

A meeting of **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL** will be held in the **CIVIC SUITE, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **WEDNESDAY, 23 JUNE 2010** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

	Time Allocation
PRAYER	5 minutes
The Venerable Hugh McCurdy, Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech will open the meeting with prayer.	
APOLOGIES	2 minutes
CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS	10 minutes
1. PETITION	10 minutes
Councillor Mrs S Worthington (or an alternative Councillor nominated by the Town Council) to present a petition containing approximately 1,108 signatures submitted by Godmanchester Town Council that states that "we the undersigned deplore Huntingdonshire District Council's decision to cease payment for the running and maintenance of the public toilets in Godmanchester and urge the District Council to reverse its decision as a matter of urgency and reinstate this necessary facility to the benefit of both residents of and visitors to Godmanchester".	
2. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)	2 minutes
To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the annual meeting held on 19th May 2010.	
3. MEMBERS' INTERESTS	2 minutes
To receive from Members declarations as to personal and/or prejudicial interests and the nature of those interests in relation to any Agenda Item. Please see Notes 1 and 2 below.	
4. COUNCIL DEBATE	60 minutes
To consider the implications of the recently elected Government's proposals upon the District Council.	
Ms C Holloway. Corporate Programme Director of the Local Government Association will speak on the subject and will answer any questions that Members may have.	
5. PARISH MEETING FUNCTIONS (Pages 7 - 8)	5 minutes
To consider a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services following a request from Covington Parish Meeting for the grant of additional functions.	
6. PARISH ELECTORAL ARRANGEMENTS (Pages 9 - 10)	5 minutes
To consider a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services proposing a variation to the electoral cycle for Little Paxton Parish Council.	

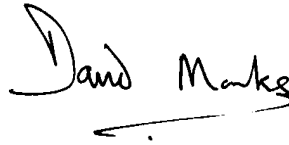
- 7. PETITIONS SCHEME** (Pages 11 - 22) **5 minutes**
- To consider a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services on the adoption of a petition scheme in accordance with the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.
- 8. FOOD SAFETY SERVICE PLAN 2010/11** (Pages 23 - 34) **5 minutes**
- The Chairman of the Licensing and Protection Panel to present a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services on the adoption by the Council of the Food Safety Service Plan for 2010/11.
- 9. REPORTS OF THE CABINET, PANELS AND COMMITTEES** **30 minutes**
- (a) Cabinet (Pages 35 - 54)
- (b) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Pages 55 - 80)
- (c) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) (Pages 81 - 84)
- (d) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) (Pages 85 - 88)
- (e) Development Management Panel (Pages 89 - 90)
- (f) Employment Panel (Pages 91 - 94)
- (g) Licensing and Protection Panel (Pages 95 - 96)
- Report of the meeting held on 16th June 2010 – to follow.
- (h) Licensing Committee (Pages 97 - 98)
- Report of the meeting held on 16th June 2010 – to follow.
- 10. ORAL QUESTIONS** **30 minutes**
- In accordance with the Council Procedure Rules (Section 8.3) of the Council's Constitution, to receive oral questions from Members of the Council

11. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: SECTION 85

2 minutes

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

Dated this 15th day of June 2010



Chief Executive

Notes

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

Please contact Ms C Deller, Democratic Services Manager, Tel No 01480 388007/e-mail: Christine.Deller@huntsdc.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Council.

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

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.

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Agenda Item 2

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the Annual Meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 19 May 2010.

PRESENT: Councillor J W Davies – Chairman.

Councillors J D Ablewhite, K M Baker,
M G Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, I C Bates,
J T Bell, Mrs B E Boddington, P L E Bucknell,
E R Butler, S Cawley, B S Chapman,
K J Churchill, W T Clough, Mrs K E Cooper,
S J Criswell, D B Dew, Mrs J A Dew,
P J Downes, J J Dutton, R S Farrer,
P M D Godfrey, P Godley, J A Gray,
S Greenall, N J Guyatt, A Hansard, D Harty,
C R Hyams, Mrs P A Jordan,
S M van de Kerkhove, P G Mitchell, A Monk,
M F Newman, P D Reeve, Mrs D C Reynolds,
T V Rogers, C M Saunderson, M F Shellens,
Mrs P E Shrapnel, L M Simpson,
C J Stephens, P A Swales, G S E Thorpe,
R G Tuplin, D M Tysoe, P K Ursell,
P R Ward, J S Watt and R J West.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors T D Sanderson and Ms M J Thomas.

1. PRAYER

Father P Maddison, Parish Priest of the Church of the Sacred Heart, St Ives opened the meeting with prayer. Having advised the Council that he would shortly be leaving his parish after nine years at the Church of the Sacred Heart in St Ives, Father Maddison thanked Members and Officers of the District Council for their support during his ministry.

2. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) The Chairman welcomed Members to the first meeting of the Council in the new Civic Suite and reminded them of the availability for use of an improved Members' lounge on the first floor of the building.

(b) Council Membership

The Chairman congratulated those Members of the Council who had been returned for a further term of office at the District Council elections held on 6th May 2010 and extended a warm welcome to the following newly elected Members –

S Cawley - Huntingdon West Ward

B S Chapman - St Neots Priory Park Ward
S Greenall - Huntingdon East Ward
N J Guyatt - Elton and Folksworth Ward
S M van de Kerkhove - St Neots Eynesbury Ward.
D M Tysoe - Sawtry Ward

A tribute also was paid to former Member, Mr R W J Eaton who had stood unsuccessfully for re-election.

(c) **Councillor M F Newman**

The Chairman announced that Councillor M F Newman had completed 40 years continuous service and 47 years in total as a District Councillor for Huntingdonshire and its predecessor, St Ives Rural District Council. Following personal tributes to Councillor Newman by Councillors S J Criswell and P L E Bucknell, the Chairman presented a framed certificate to Councillor Newman in recognition of his long service and dedication to the work of the District Council.

Councillor Newman thanked his colleagues, officers and his wife for their support and indicated that it had been privilege to serve the Council and the community during this time. He commented that the experience had enriched his life and enabled him to engage with many people from different walks of life.

3. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor J D Ablewhite, seconded by Councillor R J West and

RESOLVED

that Councillor J J Dutton be elected Chairman of the Council for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Councillor Dutton made the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office, thanked those Members who had proposed and seconded his candidacy and expressed his pleasure in becoming Chairman of the District Council. Councillor Dutton paid tribute to those eminent characters who he had succeeded in the post and indicated his intention to promote the profile of the Council in the region by visiting local groups. He stated that he had chosen as his charities for the forthcoming year the St John Ambulance Huntingdonshire, East Anglian Multiple Sclerosis Therapy Centre in Huntingdon, the Alzheimer's Society and Parkinson's UK. Councillor Dutton further announced that he had decided to appoint a Chairman's Cadet from St John Ambulance to support him on Council civic engagements and help raise the profile of that organisation.

Councillor J J Dutton in the Chair.

4. VOTE OF THANKS TO THE RETIRING CHAIRMAN

The Chairman paid tribute to the exemplary way in which Councillor J

W Davies had performed his duties as Chairman of the District Council and the high regard in which he was held by civic leaders across the region. He applauded Councillor Davies' sense of humour and the impartial manner in which he had conducted meetings of the Council and expressed appreciation for the advice and support offered to him during the two years he had acted as Vice-Chairman. As Chairman of the Opposition, Councillor P J Downes, added his appreciation for the manner in which Councillor Davies had conducted the Council's business during his term of office.

In response, Councillor Davies remarked that it had been a privilege to represent an excellent authority and would miss his involvement in civic duties. He thanked his former Vice-Chairman, the Chief Executive, the Head of Democratic and Central Services and his Personal Assistant for their support during his term of office.

RESOLVED

that the Council's appreciation to Councillor J W Davies be placed on record as Chairman during the last two years.

5. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 21st April 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

None were received.

7. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor P A Swales and seconded by Councillor A Hansard that Councillor Mrs B E Boddington be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council. Councillor P J Downes proposed and it was seconded by Councillor M F Shellens that Councillor M G Baker be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council. Having been put to the vote, it was

RESOLVED

that Councillor Mrs B E Boddington be appointed Vice-Chairman of the District Council for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Councillor Mrs Boddington made the Statutory Declaration of Acceptance of Office and expressed her appreciation to Members for their confidence in her and for the honour which had been conferred.

8. ELECTION OF LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

It was proposed by Councillor J A Gray, seconded by Councillor Mrs B E Boddington and

RESOLVED

that Councillor I C Bates be elected Leader of the Council

for the ensuing Municipal Year.

9. APPOINTMENT OF CABINET

The Leader announced that he had appointed Councillors K J Churchill, D B Dew, J A Gray, A Hansard, C R Hyams, Mrs D C Reynolds, T V Rogers and L M Simpson to join him as Members of the Cabinet for the ensuing Municipal Year. He also announced that Councillor L M Simpson would be Deputy Leader and Vice-Chairman of the Cabinet.

10. LOCAL ELECTIONS: 6TH MAY 2010

The report of the Returning Officer with regard to the District Council elections held on 6th May 2010 was received and noted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book).

The Returning Officer extended his appreciation to candidates and their agents for their co-operation and courtesy during the elections and paid tribute to the Elections Team for the efficient manner in which they had conducted the elections. Following compliments from the Leader of the Council, the Returning Officer undertook to convey the Council's appreciation to those who had been engaged in election duties over the period.

11. REPRESENTATION OF POLITICAL GROUPS ON DISTRICT COUNCIL PANELS, ETC

A report was submitted by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) relating to the principles of proportionality to be applied to the appointment of Panels in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Part II of the Local Government Act 2000.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the allocation of seats on Panels to political groups and non-aligned Members be determined as set out in the report now submitted.

12. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS

RESOLVED

that the following Members be appointed to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for the ensuing Municipal Year:-

Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being)	Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being)	Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being)
P L E Bucknell	K M Baker	J D Ablewhite
S Cawley	M G Baker	J T Bell
B S Chapman	Mrs M Banerjee	E R Butler
Mrs K E Cooper	J W Davies	Mrs J A Dew

S J Criswell	P J Downes	S Greenall
J J Dutton	P M D Godfrey	N J Guyatt
Mrs P A Jordan	P Godley	M F Shellens
P G Mitchell	D Harty	Ms M J Thomas
A Monk	M F Newman	G S E Thorpe
R J West	J S Watt	D Tysoe

13. COMMITTEES AND PANELS

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Elections Panel be not re-appointed;
- (b) that Members be appointed to serve on the Standards and Licensing Committees and Employment, Development Management, Licensing and Protection, Corporate Governance and Appointments Panels for the ensuing Municipal Year as follows:-

Standards Committee (7)

Councillors J D Ablewhite, Mrs B E Boddington, P J Downes, R S Farrer, A Hansard, T D Sanderson and G S E Thorpe;

Licensing Committee (12)

Councillors K M Baker, J T Bell, J J Dutton, R S Farrer, N J Guyatt, Mrs P A Jordan, S M van de Kerkhove, A Monk, T D Sanderson, Mrs P E Shrapnel and J S Watt and one Member of the Cabinet in an ex-officio capacity with appropriate portfolio responsibilities;

Employment Panel (8)

Councillors B S Chapman, J W Davies, R S Farrer, Mrs P A Jordan, T V Rogers, Mrs P E Shrapnel and P A Swales and one Member of the Cabinet in an ex-officio capacity with appropriate portfolio responsibilities;

Development Management Panel (16)

Councillors J D Ablewhite, Mrs M Banerjee, Mrs B E Boddington, E R Butler, W T Clough, J J Dutton, P G Mitchell, P D Reeve, C J Stephens, P A Swales, G S E Thorpe, R G Tuplin, P K Ursell, P R Ward and R J West and one Member of the Cabinet in an ex-officio capacity with appropriate portfolio responsibilities;

Licensing and Protection Panel (12)

Councillors K M Baker, J T Bell, J J Dutton, R S Farrer, N J Guyatt, Mrs P A Jordan, S M van de Kerkhove, A Monk, T D Sanderson, Mrs P E Shrapnel and J S Watt and one Member of the Cabinet in an ex-officio

capacity with appropriate portfolio responsibilities;

Corporate Governance Panel (7)

Councillors M G Baker, P L E Bucknell, K J Churchill, S J Criswell, T V Rogers, T D Sanderson and C M Saunderson; and

Appointments Panel

Councillors M G Baker, J W Davies, L M Simpson, P A Swales together with the relevant Executive Councillor in relation to the post to be filled.

- (c) that the following Members be nominated from which the Director of Central Services be authorised, when necessary, to convene a meeting of the Appeals Sub-Committee to include up to five Members (excluding Members of the Employment Panel) to determine appeals under the Council's Disciplinary and Appeals procedures –

Councillors J T Bell, J W Davies, P J Downes, C R Hyams, P G Mitchell, M F Newman, Mrs D C Reynolds, T V Rogers, G S E Thorpe, R G Tuplin and J S Watts.

14. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: SECTION 85

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

The meeting concluded at 6.45 pm.

Chairman

Parish Meeting Functions

Report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 There are a total of 13 parishes in Huntingdonshire where the population is too small for them to have a separate parish council. Nevertheless, the parish meeting of each parish (i.e. a meeting of all local government electors of that parish) does have some limited powers, albeit less than those of a parish council.
- 1.2 Members will be familiar with the principle of ultra vires in local government by which a local authority, including a parish meeting, can only perform the functions conferred upon it by legislation.

2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972: SECTION 109

- 2.1 The above section enables a District Council, on request, to confer on a parish meeting any of the functions of a parish council.
- 2.2 Covington Parish Meeting have requested the District Council to grant additional powers to them to enable them to contribute to the maintenance of the village hall, pay their clerk and offer grants to local organisations. The relevant powers are:-
- ◆ Section 133 of the Local Government Act 1972 for the provision and furnishing of buildings for public meetings or contributing towards the expenses incurred by any other person or organisation in acquiring, providing or furnishing such a building.
 - ◆ Section 112 of the Act which enables a local authority to appoint such officers as they think necessary to carry out their functions and on such terms and conditions as they think fit.
 - ◆ Section 137 of the Act which enables a parish council to incur expenditure in the interests of their area or its inhabitants where they do not have a specific power otherwise to do so.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 As the District Council has the power to grant the requested functions to Covington Parish Meeting, it is

RECOMMENDED

that an Order be made under Section 109 of the Local Government Act 1972 to confer upon Covington Parish Meeting the functions contained in Sections 112, 133 and 137 of the Local Government Act 1972.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Correspondence from Covington Parish Meeting.

Contact Officer: Mrs Jessica Walker, Trainee Democratic Services Officer
☎ (01480) 387049

Parish Electoral Arrangements

Report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Arising from the review of parish boundaries and electoral arrangements and subsequent issue of Statutory Instruments - The Huntingdonshire (Parishes) Order 2009 and The Huntingdonshire (Related Alterations) Order 2010 – district elections will now be held in Little Paxton and St Ives South Wards in 2011 rather than 2012. As a consequence of these alterations the election of all parish councillors for the parish of Little Paxton will not coincide with the elections in the Little Paxton Ward.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Section 16 of the Local Government Act 1972 states that parish elections shall take place every four years and can coincide with elections in associated district wards. The District of Huntingdonshire (Electoral Changes) Order 2002 makes provision for the election of all parish councillors for the parish of Little Paxton to be held simultaneously on the ordinary day of the election of councillors in 2004 and every fourth year thereafter.
- 2.2 The Huntingdonshire (Related Alterations) Order 2010 provides for a district election to be held in the Little Paxton Ward in 2011 rather than 2012 as a consequence of the alignment of the ward and parish boundaries. This can be attributed to the fact that the electors transferring from St. Neots Priory Park Ward to Little Paxton Ward would normally have voted in 2011 and the Electoral Commission requirements are for them to continue to be able to vote in that year.

3. LITTLE PAXTON PARISH COUNCIL

- 3.1 As a consequence of this being brought to their attention by the District Council, Little Paxton Parish Council have requested that the election of all parish councillors for the parish be held in 2011 rather than 2012 to coincide with elections in the Little Paxton Ward to enable the cost of the elections to be shared between the District and Parish Council.
- 3.2 Following the election of parish councillors in 2011, they will serve for a term of five years until 2016 and then continue according to the established system of elections every fourth year thereafter.

