provision across the district.

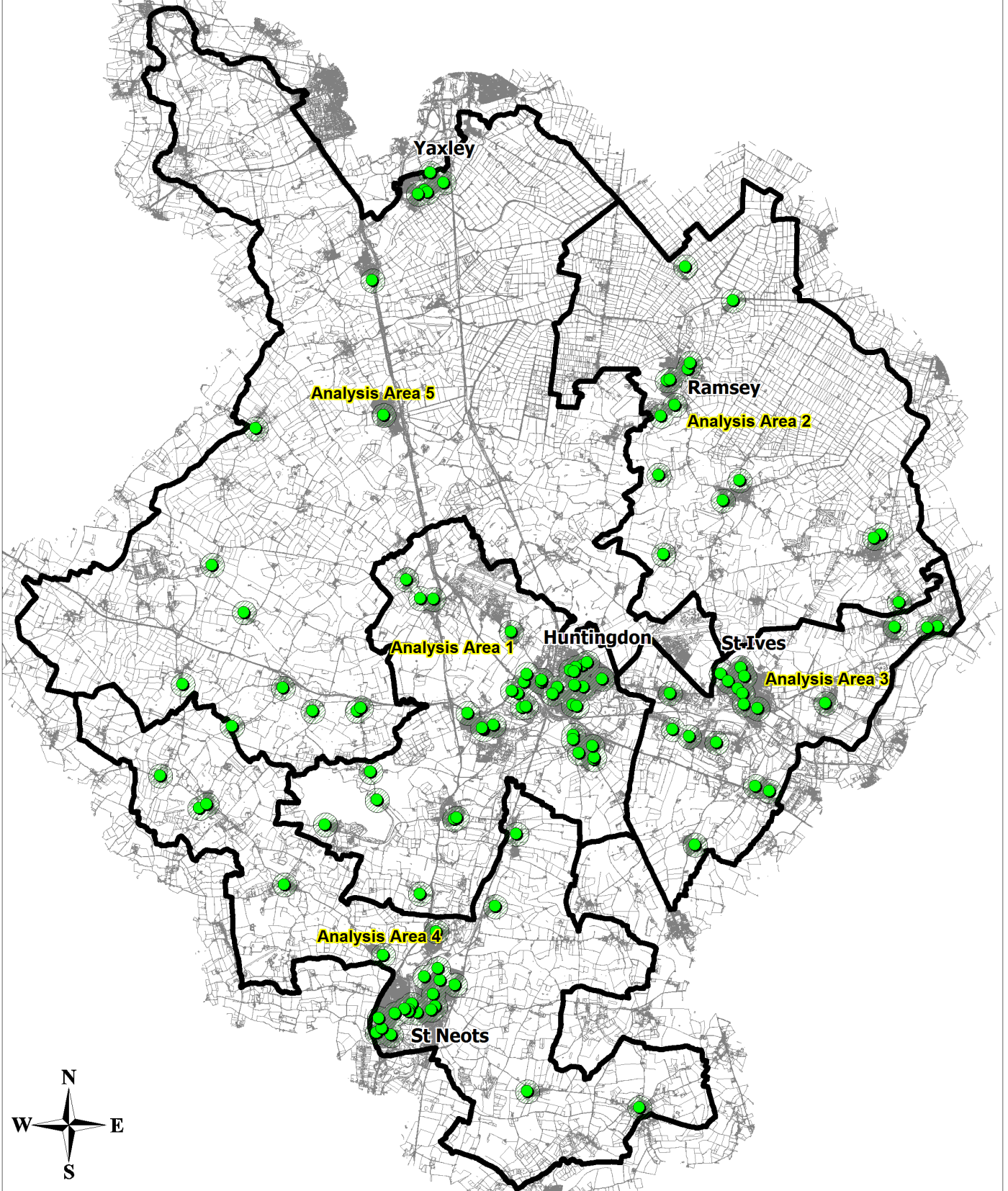
6.4 The quality of provision for children and young people in the district is set out in table 6.2 below.

**Table 6.2 – Quality of provision for children and young people in Huntingdonshire**

Analysis Area	Site Quality	Key Issues
St Neots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 50% of sites considered to be good – the highest proportion in the district</li> <li>○ despite this – 27% are poor – also the highest proportion in the district</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 4 sites are considered to be poorly maintained. Despite this, on the whole maintenance in St Neots is good</li> <li>○ St Neots has the highest incidence of vandalism in the district, with 55% of sites experiencing at least some degree of vandalism</li> <li>○ none of the sites have parking facilities</li> <li>○ 37% of sites have some access suitable for the disabled</li> </ul>
Huntingdon and Godmanchester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ overall quality of sites good – only 19%</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 25% of sites have no seating – this is important as most parents accompany</li> </ul>

	<p>considered poor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 42% good</li> </ul>	<p>their children to sites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ maintenance is good on the whole – only 4 sites considered poor</li> <li>○ main issue is vandalism and graffiti (16 sites)</li> <li>○ personal safety perceived to be poor on five sites</li> </ul>
St Ives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ only 1 site considered to be poor</li> <li>○ 37% of sites are good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 63% of sites are considered to be well laid out</li> <li>○ sites are well maintained - only one site considered to be poorly maintained (Hemingford Grey) – the only site also rated as poor overall</li> <li>○ like other areas, vandalism is a problem (37% of sites). Litter is more of a problem in St Ives than in others</li> <li>○ only two sites do not have seating, although no sites have facilities for storing cycles</li> <li>○ good perception of personal safety</li> </ul>
Ramsey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ highest quality sites in the district – no sites rated poor</li> <li>○ 40% of sites good</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ almost 50% of sites offer some facilities for disabled children</li> <li>○ quality of maintenance is high – there are no sites considered poorly maintained</li> <li>○ 50% of sites have suffered from vandalism although litter is only evident at 2 sites, again reinforcing the high quality maintenance</li> </ul>
Yaxley and Sawtry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ lowest proportion of good sites – only 20%</li> <li>○ 27% poor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ lowest proportion of good sites is reflected in the quality ratings – 25% considered to be poorly maintained although 38% were good</li> <li>○ 44% of sites suffered from vandalism and 31% were considered to be poor in terms of personal safety</li> <li>○ 25% of sites have some equipment that is accessible to disabled groups.</li> </ul>

