

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)** will be held in the **CORPORATE TRAINING SUITE, EASTFIELD HOUSE, 6 LATHAM ROAD, HUNTINGDON PE29 6YE** on **THURSDAY, 11 JUNE 2009** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

**Contact  
(01480)**

## **APOLOGIES**

**1. MINUTES** (Pages 1 - 2)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2009.

**Mrs A Jerrom  
388009**

**2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

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

**3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN** (Pages 3 - 8)

A copy of the current Forward Plan, which was published on 14th May 2009 is attached, Members are invited to note the Plan and to comment as appropriate on the contents therein.

**Mrs H Taylor  
388008**

**4. CUSTOMER SERVICES MONITORING REPORT** (Pages 9 - 20)

To receive a report by the Head of Customer Services.

**Ms M Greet  
375882**

**5. PERFORMANCE MONITORING** (Pages 21 - 26)

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

**Mr H Thackray  
388035**

**6. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT** (Pages 27 - 30)

To receive a report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships and the Head of Democratic and Central Services on the Sustainable Communities Act.

**Mrs C Sides  
388495**

**7. BUDGET WORKING GROUP** (Pages 31 - 60)

To receive the final report of the Budget Working Group.

**Mrs H Ali  
388006**

8. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY - REMIT, ROLE AND STUDIES**  
(Pages 61 - 72)

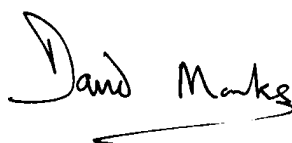
To consider a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services on the Panel's remit and role and to consider the Panel's current programme of studies.

Mr A Roberts  
388015  
Mrs A Jerrom  
388009

9. **SCRUTINY** (Pages 73 - 78)

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

Dated this 2 day of June 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 Amanda Jerrom, Democratic Services, Tel:01480 388009 Email:amanda.jerrom@huntsdc.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Committee/Panel.**

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

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

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 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) held in the Great Hall, Priory Centre, St Neots on Wednesday, 13 May 2009.

PRESENT: Councillors J Ablewhite, E R Butler, J A Dew, A N Gilbert, L M McGuire, M F Shellens, Ms M J Thomas, G S E Thorpe and R G Tuplin

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor J T Bell.

### 1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

that Councillor J Ablewhite be elected Chairman of the Panel for the ensuing Municipal Year.

**Councillor J Ablewhite in the Chair**

### 2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

### 3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

that Councillor G S E Thorpe be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Panel for the ensuing Municipal Year.

### 4. CORPORATE PLAN WORKING GROUP

RESOLVED

that Councillors J Ablewhite and G S E Thorpe be appointed to serve on the Corporate Plan Working Group for the ensuing Municipal Year.

Chairman

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## FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

Prepared by **Councillor I C Bates**  
 Date of Publication: **14 May 2009**  
 For Period: **1 June 2009 to 30 September 2009**

Membership of the Cabinet is as follows:-

Councillor I C Bates	- Leader of the Council	4 Church End Hilton Huntingdon PE28 9NJ Tel: 01480 830250 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Ian.Bates@huntsdc.gov.uk">Ian.Bates@huntsdc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor L M Simpson	- Deputy Leader of the Council with Special Responsibility for HQ/Accommodation	45 Devoke Close Stukeley Meadows Huntingdon Cambs PE29 6XE Tel: 01480 388946 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Mike.Simpson@huntsdc.gov.uk">Mike.Simpson@huntsdc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor K J Churchill	- Executive Councillor for Housing and Public Health	51 Gordon Road Little Paxton St Neots PE19 6NJ Tel: 01480 352040 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Ken.Churchill@huntsdc.gov.uk">Ken.Churchill@huntsdc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor D B Dew	- Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport	4 Weir Road Hemingford Grey Huntingdon PE28 9EH Tel: 01480 469814 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Douglas.Dew@huntsdc.gov.uk">Douglas.Dew@huntsdc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor J A Gray	- Executive Councillor for Environment and Information Technology	Shufflewick Cottage Station Row Tilbrook PE28 0JY Tel: 01480 861941 E-mail: <a href="mailto:JG@novae.com">JG@novae.com</a>

Councillor C R Hyams	- Executive Councillor for Operational and Countryside Services	22 Bluegate Godmanchester Huntingdon Cambs PE29 2EZ  Tel: 01480 388968 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Colin.Hyams@huntsdc.gov.uk">Colin.Hyams@huntsdc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor A Hansard	- Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy	78 Potton Road Eynesbury St Neots PE19 2NN  Tel: 01480 388942 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Andrew.Hansard@huntsdc.gov.uk">Andrew.Hansard@huntsdc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds	- Executive Councillor for Leisure	17 Virginia Way St Ives PE27 6SQ  Tel: 01480 388935 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Deborah.Reynolds@huntsdc.gov.uk">Deborah.Reynolds@huntsdc.gov.uk</a>
Councillor T V Rogers	- Executive Councillor for Finance	Honeysuckle Cottage 34 Meadow Lane Earith Huntingdon PE28 3QE  Tel: 01487 840477 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Terence.Rogers@huntsdc.gov.uk">Terence.Rogers@huntsdc.gov.uk</a>

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

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

Roy Reeves  
Head of Administration

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

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

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
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Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
New Industrial Units, Caxton Road, St. Ives	Cabinet	18 Jun 2009	None.	Keith Phillips, Estates and Property Manager Tel No 01480 388260 email - Keith.Phillips@huntsdc.gov.uk	Not applicable	A Hansard	Economic Well-being
St. Neots Leisure Centre - Proposals for Development	Cabinet	18 Jun 2009	None	Simon Bell, General Manager, Leisure Centres Tel No. 01480 388049 or email Simon.Bell@huntsdc.gov.uk	Not applicable	Mrs D C Reynolds	Social Well-being
Corporate Equality Policy Action Plan Progress	Cabinet	18 Jun 2009	Corporate Equality Policy - Action Plan Progress	Mrs Louise Sboui, Policy Officer Tel No. 01480 388032 or email Louise.Sboui@huntsdc.gov.uk	Overview and Scrutiny (Service Delivery) Equality Steering Group	A Hansard	Social Well-being
Proposed Changes to Policy of Gypsies and Travellers in East of England Plan	Cabinet	18 Jun 2009	Report of Panel on Gypsy and Traveller Policy	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve HDC comments to Go-East	D B Dew	Environmental Well-being
Carbon Management Plan	Cabinet	18 Jun 2009	None.	Chris Jablonski, Environment Team Leader Tel No 01480 388368 or email Chris.Jablonski@huntsdc.gov.uk		J A Gray	Environmental Well-being
Sustainable Communities Act	Cabinet	18 Jun 2009	Sustainable Communities Act 2007	Mrs Corrine Garbett, Acting Head of People, Performance & Partnerships Tel No 01480 388459 or email Corrine.Garbett@huntsdc.gov.uk		I C Bates	Economic Well-being
Covert Surveillance Policy Review	Cabinet	18 Jun 2009	Existing Policy Legislation	Wayland Smalley, Solicitor Tel No 01480 388022 or email Wayland.Smalley@huntsdc.gov.uk	Internal Steering Group	A Hansard	Economic Well-being

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Land Adjacent to - the Grand Cinema, Ramsey	Cabinet	16 Jul 2009	Report to Cabinet - 7th June 2007	Keith Phillips, Estates and Property Manager Tel No 01480 388260 or email Keith.Phillips@huntsdc.gov.uk		A Hansard	Economic Well-being
Great Fen Collaboration Agreement	Cabinet	23 Jul 2009	None	Malcolm Sharp, Director of Operational Services Tel No 01480 388301 email - Malcolm.Sharp@huntsdc.gov.uk		D B Dew	Environmental Well-being
Leisure Centres - Performance Monitoring Report	Cabinet	23 Jul 2009	None.	Simon Bell, General Manager, Leisure Centres Tel No 01480 388049 or email Simon.Bell@huntsdc.gov.uk		Mrs D C Reynolds	Social Well-being
A14 Statutory Orders Consultations	Cabinet	23 Jul 2009	None.	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No 01480 388430 or email Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Endorse HDC's position on the orders	D B Dew	Environmental Well-being
County Wide and Integrated Development Programme and Tariff***	Cabinet	17 Sep 2009	Local Investment Framework	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve for consultation	D B Dew	Environmental Well-being
Development Management Submission Document***	Cabinet	17 Sep 2009	Preferred Option Document	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve for public consultation	D B Dew	Environmental Well-being

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
St. Ivo Leisure Centre - Proposal for Development***	Cabinet	17 Sep 2009	None	Simon Bell, General Manager, Leisure Centres Tel No. 01480 388049 or email Simon.Bell@huntsdc.gov.uk		Mrs D C Reynolds	Social Well-being
Great Fen Masterplan	Cabinet	17 Sep 2009	None	Malcolm Sharp, Director of Operational Services Tel No 01480 388301 or email Malcolm.Sharp@huntsdc.gov.uk	Consultation process in preparation.	D B Dew	Environmental Well-being
Draft Planning Contributions Supplementary Planning Document	Cabinet	17 Sep 2009	Huntingdonshire Development Plans	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No 01480 388430 or email Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve for Consultation	D B Dew	Environmental Well-being
Site Options Gypsy and Travellers Development Plan Document***	Cabinet	22 Oct 2009	Issues and Options Paper	Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Approve for public consultation	D B Dew	Environmental Well-being

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# Customer Service Quarterly Performance Report Jan to Mar 2009

## Index

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<a href="#">Call Centre</a>	<a href="#">Page 4</a>	<a href="#">Appendices</a>	<a href="#">Page 5</a>

Contact Officer Michelle Greet, Customer Service Manager  
 07500 027519  
 michelle.greet@huntsdc.gov.uk

## Management summary

The number of customers who contacted Customer Services this quarter totalled 70,060, an increase from the previous quarter's total of 66,149. All service levels were met both in Customer Service Centres and the Call Centre.

The progress Customer Services is making against its Service Plan is shown in [Appendix A](#).

Several surveys in the quarter show very high satisfaction levels with the standard of service provided both internally and externally...

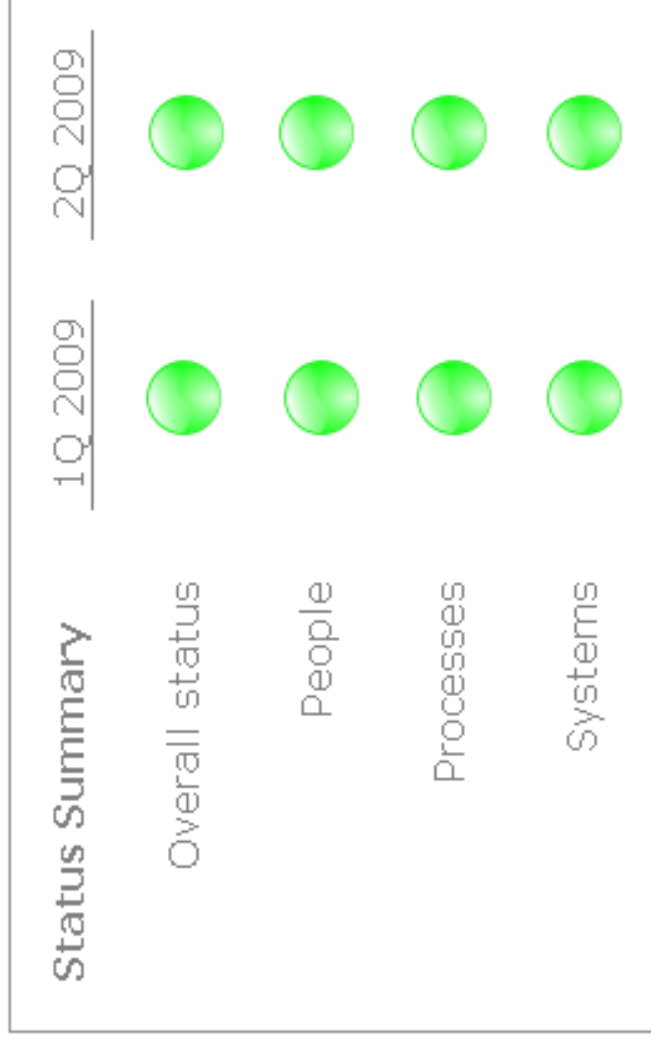
- Service department staff have recorded a satisfaction level of 95%
- Customers visiting face to face locations recorded a satisfaction level of 99.7%
- Customers contacting the Call Centre recorded a satisfaction level of 98%

This has to be considered in light of dramatic increases in Benefit (+40%) and Housing (+21%) enquiries at face-to-face locations.

The contents of the Customer Service Standard leaflet have been agreed and the document has now gone to print.

Migration of Housing to the Call Centre remains on schedule to go live early May. Training will be rolled out subsequently to face-to-face locations.

To view the Customer Services Home page click [here](#).



# Customer Service Centres

During the quarter the Customer Service Centres (CSCs) dealt with 24,794 customer enquiries, compared to the previous quarter total of 26,875. A breakdown of this figure by location is shown on the right, and details of the enquiry types are shown in [Appendix B](#).

Benefit enquiries increased dramatically this quarter, averaging 40% higher than previous months. In March the highest number of Benefit enquiries for the last twelve months were recorded at 2,088. Housing enquiries have also increased by 21% over previous months.

