

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY)** will be held in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN** on **TUESDAY, 6 JANUARY 2009** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

**Contact
(01480)**

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 2nd December 2008.

**Miss H Ali
388006**

2 Minutes.

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

2 Minutes.

3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN (Pages 7 - 14)

A copy of the current Forward Plan, which was published on 12th December 2008, is attached. Members are invited to note the Plan and to comment as appropriate on any items contained therein.

**R Reeves
388003**

15 Minutes.

4. FUTURE GOVERNANCE OF HINCHINGBROOKE HOSPITAL: CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS (Pages 15 - 22)

To receive a presentation by Dr S Dunn, Hinchingsbrooke Next Steps Project Co-ordinator, East of England Strategic Health Authority and Ms J Bawden, NHS Cambridgeshire on the future governance arrangements for Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. A report outlining the proposals is enclosed within the papers.

**Miss H Ali
388006**

30 Minutes.

5. **HOMELESSNESS AND THE HOUSING MARKET** (Pages 23 - 28)

To consider a report by the Head of Housing Services on the issue of homelessness and the housing market.

**S Plant
388240
J Collen
388220**

20 Minutes.

6. **CARE QUALITY COMMISSION: ENFORCEMENT POLICY CONSULTATION RESPONSE** (Pages 29 - 30)

To endorse the Panel's consultation response on the Care Quality Commission's Enforcement Policy.

**Miss H Ali
388006**

15 Minutes.

7. **DISABILITY ACCESS STUDY** (Pages 31 - 38)

To consider the Panel's concluding report on the study on Disability Access.

**A Roberts
388004**

20 Minutes.

8. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY) - STUDIES** (Pages 39 - 48)

To consider a report by the Head of Administration on the Panel's programme of studies.

**Miss H Ali
388006**

15 Minutes.

9. **SCRUTINY** (Pages 49 - 54)

To scrutinise decisions since the last meeting as set out in the Decision Digest and to raise any other matters for scrutiny that fall within the remit of the Panel.

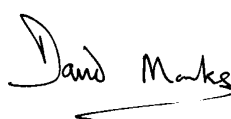
10 Minutes.

10. **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

To note that the next meeting of the Panel is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, 3rd February 2009 at 7:00pm. The meeting will be held in the **Wren Room, Countryside Centre, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park.**

2 Minutes.

Dated this 2 day of January 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 Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer, Tel No: (01480) 388006 / e-mail: Habbiba.Ali@huntsdc.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Panel.

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

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

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

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

Emergency Procedure

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

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Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY) held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 2 December 2008.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.

Councillors J D Ablewhite, Mrs M Banerjee, E R Butler, Mrs K E Cooper, Mrs J A Dew, J E Garner, P Godley, P G Mitchell, J M Sadler, M F Shellens, P K Ursell and J S Watt.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillor Mrs P A Jordan.

53. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 4th November 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

54. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor P G Mitchell declared a personal interest under Minute No. 61 by virtue of his involvement in the Stilton Skate Park.

55. FREE SWIMMING FOR OVER 60S AND UNDER 17S

The Chairman reported that in accordance with Article 16 of the Access to Information Rules contained in the Council's Constitution, he had given consent to an item relating to free swimming for over 60s and under 17s to be submitted as an item of urgency to the meeting of the Cabinet held on 20th November 2008. Members were reminded that Article 16 required the Chairman to report upon his actions to the next ensuing meeting of the Panel.

56. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN

The Panel considered the current Forward Plan of Key Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which had been prepared by the Leader of the Council for the period 1st December 2008 to 31st March 2009. Members were reminded that an item on Older Persons Housing Strategy Update would be submitted to their meeting in March and that items on the ICT and Web Strategies would be circulated shortly with any comments being made directly to the relevant Executive Councillor.

57. CUSTOMER SERVICE DEVELOPMENT IN ST IVES AND ST NEOTS

(Councillor L M Simpson, Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Information Technology, was in attendance for this item).

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Customer Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel were acquainted with the outcome of a review of the services delivered by the St Ives and St Neots Customer Service Centres.

In introducing the report, the Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Information Technology reported that the review had been prompted following the adoption of the Customer Service Strategy in February 2008. The Head of Customer Services, Mrs J Barber, provided Members with an overview of the services being provided at each of the Customer Service Centres and reported upon the research conducted and the findings of the review, together with their financial and staffing implications.

Having expressed general support for the recommendations proposed within the report, the Panel discussed the evidence provided to support the conclusions reached. The Panel commented that the survey findings required the support of further research data. Other matters that were discussed included the importance of offering customers a private meeting area, a suggestion to incorporate other services and facilities within the proposals such as the Shopmobility Scheme, the importance of locating the Customer Service Centres in an accessible and highly visible location and the need to consult with Ward Councillors on any proposals to change the location of the Centres. In terms of pursuing alternative accommodation, the Panel commented that this would be timely as it would enable negotiations on rent and rates to be undertaken with prospective landlords in a potentially advantageous market for the Council.

The Panel acknowledged the financial implications for St Neots Museum of amalgamating the two current offices in St Neots but they concurred with a suggestion that the customer service facility should be a single unit as it would enable efficiency savings to be achieved. Consideration has also been given to the long term planning developments and proposals for St Neots and the likely affect this would have on how the town centre was construed. Councillor P K Ursell expressed the view that the Customer Service Centre in St Neots should remain in the Priory Centre area and, as a result, clarification was sought on the Town Council's position on the District Council's facility located within the Priory Centre.

Having suggested that the provision of outreach services in larger villages should also be investigated as part of the proposals, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to

- (a) note the proposed increase in the range of services in St Ives and St Neots;

- (b) approve in principle the relocation of the St Neots Tourist Information Centre and the merging of staff into the main Customer Service Team;
- (c) approve the investigation of alternative accommodation in St Neots and St Ives and, subject to budgetary consideration, authorise the Director of Commerce and Technology after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Information Technology to complete moves to new premises; and
- (d) note the Panel's views on the contents of the report by the Head of Customer Services.

58. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Policy and Strategic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) containing details of the Council's performance against its priority objectives. Having endorsed the comments made by the Corporate Plan Working Group (a copy of which is also appended in the Minute Book) the Panel's attention was drawn to two areas in which the Council had not achieved its targets. With regard to the objective to promote energy efficiency to householders through the Warmer Homes for Life Scheme, Members concurred with the Working Group's recommendation that further means should be taken to promote the scheme. It was suggested that the high levels of performance to date indicated that delays in excess of the target were not significant and that the performance reflected seasonal trends. Furthermore, it was noted that the allocation of additional resources in order to achieve the target was demonstrative of the fact that the performance management process was operating as intended.

In terms of the key measure relating to the percentage of affordable housing (commitments) on qualifying sites, the Panel were advised that the target was likely to be amended to 35% to reflect the target in the Regional Spatial Strategy. Having expressed satisfaction with the levels of performance achieved in the year to date, the Panel

RESOLVED

- (a) that the report be endorsed for submission to the Cabinet; and
- (b) that the Cabinet be formally notified of the Panel's views on the contents of the report by the Head of Policy and Strategic Services.

59. CARE QUALITY COMMISSION: ENFORCEMENT POLICY CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The Panel considered the contents of a consultation document (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) issued by the Care Quality Commission on its draft enforcement policy. The Commission had been established as an independent regulator of health, mental health and adult social care in England, which brought together the

work of the three Commissions for Social Care Inspection, Healthcare and Mental Health.

Having discussed the questions raised in the consultation document, Members expressed their view that care services should be tightly regulated. However, concern was expressed at the proposed use of financial penalties which could be detrimental to the level of patient care being delivered and might result in some facilities ceasing to operate. Members also commented on the absence of any reference to the Local Involvement Network (LINK) and an inconsistency in the criteria for conducting a formal investigation.

In acknowledging the complexity of the framework represented in the consultation document, it was agreed that a representative of the Care Quality Commission should be invited to attend the Panel's January meeting to deliver a presentation on its work. In noting that the consultation period would end on 16th January 2009, prior to submitting its response, the Panel

RESOLVED

- (a) that a representative of the Care Quality Commission be invited to attend the Panel's January meeting; and
- (b) that a report outlining the Panel's response to the consultation be submitted to the next meeting.

60. ENHANCED CLEANSING SERVICES

Pursuant to Minute No. 38, the Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the Cabinet's response to the Panel's recommendations arising from the study on Enhanced Cleansing Services in the District's market towns. Having noted that the Cabinet had endorsed the principle of introducing enhanced cleansing in Sundays but that further work was required before its implementation could be considered, Members requested clarification of how this work would be completed.

61. IMPACT OF THE NEW A14 IN TERMS OF AIR QUALITY AND NOISE POLLUTION

Pursuant to Minute No. 14, Councillor M F Shellens reported upon his initial findings on the potential impact that the new A14 would have on air quality and noise pollution. Having been advised that relevant information contained in the Local Air Quality Management Further Review and Assessment Report had been presented at a previous meeting of the Licensing and Protection Panel, Councillor M F Shellens undertook to discuss this document with Officers in the Planning and Environmental and Community Health Services Divisions.

62. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY) - STUDIES

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) reviewing the Panel's programme of studies and providing an opportunity for Members to add to their work programme. In discussing the programme of existing studies, Members noted that the final report on Disability Access would be submitted to the next meeting. Members also endorsed a suggestion that Councillor P G Mitchell should attend the relevant Cabinet meeting to present the Panel's report on Grant Aid.

Members discussed future potential study areas, including trends in the value of recycled materials and the provision of leisure facilities for young people. The Chairman also provided background to the consultation arrangements on the future governance of Hinchingbrooke Hospital and reported that the matter would be discussed further at the next meeting.

