

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE SUPPORT)** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN** on **TUESDAY, 12 FEBRUARY 2008** at **7:30 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

**Contact
(01480)**

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 15th January 2008.

**Miss N Giles
387049**

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 overleaf.

3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN (Pages 5 - 10)

In accordance with the agreed procedure, Members are invited to note the Plan and comment as appropriate on the Items contained therein. A copy of the current Forward Plan is attached.

**Miss N Giles
387049**

4. PETITION BY ST AUDREY LANE AREA RESIDENTS, ST IVES
(Pages 11 - 12)

To consider a petition by the St Audrey Lane residents.

5. SPEAKING AT DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PANEL MEETINGS

(Item placed on the agenda by Councillor J A Gray)

To consider the outcome of the trial period for speaking by members of the public on planning applications at meetings of the Development Control Panel.

6. DRAFT PROPOSALS FOR RIVERSIDE PARK, HUNTINGDON
(Pages 13 - 30)

To consider a report by the Head of Planning Services outlining the draft proposals for Riverside Park, Huntingdon.

**R Probyn
388430**

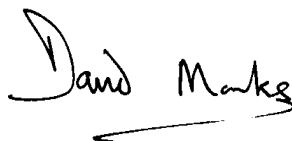
7. LOCAL PETITION AND CALLS FOR ACTION (Pages 31 - 36)

To receive a report by the Head of Administration updating Members on the 'Community Call for Action' proposal.

**R Reeves
388003**

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|-----|---|--------------------------------|
| 8. | CYCLING WORKING GROUP (Pages 37 - 42) | |
| | To receive a report outlining the findings of the Cycling Working Group. | Miss H Ali
388006 |
| 9. | TRAVEL PLAN WORKING GROUP (Pages 43 - 52) | |
| | To receive a report outlining the findings of the Travel Plan Working Group. | Miss N Giles
387049 |
| 10. | WORKPLAN STUDIES (Pages 53 - 64) | |
| | To consider, with the aid of a report by the Head of Administration, the programme of studies. | Miss N Giles
387049 |
| 11. | OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (SERVICE SUPPORT) (Pages 65 - 76) | |
| | To consider a report by the Head of Administration on decisions taken by the Panel. | Miss N Giles
387049 |
| 12. | SCRUTINY (Pages 77 - 80) | |
| | To scrutinise decisions since the last meeting. A copy of the relevant Decision Digest is attached. | Miss N Giles
387049 |

Dated this 4 day of February 2008



Chief Executive

Notes

1. *A personal interest exists where a decision on a matter would affect to a greater extent than other people in the District –*
 - (a) *the well-being, financial position, employment or business of the Councillor, their family or any person with whom they had a close association;*
 - (b) *a body employing those persons, any firm in which they are a partner and any company of which they are directors;*
 - (c) *any corporate body in which those persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or*

(d) *the Councillor's registerable financial and other interests.*

2. *A personal interest becomes a prejudicial interest where a member of the public (who has knowledge of the circumstances) would reasonably regard the Member's personal interest as being so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.*

Please contact Miss N Giles, Trainee Democratic Services Officer, Tel No 01480 387049/e-mail: Natalie.Giles@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 Panel.

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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Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE SUPPORT) held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 15 January 2008.

PRESENT: Councillor J A Gray – Chairman.

Councillors M G Baker, K M Baker, J T Bell, P H Dakers, J W Davies, P J Downes, A N Gilbert, P M D Godfrey, Ms S Kemp, L W McGuire, M F Newman and R J West.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors D Harty and R G Tuplin.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor P L E Bucknell.

64. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 11th December 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

65. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

66. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN

The Panel considered and noted the current Forward Plan of Key Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) scheduled for consideration by the Cabinet, which had been prepared by the Leader of the Council.

The Head of Administration informed the Panel of the background and likely content of a report on the sale of land previously occupied by St Neots Outdoor Pool.

67. CAR PARKING STRATEGY AND REVISED PARKING CHARGES

(Councillor P L E Bucknell, Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Environment and Transport was in attendance for this Item).

Following an introduction by the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Environment and Transport and Head of Planning Services, consideration was given to a report by the latter (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a proposed Car Parking Strategy Action Plan which had addressed the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) and Cabinet at their meetings held on 9th October and 18th October 2007 respectively.

Further to Minute No. 07/37, the Chairman reminded Members that they had considered the original draft action plan at the Panel's October 2007 meeting and had submitted a number of proposals to Cabinet. Arising from those recommendations, Members were informed that a public consultation exercise had been carried out by the Working Party during November and December to obtain the views of relevant stakeholders.

Councillor Bucknell advised that thorough consideration had been given to the recommendations made by the Panel. On the basis of the evidence available and in the light of the consultation exercise, the Working Party had felt that the action plan was robust but nevertheless needed to be reviewed in 18 months, given the rapidly changing circumstances in various parts of the District.

The Chairman expressed disappointment, on behalf of the Panel, that of the recommendations made by the Panel and Cabinet, only one appeared to have been accepted by the Working Party to extend the long-stay period in car parks from 9 hours to 10 before the charge was increased to defer commuters.

Having reviewed in detail the content of the draft Action Plan, Members questioned whether the consultation exercise involving stakeholders from 200 local groups and organisations had been sufficiently broad. The Panel expressed particular disappointment that its recommendation for a higher incentive than the proposed 25% reduction in the cost of a car parking season ticket for drivers with vehicles of low CO₂ emissions had not been accepted. As a result, Members did not feel that the action plan was sufficiently ambitious to produce a noticeable impact in encouraging motorists to consider a low emission vehicle when next purchasing a car.

Notwithstanding the Working Party's view that income generated by increasing car parking charges should not be ring-fenced in view of the Council's existing spending on transport, the Panel felt that the wording of the existing car parking strategy should be reinforced to ensure that any surplus income be used to encourage integrated, sustainable and accessible transport.

Having thanked the Executive Councillor, Officers and Members of the Working Party for their work in producing the car parking strategy action plan, the Panel acknowledged that in order to progress the matter, the action plan should be implemented but reviewed with immediate effect after its introduction.

RESOLVED

that Cabinet be informed of the Panel's views on the proposed car parking action plan as follows:-

- (a) that the Panel have no objection to the implementation of the action plan to enable changes to car parking charges in Huntingdonshire to be implemented;
- (b) the Panel's disappointment over the Working Party's retention of a 25% reduction in season ticket charges for low emission vehicles and its serious reservation

that this will not have a significant impact in persuading motorists to choose vehicles with low emissions in the future;

- (c) that any surplus income generated through increased car parking charges be spent in accordance with the current strategy;
- (d) the Panel recommend that a further review of the car parking strategy be commenced immediately after the existing changes have been implemented to address in particular the more environmentally sensitive use of the car.

68. A QUALITY CHARTER FOR GROWTH IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

(Councillor P L E Bucknell, Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Environment and Transport was in attendance for this Item).

A report by the Head of Planning Services was presented by the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Environment and Transport (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) summarising the current draft of the Quality Charter for Growth in Cambridgeshire. The Head of Planning Services informed the Panel that Cambridgeshire Horizons had been working with a range of partners to draft the Quality Charter in order to achieve higher standards in the new housing developments which were planned for Cambridgeshire.

Arising from Members' concerns regarding the inconsistency of the various references to Cambridgeshire and Cambridge used within the document, the Head of Planning Services confirmed that this was intended to apply to the Cambridge Sub-Region only. In answer to further questions, he advised that the proposed Core Strategy for the District already was underpinned by sustainable development proposals which would be supplemented by the Quality Charter Proposals.

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted and the Head of Planning Services be requested to point out to Cambridgeshire Horizons the need for consistency in the geographical terminology used in the document.

69. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel considered and noted a report by the Head of Administration (copies of which are appended in the Minute Book) reviewing the Panel's programme of studies.

Members were informed of the progress made by the Working Group looking at the Council's travel plan and that a further meeting of the Group was likely to take place prior to the next Panel meeting. The Head of Administration advised that it was hoped that a report on the

findings of that Working Group, together with the Cycling Working Group, could be submitted to the Panel's February meeting.

The Panel noted that a meeting of the Town Centre Initiatives Working Group had been scheduled for 23rd January 2008 when interviews with the Chairmen and Town Centre Managers would take place.

Members also discussed the future studies that had been identified at previous meetings and the Head of Administration was requested to ascertain whether a review of Section 106 Agreement arrangements was to be commissioned by the Cabinet. Referring to the proposed future study of HGV parking throughout the District, the Panel requested that preliminary work should commence on drawing together the pertinent issues to enable the study to commence.

70. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE SUPPORT)

The Panel considered and noted a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) reviewing the Panel's progress to date on issues that had been raised previously.

Further to Minute No. 07/47, the Panel were acquainted by Councillor A N Gilbert with details of a meeting of the Cambridgeshire Together Joint Accountability Committee that he had attended, during which concerns regarding the accountability arrangements for Cambridgeshire Together had been raised. In response to a question by a Member, it was agreed that copies of the Minutes of future meetings of the Joint Accountability Committee should be circulated to all Panel Members.

The Panel congratulated the staff of the Council's Call Centre in achieving a Charter Mark for the standard of its service to the public.

71. SCRUTINY

The Panel considered and noted the latest edition of the Council's Decision Digest, summarising the Council's decisions made in the past month.

Chairman

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

Prepared by
Date of Publication:
For Period:

Councillor I C Bates
16th January 2008
1 February 2008 to 31 May 2008

Membership of the Cabinet is as follows:-

Councillor I C Bates	- Leader of the Council	4 Church End Hilton Huntingdon PE28 9NJ Tel: 01480 830250 E-mail: Ian.Bates@huntsdc.gov.uk
Councillor L M Simpson	- Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Councillor for Headquarters and Information Technology	45 Devoke Close Stukeley Meadows Huntingdon Cambs PE29 6XE Tel: 01480 388946 E-mail: Mike.Simpson@huntsdc.gov.uk
Councillor P L E Bucknell	- Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Environment and Transport	Compass House Pathfinder Way Warboys PE28 2RD Tel: 01487 824222 E-mail: Peter.Bucknell@huntsdc.gov.uk
Councillor D B Dew	- Executive Councillor for Leisure Centres	4 Weir Road Hemingford Grey Huntingdon PE28 9EH Tel: 01480 469814 E-mail: Douglas.Dew@huntsdc.gov.uk
Councillor C R Hyams	- Executive Councillor for Operations, Parks and Countryside	22 Bluegate Godmanchester Huntingdon Cambs PE29 2EZ E-mail: Colin.Hyams@huntsdc.gov.uk
Councillor A Hansard	- Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy	78 Potton Road Eynesbury St Neots PE19 2NN Tel: 01480 388942 E-mail: Andrew.Hansard@huntsdc.gov.uk

Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds - Executive Councillor for Housing and Health	17 Virginia Way St Ives PE27 6SQ Tel: 01480 388935 E-mail: Deborah.Reynolds@huntsdc.gov.uk
Councillor T V Rogers - Executive Councillor for Finance	Honeysuckle Cottage 34 Meadow Lane Earith Huntingdon PE28 3QE Tel: 01487 840477 E-mail: Terence.Rogers@huntsdc.gov.uk

Any person who wishes to make representations to the decision maker about a decision which is to be made may do so by contacting Mrs Helen Taylor, Senior Democratic Services Officer on 01480 388008 or E-mail: Helen.Taylor@huntsdc.gov.uk not less than 14 days prior to the date when the decision is to be made.

The documents available may be obtained by contacting the relevant officer shown in this plan who will be responsible for preparing the final report to be submitted to the decision maker on the matter in relation to which the decision is to be made. Similarly any enquiries as to the subject or matter to be tabled for decision or on the availability of supporting information or documentation should be directed to the relevant officer.

