

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in **THE CONFERENCE ROOM, CREATIVEXCHANGE, LONGSANDS CAMPUS, ST NEOTS** on **THURSDAY, 23 APRIL 2009** at **11:30 AM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

APOLOGIES


Contact
(01480)

1. MINUTES

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17th April 2009. **(TO FOLLOW)**.

A Roberts
388015

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

3. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2008/09 BUDGET (Pages 1 - 4)

To consider a report by the Head of Financial Services highlighting variations from the approved Capital Programme for 2008/09.

S Couper
388103

4. FINANCIAL MONITORING - REVENUE BUDGET (Pages 5 - 10)

To consider a report by the Head of Financial Services outlining spending variations.

S Couper
388103

5. THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY REVIEW

(a) The Regional Spatial Strategy Review - The Cambridgeshire Development Study - Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)

To consider a report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) on the work by the Cambridgeshire Authorities on the Regional Spatial Strategy Review. **(TO FOLLOW)**.

J Walker
387049

(b) The Regional Spatial Strategy review - The Cambridgeshire Development Study. (Pages 11 - 28)

To consider a report by the Head of Planning Services

S Ingram

regarding the partnership working that has taken place between all the Cambridgeshire Authorities as part of the Regional Spatial Strategy Review.

388400

6. SPORTS FACILITIES

- (a) **Sports Facilities Strategy - Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery)** (Pages 29 - 30)

To consider a report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) on the Draft Sports Facilities Strategy for Huntingdonshire 2009-14.

**H Ali
388006**

- (b) **Sports Facilities Strategy** (Pages 31 - 86)

To consider a report by the Leisure Development Manager seeking approval for the Council's Sports Facilities Strategy for Huntingdonshire 2009-14.

**J Peadon
388048**

7. SAPLEY EAST PREFERRED OPTIONS PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE CENTRE (Pages 87 - 98)

To consider a report by the Head of Planning and Financial Services on consultation responses received in respect of the draft Masterplan for land formerly east of Sapley Square, Oxmoor and seeking approval for its adoption as interim planning guidance.

**R Probyn
388430**

8. HUNTINGDON WEST AREA ACTION PLAN

- (a) **Huntingdon West Area Action Plan - Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)**

To consider a report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) on options for the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan. **(TO FOLLOW)**

**J Walker
387049**

- (b) **Huntingdon West Area Action Plan Preferred Options** (Pages 99 - 106)

To consider a report by the Head of Planning Services on a suggested preferred approach for taking forward the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan.

**R Probyn
388430**

9. RIVERSIDE PARK, HUNTINGDON

(a) Improvements to Riverside Park Huntingdon - Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)

To consider a report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) on the outcome of consultation on a Masterplan for the Riverside Park, Huntingdon. **(TO FOLLOW)**

**H Ali
388006**

(b) Improvements to Riverside Park, Huntingdon (Pages 107 - 114)

To consider a joint report by the Heads of Planning Services, Operations and Environmental Management Services on consultation responses received on a Masterplan for improvements to the Riverside Park.

**R Probyn
388430**

10. ST IVES ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

(a) St Ives Environmental Improvements - Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) (Pages 115 - 116)

To consider a report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) on proposals to carry out environmental improvements in St Ives.

**H Ali
388006**

(b) Environmental Improvements to St Ives Town Centre (Pages 117 - 132)

To consider a report by the Head of Environmental Management regarding the St Ives Environmental Improvements.

**P Jose
388332**

11. THE HOME-LINK SCHEME AND THE COUNCIL'S LETTINGS POLICY

(a) Review of the Home-Link Scheme and the Council's Lettings Policy - Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) (Pages 133 - 134)

To consider a report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) on the outcome of a review of the Home-Link scheme and the Council's lettings policy.

**H Ali
388006**

(b) Review of the Home-link scheme and the Council's lettings Policy (Pages 135 - 178)

By way of a report by the Head of Housing Services to consider the findings of a review of the Home-Link scheme and the Council's lettings policy.

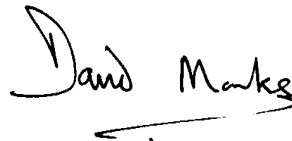
**J Collen
388220**

12. SMALL BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT ACCORD (Pages 179 - 184)

To consider a report by the Acting Manager of Sustainable Economic Development seeking authority to sign up for the small business engagement accord.

**H Donnellan
388263**

Dated this 15 day of April 2009



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 A Roberts Tel No. 01480 388015/e-mail Anthony.Roberts@huntsdc.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the 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.

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CABINET

23 APRIL 2009

CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2008/09 BUDGET (Report by the Head of Financial Services)

1. PURPOSE

1.1 This report highlights the variations from the 2008/09 Capital Programme approved in February 2008 including any member or officer decisions already taken in accordance with the Code of Financial Management.

2 MONITORING INFORMATION

2.1 The Budget approved in February 2008 and subsequent adjustments are shown below. It should be noted that variations are still likely to emerge before the final accounts are completed due to final measures on schemes and late timing adjustments:-

Capital Programme	2008/09 Capital Expenditure		
	Gross Budget	External Contributions	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000
Approved Budget (February 2008)	16,955	1,483	15,472
Deferrals from 2007/08	4,649	3,580	1,069
	21,604	5,063	16,541
Approved Adjustments in MTP February 2009	-1,054	140	-1,194
Revised Total	20,550	5,203	15,347
Further Adjustments since February			
Heart of Oxmoor – delayed S106 contribution (para 2.2)	-117	-1,529	1,412
VOIP Data Switches (para 2.3)	57	0	57
Delay in County Leisure Contribution (para 2.4)		-226	226
Other Cost Variations (Annex A)	-106	27	-133
Other Timing Changes to 2009/10 (Annex B)	-694	-898	204
Extra Revenue Salaries recharged to Capital	11	0	11
Current Forecast Total for 2008/09	19,701	2,577	17,124

2.2 The payment of the Section 106 Contribution in respect of the Heart of Oxmoor project is triggered by the sale of land at California Road Huntingdon by the County Council and the Regional College. This has been delayed and it is not yet clear when this will happen. Although we will have to fund the assumed interest resulting from the delay the sum received depends on the sale value which is currently depressed.

2.3 The approved budget for the VOIP Data Switches turned out to be inadequate. The estimate was first made before there was any certainty about the number and type of switch or how difficult the project would be to manage. Most of the extra cost was due to extra switches being required and the project proving to be more complex than expected. Virement of £57k, from the savings of £133k shown in the table, has been approved by COMT under the Code of Financial Management.

2.4 The County Council has agreed to fund 26% of the capital cost of certain maintenance projects at the Leisure Centres and now confirmed that the payment is in their capital programme for 2010/11.

3. REVENUE IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The impact of these new variations on the forecast and MTP approved in February is to reduce the net revenue expenditure by £3k in 2008/09 with further adjustments in future years, as shown below.

Revenue Impact	2008/ 2009 £000	2009/ 2010 £000	2010/ 2011 £000	2011/ 2012 £000	2012/ 2013 £000
Heart of Oxmoor	7	18			
VOIP Data Switches	0				
Delay in County Leisure Contribution	1	6	3		
Other Cost Variations	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
Other Timing Changes to 2009/10	1	3			
Extra Revenue Salaries recharged to Capital	-11				
TOTAL FORECAST VARIATION	-3	26	2	-1	-1

N.B. Revenue impact is based on 1% in the current year and 2.5% (the current 5 year PWLB rate) for subsequent years to reflect impact on interest.

4 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that Cabinet:

- Note the variations within the report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Capital programme and monitoring working papers.
Previous Cabinet reports on capital expenditure.

Contact Officer – Steve Couper ☎ 01480 388103

ANNEX A

Expected Cost Variations	2008/09 Capital Expenditure		
	Gross Budget	External Contributions	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000
After the Approved MTP – February 2009			
Disabled Facilities Grants - Reduction	-69	16	-85
Repairs Assistance Grants - Saving	-10	0	-10
Implementation of Car Parking Strategy - Saving	-38	0	-38
Huntingdon Skateboard Park	11	11	0
Forecast Cost Variations	-106	27	-133

ANNEX B

Timing Changes to 2009/10	2008/09 Capital Expenditure		
	Gross Budget	External Contributions	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000
After the Approved MTP – February 2009			
St Ives Town Centre Environmental Imps – Phase 2	27	0	27
Village Residential Areas Environmental Improvements	-25	0	-25
St Neots and Eynesbury Environmental Improvements	-90	0	-90
Environment Strategy Funding	-20	0	-20
Sustainable Homes Retrofit	-150	0	-150
Decent Homes Insulation Grants	102	102	0
Huntingdon Town Centre Developments	-6	0	-6
Huntingdon West Development (HGF)	-500	-500	0
Town Centre Developments	-21	0	-21
Ramsey Rural Renewal	-10	0	-10
Community Facilities Grants	48	0	48
Huntingdon LC - Development	-40	0	-40
St Ivo L C – Football Improvements	-237	-500	263
St Neots L C – Development	50	0	50
Leisure Centres Future Maintenance	88	0	88
Leisure Centre – CCTV Improvements	-23	0	-23
Huntingdon Riverside Improvements	-40	0	-40
Social Housing Grant	-73	0	-73
Corporate EDM	-29	0	-29
Business Systems	-2	0	-2
Customer First/Working Smarter	-61	0	-61
Resourcelink – Recruitment Module	-6	0	-6
Government Connect	12	0	12
Vehicle Replacements	-190	0	-190
Huntingdon Bus Station	-20	0	-20
Bus Shelter Provision	33	0	33
Safe Cycle Routes	-225	0	-225
St Ives Transport Strategy	-139	0	-139
Ramsey Transport Strategy	3	0	3
Headquarters	150		150
	-1,394	-898	-496
LESS Deferrals in the Approved Budget	700	0	700
Forecast Adjustment to Programme for Deferrals	-694	-898	204

FINANCIAL MONITORING – REVENUE BUDGET (Report by the Head of Financial Services)

1. 2008/09 Budget – As at March 2009

1.1 Cabinet received a forecast of £20,448k for the 2008/09 revenue outturn at its meeting on 29 January 2009. This was the figure on which the Council report for the 2009/10 budget and the MTP was based. This report updates that forecast.

1.2 It is now expected that the outturn will be £20,209k – a reduction of £239k since January. The variations are summarised in Annex A with the larger items being.

- Additional LABGI grant of £150k
- Increased investment income of £173k
- Further Leisure Centre savings £274k
- Additional cost of the concessionary fares scheme £150k
- An expectation that the turnover allowance will not be met by £148k.

1.3 Although this report is based on the position at the end of March, together with service managers' forecasts of some of the year end adjustments, there will be further fluctuations during the final accounts process which historically have been further reductions.

2. 2009/10 Budget

2.1 A preliminary review of the position on the 2009/10 budget has been undertaken that takes account of what is emerging in the outturn for 2008/09 and any other known or anticipated items. This shows the likelihood of a small overspending of £85k. The details are shown at Annex B.

2.2 However this does not take account of some of the pressures that have arisen or are emerging as a result of the recession. The following section suggests how these could be addressed.

3. Recession Impacts

3.1 Increasing pressure on certain Council services are already being felt and it is expected that this will continue to increase. Particularly affected are Housing Services and Benefits, which are both experiencing an increase in case load. In the latter case the Government is providing some extra funding but this is unlikely to be enough to maintain a prompt service for those in a vulnerable situation. There is also a significant increase in the number of people seeking help and advice from organisations, such as the Citizen's Advice Bureau, that have little opportunity to expand their service unless they receive extra grants.

- 3.2 As referred to above, there is likely to be a saving of over £200k this year compared with the figures on which the 2009/10 budget and MTP were based. Cabinet could decide that, say £200k, should be transferred to a “Recession Reserve” to be used to fund those actions that will best help maintain services for those disadvantaged by the recession. Use of the Reserve could be delegated to the Director of Commerce and Technology after consultation with the relevant Director and the Executive Councillors for the service and for finance.

4. Potential VAT reclaim

- 4.1 Due to a recent Court of Appeal judgement a window was created during which claims for VAT refunds could be made back to 1973, when VAT was introduced, as long as they were submitted by 31 March 2009. The judgement was linked to 6 areas where the treatment of VAT was corrected by HMRC from 1996 but for which they argued there was no entitlement to reclaims pre-1996. We have worked closely with our VAT advisors to ensure that we have maximised our claim and the chance of it being accepted.
- 4.2 The sums included in the claim are large – over £1M plus simple interest. There is a separate legal challenge relating to allowing compound interest which would significantly increase any sum. It would be premature to anticipate how much we will get and when we will get it but there is a strong likelihood that it will result in a useful one-off addition to our revenue reserves.

5. Amounts collected and debts written off

- 5.1 The position as at 31 March 2009 is shown in Annex C

6. Recommendation

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- Note the forecast spending variations, the potential VAT reclaim and the position on debts collected and written off.
- Approve the creation of a “Recession Reserve” of £200k (or the actual underspending if lower) to maintain service levels in those areas affected by the recession.
- Delegate the decisions on the use of the reserve to the Director of Commerce and Technology following consultation with the relevant Director and the Executive Councillors for the relevant service and finance.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985

Source Documents:

1. Cabinet and Council Reports
2. Budgetary control files.

Contact Officers: Eleanor Smith, Accountancy Manager (01480 388157)
Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services (01480 388103)

ANNEX A

FORECAST	Expenditure	Income	Recharge to capital	Net expenditure
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Original budget	68,142	-46,848	-874	20,420
Less benefits reimbursed by Government	-29,085	29,085		0
Adjusted total	39,057	-17,763	-874	20,420
Variations reported in January 2009				
Timing	260			260
Spending	-173	279	-338	-232
Total	87	279	-338	28
Forecast variations post January				
Timing differences	-57			-57
Recharge to capital			-81	-81
Leisure centre savings	-274			-274
Car parking income		51		51
LABGI		-150		-150
Concessionary fares	150			150
Additional interest		-173		-173
Increased commutation allowance	-43			-43
Development control fees	-50			-50
Land charges income		59		59
Recycling green boxes	26			26
Call Centre	34			34
Housing benefits	40			40
Grounds maintenance vehicles	40			40
Ramsey & Yaxley Community Information Centres grant		29		29
Council tax recovery costs	-20			-20
Home improvement agency	-18			-18
Review of turnover allowance	148			148
Other variations	50			50
Variations post January	26	-184	-81	-239
Total variations	113	95	-419	-211
% variations	0.3%	-0.5%	47.9%	-1.0%
Forecast net spending in year	39,170	-17,668	-1,293	20,209

FUNDING	Original Budget	Forecast outturn	
		January '09	March '09
	£000	£000	£000
Forecast net spending	20,420	20,300	20,209
Funded from			
Government support	-12,158	-12,158	-12,158
Collection fund adjustment	28	28	28
Council tax	-6,668	-6,668	-6,668
Reserves			
Contribution from delayed projects reserve	-25	-335	-335
Contribution to delayed projects reserve	200	250	250
General reserves	-1,797	-1,565	-1,326
Total reserves	-1,622	-1,650	-1,411
Total	-20,420	-20,448	-20,209

CONTINGENCIES INCLUDED IN THE BUDGET

	Budget	Estimated outturn	Variation	
	£000	£000	£000	
Turnover	-611	-363	248	The estimated outturn is that not all of the contingency will be met from staff savings
Additional planning and housing grant	-250	-251	-1	
Employee costs recharged to capital	-160	-419	-259	
	-1,021	-1,110	-79	The transfer of costs to capital is forecast to be exceeded

ANNEX B

POTENTIAL CHANGES TO THE 2009/10 BUDGET

	£000	
Known and costed		
Gate fees	131	
Central services staff saving	-78	Net of £25k target in MTP
Pay award 2.2% (budget 3%)	-170	
Extra interest due to increase in reserves at start of year	-48	
	-165	
Known but estimated		
Concessionary fares	150	
Gate fees	65	
Reduced interest due to fall in interest rates	-45	
	170	
Risk of not achieving/over-achieving budget		
Not achieving Leisure Centre savings	100	Budgeted increase -£583k
Extra interest - slippage on capital programme	-20	
Increased recharge from revenue to capital	-100	Budget -£100k
Non-achievement of turnover allowance	100	Budget £479k
	80	
OVERALL	85	

AMOUNTS COLLECTED AND DEBTS WRITTEN OFF**Collected**

The total amount of payments received, less customer refunds and transfers to other debts:

	April to Dec 2008	Jan to March 2009	Total
	£000	£000	£000
Type of Debt			
Council Tax	65,055	8,799	73,854
NNDR	47,600	6,288	53,888
Sundry Debtors	5,248	2,341	7,589
Excess Charges	111	39	150

Amounts written off

Whilst the amounts below have been written-off in this financial year, much of the original debt would have been raised in previous financial years.

	Up to £4k			Over £4k			TOTAL
	April to Dec 2008	Jan to Mar 2009	Total	April to Dec 2008	Jan to Mar 2009	Total	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Type of Debt							
Council Tax	84.2	8.3	92.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	92.5
NNDR	19.1	8.2	27.3	18.1	13.1	31.2	58.5
Sundry Debtors	22.6	16.1	38.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	38.7
Excess Charges	9.3	5.5	14.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	14.8

Authority to write off debts

The Head of Customer Services is authorised to write-off debts of up to £4,000, or more after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Finance, if she is satisfied that the debts are irrecoverable or cannot be recovered without incurring disproportionate costs. The Head of Financial Services deputises in her absence.

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**THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY REVIEW – THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE
DEVELOPMENT STUDY
(Report by Head of Planning Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet that effective joint-working, between all of the Cambridgeshire authorities, has now resulted in a situation whereby the County Council will in the near future be in a position to submit its advice to EERA (as the initial county-wide response to their request for appropriate information to inform the RSS Review).

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 The current strategic planning policy position is that the approved Regional Spatial Strategy, the East of England Plan, which was issued in May 2008, sets out growth requirements for the period up to 2021. The current Plan envisages that Huntingdonshire will deliver a minimum of 11,200 new dwellings, associated employment and other development during that time period.

2.2 Because of the need for the Council to effectively plan for the delivery of a 15 year housing land supply HDC's Submitted Core Strategy extends that plan period up to 2026. Our Core Strategy proposes that Huntingdonshire will deliver a minimum of 14,000 new dwellings (a figure which is made up of the committed 11,200 homes + an applied annual growth rate) and associated employment and other related development during that period.

2.3 The Government now requires EERA to review the East of England Plan in order to extend its life up till 2031 and to potentially plan to accommodate further substantial amounts of residential and employment growth within the region. In accordance with the Governments requirements EERA have now commenced upon that 'early review' with the whole process being proposed to be completed, in what is acknowledged to be a very short and challenging timescale, by 2011.

3. THE REVIEW OF THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY

3.1 EERA requires its constituent 4/4 authorities – that is the applicable County Council's and Unitary Authorities – to provide strategic planning 'advice' to them specifically commenting upon ;

- How they consider that the various potential levels of future growth (as suggested by the NHPAU – the National Housing and Planning Advice Unit) could be accommodated within their areas. These suggested NHPAU scenario's for future growth indicate that Huntingdonshire may need to plan to accommodate somewhere between 3,000 and 17,000 additional new homes in the period to 2021 to 2031.
- The potential appropriateness of 'Development Proposals' submitted by various private sector landowner and developer interests in

response to EERA's request for such submissions. 'Developer' proposals have been submitted in respect of several potential development sites all across Cambridgeshire and two such proposals were submitted in respect of proposals in Huntingdonshire – in respect of Alconbury Airfield and St Neots East.

- To support the review process EERA has also commissioned consultants (Arups) to prepare a Regional Scale Settlement Study in order to inform the possible growth strategy. That study proposes that various existing larger settlements, including Cambridge, may well be subject to further 'regional scale growth' and that 'new regional scale growth locations' (Regional Scale Settlements) may also be an appropriate policy option. It is proposed that new Regional Scale Settlements could deliver a minimum of 20,000 homes and have the 'potential' to accommodate far more up to an eventual long-term capacity of 250,000 people. Members will be aware that 'North Huntingdon/Alconbury' has been identified as a potential strong option for such a development by that study. HDC is in the process of commissioning additional targeted studies to help us evaluate the potential environmental capacity and implications of further growth for Huntingdonshire. It is considered that these studies will be fundamental in respect of refining HDC's views in order to inform the next stages of this work and to put us in a position whereby we can more readily respond to EERA's future options consultation.

3.2 In response to this request to provide advice to EERA with regard to these three issues Cambridgeshire County Council, working in partnership with all of the district authorities, commissioned their own consultancy team (made up of WSP and SQW et al) to prepare the 'Cambridgeshire Development Study' in order to establish how sustainable different levels of further growth could potentially be accommodated within Cambridgeshire. That Cambridgeshire wide process is being directed by the Joint Cambridgeshire Regional Spatial Strategy Review Panel (CReSSP).

4. THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE DEVELOPMENT STUDY- DRAFT ADVICE TO EERA FROM THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE AUTHORITIES

4.1 It is intended that CReSSP will consider and endorse the suggested 'draft advice' to EERA at its next meeting on the 7th April 2009 (and a copy of the applicable report is attached for Members' information). Due to the respective deadlines this report obviously had to be prepared in advance of that meeting and the finalisation of the study. Therefore it is my intention that appropriate verbal updates will supplement this report as applicable.

4.2 The suggested Draft Advice to EERA considers and comments upon the applicable processes that have been undertaken and the options considered in its various sections;

- Section 2 outlines the Consultation Process that has been undertaken to date.
- Section 3 outlines the suggested responses to EERA's Call for Development Proposals. Paragraph's 3.3 to 3.8 of the CReSSP report comments upon the basis of the submitted developer proposals and it is considered that the suggested

responses, to the two proposals in Huntingdonshire, are appropriate at this point in time. Further work needs to be done with regard to the perceived acceptability of some of the other options.

- ❖ An option of further highly sustainable growth to the East of St Neots accords with the suggested directions of strategic growth as set out in our Submitted Core Strategy. Therefore it is considered that the suggested response, that the proposal may have some potential, can be supported.
 - ❖ It is widely acknowledged that Alconbury Airfield is a resource, and a potential development option, that may need to be appropriately considered in respect of any future growth strategy for the district. Accordingly it is appropriate that it is considered to be worthy of further consideration at this early stage of the review process.
 - ❖ Whilst many of the options outlined in Paragraphs 3.3 to 3.7 are logical initial responses to the potential appropriateness of the submitted proposals I think it should be questioned as to why previously 'highly' regarded and supposedly sustainable locations, such as Northstowe and Camborne, are now considered to be less acceptable alternatives.
- Section 4 comments upon the Regional Scale Settlement Study both in general and with particular regard to the identified 'North Huntingdon/Alconbury' large scale new settlement option. Whilst many of the comments can be supported, certainly in terms of the very limited overall robustness of the report and the clear concerns as to whether Cambridge City could actually deliver additional sustainable growth, it is considered that some of the suggested wording needs to be deleted. Whilst it is considered that the content of sub-paragraph's 4.2 h), j) and k) can be endorsed it is suggested that the comments in sub-paragraph i) are far too positive in their tone and therefore should be deleted.
 - Section 5 comments upon the testing to be applied to the housing and job scenarios. It is considered that positive support should be given to the view, as set out in Paragraphs 5.4 to 5.8, that the 'higher' level scenarios are totally unrealistic and that testing should therefore be limited to the more appropriate lower level growth scenarios.
 - Section 6 comments upon the suggested District distribution of houses and jobs and the related Sub-Regional policy. It is considered that the comments set out in Paragraphs 6.3 to 6.6 should be endorsed with particular emphasis being given to the statements as set out in Paragraph 6.6. It is clear that the existing, and committed, sub-regional strategy needs to be successfully delivered prior to any consideration of potential alternative approaches.

- Section 7 comments upon the proposed rolling forward of existing RSS and extended Structure Plan policies. It is considered that the suggested approach can be supported.
- Section 8 comments upon Sub-Regional, Regional and Inter-Regional Issues and clearly because of Huntingdonshire's location, at the north-western periphery of the region, these issues, particularly in terms of the relationship with Peterborough, will be of significant importance.
- Section 9 comments upon Infrastructure requirements and 'show-stoppers' and emphasises that the significant challenges that would come from any proposals to increase delivery above current growth levels.
- Section 10 comments upon the shared 'vision' of sustainable growth that has underpinned this work.

4.3 Further to the CReSSP meeting on the 7th April it is intended that the 'Cambridgeshire Development Study' will be considered by the County Council's Cabinet on 5th May 2009. The views of the County Council will then be submitted to EERA as the initial aspect of Cambridgeshire's response to the request for 4/4 Authority advice to inform the RSS Review. However, it is important to note that this is obviously an initial position that will be subject to further public and statutory consultation, and far greater scrutiny, when EERA, after they have considered the advice they will have received from all of its constituent 4/4 authorities, publish their proposed 'options' for growth later in the year.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Therefore it is recommended that Cabinet:

- a. Notes the positive partnership working that has taken place between all of the Cambridgeshire Authorities with regard to developing a co-ordinated response to these fundamentally important strategic planning issues.
- b. Endorses the on-going assessment work that is being commissioned to consider in more detail the potential environmental capacity and implications of further strategic growth in Huntingdonshire.
- c. Requests that the County Council Cabinet takes appropriate account of HDC's statements of support and its stated concerns as set out in Paragraph 4.2 of this report and that it accordingly amends the basis of its suggested advice to EERA.
- d. Supports the submission of a suitably amended Cambridgeshire position to EERA in response to their request for initial strategic planning advice from the 4/4 Authorities.

Background Papers:

Joint Cambridgeshire Regional Spatial Strategy Review Panel – Applicable RSS Review Papers and in particular the relevant agenda items from the 7th April 2009 meeting.

The Cambridgeshire Development Study – April 2009

EERA – Regional Scale Settlement Study – Final Report – January 2009

CONTACT OFFICER - enquiries about this report to Steve Ingram, Head of Planning Services, on 01480 388400.

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**DRAFT ADVICE TO EAST OF ENGLAND REGIONAL ASSEMBLY (EERA) FROM
CAMBRIDGESHIRE AUTHORITIES**

To: Joint Cambridgeshire RSS Review Panel (CReSSP)

Date: 7th April 2009

From: RSS Review Study Group

Purpose To consider the key elements of the formal advice on the Review of the RSS in Cambridgeshire which it is proposed to be submitted to EERA by the County Council as a Section 4(4) Authority.

Recommendation: That CReSSP supports the proposed outline response as set out in this report, together with any further comments agreed by members for inclusion (and noting that the response will need further amendment once the findings of the Cambridgeshire Development Study are available).

<i>Officer Contact:</i>	<i>Member contact</i>
Name: Mark Vigor	Name: Cllr Matthew Bradney
Post: Head of Strategic Planning	Portfolio: County Council Cabinet Member for Growth, Infrastructure and Highways
Email: Mark.Vigor@cambridgeshire.gov.uk	Email: Matthew.Bradney@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk
Tel: 01223 712716	Tel: 01223 699173

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The studies and consultations that will feed into the Cambridgeshire advice on the RSS Review are drawing to a close.
- 1.2 This report suggests the main points of the advice that can be made emerging from the joint work undertaken so far. It is in outline only as EERA will also be provided with the detailed studies underpinning the conclusions.
- 1.3 It should be noted that some technical work is still ongoing and will be reported at the CReSSP meeting. Therefore further additions and amendment to some aspects of this report will be required.
- 1.4 The final advice will be agreed by the County Council's Cabinet on 5th May 2009.
- 1.5 The Structure of this report is based the headings in EERA's request, although not necessarily in the same order.

2.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS

- 2.1 EERA has requested an auditable account of consultation and facilitation with all relevant authorities, sub-regions and stakeholders.

Proposed Response:

Reference is made to the following:

- RSS Study Group (joint officer working group)
- 4 Joint Cambridgeshire RSS Review Panel meetings, held in public, with cross party membership
- Events held as part of the preparation of the Cambridgeshire Development Study including two stakeholder workshops and a stakeholder's economy seminar.
- A range of communication activity undertaken (October 2008 – April 2009) including information made available to the public and the provision made to receive representations via on-line forms on the County Council's web-pages relating to RSS Review.

The advice provided is based upon the following evidence:

- Feedback from workshops and RSS Study Group members as outlined above and any other representations received
- Cambridgeshire Development Study and related appendices (to be finalised in April 2009) and Interim Report (March 2009)
- Validation of Growth Scenarios for the Review of the RSS for the East of England Cambridgeshire - technical study & interim findings December 2008
- A Technical Note including topic papers prepared by the Study Group prior to the Cambridgeshire Development Study
- Initial Assessment of Call for Proposals

- Assessment of Regional Scale Settlement Study
- Schedule of evidence provided to Consultant team who prepared the Cambridgeshire Development Study

3.0 EERA's Call for Development Proposals.

3.1 EERA have asked for assessment and advice on the developer proposals submitted in the autumn of 2008. 12 of these were in Cambridgeshire.

3.2 This assessment is based on:

- i) an initial review of evidence put together by the joint study group
- ii) the testing of new settlement options in the Cambridgeshire Development Study

3.3 The initial review by the study group indicates that:

a) All of the proposals have been brought forward in some form before and have been the subject of previous assessments – the call for proposals has revealed nothing new.

b) On the basis of the evidence assessed, the proposals may be grouped by level of acceptability:

- i. With potential subject to resolution of some issues
 - North Ely CP36
 - Wintringham Park (St Neots East) CP80
- ii. Worthy of further consideration
 - Alconbury Airfield CP71
 - Waterbeach (Denny St Francis) CP88
- iii. Conflicting views in the evidence base
 - Cambourne East (Bourne Airfield) CP27
 - Cambourne West (Swansley Farm) CP76
 - Cambourne North CP51
- iv. Most serious planning challenges
 - South east Cambridge CP8
 - West of Shelford Road, Cambridge CP64
 - Mereham CP111
 - Northstowe Extension CP17
 - Hanley Grange, Hinxton CP23

c) Across all the proposals the evidence base identifies a range of common issues that give cause for concern, including: flood risk; transport implications; relationship to existing settlements; self containment, especially in employment; and landscape/Green Belt impacts.

3.4 Officer opinion amongst the local planning authorities indicates that there is little enthusiasm for new settlements. There is some acceptance of urban expansion, particularly in the market towns, although with a number of significant caveats, especially relating to infrastructure.

- East Cambridgeshire consider that a substantial increase in the size of Ely could help in delivering more infrastructure, community facilities

and jobs. East Cambridgeshire's total opposition to the Mereham proposal is well known.

- Cambridge City are concerned about further expansion of the City beyond that already planned because of the impact on the amenity of the City, limited capacity in the congested centre and effects on the Green Belt
- Huntingdonshire would support the principle of a new eco-quarter at St Neots but there are a range of difficult issues at other locations in the District
- South Cambridgeshire do not support higher levels of growth or further new settlements or expansions of new settlements, but they do support the current strategy for urban expansion of Cambridge and the development of Northstowe.

Call for Development Proposals - Conclusions

- 3.5 The assessment so far suggests that there is a much stronger case for future investment in existing towns, rather than committing resources to the creation further new settlements. Growing urban populations, within reason, may help some places reach a critical mass allowing them to support better infrastructure, services and job prospects. On this basis Ely North (2,700 + dwellings) and St Neot's East (4,000 dwellings) appear to have the greatest potential within known environmental limits. There may be other towns, not included in the developer proposals, for example in Fenland, which also have potential. *(Paragraph to be reviewed following completion of option testing in the Cambridgeshire Development Study).*
- 3.6 It is possible, at some point, that housing growth outside the capacity of expanding existing towns may need to be considered. Of the new settlements resulting from the call for proposals, those at Waterbeach (up to 12,750 dwellings) and Alconbury (5 - 6,000 dwellings) may be worthy of further consideration. (But see separately under Section 4 below, the assessment of the ARUP conclusions concerning a much larger proposal at Alconbury.) It is important though that such developments should support the high level of infrastructure improvements required and that they should not undermine the delivery of existing or planned growth projects in nearby areas. They are therefore likely be suitable only as options for the longer term. *(Paragraph to be reviewed following completion of option testing in the Cambridgeshire Development Study).*
- 3.7 The developer proposals with the greatest impacts are those suggested for large-scale extension into the Cambridge Green Belt (South East Cambridge and West of Shelford Road) and for new settlements at Hanley Grange, Mereham and the extension of Northstowe. In relation to Cambridge it should be noted that none of the peripheral urban extensions provided for in the current RSS have yet been started on the ground and the same holds true for Northstowe. An application at Mereham has been comprehensively rejected at a recent planning appeal. The Mereham location was also strongly discounted during the preparation of the 2003 Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan. *(Paragraph to be reviewed following completion of option testing in the Cambridgeshire Development Study).*

3.8 The results of testing from the Cambridgeshire Development Study are not yet available and will be reported at the meeting.

4.0 Regional Scale Settlement Study (ARUP)

4.1 EERA have requested a response on the findings of the ARUP study as they affect Cambridgeshire. The study includes suggestions for a major development of 20,000 homes at Alconbury Airfield near Huntingdon and indicates the Cambridge area as the focus for continued regional scale growth in the long term.

4.2 A review of this study has been carried out for the joint Cambridgeshire Study Group by Brian Human. Key findings of this review can be summarised as follows:

General

a) The Study is not convincing in demonstrating that regional size settlements or expanded key centres are the answer to problems of sustainable growth.

b) The major growth strategy proposed by Arup could undermine the delivery of the existing strategy, especially around Cambridge.

c) The study is, however, fair in drawing attention to the difficulty of promoting a spatial strategy based on diverting growth pressures from the south of the County to the north and the market towns.

d) There is no compelling justification given for the need to compete with or complement centres elsewhere in the Region such as Milton Keynes, Luton, Thurrock or Southend or to show why growth is the best way to achieve this.

