

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)** will be held in the **CORPORATE TRAINING SUITE, EASTFIELD HOUSE** on **THURSDAY, 11 MARCH 2010** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

**Contact
(01480)**

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 4th February 2010.

**A Jerrom
388009**

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

3. ICT STUDY PROPOSAL (Pages 7 - 12)

To consider a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services detailing a proposal for a study into Information Communications Technology.

**A Roberts
388015**

4. GREAT FEN LOAN (Pages 13 - 16)

To receive a report by the Head of Finance giving details of a loan request by the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough.

**S Couper
388103**

5. LEISURE CENTRES' INCOME AND EXPENDITURE (Pages 17 - 20)

To consider a report on the financial performance of the Council's leisure centres by the General Manager, One Leisure.

**S Bell
388049**

6. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL BUDGET 2010-2011 (Pages 21 - 26)

To consider a report by the Scrutiny and Review Manager on proposals for budget savings put forward by the Liberal Democrat group.

**A Roberts
388015**

7. PERFORMANCE MONITORING (Pages 27 - 38)

To consider the quarterly monitoring report prepared by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships.

**D Buckridge
388065**

8. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 FORWARD PLAN (Pages 39 - 44)

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

**H Taylor
388008**

9. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) PROGRESS REPORT (Pages 45 - 48)

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

**A Jerrom
388009**

10. WORKPLAN STUDIES (Pages 49 - 60)

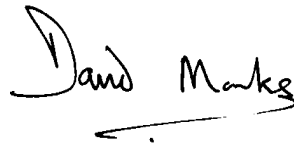
To consider, with the aid of a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services, the current programme of overview and scrutiny studies.

**A Jerrom
388009**

11. SCRUTINY (Pages 61 - 70)

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 3 day of March 2010



Chief Executive

Notes

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

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

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

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

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

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 (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) held in the Corporate Training Suite, Eastfield House on Thursday, 4 February 2010.

PRESENT: Councillor J D Ablewhite – Chairman.
Councillors J T Bell, E R Butler,
L W McGuire, M F Shellens, Ms M J Thomas
and R G Tuplin.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs J A Dew, A N Gilbert and G S E Thorpe.

69. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 14th January 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

70. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

71. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 - FORWARD PLAN

The Panel considered the current Forward Plan of Key Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which had been prepared by the Leader of the Council for the period 1st February 2010 to 31st May 2010. It was agreed that the item entitled Request for a loan to the Wildlife Trust should be considered at the next meeting.

72. FINANCIAL STRATEGY, MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2011-2015 AND THE 2010/11 BUDGET

(Councillor T V Rogers, Executive Councillor for Finance, was in attendance for this Item).

With the aid of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel reviewed the Financial Strategy, Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2011-2015 and the Budget and level of Council Tax for 2010/11 in advance of their consideration by the Cabinet and final determination by the Council.

By way of introduction Councillor Rogers, Executive Councillor for Finance, reminded Members of the process involved in developing the Financial Strategy in the current year and explained that a number of changes had been made to the draft Strategy, which took into account £1.2m in savings that had been identified. These savings had been transferred into a Special Reserve in order to help facilitate the achievement of future spending adjustments.

Members were advised that the medium term impact of the changes was a reduction in the Council's budget deficit which would allow spending adjustments to be phased in at a more regular rate. Overall spending would fall significantly from previous assumptions mainly owing to lower provision for pay and price inflation but also as a result of lower assumptions on Government Grant and the proposed reduction in the level of Council Tax increase to 2.49%, a figure which it was considered would avoid capping. The result was that a reduced level of spending adjustments would be needed in the Medium Term Plan period, though in the longer term there would be few changes.

The Director of Commerce and Technology drew Members' attention to his conclusion contained in the report that the combination of a robust budget process and the current level of reserves should give Members no concerns over the Council's financial position for 2010/11. However, he drew attention to the fact that a significant level of work would be required to plan the spending adjustments required in future years in order to avoid the Council making sub-optimum decisions as reserves were depleted.

In highlighting the uncertainties and risks associated with the financial forecast Members were reminded of the possible impact of the Guided Bus on the Council's parking income, the unknown length and depth of the recession, changes in grant funding and the revaluation of the pension scheme. These were likely to require further spending adjustments in the future. Following a question from a Member on investments, it was explained that lower than planned expenditure in 2008/09 had allowed investments to be made. In addition, previous investments over long periods had meant that the Council was benefiting from favourable rates.

In discussing expected income of £150k in respect of public conveniences, the Panel was advised that this was an estimated figure, which would be received following the sale to developers of the public conveniences at South Street, St Neots. Members also discussed the figure for future wheeled bin replacement and were advised that although in the future developers would be charged for new wheeled bins, provision had to be made for bin replacement. The Panel endorsed the figure contained in the report for wheeled bins.

In response to a question regarding the allocation of £800k for bus station improvements, Members were informed that the scheme was under review. They were also advised of the potential effects of recycling savings, VAT refunds and civil parking enforcement income.

Following discussion on the effect of introducing a higher rate of Council Tax increase the Panel expressed support for an annual increase of 2.49% in Band D equivalent Council Tax and for the proposed Budget and Medium Term Plan. They also supported the creation of a Special Reserve for use in achieving future spending adjustments. Having received assurances that the Financial Strategy would allow the Council to meet its objectives, the Panel

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be informed of the Panel's support for:

- (a) the proposed Budget, MTP and Financial Plan as submitted;
- (b) an increase of 2.49% in Band D equivalent Council Tax for 2010/11, and
- (c) the creation of a Special Reserve on the terms set out in the report now submitted.

73. 2010/11 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

(Councillor T V Rogers, Executive Councillor for Finance, was in attendance for this Item).

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel was acquainted with proposed changes to the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2010/11. The Panel was advised that following the collapse of the Icelandic Banks in 2008 treasury management now had a higher profile, which had led to new interim guidance from the Audit Commission and a revised Code of Practice from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy being produced. Members were also advised that the Department for Communities and Local Government was currently consulting on revised guidance on local authority investments, which was expected to apply from April 2010 onwards. The primary change would be to place emphasis on using a wider range of information to assess the credit quality of counterparties and on the security and liquidity of investments. The Panel was acquainted with the recommended criteria for assessing the credit worthiness of counterparties for Council investments.