RESOLVED

- (a) that progress in relation to ongoing studies be noted; and
- (b) that scoping reports on trends in the value of recycled materials and the provision of leisure facilities for young people be submitted to future meetings of the Panel.

63. SCRUTINY

The 89th Edition of the Decision Digest was received and noted.

Chairman

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FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

Prepared by Councillor I C Bates
Date of Publication: 12 December 2008
For Period: 1st January to 30th April 2009

Membership of the Cabinet is as follows:-

Councillor I C Bates	- Leader of the Council	4 Church End Hilton Huntingdon PE28 9NJ Tel: 01480 830250 E-mail: Ian.Bates@huntsdc.gov.uk
Councillor L M Simpson	- Deputy Leader of the Council and Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Information Technology	45 Devoke Close Stukeley Meadows Huntingdon Cambs PE29 6XE Tel: 01480 388946 E-mail: Mike.Simpson@huntsdc.gov.uk
Councillor P L E Bucknell	- Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport	Compass House Pathfinder Way Warboys PE28 2RD Tel: 01487 824222 E-mail: Peter.Bucknell@huntsdc.gov.uk
Councillor K J Churchill	- Special Advisor to the Cabinet	51 Gordon Road Little Paxton St Neots PE19 6NJ Tel: 01480 352040 E-mail: Ken.Churchill@huntsdc.gov.uk
Councillor D B Dew	- Executive Councillor for Leisure	4 Weir Road Hemingford Grey Huntingdon PE28 9EH Tel: 01480 469814 E-mail: Douglas.Dew@huntsdc.gov.uk
Councillor C R Hyams	- Executive Councillor for Operational and Countryside Services	22 Bluegate Godmanchester Huntingdon Cambs PE29 2EZ Tel: 01480 388968 E-mail: Colin.Hyams@huntsdc.gov.uk

Councillor A Hansard	- Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy	78 Potton Road Eynesbury St Neots PE19 2NN Tel: 01480 388942 E-mail: Andrew.Hansard@huntsdc.gov.uk
Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds	- Executive Councillor for Housing and Public Health	17 Virginia Way St Ives PE27 6SQ Tel: 01480 388935 E-mail: Deborah.Reynolds@huntsdc.gov.uk
Councillor T V Rogers	- Executive Councillor for Finance and Environment	Honeysuckle Cottage 34 Meadow Lane Earith Huntingdon PE28 3QE Tel: 01487 840477 E-mail: Terence.Rogers@huntsdc.gov.uk

Any person who wishes to make representations to the decision maker about a decision which is to be made may do so by contacting Mrs Helen Taylor, Senior Democratic Services Officer on 01480 388008 or E-mail: Helen.Taylor@huntsdc.gov.uk not less than 14 days prior to the date when the decision is to be made.

The documents available may be obtained by contacting the relevant officer shown in this plan who will be responsible for preparing the final report to be submitted to the decision maker on the matter in relation to which the decision is to be made. Similarly any enquiries as to the subject or matter to be tabled for decision or on the availability of supporting information or documentation should be directed to the relevant officer.

Roy Reeves
Head of Administration

Notes:- (i) Additions/significant changes from the previous Forward are annotated ***

(ii) For information about how representations about the above decisions may be made please see the Council's Petitions Procedure at <http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/3F6CFE28-C5F0-4BA0-9BF2-76EBAE06C89D/0/Petitionsleaflet.pdf> or telephone 01480 388006

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
To adopt Urban Design Framework for South of High Street, Ramsey	Cabinet	29 Jan 2009	Draft Consultation Document	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or e-mail - Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve changes for adoption having followed consultation with the public and statutory bodies	P L E Bucknell	Service Support

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Asset Management Plan	Cabinet	29 Jan 2009	Previous Cabinet Reports	Keith Phillips, Estates and Property Manager Tel No. 01480 388260 or email Keith.Phillips@huntsdc.gov.uk		A Hansard	Service Support
To adopt Urban Design Framework for land at The Whaddons, Mayfield Drive, Huntingdon	Cabinet	29 Jan 2009	Draft Consultation Document	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or e-mail - Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve changes for adoption having followed consultation with the public and statutory bodies	P L E Bucknell	Service Support
ICT Strategy	Cabinet	29 Jan 2009	ICT Strategy	Andrew Howes, IMD Operations Manager Tel No. 01480 388190 or email - Andrew.Howes@huntsdc.gov.uk		L M Simpson	Service Delivery
New Accommodation - Building A - Options Review	Cabinet	29 Jan 2009	Building A - Options Review	Richard Preston, New Accommodation Project Co-ordinator Tel No 01480 388340 or email Richard.Preston@huntsdc.gov.uk	To be informed by option selection.	L M Simpson	Corporate Strategic Framework
Budget and MTP	Cabinet	29 Jan 2009	Draft MTP - Previous year's budget report - Various Annexes	Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services Tel No. 01480 388103 or email Steve.Couper@huntsdc.gov.uk	Overview and Scrutiny (CSF) – 27th January 2009	T V Rogers	Overview and Scrutiny (CSF)
Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators	Cabinet	29 Jan 2009	Previous year's Strategy	Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services Tel No. 01480 388103 or email Steve.Couper@huntsdc.gov.uk		T V Rogers	Overview and Scrutiny (CSF)
Parish Plans and Local Plan Policy	Cabinet	29 Jan 2009	Previous Report to Cabinet in Dec 2003	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or email. Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Adopt process of incorporating relevant Parish Plan Policies into Planning Policies	P L E Bucknell	Service Support

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Local Investment Framework***	Cabinet	19 Feb 2009	Core Strategy	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No 01480 388430 or email Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Adopt as delivery mechanism for Core Strategy	P L E Bucknell	Service Support
Capital Grant Aid Awards***	Grants	19 Feb 2009	None	Dan Smith, Community Initiatives Manager Tel No 01480 388377 or email Dan.Smith@huntsdc.gov.uk	Copy of the report made available to all Members prior to meeting	Councillors Mrs D C Reynolds and T V Rogers	Service Delivery
Structure Review Working Group - Findings***	Cabinet	19 Feb 2009	Previous Working Group Papers	Roy Reeves, Head of Administration Tel No 01480 388003 or email Roy.Reeves@huntsdc.gov.uk	Members	K Churchill	Service Delivery Service Support
Land Adjacent to - the Grand Cinema, Ramsey***	Cabinet	19 Feb 2009	Report to Cabinet - 7th June 2007	Keith Phillips, Estates and Property Manager Tel No 01480 388260 or email Keith.Phillips@huntsdc.gov.uk		A Hansard	Service Support
Community Enterprise Centre, Sapley East - Proposals***	Cabinet	19 Feb 2009	None.	Ian Leatherbarrow, Director of Central Services Tel No 01480 388047 or email Ian.L Leatherbarrow@huntsdc.gov.uk		A Hansard	Service Support
To adopt Somersham Conservation Area Boundary Changes and Character Statement	Cabinet	19 Feb 2009	Draft Consultation Document	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No .01480 388430 or email - Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve changes for adoption having followed consultation with the public and statutory bodies	P L E Bucknell	Service Support

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Proposals for Riverside Park	Cabinet	19 Feb 2009	Draft Proposals for Riverside Park	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or email - Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve following consultation with other key stakeholders	P L E Bucknell	Service Support
Huntingdon West Area Action Plan Preferred Options	Cabinet	19 Feb 2009	Issues and Options Report and Summary of Representations	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or email - Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve for Consultation	P L E Bucknell	Service Support
St. Neots Market Town Strategy***	Cabinet	12 Mar 2009	St. Neots Market Town Transport Strategy	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No 01480 388430 or email Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve for adoption having followed consultation with the public and statutory bodies	P L E Bucknell	Service Support
Leisure Facilities Strategy***	Cabinet	12 Mar 2009	Leisure Facilities Strategy	Ms J Peadon, Leisure Development Manager Tel No 01480 388048 or email Jo.Peadon@huntsdc.gov.uk		Councillors D B Dew and L M Simpson	Service Delivery
Older Persons Housing Strategy Update	Cabinet	12 Mar 2009	Housing Strategy 2006-11. Ageing Well, Housing, Health and Social Care Strategy for Older People. Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods, A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society, CLG, DWP, and DH, March 2008	Jo Emmerton, Housing Strategy Manager Tel No. 01480 388203 or email - Jo.Emmerton@huntsdc.gov.uk		Mrs D C Reynolds	Service Delivery
A14 Statutory Orders Consultations****	Cabinet	2 Apr 2009	None.	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No 01480 388430 or email Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Endorse HDC's position on the orders	P L E Bucknell	Service Support

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Draft Planning Contributions Supplementary Planning Document***	Cabinet	2 Apr 2009	Huntingdonshire Development Plans	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No 01480 388430 or email Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve for Consultation	P L E Bucknell	Service Support
Master Plan for land Formerly East of Sapley Square, Oxmoor***	Cabinet	2 Apr 2009	Draft Issues and Options Document	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No 01480 388430 or email Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve for adoption as informal planning guidance	P L E Bucknell	Service Support
To adopt Godmanchester Conservation Area Boundary Changes and Character Statement***	Cabinet	2 Apr 2009	Draft Consultation Document	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No 01480 388430 or email Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve changes for adoption having following consultation with the public and statutory bodies.	P L E Bucknell	Service Support
To adopt Houghton & Wyton Conservation Area Boundary Changes and Character Statement***	Cabinet	2 Apr 2009	Draft Consultation Document		Approve changes for adoption having followed consultation with the public and statutory bodies.	P L E Bucknell	Service Support
To adopt Kimbolton Conservation Area Boundary changes and Character Statement***	Cabinet	2 Apr 2009	Draft Consultation Document	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No 01480 388430 or email Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve changes for adoption having followed consultation with the public and statutory bodies.	P L E Bucknell	Service Support