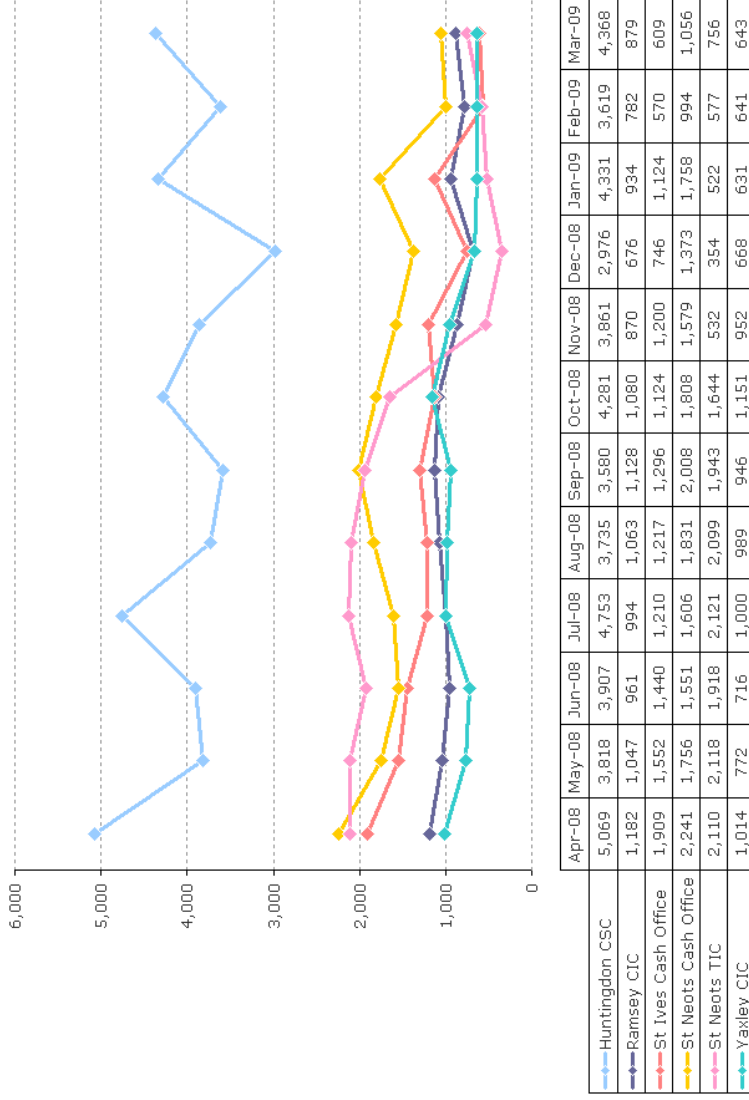
This has placed great pressure on staff. For example at Huntingdon CSC, in addition to being cross trained on these services staff have volunteered to take short lunches and miss breaks; this is not a long term solution to maintaining service levels.

The CSCs exceeded their customer service levels during the quarter. At Huntingdon CSC customers queued on average for 5 minutes 16 seconds and 93% of customers were seen within 10 minutes (target 75%). A monthly breakdown of these figures is shown in [Appendix C](#).

A revised customer satisfaction survey was carried out in March. The percentage of customers who were satisfied or very satisfied with the service received was 99.7%, reflecting the high quality of service available at our face-to-face locations.

To view further information about the Customer Service Centres click [here](#). Additional information about Ramsey & Yaxley CSCs can be viewed [here](#).

Customer Service Centres' enquiries per month



# Call Centre

Customers contacting the Call Centre during the quarter totalled 45,266, split between 41,549 calls and 3,717 emails. For calls, 98% or 40,524 were answered (target 95%). [Appendix D](#) shows the volume of calls and emails over the last 12 months.

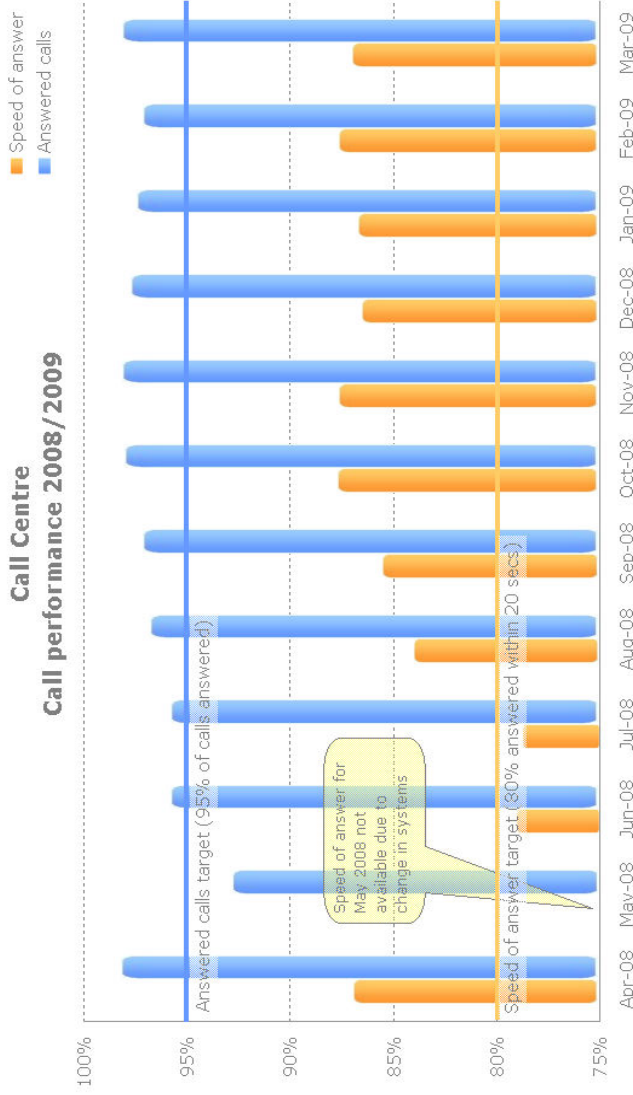
The call Centre exceeded all its customer service levels during the quarter. Performance for the last 12 months on the Call Centre's two main service levels is shown in the graph to the right.

The annual survey of service department staff satisfaction showed an increase over that recorded last year. The percentage of staff who were satisfied or very satisfied increased from 88% to 95%.

As part of the ongoing customer satisfaction survey, the percentage of customers who were satisfied or very satisfied with the service received remained consistent at 98%.

[Appendix E](#) shows the complaints received by the Call Centre, representing 1.2% of all requests for service. This shows a decrease from the previous quarter's score of 0.8%. [Appendix F](#) shows details of service requests received by the Call Centre, and [Appendix G](#) information requests.










To view further information about the Call Centre click [here](#).













# Appendix A

## Service Plan Status

Action	Target date	Status
Customer Satisfaction Measure customer satisfaction across all Customer Services' sites on a consistent basis, providing feedback to Advisors & service departments	Mar-09	 Completed Mar-09, now ongoing
Measure internal customer satisfaction	Mar-08	 Completed Mar-08, now ongoing
Benchmark Call Centre performance against other District Councils	Oct-08	 Completed Jun-08, now ongoing
Improve the way HDC's annual survey is conducted to obtain information to identify areas of strength & development areas	Jan-09	 Provided costs in December for survey to be conducted by Call Centre.
Employee Satisfaction Measure employee satisfaction across all Customer Services' sites, publish results and maintain score above 75% satisfaction	Jun-08	 Completed Jun-08, now ongoing Score Dec-08 90%
Mystery Shopper Compare performance against partners; provide customer advisors with personal benchmarks & give them experience of how partners handle calls	Jun-08	 Completed Jun-08, now ongoing
Quality Measures Measure quality of work across all Customer Services' sites	Jan-09	 Expensive Q-Matic quotation caused delay. Cost reduced by using Sharepoint application, & only using Q-Matic to developing lower level reports. Expected to complete Jun-09.
Forecast Forecast resource requirements across all Customer Services' locations	Jul-08	 Completed Jul-08, now ongoing
Recruitment/ Training Develop training for Customer Services	Apr-09	 Face-to-face mystery shopping carried out & results to be used to tailor future training in the CSCs. Staff completed two training days. Call Centre Housing training will be rolled out to face-to-face sites. Extension of the WIKI to face-to-face sites is behind schedule. Regular 1 to 1 reviews & training plans now in place.

Action	Target date	Status
Effective Communication Achieve effective two way communication via meetings with customer service co-ordinators & service managers, & invitation to Councillors to visit customer services	Mar-09	 Customer Service co-ordinators' meetings need consideration since attendance reducing. Meetings with various service departments are to be completed. Although invites sent to Councillors, most not visited.
Customer Service Performance Supply performance information to senior HDC managers on a monthly basis	Nov-08	 Completed Oct-08, now ongoing
Charter Mark Gain Charter Mark (now known as <a href="#">Customer Service Excellence</a> ) status for all of customer services	Dec-10	 Call Centre retained status Dec-08, all other Customer Service locations working towards CSE award by Dec-10.
Budget Operate Customer Services effectively within budget	Apr-08	 Performance reviewed monthly since Apr-08, now ongoing; three new budgets inherited & first year as new team. A small overspend is expected but being reviewed to prevent in future years.
Customer Service Locations Increase prominence of St Ives & St Neots	Feb-09	 Consulted 6k customers on locations/services, but budget constraints mean will have to make most out of current locations. Planning to extend & promote services, improve locations, target campaigns & partner where beneficial. Aiming to increase & promote new additional services from Jun-09 in St Ives & Sep-09 in St Neots.
Website/Kiosks Develop the website/web based services so more customer friendly	Mar-09	 Customers surveyed on why the HDC web site wasn't used to find information.
Equality & Diversity Consider the impact the customer service team have on equality issues	Dec-08	 Call Centre staff attended equality training. Information on translation published for face-to-face locations. Equality impact assessment completed & action plan in place.
Customer Service Embed the concept & practice of customer insight into HDC by encouraging services to implement the customer service strategy	Mar-10	 Customer service standards leaflet about to be published. NI14 training completed & data gathered from all departments is being analysed at present for report to COMT April 2009. Customer service protocols document being worked on at present.

