

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING)** will be held in the **WREN ROOM, COUNTRYSIDE CENTRE, HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK, BRAMPTON ROAD, HUNTINGDON, PE29 6DB** on **TUESDAY, 2 MARCH 2010** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

**Contact
(01480)**

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 2nd February 2010.

**Miss H Ali
388006**

2 Minutes.

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

2 Minutes.

3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN (Pages 7 - 12)

A copy of the current Forward Plan, which was published on 12th February 2010 is attached. Members are invited to note the Plan and to comment as appropriate on any items contained therein.

**Mrs H Taylor
388008**

10 Minutes.

4. RURAL STRATEGY FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE 2010 - 2015 (Pages 13 - 42)

To receive a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services on Cambridgeshire ACRE's Rural Strategy, prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

**D Smith
388377**

20 Minutes.

5. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT: THE CRIMINAL LAW ACT 1977 & THE PROTECTION FROM HARRASSMENT ACT 1997 (Pages 43 - 46)

To consider a report by the Head of Environmental & Community Health Services seeking delegations in respect of private sector housing enforcement.

**J Allan
388281**

20 Minutes.

6. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT (Pages 47 - 54)

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

**D Buckridge
388065**

20 Minutes.

7. STUDY - PARKING AT HINCHINGBROOKE HOSPITAL (Pages 55 - 56)

To receive a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services reviewing progress of the Panel's study into car parking at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.

**A Roberts
388015**

15 Minutes.

8. CAMBRIDGESHIRE HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

To receive an update from Councillor R J West on the outcome of recent meetings of the Cambridgeshire Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee.

5 Minutes.

9. WORK PLAN STUDIES (Pages 57 - 72)

To consider, with the aid of a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services, the current programme of Overview and Scrutiny studies.

**Miss H Ali
388006**

15 Minutes.

10. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS (Pages 73 - 82)

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

**Miss H Ali
388006**

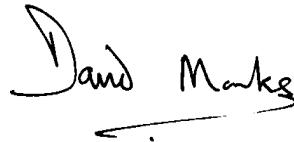
15 Minutes.

11. **SCRUTINY** (Pages 83 - 90)

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

5 Minutes.

Dated this 1 day of March 2010



Chief Executive

Notes

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

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

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

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

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

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

Emergency Procedure

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

Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) held in the Wren Room, Countryside Centre, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park, Brampton Road, Huntingdon, PE29 6DB on Tuesday, 2 February 2010.

PRESENT: Councillor R J West – Vice-Chairman in the Chair.

Councillors Mrs K E Cooper, J W Davies, J J Dutton, J E Garner, Mrs P A Jordan and P G Mitchell.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S J Criswell and J M Sadler.

84. MINUTES

Subject to the deletion of the word “blue” from the last line of the third paragraph of Minute No. 76 to be replaced by “all”, the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 5th January 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

85. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Mrs P A Jordan declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Minute No. 87 by virtue of her employment in the NHS and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillor P G Mitchell declared a personal interest in Minute No. 90 by virtue of his involvement with the Stilton Skate Park Project.

86. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN

The Panel considered and noted the current Forward Plan of Key Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which had been prepared by the Leader of the Council for the period 1st February to 31st May 2010. In noting the addition of an item entitled Housing Enforcement Powers, the Panel requested sight of the report prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

87. STUDY - PARKING AT HINCHINGBROOKE HOSPITAL

(Councillor T D Sanderson, Ward Member for Huntingdon West, Mr C Plunkett, Facilities Business Manager for Hinchingsbrooke Hospital and Mrs R Clapham, Mrs B Heather and Ms E Stubbs, Cambridgeshire LINK were in attendance for this item.)

(See Minute No. 85 for Members' interests).

The Panel welcomed Mr C Plunkett, Facilities Business Manager for Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, who had been invited to the meeting to

discuss the Panel's study on parking at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. Having been reminded, with the aid of a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), of progress of the study to date, Mr Plunkett delivered a presentation on the operation of the car parks and the action taken to date by the Hospital to review its current parking policy.

Members were informed that a Working Group comprising representatives from Cambridgeshire LINK, Hospital employees and the public had been established to undertake the review. Proposals considered thus far included the provision of an additional 40 spaces for employees and 20 spaces at the front of the main entrance to extend the current pick up/drop off point and disabled parking provision. It had further been proposed that the charge for the shortest period of stay should be changed to £2 for two hours with the charge rising by £1 for every hour thereafter. Members were advised that the parking charges currently generated in the region of £500,000 for the Hospital each year, of which £30,000 was paid to a contractor to manage the car parks. The remaining income was utilised by the Hospital for car parking maintenance and to augment medical services.

Members discussed a number of matters including the possibility of introducing a pay upon exit system, alternative charging schemes, concessionary passes, the role of the contractor, the impact of parking on the surrounding streets, the Hospital's Green Transport Plan, the possibility of introducing a shuttle bus system and the impact of the Hospital's future governance arrangements on the current car parking management contract.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Chairman thanked Mr C Plunkett, Mrs R Clapham, Mrs B Heather and Ms E Stubbs for their attendance at the meeting and for their assistance with the study.

88. PETITION - HILL RISE PARK, ST IVES

(Councillor K J Churchill, Executive Councillor for Housing and Public Health and Mr M Rigby of Hill Rise, St Ives were in attendance for this item).

Pursuant to Minute No. 55, the Panel was reminded that a petition had been received from Mr M Rigby of Hill Rise, St Ives, which drew attention to nuisance caused by anti-social drivers late at night in Hill Rise Park, St Ives. The petition has been signed by 16 residents. Mr Rigby addressed the Panel on the petition and was questioned by Members.

Having had their attention drawn to a report by the Chairman of the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), Members were advised that the petition had been referred from the Community Safety Partnership to the St Ives Neighbourhood Forum. As a result this matter had been adopted as a Policing Priority at the Neighbourhood Forum. On the basis of previous experience of similar problems in St Neots, a number of suggestions to resolve the nuisance were proposed for implementation. These included the adoption of a zero tolerance policy together with the issue of fixed penalty notices for anti-social

vehicle use in the area, the installation of CCTV cameras on site and the introduction of speed restrictions in the car park. In endorsing the proposals, it was suggested that the cost of providing a direct voice link from the CCTV control room to the site should be investigated and that the lights at the Skate Park should be programmed to turn off by an earlier designated time than at present. At the conclusion of the discussions, Members requested that a progress report was submitted to the Panel in six months time.

89. STUDY - PARKING AT HINCHINGBROOKE HOSPITAL

Pursuant to Minute No. 87 *ante*, the Panel resumed their deliberations on the study into car parking at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. In so doing, Members concluded that the Hospital should consider further reducing the length of the shortest stay by introducing an additional charging option of £1 for the first hour and by providing a greater number drop-off spaces on site. They also were of the view that a more rigorous market testing exercise should be undertaken into more cost effective ways of enabling visitors to pay for parking when leaving the Hospital. In addition, Members suggested that investigations should be undertaken into alternative ways that a shuttle bus service to the Hospital might be provided. In noting that the Hospital's Senior Executive Group would be considering proposals for changes to its car parking arrangements at the end of February 2010, it was

RESOLVED

that a report be submitted to the Hospital's Senior Executive Group containing the Panel's findings and recommendations on car parking at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.

90. MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS (PLANNING OBLIGATIONS)

(Councillor C R Hyams, Executive Councillor for Operational and Countryside Services and Councillor T D Sanderson, Member of the S106 Advisory Group, were in attendance for this item).

With the assistance of a report prepared by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Panel were updated on the receipt and expenditure of money negotiated under Section 106 Agreements by the Council. Having confirmed that the Panel's role would be to scrutinise the progress of allocated schemes and those schemes where maintenance Agreements existed, Members decided to pay particular attention to those schemes which had been completed earliest. Mr J Craig, Service Development Manager, outlined the criteria that were applied to new Agreements. He also reported that a formal written spending plan on the use of the funding would be required as part of an Agreement, together with an indemnity form signed by all parties concerned.

In noting a request to defer completion of the Agreement in respect of St Ives Golf Course, the Panel expressed the view that the request should not be granted. Having commented upon the kind of detail they might expect in the future report, the Panel

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) that further details on progress of the earliest outstanding schemes be submitted with in the next monitoring report.

91. PLAY FACILITIES WORKING GROUP

(Councillor C R Hyams, Executive Councillor for Operational and Countryside Services, was in attendance for this item).

With the assistance of a report by the Play Facilities Working Group (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Panel were updated with progress of their investigations. Members' attention was drawn to two approaches which the Working Group had identified to achieve the study's objectives. The Working Group had concluded that a funding arrangement should be offered to Parishes to help them to meet the revenue costs of their play facilities based on a 40-40-20% split between the District Council, Parish Council and the users of the facilities respectively. The only facilities that would qualify under the scheme would be skateboard ramps and multi-use games areas. Members were advised that the proposals had already been discussed with the Executive Councillor for Operational and Countryside Services.

The Panel were acquainted with the financial implications of the proposal, which included the fact that the cost of each facility would be in the order of £800. It was proposed that a bid for the District Council's portion of the costs would be made through the Medium Term Plan subject to only one Parish Council being permitted to join the scheme each year. Investigations into whether the Council could coordinate insurance for Parishes wishing to insure their facilities under a group scheme also were being undertaken. The aim of this was to achieve lower insurance premiums for Parishes.

Having expressed their support for the proposals, and in nominating Councillors P G Mitchell and R J West to attend the relevant Cabinet meeting to present the final report, it was

RESOLVED

- that a report summarising the findings of the Play Facilities Working Group be submitted to the Cabinet.

92. INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY PANEL MEMBERS

(The Chairman announced that he proposed to admit the following urgent Item in accordance with Section 100B (3) and (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 given the need for the Panel to consider it in advance of the Council meeting on 17th February 2010).

Having been advised that the selection process for the appointment of two Independent Members had begun, Members were advised that the Appointments Panel would be interviewing the final candidate

later that week. In these circumstances, the Panel would not be able to consider the Appointment Panel's recommendations on the proposed appointments before the Council meeting on 17th February 2010. In that light, it was

RESOLVED

that the Appointments Panel be authorised to make recommendations to the Council on the appointment of two Independent Members to the Panel.

93. CAMBRIDGESHIRE HEALTH AND ADULT SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor R J West reported that the Working Group appointed by the Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee to consider future governance arrangements at Hinchingbrooke Hospital would be meeting on Thursday, 4th February 2010.

94. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel considered and noted a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) reviewing the Panel's programme of studies and informing Members of studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

95. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), which contained details of actions taken in response to recent discussions and decisions. Members noted that the Corporate Plan Working Group had met on 28th January to undertake investigations into the priority objective "A Strong Local Economy".

96. SCRUTINY

In scrutinising the 101st Edition of the digest of decisions taken by the Cabinet and the other Panels, etc, Members made the following comments:-

Care Quality Commission – Councillor R J West undertook to raise with Officers of the County Council whether the Cambridgeshire Health and Adult Social Care Scrutiny Committee would have sight of the Commission's annual performance summary report on the services provided by the County Council.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) – The Panel noted that a presentation on this subject had been delivered to Members on 12th January 2010.

Enforcement – Members that the Development Management Panel had requested the Cabinet to review staffing levels in the Enforcement Team. This matter currently was being monitored by the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport and the Head of Planning Services.

