

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a meeting of **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **WEDNESDAY, 24 SEPTEMBER 2008** at **2:30 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

A G E N D A

PRAYER

The Reverend James Pullen, Vicar of St Ives will open the meeting with prayer.

APOLOGIES

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 12)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 25th June 2008.

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

3. ANNUAL STATE OF THE DISTRICT ADDRESS

To invite the Leader to address the Council on the State of the District.

4. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES (Pages 13 - 16)

To consider a report by the Head of Administration.

5. REPORTS OF THE CABINET, PANELS AND COMMITTEES

(a) Cabinet (Pages 17 - 104)

(b) Standards Committee (Pages 105 - 106)

(c) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) (Pages 107 - 108)

(d) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) (Pages 109 - 112)

- (e) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) (Pages 113 - 116)
- (f) Development Control Panel (Pages 117 - 118)
- (g) Licensing and Protection Panel (Pages 119 - 120)
- (h) Licensing Committee (Pages 121 - 122)
- (i) Corporate Governance Panel (Pages 123 - 130)
- (j) Employment Panel (Pages 131 - 132)
- (k) Elections Panel (Pages 133 - 146)

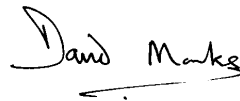
6. ORAL QUESTIONS

In accordance with the Council Procedure Rules (Section 8.3) of the Council's Constitution, to receive oral questions from Members of the Council.

7. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: SECTION 85

The Chief Executive to report on absences of Members from meetings.

Dated this 16th day of September 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 Ms C Deller, Democratic Services Manager, Tel No 01480 388007/e-mail: Christine.Deller@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 Council.

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

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Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 25 June 2008.

PRESENT: Councillor J W Davies – Chairman.

Councillors J D Ablewhite, K M Baker, M G Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, I C Bates, J T Bell, Mrs B E Boddington, P L E Bucknell, E R Butler, W T Clough, Mrs K E Cooper, S J Criswell, D B Dew, Mrs J A Dew, P J Downes, J J Dutton, R W J Eaton, R S Farrer, J E Garner, A N Gilbert, P M D Godfrey, P Godley, J A Gray, A Hansard, C R Hyams, Ms S Kemp, L W McGuire, P G Mitchell, I R Muir, M F Newman, R Powell, D J Priestman, T V Rogers, J M Sadler, T D Sanderson, M F Shellens, L M Simpson, C J Stephens, P A Swales, Ms M J Thomas, G S E Thorpe, R G Tuplin, P K Ursell and R J West.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors K J Churchill JP, P H Dakers, D Harty, Mrs P A Jordan, Mrs D C Reynolds and P R Ward.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr D L Hall.

19. PRAYER

The Reverend M Savage, Team Vicar for Huntingdon opened the meeting with prayer.

20. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Mr K Reynolds

Having been advised of the ill health of former Councillor K Reynolds, Members were informed that the Chairman had conveyed, on the Council's behalf, his best wishes for a speedy and complete recovery.

(b) Annual Cricket Match

The Chairman announced that the annual cricket fixture between councillors and staff would take place at St Ivo Outdoor Centre, St Ives on 23rd July 2008 and he encouraged all Members to support the event.

(c) Chairman's Civic Reception

The Chairman announced his intention to hold his Civic Reception at St Ivo Leisure Centre on the evening of 31st

October 2008. Formal invitations would be issued in due course.

21. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors Mrs K E Cooper, R W J Eaton, G S E Thorpe and P K Ursell declared personal and prejudicial interests in Minute Nos. 22, 23 and 25 by virtue of their appointment as trustees to St Neots Outdoor Swimming Pool and left the Chamber for the duration of the discussion on those items.

Councillor J M Sadler declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute Nos. 22, 23 and 25 by virtue of his membership of the Governing Body of Huntingdonshire Regional College and left the Chamber for the duration of discussion on those items.

Councillor I C Bates declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No. 25 by virtue of his membership of Cambridgeshire Police Authority and left the Chamber for the duration of the discussions on that item.

Councillor M G Baker declared a personal interest in Minute Nos. 22, 23 and 25 as an employee of Hinchingsbrooke School and as a member of the "Friends of Hinchingsbrooke House".

Councillor P J Downes declared a personal interest in Minute Nos. 22, 23 and 25 as former Headmaster of Hinchingsbrooke School and as Chairman of the "Friends of Hinchingsbrooke House".

Councillor M F Shellens declared a personal interest in Minute Nos. 22, 23 and 25 as Chairman of Brampton Parish Council and as a member of the "Friends of Hinchingsbrooke House".

22. PETITION NO. 1

In conjunction with Item No. 25, the Chairman invited Mr C Osborn, a member of Huntingdon Town Council, to address the meeting and to present a petition of behalf of 180 signatories calling upon the District Council "To leave the (Huntingdonshire) Regional College where it is, not replace it with houses and to refurbish it on the present site where it could best serve those who need it most."

23. PETITION NO. 2

In conjunction with Item No. 25, the Chairman invited Mr M Dixon to address the meeting and to present a petition on behalf of 99 signatories which called upon the District Council to "Reject the move of the (Huntingdonshire) Regional College to Hinchingsbrooke because of the serious traffic implications and the increased danger to cyclists and pedestrians at this busy site."

24. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 14th May 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25. DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION - DEVELOPMENT OF NEW COLLEGE CAMPUS AND ACCESS WORKS, ASSOCIATED PARKING AND SPORTS PITCHES, PART OF SPORTS GROUND, CAMBRIDGESHIRE CONSTABULARY, HINCHINGBROOKE PARK, HINCHINGBROOKE PARK ROAD, HUNTINGDON

Further to Minute Nos. 22 and 23 and in conjunction with the report of the Development Control Panel (Minute No. 30 (f) refers), the Head of Planning Services introduced a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding an outline planning application for the development of a new college campus, car parking and access, a multi-activity games area and football pitch on land currently in the ownership of Cambridgeshire Constabulary situated west of Brampton Road and north of Hinchingsbrooke Park Road, Huntingdon.

In the course of his presentation, the Head of Planning Services updated the Council on the representations received from Huntingdon Town Council, the Greater Cambridge Partnership, the Principal of the Regional College and a member of the public since the agenda had been circulated. Mr S Bell, Team Leader Transportation advised the Council of the implications of the development for the local transport infrastructure and confirmed that Cambridgeshire County Council had indicated their satisfaction that the transport assessment had demonstrated that the development could progress without detrimental effect.

Ms A Constantine, addressed the Council on behalf of the applicant, Huntingdonshire Regional College. The Chairman of the Development Control Panel, Councillor P G Mitchell, drew attention to those issues which had led the Panel to indicate its support for the application and to recommend its approval. Principally, these related to the content of the transport assessment, the views of the Highways Authority and the opportunity presented by the development to provide a "state of the art" skills college for Huntingdon and the surrounding area. Whereupon, it was moved by Councillor Mitchell and duly seconded that the recommendation contained in Item No. 1 of the Report of the meeting of the Development Control Panel be approved.

Detailed discussion ensued during which some local councillors expressed their concerns at -

- ◆ the manner in which consultation had been conducted on the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan particularly given the timing of the application under consideration;
- ◆ the potential impact of the proposed development on increased traffic, the local road network and the inadequacy of bus services and cycle links;
- ◆ that there were sufficient higher education facilities in Peterborough and St Neots;
- ◆ that a green travel plan would be ineffective;
- ◆ that the existing college site was more appropriate; and
- ◆ that the proposed site was unsuitable in such close proximity to another large educational establishment.

Alternative views were expressed in support of the application in terms of better accessibility for students, improved transport links, compliance with the emerging strategy for this part of Huntingdon and

sustainability.

Following contributions from a number of Councillors and it having been moved and seconded, the Council

RESOLVED

- (a) that, subject to conditions to be determined by the Head of Planning Services, the application for the erection of a new college campus and access works, associated parking and sport pitches on land that forms part of the sports ground, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Hinchingsbrooke Park, Hinchingsbrooke Road, Huntingdon be supported;
- (b) that the Government Office for the Eastern Region be requested to consider whether they wish to call-in the proposal; and
- (c) that, in the event that the proposal not being called in by the Government Office, the application be approved subject to conditions set out in paragraph 10 of the report now submitted and the Director of Environmental and Community Services authorised to advertise the application as a departure from the Development Plan.

26. ADJOURNMENT

At 4.28 pm, it was

RESOLVED

that the meeting stand adjourned.

Upon resumption at 4.45 pm.

27. CABINET PROCEDURE RULES - DELEGATION BY THE LEADER

In accordance with the Cabinet Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution and, subject to the replacement of Councillor D B Dew by Councillor Mrs J A Dew in the membership of the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee referred to in the Appendix to the document, the Council noted the allocation of executive functions for the ensuing municipal year contained in a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book).

28. REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION - CODE OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

Further to Minute No. 64 (h) of the meeting of the Council held on 16th April 2008 and in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 20.2, the Council considered a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding a series of changes to the Code of Financial Management contained in the District Council's Constitution. Having been moved and seconded, the Council

RESOLVED

that the Code of Financial Management, as amended, be approved.

29. FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2008/9

By reference to a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), Councillor J M Sadler, Chairman of the Licensing and Protection Panel reminded the Council that the Food Standards Agency required the preparation, on an annual basis, of a Food Safety Service Plan. A full copy of the Food Safety Service Plan 2008/9 had been made available in the Members' Room. (An executive summary of the Plan is appended to the report now submitted.)

Members were reminded of the objectives of the Service Plan in terms of identifying resources, establishing a work programme and providing a means by which to measure and manage performance.

In particular, Councillor Sadler drew the Council's attention to the success of the wide range of promotional events undertaken across the District involving local primary schools and community groups under the Hunts for Good Food project which had culminated in the award of Regional Food Champion status by the FSA.

In terms of 2008/9, Councillor Sadler advised Members that the Team would direct their resources to the inspection of food premises and that they intended to introduce a "scores on the doors" scheme involving the award of hygiene scores to food outlets after routine inspections which would be published on the Council's website. It was hoped that this scheme would encourage food businesses to maintain high hygiene standards.

Having congratulated the Food Services Team for their performance during 2007/8, for their success in achieving the Regional Food Champion award and having noted the support for the Plan on the part of the Licensing and Protection Panel, the Council

RESOLVED

that the Food Safety Service Plan 2008/9 be adopted.

30. REPORTS OF THE CABINET, PANELS AND COMMITTEES

(a) Cabinet

Councillor I C Bates, Leader and Chairman of the Cabinet, represented the Report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 24th April, 15th May and 12th June 2008.

Upon being put to the vote, the recommendation contained in Item No. 1 was declared CARRIED.

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In connection with Item No. 2 and in response to a question from Councillor W T Clough, the Leader, Councillor Bates. replied that all Members of the Cabinet received the special responsibility allowance to which they were entitled under the current Members' Allowances scheme.

.....

In connection with Item No. 7 and in response to a question from Councillor P J Downes, the Leader, Councillor Bates, acknowledged, the complexity in monitoring the new Local Area Agreement (LAA) but indicated that a seminar on the LAA, Local Strategic Partnership, Sustainable Community Strategy and Comprehensive Area Agreement to be held on 24th July 2008 to which all Councillors would be invited, would assist Members' understanding of the process.

.....

In connection with Item No. 10 and in response to a question from Councillor G S E Thorpe, the Leader, Councillor Bates, undertook to provide an explanation in writing as to the meaning of a "two factor authentication system" as part of the flexible working project for staff.

.....

In connection with Item No. 13 and in response to a question from Councillor Mrs M Banerjee, the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, Councillor P L E Bucknell indicated that he anticipated that regional guidance on the development of additional housing growth in sustainable ways would be issued shortly by the Government Office for the East of England.

.....

In connection with Item No. 15 and in response to a question from Councillor P G Mitchell, the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, Councillor P L E Bucknell, advised that the District Council would seek, through development at Mayfield Road, Huntingdon, to establish a standard for the delivery of high energy efficiency housing schemes.

.....

In connection with Item No. 20, the Deputy Leader, Councillor L M Simpson, announced that Councillors Mrs B E Boddington and J J Dutton had been appointed to the vacant posts of "Champion" for Training and for Oxmoor respectively.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that, subject to the foregoing paragraphs, the Report of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 24th April, 15th May and 12th June 2008 be received and adopted.

(b) Standards Committee

Mr D L Hall presented the Report of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 5th June 2008.

.....

Upon being put to the vote, the recommendation contained in Item No. 1 was declared to be CARRIED.

.....

In connection with Item No. 4 and in response to a question from Councillor C R Hyams, Mr Hall replied that the Monitoring Officer undertook a programme of training for town and parish councils in the District and that he was due to attend a meeting of Little Paxton Parish Council for this purpose at the beginning of July.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that, subject to the foregoing paragraphs, the Report of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 5th June 2008 be received and adopted.

(c) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework)

Councillor S J Criswell presented the Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) held on 3rd June 2008.

.....

In connection with Item No. 1, Councillor Criswell encouraged Members to identify suggestions for spending adjustments during the August recess period with a view to submitting these to Officers by September 2008.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic

Framework) held on 3rd June 2008 be received and adopted.

(d) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery)

Councillor S J Criswell presented the Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) held on 3rd June 2008.

.....

In connection with Item No. 4 and in response to a question from Councillor R W J Eaton, Councillor Criswell thanked the questioner for his kind words with regard to the conclusion of the Panel's study on disability access.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) held on 3rd June 2008 be received and adopted.

(e) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)

Councillor J A Gray presented the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) held on 8th April and 10th June 2008.

.....

In connection with Item No. 6 and in response to a question from Councillor T D Sanderson regarding the allocation of Section 106 funding for transportation initiatives, Councillor Gray advised Members that the Panel had established a study group to examine the Section 106 process in detail and that it was their intention to make recommendations which, hopefully, would secure a Section 106 regime which would more clearly identify where contributions were to be spent in future.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) held on 8th April and 10th June 2008 be received and adopted.

(f) Development Control Panel

Councillor P G Mitchell presented the Report of the meetings of the Development Control Panel held on 21st April, 19th

May and 16th June 2008.

In connection with Item No. 1, it was noted that the recommendations had been considered previously under Minute No. 25 ante.

.....

In connection with Item Nos. 4 and 5 and in response to a question from Councillor P J Downes, Councillor Mitchell confirmed that the Panel had contributed as a consultee to the preparation of the design briefs for both Primrose Lane and Mayfield Road, Huntingdon.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Development Control Panel held on 21st April, 19th May and 16th June 2008 be received and adopted.

(g) Employment Panel

Councillor Mrs B E Boddington presented the Report of the meeting of the Employment Panel held on 3rd June 2008.

.....

In connection with Item No. 3, the Leader, Councillor I C Bates and Councillor M G Baker paid tribute to the contribution made by Mr P Watkins, Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer who was due to retire from the Council's service on 27th June 2008.

Accordingly. Members placed on record their sincere gratitude to Mr Watkins for his contribution to the work of the Council and the help and advice he had offered to councillors over his 43 years in the local government service.

In reply, Mr Watkins thanked the Council for their good wishes.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Employment Panel held on 3rd June 2008 be received and adopted.

31. ORAL QUESTIONS

In accordance with the Council's Procedure Rules (paragraph 8.3 of the Council's Constitution), the Chairman proceeded to conduct a period of oral questions addressed to Executive Councillors and Panel Chairmen as follows:-

Question from Councillor P M D Godfrey to the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, Councillor P L E Bucknell

In response to a question regarding the wisdom of the decision to release agricultural land for the purposes of the Great Fen Project given the demands on future world food production, Councillor Bucknell invited the questioner to accompany him to an event to be hosted by the Environment Agency and National Farmers Union to discuss "food, fuel and wetlands" and recommended that Council Members listen to a BBC Radio 4 broadcast on the Great Fen Project.

.....

Question from Councillor P G Mitchell to the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, Councillor P L E Bucknell

In response to a question regarding the arrangements being made to manage issues arising from the acquisition of land for the Great Fen Project, Councillor Bucknell replied that a meeting would take place with partners to the Project on 18th July 2008 at which it was intended to discuss governance arrangements, land purchase and communication and negotiation issues and that he would be in a position to supply further details after that date.

.....

Question from Councillor Mrs J A Dew to the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, Councillor P L E Bucknell

In response to a question regarding the volume and estimated cost of concessionary bus passes, Councillor Bucknell reported that to date 20,894 concessionary bus passes had been issued representing 150 – 200 passes per week, that it was anticipated that a further 4,000 applications might be received – an increase of 20% over that forecasted and that it was estimated that the exercise would cost in the region of £803,000.

Question from Councillor J E Garner to the Leader, Councillor I C Bates

In response to a question regarding the use by the District Council of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act, Councillor Bates referred Council Members to details of the recent covert surveillance activities which had been described in a paper circulated at the meeting and appended to these Minutes. Councillor Bates added that the account of activities had revealed that the Council had used the provisions sparingly since the inception of the Act.

Question from Councillor M G Baker to the Executive Councillor for Leisure, Councillor D B Dew

In response to a question regarding the future of the District Council's Leisure Centres, Councillor Dew reported that although the future direction of the Leisure Centres was still under review, it was important to continue to develop and improve existing facilities. There was, however, no intention to privatise the Leisure Service but rather to continue to ensure that the Centres performed effectively and responded to the challenges set by the market.

Question from Councillor Mrs K E Cooper to the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy, Councillor A Hansard

In response to a question regarding the Electoral Review of Parishes Councillor Hansard undertook to respond to the questioner in writing on the likelihood of the changes made being in place for the 2011 elections.

Question from Councillor Mrs B E Boddington to the Executive Councillor for Planning and Transport, Councillor P L E Bucknell

In response to a question regarding the effect of the rise in world oil prices on the projected cost of the proposed scheme of improvements to the A14 in Cambridgeshire, Councillor Bucknell undertook to seek a response from experts in the field and to reply to the questioner in writing.

Question from Councillor P Godley to the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, Councillor P L E Bucknell

In response to a question regarding the methodology for street naming in the event of new developments within a ward, Councillor Bucknell replied that it was common practice for a developer to select the name of new roads within a development drawing upon local characteristics or traditions but that town and parish councils could influence this process provided they made suggestions at an early stage.

Question from Councillor G S E Thorpe to the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy, Councillor A Hansard

In response to a question regarding the accuracy of a suggestion made in a report by a study group of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) that the post of Town Centre Manager to St Neots was funded by the District Council, Councillor Hansard replied that each Town Centre Partnership was awarded annual funding of £19,200 and that, other than St Neots, the other Town Centre Initiatives had chosen to utilise part of these funds to support the employment of a Town Centre Manager.

Question from Councillor S J Criswell to the Executive Councillor for Leisure, Councillor D B Dew

In response to a question regarding the progress made by the Leisure Centres in achieving reductions in their budget, Councillor Dew reported that the service had increased income, made savings,

reduced management and administration costs and utility bills all of which had amounted to a saving in the contribution made by the District Council to the running of the Leisure Centres in 2007/08 of £732,000.

Question from Councillor T D Sanderson to the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, Councillor P L E Bucknell

In response to a question regarding the timescale for updating the Huntingdon and Godmanchester Market Town Transport Strategy, Councillor Bucknell replied that the Market Town Strategy would be updated in conjunction with the Northbridge, Huntingdon development but that he would write to the questioner to specify when this might be.

Question from Councillor J E Garner to the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, Councillor P L E Bucknell

In response to a question regarding the Great Fen Project, Councillor Bucknell replied that whilst discussion on details of the Project were ongoing there was no doubt that it would continue to progress.

32. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: SECTION 85

The Chief Executive reported that there were no absences of Members from meetings for consideration in accordance with Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972.

33. MEMBERSHIP OF CABINET, COMMITTEES AND PANELS

RESOLVED

- (a) that Councillor P M D Godfrey be appointed to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) in place of Councillor J W Davies;
- (b) that Councillor G S E Thorpe be appointed to serve on the Licensing and Protection Panel/Licensing Committee; and
- (c) that Councillor A Hansard be appointed to Standards Committee in place of Councillor R S Farrer.

The meeting concluded at 5.55 pm.

Chairman

Members' Allowances

(Report by the Head of Administration)

1. INTRODUCTION

At its meeting held on 16th April 2008, the Council, on the recommendation of the Corporate Governance Panel, approved the following recommendations which had emerged from a review of the Council's Travel Plan by a Working Group of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) -

- (a) that an alternative form of mileage allowance be introduced for Members of the Council based upon exhaust emissions;
- (b) that the new mileage allowance be optional for existing Members but compulsory for all newly elected Members with effect from 1st May 2008;
- (c) that the Members Independent Remuneration Panel be requested to confirm their agreement to the changes to the mileage allowance for Members; and
- (d) that the necessary changes be made to the Members' Allowances Scheme.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The Travel Plan Working Group were of the view that Members could demonstrate their commitment to reducing emissions, reducing their carbon footprint and improving local air quality by altering their mileage allowances to one based on emission rates. It was considered that the payment of mileage rates based upon emissions might influence Members to choose cars that have less impact on the local environment and therefore it was proposed that newly elected Members be paid an emission rated allowance.

2.2 Any proposal to vary the Members' Allowances Scheme of which travel (motor car) allowances form a part, is required under the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003, to be considered by the Councils Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP), chaired by Dr Declan Hall. To expedite this process, Dr Hall had advised that it was not necessary to reconvene the Panel provided Panel members were formally consulted on the proposed changes and that it could be demonstrated that this process had been undertaken and an audit trail recorded.

3. CONSULTATION

3.1 In accordance with Dr Hall's advice, consultation with the four other Members of the Independent Remuneration Panel has taken place over the summer. No objections to the proposed changes to the scheme were raised.

