

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING)** will be held in **THE WREN ROOM, COUNTRYSIDE CENTRE, HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK** on **TUESDAY, 8 SEPTEMBER 2009** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

**Contact
(01480)**

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 14th July 2009.

**Mrs J Walker
387049**

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN (Pages 5 - 10)

A copy of the current forward plan is attached, which was published on 13th August 2009. Members are invited to note the plan and comment as appropriate on any items contained therein.

**Mrs H Taylor
388008**

4. GREAT FEN MASTER PLAN (Pages 11 - 14)

To receive a report by the Director of Environmental and Community Services on the Great Fen Master Plan.

**Mr M Sharp
388301**

5. THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE CORE STRATEGY 2008 - THE INSPECTORS BINDING REPORT / ADOPTION PROCESS (Pages 15 - 46)

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

**Mr S Ingram
388400**

6. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

To resolve:-

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

7. **SOUTH STREET PUBLIC CONVENIENCE, ST NEOTS** (Pages 47 - 50)

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

Mr C Allen
388380

8. **RE-ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC**

To resolve:-

to re-admit the public.

9. **PERFORMANCE MONITORING** (Pages 51 - 58)

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

Mr H Thackray
388035

10. **WORK PLAN STUDIES AND WORKING GROUP TEMPLATES** (Pages 59 - 74)

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

Mrs J Walker
387049

11. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL PROGRESS** (Pages 75 - 86)

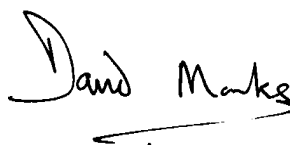
To consider a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services on decisions taken by the Panel.

Mrs J Walker
387049

12. **SCRUTINY** (Pages 87 - 92)

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

Dated this 27 day of August 2009



Chief Executive

Notes

1. *A personal interest exists where a decision on a matter would affect to a greater extent than other people in the District –*
 - (a) *the well-being, financial position, employment or business of the Councillor, their family or any person with whom they had a close association;*
 - (b) *a body employing those persons, any firm in which they are a partner and any company of which they are directors;*

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

Please contact Mrs J Walker, Trainee Democratic Services Officer, Tel: (01480) 387049, email: jessica.walker@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.

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Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) held in the Wren Room, Countryside Centre, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park on Tuesday, 14 July 2009.

PRESENT: Councillor D Harty – Vice Chairman in the Chair.

Councillors M G Baker, K M Baker,
Mrs M Banerjee, P J Downes, P Godley,
Ms S L Kemp, M F Newman and J S Watt.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor P M D Godfrey.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors P L E Bucknell, E R Butler and D B Dew.

17. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on the 9th June 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

18. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Ms S L Kemp declared a personal interest in Minute No. 22 as an employee of a subsidiary of Anglian Water.

19. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN

The Panel considered and noted an amended version of the current Forward Plan of Key Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) scheduled for consideration by the Cabinet, which had been prepared by the Leader of the Council.

In so doing, the Panel was advised that reports on the Countywide Integrated Development Programme and Tariff, and the Development Management Submission Document were still in the course of being prepared, but it was hoped that these would be available for the Panel to scrutinise in September.

20. GREAT FEN COLLABORATION AGREEMENT

(Councillor D B Dew, Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport was in attendance for this item. Councillors P L E Bucknell and E R Butler, members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Social Well-Being and Economic Well-Being respectively) were also in attendance).

Following an introduction by the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport, the Panel considered a report by the Director

of Environmental and Community Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) summarising a proposal for the Council to enter with other organisations into a Great Fen Collaboration Agreement. A copy of the draft Collaboration Agreement had been circulated with the report.

The Panel accepted that the Collaboration Agreement offered the most appropriate governance arrangement between the various partners at the present stage of development of the Great Fen Project and was advised that the Agreement would be reviewed once the Project moved into a trading position. The Panel also expressed its ongoing support for the Council's involvement in the Project, which enabled the views of the local community to be represented and provided a democratic focus for the Project.

Having regard to the Collaboration Agreement itself, Members felt that whilst Clause 7.1 appeared to be intended to cover all of the salary costs of the Project Manager, it did not refer explicitly to all potential costs that might occur such as severance or personal injury claims. The Panel suggested therefore that the wording could be more precise to avoid future ambiguity. Members also raised a concern that the confidentiality provisions in Section 14 of the Agreement might impede future scrutiny and transparency in the management of the Project. The Panel felt that the section should be re-drafted to ensure that scrutiny was not precluded. Further to this, the Panel sought an annual report to be presented to partners on progress towards the achievement of the Project's aims and objectives.

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be advised of the Panel's views on the Great Fen Collaboration Agreement.

21. SCRUTINY OF HUNTINGDONSHIRE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

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) providing the Panel with background information on the areas that fell within its responsibility with regard to scrutiny of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership (HSP).

Members noted that the Panel would be responsible for the scrutiny of the Environment Forum and the Growth and Infrastructure Thematic Group established under the HSP and were reminded of the strategic aims and objectives of those themes as set out in the Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy.

It was reported that a joint event involving representatives of Overview and Scrutiny and the Strategic Partnership was being arranged to enable both parties to formulate better working practices. Furthermore, the Panel received details of a countywide conference for Members which would be held on 7th September 2009, focusing specifically on the scrutiny of Local Strategic Partnerships.

22. ADOPTION OF ROADS AND SEWERS

Councillor J S Watt introduced a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) by the Adoption of Roads and Sewers Working Group which had been established to investigate the processes and procedures involved with a view to expediting the adoption process.

In considering the Working Group's report, the Panel noted that DEFRA had announced that with effect from April 2011, the responsibility for 200,000km of privately owned sewers and lateral drains in England would be transferred to statutory water and sewerage companies. Further to this, it was reported that Persimmon Homes had appointed staff to assess outstanding matters which had held up the adoption process on their developments.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Panel's appreciation be expressed to the Members of the Working Group; and
- (b) that the Working Group's report and recommendations be endorsed for submission to the Cabinet for consideration.

23. 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.

Having regard to the proposal to examine the process for the determination of planning applications, it was

RESOLVED

that Councillors M G Baker, P Godley, M F Newman and J S Watt be appointed to a working group to investigate the development management process.

24. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL PROGRESS

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 progress on issues that had been discussed previously.

The Panel suggested that the problem of heavy commercial vehicles parking in the District had not been resolved by the re-opening of Alconbury Truck Stop and an update on the issue was requested from the Transportation Team Leader.

Having noted that an update had yet to be received from Anglian Water with regard to the problems encountered in the St Audrey Lane area of St Ives, the Chairman undertook to write to Anglian Water seeking to expedite a reply.

The Panel requested an update as to the status of the car park which

had been constructed at the railway station in Huntingdon, which the Head of Democratic and Central Services undertook to investigate. With regard to cycling in Huntingdonshire an update was requested for the next meeting of the Panel. The Head of Democratic and Central Services undertook to circulate the dates of future meetings of the Cambridgeshire Together Joint Accountability Committee and to arrange a substitute to attend if necessary.

25. SCRUTINY

The Panel considered and noted the latest edition of the Council's Decision Digest summarising the Council's decisions since the previous meeting.

In response to a question, the Panel was informed that the timescale for the development of St Neots Leisure Centre would be included in the next review of the Medium Term Plan.

Having regard to the Sustainable Communities Act, it was reported that the proposed neighbourhood forums would host the consultation element of any future proposals.

The Panel raised concern that the forecast savings in the Carbon Management Plan had been inaccurately reported in the Hunts Post. The Head of Democratic and Central Services undertook to liaise with the Communications and Marketing Manager to enable this to be drawn to the attention of the editor.

Chairman

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

Prepared by Councillor I C Bates
Date of Publication: 13 August 2009
For Period: 1 September 2009 to 31 December 2009

Membership of the Cabinet is as follows:-

| | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|
| Councillor I C Bates | - Leader of the Council | 4 Church End Hilton Huntingdon PE28 9NJ Tel: 01480 830250 E-mail: Ian.Bates@huntsdc.gov.uk |
| Councillor L M Simpson | - Deputy Leader of the Council 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 0JY 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 |

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Any person who wishes to make representations to the decision maker about a decision which is to be made may do so by contacting Mrs Helen Taylor, Senior Democratic Services Officer on 01480 388008 or E-mail: Helen.Taylor@huntsdc.gov.uk 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 |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|

| 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 |
|---|--|---------------------------|---|---|--|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Covert Surveillance Policy Review | Cabinet | 17 Sep 2009 | Existing Policy Legislation | Wayland Smalley, Solicitor Tel No 01480 388022 or email Wayland.Smalley@huntsdc.gov.uk | Internal Steering Group | A Hansard | Economic Well-being |
| Financial Strategy | Cabinet | 17 Sep 2009 | Previous year's budget report - Various Annexes | Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services Tel No. 01480 388103 or email Steve.Couper@huntsdc.gov.uk | Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-being) - 10th September 2009. | T V Rogers | Economic Well-being |
| Great Fen Masterplan | Cabinet | 17 Sep 2009 | None | Malcolm Sharp, Director of Operational Services Tel No 01480 388301 or email Malcolm.Sharp@huntsdc.gov.uk | Consultation process in preparation. | D B Dew | Environmental Well-being |
| Handyperson Scheme *** | Cabinet | 22 Oct 2009 | http://www.huntsdc.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/BFF12A10-1B88-4142BBB0-FE985B8476CF/2263/HousingHealthandSocialCareStrategyforOlderPeople.pdf Lifetime homes Lifetime Neighbourhoods http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/lifetimehomesneighbourhoods | Jo Emmerton, Housing Strategy Manager Tel No. 01480 388203 or email Jo.Emmerton@huntsdc.gov.uk | | K J Churchill | Social Well-being |
| Land Adjacent to - the Grand Cinema, Ramsey | Cabinet | 22 Oct 2009 | Report to Cabinet - 7th June 2007 | Keith Phillips, Estates and Property Manager Tel No 01480 388260 or email Keith.Phillips@huntsdc.gov.uk | | A Hansard | Economic Well-being |
| New Industrial Units, Caxton Road, St. Ives | Cabinet | 22 Oct 2009 | None. | Keith Phillips, Estates and Property Manager Tel No 01480 388260 email - Keith.Phillips@huntsdc.gov.uk | Not applicable | A Hansard | Environmental Well-being |

| Subject/Matter for Decision | Decision/ recommendation to be made by | Date decision to be taken | Documents Available | How relevant Officer can be contacted | Consultation | Relevant Executive Councillor | Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel |
|---|--|---------------------------|---|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Draft Planning Contributions Supplementary Planning Document | Cabinet | 22 Oct 2009 | Huntingdonshire Development Plans | Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No 01480 388430 or email Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk | Approve for Consultation | D B Dew | Environmental Well-being |
| County Wide and Integrated Development Programme and Tariff | Cabinet | 22 Oct 2009 | Local Investment Framework | Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk | Approve for consultation | D B Dew | Environmental Well-being |
| Preferred Site Options Gypsy and Travellers Development Plan Document | Cabinet | 19 Nov 2009 | Issues and Options Paper | Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk | Approve for public consultation | D B Dew | Environmental Well-being |
| The RSS Review Statutory Consultation Response | Cabinet | 19 Nov 2009 | The Adopted RSS - The RSS Review Background Papers | Steve Ingram, Head of Planning Services Tel No. 01480 388400 or email Steve.Ingram@huntsdc.gov.uk | Approve HDC response to EERA. | D B Dew | Environmental Well-Being |
| Huntingdon West Area Action Plan Submission Document | Cabinet | 19 Nov 2009 | Huntingdon West Area Action Plan Preferred Approach & Results of Consultation | Steve Ingram, Head of Planning Services Tel No. 01480 388400 or email Steve.Ingram@huntsdc.gov.uk | Approve for consultation. | D B Dew | Environmental Well-Being |

| Subject/Matter for Decision | Decision/ recommendation to be made by | Date decision to be taken | Documents Available | How relevant Officer can be contacted | Consultation | Relevant Executive Councillor | Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel |
|---|--|---------------------------|---------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| A14 Statutory Orders Consultations | Cabinet | 19 Nov 2009 | None. | Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No 01480 388430 or email Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk | Endorse HDC's position on the orders | D B Dew | Environmental Well-being |
| Development Management Submission Document | Cabinet | 19 Nov 2009 | Preferred Option Document | Richard Probyn, Planning Policy Manager Tel No .01480 388430 or email Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk | Approve for public consultation | D B Dew | Environmental Well-being |
| Asset Management Plan*** | Cabinet | 17 Dec 2009 | Previous Cabinet Reports | Keith Phillips, Estates and Property Manager Tel No .01480 388260 or email - Keith.Phillips@huntsdc.gov.uk | | A Hansard | Economic Well-being |
| St. Ivo Leisure Centre - Proposal for Development | Cabinet | 17 Dec 2009 | None | Simon Bell, General Manager, Leisure Centres Tel No. 01480 388049 or email Simon.Bell@huntsdc.gov.uk | | Mrs D C Reynolds | Social Well-being |

