

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)** will be held in **THE CIVIC SUITE, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 9 DECEMBER 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 - 8)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 2010.

**C Bulman
388234**

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. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 - FORWARD PLAN (Pages 9 - 12)

A copy of the current Forward Plan, which was published on 11th November 2010 is attached. Members are invited to note the Plan and to comment as appropriate on any items contained therein.

**H Taylor
388008**

4. CABINET FEEDBACK - DRAFT BUDGET 2011/12 AND MTP 2012/16 (Pages 13 - 14)

To consider a report by the Cabinet outlining their deliberations on the draft Budget 2011/12 and MTP 2012 /16.

**H Taylor
388006**

5. THE COUNCIL'S USE OF CONSULTANTS

To discuss the Council's use of consultants with the Heads of Planning Services, Law, Property & Governance and the Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy & Transportation.

6. GREATER CAMBRIDGE AND GREATER PETERBOROUGH LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP

To receive a presentation by the District Council's Head of People, Performance & Partnerships and the Economic Development Manager.

7. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT (Pages 15 - 24)

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

**H Thackray
388035**

its priority objectives.

8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS (Pages 25 - 30)

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

**C Bulman
388234**

9. WORK PLAN STUDIES REPORT (Pages 31 - 36)

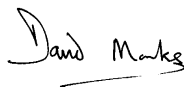
To consider with the aid of a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services, the current programme of overview and scrutiny studies.

**C Bulman
388234**

10. SCRUTINY (Pages 37 - 44)

To scrutinise decisions taken since the last meeting 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 1 day of December 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 Mrs C Bulman, Democratic Services Officer, Tel 01480 388234 / email Claire.Bulman@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.

Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) held in the CIVIC SUITE, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN on Thursday, 11 November 2010.

PRESENT: Councillor J D Ablewhite – Chairman.
Councillors J T Bell, E R Butler, Mrs J A Dew, S Greenall, N J Guyatt, M F Shellens, G S E Thorpe and D M Tysoe.

Mr R Hall and Mrs H Roberts.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, I C Bates, B S Chapman, S J Criswell, D B Dew, P J Downes, C R Hyams, P G Mitchell, M F Newman, Mrs D Reynolds, L M Simpson, J S Watt and R J West.

50. MINUTES

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

51. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor M F Shellens declared a personal interest in Minute Nos. 53 and 54 by virtue of his membership of Brampton Parish Council.

Councillor N J Guyatt declared a personal interest in Minute Nos. 53 and 54 by virtue of his membership of Cambridgeshire County Council.

Councillor P J Downes declared a personal interest in Minute No. 53 by virtue of his wife's voluntary work for Huntingdonshire Citizens Advice Bureau.

52. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 - FORWARD PLAN

The Panel considered and noted the current Forward Plan of key decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which had been prepared by the Leader of the Council for the period 1st November 2010 to 28th February 2010. The Panel were advised that a report on the sale of land at Mill Hill Road, Eaton Socon would be considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 18th November 2010. Members were also advised that the Budget and MTP, together with the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators would be presented to the Panel for consideration as a matter of course in February 2011.

In response to comments about the tight timescale between the February meetings of the Panel and the Cabinet, Members were

advised that it was anticipated that changes to the meetings calendar for 2011/12 would address some of their concerns in future years.

53. DRAFT BUDGET 2011/12 AND MTP 2012/16

(Councillor T V Rogers, Executive Councillor for Finance and Customer Services was in attendance for this item).

(Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, I C Bates, B S Chapman, S J Criswell, D B Dew, P J Downes, C R Hyams, P G Mitchell, M F Newman, Mrs D Reynolds, L M Simpson, J S Watt, and R J West).

Consideration was given to a report by the Chief Officers Management Team (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained a draft Budget for 2011/12 and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTP) for the period 2012-16, prior to their submission to the Cabinet and final determination by the Council.

By way of introduction, the Director of Commerce and Technology gave a presentation on the draft Budget based on the Government's preference for no increase in Council Tax and a reduction in spending of 11% in the current year. Having been advised of those areas where no significant changes were proposed to services, attention was drawn to the areas where efficiency savings were being sought and the impact on each service of the proposed spending cuts. Members were advised that the final Budget for 2011/12 would be prepared in the New Year with the benefit of further information in relation to the Revenue Support Grant, the impact of changes to concessionary fares and the new reward grant for housing development.

In discussing the contents of the report, Members reiterated the view that the Council should approach the financial planning process strategically through a vision for the District and for the Council. This would enable the Council's priorities to be weighted and make it possible to take better informed decisions on the budget. In response, the Executive Councillor for Finance and Customer Services explained that the Government was constantly changing the requirements it placed on local authorities and this presented difficulties in preparing a strategy. It was suggested that Government changes should not affect the overarching vision and would only have an impact on the delivery of it.

Comments were made in relation to the Council's strategic approach to financial planning and on the need for contingency plans to be prepared that addressed a range of scenarios and identified options for future action to respond to changing events. In addition, it was suggested that a rationale should be produced for each of the proposed changes. Members were assured that decisions would be informed by detailed pieces of work as the Council's plans developed.

Councillor N J Guyatt cited an example of the value of adopting a strategic approach by referring to the proposed closure of the Yaxley Customer Service Centre in the context of the Council's priority to support vulnerable people. The Executive Councillor for Finance and Customer Services drew attention to figures on claims for Housing

Benefit in the area and explained that efforts were being made to identify savings while maintaining services. Attention then was drawn to the recent public consultation exercise, which revealed that the public were of the opinion that reductions should be made in customer services. A number of members expressed the view that front-line services should be retained and that it would be preferable to seek savings in the back office. It was, however, recognised that the distinction between the two often was not clear and that the back office formed an important part of the Council's functions through such activities as local strategic planning.

The view was expressed that the Council should investigate alternative delivery methods rather than completely delete some services immediately. It was suggested that local office services might be provided through shared buildings and employees or on reduced hours using fewer employees. Specific suggestions also were made with regard to the establishment of customer service centres at the leisure centres and the libraries. At the same time caution was expressed that shared services might incur their own problems and costs especially in the field of information technology. In addition, the delegation of functions to Town and Parish Councils could result in increased service costs and it might be preferable to seek contributions from these Councils for the District Council to continue to operate them. Councillor G S E Thorpe re-emphasised that if this was to be done then Town and Parish Councils should be informed at the earliest opportunity to enable them to make the necessary provisions in their budgets.

Other suggestions for general approaches to alternative delivery methods included outsourcing, the sale of Council services to other organisations and shared services. With regard to the latter, it was suggested that the Call Centre provided a service which might be of value to other organisations and that investigations might be undertaken into establishing a "Centre for Cambridgeshire".