Chairman

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

Prepared by Councillor I C Bates
Date of Publication: 12 February 2010
For Period: 1st March to 31st June 2010

Membership of the Cabinet is as follows:-

Councillor I C Bates	- Leader of the Council	4 Church End Hilton Huntingdon PE28 9NJ Tel: 01480 830250 E-mail: Ian.Bates@huntsdc.gov.uk
Councillor L M Simpson	- Deputy Leader of the Council with Special Responsibility for HQ/Accommodation	45 Devoke Close Stukeley Meadows Huntingdon Cambs PE29 6XE Tel: 01480 388946 E-mail: Mike.Simpson@huntsdc.gov.uk
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: Ken.Churchill@huntsdc.gov.uk
Councillor D B Dew	- Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport	4 Weir Road Hemingford Grey Huntingdon PE28 9EH Tel: 01480 469814 E-mail: Douglas.Dew@huntsdc.gov.uk
Councillor J A Gray	- Executive Councillor for Environment and Information Technology	Shufflewick Cottage Station Row Tilbrook PE28 OJY Tel: 01480 861941 E-mail: JG@novae.com

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

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

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

Roy Reeves
Head of Administration

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

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

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
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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
Request for a loan to the Wildlife Trust***	Cabinet	18 Mar 2010	Past papers for the Great Fen Project	Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services Tel No. 01480 388103 or e-mail Steve.Couper@huntsdc.gov.uk		T V Rogers	Economic Well-Being
Green ICT Strategy and Action Plan	Cabinet	18 Mar 2010	TBA	Andrew Howes, IMD Operations Manager Tel No. 01480 388190 or e-mail Andrew.Howes@huntsdc.gov.uk	Environmental Management Team	J A Gray	Environmental Well-Being
Development Brief Chequers Court, Huntingdon	Cabinet	18 Mar 2010	Previous urban design framework	Richard Probyn, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No 01480 388430 or e-mail Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Adopt as Interim Guidance	D B Dew	Environmental Well-Being
Covert Surveillance Policy Review	Cabinet	18 Mar 2010	Existing Policy Legislation	Wayland Smalley, Solicitor Tel No 01480 388022 or e-mail Wayland.Smalley@huntsdc.gov.uk	Internal Steering Group	A Hansard	Economic Well-being
Masterplan for Great Fen	Cabinet	18 Mar 2010	Development Management DPD	Richard Probyn, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or e-mail Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Adopt as Planning Policy	D B Dew	Environmental Well-Being
Home Improvement Agency Review - Future Delivery Model Consultation	Cabinet	18 Mar 2010	None.	Mr S Plant, Head of Housing Services Tel No. 01480 388240 or e-mail Steve.Plant@huntsdc.gov.uk		K J Churchill	Social Well-Being
Rural Strategy Cambridgeshire ACRE	Cabinet	18 Mar 2010	None.	Dan Smith, Community Initiatives Manager Tel No. 01480 388377 or e-mail Dan.Smith@huntsdc.gov.uk		K J Churchill	Social 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
Former Fire Station and Waste Recycling Site, Huntingdon Street, St. Neots	Cabinet	18 Mar 2010	Development Brief and Marketing Information (in preparation)	Keith Phillips, Estates and Property Manager Tel No. 01480 388260 or e-mail Keith.Phillips@huntsdc.gov.uk	Ward Councillors.	A Hansard	Economic Well-Being
Transfer of S106 Asset (Community Building & Land) at Loves Farm***	Cabinet	22 Apr 2010	None.	Dan Smith, Community Initiatives Manager Tel No. 01480 388377 or e-mail Dan.Smith@huntsdc.gov.uk		K J Churchill	Social Well-Being
Street Naming and Numbering - charging for some services***	Cabinet	22 Apr 2010	None.	Chris Allen, Project and Assets Manager Tel No. 01480 388380 or e-mail Chris.Allen@huntsdc.gov.uk	None	J A Gray	Environmental Well-Being
Housing Enforcement Powers	Cabinet	22 Apr 2010	Cabinet Report	John Allan, Neighbourhoods Intervention Manager Tel No. 01480 388281 or e-mail John.Allan@huntsdc.gov.uk	Legal Services & Financial Services.	K J Churchill	Social Well-Being
Western Link Road, Huntingdon	Cabinet	22 Apr 2010	Previous planning consent	Keith Phillips, Estates and Property Manager Tel No. 01480 388260 or e-mail Keith.Phillips@huntsdc.gov.uk		A Hansard	Economic Well-Being
Homelessness Strategy	Cabinet	22 Apr 2010	None.	Jon Collen, Housing Needs and Resources Manager Tel No. 01480 388220 or e-mail Jon.Collen@huntsdc.gov.uk	Consultation process in preparation.	K J Churchill	Social 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
Ramsey Market Town Transport Strategy***	Cabinet	20 May 2010	Draft Strategy	Steve Ingram, Head of Planning Services Tel No. 01480 388400 or e-mail Steve.Ingram@huntsdc.gov.uk		D B Dew	Environmental Well-Being
St. Ivo Leisure Centre - Proposal for Development	Cabinet	17 Jun 2010	None	Simon Bell, General Manager, Leisure Centres Tel No. 01480 388049 or e-mail Simon.Bell@huntsdc.gov.uk		Mrs D C Reynolds	Social Well-Being

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**Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being)
Cabinet**

2 March 2010

15 March 2010

**Rural Strategy for Cambridgeshire 2010-2015
(Report by the Head of Environmental and Community Services)**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable members to make known their views on the above strategy document, so that the authority's comments can be fed back to Cambridgeshire ACRE by the 23 April when the consultation period ends.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Cambridgeshire Together Board commissioned Cambridgeshire ACRE to produce on their behalf a rural strategy for Cambridgeshire that sets out the "future viability of the county's rural areas". The strategy document assesses the challenges of living and working in the Cambridgeshire countryside. The strategy document also reviews Cambridgeshire's rural economic well-being and sets out a long term vision for rural Cambridgeshire.
- 2.2 During 2009 Cambridgeshire ACRE held a number of consultation events across Cambridgeshire to gather the views of statutory agencies, community organisations, rural business and individual residents on both the challenges and opportunities that living and working in rural Cambridgeshire presents.
- 2.3 At its meeting in December 2009 the Cambridgeshire Together Board agreed that the document headed Rural Cambridgeshire, Ensuring a Vibrant Future, A Rural Strategy for Cambridgeshire 2010-2015 should go out for consultation from 1 February – 23 April 2010 following which Cambridgeshire ACRE will produce a final document for consideration by Cambridgeshire Together.
- 2.4 The Rural Strategy document has been circulated to officers within the authority and specific officer comments are set out in response to what actions are proposed to be taken in the report in Appendix 'A' of this report. In addition to the report been discussed and considered at the meetings outlined above the rural strategy document is due to be discussed at the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership board meeting on the 3 March 2010.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Whilst the ambitions of the rural strategy are commendable and some are complementary to the District Council's objectives. The strategy fails to take into consideration the present economic challenges facing statutory agencies and could possibly commit the authority to programmes/initiatives that are not Huntingdonshire priorities. The rural strategy consultation document states "how we can get there and who can make it happen" at no point within the document is there any reference as to which agency or agencies will be responsible for delivering and funding the actions outlined in the document or regards to actions already been undertaken or provided.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Members note officer comments on strategy document
- 5.2 Members comments requested on strategy document

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Rural Cambridgeshire Strategy Document

Contact Officer: Dan Smith – Community Manager
☎ 01480 388377

Appendix 'A' What actions will be taken – Officer comments	
	OFFICER COMMENTS
LIVING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE	
Priority 1: Preventing rural deprivation	
Use OCSI (Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion) data to develop and interpret the Cambridgeshire rural evidence base to influence how local services are provided in rural parishes.	No comment other than clarification regarding who will fund the work
Liaise with parish councils and attend rural community events (such as meetings and fairs) in order to raise awareness of fuel poverty, energy efficiency, grants for repairs and assistance available for vulnerable rural households.	District Council offices already attend a number of community events promoting energy efficiency measures.
Ensure each parish has at least one local service / meeting place that provides a 'social hub'.	Over the last 11 years the District Council has extensively invested via its grant aid budget to both the provision of and improvement to village meeting places (Village Hall's)
To achieve one new intervention in an agreed area of deprivation in each district.	The District Council via its 3 neighbourhood management programs is actively working in partnership with a variety of other agencies both statutory and voluntary on a number of interventions in areas of highest need within Huntingdonshire
Develop Neighbourhood Forums as a way of clustering parishes in rural areas in order to develop wider approaches to local issues and needs.	Neighbourhood forums have been established and are operational in Huntingdonshire.
Priority 2: Building local homes for local people	
Build relationships and gather best practice information from Rural 80 and Rural 50 local authorities on how they deliver affordable housing through all available methods, including Section 106 agreements.	No comment

Develop a Countywide set of principles to ensure effective development in rural communities on rural exception sites, in agreement with the Regional Spatial Strategy		Officers have with this proposal to meet a set of criteria prior to planning consent been issued.
. Rural proof District Local Development Frameworks to ensure rural housing provision is catered for and that it will aid rural community sustainability.		This is un-necessary as the LDF would have gone through a raft of sustainability tests before adoption
Continue to conduct an independent Housing Needs Survey where applicable to ascertain local needs and make people aware of the results.		The undertaking of surveys should be targeted at areas where evidence suggests that there may be a need, requires further investigation. Any undertaking of housing needs survey would require additional financial resources.
Set affordable rural housing development targets for rural exception sites.		Targets for rural housing may be acceptable and will probably be a subset of NI 155 – Number of new affordable homes built each year.
Continue to develop Cambridgeshire's Affordable Rural Housing service bringing together Local Authority Housing Providers (RSLs), Local Authorities and parish councils in order to address proven need in rural areas.		No comment
Explore the concept of Community Land Trusts for delivering affordable rural housing in Cambridgeshire.		Statutory agencies can release their land to housing associations for housing if in appropriate locations; this does not need to be done through a community land trust.
All statutory agencies to assess their own estates for land which could be released for the provision of affordable housing.		This is undertaken as a matter of course.

Priority 3: Protecting and enhancing rural services		
Monitor the change in provision of rural services by repeating the Rural Services Survey (last undertaken in 2007).		No comment other than clarification regarding who will fund the work
Build relationships and gather best practice information from Rural 80 and Rural 50 local authorities on how they are supporting reducing the decline in rural services.		No comment
Support multifunctional mobile service facilities, such as libraries, police, citizens advice bureau and health services, to work together to bring services to rural areas.		CCC already operate mobile library services in Huntingdonshire and the District Council via its service agreements with Hunts CAB and DISH financially support the provision of both outreach and home visiting advice services in Huntingdonshire.
Support communities with saving essential rural services that are under threat.		No Comment
Provide support to community groups / parish councils for widening the use of existing buildings (e.g. village halls, churches, libraries, etc.).		As previously stated over the last 11 years the District Council has extensively invested via its Capital Grant Aid budget to both the provision of and improvement to village meeting places (Village Halls)
Priority 4: Providing access to local healthcare		
NHS Cambridgeshire to promote local service provision in order to allay fears.		No comment
Work with parish councils and other community groups to identify gaps in local service provision and consider what services could be provided.		The District Council along with other Cambridgeshire District Authority's have already commissioned Cambs ACRE to work with Parish Councils to undertake parish plans (statements) that should identify any service provision gaps.

Priority 5: Widening transport options		
Undertake a consultation to understand attitudes towards public transport.		For the vast majority of rural residents, the car is the only option and despite the objectives of the rural strategy will remain so.
Rural proof new Local Transport Plan to ensure that it reflects local rural needs.		The wording used to a certain extent implies that other options will be available to all, for the vast majority of rural residents, the car is the only option and despite the objectives of the rural strategy will remain so.
Support the development and implementation of accessibility action plans in the LTP priority action areas, informed by a robust evidence base and genuine stakeholder participation.		Developing accessibility action plans is an LTP objective but it is very unlikely that funding will be available to implement fully as elements will not be affordable.
Roll out of a Demand Responsive Transport scheme across Cambridgeshire and evaluate its success.		This statement implies that funding is in place to make it happen this is not the case. Developing a demand responsive scheme is an LTP objective but it is very unlikely as elements will not be affordable.
Map community transport provision in each District in order to identify gaps and opportunities for integration of services.		Mapping of community transport provision is ongoing and been undertaken by CCC.
Encourage cycling and walking between rural communities by making footpaths and bridleways suitable for everyday, year round use—perhaps by introducing a network of ‘inter village routes’ that are off road but surfaced (and possibly lit) in such a way that make cycling and walking possible at all times.		HDC and CCC have a current priority list of 30 rural cycling projects across Huntingdonshire but in reality a budget to only take the top 5 forward. In reality this is an initiative that has little hope of delivery.

Priority 6: Supporting and strengthening local communities		
Co-ordinate a training programme for all parish councils that supports the increased use of the Well-being Power.		No comment this would be an issue for Parish Councils to finance themselves.
Support parish councils to own and run community assets through the Well-being Power.		No Comment
Support and encourage parishes to achieve Quality Parish status.		No Comment
Support and encourage the development and delivery of Community Led Plans by ensuring appropriate mechanisms at all levels for responding to actions identified.		As stated previously the District council along with other Cambridgeshire District authority's have already commissioned Cambs ACRE to work with Parish Councils to undertake parish plans (statements) that should identify service provision gaps. The reporting procedure for community led planning is via the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership.
Provide training and support for local people to develop the community leaders of the future.		This work is undertaken already e.g. How your Council works course operated in Huntingdon, Ramsey and St Neots.
ECONOMIC WELLBEING		
Priority 1: Improving employment opportunities		
Encourage specialist business advice for self-employed people at all stages of work to gain skills and develop their business.		The District Council is already working with a range of agencies and organisations providing support & advice to individuals who are or are considering establishing a self-employed business.
Ensure full allocation of the funding available through the Fens Adventurers Rural Development Programme in order to increase land-based businesses.		There needs to be better publicity of the funding programme. Additionally the reporting and monitoring requirement for the Fens Adventures Programme are disproportionate to the level of funding provided and as funding is paid in arrears creates major obstacles to small business wishing to take advantage of the funding programme.

