

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 13 DECEMBER 2007** at **11:30 AM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

APOLOGIES

**Contact
(01480)**

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 22 November 2007.

**Mrs H J 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. THE USE OF ONLINE MEDIA PROCEDURAL IMPLICATIONS
(Pages 7 - 14)

To consider a report by the Head of Administration.

**R Reeves
388003**

4. MEDIUM TERM PLAN - REQUEST FOR THE RELEASE OF FUNDS
(Pages 15 - 20)

To consider a report by the Head of Financial Services.

**S Couper
388103**

5. TREASURY MANAGEMENT INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE
(Pages 21 - 24)

To consider a report by the Head of Financial Services on levels of performance achieved by External Fund Managers during the quarter ended 30th September 2007.

**S Couper
388103**

6. POTENTIAL IMPLICATIONS UNDER THE ANIMAL WELFARE ACT 2006 (Pages 25 - 28)

To consider a report by the Environmental and Community Health Services regarding the introduction of new animal welfare powers under the Animal Welfare Act 2006 and the implications for the District Council.

**J Allan
388281**

7. HUNTINGDON CONSERVATION AREA BOUNDARY CHANGES AND CHARACTER STATEMENT (Pages 29 - 36)

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

R Probyn
388430

8. SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP (Pages 37 - 40)

To receive the report of the meeting of the Safety Advisory Group held on 14th November 2007.

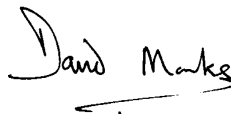
Miss H Ali
388006

9. RISK REGISTER - OPTION APPRAISAL FORM (Pages 41 - 44)

With the assistance of a report by the Audit and Risk Manager to consider a corporate risk identified as high risk.

D Harwood
388115

Dated this 5 day of December 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, their family or any person with whom they had a close association;*
 - (b) *a body employing those persons, any firm in which they are a partner and any company of which they are directors;*
 - (c) *any corporate body in which those persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or*
 - (d) *the Councillor's registerable financial and other interests.*
2. *A personal interest becomes a prejudicial interest where a member of the public (who has knowledge of the circumstances) would reasonably regard the Member's personal interest as being so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.*

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

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

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

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

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

Emergency Procedure

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit and to make their way to the car park adjacent to the Methodist Church on the High Street (opposite Prima's Italian Restaurant).

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HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Thursday, 22 November 2007.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.
Councillors P L E Bucknell, D B Dew, A Hansard, Mrs D C Reynolds, T V Rogers and L M Simpson.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor C R Hyams.

70. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18th October 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

71. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

72. DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS TOWARDS AFFORDABLE HOUSING SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Further to Minute No. 06/24, consideration was given to a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the responses received to consultation on the supplementary planning document, "Developer Contributions towards Affordable Housing".

Having considered the schedule of responses and amendments outlined in the appendices to the report and in noting officers' recommendations on representations, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Developer Contributions towards Housing Supplementary Planning Document incorporating the changes set out in Appendix 1 to the report now submitted be approved;
- (b) that the Sustainable Appraisal, appended to the report now submitted, be approved;
- (c) that the Statement of Consultation, appended as Annex 5 to the report now submitted be approved; and
- (d) that the Head of Planning Services be authorised to approve any minor consequential amendments to the

text and illustrations as a result of the changes above after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Environment and Transport.

73. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK :CORE STRATEGY - PREFERRED OPTIONS

A report by the Head of Planning Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) inviting the Cabinet to consider suggested preferred options for inclusion in the Council's Core Strategy Development Plan Document.

Members were reminded that the Core Strategy would provide a spatial vision for the District up to 2026, which would include essential housing development, stable economic growth and environmental improvements. In that respect, the Cabinet emphasised that the success of the vision would be dependent on the delivery by the Government and other stakeholders of improved infrastructure, educational and health facilities for the District

Having been reminded of the timescale and procedure for public consultation and consideration by the Council prior to its submission to the Secretary of State, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the Core Strategy: Preferred Options Report, as appended to the report now submitted, be approved as the basis for a public consultation and Head of Planning Services authorised to make any minor changes to the document as he considers necessary, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Environment and Transport.

74. GROWING SUCCESS PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Cabinet received a report by the Head of Policy and Strategic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) presenting performance data on the achievement of objectives in "Growing Success" – the Council's Corporate Plan.

Having been reminded that a joint working group of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels regularly reviewed those objectives considered to be priority, Executive Members requested that a summary of the Panel's deliberations should be appended to future monitoring reports. Having also requested further clarification about the target set for affordable housing, the demand for smoking cessation training and the continued requirement for "art attack" activities, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

75. BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2008-2013

Further to Minute No. 07/54 and by way of a report by the Head of

Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the present position on the draft 2008/09 budget, the Medium Term Financial Plan for the period up to 2012/2013 and the longer term financial forecast to 2018/2019 together with the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) thereon.

In discussing the content of the report, Members emphasised the need to consider a range of potential scenarios, particularly given the uncertainty as to future levels of revenue support grant and the possible impact of a lower than expected increase in government grant in 2008/09 and in that context it was

RESOLVED

that full Council be recommended to;

- (a) note the implications of receiving a low level of revenue support grant in terms of future council tax rises and in that respect to request Officers to report to a future meeting on other options which would involve increases of between 4.99% and 7.5%;
- (b) support a policy of limiting increases in budget requirement to 4.99% but to invite Officers to consider models requiring a lower requirement approximating to circa 4%;
- (c) support the draft Medium Term Financial Plan as the basis for the production of the 2008/2009 budget, the revised Medium Term Plan for 2009-2013 and a financial plan to 2018/2019.;and
- (d) request Officers to review critically all budgets and Medium Term Plan schemes (revenue and capital).

76. DECENT HOMES FOR VULNERABLE PEOPLE IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Further to Minute No. 06/28 and by way of a report by the Heads of Housing Services, of Technical Services and of Environmental and Community Health Services, (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were advised that the Council had been awarded a capital grant of £167,000 from EERA's Housing and Sustainable Communities Panel to help improve "non-decent" homes in the private sector.

In discussing how the grant should be used, Members were reminded that a previous award had been reserved for thermal efficiency improvements. Despite targeted publicity the take-up of this grant had been lower than anticipated. Having been advised that failure to spend the grant on the intended use might prejudice further allocations, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the grant of £167,000 be reserved for future years'

spend on the provision of insulation improvements to private sector homes occupied by vulnerable people.

77. HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION FRAMEWORK

Further to Minute No. 06/123, a report by the Head of Housing Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a copy of a proposed Homelessness Prevention Framework for discretionary payments designed to support the Council's preventative approach to homelessness.

Having considered the main aims, objectives and financial implications of the framework and in noting progress made to date on the Council's homelessness prevention programme, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the successes already achieved in the prevention of homelessness be noted; and
- (b) that the Homelessness Prevention Policy Framework for discretionary payments be approved and the Head of Housing Services requested to report further to the Cabinet after a year of operation on progress, cost and success of the scheme in preventing and reducing homelessness.

78. PROPOSED STUKELEY MEADOWS SKATE PARK

By way of a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a request for the release of funding for the development of a skate park in Stukeley Meadows which had been identified for inclusion in 2008/2013 Medium Term Plan.