The report by the Chief Officers Management Team contained indicative figures on the likely reductions in employee numbers that would be required. Councillor S Greenall suggested that the Council should investigate ways of making better use of existing employees. Having questioned whether the Union had been consulted on opportunities for job sharing and working reduced hours, it was suggested that such practices could prevent the loss of skills and generate savings on redundancy costs. In relation to the specific changes to service levels referred to within the report, a number of Members commented on proposals to reduce the grants paid to voluntary organisations. Having regard to the importance of voluntary organisations in the localism agenda and the fact that their services would be more in demand as a result of changes to the welfare system, Members were of the opinion that further consideration should be given to the value of the work they did and what it might cost the Council to replace the activities that would be lost. This applied particularly to the Citizens Advice Bureau given its role in supporting and advising homeless people.

With regard to the proposals for Street Cleansing, Councillor S J Criswell expressed the view that the service currently was inequitably provided within the District. He suggested that either the budget

should be reduced and the Town Councils asked to make up the difference or the existing budget should be more equitably distributed amongst towns and villages. On the subject of District-wide, some members were of the opinion that the Council should review its plans only to produce it electronically as this method of communication would not reach a significant number of residents. It was stressed that some means was required of communicating with those who were not electronically enabled. Following this, comments were made about the adverse effect of cuts in planning and enforcement and a suggestion was made that planned increases in car parking charges should be staggered.

In discussing the proposals for the Council's CCTV Service, a number of Members commented on the benefits it provided, that it would be costly to re-introduce if this was deemed necessary and that it should be retained. Councillor S J Criswell reported that it was the intention of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) to investigate the value of the service and the options that were available. Having regard to the fact that parts of the service were paid for by some Parish Councils, it was suggested that this was an option that could be pursued alongside the potential to share costs with Cambridgeshire Constabulary as other authorities had done.

On the subject of the District Council's leisure centres, it was suggested that their economic and social benefits should be identified, together with the overall benefit of the leisure centres to the well-being of residents of the District. It would be necessary to establish the projected rate of return on the Council's planned investments in them for this purpose. In addition, while Councillor N J Guyatt recommended that the Council should immediately investigate placing the leisure centres into a trust to inform future plans, it was also held that if the leisure centres, through investment, became profitable, they should be retained so that the Council benefited from the income that they generated.

In response to a question by Councillor M F Shellens concerning his Motion to the Council meeting on 3rd November 2010, the Executive Councillor for Finance and Customer Services advised Members of details of the grants provided to voluntary organisations and that further consideration would need to be given to funding for voluntary organisations, that the Employment Panel was currently considering changes to the Payroll System and that a number of the suggestions relating to the potential for job sharing, sub-letting of Council premises and sharing of back office staff had already been adopted or were being pursued. Members also noted that investigations had revealed that it would not be feasible to sell and lease back Pathfinder House. With regard to the proposal to reduce the number of elected Members and the size of the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny function, the Panel noted that any electoral changes would be subject to approval by the Boundary Commission and were unlikely to generate savings in the current four year term. Similarly the size of the Cabinet was a matter for determination by the Leader of the Council.

At the conclusion of the discussion, the Leader of the Council, Councillor I C Bates, expressed his appreciation to the Panel and other Members of the Council of their contribution to the debate. He

was, however, disappointed at the absence of any alternative proposals for making savings or suggestions for generating income. Having outlined a number of initial comments on the suggestions that had been made, he reminded Members that the Budget was only in draft form at this stage and any further suggestions would be welcomed. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to approve a draft budget for submission to the Council, subject to the Panel's comments on:

- weighting the Council's priorities;
- investigations taking place into ways of retaining some services through shared services and job sharing;
- investigations taking place into alternative ways of delivering services rather than completely deleting some services;
- shaping the MTP into a vision;
- concerns regarding reductions in planning enforcement activities and in grants to voluntary organisations;
- outsourcing;
- using leisure centres for the provision of customer services;
- the need for a rationale on mothballing CCTV and consultations with the Community Safety Partnership on this service;
- reviewing the proposals on District Wide through a strategic approach to communication with residents;
- reviewing further back-office functions;
- delegating functions to Town and Parish Councils and the need to communicate any proposals as soon as possible;
- the need for investments to be informed by business plans;
- the need for contingency planning and for a rationale to be produced for changes; and
- staggering increasing in car parking changes.

54. TREASURY MANAGEMENT - REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE

(Councillor T V Rogers, Executive Councillor for Finance and Customer Services was in attendance for this item).

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) containing details of the Council's Investments for the period 1st April to 30th September 2010.

By way of introduction, the Head of Financial Services reminded the Panel of the background to the introduction of enhanced arrangements for overseeing the management of the Council's

financial investments and borrowing. Members' attention also was drawn to the strategic approach that had been adopted to the management of the District Council's investments and recent changes to Public Works Loan Board loan rates, which had increased the cost to local authorities of long term borrowing by 0.85%. The Head of Financial Services also explained recent changes, which had been made to the definition used for fixed and variable rate investments and the resulting need to change the borrowing limits in order to maximise the flexibility available to the Council to react to changes in interest rates. The Panel supported the proposed change.

In discussing the content of the report and in noting that the latest forecast outturn predicted that there would be an increase in investment interest compared with the net budget, Councillor M F Shellens sought clarification as to how this had been achieved. In response, the Head of Financial Services explained that it was through a combination of factors including higher than anticipated interest rates, improved cash flow and changes in the mix of expenditure.

Members' attention was drawn to a recent decision to invest with the Cambridge Building Society, which had enabled the Council to achieve a higher rate of return compared with other Building Societies for a short term investment. In response to a comment on the risks associated with investments in Building Societies, the Head of Financial Services informed Members that while some local authorities preferred to accept a lower return for complete security, a view had been taken that the securities offered by Building Societies were sufficient to minimise the risk to the Council associated with short term investments. Moreover, the funds invested were instantly available. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be requested to recommend the Council to note the contents of the report by the Head of Financial Services on Treasury Management – Review of Performance.

55. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

With the aid of a report by the Cabinet (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel were acquainted with Executive Members' deliberations and decisions in response to a joint report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels on the Council's performance against its priority objectives (Minute No. 10/34 refers).

Having been advised that the recommendation concerning external consultants had been referred back to the Corporate Plan Working Group for further review, it was agreed that it would be more appropriate for this work to be undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) and Councillors J D Ablewhite, G S E Thorpe and D M Tysoe, Mr R Hall and Mrs H Roberts were appointed to a working group for this purpose.

