

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, 14 OCTOBER 2008** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

PLEASE NOTE START TIME

**Contact
(01480)**

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 9th September 2008.

**Mrs C Bulman
388234**

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 - 12)

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.

**Mrs C Bulman
388234**

4. PETITION

To consider an on-line petition containing 10 signatures which calls upon the District Council to:-

Control commuter parking in the Longsands area of St Neots and place a restriction on parking from 5.30am until 8.30pm.

The petition was live from 31/07/08 until 24/09/08.

5. IMPROVING LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY CONSULTATION: CHANGES TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY POWERS (Pages 13 - 20)

To consider a report by the Head of Administration seeking the Panel's views on the changes proposed for Overview and Scrutiny powers.

**R Reeves
388003**

6. LOCAL PROCUREMENT REVIEW (Pages 21 - 24)

To consider a report by the Head of Administration on the outcome of a meeting held between the District Council and representatives of the local business community.

**Mrs C Bulman
388234**

7. WORKPLAN STUDIES (Pages 25 - 30)

To consider, with the aid of a report by the Head of Administration, the programme of studies.

**Mrs C Bulman
388234**

8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE SUPPORT)
(Pages 31 - 38)

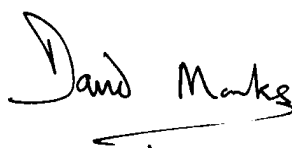
To consider a report by the Head of Administration on decisions taken by the Panel.

**Mrs C Bulman
388234**

9. SCRUTINY (Pages 39 - 48)

To scrutinise decisions made since the last meeting. A copy of the relevant Decision Digest is attached.

Dated this 3 day of October 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 Mrs Claire Bulman, Democratic Services Officer, Tel No 01480 388234/e-mail: Claire.Bulman@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, 9 September 2008.

PRESENT: Councillor J A Gray – Chairman.

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

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor K M Baker.

28. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 8th July 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

29. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors J W Davies and Ms S L Kemp declared personal interests in Minute No. 31 as patrons of licensed premises in the District.

30. 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 Chairman reminded Members that following discussion with the Chairman of the Service Delivery Scrutiny Panel, a realignment of portfolios between the two Overview and Scrutiny Panels had been agreed to reflect revised Cabinet responsibilities.

Members noted that arrangements had been made for reports listed in the Forward Plan to be submitted to future meetings as follows:-

- ◆ Parish Plans and Local Plan Policy;
- ◆ Proposals for Riverside Park, Huntingdon
- ◆ Development Control Policies Preferred Options;
- ◆ Huntingdon West Area Action Plan preferred options;
- ◆ Great Fen governance; and
- ◆ the Gypsy and Traveller Issues and Options Document.

31. THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

Following a suggestion that the night time economy in Huntingdonshire in the context of the Licensing Act 2003 might be a suitable subject for study, the Panel considered a briefing paper prepared by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). A recent report by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport into the impact of the Act nationally, which had been considered recently by the District Council's Licensing Committee was circulated at the meeting.

By way of introduction, the Head of Administration explained the limitations placed on the Council acting as the licensing authority by the legislation when considering the determination of applications, imposition of conditions and initiation of reviews of premises licences. Reference also was made to the research and surveys which had been undertaken nationally into the impact of the Act. Whilst the current situation in Huntingdonshire was considered to largely perpetuate the conditions that pertained under the old licensing regime, Members were informed that a number of concerns were starting to emerge about problems being experienced in St. Ives. These included a review by the Service Delivery Panel into the cleansing arrangements in the town centre to deal with the litter problems arising from the Saturday night time economy and an objection by the Police to a current planning application to extend night club premises in St Ives.

In relation to St. Ives town centre, Councillor J W Davies suggested that a visible police presence would assist in resolving problems and he referred to the development and extension of the CCTV system in the town by the District Council. He expressed the view that, in his opinion, the majority of licensed establishments were well managed with the main problems being caused with patrons on their way home from licensed premises.

Councillor L W McGuire acquainted the Panel with the consideration by Cambridgeshire Together of a county-wide Alcohol Harm Reduction and a pilot scheme undertaken by the County Council's Trading Standards Service in St Neots Town Centre.

Having agreed that there was little merit in undertaking a review of the impact of the Licensing Act itself, nevertheless Members felt that there was sufficient concern over the social consequences of alcohol abuse to merit an investigation.

RESOLVED

that Councillors J T Bell, P M D Godfrey and Ms S L Kemp be appointed to a working group, to address this matter.

32. MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS (PLANNING OBLIGATIONS)

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Policy and Strategic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Panel was updated on the receipt and expenditure of money negotiated

under Section 106 Agreements by the Council.

Having noted the inclusion within the report of non-monetary benefits received in the last two quarters, the Chairman suggested that if there were any specific queries that Members wished to raise these should be directed to the Policy and Strategic Services Division.

33. WORKPLAN STUDIES

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 programme of studies. In doing so, Councillor D Harty reported on the investigations being undertaken by the Section 106 Working Group.

In discussing potential future studies, and having regard to the fact that a review of any financial matters had not been undertaken for some time, it was

RESOLVED

that Councillors P J Downes, L W McGuire and R J West be appointed to a working group to investigate ways in which the Council could maximise its income opportunities and grant availability.

34. 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 previously discussed.

In particular, the Head of Administration was asked to establish the current position with regard to the Panel's recommendations on lorry parking following the latter's referral to the Freight Quality Partnership. In referring to the study of the Council's Travel Plan, the Head of Administration reported that investigations were ongoing into the possible use of transferable season tickets.

The Panel was also advised that their views on the review of public speaking at the Development Control Panel had been considered by the latter at its August meeting. The Panel also noted that a report on the recently published consultation document on improving local accountability would be submitted to its next meeting.

35. SCRUTINY

The Panel considered and noted the latest edition of the Council's Decision Digest, summarising the Council's decisions since the previous meeting.

Arising from matters raised by Members, the Head of Administration was asked to establish the timescale for improvement works to the

A141 Kings Ripton Road junction and to provide Councillor D Harty with statistics relating to Code of Conduct enquiries dealt with by the Council.

Chairman

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

Prepared by **Councillor I C Bates**
 Date of Publication: **12 September 2008**
 For Period: **1 October 2008 to 31 January 2009**