Whilst noting that the scheme had been successful in securing £160,000 from external sources, Executive Councillors referred to the absence of any funding thus far Huntingdon Town Council particularly given the benefits of the proposals for the town. In that respect Members suggested that the Town Council be approached with a view to meeting the running costs of the facility, estimated at £10k per annum. In noting the time restrictions placed on some of the designated funding and the resultant need to commission work on the scheme by the end of the year, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- a) that up to £20,000 be released from the capital programme, prior to approval of the Council's Medium Term Plan to enable a scheme to develop a skate park in Stukeley Meadows, Huntingdon to proceed; and
- b) that Huntingdon Town Council be approached to consider meeting the running costs of the scheme estimated at £10k per annum.

79. LOCAL ECONOMY STRATEGY

With the aid of a report by the Head of Policy and Strategic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the content of the draft Huntingdonshire Local Economy Strategy.

By way of background, Members were reminded that the strategy had been developed in consultation with the business community and the Huntingdonshire Economic Forum and aimed to provide a focus for investment, activities and interventions for a range of organisations working in the local economy for continued economic success.

Having noted the next stage of the process – consultation with partner organisations prior to the document's endorsement by the Economic Forum in January 2008 - the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the contents of the draft Huntingdonshire Local Economy Strategy be approved.

80. LICENSING ACT 2003 - STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered the results of consultation on the Council's revised Statement of Licensing Policy as required by the Licensing Act 2003, along with suggested responses thereto. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that full Council be recommended to approve the Statement of Licensing Policy appended to the report now submitted with effect from 7th January 2008 for a period of three years.

81. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to the financial affairs of particular persons.

82. LAND AT ST MARY'S STREET, REAR OF 22 HIGH STREET HUNTINGDON

The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Legal and Estates (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) regarding the proposed disposal of Council-owned land at St Mary's Street, the rear of 22 High Street, Huntingdon.

RESOLVED

that the terms and conditions, as set out in the report now submitted, for the sale of District Council owned land at St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, be approved.

Chairman

THE USE OF ONLINE MEDIA PROCEDURAL IMPLICATIONS

(Report by Head of Administration)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A working group led by Councillor A N Gilbert submitted a report to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) in September following an investigation into ways of promoting and communicating the work of the Council's scrutiny panels and the use of information and communications technology generally to highlight the work of the Council. As support was expressed by the Panel for the use of on-line petitions, a further report was requested on the potential constitutional implications and this was considered by the Panel in November.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to bring the Panel's conclusions to the attention of the Corporate Governance Panel and the Cabinet.

2. E-Forums Working Group

- 2.1 A copy of the group's report prepared by Councillor Gilbert is attached. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel concluded that –
 - councillors should try and make use of the personal website facility on the Council's website as a means of communicating with ward residents, although the decision whether to maintain a 'blog' should remain a matter for each individual councillor;
 - the Council should not host on-line forums because of the substantial resource implications involved but that officers should look for cost effective ways of increasing opportunities for meaningful interaction through the Council's website;
 - an on-line petition facility should be added to the Council's website in the most cost-effective way possible; and
 - Scrutiny Panel members and Chairmen should be more pro-active in using in-house methods of communication and engaging with external media.

The Modern.Gov software system used for the publication of agenda and minutes on-line enables Members to host their own web pages and 'blogs' and both training and day-to-day assistance is available from the Democratic Services Section to help Members who wish to avail themselves of this opportunity. An upgrade to the system is anticipated in December which will enable petitions to be undertaken on-line.

3. Petitions

- 3.1 An avenue exists currently for a petition on matters of relevance and containing a minimum of 50 signatories to be presented at a meeting of the Council. A similar mechanism applies to meetings of the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee.
- 3.2 Having considered whether an on-line petition should be treated any differently to one organised in a traditional manner, the Panel were of the opinion that, provided it contained the names and addresses or places of work of the signatories as opposed to e-mail addresses and someone being prepared to present it at a Council meeting, an on-line petition should be dealt with in accordance with the existing provisions of the constitution. There is a presumption that on-line petitions may be easier to organise and thus will be used more frequently. However subject to existing rules being complied with, this could stimulate interest in local democracy and attract more publicity for Council meetings. In order to prevent the possibility of a succession of petitions slowing down the business of the Council, the Panel suggest that an upper limit could be imposed of three per meeting.
- 3.3 The Panel were conscious that the Council has had to introduce a vexatious complainants procedure to prevent officers and Members from being bombarded with e-mails by individuals. On-line petitions, because of their immediacy, could provide a similar mechanism to generate excessive submissions to the Council. If this occurs, it may be necessary to re-visit the petitions and vexatious complainants procedures to prevent the process from being abused.
- 3.4 In the event of an on-line petition not generating the 50 signatures required to trigger its presentation to Council, it is suggested that it be dealt with by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel, as long as it contains a minimum of 10 signatures. If an individual member of the public wishes to raise an issue with the Council, this will be dealt with under the 'community call to action' provisions of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Police and Justice Act 2006. Regulations and guidance on the implementation of those provisions will be issued in the New Year and will be brought to the attention of Members when they become available.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The experience of those authorities that have introduced the facility of on-line petitions is that this is a successful way of engaging with the community and enhancing the democratic process. The Modern.Gov software upgrade will enable this to be introduced at minimal cost other than staff time in moderating the process and, while there is no evidence that this will result in a large influx of petitions, a limit on the number of petitions per meeting, whether submitted on-line or in a traditional format, will mean that this will be kept at manageable proportions at Council meetings.

5. Recommendations

- 5.1 Having regard to the investigations they have commissioned, the Panel

RECOMMEND

- that councillors make use of the personal website facility on the Council's website as a means of communicating with ward residents, although the decision whether to maintain a 'blog' should remain a matter for each individual councillor;
- that on-line forums be not hosted by the Council because of the substantial resource implications involved but that officers look for cost effective ways of increasing opportunities for meaningful interaction through the Council's website;
- that an on-line petition facility be introduced using the Modern.Gov software system when this becomes available;
- that on-line petitions be processed under the existing constitutional arrangements, subject to a maximum of 3 petitions being presented at any meeting;
- that in the event of an on-line petition not having the requisite number of signatories or the organiser not being prepared to present it to Council, the petition be submitted for consideration to the relevant overview and scrutiny panel, subject to the petition containing the names and addresses of at least 10 persons who live or work or own property in the District;
- that in the event of an excessive number of petitions being organised by any one individual, the Corporate Governance Panel be requested to consider amending the vexatious complainants procedure accordingly; and
- that the Corporate Governance Panel recommend the Council to approve the necessary constitutional changes.

Background Papers

Report by E-Forums working group submitted to Overview & Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 11th September 2007.

Contact Officer

Roy Reeves – Head of Administration
Tel: (01480) 388003

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**REPORT BY WORKING GROUP TO CONSIDER THE USE OF ONLINE MEDIA TO
PROMOTE THE WORK OF HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

1. INTRODUCTION

The working group was established initially to look at ways of better promoting and communicating the work of the Council's overview and scrutiny panels. The working group's remit was subsequently expanded to consider the broader issues of using information and communications technology to promote the work of the Council generally and to foster greater citizen participation in local democracy. In carrying out its remit the group has looked particularly at the use of personal web logs (blogs), online discussion forums and online petitions. The group discovered that this path (of using such media for such purposes) was already fairly well trodden by others. Pilot studies have been carried out in some local authorities and the advice of those authorities was particularly helpful in reaching the recommendations contained in this report.