**Overview Map, Analysis Areas and Open Space Type Catchments, Children & Young People**



Children & Young People



Catchment - Outdoor Sports Facilities - Pitches and Tennis (720m buffer)



Analysis Areas



Mastermap



**ACTIVE**

*Bringing data to life*



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<b>Annex B – Proposed allocation of Lottery funds</b>							
Project Title	Project Outline	Project Partners	Project Cost & Contributions	Lottery Allocation			Total £
				08/9 £	09/10 £	10/11 £	
Stukeley Meadows Skate Park Project	The Play strategy document identified that play facilities for older young people in the Huntingdon area is very low The Stukeley meadows area of Huntingdon has been subject to high levels of anti social behaviour. Following extensive consultation with local residents and young people living in the area an area of land has been identified to develop play facilities targeted at the 14-18 years age group.	Cambridgeshire Constabulary. Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership. Stukeley Meadows Residents assoc. Huntingdon Town council Hunts Dist Council HTCP	£ 40,000 Youth bank £ 10,000 Freeman's Charity £ 8,000 HCSP £ 20,000 HDC £ 30,000 Private sector	60,000			60,000

Project Title	Project Outline	Project Partners	Project Cost & Contributions	Lottery Allocation			Total £
				08/9 £	09/10 £	10/11 £	
'Fusion' summer scheme project (Oxmoor)	Fusion is an open access project, which means that young people aged 8-18 years can attend the scheme at any time during the day/evening, the young people are responsible for signing themselves in and out of the activities which they wish to participate in. Care & Education partnership funds end this year.	Cambridgeshire Police Huntingdon Housing Partnership Huntingdon District Council Countryside Services. Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership. Connexions DialDrugLink Drinksense	£ 16,800 Care & Education Partnership £ 14,660 CCC, Youth Service £ 3,000 HCSP £ 10,000 Cambs Police	17,000	17,425	17,860	52,285

Project Title	Project Outline	Project Partners	Project Cost & Contributions	Lottery Allocation			
				08/9 £	09/10 £	10/11 £	Total £
'Proud to be Loud' summer scheme project (St Neots)	The aim of the St Neots Over 10s Holiday Scheme is to provide a free, 60-place, holiday scheme for young people aged 10-14 in the St Neots area for no less than 8 weeks or 50 days a year. It is also hoped that the scheme will counteract issues of anti-social behaviour that have been experienced in locations around the town in the holiday periods.	St Neots Town Council. OPCYS Youth Service. St Neots Holidays at Home Scheme. Open Door Family Project Natural High	£ 16,512 CCC Youth Service. £ 720 Hunts Dist Council. £ 650 Luminus Housing Assoc. £ 336 Natural High £ 5,000 Youth Bank £ 10,000 Sport relief £ 2,528 Other agencies.	20,000	20,500	20,100	60,600

Project Title	Project Outline	Project Partners	Project Cost & Contributions	Lottery Allocation			Total £
				08/9 £	09/10 £	10/11 £	
Stilton Skate park project	The aim is provision of a skate park in the village of Stilton In 2004 there were a significant number of anti-social incidents in Stilton which gave cause for concern. The project is fully supported by the Parish Council, Police and HDC Community Safety Team. The Play Strategy identifies the need to develop play facilities in rural communities, this project meets this aim.	Stilton Parish Council. HCSP. Cams Constabulary. Princess Trust	£ 10,000 Hunts District Council £ 6,000 Princess Trust £ 4,500 Local fundraising £ 2,500 Barclays Bank		50,500		50,500

Project Title	Project Outline	Project Partners	Project Cost & Contributions	Lottery Allocation			Total £
				08/9 £	09/10 £	10/11 £	
Play Partnership officer post	Play partnership officer post will be responsible for managing the play partnership supporting both voluntary and community organisations and town and parish councils in the development of play facilities to ensure maximum value is achieved. To work with district council officers when developing play facilities as part of the s106 development process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Voluntary &amp; Community organisations</li> <li>• Cambridgeshire County Council Children &amp; Young Peoples service.</li> <li>• Cambridgeshire association of Local councils.</li> </ul>		24,500	25,100	25,725	75,325
				121,500	113,525	63,685	298,710
Where project exceed more than 1 year an inflation element of 2.5% has been added to all costs.							

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CABINET

19<sup>th</sup> JULY 2007

## OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND AUDIT

(Report by Head of Planning Services)

### 1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Cabinet is asked to note the findings of the report and to adopt the new standards for open space, children's play areas, outdoor sports facilities and allotments as set out in Appendix 1 as interim policy.

### 2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Consultants PMP were commissioned by the Council to prepare a study to establish the current provision of open space within the District in order to comply with national policy guidance (Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation)). The guidance requires all local authorities to carry out a needs assessment and audit of provision to inform the development of local standards for the provision of open space.
- 2.2 The Study covers informal open space, outdoor recreation facilities, children's play areas and allotments, looking at any deficiencies in either quantity or quality, together with recommended future standards. It does not cover indoor recreational facilities such as sports halls, leisure centres and indoor sports courts.
- 2.3 The Study has been the subject of considerable consultation. It also takes account of previous work and consultation undertaken directly by the District Council.
- 2.4 Appendix 1 summarises how the study was carried out and some of its findings.

### 3 USING THE STUDY

#### *Planning Policy*

- 3.1 The Study includes a section which provides for a planning policy overview. It considers existing policy and policies in the emerging Local Development Framework. Crucially, it makes detailed recommendations on open space for the forthcoming Supplementary Planning Document which will set specific standards for social and physical infrastructure which may be required in association with development. In addition to its purpose of informing planning processes, it can also be used to inform decisions on the maintenance, management and future provision of open space, play areas and recreational land.