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 Customer Services 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 and Transport	Compass House Pathfinder Way Warboys PE28 2RD Tel: 01487 824222 E-mail: Peter.Bucknell@huntsdc.gov.uk
Councillor K J Churchill	- Special Advisor to the Cabinet	51 Gordon Road Little Paxton St Neots PE19 6NJ Tel: 01480 352040 E-mail: Ken.Churchill@huntsdc.gov.uk
Councillor D B Dew	- Executive Councillor for Leisure	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 Operational and Countryside Services	22 Bluegate Godmanchester Huntingdon Cambs PE29 2EZ Tel: 01480 388968 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 Public 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 and Environment	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 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
Community Engagement	Cabinet	16 Oct 2008	Previous Report to Cabinet	Dr S Lammin, Head of Environmental and Community Health Services Tel No. (01480) 388280 or email. Sue.Lammin@huntsdc.gov.uk		A Hansard	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
Customer Service Development in St. Ives and St. Neots	Cabinet	16 Oct 2008	None.	Julia Barber, Head of Revenue Services Tel No. 01480 388105 or email - Julia.Barber@huntsdc.gov.uk		L M Simpson	Service Delivery
Joint Municipal Waste Strategy	Cabinet	6 Nov 2008	Consultation Documents	Robert Ward, Head of Operations Tel No. (01480) 388635) or email - Robert.Ward@huntsdc.gov.uk	Wide Public Consultation	C R Hyams	Service Delivery
Sub-Regional Housing Strategy	Cabinet	6 Nov 2008	None.	Steve Plant, Head of Housing Services Tel No. 01480 388240 or email - Steve.Plant@huntsdc.gov.uk	To be carried out with stakeholders July/August	Mrs D C Reynolds	Service Delivery
Insurance Liability Test Case - Zurich Municipal/MMI	Cabinet	6 Nov 2008	None	Vicki Stevens, Solicitor Tel No. (01480) 388023 or email - Vicki.Stevens@huntsdc.gov.uk		T V Rogers	Service Support
Proposals for Riverside Park	Cabinet	6 Nov 2008	Draft Proposals for Riverside Park	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or email - Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve following consultation with other key stakeholders	P L E Bucknell & Others	Service Support
Development Control Policies Preferred Options	Cabinet	6 Nov 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
To adopt Urban Design Framework for South of High Street, Ramsey	Cabinet	6 Nov 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 Somersham Conservation Area Boundary Changes and Character Statement	Cabinet	6 Nov 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
Draft MTP	Cabinet	20 Nov 2008	Financial Strategy, Previous Year's Budget Report and Various Annexes	Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services Tel No. 01480 388103 - or email Steve.Couper@huntsdc.gov.uk	Overview and Scrutiny (CSF)	T V Rogers	Corporate Strategic Framework
Decent Homes Grant***	Cabinet	20 Nov 2008	Letters for Go-East dated 10 Apr 2008 and 6 Jun 2008. Previous Cabinet Reports Dated 12 Jan 2006, 29 Jun 2006 and 22 Nov 2007	Steve Plant, Head of Housing Services Tel (01480) 388240 or email - Steve.Plant@huntsdc.gov.uk		Mrs D C Reynolds and T V Rogers	Service Delivery
Great Fen Governance	Cabinet	20 Nov 2008	None.	Malcolm Sharp, Director of Operational Services Tel No. 01480 388301 or email - Malcolm.Sharp@huntsdc.gov.uk		P L E Bucknell	Service Support
Gypsy and Travellers Issues and Options Report	Cabinet	20 Nov 2008	Local Development Scheme	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 Urban Design Framework for land at The Whaddons, Mayfield Drive, Huntingdon***	Cabinet	20 Nov 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 Godmanchester Conservation Area Boundary Changes and Character Statement	Cabinet	20 Nov 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 Kimbolton Conservation Area Boundary Changes and Character Statement	Cabinet	20 Nov 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 Houghton and Wytton Conservation Area Boundary Changes and Character Statement	Cabinet	20 Nov 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

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
Older Persons Housing Strategy Update***	Cabinet	18 Dec 2008	Housing Strategy 2006-11. Ageing Well, Housing, Health and Social Care Strategy for Older People. Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods. A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, CLG, DWP, and DH, March 2008	Jo Emmerton, Housing Strategy Manager Tel No. (01480) 38823 or email - Jo.Emmerton@huntsdc.gov.uk		Mrs D C Reynolds	Service Delivery
Amendments to Disabled Facilities Grant Legislation***	Cabinet	18 Dec 2008	The Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008 (S12008/1189). The Housing Renewal Grants (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2008 (S12008/1190). Housing Strategy 2006-11. Housing Grants Construction and Regeneration Act 1996	Jo Emmerton, Housing Strategy Manager Tel (01480) 388203 or email - Jo.Emmerton@huntsdc.gov.uk		Mrs D C Reynolds	Service Delivery
Parish Plans and Local Plan Policy	Cabinet	18 Dec 2008	Previous Report to Cabinet in Dec 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
ICT Strategy***	Cabinet	18 Dec 2008	ICT Strategy	Andrew Howes, IMD Operations Manager Tel No. 01480 388190 or email - Andrew.Howes@huntsdc.gov.uk		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
Web Strategy***	Cabinet	18 Dec 2008	Web Strategy	John Taylor, IMD Development Manager Tel No. (01480) 388119 or email - John.Taylor@huntsdc.gov.uk		L M Simpson	Service Delivery
Great Fen Master Plan Progress***	Cabinet	8 Jan 2009	None.	Malcolm Sharp, Director of Operational Services Tel No (01480) 388301 or email - Malcolm.Sharp@huntsdc.gov.uk		P L E Bucknell	Service Support
Response to Highway Agency Pre-Consultation on side road Orders - A14 Improvements***	Cabinet	8 Jan 2009	Consultation Documents	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or email - Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk		P L E Bucknell	Service Support
Draft Planning Contributions Supplementary Planning Document	Cabinet	29 Jan 2009	Huntingdonshire Development Plans	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
Huntingdon West Area Action Plan Preferred Options	Cabinet	29 Jan 2009	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

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**IMPROVING LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY CONSULTATION
CHANGES TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY POWERS**

(Report by Head of Administration)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At the Panels' meetings in February, a report was considered on changes to overview and scrutiny introduced by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 and a consultation paper on the Councillor 'call for action' and local petitions. The Panels were advised that further information would be submitted to them on the implementation of the legislation as this became available.
- 1.2 The Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) has now issued a further consultation paper on the changes, in the light of the publication of the recent White Paper 'Communities in Control'. The consultation asks a number of questions, in response to which suggested answers are contained in the attached annex. The Panels' and Cabinet's views are sought on the changes proposed and the attached response.

2. Communities in Control White Paper

- 2.1 The White Paper builds on the changes introduced in the 2007 Act and contains the following proposals for overview and scrutiny –
- Encouraging more creative involvement of the public, for example by holding deliberative events
 - Moving meetings into the community and considering webcasting
 - Greater public involvement in suggesting and selecting topics for review
 - Making information more readily available and accessible on websites and at council offices
 - Further enhancing the powers of overview and scrutiny committees to require information from partners on a broader range of issues
 - If necessary providing councils in two tier areas with a power to combine resources in 'area' scrutiny committees
 - Requiring some dedicated scrutiny resource in county and unitary councils.
- 2.2 Further proposals of relevance to overview and scrutiny are –
- Increasing the visibility of officers of local public bodies so that they are open to public scrutiny and questioning by local communities
 - A new right to petition to hold local officers to account
 - A new duty on Councils to respond to all petitions, including electronic petitions, relating to local authority functions or other public services where the Council shares delivery responsibilities.

3. Improving Local Accountability Consultation

- 3.1 CLG are planning a series of consultation papers to implement changes introduced by the 2007 Act and the White Paper. In addition to the improving

local accountability paper, the others are the making and enforcement of byelaws, a revised code of conduct for Members, on-line petitioning for mayors, time off entitlements for membership of Councils and other voluntary organisations, and a review of the code of recommended practice on local government publicity.

3.2 The particular issues on which views are sought in the current paper are –

- Developing and strengthening overview and scrutiny by implementing the provisions of the 2007 Act to enhance scrutiny powers in relation to Local Area Agreement partners and the delivery against targets and in particular regulations in respect of –
 - Overview and scrutiny committees requiring information from partner authorities
 - Publication of scrutiny reports, recommendations and responses
 - Establishment of joint county and district overview and scrutiny committees
 - Enhancing the powers of district overview and scrutiny committees
- How best to take forward the proposals in the White Paper to raise the profile of overview and scrutiny
- Increasing the visibility and accountability of local public officers
- Facilitating the work of councillors by enabling them to use information and communications technology to participate in meetings and vote remotely.

4. Other Proposals

4.1 Members may recall that the report in February also referred to the changes introduced in the Police and Justice Act 2006 which required every authority to have a crime and disorder committee to scrutinise the discharge of crime and disorder functions by other responsible authorities. Implementation of the proposals has been delayed pending the Flanagan report on policing and the publication of a Green Paper on the Police.

5. Conclusion

5.1 The Government is committed to raising the profile of overview and scrutiny as part of a series of measures to encourage greater community involvement in local decision making. Several of the initiatives have already been either tried or implemented by the Council but Members will be aware of the difficulty in engaging with the public other than in cases where a high profile issue has raised local concern.

5.2 The Panels and Cabinet will be updated as the anticipated regulations and guidance are issued.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 Suggested responses to the questions posed in the consultation paper are made in the attached annex and it is

RECOMMENDED

that the Panels and Cabinet consider and endorse the responses for submission to CLG as part of the implementation process of the 2007 Act and the White Paper.

