

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 4 SEPTEMBER 2008** at **11:30 AM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

APOLOGIES


Contact
(01480)

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17th July 2008.

Mrs H Taylor
388008

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

3. FINANCIAL STRATEGY (Pages 7 - 20)

To consider a report by the Head of Financial Services.

S Couper
388103

4. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY (Pages 21 - 46)

To consider a report by the Head of Policy and Strategic Services seeking approval for the Sustainable Community Strategy.

I Leatherbarrow
388005

5. "GROWING SUCCESS" - THE CORPORATE PLAN (Pages 47 - 76)

To consider a report by the Head of Policy and Strategic Services reviewing the Council's Corporate Plan – "Growing Success".

I Leatherbarrow
388005

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS TO ST IVES TOWN CENTRE (Pages 77 - 86)

To consider a report by the Head of Environmental Management proposing a new environmental improvement scheme for St Ives.

C Allen
388380

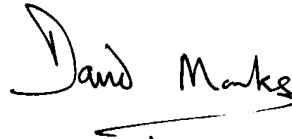
- 7. CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY ACTION PLAN** (Pages 87 - 102)
- To consider a report by the Head of Customer Services seeking approval of the Customer Service Strategy Action Plan.
- Mrs J Barber
388105**
- 8. ENHANCED CLEANSING SERVICES REPORT** (Pages 103 - 110)
- To consider a report of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) on the options to provide additional cleansing services in the District's town centres on Sundays.
- Miss H Ali
388006**
- 9. ADOPTION OF LOCAL STANDARDS FOR THE PROVISION OF CORE SPORTS FACILITIES IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE** (Pages 111 - 116)
- To consider a report by the Head of Environmental & Community Health Services regarding the adoption of local standards for the provision of sports facilities in Huntingdonshire.
- Dr S Lammin
388280**
- 10. REVIEW OF COUNCIL STRUCTURE: APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUP** (Pages 117 - 118)
- To consider a report by the Head of Administration inviting the Cabinet to establish a Working Group to review the existing Council structure in the light of experience and recent legislative change.
- R Reeves
388003**
- 11. SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP** (Pages 119 - 122)
- To receive the report of the meeting of the Safety Advisory Group held on 11th June 2008.
- Mrs A Jerrom
388009**
- 12. CUSTOMER FIRST AND ACCOMMODATION ADVISORY GROUP** (Pages 123 - 124)
- To receive the notes of the meeting of the Advisory Group held on 5th August 2008.
- Miss H Ali
388006**
- 13. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC**
- that the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to the financial affairs of particular persons (including the authority holding that information).

14. SALE OF LAND AT MAYFIELD ROAD, HUNTINGDON
(Pages 125 - 130)

To consider a report by the Head of Housing Services and of Legal and Estates regarding the disposal of Council owned land at Mayfield Road, Huntingdon.

F Mastrandrea
388208
K Phillips
388260

Dated this 26 day of August 2008



Chief Executive

Notes

1. *A personal interest exists where a decision on a matter would affect to a greater extent than other people in the District –*
 - (a) *the well-being, financial position, employment or business of the Councillor, their family or any person with whom they had a close association;*
 - (b) *a body employing those persons, any firm in which they are a partner and any company of which they are directors;*
 - (c) *any corporate body in which those persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or*
 - (d) *the Councillor's registerable financial and other interests.*
2. *A personal interest becomes a prejudicial interest where a member of the public (who has knowledge of the circumstances) would reasonably regard the Member's personal interest as being so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.*

Please contact Mrs H Taylor, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Tel No. 01480 388008/e-mail Helen.Taylor@huntsdc.gov.uk /e-mail: 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 Cabinet.

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

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

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

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

Emergency Procedure

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit and to make their way to the car park adjacent to the Methodist Church on the High Street (opposite Prima's Italian Restaurant).

Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Thursday, 17 July 2008.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.

Councillors P L E Bucknell, K J Churchill,
D B Dew, A Hansard, C R Hyams,
Mrs D C Reynolds, T V Rogers and
L M Simpson.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors P L E Bucknell and K J Churchill.

42. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 26th June 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

43. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor I C Bates declared a personal interest in Minute No 49 by virtue of his membership of the Cambridgeshire Horizons Board.

44. REVENUE MONITORING: 2007/08 OUTTURN AND 2008/09 BUDGET

A report by the Head of Financial Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of the outturn of revenue expenditure for 2007/08 and the variations between the original and the revised budget for that year.

In congratulating officers on the total net variation of £2.5m from the original budget and noting the action to be taken to enhance the budget monitoring process in the future, Executive Councillors raised concerns over the increasing level of fuel and utility costs and the impact of the current economic downturn on land charges income. Councillor Rogers drew attention to the potential implications on future levels of Council Tax and the budget for 2009/10 in the event of the Government failing to acknowledge the impact of the increasing costs and loss of income in the award of Revenue Support Grant.

Having noted a summary of debts received and amounts written off during April to June 2008, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the spending variations for the revenue budget 2007/08 be noted; and

- (b) that the position on debts collected and written off as set out in Annex C to the report now submitted be noted.

45. CAPITAL MONITORING : 2007/08 OUTTURN AND 2008/09 BUDGET

A report by the Head of Financial Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) detailing outturn capital expenditure during 2007/08 and adjustments for 2008/09.

In discussing the main variations in the programme, Executive Councillors' attention was drawn to an increase in the level of Government grant for disabled facilities. However, Members were alerted to the possibility of a reduction in grants awarded in the current year as a shortage of occupational therapists employed by the PCT locally which was likely to result in fewer assessments being undertaken. Remedial action was being investigated and the Chief Executive reported on discussions held with his counterpart at the Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust, regarding the possibility of using therapists based in neighbouring districts to undertake assessments in Huntingdonshire.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the capital scheme's monitoring report reproduced at Appendix B to the report now submitted be noted; and
- (b) that the spending variations referred to in paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4 of the report be noted and the revenue element of the Community Facilities grant be increased by £43,000.

46. CAR PARKING ORDERS

Further to Minute No. 07/117, the Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the responses received following the advertisement of proposals to introduce two new orders governing the use of car parks operated by the Council.

Members were advised that the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 enabled a local authority to decide whether to convene a local inquiry before determining an order. Having acknowledged that the matters raised in respect of the car parks where charging applied had been largely addressed during the previous deliberations on the Car Parking Strategy, and no representations had been received in respect of the order for the free car parks, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that a local inquiry to consider the representations received be not held; and

- (b) that the orders as advertised be approved.

47. RAISING SPONSORSHIP AND ADVERTISING REVENUES FROM COUNCIL WEBSITE

By way of a report by the Director of Commerce and Technology (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered an opportunity to generate revenue from the sale of sponsorship and advertising space on the Council's website and, in future, other e-channels.

In discussing issues surrounding a proposed advertising trial, Members were informed that it was likely that advertising and sponsorship would become increasingly important as a way of funding the provision of information services or developing websites. Having noted that a report on the outcome of the trial would be submitted to Cabinet in February 2009, Members

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Director of Commerce and Technology, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for IT and Customer Service, be authorised to appoint an agency to manage web advertising on behalf of the Council; and
- (b) that a review of the advertising initiative be undertaken in January 2009 and a further report thereon submitted to the meeting of Cabinet scheduled for 19th February 2009.

48. PARISH CHARTER FOR HUNTINGDONSHIRE

A report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which summarised the findings of a study by a Panel working group regarding the adoption of a Parish Charter in respect of the Council's relationship with town and parish councils in the District.

In considering the results of a questionnaire distributed to all town and parish councils on a draft charter, Members were advised that only 43% had responded and of those only 77% had been in favour of a parish charter, with even less (47%) being interested in delegated services. Under the circumstances, the Cabinet concurred with the Panel's conclusion that there appeared little value in pursuing the introduction of a charter at the present time.

A number of Members referred to recent ministerial announcements suggesting a 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 had suggested that there appeared little enthusiasm on the part of parish councils for additional powers and duties, the Head of Administration was requested to draw the attention of the Local Government Association to the results of the consultation exercise

locally.

RESOLVED

- (a) that no further action be taken to develop a Parish Charter with the town and parish councils in Huntingdonshire at the present time for the reasons outlined in the report now submitted;
- (b) that an explanation be given to the town and parish councils of the reasons for the Cabinet's decision; and
- (c) that the Head of Administration be requested to inform the Local Government Association of the Cabinet's views on the devolution of service responsibility to parish councils.

49. DESIGN BRIEF FOR MAYFIELD ROAD, HUNTINGDON

The Cabinet considered a report by the Planning Policy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the responses received to a consultation on a design brief for the re-development of an area of open space adjoining Mayfield Road, Huntingdon. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the content of the design brief for Mayfield Road, Huntingdon be approved as interim planning guidance; and
- (b) that the Head of Planning Services be authorised to make any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations in the brief, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport.

50. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information in respect of the financial or business affairs of any particular person, including the authority holding that information.

51. NEW ACCOMMODATION DELIVERY - MID-PROGRAMME REVIEW

With the assistance of a report by the New Accommodation Project Co-ordinator (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book), the Cabinet were updated on progress of the delivery of the new accommodation project. An addendum to the report was circulated regarding options for the redevelopment of an area of land fronting St Mary's Street.

Having considered issues associated with the proposed development of latter and the programme's overall expenditure, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the progress made on the delivery of the new accommodation project and the programme of work in the current year be noted;
- (b) that the actual expenditure in 2007/08 be approved;
- (c) that the requirement, when the Medium Term Plan is next reviewed, to revise the currently approved medium term plan estimate to provide for the forecast outturn for 2008/09 be noted;
- (d) that a virement from the Headquarters repairs and renewals fund of £170,000 to the MTP scheme 300B be approved;
- (e) the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Deputy Leader, be authorised to enter into contract(s) for the supply of furniture for the new headquarters; and
- (f) that various options be investigated regarding the re-development of an area of land fronting St Mary's Street and a report thereon to include the financial implications of any proposals be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet.

Chairman

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Agenda Item 3

AGENDA ITEM NO.

CABINET

4 SEPTEMBER 2008

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	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
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

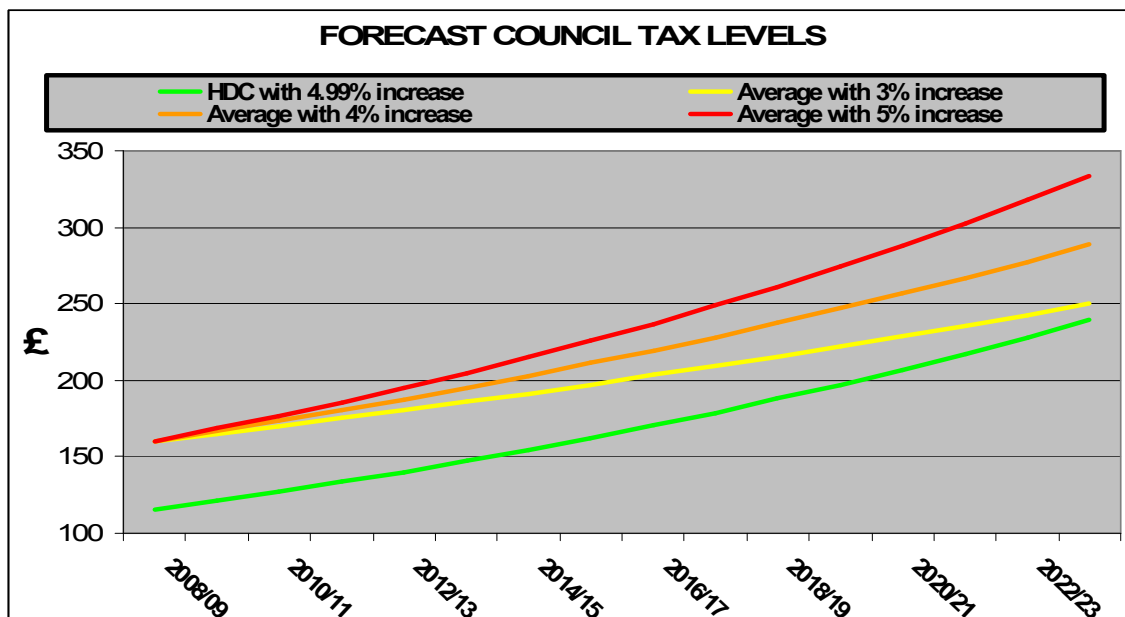
5.3 The Council decided to change its policy last year on the level of increases in Council Tax and moved from “the lower of the Council Tax and Budget Requirement increase being under 5%” to simply keeping the Council Tax increase under 5%. The Council also has a target to keep the level below that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

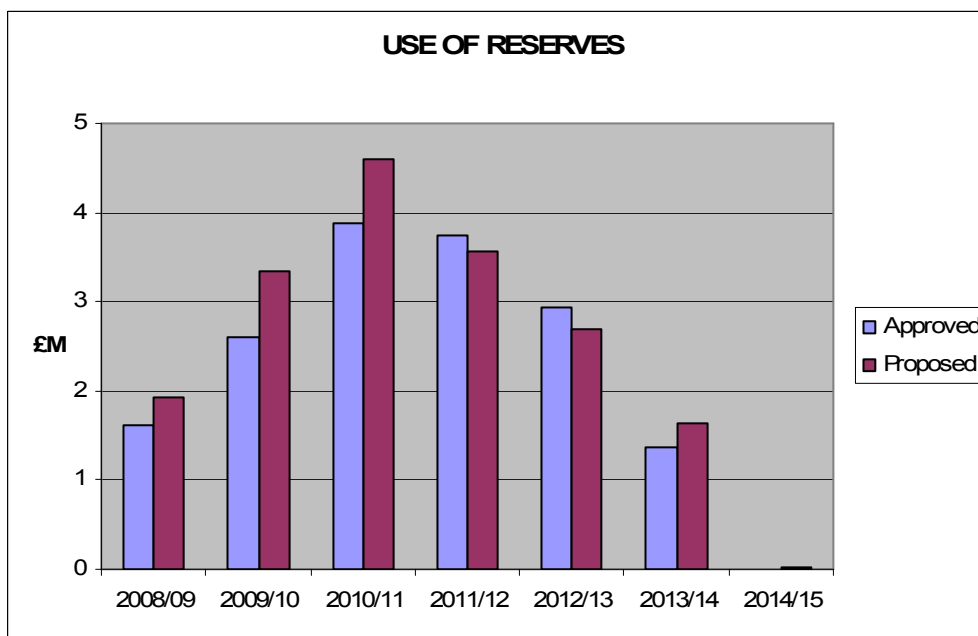


6. USE OF RESERVES

- 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	08/09	09/10	010/11	
	To	09/10	10/11	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	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£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	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£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

Source Documents:

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

☎ 01480 388103

ANNEX A

FINANCIAL SUMMARY	FORECAST	MTP				FORECAST										
	2008/09 £000	2009/10 £000	2010/11 £000	2011/12 £000	2012/13 £000	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000	2019/20 £000	2020/21 £000	2021/22 £000	2022/23 £000	2023/24 £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>	<i>18,823</i>	<i>15,492</i>	<i>10,904</i>	<i>7,372</i>	<i>4,762</i>	<i>3,198</i>	<i>3,000</i>	<i>3,000</i>	<i>3,000</i>	<i>3,000</i>	<i>3,000</i>	<i>3,200</i>	<i>3,400</i>	<i>3,600</i>	<i>3,800</i>	<i>4,000</i>
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

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.

