

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in **THE AQUARIUS ROOM, ST IVO LEISURE CENTRE, WESTWOOD ROAD, ST IVES** on **THURSDAY, 17 SEPTEMBER 2009** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

APOLOGIES


Contact
(01480)

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 23rd July 2009.

Mrs H J Taylor
388008

2. MEMBERS INTERESTS

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

3. FINANCIAL FORECAST (Pages 5 - 22)

To consider a report by the Head of Financial Services.

S Couper
388103

4. THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT CORE STRATEGY 2008 - DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT - THE INSPECTOR'S BINDING REPORT/ADOPTION PROCEDURES (Pages 23 - 56)

To consider a report by the Head of Planning Services on the Council's Core Strategy.

R Probyn
388430

5. PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT (Pages 57 - 80)

To consider a report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships containing details of the Council's performance against its priority objectives.

D Buckridge
388065

6. GREAT FEN MASTERPLAN (Pages 81 - 86)

To consider a report by the Director of Environmental & Community Services seeking approval for the draft illustrative Masterplan for the Great Fen Project.

M Sharp
388301

The maps referred to in the report are attached to the agenda separately.

7. NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS (Pages 87 - 98)

To consider a report by the Head of Democratic & Central Services regarding the introduction of neighbourhood forums in Huntingdonshire.

**R Reeves
388003**

8. NEW HEADQUARTERS - MEMORABILIA AND ENDOWMENTS (Pages 99 - 102)

To consider a report by the New Accommodation Project Co-ordinator detailing a protocol for the treatment of the Council's existing memorabilia and future acquisitions and endowments.

**R Preston
388340**

9. ADOPTION OF ROADS AND SEWERS (Pages 103 - 114)

To consider a report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being).

**Miss H Ali
388006**

10. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

To resolve:-

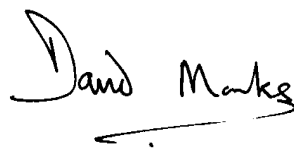
that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of particular persons.

11. SOUTH STREET PUBLIC CONVENIENCES, ST NEOTS (Pages 115 - 120)

To consider a report by the Head of Environmental Management on the potential closure of the public convenience facility located on South Street, St Neots.

**C Allen
388380**

Dated this 14 day of September 2009



Chief Executive

Notes

1. *A personal interest exists where a decision on a matter would affect to a greater extent than other people in the District –*

(a) *the well-being, financial position, employment or business of the Councillor, their family or any person with whom they had a close association;*

- (b) *a body employing those persons, any firm in which they are a partner and any company of which they are directors;*
 - (c) *any corporate body in which those persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or*
 - (d) *the Councillor's registerable financial and other interests.*
2. *A personal interest becomes a prejudicial interest where a member of the public (who has knowledge of the circumstances) would reasonably regard the Member's personal interest as being so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.*

Please contact Mrs H Taylor, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Tel No. 01480 388008/e-mail Helen.Taylor@huntsdc.gov.uk /e-mail: if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Cabinet.

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

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

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

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

Emergency Procedure

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit.

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Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Aquarius Room, St Ivo Leisure Centre, St Ives on Thursday, 23 July 2009.

PRESENT: Councillor L M Simpson – Vice-Chairman in the Chair.

Councillors K J Churchill, D B Dew, A Hansard, C R Hyams, Mrs D C Reynolds and T V Rogers.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor R S Farrer

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted from Councillors I C Bates and J A Gray.

29. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18th June 2009 were approved as correct record and signed by the Chairman.

30. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

31. REVENUE MONITORING: 2008/09 OUTTURN AND 2009/10 BUDGET

A report by the Head of Financial Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of the outturn of revenue expenditure for 2008/09 and the variations between the original and the revised budget for that year.

In considering the contents of the report, Executive Councillors raised concerns over the increasing cost of concessionary fares and recycling gate fees. Having noted a summary of debts received and amounts written off during April to June 2009, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the spending variations for the revenue budget 2008/09 be noted;
- (b) that the first forecast of the 2009/2010 outturn be noted; and
- (c) that the position on debts collected and written off as set out in Annex C to the report now submitted be noted.

32. CAPITAL MONITORING: 2008/09 OUTTURN AND 2009/10 BUDGET

A report by the Head of Financial Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) detailing outturn of capital expenditure during 2008/09 and adjustments for 2009/2010.

Having noted variations in the programme, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the capital schemes monitoring report reproduced at Appendix B to the report now submitted be noted; and
- (b) that the spending variations referred to in paragraphs 2.3 and 2.4 of the report be noted.

33. FORMER FIRE STATION SITE WASTE RECYCLING CENTRE, HUNTINGDON STREET, ST. NEOTS

(Councillor R S Farrer, Ward Member for St Neots – Eaton Ford was in attendance and spoke on this item.)

A report by the Head of Law, Property and Governance was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking approval for the marketing of land at the former fire station site and waste recycling centre, Huntingdon Street, St. Neots.

Having noted that the Domestic Waste Recycling Centre was due to be relocated by Cambridgeshire County Council by the end of the year, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the preparation of a development brief and the commencement of a marketing exercise for the disposal of the leasehold of this site be approved.

34. GREAT FEN PROJECT COLLABORATION GOVERNANCE

Further to Minute No. 08/94 consideration was given to a report by the Director of Environmental and Community Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached a draft Collaboration Agreement in respect of the Great Fen Project.

The Cabinet were advised that the Collaboration Agreement would strengthen the existing Memorandum Agreement by defining the relationship between the partners, setting out the projects aims and objectives and summarising certain managerial/financial matters.

In discussing the contents of the Collaboration Agreement Members' attention was drawn to the conclusions reached by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) on the matter. In that respect, Executive Councillors concurred with the Panel that Clause 7.1 did not refer explicitly to all potential costs such as severance or personal injury claims and the confidentiality provisions in Section 14

might prevent scrutiny and transparency in the management of the project. Executive Councillors were of the opinion that the Collaboration Agreement should be redrafted to reflect these sentiments. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the principle of entering into a Collaboration Agreement in respect of the Great Fen Project, for a renewable five year fixed term, be approved; and
- (b) that the Director of Environmental and Community Services, after consultation with the relevant Executive Councillor, be authorised to sign the resulting revised Collaboration Agreement.

35. SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP

In receiving and noting the report of the Safety Advisory Group held on 10th June 2009 attention was drawn to the findings of a report by HM's Ergonomics Specialist Inspector into the Eurobin manual handling arrangements which had concluded that the task of emptying the bins should be carried out by two employees rather than the current one. Having requested further information on the health and safety aspects of the report, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the matter be deferred.

36. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to an individual/organisation and is likely to reveal their identity/terms of the contract.

37. NEW HEADQUARTERS DELIVERY AND OPERATIONAL REVIEW

By way of a report by the New Accommodation Project Co-ordinator (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) the Cabinet were apprised of progress made to-date on the delivery of the new District Council headquarters and other accommodation.

Having considered issues associated with the future use of Castle Hill House, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the accommodation of all headquarters based staff in future years in buildings B, C, D and E be approved together with the suspension of the marketing of the site of Building A, to enable the Chief Executive to investigate the available options for the disposal of Castle Hill House and report thereon to a future meeting.
- (b) that the reservation of sums to meet contractual claims

and to fund variations within the financial forecast, as outlined in Annex A, be agreed; and

- (c) that the requirement to revise the Medium Term Plan provision for the project at its next review, to accord with the financial forecast for Annex A, be noted.

Chairman

CABINET

17 SEPTEMBER 2009

FINANCIAL FORECAST (Report by the Head of Financial Services)

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1** This report considers the Council's financial position for the next 14 years. It highlights any significant changes from the plan approved in February and outlines a number of areas where there remains major uncertainty.
- 1.2** These uncertainties include the impact and length of the recession, Government funding in the next Comprehensive Spending Review (April 2011 to March 2014), changes to the grant allocation formula and the next pension fund revaluation. The forecast is therefore less certain than normal and the report highlights the potential for information emerging within the next 18 months which might make the position worse.
- 1.3** This report will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) on 10 September and Cabinet will then be able to consider their comments on 17 September prior to making their own recommendations to Council (23 September).

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1** For a number of years, financial forecasts have highlighted the extra costs the Council faces from inflation, government grant being withheld, pressures for more and better services and low grant increases. The impact is increased because Government capping prevents the current low level of Council Tax from being significantly increased towards the average level. Therefore plans have been based on using revenue reserves over a number of years to provide time for efficiency savings to be maximised, extra grants to be sought, charges to be raised and, if all else fails, for any service reductions to be focussed on the services seen to be of lower priority (generically referred to as spending adjustments).
- 2.2** The table below shows the approved Budget/MTP which is the starting point of this year's review:

APPROVED BUDGET / MTP	09/10 £M	10/11 £M	11/12 £M	12/13 £M	13/14 £M	14/15 £M	15/16 £M	16/17 £M	17/18 £M	18/19 £M
Net Spending	23.4	25.8	27.2	28.5	29.6	30.8	32.4	33.7	35.0	36.5
Less unidentified reductions		-0.5	-1.5	-3.2	-6.5	-6.8	-7.5	-7.9	-8.2	-8.7
Net Funding required	23.4	25.3	25.7	25.3	23.1	24.0	24.9	25.8	26.8	27.8
Funding										
Government support	-12.6	-12.9	-13.5	-14.0	-14.4	-14.7	-15.1	-15.5	-15.9	-16.3
Council Tax	-7.0	-7.4	-7.8	-8.3	-8.8	-9.3	-9.8	-10.3	-10.9	-11.5
Deficit met from Reserves	-3.8	-5.0	-4.4	-3.0						

- 2.3** The Council managed to keep its spending £400k below budget last year but still needed to fund a deficit of £1.2M from reserves. Conversely net capital expenditure was £1.4M higher than budgeted due to some contributions from other bodies being delayed resulting in the Council having to fund the spending in the meantime. The result is that Revenue reserves stood at £19.6M in April and Capital Reserves were effectively all used.
- 2.4** The Council continues to face a number of years with significant deficits funded from reserves before balanced budgets can be achieved. Reaching this equilibrium will be challenging.

3. THE NEW FORECAST - SUMMARY

Section 4 - Government Grant

Government General Grant is expected to be as previously indicated for 2010/11 but the new Comprehensive Spending Review will be affected by the expected shortage of Government funds giving lower levels from 2011/12 onwards when a cash increase of just 1% is assumed for 3 years.

Section 5 - Council Tax and Capping

The Government are expected to continue to cap what they regard as excessive increases in Council Tax and their view on excessive will be conditioned by the state of the economy. Capping is assumed at 2.5%.

Section 6 – Revenue Reserves

Revenue Reserves are finite and need to be spread to give a phased target for achieving the necessary reductions in net spending. They have been rephased to reflect the net expenditure reductions (see below) and so there will still be some available in 2014/15.

Section 7 – Summary of Total Funding

Total funding reduces by £1.7m per year by 2014/15, the end of the new MTP period.

Section 8 – Net Expenditure

Optimising the calculation of the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) together with changes in the assumptions for inflation, particularly pay and utilities, result in future net spending levels falling.

Section 9 - Spending Adjustments and Overall Position

Spending adjustments for the next three years only altering marginally but a reduced increase in 2013/14 makes it more achievable.

Section 10 – Sensitivity and Risks

There are a greater number and scale of unknowns than in previous plans and the number concentrated in the next year raise the importance of achieving targeted spending adjustments.

4 GOVERNMENT GENERAL GRANT

- 4.1** In December 2007 the Government, for the first time, announced three year grant settlements and it was pleasing to see that they kept to their plan in the second year (2009/10). It is expected that they will continue to do so in 2010/11.
- 4.2** Whilst this gives councils a much better basis on which to make their shorter term plans it has the potential to concentrate significant changes into each of the three-yearly reviews. There are two types of change:
- Change in the total amount the Government is prepared to distribute to local government.
 - Changes to the formula by which this total sum is allocated to individual councils.
- 4.3** It is expected that the amount to be distributed will be a real terms cut for District Councils because of the economic situation and the perceived priorities of Education and Social Services. The forecast assumes just a 1% cash increase per year over the next review period (2011/12 to 2013/14) and that this will then increase to a 2½% cash increase per year.
- 4.4** There are likely to be two particular changes to the formula. One of these relates to the Area Cost Adjustment which attempts to compensate those authorities nearer London for higher costs. Previous exemplifications which were not subsequently actioned showed the Council losing by various amounts.
- 4.5** The second aspect relates to Concessionary fares which may be transferred to County Councils or central government in April 2011. Council's and the LGA argue that the scheme is underfunded nationally and it remains to be seen whether a transfer would result in some or all Districts losing more grant than they are currently spending on the scheme.
- 4.6** The formula changes are too complex and uncertain to model so no assumed change has been made but the risk is most certainly on the downside.
- 4.7** The Government has a system of protections still in place for those authorities which they have calculated should be receiving less grant. Unfortunately this is funded by those authorities that are due to receive increases in grant like Huntingdonshire and so this Council has now lost over £6M, including interest. The table below shows the change in assumptions on the level of grant:

GRANT* FUNDING	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M
Current Approved Plan										
True grant forecast	13.2	13.4	13.7	14.0	14.4	14.7	15.1	15.5	15.9	16.3
Less withheld to protect others	-0.6	-0.4	-0.2							
Total	12.6	12.9	13.5	14.0	14.4	14.7	15.1	15.5	15.9	16.3
Proposed Plan										
True grant forecast	13.2	13.4	13.5	13.6	13.8	14.1	14.5	14.8	15.2	15.6
Less withheld to protect others	-0.6	-0.4	-0.2							
Total	12.6	13.0	13.3	13.6	13.8	14.1	14.5	14.8	15.2	15.6
LOSS (-)		+0.1	-0.2	-0.4	-0.6	-0.6	-0.6	-0.7	-0.7	-0.7

*Grant includes Revenue Support Grant and NNDR which are *in aggregate* distributed in line with the grant formula.

5. COUNCIL TAX

Tax Base

5.1 The current forecast is based on the tax base rising as follows:

TAX BASE	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Band D Properties										
Number	57,960	58,134	58,483	59,009	59,540	59,897	60,257	60,618	60,982	61,348
% increase		0.3%	0.6%	0.9%	0.9%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%	0.6%

5.2 Current data suggests a 0.3% increase will be achieved for next year and so it is proposed to retain these assumptions which are based on significant house building as soon as the economic outlook becomes more positive with 2012/13 and 2013/14 reflecting “catch-up” on the significant sites that already have planning permission.

Council Tax Level

5.3 The Council’s policy is to keep the Council Tax increase under 5% and the total level below that of the average District Council.

5.4 On 26 March the Government designated 2 authorities for capping, giving them 21 days to explain why their increase was necessary. Subsequently, on 13 May the Local Government Minister, John Healey, made the decisions shown in the table below:

CAPPING	% increases:		Subsequent Government action
	council tax	budget requirement	
Surrey Police	7.07%	4.82%	Capped
Derbyshire Police	8.68%	4.99%	Not capped BUT the calculation of their increase next year will be as if they had been, thus allowing them only a very low increase or even a reduction next year
<i>Government criteria</i>	<i>Over 5%</i>	<i>Over 4%</i>	<i>Both increases must be over the limits for designation</i>
Huntingdonshire	4.99%	4.37%	

- 5.5 Two things are worthy of note. Firstly, the capping decision was made some 6 weeks earlier than the previous year thus demonstrating it could be made before a June election date. Secondly the criteria have again been tightened as shown below:

	Increase in budget requirement of	AND	Increase in Council Tax of
2005/06	6%		5.5%
2006/07	6%		5%
2007/08	No Authorities capped		
2008/09	5%		5%
2009/10	4%		5%

- 5.6 It is very difficult to forecast what impact a 2010 general election and the recession, particularly the key Council inflation element of pay, will have on capping levels. There is significant likelihood that the level will fall and, potentially, significantly. The forecast has therefore been based on only raising Council Tax levels by 2.49% per year. This will be reviewed in the light of the latest information when the tax is formally set next February for 2009/10.

- 5.7 The impact on the Council's income is shown below:

COUNCIL TAX	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
Current Approved Plan										
Council Tax level	£121.15	£127.20	£133.55	£140.21	£147.21	£154.55	£162.26	£170.36	£178.86	£187.79
Council Tax Income	£7.0M	£7.4M	£7.8M	£8.3M	£8.8M	£9.3M	£9.8M	£10.3M	£10.9M	£11.5M
Proposed Plan										
Council Tax level	£121.15	£124.17	£127.26	£130.43	£133.68	£137.01	£140.42	£143.92	£147.50	£151.17
Council Tax Income	£7.0M	£7.2M	£7.4M	£7.7M	£8.0M	£8.2M	£8.5M	£8.7M	£9.0M	£9.3M
Reduction in income		-£0.2M	-£0.4M	-£0.6M	-£0.8M	-£1.1M	-£1.3M	-£1.6M	-£1.9M	-£2.2M

- 5.8 In 2009/10, despite its 4.99% increase, the Council's £121 tax level was still the 19th lowest with the average being £165 and the highest £307.

6. USE OF REVENUE RESERVES

- 6.1 Revenue Reserves in April 2009 were £19.6M and it is considered that £3M is the minimum that needs to be retained for an authority of this size to cover unexpected impacts until the following year's Council Tax can be set or other action taken to resolve the problem. Last year's plan also made allowance for the £3m to gradually increase to £4M as net spending rose above £25M.

- 6.2 Thus £16.6M is available to cover the current and forecast funding deficits on a temporary basis and thus give the Council time to phase in the necessary spending adjustments over the next few

years. Taking account of the following paragraphs that discuss the level of inherent spending and thus the adjustments required to achieve a balanced budget results in the proposed changes shown in the table below.

RESERVES	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M
Current Approved Plan	3.8	5.0	4.4	3.0		
Proposed Plan	3.0	4.3	3.7	2.5	1.9	1.2
Change	-0.8	-0.7	-0.7	-0.5	+1.9	+1.2

7. OVERALL FUNDING POSTION

7.1 The chart below combines the results from the previous sections on funding to show the change in total funding available:

OVERALL FUNDING	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M	£ M
Current Approved Plan										
Government Grant	12.6	12.9	13.5	14.0	14.4	14.7	15.1	15.5	15.9	16.3
Council Tax Income	7.0	7.4	7.8	8.3	8.8	9.3	9.8	10.3	10.9	11.5
Revenue Reserves	3.8	5.0	4.4	3.0						
Total	23.4	25.3	25.7	25.3	23.1	24.0	24.9	25.8	26.8	27.8
Proposed Plan										
Government Grant	12.6	13.0	13.3	13.6	13.8	14.1	14.5	14.8	15.2	15.6
Council Tax Income	7.0	7.2	7.4	7.7	8.0	8.2	8.5	8.7	9.0	9.3
Revenue Reserves	3.0	4.3	3.7	2.5	1.9	1.2				
Total	22.6	24.4	24.5	23.9	23.6	23.5	22.9	23.5	24.2	24.8
Reduction in income	-0.8	-0.9	-1.2	-1.4	+0.5	-0.5	-2.0	-2.3	-2.6	-3.0

8. NET EXPENDITURE

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

- 2008/09 outturn
- Inflation: General inflation, pay inflation, pension contributions and assumed increases in fees and charges
- Interest Rates – Investment and Borrowing
- Unavoidable significant Service Changes

8.2 2008/09 Outturn

This Forecast takes account of the final position for 2008/09 as reported to Cabinet in July.

8.3 Inflation

In the current year there is a saving from the annual pay award being agreed at 2.2% (budget allowance 3%). The provision for very large increases in electricity and gas prices will not now be required for that purpose but will be needed for unexpected increases in diesel costs, insurance and external audit fees.

8.4 The biggest item will always be pay inflation and this forecast is based on 1% for April 2010, 2% for 2011 and 2.5% thereafter. This should not be taken as an assumption that the actual award will be at or even around these levels but simply a current estimation that general pay rises may be at these sorts of level. This change has a significant impact on spending levels.

8.5 Inflation on some other areas has also been adjusted and the table below highlights the differences over the next three years:

	From To	09/10 10/11	010/11 011/12	11/12 12/13
pay		1% from 3%	2% from 3%	2.5% from 3%
prices				
expenditure		2% from 3%	2% from 2.5%	2% from 2.5%
fees & charges		2% from 3%	2% from 2.5%	2% from 2.5%
electricity		5% from 38%	5% no change	5% no change
gas		5% from 40%	10.0% no change	10.0% no change
fuel		5% from 10%	7.5% from 10%	10% no change
pension rate		20.4% no change	20.4% no change	20.4% no change

8.6 Employer's pension contributions are based on the valuation made by the independent actuary. The next valuation is due in late 2010 and will give us the new rates for 2011/12 onwards. It will be significantly affected by the market value of equities when the valuation is carried out. It is thus impossible to estimate what the figure might be but it is very likely to result in further increases.

8.7 Interest Rates

The Council has been largely protected from the fall in interest rates through having a number of investments locked into higher rates. As these come to an end over the coming year our returns will fall but will initially be offset, in part, by low borrowing rates. It has been assumed for the purpose of the forecast that borrowing will be for a mix of periods and current long period borrowing rates are significantly higher than short ones as the market is assuming generally higher rates within the next two years. In practice, there will be some opportunity to achieve lower investment rates by borrowing short until long term rates dip.

The table below shows the assumed interest rates used in the forecast:

Average Rates	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13
Investment	3.8%	2.0%	4.5%	4.5%
Borrowing	0.7%	1.7%	4.2%	4.6%

8.8 Service Variations

Previously approved changes in budgets (MTP schemes) have been reflected in the financial forecast together with the following list of revenue items:

SPENDING VARIATIONS	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Concessionary fares	255	255	255	255	255
Change in accounting rules for recharging to capital	240	240	240	240	240
St Ives Guided Bus	20	75	75	75	75
Additional insurance costs	33	44	44	44	44
Central Services staff savings	-80	-55	-55	-55	-55
CCTV reorganisation	-32	-72	-72	-72	-72
Pay award (2009/10)	-170	-170	-170	-170	-170
Other Inflation adjustments	-45	-45	-45	-45	-45
Lower Income due to the recession	250	165	85		
Higher costs due to the recession	115	76	38		
Recycling gate fees	131				
Car parking general expenditure	-30				
Lower refuse freighter maintenance	-60				
Recharge of salaries to capital	-97				
VAT reclaim with interest	-780				
Other variations	12				
Total	-238	513	395	272	272

8.9 No provision has been made for any further revenue service enhancements or additional costs (other than inflation) but capital sums have been included from 2014/15 onwards at the rate of £5.3M per year (cash prices).