Background Papers:

Crime and Justice Act 2006

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

Communities in Control White Paper

Improving Local Accountability White Paper

Report to Overview & Scrutiny Panels in February 2008 on Local Petitions and Calls for Action

Contact Officer

Roy Reeves, Head of Administration

Tel: (01480) 388003

IMPROVING LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY CONSULTATION CHANGES TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY POWERS

Questions Raised and Suggested Answers

Question 1

This deals with the arrangements for overview and scrutiny committees to require information from partner authorities. This enables a district council committee to seek information from the county council as lead authority or any partner in an LAA that relates to a target connected with the district's area and functions. CLG propose limited regulation on the release and withholding of information. Release refers to information that relates to LAA targets and withholding concerns data protection, commercial confidentiality and information already in the public domain. No time limits are proposed for responses to requests nor how requests can be kept to manageable proportions which will be matters of local discretion. Comments are invited on the proposals.

Suggested Response

While local discretion and flexibility is welcomed, it is important that some mechanism is in place to ensure that partners do co-operate in providing information to the detail required and in a timely manner. Since Freedom of Information requests are time limited to 20 working days with an appeal to the Information Commissioner where a public authority fails to comply, it would not be unreasonable for the same sanctions to be applied in this case.

Question 2

The 2007 Act specifies the arrangements for the withholding of exempt and confidential information when overview and scrutiny reports are published and an authority responds. This does not include an executive and the question raised is whether there is agreement to the extension of the same principle to local authority executives.

Suggested Response

Agreed

Question 3

The 2007 Act enables the establishment of joint county and district overview and scrutiny committees. The consultation paper invites comments on the extension of existing overview and scrutiny powers to joint committees, while recognising the need for co-ordination to ensure that duplication does not arise in terms of the scrutiny of partners by a number of overview and scrutiny committees.

Members will be aware that joint scrutiny already exists in Cambridgeshire. In terms of health scrutiny, district councillors are co-opted to the relevant County scrutiny committee and a joint accountability committee has been formed to scrutinise the LAA board, Cambridgeshire Together. A separate report deals with those joint arrangements elsewhere on the agenda.

Suggested Response

The extension of scrutiny powers to joint committees is welcomed. The joint committee however should not be able to direct the work of scrutiny committees in individual authorities nor be able to exercise any veto over legitimate lines of enquiry into the achievement of LAA targets or the performance of partners. It should be a matter for local discretion as part of the agreed terms of reference between the local authorities concerned as to how the joint committee might co-ordinate scrutiny activities, respond to proposals by individual authorities for an area based study or suggest that a study is undertaken by an individual authority's scrutiny committee.

Question 4

Regulations are proposed to implement the provisions in the 2007 Act to give district scrutiny committees in two tier areas similar powers to lead councils, i.e. county councils. As such, they can make reports and recommendations to the county council on local improvement targets and the county must respond within 2 months. Other authorities will be required to have regard to such reports and recommendations. While it will be for a district committee to determine its programme of work, it should have regard to scrutiny work planned by the lead council and any joint committee. To minimise potential duplication, the requirements for a county council to respond and partner authorities to have regard to a report and recommendations will only apply to matters where a joint committee has not already reported. Comments are invited.

Suggested Response

The proposals to extend similar powers to district scrutiny committees are supported. While the need to avoid duplication is recognised, a timescale should be applied to the restriction preventing a district committee from scrutinising a subject already considered by a joint committee of say 2 years.

Question 5

This only applies to authorities of less than 85,000 population.

Question 6

CLG are proposing to introduce a power for county and district councils to combine scrutiny resources in area scrutiny committees if they wish to do so. Comments are invited on what issues should be considered as part of any new power.

Suggested response

While there is a role for an area committee in considering issues of county wide significance and in scrutinising LAA targets and performance, it should not circumvent the ability of district committees to scrutinise individual subjects relevant to that authority's area within the general power of promoting economic, social and environmental well-being. An area committee's co-ordinating responsibility should be limited to an advisory capacity only.

The primary role of an area committee should be to hold to account an LAA Board but it will be powerless to do so unless it has the ability to call in decisions of the Board. If an area committee cannot do so and it is impractical for scrutiny committees of individual authorities to exercise this function, a Board cannot be effectively held to account.

Question 7

CLG propose that county, unitary and borough councils are required to make provision for a dedicated scrutiny resource to support the overview and scrutiny

function. A similar requirement is not extended to district councils, presumably because of the resource implications for smaller authorities.

Suggested response

No comment.

Question 8

CLG want to introduce an appeals mechanism if petitioners are not satisfied with an authority's response to a petition. As overview and scrutiny committees are independent of the executive, CLG propose that they act as the appeals body with a remedy of triggering a debate at full council if they consider the response to be not sufficiently adequate. Comments are invited about the practicality of this approach.

Suggested response

The approach is unnecessarily bureaucratic. Authorities will have existing mechanisms for dealing with petitions. In the case of Huntingdonshire, petitions containing over 50 signatures are already presented to Council and those with over 10 signatures to a scrutiny panel. It should be a matter for the discretion of individual authorities to decide upon the most appropriate method to deal with a petition, as long as there is an assurance that this will be considered in a member forum.

Question 9

The White Paper seeks to achieve a consistency of approach in public services to formalise arrangements to require chairmen and chief executives to attend a public hearing in the community at regular intervals every three or four months to explain their actions and listen to the views and concerns of local people. The requirement to attend such meetings should form part of the job descriptions of the chairman and chief executive and the question raised is whether those responsible for the job descriptions should determine the precise arrangements for the attendance of those persons.

Suggested response

Regular meetings are unlikely to attract high attendances, even if they are co-ordinated so that several bodies are represented. If the area covered is too wide geographically, members of the public will be less likely to travel and to identify themselves with the bodies in question. The public tend to be more interested in local issues of topical significance such as a threatened hospital closure which does attract high attendances at public meetings. The result of the current proposal could be a plethora of poorly attended meetings but with leading figures present which would be an inefficient use of resources and time. If public bodies are to be held to account by the public, this would be best achieved through the strengthening of the scrutiny role of local authorities and the use of petitions to raise issues of concern.

If CLG intends to proceed with this proposal, it is preferable for the precise arrangements for public meetings and the determination as to who should attend to be dealt with by the public bodies themselves.

Question 10

The White Paper proposes a new right for people to petition to hold officers to account with senior officers working for a public body required to attend a public meeting. CLG therefore propose that the lead council in each LAA area should agree with partners a scheme for petitions to hold officers to account. The scheme should complement local petitions arrangements, set out the officers or category of officers to which it would apply, specify the petition criteria, the bodies affected and

how they will respond, and the arrangements for a hearing. Comments are invited on the proposal and the practical implications.

Suggested response

Officers implement rather than set policy. If representatives of public bodies are to be held to account in this way by the public, it is the decision makers who should be required to attend to respond to concerns. The opportunity to petition for a hearing is a much more tangible and meaningful way of ensuring public engagement than scheduled, poorly attended meetings. If the scheme is to cover the whole of an LAA area, there should be opportunities for some discretion to allow for local circumstances. The scheme also should enable issues that are local in nature to be dealt with through district scrutiny committees as opposed to the broader LAA area.

Question 11

Should the Government specify certain minimum standards for the scheme to hold public officers to account? These might include the timescale for the implementation of a scheme, which officers or category of officers should be required to attend and which local service providers should be involved. CLG suggest that officers should be restricted, in local government terms, to statutory officers and/or non-statutory officers as defined in legislation.

Suggested response

This is a subject that is best left to local discretion.

Question 12

CLG propose that a local authority and its partners should agree on which local service providers and agencies the scheme should apply to, subject to any statutory minimum requirements. Comments are invited as to whether the scope of the scheme should be agreed locally and whether this will be an effective means of empowering communities.

Suggested response

This is a subject that is best left to local discretion. There is little confidence that this will be an effective means of empowering communities and it is unlikely that it will prove popular, other than on those occasions when there is a local issue of concern.

Question 13

The report of the Councillors Commission recommended the introduction of virtual meetings with Members being able to take part and vote in meetings remotely. The Government intend to legislate to introduce the measure in the Community Empowerment, Housing and Economic Regeneration Bill. Authorities will be able to opt in to remote voting, the conditions being that at least one Member must be physically present at the meeting and members of the public present at the meeting must be able to witness what is happening. Comments are invited on the proposal.