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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'

Contact Officer: Claire Sides, Senior Policy Officer
(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**

draft

1. Introduction

I am pleased to present our Sustainable Community Strategy to you on behalf of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership. The Strategy has been developed through the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership. 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 sets out a shared long term vision for Huntingdonshire for the next 20 years (2008- 2028). A place where current and future generations have a good quality of life, make the most of opportunities that come from living in a growing and developing district; enjoy the benefits of continued economic success and access to suitable homes, jobs, shops, services and things to do.

The challenge that faces us now is to deliver the ambitions outlined in this Strategy, making a real and measurable difference to the lives of Huntingdonshire people.

Cllr I Bates
Chairman of Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership
Leader of Huntingdonshire District Council

draft

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.

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

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.

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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

	<p>the greatest threat to our environment is that of climate change.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>
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<p>3 Well designed and built <i>Featuring quality built and natural environment</i></p>	<p>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.</p>
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<p>Well connected <i>With good transport services and communication linking people to jobs, schools, health and other services</i></p>	<p>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.</p>
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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.

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.**

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

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

draft

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**

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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**

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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

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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

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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**

44

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

45

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.

draft

CABINET

4th SEPTEMBER 2008

**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 extending 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

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.

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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 2006 survey 91% of people were very satisfied or satisfied with Huntingdonshire as a place to live. The majority (60%) indicated that they were satisfied with the quality and amount of natural environment and the level of social and health services (63%).

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 91% of residents saying they feel safe in their local area and only 23% feel unsafe after dark. 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.

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 7% of our streets been assessed as having significant deposits of litter and 83% of our residents are satisfied that Huntingdonshire is a clean green attractive place.

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. Yet there is a demand for more as only 41% of residents are satisfied with the general level of leisure facilities available in the area.

Growth

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

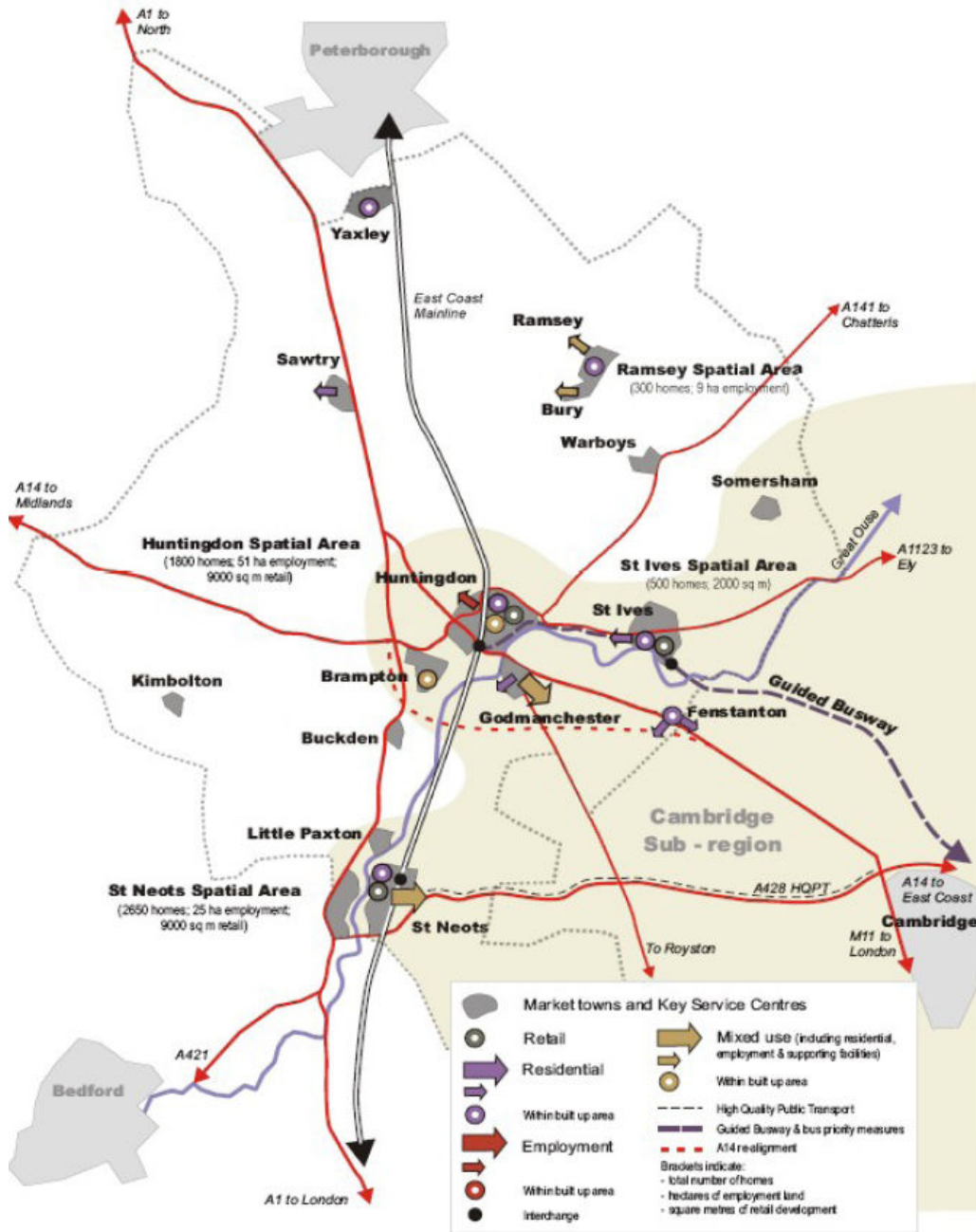
Huntingdonshire is at the centre of the Cambridge to Peterborough growth area and managing the opportunities and pressures from growth will be a continuing focus for the Council. To meet the needs of our communities we expect that Huntingdonshire will continue to accommodate a large amount of additional 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 of 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*

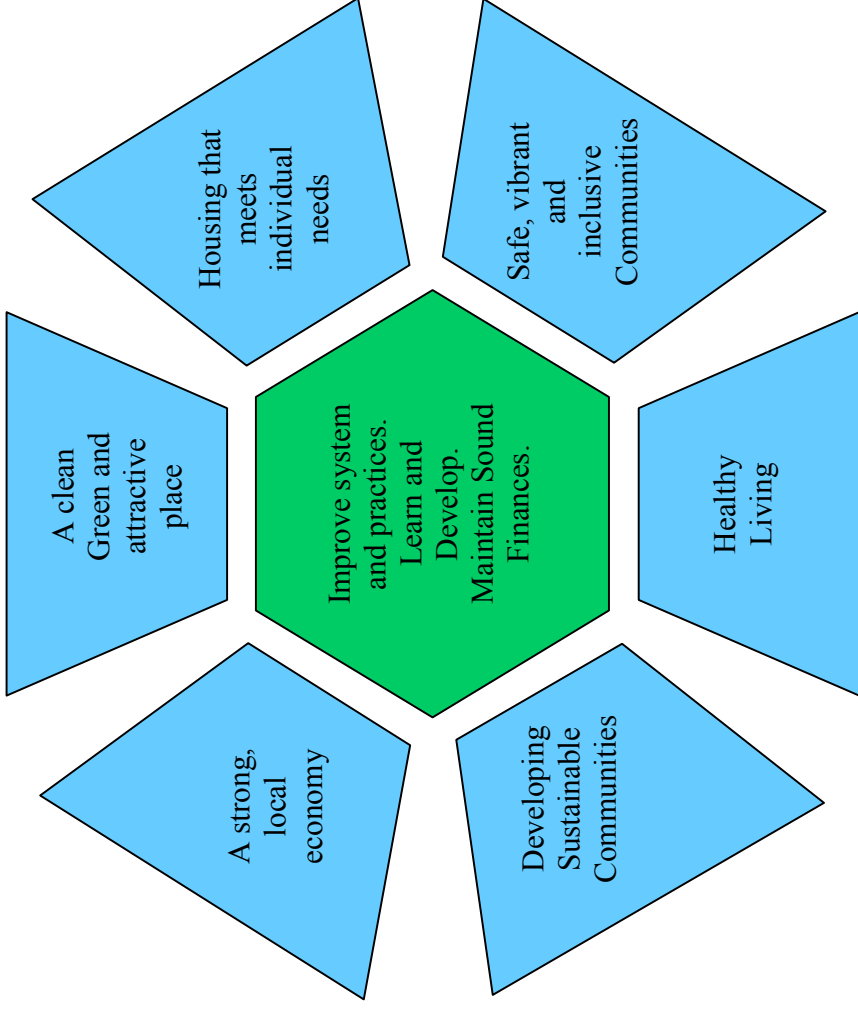
The Council aims are:

- *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 in this plan 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	Target 09/10
Proposed objectives	Measures
1. To keep the district clean	% of streets that have unacceptable levels of litter
<p>We will do this by:</p> <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 	7%
2. To use resources more efficiently	% of relevant Environmental Strategy targets on track
<p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing recycling • reducing waste • ensuring the best use of land • promoting efficient use of water • encouraging sustainable purchasing. 	75%
3. To help mitigate and adapt to climate change	Per capita CO₂ emissions in the LA area
<p>We will do this by :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing energy efficiency • encouraging renewable energy • reducing travel and emissions to air 	<p>2010/11 11%</p> <p>& NI 188 Adapting to Climate Change - level 1</p> <p>2010/011 Level 2 2</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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>
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Housing that meets individuals' needs		09/10
Proposed objectives	Measures	target
<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>The number of private sector vacant dwellings that are returned into occupation (BV64)</p>	<p>>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>Number of households living in Temporary Accommodation</p>	<p>45</p>

		target 2010/11 target 2011/12	40 35
We will do this by:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> helping prevent people from becoming homeless. housing of homeless people where appropriate. 			
4. To pay Housing and Council Tax benefits		Time taken to process Housing Benefit/Council Tax Benefit new claims and change events	17 days
We will do this by:			
<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. 			

COMMUNITY AIM: Safe, vibrant and inclusive communities			
Proposed objectives	Measures		target
1. To reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and ensure that people feel safe	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour Baseline target will be reassessed against the results of the pending 'Place Survey' Jan/Feb 09		%TBC
We will do this by:			
<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 			
2. To enable residents to take an active part in their communities and work to ensure that communities are inclusive	% of people who feel they can influence decisions Base line to be established via the Place survey results		%TBC

	available Jan/Feb 09	
<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		
Proposed objectives		target
<p>1. To protect the health of individuals</p>	<p>% of issues identified in the Health Protection Priority plan rated as very/highly important that are being actively addressed by the Council</p>	100%
<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>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>	

2. To promote active lifestyles	Number of people taking part in active lifestyle via opportunities provided or promoted by the Council	1,809,110 pa.
<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>A cumulative total of the Leisure Centres and Leisure Development.</p> <p>20010/11</p> <p>2011/12</p>	<p>1,855,100</p> <p>2,087,600</p>
<p>3. To reduce health inequalities</p>	<p>% of relevant Council actions to reduce health inequalities, on target</p>	<p>90%</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. 		

<p>4. To promote development opportunities in and around the market towns</p>	<p>Successful adoption of Core Strategy 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><i>Modal share for daily bus, cycle and pedestrian trips.</i></p>	<p>>18.5%</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>6. To enable the provision of the social and strategic infrastructure to meet current and future needs.</p>	<p>% of actions identified in the Local Investment Framework on target</p>	<p>90%</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 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and community facilities and opportunities for all. providing and support the development of play and recreation facilities in identified communities 	
COMMUNITY AIM: A strong, diverse economy	
Proposed objectives	Measures
<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>Working age population qualified to at least Level 3</p> <p>Level 3</p>
<p>3. To support town centres and key settlements to become economically viable and vibrant</p>	<p>Average footfall of the four market towns compared to the regional/national average</p> <p>> national ave.</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 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enable the improvement in the quality and availability of attractions and facilities. 	
COMMUNITY AIM: To improve our systems and practices	
Proposed objectives	Measures
1. To make it as easy as possible for customers to access our services and get appropriate information	% of contacts that are avoidable (for selected services) target to be confirmed when baseline data is available in early 2009
We will do this by:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> developing ways of accessing Council services including, self service via web site, mobile/home delivery of services increase 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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> offer good standards of service in accordance with our promises understanding our residents needs providing services which meet residents needs 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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure regular and effective communication with local residents and businesses about council services. ask our residents and organisations working in Huntingdonshire their opinions and considering what they say. seek and sharing views on new proposals. publish our plans and service standards and information about our performance. 	>75%
	70%

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> undertake research and provide information to ensure individual and community needs are identified cross reference to Communication and Marketing and Consultation and Engagement strategies engagement 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"> determine Council priorities and allocate resources. scrutinise and examine relevant issues. act in the best interests of the Council and constituents. 	
<p>5. Effective partnership</p>	<p>% of strategic partnerships fully complying with the Councils framework</p> <p>100% within 3 years</p>
<p>We will do this by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lead the Huntingdon Strategic Partnership to bring together a range of bodies that contribute to meeting the needs and aspirations of our communities. continue to take opportunities to work with others where it will meet community needs and maximise the resources. represent Huntingdonshire's interests on key partnerships such as Local Area Agreement Board. review and assess existing and proposed partnerships 	
<p>6. To maintain high levels of probity, governance and ethics</p>	<p>Achievement of improvements identified in annual Governance Statements</p> <p>100%</p>
<p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintain a clear and comprehensive constitution. ensure compliance with appropriate processes and procedures 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manage performance effectively • manage risk and opportunity effectively • cross reference to the assurance statement • Implement the Council's Improvement Plan 	
<p>7. To use Council resources efficiently</p> <p>We will do this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide and maintain of range of buildings that meets our needs, which deliver value for money and exemplify our design, environmental and land use objectives • provide high levels of ICT availability with access from multiple locations including from – desk, home, or on the move. • ensure effective service recovery plans are in place • introduce specific travel plans at each of the council's main sites. • encourage sustainable procurement where this provides value for money • introduction of new working practices • undertaking an annual review of the code of governance • managing and assurance framework • produce a annual Governance statement • investigation of any complaints regarding the breaching of the code 	<p>% of efficiency conditions/targets completed</p> <p>90%</p>

COUNCIL AIM: To learn and develop	
Proposed objectives	Measures
1. To be an employer people want to work for	target 97%