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**Overview & Scrutiny
(Environmental Well Being)**

8th September 2009

Cabinet

17th September 2009

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

1. INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Natural Environment:

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

Social:

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

Economic:

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

Climate Change Adaptation and mitigation:

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

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

2. BACKGROUND

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. RECOMMENDATION:

Overview & Scrutiny (Environmental Well Being):

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

Cabinet:

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

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

Great Fen Baseline Study – LDA 2009

Contact Officer: Malcolm Sharp, Director of Environmental & Community Services
☎ 01480 388301

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COMT
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
CABINET
COUNCIL

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

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

1. INTRODUCTION

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

2. BACKGROUND

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

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

3. THE INSPECTORS REPORT

3.1 The Inspector has issued his binding report and;

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

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

4. ADOPTION OF THE CORE STRATEGY

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

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

Background Papers:

The Submitted Huntingdonshire Core Strategy 2008

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

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

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Report to Huntingdonshire District Council

by Eric T Searle Dip TP FRTPI FB
Eng MCMI

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

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

Date 29 July 2009

PLANNING AND COMPULSORY PURCHASE ACT 2004

SECTION 20

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

DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT – CORE STRATEGY 2008

Document submitted for examination July 2008

Examination hearings held between 17 March and 1 April 2009

File Ref(s): LDF000955

1 Introduction and Overall Conclusion

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

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

2 Legal Requirements

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

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

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

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

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

3 Justified, effective and consistent with national policy.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

i) Amend paragraph 1.4

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

ii) Insert in the Spatial Vision after Protection of Character

Villages and Countryside

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

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

iii) Insert new statement in The Spatial Vision

Sustainable Development and Responding to Climate Change

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

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

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

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

vii) amend paragraph with heading

Sustainable Patterns of Growth and Sufficient Housing to Meet Needs

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

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

ix) Amendment to Objective 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Affordable Housing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

i) Proposed Changes to Policy CS4

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

v) Policy CS3 Settlement Hierarchy

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

vi) Paragraph 5.15

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

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

vii) Glossary

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

i) Changes to The Spatial Vision:

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

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

ii) Paragraph 5.5

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

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

iii) Paragraph 5.93

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

iv) Paragraph 5.92

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

i) Policy CS7

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

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

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

.....

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

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

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

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

iv) Paragraph 5.49

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

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

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

v) Policy CS8

Add the following footnote to policy CS8:

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

vi) Paragraph 5.59

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

vii) Paragraphs 5.54 and 5.55

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

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

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

viii) Change to heading after paragraph 5.55

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

ix) Amend Policy CS8:

Retail and **Town Centre Uses**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

xiii) Add to monitoring paragraph 6.5

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

4 Other changes

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

5 Overall Conclusions

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

Eric T Searle

INSPECTOR

Annexe

Schedule *of changes put forward by the Council*

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The Planning Inspectorate

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Chief Executive
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Pathfinder House
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Huntingdon
PE29 3TN

Your Ref: CS2008/Reg28

Our Ref: PINS/H0520/429/5

Date: 08 July 2009

Dear David

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT CORE STRATEGY 2008 DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT

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

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

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

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

Yours sincerely

Eric T Searle

INSPECTOR

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING

8TH SEPTEMBER 2009

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

1. INTRODUCTION

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

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

3. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- 3.1 Progress against all 37 objectives is reported to Chief Officers Management Team quarterly on a service basis. A progress report from each Division includes performance data in the form of achievement against a target for each of the objectives that those services contribute towards. This is supported by narrative on achievements, other issues or risks and budgeting information. In addition, a working group jointly appointed by the Panels continues to meet quarterly to monitor progress in the achievement of the Plan and to consider development issues.
- 3.2 Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels have an important role in the Council’s Performance Management Framework and the process of regular review of performance data has been established. In adopting the updated version of Growing Success, and in particular in prioritising objectives, it was intended that Members should concentrate their monitoring on a small number of objectives to enable them to adopt a strategic overview while building confidence that the Council priorities are being achieved.
- 3.3 Members of the Panels will also find broader performance information of help to them in undertaking their review and scrutiny functions. This information can be provided on a regular or ad-hoc basis.
- 3.4 The priority objectives have been allocated between Panels as follows:

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

4. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

4.1 The following performance data is appended for consideration:

Annex A - Performance data from services which contribute to the Council objectives. For each measure there is a target, actual performance against target, forecast performance for the next period and a comments field. The data is colour coded as follows:

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

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

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 Members are recommended to;

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

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

Growing Success: Corporate Plan

Contact Officer: Howard Thackray, Policy & Research Manager
 **01480 388035**

I can confirm the accuracy of the data in the attached reports and that its compilation is in accordance with the appropriate Divisions’ data measure templates.