Suggested response

While this may help overcome problems of time and distance, the practicalities should not be under-estimated and it should be at the discretion of individual authorities as to whether they choose to adopt this measure.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE SUPPORT)

14th OCTOBER 2008

LOCAL PROCUREMENT REVIEW (Report by the Head of Administration)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 11th July 2006, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) considered the question of local procurement by the Council and its potential impact in promoting the local economy in Huntingdonshire. The Panel appointed a Working Group comprising Councillors D B Dew, P J Downes and R J West whose report and recommendations were endorsed by the Panel in January 2007.
- 1.2 Further reports were submitted to the Panel in March and December 2007 on the outcome of further meetings between Members of the Panel and representatives of the local business community.
- 1.3 It was agreed in December that a further meeting would be held after six months had elapsed and the purpose of this report is to acquaint Members with the discussions that took place at that meeting. The following actions had been agreed when the previous meeting took place:-
- Procurement Manager to investigate the procurement rules used by local authorities and to consider whether any standardisation would be possible;
 - Sustainable Economic Development Manager to consider the inclusion of procurement on the agenda for the next breakfast forum meeting;
 - consideration to be given to the implications of the Council's emerging Environment Strategy.

2. REVIEW OF PROCUREMENT

- 2.1 The meeting held on the 18th September 2008 was chaired by Councillor M G Baker and attended by Councillors K M Baker, P J Downes and R J West with representatives from the Huntingdonshire Business Network (Mr T Downing), the Huntingdonshire Federation of Small Business (Mr M Mealing) and Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce (Mr S Taylor). Executive Councillors C R Hyams and T V Rogers were also in attendance.
- 2.2 With regard to the actions agreed at the previous meeting, the Procurement Manager and Sustainable Economic Development Manager reported that work was ongoing to standardise the terms and conditions of procurement with other district councils within the County and it was also intended to standardise the thresholds for tendering in the future. The meeting discussed

how other authorities within the County compared in local procurement and was informed that the procurement rules used by local authorities were based upon statutory requirements. While standardisation was welcomed by the local business representatives as being a step forward, mention was made of the need not to lose focus of the review's original aim of promoting the local economy in Huntingdonshire and alerting local business about possible business opportunities.

- 2.3 In that regard, comment was made that the electronic alert for additions to the contract register was still not working. The Group expressed their disappointment that this continued to be a problem and Councillor T V Rogers undertook to become involved if the situation was not resolved within the next month.
- 2.4 The business representatives indicated that they were looking to the District Council to flag up appropriate local procurement opportunities where they arose. Having queried, for example, where South Cambs District Council sourced their commodities, the meeting was advised that procurement opportunities were shared currently across district council websites within the County.
- 2.5 Mr S Taylor reported that the Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce organised informal network meetings with local businesses and he suggested that it might be useful if a representative from the District Council could attend a future meeting to advise businesses how they might best secure procurement opportunities with local authorities. Work was also ongoing by the District Council's Economic Development team to develop supply chain networks through a "meet the buyer" event scheduled to take place on the 20th November 2008. The event would provide opportunities for local businesses to speak to buyers from public sector organisations and establish the best means of doing business with them.
- 2.6 The meeting was pleased to note that the issue of local procurement had been included on the agenda for the breakfast forum meeting held in January 2008.
- 2.7 The Sustainable Economic Development Officer reported on developments within the Economic Development service since the previous meeting. In doing so, the meeting was informed that the Local Economy Strategy had recently been reviewed and that local procurement and the need to develop supply chains had featured as a priority. Whilst the "meet the buyer" project had already been referred to, the meeting was informed about the Huntingdonshire Food Festival, work to develop a manufacturing club in Huntingdon and the development of the County Council's web-based business directory which had expanded significantly in recent months. The meeting also noted that Business Link were marketing a number of courses to help

small businesses identify what they should do to trade successfully with the public sector.

- 2.8 The District Council's Head of Environmental Management then updated the Group on the production of the Council's Environment Strategy which placed an emphasis on sustainable purchasing. One of the actions in the Strategy would require all Council tender specifications to include a section on sustainability and sustainable purchasing guidance was being produced to ensure sustainable and ethical purchasing within the organisation. Work was also ongoing to prepare a leaflet for distribution to 70,000 householders giving practical advice on what they can do to benefit the environment including greener purchasing. The meeting noted that whilst the focus was predominately on domestic purchasing, the District Council could look to produce an appropriate document for business if this was thought to be required.
- 2.9 Having noted that the District Council was currently seeking opportunities to promote its "green" messages, business representatives made a number of suggestions including a forthcoming mail drop by the Huntingdonshire Regional College, a possible presentation at the Economic Forum and informal meetings organised by the Chamber of Trade. Business representatives indicated that they would welcome the opportunity to work with the Council once appropriate links on the website were up and running.
- 2.10 In discussing a number of other issues, the meeting noted that arrangements were being made to invite Ofcom into the District to discuss the delivery of electronic media, which the Group were asked to support.
- 2.11 Councillor M G Baker raised a question about business waste and whether there was any defined strategy for its disposal. Although this was not a function of the District Council, Councillor Hyams undertook to provide further information on the investigations which had been undertaken with the Operations Division. It was generally considered that businesses should be encouraged to recycle where possible.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Following a positive and constructive discussion it was agreed that it would be useful to meet again in March 2009 to review progress. With this in mind it was agreed that the Panel be

RECOMMENDED

to authorise a future meeting with business representatives on 12th March 2009.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Minutes and Reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)

CONTACT OFFICER:

Mrs Claire Bulman - ☎ (01480) 388234.

Agenda Item 7

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
(SERVICE SUPPORT)

14th OCTOBER 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 current Executive responsibilities. These were advised in agreement with the Panel Chairmen with effect from September 2008.

Service Delivery:

Customer Services &
Information Technology
Leisure
Housing & Public Health
Operational & Countryside Services

Service Support:

Finance & Environment
Resources & Policy
Planning Strategy /Transportation
Special Advisor to the Cabinet

2.3 Ongoing studies have been allocated between the Panels accordingly –

STUDY	PANEL	STATUS
Cleaning Regimes in Town Centres	Service Delivery	Concluding report to be considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 4 th September. Additional information requested by the Cabinet. Consideration of the matter will be given at the Panel's October meeting.
Process and Procedures involved with the adoption of roads and sewers.	Service Delivery	Investigations ongoing. Information being sought from the County Council and Anglian Water.
Traffic Enforcement	Service Delivery	Awaiting report following decision by AJC.
The Processes involved in Applying for Community Grant Aid and the Effectiveness of Grant Schemes.	Service Delivery	Investigative work complete. Final meeting to be arranged in October to draw together issues arising from the study.
Disability Access	Service Delivery	Meeting of the Working Group arranged for 9 th October. Completion of study anticipated by the end of 2008.
Section 106	Service Support	Next meeting to be held on 7 th October 2008. Update to be provided to October Panel meeting.

Great Fen Project	Service Support	Presentation to be made to Panel's November meeting.
Social Consequences of Alcohol Abuse	Service Support	Research being undertaken. First meeting to be held on 14 th October 2008. Update to be provided to October Panel meeting.
Maximising Council Income	Service Support	First meeting to be held on 1 st December following the completion to two internal audits on Income Generation and Discretionary Service Charges.
Affordable Housing	Service Delivery	Scoping Report to be considered at a future meeting.
Impact of New A14 in terms of air quality and noise pollution.	Service Delivery	Preliminary advice received from the District Council's Environmental and Community Health Services Division. Matter to be raised at a future meeting.

