

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY)** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN** on **TUESDAY, 4TH SEPTEMBER 2007** at **7:00 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 3rd July 2007.

**A Roberts
388009**

2 Minutes

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive from Members declarations as to personal and/or prejudicial interests and the nature of those interests in relation to any Agenda Item. Please see Notes 1 and 2 below.

2 Minutes

3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 - FORWARD PLAN (Pages 5 - 12)

A copy of the current Forward Plan, which was published on 15th August 2007, is attached. Members are invited to note the Plan and to comment as appropriate on any items contained therein.

**R Reeves
388009**

10 Minutes

4. CULTURAL STRATEGY UPDATE REPORT (Pages 13 - 24)

To consider and comment on the draft Cultural Strategy prior to its submission to the Cabinet.

**C Lloyd
388290
H Thackray
388035**

30 Minutes

5. MARKETS SERVICE

To consider information on the Council's markets service. **(TO FOLLOW)**.

**R Ward
388635**

15 Minutes

6. NHS FOUNDATION TRUST CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

To consider and comment on consultation by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust on proposals by the Trust to become a Foundation Trust and their development of local services. A copy of the consultation document is enclosed with the Agenda.

**A Roberts
388009**

15 Minutes

7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY) - PROGRESS (Pages 25 - 34)

To consider a report by the Head of Administration on the Panel's programme of studies.

**A Roberts
388009**

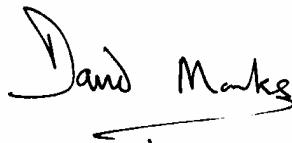
10 Minutes

8. SCRUTINY (Pages 35 - 38)

To scrutinise decisions taken since the last meeting as set out in the Decision Digest and to raise any other matters for scrutiny that fall within the remit of the Panel.

10 Minutes

Dated this 24th day of August 2007



Chief Executive

Notes

1. *A personal interest exists where a decision on a matter would affect to a greater extent than other people in the District –*
 - (a) *the well-being, financial position, employment or business of the Councillor, a partner, relatives or close friends;*
 - (b) *a body employing those persons, any firm in which they are a partner and any company of which they are directors;*
 - (c) *any corporate body in which those persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £5,000; or*
 - (d) *the Councillor's registerable financial and other interests.*
2. *A personal interest becomes a prejudicial interest where a member of the public (who has knowledge of the circumstances) would reasonably regard the Member's personal*

interest as being so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.

Please contact A Roberts, Democratic Services Officer, Tel No 01480 388009/e-mail: Anthony.Roberts@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 Committee/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 base of the flagpole in the car park at the front of Pathfinder House.

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Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY) held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 3rd July 2007.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.

Councillors J D Ablewhite, Mrs M Banerjee, K J Churchill, Cooper, J E Garner, D A Giles, D Harty, Jordan, P G Mitchell, J M Sadler, P K Ursell and J S Watt.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs C A Godley.

13. MINUTES

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

14. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors K J Churchill, S J Criswell and D Harty declared personal interests in Minute No. 16 by virtue of being Members of Cambridgeshire County Council.

15. 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 and which had been prepared by the Leader of the Council for the period 1st July to 31st October 2007

In relation to continuing interest in the subject, Members requested that a copy of the Local Economy Strategy be submitted to the Panel prior to its consideration by the Cabinet. Following discussion on the Animal Welfare Act 2006, the Central Services Manager undertook to circulate a copy of a LACoRs Briefing Note on the Animal Welfare Bill for further background information.

16. STUDIES

(a) Review of Small Scale Environmental Improvements Grant Scheme

Further to Minute No. 07/5a, the Panel considered the final report of the Small Scale Environmental Improvements Scheme Working Group (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). The Panel noted the Working Group's

activities, which had culminated in a series of site visits, where applications for funding had been made for various scales of projects.

The Panel were acquainted with the key findings of the Group in relation to the Council's corporate objectives and community aims, arrangements for involving town and parish councils and the scheme's criteria. In addition, Members were presented with a series of conclusions of the Working Group which it was hoped would help streamline the process as well as limit the Council's contributions to such schemes in view of a limited budget.

Following discussion, the Panel

RESOLVED

- (a) that the total of £15,000 in conclusion 7 of the report now submitted be amended to £22,500;
- (b) that conclusion 12 be amended to read, "that a town or parish council be required to contribute £1 per elector to a maximum contribution of 25% of the total cost of the scheme";
- (c) that, subject to the amendments outlined above, the report of the Working Group be approved for consideration by the Cabinet; and
- (d) that, subject to its consideration of the Working Group's conclusions, the Cabinet is invited to authorise the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Environment and Transport to prepare an amended Small Scale Environmental Improvements Grant Scheme.

(b) Adoption of Roads and Sewers

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) providing background information on a study into the adoption of roads and sewers. Members were advised that the issues of adopting roads and sewers appeared to be a national problem and often arose due to a lack of communication between local authorities and developers. Particular attention was drawn to recent building regulations, which included sewers, setting an industry standard together with the procedure, legal agreements and timescales for the adoption process.

In noting the ongoing problems encountered by Officers and Members when investigating reasons for the potential causes of delay or disruption to the adoption of various roads and sewers, the Panel were keen that a Working Group be established to begin to understand the processes and procedures involved and to improve the speed of the adoption process.

Having agreed to remove historical private roads from the

scope of the study, it was

RESOLVED

that a Working Group be established comprising Councillors J D Ablewhite, D A Giles, Mrs C A Godley and P K Ursell, to undertake a review on the process of adopting estate roads and sewers with an aim to put measures in place that could streamline the process and make the procedures more transparent, initially by an investigation of introducing a District-wide register of un-adopted roads and sewers.

17. STATE OF THE DISTRICT CONFERENCE

(Councillor P J Downes was in attendance for this item).

Further to Minute No. 11(a), consideration was given to a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the feasibility of introducing a State of the District Conference and on the findings of an investigation into how other local authorities engaged with their communities.