4. ST IVES TOWN COUNCIL

- 4.1 A similar situation pertains in the South Ward of St Ives Town Council. A reply is awaited from the Town Council as to whether they wish to change the date of the election for that Ward from 2012 to 2011.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 As a result of the conclusion of the parish review, the Council is therefore:-

RECOMMENDED

to make an Order under the relevant legislation to make provision for the election of all parish councillors for the parish of Little Paxton to be held in 2011 rather than 2012 to coincide with elections in the Little Paxton Ward of the District Council and for councillors elected at the election to serve for five years until 2016 when the normal cycle of elections will resume.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Correspondence on File F&GP/E/4 held in the Office of the Head of Democratic and Central Services.

Local Government Act 1972.

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.

Minutes and Report of the meeting of the Council - 5th December 2007.

Contact Officer: Lisa Jablonska, Central Services Manager,
☎ 01480 388004

Petitions Scheme

Report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for a Petitions Scheme for the Council, which is a requirement of the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council already has in place procedures to deal with petitions which are outlined within the Council Procedure Rules. Additionally, there also exists a facility for electronic petitions to be submitted to the Council via the Modern.Gov Committee Management System. Whilst these provisions already exist, an Order has been made by the Secretary of State which intends to ensure that the handling of written and electronic petitions are dealt with in a more consistent and coherent way by local authorities.
- 2.2 The Order came into force on 15th June 2010 and requires changes to be made to the existing provisions within the Constitution with effect from the date. Normally this report would be considered first by the Corporate Governance Panel but the legislative requirement for a Scheme to be in place and the Council's Calendar of Meetings has meant that this has not been possible on this occasion. The Council will be required to approve the changes made to the Council Procedure Rules which are proposed in the Appendix attached to this report which are summarised below.

3. CHANGES

Petition Scheme

- 3.1 It is being proposed that the current procedures should now be referred to as a Petitions Scheme in order to meet the necessary legislative requirements. Both written and electronic petitions will qualify under this Scheme. Petitions made under any specific enactment, such as that calling for a referendum on the form of executive of the Council, will not be dealt with under this procedure.

Eligibility of Signatories to a Petition

- 3.2 The new requirements now allow those who study within the District, including those under 18, to present and/or sign a petition to the

District Council. At present, only those who live or work in the District are accepted as signatories.

Requirement to Specify the Number of Signatories Accepted

- 3.3 The 2009 Act requires the Council to identify a specified number of acceptable signatories to be included on a Petition Scheme to trigger a debate at Full Council meetings. Guidance issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) stipulates that this should not be greater than 5% of the local authority's total population. With a population of 167,700 (mid 2007 ONS), this would equate to 8,385 signatories.
- 3.4 The Council's current provisions require only 50 signatures to be obtained before a petition is presented to the Council. The Council then decides whether the petition should then be referred to the Cabinet, Committees, Panels or Advisory Groups of the Council for debate. It is suggested that the specified number for presenting petitions to the Council should remain at 50 signatories, given the fact that the number of qualifying petitions submitted to the Council over the past few years have been relatively low and have not attracted signatures from anywhere near as high as 1% of the District's total population. In the last 5 years, 4 petitions have been presented to the Council, with the highest number of signatories being 221. In the case of the number of signatories on a petition that would trigger a debate at Full Council, it is suggested that the specified number in this case should be 500 signatures. Guidance suggests that the thresholds should encourage petitions to be submitted to the Council and indicates that the Council can at any time review the Scheme.

Procedure for Debates at Full Council Meetings

- 3.5 As highlighted in the previous paragraphs, the 2009 Act now places a requirement for a petition to be debated at Full Council meetings, subject to it satisfying the necessary criteria. As with the current provisions, it is proposed that the petition organiser be given a period of up to 5 minutes in which to present the petition to the Council, followed by a further period of 5 minutes in which Councillors may question the person(s) presenting the petition. The Council will then be required to hold a debate on the subject matter which must conclude with a decision being made. If Full Council concludes that the Cabinet should be responsible for making the final decision (which would be the appropriate course of action if the petition relates to an executive function that is the responsibility of the Cabinet), Full Council must determine whether to make recommendations to inform the Cabinet's decision on the petition.
- 3.6 Guidance issued by DCLG suggests that the length of the debate at Full Council meetings should be restricted to 15 minutes. It is proposed that this time should be included within the Council's Petition Scheme. Overall, consideration of a petition therefore should not take longer than 25 minutes in total.

Eligibility Criteria and Exclusions

- 3.7 The Council's current rules state that petitions will not be accepted if they are abusive or libellous. It is proposed that this should be changed to align with the wording in the Act which indicates that petitions considered to be "vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate" will not be accepted.
- 3.8 The legislation stipulates that the following should be excluded from the Council's Petition Scheme:-
- (a) any matter relating to a planning decision;
 - (b) any matter relating to a licensing decision;
 - (c) any other matter relating to an individual or entity in respect of which that individual or entity has a right of recourse to a review or right of appeal conferred by or under any enactment.
- 3.9 The new provisions now enable petitions concerning the terms and conditions of employment of staff to be submitted to the Council. The current provision indicates that such matters should be dealt with through the existing procedure of the Employee Liaison Advisory Group. The Scheme needs to be amended to reflect this change.

Requirement to Acknowledge Petitions

- 3.10 The current provisions state that petitions should be delivered to the office of the Chief Executive no later than noon on the eighth clear working day before the meeting at which it is to be considered. The model Scheme provided within the guidance issued by DCLG suggests that this should be extended to ten clear working days to enable sufficient time to determine what steps are to be taken by the Council and whether it qualifies for acceptance as an item on the Council agenda. In the case of any petition being refused by the Council, the reasons for refusal must be made clear to the Petition Organiser when the acknowledgement of the petition is sent.
- 3.11 Under the current arrangements, the Council does not define a period during which petitions should be acknowledged in terms of their receipt. The 2009 Act however, places a requirement upon local authorities to specify a timescale and DCLG's guidance suggests that authorities should send an acknowledgement to the Petition Organiser within ten clear working days of receipt. This will also apply to e-petitions submitted through the Council's website via the Modern.Gov Committee Management System.

Requirement to Take Steps in Response to a Petition

- 3.12 The 2009 Act prescribes that the Council must take one or more steps in response to a petition which may include the following:-
- (a) giving effect to the request in the petition;

- (b) considering the petition at a meeting of the Council;
- (c) holding an inquiry into the matter;
- (d) commissioning research into the matter;
- (e) holding a public meeting;
- (f) holding a consultation event;
- (g) holding a meeting with petitioners;
- (h) referring the petition for consideration to one of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panels; and/or
- (i) providing a written response to the petition organiser setting out the Council's views about the request in the petition.

In order to satisfy the necessary legal requirements, these steps will need to be incorporated within the Scheme.

Requirement to Call an Officer to Account

- 3.13 One of the more significant changes is the opportunity to now call Officers to account at a public meeting of an Overview and Scrutiny Panel provided that the nature of the petition relates to the discharge of functions for which that Officer is responsible. Officers who can be called to account include the Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service. At present, the current arrangements provide that petitions which relate to operational matters shall not be considered by the Council and are instead submitted to the Director responsible for that service.
- 3.14 Upon the petition being referred to an Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the relevant Officer will be required to attend that meeting to answer before it. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel may use its powers to determine whether any other appropriate Officer should be called before the Panel and to extend this invitation to the relevant Executive Member. When calling the Officer to account, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be required to produce a report and/or recommendations about what should be done to address the matter. This may include conducting an investigation, making recommendations to the Cabinet, Committees, Panels, Advisory Groups, etc of the Council or even referring the matter to a meeting of the Full Council. A copy should be sent to the Petition Organiser, and where appropriate, be published on the Council's website.
- 3.15 Guidance suggests that the specified number of signatories required for an Officer to be held to account can be different to that which triggers a debate at Full Council meetings and those which are presented to the Council. It is suggested however that the specified number of signatories in this case should remain at 500.

Petition Organiser – Absence from Meeting

- 3.16 Petitions will still be considered even if the Petition Organiser, or his/her nominee, indicates that they are unable to present the petition at the meeting of the Council or its Cabinet, Committees, Panels, Advisory Groups etc. In any such case, whether or not the Petition Organiser is absent from the meeting, written confirmation of the decision will be submitted to the Petition Organiser within ten clear working days of the meeting, and where appropriate, be published on the Council's website.

Existing Scheme - Procedure for On-Line Petitions

- 3.17 As the 2009 Act requires both written and electronic petitions to be handled in a more consistent way, it is proposed that the reference in the current procedure in respect of the way in which on-line petitions not having the requisite number of signatories are dealt with should be deleted from the scheme. If concerned residents so wish they can approach their local Ward Member as an alternative to raise an issue as an item at the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel under the provisions of the Councillor Call for Action procedure.

- 3.18 At present, those who submit an e-petition determine the length of time that an e-petition should remain open, which is usually 8 weeks. Guidance suggests that it should be restricted to a specified timescale. Whilst DCLG's guidance suggests that this should be 12 months, The Consultation Institute (an organisation which has been set up to assist authorities in public, stakeholder and employee consultation) suggests that this should be 90 days. The latter is therefore being proposed for inclusion within the Petition Scheme.

Review of Steps Taken by the Authority

- 3.19 The new provisions now enable the Petition Organiser to request a review of the adequacy of the steps taken or being proposed to be taken in response to the petition, provided that the request is submitted within twenty clear working days of the Petition Organiser receiving written notification of the Council's decision. This review must be undertaken by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel who shall determine whether the steps were adequate. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel can use any of its powers to deal with the request. This includes undertaking investigations, making recommendations to the Cabinet or other Committees, Panels, Advisory Groups of the Council or referring the matter to a meeting of the Full Council.
- 3.20 In a case where a petition was initially referred to an Overview and Scrutiny Panel by the Council or if it was a petition requesting an Officer to be held to account, then the review will be undertaken by a different Overview and Scrutiny Panel of the Council to ensure that the review is undertaken by another body.
- 3.21 The same procedures in respect of acknowledging requests for a review will apply, whereby an acknowledgement must be sent to the

Petition Organiser within ten clear working days of receipt. As above, the Petition Organiser will be given 5 minutes in which to present the request to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, stating the reasons why it is his/her belief that the Council's response is not considered adequate. This will then be followed by a further period of 5 minutes in which Councillors may question the person(s) presenting the request. There is no requirement to stipulate a specified time for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to discuss the review.

- 3.22 The Council is required to inform the Petition Organiser of the results of the review and, provided it is appropriate, publish those results on the Council's website. In the absence of the Petition Organiser, or his/her nominee, being unable to present the request for a review at the Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting, written confirmation of the decision will be submitted to the Petition Organiser within ten clear working days of the meeting, and where appropriate, be published on the Council's website.

Handling Petitions Submitted to the Council which are not the Responsibility of the Council

- 3.23 The 2009 Act indicates that the Council's Petition Scheme might include provisions that indicate how a petition would be handled if it concerns a matter that the authority does not have direct control over, if it relates to the functions of another local authority or if it concerns a matter which is delivered in partnership with any of the Council's partner organisations. Should this be the case, it is suggested that the steps to be undertaken should be determined by the Director of Central Services which may include the following:-

- (a) making representations on behalf of the petition signatories to the relevant body;
- (b) referring the petition to the local strategic partnership; and/or
- (c) forwarding the petition to the relevant authority.

In any case, the Petition Organiser will be notified of any actions that have been taken.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Council may review its Petition Scheme at any time in the future having regard to the legislation and the statutory guidance. As the new powers came into force on 15th June 2010, the Council must change the existing petition arrangements. As these involve the Council Procedure Rules, any proposed change should stand adjourned without discussion until the next ordinary meeting of the Council. As the legislation came into effect in June however, the new petition arrangements need to be implemented without delay. Council Procedure Rule 20.1 allows the suspension of the Rules, with minor exceptions, if two thirds of those Councillors in attendance vote to do so. To avoid delay, it is proposed that this matter be dealt with without an adjournment. It is therefore

RECOMMENDED

that the Council

- (a) considers the changes outlined in this report that took effect from 15th June 2010;**
- (b) suspends Council Procedure Rule 20.2 for the purpose of considering the changes proposed in the Appendix attached without the need for them to be adjourned to the following Council meeting; and**
- (c) approves the changes to the Council Procedure Rules as set out in attached Appendix.**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 – Chapter 2 – Petitions to Local Authorities.

The Local Authorities (Petitions) (England) Order 2010 and Explanatory Memorandum

DCLG Statutory Guidance on the Duty to Respond to Petitions

The Consultation Institute Alternative Model Scheme

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**IMPLICATIONS OF THE LOCAL DEMOCRACY,
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND CONSTRUCTION ACT 2009
UPON THE COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES**

10A PETITIONS SCHEME

10A.1 Definition

For the purposes of these procedural Standing Orders a petition shall be defined as a document embodying a formal request for some form of action or the consideration of some matter by the Council. The submission of a petition is seen by many as lending weight to a particular viewpoint and demonstrating that the view is shared by others. Both written and electronic petitions will qualify under this scheme. Petitions made under any specific enactment, such as that calling for a referendum on the form of executive of the Council, will not be dealt with under this procedure.

10A.2 Scope

Every petition shall be relevant to some matter of major significance in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which is of more general concern affecting the District, its Council Tax or NNDR payers or concerns a matter on the agenda for the Council meeting to which the petition is to be submitted.

Petitions requesting an Officer to be held to account will be accepted by the Council. Officers qualifying under this scheme will be the Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service.

10A.3 Eligibility

The District Council will not accept petitions which are vexatious, abusive or otherwise inappropriate or which relate to a specific or identifiable person or otherwise are considered to be an abuse of its powers, responsibilities or obligations. Petitions shall not be admissible where petitioners are representing personal or prejudicial issues, matters associated with political parties or organisations, where the matter involves a right of appeal to the courts, a tribunal or to a Government Minister or which in the opinion of the Director of Central Services is of a quasi-judicial nature. The interpretation of the above criteria by the Director of Central Services is final. Additionally, the following matters will be excluded from the scheme:-

- (a) any matter relating to a planning decision;
- (b) any matter relating to a licensing decision; or
- (c) any other matter relating to an individual or entity in respect of which that individual or entity has a right of recourse to a review or right of appeal conferred by or under any enactment.

Petitions may be co-ordinated by individuals or by local organisations.

10A.4 **Form**

The petition shall clearly state the purpose for which it is submitted and shall be addressed to the District Council.

A written petition shall contain the name, address and signature of each person who signed it. The name and address shall be in legible format. An on-line petition shall contain the name and address of each person who is party to it and shall remain open for signature on the Council's website for a period of 90 days. A petition shall indicate which one of the signatories is to present the petition. If the Petition Organiser, or his/her nominee, indicates that they are unable to present the petition at the relevant meeting, the petition will still be considered.

The petition shall be sent to the office of the Chief Executive who shall determine what steps are to be taken in response to the petition, which must comprise one or more of the following:-

- (a) giving effect to the request in the petition;
- (b) considering the petition at a meeting of the Council;
- (c) holding an enquiry into the matter;
- (d) commissioning research into the matter;
- (e) holding a public meeting;
- (f) holding a consultation event;
- (g) holding a meeting with petitioners;
- (h) referring the petition for consideration to one of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panels; and/or
- (i) provide a written response to the petition organiser setting out the Council's views about the request in the petition.

A maximum of three petitions will be presented at any ordinary full Council meeting.

A petition shall not be presented to a meeting of the Council unless it is delivered to the office of the Chief Executive no later than noon on the tenth clear working day before the meeting at which is to be considered. The petition shall be acknowledged in writing by or on behalf of the Chief Executive within ten clear working days of receipt of the petition. On-line petitions will automatically be submitted to the Council for acknowledgement once the petition has been closed for signature. The acknowledgement will indicate what steps the Council has taken or proposes to take in response to the petition and the reasons for doing so. If a petition has been refused by the Council, the reasons for refusal will be made clear to the Petition Organiser when the acknowledgement of the petition is sent.

No petition may be considered by the Council which effectively duplicates a previous petition submitted to the Council in the preceding six months.

10A.5 Procedure

Any resident who lives, works or studies (including those under 18) or who owns or occupies commercial premises in the District may present a petition to a meeting of the Council provided that it bears at least 50 signatures of people who either live or whose place of work or study is located in the District and satisfies the conditions of paragraphs 10.A3 and 10.A4 above. Petitions to trigger a debate at Full Council meetings must bear at least 500 signatures.