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Great Fen Masterplan***	Cabinet	23 Apr 2009	None	Malcolm Sharp, Director of Operational Services Tel No 01480 388301 or email Malcolm.Sharp@huntsdc.gov.uk	Consultation process in preparation.	P L E Bucknell	Service Support

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**FUTURE GOVERNANCE OF HINCHINGBROOKE HOSPITAL:
CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS
(Report by the Head of Administration)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to acquaint Members with the background to, issues associated with and terms of the forthcoming consultation arrangements for the future governance of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.
- 1.2 Dr Stephen Dunn, Hinchingsbrooke Next Steps Project Co-ordinator, East of England Strategic Health Authority and Ms Jessica Bawden, NHS Cambridgeshire will be in attendance for this item and will deliver a brief presentation to Members on the proposals thus far and answer any questions that Panel Members may have.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In Spring 2007 NHS Cambridgeshire (formerly know as Cambridgeshire PCT) led a formal public consultation setting out proposals for the future of clinical services currently provided on the Hinchingsbrooke Hospital site. Four options were considered for “the provision of appropriate services” with Option 2 being chosen after extensive consultation. Option 2 was to provide broadly the same range of services at lower volumes through major redesign of services across the hospital and community setting. At this point, the Trust Board offered to step down to generate £1m in savings; the idea being that another organisation would take on responsibility for the management of the clinical services at the Hinchingsbrooke Hospital site. In terms of the financial performance of the hospital, in March 2008 there was a reported deficit of £38.7m.
- 2.2 The East of England Strategic Health Authority has the responsibility on behalf of the Secretary of State for Health to find a way to ensure the sustainability and safety of Hinchingsbrooke, but also to ensure good financial management. The East of England Strategic Health Authority has been co-ordinating the process to review the current situation and has considered future governance models for the Trust. A Project Board and a Project Team was established in October 2007 to take forward the review.
- 2.3 The Project Board explored the following options:-
- Do Minimum Option – Trust Continues in its Current Form
 - Merger Between the Trust and the PCT Provider Arm
 - Split Out Operations and Assets (Sale and Leaseback)
 - New Integrated Model Between Primary and Secondary Care
 - New Service Model (e.g. Health and Social Care Polyclinic Campus)
 - A Management Contract for a Defined Period
 - Sale / Acquisition
 - A Franchise Agreement for a Defined Period

2.4 The last of these options, a franchised agreement for a defined period, was the preferred option for the Hospital's future governance. A formal decision from the Department of Health is currently being awaited before any form of public engagement can commence. The Project Board is keen to brief, involve and consult with key stakeholders throughout the consultation process.

3. MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION

3.1 Current developments regarding the future of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital raise a number of issues, some which are listed below.

- When is the Department of Health likely to give its formal approval to the SHA's proposals?
- It is understood that the Stakeholder Panel (see para. 4 below) will have a role in devising the criteria on which bids will be assessed. Is there any indication as to the weighting that the cost of bids will carry?
- How many other hospitals operate under a franchise? How long have they operated and has their performance been assessed?
- What guarantees will the successful bidder have regarding the PCT's future purchasing policies for Hinchingsbrooke?
- The franchisee will be able to expand beyond the service levels stipulated in Option 2. Will there be a limit on this expansion overall or by activity?
- What is the likely length of life of the Stakeholder Panel? Subject to the Department of Health's decision, when are bids likely to be invited? When is the franchise likely to start operating?
- What will be the length of the franchise? Will there be provision for review of the way it is operating?
- Will there be any scope for bidders to negotiate on what will be expected of them?
- Hinchingsbrooke had an accumulated cash debt of £39 million as at the start of 2008/09. What are the proposals for reducing this figure? Will this be the responsibility of the franchisee?
- Hospitals are paid at national NHS tariff rates. Will this rate apply to the franchisee? Under what circumstances could the rate be exceeded?
- It is understood that the bidding process will be consistent with five of the ten NHS Principles and Rules of Cooperation and Competition. How will the procurement process compare against the remaining principles?
- What are the likely costs of the planned Stakeholder Panel and other public consultation activities? What is the likely cost of the procurement process?

3.2 The future of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital is a subject that evokes strong feelings in local members of the public. Although many of these issues have already been aired in other public forums, it is important that District Councillors are aware of the terms of the ongoing debate in order that they are able to respond usefully to their constituents.

4. PROPOSED APPROACH TO PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

4.1 Upon gaining approval from the Department of Health, the following methods of public engagement have been proposed:

- The establishment of a Stakeholder Panel which would meet in public and would represent a broad range of interests;
- The holding of 6 meetings in public at different locations in Huntingdonshire which will be led by the Stakeholder Panel. The Panel will agree to meet more or less often if deemed necessary.
- Attendance by key Project Team Members at various meetings run by stakeholders;
- Meetings with former Hinchingsbrooke Patient and Public Involvement Forum and the Friends of Hinchingsbrooke;
- Meetings with the Cambridgeshire Local Involvement Network (LINK) and involvement in their Hinchingsbrooke Working Group; and
- Through active publicity about the Stakeholder Panel and advice on how the public can input into the Panel, via representatives from their area of interest or to the Chair directly. This will include:
 - dedicated website pages with interactive feedback forms to go to the Chair.
 - dedicated email address and FREEPOST address for feedback to the Chair.
 - dedicated phone line for public queries.
 - the publication of all Minutes and Agendas of meetings of the Stakeholder Panel.
 - Opportunities for the public to raise questions at the Stakeholder Panel.
 - NHS Cambridgeshire Public Engagement Team to act as a secretariat for the Panel.
 - Independent Advisor to be commissioned to advise and observe the process.

4.2 The Stakeholder Panel was suggested as a way forward for briefing and involving interested groups and interested parties. As well as representing the interests of various groups, the Panel would also advise, represent and consider the tender process being undertaken and act as a conduit for any issues raised by the public. For further details on the Stakeholder Panel, please refer to **Appendix A**.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The Panel is invited to consider the proposals outlined within this report on the approach to public engagement for the future governance of Hinchingbrooke Hospital and to raise any questions as appropriate with Dr S Dunn and Ms J Bawden at the meeting.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Report and Minutes of the meetings of Cambridgeshire County Council's Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee held on 22nd September and 24th November 2008.

Presentation by Dr S Dunn on the Next Steps for Hinchingbrooke dated 22nd May 2008.

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

STAKEHOLDER PANEL

Establishing a Stakeholder Panel

It is proposed that a Stakeholder Panel be established to meet in public and represent a broad range of public interest. The Stakeholder Panel will meet as soon as a Chair is appointed and nominated members mobilised.

Stakeholder Panel - Chair

The appointment of Chair will be crucial to the success of the Stakeholder Panel. The role of Chair requires an individual who:

- Is objective, independent and locally credible;
- Has a broad range of experience of dealing with and leading major projects;
- Is highly resilient and able to prosper in a highly charged operating environment;
- Is able to keep the focus of discussions on the key strategic issues and ensure that the project is not sidetracked;
- Can address difficult issues or situations effectively and constructively; and
- Is able to forge consensus and agreement.

Stakeholder Panel – Membership

The various membership groups identified below will be invited to proposed representative(s) for membership of the Stakeholder Panel. Representatives from the Project Team will attend all meetings.

- HNS Project Team Representatives (to be determined but to comprise PCT, SHA and HHCT reps)
- Hunts Comm Chair (Practice based Commissioning Consortium for Hunts)
- Hinchingsbrooke Health Care NHS Trust Representatives
- Huntingdonshire DC
- Fenland DC
- South Cambridgeshire DC
- East Cambridgeshire DC
- County Council
- Local MP(s)
- Trades Union Representative(s)
- Friends of Hinchingsbrooke
- Huntingdonshire Forum (voluntary sector)
- Huntingdon Community Group
- Parish Councils (CALC)
- LINK

It is anticipated that membership of the Stakeholder Panel will not exceed 20 people, in order to keep the meetings effective. The Panel may co-opt other people to one or more meetings as necessary, in order to conduct its business. The Panel will receive appropriate administrative support. All Panel Members will be invited in writing and a full explanation of representative nature of the role will be given.

It is proposed that County Council's Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee Members would not become Members of the Stakeholder Panel. However, the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee Chair (or nominated representative) could take on a critical observer role on the Panel, voicing constructive comments and ideas as appropriate. (The earlier potential issues are identified in the procurement process, the easier it will be to resolve them effectively.)

Stakeholder Panel - Objectives

The objectives of the Stakeholder Panel will be developed by the Panel but are likely to include the following:

- To utilise networks to maximise the opportunity for the views of a wide cross section of the Huntingdonshire community to feed into the Project;
- To ensure that the background, objectives and progress of the Project are clearly understood;
- To identify and articulate the views of key stakeholders and ensure they are relayed to the Project Team and Project Board in a co-ordinated way;
- To actively contribute to the shaping of the final bid criteria for consideration by the Project Team and Project Board. (It may also be appropriate where the expertise of the Panel permits and there is a perceived benefit, to include some Members of the Panel as observers in the bid evaluation process);
- To identify any key issues which may not have been addressed by the Project Team or Project Board;
- To ensure that performance monitoring mechanisms are clearly defined in the contract; and
- To actively represent their community.