8.10 Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP)

The MRP is a charge to revenue to enable borrowing to fund capital expenditure to be repaid in a prudent fashion. This is the first year that such a payment is required and the Council is required to have a policy on its calculation which is attached at Annex C. The Council's financial plans have always made provision for such a payment commencing based on equal annual instalments with an average life of assets of 25 years. However, in reviewing the DCLG guidance in detail and modelling the options it became clear that the initial payment can be delayed until the year after the borrowing is used for financing capital and that the annuity basis is the most equitable. The net impact is that borrowing costs can be significantly reduced as shown below:

BORROWING COSTS	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M
Current Approved Plan	0.6	1.4	1.8	2.2	2.6	3.0
Proposed Plan	0.0	0.6	1.3	1.7	2.1	2.6
Variation*	-0.6	-0.8	-0.5	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4

* Part of the variation is due to any revisions in interest rates and the phasing of capital expenditure.

9. SPENDING ADJUSTMENTS AND OVERALL POSITION

9.1 All the variations in funding and spending covered by this report will result in a net change to the level of spending adjustments required to produce a balanced budget each year after using the Council's remaining revenue reserves. The net effect is shown below:

CHANGES IN NET SPENDING AND SPENDING ADJUSTMENTS	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M
Net Spending Variations						
Service spending (Para 8.8)	-0.2	+0.5	+0.4	+0.3	+0.3	+0.3
Inflation provision (Para 8.5)		-0.8	-1.0	-1.2	-1.1	-1.4
Borrowing costs (Para 8.10)	-0.6	-0.8	-0.5	-0.4	-0.4	-0.4
Interest variations (Para 8.7)	+0.1	+0.3	-0.2	-0.3	-0.3	-0.2
Total	-0.8	-0.9	-1.2	-1.6	-1.5	-1.7
Less Change in Funding (Para 7.1)	-0.8	-0.9	-1.2	-1.4	+0.5	-0.5
Change in Spending Adjustments Required	0.0	0.0	0.0	-0.2	-2.0	-1.2

Spending Adjustments	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15
Included in approved plan	0.0	0.5	1.5	3.2	6.5	6.8
Proposed in Forecast	0.0	0.5	1.5	3.0	4.5	5.6

9.2 There has been marked success in identifying spending adjustments over a number of years and detailed discussions have been taking place between Cabinet Members, Chief Officers and Heads of Service on the suggestions made by the Overview and Scrutiny Working Group and a range of other possibilities. A number of these are now being developed in more detail and it is envisaged that a list of proposals will be ready for approval when the draft budget is presented in November. Any variations to the phasing shown above will be made at that time.

9.3 Annex A summarises the overall forecast for the period up to 2024/25.

10 SENSITIVITY AND RISKS

10.1 The Financial Forecast, by its very nature, takes a longer-term view and, within that time frame, many of its assumptions will turn out to be imprecise but it is a critical exercise for the Council as it allows the annual review of the required spending adjustments to ensure they are identified and available when required.

10.2 There are certain matters that it has not been possible to include at this stage and it is important for members to be aware of these issues and whether the net likelihood is expected to be good, bad or unknown (???). Examples include:

- Interest rates or inflation may turn out to be significantly different to the assumptions in this report. (???)
- The possibility of further one-off VAT refunds and receiving compound rather than simple interest on these and the refunds already agreed. (good)
- The potential for costs relating to “orphan” contaminated land sites. (bad)
- Increases in employer’s pension contributions from April 2011.(bad)
- Change in Revenue Support Grant Formula from April 2011. (probably bad)
- Financial impact of concessionary fares responsibility transferring to the County Council or centre government in April 2011. (potentially bad)
- The recession becoming more severe and prolonged. (bad)
- Difficulty delivering the savings already identified or the spending targets inherent in this plan. (bad)
- High priority service developments not already in the MTP and any unavoidable spending requirements not referred to in this report emerging. (bad)

10.3 A sensitivity analysis has therefore been undertaken to identify the potential impact if any of the key assumptions change. This is attached at Annex B.

11 CONCLUSIONS

11.1 There are a greater number and scale of unknowns than in previous plans and a number are concentrated on next year as shown below:

Risks and Unknowns	Timescale
Impact of St Ives Guided Bus	By Spring '10
Government capping decision	May each year
Length and depth of recession – impact on interest rates, pay inflation, house building, Council income and expenditure.	ongoing
Government grant totals for 2011/12 to 2013/14 (may be delayed by election)	November '10
Grant formula changes (may be delayed by election)	November '10
Changes regarding responsibility for Concessionary Fares	November '10
Pension Scheme revaluation	December '10

11.2 There will also be unavoidable areas of spending emerging during the budget/MTP process which will result in reserves having to be used more quickly and thus increase the level of spending adjustments required.

11.3 The next 18 months are therefore critical for the Council's future spending plans.

11.4 If the Government only allow Council Tax rises of 2.49% per year, the Council will never be able to get its tax level up to the average to help to protect services. Actual Council Tax levels are considered each January in the light of the latest information.

11.5 **In the meantime**, Spending Adjustment targets can be maintained at the current planned levels for the next 2 years.

11.6 Officers have been working with Cabinet Members to identify a range of measures to deliver the spending adjustments already identified as necessary. Clearly, in the circumstances, it would be best to identify a programme to cover a number of years to provide additional flexibility and this is being considered.

12 RECOMMENDATIONS

12.1 Cabinet is requested to:

Approve the annuity basis for the calculation of Minimum Revenue Provision as outlined in Annex C.

Recommend this report to Council and highlight the particular level of uncertainty leading up to April 2011.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985

Source Documents:

1. Working papers in Financial Services
2. Financial Forecast (September 2008), 2008/09 Outturn, 2009/10 Revenue Budget and the 2010/2014 MTP

Contact Officer: Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services ☎ **01480 388103**

ANNEX A

FINANCIAL SUMMARY	FORECAST	BUDGET	MTP				FORECAST									
	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
2009/10 BUDGET/MTP	23,378	25,286	25,687	25,306	23,149	24,001	24,890	25,817	26,785	27,796	28,650	29,752	30,901	32,103	33,358	34,869
Variations:																
Spending	-238	513	395	272	272	272	272	272	272	272	272	272	272	272	272	272
Interest	57	266	-157	-290	-316	-241	-202	-203	-204	-205	-206	-206	-205	-205	-205	-205
Cost of Borrowing	-572	-819	-484	-445	-442	-378	-366	-351	-330	-301	-266	-223	-172	-114	-46	31
Inflation	0	-803	-964	-1,218	-1,084	-1,355	-1,891	-2,246	-2,517	-2,980	-3,343	-3,751	-4,238	-4,647	-5,058	-5,736
Spending Adjustments (+ = reduction)	0	0	0	238	2,001	1,194	217	256	180	263	214	173	174	57	-99	-32
NEW FORECAST	22,625	24,443	24,477	23,863	23,580	23,493	22,920	23,545	24,186	24,845	25,321	26,017	26,732	27,467	28,223	29,198
FUNDING																
Use of revenue reserves	-3,004	-4,267	-3,744	-2,540	-1,858	-1,180	0	0	0	0	200	200	200	200	200	0
Remaining revenue reserves EOY	16,589	12,322	8,578	6,038	4,180	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,200	3,400	3,600	3,800	4,000	4,000	4,000
Government Support	-12,572	-12,958	-13,291	-13,626	-13,762	-14,106	-14,459	-14,820	-15,191	-15,571	-15,960	-16,359	-16,768	-17,187	-17,617	-18,057
Collection Fund Deficit	-27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Council Tax income	-7,022	-7,218	-7,443	-7,697	-7,959	-8,207	-8,461	-8,724	-8,995	-9,274	-9,562	-9,859	-10,165	-10,480	-10,805	-11,141
COUNCIL TAX LEVEL	£121.15	£124.17	£127.26	£130.43	£133.68	£137.01	£140.42	£143.92	£147.50	£151.17	£154.93	£158.79	£162.74	£166.79	£170.94	£175.20
£ increase		£3.02	£3.09	£3.17	£3.25	£3.33	£3.41	£3.50	£3.58	£3.67	£3.76	£3.86	£3.95	£4.05	£4.15	£4.26

Forecast Capital Spending	15,921	4,678	4,717	6,851	6,776	5,023	5,156	5,292	5,431	5,572	5,717	5,866	6,018	6,175	6,335	6,500
Accumulated net** Borrowing EOY	15,936	19,929	23,860	29,818	35,544	39,356	43,164	46,962	50,741	54,493	58,209	61,882	65,500	69,054	72,532	75,924
Net Interest and Borrowing Costs																
- total	-1,050	120	452	902	1,437	1,986	2,364	2,707	3,060	3,422	3,793	4,166	4,550	4,944	5,350	5,770
- as % of total net spending	-5%	0%	2%	4%	6%	8%	10%	11%	13%	14%	15%	16%	17%	18%	19%	20%
Unidentified Spending Adjustments still required	0	-500	-1,500	-3,000	-4,500	-5,621	-7,270	-7,679	-8,031	-8,466	-9,226	-9,406	-9,862	-10,421	-10,841	-11,021

** Borrowing is net of repayment reserve generated by MRP contributions only

FINANCIAL PLAN - SENSITIVITY AND RISKS

The financial forecast model has been used to demonstrate the impact that the following variations would result in. The values indicate the annual amount that would need to be added or deducted from the spending adjustments target.

Cumulative from 2010/11 unless otherwise indicated	Extra cost in:	
	2014/15 £M	2023/24 £M
0.5% extra pay award (every year)	0.7	2.8
0.5% extra increase in staff efficiency assuming this can be translated into reduced staffing levels.	-0.7	-2.8
0.5% higher interest rates	+0.0	+0.2
0.5% extra increase in level of Council Tax increase	-0.2	-0.8
1.0% extra reduction in Government Grant per year from 2011/12	+0.5	+2.1
Impact if the mix of new assets leads to a 5 year fall in their average life.	+0.3	+0.8
5% loss in Leisure Centre fees and charges	+0.3	+0.3
Increase in Pension Fund contributions of 1% in 2011/12, 2% in 2012/13 and 3% in 2013/14 onwards.	+0.5	+0.8

Inflation, other than pay, is fairly neutral as long as fees and charges are increased in line with it.

The impact of interest rates is significantly diminished by 2014/15 as the Council will no longer be a net investor as reserves will have been significantly reduced to meet revenue deficits and borrowing will be increasing each year.

Other Risks

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

Changes in the Government's allocation formula will take place from April 2011. Last time that the Area Cost Adjustment formula was considered all the options reduced the Council's grant.

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

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

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

Leisure Centre income is close to £5M per year (excluding cost sharing from the County Council and Schools) and certain facilities are in direct competition with the private sector. If the recession continues or becomes more severe there may be some loss of income.

Spending Adjustments of £5.6M by 2014/15 and £10.8M by 2024/25 are included in the financial plan and achievement of these will require detailed identification and delivery plans.

ANNUAL MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY FOR 2009/10

When a Council finances capital expenditure from borrowing, the resulting costs are charged to the Council Taxpayers over the whole life of the asset so that those who benefit from the asset share the cost. There are two elements to the cost – the interest on the borrowing is charged in the year it is payable, whilst the money to repay the sum borrowed is charged as a “minimum revenue provision” (MRP) to the revenue account each year, starting with the year after the borrowing takes place. Once money is in the MRP it can only be used for repaying borrowing.

Until recently, the calculation of the MRP was determined by regulation but this was replaced by the *Local Authorities (Capital Finance and Accounting) (England) Regulations 2008* which came into force on 31st March 2008. It simply says that ***A local authority shall determine for the current financial year an amount of minimum revenue provision which it considers to be prudent.***

However, the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has issued guidance on what constitutes prudent provision and this requires the Council to determine an approach and publish this each year.

The first year in which the Council used borrowing to finance Capital Expenditure was 2008/09 so the first requirement for an MRP is this year.

There are three options for the calculation of the MRP :

Equal annual instalments

This is the easiest and simplest approach but the combination of the equal instalments of principal and the reducing interest makes the cost high to start with but then reducing year by year.

Depreciation basis

The Depreciation basis is the most complex. It starts by mirroring the equal annual instalments method but also requires adjustments every time the life of an asset is varied.

Annuity basis

By setting the rate for the annuity equal to the expected long term borrowing rate the cost is the same for each year like a conventional mortgage. It is only marginally more work than the equal instalments approach.

The Annuity basis is, by far, the most equitable approach and it is therefore proposed that it be the Council’s MRP policy for 2009/10.

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FINANCIAL FORECAST
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being))

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Economic Well-Being has examined the financial forecast contained in the report by the Head of Financial Services at its meeting on 10th September 2009. This report contains a summary of the Panels' discussions.

2. THE FINANCIAL FORECAST

- 2.1 The Panel has been acquainted with the present position in relation to the Council's financial forecast for the period to 2018/19. Members have been informed of potential variations in a number of sources of income and other factors that could affect the Council's financial position.
- 2.2 The Panel has acknowledged the uncertainty created by current economic and political conditions and Members have discussed the potential effects for the Council of a range of changes in these respects. The figures produced are consistent with the trends reported for some time. A deficit is forecast for a number of years and the identification of significant additional spending adjustments will be required. The Panel will wish to comment on proposals for adjustments when they emerge at the end of the year.
- 2.3 The Panel has discussed the projections for inflation, employer contributions to pensions, council tax levels and capping, concessionary fares and Disabled Facilities Grants. Specific reference has been made to the potential effect of the guided bus on the Council's car parking revenue. With regard to the grant the Council receives from the government, after the final year of the current settlement, there is uncertainty attributable to the total amount of money available and to whom it will be allocated. In that context the Panel has endorsed the decision to prepare future projections on the assumption that there will be a small increase in cash terms, though it needs to be pointed out that this represents a reduction in real terms. This is in line with the expectations of other councils.
- 2.4 The Panel has discussed the potential effects for the Council of various trends in the economy. Members have been informed that the Council's position has been safeguarded as far as is possible.
- 2.5 The basis for the Council's planned future levels of reserves has been interrogated. Assurances have been received that the levels recommended in the report will be adequate for the Council's future requirements.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 While there is a high level of uncertainty involved in making forecasts, Members have stressed the importance for the Council of undertaking this work and of monitoring changes in the factors referred to. The Cabinet is

invited to consider the Panels' comments as part of its deliberations on the report by the Head of Financial Services.

Contact Officer: A Roberts – Scrutiny and Review Manager
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COMT
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
CABINET
COUNCIL

11th August 2009
8th September 2009
17th September 2009
23rd September 2009

**THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT CORE STRATEGY 2008 –
DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT - THE INSPECTORS BINDING
REPORT/ADOPTION PROCEDURES
(Report by Head of Planning Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Council that, following his examination of the submitted Core Strategy, the Inspector has now issued his binding report which outlines his considerations and sets out his conclusions regarding the soundness of the DPD.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 As Members will be aware the Council, acting in respect of its role as the Local Planning Authority, needed to fundamentally update its local development plan documents and accordingly, following a protracted preparation process, the Core Strategy was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination in July 2008.

2.2 The appointed Planning Inspector, Eric Searle, conducted the examination by way of written exchanges and via public hearing sessions held earlier this year. The Inspector has considered all of the representations received in respect of the Core Strategy and he has now issued his formal report outlining his findings and conclusions regarding the soundness of the document.

3. THE INSPECTORS REPORT

3.1 The Inspector has issued his binding report and;

- In Section 1 he outlines the basis of the applicable procedures and the relevant tests that he applied to his examination.
- In Section 2 he outlines and comments upon the Council's compliance with all of the applicable legal requirements.
- In Section 3 he considers whether the proposed strategy is justified, effective and consistent with national policy. In doing that he has;
 - endorsed the Council's vision and objectives for the future development of the district, and accepted the suggested criteria that will be applied in order to deliver sustainable development;
 - supported the proposed general distribution of future growth across the district, endorsing the proposed settlement hierarchy, the strategic directions of growth and the related proposals to appropriately restrict dispersed growth;

- supported the Council's aspirations to seek to deliver 40% affordable housing on all eligible sites;
 - amended the proposed wording of the proposed Gypsy and Traveller policy in order to clarify that developments should not have a significant adverse impact on the landscape;
 - endorsed the proposed quantum of housing development and employment land provision for the plan period and the proposed distribution and locations of the strategic directions of growth; which are primarily focussed on the Huntingdon, St Neots and to a lesser extent St Ives SPA's;
 - positively supported the Council's strategy for employment led, rather than residential led, regeneration in the Ramsey SPA;
 - endorsed the proposed distribution of retail development; specifically acknowledging the importance of regenerating Chequers Court in Huntingdon in conjunction with the complementary retail element in Huntingdon West;
 - recognised the applicable infrastructure needs, and related nature of the developer and other contributions, that will be required to support the delivery of the strategy.
- In Section 4 he outlines his approach to dealing with the agreed and proposed changes to the submitted document.
- 3.2 In Section 5 of his report the Inspector reaches his overall conclusions and determines that, with the incorporation of the amendments he recommends, the Core Strategy satisfies all of the relevant legal requirements and is therefore sound.

4. ADOPTION OF THE CORE STRATEGY

- 4.1 The approved Core Strategy is a vitally important piece of the planning jigsaw for Huntingdonshire as it sets out the Council's strategic planning framework for the further growth, development and conservation of the district for the period up to 2026.
- 4.2 The approved Core Strategy now supersedes the strategic policies contained within the adopted Local Plan and Local Plan Alteration and therefore it now needs to be formally adopted by Council as an essential component of the Development Plan for Huntingdonshire.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Therefore it is recommended that Council:
- a. Formally adopts the Core Strategy as part of the Development Plan for the district.

Background Papers:

The Submitted Huntingdonshire Core Strategy 2008

The Inspectors Report on the Examination into the Submitted Core Strategy –
July 2009

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

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Report to Huntingdonshire District Council

by Eric T Searle Dip TP FRTPI FB
Eng MCMI

an Inspector appointed by the Secretary of State
for Communities and Local Government

The Planning Inspectorate
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2 The Square
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Bristol BS1 6PN
☎ 0117 372 8000

Date 29 July 2009

PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

SECTION 20

**REPORT ON THE EXAMINATION INTO THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE
DISTRICT**

DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT – CORE STRATEGY 2008

Document submitted for examination July 2008

Examination hearings held between 17 March and 1 April 2009

File Ref(s): LDF000955

1 Introduction and Overall Conclusion

- 1.1 Under the terms of Section 20(5) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the purpose of the independent examination of a development plan document (DPD) is to determine:
 - (a) whether it satisfies the requirements of s19 and s24(1) of the 2004 Act, the regulations under s17(7), and any regulations under s36 relating to the preparation of the document.
 - (b) whether it is sound.
- 1.2 This report contains my assessment of the Core Strategy in terms of the above matters, along with my recommendations and the reasons for them, as required by s20(7) of the 2004 Act.
- 1.3 I am satisfied that the Core Strategy meets the requirements of the Act and Regulations. My role is also to consider the soundness of the submitted DPD in terms of it being “justified, effective and consistent with national policy” as set out in Planning Policy Statement 12 (2008). In line with national policy, the starting point for the examination is the assumption that the local authority has submitted what it considers to be a sound plan. The changes I have specified in this binding report are made only where there is a clear need to amend the document in the light of soundness. None of these changes should materially alter the substance of the overall plan and its policies, or undermine the sustainability appraisal and participatory processes already undertaken.
- 1.4 My report firstly considers the procedural tests, and then deals with the relevant matters and issues considered during the examination in terms of the tests of conformity, coherence, consistency and effectiveness. My overall conclusion is that the Core Strategy is sound, provided it is changed in the ways specified.
- 1.5 The report sets out all the detailed changes required, including those suggested by the Council, to ensure that the plan is sound. The Annexe contains the changes proposed by the Council including those minor changes which improve or clarify wording. In some cases I have further amended the wording of the proposed changes suggested by the Council. Although I consider that a number of changes are necessary to ensure the document is sound, none of these affect the fundamental approach taken by the Council towards development in the district contained in the Core Strategy. There are, therefore, no “main” changes which I need to make specific reference to here.
- 1.6 The references to Regulations 31 and 33 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004 in the Council’s submissions are because the Core Strategy was submitted to the Secretary of State before 1 September 2008. This has triggered the transitional provisions of Regulation 3(2) of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008 which means that the 2008 regulation

amendments removing Regulations 31 and 33 do not apply to this Core Strategy.

2 Legal Requirements

2.1 The Core Strategy is contained within the Council’s Local Development Scheme, which was approved in March 2007. There, it is shown as having a submission date during the spring of 2008. The timescale and content of the Core Strategy accord with the Local Development Scheme as required by paragraph 4.50 of Planning Policy Statement 12.

2.2 The Huntingdonshire Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) has been found sound by the Secretary of State and was formally adopted by the Council in 2006. The Council has also had due regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire. It is evident from the documents submitted by the Council, including the Regulation 28 and 31 Statements and its Self Assessment Paper, that the Council has met the requirements as set out in the Regulations.

2.3 Alongside the preparation of the Core Strategy it is evident that the Council has carried out a parallel process of sustainability appraisal. The key sustainability issues were identified in the Scoping Report as land, water and resources; biodiversity; landscape, townscape and archaeology; climate change and pollution; healthy and inclusive communities; and economic activity. The sustainability appraisal identified the need to retain the district’s historic and architectural heritage, the particular pressures for growth on greenfield land, and a high incidence of outward commuting which affects the local economy.

2.4 In accordance with the Habitats Directive, I am satisfied that an Appropriate Assessment has been undertaken by specialist external consultants and with full assessment where necessary so that there would be no significant harm to the conservation of European sites as a result of the policies and proposals within this Core Strategy.

2.5 Accordingly, I am satisfied that the legal requirements listed under paragraph 4.50 of Planning Policy Statement 12 have all been satisfied. In addition, the Regional Assembly has indicated that the Core Strategy is in general conformity with the approved Regional Spatial Strategy. It also accords with national policy.