Roy Reeves
Head of Administration

- Notes:- (i) Additions/significant changes from the previous Forward Plan are annotated ***
 (ii) For information about how representations about the above decisions may be made please see the Council's Petitions Procedure at <http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/3F6CFE28-C5F0-4BA0-9BF2-76EBAE06C89D/0/Petitionsleaflet.pdf> or telephone 01480 388006

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Draft Proposals for Riverside Park, Huntingdon	Cabinet	21 Feb 2008	Riverside Park Options Study by Gillespies 2004	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 - email - Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve for Consultation	P L E Bucknell	Service Support
Caxton Road Depot, St. Ives - development of new industrial/commercial units	Cabinet	21 Feb 2008	Estates File - C/165	Keith Phillips, Estates Manager and Property Manager Tel No. 01480 388260 or email - Keith.Phillips@huntsdc.gov.uk	Not applicable	A Hansard	Service Support

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Consultation and Engagement Strategy, Communications and Marketing Strategy, Customer Service Strategy	Cabinet	21 Feb 2008	Strategy appendices and covering report	Ian Leatherbarrow, Head of Policy and Strategic Services Tel: 01480 388005 - email - Ian.L Leatherbarrow@huntsdc.gov.uk	Equality Steering Group, State of District Working Group.	A Hansard	Corporate Strategic Framework
Asset Management Plan	Cabinet	21 Feb 2008	None.	Keith Phillips, Estates Manager and Property Manager Tel No. 01480 388260 or email - Keith.Phillips@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve annual report	A Hansard	Service Support
Shared Services	Cabinet	21 Feb 2008	None.	Terry Parker, Director of Commerce and Technology Tel No. (01480) 388100 - email - Terry.Parker@huntsdc.gov.uk	Overview and Scrutiny – Service Support.	T V Rogers	Service Support
Parish Plans and Local Plan Policy	Cabinet	21 Feb 2008	Previous Cabinet Report - December 2003	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or email - Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Adopt process of incorporating relevant Parish Plan Policies into Planning Policies	P L E Bucknell	Service Support
Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy 2008 - 2028***	Cabinet	13 Mar 2008	Consultation outcomes available in Members Room. Draft Strategy documents will be available in March 2008.	Robert Ward, Head of Operations Tel No. 01480 3888635 or email - Robert.Ward@huntsdc.gov.uk	Consultation already carried out.	C Hyams	Service Delivery
Development Control Policies Preferred Options	Cabinet	13 Mar 2008	Issues and Options Report and Summary of Representations	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or email - Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve for Consultation	P L E Bucknell	Service Support

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Growing Success Performance Reports	Cabinet	13 Mar 2008	Growing Success	Ian Leatherbarrow, Head of Policy and Strategic Services Tel No. 01480 388005 - or email - Ian.L Leatherbarrow@huntsdc.gov.uk	Overview and Scrutiny Panels	A Hansard	Service Delivery and Service Support
To adopt Earith Conservation Area Boundary Changes and Character Statement	Cabinet	3 Apr 2008	Draft Consultation Document	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or email - Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve changes for adoption having followed consultation with the public and statutory bodies	P L E Bucknell	Service Support
To adopt Somersham Conservation Area Boundary Changes and Character Statement	Cabinet	3 Apr 2008	Draft Consultation Document	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or email - Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve changes for adoption having followed consultation with the public and statutory bodies	P L E Bucknell	Service Support
To adopt Hemingfords Conservation Area Boundary changes and Character Statement	Cabinet	3 Apr 2008	Draft consultation document	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No 01480 388430 or e-mail Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve changes for adoption having followed consultation with the public and statutory bodies	P L E Bucknell	Service Support
To adopt the Core Strategy for submission to the Secretary of State	Cabinet	3 Apr 2008	None.	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. (01480) 388430 - or email - Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve changes for adoption having followed consultation with the public and statutory bodies.	P L E Bucknell	Service Support

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Environment Strategy and 2008/09 Action Plan	Cabinet	3 Apr 2008	Environment Strategy and 2008/09 Action Plan	Chris Jablonski, Environment Team Leader Tel No. (01480) 388368 - or email - Chris.Jablonski@huntsdc.gov.uk	The Strategy and Action Plan have been developed through an extended period of discussion with partners and stakeholders and through public consultation.	P L E Bucknell	Service Support
To adopt Godmanchester Conservation Area Boundary Changes and Character Statement	Cabinet	24 Apr 2008	Draft consultation document	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No 01480 388430 or e-mail Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve changes for adoption having followed consultation with the public and statutory bodies	P L E Bucknell	Service Support
Sustainable Community Strategy	Cabinet	24 Apr 2008	None.	Ian Leatherbarrow, Head of Policy and Strategic Services Tel No. 01480 388005 - email - Ian.L Leatherbarrow@huntsdc.gov.uk	Public/Stakeholder Consultation	I C Bates	Corporate Strategic Framework

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Petition by residents of St. Audrey Lane, St. Ives Area.

For several years now, many residents of St. Audrey Lane and the west end of Warren Road, have suffered from surface water flooding that has flowed into the sewerage systems preventing residents flushing their toilets. There have been occasions when sewage has flooded residents bathrooms, as well as their gardens. It should be noted that the affected dwellings in St. Audrey Lane are bungalows, and therefore they only have ground floor toilets.

Many residents believe that the problems have been exacerbated since the housing development of 120 plus houses on the opposite side of St. Audrey Lane, which is on higher ground. Although this housing development has two balancing tanks, it has frequently been noticed that considerable amounts of water has been laying about in the vicinity. The 120 plus houses were built at least ten years ago.

A few years ago there was flooding problems in the vicinity of the junction of Pig Lane and St. Audrey Lane, when it was reported that there was a collapsed drain.

I believe that there are two systems in Pig Lane. There is the foul which takes the flow from St. Audrey Lane and the houses north of there, and goes to the Broadleas Pumping Station near to Eastfield Infant & Nursery School, but I do not know when this system was last updated or how it performs now, but I have been informed by a resident that he had been told that the pump does not have the capacity in inclement times. There is also a surface water system which starts at the ditch on the north side of St. Audrey Lane, goes down Pig Lane and into the top end of Warners Park.

Obviously the plight of residents who are unable to flush their toilets in inclement times is totally unacceptable in the centre of St. Ives Town and in the twenty first century.

It would seem that there could be possibly two authorities responsible, CCC and Anglian Water, although HDC has some responsibility during the consultation process of planning for the housing development, as well as the three other developments near by.

For information, St. Audrey Lane is the A1123 which cuts right through the centre of St. Ives.

John W. Davies (20th. January 2008)

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CABINET

21ST FEBRUARY 2008

FUTURE IMPROVEMENTS TO RIVERSIDE PARK HUNTINGDON
(Report by Heads of Planning Services, Operations, Environmental Management, Legal and Estates)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Further to the established commitment to enhance the Riverside park, a Masterplan for its improvements that includes new planting, footpaths and cycleways, additional recreational areas, new hard surfacing, and moorings and signage together with costings has been produced and members are asked to approve this plan for further public consultation.

2. SUPPORTING/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 In November 2004 the findings of an earlier consultants report entitled 'Riverside Park Options Study' was discussed by Cabinet. The consultant's aim, supported by an earlier Cabinet meeting (April 2003), was to look at ways to positively diversify leisure activity in the Riverside Park. The brief for consultant's was:

- To explore options involving the community
- Produce an options report and brief to guide the extent and design of any new development
- Provide indicative costs

- 2.2 In arriving at the options the consultant's considered a number key issues concerning the Riverside Park as follows:

- Poor links and access to the town centre mainly due to barrier of the ring road and poor links through and within the park
- Inadequate footpath/cycle routes and mooring points
- Lack of distinguishable gateway feature and arrival point within the town centre
- Negative impact of the existing car park and lack of dedicated spaces for park users
- Ecological and landscape features are not exploited to their potential
- Lack of distinctive and exciting leisure attractions or events – existing leisure facilities are under utilised (football pitches), in need of upgrading (boat hire facility) or do not appeal to a broad range of people
- There are a number of visual detractors from the site and a lack of visual stimulation
- There is a need to create a critical mass of facilities in the centre of the park

- 2.3 Two options were drawn up and in-order to assist the process the Consultant's considered that the Riverside Park split naturally into three sections:

1. From the Old Bridge to the car park – formal park
 2. Car park to the eastern side of the football pitches- including the boat hire, boat club and pavilion - activity area or zone
 3. From the eastern end of the football pitches to Church lane- green lung
- 2.4 In drawing up these options a number of particular constraints were identified. The nature of the land, much of which is within the indicative flood plain, would preclude any large scale leisure development. The proposed bus lane along Hartford road and the associated cycle lane would potentially reduce the available land on that frontage. A preferred option was arrived at after consultation with the public and is set out in Appendix A.
- 2.5 The potential scheme was costed at £3.375 million which was well above the level of funding available or that could be achieved through an MTP bid. It was agreed therefore to produce our own masterplan as an alternative way forward.
- 2.6 In the preferred option the shape of the car parking area was to be altered to achieve the principles set out in the plan. The car park was to be extended along the Hartford Road and the existing car park was to be reduced in size. A planning application made in 2007 to extend the car park without carrying out any of the proposed improvements was met with some hostility from local people. The application was withdrawn as it was considered to be premature ahead of the development of a car parking strategy and further consideration to achieve a more realistic masterplan for the Riverside Park.

3. THE NEW MASTERPLAN (see Appendix B)

The new masterplan reflects the key issues identified in 2.2 above and has used specialist consultants as well as our own staff to produce the plans. The proposed new scheme now looks at the park in three areas with suggested improvements as described below.

For Area 1 (the Formal Park) the following improvements are suggested :

- Make the two entrance areas opposite the Bridge Hotel and along the ring road more welcoming. In association with the Bridge Hotel entrance, investigate the greening of the traffic island crossing
- Create a new path parallel to the ring road inside the park
- Create a focal point with shelter in the centre of the park
- Improve the mooring facility and the paved area adjacent to Bridge Foot works
- Remove certain trees and carry out new tree planting
- Clear the river bank in certain locations to encourage easier access, temporary moorings and formal fishing areas.
- Standardised signs and interpretation boards erected

3.3 For Area 2 (the Activity Area) the following improvements are suggested:

- Reconfigure the equipment in the play area and reduce the area in size to enable a footpath to be created on the southern side.
- Removal of certain trees to allow more light into the play area.
- Remove southern side of car park (loss of 17 spaces) and incorporate into a wider landscaped walkway
- Make up for the removal of car park spaces by providing an additional 16 spaces adjacent to the Pavillion and Boat House
- Replace adult football pitches with 2 mini soccer pitches
- Create an area of reinforced grass on part of the former football pitch closest to the Pavillion for use as an events area (fair/circus/Town events)
- Provide a Multi Use Games Area adjacent to the Boat Club
- Retain tarmac path linking the Boat Club area with Area 3 but remove chain link fence
- De-formalise the large green open space with additional planting and a less rigid management regime
- Clear riverbank in certain locations to encourage easier access.
- Make allowance for loss of land to cycleway and bus priority measures
- Encourage the redevelopment of the boat yard in accordance with the brief
- Standardise signs and interpretation boards erected

3.4 For Area 3 - (the Green Lung)

- Carry out management plan to enhance the biodiversity and attractiveness of the area (see Appendix C for copy of draft management plan)
- provide better signposts to car park in Church Lane and pedestrian signposts to the entrance to the Riverside park
- Provide small informal parking area adjacent to pumping station for both visitors and to assist with maintenance
- standardise signs and interpretation boards erected

3.5 The future of the Purvis Marine boatyard has not been included in this report, as separate discussions are taking place with the owners, for them to come up with a development plan for the site. The options being consider by the owners generally fit with our plans.

4. COST IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The costings for the scheme are detailed in Appendix D and are split into the different areas as described above.

4.2 The construction costs for each area are:

Area 1	£317,000
Area 2	£213,000
Area 3	£ 32,000
Total	£552,000

Design costs of 10% need to be added to these costs to give a final cost of £607,000

- 4.3 A revised MTP bid has been submitted for this scheme to give a new expenditure of £ 610,000. No formal decision has been made on this bid as yet. If this is approved, then the full funding for the scheme will be available.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Huntingdon Riverside Park is an important entrance feature to the town of Huntingdon, and as it contains the main long stay car park for the town, is the area that visitors see first.
- 5.2 Various reports have been carried out in the past on the park and all come to similar conclusions. The site has a potential to be greatly improved by: enhancing the views from and through it; replacing certain trees with better specimens; giving better footpath access that link the three areas; providing signage within the park and to and from the park to the town centre, and; replacing the adult football pitches with mini soccer pitches together with more general playing areas that are usable by a wider group.
- 5.3 In view of the time lapse since the Gillespie proposals were considered and the changes in the detail that are now proposed it is important that a similar consultation exercise is carried out. This would include a manned exhibition during times and at a location to maximise publicity.

6. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- 6.1 It is recommended that –

(1) Cabinet approve the scheme for consultation and receive feedback at a future meeting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Riverside Park Options Study October 2004 (Gillespies)

Contact Officer: R Probyn
☎ 01480 388430

Contact Officer: R Ward
☎ 01480 388635



OPTION A

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ANNEX C

**MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR HUNTINGDON RIVERSIDE
PARK – EASTERN END**

**May 2007
COUNTRYSIDE AND PARK SERVICES
HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

DRAFT



SITE DESCRIPTION

Huntingdon Riverside Park is a linear park owned by Huntingdonshire District Council which stretches from Huntingdon's Old River Bridge at the western end, to Church Lane in Hartford at the eastern end. The site is bounded by the River Great Ouse on one side and Huntingdon town on the other.

The park is designated in planning policy as an Area of Best landscape and an Open Space and Gap for Protection which restricts development on the land. Much of the site is in the floodplain identified by the Environment Agency.

The western part of the park is semi-formal parkland with a number of single trees, and a hard surfaced path running through it. At the western end there is also a children's play area, a large carpark, Purvis Marine boat repair yard, a boat club, a pavilion and two football pitches.

To the east of the football pitches a line of mature Poplar and Willow trees marks the point where Riverside Park changes to a more rural environment with more naturalised tree belts and pockets of woodland, a wide expanse of meadow, ditches and wet areas as well as ancient trees. In addition to the hard surface path which continues from the southern end, there are less formal grass mown paths around the meadow.

This management plan is concerned with the area of Riverside Park which is east of the football pitches. Also included is the small mown area by Church Lane at the very eastern point where there is a small car park and an area of mown grass.

The eastern end of Riverside Park, to which this management plan refers, total's 0.0901 km² or 0.3478 miles².

MANAGEMENT PROPOSALS

The eastern end of Riverside Park has been divided into zones, which are shown on the aerial photo.

ZONE 1: Poplars and Grassland Strip

ZONE 2: Meadow

ZONE 3: Tree Belt

ZONE 4: Woodland Pocket

ZONE 5: Car park and Green

For each zone the main plant / tree species are noted and a proposal given for management of that area. A separate map has been used to identify particular areas within the zones where work has been suggested.

ZONE 1: POPLARS AND GRASSLAND STRIP

Main Species: Poplar and Willow trees, bramble and nettle.

Hedge along grassland strip consists of Hawthorn and Elm.

