

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE SUPPORT)** will be held in **COUNCIL CHAMBER, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN** on **TUESDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2008 AT 18.45PM OR ON THE RISING OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (CORPORATE and STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK) WHICHEVER IS THE LATER** 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 14th October 2008.

**Mrs C Bulman
388234**

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive declaration from Members 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. GREAT FEN PROJECT (Pages 5 - 10)

To receive a presentation by the Director of Environmental and Community Services and the Great Fen Project Manager.

**M Sharp
388301**

(A report by the Director of Environmental and Community Services is attached).

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN (Pages 11 - 18)

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**

5. GYPSY & TRAVELLER SITES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT: INITIAL ISSUES CONSULTATION DOCUMENT: PRINCIPLES & PROCESSES (Pages 19 - 42)

To consider a joint report by the Heads of Planning Services and Housing Services.

**S Ingram
388400**

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PANELS
(Pages 43 - 44)

To consider a joint report by the Heads of Community & Environmental Health, Administration and Policy & Strategic Services updating Members on the preparation of proposals on local and national initiatives in response to the Government's White Paper – Communities in Control: Real Power, Real People.

R Reeves
388003
S Lammin
388280
I Leatherbarrow
388005

7. HOME WORKING - PILOT SCHEME (Pages 45 - 48)

To consider a report by the Head of Policy & Strategic Services.

I Leatherbarrow
388005

8. WORKPLAN STUDIES (Pages 49 - 54)

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

Mrs C Bulman
388234

9. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE SUPPORT)
(Pages 55 - 62)

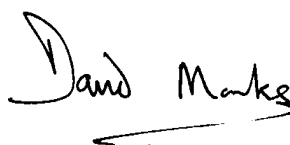
To consider a report by the Head of Administration on decisions taken by the Panel.

Mrs C Bulman
388234

10. SCRUTINY (Pages 63 - 68)

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

Dated this 30 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 Committee/Panel.

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

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

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

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

Emergency Procedure

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit and to make their way to the 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, 14 October 2008.

PRESENT: Councillor J A Gray – Chairman.

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

36. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 9th September 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

37. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

38. 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.

Members requested that the report by the Planning Policy Manager regarding the Highways Agency pre-consultation on side road orders for the A14 improvements be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel.

39. PETITION

An on-line petition signed by 10 people was presented drawing attention to the problems experienced by local residents with regard to commuter parking in the Longsands area of St. Neots.

At the invitation of the Chairman St. Neots Town Councillor Mrs Ottolangui spoke to the petition, explaining that commuters were parking in residential areas near the railway station in St Neots from 6.30am on weekdays and that residents were asking for restrictions to be imposed on on-street parking in the area for one hour during the day which would effectively prevent all day stays.

Although the problem had been ongoing for a number of years, Members expressed doubts as to whether the introduction of restrictions near the station would simply displace commuter parking to other areas. It was reported that First Capital Connect was

planning to improve parking facilities at the station but the Panel was advised that residents suspected that while this might create additional capacity, commuters would continue to park in residential areas to avoid the charges.

Members were informed that a further petition containing 173 signatures recently had been presented to the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee and that a feasibility study would be undertaken by the County Council when funding became available from its minor traffic management budget. As there was no indication when the latter might be progressed, the Panel discussed how best action might be expedited to assist local residents. Under the circumstances, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Chairman be requested to write to the Chairman of the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee, inquiring how the matter might be progressed at an early opportunity; and
- (b) that a representative from First Capital Connect be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss the expansion plans for car parking at Huntingdon and St. Neots railway stations.

40. IMPROVING LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY CONSULTATION: CHANGES TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY POWERS

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel considered a suggested response on behalf of the Council to a consultation paper issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG). Members were informed that the paper formed part of a series of consultation documents which had been produced to implement the proposals in the recent White Paper "Communities in Control". The comments made of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) which had also considered the paper were circulated for information at the meeting.

In considering the responses suggested to a series of questions posed by CLG, Members discussed in particular the proposals to create a dedicated scrutiny resource at county and unitary authority level, to require the Chairman of the Council and officers to attend public hearings to explain their actions and to introduce "virtual" meetings with remote voting by Members. The Panel noted that a number of the proposals in the paper had already been introduced by the Council and also that others would be addressed in the current review being undertaken by the working party under the Chairmanship of the Special Advisor to the Cabinet.

RESOLVED

that the suggested answers to the consultation paper set out in the annex to the report now submitted be endorsed for submission to CLG emphasising that the way in which the issues raised were implemented should be left to local

discretion rather than the prescriptive approach adopted in the paper.

41. LOCAL PROCUREMENT REVIEW

Further to Minute No. 07/60, the Panel received a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) summarising the discussions which had taken place at a recent meeting held between Panel representatives and the local business community to monitor performance against the actions contained in the Panel's review of local procurement. As chairman of the latter meeting, Councillor M G Baker expressed his satisfaction that a positive and constructive discussion had taken place. Updates had been given on developments within the economic development service, ongoing work to standardise the terms and conditions of procurement with other district councils and the implications of the Council's emerging Environment Strategy. Members were also informed that the electronic alert to external businesses for additions to the Council's Contracts Register was now working.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that a further meeting be held with business representatives on 12th March 2009.

42. 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, Councillors D Harty and Ms S L Kemp reported on the investigations being undertaken by the working groups reviewing the Section 106 process and the social consequences of alcohol abuse respectively. With regard to latter investigation, it was suggested that the working group explore the Council's position with regard to the adoption and implementation of the countywide alcohol harm reduction strategy.

In discussing potential future studies, a suggestion was made concerning the possibility of reviewing the Council's investment strategy and the Head of Administration undertook to circulate information in advance of the next meeting to determine whether this would be appropriate study area.

43. 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 discussed previously.

44. SCRUTINY

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

Chairman

**GREAT FEN PROJECT
(Report by Director of Environmental & Community Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report accompanies a presentation which will cover the following matters:

- ✚ The Great Fen Partnership
- ✚ Existing Great Fen Governance
- ✚ Background Research
- ✚ Vision
- ✚ Progress:
 - General
 - Heritage Lottery Fund
- ✚ The Future:
 - Strategic Activities
 - Governance Review

Copies of the slides will be available to the Panel.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Great Fen Project is one of the most significant habitat restoration projects ever undertaken in Britain by the acquisition and restoration of land adjacent to two existing National Nature Reserves, Holme Fen and Woodwalton Fen. Connecting these two reserves will create a haven for wildlife. The Project, however, is by no means exclusively about wildlife as it will create a massive green space for people, opening up new opportunities for recreation, education and business. Agriculture will also remain an important aspect; although over the life of the project the intensive arable activity will decrease, replaced in part by grazing and other economic activity.

2.2 The Great Fen Vision is:

“A restored fenland landscape providing a variety of habitats for people and wildlife, now and in the future”.

2.3 The Great Fen Project Aims as stated in the Strategy and Action Plan are:

- ✚ Help safeguard two very important National Nature Reserves. These are legally protected sites, one of which is of international importance for its wetland habitats and species.

- ✚ Create over 3,000 hectares (over 4200 football pitches) of new wildlife habitat, making a major contribution to local and national targets set out in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.
- ✚ Contribute to diversification in the local economy, creating opportunities for new jobs and income streams.
- ✚ Enhance flood protection in the Middle Level drainage system.
- ✚ Create access for a wide range of users in an area largely devoid of public footpaths.
- ✚ Become a significant tourist destination.
- ✚ Contribute to important Government Public Service Agreement targets.

2.4 The Project is currently governed under the terms of a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between the five partners: The Environment Agency, Natural England, The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough, The Middle Level Commissioners and the Council. Agreement to the MoA was first approved by Cabinet in June 2002 and updated in July 2006 and September 2007.

2.5 The Project aims and objectives fit closely with those of the Council, particularly:

- ✚ Provision of strategic open space (related to the growth agenda and access to the countryside).
- ✚ Diversification of the economy, especially in NW Huntingdonshire.
- ✚ Promotion of healthy lifestyle choices.
- ✚ Conservation and enhanced local heritage.
- ✚ Protection and improvement of wildlife habitats.
- ✚ Adaptation and mitigation in the face of climate change.

The Project aligns with the Council's key strategies, including:

- ✚ Sustainable Community Strategy
- ✚ (Planning) Core Strategy
- ✚ Local Economic Strategy
- ✚ Environment Strategy

2.6 With regard to 'spatial planning' the significance of the Project has been highlighted and given statutory force by inclusion in the now adopted Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS). The RSS is part of the local 'Development Plan', a legal entity and as a result the Council's Local Development Framework must be consistent with that Strategy to be judged 'sound' at subsequent Examinations.

2.7 The Great Fen Project is also recognised in the Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub Region whereby within this District it is linked with other areas including Paxton Pits and areas around Grafham Water into an extensive network of strategic green space.

2.8 The Project is funded from a variety of sources including private donations and contributions from Partners. Significant resources have been provided from public sources including Growth Area Funds (CLG), Economic Development (EEDA) and more recently the Heritage Lottery Fund in recognition of the national importance of the Project. In total some £15.6m has been raised.

