

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in the **CIVIC SUITE 0.1A, THE PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2010** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

APOLOGIES


**Contact
(01480)**

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 21st July 2010.

**Mrs H J Taylor
388008**

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

3. FINANCIAL STRATEGY (Pages 7 - 26)

To consider a report by the Head of Financial Services

**S Couper
388103**

4. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT (Pages 27 - 54)

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

**Ms C Garbett
388459**

5. THE REVOCATION OF THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY - IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ADOPTED HUNTINGDONSHIRE CORE STRATEGY 2009 AND THE JOINT CAMBRIDGESHIRE APPROACH TO STRATEGIC PLANNING (Pages 55 - 76)

To consider a report by the Head of Planning Services on the implications of the Government's revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy and the adoption of a joint Cambridgeshire approach to strategic planning.

**S Ingram
388400**

6. FORMAT OF THE COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE - THE CHOICE OF EXECUTIVE LEADER OR ELECTED MAYOR (Pages 77 - 88)

To consider a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services proposing a change in governance arrangements in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement

**R Reeves
388003**

Act 2007.

7. SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME (Pages 89 - 142)

To consider a report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships on progress of the Council's Corporate Equality Policy Action Plan and seeking endorsement of the new Single Equality Scheme.

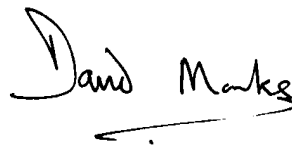
Mrs L Sboui
388032

8. DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE WORKING GROUP (Pages 143 - 148)

To receive the report of the Working Group held on 6th July 2010.

Miss H Ali
388006

Dated this 16 day of September 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 H Taylor, Senior Democratic Services Officer, Tel No. 01480 388008/e-mail Helen.Taylor@huntsdc.gov.uk /e-mail: 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 Cabinet.

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 CABINET held in Meeting Room 0.1A, Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 22 July 2010.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.

Councillors K J Churchill, D B Dew,
A Hansard, C R Hyams, Mrs D C Reynolds,
T V Rogers and L M Simpson.

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

22. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 17th June 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

23. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Bates and Churchill declared personal interests in Minute No 26 by virtue of their membership of Cambridgeshire County Council. Councillor Hyams declared a personal interest in Minute 27 by virtue of his membership of Godmanchester Town Council.

24. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING: 2009/10 OUTTURN AND 2010/11 BUDGET

A report by the Head of Financial Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of the final outturn for revenue expenditure for 2009/2010 and the variations between the original and the outturn budget for that year.

Members noted that £1913,000 had been transferred to a Special Reserve to finance any "invest to save" proposals. In discussing the main variations in the programme, Executive Councillors mentioned the reduction in income from schools using the leisure centre facilities. The Cabinet also noted the position in terms of the monitoring of the revenue budget in the current year to date and the impact of the Government's announcement that a number of grants already awarded for 2010/11 would now be withdrawn. Their attention having been drawn to an increase in the total amount of payments written-off during April to June 2010 for Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates, Members were advised that this was a consequence of the downturn in the economic climate.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the spending variations for the revenue budget for 2009/2010 be noted;

- (b) that the present position in terms of the revenue budget for 2010/2011 outturn be noted; and
- (c) that the position on debts collected and written-off as set out in Annex C to the report now submitted be noted.

25. CAPITAL MONITORING: 2009/10 OUTTURN AND 2010/11 BUDGET

A report by the Head of Financial Services was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) detailing the outturn for capital expenditure in 2009/10 and adjustments for 2010/11 budget.

In noting variations in the programme, Executive Councillors were advised that the level of Local Public Service Agreement performance reward grant was likely to be considerably less than had been budgeted. At the same time, Members noted plans announced by the Government to abolish Go-East and the possible implications for the authority. Whereupon, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the report be received and the expenditure variations noted; and
- (b) that a further report be submitted to Cabinet evaluating the implications of the closure of Go-East and other regional organisations and plans.

26. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT

By way of a report by the Heads of Planning Services and of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the background to the option of introducing Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) as a way of improving the level of on street parking enforcement throughout the County.

Members were reminded that the District Council's management of the off-street parking arrangements was to a high standard, but that there was little enforcement of on-street restrictions by the Police, with no likelihood of any improvement unless CPE was introduced.

In discussing the implications for the District Council, Executive Councillors were advised that the Department for Transport preferred a co-ordinated approach to on and off-street parking enforcement. With this in mind, initial discussions had been held with Cambridgeshire County Council to explore possible operational scenarios for a joint scheme. In that respect, Executive Councillors were of the opinion that any change should not be to the detriment of the existing off-street arrangements and mention also was made to the potential impact on the street ranger service which currently combined parking enforcement with a range of other front line services, the cost effectiveness of which could be affected by its separation from parking enforcement.

Having noted the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) on the matter, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that further negotiations be held with Cambridgeshire County Council and other authorities over the possible introduction of Civil Parking Enforcement and a further report submitted to the Cabinet when appropriate.

27. PUBLIC CONVENIENCES - RESPONSE TO PETITION

The Cabinet gave consideration to a report by the Director of Environmental and Community Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) drawing attention to three petitions from the Shopmobility Group in Huntingdon, Godmanchester Community Association and Ramsey residents regarding the closure of public conveniences across the District. Two of the petitions had been presented to Council and referred to the Cabinet, while the person submitting the third petition had agreed that it could be submitted to Cabinet in conjunction with the others on the same subject.

Executive Councillors were reminded that the decision to reduce expenditure on the maintenance public conveniences had been taken on financial grounds and as a result of an acknowledgement that the service should be more appropriately dealt with by town and parish councils.

Particular mention was made of the town councils' ability to raise their precept in the present economic climate whereas the level of council tax for district and county councils had been frozen for 2011/12 by the Government.

Having been advised of the views expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) and in stressing that officers were available to offer advice and assistance to the town councils on the matter, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the current position with regard to the transfer and closure of public conveniences across the District be noted;
- (b) that the petitions from the Shopmobility Group in Huntingdon, Godmanchester Community Association and the residents of Ramsey be received; and
- (c) that a further report be submitted by the Director of Environmental and Community Services on the future of the conveniences in Huntingdon bus station in October 2010.

(Councillor Hyams requested that his name be recorded as voting against the motion)

28. 2009/10 ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT

A report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which reviewed the Council's performance against the targets within the Corporate Plan for the year ending 31st March 2010.

Having been informed that the data would be reported to local residents via the District Wide newsletter and the Council's website, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the contents of the annual performance data for 2009/2010 be approved.

29. RISK REGISTER

By way of a report by the Audit and Risk Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet was reminded that a register had been developed to identify corporate risks. Four risks had been identified as very high or red which needed to be brought to the attention of the Cabinet under the Risk Management Strategy.

In considering the information contained in the report, Executive Councillors were advised of the options available to manage the risks to reduce their likelihood and severity and the associated financial implications. In that respect, Executive Councillors noted that the cost of complying with the requirements imposed by the Government Connect secure network had been drawn to the attention of the Secretary of State.

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted and the actions proposed approved within existing resources.

30. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the press and public be excluded because the business to be transacted contains exempt information to an individual/organisation and is likely to reveal their identity/terms of the contract.

31. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES DIRECTORATE - HEAD OF OPERATIONS

Councillor L M Simpson reported on the outcome of a meeting of the Appointments Panel which had interviewed short-listed candidates for the post of Head of Operations at a meeting held earlier that day.

Having been acquainted with the requirement of paragraph 4 (e) of the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Cabinet confirmed that

there was no material or well founded objection to the Panel's proposals with regard to the offer of an appointment to fill the vacancy.

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

(Councillor B Chapman – Ward Member for St Neots Priory Park was in attendance and spoke on this item)

Further to Minute No. 33/09 and by way of a report by the Head of Law, Property and Governance (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) the Cabinet was apprised of the tenders received for the leasehold interest of land at the former fire station site and waste recycling centre, Huntingdon Street, St. Neots.

In so doing, Members' attention was drawn to the views of the Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) Panel regarding the importance of complying with the Planning Brief for the site and the need for the developer to secure the agreement of the St Neots Town Council over the release of land in that authority's ownership to facilitate the development proposed.

In the discussion, it was suggested that any future assignment of the lease to the successful tender should be subject to a condition that this should be limited to future leisure use only.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) that the Director of Central Services after consultation with the Executive Councillors for Finance and Customer Services and for Leisure, Law, Property and Governance, be authorised to approve the terms for the disposal of the land at the former fire station site and waste recycling centre, Huntingdon Street, St. Neots to the developer named in the recommendation in paragraph 7.1 (ii) of the report now submitted.

Chairman

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**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
CABINET
COUNCIL**

**9 SEPTEMBER 2010
16 SEPTEMBER 2010
29 SEPTEMBER 2010**

**FINANCIAL FORECAST
(Report by the Director of Commerce & Technology)**

1 PURPOSE

- 1.1 This report aims to stimulate discussion of financial options prior to this year's budget/MTP process. It provides Members with an update of the financial position in the light of the likely deficit for the year, falling revenue reserves, the emerging prospects for lower government funding and government plans to replace Council Tax capping from 2012/13.

2 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 For a number of years financial forecasts have highlighted the need to substantially reduce expenditure and/or increase income. The Council is in the process of consulting with the public on their preferences regarding cuts in services and increases in Council Tax. The results of these consultations will not be known until the end of September.
- 2.2 The approved Budget and Medium Term Financial Plan (MTP) provided for expenditure of £25m in 2010/11 funded £13m by government, £7m by Council Tax and £5m from reserves. Revenue reserves were, and still are, planned to fall to £12m by March 2011. The financial plan for subsequent years required substantial savings to remove the revenue deficit by 2014/5 when revenue reserves would have fallen to a minimum level.

3 SUMMARY

Cuts are expected in the level of government funding. These are likely to amount to over £3m p.a. within 5 years.

The total budget shortfall rises to over £8m p.a. in 4 years time.

Expenditure reductions of £8m p.a. will require Members to approve substantial changes to the scope and nature of services provided by the Council and how they are provided. This could fundamentally change the role of the Council.

Reserves are sufficient to allow changes to be introduced at the rate of £2m in each of the next 4 years. However further delay is not prudent.

The scale of savings, and complexity of the consequences, requires decisions on how the first £5m of savings are to be made during this year's budget/MTP process.

If no action is taken reserves will run out in March 2013.

The budget consultation will indicate the public's relative appetite for council tax rise and service cuts. It will also identify which services have a lower priority.

The Government is consulting on a proposal that Council Tax rises above a predetermined limit would be subject to achieving a majority in a public consultation and wishes to avoid centrally imposed capping. Although the April 2011 Council Tax increase will not be subject to a formal referendum future rises may be subject to such a referendum. .

Conclusion

In advance of the budget process all Members are urged to give consideration to:

- 1. The nature of services which the Council should continue to provide.**
- 2. Whether the Council's low tax level should be maintained in preference to the provision of services or vice versa.**
- 3. The extent to which services should be managed by the District Council or devolved to Towns, Parishes or localities.**
- 4. The results of the budget consultation when they become available.**

4 2009/10 OUTTURN

The Council has benefited from some one-off windfalls which have allowed a Special Reserve of £1.9M to be set up to fund the up-front costs of achieving savings.

- 4.1 In 2009/10 the Council managed to keep its spending £1.9M below budget, predominantly due to a high Housing and Planning Delivery grant settlement (£0.6M extra) and a one-off VAT refund (£0.7M). This saving was placed in a Special Reserve to meet the up-front costs of making savings, including the costs of redundancy in line with the updated policy and schemes on which the Employment Panel is consulting the staff side. £3.7M was taken from general reserves to fund spending last year. At 1st April 2010 Revenue Reserves stood at £15.9M.
- 4.2 Capital expenditure was £6.2M lower than budgeted due to savings of £0.8M and timing changes of £5.4M. Most of this was anticipated in the MTP leaving an extra £2M to be deferred to the current year. This results in some interest and MRP (provision for repaying debt) savings for 2010/11.

5 CHANGES TO FUTURE NET SPENDING

The impact of changes from the approved forecasts due to inflation, interest rates etc. is modest.

- 5.1 At this initial stage of the MTP process the changes to net spending are limited in number. They include:
- revisions to interest rates and the amounts that interest is earned on due to last year's outturn and this year's forecast. Further refinements to the forecasting model have been made to improve accuracy in this area.
 - inflation adjustments. It has been assumed that changes will be made to the Local Government Pension Scheme such that no further increases in employer's contributions are required after 2014/15. Further changes will be necessary once we get the actuary's revaluation of the scheme towards the end of this calendar year. The previous government proposed a NI increase from April 2011 but the new government is proposing to introduce some changes to the thresholds to reduce the impact. Until the thresholds have emerged it is impossible to forecast the reduction in impact as it will vary with the profile of salary levels within any organisation.
 - some deferment of capital expenditure.
 - removal of concessionary fares from April 2011 which is offset by reduced Government Grant (see para. 6 below).

- removal of assumption that an extra £250k of specific grants will be received each year due to the cut back in government grants that has already taken place.
- introduction of a much more detailed calculation of the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) (statutory provision for repaying debt). This has resulted in some increases but because of the basis chosen this is significantly off-set by reduced interest costs. Guidance requires formal approval of this basis every year and Annex C provides the explanation of the basis agreed and used last year. This approach is still in the Council's best interests and is recommended for endorsement.

5.2 The following table shows the variations due to these items:

VARIATIONS	2011/12 £000	2012/13 £000	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000
Interest and Loan repayments	-371	-200	-140	-53	184	387	532	673
Inflation	83	162	258	347	-25	-159	-272	-270
Concessionary Fares	-740	-740	-740	-740	-740	-740	-740	-740
Provision for extra grants removed	250	250	250	250	250	250	250	250
Other Adjustments	407	15	15	15	15	0	0	0
	-370	-513	-357	-182	-316	-262	-230	-87

Based on the 'Government Preference' Council Tax option described in para. 9.4 below. The interest figure and inflation figures will vary for other options due to variations in the speed with which reserves are used and savings requirements due to conversion to current prices.

6 GOVERNMENT GRANT

Government General Grant will reduce in cash terms for the next few years and the forecast has been based on a 25% cut spread over 5 years. This and some losses from formula changes would result in a loss of £3.3M per year by 2014/15.

- 6.1 In December 2007 the Government introduced three year grant settlements to give greater planning certainty for local authorities. They kept to this commitment despite the economy being in a difficult position by last autumn when the 3rd year's allocation was confirmed with no changes. There are rumours that this year's announcement may only be for two years.
- 6.2 It is also now clear that the Government intends to reduce public spending and figures of 25%, or even 40%, in cash terms are being suggested. This contrasts with last year's assumption in the MTP that there would be a real terms cut because but no actual cash reduction over the next three years.
- 6.3 It is also expected that District Councils may lose out in the distribution mechanism of this reduced total because of the perceived priorities of Education and Social Services. However, in

order to not be too pessimistic at this stage, it has been assumed that grant will fall at 5% per year in cash terms for 5 years.

- 6.4 There are also likely to be changes to the allocation formula and the Department for Communities & Local Government (DCLG) have distributed a range of exemplifications indicating possible impacts. The most significant change is the transfer of concessionary fares to County Councils in April but it appears that the exemplifications on this may have an error. For the purpose of this forecast it has therefore been assumed that the concessionary fares impact will be neutral i.e. the loss of grant will equal the saving in expenditure. This may prove to be optimistic.
- 6.5 There may well still be some form of maximum loss of grant to protect the most significantly affected authorities and, because this will have to be funded by the other authorities, the forecast is based on us still not receiving all of the withheld grant that the Council was entitled to in 2010/11.
- 6.6 The Government are consulting on a new grant to reward Councils that support housing development. It would be based on awarding a grant equivalent to the Council Tax on the new houses for 6 years. It is expected that it will not be new money but top-sliced off of general grant. If 550 extra homes were achieved every year, the grant could grow to about £360k per year after 6 years, assuming it is just the District element of the tax, but it would need to be offset by a share of the reduction in general grant. Whilst we would expect to gain it is premature to model the likely impact until there is more clarity about whether it relates to just the District element of the Council Tax, the expected national scale to judge the offsetting RSG loss and the date it will be introduced. It will be built into the MTP as soon as clarification emerges. Its exclusion at this stage also mitigates the potential downside from a loss relating to the concessionary fares transfer and the possibility of reductions in excess of 25%.
- 6.7 The following table compares this forecast's assumptions with those in the approved MTP:

GRANT* FUNDING	Budget	MTP				FORECAST			
	10/11 £M	11/12 £M	12/13 £M	13/14 £M	14/15 £M	15/16 £M	16/17 £M	17/18 £M	18/19 £M
Current Approved MTP									
2010/11 True Grant	13.4	13.4							
Less Concessionary Fares ##	0.0	-0.7							
Net	13.4	12.6							
Forecast change %		0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
Forecast True Grant		12.6	12.6	12.6	12.9	13.3	13.6	13.9	14.3
Withheld	-0.4	-0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grant Receivable	12.9	12.4	12.6	12.6	12.9	13.3	13.6	13.9	14.3
This Forecast									
2010/11 True Grant	13.4	13.4							
Less Concessionary Fares ##	0.0	-0.7							
Less Formula Changes		-0.1							
Net	13.4	12.5							
Forecast change %		-5.00%	-5.00%	-5.00%	-5.00%	-5.00%	2.50%	2.50%	2.50%
Forecast True Grant		11.9	11.3	10.7	10.2	9.7	9.9	10.2	10.4
Withheld	-0.4	-0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Grant Receivable	12.9	11.7	11.0	10.3	9.7	9.9	10.1	10.4	10.7
Reduction this time	0.0	-0.7	-1.3	-1.9	-2.8	-3.6	-3.7	-3.8	-3.9

*Grant includes Revenue Support Grant and NNDR which are in aggregate distributed in line with the grant formula.

Loss of RSG assumed to equal reduction in expenditure so neutral overall.

7 CAPITAL

In recent years the Council has maintained a significant capital programme. However as a result of the emerging financial pressures and the conclusion of the Pathfinder House and Depot projects the capital programme is now much diminished. The table below shows the value of the capital programme and that whilst it is currently forecast to fall to around £5m p.a., borrowing will accumulate and the consequent impact of interest and repayment on the revenue budget will continue to rise.

Borrowing Costs	2010/11 £000	2011/12 £000	2012/13 £000	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000
Forecast Capital Spending	9,079	10,842	4,062	5,540	5,202
Accumulated "Borrowing" EOY (net of MRP)	19,663	29,701	32,619	36,884	40,450
Net Interest and Borrowing Costs					
- total	-58	358	1,173	1,621	2,155
- as % of total net revenue spending	0%	2%	5%	8%	11%

8 FORECAST GAP IN FUNDING

Based on the changes explained above, and assuming a 2.5% annual increase in Council Tax from 2012 the forecast gap in our revenue account is as follows.

SHORTFALL	Budget	MTP			
	10/11 £M	11/12 £M	12/13 £M	13/14 £M	14/15 £M
Net Spending before savings	24.7	24.3	25.2	26.1	27.3
Funded by:					
Government support	-12.9	-11.9	-11.3	-10.7	-10.2
Council Tax	-7.2	-7.3	-7.6	-8.0	-8.5
SHORTFALL	4.5	5.1	6.3	7.4	8.6

Previous forecasts already predicted a substantial funding gap for 2011/2 and beyond. This updated forecast has increased the gap largely due to the predicted fall in central government funding. Whilst this reduction in funding is not yet certain, the gap in our funding is unlikely to be more than £1m higher or lower than currently predicted.

9 FUNDING OPTIONS

9.1 The Council currently raises £7.2m through Council Tax by charging the average band D tax payer £124.17. It is the 20th lowest of the 201 District Councils which have an average of £168 and a maximum of £313.

9.2 Recent policy has been to keep the annual Council Tax increase under the predicted capping level. This has previously been forecast at 5% but fell to 4.5% last year. The change in government and consequent change in capping arrangements may give this Council greater scope to determine its preferred level of taxation after consultation with the public. For each £10 rise in Council Tax the savings target would reduce by £0.6M.

9.3 Council Tax Constraints

The Council has a very low Council Tax and this is a fundamental cause of its difficult financial situation. Previous Governments, as part of their economic policy, have restricted Council Tax rises by capping rather than relying on local decision-making and accountability. Thus any authority with a low council tax was effectively caught in a “poverty trap” and could not move towards the average position.

The new Government does not support capping and is proposing to replace it with a scheme where Councils that seek a percentage increase of more than a government predetermined amount (subject to de minimis cash increase levels) must obtain local support through a referendum. This cannot be introduced in time for this year's Council Tax setting.

There have been Government proposals that there should be no Council Tax increases in 2011/12 or 2012/13 with the possibility of extra government support of up to the equivalent of a 2.5% tax rise in the first year.

9.4 Council Tax Options

Whilst the Members can set Council Tax at any particular level, three scenarios have been identified to stimulate the debate on the level of increase.

Government preference: This is based on no increase next year, 2.5% in 2012/13 and then 5% per year for the rest of the plan period. It assumes we will get extra funding from the Government next year equivalent to a 2.5% rise and results in a Council Tax level of £4.40 per week (£229 per year) in 2024/25.	
Council Tax	Savings still required
No increase in 2011 followed by the maximum increase permitted without requiring a referendum in all subsequent years	£2m p.a. for each of the next 4 years.

Moving to District Council Average: This assumes the Council Tax is increased to the current year's average next year (an 84p per week rise) and then future increases are constrained to 2.5% per year. It also results in a tax level £4.45 per week (£232) in 2024/25.	
Council Tax	Savings still required
Immediate increase to the national average, but limited rises thereafter.	£2m of savings required for 2011/2, followed by a further £1m in each of the following three years

Slower increase: Based on a 10% rise next year followed by a rise of about 4.1% per year thereafter. This also results in a level of £4.45 per week (£232) in 2024/25.	
Council Tax	Savings still required
£1 per month increase in 2011 followed by 50p per month in subsequent years.	£2m of savings in 2011/2 followed by a further £1.5m in each of the subsequent years.

Annex A provides additional information for each of the above options and Annex B shows the sensitivity of these forecasts to variations in key assumptions.

9.5 Impact on Savings Requirements

The November draft budget/MTP report will provide a forecast for the level of savings that can be achieved through efficiencies, including staffing efficiencies, however it is unrealistic to believe that savings of these magnitude can be achieved through efficiencies alone. Members are invited to consider their views on the range of Council Tax increases and hence the extent to which each service should be cut.

10. PROPOSED ACTIONS AND TIMESCALE FOR AGREEING SAVINGS

10.1 It is clear that whatever approach the Council takes to taxation, a significant level of savings must be made. The extent of savings required mean that reductions in staffing are inevitable. With this in mind a voluntary redundancy scheme has already been proposed. Compulsory redundancies are most likely to also be required although the extent will depend upon the balance of tax rises and expenditure reductions determined by Members.

10.2 An indication of key dates in the process is shown below:

September	
9	Forecast considered by Overview & Scrutiny
16	Forecast considered by Cabinet
Mid to late	<i>COMT forecasts the items and value to be achieved from efficiency saving Consideration of consultation results.</i>
27	<i>Employment Panel adopt updated Redundancy Policy and agree Voluntary Redundancy scheme.</i>
28	<i>Voluntary Redundancy scheme advertised to staff.</i>
29	Forecast considered by Council
October	
12	<i>Voluntary Redundancy scheme closes for senior staff.</i>
20	Comprehensive Spending Review Announcement
November	
11	Draft Budget/MTP considered by Overview & Scrutiny
18	Draft Budget/MTP considered by Cabinet
December	
Early	Grant announcement
15	Draft Budget/MTP considered by Council
January	
8	<i>Voluntary Redundancy scheme closes for other staff.</i>
February	
10	Final Budget/MTP considered by Overview & Scrutiny
17	Final Budget/MTP considered by Cabinet
23	Final Budget/MTP considered by Council
March	
31	<i>Decisions made on Voluntary Redundancy requests.</i>

11 CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1 Whilst there remains a number of uncertainties, such as the level of reduction in government funding, the size of the Council's current deficit in relation to our now limited revenue reserves and low Council Tax will require the Council to make sizable reductions in the scale of its spending. The level of cuts can be reduced but not eliminated by raising Council Tax.
- 11.2 The results of the consultation exercises will allow the Cabinet to propose an approach to Council Tax increases and the resultant nature and phasing of service reductions.
- 11.3 The next 5 months are therefore critical to the Council's future levels of service delivery in many of its services.
- 11.4 Whatever decisions are taken the Council must make plans to achieve a minimum of £2M of reductions in its net costs next year and also determine where subsequent cuts shall be made.
- 11.5 Cabinet are required to approve the basis for calculating the Minimum Revenue Provision each year. The recommended basis is shown at Annex C.

12 RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet is requested to:

Approve the annuity basis for the calculation of Minimum Revenue Provision as outlined in Annex C.