Having outlined the borrowing that had taken place to fund the Capital Programme in future years, the Head of Financial Services went on to discuss the Prudential Code, which covered a number of indicators relating to capital expenditure, external debt and treasury management. Compliance with the Code would enable the Council to demonstrate the robustness of its capital expenditure plans. Members were advised that the proposed Strategy took account of the Code and Guidance and that further modifications would be considered should the final Guidance differ materially from the draft.

Members were advised that responsibility for scrutinising Treasury Management would fall to the Economic Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Panel and training to enable them to ensure that the Council complied with the Code would be arranged. Having noted that in future, half yearly reports would be submitted to the Panel, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be requested to recommend the Council to approve:

- a) the revised Treasury Management Strategy for 2010/11,
- b) the Treasury Management Indicators and Prudential Indicators for 2010/11 and

- c) scrutiny of Treasury Management by the Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-being) Panel.

74. CUSTOMER SERVICE QUARTERLY REPORT

The Panel received and noted the Customer Service Quarterly Performance Report for the period October to December 2009 (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). The report outlined the levels of performance and standards achieved by the Service. Members were informed of the results of a recent mystery shopper survey, which had rated the overall service ahead of other Councils in the region.

75. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In response to previous requests for information on potential study areas, the Panel received presentations on the implications for the Council and the District of the loss of the Huntingdonshire Enterprise Agency (HEA) and on the Creativexchange in St Neots.

Having informed the Panel of the services that were previously provided by the HEA, Mrs H Donnellan, the Council's Sustainable Economic Development Manager, outlined the steps that had been taken since it ceased to operate to ensure that enterprise in the District continued to be promoted. She explained that a service had been introduced to provide 1 to 1 consultancy and tailored workshops for businesses. Members also were advised that support for individuals hoping to become self employed was now available through the Cambridge and Rural Enterprise and Mentoring (CREAM) scheme, which was a project initiated by the Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services and funded by the East of England Development Association and the Greater Cambridge Partnership. CREAM was also partly funded by the District Council. It had been the catalyst for a high number of new businesses starting in the District and gave the Council the ability to commission bespoke services as conditions required. Having also discussed the cost to the Council of business development, Members concluded that, through partnership working, the budget available attracted a significant level of services; however, there were concerns regarding the future funding of the CREAM project beyond 2012. Members also were informed that Business Link provided assistance to a significant number of businesses that were already established.

The Panel then received a presentation on the CreativeXchange in St Neots and, in particular, the partnership working involved in its development and operation. It was explained that the development had been created in association with Longsands School, which had donated the land valued at £300k. Capital costs of £300k had been funded by the District Council and running costs would be met by Norfolk and Waveney Enterprise Services for the first 5 years. The total value of the project had been estimated at £2m. It now provided light industrial units for creative enterprises with easy in / out terms and back up services whilst also aiding the school in its application for specialist status. The project had successfully exceeded its operating targets for 2009/10 and had a high level of occupancy, which was notable given recent economic conditions. Having noted that the project was well placed to meet its targets for 2010/11 and that it had

received a number of awards, Members congratulated all those involved in the project on the progress that had been made to date.

76. THE HEALTH IMPLICATIONS OF THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

In pursuit of a study by the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support) into the night time economy and the relationship between alcohol consumption and anti-social behaviour and alcohol related crime within the District, Members were acquainted with the scope and findings of the study and informed that the Panel had concluded that the powers available to the police were not always fully utilised. As few reviews of premises licences had taken place, the Panel had formed the view that steps should be taken to raise public awareness of their rights in respect of premises licensing.

In order to follow up on the study findings the Panel received a presentation by the Scrutiny and Review Manager on the effects of alcohol consumption on local health and health services. The data presented had been obtained from the Strategic Partnership's Health and Well-Being Thematic Group and had been augmented with information from the Public Health Observatory at the Centre for Public Health. It indicated that Huntingdonshire had lower rates of hospital admissions than the average for England; however, Members were informed that the rate of alcohol-specific hospital admissions for under 18s was higher than in other areas of the Eastern region. They, therefore, asked for further information on this issue to be submitted to a further meeting together with any available qualitative data on alcohol consumption in rural areas.

77. INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY PANEL MEMBERS

The Panel was reminded that as part of the review of the democratic structure the Council had decided to introduce provision for two independent members of the public to be appointed to each of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels. Following an exceptional response to publicity to attract interest for the positions, a Selection Panel had recently been convened to interview the applicants. As a result the Selection Panel had recommended that Mr R Hall and Mrs H Roberts should be appointed to sit on the Economic Well Being Panel for a period of four years. Having endorsed the recommendation, it was noted that following an induction, the independent members would be invited to their first Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting in March.

RESOLVED

that the Council be recommended to accept the co-option of Mrs H Roberts and Mr R Hall to the Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well Being) Panel.

78. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) PROGRESS REPORT

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) on the Panel's current programme of studies.

79. WORKPLAN STUDIES

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) containing details of studies being undertaken by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panels. Members were advised that a report on the financial position of the leisure centres was expected at the next meeting of the Panel.

80. SCRUTINY

The 101st edition of the Decision Digest was received and noted.

Chairman

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)

11TH MARCH 2010

STUDY PROPOSAL: ICT PROVISION IN THE PUBLIC SECTOR (Report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to acquaint the Panel with a proposal for a study into Information Communications Technology (ICT) in the public sector, which has been suggested by a resident of the District.

2. THE STUDY PROPOSAL

- 2.1 The Council has been contacted by Dr J Stanley, who is a Research Fellow at Lucy Cavendish College, Cambridge, with a suggestion for a study, which she feels could have considerable benefits for the District. The proposal's objective is to make evidence-based recommendations for:

- heightening system robustness;
- increasing data security;
- making cost savings, and
- making an estimate of new employment that could be achieved.

Having made herself conversant with the Council's ICT Strategy 2009-11, Dr Stanley has prepared a proposal, which is attached at Appendix A.