In noting that a similar exercise had been undertaken by the Corporate Governance Panel in 2005, the Panel were acquainted with the responses to a consultation with Members on the subject. Generally at the time few Councillors supported a proposal to hold a State of the District Conference; however, support was expressed for improved publicity of the existing Debate.

In discussing a way forward Members acknowledged the difficulty in engaging with the public, particularly on such a wide District level, and as a result the Panel were keen to investigate the use of smaller area consultation groups involving all tiers of local government in the process. To enable the Panel to focus upon the suggestions and a way forward, it was

RESOLVED

that a Working Group be established comprising Councillors K J Churchill, P J Downes and Mrs M Banerjee to discuss the concept of local area forums, together with consideration of potential subject areas, for discussion at a future meeting of the Panel.

18. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY) - PROGRESS

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of actions taken in response to recent discussions and decisions and reviewing the programme of studies.

The Panel were advised that it was hoped that a report on the health implications of the Council's activities would be considered by the Cabinet in September 2007.

With regard to Town Centre cleaning regimes, the Central Services Manager reported that a meeting with the Head of Operations had been requested but due to ongoing work and imminent move of the Operations Division to their new site, progress had been delayed.

It was reported that an update on recycling credits would be submitted to the meeting of the Panel in September.

Having been acquainted with a draft copy of the disability questionnaire to be circulated to Town and Parish Councils, Members made a number of amendments to and suggestions on its content prior to its despatch.

Further to Minute No. 07/16(a) ante, it was suggested that the remit of the Small Scale Environmental Improvement Scheme Working Group be extended to include an investigation of all grant schemes provided by the Council and that the External Funding Officer be invited to its next meeting to discuss the issues in more detail.

In response to a comment by a Member, the Central Services Manager provided an overview of a response received from the Housing Division and the Executive Councillor for Housing and Health on concerns expressed by the Panel at the delays in processing Disabled Facility Grant applications as a result of a backlog of Occupational Therapy assessments.

19. SCRUTINY

The 74th edition of the Decision Digest was received and noted.

Chairman

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

Councillor I C Bates
15th August 2007
1st September to 31st December 2007

Prepared by
Date of Publication:
For Period:

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, Information Technology and Leisure Centres	45 Devoke Close Stukeley Meadows Huntingdon Cams 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 C R Hyams	- Executive Councillor for Operations, Parks and Countryside	22 Bluegate Godmanchester Huntingdon Cams PE29 2EZ E-mail: Colin.Hyams@huntsdc.gov.uk
Councillor A Hansard	- Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy	78 Pottin 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

<p>Councillor T V Rogers</p> <p style="text-align: center;">- Executive Councillor for Finance</p>	<p>Honeysuckle Cottage 34 Meadow Lane Earith Huntingdon PE28 3QE</p> <p>Tel: 01487 840477 E-mail: Terence.Rogers@huntsdc.gov.uk</p>
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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
Kerbside Collection of Glass for Recycling	Cabinet	6 Sep 2007	Minutes of Overview and Scrutiny Panel - 3rd October 2006	Robert Ward, Head of Operations Tel No. 01480 388635 or email - Robert.Ward@huntsdc.gov.uk	None	C Hyams	Service Delivery
Financial Strategy	Cabinet	6 Sep 2007	Previous year's budget report/Various annexes	Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services Tel No. 01480 388103 - email - Steve.Couper@huntsdc.gov.uk	Overview and Scrutiny (CSF) 4th September 2007	T V Rogers	Overview and Scrutiny (CSF)
St. Ivo Outdoor Leisure Centre - Expansion of Facilities and New Synthetic Pitch***	Cabinet	4 Oct 2007	MTP 446 and Football Foundation Bid	Simon Bell Leisure Centres Co-ordinator - Tel No. 01480 388049 or email - Simon.Bell@huntsdc.gov.uk	None.	L M Simpson	Service Delivery

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
Decent Homes for Vulnerable People in the Private Sector	Cabinet	4 Oct 2007	http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres.57940FOE-C100-4761-9A2A-A900591D1934/0/finalhousingstrategy.pdf - A Decent Home Definition and Guidance for Implementation, 7 June 2006, CLG, http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1152190 - The Decent Homes Target Implementation Plan, June 2003, CLG, http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1152202	Steve Plant, Head of Housing Services Tel No. 01480 388242 - email - Steve.Plant@huntsdc.gov.uk		Mrs D C Reynolds	Service Delivery and Resources
Caxton Road Depot, St. Ives - development of new industrial/commercial units	Cabinet	4 Oct 2007	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
To adopt Kimbolton Conservation Management Plan	Cabinet	4 Oct 2007	Conservation Area Designated Plan	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 Offord Cluny Conservation Management Plan	Cabinet	4 Oct 2007	Conservation Area Designated Plan	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
Flood Alerts - Text Message Flood Working System	Cabinet	4 Oct 2007	Civic Contingencies Act	Sonia Hansen, Development and Community Manager Tel No. (01480) 388630 - email - Sonia.Hansen@huntsdc.gov.uk	None	C Hyams	Service Delivery
Land South of High Street, Ramsey- Urban Design Framework (draft)	Cabinet	4 Oct 2007	Ramsey Conservation Character Statement	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 - email - Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Consultation on draft will take place after approval by Cabinet on draft documents.	P L E Bucknell	Service Support
Local Economy Strategy	Cabinet	18 Oct 2007	Existing LES	Ian Leatherbarrow, Head of Policy and Strategic Services Tel No. 01480 388005 - email - Ian.L Leatherbarrow@huntsdc.gov.uk	Business Community Stakeholders via Hunts Strategic Partnership.	A Hansard	Service Delivery
Culture Strategy	Cabinet	4 Oct 2007	None	Susan Lammin, Head of Environmental Health Services Tel No. 01480 388280 or email - Sue.Lammin@huntsdc.gov.uk		L M Simpson Mrs D Reynolds	Service Delivery
Sustainable Community Strategy (Draft)	Cabinet	4 Oct 2007	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
Potential Implications under the Animal Welfare Act 2006	Cabinet	4 Oct 2007	None.	John Allan, Public Health Manager Tel No. 01480 388281 - email - John.Allan@huntsdc.gov.uk		Mrs D C Reynolds	Service Delivery