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

Review of the incentives of the Council's Travel Plan.	Service Support
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- 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
Role and effectiveness of the East of England Regional Assembly.	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: Mrs Claire Bulman - ☎ (01480) 388234.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

AREA OF REVIEW	DETAILS/COMMENTS
Title of Study (name of Working Group)	Section 106 Working Group
Appointing Panel	Overview and Scrutiny (Service Support) Panel
Members Assigned (including date Working Group appointed)	Councillors P J Downes, D Harty, M F Newman and R G Tuplin Appointed by Panel on 12 th February 2008.
Possible Co-Options to the Group	Councillor T D Sanderson Appointed by Panel on 8 th April 2008.
Interests Declared	Councillors P J Downes and D Harty as members of Cambridgeshire County Council.
Rapporteur	Councillor D Harty
Officer Support	Mr Roy Reeves – Head of Administration, HDC Mrs Claire Bulman – Democratic Services, HDC Mr Steve Ingram – Head of Planning Services, HDC Mr A Moffatt – Development Control Manager Mr Robert Ward – Head of Operations Mr Steve Plant – Head of Housing Mr Colin Meadowcroft – Head of Legal Mr Ian Leatherbarrow – Head of Policy & Strategic Services
Purpose of Study / Objective (specify exactly what the study should achieve)	To investigate the Section 106 process adopted by the Council including the relationship with other infrastructure partners and make recommendations if improvements are thought to be necessary.
Rationale (key issues and/or reason for conducting a study)	Arising from Members concerns relating to S106 monitoring reports and the study by the Cycling Working Group which found it difficult to create an audit trail of money spent by different authorities.
Terms of Reference	
Links to Council Policies/Strategies	Links to Council Aim – to improve our systems and practices.

ACTION BY WORKING GROUP	
Methodology / Approach (what types of enquiries will be used to gather evidence)	Information from Heads of Service, Partner Organisations and other Members of the Council.
External/Specialist Support	N/A
Existing Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Current / Previous quarterly monitoring reports ◆ Report of the Cycling Working Group ~ Feb 2008 ◆ Details of Reviews undertaken by Cardiff, Stoke on Trent, Bradford ◆ Affordable Housing and Section 106 Agreements

	<p>(Paper by Housing Division)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Existing s106 Obligation Process – Presentation by Development Control Manager ◆ Briefing Paper by Cambridgeshire County Council – Section 106 process ◆ Notes of working group meetings held on 20th May, 3rd July, 21st July and 28th August 2008.
Evidence to be Obtained (e.g. witnesses, documents, site visits, consultation, research, etc)	Most of the evidence will be obtained by the Democratic Services Team together with information from Environmental & Community Services Directorate, Legal Department and Policy Division.
Reference Sites	None at present.
Investigations	<p>Initially discussions arranged with Heads of Planning Services, Operations, Housing Services and Legal. Representatives from Fire & Rescue, Constabulary and PCT also attended.</p> <p>Demonstration of current Section 106 database.</p> <p>Further meeting with Head of Planning Services and Development Control Manager to review issues identified from previous discussions.</p> <p>Further meeting to be held on 7th October 2008 to summarise current position.</p>
Witnesses	As above.
Site Visits (if necessary) (where and when)	N/A at current time.
Meetings of the Working Group	<p>20th May 2008. 3rd July 2008 21st July 2008 28th August 2008 7th October 2008</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 ~ 12th February 2008 Finish – tbc</p>

AREA OF REVIEW	DETAILS/COMMENTS
Title of Study (name of Working Group)	Social Consequences of Alcohol Abuse
Appointing Panel	Overview and Scrutiny (Service Support)
Members Assigned (including date Working Group appointed)	Councillors J T Bell, P M D Godfrey and Ms S L Kemp. Appointed 9 th September 2008.
Possible Co-Options to the Group	
Interests Declared	Ms S L Kemp as a patron of licensed premises in St Ives and Huntingdon Town Centre
Rapporteur	To be decided
Officer Support	Mr Roy Reeves, Head of Administration Mrs Claire Bulman, Democratic Services Officer Dr Sue Lammin, Head of Environmental and Community Health Services
Purpose of Study / Objective (specify exactly what the study should achieve)	To investigate the impact of excessive alcohol consumption on levels of Anti Social Behaviour and Alcohol Related Crime within the District.
Rationale (key issues and/or reason for conducting a study)	To respond to Members concerns about the social consequences of alcohol abuse
Terms of Reference	
Links to Council Policies/Strategies	Links to Community Aim: Safe, Vibrant and Inclusive Communities: To prevent crime and anti-social behaviour

ACTION BY WORKING GROUP	
Methodology / Approach (what types of enquiries will be used to gather evidence)	Information from Head of Environmental and Community Health Services / HCSP Interviews / Information from Partner organisations / relevant agencies Reviews undertaken by other authorities Collation of Statistical Evidence Information from the Local Education Authority
External/Specialist Support	N/A
Existing Documentation	Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership: Community Safety Plan 2008 -2011 Local Authority Profile of Alcohol Related Harm Hospital Admissions for alcohol related harm Bassetlaw District Council: Review of Alcohol Related Anti Social Behaviour Draft Cambridgeshire Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy 2008 -2011
Evidence to be Obtained (e.g. witnesses, documents, site visits, consultation, research, etc)	Interview Chairman of HCSP, representatives of Cambridgeshire Constabulary, NHS Cambridgeshire and Cambridgeshire DAAT Write to Local Education Authority Statistics from NHS Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire

	Constabulary National Statistics Statistics / Information from Head of Environmental and Community Services
Reference Sites	www.huntsdc.gov.uk www.cambsdaat.org
Investigations	Interview representatives of relevant organisations. Collection of Statistical Evidence. Write to Local Education Authority.
Witnesses	Dr S Lammin, Chairman of HCSP Cambridgeshire Constabulary NHS Cambridgeshire Cambridgeshire Drug Action Team
Site Visits (if necessary) (where and when)	N/A
Meetings of the Working Group	14 th October 2008
Costs (resource requirements, additional expenditure, time)	Officer time – both to provide support and conduct research
Possible Barriers to the Study (potential weaknesses)	None currently identified
Projected Timescale (Start and end times)	Start: September 2008 End:

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE SUPPORT)

14TH OCTOBER 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: Mrs C Bulman –Democratic Services Officer
 (01480) 388234

Panel Date	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Date</u>
<p>10/06/08</p> <p>09/09/08</p>	<p>HEAVY GOODS VEHICLE PARKING IN THE DISTRICT</p> <p>Endorsed the Working Group's report and recommendations for submission of the Cabinet.</p> <p>Head of Administration was asked to establish the current position with regard to the Panel's recommendations following their referral to the Freight Quality Partnership.</p>	<p>Recommendations endorsed by the Cabinet at their meeting on 26th June 2008.</p> <p>Email sent to Team Leader for Transportation.</p> <p>Following publication of recent consultation document on a draft Regional Freight Strategy for the East of England, County Council also asked what provision there is for lorry parking in the LTP or in future reviews of the LTP.</p>	<p>Agreed with Chairman / Vice Chairman that issue be taken forward by the Freight Quality Partnership.</p> <p>Matter included for discussion on agenda for LAA Reference Group.</p> <p>Item to be included on agenda for next Freight Quality Partnership. County Council currently arranging.</p> <p>Parties aware of Regional Freight Strategy and there has been some input to that work. There is a reference to freight issues within the current LTP but this is not updated on an annual basis but covers a set period with an annual monitoring report submitted to Government.</p>	
<p>08/07/08</p>	<p>PETITION BY ST AUDREY LANE AREA RESIDENTS, ST IVES</p> <p>Representatives from Anglian Water in attendance at Panel's July meeting. Requested that an update be provided in 6 months time and that residents be informed of the outcome of their investigations.</p>	<p>.</p>		<p>Jan 09</p>

Panel Date	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Date</u>
12/02/08	THE COUNCIL'S TRAVEL PLAN			
	Endorsed the report of the working group and their recommendations for submission to the Cabinet.	Cabinet approved the recommendations and requested that they be investigated in the context of the emerging Environment Strategy, the car parking action plan and the travel plan.		
	Further consideration to be given by the Working Group to possible incentives for employees to use public transport or travel by foot or cycle.	To be considered at a later date.	Included in future list of studies.	
11/03/08	Panel requested Corporate Governance Panel to consider those recommendations relating to Member's allowances	Report considered by the Corporate Governance Panel at their meeting on 26 th March 2008.	Deliberations of Independent Remuneration Panel considered at Council meeting on 24 th September.	
	Asked Head of Environmental Management to consider those recommendations relating to the preparation of a new Environment Strategy.	Email sent to Head of Environmental Management drawing his attention to relevant recommendations.	Email sent from Head of Environmental Management to Chairman of Panel. Reports on Pool Car Emissions and costs to be prepared at a later date.	
10/06/08	Asked the Head of Administration to establish the current position with regard to their recommendation that Employees travelling to work by means of a car share be permitted to park in Bridge Place at a concessionary rate if car parking charges are introduced to the car park by the Council.	Arrangements being explored whereby HDC staff lift sharing can share the cost of a single season ticket across the vehicles they use, thereby allowing them to park more cheaply than any other employee in the town. Details being finalised but will be available by 1 st October.		