Recommend this report to Council and highlight the challenges that need to be addressed over the coming five months.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985

Source Documents:

1. Working papers in Financial Services
2. Financial Forecast (September 2009), 2009/10 Outturn, 2010/11 Revenue Budget and the 2011/15 MTP

Contact Officer: Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services ☎ 01480 388103

ANNEX A

COUNCIL TAX SCENARIOS

OPTION Government Preferred

	Budget	MTP				FORECAST			
	10/11 £M	11/12 £M	12/13 £M	13/14 £M	14/15 £M	15/16 £M	16/17 £M	17/18 £M	18/19 £M
Net Spending before savings	24.7	24.3	25.2	26.1	27.3	28.2	29.3	30.4	31.6
Required Savings	0.0	-1.9	-3.8	-5.7	-7.6	-9.5	-9.9	-10.1	-10.5
Net Spending after savings	24.7	22.4	21.4	20.4	19.7	18.7	19.4	20.3	21.1
Funded by:									
Government support	-12.9	-11.9	-11.3	-10.7	-10.2	-9.7	-9.9	-10.2	-10.4
Council Tax	-7.2	-7.3	-7.6	-8.0	-8.5	-9.0	-9.5	-10.1	-10.7
SHORTFALL	-4.5	-3.2	-2.5	-1.7	-1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Met from Reserves	-4.5	-3.2	-2.5	-1.7	-1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Council Tax	£124.17	£124.17	£127.27	£133.64	£140.32	£147.34	£154.70	£162.44	£170.56
Remaining reserves end of year	11.4	8.2	5.7	4.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0

OPTION District Average

	Budget	MTP				FORECAST			
	10/11 £M	11/12 £M	12/13 £M	13/14 £M	14/15 £M	15/16 £M	16/17 £M	17/18 £M	18/19 £M
Net Spending before savings	24.7	24.3	25.2	26.1	27.5	28.7	30.0	31.0	32.2
Required Savings	0.0	-1.9	-2.9	-3.9	-4.9	-5.9	-6.9	-7.9	-8.9
Net Spending after savings	24.7	22.4	22.3	22.2	22.6	22.8	23.1	23.1	23.3
Funded by:									
Government support	-12.9	-11.7	-11.3	-10.7	-10.2	-9.7	-9.9	-10.2	-10.4
Council Tax	-7.2	-9.9	-10.3	-10.6	-11.0	-11.3	-11.7	-12.1	-12.5
SHORTFALL	-4.5	-0.8	-0.7	-0.9	-1.4	-1.8	-1.5	-0.9	-0.4
Met from Reserves	-4.5	-0.8	-0.7	-0.9	-1.4	-1.8	-1.5	-0.9	-0.4
Council Tax	£124.17	£168.00	£172.20	£176.51	£180.92	£185.44	£190.08	£194.83	£199.70
Remaining reserves end of year	11.4	10.6	9.9	9.0	7.6	5.8	4.2	3.4	3.0

OPTION Slower Increase

	Budget	MTP				FORECAST			
	10/11 £M	11/12 £M	12/13 £M	13/14 £M	14/15 £M	15/16 £M	16/17 £M	17/18 £M	18/19 £M
Net Spending before savings	24.7	24.3	25.2	26.1	27.4	28.4	29.5	30.5	31.8
Met from Savings	0.0	-1.9	-3.4	-5.0	-6.6	-8.0	-9.3	-9.6	-10.0
Net Spending after savings	24.7	22.4	21.8	21.1	20.8	20.4	20.2	20.9	21.8
Funded by:									
Government support	-12.9	-11.7	-11.3	-10.7	-10.2	-9.7	-9.9	-10.2	-10.4
Council Tax	-7.2	-8.1	-8.5	-8.9	-9.3	-9.8	-10.3	-10.8	-11.3
SHORTFALL	-4.5	-2.6	-2.0	-1.5	-1.3	-0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Met from Reserves	-4.5	-2.6	-2.0	-1.5	-1.3	-0.9	0.0	0.0	0.0
Council Tax	£124.17	£136.59	£142.25	£148.14	£154.29	£160.68	£167.34	£174.28	£181.50
Remaining reserves end of year	11.4	8.7	6.7	5.2	3.9	3.0	3.0	3.0	3.0

FINANCIAL PLAN - SENSITIVITY AND RISKS

The financial forecast model has been used to demonstrate the impact that the following variations would result in. The values indicate the annual amount that would need to be added or deducted from the savings target at that time, **assuming that any intermediate years had been covered by temporary savings.**

	Extra savings needed (+) ##:	
	2015/16 £M	2024/25 £M
0.5% less pay award in 2011/12 and 2012/13	-0.3	-0.4
0.5% extra pay award every year	+0.7	+3.0
2% extra reduction in Government Grant per year for 5 years (35% cut rather than 25% cut)	+1.0	+1.2
5% loss in Leisure Centre fees and charges	+0.3	+0.4
0.85% increase in spending every year to cover cost of increased population. There is no provision for demographic growth in the forecast.	+0.9	+3.4
Pension Fund contributions increase after 2014/15 at 1% every year.	+0.2	+2.7

Outturn prices for relevant year.

Inflation, other than pay, is fairly neutral as long as it is possible to quickly increase fees and charges in line with it.

Other Potential Variations

(items more likely to be favourable are in bold italics)

- A net loss through changes to the grant formula when Concessionary Fares transfer to the County in April.
- **Introduction of reward grant for housing growth.**
- **NI increase impact reduced by changes to thresholds.**
- Increase in interest rates.
- Future capital programmes have items with shorter asset lives resulting in higher revenue cost for repaying borrowing.
- Most budgets are based on 97.5% of salary due to the expectation of savings from staff turnover. A temporary adjustment was made to reduce this in last year's MTP until 2013/14. Given that turnover will reduce because of significant cuts in the public service the salary budget may have to become more nearly fully funded.
- **Remote possibility of further one-off VAT refunds or receiving compound rather than simple interest on these and the refunds already agreed.**
- The potential for costs relating to "orphan" contaminated land sites.
- A "double dip" to the recession.
- Difficulty delivering the savings already identified or the spending targets inherent in this plan.
- High priority service developments not already in the MTP and any unavoidable spending requirements not referred to in this report emerging.
- Repayment of past land charge fees.

ANNUAL MINIMUM REVENUE PROVISION POLICY 2010/11

When a Council finances capital expenditure from borrowing, the resulting costs are charged to the Council Taxpayers over the whole life of the asset so that those who benefit from the asset share the cost. There are two elements to the cost – the interest on the borrowing is charged in the year it is payable, whilst the money to repay the sum borrowed is charged as a “minimum revenue provision” (MRP) to the revenue account each year, starting with the year after the borrowing takes place. Once money is in the MRP it can only be used for repaying borrowing.

The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) has issued guidance on what constitutes prudent provision and this requires the Council to determine an approach and publish this each year.

There are three options for the calculation of the MRP :

Equal annual installments

This is the easiest and simplest approach but the combination of the equal installments of principal and the reducing interest makes the cost high to start with but then reducing year by year.

Depreciation basis

The Depreciation basis is the most complex. It starts by mirroring the equal annual installments method but also requires adjustments every time the life of an asset is varied.

Annuity basis

By setting the rate for the annuity equal to the expected long term borrowing rate the cost is the same for each year like a conventional mortgage. It is only marginally more work than the equal installments approach. This is the basis agreed for 2009/10.

The Annuity basis is, by far, the most equitable approach and it is therefore proposed that it continues to be the Council's MRP policy.

FINANCIAL FORECAST
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being))

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Economic Well-Being has examined the financial forecast contained in the report by the Director of Commerce and Technology at its meeting on 9th September 2010. To assist the Panel in their discussions, all Members of the Council were invited to attend the meeting and take part in the debate. This report contains a summary of their discussions.

2. THE FINANCIAL FORECAST

- 2.1 The Panel has been acquainted with the present position in relation to the Council's financial forecast for the period to 2018/19. Members have been informed of potential variations in a number of sources of income and other factors that could affect the Council's financial position. The Panel has acknowledged the uncertainty surrounding the current forecast which contains a number of assumptions which are expected to be clarified over the next few months.
- 2.2 The Panel has acknowledged the severity of the current situation facing the Council and the uncertainty created by current economic and political conditions, together with the likely deficit for the year, falling revenue reserves, the emerging prospects for lower government funding and government plans to replace Council Tax capping from 2012/13. Members have also acknowledged that the total budget shortfall is likely to rise to over £8 million p.a. in four years time. As a result, the Panel has recognised that radical decisions will need to be taken by the Council which are likely to affect most services in some way. All Councillors have been invited to make suggestions for budgetary savings which will then be rigorously assessed.
- 2.3 Attention is drawn to the uncertainty in the level of Government grant the Council will receive in the next few years. The Panel has been advised that the forecast has been based on a cash reduction of 25% over 5 years. It needs to be noted that this figure could increase to 40% and does not include inflation. However, it is envisaged that the authority will be afforded an element of protection as any reductions should be not be greater than the average for similar authorities. The Director of Commerce and Technology also has highlighted the circumstances that will influence the Council when setting the budget and the constraints that are likely to exist in relation to the level of Council Tax. The new Government has indicated that it does not

support capping and is proposing to replace it with a requirement that a Council must hold a referendum it intends to increase its Council Tax by more than a specified amount. It is not expected that this will be introduced in the current year and although the Government has indicated that there should be no Council Tax increases in 2011/12 or 2012/13, there might be an opportunity to increase Council Tax to a level closer to the average for District Councils.

- 2.4 With regard to any future proposals that might require a referendum on Council Tax, a suggestion was made that this should not be undertaken in conjunction with the County Council, whose proportion of the Council Tax represents a much larger element of local taxation.
- 2.5 The Panel's attention has been drawn to the recent budget consultation exercise, which has generated almost 2000 responses and will be used to obtain public views on changes in services and what local service priorities are. It is expected that a summary of the results will be available at the end of September 2010. Members have suggested that they would like to see the responses analysed by source as this could affect the overall findings.
- 2.6 In discussing the contents of the report, there has been some disagreement as to whether the Council should start to take steps in preparation of the anticipated reduction in Government grant which is expected to be announced on 22nd October 2011. Some Members are of the opinion that the Council should start to make plans at the earliest opportunity for likely budgetary reductions, while others think that decisions can only be made once the level of grant and the situation with regard to potential changes in the Council's responsibilities are known.
- 2.7 Comment has been made on the possible devolution of services to towns, parishes or localities. With the recent decision on public conveniences in mind, it has been suggested that if these organisations are to be invited to take on board other additional responsibilities, consultation should be undertaken with town and parish councils at the earliest opportunity to enable them to incorporate the need for any additional funding into their budget setting processes. The District Council might also engage with towns and parishes about the opportunities for other budgetary savings.
- 2.8 The Panel has expressed uncertainty over the statutory duties and responsibilities of the District Council. Members have suggested that it is not possible to make recommendations on possible changes in service levels and functions without sufficient knowledge of the Council's statutory responsibilities and the non statutory services it provides. Whilst the Panel has acknowledged the inherent difficulties in producing such information, the Panel has asked for details to be circulated, together with an indication of the number of employees who are currently employed to undertake wholly non statutory functions.

Having noted that basic statutory functions do not necessarily cost much to provide, the view has been expressed that the cost of basic statutory services without any enhancement needs to be considered against the Council's priorities. Comment has also been made that the Council provides some services, which were not classified as statutory under UK Parliamentary Law but nevertheless are subject to other influences arising from, for example, European Union Legislation, such as recycling targets. At the same time consideration should be given to facilities which are provided on a joint or shared basis and the contractual arrangements and obligations which exist. It will also be necessary to consider the effect of any changes to services and functions on the Council's reputation. The Council will need to review the way in which statutory services are delivered.

- 2.9 Members strongly recommend that the Council should adopt a strategic approach to planning changes to its services. It is suggested that the current challenges might provide an opportunity to refocus the Council by providing a vision through a top down approach. The strategy should demonstrate what the Council will do in the future and how it will get there. Similar concerns have been voiced at a recent meeting of the Corporate Plan Working Group who have suggested that a clear vision of Council services is required in advance of any organisational changes. Comments have been made that the Council will need to know what the Council is seeking to achieve and which positions it will need to retain to do so before it proceeds with the Voluntary Redundancy Scheme.
- 2.10 With regard to the need to make savings, a Member has suggested that a business approach should be adopted and Heads of Service invited to identify ways in which savings might be made as part of an action plan. In addition, a flexible approach should be taken towards the salary differentials between levels in the Council's organisational structure and, generally, the salary assigned to posts should be reduced as employees leave.
- 2.11 Having noted that the Panel will formally be invited to consider proposals for variations in the budget in due course, Members have emphasised the need to develop a clear plan outlining possible proposals for reductions. There is a need for Members of the Council, other than those in the Cabinet, to be involved in the formulation of any plans at an early stage. The Executive Councillor for Finance and Customer Services has explained that it is his intention to discuss proposals with Members prior to any formal discussion on the proposals at the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) in November 2011. It will not be possible to make any decisions before the results of the public consultation have been considered.

- 2.12 Several suggestions for possible areas where savings might be made have been made in the course of the discussions. A list of these suggestions appears in an Appendix to this report.

3. **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 3.1 Having recognised the significant financial challenges which face the authority in coming years, Members have emphasised the need to highlight these challenges and urge the Cabinet to take note of the comments and suggestions made by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being).

The Panel is of the opinion that Overview and Scrutiny should have a role in the development of any financial savings plan and an additional meeting will be convened for this purpose. At the same time, the Panel has

- i. endorsed the recommendations with regard to the annuity basis for the calculation of Minimum Revenue Provision as outlined in Annex C to the report by the Director of Commerce and Technology;
- ii. recommended to the Cabinet that consultation be undertaken at the earliest opportunity with town and parish councils on opportunities for the devolution of services and functions to enable them, if necessary, to include additional provision during their budget setting process;
- iii. emphasised to the Cabinet the need for a clear vision and strategic approach to any spending reductions / variations;
- iv. requested more detailed information on the Council's the statutory obligations and the number of employees undertaking wholly non statutory functions.

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CABINET

16TH September 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.

Annex C - Council Improvement Plan – a rolling plan of actions identified following internal or external reviews such as the Use of Resources or Managing Performance assessments and the Annual Governance Review.

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
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Community/Council Aim: Healthy Living						
Objective: To promote active lifestyles						
Division: Leisure						
Divisional Objective: To increase participation in healthy physical activities						
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:
Maintain and improve standard of facilities & match facility provision with usage demand (SCS measure)	Number of admissions/participants in activities provided or promoted by the Council (cumulative quarterly target)	452,721	424,857 (A)		↑	No areas of concern
Promotion and marketing of available activities	Number of active card holders	30,000	32,690 (G)		↔	Successful introduction of One Leisure Card
Division: Lifestyles						
Divisional Objective: To promote healthy lifestyle choices						
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:
Provide a range of accessible leisure opportunities such as: a Holiday Activity Programme for <17 yrs (SCS measure)	Total throughput of school, outreach and holiday activity Programmes (cumulative quarterly target)	1,125	1,388 (G)		↑	
ω Provide targeted schemes to enable vulnerable people to participate in physical leisure activities (inc Exercise Referral, Community Sports and Recreation Project, Community Sports Network and Active Life scheme) (SCS measure 2.1.5)	Throughput on identified schemes (cumulative quarterly target)	3,000	3,158 (G)		↓	New Dash project yet to get fully off ground. Some activities affected by building work at One Leisure St Neots. Individually Active Life Right Start Classes have done very well - almost doubling their results on the same period last year.
Provide under-represented groups with the opportunity to participate in sport and active recreation (SCS measure)	Total throughput of activity programme for disabled participants and under-represented groups (cumulative quarterly target)	350	405 (G)		↓	
Support vulnerable people to be more active, Cardiac Rehabilitation programme and Health Walks	Total throughput of the Cardiac Rehabilitation programme and Health Walks in Huntingdonshire (cumulative quarterly target)	2,375	2,400 (G)		↓	Attendance at cardiac rehab St Neots down due to building work at One Leisure site
Community/Council Aim: Housing that meets individuals needs						
Objective: To achieve a low level of homelessness						
Division: Housing						
Divisional Objective: To achieve a low level of homelessness						
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:
						Number has reduced from 87 (9%) during first quarter; this

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

By helping to prevent people from becoming homeless, by housing homeless people, where appropriate	(NI 156) No. of households living in temporary accommodation	45	80 (R)		↓	has been heavily influenced by the ongoing financial recession.	QRT
	The number of households prevented from becoming homeless in the year (cumulative quarterly measure)	65	103 (G)		↔	73 preventions and 30 relieved. Well on the way to meet this target.	QRT

Community/Council Aim: Developing communities sustainably

Objective: To enable the provision of affordable housing

Division: Housing

Divisional Objective: To enable the provision of affordable housing

Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:	
By maximising the land available for new affordable housing. By working in partnership with Housing Associations to bid for external funding. By making a financial contribution to pay for affordable homes to be built	(NI 155) Number of new affordable homes built by March 2011 (cumulative quarterly target) (local target)	77	76 (A)		↓	Planned number of complete in first quarter = 77 - Achieved 76, just 1 below this. The build is mainly skewed towards the end of the financial year.	QRT

Division: Planning

Divisional Objective: Maximise provision of affordable housing on relevant development sites

Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:	
Develop Core Strategy and Development Control Policies DPD (to set policy framework)/Adopt Planning Obligations SPD (to set specific targets and thresholds)/Negotiate S106 Agreements (to deliver required amounts of affordable housing)	% of affordable housing (commitments) on qualifying sites (cumulative)	40			N/A	Annual measure, data to follow	YRL
	% of housing completions on qualifying sites that are affordable in market towns and key settlements	40			N/A	Annual measure, data to follow	YRL
	% of housing completions on qualifying sites that are affordable in smaller settlements	40			N/A	Annual measure, data to follow	YRL

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

Objective		Comments from appropriate Head of Service
To promote active lifestyles	Achievements:	<p><u>Leisure Centres:</u> Admissions were again dominated by Indoor Sports, Swimming and Impressions. The new Fun Zones drew in nearly 9,000 children at St Neots and Huntingdon and the associated Caffé Zest facilities benefited accordingly (Huntingdon up 16%, St Neots up 66%). Schools admissions are not recorded above but totaled 58,000. The One Leisure card campaign was a success with over 90,000 card holders now registered of which 32,600 (36%) are “live” users.</p>
	Issues or actions for next quarter:	<p><u>Leisure Centres:</u> St Neots Redevelopment – To maintain on track (budget and time) for September 2010 opening St Ives Redevelopment – To develop business case for investment alongside innovative redevelopment.</p>
	Risks:	<p><u>Environmental and Community Health Services:</u> Impact of retrospective loss of LPSA reward funds for 2010/11[Projects: LB41-42, & LB31-33] potential unavoidable costs for HDC: £17,025 for E&CHS and £10k for One Leisure. Alt. funding sources and discussions with other fund holders on-going.</p>
To achieve a low level of homelessness	Achievements:	<p><u>Housing Services:</u> 4 empty homes were re-occupied in Q1 as a result of our advice, persuasion, grants or publicity.</p>
	Issues or actions for next quarter:	<p><u>Housing Services:</u> Immediate problem of insufficient temporary accommodation for homeless households. There are currently (21.07.10) 81 households in temporary accommodation.</p>
	Risks:	<p><u>Housing Services:</u> The project to provide move on accommodation from Kings Ripton Court has had LPSA money withdrawn. Need to decide if this can be progressed by a different means.</p> <p>All normal sources of temporary accommodation for the homeless are currently full (21.07.10). Additional sourcing efforts may not provide sufficient accommodation.</p> <p>Actual accepted homeless cases increase beyond the ability to provide temporary and later permanent accommodation. The lack of suitable permanent accommodation will result in increased use of temporary accommodation due to bed blocking.</p> <p>Any withdrawal of HDC rent deposit loans and bonds will increase the number of actual homelessness and those needing temporary accommodation.</p>
To enable the provision of affordable housing	Achievements:	<p><u>Housing Services:</u> Completed 76 affordable homes. Committed £45,800 Social Housing Grant to deliver affordable housing in Ramsey St. Mary.</p>
	Issues or actions	

Objective		Comments from appropriate Head of Service
	for next quarter: Risks:	<p><u>Housing Services:</u> Less grant availability from the Homes and Communities Agency or HDC for affordable housing. This will lead to more households with a priority housing need waiting longer on the housing register and/or the bed blocking of temporary accommodation by homeless households.</p> <p><u>Planning Services:</u> Reductions in direct housing grants will require the Council to accept alternative types of affordable housing provision</p>

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


Objective: To help mitigate and adapt to climate change

Division: Environmental Management

Divisional Objective: Adapting to climate change

Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:	
We will undertake: risk based assessment of vulnerabilities to weather and climate, identify priority risks for services & effective adaptive responses, incorporate responses into council strategies and operations	Are we on target to achieve level 2 by March 2011? (1=Yes, 0 = No)	1	1 (G)		↔		QRT

Divisional Objective: Increase energy efficiency & encourage renewable energy

Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:	
 Co2 Homes and promotions include, Eastern CRI, Anglian Go Warm, PHIS and CO2Y Homes	Number of energy efficiency and renewable energy measures carried out as a result of HDC schemes and promotions, cumulative qrt target	17	9 (R)		N/A	Target not achieved owing to an unavoidable delay in appointing contractors for HDCs new Co2yHomes insulation scheme. The scheme has now been launched and we are confident that recent publicity will generate sufficient installations for targets to be met for the rest on this financial year.	QRT

Division: Planning

Divisional Objective: To encourage sustainable forms of development

Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:	
Deliver sustainable policy in accord with Local Development Scheme 2010. Development management DPD July 2011. Planning Proposals DPD Dec 2012. Huntingdon West AAP Jan 2011. Gypsy and Traveller Sites DPD April 2013. St Neots Town Centre DPD June 2013.	Is adoption of DPD documents consistent with the approved Local Development Scheme? (1=Yes, 0=No)	1	1 (G)		N/A		QRT

Community/Council Aim: Developing communities sustainably

Objective: To promote development opportunities in and around the market towns

Division: People, Performance & Partnerships

Divisional Objective: To promote development opportunities in and around the market towns

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

Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:	
Deliver LES Physical Infrastructure Development activities in the Sustainable Economic Development service plan	% of Physical Infrastructure Development activities on track	90	90 (G)		↔	Songbird funding has been downgraded so Broadband projects to complement BT roll-out need to be reassessed.	QRT
Division: Planning							
Divisional Objective: To promote development opportunities in and around the market towns							
Key Activity(s) only to deliver service objective:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:	
To promote development opportunities in and around Market Towns by allocating land in accordance with the direction of growth, determining planning applications in a timely fashion and bidding for funding to enable development	Is adoption of DPD documents consistent with the approved Local Development Scheme? (1=Yes, 0=No)	1	1 (G)		N/A		QRT
	Successful delivery of agreed spending plan of housing growth fund? (1=Yes, 0=No)	1			N/A	Annual measure, data to follow	YRL

Objective		Comments from appropriate Head of Service
To help to mitigate and adapt to climate change	Achievements:	<p><u>Environmental Management:</u></p> <p>Little Paxton, essential drainage work being undertaken. Various energy efficient lighting schemes ongoing for internal and external clients. 10 bus shelters being fitted with solar powered LED lighting. Several Leisure Centre roofing/insulation schemes completed.</p>
	Issues or actions for next quarter:	<p><u>Environmental Management:</u></p> <p><i>Flood resilience measures being investigated and put in place for the Alconbury's (428k funding from Defra/ Environment Agency).</i></p> <p><u>IMD:</u></p> <p>Expect to start the procurement process for virtualised servers (and, possibly, desktops) in the next quarter. This project will ultimately improve the carbon footprint, resilience & flexibility of the Council's computer systems.</p>
	Risks:	<p><u>Environmental Management:</u></p> <p>Failure to 'green' facilities strategy/influence other services on low carbon agenda means higher long term costs (e.g. energy bills)</p>
To promote development opportunities in and around the market towns	Achievements:	<p><u>People, Performance & Partnerships:</u></p> <p>Business support activities over the last period have increased. Recent success has been the relocation of Cath Kidston resulting in the relocation of the entire 80 staff, 20 additional staff and potential for further job creation.</p>
	Issues or actions for next quarter:	<p><u>Planning:</u></p> <p>It is anticipated that we will receive several highly significant 'applications' in relation to potential large scale retail developments in Huntingdon Town Centre in September/October. These complex applications will give rise to significant processing issues – in terms of the particular planning issues, the need for appropriate specialist inputs and with regard to formulation of the applicable legal agreements.</p>
	Risks:	

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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	100 (G)		↔		QRT
	Regular reports on the performance of thematic groups are submitted to the HSP Executive and Board (1=yes, 0=no)	1	1 (G)		↔		QRT

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	0.50 (A)		↓	Review largely completed and will be reported to COMT later this summer	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:	Key Measure:	Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:	
Promoting from within wherever possible	Internal promotions as percentage of all vacancies filled	33	28 (A)		↓	We continue to advertise vacancies both internally and externally however there has been a significant increase in fixed term posts which may deter internal applications in the current economic climate. All vacant posts are carefully considered prior to recruitment.	QRT
Recruitment package	% of new employees still in post after 12 months	90	86.70 (A)		↓	15 people started in April-June 2009 and 13 were still in post after a year. Two of the posts were on temporary fixed term contracts. 100% of those on permanent contracts were still in post.	QRT
						39 people started in April-June 2008 and 31 were still in post	

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

	% of new employees still in post after 24 months	80	79.50 (A)		↓	after two years. Five of the posts were on temporary fixed term contracts. 91.2% of those on permanent contracts were still in post.	QRT
Retaining and releasing employees appropriately	Staff turnover – % of employees on permanent contracts leaving the Council	10	2.28 (G)		↔		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 (G)		↓		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:		Target:	Actual:	Forecast:	DoT*:	Comment:	
Maintain expenditure within budget	Actual expenditure compared to budget (cumulative quarterly target)	1.66m	1.47m (G)		↔	Better than target. Net performance £88k better than target	QRT
Maximise leisure centre income	Actual income received compared to budget (cumulative quarterly target)	1.38m	1.28m (A)		↑	Slightly below target	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:		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			N/A	Data not available at present	QRT
	% of External Funding actions on track	90	80 (A)		↓		QRT

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

Objective		Comments from appropriate Head of Service
To enable effective partnerships	Achievements:	<p><u>People, Performance & Partnerships:</u></p> <p>Launch of Huntingdonshire Manufacturers Network to promote the sector in our district. Partner organisations will help take this forward</p>
	Issues or actions for next quarter:	<p><u>People, Performance & Partnerships:</u></p> <p>Work has begun with partners on establishing a Local Enterprise Partnership. The LEP has the potential to help shape the way local planning and economic development work is undertaken. A proposal needs to be agreed and submitted to Central Government by 6th September. It is unclear at the moment what the remit or the geography of the partnership will be or the extent to which it will influence the delivery of our local services.</p>
	Risks:	
To be an employer people want to work for	Achievements:	<p><u>People, Performance & Partnerships:</u></p> <p>New monthly payroll for Variable Staff successfully setup & running from April with no complications. 19 corporate workshops undertake with 222 people attending across the authority.</p>
	Issues or actions for next quarter:	<p><u>People, Performance & Partnerships:</u></p> <p>The Council's redundancy policy has been reviewed and approved by Members for consultation with staff. A voluntary redundancy scheme has also been considered by Members and they have requested the scheme to be worked up further with the view to rolling out in the autumn. This will require a re-phasing of some HR work to ensure staff can focus on this work over the coming months.</p>
	Risks:	
To maximise business and income opportunities including extended funding and grants	Achievements:	<p><u>Leisure Centres:</u></p> <p>Profit margins on bars and all varieties of catering are on or above target and overall recovery rate is now 82% compared to 78% at the same stage last year.</p> <p><u>People, Performance & Partnerships:</u></p>
	Issues or actions for next quarter:	<p><u>Leisure Centres:</u></p> <p>Income is down by 7.6% on first quarter target and again reflects the economic climate throughout the country. All centres are affected with only swimming lessons and soft-play sessions above the group quarterly income target. However, no area, or centre, is performing badly and the situation remains acceptable for the season. To compensate, expenditure has been well controlled and is 11.7% below anticipated quarter levels and £53k below the same point last year. Staffing is 1.8% below budget, premises 47% below and operations (Supplies and services) 19% below budget, All areas of expenditure – staff hours, opening hours, contractor costs – are under constant and thorough review. Net position at the end of quarter one is identical to the previous year</p> <p><u>People, Performance & Partnerships:</u></p> <p>We have been advised by Cambridgeshire County Council that LPSA funding may be withdrawn. Therefore all</p>

Objective		Comments from appropriate Head of Service
		partners have been advised that projects must secure alternative funding or be stopped with immediate effect. This has implications for the Council and HSP partners and will affect the delivery of local projects.
	Risks:	

Improvement Plan

ANNEX C

(Note: the Council's Improvement Plan is updated and monitored frequently to reflect the development areas adopted through external inspection and compliance with statutory guidance.)