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 Car Parking Strategy	Cabinet	18 Oct 2007	Consultants report on car parking review	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 - email - Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Consultation process to be agreed after considering Car Park Working Party's recommendations.	P L E Bucknell	Service Support
To adopt St. Ives Conservation Area Boundary Changes and Character Statement	Cabinet	18 Oct 2007	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
Communications and Marketing Strategy	Cabinet	18 Oct 2007	Existing communications and engagement strategy	Ian Leatherbarrow, Head of Policy and Strategic Services Tel No. 01480 388005 - email - Ian.L Leatherbarrow@huntsdc.gov.uk		A Hansard	Service Support
Consultation and Engagement Strategy	Cabinet	18 Oct 2007	Existing communications consultation strategy	Ian Leatherbarrow, Head of Policy and Strategic Services Tel: 01480 388005 - email - Ian.L Leatherbarrow@huntsdc.gov.uk		A Hansard	Service Delivery
Core Strategy Preferred Options	Cabinet	8 Nov 2007	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
Development Control Policies Preferred Options	Cabinet	8 Nov 2007	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
Draft Planning Contributions Supplementary Planning Document	Cabinet	8 Nov 2007	Huntingdonshire Local Plan Alteration	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
Asset Management Plan***	Cabinet	22 Nov 2007	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
To adopt Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document****	Cabinet	22 Nov 2007	Draft Consultation Document	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or email: Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve changes for adopting, having followed consultation with the public and statutory bodies.	P L E Bucknell	Service Support
Revised Customer Service Strategy***	Cabinet	22 Nov 2007	Customer Service Strategy (as approved by Cabinet 26/06/03)	John Taylor, Senior Business Analyst Tel No. 01480 388119 - email - John.Taylor@huntsdc.gov.uk		L M Simpson	Service Support
Draft MTP	Cabinet	22 Nov 2007	Financial Strategy Previous Years Budget Report Various Annexes	Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services Tel No. 01480 388103 or email - Steve.Couper@huntsdc.gov.uk	Overview & Scrutiny (CSF)	T V Rogers	Corporate Strategic Framework
Huntingdon West Area Action Plan Preferred Options	Cabinet	22 Nov 2007	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
To adopt Huntingdon Conservation Area Boundary Changes and Character Statement****	Cabinet	13 Dec 2007	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

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CULTURAL STRATEGY UPDATE REPORT

(Report by Lifestyle Manager)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The development and implementation of a Cultural Strategy is a key objective of the Huntingdonshire Local Strategic Partnership (Culture and Leisure Thematic Group) and the Huntingdonshire Children and Young Peoples Plan 2006-7

2. PROGRESS

- 2.1 In October 2006 an internal steering group was established incorporating services and activities such as leisure and leisure development, arts and heritage, play, parks, open spaces, and countryside services to oversee the development of the cultural strategy.
- 2.2 The strategy explores the policy context driving forward culture in the district, examines existing provision as well as identifying a clear action plan for the coming three years to meet identified cultural themes. It is intended to help those engaged in cultural delivery or planning to place their activity in context, and help them justify funding and provide the basis for their own partnership agreements.
- 2.3 The first draft of the cultural strategy was sent out on the 1st May 2007 for consultation to members of the Culture and Leisure Thematic group and wider stakeholders at both local and county level and tied in with the current process of reviewing Huntingdonshire's Community Strategy in order to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy. Members were asked to identify the Culture and Leisure Issues, needs and aspirations that affect Huntingdonshire.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Following the initial consultation the draft Cultural strategy has been amended. However, before finalising the strategy it will need to incorporate any relevant Cultural priorities identified during the review of the Community Strategy. It is anticipated that this process will be concluded in September where by the Culture Strategy will be ready to go to Cabinet for adoption.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Overview and Scrutiny Panel is asked to note the contents of this report and to recommend that the completed cultural strategy is presented to Cabinet for adoption on 27th September 2007.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Contact Officer: Chris Lloyd. ☎ 01480 388290
Howard Thackeray ☎ 01480 388035

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Cultural Strategy

for Huntingdonshire

(2007 – 2010)



Executive Summary

1. INTRODUCTION

Culture has a fundamental role to play in community life by providing opportunities to improve standards of health, well-being and quality of life. It can also contribute to, and develop, economically vibrant communities, with positive benefits for local and regional tourism, increased investment in culture-led growth and regeneration, and positive impacts on housing and employment opportunities, reinforcing the notion of sustainable communities. Acknowledging the importance of culture, the Council will work towards meeting the following vision statement:

To enhance the quality of life and ensure that all of Huntingdonshire's residents have the opportunity to pursue a wide range of high-quality, sustainable cultural activities that fully reflect the diverse needs of the district

What is Culture?

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport defines 'culture' as having the following key characteristics:

"Culture has both a material and a value dimension and includes a wide range of activities including arts, media, sports, parks, museums, libraries, the built heritage, the countryside, and playgrounds."

With this definition in mind, the scope of this Strategy includes:

- Arts - The performing and visual arts, crafts, design and fashion
- Built heritage - The built heritage, architecture landscape and archaeology
- Leisure – Formal and informal leisure pursuits
- Libraries - Libraries, literature, writing and publishing
- Museums - Museums, artefacts and archives
- Open space - Parks, open spaces, wildlife habitats, water environments and countryside recreation
- Play - Children's play, playgrounds and play activities
- Sports - Events, facilities and development



2. LOCAL CONTEXT

District Profile

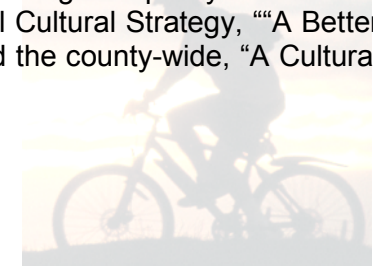
Huntingdonshire is predominantly a rural district, covering an area of approximately 350 square miles, and has a population of 162,000 (Mid-2005 population estimate, ONS). Approximately half of the district's residents live in four market towns - Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey, with the remaining residents distributed within key settlements and rural villages.