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

Objective: To help mitigate and adapt to climate change

Division: Environmental Management

Divisional Objective: To help mitigate and adapt to climate change

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

Target: Actual: Forecast: DoT*: Comment:

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

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

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

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

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|--------------|---------------|--|---|------------|
| <p>Oversee the implementation of the Environment Strategy projects</p> | <p>% of Environment Strategy Year 2 projects on target</p> | <p>75</p> | <p>90 (G)</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>ten on track - HDC Carbon Management Plan (on track) Sustainable Homes Retro-fit Project (on track) Huntingdonshire Nursery - Renewables (on track) Renewables at HDC owned Sites (on track) Schools Recycling Scheme (on track) Public Travel Information boards(on track) Low Carbon Communities(on track) Pensioners Home Insulation Scheme (on track) Business Environmental Pledge scheme (re-evaluating through poor uptake) Green Force Environmental Awareness scheme(on track) Mayfield Road Showcase New Build(on track)</p> | <p>QRT</p> |
| <p>Division: IMD</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>Divisional Objective: Reduce the resources used by IMD</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:</p> | <p>Target: Actual: Forecast: DoT*: Comment:</p> | | | | | |
| <p>Assess which other roles in IMD are suitable for increased flexible working</p> | <p>Increase the percentage of time that Officers work from home</p> | | | | | |
| <p>Implement new technology to reduce power consumption</p> | <p>Percentage reduction in power consumed (target TBA)</p> | | | | | |
| <p>Division: Planning</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>Divisional Objective: To encourage sustainable forms of development</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:</p> | | | | | | |
| <p>Include sustainable policies within LDF (to set a sustainable policy framework)</p> | <p>Target: Actual: Forecast: DoT*: Comment:</p> | | | | | |
| <p></p> | <p>Core Strategy – Adherence to LDF timetable, on target to be adopted by August 2009 (1=Yes, 0=No)</p> | | | | | |
| <p></p> | <p>1</p> | <p>1 (G)</p> | <p>↔</p> | <p>Need to revise timetable measure to October as Inspector not likely to be able to respond prior to available Full Council</p> | <p>QRT</p> | |

| | | | | |
|--|--|------------|-----------------|--|
| Community/Council Aim: Developing communities sustainably | | | | |
| Objective: To promote development opportunities in and around the market towns | | | | |
| Division: People, Performance & Partnerships | | | | |
| Divisional Objective: To promote development opportunities in and around the market towns | | | | |
| Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure: | | | | |
| Review the Local Economy strategy & identify priorities | % of LES actions/milestones on track | Target: 90 | Actual: 90 (G) | Forecast: DoT*: Comment: ↓ |
| Divisional Objective: To support town centres to be economically viable and vibrant | | | | |
| Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure: | | | | |
| Support the sustainable development of Town Centre Partnerships | % of town centre projects on track as specified in their annual action plans | Target: 90 | Actual: 100 (G) | Forecast: 100 DoT*: Comment: projects include; recession task force (window dressing) and benchmarking of town centres ↑ |
| Division: Planning | | | | |
| Divisional Objective: To promote development opportunities in and around the market towns | | | | |
| Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure: | | | | |
| 5 Develop strategic policy to promote well being of our market towns | Adoption of Core Strategy on target to be adopted by August 2009 (1=Yes, 0=No) | Target: 1 | Actual: 1 (G) | Forecast: DoT*: Comment: Need to revise timetable measure to October as Inspector not likely to be able to respond prior to available Full Council ↔ |

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

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

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

1ST SEPTEMBER 2009
8TH SEPTEMBER 2009
10TH SEPTEMBER 2009

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 leisure facilities for young people across the District. | Social Well-Being | Investigations on going. Meeting of the Working Group held on 13 th August 2009 with the Head of Operations. |
| Car parking at Hinchingbrooke Hospital. | Social Well-Being | The Panel has requested for further information to be submitted to a future meeting. |
| Tourism | Economic Well-Being | Panel will consider looking at the wider tourism issue at a brainstorming session following the Panel's September meeting. |
| The process for the determination of planning applications. | Environmental Well-Being | Investigations ongoing. Meeting of the Working Group held on 6 th August 2009. |

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 |

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**

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| | <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**

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| | 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 Leisure 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. |
| 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 leisure 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. |

ACTION BY WORKING GROUP

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| Methodology / Approach (what types of enquiries will be used to gather evidence) | Information from the Head of Operations. |
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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
(SOCIAL WELL-BEING)
STUDY TEMPLATE**

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| 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. |
| 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. Further meeting held on 13 th August 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: Unknown. |

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

| AREA OF REVIEW | DETAILS/COMMENTS |
|--|--|
| Title of Study (name of Working Group) | Car 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 | None received. |
| 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 | As above. |
| Links to Council Policies/Strategies | Link to Council Aim: 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”. |

| | |
|--|--|
| 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 |
|--|--|

| | |
|---|---|
| | <p>surrounding area</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. |
| External/Specialist Support | N/A |
| Existing Documentation | Hinchingbrooke Hospital Travel Plan. |
| Evidence to be Obtained (e.g. witnesses, documents, site visits, consultation, research, etc) | As outlined above. |
| Reference Sites | <p>Hinchingbrooke Health Care NHS Trust http://www.hinchingbrooke.nhs.uk/</p> <p>East of England Strategic Health Authority http://www.eoe.nhs.uk/</p> <p>Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Trust (Addenbrooke's) http://www.cuh.org.uk/addenbrookes/addenbrookes_index.html</p> <p>NHS Cambridgeshire http://www.cambridgeshirepct.nhs.uk/</p> |
| Investigations | As outlined above. |
| Witnesses | None currently identified. |
| Site Visits (if necessary) (where and when) | None currently identified. |
| Meetings of the Working Group | First Panel discussion: 7 th July 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: July 2009. End: Unknown. |

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

| 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. |

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

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|--|--|
| | 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 | First meeting held on Thursday August 6 th 2009. Second meeting to be held on Thursday September 10 th 2009. Future meeting dates to be confirmed. |
| 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 December 2009. |