Cambridge

e) The study report is contradictory and lacks internal consistency about the suitability of the Cambridge area for further expansion.

f) The definition of the extent of the Cambridge area, which is set a target of 300,000 to 400,000 population is unclear especially as the Cambridge Sub-Region, including surrounding market towns, already had a population of 409,000 in 1999.

g) While the study identifies the congestion pressures affecting Cambridge and the radial routes to it, it does not consider sufficiently the limited physical capacity of the City centre to accommodate additional public transport movements and pressure on services, e.g. shopping and leisure.

Alconbury

h) There is limited technical evidence to support the choice of locations for major new settlements, no overall comparison of the benefits of the locations and no clarity about what options were considered and how the conclusions were reached.

i) The proposal for a regional scale settlement at Alconbury is both interesting and challenging.

j) The Ouse Valley offers considerable potential for development – excellent communications, a good environment and a solid core of economic activity, but this does not mean Alconbury is the right place for a major new settlement, let alone one of this size.

k) Key issues which would need to be addressed include

- impact on regeneration of the Huntingdonshire market towns
- meeting local needs
- attracting economic activity and jobs
- strategic and local transport suitability
- relevance of existing infrastructure and USAF housing on site
- fit with rural character of the area.

4.3 The survey of local planning authority officer views in Cambridgeshire indicates broad agreement with this analysis. Therefore EERA can be informed that it is the view of Cambridgeshire Authorities that there are significant flaws in the Arup study. It does not adequately justify the case for large free-standing new settlements such as Alconbury or consider alternative locations on a comparable basis. Nor does it explain with any clarity its conclusions about the scope for Cambridge centred expansion. While there are aspects which merit further investigation, the Study itself does not provide an adequate foundation for strategic options in Cambridgeshire.

5.0 Testing the housing and jobs scenarios

5.1 EERA is asking for the range of housing and jobs scenarios provided to be tested by the Strategic Authorities.

5.2 Cambridgeshire County Council commissioned SQW Consulting to assess the validity and appropriateness of the scenarios as a basis for developing strategic options for the County. The results of this assessment were reported to CReSSP on 9th January 2009.

5.3 Key points from the SQW findings can be summarised as follows:

- Modelling appears to be overstating current population and employment growth leading to overstatement in future years;
- The building rates in the highest scenarios would be extremely challenging. The highest scenario requires 37% higher housing growth than the current RSS rate.
- Modelled job growth outstrips the increase in employed residents by at least 30,000 in each scenario resulting in significant net in-commuting, especially for Cambridge City.
- A significant level of net immigration to Cambridgeshire from outside the Region is modelled in all scenarios from 5,000 to 8,200 per annum.

- The employment forecasts do not seem realistic, especially in the context of the current recession.
- *SQW Consulting* recommend that there should be a revised set of scenario runs for Cambridgeshire and the Region.
- It is likely in the view of *SQW Consulting* that house-building rates will be at a significantly reduced rate for at least two years.
- Even if building returns to 2007/8 rates, the achievement of any scenarios with household rates significantly higher than targets in the current RSS must be very uncertain.
- Further work is recommended on the viability of developments affecting contributions to infrastructure and affordable housing. (ES 18)

5.4 The initial response to EERA from Cambridgeshire therefore indicated that:

"The Council and its partner authorities have serious concerns that the high levels of jobs and housing growth we have been asked to test are unrealistic, even before taking into account the current adverse economic climate. The recession appears likely to add a further delay of at least two years in meeting any suggested targets. Moreover, the scale and concentration of job growth projected for the Cambridge area does not seem sustainable and could lead to very high levels of in-commuting." (Progress Report - 6th January 2009)

5.5 Further work by SQW Consulting and Cambridge Econometrics (CE) since January has confirmed that the higher growth scenarios are not realistic and are therefore unsuitable for testing. Moreover the employment projections they have produced, taking account of the current recession, cast doubt on the achievability of rates of jobs growth included in the current RSS as follows:

- RSS job growth in Cambridgeshire 2001 to 2021 = 75,000 (3,750 pa)
- CE trend based job growth in Cambs 2007 to 2031 = 47,300 (1,990 pa)
- CE policy based job growth in Cambs 2007 to 2031 = 38,600 (1,608 pa)

5.6 It can be noted that the preponderance of this job growth is projected to be in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire with relatively little job growth in the remaining Districts of Fenland, East Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.

5.7 The housing scenarios provided by EERA would require substantial additional numbers of housing growth by 2031, beyond what has already been committed in existing planning permissions and in existing/emerging Local Development Documents. The current commitments provide for 75,400 homes. The additions required to meet the four scenarios highlighted by EERA for testing have been calculated by Pegasus Planning as follows (overall annual rate in brackets):

- | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| 1. RSS rate | 75,000 + 23,000 homes | (3,916 p.a.) |
| 3. NHPAU lower | 75,000 + 31,900 homes | (4,291 p.a.) |
| 4. NHPAU upper | 75,000 + 54,000 homes | (5,174 p.a.) |

5. GVA based 75,000 + 44,100 homes (4,783 p.a.)

- 5.8 In view of the lack of realism now apparent in any of the upper scenarios, WSP have advised that they will be testing development strategies at the following much lower levels:

Base case at 75,000 commitments only (3,000 p.a.)

Low case at 75,000 + 15,000 homes (3,600 p.a.)

High case at 75,000 + 35,000 homes (4,400 p.a.)

6.0 District distribution of housing and jobs figures and sub-regional policy

- 6.1 EERA have requested advice on the District distribution of housing and job figures up to 2031, with determination of whether this provision is district wide or tied to the Key Centres of Development and Change (KCDCs) as defined in the RSS. (In Cambridgeshire, Cambridge is the only designated KCDC.) The advice is to include a consideration of spatial patterns and forms of development. EERA has also requested that advice should be provided on possible changes in sub-regional policy or boundaries or any new growth designation.

Housing and jobs - spatial patterns

- 6.2 It will not be possible to indicate a preferred distribution of housing and jobs until after the completion of option testing in the Cambridgeshire Development Study (to be reported at the meeting). This testing may not identify a single preferred option but it will be possible to indicate to EERA the distribution of homes and jobs in each option and the degree to which they are associated with the growth of Cambridge or other centres in the County. The initial options have been selected with very clear themes to demonstrate the consequences of different approaches and to allow outcomes to be distinguishable. The outline of the options selected for testing are as follows (housing totals only):

1. Base case of commitments only growth (+ 75,000 homes)

- assumes the current strategy will not be completed until 2031

2. Low market towns growth (+ 90,000 homes)

- includes a further 15,000 homes, in addition to current commitments, to be located in the market towns

3. High market towns growth (+ 110,000 homes)

- includes a further 35,000 homes in addition to current commitments, to be located in the market towns and other corridor locations

4. Low Cambridge growth (+ 90,000 homes)

- includes a further 15,000 homes, in addition to current commitments, to be located in the Green Belt close to Cambridge

5. High Cambridge growth (+ 110,000)

- includes a further 35,000 homes in addition to current commitments, to be located in the Green Belt close to Cambridge or as an extension to Northstowe

6. Low New Settlements growth (+ 90,000)

- assumes a further 15,000 homes, in addition to current commitments, to be located in new settlements at Waterbeach and Alconbury

7. High New Settlements growth (+ 110,000)

- includes a further 35,000 homes, in addition to current commitments, to be located in new settlements at Waterbeach, Alconbury, Hanley Grange and an extension to Cambourne.

- 6.3 It is possible that no particular option may emerge as preferred at this stage. The purpose of testing is to assess the impacts of different forms of development. This will help the authorities to form advice to EERA and to consider if other development strategies should be tested, perhaps combining elements from those above. *(Paragraph to be reviewed following completion of option testing in the Cambridgeshire Development Study).*

Sub-Regional policy and the framework for infrastructure investment

- 6.4 During the RSS stakeholder events and the previous meetings of CReSSP, it has been made clear that there are very strong views about the distribution of growth within the County and a desire that any strategy should benefit existing communities, including those in Fenland and other northern areas of the County. It is recognised that the RSS will guide future investment in facilities and infrastructure as well as setting the framework for the creation of new employment opportunities.

- 6.5 If any agreed strategy for the County is to take effect in the statutory development plan, it will need to be incorporated in the RSS. This will only be possible if there is an appropriate Sub-Regional chapter in the RSS document. Therefore it should be considered whether the Cambridgeshire Authorities should press EERA to change the boundaries of the existing Cambridge Sub-Region (as defined in RSS policies CSR1 - CSR4) to include the whole of Cambridgeshire. It is essential that specific strategic policies for the County should be included in the RSS.

- 6.6 However, it is emphasised that the current growth strategy for the existing Cambridge Sub Region is strongly supported. This will take development up to 2021 and beyond as set out in policies CSR1 - CSR4. The completion of development on the urban periphery of Cambridge, at Northstowe and in the market towns would therefore take precedence within any longer term RSS strategy arising from the review.

7.0 Rolling forward of existing RSS policies and extended Structure Plan policies

- 7.1 EERA have asked for views on RSS policies which should be retained or considered for amendment. A letter from the Head of Strategic Planning (on behalf of the joint study group) to EERA on this topic was reported to the March 9th meeting of CReSSP. This included a request for a review of Policy SS4 on "Towns other than key centres and Rural Areas". This is to ensure that the potential role of market towns is given significant emphasis in the

RSS.

- 7.2 Officers have also indicated to EERA that the continuation of "saved" Structure Plan policies also needs to be given consideration.
- 7.3 A number of Policies in the 2003 Peterborough and Cambridgeshire Structure Plan have been carried forward and are not subsumed within the 2008 RSS. These relate to specific issues which would not be appropriate within the RSS but had not yet incorporated in approved Local Development Documents e.g.

- Strategic Employment Locations (P2/3)
- Distribution, Warehousing and Manufacturing (P2/5)
- Transport Investment Priorities (P8/10)
- Cambridge Green Belt (P9/2b and P9/2c)
- Economic Regeneration of Chatteris (P9/5)
- Infrastructure Provision (P9/8)
- Cambridge Sub-Region Transport Strategy (P9/9)

(List not exhaustive.)

- 7.4 It is suggested that the joint study group are requested to consider the continued relevance of these Structure Plan policies and make recommendations to any future meeting of CReSSP. There is no need to provide EERA with immediate advice on this topic.

8.0 Sub-Regional, Regional and Inter-Regional Issues

- 8.1 EERA has asked the Strategic Planning authorities to take a lead where appropriate in tasks relating to Sub-Regional, Regional and Inter-Regional issues.

- 8.2 While the main focus of the RSS review work has been on Cambridgeshire, attention has been given to vital cross boundary matters as follows:

- joint working with Peterborough City Council and involvement on CReSSP
- involvement of neighbouring authorities in stakeholder events
- consultants on the Cambridgeshire Development Study have included consideration of adjoining areas. including discussion of relevant topics
- external linkages are included in the modelling work in the Study
- continued joint officer working at regional level including both County and District representation.

9.0 Infrastructure requirements and show stoppers

- 9.0 Advice on infrastructure requirements and "show-stoppers" cannot be finalised until the completion of the Cambridge Development study. However the work to date has indicate significant challenges in delivering any significant growth beyond the current strategy in most locations.

10.0 Vision and Objectives

- 10.1 EERA has not requested any specific advice on the vision of the authorities for the future development of the County or on the specific objectives we may

wish to set. However it has been a view strongly expressed through CReSSP that a clear vision should be central to our work.

- 10.2 A Spatial Planning Vision has been drafted through CReSSP which expresses aspirations for people, for the economy, for transport and accessibility, for sustainability, for the environment and for climate change. This will be further refined as studies progress. An associated set of Objectives has also been produced and these documents will both be included in the evidence provided to EERA.

Source Documents	Location
East of England Plan CReSSP reports for 9th January 2009 CReSSP reports for 6th March 2009 Other CReSSP reports for 7th April 2009	2nd Floor Park House Shire Hall Cambridge

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SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY (Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery))

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 7th April 2009, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) considered a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services proposing the adoption of a Sports Facilities Strategy for Huntingdonshire. This report summarises the Panel's discussions.

2. THE PANEL'S DISCUSSIONS

- 2.1 The Panel has been informed by the Executive Councillor for Leisure of the background to the Strategy and was reminded that in September 2008, the Cabinet had approved local standards for the five core sports facilities located within the District. The purpose of this Strategy therefore is to examine all other known sports facilities in Huntingdonshire, with a view to achieving an adequate range of facilities to meet future need.
- 2.2 Members have been advised that the Strategy attempts to identify all sports facilities available across Huntingdonshire, inclusive of those facilities owned by the private, voluntary and education sectors. The Panel has noted that the data collated has been compared with national recommended levels of provision for a given level of population and that the results will be used to inform the future provision of sports facilities within the District.
- 2.3 In calculating the required level of provision for headline facilities, growth anticipated in the District's population in future years, particularly in the St Neots area, has been taken into account. Members have also been advised that the Building Schools for the Future Programme will be an important factor in achieving an increased level of provision of sports facilities.
- 2.4 With regard to the levels of provision of facilities, Members have discussed the current level of uptake at existing facilities. Attention is drawn to the fact that there is rarely a lack of space for customers at the District's leisure centres. Moreover, satisfaction levels with sports provision currently are the highest of any authority in Cambridgeshire and they are improving. Precise data on the present level of uptake was not available, though it has been suggested that there is some unmet demand for facilities, which is not reflected in the Strategy. For example, a question has been raised as to the adequacy of provision for hockey. It has been suggested that both occupancy and unmet demand should be taken into account when planning new facilities.
- 2.5 The Panel has drawn attention to the fact that the required level of provision sometimes does not take into account some existing provision. For example, smaller sports halls have been discounted owing to their lack of flexibility. When smaller halls are taken into account, there is little difference between existing levels of provision and the projected need. This probably accounts for the findings on available space and on satisfaction levels.

- 2.6 The Panel has received assurances that the Leisure Development Service has adequate officer resources to assist sports clubs to obtain external funding, grant aid or sponsorship to enhance their facilities. In light of the Panel's previous study into Grant Aid, Members view this as particularly important. The establishment of links with leisure bodies is key in enabling clubs to benefit from available funding.
- 2.7 The Panel has commented that while 69% of the District's residents find it easy / fairly easy to get to a sport / leisure facility, the corollary of this is that one third of the population find this difficult. This also does not reflect the level of difficulty potential users experience in getting to facilities. This issue would need to be addressed if the exercise to match the population to the levels of facilities is to translate into actual usage.
- 2.8 Finally, the Panel has expressed their support for the adoption of the Sports Facilities Strategy on the understanding that the Council will not be solely responsible for providing new facilities.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Cabinet is requested to take into consideration the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) as set out above during their deliberations on this item.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes and Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) held on 7th April 2009.

Contact Officer: Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer
☎ 01480 388006

SPORTS FACILITIES STRATEGY REPORT **Report by Head of Environmental and Community Health Services**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Members' consent to the adoption and implementation of a Sports Facility Strategy for Huntingdonshire. The development and implementation of a Sports Facility Strategy is needed to assist in guiding the future provision of a range of sports facilities in the district.
- 1.2 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 likely population growth particularly around the area of St Neots. This strategy will be used to guide and inform the nature and extent of resources, financial and operational, which are needed to ensure that Huntingdonshire has up to date, fit for purpose, accessible and welcoming sports facilities for the existing community, people working in, or visiting the District, and any new residents in the District.

2. SCOPE OF THE STRATEGY

- 2.1 This strategy examines all known sports facility provision within the district. Whilst Huntingdonshire District Council provides, manages and maintains a diverse range of sports facilities, this strategy recognises that the council is not solely responsible. Therefore the remit of the strategy is to examine all sporting provision, including private, voluntary and education provision, all of which makes an important contribution to the sporting offer of Huntingdonshire.
- 2.2 It is important to stress that this strategy focuses on community sports facility provision and the needs for provision both now and into the future.
- 2.3 This strategy is seeking to identify the following:
- ◆ Sports facilities that need to be preserved and maintained because of identified strategic need.
 - ◆ Existing facilities that require to be repaired, upgraded/improved to meet identified strategic need.
 - ◆ Any new sports facilities that may be required to meet identified strategic need.
 - ◆ Sites where new facilities may be required to meet identified strategic need.
 - ◆ A priority for future investment.
 - ◆ Those facilities that need to be expanded or redeveloped to meet identified strategic need and a timetable for any proposed sports-developments
 - ◆ Future opportunities for disinvestment in or redevelopment of existing sports facilities in Huntingdonshire, as a result of under-use and perceived lack of future demand or inappropriateness.

- 2.4 Over 180 individual sites and 330 facilities have been identified and mapped spatially onto GIS. Strategically significant sites have been proposed from this list.

3 PROGRESS

- 3.1 In September 2008 Cabinet approved local standards for the major sports facilities in the district: sports halls, swimming pools; indoor bowls; synthetic turf pitches and health and fitness based on the available national methodology. It is acknowledged however that sports facilities cover a much wider range than those covered by the national methodology.
- 3.2 This strategy takes the work a step further in identifying all key sports facilities in the district and makes recommendations on standards for other types of sports facilities.
- 3.3 The strategy has been written to take into account all relevant national, regional and local documents and strategies including Cambs Horizons Major Sports Facilities Strategy 2006, the Local Investment Framework and Local Development Framework.
- 3.4 The first draft of the Sports Facility Strategy was distributed in March 2009 for consultation to members of Task and Finish Group and key stakeholders. The consultation period closed on the 19th March and feedback received, where appropriate, has been used to further develop the strategy.
- 3.5 A copy of the draft strategy was submitted to the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) on 7th April.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The development and implementation of a Sports Facility Strategy is key to ensuring high quality accessible sports facilities for the public and in guiding the future provision of sports facilities in the district. The strategy explores the policy context, examines existing provision as well as identifying known projects that are currently in development. The draft strategy has been subject to consultation with key stakeholders and will be amended where appropriate, to take account of relevant comments received.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 Members are requested to consent to the adoption and implementation of a Sports Facility Strategy for Huntingdonshire.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Adoption of Local Standards for the Provision of Sports Facilities in Huntingdonshire,
Sept 08

Contact Officer: Jo Peadon
 **01480 388048**



Sports Facilities Strategy for Huntingdonshire

2009-2014

Draft Copy



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1. Introduction

1.1 The Need to Develop a Sports Facilities Strategy

Huntingdonshire District Council has identified the need for a strategy to assist in guiding the future provision of sports facilities in the district. The need for a clear framework for future investment is particularly critical given the projected population growth within Huntingdonshire.

The development of the sports facilities strategy also provides the opportunity to assess the condition of existing provision, establish whether it is appropriate to meet local needs and demand and to ensure that potential new provision helps to address any current quantitative or qualitative deficiencies. In addition, there is a need to facilitate increased participation and improve the health of the local community.

Strategies have been developed regionally and at county level highlighting facility provision within the district, and so there is now a need to develop a complementary strategy at this local level. Therefore, a Director-led task and finish group has been established to help develop and implement the Sports Facilities Strategy, drawing on different areas of expertise across the council including both officers and elected members (a detailed breakdown of the steering group is provided in Appendix 1).

1.2 Strategy Vision:

The purpose of this strategy is to provide a clear framework for the prioritisation, provision and enhancement of sports facilities within Huntingdonshire. With this in mind, the overarching vision of this strategy is:

To promote active lifestyles: providing facilities/events and encourage participation in active leisure pursuits for everyone. (Huntingdonshire District Council's Corporate Plan, "Growing Success", 2008/9).

1.3 Scope of the Strategy:

This strategy examines all known sports facility provision within the district. Whilst Huntingdonshire District Council provides, manages and maintains a diverse range of sports facilities, this strategy recognises that the council is not solely responsible. Therefore, the remit of this strategy is to examine all sporting provision, including private, voluntary and education provision, all of which makes an important contribution to the sporting offer of Huntingdonshire.



This strategy is seeking to identify the following:

1. Sports facilities that need to be preserved and maintained because of identified strategic need.
2. Existing sports facilities that need to be repaired, upgraded/improved to meet identified strategic need.
3. Any new sports facilities that may be required to meet identified strategic need.
4. Sites where new facilities are required to meet identified strategic need.
5. A priority for future investment.
6. Those facilities that need to be expanded or redeveloped to meet identified strategic need, and a time table for any proposed sports-developments.
7. Future opportunities for disinvestment in or redevelopment of existing sports facilities in Huntingdonshire, as a result of under-use and perceived lack of future demand or inappropriateness.

This strategy will be reviewed annually or where there is significant change in national, regional or local policy.



2. The Wider Picture

2.1 The Agenda for Sport

Encouraging participation in physical activity is important. It is recognised that sedentary lifestyles can contribute to increased health problems, with obesity a major concern within the United Kingdom.

To address this, a range of documents and strategies have been driven forward by central government and leading national sports bodies that identify leisure and sports opportunities as a major contributory factor in helping to address health issues, which in turn impact positively on issues such as community cohesion, economic development, and crime reduction.

At the national level, the Chief Medical Officer's Report (2004) outlines that fundamental changes in attitude to active lifestyles should occur in every household. The report backs the recommendation that for health benefits to accrue the population must undertake a minimum of 5x30 minutes of moderate physical activity per week, which can help towards preventing coronary heart disease, musculoskeletal disorders, some forms of cancer, obesity, diabetes and mental illness. It also showed that not being physically active is a major risk factor for many diseases and chronic illnesses. People who are not active have been shown to have a poorer health outlook than active people.

Linked to this, the Department for Health White Paper, "Choosing Health" (2004), set out new far reaching proposals for supporting the public to make healthier and more informed choices with regard to their health in order to address the issues raised within the Chief Medical Officer's report. It emphasised that effective partnerships across communities are essential in making available and promoting healthier choices and lifestyles. It also identified the need to reduce the number of people who smoke, reduce obesity through diet and exercise, and increase activity levels with particular emphasis on targeting young people.

At the start of 2009, the Department of Health, in partnership with other Government Departments, published a new plan, "Be active, be healthy: a plan for getting the nation moving", setting out new ideas for determining and responding to needs of local populations and encouraging more physical activity.

Sport England is the strategic lead for sport nationally, responsible for the delivery of government wide objectives. In 2008, it published a new strategy, "Grow, sustain, excel – Sport England Strategy 2008 – 2011", aimed at encouraging more people to play and enjoy sport. In summary, it seeks to create a vibrant sporting culture, in which the needs of sports participants are addressed. Within the strategy, Sport England make a commitment to work closely with the national governing bodies of sport and forge strong partnerships with local authorities, acknowledging that local authorities are key to driving local provision and helping to deliver high class community sport infrastructure.



2.2 The 2012 Olympics

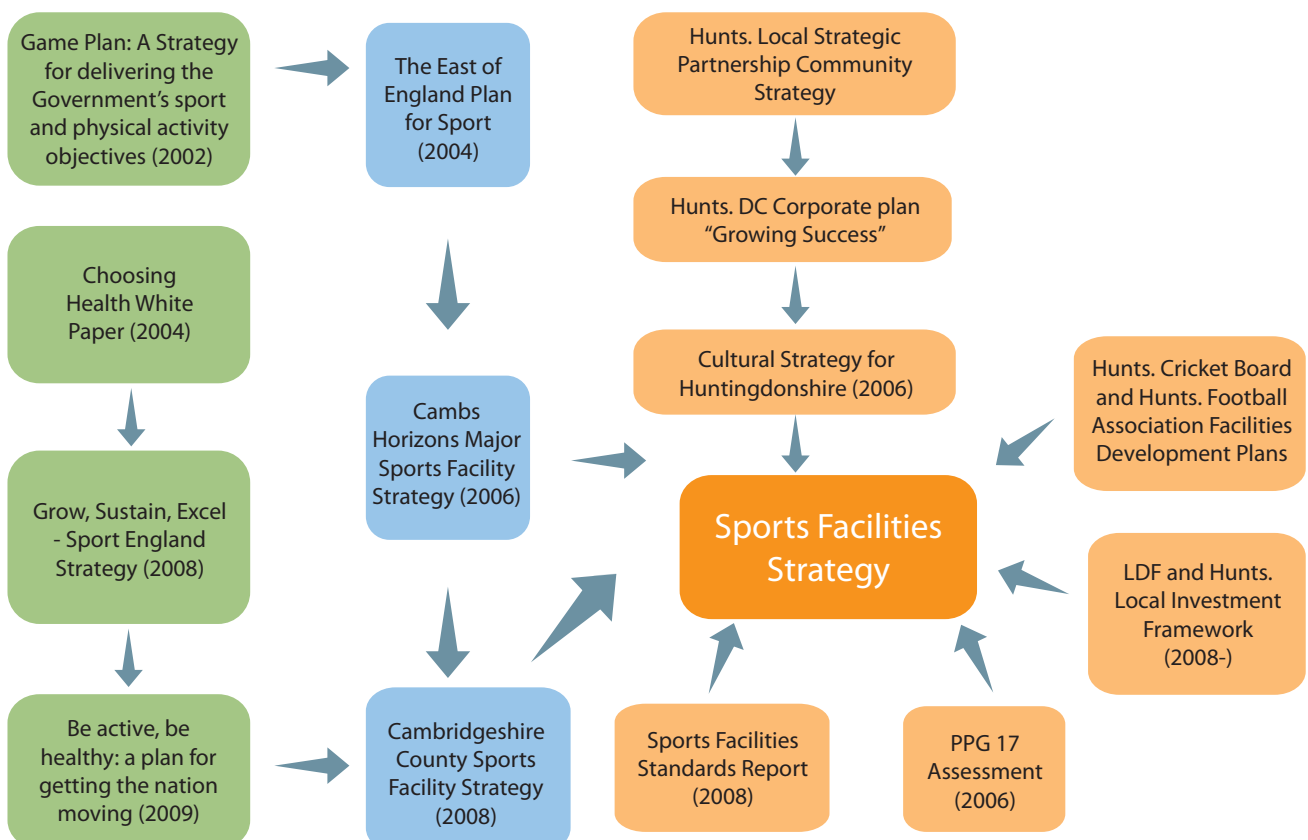
In 2012, London will be hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Central to this successful bid was the notion that hosting the Olympics in this country will inspire and encourage more people to get active, and increased participation in sport is a key goal underpinning legacy commitments and objectives designed to deliver improved community services and facilities as well as enhanced sporting opportunities within the United Kingdom.

In the lead up to the Games, it is crucial that local communities have the opportunity to access high quality sports facility provision. The Olympic and Paralympic Games provide an ideal opportunity to encourage participation and ensure that the games have a lasting effect on people's participation levels.

2.3 How this Sports Strategy fits within the National Agenda

In light of the desire to improve the quality of provision and to seek an increase in sports participation, a number of studies have taken place, both locally and regionally, to examine the current distribution of sports facilities and to identify required provision in the future. The Cambridgeshire Horizons Major Sports Facility Strategy (2006), which has subsequently been followed by the Cambridgeshire County Sports Facility Strategy (2008), outlines a co-ordinated county-wide approach to improve sports facilities, identifying specific recommendations for Huntingdonshire.

Locally, a number of key documents are important when considering both current and future sports facility provision. The Council's corporate plan, "Growing Success", the Huntingdonshire Local Strategic Partnership "Community Plan", the Huntingdonshire Local Investment Framework and a range of other service-led strategies and reports all have an impact and a detailed overview of these documents is provided within Appendix 2. The link between local, regional and national policy is shown chronologically below.



3. The Districts Sporting Needs

3.1 District Profile

The district of Huntingdonshire covers an area of approximately 350 square miles and has a population of 168,200 (based on the Government Actuary Department population figures published in 2007). This is anticipated to expand to 188,400 by 2021 and this has important implications when considering long-term management of the districts sports facilities as there is a need to ensure that there is sufficient provision to meet the demands of an increased local population.

A large proportion (approximately half) of the district's current population is found within four market towns; Huntingdon, St Neots, St Ives and Ramsey, with the remaining residents distributed within key settlements and rural villages. Much of the anticipated population growth is expected to occur around the St Neots area and this needs to be considered when assessing future needs. Similarly, the rural nature of the district means that accessibility to community provision, including sports facilities, is a challenge (Sports Facilities Standards Report, 2008), and consideration needs to be made as to how best to provide participative opportunities and ensure accessibility to rural residents.

The district has a large younger population, and a high proportion of 30-44 year olds; this profile is important with regard to sports provision, as individuals tend to be more active when younger.

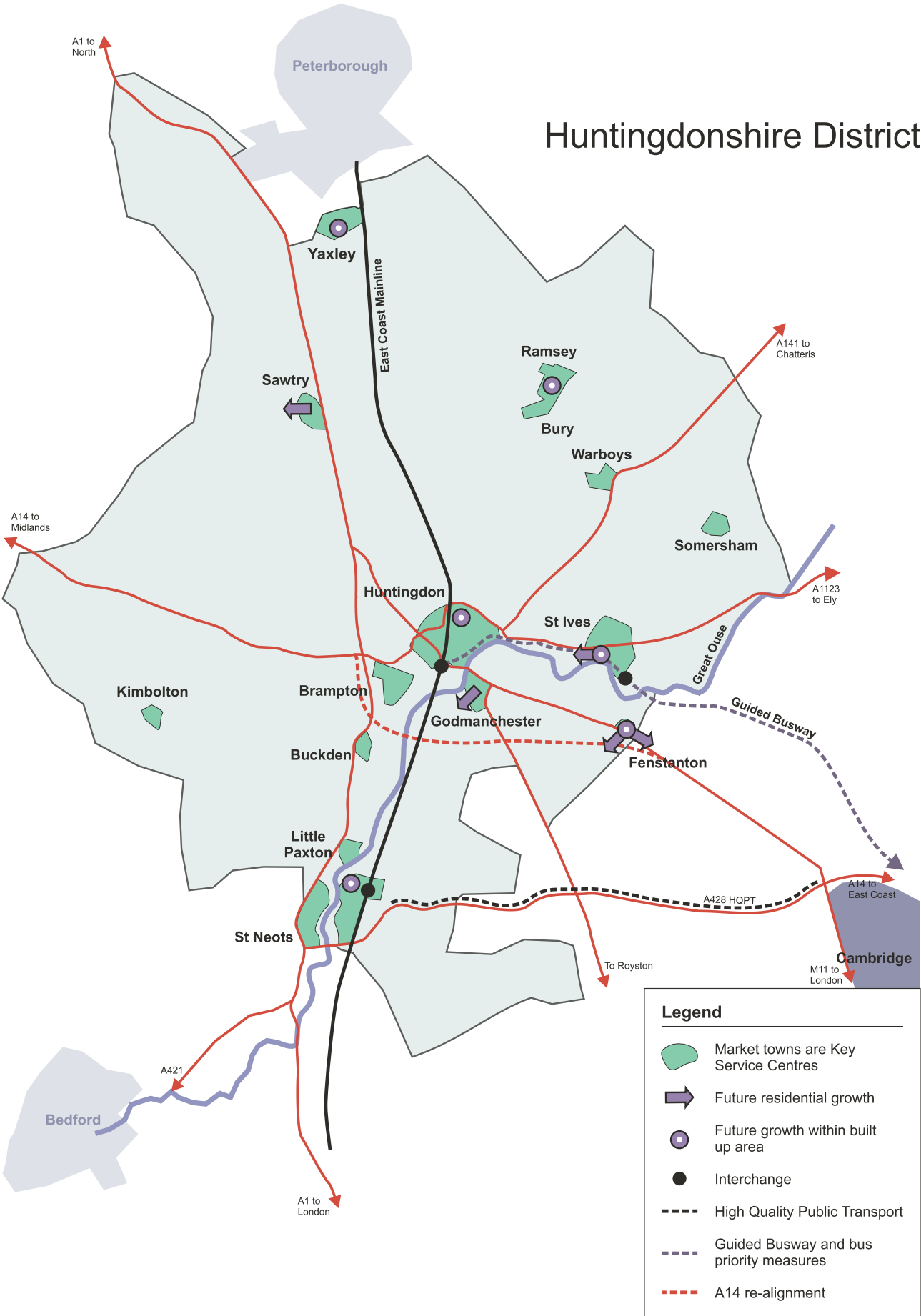
In 2008, Huntingdonshire's District Council Annual Survey highlighted that 84% of people were 'very satisfied' or 'satisfied' with Huntingdonshire as a place to live and most have a good quality of life. Life expectancy in Huntingdonshire is high compared to the national average, and general health and well-being is good as demonstrated by the 2001 census, which highlighted that 73.4% of people described their health as 'good', a percentage that is almost 5 points higher than the national average.

Transport links within the district are good with roads such as the A1 and A14, which in turn link to the M1, M11, and M6 motorways. This network is important when considering accessibility issues and planning the location of new facility provision. It should also be noted that 4% more households in the district have access to two or more cars, compared with the national average. This again reflects the rural nature of the district and the need to travel by car.

When looking at the distribution of facilities, consideration needs to be given to the fact that some local communities experience higher levels of relative deprivation compared with the district as a whole or the region generally. For instance, 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.



Huntingdonshire District



3.2 Overview of Current Participation in Sport

There are 1.5 million annual visitors to the council's leisure centres and active users of these leisure centres accounts for approximately 10% of the local population. With regard to wider participation in sport and leisure activities, Sport England has published an 'Activity Profile' for Huntingdonshire, derived using data from the Active People Survey. This was first released in 2006 and subsequently updated in 2008, and contains a range of sports participation analysis for the district. The headline participation statistics are as follows:

Activity	Huntingdonshire District Council		East Region		National Level	
	2005-2006	2007-2008	2005-2006	2007-2008	2005-2006	2007-2008
Participation (3 x 30 minutes per week)	23.5%	22.8%	20.5%	21.4%	21.0%	21.7%

This shows that nearly one in four respondents in Huntingdonshire engage in regular sport or recreational activity, a level that exceeds both the regional and national figures, although it should be noted that there has been a slight decline in participation since the first survey was conducted in 2005/2006.

This measure of participation is important - at the national level, the Government sets a range of national indicators as a means of measuring agreed national priorities. National Indicator 8 (NI8) is the indicator for sport and active recreation and is measured by the percentage of the adult population in a local area who participated in sport and active recreation, at moderate intensity, for at least 30 minutes on at least 12 days out of the last 4 weeks (equivalent to 30 minutes on 3 or more days a week). Therefore, the above data shows that Huntingdonshire is performing well against NI8.