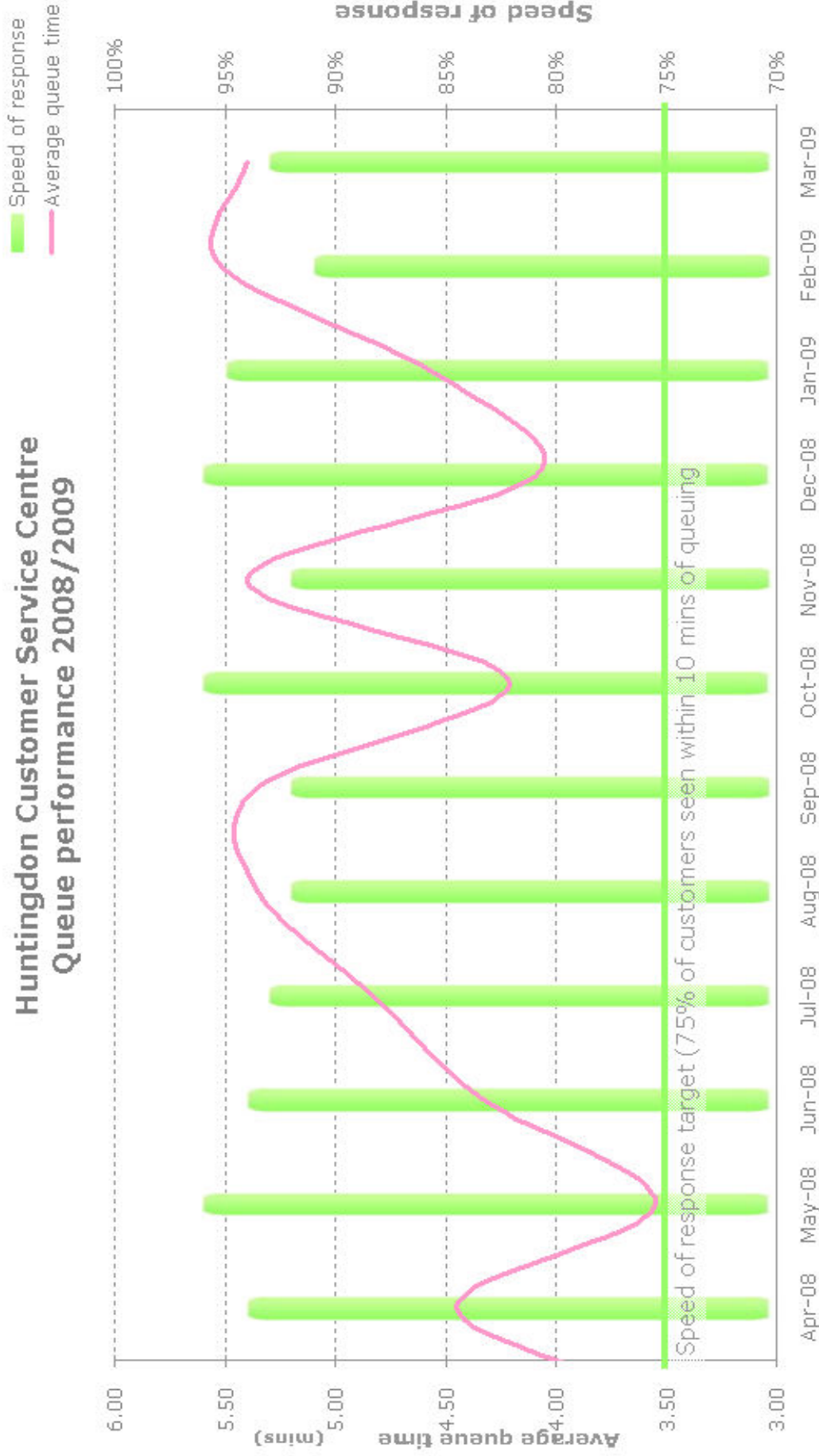
# Appendix B

## Customer Service Centres - service enquiries

Service	Jan-09	Feb-09	Mar-09	Grand Total
Benefits	1,615	1,575	2,088	5,278
Payments	2,543	853	680	4,076
Housing	1,404	1,036	1,263	3,703
Concessionary travel	451	411	521	1,383
PCs - public access with support	488	456	392	1,336
Miscellaneous	454	379	485	1,318
Tourism advice	357	390	412	1,159
Council tax	261	265	348	874
Planning	224	260	219	703
Dog bags	173	246	281	700
Transport advice	186	164	167	517
PCs - public access	113	149	188	450
Meeting	141	138	166	445
Tourism brochure	126	129	179	434
Post	118	73	93	284
Jobs or training advice	76	90	116	282
Tourism attraction enquiry	65	61	138	264
Enquiry for CCC	41	50	45	136
Form completion	39	38	38	115
Adult training (Partner session)	39	32	38	109
Choiced based letting	29	30	40	99
Streetscene enquiry	41	24	34	99
Environmental health	29	21	45	95
Tourist accommodation	30	25	39	94
Citizens' Advice Bureau (Partner session)	25	23	37	85
Enquiry for Luminus	28	20	19	67
Luminus (Partner session)	8	33	19	60
Older people's advice	21	16	16	53
Parking/abandoned cars	12	18	15	45
Debt advice	12	15	17	44
Electoral register	14	7	21	42
Deliveries to site	28	9	4	41
MIND mental health (Partner session)	16	10	13	39
Job Centre (Partner session)	13	12	13	38
Children and young people	8	19	10	37
Non HDC enquiries	7	14	8	29
New to area advice	11	12	4	27
Adult training	1	12	12	25
Service at local site	0	0	23	23
HDC job vacancies	2	11	5	18
Bulk waste	4	4	10	18
Security advice	5	6	5	16
Youth/student support (Partner session)	5	3	5	13
Enquiry for Town Council	2	2	9	13
Building control	3	6	4	13
Community Health Improvement	0	5	5	10
Energy saving grants	4	3	3	10
Volunteering advice	4	5	1	10
Digital community archives (Partner session)	3	5	2	10
District Councillor's visit/surgery	3	5	2	10
Drug dependency support (Partner session)	5	1	1	7
Leisure services	0	2	4	6
Land charges	5	0	0	5
Residents Association	4	0	0	4
Legal & estates	1	1	1	3
Neighbourhood Watch (Partner session)	0	1	1	2
Market enquiry	1	0	1	2
Payments & other enquiries	0	0	0	0
Unspecified events	0	0	0	0
Licensing	0	0	0	0
English language support (Partner session)	0	0	0	0
Streetscene advice	0	0	0	0
Parish Council surgery (Partner session)	0	0	0	0
Housing support (Partner session)	0	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9,298</b>	<b>7,175</b>	<b>8,305</b>	<b>24,778</b>

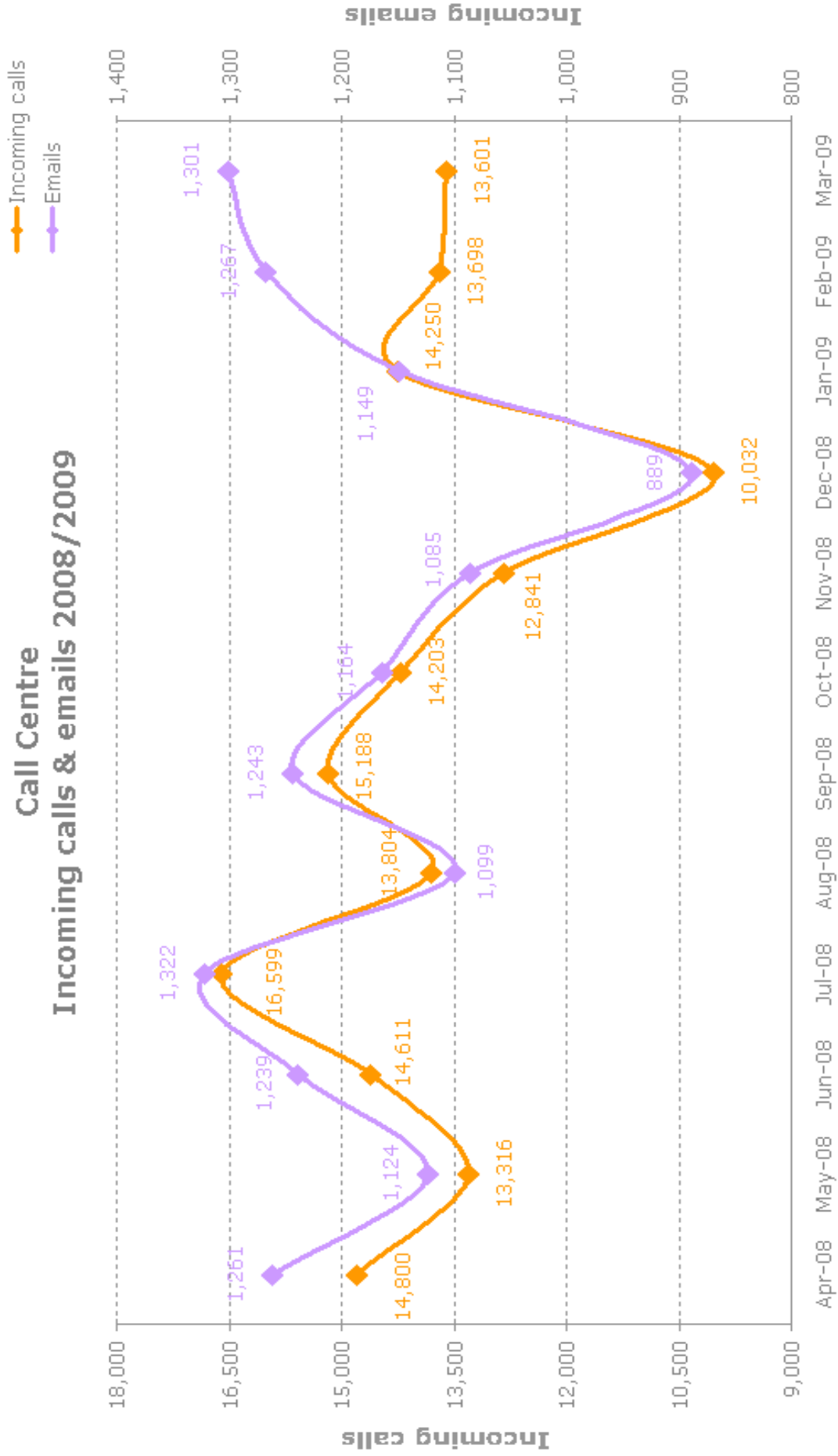
# Appendix C

## Huntingdon Customer Service Centre Queue performance 2008/2009



# Appendix D

**Call Centre  
Incoming calls & emails 2008/2009**



## Appendix E

### Complaints received at Call Centre

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Grand Total
Missed refuse collection	29	23	28	80
Formal complaint	3	3	4	10
Return bins	2	2	4	8
Crew behaviour	0	2	2	4
Take feedback from customer	0	3	0	3
Request Operations misc. work	0	1	1	2
Request street cleansing	1	0	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>108</b>

# Appendix F

## Call Centre service requests

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Grand Total
Make payment	2,290	1,150	1,144	4,584
Request refuse bin or bags	409	399	414	1,222
Missed refuse collection	369	402	301	1,072
Request street cleansing	138	112	159	409
Request bulky waste collection	89	84	127	300
Request Operations misc. work	102	83	78	263
House move	74	64	89	227
Make pest control appointment	71	61	75	207
Send electoral registration forms	37	32	47	116
Request tourism brochure/s	22	28	31	81
Return bins	21	25	22	68
Report grounds or trees problem	19	21	25	65
Take feedback from customer	18	21	23	62
Request assisted collection	22	17	14	53
Request asbestos bags	14	8	20	42
Crew behaviour	14	11	15	40
Request planning form/s	9	12	19	40
Report asset problem	13	8	14	35
Report street naming or numbering problem	3	12	14	29
Request removal of refuse bin	12	6	8	26
Missed trade waste collection	6	6	9	21
Provide refuse collection days information	9	4	7	20
Provide general bin information	1	6	8	15
Request clinical waste collection	5	3	5	13
Name change	6	2	5	13
Confirm why bin rejected	3	1	6	10
Bulky Collection information	1	2	4	7
View electoral register	1	0	4	5
Formal complaint	1	1	2	4
Request Building Control forms	1	0	0	1
Provide tourism information	1	0	0	1
Provide council tax information	0	0	1	1
Provide planning forms information	0	1	0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,781</b>	<b>2,582</b>	<b>2,690</b>	<b>9,053</b>

# Appendix G

## Call Centre information requests

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Grand Total
Provide refuse collection days information	471	495	333	1,299
Other HDC information	288	342	378	1,008
Provide number for Benefits	201	230	298	729
Provide email address to customer	193	246	231	670
Non HDC information	195	167	192	554
Provide direct dial number	188	190	174	552
Sales Enquiry QQ	129	171	180	480
Provide CCC number	151	143	125	419
Provide number for Council Tax	129	130	134	393
Provide general bin information	107	131	85	323
Provide recycling centre information	101	77	100	278
Bulky Collection information	102	74	100	276
Provide household planning information	78	80	90	248
Provide number for Luminus	51	81	84	216
Provide domestic refuse information	82	49	72	203
Provide number for Highways	56	60	59	175
Provide tourism information	57	60	43	160
Provide pest control information	46	54	38	138
Provide number for Housing	53	35	42	130
Provide planning history information	36	39	29	104
Provide number for ESTACA	47	31	24	102
Provide planning forms information	31	25	32	88
Provide council tax information	32	29	25	86
Provide electoral registration information	16	20	48	84
Provide asbestos disposal information	26	32	22	80
Provide car parking information	19	31	22	72
Provide pest appointment time	30	17	14	61
Provide car parking fine information	13	17	12	42
Missed refuse collection	6	26	8	40
View electoral register	4	11	22	37
Provide general payment options information	18	11	7	36
Provide planning fee information	8	7	12	27
Request bulky waste collection	8	8	6	22
Request tourism brochure/s	9	7	5	21
Provide planning application number	6	7	8	21
Request refuse bin or bags	7	5	8	20
Provide Antenna or Satellite Dish Information	7	8	5	20
Provide planning application cost information	4	6	5	15
House move	4	7	3	14
Request trade waste bin	4	8	1	13
Provide benefits information	10	2	0	12
Provide Home Energy advice	1	6	4	11
Send electoral registration forms	4	4	1	9
Make payment	2	5	0	7
Report grounds or trees problem	0	2	4	6
Request planning form/s	2	2	2	6
Request street cleansing	1	2	2	5
Make pest control appointment	4	0	1	5
Take feedback from customer	1	2	1	4
Request Decision Notice or Location Plan	3	0	1	4
Provide information on existing benefits claim	4	0	0	4
Formal complaint	0	0	3	3
Request Operations misc. work	1	2	0	3
Missed trade waste collection	0	3	0	3
Report street naming or numbering problem	1	2	0	3
Request clinical waste collection	0	1	2	3
Provide land charges information	1	1	1	3
Request asbestos bags	0	1	2	3
Crew behaviour	0	1	1	2
Request removal of refuse bin	0	2	0	2
Confirm why bin rejected	0	1	1	2
Provide housing information	1	0	1	2
Request assisted collection	0	1	0	1
Report asset problem	1	0	0	1
Request Building Control forms	0	1	0	1
Provide democratic services information	0	0	1	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,050</b>	<b>3,208</b>	<b>3,104</b>	<b>9,362</b>



**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 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 Members of the Panels will also find broader performance information of help to them in undertaking their review and scrutiny functions. This information can be provided on a regular or ad-hoc basis.
- 3.4 The priority objectives have been allocated between Panels as follows:

SOCIAL WELL-BEING	ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING	ECONOMIC WELL-BEING
To enable the provision of affordable housing	To help mitigate and adapt to climate change	Effective Partnership
To achieve a low level of homelessness	To promote development opportunities in and around the market towns	To be an employer people want to work for
To promote active lifestyles		Maximise business and income opportunities including external funding and grants

#### 4. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

4.1 The following performance data is appended for consideration:

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

**Annex B** - 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 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

#### 5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Members are recommended to;

Consider the results of performance for priority objectives and to comment to Cabinet as appropriate.

#### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

Growing Success: Corporate Plan

**Contact Officer:**

**Howard Thackray, Policy & Research Manager**



**01480 388035**

<b>Objective</b>		<b>Comments from appropriate Head of Service</b>
To enable effective partnerships	Achievements:	<p><b>People, Performance &amp; Partnerships: (formerly Policy &amp; Strategic Services):</b>                      Comprehensive Area Assessment: the Policy team is working with the County Council and other District Councils to coordinate information for the Area Assessment. For the Organisational Assessment, a draft 'Use of Resources' submission is being compiled. Evidence for theme 2 'Governing the Business' has already been sent to the external auditor for initial comments, full submission needs to be sent by the end of May. The Managing Performance Assessment is also being worked up at the moment the deadline for this is again the end of May. A briefing note has been produced and circulated to all Members updating them on the main requirements of the CAA.</p>
	Issues:	
	Risks:	
To be an employer people want to work for	Achievements:	<p><b>People, Performance &amp; Partnerships: (formerly HR)</b>                      Review of HR Strategy – a workshop for senior managers was held to outline the parameters of the review and the proposed process. A series of topic based workshops are planned over the next few months to inform the development of the strategy.</p>
	Issues:	
	Risks:	
To maximise business and income opportunities including extended funding and grants	Achievements:	<p><b>People, Performance &amp; Partnerships: (formerly Policy &amp; Strategic Services):</b>                      A Funding Fair was held on 25<sup>th</sup> April at the Maple Centre, Huntingdon to promote play funding for community projects.</p> <p><b>Leisure Centres:</b>                      The interim figures are extremely encouraging with income fractionally under target and expenditure currently showing a near £1/4 million saving. Impressions, however, finished the year 4% down on income – late opening of HLC, and St Ivo and St Neots both experiencing capacity and retention issues. Swim lessons continued to flourish (12% increase) as did public swims (5% increase) and indoor sports (notably through increased revenue at HLC from the Kids zone). Hospitality continues to show a decline, 12% in total, (except at Huntingdon where there was a 15% increase) as traditional bar trade suffers. Synthetic pitches failed to hit target (13%) but St Neots and Huntingdon were both closed for long periods of replacement and this will be rectified next year. Employee expenditure (£4m + for the first time) outturned almost 200k better than target with Impressions, where a comprehensive staff review took place, registering no increase in staff costs at all. There are savings on both premises and operations but the extent of these will be clarified in due course as final end of year accounts are included.</p>
	Issues:	
	Risks:	

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Community/Council Aim : To improve our systems and practices					
Objective : Effective partnership					
Division : Policy and Strategic Services					
Divisional Objective : Develop and adopt a sustainable community strategy					
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	Comments:
Deliver and measure performance against action plans for 09/10	% of SCS themed group action plans on target to be delivered in 2009/10	70			Systems will be in place to measure performance from HSP Board/Executive meetings in June/July. The Policy & Research team will be responsible for ensuring that performance is measured and managed but the HSP Board is ultimately responsible for delivery by partners.
Develop and refine SCS action plans by March 09	On target (1=Yes, 0 = No)	1	0.50		Thematic groups are currently reviewing existing action plans to ensure the actions and the measures are appropriate for 2009/10.
25					
Divisional Objective : Effective partnership framework					
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	Comments:
Develop, implement and monitor strategic/operational partnership review programme	Partnership review programme on target (1=yes, 0=No)	1	1	1	
Community/Council Aim : To learn and develop					
Objective : To be an Employer People Want to Work For					
Division : HR					
Divisional Objective : To attract and retain staff					
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	Comments:
Policies and procedures that keep up to date with modern working patterns	Review programme on target for adoption by Dec 2008 (1 = Yes, 0 = No)	1	1		Adopted in December 2008
Recruitment package	% of filled posts (for permanent staff) at anyone time	97	98.90		7 out of 628 permanent posts were vacant during this period. Of these, six have been filled and one is still vacant.

	% of posts filled within one round of recruitment	90	85.70		Six out of seven posts advertised were filled first time round. One post had to be re-advertised and this post is still vacant.	QRT
	Biennial staff survey – % level of satisfaction	80			Survey due to be undertaken Summer 2009.	YRL
<b>Community/Council Aim : To maintain sound finances</b>						
<b>Objective : Maximise business and income opportunities including external funding and grants</b>						
<b>Division : Leisure</b>						
<b>Divisional Objective : Maximise leisure centre income</b>						
<b>Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:</b>	<b>Key Measure:</b>					
Maintain expenditure within budget	Actual expenditure compared to budget (cumulative quarterly target)	£6.58m	£6.10m	£6.10m	7% saved. Figures are provisional and may change slightly as accruals are entered.	QRT
Maximise leisure centre income	Actual income received compared to budget (cumulative quarterly target)	£4.79m	£4.70m	£4.70m	2% down. Late opening HLC and SNLC. Figures are provisional and may change slightly as accruals are entered.	QRT
<b>26</b>						
<b>Division : Policy and Strategic Services</b>						
<b>Divisional Objective : To be aware of appropriate funding opportunities and communicate to the appropriate service</b>						
<b>Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:</b>	<b>Key Measure:</b>					
Co ordinate and maintain a system of internal control via funding Database, liaise with appropriate officers, provide funding advice and assistance in compilation of bids, as required	% of bids which attract funding ( year to date)	60	91.70		18 bids were submitted during 2008/9, although six of these are still pending a decision. 11 out of 12 bids with a decision made were successful. In addition, two bids submitted during 2007/8 have received approval during 2008/9.	QRT
	External Funding strategy on target to be completed by March 2009 (1=Yes, 0=No)	1	0.50		Strategy - will be completed by June 2009, but good progress is being made. Internal audit action dates have been updated to reflect this.	QRT

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC  
WELLBEING)  
CABINET**

**11 JUNE 2009**

**18 JUNE 2009**

## **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT**

**(Report by Head of People, Performance and Partnerships and Head of  
Democratic and Central Services)**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

This report provides Members with an outline of the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 and a suggested response for the Council.

### **2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 The Sustainable Communities Act was developed through a five year campaign by a coalition of interest groups called Local Works (now 'Unlock Democracy') aimed at reducing the loss of small local businesses and community facilities in parts of the Country, and the linking this to wider sustainability concerns. It was taken up as a Private Members Bill but during its parliamentary passage (in an amended form), it gained the support of the government. Publicity around the Act, has been generated by the 'Local Works/Unlock Democracy', who have been encouraging Councils to 'opt in'. However, there is no requirement to do this and it is intended that proposals will be invited by the Secretary of State annually.

2.3 The Act now forms part of a package of legislation, regulations and guidance aimed at improving the sustainability and engagement with communities and strengthening democracy. It places a duty on the Secretary of State to invite local authorities (County/Unitary and District Councils) to make proposals that they consider would contribute to promoting the sustainability of local communities. This is defined as improving the economic, social or environmental well-being of local areas. In simple terms, this means asking the Secretary of State to change something that is currently preventing the local authority from doing what it wants to do, either through a change in legislation or by devolving powers.

2.4 In exercising this discretion, the Council must similarly invite local communities to suggest changes and then have a way of consulting on those ideas. Local Works have published on their website examples of Councils who have resolved to use the Act (see [www.localworks.org](http://www.localworks.org)).

### **3. PROCESS FOR THE FORMULATION AND INVITATION OF PROPOSALS**

3.1 At Appendix A is a flow diagram showing the process for formulating and submitting ideas for proposals which includes:-

#### **Invitation**

The Secretary of State issued the first invitation on 14<sup>th</sup> October 2008 for proposals to be submitted by 31<sup>st</sup> July 2009. There is no indication from

the Secretary of State when the next invitation will be made, but it is expected annually.

### **Local Spending Reports**

To help in this process, the Secretary of State must also produce “Local Spending Reports” detailing how public money is spent in a local area to assist local authorities in drawing up proposals for submission. These reports were published on 29 April 2009 based on financial information available to the Secretary of State. The reports cover a range of functions and are not necessarily broken down to district level or by the boundaries of other organisations. The full report can be viewed on the communities and local government website at <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/localspendingreports200607>

### **Local Panels**

Local authorities must “*establish or recognise*” a panel of “*representatives of local persons*”, consult the panel about the proposals and try and reach agreement with it on the proposal(s) to be submitted. The guidance says that panels must include under represented groups and local authorities must also work with Third Sector organisations (voluntary and Community groups) and other agencies to determine who these under represented groups are. These panels can be used to generate ideas as well as a means of consultation proposals. Proposals may include a request for a transfer of functions from one person (or organisation) to another but both parties must be consulted first.

- 3.2 Initially, all proposals submitted will be considered and short listed by the Local Government Association before it consults the Secretary of State, who will determine which proposals (if any) can be implemented.
- 3.3 Guidance issued by the government says that proposals will be assessed against criteria which:
- will improve the sustainability of the local area
  - cannot be achieved through any existing powers (e.g. Well-being powers)
  - could benefit other areas
  - won't require any *new* public money
  - does not conflict with government policy

## **4. GENERATION AND FORMULATION OF IDEAS**

- 4.1 The scope of the Act is very broad. There is a lack of clarity about the process and a lack of guidance about the extent of evidence required to support assumptions of sustainability. Following this first round of proposals it is envisaged that there will be some emerging good practice examples that can be used to model future consultations. Appended to this report at Appendix B is an extract from a leaflet produced by local works with examples of how the Act might be used.
- 4.2 The Act is prescriptive on who should be consulted on proposals. Appendix C sets out diagrammatically a model which represents the range of individuals/organisations who could be involved in generating ideas and formulating proposals in Huntingdonshire. The Act is vague about how and whom ideas can be generated from. Ideas could be invited from local residents, community groups, stakeholders, businesses



etc or the Council itself. A means will need to be developed to review ideas and work up detailed proposals before consulting with the 'panel' and relevant organisations. This work would not present immediate direct costs, but would incur significant resource implications for the Council. At present, the Council does not have a specific existing panel of representatives that would meet the requirements of the Act. Setting up a specific panel for this purpose would have resource implications and is not considered a cost effective way forward and for this reason Working Group and subsequently the Council concluded that any proposals under the Act should be subject to consultation with the proposed neighbourhood forums. It is likely that such forums will become operational during late summer/early autumn. The Model at appendix C suggests an additional meeting allowing the panels to "come together" to consider collectively any proposals.

- 4.3 There are clear links with the statutory Sustainable Community Strategy for Huntingdonshire (SCS) and where appropriate proposals might need to be considered by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership to maintain a clear focus on the achievement of the SCS.
- 4.4 Discussions between local authorities across Cambridgeshire on their response to the Act are ongoing to identify potential areas for collective proposals.

## **5. RECOMMENDATION**

**That Members note the content of the report and that procedures and processes to generate and formulate ideas and proposals in relation to the Act will be developed in conjunction with the implementation of neighbourhood panels.**

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Sustainable Communities Act 2007

Sustainable Communities Act 2007: A Guide, Department of Communities and Local Government

Local Spending Reports:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/corporate/statistics/localspendingreports200607>

Local Works Website: [www.localworks.org](http://www.localworks.org)

**Contact Officer: Claire Sides, Partnership Manager**



**01480 388495**

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## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)

11TH JUNE 2009

### OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BUDGET WORKING GROUP (Report of the Working Group)

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2009, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) decided to establish a Working Group to review the budget for future years and to express a view on the priority that should be accorded to items contained within it. The suggestion for the study emerged following concerns which had been expressed by the Panel on the level of unidentified spending adjustments required by the year 2013/14.
- 1.2 In that light, Councillors J E Garner, L W McGuire and R J West were appointed onto the Working Group with a view to undertaking the review. In order to ensure political proportionality within the Working Group, Councillor P J Downes later became a Member of the Group. Councillor L W McGuire was nominated *rapporteur* for the Working Group.
- 1.3 Councillors K J Churchill, Special Advisor to the Cabinet and T V Rogers, Executive Councillor for Finance and Environment assisted Members during their investigations, together with the Director of Commerce and Technology and the Head of Financial Services. The Working Group is grateful to them for the support provided during the course of the review.

#### 2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 2.1 The Working Group was tasked with undertaking a review of the budget in future years. At its initial meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> February 2009, Members agreed upon the following terms of reference:-

*“To review the Council’s budget for future years and to express a view on the feasibility and relative merits of reducing individual budgets within it.”*

- 2.2 Whilst it has been acknowledged that £6.5m of unidentified spending adjustments would be required by the year 2013/14, it has been made clear by the Working Group that it is not within their remit to identify all of these savings. The Working Group’s role was to comment upon the individual areas which make up the Council’s budget and to consider the potential for it to be reduced.
- 2.3 The Working Group has also been tasked with identifying which items contained within the budget were a statutory requirement and those that were permissive.

### **3. WORKING GROUP ACTIVITIES**

- 3.1 The Working Group has met on a number of occasions over the ensuing months and has undertaken the following activities as part of their review:-
- review of current spending and income from fees and charges;
  - review of the Capital Programme / Medium Term Plan (MTP); and
  - discussion on the issues around the level of Council Tax.
- 3.2 Whilst undertaking the review of current spending and income from fees and charges, Members were advised that the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) had previously appointed a Working Group to investigate the possibility of maximising income opportunities for the Council. As Members would consider income from fees and charges as part of the review of the budget, and in light of the fact that the Working Group established by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) had only initiated their preliminary investigations, a decision was therefore made to subsume the Maximising Income Generation Working Group into the Overview and Scrutiny Budget Working Group. Coincidentally, Members of the Maximising Income Generation Working Group comprised Councillors P J Downes, L W McGuire and R J West.
- 3.3 The Working Group has based their deliberations on the information gathered from their investigations. The section below summarises the Working Group's findings.