The body of the report considers four separate areas: blogs, online forums, online petitions, and other means of external communications. Some of these areas might serve to better promote the work of the scrutiny panels and the Council generally, while others are more concerned with facilitating citizen engagement in the democratic process.

2. BACKGROUND

An initial report dated 3 November 2006 was prepared by Councillor Gilbert and presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) on 14 November 2006. Councillors Dew and Thorpe subsequently joined the working group. The group met on 22 February 2007 to discuss matters further. A meeting was held on 29 March 2007 between the working group, Councillor Simpson, Chris Hall, Joe Bedingfield and Christine Deller. This meeting was helpful in ascertaining the views of officers and for better understanding some of the resource implications surrounding use of online media.

A brief verbal report was presented to the scrutiny panel by Councillor Gilbert on 12 June 2007. Following that report contact has been made with Kingston Borough Council and Bristol City Council and their experiences of using online petitions have been summarised in this report.

3. BLOGS

A blog is essentially an online journal detailing the musings of its author. Weblogs are increasingly being used by elected representatives and local government officials keen to communicate more effectively and efficiently with citizens, staff, media and other tiers of government.

The aim of blogging for civic leadership is to encourage two-way communication between councillors and local residents. Blogging councillors use their online diary to offer an insight into their day to day role as a local representative. Local issues are explored and residents are invited to give their comments and opinions.

Weblogs that work best are highly individualistic. Some blogs that encourage comments actually receive them (although there is currently no facility for doing this on the HDC member sites), but ultimately this is the personal online space of the owner. It is already possible for HDC members to use their existing personal website space (once set up) to host a blog. At present only a few members have a personal HDC website and none is currently using it to blog.

The group thought that blogs were best left to individual councillors to instigate if they had a specific desire to do so. If blogs are to be done well they require a lot of time to update. The facility already exists for members to organise a simple blog on their HDC webspace if they want to (although there is no interactivity function).

RECOMMENDATION

Councillors should try to make use of the personal website facility on the Council's website as a means of communicating with ward residents, but the decision whether to maintain a blog should remain an individual one.

4. ONLINE FORUMS

An online forum is a web-based facility whereby anyone can post an idea, ask a question or otherwise enter into debate over issues. The goal of online forums is to give everyone a greater voice in local decisions and encourage more citizen participation in local public policy-making. They also provide a forum for decision-makers to receive immediate feedback from the community on issues that must be decided or voted on.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister recently provided funding to pilot online forums in Brighton & Hove and the London Borough of Newham. These forums are loosely associated with the local authorities in their respective areas, although they are not hosted or moderated by those authorities. Councillor Gilbert's report of 3 November 2006 contains further information on the operation of the Brighton forum. Initial interest in the forums was at a fairly low level. There is evidence which shows that in Newham the local authority have distanced themselves from the forum and some councillors do not consider that it makes any valuable contribution to local debate.

The working group is concerned that a dedicated forum linked to, or hosted by, the Council site is not a viable option. For legal and ethical reasons it would require full-time monitoring by an officer and would duplicate the facility provided by other privately operated local forums. This would clearly have substantial resource implications which would probably go beyond the potential benefits any such forum might offer. This view is shared by Chris Hall and Joe Bedingfield.

However, we did think that it would be useful to have on the Council website the function to post comments (after they have been checked by an officer) in response to specific news items, consultations etc. This would create a type of mini, subject-specific forum which would encourage public participation in the work of the council. Officers thought this idea would be feasible and would not involve significant resources to implement. It was also noted that the Council's website already offers a degree of interactivity. Joe Bedingfield has now brought together many of these interactive elements at www.huntsdc.gov.uk/haveyoursay.

RECOMMENDATION

Due to the substantial resource implications of hosting an online forum on the Council website, it is not recommended that the Council pursues this matter further. However, officers should continue to look for cost-effective ways of increasing the opportunities for meaningful citizen interaction through the Council's website.

5. ONLINE PETITIONS

Online petitions (or e-petitions) are simply petitions which are commenced, hosted and submitted via a website. They are being used by the Scottish parliament and some local authorities, notably Bristol City and Kingston Borough councils. Bristol and Kingston have been using e-petitions for about three years and they appear to be a successful way of providing another medium through which concerned citizens can raise a petition. In fact Bristol say that it is the most successful and most self-perpetuating e-democracy tool they have. (Information from Bristol City Council has been circulated separately to Members of the Panel).

It seems that having the online petition facility does not necessarily lead to an increase in the number of petitions submitted to a local authority. The online facility does not replace traditional paper petitions, but exists alongside it. Citizens who were not able to add their name to the petition online would still be able to sign a paper version. The technology merely enables people to organise the petition online. However, the Bristol and Kingston systems also allow for the submission of supporting documents (such as plans or photos) and there is the facility to post comments so that some debate about the subject of the petition can take place online. This requires some moderation but, according to Bristol, this is not an onerous responsibility. Once submitted to the Council the petition would be dealt with in the usual way as set out in the constitution.

The evidence from both authorities is that online petitions have enhanced citizen engagement in the democratic process and even influenced decision making. This has not come without cost. For the system to run effectively an officer needs to be available to advise potential petitioners on the wording of their petition, and whether the issue can indeed be the subject of a petition. An officer would also need to moderate any comments left on the website (if such a facility were provided) and the facility would need appropriate IT support. The original software cost £7,000 (but attracted a subsidy of £3,000). However, it seems that alternative software will be available later this year at a vastly reduced cost. Overall it seems that online petitions would provide a useful additional medium through which Huntingdonshire residents can raise matters of public concern.

RECOMMENDATION

The Council adds an online petition facility to its website in the most cost-effective way possible.

6. OTHER FORMS OF EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

The group also considered how traditional forms of external communications could be used to promote the panels' activities. We thought greater use could be made of District Wide and the website to highlight the work of scrutiny. We also thought that panel chairs should look to further develop press contacts and to supply them with regular news releases.