Given the rural nature of much of the district, isolation is seen as a major issue. Indeed, rural areas often lack an adequate range of services and facilities in their immediate localities. Therefore, this strategy looks at addressing the negative effects of isolation ensuring that all residents, irrespective of their location, can access culture and cultural services.

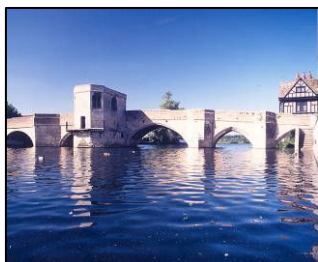
The majority of housing and economic growth has been, and will continue to be, located within the district's largest towns of Huntingdon and St Neots. Lesser scale development is planned in other market towns such as St Ives and Ramsey. In rural areas new development will be limited and will be restricted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

Policy Context

The development of a Cultural Strategy is of high priority to the district as it is identified as a key objective of the Huntingdonshire Local Strategic Partnership and also within the Huntingdonshire Children and Young People's Plan. Therefore, it is important that this Cultural Strategy has strong links to the Council's emerging Sustainable Community Strategy. Aside from the importance at the district level, key national and regional policy also has an impact upon culture within Huntingdonshire, examples being Living East's Regional Cultural Strategy, "A Better Life: the role of culture in the sustainable development of the East of England", and the county-wide, "A Cultural Strategy for Children and Young People in Cambridgeshire".



3. AUDITS OF PROVISION



Existing cultural offer in Huntingdonshire

A detailed audit of existing provision has been completed for all areas of culture – please refer to the Cultural Strategy for a full breakdown of provision levels. In summary:

- Arts Services deliver a range of activities and events including ‘Art Attack’, ‘Hinchingsbrooke Spring Music’, ‘Riverside Music’, ‘Huntingdonshire Arts Diary’, and the ‘Arts and Health Referral Scheme’. The Council also works in partnership with other organisations such as ‘Vital Communities’, and ‘Arts in Cambs on Tour’.
- With regard to the Built Heritage, the District has 58 Grade I listed buildings, 133 Grade II listed buildings and 2032 Grade III listed buildings. There are a further 60 conservation areas in Huntingdonshire.
- There are eight libraries in the district and 1 library access point.
- Museums in the district include the Ramsey Rural Museum, the Norris Museum (St Ives), St Neots Museum, Blacked-Out Britain War Museum (Huntingdon) and the Cromwell Museum (Huntingdon).
- The District Council has five Leisure Centres located in St Ives, Huntingdon, St Neots, Ramsey and Sawtry. There are also seven privately owned health and fitness centres, whilst a further 85 community facilities are owned or maintained by Parish / Town Councils. Schools and colleges also have indoor leisure provision, and an increasing number are now available outside of school hours due to the extended schools programme.
- An open space audit conducted by PMP Consultants identified that the district has 240 playing pitches. This figure is dominated by football pitches including 88 adult pitches, 54 junior pitches and 14 mini-soccer pitches. Other provision exists including rugby pitches, cricket pitches, tennis courts and golf courses.
- Water sport and recreation activities are popular at locations such as Grafham Water and the River Ouse.
- Huntingdonshire District Council’s Leisure Development focus on delivering four key areas of work: *Prevention programmes* (e.g. Youth Sports Development and the Community Sports & Recreation Project), *Intervention Programmes* (e.g. Exercise Referral scheme, health walks, etc), *Sporting Infrastructure* (targeting clubs, coaches, volunteers and officials) and *Raising the profile of sport*
- The Countryside Services manage 12 sites which are open to the public 24 hours a day. The service also maintains and promotes the 26 mile Ouse Valley Way and a nursery project in Godmanchester. There are also numerous parks and open spaces located across the District, and furthermore, there are 117 sites that have formal equipped play provision for children and young people.

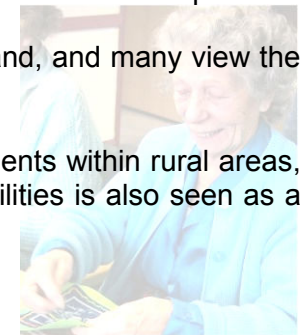
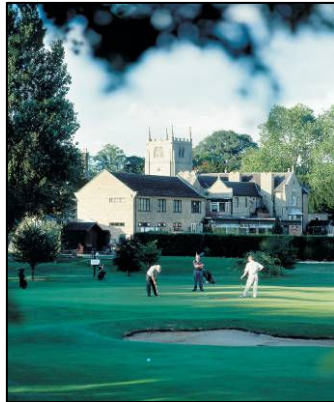
4. IDENTIFYING CULTURAL NEEDS

Consultation

Undertaking robust consultation is vitally important to ensure that this Cultural Strategy, and its associated action plan, properly meets the needs of the district. Through consultation it is possible to identify attitudes to existing cultural services, identify aspirations for culture, identify barriers to accessing provision, and consultation can help to inform the development of the culture action plan.

A range of consultation exercises have been undertaken by the Council in the past two years including specific service-related consultation, and more general consultation undertaken as part of wider studies. Examples of key consultation include the Cambridgeshire Joint Consultation Partnership, “*Cambridgeshire Quality of Life Survey*”, PMP “*Open Space Needs Assessment*” and Huntingdonshire District Council “*Annual Report*”. The main findings of the consultation are as follows:

- Whilst the general quality of open spaces is seen to be acceptable, in some cases it is limited by anti-social behaviour, litter and vandalism.
- “Natural and semi-natural greenspace” and “parks and gardens” are viewed as the highest quality open spaces within the district.
- Teenage play provision is deemed to be insufficient, whilst existing open spaces could be improved by increasing the play value of existing play facilities.
- Leisure centres are deemed to be accessible facilities within the district, although there is scope for improvements in accessibility to theatres and cinemas, and other cultural facilities
- Residents within Huntingdonshire are less satisfied with the availability of cultural facilities when compared to residents of neighbouring authorities.
- Sports clubs within the district feel that there is sufficient pitch provision to meet demand, and many view the quality of provision as good.
- There are insufficient training areas for sports clubs, with few accessible floodlit areas.
- Transport is seen as a major barrier to accessing cultural facilities, particularly for residents within rural areas, where provision is generally much poorer compared to urban areas. Cost of using facilities is also seen as a barrier to some – particularly children and young people.