- 3.2 Current planning policy included in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995 is based on the NPFA standard of 6 ac/1,000 population. The Study offers the opportunity for a more sophisticated approach which takes into account existing provision within close distance of development and would allow future provision to be targeted at specific aspects of need. The new standards will provide for a greater amount of open space/recreational facilities and includes a standard for allotments.
- 3.3 By applying a new higher standard it is not the intention to make up for past deficiencies but applied flexibly it will enable improvements to be made where they are most needed. It is intended in the interim to apply these standards using the thresholds of development set out in the saved policies of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan 1995. In the future the threshold level will be revisited.

#### ***Other Actions***

- 3.4 The Study may also be used by the District Council to take decisions on the maintenance, management and development of open space and associated facilities.
- 3.5 These could include:
- an action plan for the protection, development and improvement of parks and gardens and natural areas
  - development of a green infrastructure strategy
  - an action plan for playing pitches
  - an action plan for the use, improvement and future provision of allotments.

## **6 RECOMMENDATION**

- 6.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- Note the findings of the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment and Audit
  - Adopt as interim policy the new standards for informal open space, provision for children and young people, outdoor sports facilities and allotments, as shown in tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 of appendix 1, when considering developer's applications ahead of their inclusion in a supplementary planning document.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION:**

Planning Policy Guidance Note 17 (Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation).

**Contact Officer: Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager**  
 **01480 388430**



## **Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment & Audit Briefing Note**

The Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment and Audit was undertaken by PMP consultants and completed in September 2006. The study covers informal open space, outdoor recreation facilities, children's play areas and allotments.

### **Why the study was produced?**

The study was produced primarily to inform the planning process. PPG17 requires local authorities to carry out a needs assessment and audit of provision to inform the development of local standards for the provision of open space. The study identifies deficiencies and surpluses of provision and their spatial distribution. It also identifies key priorities for action. In addition to its use within the planning process the study can also be used to inform decisions relating to the maintenance, management and future provision of open space.

### **How was the study carried out?**

The study was carried out in five stages:

**Stage one** – Identification of Local Needs – There was a comprehensive consultation to identify local needs which included a householder survey, a sports club survey, a young people survey, schools surveys, drop in sessions, consultations with external agencies and internal officers, a Parish Council survey and open space user surveys.

**Stage two** – Audit of Local Provision – this comprehensive audit covered informal open space, provision for children and young people, outdoor sports facilities and allotments and included a quality assessment of sites.

**Stage three** – Setting Provision Standards - this used the information collected in stages one and two to set standards for the provision of each of the types of open space based on the existing provision and comments made through the consultations.

**Stage four** – Applying Provision Standards – applied the standards set in stage three to the existing provision to identify deficiencies or surpluses of supply on a geographical basis.

**Stage five** – Drafting policies, recommendations and strategic priorities – this used the analysis of provision to identify priorities for action and to develop policies to ensure that the recommended standards of provision are achieved and any deficiencies in provision are addressed.

The District was split into five analysis areas to allow the data to be examined at a more detailed local level and to enable an understanding of the geographical distribution of open spaces. The five analysis areas are; Yaxley and Sawtry, Ramsey, Huntingdon and Godmanchester, St Ives and St Neots; these are the areas referred to in the summary of findings below.

## Summary of findings

Overall residents are satisfied with the quantity of open spaces in the District and feel that the quality of open space has improved in recent years. However the geographical distribution of open spaces was highlighted as a concern particularly given the expected increase in population.

The study includes a chapter on each of the types of open space assessed; which are discussed below. For each type a standard has been identified for quantity, quality and accessibility. When applying this standard consideration should be given to the existing facilities in the area and the type of facilities which the study shows are needed. The study sets out in detail where there are shortfalls in provision in terms of quantity, quality and accessibility and this should be used when negotiating contributions towards open space or when considering future provision of open space funded from other sources.

### Informal Open Space:

The assessment of informal open space covers parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural open spaces and amenity greenspaces of 0.2 hectares or more.

The study found that St Neots, Huntingdon and Godmanchester and St Ives analysis areas have good levels of informal open space provision although provision is lower in the Ramsey and Yaxley analysis areas. The uneven physical distribution of formal parks and gardens was highlighted.

In terms of quality the study highlighted the high quality of a number of sites in the district with parks and gardens and natural and semi-natural areas being particularly high. Amenity spaces were generally perceived to be of a slightly lower quality.

The study recommends quality and accessibility standards for informal open space as set out below:

Table 1

Type of informal open space	Recommended Quantity Standard	Recommended Accessibility Standard
Parks & Gardens (minimum size 0.2 hectares) <sup>1</sup>	0.48 ha per 1000 population	15 minutes walk time (720m)
Natural and Semi-natural open spaces (minimum size 0.2 hectares) <sup>1</sup>	0.23 ha per 1000 population	15 minutes walk time (720m)
Amenity greenspace (minimum size 0.2 hectares) <sup>1</sup>	1.09 ha per 1000 population	10 minutes walk time (480m)
Total	1.8 ha per 1000 population	

Although the standards of provision have been split into these three categories this is the total level of provision which should be achieved and the when applying this to a site, consideration should be given to what is already available, as in the examples below.

<sup>1</sup> These areas can include LEAPs, NEAPs and MUGAs

Example 1: In an area where there is an oversupply of natural and semi-natural open space but a short-fall in the supply of amenity green space and formal parks and gardens, the 1.8 ha per 1000 population could be applied to provide just these two types of informal open space

Example 2: If there is an over supply of amenity space in the area but a shortfall in formal parks and gardens then contributions could be sought to upgrade one of these amenity spaces to a formal park or garden.