RESOLVED

that Councillors J D Ablewhite, G S E Thorpe and D M Tysoe,

Mr R Hall and Mrs H Roberts be appointed to a Working Group to review and make recommendations on the Council's use of consultants including the criteria used in the appointment of consultants and an assessment of the cost and value gained from using them.

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

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) reviewing progress of matters that had previously been discussed.

57. WORKPLAN

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. Councillor M F Shellens undertook to consult the Chairman on the terms of a possible future study on the financial implications of the Council's future housing responsibilities.

58. SCRUTINY

The Panel received and noted the latest edition of the Council's Decision Digest. In so doing and following the recent receipt of a Tree Replacement Notice, Councillor M F Shellens emphasised the need to re-consider the information which was circulated to Councillors with a view to securing cost savings.

Chairman

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FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

Prepared by
Date of Publication:
For Period:

Councillor I C Bates
11 November 2010
1 December 2010 to 31 March 2011

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 Resources and Policy	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 Housing and Public Health	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, Law, Property and Governance	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 and Customer Services	Honeysuckle Cottage 34 Meadow Lane Earith Huntingdon PE28 3QE Tel: 01487 840477 E-mail: Terence.Rogers@huntsdc.gov.uk

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

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

Roy Reeves
Head of Administration

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

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

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
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Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Environment Strategy Review	Cabinet	16 Dec 2010	None.	Dr Paul Jose, Head of Environmental Management Tel No 01480 388332 or e-mail Paul.Jose@huntsdc.gov.uk		J A Gray	Environmental Well-Being
One Leisure, St. Ives - Proposal for Development	Cabinet	16 Dec 2010	None	Simon Bell, General Manager, One Leisure Tel No. 01480 388049 or e-mail Simon.Bell@huntsdc.gov.uk		Mrs D C Reynolds	Social Well-Being
Asset Management Plan - Annual Report	Cabinet	16 Dec 2010	Previous Cabinet Reports	Keith Phillips, Estates and Property Manager Tel No. 01480 388260 or e-mail Keith.Phillips@huntsdc.gov.uk		Mrs D C Reynolds	Economic Well-Being
Home Improvement Agency Review - Future Delivery Model Consultation	Cabinet	20 Jan 2011	None	Steve Plant, Head of Housing Services Tel No. 01480 388240 or e-mail Steve.Plant@huntsdc.gov.uk		A Hansard	Social Well-Being
Local Transport Plan (LTP3)	Cabinet	17 Feb 2011	Draft Local Transport Plan	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No 01480 388430 or e-mail Paul.Bland@huntsdc.gov.uk	Endorse as Council policy	D B Dew	Environmental Well-Being
Open Space Strategy	Cabinet	17 Feb 2011	Open Space Strategy	Mr Howard Thackray, Policy and Strategic Services Manager Tel No 01480 388035 or e-mail Howard.Thackray@huntsdc.gov.uk	Planned with Town and Parish Councils	C Hyams	Social Well-Being
Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy	Cabinet	17 Feb 2011	Cambs County Council led project	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No 01480 388430 or e-mail Paul.Bland@huntsdc.gov.uk	Endorse as Council policy (further details required).	D B Dew	Environmental Well-Being

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Residential Travel Plan	Cabinet	17 Feb 2011	Cambs County Council led project	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or e-mail Paul.Bland@huntsdc.gov.uk	Endorse as Council policy (further details required).	D B Dew	Environmental Well-Being
Budget and MTP	Cabinet	17 Feb 2011	Draft MTP previous year's budget report various annexes	Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services Tel No. 01480 388103 or e-mail Steve.Couper@huntsdc.gov.uk	Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being)	T V Rogers	Economic Well-Being
Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators	Cabinet	17 Feb 2011	Previous year's strategy	Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services Tel No. 01480 388103 or e-mail Steve.Couper@huntsdc.gov.uk	Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being)	T V Rogers	Economic Well-Being
Contributions Community Infrastructure Levy Supplementary Planning Document***	Cabinet	17 Mar 2011	Local Investment Framework	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or e-mail Paul.Bland@huntsdc.gov.uk	Endorse as Council policy	D Dew	Environmental Well-Being

**DRAFT BUDGET 2011/12 AND MTP - FEEDBACK
(Report of the Cabinet)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting on 18th November 2010, the Cabinet considered a report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) on the draft budget 2011/2012 and the Medium Term Plan 2012/2016.

2. DELIBERATIONS

- 2.1 In recommending the draft budget and Medium Term Plan to Council as a basis for the development of the budget for 2011/2012 and the revised Medium Term Plan 2015/2016, the Cabinet has considered the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) thereon. In so doing, Members concurred with the Panel that investigations should take place until alternative delivery methods for services provided at the customer services centre. Initial discussions with Cambridgeshire County Council are currently underway with a view to working alongside their library service and further talks will be held with town and parish councils.
- 2.2 With regard to proposals to reduce the grants paid to voluntary organisations, Executive Councillors concurred with the Panel that these groups are likely to form an important part of the "localism" agenda and the public's demand on services that they provide may increase as a result of changes to the welfare system. The Cabinet concluded that these groups should be encouraged to explore a variety of alternative means of funding and revenue generation.
- 2.3 In discussing the Panel's views on the proposals for the CCTV service, the Cabinet's attention has been drawn to a number of options being investigated including the potential to enter into a joint arrangement with Cambridgeshire Constabulary, and/or town and parish councils.
- 2.4 With regard to the proposal to increase car parking charges from 2014, Members have emphasised the need to consider this carefully given the lack of adequate public transport, public opinion, ability of residents to pay and the implications of introducing civil parking enforcement.
- 2.5 Discussion has taken place on the options for the determination of levels of Council Tax for 2011/2012. Given the current economic climate, the impact on local residents and the Government proposed grant of 2.5% for councils that decide to freeze their council tax for the coming financial year, the Cabinet have recommended to Council that no increase in council tax for 2011/2012 be made.
- 2.6 Following further discussion on the Liberal Democrats proposals, the Cabinet has noted that a review of pay scales and allowances are currently underway along with the development of shared services initiatives and proposals to sub-let spare

office capacity. Areas identified as requiring further discussion included job-sharing, members allowances, the retention of the customer services centre and a reduction in the number of District Councillors. In that respect, the Cabinet expressed the view that any reduction in the number of District Councillors was unlikely to result in significant savings during the budget plan period.

- 2.7 The Cabinet has authorised Chief Officers Management Team, after consultation with the appropriate Executive Councillors, to prepare and implement plans for changes and reductions in services to achieve targeted saving plans for 2011/2012 and future years.