RECOMMENDATION

Scrutiny panel members and chairmen to be more proactive in utilising in-house methods of communication and engaging with external media.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

**CONTACT: Councillor A Gilbert
(01480) 219283**

CABINET

13 DECEMBER 2007

MEDIUM TERM PLAN REQUESTS FOR RELEASE OF FUNDS

(Report by the Head of Financial Services)

1 PURPOSE

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

2 BACKGROUND

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

3. RECOMMENDATION

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

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985

None

Contact Officer:

Steve Couper

Head of Financial Services ☎ 01480 388103

| SUMMARY | | Net Revenue Impact (£'000) | | | | | | Net Capital (£'000) | | | | | |
|---|---|-----------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|----------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| | | 2007/ 2008 | 2008/ 2009 | 2009/ 2010 | 2010/ 2011 | 2011/ 2012 | 2012/ 2013 | 2007/ 2008 | 2008/ 2009 | 2009/ 2010 | 2010/ 2011 | 2011/ 2012 | 2012/ 2013 |
| Annex | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B | Project 708 Condition Survey – St Neots Leisure Centre – Synthetic Pitch Resurface | 4 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | | | | | | |
| C | Project 708 Condition Survey - Huntingdon Leisure Centre Pool Roof | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | | | | | | |
| D | Project 708 Condition Survey – St Neots Leisure Centre – Dryside Boiler Plant and Accessibility Improvements | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | | | | | | |
| Total amount for which release now requested | | 6 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 264 | | | | | |

**Project 708 Condition Survey – St Neots Leisure Centre –
Synthetic Pitch Resurface**

Project Manager – Simon Bell

Financial Impact

| | Net Revenue Impact | | | | | | Capital | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| | 2006/ 2007 £000 | 2007/ 2008 £000 | 2008/ 2009 £000 | 2009/ 2010 £000 | 2010/ 2011 £000 | 2011/ 2012 £000 | 2012/ 2013 £000 | 2006/ 2007 £000 | 2007/ 2008 £000 | 2008/ 2009 £000 | 2009/ 2010 £000 | 2010/ 2011 £000 | 2011/ 2012 £000 | 2012/ 2013 £000 | |
| Approved Net Budget | | 222 | 172 | 254 | 261 | 265 | 236 | | 1,491 | 1,353 | 895 | 510 | 477 | | |
| Already released | | 164 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | | 559 | Comprising 464 SNLC Pool 95 HLC Synthetic | | | | | |
| Amount for which release now requested | | 4 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 8 | | 154 | | | | | | |

Summary of Scheme

- ❖ This scheme forms part of the Condition Survey and has been marked as urgent due to its deteriorating condition. Originally scheduled for 2009 (year 3) the project has been brought forward to early 2008. To compensate, an equivalent sum has been moved from year 1 to year 3 from elsewhere in the survey.
- ❖ SNLC's large synthetic pitch was installed in 1994 with a ten year life expectancy. 13 years on it now urgently needs replacing.
- ❖ Work would be carried out during a four-five week period when outdoor bookings are at their lowest. This minimises disruption to service. There will be a loss of income during this period which will be recouped by the attractiveness and anticipated additional bookings from the new high quality facility.

Justification for Release

- ❖ Pitch repairs and maintenance to the regular sweeping regime during 2006/07 totalled £2.5k and this figure will increase year on year as the pitch ages.
- ❖ The synthetic pitch is home to St Neots Hockey Club which contributes £10,000+ in pitch hire and hospitality trade each year. The potential loss of this group to an alternate proposed facility at Longsands School is very real should SNLC not be able to provide a playing surface to the National Hockey Association standard
- ❖ During these times further customer dissatisfaction has occurred when the Centre has been unable to honour customer bookings. This has resulted in loss of income.
- ❖ Synthetic pitch hire costs £48 per hour and the Centre receives regular complaints regarding the state of the facility as poor value for money.
- ❖ Reduces the risk of claims against SNLC/HDC with regard to the safety of the surface. Poor seam maintenance increases the risk of hockey balls "lifting" potentially causing serious facial injuries.

Contribution

- ❖ Following negotiations with Cambs CC, County have offered 26.15% as a contribution to all agreed schemes within the Condition Survey.

**Project 708 Condition Survey - Huntingdon Leisure
Centre Pool Roof**

Project Manager – Simon Bell

Financial Impact

Approved Net Budget
Already released

**Amount for which release
Now requested**

| Net Revenue Impact | | | | | | | Capital | | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| 2006/ 2007 £000 | 2007/ 2008 £000 | 2008/ 2009 £000 | 2009/ 2010 £000 | 2010/ 2011 £000 | 2011/ 2012 £000 | 2012/ 2013 £000 | 2006/ 2007 £000 | 2007/ 2008 £000 | 2008/ 2009 £000 | 2009/ 2010 £000 | 2010/ 2011 £000 | 2011/ 2012 £000 | 2012/ 2013 £000 | |
| | 222 | 172 | 254 | 261 | 265 | 236 | | 1,491 | 1,353 | 895 | 510 | 477 | | |
| | 164 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | | 559 | Comprising 464 SNLC Pool 95 HLC Synthetic | | | | | |
| | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | | 58 | | | | | | |

Summary of Scheme

- ❖ The project is part of the Condition Survey marked as urgent for year one (2007-08) completion.
- ❖ To complete the pool building roof making good leaks and replacing old tiles; repaint pool ceiling roof improving the lighting conditions in the pool hall (2 week closure)
- ❖ To replace the damaged glazing with resistant polycarbonate panels.
- ❖ To close the void in the pool ceiling and replace glazing with insulated cladding panels.
- ❖ To replace the flashings, and cappings and remove vegetation.

Justification for Release

- ❖ HLC pool has experienced poor environmental conditions (cold) throughout wintry periods consistently over the past few years.
- ❖ These conditions result in reduced customer satisfaction as the Centre cannot always meet the required/desired air temperature for a pool hall.
- ❖ At times conditions have been so poor (as low as 14°C) that sessions such as parents and babes and baby swimming lessons have had to be cancelled. 29 °C is the recommended temperature.
- ❖ The loss of heat through the damaged glazing and void in the pool roof is a major factor in both the poor air temperature and the relatively high energy expenditure caused by plant trying to achieve the desired air temperature.
- ❖ Currently hot air is escaping directly through the damaged glazing and pool roof. Repair of these, together with better insulation and closure of the void in the pool roof will reduce heat loss and energy consumption as well as improving environmental conditions and customer satisfaction.
- ❖ Attention to this work now will pre-empt further deterioration and potentially prevent more expensive repairs at a future date.

Contribution

- ❖ Following negotiations with Cambs CC, County have offered 26.15% as a contribution to all agreed schemes within the Condition Survey

**Project 708 Condition Survey – St Neots Leisure Centre –
Dryside Boiler Plant and Accessibility Improvements**

Project Manager – Simon Bell

Financial Impact

| | Net Revenue Impact | | | | | | Capital | | | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|--|
| | 2006/ 2007 £000 | 2007/ 2008 £000 | 2008/ 2009 £000 | 2009/ 2010 £000 | 2010/ 2011 £000 | 2011/ 2012 £000 | 2012/ 2013 £000 | 2006/ 2007 £000 | 2007/ 2008 £000 | 2008/ 2009 £000 | 2009/ 2010 £000 | 2010/ 2011 £000 | 2011/ 2012 £000 | 2012/ 2013 £000 | |
| Approved Net Budget | | 222 | 172 | 254 | 261 | 265 | 236 | | 1,491 | 1,353 | 895 | 510 | 477 | | |
| Already released | | 164 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | 28 | | 559 | Comprising 464 SNLC Pool 95 HLC Synthetic | | | | | |
| Amount for which release now requested | | 1 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | | 52 | | | | | | |

Summary of Scheme

- ❖ Updating of toilet facilities, ceiling, ventilation and lighting in circulatory areas.
- ❖ Toilet refurbishment will improve original and dated facilities (1988) to a modern standard and provide improved customer service and hygiene.
- ❖ Improved lighting to corridors improves security, CCTV images and increased awareness of vulnerable persons in line with child protection policy
- ❖ Increased disabled access to toilets
- ❖ Replacement of dry side boiler and plant, including housing which is now past its original life expectancy.