In addition to participation data, the second Sport England survey has shown that within Huntingdonshire, since 2006:

- The percentage of people volunteering – defined as people that offer support to sport for at least one hour a week - has increased from 5.1% to 8.1%
- The percentage of people that are a member of a sports club has decreased from 25.6% to 25.0%
- The percentage of people who have received tuition from an instructor or coach to improve sports performance has decreased from 22.0% to 21.1%
- The percentage of people who take part in any organised competition in any sport or recreational activity has increased from 17.2% to 18.5%
- The percentage of adults who are very or fairly satisfied with sports provision in their local area increased from 73.9% to 75.3%.



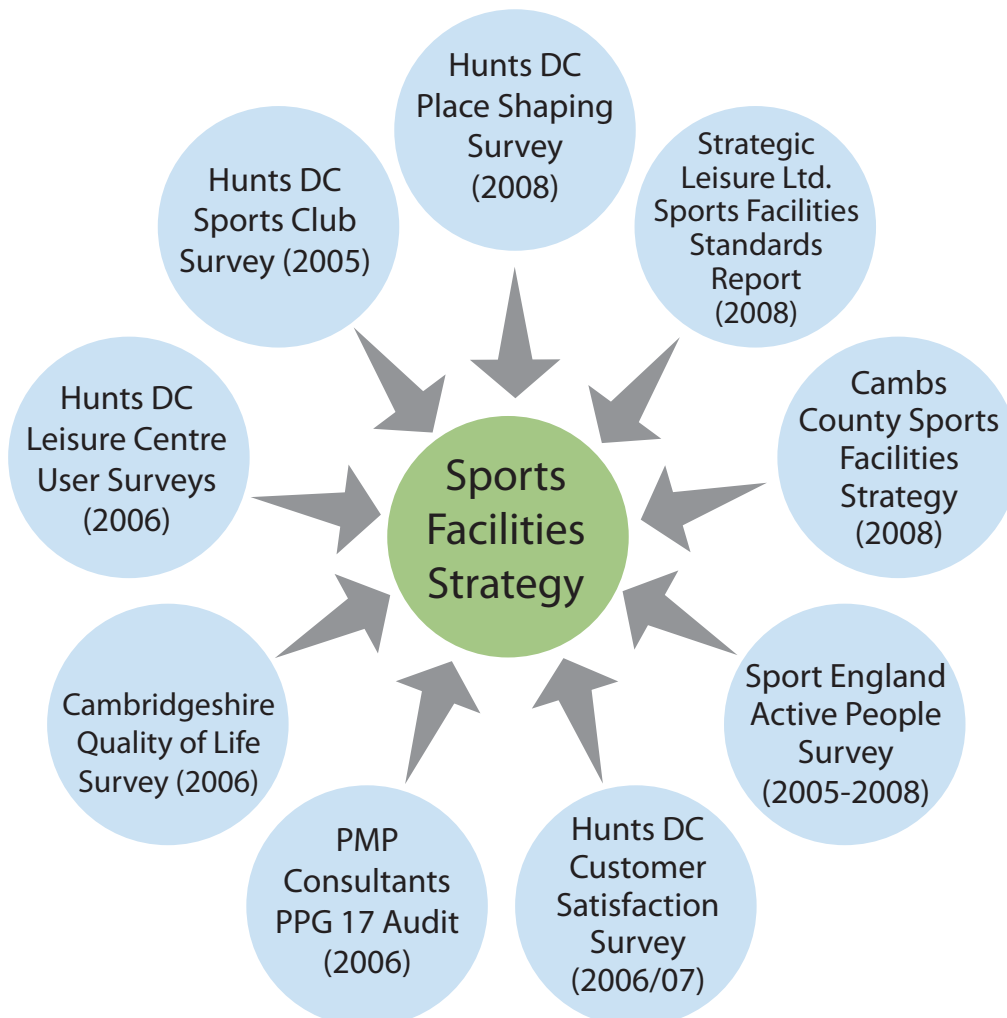
3.3 Participation by Age Group

Given that the 2008 update of the Activity Profile has only recently been released, there is currently no detailed analysis of the participation data by age group. Therefore, the 2006 data is still used as the baseline, and within this report, Huntingdonshire was identified as having higher levels of participation than those in the East of England.

One in six over 55 year olds participated 3 times a week compared to one in three 16-34 year olds and one in four 35-54 year olds. However, Huntingdonshire had among the lowest participation rates in the 16-34 age group when compared to similar Index of Multiple Deprivation and Office of National Statistics areas, yet the highest in the over 55 age group. This indicates that more needs to be done to develop facilities that will encourage greater levels of participation within the 16 to 34 year old demographic.

3.4 Do existing facilities meet the needs of local communities and clubs?

In addition to the information provided within 3.1 and 3.2, it is also important that future policy decisions relating to sports facility provision are based on an understanding of the sporting needs and aspirations of key stakeholders, including local communities and sports clubs. Therefore, detailed community engagement has been undertaken during the past four years and this is summarised in the diagram below. (A detailed breakdown of the consultation undertaken is displayed in Appendix 3).



Key findings from the consultation

- Current satisfaction levels concerning sport and leisure facilities are high, exceeding those of other authorities within the county (Sport England Active People Survey).
- There is scope for trying to encourage more people to use sports and leisure facilities with the Council's Customer Satisfaction Survey (2006/2007) showing that 1 in 5 people had never used sports or leisure facilities. However, encouragingly, the same survey showed that 37% of respondents used sports / leisure facilities at least once a month.
- Sports clubs within the district feel that there is sufficient pitch provision to meet demand, and many view the quality of provision as good.
- Although transport is seen as a major barrier to accessing cultural facilities within the district, particularly within rural areas, (Huntingdonshire District Council Cultural Strategy, 2007), the main mode of transport of respondents using outdoor sports facilities was via car (63%), indicating that people are willing to travel to reach their chosen facility (Planning Policy Guidance 17 assessment – Household Survey).
- When asked to assess how easy it is to get to a sports / leisure centre, more than 2 in 3 people (69%) of Huntingdonshire residents stated that it is very / fairly easy (Cambridgeshire Quality of Life Survey).
- Responses to the household survey suggested that perceived shortfalls in outdoor sports facilities relate to the provision of tennis and synthetic pitches.
- The Sports Club Survey (2005) highlighted that sports clubs generally felt that the quality and accessibility of pitch provision in the district was good. The only aspect that scored less than average was the provision of training areas. Most clubs did not possess a training area and hence scored this as zero, whilst changing rooms need improving in some instances. Similar to the scores given for pitch quality factors, the scores given for ancillary facilities were good, with only cycle parking scoring below average.
- Consultation suggests that access to training facilities is a key issue, with only limited slots available at synthetic pitches for clubs wishing to train midweek. There are few floodlit training areas and teams struggle to access facilities between the peak hours of 6 and 9pm, particularly at the leisure centres where there is high demand for facilities.





4. Sports Provision in Huntingdonshire

4.1 Collation of Sports Facilities Data

To help inform development of this strategy, a comprehensive database of all known sports facilities has been mapped on to the council's geographical information system including over 180 sites and 340 facilities. Furthermore, additional sites will be mapped as they are developed or identified. In the long-term this information will be continually updated and will be publicly accessible; functioning as an enhancement to the Active Places mapping system that is currently available through the Sport England website. The council has also compiled an inventory identifying sports facilities that are located within each of the district's settlements, and this information is available on request from the council.

4.2 Development of Local Standards for Sport

There is a need for objective standards, as they are important tools when looking to measure change. In particular, keeping pace with changes in population numbers and needs is important when seeking to ensure accessibility to sports facilities. The dispersed nature of the district, means that district-wide standards are a means of maintaining a strategic overview of provision versus demand.

Given the potential population expansion within the district, 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.

In order to assist in the development of local standards, Strategic Leisure Limited were 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'. This work focused on a select number of sports facilities but included all known provision irrespective of ownership, thereby incorporating local authority leisure centres, voluntary sector sports clubs, private sector facilities, and secondary schools - including those that will be re-built or re-furbished under PFI or the Building Schools for the Future programme. (The Sports Facilities Standards Report, produced by Strategic Leisure Limited, is available on request from Huntingdonshire District Council).



Following on from this report, on the 4th September 2008, the council formally adopted the following local standards for sports facilities, based on national methodology.

Facility	Standard
Sports halls	51.2 sq metres per 1,000 population
Swimming Pools	10.96 sq metres per 1,000 population
Indoor Bowls Rink	0.05 rinks per 1,000 population
Artificial Turf Pitch	0.04 turf pitch per 1,000 population
Fitness Stations	3.6 stations per 1,000 population

There are many facilities where there is no nationally agreed methodology to form standards. Therefore based on existing levels of provision the following standards are suggested for the following facilities:

Facility	Standard
Outdoor sports pitches, courts & greens	16.1 sq m per resident
Outdoor Tennis Courts	1 court per 2,200 people (Min 2 court facility)
Outdoor Bowling Greens	1 rink per 2,000 people (Min 5 rink facility/39m2)
Indoor Tennis Facility	1 facility per 40,000 people
Changing Rooms	1 facility per 2,000 people
Active Lifestyle Contribution	£50,000 per 1,000 people





4.3 Existing Provision and Future Needs

The following section will provide an overview of current provision levels of each of these headline sports facilities (refer to appendix 4 to view maps showing the spatial distribution of these facilities) and explore whether existing levels are sufficient to meet current and future demand. Whilst the main focus is on provision within the boundary of Huntingdonshire, this strategy recognises that facilities in neighbouring local authority areas can have an important role for residents of the district, and where relevant, these facilities are also highlighted.

Sports Halls

Overview

Sports halls are multi-purpose in their very nature, allowing for a range of indoor sporting activities to take place. This is important in ensuring the long-term viability of such facilities.

There are currently twelve sports halls located within the district with six sites being a minimum of four badminton courts in size. Of these, St Ivo Leisure Centre and Kimbolton School provide the largest halls, each providing up to six courts. A further five sites provide sports halls that are of three courts size, whilst Spring Common School provides a 1 court facility.

Is there sufficient provision within Huntingdonshire?

The adopted local standard for sports halls has been applied to current provision levels and is summarised below.

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Required level of provision based on suggested standards (population 168,200)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Sports Hall (@ min 594 sq m)	51.20 sq m	8612 sq m	4536 sq m

Notes: 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.

By excluding halls that are less than four badminton courts in size (i.e those less than 594 sq metres, there is currently a large deficit in sports hall provision within the district.



The table below identifies the level of provision required in 2021:

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Provision based on standards (predicted population 188,400)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Sports Hall (@ min 594 sq m)	51.20 sq m	9646 sq m	4536 sq m
Notes: 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.			

Future Options:

There is a clear shortfall in existing provision, and additional developments at Huntingdonshire Regional College and Little Paxton will not address this deficit in the long-term. Spatially, there is a lack of fit-for-purpose sports halls within Sawtry and Ramsey. Four court halls are identified as 'fit for purpose' and one way in this could be addressed is through the Building Schools for the Future programme (BSF). The Sports Facilities Standards report suggests that the implementation of BSF in the north of the district may provide the opportunity to address the need for sports halls in these areas e.g. Sawtry Community College.

Furthermore, the Local Investment Framework also suggests the need for enhanced leisure facilities in St Neots, and so there is a need to look at the strategic options and feasibility of providing enhanced facilities within this locality.

More widely the need for an 8 court hall could be considered as part of any new development as identified in both the Cambs Horizons Major Sports Facility Strategy (2006) and the Cambridgeshire Sports Facility Strategy (2008).

Given the current deficit in provision, there is a long-term need to retain existing sports hall provision.





Indoor Swimming Pools

Overview

Swimming pools have to accommodate a range of users, including those of all ages and abilities and those wishing to swim for social, fun, fitness, health or competitive reasons.

There are currently fourteen indoor swimming pools across the district, although only four sites have 25 metre length swimming pools. The largest pools are located at Huntingdon Leisure Centre and Kimbolton School (each of which is 250 sq metres in size).

Is there sufficient provision within Huntingdonshire?

The adopted local standard for indoor swimming pools has been applied to current provision levels and is summarised below.

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Required level of provision based on suggested standards (population 168,200)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Indoor Swimming Pool (@ min 212 sq m)	10.96 sq m	1844 sq m	938 sq m

Notes: Recommended Community Pool size: 325 sq m. The survey discounted smaller pools. Including all 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.

In 2021, the level of provision required is calculated to be:

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Provision based on standards (predicted population 188,400)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Indoor Swimming Pool (@ min 212 sq m)	10.96 sq m	2065 sq m	938 sq m

Notes: Recommended Community Pool size: 325 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.



Future Options:

When reviewing the data it is clear that the district currently has a deficit of swimming pools that are 25 metres in length. However, this masks the fact that there are a range of other pools (private and public) that are smaller in size.

With regard to the need for new provision, the Sports Facilities Standards Report (2008), identifies that there “could be demand” for a new swimming facility with St Neots, linked to the extensive population growth projected for this area. Furthermore, the district’s Local Investment Framework supports the notion of providing a new leisure facility, including an indoor swimming pool within the St Neots area to help address the large increase of population.

However, given that there is already a 25 metre length pool in St Neots, further consultation will be required to ascertain whether there is the need for an additional or enhanced swimming facility within this location.

It is also necessary to highlight proposed developments outside of the district’s boundary. For instance, there are plans to provide a new community 25 metre swimming pool linked to a new residential development within Hampton. Communities within the north of this district may choose to access swimming provision here.





Indoor Bowls

Overview

Indoor bowls is a sport that offers social interaction, general fitness and well-being as well as competitive opportunities to a range of age groups.

There are currently two sites that provide indoor bowls facilities; Huntingdon Indoor Bowls Club and St Neots and District Indoor Bowls Club, with the latter providing the largest number of rinks, eight.

Is there sufficient provision within Huntingdonshire?

The adopted local standard for indoor bowls has been applied to current provision and is summarised below:

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Required level of provision based on suggested standards (population 168,200)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Indoor Bowls	0.05 rink	8.41 rinks	14 rinks

Notes: There is an apparent over supply of bowls facilities. These are club-based.

Predicted provision requirements are calculated as follows:

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Provision based on standards (predicted population 188,400)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Indoor Bowls	0.05 rink	9.4 rinks	14 rinks

Notes: There is still likely to be an apparent oversupply of bowls facilities. These are club-based.

Future Options:

Although there are only two indoor bowls facilities, this is sufficient to meet both current and future needs. Provision is centrally located and is within 20-30 minutes drive-time of the rest of the district, and so there is no requirement for additional provision.



Artificial Turf Pitches

Overview

Artificial turf pitches provide high quality provision for both sports training and matches.

The district currently has five full size artificial pitches (three sand-based and two third-generation pitches), and an additional four sand-based and two third generation sites of training size within the district.

Is there sufficient provision within Huntingdonshire?

The adopted local standard for artificial turf pitches has been applied to current provision levels and is summarised below.

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Required level of provision based on suggested standards (population 168,200)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Synthetic Turf Pitches (Full size) (min 640 sq m pitch per 25,000 population)	0.04 pitches	6.7	5
Notes: There was an identified need for more pitches.			

Predicted provision requirements are calculated as follows:

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Provision based on standards (predicted population 188,400)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Synthetic Turf Pitches (Full size) (min 640 sq m pitch per 25,000 population)	0.04 pitches	7.5	5
Notes: More pitches planned before 2021.			

Future Options:

There is currently a deficit of full size provision when compared to the adopted local standard, but it should be noted that the figures above do not show the important contribution made by six training pitches. Future options regarding new artificial turf pitch provision are being considered.

The Local Investment Framework identifies the potential need for a new artificial turf pitch in St Neots. This report acknowledges that there is insufficient demand generated for an artificial turf pitch based solely on the growth of St Neots, but given the level of growth across the district as a whole, an additional pitch is recommended.

The implementation of Building Schools for the Future may also lead to the development of additional facilities, including artificial turf pitches.

When considering artificial turf pitches it should be acknowledged that it is not just the quantity of provision that is important, but also the quality and type of provision. Some surfaces are not conducive to all types of sport, likewise, new surfaces are being developed such as new third-generation pitches. Therefore, it is important to keep updated with technological developments when seeking to provide new developments or re-surfacing existing provision.



Health and Fitness

Overview

Health and fitness centres are popular with people attending these facilities for a variety of reasons including general health and well being, and weight loss.

The District Council has five Leisure Centres with St Ivo Leisure Centre providing the largest number (75 stations - including free weights room). There are a range of other providers across the district providing almost twice as much provision as the council, with RAF Alconbury the largest provider of 100 stations.

Is there sufficient provision within Huntingdonshire?

The adopted local standard for fitness stations has been applied to the quantitative data available and is summarised below.

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Required level of provision based on suggested standards (population 168,200)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Fitness Stations	3.6 stations	605	586

Notes: 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.

Predicted provision requirements are calculated as follows:

Facility Type	Local Standards of Provision per 1000 population	Provision based on standards (predicted population 188,400)	Current level of Provision (2008)
Fitness Stations	3.6 stations	678	586

Notes: Increasing demand for fitness stations set to continue.

Future Options:

The Sports Facilities Standards Report highlights that communities living in the four main settlements all have access to fitness stations within a 20 minute walk-time. Furthermore, the deficit / surplus table above does not take into account provision located outside of the district. Those residents living on the edge of Huntingdonshire may seek to use facilities outside of the district. Harper's in Wyboston attracts significant use from residents in and around the St Neots area, important when considering the projected growth within this location. Residents in the north of the district have easy access to Fitness Express on the outskirts of Peterborough.



Concerning council provision, each of the five leisure centres have 'Impressions Fitness Suites'. The Sports Facilities Standards Report states that all of the leisure centres are in 'reasonable condition, but none of them are fully DDA compliant', unsurprising given that the majority were built in the mid 1970's-early 1980's. Therefore, the council proposes to commit investment into these facilities to ensure that the quality of the facilities offered and the fabric of the buildings continue to meet users expectations given that increasing demand for fitness stations is set to continue.



Outdoor Grass Pitches, Courts and Greens.

Overview

Outdoor sports pitches, courts and greens provide a range of sporting opportunities for all ages. Usage levels are dependent upon the quality of the facility. This is particularly important for grass pitches where heavy usage can be to the detriment of the pitch quality.

The council's Playing Pitch Strategy, undertaken in 2006 as part of the Planning Policy Guidance 17 assessment, identified all known provision at that time as follows:

- 88 adult football pitches
- 54 junior football pitches
- 14 mini soccer pitches
- 43 cricket pitches
- 14 adult and junior rugby pitches
- 1 junior rugby league pitch
- 8 x 18 hole golf courses
- 2 x 6 lane athletics tracks

Is there sufficient provision within Huntingdonshire?

A detailed Playing Pitch Strategy has been completed by PMP Consultants in 2006. Within this, Sport England's Playing Pitch Methodology has been used to identify surplus / deficits in provision. However it should be noted that the overview of provision outlined above does not identify seasonal and temporal variations in pitch usage, an important factor when considering grass pitch provision. Furthermore, the analysis of provision is based upon the peak load of games to be played at a specific time during the week (i.e. am or pm on a day).

However, for some sports such as mini-soccer it may be possible to spread the games during the course of a Sunday morning and therefore not require the maximum number of pitches. The calculations take into account the capacity of pitches available. Improvements to pitch quality would increase the number of games a pitch is able to sustain (capacity) and would therefore reduce any shortfalls. (Refer to the Council's Playing Pitch Strategy for a detailed overview of the assessment process)

With regard to current outdoor pitch provision, key findings include:

- there is an oversupply of full size adult football pitches on the identified peak day across the district
- there is an undersupply of junior football pitches on the identified peak day and a large undersupply of mini-soccer pitches on the peak day
- there is a slight shortfall of cricket pitches on the identified peak day
- there is an undersupply of both adult rugby union pitches and junior rugby pitches on the identified peak day



Concerning future provision, as is the current situation, the most severe pitch shortage is of mini soccer pitches. In 2021, there will be a shortage of these pitches in all of the analysis areas in the district, whilst there will be a surplus of provision of adult football pitches.

Future Options:

The Local Investment Framework identifies the potential need for an additional 49.6 ha of outdoor grass pitches, courts and greens across the district, with slightly less than half of this being required within St Neots.

In terms of addressing this need, whilst the current quantity of pitches in Huntingdonshire secured for community use is high, there remain some pitches at school sites that are not dual use facilities at the present time and access to these facilities could provide a vital community resource, both in terms of access to open space (particularly in smaller settlements where there is limited provision) but more specifically through meeting the demand for pitch provision.

The Council should seek to secure section 106 contributions to improve the quality of existing outdoor playing fields or alternative sporting provision in the district and provide new ones where a shortfall has been identified. Developers cannot be asked to make up existing deficiencies, only to contribute to those caused by or exacerbated by their development. This is particularly relevant when considering the potential for new provision within the growth area of St Neots.

The quality of outdoor grass pitches, courts and greens vary across the district. Key sites to consider improving, based on poor quality identified within the Planning Policy Guidance 17 Assessment include:

Market Towns:	Stukeley Meadows Primary School (Huntingdon) Town Hall Pitch (Ramsey) Longsands College – St Neots
Key Centres:	Adam Lyons Recreation Field (Warboys) Fenstanton Sports Facility
Smaller Settlements:	Great Stukeley Sports Facility Southoe Football Pitch Broughton Sports Facility Colne Sports Facility Ashbeach – Ramsey St Marys Abbotsley Sports Pitch Hail Weston New Town Sports Area Thornhill Estates Archery Fields – Offords Yelling Cricket Club

4.4 Other Sports Facilities in Huntingdonshire

In addition to the headline facilities outlined in 4.3, there is a diverse range of additional sporting provision located within Huntingdonshire, including facilities such as horse riding schools and outdoor water sports facilities. Water sports in particular are important locally with a number of sites and clubs providing a good infrastructure of water sports venues, together with the River Ouse which flows through the district. In the quest to encourage physical activity, the potential contribution of water sports should not be underestimated.

5. Facility Prioritisation Work

Section 1.3 of this strategy outlined a number of key considerations that need to be addressed by this strategy, and in view of the information provided within sections 3 and 4, recommendations are now made to address the districts sporting requirements.

5.1 “Sports facilities that need to be preserved and maintained because of identified strategic need”

The following existing facilities and clubs have been identified as being strategically important to the district, and should therefore be maintained and enhanced:

St Ivo Leisure Centre (Community Leisure Centre)
St Ivo Outdoor Centre (Community Leisure Centre)
St Neots Leisure Centre (Community Leisure Centre)
Huntingdon Leisure Centre (Community Leisure Centre)
Ramsey Leisure Centre (Community Leisure Centre)
Sawtry Leisure Centre (Community Leisure Centre)
Hinchingsbrooke School (Specialist Sports College)
Huntingdon Gymnastics Club (Gymnastics)
Grafham Water Centre (Water sports)
Paxton Lakes Sailing Club (Sailing)
Hunts Sailing Club (Sailing)
Kimbolton School (Multi-sports)
Hemingford Sports Pavilion (Squash)
Huntingdon Tennis Club (Indoor Tennis)
St Neots Table Tennis Club (Table Tennis)
St Neots Town Football Club (Artificial Turf Pitch)
St Ives Rugby Club (Rugby Union)
St Neots Rugby Club (Rugby Union)
St Neots Rowing Club (Rowing)
Jubilee Park, Huntingdon (Football)
Somersham Town Football Club (Football)¹
Stilton FC (Football)¹
Sawtry Colts (Football)¹
Warboys Colts (Football)¹
Ramsey Town Colts (Football)¹
Little Paxton Colts (Football)¹
Godmanchester Town Cricket Club (Cricket)²
St Ives Town Cricket Club (Cricket)²

¹ Identified as a priority by the Huntingdonshire Football Association

² Identified as a priority by the Huntingdonshire Cricket Board



5.2 “Existing sports facilities that need to be repaired, upgraded/improved to meet identified strategic need”

Significant investment has been made to sports facilities across the district in recent years and more is planned, as shown within Appendix 7. It is particularly important that leisure centres are maintained to a high standard given that they provide a range of sporting facilities including swimming, indoor hall provision and fitness stations.

Appendix 7a provides a summary of condition survey spending at each of the five district council leisure centres for the period 2007 to 2011.

A further condition survey will be undertaken in 2009 and this will provide a clear strategic framework for the management and maintenance of leisure centre facilities until 2016, and this is important given the high level of satisfaction regarding leisure centre provision within the district.

Aside from leisure centres, it is important that the quality of all sports facilities are maintained to a suitable standard to ensure high quality, fit-for-purpose sporting opportunities are available within Huntingdonshire. Furthermore, all facilities should comply with the Disability Discrimination Act (1995). As a result of this act, service providers have had to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people, such as providing extra help or making changes to the way they provide their services since October 1999. Service providers have also had to make reasonable adjustments to the physical features of their premises to overcome physical barriers since October 2004.

Another important consideration is that all existing sports facilities should seek to improve energy efficiency. Similarly, all new projects should aim to minimise energy usage and consider the potential impact on climate change. It is also important that all council maintained sites fully embrace the recommendations made within the Huntingdonshire District Council Environment Strategy.

Within Appendix 5, a number of priority sporting and leisure projects have been identified including improvements to a number of existing facilities, examples being the redevelopment of St Neots Table Tennis Club and Huntingdon Gymnastics Club.



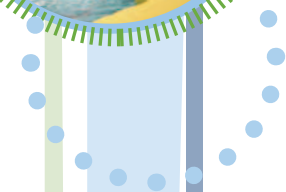
5.3 “Any new sports facilities that may be required to meet identified strategic need, and proposed sites for where these facilities should be located”

Section 4 identified that there is a lack of fit-for-purpose sports halls within Huntingdonshire, particularly within Sawtry and Ramsey. Furthermore, there is the potential requirement for additional swimming pool provision, with St Neots identified as a possible location based on projected population growth.

Given the national agenda for encouraging participation in sport linked to positive health benefits, it is important that existing facilities are of a suitable standard to encourage participation. Linked to the health agenda, there is a need for more trim trails/active places/outdoor gyms, as shown in 5.4 - increasing this form of provision will hopefully encourage more 16 to 34 years to participate in sport, addressing the concerns raised in section 3.3.

One of the key aspects of the local consultation that has been conducted is that there is general satisfaction with the quantity of sporting provision within the district. However, a lack of provision and access to high quality training pitches and ancillary facilities was identified as key barriers to participation. New developments should encourage sharing of facilities and multi-sports hubs.

Changing facilities have been identified as priorities for football clubs such as Ramsey FC (particularly the colts site), Sawtry FC and Stilton FC. The Cambs Horizons Major Sports Facility Strategy (2006) and the Cambridgeshire Sports Facility Strategy (2008) also identify the need for a specialist minimum 2 lane indoor cricket facility to address the lack of adequate indoor cricket practice facilities. These key regional documents also highlight the need for an 8 court sports hall, as well as the need for a ‘dojo’ specialist martial arts facility.



5.4 “Sites where new facilities are required to meet identified strategic need”

Based on existing facility provision and utilising the inventory that was compiled to identify facilities across the district (highlighted in 4.1), settlements identified as priorities are summarised below:

Settlement	High Priority	Medium Priority	Low Priority
St Neots		-Trim Trails/Active Places/Outdoor Gyms	-Athletics Track (synthetic) Indoor Tennis
St Ives	- Synthetic Turf Pitch	- Trim Trails/Active Places/Outdoor Gyms	
Yaxley		- Outdoor Tennis Courts	- Trim Trails/Active Places/Outdoor Gyms
Godmanchester		- Outdoor Tennis Courts	- Trim Trails/Active Places/Outdoor Gyms
Ramsey (town)			- Football Grass Pitches (Adult, Junior, Mini), including clubhouse and ancillary provision - Trim Trails/Active Places/Outdoor Gyms
Sawtry		- Football Grass Pitches (Adult, Junior, Mini) - Outdoor Cricket Pitch, including clubhouse and ancillary provision - Outdoor Tennis Courts	- Trim Trails/Active Places/Outdoor Gyms
Brampton			- Trim Trails/Active Places/Outdoor Gyms - Tennis Courts
Warboys			- Changing facilities (colts/youth provision)
Little Paxton			- Outdoor / lawn bowls
Stilton			- Football Grass Pitches (Adult, Junior, Mini), including clubhouse and ancillary provision

These settlements have been identified based on the fact that they are large enough to support additional provision, none currently exist, or the need for new facilities is identified within other strategies or through engagement with sports clubs and organisations. It should be noted that this information is continually being updated as knowledge of new provision emerges, and this impacts upon which settlements are prioritised for new facilities.



5.5 “A priority for future investment”

Appendix 5 outlines known sporting and leisure facilities projects within the district. Within this matrix, projects at Ramsey Football Club, Godmanchester Town Cricket Club, Huntingdon Gymnastics Club, St Neots Table Tennis Club, St Ives Golf Club, Paxton Lakes Sailing Club, St Neots Leisure Centre and St Ivo Outdoor Leisure Centre are identified as highest priority projects based on local strategic need, sustainability and current / potential participation.

A sports hierarchy has been developed to assist with critically evaluating any future possible investment within the district. This hierarchy is summarised below and has been developed based on assessments made by Huntingdonshire District Council, with the ranking level based on club infrastructure, current and potential participation levels, and facilities on offer (refer to Appendix 6 for a detailed overview).

Sporting types	Ranking
Football, golf, swimming, cricket	1
Squash, tennis, athletics, gymnastics, rugby (union and league), netball, rowing, sailing, martial arts	2
Hockey, bowls, basketball, canoeing, cycling, table tennis, equestrian, badminton	3
Angling, archery, boxing, fencing, judo, volleyball	4

This shows that football, golf, swimming and cricket are the highest ranking sports within the district. Future investment should seek to address facilities/ access where there is clear potential for improvement. For instance, there is scope for tennis to improve its overall ranking by having greater levels of participation which can be encouraged through improved facilities and better access to some tennis courts. The ranking is only a guide and one aspect of the decision making process.

Accessibility is an important consideration within the district; in many instances it is not the quality of the provision that limits participation, instead it is a lack of accessibility that acts as the key barrier. Future investments should seek to address the issue of access. Another case-in-point of this is rugby union, with current participation levels good given the limited number of clubs in the district. However, there is scope for improving the working relationship between schools, clubs and the council to encourage even greater levels of accessibility to playing rugby. Therefore, future investment should not simply focus on providing new facilities, but looking at wider issues of access and capacity to increase participation.

Linked to participation, future investment also needs to contribute towards achieving the Local Area Agreement target of 1.5% growth in National Indicator 8 (as detailed within 3.2).



5.6 “Those facilities that need to be expanded or redeveloped to meet identified strategic need and a timetable for any proposed sports-developments”

Appendix 5 provides an overview of future sports and leisure projects within the district. This table provides details of projects that will help to improve existing facilities.

5.7 “Future opportunities for disinvestment in or redevelopment of existing sports facilities in Huntingdonshire, as a result of under-use and perceived lack of future demand or inappropriateness”

At present, community engagement suggests that satisfaction levels concerning sport and leisure facilities are high, and most of the available evidence is that there is demand for existing facilities. Furthermore, given that there is a deficit in provision of most headline facilities (section 4.3), it is important that these facilities are protected and enhanced. Therefore, demand should be continually assessed by monitoring of national, regional and local trends as well as participation levels.

6. Strategic Overview

The district's future sporting requirements have been set out in section 5. In support of this, there is a need to establish a set of clear policy recommendations to help guide long-term decisions that are made about sports facility provision.

6.1 Policy Recommendations

1a: Seek to maximise section 106 contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy tariff to enhance sports facilities across the district through the creation of a Supplementary Planning Document within the Local Development Framework to secure contributions from housing developers.

Outcome: Contributions from housing developers to maintain and enhance sport and recreation facilities.

Timetable: On-going.

1b: Seek to maximise external funding, grant aid or sponsorship contributions to enhance sports facilities in the district.

Outcome: Reduced pressure on limited funding sources.

Timetable: On-going.

2: Embed the local standards advocated within this strategy into key documents such as the Local Development Framework and Local Investment Framework.

Outcome: High quality provision through new or improved sports facilities, as a result of engaging with the planning framework to ensure that provision meets strategic need.

Timetable: Complete by June 2009.

3: Encourage the retention of all 'strategically important sports facilities' as highlighted in section 5.1.

Outcome: Maintain a mix of strategically important facilities.

Timetable: On-going.

4: Given the current level of provision and identified need there is a long-term need to retain existing sports halls within the district.

Outcome: Public access to sports halls with indoor facilities for a range of sports activities.

Timetable: On-going.

5: To have regard to the recommendations made within the Local Investment Framework as it relates to new areas of growth.

Outcome: Potential new provision to meet demands within growth areas.

Timetable: On-going.



6: Ensure all council Leisure Centres provide facilities that are fit-for-purpose.

Outcome: High quality leisure provision that continues to meet the needs of all users.

Timetable: On-going.

7: Encourage the retention of good quality outdoor sports facilities.

Outcome: High quality pitches that meets the needs of users.

Timetable: On-going.

8: Seek to encourage greater use of all existing sports facilities irrespective of whether they are school, local authority or privately run.

Outcome: Enhanced access to existing facilities.

Timetable: On-going.

9: Work with neighbouring Local Authorities to identify key facilities that are located outside of Huntingdonshire that benefit this district. Consult with neighbouring councils when planning to improve or provide new facilities.

Outcome: Enhanced understanding of facility provision within the county and surrounding boundaries, and increased sharing of information.

Timetable: On-going.

10: Work with other sports and leisure facility providers to seek improvements in sports provision and encourage participation in sport.

Outcome: A comprehensive range of sports facilities within the district.

Timetable: On-going.

11: The district council does not currently have any dedicated funding for sports applications. In considering requests for support, the council will critically evaluate the contribution of the club and the associated club facilities in light of this strategy and wider council objectives, within the resources available.

Outcome: High quality, accessible leisure provision.

Timetable: On-going.