Attract a wider range and larger number of businesses to set up and expand in rural Cambridgeshire.	No comment
Encourage the development of rural workspaces in appropriate locations by ensuring that appropriate references are made in Local Development Frameworks.	No Comment
Encourage the growth of home based businesses.	No Comment
Investigate the potential for reduced business rates as a means of encouraging rural business growth.	Part of the DRR scheme applies to rural properties. The District Council already provides mandatory relief (50% where applicable) The District Council have the power to 'top up' the relief and the council bears 75% of the cost of the top ups. The authority already grants 100% relief to all rural Post Offices. Any additional increase in granting discretionary relief would require an MTP bid.
Influence decision makers to draw attention to the consequences of digital exclusion.	No Comment
Priority 2: Maintaining and enhancing market towns as essential service hubs	
To increase support for tourism in market towns through local farm diversification and business development.	Officers whilst supporting these aims consider it necessary that a diversity of business and local supply chains are required to ensure the sustainability of market towns in addition to tourism and farm diversification.
Produce a master plan for each market town.	Clarification would be required as to what such a master plan would cover that is not already been done? Who would undertake and finance the master plan?

Priority 3: Improving skills through education and training		
Support initiatives which increase qualification attainment levels (both higher and basic skills) in sectors where there are emerging employment opportunities.		No comment
Work with rural employers to improve the skills of their workforce, in order to equip them for the business challenges of the future.		This can be increased by the promotion of work based learning.
Encourage collaboration between businesses and further education facilities to develop apprenticeships with the intention of encouraging young people to stay in rural Cambridgeshire.		This work is already ongoing via the Cambridgeshire Learning Partnership's established in each District Council in Cambridgeshire
LAND AND ENVIRONMENT		
Priority 1: Making the most of Cambridgeshire's unique landscape		
Develop a project where parishes are supported to create green infrastructure plans.		No comment other than clarification regarding who will fund the work
Support communities to develop projects that increase biodiversity and access.		No comment other than clarification regarding who will fund the work
Priority 2: Mitigating the impact of climate change		
Work with parish councils to increase the awareness of the impacts of climate change to allow them to lead communities in making a difference.		The District Council already provides extensive information direct to residents, and parish councils.
Undertake Cambridgeshire specific scenario planning on the effects of peak oil and peak water on rural communities, using existing projection models.		Support but have major concerns regarding 'Peak Water' this must deal with both abstraction and usage for both agricultural and residential requirements.
Encourage businesses to take up renewable energy schemes, green technologies and energy efficiency measures.		No Comment

Priority 3: Ensuring sympathetic development	
Investigate the use of Village Design Statements as a mechanism for influencing decisions on design and development so as to respect the local identity.	This would only be appropriate in village locations where substantial development is proposed.
Priority 4: Promoting Cambridgeshire's food	
Develop a 'Cambridgeshire Food Policy' to enhance local food supply chains and encourage stronger loyalty to local food production.	No comment
Encourage retailers and local businesses to promote and source local produce	No Comment
Continue support for projects that localise local food and farming such as community orchards, farmers markets and community food projects.	The promotion of farmers markets and community food project is undertaken already.

Rural Cambridgeshire: Ensuring a Vibrant Future

A Rural Strategy for Cambridgeshire 2010 – 2015

23

Under consultation from 1 February – 23 April 2010

**Cambridgeshire
Together**

working together to
improve our quality of life

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What is the Cambridgeshire Together Rural Strategy and how does it affect me?

The Cambridgeshire Together Rural Strategy is a plan for the future viability of the County's rural areas. It assesses the upsides and challenges of living and working in the countryside, reviews the area's economic wellbeing and looks at the land and environment that surrounds us. It goes on to set out a long-term vision for rural Cambridgeshire, how we can get there and who can make it happen.

Why do we need a Rural Strategy?

The need for a Rural Strategy is clear. Significant parts of the County of Cambridgeshire experience a quality of life which is considerably below that of the national population at large. Alongside this, traditional rural life is gradually being eroded and yet local people tell us they want to keep the special 'rural nature' of the communities where they live and work.

Many of the problems in our local communities are distinctive and are rooted in their rural nature and legacy from the past. The Rural Strategy will play an important part in helping to describe and understand these conditions and will help shape and monitor how well the County's major plans and organisations are addressing them.

How can a document change things?

The Rural Strategy will influence the work of Cambridgeshire Together, the partnership that delivers the Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement. The Local Area Agreement sets out the relationship between central and local government and what each expects from the other. This is documented in an action plan that has a balance of national and local priorities.

The Rural Strategy will ensure that the County's rural areas are not forgotten when public money is being spent on these priorities, creating a vibrant rural economy that ensures people can live and work locally in a safe and pleasant environment.

The Strategy will have its own action plan that will set out exactly what will be done, by whom and by when. It will influence and coordinate existing activities to ensure the best approach is taken.

Where are we now?



Living in the Countryside

Living in the Countryside is a different experience across the County. Some areas, typically in the north and in pockets across the rural areas, show evidence of considerable disadvantage as measured by things such as income levels, access to services and transport.

Deprivation measures tend to focus on local concentrations and in rural areas more thinly-spread disadvantage can often go unnoticed, particularly that linked to issues of material deprivation such as fuel poverty, isolation / loneliness, lack of transport and fear of crime.

Lack of affordable housing is an issue across the area, as well as declining rural services such as shops, post offices and pubs. The ways in which expected growth in the County is channelled and controlled could have a major impact on these issues. New approaches to joint investment, community self-reliance and self-governance are needed to maximise future opportunities.



Economic Wellbeing

In recent years, traditional industries such as agriculture and manufacturing (especially food) have been added to by new technology and knowledge-based businesses and greater levels of self-employment and home-working.

Economic well-being across the County as whole is generally strong and expected to remain so, but the broad picture of economic prosperity and growth masks areas and communities which are relatively poor and less productive. Rural Cambridgeshire tends to have lower wages, smaller scale firms and employment opportunities with much economic activity operating below the radar of attention and support. Key potential areas for economic growth are tourism, food and farming (especially looking to build on local, distinctive products and markets) and other rurally-based business.

Whilst Rural Cambridgeshire has levels of young people not in education, employment or training lower than the national average, these levels are fast increasing and follow the more general patterns of deprivation in the County. This is resulting in the out-migration of many young people to more urban areas.



Land and Environment

Land and the environment in rural Cambridgeshire has undergone and continues to experience significant change, mainly as a result of the continuing development of new housing, business premises and associated infrastructure. Other influences are changes in agriculture (an overall decline in land used for farming but also shorter term shifts in the intensity and types of production), plus increased attention to recreation needs (mainly through increased access to the countryside).

The effects of climate change are expected to have different impacts on the different landscape areas and parts of the County, but a key challenge for the future is to ensure new development is more environmentally sustainable – including the better matching of where people live, work and access services, so as to reduce the amount of travel and its impact on the environment and local communities.

Where do we want to be?

Our vision is of a rural Cambridgeshire that will flourish with sustainable rural communities that are prepared for the challenges ahead.

People living in rural Cambridgeshire will have access to the jobs and services they require; the rural economy will be successful and diverse; and the environment will be protected and enhanced.

How do those who live and work locally see the future?

In putting together this Strategy, we consulted with over 230 local people who gave us both individual perspectives and views from the organisations they represented. Here are just some of them:

Philip Bradshaw

Farmer, Flegcroft Farm, Whittlesey

“There is recognition that food production has to increase dramatically at a local and international level in the very near future, and Cambridgeshire is able to play an important part in this process. It is essential that land based industry in the County is encouraged to accept the challenge of increasing output in a way that is sustainable, responsible and profitable.”



Helen Copping, Completely Chilli

Local Entrepreneur, Haddenham

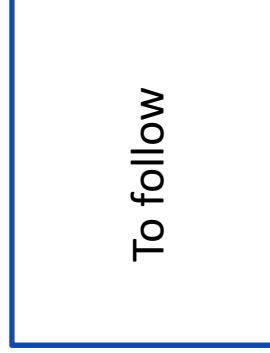
“Setting up a new business is tough. Having the right idea and stacks of enthusiasm is just the start. Support from specialist advisors and local funding is crucial to getting your business running and keeping it going.”



Philip Broadbent Yale

Outdoor Programme Manager, National Trust

“The National Trust has a crucial role to play protecting Cambridgeshire’s unique landscape. We are lucky to have an amazing variety of places and habitats in this County and we will work in partnership to look after them for ever, for everyone.”



Hugh McCurdy

Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech

“My area of the Diocese encompasses many different villages. There’s a huge variation in economic prosperity across the County and I’d like to see more support to help communities help themselves.”



Living in the Countryside - What do we need to change?

The people we consulted have collectively identified six ‘priorities’ for action that will improve ‘living in the countryside’. For each priority we have considered what our ambitions should be and how we would know if we had been successful in achieving them...

1. Preventing rural deprivation



Our Ambitions

- To ensure the allocation of resources takes account of all types of deprivation, including isolation and fuel poverty.
- To support local neighbourhood management / partnership working as a method of counteracting rural deprivation.

What will success look like?

- Increased number of community neighbourhood initiatives in targeted communities making them better places to live.
- Rural isolation is reduced through the provision of ‘social hubs’ in each community.

2. Building local homes for local people



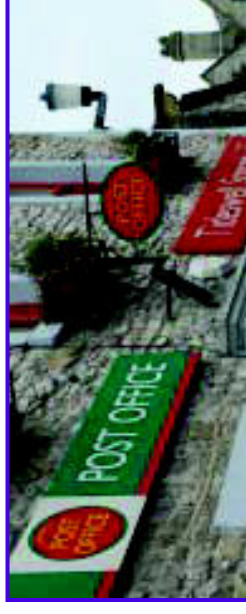
Our Ambitions

- To work with planners to support the sustainability of smaller rural communities.
- To build more homes on rural exception sites.
- To understand the scale of hidden homelessness in rural Cambridgeshire.

What will success look like?

- Vibrant, rural communities with a good mix of housing and associated infrastructure.
- Increased housing built in rural areas.
- Communities have better ways to manage homes that stay in local ownership.

3. Protecting and enhancing rural services



Our Ambitions

- To halt the decline of essential rural services.
- To support communities so they are able to play a greater role in finding their own solutions for viable service provision.

What will success look like?

- Increased number of community enterprises.
- Communities with better access to vital services with a reduced need to travel.
- More multi-use centres delivering a number of different services under one roof.

Living in the Countryside - What do we need to change?

4. Providing access to local healthcare



Our Ambitions

- To address peoples' concerns relating to the perceived centralisation of healthcare services.
- To look for opportunities where healthcare services can be provided locally in existing community facilities.

What will success look like?

- People believe that their primary care needs are being met within their local community.
- Increased use of community buildings offering some kind of healthcare service.

5. Widening transport options



Our Ambitions

- To encourage people to think differently about how they travel.
- To consult people in order to fully understand when, where and how they want to travel.
- To increase rural transport options.

What will success look like?

- Increased number of journeys made by community and public transport.
- Greater use and integration of public and community transport schemes.
- A Local Transport Plan that reflects rural need.

6. Supporting and strengthening local communities



Our Ambitions

- To increase the role of parish councils in providing governance to their own communities.
- To facilitate all rural communities in developing a clear vision for their own future.
- To ensure communities have the capacity to bring their plans to life.

What will success look like?

- Parish councils will be managing services through the Well-being Power.
- Strong, cohesive, rural communities that work together for the benefit of all residents.
- Community members will have the capacity to lead.

Economic Wellbeing - What do we need to change?

The people we consulted have collectively identified three ‘priorities’ for action that will improve the County’s ‘economic wellbeing’. For each priority we have considered what our ambitions should be and how we would know if we had been successful in achieving them...

1. Improving employment opportunities



Our Ambitions

- To improve business and social enterprise support in order to facilitate rural entrepreneurship.
- To encourage more high skilled jobs in rural areas to alleviate the need for commuting.
- To create the correct mix of business premises to allow business development and growth.
- To improve broadband and mobile phone connectivity.

What will success look like?

- Better mix of employment opportunities.
- Increased number and mix of businesses operating.
- Reduced commuting.
- No broadband or mobile phone network ‘hotspots’.

2. Maintaining and enhancing market towns as essential service hubs



Our Ambitions

- To support the tourism opportunities within and around market towns.
- To ensure all market towns have appropriate master plans for their future development.

What will success look like?

- Increased visitor numbers to market towns.
- All market towns have a long-term vision for development of the local economy.

3. Improving skills through education and training



Our Ambitions

- To enhance training and educational provision across all rural areas and at all skill levels.
- To reduce the barriers to young people in accessing education, vocational training and apprenticeships.

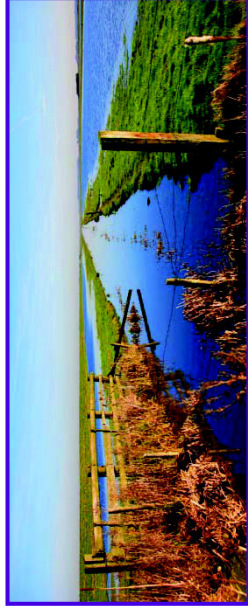
What will success look like?

- Young people have more choice in learning and training provision enabling them to remain in the rural areas.
- Cambridgeshire has an adequate workforce with varying skill levels across the whole County.

Land and Environment - What do we need to change?

The people we consulted have collectively identified four ‘priorities’ for action that will improve the County’s ‘land and environment’. For each priority we have considered what our ambitions should be and how we would know if we had been successful in achieving them...