- 2.2 Dr Stanley has been invited to the meeting to present her proposal.
- 2.3 It is usual, when planning a study to take decisions on a range of matters. These are specified in the standard study template. A copy of the template appears in Appendix B.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 A proposal for a study has been received from an expert in her field. Details of the proposal are attached and will be expanded on at the meeting. The Panel is invited to consider the proposal and decide how it wishes to take the proposal forward.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Study proposal submitted by Dr J Stanley

Contact Officer: A Roberts (01480) 388015

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Proposal to Supply Independent Advice on the Future of ICT Provision in the Public Sector

Expertise of the Partners

Dr Gerard Briscoe is a Research Officer at the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics (LSE). His PhD, in Electrical and Electronic Engineering, was gained at Imperial College London (ICL).

Prior to this he was a Research Fellow at the MIT Media Lab Europe, which post followed his completion of his B/MEng in Computing also from ICL.

His research interests include Digital Ecosystems and the societal impact of emerging technologies, and therefore alternative forms of Cloud Computing, including paradigms for dynamic, personal, mobile and Community Clouds.

Jerome Josephraj is the owner of *Bind Technology Limited*, a company which specialises in implementing Open Source Software for Charities, Membership organisations and SMEs.

Prior to this he was Head of IT for Cantor Index, London and prior to that he worked in management positions and as technical consultant for large organisations implementing complex applications using Open Source and Proprietary software.

He has also published articles related to Service Oriented Architecture and is co-authoring a book on Web Services.

Dr Jo Stanley is currently a Research Fellow at Lucy Cavendish College Cambridge, working in the OPAALS project (Digital Ecosystems) funded by the EC 6th Framework Programme.

Prior to this she developed specialist knowledge in the field of Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) in new technologies (Computer Science and Biotechnology). She has taught advanced database courses, with a particular interest in Genome databases.

She has taught ICT-related law to European LLM students, and IT Law to Computer Science students. She has a special interest in the history of copyright and the relationship between copyright law and software licenses. She is completing a book on value of IPRs in the software field: *Invention and Representation*.

She holds an Honours degree in Natural Science from London University.

Stimulus for this Proposal

We write this proposal to express our concern over the *sustainability* of current ICT provision in central and local government organisations and their agencies¹.

Even had the global financial shocks of 2008-2009 not augured a need for public sector budgetary restraint from 2010-2011 onwards, our view is that current software licensing arrangements would still have been unsustainable.

Within the UK a series of BECTA reports express similar concerns in the schools sector.

Substantiation and Alternatives

¹ References to papers we have written over the last decade supplied on request.

Our work in the UK commercial sector, and across Europe in the DBE and OPAALS projects and associated EC-funded efforts has identified issues with proprietary provision, and noted that many European municipalities now reject costly and repeat licensing agreements for software, ICT support and upgrade.

Our work with the OPAALS international teams in the BRIC countries indicate that they are adopting policies that leapfrog the UK in terms of sustainable ICT commitments in the public sector, using strategies which do not jeopardise their social objectives.

The advent of Cloud Computing makes it imperative that we decide whether the current centralised and de-centralised models should persist into the new paradigm, or should be replaced by *fully* distributed networks, which would avoid problems of *single points of control and of failure*.

For these and other reasons we now believe that financial constraints must precipitate an urgent revision of mid- to long-term ICT policy in the public sector.

Public Sector Digital Networks are not Socially Neutral

In addition to the fears express above, two other factors accelerate the need to address a more holistic view of the role of digital provision in the public sector at the earliest opportunity:

- Anticipation of an increase in economically inactive citizens who will need support and inclusion²
- The aging profile of the UK population means that awareness of the need to support elderly citizens is more urgent, and this support must include a powerful digital element.

In addition we have found from research projects conducted across Western and Eastern Europe that the public sector needs to take a lead if the SMEs are to arrive at digital provision with the properties of *interoperability*, *affordability* and *sustainability* which at the moment seems to be lacking³.

The Four Accounts

For these reasons the economic studies in OPAALS advocate that the success of ICT provision be measured under four metrics:

- *The Financial Account*: net return or cost to 'investors'
- *The User/Consumer Account*: net benefit to users as consumers of services provided
- *The Economic Development Account*: micro- and macro-economic net benefits to productivity, growth and employment
- *The Social Account*: social/community impact, net benefits in terms of social well-being.

² Sociological studies published by the LSE.

³ Reports supplied by one of us to EEDA.

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

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

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

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

Meetings of the Working Group	
Costs (resource requirements, additional expenditure, time)	Officer time – both to provide support and conduct research.
Possible Barriers to the Study (potential weaknesses)	
Projected Timescale (Start and end times)	

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

11 MARCH 2010

CABINET

18 MARCH 2010

**REQUEST FOR A LOAN TO THE WILDLIFE TRUST FOR
BEDFORDSHIRE, CAMBRIDGESHIRE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE AND
PETERBOROUGH**

(Report by the Head of Financial Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough (the Trust) is working with the Council and other partners on the Great Fen Project. They have asked whether the Council would be willing to grant them a loan for up to £1.2M.
- 1.2 The illustrative Great Fen Masterplan, approved by Cabinet on the 17 September 2009 for public consultation, outlines the social and environmental benefits of this major project. Annex A provides further information.

2 THE PROPOSED LOAN

- 2.1 The proposed loan would enable the Trust to acquire, as soon as possible, the leasehold of some key land which will substantially assist in delivering the Great Fen Masterplan. The Trust already owns the freehold of the land.
- 2.2 The Trust is confident that over the next few years it will obtain sufficient donations and grants to repay the loan given the status and significance of the Great Fen project. It is therefore seeking a flexible arrangement which allows repayments when they are available, thus avoiding the significant additional cost that banks impose for early repayment, with a fall-back period of ten years.
- 2.3 Clearly the Council needs to protect its position in the, probably unlikely, event that this funding is not achieved. The Trust is therefore proposing to provide security through a piece of high quality agricultural land that they own and which is let on a short term tenancy. The Council would be able to sell the land for a sum at least equivalent to the value of any outstanding loan and interest.
- 2.4 The Local Government Act 2000 permits a local authority, subject to certain limitations, to do anything they consider likely to achieve the promotion or improvement of economic, social or environmental well being of their area, which includes a power to give financial assistance.
- 2.5 It is considered that the project meets this requirement and whilst

none of the limitations appear to prevent us making such a loan this will be confirmed before any loan is finalised.

2.6 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy sets the balance between reward and risk for any investment the Council makes and provides delegated authority to the Head of Financial Services to agree variations which will reduce or only marginally increase that level of risk. The key issues are that:

- an adequate rate of interest is set to ensure there is no net cost to the Council.
- the security provided ensures the Council could easily and speedily receive the return of its funds and any outstanding interest.