In progress

Completed

Subject	Area of Focus	Reference	Proposed Action	Outcome	Lead Members and Officer	Progress as at June 2010
Natural Resources	The Council should ensure that information and analysis about its environmental footprint is made publicly available.	Use of Resources 2007/08			Head of Environmental Services	The report has been completed and will be reported to O & S in September 2010. This has allowed data to be collected up to March 2010 and comparisons between 2008/09 and 2009/10 to be made.
Governance	Procurement	Governance Assurance framework (AGS Sept 2009)	improve the level of compliance of the Code of Procurement	level of compliance improved – no breaches of the code	Head of Financial Services	Audit review carried out for the Directors of Central Services and Commerce & Technology in May 2010 to determine the level of compliance with the Code. It identified a significant improvement with a few minor breaches.
	Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership Evaluation	Governance Assurance framework (AGS Sept 2009)	Consideration will be given to how the Audit Commission guidance to help in the assessment of the Governance arrangements can be implemented in conjunction with the Councils own Partnership framework	Improved partnership working	Member: Ken Churchill and Head of People, Performance and Partnerships	Review of Strategic Partnership largely complete and will be reported to COMT later this summer
	Audit Letter recommendations	Governance Assurance framework (AGS Sept	maintain focus on service performance in order to improve the rate of improvement and	Improved performance and better outcome measures	Member: Ken Churchill and Head of People,	Review of the Councils corporate plan Growing Success undertaken including improved

Subject	Area of Focus	Reference	Proposed Action	Outcome	Lead Members and Officer	Progress as at June 2010
		2009)	tackle areas of comparative under performance; and Develop a stronger focus on outcomes measures.		Performance and Partnerships	measure and targets. The changes were approved by Cabinet in April 2010
	Scrutiny Annual Report	Governance Assurance framework (AGS Sept 2009)	to ensure an Overview and Scrutiny annual report reflecting their work during 2009/10 is prepared to for publication		Member: Ken Churchill and Head of Democratic & Central Services	The Scrutiny Annual report will be produced at the end of the Municipal year and reported to Council. Reported to June Scrutiny Panels
Financial planning	Demonstrating the Outcomes from Stakeholder Engagement in Financial Planning	Use of Resources 2008/09	We have undertaken and continue to undertake consultation on the priorities for Huntingdonshire. The council will continue to do this and develop its engagement		Head of People, Performance and Partnerships and Head of Financial Services	“Voice your choice” – participatory budgeting pilots undertaken summer 2009. Neighbourhood Forums commenced. A survey on access to service undertaken via District Wide in Jan 2010. Budget consultation August 2010
	Using Service Reviews to Challenge Service Delivery	Use of Resources 2008/09	The Council has embarked on a two-fold transformation programme “Balancing the budget, securing our future” this is the council’s long term plan to achieving savings and efficiencies whilst still maintaining or improving essential and priority services	understanding of costs and performance and achieve efficiencies in its activities	Directors of Central Services and Commerce and Technology	Savings and efficiencies have been identified for 2010/2011 in the Financial strategy, Medium Term Plan 2011 to 2015 and 2010/2011 Budget, reported to Members in February 2010
Financial reporting	Improving the Annual Accounts Review Process	Use of Resources 2008/09	We will strengthen the processes for reviewing our financial statements prior to their approval.	financial reporting is timely, reliable and meets the needs of internal users, stakeholders and	Head of Financial Services	Improvements to be included in the 2009/2010 closedown programme

Subject	Area of Focus	Reference	Proposed Action	Outcome	Lead Members and Officer	Progress as at June 2010
				local people		
Financial reporting	Demonstrating External Accountability	Use of Resources 2008/09	We will publish all the information that would be included in an Annual report periodically in District Wide, the Council's magazine distributed to all households in the district. The same information will also be available to view, all in one location on the internet	Residents and stakeholders more aware via Council annual report	Head of People, Performance and Partnerships and Head of Financial Services	Progress against targets for the objectives in Growing Success will be published with the annual Financial data in the September edition of District Wide.
Commissioning and procurement	Improving Strengthening procurement processes and contract management	Use of Resources 2008/09	Directors of Central Services and Commerce and Technology have undertaken to report back the Corporate Governance Panel on compliance with the Code and the Council has initiated improvements to the procurement process.	Compliance with the code of procurement	Directors of Central Services and Commerce and Technology	<p>Directors reported back to CGP in December 2009 with an action plan. The following items have been delivered against that plan.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Projected procurement dates have been supplied by managers for current and next year. • Revised procurement strategy has been delayed due to the introduction of the E-marketplace but will be completed by end of September. • First cycle of modular training completed. Further cycle to commence in November 2010. • Procurement

Subject	Area of Focus	Reference	Proposed Action	Outcome	Lead Members and Officer	Progress as at June 2010
						<p>Code reviewed and approved by Council.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of suppliers/groups-categories is a permanent ongoing review. Savings have already resulted on stationery, printing and clothing. Improvements to the Contract Register and the Procurement website have been completed. <p>E-Marketplace up and running for stationery. Further products will be rolled out over the coming months.</p>
Use of data	Look to integrate our financial and non-financial performance reporting	Use of Resources 2008/09	An exercise by Heads of Service to breakdown their budgets by Corporate objective has been undertaken. This has been reported to Members of the Corporate Plan working group at the same time as they consider the quarterly performance reports. Further consideration will be given as to how we can integrated performance reports.	Integrated financial and performance reports	Head of Financial Services and Head of People, Performance and Partnerships	Budget split by corporate objective reported to corporate plan working group (Sept and Nov 09) along with performance data relating to corporate objectives. Further integrated budget/performance reporting being considered.

Subject	Area of Focus	Reference	Proposed Action	Outcome	Lead Members and Officer	Progress as at June 2010
Data quality	Spot-checking Performance Indicators	Use of Resources 2008/09	Managers will be reminded of the need to spot check their data and confirm this has been done. Other spot checks will be undertaken as part of the general service or reviews by internal Audit as and when appropriate. The quarterly performance reports to COMT and O & S and Cabinet now include a statement from the Head of Service confirming that the data has been collected in accordance with the appropriate Divisions' data measure templates	Accurate, consistent data	Head of People, Performance and Partnerships	H of S requested to nominate an officer to undertake spot checks. The results now included in the quarterly performance reports. From Sept 09 all quarterly reports to COMT, Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet include a statement on the quality of the data from the appropriate Head of Service
Promote and demonstrate the principles and values of good governance	Demonstrating Outcomes from Partnership arrangements and their effectiveness	Use of Resources 2008/09	District Wide will contain articles on Partnership achievements	Residents and stakeholders aware of Partnership achievements	Head of People, Performance and Partnerships	Articles were published in the winter 2008 edition of District Wide relating to LPSA partnership funding. Further articles relating to partnership achievements are planned for the January 2010 edition
Workforce planning	Long-term workforce planning linked to corporate and business planning	Use of Resources 2008/09	This is being addressed via the review of and delivery of the HR strategy.	Strategic approach to workforce planning	Head of People, Performance and Partnerships	Strategy approved by Employment Panel (Dec 09) and action plan being implemented

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**PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Social Well-Being, Economic Well-Being and Environmental Well-Being met on 7th, 9th and 14th September 2010 respectively to consider a report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships on the Council's performance against its priority objectives. This report sets out the Panels' views on the performance levels achieved.

2. COMMENTS

- 2.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panels have endorsed the comments of the Corporate Plan Working Group which are reflected in the following paragraphs.

Social Well-Being

- 2.2 The Social Well-Being Panel's attention has been drawn to the "number of admissions/participants in activities provided or promoted by the Council" at its Leisure Centres, which has not achieved the first quarter target. Whilst the report indicates that this is not an area requiring particular attention, Members have received clarification that no specific activities have been identified which give rise to any concern. Instead, the figure reported is attributable to the impact of the current recession and an increase in the target figure by 9%. Nevertheless some concern has been expressed by Members at the failure to achieve the quarterly target in light of the fact that significant capital investment has been made at each of the Leisure Centres.
- 2.3 In response to questions raised by the Corporate Plan Working Group, confirmation has been received that exercise classes for older people have not been relocated away from the St Ivo facility.
- 2.4 While welcoming the success of the launch of the One Leisure card campaign in attracting 90,000 card holders, Members queried why only 32,600 were regarded as "live" users. Members questioned the meaning of this term and whether any targeted marketing will be undertaken in the future. In response, Officers have confirmed that "live" users refer to the number of people with cards used at any of the Centres over the previous 6 months and that a recent e-mail data capture exercise will assist with future targeted marketing campaigns.
- 2.5 With regard to the retrospective loss of LPSA reward funding for projects undertaken by the Environmental and Community Health Services Division, it has been noted that alternative funding sources have been sought through the submission of a bid to the Lottery Fund.
- 2.6 Members have drawn attention to the fact that the target for the key measure relating to the "number of households living in temporary accommodation"

has not been achieved. The answer provided is that this is largely attributable to the impact of the ongoing recession.

- 2.7 Some concern has been expressed by Members of the Corporate Plan Working Group at the potential withdrawal of rent deposit loans and bonds and the likelihood of this increasing the number of homelessness cases and demand for temporary accommodation. Members have questioned whether there is any scope to use these methods to reduce the level of homelessness currently being experienced. Discussion then ensued on the number of empty homes within the District, for example at RAF Upwood, and Members have queried whether anything is being done by the Council to utilise these vacant homes as another source of accommodation. Whilst it is acknowledged that some of the vacant properties are privately owned, Members have questioned whether agreements could be reached for the use of such properties.
- 2.8 The Panel has received clarification from the Head of Planning Services of the definition of “alternative types of affordable housing provision”. Members have noted that this encompasses “The Community Right to Build”, a potential future Government initiative which has yet to come into force. Under such legislation, community organisations and other local interest groups will be able to deliver new local homes and facilities for their areas without the need to apply to the Council for planning permission.

Economic Well-Being

- 2.9 The Economic Well-Being Panel’s attention has been drawn to the key measure relating to “internal promotions as a percentage of all vacancies filled”. As a result of a question raised by the Corporate Plan Working Group, the Panel has been advised that eight fixed term posts have advertised over the reporting period.
- 2.9 The Panel has also endorsed the view of the Corporate Plan Working Group that the amber indicator recorded for the key measure relating to the “percentage of new employees still in post after 12 months” should in fact be regarded as a green as there was only a minimal difference of 3.3% between the target and actual figure and some of the employees who left would have been on fixed term contracts.
- 2.10 With regard to the Leisure Centres, Members have noted that profit margins on bars and catering are reported as being above or on target. They have been advised that, although there had previously been a fall in hospitality income of £65,000 as a result of the closure of the St Neots bars and catering operation, it has been possible to accrue savings on staff costs, in addition to reduced opening hours, better supplier prices and less wastage. This has enabled profit margins to remain on target.
- 2.10 The Economic Well-Being Panel has received clarification from the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships of the current position with regard to the submission of proposals to form a Local Enterprise Partnership, the outcome of which is expected to be known at the end of September.
- 2.11 The Panel has discussed the deliberations of the Corporate Plan Working Group on the Council’s use of external consultants. The Working Group has reiterated its intention to undertake further work on this subject with a view to satisfying themselves that the use of consultants is subject to appropriate

controls, management and justification. Having noted that expenditure on consultants had amounted to £1.8 million in the previous year and was likely to increase in the current year, that in order to contribute towards the savings that the Council needs to identify, the Economic Well-Being Panel recommend the Cabinet to reduce the amount that the Council spends on employing external consultants by £1.5m in the current financial year.

Environmental Well-Being

- 2.12 The Environmental Well-Being Panel has requested clarification as to the definition of 'Songbird funding' which has reportedly been downgraded which will result in broadband projects to complement BT roll-out needing to be reassessed.
- 2.13 In response to questions raised by the Corporate Plan Working Group, the Head of Planning Services has informed the Panel that because of the complex nature of the retail and development aspects of certain forthcoming planning applications, it will be necessary, in order to determine these applications and suitably protect community interests, to retain both specialist retail and legal advice. While the costs of retaining that advice will be partially off-set by the planning fee income received, it is likely that some additional costs will be incurred by the Council. However the significant, wider benefits of delivering an enhanced retail offer within Huntingdon and facilitating the long-sought after redevelopment of parts of the town centre are considered to justify any additional cost involved.
- 2.14 With regard to the failure to meet the target for the number of energy efficiency and renewable energy measures carried out as a result of District Council schemes and promotions, the Head of Environmental Management has explained that this was due to an unavoidable delay in appointing contractors for the Cosy Homes Insulation Scheme.

3. THE CORPORATE PLAN WORKING GROUP

- 3.1 Prior to the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels, the Corporate Plan Working Group met to discuss various outstanding and current scrutiny matters. These included receiving an update on the Overview and Scrutiny Panels' recommendation in respect of the Council's expenditure on consultants and the Council's future budget planning and performance management process. With regard to the former, Members have requested an update to be made available to Members at the next scheduled meeting of the Panel Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen in September.
- 3.2 Bearing in mind recent developments concerning the Council's Redundancy Policy and its implications for the Council's strategic and future development, the Working Group has stressed the need for a clear vision of the Council's service to be developed in advance of any proposed re-organisation. Members urge the Cabinet to bear this in mind when taking decisions on these matters and accordingly suggest that the Cabinet invite contributions from opposition groups, Members, employees and the public in the search for the necessary financial savings. A review of the Council's Corporate Plan involving the Overview and Scrutiny Panels will assist in developing a clearer vision of the future of Council services and assist in setting future employment levels.

- 3.3 In respect of the proposals for the Council's performance management process, the Working Group has suggested that in the context of the recent Government decision to abolish the Comprehensive Area Assessment, the Cabinet should review all internal and external performance indicators to ensure that they are appropriate to the service delivered by or in partnership with the Council and that they remain important to residents and businesses of Huntingdonshire. Members have concurred with a suggestion that the Working Group should be involved as part of the review process.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 **All three Overview and Scrutiny Panels have expressed satisfaction with the performance levels that the Council has achieved. The Cabinet is invited**

- (a) **to consider the Panels' comments as part of its deliberations on the report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships;**
- (b) **to reduce the amount that the Council spends on employing external consultants by £1.5m in the current financial year;**
- (c) **to seek contributions from opposition groups, all Members, employees and the public in the search for the necessary financial savings;**
- (d) **to fully take into account the views expressed as a result of recommendation (c) above and review the Council's priorities, aims and objectives in the Corporate Plan with the Overview and Scrutiny Panels being involved in the review process;**
- (e) **to develop a clear vision of what services should be retained, delivered differently or withdrawn as a result of recommendation (d) above and use this as a guide in the application of the Council's Redundancy Policy; and**
- (f) **to review all internal and external performance indicators to ensure that they remain appropriate to services delivered by or in partnership with the Council and to involve the Corporate Plan Working Group in the review process.**

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Corporate Plan Working Group Notes of the meeting held on 26th August 2010.

Minutes and Reports of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) on 7th September 2010, Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) on 9th September 2010 and the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) on 14th September 2010.

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COMT
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
CABINET

31st August 2010
14th September 2010
16th September 2010

**THE REVOCATION OF THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY –
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ADOPTED HUNTINGDONSHIRE CORE
STRATEGY 2009 AND THE JOINT CAMBRIDGESHIRE APPROACH
(Report by Head of Planning Services)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet about the recent revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy; to thereby clarify any perceived uncertainty regarding the status of the Council's Adopted Core Strategy 2009; and to update Members with regard to the interim joint approach towards strategic planning being taken by all of the Cambridgeshire authorities.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Adopted Core Strategy 2009 sets out the Council's strategic planning and sustainable development strategies for the period up to 2026. The Core Strategy is in effect the spatial expression of the Council's aspirations for the future growth, conservation and environmental enhancement of Huntingdonshire. It is therefore the primary planning policy document within the Local Development Framework - and as such it is a fundamental part of the statutory development plan which can effectively be considered to constitute the approved 'local plan' for our area.
- 2.2 As Cabinet will be aware Huntingdonshire remains very much at the forefront in terms of the delivery of the sustainable growth strategy for Cambridgeshire and the sub-region. The Council's policy position is that it is supportive of appropriate levels of sustainable growth, which provides homes for our residents and supports a vibrant economy, and this approach is strongly reflected within the Adopted Core Strategy. A particularly notable feature, when the Core Strategy was independently examined, was the overall high level of public support for its strategies and proposals.

3. REVOCATION OF THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY

- 3.1 On 6th July 2010 the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government announced that Regional Strategies would be revoked with immediate effect. The revocation statement was accompanied by new national planning guidance which explicitly clarifies the status of adopted Local Development Documents. That guidance specifically;
- ❖ Strongly advocates (at 5.) that local planning authorities should continue to prepare appropriate development plan documents (DPDs) for their areas. The guidance states that these local plans will guide development and thereby provide certainty for investors and communities.

- ❖ Confirms (at 6.) that adopted DPDs, such as our Core Strategy, and saved policies, will continue to provide the statutory planning framework. Local authorities will also have the option to review applicable issues or policies as they see fit.
- ❖ Advises (at 7.) local planning authorities to continue to prepare and bring forward relevant DPDs.

It also provides some clarification with regard to other policy issues;

- ❖ In (10.11 and 12) the guidance clarifies that local planning authorities will continue to be responsible for establishing the right level of local housing provision for their area and therefore for identifying a long term supply of housing land.
- ❖ The guidance also particularly reiterates (in 13.) that local planning authorities should continue to identify enough viable land to meet their local housing needs. Local planning authorities should continue to use their plans to identify sufficient sites and broad areas for development in order to deliver their housing ambitions for at least 15 years from the date that their plan is adopted. All authorities will also continue to have to demonstrate that they have a 5 year supply of deliverable housing sites.
- ❖ In (14.) the guidance also stresses that local councils are best placed to assess the needs of Gypsies and Travellers. Local authorities will be responsible for determining the right level of site provision, reflecting local need and historic demand, and for bringing forward land in DPDs. The guidance stresses that they should continue to do this in line with current policy.

3.2 A full copy of this updated national planning advice is attached as Appendix A.

4. LOCAL IMPLICATIONS

For the Adopted Core Strategy

- 4.1 The revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies, which of course previously constituted the upper tier of the Statutory Development Plan, has created some obvious uncertainty within the development industry. The provision of certainty is the cornerstone of the plan-led system and is essential to underpin, to support and to deliver landowner and developer investment in an area.
- 4.2 This Council has been consistent in wanting to see its approved and adopted development strategies come to fruition with acceptable sustainable development proposals being brought forward in appropriate locations. Uncertainty regarding the weight that should now be attached to the Council's adopted 'plan' would both undermine potential investment and also be likely to give rise to the promotion of a number of inappropriate, speculative, development proposals.
- 4.3 Huntingdonshire is one of a minority of local planning authorities that have successfully expended the considerable time and resources needed to develop and deliver an adopted Core Strategy. Our Core Strategy sets out a positive and robust framework to deliver sustainable development, and

to safeguard our environment, for the period to 2026. As such, the Council is in a very strong position, being able to proceed with its more detailed plans and deliver appropriate forms of development, during this period of relative uncertainty in terms of national planning guidance. Moreover the Adopted Core Strategy, which was of course developed having regard to an extensive up-to-date evidence base, therefore remains the most robust mechanism to assess planning and development proposals, and to promote the growth of the District irrespective of the revocation of the RSS. Subsequent related Development Plan Documents will now take forward the applicable policy details, allocate land for development and define the appropriate delivery methods.

For the Joint Cambridgeshire Approach

- 4.4 Co-operative working between Cambridgeshire County Council and the Cambridgeshire Districts has been on-going since the successful delivery of the 2003 Structure Plan. This approach led to an agreed position being taken in relation to the preparation of the RSS and its subsequent review. In effect the RSS policy in respect of the Cambridge Sub-Region embraced and adopted the locally derived position including the agreed appropriate local levels of, and locations of, strategic housing growth. With the revocation of the RSS the Cambridgeshire authorities have therefore begun work to review the current strategic policy position. This is necessary, not only because of the demise of the RSS, but also because of the decision by Marshall, at least for the time being, not to relocate from Cambridge airport.
- 4.5 Pending any review of the agreed sub-regional strategy, and paying appropriate regard to the updated advice from the Secretary of State in respect of encouraging effective joint working, a joint interim statement has been prepared by all of the Cambridgeshire authorities and a copy is attached as Appendix 2 to this report. This joint approach is considered necessary in order to give an appropriate degree of certainty across the sub-region and to thereby discourage speculative inappropriate proposals - particularly with regard to the potential development of strategic sites and in respect of any further new settlement proposals.
- 4.6 In order to be able to give appropriate weight to this interim joint approach it needs to be endorsed by each of the constituent local planning authorities including this Council. As far as Huntingdonshire is concerned the interim statement reflects and effectively enshrines the Council's approved strategic planning policy position as set out in the Adopted Core Strategy. As such it can be positively endorsed.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 Therefore it is recommended that the Cabinet;
- a. Notes the Government's revocation of the RSS, its intention with regard to the revision of policy, and its clear guidance regarding the need for LPAs to continue to prepare appropriate Development Plan Documents, and;
 - b. Notes that the adopted Huntingdonshire Core Strategy 2009 remains as the Council's primary planning policy document in accordance with this latest Government guidance.

- c. Endorses the joint statement made by the Cambridgeshire authorities with regard to the interim planning policy position for the Cambridge Sub-Region.