### **Incidental Open Space**

Incidental open space of under 0.2 hectares is not included within the standard and therefore these types of space would be additional to the provision required through the standard and may include Local Areas for Play (LAPs).

### **Structural Landscaping**

Open spaces are an important element of landscaping but other elements of landscaping, such as structure planting and local features, which are not included in the study should also be included additionally within development proposals as discussed in the Huntingdonshire Design Guide.

### **Provision for children and young people:**

Overall the audit found that provision for children and young people is good but there are variations in provision and in some areas there is an unmet demand. There was also a general view that provision for teenagers is insufficient.

On the whole sites are of good quality but 16% are considered to be poor. The area with the lowest quality level was the Yaxley and Sawtry analysis area. Overall misuse, vandalism and graffiti are perceived to be the main quality issues.

The study recommends quantity and accessibility standards for provision for children and young people as set out below:

**Table 2**

	<b>Recommended Quantity Standard</b>	<b>Recommended Accessibility Standard</b>
Provision for children and young people <sup>1</sup>	0.8 facilities <sup>2</sup> per 1000 population (Approximately 400 houses)	Children – 10 minute walk time (480m)
		Young People (urban <sup>3</sup> ) 15 minute walk time (720m)

<sup>1</sup> Provision for children and young people includes LEAP's, NEAP's and MUGA's (Multi Use Games Area's)

<sup>2</sup> One facility should be considered equivalent to the average size of play facility in the District which is currently 6.6 pieces of equipment (approximately equivalent to the size of a LEAP)

<sup>3</sup> The standard for young people has been set for urban areas only. In rural areas provision will be considered on a village by village basis.

The standard provides the total level of provision for children and young people. When applying the standard consideration should be given to what is already available, as in some examples below.

Example 1: If a development site is within the distance set out in the accessibility standard for a children’s play area and the play area has an adequate number of pieces of equipment then contributions could be sought towards a facility for young people instead. This facility should be of a similar value to that which would have been provided for children’s provision.

Example 2: If there is a play area within the distance set out in the accessibility standard for a children’s play area but the play area does not have an adequate amount of equipment or needs improving, then contributions could be made to upgrading this rather than providing a new facility.

Example 3: If there is not a play area or young persons facility within the distance set out in the accessibility standard then contributions could be split between the two types of facility or to one or the other.

### Outdoor Sports Facilities

Generally the provision and variety of outdoor sports facilities across the District is good with the exception of the Yaxley and Sawtry analysis area.

The study recommends quality and accessibility standards for outdoor sports facilities as set out below:

**Table 3**

	<b>Recommended Quantity Standard</b>	<b>Recommended Accessibility Standard</b>
Outdoor Sports Facilities	1.61 ha per 1000 population (a minimum of 0.81 ha of this should be publicly accessible playing fields i.e. football, cricket, rugby and hockey pitches and the remainder should be tennis courts, synthetic turf pitches or bowling greens)	15 minutes walk for grass pitches and tennis courts (720m) 15 minutes drive for synthetic turf pitches and bowling greens

The standard provides the total level of provision that should be achieved for all types of outdoor sports facilities. When applying the standard consideration will need to be given to what is already available. The size of facility the standard would require should also be considered, as in the example below.

Example 1 – A development site generates a small increase in population and the resulting level of provision would not provide a useful area of outdoor sports facilities in this case contributions can be sought towards facilities offsite, this could be in the form of improvements to an existing facility in the vicinity e.g. through the provision of changing rooms or a pavilion or purchase of more land.

In addition to the assessment of outdoor sports facilities the study also includes a playing pitch strategy which looked in more detail at the provision of football, rugby, hockey and cricket pitches.

The study highlights a deficiency of 36.7 playing pitches across the District. This deficiency is predominantly of junior and mini football pitches but also includes rugby, hockey and cricket pitches. There is an over supply of adult football pitches in the District and therefore there may be some opportunities for this oversupply to address the deficiencies for other types of sport. Given the shortfalls identified the study recommends that all existing playing pitches be protected.

The database used to assess playing pitches can also be used to predict future levels of demand for playing pitches and identifies future requirements. This database has been retained by the Council and any changes to the number of playing pitches can be entered into this to assess the implications.

### Allotments:

The study found the Ramsey analysis area has the highest number of allotments with distribution in other areas being fairly even. It also found that Parish Councils are an important provider of allotments in the District.

The study recommends quality and accessibility standards for allotments as set out below:

**Table 4**

	<b>Recommended Quantity Standard</b>	<b>Recommended Accessibility Standard</b>
Allotments	0.32 ha per 1000 population	15 minutes walk time (720m)

The study recommends a higher standard than the existing level of provision due to likely increases in demand for allotments occurring as a result of high density living and the consequential lack of garden space.

### Comparison with existing standards:

Comparison of standards recommended in the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment and Audit with the Six Acre Standard included in the Huntingdonshire Local Plan (1995):

**Table 5**

	<b>6 acre standard requirement</b>	<b>New requirement</b>
Outdoor sports – pitches, courts, greens	1.6ha (4 acres)	1.61ha (4 acres)
Informal open space/ play space	0.8ha (2 acres)	1.8ha (4.4 acres) + 0.8 facilities
Allotments		0.32ha (0.8 acres)
Total	2.4ha (6 acres)	3.73ha (9.2 acres)

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**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY (SERVICE SUPPORT)  
CABINET**

**10<sup>th</sup> July 2007  
19<sup>th</sup> July 2007**

**REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY  
SINGLE ISSUE REVIEW  
PLANNING FOR GYPSY & TRAVELLER ACCOMODATION  
CONSULTATION ON OPTIONS & ISSUES**

**(Joint Report by Head of Planning Services and Head of Housing Services)**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The East of England Regional Assembly has published the Issues and Options document for the first stage of public participation on developing a policy within the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) to address the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers. The consultation period runs until 31<sup>st</sup> July 2007.