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| Panel Date | Decision | Action | Response | Date |
|------------|---|--|--|----------|
| | <p><u>Heavy Goods Vehicle Parking In The District</u> <i>This item was transferred from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)</i></p> | | | |
| 10/06/08 | <p>Endorsed the Working Group's report and recommendations for submission of the Cabinet.</p> | <p>Recommendations endorsed by the Cabinet at their meeting on 26th June 2008.</p> | <p>Agreed with Chairman / Vice Chairman that issue be taken forward by the Freight Quality Partnership.</p> | Jan 2009 |
| 09/09/08 | <p>Head of Administration was asked to establish the current position with regard to the Panel's recommendations following their referral to the Freight Quality Partnership.</p> | <p>Freight Quality Partnership has now met.</p> | <p>Matter included for discussion on agenda for LAA Reference Group.</p> | |
| 13/01/09 | <p>The outcome of discussions at the first meeting of the three county group to be reported.</p> | <p>Information on Alconbury Site provided to February meeting. Further information on the outcome of 3 county group still awaited.</p> | <p>Update to be circulated at January meeting. Three County Group established to pool information and develop a strategy for future provision post 2015.</p> | |
| 14/07/09 | <p>The Panel suggested that the problem of HCVs parking in the District had not been resolved by the re-opening of Alconbury Truck Stop.</p> | <p>Update requested from the Transportation Team Leader.</p> | <p>The Transport Team Leader has reported that although nothing has come forward from the 3 county group, the County Council are developing a County advisory route network for HCVs, which they will be consulting the District Council on.</p> | |
| | | | <p>Alconbury Truck Stop re-opened in the first-half of 2009 using the whole of the former</p> | |

| Panel Date | Decision | Action | Response | Date |
|------------------------|---|---|--|--------------------------|
| | | | <p>parking area. Rest facilities and a filling station are available for drivers. At present, the former Motel and associated facilities remain out of use.</p> <p>The Countywide HCV Advisory Route Network is now in the process of being developed by Cambridgeshire County Council, it is likely to be reported to joint lead Members by the end of 2009, and will be followed by a wider review of County HCV policy.</p> | |
| <p>08/07/08</p> | <p><u>Petition By St Audrey Lane Area Residents, St Ives</u></p> <p><i>This item was transferred from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)</i></p> <p>Representatives from Anglian Water in attendance at Panel's July meeting. Requested that an update be provided in 6 months time and that residents be informed of the outcome of their investigations.</p> | <p>Email requesting update sent – 21/10/08</p> <p>Response to be sought from Anglian Water for April meeting.</p> | <p>CCTV survey of St Audrey Lane and Pig Lane Surface Water sewer completed. Funding now available to Jet Sewer – will be carried out shortly.</p> | |
| <p>10/02/09</p> | <p>Panel made aware of further problems in recent weather. Agreed to seek further update as to what work has and hasn't been completed.</p> | | <p>Update received from Anglian Water and circulated by email to all Panel Members.</p> | <p>April 2009</p> |

| Panel Date | Decision | Action | Response | Date |
|---|--|--|---|------|
| 14/07/09 | The Customer Response Manager to be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss progress which has been made since Anglian Water's attendance at the Panel meeting in July 2008. | Letter sent 07/08/09 | Awaiting a response to the letter. | |
| <p data-bbox="456 1218 564 1960"><u>Petition To Control Commuter Parking In The Longsands Area Of St Neots And Discussion On Huntingdon Train Station</u></p> <p data-bbox="596 1218 660 1960"><i>This item was transferred from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)</i></p> <p data-bbox="724 1960 868 2114">14/10/08</p> <p data-bbox="724 1218 868 1960">Chairman to write to the Chairman of Huntingdonshire Traffic Management Area Joint Committee outlining the Panel's concerns and requesting that the matter be progressed at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p data-bbox="932 1960 1043 2114">10/03/09</p> <p data-bbox="932 1218 1043 1960">A representative from First Capital Connect to be invited to attend a future meeting to discuss their expansion plans for the car parks at Huntingdon and St Neots.</p> <p data-bbox="1139 1960 1235 2114">Members questioned whether planning permission had been granted for the car park being constructed at Huntingdon Train Station.</p> | <p data-bbox="724 669 900 1218">Update provided to February meeting. Further investigative work being undertaken by the County Council in advance of April Area Joint Committee. Further update expected in April 2009.</p> <p data-bbox="932 669 963 1218">Letter sent 21/10/08</p> <p data-bbox="1139 669 1235 1218">Clarification sought from the Development Control Manager as to the status of the construction.</p> | <p data-bbox="932 237 1107 669">Item deferred until a later date. District Council still awaiting a response from the Minister on the issue of permitted development.</p> <p data-bbox="1139 237 1410 669">The development does not have permission although it is understood that an application is to be submitted shortly. The use of the land for car parking for up to 28 days in a calendar year would be permitted development.</p> | <p data-bbox="724 47 804 237">April 2009</p> <p data-bbox="932 47 1011 237">Spring 2009</p> | |

| Panel Date | Decision | Action | Response | Date |
|------------|---|--|--|------|
| 14/07/09 | The Panel requested an update as to the status of the car park which had been constructed at the railway station in Huntingdon. | An update on this issue was requested from the Transportation Team Leader. | <p>The provision of additional car parking has been completed by Network Rail. The Secretary of State confirmed on 29th July that the land in question constitutes operational land in accordance with the relevant statutory undertaker for the purposes of section 336 (3) of the TCPA 1990. This means that it is within land that is part of the control of Network Rail, as such under certain legislation Network Rail are exempt from the need to apply for planning permission for certain elements of what they may want to do. The District Council is conducting an assessment of other legislation including the GDPO and Environmental Impact Assessment regulations to ascertain if planning permission is required.</p> <p>St Neots – The provision of additional car parking has been completed by Network Rail. There are no disputed permitted development rights or outstanding planning-related issues.</p> | |

| Panel Date | Decision | Action | Response | Date |
|------------|--|---|--|-------------|
| 12/02/08 | <p>Cycling In Huntingdonshire <i>This item was transferred over from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)</i></p> <p>Endorsed the Working Group's report and recommendations for submission of the Cabinet.</p> | <p>Considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 12th February 2008. Cabinet noted the recommendations and requested a further report by officers addressing the wider issue of Section 106 funding and partnership working. Agreed that discussions should be held with Cambridgeshire County Council regarding their offer to update the Huntingdonshire Cycling Strategy and the issue of partnership working on cycling provision.</p> | <p>Report updating the Panel on the current position the review of the Cycling Strategy and the provision for funding for Huntingdonshire in the LTP included on Agenda for the meeting for June 08 meeting.</p> | June 2008 |
| 10/06/08 | <p>Asked the Transportation Team Leader to email all Members of the Council asking about any specific issues with regard to cycle routes in their wards. Requested sight of the draft report on the prioritisation of cycle schemes before any consideration by the AJC.</p> | <p>Since the June Panel meeting, it has come to light that the list of potential cycle routes have already been scored and prioritised. A report will be considered by the AJC at their meeting on 7th July 2008, seeking ratification of the cycle routes as scored. Requests have been made for reviews to be undertaken annually, with the first review with Members to start in the autumn.</p> | <p>Priority List endorsed by the AJC. District Council members will be contacted in Summer 2009, before the next review to ask about specific issues within their ward.</p> | Spring 2009 |
| 14/07/09 | <p>Members requested an update on the issue from the Transportation Team Leader.</p> | <p>Following the AJC report of July 2008, the top five schemes approved for further development have been progressed, based on available staff resources/funding;</p> | | August 2009 |