This Strategy has been produced by Huntingdonshire District Council working in partnership with the following consultant:



jones plus limited⁺

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

Appendix 1:

Sports Facilities Strategy Task Group:

Elected Members:

Executive Councillor for Leisure Centres - Cllr Doug Dew
Deputy Leader of the Council - Cllr Mike Simpson

Officers:

Leisure Development Manager - Jo Peadon
Lifestyle Manager – Chris Lloyd
Director of Environmental & Community Services – Malcolm Sharp (Chairman)
Leisure Centres General Manager - Simon Bell
Operations Service Development Manager - John Craig
Head of Environmental & Community Health - Dr Sue Lammin



Appendix 2:

Key Local Policy Documents

i. Huntingdonshire's Community Strategy

The Huntingdonshire Local Strategic Partnership (HLSP) includes a number of organisations and community representatives formed to improve the area. This partnership includes key partners from the public, private and voluntary sector, including:

- Huntingdonshire District Council
- NHS Cambridgeshire
- Cambridgeshire Community Service
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- Cambridgeshire Police
- Local businesses
- Voluntary Sector Organisations

One of the major tasks undertaken by the HLSP was the development, implementation and on-going monitoring of a 'Community Strategy' – a key document that outlines how members of the HLSP will work in partnership to improve the quality of life in the area.

Huntingdonshire's Community Strategy's long term vision is based on what local people have told the council 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 Huntingdonshire District 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.

ii. Growing Success - Corporate Plan

Huntingdonshire District Council is responsible for promoting the economic, social and environmental well being of its communities, with the desired objective of achieving a good quality of life. This is achieved by delivering actions and principles established within the Community Strategy.



'Growing Success' is Huntingdonshire District Council's Corporate Plan and details how the Council will achieve its part of the Community Strategy. It is based on detailed community engagement so that the council can identify local communities' needs. 'Growing Success' identifies aims that the council will work towards, and details how these aims will be delivered.

iii. Local Development Framework (LDF)

This is one of the principle vehicles for achieving the corporate plan. It is a spatial plan that goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influences the nature of places and how they function. The LDF consists of a number of documents including a core strategy and development control policies which together set out a spatial strategy to manage the amount and direction of growth and policies to help guide and judge that development. It also includes a document identifying where allocations for development will occur.

iv. Huntingdonshire Local Investment Framework (HLIF)

The Council commissioned a joint consultancy team, led by EDAW plc, to undertake an in-depth study into the physical and social infrastructure needs, including sports facilities, arising from the projected population growth within the district. The HLIF was produced to assist and inform the development of the Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework.

The HLIF divides the district into five key areas of Huntingdon, Yaxley, Ramsey, St Ives and St Neots, enabling for more detailed analysis of social infrastructure demand. For each area, priorities and demands are identified up until 2026 and the report provides information relating to leisure and recreation facilities including swimming pools, sports halls, indoor bowls halls, artificial turf pitches and outdoor sports facilities.

v. Huntingdonshire Cultural Strategy

This strategy sets out Huntingdonshire District Council's key targets and aspirations for culture between 2007 and 2010. It provides a distinctive vision for the development of cultural activities, facilities and services and focuses on improving the quality of life and wellbeing of Huntingdonshire's residents, workers and visitors through the provision and development of cultural activities, events and facilities and by helping to achieve other quality of life goals such as providing lifelong learning opportunities, improving health, stimulating economic development and helping to improve safety within local communities.



The strategy contains a comprehensive action plan with detailed outputs, outcomes and targets, which establishes a partnership-based approach to sustaining, developing and improving the cultural life of the district. The action plan will be monitored on a quarterly and annual basis. Huntingdonshire District Council has initiated this Strategy but its implementation requires the co-operation and partnership of many people, organisations and groups in the public, voluntary and commercial sectors. It has been developed as a strategy for the district and not a service plan for the council.

vi. Sports Facilities Standards Report (2008)

A need to develop and adopt local sports facility standards was identified through national best practice. As an aid to this, Strategic Leisure Limited undertook a comprehensive review of existing sports facility provision and identified future needs based on predicted population growth using Sport England's nationally recognised model the 'Sports Facility Calculator'. Their research focused on indoor sports facilities (swimming pools, sports halls, health and fitness facilities, indoor bowls) and artificial turf pitches, and this work has helped inform the development of this strategy.

vii. Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment (2006)

The Open Space, Sport and Recreation Needs Assessment and Audit was undertaken by PMP consultants. The study covers informal open space, outdoor recreation facilities, children's play areas, allotments and outdoor sports pitch provision. The study was produced primarily to inform the planning process. Planning Policy Guidance 17 requires local authorities to carry out a needs assessment and audit of provision to inform the development of local standards for the provision of open space. The study identifies deficiencies and surpluses of provision and their spatial distribution.

Appendix 3: Community Engagement

Sport England - Active People Survey (2005 – 2008)

Sport England have undertaken two Active People Survey's since October 2005. The purpose of this survey was to identify the percentage of adults who are very or fairly satisfied with sports provision within their local area.

The first survey undertaken between October 2005 to October 2006, showed that 73.9% of people were very or fairly satisfied with sports provision. The repeat survey undertaken in 2007 – 2008 saw this figure rise slightly to 75.3%. When these results are compared with neighbouring authorities within Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire has the highest levels of satisfaction, as demonstrated below. Furthermore, this authority is the only one which had an increase in satisfaction when comparing the second survey with the initial consultation. These figures are also higher than the national average which was calculated as 67.5%.

Local Authority	Survey 1 (2005/2006)	Survey 2 (2007/2008)
Huntingdonshire	73.9%	75.3%
South Cambridgeshire	73.9%	72.7%
Cambridge	72.7%	70.7%
Peterborough UA	70.4%	64.3%
East Cambridgeshire	69.1%	64.0%
Fenland	65.1%	62.2%

Customer Satisfaction Survey 2006/07 (Best Value General Survey)

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) requires all local authorities to undertake customer satisfaction surveys every three years. Questionnaires were sent to 2,500 addresses within the district (49% return rate), and questions focused on a range of factors that impact on the residents of Huntingdonshire. With regard to sports and leisure facilities, 67% of respondents were satisfied with sports / leisure facilities and events, with only 10% dissatisfied. The level of satisfaction has increased since the previous consultation undertaken in 2003/04, with sports/leisure facilities now having a satisfaction rate which is six percentage points higher.

Concerning usage of the districts facilities, 37% of respondents stated that they used sports / leisure facilities at least once a month, but more than 1 in 5 people (22%) had never used sports / leisure facilities.

Those who use sports / leisure facilities were generally more satisfied than those who do not. To illustrate, those classed as non-users of the sports/leisure facilities and events (those who have never used them or last used them more than a year ago) had a satisfaction level of 50%, which is almost 30% lower than the satisfaction level among those who were users (77%).

When asked whether sports / leisure facilities had improved over the last three years, 17% of respondents stated that they had improved, whilst 8% stated that they had got worse.



When asked what needs improving locally, the second most popular answer in 2006/2007 was activities for teenagers (36% of the 1227 individuals who responded). The levels of residents who thought that this aspect was among those which most needed improving in 2006/7 were also similar to the levels in 2003/4, when 39% of respondents highlighted activities for teenagers.

Planning Policy Guidance 17 Assessment – undertaken by PMP Consultants (2006)

As the part of the district-wide audit, 5000 households were given the opportunity to comment on the overall provision, quality and accessibility of open space, sport and recreation facilities within Huntingdonshire. The questionnaire was distributed according to the total population living in each analysis area ensuring that geographically representative samples of residents living in the district were able to comment. In total, 565 postal surveys were returned and supporting this postal questionnaire was a number of community drop-in sessions.

The results from this showed that one in four people (25.7%) had visited outdoor sports facilities more than once a month, with an additional 24% visiting less than once a month. One in two people (50.3%) of respondents did not use outdoor sports facilities, indicating that there is a need to seek to encourage more people to actively participate in sport.

The main mode of transport of respondents using outdoor sports facilities was via car (63%). The most frequent travel time to the facility was between five and ten minutes (37%), followed by between 11 and 14 minutes (29%). This indicates that people are willing to travel to reach their chosen facility. This was influenced by the overall type of facility, with more people expecting to drive to synthetic pitches. This information is important to consider when planning additional facility provision that will be required to meet future increases in population within Huntingdonshire.

There are mixed views regarding the overall quantity of provision in Huntingdonshire, with similar proportions feeling the quantity of provision was about right to the proportion who felt provision was not enough. This is likely to be reflective of the vast array of facilities that the outdoor sports facilities typology covers. Further analysis of the household survey response suggested that perceived shortfalls particularly relate to the provision of tennis and synthetic pitches.

Cambridgeshire Quality of Life Survey 2006 - The Cambridgeshire Joint Consultation Partnership

Postal questionnaires were sent to a random sample of 7,500 households across the county, and 3206 responses were received. These responses were weighted based on population within each of Cambridgeshire's districts.

Within Huntingdonshire, a total of 671 completed questionnaires were returned (45% response rate). With regard to facility provision, when asked to assess how easy it is to get to a sports / leisure centre, more than 2 in 3 people (69%) of Huntingdonshire residents stated that it is very / fairly easy. This figure compared favourably to the county wide response of 64%.

Huntingdonshire Leisure Centre User Surveys

User Surveys were carried out at all five of the council's leisure centres to assess usage patterns and needs. When asked whether there are any facilities/services that could be improved, the most common answers were 'changing rooms/showers' and 'equipment'.



17.4% of users at Huntingdon Leisure Centre wanted improved changing facilities, more than twice as many people than at Sawtry Leisure Centre (8.6%), and Ramsey (6.5%).

24.2% of users at St Neots wanted improved equipment; with better gym facilities and a larger pool the most commonly cited factors. In contrast, only 3% wanted improved equipment at St Ives Indoor Leisure Centre.

Huntingdonshire District Council Sports Club Survey (2005)

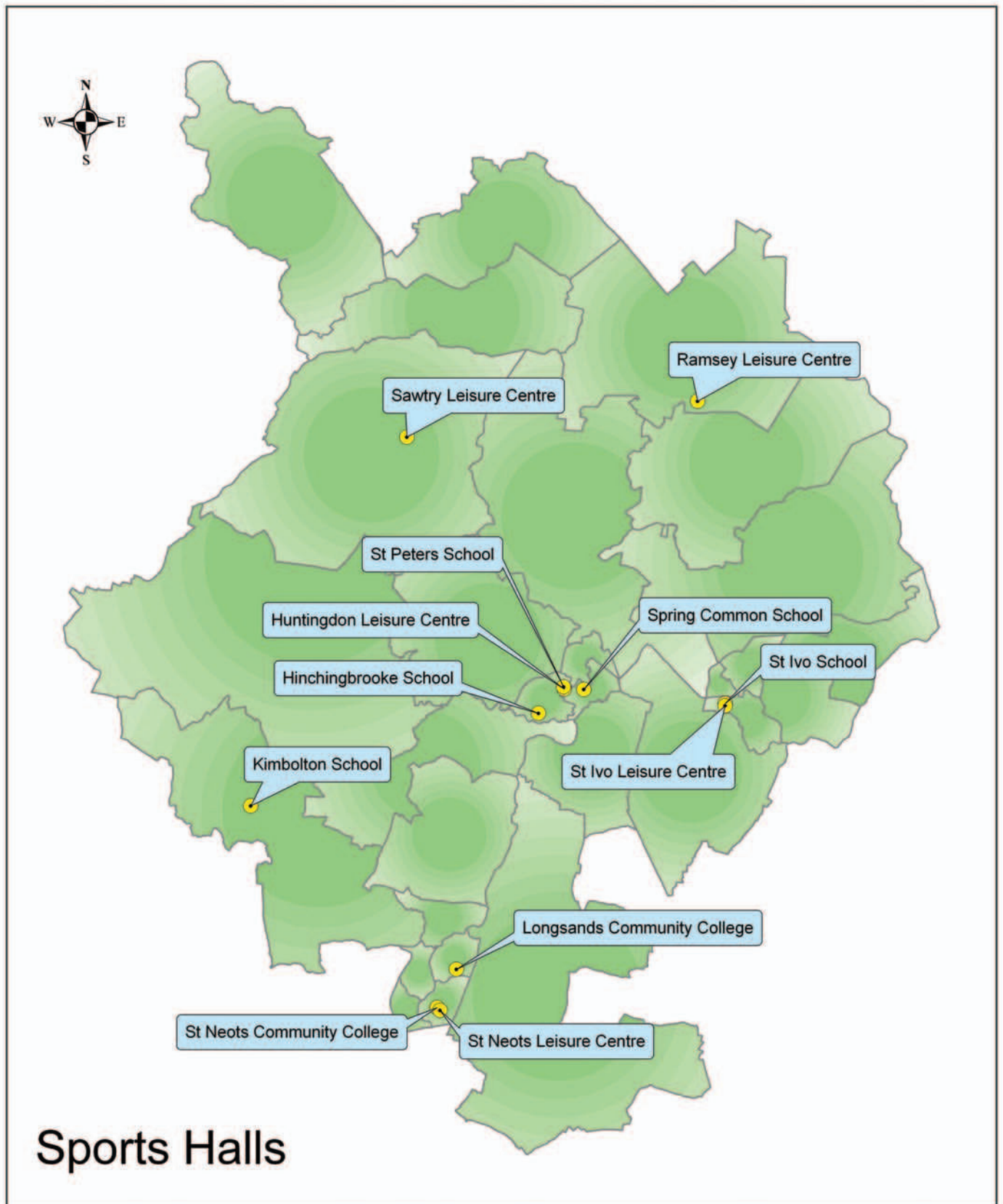
A sports club survey was undertaken by the council to all known football, cricket, rugby, hockey, tennis and bowls clubs during 2005, with a total of 62 clubs responding to this questionnaire.

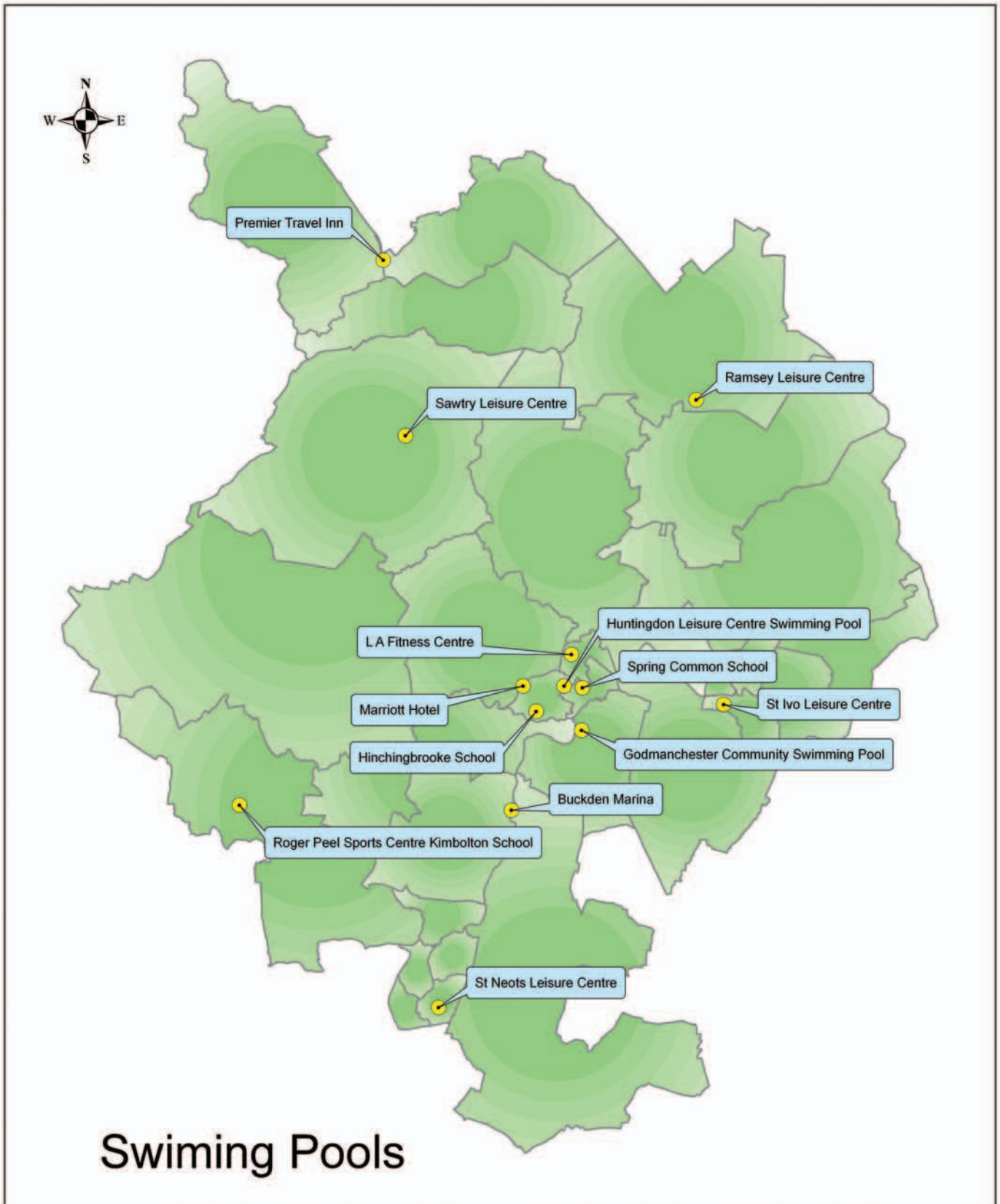
Responses indicated that 77% of the clubs felt that number and availability of pitches met the demand within the district. In line with this, 47.6% of clubs rated the availability of pitches in the district as very good or excellent. This related to an average score of 3.42 (out of 5) and a modal score of 4 (very good). 59.7% of clubs rated the accessibility of pitches as very good or excellent. This relates to an average score of 3.61 (out of 5) and a modal score of 4 (very good).

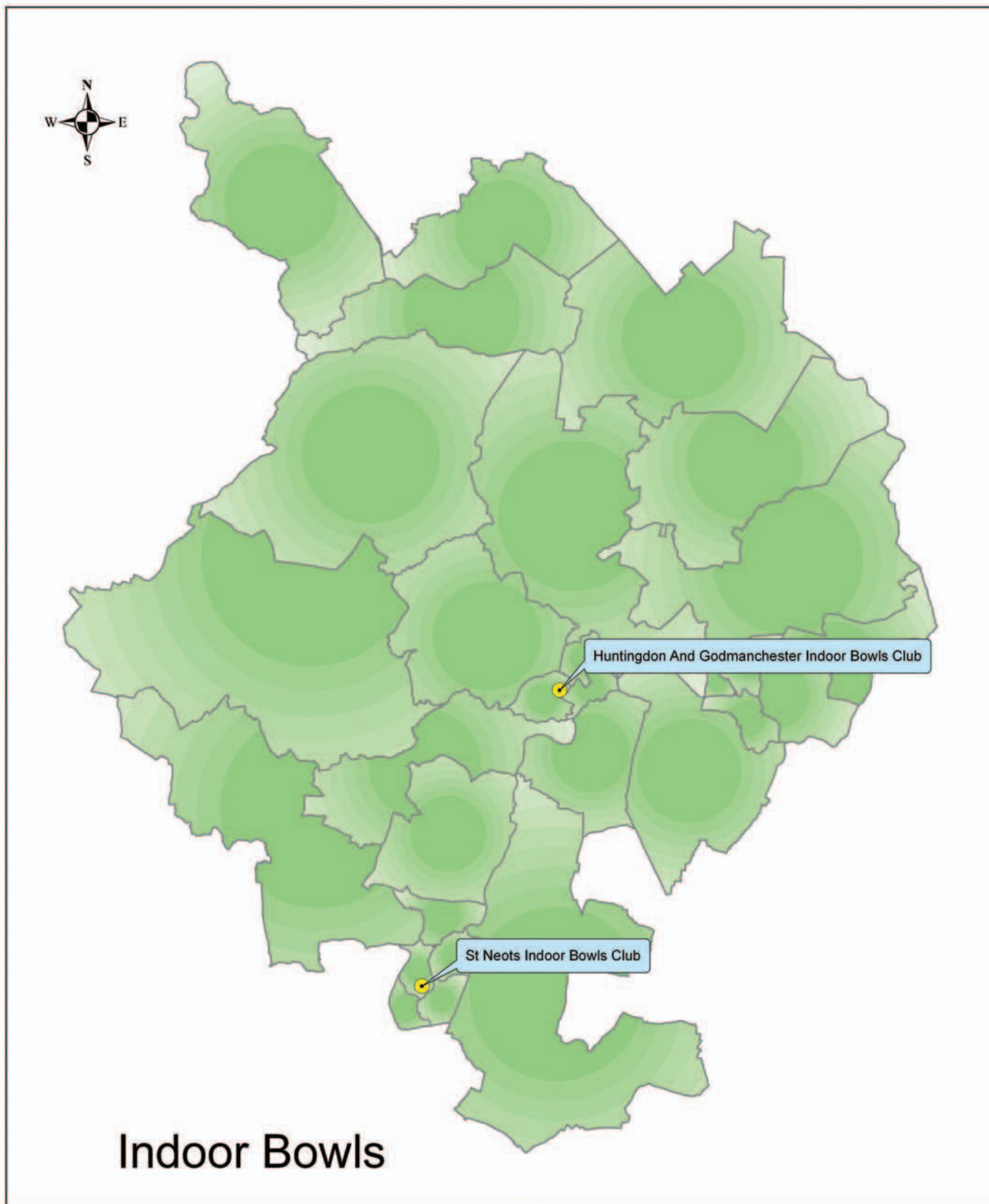
Sports clubs generally felt that the quality of pitch provision in the district was of a good standard. The only aspect that scored less than average was training area. Most clubs did not possess a training area and hence scored this as zero. Similar to the scores given for pitch quality factors, the scores given for ancillary facilities were good, with only cycle parking scoring below average. Consultation suggests that access to training facilities is a key issue, with only limited slots available at synthetic pitches for clubs wishing to train midweek. There are few floodlit training areas and teams struggle to access facilities between the peak hours of 6 and 9pm, particularly at the leisure centres where there is high demand for facilities.

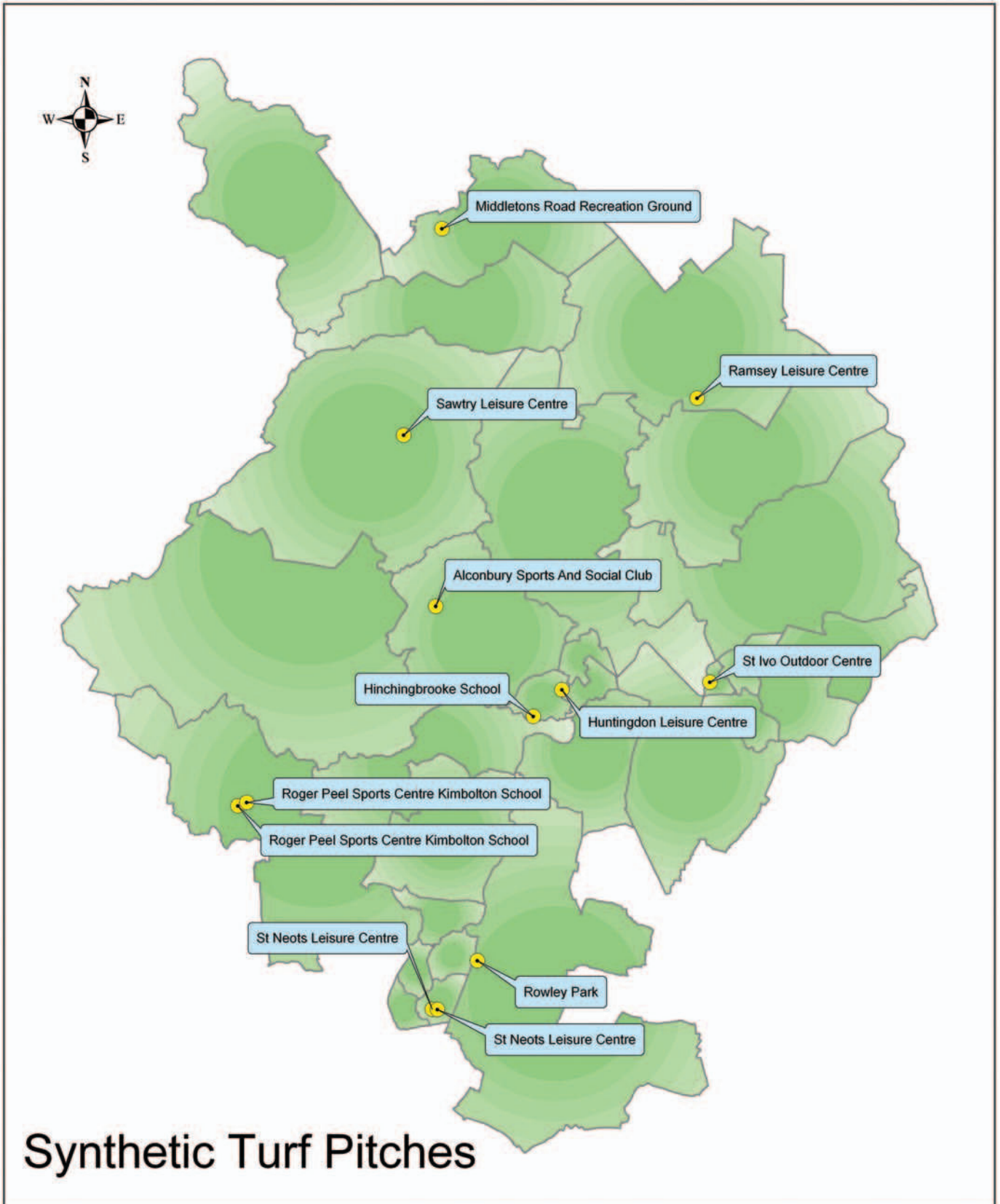


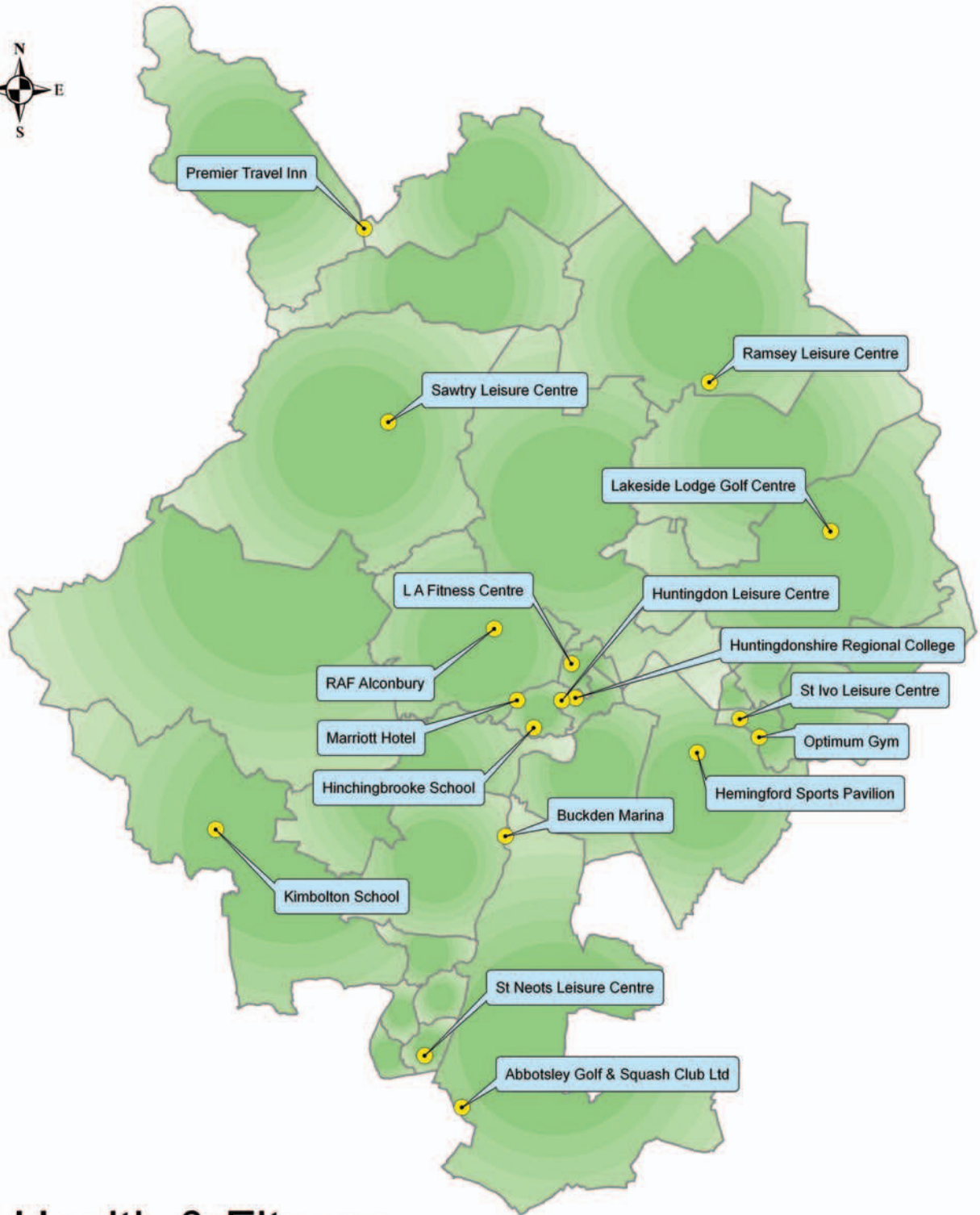
Appendix 4: Spatial distribution of headline facilities











Health & Fitness

Appendix 5: Future sports and leisure projects

Project	Type of Organisation	Project Summary	Total project cost (estimated)	Estimated Timescales	Sports Development	Ward	Indices of Deprivation	Local Strategic Need/ Priorities (3 - High/ 1 - Low)	Sustainability (3- High/ 1 - Low)	Participation (3 - High/ 1 - Low) Current & potential	Local Priority
Ramsey Football Club & Ramsey Youth Club	Sports Clubs	Clubhouse Changing facilities Ancillary Facilities May be one joint or two separate projects			Increase Participation Potential to become Community Club	Ramsey	Barriers to Housing and Services, Rural accessibility issues, Education, Skills & Training Domain, Health Deprivation & Disability Domain, Income Domain	3 colts 2 adults	2	3	High
Sawtry Football Club/Juniors	Sports Clubs	Field and Changing Rooms			Increase Participation Potential to become Community Club	Sawtry	Barriers to Housing and Services, Rural accessibility issues	2	2	3	Medium
Offords Recreation Field	Community	Develop recreation field Drainage, access, planting all required	£100,000		Community benefit as no alternative facility serving village	Gransden & the Offords	Barriers to Housing and Services, Rural accessibility issues	2	3	2	Medium
Godmanchester Town Cricket Club	Sports Clubs	Upgrade Clubhouse Install NTP Nets	£230,000		Good club with successful track record at adult and junior level	Godmanchester	Living Environment Domain	2	3	3	High
Stilton Football Club	Sports Clubs	New pitches 2 changing rooms / pavilion Drainage Muga Floodlighting	£400,000		Community benefit as no alternative facility serving village. A developing club in need of environmentally sustainable facilities - currently have to travel to Yaxley.	Stilton	None of note Rural accessibility issues	3	2	2	Medium

Project	Type of Organisation	Project Summary	Total project cost (estimated)	Estimated Timescales	Sports Development	Ward	Indices of Deprivation	Local Strategic Need/ Priorities (3 - High/ 1 - Low)	Sustainability (3 - High/ 1 - Low)	Participation (3 - High/ 1 - Low) Current & potential	Local Priority
Huntingdon Regional College	Further Education	Relocation to Hinchbrook with new sports facilities		2010/11	Potential to have significant effect. Defined educational need. Location - proximity to other facilities an issue			2	2	2	Medium
Huntingdon Gymnastics Club	Sports Clubs	Redevelopment of existing facilities	£4,000,000	2009/10	Centre of Excellence Track record of elite success. Will increase participation			3	2	3	High
St Neots Table Tennis Club	Sports Clubs	Redevelopment of existing facilities	£390,000	2009	Potential to be Centre of Excellence Unique facility Will increase participation			3	2	2	High
Warboys Sports Field, Forge Way	Combined	New changing facilities & ancillary facilities			Increase participation. Potential to become community club. Good site let down by poor changing and ancillary facilities. Existing high levels of participation.	Warboys & Bury	None of note Rural accessibility issues	3	1	2	Medium
Huntingdon Rugby Club	Sports Clubs	Possibly looking for dedicated home site			Club would like to have own home. Using other facilities in the town.			1	2	2	Low
Huntingdon Hockey Club	Sports Clubs	Require full size STP suitable for hockey within Huntingdon	£500,000		Club currently training and playing outside of home town.			2	2	2	Low
St Ives Golf Club	Sports Clubs	New 18 hole Golf Course being developed		2009/10		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	High

Project	Type of Organisation	Project Summary	Total project cost (estimated)	Estimated Timescales	Sports Development	Ward	Indices of Deprivation	Local Strategic Need/ Priorities (3 - High/ 1 - Low)	Sustainability (3- High/ 1 - Low)	Participation (3 - High/ 1 - Low) Current & potential	Local Priority
Eynesbury Rovers FC	Sports Clubs	Looking to relocate to new pitch site with additional training facilities and new club house/ancillary facilities	£1m-£3m		Club ability to progress through pyramid structure	Eynesbury		1	2	1	Low
Paxton Lakes Sailing Club	Sports Clubs	May be relocated due to expansion/developments at Paxton Lakes			Potential to be Centre of Excellence. Good links with Leisure Development.			3	2	2	High
St Neots Leisure Centre	Leisure Centre	Increase in provision - larger fitness studio, additional aerobics, health suite, soft play and fun zone	£1.6m	2009/10	Additional facilities - No depletion of existing stock	Eynesbury		2	3	3	High
St Ivo Leisure Centre (Outdoor)	Leisure Centre	New Synthetic Pitch (soccer only), additional changing rooms, car park, cycleway	£1.5m	2009/10	Potential for significant benefit	St Ives (West)		3	2	3	High
Huntingdon Leisure Centre	Leisure Centre	2 x 3G 5-a-side pitches, floodlit	£150,000	2008/09	Potential for significant benefit	Huntingdon (North)		1	3	2	Medium
Sawtry Cricket Club	Sports Clubs	Relocation to new site including sports facilities, clubhouse etc			Hunts CB think it would be key strategic site	Sawtry		2	2	2	Low
St Ivo Leisure Centre (indoor)	Leisure Centre	Conversion of Rifle Range, and likely improvements to reception, catering, creche, childrens product, and increased fitness provision.	£600,000	2010		St Ives (South)		1	2	2	Low
Ramsey Cricket Club	Sports Clubs	Install 2 or 4 lane indoor cricket net	£500,000-£1m			Ramsey		2	2	1	Low

Appendix 6: Sports Ranking Matrix

Sport	Overall	Club Infrastructure (out of 5)	Participation		Facilities (out of 5)	Total (max 20)	Information in support of the prioritisation
	Ranking		Current (out of 5)	Potential (out of 5)			
Football	1	5	4	5	4	18	County FA means resources better on the ground for ngb. Excellent supply of clubs with high participation levels. LFP and Hunts FA have development plans.
Golf	1	5	3	4	5	17	Excellent supply of facilities across the district. Some work on going with School Sports Partnership and Leisure Development holiday programmes & afterschool programmes. Private businesses and others require more support.
Swimming	1	4	4	5	4	17	5 district council swimming facilities plus Hinchingsbrooke, Godmanchester and Kimbolton. Good supply of clubs with good participation levels.
Cricket	1	5	4	4	4	17	County Cricket Association means resources better on the ground for ngb. Good supply of facilities and clubs with junior sections. Huntingdonshire Cricket Board has own development plan.
Squash	2	4	3	4	4	15	Hunts County Squash Club at Hemingford pride of place but other good facilities and clubs including Abbotsley, SIOC, St Neots etc.
Tennis	2	4	3	4	4	15	Very nearly a 1. Hunts tennis club with indoor facilities a good advantage for the district. Elite performance track record. Good supply of clubs across the district – facilities can be variable and access can be variable.