### **4. WORKING GROUP FINDINGS**

- 4.1 Prior to undertaking their investigations, the Working Group was apprised of the outcome of recent meetings held between the Executive Councillor for Finance and Environment, together with Portfolio Holders and respective Heads of Service, on the level of budget set for individual service areas across the Council and the actual spend attributed to each service. In his opinion, the Executive Councillor for Finance and Environment expressed his view that there may be opportunities for spending adjustments to be achieved without reductions in service standards.
- 4.2 Additionally, the Working Group has been advised that the Director of Central Services and the Director of Commerce and Technology had recently conducted their own reviews into the Central Services Directorate and Leisure Centres respectively, the outcome of which demonstrated the achievement of significant savings for the Council.

#### **(a) Review of Current Spending and Income from Fees and Charges**

- 4.3 The Working Group has strongly expressed their concerns at the prospect of increasing levels of financial borrowing from external sources. By way of background, Members were reminded of the three main sources of income for the Council, which comprised Central Government grants, Council Tax and internal income generation. The Working Group was mindful of the statutory duties placed upon the Council to provide services such as refuse collections and Disabled Facilities Grants. The Working Group also received details of

the Council's Revenue Reserves Policy, when it was reported that the current level of revenue reserves of £19m was planned to reduce to what is considered a minimum prudent level of £3m. In discussing the Council's current financial position, the Working Group has concluded that external borrowing, would, in the long term, be the most viable option for the Council to fund capital projects in future years.

4.4 The Working Group has undertaken a review of current spending and income from fees and charges based upon the level of budget set for each Head of Service across the Council for the 2009/10 financial year. **Appendix A** sets out the comments and observations of the Working Group on each of the individual service areas. Extensive discussions have been held on the feasibility and relative merits of reducing individual budgets across the Council and a number of areas have been identified where spending adjustments might be achieved. Similarly, areas where there may be an opportunity for increased income opportunities have been identified.

4.5 Whilst there are a number of specific recommendations proposed by the Working Group within **Appendix A**, a number of recommendations have been suggested by Members which generally relate to the following:-

- the achievement of efficiency savings;
- reductions in service standards;
- specific budget reductions in service areas;
- seeking financial contributions from partners; and
- the introduction of charges for services provided by the Council.

4.6 The Working Group is satisfied with the outcome of the review of current spending and income from fees and charges and has commented accordingly. Areas for achieving savings within the Council's budget have been identified, together with a number of suggestions for increased income opportunities. **The Working Group has therefore suggested that the recommendations proposed within Appendix A should be endorsed by the Panel.**

4.7 The Working Group dedicated some time to reviewing the current income levels generated from fees and charges set by the Council. The sources of income are reflected in **Appendix B**, which was utilised to assist the Working Group in compiling the recommendations relating to increased income opportunities proposed within **Appendix A**. Whilst it has been identified that financial contributions should be sought from partners on specific service areas, the Working Group concurred that the level of financial contributions currently being received from local authorities and partner organisations should be reviewed. **The Working Group has therefore suggested that Officers should be tasked with looking at and reviewing, on a wider basis, all financial contributions made from other local authorities and partner organisations.**

4.8 The Working Group has been acquainted with details of a recent announcement made by the Local Government Association (LGA) in respect of shared services. The LGA is disappointed at the current take up of services being provided nationally by local authorities on a shared basis. The Working Group has been advised that there would now be further pressure placed upon the Council to introduce shared services as this would form part of the

criteria for the Council's Use of Resources assessment which is undertaken by the external auditor each year. The changes to the criteria for the Use of Resources assessment would take effect from the next financial year. Whilst Members have been advised of recent attempts made by Officers to introduce shared services within the Council, the Working Group has commented upon the need to revisit opportunities for introducing shared services, as this would help towards the achievement of efficiency savings for the Council. **The Working Group has therefore suggested that the Cabinet should be invited to reconsider opportunities for shared services for the Council, where appropriate.**

**(b) Review of Capital Programme / Medium Term Plan (MTP)**

4.9 The Working Group has conducted a review of the Capital Programme / Medium Term Plan (MTP) for the period 2008/09 to 2013/14. In advance of the review, the Working Group received a brief demonstration from the Director of Commerce and Technology on the impact of revenue on capital reductions. The demonstration enabled Members to familiarise themselves with the financial implications of schemes contained within the Medium Term Plan (MTP).

4.10 An attempt has been made to group all Medium Term Plan (MTP) schemes into the following categories:-

- Schemes linked to Growing Success – the Corporate Plan;
- Schemes which are either a statutory requirement, unavoidable or already committed;
- Schemes which are attributed to the maintenance of the Council's assets; and
- Schemes which demonstrate a saving or a net nil balance.

The outcome of this exercise has been included as **Appendix C**.

4.11 Whilst conducting the review, the Working Group has stressed the importance of ensuring that all schemes contained within the Medium Term Plan (MTP) are supported by a robust business case, which outlines the likely financial implications, and is drawn to the attention of the relevant Portfolio Holder.

4.12 Having regard to the schemes linked to Growing Success, the Working Group has undertaken an exercise to categorise all these schemes into a high, medium, low or nil priority order. These have been determined in accordance with the objectives set within the Corporate Plan. Members would however, wish to highlight that the exercise was undertaken without the benefit of full details of each of the schemes. Specific comment has however, been made on the following:-

**(i) New Public Conveniences (302)**

Members expressed the view that this scheme should be deleted from the Medium Term Plan and stated that all public conveniences should either be offered to Town Councils or closed and disposed of in the future. (Please refer to the previous comments made by the Working Group in **Appendix A**). **It has therefore been suggested that the**

**scheme relating to New Public Conveniences should be deleted from the Medium Term Plan.**

(ii) **Huntingdon Riverside (808)**

The Working Group has expressed concerns over the level of capital funding required for this scheme. The former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) and the Cabinet have already considered this scheme at their meetings on 14<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2009 respectively. A decision was made by the Cabinet that the proposal in its current form should not be approved, but that minor improvement works to the area should be completed. The Working Group would wish to place on record their support for the Cabinet's decision.

(iii) **St Ives Town Centre 2 – Completion (52)**

Members have expressed concerns over the expenditure required for this scheme, particularly in light of the absence of consensus for environmental improvement works on the options proposed for consultation. This scheme has been subject to scrutiny by the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) and considered by the Cabinet in April 2009, where a decision was reached by the Cabinet that it should be deferred by 3 years in the Medium Term Plan (MTP). Similarly, the Working Group would like to record their support for the Cabinet's decision.

(iv) **Business Systems (891)**

The Working Group commented upon the need to ensure that all corporate systems should be supported by a business case. Officers were requested to distinguish whether such systems were a necessary or an optional requirement. **It has therefore been suggested that any new business systems should be supported by a robust business case and only introduced into a service area if it was a necessary requirement.**

(v) **Repairs Assistance (867)**

The Working Group has noted that a report on this matter would be presented to the Cabinet at a future meeting.

(vi) **Huntingdon Town Centre Development (401) / Town Centre Developments (224) / Working Smarter (900)**

The Working Group was not satisfied that a reasonable business case has been provided for these schemes and has identified them as areas for potential spending adjustments. **The Working Group has suggested that the above schemes should be reviewed further by Officers.**

(vii) **Transportation Strategy / Public Transport / Car Parks / Environmental Improvements (All MTP Schemes)**

The Working Group has expressed the view that items of capital expenditure should be cut back within these areas. The Working Group expressed the opinion that there would be merit in cutting back these figures, in light of the Council's current financial position. In terms of the schemes relating to the Transportation Strategy, the Working Group has acknowledged that whilst the County Council were responsible for delivering this function, the District Council should retain a proportional input into these schemes as they were being delivered on partnership basis. It was also noted that the County Council adopts a "matched funding" principle and that cutting back on these schemes could result in potential delays to projects. **Nevertheless, the Working Group concluded that all schemes listed under the above categories should be reviewed by Officers.**

(viii) **Planning Enforcement Monitoring Officer (656)**

Whilst the Working Group has identified this scheme as a high priority, Members have expressed their view that funding of this scheme should be met from within existing resources, particularly in light of the current decline in the level of activity being undertaken within the Planning Department. **The Working Group has therefore suggested that this scheme should be met from within existing resources.**

4.13 The Working Group has acknowledged that there were number of schemes within the Medium Term Plan (MTP) which demonstrated net revenue savings or contributed to the maintenance of the Council's assets. Additionally, the Working Group has considered those schemes which were either a statutory requirement, unavoidable or schemes that were already committed within the Medium Term Plan (MTP). The Working Group has concluded that it would not be feasible to remove these schemes from the Medium Term Plan and is satisfied with the content of them. Specific comment has however, been made on the following:-

(i) **Stray Dog Kennels (307)**

The Working Group has noted that this scheme offered potential savings for the Council. **It has been suggested that the matter should be referred to the relevant Portfolio Holder for further consideration.**

(ii) **New Industrial Units (239)**

The Working Group has expressed support for this scheme in light of the fact that it generated a revenue stream for the Council in future years. **The Working Group has expressed their support for this scheme.**



(iii) **Disabled Facilities Grants (866)**

The Working Group has expressed some concern over the level of expenditure required for this scheme. However, as this was a statutory requirement placed upon the Council, the Working Group acknowledged that little could be done to reduce this further. Grants were being received from the Government to assist with meeting the costs of this scheme, however these funds only accounted for a small proportion of the actual expenditure required. **Whilst contributions from the Government were forthcoming, the Working Group has made a suggestion to lobby the Government with a view to increasing the level of grant funding for this scheme.**

In noting that part of the process for approving Disabled Facilities Grants included commissioning by the Council, the Working Group has identified that there may be opportunities for efficiencies to be made. **The Working Group has therefore suggested that Officers should be tasked with reviewing the process for Disabled Facilities Grants, with a view to achieving savings.**

(iv) **Leisure Centres (All MTP Schemes)**

Members have expressed some concern over the level of expenditure anticipated at each of the Leisure Centres up to the year 2013/14. Particular mention was made of the scheme relating to the Future Maintenance of the Centres (861). It was however, acknowledged by the Working Group that in order to generate efficiency savings at the Centres, substantial capital investments would be required. Additionally, it was noted that the Centres had been tasked with achieving £1m in savings by the end of the 2010/11 financial year. **Members concluded that the relevant Portfolio Holder should be tasked with rigorously reviewing each Leisure Centre scheme identified within the Medium Term Plan (MTP), with a view to justifying capital expenditure.**

(c) **Discussion on the Issues around the Level of Council Tax**

- 4.14 The Working Group has discussed issues around the level of Council Tax. Members understand the existing policy to be that the Council seeks to raise Council Tax by the maximum sum possible without incurring capping and subject to a maximum of £12 per year for a Band D property (equivalent to £1 per month). With recent capping arrangements this has left the Council having to assess the maximum sum that the Council can raise in any year whilst avoiding capping. **The Working Group has concluded that the Council's current policy in respect of Council Tax should remain unchanged.**

**5. OTHER MATTERS RAISED DURING THE COURSE OF THE REVIEW**

- 5.1 During the course of their investigations, it was suggested that there may be an opportunity to generate savings through a review of the current organisational structure adopted by the Council. The view has been expressed that savings might be achieved through a reduction in the number

of Officer posts within the authority. It has been acknowledged that a significant proportion of expenditure by the Council was attributed to employee costs and that efforts should be made to reduce the level of expenditure accordingly. Members commented upon the need to review all departments across the Council and to investigate cost effective means of providing the same level of service but with reduced employee numbers. The Working Group has commented that only minor reductions were being sought, given the implementation of a number of corporate systems and business practices which have been introduced to improve working practices and to encourage efficiencies. **The Working Group has therefore suggested that a review of the current organisational structure should be undertaken by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council.**

- 5.2 As reported earlier, and with reference to **Appendix A**, the Working Group has identified that there are a number of areas across the Council where efficiency savings could be made. In order to prompt Officers to achieve this, the Working Group has suggested that consideration should be given as to how individuals might be rewarded for achieving such efficiencies. The Working Group has suggested that the current pay system might be used to contribute towards this. **It has therefore been suggested that Officers should be tasked with investigating how the pay system might be used to encourage and provide recognition to reward individuals who achieve efficiency savings.**

## 6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The Working Group has undertaken a thorough review of the Council's budget in future years and has made a number of comments on it. Whilst conducting their investigations, the Working Group has been mindful of the level of unidentified spending adjustments required by the year 2013/14 and has made recommendations which would assist the Council in meeting this target in future years. Members have identified areas within the budget where they believe spending adjustments could be made and have identified some areas which would require further investigation. A number of recommendations have been proposed, which are set out in the section below.