1. Making the most of Cambridgeshire’s unique landscape



Our Ambitions

- To ensure that the planning of green spaces in and around rural parishes takes into account social, economic and environmental considerations.

What will success look like?

- Better use of green space is linked to the needs of the rural population and the wider Cambridgeshire environment.
- More opportunities for enhanced landscapes, better access and greater biodiversity value.
- Green spaces play a direct role in improving the lives, livelihoods and health of local people and communities.

2. Mitigating the impact of climate change



Our Ambitions

- To support communities with programmes of climate change adaptation and mitigation.
- To fully understand the effects and concept of ‘peak oil’ and ‘peak water’.
- To support businesses with schemes which promote green technologies and energy efficiency.

What will success look like?

- Increased number of parishes with local climate change interventions being delivered.
- People have an understanding about the impact of climate change on rural sustainability.
- Businesses make better use of local assets and technologies.

3. Ensuring sympathetic development



Our Ambitions

- To recognise the character and distinctiveness of rural parishes across Cambridgeshire.

What will success look like?

- Rural Cambridgeshire will remain an attractive place to live, work and visit.
- Communities will feel their voices are being heard when new development is planned.

Land and Environment - What do we need to change?

4. Promoting Cambridgeshire's food



Our Ambitions

- To address the issue of global food security by Cambridgeshire-specific interventions.
- To develop better local food supply chains and clearer labelling.
- To develop a better understanding of food production.

What will success look like?

- Changes in local farming practices to mitigate against the effects of climate change and to protect the local environment.
- Increased demand for people purchasing food grown locally .
- Increased number of local community food projects.

How will we know what's been achieved?

Success in delivering the Rural Strategy will be overseen by the Cambridgeshire Together Board monitored through its Safer and Stronger Partnership. An Action Plan has been developed which details who is responsible for overseeing the delivery of each ambition. The actions are shown on pages 14 – 17.

The phrase 'rural proofing' is used within the Action Plan and this is the process of checking the effect that policies, programmes, initiatives and individual projects could have on rural communities. It ensures that the particular needs of people in rural areas are not overlooked and that policies or projects do not have any unintended negative outcomes for rural communities. One of the key elements of the Cambridgeshire Rural Strategy will be to rural proof key local initiatives.

Nine key performance indicators (KPIs) have been set to enable us to measure the vibrancy of Rural Cambridgeshire going forward. These are:

1. Number of homes built on rural exception sites in Cambridgeshire.
2. Number of essential rural services maintained.
3. Number of new rural enterprises set up.
4. Number of Cambridgeshire parish councils using the Well-being Power.
5. Number of broadband notspots and slowspots in rural Cambridgeshire.

How will we know what's been achieved? (continued)

6. Number of people that work within five kilometres of their home address.
7. % of apprenticeship opportunities located in Cambridgeshire's rural villages/market towns.
8. % of Cambridgeshire communities with a green infrastructure section within their community led plan.
9. Number of village design guidance documents adopted by parish councils to inform their response to planning consultations.
10. Number of organisations taking part in developing and signing up to a Cambridgeshire Food Policy.

These KPIs will be measured each year and an annual report on progress towards achieving the ambitions of this Rural Strategy will be issued.

What actions will be taken?

LIVING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

Priority 1: Preventing rural deprivation

- Use OCSI (Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion) data to develop and interpret the Cambridgeshire rural evidence base to influence how local services are provided in rural parishes.
- Liaise with parish councils and attend rural community events (such as meetings and fairs) in order to raise awareness of fuel poverty, energy efficiency, grants for repairs and assistance available for vulnerable rural households.
- Ensure each parish has at least one local service / meeting place that provides a 'social hub'.
- To achieve one new intervention in an agreed area of deprivation in each district.
- Develop Neighbourhood Forums as a way of clustering parishes in rural areas in order to develop wider approaches to local issues and needs.

Priority 2: Building local homes for local people

- Build relationships and gather best practice information from Rural 80 and Rural 50 local authorities on how they deliver affordable housing through all available methods, including Section 106 agreements.
- Develop a Countywide set of principles to ensure effective development in rural communities on rural exception sites, in agreement with the Regional Spatial Strategy.
- Rural-proof District Local Development Frameworks to ensure rural housing provision is catered for and that it will aid rural community sustainability.
- Continue to conduct an independent Housing Needs Survey where applicable to ascertain local needs and make people aware of the results.
- Set affordable rural housing development targets for rural exception sites.
- Continue to develop Cambridgeshire's Affordable Rural Housing service bringing together Local Authority Housing Providers (RSLs), Local Authorities and parish councils in order to address proven need in rural areas.
- Explore the concept of Community Land Trusts for delivering affordable rural housing in Cambridgeshire.
- All statutory agencies to assess their own estates for land which could be released for the provision of affordable housing.

Priority 3: Protecting and enhancing rural services

- Monitor the change in provision of rural services by repeating the Rural Services Survey (last undertaken in 2007).
- Build relationships and gather best practice information from Rural 80 and Rural 50 local authorities on how they are supporting reducing the decline in rural services.
- Support multifunctional mobile service facilities, such as libraries, police, citizens advice bureau and health services, to work together to bring services to rural areas.
- Support communities with saving essential rural services that are under threat.
- Provide support to community groups / parish councils for widening the use of existing buildings (e.g. village halls, churches, libraries, etc.).

What actions will be taken?

LIVING IN THE COUNTRYSIDE (continued)

Priority 4: Providing access to local healthcare

- NHS Cambridgeshire to promote local service provision in order to allay fears.
- Work with parish councils and other community groups to identify gaps in local service provision and consider what services could be provided.

Priority 5: Widening transport options

- Undertake a consultation to understand attitudes towards public transport.
- Rural-proof new Local Transport Plan to ensure that it reflects local rural needs.
- Support the development and implementation of accessibility action plans in the LTP priority action areas, informed by a robust evidence base and genuine stakeholder participation.
- Roll out of a Demand Responsive Transport scheme across Cambridgeshire and evaluate its success.
- Map community transport provision in each District in order to identify gaps and opportunities for integration of services.
- Encourage cycling and walking between rural communities by making footpaths and bridleways suitable for everyday, year round use – perhaps by introducing a network of ‘inter-village routes’ that are off-road but surfaced (and possibly lit) in such a way that make cycling and walking possible at all times.

Priority 6: Supporting and strengthening local communities

- Co-ordinate a training programme for all parish councils that supports the increased use of the Well-being Power.
- Support parish councils to own and run community assets through the Well-being Power.
- Support and encourage parishes to achieve Quality Parish status.
- Support and encourage the development and delivery of Community Led Plans by ensuring appropriate mechanisms at all levels for responding to actions identified.
- Provide training and support for local people to develop the community leaders of the future.

What actions will be taken?

ECONOMIC WELLBEING

Priority 1: Improving employment opportunities

- Encourage specialist business advice for self-employed people at all stages of work to gain skills and develop their business.
- Ensure full allocation of the funding available through the Fens Adventurers Rural Development Programme in order to increase land-based businesses.
- Attract a wider range and larger number of businesses to set up and expand in rural Cambridgeshire.
- Encourage the development of rural workspaces in appropriate locations by ensuring that appropriate references are made in Local Development Frameworks.
- Encourage the growth of home-based businesses.
- Investigate the potential for reduced business rates as a means of encouraging rural business growth.
- Influence decision-makers to draw attention to the consequences of digital exclusion.

Priority 2: Maintaining and enhancing market towns as essential service hubs

- To increase support for tourism in market towns through local farm diversification and business development.
- Produce a master plan for each market town.

Priority 3: Improving skills through education and training

- Support initiatives which increase qualification attainment levels (both higher and basic skills) in sectors where there are emerging employment opportunities.
- Work with rural employers to improve the skills of their workforce, in order to equip them for the business challenges of the future.
- Encourage collaboration between businesses and further education facilities to develop apprenticeships with the intention of encouraging young people to stay in rural Cambridgeshire.

What actions will be taken?

LAND AND ENVIRONMENT

Priority 1: Making the most of Cambridgeshire's unique landscape

- Develop a project where parishes are supported to create green infrastructure plans.
- Support communities to develop projects that increase biodiversity and access.

Priority 2: Mitigating the impact of climate change

- Work with parish councils to increase the awareness of the impacts of climate change to allow them to lead communities in making a difference.
- Undertake Cambridgeshire-specific scenario planning on the effects of peak oil and peak water on rural communities, using existing projection models.
- Encourage businesses to take up renewable energy schemes, green technologies and energy efficiency measures.

Priority 3: Ensuring sympathetic development

- Investigate the use of Village Design Statements as a mechanism for influencing decisions on design and development so as to respect the local identity.

Priority 4: Promoting Cambridgeshire's food

- Develop a 'Cambridgeshire Food Policy' to enhance local food supply chains and encourage stronger loyalty to local food production.
- Encourage retailers and local businesses to promote and source local produce.
- Continue support for projects that localise local food and farming such as community orchards, farmers markets and community food projects.

Glossary

Affordable Housing: Housing which is built on rural exception sites with a subsidy from a Housing Association, made available for rent/shared ownership, allocated (in priority) to households with a local connection and is kept affordable for local people.

Biodiversity: The variety of life forms in a given area.

Fuel poverty: Those who spend more than 10% of their annual income on heating their home.

Global Food Insecurity: The result of rising food prices and increased demand for food. Rapidly increasing energy costs, increased global population and lower yields due to volatile weather result in global food insecurity.

Green Spaces: Protected areas of undeveloped landscape and the natural environment.

Local Transport Plan: A Local Authority plan which sets out local transport strategies, policies and an implementation programme.

Material Deprivation: A relative term to describe the inability of individuals /households to afford those goods and activities that are typical in a society at a given point in time.

Notspot: An area where broadband or mobile phone signal is unavailable. (Slowspots refers to those areas where broadband speed is less than 2 Mbps)

Peak Oil: The point at which oil is being extracted at maximum rate is known as the peak, after which oil production decreases as it becomes harder to extract.

Peak Water: The point at which demand for fresh water is greater than the natural rate of replenishment. Peak water will effect some locations more than others.

Rural Exception Sites: Small plots of land, solely for affordable housing developments, within or bordering an existing rural settlement which would not otherwise be available for market housing.

Social Hubs: Places which encourage community activities, inclusion and regeneration.

Well-being Power: Passed in 2000, it allows local authorities in England to do anything they consider likely to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area unless forbidden elsewhere in legislation.

Enjoyed reading this and want to know more?

To read the research and evidence that underpin the Rural Strategy, please visit www.cambsacre.org.uk where you can download :

 Evidence Base

 Summary of Evidence

 Reports on the District-based Consultation Workshops

 Summary Report on the Countywide Consultation undertaken in September and October 2009

 Full Cambridgeshire Rural Strategy Action Plan

The Cambridgeshire Together Rural Strategy was produced by the partners of Cambridgeshire Together, in conjunction with local stakeholders throughout the County .

Strategy production was led and facilitated by Cambridgeshire ACRE

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
(SOCIAL WELL-BEING)**

2 MARCH 2010

CABINET

22 APRIL 2010

PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING ENFORCEMENT THE CRIMINAL LAW ACT 1977 & THE PROTECTION FROM HARASSMENT ACT 1997

(Report by the Head of Environmental & Community Health Services)

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek delegated authority for authorised officers to use provisions set out in the Criminal Law Act 1977 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 when dealing with allegations of harassment and illegal eviction in the private housing sector. The use of all enforcement powers is seen as a last resort but complaints of harassment and illegal eviction are frequently made in landlord/tenant disputes and occasionally enforcement action is warranted.
- 1.2 The definitions of the criminal offences of illegal eviction and harassment are contained in the Protection from Eviction Act 1977, as amended by the Housing Act 1988 but the Criminal Law Act 1977 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 provide additional powers that could prove useful in Private Sector Housing enforcement and are now recommended by the housing charity "Shelter".
- 1.3 This report sets out the potential benefits of these additional powers which can be used alongside the Protection from Eviction Act 1977 powers already delegated to officers involved in private sector housing enforcement duties.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Protection from Eviction Act was introduced in 1977 in an attempt to give a measure of protection to residential occupiers, notably private sector tenants. The Act allows local authorities to prosecute offenders when investigations into complaints of harassment and illegal eviction are found to be justified. This legislation does not prevent harassment or illegal eviction from taking place and there is no sanction on the landlord for an illegal act unless the local authority can actually prove the offence has taken place. Often there is no written evidence that an illegal act has taken place and the local authority cannot proceed with a prosecution. In such circumstances, the landlord gains possession of the property and the tenant is rendered homeless in spite of the apparent protection afforded by the Act.
- 2.2 Illegal eviction is often the final act of a campaign by a landlord to harass the tenant in order to gain vacant possession of the property. Depriving the tenant of essential services such as heating or water, threatening the tenant or making living in the property unbearable are techniques used by unscrupulous private landlords to drive tenants out without going through the proper legal procedures for possession.