- The line of Poplars and Willows at the edge of the playing field have been cut in the past and this should be continued. The trees should be checked every 8 years to see if the tops need cutting.

- The path running parallel to the Poplars should be mown between April and September if the ground is dry. To encourage wildflowers along the edge of the path, a 1 meter strip along the middle could be mown with the blade on low and for 1 meter either side the blade could be raised slightly.
- The entrance from the playing field at point 1A should be kept accessible. The bramble bush here needs to be trimmed each year in the autumn to prevent it from growing across the path.
- The grassland strip which runs parallel to the road is kept short by rabbits but periodic mowing of the nettles and creeping thistles will discourage these from spreading.
- The hedgerow along the grassland strip, which is an important boundary to the road, both visually and for wildlife, is thin and gappy. To encourage the hedge to thicken out, the hedge bottom should not be sprayed with herbicides and an unmown strip of 2 meters from the base should be left. This will benefit all wildlife from invertebrates to small mammals.
- The Guided Bus Route is expected to have an impact on this hedgerow when the route is constructed. Reinstatement of a native, rabbit protected hedge needs to take place following this work.
- There is a dangerous manhole cover in the grassland strip which has a hole in the corner big enough for a child or dog to lose their foot through. This needs to be dealt with to avoid any accidents.

ZONE 2: MEADOW

Main Species: Cut-leaved Cranesbill, Meadow and Creeping Buttercup, Cow Parsley, Meadowsweet, Dock species, Dandelion, Ground Ivy, Cleavers, Nettle, Sorrel as well as Cuckoo Flower, Pond Sedge, Marsh Marigold, Reed Sweet Grass and Common Reed in wetter areas.

- Mow the meadow once per year in June / July and ensure hay is removed from site. This will encourage less coarse grasses and more wildflowers to grow. There are areas where trees such as Poplar and Blackthorn are encroaching onto the meadow. Annual mowing is important to limit the succession to woodland.
- Between April and September mow the grass around benches and either side of the hard surfaced path – 1 meter either side, unless the path is close to the river bank when a ½ meter strip should be cut.
- Between April and September mow a grass path around the meadow 1 ½ meters wide, keeping well away from the river bank. This provides more varied walks for visitors to the site.
- The wet corner of the meadow at point 2A is good for Marsh Marigold and Meadowsweet and should be included in the hay cut. If this is not possible to do by machine, it should be cut and raked off by hand. This will help to reduce the dominance of the coarse grasses. The Poplar is seeding in this area and the small poplars should be cut to prevent encroachment into the meadow.
- Leave some areas of the meadow which are close to the river out of the hay cut to discourage people getting close to the river during the summertime. Monitor scrub encroachment in these areas in order to maintain viewpoints of the river and Westside Common.
- At 2B the Ash tree has lost a large limb which needs clearing up. The wood could be cut up into smaller sections and placed away from the path in zone 4 as a habitat pile for invertebrates and small mammals.
- At the footbridge at point 2C, on the side of the bridge which is furthest away from the river bank, the two willows could be re-pollarded during the winter time.

- Create a large glade at 2D between the Horse Chestnut trees, and another glade nearer the footbridge at 2C. These should be mown in September, raked up and the cuttings removed. For the first two years mow them again at the first cut of the year in April and then in July, removing the cuttings. This will reduce the amount of nettles and increase the variety of wildflowers.
- At 2E the Weeping Willow should be removed.

ZONE 3: TREE BELT

Main Species: Willows, Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Elm, Maple, Ash, Lime, Black Walnut, Apple, Ornamental fruit trees,

- At point 3A cut a small glade either side of the path and rake off the cuttings, to reduce the stinging nettles and add variety. Avoid making the glade too big as this will encourage unwanted public access into the wooded area. Maintain the standing dead wood in the area where possible. The glade should be cut on one side of the path one year and the other side the following year.
- The wooden bridges either side of 3A should be inspected regularly to check they are safe and are not rotten.
- At 3B the Elm with 3 stands should be re-coppiced and the leaning branch of the other Elm next to the bridge should be taken off.
- At 3C on the other side of the bridge, the dead elms should be cut down at shoulder height.
- Create glades on the edge of the tree belt at 3D and 3E by again cutting the vegetation and raking off the cuttings. Since the meadow circular path passes next to these areas, the dead Elms which are near to the path should be removed.
- Set up a programme to remove the non native trees in the tree belt. This work would need to be carried out over 10 years to avoid too much public concern. The gaps and hollows in the tree belt could be planted up with native shrub willows.
- Maintain standing dead wood as much as possible to provide valuable habitat for invertebrates and birds. Standing dead wood close to paths should be inspected, closely monitored and removed only if necessary.
- There are several dead Elm trees along the tree belt on the meadow side which are a potential danger to the public taking the circular mown path around the meadow. Some of these need to be cut down and stacked to form habitat piles.
- Consider developing a programme of pollarding for some of the ancient Willows in order to prolong their life. Some of the younger Willows on the edge of the grassland strip could be pollarded first to allow light onto the ancient Willows. The very old Willows will need a lot of light if they are going to survive any pollarding.

ZONE 4: WOODLAND POCKET

Main Species: Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Elm, Ash, Field Maple, Green Alcanet (garden escape), Forget me not, Comfrey, Speedwell, Cow Parsley, Hard Rush, Gypsywort, Rosebay Willowherb, Lesser Celendine, Hedge Garlic

- Improve the entrance to the park at the Hartford end by trimming back vegetation to let more light in. Some of the Elder trees could be cut back slightly.
- Involve the Enforcement team in any fly tipping that is found next to the residential areas here.
- Remove the old Nature Trail posts.

- Mow 1 meter either side of the path and side up any overhanging branches to give a more open feel to the Woodland Pocket.
- Allow more light to the ditch and ponds at 4A by coppicing trees and removing scrub within 2 meters of the edge. This will also help to improve flow by reducing the amount of leaf litter that can fall, and will allow water plants to grow. Retain some scrub for structural diversity, landscape and as a food source for wildlife. It is important that this work isn't done all at once because it will look very drastic and it may encourage unwanted access off the path to these areas. The coppicing could be done on one side 1 year and the other side the next year. This would then be left for 5 years until it is done again.
- At point 4B, thin out some of the Elms to allow regeneration of ground flora and to allow more space for the remaining Elm's to broaden out.

ZONE 5: CARPARK AND GREEN

Main Species: Horse Chestnut, Ash, Hawthorn, Sycamore and Willow spp and species poor grassland.

- Continue to mow the green, maintain the car park and maintain the open views of the river and meadows on the opposite side.
- At the base of the 2 trees in the middle of the green, leave an unmown large circle for wildflowers. Mow once each year in September and remove the cuttings.
- Decide on the management required for the ditch which is next to the car park, if it is HDC's responsibility. There are some very large trees which are very close to the houses.
- The Weeping Willow in the northern corner of the green at point 5A needs reducing as it is too big.
- Metal plates could be secured onto the picnic benches to prevent BBQ's from burning the benches.
- Consider putting in a 48 hour mooring by the Green to encourage people to visit Huntingdon Riverside Park by boat.

FURTHER POTENTIAL ENHANCEMENTS FOR BIODIVERSITY AND PEOPLE

Other projects affecting the whole of the Huntingdon Riverside Park Eastern End which could be discussed are:

- Reinstatement of the redundant ditches through the whole of the site could improve their amenity and wildlife value.
- Create wetland areas by installing sluices etc
- Provide fishing platforms along the river bank.
- Re-seed parts of meadow to improve diversity of the flora.

EDUCATION AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Riverside Park is well used by local people for getting to town, work, school as well as to walk their dogs. The eastern end is particularly popular with people because of the varied habitats and the wide range of wildlife associated with it.

Working with the community is an extremely effective way of solving problems, encouraging people to enjoy the site and planning for its long term future. By encouraging local people to become involved in practical work and events on the park, a sense of pride and ownership will develop.

Proposals to Encourage Involvement

- Work with local schools and groups to offer activities such as: mini-beast hunting, tree activities, scavenger hunts, guided walks and countryside events.
- Develop links with secondary schools and encourage use of the park for project work for older children e.g. GCSE and A level Geography and Biology Projects.
- Encourage people of all ages and abilities to enjoy and be involved in practical work on the park such as litter picking and conservation tasks. Pond and ditch management, scrub clearance, litter picking, tree planting and maintenance are all very suitable for volunteers, and will help to develop pride in the site and understanding of the management of Riverside Park.
- Encourage fishing along the river by formalising an agreement with a local club.
- Review the number of moorings along river bank and consider increasing the number to allow more day visitors by boat.

General Publicity

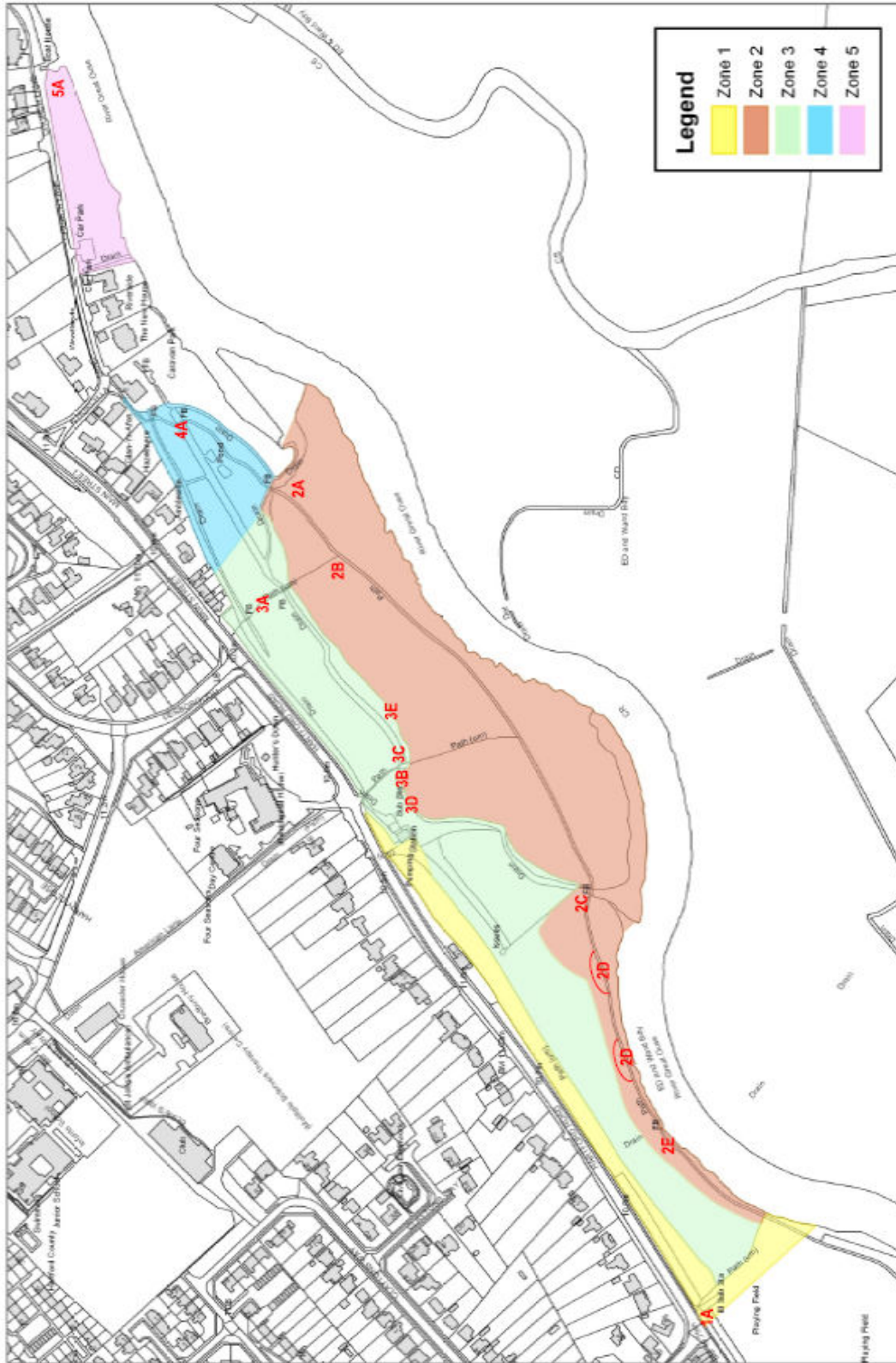
- Welcoming information boards would help to link the fragmented western and eastern ends of Riverside Park, as well as provide information on the history and wildlife value of the site. They could be placed at either end, and one in the middle could focus more specifically on the wildlife of the eastern section.
- Press releases and features would help to inform the public about management and to ensure good publicity for HDC's Parks Service.

WIDER ISSUES

- Erosion of banks by river

FUTURE MANAGEMENT

- It is anticipated that the park will continue to be managed by HDC's Parks Service with support from Countryside Services.
- There are a lot of interested people living near to the park and using the site so a Friends Group could be formed to help with day to day management, events, positive publicity and fundraising.