<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 • ensure 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>2. To ensure that employees and members have appropriate skills, knowledge, behaviours and develop a culture of innovation</p>	<p>% of employees with a development plan % of councillors with a development plan</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>3. To strengthen our commitment and capacity to achieve equality, diversity and inclusion</p>	<p>Achievement against appropriate levels of the Equality Standard for Local Government.</p>
	<p>Level 3 by 2010</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. 	
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COUNCIL AIM: To maintain sound finances	
Proposed objectives	Measures
<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>% of plans and budgets produced on time</p> <p>target 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"> compliance with (where appropriate) the Key Line of Enquiry in the Use of Resources assessment and the delivery of the Use of Resources action 	<p>Use of Resources value for money score</p> <p>Level 3</p>

<p>plan</p>			70:30
<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>4. To maintain below average council tax</p>	<p>Council Tax level below national average.</p>	<p>Council Tax by band remains the lowest decile of districts in England.</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>5. To administer local taxation</p>	<p>% of council tax collected per annum % of nation non-domestic rates collected per annum</p>	<p>98.6% 99.2%</p>	

<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. 	
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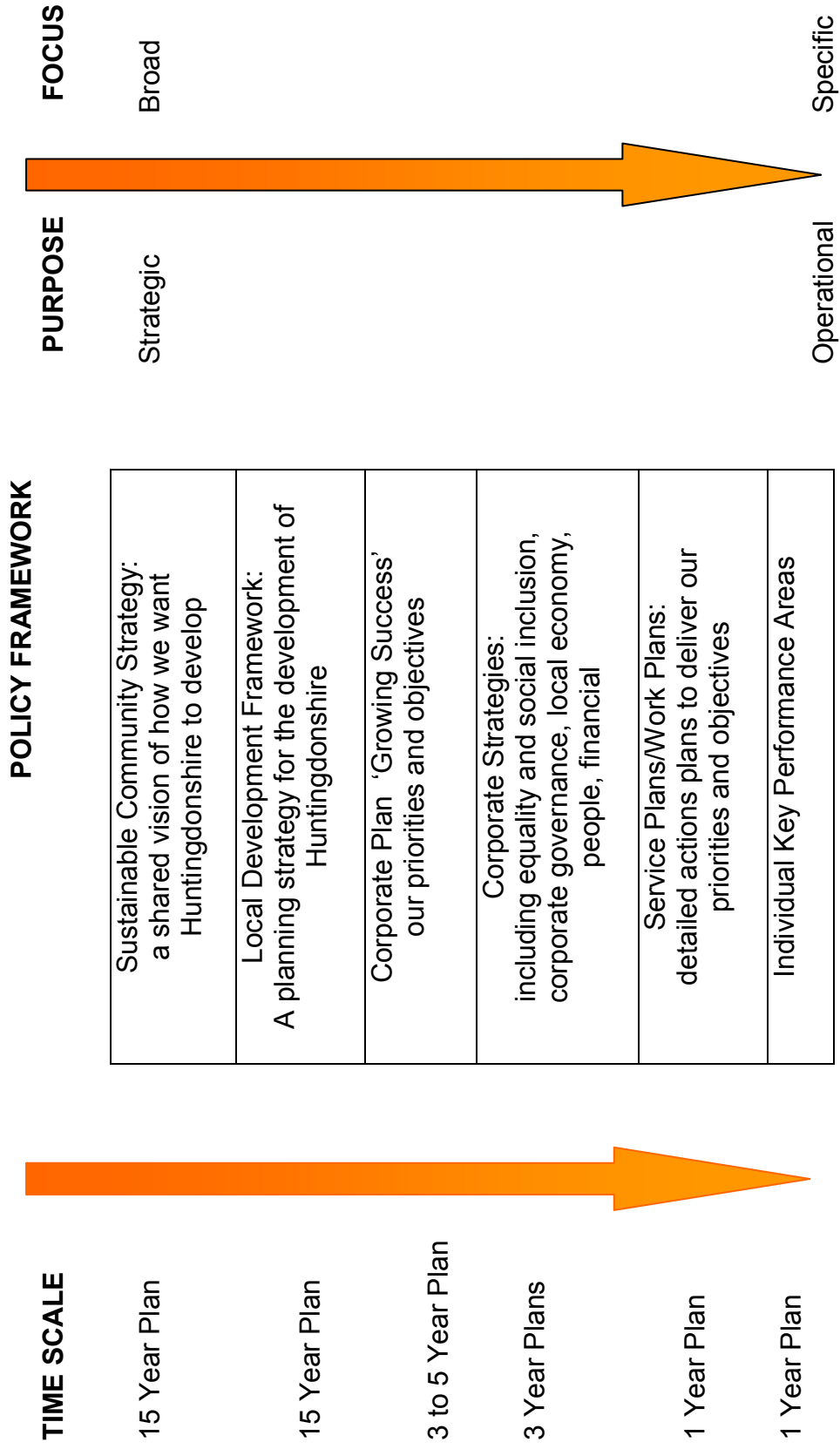
Managing Our Performance

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.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (SERVICE DELIVERY)

2 SEPTEMBER 2008

CABINET

4 SEPTEMBER 2008

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS TO ST IVES TOWN CENTRE
(Report by Head of Environmental Management,)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 St Ives Town Centre has been identified as being an area that required improvements due to its importance as a Town Centre area. There is a MTP scheme for £1080k in the programme to carry out these works between 2008 and 2010. A previous phase carried out improvements to the Bridge Street area. Phase 2 of the work is looking to improvements in the Market Hill area of the town centre. It is important to ensure that the town centre's viability remains and this would be helped by keeping the centre's appearance at a high standard as this scheme proposes.
- 1.2 This report outlines the progress to date and the process required to take the scheme forward to construction and to get Cabinet's permission to take the consultation forward.
- 1.3 In September 2006, the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee was presented with a 116 signature petition which asked that, to enable the use of Bridge Street for Pavement cafes, the Committee vary the road traffic regulation order to prohibit loading after 10am daily. Preliminary consultation showed that there was a range of views on this proposal, and formal consultation was requested on the matter. It is intended that this consultation be included with the Market Hill proposals as they are related.

2. SUPPORTING/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 A previous phase was carried out in 2001 following wide consultation in the Bridge Street / Crown Street area. This removed the parking from the street and replaced it with loading bays and disabled parking. The surfacing was changed to yorkstone pavements and gravel finished asphalt on the road. Despite early concerns over the design, compliments have been made about the final appearance.
- 2.2 As part of the previous consultation, it was agreed that the second phase would be the Market Hill area. The district council supported this by including future monies in the capital programme.
- 2.3 Following the guidelines set by Cabinet, an Advisory Group has been set up for the scheme. This includes the local District and County Councillors, Town Council representatives, Scrutiny representatives and representatives from local consultative groups such as the Town Centre Initiative, Access Group and Civic Society. Meetings have been held since May 2006 with these groups to discuss the principle of the scheme and, more recently, detail of the design.

3. MARKET HILL PROPOSALS

- 3.1 Market Hill, a large market square, has a charter market every Monday which takes over most of the space with stalls. On Fridays there is a smaller market, with Farmers Market held fortnightly on Saturdays. There is charged parking (20 spaces) in the centre of the square with free parking on one side of the square. On Mondays, no parking is available within the square.
- 3.2 The pavements are narrow for a town centre and, with stalls erected on them, this causes restrictions to pedestrian flow. Cars will often drive around market place looking for spaces rather than go direct to the off street car parks.
- 3.3 Several options were drawn up and presented to the Advisory Groups over the last two years. These showed a range of options from slight reduction in parking provision, to minimum parking with maximum pedestrianisation. Total pedestrianisation is not possible as there is one road and several accesses off the square which need to be kept available at all times.
- 3.4 From discussions on these proposals, three options have been developed and it is on these options that consultation is planned to be taken forward. The new road layouts for the options 1 & 2 are similar, but Option 2 provides extra parking for Blue Badge holders and delivery areas at the west end of Market Hill. Option 3 is not to carry out any road layout changes, but just to enhance the existing street furniture, signage and surfacing. The Advisory Group has supported the principle of consultation on these options.
- 3.5 The plans included in Annex A show the three options proposed for consultation. The main changes to the existing layout are:
- A public space is created at the west of Market Hill which would be used for the Markets on three days and for special events or fairs at other times. Option 1 has no parking and limited loading / unloading in this area, while Option 2 will have bays for Blue Badge holders and loading / unloading within the area.
 - The war memorial is to be moved to outside the Town Hall where it has a better setting being surrounded by paving rather than roads.
 - The Cromwell Statue will need local adjustment in position to match the new road layout.
 - The pavements are widened to improve access.
 - The Sheep Market area is retained for use with stalls and other events. It could also be used for street cafes, as could the public space area.
 - Access is kept to the roads and private parking areas off the square.
 - The market stalls will be designed into the new layout so that pavements are not restricted as at present.

- 3.6 The new layouts will give a better defined area for the markets and make them safer more attractive. Discussions are also in progress with the fair which occupies the town centre for 1 week each year.
- 3.7 The design will also allow for the access for busses through Market Hill. Whether buses use this route will be decided by the County Council and the bus operators and is not part of this consultation.
- 3.8 As part of the discussions on the use and control of parking in the town centre, it was requested that the east end of Broadway be covered by Pay and Display parking based on the existing 1 hour maximum period. This would ensure a regular turn over of cars and easier access for shoppers. The present system is hard to control due to the lack of police presence in the town for this issue. It is however recommended that this proposal be considered separately as part of the County Council's On-Street parking proposals.

4. BRIDGE STREET PROPOSALS

- 4.1 When Bridge Street was improved in 2001, parking was removed and replaced with designated bays for Blue Badge holders and other bays for loading / unloading. This has reduced the traffic entering the road, but there have been reports that due to lack of enforcement the system is being abused.
- 4.2 There is a café culture in Bridge Street and one application was received for a street café. The Licensing Panel considered the application and recommended that it could be allowed if all loading was removed from the street after 10am. Such changes needed the approval of the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee, and they recommended that consultation be carried out so that a decision could be made. Preliminary consultation showed that there is a wide division on making changes to the traffic order for Bridge Street. The majority of residents and shop keepers are against changing the Orders, and the formal groups are generally in favour of a change, but with a variety of suggested times.
- 4.3 In order for this to be progressed, formal consultation needs to be held on the options and reported back to the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee. Since the Market Hill proposal also affects parking and loading in the town centre, these need to be considered together.
- 4.4 Taking into account the various options suggested, the Advisory Group agreed that a consultation exercise be undertaken consisting of the following options:-
- (1) to leave the order as it is at present;
 - (2) to restrict the use of one loading bay at the south end of the street to the time of 12 midday to 12 midnight to allow for street cafes
 - (3) to restrict all loading bays from 12 midday to 12 midnight and move the disabled bay from the south end to the north end;

Details are shown in Annex B

5. PROGRESSION OF THE SCHEME

- 5.1 Monies are available in the MTP for construction in 2009/10 and 2010/11.
- 5.2 The next stage of the process is to go out for public consultation. Since the works are all on the public highway, the approval of the County Council is needed to proceed.
- 5.3 The Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee needs to give permission to consult on the proposals. The method of consultation is set by the County Council and, as partners in the scheme, their formal consultation system will be used.
- 5.4 Following consultation, reports will be made back to this Cabinet and then to the Area Joint Committee for them to approve the scheme and the necessary traffic orders.
- 5.5 Design and tendering for the scheme will follow with construction starting in the January of 2010.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

- 6.1 The risk assessment to the completion of the scheme is:
- As the road is all Public Highway, County Highways approval is needed to the design and materials. Discussions have been on going with county officers and their approval is expected.
 - The Area Joint Committee need to give permission to consult on the scheme. Since Town, District and County Councillors have been involved in the Advisory Groups, their permission is expected to be given.
 - The results of the consultation will determine the public support for the scheme. Amendments can be made to the designs to take account of the requests. The final layout will need the approval of the Area Joint Committee

7. CONCLUSION

- 7.1 St Ives town centre, like many other towns, is experiencing challenges in the retail sector. It is considered that investment in the town central area is needed to ensure its continued viability and also to improve the environment to make it a better shopping experience.
- 7.2 Discussions on the proposals have been held with the Advisory Groups and they have generally supported the principles of the scheme. Two options have been developed which have taken into account the main views of these groups and these are recommended to go out for public consultation. A third option just enhances the existing layout.
- 7.3 The consultation will include the design of the Market Hill area and discuss the request for revised traffic orders on Bridge Street.

- 7.4 On approval by this Cabinet, the report will progress to the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee for approval to consult. Results of the consultation will be brought back to Cabinet for their views.