**2 BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Government's Circular 01/2006 (in para 23) requires the RSS to identify the number of pitches needed (but not their location) for each local planning authority in the light of local Gypsy and Travellers Accommodation Assessments (GTAA's) and a strategic view of needs across the region. The current RSS, which is at the Proposed Changes stage with adoption due later this year, does not address this matter and that is why a single issue policy review is needed.
- 2.2 In coming to a strategic view of needs across the region, EERA commissioned research to reconcile the various Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments (GTAA's) which have been or are being prepared. The GTAA for the wider Cambridge Sub-Region was published in May 2006; it identified that the need in Huntingdonshire for the period to 2011 is for an additional 15 to 25 pitches. The GTAA identified that in Huntingdonshire at the time of the survey (2005) there were 20 pitches (with a capacity for 36 caravans) on the County Council owned site at St. Neots, while the average number of unauthorised caravans 2002-2004 was 14 caravans. This was reported to Cabinet on 29<sup>th</sup> June 2006.
- 2.3 The Council is committed to prepare a Development Plan Document (DPD) for Sites for Gypsies and Travellers and the programme for it is set out in the Local Development Scheme. The programme reflects the need to ensure that the DPD is consistent with the RSS policy and policies in the Core Strategy. Consistent with Government Guidance as set out in Circular 01/2006, this Council has recently granted temporary planning permission for a number of pitches. These are sites which could potentially be options for allocations in the Development Plan Document (DPD). If they are translated into allocations, which could then be granted permanent planning permission, they would count towards the

requirement of 20 additional pitches. Any permanent permission for pitches granted ahead of the DPD would also count towards this requirement.

### **3 THE RSS ISSUES AND OPTIONS DOCUMENT**

- 3.1 The consultation document poses a number of questions in respect of the issues and options that are set out in Appendix A together with a recommended response.
- 3.2 The consultants for EERA developed a methodology to establish need across the region, taking into account published GTAA's. They have devised a formula to assess need where a GTAA is not in existence and to benchmark existing GTAA's. This has led to the assessment that 1,220 net additional residential pitches are required for the five years 2006 to 2011. For Huntingdonshire it proposes an additional 20 pitches (which is consistent with the Cambridge Sub-Region's GTAA estimate of 15-25 pitches).
- 3.3 The document also considers whether it is possible to forecast needs beyond 2011. This could be done through using a compound growth rate of 3% either to 2016 or 2021. Although EERA proposes a further general review of the RSS to be adopted by 2011, this is unlikely to be significantly later than the adoption of the single policy for Gypsies and Travellers, and therefore the general review provides no real opportunity to revisit provision.
- 3.4 The next section of the document considers issues and options for the distribution of pitches within the region. Two options are put forward: the first would accommodate need where it arises, while the second proposes that each local council area should provide at least 15 additional pitches over and above the existing number of pitches.
- 3.5 The document then considers issues of delivery and implementation. It considers provision by local councils/registered social Landlords, by Gypsies and Travellers or private landlords or by the development industry secured through S106 Agreements.

### **4 Recommendation**

- 4.1 It is recommended that the responses set out in Appendix A be approved as the formal response of the Council.

#### **Background Papers:**

Planning for Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation in the East of England: Issues & Options Consultation Document; *East of England Regional Assembly, May 2007.*

Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites, Circular 1/2006, ODPM February 2006.



Cambridge Sub-Region Traveller Needs Assessment; Anglia Ruskin University/Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College, May 2006.

**CONTACT OFFICER** - enquiries about this report to Richard Probyn (Planning Policy Manager), on 01480 388430 or Steve Plant (Head of Housing Services) on 01480 388240.

**Planning for Gypsy and Traveller accommodation in the East of England: Issues and Options.**

**Recommended Responses from Huntingdonshire District Council**

**Q1. Do you think 1,220 net additional residential pitches is a reasonable estimate of the level of unmet need for residential pitch provision taking into account how this may change over the period until 2011?**

*Recommended Response:*

*The Cambridge Sub-Regional GTAA is a robust and carefully worked detailed assessment and the Council accepts the number of pitches it suggests for Huntingdonshire. The wider regional figures, based on research undertaken by CLG, which includes estimates where such detailed assessments may not be in place, is considered to be the best evidence available and the Council has no evidence to question them.*

**Q2. If you think 1,220 net additional pitches is not a reasonable estimate of need what alternative level do you think is a more reasonable estimate of need at 2011? Please make clear why.**

*Recommended Response:*

*The Council considers there is no evidence to suggest that 1,220 net additional pitches is not a reasonable estimate of need.*

**Q3. On the basis of information currently available is it helpful if the RSS revision seeks to establish policy on the level of need for transit pitches? And, if so, would it be more helpful to distinguish this provision from the need for residential pitch provision in policy.**

*Recommended Response:*

*The Cambridge Sub-Region GTAA considered that there are difficulties in establishing the need for transit sites, and that in practice the distinction between transit and residential sites becomes blurred over time with transit sites becoming long-stay over time. The GTAA therefore provides only very limited evidence of this aspect of need. The Council therefore sees little point in trying to establish this in policy in the RSS.*

*There are also considerably more difficulties over management of such sites for a number of reasons including high turnover, non-payment of rent, vandalism of facilities, anti-social behaviour, complaints from neighbouring land users, conflict between different occupiers and difficulty in enforcing maximum length of stay. Transit sites tend to be sought by G&Ts along the main road routes.*

*The Council considers that such need is best served by pragmatic decisions taken locally. The need for short-term provision may be better met through the use of emergency stopping places.*

**Q4. Should this revision seek to establish policy on the level of pitch provision beyond 2011? If so, what assumptions should this be used to do this and until what year should they be applied?**

*Recommended Response:*

*The Council notes that the I&O document points to a number of studies which suggest an 3% annual compound growth rate, but the CLG consultants do not endorse this strongly pointing to the difficulties of establishing longer-term needs. If a 3% compound growth rate is used, the Council assumes that this is based on the total number of G&T households in the District once the pitch provision need at 2011 has been met. There are great difficulties in translating this somewhat dubious level of need into sound evidence for specific site allocations in a DPD. The District Council therefore considers that there is no sound evidence base for the RSS Policy to establish policy on the level of need beyond 2011.*