2.7 The Trust expect to complete the purchase by October and, by then, they may be clearer on the results of further fund raising or grant submissions which could reduce the loan amount and the fall-back number of years for the agreement. They would therefore like the loan to have an initial period of up to five years that is interest only which, as long as the security is agreed at an adequate value, would not be an issue for the Council.

2.8 They are comfortable with a variable rate loan but would like a cap on the maximum interest rate. The Council will ensure that it is left with no net cost by adding a margin to base rate to ensure that a surplus is achieved with the cap level being subject to negotiation.

2.9 The Trust need to reach agreement with the Council so they have the ability to finalise their negotiations with the tenant knowing the funding will be available. The completion of the loan agreement will be subject to the terms meeting the requirements of the Treasury Management Strategy, the Director of Commerce and Technology and the Head of Legal and Estates. The Trust will pay the legal costs of the agreement.


3. RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Cabinet approve a loan of up to £1.2M being provided to the Trust subject to the Director of Commerce and Technology and the Head of Legal and Estates being satisfied with the terms and security.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Correspondence with the Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Northamptonshire and Peterborough

**Contact
Officer:**

Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services
 01480 388103

THE GREAT FEN PROJECT

The Great Fen Project is one of the most significant habitat restoration projects ever undertaken in Britain. 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. The aims of the project as set out in the emerging Masterplan are:

- To create a new resilient fenland landscape which delivers major wild life benefits and achieves high standards of sustainability in all respects.
- To create an accessible, inspiring and tranquil environment for recreation, education, health and well being.
- To contribute to diversification and development of the local economy, consistent with environmental and social objectives.
- To plan, design and manage the Great Fen to benefit climate change adaptation and mitigation.

The project aims fit closely with those of the Council, particularly:

- The provision of strategic open space both in terms of access to the countryside and in association with the significant growth of the District;
- Diversification of the economy especially in NW Huntingdonshire;
- Promotion of healthy lifestyles;
- Conservation and enhanced local heritage;
- Protection and improvement of wildlife habitats;
- Adaptation and mitigation in the face of climate change.

and also align with and contribute to the achievement of the Council's key strategies, including the :

- Sustainable Community Strategy,
- Core Strategy (Spatial Planning),
- Local Economic Strategy,
- Environment Strategy.

The Great Fen is a key component of the Green Infrastructure Strategy for the Cambridge Sub Region linking with other areas of strategic open space including Paxton Pits and around Needingworth and Grafham Water. The project is given statutory force by inclusion in the Regional Spatial Strategy (now with the Council's adopted Core Strategy part of the 'Development Plan' for Huntingdonshire).

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

11TH MARCH 2010

**LEISURE CENTRES' INCOME & EXPENDITURE
Report by General Manager, One Leisure**

1. Background

The last all-centres quarterly income and expenditure performance report to O&S (to end December 2009 – month 9) noted:

	Actual (£k)	Target (£k)	%
Income	3,542	3,722	95%
Expenditure	4.401	4.671	94%

Consequently, members have requested further information on the financial performance of the Leisure Centres. This report provides a fuller account of the Centre's financial performance.

2. Actual Results for 10 months to end of January 2010

£000	Actual	Budget	Last year
Income	4,256	4,377	4,140
Expenditure	5,284	5,424	5,230
Net Controllable	1,028	1,047	1,090

3. Forecast Result for full year

£000	Forecast	Budget	Last year
Income	5,453	5,583	5,282
Expenditure	6,648	6,606	6,387
Net Controllable	1,195	1,023	1,085
Overheads	983	1,452	1,150
Capital costs	826	988	804
Total Net cost	3,004	3,463	3,039

As can be seen, a forecast improvement on previous year actual despite a probable failure to achieve budget income target. Members will note a £469k saving in Overheads. Most of the expected reduction in overheads is due to the change in the pensions adjustment that is required to be made under international financial reporting standards. Now that pension contribution rates have increased, the pensions adjustment for the Centres has changed from a budgeted charge of £193k to an anticipated charge of -£160k, a reduction of £353k.

4. Individual Centre performance

	Hunt	Ram	Saw	SI	SN	Gen	Total
Income	1,278	505	484	2,132	1,054	0	5,453
Expenditure	1,435	726	749	2,228	1,425	85	6,648
Net Controllable	157	221	265	96	371	85	1,195
Overheads	215	132	137	287	204	8	983
Capital costs	195	96	115	278	142	0	826
Total Net Cost	567	449	517	661	717	93	3,004

5. Current Income

5.1 A number of factors have affected the performance over the year.

- This is the first full year of operation at One Leisure Huntingdon following the major development during 2008/09.

Income (£k)	2008/09	2009/10 (estimated)
Centre	621	829 (+33%)
Impressions	394	449 (+14%)
Total	1,015	1,278 (+26%)
Admissions	293,714	332,022 (+13%)

Against this, a predicted increase in expenditure associated with the redevelopment, particularly in staffing, has not materialized as the centre has made strenuous efforts to improve efficiency. As a result, expenditure prediction is £100k below budget and over £20k below the previous year.

Expenditure (£k)	2008/09	2009/10 (estimated)
Centre	1,270	1,272
Impressions	172	163 (-9%)
Total	1,442	1,435

- Hospitality income across the sites, however, is down from **£636k** budget to **£549k** estimated outturn, a decrease of **£87k**. This figure reflects a general downturn in the market nationality as the customer's propensity to spend on secondary products becomes reduced. Less club members stay behind after matches and training, those that do spend less over the counter and individual visits to the catering and bar outlets have reduced. Whilst the situation is not wholly welcomed it is symptomatic of a general credit squeeze across the globe and we are not alone in reporting falling sales. However, this has allowed us to re-examine our outlets and look more closely at our customers. As a result, St Neots LC redevelopment will move more towards a café, coffee-house environment with less emphasis on draught beer and lager. Bottled beer will be sold on site, eliminating the

need for large cellars. The situation at St Ivo Leisure Centre, which has 3 bars in total, is currently under review but significant change is anticipated.