3 Justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

3.1 As the district is within a growth area the main issues are housing and employment, their location and quantity.

3.2 Issue 1 – Whether the strategic vision and objectives are appropriate for the district

3.3 The District lies in the East of England Region within London/Stansted/Cambridge/Peterborough Growth Area. In East of England Plan, Policy CSR1- the Vision for the Cambridge sub-region – includes the statement; “to continue to develop as a centre of excellence and world leader in the fields of higher education and research, fostering the dynamism, prosperity and further expansion of the knowledge based economy spreading outwards from Cambridge.” The southern part of the district, including the towns of Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives falls within the Cambridge Sub Region. The northern part is influenced by its relationship with Peterborough.

3.4 The Core Strategy should emphasise that its policies are overarching and will apply to all subsequent Local Development Documents. This is inferred but the wording requires clarification for soundness. The importance of employment land suitable for high quality business and employment opportunities is not referred to in the Core Strategy and the Council accepts that this needs to be emphasised. However, hi-tech jobs account for only 9.5% of all employment within Huntingdonshire and these are established and concentrated in the three market towns of Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives. Because of this I see no need to specifically mention hi-tech firms in Policy CS7. The supporting text which explains the influence of the Cambridge Sub-Region needs further clarity for soundness.

3.5 To ensure that the Spatial Vision is up to date and the objectives and policies that follow are clearly related to that Spatial Vision amended wording of the text is necessary for soundness. These are listed below.

3.6 A section on climate change should be introduced because of new responsibilities contained in the Planning Act 2008.

3.7 The addition of a section is required to cover more fully the future needs and sustainability issues of the villages and countryside.

3.8 The approach to development in villages and the countryside, where strategic growth is not proposed should be set out. With government support for the rural economy, under Objective 6 exceptionally business development on a limited scale will be permitted in rural areas.

3.9 Clarification is required regarding the status of Key Service centres where strategic growth is to be directed.

3.10 Having the regard to the Council’s approach to growth within the district it is important for soundness to state that it is the Spatial Planning Areas as a whole which are considered to be sustainable for growth, not just the market towns.

3.11 It is also necessary to amend the text under the heading *Increased Capacity of the Transport Network* to incorporate the latest advice from the Highways Agency on the impact of individual developments on traffic flows within the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area on the A14. I have dealt with this under Infrastructure at Issue 4 below.

3.12 I am of the view that a mechanism for specialist housing does not need to be part of Policy CS4. I agree with the Council that it has no direct spatial dimension and is a local issue which can be better dealt with in a subsequent Local Development Document. However, specialist housing should be mentioned in the supporting text

3.13 Tourism in Huntingdonshire is of a modest scale and is spread widely across the district. Apart from adding reference to the importance of the Great Fen and water features in the Core Strategy, any further policies and guidance should be provided through subsequent Local Development Documents.

3.14 With the changes below I consider there would be consistency between the Spatial Vision and other policies of the Core Strategy, and regional and national policy.

3.15 Therefore, subject to the changes below I find the Spatial Vision and Objectives justified, effective and in accordance with national policy.

3.16 **The following changes are necessary to make the document sound:**

i) Amend paragraph 1.4

~~It will not include detailed development control policies or identify specific development sites.~~ **The Core Strategy is a strategic document. The vision and objectives are overarching and form the basis for the whole Local Development Framework; they will therefore be used for subsequent Local Development Documents. Because of the strategic nature of the Core Strategy the Council has chosen not to include detailed development control policies or identify specific development sites.** These will be dealt with separately by the Development Control Management DPD, the Planning Proposals DPD and the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan. ~~—~~ **as appropriate.** (PC/1/00200 as amended)

ii) Insert in the Spatial Vision after Protection of Character

Villages and Countryside

To promote the sustainability of our villages and countryside appropriate investment in the rural economy will be encouraged, including complementary diversification of agricultural holdings. Provision of affordable housing on rural exceptions sites will be encouraged to help people remain in, or return to, their local communities. Transport services, communication links and access to key services and facilities

will be protected and improved where possible to help people living in, working in or visiting villages and the countryside pursue sustainable lifestyles. Huntingdonshire’s villages and countryside offer abundant habitats for plants and wildlife; opportunities will be maximised to maintain and enhance the quality and diversity of habitats supported. (PC/3/00400)

iii) Insert new statement in The Spatial Vision

Sustainable Development and Responding to Climate Change

Delivering the required growth sustainably and in a way that mitigates against and responds to our changing climate will be the most significant challenge for the Development Plan. Development will therefore respond to the need to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by ensuring that energy is used efficiently both in the construction and use of buildings and more of the energy used comes from zero or low carbon sources. The location of development will minimise the need to travel especially by car, make sustainable forms of travel more convenient and so reduce the impact of transport on climate change. Global warming is likely to enhance extremes of weather and the potential of increased risk of flooding that comes from the likelihood of wetter and milder winters could affect much of Huntingdonshire. Also the East of England is already one of the driest areas in the country for much of the year and this is likely to get worse with climate change and will have implications for the use of water in new and existing development. (PC/3/00300 as amended)

iv) ...More limited development will be supported in larger villages to help sustain their existing facilities and amenities, without damaging their character. In ~~our rural areas~~ **other villages**, schemes that sustain and enhance the vitality of established communities, **through the appropriate development of homes and businesses**, will be supported **where they are compatible with environmental designations and constraints.** ~~With the housing growth the~~ **In conjunction with the proposed housing growth** appropriate provision of health, education, training, and community, leisure and open space facilities will be secured. (PC/3/00500)

v) Future **strategic** employment development will be located in the most sustainable locations of the market towns. This is primarily in order to ensure delivery of the most marketable sites but it also follows housing growth to ensure the creation of balanced communities. **The Council will promote the** provision of a wider range of local employment opportunities, particularly ~~in~~ **high quality sites for** advanced manufacturing, environmental technologies, ICT and creative industries. This will help limit levels of out-commuting to London, Peterborough and Cambridge and ensure the continuing success of the District’s economy. (PC/3/00800 and PC/3/00900)

vi) (Paragraph 3.3) ... continuing in the 1980's and 1990's. **As a result of their location within the Cambridge Sub Region pressures for development will continue to be felt within St Neots and Huntingdon as well as St Ives. Other settlements, within the east and south of the District, will also feel increased pressure for development resulting from the District's location within the London/ Stansted/ Cambridge/Peterborough growth area.** Opportunities are arising to regenerate the Town Development Scheme estates and the town centres of Huntingdon and St Neots. The District has a high net out-commuting pattern to London, Cambridge and Peterborough. ~~It but~~ also has a buoyant local economy which now ~~contains~~ **includes** the **Cambridgeshire's** largest cluster of high-technology firms **outside the immediate area of Cambridge in the market towns of Huntingdon, St Neots and St Ives.** ~~in Cambridgeshire outside the immediate area of Cambridge~~ **However, it has to be noted that this is not the most dominant part of the local economy.** (PC/3/00200)

vii) amend paragraph with heading

Sustainable Patterns of Growth and Sufficient Housing to Meet Needs

During this time Huntingdonshire will play a proactive role in accommodating housing growth, including **any appropriate specialist housing and** much needed affordable housing, required as part of the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough growth corridor while respecting, maintaining and enhancing the special character of its natural, historic and built environments. The majority of growth will be concentrated in the most sustainable locations. ~~namely the market towns.~~ More limited development will be supported in larger villages to help sustain their existing facilities and amenities, without damaging their character. In our rural areas schemes that sustain and enhance the vitality of established communities will be supported. With the housing growth the appropriate provision of health, education, training, and community, leisure and open space facilities will be secured. (PC/3/00650 and PC/3/00700)

viii) (Additional Objective) **To support the District's tourism sector, particularly opportunities relating to the Great Fen and water based activities.** (PC/3/01700)

ix) Amendment to Objective 1

Start Objective 1 **To facilitate required growth in locations.....**

x) Objective 6: To ~~enable~~ **support** business development in ~~rural areas~~ **the District's villages and countryside**, in locations and on a scale which helps to provide local jobs, limits commuting and minimises or mitigates against adverse environmental impacts (PC/3/01200)

- xi)** Objective 9: Delete “identify opportunities to” and add **infrastructure while improving the natural habitat and biodiversity** (PC/3/01400 and PC/3/01500)
- xii)** Objective 16: Insert after “energy used,” **encouraging the uptake of sustainable travel modes** (PC/3/01600)
- xiii)** Additional Objective 18: **To support the District’s tourism sector, particularly opportunities relating to the Great Fen and water based activities.** (PC/3/01700)

3.17 Issue 2 – Whether the overall policies of the Core Strategy will lead to development that meets the needs of the district in a sustainable way

3.18 The major part of the housing and employment development is directed to the two major Spatial Planning Areas of Huntingdon and St Neots, 1800 homes in Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area and 2650 in St Neots Spatial Planning Area. In St Ives Spatial Planning Area at least 500 homes would be provided and in Ramsey Spatial Planning Area at least 300 homes are proposed. In addition certain Key Service Centres outside of the Spatial Planning Areas will accommodate about 250 homes.

3.19 Key Service Centres have been identified consistent with the broad criteria set out in the East of England Plan (REG10). Outside of the Spatial Planning Areas only the two villages of Yaxley and Sawtry meet all 5 criteria. Fenstanton misses 1 criterion, access to secondary education, but in my view has rightly been included as a Key Service Centre because of its sustainable location within the Cambridge Sub-Region and the sequential approach in the East of England Plan.

3.20 Concern was expressed by some representors about the lack of flexibility for development in the Key Service Centres and other villages. It was argued that there should be a range of categories for the villages, instead of lumping them all into one category below Key Service Centres. However, I found the range of settlements overall identified in Policies CS2 and CS3 to be wider than is first apparent. There are the market towns and Spatial Planning Areas to which development is directed. There are the Key Service Centres within the Spatial Planning Areas within which strategic development will occur. Those Key Service Centres which have been included within the Spatial Planning Areas have higher levels of sustainability as they are closely related and accessible to their market town.

3.21 Outside the Spatial Planning Areas only 3 Key Service Centres have been identified for limited strategic growth. Fenstanton, within the Cambridge Sub-Region. Sawtry to serve the centre of the district and Yaxley which is closely related to Peterborough and Hampton to the north of the district. In addition there are smaller Key Service Centres

identified which will take a limited amount of development commensurate with their character and scale.

3.22 Under these are the remainder of the villages which, although from my visit I found to be of different size and varied character, I support the Council’s cautious approach and strict control over development in these mainly more remote settlements. In my view even in these smaller villages Policy CS3 provides reasonable flexibility by stating that development proposals of a larger scale may be allowed where site specific circumstances demonstrate that this secures the most sustainable option for the site.

3.23 In the past there was a policy of dispersal and some villages I saw have accommodated high levels of development over the years and have reached a reasonable size. This may well have helped these villages to become more balanced settlements but I consider it sound to strictly control future development in the rural villages by directing growth to more sustainable locations. In the East of England Plan it is stated that it is difficult to identify a correlation between the number of houses, and the range of facilities provided in villages and development has been unable to halt closure of local services. Substantial housing in non sustainable locations would be needed to ensure the maintenance and retention of some village facilities

3.24 I do not agree with the arguments that on the grounds of flexibility more strategic development should be directed towards the Key Service Centres, as I share the view of the Council that some will always be at the margins of sustainability. The smaller Key Service Centres will have opportunities for varying degrees of limited growth. Development in the smaller villages below Key Service Centre level will be strictly controlled.

3.25 I consider that the dispersed option to the Key Service Centres and villages in the Preferred Options Report is the least sustainable option and that the 250 figure for dwellings to be spread across the 3 most sustainable Key Service Centres should not be increased to encourage further dispersal.

3.26 I see no reason on grounds of strategy that directions of growth should be indicated for all Key Service Centres, neither do Key Local Services need to be identified in the Core Strategy. It is only necessary to show directions of growth that are strategic and village services and facilities are normally not. Such services and facilities, if they need to be identified at all, should be dealt with in a later Local Development Document.

3.27 Policy CS3 promotes a sustainable and modest scale of development and identifies those circumstances where such development will be permitted. It also sets out circumstances where different scales of development may be appropriate. This is complemented by Policy CS5 which provides for affordable housing as an exception in rural areas.

3.28 However, the settlement hierarchy needs clarification as a framework for housing development on unallocated sites. It should be stated that Policy CS3 will manage other development on non allocated sites whereas Policy CS2 is intended to guide strategic growth.

3.29 The Core Strategy has a criteria based policy to control development in the villages instead of the former village boundaries approach which some representors, including some parish councils, preferred because they consider it is more definite. To my mind both approaches are acceptable and I do not find a criteria approach unsound. I would expect the criteria to be further defined in the forthcoming Development Management Local Development Document. This should be made clear by a change to paragraph 5.15 and the Glossary. Otherwise I do not find it inappropriate to establish the basic definition of the “built up area” of a village in the Core Strategy at paragraph 5.15, as amended by a proposed change.

3.30 For soundness, sustainable drainage systems should be specifically mentioned in paragraph 4.10 and sites of nature conservation value in paragraph 4.14.

Affordable Housing

3.31 Turning to the sustainability of the Affordable Housing policy CS4, on the 19 February 2009 there were 3139 applicants on the housing register awaiting affordable housing in Huntingdonshire. When compared to the Regional Spatial Strategy target for housing growth, Huntingdonshire has the greatest level of housing need in Cambridgeshire. There is therefore, a sound case for the high target figure in Huntingdonshire.

3.32 Following the publication of Planning Policy Statement 3 and the requirements of paragraph 19, site viability appraisals were carried out across the district. These were assessed both on the basis of a buoyant and a depressed market. If a site is found to be unviable the Council will apply a cascade mechanism which is set out in the Council’s Supplementary Planning Document. However, for soundness it should be made clear that the 40% affordable housing requirement is a target “to be aimed for” not necessarily achieved. Also “may” should be substituted by “will” in the third paragraph of Policy CS4 to ensure that site specific circumstances are taken into account. Otherwise Policy CS4 is flexible enough to deal with market variations by taking into account “other material considerations”.

3.33 Even in the cheapest areas, the lowest quartile house price is 4.5 times local incomes. As Planning Policy Statement 3 requires separate targets to be set for social rented housing and intermediate housing I do not find it inappropriate in principle to include them within the policy, but the tenure figures need to be clarified. Policy CS4 allows for the percentages of social rented housing and intermediate housing to be varied where this is justified.

3.34 Although concern was expressed about the availability of funds to support a 40% target the Council has a grant programme of £1m per year and has already been successful in attracting Growth Area funding.

3.35 Paragraph 29 in Planning Policy Statement 3 requires Councils “to set out the approach to seeking developer contributions.” Although the transfer of free serviced plots is a long established practice it does not occur in every case. It is, therefore not sound to require it and the criterion should be deleted from the policy.

3.36 Although there are differences between the 2006 survey and the later survey, to accord with current government guidance the Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2008 (Document HOU4) supersedes the 2006 survey.

3.37 I have considered gypsy policy CS6 – Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople - in the light of national policy in Circular 01/2006. The second criterion would be unattainable as there is always likely to be an adverse impact of some kind. The issue is whether that any adverse impact would be substantial or significant having regard to the location of the site. The criterion should be reworded to reflect this.

3.38 I consider that subject to the proposed changes below, the proposals in the Core Strategy are sustainable, justified, effective and in compliance with national policy.

3.39 **The following changes are required to make the document sound:**

i) Proposed Changes to Policy CS4

In order to address the need for affordable housing in the ~~the~~ District, ~~40% of~~ all housing proposed in developments in the following categories should ~~be provided as~~ **seek to achieve a target of 40%** affordable housing:

on proposals of 15 or more homes or 0.5ha, or more in all parts of the District; or

on proposals of 3 or more homes or 0.1ha, in all smaller settlements as defined in the settlement hierarchy. (PC/5/01100 as amended)

ii) ..The affordable housing provision should ~~comprise at least~~ **seek to achieve a target of 70%** social rented accommodation with the balance being provided as intermediate housing. (PC/5/01200 as amended)

iii) ... In determining the amount **and mix** of affordable housing to be delivered, specific site conditions and other material

considerations including viability, redevelopment of previously developed land or mitigation of contamination ~~may~~ **will** be taken into account. (PC/5/01300)

iv) Delete from policy CS4 the words **Provision shall be made in the form of free serviced land** (PC/5/01150)

v) Policy CS3 Settlement Hierarchy

The settlement hierarchy provides a framework to manage the scale of housing development appropriate on unallocated sites. (PC/5/00900)

vi) Paragraph 5.15

The definition of the built-up area will be set out in more detail in the Development Management DPD but for the purposes of the Core Strategy it ~~The built-up area~~ is considered to be the existing built form excluding:

- buildings that are clearly detached from the main body of the settlement;
- gardens and other undeveloped land within the curtilage of buildings at the edge of the settlement, ~~especially~~ where these relate more to the surrounding countryside than they do to the built-up parts of the village; **and**
- ~~Also excluded~~ are agricultural buildings where they are on the edge of the settlement. (PC/5/00700)

vii) Glossary

.... **The built-up area is the existing built form excluding:**
~~Excludes~~

- buildings that are clearly detached from the main body of the settlement;
- gardens and other undeveloped land within the curtilage of buildings at the edge of the settlement, ~~especially~~ where these relate more to the surrounding countryside than they do to the built-up parts of the village; **and**
- ~~Also excluded~~ are agricultural buildings where they are on the edge of the settlement (PC/7/00100)

viii) Insert in paragraph 4.10 after “water shortages by” **incorporating sustainable drainage systems into new developments and also....** (PC/4/00200)

ix) Amend the second criterion of Policy CS6 as follows:

The development should not **have a significant adverse** impact on the.....

3.40 Issue 3 – Whether Policies CS2 and CS3 will produce the required housing to meet the needs of the district during the Plan and provide for development in appropriate locations.

3.41 The Council extended the Core Strategy period to 2026 to meet the 15 year supply requirement in Planning Policy Statement 3. This brought the total to at least 14,000 homes between 2001 and 2026, with some 11,000 to be delivered between 2006 and 2026. All allocations were assessed as deliverable in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (Document HOU7). Non allocated sites with planning permission or agreement in principle are capable of short term delivery. Since the submission of the Core Strategy development of some sites has commenced. These are identified in the Annual Monitoring Report 2008 (Document LOC27). The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment identified potentially suitable sites that have a capacity of 8734, far more than the 5500 identified and required for new allocations. I, therefore, find no need to discount for non delivery.

3.42 Concern has been expressed about the balance of housing/employment between Huntingdon, St Neots, and St Ives. The East of England Plan urges concentration of development in settlements, particularly market towns, in the Cambridge Sub-Region. In the Huntingdon and St Neots Spatial Planning Areas 4500 of the 5500 homes are proposed. Huntingdon is the largest market town in the district with a good balance of housing and employment. Looking at the town of Huntingdon in isolation from its Spatial Planning Area it does not appear to be getting its fair share of housing. However, it is important to recognise at the outset that the Council are not starting with a blank sheet. The Council cannot ignore the history of planning and existing development in the area, including outstanding commitments, and the recognition of RAF stations which will become available for development during the plan period. These have influenced the definition of the Spatial Planning Areas by including settlements around the market towns.

3.43 In the case of Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area this includes Godmanchester and Brampton. Godmanchester is virtually contiguous to Huntingdon and relies on the market town for most of its needs, and at RAF Brampton there is an extensive area of previously developed land which can be used for large scale mixed development, avoiding the need to take further greenfield land around Huntingdon. I find this to be a sound and realistic approach which would recognise the close relationship between the Market Town and the Key Service Centres nearby. These developments with their improved public transport will be served by Huntingdon railway station and extensive bus services, including the new

priority bus and guided bus route linking Huntingdon/St Ives with Cambridge.

3.44 St Ives is also a sustainable location for development and will become more so with the introduction of the Cambridge Guided Bus route. However, it has less opportunity for growth other than to the west where it can link with existing allocations and commitments. From my visits I agree with the Council that separation between St Ives and Houghton should be retained. There are also flood risks constraints to the south and south east making land unsuitable for housing development, and land to the north and north-west is remote from the town centre. Nevertheless 500 homes are proposed during the plan period and 17ha is available for employment generating uses. If there is any imbalance relating to inward and outward commuting advantage can be taken of the guided bus provision between Cambridge and St. Ives.

3.45 Ramsey is remote and the least sustainable of the market towns, but there may be some opportunities for employment led regeneration as attempts at housing led regeneration have not been successful in the past. RAF Upwood, which is within the Ramsey Spatial Planning Area, presents an opportunity for employment generation. Although there is local support to regenerate Ramsey by encouraging employment led development I do have some concern about the likely success of employment led regeneration in this most remote of the Spatial Planning Areas, where in the past housing led generation failed. Nevertheless, there is some flexibility in Policy CS7 in that the area identified for growth at Ramsey to the north west of the town is for mixed use development, not employment led, and with the two areas available for development there will be the opportunity for both housing led and employment led development to come forward in the Ramsey area.

3.46 With its grouping of settlements within the Spatial Planning Area Huntingdon has ample opportunity for sustainable growth. There is previously developed land at Huntingdon West which is the subject of a forthcoming Area Action Plan. Brampton and Godmanchester are closely linked to Huntingdon and RAF Brampton, a previously developed site, has potential for mixed use after 2012. Although the Godmanchester and Fenstanton developments may have to wait for road improvements, the development at Huntingdon West and RAF Brampton is not similarly constrained.

3.47 For soundness it should be made clear in paragraph 5.4 the realignment of the A14 and removal of the viaduct will help facilitate further development in Huntingdon West.

3.48 St Neots is the largest of the market towns and there is opportunity for relatively unconstrained development to the east with a limited number of landowners. Although there is concern that there might be too much housing in one place in terms of marketability, I consider that it is because of its scale that a highly sustainable urban extension could be provided, with homes, employment, a district centre and other infrastructure advantages. It also has potential for further future growth.

3.49 I conclude that with the changes made below the Core Strategy will be sound in terms of overall housing policy

3.50 **The following change is required to make the document sound:**

- i) Amend paragraph 5.4 to include the words **in Huntingdon West** (PC/5/00250)

3.51 ***Issue 4 – Whether the policies of the Core Strategy satisfactorily provide for delivery of development and its implementation and there is appropriate monitoring of their effectiveness***

3.52 Because of the highway’s strategic importance the A14 improvements have been identified as high priority schemes throughout its length in the government white paper Britain’s Transport Infrastructure: Motorways and Trunk Roads. The A14 improvements are fundamental to the growth strategy of the Cambridge Sub-Region.