5. IDENTIFYING THE PRIORITIES FOR CULTURE

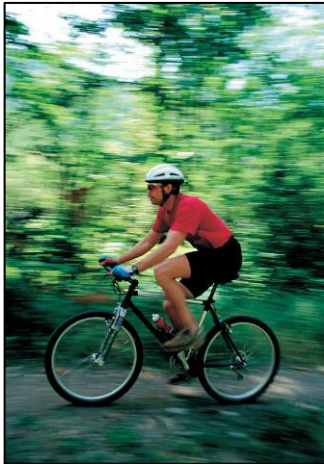
Long-term principles

In support of the broad vision statement outlined in the introduction, Huntingdonshire District Council has developed a set of long-term cultural principles that it will aspire to achieve. These are as follows:

1. Huntingdonshire will be a centre for cultural excellence, with a clear distinct identity where people choose to live, work and visit.
2. Culture will help to improve quality of life by significantly impacting upon all areas of local community life through a range of opportunities resulting in improved health and well-being.
3. Implementing this Cultural Strategy will make a real and positive difference to community life and community cohesion by specifically targeting resources at meeting needs in priority neighbourhoods and communities.
4. The development of a Cultural Strategy for Huntingdonshire will help to positively contribute to Council policies and priorities including education, health, equality and community needs.
5. All key cultural partners will ensure that 'culture' is sustainable by embedding it into all relevant strategies and plans, both at the local and regional level.
6. Huntingdonshire's cultural diversity, its local character and its diverse natural and built environment will be celebrated and enhanced.
7. All residents will have the opportunity to access and participate in a wide range of high quality cultural activities, and this will be reflected in increased participation levels.
8. Barriers will be removed so that all children and young people can access a range of safe inclusive play and recreational opportunities.
9. Enhanced cultural activity will support and encourage community programmes and the personal, social, environmental, economic and physical development of all residents within the district.
10. All key cultural partners will work towards understanding the changing cultural needs of the district, by improving methods of engagement and consultation including isolated and under-represented groups.
11. Using tools including the "Open Space, Sport, and Recreation Needs Assessment and Audit", a co-ordinated approach across culture will be adopted when considering future provision of open space, recreation and cultural activities, in relation to section 106 monies.
12. All key cultural partners will work towards maximising potential external funding opportunities to support cultural activities and events.
13. All key cultural partners will work towards raising the profile of culture within the district, actively seeking out new ways of highlighting and promoting cultural opportunities within the district.

In order to deliver against the identified vision and thirteen long-term principles, the Council has developed three key themes to act as a basis for developing a three year action plan. These three themes address priority areas identified within the consultation and wider corporate objectives, and are as follows:

- 1. Improve access to culture and leisure opportunities**
- 2. Develop and improve life-long learning**
- 3. Develop vibrant communities which are safer, healthier, cohesive and economically sustainable**



6. ACTION PLAN: 2007 – 2010



At the core of Huntingdonshire's Cultural Strategy is an action plan which is underpinned by the three key themes listed previously. For each of the themes, a set of objectives have been produced as demonstrated below. (*Note:* Many of these objectives are supported by a list of actions which can be monitored throughout the life-span of the Strategy. These actions relate to specific service areas of the Council and / or to key cultural partners. To view the key actions please refer to the Cultural Strategy document)

THEME 1: *Improve access to culture and leisure opportunities*

Identified objectives

- Make effective use of section 106 monies to positively contribute to cultural opportunities within the District
- Make accessible leisure opportunities for all
- Enhance the standard of service provided at Leisure Centres and by Leisure Development
- Make sport and active recreation opportunities accessible for disabled people; and for over 50's
- Provide under-represented groups with the opportunity to participate in sport and active recreation
- Promote healthy lifestyles by enabling vulnerable people through ill health / rehabilitation to lead active lives via improved participation in physical leisure activities
- Increase opportunities to pursue a healthy lifestyle by encouraging walking
- Raise awareness of sports clubs available in the District
- Raise the profile of sport and culture linked to the 2012 Olympics
- Raise the profile and awareness of water-based sporting and recreation opportunities
- Promote, maintain and improve access to Ouse Valley Way
- Promote and enhance the Public Rights of Way Network (PROW network)
- Provide countryside sites that are accessible to all
- Raise awareness of the District's greenspace including both countryside sites and parks and open spaces
- Raise the standards of all District Council maintained parks and open spaces
- Develop existing & new opportunities for arts activities and events
- Improve access to opportunities for cultural enrichment that promote good health & mental well-being
- Increase the number of cultural & leisure opportunities for young people
- Develop and improve the Arts Venue Database
- Improve the understanding of and access to the countryside & the heritage of the landscape



6. ACTION PLAN: 2007 – 2010

THEME 2: *Develop and improve life-long learning*

Identified Objectives

- Develop further opportunities for local people to improve or gain work related skills
- Provide volunteer activities for all at countryside sites
- Provide open space events and activities for all
- Develop learning opportunities through cultural activity
- Develop understanding of local heritage
- Promote all libraries and library access points

THEME 3: *Develop vibrant communities which are safer, healthier, cohesive and economically sustainable*