3. THE FUTURE

- 3.1 In considering matters raised by Councillors and Parish Councillors at a meeting held on 6 June, the Great Fen Steering Group gave a response which is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.2 Progress since the response will be outlined in the presentation to the Panel.

4. CONCLUSION

- ✚ The Great Fen Project aligns well with local, regional and national policies.
- ✚ The Council is a full partner in the Project
- ✚ Further and active consideration is being given to:
 - New more robust governance arrangements.
 - A communication and information strategy.
 - Land assembly and land management.
 - Further research and master planning.

Contact Officer: Malcolm Sharp, Director of Environmental & Community Services
☎ 01480 388301

Great Fen Project

Response to the Four Propositions put to Councillors: Briefing on 6 June by Councillor Swales

New Governance Arrangements

The Project Partners currently operate under a Memorandum of Agreement which has served the Project well for the last few years. However, the Partners have agreed that the current governance arrangements are no longer fit for purpose and they are committed to a more robust agreement which establishes the partnership as an enduring institution. We are currently undertaking a review of mechanisms to identify the most appropriate form of governance that is acceptable to all Partners and that matches the aims and objectives of the Project over the coming years. Each Partner is taking legal advice on this.

The Partners' representatives on the Steering Group have agreed that a new agreement should be in place by 1 April 2009, but this is subject to independent legal advice being sought by individual Partners.

Communication

The Partners are committed to providing information about the Project and to ensuring all interested parties are consulted and kept informed of progress. The current ways in which different stakeholders can receive or seek information include:

- Personal contact with the Great Fen Project Manager, Campaign Manager, Development Officer or Ramsey Heights Countryside Classroom Centre Manager as well as Natural England / Great Fen reserves manager.
- Personal contact with partner representatives on the Steering Group
- The Great Fen Project Newsletter which is published twice a year
- The Great Fen Project website and project partners' websites
- Communications between the tenants and the landlords are through the landlord's agent
- News items in local press and other publications such as Ramsey Matters
- Guided walks which are undertaken on a regular basis and which can be requested (450 people were given guided walks of the area between April-June 2008)
- Talks/presentations to local community groups and societies
- Community events in the Project area and other venues (e.g., British Bird Watching Fair, Peterborough Green Festival, Ramsey Heritage Weekend)

Since the Project's inception, we have undertaken strategic consultation work with key stakeholder groups and the general public and will continue to do so. Our capacity to undertake further outreach, consultation, education and community engagement work will be greatly enhanced from January 2009 onwards with the employment of new dedicated staff funded by Heritage Lottery Fund.

In addition to these established links we propose to provide a regular email briefing to Parish, District and County Councillors.

We would also welcome your views on how you would like us to communicate with you in the future.

Land Assembly

In order to achieve the long-term aims and objectives of the Great Fen Project, the partners wish to eventually secure control over all of the land within the Project area. However, there are areas of priority land which:

- Lie close to, and between, Holme Fen and Woodwalton Fen National Nature Reserves, for purposes of nature conservation and water level management;
- Will provide opportunities for water management, for purposes of flood protection; and/or
- Offer valuable opportunities for visitors and visitor facilities, for purposes of recreation, education and socio-economic benefit.

These priorities have guided land acquisition subject to its availability and our approach to fundraising. The following statements outline how we will take forward land purchase and tenancies in the future.

1. The Project partners will be examining opportunities for changing tenancy boundaries on land owned by the Wildlife Trust, formerly part of the Holmewood Estate, where this better achieves project aims and objectives. However, this can only be achieved with the voluntary involvement and cooperation of tenants.
2. If a tenant wishes to sell the interest in their land and terminate their tenancy early, the Wildlife Trust, as landlord, will enter into negotiations. This could result in the granting of a new tenancy to another farmer or the early reversion of the land. These notifications will be subject to commercial confidentiality.
3. The Partners will focus their proactive approaches to landowners who own properties within the higher priority areas as described above.
4. The Partners will hold discussions with any landowner in the project area that approaches the project about selling their land.
5. As has already been demonstrated in the Project area, the Partners will seek to involve the vendor or other local farmers in the re-creation of wildlife habitat. Constraints notwithstanding, this could involve granting new tenancies.
6. As with all commercial negotiations these would be confidential. The Partners will not divulge the nature of any agreements between interested parties.

Masterplan

The social, economic and environmental benefits of the Project flow from the acquisition and appropriate use of land. Now we have greater certainty over

what will happen in the Project area over the coming years, the Partners are developing a masterplan which sets out what the Project area will be like in the future. This in turn will help inform discussions on issues such as visitor facilities, access routes/infrastructure and connectivity to local towns and villages. The intention is for a Great Fen Project masterplan to be finalised by spring 2009.

The masterplan will inform the context for the development of socio-economic benefits. The Partners will also be engaged in projects of benefit to local communities. Examples include:

- Enhanced flood storage in the project area;
- Improved access to and around the project area for recreation, learning and improving health/quality of life;
- The provision of education/training/community facilities and opportunities at Ramsey Heights Countryside Classroom;
- A grazing project working with local farmers;
- An investigation into the use of hay, coppice and reed for power generation.

The Partners have also established a Visitor Facilities Working Group to bring forward short and long-term proposals to enhance visitor facilities and the consequent social/economic benefits. These proposals will inform the Masterplan.

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

Prepared by **Councillor I C Bates**
 Date of Publication: **16 October 2008**
 For Period: **1 November 2008 to 28 February 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
Customer Service Development in St. Ives and St. Neots	Cabinet	6 Nov 2008	None.	Julia Barber, Head of Revenue Services Tel No. 01480 388105 or email - Julia.Barber@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
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
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
Sub-Regional Housing Strategy	Cabinet	20 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
To adopt Urban Design Framework for South of High Street, Ramsey	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
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 No. 01480 388240 or email - Steve.Plant@huntsdc.gov.uk		Mrs D C Reynolds and T V Rogers	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
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
Asset Management Plan****	Cabinet	18 Dec 2008	Previous Cabinet Reports	Keith Phillips, Estates Manager and Property Manager Tel No. 01480 388260 or email Keith.Phillips@huntsdc.gov.uk		A Hansard	Service Support
To adopt Somersham Conservation Area Boundary Changes and Character Statement	Cabinet	18 Dec 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
Development Control Policies Preferred Options	Cabinet	18 Dec 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
Community Engagement	Cabinet	18 Dec 2008	Previous Report to Cabinet	Dr S Lammin, Head of Environmental and Community Health Services Tel No. 01480 388280 or email. Susan.Lammin@huntsdc.gov.uk		Mrs D C Reynolds	Service Delivery

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
To adopt Urban Design Framework for land at The Whaddons, Mayfield Drive, Huntingdon	Cabinet	18 Dec 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
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 388203 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 No. 01480 388203 or email - Jo.Emmerton@huntsdc.gov.uk		Mrs D C Reynolds	Service Delivery

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
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
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
To adopt Godmanchester Conservation Area Boundary Changes and Character Statement	Cabinet	13 Jan 2009	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
Budget and MTP***	Cabinet	29 Jan 2009	Draft MTP - Previous year's budget report - Various Annexes	Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services Tel No. 01480 388103 or email Steve.Couper@huntsdc.gov.uk	Overview and Scrutiny (CSF) – 27th January 2009	T V Rogers	Overview and Scrutiny (CSF)
Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators***	Cabinet	29 Jan 2009	Previous year's Strategy	Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services Tel No. 01480 388103 or email Steve.Couper@huntsdc.gov.uk		T V Rogers	Overview and Scrutiny (CSF)
Parish Plans and Local Plan Policy	Cabinet	29 Jan 2009	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

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Draft Planning Contributions Supplementary Planning Document	Cabinet	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
Proposals for Riverside Park	Cabinet	19 Feb 2009	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
To adopt Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area Boundary Changes and Character Statement	Cabinet	19 Feb 2009	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
Huntingdon West Area Action Plan Preferred Options	Cabinet	19 Feb 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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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
(SERVICE SUPPORT)**

11TH NOVEMBER 2008

**GYPSY AND TRAVELLER SITES DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT:
INITIAL ISSUES CONSULTATION DOCUMENT: PRINCIPLES AND PROCESSES**

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

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 To consider the consultation document addressing the issues arising for the preparation of the Gypsy and Traveller Sites DPD. The consultation document will be presented to Cabinet on 20 November.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council's Local Development Scheme 2007 proposes a DPD to allocate sites for Gypsies and Travellers.
- 2.2 A Steering Group has been set up to oversee the DPD's preparation. It includes representatives from Planning Services (Planning Policy, Development Control and Enforcement), Environmental Health, Housing Services, the County Council and Luminus and can also take advice from other organisations such as Go-East and the Police. The Executive Member for Planning Strategy and Transport is informed of the matters considered by the Steering Group.
- 2.3 The DPD will need to conform to the policy in the East of England Plan. The Examination into the draft policy took place in the week beginning 20th October 2008. Cabinet agreed the Council's response to the draft policy at its meeting on 24th April 2007. The Council has submitted additional written statements and has participated in the Examination to safeguard Huntingdonshire's interests.
- 2.4 The Draft RSS policy requires Huntingdonshire to provide an additional 20 pitches by 2011, and using the suggested growth rate of 3% pa, it would mean a further 18 pitches for the period 2012 - 2021. The inspector's report followed by the Secretary of State's proposed changes is expected in 2009.