| Panel Date | Decision | Action | Response | Date |
|------------|----------|---|----------|------|
| | | <p>1) Yaxley to Farcet – Phase 1 currently under construction. Phase 2 (Yaxley to Farcet) under development in partnership with CCC. Delivery subject to funding & S.106 contributions planned in 2010/11.</p> <p>2) (Joint) St. Ives to Huntingdon – Phase 1 (Hartford to Wyton) subject to discussion with CCC. Scheme development may follow completion of Old Houghton Road bus priority measures.</p> <p>2) (Joint) St. Ives Guided Busway (St. Ives to District Boundary). Any progress dependant on completion and opening of guideway.</p> <p>4) Layton Crescent to RAF Brampton. Pending possible redevelopment opportunities at RAF Brampton.</p> <p>5) (Joint) Perry Village Cycle Route. Scheme at development stage following funding via S.106 agreement for Littlehey Prison expansion. Subject to approval, likely delivery during 2010/11</p> <p>5) (Joint) Earith – Bluntisham – Needingworth to St. Ives. No progress due to lack of funding and staff resources</p> <p>5) (Joint) Kings Ripton to St. Ives. Pending possible linkage to redevelopment opportunities at RAF Wyton.</p> | | |

| Panel Date | Decision | Action | Response | Date |
|--------------------------|--|--|--|-------------|
| 14/07/09 | | The review of the wider district-wide priority list of 30 sites is awaited. In accordance with the previous Panel decision, when this is undertaken, Members will be asked about any specific issues with regard to cycle routes in their wards. | | August 2009 |
| 13/05/09 | <p><u>Adoption of Roads and Sewers</u></p> <p>This item was transferred from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery), who had decided to undertake a study into the processes and procedures involved with the adoption of roads and sewers. A Working Group comprising Councillors J D Ablewhite, Mrs P A Jordan, M F Shellens, P K Ursell and J S Watt was therefore appointed to conduct the review.</p> | A number of meetings have been held by the Working Group. | The final report of the Working Group was endorsed by the Panel. | July 2009 |
| 13/05/09 09/06/09 | <p><u>Corporate Plan – Growing Success</u></p> <p>Councillors P M D Godfrey and D Harty appointed to Corporate Plan Working Group.</p> | <p>Quarterly reports submitted to all Overview & Scrutiny Panels.</p> <p>The Panel questioned how performance targets are set against achievement of corporate plan objectives.</p> | <p>The review of the corporate plan starts in spring, following which corporate objectives are reviewed and refreshed to ensure they are still relevant, and to set future targets. The review involves Heads of Service, COMT and the</p> | |

| Panel Date | Decision | Action | Response | Date |
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| | | | Chairmen and Vice Chairmen of each Scrutiny Panel. Objectives and targets are then considered by COMT, Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet before being approved at full Council, usually in September. | |
| 15/01/08 | <u>Local Area Agreements</u> Minutes of future meetings of the Cambridgeshire Together Joint Accountability Committee should be circulated to all Panel Members. | Minutes of the meeting held on 24 th February 2008 have been circulated. | | Feb 2009 |
| 13/05/09 | Councillor P M D Godfrey appointed to Joint Accountability Committee. Substitute Members to be appointed in consultation with the Head of Democratic and Central Services. | | | |
| 14/04/05 | <u>Monitoring Of Section 106 Agreements</u> <i>This item was transferred over from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)</i> Quarterly reports to be submitted to the Panel. | Report considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 12 th March 2009. | The Cabinet endorsed the recommendations and resolved that the Section 106 working group be invited to consider the likely effects of the introduction of the Community Infrastructure Levy | Mar 2009 |
| 10/02/09 | Subject to minor amendments endorsed the Final report for consideration by the Cabinet. | | | Feb 2009 |

| Panel Date | Decision | Action | Response | Date |
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| | | | <p>and make recommendations on processes to implement the system.</p> <p>The Working Group comprised Councillors P J Downes, D Harty, M F Newman and R J Tuplin. Councillor T D Sanderson was co-opted to the Group as a result of his interest in the subject matter. As the Panels have been changed, Members may decide to reappoint to this Working Group.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">June 2009</p> |
| <p>10/02/09</p> | <p><u>Regional Scale Settlement Study</u> <i>This item was transferred from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)</i></p> <p>Head of Planning Services to report back on outcome of Cambridgeshire Development Study and HDC response to Regional Scale Settlement Study.</p> | <p>Report to be received from the Head of Planning Services.</p> <p>The Panel endorsed a recommendation that the District Council should adopt the six principles suggested when responding to the EERA proposal.</p> | <p>This item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.</p> <p>Awaiting further developments.</p> | <p style="text-align: center;">April 2009</p> |
| <p>14/0409</p> | <p>Head of Planning Services attended to give an update.</p> | | | |

| Panel Date | Decision | Action | Response | Date |
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| | <p><u>Great Fen Project</u></p> <p><i>This item was transferred from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)</i></p> | | | |
| 08/07/08 | <p>Director of Environmental & Community Services to make presentation to future meeting. All Scrutiny Members to be invited.</p> | <p>Comments submitted to Cabinet meeting on 20th November 2008.</p> | | TBA |
| 11/11/08 | <p>Report on the content of the collaboration agreement to be submitted to a future Panel meeting before its consideration by Cabinet.</p> | <p>Presentation to be given to all Members in April.</p> | | |
| 14/04/09 | <p>A presentation on the Great Fen was given to all Members.</p> | <p>The Great Fen Master Plan is anticipated in September.</p> | <p>This item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.</p> | Summer 2009 |
| 15/05/09 | <p><u>'Green House' Project</u></p> <p>This item was transferred over from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery). The Corporate Plan Working Group requested submission of a report on the 'green house' project to be submitted to a future Panel meeting.</p> | <p>Request submitted to the Head of Environmental Management.</p> | <p>A report will be presented to a future meeting of the Panel.</p> | TBC |