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**Huntingdon Riverside Park,
 Eastern End**





Legend

Zone 1	Zone 2	Zone 3	Zone 4	Zone 5

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**Huntingdon Riverside Park,
 Eastern End**



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ANNEX D

SCHEME COSTINGS

AREA 1 – THE FORMAL PARK

Greening Traffic Island	15,000
Bridge Foot Moorings	75,000
Reconstruct exist footpath	47,000
New Footpath	46,000
Decorative paved areas	14,000
Focal Point Shelter	30,000
Seating and Information Boards	32,000
Planting scheme	92,000

Total Area 1 297,000

AREA 2 – THE ACTIVITY AREA

Alterations to existing car park	6,000
New car parking	31,000
Revision to play area	5,000
Multi Activity area	34,000 (up to 66,000)
Reinforced grass area	116,000
Activity trail	10,000
Planting scheme	21,000

Total Area 2 223,000

AREA 3 – THE GREEN LUNG

Seating and Information Boards	12,000
Hartford road car park	20,000

Total Area 3 32,000

CONSTRUCTION COST ALL AREAS	£552,000
DESIGN COSTS	£ 55,000
TOTAL COSTS	£607,000

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

5TH FEBRUARY 2008

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

12TH FEBRUARY 2008

LOCAL PETITIONS AND CALLS FOR ACTION

(Report by Head of Administration)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Panel on the implications of recent legislative change affecting the overview and scrutiny function and invite comments in response to a consultation paper from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) on local petitions and calls for action.

2. Legislative Change

- 2.1 Both the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and the Police and Justice Act 2006 have enhanced the powers of overview and scrutiny committees. The relevant sections of both Acts are likely to be brought into force later in the year and are subject to regulations and statutory guidance which have yet to be issued. The recent DCLG consultation paper is the first step towards the preparation of the Secretary of State's guidance.

- 2.2 The key changes to the role of scrutiny can be summarised as follows –

- Provision for any member of an overview and scrutiny committee to refer to the committee any matter of relevance to the functions of the committee.
- Provision for any member of the Council to refer to an overview and scrutiny committee any matter of relevance to the functions of the committee that affects his/her ward.
- A requirement to establish a crime and disorder committee to review, scrutinise and make reports and recommendations to authorities responsible for crime and disorder strategies.
- Provision for any member of the Council to refer to a crime and disorder committee any matter of relevance to the functions of the committee that affects his/her ward.
- Power to scrutinise the discharge of functions by individual councillors in their wards if the Council devolves decision making to ward councillors under the 2007 Act.
- Power for an overview and scrutiny committee to require information from the County Council and certain partner authorities.
- Power for a crime and disorder committee to similarly require information and also require attendance at committee meetings by responsible authorities.
- Power to co-opt additional persons to a crime and disorder committee.
- Discretion for an overview and scrutiny committee to publish its report and recommendations to the executive.
- A duty for the executive to respond in writing to an overview and scrutiny's report and recommendations within 2 months and to publish the response if the committee's report was published.

- Power for a county council and partner district councils to establish a joint overview and scrutiny committee to scrutinise the attainment of local improvement targets specified in a local area agreement.
- Power for a district council to make reports and recommendations to a partner county council relating to the attainment of local improvement targets specified in a local area agreement.
- Power for councils responsible for crime and disorder strategies to appoint a joint crime and disorder committee to exercise scrutiny functions.

2.3 Further information will be brought to the Panel's attention when the regulations and guidance have emerged.

3. Local Petitions

3.1 The Government believes that there should be a duty on local authorities to respond to petitions in the following circumstances –

- The subject of the petition relates to the functions of the authority or other public services with shared delivery responsibilities through a local area agreement or other partnership arrangement.
- The petition has been organised by a local person.
- The petition demonstrates a sufficient level of support from local people.
- The petition satisfies minimum requirements in relation to the manner in which it was submitted, its form and its content.

3.2 It is proposed that petitioners ought to be able to present their petitions either to the council or to a councillor.

3.3 The DCLG has invited comment on such issues as the definition of a local person, the number of signatures required for a petition to be considered, how qualifying signatures could be extended to children and what minimum information a petition should contain.

4. Calls for Action

4.1 The Government take the view that the proposal in the Government's white paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' in October 2006 for a 'community call for action' is satisfied by the duty for authorities to respond to qualifying local petitions.

4.2 The legislative changes outlined above that enable councillors to refer a local government matter to the relevant overview and scrutiny committee and a crime and disorder matter to a local crime and disorder committee are regarded by the DCLG as amounting to a 'councillor call for action'. A local government matter is defined as relating to the discharge of any function of the authority which affects a member's ward but which is not excluded by order of the Secretary of State, for example planning and licensing appeals. A crime and disorder matter is defined as relating to crime and disorder (including in particular anti-social behaviour) and the misuse of drugs, alcohol and other substances that affects a member's ward.

4.3 The DCLG has invited comment on any matters that should be excluded from the calls for action and what key issues should be included in the statutory guidance.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 The regulations and guidance on the implementation of the changes outlined in this report are likely to be extensive. Further reports will be submitted as these emerge, in particular how the requirement for a crime and disorder committee is to be dealt with.
- 5.2 In the interim, the Secretary of State has invited comments on how certain aspects of the new procedures will work in practice. The questions posed in the consultation paper are listed in the annex to this report, together with suggested responses.
- 5.3 The impact of the changes on the Council's existing governance and scrutiny arrangements will depend upon the extent to which the public and individual members take advantage of the new powers to encourage greater participation in local democracy. Local people already can submit petitions for consideration by the Council and the constitution provides for individual members to include items on a meeting's agenda. Both are used sparingly at the moment but the Government's aim of enhancing public participation and reinvigorating local democracy may lead to wider use of the new statutory powers. This is to be welcomed but the impact on the workload of both the existing overview and scrutiny panels and support staff will need to be monitored and reviewed if there is a proliferation of petitions and calls for action.

6. Recommendations

6.1 The Panel is

Recommended

- (a) to note the content of this report; and
- (b) to consider the suggested responses to the consultation paper as set out in annex A and comment accordingly to the DCLG.

Background Papers:

DCLG Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper
DCLG Local Petitions and Calls for Action consultation

Contact:

Roy Reeves – Head of Administration 8003

LOCAL PETITIONS AND CALLS FOR ACTION.

The following specific questions are raised by DCLG in the consultation paper –

Petitions

The Government believes there should be a statutory duty on local authorities to respond to local petitions. What conditions should be met before a local authority is required to respond formally to a petition?

Petitions have been used by the public for many years as a way of drawing attention to an issue of concern and many authorities already make provision in their constitutions that formalises the way in which petitions are handled. Although a response to a petition will become a statutory duty, some flexibility must remain to enable individual authorities to decide whether a petition is repetitious, vexatious, frivolous or indeed libellous. The Council should remain the final arbiter in such circumstances. It would be unwieldy and unnecessarily bureaucratic for any form of external appeals mechanism to be put in place for an aggrieved party who disagrees with an authority's rejection of a petition. That person could always approach the Local Government Ombudsman with a claim of maladministration if an authority failed to follow its own procedures.

Further flexibility as to how petitions are to be dealt with would be welcome to enable an authority to decide whether a petition should be submitted to council, executive or scrutiny, how petitions are to be presented personally etc.

A petition must relate to a matter in which the Council has an interest either in terms of the direct or shared provision of services or its wider community well-being role.

In particular, how should we define the level of support required before a petition must get a formal, substantive response?

By a fixed number of signatures?

By a percentage of the electorate in the area?

By a hybrid of the two?

Or in some other way?

It would be preferable to set maximum standards and permit some local flexibility as opposed to a rigid national standard which might be too difficult to attain if set too high or cause an unmanageable proliferation of petitions if too low. As most petitions are likely to relate to local as opposed to authority-wide matters, a fixed number of signatures is preferable to a percentage of the population. A maximum of 100 persons is suggested.

Signatories must have a relevant connection with the authority's area. A reliance upon names appearing on an authority's register of electors would exclude those who work but don't live in the area, children and migrant workers. There does need to be an ability to check the validity of a signature where doubt exists as to its authenticity but simple headings such as name, address, place of work (if non resident in the area), age (if under 18) and e-mail address (in the case of electronic petitions) may be sufficient.

Calls for Action

What, if any, matters should be excluded from the call for action?

Councillors should not be able to raise items that relate to specific quasi-judicial decisions such as planning and licensing applications nor employment issues that relate to individual employees by name or designation.

What guidance should Government provide on the operation of the councillor call for action?

Guidance should include provision for a councillor who is not a member of an overview and scrutiny committee to address the committee on the item that he/she has placed on the agenda. There should also be a limit on the number of items that can be placed on the agenda for each meeting and by an individual councillor within a prescribed period to prevent repetition or an unmanageable proliferation of calls for action.

Overall

Taken together, would petitions and calls for action sufficiently empower communities to intervene with their elected representatives? Should we contemplate other measures?

Much will depend upon the extent to which the public avail themselves of the new opportunities. There are various avenues through which the public can raise issues of concern with councils and ward councillors and no additional measures are required of a statutory nature.

Do you have other views on the operation of the new duty to respond to petitions and the call for action?

No.

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**CYCLING
(Report by the Cycling Working Group)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At their meeting held on 13th March 2007, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) decided to establish a working group to investigate the Council's expenditure on cycling in Huntingdonshire and its effectiveness in providing dedicated cycle paths and promoting cycling as a means of transport. The working group comprised Councillors K M Baker, P J Downes and P M D Godfrey and has met on a number of occasions in the ensuing months.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Panel's initial interest in the subject was prompted by concern expressed by a ward member over a lack of progress in providing a cycleway in his Ward, notwithstanding a financial contribution under a Section 106 Agreement. This led to a discussion in October 2006 when the Panel considered the level of expenditure on cycleway development in Huntingdonshire, vis-a-vis the provision made in the Council's medium term plan and in Section 106 Agreements with developers.

- 2.2 The Panel acknowledged at the outset that the authority with principal responsibility for cycling is Cambridgeshire County Council and that both Councils have agreed previously that it would not be practical to scrutinise the level of service provision by each other. Nevertheless, the Panel was conscious that the District Council plays an active role in cycling provision in a number of ways, namely –

- ◆ contributing towards expenditure on cycleway provision in Huntingdonshire;
- ◆ the negotiation of Section 106 Agreements for transportation provision with money being paid by developers direct to the County Council and its expenditure through the market town transport strategies;
- ◆ financial contributions towards the County Council's safe cycle routes programme;
- ◆ the provision of cycle racks in the market towns;
- ◆ the production of leaflets on cycle routes in Huntingdonshire;
- ◆ working with Sustrans on the national cycle network, two of the major routes of which pass through the District; and
- ◆ the adoption in 2000 of a cycling strategy for Huntingdonshire.

2.3 Having regard to that level of investment and involvement, the Panel sought information from the County Council on their programme and financial commitment to cycleway provision and the promotion of cycling in Huntingdonshire. In the context of the partnership arrangements between the two authorities, the relevant executive councillor and officer of the County Council were invited to attend a Scrutiny Panel meeting but the invitation was declined.

2.4 The Panel therefore established a working group to review the Council's strategy, plans and expenditure on cycling in Huntingdonshire and examine the influence which the Council's financial commitment was having in the practical delivery of new routes and the growth of cycling in the District.

3. PROMOTION OF CYCLING

3.1 The working group recognised the many benefits of encouraging the use of cycles both in terms of reducing traffic congestion and town centre pollution and in improving the fitness and health of the cyclist. During the course of its study, other issues have emerged to reinforce that view, including the growing concern over climate change and each individual's carbon footprint and the development of the Council's Environment Strategy.

3.2 The evidence of the health benefits of physical activity is well documented. People who are physically active reduce their risk of developing major chronic diseases (such as coronary heart disease, stroke and type 2 diabetes) by up to 50% and reduce the risks of premature death by 20-30%. Regular physical activity also has benefits for mental health and a sense of well-being. The National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence published Public Health Guidance on 'Physical Activity and the Environment' in January 2008 which offers the first national, evidence-based recommendations on how to improve the physical environment to encourage physical activity. Recommendations are aimed at those developing Local Development Frameworks and Local Transport Plans and the emerging Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy seeks to promote active and healthy lifestyles, as well as tackle obesity in both children and adults. A major contributor to this work will be increasing local levels of physical activity, including the promotion of active travel.

3.3 Nevertheless the volume of traffic on Huntingdonshire's roads can tend to discourage cycling unless dedicated cycleways or paths have been provided. The working group did not seek evidence to support its perception but the view held by Members was that most casual cyclists would be deterred from using the more busy roads in the District. Observations suggest that cyclists often use footways adjoining carriageways in such circumstances which can lead to conflict between the pedestrian and the cyclist.

4. CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS

4.1 The promotion of cycling is encouraged in the Local Transport Plan prepared by Cambridgeshire County Council and to which the District Council is a partner signatory. In the towns, the development of cycling initiatives is promoted through the market town transport strategies compiled by the County Council, again in partnership with the District Council, and approved by the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area

Joint Committee. The picture is less clear outside the market towns and the working group found little or no evidence of any active district-wide policy to link settlements by the construction of cycleways or to connect those living on the outskirts of the market towns with the town centres.

4.2 That being said, the attention of the working group has been drawn to the existing cycling strategy adopted by the Council in 2000 which has the following objectives –

- ◆ to maximise the role of cycling as a transport mode in order to reduce the use of the private car;
- ◆ to develop a safe, convenient, efficient and attractive transport infrastructure which encourages and facilitates cycling within and beyond Huntingdonshire and which minimises reliance on and discourages unnecessary use of private cars;
- ◆ to ensure that policies to increase cycling and meet the needs of cyclists are fully integrated into the Local Plan and in all complementary strategies including transport, environmental improvement, leisure, tourism and Local Agenda 21 strategies;
- ◆ to ensure that the development of cycle networks in Huntingdonshire considers, where appropriate, the views of the general public and other interest groups through regular consultation.