3 THE ISSUES REPORT

- 3.1 This consultation document is the first public step in discussing the issues which arise and seeking views on them which will help to guide the preparation for the DPD. It is proposed to publish the document in January 2009 for a six week period. A copy of the Issues Report is attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.2 The results of the consultation will inform the next stage which will be to identify the various site options which could be allocated to make provision for the additional pitches required. It is envisaged that the document with site options would be the subject of further consultation in the summer of 2009. The Council would then need to assess the results of that consultation in order to come to a view as to which sites are the most suitable to be allocated in the DPD. The Council will then need to agree a draft plan will be subject to participation ahead of being submitted in mid 2010 to the Secretary of State for Examination.
- 3.3 The Issues report is in two parts – ‘Background’ about the various framework documents and assessments which are being used to inform the policies; and ‘The Issues’ which lists the issues and asks questions.
- 3.4 A vision and objectives are drafted for comment to make it clear what the aims of the DPD are (Issues 1 and 2). These will also help in the testing required for sustainability appraisal and for monitoring.
- 3.5 The criteria for the location of Gypsy and Traveller sites as set out in the Core Strategy are listed, together with questions about whether there is a need to add further criteria or identify particular geographical areas as having more need than others (Issue 3).
- 3.6 The proposed timeframe of up to 2021 is noted at Issue 4 with questions about whether this is the appropriate date and whether criteria can be used for part of the period rather than identifying sites for the full period.
- 3.7 The size of site, both in terms of numbers of pitches and the size of each pitch, is discussed at Issue 5.
- 3.8 Officers are undertaking analysis of public land and other land that is currently used by gypsies and travellers for the next ‘Site Options’ document. Issue 6 asks whether consultees know of any other land that should be considered.
- 3.9 Issue 7 asks about who might own gypsy and traveller sites in order that they be brought forward according to the timeframes in RSS.
- 3.10 Site specifics are thought to be largely covered in the recently released government Good Practice Guide. Issue 8 asks about these specific design issues.
- 3.11 The future of the site owned by the County Council and managed by Luminus at St Neots is raised at Issue 9.

- 3.12 The needs of Travelling Showpeople and the need for transit sites and emergency stopping places complete the report (Issues 10, 11 and 12).

4 CONSULTATION STRATEGY

- 4.1 The DPD will be prepared in accordance with the Council's adopted Statement of Community Involvement. However, this is a specialised planning document and it will be important to engage effectively with the local Gypsy and Traveller community, including the existing residents of the St Neots site. An initial discussion with the local Gypsy and Traveller community has taken place to ensure that the approach being taken in drafting the Issues consultation document is appropriate.
- 4.2 Discussions have taken place with the Diversity Officer in order to progress a consultation strategy to enable effective participation by all stakeholders.

5 INTERIM SUSTAINABILITY APPRAISAL (SA)

- 5.1 Given the specific nature of the DPD, the Scoping Report which forms the basis of SA may need to be augmented to ensure that is appropriate for the purpose of assessing this particular DPD. Officers are therefore considering an addendum to the Scoping Report which will be pertinent to the assessment of this DPD. This will be subject to consultation with the key environmental bodies, and bodies with a particular interest in Gypsy and Traveller issues.
- 5.2 The Interim SA will need to be published for consultation as a supporting document to the Issues report in January. Cabinet will therefore be asked to agree that the Interim SA be finalised by the Head of Planning Services and the Head of Housing Services in conjunction with the Executive Member for Planning Strategy and Transport.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 Cabinet will be recommended to:
1. Agree the Issues report for the Gypsy and Traveller sites DPD for the purposes of consultation;
 2. Agree that the Interim SA be finalised by the Head of Planning Services and Head of Housing Services after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport; and
 3. Agree that illustration and any minor additional editing and updating which may be needed prior to publication be undertaken by the Head of Planning Services and Head of Housing Services after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

ODPM Circular 01/2006 Planning for Gypsy & Traveller Caravan Sites (February 2006)
CLG Circular 04/2007 Planning for Travelling Showpeople (August 2007)
RSS Single Issue Review: Planning for Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation in the East of England, Draft Policy (February 2008) and submissions to the Examination into that policy
CLG Designing Gypsy & Traveller Sites – Good Practice Guide (May 2008).
Cambridge Sub-Region Traveller Needs Assessment (May 2006)

**Contact Officer: Steve Ingram, Head of Planning Services
(01480 388400)**

APPENDIX 1

Huntingdonshire Gypsy & Traveller Sites Development Plan Document

Initial Issues Consultation Document: Principles and Processes

October 2008

Foreword

Huntingdonshire District Council has a duty to ensure that appropriate accommodation is made available for its Gypsy and Traveller community in accordance with the East of England Regional Plan. It is important that we remember that travelling and living in a caravan is the cultural heritage of that community. Gypsies and Travellers are often more disadvantaged than other ethnic minority groups in opportunities for access to health-care and education.

There are advantages in making adequate provision on sites which are well designed with appropriate facilities. There should be fewer unauthorised encampments and developments, less conflict between the travelling and settled communities and less social exclusion, leading to a greater understanding and respect between communities.

This document is the first in a series of documents which will result in a plan identifying sites to provide residential accommodation for the Gypsy and Traveller community in Huntingdonshire. It will be followed by a further consultation document which will set out a number of potential sites which could be identified as possible allocation sites. In turn, this will be followed by a document which sets out the sites which the Council think best meet the identified need in Huntingdonshire.

As this is a Development Plan Document, the Draft Plan will be subject to an Examination by an independent planning inspector before it is finally adopted in 2010.

The District Council wants all stakeholders, from both the settled community and the Gypsy and Traveller community, to take an active part in this process and so your responses at each stage are important.

Councillor Peter Bucknell
Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport

Part 1 Background

1. The Local Development Framework

1.1 The District Council is preparing a number of planning policy local development documents which will make up the Local Development Framework (LDF). Such documents are either Development Plan Documents (DPDs), which form the statutory Development Plan and have been subject to public Examination by an independent Inspector, or Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) which although they have been subject to public participation do not need to go through the Examination process.

1.2 As part of this process, the Council is preparing a DPD to provide additional permanent residential sites for Gypsies and Travellers. It is required to be a DPD because it allocates land for development. It will need to be consistent with the Council's Sustainable Communities Strategy and the Submission Draft Core Strategy which was submitted to the Secretary of State in July 2008.

1.3 In parallel, the Council is preparing a Planning Proposals DPD which will identify housing sites for the settled population. The documents which the Council proposes to prepare, together with a timetable for preparation, are set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The Council's formal LDS dates from March 2007. This has been informally revised to take account of changes in circumstances, particularly changes in the timetables. The Council has published an update and will revise the LDS formally when new legislation from the Government allows.

2. Government Guidance

2.1 Government policy is set out in Planning Policy Statements (which are replacing Planning Policy Guidance Notes), Circulars and other advice such as Ministerial statements. Highly relevant is "Planning for Gypsy and Traveller Caravan Sites" ODPM Circular 01/2006, which requires local authorities to allocate sufficient sites for Gypsies and Travellers in site allocation DPDs and sets out a broad set of criteria to be taken into account when allocating sites.

2.2 Specifically the Circular says: 'The number of pitches set out in the RSS must be translated into specific site allocations in one of the local authority's DPDs.'... 'Criteria must not be used as an alternative to site allocations in DPDs where there is an identified need for pitches. Local planning authorities will need to demonstrate that sites are suitable, and that there is a realistic likelihood that specific sites allocated in DPDs will be made available for that purpose. DPDs will need to explain how the land will be made available for a gypsy and traveller site, and timescales for provision.'

2.3 The Circular also sets out a clear definition for Gypsies and Travellers:

“Persons of nomadic habit of life whatever their race or origin, including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family’s or dependants’ educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling show people or circus people travelling together as such.”

3. The Sustainable Community Strategy

3.1 Huntingdonshire’s Draft Sustainable Community Strategy 2008 (SCS) has been prepared by the District Council and its partners. It is an important base for the Gypsy and Traveller Sites DPD.

3.2 The SCS recognises the need to provide accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers as required by the emerging policy in the RSS as part of the objective of providing sufficient housing to meet future needs.

3.3 The SCS also recognises the needs of migrant workers and non settled communities including Gypsies and Travellers as part of the objective of achieving inclusive safe and cohesive communities.

4. The East of England Plan (the Regional Spatial Strategy)

4.1 The East of England Plan (the RSS) was approved in May 2008, but the key policy for Gypsies and Travellers is subject to a single policy review. The East of England Regional Assembly submitted a draft policy to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government on 25 February 2008, and the consultation period closed in May 2008.

4.2 The draft policy requires at least 1,187 net additional permanent residential pitches to be provided over the period 2006 to 2011. This number of authorised pitches in the Region would consequently rise from 1,836 in 2006 to 3,023 in 2011. For Huntingdonshire the figures would be the existing 20 pitches as at 2006 rising to 40 pitches by 2011 i.e. an increase of 20 pitches.