8. RECOMMENDATION

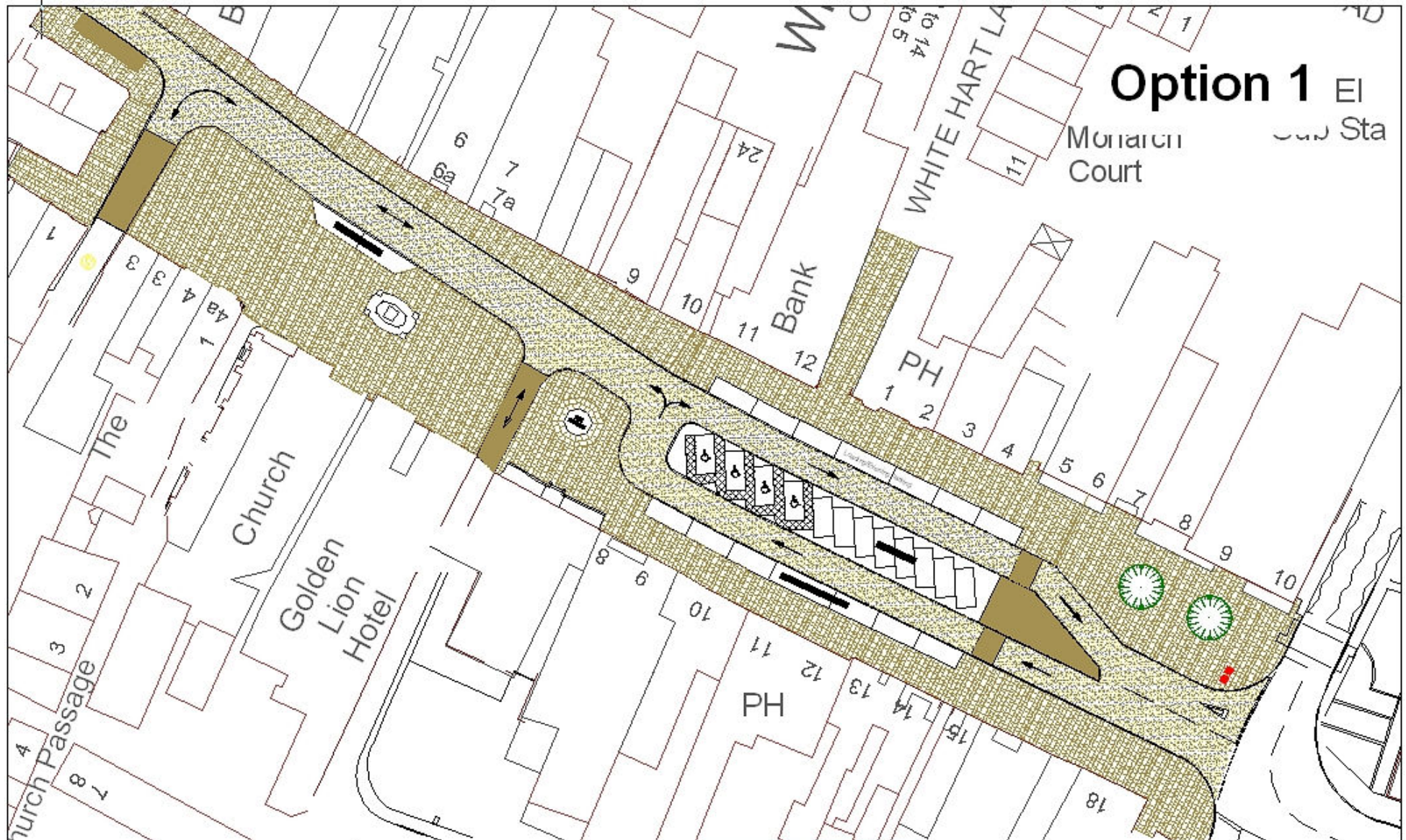
- 8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet–
- (1) note the progress of the scheme and consultation to date
 - (2) approve the basis of the scheme and agree to submitting a report to Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee for approval to consult
 - (3) and receive feedback at a future meeting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Advisory Group minutes
Environmental Management files

Contact Officer: C Allen – Project and Assets Manager
☎ 01480 388380

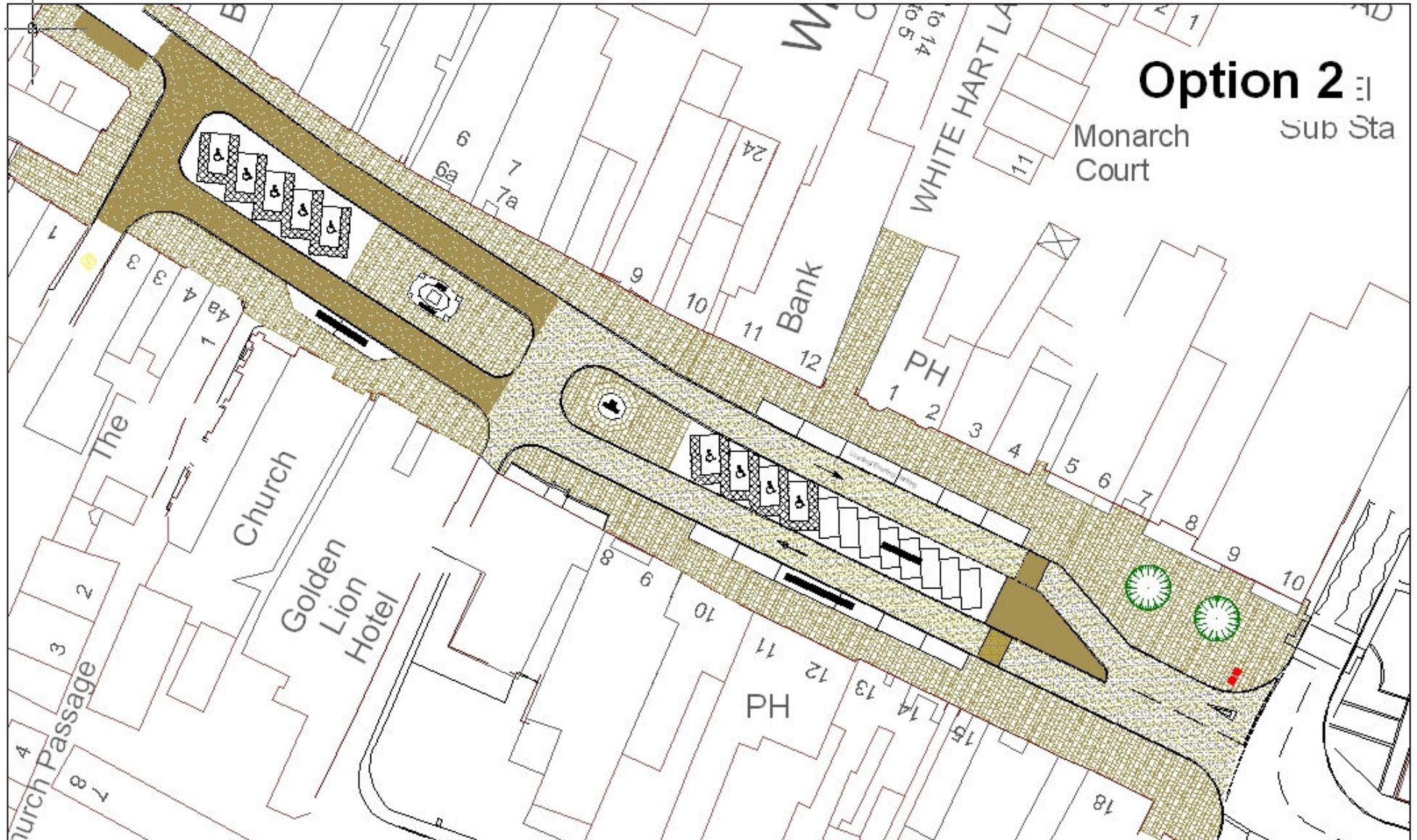
ANNEX A - MARKET HILL PROPOSALS - OPTION 1



82

<p>JOB Environmental Improvements Market Hill St. Ives</p>	<p>TITLE Proposed Layout</p>	<p>Huntingdonshire DISTRICT COUNCIL PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST. MARY'S STREET HUNTINGDON, CAMBS. PE18 6TN TELEPHONE: HUNTINGDON (01480) 388388</p>	<p>Chris Allen, B.Sc., CEng, Dip. ESA Project Manager Directorate of Operational Services</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>SCALE</td> <td>nts</td> <td>DATE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DRAWN BY</td> <td colspan="2">GVW</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DRG. No.</td> <td colspan="2"></td> </tr> </table>	SCALE	nts	DATE	DRAWN BY	GVW		DRG. No.		
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ANNEX A - MARKET HILL PROPOSALS - OPTION 2



Option 2

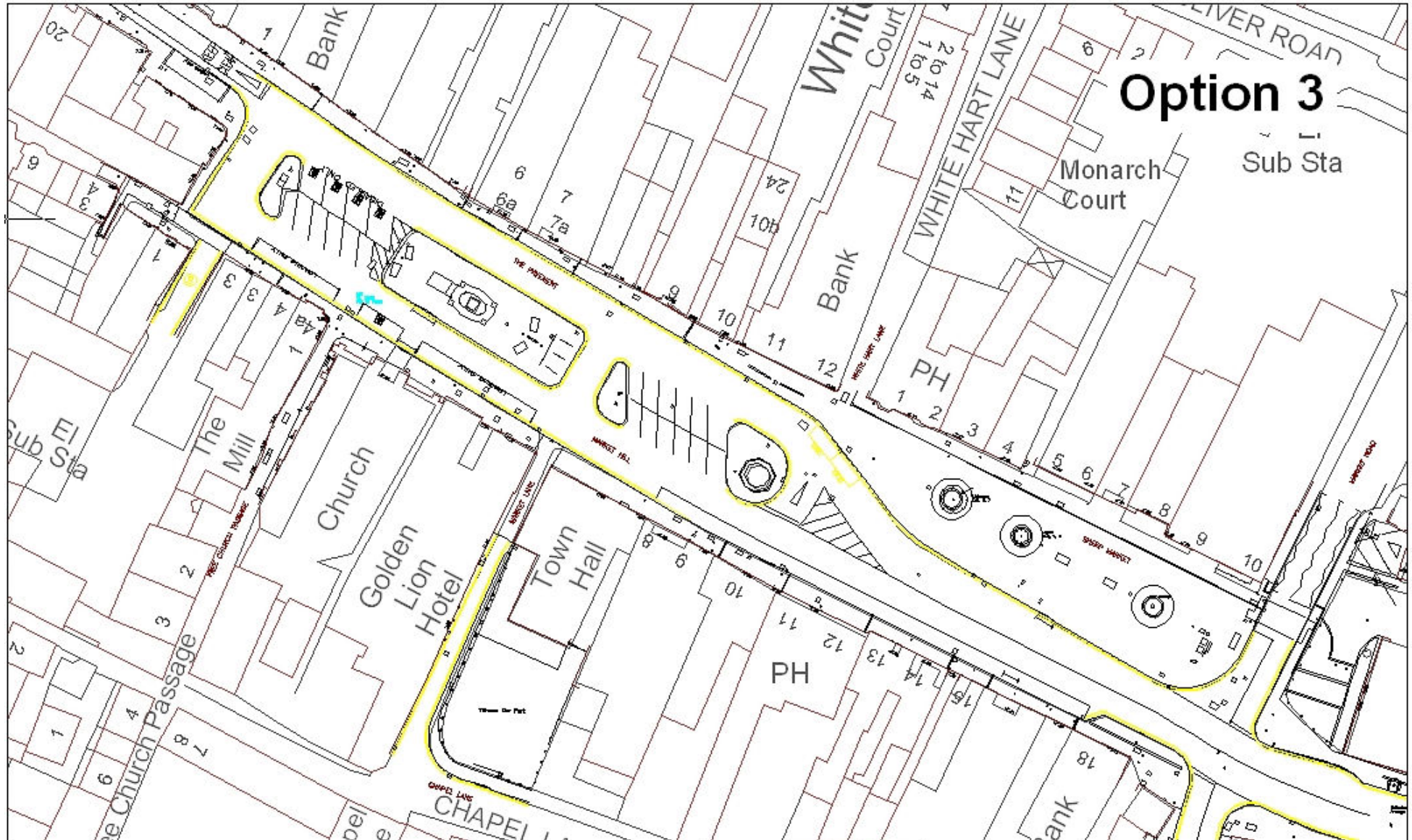
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83

<p>JOB Environmental Improvements Market Hill St. Ives</p>	<p>TITLE Proposed Layout</p>	 <p>PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST. MARY'S STREET HUNTINGDON, CAMBS. PE18 6TN TELEPHONE: HUNTINGDON (01480) 388388</p>	<p>Chris Allen, B.Sc., C.Eng, Dip. RSA Project Manager Directorate of Operational Services</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>SCALE nts</td> <td>DATE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DRAWN BY GW</td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>DRG. NO.</td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	SCALE nts	DATE	DRAWN BY GW		DRG. NO.	
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ANNEX A - MARKET HILL PROPOSALS - OPTION 3

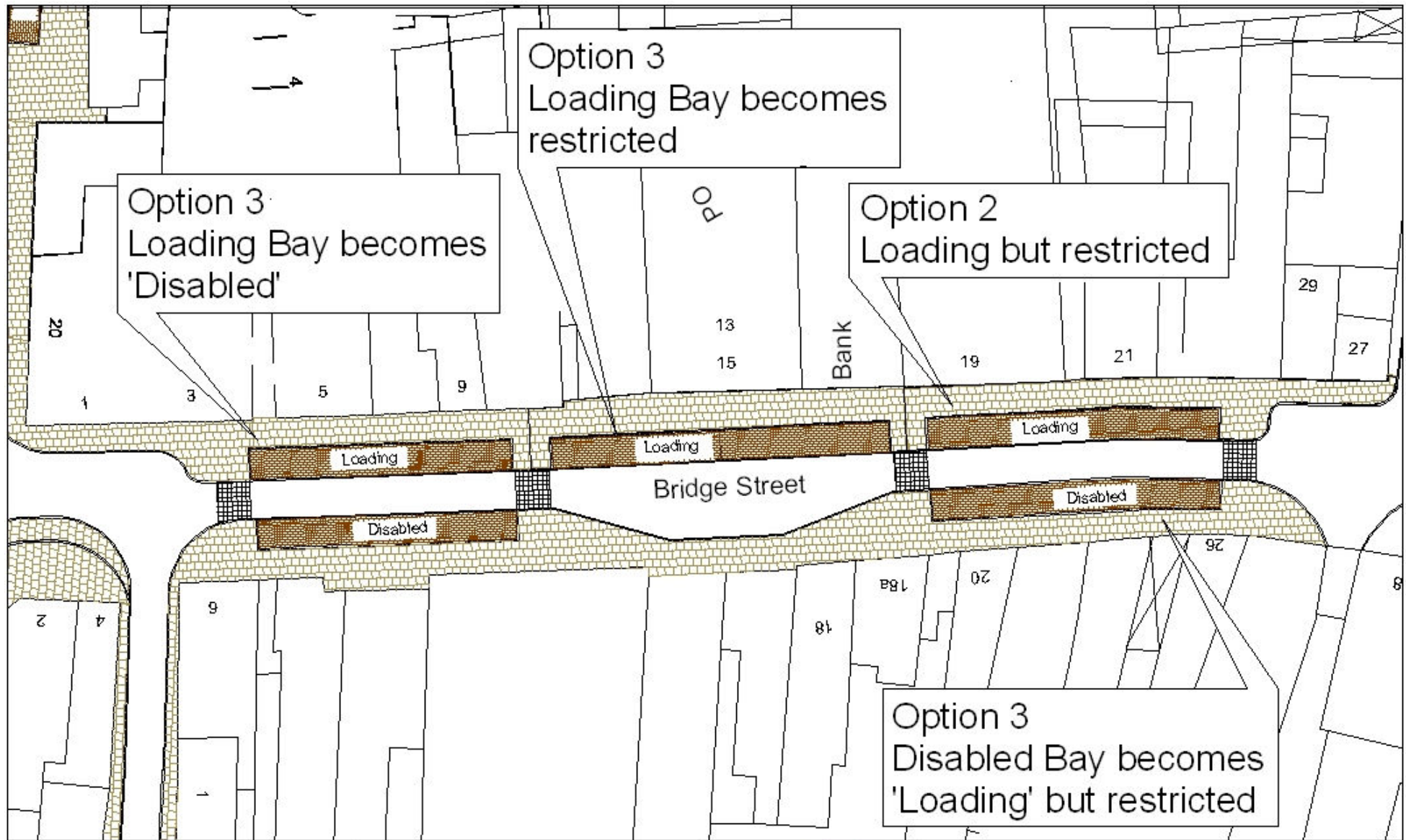


84

<p>JOB Environmental Improvements Market Hill St.Ives</p>	<p>TITLE Existing Layout</p>	 <p>PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST.MARYS STREET HUNTINGDON, CAMBS. PE18 8TN TELEPHONE: HUNTINGDON (01455) 382388</p>	<p>Chris Allen, B.Sc., CEng, Dip. RSA Project and Assets Manager Environmental and Community Services</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>SCALE</td> <td>nts</td> <td>DATE</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DRAWN BY</td> <td colspan="2">GWJ</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DRG. No.</td> <td colspan="2"></td> </tr> </table>	SCALE	nts	DATE	DRAWN BY	GWJ		DRG. No.		
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ANNEX B – BRIDGE STREET PROPOSALS

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<p>JOB Bridge Street</p>	<p>TITLE Proposed Layout</p>	 <p>PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST. MARY'S STREET HUNTINGDON, CAMBS. PE18 6TN TELEPHONE: HUNTINGDON: (01455) 388388</p>	<p>Chris Allen, B.Sc., C.Eng. Dip. RSA Project Manager Directorate of Operational Services</p>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>SCALE nts</td> <td>DATE May 07</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">DRAWN BY GW</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">DRG. No.</td> </tr> </table>	SCALE nts	DATE May 07	DRAWN BY GW		DRG. No.	
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**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
(CORPORATE & STRATEGIC
FRAMEWORK)
CABINET**

2ND SEPTEMBER 2008

4TH SEPTEMBER 2008

CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY ACTION PLAN (Report by Head of Customer Services)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Cabinet meeting of 21st February 2008 approved the new Customer Service Strategy. At that time, the Action Plan was not developed because the Council was to establish a new Customer Services team under a new Head of Service.
- 1.2 On the 1st April, the new team was created by joining together all front facing services (customer service centres, community information centres, tourist information centre and the call centre) under a new Customer Services Manager. The team reports to the new Head of Customer Services (formerly Head of Revenue Services).
- 1.3 Since then, the Action Plan has been developed, and is now submitted to the Scrutiny Panel for comment and for Cabinet to endorse.