- Synthetic and grass pitches will not achieve income target of **£273k**. Anticipated estimate is **£222k**. This area has been particularly affected by the cold spell across our busiest times and many pitches were unplayable for long periods as a result of the frost. There is no remedy for this – salting is ineffective and under-floor heating and covers are cost prohibitive. Some matches will be re-scheduled but general training and social sessions are permanent losses.
- School income in previous years has been paid by the County Council on behalf of all secondary and primary school use. Essentially a lump sum was given over to HDC each year for “agreed” use of facilities. In practice, there were flaws. Schools often did not use facilities that were booked resulting in empty pools and sports halls which the public could have occupied. Because there was no onus on the school to cancel in advance this created a number of awkward situations for centre management which the new arrangement has attempted to resolve. From September 2009, County Council devolved funding directly to the secondary and primary schools and the schools booked out facilities based around the financial allocation they were given. A pricing schedule for each area of each facility was devised which, assuming similar usage patterns, would result in a similar sum being received each year. Since September, schools have been invoiced directly on a monthly basis. However, some secondary schools have not booked the same quantity of facilities and there is concern that the income received will be less than previous. The differing school years compared to HDC financial years makes the issue somewhat more complicated – County paid a lump sum for the April to July period, and from then on the schools pay themselves – and negotiations are continuing to effect a solution to the problem. The situation at present indicates that income will be around £80k less than last year although some of this has been recouped by additional pool and hall hours for paying public at all sites.

2. Future Developments

- 2.1 The single biggest success story this year has been One Leisure Huntingdon with its 26% income growth and 13% rise in admissions. Additionally, recovery rate here has risen by nearly 15% to 87% (income as a percentage of expenditure). The loss of two badminton courts has not been felt, admissions to the Fun Zone will exceed 20,000 in the year, over 3,000 additional customers have taken out membership, fitness visits of 8,237 recorded in January were the highest any centre in HDC has ever achieved, the spa facility, Pure, attracts 80% more visitors than ever before and total controllable costs have risen by just 2% year to date.

- 2.2 The total investment in One Leisure Huntingdon which included additional car parking, new reception, and new changing facilities along with the additional and improved activity areas totaled around **£1.5m**. The expansion and redevelopment at One Leisure St Neots will cost slightly less than double that amount (**£2.9m**). Our business plan for the centre includes over 100-station gym, innovative soft play centre, additional dance/aerobic studio, dedicated crèche, spa and therapy centre offering a wide variety of treatments, external changing rooms and new indoor changing facilities. Slightly less ambitious income targets have been set for the centre than was the case at Huntingdon but confidence is high that the facility will become a magnet for local and more far flung customers. Phase one, soft play and café will open in April with phase two due for completion in September
- 2.3 Further plans are in development for One Leisure St Ives with a bid to the Football Foundation for around £750k set to launch a major expansion at the Outdoor Centre including an additional synthetic, football only, floodlit pitch. The Indoor Centre plans will include expansion of Impressions, new reception and better use of the huge area available but are not yet ready for round table debate. St Ivo is the nearest centre to achieving break-even on controllable costs (currently 91%) and our aim is to take this over 100% at the earliest opportunity.

Contact Officer:

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

11TH MARCH 2010

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

1. INTRODUCTION

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

2. THE PROPOSALS

- 2.1 At the full Council meeting on 17th February 2010, the Liberal Democrats submitted proposals for amendments to the budget 2010 – 2011. It was decided that the proposals should be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) for consideration. A summary of the proposals is attached as an Appendix hereto.
- 2.2 The Panel is invited to consider how to examine the proposals with a view to making a formal response to the Council.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Report submitted to the Council on 17th February 2010.

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

Council has requested that the following matters put forward by the Liberal Democrat group should be referred to this Overview & Scrutiny Panel for further consideration.

Liberal Democrat amendments for the Huntingdonshire District Council budget 2010 – 2011

Introduction Huntingdonshire District Council faces financial difficulties and uncertainties. These have been clearly outlined in the papers provided for Members. We recognise that more difficult decisions lie ahead. We consider that more savings should be made early. Our proposed amendments offer mainly minor savings but should not be dismissed simply for that. Minor savings accumulate. The following amendments to the budget are offered in response to requests from the Executive Member, Terry Rogers, for cost-cutting and money-saving ideas and these are contained in Part A of this paper. In Part B we propose some investment to offset the potentially damaging effects of the MTP proposals and to meet HDC objectives and priorities.

Part A – savings

1. Members' Allowances (page 47) Reduce expenditure on Members

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

- a. Cut basic allowance by 5% and SRAs by 10% - saves £31,490
- b. Freeze basic allowance and cut SRAs by 10% - saves £18,560
- c. Freeze all allowances – saves £3,890

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

2. Referred to Employment Panel

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Part B – investments in improvements

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

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

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

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

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

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

10. Partial protection of the Arts Development service (page 44)

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

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ECONOMIC WELL-BEING

11th March 2010

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

1. INTRODUCTION

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

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Council’s Corporate Plan includes short, medium and long term objectives to help achieve aims and ambitions for Huntingdonshire’s communities and the Council itself. In addition the Council identified eight of these objectives which were considered as priorities for the immediate future.

3. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

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

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

4. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

4.1 The following performance data is appended for consideration:

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

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

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

5. DATA QUALITY

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

6. RECOMMENDATION

6.1 Members are recommended to;

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

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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

Growing Success: Corporate Plan

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

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Community/Council Aim: To improve our systems and practices						
Objective: Effective partnership						
Division: People, Performance & Partnerships						
Divisional Objective: Develop, adopt and support the delivery of a sustainable community strategy for Huntingdonshire						
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:
Ensure an appropriate performance management system for the Sustainable Community Strategy and provide policy support for this process	% of thematic groups reviewing their performance and delivery	100	67 (R)	80	↓	G&I action plan needs to be smarter and be integrated with partner activities/LIF, C&YP currently reviewing action plan in line with the 'BIG' plan with a view to prioritising objectives
	Regular reports on the performance of thematic groups are submitted to the HSP Executive and Board (1=yes, 0=no)	1	1 (G)		↔	1 = Yes regular reports are submitted to the HSP Executive and Board
Divisional Objective: Effective partnership framework						
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:
Develop, implement and monitor strategic/operational partnership review programme	Partnership review programme on target (1=yes, 0=no)	1	1 (G)		↔	On target
Community/Council Aim: To learn and develop						
Objective: To be an Employer People Want to Work For						
Division: People, Performance & Partnerships						
Divisional Objective: To attract and retain staff						
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:
Promoting from within wherever possible Recruitment package	Internal promotions as percentage of all vacancies filled	33	41.70 (G)		↔	5 promotions out of 12 posts
	% of new employees still in post after 12 months	90	88.20 (A)		↓	Between October 2008 and December 2008 there were 17 contracted new starters. Between October 2009 and December 2009 88.2% of them were still employed.
	% of new employees still in post after 24 months	80	80 (G)		↓	Between October 2007 and December 2007 there were 30 contracted new starters. Between October 2009 and December 2009 80% of them were still employed.