Background Papers:

The Adopted Huntingdonshire Core Strategy 2009

Revocation of Regional Strategies Statement – Department for Communities and Local Government July 2010

Interim Joint Statement – Cambridgeshire Authorities August 2010

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

JOINT STATEMENT ON THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE BY THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE AUTHORITIES

BACKGROUND REPORT

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an update on discussions between the Cambridgeshire authorities on a joint planning statement setting out the development strategy for Cambridgeshire following the recent abolition of Regional Strategies.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 There is a long history of joint working between the Cambridgeshire authorities to address the issues affecting Cambridgeshire and to establish a strategy for the future development of the County. This approach led to the development and adoption of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan (2003) and the recent work undertaken by the authorities in responding to the East of England Regional Assembly (EERA) on the review of the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), 'The East of England Plan > 2031'.
- 2.2 Work on the RSS review was overseen by the Cambridgeshire Regional Spatial Strategy Review Panel (CRESSP) - a joint Member body from across the Cambridgeshire local authorities and including representatives from Cambridgeshire Horizons and Peterborough City Council. This work culminated in the submission of a detailed response to EERA in December 2009, which set out the authorities' vision for the County and preferred distribution and levels of growth to 2031.
- 2.3 The Cambridgeshire authorities' comments were reflected in the policies and growth levels subsequently set out in the draft revision of the RSS, published by EERA and submitted to Government in March 2010.

3.0 REVOCATION OF REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGIES

- 3.1 After submission of the draft RSS, the new coalition Government announced in July that Regional Strategies would be revoked with immediate effect. In the longer term the legal basis for Regional Strategies will be abolished through a Localism Bill that the Government intends to introduce in the current Parliamentary session.
- 3.2 The Government also issued guidance for local planning authorities which states that:

- Local planning authorities should determine planning applications having regard to their Local Development Frameworks, saved policies and any old style Local Plans that have not lapsed, as well as national policy and any other material considerations.
- Local planning authorities should continue to work on their Local Development Frameworks. They may use the revocation of Regional Strategies as an opportunity to revisit policies in adopted LDFs if they wish.

3.3 The guidance emphasises that local planning authorities will:

- Be responsible for establishing the right level of housing for their areas, and will no longer have to meet regionally established housing targets.
- Need to justify the housing numbers they arrive at through the use of reliable information.
- Still be required to demonstrate a five year supply of housing land.

4.0 CAMBRIDGESHIRE AUTHORITIES' RESPONSE

4.1 The Government intends that the previous 'top-down', target-driven planning system will be replaced by a new approach, giving local authorities considerable freedom and allowing local people more say in how their communities develop. Regarding regional and sub-regional planning, the guidance states that: "New ways for local authorities to address strategic planning and infrastructure issues based on cooperation will be introduced."

4.2 Although these changes present opportunities for Cambridgeshire, they also raise concerns, including that the gap left by the abolition of Regional Strategies will open up the authorities to major speculative development pressures and create a strategy driven by planning decisions granted on appeal.

4.3 In response to these concerns, the Cambridgeshire authorities have undertaken initial work to:

- Agree a joint position statement, setting out the development strategy for Cambridgeshire in the absence of the RSS – Section 5 and Appendix A.
- Scope out what further work may be required for future strategic planning in Cambridgeshire - Section 6.

5.0 JOINT INTERIM PLANNING STATEMENT

5.1 The joint interim planning statement developed by the Cambridgeshire

authorities is attached as Appendix A to this report. The statement was discussed by Cambridgeshire Public Service Board on 28 July 2010. Public Service Board endorsed the statement, subject to the addition of reference in paragraph 3.1 to the need to rebalance the economy towards the private sector and to the Local Enterprise Partnership.

- 5.2 The statement sets out the Cambridgeshire authorities' position following the abolition of Regional Strategies and the effects of the recession on the delivery of key development sites. It is anticipated that the statement will be adopted by each of the Cambridgeshire authorities through their committee processes and will be used to inform development decisions. It is also intended to prepare a joint press release to accompany the publication.

6.0 FUTURE STRATEGIC PLANNING FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE

- 6.1 While the planning statement affirms the authorities' commitment to the current strategy, there is also a recognition that the strategy needs to be kept under review.
- 6.2 Cambridgeshire Public Service Board discussed future strategic planning for Cambridgeshire alongside the joint planning statement at its meeting on 28 July. The Board considered a number of options, including:
- Waiting until new legislation is published before undertaking further work.
 - Beginning work immediately to gather and update the background evidence base.
 - Beginning to prepare a joint sub-regional strategy for the County addressing strategic issues where coordination is essential, including housing, education, employment, transport and infrastructure.
- 6.3 Public Service Board endorsed the recommended option to begin work immediately to gather and update the evidence base. This evidence will be used to inform the authorities' emerging Local Development Frameworks and future LDF reviews. It could also inform a sub-regional strategy for Cambridgeshire, if provision is made for this in legislation and the authorities were to agree at a later date that such a strategy is necessary.

APPENDIX A: JOINT STATEMENT ON THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE BY THE CAMBRIDGESHIRE AUTHORITIES

[Highlighted text shows changes following PSB 28 July 2010]

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This statement has been prepared by the Cambridgeshire authorities to set out our position regarding the development strategy for the County in light of the Government's recent announcement of the revocation of Regional Spatial Strategies and aspiration for a locally based planning system.
- 1.2 The Cambridgeshire authorities have a long history of joint working on planning issues and will continue to work together to share information and develop good practice. A significant evidence base has been built up that provides the authorities with important information to guide further work. An important outcome of this approach was the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Structure Plan - a sustainable strategy for growth that was tested at Examination and adopted in 2003. This strategy was adopted largely unchanged in the Regional Spatial Strategy (2008) and the authorities' response to the RSS review in 2009. The Structure Plan strategy has also informed the development of the City and District Councils' Local Plan and Local Development Frameworks and is currently being implemented by the authorities through their development decisions.

2 Cambridgeshire strategy

- 2.1 The Cambridgeshire authorities remain committed to the strategy for planning in the County, including the provision of housing, as originally established by the Structure Plan and as now partially set out in saved Structure Plan policies and as reflected by the policies and site proposals in the Cambridge Local Plan and District Councils' Development Plan Documents and developing strategies for market towns.
- 2.2 The key objective of the strategy is to locate homes in and close to Cambridge, following a comprehensive review of the Cambridge Green Belt, and to other main centres of employment, while avoiding dispersed development which increases unsustainable travel and makes access to services and community facilities difficult. Further sustainable locations for growth focus mainly on Cambridgeshire's market towns.
- 2.3 This strategy makes provision for development:
 - within Cambridge or as sustainable extensions to the urban area, subject to environmental capacity and compatibility with Green Belt objectives.
 - at the new town of Northstowe, linked to the guided busway;

- within, or as sustainable extensions to, the market towns of Wisbech, March, Ely, Huntingdon and St Neots, subject to the potential for regeneration and the provision of essential infrastructure and public transport improvements¹; and
- within, or as extensions to, other market towns, where development would increase the towns' sustainability and self-containment, improvements to infrastructure and services are planned or will be provided and high quality public transport provision can reduce the impacts of out-commuting.

2.4 This strategy has met with considerable success so far and a large number of sites have already been delivered throughout the County or are under construction, with more remaining to be developed. Despite the recession, construction has continued and Cambridgeshire is identified as one of the key areas of the country likely to lead the national economy into recovery.

2.5 Despite recent announcements about the relocation of Marshalls from Cambridge airport, the authorities consider that Cambridge East retains great potential for sustainable development and currently remains part of the strategy. The authorities also consider that there is sufficient availability of housing land over the short to medium term. Cambridge East will be considered alongside other sites as part of a fuller review of the strategy.

3 Looking forward

3.1 The Cambridgeshire authorities remain committed to the strategy for planning in the County outlined above, as embedded in the Cambridge Local Plan and District Councils' Development Plan Documents. However, with factors such as fragile economic growth, the need to rebalance the economy towards the private sector, changing demographic pressures, the challenges of climate change, uncertainty over infrastructure provision and emerging proposals for the Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership, there remains a need to keep the strategy under review.

3.2 The authorities will continue to work together on place-shaping issues and will begin gathering evidence to inform decisions on future development levels and locations, so that the strategy that emerges will be based on a thorough understanding of the issues the County faces, including cross-County boundary impacts. Moves to a more locally based planning system will provide the authorities with much greater freedom. We will ensure that under this new system the future strategy is driven by the needs and aspirations of local communities, is fully deliverable, ensures the County's

¹ Huntingdon and St Neots in this policy refers to the Spatial Planning Areas as defined in the adopted Huntingdonshire Core Strategy

continuing economic success and protects and enhances Cambridgeshire's unique environment.

The Chief Planning Officer
Local Planning Authorities in England

6 July 2010

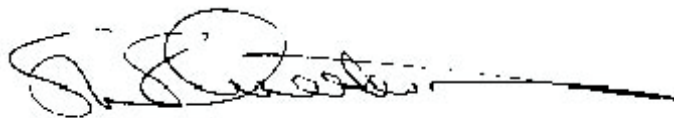
Chief Planning Officer Letter:

REVOCATION OF REGIONAL STRATEGIES

Today the Secretary of State announced the revocation of Regional Strategies with immediate effect.

I have attached some 'questions and answer' advice on immediate issues that may arise from this announcement. It will be important for local planning authorities to carry on delivering local development frameworks and making decisions on applications and the attached document focuses on how to continue taking these forward.

Please address any queries to Eamon Mythen at CLG in the first instance (Eamon.Mythen@communities.gsi.gov.uk).



STEVE QUARTERMAIN
Chief Planner

Department for Communities and Local Government
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London
SW1E 5DU

Guidance for Local Planning Authorities following the revocation of Regional Strategies

The Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government confirmed today that Regional Strategies will be revoked (see the attached copy of the Parliamentary Written Statement). In the longer term the legal basis for Regional Strategies will be abolished through the “Localism Bill” that we are introducing in the current Parliamentary session. New ways for local authorities to address strategic planning and infrastructure issues based on cooperation will be introduced. This guidance provides some clarification on the impact of the revocation; how local planning authorities can continue to bring forward their Local Development Frameworks (LDFs); and make planning decisions in the transitional period.

1. Under what powers are Regional Strategies being revoked?

Regional Strategies have been revoked under s79(6) of the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and no longer form part of the development plan for the purposes of s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This guidance covers the period between revocation of Regional Strategies and legislation to abolish them altogether.

2. Do Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) remain in force?

Yes. The Policy Statement on Regional Strategies (February 2010) is cancelled, and references to Regional Strategies in other Policy Statements are no longer valid. But all other PPSs will continue to apply until they are replaced by the National Planning Framework.

3. Will this affect the London Plan?

The London Plan will continue to provide the planning framework for London boroughs. As part of a wider process of decentralisation in London, we are reviewing how powers and discretion can be shifted downwards from central government to the Mayor and Assembly, to London Boroughs and to local neighbourhoods. This will include reviewing the scope for devolving power from the Greater London Authority down to the Boroughs and below.

The following sections provide advice on some of the issues likely to arise following revocation of Regional Strategies, until the “Localism Bill” and the new National Planning Framework are in place. This guidance should be regarded as a material consideration by local planning authorities and the Planning Inspectorate in their decisions.

4. How will this affect planning applications?

In determining planning applications local planning authorities must continue to have regard to the development plan. This will now consist only of:

- Adopted DPDs;
- Saved policies; and

- Any old style plans that have not lapsed.

Local planning authorities should also have regard to other material considerations, including national policy. Evidence that informed the preparation of the revoked Regional Strategies may also be a material consideration, depending on the facts of the case.

Where local planning authorities have not yet issued decisions on planning applications in the pipeline, they may wish to review those decisions in light of the new freedoms following the revocation of Regional Strategies. The revocation of the Regional Strategy may also be a material consideration.

5. Should we continue preparing LDF documents?

Yes – the revocation of Regional Strategies is not a signal for local authorities to stop making plans for their area.

Local planning authorities should continue to develop LDF core strategies and other DPDs, reflecting local people's aspirations and decisions on important issues such as climate change, housing and economic development.

These local plans will guide development in their areas and provide certainty for investors and communities. Local authorities may wish to review their plans following the revocation of Regional Strategies. We recommend reviews should be undertaken as quickly as possible.

6. How does this affect adopted local plans / LDFs?

Adopted DPDs and saved policies will continue to provide the statutory planning framework. Local authorities may decide to review these now that Regional Strategies have been revoked. There is no need to review the whole LDF, only those issues or policies which local authorities wish to revisit. When undertaking consultation and sustainability appraisal on their draft policies, authorities should take an approach that considers the stage reached, the extent of work already undertaken and the scope of the policy changes they are making.

7. What if my LDF document is still being prepared?

Where local planning authorities are currently bringing forward development plan documents they should continue to do so. Authorities may decide to review and/or revise their emerging policies in the light of the revocation of Regional Strategies. Where authorities decide to do this they will need to ensure they meet the requirements for soundness under the current legislation. When undertaking consultation and sustainability appraisal on their draft policies, authorities should take an approach that considers the stage reached, the extent of work already undertaken and the scope of the policy changes they are making.

8. Will Examinations in Public continue for DPDs?

Yes – where local planning authorities are bringing forward new development plan documents or reviewing adopted plans they should present evidence to support their plans. The examination process will continue to assess the soundness of plans, and Inspectors will test evidence put forward by local authorities and others who make representations.

9. Will data and research currently held by Regional Local Authority Leaders' Boards still be available?

Yes. The regional planning function of Regional LA Leaders' Boards – the previous Regional Assemblies – is being wound up and their central government funding will end after September this year. The planning data and research they currently hold will still be available to local authorities for the preparation of their local plans whilst they put their own alternative arrangements in place for the collection and analysis of evidence. Notwithstanding, the new Government regards the Regional Leaders' Boards as an unnecessary tier of bureaucracy.

Clarification on policy issues

There are a number of areas where Regional Strategies supplemented the national policy framework. Further clarification on these areas is set out below.

10. Who will determine housing numbers in the absence of Regional Strategy targets?

Local planning authorities will be responsible for establishing the right level of local housing provision in their area, and identifying a long term supply of housing land without the burden of regional housing targets. Some authorities may decide to retain their existing housing targets that were set out in the revoked Regional Strategies. Others may decide to review their housing targets. We would expect that those authorities should quickly signal their intention to undertake an early review so that communities and land owners know where they stand.

11. Will we still need to justify the housing numbers in our plans?

Yes – it is important for the planning process to be transparent, and for people to be able to understand why decisions have been taken. Local authorities should continue to collect and use reliable information to justify their housing supply policies and defend them during the LDF examination process. They should do this in line with current policy in PPS3.

12. Can I replace Regional Strategy targets with “option 1 numbers”?

Yes, if that is the right thing to do for your area. Authorities may base revised housing targets on the level of provision submitted to the original Regional Spatial Strategy examination (Option 1 targets), supplemented by more recent information as appropriate. These figures are based on assessments undertaken by local authorities. However, any target selected may be tested during the examination process especially if challenged and authorities will need to be ready to defend them.

13. Do we still have to provide a 5 year land supply?

Yes. Although the overall ambition for housing growth may change, authorities should continue to identify enough viable land in their DPDs to meet that growth. Strategic Housing Market Assessments and Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments can help with this. Local planning authorities should continue to use their plans to identify sufficient sites and broad areas for development to deliver their housing ambitions for at least 15 years from the date the plan is adopted. Authorities should also have a five year land supply of deliverable sites. This too will need to reflect any changes to the overall local housing ambition.

14. How do we determine the level of provision for travellers' sites?

Local councils are best placed to assess the needs of travellers. The abolition of Regional Strategies means that local authorities will be responsible for determining the right level of site provision, reflecting local need and historic demand, and for bringing forward land in DPDs. They should continue to do this in line with current policy. *Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessments* (GTAAs) have been undertaken by all local authorities and if local authorities decide to review the levels of provision these assessments will form a good starting point. However, local authorities are not bound by them. We will review relevant regulations and guidance on this matter in due course.

15. How do we establish the need for minerals and aggregates supply without Regional Strategy targets?

Minerals planning authorities will have responsibility for continuing to plan for a steady and adequate supply of aggregate minerals to support economic growth. They should do this within the longstanding arrangements for minerals planning. Technical advice provided by the Aggregate Working Parties, including their current work in sub-apportioning the CLG guidelines for 2005-2020 to planning authority level will assist with this.

Planning authorities in the South East should work from the apportionment set out in the "Proposed Changes" to the revision of Policy M3, published on 19 March 2010.

Planning authorities can choose to use alternative figures for their planning purposes if they have new or different information and a robust evidence base. We will work with the minerals industry and local government to agree how minerals planning arrangements should operate in the longer term.

16. How do we establish the need for waste management without Regional Strategy targets?

Planning Authorities should continue to press ahead with their waste plans, and provide enough land for waste management facilities to support the sustainable management of waste (including the move away from disposal of waste by landfill). Data and information prepared by partners will continue to assist in this process. For the transitional period this will continue to be the data and information which has been collated by the local authority and industry and other public bodies who

currently form the Regional Waste Technical Advisory Bodies. We intend for this function to be transferred to local authorities in due course.

17. Does the abolition of the hierarchy of strategic centres mean the end of policies on town centres?

No. Local authorities must continue to have regard to PPS 4: *Planning for Sustainable Economic Growth* in preparing LDFs and, where relevant, take it into account in determining planning applications for retail, leisure and other main town centre uses.

In assessing any planning applications proposing unplanned growth in out of town shopping centres, particularly those over 50,000 sqm gross retail floor area, local authorities should take account of the potential impacts of the development on centres in the catchment area of the proposal.

18. What about regional policies on the natural environment?

Local authorities should continue to work together, and with communities, on conservation, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment – including biodiversity, geo-diversity and landscape interests. Authorities should continue to draw on available information, including data from partners, to address cross boundary issues such as the provision of green infrastructure and wildlife corridors.

19. What about regional policies on Flooding and Coastal Change?

Local authorities should continue to work together across administrative boundaries to plan development that addresses flooding and coastal change. For flooding matters local authorities already have a duty to co-operate under the Floods and Water Management Act. The Environment Agency will continue to work with local authorities individually and/or jointly to provide technical support on these matters. The Coalition agreement is clear that we should prevent unnecessary building in areas of high flood risk.

20. What about regional policies on Renewable and Low Carbon Energy?

Through their local plans, authorities should contribute to the move to a low carbon economy, cut greenhouse gas emissions, help secure more renewable and low carbon energy to meet national targets, and to adapt to the impacts arising from climate change. In doing so, planning authorities may find it useful to draw on data that was collected by the Regional Local Authority Leaders' Boards (which will be made available) and more recent work, including assessments of the potential for renewable and low carbon energy.

21. What about regional policies on Transport?

Local authorities should continue to ensure their land use and local transport plans are mutually consistent, and deliver the most effective and sustainable development for their area. Local authorities should work with each other and with businesses and communities to consider strategic transport priorities and cross boundary issues.

22. Does the end of Regional Strategies mean changes to Green Belt?

No. The Government is committed to the protection of the Green Belt and the revocation of Regional Strategies will prevent top-down pressure to reduce the Green Belt protection. Local planning authorities should continue to apply policies in PPG2. As part of their preparation or revision of DPDs, planning authorities should consider the desirability of new Green Belt or adjustment of an existing Green Belt boundary, working with other local planning authorities as appropriate.

Parliamentary Statement Revoking Regional Strategies

Today I am making the first step to deliver our commitment in the coalition agreement to “*rapidly abolish Regional Spatial Strategies and return decision-making powers on housing and planning to local councils*”, by revoking Regional Strategies.

Regional Strategies added unnecessary bureaucracy to the planning system. They were a failure. They were expensive and time-consuming. They alienated people, pitting them against development instead of encouraging people to build in their local area.

The revocation of Regional Strategies will make local spatial plans, drawn up in conformity with national policy, the basis for local planning decisions. The new planning system will be clear, efficient and will put greater power in the hands of local people, rather than regional bodies.

Imposed central targets will be replaced with powerful incentives so that people see the benefits of building. The coalition agreement makes a clear commitment to providing local authorities with real incentives to build new homes. I can confirm that this will ensure that those local authorities which take action now to consent and support the construction of new homes will receive direct and substantial benefit from their actions. Because we are committed to housing growth, introducing these incentives will be a priority and we aim to do so early in the spending review period. We will consult on the detail of this later this year. These incentives will encourage local authorities and communities to increase their aspirations for housing and economic growth, and to deliver sustainable development in a way that allows them to control the way in which their villages, towns and cities change. Our revisions to the planning system will also support renewable energy and a low carbon economy.

The abolition of Regional Strategies will provide a clear signal of the importance attached to the development and application of local spatial plans, in the form of Local Development Framework Core Strategies and other Development Plan Documents. Future reform in this area will make it easier for local councils, working with their communities, to agree and amend local plans in a way that maximises the involvement of neighbourhoods.

The abolition of Regional Strategies will require legislation in the “Localism Bill” which we are introducing this session. However, given the clear coalition commitment, it is important to avoid a period of uncertainty over planning policy, until the legislation is enacted. So I am revoking Regional Strategies today in order to give clarity to builders, developers and planners.

Regional Strategies are being revoked under s79(6) of the Local Democracy Economic Development and Construction Act 2009 and will thus no longer form part of the development plan for the purposes of s38(6) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Revoking, and then abolishing, Regional Strategies will mean that the planning system is simpler, more efficient and easier for people to understand. It will be firmly

rooted in the local community. And it will encourage the investment, economic growth and housing that Britain needs.

We will be providing advice for local planning authorities today and a copy has been placed in the house library.

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**THE REVOCATION OF THE REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being))**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting on 14th September 2010, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) considered a report by the Head of Planning Services on the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy and the implications for strategic planning in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.

2. DELIBERATIONS

- 2.1 The Panel was encouraged to note that the District Council is one of a minority of local planning authorities that has an adopted Core Strategy which sets out a positive and robust framework to deliver sustainable development. Furthermore, the strategy has been tested at a recent public inquiry and found by the Planning Inspector to be sound. The Panel was somewhat relieved that the ambitious targets for development mooted by the now defunct East of England Regional Assembly for the review of the East of England Plan to 2031 have now been abandoned. However Members have noted that with the guidance from the Secretary of State calling for local planning authorities to identify a 15 years supply of land for housing, the Core Strategy which was until 2026 may soon need to be revisited.
- 2.2 Issues that remain a concern to Members are the need for employment provision to cater for the housing growth and infrastructure improvements in advance of development taking place. Members drew particular attention to the A428 which is under increasing pressure from housing developments in St. Neots.
- 2.3 The Panel welcomed the apparent change in direction over the provision of gypsy and traveller sites which will enable the District Council to assess its own need for additional pitches as opposed to this being determined regionally. Having been informed by the executive councillor for planning strategy that further guidance will be awaited before now progressing with a gypsy and traveller sites DPD, the Panel suggests that the Cabinet should make a public announcement on the present situation having regard to the magnitude of the public response to the recent SHLAA exercise on the identification of potential sites.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Cabinet is invited to note that the Panel supports the recommendations in the report by the Head of Planning Services and consider the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) as part of its deliberations on the revocation of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

Contact Officer: Mrs J Walker, Trainee Democratic Services Officer
(01480) 387049

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**FORMAT OF THE COUNCIL'S EXECUTIVE
THE CHOICE OF EXECUTIVE LEADER OR ELECTED MAYOR**

(Report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services)

1. Introduction

- 1.1 A review of the democratic structure of the Council was undertaken by a working party chaired by Councillor K J Churchill in the autumn of 2008 which reported to the Council in April 2009. Most of the recommendations were determined at that meeting, although some were deferred until the June meeting of the Council. A review of the changes implemented is currently underway and the working party will be reporting to a meeting of the Council to be held on 3rd November 2010.
- 1.2 One aspect of the working party's review concerned the choice of executive for the District Council with legislative change having narrowed the choice of executive to two – an executive leader or an elected mayor – with the change being required by May 2011. The Council agreed to consult on the options with a view to an early implementation of the final choice. Further examination of the legislation before the consultation took place however resulted in an acknowledgement that the change could not be implemented before May 2011, with a final decision due by the end of December 2010. As a result, the consultation exercise was delayed until this summer with a closing date of 30th July.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to inform the Council of the result of the consultation and to invite Members to determine the choice of executive for Huntingdonshire.

2. Current Arrangements

- 2.1 Before turning to the outcome of the consultation, it may be useful to explain the background to the choices available and the implications of the legislative change.
- 2.2 The Council currently operates under the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000 which requires the Council to have one of three types of executive – an elected mayor and cabinet, an elected mayor and council manager, or a leader and cabinet. Under the latter, the cabinet is chosen either by the leader (referred to as the 'strong leader' model) or by the Council (the 'weak leader' model). The Council operated the latter, until the annual meeting in May 2010 when a change was made to the strong leader model. Inclusive of the mayor or leader, a cabinet must have a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 10 councillors.
- 2.3 The vast majority of councils operate under the leader and cabinet model. Despite consistent Government support for directly elected mayors, there are only 12 currently throughout the country. Only one authority operated the mayor and manager model but has reverted back to a leader and cabinet. If 5% of the electorate sign a petition in favour of an elected mayor, the Council must hold a referendum to obtain the public's reaction. In the event of a majority voting in favour of a mayoral system at the referendum, the Council must introduce that form of administration. Once a mayoral system had been introduced, it was not possible, prior to the Local Government and Public

Involvement in Health Act 2007, for an authority to return to a leader and cabinet system.

3. Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

- 3.1 The 2007 Act has narrowed the choice of executive arrangements open to local authorities to
- an elected mayor and cabinet appointed by him, or
 - an executive leader appointed by the Council from amongst its membership and a cabinet appointed by that leader.
- 3.2 In either case the cabinet still must comprise between 2 and 10 councillors inclusive of the mayor or executive leader.
- 3.3 The Act has introduced significant changes to the leader and cabinet system which are explained in the following paragraphs.
- 3.4 The executive leader must be elected at the first annual meeting of the Council following the transition to the new executive leader and cabinet executive model in May 2011. He or she holds office until the annual meeting after his normal date of retirement as a councillor. In the case of an authority operating partial-council elections such as Huntingdonshire, that period could therefore be up to 4 years in length or such lesser period when the leader's term of office as a councillor comes to an end. If an executive leader would normally have ceased to be a councillor when his term of office comes to an end (because he has decided not to stand again or is not elected), he nevertheless will remain as executive leader and a councillor until the ensuing annual meeting when a new executive leader is appointed.
- 3.5 The Council can resolve to remove an executive leader from office at any time and appoint a replacement either when the executive leader is removed from office or at a later meeting.
- 3.6 The executive leader must appoint one of the members of the cabinet executive to be the deputy executive leader who shall serve for the same period of office as the executive leader, unless he resigns as either deputy executive leader or as a councillor in the interim or he is removed as deputy executive leader by the executive leader. The deputy executive leader will act in place of the executive leader if the latter position is vacant or the executive leader is unable to act. If both are unable to act or both positions are vacant, the cabinet must act in the place of the executive leader or can appoint a member of the cabinet to do so.
- 3.7 The Act effectively gives the executive leader the same powers as a mayor in terms of the discharge of the executive functions of the Council. The leader can discharge any of those functions himself or can arrange for them to be discharged by the cabinet, by a member of the cabinet, by a committee of the cabinet or by an officer. That choice is his and not the Council's. The Act enables the cabinet, a committee of the cabinet or an executive member to further delegate any executive power delegated to them to an officer but gives the leader a right of veto over any such further delegation.
- 3.8 The Council must decide which form of executive it wishes to operate by the end of the transitional period specified in the Act. In the case of district councils, a resolution to change the governance arrangements must be made no later than 31st December 2010 with the new arrangements coming into effect no later than the third day after the day of elections to the Council in May 2011. If a resolution is not passed by the due date, the Council must

implement the executive leader and cabinet executive arrangements. The Council's existing arrangements remain in place until the new arrangements are implemented.

- 3.9 The Council can change governance arrangements subsequently only during a permitted resolution period which extends from the date of the annual meeting in 2014 until the end of that year and a similar period every 4 years thereafter. The change would come into effect on the third day after the day of election in 2015 and any fourth year thereafter. It is open now for an authority to move back from an elected mayor and cabinet system to an executive leader and cabinet executive system.
- 3.10 Before passing a resolution as to which new form of executive to adopt, the Council must take reasonable steps to consult the electorate and other interested parties. The Council must then draw up proposals for change in order to secure continuous improvement in the way in which the Council's functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The Council had the discretion to make a decision on the choice of executive the subject of approval by a referendum but chose not to do so.
- 3.11 The change introduced by the Act does not affect the opportunity for the electorate to petition for the introduction of a mayor and cabinet under the 2000 Act which would not follow the above timetable. However where a change to a mayoral system has been made as a result of a referendum, either as a result of a petition or by choice on the part of the authority, the Council cannot resolve to change governance arrangements again without another referendum being held. If a referendum is held as a result of a petition, another referendum cannot be held until a period of 10 years has elapsed.

4. Democratic Structure Working Party

- 4.1 The Council accepted a recommendation from the working party not to hold a referendum on the choice of executive on the basis that this would lengthen the timescale for the consultation exercise and there was thought to be little enthusiasm locally for an elected mayor to justify the cost of a referendum.
- 4.2 It was the view of the working party -
- that there was a lack of support nationally for the mayoral model,
 - that the public consultation that was undertaken on the choice of executive in Huntingdonshire when the 2000 Act was implemented favoured the leader and cabinet model,
 - that the County Council (which had to move to the new arrangements earlier in the statutory timescale) had adopted the executive leader model with effect from May 2009 in response to its public consultation on the choice,
 - that there was an apparent lack of enthusiasm both in Huntingdonshire and elsewhere within Cambridgeshire for an elected mayor, and
 - that the Council's existing leader and cabinet arrangements are understood and have been embedded in the organisation since their initial implementation.
- 4.3 The working party recognised that the mayoral system enables an individual person to become elected, potentially on the basis of a populist electoral campaign or a single contentious issue of concern, without the benefit of support from one of the political parties. This has the potential to lead to tensions between the mayor and elected councillors from whom the cabinet would be chosen and to consequential operational and practical difficulties in

terms of working relationships. Members felt that there was little to be gained and potentially much to be lost if a mayoral system was introduced.

5. The Consultation Exercise

- 5.1 An extensive consultation exercise has been undertaken, commencing in mid May and with a closing date of 30th July.
- 5.2 An article was included in the June edition of District Council which is delivered to all households in Huntingdonshire. Information was included on the Council's website and letters sent to a range of organisations, including town and parish councils, chambers of trade, town centre partnerships, Hunts Forum and other LSP partners. Flyers were distributed at the neighbourhood forums throughout Huntingdonshire in July and an item included on the agenda for the forum meetings, drawing attention to the consultation. The consultation exercise was reported in the local media.
- 5.3 A copy of an explanatory leaflet which was available on the website and which accompanied the consultation letter is attached as Appendix A.
- 5.4 Subsequent to the start of the consultation, the coalition government has begun announcing their plans for alternative choices for the way in which local authorities take decisions, including 'super mayors' for the largest cities and the option of a return to the committee system which applied before 2000. The government recognises that, until such time as alternative forms of administration are approved in the forthcoming Localism Bill, authorities are required to comply with the timetable set by the 2007 Act. The Government has therefore asked that Councils do not incur any significant expenditure on the consultation exercise, especially in today's economic climate and that this need be no more than a small newspaper advertisement or article and notice on the website. The consultation exercise undertaken by the Council has therefore been more than sufficient under the circumstances.

6. Outcome of the Consultation

- 6.1 Few responses were received to the consultation exercise, notwithstanding an editorial by one of the local newspapers earlier in the year advocating the choice of an elected mayor for Huntingdonshire.
- 6.2 Twelve parish councils replied to say that they had resolved to support the choice of an executive leader, with one town council replying to say that its members had been unable to reach a consensus. Two parish councillors wrote separately to support an executive leader, as did one charitable organisation in the District. Four members of the public wrote in support of an executive leader and four in favour of an elected mayor.
- 6.3 The clear preference of those who responded therefore was for an executive leader.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The government has indicated that it is committed to allowing councils to return to the committee system, should they wish, or have elected mayors. The government also intends to remove the necessity to elect a leader for four years. The changes will be contained in the Localism Bill which may mean that any change that the Council implements in May 2011 may be of short duration and may need to be changed again within a year or so.
- 7.2 Until the Bill is passed, the Council must operate within the existing legislation which requires a decision to be made on the choice of executive leader or

elected mayor by the end of December 2010 for implementation in May 2011. It was the view of the Democratic Structure Working Party that the Council should move to an executive leader and this has been supported by the great majority of the comments received in response to the public consultation.

8. Next Stage

- 8.1 Having carried out the consultation exercise, the Council must draw up proposals for the change in executive arrangements which must include a timetable and details of transitional arrangements (if any). Copies of the proposals must be made available for inspection and must be advertised in one or more local newspapers. The proposals are set out in Appendix B attached.
- 8.2 A resolution to change governance arrangements must be passed at a meeting of the Council specially convened for the purpose. Once a resolution has been passed, a document setting out the proposals must be made available for inspection and a notice published in one or more local newspapers.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is therefore

Recommended

that the Council approves the proposals for a change in governance arrangements in accordance with the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 as set in Appendix B attached to this report.

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LEADER OR MAYOR – THE CHOICE FOR HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The following questions and answers are intended to explain the main differences between the new types of executive which will be introduced in local authorities in England and Wales (other than small district and parish councils) and the decision which the council needs to make in choosing which system to adopt.

What's in the legislation?

The Local Government Act 2000 swept away the old committee style of administration in county and larger district councils in England and Wales, replacing it with three types of executive –

- An elected mayor with a cabinet appointed by the mayor from among the elected councillors or
- An elected mayor with a council manager who is an officer of the council or
- A leader and cabinet comprising the councillors elected by the voters for that authority.

The role of the executive, irrespective of whichever form it takes, is to undertake most of the functions and responsibilities of the authority within a policy and budgetary framework adopted by the council as a whole. The principal exceptions are regulatory functions such as planning and licensing which continue to be dealt with by elected councillors.

Which system operates in Huntingdonshire now?

Following public consultation when the Act came into force in 2002, the council has operated with a leader who is a councillor elected each year at the annual meeting by the council as a whole. Three councillors have been leader since that time.

The council also appoints a number of overview and scrutiny panels whose role it is to challenge the leader and cabinet in a constructive way and hold them to account for their decision making.

At any time, a petition signed by 5% of the electorate (currently 6,270 electors) can be submitted asking for a referendum to be held in Huntingdonshire on whether there should be an elected mayor. The result of the referendum is binding on the council.

Why consult on change now?

Another piece of legislation, the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, has reduced the choice of executive to two –

- An elected mayor with a cabinet appointed by the mayor from among the elected councillors, or
- An executive leader who is a councillor and who is elected to that position by the other councillors. The executive leader then appoints a cabinet from those councillors.

All authorities (with the exception of smaller districts and parishes) must move to one or other of the new types of executive. In the case of county councils, the change had to be made by May 2009 and Cambridgeshire County Council already has adopted the executive leader and cabinet model. In the case of district councils such as Huntingdonshire, the change must be implemented by May 2011.

Before adopting a new form of executive, the council must consult locally before drawing up proposals to implement the new arrangements. A decision on which form of executive to adopt must be made at a full meeting of the council convened for that purpose by the end of December this year.

What's the difference between an executive leader and an elected mayor?

The principal difference is the way in which they are elected and can be removed from office.

An executive leader would be a councillor who has already been elected for one of the wards in Huntingdonshire. The executive leader is then elected at an annual meeting of the council by the other councillors for a four year period or until his term of office as a councillor comes to a close, whichever is the shorter. The leader then appoints up to nine councillors to form a cabinet. At any time during that four year term, the leader can resign or be removed from office by the council. If that happens, the council will elect another leader for a new term of four years or until he ceases to be a councillor.

By contrast, an elected mayor is directly elected at a district-wide election which may or may not be held in conjunction with another election. The term of office is also four years. Once elected, the mayor appoints up to nine councillors to form a cabinet. The mayor cannot be removed from office during his four year term but if he or she resigns or dies during that period, a further district-wide election will be need to be held to elect a new mayor.

Once elected, the functions and responsibilities of the leader and mayor are broadly similar. Both are responsible for the executive functions and responsibilities of the council and decide who sits on the cabinet to assist them in that role. Both are responsible for formulating policy and its implementation within the broad policy and budgetary framework set by the council. Both are held to account for their actions by the council itself and the overview and scrutiny structure. Neither is responsible for the regulatory functions of the council such as the determination of planning and licensing applications, although they can sit on the relevant committees.

So what's the advantage of an executive leader?

The executive leader is a councillor who has already been elected by voters for one of the wards in Huntingdonshire and who is then elected as leader by the council as a whole. The election of leader does not involve any additional cost, as he or she has already been elected as a councillor in the normal way. If an executive leader proves unpopular, he can be removed from office by the council and a replacement chosen. Whenever a vacancy occurs, whether by removal from office, death in service, resignation or dismissal, no additional election costs are involved, as the successor will already be an elected councillor.

Conversely, the cost of an election for a mayor in Huntingdonshire would be in excess of £125,000 every four years, although this could be less if the election is held jointly with another election being held on that day. Any vacancy would have to be filled by a fresh election but this would be unlikely to coincide with another election, resulting in the full cost having to be met by the council.

An executive leader is likely to be a member of the same political party as the majority of councillors on the council. The leader will therefore have the general support of the majority of the electorate in the district, even if he has not been elected directly by them. The leader is also likely to be able to work with the majority of his fellow councillors and especially those that he has appointed to the cabinet.

And what's the advantage of an elected mayor?

The mayor is likely to be a high profile figure who is popular locally. He or she may be a local politician or may be completely unconnected with local politics. The mayor may be better able to focus decision making in one person and be able to be held accountable for decisions. The Mayor of London is the most obvious example, although the Greater London Authority is not directly comparable with other local authorities. An elected mayor might encourage greater interest in local politics and a higher turnout at elections.

Conversely an elected mayor may deter people from standing as a councillor or cause a reduction in turnout at council elections as people think the role of a councillor has become less important.

The mayor may or may not be a member of a political party and a few that have been elected elsewhere are wholly independent. However once elected, the mayor still has to form a cabinet from councillors with a potential for disagreement and conflict if they are members of a different party. The mayor also has to propose a budget and policies that have to be approved by the council as a whole.

What's happened elsewhere?

Since the option of an elected mayor first was introduced in 2000, it has not proved as popular as some of the political parties nationally had envisaged. To date, there have been 37 referenda in England and Wales on whether to elect a mayor. Of those, 12 have resulted in a majority in favour of a mayor and in 25, the proposal has been rejected. 22 of the referenda were promoted by councils themselves, 14 were the result of a public petition and 1 was called by the government. The cost of a referendum is roughly the same as a whole district election which in Huntingdonshire is about £125,000.

There are currently 12 directly elected mayors in England. There has been some public reaction recently about what is perceived to be the excessive power of directly elected mayors. Campaigns have been held in four of the twelve areas to hold a referendum to abolish the post and, following a vote in Stoke-on-Trent, that authority has already returned to a leader and cabinet system.

Elsewhere in Cambridgeshire, all of the authorities have a leader and cabinet system. A referendum in Fenland in 2005 resulted in an overwhelming rejection of an elected mayor by a 3:1 majority. Cambridgeshire County Council which had to choose between an executive leader and elected mayor earlier than the districts has already moved to the executive leader arrangements with effect from 2009.

What happens to elected councillors?

The role of the 52 ward councillors in Huntingdonshire remains unchanged, whichever system is chosen. Councillors remain responsible collectively for the budget and policy framework and those functions that parliament has defined as non-executive such as planning and licensing. Councillors also form the basis of the overview and scrutiny arrangements with responsibility to hold the executive and partner organisations to account, not dissimilar to the parliamentary select committees. Some will be appointed to the cabinet to take executive decisions and they all undertake constituency work on behalf of the residents of their wards.

Which option does the Council favour?

Huntingdonshire District Council believes the executive leader and cabinet system is the more easily understood and flexible option. Elected mayors might be confused with the wholly different position of mayors in each of the five town councils in the district. Cambridgeshire County Council has already implemented the executive leader arrangements and none of the other district councils in the County have

elected mayors. Leaders can be chosen without the additional cost of a separate election and can be removed from office if they become unpopular. At a time of financial restraint when savings need to be made in the public sector, the cost of electing a mayor every four years at £125,000 is high, even if it's possible that this might be shared with another election from time to time.

What's the next step in the process?

The council is currently consulting the public on which option they think should be adopted. In addition to the council's website, information has been published in District Wide, the council's own in-house magazine, which is delivered to all households throughout the district. The views of other public sector and business interests in Huntingdonshire are also being sought.

The council has rejected the idea of a referendum asking the public for their views on the basis of cost. Although this would have enabled everyone to express their views individually, there is no guarantee of a high turnout and the cost is the same as a whole district election. A yes vote in a referendum followed by a mayoral election would cost £250,000 which could only be funded at the expense of local services.

That doesn't mean that the electorate won't have an opportunity to ask for a mayor in the future. At any time a petition signed by 5% of the electorate can ask for a referendum to be held and the council is obliged to comply.

Where can I send my comments?

You can let us have your views either by e-mail to democratic.services@huntsdc.gov.uk or by writing to the Head of Democratic & Central Services, Huntingdonshire District Council, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN.

The closing date for comments is 31st July 2010.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

PROPOSALS FOR CHANGE IN GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

1. Governance Arrangements

1.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires Huntingdonshire District Council to resolve to adopt a new form of executive arrangements by 31st December 2010 that comprises –

- an elected mayor and two or more councillors appointed to the cabinet executive by the mayor, or
- a councillor who is elected as executive leader by the Council and two or more councillors appointed to the cabinet executive by the executive leader.

1.2 These proposals have been drawn up by the Council in compliance with Section 33E of the Local Government Act 2000 with respect to the change in governance arrangements of the Council.

1.3 Prior to drawing up these proposals, the Council has taken reasonable steps to consult the local government electors of Huntingdonshire and other interested parties on the choices available to it by way of information on its website, an article in its magazine delivered to all households in the District, information presented at the neighbourhood forums in the District and targeted correspondence to local councils and representative groups.

1.4 Having regard to –

- the majority of the consultation responses favouring a leader and cabinet executive form of governance;
- there is a lack of support nationally for the mayor and cabinet executive format;
- previous consultation in Huntingdonshire when the 2000 Act was implemented having favoured the leader and cabinet model;
- consultation undertaken by Cambridgeshire County Council in 2008 having resulted in that authority adopting a leader and cabinet executive;
- the Council's existing leader and cabinet arrangements having been in existence since 2002 with minimal public interest locally in changing those arrangements; -

Huntingdonshire District Council proposes to change its governance arrangements to an executive leader and cabinet executive.

1.5 In so doing, the Council has considered the extent to which the proposals are likely to assist in securing continuous improvement in the way in which the authority's functions are exercised, having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness. The effect of the proposals will be to –

- authorise the Council to elect an executive leader from among the councillors that have been elected;
- make the executive leader responsible for the discharge of all the executive functions of the authority which he can discharge himself or arrange to be discharged by the cabinet, another member of the cabinet, a committee of the cabinet or by an officer of the authority;

- enable the executive leader to appoint a deputy executive leader; and
 - enable the executive leader to appoint a cabinet comprising between 2 and 10 councillors, inclusive of himself and the deputy executive leader.
- 1.6 The executive leader will be appointed for a period of four years, unless he ceases to be a councillor before the end of that period, he resigns from office or he is removed from office by the Council. If the Council removes the executive leader from office, it will elect another councillor to that position.

2. Timetable

- 2.1 The consultation exercise undertaken prior to the drawing up of these proposals was undertaken from mid May to 21st July 2010.
- 2.2 A report on the outcome of the consultation exercise and the choices available to the Council was considered at a meeting of the Council held on 29th September 2010. These proposals were attached as an appendix to that report.
- 2.3 Following approval of the proposals, public notice will be given in a local newspaper circulating in the District and on the Council's website.
- 2.4 A special meeting of the Council will be held on 3rd November 2010 to formally approve the proposals. A report iteming the consequential changes to the Council's constitution will be submitted to that meeting and adjourned in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules without discussion until the meeting of the Council to be held on 15th December 2010.
- 2.5 Public notice of the approval of the proposals will be given in a local newspaper circulating in the District and on the Council's website.
- 2.6 Having been adjourned without discussion at the Council meeting on 3rd November 2010, the report iteming the consequential changes to the Council's constitution will be considered in accordance with the Council Procedure Rules at the meeting of the Council to be held on 15th December 2010.
- 2.7 The proposals will be implemented with effect from the annual meeting of the Council to be held on 18th May 2011.

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
(SOCIAL WELL-BEING)**

7th September 2010

EMPLOYMENT PANEL

15th September 2010

CABINET

17th September 2010

**Single Equality Scheme
(Report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on progress with the achievement of the Council's Corporate Equality Policy (CEP) Action Plan and to seek endorsement of a new Single Equality Scheme, containing a number of existing policies and schemes.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The CEP and action plan shows how the Council will meet its statutory responsibilities, in particular how we take account of:

- legislation relating to race, disability and gender equality; and
- achievement against the Equality Framework for Local Government.

Furthermore, it translates the Council's aim and objectives for equality and diversity into corporate and Directorate actions and targets and is compatible with the "achieving" level of the Equality Framework for Local Government.

- 2.2 The Council has concluded a three year timetable to meet the statutory requirement to assess (Equality Impact Assessments). It is intended to continue to have an EIA programme which will be less intrusive and to monitor progress through the Council's performance management framework.

3. Equality Framework for Local Government

- 3.1 The Equality Framework for Local Government was introduced in April 2009 to replace the Equality Standard for Local government. The new Framework has fewer indicators and an emphasis on self assessment and peer challenge. It relates better to the performance framework for local government and uses a broader definition of equality.
- 3.2 The Framework will consist of 3 levels; 'Developing', 'Achieving' and 'Excellent' (the Equality Standard had 5 levels); all councils at Level 3 of the Standard will automatically transfer over to the Achieving level within the new Framework.

3.3 The Council underwent a successful external assessment for validation of achievement against Level 3 of the Equality Standard in July 2009; and we automatically became Achieving Council within the new Framework. This was a considerable achievement by the Council. Some areas of development were identified during this assessment; these have been included in the action plan. A Peer Assessment against the Achieving criteria will be required in 2012. Rather than creating any new work to prepare for this external assessment we intend to adapt what we already do to provide the evidence to show how we are meeting the Achieving criteria.

4. The purpose of a Single Equality Scheme

4.1 The Equality Act 2010 established a duty on public bodies to tackle discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and encourage good community relations. The new duty covers race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and religion or belief, replacing the three existing, separate duties with a single framework. This will bring together the existing public sector equality duties of tackling discrimination and promoting equality for race, gender and disability so that the requirements do not vary between groups. This new Single Equality Scheme brings together all the equality strands within one document and streamlines our work in this area and also ensures that we meet our statutory requirements

4.2 Having a single equalities action plan will allow for and ensure robust monitoring. It provides a framework to help us to improve our services and also ensure we take a proportional response.

5. PROGRESS

5.1 The Corporate Equality Policy identified two outcomes and two measures that told us how successful we have been in terms of understanding the diverse needs of local people, that our services meet those needs and that they are provided in a fair and accessible way. Residents' perceptions of how well we are doing in this area have been measured through a variety of surveys and are set out below -

	2008/09	2009/10
To what extent do you agree or disagree that your local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together	79.4%	82.1%
In the last year would you say that you have been treated with respect and consideration by your local public services	78.9%	72.7%

5.2 The Corporate Equality Policy Action Plan for 2009/10 contained 18 actions, of which

- 12 have been fully completed
- 6 are on-going.

- 5.3 Seventeen individual services carried out EIA's during 2009/10, this equated to 35 different EIA's; 21EIA's were completed. Those not completed on time have been re-scheduled for completion during 2010/11. A list of outcomes/actions arising out of completed EIA's is in Appendix G; no significant actions were identified.
- 5.4 The Council has a statutory responsibility to report findings from progress made with the equality schemes, this is set out in Appendix F along with other related achievements.
- 5.5 Supporting appendices are available and they include:
- About Huntingdonshire
 - Responsibility, monitoring and review of the Single Equality Scheme
 - Links with other strategies and policies
 - Outline of the law relating to equality
 - Progress with equality 2007-2010
 - How we involved people in developing the Scheme

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The Council has a revenue budget of £12,000 to meet the direct cost of achieving objectives, the majority of which is used for employee and Member training. Other costs include the time taken to review and make changes to services/policies in response to assessment of residents needs and completing activities set out in the Action Plan. The Assessments undertaken have not resulted in any significant expenditure and the Council is making a proportionate but effective response to statutory and business requirements.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Cabinet is asked:
- endorse the new Single Equality Scheme and action plan; and
 - to note progress and the findings from Equality Impact Assessments conducted during 2009/10 (Appendix G)

Background Papers

Single Equality Scheme

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Single Equality Scheme

2010 to 2013

If you would like a translation of this document, a large text version or an audio version, please contact us on 01480 388388 and we will try to accommodate your needs.

Jeśli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać tłumaczenie tego dokumentu, wersję dużym drukiem lub wersję audio, prosimy skontaktować się z nami pod numerem 01480 388388, a my postaramy się uwzględnić Państwa potrzeby.

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We welcome and encourage any comments you may have about our Single Equality Scheme, this will help us to review and improve what we do.

Please contact us on the number above or email CRM_Policy@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

More equalities and diversity information is available on the District Council's web site:
www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/Community+and+People/Equality

Foreword

Welcome to Huntingdonshire District Council's Single Equality Scheme

Huntingdonshire District Council is committed to equality of opportunity in our approach to service delivery, employment and policy-making. We are committed to identifying, understanding and eliminating anything that prevents access to services, information and employment.

This Scheme shows how the Council will translate its legal duties into objectives and actions. It takes account of current equalities legislation relating to race, disability, gender, religion, sexuality and age and the Equality Framework for Local Government.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'KJ Churchill', written on a light-colored background.

Councillor Ken James Churchill JP
Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy

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Section 1

1.1 Introduction

Huntingdonshire District Council is committed to equality of opportunity in our approach to policy-making, service delivery and employment. We are committed to identifying, understanding and eliminating anything that prevents access to services, information and employment. The Council believes that no person should be treated unfairly and is committed to eliminate all forms of discrimination (unfair treatment). Our Single Equality Scheme sets out the Council's aims and objectives for equality, and accompanying action plan sets out how the Council's commitment will be translated into action along with clear targets and timetable.