Panel Date	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Date</u>
12/02/08	<p>CYCLING IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE</p> <p>Endorsed the Working Group's report and recommendations for submission of the Cabinet and requested that the study recommendations be placed on the progress report for future monitoring.</p> <p><i>[Recommendations are appended to this report].</i></p>	<p>Considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 12th February 2008. Cabinet noted the recommendations and requested a further report by officers addressing the wider issue of Section 106 funding and partnership working. Agreed that discussions should be held with Cambridgeshire County Council regarding their offer to update the Huntingdonshire Cycling Strategy and the issue of partnership working on cycling provision.</p>	<p>Report updating the Panel on the current position the review of the Cycling Strategy and the provision for funding for Huntingdonshire in the LTP included on Agenda for the meeting for June 08 meeting.</p>	June 08
10/06/08	<p>Asked the Transportation Team Leader to email all Members of the Council asking about any specific issues with regard to cycle routes in their wards. Requested sight of the draft report on the prioritisation of cycle schemes before any consideration by the AJC.</p>	<p>Since the June Panel meeting, it has come to light that the list of potential cycle routes have already been scored and prioritised. A report will be considered by the AJC at their meeting on 7th July 2008, seeking ratification of the cycle routes as scored. Requests have been made for reviews to be undertaken annually, with the first review with Members to start in the autumn.</p>	<p>Priority List endorsed by the AJC. District Council members will be contacted before the next review in Summer 2009 to ask about specific issues within their ward.</p>	
09/09/08	<p>MAXIMISING COUNCIL INCOME</p> <p>Appointed Councillors P J Downes, L W McGuire and R J West to a Working Group for the purpose of undertaking the above review.</p>	<p>Internal Audit Service currently undertaking reviews of income generation and discretionary service charges. Working Group awaiting outcome of these reviews as a start to their study. First meeting to be held on 1st December 2008.</p>		Dec 08

Panel Date	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Date</u>
14/05/08	CORPORATE PLAN – GROWING SUCCESS Councillors M G Baker, J A Gray and R G Tuplin appointed to Corporate Plan Working Group.	Quarterly reports submitted to Overview & Scrutiny. Working Group to act as a conduit between the Panels and the LAA Board.	Next meeting anticipated early 2009.	Jan 09
15/01/08	LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS Minutes of future meetings of the Cambridgeshire Together Local Accountability Committee should be circulated to all Panel Members.			
14/05/08	Councillor J A Gray appointed to Joint Accountability Committee. Substitute members to be appointed in consultation with Head of Administration.	Next meeting 22 nd October 2008 at 18.00pm.		
09/01/07	REVIEW OF LOCAL PROCUREMENT Endorsed the recommendations of the Working Group established to consider the question of local procurement by the Council. In light of the issues raised, agreed that the Chairman, Vice Chairman, Executive Councillor and Members of the Working Party should meet with representatives of the Huntingdonshire Business Network, Federation of Small Businesses and the Chamber of Trade.	Meeting held on 28 th February 2007. Positive outcomes, agreed that a number of measures be explored to improve local business awareness of future contracts. Suggested future meeting should be arranged to keep communication channels open.		
13/03/07	Agreed that Working Group should continue in existence to monitor progress in Autumn and meet with the business community at this time.	Subsequent meeting held on 22 nd November 2007. Report presented at Panel's December meeting.		
11/12/07	Agreed to hold a further meeting with business representatives to review progress and consider the implication of the Council's emerging Environment Strategy.	Meeting held on 18 th September 2008.	Report included on agenda for October Panel. Item No.6 refers	Oct 08

Panel Date	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Date</u>
13/11/07	LOCAL PETITION AND CALLS FOR ACTION Head of Administration drew attention to “community calls for action” proposals contained in recent legislation which was intended to enable the public to raise issues for scrutiny and would submit a report on the implications when the guidance had been issued by Government.	Report submitted to February meeting inviting comments on a consultation paper from the Department for Communities and Local Government on local petitions and calls for action.	Subject to a number of proposed amendments to reflect the comments of the Panel, endorsed the proposed answers to the consultation. Report on recently published consultation document on improving local accountability to the submitted to October Panel meeting. Item No. 5 refers.	Oct 08
08/07/08	LICENSING ACT – IMPACT ON NIGHTTIME ECONOMY Head of Administration to prepare a scoping report for a future meeting.	Report submitted to September 2008 meeting.		
09/09/08	Agreed to establish a working group comprising Councillors J T Bell, P M D Godfrey and Ms S L Kemp to undertake a review of the problems of alcohol abuse and its social consequences.	Officers undertaking initial research.	First meeting to be held on 14 th October 2008 with Community Safety Officer.	
14/04/05	MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS Quarterly reports to be submitted to the Panel.	Next report due December 2008.		Dec 08
12/02/08	Agreed to establish a working Group comprising Councillors P J Downes, D Harty, M F Newman and R G Tuplin to investigate the current Section 106 Agreement Mechanism for the negotiation of agreements and the distribution of money received.	Group asked to arrange interview with Councillor Bates to seek strategic guidance to ensure that the work of the group takes the same direction as intended by the leadership. First meeting held on 20 th May 2008.	Agreed that Scrutiny would undertake an all encompassing review of s106 agreements. Meetings held on 3 rd , 21 st July and 28 th August 2008. Next meeting 7 th October 2008.	

Panel Date	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Date</u>
08/07/08	GREAT FEN PROJECT Director of Environmental & Community Services to make presentation to future meeting. All Scrutiny Members to be invited.			Nov 08
08/07/08	SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT 2007 Head of Administration requested to report back on the implications for the Council of the Sustainable Communities Act 2007.		Report to be submitted to November meeting.	Nov 08
08/04/08	FORWARD PLAN Development Control Policies Preferred Options Requested that report should be considered at a future meeting of the Panel.			Nov 08
09/10/07	Huntingdon West Area Action Plan Requested that the report should be considered at a future meeting of the Panel.			Jan 09
13/11/07	Parish Plans and Local Plan Policy Circulate report when this becomes available.			Dec 08
08/07/08	Proposals for Riverside Park Requested that report should be considered at a future meeting of the Panel.			Nov 08
08/07/08	Developer Contributions SPD Requested that report should be considered at a future meeting of the Panel.			Jan 09
09/09/09	Gypsy & Traveller Issues and Options Document.			Nov 08

RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM CYCLING IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

- (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.

Decision Digest

Edition 87

Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 4th August to 30th September 2008.

GROWING SUCCESS – CORPORATE PLAN

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate & Strategic Framework) has considered the outcome of the annual review of the Corporate Plan – Growing Success. The revised document contains fewer priorities and will be used to inform the Council's financial planning. The Panel has taken into account work undertaken by the Corporate Plan Working Group in the course of their review.

The Panel has discussed a range of matters associated with the Plan, including climate change, affordable housing and public transport, particularly in rural areas although it refers only to matters that fall within the Council's remit. Given its links to the Council's financial planning, the Panel has decided to extend the Corporate Plan Working Group's remit by requesting it to investigate the cost implications of each priority area identified within the Plan.

Having been advised of the Panel's satisfaction with the content of the Plan and following discussions regarding its content, the Cabinet has recommended to full Council that the Strategy be approved.

FINANCIAL FORECAST

Members have been advised of the present position in relation to the Council's financial forecast for the period up to 2018/2019. The Council's net revenue expenditure has to be funded from Central Government grant, Council Tax and reserves. The Council has continued to spend carefully and this together with extra grants and budget income has resulted in last year's outturn being £1.2m less than budgeted. Members have been advised of the need to identify and implement savings to achieve a balanced Medium Term Plan. There may well be unavoidable areas of spending due to inflation and the downturn in the housing industry. The 2009/10 budget will be set by Council at its December meeting.

CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate & Strategic Framework) has reviewed the Action Plan to the Customer Service Strategy. The Plan which has subsequently been endorsed by the Cabinet outlines the actions proposed to achieve the following objectives:-

- ◆ provide high quality customer service;
- ◆ make it as easy as possible for customers to access services and get appropriate information; and
- ◆ be good at communicating with and listening to people and organisations.

These will link to the objectives of the Council's Corporate Plan – "Growing Success", the Corporate Equality Policy, the Consultation and Engagement Strategy and the Communications and Marketing Strategy.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS TO ST. IVES TOWN CENTRE

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has considered a range of options for Phase 2 environmental improvements to the Market Hill and Bridge Street areas of St. Ives. The options have been scrutinised by an Advisory Group comprising County, District and Town Councillors, together with Panel representatives and representatives from local consultative groups such as the Town Partnership, the Access Group and the Civic Society. The options will now be subject to public consultation. The Panel has been reminded that its role is to ensure that the Environmental Improvements Protocol has been adhered to and having reviewed details of the consultation, affirmed their satisfaction that the protocol had been followed on this occasion.

However, the Panel has expressed the view that extensive publicity

should be undertaken during the consultation process and that a number of methods of engaging with the public should be employed. Following discussions on bus services operating within the town centre, the Panel has been advised that access for buses will not be affected by any of the options.

The Panel has concluded that the Environmental Improvements Protocol previously approved by the Cabinet has been adhered to. Subsequently, the Cabinet has considered three design options for phase 2 and revised Traffic Orders for Bridge Street, and in doing so has

- ◆ approved the options in principle for the purpose of public consultation;
- ◆ agreed to submit the options to the Huntingdonshire Traffic Area Joint Committee for approval;
- ◆ requested that the results of the consultation exercise be reported back to a future meeting; and
- ◆ requested that significant financial contributions towards the cost of the work be sought from Cambridgeshire County Council and St Ives Town Council.

CUSTOMER SERVICE QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT: APRIL – JUNE 2008

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has received the Customer Service Quarterly Performance Report for the period April to June 2008. Following the formation of a new Customer Services Team in February 2008,

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

quarterly performance reports now cover all services within the Team.

Having noted the performance reported and the scope of a number of activities referred to, the Panel has requested additional information on the number of unanswered phone calls received by the Call Centre and on enquiries in areas that are not the responsibility of the District Council be incorporated into future performance reports.

ADOPTION OF LOCAL STANDARDS FOR THE PROVISION OF CORE SPORTS FACILITIES IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has considered a proposal to adopt local standards for the provision of core sports facilities in Huntingdonshire. The standards will help to achieve an appropriate range of sports facilities to meet future need. The proposal is particularly timely in the context of the preparations for the forthcoming Olympics. Members have been assured that the adoption of the standards will not result in the creation of new facilities that will compete with existing Council facilities.

Whilst the proposal is for five specified types of sports facilities, an emerging Leisure Facility Strategy will incorporate other facilities. In recognising that it is being encouraged by Sport England, the Cabinet, on the recommendation of the Panel has approved the adoption of local standards for the provision of core sports facilities within

Huntingdonshire on the understanding that the Council will not be responsible for their future operating and maintenance costs.

CHEWING GUM LITTER REDUCTION TRIAL

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has reviewed the outcome of the chewing gum litter reduction trial and has considered a proposal to extend the scheme to St Neots. Having noted that the Council spends £17,000 per year removing chewing gum from pavements in town centres, questions have been raised regarding the level of savings achieved since the scheme was introduced. As the scheme was still in its early stages, the level of savings achieved was not yet identified. Nevertheless, owing to the success of the trial to date, the Panel has endorsed the decision to extend the scheme and has requested that Parish Councils are provided with details of it in order that they may introduce their own schemes.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY) - PROGRESS

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has reviewed its programme of studies. In discussing the Great Fen Project concern has been raised about the loss of prime agricultural land. As the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) will be undertaking a study on the Project, Councillors E R Butler, P G Mitchell and J S Watt have expressed interests in participating in that study

and other Members of the Panel have been invited to attend a presentation at the November meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) on the Project.

A study on the impact of the new A14 in terms of air quality and noise pollution is also being investigated and the Panel has requested that a scoping report on affordable housing be submitted to a future meeting.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 – FORWARD PLAN

Following consideration of the Forward Plan, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has requested sight of the Sub-Regional Housing Strategy at a future meeting and have received background information on Customer Service Development in St Ives and St Neots and land at Mayfield Road, Huntingdon.

Arrangements have been made for reports to be submitted to future meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) as follows:-

- ◆ Parish Plans and Local Plan Policy;
- ◆ Proposals for Riverside Park;
- ◆ Development Control Policies Preferred Options;
- ◆ Huntingdon West Area Action Plan – Preferred Options;
- ◆ Great Fen Governance; and
- ◆ The Gypsy and Travellers Issues and Options Document.

THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

Following a suggestion that the night time economy in Huntingdonshire in the context of the Licensing Act 2003 might be a suitable subject for study, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) has received further information on the Act, the situation in Huntingdonshire and national research into the impact of the Act.

The Panel has acknowledged the limitations placed on the licensing authority by the legislation when imposing conditions and initiating reviews of licences. Nevertheless concerns remain on the part of Members about the problems being experienced currently in St. Ives.

Overall, the Panel concluded that there was little that could be achieved in undertaking a review of the technicalities of the Act and that the majority of establishments within the District in the main were well managed. However, having regard to Members' concerns about the social consequences of alcohol abuse, the Panel has agreed to establish a working group to address the matter. Councillors J T Bell, P M D Godfrey and Ms S L Kemp have been appointed to a working group for this purpose.

MAXIMISING INCOME OPPORTUNITIES AND GRANT AVAILABILITY

Councillors P J Downes, L W McGuire and R J West have been appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) to

a working group to ensure that the Council is maximising its income opportunities and grant availability.

MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS – PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) has been updated on the receipt & expenditure of money negotiated under Section 106 Agreements by the Council.

ENHANCED CLEANSING SERVICES PROPOSAL FOR MARKET TOWNS

The findings of a study by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) regarding the introduction of additional cleansing services in the District's town centres on Sundays to deal with the litter left as a result of the Saturday night time economy have been considered by the Cabinet.

In discussing those areas identified as requiring additional cleansing on Sundays, Executive Councillors have queried various operational matters associated with the proposal and its effect on the existing cleaning regime. Particular reference was made to extensiveness of the areas identified and the need to target specific streets. The Cabinet recognised also that additional cleansing was likely to cause some early morning noise which could be a cause of disturbance to some residents. The Overview & Scrutiny Panel has been requested to investigate these issues further.

With regard to the cost of introducing an additional cleansing service, the Cabinet has requested that the possibility of financial contributions towards its cost be investigated with local town councils. Further aid may be available via a new Government measure entitled Alcohol Disorder Zones, designed to require those establishments responsible for the litter problem to make good the effected area. The Cabinet has requested that their use be investigated further.

REVIEW OF COUNCIL STRUCTURE: APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUP

The Cabinet has appointed Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, K J Churchill, W T Clough, S J Criswell, T D Sanderson, Ms M Thomas, G S E Thorpe and R G Tuplin to a Structural Working Group established to review the existing Council structure in light of experience and recent legislative change. The first meeting of the Working Group is scheduled to take place on 24th September and the review is expected to be concluded with the intention to implement any changes in the new Municipal Year.

LAND AT MAYFIELD ROAD, HUNTINGDON

The Cabinet has approved the disposal of Council owned land at Mayfield Road, Huntingdon to Wherry Housing Association for the purpose of providing affordable housing.

LEISURE CENTRES RESTRUCTURING

For the purposes of consultation with affected staff, the Employment Panel has approved an indicative management structure for the Leisure Centre Service. The proposed arrangements are designed to improve the levels of co-ordination and cohesion across the five sites and to develop the Centres as a stronger, more unified service. The proposals are also intended to establish a management structure which will be better placed to achieve significant savings targets which have been set over the next few years.