Stakeholder Panel - Meetings

Stakeholder Panel meetings will be arranged as follows:

- 6 meetings to be held in public with provision in the agenda for members of the public to ask questions and lodge views (dates to be synchronised with key project dates);
- The first meeting to be held in public to be scheduled as soon as possible following appointment of Chair and mobilisation of the Stakeholder Panel;
- Members of the local Press/Media to be invited to each meeting;
- Meeting rooms to be booked at several locations to ensure maximum opportunity for local people to attend;
- Sufficient notice of meetings to be given and dates and locations should be published to advertise the engagement period;

- Proceedings of meetings to be recorded in formal Minutes – and these to be included in the Project Team and Project Board meeting papers for consideration; and
- A meeting to be held approximately one year post service commencement to review performance of new provider, if this is considered appropriate.
- To produce a final report to be given to the County Council's Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee and the Project Board to consider.

The Panel will be expected to give their views on

- Any proposed additions/enhancements to the service model agreed as part of the Spring 2007 public consultation;
- The assessment of the preferred bidder's proposal against evaluation criteria;
- The timing and phasing of implementation;
- The proposed governance arrangements (including performance monitoring arrangements for the proposed new service provider);
- The degree of flexibility within the contract to cope with unforeseen circumstances - future proofing;
- The potential benefit of the Stakeholder Panel meeting one year after project implementation to carry out a post project evaluation; and
- Ongoing arrangements for involving local people.

Stakeholder Panel Membership to include:

Membership	Role(s)
HNS Project Team Representatives (to be determined but to comprise PCT, SHA and HHCT reps)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ provide expert support and guidance to the Panel ▪ ensure that the required information is provided in a timely fashion ▪ act as a link back to the Project Team and Project Board ▪ communicate to the Panel the views and perspectives of their respective organisation
Hunts Comm Chair (Practice based Commissioning Consortium for Hunts)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ represent the views of the Hunts Comm Strategic Committee ▪ ensure that local GP Practices are kept informed and that their views are represented as appropriate
Hinchingbrooke Health Care NHS Trust Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ensure that the views of HHCT are represented at the Panel meetings ▪ act as a link back to the HHCT Senior Management Team
Huntingdonshire DC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ensure that the views of the Councils are represented and taken into account by the Panel
Fenland DC	
South and East Cambridgeshire DCs	
County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ensure that local people's views are represented and taken into account by the Panel
Local MP(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ensure that the views of the Council are represented as a corporate body
Local MP(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ensure that local people's views are represented and taken into account by the Panel
Trades Union Representative(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ensure that the views of HHCT T.U. members are represented and taken into account by the Panel
Friends of Hinchingbrooke	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ensure that the views of the supporters of HHCT are represented and taken into account by the Panel
Huntingdonshire Forum (voluntary sector)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ensure that the views of the voluntary sector associated with HHCT and the wider community are represented and taken into account by the Panel
Huntingdon Community Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ensure that the views of Huntingdon Community Group which represent the views of the ethnic community are represented and taken into account by the Panel
Parish Councils (CALC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ensure that parishioners' views are represented – it is expected that a representative be nominated through the Cambridgeshire Association of Local Councils
LINK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ to represent Local Involvement Networks' views on what they want from their local health services

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY)

6TH JANUARY 2009

HOMELESSNESS AND THE HOUSING MARKET (Report by the Head of Housing Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Corporate Plan Working Group recently considered a quarterly monitoring report on service delivery which identified achievements, issues and risks. When considering the report the Working Group raised two questions with regard to Housing Services. These were:
- a) Given the current national and local economic factors affecting the housing market was the increase in demand for social rented housing a potential issue rather than an identified risk that the Council would have to manage to continue to achieve a low level of homelessness?
 - b) Is there anything the Council can do to help facilitate the remodelling of Coneygear Court if Granta Housing Society is unsuccessful in bidding for government funding to carry out these works?
- 1.2 It was requested by the Working Group that a report be submitted to the Service Delivery Scrutiny Panel, given that these areas fall within its remit.
- 1.3 As the demand for social rented housing is influenced by economic factors and these also have a direct relationship with the rates of homelessness in the district, this report also covers the initiatives and measures that have been put in place to try and prevent homelessness and so reduce demand.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Economic Factors

- 2.1 The demand for social rented housing is significantly affected by economic factors, both when the economy is booming and when there is an economic downturn. We have had a period of economic growth and increases in property prices that have priced many first time buyers out of the market. In these circumstances many people see social rented housing as their only realistic option and so demand increases.
- 2.2 We are now faced with an economic downturn and although property prices are reducing, the fact that unemployment is rising and the availability of mortgage products decreasing, many people

still see social rented housing as their only realistic option. Added to this increasing unemployment can lead to more households falling into arrears with their mortgages, leading to higher repossession rates, and an increase in households coming to the Council as a result.

- 2.3 The Council has been successful over the last four years with reducing homelessness in the district by changing the way we deliver our housing advice service. This has involved restructuring to deliver a more proactive advice service that helps customers prevent their homelessness in the first place or helps them find alternative housing before they actually become homeless. This has been achieved by introducing a range of measures to highlight where there is the threat of homelessness at the earliest stage possible and then taking the most appropriate action to prevent it happening.
- 2.4 As a result households accepted as homelessness has reduced from 254 in 2004/05 to 146 in 2007/08. Unfortunately, the first 6 months of 2008/09 has seen 91 households accepted as homeless compared to 76 in the same period of the previous year, so if rates continue we are expecting an overall increase in homelessness this year.
- 2.5 The number of households where homelessness was prevented increased from 98 in 2005/06 to 138 in 2007/08, with the majority of these households helped to find private sector tenancies via the Rent Deposit/Rent In Advance scheme. We have already helped 129 households avoid homelessness in the first six months of this year compared to 52 in the same period of the previous year and so we can see the positive outcomes our prevention and options services are achieving.
- 2.6 Much of this has been achieved in a period of economic growth where there has been a buoyant private rented sector, and where we have managed to develop good relationships with private landlords and agents who have provided us with solutions to resolve some households' needs.
- 2.7 We now face a range of different problems that may affect households within the district and possibly lead to them seeking help from the Council. These primarily revolve around:
- owner occupiers facing repossession where they are struggling to pay their mortgage, perhaps because of unemployment or the end of more affordable fixed term mortgage deals, and
 - private sector tenants facing eviction as a result of their landlord choosing to sell the property due to their financial situation or facing repossession if they have defaulted on the mortgage.

2.8 Where a private sector tenant is faced with eviction we try to assist with finding another tenancy in the private sector as this is often the most realistic way of preventing the household from becoming homeless. Where an owner occupier faces possible repossession there are a number of options that we explore with them to see if we can resolve their problems. Where we are not able to assist ourselves we refer to other agencies who can act on behalf of the household. Possible prevention options in these situations include:

- a) Negotiation with the mortgage lender – where someone approaches their lender and explains they are having difficulty paying their mortgage the lender has a range of hardship options they should consider. These include extending the term of the mortgage to make the monthly payments cheaper; moving the mortgage to an interest only deal; repayment ‘holidays’ and checking whether the customer has the best available mortgage deal for them. Where the customer has not made contact to discuss these options we advise that they should, assist them with this if necessary or direct them to CAB or Huntingdon Law Centre to assist them.
- b) Ensuring the lender has followed the pre-court possession protocol – the government has launched a protocol, agreed with the Council of Mortgage Lenders, that possession proceedings should only be taken as a last resort and then only when this protocol has been followed. Where a lender has not followed the protocol before applying for a Possession Hearing at the Court, this may be used as a ground for having the case adjourned. The purpose of the protocol is to prevent inappropriate possession action by lenders when there may still be legitimate ways in which possession may be prevented.
- c) Court desk service – the Council has commissioned Huntingdon Law Centre (HLC) to provide a Court Desk Service on Possession Hearing days at the County Court. This service commenced in November and its purpose is to ensure that households have representation at Possession Hearings and HLC liaises between the Court, lender and householder where there are still options to be explored that may prevent a Possession Order being granted. This is a pilot initiative for 18 months to see whether it provides positive outcomes.
- d) Mortgage rescue scheme – the government will introduce a national mortgage rescue scheme from January 2009. £200m has been pledged nationally to support up to 6,000 vulnerable owner-occupiers facing repossession, to remain in their home. This funding will be distributed through the Homes and Communities Agency with match funding (supported by rent or equity loan charges) from provider Housing Associations. Further details of this scheme are awaited.

- e) Money and debt advice services – where a person has several debts and requires help managing these we refer them to CAB or Huntingdon Law Centre (HLC) who have specialist advisors to help. The advisors will help negotiate with lenders and prioritise debts with the aim of preventing the person losing their home. A debt advice service is an integral part of the mortgage rescue process and so it is essential that we ensure these services have the capacity to react quickly where mortgage rescue may be an option. The Council currently funds the CAB to provide these services but not HLC.
- f) Changes to the benefit system – the government has changed the rules for Income Support on mortgage interest payments. From January 2009, this benefit is available 13 weeks after making a claim, whereas previously it was only available after 39 weeks. Homeowners will be eligible for help on the first £200,000 of their loan, which is up from the previous limit of £100,000.

2.9 A further initiative announced by government at the beginning of December is the Homeowner Mortgage Support Scheme. Under this scheme households that experience a significant and temporary loss of income as a result of the economic downturn will be able to defer a proportion of the interest payments on their mortgage for up to two years. The government is working with lenders to encourage their participation in the scheme on the basis that the government offers a guarantee against the deferred payments. Further details of the final scheme are anticipated in the New Year and will be another option we can advise customers on to prevent them losing their home.