3. **CONCLUSION**

- 3.1 Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel are invited to note the contents of this report.

Contact Officer: Helen Taylor, Senior Democratic Services Officer - Tel: 01480 388008.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
SOCIAL WELL-BEING
ECONOMIC WELL-BEING
ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING

7TH December 2010
7TH December 2010
9TH December 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. A review of Growing Success, involving officers and members, is currently underway with the emphasis on local priorities, informed by national changes to performance arrangements.

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.

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:		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	100 (G)		↔	
	Regular reports on the performance of thematic groups are submitted to the HSP Executive and Board (1=yes, 0=no)	1	0 (R)		↓	No – HSP mtgs for Board and Executive have been cancelled for Oct/Nov
Key Measure:						
QRT						
Divisional Objective: Effective partnership framework						
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:		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)		↑	Yes ¾ of the project is complete. There are 2 remaining strategic partnerships to be assessed (CT and Cambs Horizons which may need to be reviewed in light of LEP developments and current debate on the future of CT)
Key Measure:						
QRT						
Community/Council Aim: To learn and develop						
Objective: To be an Employer People Want to Work For						
Division: People, Performance & Partnerships						
Divisional Objective: To attract and retain staff						
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:		Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:
Promoting from within wherever possible	Internal promotions as percentage of all vacancies filled	33	35.30 (G)		↑	Of 17 posts advertised in the last quarter, 6 were filled internally. There has been a significant increase in fixed term posts which may deter internal applications in the current economic climate (8 of the 17 posts advertised in the last quarter were on fixed
Key Measure:						
QRT						

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

Annex A - Economic Well-Being Quarterly Report
30 September 2010

							term contracts). All vacant posts are carefully considered prior to recruitment.	
			90	85.70 (A)	↓		14 people started in July-September 2009 and 12 were still in post after a year. Both of the leavers were on temporary fixed term contracts. 100% of those on permanent contracts were still in post after a year.	QRT
Recruitment package			80	64 (A)	↓		28 people started in July-September 2008 and 18 were still in post after two years. Three of the posts were on temporary fixed term contracts. 72% of those on permanent contracts were still in post after two years.	QRT
20			10	2.70 (G)	↔			QRT
Retaining and releasing employees appropriately			96	97.63 (G)	↓			QRT
Successful wellbeing initiatives which are improving attendance rates								
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:								
			Target: £3.38m	Actual: £3.02m (G)	Forecast: ↔	DoT*: ↔	Comment: Savings on staff (7%), premises (20%), supplies (21%), £93k improvement on previous year	QRT
Maintain expenditure within budget								
Maximise leisure centre income			Target: £2.79m	Actual: £2.63m (A)	Forecast: ↔	DoT*: ↓	Comment: Growth only at Huntingdon (10%) although St Neots will follow suit	QRT

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

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:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:
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	73 (G)		N/A	8 out of 11 bids were successful. Unsuccessful were Godmanchester Nursery, Ramsey Barge Dock, Sapley East Community and Social Enterprise Centre
		% of External Funding actions on track	90	60 (R)	80	↓	60% of the action are on target. The post has been vacant since the officer covering maternity leave left the authority in May. The action plan is currently being reviewed.

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<p>Objective</p>	<p>Comments from appropriate Head of Service</p>
<p>To enable effective partnerships</p>	<p>People, Performance & Partnerships: Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) will play a key role in both strategy and delivery of economic development and the LEP proposal covering the Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough area was approved at the end of October 2010.</p>
<p>Issues or actions for next quarter:</p>	<p>People, Performance & Partnerships: Cambridgeshire Together Strategic Partnership are currently reviewing their structure this may impact on the arrangements we have locally in Huntingdonshire.</p>
<p>Risks:</p>	<p>People, Performance & Partnerships: Cut in LPSA (Local Public Service Agreement) funding has meant some Huntingdonshire-based partnership projects are now unable to go ahead. The withdrawal of LPSA funding will undoubtedly affect Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) targets (e.g. holiday activity schemes, antisocial behaviour...).</p>
<p>To be an employer people want to work for</p>	<p>People, Performance & Partnerships: Council-wide Voluntary Release Scheme designed by HR, consulted on and approved by Employment Panel for roll out from 28 September to 12 January. Review and adoption of new stress policy and redundancy policy.</p>
<p>Issues or actions for next quarter:</p>	<p>People, Performance & Partnerships: Temporary posts have an impact on the retention rates of new employees that we are reporting and this is likely to continue as more posts are filled on a temporary basis. However, staff turnover remains low.</p>
<p>Risks:</p>	<p>The attendance rate has decreased slightly from 98% in the year to 30 June 2010 to 97.63% in the year to 30 September 2010 but remains well above the comparator rate of 96%.</p>
<p>Risks:</p>	<p>Leisure Centres:</p>
<p>To maximise business and income opportunities including extended funding and grants</p>	<p>Expenditure savings on staff (7%), premises (20%) and supplies and services (21%). Although income is below target, it is up in comparison to last year predominantly due to increased take following the redevelopment at Huntingdon. High performers again include swimming lessons and soft-play sessions although Impressions will exceed target once St Neots new income filters through (400 new Direct Debit Impressions & Pure members in the first three weeks – equivalent to over £14k per month). A current replacement of fitness equipment at St Ives will also see further returns in the next quarter. Profit margins on bars and all varieties of catering are on or above target and overall recovery rate is now 82% compared to 77% at the same stage last year. Centre controllable net position at the end of quarter two is £93k better than the previous year and the expected out-turn is expected to be less than £600k with hopes remaining high to limit this to £500k</p>

Objective	Comments from appropriate Head of Service
	<p><u>People, Performance & Partnerships:</u> External Funding Officer has now returned from maternity leave. This post had been vacant since the officer covering it left the authority in May. Countywide bid to BDUK for part of £1.5m central government funding for 3 broadband pilot projects has got through the first round as EEDA's preferred project for the region and we are awaiting the final decision.</p> <p><u>Leisure Centres:</u> School income is traditionally lowest during the summer term (currently 28% of target) but will pick up over the autumn and winter months. All areas of expenditure - staff hours, opening hours, contractor costs - are under constant and thorough review.</p> <p><u>People, Performance & Partnerships:</u> Godmanchester nursery, Ramsey barge dock and Sapley community and social enterprise centre bids were unsuccessful.</p> <p><u>People, Performance & Partnerships:</u> Cut in LPSA funding has meant some strategic projects led by the Council are now unable to go ahead unless alternative funding can be found to support them e.g. Ramsey Enterprise Centre.</p>
<p>Issues or actions for next quarter:</p>	
<p>Risks:</p>	