4.3 In conjunction with the approval of the strategy, the Council approved a list of 41 priority routes for future consideration containing a mixture of urban and rural locations. The urban routes are considered as part of the market town transport strategies but progress on the rural routes that were identified has been slow. No specific provision is contained in the Local Transport Plan for new cycleways in Huntingdonshire and, given the relatively high cost of construction of dedicated cycle paths, it appears unlikely that the rural routes will be addressed unless additional resources are made available.

5. FINANCIAL PROVISION

5.1 The working group found that, over the past five years, the District Council's direct expenditure on cycling provision has amounted to just over £600,000, comprising –

safe cycle routes - £243,000
cycle shelters - £59,000
specific cycleway provision - £299,000.

Included in the MTP for the current and next four years is a total of £347,000 for safe cycle routes to school plus £524,000 for St. Neots pedestrian bridges (which can be used by cyclists) and £505,000 towards schemes (not specifically identified for cycling) in the market town transport strategies.

5.2 Section 106 contributions play an increasingly important role in the delivery of the latter strategies. Some contributions for specific schemes are negotiated with developers by the District Council, such as those relating to development west of St. Ives which make provision for a new cycleway as part of improvements to the St Ivo Outdoor Centre. Others form part of the

wider transportation contribution which is paid direct to the County Council and spent under the market town transport strategies with individual schemes being approved by the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee.

- 5.3 The working group wished to establish the precise extent of any County Council funding that might be available for cycleway provision in the District.

6. WORKING GROUP INVESTIGATIONS

- 6.1 The working group found that, although not the authority with principle responsibility for this function, the District Council makes a significant contribution to the promotion of cycling in Huntingdonshire, both by way of financial expenditure and the promotion of cycling as an environmentally friendly and healthy alternative to the car.

- 6.2 On that basis, the working group was disappointed that officers of the County Council had not been prepared to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to discuss the subject. During the course of the working group's study, Councillor Downes, in his role as a County Councillor, met one of the highways officers to discuss the partnership arrangements and the County Council's expenditure on cycling provision in Huntingdonshire. This was followed up by a meeting between District and County Council officers.

- 6.3 Notwithstanding the efforts of the working group, it has not been possible to identify the precise extent of the County Council's past or planned expenditure on cycleway provision in Huntingdonshire. Principally this seems to be because, unlike the District Council, there is no specific allocation for cycling in the County Council's transportation budget. Similarly an analysis of recent Section 106 agreements shows numerous references to contributions by developers towards transportation provision of up to £2,000 per dwelling but more limited references to cycleway provision which are usually site specific. Most of that expenditure is being allocated through the market towns transport strategies with little likelihood that rural routes will be progressed

- 6.4 Although expenditure on cycleway provision is dependent on a variety of sources from Government grant through the Local Transport Plan to County and District Councils budgetary allocations and Section 106 agreements, the working group was disappointed that it was unable to establish the precise amount of available funding and plans for its expenditure, whether in the market towns or elsewhere.

7. OUTCOMES

- 7.1 A significant development from the working party's inquiries is an offer by County Council officers to update the District Council's cycling strategy to align its content with the Local Transport Plan and to prepare, in conjunction with District Council officers, an action plan for its implementation, including the identification of inter-urban routes. A similar exercise has already been carried out for South Cambridgeshire District Council which has led to an allocation of funding from the Local Transport Plan each year for cycleway provision in that District.

- 7.2 With limited exceptions where an individual scheme can be identified, Section 106 agreements do not tend to make specific provision for a financial contribution towards cycleway development. The adoption of an action plan to implement the cycling strategy will enable more agreements to target expenditure on specific cycleway provision. If those receipts were to be made payable to the District Council as opposed to the County Council, this should establish a clearer link to the implementation of the cycling strategy.
- 7.3 With regard to the market towns, the working group has been unable to distinguish with any accuracy how much money is available for expenditure on cycleway provision through the market town transport strategies. Where the Council itself has allocated specific funding, the working group has been informed that this is released on a scheme by scheme basis following approval by the Area Joint Committee with District officers often designing the individual projects. The working group feels that this practice should continue.
- 7.4 The working group had hoped, at the outset of the study, that it might be possible to establish what influence the District's Council's expenditure and involvement in cycling provision had in encouraging and promoting investment in cycleway development in Huntingdonshire. Despite the enquiries made, it has not been possible to identify the amount of funding available nor a programme for cycleway development outside the market towns. The working group has therefore concluded that it is impractical to pursue this matter any further.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 Members of the working group wish to extend their appreciation to the District Council's officers in the Planning Division for their assistance during the course of the review and for their candid advice and views.
- 8.2 The working group had hoped to establish a clear link from Section 106 contributions for transportation to its expenditure on individual cycleway schemes but this has not proved possible. The updating of the cycling strategy and an associated action plan will however enable the Council to distinguish between contributions for cycleway provision and transportation generally in appropriate cases. Given the District's existing commitment to cycling provision, the working group considers that the contributions negotiated for cycling should be paid by developers to the District Council as opposed to the County Council. The funding available for expenditure can be monitored by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) in the same way as existing Section 106 receipts with the money being committed to individual schemes approved by the Area Joint Committee as currently.
- 8.3 The updated strategy and action plan should hopefully attract specific funding through the Local Transport Plan which, together with targeted Section 106 receipts, will enable progress to be made in the creation of inter-urban cycleway routes in Huntingdonshire and thereby encourage more people to cycle with all of the associated benefits in terms of reduced traffic congestion, improved air quality and a healthier population.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The working group therefore

RECOMMEND

- (a) that the offer by the County Council to update the Council's existing cycling strategy and to prepare an action plan for its implementation be welcomed and officers requested to conclude this work within the next six months;
- (b) that, following completion of the strategy and action plan, specific contributions be sought in Section 106 agreements for cycleway provision in Huntingdonshire in appropriate cases;
- (c) that contributions negotiated under (b) above be retained by the District Council for expenditure on implementation of the cycling strategy action plan;
- (d) that the District Council seek the allocation of specific funding through the Local Transport Plan for cycleway provision in Huntingdonshire;
- (e) that the approval of individual cycleway schemes continue to be the responsibility of the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee with District Council expenditure continuing to be allocated on a scheme by scheme basis.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Notes of the Cycling Working Group

Medium Term Plan

Reports and Minutes of meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) and the Section 106 Agreement Advisory Group

Market Town Transport Strategies

Cycling Strategy for Huntingdonshire 2000

Local Transport Plan

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (2006). Transport Interventions Promoting Safe Cycling and Walking: Evidence Briefing.

National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (2008). Promoting and creating built or natural environments that encourage and support physical activity.

Contact Officer: Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer
☎ (01480) 388006

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

1. INTRODUCTION

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

2. BACKGROUND

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

the members' rate should be fixed to that of the employees on the grounds of equity but should track the employees' rate if that should vary at any time in the future.

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

3. INFORMATION

- 3.1 The working group made extensive enquiries on the websites of other local authorities into their travel allowances and incentives and the content of their travel plans. Information was obtained on the estimated costs of running a car provided on the Royal Automobile Club's website and the taxable allowances operated by HM Customs and Revenues. Enquiries were made into the car sharing arrangements available for employees in Cambridgeshire.

- 3.2 Extensive use was made of the [vcacarfueldata](http://www.vcacarfueldata.org.uk) website which contains data on the emissions of all recently manufactured vehicles.

4. VEHICLE EMISSIONS

- 4.1 With the emerging Environment Strategy and a growing recognition of the importance of carbon footprints, the working group felt that the current mileage rates for employees and members based on engine size with no regard to emission values was becoming rapidly outdated. With only three engine bands and the highest being for vehicles with an engine size over 1,200 cc, the great majority of employees and members will be eligible for the maximum rate of 54.4 pence per mile. Tax is payable on that element of reimbursement over 40 pence per mile which HM Customs and Revenues regard as 'profit'.

- 4.2 The working group did not feel that it was within its remit to propose an alteration to the mileage rates paid to employees which, as mentioned above, forms part of their contracts of employment. Any change would have to be the subject of negotiation between the Council and the employees and could result in a move from the national to a locally determined scheme.

- 4.3 However, the working group did consider that members could demonstrate their commitment to reducing emissions, reducing their carbon footprint and improving local air quality. By altering the mileage rate for members to one based on emission rates, the working group is of the opinion that this may set an example for others to follow.

- 4.4 Information on exhaust emission ratings or 'Euro' standards (expressed as the amount of grams per kilometre of CO₂ emitted) is readily available on www.vcacarfueldata.org.uk. These have been converted to bandings for the purposes of vehicle excise duty which are shown in the following table, together with the VED rates –

Vehicles registered on or after 1st March 2001		Diesel Car TC 49		Petrol Car TC 48		Alternative Fuel Car TC 59	
Bands	CO ₂ Emission Figure (g/km) *	12 months rate £	6 months rate £	12 months rate £	6 months rate £	12 months rate £	6 months rate £
Band A	Up to 100	<u>0.00</u>	-	<u>0.00</u>	-	<u>0.00</u>	-
Band B	101 to 120	<u>35.00</u>	-	<u>35.00</u>	-	<u>15.00</u>	-
Band C	121 - 150	<u>115.00</u>	<u>63.25</u>	<u>115.00</u>	<u>63.25</u>	<u>95.00</u>	<u>52.25</u>
Band D	151 - 165	<u>140.00</u>	<u>77.00</u>	<u>140.00</u>	<u>77.00</u>	<u>120.00</u>	<u>66.00</u>
Band E	166 - 185	<u>165.00</u>	<u>90.75</u>	<u>165.00</u>	<u>90.75</u>	<u>145.00</u>	<u>79.75</u>
Band F	186 - 225	<u>205.00</u>	<u>112.75</u>	<u>205.00</u>	<u>112.75</u>	<u>190.00</u>	<u>104.50</u>
Band G	226+	<u>300.00</u>	<u>165.00</u>	<u>300.00</u>	<u>165.00</u>	<u>285.00</u>	<u>156.75</u>

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

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

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

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

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

4.9 Any alteration to the members mileage allowance would have to be agreed by the Independent Remuneration Panel. Enquiries have been

made with the Chairman of the Panel as to whether it would be necessary to reconvene the Panel to approve the change but his view is that this can be dealt with in a convenient manner without the expense of holding a meeting of the Panel.

5. INCENTIVES TO EMPLOYEES

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

CCTV records with false claims being a disciplinary offence in the same way as any other allowances claim.

- 5.6 The working group also discussed briefly possible incentives for employees to use public transport or travel by foot or cycle. Further investigations will be necessary before any recommendations would be formulated and in order not to further delay this report, the Group will report tot his subject at a future date.

6. POOL CARS

- 6.1 The working group investigated the use of the District Council's pool car status and the frequency/mileage of each car to date. The fleet comprises three diesel powered Toyota Yaris and a petrol/electric hybrid Toyota Prius. The pool cars have been specifically chosen for their low carbon emission output. The Toyota Yaris, tax band B, has an engine capacity of 1.3 and emits 119 g/km of CO₂ whilst the Prius, also tax band B, has an engine capacity of 1.5 and emits 104 g/km of CO₂. Although these were not actively promoted during their first quarter (April – June 2007), their usage has provided encouraging results:

Month	Mileage	Cost per mile – private car (54.4p)	Cost per mile – pool car (40p)	Saving £
May	1789	966.06	715.60	250.46
June	1430	772.20	572.00	200.20
July	3756	2,028.24	1,502.40	525.84
August	2714	1,465.56	1,085.60	379.96
September	2625	1,417.50	1,050.00	367.50
October	3616	1,952.64	1,446.40	506.24
November	3871	2,090.36	1,548.40	541.96

- 6.2 As anticipated, active promotion of the pool cars coupled with the loss of onsite parking has caused an increase in their usage in the second quarter reflecting the positive incorporation of the pool car into everyday work. The charge of 40p per mile includes the running costs of the vehicle and, as shown in the table above, highlights the increasing savings made by the Council through their use. The Group welcomes the use of the lower emission vehicles purchased by the Council and foresee their use to a greater extent in the future with increased publicity of their availability to employees and members.
- 6.3 The Group felt that it would be useful also if it were possible to assess what the saving in CO₂ emissions was from the use of pool cars and in order to monitor the continuous use of the cars, the Group suggest that regular reports be made available highlighting the reductions in both costs to the Council and CO₂ emissions.

7. FINANCIAL PROVISION

- 7.1 As the concept of changing mileage rates to emission rates is an innovative approach, the group researched the potential availability of

funding for publicity and the implementation of the scheme. To date no source has been identified but further enquiries may lead to possible opportunities for support.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 The working group is firmly of the belief that the Council should be innovative in its approach to the question of mileage allowances and that incentives should be made available for employees and members to reduce the use of cars in general and the more heavily polluting cars in particular.
- 8.2 By moving to a different basis for the payment of mileage allowances to members, the working group hopes that the Council will be seen as offering an example of good practice that will be followed by others. Positive incentives for car sharing by employees will help to make this more attractive as opposed to individual travel to work in single occupancy vehicles and again may be regarded as a step towards reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The working group therefore

RECOMMEND

- (a) that an alternative form of mileage allowance be introduced for members of the Council as set out in paragraph 4.6 above based upon exhaust emissions;
- (b) that the new mileage allowance be optional for existing members but compulsory for all newly elected members with effect from 1st May 2008;
- (c) that the Members' Independent Remuneration Panel be requested to confirm their agreement to the changes to the mileage allowance for members;
- (d) that the necessary changes be made to the Members Allowance Scheme;
- (e) that employees travelling to work by means of car share be permitted to park in Bridge Place car park at a concessionary rate if car parking charges are introduced for that car park by the Council and suitable arrangements be made to enable those who have car shared to travel home in an emergency if they are left without suitable means of transport;
- (f) that enquiries continue to be made regarding potential funding for the implementation and publicity of the proposed changes to the mileage allowances to Members;

- (g) that regular reports be produced highlighting the savings in both emissions and costs to the Council from the use of pool cars; and
- (h) that further consideration be given to incentives for employees to use public transport, cycling and walking by the working group in the future.