Identified Objectives

- Ensure that there is clear linkage between this Strategy and the new Sustainable Community Strategy
- Ensure that key actions are helping to deliver vibrant communities
- Enable residents to take an active part in their communities
- Ensure high-quality built-environment
- Develop Godmanchester Nursery Project
- Develop community involvement in greenspaces & biodiversity projects
- Increase the Biodiversity value throughout the District
- Enhance provision of Facilities for Healthy and Active Lifestyles
- Seek to encourage greater community involvement in the districts parks and open spaces
- Support communities in protecting & valuing open spaces & historic sites & buildings
- Develop further opportunities for local people to improve or gain work related skills
- Support the development of play and recreation facilities in identified communities
- Adopt Neighbourhood Management Approach within three identified priority areas of Oxmoor, Eynesbury and Ramsey
- Apply to Big Lottery through the 'Children's Play Programme



7. MONITORING AND EVALUATING THE STRATEGY

Review Mechanisms



This Cultural Strategy acknowledges that risk management is important in ensuring the delivery of objectives and key actions outlined in the Action Plan. To help identify the potential for risk, key organisations and partners responsible for delivering each action have been identified. Furthermore, to enable actions to be monitored, timescales and performance measures / indicators have been established to enable the District Council to assess progress.



This Cultural Strategy is intended to act as starting point to address issues in the long-term – working towards achieving the thirteen long-term cultural principles. Therefore, this strategy will be reviewed in due course so that a new strategy will immediately follow on at the end of this initial three-year period.

The development and implementation of this Cultural Strategy is a key objective of the Huntingdonshire Local Strategic Partnership (Culture and Leisure Thematic Group). Therefore, it follows that the three-year action plan will be monitored and reviewed by the Culture and Leisure Thematic Group. With regard to the specific actions and objectives identified within the action plan, progress will be tracked and monitored by individual service plans, which are refreshed on an annual basis. If appropriate, reference will also be made to relevant performance indicators from the Local Area Agreement.



Within the three-year action plan, Huntingdonshire District Council also commits to investigating and reviewing appropriate evaluation tools and where appropriate, will build them into the Cultural Strategy review process.

This Strategy has been produced by Huntingdonshire District Council working in partnership with environmental consultants, Jones Plus Limited



jones plus limited⁺

Consultant: Alex Jones
e-mail: jonesplusltd@yahoo.co.uk



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Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
<p data-bbox="163 475 264 502">4/07/06</p>	<p data-bbox="318 373 857 437"><u>The Health Implications of the Council's Activities.</u></p> <p data-bbox="318 475 857 707">Final report of the Working Group considered. Recommendations endorsed for submission to the Cabinet. Reports requested on the Cabinet's decision and progress with the implementation of measures contained in the report.</p>	<p data-bbox="884 475 1196 539">Further meeting to be arranged.</p> <p data-bbox="884 611 1196 675">Further reports to be submitted.</p> <p data-bbox="884 778 1196 842">Meeting held on 8th November 2006.</p> <p data-bbox="884 946 1196 1042">Further meeting scheduled for 27th November 2006.</p>	<p data-bbox="1227 475 1397 502">Meeting held.</p> <p data-bbox="1227 611 1816 738">The Cabinet noted the report and asked for further information on the operational and financial implications of the recommendations before coming to a decision.</p> <p data-bbox="1227 778 1816 906">Costing of the proposals in relation to the leisure centres requested. Further meeting arranged to discuss the next report with appropriate Heads of Service.</p> <p data-bbox="1227 946 1816 1114">Report to be submitted to the Cabinet to include appendices by the Heads of Administration and of Environmental and Community Health Services on the financial implications of the Panel's recommendations.</p> <p data-bbox="1227 1153 1816 1281">Submission of report postponed by Chief Officers Management Team to enable further work to be undertaken. Report now completed for submission to the Cabinet.</p>	
<p data-bbox="163 810 264 837">3/10/06</p>	<p data-bbox="318 810 857 906">Working Group requested to meet to discuss the submission of further information to the Cabinet.</p>			

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
<p>1/11/05</p> <p>3/10/06</p> <p>3/07/07</p>	<p><u>Town Centre Cleaning Regimes</u></p> <p>Cleaning regimes in town centres added to the programme of studies.</p> <p>Presentation by Head of Operations. Working group formed to look at Sunday cleaning and enforcement.</p> <p>Update received from Head of Operations.</p>	<p>Scoping report requested.</p> <p>Meeting of Working group held on 13th November 2006. Further meeting to be held to consider a possible pilot of new cleaning arrangements in St Ives.</p> <p>Report requested from the Head of Operations.</p> <p>Further meeting of Working Group to be arranged.</p>		

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
7/03/06	<p><u>Recycling Credits – Payments to Other Organisations</u></p> <p>Recommendations made on the content of a future report to the Cabinet. Sight of the report requested prior to its submission to the Cabinet.</p>	Report requested.	Report to be submitted to a future meeting.	2/10/07
<p>6/06/06</p> <p>4/07/06</p>	<p><u>Traffic Enforcement</u></p> <p>Traffic enforcement via Town and Parish Councils added to the programme of studies.</p> <p>Presentation from the Head of Technical Services received. Further report requested on the progress of the decriminalisation of parking enforcement.</p>	Report to be submitted to the Panel.		

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
<p>7/11/06</p> <p>5/12/06</p> <p>6/02/07</p>	<p><u>Disability Access.</u></p> <p>Preliminary report considered. Further information requested on the Council's existing policies in relation to disability equality and access and on research carried out in this area.</p> <p>Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan endorsed.</p> <p>Further research to be undertaken within Members' wards and officers of the County Council and of the Police requested to attend future meetings to discuss the study.</p> <p>Panel met with representatives of Speaking Up and G Morris. A number of matters were identified for further consideration. – improved enforcement of disabled parking bays, extending bus pass hours for disabled users, Council paperwork, advertising of disabled facilities at leisure centres and advocacy services at Council offices.</p>	<p>Further reports submitted.</p> <p>Representatives of the County Council and of the Police invited to future meetings.</p>	<p>Consultant and representative of Speaking Up invited to attend to discuss the study.</p> <p>Representatives of the County Council to attend future meeting.</p>	