3 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Protection from Eviction Act 1977 and the Criminal Law Act 1977 create specific powers related to the protection of private sector tenants. Further powers are set out in the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 and these can be seen as a package of enforcement powers for local authority officers.
- 3.2 The Protection from Eviction Act 1977 powers have already been adopted by the Council and are delegated to authorised Environmental Health Officers. The housing charity “Shelter” recommends that local authorities also adopt the additional enforcement powers set out in the Criminal Law Act 1977 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.
- 3.3 In cases of illegal eviction the tenant is frequently terrified and does not wait around to see if the landlord will allow re-entry but immediately presents to the Council for emergency accommodation. Such cases are of course referred to Environmental Health for investigation but tenants are often unable to substantiate allegations of illegal eviction through lack of written contract or corroboration and so no evidence can be gathered to prosecute a landlord for illegal eviction. The Criminal Law Act 1977 creates offences of using or threatening the use of violence for gaining possession and allows for the restoration of a displaced occupier of residential premises. The use of these powers will secure the restoration of a tenant to their rented property in appropriate cases, at the landlord’s expense, pending the institution of proper legal procedures for eviction.
- 3.4 The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 creates four criminal offences of harassment, putting another person in fear of violence, breach of a restraining order and breach of an injunction. These provisions can be used when a disreputable landlord attempts to make the occupation of a property unbearable. To avoid court costs and to gain quick access to a property a landlord may for instance deprive the tenant of heat or electricity or enter the property illegally without giving notice in order to force them out of the property. With delegated authority, the authorised officers could gather evidence of such actions and may initiate a prosecution against the landlord.

4. IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no financial or manning implications resulting from this report. The powers will be used by Environmental Health Officers in conjunction with existing enforcement powers.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The delegated enforcement powers currently available to authorised officers could usefully be extended by way of adoption of the specific powers available under the Criminal Law Act 1977 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.
- 5.2 The powers available under the Criminal Law Act 1977 may, in particular, enable authorised officers to regain possession of a property on the tenant’s behalf and to allow them to stay there until such time as proper legal procedures for possession have been followed. This can be

done at the landlord's expense and demonstrates that there are consequences for such illegal actions.

- 5.3 The powers available under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997 would provide protection for tenants against unreasonable behaviour by unscrupulous landlords and their agents.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is RECOMMENDED that delegated authority be given to:

- (a) The Director of Environmental & Community Services to appoint Environmental Health Officers and Environmental Health Protection Officers to enforce the provisions of the Criminal Law Act 1977 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997;
- (b) Appointed Environmental Health Officers and Environmental Health Protection Officers to exercise the powers set out in the Criminal Law Act 1977 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997; and
- (c) The Head of Environmental & Community Health Services, following consultation with the executive Councillor, to institute legal proceedings for offences under the provisions of the Criminal Law Act 1977 and the Protection from Harassment Act 1997.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Protection from Harassment and Illegal Eviction - Shelter
Criminal Law Act 1977
Protection from Harassment Act 1997

Contact Officer: John Allan, Neighbourhoods Intervention Manager
 **01480 388281**

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SOCIAL WELL-BEING

2nd March 2010

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT (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 The Council’s Corporate Plan includes 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 as priorities for the immediate future.

3. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 Progress against all the 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.
- 3.2 In addition, a working group appointed by the Overview & Scrutiny Panels continues to meet quarterly to monitor progress in the achievement of the Plan and to consider development issues.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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.
- 3.5 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 - Performance data from services which contribute to the Council objectives. For each measure there is a target, actual performance against target, forecast performance for the next period, an indicator showing the direction of travel compared with the previous quarter and a comments field. The data is colour coded as follows:

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

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

5. DATA QUALITY

5.1 The appropriate Heads of Service have confirmed the accuracy of the data in the attached report and that its compilation is in accordance with the appropriate Divisions’ data measure templates. Acknowledging the importance of performance management data, a system of spot checks has been introduced to give further assurance on its accuracy.

6. RECOMMENDATION

6.1 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

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Community/Council Aim: Healthy Living

Objective: To promote active lifestyles

Division: Leisure

Divisional Objective: To increase participation in healthy physical activities

Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:	QRT
Maintain and improve standard of facilities & match facility provision with usage demand (SCS measure)	Number of admissions/participants in activities provided or promoted by the Council (cumulative quarterly target)	1,26m	1,22m (R)		↓	Increase on 2008-09 at HLC only	QRT
Promotion and marketing of available activities	Number of active card holders	19,850	19,077 (R)		↓	Data capture of all users from Jan 2010 will ensure this target is reached	QRT

Division: Lifestyles

Divisional Objective: To promote healthy lifestyle choices

Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:	QRT
Provide a range of accessible leisure opportunities such as: a Holiday Activity Programme for <17 yrs (SCS measure)	Total throughput of school, outreach and holiday activity Programmes (cumulative quarterly target)	3,000	4,520 (G)		↔		QRT
Provide and facilitate arts activities directly and in partnership	Throughput of people (target 8500 per ann) experiencing arts interventions as a result of Arts Service and Partner activities during 2009/10 (cumulative quarterly target)	6,375	16,204 (G)		↔		QRT
Provide targeted schemes to enable vulnerable people to participate in physical leisure activities (inc Exercise Referral, Community Sports and Recreation Project, Community Sports Network and Active Life scheme) (SCS measure 2.1.5)	Throughput on identified schemes (cumulative quarterly target)	8,475	17,361 (G)		↔		QRT
Provide under-represented groups with the opportunity to participate in sport and active recreation (SCS measure)	Total throughput of activity programme for disabled participants and under-represented groups (cumulative quarterly target)	750	1,637 (G)		↔		QRT
Support vulnerable people to be more active, Cardiac Rehabilitation programme and Health Walks	Total throughput of the Cardiac Rehabilitation programme and Health Walks in Huntingdonshire (cumulative quarterly target)	5,670	7,644 (G)		↓		QRT

Community/Council Aim: Housing that meets individuals needs

Objective: To achieve a low level of homelessness

Division: Housing

Divisional Objective: To achieve a low level of homelessness

Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:	QRT
By helping to prevent people from becoming homeless by housing homeless people, where	(NI 156) No. of households living in temporary accommodation	45	65 (R)		↓	The recession has slowed the pace of reduction in this indicator.	QRT

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

appropriate	The number of households prevented from becoming homeless in the year (cumulative quarterly measure)	195	270 (G)	↔	Annual target already reached	QRT
Community/Council Aim: Developing communities sustainably						
Objective: To enable the provision of affordable housing						
Division: Housing						
Divisional Objective: To enable the provision of affordable housing						
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:						
By maximising the land available for new affordable housing. By working in partnership with Housing Associations to bid for external funding. By making a financial contribution to pay for affordable homes to be built	(NI 155) Number of new affordable homes built by March 2010 (cumulative quarterly target) (local target)	160	180 (G)	↑	On track to complete at least 250 before the end of the financial year	QRT
Division: Planning						
Divisional Objective: Maximise provision of affordable housing on relevant development sites						
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:						
Develop Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD (to set policy framework)/Adopt Planning Obligations SPD (to set specific targets and thresholds)/Negotiate S106 Agreements (to deliver required amounts of affordable housing)	% of affordable housing (commitments) on qualifying sites (cumulative) % of housing completions on qualifying sites that are affordable in market towns and key settlements % of housing completions on qualifying sites that are affordable in smaller settlements	35 40 29	73.20 (G) 49.80 (G) 65 (G)	↔ N/A N/A	as at March 2009 As at year end March 2009.	QRT QRT QRT

<p>Objective To promote active lifestyles</p>	<p>Achievements:</p>	<p>Comments from appropriate Head of Service <u>Leisure Centres:</u> Key area, Impressions, has continued to grow by 8,995 (5.2%) to 203,000 with growth at all sites (Huntingdon 17%). 37,000 additional visits (14%) have been recorded at Huntingdon LC (despite the pool closure) in the first full year of the new facilities opening. Funzone at Huntingdon has had over 15,000 participants at the three quarter year stage and aerobics classes everywhere continue to thrive. 64% of all available courts are used (identical to last year). “One Leisure” was launched from January 2010. A full staff meeting, attended by over 300, took place in December and a public awareness campaign has continued thereafter.</p> <p><u>Leisure Centres:</u> Admissions remain 4% below target. Closure of two pools over summer and inclement weather in December remain contributory factors but there is optimism that the busier New Year period will address the shortfall. In the current economic climate this admissions decrease is unsurprising. Despite increased visits to Huntingdon LC, other centres have dropped by between 1% (St Neots) and 9% (Ramsey) (note - pool closed in summer). Swimming remains 8% down (although over half of this will be as a result of the closures). Pool occupancy has decreased fractionally to 22.1 people per hour.</p> <p><u>Environmental and Community Health Services:</u> Community Sports Network funding bid through 1st round selection, second-stage outcome due February 2010. £150M worth of bids for £10M funding. HDC bid currently ranked amongst the highest & survived stringent bid-thinning in 1st round; some issues with match-funding have been addressed as far as possible.</p>
<p>To achieve a low level of homelessness</p>	<p>Risks: Achievements: Issues or actions for next quarter: Risks:</p>	<p><u>Housing Services:</u> 31 households were accepted as homeless compared to 36 in the same period last year.</p> <p><u>Housing Services:</u> There was an increase in the number of households in temporary accommodation, from 54 households at the start of the quarter to 65 at the end. We need to achieve a maximum of 45 households by the end of March 2010 to achieve our temporary accommodation reduction target with central government. A consultation draft of the Homelessness Strategy will incorporate the findings of the homelessness Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA).</p> <p><u>Housing Services:</u> There is a risk of reduced provision within the private rented sector if house prices and sales increase, with more owners looking to sell rather than rent properties out. This would reduce the council’s ability to prevent homelessness by helping households into private sector tenancies.</p>

<p>Objective</p> <p>To enable the provision of affordable housing</p>	<p>Comments from appropriate Head of Service</p>
<p>Achievements:</p>	<p>Housing Services: Completed 16 affordable homes bringing the cumulative total for the year to 180. Secured £1.162m HCA grant for affordable housing.</p>
<p>Issues or actions for next quarter:</p>	<p>Housing Services:</p>
<p>Risks:</p>	<p>Housing Services: Availability of Homes and Communities Agency funding via the bidding process.</p> <p>Planning Services: As stated previously the most obvious current risk is the potential impacts of a longer than expected downturn in the housing/development market. The nature of that risk is that a prolonged downturn will continue to detrimentally impact upon the local property market thereby undermining the delivery of new homes, new employment opportunities and community facilities. Potential impacts could be upon levels of planning fee income, housing delivery and the scale, content and the potential viability and delivery of S106 contributions.</p>

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING)

2ND MARCH 2010

STUDY – PARKING AT HINCHINGBROOKE HOSPITAL (Report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides the Panel with opportunities to review progress of the study into car parking at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital and to consider whether any further action needs to be taken.

2. ISSUES RAISED IN THE COURSE OF THE STUDY

- 2.1 The Panel has, since June 2009, been engaged in a study on car parking at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. The study culminated, at the last meeting, with discussions with the Hospital's Facilities Manager and representatives of the Cambridgeshire Local Involvement Network (Link). Following that meeting, a report has been compiled and, by the time the Panel meets, it will have been sent to the Hospital for consideration as part of its deliberations during its own review of its parking arrangements.
- 2.2 There now are opportunities to review the study's progress and to identify further actions. One of the discussion points that arose concerns the general principle of charging for hospital parking. As there is an ongoing debate at the national level on this, the Panel may wish to make its views known to the Department of Health or locally.
- 2.3 Another issue that has been discussed is the level of public transport that serves the Hospital. While a recommendation on this has been made to the Hospital, other organisations also have a role here and the Panel might engage with them on possible ways of making improvements.
- 2.4 The Panel also has been acquainted with the British Parking Association's Hospital Parking Charter. Given that the Hospital's Facilities Manager has offered to return to discuss parking with the Panel in the future, it would be possible to make an assessment on the degree to which the Hospital complies with the Charter once it has been introduced.
- 2.5 Finally, mention has been made of the Guided Bus and alternative ways of reaching the Hospital, such as cycling and walking.

3. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 The primary purpose of the study, which was to examine and make recommendations on the operation of the Hospital's car parks, has substantially been achieved. It only remains to determine whether there are any other matters that need to be addressed before the study can be regarded as concluded and to plan any follow-up work. A few of the issues that have been discussed are outlined above. The Panel might pursue any of

these or others that have arisen. Members may also want to identify a timescale for carrying out follow-up work.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Report and Minutes of meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) held on 2nd June, 7th July, 1st September, and 3rd November 2009 and 2nd February 2010.

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

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS
(SOCIAL WELL-BEING)
(ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING)
(ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)**

**2ND MARCH 2010
9TH MARCH 2010
11TH MARCH 2010**

**WORK PLAN STUDIES
(Report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to allow Members of the Panel to review their programme of studies and to be informed of studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

2. STUDIES

- 2.1 The Council has a duty to improve the social, environmental and economic well-being of the District. This gives the Overview and Scrutiny Panels a wide remit to examine any issues that affect the District by conducting in-depth studies.