Background papers

See Appendix C

Contact Officer: Miss N Giles
☎ 01480 387049

Mileage Rates

Inland Revenue approved mileage rates

Tax Year	Business Miles	Engine <1000cc	Engine 1001-1500cc	Engine 1501-2000cc	Engine >2000cc
2007/08	< 10,000	40 p/mile	40 p/mile	40 p/mile	40 p/mile
2007/08	> 10,000	25 p/mile	25 p/mile	25 p/mile	25 p/mile

Current Huntingdonshire District Council (Councillor)

Mileage Bands	451-999cc	1000-1199cc	1200-1450cc
< 8,500	39.7p	43.1p	54.4p
> 8,500	12.1p	12.0p	14.3p

APPENDIX B

Examples of Vehicles within Tax Bands A – G

TAX BAND (emissions)	MAKE	MODEL	ENGINE CAPACITY	FUEL	CO2 (g/km)
A (up to 100)	Seat	Ibiza	1.4 TDI	Diesel	99
	Volkswagen	Polo	1.4 TDI	Diesel	99
B (101-120)	Citroen	C3	1.6 HDI	Diesel	118
	Peugeot	207	1.4 HDI	Diesel	120
	Fiat	500	1.2	Petrol	119
	Daihatsu	Sirion		Petrol	118
C (121-150)	Honda	Civic - Type S	2.2	Diesel	138
	Toyota	Avensis	2.2	Diesel	146
	Chevrolet	Matiz	1	Petrol	139
	Ford	Ka	1.3	Petrol	150
D (151-165)	Audi	A4 Saloon	1.9 TDI	Diesel	152
	Hyundai	Sonata	2	Diesel	159
	Renault	Clio	1.6	Petrol	160
	Suzuki	SX4	1.6	Petrol	165
E (166-185)	Mazda	5 series	2	Diesel	173
	Renault	Coupe	1.9	Diesel	180
	Chrysler Jeep	Sebring	2	Petrol	185
	Alfa Romeo	159	1.8	Petrol	181
F (186-225)	Skoda	Superb	2.5	Diesel	206
	Land Rover	Freelander 2	2.2	Diesel	224
	Kia	Sportage	2	Petrol	194
	Audi	Cabriolet	2	Petrol	197
G (226+)	Citroen	C6	2.7	Diesel	230
	Nissan	Patrol	3	Diesel	313
	Ford	Galaxy	2.3	Petrol	242
	Toyota	Land Cruiser	4	Petrol	291

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Notes of the Travel Plan Working Group
- Reports and Minutes of meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)
- LGA Members' Allowance Scheme
- NJC Officer Mileage Rates
- HDC's Travel Plan
- RAC Report on Motoring 2006: Chapter 4 – Greener Motoring
- East of England Development Agency
- HM Revenue and Customs
- Manchester Green City Campaign
- Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency
- DVLA Sustainable Development Action Plan (SDAP) April 2007 – March 2008

Websites for the following Councils:

Birmingham City
Bristol City
Dundee City
South Bedfordshire District
Cambridgeshire County
London Boroughs of Bromley
Camden
Havering and Islington
Manchester City
Newcastle Upon Tyne City
North Lincolnshire
West Oxfordshire District
Sheffield City
Sandwell Metropolitan Borough
Southampton City
Warwickshire County

WEBSITES

www.vcacarfueldata.org.uk
www.huntsdc.gov.uk
www.rac.co.uk
www.lga.gov.uk
www.hmrc.gov.uk/green-transport/travel-plans.htm
www.camshare.co.uk
www.peterboroughcarshare.com
www.liftsharesolutions.com/carbudi.asp
www.globalactionplan.org.uk/transportfacts.aspx

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

12TH FEBRUARY 2008

**WORK PLAN: STUDIES
(Report by the Head of Administration)**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to allow Members of the Panel to review their programme of studies.

2. STUDIES

2.1 The Council has a duty to improve the social, environmental and economic well-being of the District. This gives the Overview and Scrutiny Panels a wide remit to examine any issues that affect the District by conducting in-depth studies.

2.2 Studies are allocated according to the Panels' respective terms of reference. These are currently:-

Service Delivery:

Environment & Transport
Leisure
Housing & Public Health
Operations

Service Support:

Finance
Resources & Policy
Information Technology
Planning Strategy

2.3 Ongoing studies have been allocated between the Panels accordingly -

STUDY	PANEL	STATUS
The Council's Travel Plan	Service Support	Final report of the Working Group expected at Panel's February meeting.
Older Persons Public Health Needs	Service Delivery	Working Group to meet to provide information for Cabinet and discuss progress of the actions.
Cleaning Regimes in Town Centres	Service Delivery	Further report to March meeting.
Cycling	Service Support	Final report of the Working Group expected at Panel's February meeting.
The Promotion of Services provided for improved home energy efficiency.	Service Delivery	Recommendation made for inclusion in Environment Strategy – to March meeting.
Processes and Procedures involved with the adoption of roads and sewers.	Service Delivery	Working Group to meet with G Shipley and S Ingram. Information being collated.
Traffic Enforcement	Service Delivery	Awaiting report following decision

		by AJC.
The Processes Involved in Applying for Community Development Grant Aid and the Effectiveness of Grant Schemes.	Service Delivery	Interim report has been to Cabinet. Information being gathered on grant schemes.
Disability Access	Service Delivery	Survey of Parish Councils and Councillors undertaken. Further work being done to follow up results.
State of the District Consultation	Service Delivery	Final report to Panel's February meeting.
Parish Charter for Huntingdonshire	Service Support	Letters and a questionnaire have been sent to Parish Councils.
Town Centre Initiatives	Service Support	Interviews held with TCM and Chairmen on 23 rd January to discuss progress so far.

2.4 The Service Support Panel have also identified the following as future studies:-

Internal Communication with Members	Service Support
Review of the Council's Housing Needs Assessment Process	Service Support
Review of Section 106	Service Support

2.5 The Service Delivery Panel have also identified the following as possible future studies:-

Joint working between the three tiers of local government and the implications of the white paper	Service Delivery
Heavy Goods Vehicle Parking throughout the District	Service Support
Role and effectiveness of the East of England Regional Assembly.	Service Delivery
Support for vulnerable people	Service Delivery
The Council's Plans in terms of Tourism and Sports Infrastructure in preparation for the 2012 Olympics.	Service Delivery

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 The Panel is requested to note the progress of the studies selected.

Contact Officer: Miss N Giles - ☎ (01480) 387049.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Minutes and Reports from previous meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

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AREA OF REVIEW	DETAILS/COMMENTS
Title of Study (name of Working Group)	Travel Plan Working Group
Appointing Panel	Overview and Scrutiny (Service Support) Panel
Members Assigned (including date Working Group appointed)	Councillors M G Baker, J A Gray and R J West Appointed by Panel on 13 th March 2007.
Possible Co-Options to the Group	N/A
Interests Declared	None received.
Rapporteur	Councillor J A Gray
Officer Support	Mr Roy Reeves – Head of Administration, HDC Mrs K Pauley – Support Services Assistant, HDC Miss N Giles – Trainee Democratic Services
Purpose of Study / Objective (specify exactly what the study should achieve)	To establish and investigate the question of travel allowances and incentives/disincentives for Members and Officers to use more environmentally sensitive means of transport.
Rationale (key issues and/or reason for conducting a study)	Topical issue ~ with the emerging Environment Strategy and the recent signing of the Nottingham Declaration. Aiming to reduce individual carbon footprints and to encourage and support the move towards a green travel plan.
Terms of Reference	National Joint Council (NJC) Neighbouring Authorities in Cambridgeshire
Links to Council Policies/Strategies	Yes ~ to achieve the Community Aim identified on the Corporate Plan as “a clean ‘green’ and attractive place to live”.

ACTION BY WORKING GROUP	
Methodology / Approach (what types of enquiries will be used to gather evidence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research of Members’ Allowances schemes operated by a variety of district, borough and city councils • Research of Green Travel Plans initiated and operated by a variety of district, borough and city councils • Research of emission levels and car-sharing schemes
External/Specialist Support	N/A
Existing Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LGA Members’ Allowances Scheme (April 2003) • NJC Officer Mileage Rates • HDC’s Travel Plan (October 2006) • RAC Report on Motoring 2006 : Chapter 4 – Greener Motoring
Evidence to be Obtained (e.g. witnesses, documents, site visits, consultation, research, etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer and Member mileage rates operated by other authorities • Research into incentives offered to Members by other authorities • Research into Green Travel Plans initiated and operated by other local authorities • Research into HDC pool car usage • Copies of greener emissions bands for cars from 2005/06 onwards

Reference Sites	<p>HDC's Website www.huntsdc.gov.uk</p> <p>RAC Website www.rac.co.uk</p> <p>www.vcacarfueldata.org.uk</p> <p>Local Government Association Website www.lga.gov.uk</p> <p>Websites for the following Councils: Birmingham City, Bristol City, South Beds District, Cambridgeshire County, London Boroughs of Bromley, Camden, Havering and Islington, Manchester City, Newcastle Upon Tyne City, West Oxfordshire District, Sheffield City, Southampton City and Warwickshire County.</p>
Investigations	Research into the above websites.
Witnesses	N/A
Site Visits (if necessary) (where and when)	N/A
Meetings of the Working Group	<p>First meeting held ~ 17th July 2007</p> <p>Second meeting held ~ 20th December 2007</p>
Costs (resource requirements, additional expenditure, time)	<p>Officer time ~ both to provide support and to conduct research.</p> <p>No other external costs identified to date.</p>
Possible Barriers to the Study (potential weaknesses)	None identified.
Projected Timescale (Start and end times)	<p>Start ~ 13th March 2007</p> <p>Final report expected at the February 2008 meeting.</p>

AREA OF REVIEW	DETAILS/COMMENTS
Title of Study (name of Working Group)	Cycling Working Group
Appointing Panel	Overview and Scrutiny (Service Support) Panel
Members Assigned (including date Working Group appointed)	Councillors K M Baker, P J Downes and P M D Godfrey. Appointed by Panel on 13 th March 2007.
Possible Co-Options to the Group	N/A
Interests Declared	No declarations received.
Rapporteur	Councillor P J Downes
Officer Support	Mr Stuart Bell – Transportation Team Leader, HDC Mr Richard Probyn – Planning Policy Manager, HDC Mr Roy Reeves – Head of Administration, HDC Miss Habbiba Ali – Democratic Services Officer, HDC
Purpose of Study / Objective (specify exactly what the study should achieve)	To establish and identify the Council's strategies, plans and expenditure on cycling in Huntingdonshire.
Rationale (key issues and/or reason for conducting a study)	The Panel identified the need to clarify/identify the areas where HDC's expenditure on cycling was being used. At present, there is no clear audit trail of where the money was being expended.
Terms of Reference	Both HDC and CCC Officers.
Links to Council Policies/Strategies	Yes ~ ties in to 2 of the Community Aims identified in the Corporate Plan "access to services and transport" and "healthy living".

ACTION BY WORKING GROUP	
Methodology / Approach (what types of enquiries will be used to gather evidence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct preliminary investigations with HDC Officers ~ Policy and Strategic Services//Financial Services/Transportation Section/Leisure Development Section ~ (fact finding/evidence gathering exercise) prior to the first meeting of the Working Group. • Circulate HDC's May 2000 version of Cycling Strategy to Working Group together with information/evidence gathered. • Initial meeting of Working Group to consider initial findings and draft together comments for CCC. • Working Group to meet with CCC to discuss issues identified/raised. • HDC and CCC Officer meeting to be held first before convening a further meeting of the Working Group. • Continue meeting with Officers from CCC until issues have been resolved.
External/Specialist Support	Officers from CCC.
Existing Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 2000 version of HDC's Cycling Strategy • Available HDC publications for cycling • Market Town Transport Strategy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Transport Plan • Open Space, Sports and Recreation Needs Assessment and Audit • Huntingdonshire Design Guide. • CCC Cycling Strategy.
Evidence to be Obtained (e.g. witnesses, documents, site visits, consultation, research, etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MTP = level of funding earmarked for cycling. • Research into level of funding spent by HDC on cycling over last 5 years. • Research into existing policies/strategies that involve cycling provision. • Research into current leisure provision for cycling. • Level of S106 funding earmarked for cycling.
Reference Sites	HDC Website www.huntsdc.gov.uk CCC Website www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Investigations	With HDC and CCC Officers. HDC's Policy and Strategic Services, Financial Services, Transportation Section, Planning Policy Section and Leisure Services. CCC's West Highways Division, Network Management Division and Major Transport Infrastructure Division.
Witnesses	N/A
Site Visits (if necessary) (where and when)	N/A
Meetings of the Working Group	First meeting held ~ 31 st May 2007. Second Meeting held with CCC ~ 26 th June 2007. Third meeting held ~ 30 th November 2007.
Costs (resource requirements, additional expenditure, time)	Officer time ~ both to provide support and conduct research. No other external costs identified to date.
Possible Barriers to the Study (potential weaknesses)	At present, there is no clear audit trail of where money is being expended. Causing difficulties. Reflects inconsistencies in the current approach.
Projected Timescale (Start and end times)	Start ~ 13 th March 2007 Final report of Working Group expected February 2008.