4.3 For the longer period, based on general research, the draft policy proposes that provision should be made on the basis of an annual 3% increase on the overall planned provision in 2011. Huntingdonshire’s share is to be based on the increase required between 2006-2011, this translating into a further 18 pitches being required for the period 2011 – 21 with the total additional pitches therefore being 38 pitches for the period 2006 – 2021.

4.4 The Examination into the draft policy is scheduled for October 2008. The Examination Panel will make recommendations on any changes. The government will then decide and publish any changes for public consultation prior to finalising the review.

5. The Cambridge Sub-Region Local Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment

5.1 The Housing Act 2004 requires local housing authorities to carry out a “Gypsy and Traveller Housing Needs Assessment” (GTAA), in line with the duty to carry out a general Housing Market Assessment every three years.

5.2 The housing authorities, with Cambridgeshire County Council, agreed to carry out a joint study across the Cambridge Sub-region - the Cambridgeshire districts plus Forest Heath, King’s Lynn and West Norfolk, and St. Edmundsbury. This allowed a larger survey to be carried out than would otherwise have been possible and provided the opportunity to explore education and health issues.

5.3 The study, which has been cited by Government as an example of best practice, was carried out by Anglia Ruskin University and Buckinghamshire Chilterns University College. It found that between 405 and 535 pitches were needed in the County by 2010, of which between 15 and 25 additional pitches were required in Huntingdonshire.

5.4 In Huntingdonshire at the time of the GTAA survey (2005) there were 20 pitches (with some 36 caravans) on the County Council owned site at St. Neots, while the average number of unauthorised caravans, excluding those on unauthorised roadside encampments, for 2002-2004 was 14 caravans.

6. Strategic Market Housing Assessment

6.1 Sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SMHAs) are now required by Government (Planning Policy Statement 3). Their purpose is to set out the evidence of need and demand for market and affordable housing. They will replace local Housing Needs Assessments as they relate to affordable housing and provide evidence as to the likely profile of household types requiring market housing.

6.2 A SMHA was published in April 2008 for the Cambridge Sub-Region which includes the five Cambridgeshire and two of the Suffolk authorities.

6.3 The section dealing with Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation draws strongly on the GTAA prepared for the Cambridge Sub-Region in 2006. As well as reflecting the GTAA’s assessment of need, it draws attention to the survey which found that:

- Types of work have changed in recent years, with a decline in traditional farm work, and increased competition from cheaper immigrant labour, contributing to severe economic disadvantage and social exclusion.
- Family networks and informal reciprocal arrangements are important for encouraging and sustaining economic activity
- Seasonal social security benefits are important income sources, especially for those on council sites.

6.4 Since the survey, the SMHA notes that further research has shown family networks to be influential in accommodation arrangements and preferences. This is the case for both movement on to privately developed sites on purchased land, and for movement between Local Authority sites.

6.5 The SMHA indicates that Local Development Plan Documents will determine the criteria to be used within each district, and work is ongoing to inform this process.

7. Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Appraisal

7.1 The DPD is required to consider how it can help achieve sustainable development. The Government's principles for sustainable development (from 'Securing the Future' 2005) are:

- Living within environmental limits
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- Achieving a sustainable economy
- Promoting good governance
- Using sound science responsibly

7.2 A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is required by European Directive 2001/42/EC, while the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) to be undertaken to look at the full range of environmental, social and economic impacts. These processes, which are very similar and have been combined, are required for all stages of plan preparation. A Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report has been prepared for the Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework which covers the main economic, social and environmental issues to be considered.

7.3 The European Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) requires an Appropriate Assessment to consider the potential significant impacts of the Plan on natural habitats of European importance. As this consultation document does not identify sites for development at this stage, it is considered that no significant impacts can be identified, but this will need to be reviewed at the next stage when site options are considered.

Part 2

The Issues

1. A Vision for the Future

Issue: What should be our Vision for the future?

1.1 The DPD should consider an overall vision to consider how its proposals will affect the lives of both the Gypsy and Traveller community and those living in our settlements. The following draft Vision has been prepared:

By the end of the Plan period in 2021, Huntingdonshire will provide sufficient well located, sustainable and high quality sites to meet the needs of the local Gypsy and Traveller communities. There will be a reduced incidence of unauthorised encampments and developments and increased respect and understanding between the Gypsy and Traveller community and the settled community leading to greater integration and social inclusion.

Issue 1: Draft Vision

Q1: Do you agree that this is the appropriate Vision to guide the development of a DPD which will identify sites for permanent residential accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers? Or is there a reasonable alternative Vision which has not been put forward?

2. Objectives

Issue: What are the objectives which should guide the preparation of the DPD?

2.1 The following draft objectives have been drawn up to support the Vision and to guide the development of appropriate policies and the identification of sites:

1. *To provide sufficient permanent residential pitches to meet the numbers required by the East of England Plan*
2. *To provide pitches on sites which meet the criteria set out in the Huntingdonshire Core Strategy*
3. *To ensure that the design of all sites is considered against the standards set out in the Government's design guidance (Designing Gypsy & Traveller Sites: Good Practice Guide, May 2008.)*
4. *To engender social inclusion and reduce the social exclusion and disadvantage suffered by the Gypsy and Traveller community as an ethnic minority*
5. *To promote greater respect and understanding between the settled and Travelling communities*
6. *To safeguard the local environment, the operations of adjoining activities and the amenity of residents in settled communities*
7. *To reduce the incidence of illegal and unplanned Gypsy and Traveller encampments and development*

Issue 2: Draft Objectives

Q2: Do you agree that these draft objectives are appropriate? Or are there reasonable alternatives which have not been identified?

3. Criteria for Selecting Sites

Issue: What criteria should be used to select and assess sites?

3.1 The Core Strategy which was submitted to the Secretary of State in July 2008 includes a policy on Gypsy and Traveller sites as required by Government guidance. Circular 1/2006 states that:

“The core strategy should set out criteria for the location of gypsy and traveller sites which will be used to guide the allocation of sites in the relevant DPD. These criteria will also be used to meet unexpected demand.”

3.2 The submitted Core Strategy policy states:

Policy CS 6 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Account will be taken of the need to ensure that Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople are accommodated in sustainable locations where essential services such as water and sewerage are provided and with good access by foot, cycle or public transport to services such as education and health. Account will also be taken of the rural nature of Huntingdonshire where the availability of public transport is limited.

Providing sites in appropriate locations will help prevent the social exclusion of Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople and conflict with settled communities. Consideration will be taken of the preference of many Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople for a rural location with a degree of separation from the settled community.

The number of pitches should be appropriate to the size of the site and the availability of infrastructure and services and facilities in accordance with the general principles set out in the settlement hierarchy. The following criteria will guide the provision of sites:

- there would be no significant adverse effect on the amenity of nearby residents or operations of adjoining land uses; the development should not adversely impact on the character of the landscape and appropriate landscaping and boundaries should be provided;***
- adequate schools, shops and other community facilities are within reasonable travelling distance, and can be reached by foot, cycle or public transport;***
- the site is served (or can be served) by an adequate water supply and appropriate means of sewage disposal which meets national standards;***

- ***the health and safety of occupants are not put at risk including through unsafe access to sites, poor air quality and unacceptable noise (as for example close to trunk roads) or unacceptable flood risk so that the quality of the environment is at the same acceptable standard as for the settled community;***
- ***there should be adequate space for operational needs including the parking, turning and servicing of vehicles.***

Issue 3 - Criteria

Q3A: Are the criteria in the Core Strategy sufficient to enable the DPD to assess sites which could be allocated for permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller pitches, or is there a need for an additional level of more detailed criteria in this DPD?

Q3B: If you consider there is a need for more detail, what additional detail do you suggest?

3.3 The East of England Plan and the Huntingdonshire Core Strategy consider the District as a whole and make no reference to the distribution of provision within its boundaries. Comments from the Cambridgeshire Sub-Region GTAA suggest a need for more pitches anywhere in the sub-region. However, there may be a spatial pattern of need in Huntingdonshire. The St Neots site is oversubscribed which may indicate a desire for additional provision in that area. There might also be a greater demand in the east of the District within and close to the tradition of seasonal agricultural work on fenland farms. Where Gypsy and Traveller families currently live in “bricks and mortar” housing but seek to relocate to caravan sites close to their existing networks, there could also be a particular geographical need. Alternatively, the view could be taken that what is needed is more sites and that the opportunities for sites are limited and therefore anywhere in the District should be considered as long as it has a reasonable fit with the criteria.

Q3C: Is it appropriate to consider whether there are particular parts of the District where the need for additional sites is greater than other areas?

4. Numbers and Timing

Issue: How should the DPD approach selecting sites over the whole plan period?

4.1 The LDS proposes that the DPD looks to make provision up to the year 2021. However, the RSS Draft Policy only gives specific guidance to 2011 as GTAA's have difficulty in identifying need over a longer term.

4.2 For the longer period, the RSS Draft Policy proposes that provision should be made on the basis of an annual 3% increase on the overall planned provision in 2011, with each district continuing to have the same proportion of additional provision as they were required to have between 2006 and 2011. For Huntingdonshire this would translate into a further 18 pitches being required for the period 2011 – 21 with the total additional pitches therefore being 38 pitches for the period 2006 – 2021. It should be noted that a pitch can accommodate more than one caravan to meet the needs of the family; for example, the St. Neots site of 20 pitches currently accommodates some 38 caravans.