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

Retaining and releasing employees appropriately	Staff turnover – % of employees on permanent contracts leaving the Council	10	4.46 (G)	↔	Turnover excluding fixed terms = 4.46%, turnover including fixed terms = 6.1%.	QRT
Successful wellbeing initiatives which are improving attendance rates	% attendance of HDC employees a rolling 12 month average. Target based on CIPD for public sector employees.	96	98.40 (G)	↓	98.4% attendance achieved (based on 1270 employees)	QRT
Community/Council Aim: To maintain sound finances						
Objective: Maximise business and income opportunities including external funding and grants						
Division: Leisure						
Divisional Objective: Maximise leisure centre income						
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:						
Maintain expenditure within budget	Actual expenditure compared to budget (cumulative quarterly target)	£4.67m	£4.40m (G)	↔	Savings in all budget headings	QRT
Maximise leisure centre income	Actual income received compared to budget (cumulative quarterly target)	£3.72m	£3.54m (R)	↑	Two pools closed in summer. Income shortfall balanced by expenditure savings	QRT
Division: People, Performance & Partnerships						
Divisional Objective: To be aware of appropriate funding opportunities and communicate to the appropriate service						
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective: Key Measure:						
Co ordinate and maintain a system of internal control via External Funding strategy, liaise with appropriate officers, provide funding advice and assistance in compilation of bids as required	% of bids which attract funding (year to date)	70	55 (A)	↑	Submitted 18, Successful 10, Unsuccessful 7. Awarded but declined 1.	QRT
	% of External Funding actions on track	90	80 (A)	↓	8 out of 10 actions on target.	QRT

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

<p>Objective To enable effective partnerships</p>	<p>Achievements:</p> <p>Issues or actions for next quarter:</p> <p>Risks:</p>	<p>Comments from appropriate Head of Service People, Performance & Partnerships: HSP Economic Summit was held in September to discuss partnership solutions to address the effects of the recession locally, there was good representation from all partner organisations.</p> <p>People, Performance & Partnerships: Growth and Infrastructure action plan needs to be SMARTer and be integrated with partner activities/Local Investment Framework. Children & Young People's Partnership is currently reviewing its action plan in line with the BIG Plan with a view to prioritising objectives.</p>
<p>To be an employer people want to work for</p>	<p>Achievements:</p> <p>Issues or actions for next quarter:</p> <p>Risks:</p>	<p>People, Performance & Partnerships: The Members Employment Advisory Group presented their interim findings to Employment Panel on current recruitment and remuneration practice. The HR Strategy and a new policy on 'Loans for season tickets' were adopted by Employment Panel.</p> <p>People, Performance & Partnerships: The annual salary review report was produced in-house this year to aid the pay negotiation process. Members and ELAG have agreed to take into account the Member Advisory Group work before reaching a settlement.</p>
<p>To maximise business and income opportunities including extended funding and grants</p>	<p>Achievements:</p> <p>Issues or actions for next quarter:</p> <p>Risks:</p>	<p>People, Performance & Partnerships: Successful external funding bid for "Future Jobs fund", including up to £9k for a post at Huntingdonshire Community nursery. Funding also secured from EERA, approx £7k for staff training.</p> <p>Leisure Centres: Centres have, where possible, rationalized costs and made concerted savings efforts across the board. As a result, expenditure is over 10% saved on budget resulting in a net spend ahead of original budget target. Given the circumstances, and recognising the effect external pressures have on centre performance, this is a reasonable Q3 position.</p> <p>All expenditure budget headings have recorded savings against target and this has helped balance the income shortfall. Staff costs overall have risen by less than 2% during the year. Profit margins on bars and all varieties of catering are above target and overall recovery rate is now 83% compared to 79% at this stage last year.</p> <p>Leisure Centres: Income is down by 5% on target and clearly reflects the economic climate throughout the country although shortfall was over 9% at end of Q2. All areas of the centres have been hit with hospitality and indoor activities being particularly affected.</p>

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CORPORATE PLAN WORKING GROUP

NOTES OF MEETING HELD 24TH FEBRUARY 2010

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Corporate Plan Working Group met on 24th February 2010 when Councillors J D Ablewhite, S J Criswell, P M D Godfrey, D Harty, G S E Thorpe and R J West were present.
- 1.2 Mrs C Garbett, I Leatherbarrow, A Roberts, H Thackray and Mrs J Walker were in attendance.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Working Group has been reminded that the Council has adopted 37 corporate objectives, eight of which are considered to be a priority for the immediate future. The eight priority objectives have been split between the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Social Well-Being, Environmental Well-Being and Economic Well-Being) accordingly.

3. WORKING GROUP COMMENTS

Social Well-Being

- 3.1 The Working Group has drawn attention to the number of admissions/participants in activities provided or promoted by the Council, which remains 4% below target. It has been noted that the closure of the two pools over the summer period and the inclement weather in December have been contributory factors to the shortfall, and it has been suggested that the current economic climate would also have had an effect. Members have noted that Huntingdon Leisure Centre has experienced an increase in visitor numbers.
- 3.2 Members have questioned how the data capture of all users from January 2010 will ensure the target number of active card holders is reached. In response, the Working Group has been advised that following the launch of 'One Leisure' in January 2010, a 'One Card' is being promoted which is free of charge and offers the cardholder benefits such as savings on activities, discounts and promotions. It is hoped that this initiative will result in an increase in the number of active cardholders.
- 3.3 Members have noted the increase in the number of households living in temporary accommodation, which stood at 65 at the end of the quarter. A maximum of 45 households will need to be achieved by the end of March 2010 to achieve the temporary accommodation reduction target. The Panel has asked whether those households living in temporary accommodation are automatically placed on the housing waiting list.