3.53 Early delivery of around 800 homes and 6 ha of employment land is potentially limited by A14 improvements. However, in the housing trajectory there is estimated to be an oversupply of housing between 2007/8 and 2018/19 and with the current slow down in house building I share the view of the Council that a potential short term delay in the delivery of the A14 improvements (the A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton Scheme) would not undermine the soundness of the Core Strategy as other development around Huntingdon and St Ives could proceed without restriction. However, since the Core Strategy was submitted for examination various changes have been agreed to the wording with the Highways Agency and phasing of strategic Greenfield sites close to the A14 will now be required to demonstrate “nil detriment” on traffic flows on the A14 with development that takes place prior to the A14 improvements.

3.54 Turning to the A428 the Highways Agency is satisfied that with the major housing and employment growth planned to the east of the St Neots that localised improvements will provide sufficient capacity up to 2026. This will be complemented by a High Quality Public Transport bus route along the A428 corridor between St Neots and Cambridge. The text needs to be clarified and updated for soundness.

3.55 The extract from the recently completed phase 1 Watercycle Study (INF2) confirms the measures proposed to ensure the growth of St Neots can be accommodated. An increase in the discharge limit is proposed to accommodate up to 2000 additional homes between 2009 and 2016 with a later possible tertiary treatment works funded by Anglian Water Services

during 2016-2020. The present estimate is that there will be capacity up to 2018. Following the results of the recent study the wording in the Core Strategy needs amending to alleviate any fears about the St Neots development being delayed.

3.56 Although Policy CS10 requires contributions to infrastructure from stakeholders, the nature and scale of any planning obligation sought will be related to the form of development and its potential impact. Infrastructure requirements for each site will be subject to negotiation as required by national guidance. I have assessed the sites chosen for housing and employment elsewhere in this report and conclude there are no insurmountable barriers to delivery during the plan period.

3.57 I conclude that with the inclusion of the changes below, in terms of implementation, infrastructure and monitoring the Core Strategy has been justified, is effective and in accordance with national policy.

3.58 **The following changes are required to make the document sound:**

i) Changes to The Spatial Vision:

The proposed A14 improvements will **assist** much of the development in the Huntingdon area to take place and will improve access to and around the town centre, **but individual developments within the Huntingdon SPA may take place subject to demonstrating either ‘minimal impact’ or ‘nil detriment’ on traffic flows on the A14.** ~~while the dualling of the A428 in the St Neots area will be promoted to facilitate development there~~ **In the longer term an enhanced A428 in the St Neots area will facilitate the continuing development of a sustainable community beyond the plan period.**

Improvements in public transport will enable the promotion of sustainable travel options, particularly through the Cambridge to St Ives Guided Bus with associated bus priority measures between St Ives and Huntingdon, **enabling more convenient sustainable travel to and from Cambridge.** The provision of high quality public transport along the A428 corridor **will enable similar convenience between St Neots and Cambridge.** (PC/3/01000, PC/3/00950, PC/3/01000A, PC/3/01100)

ii) Paragraph 5.5

The St Neots Spatial Planning Area includes St Neots and Little Paxton and has a combined population of around 31,200. Little Paxton has its own distinctive identity and is physically separated from St Neots by the River Great Ouse. However, the key concentration of services and facilities of St Neots town centre are as close to Little Paxton as to many parts of the town itself. Along with land in Bedfordshire around Wyboston, the area is also a key driver of the local economy particularly for the manufacturing and

warehousing and distribution sectors. The SHLAA has identified that this area offers significant opportunities for development especially through the creation of a large sustainable urban extension to the east of the town. ~~The capacity of the A428 may be an issue until the section between the A1 and Caxton Gibbet can be upgraded to a dual carriageway.~~ (PC/5/00200)

iii) Paragraph 5.93

The transport network across Huntingdonshire is dominated by the north-south corridor of the A1(M) and East Coast mainline and east-west A14(T) route. Existing infrastructure contributes to the dominance of the car both in physical terms as a barrier and in operational terms through congestion. The A14 Ellington to Fen Ditton improvement scheme will alleviate the situation, with the preferred route having been confirmed. The Cambridgeshire Guided Busway is programmed to commence operation in spring 2009. Phasing of strategic greenfield sites close to the A14 within the plan period will be required to coincide with the associated works with the A14 improvements. ~~Junction improvements will be required to the A428 to overcome objections to further development in St Neots.~~ **Improvements will be needed to the three roundabouts on the A428 to mitigate the impact of development related traffic arising from the Core Strategy proposals.** Any further works to the road network (such as the A1 at Buckden) that are identified during the plan period may affect the phasing of sites where it is proven that the development is significantly dependent on that infrastructure. (PC/5/03900)

iv) Paragraph 5.92

Research for the Council’s ~~emerging~~ Watercycle Study has identified where current treatment infrastructure has insufficient capacity for development in its catchment. The scale of proposed development at St Neots is such that a new treatment works and increase in discharge consent ~~is likely to~~ **will** be required. ~~The design, construction and commissioning period for a new treatment plant is in the order of 5 years and, if land purchase negotiations are added, the period could be 8 years~~ **The timing of growth however will not be affected as an increase in the discharge consent has been granted allowing development to proceed up to 2018 by which time any expansion of the treatment works can be delivered.** This constraint could have a significant impact on the timing of growth at St Neots, particularly if funding is not obtained until the period 2015 – 2020. Any development proposals falling within the Upwood Sewage Treatment Works catchment will need to ensure that no adverse effect would arise impacting on Woodwalton Fen. (PC/5/03800A)

3.59 Issue 5 – Whether the Core Strategy justifies and deals flexibly and effectively with employment issues and town centre policy.

3.60 Although some housing is proposed in the town centre I concentrate here mainly on employment provision.

3.61 Forecasts predict there will be around 13,000 jobs created in Huntingdonshire. The Employment Land Review considered that a “low carbon future” approach would be the most appropriate model and the strategy aspires to this approach, but has factored in flexibility to ensure an adequate supply of deliverable land in locations where significant housing growth will be delivered. The Employment Land Review model indicated that with a “low carbon future” approach at least 66ha of land for employment uses should be identified.

3.62 There were diverse views from representors during examination on employment land provision some considered the total provision too little, others considered it to be too much and others thought it about right, but not necessarily in the right place.

3.63 Employment projections are notoriously difficult to assess with a significant degree of accuracy. As far as total provision is concerned I consider Policy CS7 to be flexible. The figure of 85ha is in excess of the 66ha “low carbon figure” and Policy CS7 requires *at least* 85ha of employment land to be provided before 2026. Inserting “about” instead of *at least* would add to the soundness of the plan, but the policy does not preclude more land coming forward during the plan period if required. The amount of employment land in St Neots has been increased to reflect the housing growth and small scale employment opportunities are also identified at RAF Upwood in the Ramsey Spatial Planning Area. Also potential sites in Huntingdon West can make up for loss of employment land through regeneration. I am satisfied that in respect of total provision Policy CS7 will meet the requirement of the East of England Plan and provide sufficient flexibility of choice.

3.64 It is part of the overall strategy to concentrate the major part of the employment growth in Huntingdon and St Neots Spatial Planning Areas. Most of the job growth in recent years has been in Huntingdon and I would expect this to continue. Some 51ha of employment land will be provided in the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area. At least 13ha of this will be on previously developed land.

3.65 Some 25ha of employment land are proposed for development in the St Neots Spatial Planning Area on Greenfield land in a mixed use urban extension for B1, B2 and B8 uses to the east of the town. The figure of 25ha is higher than that identified in the Employment Land Review but I consider this will help to ensure a balanced community with less out commuting, particularly as the employment development would be part of an integrated mixed use scheme in the form of a Sustainable Urban Extension.

3.66 In January 2009 in the St Ives Spatial Planning Area existing commitments amounted to 16.85ha. There is planning permission for 32,899m² of mainly offices on 15.25ha of this land. The average take up of employment land over the last seven years was less than 1ha. There is potential for additional supply from redevelopment and intensification of uses within the 33ha Somersham Road Industrial Estate. Taking into account employment development which may come forward during the plan period and relating this to the expected rate of housing completions, I consider this to be sufficient to match growth and market pressure for a settlement of this size.

3.67 In Ramsey Spatial Planning Area at least 9ha of employment land will be provided with at least 2ha on previously developed land. The previous approach to provide a large scale allocation was not successful and was deleted under the 2002 LPA (LOC4). In 2004 informal planning guidance was adopted by the Council. This retained 7.24ha of employment land, 3.9ha re allocated for a food store, 1.6ha for predominantly residential and 5.43ha for potential redevelopment. This development is now coming forward. Some new employment has been generated at the former RAF Upwood. A new Tesco store has been permitted and there is no evidence to indicate this will not be delivered in the short term. Whether employment led growth will rectify the imbalance will need to be monitored but I share the view of the Council that an alternative strategy which involves substantial housing growth would fuel unsustainable out commuting.

3.68 Yaxley and Sawtry are Key Service Centres outside the Spatial Planning Areas, which have existing employment commitments. Little Paxton and RAF Brampton lie within the St Neots and Huntingdon Spatial Planning Areas respectively. From my visits and the representation submitted on sustainability and service provision I consider these Key Service Centres are only suitable for limited development which would not be strategic in scale and, if thought to be necessary, could come forward through a later Development Plan Document. I do not consider Hemingford Abbots, Hemingford Grey and Conington are sustainable locations for strategic employment development.

3.69 It should be made clear in the Core Strategy that all employment contributes to the 13000 target, not just B1 uses.

3.70 Policy CS8 sets a minimum target of 20,000sq.m for comparison sector growth and 4,000sq.m for convenience sector growth. No upper limits are set. The retention rate for convenience goods is 75.6% and it is not expected this is likely to be increased because of large modern food stores just outside the district boundary. Only 38% of comparison sector expenditure is retained in the Huntingdonshire catchment area as it suffers from high leakage to Cambridge, Peterborough and Bedford. To improve this retention rate it is important to seek an increase in the existing comparison retention rate. Additional comparison floor space within a range 11,319 and 21,662 sq.m was suggested. All figures are net floor space and this should be clarified in the text. They do not include non strategic retail development and other uses in the Sustainable

Urban Extensions or town centres. These should be identified in the future Development Management DPD. Also the text should better reflect the diversity of town centre uses and their importance to the local economy.

3.71 Huntingdon is at present failing to fulfil its potential as the principal town centre of the district and there is a clear need for an enhancement of the town centre comparison retail offer.

3.72 Chequers Court is an important integral part of the town centre and its regeneration should be given priority. The Council accepts this and has proposed a change to the wording of Policy CS 8. I consider the policy now not only recognises the importance of Chequers Court but also has the flexibility to bring forward the Huntingdon West at the appropriate time, which will secure an improved road network for the future. This was not clear in the previous wording of the policy. The retail element of the Huntingdon West scheme is so close to the centre that I do not consider it would fall foul of advice in PPS6 paragraph 2.46. However, it is necessary for soundness to ensure that the complementary nature of Huntingdon West be clearly identified, as that development will be required at some stage to deliver the improvements to shopping required by the plan.

3.73 It will be necessary to serve the proposed development at Godmanchester with convenience shopping, and the developers acknowledge that about 500 to 600 square metres net retail floorspace could be supported by the urban extension. With the close proximity of Godmanchester to Huntingdon, I consider it unlikely that such convenience shopping would need to be strategic in scale, as it would then become a competitive attraction for convenience shopping, rather than serve the locality. I do not consider it appropriate to mention non strategic shopping in Policy CS8.

3.74 I find the employment policies flexible but sound and the retail floor space targets to be flexible and sufficient to encourage investment.

3.75 I conclude that subject to the changes below, in terms of sustainability the Core Strategy is justified, effective and in accordance with national policy.

3.76 **The following changes are required to make the document sound:**

i) Policy CS7

In the St Neots Spatial Planning Area where 25ha of land, all of which is greenfield land, will be provided in the following general location:

In a significant mixed use urban extension for B1, B2 and B8 uses on greenfield land to the east of St Neots.

In addition to this, an existing commitment at Little Paxton, which might come forward during the plan period.

.....

Outside the Spatial Planning Areas, in the Key Service Centres of ~~Little Paxton~~, Sawtry and Yaxley, on existing commitments which might come forward during the plan period. (PC/5/01700 as amended)

ii) About 85ha of new land for employment will be provided before 2026 in order to ~~support~~ contribute to the creation of at least 13,000 jobs, assist the diversification of local job opportunities and reduce the significant level of out-commuting. (PC/5/01650 - as amended). **The reuse of previously developed land will be promoted within the Market Towns and other sustainable locations, with the result that.....** (PC/5/01500)

iii) In the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area **about** 51ha ...

In the St Neots Spatial Planning Area where **about** 25ha... (PC/5/01600 - as amended)

iv) Paragraph 5.49

The Council’s *Economic Strategy* is promoting jobs that will feed off the growth in the high-tech economy around the Cambridge area and is seeking higher quality, more sustainable locations to achieve this. **These locations will also provide for competition, between developers and choice, between occupiers.** ~~These will tend to be closer to the town centres and built at higher densities and often-~~**They will be on previously developed industrial sites land and on new allocations; closer to the town centres and built at higher densities; in mixed use developments on previously developed and greenfield sites and edge of town sites for larger scale general industry and warehousing.** Other local jobs will be created in the retail, leisure and tourism sectors as a result of population growth. The area of land identified has, however, been increased to take into account a number of factors **support the operation of the market.** To reflect the main market preference for new employment land, the potential locations available and as Huntingdon has been identified as having the best balance between jobs and homes, it is considered appropriate to identify locations for additional local employment opportunities in the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area. This would help to ensure an adequate supply of deliverable sites around Huntingdon. All the options considered were evaluated to ascertain their potential highway impacts. Details of the *Huntingdonshire Spatial Strategy Options Assessment* are given in Annex 1 of the Statement of Consultation: Audit Trail. **This is characterised by long term development pipelines through which developers bring land forward through site identification, planning and advance**

infrastructure investment for take up by business users over many years.

Additional local employment opportunities have been identified in the Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area as this area is the main focus of market activity and this presents an opportunity to maintain the good balance between homes and jobs. In addition the town offers a range of general locations which could provide high quality development in sustainable locations (adjoining the town centre, on previously developed land and within mixed use development) and for larger scale general industry and warehousing (to the north west of the town with good links to residential areas and the highway network). (PC/5/01800)

v) Policy CS8

Add the following footnote to policy CS8:

Note: all floorspace figures given are net sales area. (PC/5/02300)

vi) Paragraph 5.59

Huntingdon is the higher order centre within the District and market demand for further retail development is greatest. **The Council is looking to facilitate developments that benefit the vitality and viability of the town centre as a whole.** The implementation of the **further development and improvement of retail facilities at Chequers Court Phase II** scheme in Huntingdon town centre is the Council’s top retail priority ~~as this is a previously developed site within the existing town centre.~~ Delivery of this scheme is expected to attract additional comparison goods retailers to Huntingdon offering a greater diversity of shopping opportunities which is critically important for the retention of comparison retail expenditure. **This will be supplemented by limited, complementary retail and leisure provision on previously developed land on the edge of the existing town centre on land within the area covered by the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan. Schemes in this area will be carefully controlled to ensure they are complementary to the existing town centre, rather than competing directly with it, and contribute to the provision of retail and town centre uses within Huntingdon.** ~~Compared to the other Market Towns, Huntingdon has more opportunities for use of previously developed land in and adjacent to the town centre to strengthen the range of retail provision in locations most easily accessed by sustainable modes of transport. (PC/5/02800)~~

vii) Paragraphs 5.54 and 5.55

Huntingdonshire’s **market towns** faces a number of many challenges over the plan period in terms of retailing and the District’s town centres **as they compete with larger centres nearby to attract investment and maintain their vitality and viability.** These have been identified as **include the need to:**

- the need to retain more of the retail **a higher proportion of residents’ expenditure by improving the retail and leisure facilities** to the benefit of the town centres and the wider economy of the District
- to continue to improve **safeguard** the environment and public realm in town centres and **unique character of each historic town as places to visit**
- to provide opportunities for residents to access town centre services sustainably
- **boost the diversity of uses including retail, leisure, housing, parking, tourism and cultural facilities**

paragraph 5.55 National planning policy for town centres requires local authorities to identify where new retail facilities will be focused **as they are a key driver of the local economy.** Huntingdon and St Neots, being the main **locations** for growth will take the larger proportion of retail development **of retail and other town centre uses.** Retail development in the other key settlements **market towns and key service centres** is important for maintaining services, providing sustainable options for residents and retaining retail expenditure **locally.** (PC/5/02200)

viii) Change to heading after paragraph 5.55

Retail **and Town Centre Uses** (PC/5/02100)

ix) Amend Policy CS8:

Retail and **Town Centre Uses**

At least 20,000m² of comparison floorspace and 4,000m² of convenience floorspace will be provided before 2026. As part of the overall development strategy to concentrate the majority of growth in the Huntingdon and St Neots Spatial Planning Areas **it is proposed to locate retail development in the following areas whilst observing environmental designations and constraints:**

At least 9,000m² of comparison floorspace will be located in Huntingdon, concentrated in the town centre **with priority given to the further development and improvement of retail facilities at Chequers Court.** ~~and~~ Complementary and appropriate development, **that does not jeopardise the delivery of further redevelopment of Chequers Court,** will be located in

a significant mixed use redevelopment in the area west of the town centre covered by the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan

At least 9,000m² of comparison floorspace will be located in St Neots, **with priority given to proposals** ~~concentrated~~ in the town centre. ~~and~~ Complementary and appropriate development **will be located** as part of a significant mixed use urban extension on greenfield land to the east of the town;

At least 2,000m² of comparison floorspace will be located in St Ives concentrated in the town centre; and

At least 4,000m² of convenience floorspace **primarily** in town centres across the District. (PC/5/02400 and PC/5/02500)

x) Add to paragraph 5.86 after “Caxton to St Neots” **and the possible future improvements to the A428 from Caxton to the A1 bypassing St Neots** (PC/5/03700)

xi) Add to the fifth line paragraph 5.93 after “spring 2009” **The release of development sites within the Huntingdon SPA will be required to demonstrate ‘minimal impact’ or ‘nil detriment’ on traffic flows on the A14 prior to the A14 improvements taking place.** Delete the next two sentences and add **Improvements will be needed to the three roundabouts on the A428 and other traffic management measures to mitigate the impact of development related traffic arising from the Core Strategy proposals.** (PC/5/03850A and B and PC/5/03900)

xii) Add to third item in the contributions list after “strategic green infrastructure” **and biodiversity enhancement mitigation;** (PC/5/04000)

xiii) Add to monitoring paragraph 6.5

...particularly the Huntingdon **Spatial Planning Area.** The next phase will see the start of strategic Greenfield development **that** will be dependent on the provision of a significant amount of infrastructure, **and in the case of sites close to the A14 in Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area demonstrate ‘nil detriment’ to the A14 if they wish to be developed prior to the A14 improvements.** Delete remainder of last two sentences. (PC/6/00050)

4 Other changes

4.01 The Council wishes to make several changes to the submitted Core Strategy in order to clarify, correct and update various parts of the text. They are often words of explanation which makes the Core Strategy easier to read and understand. Although these changes do not address key aspects of soundness, I endorse them on a general basis in the interests of clarity and accuracy. These changes are listed for convenience in the Annexe. The Annexe is a comprehensive list of all changes proposed by the Council, some of which have been further amended by me in this report.

5 Overall Conclusions

5.01 I conclude that, with the amendments I recommend, the Core Strategy satisfies the requirements of s20(5) of the 2004 Act and the associated Regulations, is sound in terms of s20(5)(b) of the 2004 Act, and meets the soundness requirements in Planning Policy Statement 12.

Eric T Searle

INSPECTOR

Annexe

Schedule *of changes put forward by the Council*

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The Planning Inspectorate

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David Monks
Chief Executive
Huntingdonshire District Council
Pathfinder House
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Huntingdon
PE29 3TN

Your Ref: CS2008/Reg28
Our Ref: PINS/H0520/429/5
Date: 08 July 2009

Dear David

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT CORE STRATEGY 2008 DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

1. As you know, I was appointed by the Secretary of State to carry out an independent examination of the above development plan document, which was submitted to the Secretary of State in July 2008, pursuant to section 20 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
2. I held a pre-examination meeting on 16 December 2008, and conducted the examination by way of written exchange and by a series of hearings. The hearing sessions were held at The Methodist Church, 17 High Street, Huntingdon between 17 March and 2 April 2009.
3. The purpose of the examination is set out in section 20(5) of the 2004 Act. By the time I started making an assessment of soundness, Planning Policy Statement 12 had been revised in June 2008 (and re-titled Local Spatial Planning) and I have assessed the submitted document against the legal requirements and soundness as set out in paragraphs 4.50-4.52 of the new PPS12.
4. With this letter is a copy of my report on the submitted Core Strategy. This contains my recommendations and the reasons for them as required by section 20(7) of the 2004 Act.

5. After considering all the representations made during the 6 week period following submission as well as all the matters and issues, I have written the accompanying report, which contains my recommendations and the reasons for them. My overall conclusion is that, with the amendments recommended in my report, the Huntingdon Core Strategy satisfies the legal requirements and is sound.

6. Gloria Alexander acted as my Programme Officer. Because of the demolition work on the Pathfinder House site she had to work in less than ideal conditions and I am grateful for her valuable assistance in ensuring that the examination process, and particularly the hearing sessions, ran smoothly. All the core documents which constituted the evidence base for the plan are available in the examination library together with representations made and statements prepared during the examination

7. I wish to express my thanks to the Council's officers and advisors and all those attending the hearing sessions for the helpful, positive and professional manner they adopted throughout the examination. I hope that my conclusions and recommendations will help to facilitate the regeneration of the Huntingdonshire district in an effective manner which is beneficial to both the towns, and those sustainable rural areas.

Yours sincerely

Eric T Searle

INSPECTOR

CABINET

17TH SEPTEMBER 2009

**THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE CORE STRATEGY 2008 – THE INSPECTOR’S BINDING
REPORT/ADOPTION PROCESS
(Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being))**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting on 8th September 2009, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) considered a report by the Head of Planning Services on the Council’s Core Strategy.