Justification for Release

- ❖ Investment in facilities at SNLC has been minimal in recent years and the bid ensures services are upgraded to increase customer satisfaction.
- ❖ Ongoing maintenance and repair to services and lighting will be reduced by up to £1K per annum. (Source Cfacs Analyser 2006/07)
- ❖ Toilet refurbishment will save energy by replacing services with modern energy efficient products
- ❖ Better, modern lighting and water services will reduce energy consumption in line with the Council's Environment Strategy. Each light saving £9 in electricity cost per year or 38 kg of CO2 (Source www.energysavingtrust.org.uk)
- ❖ Improved security and Health and Safety will reduce the number of incidents and accidents attributable to the facility.
- ❖ Boiler/plant replacement reduces service and repair costs and replaces dated equipment with cost effective, energy efficient equivalents.
- ❖ Completing the work as a package will minimise the disruption to users of the facility and will not necessitate a closure of any activity areas.

Contribution

- ❖ Following negotiations with Cambs CC, County have offered 26.15% as a contribution to all agreed schemes within the Condition Survey

**TREASURY MANAGEMENT
INVESTMENT PERFORMANCE
(Report by the Head of Financial Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. This report comments on the performance of the fund to the end of September 2007. At the beginning of the year the Fund Managers managed £53m of the Council's funds: £21.5m with Investec, and £31.5m with CDCM. After the return of Investec's portfolio in early September the funds were allocated £31.5m with CDCM and £20m managed in-house.
- 1.2. Cabinet will recall that the decision to ask for the return of the Investec fund was to reduce volatility and improve performance in a period where attractive fixed rates were available on time deposits.
- 1.3. Accordingly now that all the investments (in-house and CDCM) are time deposits the management and monitoring is now much simpler and the returns more easily forecast during the course of the year. This report therefore recommends that in future the Cabinet receives the Annual Report in May and a six-monthly update in December.

2. PERFORMANCE SUMMARY

- 2.1 Annex A shows investment returns over various periods.

2.2 CDCM

Over the quarter to 30 September 2007 CDCM did not achieve the benchmark or the industry average because the majority of their investments were locked in at rates below those prevailing in the quarter, although were higher than the rates current when they were taken out. Whether or not they made the correct judgement on any particular loan can only be assessed when it has matured and this will be monitored and discussed with CDCM.

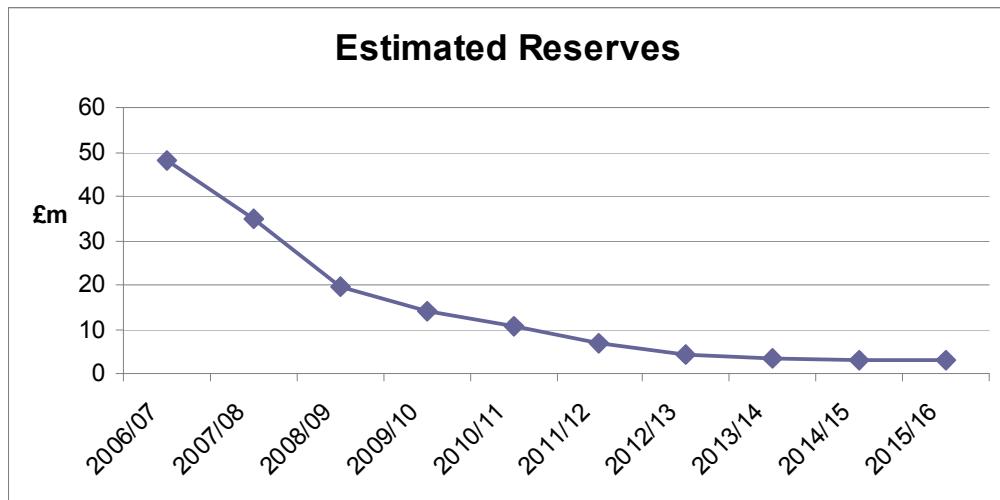
- 2.3 This approach was a reflection of their strategy and their judgement has proved to be correct over the longer term as shown in the final table in the annex.

2.3 In-house funds

The in-house portfolio has always comprised of temporary borrowing and short-term investments to manage cash flow but now includes the £20m returned by Investec which is invested in time deposits. These mature between March 2008 and February 2009 at an average rate of 6.26%. These will be compared with a benchmark of 3 month LIBID, which is the same as that used for CDCM funds. As an indication the annualised 3 month benchmark was 5.98% as at 30 September 2007.

3. FUTURE USE OF FUNDS

- 3.1 The draft MTP indicates that reserves will be used significantly to fund both revenue and capital expenditure over the next few years as shown in the graph below.



4 MARKET OUTLOOK

- 4.1 The bank base rate is 5.75% and has remained at that level since July 2007. Before the credit crisis in August 2007 economists were predicting another increase in the base rate. Now they expect that the rate has reached its peak and some, not all, take the view that the base rate will be 5% in a year's time

5. PERFORMANCE AGAINST BUDGET IN 2007/8

- 5.1 The latest forecast outturn is, as in September, that there will be additional interest of £120k on the budget of £2,587k.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- Note this report.
 - Receive six-monthly reports in future.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Working papers in Financial Services

CONTACT OFFICER

Steve Couper – Head of Financial Services Tel. 01480 388103

ANNEX A

| PERFORMANCE FOR THE QUARTER JULY 2007 – SEPTEMBER 2007 # | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Performance % | Benchmark % | Variation from benchmark | Industry average % | Variation from average % |
| Investec | 1.32 | 1.35* | -0.03 | N/A | N/A |
| CDCM | 1.28 | 1.57** | -0.29 | 1.55 | -0.27 |

| PERFORMANCE FOR THE 6 MONTHS APRIL 2007 – SEPTEMBER 2007 # | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Performance % | Benchmark % | Variation from benchmark | Industry average % | Variation from average % |
| Investec | 2.24 | 2.28* | -0.04 | N/A | N/A |
| CDCM | 2.56 | 2.99** | -0.43 | 2.73 | -0.17 |

| CUMULATIVE PERFORMANCE SINCE JULY 2000 | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Performance % | Benchmark % | Variation from benchmark | Industry average % | Variation from average % |
| Investec | 40.03 | 39.71* | 0.32 | 38.43\$ | 1.6\$ |
| CDCM | 42.72 | 39.38** | 3.34 | 38.96 | 3.76 |

* Composite of 60% Merrill Lynch 3 month LIBID (London Inter-Bank Bid Rate) and 40% ML 0-5yr Gilt Index.