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
5/06/07	<p><u>Disability Access (Contd.)</u></p> <p>Meeting attended by County Council's Access Officer. A number of avenues identified for further investigation. Cabinet to be requested to consider providing high dependency toilets.</p>	<p>Report to be submitted to a future meeting on study focus.</p> <p>Report submitted to the Cabinet on high dependency toilets on 28/06/07.</p> <p>Survey sent to Town and Parish Councils and District Councillors. Returns being received.</p>	<p>The Cabinet decided to approach Papworth Trust for their advice on the need for high dependency facilities for people whose disabilities are so severe as to prevent them from using conventional toilets designed for the disabled and in particular on the possibility of extending the availability of facilities at Saxongate, Huntingdon for such use.</p>	
5/12/06 6/03/07	<p><u>Home Energy Efficiency</u></p> <p>Study to be undertaken into the promotion of services provided for improved home energy efficiency.</p> <p>Presentation by Environment team Leader and Home Energy Efficiency Officer. Agreed to discuss the remit of the study following consideration of the Environment Strategy at the next meeting.</p>			

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
3/4/07	<p><u>Home Energy Efficiency (cont'd)</u></p> <p>Recommendations made on the draft Strategy.</p> <p>Requested that:</p> <p>a) a methodology to assess the environmental benefit of projects against their cost is developed, and</p> <p>b) the final Strategy document, including costings, is submitted to the Panel prior to its publication.</p>			
5/12/06	<p><u>Adoption of Roads and Sewers</u></p> <p>Study to be undertaken into the processes and procedures involved with the adoption of roads and sewers.</p>	Information requested.	<p>Scoping report to be submitted to a future meeting.</p> <p>Representative of the Anglian Water to be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss the study.</p>	
5/06/07	Report deferred to next meeting.			

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
3/07/07	<p><u>Adoption of Roads and Sewers (Contd)</u></p> <p>Working Group established comprising Councillors J D Ablewhite, D A Giles, Mrs C A Godley and P K Ursell, to undertake a review on the process of adopting estate roads and sewers with an aim to put measures in place that will streamline the process and make the procedures more transparent, initially by an investigation of introducing a District-wide register of un-adopted roads and sewers</p>	Meeting to be arranged.		
5/12/06	<p><u>Grant Aid</u></p> <p>Study to be undertaken into the processes in applying for grant aid and the effectiveness of grant schemes.</p> <p>Details of all grant schemes requested.</p> <p>Review of Small Scale Environmental Improvement schemes to be undertaken.</p>	Information requested.		

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
3/4/07	<p><u>Grant Aid (Contd)</u></p> <p>Details of all grant schemes considered. With the exception of Shopmobility, the Working Group undertaking the review of the Small Scale Environmental Improvements scheme was requested to examine the schemes' criteria, publicity, application process, officer involvement and approval process.</p>			
2/01/07	<p><u>Small Scale Environmental Improvement schemes</u></p> <p>Working Group established comprising Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, R W J Eaton, D A Giles and P G Mitchell to consider various matters and to report back to a future meeting with a view to introducing a revised scheme in 2008/09.</p>	Meeting arranged.		
6/02/07	<p>Councillor J S Watt confirmed as co-optee to the Working Group.</p>	Meeting of Working Group held on 13/02/07. Site visits undertaken.		

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
3/07/07	<u>Small Scale Environmental Improvement schemes (Contd)</u> Working group report endorsed for submission to the Cabinet.		The Cabinet approved the implementation of a revised scheme as recommended.	
5/12/06	<u>Markets Service</u> Further information requested on uptake of market pitches, the promotion and operation of the markets and identification of best practice.	Information requested.	Information to be submitted to a future meeting. See item elsewhere on the Agenda.	4/09/07
5/06/07	<u>Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership</u> Study to be undertaken on the role and achievements of the Strategic Partnership.		Report to be submitted to a future meeting.	4/10/07
5/06/07	<u>Youth Forum</u> Working Group established comprising Councillors E R Butler, Mrs K E Cooper, P J Downes, Mrs P A Jordan and J S Watt to investigate the proposal in detail	First meeting held on 30/08/09		

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
3/07/07	<p><u>State of the District Conference</u></p> <p>Working Group established comprising Councillors K J Churchill, P J Downes and Mrs M Banerjee to discuss the concept of local area forums, together with potential subject areas, for discussion at a future meeting of the Panel</p>			

HDC Decision Digest

Edition 75

Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 30th June and 24th August 2007

MEDIUM TERM PLAN

The Cabinet has agreed to release funding from the Medium Term Plan for a scheme to extend the Impressions Fitness Suite at Huntingdon Leisure Centre. The scheme involves the creation of new areas including a soft play area, team zone, spa facilities and a vibration training room, which will be of particular benefit to the elderly and disabled.

FINANCIAL MONITORING

The Cabinet has noted the outturn of revenue and capital expenditure in 2006 – 2007 along with variations between the original and revised budget provision for that year.

In discussing the Budget and Medium Term Plan review process and having noted that the Council has been successful in preventing the need to use its reserves to fund revenue spending, Executive Councillors have expressed their thanks to staff for their efforts in achieving the budgetary outcomes.

CHOICE-BASED LETTINGS POLICY

A lettings policy for Huntingdonshire has been approved by the Cabinet. The policy has been developed as part of a wider Sub-Regional Choice-Based Lettings Scheme for Cambridgeshire. It sets out how properties will be allocated using bands rather than the previous points system. These will

reflect the length of time applicants have been registered within a band and will respond better to the needs of vulnerable people. The new policy will take effect when the Choice-Based Lettings Scheme “goes live” which is likely to be February 2008 at the earliest. A report on the progress of the scheme will be submitted to Cabinet 12 months after its implementation.

HOUSING RENEWAL ASSISTANCE POLICY

Three amendments to the Council's Housing Renewal Assistance Policy relating to exempt disposal where the repayment of loans are not required, disabled facilities “top-up” assistance and the determination of a loan or grant for repairs assistance have been approved by the Cabinet. Having expressed some apprehension about the potential for anomalies, particularly where grants in excess of £25,000 are made for adaptations to a home of a family member or relative who is not the disabled person, the Cabinet has requested that this be raised with the Members of Parliament for the Huntingdon and North-West Cambridgeshire Constituencies.