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date For Future Action
15/07/10	<p><u>Grant Aid</u></p> <p>Annual Report on organisations supported by grants through Service Level Agreements received by Panel.</p>		Next report due July 2011.	07/11
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 twice per year and formally twice per year.</p>	Report to be included on Panel Agenda in July and January.	<p>Next report due January 2011, together with presentation on the changes to Customer Services.</p> <p>Latest report circulated in October 2010.</p>	13/01/11
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>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>Report received at February 2010 meeting, Panel requested further information on the rate of alcohol specific hospital admissions for the under 18s and qualitative data on alcohol consumption in rural areas.</p> <p>Further consideration to be given to the means by which this study can be taken forward at the December meeting.</p>	<p>TBC</p> <p>TBC</p>

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date For Future Action
19/05/10	<u>Corporate Plan Working Group</u> Councillors J Ablewhite and GSE Thorpe have been appointed to the Corporate Plan Working Group.	Quarterly performance reports to be submitted to all Overview and Scrutiny Panels.	Meeting of Corporate Plan Working Group held on Monday 29 th November 2011. See item on the agenda	09/12/10
12/11/09	<u>Local Government Act 2000 – Forward Plan</u> Covert Surveillance Policy review	Received Presentation by Council's Solicitor and Fraud Manager on the operation of current policy (April 2010)	Policy to be reviewed in due course. Await return on Forward Plan.	TBC
09/09/10	Asset Management Plan – Annual Report		Report to be submitted to a future meeting.	13/01/11
10/6/10	<u>Visitor Development & Town Centre Vibrancy</u> Received a presentation by the Head of People, Performance & Partnerships and the Sustainable Economic Development Manager. Requested a further report outlining the cost of the service and the benefits it brings to both the Council and the District.		Report to be submitted to future meeting. Advised by Head of People, Performance & Partnerships that this will be following the conclusion of the Budget process.	10/03/11

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date For Future Action
10/6/10	<p><u>Performance Management – Leisure Centres</u> Requested a further report on the financial performance and future plans of the Leisure Centres Hospitality Service.</p> <p>Requested a future report on the overall financial performance of the Leisure Centres and their employment structure.</p>		<p>Requested an assessment of the degree to which bars attracted customers to the Leisure Centres.</p> <p>Requested more detailed financial information. Requested further information which separated out the “social” services provided by One Leisure from those services which competed with the Private Sector. The information should contain key business indicators and include business reference plans, the calculation of re-charges and a breakdown of the staff structure at Leisure Centres.</p> <p>Requested an Annual Report on the Performance of One-Leisure.</p>	<p>13/01/11</p> <p>13/01/11</p> <p>TBC</p>
15/0710	<p><u>Scrutiny of Partnerships</u> Agreed to consider the Economic Prosperity & Skills Performance Report at a future meeting.</p>		To be deferred pending outcome of review of partnership options / arrangements for Huntingdonshire.	SPRING 2011

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date For Future Action
03/06/10	<p><u>Proposed Amendments to the Huntingdonshire District Council Budget 2010/11</u></p> <p>Requested a further report on public perception and the effectiveness of District Wide and on ways of reducing the cost of its production.</p> <p>Officers to investigate ways of altering the format of Council publications to reduce cost.</p>		<p>Report to be presented to a future meeting. Advised by Head of People, Performance & Partnerships that this will be following the conclusion of the Budget process</p> <p>Design and Project support officer currently reviewing for Action Lists, Committee Reports, Corporate Agendas, Email Signatures, Forward Plans, General Word Documents, Letters, Minutes, News Releases, Powerpoint presentations, Projects, Service Plans and Strategy Reports. Currently awaiting sign off.</p>	10/03/11
11/11/10	<p><u>Budget & Medium Term Plan</u></p> <p>Agreed to convey a number of comments to the Cabinet.</p>		See separate item on agenda.	
11/11/10	<p><u>Use of Paper</u></p> <p>Councillor M F Shellens commented on the circulation of a seventeen page Tree Replacement Notice.</p>		Comments referred to Head of Planning Service.	

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date For Future Action
	<p><u>Workplan Studies</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The employees Performance Development Review process 2. The implications for Huntingdonshire of the abolition of the East of England Development Agency and its replacement with Local Enterprise Partnerships. 3. Implications of the Government's decision not to proceed with improvements to the A14 for the local economy. 4. The Financial Implications of the Council's future housing responsibilities. 		<p>This is being considered as part of the project reviewing the pay structure which is expected to conclude in Spring 2011.</p> <p>Report requested from Head of People, Performance & Partnerships.</p> <p>Report to be prepared by Scrutiny & Review Manager.</p> <p>Councillor M F Shellens to consult with the Chairman with regards to the terms of a future study.</p>	<p>2011</p> <p>09/12/10</p> <p>13/01/11</p> <p>TBC</p>
<p>09/09/10</p> <p>11/11/10</p>	<p><u>Use of External Consultants</u></p> <p>Endorsed a recommendation to the Cabinet to reduce the amount the Council spends on employing external consultants by £1.5m in the current financial year.</p> <p>Agreed that the review should be undertaken by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) and appointed Councillors J D Ablewhite, G S E Thorpe, D M Tysoe, Mr R Hall and Mrs H Roberts to a working group for this purpose.</p>		<p>Report considered by Cabinet at their meeting on 21st October 2010. Agreed that the matter be referred back to the Corporate Plan Working Group for further review.</p> <p>First meeting held on 30th November 2010. Panel to discuss the issues further with Heads of Planning Services, Head of Law, Property & Governance and Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy & Transportation at their meeting on 9th December 2011.</p>	

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

7TH DECEMBER 2010
7TH DECEMBER 2010
9TH DECEMBER 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 Details of ongoing studies are set out in the attached Appendix.

2.4 Members are reminded that if they have a specific interest in any study area which is not being considered by their Panel there are opportunities for involvement in all the studies being undertaken.