AREA OF REVIEW	DETAILS/COMMENTS
Title of Study (name of Working Group)	Parish Charter Working Group
Appointing Panel	Overview and Scrutiny (Service Support) Panel
Members Assigned (including date Working Group appointed)	Councillors J W Davies, P J Downes and R G Tuplin. Appointed by Panel on 12 th June 2007.
Possible Co-Options to the Group	N/A
Interests Declared	None received,
Rapporteur	Councillor P J Downes
Officer Support	Mr R Reeves – Head of Administration, HDC Mrs K Pauley – Support Services Assistant, HDC
Purpose of Study / Objective (specify exactly what the study should achieve)	To review the draft parish Charter for the Council's relationship with town and parish councils in the District and to make recommendations to Cabinet.
Rationale (key issues and/or reason for conducting a study)	As identified above.
Terms of Reference	Government Quality Parish Council Initiative Establishment of more formalised arrangements with Town and Parishes in Huntingdonshire.
Links to Council Policies/Strategies	Yes ~ to achieve the Council aim identified in the Corporate Plan "to improve our systems and practices".

ACTION BY WORKING GROUP	
Methodology / Approach (what types of enquiries will be used to gather evidence)	Consultation with County and other District Councils in Cambridgeshire.
External/Specialist Support	N/A
Existing Documentation	Existing draft charter Government Quality Parish Council initiative Impending legislation change
Evidence to be Obtained (e.g. witnesses, documents, site visits, consultation, research, etc)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research cost of services that could potentially be devolved • Progress made by Cambridgeshire County Council and other District councils towards Charter implementation • Consultation with CALC • Consultation with parish councils
Reference Sites	None
Investigations	With the Town and Parish Councils.
Witnesses	Town and Parish Clerks.
Site Visits (if necessary) (where and when)	N/A

Meetings of the Working Group	First meeting held ~ 28 th August 2007 Second meeting held ~ 26 th September 2007.
Costs (resource requirements, additional expenditure, time)	Officer time – both to conduct research and provide support. No other external costs identified to date.
Possible Barriers to the Study (potential weaknesses)	N/A
Projected Timescale (Start and end times)	Start ~ 12 th June 2007 Completion of Study expected March 2008

AREA OF REVIEW	DETAILS/COMMENTS
Title of Study (name of Working Group)	Town Centre Initiatives Working Group
Appointing Panel	Overview and Scrutiny (Service Support) Panel
Members Assigned (including date Working Group appointed)	Councillors J D Ablewhite, K M Baker, A N Gilbert and R J West. Appointed by Panel on 13 February 2007.
Possible Co-Options to the Group	N/A
Interests Declared	None received.
Rapporteur	Councillor R J West
Officer Support	Mrs Corrine Garbett – Sustainable Economic Development Manager, HDC Mr Roy Reeves – Head of Administration, HDC Miss Habbiba Ali – Democratic Services Officer, HDC
Purpose of Study / Objective (specify exactly what the study should achieve)	To be acquainted with the purpose, cost and achievements of the Town Centre Initiatives across the District. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do they provide good value for money? • What objectives have been set and have they been achieved? • How does performance and cost compare across the Initiatives? • How will their future roles be developed?
Rationale (key issues and/or reason for conducting a study)	Study was suggested by Councillor J D Ablewhite from the Overview and Scrutiny (Service Delivery) Panel to address the issues raised above.
Terms of Reference	HDC's Sustainable Economic Development Section HDC's Accountancy Section Association of Town Centre Management All 4 of the District's Town Centre Partnerships.
Links to Council Policies/Strategies	Yes ~ to achieve the Community Aim identified in the Corporate Plan as providing "access to services and transport" and to create "a strong and diverse community". Town Centre Management has been identified as a key activity under the objective to make town centres and key settlements accessible.

ACTION BY WORKING GROUP	
Methodology / Approach (what types of enquiries will be used to gather evidence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial meeting with Sustainable Economic Development Manager to discuss the background to the Initiatives. Financial summary on each to be provided by the Principal Accountant. • Circulate information (end of year accounts, publications, constitutions, etc) to Working Group. • Interview TCMs / Chairmen / District Councillors appointed onto the TCPs as a means of obtaining information about each TCP.
External/Specialist Support	N/A

Existing Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End of Year Accounts 2006/07 for each TCP • Minutes of last 2 meetings of the TCI Liaison Group meeting • Latest edition of each TCP magazine publication • Membership lists for each TCP • Constitutions/Articles of Association • TCM Job Descriptions
Evidence to be Obtained (e.g. witnesses, documents, site visits, consultation, research, etc)	<p>Most of the evidence will be obtained by the Democratic Services Team and from the Town Centre Managers.</p> <p>Other evidence will be obtained from Accountancy and Sustainable Economic Development Sections and those whom the Working Group decide to interview.</p>
Reference Sites	<p>Association of Town Centre Management Website. www.atcm.org</p> <p>St Ives Town Initiative Website www.stives-tcni.info</p> <p>Huntingdon Town Centre Partnership Website www.huntingdowntowncentrepартnership.co.uk</p> <p>Ramsey Town Centre Partnership www.ramseytowncentrepартnership.co.uk</p> <p>St Neots Town Centre Management Initiative www.st-neots.co.uk/towncentre</p>
Investigations	<p>To be made with Mr N Green and Mrs C Garbett ~ HDC.</p> <p>Further investigation to be undertaken with TCM/District Councillors/Chairman/HDC Officers of each TCP.</p>
Witnesses	Chairman/TCM/District Councillors/HDC Officers from each of the TCPs.
Site Visits (if necessary) (where and when)	N/A
Meetings of the Working Group	<p>First meeting held ~ 20th July 2007</p> <p>Second meeting held ~ 7th November 2007</p> <p>Third meeting held with HDC Officers and Members ~ 13th December 2007</p> <p>Fourth Meeting held with Chairmen and TCM ~ 23rd January 2008</p>
Costs (resource requirements, additional expenditure, time)	<p>Officer time ~ both to provide support and conduct research. Meetings of Working Group usually last around 1.5 hours. Time to arrange and conduct interviews.</p> <p>No other external costs identified to date.</p>
Possible Barriers to the Study (potential weaknesses)	None identified at present.
Projected Timescale (Start and end times)	<p>Start ~ 13th February 2007</p> <p>Completion of Study expected March 2008.</p>

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE SUPPORT)

12TH FEBRUARY 2008

PROGRESS TO DATE (Report by the Head of Administration)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Panel have asked for the submission of a brief progress report to their monthly meetings to monitor action taken and the response to any recommendations which they have made.

2. PROGRESS REPORT


- 2.1 The monthly progress report therefore is attached which covers all outstanding items. Actions previously reported upon as having been completed have been deleted from the report as the process rolls forward. The report is in tabular form and comprises a brief synopsis of the Panel's decisions and the subsequent action taken.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Panel are requested to note the contents of the attached report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Minutes and Reports of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Planning and Finance/
Service Support)

Contact Officer: Miss N Giles – Trainee Democratic Services Officer
 (01480) 387049

Panel Date	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Date</u>
14/11/06	<p><u>The Council's Travel Plan</u></p> <p>Agreed to continue to monitor the Council's Travel Plan.</p>	Corporate & Strategic Framework Panel to consider an item at their January meeting updating Members on Office Accommodation and the Travel Plan.	<p>Update on Travel Plan received by Corporate & Strategic Framework Panel. Agreed that a further update should be submitted to Corporate & Strategic Framework Panel in September 2007.</p> <p>Working Group met on 17th July 2007. Second meeting held on 20th December 2007.</p> <p>Final report of the Working Group expected at the Panel's February 2008 meeting.</p>	<p>Sept 2007</p> <p>Dec 2007</p> <p>Jan 2008</p>
<p>14/4/05</p> <p>12/12/06</p> <p>14/04/05</p>	<p><u>Use of S106 monies</u></p> <p>Quarterly reports to be submitted to the Panel.</p> <p>Requested additional information for future statements including comparative information for previous quarters, a reinstatement of future potential agreement statistics and the expiry date for money to be expended.</p> <p>Following a recent announcement on possible planning gain supplement development tax which would lead to changes in planning policy, asked Head of Planning Services to consult the Panel on the consultation draft as this became available.</p> <p>Consideration to be given to the monitoring of expenditure by Cambridge Horizons on infrastructure development at a future meeting.</p>	Update on Section 106 and the introduction of Planning Gain Supplement to be requested.	<p>Advised by Head of Planning Services that Government consultation regarding possible levels/ways of working would be available later in the year and he will report back to Panel at this time.</p> <p>E-mail from Head of Planning Services circulated to Panel.</p> <p>Panel discussed the possibility of establishing a S106 Working Group.</p>	<p>June 2007</p> <p>Jan 2008</p>

<p>11/09/07</p> <p>11/12/07</p>	<p>Requests made for further information on the mechanisms for ensuring that money received from S106 Agreements is spent for the purpose specified in the Agreement.</p> <p>Requests made by Panel at the meeting for the Executive Councillor for Operations, Parks and Countryside to consult with the Panel on any proposals that emerged from his investigations in to the review of the S106 process.</p> <p>Requested that future monitoring reports include details of any non-monetary receipts as well as income in the future.</p>	<p>Requests forwarded to the Head of Policy and Strategic Services.</p>		
<p>14/11/06</p>	<p><u>“Growing Success”: A Corporate Plan</u></p> <p>Revised Plan - Growing Success, endorsed by Corporate & Strategic Framework Panel. Asked to review targets in 2007.</p>		<p>Advised by Head of Policy that next performance monitoring report is to be submitted in June 2007. Quarterly reports likely to follow thereafter. Discussions to be held with Chairmen at next Joint Chairmen’s meeting.</p> <p>Working Group to liaise with Head of Policy and report back to June meeting. Working Group also to act as conduit between the Panel and LAA Board.</p> <p>Corporate Plan submitted to Council in June 2007.</p> <p>Meeting of the Working Group to be arranged for January/February 2008.</p> <p>Quarterly monitoring report expected at Panel’s March 2008 meeting.</p>	

<u>ICT Developments</u>				
<u>12/09/06</u>	Requested further information on the current status of the Pilot of mobile technology within the Benefits Division.	Report on progress of trial and demonstration submitted to December meeting.	Further report on the outcome to be submitted to Panel meeting prior to consideration by Cabinet.	
<u>9/01/07</u>	Requested sight of forthcoming reports prior to their consideration by Cabinet:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Flexible Working Strategy ❖ Revised Customer Service Strategy 	Request sent to Head of IMD.	Reports anticipated for April meeting. Finished Customer Service Strategy may not be available – so an update may be provided. Update submitted to April meeting of Panel. Briefing note on Flexible Working Strategy submitted at Panel's September meeting by Director of Commerce & Technology. Requests made for the outcome of home working project to be submitted to the Panel.	Sept 2007
<u>11/12/07</u>	Joint O&S Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen agreed that the Consultation and Engagement Strategy, Communications and Marketing Strategy and Customer Service Strategy should all be considered at a special meeting of the Corporate and Strategic Framework Panel in February 2008.		Special meeting of the Corporate and Strategic Framework Panel arranged for Wednesday 6 th February 2008.	Jan 2008

<u>10/01/06</u>	<p><u>Local Area Agreements</u></p> <p>Head of Policy to investigate feasibility of the results of the quarterly monitoring of the LAA and LPSA performance being reported to the relevant O&S Panels.</p>	<p>Issue being discussed at County level. Report to be submitted to Corporate & Strategic Framework Panel in January 2007.</p>	<p>Presentation given to Corporate & Strategic Framework Panel by Head of Policy, recommendations submitted to LAA Board.</p> <p>Corporate Plan Working Group to act as conduit between the Panel and LAA Board. Report to June meeting in conjunction with Corporate Plan update.</p> <p>Meeting of Cambridgeshire Together Joint Accountability Committee held on 19th December 2007.</p>	
<u>09/01/07</u>	<p><u>Local Procurement</u></p> <p>Agreed to endorse the outcome of the working group's deliberations. In light of issues raised, agreed that the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Executive Councillor and Members of the Working Group should meet with representatives of the Huntingdonshire Business Network, Federation of Small Businesses and the Chamber of Trade.</p>	<p>Arrangements being made to convene this meeting.</p>	<p>Meeting held on 28th Feb 2007 between Working Group and representatives from local business.</p> <p>Positive outcome from meeting, suggestions made for improving communication between local business and Council, via website. Suggested a future meeting to keep communication channels open.</p> <p>Working Group meeting held on 22nd November 2007 reviewing progress made since 28th February. Positive outcome from meeting – report presented at Panel's December meeting.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Dec 2007</p>