3.2 The following additional comments were received –

“I feel that the final decision on how much to pay Members for travelling and expenses should be voted on by the elected Members and the proposed scheme seems reasonable and in line with income tax allowances and ‘green tax’ thinking”; and

“I can see merit in this initiative. Provided no Member is disadvantaged, or potential new Members discouraged from standing (and this seems to be the case), I have no objection to the proposal”.

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 On the basis of the replies received from his colleague Panel Members, the Chairman of the IRP has submitted the following view –

“the IRP notes that the proposed changes from the Travel Plan Working Group, based on vehicle emissions is in line with current Government policy to promote ‘greener travel’ and fully supports the following mileage rates that can be claimed by Members on approved duties. These are as follows –

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

I can confirm that the IRP also supports the view that the new mileage allowance should be optional for existing Members but compulsory for those Members newly elected to the Council in May 2008 and that, for ease of implementation, the necessary changes be made to the Members' Allowances Scheme with effect from 1st October 2008”.

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 The Independent Remuneration Panel

RECOMMENDS

- (a) that an alternative form of mileage allowance be introduced for Members of the Council as set out in paragraph 4.1 above based upon exhaust emissions;**
- (b) that the new mileage allowance be optional for existing Members but compulsory for all newly elected Members with effect from 1st October 2008; and**
- (c) that the necessary changes be made to the Members' Allowances Scheme.**

BACKGROUND DOCUMENT

Council Minutes 16th April 2008.
Report of the Travel Plan Working Group

Contact Officer: Christine Deller, Democratic Services Manager
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Cabinet

Report of the meetings held on 26th June, 17th July and 4th September 2008

Matters for Decision

21. FINANCIAL FORECAST

By way of a report by the Head of Financial Services (attached as Appendix A), the Cabinet has been acquainted with the present position in relation to the Council's financial forecast for the period up to 2018/19. This has also been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework).

The Council has continued to spend carefully and this, together with extra grants and budget income has resulted in last year's outturn being £1.2m less than budgeted. In discussing the need to identify and implement savings to achieve a balanced Medium Term Plan, the Cabinet has acknowledged the implications of current and future levels of inflation and the economic downturn in the housing industry. Members also have been reminded of the Government's approach to manage these changes through capping and future grant settlements. In the meantime, the Cabinet

RECOMMEND

that Council approve the financial strategy as set out in the report now submitted.

22. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Policy and Strategic Services, reproduced as Appendix B, the Cabinet has considered the content of the Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy. Partners and stakeholders, including the business and voluntary sectors have been involved in the Strategy's development including the construction of delivery plans for each of the strategic themes (Item No. 24 below refers).

Having noted that the Strategy will be reviewed every three years, the Cabinet

RECOMMEND

that the Sustainable Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire be approved for publication.

23. CORPORATE PLAN – “GROWING SUCCESS”

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and by way of a report by the Head of Policy and Strategic Services (a copy of which is attached as Appendix C) the Cabinet has considered the content of the updated Corporate Plan – “Growing Success”.

Having noted the priority areas identified in the plan, the Cabinet

RECOMMEND

that the contents of the revised Corporate Plan – “Growing Success” be approved for publication.

Matters for Information

24. HUNTINGDONSHIRE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY AND LOCAL ECONOMY – ACTION PLANNING

The Cabinet has approved the content of draft delivery plans for the Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy along with an action plan for the Local Economy Strategy. The strategy aims to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the District and has been developed with the involvement of partners and stakeholders, including the business and voluntary sectors. Work has been undertaken to produce a delivery plan for each of the six strategic themes of:-

- ◆ growth and infrastructure;
- ◆ health and wellbeing;
- ◆ environment;
- ◆ children and young people;
- ◆ inclusive, safe and cohesive communities; and
- ◆ economic prosperity.

The plans aim to promote joint initiatives by partners and will be taken forward by the individual strategic partnerships linked to the themes.

25. CONSULTATION ON THE SUPPORTING PEOPLE REVIEW OF HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCIES

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the findings of a review of Home Improvement Agency (HIA) services undertaken on behalf of Cambridgeshire’s Supporting People’s Commissioning Body as part of a wider strategic review of services. HIAs in Cambridgeshire are funded by a Supporting People grant and by way of funding from the Primary Care Trust, Cambridgeshire County Council and the District Councils.

In approving a suggested response to the paper, Executive Councillors have expressed concern at the continuing and unacceptable time taken to complete occupational therapy assessments for vulnerable, older and disabled people in the District. Having concluded that an approach which seeks to maintain high levels of customer care, improve efficiency and lower costs through shared or combined services rather than market testing should be examined, the Cabinet has requested that Officers explore further the opportunities available to improve the effectiveness of HIAs through shared services or other options.

26. CAMBRIDGE SUB-REGION STRATEGIC HOUSING MARKET ASSESSMENT

The Cabinet has been acquainted with details of the Cambridge Sub-Region Strategic Housing Market Assessment and its implications for Huntingdonshire. The assessment outlines the evidence of need and demand for market and affordable housing based on seven local authority areas within the sub-region and replaces the need for local assessment.

27. PLANNING DESIGN BRIEFS

Having been acquainted with the responses received from consultation exercises on the design briefs for the redevelopment of an area of open space adjoining Mayfield Road, Huntingdon and the former Primrose Lane Hospital in Huntingdon, the Cabinet has agreed to adopt the documents for use as material consideration in planning decisions. In so doing, the Cabinet has requested that the retention of the Primrose Centre building be included as part of the development of the site but in the event that this proves not to be possible, consideration be given to its replacement with a scheme of high design quality.

28. A141 ABBOTS RIPTON ROAD

The Cabinet has approved a contribution of £75,000 towards a County Council accident safety scheme to improve the junction of the A141 and Kings Ripton Road in Huntingdon. Overall the scheme will cost in the region of £400,000 for which funding contributions have been sought from the District and Town Councils.

29. HEAVY GOODS VEHICLE WORKING GROUP

The Cabinet has considered the findings of a review by a Working Group of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) into the issue of heavy goods vehicles parking throughout the District. In so doing, Executive Councillors have been advised of the general shortage of suitable parking on the trunk road network for vehicles which has been exacerbated by the rationalisation of the lay-bys along the A14. In examining various options for providing such provision, the Cabinet has

- ◆ invited the County Council to establish a county-wide forum, involving the County Council, District Councils, local Members of Parliament, Cambridgeshire Constabulary and HGV operators to lobby Government to investigate the problem urgently and take steps to resolve it;
- ◆ agreed to seek the support for the forum via the Cambridgeshire Together: Local Area Agreement Board; and
- ◆ agreed that the District Council, as Local Planning Authority, should seek to influence the development of suitable HGV parking opportunities adjacent to the trunk roads in the District.

30. REVENUE OUTTURN 2007/08

The Cabinet has noted the outturn of revenue expenditure in 2007/08 along with variations between the original and revised budget provision for that year. A summary of debts received and the amount written-off during April to June 2008 has also been reported.

In considering expenditure, the Cabinet has congratulated Officers on the total net saving of £2.5m compared with the original budget. Whilst noting the action to be taken to enhance the budget monitoring process in the future, Executive Councillors have raised concerns over the increasing level of fuel and utility costs and the impact of the economic down turn on land charges income. Particular reference was made to the potential implications of this situation on future levels of council tax and the budget for 2009/2010 should the Government fail to acknowledge the impact of increases in costs and loss of income in their award of Revenue Support Grant.

31. MONITORING OF THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2007/08

Consideration has been given by the Cabinet to a report detailing the outturn of capital expenditure for 2007/08 and the implications for 2008/09. In discussing a number of variations in the 2008/09 programme, Executive Councillors have been advised that the level of Government grant for disabled facilities could be lower in 2009 than previous years, due to a shortage of occupational therapists employed by the PCT locally, which may result in fewer assessments being undertaken. Remedial action is being investigated and the Chief Executive has held discussions with his counterpart at the Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust regarding the possibility of using therapists based in neighbouring districts to undertake assessments in Huntingdonshire.

Having been advised that the revenue section of the Community Facilities grant aid budget for 2008/09 was over-committed and the capital part under-subscribed, the Cabinet has agreed to increase the revenue element by £43,000.

32. CAR PARKING ORDERS

In Item No. 75 of its Report to the meeting of the Council held on 16th April 2008, the Cabinet reported that it had approved the implementation of the Car Parking Strategy and consequential

amendments to car parking charges. As a consequence new orders under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 have been prepared and advertised in the local press.

The first order proposes the introduction of a new three year pricing policy to manage paid and controlled car parks in the town centres, with the aim of keeping demand at the 2007 base line. The second order relates to the free car parks to ensure they are used for the purpose for which they were provided. As a result of the public advertisement a number of representations have been received to the first order. Having been advised that the matters raised in the representations had been addressed during the previous deliberations on the strategy, the Cabinet has agreed not to hold a local inquiry and to approve the Orders as advertised.

33. RAISING SPONSORSHIP AND ADVERTISING REVENUES FROM THE COUNCIL'S WEBSITE

Having considered the benefits of selling sponsorship and advertising space on the Council's website, the Cabinet has authorised the Director of Commerce and Technology, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for IT and Customer Service, to appoint an agency to manage web advertising on behalf of the Council. In so doing, Members have requested that a review of the advertising initiative be undertaken in January 2009 and a further report submitted to the Cabinet at its meeting scheduled for 19th February 2009.

34. PARISH CHARTER FOR HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The Cabinet has considered the findings of a study by a Panel of the Overview and Scrutiny (Service Support) regarding the adoption of a Parish Charter in respect of the Council's relationship with Town and Parish Councils in the District (Item No. 13 of their Report refers).

In considering the results of a questionnaire distributed to all town and parish councils on a draft Charter, Members noted that only 43% of the towns and parishes responded and of those only 77% were in favour of a Parish Charter, with even less (47%) being interested in delegated services. Under the circumstances, the Cabinet has agreed that no further action be taken to develop a Parish Charter with the town and parish councils in Huntingdonshire at the present time. An explanation has been sent to the towns and parishes to inform them of the reasons for the decision.

At the same time, Members have discussed a recent Ministerial announcement suggesting devolution of service responsibility from the centre to county and district councils who would then be expected to further devolve responsibility to parish councils. As the scrutiny investigation has suggested that there appears to be little enthusiasm on the part of parish councils for additional powers and duties, the Head of Administration has been requested to draw the attention of the Local Government Association to the results of the consultation exercise locally.

35. NEW ACCOMMODATION DELIVERY – MID-PROGRAMME REVIEW

The Cabinet has noted the progress made on the delivery of the new accommodation project and the programme of work for the current year. In so doing, the Cabinet has approved a virement from the headquarters, repairs and renewals fund of £170,000 and has authorised the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Deputy Leader, to enter into a contract(s) for the supply of furniture for the new building.

Having discussed issues associated with the proposed development of the area of land fronting St. Mary's Street, the Cabinet has requested that development options be investigated and the findings, along with the financial implications, submitted to a future meeting.

36. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS TO ST IVES TOWN CENTRE

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the progress of phase 2 of an environmental improvements scheme for the Market Hill and Bridge Street areas of St Ives.

Phase 1 of the scheme was completed in 2001, involving the removal of parking from the Bridge Street/Crown Street area and the creation of loading bays and disabled parking. The development of phase 2, involving the Market Hill area, has been the subject of extensive scrutiny by an Advisory Group comprising local County, District and Town Councillors along with Scrutiny Members and representatives from local consultative groups such as the Town Centre Partnership, Access Group and the Civic Society.

Having considered three design options for phase 2 and revised Traffic Orders for Bridge Street, the Cabinet has

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

37. CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

The Cabinet has approved the contents of the Customer Service Strategy Action Plan. The Plan outlines the actions proposed to achieve the following objectives:-

- ◆ to provide high quality customer service;

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

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

38. ENHANCED CLEANSING SERVICES PROPOSAL FOR MARKET TOWNS

Following a presentation by Councillor J D Ablewhite, Scrutiny Panel Member, the Cabinet has considered the findings of a study by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) regarding the introduction of additional cleansing services in the District's town centres on Sundays to deal with the litter left as a result of the Saturday night time economy.

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

Having considered the overall cost of introducing an additional cleansing service and given the financial constraints faced by the Council, the Cabinet has requested that the possibility of financial contributions towards the cost of implementing the service be investigated with local town councils.

Attention also having been drawn to a new Government measure of Alcohol Disorder Zones, designed to require establishments creating additional expenditure for public authorities to bear the cost of any additional measures, the Cabinet has requested that their use be investigated further.

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

The Cabinet has agreed to adopt local standards for the provision of core sports facilities in Huntingdonshire. The availability of developing and adopting local sports facilities standards has been identified through recent research and it is intended that the adoption of such standards will assist in maintaining an appropriate range of sports facilities in the District to meet future need. As part of the process, seven key drivers have been identified as follows:-

- ◆ the need to plan strategically and ensure sustainability of future provision;
- ◆ the need to inform the Local Development Framework (LDF), and Supplementary Planning Documents and set out expectations for Section 106 contributions from developers towards future sports facility provision;
- ◆ the priorities and objectives for the Sustainable Community Strategy;
- ◆ the need to identify what provision is needed in St Neots, given the significant population increases planned for this area;
- ◆ the requirement to identify the needs of those living in rural areas, where accessibility to sports facilities is more limited;
- ◆ the need to increase participation in sport at local level (LAA target); and
- ◆ the emerging opportunities for partnerships – Building Schools for the Future (BSF), National Governing Bodies (NGBs), Sports Clubs etc.

Eventually it is intended to develop a leisure facility strategy which will embrace the local standards.

**40. REVIEW OF COUNCIL STRUCTURE:
APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUP**

The Cabinet has appointed Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, K J Churchill, W T Clough, S J Criswell, T D Sanderson, Ms M Thomas, G S E Thorpe and R G Tuplin to a Structural Working Group established to review the existing Council structure in light of experience and recent legislative change. The first meeting of the Working Group is scheduled to take place on 24th September 2008 and the Cabinet has been advised that the review was expected to be concluded with the intention to implement any changes in the new Municipal Year.

41. LAND AT MAYFIELD ROAD, HUNTINGDON

(The following item was considered as a confidential item under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.)

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

I C Bates
Chairman

**FINANCIAL FORECAST
(Report by the Head of Financial Services)**

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report considers the Financial Forecast for the next 15 years and highlights the difficulties of assessing inflation and the other impacts of the current economic problems together with the potential for significant fluctuations in Government Grant every 3 years when the Government's Comprehensive Spending Reviews are announced.
- 1.2 This report will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) on 2 September and Cabinet will then have the opportunity to consider their comments on 4 September prior to making their own recommendations to Council (24 September).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council has continued to spend carefully and this, together with extra grants, buoyant income and some transfers from revenue to capital, resulted in last year's outturn being £1.2m less than assumed in the MTP, though £0.3m of this will be needed to fund projects unavoidably deferred. This has been added to Revenue Reserves giving a total of £20.7m at April 2008. Additional capital expenditure resulted from transferring some items originally budgeted for as revenue and a lower level of deferral to 2008/09 than had been forecast. This resulted in Capital reserves of £16.0m at April 2008.
- 2.2 Our approved financial forecast recognises that we will have a number of years with deficits funded from reserves before equilibrium can be achieved. It also recognises that finding additional income, specific grant funding or savings to achieve this total will be a challenge.

3. FUNDING

- 3.1 The Councils net revenue expenditure has to be funded from Government general grant, council tax and reserves. The table below shows the proposed changes in each of these elements and the following paragraphs explain the changes included in this new forecast:

FUNDING	08/09 £M	09/10 £M	10/11 £M	11/12 £M	12/13 £M	13/14 £M	14/15 £M	15/16 £M	16/17 £M	17/18 £M	18/19 £M
Proposed Changes											
Government Grant				0.1	0.2		-0.1	-0.3	-0.4	-0.6	-0.8
Council Tax			-0.1								
Reserves	0.3	0.7	0.7	-0.2	-0.3	0.2	0.2				
Reduction (-)	0.3	0.7	0.6	-0.2	-0.2	0.2	0.1	-0.3	-0.4	-0.6	-0.8

Note – some tables do not add up due to roundings

4 GOVERNMENT GENERAL GRANT

- 4.1 In December 2007 the Government, for the first time, announced three year's grant. They gave a definite figure for 2008/09 and a provisional indication for 2009/10 and 2010/11 as part of their Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR07).
- 4.2 Whilst this gives councils a much better basis on which to make their shorter term plans it has the potential to concentrate significant changes into each of the three-yearly reviews. There are two types of change:
- ◆ Change in the total amount the Government is prepared to distribute to local government.
 - ◆ Changes to the formula by which this total sum is allocated to individual councils.
- 4.3 The Government's provisional settlement for 2009/10 and 2010/11 gave increases of 3.4% and 2.9% respectively and 3.5% per year was assumed thereafter. Given the current economic difficulties faced by the Government it is now likely that these assumptions are optimistic. The increases post 2010/11 have therefore been reduced to 2.5%. However, adjustments to the previous assumptions on the level of grant temporarily withheld, to protect those authorities who should receive decreases, means that losses only emerge post 2013/14 but then rise to £764k per year by 2018/19.
- 4.4 Any change in formula could be quite dramatic given the exemplifications produced when changes to the area cost adjustment factor were being considered in the last review. The Government has a working group that considers changes to the formula and by next year's review of the forecast it may be possible to identify whether we are more likely to lose or gain from potential changes. For this year's review the forecast has been based on no change to the formula.

GRANT FUNDING		08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
		£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M
Current Approved Plan												
	True grant forecast	13.0	13.2	13.4	13.8	14.3	14.8	15.3	15.9	16.4	17.0	17.6
	Less withheld for tapering	-0.8	-0.6	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4	-0.5	-0.5	-0.5	-0.5	-0.5	-0.6
	Total	12.2	12.6	12.9	13.4	13.9	14.3	14.8	15.4	15.9	16.5	17.0
Proposed Plan												
	True grant forecast	13.0	13.2	13.4	13.7	14.0	14.4	14.7	15.1	15.5	15.9	16.3
	Less withheld for tapering	-0.8	-0.6	-0.4	-0.2							
	Total	12.2	12.6	12.9	13.5	14.0	14.4	14.7	15.1	15.5	15.9	16.3
LOSS (-)		-0.0	-0.0	-0.0	+0.1	+0.2	0.0	-0.1	-0.3	-0.4	-0.6	-0.8

5. COUNCIL TAX

Tax Base

- 5.1 The current forecast is based on the tax base rising by 0.6% per year due to new house building.

5.2 Current economic difficulties have had a major impact on the house building industry and there has also been a noticeable volume of success in requests for reducing Council Tax bands for a variety of reasons. Overall it is anticipated that there will be no growth in taxbase for 2009/10 and just 0.3% in 2010/11. It has been assumed that, due to the inherent demand for additional housing, numbers will then rise for a period before returning to more normal levels of growth.

TAX BASE		09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14
		£	£	£	£	£
Current Approved Plan		58,132	58,481	58,831	59,184	59,539
	% increase	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%
Forecast Tax base		57,785	57,958	58,480	59,184	59,539
	% increase	0.0%	0.3%	0.9%	1.2%	0.6%
LOSS (-)		-347	-523	-351	0	0

Council Tax Level

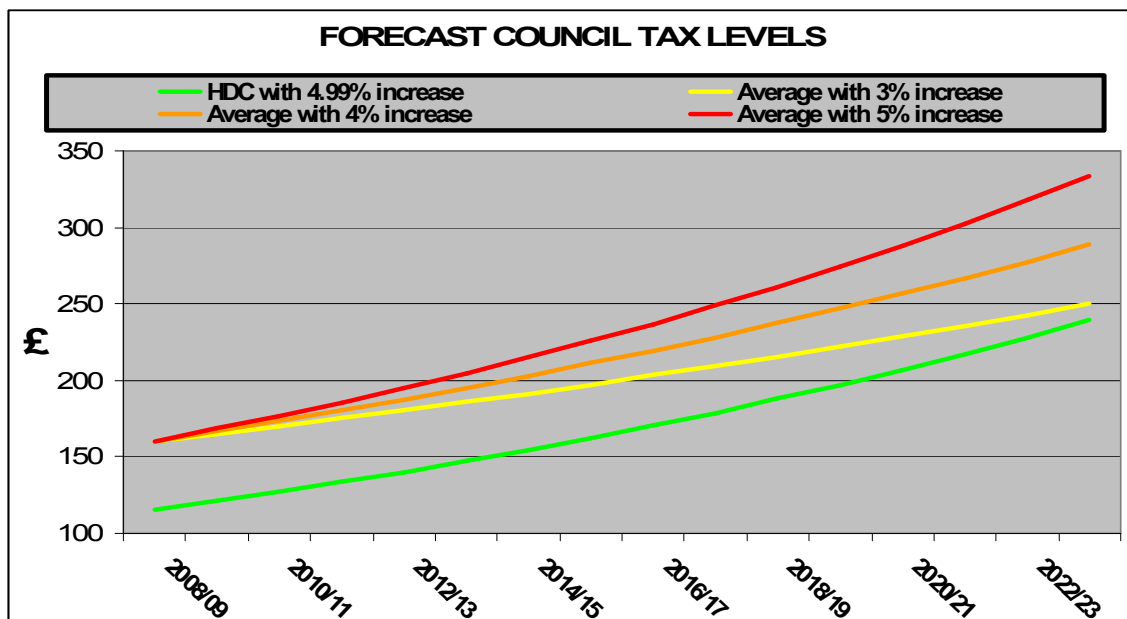
5.3 The Council decided to change its policy last year on the level of increases in Council Tax and moved from “the lower of the Council Tax and Budget Requirement increase being under 5%” to simply keeping the Council Tax increase under 5%. The Council also has a target to keep the level below that of the average District Council.