Re-modelling of Coneygear Court

2.10 Granta Housing Society owns and manages Coneygear Court, the main source of temporary accommodation available to the Council. This scheme has 21 units, with the main block having cluster flats around shared kitchens and bathrooms. This is an out-dated model of temporary accommodation and contributes to the Council's poor performance measured against the placement of families in shared hostel accommodation (a previous Best Value Performance Indicator). Plans have been drawn up with options to either refurbish this scheme, or demolish and re-build, which would provide self contained units. Granta has advised that to demolish and re-build this scheme would be the most cost effective option, at an estimated cost of £2.75m

3. IMPLICATIONS

3.1 It is anticipated that the range of measures available to homeowners mentioned in paragraph 2.8 above will help prevent mortgage arrears becoming a significant cause of homelessness during this period of economic downturn. There are, however,

likely to be circumstances where these options are not successful and at present we are not aware how many households this may apply to. The concern is that if there are large numbers of households where these options are not successful we may see an increase in the number of households approaching the Council for assistance under the terms of the homelessness legislation. If this were to happen it would have implications on the number of households we have to place into temporary accommodation, with the associated cost to the welfare of the household and financial cost to the Council.

- 3.2 The Council has previously been criticised for its performance against the Best Value Performance Indicator (BVPI) measuring the average length of stay of families in hostel accommodation with shared facilities. The calculation of this BVPI is based on the Council's placement of families into Coneygear Court. Although this BVPI does not appear in the new set of National Indicators it will continue to be recorded as a local indicator and appear in the returns that are made to government on our homelessness work. It is therefore likely to remain a high profile area of our work.
- 3.3 The Council's performance in this area will only improve when Coneygear Court is remodelled to provide self contained units. The issue is identifying the capital funding for this work, by supporting a bid to the Homes and Communities Agency, by supporting this through the Council's own capital funding, or a combination of the two. A bid for funding via the Homes and Communities Agency is expected in the near future.

4. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Scrutiny Panel note:

- a) the initiatives in place to help prevent a rise in mortgage repossessions in the district, and
- b) the issues around identifying the capital funding to re-model Coneygear Court.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Service Delivery Plan (up to 30th September 2008)

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**CARE QUALITY COMMISSION: ENFORCEMENT POLICY
CONSULTATION RESPONSE
(Report by the Head of Administration)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the Panel's meeting in December, Members considered a consultation document issued by the Care Quality Commission on their proposed enforcement policy for the regulation of health and adult social care services across the country. Having discussed the document, the Panel agreed to submit a response to the consultation.
- 1.2 Before finalising its submission the Panel requested that a representative of the Commission be invited to this meeting in order to understand better the Commission's role, how it fits into the wider health service framework and its links to other health service bodies. The Commission's regional office has been contacted and the Council has been advised that the Commission will not begin operating until 1st April 2009. An invitation to attend a future Panel meeting will be extended to the Commission in the spring.

**2. CARE QUALITY COMMISSION: ENFORCEMENT POLICY
CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

- 2.1 The consultation document asked three specific questions. The Panel's response to the consultation questions are summarised below:-

Q. *Do you agree with our proposed principles and overall approach to enforcement?*

A. Yes, agree to the principle of enforcement and the overall approach. Health and adult social care services should be tightly regulated and facilities that provide bad service should be closed.

Q. *Do you agree with the circumstances and manner in which we intend to use each enforcement power?*

A. Generally yes, however there are some concerns over the use of financial penalties as the Panel would not wish for these penalties to affect the level of patient care being delivered by diverting funds away from services. Furthermore, the rules set out appear to be onerous and if they are enforced they could result in facilities ceasing to be able to operate.

Q. *Does the way in which we propose to work with other organisations ensure a coordinated approach to enforcement?*

A. Do not believe that a coordinated approach to enforcement has been demonstrated within the document. Whilst it has been stated that working relationships will be formed with other enforcement bodies and organisations, these entities already have their own comprehensive systems and practices in place. There also is no

mention of the Local Involvement Network (LINK) and how it fits into the enforcement process.

- 2.2 In addition to the comments above, the Panel expressed concern over an apparent inconsistency in Appendix A of the document, which sets out the criteria for a formal investigation. While it is indicated that direct contact from service users might trigger an investigation, it is also stated that individual incidents that have not been pursued through the appropriate complaints procedure will not be investigated. The Panel expressed the view that this should be clarified and, as a result, it is intended that these comments will be sent to the Commission as part of the Panel's response to the consultation.

3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The consultation period for the proposed enforcement policy ends on 16th January 2009. The Panel is, therefore

RECOMMENDED

to endorse the consultation response for submission to the Care Quality Commission and to make any further comments on the Panel's response as necessary.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Minutes and Reports of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) held on 2nd December 2008.

Contact Officer: Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer
(01480) 388006

**DISABILITY ACCESS STUDY
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery))**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report sets out the origins, process and conclusions reached in the course of a study by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) on Disability Access.

1.2 To put the study into context, it has been estimated that approximately 12.5% of people nationally have some form of disability. These disabilities take a variety of forms. The recommendations at the end of this report have been designed to take this fact into account.

1.3 The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 aims to end the discrimination that many disabled people face. This Act has been significantly extended. In order to enhance inclusiveness, it now gives disabled people rights in the areas of:

- employment;
- education;
- access to goods, facilities and services, including larger private clubs and transport services;
- buying or renting land or property, including making it easier for disabled people to rent property and for tenants to make disability-related adaptations, and
- functions of public bodies, for example issuing of licences.

The Act requires public bodies to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people.

1.4 A number of individuals have assisted the Panel in the course of the study. They are as follows:

Mr G Morris – consultant
Representatives of the Cambridgeshire Parliament
Town and Parish Councils
Gerald Riley, Access Officer for Cambridgeshire County Council
Gerri Bird, Forum Manager for Disability Cambridgeshire (Directions Plus)
Mrs J Farrow - The Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations.

The Panel is grateful to everyone who has contributed to the study.

2. ORIGIN OF THE STUDY

2.1 The Panel originally discussed the scope of a study on access for those with disabilities to premises, facilities and other sites in the District, excluding those provided by the District Council. Members looked at parking on pavements, the installation of dropped kerbs and access to buses as potential areas of investigation. It was decided initially to review the Council's existing policies in relation to disability equality and access and existing research carried out in this area

before the precise remit of the study was decided upon. Following this the Council's Disability Equality Scheme was endorsed by the Panel.

- 2.2 The research findings on which the Disability Equality Scheme was based were examined with the assistance of Mr G Morris, the consultant who undertook research for the Scheme. The aim was to identify possible avenues of study. In Mr Morris' view the principal challenges were improving public understanding of and attitudes towards those with disabilities. He also outlined the duties of facilities and service providers under the DDA.
- 2.3 Having discussed the prevalence of disability in the District and the Council's provisions in terms of facilities and of advice, the Panel highlighted improving enforcement of disabled parking bays, extending the hours bus passes could be used by the disabled, the Council's paperwork and advocacy services at Council offices as potential study areas. The Panel also referred to the benefits of introducing, for Council decisions, a dedicated group of consultees, representing those with learning, physical and sensory impairments, possible opportunities to promote the needs of those with disabilities through the Local Strategic Partnership and the Local Area Agreement and the County Council's role in this area.

3. CAMBRIDGESHIRE PARLIAMENT

- 3.1 The Panel received a presentation by a number of representatives of the Cambridgeshire Parliament on the work of Speaking Up, a Cambridge based provider of advocacy services for those with learning difficulties, mental ill health and other disabilities. In the course of the presentation reference was made to the experiences of those with disabilities concerning the accessibility of places and services and how improvements might be made in these respects, which included the provision of toilet facilities for those with high support needs, improvements to leisure, transport and employment opportunities and enforcement of parking in spaces allocated for Blue Badge holders.
- 3.2 The Panel discussed with the Parliament the Council's consultation procedure, the location and cost of disabled toilets, the Council's communications, including the benefits of producing Council information in a larger size print, and the possible introduction of advocacy services located in Huntingdonshire.
- 3.3 As has been said the provision of High Dependency Toilets was discussed. These are distinct from those provided for the disabled in that the latter are designed for lone wheelchair users, while the former are for assisted use. Such publicly available facilities are rare and indeed it is understood that, in England, they are found only in Bradford. It has been suggested to the Cabinet that the Papworth Trust might be approached on the question of demand for such a facility and whether the facility at Saxongate, Huntingdon might be made available for public use. The Cabinet endorsed the suggestion and the Papworth Trust have been formally approached. A reply has not yet been received. Progress will be reported in due course.

4. CONSULTATION WITH MEMBERS AND TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS

4.1 The Panel consulted Town and Parish Councils along with all District Council Members on a range of matters arising from the study. A questionnaire was circulated and 33 responses were received from Town and Parish Councils. This amounts to a 39% response rate, which generally should be regarded as a high rate of return.

4.2 Analysis now is given to those issues raised. The main concerns highlighted are as follows:

Buses

4.3 Many authorities reported on the infrequency and irregularity of public transport. It was observed that the type of bus provided was ill-equipped to cater for the needs of disabled passengers. The lack of transport generally and access to suitable vehicles such as buses were mentioned by most respondents, reflecting in particular the needs of the rural parishes. It was concluded that more low liner buses should be provided and that the need for appropriate dropped kerbs/pathways leading to buses should be addressed as currently they limit an individual's mobility.

4.4 Concerns have been registered regarding the hours in which holders of disabled bus passes can use their passes. It was also recorded that there should be a form of carer's bus pass for those who are required to travel with disabled individuals. Recommendations on bus passes appear in Section 10 of this report.