Sport	Overall	Club Infra-structure (out of 5)	Participation		Facilities (out of 5)	Total (max 20)	Information in support of the prioritisation
	Priority Classification		Current (out of 5)	Potential (out of 5)			
Athletics	2	4	3	4	3	14	St Ivo Outdoor Centre facilities & locally based club – Huntingdonshire Athletics Club & St Neots Riverside Runners
Gymnastics	2	4	3	4	3	14	Huntingdon Olympic Gym Club – ambitious club with approved development plans. Track record for elite athletes and waiting lists for grass roots participation.
Rugby (Union and League)	2	4	3	4	3	14	Good clubs across the district although Huntingdon require a new home. High participation levels. Not higher because of ngb structure – scope for improving schools / clubs working relationship.
Netball	2	3	3	4	3	13	Lack of high quality facilities probably holds it back but good clubs in Hawks and Icons. New social club starting in St Neots. Excellent work going on in schools with High 5's.
Rowing	2	4	3	3	3	13	High participation levels at 3 clubs in the area – St Neots, St Ives & Huntingdon. St Neots track record at elite level & St Ives participation in Leisure Development holiday activity programme
Sailing	2	4	3	3	3	13	Good facilities at Grafham, Little Paxton & St Ives. Little Paxton SC participation in holiday programmes.
Martial Arts	2	4	3	4	2	13	Recognised governing body structure required.
Hockey	3	4	2	3	3	12	Adequate clubs and facilities across the district. Issue with Huntingdon and full size synthetic turf pitch access. Not as strong as some of the others but obvious potential.

Sport	Overall	Club Infrastructure (out of 5)	Participation		Facilities (out of 5)	Total (max 20)	Information in support of the prioritisation
	Priority Classification		Current (out of 5)	Potential (out of 5)			
Bowls	3	3	3	3	3	12	Good indoor facilities in the district and good supply of outdoor facilities. Need to work on junior development but a good asset to the district.
Basketball	3	2	2	4	3	11	Huntingdon Hawks seeking to expand - very keen and enthusiastic. Facilities may be a bit limited (only 1 double court venue) but there is untapped potential.
Canoeing	3	2	2	3	3	10	Good facilities across the district. Leisure Development holiday programmes with independent instructor and Huntingdon Canoe Club.
Cycling	3	2	2	4	2	10	New partnership building with British Cycling over holiday programmes. St Ives Cycling Club looking to expand junior programme.
Table Tennis	3	2	2	3	3	10	St Neots Table Tennis Club provides an opportunity for the sport in the area. Other facilities also host and there are a few clubs around. Potential but limited impact across the whole district.
Equestrian	3	2	2	2	3	9	There are facilities within the district but limited available information to rate higher
Badminton	3	2	2	3	2	9	
Angling	4	1	2	3	2	8	Angling – Countryside Services do some excellent work with angling for young people. Disabled platforms being added to the district. Good facilities at Grafham.
Archery	4	2	1	2	2	7	

Sport	Overall	Club Infrastructure	Participation		Facilities	Total	Information in support of the prioritisation
			Current (out of 5)	Potential (out of 5)			
	Priority Classification	(out of 5)			(out of 5)	(max 20)	
Boxing	4	2	1	3	1	7	Boxing – couple of clubs in the district and always seem to be interest for more. Limited access to facilities though and always needing support.
Fencing	4	2	1	2	1	6	Fencing – Excellent Club at St Neots Leisure Centre. Good track record at competition level as well.
Judo	4	1	1	3	1	6	
Volleyball	4	1	1	2	2	6	

Appendix 7: Sports Facilities Investment

a: Condition Survey Spending (2007- 2011)

Type of works	HLC	RLC	SLC	SNLC	SILC*	SIOC	Total
Exterior works	£207,185	£119,240	£64,625		£664,730	£17,050	£1,072,830
Sportshall	£4,400	£56,595	£22,990		£64,900		£148,885
Circulation routes and general areas	£108,735	£68,200	£8,360		£122,595	£233,860	£541,750
Heating, ventilation and mechanical services	£56,760	£56,100	£26,180		£258,115	£9,020	£406,175
Swimming pool including changing rooms	£37,950	£99,770	£46,970	£539,880	£111,760		£836,330
Astro/athletics track/ tennis courts	£99,000		£66,000	£156,200		£18,150	£339,350
SNLC dryside refurbishment				£339,240			£339,240
Total	£514,030	£399,905	£235,125	£1,035,320	£1,222,100	£278,080	£3,684,560

All figures correct at 30/01/2009

* Does not include Burgess Hall and Drama Studio

HLC	Huntingdon Leisure Centre
RLC	Ramsey Leisure Centre
SLC	Sawtry Leisure Centre
SNLC	St Neots Leisure Centre
SILC	St Ivo Leisure Centre
SIOC	St Ivo Outdoor Centre

b: Recent Investment Sites (>£50,000)

Site	Funding source	Completed	£ (Total cost)
Jubilee Park, Huntingdon (Changing Provision / Stadia)	Football Foundation Partnership Funding Plus Revenue Grant	In progress	1,100,000 46,000
Huntingdon Gymnastic Club (Extended Facilities)	Housing Growth Fund	In progress	500,000
St Neots Table Tennis Club	Community Club Development Fund	In progress	390,000
Grafham Water Centre (Extended Ancillary Facilities)	Housing Growth Fund	In progress	500,000
Hinchingsbrooke School (3G STP)	Football Foundation Partnership Funding Plus Revenue Grant	2009	600,000 140,000
Alconbury Sports & Social Club (STP)	Football Foundation	2009	280,000
St Neots Leisure Centre (Swimming Pool)	Hunts District Council	2008	500,000
St Neots Leisure Centre (Tennis/Netball Courts)	- Hunts District Council - New Opportunities Fund (Lottery)	2008	330,000
Huntingdon Leisure Centre (Gym/Sports Hall)	Hunts District Council	2008/09 (Phased)	1,300,000
Priory Park, St Neots (Changing Provision)	Football Foundation	2008	500,000
Hemingford Sports Pavilion	Community Club Development Fund	2008	500,000
St Neots Town FC & Community Facilities (New Stadium & 3G STP)	Section 106	2008	
Ferndale, Yaxley (Changing Provision)	- Football Foundation - Section 106	2008	514,000
Grafham Water Centre (Indoor Activity Hall)	- Hunts District Council - New Opportunities Fund (Lottery)	2007	300,000

CABINET

23 APRIL 2009

SAPLEY EAST PREFERRED OPTIONS PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND COMMUNITY ENTERPRISE CENTRE

(Heads of Planning and Financial Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Council has been working with local people and stakeholders to prepare a master plan on land mainly to the east of Sapley Square including the legal and funding arrangements for a Community Enterprise Centre. Members are asked to note the work that has taken place over the last 6 months in working towards a masterplan and to consider its approval as informal planning guidance

2. SUPPORTING/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The master plan area covers open land at Oak Drive adjacent to the Oak Tree Centre, and land bounded by Nene Road, Coneygear Road and the Medway Centre. The area comprises managed green space, footpaths, under-developed land and six buildings: the Medway Christian Centre; Kingdom Hall; Golden Knight PH; Medway Court; St Barnabas Church and the Medway Centre.
- 2.2 The Council has undertaken two rounds of consultation: 'Issues and Options' and a 'Preferred Option'. On 18th December 2008, Cabinet received a report on the 'Issues and Options' consultation and a proposal by EEDA to part fund a Community Enterprise Centre within the area.

3. PUBLIC CONSULTATION PROCESS Issues and Options stage

- 3.1 Under the 'Issues and Options' consultation, the Council presented a plan of the area as it stands together with three alternative development options, all of which offered the potential to develop:
- ❖ up to 60 homes, including the upgrading and reconfiguration of housing for the elderly;
 - ❖ new faith buildings;
 - ❖ a Community Enterprise Centre for small scale employment, skills development and learning opportunities to meet community needs such as long term unemployment;
 - ❖ safer routes through the area;
 - ❖ more usable open space.
- 3.2 Through the 'Issues and Options' consultation held at various locations between 9th September and 21st October 2008, over 300 local people gave their general support for the principle of development but raised concerns about proposals which could directly affect their homes and interests, most notably in relation to faith buildings.

- 3.3 These messages from local people and stakeholders informed and shaped the design of the 'Preferred Option' in the following ways:
- i) Faith Buildings:
 - St Barnabas Church: shows the retention of the church with the opportunity for expansion of faith facilities and or residential use
 - Kingdom Hall: identifies a possible relocation site in Medway Road
 - Medway Christian Centre: identifies possible relocation sites – one as an extension of the Medway Centre, the other on the site of the St Barnabas Learning Centre
 - ii) Community Enterprise Centre:
 - identifies a site for the centre in two phases, and including the possible relocation of the St Barnabas Learning Centre
 - iii) Family and Supported Housing:
 - identifies housing with one group having access off Nene Road and a second housing group with access off Medway Road
 - iv) Access and Car Parking:
 - removes the proposal to link Medway Road with Nene Road; and
 - retains the footbridge across Nene Road.
 - v) Oak Drive:
 - proposes improved landscaping and footpath linkages
 - vi) Open Space and Play Area:
 - proposes a linear park to provide safer routes through the area to Medway Road and the 'Courts' and
 - designs out a former play area adjacent to Medway Court
 - vii) Pub: proposes the removal of the existing pub with no site for its relocation.

Preferred option stage

- 3.4 The consultation on the 'Preferred Option' involved over 140 local people and stakeholders held at various locations between 3rd February and 4th March 2009. The programme, which included events dedicated for those most affected by the proposals, is listed in Annex A. The comments of those who wrote in at this stage are listed in Annex B.

- 3.5 Overall there was strong support for investment in improving the area, providing more work and community opportunities and making better use of the open spaces. The following arose from the exercise to inform the masterplan.

- i) Faith Buildings:
 - St Barnabas Church: the local church authorities have confirmed they wishes to remain in-situ.
 - Kingdom Hall: the principle of the relocation site was endorsed with the main concerns raised about the siting and access of the building to maximise security and the amount and location of any car parking
 - Medway Christian Centre: the church is concerned about the tenure of any new building and the availability of car parking but has undertaken to review the available options

- ii) Community Enterprise Centre:
 Consultees raised questions about
 - the final size, use and look of the building, and how much car parking would be needed, and
 - whether the St Barnabas Learning Centre needed to move

- iii) Family and Supported Housing:
 Consultees raised questions about:
 - the number of houses and the mix of these houses by size and tenure as this will influence the demands for access, car parking, open space and the overall cohesiveness and integration of the area
 - the quality of the design of the houses and their environmental performance
 - the impact of the phasing of development on residents of Medway Court,
 - the timetable for delivery including risks arising from the private housing market and public funding

- iv) Access and Car Parking:
 Consultees raised questions about:
 - the impact of the phasing of development on car parking and access for emergency vehicles

- v) Oak Drive:
 Consultees were happy about:
 - no further traffic generation uses being allowed off Oak Drive

- vi) Open Space and Play Area:
 Consultees raised the need for:
 - the routes through the linear park to be short, safe and manageable with good lighting and overlooking
 - the need to design defensible space between the public realm and private gardens with fencing designed to enable overlooking and contribute to the area's environmental amenity

- vii) Pub:
 Consultees had contradictory views over whether the pub should stay or go.

4. THE MASTERPLAN

- 4.1 In response to comments made by local people and stakeholders, the following amendments to the design and layout of the 'Preferred Option' are proposed for the masterplan:

- i) Faith Buildings:
 - St Barnabas Centre: to note the variety of options available to the church authorities including remaining in-situ and/or the possibility of the existing learning centre being used as a faith building and/or possible residential use of the site

 - Kingdom Hall: to explore with Huntingdon Town Council the possibility of sharing the existing access and expanding the car park to the north of the Medway Centre to enable the early development of the new Kingdom Hall

- ii) Community Enterprise Centre:
 - to confirm the location of the first phase of the centre up to 600 sq m with provision for a second phase of approximately 200 sq m, and to clarify the general location for the area of current car parking that would be lost to the development

- iii) Family and Supported Housing:
 - Nene Road: to identify this area for mostly two storey family housing with some two and three storey flats
 - Medway Road: to treat this areas as a self contained housing scheme that through its size, tenure mix, design, layout and landscaping combines to protect the residential amenity of the existing residents at Medway Court

- iv) Access and Car Parking:
 - expand the existing car park to the north of the Medway Centre, see (i) above, as part of the new Kingdom Hall scheme
 - retain 18 car parking spaces at Nene Road
 - allocate further car parking provision in accordance with the Council's approved car parking standards

- v) Open Space and Play Area:

To incorporate within the design of the linear park:

 - a footway and cycle path linking the Coneygear Road foot bridge with Nene Road and Humber Road via pocket parks
 - lighting and CCTV
 - fencing to allow for overlooking as well as security and visual amenity
 - the closure of the alley at the rear of 22 – 28 Nene Road and provision of car parking spaces for these houses via the access from Nene Road

5. IMPLEMENTATION

Finance

- 5.1 The principles set out in the Oxmoor Action plan, whereby the receipts from the sale of the land in the ownership of the District Council were pooled together with the planning obligations arising from the betterment of land and together ringed fenced for the benefit of the Oxmoor community, will be applied in the implementation of this master plan.

- 5.2 In these circumstances it would be appropriate to seek a tariff from each new house as the total planning obligation as described in the Local Investment Framework. The tariff (between £10k-£15k) will be required for the improved walkway (transportation contribution) and open space (recreation and open space contribution). Affordable housing will be provided as part of the scheme. Discussions with the appropriate service provider will be needed as to whether an education and health contribution will be required.

- 5.3 Additionally the Council will be seeking grants towards the cost of the community enterprise centre from EEDA and other bodies. To support the applications a business case is being prepared to demonstrate its viability.

Phasing of development

5.4 It is proposed to bring forward the comprehensive development of the area as four distinct elements:

1) Community Enterprise Centre: to establish the business case, put together the funding and prepare a scheme together with a timetable for EEDA grant funding, a planning application and construction

2) Faith Buildings: to progress the relocation of the Kingdom Hall and Christian Medway Centre

3) Nene Road Housing: to negotiate a mixed tenure predominantly family housing scheme

4 A) Medway Road Housing and Linear Park

- to progress the acquisition of the Golden Knight PH by private treaty and failing that the possible use of the Council's Compulsory Purchase Powers

- adjacent to Coneygear Road: to provide for family houses and apartments

- adjacent to Medway Court: to provide for housing which protects the environmental amenity of Medway Court

- develop the linear park

4 B) Medway Road Housing and Linear Park

- to progress most of the above housing and linear park should it not be possible to acquire the Golden Knight PH

6 RECOMMENDATION

6.1 It is recommended that cabinet

(i) Note the progress through various stage of consultation and endorse the proposed amendments to the 'Preferred Option' for the Master Plan as set out in section 3 above in response to comments made by local people and stakeholders during the consultation held during February and March 2009;

(ii) approve the master plan document, attached Annex C, as informal planning guidance for the comprehensive development of the land mostly to the east of Sapley Square;

(iii) endorse the principles of implementation set out in section 5

ANNEX A

Time and Date	Group	Venue
3 rd February	Oxmoor Community Action group	St Barnabas Learning Centre
4 th February	Huntingdon Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses	Kingdom Hall
8 th February	Medway Christian Fellowship	Medway Centre
8 th February	Huntingdonshire Community Group	Medway Centre
11 th February	Norfolk and Essex Road Residents Association	Maple Centre
12 th February	Medway Court residents	Medway Court
12 th February	Open event	Maple Centre
4 th March	Oxmoor Community Action Group	Maple Centre

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Oxmoor Action Plan
Consultation documents on Issues and Options stages

Contact Officer: Richard Probyn
 01480 388430

Annex B
Land around Sapley Square, Huntingdon
 precis of written comments

The table below details the comments received in general letters and from comments or attachments from the public questionnaires.

Comment by:	Nature of Comment
Huntingdon Town Council	<p>The plan does not adequately address the need for suitable and sufficient parking facilities in an area which is already recognised as having a shortfall of parking availability.</p> <p>Consideration must be given to the need for suitable access for construction machinery at the time when the new Kingdom Hall is being built.</p> <p>What assurance is there that the capital investment necessary to further an extension of the Medway Centre or the St Barnabas Centre will be available?</p> <p>The current proposals show the removal of existing footpaths allowing access for users with disability between the bus stops on Coneygear Road and the Medway Centre/Medway Court and no suitable replacement for this loss of amenity.</p> <p>The Council is of the view that the proposals overall will result in a substantially improved use of the land in the area.</p> <p>There is a strong local preference for the retention of a public house and therefore a suitable site should be identified if the existing one is to be removed.</p> <p>There is concern that plans to accommodate specific user groups in an extension to the Medway Community Centre will limit the opportunity of the Town Council as tenant to extend or develop the Centre, should this be a user requirement.</p> <p>Location of the Kingdom Hall next to the BRJ Club and opposite the Health Centre is preferred to the current</p>

Comment by:	Nature of Comment
	<p>location between Medway Court and the Medway Centre, as existing parking facilities at the BRJ Club would be available for users.</p> <p>In the event that the Kingdom Hall is relocated as suggested, then the proposed Kingdom Hall site in the Preferred Options Plan could be used to site a public house for the Community.</p>
Questionnaire 1	<p>Why is that green spaces and well maintained buildings are always the ones to be altered or demolished.</p> <p>The St Barnabas Learning Centre has only just been built and should not be interfered with.</p>
Questionnaire 2	<p>St Barnabas Learning Centre has been built for the community.</p> <p>It would be totally immoral and unethical to use these facilities for anything else.</p> <p>Grant received would not have been given for a no conformist church.</p> <p>The congregation would be against any extension which would take away their green space.</p>
Questionnaire 3	<p>Would prefer to see improvements to existing buildings, eg Medway Court and Medway Centre, an the pathway between Nene Road and Medway centre needs resurfacing.</p> <p>Any housing built should bring with it 'infrastructure charges'.</p>
Questionnaire 4	<p>Thinks that the Golden Knight should be given a face lift, not taken away.</p>
Questionnaire 5	<p>There should be more parking facilities for the shops and the Maple Centre. Parking for any of the new proposed buildings does not seem to have been considered.</p>

Comment by:	Nature of Comment
Questionnaire 6	In favour of re-siting the public house. There is already too much drinking on the streets.
Questionnaire 7	The learning centre should stay where it is. The Medway Christian Centre, the Golden Knight and the Medway Court flats should no be moved.
Questionnaire 8	Concern over removal of wing to Medway Court. No great amount of additional housing, just different housing. Fears that the business enterprise building will be a white elephant. Supports changed footpaths, but need to look at levels.
Questionnaire 9	Too many houses in a small space. Not enough provision for childrens' play.
Questionnaire 10	Parking?
Questionnaire 11	Should have a discussion for leaving learning centre where it is.
Questionnaire 12	Needs clarification between Medway Centre and Christian Fellowship. Vehicular access to Kingdom Hall – surely the gradient is too steep from Medway Road. Would access from Nene Road end be better.
Questionnaire 13	Concerned that the learning centre stays where it is.
Questionnaire 14	Will the new footpaths be will lit with the new down facing street lamps? Also parking on a Sunday morning when both Kingdom Hall and Christian Fellowship services are on, even now in Nene Road when the Kingdom Hall is in use there is a lack of parking with the cars from the people worshipping parking all round the Kingdom Hall and parking area of the Golden Knight?

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
(SERVICE SUPPORT)
CABINET**

14 APRIL 2009

23 APRIL 2009

**DRAFT HUNTINGDON WEST AREA ACTION PLAN
PREFERRED APPROACH
(Report by HEAD OF PLANNING SERVICES)**

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Following consultations on an Issues and Options document in June 2007 and Land Use Options in May 2008, a suggested Preferred Approach for taking forward the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan has been prepared. An earlier draft was presented to the Development Plan Policy Advisory Group on 17 February. A presentation for Members took place on the evening of 31 March. Members are asked to support the content of the Action Plan and agree to it being the subject of further consultation.

2 CONTENT OF THE PREFERRED APPROACH

- 2.1 The Area Action Plan seeks to set the planning and development framework for the area west of Huntingdon town centre to help deliver planned growth and regeneration. The format involves description followed by establishing the vision and five objectives. The five objectives in turn create headings within which there are 12 policies as follows.
- Sustainable Travel:
 - 1: New and enhanced road links;
 - 2: Pedestrian and cycle links;
 - 3: The Railway Station;
 - 4: Public car parking
 - A Vibrant New Quarter:
 - 5: George St / Ermine St;
 - 6: Development West of the Railway and Hinchingsbrooke
 - Healthy and Green:
 - 7: Hinchingsbrooke Country Park;
 - 8: Views Common;
 - 9: Other Open Space and Play Areas
 - A High Quality Environment:
 - 10: Design Guidance
 - Infrastructure, Phasing and Implementation:
 - 11: Infrastructure;
 - 12: Phasing and Implementation

- 2.2 The policies have been derived by analysing how each matter was considered and addressed in the previous documents, the results of the sustainability appraisals, the consultation responses and further research. All of this information is presented in the document in order to form an 'audit trail' with regard to the evolution of this policy document.
- 2.3 Sustainable travel is considered first because new local road infrastructure is key to delivering potential change in this area. This involves the removal of the railway viaduct and replacement routes as proposed by the Highways Agency, as well as the Council's proposed West of Town Centre Link Road, and an indication that a further potential route could be investigated between Hinchingsbrooke Park Road and the anticipated de-trunked A14 in the vicinity of the hospital and Views Common. In addition to the roads, enhanced pedestrian and cycle linkages are set out and there is discussion on the importance of the railway station. There is also provision for a potential new public long stay car park to the west of the proposed new Link Road.
- 2.4 The potential for regeneration is set out under the second objective. The land to be allocated has been derived from the highlighted alternatives in the options leaflet. A series of diagrams show how the area could be redeveloped and regenerated. Provision is made: for mixed use development in the George St / Ermine St area including new retail floorspace which will be complementary to the existing town centre; for new training and economic development land (at least 4ha mostly west of the railway line and on hospital and constabulary land), and; for residential development (providing for approximately 200-300 homes). Alternative activities such as restaurants, a hotel, a leisure facility, and a health centre are also mentioned as possible appropriate uses in this sustainable location.
- 2.5 Improved open spaces are envisaged. The potential to extend as well as improve Hinchingsbrooke Country Park is specifically highlighted. Land no longer needed for the A14 railway viaduct (post the potential new A14 and local road improvements) should become open space (it is envisaged that this will return as part of a reconfigured Views Common). Additional open space is also expected in the George St / Ermine St area in three areas (as a public square at the George St end associated with potential retail development, and the others at the northern end as green linkages associated with Barracks Brook, a reinstated Handcroft Lane and pedestrian routes linking with the town centre).
- 2.6 To achieve a high quality environment Draft Policy 10 sets out specific local design requirements. This policy will stand alongside Conservation Area policies and other general policies such as those in the emerging Development Management DPD. Mention is made of the need to

investigate sustainable energy sources although a specific requirement is not set due to the feasibility of this not being known at this stage.

- 2.7 The infrastructure requirements and potential phasing identifying development before and after the A14 viaduct removal are set out in the appendices to the plan.

3 NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 A sustainability appraisal is being finalised, together with a record of the consultation process that has taken place. Discussions are ongoing with owners of land identified to be allocated in the document. A draft list of the key sources noted throughout the document with their website references is set out in an appendix to this report.
- 3.2 Once approved by Cabinet, the Preferred Approach will be subject to further engagement with the public and interested parties. A draft of the final Area Action Plan will then be prepared and approved by Cabinet and Council, followed by a statutory consultation process before its submission to the Secretary of State.

4. CABINET RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 That Cabinet agree that the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan - Preferred Approach be the subject of further consultation. That Cabinet delegates to the Head of Planning Services after consultation with the Executive Member for Planning Strategy the making of any minor amendments, and approval of the Sustainability Appraisal.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Issues and Options document June 2007

Options Leaflet May 2008

Various key sources as noted throughout the document (see appendix)

**Contact Officer: Richard Probyn, Development Plans &
Implementation Manager**
 **01480 388 430**

APPENDIX

DOCUMENT LIBRARY

(These are all the documents listed in the Preferred Approach – in alphabetical order)

A14 Announcements (Highways Agency 2007-2008)
<http://www.highways.gov.uk/roads/projects/4211.aspx>

Cambridge to Huntingdon Multi-Modal Study (EERA 2001)
http://www.gos.gov.uk/goeast/transport/regional_transport_strategy/multi_modal_studies/

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Minerals and Waste Local Development Framework (CCC and PCC – current stage is Preferred Options, Additional Sites 2008)
<http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/environment/planning/mineralswasteplan/>

Cambridgeshire County Council Strategic Open Space Study (CCC 2004)
(Not on web)

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IMPROVEMENTS TO RIVERSIDE PARK HUNTINGDON
(Report by Heads of Planning, Operations and Environmental Management Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is for the Cabinet to consider the comments from the public and other bodies on the ideas for improving the Riverside Park and to make a decision on what proposals will be supported and their timescale.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Cabinet at its meeting on the 21st February 2008 agreed that the Council should engage with the public and others to obtain their views on a masterplan for the improvements to the Riverside Park. The estimated cost was £614,000 (see Annex 1 for breakdown) and money was included in the capital programme for this purpose.

- 2.2 The masterplan drawn up by officers of the Council had been adapted from the preferred option of the Consultants to suit the budget for this project but still addresses many of the issues set out by the consultants namely :-

- Poor links within the park and access to the town centre mainly due to the ring road
- Inadequate footpath/cycle routes and mooring points
- Lack of distinguishable gateway feature and arrival point for the town centre
- Negative impact of the existing car park and lack of space for park users
- Ecological and landscape features are not exploited to their potential
- Lack of distinctive and exciting leisure attractions or events – existing leisure facilities are under utilised (football pitches), in need of upgrading (boat hire facility) or do not appeal to a broad range of people
- There are a number of visual detractors from the site and a lack of visual stimulation
- There is a need to create a critical mass of facilities in the centre of the park

3.0 THE COUNCIL'S MASTERPLAN

- 3.1 For Area 1 (the formal park from the Bridge to Barracks Brook) the following improvements were suggested:

- Make the two entrance areas opposite the Bridge Hotel and along the ring road more welcoming
- In association with the Bridge Hotel entrance investigate the greening of the traffic island crossing
- Create a new footpath/cycleway parallel to the ring road inside the park
- Create a focal point with a shelter and seating in the centre of the park
- Improve the mooring facility and the paved area adjacent to Bridge Foot offices
- Remove certain trees and carry out new and more appropriate tree planting
- Clear river bank in certain locations to encourage easier access and improved and extra moorings
- Erect standardised signs inside and through the park together with interpretation boards

- 3.2 For Area 2 (the activity area from Barracks Brook to the north eastern edge of the playing field) the following improvements were suggested:
- Reconfigure the equipment in the play area and reduce the area in size to enable a wider landscaped walkway footpath to be created on the southern side of the car park
 - Retain tarmac path but remove chain link fence on the southern side of the playing field
 - Relocate one football pitch to Sapley Park and retain one adult sized pitch that would be sufficient to convert to 3 mini soccer pitches if necessary
 - Create an area of reinforced grass on part of the playing field closest to the Pavilion to accommodate the fair or circus and other events at times without losing the long stay car parking area
 - Create a Multi Use Games Area or youth equipment area on the playing field
 - De-formalise the playing field with additional planting and a less rigid management regime
 - Clear the river bank in certain locations to encourage easier access and improved and extra moorings. Improve the access to the slipway
 - Remove clutter at car park entrance by relocating recycling area and electricity pylon, removing fencing and creating a more attractive area around the pavilion and the entrance to the playing field
 - Encourage the redevelopment of the boat yard in accordance with the brief
 - Erect standardised signs and interpretation boards
- 3.3 For Area 3 (the Wildlife Area)
- Implement management plan to enhance the biodiversity and attractiveness of the area
 - Provide better signage to the car park in Church Lane and pedestrian signposts to the entrance to the Riverside Park at the Hartford end
 - Erect standardised signs and interpretation boards
 - Consider the development of a new car park opposite the end of American Lane

4. THE CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The consultation took place over a 2 month period from October to December 2008. It consisted of an exhibition in the High street on a Wednesday (market day) and a Saturday adjacent to Sainsburys. At the same time a questionnaire was distributed explaining the proposals to local residents and to interested parties.
- 4.2 In addition officers explained the proposals at 4 meetings they attended during this period. Officers felt it was important that young people were involved in the process to obtain their views on the type of facility that they would like to see in the park. This involved workshops with the holiday play scheme in Huntingdon and a day's workshop in the Technology Department at Hinchingsbrooke School.

5. THE RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The details of the consultation results are given in Annex 2.
- 5.2 There was a general feeling that many people did not want to see very much change in the park. There was a strong feeling against reinforced grass which would enable an activity area to be created on which the fair could be located. Their main objection being that it was a considerable amount of money to spend on something that would only be used on a relatively small number of occasions a year and could become overspill car parking. Immediate neighbours were also concerned that it would result in more noise disturbance closer to their homes. The creation of a focus in the formal

park by providing a shelter and seating raised concerns as they quoted the experience of 'undesirables' gathering in such places. There was support for improving moorings and whilst there was some support for a wider offer of play equipment particularly for teenagers, its location had to be carefully considered to avoid nuisance to local residents.

- 5.3 During discussions on the scheme, it became apparent that the park lacked a central entrance / meeting area. It is considered that a meeting area between the pavilion and the car park would make a major improvement to the use of the park. This has now been included in the proposals.
- 5.4 What people felt was also important was that the Park could be better maintained. This was particularly relevant to the wildlife area where it was pointed out that the paths were getting overgrown by vegetation and the area was not being managed in the most sympathetic way. Issue of flooding were mentioned and the need to raise the footpath in some areas by means of a boardwalk where water tends to hang about after a flood. People who regularly used this part of the park felt that the small car park was unnecessary as better signs to the existing car park at the Hartford end would be a cheaper solution. There were many general and specific comments made in the returned questionnaires. Many of these are reflected in the voting for the options and these have been used to make some of the changes to the scheme.
- 5.5 The consultation with the youth groups showed that rather than a formal MUGA/MUSA, they would prefer exciting equipment which gives a wider range of play activity and appeals to girls as well as boys. One group of local residents suggested that the youth play equipment be moved off the park to another site, but this does not fit in with the play strategy of incorporating this equipment in the wider park setting.
- 5.6 The Football Association have been contacted about the reduction of the number of football pitches to one and verbally have agreed to this. However they have not confirmed this in writing. They have also indicated that they would like to have the facility for junior football using smaller pitches.

6. THE WAY FORWARD

- 6.1 The MTP shows an expenditure profile of:

2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	Total
55	510	50	615 (£000s)

- 6.2 The consultation shows that the majority of respondents are in favour of many of the proposed improvements to the park. The areas which are not supported are the reinforced grass, the structure in the formal park and the car park for the wild area. None of these are critical to the overall development of the park and if removed make a major saving to the scheme. A significant number of respondents to the consultation did request that the project include additional footpath improvements and these are now costed in Annex 1.
- 6.3 A Management Plan designed to improve the wildlife area of the park had been developed as requested in the consultation. The plan will require significantly increase levels of management and maintenance to this area on an ongoing basis and will require revenue funding. This additional cost is identified as £20k per annum. It is accepted that if this funding is not available, then this part of the project will not proceed. Extra greening of areas may also incur extra revenue costs which have not been included at this stage.

6.4 Because of the financial climate, it is considered that it would not be economically advantageous to carry out all the proposed work in the current financial year. Due to nature of the scheme, the work can be carried out over a period of time.