Equality is a key target for the Council. Growing Success, our Corporate Plan, stresses our commitment to achieve equality, diversity and inclusion. In July 2009 the Council was awarded Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government, which recognised that we have put in place systems that support continuing improvement in the development of equality. We are now an 'Achieving Council'.

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act was passed by Parliament in April 2010 and the majority of the new legislation is expected to come in to force in 2011. It creates a new 'Single Equality Duty' on public bodies to tackle discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and encourage good community relations. The new duty covers race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and religion or belief, replacing the three existing, separate duties with a single, more effective framework. This will

bring together the existing public sector equality duties of tackling discrimination and promoting equality for race, gender and disability so that the requirements do not vary between groups.

Why did we develop this scheme?

This Scheme has been prepared in response to the Equality Act 2010, which has two main purposes – to harmonise discrimination law, and to strengthen the law to support progress on equality. It combines our existing Corporate Equality Policy our Race Equality, Disability Equality and Gender Equality Schemes; and brings together our objectives across six equality strands of age, disability (which includes learning disability and mental health), gender, sexual orientation, religious belief and race.

There are many more elements to this new Act which will have an impact on communities and employers in Huntingdonshire, particular elements will impact Huntingdonshire District Council directly. A full analysis of the Act will be carried out to identify what actions are required, particularly the new Socio Economic Duty, which will consider how the Council can reduce inequalities relating to health, housing, employment, education, skills and income. Further information can be found in Appendix E.

Race, Disability & Gender Equality Schemes

We have recently reviewed our Disability, Gender and Race Equality Schemes. Consultation was carried out as part of these reviews – internally within the Council, with our partner organisations and with local residents. This shaped our priorities in the action plan. The Disability, Gender and Race Equality duties and respective actions have been included within this new Single Equality Scheme; along with the consideration of the needs of people in terms of different religious beliefs; people of all ages; lesbian, gay and bi-sexual people; transsexual people and those with gender identity issues when designing and delivering services.

How this Scheme is structured

This Scheme contains our objectives for delivering our vision for equality and diversity.

Section 2 provides a summary of diversity of the population in Huntingdonshire.

Section 3 describes our approach to equality and diversity, and how we will work to embed equality and diversity issues across our services.

Section 4 outlines our commitments for equality and diversity – our individual objectives and the actions we will take to achieve them.

Section 5 shows how we will continue to monitor and review our success in meeting our aims, and how this Scheme will be reviewed.

Appendices

Appendix A – details our Action Plan 2010 to 2013.

Appendix B – provides further details about Huntingdonshire in terms of population and different characteristics.

Appendix C – details the responsibility, monitoring and review of this Scheme.

Appendix D - outlines the links with other policies and strategies that have shaped the Single Equality Scheme.

Appendix E - describes the legislation that has shaped this Scheme.

Appendix F – details the progress made with equality and diversity over the last three years

Appendix G – sets out the results from Equality Impact Assessments 2009 and 2010.

Appendix H – details how we involved people in developing this Scheme.

Section 2

Huntingdonshire in Context

Huntingdonshire is a large district in North West Cambridgeshire, which covers an area of approximately 910 square kilometres (approximately 350 square miles). Huntingdonshire shares borders with Peterborough, Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, and the Districts of Fenland, East Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire. Around 165,200 people live in the district, with almost half of the population living in the four market towns of Huntingdon, Ramsey, St Ives and St Neots. A large proportion of Huntingdonshire is rural in character, with village settlements providing the main focus for community facilities outside the market towns. The 2001 Census showed that the district's population was 156,950 and this is estimated to have risen by more than 8,000 (around 5%) to mid-2008.

Cambridgeshire is one of the fastest growing areas of the country. This creates its own challenges of ensuring that new communities can integrate and develop effectively with existing residents. Recent years have seen an increase in people migrating into Cambridgeshire, both from within the UK and from abroad. The 2001 Census showed that 9 per cent of people living in the county were born outside the UK. Latest figures from the County Council's Research Group suggest that the figure was 11 per cent by 2006.

Overall we have a relatively low proportion of people from Black or Minority Ethnic background (BME) however estimates from the Mid-2007 Population on Ethnic Groups (experimental) suggests that White Other has increased to 4.9% from 3% (2001 Census) and Non White has increased to 6% from 2.85% (2001 Census).

Levels of deprivation or social exclusion are generally low. We know that generally:

- The local economy is strong
- Unemployment is low
- Educational attainment for pupils in Huntingdonshire is above the national average (based on pupils obtaining five or more GCSE's grades A*-C), although performance varies between schools
- Income of Huntingdonshire residents is above the national average however workplace earnings for jobs in the district are slightly below the national average
- Our houses are in a good condition
- There are relatively low levels of crime

More detailed information from the 2001 Census and other research about the population in the district in terms of age, disability, ethnicity, gender, religious belief and sexual identity can be found in Appendix B.

Section 3

Our approach

We define equality and diversity as:

Equality – a fair society in which everyone can participate and is given the opportunity to achieve. Equality is backed by legislation addressing discrimination.

Diversity – is about improving how people can work together by valuing people’s differences and similarities.

The Council is subject to legislation relating to equality; both as an employer and as a service provider. This legislation governs the way we work, our employment policies and procedures and the way in which we deliver services. The legislation that has shaped this Scheme is set out in Appendix E.

The Council’s Vision

Growing Success, the Council’s Corporate Plan, includes a long term vision based on what local people have told us is important for them now and in the future, which is:

“Huntingdonshire is a place where current and future generations have a good quality of life and can:

- make the most of opportunities that come from living in a growing and developing district
- enjoy the benefits of continued economic success
- access suitable homes, jobs, services, shops, culture and leisure opportunities
- realise their full potential
- maintain the special character of our market towns, villages and countryside
- live in an environment that is safe and protected

from the effects of climate change and where valuable natural resources are used wisely”.

The Council has identified a series of corporate aims, which, by working with partners, will support this vision. These are set out in Appendix D, along with details of links between the Single Equality Scheme and the Council’s other plans and strategies. We have divided the Single Equality Scheme objectives into five categories, these are:

- **Knowing your community and equality mapping**
- **Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment**
- **Community engagement and satisfaction**
- **Responsive services and customer care**
- **A modern and diverse workforce**

These categories relate to the five performance areas within the Equality Framework for Local Government (a national tool for measuring progress) and reflect how we work internally, with our own workforce; and how we deliver our services to Huntingdonshire residents.

How we involved people in developing this scheme

We have asked a range of public and voluntary organisations, residents, and our employees for their views. We wanted to ensure that we involved individuals and organisations who were able to provide advice on the grounds of race, gender, disability, religion and belief, sexuality and age equality issues. A summary of these views are available in Appendix H.

Section 4

Our objectives

Knowing our community and equality mapping

Understanding who our residents are and what their needs may be is vital if we are to identify, understand and eliminate all barriers that prevent access to services, information and employment.

We will:

- Use national and local data and work with community or voluntary organisations to increase our understanding of local need
- Where appropriate, services will monitor and evaluate available evidence about their customers
- Identify and address unmet needs and gaps in services where appropriate and where financial resources allow
- Identify and seek to address the stigma and discrimination experienced by excluded groups

Working with communities

The Council has organised drop-in sessions for migrant workers and people new to Huntingdonshire. The aim of these sessions is to support people to settle in the area, help them to integrate and make information available on opportunities and services that are available to them.

The Council has also supported the setting up of St Neots International Society. The aim of this group is to promote the increasing diversity of the community in St Neots, to provide information for residents and opportunities to meet other people through local events. For further details please contact the Priority Centre 01480 388922

Place shaping, leadership, partnership and organisational commitment

Equality and diversity is central to everything that the Council does, we need to promote it, identify clear responsibilities and ensure we give thought to addressing issues across all 6 strands

We will:

- Work to achieve national standards through the Equality Framework for Local Government;
- Conduct an equality impact assessment each time the Council makes changes to an existing or develops a new policy, service or function and promote good practice throughout the Council;
- Use the Council's performance management framework to monitor performance against this Scheme and actions and targets that arise out of equality impact assessments; and
- Encourage our partners to adopt the same approach to equality via our Partnership Framework.

Working towards making Huntingdonshire District Council more of an 'employer of choice' for disabled people

As part of the Papworth Trusts' 'Try Something New' week, we organised for two of their service users to spend half a day shadowing our Director of Central Services in May 2010.

We have also organised work experience for Papworth Trust students on the Office Skills Programme to spend half a day with our Customer Services Team.

It is hoped that these are just the start of a longer term programme of activities which will enhance understanding within the council and provide opportunities for disabled people in Huntingdonshire to gain skills and get to know the Council better.

- Take consultation into account when carrying out equality impact assessments
- Continue to support Neighbourhood Management

Have Your Say Event

Working with the Papworth Trust, a disability charity, we organised two 'Market Stall' events, the aim of which was to give the council an opportunity to engage with disabled people, their family or carers to find out how people accessed our buildings, our services or information about our services. We were able to establish how effective our services are, and helped us identify areas that needed improvement.

Gypsy/Traveller consultation

The Council is now consulting on a "long list" of potential sites which have come forward through its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. This involves a lot of consultation with local people and also with local Gypsies and Travellers. The new Coalition Government has indicated that it intends to end the targets for new pitches which were set out in the Regional Spatial Strategy, and that the number of pitches needed will be determined locally. The Council will use the results of the current consultation to inform the next stages of this project, which will also be informed by new guidance from the Government.

Community engagement and satisfaction

If we are to achieve our ambition to engage and involve our communities we must be open to change and improvement. We need to use different methods of communication and consultation to engage with different communities, individuals, employees and staff associations, in line with our Consultation & Engagement Strategy.

We will:

- Encourage equality and diversity to be considered as part of any consultation and engagement exercise to ensure that people can talk to us in different ways
- Use information from our Suggestions, Compliments and Complaints Policy
- Endeavour to engage with and support voluntary, community and charitable organisations and social enterprises where appropriate

Responsive services and customer care

Services cannot be provided on a one-size-fits-all basis: it may be necessary to target particular groups, or to deliver services in a different way that is more appropriate to those groups. We need to ensure that our communities have access to and information about our services, and ensure that accessibility of services is considered at planning, design and delivery stages.

We will:

- Ensure that information about services is published widely and in ways that will help local people to use them
- Use the information from listening, consulting and engaging with our communities to plan and deliver services
- Use equality impact assessments to ensure that Council policies do not discriminate directly or indirectly against any groups in our community
- Make welfare rights information readily available (information about obtaining benefits)

Benefits advice

The Council has cross checked addresses where Housing Benefit was not being claimed but information indicated that the occupiers might qualify and has been able to contact residents to let them know that they may be eligible for benefit. Two benefit take up campaigns have taken place so far and new benefit claims have resulted.

A Housing and Benefit Officer is available at the St Ives and St Neots Customer Service Centre every Monday

Supporting Citizens Advice Bureau

The Council has provided an additional £34,000 over two years to the Huntingdonshire Citizens' Advice Bureaux. This is in addition to the £172,000 per year we already provide. The purpose of this additional funding was to support residents with debt, housing and benefits advice during the economic downturn.

A modern and diverse workforce

A diverse workforce can help make sure that all sections of the community see real improvements in the standard of the service they receive. A Council that reflects its customers will be in touch with those customers and make us more likely to deliver the right services.

We will:

- Recognise and promote the benefits of a diverse workforce
- Achieve the aims of the HR Equality of Opportunity Policy
- Develop our employees and Councillors to recognise and prevent discrimination and help them promote equality and diversity in our communities

Equality Training

The Council now provides a variety of equality & diversity training. We offer:

- A half day general equality & diversity awareness session
- Equality E-Learning
- Equality case study session
- Disability awareness

We have also worked with One Leisure to get a specific equality & diversity module included in a leisure customer care training course. One Leisure has carried out an employee survey to establish levels of knowledge and understanding of equality and diversity issues. This will help to target training.

Section 5

Responsibility, monitoring and review of this Scheme

Resources and responsibilities

All Councillors, employees and others who work on behalf of the council have a duty or responsibility to implement the outcomes of this Scheme through the action plan. Particular responsibilities are allocated to:

- Councillors
- Chief Executive
- Directors
- Services
- Employees
- Head of People, Performance & Partnerships
- Procurement (buying goods and services)
- Corporate Equality Steering Group

Promotion of the Single Equality Scheme and action plan

- The full Scheme and a summary of it will be published
- Upon request a summary document will be made available in appropriate formats
- A copy of the Scheme and summary will be available for all staff
- External applicants for Council posts will be made aware of the Scheme and it will form part of their induction programme

Monitoring and review of Single Equality Scheme

This Scheme will be reviewed fully every three years. The action plan is a 'live' document and can be updated with new actions at any point; however a formal review will take place on an annual basis. These reviews will be carried out by the corporate equality steering group. New legislative requirements will be incorporated and best practice recommendations considered at appropriate times.

Appendix A

Action Plan 2010/2013

Action <i>*actions included as a result of consultation</i>	Responsibility	Target
Knowing your community and equality mapping		
Continue to research the needs of people with a disability in terms of access to services and information about our services through consultation, engagement with service users (and non users) and analysis of local, regional and national reports*	Policy	On-going
Explore the possibility of creating a profile of LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender) population and Religion, Belief and non-Belief in Huntingdonshire	Policy	April 2011
Continue to encourage corporate approach to monitoring and analysis of equality monitoring	Policy	2011
Analyse results of 2011 Census (available from 2013) and take appropriate action	Policy	2013/14
Explore the possibility of Cambridgeshire wide interpretation and translation contract	Policy	April 2011
Continue to monitor take up of information requested in other languages or formats	Policy	On-going
Continue equality impact assessment of new or amended policies/ strategies/ services. Update performance management and service plans accordingly	All Heads of Service, COMT & Policy	April 2011
Continue to engage in relevant partnerships to share good practice in addressing equality related issues across Cambridgeshire e.g. Cambridgeshire Equality & Diversity Officer Network, Huntingdonshire Diversity Forum	Policy	Report progress in 2011

Continued

Action <i>*actions included as a result of consultation</i>	Responsibility	Target
Positive activities to raise awareness in the district of equality & diversity issues (events, publicity etc)	Community Initiatives and Policy	April 2011
Place shaping, leadership and organisational commitment		
Consideration of becoming a Mindful Employer*	HR & Policy	April 2012
Assessment and publication of results of equality impact assessments	Policy	September 2010 & April 2011
Report on progress with race, disability, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief and age and actions within the Single Equality Scheme to Chief Officers, Overview & Scrutiny & Cabinet	Policy	September 2011
Publication of reviewed gender and disability and race equality schemes (as part of the Single Equality Scheme in 2010)	Policy	September 2010
Produce equality & diversity employee e-newsletters*	Policy	Four per year
Produce a case study/example template that can be completed by employees to help them understand how the service they provide contributes to equality & diversity and to help the Council to highlight its commitment*	Policy	April 2011
Work towards confirmation of Achieving Council status (Equality Framework for Local Government) via a Peer Assessment in 2012.	Policy	September 2012
Develop new actions within this Single Equality Scheme to meet the requirements of the new Equality Act 2010.	Policy	April 2011
Publish guidelines for employees and partner organisations regarding the impact of the Equality Act 2010. In addition to this, produce summary advice sheet for local employers on equality & diversity/employee related information*	Policy & Economic Development	April 2011
Community engagement and satisfaction		
Continue to engage with Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) and other hard to engage groups (including older people) *	Community Initiatives & Policy	April 2011
Continued		

Action <i>*actions included as a result of consultation</i>	Responsibility	Target
Support the development of community groups	Community Initiatives	April 2011
Continue to support the development of Huntingdonshire Faith Forum	Community Initiatives	April 2011
Research existing disability forums (including learning disability and mental ill health) within the area which can be approached for consultation & engagement on disability issues.	Policy	April 2011
Monitor outcomes from Disability Equality Scheme review and Have Your Say event outcomes	Policy	April 2011
Ensure evidence of change for the consultation and engagement with children and young people	Policy	April 2011
Support the development of a children and young people 'friendly service' award	Policy	April 2011
Continue with the Gypsy/Traveller consultation and engagement work to identify pitches locally	Planning	
Responsive services and customer care		
Consider better signage and facilities within Council buildings with public access*	Headquarters Accommodation Group Customer Services Leisure Services	2012
Establish public access PC's at St Ives and St Neots	Customer Services Team	2011
Produce a simple easy to read guide to Council services	Policy	September 2010
Publicity to improve access by getting wheelie bins off pavements*	Operations Division	April 2011
Seek to negotiate Section 106 funding so that clarity over role of district Council with regards to rural and accessible transport and conditions of pavements *	Policy	April 2011
Ensure Huntingdon Shop Mobility is closely linked with Huntingdon town centre redevelopment.*	Planning & Community Initiatives	2012
Continued		

Action <i>*actions included as a result of consultation</i>	Responsibility	Target
Continue to support Papworth Trust work experience and shadowing placements*	Policy & Customer Services Team	April 2011
Continue to support St Neots International Community Group	Community Initiatives Funding stops in December 2010	December 2010
Promote and distribute the Moving Stories DVD	Community Initiatives Funding stops in December 2010	December 2010
Support the Junior PCSO scheme with diversity awareness sessions	Community Initiatives Funding stops in December 2010	December 2010
Support the development of the ESOL action plan for Huntingdonshire and be part of the delivery group	Community Initiatives (dependant on retaining present level of Government Grant)	April 2011
Support anti social behaviour case workers with diversity advice and support	Community Initiatives Funding stops in December 2010	December 2010
Analysis of hate crime figures to determine if any actions are required	Community Initiatives & Policy	April 2011
A modern and diverse workforce		
Explore how the Council can support transsexual and transgender employees	HR & Policy	2011
Work with the county and other districts to explore feasibility of joint approach to LGBT employee network and LGBT countywide survey.	Policy	April 2011
Analyse Equal Pay audit for equality issues. Set equality objectives where required	HR	April 2011
Explore how best to include sexual orientation, religion and belief in HR employment monitoring	HR	2011
Continued		

Action <i>*actions included as a result of consultation</i>	Responsibility	Target
Continue to collect and analyse previous year's employment (equality monitoring) data to produce monitoring and analysis of workforce profiles by equality categories. Set equality objectives where required	HR	
Continue to build capacity amongst Council employees and Members through awareness training, information sharing sessions or newsletters. Identify employees who could receive specific disability awareness training.	HR and Policy	Annual review
Analyse equality training database to identify % of staff received training and create target % for next 3 years	HR & Policy	April 2011
Promote all of the work life balance options	HR	2011
Improve disability disclosure amongst employees and Members. Consider 'hidden disabilities' training for managers or basic mental health awareness training for employees*	HR & Policy	2011
Work with the Richmond Fellowship to ensure that support for employees is available	Customer Services	2011
Carry out a Local Labour Market Assessment	HR & Policy	2012
Analysis of One Leisure employee survey on awareness of equality & diversity. Use findings to tailor equality & diversity training for One Leisure employees.	One Leisure	2011

Appendix B

Huntingdonshire in context

Gender

The gender split in the district is similar to the national average – Huntingdonshire's figures are 49.9% male and 50.1% female, and nationally they are 49.2% male and 50.8% female¹, showing slightly more males and slightly less females in Huntingdonshire than nationally.

Female full-time workers living in the district (regardless of where they work) earn 28% less gross weekly median pay than male full-time workers living here² (£421.10 for females, £584.60 for males). This is greater than the national pay gap between female and male full-time gross weekly median pay, which is just under 20%.

The gender pay gap for those working full-time in the district (regardless of where they live) is lower at 21% less gross weekly median pay for females than males but is still above the 20% national pay gap. The difference between the residential and workplace pay gaps is related to the higher proportion of males than females who commute out of the district to work (38.7% of male residents compared to 30.9% of female residents).

A slightly higher proportion of all Disability Living Allowance claimants in Huntingdonshire in November 2009 were male (51%)³. More than two-thirds (68%) of Income Support claimants in November 2009 were female⁴.

According to the 2001 Census, 8.8% of Huntingdonshire residents were providing unpaid care compared to 9.2% of the Cambridgeshire population, 9.7% regionally and 9.9% nationally. Females were slightly more likely to provide this

unpaid care than males (9.9% compared to 7.8%). However nearly four times as many women in the district received Carers Allowance as men (79.4% of claimants were female)⁵ in November 2009.

Ethnicity

The 2001 Census showed that 93.1% of the local population were born in the UK, compared to 92.3% of all Cambridgeshire residents, a regional figure of 92.9% and 90.4% nationally. Ethnic diversity is also low in Huntingdonshire, with 97.2% of people from White ethnic groups compared to 90.9% nationally.

The 2001 Census recorded nearly 4,500 Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) residents, accounting for 2.8% of the population. This was lower than the Cambridgeshire level of 4.1%, the regional level of 4.7% and the national average of 9.1%.

Experimental statistics from the Office for National Statistics have estimated that the BME population more than doubled to 10,000 by mid-2007, increasing the proportion of BME residents to nearly 6% and reducing the proportion of White residents from 97.2% to 94%⁶.

The Census showed that the profile of Huntingdonshire's BME population was much younger than the overall total population - 40.8% of the BME population in the district were aged 0-19 years compared to 25.8% of the White population. Just 3.8% of the BME population are aged over 65 compared to 13.2% of White residents.

The Cambridgeshire sub-region Traveller Needs

¹ Mid-2008 Population Estimates, Office for National Statistics (ONS). Crown Copyright 2009 www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=15106

² ASHE (Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2009), ONS www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=15313

³ Disability Living Allowance Claimants at November 2009 www.nomisweb.co.uk

⁴ Income Support Claimants at November 2009 www.nomisweb.co.uk

⁵ Carers Allowance Claimants at November 2009 www.nomisweb.co.uk

⁶ Population Estimates by Ethnic Groups (experimental), © ONS, Crown Copyright 2008 www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=14238

Assessment (2005-10) stated that based on ODPM counts and school roll data, there were around 192 Gypsy/Travellers in Huntingdonshire. This equates to around 0.1% of the 2005 district population, the lowest figure in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. In Huntingdonshire, much of the traveller population is not settled with 88% of households in caravans rather than housing.

While Huntingdonshire does not face the same demands as an ethnically diverse inner city area, there are challenges to be met; engaging with BME communities is one, as few representative groups have been established in the area. The Diversity Forum (Huntingdonshire) was set up to share knowledge and resources on Huntingdonshire's BME population. This is a multi-agency group comprising representatives from Huntingdonshire District Council, Luminus Housing Group (the largest RSL in the area), the Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Primary Care Trust, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service, and Jobcentre Plus.

Migrant workers

In Autumn 2004, the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) commissioned one of the most comprehensive and detailed reports to date on the contribution migrant workers make to the regional economy. The report estimates that in the last five years, between 50,000 and 80,000 migrant workers had arrived in the East of England region, and that using the lower figure, migrant workers contribute somewhere in the region of £360 million per annum. In addition, the report found several companies in the region could not survive without the skills provided by migrant workers, yet many have inadequate access to basic support such as information on rights, childcare, finance and services.

Migrant workers may face language barriers and other barriers, for example exclusion from local social and sporting events, hostility from the local community, and poor housing. As a predominately rural area, the East of England region experienced a significant influx of incomers from the European Union accession states, and although there is no

concentrated Polish community in the District, there has been an increase in the numbers of Polish people living and working here. Many of the local Polish community for this part of the sub-region are based in the nearby city of Peterborough, which has a thriving Polish community.

The number of National Insurance Number (NINO) registrations to non-UK nationals increased from around 500 per year in 2002/3 and 2003/4 up to 1,350 by 2006/7. The total number of NINO increased significantly when ten additional countries joined the European Union (EU) on 1st May 2004. Nationals of Cyprus and Malta were granted full rights to work throughout the EU and nationals of the other eight countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia – known as the 'Accession 8' or 'A8') were given regulated access to the UK labour market.

The latest monitoring report on the impact of international migration from Cambridgeshire County Council's Research Group stated that they considered it likely that there was no significant change in Cambridgeshire's total migrant population in 2008.

Age

In the district, 18.3% of residents are estimated to be of pensionable age (males 65+, females 60+), which is lower than the county average of 18.7%⁷.

17% of those receiving Income Support in November 2009 were aged over 50⁸, and 45% of all Incapacity Benefit and Severe Disablement Allowance claimants were aged over 50⁹.

Significant population growth is projected nationally between 2008 and 2033¹⁰ with an increase of 18% forecast. The greatest growth is expected in the 65+ age group, where a 65% increase is projected. The projections also forecast population growth for Huntingdonshire of around 27,700 (+17%) over this time period (2008-2033), including an increase of 26,000 in the 65+ age group (+104%). The projections

⁷ Mid-2008 Population Estimates, Office for National Statistics (ONS). Crown Copyright 2009 www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=15106

⁸ Income Support Claimants at November 2009 www.nomisweb.co.uk

⁹ Incapacity Benefit / Severe Disablement Allowance at November 2009 www.nomisweb.co.uk

¹⁰ 2008-based Subnational Population Projections, ONS. Crown Copyright 2010 www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk=997

also show reduced numbers of people in younger age groups, which would mean a much older population profile by 2021 with a corresponding shift in service needs for the local population.