## 7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Working Group recommend
- (a) that the comments of the Working Group and the recommendations proposed within **Appendix A** be endorsed by the Panel;
  - (b) that Officers should be tasked with looking at and reviewing all financial contributions made from other local authorities and partner organisations;
  - (c) that the Cabinet be invited to reconsider opportunities for shared services across the Council, where appropriate;

- (d) that the scheme relating to New Public Conveniences be deleted from the Medium Term Plan (MTP);
- (e) that the scheme relating to Business Systems within the Medium Term Plan (MTP) be supported by a robust business case and only be introduced within a service if deemed a necessary requirement;
- (f) that the Medium Term Plan (MTP) schemes relating to Huntingdon Town Centre Development, Town Centre Developments and Working Smarter be investigated further by Officers;
- (g) that all Medium Term Plan (MTP) schemes listed under the categories for Transportation Strategy, Public Transport, Car Parks and Environmental Improvements be reviewed further by Officers;
- (h) that the scheme relating to Planning Enforcement Monitoring Officer within the Medium Term Plan (MTP) be met from within existing resources;
- (i) that the Medium Term Plan (MTP) scheme relating to Stray Dog Kennels be referred to the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Public Health for further consideration;
- (j) that support for the Medium Term Plan (MTP) scheme relating New Industrial Units be noted;
- (k) that the Government be lobbied for increases in the level of grant awarded for Disabled Facilities Grants;
- (l) that Officers be tasked with reviewing the current process for Disabled Facilities Grants, with a view to achieving savings;
- (m) that the Portfolio Holder for Leisure be tasked with rigorously reviewing each Leisure Centre scheme identified within the Medium Term Plan (MTP), with a view to justifying capital expenditure;
- (n) that the Council's current policy in respect of Council Tax should remain unchanged;
- (o) that a review of the current organisational structure be undertaken by the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council; and
- (p) that Officers be tasked with investigating how the pay system might be used to encourage and provide recognition to reward individuals who achieve efficiency savings.

## **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

Minutes and Reports of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) held on 27<sup>th</sup> January 2009.

Notes of meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Budget Working Group.

Overview and Scrutiny Budget Working Group Working File held by Democratic Services Section.

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

## **OVERVIEW OF SERVICE LEVEL BUDGETS**

This Appendix sets out the comments and observations of the Overview and Scrutiny Budget Working Group in respect of its review of the Council's budget for future years and provides a view on the feasibility and relative merits of reducing individual budgets within it.

All values quoted exclude capital charges and recharges for corporate overheads.

**OPERATIONAL AND COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES**  
**DIRECTORATE**

<b>OPERATIONS - £5.4M</b>	
<b>Refuse/Recycling £2.5m</b>	<p>Recent round rescheduling demonstrates efforts going into achieving efficiency savings. Further efforts should be encouraged.</p> <p>Whilst significant savings could be achieved through a reduction in service levels, the Working Group consider this to be a highly valued service offered by the Council. Consequently, we do not believe it is worth considering substantial changes such as reducing the frequency of green bin collections in the winter months.</p> <p>However, we believe charging for green bin collection should be investigated as a last resort to balancing the budget.</p>
<b>Markets Income £0.1m</b>	<p>We see little opportunity to generate significant additional income. Some cost savings may be obtained by outsourcing the management of this service. However, we consider the likelihood of successfully obtaining savings to be too small to merit investigation at this time.</p>
<b>Street Cleansing £0.9m</b>	<p>Whilst the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has already recently commented on the desirability of increasing the provision of weekend street cleansing in some areas, we believe the total resources expended on street cleansing should not be increased and that Officers should be asked to test the impact of revising this service to obtain a 10% per annum budget saving. Officers should be asked to evaluate the feasibility of redesigning the work shifts to reduce week day working and increase weekend working. Should changes require staff reductions, any such change may need to be phased in to avoid undue redundancy costs.</p>
<b>CCTV £0.5m</b>	<p>We believe that discussions should be held with partners, particularly the Police, regarding the funding of this service from LSP reward grant or other funds. Particular regard should be given to the mobile CCTV vehicle with a view to finding alternative means of funding the vehicle. Failure to obtain alternative funding should result in the disposal of the vehicle.</p> <p>Whilst the CCTV service is valued, we believe that the impact of reducing the level of staff cover during quiet</p>

	<p>periods should be tested and consideration should be given to reducing the budget for replacement cameras.</p> <p>In addition, we understand that there is some possibility that we could generate additional income from providing services to other Councils or commercial organisations. If this is the case, we believe the opportunity should be actively pursued by Officers.</p>
<p><b>Countryside £0.5m</b></p>	<p>The Countryside Service provides one of the services that makes Huntingdonshire a distinctive place. The prospect that significant savings could be obtained by putting some or all of the parks into an independent Trust is unlikely and we do not believe that this should be investigated at this time.</p> <p>Officers should be asked to test the impact of a 10% reduction on the budget. Given that this is likely to impact on staff, consideration should be given to phasing in any budget reduction in order to minimise the impact on staff and to reduce redundancy costs.</p>
<p><b>Car Parks Income £1.3m</b></p>	<p>Given that car park fees have recently been reviewed and increased, we see no purpose in investigating this further at this time.</p> <p>We are concerned that there may have been a reduction in the enforcement of parking charges. Officers should be asked to report on the opportunity to enhance enforcement of the charges through both increasing the application of excess parking charges and by increasing the excess parking charges applied in each instance.</p> <p>Street Wardens should be targeted with increasing the value of excess parking charges applied.</p>
<p><b>Grounds Maintenance £0.9m</b></p>	<p>Officers should be asked to test the impact of a 10% reduction on the budget. Given that this is likely to impact on staff, consideration should be given to phasing in any budget reduction in order to minimise the impact on staff and to reduce redundancy costs.</p> <p>Whilst savings should focus on increased efficiency, there may be some opportunity to come to new arrangements with other authorities, particularly Parish Councils. This might involve the District undertaking grass cutting for Parishes at a charge, or vice versa, or disposing of small parcels of land to Parishes. Failing this, consideration should be given to reducing the level of service currently being provided by the Council such as cutting the grass less often.</p>
<p><b>Vehicle Maintenance £0.2m</b></p>	<p>Despite the improvement in vehicle maintenance facilities available at the Council, we are sceptical that</p>

	there is sufficient capacity to generate a commercially viable income stream from this asset.
<b>Management Units £1.3m</b>	<p>This budget should be reduced to reflect any changes initiated in the service. We are uncertain of the savings that can be obtained. Officers should be requested to report on further opportunities for staff savings.</p> <p>We are aware that there may be an opportunity to recharge additional management costs to S106 funding received. Whilst we recognise that this would leave lesser sums available for S106 projects, we believe that these projects should be required to fund their full share of management costs. This practice is already adopted by the County Council.</p>

<b>ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY HEALTH SERVICES - £2.6M</b>	
<b>Environmental Health £0.3m</b>	Whilst many aspects to this service have a statutory basis, some consideration should be given to opportunities for reductions in service standards. Officers should therefore be asked to test a 10% reduction in the budget.
<b>Community Initiatives £0.4m</b>	Rather than comment on this budget line at this time we would prefer to refer to the review of grants being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery).
<b>Arts Development £0.1m</b>	This is a non statutory service provided by the Council and whilst mindful of the contribution that it makes to the quality of life within the District, we believe that Officers should be asked to test a 50% reduction in this budget and associated staffing.
<b>Leisure Development £0.2m</b>	Whilst this is a non statutory service, it makes a valuable contribution to health inequalities and the obesity agenda. Given that this is primarily the responsibility of the PCT, Officers should be asked to report on alternative means of funding and / or means of delivering this agenda. Officers are requested to achieve a saving of 25% of the net revenue budget.
<b>Management Units £1.6m</b>	The management unit budget should be reduced to reflect any changes initiated in this service. We are uncertain of the savings that can be obtained. Officers should be requested to report on further opportunities for achieving staff savings as appropriate.



<b>ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT - £2.6M</b>	
<b>Internal Drainage Boards</b> £0.34m	We see no opportunity to reduce or avoid these costs.
<b>Watercourses</b> £0.06m	We see no opportunity to reduce or avoid these costs.
<b>Public Conveniences</b> £0.2m	<p>We believe that all public conveniences should be offered to Town Councils for them to maintain. Failing the transfer of the public conveniences they should be closed and the land disposed of.</p> <p>To mitigate the impact of these changes and to encourage a more welcoming approach to the public and particularly to visitors of the District, consideration should be given to funding hotels, pubs and other commercial establishments with suitable facilities to make these available to the general public.</p>
<b>Environmental Initiatives</b> £0.1m	Given the very low level of this budget, even when allowing for related management unit costs and overheads, and the relative priority of these initiatives, we believe there is no merit in reducing budgets in this area.
<b>Building Control</b> £0.2m	We see no opportunity to reduce or avoid these costs unless other local Districts can be persuaded to merge their services with our own. Failing cooperation from other Districts, and subject to capacity being available, we see an economic advantage in seeking building control work outside of Huntingdonshire rather than in reducing capacity.
<b>Street Naming and Minor Works</b> £0.1m	We see no opportunity for, or benefits to, policy change at this time.
<b>Facilities Management</b> £0.8m	Staff reductions and the introduction of hot desking following the promotion of home working and flexible working (at both Pathfinder House and Eastfield House) should release office space for letting or the disposal of Castle Hill House.
<b>Management Units</b> £0.8m	Staff may need to be reduced in line with reducing the projects contained within the Capital Programme.

<b>PLANNING SERVICES - £2.5M</b>	
<b>Development Control Income £0.7m</b>	We support the Cabinet's plans to investigate the possibility of introducing charges for planning advice and wonder whether there is merit in providing such advisory services in respect of planning matters in other Districts.
<b>Planning Policy &amp; Conservation £0.4m</b>	We see no opportunity to reduce or avoid these costs.
<b>Transportation £0.2m</b>	Officers should be asked to test the impact of a 25% reduction in the budget and staffing levels. In doing this, staff should discuss with the County Council possibilities for increased efficiency through improved working by staff and Members of both District and County Councils.
<b>Concessionary Fares £0.5m</b>	We see no opportunity to reduce or avoid these costs but have registered our concerns at the Government failure to recognise the true cost of this scheme.
<b>Planning and Housing Grant Income £0.3m</b>	We understand that the rules relating to grants change regularly, but believe these grants make a valuable contribution to our budget and should be targeted.
<b>Management Units £2.4m</b>	<p>We are aware that there may be an opportunity to recharge additional management costs to S106 funding received. Whilst we recognise that this would leave lesser sums available for S106 projects, we believe that these projects should be required to fund their full share of management costs. This practice is already adopted by the County Council.</p> <p>Officers should be requested to report on further opportunities for staff savings. We believe that savings may arise from opportunities for training and inter-departmental working within the service.</p>

<b>HOUSING SERVICES – £1.3M + £2M CAPITAL</b>	
<b>Homelessness £0.2m</b>	Whilst the non-staff budget in this area has not always been expended, homelessness is a priority area and the budget should not be reduced.
<b>Capital Grants £2m</b>	Whilst the Working Group puts a high value on the role of grants for social housing, Members have noted the receipt of capital grants from the Government for this purpose. Grants from the Housing Corporation, now the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) have increased the District Council's contribution towards social housing from £1m pa to £25m so far for the period 2008-11. In addition, the District tops up government funding for Disabled Facilities Grants.
<b>Management Units £1.1m</b>	The management unit budget should be reduced to reflect any changes initiated in this service. We are uncertain of the savings that can be obtained. Officers should be requested to report on further opportunities for achieving staff savings.

## COMMERCE AND TECHNOLOGY DIRECTORATE

<b>FINANCIAL SERVICES - £0.2M</b>	
<b>External Audit £0.1m</b>	We see no opportunity to reduce or avoid these costs.
<b>Contingencies (efficiency, deferrals, turnover) Income £0.9m</b>	We see no opportunity to reduce or avoid these costs.
<b>Cost of Borrowing £0.7m</b>	We see no opportunity to reduce or avoid these costs.
<b>Interest Income £1.2m</b>	We see no opportunity to enhance this income stream other than the deferral of some of the Capital Programme.
<b>Insurance Premiums £0.3m</b>	We see no opportunity to reduce or avoid these costs.
<b>Management Units £1.2m</b>	Officers should be requested to investigate opportunities to implement systems and procedures which centralise and standardise procurement of repeat purchase items and to test the opportunity to make staff and other savings in the budget of 10%.

<b>CUSTOMER SERVICES - £2.2M</b>	
<b>Income £1.5m</b>	We see no opportunity to increase this income.
<b>Call Centre £0.6m</b>	Whilst we believe that the Council should retain control of this service, Officers should be asked to investigate the potential for savings by relocating the Call Centre to Huntingdon. Reductions in service levels should not be considered at this time although we expect to see savings if Officers are successful in migrating some customer enquiries into the website.
<b>Customer Service Centres £0.9m</b>	Whilst the Customer Service Centres offer an important service to an often needy sector of our community, service levels should not be reduced. Officers should be asked to demonstrate that these services are only provided where there is sufficient

	demand for them to be economically delivered. It has also been suggested that where possible, opportunities for partnership working with the County Council should be investigated.
<b>Management Units £2.2m</b>	Whilst service levels in Housing and Council Tax Benefit should not be reduced, Officers should continue to seek efficiency improvements. A suggestion has been made for Officers to investigate the possible introduction of electronic Council Tax billing. Consequently, Officers have been asked to scope the potential of making a 10% saving in this budget.