4.3 Thus, based on the RSS draft policy, the DPD would need to identify:

Existing pitches 2006	2006 – 2011 (total in brackets)	2011-2016 (total in brackets)	2016 – 2021 (total in brackets)
20	+20 (40)	+8 (48)	+10 (58)

4.4 It should be noted that there is greater uncertainty over need for the periods beyond 2011 as it is not covered by a needs survey. There is little firm evidence to support the assumption in the draft RSS policy of an annual 3% increase which attempts to take into account projected changes in household size, birth rates etc within the Gypsy and Traveller communities.

4.5 Given that there is some uncertainty surrounding the longer-term need, it may be difficult to justify the allocation of sites for the period up to 2021 envisaged. An alternative would be to allocate sites for a shorter timeframe and use a different approach for the longer period.

Issue 4 – Numbers and Timing

Q4A: Should the DPD allocate sites for the period to 2011 only, based on the evidence of the GTAA and consistent with the figure set out in the East of England Plan draft policy - and then give a general indication of how criteria would be applied to bring forward sites in the longer term future?

Or

Q4B: Should the DPD allocate sites fully for the period to 2021 based on the 3% pa increase overall across the Region as set out in the East of England Plan draft policy?

Or

Q4C: Should the DPD allocate sites for a period between 2011 and 2021, such as 2016, where there is some degree of clarity of need, and then follow the approach set out in Q4A for the remainder of the Plan period?

5. Site Size and Pitch Size

Issue: Is there an optimum size for sites and pitches?

5.1 The current provision in Huntingdonshire includes one site, at St Neots, owned by the Cambridgeshire County Council and managed by Luminus for rent (following stock transfer from Huntingdonshire District Council in 2000) which has 20 pitches. Since 2006 some additional provision has been made by way of planning permissions on four sites. These four private family sites near Somersham, Pidley, St Ives and Catworth are of various sizes from 1 to 10 pitches altogether providing for some additional 17 pitches, although all except for one of these is a temporary permission. Details are set out in Appendix 1.

5.2 The Department of Communities and Local Government published a Good Practice Guide for Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites in May 2008. It states at paragraph 1.12 that:

“Local authorities and registered social landlords will need to take decisions on design on a case by case basis, taking into account local circumstances such as the size, geographical and other characteristics of the site or prospective site and the particular needs of the prospective residents and their families.”

5.3 This suggests that the DPD should consider the appropriate size or ranges of sizes of sites which might be appropriate for Huntingdonshire.

5.4 At paragraph 3.7, the Guidance notes that:

“..... small scale sites of three to four pitches.... are known to work well for single extended families.”

5.5 The DPD will need to convert the number of pitches into land allocations and so there has to be an understanding of how much land a pitch will occupy. There is little guidance on this matter, which would vary depending on servicing and whether additional land is required for grazing animals or for business activities. A pitch should be able to accommodate two caravans, and an amenity building and parking and turning space. The exact size of pitches may vary depending upon local circumstances and the applicant’s stated personal needs. On private sites, a large area of land may be bought simply to provide for separation from neighbours.

Q5A: What is the optimum size of site to address the needs of Gypsies and Travellers in Huntingdonshire?

Q5B: Should there be a maximum size of any new site?

Q5C: What is the appropriate size for pitches?

6. How to identify sites

Issue: What opportunities are there to identify sites?

6.1 Circular 1/2006 at paragraph 35 identifies the various ways in which sites can be identified and be made available:

- “a) Local authorities have discretion to dispose of land for less than best consideration where it will help to secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well-being of the area, as set out in ODPM Circular 06/03.***
- b) Authorities should also consider making full use of the registers of unused and under-used land owned by public bodies as an aid to identifying suitable locations. Vacant land or under-used local authority land may be appropriate.***
- c) Authorities should also consider whether it might be appropriate to exercise their compulsory purchase powers to acquire an appropriate site.***
- d) Cooperation between neighbouring authorities, possibly involving joint DPDs, can provide more flexibility in identifying sites. Such cooperation is***

particularly important where an authority has strict planning constraints across its area.”

6.2 The District Council has engaged with the County Council and the other Cambridgeshire Districts in the preparation of a study of County Council owned land which could be used to provide sites. The project has been undertaken by consultants and funded by Cambridgeshire Horizons. The project established a set of criteria which has been tested against County Council owned land. Further discussions with the County Council are expected with a view to including some County Council owned land in the site options document in 2009.

6.3 The registers of other publicly owned land may also provide opportunities. The District Council has very limited land holdings and most of them are provided for other uses such as sports pitches, play areas and amenity land, but there may be other opportunities presented by the land holdings of other organisations. Contact has been made with public land owners in order to include land not needed for other uses in this study, so that any suitable land can be included in the site options document.

6.4 The Circular points to the potential use of Compulsory Purchase Orders, but this is generally used only as a last resort, as wherever possible, willing landowners are sought and compulsory purchase is a very lengthy process.

6.5 Suitable sites which are privately owned could also be allocated for gypsy and travellers sites where the landowner has indicated a willingness to release the site for this purpose. One of the aims of the participation process is to identify such opportunities. In some cases the sites may already be owned by members of the Gypsy and Traveller community.

Issue 6 How to Identify Sites

Q6A: Are you aware of any land owned by a public body which could be allocated for a Gypsy and Traveller site?

Q6B: Do you agree that Compulsory Purchase Powers should only be used as a last resort in bringing forward sites for Gypsy and Travellers?

Q6C: Are you aware of any privately owned land which might be appropriate to be allocated for a Gypsy and Traveller site?

7. Providers

Issue: what are the best ways of bringing forward the selected sites for development?

7.1 Sites can be allocated in the Plan but it will be important that they are available and can be developed for the required purpose. Sites can be in public or private ownership. If privately owned, the willingness of the site owner to sell is important to ensure that the site does come forward for development in the Plan period rather than being sold or retained in order to achieve an alternative type of development such as housing for the settled community. The Plan will need to make it clear that an allocated

site only has the development potential for the allocated use and that this will be the subject of any planning permission granted.

7.2 The consultation process has an important part to play in ensuring that landowners are aware of the search for sites and are encouraged to consider whether they hold land which could be suitable and which they are willing to release for this purpose.

7.3 In terms of tenure residential sites for Gypsies and Travellers can be:

- Privately owned for owner-occupation by a single or extended family
- Privately owned and managed to be rented by Gypsies and Travellers
- Publicly owned and managed by a Registered Social Landlord.

7.4 Whilst some members of the Gypsy and Traveller community may be able to buy and develop sites, others will be reliant on renting. The District Council might be able to assist this process through the purchase of sites and then selling to individuals or a Registered Social Landlord to develop. Registered Social Landlords can also purchase sites themselves. There is currently an opportunity to bid for Government funds to facilitate this. Funding could be used as a “rolling fund” for the Council to own, lease or sell on.

7.5 Housing developers can contribute to the provision of gypsy and traveller sites. Such provision might occur where there is a particular need in the area and the contribution is needed along with other contributions agreed under S106 of the Town and Country Planning Act.

Issue 7 Providers

Q7A: Are you aware of particular advantages or disadvantages for any of the forms of tenure?

Q7B: Is a mix of tenures appropriate to meet the needs of different Gypsy and Travellers?

Q7C: Should the District Council take a proactive role, perhaps with Registered Social Landlords or housing developers, to ensure that land comes forward for the required purpose?

8. Site Specifics

Issue: what should the DPD say about design?

8.1 Government guidance “Designing Gypsy and Traveller Sites: Good Practice Guide” was published in May 2008. It is intended to provide potential developers and existing site owners with an understanding of the design features needed to help ensure a site is successful, easy to manage and maintain, including site location, layout, size and the services and facilities need to make it operate effectively. As Government guidance the District Council can take it into account as a material planning consideration when determining planning applications. As it is a comprehensive

document it may not be necessary for the DPD to include policies on the matters covered.

8.2 It is noted that paragraph 7.21 of the Good Practice Guide states that any opportunities for using energy from renewable sources should be considered in respect of amenity buildings. It may be that there are opportunities for on-site renewable energy to cater for all uses on the site and a further design policy could be considered to meet regional obligations for increasing the amount of renewable energy used in new developments.

Issue 8 Site Specifics

Q8A: Do you consider that there is no need to include design guidance in the DPD as this is adequately covered by Government guidance?

Or

Q8B: Would you like to see additional design policies, for example about renewable energy, included in the DPD?

9. The St Neots site

Issue: What is the most appropriate future for provision in the St. Neots area?

9.1 The largest and longest established Gypsy and Traveller site in Huntingdonshire lies south of Cambridge Road on the eastern outskirts of St. Neots, close to the Main East Coast Railway. There are 20 pitches on the site, currently occupied by 38 caravans. There is a waiting list should pitches become available. The site is owned by Cambridgeshire County Council and managed by Luminus as a Registered Social Landlord. It lies in a larger tract of land bounded by the A428 to the east and the railway to the west. It therefore has immediate access to open countryside. The location has the advantage of being close to the services and facilities in St Neots.