| Panel Date | Decision | Action | Response | Date |
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| | <p>Forward Plan <i>The following items were transferred from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Service Support and Service Delivery) who requested that these items should be considered at future meetings of the Panel.</i></p> | | | |
| 13/11/07 | <p>Parish Plans and Local Plan Policy Circulate report when this becomes available.</p> | | | TBA |
| 08/07/08 | <p>Developer Contributions SPD Requested that the report should be considered at a future meeting of the Panel.</p> | | | Oct 2009 |
| 14/10/08 | <p>A14 Statutory Orders – Consultations Requested that the report should be considered at a future meeting of the Panel.</p> | | | Nov 2009 |
| 09/06/09 | <p>Site Options Gypsy and Travellers Development Plan Document Requested that the report should be considered at a future meeting of the Panel.</p> | | | Nov 2009 |
| 09/06/09 | <p>Huntingdon West Area Action Plan Requested that the report should be considered at a future meeting of the Panel.</p> | | | Nov 2009 |
| 14/07/09 | <p>County Wide and Integrated Development Programme and Tariff Requested that the report should be considered at a future meeting of the Panel.</p> | | | Oct 2009 |
| 14/07/09 | <p>Development Management Submission Document Requested that the report should be considered at a future meeting of the Panel.</p> | | | Nov 2009 |

| Panel Date | Decision | Action | Response | Date |
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Decision Digest

Edition 96

Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 6th July - 28th August 2009.

ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER

Having regard to the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter for 2007/08, the Corporate Governance Panel has noted that the Council's rate of improvement in the priority areas identified compared favourably against other District Councils. The Council also has consistently exceeded the Audit Commission's criteria for "performing well".

HOUSING BENEFIT COMPLAINT: AWARD OF COMPENSATION

The Corporate Governance Panel has received details of a complaint against the Council by a member of the public and the terms of compensatory payment which has been awarded to the complainant.

AUDIT STRATEGY DOCUMENT

The Corporate Governance Panel has received details of the approach to be undertaken by the Council's external auditors, Grant Thornton UK LLP, to the audit of the Council, which will include the former Leisure Centre Management Committees.

INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE: INTERNAL AUDIT PLAN

The Corporate Governance Panel has approved the Internal Audit and Assurance Plan for the twelve months period commencing 1st August 2009.

ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION FRAMEWORK

The Corporate Governance Panel has noted the outcome of a review of the Council's Anti-Fraud and Corruption Framework and endorsed the content of a revised Action Plan.

COMPLAINTS

The Corporate Governance Panel has received an analysis of the Council's internal complaints and a summary of complaints involving the District Council which have been determined by the Local Government Ombudsman in 2008/09.

FINAL ACCOUNTS 2008/09

The Corporate Governance Panel has approved the draft Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2009 and Members' attention has been drawn specifically to a series of issues arising from the accounts, which included the Council's investments, the pension

fund, the treatment of capital and the collection fund.

The Panel has expressed some concern at the suggested deficit of funds available in the pension fund but has been informed that whilst the funds assets were currently valued at market value for investments, a full valuation every three years took account of a wide variety of factors including liability and potential changes in investment markets and that this would be used to evaluate changes in the employer's contribution rate. Concern has also been expressed at the risks associated with the Council's approach to long-term investments. In response, assurances have been received from Officers that appropriate procedures were in place through the Council's Treasury Management Strategy.

Having questioned the appearance of Government Departments as one of the Council's debtors, the Panel has been advised that this related to grant funding from Central Government which was still awaited.

GREAT FEN COLLABORATION AGREEMENT

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) has considered a proposal which would result in the Council entering, together with other organisations, into a Great Fen Collaboration Agreement. The Panel accepts that the collaboration agreement offers the most appropriate governance arrangement between the various partners at the present stage of the Great Fen Project. The agreement will be reviewed once the project moves into a trading position. The Panel has expressed its ongoing support for the Council's

involvement in the project, which enables the views of the local community to be represented and provides a democratic focus for the project.

With regard to the collaboration agreement itself, the Panel has raised a concern that while Clause 7.1 of the Agreement appears to cover all of the salary costs of the project manager, it does not refer explicitly to all potential costs that might occur such as severance or personal injury claims. The Panel also has suggested that the wording could be more precise to avoid future ambiguity. The Panel has expressed a view that the confidentiality provisions in Section 14 of the Agreement could impede future scrutiny and transparency in the management of the project. The Panel feel that the section should be re-drafted to ensure that scrutiny is not precluded. It was also suggested that an annual report be presented to partners on progress towards achievement of the project's aims and objectives.

Subsequently, the Cabinet has approved in principal, arrangements to enter into a Collaboration Agreement for a renewable five-year fixed term. Having concurred with the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the Cabinet has requested that the Agreement be re-drafted to reflect these sentiments. With this proviso the Cabinet has authorised the Director of Environmental and Community Services to sign the Agreement.

SCRUTINY OF HUNTINGDONSHIRE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The Overview and Scrutiny Panels have received information on the areas that fall within each Panel's

responsibility with regard to the scrutiny of Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership (HSP). The Environmental Well-Being Panel has noted that they will be responsible for the scrutiny of the Environment Forum and the Growth and Infrastructure Thematic Group established under the HSP. The Panel has been acquainted with the strategic aims and objectives of those themes as set out in the Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Social Well-Being Panel has been advised that they will be responsible for scrutinising the Children & Young People, Health & Well-Being and Inclusive, Safe and Cohesive Communities Thematic Groups.

A joint event involving representatives of Overview and Scrutiny and the Strategic Partnership is currently being arranged and a countywide conference on the scrutiny of partnerships will be held on 7th September 2009.