** 3 month LIBID

The performance for Investec is to 3 September 2007

\$ Estimated

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CABINET

13 DECEMBER 2007

ANIMAL WELFARE ACT 2006
(Report by Head of Environmental & Community Health Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise Members of the introduction of new animal welfare powers under the Animal Welfare Act 2006, “the 2006 Act”, and to seek delegated authority for officers to be appointed under section 51 of the 2006 Act and to use the full range of these new powers. The 2006 Act came into effect on 6 April 2007.
- 1.2 Secondary legislation and codes of practice will be introduced under the 2006 Act to update and replace much of the existing licensing and registration schemes relating to animals. These latter functions are likely to be designated as non-executive functions and as such will be reported to the Licensing and Protection Panel in due course.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Protection of Animals Act 1911 has formed the basis for most prosecutions concerning animal cruelty and although it has been amended by several subsequent Acts, it is no longer considered to reflect modern practice.
- 2.2 The 2006 Act brings together and updates existing legislation designed to promote the welfare of vertebrate animals, other than those in the wild. It introduces a duty to ensure the welfare of kept animals and offences related to cruelty and fighting. It has limited applications to animal welfare establishments which are regulated under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986.
- 2.3 Animals of a kind commonly domesticated in the British Islands are “protected animals” under the 2006 Act and this ensures that, for instance, stray dogs and feral cats are covered. Animals of a kind not commonly domesticated in the British Islands are only “protected animals” to the extent that they are under the control of man or are not living independently in the wild. “Under control” is intended to be a broader expression than “captive animal”.
- 2.4 The 2006 Act introduces a duty on those responsible for animals to take reasonable steps to meet the welfare needs of their animals. It also makes available a range of powers to local authorities and their inspectors. These include:
- ◆ Emergency powers in relation to animals in distress.
 - ◆ Powers of entry and inspection including the power to seize documents.
 - ◆ Prosecution powers.
 - ◆ Improvement notices.

- 2.5 The Act is a “common informant act” which means that anyone is allowed to bring a prosecution for an offence. This means that, for instance, the RSPCA can continue to bring prosecutions in relation to cruelty to domestic animals but RSPCA inspectors will not have formal enforcement powers such as the power of entry to residential premises when an owner’s consent to enter is withheld and will therefore have to be accompanied by a local authority inspector or the police in such circumstances.
- 2.6 Although there is no duty on local authorities to use the powers introduced by the Act, there will be an expectation that local authority inspectors will exercise all available powers when circumstances indicate that they should.

3. IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 The 2006 Act introduces a range of powers designed to help local authority inspectors carry out their existing duties more effectively and comes at a time when new dog control orders are taking effect and the police responsibility for dealing with stray dogs is being transferred to local authorities. These facts will put added strain on our small animal welfare team of 1.6 FTEs and it is hoped that sufficient savings can be identified corporately to allow a modest increase in personnel to 2 FTEs.
- 3.2 Secondary legislation will be issued under the 2006 Act in connection with the licensing and registration of animal-related businesses and it is anticipated that this will extend the application of such matters to additional animal-related businesses such as liveries and pet-sitting businesses. These issues are likely to be designated as non-executive functions and as such will be reported to the Licensing and Protection Panel.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 These new powers will be useful to local authority inspectors dealing with animal welfare issues and should be adopted.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 It is RECOMMENDED that:
- a) The Council adopt the powers set out in the Animal Welfare Act 2006;
 - b) The Director of Operational Services and the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services are authorised to appoint officers as inspectors under section 51 of the Animal Welfare Act 2006;
 - c) That appointed officers are authorised to exercise all of the powers set out in the Animal Welfare Act 2006 in the course of their duties;
 - d) The Head of Environmental and Community Health Services be authorised to initiate legal proceedings under the 2006 Act after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Housing and Health;

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Animal Welfare Act 2006

Contact Officer: John Allan
 **01480 388281**

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COMT
CABINET

27TH NOVEMBER 2007
13TH DECEMBER 2007

HUNTINGDON CONSERVATION AREA: CHARACTER STATEMENT AND BOUNDARY REVIEW

(Report by Planning Policy Manager)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Cabinet of the responses to the Huntingdon Character Statement and Boundary Review consultation documents and to consider the Council's response.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The District Council is committed to the production of Conservation Area Character Statements to provide an analysis of the special interest of all the district's 60 Conservation Areas. These documents will be used to guide decisions on planning matters and other changes to the fabric of Conservation Areas to ensure that the character and appearance of Conservation Areas is not diminished. It is also hoped that the publication of these documents will help to increase the general public's awareness of the special qualities that make the District's Conservation Areas unique.
- 2.2 The existing Huntingdon Conservation Area Character Statement was adopted in May 1972 with Victoria Square added in May 1991 following a period of public consultation. Under the new Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs), all character statements should be reviewed in a five year rolling programme to ensure that the advice being offered is relevant and up-to-date. It was last reviewed in 2002 and Victoria Square in 2000.

3. THE BOUNDARY REVIEW

The original boundary of the Huntingdon Conservation Areas was very tightly drawn around building groups and did not reflect a thorough or justified examination of the area's historic merit or development. Best and current practice expects Conservation Area boundaries to be drawn on the basis of thorough research and analysis.

Following the methodology for Boundary Review adopted in 2003, it is proposed that the Conservation Area is enlarged. This would better reflect the historic relationship between the town and the surrounding area. The proposed boundary also includes some of the earlier urban extensions within the town and the Hinchingsbrooke Campus.

The rationale for the proposed boundary changes is explained and illustrated in the attached document, Huntingdon Conservation Area Boundary Review.

4. THE CHARACTER ASSESSMENT

4.1 The contents of the Character Statement follows a previously-agreed pattern, which conveys the special architectural and historical interest of the Conservation Area through maps, photographic illustrations and written text. Specific references are made to:-

- The historical development of the town
- The essential characteristics of the Conservation Area including important views, focal points and landmark buildings
- The green open spaces, trees and gardens in the Conservation Area
- The architectural styles within the town
- The distribution of construction materials
- Examples of traditional local detailing

4.2 This approach conforms with English Heritage's recent publication *Guidance on conservation area appraisals* 2006.

5. THE CONSULTATION RESPONSE

5.1 6 written responses have been received from the statutory agencies, local organisations and members of the public consulted. The comments received are presented within Appendix 1 and the Council's response to them is also indicated.

5.2 Many comments related to minor issues of fact or detail, or issues beyond the scope of the document.

5.3 On 26th November 2007, the Development Control Panel endorsed the Character Statement and Boundary Review.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. Adopt the revised Huntingdon Conservation Area Character Statement and Boundary Review (as previously circulated) with the amendments contained in Appendix 1 of this paper, which will become a material consideration in planning decisions.

2. Authorise the Head of Planning Services to make any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations necessary as a result of these changes, after consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Strategy.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Draft Huntingdon Character Statement and Boundary Review

Contact Officer: Susan Smith
Assistant Conservation Officer
☎ 01480 388416

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Comments . . .

Huntingdon Boundary Review/Character Assessment

1. Do you think it is a good idea to change the boundary of the Conservation Area?

Yes No

Comments:

2. Do you think the new boundary is correct?

Yes No

3. Do you think that there are areas that should be included within the proposed Conservation Area or areas that would be better omitted?

4. A character statement for a Conservation Area is required by national government. Do you find the document useful for understanding the historic character of Huntingdon?