<b>IMD SERVICES - £2.5M</b>	
<b>Telecommunications £0.1m</b>	<p>The Council is inevitably going to become more and more dependent upon ICT in delivering its services and consequently we see little chance of substantial reductions in this area. However, spend on ICT should lead to demonstrable savings in staff costs.</p> <p>However, the focus of this service should be directed towards facilitating operational and administrative efficiencies in other services areas, specifically of reducing staff costs.</p> <p>Greater use should be made of making Council papers available electronically rather than in paper form.</p> <p>Officers should be asked to investigate how electronic Council Tax billing could reduce the number of paper based Council Tax bills.</p> <p>Opportunities for generating economies of scale by providing ICT services to other local authorities should also be explored.</p>
<b>Helpdesk £0.6m</b>	
<b>Network Services £0.7m</b>	
<b>Development Team £0.3m</b>	
<b>Information Management £0.3m</b>	
<b>Business Analysis £0.3m</b>	
<b>Head of IMD £0.2m</b>	

<b>LEISURE CENTRES - £1.2M</b>	
<b>Huntingdon Leisure Centre £0.3m</b>	<p>Whilst the Leisure Centres make a significant and high profile contribution to an important priority of the Council, the services delivered are a non statutory requirement. In addition, the Centres are based on land owned by other public bodies and are subject to large fixed costs that the Council is unlikely to be able to avoid in the short term. Many of the services delivered are subject to commercial competition.</p> <p>The Leisure Centres should be developed in order to maximise their income generation potential with the aim that in time they become self financing in the future. We accept that this will mean continuing to invest in the Centres where there is an economic case for doing so.</p> <p>Recognising that the Huntingdonshire Council Tax payer makes a financial contribution to the running of the Leisure Centres, consideration should be given to introducing a membership system, (perhaps utilising SMART cards) which rewards regular attendance.</p> <p>Services should not be provided at subsidised rates unless there are good economic reasons for doing so. Charges should be increased wherever possible to reflect the full cost of the service or at market rates where appropriate.</p> <p>Notwithstanding the above, improved utilisation of meeting rooms can be facilitated by making them available for Council use on a 'last minute' cheap rate booking basis.</p> <p>Consideration should be given to reducing the opening hours of the swimming pools, Centres or parts of the Centres where there is insufficient demand for services.</p> <p>Trust status or another organisational model should be investigated at a suitable time in the future.</p>
<b>Ramsey Leisure Centre £0.3m</b>	
<b>Sawtry Leisure Centre £0.3m</b>	
<b>St Ivo Leisure Centre £0.3m</b>	
<b>St Neots Leisure Centre £0.4m</b>	
<b>Management Units £0.2m</b>  <b>Leisure Centres Savings Target £0.6m rising to £1m</b>	

## CENTRAL SERVICES DIRECTORATE

<b>PEOPLE, PERFORMANCE AND PARTNERSHIPS - £2.2M</b>	
<b>Economic Development £0.2m</b>	Given the current economic climate, we see no merit in reducing this budget at this time or in the immediate future.
<b>Communications and Marketing £0.2m</b>	Officers should be asked to report on the impact of a 20% reduction on the budget and similar reductions in external communication spend in other service areas. In addition, we believe that the mobile information vehicle should be disposed of.
<b>Pensions £0.2m</b>	We see no opportunity to reduce or avoid these costs.
<b>Leased Cars £0.1m</b>	We see no opportunity to reduce or avoid these costs.
<b>Management Units £1.5m</b>	Officers should continue to be tasked with generating administrative efficiencies of 10% pa for each of the next 3 years.

<b>LAW, PROPERTY AND GOVERNANCE – INCOME £0.9M</b>	
<b>Commercial Properties Income £0.2m</b>	Our property portfolio should be reviewed to ensure that income generating opportunities are maximised and greater consideration should be given to more active trading of our portfolio. Further investments should be made where they can make a financial return in excess of our borrowing costs.
<b>Industrial Properties Income £0.5m</b>	
<b>Miscellaneous Properties Income £0.7m</b>	
<b>Management Units (£0.5M)</b>	We see no significant opportunity to reduce or avoid these costs, but Officers should continue to be tasked with generating administrative efficiencies.

<b>DEMOCRATIC AND CENTRAL SERVICES - £1.8M</b>	
<b>Corporate Committees &amp; Subscriptions £0.1m</b>	We see no opportunity to reduce or avoid these costs.
<b>Member Allowances &amp; Support £0.5m</b>	We see no opportunity to reduce or avoid these costs. However, we believe there should be no inflationary increase in Members' allowances or support in the coming year.
<b>Elections £0.1m</b>	We see no opportunity to reduce or avoid these costs.
<b>Land Charges Income £0.1m</b>	We see no opportunity to increase this income, but efforts should be placed upon marketing this service, particularly in light of the current economic conditions.
<b>Licensing Income £0.2m</b>	We see no significant opportunity to increase this income.
<b>Document Centre £0.6m</b>	Officers should continue to be tasked with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reducing the demand levied upon the Document Centre (i.e. reducing the volume of documents printed or posted).</li> <li>• Making Council papers available electronically rather than in paper form.</li> <li>• Making cost savings even where this means that recently introduced practises are further amended.</li> <li>• Marketing this service to other public or private sector bodies with a view to generating income and generating economies of scale by working with other local authorities.</li> </ul>
<b>Management Units £0.8m</b>	Officers should be asked to report on the implications of possible changes to our democratic structure with a view to continuing cost savings and managing workload expectations and should continue to be tasked with generating administrative efficiencies. We do not want to see any increase in costs as a result of recently proposed changes to the democratic structure or arrangements within the Council.



**APPENDIX B**

**2008/09 INCOME SOURCES**

	<b>Total Income</b>	
	£'000	£'000
Rent allowance subsidy		23,375
Council tax benefit subsidy		6,256
Benefit administration subsidy		890
Costs recovered, including summons costs and temporary accommodation		1,062
Contributions from other Local Authorities and other organisations		1,027
Government grants		827
Other grants		258
Industrial and commercial rent		1,540
Development control fees		942
Building control fees		536
Land charges		246
Licence fees		270
Parking Charges		1,405
Parking excess charges		217
Recycling credits		686
Bulky waste and commercial waste		128
Interest earned		535
Markets		189
Other rent		106
Other sales		209
Other income		399
<b>Leisure Centres</b>		
Swimming - Public	511	
Swimming - Lessons	616	
Fitness Suite	488	
Advantage	1,302	
Hospitality (Excluding Vending)	636	
Vending	112	
Centre Functions (St Ivo Only)	100	
Burgess Hall (St Ivo Only)	118	
Other Indoor Activities	944	
Synthetic Pitches	242	
Grants	20	5,089
		<b>46,192</b>

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Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date For Future Action
<b>13/05/09</b>	<p><b><u>Review of Local Procurement</u></b></p> <p>This item was transferred over from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support). Following a study which had been undertaken into Local Procurement, one of the recommendations proposed was for regular meetings to be held between the District Council and local business representatives.</p>	<p>Meeting arranged for 14<sup>th</sup> September 2009 at 4pm.</p>		<b>15/10/09</b>
<b>13/05/09</b>	<p><b><u>Grant Aid</u></b></p> <p>This item was transferred over from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery). A Working Group was established, comprising Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, P G Mitchell and J S Watt, to consider all capital and revenue grant aid schemes administered by the Council. The Working Group's final report has been endorsed for submission to the Cabinet.</p>	<p>Final report submitted to Cabinet on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2009.</p>	<p>The Cabinet deferred consideration of this item, subject to further investigations being undertaken with the relevant Executive Councillors. Councillor P G Mitchell undertook to pursue this matter directly. Update to be received in due course.</p>	<b>TBC</b>
<b>13/05/09</b>	<p><b><u>Customer Services Monitoring Report</u></b></p> <p>This item was transferred over from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery). Quarterly performance reports to be circulated</p>	<p>Report to be included on Panel Agenda in June and November.</p>	<p>This item appears elsewhere on the Panel Agenda.</p>	<b>11/06/09</b>

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date For Future Action
	informally by the Panel (February and September each year) and formally on the Agenda (June and November each year).			
13/05/09	<p><b><u>Licensing Act – Impact On Nighttime Economy</u></b></p> <p>This item was transferred over from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support).</p> <p>Subject to an amendment to one of the recommendations, the Service Support Panel endorsed the final report for consideration by the Cabinet at their meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2009.</p> <p>Agreed to re-visit the study towards the end of the year to review progress made towards achievement of the countywide action plan, the night watch project and the availability of statistics from Hinchingbrooke Hospital on alcohol related accidents and emergency treatment.</p>	Report endorsed by the Cabinet at their meeting on 29 <sup>th</sup> January 2009.		Nov 2009

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date For Future Action
13/05/09	<p><b><u>Budget Working Group</u></b></p> <p>This item was transferred over from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework). A Working Group, comprising Councillors J E Garner, L W McGuire and R J West was appointed by the Panel as a result of concerns which had been raised regarding the level of unidentified spending adjustments required by the year 2013/14. The Working Group was tasked with reviewing the budget in future years and to identify which items within the budget were statutory and those that were permissive. In order to ensure political proportionality within the Working Group, Councillor P J Downes, later became a Member of the Group.</p>	<p>A number of meetings have been held with Director of Commerce and Technology and Head of Financial Services. Councillors T V Rogers and K J Churchill also assisted Members with their investigations.</p>	<p>The final report of the Working Group appears elsewhere on the Agenda.</p>	11/06/09
13/05/09	<p><b><u>Corporate Plan Working Group</u></b></p> <p>Councillors J Ablewhite and GSE Thorpe Have been appointed onto the Corporate Plan Working Group.</p>	<p>Quarterly performance reports to be submitted to all Overview and Scrutiny Panels.</p>	<p>This item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.</p>	11/06/09
13/05/09	<p><b><u>Sustainable Communities Act 2007</u></b></p> <p>Remit transferred over from former O&amp;S (Service Delivery) sight of the report requested prior to its consideration by the</p>	<p>Request submitted to Head of People, Performance and</p>		11/06/09

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date For Future Action
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	Cabinet.	Partnerships		
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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REMITS AND STUDIES  
(Report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to acquaint Members with their remit following the introduction of changes to the structure of overview and scrutiny, review the programme of studies, provide an opportunity for Members to plan their work programme for the forthcoming year and set out additional responsibilities that the Panels now have in terms of scrutinising strategic partnership working.

**2. WORK PROGRAMME**

**(a) Internal Scrutiny**

- 2.1 The Council's services are divided into portfolios, which are the responsibility of Executive Members. In the past the portfolios have been simply divided between the Scrutiny Panels. Following the democratic structure review a new structure for overview and scrutiny has been introduced. This structure is based on the broad themes of Social, Environmental and Economic Well-Being. The allocation of Council services under these themes is represented in Appendix A.

**(b) External Studies**

- 2.2 The Council has a duty to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the District and, in order to demonstrate that the Council closely complies with the duty, this has been reflected in the new structure for overview and scrutiny. It gives the Panel a wide remit to examine any issues that affect the District by conducting in-depth studies. A number of such studies have been completed in the past, such as the investigation into flooding in the District.

**(c) Study Programme**

- 2.3 At the first meeting in the Municipal calendar, it is usual for the Overview and Scrutiny Panels to give detailed consideration to a programme of studies that they intend to undertake in the course of the year. Members are requested to consider whether any studies or investigations of single issues within their remit might usefully be undertaken. These might be topical or contentious matters, for example, it could be an issue that has arisen in the course of a Member's contact with constituents.
- 2.4 Performance data, which is regularly submitted to the Panel, and the Decision Digest, also can be used to identify study areas. The latest performance report appears elsewhere on the Agenda.
- 2.5 At each meeting the Panel's discuss a progress report their programme of studies. This report is reproduced at Appendix B.

#### **(d) Study Methodology**

- 2.6 Following a recent audit a report template to guide studies has been adopted. The template appears at Appendix C. It will be seen that there is considerable flexibility in the way studies may be conducted. It is also important to note that the Panels have a budget with which to pursue their study aims, for example, by obtaining expert opinion on a particular issue.
- 2.7 A number of working groups already exist to undertake some of these studies. It has been the practice for the membership of working groups to continue to the completion of studies and it is suggested that this principle should continue.