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 C Bulman, Democratic Services Officer
01480 388234**

ONGOING STUDIES

STUDY	OBJECTIVES	PANEL	STATUS	TYPE
Car Parking at Hinchingbrooke Hospital	To investigate the causes of public complaints regarding the provision of parking facilities at the Hospital.	Social Well-Being	Six month review of new pricing structure to be conducted with the Hospital in December.	Whole Panel Study
Visitor Development & Town Centre Vibrancy	To consider issues relating to Visitor Development & Town Centre Vibrancy.	Economic Well-Being	Further information requested on the cost of the tourism service and the benefits it brings to both the Council and to the District.	Whole Panel Study
Consultation Processes	To review the Council's current consultation processes with a view to determining whether the approach taken to consultation is suitable and consistent across the authority.	Social Well-Being	Panel has begun to scope this study. Report to be considered at Panel's December meeting. The Policy and Strategic Services Manager will be in attendance at the meeting.	Whole Panel Study
Gypsy & Traveller Welfare	To be determined pending receipt of background information on existing gypsy and traveller sites already established within the District.	Social Well-Being	Report requested for submission to a future meeting. Following consultation with the Chairman, agreed that the report would be deferred until further notice.	To be determined.

Health Implications of the Night Time Economy	To follow up the previous study undertaken by the former Overview and Scrutiny (Service Support)	Economic Well-Being	Further information requested with regards to the rate of alcohol-specific hospital admissions for under 18s and the availability of any available qualitative data on alcohol consumption in rural areas. Alcohol Harm Reduction Co-ordinator asked to attend a future meeting to discuss the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy.	Whole Panel Study
Planning Conservation	To consider & evaluate the role of the Council's Planning Conservation Team in the preservation of Huntingdonshire's built heritage with particular reference to conservation areas and listed buildings.	Environmental Well-Being	Working Group meetings held on 29 th July, 5 th August, 2 nd September, 7 th and 22 nd October, 11 th and 18 th November 2010.	Working Group.
Leisure Centre Financial Performance and Employment Structure	To review the overall financial performance and monitoring arrangements. To consider the current Employment Structure.	Economic Well-Being	Requested further information for submission to future meeting.	Whole Panel Study.
CCTV Provision within the District	To review the impact of the Council's proposal to cease the CCTV service with effect from April 2010.	Social Well-Being	The views of the Police and the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership have been sought on the impact of the Council's proposals. A report to this effect will be submitted to the Panel's	Whole Panel Study.

				December meeting.	
Proposals to replace EEDA with LEPs.	To establish the implications of these proposals.	Economic Well-Being		Presentation to be given to December meeting.	To be determined.
A14 improvements.	To review the implications to the local economy of the decision not to proceed with the A14 improvements.	Economic Well-Being		Report requested for submission to a future meeting,	To be determined,
The Use of Consultants	To review the criteria used in the appointment of consultants and assess the cost and value gained from using them.	Economic Well-Being		Working Group established. First meeting to be held on 30 th November 2010. Discussion to be conducted at Panel meeting with Head of Law, Property & Governance, Head of Planning Services and Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy & Transportation.	Working Group.
The Financial Implications of the Council's Future Housing Responsibilities.	To be determined.	Economic Well-Being		Councillor M F Shellens to discuss with Chairman the possible terms of the study.	To be determined.
Tree Strategy	To form a strategy in conjunction with the Tree Officers for the retention and planting of trees.	Environmental Well-Being		Working Group meetings on 5 th and 24 th November 2010.	Working Group.

POSSIBLE FUTURE STUDIES

<p>The Employees Performance Development Review Process</p>	<p>To review the current process.</p>	<p>Economic Well-Being</p>	<p>Outcome of Officer Review to be reported to the Panel when this is concluded. Work is expected to conclude in February 2011.</p>	<p>To be determined.</p>
<p>Land Use for Agricultural Purpose in the context of planning policies and its contribution to the local economy.</p>	<p>To review the lack of promotion and protection of land for this purpose.</p>	<p>Environmental Well-Being</p>	<p>Not being pursued as a study at the current time.</p>	<p>To be determined.</p>
<p>Rural Transport</p>	<p>To review the lack of transportation in rural areas.</p>	<p>Environmental Well-Being</p>	<p>Not being pursued as a study at the current time.</p>	<p>To be determined.</p>



Decision Digest

Edition 109

Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 1st to 30th November 2010.

HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY: CONSULTATION DRAFT

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has considered the Council's draft Homelessness Strategy, which was reviewed under the provisions of the Homelessness Act 2002. Homelessness is of growing concern for the Council and increases in financial and resource pressures and changes prompted by the Government to the Council's housing benefit system will further add to the increasing levels of demand for housing advice and homelessness within the District.

A number of preventative measures have contributed towards the homelessness reductions achieved by the Council, the most successful of these measures is the Rent Deposit/Rent In Advance Scheme.

Concern was registered at the need to identify funding and resources for a number of actions contained within the Strategy, owing to the fact that funding from the Government's Homelessness Prevention Budget might not continue beyond 2010/11. The challenge to identify resources will continue to remain, particularly when considering the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review announcement and the Council's future budget process and efficiency programme. Other matters

that were discussed included the types of accommodation available, migrant workers and the factors that constrain the Council from using exception sites within the District.

The Cabinet has subsequently noted the concerns of the Panel and approved the contents of the Strategy for publication.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has considered the Cambridgeshire Local Investment Plan (CLIP) which is currently subject to consultation. The Plan intends to facilitate the delivery of investment in a range of housing, infrastructure, regeneration and community activities taking into account locally determined priorities and a number of existing Countywide strategies and plans. The Plan identifies investment needs across Cambridgeshire and will primarily be used as evidence to support bids to draw in external funding to the area.

The establishment of a Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEP) will assist with streamlining the current partnership framework across the County which is considered to be complex. Under the LEP, cross boundary working practices will be adopted. Members have expressed differing views on the extent

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

to which the Council should engage in collaboration with other authorities and on the benefits it would bring. The importance of the CLIP in competing for financial resources has been acknowledged by the Panel, particularly as the Homes and Communities Agency has experienced a 50% reduction in funding which was announced in the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review.

The Panel has registered concern at the way upgrades or improvements to the local road network infrastructure have been prioritised. The implications of this for housing and economic growth in the area have also been considered. Particular reference was made to the A14 and the A428.

Discussion has taken place on housing schemes within Huntingdonshire identified for completion between 2010/11 and 2013/14. The Panel has suggested that the data employed by the County Council in respect of population projections for the District should be updated.

Finally, the Panel has requested that a further report be submitted to them on the implications of the CLIP for local housing to include potential shortfalls in the delivery of affordable housing within the District.

Subsequently, the Cabinet has approved the content of the Plan, in doing so they have concurred with the Panel over the importance of upgrading the A14.

MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS (PLANNING OBLIGATIONS)

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-being) has been updated on the receipt and expenditure by the Council of money negotiated under Section 106 Agreements. The Section 106 Agreement Advisory Group did not concur with the Panel's suggestion to adopt a project plan for each scheme as it was felt that the current arrangements were satisfactory. As the

Panel is still of the view that such a plan would enable more effective monitoring to take place, Councillor P G Mitchell has undertaken to raise the matter at the next Development Management Panel meeting.