9.2 A new housing neighbourhood is currently under construction at Love's Farm, immediately to the north of Cambridge Road and opposite the Gypsy and Traveller site. The outline planning permission covering this site is for 1,250 dwellings.

9.3 The Core Strategy envisages a potential major urban extension to St. Neots on land east of the Railway. Although its exact extent and location will need to be determined through a Planning Proposals DPD, it is likely that the Gypsy and Traveller site's surroundings will dramatically change. Instead of being on the edge of the urban area, the site would be embedded within a large scale urban extension.

9.4 Consideration needs therefore to be given to the future of provision for Gypsy and Travellers in this general location. During this residential development process there is an opportunity to potentially relocate within the vicinity. With careful planning, it should be possible to create both a good residential environment for the settled community and improved premises for Gypsy and Travellers.

Issue 9 – The St Neots Site

Q9A: Who needs to be involved in the process of deciding the future of the St Neots site in addition to the local Gypsy and Traveller Community, the County Council as landowner, Luminus as landlord, the Huntingdonshire District Council and St Neots Town Council?

Q9B: Should additional or improved alternative provision be made in the vicinity of the existing St Neots site?

10. Travelling Showpeople

Issue: How should the DPD address the needs of Travelling Showpeople?

10.1 The needs of Travelling Showpeople are not included in the provision suggested by the East of England Plan draft policy, which covers Gypsies and Travellers only (as defined by Circular 1/2006). Travelling Showpeople are defined in Circular 04/2007 as:

“Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family’s or dependants’ more localised pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined in ODPM Circular 1/2006.”

10.2 As with Gypsies and Travellers, Circular 04/2007 requires local planning authorities to take account of the needs of Travelling Showpeople. The East of England Plan draft policy makes no specific provision to expand on this, instead indicating that the issue is the subject of ongoing research. The Cambridgeshire Sub-Region GTAA also does not deal with Travelling Showpeople. Accordingly, the Council’s own Local Development Scheme does not extend the scope of the DPD to address these needs. It is likely that any provision for Travelling Showpeople in Huntingdonshire would be on a limited scale and could be addressed through individual planning applications. There are currently no sites with permissions for use by Travelling Showpeople on a permanent basis. Planning applications would be mainly for the use of land as winter quarters, including the storage of fairground vehicles and equipment, as this is not defined as permitted development within the General Permitted Development Order.

10.3 Circular 04/2007 refers to a “plot” as meaning a pitch for Travelling Showpeople to reflect the term traditionally used by them and to differentiate between residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, and plots for Travelling Showpeople which may need to incorporate space to allow for the storage and maintenance of equipment.

Issue 10 Travelling Showpeople

Q10A: Do you agree that the scope of the DPD should not include provision for Travelling Showpeople given that there is no evidence of need available?

Or

Q10B: Do you have evidence of need for sites in respect of Travelling Showpeople?

11. Transit Sites

Issue: Should the DPD make provision for Transit Sites?

11.1 The emerging East of England policy covers the need for permanent residential pitches but not either transit sites or emergency stopping places. The Cambridgeshire Sub-Regional GTAA found that there was an acute need for more pitches but that transit sites were not favoured by the Gypsy and Traveller community who expressed a preference for permanent residential sites.

11.2 Transit sites may be in continual use but are not designed to be used as permanent accommodation. The danger is that if there is a shortage of permanent sites they can become permanent sites despite the level of facilities being lower than for permanent residential sites. There can also be problems associated with the fact that their users have no vested interest in maintaining the site and therefore a high level of management is needed, with a resident manager.

11.3 One way of providing transit pitches is to locate them within or adjacent to a residential site, but this may be inconsistent with the needs of the residents on the permanent site.

Q11A. Do you think that the DPD should concentrate on permanent residential pitch provision rather than including transit sites?

12. Emergency (or Temporary) Stopping Places

Issue: Should the DPD make provision for Emergency/Temporary Stopping Places?

12.1 Temporary stopping places can accommodate the occasional need for a pitch. They are not intended to be in continual use but are intended to deal with times of increased demand, such as fairs or cultural event. The level of facilities provided is minimal, and so are not at all suitable for long-term occupation. However, they should be located with safe road access, cause minimum disruption to surrounding communities and take account of any risk arising from adjoining land uses.

Q12. Do you think that the DPD should concentrate on permanent residential pitch provision rather than including temporary stopping places?

13. Other Issues?

Issue: Are there other issues which the Council should take into account when preparing the DPD?

13.1 The Council believes that the issues put forward in this document are the main ones which will need to be addressed in order to prepare a sound DPD. However, the purpose of this document is to ensure that all relevant issues are taken into account and therefore this document allows the opportunity for other issues to be raised.

Q12. Do you consider that there are any other issues which the Council should take into account in determining which sites should be allocated in the DPD?

APPENDIX 1

Existing Provision for Gypsies and Travellers at 2/9/08

Permanent residential pitches

20 pitches (currently some 38 caravans) at the St Neots site owned by Cambridgeshire County Council and managed by Luminus

Planning Permissions Granted

Parkhall Road, Somersham.

0400062FUL

A full personal consent granted on appeal (02.02.2006). The number of caravans is not restricted, although it is assumed to be 1 pitch.

Corner of St Ives Road and Pidley Sheep Lane, Pidley.

0701841FUL

A temporary 3yr personal consent granted (21.11.2007) for the siting of 2 caravans until 21.11.10. This is for one family and therefore assumed to be 1 pitch.

Somersham Road, St Ives.

070959FUL,

A temporary 3yr personal consent granted (22.05.2007) for the siting of 8 caravans until 22.05.10. This is for four families and therefore assumed to be 4 pitches.

Brington, Catworth

0702731FUL

A temporary 4yr consent granted on appeal (15.08.2008) for 10 pitches for the siting of 20 caravans until 15.08.12.

Planning Applications Being Pursued

Chatteris Road, Somersham

0702530FUL

6 pitches – Refused Nov 07.

0704185FUL

6 pitches - pending

0801685FUL

2 pitches – Refused July 2008.

Glossary

Amenity Building

Presently there is no single definition of an amenity building. This aside, the overall size will depend on the size of the family, while draft government guidance states that at a minimum they should include: hot and cold water; electricity supply; separate toilet; a bath/shower room and a kitchen and dining area.

Caravan

A caravan is any structure designed or adapted for human habitation that is capable of being moved from one place to another. Twin unit caravans are included in the definition although they cannot be moved when assembled. Maximum dimensions are 20m x 6.8m x 3.05m.

Family Site

A private caravan site owned and occupied by an (extended) family. Broadly equivalent to owner-occupation in mainstream housing.

Gypsy (or English Gypsy)

Member of one of the main groups of Gypsies and Travellers in Britain. Romany Gypsies trace their ethnic origin back to migrations, probably from India, taking place at intervals since 1500. Gypsies were recognised as an ethnic group in 1989.

Gypsy and Traveller

In this document, the term used to include all ethnic Gypsies and Irish Travellers, plus other Travellers who adopt a nomadic way of life. It does not include Travelling Showpeople.

Irish Traveller

Member of one of the main groups of Gypsies and Travellers in Britain. Irish Travellers have a distinct indigenous origin in Ireland and were recognised as an ethnic group in England in 2000.

Local Development Framework (LDF)

A LDF sets out the planning framework for the local area. LDF's replace Local Plans.

Pitch/Plot

Area of a Gypsy/Traveller site where a single household live in their caravans (trailers). Pitches may vary between large enough for one residential trailer (or mobile home) and

one touring (small) trailer to spacious enough to hold one or two large mobile homes and several 'tourers' as well as working vehicles.

Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)

Sets out the long term strategic planning strategy for how a region should be developed. In the case of South Gloucestershire, the relevant document is the South West Regional Spatial Strategy, which covers the period between 2006 and 2026.

Registered Social Landlords (RSL)

Not-for-profit organisations that can bid for regional funding to establish and run Gypsy and Traveller sites.

Residential Site/Pitch

A site/pitch intended for long-stay use by residents. No maximum length of stay is set unless the permission is temporary.

Site

An area of land laid out and used for Gypsy and Traveller caravans. Sites vary in type and size and can range from one-caravan private family sites on Gypsy and Traveller's own land to large local authority sites.

Transit site

Authorised Gypsy and Traveller site intended for short-term use by those in transit to other areas. The site is permanent, but people who stay on it may only do so for a temporary period (normally up to three months). Normally these sites have fewer facilities than permanent residential sites.

Unauthorised Development

A Gypsy and Traveller site established on Gypsy and Traveller owned land without appropriate planning permission or site licence.

Unauthorised Encampment

A piece of land where Gypsies and Travellers reside without planning permission. The land is not owned by those involved in the encampment and is often located on the edge of roads/carparks or in other unsafe or unsuitable environments.

**Overview and Scrutiny Panel
(Service Delivery)
Overview and Scrutiny Panel
(Service Support)**

4th November 2008

11th November 2008

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD PANELS
(Report by the Heads of Community & Environmental Health,
Administration and Policy & Strategic Services)**

1. Introduction

The purpose of this report is to update Members on preparation of proposals on local and national initiatives in response to the Government's White Paper – Communities in Control: Real Power, Real People.