Disability

No single figure exists to record the total number of disabled people living in the district Council area; however, there are a range of indicators from various sources that suggest there are a significant number of residents with disabilities living in Huntingdonshire:

- 5,610 people were claiming Disability Living Allowance (DLA) in November 2009 (3.4% of all people in the district); this is below the national average of 5%¹¹
 - 3,380 people were claiming Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA) - 2.6% of all residents aged 16 or over in the district; this is below the national average of 4.3%¹²
 - The 2001 Census results showed 13.5% (21,263) of all people in the district stated that they had a limiting long-term illness
 - 6.3% of people in the district (9,820 people) reported that their general health had been 'not good' over the twelve months before the 2001 Census
 - 2.9% (3,269) of people aged 16-74 in the district were recorded as being economically inactive due to permanent sickness or disability (2001 Census)
 - Evidence suggests that one in four of us will experience mental ill health during our lifetime
- October 2008-September 2009 figures from the Annual Population Survey¹³ estimate that 15,500 (14.9%) of the working age population of the district are disabled. Of these more than half (8,000) were estimated to be defined as both DDA and work-limiting disabled, with 4,900 defined as DDA-only disabled and 2,700 defined as work-limited only disabled.

Religion or belief

The 2001 Census showed that 74.5% of Huntingdonshire residents stated their religion

as Christian. This level is higher than the national average of 71.7% and the countywide average of 71.3%.

The next largest religious group in the district was Muslims, with nearly 1,000 people (0.6% of the district's population). Buddhism and Hinduism each represented 0.2% of Huntingdonshire's population (respectively around 300 and 270 residents), with Sikhism and Judaism at 0.1% each (respectively around 185 and 200 residents). 0.3% of the population (455 residents) listed another religion.

In addition, 7.5% (nearly 12,000 people) did not state their religion and a further 16.5% of residents (nearly 26,000 people) stated they had no religion.

Sexual orientation

Only limited survey evidence on the circumstances of lesbian, gay and bisexual people is available nationally, and there is no data on sexual orientation within the local population. The position is unlikely to change: following consultation, the ONS has concluded that it will not include sexual orientation in the 2011 UK Census¹⁴.

However, Stonewall estimate that between 5 to 7% of the population is gay, lesbian or bisexual. Another indicator that could be used is the Council's register for social housing – around 1% of applicants said they were lesbian, gay, or bisexual (LGBT).

Deprivation and Health Inequalities

The Indices of Deprivation¹⁵, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government, measure 'deprivation' across all of England. The data has been issued for areas known as 'Lower Output Areas' (LOAs), which are smaller than wards and therefore can show deprivation at a more local level.

¹¹ Disability Living Allowance Claimants at November 2009 www.nomisweb.co.uk

¹² Incapacity Benefit / Severe Disablement Allowance at November 2009 www.nomisweb.co.uk

¹³ Annual Population Survey, ONS, from NOMIS

¹⁴ ONS 2006, "Sexual orientation and the 2011 Census"

¹⁵ Department of Communities and Local Government, Indices of Deprivation 2007

As with many rural districts, Huntingdonshire suffers from concentrations of social problems. Data from the latest (2007) Indices of Deprivation shows that although the district is not ranked as highly deprived overall, some areas within the district do show relatively high levels of deprivation.

There are six different rankings of local authorities, none of which is favoured over another. These show Huntingdonshire ranks between 187th and 311th most deprived of all 355 authorities, which means there is a relatively low level of deprivation for the district as a whole.

Wards in which the five most deprived areas in Huntingdonshire are located are St Neots Eaton Socon, Huntingdon East and Huntingdon North. Three of the four LOAs in Huntingdon North are in this group, which strongly suggests that the entire ward has a high level of deprivation.

The health of Huntingdonshire's population is a significant issue. Life expectancy at birth in Huntingdonshire is quite high. Men are expected to live to 79.1 years old (more than a year longer than the national average of 77.9) and women can expect to live nearly four years longer than this at 83 years (one year longer than the national average of 82)¹⁶.

On average there are 42 accidental deaths a year in Huntingdonshire (based on figure for 2006-2008). The rates of all accidental deaths and accidental deaths in people aged 15-24 and accidental deaths in people aged 85 and over are all statistically significantly higher than the average rate for England.

The rate of alcohol-related hospital admissions per 100,000 population in the district (1,626) is above the regional (1,303) and national (1,583) average. The level increased by 53% in Huntingdonshire between 2002/3 to 2008/9¹⁷.

Latest teenage conception rates for females aged 15-17 are higher in the district than the county level (27 per 1,000 against 24.9 per 1,000 in 2006-08).

Economic activity, employment, and commuting

The five main industries of Huntingdonshire's workforce are: manufacturing; wholesale/retail and repair of motor vehicles; Real estate, renting and business activities; public administration and defence; and health and social work. On average, 16.8% of jobs in Huntingdonshire are managers and senior officials, accounting for over 11,500 jobs in the district. This is 1.5% higher than the national average.

Every ward in the district has a higher rate of economic activity amongst 16-74 year olds than the national average of 67%, with a district average of 75%. Only The Hemingfords has a lower level than the countywide average of 70%, which is mainly due to the high level of retired people in that ward.

The 2001 Census results show that 69,000 people work in Huntingdonshire and of those 77.2% lived in the district and 22.8% lived outside the district. Since the 1991 Census, there has been an increase in the number of people living outside the district and commuting into Huntingdonshire. The 2001 Census results also showed that 82,325 employed people lived in Huntingdonshire and of those 64.7% worked in the district and 35.3% commuted out of the district. When compared to the 1991 Census results, the level of out-commuting in the district has risen by 4%.

Employment opportunities are, of course, key to the wealth of the area. Major employers in the district include the Royal Air Force at Wyton and Brampton, Myer's Beds, Exel plc, the NHS and the County and District Councils. At March 2009, 6,980 local units employed 71,958 people in the district¹⁸.

At April 2010, the Jobseekers Allowance claimant rate for Huntingdonshire residents was 2.6% of the working age population¹⁹. This is lower than the regional average of 3.4% and the national average of 4.1%. The number of local residents claiming Jobseekers Allowance (2,728 at April 2010) is more than double the total claiming in April 2008 (1,197 claimants) but has fallen from its peak of 3,025 claimants in April 2009.

¹⁶ Life expectancy at birth (2006-2008), ONS www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=8841

¹⁷ Local Alcohol Profiles for England, North West Public Health Observatory www.nwph.net/alcohol/lape/LAProfile.aspx?reg=g

¹⁸ Inter-Departmental Business Register (IDBR), ONS www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/nugget.asp?ID=195

¹⁹ Jobseekers Allowance Claimants at April 2010 www.nomisweb.co.uk

Appendix C

Responsibility, Monitoring and Review of this Scheme

Resources and responsibilities

All Councillors, employees and others who work on behalf of the Council have a duty or responsibility to implement the outcomes of this Scheme through the action plan. Particular responsibilities are allocated to:

Councillors

Councillors will support this Scheme and work towards the promotion of equalities and social inclusion in all Council and community activities.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the implementation of the Scheme and action plan for the Council as a whole.

Directors

Directors have a duty to promote the Scheme and action plan throughout their directorates. They also have responsibility to ensure the implementation, review, monitoring and performance of departmental equality action plans and targets, self assessment and audit specific to services that fall within their directorate.

Services

Heads of service, activity managers and team leaders are responsible for implementing this Scheme and action plan in the day-to-day delivery of their service, including the collection of data. They will also be responsible for developing and

implementing departmental action plans that translate the Scheme into more detailed actions that link into the policies and services they deliver. They will also be responsible for self assessment and audit.

Employees

All employees have a responsibility to implement the Scheme and action plan and work towards the provision of services that meet the goals and objectives of the Scheme and action plan. Appropriate training will be provided to help employees achieve this.

Head of People, Performance and Partnerships

The Head of People, Performance & Partnerships will ensure that the Scheme is reviewed every 3 years and the action plan is reviewed regularly, and will evaluate and verify performance data that has been provided.

Procurement (buying goods and services)

As part of the development of the Equality Framework for Local Government the Council will ensure that our Procurement Strategy makes clear that contractors and others conform to the Council's expected standards.

Corporate Equality Steering Group

The cross-departmental equality steering group will co-ordinate the following actions to support the achievement of this Scheme:

- promote a corporate perspective on equality issues including the implementation of new equalities legislation
- overseeing the progress of work against this action plan
- collecting information from each directorate on the progress being made
- produce regular reports to Chief Officers, Overview and Scrutiny Panel and Cabinet in relation to progress being made in relation to the action plan

Review of Single Equality Scheme

This Scheme will be reviewed fully every three years. The action plan is a 'live' document and can be updated with new actions at any point; however a formal review will take place on an annual basis. These reviews will be carried out by the corporate equality steering group. New legislative requirements will be incorporated and best practice recommendations considered at appropriate times.

Promotion of the Single Equality Scheme and action plan

- The full Scheme and a summary of it will be published and made available to all staff
- Upon request a summary document will be made available in appropriate formats
- External applicants for Council posts will be made aware of the Scheme and it will form part of their induction programme

Appendix D

Links to other council policies and strategies

Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy

The Sustainable Community Strategy has been developed through partnership with the County Council, NHS Cambridgeshire, Cambridgeshire Police, Town and Parish Councils, local businesses, the voluntary sector and Huntingdonshire Regional College. The Strategy is based on what people who live and work in the district have told us what is important to them, both now and in the future. The Strategy sets out a shared long term vision for the next 20 years.

Strategic themes include Growth and Infrastructure, Health and Well Being, Environment, Children and Young People, Inclusive, Safe and Cohesive Communities and Economic Prosperity and Skills. Equality and Diversity impacts on all of these strategic themes.

Further information can be found on our website www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Corporate Plan – Growing Success

The Council's corporate plan, Growing Success, sets out how we will achieve our part of the Sustainable Community Strategy, it is based on detailed research and what our communities have told us. This plan identifies the aims the Council will be working towards and how we

plan to deliver them to meet the needs of people in Huntingdonshire.

One of the Council's aims is to Learn and Develop, within this there is a specific objective relating to equalities, this is: To strengthen our commitment and capacity to achieve equality, diversity and inclusion. We will do this by:

- Maintaining a Single Equality Scheme which considers age, disability, gender, race, religious belief and sexual orientation along with the needs of disadvantaged groups at all levels of services and in our policies and practices
- Ensuring that our employment practices provide equality of opportunity and do not discriminate against any individual
- Undertaking equality impact assessments for all services, policies and practices
- Maintaining policies, procedures and practices which meet best practice in achieving equality, diversity and inclusion

Another Council aim is to Improve our Systems and Practices, this contains a number of objectives relating to understanding customer needs, and these are:

- To make it as easy as possible for customers to access our services and get appropriate information
- To provide high quality customer service
- To be good at communicating with and listening to people and organisations and be clear about what we can do and aspire to achieve

Further information can be found on our website www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Equality of Opportunity Policy

It is the policy of the Council as an Equal Opportunities Employer to ensure that no employee or job applicant receives less favourable treatment on any grounds of age, gender, disability, ethnic origin, religion and sexual orientation. The Council is committed to positively eliminating direct, indirect or institutional discrimination in all employment practices; recruitment, training and policies and procedures.

Disability At Work Policy

This policy aims to:

- Provide managers and employees with guidance on a range of support and reasonable adjustments that the Council can provide disabled employees to ensure they are supported at work.
- Enable, so far as is reasonably possible, equity in access to the full range of recruitment, training and career development opportunities for all job applicants and staff.
- Ensure that there is no unfair discrimination or harassment on the grounds of disability and that access to employment and promotion in the Council is based on skills, qualifications and suitability for work.
- Identify ways to monitor diversity in the Council to ensure equity and fairness.
- Identify and adopt annual targets for improvements and report as required on proposals and progress in the equality progress report to Employment Panel

Dignity At Work Policy

This policy states that 'all employees have the right to work in an environment that is safe and to be protected from all forms of abuse, violence and harassment. The Council is committed to ensuring all employees are treated with dignity and respect'.

The purpose of this policy is to promote consistency of approach and to create a climate in which all types of bullying and harassment are regarded as unacceptable, discriminatory and in certain circumstances also unlawful.

Appendix E

Legislation

Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act has two main purposes – to harmonise discrimination law, and to strengthen the law to support progress on equality.

In summary, the Equality Act strengthens equality law by:

1. Introducing a new public sector duty to consider reducing socioeconomic inequalities;
2. Placing a new integrated Equality Duty on public bodies;
3. Using public procurement to improve equality;
4. Banning age discrimination outside the workplace;
5. Requiring gender pay and employment equality publishing;
6. Extending the scope to use positive action;
7. Strengthening the powers of employment tribunals;
8. Protecting carers from discrimination;
9. Clarifying the protection for breastfeeding mothers;
10. Banning discrimination in private members' clubs;
11. Strengthening protection from discrimination for disabled people; and
12. Protecting people from dual discrimination - direct discrimination because of a combination of two protected characteristics.

Further information about the Equality Act can be found at:
www.equalities.gov.uk/equality_bill.aspx

The Human Rights Act 1998

The Human Rights Act came into force in October 2000. The Act allows people to claim their rights under the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in all UK courts and tribunals instead of going to the European Court in Strasbourg. The Act requires all public authorities in the UK to act in compliance with the Convention rights and has many implications for local government activity.

Convention on the Rights of the Child

The UK signed up to this convention in December 1991. It sets out 42 articles that define basic rights that all young people under the age of 18 years are entitled to. States that are party to the convention are obliged to develop and undertake all actions in light of the best interests of the child. Particular relevant articles to the work of a local authority are articles 9, 12, 15, 16, 19, 23 & 31.

Appendix F

Progress with Equality & Diversity over the last three years (2007 to 2010)

Actions Relating to Race	Progress
Making sure the public have access to our services	
Open Out reporting stations across the district have the ability to record Hate crime, including race related crime	The scheme has been replaced by Stop Hate UK which is a national charity that provides independent and confidential support to people affected by Hate Crime, including hate crime based on race, gender, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation and age.
Training and developing our employees	
Evaluate equality training to date	This is completed annually
Development of training plan for employees e.g. for equality steering group, managers/general staff and Members	Member and Officer training are now combined. Equality training database created and used to target training. E-learning and specific disability awareness training now available
Establish departmental equality working groups	Not required as Equality Steering Group will fulfil this role
Development of guidance and training for assessment of policies for impact on race and other equality areas	Staff guidance for conducting Equality Impact Assessments (EIA's) produced. EIA training provided to 47 members of staff.
Publishing the results	
Report on progress with Race Equality Scheme (RES) and Corporate Equality Policy Action Plan targets to Chief Officers, Overview & Scrutiny & Cabinet	Complete. Available on the web site www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Continued

Actions Relating to Race	Progress
Publication of results of equality impact assessments	Completed annually. Available on the website
Publication of RES	Complete. Available on website.
Assessment, consultation and monitoring for likely impact in terms of race equality	
Examination and publication of previous years employment (equality monitoring) data	Complete. Available on the web site
Review of procurement strategy in relation to race	Procurement EIA complete, actions arising are on-going. Available on the web site
Equality Impact Assessment timetable established and complied with	Initial timetable completed in 2006. An annual plan to ensure the completion of EIA's is produced, so far over the 3 years, 90% of EIA's have been completed on time. Available on web site.
Review of systems and procedures in relation to ethnic monitoring	Most services are monitoring service users by equality, however there is still some inconsistency in approach. Further work required.
Review of complaints procedure in relation to race, gender & disability	EIA of customer feedback procedure complete, new procedure now in place. Available on the web site

Additional race equality actions achieved since 2006

- Corporate Equality Policy written and published
- Equality links placed in Growing Success
- Published Living & Working in Huntingdonshire, a booklet aimed at newcomers to the district, providing information on services available
- Faith booklets
- HR Equality of Opportunity Policy produced
- Performance management framework now includes targets and objectives for equality impact assessments; now further developed to include all outcomes from completed assessments and additional links to the Corporate Equality Policy action plan
- An equality action has now been placed in the Council's risk register (service developments and new/amended policies introduced without due consideration of their equality impact) and equality is included within the Council reports checklist (If new or amended policy/strategy, has an EIA been completed?).
- The introduction of a language leaflet in the customer service centres was introduced as a result of an increased demand for services in other languages. This is available in Polish, Portuguese & Lithuanian.
- Employees have access to both Cintra and Language Line interpretation and translation services
- Non English speaking visitors to the customer service centres have the opportunity to identify their preferred language spoken using translation posters in these offices

- Updated the Google translation service on web site to include greater number of languages.
- Environmental & Community Health Services introduced new services for Economic Migrants in 2008/9 because of need identified – web access to information
- Environmental Health Officers helped to train the organisers of the Huntingdonshire Community Group (a voluntary group established to support local ethnic populations, notably African, Latvian and Polish) on the functions covered by the Councils Private Sector Housing Enforcement staff and have also attended subsequent drop-in sessions.
- Produced a Black & Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy
- Two questions were included in the 2009 Employee Survey
 - o Do you think the Council is an equal opportunities employer? (94% said yes)
 - o Do you think that the Council treats residents, customers and employees in an equal manner, regardless of their gender, age, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, ethnic background or any disabilities they may have? (92% said yes)
- Produced corporate guidance on the translation of written material
- Achieved Level 3 of Equality Standard for Local Government
- Leisure has conducted an equality & diversity staff survey to establish current knowledge and awareness to determine training needs.
- Employee newsletter on equality and diversity activities in March and July 2010

The Council’s Diversity Officer has:

- Organised information drop in sessions for new arrivals to promote services in the area for new communities in Huntingdon and Ramsey
- Organised Huntingdonshire Communities Festival
- Supported Unity in the Community event
- Supporting migrant workers in Ramsey to get involved in Ramsey Party in the Field event
- Supported the development of St Neots International Community group
- Organised a Diversity Awareness day at St

Peters School

- Created ‘Moving Stories’, a DVD for schools on information about migrants in the area
- Raised awareness of Stop Hate Crime UK
- Involved in the promotion of ESOL provision in the area

Work with Gypsy/Travellers

- On going consultation with Gypsy and Travellers in the area in preparation with the Gypsy/Traveller development plan document

Translation and interpretation used

- Translation of refuse & recycling information into alternative formats
- Use of a Polish interpreter on Oxmoor when publicising changes to refuse & recycling collection and to promote correct use of bins
- One Leisure have translated Impressions information into Polish
- Customer Services and Housing Services use interpreters throughout the year. The main languages requested are Polish and Portuguese, however interpreters for Russian, Lithuanian, Italian and Tamil have also been arranged.

Place Survey

Some further Place Survey work was carried out aimed at increasing the response rate from BME communities in Huntingdonshire. Three sets of results were compared; the results from this specific BME focus group, results from BME respondents from the main Place Survey and results the whole Place Survey have been analysed. It was difficult to make a comparison given the different sample sizes, however, it did, in some cases, demonstrate some differences and similarities in opinion. No action was proposed in light of these findings.

Actions relating to Gender	Progress
Making sure the public have access to our services	
Open Out reporting stations across the district have the ability to record Hate crime, including gender related crime	See comments relating to race
Assessing, consulting and monitoring for likely impact in terms of gender equality	
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) timetable established and complied with	Initial timetable completed in 2006. An annual plan to ensure the completion of EIA's is produced, so far over the 3 years, 90% of EIA's have been completed on time.
Review of systems and procedures in relation to gender monitoring	Most services do now monitor service users by equality but there is still some inconsistency in approach, further work required.
Examination and publication of previous years employment (equality monitoring) data	Complete – most recent September 2009. Available on web site
Further to analysis of employment monitoring data more research in terms of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pay gap • Imported discrimination • Encouraging more females into high grades • Encouraging more males into position graded 8 – 13 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Low Pay and Equal Pay Audit completed Feb 2010, currently being considered by Employee Liaison Advisory Committee and Employment Panel for further analysis. • Imported discrimination has not been explored, no intention for this action to be taken further. • Encouraging different gender into high/low grades has been considered as part of the Equal and Low Pay audit and the annual HR equality monitoring. No actions arising from HR equality monitoring, actions may arise as a result of Equal/Low Pay Audit.
Review of complaints procedure in relation to race, gender & disability.	Complete. All HR policies are reviewed on a 3 year rolling programme and EIA's of all policies are carried out.
Review HR policies Ensure gender equality, equal pay and under-represented are considered as part of review of personnel policies	Complete. All Personnel policies are reviewed on a 3 year rolling programme and EIA's of all policies are carried out.
Continued	

Actions relating to Gender	Progress
Monitor key employment and workforce profiles by gender, age, ethnic origin, disability, sexual orientation, religion and belief	Completed in 2009. Will be carried out annually as part of HR Equality Monitoring; however sexual orientation, religion and belief are not currently monitored. Available on web site
Consult with employees Conduct consultation with Employee Liaison Advisory Group and employees on Gender Equality	Complete. Two actions from this consultation are included below.
Undertake further work to consider why employees do not feel confident reporting gender discrimination	Complete. The annual staff survey and analysis of grievance and disciplinary process have not revealed any specific gender issues.
Undertake further work to explore further the reasons why employees feel that they have been discriminated against, particularly in terms of gender.	Complete. The annual staff survey and analysis of grievance and disciplinary process have not revealed any specific gender issues.
Raise general awareness/monitor/evaluate different working patterns and work life balance options available to both male and female employees.	A project will be undertaken during the next 12 months which will pull together all of the work-life balance options available.
Information relating to flexible working to be considered as part of the review of the Flexible Working Policy	Complete. A project will be undertaken during the next 12 months which will pull together all of the work-life balance options available.
Analysis of training take up by gender using ResourceLink	Complete and will be carried out annually as part of HR Equality Monitoring. Available on web site
Any future employee surveys need to consider the difficulties in obtaining a representative sample from across the whole of the Council	Complete. Response rate was slightly higher for the 2009 survey. Proportion of responses matched gender make up of HDC employees.
Publishing the results	
Publication of Gender Equality Scheme (GES)	Completed in 2007, reviews take place annually
Assessment and publication of results of equality impact assessments	Complete. Annual update available on web site. www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Publication of Annual Report on web site	Completed annually
Continued	

Actions relating to Gender	Progress
Report on progress with Gender Equality Scheme and Corporate Equality Policy Action Plan targets to Chief Officers, Overview & Scrutiny & Cabinet	Completed annually. Available on web site Reports produced annually
Training and developing our employees	
Development of guidance and training for assessment of policies for impact on gender and other equality areas	Staff guidance on conducting EIA's produced. EIA training provided to 47 members of staff.
Establish departmental equality working groups	Not required, function will be
Develop Consultation & Engagement strategy to support GES	Complete
Development of training plan for employees (linked into equality standard training) e.g. for the equality steering group and managers/general staff and Members	Member and Officer training are now combined. Equality training database created and used to target training. E-learning, case studies and specific disability awareness training now

Domestic violence

The Huntingdonshire Domestic Violence Task Group is made up of a number of local agencies and organisations who aim to raise awareness of domestic violence and its effects on families and children, and improve services for those experiencing domestic abuse.

Households presenting as homeless to Huntingdonshire District Council as a result of domestic violence

2008/09	17
2007/08	9
2006/07	11
2005/06	21
2004/05	25

However the above only represents the number of households who have gone through the statutory homeless procedure, many more households have

been helped through other options designed to help people find alternatives to leaving their home e.g. legal advice, support for finding private rented accommodation through the rent deposit scheme, homeless prevention fund, and extra priority on waiting lists. The Council can arrange urgent management transfers for Housing Association tenants and also supported the establishment of the Sanctuary Scheme, which works across the county, by working with the police and fire service, a safe room can be created in the home. However anecdotal evidence suggests that many incidents of domestic violence go unreported; so figures could be higher. We can only report figures for those people who report the matter to the police or come to the Council for help with re-housing; many others could go to their registered social landlord for help.

Domestic Violence Offence Rate 2008/09 rate per 1,000 population

Cambridge District	12.8
East Cambridgeshire	7.6
Fenland District	16.8
Huntingdonshire	11.4
South Cambridgeshire	8.4
Cambridgeshire	11.3

- The Council is a member of the Huntingdonshire Domestic Violence Task Group
- There is a domestic violence advocacy service in the district, although the Council does not directly fund this service, money from the Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement pays for 2 full time members of staff at the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy Service
- The Council part funds the Domestic Abuse Partnership Manager
- There is a Domestic Violence Refuge in St Neots.
- 40% of domestic violence resources from the Domestic Abuse Unit (DAU) is targeted at domestic violence in Hunts;
- There are two Freedom Programmes (for female victims of domestic violence running via the DAU in Hunts;
- There is a Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) (Central) for Hunts/ Fenland supporting high-risk victims of domestic violence once per month;
- There are targets around increasing numbers of professionals in Huntingdonshire trained in supporting victims of domestic violence;
- 20% of an Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) supports clients of sexual violence in Hunts.