2. DELIBERATIONS

- 2.1 The Panel was pleased to note that the vast majority of changes to the Core Strategy had been proposed by the Council and that any other changes imposed by the Inspector were negligible.
- 2.2 Members congratulated the Head of Planning Services and his team on their efforts, and noted that the next stage in the process would be the Development Management Submission Document which would be subject to consultation in due course.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Cabinet is invited to note that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) has no specific comments on the Core Strategy to bring to its attention.

Contact Officer: Mrs J Walker, Trainee Democratic Services Officer
☎ 01480 387049

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CABINET

17th September 2009

**PERFORMANCE MONITORING
(Report by the Head of People, Performance & Partnerships)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present to Members performance management information on “Growing Success” – the Council’s Corporate Plan.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 In September 2008 the Council adopted an updated Plan which includes 37 short, medium and long term objectives to help achieve aims and ambitions for Huntingdonshire’s communities and the Council itself. In addition the Council identified eight of these objectives which were considered to be a priority for the immediate future.

3. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 Progress against all 37 objectives is reported to Chief Officers Management Team quarterly on a service basis. A progress report from each Division includes performance data in the form of achievement against a target for each of the objectives that those services contribute towards. This is supported by narrative on achievements, other issues or risks and budgeting information. In addition, a working group jointly appointed by the Overview & Scrutiny Panels continues to meet quarterly to monitor progress in the achievement of the Plan and to consider development issues.
- 3.2 Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels have an important role in the Council’s Performance Management Framework and the process of regular review of performance data has been established. In adopting the updated version of Growing Success, and in particular in prioritising objectives, it was intended that Members should concentrate their monitoring on a small number of objectives to enable them to adopt a strategic overview while building confidence that the Council priorities are being achieved.
- 3.3 Executive members requested that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel’s deliberations were summarised and appended to this report. However, due to the timing of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel’s meeting and the distribution of the Cabinet agenda the Panels comments will now be circulated separately.

4. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- 4.1 The following performance data is appended for consideration:

Annex A - Performance data from services which contribute to the Council objectives. For each measure there is a target, actual performance against target, forecast performance for the next period, an indicator showing the direction of travel compared with the previous quarter and a comments field. The data is colour coded as follows:

- green – achieving target or above;
- amber – between target and an “intervention level (the level at which performance is considered to be unacceptable and action is required);
- red – the intervention level or below; and
- grey – data not available.

Annex B - a summary of the achievements, issues and risks relating to the objectives, as identified by the Heads of Service.

Annex C - Council Improvement Plan – a rolling plan of actions identified following internal or external reviews such as the Comprehensive Performance Assessment, Use of Resources Assessment and the Annual Governance Statement.

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Members are recommended to;

Consider the results of performance for priority objectives.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Performance Management reports produced from the Council’s CPMF software system

Growing Success: Corporate Plan

Contact Officer: Howard Thackray, Policy & Research Manager
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I can confirm the accuracy of the data in the attached reports and that its compilation is in accordance with the appropriate Divisions’ data measure templates.

Community/Council Aim: Healthy Living								
Objective: To promote active lifestyles								
Division: Leisure								
Divisional Objective: To increase participation in healthy physical activities								
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:		Key Measure:		Target:	Actual:	Forecast:		
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:		Key Measure:		Target:	Actual:	Forecast:		
Maintain and improve standard of facilities & match facility provision with usage demand (SCS measure)	Number of admissions/participants in activities provided or promoted by the Council (cumulative quarterly target)	447,750	428,101 (R)				Increases at HLC with new facilities and with swimming. Decreases in Burgess Hall and synthetic pitches	
Promotion and marketing of available activities	Number of active card holders	19,000	19,656 (G)				Above target. Data capture campaign will increase number	
Division: Lifestyles								
Divisional Objective: To promote healthy lifestyle choices								
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:		Key Measure:		Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:
Provide a range of accessible leisure opportunities such as: a Holiday Activity Programme for <17 yrs (SCS measure)	Total throughput of school, outreach and holiday activity Programmes (cumulative quarterly target)	1,000	1,413 (G)				↔	
Provide and facilitate arts activities directly and in partnership	Throughput of people (target 8500 per ann) experiencing arts interventions as a result of Arts Service and Partner activities during 2009/10 (cumulative quarterly target)	2,125	8,023 (G)		10,523		↔	
Provide targeted schemes to enable vulnerable people to participate in physical leisure activities (inc Exercise Referral, Community Sports and Recreation Project, Community Sports Network and Active Life scheme) (SCS measure 2.1.5)	Throughput on identified schemes (cumulative quarterly target)	2,825	5,632 (G)				↔	
Provide under-represented groups with the opportunity to participate in sport and active recreation (SCS measure)	Total throughput of activity programme for disabled participants and under-represented groups (cumulative quarterly target)	250	507 (G)				↑	
Support vulnerable people to be more active, Cardiac Rehabilitation programme and Health Walks	Total throughput of the Cardiac Rehabilitation programme and Health Walks in Huntingdonshire (cumulative quarterly target)	1,890	2,547 (G)				↑	Cardiac Rehabilitation throughput is slightly below the expected level at 471, against a simple quarterly target of 550 (2,200 divided by 4). However, this is explained by seasonal variance with Easter holidays falling in April this year. Health Walks throughput is up on the same quarter last year at 2,076 and is above the quarterly target of 1,340.

* Direction of Travel - shows change in performance since last quarter, where applicable

Community/Council Aim: Housing that meets individuals needs
Objective: To achieve a low level of homelessness

Division: Housing

Divisional Objective: To achieve a low level of homelessness

Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:

Key Activity(s)	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:	QRT
By helping to prevent people from becoming homeless by housing homeless people, where appropriate	45	66 (R)	45	↓	Performance indicator affected by the credit crunch and an increase in customer figures. Forecast is for end of year.	QRT
The number of households prevented from becoming homeless in the year (cumulative quarterly measure)	65	75 (G)	260	↓	Forecast is for whole year's prevention cases	QRT

Community/Council Aim: Developing communities sustainably

Objective: To enable the provision of affordable housing

Division: Housing

Divisional Objective: To enable the provision of affordable housing

Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:

Key Activity(s)	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:	QRT
By maximising the land available for new affordable housing. By working in partnership with Housing Associations to bid for external funding. By making a financial contribution to pay for affordable homes to be built	307	81 (R)	307	↓	Most of the properties will be completed in the last quarter. Forecast is for whole year	QRT

Division: Planning

Divisional Objective: Maximise provision of affordable housing on relevant development sites

Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:

Key Activity(s)	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:	QRT
Develop Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD (to set policy framework)/Adopt Planning Obligations SPD (to set specific targets and thresholds)/Negotiate S106 Agreements (to deliver required amounts of affordable housing)	35	100 (G)		↔		QRT
% of affordable housing (commitments) on qualifying sites	40			N/A		YRL
% of housing completions on qualifying sites that are affordable in market towns and key settlements	29			N/A		YRL
% of housing completions on qualifying sites that are affordable in smaller settlements						

Community/Council Aim: A Clean, Green and Attractive Place

Objective: To help mitigate and adapt to climate change

Division: Environmental Management

Divisional Objective: To help mitigate and adapt to climate change

Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:

Target: Actual: Forecast: DoT*: Comment:

Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:
(NI 185) Green Force initiative	1	1 (G)		N/A	Training and ideas workshop held on 26th June, work programme for coming year to be finalised during summer 2009
(NI 185) Identify opportunities to reduce CO2 emissions from the Council's own operations	70	100 (G)		↑	10 projects identified in the Carbon Management Plan all of which are currently on track.
	125	243 (G)		↑	10 projects identified in the Carbon Management Plan which when completed will deliver an annual CO2 saving of 511 tonnes. Projects contributing to first quarter savings include: Multi- Functional devices Pool Car usage PIR sensors at Sawtry Leisure Centre CHP at Huntingdon Leisure Centre
(NI 186) Hunts Post Green page	3	3 (G)		N/A	Themed pages during the quarter as follows: April - Adaptation to Climate Change May - Sustainable Purchasing June - Water
(NI 188) Undertake risk-based assessment of					National Indicator 188 used as the measure of success. Target for the current year is to reach Level 2 of the indicator by 31st March 2009. This will

* Direction of Travel - shows change in performance since last quarter, where applicable

current vulnerabilities to weather and climate changes and identify adaptation responses	of NI188 on target (1=Yes, 0 = No)	1	1 (G)	↔	involve interviewing service managers and integrating the risks identified into the Council's risk management framework	QRT
(NI186) Promote energy efficiency and use of renewable energy to householders	Number of tonnes of CO2 saved through installation of energy efficiency measures and renewables in domestic properties (cumulative quarterly measure)	175	363 (G)	↔	For the pensioners scheme we carried out measures in 160 properties and saved 264.63 Tonnes of CO2 For the WH4L scheme we carried out measures to 73 properties and saved 97.99 tonnes	QRT
(NI186) Promote Energy Efficiency to householders through the Warmer Homes For Life Scheme	% of applications for loft and Cavity Wall Insulation received under the scheme replied to within 5 working days	95	94 (A)	↓	Total saving for the two schemes in Q1 is 362.62 tonnes 34 applications received, 2 applications not processed within 5 working days.	QRT
(NI186) Retro fit project - procurement of Housing stock	Green House (retro fit) project - completion of building work by Jan 2010 (on target 1 = Yes, 0 = No)	1	1 (G)	↔	Properties purchased, tendering for building work to be undertaken in August 2009, construction scheduled to take place from September 2009 to January 2010.	QRT
(NI186) Update existing and extend Travel Plans to all of the Council's employment sites and implement to achieve a modal shift away from single occupant car use	% of council employees travelling alone to work by car	50		N/A		YRL
Complete an annual review & update of Growing Awareness a plan for our environment	Review completed 2009/10 (1 = yes, 0 = no)	1	1 (G)	↔	Review of Environment Strategy Year 1 Actions to be completed and publicised by January 2010	QRT
Identify areas of joint working with stakeholders to help deliver aims of Growing Awareness.	HSP Environment Forum to meet at least twice annually (1=Yes, 0 = No)	1	1 (G)	↔	HSP Environment Forum met in June 2009 and will meet again in Sept 2009 to agree action plan for joint working	QRT
					Year two funded Environment Strategy Projects nine out of	

* Direction of Travel - shows change in performance since last quarter, where applicable

Oversee the implementation of the Environment Strategy projects	% of Environment Strategy Year 2 projects on target	75	90 (G)	↔	<p>ten on track -</p> <p>HDC Carbon Management Plan (on track)</p> <p>Sustainable Homes Retro-fit Project (on track)</p> <p>Huntingdonshire Nursery - Renewables (on track)</p> <p>Renewables at HDC owned Sites (on track)</p> <p>Schools Recycling Scheme (on track)</p> <p>Public Travel Information boards(on track)</p> <p>Low Carbon Communities(on track)</p> <p>Pensioners Home Insulation Scheme (on track)</p> <p>Business Environmental Pledge scheme (re-evaluating through poor uptake)</p> <p>Green Force Environmental Awareness scheme(on track)</p> <p>Mayfield Road Showcase New Build(on track)</p>	QRT
Division: IMD						
Divisional Objective: Reduce the resources used by IMD						
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:	Target: Actual: Forecast: DoT*: Comment:					
Assess which other roles in IMD are suitable for increased flexible working	Increase the percentage of time that Officers work from home	10		N/A		YRL
Implement new technology to reduce power consumption	Percentage reduction in power consumed (target TBA)			N/A		QRT
Division: Planning						
Divisional Objective: To encourage sustainable forms of development						
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:						
Include sustainable policies within LDF (to set a sustainable policy framework)	Core Strategy – Adherence to LDF timetable, on target to be adopted by August 2009 (1=Yes, 0=No)	1	1 (G)	↔		QRT

* Direction of Travel - shows change in performance since last quarter, where applicable

Community/Council Aim: Developing communities sustainably				
Objective: To promote development opportunities in and around the market towns				
Division: People, Performance & Partnerships				
Divisional Objective: To promote development opportunities in and around the market towns				
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:				
Review the Local Economy strategy & identify priorities	% of LES actions/milestones on track	Target: 90	Actual: 90 (G)	Forecast: DoT*: Comment: ↓
Divisional Objective: To support town centres to be economically viable and vibrant				
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:				
Support the sustainable development of Town Centre Partnerships	% of town centre projects on track as specified in their annual action plans	Target: 90	Actual: 100 (G)	Forecast: 100 DoT*: Comment: projects include; recession task force (window dressing) and benchmarking of town centres
Division: Planning				
Divisional Objective: To promote development opportunities in and around the market towns				
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:				
Develop strategic policy to promote well being of our market towns	Adoption of Core Strategy on target to be adopted by August 2009 (1=Yes, 0=No)	Target: 1	Actual: 1 (G)	Forecast: DoT*: Comment: Need to revise timetable measure to October as Inspector not likely to be able to respond prior to available Full Council

* Direction of Travel - shows change in performance since last quarter, where applicable

Community/Council Aim: To improve our systems and practices

Objective: Effective partnership

Division: People, Performance & Partnerships

Divisional Objective: Develop and adopt a sustainable community strategy

Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:

Target: Actual: Forecast: DoT*: Comment:

Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:	QRT
Deliver and measure performance for the action plans that will deliver the objectives in the SCS	Action identified by the Children and Young People thematic group on target (Yes=1, No=0)	1	0.50 (A)	N/A	Action plan not sufficiently embedded to reach a quantitative conclusion, however the plan is under revision to fit with the Huntingdonshire Children and Young People's Plan	QRT
	Action identified by the Economic Prosperity and Skills thematic group on target (Yes=1, No=0)	1	1 (G)	N/A	Action plan not sufficiently embedded to reach a quantitative conclusion, however, some projects are delayed but this should not impact overall long term outcomes	QRT
	Action identified by the Environment thematic group on target (Yes=1, No=0)	1	1 (G)	N/A	Action plan not sufficiently embedded to reach a quantitative conclusion, however so far, so good for HDC but work in progress to identify partner initiatives and contributions to long term outcomes	QRT
	Action identified by the Growth and Infrastructure thematic group on target (Yes=1, No=0)	1	0.50 (A)	0.5	Action plan not sufficiently embedded to reach a quantitative conclusion, however reduced central Government infrastructure funding may have an impact here	QRT
	Action identified by the Health and Wellbeing thematic group on target (Yes=1, No=0)	1	0 (R)		Action plan not sufficiently embedded to reach a quantitative conclusion, however teenage pregnancy and Chlamydia screen targets not achieved	QRT

* Direction of Travel - shows change in performance since last quarter, where applicable

	Action identified by the Inclusive, Safe and Cohesive Communities thematic group on target (Yes=1, No=0)	1	1 (G)	1	N/A	Action plan not sufficiently embedded to reach a quantitative conclusion, however crime has fallen	QRT
Divisional Objective: Effective partnership framework							
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:							
	Develop, implement and monitor strategic/operational partnership review programme	1	0.50 (A)	1	↓	Partnership guidance reviewed and updated. List of strategic and operational Partnerships revised and review programme being developed	QRT
Community/Council Aim: To learn and develop							
Objective: To be an Employer People Want to Work For							
Division: People, Performance & Partnerships							
Divisional Objective: To attract and retain staff							
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:							
66							
	Recruitment package	97	95.50 (A)		↓	The result shown relates to 30 posts (out of 664) that were deliberately held vacant on either a long-term or short-term basis during the period. This measure is intended to assess success in attracting and retaining staff to available posts and so should exclude these. HR are considering how best to assess this and will amend the measure for the next reporting period.	QRT
		90	81 (A)		↓	13 out of 16 posts recruited for in the period were filled first time, with three posts having to be re-advertised. The recruitment processes for a further eight vacant posts were ongoing at the end of the quarter (awaiting interview, etc)	QRT

* Direction of Travel - shows change in performance since last quarter, where applicable

To ensure a culture in which staff are able to work to their full potential	Biennial staff survey – % level of satisfaction	80	79 (A)	N/A	% agreeing/strongly agreeing that they are satisfied with the Council as their employer ('09 Employee Opinion Survey). There has been a statistically significant increase in satisfaction from 71% in 2007.	YRL
Community/Council Aim: To maintain sound finances						
Objective: Maximise business and income opportunities including external funding and grants						
Division: Leisure						
Divisional Objective: Maximise leisure centre income						
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:						
Maintain expenditure within budget	Actual expenditure compared to budget (cumulative quarterly target)	1.75m	1.91m (R)	↓	Full year NIDR paid - for further information, please see Appendix B.	QRT
Maximise leisure centre income	Actual income received compared to budget (cumulative quarterly target)	1.44m	1.39m (R)	↓	School income not yet received	QRT
Division: People, Performance & Partnerships						
Divisional Objective: To be aware of appropriate funding opportunities and communicate to the appropriate service						
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:						
Co ordinate and maintain a system of internal control via External Funding strategy, liaise with appropriate officers, provide funding advice and assistance in compilation of bids as required	% of External Funding actions on track	90	90 (G)	↑		QRT

* Direction of Travel - shows change in performance since last quarter, where applicable

<p>Objective</p> <p>To promote active lifestyles</p>	<p>Achievements:</p>	<p>Comments from appropriate Head of Service</p> <p><u>Leisure Centres:</u></p> <p>Admissions at Huntingdon and St Neots (12k and 3k respectively) have been positive, with the Funzone at Huntingdon, despite perceptibly quieter periods in good weather, operating very successfully. The new Pure facility at Huntingdon has seen an increase of 40% on spa and sauna visits. Impressions at Huntingdon also shows a 25% increase in admissions post-investment (20k from 16k) and all other centres remain stable (total of 68,000 admissions against 64,000 last year). Swimming lessons show a 5k admissions increase and occupancy remains in excess of 85%. All pools exceeded occupancy (swimmers per hour) targets. Over 71,000 individuals now hold Leisure cards and the number of active cardholders is above target.</p> <p><u>Environmental and Community Health Services:</u></p> <p>The school-outreach and Easter activity leisure schemes for young people exceeded target by 41% this quarter. The leisure schemes aimed at vulnerable participants exceeded their targets by almost double. The Cardiac Rehab and Health Walks continue to prove popular.</p>
<p>Issues or actions for next quarter:</p>	<p>Risks:</p>	<p><u>Leisure Centres:</u></p> <p>A 6% decrease in total admissions from last year's first quarter is disappointing, although may in part be due to initial over-estimation. The Burgess Hall and the Outdoor Centre are the main areas affected, with the Burgess Hall 20,000 down on last year's first quarter.</p> <p>Free swims for over 60's commenced 1st April. First grant received.</p> <p><u>Environmental and Community Health Services:</u></p> <p>Community Sports Network funding coming to an end, alternative being pursued. Active at 50 and the Play Project both have approximately 2 years of funding remaining. Partnership projects with PCT agreement lasts 2.5 years with funding.</p>
<p>To achieve a low level of homelessness</p>	<p>Achievements:</p>	<p><u>Housing Services:</u></p> <p>75 households were prevented from becoming homeless in Q1 of the year, compared to 54 in Q1 last year. 49 decisions were reached on homeless applications in Q1 compared to 56 in the same period last year. Of these, 25 households were accepted as homeless compared to 36 in the same period last year.</p> <p>Two emergency crash beds came into use at Paines Mill Foyer as an alternative to placing homeless young people into B&B accommodation.</p> <p>The multi agency Joint Strategic Needs Assessment on homelessness and the Supporting People needs assessment are progressing. The outcomes will feed into the review of the Council's Homelessness Strategy.</p> <p>Received 138 Rent Deposit scheme applications in Q1 and assisted 78 of these applicants into private sector tenancies with the help of a loan or bond.</p>

Objective	Issues or actions for next quarter:	<p>Comments from appropriate Head of Service</p> <p><u>Housing Services:</u></p> <p>An increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation, from 61 households at the start of the quarter to 66 at the end. We need to achieve a maximum of 45 households by the end of March 2010 to achieve our temporary accommodation reduction target.</p> <p>Progress the work plan that has come out of the Home-Link review. This will continue throughout the financial year and incorporate the Home-Link brand into a wider Enhanced Housing Options Service.</p> <p>The project to extend Kings Ripton Court to provide training facilities and 4 emergency crash beds will go through the planning process.</p> <p>Work with Granta HS to consider more viable options to either refurbish or rebuild Coneygear Court, or to consider other options to reprovide on another site – providing self contained units.</p> <p>Progress the development of a county-wide supported lodgings scheme for young people threatened with homelessness.</p>
Risks:		<p><u>Housing Services:</u></p> <p>Reduced Housing Benefit levels available to applicants as a result of changes to the Local Housing Allowance rates from August 2009. This will reduce the council's ability to prevent homelessness by helping HB dependant households into private sector tenancies.</p> <p>National and/or local economic factors have increased demand but demand may increase further.</p> <p>Not delivering increased emergency accommodation facilities at Kings Ripton Court in accordance with LPSA reward grant.</p>
To enable the provision of affordable housing	Achievements:	<p><u>Housing Services:</u></p> <p>Commenced development of Mayfield Road Huntingdon (exemplar scheme).</p> <p>Completed 81 affordable homes.</p> <p>Secured additional £385, 875 from HCA to fund more affordable housing units</p> <p>Project Group established for Brookside Huntingdon Extra Care scheme.</p> <p>Completed HCA information for 'Single Conversation' purposes (to identify strategic sites that could benefit from investment).</p> <p>Began work on revising the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.</p> <p><u>Planning Services:</u></p> <p>Work has commenced on several key development sites e.g. the Ramsey Gateway development; the Mayfield Road Exemplar Eco-homes.</p>

Objective	Issues or actions for next quarter:	Comments from appropriate Head of Service
	<p><u>Housing Services:</u> Start drafting for the Single Conversation. Continue/conclude work on Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. Review Service Level Agreement with the Homebuy Agent. Secure planning consent and progress LPSA reward grant for Kings Ripton Court, Huntingdon.</p> <p><u>Risks:</u></p>	<p><u>Housing Services:</u> RSLs and developers not performing to timescales. Availability of Homes and Communities Agency and Council funding via the bidding processes.</p> <p><u>Planning Services:</u> The most obvious continuing current risk is the potential impacts of a prolonged downturn in the housing/development market. The nature of that risk is that a longer term downturn will impact upon the local property market knocking back householder and developer confidence and thereby undermining the delivery of new homes, new employment opportunities and community facilities. Potential impacts could be upon planning fee income, housing delivery related grant awards and the scale, content and the potential viability and delivery of S106 contributions.</p>