Environmental Well-Being

- 3.4 Having noted that the number of tonnes of CO2 saved through the installation of energy efficiency measures and renewables in domestic properties is slightly below the target, the Working Group has questioned how the CO2 saving is calculated. Members also have questioned whether the recent boiler replacement scheme is reflected in these figures. It is suggested that these issues should be pursued further by the Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel.

Economic Well-Being

- 3.5 Attention has been drawn to the percentage of thematic groups who have reviewed their performance and delivery, which is below the target. The Working Group has been advised that the action plan for the Growth and Infrastructure Thematic Group needs to be redeveloped to ensure it is smarter, and can be integrated with partner activities and the Local Investment Framework.
- 3.6 Performance for the key measure for the Leisure Centres relating to the 'actual income received compared to budget' is five percent lower than the quarterly target. Members have discussed the schools' use of the pools and questioned the extent to which this has affected leisure centre income. The Working Group has suggested that this matter should be investigated further by the Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) Panel.

4. REVIEW OF GROWING SUCCESS TARGETS

- 4.1 The Policy and Strategic Services Manager has addressed the Working Group on the review of Growing Success non-priority targets. The review has been undertaken in conjunction with Heads of Service and has concentrated on the targets, objectives and measures to determine whether they remain appropriate for the period to the end of 2010-11.
- 4.2 Members have been acquainted with the changes that have been suggested to date. The Policy and Strategic Services Manager has requested any further comments within two weeks of the date of the meeting.

5. MAKING CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNT

- 5.1 The Director of Central Services has provided the Working Group with an update on the Council's involvement in Making Cambridgeshire Count and the progress of shared services. Members have been reminded that Making Cambridgeshire Count is an initiative that intends to examine the local area's public services to ensure the needs of local residents are being met. It is hoped that this will prevent duplication of service provision and, therefore, reduce costs. 13 pilot schemes are ongoing nationally, though Making Cambridgeshire Count is a voluntary scheme which has been funded by a grant of £350k from Invest East.
- 5.2 It has been reported that Cabinet Members have expressed reservations about the project, specifically that there has been a lack of clear direction, references have been made to the possible reorganization of local authorities in

Cambridgeshire and insufficient evidence has been presented of the cost savings that might be achieved. In addition, Cabinet Members have concerns regarding project management, governance and the perceived lack of benefit to local residents. Concerns also have been raised over the lack of scrutiny and elected Member involvement in the project. As a result the Leader of the Council has suspended the Council's formal involvement and decided to monitor progress of the project before making any decisions on the extent of the District Council's future involvement in it. South and East Cambridgeshire District Councils have adopted similar positions.

- 5.3 While it has been noted that some work is continuing at officer level, the Working Group has strongly expressed the view that ways should be found to enable the Council to resume playing a full part in Making Cambridgeshire Count.
- 5.4 Members also have reiterated their view that shared services could offer significant benefits to the Council and, as such, ought to be explored further. Although the Director of Central Services has provided assurances that the management team is continuing to explore the possibility of shared services, the Working Group has suggested that the Cabinet should be recommended to investigate whether there are any opportunities for jointly employing expert staff to avoid the greater costs using of specialist consultants.

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FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

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

Membership of the Cabinet is as follows:-

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

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

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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
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Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Request for a loan to the Wildlife Trust***	Cabinet	18 Mar 2010	Past papers for the Great Fen Project	Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services Tel No. 01480 388103 or e-mail Steve.Couper@huntsdc.gov.uk		T V Rogers	Economic Well-Being
Green ICT Strategy and Action Plan	Cabinet	18 Mar 2010	TBA	Andrew Howes, IMD Operations Manager Tel No. 01480 388190 or e-mail Andrew.Howes@huntsdc.gov.uk	Environmental Management Team	J A Gray	Environmental Well-Being
Development Brief Chequers Court, Huntingdon	Cabinet	18 Mar 2010	Previous urban design framework	Richard Probyn, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No 01480 388430 or e-mail Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Adopt as Interim Guidance	D B Dew	Environmental Well-Being
Covert Surveillance Policy Review	Cabinet	18 Mar 2010	Existing Policy Legislation	Wayland Smalley, Solicitor Tel No 01480 388022 or e-mail Wayland.Smalley@huntsdc.gov.uk	Internal Steering Group	A Hansard	Economic Well-being
Masterplan for Great Fen	Cabinet	18 Mar 2010	Development Management DPD	Richard Probyn, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or e-mail Richard.Probyn@huntsdc.gov.uk	Adopt as Planning Policy	D B Dew	Environmental Well-Being
Home Improvement Agency Review - Future Delivery Model Consultation	Cabinet	18 Mar 2010	None.	Mr S Plant, Head of Housing Services Tel No. 01480 388240 or e-mail Steve.Plant@huntsdc.gov.uk		K J Churchill	Social Well-Being
Rural Strategy Cambridgeshire ACRE	Cabinet	18 Mar 2010	None.	Dan Smith, Community Initiatives Manager Tel No. 01480 388377 or e-mail Dan.Smith@huntsdc.gov.uk		K J Churchill	Social Well-Being

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Former Fire Station and Waste Recycling Site, Huntingdon Street, St. Neots	Cabinet	18 Mar 2010	Development Brief and Marketing Information (in preparation)	Keith Phillips, Estates and Property Manager Tel No. 01480 388260 or e-mail Keith.Phillips@huntsdc.gov.uk	Ward Councillors.	A Hansard	Economic Well-Being
Transfer of S106 Asset (Community Building & Land) at Loves Farm***	Cabinet	22 Apr 2010	None.	Dan Smith, Community Initiatives Manager Tel No. 01480 388377 or e-mail Dan.Smith@huntsdc.gov.uk		K J Churchill	Social Well-Being
Street Naming and Numbering - charging for some services***	Cabinet	22 Apr 2010	None.	Chris Allen, Project and Assets Manager Tel No. 01480 388380 or e-mail Chris.Allen@huntsdc.gov.uk	None	J A Gray	Environmental Well-Being
Housing Enforcement Powers	Cabinet	22 Apr 2010	Cabinet Report	John Allan, Neighbourhoods Intervention Manager Tel No. 01480 388281 or e-mail John.Allan@huntsdc.gov.uk	Legal Services & Financial Services.	K J Churchill	Social Well-Being
Western Link Road, Huntingdon	Cabinet	22 Apr 2010	Previous planning consent	Keith Phillips, Estates and Property Manager Tel No. 01480 388260 or e-mail Keith.Phillips@huntsdc.gov.uk		A Hansard	Economic Well-Being
Homelessness Strategy	Cabinet	22 Apr 2010	None.	Jon Collen, Housing Needs and Resources Manager Tel No. 01480 388220 or e-mail Jon.Collen@huntsdc.gov.uk	Consultation process in preparation.	K J Churchill	Social Well-Being