6.5 Annex 1 shows the proposed elements which could be carried out in 2009/10 and the remainder which will be carried out at a later date. Funding can also be sought for the future works from section 106 monies or grants.

6.6 The proposed profile is now

	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	Total
Capital	10	249	0	248	484 (£000s)
Revenue(extra)			20	20	Continuing (£000s)

6.7 There are still ongoing discussions with the owners of Purvis Marine as to the future of this site. Since there is an existing leaseholder on the site, this area was not included in the consultation. Cabinet will be updated at a later date on this matter.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 Annex 1 sets out the original breakdown in costs of the project and illustrates the changes that could be made as a result of the consultation exercise. Savings have been made by removing some items from the scheme but others have been added in to meet the needs of the future scheme

7.2 To reflect the financial climate, it is possible to split the work into phases. Annex 1 suggests that £249,000 be spent in 2009/10 and the remaining £248,000 at a later date, perhaps 2011/12

7.2 Extra revenue budget is requested to improve the maintenance of the park as the new management schedule. If the revenue budget is not increased, then the extra maintenance of this area cannot take place.

7.2 A total saving of £117,000 could be achieved by responding to people's views.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 It is recommended that Cabinet–

(1) note the progress of the scheme and consultation to date

(2) approve the proposed new scheme as outlined in Annex 1 and the Conclusions, with the new cost profile for capital and revenue.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Environmental Management files
Consultation documents.
Riverside Park Masterplan, Gillespies

Contact Officers:
Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager
☎ 01480 388430
Robert Ward, Head of Operations
☎ 01480 388635
Chris Allen, Project and Assets Manager
☎ 01480 388380

ANNEX 1

SCHEME COSTINGS - CAPITAL

AREA 1 – THE FORMAL PARK	Original		Proposed	
			Phase 1	Phase 2
		timings		
Greening Traffic Island	15,000			15,000
Bridge Foot Moorings	75,000	rev		85,000
Reconstruct exist footpath	37,000		22,000	15,000
New Footpath	46,000		46,000	
Decorative paved areas	14,000			14,000
Focal Point Shelter	30,000	delete	0	
Seating and Information Boards	22,000		8,000	14,000
Planting scheme	72,000		30,000	32,000
Moorings		add	10,000	
Total Area 1	311,000		116,000	175,000
AREA 2 – THE ACTIVITY AREA				
Alterations to existing car park	6,000		6,000	
Create entrance area		add	25,000	
New car parking	25,000	delete	0	
Revision to play area	5,000		5,000	
Multi Activity area	34,000	delete	0	
Youth play area			34,000	
Reinforced grass area	114,000	delete	0	
Activity trail	10,000			10,000
Planting scheme	21,000		21,000	
Widen walkway through the area		add		20,000
Turning for slipway			7,000	
Total Area 2	215,000		98,000	30,000
AREA 3 – THE WILDLIFE AREA				
Seating and Information Boards	12,000		12,000	
Hartford road car park	20,000	delete	0	
Additional pathways		add		20,000
Total Area 3	32,000		12,000	20,000
BUILD COST ALL AREAS	£558,000		226,000	225,000
DESIGN COSTS	£ 56,000		23,000	23,000
TOTAL COSTS	£614,000		249,000	248,000

SCHEME COSTINGS – REVENUE

Extra revenue for Wildlife Area maintenance - £20k per year.

ANNEX 2 – RESULTS OF THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION

		Percentages			
1	Do you agree that improvements are needed to the Riverside Park?	Yes	No	Unanswered	
	Yes	67	28	8	
	No				
2	Were you aware of the park's size and the opportunities that exist within it?	Yes	No	Unanswered	
	Yes	85	9	9	
	No				
	FORMAL AREA				
F1	Better entrance features	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support				
	Oppose	46	32	17	8
	No Views				
F2	More notice boards, signs and interpretation	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support				
	Oppose	52	33	9	8
	No Views				
F3	Green the traffic island by Bridge Hotel	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support				
	Oppose	51	29	16	6
	No Views				
F4	Improve moorings	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support				
	Oppose	67	9	19	8
	No Views				
F5	Improve area around bridge	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support				
	Oppose	74	9	11	9
	No Views				
F6	Tree management & new planting	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support				
	Oppose	74	14	6	9
	No Views				
F7	Create a central focus such as a gazebo	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support				
	Oppose	31	54	12	6
	No Views				
	ACTIVITY AREA				
A1	Provide improved entrances	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support				
	Oppose	51	21	21	9
	No Views				

		Percentages			
A2	Better linkages between parts of the park	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support	53	25	16	9
	Oppose				
	No Views				
A3	Provide short stay parking area	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support	59	20	15	9
	Oppose				
	No Views				
A4	Create "collecting point"/ entrance near the pavilion	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support	39	25	26	12
	Oppose				
	No Views				
A5	More notice boards, signs, interpretation	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support	48	32	15	8
	Oppose				
	No Views				
A6	Retain one football pitch	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support	62	21	9	9
	Oppose				
	No Views				
A7	Relocate recycling facilities	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support	38	25	30	9
	Oppose				
	No Views				
A8	Create cycle facility from Bridge to wildlife area	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support	61	26	9	8
	Oppose				
	No Views				
A9	Create area of fibre reinforced grass for events	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support	34	50	9	9
	Oppose				
	No Views				
A10	Create area for youth play activities	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support	50	34	9	9
	Oppose				
	No Views				
A11	Redesign play area	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support	47	28	18	9
	Oppose				
	No Views				

		Percentages			
A12	Provide turning area for the slipway	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support	50	16	30	7
	Oppose				
	No Views				
A13	Management of existing trees + new landscaping	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support	73	15	8	8
	Oppose				
	No Views				
A14	Create fishing areas and better quality moorings	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support	67	12	17	7
	Oppose				
	No Views				
	WILDLIFE AREA				
W1	Improve the management of the wildlife area	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support	84	11	2	6
	Oppose				
	No Views				
W2	Encourage access into this area	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support	67	17	8	11
	Oppose				
	No Views				
W3	More notice boards, signs, interpretation	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support	45	41	9	8
	Oppose				
	No Views				
W4	Create fishing areas and better quality moorings	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support	59	21	13	10
	Oppose				
	No Views				
W5	Extra car parking off Hartford Rd	Support	Oppose	No Views	Unanswered
	Support	27	52	12	11
	Oppose				
	No Views				

CABINET

23RD APRIL 2009

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS TO ST IVES TOWN CENTRE (Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery))

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 7th April 2009, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) considered a report by the Head of Environmental Management detailing the outcome of a consultation exercise undertaken by the Council as part of the second phase of environmental improvements to the Market Hill and Bridge Street areas of St Ives. This report summarises the Panel's discussions.

2. THE PANEL'S DISCUSSIONS

- 2.1 The Panel has been reminded that its primary role is to ensure that the Environmental Improvements Protocol, previously adopted by the Cabinet, has been adhered to in advance of any works being carried out. The Panel has expressed their satisfaction that this has been the case.
- 2.2 The Panel has reviewed the outcome of the consultation, which reveals that there is no clear majority amongst respondents for any of the three options. The Advisory Group, which comprises County, District and Town Councillors together with Panel representatives and representatives from local groups such as the Town Partnership, the Access Group and the Civic Society has previously scrutinised the results of the consultation and has suggested that, as no consensus has been gained, the scheme should be deferred from its planned start date of January 2010 to enable a review of the options to take place and to allow time for the formulation of a scheme which more adequately suits the requirements of the Town.. Additionally, the Advisory Group has expressed the view that the deferral would be timely given the current economic climate and the impact that works would have on local retailers within the Town. Finally, the Panel has noted that the works might adversely affect planned celebrations of the Town's 800th anniversary.
- 2.3 The Panel has considered the options that are now available to the Council. Members have concluded that, for the reasons outlined above and in accordance with the Advisory Group's recommendation, deferral of the scheme is the preferred course of action. However, the Panel suggest that the situation should be reviewed in 12 months time rather than make a commitment to start work after that time. The Panel has also suggested that financial contributions towards the cost of the scheme should be sought from the County and Town Councils. In coming to its conclusions, the Panel took into account the views of two of its Members who represent Wards in St Ives and comments Made by Councillor J W Davies who addressed the Panel as a local Ward Member.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Cabinet is requested to take into consideration the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) as set out above during their deliberations on this item.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes and Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) held on 7th April 2009.

Contact Officer: Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer
☎ 01480 388006

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
(SERVICE DELIVERY)**

7 APRIL 2009

CABINET

23 APRIL 2009

**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. The whole purpose of the scheme is to ensure the continued economic prosperity of the town for future years by keeping it at a high standard of appearance and increasing footfall and reducing town centre traffic.
- 1.2 This report outlines the progress to date and the process required to take the scheme forward to construction

2. SUPPORTING/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 A previous phase was carried out in 2001 following wide consultation in the Bridge Street / Crown Street area.
- 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 ISSUES AND PROPOSALS

- 3.1 Market Hill, a large market square, regularly hosts a number of markets, including a charter market every Monday which takes over most of the space with stalls. There are safety issues with the present layout which could be improved with a new market layout.
- 3.2 Currently, the pavements are narrow for a town centre and, with stalls erected on them, this causes restrictions to pedestrian flow. Traffic surveys have shown that vehicles will often drive around market place looking for spaces rather than go direct to the off street car parks, where there is extensive parking provision.
- 3.3 The present layout of Market Hill has limited clear public open space and favours vehicles over pedestrians. Studies of semi-pedestrianisation of town centres have shown that this increase in pedestrian rights benefits both the economic vitality of towns and enhances the environment for shoppers. A St Ives specific study of the economy has not been carried out to assess the effect on varying degrees of pedestrianisation of the town. Several options were developed under the framework of 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 The Advisory group agreed in autumn 2008 to take 3 options out to consultation. These options were;

Option1: a semi-pedestrianised scheme with the creation of a defined public open space outside three of the towns most notable buildings – the Free Church, Golden Lion and the Town Hall. A combination of Blue Badge / Public parking / loading is provided at the eastern end of the town centre. The scheme also proposed to move the War Memorial and Cromwell Statue into more prominent places in the open spaces.

Option 2: this has a similar road layout to Option 1 but 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.

3.5 The plans included in Annex A show the three options that went out for consultation.

4. BRIDGE STREET PROPOSALS

4.1 The consultation also considered the requirement for removal of loading bays from Bridge Street to allow for street cafes to be allowed. (Plan in Annex B) This consultation was required by the County council following a petition they received for Street cafes in Bridge Street. The following options were considered:-

- (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 for a maximum of 8 hours to allow for street cafes
- (3) to restrict all loading bays for a maximum of 8 hours and move the disabled bay from the south end to the north end;

5. RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION

5.1 The evaluation of the 638 returned questionnaires revealed the following:.

Those in favour of improvements to Market Hill 68%

The results for preference of the options are:

In favour of Option 1	36%
In favour of Option 2	13%
In favour of Option 3	34%
In favour of none of the proposals	14%

5.2 For Bridge Street:

In favour of no change	42%
In favour of reductions	53%
Of these In favour of removing 1 loading bay	59%
In favour of removing all loading bays	42%

5.3 Full results of the survey are given in Annex C.

5.4 Written responses were also received from formal consultees. These are included Annex D

- 5.5 There were three alternative schemes submitted by groups / individuals which gave variations on the original options.

6 INTERPRETATION OF THE RESULTS

- 6.1 There is a majority of 68% in favour of improvements to the Market Hill.

The most favoured was Option 1 (36%) which will create the public square but by only a small majority. The next most popular was Option 3 (34%) – to do minimum.

The significant objection to those choosing Option 3 in particular was that they did not want the war memorial or Cromwell statue moved. However when you consider those that want Option 1, then 88% of them are happy for the memorials to be moved.

The Town Council at their planning committee in December did not support any of the options, but modified their response at their meeting of 17th March 2009.

SITI supported Option 1

Civic Society supported Option 3

Bridge Street – 53% support reduction of loading bays, with the majority of these for just one bay being removed.

- 6.2 Two meetings of the Advisory group have been held since the consultation closed, firstly to inform the groups of the results of the consultation, and then to receive their comments back on the results. These comments are included in Annex D. After consideration of the results, most groups agree that improvements are needed to the town centre but could not yet agree to a preferred layout. They have been made aware that any option needs to meet this Council's requirement to aid economic growth, the main requisite is to reduce car movements and increase pedestrianisation, and County's highways design requirements. The majority of the groups recommended that the scheme be delayed from its planned start date of January 2010 by 12 months because of the current economic climate. It is also clear that as a result of the effective nature of the consultation that there was a consensus that a design could be agreed if time was available for further considerations of economic and design aspects. Concerns were also expressed about a 2010 start due to the Towns 800 year celebrations that would be held throughout the town centre.
- 6.4 The results of the Bridge Street consultation needs to be passed to the County Council for them to take forward any amendments to the parking order regarding the loading bays and the disabled bays.

7 PROGRESSION OF THE SCHEME

- 7.1 Monies are presently available in the MTP for construction in 2009/10 and 2010/11.
- 7.2 There is no clear majority for any of the three options, with a close split existing between options 1 and 3. It should be possible to produce a compromise scheme which meets some of the concerns raised, but meets the base criteria for the scheme. This would be taken forward under the guidance of the Advisory Group, and then with the approval of the Area Joint Committee, be consulted on regarding the required traffic regulations.
- 7.3 None of the partners have yet committed joint funding to this scheme, although the Town Council have indicated that they will support the scheme financially, but have not set a budget for this yet.
- 7.4 Because of delays that been experienced with the results of the consultation, there is a now a time constraint in actually starting on site in January 2010, as there will be a problem with meeting the Area Joint Committee cycle. Also under the present economic climate and the town's 800 year celebrations, it is considered by most parties that it is not the best time to carry out work in the town centre, and that the work should be deferred by 12 months.

- 7.5 There are several options that the Cabinet need to consider:
- 1 to stop all the design work on the scheme and not carry out any work in St Ives Town Centre.
 - 2 to carry out minimum improvements to the street furniture, signage and access requirements on the pavements. Pavement and road surface repairs would be the responsibility of the County Council.
 - 3 to choose the most favoured option, No 1, and proceed to the timescales previously set
 - 4 to defer the project by 12 months (or other as yet unspecified period) to allow time for the production of a scheme which meets the majority of the requirements of the interested parties.

8. CONCLUSION

- 8.1 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 economic viability and also to improve the environment to make it a better shopping experience. In this Council's opinion, this requires reducing the traffic flows in the town centre and increasing the pedestrianised areas.
- 8.2 The results of the consultation show that a majority would like to see improvements to the area and that Option 1 is just the favoured option but not with any great majority. There have been objections for some areas of the business community and local residents to changes because of the economic climate and their perception that maximum car parking is required in the centre of the town.
- 8.3 Guidance is needed as to whether the scheme is taken forward, and if it is, the timescale that will now be adopted. These options are listed in para 7.5 above.

9. RECOMMENDATION

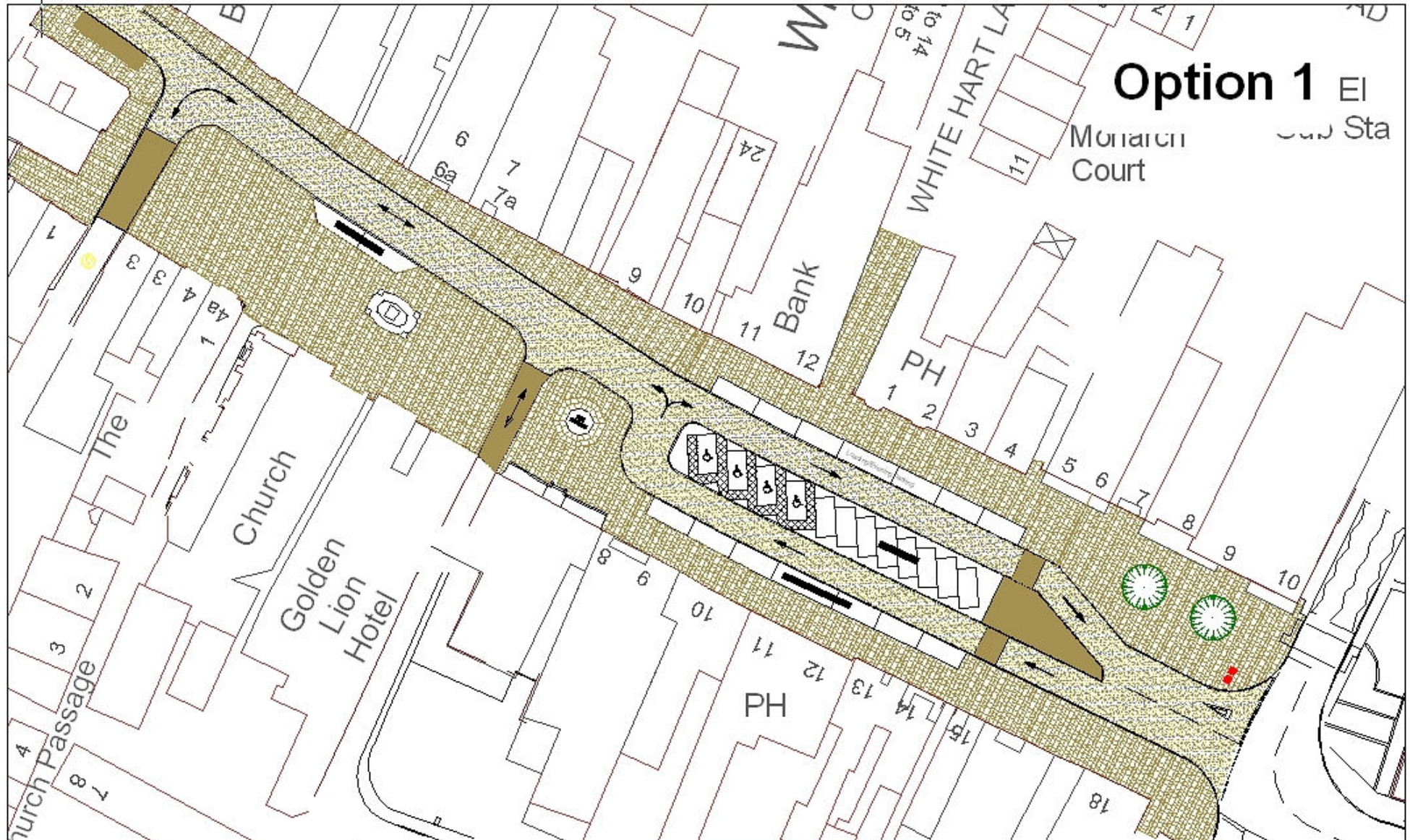
- 9.1 It is recommended that Cabinet–
- (1) note the progress of the scheme and the results of the consultation to date
 - (2) give guidance as to which of the options listed in para. 7.5 should be adopted to take the scheme forward.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Environmental Management Division files
Consultation documents and results

Contact Officer: Dr P Jose, Head of Environmental Management
☎ 01480 388332
C Allen – Project and Assets Manager
☎ 01480 388380

ANNEX A - MARKET HILL PROPOSALS - OPTION 1

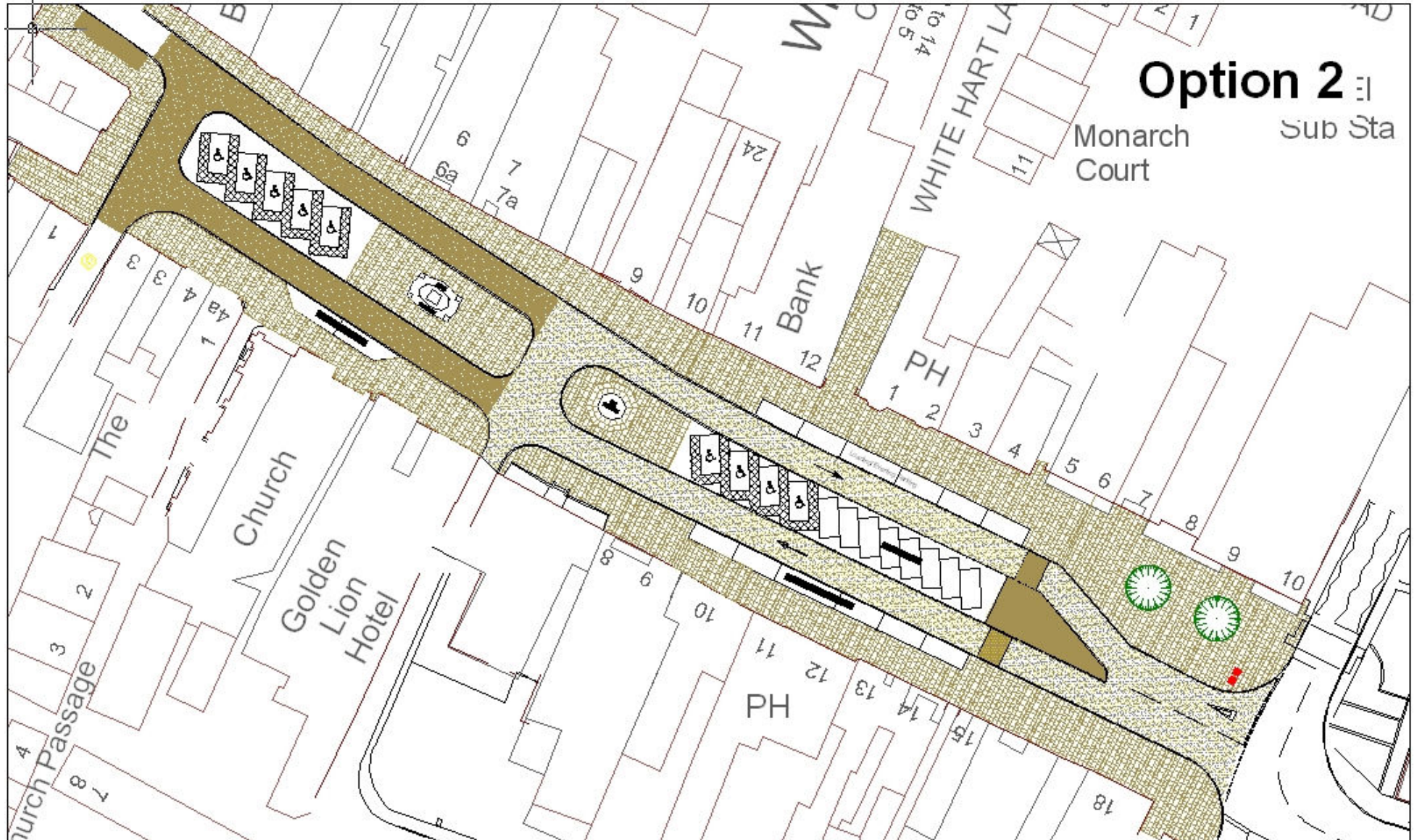


Option 1 EI
Monarch Court
St. Ives Station

121

<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. RSA 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">GWW</td> </tr> <tr> <td>DRG. No.</td> <td colspan="2"></td> </tr> </table>	SCALE	nts	DATE	DRAWN BY	GWW		DRG. No.		
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ANNEX A - MARKET HILL PROPOSALS - OPTION 2



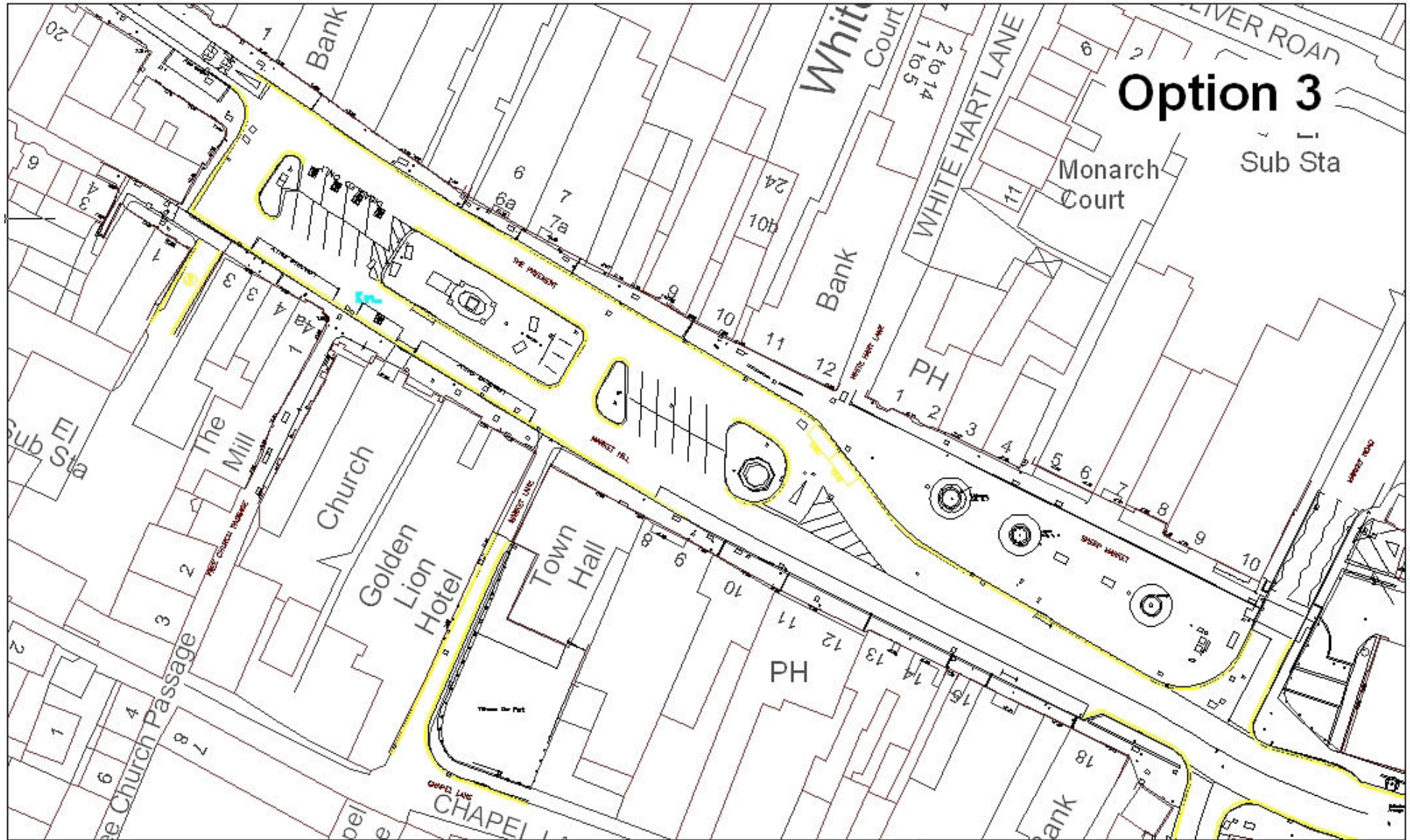
Option 2

Monarch Court Sub Sta

122

<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 colspan="2">DRG. No.</td> </tr> </table>	SCALE nts	DATE	DRAWN BY GW		DRG. No.	
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ANNEX A - MARKET HILL PROPOSALS - OPTION 3



Option 3

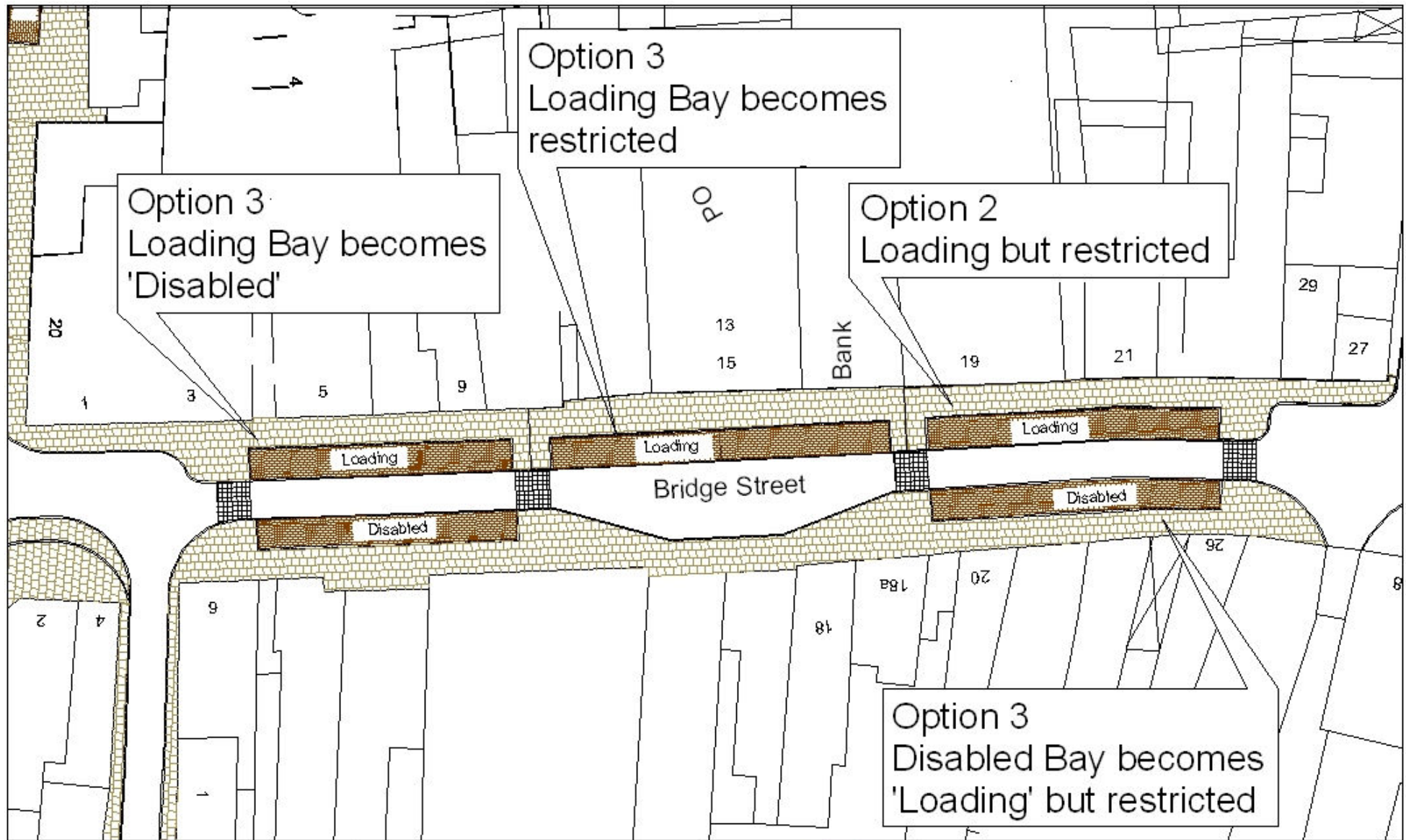
Sub Sta

123

<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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DRG. No.													

ANNEX B – BRIDGE STREET PROPOSALS

124



<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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Annex C

Public Consultation – Questionnaire Responses

In total there were 638 responses

Question 1 – *Would you support further improvements in Market Hill ?*

Yes (431) – 68%

No (182) – 29%

Question 2 – *Would you like wider pavements ?*

Yes (385) – 60%

No (234) – 37%

Question 3 – *Would you agree that a public open space would enhance the Market Hill area ?*

Yes (332) – 52%

No (278) – 44%

Question 4 – *Do you feel an improved Market stall layout is required ?*

Yes (344) – 54%

No (265) – 42%

Question 5 – *Do you agree that both should be moved ?*

War Memorial **Yes (248) – 39%**

No (358) – 56%

Cromwell Statue **Yes (239) – 37%**

No (363) – 57%

Question 6 – *Which of the proposed options do you prefer ?*

Option 1 (227) – **36%**

Option 2 (84) – **13%**

Option 3 (218) – **34%**

None (93) – **14%**

Question 7 – *Do you think the balance between on-street parking is appropriate in:*

Option 1 – **Yes (194) 30%**

No (181) 28%

Option 2 – **Yes (84) 13%**

No (168) 26%

Option 3 – **Yes (228) 36%**

No (131) 21%

Question 8 – *Would you support such reductions in Bridge Street*

Yes (337) – 53%

No (266) – 42%

Of the ones that said yes

Remove one loading bay (199) **59%**

Remove all loading bays (103) **31%**

Annex D – Correspondence for Advisory group representatives



St. Ives → ACCESS GROUP

20, Willow Green
Needingworth
Cambs
PE27 4SW
Tel 01480 467091
Email sue.ferreira@virgin.net

15th March 2009.

Dr P José
Head of Environmental Management
Huntingdonshire District Council
Pathfinder House

SIAG's comments on the St Ives Environmental Improvements

We feel the questionnaire was difficult to answer impartially. For example: if the response to changing of loading bays had been to have no loading bays would this really have happened? The same applies to Blue Badge Parking Bays. There seems little point in asking these questions when their provision is a necessity

Having said that, we feel it is time to move on in a positive and constructive way. We have submitted our own plan which encapsulates our views.

- Cromwell and the War Memorial should not be moved.
- There should be adequate Blue Badge Parking bearing in mind the current designated bays and the number of Badge Holders who currently have to park on yellow lines.
- There should be provision for loading and space for wedding and funeral cars to access the Free Church.
- All street furniture should be kept to a minimum though extra seating would be welcome. Do we need two phone boxes?
- The pavements need to be maintained to a high standard with regular dropped kerbs flush with the road.
- The open space outside Boots is well placed for sunshine. Why do we need another space?
- Extending and rationalising the whole central island to include Cromwell, the War Memorial and all the central parking spaces, as suggested in our plan, seems to us a more cost-effective solution.

We do not believe there is any reason to delay the work once the plan is agreed upon. There is an argument for starting it at a time when the shops are quiet. Once the economy improves the traders will be glad of the improvements. There is probably no perfect time for everyone but if the work is completed as quickly as possible the disruption could be minimised. If there is any question of delaying the start of the scheme it would be imperative that the financing be ring fenced to protect it for use only on this project.

The recent Town Centre Survey suggests that St Ives is a currently a vibrant and popular place to shop. Let us not destroy that.