5.4 On 27 March the Government designated 8 authorities for capping, giving them 21 days to explain why their increase was necessary. Subsequently, on 26 June the Local Government Minister, John Healey, made the decisions shown in the table below:

CAPPING	% increases:		Subsequent Government action
	council tax	budget requirement	
Bedfordshire Police	9.6%	5.3%	No change 2008/09 but notional lower figure set on which the 2009/10 increase will be calculated.
Norfolk Police	8.3%	5.3%	
Portsmouth City	5.04%	6.1%	
Surrey Police	9.7%	6.0%	
Cheshire Police	17.0%	6.8%	No change 2008/09 but increases limited to 3% in 2009/10 and 2010/11
Leicestershire Police	15.4%	6.5%	
Warwickshire Police	12.9%	6.7%	
Lincolnshire Police	78.9%	29.0%	Capped and required to re-bill in 2008/09
<i>Government criteria</i>	<i>Over 5%</i>	<i>Over 5%</i>	<i>Both increases must be over 5% for designation</i>

5.5 Some of the Police Authorities may have gained benefit from this approach, e.g. Cheshire will achieve Council Tax increases of 23% over the next three years, it is likely that there is an underlying problem with Police finance that required some benefit. The only Local Authority, Portsmouth, has gained nothing as its marginal increase in Council Tax above 5% will be clawed back next year. It would therefore appear that the Council’s decision to increase the Tax level by 4.99% last year was sound.

- 5.6 However, it is very difficult to forecast what impact the current high levels of inflation on fuel, electricity and gas will have on the approach to capping for 2009/10. The position is exacerbated by public sector unions refusing to accept the current pay award offers because they consider that it results in a real-terms pay cut.
- 5.7 One argument is that Councils will have no choice but to make more significant increases, as, to do otherwise, will require unacceptably large cuts in services. Thus many Councils will make higher tax increases and, based on past performance, the Government would simply pick the worst ones resulting in a higher capping level.
- 5.8 Alternatively the Government may try and use local authorities as a means of deflation by limiting increases to lower levels than in past years.
- 5.9 For the purpose of the forecast, increases in Council Tax have been assumed to follow the previously approved plan of 4.99% per year. This will be reviewed in the light of the latest information when the tax is formally set next February for 2009/10.
- 5.10 The graph below shows Huntingdonshire's planned increases compared with the average District level rising at 3%, 4% or 5%.

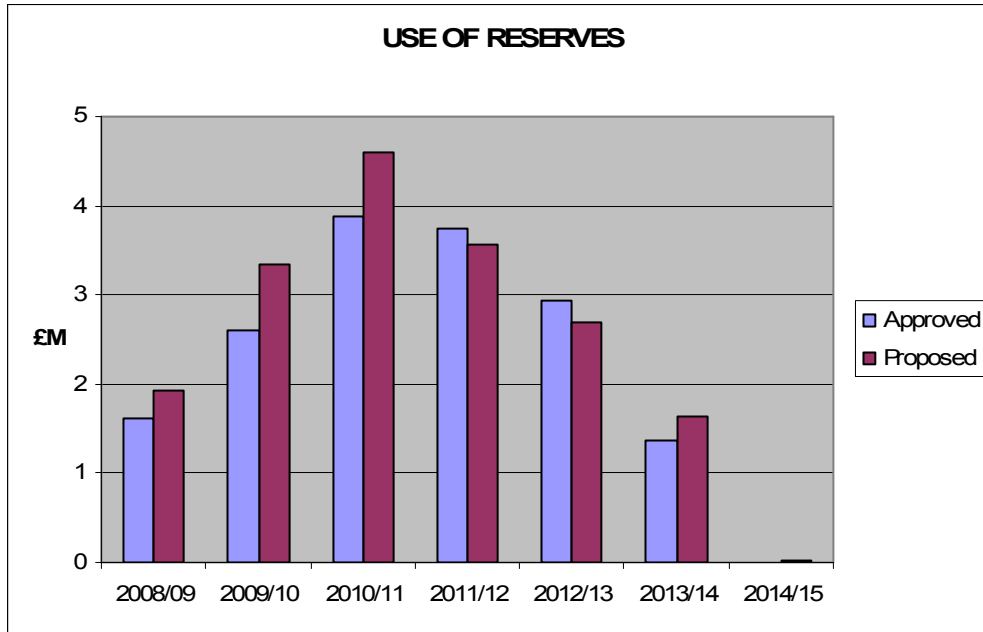


6 USE OF RESERVES

- 6.1 The balancing items in the process of producing the forecast are the use of reserves and the level of spending adjustments to be achieved. Available reserves are allocated over a number of years to give a profile of spending adjustments that is manageable (see also para. 8.1 below).
- 6.2 The current approved plan is based on allowing Revenue Reserves to fall to £3m, the recommended minimum level. The position is improved by the success in 2007/08 which led to them being increased and the forecast for the current year also shows less being required.

6.3 The previous Plan was based on net spending rising to £29M by 2018/19 and revenue reserves falling to £3M. The new plan has been extended to 2023/24, by when, net spending will rise to £33M. It is therefore considered appropriate to increase reserves to £4M as that date approaches.

6.4 The graph below compares the use of reserves in the approved plan with the proposed plan:



6.5 Capital Reserves

The forecast level of capital receipts has been revised downwards to reflect expected reductions in the Council's share of "right-to-buy" receipts, due to the current economic problems, and also because certain schemes now include related receipts within the relevant MTP appraisal. This results in less buoyant capital reserves and hence requires additional capital funding to be met from borrowing.

7 NET EXPENDITURE

7.1 At this stage of the annual budget process the Forecast does not attempt to include all of the detailed variations that will emerge later in the process. It does however attempt to identify the significant items within the following categories:

- ◆ Inflation: General inflation, pay inflation, pension contributions and assumed increases in fees and charges
- ◆ Interest Rates
- ◆ Unavoidable significant Service Changes
- ◆ Service Variations post April 2013
- ◆ Minimum Revenue Provision
- ◆ Items not taken into account.

7.2 Inflation

In the current year additional costs will arise due to the slightly higher than budgeted pay award (though this can be almost met from a small reduction in the employer's pension contribution rate) together with higher electricity and diesel costs. These are partly offset by a significant reduction in insurance rates achieved at the re-tendering from July (£90k this year and £120k in a full year). Whilst there is no clear evidence on what may happen on diesel costs, an assumption has been made and the net result is that £155k will be needed in the current year and £132k in subsequent years to correct the 2008/09 price base.

- 7.3 The inflation on diesel is based on a purchase price of £1.10 per litre (£1.29 including VAT) for the rest of the year. Recent reductions in prices mean that this figure might be able to be reduced when the draft budget is considered in November. A reduction of 5p would amount to a reduction of around £25k. Diesel is purchased in bulk to obtain discounts and stored in a larger tank than was available at the old Godmanchester Depot.
- 7.4 Employer's pension contributions have been based on the latest valuation by the actuary and show a small reduction on the levels previously included. It must be appreciated that the figures are closely linked, in part, to the performance of the equity market, which may have implications for the next valuation in 3 years time.
- 7.5 2009/10 will see the end of our current fixed price contracts for gas in November and electricity in December. General inflation may also be higher but this can be broadly off-set by higher increases in discretionary fees and charges. Diesel, gas and electricity costs are likely to continue to increase by more than average inflation in the long run. Again there is no reliable basis on which to make these future assumptions and so the forecasts shown in the table below will be reviewed regularly during the plan period:

	From To	08/09 09/10	09/10 10/11	010/11 011/12	
prices					
expenditure		3.0% from 2.5%	3.0% from 2.5%		
fees & charges		3.0% from 2.5%	3.0% from 2.5%		
electricity		12% from 5%	38% from 5%	Stay at 5%	ongoing
gas		20% from 5%	40% from 5%	10.0% from 5%	ongoing
fuel		10% from 5%	10% from 5%	10% from 5%	ongoing
pension rate		18.4% from 18.8%	20.4% from 21.1%	20.4% from 21.1%	ongoing

- 7.6 There is also a need to identify inflation on the required spending adjustments so that they can be shown at the same price base as the rest of the budget each year to ensure comparability e.g. the new plan is at 2009/10 prices. The calculation last year has been refined which, whilst not altering the bottom line results in more of the spending adjustment being treated as inflation, and thus gives a lower headline figure for spending adjustments.

7.7 Higher inflation also means that if the Council is to use increases in fees and charges to contribute to future spending adjustment targets the increases will have to be higher.

7.8 Interest Rates

It has been assumed that we will earn 4.95% on our investments in 2009/10, 5.25% in 2010/11, 5.5% in 2011/12, 5.0% in 2012/13 and 4.75% thereafter. The Interest rate for borrowing has been assumed at 4.75% through until 2012/13 and 4.5% thereafter. In reality borrowing rates are likely to be higher during the earlier years but fluctuate within each year throughout the whole period of the forecast. Long term borrowing will take place either in advance or arrears to ensure keen rates are achieved and short term borrowing or investment used to cater for the timing differences. These rates will be reviewed at each stage of the budget process.

7.9 Service Variations to March 2013

Previously planned changes in budgets (MTP schemes) have been reflected in the financial forecast together with the following list of significant revenue items that are currently known. There is also an increase of £1,439k in the cost of the projects for the new Operations Centre, Customer Service Centre and Offices, excluding any recharges from revenue salaries for which there are compensating savings:

VARIATIONS	08/09 £000	09/10 £000	10/11 £000	11/12 £000	12/13 £000	13/14 £000
Land Charges	200	100	100	100	100	100
Car Park Strategy – delayed implementation and change to charging basis.	80	-113	-113	-113	-113	-113
Planning fees – major fall in house building	150	150				
A14 Inquiry		250				
Need to accrue untaken leave in accounts			150			
Benefits adjustment	-80	-80	-80	-80	-80	-80
VAT Partial Exemption	-105					
Revenue to Capital Transfers	-104					
Total	141	307	57	-93	-93	-93

7.10 Whilst these items will result in a short term cost of £505k this is followed by a permanent reduction in costs of £93k per year.

7.11 Service Variations post April 2013

It is necessary to consider what general provision for service variations should be made beyond the level to March 2013 already included in the approved MTP.

7.12 It has been assumed that, given the financial position the Council will be facing in the coming years, any additional **revenue** developments should be funded from compensating savings or additional specific grant or contributions.

7.13 £4.65m per year for capital investment (at 2009/10 prices) has been included and this would be sufficient, **for example**, to fund:

	£000
Social Housing Grant	1,100
Leisure Centre Maintenance (500) and regular replacement of fitness equipment (200)	700
Disabled Facilities Grants	900
Vehicle Replacements	800
Other items	1,154
Total	4,654

7.14 Any unavoidable additional costs will need to be met from revenue reserves until compensating savings or additional income can be obtained.

7.15 Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

The MRP is a charge to revenue to enable borrowing to fund capital expenditure to be repaid in a prudent fashion. New regulations require the Council to have a policy on the calculation of the MRP and this will be included in the November MTP report. The forecast has always made provision for such a payment once borrowing is required based on an average life of assets of 25 years. The Sensitivity Analysis exemplifies the impact if the new rules result in this average changing.

7.16 Items not taken into account

There are also some items that it is not possible to take account of at this stage but which may need to be brought into the MTP, before it is approved next February, if additional information becomes available in time. These include:

- ◆ The VAT position on off-street car parking which is the subject of continuing judgements and appeals. If it is finally resolved in favour of local authorities there will be a benefit of £150k per year.
- ◆ The Council is likely to be faced with some significant costs relating to an “orphan” contaminated land site. This could amount to as much as £150k per year together with some sums due for past years.
- ◆ At the time of writing this report there was still insufficient data from bus operators to forecast the level of any under or over spending on concessionary fares in the current year. There is the potential for additional costs and reduced income from next spring when the Guided Bus becomes operational. This would be due to additional trips by passengers with concessionary fares passes and the impact on car park income at St Ives if the Guided Bus car park is free. There is a possibility that Concessionary Fares may become a County Service from April 2011 but it is impossible to predict whether the grant adjustments will be greater or less than our expenditure at that time.
- ◆ Potential service developments not already in the MTP and any unavoidable spending requirements not referred to in this report.

The net impact of the items in this paragraph is likely to be an additional cost and this is considered in Annex B.

8 SPENDING ADJUSTMENTS AND OVERALL POSITION

- 8.1 Any variations in funding, identified in sections 4 and 5 above, or net expenditure, section 7, need to be balanced by a combination of spending adjustments and the use of revenue reserves. There is still sufficient flexibility provided by revenue reserves to achieve this in an organised manner.
- 8.2 As referred to in para 7.6 above there is a need to adjust the split of spending adjustments between the inflation element and the headline target to achieve comparability with the price base for the rest of the plan. The table below therefore shows the relevant figures to restate the approved figures and then highlight the differences in the proposed plan:

UNIDENTIFIED SPENDING ADJUSTMENTS	09/10 £000	10/11 £000	11/12 £000	12/13 £000	13/14 £000	14/15 £000	15/16 £000	16/17 £000	17/18 £000	18/19 £000
Approved Plan	-500	-1,000	-2,000	-3,642	-5,979	-8,070	-8,646	-9,365	-9,816	-10,715
Transfer to inflation provision	0	24	94	296	702	1,192	1,445	1,750	2,006	2,426
Proposed variations	0	-25	-594	-654	-323	-405	-681	-791	-852	-967
Proposed Plan	-500	-1,000	-2,500	-4,000	-5,600	-7,283	-7,882	-8,406	-8,663	-9,256
Increase (-)	0	0	-500	-358	379	787	764	959	1,153	1,459

- 8.3 There has been marked success in identifying spending adjustments with a significant part of the 2009/10 target identified last year leaving just £500k now to be found. However the increasing levels for future years mean that robust challenge will be required of any proposals for additional spending that emerge in this year's MTP.
- 8.4 Later reports in the budget cycle will identify the remainder of the adjustments for next year and any progress relating to later years.
- 8.5 Annex A summarises the overall forecast and covers the period up to 2023/24.

9 SENSITIVITY AND RISKS

- 9.1 The Financial Forecast takes a longer-term view and, within that time frame, many of its assumptions will turn out to be inaccurate and for this reason a sensitivity analysis is undertaken to identify the potential impact if any of the key assumptions change. This is attached at Annex B.

10 CONCLUSIONS

- 10.1 The benefits to forward planning, from three year grant figures, are illusory as the uncertainty every third year, on future grant levels, is significant.
- 10.2 The Council's plan to increase Council Tax levels by 4.99% per year is still sound in the light of the Government's approach to capping for 2008/09.

- 10.3 There will be unavoidable additional spending due to inflation, the downturn in the housing industry and other adjustments included in this report. There may well be other unavoidable areas of spending which will emerge during the budget/MTP process. This results in reserves having to be used more quickly and some increases in the level of spending adjustments required.
- 10.4 Although the Council continues to be successful in identifying revenue savings and additional grant funding there will need to be a robust challenge of all MTP bids. Also, any attempts to contribute from increases in fees and charges, will necessitate greater rises to compensate for higher levels of inflation.
- 10.5 Long range planning is far from precise, especially given the frequent changes within local government. However it does provide a clear indication of what will happen based on the current set of assumptions. It thus allows strategic decisions to be made which will be regularly reviewed when changes to the underlying assumptions emerge.
- 10.6 Cabinet will have the comments from the Overview & Scrutiny Committee available when they consider this report.

11 RECOMMENDATIONS

11.1 Cabinet is requested to:

Recommend this report to Council and highlight the increased uncertainty created by the current and future levels of inflation and the Government's reaction to them through capping and future grant settlements.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985

1. Working papers in Financial Services
2. Financial Forecast (September 2007), 2007/08 Outturn, 2008/09 Revenue Budget and the 2009/2013 MTP

Contact Officer: Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services
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FINANCIAL SUMMARY	FORECAST	MTP				FORECAST										
	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
2008/09 BUDGET/MTP	20,420	22,214	24,252	24,990	25,103	24,469	24,105	25,146	26,233	27,369	28,559	28,418	28,408	28,351	28,559	28,418
Net deferrals	185	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Items identified in forecast report	141	307	57	-93	-93	-93	-93	-93	-93	-93	-93	-93	-93	-93	-93	-93
Inflation adjustments																
- 2008/09 adjustments	155	132	132	132	132	132	132	132	132	132	132	132	132	132	132	132
- future revisions		-48	165	94	83	75	9	9	15	-43	-24	2,000	3,743	5,986	8,347	10,409
- adjusting savings pricebase	0	0	-26	-155	-393	-765	-1,292	-1,649	-2,030	-2,356	-2,883	-3,737	-4,499	-5,461	-6,617	-7,523
Variation in Cost of Borrowing		162	333	361	393	415	434	453	472	489	506	838	1,174	1,512	1,854	2,198
Interest Variation	42	163	-13	4	74	101	118	128	130	134	139	134	120	106	92	78
Forecast Outturn	-223															
Changes to spending adjustments	0	0	0	-500	-358	379	787	764	959	1,153	1,459	958	766	369	-171	-260
NEW FORECAST	20,720	22,930	24,899	24,833	24,942	24,713	24,199	24,890	25,817	26,785	27,795	28,650	29,751	30,902	32,103	33,359
FUNDING																
Use of revenue reserves	-1,923	-3,331	-4,588	-3,532	-2,610	-1,564	-198	0	0	0	0	200	200	200	200	200
<i>Remaining revenue reserves EOY</i>	18,823	15,492	10,904	7,372	4,762	3,198	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,200	3,400	3,600	3,800	4,000
Government Support	-12,157	-12,572	-12,939	-13,491	-14,034	-14,384	-14,744	-15,113	-15,491	-15,878	-16,275	-16,682	-17,099	-17,526	-17,964	-18,414
Collection Fund Deficit	28	-27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Council Tax	-6,668	-7,001	-7,372	-7,810	-8,298	-8,765	-9,257	-9,777	-10,327	-10,907	-11,520	-12,168	-12,853	-13,576	-14,339	-15,146
COUNCIL TAX LEVEL	£115.39	£121.15	£127.20	£133.55	£140.21	£147.21	£154.55	£162.26	£170.36	£178.86	£187.79	£197.17	£207.02	£217.36	£228.22	£239.62
% increase	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%	4.99%
Forecast Capital Spending	16,084	15,034	7,497	7,264	5,009	5,133	5,263	5,396	5,532	5,670	5,812	5,957	6,106	6,258	6,415	6,575
Capital reserves EOY	539	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Accumulated Borrowing EOY	0	13,395	19,992	26,556	30,864	35,297	39,861	44,557	49,388	54,359	59,470	64,727	70,133	75,691	81,406	87,281
Net Interest and Borrowing Costs	-2,120	-517	474	1,204	1,867	2,320	2,698	3,022	3,342	3,664	3,989	4,316	4,638	4,962	5,290	5,621
Spending Adjustments required	0	-500	-1,000	-2,500	-4,000	-5,600	-7,283	-7,882	-8,406	-8,663	-9,256	-9,757	-9,949	-10,346	-10,886	-10,975

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FINANCIAL PLAN -SENSITIVITY AND RISKS

The financial forecast model has been used to demonstrate the impact that variations in investment rates, borrowing rates and increases in pay will have in specific years.

Cumulative from 2009/10 unless otherwise indicated	Extra cost in:	
	2013/14 £M	2023/24 £M
0.5% extra pay award	+0.7	+3.3
0.5% increase in staff efficiency assuming this can be translated into reduced staffing levels.	-0.7	-3.3
0.5% higher investment returns	0.0	0.0
0.5% higher borrowing costs	+0.1	+0.3
0.5% increase in Government Grant per year from 2011/12	-0.2	-1.4
Impact on MRP of 5 year increase in average life of assets	-0.2	-0.4
Impact on MRP of 5 year decrease in average life of assets	+0.3	+0.5
Extra growth of £0.5m per year	+2.5	+7.5

Inflation, other than pay, is fairly neutral as long as fees and charges are increased in line with it. If pay awards increase by more than forecast then further efficiency improvements would be needed to reduce the impact.

The impact of investment rates has significantly diminished by 2013/14 as reserves will have been significantly reduced to meet revenue deficits and to fund capital projects.

The impact of higher borrowing rates is less significant than pay but is growing.

Other Risks

The results of the next triennial revaluation of the Pension Fund will be received in December 2010. The performance of the Funds investments over the next three years will have a significant impact on the result. An increase of 1% per year for 4 years would have an impact of £0.5M in 2013/14 and £1.1M in 2023/24.

The position on Concessionary Fares is still not clear in the short term and it may become a County function from April 2011 though whether this will be financially beneficial cannot be assessed.

The Government's next Comprehensive Spending Review will be published in the summer of 2010 (and every three years thereafter) and will create significant uncertainty and potential volatility. It could have a significant impact as changes to the area cost adjustment are likely to be reconsidered.

It has been assumed that capping will continue to allow 4.99% increases in Council Tax. If this limit were to be reduced significant additional spending adjustments would be required. Relaxation of capping would provide potential

to reduce the level of spending adjustments required by increasing Council Tax levels, if this were supported by Council.

Inflation on Capital Schemes of 2.5% per year has been included in total within the plan. There have been examples of high tender prices on specific schemes but there is little objective data on which to base a higher inflation allocation or even to estimate a suitable contingency sum so no additional provision has been included. The Customer Service Centre and Pathfinder House figures are predominantly fixed prices.

There is no provision for any demographic growth in services. Pressures will emerge due to additional housing and increased longevity over the plan period.

Most budgets are based on 97.5% of salary due to the expectation of savings from staff turnover. If turnover falls financial pressures will emerge and vice versa.

Leisure Centre income is close to £5M per year (excluding cost sharing from the County Council and Schools) and certain facilities are in direct competition with the private sector. If income was lost it would be difficult to reduce expenditure by an equivalent sum in the short term. In addition the financial plan incorporates a substantial challenge for leisure centres to reduce their net cost by nearly £1M per year. This may not be achieved.

Spending Adjustments of £5.5M by 2013/14 and £11M by 2023/24 are included in the financial plan and achievement of these will require detailed identification and delivery plans.