4 Recommendation

- 4.1 It is recommended that the Customer Service Strategy Action Plan be approved.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Cabinet minutes – 21 February 2008

Contact Officer: Julia Barber – Head of Customer Services
☎ 01480 388105

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Customer Service Strategy: 'Customer Insight'

Purpose

Huntingdonshire District Council aims to provide excellent customer service.

Our vision is one where, for each of our services, we have a clear insight into the needs of our customers and provide services in a way, which meets those needs. Specifically this means each service will;

- ◆ Carefully consider who its customers are, and what services they require; and
- ◆ Design service delivery around the needs of those customers.

Contribution to the Council's Corporate and Strategic Framework

The Council has many roles, but to achieve our aims and objectives in our corporate plan, Growing Success, we are committed to consistent and sustained customer service.

Using our customer insight, the Council aims to achieve the following objectives in Growing Success:

- **to provide high quality customer services** – by making it as easy as possible for customers to access our services and get appropriate information;
- **to improve access to our services** – by introducing new ways of contacting the Council including: self service via web site, mobile/home delivery of services, increase use of call centre and customer service centres;
- **to be good at communicating with and listening to people and organisations** – this will entail regular and effective communication with local residents about Council services, seeking their views on new proposals, and regularly asking them their opinions and considering what they say;
- **to be clear about what we can do and aspire to achieve** – by regularly publishing our plans and services standards and information about our performance;
- **to be a part of effective partnerships** – by continuing to take opportunities to work with others where it will meet community needs and maximise the resources;
- **to strengthen our commitment and capacity to achieve equality, diversity and inclusion** – by maintaining or establishing statutory equality schemes which consider gender, race and disability equality issues and the needs of disadvantaged groups at all levels of services, policies and practices.

The achievement of these objectives means that the Council must be excellent at understanding the needs of the users of our services, those we represent and in organising services around those needs. This requires excellent customer service standards and practices, communications, marketing, consultation and engagement skills and activities.

In addition to the objectives in Growing Success, a series of strategic policies, including the Corporate Equality Policy, Consultation and Engagement Strategy and Communications and Marketing Strategy, all contain objectives and activities which require effective customer service and/or contribute towards the approach adopted within this strategy.

These strategies and policies are mutually supportive and are inherently connected in terms of the objectives they are seeking to promote. In delivering the vision for excellent customer service the Council also has to balance the costs and value of improvements we make.

Background

Where are we now?

Huntingdonshire District Council Customer Service Strategy, approved in 2003, has been successfully achieved. In the past four years the way that customers can contact the Council, obtain services and information has been significantly improved -

- A Call Centre has been established which deals with the majority of initial calls from customers and provides a more detailed call answering service for an increasing range of services.
- A temporary Customer Service Centre has been established in Huntingdon which brought together disparate points of contact for customers, including a tourist information centre. In addition to the physical change this has facilitated a consistent approach towards customer service and improvements in the development of employees. A new permanent centre is being built as part of the Council's new headquarters.
- Satellite Customer Service Centres have been maintained in St Ives and St Neots offering payment facilities and a range of other services.
- Community Information Centres have been successfully established in Yaxley and Ramsey working closely with many external partners.
- Continuous improvements have been made to the Council's website as a means of obtaining information about services.
- The St Neots Tourist Information Centre has been maintained pending its amalgamation with an enhanced customer service centre in the town.
- A Mobile Display Unit is used extensively around the district to promote services and as a mobile office. Trials have also been conducted on mobile working, mobile information provision and flexible working for employees. These trials have provided information about the demand and costs of such activities.

In the main, face to face services have developed independently and we need to ensure we learn from existing best practice across these locations. Officers also act as 'advocates' for those customers who need more help than others, and this will continue.

Where do we want to be?

Having made these achievements and having regard to increasing customer expectation and good practice in this field the time is right to revisit the strategy.

The strategy is planned to have a life of approximately three years and includes a broad action plan required to achieve its objectives. It is intended to reinforce existing good practice and performance already present across the Council. The strategy is focussed on the initial contact we have with customers and the subsequent delivery of service.

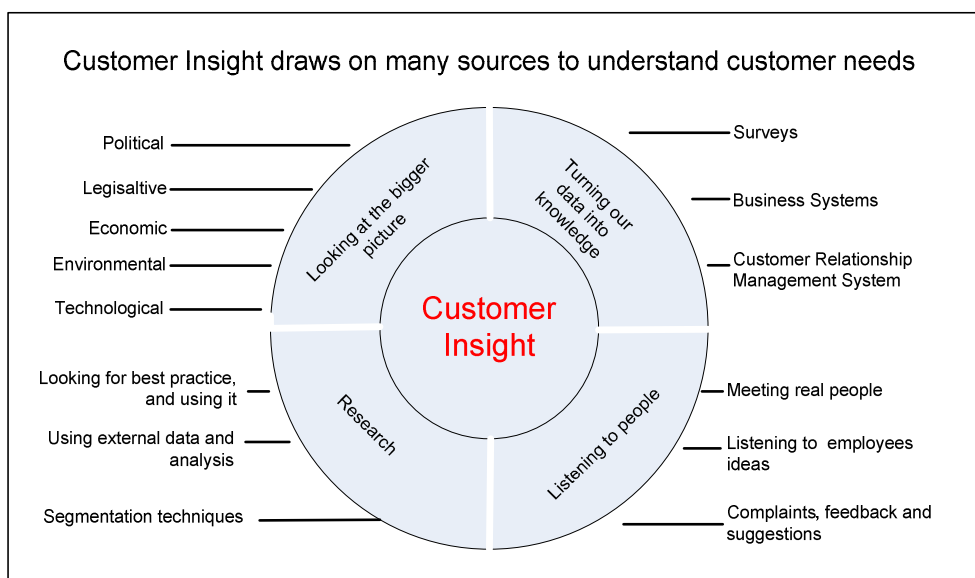
Understanding our customers better

Every potential or actual user of our services is a customer. The Council works hard to ensure customers receive excellent service, and while it knows a great deal about customers, more can always be done.

The Council wants to better understand the diversity of its communities, and deliver services which respond to different needs and aspirations. To do this, it needs to get maximum value from the information it gathers, and be able to bring different information sources together to build a richer, more comprehensive, picture of its customers.

Equality Impact Assessments are being carried out on all our services and policies and they will highlight issues that need to be addressed through customer service activities. It is important that we have a coordinated approach to the use of information from these assessments.

Each service needs to have a clear insight into the customers it serves. The following diagram highlights many of the sources of information the Council will use to develop this insight.



The services the Council provides

The Council delivers many services and for operational reasons and efficiency they will continue to be delivered in the most appropriate way. However, as our 'customer insight' develops new ways of meeting customer needs will be

Customer Insight

identified, and opportunities will arise to bring together services to work in a way better suited to meeting customer needs.

The way the Council is structured will need to reflect the objectives of this strategy. While Heads of Service will remain responsible for the delivery of customer service within their own service this will concentrate on more complex enquiries, requiring a level of specialist expertise. Such contact may lower in volume, but require more time and resources. However, to promote the exchange of best practice, service development, improved training and consistent levels of high quality customer service it is proposed that Customer Service will become within the remit of an existing single Head of Service who will be responsible for:

- ◆ ensuring a customer perspective is at the heart of all services
- ◆ overseeing the delivery and monitoring of this strategy
- ◆ managing the first point of contact with customers including:
 - The Call Centre
 - Customer Service Centres
 - Community Information Centres
 - Visitor Information Centres

They will deal with high volume, relatively simple services. They will interact heavily with customers and will need to be experts in customer service. They will also be responsible for:

- ◆ coordinating campaigns which involve services provided by the customer service team
- ◆ providing advice and guidance to services
- ◆ ensuring managers acknowledge their responsibility for customer service in their own service.

Customer Service Skills

Customer service and customer insight are key skills for all employees. This strategy promotes high quality training and development of employees to deliver the Council's objectives.

Meeting the needs of all our customers

The Council has a duty to ensure the services it provides do not exclude any group of customers, and this remains a high priority. For example we are meeting the needs of the emerging group of customers from the new EU member states. The website now has a screen-reader function enabling access to blind customers. Other new developments are underway and will be completed during the life of the strategy. We will ensure that information and communication requirements of disabled people are considered, specifically, disabled people have asked to be better informed about facilities and funding.

Making the most of our website

Offering 24/7 access to information and services will be a key part of meeting customer needs. By doing this we actively encourage greater access to services, at a cheaper cost to the Council, and free resources to deliver services to those customers most in need.

Where appropriate as part of our everyday business with our customers, we will:

- ◆ make them aware that the information or service they require is available online, encouraging them to use the website
- ◆ include a link to the Council's home page, or other relevant pages, in e-mails
- ◆ include our website address in printed material.

We will continue to look at the design and scope of the website to ensure it meets customer needs and consideration will be given to personalising the content for particular customers. We will ensure the website provides high quality and useful information, and the number of on-line services will increase.

Developing the points of contact with customers

The Council will continue to develop ways for customers to obtain services from the Council.

- The Call Centre will remain the primary method of dealing with telephone calls and with more services will be offered over time.
- Direct dial – customers will be able to contact direct service areas. As services transfer to the Call Centre, direct dial volumes will decrease and these calls will become more focussed on the complex, specialist calls, best dealt with by service experts.
- Face to face - the Customer Service Centre at Huntingdon will be a primary point of access, but there will be Customer Service Centres at St Ives and St Neots. The Community Information Centres at Yaxley and Ramsey will continue to provide services to customers. The range of service and information between these centres will be brought together.
- Mobile or flexibly delivered services – services delivered away from the Council's premises; sometimes in a customer's home will be further developed. Work is underway to introduce more flexible ways of working. Where there is a clear business case, this has potential to provide service at locations more suited to the customer, particularly in rural locations.
- Via the internet – either from their own home, from mobile devices, or from public points of access.
- In writing - this may be within a letter, or a customer may have to apply for a service using application forms.

Getting it right first time

Ensuring we answer customer enquiries first time is important. It means the customer receives an excellent level of service, and the Council does not spend effort dealing with avoidable and repeated customer contact. The establishment of the Call Centre and the Customer Service Centre in Huntingdon has meant a greater percentage of enquiries are dealt with at the first point of contact – but more could be done.

All services can help to improve our performance. Developing a clear customer insight requires all staff to understand the needs of customers and building services around those needs will reduce costs and lead to greater satisfaction. The Council should also use data more effectively to inform day

Customer Insight

to day contact with customers. This will increase the likelihood that the service offered fits the needs of the customers.

Encouraging customers to provide feedback, and understanding their comments allows the Council to make improvements and this is an area the Council will develop further.

Managing and responding to customer demand

The Council will also manage demand better by 'smoothing' the day-to-day peaks in customer demand. This will increase access to service, especially at busy times.

For example, collecting and publishing information showing the least busy times may encourage some customers to plan their next visit or phone call to coincide with these quieter times. In addition it will help services to plan for peaks in demand.

Making more of contact with customers

The Council has a Communications and Marketing Strategy and structure in place to promote marketing activities and many services already market themselves to customers and deliver excellent results. But the Council has identified that it can do more. Coordinated and targeted campaigns, based upon an increased understanding of customer needs and preferences, will ensure customers are more aware of services delivered by the Council.

Increasing the electronic provision of services and information

For some services currently there are limited practical alternatives to a paper application form, and some customers prefer to write to the Council. New media is becoming an increasingly preferred method for communication for many customers. This is something that must be taken into account and is being considered in the communications and marketing strategy, as more customers opt to receive electronic communications.

The Council will increase the use of e-mail and the website where possible and appropriate. This approach will reduce the time taken for the Council to respond to a customer, reduce the use of paper and reduce expenditure.

Bringing together services

While it is important that customers appreciate the distinctions between providers of services increasingly they are looking for simple or single points of contact. The Council already shares some elements of our customer service delivery for the benefit of our customers. Where practical, we will engage with partners and other agencies to try to deliver an improved service. This will mean customers can access a number of services in one location. The Council will need to share information with partners, and this will be encouraged.

Action Plan

This strategy is supported by a three-year action plan which will help to ensure a consistent approach across the whole of the Council. The Council's Head of Service overseeing customer service will be responsible for the monitoring

Customer Insight

and implementation of the plan and will work with other services to make sure this happens.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation are critical to ensuring that we achieve the objectives.

To ensure we are making progress we will:

- monitor our performance against local (and national, if any) measures
- report performance on customer service
- collect and publish evidence of good practice throughout the Council.

This strategy and action plan will be reviewed annually so that we can set specific targets for the future. A comprehensive review of the strategy will be undertaken every three years.

Risks

The council's corporate risk register identifies a large number of risks that may have negative effects on the council.

An effective customer service strategy is imperative to ensure the risks and the possibilities of them becoming a reality are kept to a minimum or prevented altogether.

The following key risks have been identified:

- Delivering the strategy may require resources already committed to other activities and projects.
- Customers are targeted in an uncoordinated way, using resources inefficiently and lowering customers' perception of our services.
- Customer insight may focus effort onto the majority of customers at the expense of hard to reach groups.
- Shared service requires commitment from outside the Council; it may be this is not forthcoming.