Sue Ferreira

13 March 2009

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS TO ST. IVES TOWN CENTRE.

We have now had the opportunity to go through Chris Allen's recent report, consider the figures and formulate some ideas. The report asks groups to feed back their views at the meeting on 17 March; this letter is, in effect, a pre-view of what we will be suggesting next Tuesday.

Of those who replied to the questionnaire (not very many really) 68% supported improvements to Market Hill. The question was a bit like asking "Would you like more pay?"; almost certain to elicit a 'Yes' answer. The problems, in our view, start to arise with Questions 5 and 6. The numbers in your survey are significantly against moving the war memorial and Cromwell statue and without movement Options 1 and 2 lose a lot of their effect.

In gauging electors' support, we believe we could put Options 1 and 2 together and Options 3 and 'None of the Above' together. Options 1 and 2 both go for major structural change in the same area, with variations; Option 3 proposes almost no change and is very nearly 'do nothing'. In your survey the total numbers approving Options 1 or 2 was 311; the total numbers opting for Option 3 or None was also 311. It therefore appears that there is no significant majority support for Options 1 or 2 and that we should be looking at the whole scheme afresh.

The Civic Society therefore proposes deferring the project by a year provided the time gained is used for a major re-think of the scheme involving, *inter alia*, no movement of the war memorial or Cromwell statue.

In any revised scheme the following should be considered:

- a. The balance between the needs of market traders and static retailers.
- b. To provide wider pavements where possible.
- c. Extend pedestrian (public) space round the war memorial
- d. Provide a turning circle for large delivery lorries at the western end of Market Hill.
- e. Parking balance.
- f. Make more use of the 'sunny' area of Market Hill.
- g. To leave the town centre doing what it does best: to be an unchanged, un-made-over market town centre with a street market that straggles from one end to the other.

The Society would also suggest the use of two pedestrian crossings at the war memorial, not only as crossings but also for traffic calming in Market Hill.

Regarding Bridge Street, you will be aware from previous correspondence that for several years now the Civic Society's policy on pavement cafes has been to support and encourage any traders who wish to risk the vagaries of the British climate. If Bridge Street is to be made available for pavement cafes the sensible approach would appear to be to eliminate the loading and parking bays south of the entrance to Star Court (Noble's Yard) and south of Bull Lane, thus leaving the south end of Bridge Street available for pavement cafes.

(PHW ALLAN)
Secretary
Civic Society of St. Ives



Consultation on the St Ives Town Centre Environmental Improvements.

We have carefully considered at our board meetings the three proposals brought forward to us by Huntingdonshire District Council.

Having been involved in the consultation group since its inception we believe we have positively contributed towards it with regards to this scheme.

The second part of the consultation was regarding the proposed alterations to Bridge Street. We have been instrumental in bringing these forward originally as a petition called for by a number of our members.

Our choice of scheme to support at the time of the consultation was firmly for Option 1 and continues to be so.

SITI has considered the results of the public consultation extensively and would wish to make the following observations and comments.

Whilst our preferred option, Option 1, received the highest overall level of support we do not consider this high enough to emerge as a favorite from the consultation results.

There was a clear preference for at least something to be done to Market Hill and Bridge Street.

Option 2, in our opinion, fails to gain a great level of support.

We still feel that Option 3 fails to provide any clear benefits to the town. However, a large number of people who supported this option were of the opinion that the statue of Oliver Cromwell or the Cross of Sacrifice should not be moved. In fact this is a highly emotive issue in the town.

Having considered the report in great detail at a special meeting our considered response is that we still favour Option 1 but that consideration should be given to amending this to leave the memorials in situ.

We still fully support the Bridge Street proposals and hope that this implemented in the very near future.

We therefore strongly recommend that the present program be deferred to enable the District Council to bring forward these alternatives at a suitable time.

ST IVES TOWN COUNCIL

Town Hall
St Ives
Huntingdonshire
PE27 5AL
Tel: 01480 388929 Fax: 01480 388932
e-mail: clerk@stivestowncouncil.gov.uk
www.stivestowncouncil.gov.uk
TWINNED WITH STADTALLENDORF



Alison Melnyczuk
TOWN CLERK

23 February 2009

Dr Paul José
Head of Environmental Management
Huntingdonshire District Council
Pathfinder House

By Email

Dear Paul

ST IVES ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS

As you are aware following our recent conversation the Town Council was proposing to host a meeting of various group in the town that have a direct interest in the Environment Improvement Scheme. The purpose of the meeting was to try and identify common ground between the groups that could be presented to HDC at the next Liaison Meeting on 17th March. On Saturday 7 March that meeting took place and present were representatives from The Civic Society, SIT1, St Ives Business Forum and Members of the Town Council. Comments were also considered and taken into account from the Town Centre Residents Association and the St Ives Access Group who were unable to attend but wanted their views included.

All groups agreed that it would be impossible for everyone's requirements to be met but that change is required and those present outlined the individual views of their groups. Thereafter the various parts of the proposals were discussed in turn and the following general principals were agreed:

- Any work should be delayed for a year due to the current economic situation and to allow time for a scheme to be agreed.
- The War Memorial and Oliver Cromwell statue should remain in their current locations
- Wider pavements were desirable where existing pavements were narrow and to enable a ramp to be provided for the Town Hall.
- A new market stall layout was required to improve access to shops on market days
- Public space around the War Memorial should be increased to give this feature prominence
- It was noted that for the Monday market and other events the entire area was used as a public space
- Similar levels of parking should be provided
- Parking restrictions needed to be enforced
- The road junction at Market Hill / Station Road needed to be improved.
- Any scheme should have an impact statement on business
- Any scheme must consider and minimise disruption to traders during construction.

Other points raised during the discussion included:-

- Any improvements in St Ives Town centre would be undermined if out of town retail space and parking were allowed to expand
- The new Park & Ride site in St Ives would offer free parking, although CCC would take steps if too many St Ives shoppers used it.

- It was noted that all the proposed guided busway services would continue into St Ives bus station and onto Ramsey Road
- Improvement work was also need to the bus station area.

I have also been instructed to forward to you the comments made at the Town Council Planning Committee meeting held on 25 February at which time the results of the Consultation were considered, although please take into account some of these comments have been superseded by the points above:-

- It was felt that the results had, to some degree, been misinterpreted, particularly with regard to the re-siting of the statues and the claim that a majority had supported Option 1.
- Some concerns were expressed about inaccurate reporting in the press which intimated that local groups in the town would be required to find a solution.
- The Council might wish to reconsider its view on the number of parking bays in Bridge Street in the light of the high percentage in favour of removal of a single parking bay.
- There was some urgency in formulating a way forward. It was uncertain whether attendance at the Advisory Group meetings would be the best way and consideration ought to be given to meeting with other local groups and with the District Council officers separately.
- A basis exists to formulate a view and there are elements all the options could be used in this
- Seeing the responses from the various consultees would be useful to the Council in formulating a view.
- Postponement of the scheme for one year was an option which had been discussed at the first Advisory Group meeting and perhaps there was some validity in seeking this.
- There was some concern that the threat of losing the money for the project was once again being directed at the Council.

I trust the above is clear however, should you require clarification of any points prior to the next Advisory Group meeting please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards.

Yours sincerely

Alison Melnychuk
TOWN CLERK

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CABINET

23RD APRIL 2009

REVIEW OF THE HOME-LINK SCHEME AND THE COUNCIL'S LETTINGS POLICY

(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery))

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 7th April 2009, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) considered a report by the Head of Housing Services on the outcome of a review of Home-Link, the choice based lettings scheme and the Council's Lettings Policy. This report summarises the Panel's discussions.

2. THE PANEL'S DISCUSSIONS

- 2.1 The Panel has received details of work undertaken to review the Home-Link scheme, which comprised an examination of strategic and operational aspects of the scheme and consultation with housing association partners, statutory and voluntary agencies and customers of the scheme.
- 2.2 The Panel has been encouraged by the reported level of users' satisfaction with the scheme, but has acknowledged the review reveals that a significant proportion of users rate the scheme as "poor". Members have suggested that the data should be analysed further with a view to establishing whether there is any link between users' responses and the priority band they have been allocated. With regard to the difficulties some customers experience in understanding the mechanics of the scheme and the finding that some users require assistance to bid for properties, the Panel has been reassured that efforts will be made to inform potential users and to raise awareness generally of the support that is available to them, particularly for those on the Housing Register.
- 2.3 On the subject of the Council's Lettings Policy, the Panel has been advised that the review has concluded that the current policy is adequate to meet local need and that only a minor amendment is required. The Panel has discussed the implications of re-prioritising homeless persons who are sleeping rough by awarding them a Band B priority. In expressing support for this change, Members have taken into account the facts that often such applicants for housing assistance do not merit a higher priority and that there are no charities in Huntingdonshire helping those who sleep rough.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Cabinet is requested to take into consideration the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) as set out above during their deliberations on this item.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Minutes and Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) held on 7th April 2009.

Contact Officer: Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer
☎ 01480 388006

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Cabinet

23 April 2009

Review of the Home-Link scheme & the Council's Lettings Policy (Report by the Head of Housing Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In February 2008 the Council introduced a choice based lettings scheme, branded Home-Link. This changed the way in which housing association properties in the district were let, from a system where officers allocated properties to households on the Housing Register based on their areas of choice, to one where the applicant is able to express an interest, or bid, for specific vacant properties. Through this scheme properties available for letting are openly advertised so that applicants on the Register are able to see what is available and, within certain criteria, make choices as to what they would like to bid for.
- 1.2 The Home-link scheme was introduced in partnership with the six other councils that form the Cambridge sub region and attracted funding from central government to help with the set up costs of the scheme. Each partner reviewed their individual Lettings Policies and agreed a common priority system as part of the scheme so that Register applicants across the sub region have their overall priority for housing assessed in the same way. Cabinet approved the adoption of Huntingdonshire's new Lettings Policy in July 2007 and this was introduced in February 2008 when the scheme went live. This changed the priority assessment from a points based system to a broader brush priority band system. All applicants on the Register are now prioritised under this banding system.
- 1.3 At the time of agreeing the new Lettings Policy and approval to implement the Home-Link scheme, Cabinet recommended it receive a report on the progress of the Home-Link scheme within 12 months of its implementation. The Home-link partnership has carried out a review of the scheme over the last few months and this report highlights the findings.

2. SCOPE OF THE REVIEW

- 2.1 The review considered Home-Link's strategic and operational issues, and involved consultation with housing association partners, statutory and voluntary agencies, as well as customers of the scheme to gauge their experiences and views. A detailed report on the review's initial findings and recommendations was considered by the Home-Link Management Board on 6 March 2009. The Management Board consists of chief housing officers of all the local authority partners as

well as representatives from the housing association partners. Steve Plant is Huntingdonshire's representative on this board. The areas covered by the review and the issues raised included:

- 2.2 **Performance Management Information.** The Home-Link IT system holds a great deal of information about the demand for social housing, the circumstances of people applying for housing, and the letting of council and housing association properties across the sub region. The Management Board has requested that the reports produced from the IT system be refined to produce a range of performance management data and other information. This may then be used to inform the development of the Home-Link scheme and also give councils information that will be useful in delivering affordable housing on new sites across the sub region.
- 2.3 **Developing the Home-Link brand.** The initial plan was to establish the core function of the Home-Link scheme to let social rented properties by advertising them to applicants on the Housing Register. It was then hoped that the scheme would be extended to advertise low cost home ownership properties, including key worker housing as well as privately rented properties. This would then give households a range of property tenures that they could consider to try and meet their housing need. Having consulted with applicants on the Register throughout the first year of operation, over 70% of respondents said they would like to see privately rented housing advertised through Home-Link. This piece of work is due to be progressed through a project that the Cambridgeshire councils are currently involved in called the Enhanced Housing Options programme. The partnership is also in discussion with Key Homes East, the agent for delivering low cost homeownership housing, as to how they may make use of Home-Link to advertise their properties.
- 2.4 **Accessing and understanding the Home-Link scheme.** The Home-Link partnership sent a questionnaire to 10% of the households on the Housing Registers across the Cambridge sub region to ask their views on the Home-Link scheme, a total of over 2,200 households. Although only 364 responded this gave some interesting feedback:
- 79% of respondents understand how the scheme works.
 - 73% report they have enough information to allow them to use the scheme.
 - 72% know where/how to obtain a copy of property magazine or find out what properties are available.
 - 46% knew they could subscribe to the property magazine for a fee.
 - 18% of respondents state they have never bid because they have difficulty in understanding or using the scheme.
 - Of the 18% above who did not bid because of difficulties understanding and using the scheme:

- 12% had difficulties accessing the scheme due to lack of computer facilities, unable to get/afford magazine.
- 8% said they needed help with accessing the scheme.
- 5% were not aware of Home-Link.

What did respondents like most about the scheme?

- Top responses – Ease of use; transparency of the scheme; choice – not only of property but the increase in geographical area.

What did respondents like least about the scheme?

- Top responses – Not enough houses; complicated system; lack of feedback; don't like the system; unfair process; band C & D disadvantaged.

Overall rating of the scheme.

Good/Excellent – 40%

Average – 25%

Poor – 35%

2.5 Communications and raising awareness of the support available –

As some of the responses to the customer questionnaire above indicate, even from a small sample of households on the Register, it suggests there are still a significant number of people who do not fully understand how the Home-Link scheme works and/or require help to be able to access the scheme and bid for properties. This was one of the main concerns raised at the time the scheme was launched and as a result:

- A welcome pack is sent to everyone applying to the Register giving details of how the scheme works and the ways in which they can get information on the properties available and how they may bid for properties.
- The agencies able to offer support to customers were trained on the Home-Link scheme with many signing up to an 'Access Strategy' giving details of the type of support they may offer customers.
- Customer Contact and Call Centre staff within each council were trained on Home-Link so that they can advise and help customers.

2.6 As it appears that some people may still not be able to use the Home-Link system the Management Board has recommended that a Communications Strategy be put together to make sure that the information regarding Home-Link and the places that support can be provided are publicised as widely as possible in order to help those people who may require help. This would also include an on-going

training plan for other agencies to ensure they are kept up to date with the scheme and are confident about advising their customers about the scheme.

2.7 **Lettings Policy issues.** The review considered whether there were any aspects of the Lettings Policies of each of the partners that affected their ability to deliver their legal duties and strategic objectives in relation to meeting their own local housing needs. This part of the review was particularly important for two reasons:

- Ensuring that the relative weighting awarded to different housing circumstances within the common priority system of the Home-Link scheme (the banding system), did not restrict those in perceived greatest need being prioritised for housing.
- Ensuring that the policies were legal and complied with the relevant legislation.

2.8 Each partner felt that the banding system prioritised those households in greatest need and generally only minor changes to wording in the policy have been recommended. The only recommendation for change to the banding system was that applicants who were homeless and sleeping rough should have a higher priority than the band C priority the policy awarded. The logic to this was that other applicants awarded band C priority included people living in properties where they had to share facilities, such as a bathroom and a kitchen. A person without a roof over their head should therefore have a higher priority and a recommendation was made that they be awarded a band B priority. It is proposed that this Council adopts this recommendation.

2.9 Several choice based lettings schemes have faced legal challenge relating to how they prioritise households on their Register. It is sensible to review our policy in line with the rulings made in any of these cases so that any necessary changes may be made. Changes to policy would require formal adoption by Cabinet and so members will be kept informed of any legal rulings that impact on the Council's Lettings Policy. This will be an on-going process as any legal challenges and rulings emerge.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The Home-Link scheme has had a positive first year of operation and it continues to have encouraging feedback in terms of its transparency and ease of use, particularly amongst those applicants that use the website as a means of finding vacant properties and placing bids. The partnership recognises thought that it needs to continue to promote the scheme widely and ensure that the most vulnerable households in housing need are supported so that they can participate in the scheme. This will include reviewing the Access Strategy and support voluntary and statutory agencies provide their clients and ensuring that any gaps

in support provision are filled. This will be one of the major pieces of work over the coming months.

- 3.2 It is felt that the Council's Lettings Policy ensures that those households in greatest need continue to receive priority for housing and it has therefore only required minor amendments. The Policy will however remain open for review in the light of changing local circumstances and rulings on legal challenges against choice based lettings schemes elsewhere in the country. Any changes will be brought back to members as required.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- a) note the findings of the review of the scheme and the planned enhancements to Home-Link; and
 - b) adopt the attached amended Lettings Policy.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Choice Based Lettings & Lettings Policy report – Cabinet July 2007

Contact Officers: **Steve Plant, Head Of Housing Services**

☎ 01480 288240

Jon Collen, Housing Needs & Resources Manager

☎ 01480 288220

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Huntingdonshire District Council

LETTINGS POLICY DOCUMENT

This document sets out how Huntingdonshire District Council, in partnership with Housing Associations with properties in the district, let their properties through the “Cambridge Sub Regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme” (Home-Link scheme)

April 2009

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Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 This is the letting policy for Huntingdonshire District Council, (“HDC”) and should be considered in conjunction with the Cambridge Sub-regional Choice Based Lettings scheme (“CBL”), framework document, which outlines how the CBL scheme will work. The Partnership Organisations (“PO’s”) to the Sub-regional CBL scheme are:

- Cambridge City Council
- East Cambridgeshire District Council
- Fenland District Council
- Forest Heath District Council
- Huntingdonshire District Council
- South Cambridgeshire District Council
- St Edmundsbury Borough Council

1.1.2 The CBL scheme and this lettings policy have been designed in collaboration with the sub regional POs listed above, with the aim of having as much consistency in the letting of social housing as is possible in a very diverse sub-region. The lettings policy aims to ensure that all people seeking social housing in Huntingdonshire are able to exercise choice in deciding where they wish to live and in the type of property they would prefer.

1.1.3 The policy enables HDC to consider the individual needs of its applicants whilst making best use of the scarce resource of housing stock. The policy sets out:

- How to apply for housing
- Who is eligible to be accepted onto the housing register
- Who is not eligible to be accepted onto the housing register
- How priority for housing applicants will be given
- What the decision making processes are
- How homes will be let

1.1.4 You may view the CBL framework document and this lettings policy, at www.huntsdc.gov.uk, or request a copy from any of the PO’s offices. (See appendix 1)

1.2 Objectives of the lettings policy

- To meet the legal requirements for the allocation of social housing as set out in the Housing Act (1996) as amended by the Homelessness Act (2002)
- To assist applicants in the highest assessed need
- To let properties in a fair and transparent way and provide a consistent lettings process

- To make best use of housing stock
- To ensure that applicants are not unlawfully discriminated against, whether directly or indirectly
- To support vulnerable applicants
- To provide increased choice and information to applicants
- To provide information and feedback on homes that are let through the CBL scheme
- To improve mobility across the sub-region
- To promote social inclusion and help achieve sustainable communities

1.3 Statement on choice

- 1.3.1 HDC is fully committed to enabling applicants to play a more active role in choosing where they live, whilst continuing to house those in the greatest need in Huntingdonshire.
- 1.3.2 The CBL scheme will enable applicants from Huntingdonshire to have access to a percentage of available homes from all the PO's across the sub region.

1.4 Legal context

- 1.4.1 All applicants for housing will be placed in the appropriate housing needs band, based on an assessment of their household's needs. This is to ensure homes are let to those in the highest assessed need and ensures that the Council meets its legal obligations as set out in the Housing Act (1996) as amended by Homelessness Act (2002).
- 1.4.2 The law states that there are five groups of applicants where reasonable preference must be considered:
- People who are homeless (within the meaning of Part VII (7) of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.)
 - People who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2), or 195(2) of the 1996 Act (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985) or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3)
 - People occupying unsanitary or overcrowded housing or otherwise living in unsatisfactory housing conditions
 - People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including grounds relating to a disability); and
 - People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the authority, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others)

1.4.3 The Lettings Policy has been designed to ensure applicants who fall into the above reasonable preference categories will be awarded reasonable preference.

1.4.4 Every application received by HDC will be considered according to the facts unique to that application as HDC recognises that every applicant's situation is different. Applications will be considered on an individual basis and individual circumstances will be taken into account. However, all lettings will be made in accordance with this lettings policy

1.5 Equal opportunities and diversity

1.5.1 The lettings policy will be responsive, accessible and sensitive to the needs of all. HDC will not tolerate prejudice and unlawful discrimination and we will actively promote equality.

1.6 Monitoring and reviewing the lettings policy

1.6.1 HDC will monitor the operation of the lettings policy by:

- Regularly reviewing the policy to ensure that the policy meets its stated objectives and complies with legislative changes.

Chapter 2

2. Applying for housing

2.1 How to apply for housing

- 2.1.1 Anyone can apply to HDC for housing. However, not everyone will be eligible for housing. HDC will not register people who are not eligible to be housed. Evidence of eligibility may be required to complete registration. (See chapter 3) Applicants are advised that due to a high demand for available housing in Huntingdonshire, not everyone who is eligible to be considered for housing is guaranteed housing from the register
- 2.1.2 To apply to go on the housing register, applicants are required to complete a housing application form. This can be completed on-line at www.home-link.org.uk or by requesting a paper form from any of the Home-Link partners offices. Paper forms should be returned to Huntingdonshire District Council, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN or any of the POs offices as detailed in appendix 1.
- 2.1.3 An applicant may include anyone on their application who may reasonably be expected to live with them as part of their household.
- 2.1.4 Where more than one eligible applicant wishes to have a shared application they will be known as joint applicants. Although siblings and friends may jointly apply to the register, due to the level of demand for family sized accommodation from family households, they will not be prioritised for an offer of this size of accommodation ahead of families.
- 2.1.5 On receipt of the application form HDC will assess the form and may request additional information and supporting evidence so that the applicant's eligibility and housing need can be confirmed. HDC will verify the information provided which may include inviting the applicant for an interview or visiting them at home.
- 2.1.6 After assessment HDC will write to applicants to inform them:
- Whether the applicant is eligible for housing and if so:
 - Their unique reference number, which allows them to bid for homes through the CBL Scheme
 - The Housing Needs Band in which the application has been placed
 - The date that the application was placed in the band (the "date in band")
 - The size of property for which the applicant is likely to be able to bid
 - How decisions may be reviewed

2.2 Date of registration

2.2.1 The registration date of an application form will be the date the housing application form is received at the office of HDC, or any of the POs. If the form is completed over the Internet the date the form is received electronically is the date of registration.

2.3 Date in band

2.3.1 The principle of the policy is that normally no applicant should overtake existing applicants in a band. Therefore applicants will be placed within a band in date order.

- **New applications:** the date in band will be the same as the applicant's date of registration.
- **Change of circumstances which results in a higher band assessment:** the date in band will be the date the applicant provides evidence of the change of circumstances leading to the award of a higher priority band.

2.3.2 When applicants move down bands due to a change in their circumstances the following applies:

- **Returning to a band that they were previously placed in (whether this is a higher or lower band):** the date in band reverts to the date that applied when the applicant was previously in that band.
- **Moving into a lower band they have not previously been placed in:** the date in band will be the date that the application was first placed into a higher band. In most circumstances this is likely to be their date of registration.

2.4 Multiple applications

2.4.1 An applicant can have only one active application as a main applicant on the housing register at any time.

2.5 Change of circumstances

2.5.1 Where an applicant registered with HDC has a change in their circumstances they must promptly inform HDC. Applicants can obtain a change of circumstances form from any PO, but this must then be sent to the PO where the original application was made. Change of circumstances received by HDC will be assessed based on the new circumstances. Examples of change of circumstances are detailed below, although this list is not exhaustive.

- Change of address
- People joining or leaving the household

- Pregnancy/birth of a child
- Relationship breakdown
- Change to the medical circumstances of anyone included on the application
- Death of a household member
- Death of a joint applicant
- Change of income and/or capital

2.6 Applicant's consent and declaration

2.6.1 When an applicant applies for housing, they will be required to sign a declaration to confirm that:

- The information they have provided is true, accurate and complete
- They will promptly inform HDC of any change in circumstances
- They understand that information will be shared with all the POs
- They consent to HDC making enquiries of any relevant persons to confirm the information on the application form is correct
- They consent to the release of any relevant information either to HDC held by third parties, or by HDC to third parties

2.6.2 HDC may take legal action against applicants who withhold or provide false information regarding their housing application. Where an applicant has been let a property as a result of providing false information, their landlord may take court action to obtain possession of the property.

2.7 Data protection

2.7.1 HDC policy on Data Protection is available on request.

2.8 Application review

2.8.1 When an applicant has not bid for any available properties for one year, we will normally write to them to see if they still wish to be on the housing register. If there is no response within the required time limit, (28 days from the letter being sent) the application will be cancelled. We will write to the applicant to notify them of this. If an applicant contacts HDC within 28 days of their application being cancelled and indicates that they still want to be considered for housing the application will be reinstated from their last applicable date in band (see section 2.3 above)

2.9 Cancelling an application

2.9.1 An application will be cancelled from the housing register in the following circumstances:

- At the applicant's request
- If the applicant becomes ineligible for housing (see chapter 3)

- When the applicant has been housed through the Lettings Policy
- When a tenant completes a mutual exchange
- Where an applicant does not maintain their application through the review process, or where they move and do not provide a contact address
- Where the applicant has died

2.9.2 When an application is cancelled, we will write to the applicant or their representative to notify them. Where an applicant has been highlighted as vulnerable, HDC will contact the applicant to check their circumstances before cancelling the application. Any applicant whose application has been cancelled has the right to ask for a review of the decision, (see chapter 6)

2.9.3 Where an applicant wishes to re-join the housing register at a later date their new date of registration will be the date they re-apply.

Chapter 3

3. Eligibility to be accepted onto the housing register

3.1 Eligibility categories

- 3.1.1 Under the Housing Act (1996), local authorities must consider whether applicants are eligible for housing assistance. This relates to some people who may have been living abroad or who do not have permanent permission to remain in the UK.
- 3.1.2 HDC cannot, by law, allocate housing accommodation to anyone who is subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act (1996), unless they fall within a class exempted from this restriction by Government regulations.
- 3.1.3 In addition, HDC cannot allocate housing accommodation to other classes of persons from abroad if, by law, Government regulations dictate we cannot.

3.2 Notifying an ineligible applicant

- 3.2.1 Applications whose immigration status makes them ineligible to be considered on the register will be notified in writing of the decision and the reason for the decision. If an applicant is accepted onto the register, but subsequently becomes ineligible, their housing application will be cancelled and the applicant notified. Applicants found to be ineligible have a right to ask for a review of the decision (see chapter 6).

3.3 Exclusions from the housing register

- 3.3.1 HDC may exclude someone from the register if it considers it proportionate and reasonable to do so as a result of unacceptable behaviour.
- 3.3.2 Unacceptable behaviour is defined as behaviour which would, if the person was either a secure tenant or a member of a secure tenant's household, entitle a landlord to a possession order under any grounds of grounds 1 to 7 of the Housing Act 1985 schedule 2.
- 3.3.3 Unacceptable behaviour can include tenancy related debt or other breach of tenancy conditions.
- 3.3.4 When considering whether to exclude an applicant from the register HDC will consider when the unacceptable behaviour took place, the length of time that has elapsed since and whether there has been any change in circumstances which would show that the applicant had amended their behaviour so that they are considered suitable to become a tenant.

3.4 Notifying applicants who are excluded due to unacceptable behaviour

- 3.4.1 All applicants who are excluded due to unacceptable behaviour, will be informed of this decision in writing and how they can become eligible, for example, by agreeing an arrangement to make payments towards rent arrears and adhering to this, or by the applicant showing that the circumstances or behaviour that made them unsuitable to be a tenant, has changed.
- 3.4.2 If an applicant is accepted onto the register, but subsequently becomes ineligible, due to unacceptable behaviour, their housing application will be removed and the applicant will be notified.
- 3.4.3 Applicants found to be ineligible due to unacceptable behaviour have a right to ask for a review of the decision (see chapter 6).

Chapter 4

4. Assessment of housing need

4.1 Legal background

4.1.1 All applicants will be placed in a housing needs band following an assessment of their household's needs. This is to ensure that HDC meet their legal obligations as set out in the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

4.2 Advice and information

4.2.1 HDC will ensure that advice and information on how to apply for housing in Huntingdonshire is available free of charge to everyone. If applicants are likely to have difficulty in making an application without assistance, then any necessary assistance they require will be made available by the council.

4.3 Assessment of housing need

4.3.1 Assessments of housing needs are based on an applicant's current housing circumstances. These assessments are made by housing officers of HDC.

4.4 Local connection criteria

4.4.1 To ensure local housing needs are met, 90% of properties advertised through the CBL scheme will be labelled as available to applicants with a local connection to HDC. 10% of advertised properties will be open to bidding from applicants with a local connection to any authority in the Cambridge Sub-region. 25% of new growth homes will be made available for cross boundary mobility. The relevant local connection requirement will be clearly labelled on the property advertisement.

4.4.2 The housing register is open to all customers who are eligible for housing even if they do not have a connection to HDC. They are able to express interest in advertised homes, but usually the property will be labelled as available to a customer with a local connection to HDC or the Sub region. If there is no local connection criteria required for the property, this will be stated in the property advert.

4.4.3 Having a local connection with Huntingdonshire means that one of the following conditions must apply:

- The applicant works in the local authority area for sixteen hours or more per week
- The applicant has lived in the local authority area for at least 6 of the last 12 months, or 3 of the last 5 years

- The applicant previously lived in the local authority area for 5 or more years
- The applicant has family members who are resident in the local authority area. Family members are defined as parents, children or brothers or sisters who have been resident in the local authority for a period of 5 years or longer. Other close family ties will be considered on a case by case basis
- There are special circumstances which HDC considers give rise to a local connection

4.4.4 When applying for a sub-regionally advertised property a local connection to any of the POs will enable applicants to bid for it.

4.5 Housing needs bands

4.5.1 Housing need is assessed and applicants will be placed in one of the following four bands in date order. Applicants placed in band A will have the highest assessed need, band D the lowest. When an applicant is placed in a housing needs band the same level of priority will apply with all PO's in the sub-region.

4.6 Band A: Urgent Need

Applicants with the following circumstances will be placed into band A:

a) Urgent transfer

Where a housing association tenant living in Huntingdonshire or a PO tenant needs to move urgently because of circumstances that could include:

- Major repairs are required on the property in which they live and which cannot be undertaken with the tenant living in the property
- The property is being demolished
- Urgent social need to move

b) Statutorily overcrowded

Applicants who have been assessed as being overcrowded as defined in Part X (10) of the Housing Act 1985. An Environmental Health Officer will carry out this assessment.

c) Current supported housing resident

Applicants leaving Social Services care, or other supported accommodation, and are ready to move to a permanent home of their own. This will be subject to the council, Social Services and the landlord of the supported accommodation agreeing that the applicant is ready to move to their own home. If the applicant needs an on going support package to be able to live independently confirmation that this

will be put in place will also be required from the proposed support provider.

d) Urgent health and safety risk

Applicants whose current accommodation has been assessed by HDC or a PO as posing an urgent health and safety risk. This will apply where the assessment has classified the accommodation as unsafe, or where there is a risk of imminent harm as identified in the assessment, which cannot be remedied in a reasonable time and where the health and safety risk has not been caused intentionally by the applicant or a member of the applicant's household.

e) Urgent medical need

An assessment of medical need will be made by a medical professional or senior officer, using sub-regionally agreed criteria for assessment.

Urgent medical need priority will be awarded when an applicant's current housing conditions have been assessed as having a major adverse effect on the medical condition or disability of the applicant or a member of their household.

f) Homeless households (Full homelessness duty owed under s.193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002)

Means where an applicant is not homeless intentionally or threatened with homelessness intentionally, is eligible for assistance and has a priority need for accommodation, and HDC or a PO has accepted a duty under s193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 (referred to as the full homelessness duty).

g) Urgent multiple needs

Means where an applicant is assessed as having two or more band B needs. This may include an application where two household members have the same assessed need. i.e. two high medical needs.

For multiple needs in band A please see emergency housing status (see chapter 5)

4.8 Band B: High Need

Applicants with the following circumstances will be placed into Band B:

a) High health and safety risk

Means applicants whose current accommodation has been assessed by HDC or a PO as posing a high health and safety risk to them or

members of their household. This will apply where the assessment has identified that the applicant is living in a property, the condition of which places them or members of their household at a high risk of harm as identified in the assessment, which cannot be remedied in a reasonable time and where the health and safety risk has not been caused intentionally by the applicant or a member of the applicant's household.

b) High medical need

An assessment of medical need will be made by a medical professional or senior officer, using a sub-regionally agreed criteria for assessment.

High medical need priority will be awarded where an applicant's current housing conditions have been assessed as having a significant adverse effect on the medical condition or disability of the applicant or member of their household and this will be improved by alternative accommodation.

c) Victims of harassment, violence or abuse

Where HDC or a PO has investigated and identified that the applicant or a member of their household is being subjected to harassment or other conduct causing alarm and distress that will be improved by a move to alternative accommodation. Harassment might be, but is not limited to, harassment due to, race, gender, sexual orientation, mental health, physical disability, learning disability, religion, domestic abuse or harassment by a former partner or associated persons.

HDC will offer advice and support to assist the applicant in identifying possible ways to resolve the situation.

d) Lacking two bedrooms

Means the household is assessed as lacking two bedrooms based on the bedroom calculation in chapter 5,.

e) Under-occupancy by two or more bedrooms or release of adapted property

Means where an existing social housing tenant living in the sub region is living in a property which:

- Has two bedrooms more than are required by the household
- Where a property has been adapted and the adaptations are no longer required. For example if the person requiring the adaptations has moved or died.

f) Homelessness prevention (prior to homelessness decision being made)

Where an applicant is threatened with homelessness within a period of more than 28 days, HDC will work with the applicant to try and prevent their homelessness. Those applicants, who appear likely to have a priority need in the event of a homelessness application, will be placed in band B whilst the prevention measures are being pursued. Existing housing register applicants within band A will retain their band A status.