Petitions which are considered at a meeting of the Council shall be presented at the conclusion of the receipt of any announcements by the Chairman. A summary of the wording of the petition shall be incorporated on the Agenda for the meeting. If the petition relates to an item on the agenda for Full Council meeting, the presentation will be made at the beginning of that item.

On being called by the Chairman, the person(s) presenting the petition may speak for a total of no more than five minutes in support of the petition. District Councillors may question the person(s) presenting the petition for a period of up to five minutes thereafter. The period for questions may be extended at the discretion of the Chairman. In the case of petitions that qualify for debate at Full Council meetings, the length of the debate shall be no longer than fifteen minutes and must conclude with a decision being made by Full Council. The Council must take the contents of the petition into account when the relevant business is considered. In drawing their conclusions, Full Council may conclude that the Cabinet should be responsible for making the final decision. In such cases, Full Council must determine whether to make recommendations to inform that decision. Written confirmation of the Council's decisions will be submitted to the Petition Organiser within ten clear working days of the meeting and where appropriate, be published on the Council's website.

Other than to respond to questions asked by District Councillors, petitioners shall not participate in debate nor discussion of the item to which their petition relates either at Full Council or at the meeting of the Cabinet, Committee, Panel or Advisory Group to which the petition may be referred.

Petitions shall be presented to Council in the order in which they have been received.

Petitions which request an Officer to be held to account will be considered at a public meeting of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel. The relevant Officer is required to attend that meeting to answer before the Panel, provided that the petition bears at least 500 signatures. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel may use its powers to determine whether any other appropriate Officer should be called before the Panel and whether to extend this invitation to the relevant Executive Member. A report and/or recommendations will be produced by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel indicating what steps should be taken to address the matter. This may include conducting

an investigation into the matter, making recommendations to the Cabinet, Committees, Panels, Advisory Groups etc of the Council or even referring the matter to a meeting of the Full Council. Written confirmation of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel's decisions will be sent to the Petition Organiser within ten clear working days of the meeting and where appropriate, be published on the Council's website.

10.A6 Review of Steps Taken By The Council

A review of the steps taken or being proposed to be taken by the Council which are requested by the Petition Organiser shall be undertaken by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel, provided that the request is submitted within twenty clear working days of the Petition Organiser receiving written notification of the Council's decision. An acknowledgment of the request for review will be sent to the Petition Organiser within ten clear working days of receipt. In the case where a petition was initially referred to an Overview and Scrutiny Panel by the Council or if it was a petition requesting an Officer to be held to account, then the review will be undertaken by another Overview and Scrutiny Panel of the Council.

On being called by the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the person(s) presenting the petition may speak for a total of no more than five minutes outlining the reasons why the Council's response was not considered adequate. District Councillors may question the person(s) presenting the petition for a period of up to five minutes thereafter. The period for questions may be extended at the discretion of the Chairman. When dealing with the request, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel can use any of its powers which includes undertaking investigations, making recommendations to the Cabinet or other Committees, Panels, Advisory Groups, etc of the Council or referring the matter to a meeting of Full Council.

The petition organiser shall be informed in writing of the results of the review within ten clear working days of the meeting, and where appropriate, the results will be published on the Council's website.

10.A7 Petitions Which Are Not The Responsibility Of The Council

Petitions concerning a matter that the Council does not have direct control over, which relates to the functions of another local authority or concerning a matter delivered in partnership with any of the Council's partner organisations will be submitted to the Director of Central Services who shall determine what steps the Council should take. The Director of Central Services' decision on the matter is final. The Petition Organiser will be notified of any actions that have been taken.

Food Safety Service Plan 2010/11

Report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Member's endorsement for the Food Safety Service Plan for 2010/11. It is a requirement of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) Framework Agreement on Local Authority Food Law Enforcement that a Food Safety Service Plan be prepared in accordance with a format provided by the FSA. Under the Council's constitution this is part of the policy framework that has to be formally approved by the Council.
- 1.2 This is the tenth annual report that has been submitted to Members. It details the work that the service has planned for 2010/11, the staffing and financial resources required, the constraints that may prevent some of the tasks from being fulfilled and the priority of the tasks. It also includes a review of the previous year's performance and identifies where the Authority was at significant variance from the service plan and the reasons for that variance.

2. SUPPORTING/BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 Huntingdonshire District Council is a Food Authority and as such it is responsible for enforcing specific food safety legislation, this work is carried out by the Environmental and Community Health Services Division. It is a front line service integral to supporting the national food industry and keeping food safe for consumers.
- 2.2 The service is linked to the Council's corporate plan 'Growing Success' and the Community Aim of Healthy Living and the service objective to protect the health of individuals. Many of the service's actions contribute to the achievement of Growing Success, the Sustainable Community Strategy, 'Growing our Community', Cambridgeshire's Vision/Local Area Agreement and National Indicators. The service provides a positive opportunity for the council to interact with local businesses and protect the health of the community.
- 2.3 There are over 1400 food businesses in the district and the service helps the changing local food economy to remain vibrant and enables the Council to provide practical support to businesses in a difficult economic times. The work of the service helps to maintain public confidence in the standards of our local food industry, helps businesses comply with food legislation which helps ensure fair

competition and allows well run food businesses to flourish and contribute to the local economy.

2.4 The aim of the Service Plan is to:

- ◆ provide information about the Food Safety Service;
- ◆ identify the means by which the service will be provided;
- ◆ identify the means by which the service will meet any relevant performance targets or performance standards;
- ◆ enable performance to be reviewed by examining any variances from the Service Plan; and
- ◆ demonstrate a balanced enforcement approach.

2.5 The FSA sees this Service Plan as a mechanism for local authorities to ensure that national priorities and standards are addressed and delivered locally as well as:

- ◆ focussing debate on key delivery issues;
- ◆ providing an essential link with financial planning;
- ◆ setting objectives for the future and identifying major issues that cross service boundaries; and
- ◆ providing a means of managing performances and making performance comparisons.

3. REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE IN 2009/10

3.1 The Food Service was fully staffed for the whole of the financial year although there was a higher level of sick leave than expected. However, re-prioritising work ensured that 99.6% of high-risk and 83.3% of low-risk premises requiring an inspection were inspected. In total 1526 inspections and visits were carried out to food premises as part of programmed activity and in response to complaints and food alerts. The support we provide on such visits can be vital to businesses that are under pressure in the current financial climate. Our officers make sure food businesses are aware of their legal obligations and help them ensure that the food they supply is safe. A range of alternative approaches to engage low risk businesses have been carried out, which are aimed at minimising burdens on the businesses while still ensuring that they have support from the Council.

3.2 Huntingdonshire Scores on the Doors Food Hygiene Rating Scheme (SOTD which was launched in October 2008 has proven to be very popular with businesses and consumers. The scheme, which applies to all caterers and takeaway businesses, involves food hygiene scores, assessed during a routine inspection, being published on the Council's website in a star rating format which is easy for the public to understand and enables them to make an informed choice about where to eat out. Businesses can be awarded up to five stars, the higher the standard of compliance, the more stars are awarded. Very poor standards are rated as zero. To date there have been over 82,000 searches on the website since it went live. There is evidence that this scheme has encouraged food businesses to improve

standards with a significant improvement in the number of 3 to 5 star ratings and a decrease in the number 0 to 2 stars issued. This in turn has meant that associated efficiency savings have enabled resources to be directed into dealing with higher risk premises and those presenting a risk to public health.

- 3.3 The Pennington Report following the fatal E.Coli enquiry in Wales in 2005 was finally released in April 2009 and resulted in significant work for the service. All butchers premises were sent a summary version of the report and provided with guidance and were visited over a short time frame. Their food safety management systems were audited and required data collected. Where appropriate food and environmental samples were taken and submitted for analysis. One butcher had Improvement Notices served on his businesses to ensure compliance. As a result of this intervention and discussions with local butchers a comprehensive butchers training package is currently being developed by the Food team and will be implemented in the early part of this year.
- 3.4 A licensed annual music and arts festival attracting over 15,000 visitors required significant resources and food officer involvement. A total of 60 food vendors were inspected, and food and water samples taken. Formal action was taken where appropriate. This was in addition to inspection of site infrastructure, displays, event areas, water and lake based activities, car parking and camping areas for health and safety issues. Other large scale events, fairs, shows and heritage attractions place an unplanned demand on the service and have resulted in increased proactive and reactive work often at weekends and unsociable hours. These activities have been absorbed within existing budgets and resources but their impact should be noted.
- 3.5 The service has a clearly laid down enforcement policy which focuses on providing advice and guidance for businesses to secure compliance. This process is successful in the vast majority of cases. However, where businesses consistently fail to comply with the law or present a serious threat to public health it is important that the Council takes action to protect consumers. In 2009/10 there was one successful prosecution instigated for unhygienic premises and practices identified at a mobile caterer. A total of 42 Improvement Notices were served on 6 premises, all of which were complied with within the specified timescale. 2 premises were subject to voluntary closure and a quantity of unfit food was voluntarily surrendered from a market trader and 2 restaurants following routine inspections.
- 3.6 The service responded to 178 complaints from local residents about unfit food or unhygienic food premises and 94 food alerts from the FSA. These were all dealt with efficiently and effectively and provided a vital opportunity to demonstrate that the service responds to the needs and concerns of our community. Responding to complaints is a key way in which the service can gain intelligence about food businesses and helps to maintain consumer confidence in local food businesses. 175 food and 25 water samples were taken

for analysis of which 23 were found to be unsatisfactory. Appropriate action was taken to resolve any problems.

- 3.7 Officers from the service provided specialist training and guidance for Public Health Registrars and Nurses from the Health Protection Agency in food safety and infectious disease control. Officers have also run 6 CIEH level 2 food hygiene training courses for local businesses and volunteer groups and have delivered a number of training sessions in schools and at local venues.
- 3.8 EU and UK food legislation has continued to have a significant impact on food business operators as they have to ensure that a fully documented food safety management system is in place and maintained. To meet the needs of the food business sector the service has had to provide considerable guidance and advice. This has increased the time spent at each premises during an inspection. This year the service was part of a successful county wide bid to the FSA for funding to support the implementation of food safety management training and coaching in catering businesses. This is the third successful year that funding has been achieved. So far over 400 food businesses have benefited from this initiative and has resulted in an improvement in standards.
- 3.9 Joint working with other agencies including Cambridgeshire Police, Trading Standards and the Fire Officer targeting specific licensed premises proved a successful operation. Other joint initiatives were implemented to address illegally imported foods and work with Primary food producers
- 3.10 The preventative activity did not eradicate all food-borne illness and 234 cases were notified to the Council. Some food poisoning organisms can cause serious illness and permanent disability and some types can kill. The number of food poisoning cases shows no significant change compared to last year and continues to marginally exceed national averages. The dominant pathogen is Campylobacter. All individual cases were promptly investigated and analysis of the investigation findings show that the majority of food-borne illnesses reported by residents of the district were contracted abroad, outside Huntingdonshire or in a domestic setting and none of the cases investigated identified local food premises as being the likely source. One viral outbreak did occur at a local restaurant and was associated with the consumption of oysters which affected 15 diners and 3 staff. A full investigation with the Health Protection Agency was carried out which necessitated the establishment of an Incident Management Team. This involved a number of officers from the food team, the Consultant in Communicable Disease Control, The Regional Epidemiologist, Microbiologists and Communications staff. The investigation was resource intensive and involved the co operation of a number of organisations, businesses and other local authorities. The outbreak resulted in the associated oyster bed in Ireland being formally closed by the Irish FSA until the contamination issue has been resolved.

3.11 The delivery of the service plan has resulted in an improvement in National Indicator 184 (the number of food premises that are broadly compliant) from 87% the previous year to 88% this year. (This excludes those that are not yet inspected or rated.) This is above the national average and is seen as a critical area of our work by the FSA and central government. National Indicator 182, which measures business satisfaction was also high with the Food service achieving 86% (2% higher than the previous year and against a Government target of 80%.) [Note this result is for the service and is for the second year higher than the corporate average.]

3.12 Full details of the review are set out in Section 6 of the Service Plan.

4. SERVICE PLAN FOR 2010/11

4.1 The format of this document remains essentially unchanged from that of the previous year. (An executive summary is attached as Appendix.) The resources provided by the Council for this year should be sufficient to enable this Authority to meet the requirements of the FSA although one 0.5FTE post within the commercial team will be on maternity leave for the whole year. The service will continue to explore the use of alternative enforcement strategies and interventions for low-risk businesses and any time saved will be invested in inspecting high-risk premises and providing education and guidance.

4.2 In the event of unforeseen issues arising during the year that would hinder the achievement of all targets within the service plan, priority would be given to the inspection of high-risk food premises and delivery of key projects which will help to protect the health of individuals as outlined in Growing Success and the Sustainable Community Strategy. It is also possible that the FSA may redirect resources, at any time, to meet the need of a nationally significant food safety concern or the Health Protection Agency in the event of a significant outbreak or public health emergency (eg pandemic flu).

4.3 The food service has always adopted a risk-based approach to inspections and a graduated approach to enforcement. However the Pennington report (published April 2009) following the 2006 E.Coli outbreak in Wales in which a young schoolboy died and several hundred people became seriously ill, severely criticised the Local Authorities concerned for implementing a 'light touch' approach to their enforcement duties. The report called for robust and in-depth audits of high-risk food businesses and a move away from self regulation. It will therefore be necessary to maintain the adoption of a 'right touch' approach to regulatory duties and the delivery of this service plan will ensure this.

5. CONCLUSION

5.1 Last year the team successfully inspected 99% of high-risk and 83% of low-risk premises on its programme and delivered on the majority of the initiatives outlined in the 2009/10 Development Plan. This year's plan includes further development of the alternative

enforcement strategy, implementation of a training initiative for butchers, maintenance and promotion of the Scores on the Doors scheme and development of healthy eating initiatives for businesses and the community. We will progress with our joint working with Trading Standards and the Health Protection Agency and continue to provide guidance and information to businesses on the implementation of food safety legislation. The plan also includes new elements to the education programme to provide a joined-up approach to initiatives aimed at keeping the population healthy and reducing inequalities.

6. RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 Council is requested to note the contents of the report and approve the Food Safety Service Plan.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Food Safety Service Plan 2010/11
FSA Framework Agreement
FSA Code of Practice

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Chris Lloyd, Lifestyles Manager
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A full copy of the Food Safety Service Plan 2010/11 is available in the Members' Room. If you wish to have an individual copy, please contact the Environmental Health Admin Section on 01480 388302.

APPENDIX

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 2010/11

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of the Food Safety Service is to work with businesses and consumers to endeavour to ensure that food intended for sale for human consumption which is produced, stored, distributed, handled or purchased within Huntingdonshire is without risk to public health or the safety of the consumer.

The service is linked to the Council's corporate plan 'Growing Success' and the Community Aim of Healthy Living and the service objective is 'reducing the risk of food poisoning. Many of the services actions contribute to the achievement of Growing Success, the Sustainable Community Strategy, 'Growing our Community', Cambridgeshire's Vision/Local Area Agreement and National Indicators. There are also close links with the council's Environment Strategy and the National Health Improvement Agenda.

The following key activities are identified within the performance management system and will be measured to determine the effectiveness of the listed activities and actions.

- ◆ Planned and reactive inspections of registered food premises
- ◆ Provision of training, advice to businesses and food hygiene promotion
- ◆ Taking food, water and environmental samples
- ◆ Investigation of food poisoning and cases/outbreaks of food-borne disease

The service will seek to achieve this through a number of key actions that are identified within this service plan.

CHANGES IN RESOURCES FROM 2009/10 TO 2010/11

STAFF	2009/10	2010/11
Environmental Health Officers	3.6	3.6
Environmental Health Protection Officers	1.1	1.1
Lifestyle Manager	0.3	0.3
	5.0	5.0
Admin Support Staff	1.75	1.6
Total	6.75	6.6

FINANCIAL	2009/10	2010/11
Direct Costs (Employees)	£300,810	£323,300
Overheads	£191,340	£148,770
Other Direct costs (specialist equipment legal fees and sampling)	£12,530	£13,990
Total	<u>£504,680</u>	<u>£486,068</u>
Income	<u>-£700</u>	<u>-£1000</u>
NET EXPENDITURE	<u>£503,980</u>	<u>£485,068</u>

ACTIONS AND TIME ALLOCATIONS

All calculations assume 1 x FTE = 1290 hours per year (215 working days x 6 productive hours per working day). All estimates include revisit activity. Time does not include administrative support.