- 2.2 Studies are allocated according to the Council's service areas which have been identified as follows:-

Social Well-Being

Housing
Community
Leisure Centres
Operations (part)
Democratic and Central Services (part)
People, Performance and Partnerships (part)

Environmental Well-Being

Environmental and Technical Services
Planning Services
Environmental Health
Operations (part)

Economic Well-Being

Information Management
Finance
Customer Service and Call Centres
Revenues
Democratic and Central Services (part)
Law, Property and Governance
People, Performance and Partnerships (part)
HQ/Accommodation

2.3 On going studies have been allocated between the Panels accordingly:-

STUDY	PANEL	STATUS
The processes involved in applying for community grant aid and the effectiveness of grant schemes.	Economic Well-Being	Annual report on those organisations supported by grants to be submitted to a future Panel meeting.
Provision of play facilities for young people across the District.	Social Well-Being	Final report to be submitted to the Cabinet on 18 th March.
Car parking at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.	Social Well-Being	Final report outlining findings of the study submitted to Hospital. Also appears on the Panel's March Agenda.
Tourism.	Economic Well-Being	Panel will consider looking at the wider implications of tourism.
The process for the determination of planning applications.	Environmental Well-Being	Final report of the Working Group anticipated for submission to the Panel's March meeting.

2.4 The following have also been identified by Members as possible future studies:-

Review of the incentives contained in the Council's Travel Plan.	Environmental Well-Being
The Council's future borrowing arrangements.	Economic Well-Being
Planning enforcement.	Environmental Well-Being
Waste disposal arrangements.	Environmental Well-Being
Management of capital projects by Environmental Management Section.	Economic Well-Being
The effect and cost implications of the loss of the Huntingdon Enterprise Agency.	Economic Well-Being
The employees performance development review process.	Economic Well-Being

The Creative Exchange, St Neots.	Economic Well-Being
Annual report on organisations supported through service level agreements.	Economic Well-Being
Financial reports on the District Council's Leisure Centres.	Economic Well-Being
Lessons learned from the Headquarters and other accommodation project.	Economic Well-Being
Industrial Units at Caxton Road, St Ives.	Economic Well-Being
Night time economy study (Hospital's perspective).	Economic Well-Being

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 The Panel is requested to note the progress of the studies selected.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Minutes and Reports from previous meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

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

**Mrs J Walker, Trainee Democratic Services Officer
01480 387049**

**Mrs A Jerrom, Member Development Officer
01480 388009**

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
(ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)
STUDY TEMPLATE**

AREA OF REVIEW	DETAILS/COMMENTS
Title of Study (name of Working Group)	Grant Aid Working Group
Appointing Panel	Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) Formerly Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery)
Members Assigned (including date Working Group appointed)	Date Appointed: 3 rd July 2007 Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, P G Mitchell and J S Watt. In addition, former District Councillor D A Giles was appointed on to the Working Group and assisted with the investigations up until April 2008.
Possible Co-Options to the Group	None identified.
Interests Declared	None declared.
Rapporteur	Councillor P G Mitchell.
Officer Support	Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer, HDC Mr A Roberts, Scrutiny and Review Manager, HDC Mr S Plant, Head of Housing Services, HDC Mr F Mastrandrea, Policy and Enabling Officer, HDC Mr K Tayler, Private Sector Housing Officer, HDC Mr S Ingram, Head of Planning Services, HDC Mr R Probyn, Planning Policy Manager, HDC Mr I Leatherbarrow, Former Head of Policy and Strategic Services Dr S Lammin – Head of Environmental and Community Health Services Mr D Smith – Community Team Manager Mrs K Shaw – External Funding Officer
Purpose of Study / Objective (specify exactly what the study should achieve)	To undertake a review of the processes involved in applying for community grant aid and the effectiveness of grant schemes.
Rationale (key issues and/or reason for conducting a study)	The suggestion for the study emerged from the Panel's previous investigations into the Small Scale Environmental Improvements Scheme, where the recommendations arising from the study had been endorsed by the Cabinet and implemented by the Council.
Terms of Reference	As above, and additionally, the following:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify the purpose of each scheme having regard to the Council's priority contained in Growing Success; • To investigate the criteria for assessing applicants' eligibility under each scheme; • To investigate the methods adopted to publicise the availability of grant funding; • To investigate the application process for each scheme; • To be informed of Officer/Member involvement during

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
(ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)
STUDY TEMPLATE**

	<p>the approval process; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To investigate external sources of funding, specifically, the level of funding attracted by the Council and the application procedure.
Links to Council Policies/Strategies	<p>Link to Council Aim: To Maintain Sound Finances. Link to Community Am: Developing Communities Sustainably.</p>

ACTION BY WORKING GROUP	
Methodology / Approach (what types of enquiries will be used to gather evidence)	Discussions with all of the Officers within the Council previously identified.
External/Specialist Support	N/A
Existing Documentation	<p>Minutes and Reports of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) – 3rd July 2007. 2006/07 – HDC Grant Aid News Release. 2008/09 HDC Capital Grant Aid News Release. Voluntary Sector Commissioning Report – Report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services. HDC CAB Commissioning Agreement Document. HDC Grants Award Information – Report by the Head of Financial Services. HDC Grant Application Handbook and Application Form ~ Capital and Revenue. Listed Building / Shopmobility / Shopfront / Transportation / Home Repairs / Voluntary Grants. HDC Grant Awards Scheme. Six Month Review of Capital and Revenue Grant Aid Awards 2008/09 – Report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services.</p>
Evidence to be Obtained (e.g. witnesses, documents, site visits, consultation, research, etc)	Discussions with all Officers identified above.
Reference Sites	HDC Website:- www.huntsdc.gov.uk
Investigations	As outlined above.
Witnesses	<p>As above and in addition the following Councillors:-</p> <p>Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds, Executive Councillor for Housing and Public Health. Councillor T V Rogers, Executive Councillor for Finance and Environment.</p>
Site Visits (if necessary) (where and when)	N/A
Meetings of the Working Group	<p>24th October 2007. 1st February 2008. 20th March 2008. 26th March 2008.</p>

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
(ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)
STUDY TEMPLATE**

	9 th April 2008. 7 th May 2008. 24 th July 2008. 24 th October 2008.
Costs (resource requirements, additional expenditure, time)	Officer time – both to provide support and conduct research.
Possible Barriers to the Study (potential weaknesses)	None currently identified.
Projected Timescale (Start and end times)	Start: January 2009 End: July 2009.

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
(SOCIAL WELL-BEING)
STUDY TEMPLATE**

AREA OF REVIEW	DETAILS/COMMENTS
Title of Study (name of Working Group)	Provision of Play Facilities Across the District Working Group
Appointing Panel	Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) Formerly Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery)
Members Assigned (including date Working Group appointed)	Date Appointed: 3 rd March 2009. Councillors J D Ablewhite and P G Mitchell. Councillors Mrs P A Jordan and R J West were later appointed onto the Working Group in June 2009. Councillor J D Ablewhite assisted with the study up until June 2009.
Possible Co-Options to the Group	None identified.
Interests Declared	Councillor P G Mitchell declared a personal interest into the study due to his involvement with the Stilton Skate Park Project.
Rapporteur	Councillor P G Mitchell
Officer Support	Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer, HDC Mr A Roberts, Scrutiny and Review Manager, HDC Mr R Ward – Head of Operations, HDC Mr J Craig, Service Development Manager, HDC
Purpose of Study / Objective (specify exactly what the study should achieve)	To investigate the provision of play facilities across the District, with a view to making recommendations on achieving an even distribution of facilities across the District and on meeting the ongoing revenue costs associated with such facilities.
Rationale (key issues and/or reason for conducting a study)	Raised as potential study area by Councillor P G Mitchell due to the current problems experienced at Stilton. Further information obtained from the Head of Operations and Panel concluded that due to the inconsistencies with the distribution of facilities across the District, a study should be undertaken.
Terms of Reference	As above.
Links to Council Policies/Strategies	Link to Community Aim: Developing Communities Sustainably. In particular, the objective to enable the provision of the social and strategic infrastructure to meet current and future needs. Link to Community Aim: Safe, Vibrant and Inclusive Communities. In particular the objective to reduce anti-social behaviour and ensure that people feel safe.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
(SOCIAL WELL-BEING)
STUDY TEMPLATE**

ACTION BY WORKING GROUP	
Methodology / Approach (what types of enquiries will be used to gather evidence)	Information from the Head of Operations.
External/Specialist Support	N/A
Existing Documentation	Provision of Leisure Facilities for Young People – Report by the Head of Operations. Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) – 3 rd March 2009.
Evidence to be Obtained (e.g. witnesses, documents, site visits, consultation, research, etc)	Further discussions with the Head of Operations and Executive Councillor for Operational & Countryside Services.
Reference Sites	N/A
Investigations	As outlined above.
Witnesses	Mr R Ward, Head of Operations Mr J Craig, Service Development Manager Councillor C R Hyams, Executive Councillor for Operational and Countryside Services.
Site Visits (if necessary) (where and when)	None currently identified.
Meetings of the Working Group	First meeting held 30 th April 2009. Second meeting held on 13 th August 2009. Third meeting held 28 th October 2009. Fourth meeting held 16 th December 2009.
Costs (resource requirements, additional expenditure, time)	Officer time – both to provide support and conduct research.
Possible Barriers to the Study (potential weaknesses)	None currently identified.
Projected Timescale (Start and end times)	Start: March 2009 End: March 2010.

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
(SOCIAL WELL-BEING)
STUDY TEMPLATE**

AREA OF REVIEW	DETAILS/COMMENTS
Title of Study (name of Working Group)	Parking At Hinchingsbrooke Hospital
Appointing Panel	Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being)
Members Assigned (including date Working Group appointed)	Date Appointed: 7 th July 2009. Agreed to pursue this as a full Panel investigation, comprising Councillors P L E Bucknell, Mrs K E Cooper, S J Criswell, J W Davies, J E Garner, Mrs P A Jordan, P G Mitchell, A Monk, J M Sadler and R J West.
Possible Co-Options to the Group	None identified at present.
Interests Declared	Cllr Mrs P A Jordan – by virtue of her employment with the NHS.
Rapporteur	Councillor S J Criswell (as Chairman)
Officer Support	Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer, HDC Mr A Roberts, Scrutiny and Review Manager, HDC
Purpose of Study / Objective (specify exactly what the study should achieve)	To generate and raise awareness of the impact that the introduction of car parking charges has had upon the public and the consequent restrictions that it has placed upon them.
Rationale (key issues and/or reason for conducting a study)	The suggestion for the study was prompted by representations made by a number of members of the public to the District Council on the level of charges being levied for parking at the hospital, restrictions on parking in terms of the length of stay permissible and the impact of the introduction of charges on the surrounding residential area.
Terms of Reference	To investigate the causes of complaints and make recommendations on measures that will ameliorate them.
Links to Council Policies/Strategies	To Improve Our Systems and Practices - In particular, the objectives to be good at communicating and listening to people and organisations and to be clear about what we can do and aspire to achieve and to enable Councillors to carry out their leadership role effectively. A Clean, “Green” and Attractive Environment – to help mitigate climate change. Healthy Living – to promote active lifestyles. Developing Communities Sustainably – supporting opportunities to cycle, walk and use public transport.

Methodology / Approach (what types of enquiries will be used to gather evidence)	Investigations into:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the management of the car park • the effectiveness of the hospital's Travel Plan • the availability of public transport • the impact of parking and associated charges on the surrounding area • inviting a representative of the NHS Trust to attend a future Panel meeting • consultation with local residents and users of the car park • comparisons to other hospitals, i.e Addenbrooke's • desktop research • formal request for information to the Hospital • public views sought.
External/Specialist Support	Ms E Stubbs, Mrs R Clapham and Ms B Heather – Cambridgeshire LINK. Mr C Plunkett – Facilities Business Manager, Hinchingbrooke Hospital.
Existing Documentation	Planning Permission for Hospital site. Hinchingbrooke Hospital Travel Plan. Presentation delivered by the Scrutiny and Review Manager on 1 st September 2009.
Evidence to be Obtained (e.g. witnesses, documents, site visits, consultation, research, etc)	Representative from the NHS Trust. Consultation Questionnaire with local residents living within the vicinity of the site. Discussion with Ward Councillors.
Reference Sites	Hinchingbrooke Health Care NHS Trust http://www.hinchingbrooke.nhs.uk/ East of England Strategic Health Authority http://www.eoe.nhs.uk/ Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Trust (Addenbrooke's) http://www.cuh.org.uk/addenbrookes/addenbrookes_index.html NHS Cambridgeshire http://www.cambridgeshirepct.nhs.uk/ British Parking Association http://www.britishparking.co.uk/

Investigations	As outlined above; namely local parking facilities, parking practices at other Hospitals and national policies.
Witnesses	None currently identified.
Site Visits (if necessary) (where and when)	None currently identified.
Meetings of the Working Group	Panel discussions: 7 th July 2009, 1 st September 2009 and 3 rd November 2009 and 2 nd February 2010.
Costs (resource requirements, additional expenditure, time)	Officer time – both to provide support and conduct research.
Possible Barriers to the Study (potential weaknesses)	None currently identified.
Projected Timescale (Start and end times)	Start: July 2009. End: March 2010.