*The difficulties of predicting in the longer term are compounded by potential changes within the G&T community as they become more settled and their children receive education, so their aspirations are likely to change. This points to the need for additional survey and research.*

*There are also difficulties in establishing what end date should be used, 2016 or 2021. The Council is unsure as to the implications for G&T housing of the requirement of PPS3 that a 15 year supply should be identified to cover the period from the date of the adoption of the Core Strategy (or indeed the G&T DPD).*

**Q5. To what extent is it reasonable to seek to spread the distribution of pitches from the Council areas where need is calculated to arise? Will a more dispersed distribution still meet the needs of G&Ts? Would a different pattern of dispersal seeking to re-distribute provision from areas of greatest need into nearby council areas be more appropriate than option 2?**

*Recommended Response:*

*The Council is firmly of the opinion that need should be met where need arises. To try to influence the location of Gypsies and Travellers into areas where they do not wish to go will simply continue existing problems of unauthorised encampments and unauthorised developments in those areas favoured by Gypsies and Travellers. Consideration should be given to the reasons why Gypsies and Travellers prefer to locate in certain areas. This may be cultural tradition or the need to gain access to appropriate employment, such as*

*seasonal agricultural work, areas suitable for the breeding of horses and ponies or recycling of material and scrap metal dealing. Where it is agricultural, sites will need to be in areas of appropriate agriculture where seasonal workers are in high demand (such as Fenland); where work is based on recycling of materials sites are likely to be needed in close proximity to large urban centres (as is the case with sites around Cambridge and Peterborough).*

*The principle of meeting housing need where it arises is a key current planning policy for the Cambridge Sub-region which has replaced a previous and discredited policy of trying to disperse housing to areas where the need was lower; the same principle should be applied to the housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers.*

*It is more appropriate for Local DPDs to consult at the local level on the location of site provision which would meet local needs in an appropriate way*

**Q6. Is it reasonable to accept the principle that each local council area should seek to provide at least one additional site?**

*Recommended Response:*

*No, for the reasons set out in the response to Q5.*

**Q7. In the light of the above consideration of locational issues, is there any evidence to suggest that any council area within the East of England could not make provision for a level of pitches in the order of that shown in the two illustrative options without having an adverse impact on areas of recognised environmental importance? Are there any other environmental or policy constraints that may be so significant to influence the distribution of pitches between council areas?**

*Recommended Response:*

*This will be a matter for each individual council to comment upon in the light of its own knowledge of local circumstances; it is not appropriate for Huntingdonshire to speculate about the capacity of other council areas. The Council considers that there are no overriding constraints or environmental factors which would lead it to be unable to identify sites for the level of need suggested in the RSS Options & Issues document at Options 1 and 2 of 20 pitches in Huntingdonshire.*

**Q8. To what extent is it reasonable to rely upon the delivery of sites either by Gypsies and Travellers themselves or by the development industry?**

*Recommended Response:*

*There is evidence that Gypsies and Travellers prefer to buy their own sites and manage them themselves, particularly small family sites. It is considered that this could satisfy a considerable proportion of the need. However, councils should be given considerable flexibility to establish locational and site requirements criteria*

*appropriate for their local council area, particularly with regard to “sustainable” locations.*

*At the same time there will be a need for local authority/registered social landlord sites for those unable to buy their own sites. The Government must allocate sufficient funds to local authorities to enable them to undertake this provision and to ensure adequate management and maintenance. The Council notes that Luminus, a local RSL, wishes to extend its current site at St. Neots.*

*The Council is extremely sceptical that the development industry would be eager to develop or contribute towards sites for Gypsies and Travellers, given land values.*

**Q9. In view of the potential scale of pitch provision in the east of England and constraints on public funding available is it reasonable to suggest that most of the need identified is likely to have to be met by provision on “exception” sites or other sites that would not normally be granted planning permission for other forms of housing?**

*Recommended Response:*

*The Council considers that it is unrealistic to expect sites to be provided on land where the alternative is traditional housing as the land values will exclude Gypsies and Travellers from buying land at such values. Local authorities and Registered Social Landlords would also face similar difficulties on the open market. It is therefore almost inevitable that most sites which are not allocated in a Development Plan Document (DPD) will come forward in locations where planning policies would not permit housing for the settled community (ie “as exceptions”). In these circumstances councils should be given flexibility in determining appropriate locational criteria for such sites in terms of sustainability, as suggested in the answer to Q8.*

*In preparing its DPD for Gypsy and Traveller sites, the District Council will be seeking agreement with the Gypsy and Traveller community and willing landowners. The agreed sites would then be allocated for that use which should result in appropriate land values, as the land would not be in competition with other forms of housing. However, it is too early in the process to assess what proportion of the total requirement in Huntingdonshire will be met by allocated sites as opposed to those coming forward on unallocated land as “windfalls” which will be in “exception” locations.*

**Q10. In view of the scale of potential need for new sites identified, is there a need to develop new means of providing Gypsy and Traveller sites, such as through the establishment of some form of specialist delivery organisation?**

*Recommended Response:*

*The creation of yet another delivery vehicle is to risk increased bureaucracy with less local accountability. Delivery is better vested in the Gypsy and Traveller communities and local authorities properly supported by Government funding.*

**Q11. In the light of the proposed draft Circular is it appropriate for the revision to seek to identify the number of pitches that should be provided in each council area to meet the needs of Travelling Showpeople separately from those to be provided to meet the needs of Gypsies and Travellers? If so, what evidence is available to inform this and what other issues should be taken into consideration?**

*Recommended Response:*

*The Cambridge Sub-Region GTAA did not find evidence of specific need. Such need is likely to be very specific to a few sites and the Council considers that this is a matter better addressed in local DPDs rather than at a regional level.*

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL  
(SERVICE DELIVERY)**

**3RD JULY 2007**

**CABINET**

**19TH JULY 2007**

## **REVIEW OF SMALL SCALE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS GRANT SCHEME**

**(Report by the Working Group)**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel at their meeting on 2nd January 2007 established a Working Group comprising Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, R W J Eaton, D A Giles, P G Mitchell and J S Watt to undertake a study into various aspects of the Council's Small Scale Environmental Improvements grant scheme. Councillor Mrs Banerjee was elected Chairman of the Working Group.