**HUNTINGDONSHIRE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY
(Report by Head of Policy and Strategic Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinets endorsement of the Sustainable Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire (SCS) prior to submission to the Council

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The District Council has a statutory duty to work with partner organisations to produce a SCS for Huntingdonshire; a plan that sets out how the providers of local services – including the business and voluntary sectors - will work together to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the area.

2.2 At the meetings held on 4 October 2007 and 26 June 2008, the Cabinet considered the draft (SCS). The vision, outcomes and objectives set out in the SCS have been developed in conjunction with partners and have been endorsed by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership (HSP) Board. Appended to this report is the final SCS.

2.3 The SCS is supported by a series of shorter term delivery plans which have been reviewed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels. These plans will form the basis of regular performance monitoring to ensure that the Council and our partners are working towards the achievement of the plans and objectives. The SCS itself will be reviewed every three years. The achievement of delivery plans will be subject to a quarterly/annual cycle of review.

3. PUBLICATION


It is proposed that the attached SCS appended to this report will be published in the Autumn.

4. RECOMMENDATION

That the Cabinet are requested to review the Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy prior to its adoption and publication by the Council.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Key corporate strategies of all partner organisations
Huntingdonshire Community Strategy 2004
Local Government White Paper, 'Strong and Prosperous Communities'

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(Sustainable Community Strategy)
 01480 388495

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**Huntingdonshire Sustainable
Community Strategy
2008- 2028**

draft

Contents

1. **Introduction**
 - What is the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership
 - What is a Sustainable Community Strategy
 - What does Huntingdonshire look like today
2. **What is sustainable community**, and how does this apply to Huntingdonshire
3. A **Vision** for Huntingdonshire & **strategic themes**
4. **Outcomes and objectives**

1. Introduction

Introduction by Councillor I C Bates to be inserted.

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What is the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership?

The Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership is one of five Local strategic Partnerships across Cambridgeshire. The Partnership involves representatives from Cambridgeshire County Council, Huntingdonshire District Council, NHS Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire Police, Town and Parish Councils, the Environment Agency, Huntingdonshire Regional College, local businesses and the voluntary sector.

All of these organisations have teamed up to work together more effectively to improve the quality of life for the people of Huntingdonshire. They do this by combining their activities to make the best use of resources and share knowledge and expertise. Their vision will be delivered through the Sustainable Community Strategy.

What is a Sustainable Community Strategy?

Huntingdonshire's Sustainable Community Strategy shows how we will build a better future for Huntingdonshire. It reflects key district, regional and sub-regional strategies, specifically the Local Development Framework which will be the delivery mechanism for the spatial elements of the Strategy.

It is based on a collective understanding of the current and future needs of Huntingdonshire, public consultation and the aspirations and priorities of those who live and work in the district.

The Strategy is organised under six strategic themes:

- Growth and Infrastructure
- Health and Wellbeing
- Inclusive, Safe and Cohesive Communities
- Economic Prosperity and Skills
- Environment
- Children and Young People

For each theme, a series of outcomes (What we want to achieve) and objectives (how we will go about achieving the outcomes) have been identified. These outcomes and objectives will enable the partnership to address common priorities, set clear goals and share responsibility.

Each of the strategic themes has a five year delivery plan which will detail how the outcomes and objectives will be achieved. The delivery plans will have annual targets that will be reviewed each year.

What does Huntingdonshire look like today?

Huntingdonshire is still a large district characterised by four market towns which act as service centres for surrounding villages. The District's towns, villages and countryside offer diverse and attractive environments in which to live and work, each having their own distinctive character.

The population is currently around 166,000 people, with approximately half living in the four market towns of Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey and the remainder in almost 100 villages. A number of large villages – key settlements - act as local service centres for surrounding areas, and there are also numerous smaller villages and hamlets.

The southern part of the District, including the towns of Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives fall within the Cambridge Sub-Region and looks to Cambridge for many of the higher order services, while the northern part of the District is influenced by Peterborough.

The District has experienced considerable pressures for growth. Since the 1960's there has been a rapid and extensive new house building. While the local economy has developed successfully the number of jobs has not matched population growth associated with new houses. As a result there is a net out-commuting pattern. Similarly the development of facilities, services and local infrastructure has been outstripped by population growth.

The District lies within the London/Stansted/Cambridge/Peterborough growth area within the East of England Region. New development will generate additional demands on the district's physical and social infrastructure. A key challenge will be timely provision of adequate and appropriate new infrastructure to meet these demands. This is essential to create balanced, sustainable communities.

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2. Sustainable Communities in Huntingdonshire

What is a Sustainable Community?

Sustainable communities are places where people **want to live, work and spend time**, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, and provide a good quality of life.

Eight key components of a sustainable community are:

- Active, inclusive and safe
- Well run
- Environmentally sensitive
- Well designed and built
- Well connected
- Thriving
- Well served
- Fair for everyone

The extent to which Huntingdonshire meets these key components is shown in the diagram below

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Sustainable Communities in Huntingdonshire

Active, inclusive and safe

Fair, tolerant and cohesive with a strong local culture and other shared community activities

Huntingdonshire

Perceptions of community identity and belonging in Huntingdonshire are generally high. However, perceptions of strong community identity and belonging tend to be higher in communities where there is good access to facilities and services. Rural areas and the more deprived communities are more likely to feel a lower sense of identity and belonging.

Huntingdonshire is generally a safe place with a low level of crime. However, there are some communities where crime and anti-social behaviour is relatively high.

Well run

With effective and inclusive participation, representation and leadership

There are some well established consultation and participation activities across Huntingdonshire, both general perception views and service specific. However, there is not always a consistent approach and there is a need to establish effective feedback mechanisms. Working closely with the three tiers of local government, and engaging communities and neighbourhoods and listening and communicating with local residents will involve them in decision making and ensure that their views are used to improve services and inform the development of policies.

Environmentally sensitive

Providing places for people to live that are considerate of the environment

Huntingdonshire is at the heart of the East of England Growth Agenda and as a result, we need to ensure that the development of places for people to live, work and visit enhances, rather than degrades our environment.

On a global scale there has been a growing realisation that the way we currently live our lives is unsustainable. In other words we are living beyond our means. Perhaps the greatest threat to our environment is that of climate change.

In order to address this global issue, we must act locally. Work is underway in Huntingdonshire to reduce emissions of carbon and other greenhouse gases and develop a long-term strategy to adapt to the climate change already taking place. As one of the lowest lying and driest parts of the country, the local consequences are likely to include increased risk of flooding and further stress to water resources.

Addressing the imbalance between our use of natural resources in building the new homes and services we require and the resulting waste produced, is a key challenge where progress is already being made. The protection and enhancement of Huntingdonshire's valuable natural environment and the maintenance of local distinctiveness are also vital to the development of a truly sustainable Huntingdonshire.

Well designed and built

Featuring quality built and natural environment

Huntingdonshire has a good built environment with a mix of quality historic and modern buildings. However a proportion of the housing stock does not meet modern standards for energy efficiency. Job growth has not matched housing and population growth and in addition there is a lack of affordable housing. The natural environment is varied and valued by local residents.

Well connected

With good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services

Access to Market towns and other service centres has relied on a high dependency on cars throughout Huntingdonshire's communities which in turn has contributed to congested main roads at peak times. The need for improvements in transport services, communication links, and access to services has been accepted.

Thriving

With a flourishing diverse local economy

Huntingdonshire has a strong and diverse local economy. To maintain this, jobs need to match the level of growth and skills for the future particularly in key sectors, need to be achieved. The vibrancy of our town centres needs to match the demand of growth.

Well served

With public, private, community and voluntary services that are appropriate to people's needs and accessible to all

Huntingdonshire has an extensive range of public, private, community and voluntary organisations providing valued and essential services in many communities. Local residents have high perceptions of local services - 84% of residents stated that they were satisfied with their local area as a place to live (*residents survey 2008*)

Fair for Everyone

now and in the future

Not everyone in Huntingdonshire has equal access to services or information. Huntingdonshire is made up of many different groups of people who have different needs and aspirations. It comprises many different communities; some of these communities represent a geographical location others a shared interest of need. To make progress, resources must be targeted to meet the greatest need.

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3. A Vision for Huntingdonshire

The Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership is working together to achieve a long term vision for Huntingdonshire as a place where current and future generations have a good quality of life and can –

- make the most of opportunities that come from living in a growing and developing district;
- enjoy the benefits of continued economic success;
- access suitable homes, jobs, services, shops, culture and leisure opportunities;
- realise their full potential;
- maintain the special character of our market towns, villages and countryside; and
- live in an environment that is safe and protected from the effects of climate change and where valuable natural resources are used wisely.

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4. Strategic Themes Outcomes and Objectives

Growth & Infrastructure

New development will place additional demands on the district's physical and social infrastructure. Dealing positively with this growth will help to deliver sustainable communities. It is essential that growth is appropriately directed and opportunities are maximised. A key challenge for Huntingdonshire will be to ensure that the infrastructure, transport network and community/leisure facilities in new or expanded communities meet demand and that the growth in jobs matches new housing and addresses previous imbalances. In order to deliver sustainable communities it is also important that growth in housing maximises the opportunities for affordable homes

Outcomes:

- Sustainable patterns of growth and development
- Sufficient housing to meet future needs
- Appropriate business infrastructure to support sustainable growth of the economy and reduce out commuting
- An upgraded and managed transport network, including public transport to service existing and growing communities effectively and safely.
- Enhanced market town centres that serve their surrounding area
- Appropriate flood risk management, sustainable water supply and sufficient provision of utilities including the development of local renewable sources of energy
- Improve health, education/learning, training, community, leisure and local and strategic open space through the appropriate provision of facilities to meet current and future needs
- New and upgraded homes and other buildings which are well designed, well maintained and contribute to lowering carbon emissions

Sustainable patterns of growth and development

- Ensure appropriate policies and plans are in place to meet the infrastructure needs
- Ensure effective and realistic delivery plans are in place

Sufficient housing to meet future needs

- Ensure an appropriate supply of new housing to at least meet RSS targets
- Increase supply of affordable housing (including key worker)
- To reduce the occurrence of homelessness
- Provide accommodation for gypsies and Travellers as required by the emerging policy in the Regional Spatial Strategy

Appropriate business infrastructure to support sustainable growth of the economy and reduce out commuting

- Ensure land, premises and infrastructure are available for the development of key sectors to support economic growth, including:

- 58 ➤ advanced manufacturing
- environmental technologies
- high tech industries such as telecommunications; and
- creative industries

An upgraded and managed transport network, including public transport to service existing and growing communities effectively and safely.

- Enhanced strategic highway capacity and safety
- Improved public transport
- Enhance the physical integration of bus/train/taxi/cycle/pedestrian services (including provision for people with mobility issues)
- Increase cycle and footway networks (particularly to key services in towns and villages)
- Develop improved access to services and facilities by community-based transport

Enhanced market town centres that serve their surrounding area

- Appropriate re-developed and new floor space to enable an improved mix of retail, leisure, commercial, cultural and public facilities
- Enhanced public realm
- Appropriate level of managed car parking

Appropriate flood risk management, sustainable water supply and sufficient provision of utilities including the development of local renewable sources of energy

- Appropriate flood risk management measures in place
- Develop capacity for renewable energy
- Sustainable water supply
- Develop utility provision including ICT (Broadband capacity)

Improve health, education/learning, training, community, leisure and local and strategic open space through the appropriate provision of facilities to meet current and future needs

- Provide appropriate cultural, leisure and community infrastructure
- Provide appropriate local green, recreational and open space
- Provide appropriate networked strategic green open space
- Provide appropriate health and social care infrastructure
- Provide appropriate life-long education/ learning and training facilities

New and upgraded homes and other buildings which are well designed, well maintained and contribute to lowering carbon emissions

- Ensure the building of new homes and commercial/public premises comply to zero carbon standards by 2016 and Lifetime Home Standards
- Improve energy and water efficiency of existing homes, commercial and public buildings
- Ensure design and location of public services as far as possible reduce carbon emissions
- Ensure design and location of community services as far as possible reduce carbon emissions
- Well maintained/decent homes
- Conserved heritage assets

******Publication note**** a series of resident quotes, photos and project case studies will be inserted at this section**

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Health & Wellbeing

Promoting health and wellbeing, protecting health and intervening to improve health and high quality health care are key to maintaining sustainable communities. To achieve this, the partnership will need to address health inequalities, intervene to alter situations with negative health impacts, promote healthy lifestyles, ensure well maintained (decent) homes and provide/promote opportunities for active leisure and cultural activities

Outcomes:

- **Appropriate culture and leisure opportunities**
- **Reduced health inequalities**
- **Individuals choose healthy lifestyles**
- **Reduced accidents**
- **Increased opportunities for vulnerable people to live independently**

9

Appropriate culture and leisure opportunities

- Develop culture & leisure opportunities
- Provide accessible opportunities - things to do, particularly Children and Young People and those with disabilities
- Address play needs as identified in the Play Strategy
- Address culture needs as identified in the Cultural Strategy
- Promote awareness of active leisure activities
- Improve access to the countryside and green space
- Provide arts and entertainment including performance exhibition spaces
- Enhance access to heritage
- Provide good quality and quantity of leisure services including modernisation
- Ensure sufficient quality and quantity of indoor and outdoor sporting infrastructure

Reduced health inequalities

- Narrow the gap of inequalities between areas in the district

Individuals choose healthy lifestyles

- Reduce the number of people who smoke
- Tackle obesity – improve nutrition and physical exercise in children and adults
- Promote active and healthy lifestyles
- Reduce alcohol and drug misuse
- Improve sexual health
- Promote mental health well being
- Reduce teenage conceptions

Reduced accidents

- Reduce workplace accidents
- Prevent falls by older people
- Prompt and efficient disabled facilities grants/adaptations

Increased opportunities for vulnerable people to live independently

- Promote the independence of older people
- Increase provision for homeless and young people
- Support the housing needs of other vulnerable groups where appropriate

Publication note** a series of resident quotes, photos and project case studies will be inserted at this section**

Environment

To reduce emissions of carbon and other greenhouse gases we must focus on a more balanced transport system with an emphasis on reducing travel demand and increasing sustainable modes of travel, and also look to influence the way energy is used and produced in the District. By focusing our efforts on vulnerable groups we help protect them from the impacts of fuel poverty.

It is important to safe guard both the urban and rural heritage of the District, to protect the quality of green space and ensure adequate provision for present and future generations. We must make this environmental capital accessible to all, while realising its economic potential for the benefit of visitors and residents alike.

We all have concern for our local environment – the places in which we live, work and play. Our streets, local park, village or town, as well as the organisations and businesses that we work within, all impact on the environment. We must maintain our local environment to a high standard, while at the same time reducing our impacts on the broader global environment

Outcomes:

- **Mitigate and adapt to climate change**
- **Efficient use of resources**
- **An environment that is protected and improved**

Mitigate and adapt to climate change

- Increase energy efficiency
- Encourage renewable energy
- Reduce travel and emissions to air
- Adaptation to climate change

Efficient use of resources

- Encourage sustainable purchasing
- Efficient water use
- Make the best use of land
- Reduce waste

An environment that is protected and improved

- Reduce contaminated and polluted land
- Protect & enhance biodiversity & open space
- Protect and enhance urban & rural character
- Maintain a clean & safe Huntingdonshire

Publication note** a series of resident quotes, photos and project case studies will be inserted at this section**

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Children and Young People

Children and young people have played an integral part in identifying outcomes for this section of the strategy. A key challenge for Huntingdonshire is to ensure we continue to develop services that take into account children and young people's needs and preferences.

This strategy will provide the framework to ensure that there is sustained support for families and carers and tangible improvements for children and young people across Huntingdonshire.

Outcomes:

- **Services that are designed and evaluated by children and young people**
- **Effective and sustained support is available for all parents and carers especially those that are vulnerable and/or have vulnerable children and young people**
- **Safe, accessible, positive activities for children and young people**
- **A safe clean environment for children and young people**
- **Positive images of children and young people**
- **Education and training opportunities for all children and young people**

Services that are designed and evaluated by children and young people

- Develop structures to facilitate children and young people's active involvement in delivery of services
- Encourage and support children and young people's active involvement in the implementation of the Sustainable Community Strategy
- Monitor the impact of children and young people's active involvement; ensure feedback and develop an evidence base

Effective and sustained support is available for all parents and carers especially those that are vulnerable and/or have vulnerable children and young people

- Develop sustainable support for vulnerable parents/carers and families
- Develop frameworks for involving parents and carers in the delivery of services and monitor impact
- Develop a balance of 1:1 and group support

Safe, accessible, positive activities for children and young people

- Increase the range of opportunities for children and young people to meet in informal and safe environments
- Improve access to existing facilities
- provide opportunities for leadership and volunteering and peer mentoring for young people

A safe, clean environment for children and young people.

- Develop local initiatives to improve the environment for children and young people
- Address fear of crime

Positive images of children and young people

- Bridge the generation gap
- Encourage positive images of children and young people

Education and training opportunities for all children and young people

- Raising the aspirations of children and young people
- Develop training and employment opportunities based on the needs of young people

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Inclusive, Safe and Cohesive Communities

Huntingdonshire has relatively low levels of deprivation. However, there are some small pockets of deprivation that need to be addressed. Huntingdonshire also experiences relatively low levels of crime, but in order to make our communities 'safe', we need to reduce crimes such as burglary, violence against the person and acquisitive crime and address anti-social behaviour and reassurance. In order to create successful cohesive communities it is important to promote active communities with opportunities for cultural, leisure, community and volunteering activities. It is vital that we ensure the delivery of good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, health facilities and other services and that we ensure the availability of information, advice and guidance.

Outcomes:

- Accessible services for all
- Appropriate community transport
- Vibrant and cohesive communities
- Reduced anti social behaviour
- Reduced crime
- Reduced fear of crime
- Good opportunities for life long learning
- Effective neighbourhood management in appropriate communities
- Better working with young people
- Appropriate lifestyle opportunities for older people

Accessible services for all

- Increase access to services for young and older people and in rural areas
- Promote different ways of providing services in communities
- Ensure access to information, advice and guidance

Appropriate community transport

- Affordable transport for job seekers, young people and those on low incomes

Vibrant and cohesive communities

- Promote community based/run activities
- Promote community involvement
- Address the needs of migrant workers and non settled communities including gypsies and travellers
- Address the needs of existing communities where a change in population occurs
- Engage with new and developing communities
- Provide specialist support

Reduced anti social behaviour (inc. criminal damage)

- Reduce alcohol related anti social behaviour
- Address anti-social behaviour
- Reduce vehicle related anti social behaviour

Reduced crime

- Reduce alcohol and drug misuse
- Reduce re-offending
- Reduce the incidences of violence against people including domestic abuse

Reduced fear of crime

- Promote safer by design

Good opportunities for life long learning

- Support and increase the capacity of learning communities and facilities for out-reach learning
- Increase access to formal and informal learning opportunities
- Provide opportunities for family learning
- Address the lack of basic skills
- Promote opportunities for local people to improve or gain skills through cultural, leisure and volunteer activities

Effective neighbourhood management in appropriate communities

- Implement neighbourhood management in Ramsey, Oxmoor and Eynesbury
- Investigate neighbourhood management in other communities
- Promote the engagement of communities in the provision and running of services.

Better working with young people

- Engage with young people
- Reduce the risk of young people being victims
- Reduce the risk of young people perpetrating crime

Appropriate lifestyle opportunities for older people

- Appropriate lifestyle opportunities for older people
- Provide opportunities for lifelong learning

Publication note** a series of resident quotes, photos and project case studies will be inserted at this section**

Economic Prosperity and Skills

To maintain a flourishing and diverse local economy, it is vital that we increase investment in our local economy. Dynamic job and business creation will benefit the local community and provide a wide range of employment opportunities. It is important that we maintain a high level of business support, promote the development of key growth sectors, maintain the economic viability and vibrancy of our town centres and ensure that skill levels support economic prosperity. Previously, housing and population growth has outstripped job growth and it is important that this imbalance is addressed to maintain and develop our flourishing economy

Outcomes:

- **A comprehensive level of business support**
- **An appropriate physical infrastructure to support sustainable growth of the economy**
- **Skills that support economic prosperity**
- **Vibrant town centres**
- **Increased visitor numbers**
- **Well developed key growth sectors**

A comprehensive level of business support

- Co-ordinate the delivery of advice and support for new start ups
- Ensure the availability of general business services and advice across the district
- Ensure specific business advice, for key growth sectors, rural businesses, young people, migrant workers and businesses looking to re-locate here
- Enable the growth of small and medium sized businesses
- Ensure appropriate (de) regulation
- Promote strong business to business networks
- Develop appropriate services and support for businesses already in the district and those looking to locate within Huntingdonshire

An appropriate physical infrastructure to support sustainable growth of the economy

- Improve public transport
- Improve transport networks for business
- Ensure land and premises for economic growth
- Improve ICT broadband/capacity

Skills that support economic prosperity

- Meet skill shortages
- Address skills for the future, particularly in key growth sectors
- Maximise opportunities for workplace learning and training
- Promote learning and training opportunities for people in deprived communities and those who are long term out of work
- Seek investment opportunities for learning and skills development
- Increase retention of young people in learning and training
- Promote vocational opportunities for young people
- Ensure the readiness and transition of young people to work

Vibrant town centres

- Increase the number of people using town centres
- Encourage residents and businesses to buy local produce and services
- Increase the retail offer and mix
- Improve the evening economy
- Enhance town centre environments

Increased visitor numbers

- Encourage local people to visit local attractions
- Encourage business visitors
- Market Huntingdonshire to prospective businesses
- Improve the mix of attractions, facilities and leisure opportunities
- Develop attractions and services for visitors, specifically overnight stay visitors

70 Well developed key growth sectors (Creative Industries, Environmental Science, Technologies, High Value Manufacturing and Hi-Tech Enterprise)

- Develop business support and promote training for individuals and businesses
- Improve the development of networks for collaboration and the fostering of supply chains
- Cultivate a dynamic cluster within each key sector
- Harness the world-class expertise of our key sectors and utilise for growth
- Encourage employment creation within the sector both in the market towns and rural areas of our district

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5. Implementing and Reviewing the Sustainable Community Strategy

Underpinning each of the Strategic themes is a delivery plan. Each delivery plan details how the outcomes and objectives will be achieved. The delivery plans will identify measures and targets so that achievement of can be reported and reviewed by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership.