Proactive Tasks	Level of activity		Hours	FTE
	Actual 2009/10	Estimated 2010/11	Estimated 2010/11	Estimated 2010/11
Planned Food Hygiene inspections	633	600	3287	2.55
Alternative Enforcement Strategy Interventions	105	126		
Revisits	153	150		
Inspection of new, mobile and temporary premises	206	210		
EC approved manufacturing plants	4	4		
Food safety and public health promotion	Project work linked to delivery of Corporate objectives, Sustainable Community Strategy, LAA, NI's, Statutory duties and the delivery of the Service Development Plan (e.g. Provision of targeted interventions, food hygiene training courses, scores on the doors, development of newsletters, leaflets, website, promoting food safety, healthy eating initiatives and reduction in infectious diseases.)		1183	0.92
Liaison with other organisations	Maintenance and development of existing links and initiatives both internal and external.		100	0.08

Reactive Tasks	Level of activity		Hours	FTE
	Actual 2009/10	Estimated 2010/11	Estimated 2010/11	Estimated 2010/11
Food related complaints – estimate complaints re premises and food	178	175	500	0.39
Food inspection and sampling - estimate food, water and environmental samples to be taken	178	180	100	0.08
Infectious disease control - estimate notifications of food poisoning	234	240	150	0.12
Food Safety Incidents - estimate receipt	94	80	30	0.02
Advice to business enquiries	Provision of guidance on the implementation of relevant and new legislation. Alternative Interventions to specific business groups with seminars and newsletters. Promotion of the FSA Safer Food Better Business toolkit to all relevant food business. Advice given at the time of each inspection plus an estimated further 300 enquiries from the public and businesses on food safety matters, including Home Authority/Primary Authority Principle.		400	0.30
Staff development and training	Internal and external training courses, peer review exercise, research		200	0.15
Service management	Overall supervision and management of service, policy and procedural development. Responding to central government consultations and audits.		500	0.40
Total			6450	5.0

The budget for 2010/11 represents a decrease of 3.75% on the previous financial year. This decrease is primarily as a result of a technical adjustment to pension liabilities. (The estimate of the present value of the future pensions of employees is less than the employer's pension contributions during 2009/10. The service accounts receive this credit although it is reversed out as a lump sum, so there is no impact on the budget for HDC as a whole). There may be some savings on the Employees' budget as one 0.5FTE post within the commercial team will be on maternity leave for the whole of the year although this will have an impact on service delivery. It is anticipated that the budget will be sufficient to meet the demands of the service but in the event of a complex legal case or the introduction of sampling charges then additional funds will have to be sought.

The administrative support workload includes the production of detailed post-inspection letters, data entry to Flare, taking and recording of enquiries, service requests and collating data on infectious diseases, collation of information for FSA, CIEH returns, internal PI monitoring and EU directive compliance.

A balanced workload has been proposed for the 2010/11 year which incorporates a full range of enforcement actions including food safety education. The plan has been based upon the service being fully staffed. If staffing levels are not maintained due to staff leaving or long-term sickness or as a consequence of staff being seconded to other Local Authorities as part of a Local Agreement, then the service will be under-resourced to meet the requirements of this service plan. This will have an impact on completion of inspections targets (particularly lower risk ones) and the delivery of the Development plan as outlined below.

The impact of large scale events such as the Secret Garden Party (SGP) and Heritage events also needs to be recognised. In 2009 the SGP resulted in an additional 60 food hygiene inspections, enforcement activity, use of sampling resources, and considerable staff involvement.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN 2010/11

During 2010/11, the following areas of project development and service improvement are planned. This work is in addition to existing food enforcement work being undertaken as identified in this service plan and is linked to the objectives and outcomes identified in Growing Success, The Sustainable Community Strategy, The LAA, National Indicators and Regional and National Strategies.

- ◆ Review the service against the new FSA audit criteria for LA's on the enforcement and application of HACCP legislation and its validation and verification
- ◆ Develop and deliver an appropriate training intervention for butchers to address concerns highlighted in the 2009 Pennington report on the *E. coli* outbreak in Wales and the services own audit of butchers premises
- ◆ Develop a project aimed at reviewing the risk of cross contamination and the effectiveness of cleaning and disinfection in high risk food businesses,

- ◆ Review the delivery of food hygiene training to businesses to maximise uptake
- ◆ Deliver targeted educational and enforcement interventions for high risk business which consistently demonstrate poor compliance. (0-2 star)
- ◆ Review existing and identify new private water supplies and private distribution networks within the district and carry out a risk assessment as required by new legislation
- ◆ Review all Standard operating procedures in the light of the new legislation and regional and national policy changes
- ◆ Formally launch the healthy eating project 'tips for chips' and promote to caterers and the local community
- ◆ Review and develop in partnership with other services and agencies healthy eating projects and campaigns to support healthy communities
- ◆ Develop an educational initiative focusing on Eastern European food Businesses
- ◆ Work in partnership with the Cambridgeshire Business Partnership to promote the role of the Food Safety service in supporting businesses with compliance
- ◆ Continue to identify and develop opportunities for joint working with Trading Standards Officers
- ◆ Continue to develop and promote the Scores on the Doors Scheme
- ◆ Review of website content and customer information access
- ◆ Develop and initiate internal training to ensure staff are competent under the FSA COP in terms of formal food sampling

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Cabinet

Report of the meetings held on 22nd April and 19th May 2010

Matters for Information

1. APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS

Executive responsibilities for the Municipal Year 2010/11 have been allocated by the Leader of the Council as follows:-

- ◆ Finance and Customer Services –
Councillor T V Rogers
- ◆ Environment and Information Technology –
Councillor J A Gray
- ◆ Planning Strategy and Transport –
Councillor D B Dew
- ◆ Resources and Policy –
Councillor K J Churchill
- ◆ Housing and Public Health –
Councillor A Hansard
- ◆ Leisure and Law, Property and Governance –
Councillors Mrs D C Reynolds
- ◆ Operational and Countryside Services –
Councillor C R Hyams

Executive Councillors have been appointed to serve as ex-officio Members of Panels as follows-

Executive Councillor for	Ex-Officio for
Finance and Customer Services	Corporate Governance
Planning Strategy and Transport	Development Management Panel
Resources and Policy	Corporate Governance Licensing and Protection Panel/ Licensing Committee

2. PROVISION OF PLAY FACILITIES IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The Cabinet has considered the findings of a study by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) regarding the availability of

play facilities in Huntingdonshire and the ongoing revenue costs associated with such facilities. (Item No. 3 of their Report refers).

In considering the Panel's recommendations, Executive Councillors have concurred with the Panel that further research into the availability of group insurance with the aim of achieving a lower insurance premium and the feasibility of combining safety inspections should be undertaken. In discussing the Panel's suggestions on the future revenue funding of play equipment, the Cabinet decided that the provision and management of local play facilities should be undertaken at a local level by town and parish councils and community organisations and that the District Council's role should be confined to strategic, district-wide initiatives and in advising on opportunities for funding.

3. HOUSING AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFITS AND ANTI-FRAUD STRATEGY AND PROSECUTION POLICY

The Cabinet has approved the contents of a revised and enhanced Benefit Fraud Strategy and Policy for the prosecution and investigation of those persons found to have been committing benefit fraud. In so doing, staff in the Fraud Team have been authorised to undertake investigations in fraud affecting all other District Council services and to report to the relevant Head of Service on the outcomes, findings and recommendations arising from these investigations.

4. CHEQUERS COURT, HUNTINGDON, PLANNING BRIEF SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Having been acquainted with the responses received from the consultation exercise on the draft planning brief on the redevelopment of Chequers Court, Huntingdon, the Cabinet has agreed to adopt the brief as a Supplementary Planning Document. The Cabinet has also authorised the Head of Planning Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, to make any minor consequential amendments to the text and illustrations as necessary.

5. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Cabinet has reviewed the Council's performance against targets within the Corporate Plan - "Growing Success" together with achievements, service performance, data for priority objectives, progress against the Council's improvement plan and the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels on the matter. At the same time, the Cabinet has approved the revised targets, objectives and measures for 2010/11.

6. MONITORING OF THE REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Consideration has been given by the Cabinet to reports on the projected outturn for the revenue budget and capital expenditure in

2009/10. In so doing, Members have noted the variations to the approved programme and the associated capital and revenue implications. Having regard to the level of estimated underspend of £1.6m, the Cabinet has decided that this will be transferred to the Special Reserve on the closure of the accounts.

**7. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT,
THE CRIMINAL LAW ACT 1977 AND
THE PROTECTION FROM HARASSMENT ACT 1997**

The Cabinet has authorised the Director of Environmental and Community Services to appoint Officers to enforce the provisions of the Criminal Law Act 1977 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 when dealing with allegations of harassment and illegal eviction in the private housing sector. Eight to ten reports of such cases are reported each year but at present, the Council does not have the necessary powers to undertake investigations and prosecute offenders. The new powers will enable Officers to regain possession of a property on a tenant's behalf enabling them to reside there until the correct legal procedures for possession have been followed. The changes will not have any financial implications for the Council.

8. GREAT FEN MASTERPLAN

The Cabinet has considered the contents of a revised masterplan for the Great Fen. The Masterplan is a spatial plan that indicates how the project might be developed by the partner organisations. The document was the subject of extensive consultation with interested parties prior to its approval by the project partners.

**9. PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT FOR ICT DEVELOPMENT WITHIN
CAMBRIDGESHIRE**

The Cabinet has approved the principle of entering into an Information Management and Technology Partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, Fenland and South Cambridgeshire District Councils. The purpose of the Partnership is to oversee a number of Cambridgeshire ICT projects including the procurement of the Cambridgeshire Public Sector Network which aims to extend the scope of the shared infrastructure and "Tell Us Once" Initiative which concentrates on the sharing of information.

10. LAND AT CEMETERY ROAD, ST. NEOTS

The Cabinet has approved the transfer of land at Cemetery Road, St. Neots to St. Neots Town Council. The Urban District Council of St. Neots acquired the land in 1933 for the purpose of a burial ground. However as the result of local government organisation in 1974 the land was transferred to Huntingdonshire District Council and the land was never formally vested to the town council as the burial authority. The terms of the transfer will ensure that the land is used for burial purposes only.

11. WESTERN LINK ROAD

The Cabinet has authorised the Director of Central Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillors for Finance and Customer Services and for Resources and Policy, to approve the terms for the acquisition of properties required for the implementation of the Western Link Road, Huntingdon. The road will improve traffic movements on the ring road and will open up land for new development. The acquisition of properties is subject to an assessment that demonstrates that there is minimal risk to the Council.

12. TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION, HUNTINGDON

The Cabinet has approved, in principle, the making of a Compulsory Purchase Order in respect of land required for the construction of a multi-storey car park as part of the re-development of Chequers Court, Huntingdon. The scheme is an important element of the overall regeneration of Huntingdon Town Centre.

The Director of Environmental and Community Services has been authorised to progress the necessary preparatory work to enable the Cabinet to consider and make a formal resolution to make a CPO at the earliest opportunity, concurrent with continuing negotiations to secure the land by agreement. In response to Executive Councillors' concerns over the potential cost implications of a CPO, a further report by the Director of Environmental and Community Services will be submitted to a future meeting of Cabinet addressing this issue.

I C Bates
Chairman

Cabinet

Report of the meeting held on 17th June 2010

Matter for determination

13. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2009/2010

By way of a report by the Head of Financial Services (attached as an Appendix), the Cabinet has been acquainted with the respective levels of performance for the year ending 31st March 2010 by fund managers and the investment of the Council's Capital Receipt.

The Council has continued to carry out its treasury management activities with due regard to minimising risk, and in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Having been acquainted with the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) Panel on this matter, as described in Item No. 6 of their Report, the Cabinet

RECOMMEND

that Council note the contents of the report now submitted.

Matters for information

14. RAMSEY MARKET TOWN TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Cabinet has approved the contents of the Ramsey Market Town Transport Strategy, which forms part of the existing Cambridgeshire Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2006 - 2011 and will be incorporated into the next update of the Plan which is currently the subject of public consultation.

In considering the key aspects of the document, Executive Councillors have noted the steps to be taken to implement a programme of schemes identified for the next five years including improved transport provision and measures to manage traffic. The strategy will be reviewed between now and 2015 to take into account the emerging Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework.

**15. TRANSFER OF SECTION 106 ASSET:
LOVES FARM COMMUNITY BUILDING**

The Cabinet has been acquainted with the possible options for the future management of the new community building to be built at the Loves Farm development, St. Neots as part of a Section 106 Agreement.

Expressions of interest have been received from St. Neots Town Council and an established Loves Farm Residents' Association. In discussing the terms of any transfer, Executive Councillors were advised that the Residents' Association had expressed a wish to be involved in both the design and the generation of supplementary funding for the building. Whilst the Town Council would be looking for a transfer of the asset on completion, an arrangement with the Residents' Association would involve the granting of a leasehold. Given their overall enthusiasm for the project, the advantages of retaining the freehold rights for the land and the benefits associated with community ownership, the Cabinet has agreed to Loves Farm Residents' Association managing the new community building, subject to the establishment of an appropriate charitable trust and the receipt of a three to five year business plan.

16. CAR PARKING ORDERS

Further to Item No. 70 of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 17th February 2010, the Cabinet has considered the responses received to the public consultation on the Off-Street Parking Places Orders 2010. The orders set out a number of changes to car parking in Huntingdonshire including control of free parking in Ramsey and the introduction of charging at the car parks at Hinchbrooke Country Park, Huntingdon and the Riverside Park and Cambridge Street, St. Neots.

In discussing the responses received, Executive Councillors have heard the views of two ward Councillors as to their perception of the impact of charging on the economy of St Neots and have noted the receipt of two petitions on the matter.

The Cabinet also has had the benefit of the views of the Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel which has been summarised in Item No. 6 of their Report elsewhere on the agenda. In considering the Panel's recommendations, Executive Councillors have concurred with the Panel that the use of the car park at Hinchbrooke Country Park will need to be managed in such a way to ensure that membership of the Friends of the Country Park is not used simply as a way of enabling commuters and both workers and visitors at the nearby hospital to continue to park at the country park without incurring a charge.

On the issue of a local inquiry, the Cabinet has agreed with the Panel that there has been ample opportunity for members of the public to comment on the Orders and therefore there is no reason why a local inquiry should be required. The Cabinet has considered carefully the

representations received in the context of needing to achieve additional income to balance the Council's budget in future years. The retention of a number of spaces where motorists can park free of charge for two hours will help in offsetting the concerns of users of the Riverside Park itself and will provide some free parking for those who wish to make short visits to the town centre. The Cabinet has therefore decided not to hold a local inquiry and to confirm the Orders as advertised.

**17. CAMBRIDGESHIRE VOLUNTARY SECTOR:
INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW**

Having been acquainted with proposals published by Cambridgeshire County Council and NHS Cambridgeshire to introduce a single funding agreement for the Councils for Voluntary Services across Cambridgeshire, the Cabinet has requested further information on the cost implications of the proposals. The proposed changes have arisen as a result of a review by the Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Group which had identified inconsistencies and inequalities in the current scheme.

18. GROWING SUCCESS - PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Social, Economic and Environmental Well-Being, the Cabinet has reviewed the Council's performance against the Corporate Plan - "Growing Success" by considering data and narrative on the achievement against targets for each of the Council's priority objectives. Progress in the achievement of the Plan continues to be monitored by a Working Group jointly appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

19. REPRESENTATION ON ORGANISATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The Cabinet have made appointments/nominations in relation to representation on a variety of organisations/partnerships and has authorised the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council, to make any changes that may be required throughout the year.

I C Bates
Chairman

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**TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10
(Report by the Head of Financial Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Council has always approved the Treasury Management strategy for the forthcoming year when it approves the budget and MTP each February. The CIPFA Code of Practice now requires full Council to receive a mid year report, and an annual report after the end of each financial year. This was included in the current approved strategy.
- 1.2 The Code also requires there to be scrutiny of the Treasury Management function and the Council has determined that this will be carried out by the Economic Well-being Scrutiny Panel.
- 1.3 The Council approved the 2009/10 treasury management strategy at its meeting on 18th February 2009. The key points were:
- ◆ to invest any available funds in a manner that balanced low risk of default by the borrower with a fair rate of interest.
 - ◆ to ensure it had sufficient cash to meet its day-to-day obligations and to borrow when necessary to fund capital expenditure and to borrow in advance if rates were considered to be low.