Under the revised structure, specific responsibilities will be aligned to individual managers in an attempt to reduce duplication of effort, improve efficiency and enable further business and service improvements to be brought forward.

REQUESTS TO FILL VACANT POSTS

Given the circumstances applicable to a number of vacancies across the Council's Directorates the Employment Panel has authorised the HR Manager to recruit to the following posts:-

- ◆ Corporate ICT Systems Officer;
- ◆ Assistant Engineer;
- ◆ Training and Development Advisor; and
- ◆ Environmental Protection Officer.

The Panel has also authorised the HR Manager to recruit to any subsequent posts vacated as a

result of internal promotion to these posts.

RETIREMENT OF PERSONNEL – ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Employment Panel has placed on record its recognition of, and gratitude for, the excellent contributions made by the following employees during their employment in the local government service and conveyed its best wishes to them for a long and happy retirement.

Name	Directorate	Local Government Service
Mrs S Nesbitt	Commerce & Technology	37 years
Mr A Strand	Environmental & Community Services	4 years
Mrs A Davies	Environmental & Community Services	4 years

CUSTOMER SERVICES TEAM - TECHNICAL SENIOR ADVISOR POST

As a consequence of recent changes to staff working hours and the changing requirements of the District Council's Call Centre, the Employment Panel has approved a proposal to create a post of Senior Technical Advisor at the Centre. The new position will be responsible for systems and management support and provide performance management statistics and information. The cost of the post will be met by the deletion of another post in the call centre establishment.

APPOINTMENT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR, CENTRAL SERVICES

With the assistance of a report prepared by the Consultants who had been employed to manage the recruitment process to the vacant position of Director of Central Services, the Employment Panel has approved a number of recommendations to facilitate a successful appointment, including a move to spot salaries and changes to the arrangements for performance related pay for the post. The Panel had previously authorised the Head of HR and Payroll to recruit to the post at their meeting in June. In the light of market conditions relating to Chief Officer salaries, the Panel has also agreed to implement the proposals for the Chief Executive and existing Directors from 1st April 2009.

The Panel has also suggested that the same consultants be commissioned to prepare the annual report received at the Employment Panel in the New Year to facilitate Officer salary negotiations for 2009/10.

REVIEW OF PUBLIC SPEAKING AT DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PANEL MEETINGS

The Development Control Panel has considered the results of a survey of those who had addressed the Panel on a planning application under the new arrangements for speaking at meetings. In response to comments about the intimidating and daunting nature of the Panel, the Chairman, will, in future welcome public

speakers informally before the start of meetings to try and put them at their ease. Whilst endorsing the continuation of existing procedures, the Panel has expressed the view that supporters of applications should also be entitled to speak so the procedure will be amended to give effect to this change.

ENFORCEMENT ACTION – LITTLE END ROAD, EATON SOCON, ST NEOTS

The Development Control Panel has instructed the Head of Planning Services to take enforcement action to secure the cessation of the unauthorised use for B2 (general industrial) purposes of premises at 20 Little End Road, Eaton Socon. In general the Notice will require compliance within 4 calendar months but elements of it need to be addressed within 3 days given the detrimental effect of the unauthorised activity on residents in Admirals Way, Eaton Socon.

URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK, LAND SOUTH OF HIGH STREET, RAMSEY

The Development Control Panel has welcomed the publication of an Urban Design Framework Document for land south of the High Street, Ramsey and recommended that it be adopted by the Cabinet as Council policy.

The document identifies important settlement characteristics, open spaces and settings and potential locations for appropriate development that with guidance could be used to achieve

successful, imaginative and distinctive schemes.

STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND: ANNUAL REVIEW

The Chairman has presented to the Standards Committee the outcome of his review of the content of the Annual Review document 2007/08 published by the Standards Board for England. Although there is little for them to follow up, the Committee has requested that the DVD "The Code Uncovered" be made available for all Members of the Council to view and that that part of the website relating to standards and conduct be enhanced by the inclusion of material relating to the new standards framework.

REFERRALS (ASSESSMENT) SUB COMMITTEE

The Chairman of the Referrals (Assessment) Sub Committee has reported upon the outcome of the 3 cases considered by the Sub Committee to date and the action taken by the Monitoring Officer in each case.

REGISTRATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

Although pleased to note that only 20 of the 672 Councillors elected or appointed to office have failed, to date, to return their declarations of financial or other interests, the Standards Committee requested the Monitoring Officer to specifically follow up those parishes/individuals where forms were outstanding.

CREATIVE ENTERPRISE CENTRE, ST NEOTS

The Cabinet has authorised the Head of Legal and Estates, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy, to agree final terms for the management of the new Creative Enterprise Centre in St Neots. At the same time, the Cabinet has been informed of the outcome of a tender exercise for the management of the Centre and has approved a tender received from NWES.

The building will provide accommodation for about 24 small creative businesses, together with other facilities for educational exhibition and conference purposes. The project is being developed in conjunction with Longsands College and the Department of Communities and Local Government.

HOUSING BENEFIT FRAUD INVESTIGATION ACTIVITY

The Corporate Governance Panel has been acquainted with the work undertaken by the Benefits Fraud Investigation Team over the past three years and in particular the background to the Council's subscription to two data matching schemes and the level of partnership work being undertaken with partner agencies. Annual update reports on this activity will be submitted to future meetings.

INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

The Corporate Governance Panel has been acquainted with progress made against the 2007/08 Annual Audit Plan, the performance standards achieved and the Audit

and Risk Manager's opinion on the level of assurance provided by the Council's internal control environment in terms of the effective exercise of its functions.

RISK REGISTER

The Corporate Governance Panel has received and noted details of new or changed entries made to the Risk Register since it was last reviewed in March 2008.

RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Corporate Governance Panel has been acquainted with progress made to embed risk management within the Council and noted a requirement to improve the Council's current rating to Level 3 against the risk management standard.

REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PANEL

The Corporate Governance Panel has been acquainted with the outcome of the Panel's own review of its effectiveness and endorsed the content of the Action Plan referred to within the report.

PROTOCOL BETWEEN THE LEADER AND THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

In accordance with the CIPFA/SOLACE publication on Good Governance in Local Government, the Corporate Governance Panel has approved the content of a protocol for the relationship between the Leader of

the Council and the Chief Executive, an issue which has been outstanding from the Council's Governance Statement.

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Corporate Governance Panel has approved the Governance Statement for 2008/09, which reviews the Council's governance arrangements and identifies matters to be addressed next year.

APPROVAL FOR PUBLICATION OF THE 2007/08 ACCOUNTS

The Corporate Governance Panel has approved the accounts for the year 2007/08. Having endorsed the Council's Letter of Representation, the Panel has been informed by the Council's external auditors that an unqualified opinion will be provided on the accounts. Matters contained in the Action Plan to the auditor's report have also been noted.

ELECTORAL CYCLE IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The Elections Panel has been acquainted with recent legislative changes that enable the Council to alter its electoral cycle from the current elections by for a third of its Members each year followed by a fallow year when no District elections are held to whole council elections and, should the need arise, to revert to elections by thirds.

The Panel has noted the procedure involved, the implications for town and parish councils, the financial implications and other consequential considerations.

Before coming to a view on whether the Council should change its electoral

cycle, the Panel has requested that a range of further information is collected and that District Council Members are consulted on what would be suitable electoral arrangements for the Council.

Should the Council wish to move to whole Council elections it will need to pass a resolution to that effect by the end of 2010.

REVIEW OF PARISH ARRANGEMENTS IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The Elections Panel has received an update on progress of implementation of recommendations made following the conclusion of the review of parish arrangements in Huntingdonshire.

The necessary Orders have been made to bring into effect a series of recommendations for changes to parish electoral arrangements. Copies of the Orders have been sent to the councils affected and to various other bodies prescribed in legislation.

The Department of Communities and Local Government will undertake the process of implementing a number of other recommendations involving boundary changes. Once this process has been completed the Council will be responsible for taking resulting consequential actions such as making Orders to specify the number of councillors a new parish council has.

There are expected to be a small number of other minor boundary changes that the Electoral Commission will be requested to make. The Panel has asked that those parishes affected by these recommendations are informed of progress.