<p>Objective</p> <p>To help to mitigate and adapt to climate change</p>	<p>Achievements:</p>	<p>Comments from appropriate Head of Service</p> <p><u>Environmental Management:</u></p> <p>Environment Team won Heat Energy Officers Network/Carbon Action Network award for energy efficiency work and Building Control won East Anglian Region LABC Excellence Awards for most sustainable building category with the Creative Exchange, St Neots.</p> <p>Local energy efficiency events/promotions ongoing: Energy saving campaign Watts going down in Warboys expands and is being rolled out to other Parishes. 150 energy monitors distributed and 22% savings recorded.</p> <p>HDC Solar grants scheme uptake continues.</p>
<p>Issues or actions for next quarter:</p>	<p>Risks:</p>	<p><u>Environmental Management:</u></p> <p>Retrofit project on site work to progress/develop role out programme proposals.</p> <p><u>Environmental Management:</u></p> <p>Failure to 'green' facilities strategy/influence other services on low carbon agenda means higher long term costs (e.g. energy bills)</p> <p>Closer integration of key findings of the Carbon appraisal of the Cambridge sub region LTDP and HDC LIF continue to be critical to the delivery of long term carbon reduction measures to meet targets for: energy saving, combating climate change and meeting government targets NI 186 and 188. St Neots energy study should contribute in this area.</p> <p>Failure to gain planning permission for 2 story extension at St Ives retrofit property.</p> <p>Risk management approach for climate change activities not fully developed. Close working with Environment Agency and County required. There is a risk that this fails to materialise.</p> <p><u>IMD:</u></p> <p>Risk that working from home technology (ie MyOffice) fails to allow sufficient remote working due to increased demand (this has been mitigated by increasing the number of concurrent licences to 75).</p>
<p>To promote development opportunities in and around the market towns</p>	<p>Achievements:</p>	<p><u>People, Performance & Partnerships:</u></p> <p>Positive feedback from the 'Make it your own market' initiatives, and two new businesses now trading regularly at local markets.</p>
<p>Issues or actions for next quarter:</p>	<p>Risks:</p>	<p><u>People, Performance & Partnerships:</u></p> <p>Developing a joint marketing campaign with Cambridgeshire County Council and a coach for the G i ød Bus, however launch date still not been published.</p> <p><u>People, Performance & Partnerships:</u></p> <p>Feasibility work for Community Workspace in Oxmoor currently being investigated, current economic climate and limited funding opportunities may effect the successful delivery of this project.</p>

<p>Objective To enable effective partnerships</p>	<p>Achievements:</p> <p>Issues or actions for next quarter:</p> <p>Risks:</p>	<p>Comments from appropriate Head of Service People, Performance & Partnerships: Partnership guidance has been reviewed and updated. The list of strategic and operational partnerships has been revised and a review programme is being developed.</p> <p>People, Performance & Partnerships: Children and Young People's action plan is being revised to fit with the Big Plan 2 area plan.</p>
<p>To be an employer people want to work for</p>	<p>Achievements:</p> <p>Issues or actions for next quarter:</p> <p>Risks:</p>	<p>People, Performance & Partnerships: Achieved Level 3 of the Equality Standard. A rigorous self assessment was undertaken and staff at all levels of the organisation were interviewed by the external assessor. HR strategy workshops completed for priority areas. Findings will be reported to COMT on 15 September.</p> <p>People, Performance & Partnerships: Employment Advisory Member group terms of reference has been agreed, the scope of the study will impact on resources but this will be met within existing budgets and officer time.</p>
<p>To maximise business and income opportunities including extended funding and grants</p>	<p>Achievements:</p> <p>Issues or actions for next quarter:</p> <p>Risks:</p>	<p>People, Performance & Partnerships: Secured £150k funding for Caxton Road development from Cambridgeshire County Council. Secured £275k funding for phase 2 of Community Centre in Ramsey to provide business enterprise facilities.</p> <p>Leisure Centres: Swimming income (lessons and public) remains healthy at 15% and 14% respectively above target. All expenditure budgets are under close scrutiny. Staffing, which comprises 65% of revised total expenditure budget, is 2% under target at present (a saving of £27k). Profit margins on bars and all catering are above target and overall recovery rate is 78% compared to 79% at the same stage last year. NDR has been paid in full for the year (£329k) as the invoice received was for the entire amount (previously half the year's total was paid in the first quarter of 2008/09 - £171k - and the remainder was paid in September). Paying in full neither increases or decreases the cost as no discount is available for either method of payment. St Ivo Centre Flat Roofs (capital scheme): Completed on target with over £50k saving on budget.</p> <p>Leisure Centres: Hospitality, centre functions and synthetic pitches have all failed to hit budget targets in the first quarter (secondary spend down, less functions and increased public pitch competition all contributory). Impressions is 7% below target but in the midst of an already successful promotion which will address the situation. A shortfall in predicted annual membership renewals has prompted remedial action forthwith.</p>

Objective		Comments from appropriate Head of Service
		<p>Revision to the funding arrangements with schools has meant that less income has been received to date than in 2008/09 (£168k against £318k) but outturn at year end will be the same (appr x i r a t e y £570k).</p> <p><u>People, Performance & Partnerships:</u> Feasibility work for Community Workspace in Oxmoor currently being investigated, current economic climate and limited funding opportunities may effect the successful delivery of this project.</p>

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(Note: the Council's Improvement Plan is updated and monitored frequently to reflect the development areas adopted through external inspection and compliance with statutory guidance.)

In progress Completed

Subject	Area of Focus	Reference	Proposed Action	Outcome	Lead Members and Officer	Progress June 2009
Learning & Knowledge	Learning across the Council and making the most of learning opportunities to use research, consultation and knowledge to plan services.	CPA	Adopt systematic approaches to learning and sharing knowledge via the Council's intranet.	Council uses learning and knowledge and research effectively across the organisation to improve the delivery of services and achievement of priorities.	Member: Mike Simpson Officer: Dir Commerce & Technology support Head of IMD	All SharePoint sites have been set-up/migrated to latest version of SharePoint and search facility re-instated. Encouraging the use of WIKIs to aid the sharing of knowledge & experience within teams. A good example is in use at the Call Centre.
Capacity and Resources	Sustainability of spending plans, employee capacity, staff turnover.	CPA	Delivery of People Strategy	The Council has the right number of employees with the right skills to meet its priorities and objectives.	Member: Andrew Hansard Officer: Dir Central Services Support: Head of Personnel	A new People Strategy is being developed. This will go to Employment Panel in Sept 2009 and thereafter an action plan will be implemented to deliver the strategy
Systems of Internal Control	The Council should develop and implement an assurance framework. Once implemented, processes need to be put in place to ensure that this a fluid living document that is updated constantly for any changes in objectives, risks and assurances.	Use of Resources 2007/08	An assurance framework will be developed and agreed by the Corporate Governance Panel on 26 March 2008. (by 31 March 08)	Agreed systems/process in place to provide assurance that the council undertakes it's functions and responsibilities with integrity, openness and accountability.		The report to Governance Panel on 25 th March 2009 addressed this item.
						Reports dealing with Risk Assurance will be sent to the Panel on a six monthly basis
	Internal Audit Managers opinion on the internal control	Governance Assurance framework	Actions identified in the internal audit action plan are implemented as per	Improve the overall assurance opinion on the system of		See above. Also Monitored via Performance

Subject	Area of Focus	Reference	Proposed Action	Outcome	Lead Members and Officer	Progress June 2009
	environment.		the agreed audit timetable.	Internal control.		Management Framework and reported Quarterly to COMT
	The Council should ensure that it is regularly reviewing its Asset Management Plan and that this is reported on to Members.	Use of Resources 2007/08	Up to date Asset Management Plan		Estates and Property Manager	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>A report on the AMP was submitted to Cabinet on the 29 January 2009, containing information on the performance indicators for the last two years.</p> <p>Monthly meetings are held with the Cabinet member responsible for property and asset management.</p> <p>The Asset Management sub group will be meeting during the year to review related issues and to prepare information for the performance indicators.</p> <p>The Estates and Property Manager will organise any further reports and co-ordinate meetings.</p>
	The service and financial plans of key partners and stakeholders should be considered when developing the Council's own financial plans	Use of Resources 2007/08	Review Partnership guidance and evaluation of Strategic Partnerships		Head of People, Performance and Partnerships	<p>Already achieved for strategic partnerships – ongoing for others</p> <p>Reviews (for others) delayed due to updating partnership guidance to reflect latest guidelines.</p>

Subject	Area of Focus	Reference	Proposed Action	Outcome	Lead Members and Officer	Progress June 2009
Natural Resources	The Council should ensure that information and analysis about its environmental footprint is made publicly available.	Use of Resources 2007/08			Head of Environmental Services	Reviews to commence late summer/autumn 09
Governance	Equalities.	Governance Assurance framework	Implement and monitor Corporate Equality Action Plan.	Facilitate progress in relation to the Local Government Standard for Equalities.		First annual report September 2009. This report will be available in December Level 3 of the standard achieved ahead of schedule
	Consultation.	Governance Assurance framework	Adopt and implement consultation and engagement strategy.	Developing consultation and engagement with local communities.		Corporate Equality Policy – the actions identified in this policy are on target. Strategy adopted in Spring 08 Progress being made to deliver the action plan
	Sustainable Community Strategy.	Governance Assurance framework	Working to develop a Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS).	Delivery of the outcomes identified in the SCS via the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership.		SCS adopted by Council in Sept 08.
Data Quality	Data Quality	Use of Resources/ VFM	Action identified in the Data Quality action plan are implemented as per the agreed timetable	To provide reliable, accurate and timely performance information which to manage services, inform users and account for our performance	Head of People, Performance and Partnerships	Work underway to develop and monitor partner actions Delivery of actions identified in the DQ strategy. Deliver the actions agreed in the external data quality audit

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PERFORMANCE MONITORING
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Social Well-Being, Environmental Well-Being and Economic Well-Being meetings on 1st, 8th and 10th September 2009 respectively considered a report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships on the Council's performance against its priority objectives. This report sets out the Panels' views on the performance levels achieved.

2. COMMENTS

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panels have endorsed the comments of the Corporate Plan Working Group. These comments are reflected in the following paragraphs.

Social Well-Being

- 2.2 Having questioned whether the data on the throughput of the cardiac rehabilitation programme and health walks in Huntingdonshire could be presented separately rather than as a combined figure, the performance report now makes clear that while health walks is above the quarterly target, cardiac rehabilitation throughput is slightly below the expected level. Although the latter has been attributed to seasonal variance because the Easter holidays fell in April this year, Members will continue to monitor this target.
- 2.3 Members have discussed trends in demand for housing services in the District and the implications they have had for a number of the Council's objectives. The Panel has noted that the target for the number of households living in temporary accommodation has not been achieved, and this has been attributed to the economic downturn and a resulting increase in demand. The corollary of this has been that the target for the number of households that have been prevented from becoming homeless has been exceeded by a significant margin.

Environmental Well-Being

- 2.4 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) has noted that all of the indicators where statistics are available are positive with the exception of the percentage of applications for loft and cavity wall insulation received under the Warmer Homes For Life Scheme that have been replied to within 5 working days. In this case, Members have suggested that the target ought to be amended to reflect the number of enquiries that result in the installation of loft and cavity wall insulation, as this would be a more meaningful measure.

Economic Well-Being

- 2.5 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has received clarification that the Council has deliberately held vacant 30 posts during the quarter.
- 2.6 Having questioned why the leisure centres have made the full year's NNDR payment upfront, Members have received an assurance that this neither increases nor decreases the direct cost to the Council as no discount is available however the payment is made. However, Members have commented on the loss of interest as a result of this change.

3. THE CORPORATE PLAN WORKING GROUP

- 3.1 The Corporate Plan Working Group has received an analysis of the level of budget associated with each of the Council's aims and objectives. Having discussed the information presented in detail, Members have decided to undertake an exercise in more detailed priority analysis. They have requested a further breakdown of the budget for this purpose. Members will take into consideration whether Council activities are undertaken on the basis of permissive powers or are statutory duties. An additional meeting of the Group will be arranged for this purpose.
- 3.2 Following a suggestion at a previous meeting of the Group, Members have received information on all those community and council aims where targets were not being achieved. As a result, further information has been requested. This will be presented to the additional meeting of the Group.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 All three Overview and Scrutiny Panels have expressed satisfaction with the performance levels the Council has achieved. The Cabinet is invited to consider the Panels' comments as part of its deliberations on the report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Corporate Plan Working Group Notes of the meeting held on 18th August 2009.

Minutes and Reports of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) on 1st^t September 2009, Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) on 8th September 2009 and the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) on 10th September 2009.

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**Mrs J Walker, Trainee Democratic Services Officer
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**Overview & Scrutiny
(Environmental Well Being)**

8th September 2009

Cabinet

17th September 2009

**GREAT FEN MASTERPLAN
(Report of Director of Environmental & Community Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This report introduces the draft illustrative Masterplan for the Great Fen Project which has been approved by the Project's Steering Group on the basis for consultation. It is now intended that the Great Fen Project Partners will consult widely on this document before finalising it early in 2010.

1.2 The illustrative Masterplan is a spatial plan – it sets out where new physical features could be created and illustrates where existing features are retained. It shows, amongst other things, open water, wetlands, woodlands, footpaths and cycleways, buildings and car parks. It is intended to convey something of the new character which could be created. Subject to final approval it will form the basis of a new action plan which the partners will develop next year to guide the on-going development of the project.

1.3 The Great Fen Project is one of the most significant habitat restoration projects ever undertaken in Britain by the acquisition and restoration of land adjacent to two existing National Nature Reserves, Holme Fen and Woodwalton Fen. Connecting these two reserves will create a haven for wildlife. The Project, however, is by no means exclusively about wildlife as it will create a massive green space for people, opening up new opportunities for recreation, education and business. Agriculture will also remain an important aspect; although over the life of the project the intensive arable activity will decrease, replaced in part by grazing and other economic activity. The Project partners are:

- Environment Agency
- Huntingdonshire District Council
- Middle Level Commissioner
- Natural England
- The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough

1.4 The Great Fen Vision as recast in the Masterplan is:

A vast swath of restored, accessible fenland landscape providing a rich variety of habitats for people and wildlife, offering an unforgettable encounter with nature now and in the future.

- 1.5 The aims of the project have been revised during the Masterplan process as follows:

Natural Environment:

- ✚ To create a new resilient fenland landscape which delivers major wild life benefits and achieves high standards of sustainability in all respects.

Social:

- ✚ To create an accessible, inspiring and tranquil environment for recreation, education, health and wellbeing.

Economic:

- ✚ To contribute to diversification and development of the local economy, consistent with environmental and social objectives.

Climate Change Adaptation and mitigation:

- ✚ To plan, design and manage the Great Fen to benefit climate change adaptation and mitigation.

These aims are expanded in more detail in the accompanying text.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A report was presented to Overview & Scrutiny (Service Support) in November 2008, this dealt with progress with the project; the governance arrangements; the linkage of the project to the Council's own aims and objectives; the statutory status of the project in relation to the Regional Spatial Strategy and the, then, emerging Council's Core Strategy; funding achieved and future direction. In considering the last point, reference was made to a meeting of County, District and Parish Councillors and the response of the Project partners. That response covered:

- ✚ New and more robust governance arrangements (Cabinet received a report on this at their last meeting);
- ✚ A communication and information strategy;
- ✚ Land assembly and land management
- ✚ Further research and Masterplanning.

In respect of this latter matter the report referred to Partners developing a Masterplan which sets out what the project area will be like in the future and informs discussions on issues such as visitor facilities and access. It had been hoped to complete the Masterplan earlier in 2009, however, the robust nature of the studies and stakeholder involvement required led to a revised programme as mentioned above.

- 2.2 The masterplanning process has also involved the bringing together of a wealth of information in a baseline study, fieldwork analysis and consultation with a wide variety of interest groups and stakeholders

2.3 As part of the stakeholder involvement contributing to the development of the draft Masterplan a seminar for County and District Members was held in June 2009 led by Professor Robert Tregay of Landscape Design Associates who had been engaged to produce the Masterplan.

2.4 The Masterplan document, the text for which is appended, is set out as follows:

1. Introduction
2. The Masterplanning process
3. Strategic Drivers
4. Physical Geography and Ecology
5. People communities and heritage
6. Engaging local stakeholders
7. Aims
8. The illustrative Masterplan
 - Habitats
 - Landscape character and structure
 - Land management
 - Visitor gateways
 - Access and circulation
9. The heart of the Great Fen: The visitor centre and surrounding Landscape
10. Next steps

Members will also have received the various map layers making up the Masterplan. The published version laying out the text and including photographs, will be available to Members and sent under separate cover in due course. (Note: the reference on page 23 of the text refers to the Masterplan itself not being available – however, this is simply a composite of the map layers).

3. **RECOMMENDATION:**

Overview & Scrutiny (Environmental Well Being):

- To comment on the draft Illustrative Masterplan as a basis for public consultation.

Cabinet:

- To endorse the publication of the Masterplan for public consultation in the light of any comments from Overview & Scrutiny (Environmental Well Being).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Great Fen Baseline Study – LDA 2009

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**GREAT FEN MASTER PLAN
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being))**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting on 8th September 2009, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) considered a report by the Director of Environmental and Community Services introducing the draft illustrative master plan for the Great Fen Project.

2. DELIBERATIONS

- 2.1 The Panel welcomed the production of the Masterplan as the next stage in the planning for the Great Fen project and reiterated its support for the Council's involvement in the venture. Nevertheless, while recognising that more detailed plans would follow the adoption of the Masterplan, Members felt that some emphasis should have been to the issues of business planning and finance in the Masterplan itself. Questions also were raised as to the cost of the Council's involvement in the project by way of officer time which was additional to the £20,000 per annum commitment made in the recently approved Collaboration Agreement.
- 2.2 The Panel also was anxious to ensure that there would be no long term financial implications for the Council arising from the cessation of grants awarded to the project. The Panel was mindful of the danger of creating aspirations through the wider consultation process that it might be difficult to fund in the long term. Some concern also was raised over the potential future viability of the visitor centre and whether the number of visitors and income forecast were perhaps optimistic.
- 2.3 Having previously raised doubts about the loss of arable land, the Panel was encouraged to note that some land owners who had initially resisted the project were beginning to recognise the opportunities offered and were approaching the partners to discuss the possibility of changing their farming methods in line with the project's vision.
- 2.4 Having regard to the proposed location of the visitor centre, attention was drawn to the poor condition of the B660 access road which the Panel felt would need to be improved in light of the anticipated visitor numbers.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Cabinet is invited to consider the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) as part of its deliberations on the Great Fen Master Plan.

Contact Officer: Mrs J Walker, Trainee Democratic Services Officer
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Neighbourhood Forums

(Report by Head of Democratic & Central Services)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting on 22nd April 2009, the Council approved arrangements, subject to consultation, for the introduction of neighbourhood forums in Huntingdonshire as a means of improving community engagement and informing, consulting and involving local people in the exercise of the functions of the Council and its partners.

2. Proposed Arrangements

- 2.1 Consultation is continuing on the precise detail of the arrangements. An initial draft of the terms of reference for the new forums and panels is attached as an annex to this report. This has been considered at a meeting of the Huntingdonshire Local Strategic Partnership when general support for the proposals was expressed by partners.

- 2.2 Following further discussion with the Divisional Commander of Cambridgeshire Constabulary, it has become apparent that the initial idea for six panels in Huntingdonshire as envisaged by the Structure Review Working Party will create significant logistical and administrative problems for the Police. A model based on the Police Safer Neighbourhood Panels appears the preferable solution with five neighbourhoods as set out in the attached annex with the smaller policing panels at North Huntingdon and Eynesbury being absorbed into the larger areas.

3. Representation

- 3.1 The model envisaged by the Council provided for a panel to be established of up to ten representatives of local authorities and other public and voluntary bodies in each forum area. Each panel is intended to include one representative of the District Council who represents a ward in that neighbourhood, although all ward councillors are encouraged to attend the meetings. It was intended that forums and panels be chaired by the District Council representative but following discussion at the LSP meeting, the proposal is now for the initial chairmanship only to be held by a District Councillor with subsequent chairmanship being a matter for each panel.

- 3.2 The panels will replace the Police Safer Neighbourhood Panel meetings already programmed after the beginning of the new calendar year. In the interim an initial forum meeting will be held for the southern neighbourhood at the Priory Centre, St Neots on 28th September as a pilot to enable valuable lessons to be learnt.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 A further report will be submitted to Cabinet on the final outcome of the consultation arrangements with partners.
- 4.2 In the interim, views are invited on the draft terms of reference attached and the Cabinet is invited to appoint representatives to the five forum areas who will become the initial chairmen of those forums and panels.

5. Recommendations

5.1 It is therefore

Recommended

- (a) that the Cabinet comment on the draft terms of reference of the proposed neighbourhood forums and panels; and
- (b) that the Cabinet appoint representatives to the five proposed forums and panels from the wards situated in each neighbourhood.

Contact Person

Roy Reeves
Head of Democratic & Central Services

Background Papers

Report of the Structure Review Working Party.

NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

Terms of Reference

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To provide a forum to promote understanding of the democratic arrangements and functions of public sector organisations in a geographical neighbourhood and to inform, consult and involve the public on issues of local importance.
- 1.2 To enable local communities and the public to raise issues of local concern and highlight priorities to public sector organisations and influence the decision-making processes that direct service delivery.

2 Key Roles

- 2.1 To promote an understanding among local people of the functions of public sector organisations and their democratic arrangements and how individuals can influence and take part in those arrangements.
- 2.2 To act as a forum for consultation and engagement with the local authorities and public sector and voluntary sector organisations forming part of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership and the delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire.
- 2.3 To advise public sector organisations in the District of local issues and priorities and to seek explanations for actions taken. This does not extend to individual planning or licensing applications unless they are of widespread significance or personal or private matters relating to individual members of the public and businesses.
- 2.4 To agree key actions to be achieved between meetings by public sector providers with a report on action taken to be given at the ensuing meeting.
- 2.5 To act as the focus for consultation on proposals for local service delivery emerging from the Sustainable Communities Act 2007.
- 2.6 To provide an opportunity for public sector and voluntary sector organisations to inform and consult with the public on proposals affecting a neighbourhood.
- 2.7 To develop and commission local community initiatives, including the development of local skills, raising aspirations and improving the quality of life locally.