2. ECONOMIC REVIEW

- 2.1 By the start of the financial year in April 2009, UK GDP had already contracted approximately 5.3%, due to a sharp fall in private sector spending. The financial crisis in late 2008 had prompted the Government to implement a number of extraordinary measures, including capital injections in some banks and the Credit Guarantee Scheme, to keep the banking system afloat amidst a wave of mistrust in financial markets.
- 2.2 In an attempt to avoid a more severe recession and possible deflation, the Bank of England had cut the Bank Rate to 0.5% in March 2009, where it remained for the whole year. To further loosen policy, the Bank initiated a policy of quantitative easing. Policymakers hoped to stimulate spending and economic activity by using newly created central bank reserves to purchase £200bn of government and commercial financial assets.
- 2.3 As a consequence of the recession and the various fiscal stimulus packages, UK Government borrowing rose significantly. By the end of 2009, the national debt had reached £890bn (62% of GDP) and the annual fiscal deficit was estimated to be £167bn.
- 2.4 The UK and other national governments are under intense pressure to cut spending and raise taxes in order to control debt levels. Although fears of a double-dip recession may eventually prove unfounded, austerity measures introduced by national governments will affect future economic activity.
- 2.5 Many European countries are given an AAA rating by the rating agencies, however during the year this was downgraded in some countries due to concern about the public sector deficits and the perceived higher credit risk.

Country	Lowest long term credit rating 5 February 2010
Greece	BBB+
Ireland	AA-
Italy	A+
Portugal	A+
Spain	AA+
UK for comparison	AAA

3. PERFORMANCE OF FUNDS

3.1 The following table summarises the treasury management transactions undertaken during the 2009/10 financial year:

	Principal Amount £m	Interest Rate %
Investments		
at 31st March 2009	42.5	4.28
less matured in year	-87.6	
plus arranged in year	+65.1	
at 31st March 2010	20.0	3.75
Average Investments	36.3	4.09
Borrowing		
at 31st March 2009	16.0	2.66
less repaid in year	-66.6	
plus arranged in year	+65.2	
at 31st March 2010	14.6	2.82
Average Borrowing	12.7	3.16
Net Investments		
31st March 2009	26.5	
31st March 2010	5.4	

3.2 As the Council's reserves have fallen over the last few years the number of fund managers have reduced leaving just CDCM at the start of the year with £18M. They also were given notice in March 2009 and as investments reached their maturity they were managed in-house. At the end of the year there was only £5M left with CDCM and the remaining investments will all mature during the current year. In-house investments started the year at £24.5M and were £15M at the end of the year. The table below shows the returns by fund manager. Whilst the benchmark for in-house funds is officially the 7 day rate, a split has also been shown to indicate a comparison for the medium term element against the 3 month rate as used for CDCM:

PERFORMANCE FOR THE YEAR APRIL 2009 – MARCH 2010				
	Average Investment £M	Performance %	Benchmark %	Variation from benchmark %
CDCM	12.5	4.8	0.6**	+4.2
In-house	23.7	3.7	0.4^^	+3.3
medium term	10.0	4.4	0.6**	+3.8
short-term for cash flow	13.7	3.1	0.4^^	+2.7

** 3 month LIBID ^^ 7 day rate

3.3 This very good performance was due to many of the investments being locked into higher rates before the year started or before rates had dropped too far.

3.4 The actual net investment interest (after deduction of interest payable on loans) was £1,085k compared with a budget of £607k.

4. STRATEGY – BORROWING

4.1 Long-term borrowing. The strategy allowed for ‘must borrow’ to finance that part of the capital programme that could not be met from internal funds. There was also a provision for ‘may borrow’ which allowed borrowing in anticipation of need, based on whether longer term rates seemed low compared with future likely levels. No long-term borrowing was carried out as the rates were not deemed to be low enough and there were sufficient internal funds to finance the capital spending in the year.

4.2 Short-term borrowing. The Authority did carry out short-term borrowing during the year to manage its cash flow; it averaged £2.7m.

5. STRATEGY - INVESTMENTS

5.1 The Council’s strategy for 2009/10 was based on using CDCM managing a reducing value of time deposits with the remainder managed in-house.

5.2 The in-house investments would be of two types: time deposits with banks with a high credit rating and the top 25 building societies by asset value, and liquidity (call) accounts with banks. The strategy included limits on the size of investments with each organisation and country limits. The mandates for CDCM and in-house funds are shown in Annex B

5.3 The strategy was reviewed during the course of the year with the Capital Receipts Advisory Group (CRAG) when there was concern about the reducing number of banks and building societies where monies could be placed. This was due to the merger of a number of building societies and concerns about the financial stability of some European countries where the Authority has regularly placed funds with banks, for example Ireland.

5.4 The review concluded that the Authority should continue to invest in banks and building societies based on the approved strategy, but if we borrowed in anticipation of need leading to a temporary increase in funds to be invested, the policy should be reviewed

6. RISK MANAGEMENT

6.1 The Council’s primary objectives for the management of its investments are to give priority to the security and liquidity of its funds before seeking the best rate of return.

6.2 **Security** is managed by investing short-term with highly-rated banks, building societies and local authorities in the UK. The Authority receives regular updates from its advisors, Sterling Consultancy Services, sometimes daily, on changes to the credit rating of counterparties. This allows the Council to amend its counterparty list and not invest where there is concern about the credit rating.

6.3 **Liquidity.** The majority of the funds are time deposits which cannot be traded and this means that they will not be returned until the end of the agreed period. However the Council has also made use of liquidity accounts which have a rate

or interest above base rate and provide instant access to funds. The interest rate on credit balances at the bank has been generous and so the account has been kept in credit, providing additional liquidity.

- 6.4 Overall, liquidity is managed by producing cash flow forecasts that help set the limit on the duration of the investments in time deposits. The projections tended to be cautious which sometimes resulted in funds being available before they were needed with any surplus easily being invested on a temporary basis.
- 6.5 **Return on investments.** Security and liquidity take precedence over the return on investments, which has resulted in investments during 2009/10 generally being of short duration at lower rates of interest.
- 6.6 The risk was mitigated in two ways. When the Authority borrowed £10M in advance in December 2008 it invested the funds, in the meantime, at marginally higher interest rates thus protecting the Council from any short term loss of interest. Secondly, the use of the above-market rates on credit balances in the bank account (until bank charges have been covered) and liquidity accounts have given attractive returns at minimal risk.

7. COMPLIANCE WITH REGULATIONS AND CODES

- 7.1 All the treasury management activity undertaken during the financial year complied with the approved strategy, the CIPFA Code of Practice, and the relevant legislation
- 7.2 In 2009 CIPFA issued a new Code on Treasury Management which has been adopted. The Code requires the Council to approve Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators. Those for 2009/10 were approved at the Council meeting on 18th February 2009. Annex C shows the relevant indicators and the actual results.

8. PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

- 8.1 The Council was made aware of the difficulty of some Parish and Town Councils in achieving any returns on their cash deposits and in January 2010 introduced a scheme whereby Parish and Town Councils could invest funds with this Council. Once received they simply form part of the Council's investment portfolio. The terms of the scheme are shown in Annex D.
- 8.2 To date only one investment has been received of £100k from Brampton Parish Council

9 CONCLUSION


- 9.1 The performance of the funds in a year when rates stayed very low was pleasing, significantly exceeded both the benchmark and the budgeted investment interest.
- 9.2 In a year of uncertainty in the financial markets all of the Council's investments were repaid in full and on time.
- 9.3 The Authority has carried out its treasury management activities with due regard to minimising risk, and in accordance with legislation. During the year it reviewed its strategy in the light of external events in the markets.

10. RECOMMENDATION

10.1 It is recommended that Cabinet note this report and forward it to Council

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

2009/10 cash management files and working papers
Reports to the Cabinet and Capital Receipts Advisory Group
CIPFA Code on Treasury Management

Contact Officer: Mrs Eleanor Smith, Accountancy Manager
 01480

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ANNEX A

BORROWING AND INVESTMENTS AT 31 MARCH 2010

	RATING	DATE INVESTED/ BORROWED	AMOUNT		INTEREST RATE %	REPAYMENT DATE	YEAR OF MATURITY
			£M	£M			
BORROWING							
Short term							
West Sussex County Council		23-Mar-10	-1.0		0.400	06-Apr-10	2010/11
Surrey County Council		22-Mar-10	-2.5		0.500	15-Apr-10	2010/11
Leicester City Council		31-Mar-10	-1.0		0.550	16-Apr-10	2010/11
Brampton Parish Council		01-Mar-10	-0.1		0.500		
				- 4.6			
Long term							
PWLB		19-Dec-08	- 5.0		3.910	19-Dec-57	2057/58
PWLB		19-Dec-08	- 5.0		3.900	19-Dec-58	2058/59
				-10.0			
TOTAL BORROWING							
				- 14.6			
INVESTMENTS							
IN-HOUSE							
Short term							
Nottingham BS		24-Feb-10	2.5		2.142	23-Feb-11	2010/11
Lloyds TSB Bank	F1+ P1	24-Feb-10	2.5		1.800	24-Feb-11	2010/11
				5.0			
Medium term							
Royal Bank of Scotland	F1+ P1	19-Dec-08	5.0		4.040	19-Dec-12	2012/13
Skipton BS	F2 P2	19-Dec-08	5.0		4.850	19-Dec-13	2013/14
				10.0			
In-house Total							
				15.0			
CDCM							
Nationwide (Cheshire) BS	F1+ P1	25-Jun-08	2.0		1.147	24-Jun-10	2010/11
Nationwide (Dunfermline) BS	F1+ P1	21-Aug-08	3.0		6.100	30-Sep-10	2010/11
				5.0			
TOTAL - INVESTMENTS							
				20.0			
NET INVESTMENTS							
				5.4			

EXTERNAL FUND MANAGER MANDATE 2009/10

CDCM

Duration of investments	No investment shall be longer than 2 years. The following funds must be available for return by the dates listed below: £13m by 31 March 2010 £7m by 31 March 2011	
Types of investments	Fixed Deposits Deposits at call, two or seven day notice	
Credit Ratings	Short term rating F1 by FITCH IBCA or equivalent Long term rating of A- by FITCH IBCA or equivalent if the investment is longer than 1 year	
Maximum limits	F1+ or have a legal position that guarantees repayment for the period of the investment	£6m
	F1	£5m
	Building Society with assets over £2bn in top 25 (Currently 16)	£6m
	Building Society with assets over £1bn if in top 25 (Currently 3)	£5m
	Building Society with assets under £1bn in top 25	£3m
	Other Country limits <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - £6m in a country outside the EU - £10m in a country within the EU (excluding UK) - £20m in EU countries combined (excluding UK) 	
	These totals apply to investments made up until 31 March 2010 but lower limits may be introduced for later years to avoid too high a proportion of the Council's funds being with any one counterparty.	
Benchmark	3 month LIBID	

IN-HOUSE FUND MANAGEMENT 2009/10

Duration of investments	No investment shall be longer than 5 years.	
Types of investments	Fixed Deposits Deposits at call, two or seven day notice	
Credit Ratings	Short term rating F1 by FITCH IBCA or equivalent Long term rating of A- by FITCH IBCA or equivalent if the investment is longer than 1 year.	
Maximum limits	<p>F1+ or have a legal position that guarantees repayment for the period of the investment £6m</p> <p>F1 £5m</p> <p>Building Society with assets over £2bn in top 25 (Currently 16) £6m</p> <p>Building Society with assets over £1bn if in top 25 (Currently 3) £5m</p> <p>Building Society with assets under £1bn in top 25 £3m</p> <p>In addition to the above: Liquidity (Call) Account with a credit rating of F1+ or with a legal position that guarantees repayment.</p> <p>Other Country limits</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - £6m in a country outside the EU - £10m in a country within the EU (excluding UK) - £20m in EU countries combined (excluding UK) <p>These totals apply to investments made up until 31 March 2010 but lower limits may be introduced for later years to avoid too high a proportion of the Council's funds being with any one counterparty.</p>	
Benchmark	LGC 7 day rate	

**PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS FOR 2009/10 RELATING TO
TREASURY MANAGEMENT
COMPARISON OF ACTUAL RESULTS WITH LIMITS**

EXTERNAL DEBT

The authorised limit for external debt.

This is the maximum limit for borrowing and is based on a worst-case scenario. This limit and the operational boundary below were set to allow up to £36.5m of borrowing in anticipation of need.

2009/10 Limit £000	2009/10 Actual £000
56,500	20,400

The operational boundary for external debt.

This reflects a less extreme position. Although the figure can be exceeded without further approval it represents an early warning monitoring device to ensure that the authorised limit (above) is not exceeded.

2009/10 Limit £000	2009/10 Actual £000
51,500	20,400

Both of these actual results reflect the fact that long term rates were not considered low enough to borrow in anticipation of need

TREASURY MANAGEMENT

Exposure to investments with fixed interest and variable interest.

These limits are given as a percentage of total investments.

	2009/10 Limit	2009/10 Actual
Upper limit on fixed rate exposure	100%	96%
Upper limit on variable rate exposure	50%	10%

This reflects the investments that CDCM had during the year where the rate is revised every half-year.

Borrowing Repayment Profile

The proportion of 2009/10 borrowing that matured in successive periods.

Cash flow borrowing	Upper limit	Actual	Lower limit
Under 12 months	100%	100%	100%
12 months and within 24 months	0%	0%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	0%	0%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	0%	0%	0%
10 years and above	0%	0%	0%

Funding capital schemes	Upper limit	Actual	Lower limit
Under 12 months	25%	0%	0%
12 months and within 24 months	25%	0%	0%
24 months and within 5 years	25%	0%	0%
5 years and within 10 years	50%	0%	0%
10 years and above	100%	100%	0%

Investment Repayment Profile

Limit on the value of investments that cannot be redeemed within 364 days.

2009/10 Limit £000	2009/10 Actual- maximum £000	2009/10 Actual – 31/3/10 £000
36,000	15,000	10,000

**DEPOSIT OF PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL FUNDS WITH
HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

The terms of the scheme

Minimum sum

£25,000.

Period

Either a fixed term of not less than 3 months

OR

A minimum of 3 months with a minimum of 30 days notice for repayment after 3 months

Rate

Prevailing Bank Base Rate during the period of the investment

Payment of Interest

Paid annually on 31 March or on repayment whichever is the earliest

Transmission

Funds must be received electronically and repaid in same way

Agreement

The Parish or Town Council will be sent an email confirming receipt of the deposit and confirming the terms.

Changes to these terms

The District Council reserves the right to vary or cancel this offer but this will not affect any investment already completed.

Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being)

**Reports of the meetings held on 15th April, 3rd June
and 10th June 2010**

Matter for Determination

**1. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE
HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL BUDGET 2010/11**

Pursuant to Item No. 52 of its Report to the meeting of the Council held on 21st April 2010, and with the assistance of additional information, the Panel has discussed proposed amendments to the 2010/11 Budget, which had been submitted by the Liberal Democrat Group to the Council on 17th February 2010. The Council decided to refer the proposals to the Panel for consideration and relevant Officers were invited to comment on each of them. A copy of the report considered by the Panel is appended as an Appendix hereto.

Members have been advised by the Liberal Democrat Group that the proposals are not intended to be a comprehensive alternative budget but represent suggestions for ways in which the Council might achieve budget adjustments.

As part of their deliberations, the Panel has discussed suggestions for reductions to Members' allowances and for research on the next review of allowances to be carried out "in house". Members have noted the statutory requirement of the Council to arrange for an independent review to be undertaken in the current year. Although the Panel is not in favour of a specific recommendation on allowances to the Independent Review Panel, Members suggest that the review should take account of recent economic trends. Moreover Members also have suggested that the review be undertaken as cost effectively as possible, having regard to the allowance made in the Medium Term Plan to undertake the process.

The Panel has also discussed the potential to reduce expenditure on District Wide and in doing so has discussed its frequency of publication and its value as a means of communicating with local residents without access to the internet. Members have decided that further information is required on the public's perception of District Wide and on other options to reduce the cost of its production before a recommendation is made on this proposal.