PROVISION OF PLAY FACILITIES

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has noted that the Council spent an estimated £22,300 per year on revenue costs for six skate park facilities located within the District. These costs include weekly inspections, surface painting, other repairs and ROSPA inspections.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The outcome of the Cabinet's deliberations in response to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels' report on the Council's performance against its priority objectives was received and noted by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels. The matter concerning external consultants has been referred back to the Corporate Plan Working Group for further review to include the criteria used in the appointment of consultants and an assessment of the cost and value gained from using them.

In considering the content of the report, the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) have agreed that the review of the use of external consultants might best be undertaken by them and have appointed Councillors J D Ablewhite, G S E Thorpe, D M Tysoe, Mr R Hall and Mrs H Roberts to a working group for this purpose.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE ADULTS WELL-BEING AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has received an update on matters currently being considered by the Cambridgeshire Adults Well-Being and Health Scrutiny Committee which included the Older Peoples' Mental Health Strategy.

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

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has reviewed its programme of studies. Hinchingsbrooke Hospital is shortly due to commence its review of the revised pricing structure and car park concessions at the Hospital. Clarification on how the Panel will be involved in the review process is being investigated by Officers.

DRAFT BUDGET 2011/12 AND MTP 2012/16

In conjunction with the Cabinet, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) have examined the draft Budget for 2011/12 and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTP) for the period 2012-16 at its meeting on 11th November 2010. To assist the Panel in their deliberations, all Members of the Council were invited to attend.

Following an extensive discussion, the Panel has made a number of comments for consideration by the Cabinet in the preparation of the Budget for 2011/12. These include the need to consider:-

- weighting the Council's priorities;
- investigations into ways of retaining some services through shared services and job sharing;
- investigations into alternative ways of delivering services rather than completely deleting some services;
- shaping the MTP into a vision;
- concerns regarding cuts in grants to voluntary organisations and in planning enforcement;

- outsourcing;
- the need for a rationale for mothballing CCTV and consultations with the Community Safety Partnership on this service.
- reviewing the proposals for District Wide through a strategic approach to communication with residents;
- comments about the potential to provide Customer Service Centre functions from Leisure Centres;
- retaining front-line services;
- reviewing further back-office functions;
- the need to communicate with Town and Parish Councils at the earliest opportunity;
- the need for investments to be informed by business plans;
- the need for contingency planning and for a rationale to be produced for changes; and
- staggering increases in car parking charges.

The Panel has also received a preliminary response from the Executive Councillor for Finance & Customer Services with regard to the proposals for financial savings presented by the Liberal Democrat Group to the Council meeting on 3rd November 2010.

These conclusions have subsequently been referred to the Cabinet who have recommended to Council that the draft Budget and MTP be approved as a basis for the development of the budget

for 2011/2016 and the MTP for 2012/2016. Whilst considering the options for the determination of levels of council tax for 2011/2012, the Cabinet has been mindful of the Government's incentive of a 2.5% grant for councils that decide to freeze their council tax for the coming financial year. Having referred also to the current economic climate and the impact on local residents, the Cabinet has recommended to Council that no provision be made for an increase in Council Tax for 2011/12.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT – REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE

Having been reminded of the background to the introduction of enhanced arrangements for overseeing the management of the Council's financial investigations and borrowing, the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has reviewed the performance of the Council's Investments for the period 1st April to 30th September 2010.

The Panel has noted that the latest forecast outturn had predicted an increase in investment income and the reasons for this. The Panel has also noted recent changes to the definition used for fixed and variable rate investments and the need to change the borrowing limits in order to maximise the flexibility to react to changes in interest rates.

Attention having been drawn to the recent decision to invest with the Cambridge Building Society which had enabled the Council to achieve a higher rate of return compared with other Building Societies, the Panel has discussed the risks associated with such investments. Having done so, the Panel has recommended that the Council should be invited to note the contents of the report.

Subsequently, the Cabinet has approved the contents of the report.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

Fifteen applications were considered by the Development Management Panel in November. Of interest generally will be the Panel's decision to refuse an application for a new Lidl Neighbourhood Foodstore on Stukeley Road, Huntingdon principally because the applicant had failed to demonstrate why the store could not be located in the town centre or not have an adverse impact on planning retail development in the town. However, it was also considered that the siting, design, layout and landscaping of the proposal did not represent the high quality scheme which would be desirable in the area.

The Head of Planning Services was authorised to approve, following a contaminated land risk assessment, an application for a new purpose built scout and guides centre on land between Weston Farm, Great Drove and Mere View, Yaxley. The land is currently owned by Yaxley Parish Council.

The Panel also has indicated its support for an application which will involve the relocation of Rushton's Engineering Co from their existing site on Brampton Road, Huntingdon to two purpose built factory units on land at Fenton Road, Warboys. A proposed S106 obligation will ensure that RECO is the first occupier of the new site and secure the cessation of the use of the existing site in Huntingdon. As this application is a proposed departure from the Development Plan, it will be considered by Council on 15th December.

S106 AGREEMENT ADVISORY GROUP

The Development Management Panel has appointed Councillor P L E Bucknell to replace Councillor Mrs B E Boddington in the Membership of the

S106 Advisory Group. In thanking Councillor Mrs Boddington for her contribution to the Group, the Panel acknowledged that it was her duties as Vice-Chairman of the Council that had prevented Councillor Mrs Boddington from attending meetings of late.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PROGRESS REPORT: 1ST JULY - 30TH SEPTEMBER 2010

Having commented previously about the disappointing level of income received from planning fees against budget in the previous quarter, the Development Management Panel were pleased to note that the number of applications submitted in the quarter 1st July - 30th September had improved over the corresponding period in 2009 which had, in turn, resulted in a consequential increase in income. It was suggested that the ongoing trend appeared to be a rise in the workload for the Development Management Division.

GREENHOUSE PROJECT

Having had a tour of the two properties in St. Ives and St. Neots modernised by the Council as part of the "Greenhouse Project". The Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel has stated that the cost savings associated with the energy saving measures should be widely publicised to householders alongside the reduction in carbon emissions. With regard to the staffing implications of having the houses manned while they are open to the public, Members have been advised that it will be possible for officers to work from the houses due to the availability of wi-fi.