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AREA OF REVIEW	DETAILS/COMMENTS
Title of Study (name of Working Group)	Development Management Process Working Group.
Appointing Panel	Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel.
Members Assigned (including date Working Group appointed)	Councillors M G Baker, P Godley, M F Newman and J S Watt. Appointed by the Panel on 14 th July 2009.
Possible Co-Options to the Group	TBC
Interests Declared	None received.
Rapporteur	Councillor M G Baker
Officer Support	Roy Reeves, Head of Democratic and Central Services Jessica Walker, Trainee Democratic Services Officer
Purpose of Study / Objective (specify exactly what the study should achieve)	To investigate the process for the determination of planning applications and make recommendations where appropriate.
Rationale (key issues and/or reason for conducting a study)	Anecdotal evidence from Members of public concern over the pre-decision planning process.
Terms of Reference	The review will concentrate on the process leading to the determination of planning applications, not the decision making process itself or the merits of decisions. The intention will be to look at the practices and procedures from first enquiry by potential applicants to the preparation of an officer's final report and recommendations, involving pre-application advice, public consultation, plans and amendments, duration of the process and other related matters.
Links to Council Policies/Strategies	Link to Corporate Plan – To improve our systems and practices.

Methodology / Approach (what types of enquiries will be used to gather evidence)	Examination of available data; Interviews; Surveys.
External/Specialist Support	TBC
Existing Documentation	To be determined.
Evidence to be Obtained (e.g. witnesses, documents, site visits, consultation, research, etc)	Evidence to be obtained by the Democratic Services team, together with information from the Planning Division. Possible survey of sample of applicants. Consultation with Town and Parish Councils. Customer feedback & ombudsman investigations (if any). Comparison of processes with other authorities. Website Comparisons. Performance against Government Indicators. Availability of best practice advice and guidance. Cost effectiveness of process.

Reference Sites	Comparable local authorities.
Investigations	To be undertaken by officers supporting the Working Group.
Witnesses	Planning officers. Chairman of Development Management Panel.
Site Visits (if necessary) (where and when)	Likely to be unnecessary.
Meetings of the Working Group	Meetings held on Thursday August 6 th 2009, Thursday September 10 th 2009, Thursday 8 th October 2009, Thursday 29 th October 2009 and Friday 20 th November 2009, Thursday 10 th December 2009 and Thursday, 7 th January 2010. A future meeting is scheduled for Thursday 28 th January 2010.
Costs (resource requirements, additional expenditure, time)	Officer time – both to provide support and to conduct research.
Possible Barriers to the Study (potential weaknesses)	None known at this stage.
Projected Timescale (Start and end times)	Start – July 2009 Completion of study expected March 2010.

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
<p>13/05/09</p> <p>7/07/09</p> <p>3/11/09</p> <p>5/01/10</p>	<p><u>Disability Access</u></p> <p>This item was transferred over from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery). Final report endorsed for submission to the Cabinet.</p> <p>The Panel was provided with an opportunity to plan its follow up work and identified a number of aspects to the study that they wished to pursue.</p> <p>Report providing an update on the work undertaken to date in respect of joint advocacy and advice services across the District considered by the Panel in November.</p> <p>Further follow up report considered by the Panel. Agreed that the Town and Parish Councils should be informed of the outcome of the study and reminded of the role of the Neighbourhood Forums, which would now be the most appropriate body to report such issues to in the future.</p>	<p>Submitted to Cabinet on 29th January 2009.</p>	<p>Recommendations endorsed by Cabinet. Members requested a progress report to be submitted to the Panel in six months time.</p> <p>Follow up work was considered by the Panel in September.</p>	

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
<p>13/05/09</p> <p>01/09/09</p>	<p><u>Future Governance of Hinchingbrooke Hospital: Consultation Arrangements</u></p> <p>This item was transferred over from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery). Dr Stephen Dunn, Hinchingbrooke Next Steps Project Co-ordinator and Ms Jessica Bawden, NHS Cambridgeshire attended the Panel's January meeting to provide background to the consultation on the future governance arrangements for Hinchingbrooke Hospital. Advised the Panel that the consultation was likely to commence at some point in the middle of the current calendar year.</p> <p>Panel advised that Councillor S J Criswell had been appointed as the District Council representative on the Stakeholder Panel.</p>	<p>Panel to partake in the consultation when it emerges. Matter to be raised at a future Panel meeting.</p>	<p>Public meeting of the Stakeholder Panel held on 26th November 2009 at 2pm, Huntingdon Library. Future public meetings scheduled as follows:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 25th February 2010 • 26th May 2010 • 5th July 2010 • 27th October 2010 • 6th January 2011 	<p>TBC</p>

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
13/05/09	<p><u>Corporate Plan – Growing Success</u></p> <p>Councillors S J Criswell and R J West appointed to Corporate Plan Working Group. A previous decision has been made by the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Corporate and Strategic Framework) to extend the Corporate Plan Working Group's remit by requesting it to investigate the cost implications of each priority area identified within the Corporate Plan. A suggestion has been made to invite Heads of Service to a future meeting to discuss their contributions in achieving the Council's objectives.</p>	<p>Quarterly performance reports to be submitted to all Overview and Scrutiny Panels in September, December, March and June of each year.</p> <p>Financial information currently being considered by Working Group. Meeting held on 24th February 2010.</p>	This item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.	2/03/10
13/05/09	<p><u>Provision of Play Facilities for Young People</u></p> <p>This item was transferred over from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) who had identified this subject as a potential area for study. Particular interest expressed on how these facilities are managed and insured and if they were maintained by the District Council. Report submitted to Panel in March 2009 and a Working Group was established, comprising Councillors J D Ablewhite and P G Mitchell, to meet with</p>	First meeting of the Working Group held on 30 th April 2009.	Head of Operations and Service Development Manager undertook to investigate further, the likely insurance, resource (inspection) and maintenance costs of facilities located within the smaller Parishes.	

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
	<p>the Executive Councillor for Operational and Countryside Services to investigate the provision of play facilities, with a view to making recommendations on achieving an even distribution of facilities across the District and on meeting the ongoing revenue costs associated with such facilities.</p>			
2/06/09	<p>Owing to their interests in the study, Councillors Mrs P A Jordan and R J West were appointed on to the Working Group. Additionally, the Panel requested for an update on progress since the first meeting of the Working Group to be submitted to the Panel for information.</p>	<p>Request submitted to the Head of Operations.</p>	<p>Meeting of the Working Group held on 13th August 2009.</p>	
6/10/09	<p>Preliminary report outlining the findings of the Working Group to date considered by the Panel. Requested that the Working Group should meet with the Executive Councillor for Operational & Countryside Services to discuss the findings further.</p>	<p>Working Group met with the Executive Councillor for Operational and Countryside Services.</p>		
2/02/10	<p>Further report considered. The Panel has recommended to the Cabinet that an agreement should be offered to Parishes to assist with the revenue costs of their facilities. It has also been recommended that the Council should also explore the co-ordination of a group insurance policy, with a view to achieving a lower premium.</p>	<p>Final report to be considered by Cabinet on 15th April 2010.</p>		

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
	Councillors P G Mitchell and R J West have been nominated to present the final report to the Cabinet.			
	<p><u>Monitoring of Section 106 Agreements</u></p> <p>3/11/09 Panel agreed to include the Monitoring of Section 106 agreements in its work plan, subject to gaining the agreement of the Development Management Panel. It was agreed that only allocated schemes and those developments where funding has been received for future maintenance of the facilities would be considered by the Panel.</p> <p>1/12/09 The Panel has requested that when the quarterly monitoring reports are due for consideration, a representative from the Operations Division should attend the Panel's meeting.</p> <p>2/02/10 First monitoring report considered. Agreed that greater details on progress of schemes completed earliest should be included in the next monitoring report.</p>	<p>Councillor P G Mitchell raised the matter at the Development Management Panel's November meeting.</p> <p>Request submitted to the Policy Officer.</p>	<p>The Development Management Panel expressed their support for the Social Well-Being Panel to consider these schemes.</p> <p>Next report anticipated June 2010.</p>	<p>1/06/10</p>

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
3/11/09	<p>impact of parking on the surrounding area.</p> <p>The Panel sought clarification on a number of issues relating to the Hospital's Green Travel Plan.</p> <p>Representatives from Cambridgeshire Link were also in attendance at the Panel's November meeting and agreed to assist the Panel with its study. Agreed that Hinchingsbrooke NHS Trust would be invited to a future meeting.</p>	<p>Letter submitted to Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.</p> <p>Invitation to be extended to Hinchingsbrooke NHS Trust.</p>	<p>Response from the Hospital received and noted.</p>	
1/12/09	<p>The Chairman advised Members that the Hospital were conducting their own review of the parking arrangements and requested the Scrutiny and Review Manager to investigate this further.</p>			
2/02/10	<p>Mr C Plunkett, Facilities Business Manager attended the Panel meeting, along with representatives of Cambridgeshire LINK. The findings of the review undertaken by the Hospital will be submitted to the Hospital's Senior Executive Group at the end of February. Agreed that the Panel's findings should also be forwarded to the Hospital.</p>	<p>The Panel's final report has been circulated electronically to Members and a copy sent to the Hospital.</p>	<p>This item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.</p>	2/03/10

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
<p>6/10/09</p> <p>1/12/09</p>	<p><u>The PLACE Survey</u></p> <p>In considering the results of the PLACE Survey, the Panel has requested a report on the data from further work with focus groups in three months time on the areas identified as needing the most improvement in Huntingdonshire; namely activities for teenagers, road and pavement repairs, public transport, traffic congestion and shopping facilities.</p> <p>Advised that there were difficulties across the County in getting the focus groups together. Nevertheless, the Panel placed on record their wish to ensure that steps were being taken to address the matters which had been raised in the Survey.</p>	<p>Request submitted to the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships.</p>		
<p>3/11/09</p>	<p><u>Petition – Hill Rise Park, St Ives</u></p> <p>Preliminary details of the petition considered by Panel. The petition organiser has indicated that he will be in attendance at the Panel's January 2010 meeting. Agreed that investigations be made into the action taken by Officers and the Police on the issue raised, together with information on the arrangements in place at a similar site in St Neots.</p>	<p>Advised that the petition would also be considered at a meeting of the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership on 26th November 2009.</p>		

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
<p>1/12/09</p> <p>2/02/10</p>	<p>Reported that the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership would be submitting a response to the petition from a Community Safety and a Police perspective. Petitioners would also be advised of the forthcoming meeting of the St Ives Neighbourhood Forum on 6th January 2010, where the matter could also be raised.</p> <p>Petition organiser presented the petition to the Panel. A number of proposed recommendations have been agreed. An update report has been requested for submission to the Panel in 6 months time. The area was adopted as a Policing Priority at the St Ives Neighbourhood Forum meeting in January.</p>	<p>Request submitted to the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services.</p>	<p>Report anticipated September 2010.</p>	<p>7/09/10</p>
<p>13/05/09</p>	<p><u>Forward Plan</u></p> <p>The following items were transferred over from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) who requested that the items should be considered at future meetings of the Panel.</p> <p>St Ivo Leisure Centre – Proposals for Development</p>	<p>Request submitted to the General Manager, Leisure.</p>	<p>Due to appear before the Panel in the summer.</p>	<p>1/06/10 or 6/07/10</p>

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
5/01/10	Cambridgeshire ACRE Rural Strategy	Request submitted to the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services.	This item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.	2/03/10
2/02/10	Housing Enforcement Powers	Request submitted to the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services.	This item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.	2/03/10



Decision Digest

Edition 102

Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 1st February to 26th February 2010.

PARKING AT HINCHINGBROOKE HOSPITAL

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has received a presentation from the Facilities Business Manager for Hinchingsbrooke Hospital on the operation of the hospital car parks and the action taken to review the parking policy. A number of proposals for change have been suggested, which include increasing the provision for employees, extending the current pick up/drop off point and disabled parking spaces. A change to the charge for the shortest period of stay is also being proposed of £2 for 2 hours with the charge rising by £1 for every hour thereafter. £500,000 revenue is generated by the Hospital each year, of which £30,000 is paid to a contractor to manage the car parks. The remaining funds are utilised by the Hospital for car parking maintenance and essential medical services.

A number of matters have been discussed by the Panel. It was concluded that the Hospital should

consider further reducing the length of the shortest stay and to explore more cost effective ways of enabling visitors to pay on leaving the Hospital. Alternative ways that a Shuttle Bus service to the Hospital might be achieved was also suggested by Members. A report by the Panel on these points and other findings in the course of the study will be sent to the Hospital's Senior Executive Group at the end of February for inclusion as part of their deliberations.

PETITION – HILL RISE PARK, ST IVES

A petition signed by 16 people was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) drawing attention to nuisance caused by anti-social drivers late at night in Hill Rise Park, St Ives. The petition was referred via the Community Safety Partnership to the St Ives Neighbourhood Forum which resulted in the area being adopted as a Policing Priority at the Neighbourhood Forum. A number of suggestions to resolve the nuisance caused was also proposed and endorsed by the Panel. A report on

Further information can be obtained from the Democratic Services Section ☎ (01480) 388007

progress has been requested for 6 months time.

MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS (PLANNING OBLIGATIONS)

The receipt and expenditure by the Council of money negotiated under Section 106 Agreements has been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). A detailed description of the progress of those schemes yet to be completed has been requested for inclusion in the next monitoring report.

PLAY FACILITIES WORKING GROUP

The Play Facilities Working Group has presented the findings of their latest investigation to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). It was concluded that a funding arrangement should be offered to Parishes to assist with their facilities' revenue costs based on a 40-40-20% split between the District Council, Parish Council and users of the facilities respectively. Facilities that would qualify under the scheme are skateboard ramps and multi-use games areas. The proposal has already been discussed with the Executive Councillor for Operational and Countryside Services.

With regard to the financial implications of the proposals it was suggested that only one Parish Council should be permitted to enter into this arrangement per year. Investigations also are being undertaken into whether the Council can co-ordinate insurance for Parishes wishing to insure their facilities under a group scheme. Councillors P G Mitchell and R J

West will present the findings of the study to the Cabinet.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 – FORWARD PLAN

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has requested sight of the Housing Enforcement Powers item prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

FINANCIAL STRATEGY, MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2011 - 2015 AND THE 2010/2011 BUDGET

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has reviewed the Financial Strategy, Medium Term Plan 2011 - 2015 and the Budget for 2010/2011 in advance of their consideration by Cabinet and final determination by the Council.

Members have been acquainted with the changes that have been made since they previously endorsed the draft strategy. Changes include the identification of £1.2million in savings which have been transferred into a Special Reserve in order to facilitate the achievement of future spending adjustments. The changes have brought about a reduction in the Council's budget deficit which will allow the future required spending adjustments to be phased in at a more regular rate. Overall spending will be significantly lower than previously assumed owing to lower pay and price provisions, lower assumptions relating to Government Grant and the proposed reduction in the level of Council Tax increase to 2.49%. The result will be that a reduced level of spending

adjustment will be needed in the Medium Term Plan period with the longer term requirement little changed. The Director of Commerce and Technology has informed Members that in his opinion the combination of a robust budget process and the current level of reserves should give Members no concerns over the Council's financial position for 2010/2011. He does however believe a significant level of work will be required to plan for the spending adjustments that will be required in future years as reserves are depleted.

The Panel has been reminded of the uncertainties and risks associated with the financial forecast and further discussion took place on investment interest and borrowing costs. Members have received assurances that the budget will enable the Council to achieve its objectives in the forthcoming financial year and outlined their support for an annual increase of 2.49% in Band D equivalent Council Tax and for the proposed Budget and Medium Term Plan.

Having noted the conclusions reached by the Panel, the Cabinet has recommended to Council that the proposed budget, MTP and Financial Strategy be approved along with a council tax increase of £3.02 (2.5%) representing a level of £124.17 for a band D property.

2010/2011 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) Panel has considered proposed changes to the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2010/2011. New guidance has been published by the Audit Commission and a revised

Code of Practice has been received from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) as a result of the collapse of Icelandic banks in 2008. Revised guidance on local authority investments to apply from April 2010 is also expected from the Department for Communities and Local Government. The Panel has endorsed the Treasury Management Strategy for 2010/2011 and its submission to the Cabinet and Council.

Subsequently, the Cabinet has recommended to Council the adoption of the Strategy and the Scrutiny of Treasury Management by the Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) Panel in accordance with the CIPFA Code of Practice.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) Panel has been apprised of the business support that is now provided to individuals following the loss of the Huntingdonshire Enterprise Agency. Having discussed the cost to the Council of business development, Members concluded that, through partnership working the budget available attracts a significant level of services including the Cambridge and Rural Enterprise and Mentoring (CREAM) project which gives business advice to individuals wishing to become self employed.

The Panel also has received a presentation on the Creativexchange in St. Neots. The project, which was developed in partnership with Longsands School, has had a total investment of £2m, has exceeded its operating targets to date and is well placed to meet its targets for 2010/2011. The Panel congratulated all those involved in

the project which has received a number of awards.

INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY MEMBERS

The following persons have been appointed as independent Members to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels:

Economic Well-Being – Mrs H Roberts and Mr R Hall;

Environmental Well-Being – Mr D Hopkins and Mr M Phillips; and

Social Well-Being – Mr R Coxhead and Mrs M Nicholas.

THE HEALTH IMPLICATIONS OF THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

The Economic Well-Being Panel has followed-up work carried out by the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) during a study into the impact of excessive alcohol consumption on levels of anti-social behaviour and alcohol related crime within the District by receiving data on the effect of alcohol consumption on local health and health services. The data provided indicates that for all age bands Huntingdonshire has lower rates of admission to hospital than the national average. However, the Panel has requested further information on why the rate of alcohol specific hospital admissions for under 18s is higher than for other indicators and whether any qualitative analysis has been carried out on the effects of alcohol consumption in rural areas.

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

The Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) Panel has requested reports on the cost

associated with Standards and on the Council's management of capital projects for submission to future meetings.

LICENSING COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT POLICY

Both the Licensing and Protection Panel and Licensing Committee have approved a draft licensing compliance and enforcement policy statement which has been revised in light of the Regulatory Enforcement and Sanctions Act 2008 and the new Regulators' Compliance Code. Licence holders and relevant responsible authorities will be consulted.

FEES AND CHARGES

The Licensing and Protection Panel has noted a 2.5% increase in fees and charges for licences administered by the Council for the period 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011. Some further adjustments have also been made to reflect additional charges made by the Council's vehicle testing centre in respect of meter testing and wheelchair suitability.

SECRET GARDEN PARTY

The Licensing Committee has been acquainted with the extensive measures put in place by the licensing authority to minimise the impact of the Secret Garden Party on the area following the granting in perpetuity of a premises licence for this large annual outdoor event which attracts an attendance of approximately 26,000 people.

CHANGES TO LICENSING PROCESSES UNDER THE LICENSING ACT 2003

The Head of Democratic and Central Services has been authorised to respond to a Government consultation proposing to simplify requirements under the Licensing Act 2003 in respect of three processes recognised by stakeholders to be unduly restrictive and burdensome.

If approved, the proposals which include the removal of a requirement for licensing authorities to determine and publish a licensing statement every three years will simplify processes and reduce unnecessary work.

CHANGES TO THE POLICE AND CRIME ACT

The Licensing Committee has been acquainted with amendments to the Licensing Act that will allow members of licensing authorities to act as interested parties, allowing them to make representations in respect of applications for and variations to, premises licences and club premises certificates and to make applications for a review of such licences or certificates without the need to reside within the vicinity of the premises. The Committee have also been informed of changes which will make it an offence to persistently sell alcohol to children from the same premises on two or more occasions within 3 months. Under 18s can also now be prosecuted if found in possession of alcohol in a public place on three or more occasions within a twelve month period.

SMALL LIVE MUSIC EVENTS

The Licensing Committee has authorised a response to a consultation exercise being undertaken by the Department of Culture Media and Sport on a Government proposal to exempt small live music events from having to obtain a variation to an existing licence or certificate. The proposal has led to a number of local authorities and police raising concern over the impact of the exemption on the licensing objectives as a result of which residents, businesses and responsible authorities will be able to apply for specified premises to be excluded from the exemption.

CARBON FOOTPRINT REDUCTION

Following the discussion at the headline debate at the Council meeting held on 2nd December 2009, the Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel has received an update from the Executive Councillor for Environment and Information Technology and the Head of Environmental Management on actions being undertaken by the Council to address the need to reduce carbon emissions.

As the Council's resources are limited and the widespread implementation of carbon reduction schemes costly, the Panel has been advised that the Council hope to access external funding to deliver projects. The Panel has requested that the Executive Councillor for Environment and Information Technology and the Head of Environmental Management attend the Panel meeting in June 2010 to provide a further update on progress

made on carbon reduction measures.

CAR PARKING REVIEW UPDATE

The Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel has considered the findings of a meeting of the Car Parking Review Working Group which was convened to discuss the operational issues of introducing 38 spaces for free car parking for 2 hours use at the Riverside Car Park, St. Neots for recreational use.

Members raised concerns over the possible implications of introducing charging in the car park in view of a recent reduction in the footfall in St. Neots and problems of traffic congestion in the town. The Panel is of the opinion that the implementation of parking charges at the Riverside Park will further exacerbate these issues and increase air pollution in the Town Centre. The Panel invited the Cabinet to consider allowing three hours free parking in the whole of the Riverside Car Park which will benefit shoppers who wish to park there and those who want to use the park for leisure and recreational purposes. The Panel has suggested that an appropriate charge be set for those who park longer than three hours with payment on exit which may reduce enforcement costs.

Having been advised of the Panels views, the Cabinet has authorised the Director of Environment and Community Services to proceed to make and advertise the Revised Off-Street Parking Places order which will enable the Panel's comments to be considered with any other responses received during the statutory consultation period. The Cabinet is conscious that

provision has been made in the budget for increased income at several car parks commencing at the beginning of June and that any further delay in proceeding with the order will jeopardise the anticipated level of income.

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel has endorsed a report on the changes proposed to the Local Development Scheme for Huntingdonshire. The changes have arisen as a result of new Regulations on development plan document production and the need to amend the anticipated timetable for the production of various elements of the Local Development Framework since adoption of the Core Strategy. Subsequently, the Cabinet has approved amendments to the Scheme prior to its submission to the Secretary of State.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT DPD - PROPOSED SUBMISSION

The Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel has considered the proposed submission document for the Development Management DPD which has been prepared following consultation on the development of options between 30th January and 30th March 2009. Key stakeholder consultation also has taken place between 18th December 2009 and 11th January 2010 on the draft proposed submission document.

When considering the development of options stage, the Panel has expressed concern over the adverse effects on carriageway congestion and parking on verges as a result of

car parking allocations on new developments as well as Policy E6 relating to the implementation of the Great Fen Project. At the same time, doubts have been expressed about the proposed withdrawal of permitted development rights for specific farming or operational purposes in the Great Fen area.

The Cabinet has recommended the adoption of the submission document to Council.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) PROGRESS

The Transportation Team Leader has updated the Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel on the situation with regard to HCV parking in the District. The Panel has been advised that the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport has responded on behalf of the District Council to the HCV Advisory Route Network Public Consultation. The HCV parking facility at Alconbury has re-opened, and as part of the A14 proposals, the Council will continue to look for the provision of HCV parking facilities or the expansion of existing facilities within the District.

Having regard to a question raised by a member at an earlier meeting about the cost of the Council's website, a detailed answer has been provided to the Panel's satisfaction.

NATIONAL NON-DOMESTIC RATES – DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF UNDER LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT 1988

As a result of a re-examination of the Council's policy for assessing

entitlement to discretionary rate relief for charities and kindred organisations the Cabinet has –

- ◆ agreed that the rateable value referred to in the policy be reviewed on the occasion of a new rating list (every five years);
- ◆ authorised the Head of Revenue Services and the Local Taxation Manager to grant relief under the new policy;
- ◆ agreed that "Part Occupation" relief be optimised in appropriate cases for a maximum of twelve months, subject to prevailing legislation on unoccupied rating;
- ◆ agreed that "Rural Rate Relief" continue to be granted in appropriate cases (subject to the Rural Settlement List) and with a provision of 100% relief for post offices;
- ◆ approved the determination of "Hardship Relief" by the Head of Customer Services, after consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, on the merits of individual cases; and
- ◆ authorised the Director of Commerce and Technology to deal with appeals from applicants dissatisfied with the determination made by the Head of Revenue Services and the Local Taxation Manager.

MINI-RECYCLING SITES – WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

Revised working arrangements put in place by the Head of Operations to ensure that 1,100 litre wheeled bins at bring sites are moved safely by employees have been noted by the Cabinet. The collections have been re-scheduled so that two employees attend known heavily used locations together. If an employee finds that a bin is too heavy to move when working alone, he should not attempt to move it. These changes meet the requirements for safe working practices outlined by the HSE Inspectorate.

ST NEOTS EASTERN EXPANSION

Governance arrangements required to support the master planning process for the St Neots Eastern Expansion have been reported to the Cabinet. A Members' Steering Group will be established with representatives from the County, District and Town Councils. The Group will receive input from the various stakeholder groups including the St Neots Town Centre Initiative and will report directly to a Delivery Board on which the Director of Environmental and Community Services will represent this authority.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

At its February meeting, the Development Management Panel approved eight and refused four applications for development.

In addition, the Panel has given early consideration, as a consultee, to an outline application, made to Peterborough City Council for the

development of a new township south of Hampton Vale between the A15 and A1, west of Yaxley.

Representations were made to the Panel on a number of issues by Parish and Ward Councillors, an objector and the agent. The Panel agreed that Officers should continue discussions with the City Council to address the issues raised in connection with the Master Plan and transport and the benefits likely to accrue to Yaxley and Huntingdonshire as a result of the application.