2. Supporting Information

- 2.1 In July this year the Cabinet requested a report on the interdependency of Community Engagement initiatives, specifically the proposed establishment of Multi Agency Neighbourhood Panels. It was intended to acquaint members with the main provisions of the White Paper, to consider the principles and processes for developing Community Engagement in the district and to seek views on a specific proposal to develop neighbourhood panels in by November so that the Cabinet could consider options in December. However, in the face of a stream of announcements and policy initiatives coming from the Government the pace of change has meant it's not yet possible to provide members with a comprehensive picture of the various proposals and the implications for both the District Council and communities in Huntingdonshire.
- 2.2 The latest announcement relates to the processes to be adopted in relation to the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 which requires consideration of a number of issues, and particularly how they relate to other proposals.
- 2.3 Discussions with neighbouring authorities and partner organisations are continuing and it has been suggested that a coordinated and/or complementary approach might better serve local and wider interest. All of the initiatives have resource implications and a cost benefit analysis ought to form part of the consideration of proposals by Members.
- 2.4 In these circumstances it is proposed that the Democratic Structure Working Group should be invited to undertake a detailed consideration of community engagement initiatives and possible structures and that their report on this subject should be considered both by the Overview and

Scrutiny Panels and by the Cabinet in due course. It is anticipated that the Working Groups Report would come forward for discussion by March 2008.

3. Recommendation

Members of the Panels are requested to endorse the suggested process for the consideration and development of community engagement initiatives, by the Democratic Structure Working Group.

4. Background Papers

Local Government White Paper: Strong and Prosperous Communities, DCLG 26 October 2006:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/strongprosperous>

Local Government White Paper: Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power, DCLG 9 July 2008:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/communitiesincontrol>

Sustainable Communities Act 2007: A Guide Department for Communities and Local Government, February 2008

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/localgovernement/doc/682894.doc>

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**HOME WORKING – PILOT SCHEME
(Report by the Head of Policy & Strategic Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Home Working Project was one of several projects arising from the Council's Flexible Working Strategy.
- 1.2 The Strategy recognises the potential benefits of flexible working are broad and range from increasing the number of people who may be willing to work for the Council, improving retention, providing lifestyle improvements for employees, reducing travel and environmental impact and reducing accommodation costs. This report considers these issues as they relate to frequent (full or part time) home working.
- 1.3 This evaluation is taken from a more in depth analysis previously considered by the Chief Officers Management Team.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The pilot scheme comprised a group of 5 employees who volunteered to work full time at home. During the pilot they no longer had access to a desk in the office, but were required to attend meetings with their manager, team meetings or other meetings. They were provided with the necessary office, computer and communications equipment and links. The pilot project also addressed training and management issues arising from working remotely and the impact on other employees.
- 2.2 It was of fundamental importance that an employee working from home would be as effective and efficient as they would be in the office. Therefore an important consideration for home working would be the manager's assessment of the employee's ability to manage their workload from a distance. This assessment included:
 - Unintended shift of work or responsibility to other team members through, for example, a staff member not being there to answer ad hoc queries or telephone calls;
 - The employee's performance when working unsupervised; and
 - The employee's personal circumstances and desire to work from home.
- 2.3 The pilot involved 4 employees from Revenues and Benefits Service and one from Environment Health Service.
- 2.4 The Project also included an evaluation of research of the experience of other councils, particularly good examples of efficiency savings and performance improvement.
- 2.5 A log of issues was maintained throughout the Pilot, most of which were resolved at an early stage, included -

- HR issues, which are being developed into a Home Working Policy and Procedure.
- Technical issues particularly the speed of access which have been improved by the introduction of new broadband access; and
- Health and Safety issues which concentrated on appropriate working arrangements and communications.

3. PERFORMANCE BENEFITS AND COSTS

3.1 The productivity of processing of Benefits applications increased by up to 50% over the duration of the Pilot with no adverse effects on performance, and there was no noticeable tailing-off as time progressed. Productivity was measured in terms of the number of client claims processed.

3.2 Recognising the small sample size, self selection process and the limited period of the pilot, nevertheless sickness levels decreased. In the previous 12 months the five volunteers averaged 5.4 working days lost per person, and during the Pilot, there was a reduction of 20%.

3.3 With regard to staff turnover, none of the volunteers left during the course of the Pilot, but it is not possible to make any assumptions as to whether or not home working would reduce staff turnover, although the comments from the volunteers were encouraging.

3.4 Overall, participants in the pilot found the experience positive. Home working significantly increased staff satisfaction levels and motivation.

3.5 In the short term there were no cost savings from the pilot but it is estimated that it cost £3.5K per employee each year to provide traditional office accommodation. Given that a home-worker generally costs around £1k in one of equipment costs, with a further £0.5k annually. First year saving of around £2K could be made per home worker with ongoing annual savings in the region of £3K.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 The evidence shows that the Pilot scheme was successful, to the extent that other staff in the Benefits Section have sought the opportunity to work from home. Currently there remain 5 employees working from home. Other applications have been received but it was determined that it was not appropriate in those cases.

4.2 The Project evaluation concluded that there was scope for full-time home working to be rolled-out further across the Council, both within the Benefits service, but also for other service areas, such as Local Taxation, Building Control, Environmental and Community Health, Planning and Financial Services.

4.3 One of the key benefits for home-based employees was found to be a significantly enhanced work-life balance. Home-based employees reported that they did not feel socially isolated from their work colleagues and were able to play a greater role within their life outside work.

- 4.4 The pilot and subsequent wider adoption of home working will lead to the development of new employment policies within the Council.
- 4.4 Home working can result in fewer work-related car journeys which in turn can help to reduce congestion at peak hours as well as contribute to a reduction in travel-related pollution.
- 4.5 Besides the environmental benefits, there are significant overall savings to be made in terms of office space, which will more than offset the additional set-up and operating costs of home workers. However, for this to be realised, decisions will need to be taken on the numbers of full time home workers and the office space that can be released.

Background Papers

Project Evaluation Report

Contact Details

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Agenda Item 8

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE SUPPORT)

11th NOVEMBER 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	The Cabinet had considered the Panel's concluding report and has requested further information. A further report will be submitted to the Cabinet at their 6 th November 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. Further meeting to be arranged.
The Processes involved in Applying for Community Grant Aid and the Effectiveness of Grant Schemes.	Service Delivery	Investigative work complete. Final meeting held on 24 th October 2008. Working Group is now in the process of compiling their final report.
Disability Access	Service Delivery	Meeting of the Working Group held on 9 th October. Completion of study anticipated by the end of 2008.
Section 106	Service Support	Working Group is in the process of compiling their final report. Update to be provided to November Panel meeting.

Great Fen Project	Service Support	Presentation to be made to Panel's November meeting.
Social Consequences of Alcohol Abuse	Service Support	Further meetings to be held on 3 rd and 24 th November 2008. Update to be provided to November 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
The Council's Investment Strategy	Service Support

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 held on 7th October 2008 to summarise current position. Final report currently being compiled.</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	Councillor Ms S L Kemp
Officer Support	Mr Roy Reeves, Head of Administration Mrs Claire Bulman, Democratic Services Officer Dr Sue Lammin, Head of Environmental and Community Health Services Ms C Walters, Team Leader, Community Safety
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 Alcohol Harm Reduction Newsletter
Evidence to be Obtained (e.g. witnesses, documents, site visits, consultation, research,	Interview Chairman of HCSP, representatives of Cambridgeshire Constabulary, NHS Cambridgeshire and Cambridgeshire DAAT

etc)	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	As outlined in evidence to be obtained
Witnesses	Dr S Lammin, Chairman of HCSP C Waters, Community Safety Team Leader Cambridgeshire Constabulary NHS Cambridgeshire Cambridgeshire Drug Action Team
Site Visits (if necessary) (where and when)	None currently identified.
Meetings of the Working Group	14 th October 2008 3 rd November 2008 24 th November 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)

11TH NOVEMBER 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>
	HEAVY GOODS VEHICLE PARKING IN THE DISTRICT			
10/06/08	Endorsed the Working Group's report and recommendations for submission of the Cabinet.	Recommendations endorsed by the Cabinet at their meeting on 26 th June 2008.	Agreed with Chairman / Vice Chairman that issue be taken forward by the Freight Quality Partnership.	
09/09/08	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.	Email sent to Team Leader for Transportation.	Matter included for discussion on agenda for LAA Reference Group. Item to be included on agenda for next Freight Quality Partnership. County Council currently arranging.	
	PETITION BY ST AUDREY LANE AREA RESIDENTS, ST IVES			
08/07/08	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.	Email requesting update sent – 21/10/08	CCTV survey of St Audrey Lane and Pig Lane Surface Water sewer completed. Funding now available to Jet Sewer – will be carried out shortly.	
	PETITION TO CONTROL COMMUTER PARKING IN THE LONGSANDS AREA OF STNEOTS			
14/10/08	Chairman to write to the Chairman of Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee outlining the Panel's concerns and requesting that the matter be progressed at the earliest opportunity.	Letter sent 21/10/08		
	A representative from First Capital Connect to be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss their expansion plans for the car parks at Huntingdon and St Neots.	Letter sent 21/10/08		

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>	<p>June 08</p>
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>		<p>Dec 08</p>

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.	Next meeting anticipated November 2008	Nov 08
15/01/08	LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS Minutes of future meetings of the Cambridgeshire Together Local Accountability Committee should be circulated to all Panel Members.	Meeting held on 22 nd October 2008. Minutes to be circulated when available.		
14/05/08	Councillor J A Gray appointed to Joint Accountability Committee. Substitute members to be appointed in consultation with Head of Administration.			
14/10/08	REVIEW OF LOCAL PROCUREMENT Agreed to hold further meeting with business representatives in the New Year.	Meeting to be held on 12 th March 2008 at 4pm.		
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.	First meeting held on 14 th October 2008.	Further meetings to be held on 3 rd and 24 th November 2008.	