OPEN SPACE, SPORT AND RECREATIONAL NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND AUDIT

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the key findings of the Open Space, Sport and Recreational Needs

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

Assessment which reviewed the District's informal open space, outdoor recreational facilities, allotments and children's play areas. At the same time, the Cabinet has approved a series of new standards for each area as interim policy for use when negotiating contributions from developers towards open space or when considering the future provision of open space funded from other sources.

PLANNING FOR GYPSY AND TRAVELLER ACCOMMODATION

A consultation paper issued by the East of England Assembly entitled "Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation East of England: Issues and Options" has been considered by the Cabinet.

Having requested that clarification be sought over the reference in the document to the extension of the current site in St. Neots, the Cabinet has authorised the Heads of Planning Services and of Housing Services to respond to the paper on their behalf.

The Overview and Scrutiny (Service Support) Panel raised concerns over the number of areas where planning issues had arisen and at the practice of those authorities who have chosen to locate sites close to Huntingdonshire boundaries. Cabinet were therefore asked to consider these concerns and recommended that liaison should take place with neighbouring authorities to avoid sites being established near district boundaries.

REVIEW OF SMALL SCALE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS GRANT SCHEME

Subject to some minor amendments, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has approved the

final report of the Small Scale Environmental Improvements Scheme Working Group. The Panel have noted the Working Groups' activities, which culminated in a series of site visits, where applications for funding have been made for various scales of projects. The Panel also has been acquainted with the Groups' key findings in relation to the Council's Corporate Objectives and Community Aims, arrangements for involving town and parish councils and the scheme's criteria.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Services Delivery) has drawn the Cabinet's attention to the findings of the study and having discussed their recommendations, the Cabinet has authorised the Director of Operational Services, after consultation with the Group and the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy, Environment and Transport to prepare an amended scheme.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE PLAY STRATEGY

The contents of a Play Strategy and associated action plan have been approved by the Cabinet prior to their submission to the National Lottery Board for funding to create, improve and develop children and young people's play spaces locally. The strategy includes a proposal to establish a play partnership with representatives from both the statutory and voluntary sectors.

APPLICATIONS FOR DISPENSATIONS

Details of applications received for dispensations to allow Members of Colne, Ellington, Great Gransden, Huntingdon, St Neots and Upwood &

The Raveleys Town and Parish Councils to discuss and vote on matters relating to particular circumstances in their parishes have been considered by the Standards Committee.

With one exception where details relating to Huntingdon Town Council were not sufficiently clear – dispensations were granted in all cases for the period ending 30th April 2011. The Committee reiterated their unease at granting dispensations in situations where all Members of a Town/Parish Council served as trustees to a community facility so, to overcome conflicts of interest, the Monitoring Officer has suggested to the Parishes involved that they might wish to explore ways of changing their trustee arrangements to encourage people other than Councillors to become trustees.

TRAINING ISSUES

The Standards Committee have endorsed the approach to be taken by the Monitoring Officer towards the training of District, Town and Parish Councillors on the new Code of Conduct. At the request of the Committee, the Monitoring Officer will seek to establish, after 1st October 2007, that all Town and Parish Councils in Huntingdonshire have adopted the new Model Code of Conduct.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

At the July and August meetings, the Development Control Panel has approved sixteen and refused five applications. Amongst those applications approved was one for the construction of a car park on the site of the Depot at Bridge Place, Godmanchester. In response to representations from the local Town and County Councillors, the Panel has

acknowledged the importance of the creation of a 'toucan' crossing opposite the car park and requested County Councillors to lobby the Area Joint Committee for completion of this scheme in conjunction with the development of the car park.

DEVELOPMENT CONTROL: PROGRESS REPORT

As part of their regular monitoring of the activities of the Development Control Team in the Planning Division, the Development Control Panel has noted that over the quarter 1st April to 30th June 2007, 576 applications had been received, an increase of 32 over the same period last year. Of these, 448 had been determined indicating a slight backlog of cases. However, national performance targets for the determination of major, minor and other applications continue to be met.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 – FORWARD PLAN

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has requested sight of the Local Economy Strategy before it is submitted to the Cabinet.

REVIEW OF SMALL SCALE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS GRANT SCHEME

ADOPTION OF ROADS AND SEWERS

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has considered background information on a study in to the adoption of roads and sewers. This appears to be a national problem and often arises from a lack of communication between local authorities and developers. Particular attention has been given to recent building regulations, which include

sewers, setting an industry standard together with the procedure, legal agreements and timescales for the adoption process.

Having noted ongoing problems encountered by Officers and Members when investigating reasons for the potential causes of delay or disruption to the adoption of various roads and sewers, the Panel has established a working group comprising Councillors J D Ablewhite, D A Giles, Mrs C A Godley and P K Ursell, to undertake a review on the process with the aim of putting measures in place that will streamline the process and make the procedures more transparent, initially by investigating the introduction of a district-wide register of unadopted roads and sewers.

investigate the use of smaller area consultation groups involving all tiers of local government in the process.

A working group has been established comprising Councillors K J Churchill, P J Downes and Mrs M Banerjee to discuss the concept of local area forums, together with potential subject areas, for discussion at a future meeting of the Panel.

STATE OF THE DISTRICT CONFERENCE

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has looked at the feasibility of introducing a State of the District conference by reviewing the findings of an investigation into how other local authorities engage with their communities.

The Panel has noted that a similar exercise was undertaken by the Corporate Governance Panel in 2005 and the responses to a consultation with Members on the subject at that time. Generally few councillors supported a proposal to hold a State of the District conference; however, the view has been expressed that the existing debate would benefit from improved publicity.

Members have acknowledged the difficulty in engaging the public, particularly on a district-wide level and, as a result, the Panel is keen to