Information

4.5 It was reported that the majority of information surrounding the needs and requirements of disabled people was sought directly from disabled people themselves and members of the community in relation to friends or family with a disability. The District Council featured as a useful site for obtaining information; however, some authorities requested access to further information with regard to representation, service planning and the availability of funding. The need for education and training to improve awareness of disability access also was raised.

Funding

4.6 Funding and financial support was a common theme. It often appeared to be an issue that seemed to arise from a lack of information and confusion regarding claims. The need for better communication on available funding was a common finding. Although direct provision of grant aid is not exclusively the Council's responsibility, the Panel is of the view that more could be done to provide information and assistance with completing applications for funding. This has been taken up in a separate study by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) on grant aid.

Parking

4.7 Dedicated parking, greater penalties for anti-social parking in disabled (accessible) bays and adjustments to roads and paving

were highlighted as key solutions to many outstanding issues. The majority of authorities reported on the inconvenience of illegal parking, in particular, outside schools at peak times and local shops and the effect on members of the public in those areas. (See Sections 7 and 12).

5. CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

5.1 The Panel received evidence from Gerald Riley, Access Officer for Cambridgeshire County Council, on the County Council's responsibilities under the DDA and on his role in ensuring the County Council complies with them. The County Council has three duties through its policies and practices as an employer, through the design and delivery of services and through the discharge of its public functions. In each of these areas the County Council has to demonstrate that they have been informed by the Act. With regard to accessibility in the built environment, the County Council has to ensure that those with a disability have been consulted as part of the design process. Every Head of Service has individual arrangements for involving disabled users in the development and monitoring of service plans.

5.2 Mr Riley stated that dropped kerbs are designed to accommodate wheelchairs of a certain size but that problems now arise as larger chairs are being manufactured. Problem areas can be reported either to the County Council or to the Environment and Transport Area Joint Committee. Mr Riley confirmed that maintenance standards take into account the DDA.

5.3 The Panel decided that the precise location of defective dropped kerbs and areas where dropped kerbs should be installed and their priority should be obtained from those who had responded to the survey of Town and Parish Councils and of Members. This information has been forwarded to the County Council either for action or identification of those areas that did not fall within its remit. In the case of the latter, Town and Parish Councils have been informed accordingly. Members also decided that a similar exercise should be carried out on parking practices within the District, with the findings being forwarded to the Police for comment. This has been done and feedback has been received from the police on action taken.

5.4 Councillor R W J Eaton has carried out consultations within his Ward on disability access and the findings have been taken into account during the study. He has suggested that the County Council should liaise with disabled groups to identify the best location of dropped kerbs and problems with pavements together with measures to alleviate them. This suggestion has been referred to the Transport and Access Sub-Group of the Growth and Infrastructure Thematic Group established under the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership.

6. DIRECTIONS PLUS

6.1 Gerri Bird, Forum Manager for Disability Cambridgeshire (Directions Plus), attended a Panel meeting to discuss the study. Disability Cambridgeshire's purpose is to provide information and advice to disabled people and / or older people and carers in Cambridgeshire. It offers short courses in disability awareness in accessible locations

around Cambridgeshire. It is also funded to undertake developmental work with voluntary and community organisations in Cambridgeshire and across the Eastern Region. Staff from Disability Cambridgeshire provide representation / liaison to a number of committees and working groups from local to Regional Assembly levels.

- 6.2 Mrs Bird outlined the problems she has experienced with incorrectly installed dropped kerbs and her perception of the causes of abuse of Blue Badge parking permits. The main points are summarised in the sections below.

7. BLUE BADGES

- 7.1 The Panel has obtained information from Cambridgeshire County Council on the application process and measures currently in place to identify abuses of Blue Badge permits and the enforcement that is undertaken. Mrs Bird stated that there is a need to introduce separate permits, which distinguish between those with temporary and permanent disabilities.

- 7.2 Having discussed the problems experienced by legitimate Blue Badge holders as a result of the abuses of the system, Members have noted the current position on the decriminalisation of parking. Although this is some way off yet, Members are of the view that now is the time to make representations that enforcement of Blue Badge parking should be formally recognised in any new arrangements. On a related matter Members recommend that the District Council should make clear that it undertakes enforcement of parking in disabled bays in the car parks it manages.

8. BLUE ROUTES

- 8.1 Councillor P K Ursell has suggested that there might be benefit in resurrecting Blue Routes, which assist those with disabilities in navigating their way round the District's towns. It was argued that they might have the benefit of influencing the County Council's pavement maintenance programme.

- 8.2 Despite extensive investigation, no trace of these routes has been found. As an alternative the Papworth Trust has been consulted on whether there are routes that exist which are regularly used by the disabled. However, the Trust has advised that it does not have such routes in the District. Even if blue routes had been found to have existed, it appears they are no longer in use. In addition, given that such guides would need to be regularly updated and that the need for them will be obviated if the recommendations of this study are implemented, it has been concluded that this suggestion should not be pursued.

9. ADVOCACY SERVICES

- 9.1 The Panel has discussed the provision of advocacy services around the District.

- 9.2 Mrs Bird confirmed that Disability Cambridgeshire already provides an advocacy service. The Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations provides a similar service.

- 9.3 The provision of advocacy services around the District was discussed with the Cambridgeshire Parliament. The Parliament has indicated that it would be prepared to make available representatives to provide an advocacy / advice service at Council premises.
- 9.4 It has been concluded that such services might also help address demand for information and for details of available funding from other organisations. It is suggested that the Council should initiate discussions on the provision of comprehensive joint advocacy / advice services and act as a catalyst to identify other opportunities for joint working between these organisations.

10. PUBLIC TRANSPORT

- 10.1 With regard to public transport services, comments from Town and Parish Councils concerning the need for more low level buses and issues surrounding training for public transport employees on the needs of those with disabilities have been forwarded to bus operators. Disappointingly, despite an initial enquiry on their policies in these respects and a subsequent reminder, no replies have been received. It has been suggested to the County Council that these points should be included in future contracts for bus services. These consultation findings also have been sent to bus companies operating in the District. Representations on these lines have also been made to the Local Government Association. Alternatively, the District Council's Licensing section is in the process of carrying out consultations on the needs of the disabled from the point of view of the taxi industry. Given the reluctance of bus companies to respond to the need that has been demonstrated, this need might be addressed via the Council's taxi licensing service.
- 10.2 In addition, a suggestion that those who care for individuals with disabilities should be provided with free bus travel has been referred to the County Council. Carers UK, which is running a national campaign on this issue, has been informed of the support that exists in Huntingdonshire for this initiative.
- 10.3 A suggestion by the Cambridgeshire Parliament that bus timetables near bus sheltered should be lowered to enable those in wheelchairs to read them has been passed to the County Council.

11. CONSULTATION ON COUNCIL POLICIES

- 11.1 The Panel previously has suggested that the Council should introduce a list of organisations and individuals representing those with learning, physical and sensory impairments who would be involved as a matter of course in all consultations on policies. To reinforce this Mrs Bird has stressed that the Council should incorporate the views of those with disabilities into its policy making. There would be no obligation on consultees to respond but they would be given the opportunity to do so if they thought it necessary. Potential consultees have been approached. The Cambridgeshire Parliament has indicated that it would like to be included in the list of consultees as have the Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations and the Papworth Trust. A full list of consultees has been passed to the Council's Policy and Research Department for use in future consultations.

12. OTHER MATTERS

- 12.1 The Panel has given consideration to a government initiative to introduce a countywide coalition of disabled people which has been discussed with the Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations. Similar functions were performed by the Huntingdonshire Coalition of Disabled People who used to offer a range of local advocacy services to its stakeholders. It also organised networking events for members and carers of disabled people, training sessions for local retailers and consultation with members. Furthermore, it acted as a general point of contact for the community. The Coalition has now disbanded and some of its work has been taken on by Shopmobility. The Panel welcomes the extension of this initiative to Huntingdonshire but has asked the County Council to incorporate existing organisations already working in this area into its activities in complying with this duty.
- 12.2 During the initial stages of the study the Panel recognised the importance of the Council's documents being produced in larger size print. This idea, together with a number of other recommendations, has already been incorporated into the Council's new corporate identity.
- 12.3 Another idea that emerged at an early stage concerned the opportunities available to promote the needs of those with disabilities through the Strategic Partnership. This has been referred to the Growth and Infrastructure and Health and Wellbeing Thematic Groups of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership.

14. CONCLUSION

This has been an extensive study, which has taken a wide range of evidence. As a study that predominantly focussed on the external environment, much of the interest and many of the recommendations concern other organisations. The result is that many of the actions have already been implemented by way of recommendations to those organisations. The recommendations are to:

- a) note progress in respect of High Dependency Toilets (para. 3.3);
- b) note the action taken to address defective or absent kerbs and unhelpful parking identified by Town and Parish Councils (para. 5.3);
- c) note that the suggestion that consultation should be held with disabled groups on the location of dropped kerbs and problems with pavements has been referred to the Growth and Infrastructure Thematic Group of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership (para. 5.4);
- d) make representations that enforcement of Blue Badge parking should be formally recognised in any new arrangements for decriminalised parking (para. 7.2);
- e) make clear that the Council undertakes enforcement of parking in disabled bays in the car parks it manages (para. 7.2);

- f) initiate discussions on the provision of comprehensive joint advocacy / advice services and act as a catalyst to identify other opportunities for joint working between these organisations (para. 9.4);
- g) note the suggestion has been made on the need for more low level buses and for training for public transport employees on the needs of those with disabilities (para. 10.1);
- h) note that bus companies operating in the District and the Local Government Association have been informed of the study's findings on low level buses and on training for public transport employees on the needs of those with disabilities and that the Council's licensing service is investigating ways in which local taxi services might meet these needs (para. 10.1);
- i) note the action taken to draw attention to and support the case for carers to be provided with free bus travel (para. 10.2);
- j) note the action to request lower bus timetables are installed near bus shelters (para. 10.3);
- k) note that a list of consultees with an interest in disability matters has been compiled (para. 11.1);
- l) note the action to promote the involvement of local organisations in work on meeting the needs of those with disabilities (para. 12.1);
- m) note that the Growth and Infrastructure and Health and Wellbeing Thematic Groups of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership have been formally requested to promote the needs of those with disabilities in the District (para. 12.3); and
- n) inform Town and Parish Councils of the outcome of the study.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Disability Equality Duty Research Findings

Disability study file held in the office of the Director of Central Services.