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Ramsey Market Town Transport Strategy***	Cabinet	20 May 2010	Draft Strategy	Steve Ingram, Head of Planning Services Tel No. 01480 388400 or e-mail Steve.Ingram@huntsdc.gov.uk		D B Dew	Environmental Well-Being
St. Ivo Leisure Centre - Proposal for Development	Cabinet	17 Jun 2010	None	Simon Bell, General Manager, Leisure Centres Tel No. 01480 388049 or e-mail Simon.Bell@huntsdc.gov.uk		Mrs D C Reynolds	Social Well-Being

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Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date For Future Action
13/05/09	<p><u>Grant Aid</u></p> <p>This item was transferred over from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery). A Working Group was established, comprising Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, P G Mitchell and J S Watt, to consider all capital and revenue grant aid schemes administered by the Council. The Working Group's final report has been endorsed for submission to the Cabinet.</p>	<p>Final report submitted to Cabinet on 29th January 2009.</p> <p>In order to monitor the situation an annual report on organisations supported by grant through service level agreements is requested by the Panel</p>	<p>The Cabinet considered and concurred with the final report.</p>	<p>TBC</p>
13/05/09	<p><u>Customer Services Monitoring Report</u></p> <p>This item was transferred over from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery). Quarterly performance reports to be circulated informally to the Panel (February and September each year) and formally on the Agenda (June and November each year).</p>	<p>Report to be included on Panel Agenda in June and November.</p>		

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date For Future Action
13/05/09	<p><u>Licensing Act – Impact On Night-time Economy</u></p> <p>This item was transferred over from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Support).</p> <p>Subject to an amendment to one of the recommendations, the Service Support Panel endorsed the final report for consideration by the Cabinet at their meeting on 29th January 2009.</p> <p>Agreed to re-visit the study towards the end of the year to review progress made towards achievement of the countywide action plan, the night watch project and the availability of statistics from Hinchingbrooke Hospital on alcohol related accidents and emergency treatment.</p>	<p>Request for report to be submitted from Health and Well Being Thematic Group</p>	<p>Report endorsed by the Cabinet at their meeting on 29th January 2009</p> <p>Report received and item reported on at February meeting. Panel requested further investigation on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The nightwatch initiative 2. Hospital data on alcohol related treatment 3. Achievements against targets contained in the Countywide Action Plan 	
13/05/09	<p><u>Corporate Plan Working Group</u></p> <p>Councillors J Ablewhite and GSE Thorpe have been appointed onto the Corporate Plan Working Group.</p>	<p>Quarterly performance reports to be submitted to all Overview and Scrutiny Panels in September, December, March and June of each year.</p>	<p>Item appears elsewhere on the agenda</p>	11/3/09

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date For Future Action
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	<u>Local Government Act 2000 – Forward Plan</u>			
12/11/09	Covert Surveillance Policy review	Presentation by Council's solicitor expected at future meeting		TBC
12/11/09	Development brief for former Fire Station site in St Neots	Requested.		TBC
10/09/09	<u>Workplan Studies</u> The following studies are to be prioritised and will form future studies(the first three were suggestions by the Corporate Plan Working Group following their examination of the Council's performance against its non-priority targets: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Management of capital projects by the Environmental Management Section 2. The effect and cost implications of the loss of Huntingdonshire Enterprise Agency 3. The employees Performance 	Information requested from Heads of Service.	Presentation received by Economic Development at Feb 2010 meeting	

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date For Future Action
14/01/10	<p>Development Review process</p> <p>4. Tourism</p> <p>5. Creativexchange St Neots</p> <p>6. Financial reports on the Leisure Centres</p> <p>7. Lessons learned from the headquarters and other accommodation project</p> <p>8. Industrial units at Caxton Road St Ives</p> <p><u>Financial Cost of Standards</u></p> <p>Report requested giving financial cost of providing Standards support</p>	<p>Report expected at future meeting</p> <p>Report requested</p>	<p>Presentation received by Ec.Dev. in Feb10 Item appears elsewhere on the agenda</p>	<p>11/03/10</p> <p>15/04/10</p>

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

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

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

1. INTRODUCTION

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

2. STUDIES

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

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

Social Well-Being

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

Environmental Well-Being

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

Economic Well-Being

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. RECOMMENDATION

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

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Decision Digest

Edition 102

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

PARKING AT HINCHINGBROOKE HOSPITAL

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

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

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

PETITION – HILL RISE PARK, ST IVES

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

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

progress has been requested for 6 months time.

MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS (PLANNING OBLIGATIONS)

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

PLAY FACILITIES WORKING GROUP

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

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

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

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 – FORWARD PLAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

2010/2011 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

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

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

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

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

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

the project which has received a number of awards.

INDEPENDENT SCRUTINY MEMBERS

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

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

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

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

THE HEALTH IMPLICATIONS OF THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

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

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

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

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

LICENSING COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT POLICY

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

FEES AND CHARGES

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

SECRET GARDEN PARTY

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

CHANGES TO LICENSING PROCESSES UNDER THE LICENSING ACT 2003

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

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

CHANGES TO THE POLICE AND CRIME ACT

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

SMALL LIVE MUSIC EVENTS

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

CARBON FOOTPRINT REDUCTION

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

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

made on carbon reduction measures.

CAR PARKING REVIEW UPDATE

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

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

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

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

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

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

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT DPD - PROPOSED SUBMISSION

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

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

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

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

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) PROGRESS

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

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

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

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

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

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

MINI-RECYCLING SITES – WORKING ARRANGEMENTS

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

ST NEOTS EASTERN EXPANSION

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

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

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

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

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

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

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