Action Plan 2008-2011

Outcome	Action	Measure	Target	By whom	When
<p>To provide High quality customer service</p> <p><i>Services are provided in a way that meet customer needs</i></p>	Designates a Head of Service to be responsible for overseeing the delivery of this strategy and for the provision of 'front-office' service.	Head of Customer Service appointed	April 2008	Terry Parker	April 2008
	Embeds the concept and practice of 'customer insight' into the organisation by encouraging services to implement this strategy.	Achieve commitment and buy in from all departments	All activity managers have attended a customer insight workshop.	Customer Services Manager	March 2009
		Review the complaints & feedback system to record feedback from customers, particularly satisfaction with the level of service provided.	% Improvements made based upon feedback from customers through comments and complaints.	Customer Services Manager & Central Services Manager	March 2010

Outcome	Action	Measure	Target	By whom	When
To provide high quality customer service <i>Services are provided in a way that meet customers needs</i>	Training and development course for relevant employees in customer service activities.	Adequate courses to meet personal development plan needs.	100% in relation to appropriate actions.	Customer Services Manager	March 2009
	Establish and publicise customer service standards.	Publication of standards	September 2008	Customer Services Manager	September 2008
	Production of protocols and good practice guidance for customer service.	Publications and dissemination of protocols.	January 2009	Customer Services Manager	January 2009
	Reduce the amount of avoidable customer contact by 'getting it right first time'	NI14	Methodology in place – Oct 08 Data Gathered – Baseline Data produced April 09 % Reduction of avoidable contact TBC.	Customer Services Manager &HOS	Ongoing

Outcome	Action	Measure	Target	By whom	When
<p>To make it as easy as possible for customers to access our services and get appropriate information.</p> <p><i>Services are accessible to our customers</i></p>	Achieve recognition of providing customer service excellence across all customer service locations	Achievement of the prestigious Customer service excellence award	Dec 2010	Customer Services Manager	Dec 2010
	To make better use of available data to improve our understanding of customers needs	Services are built around the needs of customers	All activity managers attended customer insight workshop	Customer Services Manager	March 2009
	Maintain or establish systems to ensure employees know how to share information and knowledge	Sharepoint site used to share information and Knowledge	All customer service staff update and use the Sharepoint site to share information and knowledge	Customer Services Manager	December 2008
	Continued development and updating of web site and web based material	% Of customers satisfied that web-based information meets their needs.	80%	The Web Team	Ongoing

Outcome	Action	Measure	Target	By whom	When
<p>To make it as easy as possible for customers to access our services and get appropriate information.</p> <p><i>Services are accessible to our customers</i></p>	To promote the use of the website to improve service and 'free-up' resources	% Of selected transactions (e.g. payments) completed online compared to other channels (where there is a choice)	50% (this measure is part of the updated Growing Success, so may change once approved by Members)	The Web Team & Customer Services Manager	Ongoing
	To develop the website and web based services so they are more personalised to customers needs	Implement personalisation on the website	By Mar 2010	IMD Development Team	By Mar 2010
	Continue the development of the Call Centre and Customer Service Centre in Huntingdon.	More services introduced and customers dealt with quickly and efficiently	Service level agreements continue to be met at the call centre and customer service centre	Customer Services Manager	Ongoing
	Develop the face-to-face customer service in St Neots and St Ives.	Make recommendations To improve	Report to cabinet outlining recommendations	Customer Services Manager	October 2008

Outcome	Action	Measure	Target	By whom	When
<p>To make it as easy as possible for customers to access our services and get appropriate information.</p> <p><i>Services are accessible to our customers</i></p>	Explores with other public services and the voluntary sector, opportunities to provide services in a way that meets customer's needs; especially to establish a shared "high street" or prominent presence in St Neots.	service delivery. Make recommendations To improve service delivery	Report to cabinet outlining recommendations	Customer Services Manager	October 2008
	Improves access to services by managing, and responding to, the demand on services better.	% Of customers who rate access to council services as good or excellent.	TBC from growing success	Customer Service Manager & HOS	Ongoing
	To improve the delivery of mobile services around the district.	% Of customers who rate access to council services as good or excellent.	TBC from growing success	IMD Development Team & HOS	Ongoing

Outcome	Action	Measure	Target	By whom	When
<p>To be good at communicating with and listening to people and organisations</p> <p><i>To work to ensure that communities are inclusive</i></p>	<p>To ensure all customers, including those groups which are considered to be excluded or do not engage with the Council, are considered when delivering services.</p>	<p>Use mosaic and other customer feedback to target customer groups correctly to increase the % of customers who rate access to council services as good or excellent.</p>	<p>TBC from growing success.</p>	<p>Customer Services Manager & Heads of Service.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
	<p>Use the results of Equality Impact Assessments in the planning of customer service activities.</p>	<p>Number of actions arising from EIA's, which are used to inform customer service activities.</p>	<p>100% of appropriate actions</p>	<p>Customer Service Manager & Heads of service</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

ENHANCED CLEANSING SERVICES PROPOSAL FOR MARKET TOWNS (Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery))

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting on 1st July 2008, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) considered a report containing details and costs of providing additional cleansing services in the District's town centres on Sundays. The report is attached as an Appendix hereto.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In October 2006, the Panel established a Working Group comprising Councillors J D Ablewhite, R W J Eaton and J W Davies to consider whether there was a need to introduce a cleaning service in towns on Sundays to deal with the effects of the Saturday night time economy in terms of litter. In view of the rise of the Sunday economy the Working Group was asked to take into account tourism and Sunday trading.
- 2.2 Following discussion, the Working Group suggested that a trial of new cleansing arrangements on Sundays should be undertaken in St Ives. This proposal was considered by the Panel at its meeting on 8th January 2008, when a detailed explanation of various options and their financial implications was available. However, the Panel were of the view that a similar situation existed in other areas and, therefore, requested additional information, including the financial implications, on providing a cleansing service on Sundays in the market towns across the District.

3. DELIBERATIONS

- 3.1 Members of the Panel, at their meeting on 1st July 2008, reiterated their concerns about the cleanliness of the District's town centres on Sundays, particularly as Sunday trade and tourism are increasing both at a local and national level. Reference was made to the effect of litter on the objectives in these respects identified in Growing Success, the Council's Corporate Plan, and, more specifically, the Local Economy Strategy.
- 3.2 The Panel has taken into account a representation made by Holywell-cum-Needlingworth Parish Council, who have registered concerns that the District Council cleaning regime is focused primarily on town centres and that cleansing services for villages are predominantly funded by Parish Councils. Nevertheless, the Panel were of the view that as users of the towns, parishioners would benefit from the proposed cleansing services.
- 3.3 The Panel has discussed the option of establishing Alcohol Disorder Zones within the District. This is a Government measure designed to identify establishments deemed responsible for the problems in an area. Those establishments identified are liable to pay for the necessary cost of services required to return an area back to an acceptable state. The Panel has expressed the view that investigation of the potential benefits of introducing

Alcohol Disorder Zones should be undertaken, with a view to adopting this as a long term measure to address the problems associated with litter in Towns.

- 3.4 In terms of the operational costs of introducing a Sunday cleansing service, the Panel has concluded that the annual cost of £52,400 demonstrates good value for money, particularly, in light of the anticipated benefits that would be achieved. The Panel have, however, expressed their view that as savings are required to be identified by the Council to meet the costs of the proposal, financial contributions should be sought from the Town Councils. Cleansing on Sundays would be more feasible and there would be a greater likelihood that a service would be introduced if such contributions were forthcoming.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Panel has identified that there is a need to introduce Sunday cleansing services in the market towns across the District, which has arisen out of the growing Saturday night time economy and the adverse effect of the resulting litter on Sunday trade and tourism. In recognising the financial constraints already placed upon the Council, the Panel therefore

RECOMMEND the Cabinet to

- (a) introduce cleansing services on Sundays in the market towns across the District as set out in the Appendix;**
- (b) seek financial contributions from Town Councils towards the costs of implementing this proposal;**
- (c) subject to the outcome of (b) above, include a bid for funding for the proposal in the Medium Term Plan; and**
- (d) investigate the introduction of Alcohol Disorder Zones in the District in the long term.**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

**Contact Officer: Miss Habbiba Ali, Democratic Services Officer
01480 388006**

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
(SERVICE DELIVERY)

1ST JULY 2008

ENHANCED CLEANSING SERVICES – PROPOSALS – MARKET TOWNS
(Report by the Head of Operations)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel considered a report on 8th January 2008, Enhanced Cleansing Service - Pilot Study and resolved that a further report be submitted to a future meeting giving full details and costs of providing a full cleansing service to the main town centres on Sundays. The Panel requested that the proposals as outlined at option 2 of the report, be adopted for the purpose of preparing the report

1.2 This report provides members with revised proposals based on the above.

2. ENHANCED SUNDAY CLEANSING PROPOSALS

2.1 The proposed enhanced Sunday cleansing services will be provided by 8 employees and one Supervising Inspector working from 06.00 to 10.00. The areas detailed in the town centres below will be cleansed using a combination of mechanical sweepers, litterpicking and the emptying of litterbins situated on roads detailed below, using the resources listed for each area.

St Ives Compact mechanical sweeper, plus a response team of 3 undertaking litter picking and emptying of litter bins.

St Ives	
The Waits	The Broadway
Crown Street	Merryland
Bridge Street	The Quay
The Pavement	Market Hill
White Hart Lane	Sheep Market
Market Road	Station Road
Cattle Market Car Park	

Huntingdon Compact mechanical sweeper, plus a response team of 3 undertaking litter picking and emptying of litter bins.

Huntingdon	
High Street	Ferrars Road
George Street	Royal Oak Passage
Market Hill	Princes Street
Literary Walk	St Marys Street
Hartford Road	St Benedicts Court
Chequers Court	St Germain Walk
Trinity Place	Chequers Way
Brewery Yard	St Germain Street Car Park
Brewery Yard	

St Neots Compact mechanical sweeper, plus a response team of 3 undertaking litter picking and emptying of litter bins.

St Neots	
St Neots Road	High Street
Cambridge Street	Huntingdon Street
Tebbutts Road	New Street
Church Street	Brook Street
South Street	St Marys Street
Priory Lane	Tan Yard
Bec Road	The Priory
Priory Lane Car Park	Waitrose Tan Yard Car Park
Market Square West	Market Square South

Ramsey & Godmanchester Response team of 2 undertaking litter picking and emptying of litter bins

Godmanchester	
Causeway	Post Street
Old Court Hall	Cambridge Street

Ramsey	
Great Whyte	Little Whyte
High Street	New Road
Mews Close Car Park	

Appendix 1 to this report provides maps of the actual areas that will be cleansed under these proposals.

3. OPERATING COSTS

	Per week	Per annum
Employee costs including supervision and management	£790	£41,000
Vehicle and Plant operating costs	£220	£11,400
Total Cost	£1,010	£52,400

Financial Context

No provision has been made for enhanced cleaning services in the Council's financial plan. The existing plan can be summarized as:

- 1) A deficit had already been planned for years 2008/9 through to 2014/5 by which time revenue reserves would be reduced to what is considered to be a minimal level.
- 2) The existing medium term financial plan is based on Council Tax rises of 5% every year for the next 10 years.
- 3) The existing medium term financial plan requires further savings to be identified of £0.5m for 2009/10 rising to £1.0m and £2.0m in each of the following two years.
- 4) All new expenditure will add to the requirement to make savings in other areas.

4. OPTIONS FOR DELIVERING THE ENHANCED SERVICE

- 4.1 As indicated at para 3 above, there is at present, no funding identified to provide this increased level of service and if Members were minded to recommend to Cabinet that the proposals be introduced, it would be necessary to prepare a bid for funding as part of the medium term financial plan later in the year which would be considered on its merits when assessed against other competing priorities.

5. SUMMARY

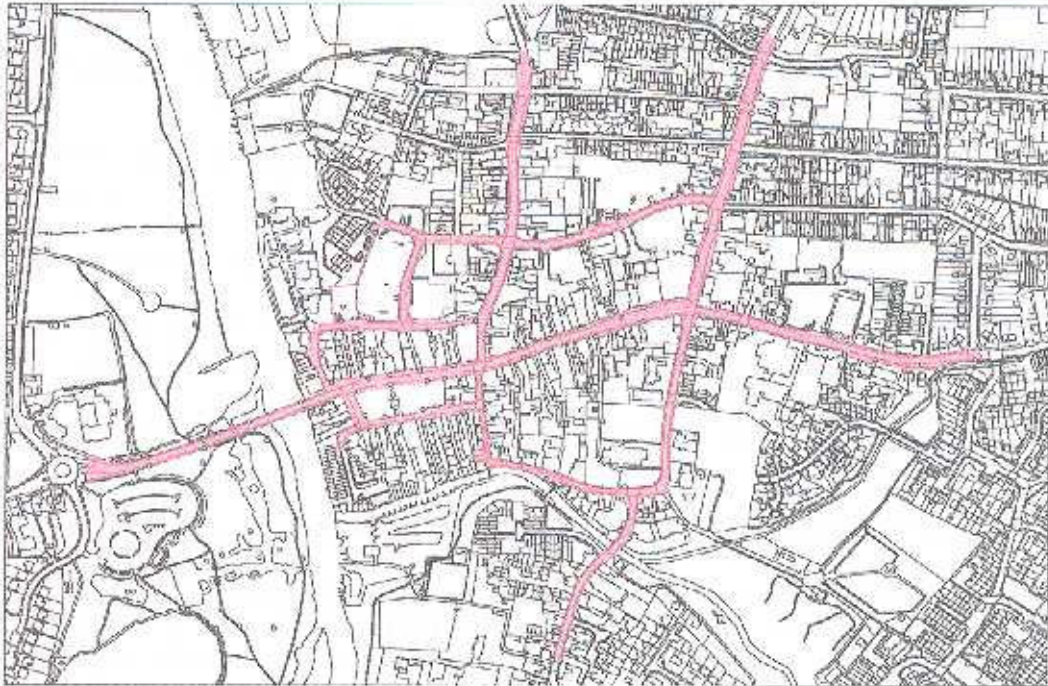
- 5.1 As indicated in the report considered by the Panel on 8th January 2008 our existing street cleansing services currently deliver a frequency based cleansing service higher than the EPA and COPLAR requirements. We are currently performing well in relation to the national performance indicators (which measures litter, detritus, graffiti and flyposting) being in the upper quartile of performance nationally.
- 5.2 The enhanced Sunday cleansing services proposed in this report would improve the Town Centre appearance *in the mornings*, but the standard will deteriorate during the day as there will be no full time presence to maintain the standard throughout the day. Litter dropped during the day will be recovered on the Monday morning by scheduled cleansing regimes.

6. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

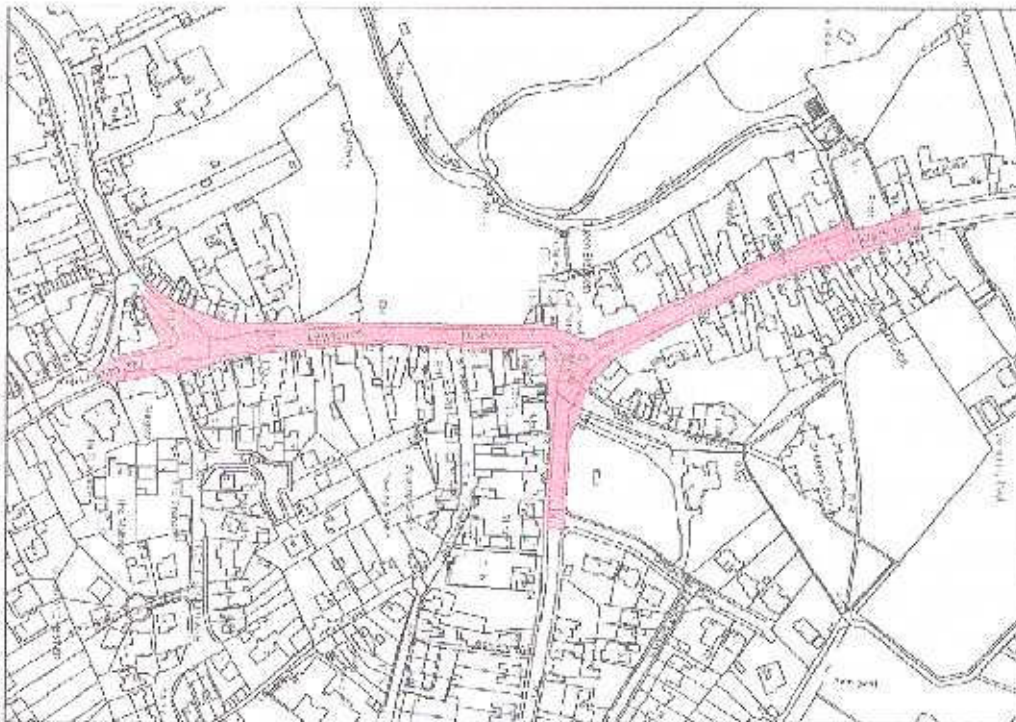
- 6.1 If the Panel supports improved cleaning services for one or more of the towns they may consider a recommendation to Cabinet that additional funding be provided or that the cleaning service be enhanced by savings from other services.

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Head of Operations
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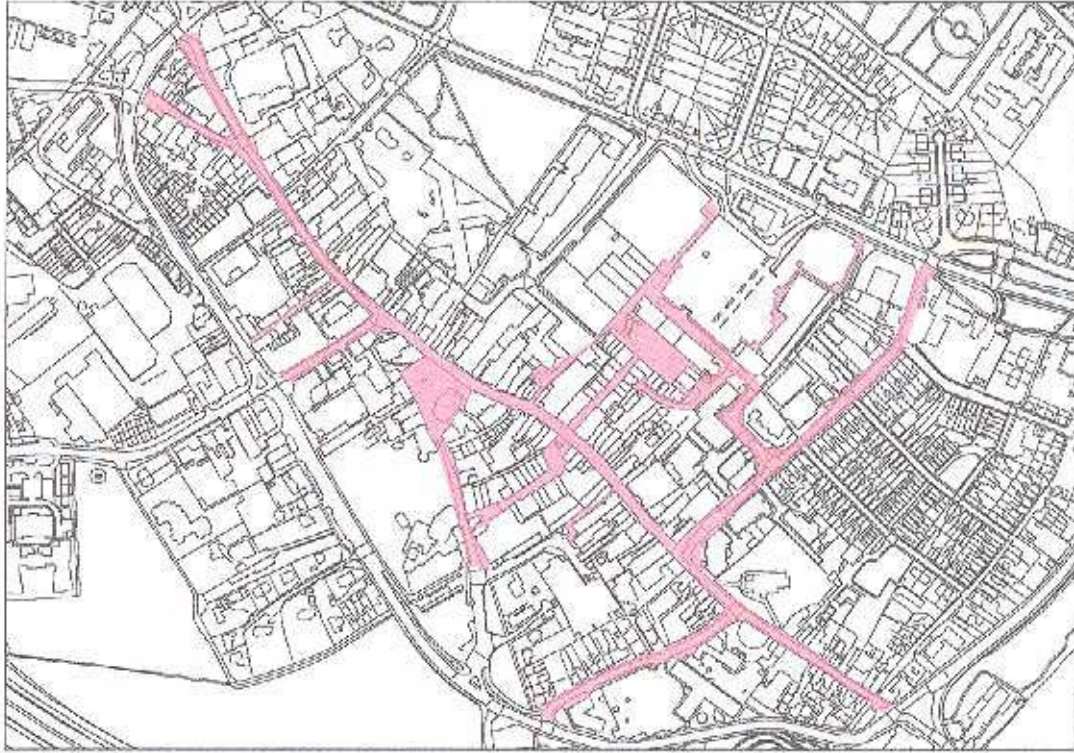
St Neots



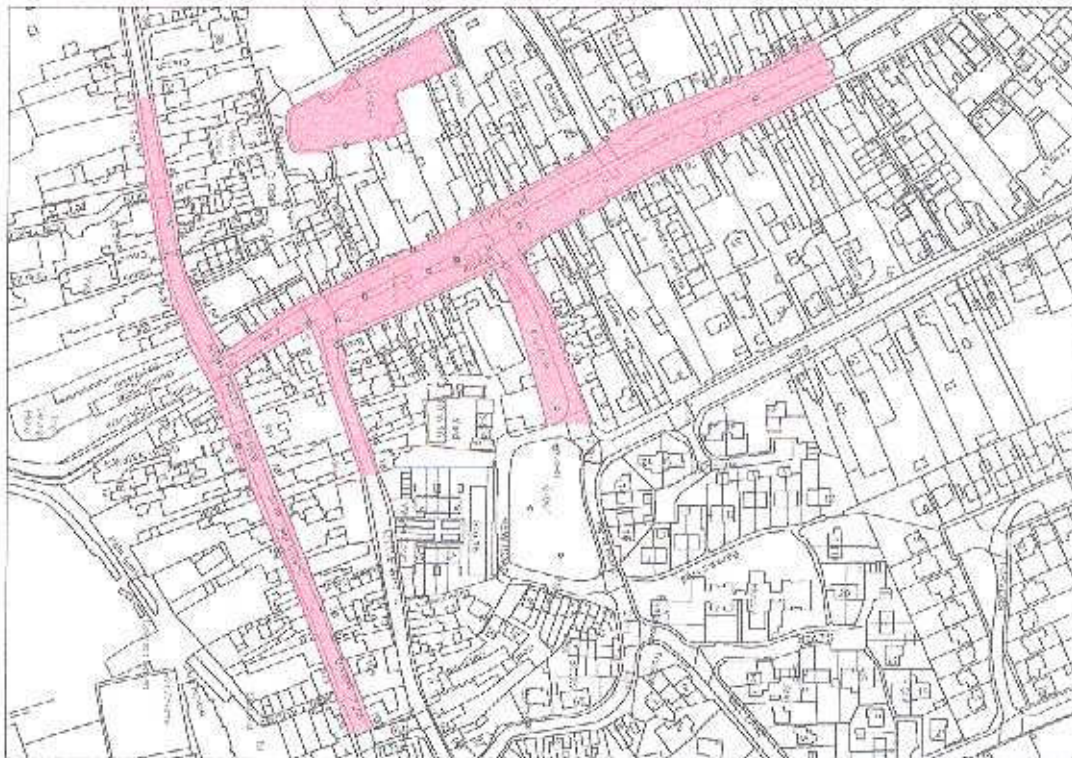
Godmanchester



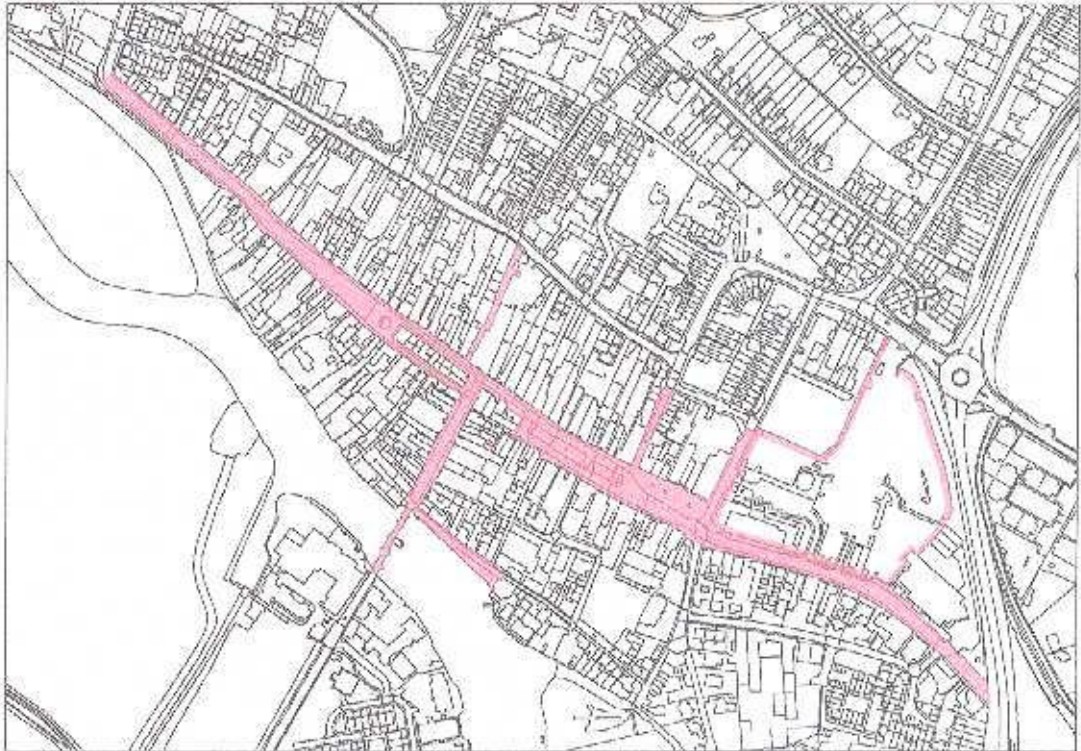
Huntingdon



Ramsey



St Ives



CABINET

4 SEPTEMBER 2008

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

(Report by Head of Environmental & Community Health Services)

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to request that Members consider the adoption of local standards for the provision of core sports facilities in Huntingdonshire.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A need to develop and adopt local sports facility standards has been identified through recent research. It is intended the adoption of standards will assist in maintaining an appropriate range of sports facilities in the district to meet future need. It is proposed that, in the near future, a leisure facilities strategy will be developed which will embrace the local standards identified within this report.
- 2.2 The need for a clear and prioritised framework for future investment in sports facility provision is critical given the likely need for additional provision as a result of population growth in the district, principally in the St Neots area, and the need for ongoing investment in the existing infrastructure.
- 2.3 There is also a need for objective standards, as a measure of change. Keeping pace with changes in population numbers and needs will be important in maintaining accessibility to sports facilities. The dispersed nature of the district, with the four main towns of Huntingdon, Ramsey, St Neots and St Ives, smaller villages and more rural areas means that district-wide standards are a means of maintaining a strategic overview of provision versus demand.
- 2.4 There are two main factors which are particularly relevant to the future provision of sports facilities. These are the future implementation of the Building Schools for the Future Programme (BSF) in the district, and the significant population growth predicted. Local standards can be used when new developments are proposed to guide and inform the nature and extent of resources, financial and operational, which are needed to ensure that Huntingdonshire has sufficient up-to-date, fit-for-purpose, and accessible sports facilities. This should allow proactive planning to meet future demand.
- 2.5 In order to assist in the development of local standards, Strategic Leisure Limited was commissioned to undertake a comprehensive review of existing provision and to identify future needs based on predicted population growth using Sport England's nationally recognised model the 'Sports Facility Calculator'. Their report provides the evidence for the proposed standards.

3 EVIDENCE BASE FOR THE STANDARDS

- 3.1 A report was produced by Strategic Leisure Limited in March 2008. This research was looking at community sports facility provision; both present and future needs.
- 3.2 The research focused on indoor sports facilities (swimming pools, sports halls, health and fitness facilities, indoor bowls) and artificial turf pitches (ATPs), and considers existing and planned facilities incorporating: local authority leisure centres, voluntary sector sports clubs, private sector facilities, and secondary schools, that will be re-built or re-furbished under PFI or the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme.
- 3.3 The district has a significant sporting infrastructure which includes provision for activities such as golf, sailing, etc. and a large number of individual sports clubs. These are very important to facilitate increased participation and encourage people to become involved in activity on a regular basis. However, the lack of a nationally agreed methodology for recommended levels of provision means these facilities are excluded from this report. They will be included in a further strategy to be presented later in the year.
- 3.4 The key drivers for adoption of local standards, and eventually a strategy, are:
- ◆ 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 S106 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)
 - ◆ The emerging opportunities for partnerships – Building Schools for the Future (BSF) - Schools, National Governing Bodies (NGBs), Sports Clubs etc.

4 CURRENT AND FUTURE DEMAND – SUPPLY AND DEMAND ANALYSIS

- 4.1 This assessment of need is based on Sport England's 'National Sports Facility Calculator' which identifies the level of provision needed for the current population, and future changes. The suggested standards are therefore based on population numbers.
- 4.2 To make the assessment relevant to local need, the modelling accounts for the actual number of sports facilities that are deemed accessible; those currently available on a pay and play basis. This additional analysis highlights where there are built facilities in the district that are not currently fully accessible for community use. This situation, which is common across the UK, would suggest that the way forward could be a

combination of opening up existing sports facilities to ensure there is greater community access and developing new facilities; this is an area that will be considered in the eventual strategy. The outcome of the supply and demand analysis is summarised in Annex 1. The research identifies short-falls for certain types of facility.

- 4.3 It is recommended that, using Sport England’s nationally recognised model the ‘Sports Facility Calculator’, that Huntingdonshire adopts the following local standards for future core sports facility provision. Figures are based on 1000 head of population.

Table 1

FACILITY TYPE	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population
Sports Hall (@ min 594 sq m)	51.20 sq m
Indoor Swimming Pool (@ min 212 sq m or 4 lane x 25m)	10.96 sq m
Fitness Stations	3.6 stations
Indoor Bowls	0.05 rink
Synthetic Turf Pitches (Full size) (1x 640 sq m pitch per 25,000 population)	0.04 pitches

5 CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1 The proposed standards will be used to assess future need for sports facilities and will be used as part of the proposed Sports Facilities Strategy. They are also a simple population multiplier, which together with the predicted supply/demand for facilities illustrated in table 3, planning officers can use to assess potential need created by any development.
- 5.2 The research report also includes a series of recommendations based on the analysis of supply and demand. The Sports Facilities Strategy Group will consider these recommendations when developing the strategy.
- 5.3 Nothing in this report should be taken to imply that the Council will always be the provider of any facility. Increases in provision may be achieved by: encouraging increased accessibility to existing facilities; assisting in the development of community facilities; developing new facilities or encouraging the private sector to fill the market opportunity.