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

Contact Officer: A Roberts
 **01480 388009**

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
7/11/06	<p><u>Disability Access</u></p> <p>Preliminary report considered. Further information requested on the Council's existing policies on disability equality and access and on research in this area.</p>	Further reports submitted.		
5/12/06	<p>Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan endorsed. Further research to be undertaken within Members' wards and officers of the County Council and of the Police requested to attend future meetings to discuss the study.</p>	Representatives of the County Council and of the Police invited to future meetings.		
6/02/07	<p>Panel met with representatives of Speaking Up and G Morris. A number of matters were identified for further consideration. – improved enforcement of disabled parking bays, extending bus pass hours for disabled users, Council paperwork, advertising of disabled facilities at leisure centres and advocacy services at Council offices.</p>	Report submitted to the Cabinet on high dependency toilets on 28/06/07.	The Cabinet decided to approach Papworth Trust for their advice on the need for high dependency facilities for people whose disabilities are so severe as to prevent them from using conventional toilets designed for the disabled and in particular on the possibility of extending the availability of facilities at Saxongate, Huntingdon for such use.	
5/06/07	<p>Meeting attended by County Council's Access Officer. A number of avenues identified for further investigation. Cabinet to be requested to consider providing high dependency toilets.</p>	Survey sent to Town and Parish Councils and District Councillors. Returns received.		
4/12/07	<p>Findings of survey considered. The Panel requested:</p>			

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
	<p><u>Disability Access (Cont.)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • further consultation with Town and Parish Councils on dropped kerbs and parking, the findings of which will be forwarded to the County Council and police respectively for action/comment; • that views on the need for more low liner buses and training for employees on the needs of those with disabilities be forwarded to bus operators; • that a suggestion that carers be provided with free bus passes be forwarded to the County Council; • details of potential consultees on Council policies and services representing local disability groups. • that a representative of Directions Plus be invited to a future meeting to discuss the study; • further investigation of the existence of the Disability 'Blue' Route scheme implemented by the Council; and • that investigations be made on the use of Blue Badge parking permits, 	<p>Further consultation documents despatched.</p> <p>Letters sent to bus operators.</p> <p>Carers UK consulted.</p> <p>List submitted to meeting in January 2008.</p>	<p>Presentation received at Panel's April 2008 meeting.</p> <p>Advised that the Papworth Trust did not have Disability 'Blue' Routes in the District.</p> <p>The Council's Supervising Inspector reported that very little enforcement action is taken</p>	

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
	<u>Disability Access (Cont.)</u>			
4/03/08	to include the procedures involved in applying for a permit. Suggestion made to invite a representative from Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations to a future meeting to discuss the study.		towards Blue Badge Holders. Presentation received at Panel's July 2008 meeting.	
1/07/08	Working Group established comprising Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, S J Criswell, Mrs K E Cooper and Mrs J A Dew to review the findings of the study.	Meetings held on 8 th September, 9 th October and 4 th December.	Final report appears elsewhere on the Agenda.	06/01/09
	<u>Adoption of Roads and Sewers</u>			
5/12/06	Study to be undertaken into the processes and procedures involved with the adoption of roads and sewers.	Information requested.	Scoping report to be submitted to a future meeting. Representative of the Anglian Water to be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss the study.	
5/06/07	Report deferred to next meeting.	Meeting to be arranged.	First meeting held on 22/10/07.	
3/07/07	Working Group established comprising Councillors J D Ablewhite, D A Giles, Mrs			

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
	<p><u>Adoption of Roads and Sewers (Cont.)</u></p> <p>C A Godley and P K Ursell, to undertake a review on the process of adopting estate roads and sewers with an aim to put measures in place that will streamline the process and make the procedures more transparent, initially by an investigation of introducing a District-wide register of un-adopted roads and sewers.</p>			
4/12/07	Working Group held meeting with the Principal Building Control Officer.			
5/02/08	Further meeting to be held with Head of Planning Services, Projects and Assets Manager and representatives Highway authority.	Meeting arranged.		
4/03/08	Councillor Mrs P A Jordan appointed onto the Working Group in place of the late Councillor Mrs C A Godley.	Meeting held on 11/04/08.		
03/06/08	Owing to their interests in the study, Councillors M F Shellens and J S Watt were appointed on to the Working Group.	Meetings held on 24/07/08 and 16/12/08.	Investigations ongoing. Further meeting arranged with the Head of Planning Services and a representative from the County Council's Highways Development Control Team on 29 th January 2009.	

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
5/12/06	<p>Grant Aid</p> <p>Study to be undertaken into the processes in applying for grant aid and the effectiveness of grant schemes.</p> <p>Details of all grant schemes requested.</p> <p>Review of Small Scale Environmental Improvement Schemes to be undertaken.</p>	Information requested.		
3/4/07	<p>Details of all grant schemes considered. With the exception of Shopmobility, the Working Group undertaking the review of the Small Scale Environmental Improvements scheme was requested to examine the schemes' criteria, publicity, application process, officer involvement and approval process.</p>	Meeting arranged.	Meeting held on 24/10/07 to plan further study work.	
4/12/07	<p>Review of Small Scale Environmental Improvements Scheme completed. Working Group awaiting further information on other grant schemes administered by the Council.</p> <p>Details of grant schemes circulated. Meetings to be held with various Heads of Service to discuss capital and revenue grant schemes falling within their remits. Investigations nearing completion.</p>	<p>Meeting held on 1/02/08.</p> <p>Meetings held on 20/03/08, 26/03/08, 7/05/08, 24/07/08 and 24/10/08.</p>	<p>The Working Group's concluding report considered at Panel's November meeting. Due to appear before Cabinet at their meeting on 29th January 2009. Councillor P G Mitchell to present the report to the Executive.</p>	

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
2/09/08	<p><u>Call Centre Monitoring</u></p> <p>Following recent changes to the Panel's remit (with effect from 1st September 2008), Call Centre Monitoring has now been transferred over from the Service Support Panel to the Service Delivery Panel. Quarterly performance reports to be circulated informally to Members of the Panel (June and November of each year) and an Item included on the Agenda every 6 months in future (February and September of each year). Since the formation of the Customer Service Team in February 2008, quarterly performance reports for the Customer Service Team are now produced, incorporating Call Centre statistics.</p> <p>Requests made for future performance reports to incorporate additional information relating to the number of unanswered telephone calls received by the Call Centre and the number of enquiries that were not the responsibility of the District Council.</p>	<p>Formal report to be considered at Panel's September 2008 meeting.</p> <p>Next report anticipated to appear before the Panel in February 2009.</p>		03/02/09

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
	<u>ICT Developments</u>			
2/09/08	Remit transferred over from the Service Support Panel in September 2008.			
07/10/08	Update on Flexible Working Strategy to be received at October Panel meeting.		Presentation received at the Panel's October meeting.	
04/11/08	Requests made for ICT Strategy and Web Strategy to be circulated via email to Panel Members as soon as they were available.	Web Strategy circulated on 12/12/08. ICT Strategy to follow - anticipated 21/01/09.		
	<u>Corporate Plan – Growing Success</u>			
14/05/08	Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, S J Criswell and P G Mitchell appointed to Corporate Plan Working Group.	Meetings held in June and July to review the Corporate Plan.		
02/09/08	In considering the Review of Growing Success the Corporate and Strategic Framework Panel decided to extend the Corporate Plan Working Group's remit by requesting it to investigate the cost implications of each priority area identified within the Corporate Plan. A suggestion has been made to invite	Bi-annual reports to be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Panels. Financial information to be considered at future Working Group meetings.		

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
	<p><u>Corporate Plan – Growing Success (Cont.)</u></p> <p>Heads of Service to a future meeting to discuss their contributions in achieving the Council’s objectives.</p>			
2/12/08	<p><u>Homelessness And The Housing Market</u></p> <p>Identified as an area of concern by the Corporate Plan Working Group at their meeting on 27th November 2008.</p>	Request submitted with the Head of Housing Services.	Report appears elsewhere on the Agenda.	06/01/09
2/12/08	<p><u>Recycled Materials</u></p> <p>Requested for a scoping report to be submitted on trends in the value of recycled materials.</p>	Request submitted with the Head of Operations.	The matter has been acknowledged by the Head of Operations.	
6/12/08	<p><u>Provision of Leisure Facilities for Young People</u></p> <p>Identified as a potential area for study by the Panel. Particular interest expressed on how these facilities are managed and insured and if they were maintained by the District Council.</p>	Request submitted to the Heads of Operations and Environmental Community Health Services.	Report anticipated February / March 2009.	03/02/09 or 03/03/09

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
2/12/08	<p><u>Care Quality Commission</u></p> <p>The Panel agreed to submit a response to the Commission's Enforcement Policy. Requested that a representative should be invited to attend the Panel's January meeting to deliver a presentation on the work of the Commission and how the document fits into the wider health service framework. Advised that the Commission will not begin operating until 1st April 2009.</p>	<p>Invitation to be extended to the Commission in April 2009.</p>	<p>The matter is raised elsewhere on the Agenda.</p>	06/01/09
2/12/08	<p><u>Future Governance of Hinchingbrooke Hospital: Consultation Arrangements</u></p> <p>Subject was drawn to the attention of the Panel by the Chairman who requested that the subject should be raised at the Panel's January meeting, in preparation for the forthcoming consultation on the future governance of Hinchingbrooke Hospital.</p>	<p>Dr Stephen Dunn, Next Steps Project Co-ordinator and Ms Jessica Bawden, NHS Cambridgeshire will be in attendance at the Panel's January meeting.</p>	<p>This matter is raised elsewhere on the Agenda.</p>	06/01/09

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
4/11/08	<u>Forward Plan</u> Older Persons Housing Strategy Update Requested that the report should be considered at a future Panel meeting.		Due to appear before the Panel at their March 2009 meeting.	03/03/09

Decision Digest

Edition 90

Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 1st to 17th December 2008.