Where homelessness prevention has not been possible and an applicant remains threatened with homelessness within the next 28 days, they may choose to make a homeless application which will be assessed under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002.

g) Sleeping Rough

Means where it is confirmed that an applicant is sleeping rough and has no other accommodation available to them. The council will verify that an applicant is sleeping rough before awarding this priority. Rough sleeping priority will not be awarded when accommodation is available to the applicant, including a placement at a direct access hostel, but the applicant chooses not to take up this offer of accommodation.

h) Multiple needs

Means where an applicant is assessed as having three or more band C needs. This may include an application where more than two household members have the same assessed need eg. three medical needs.

4.9 Band C: Medium Need

Applicants with the following circumstances will be placed into band C:

a) Medium medical need

An assessment of medical need will be made by a medical professional or senior officer, using a sub-regionally agreed criteria for assessment.

Medium medical need will be awarded where an applicant's current accommodation is having a minimal effect on the medical condition or disability of the applicant or member of their household, but a move to different accommodation would be likely to improve their quality of life.

b) Lacking one bedroom

Means the household is assessed as lacking one bedrooms based on the bedroom calculation in chapter 5,.

c) Under-occupancy by one bedroom.

Means where an existing social housing tenant living in the sub region lives in a property which has one bedroom more than is required by the household.

d) Need to move for social reasons

Means where HDC or a PO has assessed the applicant's need to move for social reasons.

For example, where it has been confirmed that an applicant:

- Needs to move to or within an area of the sub region to give or receive support, and a proven level of support is required and can be given
- Has found employment in the Huntingdonshire area and needs to move closer to work, or will otherwise lose their employment
- Has staying contact with a child/children and is living in accommodation where the child/children are not allowed to stay overnight
- Is living in a first floor or above property and has children under 10 years of age as part of their household, or is more than 24 weeks pregnant with their first child.

e) Housing conditions.

Means where the applicant/s either lack or share one or more of these facilities with persons, who are not members of their household.

Facilities may include:

- A living room
- Kitchen
- Bathroom

f) Other homelessness

Applicants who are homelessness or threatened with homelessness and are:

- Intentionally homeless
- Homeless or threatened with homelessness but not in priority need
- Owed a main homelessness duty by a local authority that is not a PO in the sub-region

4.10 Band D: Low Need

Any applicant who does not meet any of the criteria in bands A, B and C will be assessed as having a low level of housing need and their application will be placed in band D.

4.11 Low priority

4.11.1 In certain circumstances, applicants will be accepted onto the housing register, but their application will be considered as low priority as a result of behaviour or circumstances that affects their suitability to be a tenant. In these circumstances their application will be placed in a housing needs band but they will not be actively considered for an offer of a tenancy and they will not be able to express interest in available properties. Their application will remain in low priority until the applicant has shown that the circumstances or behaviour has changed so that they are considered suitable to be a tenant.

4.11.2 The following categories will be considered as low priority:

- Applicants with rent arrears, former rent arrears or other housing-related charges or debts, where these are not sufficiently high to exclude the applicant from the register (see section 3.3). Other than in exceptional circumstances, an applicant with outstanding rent arrears, former rent arrears or other housing-related debts will not be considered for an offer of a tenancy or eligible to bid for housing until they have shown a regular repayment record.
- Applicants guilty of anti social behaviour where this is not sufficiently severe to exclude them from the register (see section 3.3).

4.11.3 All applicants who are considered low priority will be informed of this decision in writing, and how their application could be re-assessed, for example, by agreeing and keeping to an arrangement to make payments towards rent arrears, or by the applicant satisfying the council that the circumstances or behaviour that made them unsuitable to be a tenant has changed.

4.11.4 HDC expects applicants to clear any housing related debts owed to any registered social landlord before an offer of a tenancy is made, where it is clearly within their means to do this (for example where the debt is relatively low and the applicant has a reasonable disposable income or has sufficient savings available).

4.11.5 When a financial assessment shows that the debt cannot be cleared immediately then a realistic and affordable repayment arrangement should be agreed to clear the debt. The applicant may become eligible to bid for property as long as they have made regular payments in line with the agreement they have made.

4.11.6 Applicants found to be low priority have a right to ask for a review of the decision (see chapter 6). A designated senior officer will undertake the review.

4.12 Intentionally worsening housing circumstances

- 4.12.1 If, in the reasonable opinion of a PO, an applicant has intentionally worsened their housing situation in circumstances to deliberately improve their housing priority, their housing need will be assessed on the basis of their previous accommodation.
- 4.12.2 Applicants found to have intentionally worsened their circumstances have a right to ask for a review of the decision (see chapter 6).
- 4.12.3 All applicants deemed to have intentionally worsened their circumstances will have their application reviewed on the anniversary of the decision, unless there is a change in their circumstances in the meantime.

4.13 Financial resources

- 4.13.1 All eligible applicants are entitled to apply for housing regardless of income levels. However if an applicant has an income and/or capital, which will enable them to resolve their own housing need through other tenures they will not receive any preference for rented housing and will be given a low priority.

This assessment will be based on the following

- The total income of the applicant/partner
- Any capital available to the applicant/partner
- Average property prices in the area for the type of accommodation needed by the household
- The ability of the applicant/partner to meet the required mortgage repayments based on a realistic assessment of their financial position and commitments.

4.14 Officer review for band A applicants

- 4.14.1 Where an applicant has held band A status for three months from their applicable date in band, HDC will carry out a review of their circumstances. This will result in either:
- A direct let – usually for statutorily homeless applicants living in temporary accommodation
 - Priority being maintained
 - Moving into a lower priority band if the circumstances under which they were placed in band A no longer apply

Chapter 5

5.1 Assessment information and criteria

- 5.1.1 The following section outlines criteria taken into account when considering assessments of housing need.

5.2 Transfer applicants

- 5.2.1 Transfer applicants are those applicants who are tenants of a housing association property in the Huntingdonshire area who wish to move to alternative accommodation.

5.3 Homeless applications

- 5.3.1 Applicants who are already on the housing register will remain in their existing housing needs band whilst a homeless assessment is carried out (unless the criteria in paragraph 5.3.3 below applies).
- 5.3.2 When a decision has been made by HDC that an applicant is owed a full homelessness duty under s.193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended) their application will be placed in band A. (See chapter 4 section 4.7.1 b)
- 5.3.3 Where a person is threatened with homelessness within a period of more than 28 days, the Council will work with the applicant to try and prevent their homelessness. Those persons, who would appear likely to have a priority need in the event of a homelessness application, will be placed in band B whilst the prevention measures are being pursued.
- 5.3.4 A person who is threatened with homelessness may have an existing housing register application. Applicants already in band A will retain their existing band A status whilst homelessness prevention measures are pursued.
- 5.3.5 An applicant who is statutorily homeless or threatened with homelessness but deemed not to have a priority need will be placed in band C (unless other circumstances are such that they are eligible for placement within a different band).
- 5.3.6 Applicants who have been assessed as being in priority need but are intentionally homeless will have their housing application assessed on their current accommodation, if an applicant has intentionally worsened their circumstances the housing needs assessment will take this into account. (See section 4.12).

5.4 Split families

- 5.4.1 Where an application is made by family members who it would be reasonable to expect them to live together but they are unable to do so,

the council will assess their particular circumstances to consider the best way of addressing their housing needs.

5.5 Bedroom requirement guidelines

- 5.5.1 The following guidelines will be used when assessing the overcrowding in an applicant's own home:
- Couples require one double bedroom
 - Single applicants require one bedroom
 - Two children of the same sex under 10 years old require one double bedroom
 - Three children share a bedroom because they have no other option they will be assessed as lacking one bedroom
 - Two children of the opposite sex, where the oldest child is aged 6 years or over require two bedrooms
 - Two children of the same sex over 10 years old require two bedrooms
 - A pregnant woman expecting her first child requires two bedrooms after 24 weeks pregnant
 - Bedrooms below 50 square feet in size will not be included as a room in bedroom and overcrowding calculations
 - Where a property has two reception rooms one of these will be counted as a bedroom in the bedroom and overcrowding calculations

5.6 Staying contact with children

- 5.6.1 A child living between parents at separate addresses will only be considered as having one main home. An assessment will be made by the council as to which parent's property is considered as the child's main home. If the council considers that an applicant does not provide the child with his or her main home then the child will not be considered as part of the register application. This means that the child will not be considered as part of the bedroom and overcrowding calculations for that applicant.

5.7 Medical assessments

- 5.7.1 Medical assessments will be carried out for any applicants who believe that their medical condition or disability is affected by their current accommodation. The applicant will be required to fill in a self-assessment medical form, detailing the effect that their current accommodation has on their medical condition or disability. These forms will be assessed and where appropriate referred to a medical professional for their opinion of how the medical condition is affected by the applicant's housing circumstances.

5.8 Harassment and domestic violence

5.8.1 Where the applicant is a victim of harassment, domestic violence or anti-social behaviour, HDC will offer advice and support to assist applicants in identifying possible ways of resolving their situation.

5.9 Applicant subject to Multi Agency Public Protection arrangements, (MAPPA)

5.9.1 Where an applicant is subject to Multi Agency Public Protection (MAPP) arrangements, HDC will liaise with the panel to ensure an appropriate housing solution to meet the needs of the applicant and the community as a whole.

5.10 Emergency housing status

5.10.1 An emergency housing status may be awarded to applicants in exceptional circumstances, where remaining in their current accommodation may cause risk of death or serious injury, or where an applicant has been assessed as having multiple needs that fall within band A. An applicant with emergency housing status who bids for a home will be considered as a priority above all other applicants in any other band.

5.11 Direct lets

5.11.1 Most properties will be advertised through the CBL scheme. However in certain circumstances some properties may be let directly to applicants. Where an applicant is identified as requiring a direct let the case will be referred to a senior officer for approval. The list below gives some examples of where this may happen.

- Where the council has accepted a full homelessness duty towards a household but the household has not found suitable accommodation during a period of choice through the CBL scheme.
- Where an applicant and their household require a specific size, type or adapted property and the applicant has not been able to find suitable accommodation through the CBL scheme
- Where an existing social housing tenant is required to move to make the best use of stock, and they have not been successful in finding a suitable property through the CBL scheme

5.11.2 Information as to which properties have been allocated though direct lets will be made available though the CBL feedback mechanism.

5.11.3 Direct lets will be made on the basis of a suitable property becoming available. Where a property becomes available that is suitable for more than one applicant with a direct let status, the date applicants

were awarded a direct let status will be used as a deciding factor in deciding to whom the property will be let.

5.12 Direct lets to homeless applicants

5.12.1 Homeless applicants who are owed a full homelessness duty by HDC (under s.193 (2) of the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002), will be placed in band A and will be able to bid for properties via the CBL scheme. Their date in band will be the date they originally applied to the council as homeless.

5.12.2 Where homeless applicants in band A have not been successful in bidding for properties within 3 months of their date in band, HDC reserves the right to make a direct let of a property under the council's homelessness policy. The decision to make a direct let will depend on the extent to which homeless applicants have had the opportunity to bid for a property during the initial 3 month period of the full duty being accepted.

5.12.3 Where a homeless applicant bids for a property within the initial 3 month period of being owed the full homelessness duty, is offered the tenancy and subsequently refuses the offer, their application will remain within the same housing band and the s.193 (2) duty under the Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, will continue.

5.12.4 The full homelessness duty will come to an end, and a homeless applicant lose their priority under this section, when any of the circumstances within s.193 (6) of the Act are met. This will include an applicant:

- accepting an offer of accommodation made through the CBL scheme
- accepting an offer made via the direct let mechanism within the policy (see 5.11 above), or
- if, having been informed of the consequences and the right to request a review, refuses a reasonable offer of suitable accommodation made via the direct let mechanism

S. 193(6) of the Housing Act 1996 Act gives the full circumstances under which the full homelessness duty comes to an end.

5.12.5 Where a homeless applicant is to be allocated a property through the direct let process HDC has responsibility for determining the suitability of any allocation. They will do this by assessing the household's particular needs and circumstances within the context of the general housing conditions in the area as a whole.

5.12.6 Where a homeless applicant is offered accommodation via a direct let, but does not feel that this offer is suitable, they have the right to

request a review of the decision that the offer is suitable. For details of the review process (see chapter 6).

5.12.7 As the property does not have to remain available during the review of the suitability and reasonableness of a direct let, homeless applicants are advised to accept and move in to the accommodation pending the decision on review. If the review outcome is unsuccessful for the applicant they will still have accommodation to live in whilst they consider their further options.

5.12.8 If a direct let is refused by a homeless applicant and it is then deemed suitable at review, the full homelessness duty will come to an end. They will also have to vacate any temporary accommodation that is being provided.

5.12.10 If, on review reviewing an applicant's refusal of a direct let, the property offered is considered to be unreasonable or unsuitable, the duty under s.193 (2) will continue and the applicant will be made a further offer of suitable accommodation.

5.13 Applicants who require a specific size, type or adapted property.

5.13.1 Where an applicant requires a specific size, type or adapted property, they will be placed in the appropriate housing needs band, but may be offered a direct let if HDC have a shortage of suitable properties. For example:

- An applicant requires a very large property to accommodate their household
- An applicant requires a property of a specific type in a specific area of the district
- An applicant requires a property with specific adaptations and such a property becomes available
- Where an applicant is willing to move to release a large family home

5.14 Sheltered housing

5.14.1 Sheltered housing will be advertised through the CBL scheme. Sheltered housing is available to applicants over 60 years of age and prior to an offer of a tenancy applicants will be subject to an assessment by the landlord of the accommodation to establish their prospective support needs and suitability to living in sheltered housing.

5.15 Extra care homes

5.15.1 Extra care homes are properties for older people where additional support services are provided. Allocation to extra care homes will not be advertised through CBL but will be made by an allocation panel.

5.16 Refusals of direct let

5.16.1 Where an applicant (other than a person owed the full homelessness duty) refuses a reasonable offer of a direct let a senior officer will review the reasons for the refusal and the applicant may lose any housing priority they held, dependent on the reasons for the offer refusal. Applicants have the right to ask for a review of this decision (see chapter 6)

5.17 Area specific policies

5.17.1 Area specific policies, also known as local lettings policies, are used within the sub region to help create balanced and sustainable communities. Where an area specific policy applies, it will be stated in the property label. Details of these area specific policies/ schemes will be available from the local authority. Some schemes may ask for an applicant to have a local connection to a specific parish or village. In those cases, the connection criteria will be stipulated in the legal agreement for the development.

Chapter 6

6.1 Reviews of decisions

6.1.1 A designated senior officer will carry out reviews of assessment decisions as required.

6.1.2 Examples of circumstances that may be reviewed include:

- Multiple need in band
- Emergency housing status
- Moving people up a band or down a band
- Priority assessments, in complex cases.
- Housing people in different accommodation to designated need size
- Low priority review decisions
- Direct lets

This list is not exhaustive.

6.2 Statutory reviews

6.2.1 An applicant has the right to request a review of certain decisions made under part 6 of the Housing Act 1996. These are:

- Decisions about the facts of the applicant's case which are likely to be, or have been, taken into account in considering whether to allocate housing accommodation to the applicant
- Lack of any reasonable preference based on previous behaviour s167 (2C) Housing Act 1996
- Ineligibility for an allocation based on immigration status s160A (9).

6.2.2 Decision letters issued in respect of housing applications will advise the applicant of their right to request a review and provide appropriate guidance on how to do this. An applicant can obtain further details of the review procedure from HDC.

6.2.3 A request for a review of a decision can be made in writing or verbally to a member of staff at HDC. The request should be made within 21 days following the notification of the decision. Reviews will be considered within 28 days of the request being received and the applicant will receive a written response outlining the result of the review.

6.2.4 An applicant will only be entitled to one internal review. If an applicant is still unhappy following the review of a decision, they can make a complaint through the council's complaints procedures, contact the Local Government Ombudsman (see section 6.5) or seek to challenge the decision via a judicial review.

6.2.5 Reviews will be undertaken by a designated officer who was not involved in the original decision, and who is senior to the original decision making officer.

6.3 Homeless reviews

6.3.1 Homeless applicants have the right to request a review of certain decisions made by HDC in respect of their homeless application. Within the context of the council's lettings policy this includes the decision to bring to an end the full homelessness duty by making a suitable offer of permanent accommodation via the housing register (through the direct let mechanism).

6.3.2 If an applicant wishes to request a review of the reasonableness of an offer or the suitability of the property, this must be made within 21 days of notification of a decision to make the offer. Late review request can be considered under exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the local authority.

6.3.3 Applicants who request reviews of decisions about suitability of accommodation will be advised to accept and move into accommodation pending the outcome of their review request. If the review goes in their favour alternative accommodation will be provided as quickly as possible. However if the reasonableness and suitability of the offer is upheld the applicant will still have accommodation to live in whilst they consider their further options.

6.3.4 The applicant has the right of appeal to the county court if he or she is dissatisfied with the decision on a review.

6.4 The Local Government Ombudsman

6.4.1 The Local Government Ombudsman investigates complaints of injustice arising from maladministration by local authorities and other bodies. They can be asked to investigate complaints about most council matters including housing.

6.4.2 If an applicant is not satisfied with the action the council has taken, and has exhausted the council's own complaints procedure, they can send a written complaint to the ombudsman.

6.4.3 The Local Government Ombudsman can be contacted at:

Local Government Ombudsman
The Oaks No 2
Westwood Way
Westwood Business Park
Coventry CV4 8JB

Tel: 024 7682 0000
Website: www.lgo.org.uk

If an applicant wishes to make a complaint against a housing association, they should contact:

The Housing Ombudsman Service
Norman House
105 -109 Strand
London
WC2R 0AA

Tel: 08457 125 973
Website: www.ihos.org.uk

Chapter 7

7.1 Letting of accommodation

- 7.1.1 Properties will be advertised through the sub regional CBL scheme. The advertising will be carried out on a regular basis and for specific periods of time, known as advertising cycles. (See framework document).

7.2 Labelling property advertisements

- 7.2.1 All adverts will include a description of the property and any other relevant information, for example rent charge, property size, local facilities, disabled adaptations or if the property is sheltered housing. The property will be labelled to show who is able to express an interest in it, for example, where a local connection is required, or if there is an age restriction on the property.

7.3 Bedroom requirements

- 7.3.1 Table 1 below will be used to assess applicant's/household bedroom requirements.
- 7.3.2 Table 1 below shows the size of property that applicants may be considered for based on their household composition, either when expressing interest for an advertised property or for a direct let. (See section 5.11)

Table 1

Key; Bungalow = B Maisonette = M House = H

	Studio Flat M	1 Bed Flat or H or B or M	2 Bed Flat or M.	2 Bed H or B	3 Bed H or B	3 Bed Flat or M.	4 Bed H	4 Bed Flat or M	5 Bed -
Single Person	√	√							
Single Person with overnight contact to 1 or more children		√							
Couple or 2 Adults		√	√						
Household with 1 child			√	√					
Household with 2 children of same sex; or 3 individual adults				√	√	√			
Household with 2 children of opposite sex; or 3 or more children					√	√			
Household with 4 or more children; or household of at least 6 people in total					Large √	√	√	√	
Household with 5 or more children; or household of at least 8 people in total					Large √	√	√	√	√

7.3.3 Please note that these are general guidelines. All properties that are advertised through the CBL scheme will be clearly labelled to identify the household size eligible to bid for each property as some landlords may have different policies on the different property sizes offered to the various household sizes. Applicants should check the information contained in the labelling to see if they are able to be considered for the property.

7.4 Short listing

- 7.4.1 After the end of an advertising cycle a shortlist of applicants bidding for the property will be taken from the CBL computer system. The shortlist will identify the order of applicants based on who has been in the highest housing needs band for the longest time. In circumstances where there is more than one applicant in the same band and they have the same date in band, priority will be given to the applicant with the earliest registration date. If there is more than one applicant with the same band, date in band and registration date a senior officer will make an allocation decision based on the best use of the housing stock and needs of the applicants.
- 7.2.2 When a short list of applicants is completed the landlord of the available property will offer an accompanied viewing of the property to the highest priority applicants. This is to ensure that if the applicant who tops the short list decides not to take the tenancy, the property can be quickly offered to the next person on the shortlist.
- 7.2.3 After viewing the property the applicant at the top of the shortlist will be given 24 hours to accept or refuse the offer. If the offer is refused the next person on the short list will be offered the property.
- 7.2.4 In exceptional circumstances a senior officer may make a decision not to offer a property to the applicant who tops a short list, eg. if, in doing so, the offer could put a vulnerable person at risk of any harm. Any such decisions will be explained fully to the applicant in writing.

7.3 Formal offer of the property

- 7.3.1 Once the applicant has confirmed their acceptance of the tenancy the landlord of the property will write to confirm the formal offer of the tenancy. The CBL system will then not allow that applicant to be considered for any further properties and once the tenancy starts their Register application will be cancelled.
- 7.3.2 Once the property is ready to let the landlord of the property will complete the tenancy sign up.

7.4 Withdrawal of offers

- 7.4.1 In exceptional circumstances an offer of a property may be withdrawn, for example:
- Where there has been a change in the applicants circumstances
 - Where the successful applicant has rent arrears or other housing related debts that had previously not come to light
 - Following verification the applicant is not eligible for the property
 - Where an error has been made in the advertising criteria

- Where an offer of accommodation could put a vulnerable person at risk of any harm

7.5 Refusing an offer of accommodation

7.5.1 Usually, if an applicant refuses an offer of accommodation made through CBL, they will remain in their housing needs band. If an applicant refuses three offers of a property made through CBL, a housing officer will contact the applicant to offer support and assistance and verify their circumstances.

7.6 Allocations to staff, council members or their family members

7.6.1 Members of staff, their close family and elected members who require housing with HDC may apply for housing in the same way as other applicants. Their status should be disclosed on the application form at the time of applying.

7.6.2 If an applicant who is a member of staff, elected member or a member of their direct family, makes a successful bid for a property the Head of Housing Services will be informed and must approve the letting prior to the formal offer being made.

7.7 Tenancy management outside the scope of the lettings policy

7.7.1 The following tenancy management areas are not included as part of this lettings policy as they are not included within part 6 of the Housing Act 1996:

- Mutual exchanges
- Introductory tenancies converted to secure tenancies
- Where a secure tenancy of a property is assigned by way of succession to the same property
- Where a secure tenancy is assigned to someone who would be qualified to succeed to that tenancy if the secure tenant died immediately before the assignment
- Where court orders are made under one of the following:
 - Section 24 of the Matrimonial Causes Act 1973
 - Section 17 (1) of the Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984
 - Paragraph 1 of schedule 1 to the Children Act 1989

Chapter 8

8 Confidentiality and access to information

8.1 Applicants' Rights to Information

8.1.1 Applicants have the right to request such general information as will enable them to assess:

- How their application is likely to be treated under the Lettings Policy (including in particular whether they are likely to be regarded as a member of a group of people who are to be given preference by virtue of this Policy, (see chapter 4)
- Whether housing accommodation appropriate to their needs is likely to be made available to them.

8.1.2 Applicants have the right to request information held about their application which is likely to be, or has been, taken into account when considering whether to allocate them housing.

8.2 Data protection

8.2.1 When an applicant applies to the CBL scheme the POs will only ask for information that they need to assess their eligibility and housing needs. The POs will collect and keep data in accordance with the council's guidelines on handling personal data.

8.2.2 These guidelines are in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 that covers both electronic and manual records and the Act governs everything we do with the personal data, including collecting, storing, using and disposing of it.

8.2.3 Confidential information held about applicants will not be disclosed to third parties apart from:

- Where the individual who is the subject of the confidential information has consented to the disclosure
- Where the council or a PO is required by law to make such disclosures
- Where disclosure is made in accordance with an information sharing protocol

8.3 Requesting information

8.3.1 Applicants are able to request copies of the information held regarding their application. This information is held in line with Data Protection Act guidelines.

Please note that we cannot provide you with personal information about other people if doing so will breach the Data Protection Act 1998.

Appendix 1

Cambridge Sub regional Choice Based Lettings Partner Organisation list

Local Authority

LSVT Landlord

Cambridge City Council

Hobson House
44 St Andrews Street
Cambridge City Council CB2 3AS

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Cambourne Business Park
Cambourne
Cambridge, CB3 6EA

East Cambridgeshire District Council,

The Grange,
Nutholt Lane,
Ely, CB7 4PL

Hereward Housing

St Mary's Lodge
St Mary's Street
Ely
Cambridge
CB7 4EY

Huntingdonshire District Council

Housing Services
Pathfinder House
St Mary's Street
Huntingdon
PE29 3TN

Luminus Group

Brook House
Ouse Walk
Huntingdon
Cambs
PE29 3QW

Fenland District Council

Fenland Hall
County Road
March
Cambridgeshire
PE15 8QN

Forest Heath District Council

District Offices
College Heath Road
Mildenhall
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
LP28 7EY

Kings Forest Housing Association

College Heath Road
Mildenhall
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
LP28 7EY

St Edmundsbury Borough Council

Borough Offices
Bury St Edmunds
Suffolk
1P33 1XB

Havebury Housing Partnership,

Havebury House, Western Way
Bury St. Edmunds, Suffolk IP33 3SP
and also Manor Road, Haverhill, Suffolk
CB9 OEP.
Email is Office@Havebury.com

Appendix 2

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Adapted properties

Property that has been adapted for an applicant with disabilities.

Advertised

Properties that are advertised and are available for applicants to bid for under CBL.

Age restrictions

Where a property is labelled, as only being available to applicants of a certain age.

Application number

A unique housing number generated by the computer system.

Bedroom eligibility

How many bedrooms a household is assessed as needing

Choice Based Lettings (CBL)

A method of letting social housing through openly advertising property, and allowing applicants to bid for those advertised properties.

Customer/Applicant

Is either a tenant of a PO (including those in temporary accommodation) or a housing applicant on the housing needs register

Date of registration

The date an application form is registered with a PO

Date in band

The date an application is placed in a housing needs band, used as the applicable date when short-listing.

Decision making organization

The PO that made a particular decision with regard to a housing or homeless application

Direct lets

Property that is offered directly to an applicant, without them having to bid.

Domestic violence

Is threatening behaviour, violence or abuse (physical, psychological, sexual, financial or emotional) by a former partner or associated person.

Bid

The process of applicants saying which property they would like to live in

Housing Associations

Also known as Registered Social Landlords. These are landlords who also provide social rented housing for which applicants/ customers can bid through the CBL scheme.

Housing options

Looking at what housing might be available to an applicant, including private rented accommodation and other solutions.

Housing needs register

A list of those requesting and eligible for housing

Housing Related Debts

Are defined as current rent arrears, former tenant arrears, outstanding re-chargeable repairs, current and former housing related service charge arrears

and court costs. They do not include Council Tax debts or Housing Benefit overpayments.

Joint Application

Where one or more applicant applies to join the housing register on one application form.

Labelling properties

Describing who is eligible to bid for a property

Local Connection

The connection an applicant has to a specific area within the sub region

Local elected members

Each local authority is governed by a group of elected member.

LSVT Landlord

Local Stock Voluntary transfer, where a Local authority has sold its housing stock to a Registered Social Landlord

Mutual exchange

A scheme which allows two tenants to swap their homes.

Partner organizations (POs) All the organizations that are partners to the Sub regional CBL scheme these may be local authority or RSL organizations.

The Cambridge Sub Region

The seven Local Authorities that make up the sub-region.

Transferring tenant

An applicant who is currently a tenant of a partner organization

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CABINET

23RD APRIL 2009

FEDERATION OF SMALL BUSINESSES ENGAGEMENT ACCORD (Report by Acting Economic Development Manager)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to invite the Cabinet to adopt the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) Accord, a voluntary code of practice for local authorities which seeks to maintain or encourage a productive dialogue with local businesses.
- 1.2 The Accord represents a commitment by local authorities to taking an active approach to engaging with businesses so they are given the opportunity to participate in the decision-making process and to fully understand reasons behind final decisions.

2. ACCORD-DETAILS

- 2.1 There are 14 Accord Principles (Appendix A) which outline how local authorities can ensure that effective consultation with the business community becomes a feature of our consultations.
- 2.2 Huntingdonshire District Council already adheres to the 14 principles. While the Accord has been designed with small businesses in mind, it is considered that the principles are relevant to all businesses and will be applied accordingly.
- 2.2 There are some implications for the Council in signing up to the Accord which relate to two of the 14 principles.

3. IMPLICATIONS FOR HDC IN SIGNING THE ACCORD

- 3.1 Accord Principle 1 requires the Council to nominate representatives to ensure that views of the local business community are considered at appropriate stages of consultation exercises. In line with current practice it is suggested that these responsibilities should be undertaken by the Executive Councillor with responsibility for Resources & Policy and the Sustainable Economic Development Manager.
- 3.2 Accord Principle 3 states the Council should identify businesses that can encourage links in the local business community. Again recognising the role adopted by businesses and their representatives within the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership, it is suggested that the members of the Economic Prosperity & Skills Group should be identified as the main route for engagement with the local business community.


4. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no added financial implications arising from adoption of the Accord and formalising the Council's existing arrangements may result in small efficiency savings by having a clear route and process for engagement.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Adoption of the Accord will help to demonstrate the Council's longstanding commitment to consultation and engagement with the business community and by building alliances will help in joint identification of priorities and in the better targeting of resources and applications for external funding.
- 5.2 It is recommended that the cabinet —
- (a) endorse the signing of the Small Business Engagement Accord; and
 - (b) nominate the Executive Councillor with responsibility for Resources & Policy and the Sustainable Economic Development Manager as the council's representatives to promote effective engagement with the business community; and
 - (c) note that, in addition to annual and specific consultation initiated by the council, that the Economic Prosperity and Skills Group at the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership has been identified as the main route for engagement with the business community.

Contact Officer: Helen Donnellan
Acting Economic Development Manager

 01480 388263



federation of small businesses
south east

small business engagement accord

Introduction

Local authorities are increasingly being asked to identify new methods to develop more constructive relationships with their local business community. Too often businesses feel that decisions made by local authorities are being agreed behind “closed doors” and the consultation process is too complex and confusing.

The value of good local authority consultation with the business community must not be underestimated, poor consultation fosters mistrust amongst businesses and this in turn makes any future business engagement with local authorities very difficult.

Small businesses are not just a part of our local communities, they are the local community. They generate the wealth, employment and opportunity. The purpose of this Accord is to address the common problems that all too often serve to alienate the business community from the decision making process.

Purpose of Accord

The Small Business Engagement Accord is a voluntary code of practice for local authorities in the South East which seeks to encourage a more productive dialogue with local businesses. The Accord brings together various aspects of consultation best practice already produced, as well as specific proposals from the FSB designed to improve the level of participation by businesses in local democracy.

The Accord represents a commitment by local authorities to taking a proactive approach to engaging with businesses so that they are given the fullest opportunity to participate in the decision making process, and to fully understand the reasons behind the final decisions taken.

Local authorities need to adopt a leadership style that engages local partners, builds alliances and secures support for joint priorities. It should facilitate, advocate, arbitrate and influence rather than dominate.

SOUTH EAST ECONOMY

The South East economy is worth £177.2 billion or 15.7% of the total Gross Value Added (GVA). In 2005/06 the South East made a net contribution of £12 billion to government finances. This amounts to approximately 50% of the total net contribution.

There are 729,545 businesses in the South East. 99.4% of these businesses have less than 50 employees, and are therefore classified as small businesses.

Source: Lyons Inquiry into Local Government

Good consultation reaches out, actively recruiting participants rather than waiting for citizens to come forward

Source: Council Tax consultation - Guidelines for local authorities

TAKING THE ACCORD FORWARD

The Accord is owned and operated by its signatories. Those in local government will already be aware of many of the principles and benefits of encouraging small firms to participate in local democracy and decision making.

This Accord is designed to ensure that effective consultation with the business community becomes a mainstream feature of all future consultations, rather than an optional extra.

Accord Principles

1. Councils should nominate representatives to be "business engagement champions" whose role will be to ensure that the views of the local business community are considered at every stage of any consultation exercise.
2. Council "business engagement champions" should be tasked with creating effective links with all sections of the business community.
3. Councils should identify business owners that can be "engagement champions" within their local business community.
4. Councils should look to "front load" consultations in order to ensure that engagement with the business community happens at the earliest stages of any consultation exercise.
5. Local authorities must use recognised business organisations when consulting with small businesses.
6. Councils must not regard consultation with just one business or business organisation as an adequate consultation.
7. Local, regional and central government should make consultation documents easier to understand and easier to respond to.
8. Consultation documents should use the correct language for the relevant audience.
9. Councils should employ a range of communication tools to promote better business engagement in consultations including for example utilising consultation documents, newsletters, information on web sites, text messages, local media, or staff directly working with businesses.
10. To increase attendance at consultation events councils should give greater notice periods in advance of any meetings.
11. Consultation with the business community should not be limited to formal consultation exercises but should be an ongoing dialogue. Councils should therefore look to hold at least one open meeting per quarter with local businesses and business organisations to encourage an open two-way exchange of information.
12. Councils should not underestimate the ability of the business community to deal with strategic issues and therefore there should be genuine consultation on an annual basis with small businesses to examine council spending plans for the following financial year.
13. Effective consultation should demonstrate to business owners the outcomes and the rationale behind the final decisions.
14. Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs) should adopt a broker function to provide a business friendly access point.
15. LSPs must look for ways to maximise the opportunities for business engagement and demonstrate that they have fully considered the needs of the business community in their consultation processes.
16. LSPs should produce an annual statement detailing how they have engaged local businesses and businesses support organisations in their duty to promote economic development and sustainable prosperity.

declaration of support for the small business engagement accord

The FSB wants to see all local authorities signing up to the Small Business Engagement Accord. The accord is voluntary; your signature represents your pledge to support the principles of the accord to guide your future engagement with the business community. For our part the FSB will continue to give our support to any council that signs up to the accord to work together to successfully engage with their local small business community to encourage greater business involvement in local democracy.

Local Authority Section

Name of your Authority:

Signed by:

Date:

Council position:

FSB Section

Region:

Signed by:

Date:

FSB position:

thank you for your support

Contact us

Roger Culcheth
FSB Local Government Chairman
Priyen.patel@fsb.org.uk
0207 592 8100

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