Panel Date	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Date</u>
	MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS			
14/04/05	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.	Working Group currently in the process of compiliing final report.	Report to be submitted to a future meeting.	Dec 08
	GREAT FEN PROJECT			
08/07/08	Director of Environmental & Community Services to make presentation to future meeting. All Scrutiny Members to be invited.			Nov 08
	SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT 2007			
08/07/08	Head of Administration requested to report back on the implications for the Council of the Sustainable Communities Act 2007.	Report on Community Engagement to be submitted to November meeting. It is suggested that in view of the other community engagement issues ongoing that it would be inappropriate to consider the Sustainable Communities Act in isolation. Agenda item no. 6 refers	Report to be submitted to November meeting.	Nov 08

Panel Date	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Date</u>
	FORWARD PLAN			
08/04/08	Development Control Policies Preferred Options Requested that report should be considered at a future meeting of the Panel.			Dec 08
09/10/07	Huntingdon West Area Action Plan Requested that the report should be considered at a future meeting of the Panel.			Feb 09
13/11/07	Parish Plans and Local Plan Policy Circulate report when this becomes available.			Jan 09
08/07/08	Proposals for Riverside Park Requested that report should be considered at a future meeting of the Panel.			Feb 09
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. Requested that report should be considered at a future meeting of the Panel	Item No. 5 refers.		Nov 08
14/10/08	Response to Highways Agency pre-consultation on side road orders: A14 improvements. Requested that report should be considered at a future meeting of the Panel	Awaiting items reappearance on Forward Plan. Anticipated March 2009.		

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.

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Decision Digest

Edition 88

Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 1st to 31st October 2008.

IMPROVING LOCAL ACCOUNTABILITY CONSULTATION: CHANGES TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY POWERS

Both the Overview and Scrutiny Panels have considered a consultation paper by the Department for Communities and Local Government on 'improving local accountability' and the Service Delivery Panel has endorsed the responses suggested, and –

- ◆ expressed general support for area scrutiny committees operating on a district basis, especially given the need to scrutinise the LAA/LSP and their effect on Huntingdonshire;
- ◆ emphasised that it is councillors who should be accountable to the public and not officers;
- ◆ suggested that in order to increase public interest, the Council's website should be updated after each overview and scrutiny meeting on the subjects discussed and decisions taken;
- ◆ suggested that, if officers are to be held to account, this should apply to officers

of other bodies that the Council is in partnership with only, with Councillors being held to account in the case of local authorities;

- ◆ emphasised the resource implications if overview and scrutiny's profile / role are to be raised.

The Service Support Panel has endorsed the responses suggested in the report, emphasising that these matters were best left to local discretion rather than the prescriptive approach adopted in the consultation paper. The Panel had no objection to the views expressed by the Service Delivery Panel.

Having been advised of the Panels views, the Cabinet has questioned the requirement to make provision for a dedicated scrutiny resource to support the overview and scrutiny function. Although not a requirement for district councils, the Cabinet has suggested that this should be at the discretion of individual authorities depending on local circumstances. The Cabinet also recognised that several of the initiatives proposed to raise the profile of overview and scrutiny have either been tried or have already implemented by the Council.

ON-LINE PETITIONS

An on-line petition signed by ten people was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) drawing attention to the problems experienced by local residents with commuter parking in the Longsands area of St. Neots. St. Neots Town Councillor Mrs Ottolangui addressed the Panel and explained that she would like to see restrictions imposed to restrict on-street parking in the area to one hour during the day.

Having noted that the matter had been the subject of a recent petition presented to the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee, the Panel asked the Chairman to write to the AJC outlining their concerns and requesting that the matter be progressed at the earliest opportunity.

The Panel has also agreed that a representative from First Capital Connect should be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss their plans for the car parks at Huntingdon and St. Neots stations.

LOCAL PROCUREMENT REVIEW

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) has been updated with discussions held recently between Panel representatives and the local business community.

The meeting was arranged to monitor the actions contained in the Panel's review of local procurement and to review progress made since the last meeting.

The Chairman of the meeting, Councillor M G Baker was satisfied that a positive and constructive discussion had taken place. During the meeting, the Group was advised of developments within the Economic Development Service, ongoing work to standardise the terms and conditions of procurement with other District Councils and the implications of the Council's emerging Environment Strategy. It was also noted that the electronic alert for additions to the contracts register was now working correctly.

A further meeting with business representatives is to be held on 12th March 2009.

PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY

The Development Control Panel has been advised of the circumstances which have arisen following the receipt of an objection to an Order made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to divert parts of public footpath No1 at Buckden. As the proposed line of the footpath has also been obstructed by new development and cannot be used as a public footpath, the diversion cannot proceed under the Town and Country Planning Act legislation and therefore the Panel has formally agreed not to confirm the Order. An alternative diversion is being pursued, however, under the Highways Act by the Nene Housing Association.

ALCOHOL DISORDER ZONES

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) and the Cabinet have been briefed on the

background to Alcohol Disorder Zones (ADZs), a Government initiative aimed at tackling the problems in city and town centres as a result of excessive alcohol consumption. Having noted that ADZs are intended as a short term, last resort measure to address high levels of alcohol related nuisance and disorder, circumstances not applicable to Huntingdonshire, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) and the Cabinet has recognised that their use would not deal with the problem of litter left as a result of the Saturday night time economy which has been highlighted as a concern in the District.

MARKET RULES

The Cabinet has approved revised rates for Council-run markets in Huntingdonshire. The rules have been updated to ensure they are relevant and appropriate to current trading practices.

REPRESENTATION ON ORGANISATIONS

Councillors J A Gray, T V Rogers and L M Simpson have been appointed by the Cabinet as the Members with whom the Director of Commerce and Technology is required to consult to exercise delegated authority on treasury management matters.

FLEXIBLE WORKING STRATEGY

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has received a presentation on the Council's progress in respect of flexible

working and noted the benefits that it would bring.

The Corporate Mobile Working Project has been successful in rolling out mobile devices, new back office systems and processes, touchdown working, digital pens and Blackberrys to service departments.

The use of Remote Access Technology has also been discussed and the Panel has been advised of the recent introduction of a key fob system, which provides an additional level of security for employees accessing the Council's information systems from home.

The Full Time Home Working Pilot has involved employees who had volunteered to take part from the Revenues and Benefits and Environmental and Community Health Services Divisions.

The Panel also discussed the financial implications of introducing the initiatives, the levels of savings achieved, the management of employees and the monitoring of their performance whilst working full time from home. It was also reported that all projects had been implemented within existing budgets.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH JOINT MUNICIPAL WASTE STRATEGY

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has approved the content of the revised Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Municipal Waste Strategy.

The original Strategy had been adopted by the Council in 2002 and the Recycling Plans appended to the Strategy had been reviewed in 2005. The revised Strategy now focuses on new priority areas such as business waste and environmental issues and would have no financial implications for the Council.

Discussions also have taken place on the actions taken by the Council to reduce the impact of waste management activities on climate change, the effects of the closure of the Buckden Waste disposal facility, the level of commercial waste generated in the District and the measures that have been introduced to encourage commercial waste recycling. Having regard to the latter, the Panel noted that external funding had been received to carry out pilot studies into recycling initiatives for small businesses with a view to introducing schemes across the County.

ENHANCED SERVICES CLEANSING SERVICES

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has noted the Cabinet's response to the Panel's recommendations arising from the study on Enhanced Cleansing Services for the District's market towns.

In noting their requests for additional information, the Panel has confirmed that those areas highlighted within the plans originally circulated with the report had represented the scope of the areas to be cleaned. In response to

concerns relating to the effect of early morning noise on residents living within the vicinity of the areas to be cleaned, it has been reported that the proposed cleansing service would be limited to the emptying of litter bins and the use of small mechanical road sweepers. In addition, it was noted that whilst employees would report to Eastfield House at 6:00am, work in the market towns would not commence until approximately 7:30am.

The Panel has endorsed the view that financial contributions should be sought from the Town Councils and Members have stressed that this should only be done once the Cabinet has agreed the principle of providing an enhanced cleansing service.

STRATEGIC HEALTH AUTHORITY: STRATEGIC VISION DOCUMENT

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has noted the Strategic Health Authority's Strategic Vision Document, which outlines the Vision for the National Health Service over the next 10 years.

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