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**GROWING SUCCESS – CORPORATE PLAN
REPORT BY THE HEAD OF POLICY AND STRATEGIC SERVICES**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Cabinet's endorsement of an updated version of Growing Success, the Council's corporate plan for submission to the Council.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Growing Success was originally adopted by the Council in December 2006. It represents the Council's statement on how it will maintain or improve the quality of life in Huntingdonshire; specifically it is the Council's contribution towards the achievement of the Sustainable Community Strategy, Cambridgeshire's vision/Local Area Agreement and National Performance Indicators.
- 2.2 Ultimately, our success in these areas will be judged as part of the new, Comprehensive Area Assessment.
- 2.3 The plan also sets out our objectives for organisational improvement, to ensure that the Council can continue to achieve its overall objectives. Performance against the targets in the plan is reviewed quarterly and the plan as a whole is subject to an annual review.
- 2.4 Earlier this year the Cabinet agreed to extend the timescale for reviewing the plan so that account could be taken of the new Sustainable Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire and the Local Area Agreement for Cambridgeshire, both of which were in preparation. During the summer, an extensive process has been undertaken to examine the Council's organisational objectives and targets to take account of these broader strategic documents. The process included review of the plan by Heads of Service, the Chief Officer Management Team and the Member Working Group appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels. The Cabinet also adopted this timetable with submission to the September Council meeting, for future reviews of Growing Success as it provides a better fit with the Council's business planning budget, MTP and service planning processes.
- 2.5 The attached plan incorporates the results of the extended review.
- 2.6 For the priority areas identified in the plan, an attempt has been made to establish stretching targets to reflect the desire to see significant improvements in these areas in the short term – 3 or so years. In some cases, given the limitations of resources and the external environment

maintaining current performance levels is considered to be a stretching target.

3. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet are requested to review Growing Success prior to re-adoption and publication by the Council.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Growing Success: the Council's Corporate Plan

Notes of the meetings of the corporate plan review working group

Sustainable community strategy for Huntingdonshire

Cambridgeshire's Vision

Local Area Agreement for Cambridgeshire

Contact Officers: Ian Leatherbarrow, Head of Policy and Strategic Services
☎ 01480 388005/
Howard Thackray, Policy and Research Manager
☎ 01480 388035

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) has been invited to comment on the plan and any views forthcoming will be reported to the meeting.

Growing Success

The Council is responsible for promoting the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of our communities, so that we can all enjoy a good quality of life. To do this we must work with and bring together a variety of partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors.

This partnership has a Sustainable Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire, which sets out how, by working together, we can meet local and national priorities.

'Growing Success' is the Council's plan of how we will achieve our part of the Sustainable Community Strategy. It is based on detailed research and importantly what our communities have told us. We need to balance and reconcile many competing demands and this plan will be used to help us prioritise and allocate resources.

'Growing Success' identifies the aims we will be working towards as a Council and how we plan to deliver them to meet the needs of people in Huntingdonshire.

This plan will be reviewed every three years to make sure that our priorities are still the right ones and that we are doing the best we can for Huntingdonshire. Every year we will look at how well we have done in achieving our objectives and targets.

Local Context – A diverse district:

Huntingdonshire is a diverse area of nearly 350 sq miles. Currently our population is around 160,000: approximately half live in four market towns - Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey - with the remainder in key settlements and rural villages set in attractive countryside.

It is a generally prosperous area where the majority of people enjoy a good quality of life. In a 2008 survey 84%¹ of people were very satisfied or satisfied with Huntingdonshire as a place to live and the vast majority (82%¹) indicated that they were satisfied with the quality and amount of natural environment.

However, the Council recognizes that this general picture does not apply to all individuals and communities. Some communities have more needs than others. Some areas in the market towns are experiencing higher levels of relative deprivation compared with Huntingdonshire as a whole or the region generally. Huntingdon North ward has the lowest levels of both household income and educational attainment in the district and is in the 10% most deprived areas in Cambridgeshire. The Eynesbury ward in St Neots also has examples of need including lower levels of skills, education and training. Parts of that ward are also in the worst 10% of areas in the County.

Many villages lack an adequate range of services and facilities in their immediate localities. Many continue to rely on employment opportunities characterised by lower wages, often due to seasonal work, and lower skills and attainment. In our villages some communities sit next to more prosperous ones where local residents commute to higher paid work within or outside the district. Public transport is perceived as poor and is a major contributor to dissatisfaction with the quality of life. However, transportation along the main travel corridors is good – with the exception of the A14 trunk road at peak times. Travel around the market towns and on local roads is reasonable although congestion, particularly at peak times, has been highlighted as a growing concern of local residents.

The level of crime compared with national figures is low and most people feel safe in Huntingdonshire. This is reflected in a recent survey with 88%¹ of residents saying they feel safe in their local area. However, in a few communities crime is relatively high and this has a detrimental impact on daily life. For others, the fear of crime or antisocial behaviour/disorder is a disproportionate cause for concern.

¹ Huntingdonshire District Council annual survey 2008

Many people have highlighted the affordability of housing as a particular issue for them and their families. The last 'Quality of Life' survey reported 42% of residents satisfied with the availability of housing and 28% satisfied with the affordability of housing. Surveys have identified the requirement for 585 new social rented homes each year to meet local needs. There is a further need for 470 low cost homes for people who are unable to afford to buy their homes but would like to do so.

Life expectancy in Huntingdonshire is high compared to the national average. In the 2001 census 73.37% of people described their health as 'good'. This is almost 5% higher than the national average. Although for some sections of our communities and some parts of the district the statistics are not as good – there are health inequalities.

The cleanliness of the district continues to be kept to a high standard with only 8% of our streets been assessed as having significant deposits of litter and more than two thirds of our residents are satisfied that the Council has kept land it controls clear of litter and refuse.

Last year there were over 1.5 million visits to the Council's leisure centres and active users of our leisure centres amount to about 10% of the local population.

¹ Huntingdonshire District Council annual survey 2008

Growth

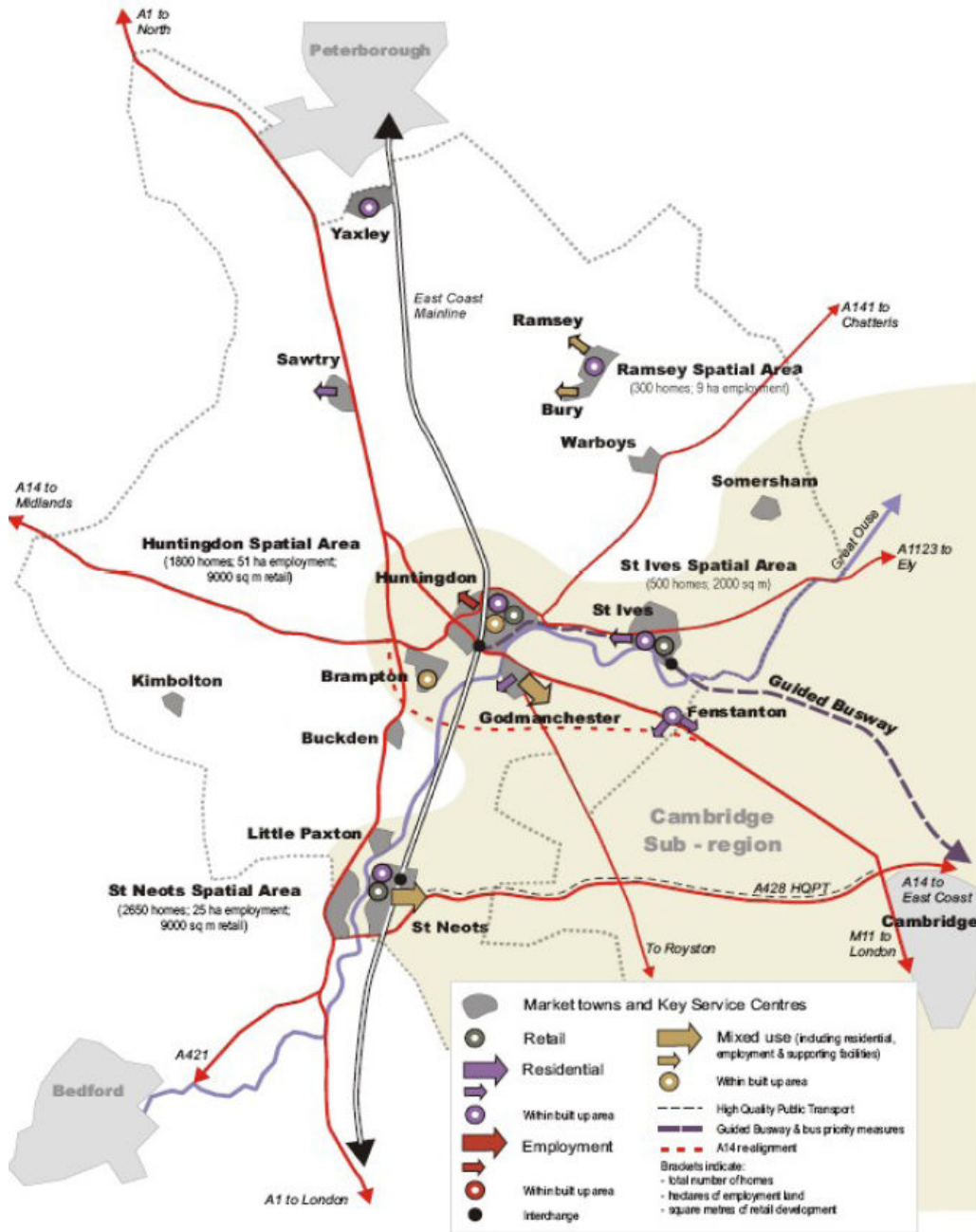
Since the early 1970s, Huntingdonshire has accommodated a large amount of new housing and job growth.

Huntingdonshire is at the centre of the Cambridge to Peterborough growth area and managing the opportunities and pressures from growth will be a continuing focus for the Council. To meet the needs of our communities we expect that Huntingdonshire will continue to accommodate a large amount of additional housing and jobs. Our role will include balancing the needs of new or expanding communities, which will require new infrastructure and services, with those of nearby communities which might be affected by growth but who don't have the same level of services and facilities. We will also need to consider the needs of those communities which don't grow and which might lack local services, facilities and opportunities. Managing the impact of growth is a key challenge for our environment. This has involved ensuring an adequate supply of land while minimizing the adverse environmental effects of development, including loss of greenfield sites, the urbanization of rural settlements, problems associated with increased usage of the private car and additional waste. Most of the growth in Huntingdonshire has involved new housing. An important role for the Council will be to ensure that there are enough jobs so local people can live and work in Huntingdonshire.

The majority of growth has been, and will continue to be, located within Huntingdon and St Neots, our largest towns and key economic and service centres. There will be a lesser scale of development in the other market towns of St Ives and Ramsey. In rural areas new development will be limited and will be restricted to a number of key settlements. In villages there will be limited growth to meet local needs. The Council's resources will be focused upon the need to reinvigorate all our towns and to assist our more deprived communities, including villages. Because of the current needs the provision of new affordable homes to rent and buy will remain an important issue.

Specifically the Council is proposing the significant extension to St Neots with a mixed housing development and retail development. The Council's proposed Spatial Strategy sets out how we see the different parts of the District developing. It identifies the different types of settlement within the District and how they will develop. It shows how and where the growth in housing, employment and retailing will be accommodated, and sets out priorities for areas that will be protected from development. The Key Diagram below illustrates the locations and directions of growth for the new homes, employment and retail.

Huntingdonshire Core Strategy Key Diagram.



Our Vision

The Community Strategy's long term vision is based on what local people have told us is important for them now and in the future, which is:

Huntingdonshire is a place where current and future generations have a good quality of life and can:

- Make the most of opportunities that come from living in a growing and developing district;
- Enjoy the benefits of continued economic success;
- Access suitable homes, jobs, services, shops, culture and leisure opportunities;
- Realise their full potential;
- Maintain the special character of our market towns, villages and countryside; and
- Live in an environment that is safe and protected from the effects of climate change and where valuable natural resources are used wisely.

To support this the Council will strive to:

- Make the most of the opportunities that come from growth by promoting the development of sustainable communities;
- Enable people to realise their full potential and have access to suitable homes, jobs and services;
- Work towards achieving a balance between social, economic and environmental needs;
- Maintain 'excellent' standards.

Roles

The Council has many roles that will influence or help to achieve the vision and our aims for Huntingdonshire, including:

‘Place making’, by this we mean:

Delivering the shared vision, with our partners and local communities, as to how Huntingdonshire will develop. This will mean more growth and change but in a sustainable way that meets local needs now and in the future. Development must reflect the distinctive character of our towns and rural areas and must include adequate infrastructure, community facilities and opportunities to work so that our communities are places where people want to live and work. The Local Development Framework will play a large part in helping us to fulfil this role.

Community leadership, by this we mean:

Representing Huntingdonshire; setting out the vision for our communities in partnerships with others; challenging and scrutinising services (including those we provide); making decisions; setting priorities for the area and the Council and being accountable for the choices made.

It requires us to recognise that our communities are diverse and have different needs, some greater than others; welcome diversity; understand that ‘one size does not fit all’; and recognise that achieving equality does not mean treating everyone the same.

Empowerment, by this we mean:

Helping local people and acting as their advocate and working closely with town and parish councils, communities and neighbourhoods and community and voluntary organisations. Listening and communicating with local residents and supporting the representative role of local councillors and helping people to get involved.

Bringing together services, by this we mean:

Shaping and bringing together services around the needs of residents and marshalling resources to best serve individuals and communities, particularly in the areas of most need.

Aims

In seeking to balance environmental, social and economic factors the Council has six aims for its communities that it is working towards and three aims for the Council itself, each with a series of objectives. The individual objectives need to be achieved if we are going to make progress and achieve the vision of the future.

The Community aims are:

- *A clean, 'green' and attractive place*
- *Housing that meets individual needs*
- *Safe, active and inclusive communities*
- *Healthy living*
- *Developing communities sustainably*
- *A strong, diverse economy*

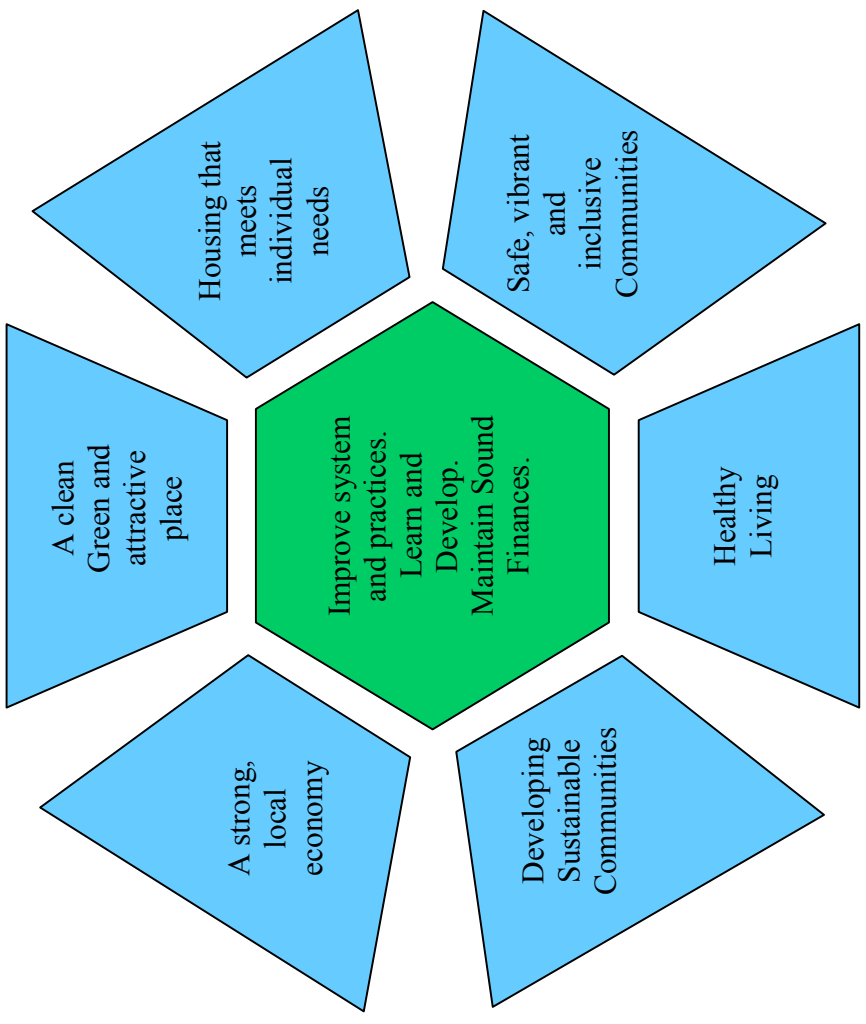
The Council aims are:

- *To improve our systems and practices*
- *To learn and develop*
- *To maintain sound finances*

Aims and Roles

Place Making
What we want
Huntingdonshire to
be like

Community Leadership
Working effectively with
our partners



Empowerment
Working closely with
Communities and
neighbourhoods

Bringing Together Services
Putting the customer first

Council Aims ■
Community Aims ■

Priorities

In this section the Council has chosen from the objectives a number of short term priorities where there is a particular local need or where the Council wants to develop its services. The relevant objectives are highlighted in the plan.

The Council expects to see significant progress in the achievement of these priorities within the next three years.

Community Priorities

1. To enable the provision of affordable housing
2. To achieve a low level of homelessness
3. To help to mitigate and adapt to climate change
4. To promote active lifestyles
5. To promote development opportunities in and around the market towns

Council Priorities

6. To be an employer people want to work for
7. To enable effective partnerships
8. To maximise business and income opportunities including extended funding and grants

Community Objectives

In this section the Council has set out objectives for each of the Community and Council aims, together with some of the main changes expected and the main activities and projects that will take place to help them to be achieved.

COMMUNITY AIM: A clean, 'green' and attractive place	Measures	Target 09/10
Proposed objectives 1. To keep the district clean	% of streets that have unacceptable levels of litter	target 7%
We will do this by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring that public spaces are kept free of litter, fly tipping and graffiti • ensuring that that rubbish is regularly collected from public and private bins 		
2. To use resources more efficiently	% of relevant Environmental Strategy targets on track	75%
We will do this by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing recycling • reducing waste • ensuring the best use of land • promoting efficient use of water • encouraging sustainable purchasing 		
3. To help mitigate and adapt to climate change	1. Reduction per capita CO₂ emissions in the LA area: 2009/10 2010/11 2. Adapting to Climate Change: 2009/10 2010/011	-7.33% -11% Level 1 Level 2
We will do this by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing energy efficiency • encouraging renewable energy • reducing travel and emissions to air • adapting to climate change 		

<p>4. To provide an environment that is protected and improved</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reducing contaminated and polluted land • protecting and enhance biodiversity in strategic green spaces and in other open space • protecting and enhancing the character of urban and rural areas • minimizing the development of greenfield land • ensuring good quality parks and open spaces 	<p>% of residents satisfied with the local environment</p>	<p>80%</p>
<p>Housing that meets individuals needs</p>		
<p>Proposed objectives</p>		
<p>1. To promote well maintained housing stock and bring empty homes back into use</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving housing conditions by enabling people to repair or improve their homes • increasing home energy efficiency • encouraging private landlords to improve conditions where necessary • advising, enforcing and providing financial assistance where appropriate 	<p>Measures</p> <p>The number of private sector vacant dwellings that are returned into occupation</p>	<p>09/10 target</p> <p>Greater than 95</p>
<p>2. To support opportunities for the vulnerable to live independently</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adapting homes of disabled or older people to enable them to remain independent in their own homes • enabling the development of new supported housing services for vulnerable people 	<p>Number of vulnerable people who are supported to maintain independent living</p>	<p>200</p>

<p>3. To achieve a low level of homelessness</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • helping prevent people from becoming homeless • housing of homeless people where appropriate <p>4. To pay Housing and Council Tax benefits</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • paying Housing and Council Tax benefits to individuals who need help with these costs • improve take up of benefits 	<p>Number of households living in temporary accommodation:</p> <p>target 2009/10 target 2010/11 target 2011/12</p>	<p>45 40 35</p>
<p>4. To pay Housing and Council Tax benefits</p>	<p>Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events</p>	<p>17 days</p>
<p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • paying Housing and Council Tax benefits to individuals who need help with these costs • improve take up of benefits 		
<p>COMMUNITY AIM: Safe, vibrant and inclusive communities</p>		
<p>Proposed objectives</p>		
<p>1. To reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and ensure that people feel safe</p>	<p>Measures</p> <p>Perceptions of anti-social behaviour Baseline target will be reassessed against the results of the pending 'Place Survey' Jan/Feb 09</p>	<p>target %TBC</p>
<p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing effective licensing and registration • using relevant powers (including ASBOs and ABCs) • 'designing out' crime in new development • promoting schemes which will provide positive and diversionary activity for young people • promoting facilities which bring people together, including inter-generational activities • providing effective CCTV system in vulnerable areas • dealing with streetscene issues such as abandoned vehicles and graffiti 		