ABANDONED SHOPPING TROLLEYS

The Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel has been advised that at the previous meeting of the Huntingdon Neighbourhood Forum complaints had been raised by members of the public about the number of shopping trolleys being abandoned by customers at town centre shops. Members have been informed of the powers available to the Council if Section 99 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 is adopted which would enable the Council to collect shopping trolleys that appear to have been abandoned and store them for up to six months. If a trolley is not claimed within this time, it can be sold or disposed of by the Council. If a trolley is seized, the owners have to be served with a notice within 14 days stating that it has been removed, where it is being stored and, if it is un-claimed, that the Council will dispose of it. The cost of seizing, storing and returning a trolley can be recovered by the Council from the owner of the trolley if the company ask for its return. With regard to the possibility of adopting Section 99 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Panel has been advised that the Council has limited storage facilities for any trolleys that are collected and that the low number of complaints together with the co-operation of supermarket owners makes such a venture unnecessary.

ST. NEOTS EAST URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK

The Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel has considered a report on development opportunities for land east of the railway line, St. Neots. The principal areas of concern were highways and educational provision. In view of the separation from the rest of the town by the East Coast main rail line, the Panel

has acknowledged that, without careful planning, there is a danger of a separate community developing which is not integrated with the remainder of the town. The Panel has accepted that the idea of a third secondary school in St. Neots located within the Eastern expansion might exacerbate the sense of a separate identity and therefore have not supported the recommendation of the Development Management Panel in that respect. The Panel has suggested that an adequate financial contribution be secured from developers to ensure that the existing secondary education establishments in St. Neots could be expanded to meet the anticipated increase in pupil numbers. With regard to primary education, the Panel has been advised that the County Council have sought a minimum of three new schools as part of the development as there is under-capacity west of the rail line in existing establishments. The land use plan suggested an allocation of land for two new schools in addition to the existing primary school already provided as part of the Loves Farm Development. However, the Panel has queried whether it is sufficient for a projected development of 5,000 homes. The Panel has also queried the proposed distribution of sites for primary schools within the eastern expansion with those houses in the north-eastern sector of the new development being some distance from the primary school proposed. The Panel have also commented on the highway provision and particularly the uncertainty over improvements to the A428 before the development takes place, with the new development creating greater pressure on the already congested A428. The Panel is also keen to ensure that there is sufficient vehicular links in addition to those proposed for cyclists and walkers as a failure to do so could lead to unacceptable congestion on those which currently exist via Cambridge Street via the A428.

These conclusions have subsequently been referred to the Cabinet who have

approved the document as Planning Policy.

PLANNING FOR SCHOOLS DEVELOPMENT CONSULTATION

Councillor P J Downes has addressed the Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel on a recently published planning for schools development consultation exercise which has invited views on the Government's proposals to make changes to the general permitted development order to give permitted development rights for a change of use for a school development. The purpose of the proposals is to support the Department for Education's policy on new "free schools" but Councillor Downes has raised a concern that the proposed absence of any requirement for planning permission will prevent any local objection to the opening of the new school, dispense with the requirement for a traffic impact assessment and remove any democratic involvement in the process. Under the circumstances it has been decided that an ad-hoc working group be set up to include Councillor Downes, Councillor P G Mitchell as Chairman of the Development Management Panel and Councillor D B Dew as Executive Councillor for Planning Strategy and Transport to draft a response to the consultation for consideration at the next meeting of the Panel prior to the closing date for comment of 10th December 2010.

RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE EMPLOYEE LIAISON ADVISORY GROUP

The Employment Panel has considered a request from Employee Side representatives to extend the period during which employees may apply for the Voluntary Release Scheme until the Council's Budget has been determined in February 2011. However, the Panel has concluded that it would not be practical or equitable to extend this stage of the scheme.

The Panel has also been acquainted with discussions which had taken place at a recent meeting arranged for all staff by Employee Side and Trade Union representatives on the Council's draft Budget and the implications for employees.

CHANGES TO THE EMPLOYEE LIAISON ADVISORY GROUP

The Employment Panel has been acquainted with the outcome of the review by the Democratic Structure Working Group on the operation of the Employment Panel and its related structures, which had been endorsed by the Council at their meeting in September 2010.

Although the Council had made no changes to the operation of the Employment Panel, the Panel has noted the changes which had been made to the membership and operation of the Employee Liaison Advisory Group (ELAG). Consequently the Panel has appointed Councillors J W Davies, Mrs P A Jordan, P A Swales and T V Rogers to serve on the Group for the remainder of the municipal year.

The Panel has also endorsed minor changes to the Group's Terms of Reference. The changes relate to the size of the quorum and also will enable attendance at the Group of Trade Union representatives on an advisory or consultative basis if required.

VOLUNTARY REDUNDANCY SCHEME

The Employment Panel has received an update on the roll-out of the Voluntary Release Scheme across the Council and noted that the first stage has now concluded. Three applications had been received and considered by the Employee Selection Panel.

The Panel has been advised of progress with the second stage, noted that there were 6 weeks remaining and received details of the guidance and support which was being given to Managers and employees by HR Services.

The Panel also has been updated on the ongoing review of pay, the pay structure and allowances, which would form the basis of discussions with employees in due course.

DISABILITY AT WORK POLICY

To comply with the 2010 Equality Act and reflect best practice, the Employment Panel has adopted a policy for disability at work. The Policy is intended that disabled employees are supported at work, that there is no unfair discrimination or harassment of them on the grounds of disability. It also provides managers and employees with guidance on a range of reasonable adjustments that the Council can provide to disabled employees to support them in the workplace.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYMENT MONITORING

Having noted that the 2010 Equality Act requires the Council to publish information relating to the characteristics of its employees, the Employment Panel has received and noted the results of the equal opportunities monitoring of its workforce over the period 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010.

In reviewing the statistics, the Panel has observed several issues which reflect well on the organisation and suggest that there is no evidence of discrimination within the Council. The Panel has also noted that further reports will be produced as required under the Act, Regulations and Codes of Practice and that every effort would

be made to ensure that they provide a cost benefit.

STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

Having considered the contents of a revised Statement of Licensing Policy under the Licensing Act 2003, the Cabinet has recommended its approval to Council. The statement has been updated to take into account the latest regulations and guidance issued by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport.

LAND AT MILL ROAD, EATON SOCON

The Cabinet has approved in principle the sale of Council owned land at Mill Road, Eaton Socon to an adjoining landowner for the development of a residential scheme. The transaction will include the developer providing replacement facilities for an existing scout headquarters that currently occupies the land.

EMPLOYEE SELECTION PANEL – APPLICATIONS FOR VOLUNTARY RELEASE

In accordance with the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Cabinet has confirmed that there are no material objections to the recommendations of the Employee Selection Panel regarding applications for voluntary release from senior managers under stage 1 of the voluntary release scheme.