1.2 The Working Group was specifically tasked with examining the following:

- the purpose of the funding having regard to the Council's corporate objectives and community aims contained in Growing Success;
- arrangements for inviting town and parish councils to propose projects for funding;
- the criteria for evaluating individual projects proposed for funding;
- the extent to which the criteria should have regard, if any, to the size of the town or parish council promoting the project;
- differential levels of financial contribution by the town or parish council promoting the project; and
- the involvement of Members in the evaluation process

These are discussed in detail below.

### **2. WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES**

2.1 The Working Group first met on 13th February 2007, when the Executive Councillors for Finance and for Planning Strategy, Environment and Transport outlined their concerns relating to the existing scheme, which had prompted them to suggest a review. These are addressed in the following paragraphs.

2.2 The Working Group, at this meeting, discussed various aspects of the Scheme and its administration. Members, however, decided that their deliberations should be informed by practical experience of the Scheme in operation. Site visits were, therefore, held at 12 locations where applications for funding had been made for various scales of projects some of which were successful and some not. The visits took place on 2nd April 2007. The next section summarises the Working Group's findings.

### **3. FINDINGS**

#### **(a) The Council's Corporate Objectives and Community Aims**

3.1 The Working Group has been acquainted with the outcome of an exercise by Officers to link the Scheme's aims to the Council's corporate objectives and community aims. The relevant ones are A Clean, 'Green' and Attractive Place; Safe, Vibrant and Inclusive Communities; Access to Services and Transport and A Strong, Diverse Economy. Members have concluded that all the existing scoring criteria have links to the Council's Corporate Plan "Growing Success".

#### **(b) Arrangements for inviting Town and Parish Councils to Propose Projects for Funding**

3.2 The Working Group has identified a number of areas where improvements might be made to the bidding process. Although all clerks receive full details of the Scheme, its criteria and the bidding process, a frequent comment made by town and parish councillors is that they are unaware of it. It appears that the latter are not receiving this communication. In order to avoid such situations occurring in the future, the Working Group recommends that copies of the correspondence to clerks are sent to all Members, which will enable them to raise it at meetings and answer queries.

3.3 The previous recommendation is aimed at raising public awareness of the Scheme. With this in mind the Working Group also recommends that details of all the Council's grants schemes are published in a single location on the website in such a way that members of the public will be clear which scheme is the most appropriate for their purposes. This will increase awareness amongst the public and encourage individuals to raise schemes at parish level. A further recommendation intended to achieve this aim is that the timing of bidding processes for the funding schemes referred to in paragraph 3.5 (and 3.15) are harmonized in conjunction with the County Council.

3.4 Their deliberations concentrated on bids by town and parish councils but, for clarity, the Working Group suggests that the Scheme's literature makes clear who is able to apply.

3.5 A number of suggestions stem from the Scheme's relationship with other funding schemes. If a bid is received for which either the Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee Small Scale Improvements Scheme, the Local Transport Plan Village Residential Areas Environmental Improvements Scheme or the Transport Scheme is more appropriate, be it because of the cost or nature of the project involved, Officers automatically refer it to the body undertaking the administration of that scheme. Furthermore, there is an informal process under which Officers make District Council Medium Term Plan bids for qualifying schemes costing over £30k. The Working Group is of the view that this should be formalised by imposing an upper limit on the value of a project of £30k. In addition, it is proposed that the District Council's contribution should be limited to £22.5k to enable a greater number of projects to be undertaken.



- 3.6 In addition, where a bid has been referred elsewhere the Working Group recommends that the applicant is informed as such to enable enquiries to be made as to the outcome.
- 3.7 In a similar vein the Working Group recommends that where applications are refused under the Small Scale Environmental Improvements scheme (and not referred elsewhere) applicants are formally provided with feedback on the reasons for decisions and details of how their schemes have ranked in relation to others. This will encourage, in subsequent years, the resubmission of bids that are appropriate and avoid the resubmission of ones that are not.

**(c) The Scheme's Criteria**

- 3.8 The Working Group has reviewed the Scheme's criteria. In general they are satisfied with it and have only recommended some minor alterations. A copy of the application form is attached to assist with understanding this discussion. It is suggested that the wording of the Environment, Community Safety, Existing Condition, Local Economy and Community Benefit criteria do not need to be changed. Similarly, the scores attached to each of these, in practice, appear to work well.
- 3.9 The Working Group, however, question the validity of the Prominence criterion. It does not contribute meaningfully to assessments and has inconsistent application in that a quiet part of St Neots might have considerably more through traffic than a village such as Covington, both of which sites were visited by Members. It is, therefore, recommended that the Prominence criterion is removed.
- 3.10 With regard to Access, the Working Group feels that there is no need to distinguish between land that is private with public access and that which is publicly owned. An example is the replacement of a wall and railings outside 36 to 38 High Street, Huntingdon, which has considerably enhanced the appearance of a public thoroughfare, even though technically it is on privately owned land. The Working Group's view is that public benefit is sufficient and so they recommend that the existing two criteria are replaced with a single one, which awards two points if a project is subject to public access or is publicly visible.
- 3.11 At the suggestion of the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Environment and Transport, the Working Group has considered the role of Section 106 Agreements in funding works. Members recognise the inequity of a situation whereby some areas receive considerable benefit via this route while others receive nothing. As things stand, however, money obtained in this way cannot be used for this purpose. On the basis of work undertaken, however, the Working Group is of the view that if it is appropriate to use Section 106 money in this way, Members would endorse a change in the current arrangements from whatever direction.