Yes No

Comments:

5. Do you have any comments to make regarding the content of the Character Assessment?

6. Any other issues you feel the Character Assessment should address?

Further Comments

If you have any other comments to make on the two documents, please make them in writing by **22nd October 2007** to:

Head of Planning Services, Huntingdonshire District Council, Pathfinder House, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN or to Matthew.Hare@huntsdc.gov.uk

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HUNTINGDON CHARACTER ASSESSMENT & BOUNDARY REVIEW: SUMMARY OF RESPONSES

APPENDIX ONE

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

| Respondent | Comment | Response | Action |
|--|--|--|-------------------|
| <p>1</p> <p>West Highways Division Box ET 1031 Stanton Way Huntingdon</p> | <p>(i) Boundary Review – the extent of areas F, Ca, Cb, Ba, Bb, D, Ab, Aa and E are greater than necessary as they cover mainly common or are public open spaces. This will have a significant impact on the nature and cost of highway schemes proposed in those areas.</p> <p>(ii) Planners need to be mindful of the objectives and schemes identified within Cambridgeshire’s Local Transport Plan</p> | <p>(i) <i>Noted</i></p> <p>(ii) <i>Noted</i></p> | <p>3</p> <p>3</p> |
| <p>2</p> <p>Quinton Carroll Eliza Gore Historic Environment Team Cambridgeshire County Council Box ELH 1108 Shire Hall Cambridge</p> | <p>(i) Extensions welcome and will take into account importance of Huntingdon’s settlement morphology</p> <p>(ii) New Conservation Area seeks to protect a range of distinctive zones which reflect areas different age and use, not just appearance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Area Aa – area Medieval settlement and small scale industry b. Area Ba – Medieval moated site and may be location of Medieval hospital c. Area Ca – encompasses wider area around castle and Medieval earthworks and remains have been recorded here along with burials d. Area Cb – concentration Roman activity, plus Saxo-Norman remains e. Area D – location Medieval priory f. Area E – ancient open space which would have provided vital grazing land for community in Medieval period g. Area F – northern section contains surviving ridge and furrow giving essential link back to integration of farming with Medieval settlement. Also pleased to see setting of Hinchbrook House protected as 16th and 17th century gardens are of considerable local importance. Inclusion of World War II pillbox is also welcomed | <p>(i) <i>Noted</i></p> <p>(ii) <i>Noted</i></p> | <p>3</p> <p>3</p> |

| | | | | |
|---|--|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| 3 | Chris Blackman Planning Policy Officer Box ET 1010 Cambridgeshire County Council | (i) Presuming that the Huntingdon Area Action Plan was taken into account so that the two documents are "joined up". The AAP isn't referred to. | <i>Noted</i> | 3 |
| 4 | Jacky Homer Ramblers Association | (i) Positive response and wish to see existing footpaths and alleyways retained and included in future development plans. They believe it is important to provide convenient routes for moving about built-up areas on foot | <i>Noted</i> | 3 |
| 5 | 3 Comments sheets from Public Exhibition | (i) Area should be extended along side of River Great Ouse to meet Hartford Conservation Area (ii) Include Reco, Limpit Tapes etc industrial area | (i) <i>Noted</i> (ii) <i>Noted</i> | 3 |

SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP (Report of the Advisory Group)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Advisory Group met on 14th November 2007 when Councillors J W Davies, A Hansard, Mrs P A Jordan and L M Simpson were present.
- 1.2 Also in attendance were Messrs P Corley, J Craig, P Duerden, S Howell, O Langford and R Preston, Miss H Ali, Ms D Ingram-Hall, Mrs C Rowland and Mrs T Davidson.
- 1.3 The Staff Side were represented by Mr K Lawson and Mrs S McKerral.
- 1.4 Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Mrs G Smith.
- 1.5 In the absence of the Chairman, Mr Lawson took the Chair for the duration of the meeting.
- 1.6 The report of the meeting of the Advisory Group held on 12th September 2007 was received and noted.
- 1.7 No declarations of interest were received.

2. AD-HOC SAFETY INSPECTION: 19TH SEPTEMBER 2007

- 2.1 The Advisory Group received an account of the observations recorded during an ad-hoc safety inspection which had taken place on 19th September 2007 at Centenary House, the Council's Temporary Customer Service Centre.
- 2.2 Although the Group had expressed some concerns, Members acknowledged that there were areas where good practice had been seen. The Team Leader for the Customer Services Team reported that the issues highlighted by the inspection had now been addressed. Members expressed their appreciation to all staff in Centenary House for their helpful assistance on the day.
- 2.3 Following proposals made by the Health & Safety Adviser, the Group agreed that a sufficient number of staff, across all Council sites, should undertake fire extinguisher training.

3. PATHFINDER HOUSE: STAGE 1 DEMOLITION

- 3.1 By way of a report by the Head of Technical Services, the Advisory Group were acquainted with details of the potential risks associated with the demolition of the vacant wing of Pathfinder House and the possible mitigation strategies that had been identified. Members were updated on a number of amendments that had been made to the annex of the report since it was originally circulated to the Group.

- 3.2 The Head of Technical Services advised the Group of the safety measures that would be put in place during the demolition, which included the provision of safety netting six metres in length from the wing being demolished to the occupied part of the building, together with wire mesh grills that would be hung around the scaffold. In response to questions raised by the Vice-Chairman concerning the noise monitoring procedures that had been adopted, the Group were advised that McAlpine would be monitoring their own noise levels as part of their “considerate constructor” programme. Members noted that the Environmental and Community Health Services Division had conducted their own background work and that monitoring equipment had been installed in the Legal & Estates Section. The Group were assured that McAlpine were taking health and safety matters seriously and were operating under the Contractors Health and Safety Scheme (CHAS), a national vetting scheme for health & safety matters on construction sites. Furthermore, the Group were advised that only those carrying a Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) card and wearing the relevant personal protective equipment would be permitted on site.
- 3.3 Following questions regarding the involvement of the Health & Safety Adviser during the construction process, the Group were advised that McAlpine were responsible for all matters relating to health & safety on site and that any concerns should be raised with the Head of Technical Services and/or the Health & Safety Adviser. The Group did however express the need for communicative links to remain open between all parties concerned.

4. FIRE EVACUATIONS

- 4.1 The Group received and noted reports on the recent fire evacuations at Pathfinder House and Eastfield House.
- 4.2 In noting the problems identified during the three evacuations at Pathfinder House, Members expressed concern with regard to the location of the meeting point situated in the rear car park, which would potentially cause a problem if the fire services required access to the building. In that light, the Health & Safety Adviser reported that in such circumstances, the roll call process should already have been completed before the fire services arrived, therefore allowing for the safe movement of staff upon the fire services arrival. In response to questions raised by a Member concerning vehicular access through the rear car park barrier, the Health & Safety Adviser undertook to liaise with the Facilities Manager and the fire authority requesting them to assess their access requirements.
- 4.3 Having drawn attention to the problems identified during the evacuation process at Eastfield House, the Health & Safety Co-ordinator for the Operations Division reported that some confusion had been evident amongst visitors to the building and that action would now be taken to prevent this happening in the future.

5. INTERNAL SMOKING CESSATION CLINICS

- 5.1 The Group were acquainted with details of a proposal by the Smoke Free Implementation Officer to introduce a 6 to 8 week pilot of free smoking cessation clinics to assist staff who wish to stop smoking. By way of background, the Group were advised that the clinics would mirror those already being offered to local businesses and that both one-to-one and group sessions would be offered.

- 5.2 The Group were informed that internal research and marketing would be conducted as a means of gauging staff interest on the matter. Discussions ensued on the need to ensure that the clinics would be offered corporately to all staff as well as the District Councillors. Members agreed that attendance at such clinics would be required in the individual's own time.
- 5.3 Having expressed support for the proposal, the Group concluded that the Smoke Free Implementation Officer should liaise with the Head of HR and Payroll Services on the matter.