<p>2. To enable residents to take an active part in their communities and work to ensure that communities are inclusive</p>	<p>% of people who feel they can influence decisions Base line to be established via the Place survey results available Jan/Feb 09</p>	<p>%TBC</p>
<p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enabling access to facilities and opportunities for cultural, leisure, sport, community, voluntary and other activities • encouraging residents to take part in representative and democratic activities • engaging with children and young people and promote opportunities for their involvement in positive activities • assisting communities to resolve community issues locally • adopting neighbourhood management approaches in the neediest communities • ensuring information and advice is available and accessible • supporting the community and voluntary sectors, by providing grants and community initiatives • promoting consultation and engagement with communities 		

COMMUNITY AIM: Healthy Living		Measures	target
Proposed objectives			
<p>1. To protect the health of individuals</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improving air quality reducing the risk of injury or ill health at work reducing the risk of food poisoning intervening to abate statutory nuisances having sound plans for civil emergencies 	<p>% of issues identified in the Health Protection Priority plan rated as very/highly important that are being actively addressed by the Council</p> <p>Calculated from the Health Protection Priority Plan (baseline 2008-9) where very highly important are scores 13-16, and highly important are scores 9-12. (currently 70% of issues tracked; of which 30% are addressed by HDC). Assessed by review of Health Protection Priority Plan progress by Cambridgeshire Health Protection Committee</p>	<p>100%</p>	
<p>2. To promote active lifestyles</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> providing facilities/events and encourage participation in active leisure pursuits for everyone. encouraging community involvement, volunteering and service providing a network of Leisure Centres and associated activities promoting and support the Healthy Walks programme providing Holiday activity programme for children and young people providing a cardiac rehabilitation programme providing activity programmes for older people, disabled participants and under-represented groups promoting cultural events and activities, in line with the Culture Strategy providing play and activities for young people, in line with the Play Strategy 	<p>Number of admissions/participants in activities provided or promoted by the Council</p> <p>A cumulative total of the Leisure Centres and Leisure Development.</p> <p>20010/11</p> <p>2011/12</p>	<p>1.8m per ann</p> <p>1.85m per ann</p> <p>2.0m per ann</p>	

<p>3. To reduce health inequalities</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working with our partners to improve life expectancy in communities with the greatest health needs • promoting cardiac rehabilitation schemes and physical activity • promoting physical activity for people with disabilities • discouraging smoking. • encouraging people to have healthy diets. 	<p>% of relevant Council actions to reduce health inequalities, on target</p> <p>90%</p>
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<p>COMMUNITY AIM: Developing communities sustainably</p>	
<p>Proposed objectives</p>	<p>Measures</p>
<p>1. To ensure an appropriate supply and mix of new housing to meet future needs</p>	<p>Net additional homes provided</p>
<p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • allocating sufficient land • determining planning applications to enable an appropriate number of new homes to be built each year in accordance with the Local Development Framework and the Regional Spatial Strategy • influencing developers to provide a mix of houses to meet the needs for a range of incomes, household types and sizes 	<p>Target 09/10</p> <p>550</p>

2. To enable the provision of affordable housing	Number of affordable homes delivered Target 2010/11 Target 2011/12	230 140 140
<p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maximising the land available for new affordable housing working in partnership with housing associations to bid for external funding making financial contributions to enable new affordable homes to be built/purchased 	<p>Note, target for 2010 to 2012 reduced to reflect current slowdown of the economy</p>	
<p>3. To encourage the provision of a wide range of jobs appropriate for existing and future residents</p>	<p>Number of jobs created (13,000 by 2015)</p>	<p>1800 per ann</p>
<p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> allocating sufficient land for employment implementing policies and support the creation of jobs and business in the priority sectors and locations 		
<p>4. To promote development opportunities in and around the market towns</p>	<p>1. Successful adoption of Core Strategy</p> <p>2. Successful bid for Housing Growth Fund and delivery of agreed spending plan</p>	<p>2009/10 2010/11</p>
<p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> producing design briefs/urban design frameworks/master plans determining planning applications bidding for funding to enable development promoting the provision of enterprise centres on key sites to facilitate development considering investing in infrastructure, land and facilities to enable development promoting the provision of enterprise centres on key sites to facilitate development 		

<p>5. To make town centres and key settlements accessible by supporting opportunities for residents to cycle, walk and use public transport</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enhancing walking/cycling routes • enhancing public transport, community and specialised transport • implementing car parking policies • developing/implementing market town transportation strategies • ensuring safe pedestrian routes • providing concessionary fares 		<p>Modal share for daily bus, cycle and pedestrian trips</p>	<p>Greater than 18.5%</p>
<p>6. To enable the provision of the social and strategic infrastructure to meet current and future needs</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • enabling the delivery of the Investment Framework • encouraging the provision of accessible leisure and community facilities and opportunities for all • providing and support the development of play and recreation facilities in identified communities 		<p>% of actions identified in the Local Investment Framework on target</p>	<p>90%</p>

<p>COMMUNITY AIM: A strong, diverse economy</p>			
<p>Proposed objectives</p>	<p>Measures</p>	<p>target</p>	
<p>1. To encourage a high level of business support</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • facilitating comprehensive business support services for new and existing businesses • supporting and developing businesses networks, particularly in priority employment sectors or groups, such as manufacturing and creative enterprises 	<p>% of people who are satisfied with business support services</p>	<p>60%</p>	

<p>2. To support the skills levels that aid economic prosperity</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • working with businesses and learning providers to identify current and future skill and training needs • bidding for additional funding to meet identified gaps • promoting projects which support skill development and learning in communities 	<p>% of working age population qualified to Level 3 or above</p>	<p>30%</p>
<p>3. To support town centres and key settlements to become economically viable and vibrant</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • supporting Town Centre partnerships • Implementing specific projects linked to the town centre visions and other plans • providing environmental improvements • promoting the district, local facilities and attractions to residents and visitors • enable the improvement in the quality and availability of attractions and facilities 	<p>Average footfall of the four market towns compared to the regional/national average</p>	<p>Better than national average</p>

<p>COUNCIL AIM: To improve our systems and practices</p>		
<p>Proposed objectives</p> <p>1. To make it as easy as possible for customers to access our services and get appropriate information</p>	<p>Measures</p> <p>% of contacts that are avoidable (for selected services) target to be confirmed when baseline data is available in early 2009</p>	<p>target %TBC</p>
<p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • developing ways of accessing Council services including, self service via web site, mobile/home delivery of services • increasing the range of services available in the call centre and customer service centres 		

2. To provide high quality customer service	% of residents consider they have received an excellent/good service	>75%
<p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offering good standards of service in accordance with our promises • understanding our residents needs • providing services which meet residents needs 		
<p>3. To be good at communicating with and listening to people and organisations and be clear about what we can do and aspire to achieve</p>	<p>% of residents very/satisfied with the information provided about Council services and plans</p>	<p>70%</p>
<p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensuring regular and effective communication with local residents and businesses about council services • asking our residents and organisations working in Huntingdonshire their opinions and considering what they say • seeking and sharing views on new proposals • publishing our plans and service standards and information about our performance • undertaking research and provide information to ensure individual and community needs are identified • cross reference to Communication and Marketing and Consultation and Engagement strategies • engaging with Children and Young People 		
<p>4. To enable Councillors to carry out their leadership role effectively</p>	<p>% of Councillors who believe they are supported in carrying out their leadership role effectively</p>	<p>80%</p>
<p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • determining Council priorities and allocate resources • Scrutinising and examine relevant issues • acting in the best interests of the Council and local residents 		

5. Effective partnership	% of strategic partnerships fully complying with the Councils framework	100% within 3 years
<p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leading on the Huntingdon Strategic Partnership to bring together a range of bodies that contribute to meeting the needs and aspirations of our communities • continuing to take opportunities to work with others where it will meet community needs and maximise resources • representing Huntingdonshire's interests on key partnerships such as Local Area Agreement Board • reviewing and assess existing and proposed partnerships 		
<p>6. To maintain high levels of probity, governance and ethics</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintaining a clear and comprehensive constitution • ensuring compliance with appropriate processes and procedures • managing performance effectively • managing risk and opportunity effectively • cross reference to the assurance statement • Implementing the Council's Improvement Plan 	<p>Achievement of improvements identified in annual Governance Statements</p>	<p>100%</p>

7. To use Council resources efficiently	% of efficiency conditions/targets completed	90%
<p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing and maintaining a range of buildings that meet our needs, which deliver value for money and exemplify our design, environmental and land use objectives • providing high levels of ICT availability with access from multiple locations including from desk, home, or on the move • ensuring effective service recovery plans are in place • introducing specific travel plans at each of the council's main sites • encouraging sustainable procurement where this provides value for money • introducing new working practices • undertaking an annual review of the Code of Governance • managing the Assurance Framework • producing an annual Governance statement • investigation of any complaints regarding the breaching of the code 		

COUNCIL AIM: To learn and develop		Measures	target
Proposed objectives			
<p>1. To be an employer people want to work for</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • selecting and recruiting the right people, at the right time • retaining and releasing employees appropriately • training and developing employees • promoting from within wherever possible • encouraging innovation and creativity • encouraging employees to behave the way we expect • ensuring appropriate levels of health and safety in the workplace • ensuring appropriate working conditions and occupational health • maintaining appropriate systems of remuneration and employment terms and conditions 	<p>% of posts filled after one round of recruitment</p>	<p>97%</p>	
<p>2. To ensure that employees and members have appropriate skills, knowledge, behaviours and develop a culture of innovation</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying development needs through individual performance and development plans. • being clear about skills and competencies needed to achieve the Council's objectives • preparing and delivering development plans for councillors • encouraging employees and members to share ideas, experience and knowledge internally and with partners • effective communications 	<p>1. % of employees with a development plan</p> <p>2. % of councillors with a development plan</p>	<p>95%</p> <p>80%</p>	

<p>3. To strengthen our commitment and capacity to achieve equality, diversity and inclusion</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintaining statutory equality schemes which consider gender, race and disability equality issues and the needs of disadvantaged groups at all levels of services and in our policies and practices • ensuring that our employment practices provide equality of opportunity and do not discriminate against any individual • undertaking equality impact assessments for all services, policies and practices • maintaining policies, procedures and practices which meet best practice in achieving equality, diversity and inclusion 	<p>Achievement against appropriate levels of the Equality Standard for Local Government.</p>	<p>Level 3 by 2010</p>
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<p>COUNCIL AIM: To maintain sound finances</p>		
<p>Proposed objectives</p> <p>1. To manage our reserves and borrowing effectively</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • maintaining clear funding, reserves and borrowing plans • producing accurate financial plans and accounts which are regularly reviewed • preparing a 10 year finance plan • preparing a fully delegated budget each year 	<p>Measures</p> <p>% of plans and budgets produced on time</p>	<p>target</p> <p>100%</p>

<p>2. To continually review services to ensure that the Council resources are used to support achievement of our objectives and in a way that provides value for money</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • complying with (where appropriate) the Key Line of Enquiry in the Use of Resources assessment and the delivery of the Use of Resources action plan 		<p>Level 3</p>
<p>3. Maximise business and income opportunities including external funding and grants</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • monitoring available sources of funding and making appropriate grant applications • maintaining data and evidence of need in the district and presenting effective cases to sub regional and national partners • maximising resources through planning obligations • supporting communities and organisations in seeking funding where this will help achieve Council or Sustainable Community Strategy objectives 	<p>Ratio of successful/unsuccessful bids</p>	<p>70:30</p>
<p>4. To maintain below average council tax</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • balancing spending on priorities against available resources • implementing the Council's Financial Strategy 	<p>Council tax levels compared to the average for District Councils</p>	<p>Council Tax by band remains the lowest decile of districts in England</p>

5. To administer local taxation	1. % of council tax collected per annum	98.6%
	2. % of nation non-domestic rates collected per annum	99.2%
<p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> accurately assessing and collecting council tax and national non domestic rates each year on behalf the Council, Cambridgeshire County Council, Town and Parish Councils, Police and Fire and Rescue Service and the Government 		

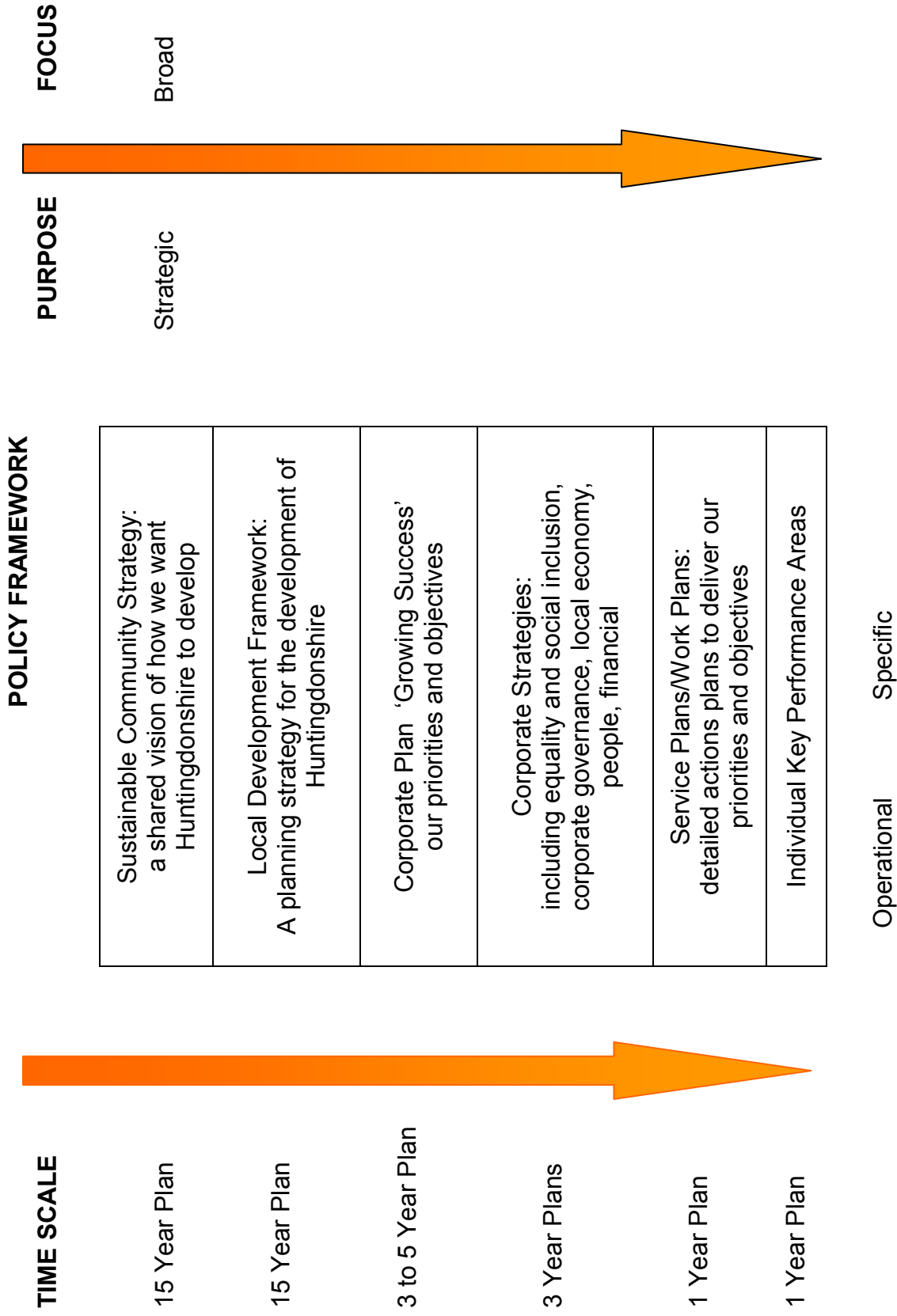
Managing Our Performance

The Council has been rated as ‘Excellent’ in the Government’s system for grading Councils, but we are not complacent. ‘Growing Success’ is designed to help us maintain and improve the very high standards we have achieved. This plan brings work together to ensure that it is linked to achieving our priorities.

The Council has a comprehensive performance management framework, which draws together the things we must achieve to meet our aims and vision. It enables us to examine our performance from four perspectives: community, financial, process and people.

<p>COMMUNITY</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clean, ‘green’ and attractive place • Housing that meets individuals needs • Safe, vibrant and inclusive communities • Healthy living • Developing communities sustainably • A strong, diverse economy 	<p>PROCESS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To improve our systems and practices
<p>PEOPLE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To learn and develop 	<p>FINANCIAL</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To maintain sound finances

The policy framework on the next page shows how our plans link together.



Our corporate and management plans are kept under constant review. We publish the progress we make towards meeting our aims annually, and an important way we test our progress is to encourage our communities to share with us their views on what they think about Huntingdonshire, our services and what they expect of us. We also have an annual cycle for reviewing management and operational plans, and team and individual performance plans. These can be changed on a more frequent basis should we find it appropriate. A quarterly performance management plan helps us to monitor progress and achievements.

Collecting data and information is an integral part of performance reporting and we are committed to continuously improving the arrangements for securing the quality of data so that it is reliable, accurate, timely and helps us to judge performance accordingly. Each year the quality of our processes and procedures will be reviewed by an external auditor.

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Standards Committee

Report of the meetings held on 3rd July and 11th September 2008

Matters for Information

5. CODE OF CONDUCT COMPLAINTS - STATISTICS

The Committee has been notified that the Standards Board for England has decided not to take any further action in relation to allegations of breaches of the Members' Code of Conduct made against two Councillors serving on St Ives Town Council.

It is the role of the Committee to monitor the operation of and advise and train Members on matters relating to the Code. In order to monitor the number and type of issue that has arisen, the Committee now receive details of Code of Conduct enquiries recorded by the Head of Legal and Estates and Monitoring Officer on a quarterly basis. This information has proved useful to the Committee in identifying which areas of the Code appear to give rise to the greatest concerns.

At the same time, the Committee has noted, with interest, information published by the Standards Board which illustrates the number of allegations received by the Board during the period 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2008 and the referral and investigation statistics over the same period.

6. STANDARDS BOARD FOR ENGLAND: ANNUAL REVIEW

On behalf of the Committee and at the request of the Leader, the Chairman has reviewed the content of the Annual Review document 2007/08 published by the Standards Board for England. Although the review contained little that needed to be followed up, the Committee has suggested that the DVD "The Code Uncovered", produced as a training aid for local authorities be made available for view by all Members of the Council. The DVD, which will be shown on the rising of the Council, focuses on a Planning Committee meeting and highlights key changes to the revised Code of Conduct specifically examining the rules relating to the declaration of interests, the disclosure of confidential information and bullying.

The Committee also has requested that that part of the District Council's website relating to standards and conduct be enhanced by the inclusion of material relating to the new standards framework.

7. REFERRALS (ASSESSMENT) SUB COMMITTEE

Further to Item No. 1 of their Report to the meeting held on 25th June 2008, the Committee has now received a report from the Chairman of the Referrals (Assessment) Sub Committee, which has responsibility for the initial assessment of Code of Conduct allegations. The Sub Committee has met on three occasions since its inception and in each case decided not to refer the allegations received for investigation but to refer the matters to the Monitoring Officer for other action. In making those decisions, the Sub Committee has strived to be constructive and positive in the course of action that it has recommended to avoid a re-currence of similar situations/allegations arising.

Accordingly, the Monitoring Officer has

- ◆ advised a Councillor to exercise greater care in monitoring the content of press statements released in his name or office and conveyed the Sub Committee's concerns to those responsible for the drafting, authorisation and release of press statements;
- ◆ advised the Clerk to a Town Council that it would be prudent on their part to have regard to the timetable for the invitation of nominations for the election of Councillors and if necessary vary the date of publication for the Council's newsletter to avoid the suggestion that existing Councillors might be using Council resources for political purposes; and
- ◆ undertaken to present training on the Code of Conduct to a Parish Council before 31st October 2008 given the concerns of the Sub Committee at the apparent level of understanding of the Code in the Parish currently.

8. REGISTRATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Under Section 81 of the Local Government Act 2000, the Monitoring Officer has a duty to establish and maintain a register of interests of the Members and co-opted Members for all authorities in Huntingdonshire. The Committee has noted the up to date position in terms of the return of registration forms from the 73 town and parish councils in Huntingdonshire. Of the 672 Councillors elected or appointed to office only 20 are outstanding. Whilst aware that Council Members are regularly reminded to review their registerable interests, the Committee has requested the Monitoring Officer to specifically follow up those parishes/individuals that have yet to submit their registration forms.

9. LOCAL ASSESSMENT: EXERCISES

Over their last two meetings, the Monitoring Officer has conducted a local assessment exercise, for training purposes, using example cases.

D L Hall
Chairman

Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework)

Report of the meeting held on 2nd September 2008

Matters for Information

3. GROWING SUCCESS – CORPORATE PLAN

In conjunction with Item No. 23 of the Report of the Cabinet, the Panel has been acquainted with the outcome of the annual review of the Corporate Plan – Growing Success. The revised document contains fewer priorities and will be used to inform the Council's financial planning. Members have taken into account work undertaken by the Corporate Plan Working Group in the course of the review.

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

The Panel has expressed their satisfaction with the content of the Plan and recommended the Cabinet to request the Council to adopt it.

4. FINANCIAL FORECAST

In conjunction with Item No. 21 of the Report of the Cabinet, the Panel has been acquainted with the present position in relation to the Council's financial forecast for the period up to 2018/19. Members have been informed of potential variations in a number of sources of income and other factors that could affect the Council's financial position.

The Panel has acknowledged the uncertainty created by inflation in the current economic climate and, in that context, Members have stressed the importance for the Council of identifying the necessary spending adjustments in order to achieve the Proposed Spending Plan referred to in the report.

5. CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

Further to Item No. 9 of their Report to the meeting of the Council on 20th February 2008, the Panel has reviewed the Action Plan to the Customer Service Strategy. Having received clarification of a number of items within the Plan and an outline of future plans to develop the way the Council delivers its service to the public, Members have recommended the Cabinet to approve the content of the Customer Service Strategy Action Plan.