#### **(e) Completed Studies**

- 2.8 Since the establishment of Overview and Scrutiny Panels in June 2000, a number of studies have been completed. These are listed below:

- Anti-Social Behaviour Orders
- Vandalism
- Cemetery Administration
- Arts Provision in Huntingdonshire and Major Events Promoted by the Council
- Registered Social Landlord Rent Levels
- Bus Stations/Bus Services
- Bus Shelters
- Bus Information/Publicity
- Flooding
- Post Office Network and Services
- Fly Posting
- Fly Tipping
- Trees and Hedgerows
- Emergency Planning
- Sun Beds in Leisure Centres
- The Council's Charging Policy
- Tourism
- Market Services
- Best Value Review on Access to Services
- Council's Budget and Expenditure
- Member Development
- Street Naming and Numbering
- Levels of Affordable Housing on Land Sold By The Council
- Procedural Arrangements for Development Control
- Local Procurement
- Town Centre Initiatives
- St Ives (Environmental Improvements Schemes)
- County Council Highway Standards
- Consumption of Alcohol in Public Places
- Safer Routes to Schools
- Rent Levels at Paines Mill Foyer, St Neots
- West Huntingdon Rural Transport Study
- Benefit Fraud
- Service Provision for the Elderly
- Health and Safety Management
- Member Involvement and Consultation Procedures in the Local Plan Process
- Substance Misuse in Huntingdonshire
- Play Equipment
- Abandoned Vehicles
- Services for Young People
- The Big Gig
- Biodiversity
- Council's Complaints Procedure
- The Budget and Medium Term Plan
- Rural Economy and Services
- District Council's Twinning Links
- Hear By Right
- Dentistry Services
- Promoting Better Health in Older People Through Physical Activity

- Cycling in Huntingdonshire
- District Council's Travel Plan
- Electronic Communication
- Youth Forum
- Social consequences of alcohol abuse
- Section 106 process
- Small Scale Environmental Improvements
- State of the District Engagement Events
- Grant Aid
- Leisure facilities for older people

### **3. SCRUTINISING STRATEGIC / PARTNERSHIP WORK**

- 3.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 Act introduced changes from April 2009 to secure effective scrutiny of strategic partnership working and of local area agreements. The thematic groups under the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership have been aligned to the terms of reference of scrutiny panels. The Economic Well-Being Panel will be responsible for the Economic Prosperity and Equality and Inclusion thematic groups of the Strategic Partnership. The Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership itself is to be held to account through the full Council.
- 3.2 The Panel's remit also contains reference to the Council's corporate priorities and goals as they appear in the Corporate Plan. Specifically, this means that the Panel will be responsible for scrutinising the Strong Local Economy, Improving Systems and Practices, Learning and Developing and Maintaining Sound Finances aims of the Council's corporate plan 'Growing Success'. As has been said, a report monitoring progress against each of these aims appears elsewhere on the Agenda.
- 3.3 Details of how it is suggested that these strategic / partnership areas of work might be undertaken will be the subject of a report at a future meeting.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Panel is

#### **RECOMMENDED**

- a. to note the contents of the report;
- b. to review the existing programme of studies for the forthcoming year; and
- c. to consider the addition of new subject areas to the programme of studies.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Previous reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
(ECONOMIC WELLBEING)  
WORKING GROUP STUDY**

AREA OF REVIEW	DETAILS/COMMENTS
<b>Title of Study</b> (name of Working Group)	
<b>Appointing Panel</b>	
<b>Members Assigned</b> (including date Working Group appointed)	
<b>Possible Co-Options to the Group</b>	
<b>Interests Declared</b>	
<b>Rapporteur</b>	
<b>Officer Support</b>	
<b>Purpose of Study / Objective</b> (specify exactly what the study should achieve)	
<b>Rationale</b> (key issues and/or reason for conducting a study)	
<b>Terms of Reference</b>	
<b>Links to Council Policies/Strategies</b>	

<b>Methodology / Approach</b> (what types of enquiries will be used to gather evidence)	
<b>External/Specialist Support</b>	
<b>Existing Documentation</b>	
<b>Evidence to be Obtained</b> (e.g. witnesses, documents, site visits, consultation, research, etc)	
<b>Reference Sites</b>	
<b>Investigations</b>	
<b>Witnesses</b>	
<b>Site Visits (if necessary)</b> (where and when)	

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
(ECONOMIC WELLBEING)  
WORKING GROUP STUDY**

<b>Meetings of the Working Group</b>	
<b>Costs</b> (resource requirements, additional expenditure, time)	
<b>Possible Barriers to the Study</b> (potential weaknesses)	
<b>Projected Timescale</b> (Start and end times)	



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## Decision Digest

Edition 94

**Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 14th April to 14th May 2009.**

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

The outcome of a review of Home-Link, the choice based lettings scheme, has been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery). The review examined strategic and operational aspects of the scheme and involved consultation with housing association partners, statutory and voluntary agencies and customers of the scheme. The reported level of users' satisfaction with the scheme was welcomed by the Panel. However the review has revealed that some customers have difficulty in understanding the mechanics of the scheme and that some users require assistance to bid for properties. Continued efforts will be made to inform potential users and raise awareness generally of the support that is available, particularly for those on the Housing Register.

The Panel was encouraged that the review concluded that the Council's Lettings Policy was adequate to meet local need and that only a minor amendment was required. The amendment related to the re-prioritisation of homeless persons by awarding them a Band B priority.

This change was subsequently supported by the Panel. The Panel's views have been considered at a meeting of the Cabinet, where the contents of the revised lettings policy for the Council along with a series of planned enhancements to the Home-link scheme were approved.

### **SPORTS FACILITY STRATEGY**

The Cabinet has approved the contents of the Sports Facility Strategy for Huntingdonshire 2009-2014. The Strategy will help to achieve an adequate range of sports facilities to meet future need.

An attempt has been made to identify all sports facilities available across Huntingdonshire, inclusive of those owned by the private, voluntary and education sectors. Comparisons have been made with national recommended levels of provision and the outcome will be used to inform future provision of facilities in the District. The document has been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery); they recommended to Cabinet that the strategy be adopted on the understanding that the Council will not be solely responsible for being the provider of such facilities.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENTS TO ST IVES TOWN CENTRE**

The outcome of a consultation exercise undertaken by the Council as part of the second phase of environmental improvements to the Market Hill and Bridge Street areas of St Ives has been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery). The Panel's role is to ensure that the Environmental Improvements Protocol has been adhered to in advance of any works being carried out.

The consultation reveals that there is no clear majority amongst respondents for any of the three options presented for consultation. The Advisory Group which was set up to oversee the environmental improvements scheme has scrutinised the results of the consultation and has suggested, as there appears to be no consensus for any of the options, that the scheme should be deferred from its planned start date of January 2010 to enable a review of the options to take place. The deferment would also be timely given the current economic climate and the impact that works would have on local retailers within the town. In addition, works might adversely affect planned celebrations of the Town's 800th Anniversary.

The Panel has expressed their satisfaction that the Environmental Improvements Protocol has been adhered to and has suggested to the Cabinet that deferral of the scheme is the preferred course of action to take. This would enable the formulation of a scheme which

more adequately suits the requirements of the Town. In addition, the Panel has suggested that financial contributions towards the cost of the scheme should be sought from the County and Town Councils.

Having considered the views of the Panel, the Cabinet has agreed to defer the project for three years to allow time for the production of a scheme which meets the majority of requirements of the interested parties and not to proceed without commitments by the County Council and St. Ives Town Council to make financial contributions to the project. The Cabinet has requested also that the results of the Bridge Street consultation be sent to the County Council to enable them to amend their parking orders relating to loading and disabled bays.

## **RECYCLING**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has been updated with the outcome of recent negotiations on the contract for the processing and onward sale of recyclable materials. In light of recent trends within the market, the terms of the current contract in respect of gate fees has been varied. This contract would cease in November 2009. A tendering process is currently being undertaken for a new contract in conjunction with Fenland District Council and Cambridge City Council.

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT IN HEALTH ACT 2007 -**

### **IMPLICATIONS FOR OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panels and the Corporate Governance Panel have been acquainted with legislative changes affecting Overview and Scrutiny, which have arisen from the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. The changes introduce a Councillor Call for Action, which enables any Member of the Council to refer to an Overview and Scrutiny Panel any local government matter relevant to the functions of that Panel. The changes require alterations to the Council Procedure Rules and the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules contained within the Constitution. Both Scrutiny Panels have endorsed the content of a guide outlining the process for making a Councillor Call for Action, and this has subsequently been recommended for adoption by the Corporate Governance Panel to Council.

Attention has been drawn to changes which affect the scope of Scrutiny Panel work and the way in which Overview and Scrutiny reports and recommendations must be responded to. In addition, there now exist provisions for joint Overview and Scrutiny arrangements between the County and District Councils. These changes have taken effect from 1st April 2009. Legislation relating to the scrutiny of crime and disorder matters is likely to come into force at the end of April 2009.

### **NHS CAMBRIDGESHIRE: STRATEGIC PLAN 2009 - 2014**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has received details of a consultation being undertaken by NHS Cambridgeshire on the content of their Strategic Plan for the period 2009 - 2014. In advance of submitting a response to the consultation, the Panel has decided to meet with a representative of NHS Cambridgeshire to discuss the proposals contained within the Plan in detail. The consultation period ends on 29th May 2009.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 - FORWARD PLAN**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) has requested sight of items entitled St Ivo and St Neots Leisure Centres - Proposals for Development, Carbon Management Plan, Sustainable Communities Act and Leisure Centres Performance Monitoring Report prior to their consideration by the Cabinet.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) has requested sight of the comments on the proposed changes to the policy for gypsies and travellers in the East of England Plan.

### **PROPOSALS FOR RIVERSIDE PARK, HUNTINGDON**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) has considered a report by the Heads of Planning, Operations and Environmental Management Services on the outcome of a consultation exercise on proposed improvements to the Riverside Park, Huntingdon. The Panel has been advised that the

improvements scheme has been split into two phases to reflect the views expressed during the consultation and the financial situation of the Council. The Panel has raised concerns over the allocation of £15,000 for the 'greening' of the traffic island at the Bridge Hotel, as this forms part of the highway, and as such is considered to be the responsibility of the County Council. The Panel has expressed a view that the amount allocated for planting is excessive, and does not support the proposed ongoing revenue expenditure of £20,000 per annum for improved maintenance of the wildlife area at the park. The Panel broadly welcome the scheme but feel that Phase II of the improvements should be regarded as aspirational only at this stage.

Having considered the views of the Panel and the outcome of the consultation exercise, the Cabinet has authorised the Head of Operations to undertake a programme of maintenance only at the park and to liaise with the Executive Councillors for Finance & Environment, Planning Strategy & Transportation and Operational & Countryside Services over the extent and cost of the work to be done.

### **MASTERPLAN FOR LAND EAST OF SAPLEY SQUARE, OXMOOR**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) has endorsed a report and proposed masterplan, which has been drafted following public consultation on the preferred

options for Sapley East and the development of a community enterprise centre. The Panel has commented on the success of the consultation exercise and has noted that local residents welcome the proposals in the masterplan. Subsequently the document has been approved as informal planning guidance by the Cabinet.

### **HUNTINGDON WEST AREA ACTION PLAN**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) has considered a report by the Head of Planning Services on the preferred approach for taking forward the Huntingdon West Area Action Plan. Although the Panel has welcomed the proposals, concerns have been raised over the highway implications of the proposals and the possibility that the removal of the viaduct at the Railway station would create an increase in traffic congestion. The Panel has suggested that a more aspirational approach could be taken to secure highway improvements as part of the action plan.

Subsequently, the Plan has been approved for public consultation by the Cabinet.

### **THE RSS REVIEW – THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE DEVELOPMENT STUDY**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) has been acquainted with the basis of a response to the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) by the Joint Cambridgeshire Review Panel (CRoSSP) on the review of the



regional spatial strategy. The Panel remain concerned over the proposals and their implications for Huntingdonshire.

The Panel supports the concept of development occurring where employment opportunities exist, and feel that the proposals do not pay sufficient regard to the substantial improvement to public transport in the county. The Panel has been reminded that the District Council will be commissioning its own independent consultants to inform the Council's response to the proposals and evidence at the subsequent examination in public on the regional plan proposals. The Panel has endorsed a recommendation by the Head of Planning Services that the District Council should adopt the following principles when responding to the EERA proposal -

- (i) that the emerging 'Cambridgeshire Growth Strategy' is underpinned by a positive commitment to a highly sustainable approach that will both direct policy development and influence the proposed spatial pattern of development;
- (ii) that the emerging 'Cambridgeshire Growth Strategy' principally reinforces and builds upon the established sequential approach to the direction of further growth within Cambridgeshire;
- (iii) that the emerging 'Cambridgeshire Growth Strategy' acknowledges that

there is limited capacity for additional growth above the established RSS levels and therefore any targets for growth up to 2031 must reflect the lower rather than the higher NHPAU scenarios;

- (iv) that the emerging 'Cambridgeshire Growth Strategy' acknowledges the need to utilise the capacity, of, and the opportunities created by, existing and committed transport and other infrastructure provision;
- (v) that the emerging 'Cambridgeshire Growth Strategy' acknowledges the essential needs to co-locate homes with jobs. As the economic models favour jobs growth in the south of the county and acknowledge the challenges associated with the potential job creation in the north of the County, then that is where the majority of new homes need to be located; and
- (vi) that the emerging 'Cambridgeshire Growth Strategy' recognises that whilst the market towns could sustainably accommodate further growth, and indeed such growth could aid their regeneration, these market towns do have environmental capacities that need to be respected.

These principles together with a suggestion for testing options for higher growth have been endorsed by the Cabinet. At the same time,

the Cabinet has requested the County Council's Cabinet to take appropriate account of the District Council's statements of support and concerns and to amend the basis of its suggested advice to EERA accordingly.

### **SMALL BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT ACCORD**

The Cabinet has agreed to adopt the Federation of Small Businesses Accord, a voluntary code of practice for local authorities which seeks to maintain or encourage a productive dialogue with local businesses.

### **ENFORCEMENT ACTION**

The Development Control Panel has noted action taken by the Council to obtain an injunction to prevent unauthorised occupation of a site for residential development off the A1123, Needingworth Road, Bluntisham. No further development has subsequently taken place on site.

### **DEVELOPMENT CONTROL - PERFORMANCE MONITORING**

Having considered the level of activity of the Development Control Services during the period 1st October to 31st December, 2008, the Development Control Panel has welcomed a report that Government performance targets for the determination of major, minor and other applications within the prescribed timescales had all been exceeded over this period.