In respect of proposals relating to the Council's current electoral arrangements, the Panel has concluded that, as the Council has recently taken a decision on the cycle of elections, no changes should be made to the Council's current electoral arrangements.

With regard to the suggestion aimed at reducing the amount of paper the Council uses, the Panel has discussed the potential benefits of producing documents using alternative formatting. Whilst recognising the potential this represents for achieving savings, the Panel is conscious that any changes should be considered against the requirements of those with disabilities. In addition, the Panel has suggested that savings in the cost of postage might be achieved if the Council is more selective in the way documents are sent to Members and has agreed to investigate the potential benefits of producing a protocol for this purpose.

In discussing the proposal to purchase Smart meters for loan to residents, the Panel has noted that other initiatives to reduced domestic energy consumption are already included in the Medium Term Plan. However, whilst Members do not support the additional expenditure proposed, the Panel has asked the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) to consider whether the benefits of Smart meters are more cost effective than some of the other initiatives already planned to inform future action under the Environment Strategy.

With respect to the remaining proposals, the Panel has noted that improvements to Huntingdon Bus Station will not be undertaken pending a review of alternative options and it has been agreed that any further reports on public conveniences should be reviewed by an Overview and Scrutiny Panel before being submitted to the Cabinet. Members have also decided to carry out a more wide-ranging review of customer services at a future meeting.

Having noted that the proposal relating to the Arts Development Services had been withdrawn, the Panel

RECOMMEND

that the Council notes and endorses its deliberations on the proposals by the Liberal Democrat Group at the Council meeting in February –

- ◆ **the Independent Members' Allowances Panel is requested to take account of recent economic trends when it undertakes the forthcoming review;**
- ◆ **the review will be undertaken as cost effectively as possible;**
- ◆ **further information has been requested on the public's perception and the effectiveness of District Wide and on ways of reducing the cost of its production;**
- ◆ **a report has been requested on the scope of a review of customer services;**

- ◆ no changes are recommended to the Council's current electoral cycle;
- ◆ Officers will investigate ways of altering the format of Council publications to reduce cost;
- ◆ Investigations will be undertaken into ways of disseminating information to Members more economically;
- ◆ planned improvements to Huntingdon Bus Station have been deferred pending the outcome of investigations into alternative courses of action;
- ◆ any future reports on public conveniences will be reviewed by an Overview and Scrutiny Panel before being submitted to the Cabinet;
- ◆ the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) will consider the cost effectiveness of investing in the distribution of Smart meters to residents in comparison with other initiatives in the Environment Strategy; and
- ◆ the proposals relating to the Arts Development Service have been withdrawn.

Matters for Information

2. COVERT SURVEILLANCE POLICY - RIPA

The Panel has received a joint presentation by the District Council's Solicitor and Fraud Manager on the Council's use of covert surveillance. The presentation had been requested because the Council's Policy will be reviewed later in the year following the publication of new codes of guidance by the Home Office.

The Panel has been acquainted with the background to the use of covert surveillance by local authorities and the scope of its use for the prevention of crime and disorder. The Panel has also received details of the policy on covert surveillance employed by the District Council, including the authorisation procedure and the reporting and record keeping arrangements in place. The Panel has noted that the Council's level of use of covert surveillance is low, which reflects the fact that overt surveillance is used whenever possible and covert surveillance is used only as a last resort.

Any covert surveillance has to be authorised by a senior Officer and in granting authorisation the tests of necessity and proportionality are applied. The Council is regulated by the Office of Surveillance Commissioners and inspected by a Judge every three years. For this reason extensive reporting and record keeping arrangements are in place.

The Fraud Manager has provided information on the ways in which surveillance is used within the Benefits section, together with details of the outcomes of benefit fraud investigations in recent years. The

Panel has been advised that two of which authorisations have taken place in the previous year. Covert surveillance is considered to be a valuable tool which, in addition to supporting or refuting allegations of benefit fraud, is used to identify weaknesses in the Council's systems. The Council operates to the standards required of criminal evidence and cost is an important factor in deciding whether to undertake covert surveillance

The Panel has discussed a number of issues, including the cost of training officers given the small number of authorisations that are actually made. Part of the purpose of the training is to ensure that covert surveillance is only used where appropriate. Members have also discussed whether noise monitoring is effective if those generating the noise have to be informed that such action is being undertaken.

In discussing the investigation of potential benefit fraud, the Panel has queried whether the evidence obtained might be weakened by not having undertaken surveillance of suspects late at night. The Panel has also commented that use should be made of the local press to publicise the outcome of successful prosecutions for benefit fraud as a deterrent to others.

3. STANDARDS COMPLAINTS

Information has been provided to the Panel on the costs incurred by the Council in dealing with complaints made against district and parish councillors since responsibility for dealing with complaints was transferred to local authorities from Standards for England in May 2008.

Members have received an outline of cases referred for formal investigation together with estimates of the time spent by the Monitoring Officer and his deputy on standards related matters. They then examined the sanctions that can be imposed on individuals found to have acted inappropriately under the Code of Conduct and the courses of action if these are not complied with.

The Panel has discussed the means by which issues of a more trivial nature are dealt and whether there is any opportunity to hold a complainant to account if there is found to be no case to answer. It is, however, a legal requirement that all complaints are considered by the Standards Committee and, if no further action is required, the complainant receives a decision notice to this effect.

The Panel has discussed four investigations that have been undertaken by an external investigator. As each investigation is a time consuming exercise, it has not been possible for these to be undertaken by staff because of existing workloads. A former Council employee with experience in the field has therefore been retained which has proved significantly more cost effective than other alternatives.

With regard to the mechanisms through which details of cases are circulated to town and parish councils, Members have been informed that decision notices are routinely provided to town and parish clerks. Training sessions are also available for parish and district councillors.

Having reviewed the information provided, the Panel has expressed their concern at the transfer of a significant and highly regulated area of work to councils without additional funding from Government.

4. REQUEST FOR A LOAN TO THE WILDLIFE TRUST FOR BEDFORDSHIRE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH – FEEDBACK

The Panel has been informed of the conclusions of the Cabinet in respect of a request for a loan to the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough. In so doing, the Panel has been pleased to note that the Cabinet has agreed with their earlier conclusions on the interest rate and the robustness of the terms and security of the loan and the Great Fen Project's governance arrangements.

5. VISITOR DEVELOPMENT AND TOWN CENTRE VIBRANCY

The Panel has received a presentation by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships and the Sustainable Economic Development Manager on visitor development and town centre vibrancy. Having been reminded of the Cabinet's previous decisions drastically to reduce the tourism service to make savings, Members have been acquainted with the ways in which the Council, in conjunction with its partners and local businesses, encourages visits within Huntingdonshire.

There are two main strands to the Council's strategy. First, it aims to encourage visitors within a two hour radius of the District to use local accommodation by drawing attention to specialist attractions and attracting tourists visiting Cambridge. This is almost exclusively achieved through the internet. Secondly, it endeavours to promote town centre vibrancy and thereby persuade Huntingdonshire residents to spend their money locally. The resources used by the Council to do this work amount to less than the equivalent of one full-time post.

The Panel has discussed the interaction between the two approaches, the potential for staging more large scale events and the costs and benefits of this work. Members have noted that most bed and breakfast accommodation is occupied by workers staying during the week. While they are keen to promote events, it has been stressed that this should be done using local suppliers and services.

Having received an introduction to this area of activity, the Panel will now look at the cost of the service and the benefits it brings to both the Council and the District.

6. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10

In accordance with the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice and the Council's Treasury Management Strategy, the Panel has reviewed the performance of Fund Managers for the year ending 31st March 2010 in the investment of the Council's Capital receipts. Members have been pleased to note that funds have performed well, significantly exceeding both the benchmark and the budgeted investment interest. In addition, all of the Council's investments have been repaid in full and on time.

The Panel has paid particular attention to the scheme through which town and parish council's can deposit funds with the District Council for investment. Having noted the origins of the scheme, the Panel has been made aware of the strict legal framework within which it operates in that, for example, the District Council cannot borrow to invest. Members have considered whether there might be any benefit in varying the scheme's current terms. While the administrative costs and low level of likely returns mean it would not be worth reducing the minimum sum that can be invested, there might be an opportunity to tailor investments that exceed £250k.

With regard to the Council's advisors on investments, Members have discussed the value of the service they provide. Although the cost to the Council is relatively low, the Panel consider that the Council should review whether they are needed in two years time, when balances have reduced.

Having discussed the security of investments and received an update on the request for a loan by the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough, the Panel has endorsed the Treasury Management Annual Report 2009/10 for submission to the Cabinet.

7. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

In conjunction with the Panels for Social and Environmental Well-Being, the Panel for Economic Well-Being has reviewed the Council's performance against the targets within the Corporate Plan "Growing Success" that fall within its remit.

The Panel has received clarification regarding the fact that the Burgess Hall is £20k up on target and £30k up on the previous year yet hospitality income has dropped by £65k across the board. While the former concerns events income, the latter relates to bars and catering income. Members also have received a brief statement on the role of the Bars and Catering Manager at St Ivo. Members have decided that the reported financial performance requires further investigation. In addition, the Panel will also look at the leisure centres' overall financial performance and their employment structure.

Comment also has been made that the target of 10% for staff turnover is too high and that something in the order of 7% would be

more appropriate. At the same time it is recognised that an actual figure of 2.23% is a positive performance.

Other Matters of Interest

**8. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL –
REMIT AND WORK PROGRAMME**

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies and considered its work programme for the forthcoming year. In so doing, the Panel has noted that the Customer Services Monitoring Report and the annual report containing details of those organisations supported by grants through service level agreements will be presented to its July meeting.

The Panel has added waste collection round scheduling, promotion of use of disposable nappies and the use of S106 money for transport schemes in St Neots to the list of matters it intends to investigate in the course of the year.

9. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10

The Panel has reviewed the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2009/10. Having been advised that there is a constitutional requirement to produce such a report each year, Members have suggested that it should include further details of the work the plan to undertake in the forthcoming year .

10. SCRUTINY

The Panel has considered the latest editions of the Decision Digest and discussed the matters contained therein. As a consequence of a comment made concerning the number of new entries made to the Risk Register during the period 1st September to 28th February 2010, the Panel has invited the Audit and Risk Manager to a future meeting to discuss this matter further.

J D Ablewhite
Chairman

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**PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE
HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL BUDGET 2010 – 2011
Report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides the Panel with an opportunity to determine its approach to responding to proposals submitted by the Liberal Democrats for amendments to the Council's budget 2010 – 2011.

2. THE PROPOSALS

- 2.1 At the full Council meeting on 17th February 2010, the Liberal Democrats submitted proposals for amendments to the budget 2010 – 2011. It was decided that the proposals should be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) for consideration.
- 2.2 The Economic Well-Being Panel gave the proposals provisional consideration on 11th March 2010, when various items of additional information were requested.
- 2.3 A summary of the proposals together with the additional information is attached as Annex A hereto.
- 2.4 The Panel is invited to consider the proposals with a view to making a formal response on them.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Report submitted to the Council on 17th February 2010.

Contact Officer: Tony Roberts, Scrutiny and Review Manager
☎ 01480 388015

ANNEX A

Members' Allowances (page 47) Reduce expenditure on Members

HDC employees are facing a difficult time. Pay improvements will be limited or non-existent. Over the next 3 or 4 years job losses cannot be ruled out. Members should be prepared to share in these difficulties. We propose that the review of Member Allowances should take place in-house, thus avoiding the £5,000 fee to the Independent External panel. Three options for reductions are offered:

Cut basic allowance by 5% and SRAs by 10% - saves £31,490

Freeze basic allowance and cut SRAs by 10% - saves £18,560

Freeze all allowances – saves £3,890

Our preferred option is a. and, together with the £5,000 saving referred to above saves £36,000.

Comments by the Head of Democratic and Central Services

The Members Allowances Regulations require the Council to have regard to the recommendations of an Independent Remuneration Panel when setting the Members Allowances Scheme. The review therefore cannot be undertaken in house as suggested by the Liberal Democrat Group.

The Huntingdonshire panel comprises local business people and is chaired by a leading academic in the field of allowances. The scheme can be index linked for a period of 4 years in accordance with the regulations. After that time, the independent remuneration panel must be reconvened to carry out a further review.

The last review by the independent remuneration panel of the Council's scheme index linked the allowances for four years so there must be a review during the course of this year. The revised scheme will come into effect in May 2011.

In terms of the cost of the review, the sum of £5,000 referred to in the Liberal Democrats' proposals is the fee charged by the chairman. As one of the leading persons on allowances nationally, he provides information on what comparable authorities are doing and is able to offer constructive advice and guidance to the local panel members. The Council is fortunate that none of the other members of the panel charge for their time.

While it would be possible to undertake a review of the allowances without the chairman's assistance, this would be more difficult and would involve the Council's own staff in gathering the necessary evidence on the position in comparable authorities and nationally. The chairman also offers the added advantage of impartiality in comparison to the evidence being provided by the Council's own staff. Moreover the additional time required on the part of the latter would mean that any saving would be minimal if the chairman's services were dispensed with.

Irrespective of any decision that the Council may take on Members Allowances, these must be reviewed by the Independent Remuneration Panel later in the year. All Members have an opportunity to submit their comments to the panel as part of its deliberations and to appear before the panel to argue in support of any proposals. It would be logical for the Liberal Democrats to present their current ideas on allowances to the panel when it meets in a few months' time and for any decision to await the panel's final report.

.....

Corporate Services (page 47) Reduce expenditure on 'District Wide' by £21,000

The six editions of District Wide currently cost £42,000. If this were reduced to three editions (Spring, Summer, Autumn) there could be a saving of £21,000. Greater use could be made of the new and improved web-site to disseminate information.

Comments by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships

Magazines and newspapers like District Wide are a highly effective way of communicating with as many people as possible. Research locally and nationally continues to show that a majority of people prefer getting information from the Council in written format.

District Wide is delivered to all 65,000 households and 5,000 businesses in the District and is our opportunity to raise awareness of and gain understanding of the Council's aims, objectives and the services we provide. No single local newspaper covers the whole of Huntingdonshire. Many of the items carried in District Wide are not considered 'newsworthy' by the local papers and to have them covered by the local press we would have to buy advertising space. In order to cover the whole district we would need to advertise in at least three local papers (Hunts Post, News and Crier, and Peterborough Evening Telegraph.)

We moved to six issues a year because of pressure on space from both services and local organisations and to meet the preferences of local residents for shorter but more frequent communication of this type. All services across the Council use District Wide to promote their messages as it has proved to be an effective medium for them. The current cycle is also attractive to advertisers, particularly the pre-Christmas issue which produces the most revenue, (including a four-page annual report of the police authority) and presents the opportunity to publicise Christmas/New Year openings at our offices and leisure centres plus holiday refuse and recycling arrangements.

Typically each edition of District Wide costs £2,500 for design, £8,000 for printing (the majority of this is covered by advertising revenue) and £5,000 for distribution/postage, less £8,400 from advertising revenue.

We have recently been working with Cambridgeshire County Council and the other district councils on a shared procurement exercise which may result in additional savings. We are also talking with the current supplier about possible savings including a reduction in design costs and using a cheaper lighter weight paper without compromising on quality.

District Wide now incorporates the Arts Diary, which has resulted in a financial saving.

The current frequency and format of District Wide makes it easier for residents to be kept informed of changes to services and the work of the council. It is a cost effective way of providing information to the public and is significantly cheaper than producing separate leaflets or buying advertising space in the local press. Reducing the number of issues also might have a disproportionate effect on advertising income: many advertisers like to block book 4 or 6 issues to run campaigns.

Both District Wide and our website were highlighted as part of the CAA organisational assessment as being complementary and effective tools for consultation with residents.

.....

Reduction in 'Customer Service' (page 49) – Saving of £30,000

'Customer First' covers a wide range of services to the public including face-to-face contact, Call centre and web-site. There have been extensive and welcome improvements. Now that we have a refreshed web-site, it ought to be possible to reduce overall expenditure in this area. Officers should be asked to reprioritise to avoid the proposed increase.

Comments by the Head of Customer Services

Looking at the bigger picture for customer services as a whole, we have been extremely efficient in delivering an ever expanding customer service centre /call centre service. The on line payments module has reduced the number of calls to the call centre for payments. However, despite the success of this channel migration we have not been able to realise any financial savings as yet - we have paid for the Capita project out of existing resources but further savings aren't do-able yet.