J A Gray
Chairman

Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)

**Report of the meetings held on 8th July and
9th September 2008**

Matters for Information

11. SEWERAGE PROBLEMS, ST AUDREY'S LANE, ST IVES

Following the consideration of a petition signed by 26 people at its February meeting, the Panel has met with representatives of Anglian Water to discuss the problems being experienced by residents of St Audrey Lane, Warren Road and Pig Lane, St Ives arising from flooding of the foul sewerage system.

In doing so, the Panel has discussed a number of issues which had been identified from their previous meetings with local residents and the Council's Asset and Project Manager. The Panel was also acquainted with the information obtained from their working group which had been established to gather further information on site from local residents.

The Panel is pleased to report that a helpful and frank meeting was held with Anglian Water representatives, that the company would be investigating the matter further and that a CCTV investigation of the surface water drain in Pig Lane would now be undertaken to see if this required cleansing. The Panel has asked representatives of Anglian Water to provide details of their investigations to the local residents and to provide an update on progress to the Council in six months time.

12. REVIEW OF PUBLIC SPEAKING IN DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PANEL MEETINGS

With the assistance of the results of a recent survey of Members and those members of the public who had addressed the Development Control Panel on a planning application within the past year, the Panel has considered whether to recommend any changes to the current arrangements for public speaking at meetings of the Development Control Panel at the end of the 12 month trial following its introduction.

Overall, the Panel has concluded that the current arrangements were working satisfactorily and that the Chairman of the Development Control Panel is able to exercise sufficient discretion/flexibility to

address any issues which arose from the questionnaire. Although there were no changes that the Panel wished to raise directly with the Development Control Panel, Members have noted the intention of the Chairman of the latter Panel to seek to address the comments made by members of the public in relation to the intimidating and daunting nature of the Panel proceedings.

The Panel has also discussed the situation with regard to the recent presentation of two petitions to full Council under the Council Procedure Rules when an associated planning application was to be determined. In doing so, the Panel has agreed that it would be preferable for future petitions relating to planning applications to be dealt with as part of the public speaking arrangements. This will be dealt with in the next biennial review of the Council's Constitution in Spring 2009.

The Panel's report has subsequently been considered by the Development Control Panel. Item No. 11 of their Report refers.

13. PARISH CHARTER FOR HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The Panel has received the final report of its Working Group which was established to consider the possible preparation of a Parish Charter for the Council's relationship with town and parish councils in the District.

The Panel has agreed that there is little value in proceeding with a Parish Charter with the towns and parishes at the present time. However, in recognition of the disappointment which is likely to be expressed by some councils if a charter were not to proceed, the Panel suggested that the reasons for its conclusion be explained to those councils, together with an assurance that the matter will be kept under review as the powers and responsibilities of the various tiers of local government alter with changing legislation.

The Panel's report has subsequently been considered by the Cabinet. Item No. 34 of their Report refers.

14. THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

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

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

Overall, the Panel concluded that there was little that could be achieved in undertaking a review of the technicalities of the Act and

that the majority of establishments within the District in the main were well managed. However, having regard to Member's concerns about the social consequences of alcohol abuse, the Panel has agreed to establish a working group to address the matter. Councillors J T Bell, P M D Godfrey and Ms S L Kemp have been appointed to a working group for this purpose.

15. MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS – PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

The Panel has been updated on the receipt and expenditure of money negotiated under Section 106 Agreements by the Council.

16. FORWARD PLAN

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the Forward Plan of forthcoming key decisions prepared by the Leader of the Council, arising from which, Members have identified a number of items for consideration at future meetings.

17. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel has been advised of progress to date on its study into the negotiation and expenditure of Section 106 Agreements. The Panel has also discussed a number of potential future studies and it has been agreed that the Director of Environmental and Community Services should be invited to a meeting in November to make a presentation on the Great Fen Project.

Councillors P J Downes, L W McGuire and R J West have been appointed to a working group to ensure that the Council is maximising its income opportunities and grant availability.

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

The Panel has been apprised of progress on actions required as a result of recent decisions.

In doing so, the Panel has noted that following discussion with their Panel Chairmen, a realignment of Executive Councillors between the two Overview and Scrutiny Panels has been agreed to reflect revised Cabinet responsibilities.

The Panel has also asked the Head of Administration to report back in the Autumn on the implications of the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 on the Council.

J A Gray
Chairman

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Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery)

**Report of the meetings held on 1st July and
2nd September 2008**

Matters for Information

7. DISABILITY ACCESS STUDY

In pursuit of the Panel's current study on Disability Access in and around the District, the Panel has received a presentation by the Chief Executive of the Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations on the background to the services it offers, which include the Shopmobility scheme, a Disability Forum, training and local advocacy services. She also outlined the contribution made to the community by the Huntingdonshire Coalition of Disabled People.

The Panel has noted that owing to a lack of available resources, the Huntingdonshire Coalition of Disabled People is likely to cease operating in the near future. Following questions regarding the role of Disability Cambridgeshire and a recent Government initiative to establish a county-wide coalition for disabled people, the Chief Executive for the Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations has expressed the view that it would be preferable to provide additional support for the existing Coalition rather than create another organisation. The Panel will, therefore, suggest to the County Council that it should ensure that existing bodies are taken into account when it plans how to meet this new duty.

As the study is nearing completion, a Working Group comprising Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, Mrs K E Cooper, S J Criswell and Mrs J A Dew has been established to review the findings to date and to make recommendations for consideration by the Panel.

8. ENHANCED CLEANSING SERVICES – PROPOSALS - MARKET TOWNS

Pursuant to Item No. 22 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 20th February 2008, the Panel has decided to submit to the Cabinet a proposal to provide enhanced Sunday cleansing services in all the market towns in the District. The resource implications and associated operating costs are included in the proposal.

The Panel is mindful of the fact that there is no provision in the Council's financial plan for enhanced cleansing services but Members have concluded that the annual cost of the proposal of £52,400

represents good value for money. In the circumstances it has been suggested that for the Council to meet the costs of the proposal, financial contributions should be sought from the District's Town Councils.

The Panel has taken into account representations made by Holywell-cum-Needingworth Parish Council, drawing attention to the fact that the District Council dedicates resources to cleansing in town centres whilst cleansing in villages is predominantly funded by Parish Councils. Nevertheless, Members have reiterated their concerns at the deterioration in cleanliness of the District's town centres on Sundays as a result of the night time economy, particularly given increases in Sunday trade and tourism.

A suggestion has been made that the Council might investigate the establishment of an Alcohol Disorder Zone, which is a Government measure designed to provide a means of redress in areas experiencing problems associated with alcohol consumption. The Panel has referred this suggestion to the Cabinet as a long term measure to address problems associated with litter in towns.

9. HUNTINGDONSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP

The Panel has been acquainted with the background to the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership and the scope of its work. The Partnership was established in response to a requirement of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, and aims to reduce crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour within the District. The Partnership has established a number of strategic links to both County and District-wide groups. The Panel has acknowledged the complexity of the way in which the Partnership operates. In order to clarify matters, a chart illustrating the Partnership's structure is to be circulated to Panel Members.

Members have discussed Town and Parish Council representation at Neighbourhood Management Boards, the formulation and agreement of Local Area Agreement targets and the publication of crime statistics. Furthermore, the Panel has expressed their satisfaction that the Panel has appropriate monitoring and accountability mechanisms in place. Members have concluded that it is not necessary to conduct a study on the Partnership.

10. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS TO ST IVES TOWN CENTRE

The Panel has considered a range of options for Phase 2 environmental improvements to the Market Hill and Bridge Street areas of St. Ives. The options have been scrutinised by an Advisory Group comprising County, District and Town Councillors together with Panel representatives and representatives from local consultative groups such as the Town Partnership, the Access Group and the Civic Society. The options will now be subject to public consultation. The Panel has been reminded that its role is to ensure that the Environmental Improvements Protocol has been adhered to.

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

The Panel has concluded that the Environmental Improvements Protocol previously approved by the Cabinet has been adhered to. Members have, therefore, recommended the Cabinet to approve the principle of the scheme and to take the necessary public consultation to identify the preferred option.

11. CUSTOMER SERVICE QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT: APRIL – JUNE 2008

The Panel has received the Customer Service Quarterly Performance Report for the period April to June 2008. By way of background, the Panel has been advised that following the formation of a new Customer Services Team in February 2008, quarterly performance reports are now produced, which covers all services within the Team.

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

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

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

The Panel has been informed that whilst the proposal is for five specified types of sports facilities, an emerging Leisure Facilities Strategy will incorporate other facilities. In recognising that it is being encouraged by Sport England, the Panel has recommended the Cabinet to approve the adoption of local standards for the provision of core sports facilities within Huntingdonshire on the understanding that the Council will not be responsible for future operating and maintenance costs of new facilities.

13. CHEWING GUM LITTER REDUCTION TRIAL

The Panel has reviewed the outcome of the chewing gum litter reduction trial and has considered a proposal to extend the scheme to St Neots. Having noted that the Council spends £17,000 per year

removing chewing gum from pavements in town centres, questions have been raised regarding the level of savings achieved since the scheme was introduced. As the scheme was still in its early stages, the level of savings achieved was not yet been identified. Nevertheless, owing to the success of the trial to date, the Panel has endorsed the decision to extend the scheme and has requested that parish councils are provided with details of it in order that they may introduce their own schemes.

14. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY) – PROGRESS

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies at each of its meetings. In discussing the Great Fen Project concerns have been raised over the fact that it will result in the agricultural industry's loss of high quality land. In noting that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) will be undertaking a study on the Project, Councillors E R Butler, P G Mitchell and J S Watt have expressed interests in participating in the study. Other Members of the Panel have been invited to attend a presentation at the November meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) on the Project.

In addition, the need to pursue a study on the impact of the new A14 in terms of air quality and noise pollution is being investigated and the Panel has requested that a scoping report on affordable housing is submitted to a future meeting.

Other Matters of Interest

15. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 - FORWARD PLAN

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the relevant Forward Plan of Key Decisions and has requested sight of the Sub-Regional Housing Strategy at a future meeting. Members also have requested and received background information relating to items on Customer Service Development in St Ives and St Neots and Land at Mayfield Road, Huntingdon.

16. SCRUTINY

The Panel has considered the latest editions of the Decision Digest and received answers to Members' queries on matters contained therein.

S J Criswell
Chairman

Development Control Panel

**Report of the meetings held on 14th July, 18th August
and 15th September 2008**

Matters for Information

10. ENFORCEMENT ACTION

Having been acquainted with details of a significant breach of planning control involving an unauthorised change of use from B1 (light industry) to B2 (general industry) at an industrial unit located on Little End Road, Eaton Socon, the Committee have instructed the Head of Planning Services to issue an Enforcement Notice to secure the cessation of the activities within a maximum period for compliance of four calendar months from the date of the notice coming into effect. Elements of the notice will require to be actioned within three days given the detrimental effect of the unauthorised activities on the amenity of residents in Admirals Way, Eaton Socon.

11. REVIEW OF PUBLIC SPEAKING

The Panel has considered the outcome of a recent survey of Members and of those members of the public who had addressed them on planning applications within the past year. The survey, undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) has reviewed the operation of the procedure for public speaking in respect of planning applications since its introduction in January 2007. (Item No. 12 of the Report of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) refers.)

In response to the suggestion that the Panel's procedure might seem intimidating and daunting to some speakers, the Chairman has indicated his intention to welcome public speakers informally before the commencement of meetings in an attempt to put them at their ease.

Although endorsing the existing procedure for public speaking, the Panel's attention has been drawn to a discrepancy in the procedure recorded in the Council's Procedure Rules in the Constitution and the decision of the Council in December 2006 as to whether persons wishing to support an application should be permitted to speak at meetings. Following discussion on the matter, the Panel was of the view that supporters of applications should be entitled to speak and words to this effect will now be included in the Procedure for Public Speaking.

**12. PERFORMANCE MONITORING:
DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PROGRESS REPORT:
1ST APRIL - 30 JUNE 2008**

The Panel has received a statistical report on the performance of the Development Control Section of the Planning Division over the period 1st April to 30 June 2008 and was pleased to note that all national performance targets had been met by the Section for the determination of major, minor and other applications with an overall total of 82% (or 400 out of 489 applications) determined during the quarter.

**13. URBAN DESIGN FRAMWORK, RAMSEY:
LAND SOUTH OF HIGH STREET**

The Conservation Area Management Plan for Ramsey highlighted, in 2005, an area to the south of the High Street, as sufficiently important to warrant a specific strategy for its protection and enhancement. Consequently, the Urban Design Framework has been produced which highlights the principal planning constraints in the area and identifies the important settlement characteristics, open spaces and settings. The Framework document also identifies potential locations for appropriate development with guidance to achieve, in particular, successful, imaginative and distinctive redevelopment of three sites in the area.

The Design Framework has been published for consultation and, as a consultee, the Panel has welcomed and endorsed its contents and recommended to the Cabinet that the document be adopted as Interim Planning Guidance.

14. DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

Over three meetings, the Panel has determined a total of 37 applications of which 23 were approved, 11 refused and 3 deferred.

P K Ursell
Vice Chairman

Licensing and Protection Panel

Report of the meeting held on 18th June 2008

Matter for Decision

1. SERVICE PLAN FOR FOOD SAFETY 2008/09

The Panel has considered an executive summary of the proposed Service Plan for Food Safety 2008/09. The Plan has been developed to comply with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency and incorporates the aims and objectives of the service, the resources available and a review of work undertaken during the previous year.

The Council has already approved a recommendation that the Service Plan be adopted at its meeting held on 25th June 2008.

Matters for Information

2. SERVICE PLAN FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT

The Panel has endorsed the content of the service plan for Health and Safety Enforcement for 2008/09. The plan has been developed in accordance with guidance issued by the Health & Safety Commission and contains sections on the aims and objectives of the service, the resources available and a review of the work undertaken in the previous year.

Members have been informed that a full programme of premises inspections was carried out in 2007/08 and a high customer satisfaction rating achieved in this period. In accordance with Health & Safety Commission's strategic direction, the service delivery element gives priority to focused initiatives, which accords with the Council's existing targeted approach to health and safety enforcement.

3. SCORES ON THE DOORS

The Panel has approved the content of a food hygiene rating scheme for food businesses which aims to improve food standards across the District. Under the scheme, all caterers and take-away businesses within the District will be awarded up to five stars for food hygiene and safety, cleaning and confidence in management. Premises will be assessed during their scheduled food hygiene inspections and a certificate and window sticker showing the appropriate stars will be awarded for display at the premises. Should a premise receive one or zero stars then a certificate will not be issued.

In considering the content of the scheme, the Panel's attention has been drawn to proposals by the Food Standards Agency to establish a nationwide "Scores on the Doors" scheme on which the agency are currently consulting. Despite the existence of a large number of five star pilot schemes, the Agency has decided to only consult on a three star plus/fail (four-tier) scheme and a pass/improvement required (two-tier) scheme. Members were advised that in Cambridgeshire, four councils currently operate a five star scoring system and they have indicated that they will not be willing to change to an alternative scheme, their reason being a five star system allows for better differentiation between businesses and provides a better incentive for improvement.

The Panel have therefore agreed to proceed with the scheme on a five star basis.

4. REPRESENTATION ON ORGANISATIONS

The Panel has appointed a number of representatives to outside organisations for the ensuing Municipal Year.

J M Sadler
Chairman

Licensing Committee

Report of the meeting held on 18th June 2008

Matters for Information

1. LICENSING ACT 2003 - DELEGATIONS

The Committee has formally approved existing arrangements for Officers to make representations under the Licensing Act 2003 on behalf of the Council which is defined as the responsible body for both the planning and environmental health functions.

2. GAMBLING ACT 2005 - DELEGATIONS

The Panel has authorised the Licensing Manager and the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services respectively to act on behalf of the licensing and environmental health authorities for the purpose of making representations under the Gambling Act 2005.

3. EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003

The Committee has been advised of the outcome of a recent review by the Government into the implementation and impact of the Licensing Act 2003 which came into force in November 2005. The review concluded that the freedoms introduced by the Act are being used well but that the powers to tackle problems are not sufficiently well known and are not being taken advantage of. Members have been advised that this reflects the situation locally where the implementation and administration of the Act and its provision has operated smoothly, despite the late issue of many of the required regulations.

J M Sadler
Chairman

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Corporate Governance Panel

Report of the meeting held on 24th June 2008

Matter for Decision

1. CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION – STANDARDS COMMITTEE

By reference to a report by the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer (a copy of which is reproduced as an Appendix hereto) the Panel has been acquainted with the arrangements which the Council needs to have in place in order to comply with new duties placed on it by the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008. Having considered the changes required to the Constitution to implement the Regulations, the Panel

RECOMMEND

that the Council approve the changes required to the Constitution as set out in Section 2 of the appended report.

Matters for Information

2. FINAL ACCOUNTS 2007/08

The Panel has approved the draft Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2008 to enable the audit to commence. Members have been acquainted with issues arising from the accounts relating to the Council's investments, its debtors and creditors, pensions, the treatment of capital and the collection fund.

The Panel has questioned the way in which Eastfield House is presented in the accounts and particularly the valuation assessed by the District Valuer. Nevertheless, the Panel has acknowledged the non-tangible and longer term benefits to be derived from the Operations Centre over a prolonged period.

The Panel has discussed the Council's sources of income, excluding the Leisure Centre accounts which are treated separately. The Panel has also been advised that the accounts will be publicised via the Council's website and through the District Wide publication.

3. BENEFIT FRAUD PROSECUTION POLICY AND PROCEDURES

In noting the increasing levels of fraud detection and sanction activity undertaken by the Council, the Panel has approved a policy for the prosecution of benefits claimants, landlords, employees and Members who may commit benefit fraud and has authorised the Fraud Manager to undertake court hearings and issue formal cautions and administrative penalties as necessary. Additionally, the Panel has authorised staff within the Fraud Team to undertake investigations into fraud affecting all other District Council services and to report to the relevant Head of Service on the outcomes, findings and recommendations arising from these investigations.

4. ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE

The Panel has been acquainted with the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of the system of internal audit, which is required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2006. The review reveals that the Council's internal audit service meets the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Audit Practice. The Panel has noted the external auditor's positive endorsement of the service and identified areas for improvement. The Panel has authorised a review of the Council's effectiveness against CIPFA's best practice guidance for Audit Committees to be undertaken.

**5. INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE:
INTERNAL AUDIT AND ASSURANCE PLAN**

The Panel has approved the Internal Audit and Assurance Plan for the twelve months period commencing 1st August 2008.

6. EXTERNAL AUDIT PLAN 2008/09

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the planned work to be undertaken at the Council over the 2008/09 financial year by the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton UK LLP.

7. COMPLAINTS

The Panel has received an analysis of the Council's internal complaints and a summary of complaints which have been determined by the Local Government Ombudsman in 2007/08.

**8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMBUDSMAN:
LOCAL SETTLEMENT OF COMPLAINT**

The Panel has received and noted details of a complaint made against the Council by a member of the public and the terms of compensatory payment negotiated by way of a local settlement.

**9. COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT COMPLAINT:
AWARD OF COMPENSATION**

The Panel has approved a sum of £1,085.31 to be awarded as compensatory payment to a complainant under the Council's internal complaints system.

C J Stephens
Chairman

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**CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION – STANDARDS COMMITTEE
(Report by the Director of Central Services & Monitoring Officer)**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008 came into force on 8th May 2008. In brief, the 2008 Regulations provide for –

- ◆ Standards Committees to establish a Referral (Assessment) Sub-Committee which will have responsibility for the initial assessment of allegations and determining whether a particular allegation should be investigated, and a Review Sub-Committee which will have responsibility for considering any requests from the complainant to review a decision of the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee not to investigate a particular allegation;
- ◆ undertaking an initial assessment within 20 working days of receipt of an allegation;
- ◆ Standards Committees to be composed of at least 25% independent members and to be chaired by an Independent Member; and
- ◆ an increase in the maximum sanction available to Standards Committees from three months to six months suspension or partial suspension.

1.2 At their meeting held on 5th June 2008, the Standards Committee considered the arrangements necessary to respond effectively to the new Regulations and resolved specifically to –

- ◆ establish and appoint a Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee and a Review Sub-Committee both comprising one Independent Member, one Parish Council representative and one District Councillor and adopt a terms of reference for each Sub-Committee; and
- ◆ recommend that the Council appoint an additional Independent Member to serve on the Standards Committee for the remainder of the current four-year term to May 2011.

1.3 Other matters of an operational nature were delegated to the Director of Central Services and Monitoring Officer.

2. PROPOSED CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

2.1 Implementation of the 2008 Regulations requires a series of changes to the District Council's Constitution. As the terms of reference of the Corporate Governance Panel includes responsibility for "oversight of the Council's constitutional arrangements and advising the Council of the changes that may be desirable", the following proposed amendments to the Constitution, to reflect the new 2008 Regulations, are presented to the Panel for approval prior to adoption by the Council –

Article 9 – Standards Committee (p27)

Item 2 - Membership

Delete paragraph one and insert –

“The Standards Committee shall comprise –

- ◆ 7 members of the Council (of whom one must be a member of the Cabinet) but excluding the Leader;
- ◆ 4* independent members who are not Councillors or Officers of the Council or any other local authority; and
- ◆ 3** town or parish councillors representing town and parish councils in the District.”.

(* *the question of an increase by one, from three to four Independent Members is subject to the resolution of the Council at their meeting to be held on 25th June 2008; and*

** *the question of an increase by one, from two to three parish council representatives was approved by Council on 14th May 2008.)*

Item 4 - Functions and Role

Delete bullet point 6 and insert –

- ◆ “Undertaking the assessment of complaints which allege breaches of the Members’ Code of Conduct and determining what action should be taken in respect of the allegation;”

Insert in addition –

- ◆ “determining requests from complainants to review decisions not to take action or to investigate an alleged breach of the Members’ Code of Conduct”;
- ◆ undertaking hearings into alleged breaches of the Members’ Code of Conduct;
- ◆ determining appropriate sanctions or actions in response to breaches of the Code of Conduct; and
- ◆ granting and supervising the exemptions of certain posts from political restrictions under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007”.