6. RECOMMENDATION

It is RECOMMENDED that

- ◆ Members agree to the adoption of the local standards as identified in this report (Table 1) for the provision of core sports facilities in Huntingdonshire.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Sports Facilities Standards Report 2007-2020, Strategic Leisure, March 2008
Activity Profile: Huntingdonshire, Sport England with Living Sport & ERPHO,
July 2007

Contact Officer: Jo Peadon
 **01480 388048**

Table 2 Current supply/demand

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Required level of provision based on suggested standards (population 168,200)	Current Level of Provision (2007)	Notes
Sports Hall (@ min 594 sq m)	51.20 sq m	8612 sq m.	4536 sq m	The survey discounted smaller sports halls. There is 2376 sq m of space within these smaller venues and there are 2 sports halls currently in development. Predicted need for <1 additional sports hall. There are issues about the types of activities small sports halls can support.
Indoor Swimming Pool (@ min 212 sq m) [Recommended Community Pool size: 325 sq m]	10.96 sq m	1844 sq m	938 sq m	The survey discounted smaller pools. Including <u>all</u> smaller pools there is 2202.7 sq m of water space in the district. There are issues about both accessibility and the types of activities small pools can support.
Fitness Stations	3.6 stations	605	586	Almost 40% of these facilities are in HDC leisure centres. At the time of the survey there was a shortfall of 19 fitness stations. Since the survey new fitness stations are being developed within HDC leisure centres.
Indoor Bowls	0.05 rink	8.41 rinks	14 rinks	There is an apparent over-supply of bowls facilities. These are club-based.
Synthetic Turf Pitches (Full size)* (min 640 sq m pitch per 25,000 population)	0.04 pitches	6.7	5	There was an identified need for more pitches There are current plans to develop 2 more pitches.

*NB There are different types of Synthetic Turf Pitch (sand dressed, 3G, etc) not all are suitable for all sports/uses. The mix of types will be considered by the strategy group.

Table 3 Predicted supply/demand in 2021 due to population change**

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Provision based on standards (predicted population 188,400)	Current Level of Provision (2007)	Notes
Sports Hall (@ min 594 sq m)	51.20 sq m	9646 sq m	4536 sq m	2 in development in 2008-11. Further 2 large sports halls required (by 2021) to cope with demand from population increase. There are some small halls in the district that may not be fit for purpose.
Indoor Swimming Pool (@ min 212 sq m) [Recommended Community Pool size: 325 sq m]	10.96 sq m	2065 sq m	938 sq m	The 2202.7 sq m of water space in the district, includes some very small pools that may not be fit for purpose.
Fitness Stations	3.6 stations	678	586	Increasing demand for fitness stations set to continue.
Indoor Bowls	0.05 rink	9.4 rinks	14 rinks	There is still likely to be an apparent over-supply of bowls facilities. These are club-based.
Synthetic Turf Pitches (Full Size) (1x 640 sq m pitch per 25,000 population)	0.04 pitches	7.5	5	2 more planned before 2021 – in hand. Thus need for <1 extra pitches.

**NB: The predicted demand for facilities (above) is based solely on population growth. It is likely that demand may increase from existing residents, as the Government and agencies promote the health benefits of increased physical activity. This increase in demand due to market trends/health promotion will be considered further in formulating the strategy.

CABINET

4 SEPTEMBER 2008

REVIEW OF COUNCIL STRUCTURE: APPOINTMENT OF WORKING GROUP

(Report by Head of Administration)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to invite the Cabinet to establish a Working Group to review the existing Council structure in the light of experience and recent legislative change.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council's present Cabinet system of decision making stems from the Local Government Act 2000. It has been in operation for the past six years replacing the old out-moded committee system that had existed since the 19th Century and was trialled by the Council for two years prior to its introduction.

3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The review is expected to be concluded by the end of 2008 with a view to implementing any changes in the new Municipal Year and it is therefore

RECOMMENDED

that a review working group of Council's structure be established and Members appointed accordingly.

Background Papers:

Communities in Control white paper

Contact Officer:

Roy Reeves, Head of Administration
Tel: (01480) 388003

Helen Taylor, Senior Democratic Services Officer
Tel: (01480) 388008

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04th September 2008

SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP (Report of the Advisory Group)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Advisory Group met on the 11th June 2008 when Councillors Mrs B E Boddington and J W Davies were present.
- 1.2 Also in attendance were Messrs P Corley, J Craig, P Duerden, S Howell and Mrs T Davidson, Ms C Deller, Mrs A Jerrom and Mrs C Rowland.
- 1.3 The Staff Side were represented by Mrs S McKerral, C Sneesby and Mrs G Smith.
- 1.4 Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors A Hansard, Mrs P Jordan and L M Simpson and K Lawson.

2. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

- 2.1 Councillor Mrs B E Boddington was elected Chairman of the Group.
- 2.2 The report of the meeting of the Advisory Group held on the 5th March 2008 was received and noted.

3 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

- 3.1 No declarations of interest were received.

4. APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIRMAN

- 4.1 K Lawson was appointed Vice Chairman of the Group.

5. ZURICH AUDIT REPORT

- 5.1 The Group were advised by the Head of HR and Payroll Services that the District Council had engaged Zurich Municipal to undertake an audit of the authority's health and safety management, particularly at the Senior/Strategic level. The draft document had raised several issues which currently were being discussed with the Consultant from Zurich. Once these had been resolved, the final document would be published and this together with a consequential Health and Safety Strategy and associated Action Plan would be submitted to the next meeting of the Group.

6. INCIDENT AT ST NEOTS LEISURE CENTRE

- 6.1 The views of the Advisory Group were requested by the Health and Safety Adviser following her description of an incident at St Neots Leisure Centre on 24th February 2008, which had involved a masked robbery at the main reception.
- 6.2 The Group were satisfied that a full internal investigation had taken place and that the two employees present at the time had been given any necessary support needed. First Contact and the external

Counselling Service had been offered to the employees. In the event, sufficient support had been provided by their Manager and colleagues. The Group felt that the incident had been well managed, particularly because the employees had followed implicitly, actions provided in their earlier violence at work training. It was agreed that the earlier removal of glass screens from the reception area had resulted in the incident being less violent than may have been case had the screens been in place. The Group were advised however that during the planned refurbishment of the reception area, consideration would be given to providing an emergency exit for staff to a place of safety (e.g. a lockable office). It was suggested that when completed this could form part of a future ad-hoc safety inspection visit. For the future, the Advisory Group noted that a sealed area for safe egress from reception would form part of the design for the dryside facilities at St Neots and Huntingdon Leisure Centres and that "Violence at Work" training now would include advice on dealing with such incidents. The Advisory Group requested the Head of HR and Payroll to commend on their behalf, the actions of the 2 employees involved.

7. ASBESTOS POLICY

- 7.1 The Group considered a report by the Head of HR and Payroll Services on the District Council's Asbestos Policy which had been reviewed and updated to comply with the Control of Asbestos Regulations 2006.
- 7.2 The Asbestos Policy had been amended to take account of the significant changes that had been introduced and, in particular to nominate specific duty holders to carry out responsibilities to ensure compliance with the Regulations in managing asbestos in the Council's owned or managed premises. It was explained that appropriate asbestos awareness training would be carried out. In approving the contents of the policy the Group recommended that it be adopted by the Cabinet as Council policy.

8. THE CONTROL OF NOISE AT WORK REGULATIONS 2005 (APPLICATION TO PLACES OF ENTERTAINMENT)

- 8.1 The Group received and noted a report by the Head of HR and Payroll Services on the Control of Noise at Work Regulations 2005 and the action taken by the Council to ensure compliance with one section of the Regulations which had not come into effect until April 2008. This related to the provision of live or recorded music and the potential adverse effect on employees who may be exposed to noise in excess of the statutory limits. As the Council provides live or recorded music at its Leisure Centres, noise assessments had been carried out by specialist Officers from the Environmental and Community Health Services division. The Advisory Group was informed that preliminary results had indicated that the music played was not above the threshold levels requiring further action but that the Health and Safety Advisor would seek confirmation on this assessment.

9. THE CONTRACTORS HEALTH ASSESSMENT SCHEME (CHAS) – UPDATE

- 9.1 The Group received and noted a report by the Head of HR and Payroll Services on the Contractors' Health Assessment Scheme. The Group endorsed the action taken by COMT on 15th April 2008 to approve the

introduction of CHAS as the Council's method of vetting contractors who were being employed to carry out potentially high risk activities for the Council and to ensure that the second and third stages of the process were undertaken by competent persons.

10. APPOINTMENT OF:
(a) A CHAMPION FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY (OFFICER) AND
(b) A RESPONSIBLE PERSON FOR FIRE

- 10.1 The Group were informed that interim arrangements would be put in place to ensure appointments to the posts of Officer Champion for Health and Safety and Responsible Person For Fire in view of the imminent retirement of the Director of Central Services and Head of HR and Payroll Services. These appointments would be reported to the next meeting of the Advisory Group. In the meantime, it was reported that Councillor A Hansard had been appointed Member Champion for Health and Safety.
- 10.2 The Group were updated on the concerns raised at Item 5.3 of their previous report and were informed that, following reassessment of the perceived risk inherent in the selection of the first assembly point, it was now agreed that employees in Centenary House would continue to assemble on the green in front of the Bus Station but they would cross slightly further down St Mary's Street rather than on the corner as it was felt that this was still a safer option.

11. ACCIDENT REPORT
(a) DISTRICT COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

- 11.1 The Group received and noted a report by the Head of HR and Payroll Services giving details of 23 accidents involving employees, one accident involving a volunteer and three involving non-employees that occurred since the last meeting of the Group.
- 11.2 Whilst most of the accidents were relatively minor, one accident which had involved an employee being absent from work for more than three days had been reported to the HSE.
- 11.3 The Group was concerned at the cause of the accidents referred to in accident Nos 2111 and 2119 and questioned whether it was reasonable for one operator to be emptying a recycling bin of that size and weight (1100 litres). Having been informed that the problems concerning the emptying of wheeled bins which had been raised before and were being looked into and whilst acknowledging that there were several issues to take into account including the nature of the individual sites and ground conditions, the Advisory Group requested that a report be submitted to their next meeting and that a risk assessment on the practice be undertaken in the meantime.

(b) LEISURE CENTRES ACCIDENT REPORT

- 11.4 The Group also received a report by the Leisure Centres' Health and Safety Co-ordinator detailing accidents which had been reported at the Leisure Centres since the last meeting.

12. TRAINING REPORT

- 12.1 The Group were acquainted, by means of a report by the Head of HR and Payroll Services, with details of Health and Safety courses which had been provided since the previous meeting of the Group.
- 12.2 At the request of the Health and Safety Adviser, the Advisory Group agreed to a change in the format of the report to reflect the total number of participants per course over a specific period. In terms of training for new Members of the Group, the Health and Safety Adviser undertook to discuss with the Chairman and Councillor Mrs Jordan the possibility of their attendance on the IOSH Safety for Senior Executives Course and whether other Members would benefit from a refresher course on the subject. In addition Democratic Services Officers agreed to canvass the interest of Members in training on first aid should their assistance be required out of hours during evening meetings.
- 12.3 The Group were requested to give some thought to ideas for future visits for the ad-hoc safety inspections.
- 12.4 The Group conveyed their thanks and extended their best wishes to Phil Duerden, Head of HR and Payroll Services on his forthcoming retirement and for his support and advice over the years.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was noted that the next meeting of the Safety Advisory Group was scheduled for 10 September 2008.

Chairman

CABINET

4TH SEPTEMBER 2008

**CUSTOMER FIRST AND ACCOMMODATION ADVISORY GROUP
(Report of the Advisory Group)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Advisory Group met on 5th August 2008 and Councillors P L E Bucknell, S J Criswell, T V Rogers, L M Simpson and G S E Thorpe were present. Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor P J Downes.
- 1.2 Councillor L M Simpson was elected Chairman of the Advisory Group.
- 1.3 Also in attendance were Councillor I C Bates and Messrs S Couper, D Monks, R Preston, R Reeves and M Sharp and Miss H Ali.
- 1.4 The report of the meeting of the Advisory Group held on 29th November 2007 was received and noted.
- 1.5 Councillors P L E Bucknell and G S E Thorpe declared personal interests in respect of their membership of the Development Control Panel. Additionally, Councillor Bucknell declared a personal interest as Executive Member for Planning Strategy and Transport.

2. NEW ACCOMODATION DELIVERY – MID-PROGRAMME REVIEW

- 2.1 The Advisory Group received and noted a report by the New Accommodation Project Co-ordinator reviewing the progress and delivery of the new accommodation buildings at the half way stage of the project as a whole.
- 2.2 The Advisory Group received a detailed explanation in respect of a number of aspects to the project, including the successful completion of Eastfield House, an overview of the construction work currently taking place on the Headquarters site, a revised property strategy for Castle Hill House and the site of Block A and details of a number of risks that had been identified outside the development agreement. In terms of the site of Block A, the Advisory Group was advised that initial attempts at marketing the land fronting St Mary's Street had been unsuccessful which reflected the current economic climate and state of the building industry. Options to address the situation were currently being considered by the Project Team.
- 2.3 The Advisory Group was acquainted with the budget variations that had arisen over the course of the project which were attributed to additional works and staffing costs relating to Eastfield House and additional costs relating to the Headquarters build which included increased property strategy costs, improvement works to Castle Hill House, exceptional items outside the development agreement, design changes to improve the functionality of the Headquarters building and further contingency costs for the duration of the project.

- 2.4 In terms of decanting staff from the existing building to the first completed phase of the new building, the Advisory Group was advised that this would occur over a two week period in early December 2008, which would include the transfer of all data and telephony to ensure that ICT services were maintained throughout the move.
- 2.5 The Chairman updated the Advisory Group with progress made to date in respect of the Civic Suite.
- 2.6 The Advisory Group placed on record their appreciation to the New Accommodation Project Co-ordinator and his Team for their hard work and effort in co-ordinating the project to date.

3. BACKGROUND PAPERS

The report submitted to the Advisory Group meeting contained exempt information under the Local Government Act 1972. They are therefore unavailable for public inspection. In the event of any questions at the Cabinet meeting relating to the content of the report, the Cabinet will be invited to pass a resolution to exclude the press and public where the necessary answers are provided.

Chairman

Agenda Item 14

Document is Restricted

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