We have taken the Housing phone calls - and this will realise a cash saving of 1/2 FTE in Housing (not Call Centre where the work has been taken on within existing resources). I would point out that the Customer Services Team in general are losing 'quick' queries and calls and gaining more enquiries that take far longer to deal with.

It is assumed that this proposal refers to the final capital spend on the wireless working project (£31k). This is the facility to offer on-line customer services in people's homes, with direct access to Northgate SX3 and Anite. In effect - Housing Benefits assessment officers in people's homes. This is not something that members of the public can do for themselves - it's a technical job and not just internet based information. This amount is just the final spend to get laptops etc for the mobile Housing Benefit officers. We have already invested £150k on the infrastructure. There is not much point in having the infrastructure with no laptops to enable us to use it. The entire project was externally funded.

The restrictions placed on the authority by the Government Connect requirements has meant that this wireless working project has been suspended for now and we are not using it at all. If it turns out we can't get back on track, we'd not spend the money on the equipment anyway.

.....

Democratic representation (page 47) Reduce expenditure on elections by £50,000 over four years

The present pattern of elections every year except one in four is more expensive than having an all-up election once every four years (which is the pattern in most other authorities). We propose that this issue be reconsidered by the Corporate Governance Panel.

Comments by the Head of Democratic and Central Services

This was the subject of detailed discussion in the Elections Panel which submitted a recommendation to Council as recently as April 2009 to retain the status quo in terms of a 4 yearly election cycle. The Liberal Democrat Group moved an amendment to the Panel's report at Council to change to a single election every 4 years but this was rejected. The Panel's report followed consultation with Members as to the electoral cycle that they preferred. A report summarising the position that was considered by the Panel can be found on the following link -

Under recent legislative change, the Council can only take a decision to move to whole Council elections in a permitted resolution period. That currently applies until the end of December 2010 for an election in 2011. After that, the permitted resolution period only applies every 4 years between the date of the annual meeting and the end of December, i.e. 2014, 2018 etc. for elections in the following year.

As the decision not to alter the current cycle was made only 12 months ago in the knowledge of all the facts and the Council's financial position and as no new evidence has been submitted by the Liberal Democrat Group, there is little point in this being considered further.

In addition the Economic Well-Being Panel asked for a copy of the original report to the Elections Panel on this subject ([Agenda for Elections Panel on Aug 27 2008 6:00PM](#)). This report is reproduced at Annex B.

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Document Centre (page 51) Reduce expenditure by £10,000

HDC currently spends over £30,000 on paper. Most printed documents have wide margins, blank pages and are not laid out economically. Trials have demonstrated that, by using a different layout (narrower margins, smaller font, less elaborate headings, fewer blank pages), most documents could be reduced to $\frac{3}{4}$ or even $\frac{2}{3}$ of their length. If documents were worded more concisely and fewer were sent out by the post savings could be made.

Comments by the Head of Democratic and Central Services

The Council adopted corporate guidelines for all printed materials when the new logo was introduced recently. These had regard to the guidelines issued by the Royal National Institute for the Blind and the Disability Rights Commission which includes the size of print and layout of documents. This was done to ensure that information is provided in a way that all our customers can read. Some people, including those with sight problems, have difficulty understanding information because of poor education, learning disabilities, dyslexia, brain injury, dementia or short attention span and/or memory. The Liberal Democrat proposals would impact on the Council's ability to reach some of those customers.

The Document Centre has already been charged with saving £60,000 per annum by the autumn of 2011 against the Council's spend on printing and postage and is on track to achieve the required reduction. This will be achieved by a variety of means including greater efficiencies, changes in business systems and procuring reduced tariffs.

.....

Capital budget – saving of £800,000 from Bus station project (page 46)

The Bus Station improvement, though perhaps desirable, is not essential. An up-grade of the toilet facilities and minor enhancements to the existing fabric could be achieved for £90,000 leaving a saving of £800k for capital reserves (with a knock-on effect on need to borrow and interest income).

Comments by the Head of Planning Services

This capital project has been put on hold whilst;

1. a review is carried out of what works may be necessary,
2. consideration is given to what development opportunities may exist.

.....

Public Conveniences (page 41) - £7,000 for pilot scheme for alternative provision

The reduction in the provision of toilets is very unpopular. This gives HDC the opportunity to pilot a scheme which is widely used in Austria (and possibly other European countries) whereby the public is allowed access to toilets in hotels, cafes and restaurants without having to be a paying customer. It is suggested that a payment would be made to any establishment willing to pilot this approach in Huntingdonshire to cover extra costs. This would maintain public access to toilets and be very much less expensive than the previous arrangements and still provide a service people value, especially tourists, families and older people.

Comments by the Head of Environmental Management

Officers are already in the process of drafting a report on this subject, which will be submitted to the Cabinet in due course. The relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel will be able to request sight of the report if they wish.

.....

Environmental Strategy (page 41) – capital expenditure of £7,000 to stimulate public interest in reducing domestic electricity consumption

The pilot scheme in Warboys where Smart meters have been available for residents is now being moved on to Somersham. There is evidence to indicate that people change their domestic energy habits quite rapidly once they have experienced the Smart meter. This proposal is for the purchase of 200 Smart meters, rechargeable batteries and charger units to be located in public libraries for free loan to residents.

Huntingdon 50, St Neots 50, St. Ives 30, Ramsey 30, Warboys 10, Buckden 10, Sawtry 10 and Somersham 10.

Final confirmation from Cambridgeshire Libraries that they can handle this is anticipated.

Comments by the Head of Environmental Management

The Council has already made provision in the budget to do this and schemes will be brought forward at the appropriate time.

.....

Partial protection of the Arts Development service (page 44)

The proposal that by 2012 there should be no Arts Development Service at all is unacceptable. We propose that some of the above savings be used to maintain a reduced Arts Service. We propose that £70k be added to the budget for 2012-13 and beyond to preserve a basic service.

Comments by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services

Until such time that Members agree on savings elsewhere in the budget, officers are in no position to recommend further expenditure on the Arts Service. Given the size of the current budget deficit (£4.7m) even if savings were identified it is unlikely that officers could recommend reinstating the Arts budget.

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ELECTORAL CYCLE IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE
(Report by Head of Administration)

1. INTRODUCTION

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

2. CHOICE

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

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

3. NEW PROCEDURE

- 3.1 Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, districts that historically elected by thirds can move to whole council elections and can revert back to thirds. Other authorities that have whole council elections now cannot move to thirds. The same situation pertains to authorities that historically elected by halves. However authorities cannot move from thirds to halves and vice versa.
- 3.2 If an authority wishes to move from thirds to whole council elections, it must
- ◆ consult such persons as it thinks appropriate on the proposed change,
 - ◆ convene a special meeting of the Council,
 - ◆ pass a resolution to change by a two thirds majority of those voting,
 - ◆ publish an explanatory document on the decision and make this available for public inspection, and
 - ◆ give notice to the Electoral Commission.
- 3.3 The authority may also request the Commission to give the Boundary Committee a direction to undertake a review of the authority's area with a

view to establishing single member wards, where it considers this to be appropriate.

- 3.4 An authority that elected by thirds and has moved to whole council elections may return to elections by thirds. To do so, it must carry out the same procedure as set out in paragraph 3.2, except that the Commission must make an order to that effect and, before doing so, must consider whether to direct the Boundary Committee to carry out a review of the district in question. That review would look at the division of the district into wards with a view to the desirability of establishing three member wards.

4. TIMESCALES

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

5. PARISH COUNCILS

- 5.1 Currently, town and parish council elections in Huntingdonshire coincide with the district election for the ward in which they are located. Roughly one third of the towns and parishes therefore have elections in any year except in the year of county council elections. A schedule showing the dates of elections to the various town and parish councils in the District is shown in Annex 1. The cost of a contested election is shared between the Council and the relevant town or parish, where possible.
- 5.2 If the Council resolve to move to whole council elections in 2011 and every fourth year thereafter, those towns and parishes with elections that fall in the two years in the cycle when there will no longer be district council elections would have to meet the whole of the cost of their individual elections. Similarly, the District Council itself would have to meet the whole of the cost of its own election in those wards where no town or parish council is held.
- 5.3 Although contested town/parish council elections have become increasingly rare in recent years, other than in the towns of Huntingdon, St Ives and St Neots, a contested election is currently a prerequisite for those councils which are quality parishes to retain their status and the transfer of additional powers and responsibilities to towns and parishes recently may encourage more individuals to stand as candidates.
- 5.4 The 2007 Act enables the Council to make an order to alter the years of the ordinary election of towns and parishes so that they coincide with a move by a district council to elections by whole council or a reversion to elections by thirds. The order can make transitional provision for the retirement of town

and parish councillors at different times than would otherwise apply during that transitional period.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 A move to whole council elections will clearly lead to a financial saving for the Council. As part of the exercise to identify savings in 2006, the Council has already agreed to include whole council elections in the schedule of cuts to services. However the saving will not equate to the whole of the cost of an election in two of the three years of the current cycle.
- 6.2 Currently, the District is divided into 29 wards. Although elections are by thirds, only 4 wards comprise 3 councillors. 15 have two councillors and 10 are single councillor wards. This results from the need to achieve electoral parity of an equal number of electors per councillor with the most recent periodic electoral review only succeeding to create 3 member wards in Eynesbury, Huntingdon East, Ramsey, and Yaxley and Farcet. In very few wards therefore is an election held each year.
- 6.3 Although the electoral split between wards is equal at the moment with 17 wards having elections in two out of three years and 18 wards in the third year, the cost of an election varies with the number of polling stations per ward. This varies from a minimum of 1 station per ward up to a maximum of 11. The current electoral cycle of 63, 73 and 54 stations in each of its three years (as shown in Annex 2) directly affects the cost of the annual election in each of those years.
- 6.4 A move to whole council elections would result in all 106 polling stations being required in each election, representing an increase of 45% compared with the busiest year currently. Similarly all 29 wards would have elections, an increase of 61% on the current position. It is likely therefore that the direct cost of a whole council election would be some 50% higher than in the most expensive of the three current years of the cycle with a saving in the other two years. By-elections also would be more frequent because these could no longer be organised to coincide with annual elections.
- 6.5 Based upon current figures, it is estimated that a saving of approximately £100,000 could be achieved across a four year cycle. However this will vary depending upon the number of contested town and parish council elections that are held. Parliamentary elections have also coincided with district elections in previous years which has enabled costs to be shared, most recently in 1979. A whole council election in 2011 would be out of sequence with general elections and they would be unlikely to coincide for the foreseeable future. Finally the cost would be influenced by the creation of more single member wards.

7. BOUNDARY REVIEW

- 7.1 If the Council considers moving to whole council elections, it will need to decide whether to ask the Commission to implement a boundary review. Ideally, councils where elections are by thirds have three member wards and those with whole council elections have single member wards. The latter tends to focus on the performance of an individual councillor as the representative/champion of his or her ward as opposed to the situation in a multi-member ward. As mentioned above, the last periodic electoral review of the District resulted in a predominance of two member wards to achieve electoral parity. Because of the geographical composition of Huntingdonshire, it is unlikely that single member wards can be created

throughout the District without resulting in some unusual ward configurations. Conversely, this would present an opportunity to redress some of the more contrived ward structures that arose from the last review.

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

8. RELATIVE MERITS

- 8.1 A series of arguments can be advanced for the merits and disadvantages of whole council elections and elections by thirds. The Electoral Commission carried out a consultation exercise at the request of the Deputy Prime Minister in 2003 and recommended that authorities move to whole council elections. Conversely the Government had only a few years earlier advocated annual elections as a way of stimulating public interest in local democracy.
- 8.2 A summary of the various merits and disadvantages of the two systems are contained in the attached Annex 3.

9. CONCLUSION

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

10. RECOMMENDATION

- 10.1 The Panel is asked to consider a move to whole council elections before the current deadline of the end of December 2010 and the consequential implications for the Council, individual councillors and town and parish councils.

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

Contact Person: Roy Reeves, Head of Administration
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CYCLE OF TOWN AND PARISH COUNCIL ELECTIONS IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE
(Including Wards of Towns and Parishes, where appropriate)

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

ELECTORAL CYCLE

Number of Polling Stations per Ward

WARD	Number of seats	COUNTY	DISTRICT				COUNTY	DISTRICT			COUNTY	DISTRICT			Number of Polling Stations
		2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020		
Alconbury & The Stukeleys	1		4				4				4			4	
Brampton	2		4		4		4		4		4		4	4	
Buckden	1		3				3				3			3	
Earith	2		3	3			3	3			3	3		3	
Ellington	1			11				11				11		11	
Elton & Folksworth	1			5				5				5		5	
Fenstanton	1			1				1				1		1	
Godmanchester	2		2		2		2		2		2		2	2	
Gransden & The Offords	2		7	7			7	7			7	7		7	
The Hemingfords	2		4		4		4		4		4		4	4	
Huntingdon (East)	3		4	4	4		4	4	4		4	4	4	4	
Huntingdon (North)	2			2	2			2	2			2	2	2	
Huntingdon (West)	2		3	3			3	3			3	3		3	
Kimbolton & Staughton	1			5				5				5		5	
Little Paxton	1				1				1				1	1	
Ramsey	3		6	6	6		6	6	6		6	6	6	6	
Sawtry	2		7		7		7		7		7		7	7	
Somersham	2			6	6			6	6			6	6	6	
Stilton	1			2				2				2		2	

St Ives West	1				1				1				1	1	
St Ives South	2		2		2		2		2		2		2	2	
St Ives East	2		2		2		2		2		2		2	2	
St Neots Eaton Ford	2			2	2			2	2			2	2	2	
St Neots Eaton Socon	2			2	2			2	2			2	2	2	
St Neots Eynesbury	3		3	3	3			3	3	3		3	3	3	
St Neots Priory Park	2		3	3				3	3			3	3	3	
Upwood & The Raveleys	1			5				5				5		5	
Warboys & Bury	2		3		3			3		3		3		3	
Yaxley & Farcet	3		3	3	3			3	3	3		3	3	3	
	52		63	73	54			63	73	54		63	73	54	106

Number of Wards 29
Number of 3 Member Wards 4
Number of 2 Member Wards 15
Number of 1 Member Wards 10

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

Merits of elections by thirds

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

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

Merits of elections by whole council

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

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

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Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being)

**Report of the meeting held on 13th April and
8th June 2010**

Matters for Information

1. MASTERPLAN FOR THE GREAT FEN

Following the earlier consideration of the draft plan, the Panel has received a report on the Great Fen Masterplan which has been approved by the Project Steering Committee, and represents the spatial plan of how the project is anticipated to develop.

The Panel has been advised that the Council's financial exposure to the project is limited by the collaboration agreement that has been signed with the other partners, although the Council can withdraw from the Steering Committee at any time.

The Panel has been advised that the loan approved by the Cabinet to the Wildlife Trust is a commercial business decision between partners with shared objectives. The loan will be used to purchase land which will help fulfil the District Council's objectives and aspects of the Masterplan and is subject to satisfactory security.

Members have been informed that further detailed work will be undertaken to produce action plans by the partners and that it is for the partners to satisfy themselves as to the business and financial planning of those aspects of the Great Fen on which they will be leading. There is therefore no overall business plan for the project as a whole.

The Panel have agreed to a suggestion that a site visit to the Great Fen be convened with representatives of partner groups and the Project Manager present to enable Members to view how the land is being managed and to discuss the project with partners.

Members have also requested bi-annual reports from the Director of Environmental and Community Services on the progress of the Great Fen project and details as to the cost of the Council's involvement in the project by way of office time.

The views of the Panel have been passed to the Cabinet for its consideration.

2. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 FORWARD PLAN

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the Forward Plan of forthcoming decisions prepared by the Leader of the Council.

3. CABINET FEEDBACK

Members have noted reports from the Cabinet in response to the Panel's recommendations on the Car Park Review 2009 and the Development Management Process.

**4. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
(ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) PROGRESS**

The Panel has been advised of progress on issues that had been previously discussed.

Members have been encouraged to note that progress has been made on the Perry Village Cycle Route, with route options due to be considered at the next Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee meeting.