ADOPTION OF ROADS AND SEWERS

The Overview (Environmental Well-being) Panel has endorsed the final report of the adoption of roads and sewers working group which was established to investigate the processes and procedures involved with a view to expediting the adoption process. The Panel was encouraged to note that DEFRA had announced that with effect from April 2011, responsibility for 200,000 kilometres of privately owned sewers and lateral drains in England

will be transferred to statutory water and sewage companies. Furthermore, Persimmon Homes have appointed staff to assess outstanding matters which have held up the adoption process on their developments. The Panel have expressed their appreciation to the Members of the Working Group.

WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel have appointed Councillors M G Baker, P Godley, M F Newman and J S Watt to the Development Management Process Working Group, which has been established to examine the process for the determination of planning applications.

LEISURE CENTRES – PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has received the Huntingdonshire Leisure Centres Annual Report 2008/09. The report summarised the activities of the Leisure Centres in Huntingdonshire over the preceding twelve months.

Total admissions to the Centres had exceeded 1.74m for the first time and a saving of £569,000 against the budget across the Centres as a whole has successfully been achieved.

DISABILITY ACCESS – FOLLOW UP

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has planned its follow up work on their previous

study into disability access. A number of aspects that the Panel wish to pursue have been identified, which includes requesting updates from the County Council and Police on matters previously referred to them and informing Town and Parish Councils of the outcome of the study. Progress of discussion on the provision of joint advocacy/advice services by organisations supporting those with disabilities has also been requested.

STUDY – PARKING AT HINCHINGBROOKE HOSPITAL

The scope of a study on parking at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, Huntingdon has been discussed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). A number of potential areas for investigation have been identified, which includes the management of the car park, the effectiveness of the Hospital's travel plan, the availability of public transport and parking practices nearby. A representative of the Hospital will be invited to attend a future Panel meeting.

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

The Cabinet has agreed to the preparation of a development brief and the subsequent marketing exercise for the disposal of the leasehold of an area of Council-owned land at the former fire station site and waste recycling centre, Huntingdon Street, St. Neots. The Cabinet has been advised that the domestic waste recycling centre is due to be relocated by Cambridgeshire County Council at the end of the year. In order to ensure that the site is fully marketed a detailed development brief will be

prepared and a comprehensive marketing exercise undertaken. Applicants will be invited to submit details of their proposals including drawings showing layout, size and external appearance. The applications will then be assessed on the basis of their compliance with the development brief which also should feature some benefit to the local community.

SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP - EURO BIN MANUAL HANDLING ARRANGEMENTS

Having considered the findings of a report by Her Majesty's Ergonomics Specialist Inspector into the Eurobin manual handling arrangements, the Cabinet has deferred consideration of the matter to enable further information on the health and safety aspects to be submitted to a future meeting. The Inspector's report had concluded that the task of emptying 1,100 and 1,280 litre glass recycling eurobins should be undertaken by two employees rather than the current one.

NEW HEADQUARTERS DELIVERY AND OPERATIONAL REVIEW

The Cabinet has been apprised with progress made to-date on the delivery of the new District Council Headquarters and Other Accommodation. In considering issues associated with the future use of Castle Hill House, the Cabinet has agreed that the accommodation of all headquarters based staff in future years be contained in buildings B, C, D and E. At the same time, the Cabinet endorsed the suspension of the marketing of the site for Building A, to enable the Chief Executive to investigate options available for the disposal of Castle Hill House and

have agreed the reservation of sums to meet contractual claims and variations within the financial forecast for the project. The Medium Term Plan will be changed to reflect this at its next review.

ETHICAL STANDARDS AND THE CODE OF CONDUCT

In accordance with "Best Practice" recommended by 'Standards for England', Councillor I C Bates has recently addressed the Standards Committee. This follows a similar presentation by Councillor P J Downes. Councillor Bates made reference to several themes, including improvements in the administration and conduct of local councils as a result of the standards process, the resource intensive regime prompted by the 2008 Regulations and whether 'Standards for England' (formerly the Standards Board) provided value for money. Councillor Bates' ideas prompted a wide ranging discussion at the meeting.

STANDARDS COMMITTEE (FURTHER PROVISIONS) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2009

The Standards Committee has noted the coming into force on 15th June 2009 of the Standards Committee (Further Provisions) (England) Regulations 2009 which will enable 'Standards for England' to suspend the functions of a local Standards Committee if it is failing to perform satisfactorily and either to discharge the functions itself to transfer them to another authority. The Regulations also give the power to establish joint committees with

other authorities vary the rules in respect of dispensations.

STATISTICS

Having noted the outcome of research commissioned by 'Standards for England' and in particular the observation that Councils with better conduct made training mandatory, the Monitoring Officer was requested to look into the legality of this step and whether code of conduct training could be made mandatory for District Councillors.

ANNUAL ASSEMBLY OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Standards Committee has nominated Messrs J Alexander, D L Hall and G Watkins to attend the Annual Assembly at the ICC Birmingham on 12th/13th October 2009.

LOG OF CODE OF CONDUCT

The Standards Committee has noted the nature of the code of conduct enquiries recorded by the Monitoring Officer since the last meeting.

HARTFORD MARINA

The Development Management Panel has considered the outcome of a review by a Working Group tasked with looking at a variety of issues relating to unauthorised occupation at Hartford Marina. Recommendations of the Working Group were endorsed and these related to -

- ◆ preparation of a policy on permanent occupation of marinas;
- ◆ the undertaking of enforcement action against unauthorised occupants of the flats/apartments at the Marina;
- ◆ rationalisation of the current position at the Marina once the policy begins to emerge;
- ◆ no action being taken against the current floating residents pending formulation of a policy on marinas provided they help in recovering unpaid council tax;
- ◆ no further expansion of the Marina without planning consent.

PERFORMANCE MONITORING

As part of their regular monitoring of the activities of the Development Management Division, the Panel has noted that quarterly income is currently £91,000 over the projected budget due in part to fees received from a major strategic planning application.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT

Over two meetings, the Panel has considered a total of 25 applications with 7 refused, 14 approved, 3 deferred and one delegated to the Head of Planning Services.