Article 12 – Officers (p33)

Item 4 – Functions of the Monitoring Officer

Delete (d) and (e) and insert –

“(d) **Local Assessment of Code of Conduct Complaints** – The Monitoring Officer shall discharge the functions in relation to the initial assessment and review of allegations of breaches of the Members’ Code of Conduct, act in accordance with the Monitoring Officer’s Protocol and convene and appoint Members to hearings as necessary;

- (e) **Conducting Investigations** – the Monitoring Officer will conduct investigations in matters referred by the Referrals (Assessment) Sub-Committee and make reports and recommendations in respect of them to the Standards Committee”.

Table 2 – Responsibility for Council Functions (p63)

Column 2 of the entry for the Standards Committee to be amended to read –

“7 members of the Council other than the Leader, 4* voting co-optees and 3** voting members appointed by town and parish councils in Huntingdonshire”.

(* *subject to the resolution of the Council at their meeting to be held on 25th June 2008.*

** *approved by Council on 14th May 2008.)*

To insert in Column 3 on page 64 under the heading “**Other Functions**” –

“Functions relating to the initial assessment of member misconduct and other requirements under the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008.

To grant and supervise exemptions of certain posts from political restriction under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.”.

(Currently this latter function is delegated to the Chief Executive and Regulations on the transfer of the function to the Standards Committee are awaited from the Department of Communities and Local Government.)

2.2 **Part 5 – Codes and Protocols (p239)**

The role of the Monitoring Officer has increased significantly under the new Regulations. To ensure that the necessary arrangements to discharge the functions in relation to the initial assessment and review of allegations are effectively administered in accordance with a clear and transparent procedure, it is proposed that a Monitoring Officer protocol setting out the responsibilities and discretions of the Monitoring Officer be introduced and that this should form part of the District Council’s Constitution and inserted into Part 5 – Codes and Protocols. A proposed protocol is enclosed as an Appendix. The protocol refers, for example, to procedures for notifying Members who become subject to a Code of Conduct complaint, local resolution of complaints, how to deal with anonymous complaints, plus other matters relating to investigations.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 That the Panel be requested to recommend the Council to approve the changes required to the Constitution as described in Section 2 of the report arising from the coming into force of the Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Council's Constitution.
Standards Committee Minutes – 5th June 2008.
Standards Committee (England) Regulations 2008.

Contact Officer: Christine Deller, Democratic Services Manager,
☎ 01480 388007

Employment Panel

Report of the meeting held on 16th September 2008

Matters for Information

4. LEISURE CENTRES RE-STRUCTURING

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

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

5. REQUESTS TO FILL VACANT POSTS

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

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

The Panel has also authorised the HR Manager to recruit to any subsequent posts vacated as a result of internal promotion to these posts.

6. RETIREMENT OF PERSONNEL - ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

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

(The following items were considered as confidential items under paragraph 1 of Part 1 of schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972)

**7. CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM:
TECHNICAL SENIOR ADVISOR POST**

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

**8. APPOINTMENT OF CORPORATE DIRECTOR,
CENTRAL SERVICES**

With the assistance of a report prepared by the Consultants who had been employed to manage the recruitment process to the vacant position of Director of Central Services, the Panel has approved a number of recommendations to facilitate a successful appointment, including a move to spot salaries and changes to the arrangements for performance related pay for the post. The Panel had previously authorised the Head of HR and Payroll to recruit to the post at their meeting in June (Item No. 2 refers). In the light of market conditions relating to Chief Officer salaries, the Panel has also agreed to implement the proposals for the Chief Executive and existing Directors from 1st April 2009.

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

Mrs B E Boddington
Chairman

Elections Panel

Report of the meeting held on 27th August 2008

Matters for Information

1. ELECTORAL CYCLE IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The Panel has been acquainted with recent legislative changes that enable the Council to alter its electoral cycle. Since 1974 the Council has undertaken elections for a third of its Members each year followed by a fallow year when no District elections are held. The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 has made it possible to move to whole council elections and, should the need arise, to revert to elections by thirds. A report by the Head of Administration containing further details of this change, the procedure involved, the implications for town and parish councils, the financial implications and other consequential considerations is attached as an Appendix hereto.

Before coming to a view on whether the Council should change its electoral cycle, the Panel has requested that a range of further information is collected and that District Council Members are consulted on what would be suitable electoral arrangements for the Council. Should the Council wish to move to whole Council elections it will need to pass a resolution to that effect by the end of 2010.

2. REVIEW OF PARISH ARRANGEMENTS IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The Panel has received an update on progress of implementation of recommendations made following the conclusion of the review of parish arrangements in Huntingdonshire. Following approval by the Council at its meeting on 20th February 2008 of a series of recommendations for changes to parish electoral arrangements, the necessary Orders have been made, which bring the changes into effect. Copies of the Orders have been sent to the councils affected and to various other bodies prescribed in legislation.

At the time the review was completed the Council did not have the powers under the legislation then in force to implement a significant number of its recommendations. Instead, these had to be submitted to the Secretary of State and the Electoral Commission to consider and act upon. This situation changed when the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 came into force and the Council now would be responsible for implementing many of these recommendations. However, under the associated transitional arrangements, on this occasion, the Department of Communities and

Local Government will undertake the process of implementing the recommendations. Once this process has been completed the Council will be responsible for taking resulting consequential actions such as making Orders to specify the number of councillors a new parish council has. There are expected to be a small number of other minor boundary changes that the Electoral Commission will be requested to make. The Panel has asked that those parishes affected by these recommendations are informed of progress.

D Harty
Chairman

ELECTORAL CYCLE IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

(Report by Head of Administration)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Council has undertaken elections by thirds since its inception in 1974. It has been possible since for the Council to pass a resolution to ask the Secretary of State to make an order to change the system to whole council elections and vice versa, subject to an interval of not less than 10 years between requests. Legislative change introduced by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 enables the Council to resolve to change its electoral cycle at certain fixed periods of time and to implement certain consequential changes.

2. CHOICE

2.1 Non-metropolitan district councils have the choice of elections by whole council or by halves or thirds of their membership. Huntingdonshire historically has elected by thirds with one fallow year when no district election is held which is the year of the county council election.

2.2 The summary position in England is –

Authority type	Thirds	Halves	Whole	Total
County Council	-	-	34	34
District/bor. council	82	7	149	238
Unitary council	19	-	27	46
London borough	-	-	33	33
Metropolitan borough	36	-	-	36
Parish/town councils	-	-	8,700	8,700

3. NEW PROCEDURE

3.1 Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, districts that historically elected by thirds can move to whole council elections and can revert back to thirds. Other authorities that have whole council elections now cannot move to thirds. The same situation pertains to authorities that historically elected by halves. However authorities cannot move from thirds to halves and vice versa.

3.2 If an authority wishes to move from thirds to whole council elections, it must

- ◆ consult such persons as it thinks appropriate on the proposed change,
- ◆ convene a special meeting of the Council,
- ◆ pass a resolution to change by a two thirds majority of those voting,

- ◆ publish an explanatory document on the decision and make this available for public inspection, and
 - ◆ give notice to the Electoral Commission.
- 3.3 The authority may also request the Commission to give the Boundary Committee a direction to undertake a review of the authority's area with a view to establishing single member wards, where it considers this to be appropriate.
- 3.4 An authority that elected by thirds and has moved to whole council elections may return to elections by thirds. To do so, it must carry out the same procedure as set out in paragraph 3.2, except that the Commission must make an order to that effect and, before doing so, must consider whether to direct the Boundary Committee to carry out a review of the district in question. That review would look at the division of the district into wards with a view to the desirability of establishing three member wards.

4. TIMESCALES

- 4.1 There is a 'permitted resolution period' for authorities that wish to change their electoral cycle. In the case of Huntingdonshire, a resolution must be passed no later than 31st December 2010. The whole council election would then be held in May 2011. The next opportunity to change will be between the annual meeting in May 2014 and 31st December of that year and then during the same interval every fourth year thereafter. If a resolution were to be passed at any time in those permitted resolution periods, the first whole council elections would take place in 2015 and each fourth year thereafter.
- 4.2 If the authority moved to whole council elections and then wished to move back to thirds, the permitted resolution period is between the annual meeting in May 2012 and 31st December 2012 and every fourth year thereafter. The first election by thirds would happen in the year after the Electoral Commission made the order, except that 2013 and every fourth year thereafter would be a fallow year when no district election would take place. The likelihood is that the cycle of elections would be 2015, 2016, 2018, etc.

5. PARISH COUNCILS

- 5.1 Currently, town and parish council elections in Huntingdonshire coincide with the district election for the ward in which they are located. Roughly one third of the towns and parishes therefore have elections in any year except in the year of county council elections. A schedule showing the dates of elections to the various town and parish councils in the District is shown in Annex A. The cost of a contested election is shared between the Council and the relevant town or parish, where possible.
- 5.2 If the Council resolve to move to whole council elections in 2011 and every fourth year thereafter, those towns and parishes with elections that fall in the two years in the cycle when there will no longer be district council elections would have to meet the whole of the cost of

their individual elections. Similarly, the District Council itself would have to meet the whole of the cost of its own election in those wards where no town or parish council is held.

- 5.3 Although contested town/parish council elections have become increasingly rare in recent years, other than in the towns of Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots, a contested election is currently a prerequisite for those councils which are quality parishes to retain their status and the transfer of additional powers and responsibilities to towns and parishes recently may encourage more individuals to stand as candidates.
- 5.4 The 2007 Act enables the Council to make an order to alter the years of the ordinary election of towns and parishes so that they coincide with a move by a district council to elections by whole council or a reversion to elections by thirds. The order can make transitional provision for the retirement of town and parish councillors at different times than would otherwise apply during that transitional period.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A move to whole council elections will clearly lead to a financial saving for the Council. As part of the exercise to identify savings in 2006, the Council has already agreed to include whole council elections in the schedule of cuts to services. However the saving will not equate to the whole of the cost of an election in two of the three years of the current cycle.
- 6.2 Currently, the District is divided into 29 wards. Although elections are by thirds, only 4 wards comprise 3 councillors. 15 have two councillors and 10 are single councillor wards. This results from the need to achieve electoral parity of an equal number of electors per councillor with the most recent periodic electoral review only succeeding to create 3 member wards in Eynesbury, Huntingdon East, Ramsey, and Yaxley and Farcet. In very few wards therefore is an election held each year.
- 6.3 Although the electoral split between wards is equal at the moment with 17 wards having elections in two out of three years and 18 wards in the third year, the cost of an election varies with the number of polling stations per ward. This varies from a minimum of 1 station per ward up to a maximum of 11. The current electoral cycle of 63, 73 and 54 stations in each of its three years (as shown in Annex B) directly affects the cost of the annual election in each of those years.
- 6.4 A move to whole council elections would result in all 106 polling stations being required in each election, representing an increase of 45% compared with the busiest year currently. Similarly all 29 wards would have elections, an increase of 61% on the current position. It is likely therefore that the direct cost of a whole council election would be some 50% higher than in the most expensive of the three current years of the cycle with a saving in the other two years. By-elections also would be more frequent because these could no longer be organised to coincide with annual elections.

- 6.5 Based upon current figures, it is estimated that a saving of approximately £100,000 could be achieved across a four year cycle. However this will vary depending upon the number of contested town and parish council elections that are held. Parliamentary elections have also coincided with district elections in recent years which has enabled costs to be shared, most recently in 2005. A whole council election in 2011 would be out of sequence with general elections and they would be unlikely to coincide for the foreseeable future. Finally the cost would be influenced by the creation of more single member wards.

7. BOUNDARY REVIEW

- 7.1 If the Council considers moving to whole council elections, it will need to decide whether to ask the Commission to implement a boundary review. Ideally, councils where elections are by thirds have three member wards and those with whole council elections have single member wards. The latter tends to focus on the performance of an individual councillor as the representative/champion of his or her ward as opposed to the situation in a multi-member ward. As mentioned above, the last periodic electoral review of the District resulted in a predominance of two member wards to achieve electoral parity. Because of the geographical composition of Huntingdonshire, it is unlikely that single member wards can be created throughout the District without resulting in some unusual ward configurations. Conversely, this would present an opportunity to redress some of the more contrived ward structures that arose from the last review.

- 7.2 A move to all single member wards clearly would generate 52 wards, unless the size of the council changed, with the probability of additional polling stations being required. This could add up to £50,000 to the cost of an election, halving the saving over the electoral cycle.

8. RELATIVE MERITS

- 8.1 A series of arguments can be advanced for the merits and disadvantages of whole council elections and elections by thirds. The Electoral Commission carried out a consultation exercise at the request of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2003 and recommended that authorities move to whole council elections. Conversely the Government had only a few years earlier advocated annual elections as a way of stimulating public interest in local democracy.

- 8.2 A summary of the various merits and disadvantages of the two systems are contained in the attached Annex C.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The recent legislative change encourages authorities to move towards whole council elections. Those currently electing by thirds or halves can move to whole council elections but those operating the latter system at the time when the Act was passed now cannot change.

- 9.2 The merits of elections by thirds and by whole council are equally balanced but the financial saving is not as great as may be first envisaged, especially if a review is requested which implements single member wards and an opportunity to share costs with a general election is lost. It also would mean that a third of the membership of the Council who were elected in 2010 would have to stand for re-election again in 2011 and those elected in the most recent election in May 2008 only serving three of their four year term of office. A similar situation pertained after the last periodic electoral review which changed ward boundaries.
- 9.3 Any decision on the part of the Council would inevitably require the electoral arrangements of the towns and parishes in Huntingdonshire to change to bring their individual years of election into line with that of the District. Depending upon the transitional arrangements that the Council included in the order, this could mean either a shorter or longer period of office for the councillors affected.
- 9.4 Before a special meeting of the Council could be held to consider a resolution for change, it would be necessary to consult with appropriate bodies which could include existing councillors, the political parties, town and parish councils and others. If the Panel is minded to consider a move to whole council elections, it may wish to review the outcome of that consultation before submitting proposals to a special meeting of the Council.

10. RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 The Panel is asked to consider a move to whole council elections before the current deadline of the end of December 2010 and the consequential implications for the Council, individual councillors and town and parish councils.
- 10.2 In the event of the Panel favouring whole council elections, it is also invited to consider -
- ◆ the implementation of a consultation process with interested parties and the determination of whom to consult;
 - ◆ preliminary consideration as to whether to ask the Electoral Commission to direct the Boundary Committee to carry out a review of the District with a view to the creation of single member wards; and
 - ◆ the consequential implications for town and parish councils, the making of an order to change the year of election for a majority of those councils and any transitional arrangements arising therefrom.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

Polling arrangements for County, District and Parish Councils in Huntingdonshire.

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CYCLE OF TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE
(Including Wards of Towns and Parishes, where appropriate)

2010	2011	2012
Alconbury	Abbotsley	Brampton
Alconbury Weston	Abbots Ripton	Broughton
Alwalton	Barham & Woolley	Conington
Buckden	Bluntisham	Glatton
Bury	Brington & Molesworth	Godmanchester
Elton	Buckworth	Great & Little Gidding
Farcet	Bythorn & Keyston	Hemingford Abbots
Folksworth & Washingley	Catworth	Hilton
Great Paxton	Colne	Little Paxton
Hemingford Grey	Earith	Old Hurst
Houghton & Wyton (Airfield Ward)	Easton	Pidley-cum-Fenton
Houghton & Wyton (Houghton & Wyton Ward)	Ellington	Sawtry
Offord Cluny	Eynesbury Hardwicke (Town Ward)	St Ives (East Ward)
Offord D'Arcy	Eynesbury Hardwicke (Spinney Ward)	St Ives (South Ward)
Sibson-cum-Stibbington	Fenstanton	St Ives (West Ward)
Southoe & Midloe	Grafham	Warboys
The Stukeleys (Hinchingsbrooke Ward)	Great Gransden	Woodhurst
The Stukeleys (The Stukeleys Ward)	Great Staughton	
Toseland	Hail Weston	
Upton & Coppingford	Holme	
Wistow	Huntingdon (East Ward)	
Yelling	Huntingdon (North Ward)	
	Huntingdon (West Ward)	
	Holywell-cum-Needingworth	
	Kimbolton & Stoneley	
	Kings Ripton	
	Leighton Bromswold	
	Old Weston	
	Perry	
	Ramsey	
	St Neots (Eaton Ford Ward)	
	St Neots (Eaton Socon Ward)	
	St Neots (Eynesbury Ward)	
	St Neots (Priory Park Ward)	
	St Neots Rural	
	Somersham	
	Spaldwick	
	Stilton	
	Stow Longa	
	Tilbrook	
	Upwood & The Raveleys	
	Waresley	
	Woodwalton	
	Yaxley	

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ELECTORAL CYCLE

Number of Polling Stations per Ward

WARD	Number of seats	COUNTY		DISTRICT			COUNTY			DISTRICT			COUNTY			DISTRICT			COUNTY			Number of Polling Stations																			
		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016		2017	2018	2019	2020															
		Alconbury & The Stukeleys	1		4							4															4													4	
Brampton	2		4		4					4															4											4					
Buckden	1		3							3															3											3					
Earith	2		3		3					3															3											3					
Ellington	1				11																															11					
Elton & Folksworth	1				5																															5					
Fennstanton	1				1																															1					
Godmanchester	2		2		2					2																										2					
Gransden & The Offords	2		7		7					7																										7					
The Hemingfords	2		4		4					4																										4					
Huntingdon (East)	3		4		4					4																										4					
Huntingdon (North)	2				2					2																										2					
Huntingdon (West)	2		3		3					3																										3					
Kimbolton & Staughton	1				5																															5					
Little Paxton	1				1																															1					
Ramsey	3		6		6					6																										6					
Sawtry	2		7		7					7																										7					
Somersham	2				6					6																										6					
Stilton	1				2																															2					
St Ives West	1				1																															1					
St Ives South	2		2		2					2																										2					
St Ives East	2		2		2					2																										2					
St Neots Eaton Ford	2				2																															2					
St Neots Eaton Socon	2				2																															2					
St Neots Eynesbury	3		3		3					3																										3					
St Neots Priory Park	2		3		3					3																										3					
Upwood & The Raveleys	1				5																															5					
Warboys & Bury	2		3		3					3																										3					
Yaxley & Farcet	3		3		3					3																										3					
	52		63		73		54			63		73		54											63		73		54						63		73		54		106

Number of Wards

29

Number of 3 Member Wards

4

Number of 2 Member Wards

15

Number of 1 Member Wards

10

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SUMMARY OF MERITS AND DISADVANTAGES OF WHOLE COUNCIL ELECTIONS AND ELECTIONS BY THIRDS

Merits of elections by thirds

- ◆ Encourages people into the habit of voting in May every year
- ◆ A Council is judged on its performance annually, rather than every 4 years
- ◆ The electorate can react more quickly to local circumstances and Council decisions
- ◆ The Council better reflects public opinion locally
- ◆ Political parties have fewer candidates to find at any one time
- ◆ There are more frequent opportunities for potential candidates to stand
- ◆ Easier to assimilate newly elected Members as numbers are less
- ◆ Disruption to ongoing policies etc. is less significant
- ◆ Elections staff maintain their expertise because of frequency of elections
- ◆ Counts are easier to organise for a single councillor per ward
- ◆ Less likely for local situation to be influenced by national situation politically (i.e. whole council election can be heavily influenced by low point in party fortunes nationally)
- ◆ More difficult to change political balance of authority (although can change more frequently if evenly balanced politically)
- ◆ Creates greater continuity/stability
- ◆ Less likely that controversial decisions will be delayed because of election
- ◆ Easier to organise parish elections if contested
- ◆ With the trend towards parliamentary election on same day as local election, result less likely to be influenced by voting on national issues
- ◆ Rising 18 year olds do not have to wait so long before they can vote
- ◆ In moving to whole council elections, some councillors will only serve one year before having to stand again for election
- ◆ If town and parish elections continue to be combined with district elections, the same situation will apply to parishes where, depending upon the existing cycle, the whole council would have to stand again for re-election
- ◆ More difficult to manage whole council and all town/parish councils elections on same day
- ◆ With propensity for parliamentary election to be held on same day as district election, very difficult to manage parliamentary, whole district and town/parish councils on same day
- ◆ Less likelihood for intermittent by-elections as these tend to be held, where possible, on the date when the election by thirds is being held
- ◆ More difficult to revert to election by thirds if Members dislike whole council elections
- ◆ More difficult for towns and parishes to change periodic cycle if Council reverts back to thirds

- ◆ While towns and parishes could remain on existing cycle, costs would increase as these are shared currently on combined elections.

Merits of elections by whole council

- ◆ A council has a clear mandate from the electorate for 4 years
- ◆ An elector can vote for the whole council as well as a councillor
- ◆ Creates greater stability over the 4 year period with no chance (subject to by-elections) of a change in political control
- ◆ Greater propensity for change in political control
- ◆ Avoids situation where political control of council can change in election by thirds but some electors in single member wards have no opportunity to vote
- ◆ Whole electorate votes together, compared to some who only vote once or twice in the three yearly cycle in one or two member wards respectively
- ◆ Greater publicity for whole council election may generate higher turnout
- ◆ Evidence suggests (according to Electoral Commission) that slightly higher turn out in whole council elections
- ◆ Evidence suggests (according to Electoral Commission) that electorate associates more clearly with whole council election rather than dates when thirds
- ◆ Reduced expenditure for Council
- ◆ Reduced expenditure by political parties because less elections
- ◆ Less disruptive for staff
- ◆ Induction training required less frequently
- ◆ Less campaigning needed by parties (two fallow years in four)
- ◆ Problem with publicity purdah only occurs once every four years.

Clearly some arguments can be used both for and against whole council elections or elections by thirds.