5. RAMSEY MARKET TOWN TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Panel has considered a report seeking approval of the first Ramsey Market Town Transport Strategy which has been devised in conjunction with the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee. The strategy identifies the key transport issues facing Ramsey and outlines a programme of transport schemes to address the transport needs of the town and surrounding villages over the next five years. Projects within the strategy will be funded from a variety of different sources, with the strategy providing the evidence base required to request contributions from developers. However the majority of funding will be required from the County Council as the highway authority which will also be responsible for the maintenance of the improvements that are made.

The Panel has acknowledged that on-street parking is a particular concern in Ramsey as it slows traffic and can make junctions more difficult to negotiate. This is exacerbated by a lack of enforcement of illegal parking which might be addressed by forthcoming proposals on civil parking enforcement.

Members have questioned the extent to which the proposed strategy could be funded via Section 106 contributions from the recent Tesco development in Ramsey. However the principal contribution would have been the provision of traffic signals at the High Street/Great Whyte junction which has not been supported by the Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee.

The Panel has endorsed the report for submission to the Cabinet.

6. CAR PARKING ORDERS

Following consideration of reports on car parking in February and March 2010, the Panel has considered a further report summarising the public response to the advertisement of proposals to introduce new Orders governing the use of car parks operated by the Council. Members have also been acquainted with details of the financial impacts of the approved MTP, in the context of income from the fees for parking at Riverside Park, St Neots with 38 spaces free of charge for 2 hours, as well as the alternative scenario suggested by the Panel of all spaces at Riverside Park being free for 3 hours.

Having regard to the proposed introduction of parking charges at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park, Members have recognised that the car park is being used by motorists working and visiting the nearby hospital and commuting via the railway station. With that in mind, the Panel has drawn attention to the need to ensure that membership of the Friends of the Country Park is not used simply as a way of enabling motorists to continue to park at the country park without charge.

The Panel has noted the responses received which oppose the introduction of charges at Riverside Park, St Neots. In view of the level of publicity that this matter has generated in the local press, Members have acknowledged that there has been ample opportunity for members of the public to comment. The Panel therefore see no reason why a local inquiry should be required to explore the objections raised in greater detail which, in Members' opinion, would only add further delay and cost to the process.

Members of the Panel have expressed some sympathy with the views expressed by the public but also recognise the need for the Council to generate additional income to meet the anticipated shortfall in the Council's budget.

The Panel therefore has recommended that the Cabinet considers the objections received and determines the Orders without holding a local inquiry.

7. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Council's performance against the environmental well-being targets within the Corporate Plan "Growing Success" has been reviewed by the Panel. The Panel has requested details as to the amount of CO2 saved through moving into the Council's new headquarters.

8. WORK PLAN STUDIES

Having previously suggested waste disposal as a possible topic for a future study, the Panel has received a summary of waste disposal arrangements for the District. As a result, the Panel has requested

further information on future plans for waste disposal and the costs associated with these plans.

Following further consideration of topics for detailed investigation the Panel has appointed Councillors M G Baker, P Godley, D Harty and Messrs D Hopkins and M Phillips to a working group to investigate the subject of planning conservation.

9. SCRUTINY

The Panel has considered the latest edition of the Decision Digest and considered the matters contained therein.

P M D Godfrey
Chairman

Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being)

Report of the meeting held on 1st June 2010

Matters for Information

1. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

In conjunction with the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Environmental Well-Being and for Economic Well-Being, the Panel for Social Well-Being has reviewed the Council's performance against its priority objectives, which are contained in "Growing Success" - the Corporate Plan. The Panel has endorsed the views of the Corporate Plan Working Group, particularly with regard to the objectives where targets have not been achieved.

Clarification has been received on a number of matters raised by the Corporate Plan Working Group including the methodology used to calculate admissions to the Burgess Hall, the achievement of targets in respect of the objective "to promote healthy lifestyle choices" and the types of temporary accommodation used to prevent people from becoming homeless. Members' comments on these matters have been passed to the Cabinet.

2. MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS (PLANNING OBLIGATIONS)

The Panel has been updated on the receipt and expenditure by the Council of money negotiated under Section 106 Agreements. The Panel's role is to scrutinise the progress of allocated and maintenance schemes. Members previously have decided to pay particular attention to four schemes that were completed earlier where works were not scheduled to start. Progress has been made in respect of two of the schemes since the last quarter.

The Panel has asked whether details of the developer involved in each Agreement can be included in future monitoring reports. Additionally, Members have requested further information on particular schemes that are currently pending allocation.

3. PROVISION OF PLAY FACILITIES IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

Members have been acquainted with the outcome of the Cabinet's deliberations on the Panel's study into the availability of play facilities in Huntingdonshire. Having noted that their recommendations in respect of researching the availability of group insurance schemes

and the feasibility of combining safety inspections have been endorsed by the Cabinet, a progress report on these matters has been requested for a future meeting.

4. CAMBRIDGESHIRE HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Panel has received an update on matters currently being considered by the Cambridgeshire Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee. Members have noted that the Committee is currently seeking views on the quality of services at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, with a view to undertaking a study on this subject.

5. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2009/10

The Panel has reviewed the draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2009/10. Members have been reminded that there is a constitutional requirement to produce a Report each year. It has been suggested that the Report should include reference to the Chairman's role in providing public scrutiny of the process to change the governance arrangements of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital and details of how members of the public can obtain information on the Council's Overview and Scrutiny work.

6. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY – REMIT AND WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies and considered its work programme for the forthcoming year. In so doing, Members have been reminded of their responsibility to scrutinise the Children and Young People, Health and Well-Being and Inclusive, Safe and Cohesive Communities thematic groups of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership. Whilst the Panel has already begun to scrutinise the thematic groups, further work in this respect will be undertaken in the course of the year.

The Panel has reviewed its existing programme of studies and has received updates on the future governance of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, the Place Survey and car parking at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. Members also have been reminded of the opportunity to suggest potential future study areas for investigation by any one of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

Other Matters of Interest

7. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel has reviewed its work plan and received details of studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 – FORWARD PLAN

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the current Forward Plan of Key Decisions. Items entitled Home Improvement Agency Review – Future Delivery Model Consultation, Homelessness Strategy and St Ivo Leisure Centre Proposals for Development will be considered by the Panel prior to their consideration by the Cabinet.

9. SCRUTINY

The Panel has considered the latest edition of the Decision Digest and discussed matters contained therein.

S J Criswell
Chairman

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Development Management Panel

**Report of the meetings held on 19th April, 24th May
and 14th June 2010**

Matters for Information

1. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROCESS

Following a presentation by Councillor M G Baker, the Panel has approved a series of recommendations arising from the final report of a Working Group appointed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) on the process for the determination of planning applications. Having been made aware that the Development Management service either had largely implemented or would be giving further consideration to the Working Party's recommendations in respect of the development management process, the Panel was of the view that it was particularly essential to establish an ongoing programme of training and assistance for town and parish councils. The Working Group was commended for the excellence of their report and for the detail in which they had approached their investigation.

2. SECTION 106 APPLICATION: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT RAF UPWOOD, RAMSEY

On the recommendation of the Section 106 Agreement Advisory Group and having been advised of the progress of an appeal against non-determination of an application for proposed development at RAF Upwood and the current position in respect of negotiations on the potential 106 Agreement, the Panel has authorised the Head of Law, Property and Governance to enter into such Agreement as he considers appropriate in the event that the Secretary of State decides that proposed development at RAF Upwood is acceptable.

3. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT APPLICATIONS

At three meetings, the Panel has determined a total of 33 applications of which 23 were approved and 8 refused. Two applications were deferred to enable the Head of Planning Services, in the first instance to clarify details in respect of ridge heights and footprints involved in an application for a replacement dwelling at Great Staughton. In terms of the second application at Rectory Road Bluntisham, this was deferred because of the requirement for further investigation of the need for a dwelling on the site.

Of wider interest to the Council might be the application to construct a new recreation ground and car park off High Street, Offord D'Arcy and three cottages to offset the funding required for the sports facilities. The recreation ground has been gifted to the Parish Council and will accommodate a Football Association adult standard pitch.

**4. PERFORMANCE MONITORING DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT
PROGRESS REPORT: 1ST JANUARY - 31ST MARCH 2010**

The Panel has undertaken its regular review of the activities of Development Management Services over the period 1st January - 31st March 2010 in comparison with the preceding quarter and the corresponding period in 2009 and it is the expectation that income from planning fees will increase over the coming year with the submission of several large development applications being anticipated in the coming months.

5. IMPACT OF NEW GOVERNMENT ON PLANNING POLICIES

The new Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government has announced the intention to abolish Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS) and return decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils. Whilst a further announcement is awaited, the Panel has noted that local planning authorities and the Planning Inspectorate have been advised to regard this intention as a material planning consideration in any decision-making. This development will be particularly relevant for those authorities where there is a variation between RSS and local planning policies which is not currently the case in Huntingdonshire.

The Panel also has noted recent publication of revisions to Planning Policy Statement No. 3 with regard to housing. In brief, the definition of previously developed land now excludes private residential gardens and the indicative minimum density of 30 dwellings per hectare has been deleted.

P K Ursell
Vice-Chairman

Employment Panel

Report of the meeting held on 25th May 2010

Matters for Information

1. ANNUAL PAY AWARD 2010/11

The Panel has received the findings of a study by the Employment Advisory Group regarding current remuneration practices and terms and conditions of employees. The study had included a review of the salaries of those members of staff on lower salary scales.

In considering the conclusions of the review, the Panel has

- ◆ used the Group's analysis and recommendations in continuing negotiation of the 2010/11 pay award to employees;
- ◆ authorised the Director of Central Services to initiate a review of the Council's pay and performance related pay systems; and
- ◆ engaged with employee representatives to suggest improved mechanisms to consult and engage with employees on future savings plans, in conjunction with the outstanding work of the Democratic Structure Working Group.

Having regard to the outcome of the study and other local & national factors, the Panel has commenced negotiations with Employees Side representatives concerning the 2010/11 pay award. However negotiations have been adjourned until 26th July 2010 to enable Employees' Side representatives to consult further with Council employees.

2. POLICY REVIEWS

(a) Adverse Weather Policy

Subject to a number of minor amendments, the Panel has approved the contents of a policy designed to address issues which may arise during periods of adverse weather. The need for such a policy had arisen during poor weather conditions experienced in the previous two winters and is intended to clarify working and remuneration arrangements in such circumstances.

(b) **Disciplinary Procedure**

As part of its overall review of the Council's current HR policies and procedures, the Panel has approved the content of a new disciplinary policy which has been drafted to take into account best practice and legislative changes which have emerged since the procedure was last reviewed. The aim of the policy is to provide a solution for those occasions when standards of employee conduct or performance are unacceptable and to encourage an improvement in these circumstances.

**3. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR
EMPLOYEE LIAISON ADVISORY GROUP**

Pending a review of the operation of the Employee Liaison Advisory Group by the Democratic Structure Working Group and discussion with employee representatives, the Panel has approved interim revisions to the terms of reference and constitution of the Group. The changes include an increase in the number of Employees' Side representatives, together with changes to the Group's general objectives.

4. REQUEST TO FILL VACANT POSTS

The Panel has considered the circumstances applicable to a number of vacancies across the Council's Directorates. Having questioned the Director of Environmental & Community Services and Head of Financial Services extensively as to the justification for recruitment to these posts, the Panel has authorised the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships to recruit to the following vacancies:-

- ◆ Head of Operations; and
- ◆ Auditor, Financial Services.

Subject to clarification that the Executive Councillor had been consulted, the Panel has deferred a decision to recruit to the post of Supervising Inspector (Refuse and Recycling) and has authorised the Chairman and Vice Chairman to proceed when they consider it appropriate to do so.

5. RETIREMENT OF EMPLOYEES - ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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

Name	Directorate	Local Government Service
Mr R Ward	Environmental & Community Health Services	13 years
Mr M Smith	Environmental & Community Health Services	38 years
Mr C Sneesby	Environmental & Community Health Services	40 years
Mr D Deller	Commerce & Technology	18 years

In so doing, the Panel has been pleased to note that the Leader of the Council personally was now writing to all retiring members of staff with a significant length of service.

P A Swales
Chairman

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Licensing and Protection Panel

Report of the meeting held on 16th June 2010

Matter for Decision

1. SERVICE PLAN FOR FOOD SAFETY 2010/11

The Panel has considered an executive summary of the proposed Service Plan for Food Safety 2010/11. The Plan has been developed to comply with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency and incorporates the aims and objectives of the service, the resources available and a review of work undertaken during the previous year.

Approval of the Plan is reserved to Council and appears as Item No. 8 on the Agenda for the meeting.

Matters for Information

2. SERVICE PLAN FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY ENFORCEMENT

The Panel also has endorsed the content of the service plan for Health and Safety Enforcement for 2010/11. The plan has been developed in accordance with guidance issued by the Health & Safety Executive and covers the aims and objectives of the service, the resources available and a review of the work undertaken in the previous year.

Members have been informed that a full programme of premises inspections was carried out in 2009/10 and a high customer satisfaction rating achieved in this period. In accordance with the Health & Safety Executive's strategic direction, the service delivery element gives priority to focused initiatives which accords with the Council's existing targeted approach to health and safety enforcement.

3. HEALTH PROTECTION REGULATIONS

Arising from recent legislative change implementing a modernisation process for infectious disease notification and control, the Panel has approved a number of delegations to the Director of Environment and Community Services and Head of Environmental and Community Health Services to appoint Officers to enforce the provision of the Regulations and initiate prosecutions for breaches of the legislation.

The Regulations, which came into force on 6th April 2010, have been designed to be more flexible and to give greater safeguards to those affected by them. They introduced new powers and responsibilities for local authorities to allow for an appropriate response to public health threats and as such will have an impact on service delivery.

The proposals are set out in three sets of Regulations which give authorities wide-ranging powers in the case of notifiable diseases including detentions and quarantines of infected persons and decontaminating affected premises. The Council has a duty to have regard to the welfare of anyone whose liberty is restricted by a public health order and may have to provide services for people if they are housebound, with the power to recover costs. There are significant legal and potential human rights implications for the Council as a consequence of the legislation, with the safeguard of a magistrates order when applying restrictions on people's civil liberties.

4. PRIVATE WATER SUPPLY REGULATIONS

Members have been advised of the implications of the introduction of the Private Water Supply Regulations 2009.

The Regulations impose a duty on local authorities to carry out a risk assessment of the private water supplies in the District. If water is found to be not wholesome, procedures including a full investigation will have to be followed and the associated costs incurred by the authority can be recovered where possible.

There are only 9 such supplies in the area at present all serving a single dwelling and, as such, exempt from the requirement for a risk assessment unless this was requested by the owner.

Of greater concern for the Council is the question of the responsibility for Private Distribution Networks. Depending upon the definition of a PDN this could apply where water is supplied by a licensed supplier and is then further distributed by a person other than a licensed carrier e.g. a caravan park. The Panel has been informed that this could apply to over 1000 premises in the District which could have significant repercussions for the Council in terms of the resources required to ensure compliance with the Regulations. Guidance on this is being reviewed by the Drinking Water Inspectorate and once the position is clarified a further report on the possible impact will be submitted to the Panel.

Members have authorised the Director of Environment and Community Services and Head of Environmental and Community Health Services to appoint authorised persons to enforce the Regulations and initiate prosecutions.

5. REPRESENTATION ON ORGANISATIONS

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

J T Bell
Chairman

Licensing Committee

Report of the meeting held on 16 June 2010

Matters for Information

1. LICENSING ACT 2003 – NEW MANDATORY CONDITIONS

The Committee has been acquainted with five new mandatory conditions that have been introduced for licences granted under the Licensing Act 2003 for the sale and supply of alcohol. Following concerns nationally about the costs of crime and disorder linked to alcohol consumption, the intention of the conditions is to ensure good practice and consistency within the industry in trying to prevent irresponsible drinking and associated activities.

The conditions, which will be applicable to all premises licences and club premises certificates will:

- ◆ ban irresponsible drinking promotions and activities;
- ◆ ensure free tap water is available for customers;
- ◆ ensure all premises that sell alcohol have an age verification policy for anyone that looks under 18 years of age;
- ◆ ensure that small measures are available to customers; and
- ◆ ban the practice of alcohol being dispensed directly into the mouth of another person.

Breaches of the mandatory code will result in a range of possible sanctions including the revocation of the licence or certificate, additional conditions or, on summary conviction, a fine not exceeding £20,000 and/or six months imprisonment.

J T Bell
Chairman

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