			RSS link to contracts register now live and operational.	Jan 2008
<u>04/07/06</u>	<u>Raising the Profile of Overview & Scrutiny</u>	<p>Discussed ways in which profile of the overview and scrutiny function could be raised with the local community.</p> <p>Councillor A Gilbert investigating the use of E-Forums and Blogs to promote the activities of the Panel.</p> <p>Head of Policy & Communications Manager made presentation to January meeting.</p>	<p>Initial report considered at Panel meeting on 14th November. Councillors D B Dew, A N Gilbert and G S E Thorpe requested to pursue matter further.</p> <p>Panel agreed to extend remit of E-Forum Working Group to include communications across Overview & Scrutiny.</p> <p>Final report submitted to Panel's September meeting. Recommendations endorsed by the Panel. Requests made for a further report to be submitted to the Panel on the possible use of the website and the procedure for handling online petitions before considering the formulation of recommendations to Cabinet. Report expected at Panel's November meeting.</p> <p>Report to go before Corporate Governance Panel on 12th December 2007 and Cabinet on 13th December 2007.</p>	<p>Sept 2007</p> <p>Nov 2007</p>
<u>13/11/07</u>	Panel advised of the forthcoming "community call for action" proposal by the Government which intended to enable the public to raise issues for scrutiny.	Report by Head of Administration to be presented to Panel once guidance has been issued by the Government.	Report expected at the February 2008 meeting of the Panel.	Jan 2008

<u>Cycling in Huntingdonshire</u>				
<u>10/10/06</u>	Relevant Executive Councillor and an officer of the County Council to be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss ways of improving the relationship and arrangements with the District Council to deliver and promote cycling schemes.	Invitation sent 19 th October. Reminder sent 16th and 30th November.	County Council Officers declined invitation to attend. Believe that officers and Members should not be discussing County Policy & Procedures at another Authority's Scrutiny Panel. Welcomed opportunity to discuss issues with officers involved.	
<u>14/11/06</u>	Identified a number of issues requiring further information / clarification. Agreed that Panel may wish to pursue these following their discussions with the County Council.			
<u>09/01/07</u>	Emphasised importance of this matter being a partnership issue. Agreed to send invitation to Executive Councillor directly.	Invitation sent to Cllr McGuire.	Cllr McGuire will discuss with officers and advise ASAP. Response received from Cllr McGuire suggesting that issues could be raised through AJC. Working Group met on 31 st May, good debate with S Bell, P Downes agreed to contact CCC directly to discuss queries on S106 funding. Working Group met on 28 th June 2007, received comments from meeting of Cllr P Downes and CCC. DC and CCC Officer meeting held. Working Group meeting held on 30 th November 2007. Final report of Working Group expected at Panel's February 2008 meeting.	July 2007

<u>14/11/06</u>	<p><u>District Council Call Centre</u></p> <p>Requested that future quarterly monitoring reports contain further information on trends and comparable statistics for previous years rather than a snapshot of the past quarter.</p> <p>Queried the process by which savings were identified from a service once calls had been transferred to the Call Centre. Emphasised need to ensure that savings were quantifiable.</p>	<p>Next report due November 2007.</p> <p>Information on savings circulated and noted.</p>	<p>Monitoring Report submitted in November 2007 – includes comparable data as requested.</p> <p>Report to be presented to the Panel by the Head of Administration at the February 2008 meeting.</p>	<p>Nov 2007</p> <p>Jan 2008</p>
<u>13/11/07</u>	<p>Quarterly monitoring reports to be circulated informally to Members. Reports to be presented 6 monthly to the Panel.</p>			
<u>12/12/06</u>	<p><u>HQ</u></p> <p>Update on Pathfinder House to be submitted to Joint meeting in January 2007 (including car parking).</p>	<p>Report provided for Corporate & Strategic Framework Panel in February.</p>	<p>Update received by Corporate & Strategic Framework Panel.</p> <p>Further update received at Corporate and Strategic Framework Panel's September meeting.</p> <p>Panel received an update at the January 2008 meeting.</p>	<p>Feb 2007</p> <p>Sept 2007</p> <p>Jan 2008</p>
<u>13/02/07</u>	<p><u>Town Centre Initiatives</u></p> <p>Working Group established to investigate the purpose, cost and achievements of the Town Centre Initiatives across the District.</p>	<p>Two meetings held with the Sustainable Economic Development Manager.</p>	<p>Meeting held with the District Councillors and Officers on 13th December 2007.</p> <p>Interviews with the Chairman and TCM's held on 23rd January 2008.</p>	<p>Jan 2008</p>

<u>9/10/07</u>	<u>HGV Parking Throughout the District</u> Panel requested that preliminary work should commence on drawing together pertinent issues relating to HGV parking throughout the District, in preparation for a future study.	Requests made with the Team Leader for Transportation to investigate the matter and forward details on to the Panel.	Report expected at March/April 2008 meeting.	Jan 2008
<u>13/11/07</u>	<u>Affordable Housing SPD</u> Panel advised that a strategic market assessment was proposed in the SPD, having considered the document at the Panel's November meeting.	Chairman requested that copies of the report be circulated to Panel Members when this became available.		
<u>11/12/07</u>	<u>Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest</u> Questions raised regarding the District Council's involvement in the listing and de-listing of buildings of special architectural or historic interest. Requests made for a report to be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel on the process involved.	Request forwarded on to the Development Plans and Implementation Manager.	Report expected at Panel's March 2008 meeting.	Jan 2008
<u>11/04/06</u>	<u>Forward Plan</u> Review of payments from recycling credits Circulate report to Members when available.	Further information requested by Chairman (10/10/06).	Position will not be reviewed until outcome of investigations into kerbside glass collections is known.	
<u>14/11/06</u>	<u>Environment Strategy</u> Outlined ongoing interest and emphasised the need for consideration to be given to the issue prior to its consideration by Cabinet.	Discussed at Meeting of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen on 6 th December 2006.	Meeting of Corporate & Strategic Framework Panel to be held on 20 th February 2007. All O&S Members to be invited to attend.	

<u>14/11/06</u>	<p>Car Parking Strategy</p> <p>Requested submission of a progress report to their next meeting.</p>		<p>Report to April meeting of Panel.</p> <p>O&S (SD) asked to see Strategy again before it is published.</p> <p>Car Parking Working Group established by Cabinet, first meeting to be a Workshop on 17th April 2007.</p> <p>Draft Strategy brought to Panel for consideration in October – comments forwarded to Cabinet.</p> <p>Report presented to Panel's January 2008 meeting, seeking approval of strategy and revised car parking charges.</p> <p>Information circulated to Panel Members via email.</p> <p>Panel Members approved the strategy and revised car parking charges with recommendations.</p>	<p>Oct 2007</p> <p>Dec 2007</p> <p>Dec 2007</p> <p>Jan 2008</p>
<u>13/11/07</u>	<p>Questions raised concerning the development of the County Council's on street parking policy in relation to the District Council's off street parking policy. Clarification sought as to whether the two documents were being considered together.</p>	<p>Requests made with the Team Leader for Transportation.</p>		
<u>11/09/07</u>	<p>Development Control Policies Preferred Options</p> <p>Circulate report when this becomes available.</p>			
<u>9/10/07</u>	<p>Huntingdon West Area Action Plan</p>			

<p><u>13/11/07</u></p>	<p>Circulate report when this becomes available.</p> <p>Kerbside Collection of Glass</p> <p>Taken off the Forward Plan for the time being. Requested sight of the document as soon as it becomes available.</p> <p>Parish Plans and Local Plan Policy</p> <p>Circulate report when this becomes available.</p>	<p>Requests made with the Development Plans & Implementation Manager.</p>		
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HDC Decision Digest

Edition 80

Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 2nd January to 1st February 2008

CAR PARKING STRATEGY AND REVISED PARKING CHARGES

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) has had further discussion on car parking within the District in the light of the revised draft of the action plan addressing the recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) and Cabinet at their October 2007 meetings. The Panel has been informed of a consultation exercise carried out by the Working Party to obtain the views of relevant stakeholders. The Panel has questioned the broadness of the consultation and did not feel that the action plan was sufficiently ambitious to produce a noticeable impact when motorists consider emissions on buying their next car. The Panel has expressed disappointment that of the recommendations made, only one appears to have been adopted – that relating to the extension of the long-stay period in car parks from nine hours to ten before the charge was increased to deter commuters. After much discussion, the Panel acknowledges that in order to progress the matter, the action plan should be implemented but reviewed with immediate effect. In the mean time, the Cabinet have been requested to note –

- that the Panel have no objection to the implementation of the action plan to enable changes to car parking charges in Huntingdonshire to be implemented;

- the Panel's disappointment over the Working Party's retention of 25% reduction in season ticket charges for low emission vehicles and its serious reservation that this will not have the significant impact desired;
- the panel's view that any surplus income generated through increased car parking charges be spent in accordance with the current strategy; and
- the Panel's recommendation that a further review of the car parking strategy be commenced immediately after the existing changes have been implemented.

EQUALITY CHARTER FOR GROWTH IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE

A draft Quality Charter document on Growth in Cambridgeshire has been endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support). The document has been compiled by Cambridgeshire Horizons through joint working with a range of partners and identifies how to achieve higher standards in the new housing developments that are planned for Cambridgeshire. Having raised issues regarding the consistency of the geographical terminology used, the Panel has requested the Head of Planning Services to raise these issues with Cambridgeshire Horizons.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DESIGN GUIDE REVIEW: PILOT PROJECT

Further information can be obtained from the Democratic Services Section ☎ (01480) 388007

The Development Control Panel has approved a procedure and methodology for a Huntingdonshire Design Review. This will involve the undertaking of a pilot project for a trial period of twelve months which will review completed development to identify any areas where the planning application and design process might have been improved to secure, for the future, a higher quality of development in the District. In the first instance, a team comprising Panel Members and Officers will consider four completed developments in Huntingdon on sites at Watersmeet, the Model Library, Royal Oak Passage and Saunders Garage, Ermine Street and report back to a future meeting. The review process will be applied to completed developments in other towns/villages in due course.

CONSULTATION ON ORDERS AND REGULATIONS RELATING TO THE CONDUCT OF LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS IN ENGLAND

The Standards Committee has approved a suggested response to a consultation paper published by the Department of Communities and Local Government entitled "Orders and Regulations Relating to the Conduct of Local Authority Members in England". The consultation focuses primarily on local authority standards committees becoming responsible for assessing allegations of misconduct against councillors and makes suggestions as to how the regime could operate via appropriate regulations and orders under the Local Government Act 2000, as amended.

MIGRANT WORKERS IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has received a presentation by the Community Manager on Migrant Workers in Huntingdonshire. Members have been informed of recent increases in migrant workers arriving in new areas of the Country and specifically in Huntingdonshire; however, as data is difficult to obtain, the figures have been treated cautiously. Members' attention has been drawn to the key areas of activity for the District Council regarding migrant workers and the additional financial burden on Councils in a number of service areas for which no additional funding is available.

In the discussion, Members have been informed of the remit and work of the Cambridgeshire Migrant Workers Network which comprises agencies that engage with migrant workers. The Panel also has discussed migrants' entitlement to benefits and noted that only limited benefits are available.

Having discussed the effect of migrant workers on local businesses and the economy, Members have discussed the language and accommodation problems migrant workers experience and the cessation of funding for the Regional College for language courses. With regard to the latter, the Panel has suggested that the Local Strategic Partnership should lobby the Government for Cambridgeshire to become an English for Speakers of Other Languages targeted area.

The Panel has commented on the need for improved recognition of migrant workers' qualifications and for partner organisations to refer un-registered workers to other appropriate agencies. The Citizens Advice Bureau is one of the most active organisations working with migrant workers and it has

incurred additional resource burdens as a result of language difficulties which prolong client interviews. On a related matter, the Migrant Gateway, amongst other services, provides interpreters for employers.

ENHANCED CLEANSING SERVICES: PILOT STUDY

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has reviewed the current arrangements for cleansing in the District and options to increase service levels in St. Ives. Members have been reminded of the background to a study on the subject and been provided with a detailed explanation of the options. In particular, reference has been made to the street cleansing standards the Council has adopted and the current financial constraints on the Council.

The Panel has discussed the cleanliness of the District's town centres as a result of the Saturday night time economy and the adverse effect of litter on Sunday trade and tourism. Members have noted the financial implications for the Council of providing a full cleansing service on Sundays principally arising from its health and safety responsibilities. Given the levels of litter in towns on Sundays, Members have expressed general support for the introduction of a full cleansing service on every day of the week. A further report on this has been requested for the Panel's meeting in March.

DISABILITY ACCESS STUDY

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has been acquainted with progress of the study on disability access. With regard to a list of potential organisations to consult on the Council's policies, it has been suggested that each should be asked

whether they would be prepared to assist the Council in this way.

PATIENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FORUMS: ANNUAL REPORT

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has received and noted the Patient and Public Involvement Forum's Annual Report 2006/07 National Summary. It has been decided to await the establishment of Local Improvement Networks before considering whether to undertake any studies on health matters.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY) - PROGRESS

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has been acquainted with progress of its ongoing studies. Members have accepted a suggestion that Councillor D Harty should continue on the Older Persons' Working Group until the study is concluded.

FINANCIAL STRATEGY, MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2009 – 2013 AND BUDGET 2008/09

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) has reviewed the Financial Strategy, Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2009 – 2013 and the budget and Council Tax for 2008/09 in advance of their consideration by the Cabinet and final determination by the Council. Members have been acquainted with the process involved in developing the Financial Strategy in the current year and the Government's grant settlement and its approach to Council Tax levels.

The Panel has been informed of Executive Councillors' involvement in developing the proposals contained in

the report and the rationale for changing the procedure for approving expenditure. The Panel has endorsed the proposed change.

With regard to the proposed level of Council Tax for 2008/09, the Panel has discussed the Government's expectations and the approach taken by other Councils. As a result and following discussion on the mechanism by which the Council's grant is determined, Members have expressed support for Option B which represents an increase of £5.48 (4.99%) in Band D equivalent Council Tax in 2008/09. Having discussed a number of other items for inclusion, Members also have expressed support for the proposed budget and MTP.