DEVELOPMENT OF OPTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT DPD

The Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) has considered the content of the Development Management DPD which sets out the Council's policies for managing future development in Huntingdonshire.

The Panel has commented on a variety of issues including parking provision and energy conservation in new development, the implications of the new Community Infrastructure levy and the retention of historic orchard. Members also noted that a framework had been developed for the first time to establish contributions from developers towards indoor sports facilities.

In respect of the draft policy concerning development as part of the Great Fen project, Members expressed concern that the policy was overly prescriptive and not consistent with the more conditional language adopted elsewhere in the document. The Panel felt that the terminology whereby "planning permission for development will be granted for proposals which will deliver the implementation of the

Great Fen project as identified on the Proposals Map and which are consistent with the Master Plan" could fetter the Council's discretion when considering future planning applications. As the content of the Master Plan was not yet known, Members felt unable to support the policy as drafted. With this in mind, the Panel has recommended to the Cabinet that they adopt a change in terminology with respect to this policy area.

Concerns were also expressed about the references within the document to the possible restriction of permitted development rights for specific farming or operational purposes which could disadvantage local landowners operating in the Master Plan area.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Overview and Scrutiny Panels have considered the performance of the authority against the priority objectives identified in "Growing Success", the corporate plan updated by the Council in September 2008.

The Service Support Panel has noted that most of the targets within their priority areas were being met or exceeded. However comment

was made in relation to the target of maximising leisure centre income. Whilst this had fallen against target, Members acknowledged that the loss of income had been more than offset by reductions in expenditure in the Leisure Centres as a whole.

The Service Delivery Panel has endorsed the comments made by the Corporate Plan Working Group. However comment was made about the two priority areas where targets were not being met – namely the promotion of energy efficiency to householders and the percentage of affordable housing on qualifying sites. With regard to the latter the Panel has noted that the target was likely to be amended to reflect targets in the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Members also concurred with a suggestion that further measures should be taken to promote the Warmer Homes for Life scheme.

MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS

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

Members were advised of the impact of the current economic climate and alerted to the future possibility of developers seeking to renegotiate agreements because properties were no longer achieving the previously anticipated values.

URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK – LAND AROUND BUTTSGROVE WAY, THE WHADDONS AND SUFFOLK HOUSE, HUNTINGDON

The contents of a draft Urban Design Framework for development opportunities in this part of Huntingdon was considered by the Overview & Scrutiny (Service Support).

Members attention was drawn to the comments that had been received by way of correspondence and questionnaires completed at public exhibitions that had been held on the proposals. It was noted that a number of replies had contained concerns over loss of green space in the area.

In welcoming the document as a positive step and one which had helped to alleviate initial misunderstanding, Members commented also on the question of highway safety in Buttsgrove Way, the future housing mix of development and the need to respect the private dwellings in the area in the subsequent development proposals.

CALCULATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2009/10

In accordance with the legal requirement placed on the Council, the Corporate Governance Panel has set the tax base for the whole of the District for the year 2009/10 as 57,960 with figures apportioned for each Parish of the District.

REVIEW OF THE RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Corporate Governance Panel has endorsed the content of a revised Risk Management Strategy. In addition an exercise is currently underway to ensure that any partnership risks would be flagged up by the Council's performance management system.

REVIEW OF THE ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION STRATEGY

The outcome of a review of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy has been reported to the Corporate Governance Panel. The review has identified the need for several changes principally arising from the External Auditor's Use of Resources report and best practice guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Association of Local Authority Risk Managers (ALARM).

WHISTLEBLOWING: ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The annual review of the Whistleblowing Policy and Procedure has taken place and the Corporate Governance Panel has endorsed proposed changes to the guidance notes issued on Whistleblowing. At the Panel's request, future Whistleblowing reports will be submitted to the Panel at the same time as the annual Housing Benefit Fraud Investigation Activity report.

FEEDBACK PROCEDURE

Following a review of the Council's complaints procedure, the Corporate Governance Panel has endorsed proposals for changes to the procedure which will introduce a new feedback procedure allowing complimentary views and comments on services received other than complaints also to be formally registered.

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR LOCAL AUTHORITY MEMBERS AND EMPLOYEES

The Standards Committee has responded on behalf of the District Council to a consultation paper published by DCLG entitled "Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power" which had invited comments on proposals to review the Members' Code of Conduct. It is the intention to publish a revised code to come into effect by May 2009. The most significant revision to the code involves the issue of "private capacity" to cover those occasions when a Member's criminal behaviour in a private capacity brings disrepute upon the local authority.

USE OF RESOURCES JUDGEMENTS 2007/08

To comply with Audit Commission requirements, the Standards Committee has undertaken "an annual assessment of standards of ethical conduct across the organisation." As there does not appear to be any trend emerging in terms of the aspects of code which give rise to the most complaints, the Committee has endorsed the continuation of the approach

towards training being adopted by the Monitoring Officer which involves responding to Parish Councils as circumstances evolve and the need for training is identified. However, the Committee has requested the Monitoring Officer to establish whether the Quality Status awarded to Parish Councils requires Code of Conduct training and refresher sessions to be undertaken.

OTHER STANDARDS ISSUES

The Standards Committee has noted the nature of the Code of Conduct enquiries which had been logged by the Monitoring Officer since their last meeting and have extended an invitation to both the Leaders of the Council and of the Opposition Group to address them at future meetings on their expectations in terms of the Committee's contribution to the Council and to maintaining standards and conduct locally.

SCHEME OF DELEGATED POWERS – DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PANEL

The Development Control Panel has reviewed its delegated powers and proposed several minor amendments to the current scheme to sustain performance levels, make best use of resources and to ensure that Members continue to focus on those applications considered to be major or controversial. The changes will take place with immediate effect but will not vary the opportunity which exists for Members to request the Head of Planning Services, within 21 days of the publication of the weekly list to submit an

application to the Panel for determination.

CUSTOMER SERVICE DEVELOPMENT IN ST IVES AND ST NEOTS

The outcome of a review of the services delivered by the St Ives and St Neots Customer Service Centres has been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery). The review had been prompted following the adoption of the Customer Services Strategy in 2008.

The Panel expressed general support for the recommendations – namely the proposal to increase the range of services in St Ives and St Neots, the principle of relocating the St Neots Tourist Information Centre and the investigation of alternative accommodation in St Neots and St Ives.

Members discussed the importance of offering customers a private meeting area, the incorporation of other services and facilities within the proposals, the importance of locating the Customer Service Centres in an accessible and highly visible location and the need to consult with Ward Councillors on any proposals to change the location of the Centres.

The Panel has acknowledged the financial implications for St Neots Museum of amalgamating the two current offices in St Neots, but concurred with a suggestion that the customer service facility should be in one single unit to enable efficiency savings to be achieved.

Further information was requested on the Town Council's position in the event that the District Council considers relocating its facilities which are currently located within the Priory Centre.

The Panel has also suggested that the provision of outreach services in larger villages should be investigated.

CARE QUALITY COMMISSION: ENFORCEMENT POLICY CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has considered a consultation document issued by the Care Quality Commission on its draft enforcement policy. The Commission has been established as an independent regulator of health, mental health and adult social care in England, and brings together the work of the three Commissions for Social Care Inspection, Healthcare and Mental Health.

The Panel has made a number of comments in response to the questions raised in the consultation paper and has requested that a report summarising their response be submitted to the next meeting.

In acknowledging the complexity of the framework represented in the consultation document, the Panel has invited a representative of the Care Quality Commission to attend a future meeting to deliver a presentation on its work.

ENHANCED SERVICES

CLEANING

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has been advised of the Cabinet's response to the recommendations arising from their study on enhanced cleansing services in the District's market towns.

Having noted that the Cabinet had endorsed the principle of introducing enhanced cleansing on Sundays but that work was required before its implementation would be considered, Members have requested further clarification as to how this would be completed from the Head of Operations.

IMPACT OF THE NEW A14 IN TERMS OF AIR QUALITY AND NOISE POLLUTION

Councillor M F Shellens has reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) his initial findings into the potential impact that the new A14 would have on air quality and noise pollution. Having been advised that relevant information contained in the Local Air Quality Management Further Review and Assessment Report had been presented to a previous meeting of the Licensing & Protection Panel, Councillor Shellens undertook to discuss this document with Officers in the Planning and Environmental and Community Health Services Divisions.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY) –
STUDIES**

Having discussed a number of options for future study areas, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has requested the submission of reports to their future meetings on the provision of leisure facilities for young people and on trends in the value of recycled materials. The Panel also intend to discuss the future governance arrangements for Hinchingbrooke Hospital at their January meeting.