3. Neighbourhood

- 3.1 The term “neighbourhood” is used to describe a cluster of towns and parishes that have been aggregated for the purpose of administering a neighbourhood forum. Each forum groups parishes with a broad affinity of interests while recognising the practical implications of supporting a proliferation of forums in the District.
- 3.2 The extent of the neighbourhood forums is described at Appendix A.

4. Attendance

- 4.1 Attendance at forum meetings is open to all public sector and voluntary sector organisations that provide services or support in a neighbourhood, to members of the public who live or work in the area and to business and commercial interests with local premises.
- 4.2 Elected members from the relevant electoral divisions and wards of Cambridgeshire County Council and Huntingdonshire District Council respectively, together with elected members of town and parish councils within each neighbourhood are encouraged to attend.

4.3 Other public sector organisations, such as Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, the National Health Service, registered social landlords and governing bodies of educational establishments, as well as voluntary sector organisations and community groups, are encouraged to be represented at neighbourhood forum meetings.

5. Speaking at Forum Meetings

5.1 Members of the public are encouraged to attend forum meetings, to contribute to discussions and raise issues of local concern. Persons who are speaking will be encouraged to be concise and avoid repetition, thereby ensuring sufficient opportunity for others to contribute.

6. Neighbourhood Panel

6.1 Each neighbourhood forum shall have a panel of up to 10 persons comprising representatives of public sector and voluntary sector organisations active in the area of that neighbourhood. Membership of the panel shall be as follows -

- one representative of Cambridgeshire County Council who shall be an elected member for an electoral division within the neighbourhood,
- one representative of Huntingdonshire District Council who shall be an elected member for a ward within the neighbourhood,
- three representatives of parish councils within the neighbourhood which shall include one representative of a town council if such exists within the neighbourhood and who shall be elected members of those authorities, such representatives to be chosen by the parish councils within that neighbourhood,
- one representative of Cambridgeshire Constabulary,
- one representative of Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service,
- one representative from the health service, and
- one representative of the registered social landlord with the largest number of properties in the neighbourhood.

6.2 The remaining place and any places unfilled by organisations listed in paragraph 6.1 shall be filled by appointment by the panel from public sector and voluntary sector organisations providing services or support within the neighbourhood, subject to the membership of the panel not exceeding 10 persons. In so doing, the panel shall have regard to the desirability of achieving a panel membership that is representative of the organisations active in the neighbourhood.

6.3 In the event of a member of the panel being unable to attend a meeting, he or she may be substituted by another representative from that organisation. In the case of an elected member of a local authority, the substitute shall be another elected member as defined in paragraph 6.1 or an employee of that authority.

6.4 The purpose of each panel is to –

- present information on issues affecting a local community,
- moderate any requests for information/action that need to be referred elsewhere,
- set priorities for action emerging from the forum,
- monitor the performance of the forum,
- progress chase requests for information/action,
- ensure that feedback takes place from forum and panels meetings to the Local Strategic Partnership thematic groups and to public sector organisations as appropriate, and
- resolve issues emerging from meetings and report back to ensuing meetings.

6.5 The panel shall meet in public at the conclusion of a forum meeting (or as soon as practicable thereafter) to consider actions emerging from the forum meeting.

7. Communication

- 7.1 A representative of a public sector or voluntary sector organisation shall notify the officer supporting the forum of any item that he or she wishes to be included on the agenda for the next ensuing meeting at least 10 working days prior to the meeting.
- 7.2 Public sector and voluntary sector organisations are encouraged to use the neighbourhood forums as an opportunity to inform, consult and involve the public about matters affecting the neighbourhood.
- 7.3 Responsibility for investigating and pursuing actions, priorities and requests made or agreed at forum and panel meetings will rest with the relevant elected member or representative of the public sector organisation at that meeting. That person will arrange for issues raised to be resolved, where practicable, prior to the next meeting and will inform the officer supporting the forum of the action taken. A verbal or written update will be presented at the next ensuing meeting, where appropriate.
- 7.4 The forums and panels will feed back to the appropriate thematic groups of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership, as illustrated in the diagram attached as Appendix B.
- 7.5 Any issues as to the roles and internal relationships or practices of a forum or panel where resolution cannot be reached locally will be referred to the Huntingdonshire Local Strategic Partnership for determination.
- 7.6 A report will be submitted annually to individual partners and the Huntingdonshire Local Strategic Partnership evaluating the performance and effectiveness of the neighbourhood forums and panels in Huntingdonshire.

8. Chairman

- 8.1 Each forum and panel shall be chaired by a chairman who, in the first instance, shall be the elected member of Huntingdonshire District Council appointed to represent the authority on the neighbourhood panel. A vice chairman shall be chosen from among the persons comprising the panel for each neighbourhood. The first chairman and vice chairman shall serve until May 2011. The chairman and vice chairman shall be appointed annually thereafter with effect from the first neighbourhood meeting following May in each year and shall serve for one year.
- 8.2 A chairman or vice chairman may resign at any time and if so, a new chairman or vice chairman shall be chosen as set out in paragraph 8.1 for the remainder of the year until the next normal date of appointment for that position.
- 8.3 In the event of a chairman being absent from a meeting, the meeting shall be chaired by the vice chairman. If neither the chairman nor vice chairman is able to attend a meeting, then a chairman shall be chosen for the duration of that meeting from among the other representatives on the panel who are present.
- 8.4 The role of the chairman is outlined in Appendix C.

9. Officer Support

- 9.1 The administration of each neighbourhood forum and panel will be undertaken by Huntingdonshire District Council in the first instance.
- 9.2 This support will take the form of
- arranging meeting dates and venues,
 - advertising meetings to the general public
 - agenda preparation and dispatch of associated materials

- attending meetings to take notes and providing procedural advice to the forum and panel,
- collating a summary of action taken following a meeting for submission to the next ensuing meeting, and
- forwarding any issues to the thematic groups of the Huntingdonshire Local Strategic Partnership, as appropriate.

10. Meetings

- 10.1 Neighbourhood forum and panel meetings will take place quarterly and will be open to the general public.
- 10.2 The location and venue for meetings will be decided by the officer supporting the forum in consultation with the chairman, having regard to the availability and convenience of the accommodation.

11. Decision making

- 11.1 Issues will be presented to the forum by the chairman and representatives of the public sector and voluntary sector organisations in attendance in the order in which they appear on the agenda, unless agreed otherwise by the chairman.
- 11.2 Members of the public are encouraged to play an active part in forum discussions and to raise issues of local importance or significance.
- 11.3 Panel members will discuss in public the issues raised at the end of each forum meeting and, where action is necessary, prioritise the most important issues to be addressed, taking account of the views expressed by the public present at the forum. Decisions will be reached by consensus where possible. Where a consensus cannot be reached, a decision will be made by simple majority vote and the chairman will have a casting vote in the event of an equality of voting.
- 11.4 Each member of the panel is entitled to one vote.

12. Press and Public Relations

- 12.1 Neighbourhood forums and panels will be open and transparent in their decisions and actions and will communicate them effectively to the public.
- 12.2 Publicity for neighbourhood forums and panels will be co-ordinated by Huntingdonshire District Council. Press releases for neighbourhood forums and panels will be approved by all of the public sector, voluntary sector and relevant partner organisations named in the publicity before it is finally agreed by the chairman of that forum and panel.
- 12.3 Forum and panel meetings shall be open to the press and the agenda, reports and minutes will be available for inspection at the offices of Huntingdonshire District Council and on its website in advance of each meeting, wherever possible.
- 12.4 Public sector and voluntary sector organisations are encouraged to distribute publicity material locally in the neighbourhood, in liaison with Huntingdonshire District Council, and for maintaining local contacts with, for example, parish magazines or newsletters.

13. Resources

- 13.1 While the neighbourhood forums and panels do not currently have their own budgets, all public sector and voluntary sector organisations are encouraged to support the process, for example by waiving charges for the use of local venues.
- 13.2 Should any funding becoming available in the future, the mechanism for allocating this resource will be agreed on an ad hoc basis having regard to the scheme/grant involved.
- 13.3 All travelling and subsistence expenses incurred by representatives of public sector and voluntary sector organisations incurred in their attendance at forum and panel meetings will be met by their respective organisations.

14. Conduct at Meetings

- 14.1 High standards of conduct are expected from the representatives of public sector and voluntary sector organisations at forum and panel meetings. Elected members must abide by the Members Code of Conduct of their respective authority when engaged in the business of forums and panels. They should apply the rules concerning the declaration of personal and prejudicial declarations of interest at forum and panel meetings.
- 14.2 Where it is clear that a decision in which an elected member has such an interest is likely to arise at a particular meeting, the authority concerned may nominate a substitute member (with no interest to declare) to attend that forum or panel meeting or a part of the meeting in his/her place.
- 14.3 Where a member of a panel has failed to attend 3 consecutive panel meetings, the seat will be declared vacant. In the event of the vacancy occurring in respect of one of the organisations listed in paragraph 6.1, another representative will be appointed to sit on the panel by the relevant organisation. In the case of any other vacancy, another person will be chosen by the panel in accordance with the procedure set out in paragraph 6.2.
- 14.4 If an elected member declares a prejudicial interest he or she can speak once on the item (in accordance with the model code of conduct) but must then leave the meeting until the discussion and voting (if any) on the item is concluded. The member must not vote on that item. If a member declares a personal interest, he or she may speak, remain in the meeting and vote on the item.
- 14.5 Members of the public speaking at forum meetings should not engage in personal criticism or slanderous comment regarding individual employees of public sector organisations, nor attempt to use the forum as a means of pursuing personal objectives.

NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS – EXTENT

Huntingdon Forum

Cambridgeshire County Council Electoral Divisions

Brampton & Kimbolton, Buckden, Gransden & The Offords, Godmanchester & Huntingdon East and Huntingdon.

Huntingdonshire District Council Wards

Alconbury & The Stukeleys, Brampton, Godmanchester, Huntingdon East, Huntingdon North and Huntingdon West.

Town and Parish Councils

Alconbury, Alconbury Weston, Brampton, Godmanchester, Grafham, Huntingdon, Perry and The Stukeleys

North West Huntingdonshire Forum

Cambridgeshire County Council Electoral Divisions

Norman Cross and Sawtry & Ellington.

Huntingdonshire District Council Wards

Ellington, Elton & Folksworth, Sawtry, Stilton and Yaxley & Farcet

Town and Parish Councils

Alwalton, Chesterton, Barham & Wooley, Brington & Molesworth, Buckworth, Bythorn & Keyston, Catworth, Conington, Denton & Caldecote, Easton, Ellington, Elton, Farcet, Folksworth & Washingley, Glatton, Great Gidding, Haddon, Hamerton, Holme, Leighton Bromswold, Little Gidding, Morborne, Old Weston, Sawtry, Sibson-cum-Stibbington, Spaldwick, Steeple Gidding, Stilton, Water Newton, Stow Longa, Upton & Coppingford, Winwick and Yaxley

Ramsey Forum

Cambridgeshire County Council Electoral Divisions

Ramsey, Somersham & Earith and Warboys & Upwood

Huntingdonshire District Council Wards

Ramsey, Somersham and Warboys & Bury.

Town and Parish Councils

Broughton, Bury, Colne, Old Hurst, Pidley cum Fenton, Ramsey, Somersham, Warboys, Wistow and Woodhurst

St Ives Forum

Cambridgeshire County Council Electoral Divisions

Somersham & Earith, St Ives, The Hemingfords & Fenstanton and Warboys & Upwood

Huntingdonshire District Council Wards

Earith, Fenstanton, St Ives East, St Ives South, St Ives West, The Hemingfords and Upwood & The Raveleys

Town and Parish Councils

Abbots Ripton, Bluntisham, Earith, Fenstanton, Hemingford Abbots, Hemingford Grey, Hilton, Holywell-cum-Needingworth, Houghton & Wyton, Kings Ripton, St Ives, Upwood & The Raveleys and Woodwalton

St Neots Forum

Cambridgeshire County Council Electoral Divisions

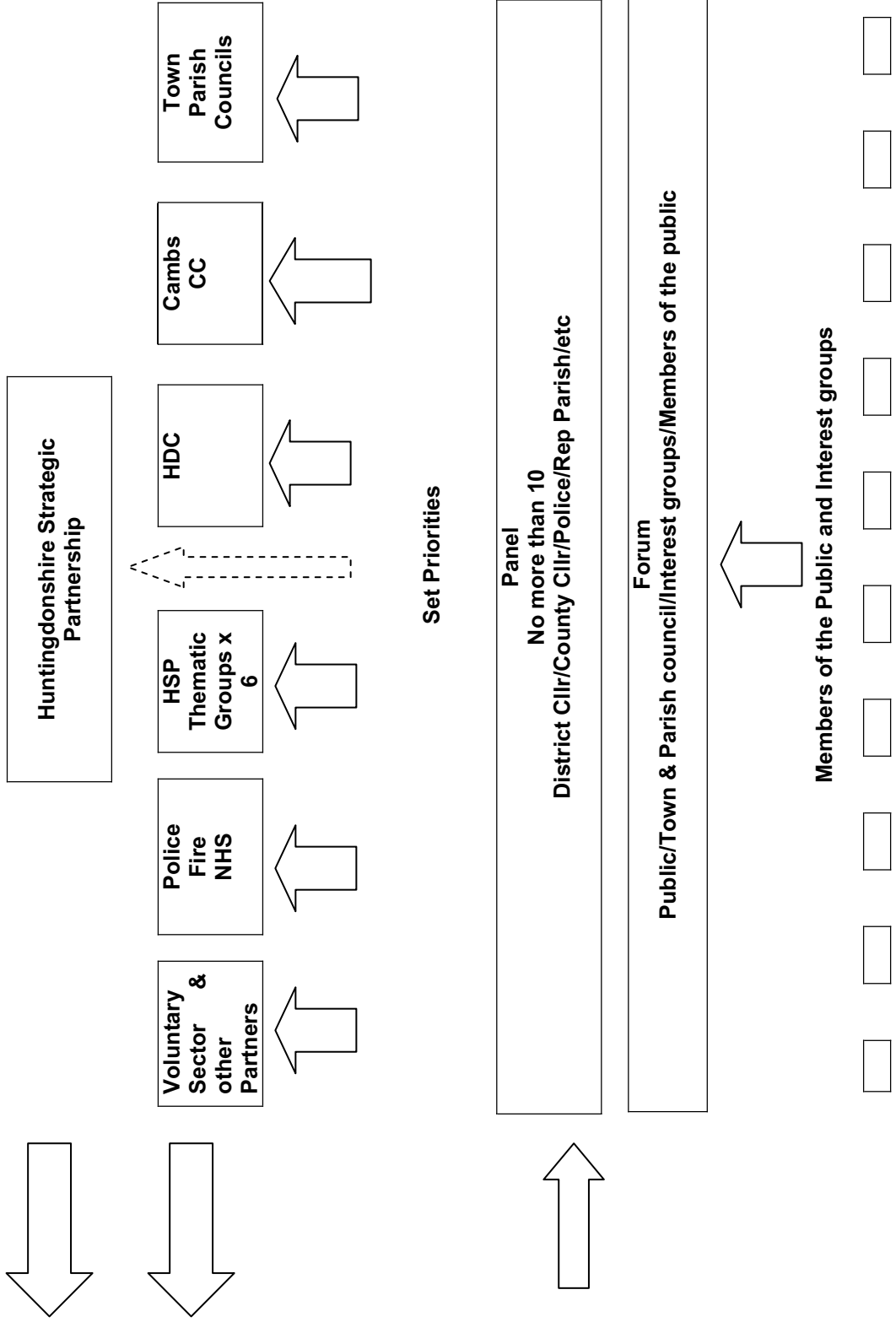
Brampton & Kimbolton, Buckden, Gransden & The Offords, Little Paxton & St Neots North and St Neots Eaton Socon

Huntingdonshire District Council Wards

Buckden, Gransden & The Offords, Kimbolton & Staughton, Little Paxton, St Neots Eaton Ford, St Neots Eaton Socon, St Neots Eynesbury and St Neots Priory Park

Town and Parish Councils

Abbotsley, Buckden, Covington, Diddington, Eynesbury Hardwicke, Great Gransden, Great Paxton, Great Staughton, Hail Weston, Kimbolton, Little Paxton, Offord Cluny, Offord Darcy, St Neots, St Neots Rural, Southoe & Midloe, Tetworth, Tilbrook, Toseland, Waresley and Yelling



ROLE OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM AND PANEL CHAIRMAN

Overall responsibility

The chairman will play a crucial role in ensuring the effectiveness of the forum and panel in all aspects of their role. The chairman's responsibilities will include -

- liaising and co-ordinating with panel members and others to ensure that the key roles of the forum are being achieved,
- oversight of performance delivery through regular dialogue with the other members of the panel,
- being aware of and closely in touch with key strategic and performance issues (such as those relating to the Local Area Agreement and Local Strategic Partnership for Huntingdonshire) to ensure effective leadership of the Panel, and
- recognising and responding to diversity to ensure an inclusive approach to community engagement,

Leadership

The chairman will be responsible for -

- leading the forum and panel and setting their overall agenda, in consultation with other public sector and voluntary sector organisations and members of the panel, and
- ensuring the effectiveness, performance and evaluation of the forum and panel and that their terms of reference are appropriate for their needs.

Chairing Meetings

The chairman will be responsible for the effective chairing of meetings, including -

- ensuring the agenda is adhered to and that meetings are brought to a timely conclusion,
- allowing sufficient time for complex or contentious issues to be discussed,
- encouraging participation by the public and allowing sufficient opportunity for issues of local concern to be raised,
- making sure that meetings receive timely, accurate and clear information,
- facilitating an effective contribution and involvement from those present at meetings,
- developing partnership work through consensus management, securing agreement and clarity over actions,
- maintaining an appropriate environment to allow presentations and questions and supporting any guest speakers prior to and during the meeting as necessary, and
- promoting and advancing an understanding of local democracy and the democratic arrangements of public sector organisations.

Communication

The chairman will act as the spokesperson for the forum and panel to the wider community and ensure that there is -

- effectively communication with panel members,
- an understanding of the local concerns raised by the public and that these are prioritised where necessary,
- a constructive and effective relationship between public sector and voluntary sector organisations represented on each panel,
- effective reporting of action taken by public sector and voluntary sector organisations in response to issues raised at forum meetings, and

- ensuring that issues raised are fed back to meetings of the Huntingdonshire Local Strategic Partnership thematic groups.

Development and evaluation

The chairman will -

- assess the performance of the forum and panel and encourage an evaluation of their meetings,
- ensure that panel members play an effective part in the neighbourhood engagement process,
- address the development needs of the forum and panel both as a whole and individually to ensure team and individual effectiveness,
- raise any issues of concern about the effectiveness of the local forum and panel initially on an informal basis with the chairman of the Huntingdonshire Local Strategic Partnership and formally with the Partnership itself where appropriate.

Governance and ethics

The chairman will be responsible for –

- upholding and promoting high standards of integrity and probity and appropriate governance at meetings of the forum and panel.

Agenda Item

CABINET

17 SEPTEMBER 2009

NEW HEADQUARTERS – MEMORABILIA AND ENDOWMENTS (Report by New Accommodation Project Co-ordinator)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Since its creation in 1974 the Council has accumulated a substantial collection of memorabilia which previously was displayed in the old Pathfinder House. Because of the contemporary look and feel of the replacement building careful consideration will have to be given to the future use of the memorabilia. Display space will be limited and consideration will need to be given to the function of the various spaces and to creating a look and feel that is appropriate to their use.
- 1.2 The new building and associated public realm have the potential to provide a clear statement of the Council's civic values and strategic vision. Care will, therefore, need to be exercised to ensure that the structures and spaces are managed appropriately and that decisions with regard to their use help to enhance the Council's overall image.
- 1.3 This report proposes a protocol for the treatment of the Council's existing memorabilia and future acquisitions and endowments.

2. Categories of Spaces

- 2.1 There are five discrete categories of space on the Council's redeveloped headquarters site –

Customer Service Centre – a space providing convenient and quick access for customers to face-to-face service delivery and information – so far as is possible the space should be open and inviting.

Public Meeting Rooms – the spaces used for meetings of the Council and its Panels etc. which needs to achieve appropriate gravitas without being intimidating to the public wanting to see democracy at work – the spaces may also be used for internal meetings and has the potential to be let commercially so need to be versatile and not viewed as a traditional council chamber.

Members' Lounge, Meeting Room and Chairman/Leader's Room – spaces reserved for the use of Members and in which memorabilia relating to the history of the Council, including its twinning activities, could be displayed to provide Members and their guests with a historical context for their participation in local democratic and civic processes.

Back Office Areas – working and welfare spaces used by the Council's staff, to which public access is restricted, designed to support innovative thinking and a positive public service ethic.

External Public Realm – an area of hard and soft landscaping which will provide visitors with their first impression of the Council's headquarters – the quality of signage and any public art must help to create the general feeling that the headquarters exists to deliver publicly accessible democratic processes responsible for efficient, effective and economic service.

- 2.2 The treatment of these spaces will be very different according to the function they are fulfilling and the use of memorabilia within them will similarly differ.

3. Categories of Memorabilia

- 3.1 The memorabilia falls into the following categories –

Rolls of Honour – boards listing former and serving Chairman and Chief Executive of the Council

Portraits of Chairmen – large photographs of all Chairmen of the Council

Photographs of Council – group photograph of every Council since 1974

Twinning Items – items received from the Council's twinned authorities

RAF/USAF Related Items – plaques etc. relating to the military association with the site and/or Huntingdonshire

Awards and Trophies – items presented by external organisations to mark achievements by the Council e.g. Investors in People

- 3.2 The table at Annex A proposes how this Memorabilia could be used within the new headquarters. Because wall space is limited it may only be possible to display the most recent portraits of chairmen and most recent group photographs of the Council. Those not physically displayed could be made available to view on the council's website.

4. Future Endowments

- 4.1 Existing items previously were displayed in Pathfinder House and could, if they are to be displayed in future, be displayed in the new building as proposed at Annex A. An offer has been now been received of an endowment in the form of a sculpture for installation in the public realm associated with the new building. The endowment has been offered by a former Chairman to commemorate her late husband.