**(d) The Size of Town or Parish Council**

- 3.12 The situation in the previous paragraph is strongly related to the size of the settlement involved. In the course of its work the Working Group looked at whether this should be factored into the scheme. Members are not in favour of introducing separate schemes for large

and small settlements as the cut off point would be arbitrary and such a move would create additional administration. Equally, they do not feel that size of settlement should be included in the Scheme's criteria to determine eligibility. Nevertheless, they endorse the Executive Councillor for Finance's view that larger parishes and towns have access to other funding sources and are able to raise more money through their precepts and this should be recognised. They suggest that once a project has been approved to proceed, the applicant's contribution should be inversely proportional to the size of settlement. Accordingly, they recommend that a town or parish council be required to contribute £1.00 per elector to a maximum contribution of 25% of the scheme cost. This is the same as the Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee Small Scale Improvements Scheme.

**(e) Financial Contribution by Town and Parish Councils**

3.13 The Working Group does not consider that extra weighting should be given to bids for which town or parish councils are prepared to contribute a greater proportion of the total cost than the minimum required under the scheme. While this is welcomed the Working Group feels that it should not form part of the eligibility criteria.

**(f) Members' Involvement**

3.14 The Working Group is of the view that Members should not have any involvement in the assessment process. This is because Members will naturally favour their own wards making it difficult to obtain a balanced view. The second point of paragraph 3.15 demonstrates there is no need for Member involvement in assessments.

**(g) Other Matters**

3.15 In addition to their deliberations on the matters the Working Group was asked to investigate, two others arose in the course of their work. The first is that as the criteria give added weighting if a project involves a listed building or ancient monument, Conservation Area grants should be added to the list of alternative grant schemes to which bids might be referred. The second is that although, during the site visits, Members concurred with the scoring of bids against the criteria, there was an example that they thought should have been scored differently. As this was only one instance out of twelve they did not feel it merited a change to the process but they thought it should be drawn to Officers' attention.

**4. CONCLUSIONS**

4.1 The Working Group has undertaken a thorough review of the Small Scale Environmental Improvements Grant Scheme, which incorporated its strategic underpinnings, its technical operation and its practical application. On this basis the Working Group concluded -

- 1) that links between the Scheme and the Council's Corporate Plan "Growing Success should be noted;
- 2) that copies of correspondence to Clerks should be sent to all Ward Members;

- 3) that details of all the Council's grants schemes should be published in a single location on the website in such a way that members of the public will be clear which scheme is the most appropriate for their purposes;
- 4) that the timing of bidding processes for the funding schemes referred to in paragraphs 3.5 and 3.15 should be harmonized in conjunction with the County Council;
- 5) that the Scheme's literature should make clear who is able to apply;
- 6) that qualifying schemes costing over £30k should be referred for consideration in conjunction with the Medium Term Plan process;
- 7) that the Council's contribution should be limited to £22.5k per scheme;
- 8) that where a bid has been referred elsewhere applicants should be informed accordingly;
- 9) that applicants should be provided with feedback on the reasons for decisions and details of how their schemes ranked in relation to others;
- 10) that "Prominence" should be removed from the assessment criteria;
- 11) that under "Access" existing criteria should be removed and replaced with a single score of two points if a project is subject to public access or is publicly visible;
- 12) that a town or parish council should be required to contribute £1.00 per elector up to a maximum contribution of 25% of the scheme cost;
- 13) that Members should not have any involvement in the evaluation process;
- 14) Conservation Area grants should be added to the list of alternative grant schemes to which bids might be referred; and
- 15) Members' comment on the consistency of scoring should be noted.

## **5. RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 Subject to its consideration of the Working Group's conclusions, the Cabinet is invited to authorise the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Environment & Transport and the Working Group to prepare an amended Small Scale Environmental Improvements Grant Scheme.

## **Background Documents**

Report and notes of the meetings of the Environmental Improvements Working Group

**Contact Officer:** A Roberts  
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<b>SMALL SCALE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT BIDS</b>	<b>DATE:</b>
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<i>Bid Title</i>	
<b>Project officer</b>	<b>P Milward, Project Engineer</b>
<b>Background</b>	

<b>Proposal</b>	
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<b>Alternate Approach</b>	
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<b>Key Assessments / Risk</b>	
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<b>Funding/Costs</b>	
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<b>Future Liabilities</b>	
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<b>Programme Restraints</b>	
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**SCORING CRITERIA FOR SCHEME (Score each section if relevant)**

<b>ENVIRONMENT</b> Site in conservation area +3 Surrounding site of environment significance +2 Surrounding site little environment significance +1 Will be detrimental to surrounding site -1 <b>Add the following if relevant</b> Site adjacent to listed building/ancient monument +1 Site is part of listed building/ancient monument +2	<b>EXISTING CONDITION</b> Site in very poor state and in need of immediate attention +3 Site in poor state requiring some remedial works +2 Site in poor state +1 Area has been subject of public complaint +1 <b>ACCESS</b> Is land private with public access +1 Is land public +2
<b>PROMINENCE</b> Major access route +3 Minor access route +2 In quiet part of town/village +1	<b>LOCAL ECONOMY</b> Improves access to local retail outlet +2 Improves access to local employment +2 Enhances tourism appeal +1
<b>COMMUNITY SAFETY</b> Improves safety to many +2 Improves safety to few +1 Reduces safety -1 Reduces local nuisance +1 Reduces fear of crime +2	<b>COMMUNITY BENEFIT</b> Improves access to all services/facilities +3 Improves access to local services/facilities +2 Enhances community identity +1 Improves community participation +2 Will be maintained by community +3

FORM COMPLETED BY:	TOTAL SCORE:
DATE COMPLETED:	

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