6. ANNUAL ACCIDENT REPORTS

(a) DISTRICT COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

- 6.1 The Group received and noted a report by the Head of HR and Payroll Services summarising and comparing accident data and statistics for 2006/07 compared to previous years. In so doing, the Group noted that the total number of accidents across the Council had fallen by 10, although 18 incidents leading to absence from work for more than three days had risen by 3 when compared to the previous year. The Group's attention was also drawn to trends demonstrated in accidents over the year.
- 6.2 Members acknowledged that the number of incidents reported in the Operations Division was higher than those reported elsewhere within the Council due to the nature of the work involved. In the ensuing discussion the Health & Safety Adviser reported that in addition to a request for waterproof trousers and a shorter waterproof coat similar to that currently worn by the agency workers, a Medium Term Plan bid for a managed clothing facility would be submitted over the forthcoming year to help improve the welfare of staff in the Operations Division.

(b) LEISURE CENTRE EMPLOYEES

- 6.3 A report by the Leisure Centres' Health & Safety Co-ordinator detailing the results of the annual accident summary at Leisure Centres was also presented. In so doing, the Group were pleased to note a slight decrease in the total number of accidents involving employees and that all accidents were of a minor nature. In noting the increase in numbers involving non-employees, the Group were advised that 12 of the accidents had related to flooring issues at two of the sites which had now been resolved with the contractors.

7. ACCIDENT REPORTS

(a) DISTRICT COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

- 7.1 The Group received and noted a report by the Head of HR and Payroll Services giving details of 11 accidents involving employees and 7 accidents involving non-employees which had taken place since the previous meeting. The Health and Safety Adviser drew Members' attention to one incident involving asbestos in the roof of one of the Council's buildings. Members were advised that contractors had resolved the situation safely.

(b) LEISURE CENTRE EMPLOYEES

- 7.2 The Group also received a report by the Leisure Centres' Health and Safety Co-ordinator detailing accidents which had been reported at the Leisure Centres since the previous meeting.

8. HEALTH & SAFETY TRAINING UPDATE

- 8.1 The Group were acquainted with a report by the Head of HR and Payroll Services outlining health & safety training courses which had been held since the previous meeting.
- 8.2 Following a proposal made by the Health and Safety Adviser, the Advisory Group agreed that a Corporate Manslaughter Seminar should be held prior to the next meeting of the Group.

9. SAFETY INSPECTION AND NEXT MEETING

- 9.1 The Advisory Group noted arrangements made for the Annual Safety Inspection and for their scheduled meeting on 5th March 2008.

Vice-Chairman
Mr K Lawson

RISK REGISTER - OPTION APPRAISAL FORM (Report by the Audit & Risk Manager)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In line with the Council's risk management strategy a risk register has been developed that identifies corporate level risks. The strategy requires that Cabinet consider all very high 'red' risks that are identified so that they can decide whether they wish them to be further mitigated by cost-effective and affordable actions.
- 1.2 Since this matter was last reported to Cabinet in May 2007, one new very high 'red' risk has been identified.

2. RISK TREATMENT OPTION FORMS

- 2.1 The Head of Planning Services has identified a risk that may have serious implications for the long term development of Huntingdon. The attached option appraisal form explains the risk and the current level of controls that are in place. Both the Chief Officers' Management Team and the Risk Management Group have had the opportunity to review and comment upon the risk.
- 2.2 COMT are of the opinion that no further cost-effective mitigating controls can be introduced at this time.

3. RECOMMENDATION

Members are invited to consider the option appraisal form and decide whether to accept the level of risk identified or not.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Risk Register
Risk Management Group papers

Contact Officer: David Harwood, Audit & Risk Manager ☎ **01480 388115**

Risk Treatment Option Form

| Risk Treatment – Action Plan | | | | | | |
|--|-------------|---------------------|--|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----|
| Description of risk from register: | Risk ID No: | 104 | Current residual risk score: Likelihood x Impact | 2 | 5 | 10 |
| <p>Delays to the construction of the new A14 may significantly reduce the amount of new development land that becomes available for housing and other developments, leading to a failure to achieve the longer term development/regeneration strategy for Huntingdon and in particular Huntingdon Town Centre, thereby potentially undermining the vitality and viability of the local economy and causing significant problems in terms of the Councils ability to deliver new housing, commercial and retail developments and to resist inappropriate planning proposals.</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>Controls already in place as listed on the risk register:</p> <p>Promote early implementation of the A14 by lobbying the Highways Agency and Central Government and by committing appropriate resources to any public inquiry etc.</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>Are these controls operating effectively? Yes</p> | | | | | | |
| Risk Action Plan (All actions listed in priority order) | | | | | | |
| Proposed actions to reduce risk using existing resources | | | New residual risk score ¹ | | Extra resources required ² | |
| | | | L | I | | |
| a. | | | | | | |
| b. | | | | | | |
| c. | | | | | | |
| Actions requiring additional resources | | | | | | |
| 1. | | | | | | |
| 2. | | | | | | |
| 3. | | | | | | |
| Decision | | | | | | |
| Agreed Option: | | Implementation Date | | Risk Owner | | |
| | | | | Head of Planning Services | | |
| Decision taken by: | | | on: | | | |

¹ **New Residual Risk Score:** after the action has been introduced

² **Extra Resources:** only complete if extra resources will be required to allow the proposed action to be introduced e.g. financial costs and staff time

Risk Treatment Option Form

Remember, when considering treatment options that the Council's aim is to manage risk rather than eliminate it completely – successful risk management is about improving risk taking activities whilst minimising the frequency of the event occurring.

Issues that should be considered when making the risk treatment decision are listed below.

| | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| Administration | <p>Is the option easy to implement? Will the option be neglected because it is difficult to implement? Do staff have sufficient expertise to introduce the option?</p> |
| Continuity of effects | <p>Will the effects of the risk treatment option be long term/continuous or short term? If short term, when will further risk treatments be needed? Does the risk need to be treated at all as it will 'disappear' in the short term (e.g. a project it refers to will be completed or in the next three months)</p> |
| Cost effectiveness | <p><i>Costs need to be estimated accurately as it's the base against which cost effectiveness is measured.</i></p> <p>Can the cost of implementing further control be justified compared to the risk reduction benefits expected? What financial loss is to be expected if no action is taken? Could the same results be achieved at lower cost by other means?</p> <p>Will running costs go up or down? What capital investment will be needed? What other costs will there be?</p> |
| Benefits | <p>What will happen to service levels? What will happen to service quality? What additional benefits or risk reductions will occur in other areas? Can other controls in place be amended to deal with this risk? How will you evaluate this option to see if it is reducing the identified risk?</p> |
| Objectives | <p>Will reducing risk advance the Council's overall objectives? What will be the economic and social impacts? What will be the impact on the environment of leaving the risk as it is?</p> |
| Regulation and complying with the Law | <p>Does the lack of treating the risk (or the current method of control) breach any laws or regulatory requirement? Is the treatment option proposed, including its cost, totally disproportionate to the risk?</p> |
| Risk creation | <p>What new risks will be created from introducing the option?</p> |

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