- 4.2 Accepting the endowment could establish a precedent and it would be prudent to consider a framework within which such requests are considered before making a decision. The framework could include –

- I. the relationship of the donor to the Council;
- II. the relationship, if any, of the person being commemorated to the Council;
- III. the availability of a suitable location for the installation/display of the item provided by the endowment;
- IV. control of the size and wording of any inscription required by the donor;
- V. the appropriateness of the endowment to the Council's civic values and strategic vision;
- VI. future maintenance liabilities and cost, including insurance;
- VII. restrictions on the placing of wreaths etc. at the time of anniversaries ; and
- VIII. the Council's right, at its sole discretion, to relocate or remove the sculpture at a future date.

4.3 The public realm is within a Conservation Area and is a key part of the setting for the Grade II* listed building and any installation will, therefore, need to be considered in the planning context of the building.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Cabinet are recommended to –

- (a) agree the proposed display of memorabilia detailed in Annex A and to approve this approach for all similar items added in future years;
- (b) note that the display of chairman's portraits and group photographs of the council will be restricted to the most recent compatible with the available space; and
- (c) agree a protocol which will be used by the Chief Executive, after consulting the Leader of the Council, to determine current and future consideration of endowments.

Contact Officer: Richard Preston, New Accommodation Project Co-ordinator

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ANNEX A: PROPOSED LOCATION FOR DISPLAYING MEMORABILIA

	Customer Service Centre	Public Meeting Rooms	Members' Lounge, Meeting Room and Chairman/Leader's Room	Back Office Areas
Rolls of Honour			Members' Lounge	
Portraits of Chairmen			Stairs and first floor corridor leading to Members' rooms	
Photographs of Council			Members' Lounge	
Twinning Items			Small items in Chairman/Leaders' Room and Members' Private Meeting Room – Larger items in Member's Lounge	
RAF/USAF Related Items		Foyer outside public meeting rooms.		
Awards and Trophies	Awards related to service quality/customer service.	Awards relating to overall performance in foyer outside public meeting rooms.		Awards relating to internal processes.

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CABINET

17TH SEPTEMBER 2009

**ADOPTION OF ROADS AND SEWERS
(Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being))**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report contains the background to, the methodology used and the findings following completion of a study on the adoption of roads and sewers in Huntingdonshire.
- 1.2 The decision to undertake the study followed discussions by the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) on problems being reported by residents concerning delays in completing adoptions of roads. It was acknowledged that this is a national problem. The Panel decided to establish a Working Group to investigate the processes and procedures involved with a view to improving the speed of the adoption process. There have been changes to the membership of the Working Group since its establishment, with the final membership being Councillors J D Ablewhite, Mrs P A Jordan, M F Shellens, J S Watt and P K Ursell. Former Councillor D A Giles was appointed on to the Working Group and assisted with the investigations until April 2008 and the late Councillor Mrs C A Godley also participated in the study during its initial stages.
- 1.3 Councillor P K Ursell has declared a personal interest in the study by virtue of his employment with a local developer.
- 1.4 Discussions have been held with relevant District Council Officers and the Working Group is grateful to them for the support provided during the course of their investigations. Further details appear in section 3.

2. AIMS OF THE STUDY

- 2.1 It was originally decided to undertake a study on the process of adopting estate roads and sewers with an aim to put measures in place that could streamline the process and make the procedures more transparent, initially by investigating the feasibility and potential benefits of introducing a District-wide register of unadopted roads and sewers.
- 2.2 Having investigated the feasibility and utility of introducing a register of unadopted roads and sewers in the District, it has been concluded that this would not be appropriate given that the County Council already has a statutory duty to maintain a register of adopted roads, a register of unadopted roads would very quickly become out of date as new developments were completed and that maintenance of a register would have resource implications for the District Council. Nevertheless, the importance of the principle that underlies such a register has been acknowledged but it has been decided that it would be more appropriate to focus on ensuring that the necessary procedures are in place so that roads and sewers are adopted as soon as they become eligible under the respective statutory procedures.
- 2.3 In light of the above, comprehensive investigations have been undertaken into the existing processes and procedures for adoption, with a view to

making recommendations to improve upon the current systems and practices, and into the wider implications of these procedures.

3. WORKING GROUP'S ACTIVITIES

3.1 The Working Group has met on a number of occasions and has been assisted in their deliberations by Councillor Peter Bucknell in his capacity as Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport. The following District Council Officers have been interviewed:-

- Mr Chris Allen – Projects and Assets Manager
- Mrs Heather Gilling – Communications and Marketing Manager
- Mr Steve Ingram – District Council's Head of Planning Services
- Mrs Lesley Kent – Land Charges Officer
- Mr Colin Meadowcroft – Head of Law, Property & Governance
- Mr Andy Moffatt – District Council's Development Control Manager
- Mr Graham Shipley – Principal Building Control Officer

The Working Group has also spoken to Mrs Sue Reynolds – Highways Development Control Manager, Cambridgeshire County Council.

3.2 In addition to interviewing the above Officers, the Working Group has undertaken comprehensive research in connection with the following:-

- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
- Department for Transport (DFT)
- Anglian Water Authority
- District Council's Legal and Estates Division
- District Council's Environmental and Community Health Services Division
- District Council's Land Searches Section
- County Council's Transport Asset Management Section
- Home Insurance Providers

3.3 The section below summarises the Working Group's findings.

4. STUDY FINDINGS

4.1 As there had been a long standing agreement that the District Council would not scrutinise County Council services and *vice versa*, it was initially decided to concentrate on the adoption of sewers. This is often (but not always) a necessary precursor to road adoption.

(a) Sewer Adoption

4.2 Extensive research has been undertaken into the processes and procedures involved in the adoption of sewers, which is an important part of the study as Highways Authorities will not usually adopt roads until the associated sewers have been adopted by the body responsible for drainage. Common causes of delay in sewer adoption are as follows:-

- proposed deviations from the Sewers for Adoption Guide;
 - commencement of work by developers before technical approval has been received from the sewerage undertaker;
 - legal disputes and legal matters; and
 - developers being reluctant to complete remedial works once they have completed a site.
- 4.3 On the basis of these investigations concern has been expressed that homeowners are unaware of their current liability towards paying for drainage repairs to their property. It has become apparent that when land searches are submitted, the question of drainage is not automatically raised. The District Council's Land Charges Section have advised that any matters relating to drainage are referred to Geodysys, a provider of land and property information for the East of England, which was established by Anglian Water in June 1997 to manage its water asset information and to provide water and drainage search services to all property professionals. Solicitors therefore have to request drainage searches at an additional cost of £36 - £51 to the client. While property deeds stating whether the owner of the property is responsible for the cost of maintaining the sewer that serves it, a suggestion has been made that Solicitors should be encouraged to advise clients to undertake drainage searches when purchasing properties in order that they are fully aware of the extent of their potential liability in this respect and are able to obtain appropriate insurance cover if it is deemed necessary.
- 4.4 Enquiries have been made with home insurance providers to investigate whether policies cover drainage and sewerage repairs at a property. Advice has been received that policies are unlikely to provide cover for such repairs. This issue is also referred to within DEFRA's review of private sewers (see paragraph 4.9).
- 4.5 Various estates in the District that have experienced sewerage problems in the past have been considered, namely Kings Road, Dukes Road, Queens Gardens and Regents Road, Eaton Socon and Christie Drive, Huntingdon. It was initially intended to conduct a site visit to the estates but it was concluded that little extra information would be gained from visiting the sites. Information has been obtained from the District Council's Environmental and Community Health Services Division on the Council's powers to intervene in certain circumstances when drainage problems occur. In such cases, if the blockage is not cleared up within 28 days, the District Council may serve notice and carry out the necessary works. The cost of the works is recharged to the properties concerned or a charge is placed on the property. Although there are concerns over the 28 day period required before the District Council can intervene, Members are nevertheless satisfied that intervention processes are available and in place to address such issues as a last resort.
- 4.6 During the course of the investigations, it became evident that the estates referred to above had been constructed by public sector housing authorities but are now either privately owned or have been transferred to a registered social landlord. With regard to the latter, the terms of the Large Scale Voluntary Transfer agreement have been examined and advice has been received from the District Council's Legal and Estates Division that the District Council still has a liability to pay for drainage repairs for social housing, should maintenance costs exceed a certain sum in any year. Whilst Huntingdonshire Housing Partnership is liable for the initial costs of up to

£65,000, over this figure the District Council would then be required to contribute up to a further £65,000 towards the cost of repairs. Should total maintenance costs exceed the sum of £130,000 in any year, the District Council would still be liable, however, the matter would be referred to arbitration to establish who would be responsible for meeting the cost. These provisions will cease in 2015.

- 4.7 Investigations have been carried out into the Protocol on Design, Construction and Adoption of Sewers in England and Wales which was introduced by DEFRA in 2002 and reviewed in 2005. The Protocol was primarily intended to ensure that all new sewers constructed since then would be built to an adoptable standard. The 2005 review of the Protocol concluded that owing to the cost involved and a lack of legal powers to compel developers to construct sewers to an adoptable standard, sewers were still not being built to this standard. This point has further been reinforced by the District Council's Principal Building Control Officer, who has advised the Working Group that the Building Control Section are unable to enforce the standards to which sewers are constructed and that current Building Regulations allow developers to construct sewers to a standard that is lower than that required for adoption purposes. One of the recommendations proposed within DEFRA's review of private sewers was that the Protocol should be made mandatory and incorporated within Part H of Building Regulations. The consultant appointed by DEFRA, W S Atkins, had established that only 1% of developments built after the publication of the Protocol were built in accordance within the terms outlined within the document.
- 4.8 It appears that water authorities see little benefit in adopting sewers and they are regarded as a financial liability. Investigations have been carried out into the standards to which Anglian Water requires sewers to be constructed and it has become apparent that their standards are outlined within a publication entitled *Sewers for Adoption*. This guide specifies the industry standard and sets out the design standards and specifications, together with the procedure, legal arrangements and timescales for the adoption process. Additionally, the Principal Building Control Officer has advised that the National House-Building Council (NHBC) standards for sewer adoption are not the same as those identified by Water Authorities. It has become clear that the existence of various protocols and standards have contributed towards the delay in the adoption process. At this point in the study Members formed the view that more standardisation in this respect was required. Furthermore, in order to encourage water authorities to improve their own adoption procedures, they considered whether there would be merit in establishing a forum of local authorities to lobby water companies on this matter.
- 4.9 Whilst undertaking their investigations into sewer adoption, Members were encouraged by an announcement made by DEFRA on 15th December 2008, which stated that from April 2011, responsibility for 200,000km of privately owned sewers and lateral drains in England would be transferred to statutory water and sewerage companies. This would mean that a total of 55% of private drainage would be under the direct control of water and sewerage companies. This decision had been reached following an extensive review of private sewers which had commenced in 2001, and had been prompted by a consultation exercise in 2003. The District Council had submitted a response to the consultation, the content of which has been reviewed during the study. DEFRA has advised that the cost of the transfer will be met by an increase in

the sewerage element of bills, estimated to equate to £3 to £11 per year, dependent upon the sewerage company in question.

- 4.10 The Government intends to consult on draft regulations in Spring 2009 and to present them to Parliament in Autumn 2009. It is intended that the regulations will specify detailed arrangements for the implementation of the transfer. The Panel is keen to raise the profile of the DEFRA announcement to all Members and local residents and have suggested that a press release be issued and article be published in the District Wide magazine (see Section 5 below). It is anticipated that DEFRA's initiatives on private sewers will expedite the road adoption process.
- 4.11 Enquiries also have been made with the Department for Transport to identify whether or not there are any proposals to review the process for road adoption but no intentions in this direction have been identified.

(b) Road Adoption

- 4.12 Having completed the primary work, investigations continued on compiling evidence on road adoption procedures. Given that many District Council Members receive enquiries from residents on this subject, it was thought to be a useful exercise to make this information available to Members to help them to deal satisfactorily with such enquiries.
- 4.13 Members have been advised of the background to Section 38 Agreements, established under the Highways Act 1980, which enable developers to enter into an agreement with the Highways Authority (in this case, Cambridgeshire County Council) for the construction of new roads with a view to adopting them in the future. Under this Agreement, a developer is required to construct a road to an appropriate standard to the satisfaction of the Highways Authority and in accordance with the agreed specification. The Highways Authority is responsible for negotiating the Agreement and for the issue of guidance to developers, but the latter is often regarded as inconsistent and confusing for developers. Whilst it has become evident that developers may not always construct roads to an adoptable standard, it has been acknowledged that there is little incentive or penalty associated with completing the adoption process. It is also the case that it would be costly for Highways Authorities to take legal action against developers who fail to construct to the required standards.
- 4.14 Common reasons why there are significant delays in the road adoption process are as follows:-
- land or legal disputes;
 - remedial works being undertaken where a defect has occurred in construction;
 - the need for roads to be adopted sequentially as they cannot be adopted unless they connect directly to an adopted highway;
 - changing specifications and standards of construction – e.g. lighting; and
 - developers not building sewers to agreed plans which creates problems for their adoption with the knock-on effects for roads.

The majority of problems with the adoption process result from developers failing to complete remedial works to development sites, which usually are of a minor nature. Complaints received often relate to unsafe footways and carriageways. Delays in communication between the County Council and developers have been found, which may be attributed to the length of time taken to receive and respond to correspondence. Some progress is being made with regard to the latter.

- 4.15 Members have discussed with Mrs Sue Reynolds, County Council's Highways Development Control Manager, the County Council's procedure for road adoption. They have been advised that the County Council is dependant on developers approaching that Authority with a view to entering into Section 38 Agreements. No legislation exists to compel developers to work towards having estate roads adopted or to enter into an agreement with the County Council.
- 4.16 In terms of the Agreement process, on signing an Agreement developers are required to complete developments to which they relate within two years. This requires all carriageways, footways, drainage and lighting to be completed to a satisfactory standard. Upon completion of the initial works, a certificate is then issued.
- 4.17 All Section 38 Agreements are covered by Bonds, which are calculated on a linear metre basis. £800 per linear metre is charged under the Bonds. The Bonds are used as a precautionary measure in instances where developers fail to complete any works. To date, the County Council have only once called in a Bond.
- 4.18 Mrs Reynolds encourages all Planning Authorities within the County to use Planning Conditions (and the enforcement of them) to ensure that developers complete all infrastructure works on a site prior to the occupation of properties. However, the District Council's Head of Planning Services has stated that that the District Council does not have any powers to compel developers to construct to an adoptable standard. The Planning process stands alone from the Building Control process. Whilst it may be possible to propose related conditions on larger developments (e.g. Loves Farm, St Neots) it is often difficult to justify the imposition of such conditions on smaller scale developments. There is no legal requirement for a developer to put sites up for adoption. The adoption process is therefore treated as a separate legal matter. Interim checks on construction works at development sites are conducted by the District Council's Building Control Section.
- 4.19 There is a number of development sites in the District that have not been adopted some for a prolonged period of time. Mrs Reynolds has argued that the County Council has limited statutory powers in this area. In contrast, however, the District Council's Head of Legal and Estates has outlined the legal provisions in existence in respect of the adoption of both sewers and roads. In his view these provisions are adequate to ensure the adoption process is completed. Following enquiries with local Solicitors on conveyancing practice, the Head of Legal and Estates has advised that, during the purchasing process, purchasers and mortgage providers are made aware of the status of the roads and sewers serving properties and of their financial liabilities for paying for drainage and road repairs on estates that have not been adopted. Providing the relevant agreement between developer

and responsible body is in place, mortgage providers would not be expected to have any concerns over future liability for maintenance of roads or sewers. Where mortgage providers have concerns, retentions are still used, but usually only where there is no bond in place. The Head of Legal and Estates has further advised that insurance indemnity should be available against future liability in these areas.

- 4.20 It has become clear that there is no national consistency on Design Guides and the construction of sites. Despite this, Members have been assured by the County Council's Highways Development Control Manager that developers have not experienced any problems with regards to the construction specifications as outlined within the County Council's Design Guide. Additionally, the District Council's Head of Planning Services reported that the District Council worked closely with the County Council on the development of such guidance, so as to ensure that consistent advice is being given to applicants concerned.
- 4.21 The District Council's Head of Planning Services reported on an initiative introduced by the Land Searches Section to put notes on its system to highlight properties/areas of concern. However, the efficacy of this measure is dependant on Solicitors alerting prospective purchasers to the implications of these notes and offering advice to their clients on suitable courses of action. Mrs Reynolds has concerns over the advice being offered by Solicitors to their clients. It is felt that insufficient emphasis is placed on the financial liabilities occupiers could face should they proceed to purchase homes on unadopted sites. Members had intended to speak to a representative of the local branch of the Law Society on this; the intention being to clarify best practice and establish whether there are any steps that can be taken to ensure the status of roads and sewers is thoroughly followed up during conveyancing. Although an invitation was extended to the local branch of the Law Society to meet with Members, a meeting has not taken place. This is not perceived to be a problem as a recommendation on this subject appears at the end of this report.
- 4.22 In addition, Members have noted that there is no process in place for the automatic adoption of old estate roads. Should individuals wish these roads to be adopted, then they would be liable to meet the necessary costs of bringing them to an adoptable standard.
- 4.23 From the perspective of developers, it has been recognised that they would not want to apply the final surface to a road until all construction work has been completed. Yet it is not easy to identify why they would not want to absolve themselves of liability for future maintenance by ensuring completion of the adoption process. It has been speculated elsewhere that this is because of the difference between the construction specifications for Building Control purposes and the standards required for adoption. The latter are higher and are not a statutory requirement.

5. COMMUNICATING THE STUDY FINDINGS

- 5.1 Given the obvious need to alert the various interested parties to the information uncovered in the course of the study, the Communications and Marketing Manager has advised on the courses available to achieve this, particularly, in raising the profile of the Government's intention to transfer responsibility for privately owned sewers and lateral drains in England to the

statutory water and sewerage authorities and to publicise the need for prospective house buyers to pay sufficient regard to this important issue.

- 5.2 The Communications and Marketing Manager has presented a number of options, which might assist in achieving these aspirations. The outcome is that a communications plan has been developed (see Appendix hereto) and this is put forward for implementation.
- 5.3 With the exception of the activities entailed in implementing the communications plan the findings of the study will not have any direct operational or additional resource implications for the Council.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Following conclusion of its work, the Panel

RECOMMEND

- a) that the information contained in the report be noted;
- b) that, subject to consultation with Anglian Water on the proposed approach, the communications plan be implemented;
- c) that the local branch of the Law Society be formally written to with a view to ensuring that best practice is adopted throughout the conveyancing process and the status of roads and sewers thoroughly investigated and clients advised accordingly;
- d) that the study be revisited once the extent is known of the roads not under the responsibility of Anglian Water following implementation of the Government initiative referred to in paragraph 4.10; and
- e) that the Local Government Association be lobbied in order to seek the strengthening of the powers of the Highways Authority with regard to the road adoption process.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Notes of the meetings of the Adoption of Roads and Sewers Working Group.

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

Adoption of Roads and Sewers Working Group

Communications Plan

The Adoption of Roads and Sewers Working Group was set up to investigate processes and procedures following concerns expressed by Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) regarding delays in adoption of roads and sewers across the district, although this is a national problem.

During the course of the study an announcement was made by DEFRA (December 2008) that from April 2011 responsibility for around 200,000 kilometres of privately owned sewers and drains in England would be transferred to the water companies. This would remove responsibility from householders, and could help speed up the process of adoption of roads, as often it is unresolved sewerage matters that cause delay in adoption of roads.

The working group wishes to communicate this message as widely as possible throughout the district.

Communications objectives

The objectives of the communications plan are:

- to create awareness of the change of responsibility to householders, and other interested parties
- to encourage positive coverage of the change of responsibility in the local and regional press and media

Audiences

Communications will need to be targeted at local residents, and other interested parties, for example developers and the legal profession. It is important to keep employees and elected members in the loop to ensure consistency in messages. County and parish councillors will also need to be informed.

Key audiences include:

- Employees
- Councillors
- Local residents and communities
- Partner organisations
- Press and media
- Relevant professionals – e.g. developers, legal, land charges.

Messages

In order to achieve a successful outcome, messages must be clear, concise and consistent. The message must be relevant to the people we are talking to. However, one size does not fit all and while the messages should be consistent, the channels of communication, and the way in which the messages are framed may be different.

The key messages to be communicated are:

- Change in responsibility. Responsibility for 200,000 kilometres of privately owned sewers and drains in England will transfer to water and sewerage companies.
- Current arrangements. Many householders may not be aware that they currently have a responsibility for sewers and drains, even those that are not actually within the boundary of their properties.
- Timescale of the implementation of the new arrangement.
- Cost implication to householders in increased water and sewerage charges.

Methods of communication

An integrated marketing communications approach will be taken to strengthen the message and to help achieve the objectives set. The methods will include:

External

- Articles and features in our publication, District Wide, and local press and media
- Website page on the council's website
- Briefing notes for partners
- Direct contact with the appropriate professional organisations

Internal

- Team News, the council's newsletter for employees and members
- Briefing notes for members

Media

Media to target will include:

Print

- Local papers – Hunts Post, News and Crier, Cambridge News and Peterborough Evening Telegraph

Broadcast

- Radio – Heart, BBC Radio Cambridgeshire
- Anglia TV

Timescales

Contact needs to be made with DEFRA and our local water and sewerage companies to establish what communications and marketing plans they have in place in order to ensure that our communications is complementary to anything they are issuing.

However our publicity can be started soon – highlighting the fact that many householders at the moment ARE responsible for private sewers and drains, and outlining what action (if any) they may be able to take.

Suggest that press and media coverage could begin in the 'quiet' period over the summer to allow a 'drip feed' approach. Internal audiences and parish councils should be provided with information at the same time.

Initial press coverage can be followed up with an item in District Wide, perhaps in the September issue, with follow-up stories nearer the transfer date, and just after implementation of the new arrangements.

Under the new bi-monthly schedule there will be issues of District Wide published in January 2011, March 2011, and May 2011 – precise dates still to be identified.

Evaluation

To determine the effectiveness and efficiency of the publicity an evaluation should be carried out. It will also help to identify whether the objectives set were achieved.

The success of the communications plan will be measured on the following:

- number of articles published in District Wide.
- monitoring of local media coverage (the amount of positive or neutral coverage and lack of negative coverage)
- feedback from members and other partners
- Evidence through feedback of raised awareness amongst all of our key audiences

Review

This communications plan should be regarded as 'a moveable feast' to be reviewed by the communications and marketing manager at regular intervals to take account of any changes in timescale.

Heather Gilling
Communications and Marketing Manager
Ext: 8033.
April 2009

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