Additional Gender Equality actions achieved since 2007

- Corporate Equality Policy written and published
- Equality links placed in Growing Success
- HR Equality of Opportunity Policy produced
- Achieved Level 3 of Equality Standard for Local Government

- The performance management framework now includes targets and objectives for equality impact assessments; now further developed to include all outcomes from completed assessments and additional links to the Corporate Equality Policy action plan
- An equality action has now been placed in the Council’s risk register (service developments and new/amended policies introduced without due consideration of their equality impact) and equality is included within the Council reports checklist (If new or amended policy/strategy has an EIA been completed?).
- The Council has introduced family friendly policies e.g. flexible working, reduced hours, phased return, paternity and maternity leave, home working and offers child care vouchers. All women returning from maternity leave return to their previous post
- Two questions were included in the 2009 Employee Survey
- Do you think the Council is an equal opportunities employer? (94% said yes)
- Do you think that the Council treats residents, customers and employees in an equal manner, regardless of their gender, age, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, ethnic background or any disabilities they may have? (92% said yes)
- A Low Pay and Equal Pay Audit is currently being undertaken, findings will be reported to Employment Liaison Advisory Group and Employment Panel in September 2010. The audit will identify any gender pay gaps and will make appropriate recommendations to address these.
- All 4 senior officers are male; however, 23% of all Heads of Service are female and 32.5% of all Activity Managers are female.
- An employee newsletter on equality and diversity activities produced in March and July 2010
- The number of female Members has varied over recent years

Number of female Members at HDC (total of 52)

2004/05	2006/07	2008/09	2009/10
9	10	8	7

Evening meetings have been introduced to try to encourage a greater variety of people into the role e.g. making it easier for people who work during the day to attend meetings.

- We have the following HR policies to prevent bullying and harassment, these include; Dignity at Work, Whistle blowing, Disciplinary and Grievance procedures, HR Equality of

Opportunity Policy, and First Contact (counselling facility)

- Leisure Centres offer mixed and female only activities upon demand.
- Leisure have conducted an equality & diversity staff survey to establish current knowledge and awareness to determine training needs

Actions relating to Disability

Action relating to Disability Equality Duty consultation in 2006	Progress - year 2 & 3 (2008/09)
More education and training for Council employees to raise awareness and attitude change to disabled people	Four disability awareness training sessions have taken place with Customer Services team during 2010. A need for further training in this area will be established.
A dedicated department for disability issues that is accessible and widely publicised as a centre for information and consultation	The Council is unable to support this however the Policy Team can partially support. It was agreed that rather than have a dedicated department for disability issues, capacity throughout the organisation to provide advice on disability issues should be developed through training of specific staff.
Improve physical access to Council buildings	<p>Achieved.</p> <p>DDA accessibility is only part of full compliance to the current DDA legislation. Most Council buildings have DDA compliant access but very few are fully DDA compliant</p> <p>Eastfield House, Centenary House and new Pathfinder House, Civic Suite are DDA compliant, which includes the new Huntingdon Customer Service Centre (CSC).</p> <p>The Customer Services Centres at Yaxley, Ramsey, St Neots and St Ives are DDA access compliant</p>
Improved transportation in rural areas with adjustments to access for disabled people on buses.	Progress made via Cambs Local Transport Plan and Huntingdonshire Accessibility action plan Some progress made, and action likely to be on going.

Continued

Dedicated parking, greater penalties for anti-social parking in disabled (accessible) bays and adjustments to roads and paving	Dedicated parking considered as part of Car Parking Strategy. Street rangers now able to enforce indiscriminate parking in blue badge bays, parking outside of bays etc EIA of car parking strategy completed.
A transparent complaints procedure, well trained staff with an understanding of the needs of disabled people.	New Customer Suggestions, Compliments and Complaints Policy
Better communication and flow of information on available funding and facilities for disabled people	Information & communication requirements of disabled people were considered as part of the review of the Customer Service Strategy
More dedicated leisure facilities with improved access and support available	Achieved • See EIA of Leisure Customer Care Policy (www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk) and bullet points below
Greater access to IT and Internet for dissemination of information	Achieved • Expanded number of online translation services • Improved spelling and use of Plain English • On line payments
Consider how to consult with learning disabled in future consultation	On going. Further work to identify which forums exist within the district

Additional Disability Equality actions achieved since 2007

Leisure and Sport & Active Lifestyles

- Huntingdon One Leisure has Inclusive Fitness Initiative (IFI) accreditation for its Fitness Studio. IFI is a programme supporting the fitness industry to become more inclusive, catering for the needs of disabled and non-disabled people, raising physical activity participation levels. Huntingdon One Leisure host an annual inclusion fitness week where they provide a range of leisure activities including free taster sessions. The model is built around developments in four key areas:
 - o Accessible Facilities
 - o Inclusive Fitness Equipment
 - o Staff Training
 - o Inclusive Marketing Strategies
 - o Gym buddy schemes

- The Community Sports & Recreation Project (Lifestyles Team) had a throughput of 796 disabled people at the half way point during 2008/09 (168 individual participants)
- Two festivals are held at the St Ives One Leisure (Outdoor and indoor) each year with between 50-80 disabled people attending with no access issues
- £30,000 has been spent on improving disabled changing provision at St Neots One Leisure
- A significant number of individuals have received access to disability awareness training through the Community Sports & Recreation Project as well as individuals accessing national governing body awards, first aid, child protection and IFI YMCA Disability gym instructors training – all to assist with the provision of sporting opportunities

for disabled people

- St Ives Rangers now has both an adult and disability football team thanks to the Community Sports & Recreation Project, Hunts FA and the club
- Both Huntingdon and St Neots One Leisure now run both adult and junior multi-sports clubs for disabled people as a result of the Community Sports and Recreation Project
- The Council has run holiday activities for disabled people over the past two years through the Community Sports & Recreation Project. Activities to achieve this include Health Walks, Exercise Referral Scheme, Cardiac Rehabilitation classes, Disability Sport, summer holiday activities, coach education, school sport and leisure organisation directory.
- The Leisure Development EIA identified that Health Walks had limited accessibility for those with mobility issues, efforts to reduce this problem were made and now walks are offered in each area which are suitable for wheelchair users.
- Greater inclusion has been achieved through disability events and clubs.

One Leisure St Neots

Swimming Pool Building

- New open plan reception
- Lower reception counter
- Hearing loop in reception area
- Automatic sliding doors for easier access in the swimming pool building
- Improved family changing area with improved accessibility for wheel chair users
- Lockers that can be used by wheelchair users
- Braille locker numbers
- Updated and improved disabled changing facility
- Updated and improved disabled shower and toilet facility

Centre Building

- New open plan reception
- Lower reception counter
- Hearing loop in reception area
- Improved disabled toilet facility
- Automatic sliding doors for easier access

- Lockers that can be used by wheelchair users
- Braille locker numbers
- Updated and improved shower and toilet facility for disabled people.

One Leisure St Ives - Outdoor

- Toilets for disabled people refurbished.
- Rear entry to synthetic pitch has a slow release closure fitted.
- Parking bays for disabled people in the car park.
- Wheelchair ramp from fire exit to car park built.

One Leisure St Ives

- Small lift for disabled people to gain access to the burgess hall, this wheelchair users access onto the stage.

One Leisure Huntingdon

- Active & Able club for adults.
- Lifestyles offer a class for disabled children.
- Groups of disabled people use the sports wall and dance mats.
- Regular work placement for disabled students.
- Lifestyles Team have trained some staff on adapting sports for disabled users.
- Some swim teachers are undertaking disability swimming workshops.
- New open plan reception.
- Lower reception counter.
- Hearing loop in reception area.
- Improved disabled toilet facility.
- Automatic sliding doors for easier access.
- Lockers that can be used by wheelchair users.
- Updated and improved shower and toilet facility for disabled people.

Huntingdon is an Inclusive Fitness Accredited site with trained staff and a gym buddy scheme and a facility which has been through an Inclusive Fitness audit

One Leisure Sawtry

- Special needs group use lunchtime swimming.

One Leisure Ramsey

- New manual pool hoist.
- Changing facility for disabled people.
- Special needs group use lunchtime swimming.

All One Leisure Centres

Minimum of two staff have acquired either SENCO & ENCO (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator & Educational Needs Co-ordinator).

Customer Service Centres

- Charter Mark Customer Service Excellence accreditation for our Contact Centre and Community Information Centres
- Customer Service Strategy developed
- Community Information Centres have been successfully established in Yaxley and Ramsey working closely with many external partners.

The following facilities are offered at the customer service centres (not all Centres):

- Low counter provision in customer service centres - Huntingdon
- On line payment facility - all centres
- Toilets for disabled people in Huntingdon and Ramsey
- Hearing loop & type talk – Huntingdon
- Volume controls on headsets – in call centre
- Screens have been removed from all customer service centres to aid communication & privacy
- Staff training has been undertaken in signing to help support its deaf customers.
- E-mail service requests and queries are available at the call centre, which benefit all customers regardless of age, disability etc.
- Huntingdon and St Ives Customer Service Centres are fully accessible. The Call Centre at Speke House is also fully accessible.
- The Bailiff Contract was recently renewed; and specific equality and diversity issues were incorporated into the contract

Human Resources

- Achieved Positive about Disability status
- Flexible Working within the Council. Over 200

Officers are now able to work from home using a secure connection to the Council's network. This has increased the range of options the Council is able to offer as an employer, helping make the Council more attractive to employees who may require some flexibility in their working patterns.

- Introduced a HR Equality of Opportunity Policy
- Trials have also been conducted on mobile working, mobile information provision and flexible working for employees
- Annual equality monitoring showed that the number of staff disclosing that they had a disability was 26 employees, a total of 3.7%, broadly in line with national averages

Website

- The website has a screen-reader function enabling access to blind customers.
- The new version of the Website will have a simple colour scheme based on the content structure to improved navigation for customers who prefer to follow 'visual clues', rather than rely solely on text.
- The spelling and use of Plain English on the website has been improved through feedback to authors and automated checking. A 'reading age' assessment of pages, ensuring we do not overcomplicate content can now be provided.
- Online payments are now available, allowing customers to pay for services from their own homes 24*7.
- Public points of access to PCs with Internet access are available at Customer Service locations
- Planning Services have introduced "Public Access" which enables online web based access to planning applications and enables comment to be made without the need for a physical visit to our offices.

Operations division

- Providing opportunity via social services for work experience and volunteering for people returning to work after mental illness, similar work with probation service.
- CCTV services and Hunts Community Nursery provide work placements for Papworth Trust

clients

- New river boat just purchased suitable for wheelchair users. Bell boats suitable for disabled people in use.
- The Environment Agency are planning to put in some disabled fishing platforms in Godmanchester, to support this the Council will mark out some bays for disabled people in the closest car park.
- Choice Based Lettings was introduced with five access channels, customers can submit bids for homes by telephone, text, coupons, via the web or face to face, when Housing staff can bid on behalf of a client.
- 698 homes improved through Disabled Facilities Grant

Central services

- The Place Survey has been analysed by respondents with a disability to identify differences between these respondents and the overall results. Further detailed work to ensure these findings are taken into account when services are developed.
- The Council wanted to specifically find out about the needs of people with a disability to ensure that their opinions were adequately reflected in the Place Survey. Two focus Groups, one in Huntingdon and the other in St Neots were organised by an external facilitator (a disability equality trainer/specialist). The aim of the events was to find out how the services delivered by the Council and its partners could be improved for disabled people in Huntingdonshire. There were 21 attendees who were able to provide a perspective from a physical, sensory impairment or learning disability. This report will be circulated to relevant Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership thematic groups.
- An equality & diversity training programme has been in place for 3 years, of which disability awareness is an integral part. 303 members of staff have attended equality related training since 2007. Mixed Officer/Member training is now in place. Four disability awareness training sessions have taken place during 2010. An Equality E-learning module has been introduced.
- Achieved level 3 of Equality Standard for Local Government
- Equality training for Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Members
- A question was included in the 2009 Employee Survey
- Do you think the Council is an equal opportunities employer? (94% said yes)
- Do you think that the Council treats residents, customers and employees in an equal manner, regardless of their gender, age, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, ethnic background or any disabilities they may have? (92% said yes)
- The Council decided to lift the restriction on the number of licences granted for hackney carriages and will require all new licences to be for wheelchair accessible vehicles only
- A footnote on Council correspondence states that information can be made available in alternative formats
- The Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) timetable has been established and 90% of EIA's have been completed on time since April 2007.
- A Shopmobility scheme, through consultation with disabled residents the service was established and priorities agreed, which now form part of a commissioning agreement with the Council. This led to a change in operating hours to suit customer needs. Outcome – in turn, leading to a 45% increase in number of customers using mobility services in Huntingdon Town from 07/8 to 08/9.
- Corporate Identity guidelines include guidance on producing accessible information (RNIB clear print guidelines).
- £300,000 invested in Parish Councils for the upgrade of village halls.

Disability related outcomes from EIA's completed 2007-2009

- Continue to research the needs of people with a disability
- Improve signage in Leisure Centres and Customer Service Centres, especially for people who require extra help
- Leisure Centres and Customer Service Centres to introduce staff training to enable staff to better support customers with a disability

- Revenues Service to review their caseloads and analyse in terms of the local population and equality data
- Revenues Service to target vulnerable customers to ensure that they are receiving all the benefits they are entitled to
- Planning are reviewing the font size of their documents
- Encouragement for the whole organisation to use Plain English
- Ensure that DDA issues are considered when industrial or commercial properties are upgraded
- Introduction of equality monitoring of service users and inclusion of equality monitoring on application forms
- Introduction of equality related questions in leisure surveys
- Across many services, the need for better consultation and engagement with different equality groups was identified
- Consider whether the development of specialist homes for people with a disability or those in need of supported housing are in line with identified need
- The Arts service to encourage local groups to publicise the accessibility of their venues

Actions relating to age

- Wise Owls (London based not for profit organisation) conducted an age audit of the number of Councils. The aim of the audit was to find out whether Councils throughout the country have an age diverse workforce.
 - o This audit examined the age groups of employers that work within the Council fitting into the categories under 25, 25 – 49 and 50. The audit suggested that under 25's face the worst ageism, however, Huntingdon was top of the league table for employing under 25's (25% of the workforce). Click on link for further details. www.wiseowls.co.uk/documents/161.pdf
- The Council has hosted an LPSA (Local Public Service Agreement) funded post to involve children and young people across the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership

Actions relating to Faith and Religion

- Supported the development of Huntingdonshire Faith Forum

Appendix G

Results from EIA's carried out during 2009/10

Name of policy or service area	Actions/issues arising out of assessment
HR	<p>Disciplinary Procedures</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring of the type of disciplinary action being taken • Include Disciplinary Policy in directory handbook to improve access for employees • Training or updates to managers on new Disciplinary Policy <p>Home working</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to collect equality data relating to employees who home work <p>Recruitment Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate actions arising from Equality Act 2010 • Consider inclusion of religious belief and sexual orientation on equality monitoring section of application form • Cross-check all recruiting panels to ensure managers have been on equality & diversity training • Ensure each stage of the recruitment process is monitored e.g. application, short listing and successful applicants by equality group and include in annual HR Equality Monitoring report <p>People Strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Record the turnover in specific areas against projected turnover • Equality statistics to be kept on internal promotions • Research, review and recommend for adoption an HR Strategy and action plan ensuring full recognition of current and proposed equalities legislation
Administration	<p>Electoral registration & elections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote electoral registration process with schools to encourage future voters • Work around accessibility of voting stations and registration • Continue with equality training for canvassers and election staff <p>Local land charges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure members of the team have attended equality & diversity training • Continue to evaluate the service to ensure that it satisfies the needs and requirements of its customers <p>Printing Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out satisfaction survey • Ensure members of the team have attended equality & diversity training

Continued

Name of policy or service area	Actions/issues arising out of assessment
Law, Property & Governance	<p>Legal services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure members of the team have attended equality & diversity training • Ensure statement about availability of information in other formats is included in documents sent out to the public <p>Asset Management Plan</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the impact on local community of either investment in assets or the disposal of assets
One Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake research of current crèche and junior activity use • Improve Emergency Evacuation Procedures (EAP) for customers who are mobility or visually impaired • Ensure leisure employees have an understanding and awareness of equality and diversity. • Monitor One Card equality data. • Ensure marketing activities consider ethnicity, gender, disability, age, religion / beliefs and sexual orientation.
Operations Division	<p>Car parks management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to monitor car parking appeals • Ensure members of the team have attended equality & diversity training • Ensure future car parking designs incorporate issues around accessibility <p>Street cleansing & grounds maintenance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure members of the team have attended equality & diversity training • Review how to involve manual employees in equality & diversity awareness training • Investigate level of equality & diversity awareness amongst contractors staff
Information Management Department	<p>IMD Operations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure members of the team have attended equality & diversity training
Political management structures and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have regard to the multi-faith Calendar when setting the Council’s Schedule of Meetings and Member Development Programme • Offer equalities training to all Councillors • Raise public awareness of the opportunities local people have to become councillors. • Investigate ways of giving local people more say in local decision making

Appendix H

We asked a range of voluntary and organisations, residents, employees and other organisations for their views.

What you said	What we did (where appropriate)
The Council needs a better understanding of faith groups in the district	We will continue to support the Huntingdonshire Faith Forum and consider further work to create a profile of religion and belief in Huntingdonshire
The Council needs to improve how we consult with older people	We will continue to engage with hard to reach groups, including those representing older people
The Council needs to use different ways to consult and engage with different groups	We will continue to engage with BME (Black & Minority Ethnic) and other hard to reach groups. We need to be prepared to go and talk to community groups rather than focus on using surveys
The Council should continue to make improvements to increase equality for disabled people	We will continue to research the needs of people with a disability in terms of access to services and information about our services.
Some of the terminology used in the draft Scheme is quite complicated	We have tried to make the Scheme simpler and easier to read and it will be available in alternative formats
The Council needs to ensure that we include learning difficulties and mental health when doing any work around disability	We have made this clear in the Scheme
The Council needs to address the stigma and discrimination experienced by excluded groups	<p>This is now in our list of objectives and we have included the following actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of becoming a Mindful Employer • Continue with our Equality & Diversity training programme for employees and Councillors • Work with the Richmond Fellowship to ensure support for employees is available • Improve disability disclosure amongst employees and Councillors • Consider hidden disability and basic mental health

Continued

The Council should make sure that all council buildings are as accessible as possible	We will continue to improve signage and facilities within council buildings with public access
The Council needs to make clear what its role is with regards to public transport	We will provide some guidance on the role of the council with regards to rural transport, accessibility issues and conditions of pavements
The Council needs to make sure that residents try not to block pavements with their wheelie bins	We will run a publicity campaign to highlight the problem
The Huntingdon Shop Mobility scheme is vital for many wheel chair users	We will ensure that the Huntingdon Shop Mobility scheme is closely linked with the Huntingdon town centre redevelopment
A shorter version would be useful	A summary of the Scheme will be available
A better understanding of what Equality and Diversity means in practice	We will continue to produce equality and diversity newsletters and produce case studies or examples to help employees understand how their work contributes towards making our services more accessible
Better understanding of the Equality Act 2010	Guidance for employees and partner organisations will be produced regarding the impact of the Equality Act

People we consulted

HuntsMind
 The Papworth Trust
 Huntingdonshire Community Group
 Huntingdonshire Faiths Forum
 Age UK
 Cambridgeshire Equality & Diversity Network
 Huntingdonshire Diversity Forum
 Environment Agency
 Equality consultant
 ESOL students
 Huntingdonshire District Council employees

Methods of consultation

On line survey (HDC website and internal intranet)
 Paper based survey
 Via telephone and email
 Attending employee meetings
 Attending workshops and community group meetings

**SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being))**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 7th September 2010, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) considered a report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships, seeking the endorsement of a new Single Equality Scheme and outlining the progress made to date in respect of the Council's Corporate Equality Policy Action Plan. This report sets out the Panel's discussions.

2. COMMENTS

- 2.1 The Panel has been informed by the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy of the legislative background to the Corporate Equality Policy, together with details of the achievements made by the Council over the previous year in respect of the Action Plan. In noting progress against the 2009/10 Action Plan, attention has been drawn to the fact that of the 18 actions contained in the Plan, 12 have been completed and six are ongoing. The Panel has also been reminded that following external assessment the Council has attained Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government.
- 2.2 With regard to residents' perceptions in relation the two outcomes and measures identified within the Policy, the Panel has drawn attention to the negative trend revealed against one of the measures compared with the previous year. Members have been requested to bear in mind that the measures are based on individuals' perceptions of all local public services and not just those provided by the District Council. These views were elicited through the Place Survey. The Panel has suggested that it might be useful to continue to test these measures through other means in future.
- 2.3 Members have been informed that, to date, 90% of services have been the subject of Equality Impact Assessments. The outstanding Assessments will be completed in the current year.
- 2.4 In response to a question raised by a Member concerning the financial support the Council provides to the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy has reported that decisions on this and other matters will be reached following the Government's comprehensive spending review announcement in the Autumn.
- 2.5 In discussing employees' attitudes towards equalities matters, Members have noted that training is provided to both employees and Members on equality and diversity. The Panel has discussed whether changes made as a result of current financial pressures might have an impact on the Council's equalities standards. In response, Members have been reminded that the Policy framework is driven by legislation and that the Council has a duty to tackle discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and encourage good community relations and that individual Officers are responsible for ensuring that they comply with their equalities responsibilities. The Action Plan will play



a key part in achieving these requirements. Furthermore, steps have been taken to embed equalities across the Council.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Cabinet is invited to consider the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) as part of its deliberations on the report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Minutes and Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) on 7th September 2010.

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CABINET
CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PANEL
COUNCIL

16TH SEPTEMBER 2010
28TH SEPTEMBER 2010
29TH SEPTEMBER 2010

DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE WORKING GROUP (Report of the Working Group)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Democratic Structure Working Group met on Tuesday, 6th July 2010 to consider the membership of Employment Panel, a matter which had been deferred by the Council when considering the Working Group's initial proposals relating to the democratic structure review. The Working Group also considered a proposal to introduce the title of Honorary Aldermen and Alderwomen to past Members of the Council and Honorary Freemen and Freewomen to local citizens.
- 1.2 Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, K J Churchill (Chairman), S J Criswell, G S E Thorpe and R G Tuplin were present at the meeting.

2. EMPLOYMENT PANEL AND EMPLOYEE LIAISON ADVISORY GROUP (ELAG)

- 2.1 In considering the membership of the Employment Panel, the Working Group was reminded that as the terms and conditions of employees and other employee related issues were defined as not being an executive function of the Council, the only means of addressing such matters was either in full Council or by delegating the function to a committee or an Officer. At present, the Employment Panel comprised 8 Members, whom one was a Cabinet Member and was politically proportionate.
- 2.2 In recognising the need for there to be an appropriate forum in which to deal with employment issues, the Working Group concurred with its original suggestion that the present arrangements were working satisfactorily and that any alternative approaches would not be suitable, given that it would be inappropriate for staffing matters to be discussed at full Council meetings or for issues such as the negotiation of an annual salary award to be delegated to Officers. It was therefore proposed that no change should be made to the terms of reference, composition, etc of the Employment Panel.
- 2.3 In noting reservations had been made by the Employment Panel in recent months with regard to the scheduling and membership of ELAG, the Working Group acknowledged that the present arrangements were cumbersome and offered little opportunity for constructive dialogue between Members and employees in advance of Employment Panel meetings.
- 2.4 Having been acquainted with revised terms of reference for ELAG which had been approved at its May 2010 meeting, Members were advised that the Group had increased the employee side representation from 8 to a maximum of 15. Additionally, Members were advised of a recent decision to

increase representation on the Group from 4 to 8 Members as it had been felt at the time that it was inappropriate for only half of the membership of the Panel to attend ELAG. However, it was reported that since the new arrangements came into effect, this has further added to the duplication of business being discussed at meetings.

2.5 In discussing a way forward, Members suggested that in terms of the membership of ELAG, 4 Members was regarded as being sufficient, irrespective of the number of employee side representatives. With regard to the scheduling of meetings, Members concurred with a suggestion that ELAG meetings should be held approximately 4 weeks before the Employment Panel which would enable issues to be discussed in advance of Panel meetings and allow employees a better opportunity to contribute towards the formulation of any employment related reports.

2.6 **The Working Group therefore recommends that no change be made be made to the terms of reference, composition, etc of the Employment Panel and that the Employment Liaison Advisory Group comprises 4 Members of the Employment Panel, with meetings of ELAG being held approximately 4 weeks before meetings of the Employment Panel.**

3. HONORARY ALDERMEN AND ALDERWOMEN & HONORARY FREEMEN AND FREEWOMEN

3.1 Following recent changes introduced by The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, the Working Group considered the introduction of the title Honorary Aldermen and Alderwomen to past Members of the Council and Honorary Freeman and Freewomen to local citizens. Although the ability to confer the title of Honorary Alderman has existed for some time, the recent change reflects a recommendation by the Councillors Commission to limit the length of service of Councillors and Leaders/Mayors, thereby encouraging new persons to stand for election. One of a range of options to make it easier for Councillors to stand down was a public recognition of past service. Although the recommendation regarding a maximum length of service was not pursued by the previous Government, the promotion of a public recognition of past service was followed up in a subsequent White Paper.

3.2 The title of Honorary Aldermen and Alderwomen can be conferred on persons who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent services to the Council as past Members of the authority. It can only be conferred after a person has left the Council. If that person subsequently is re-elected to the Council, he or she is no longer entitled to be addressed as an Alderman or Alderwoman, nor can they take part in any civic ceremonies in that capacity.

3.3 An Honorary Alderman or Alderwoman can attend and take part in such civic ceremonies as the Council may from time to time decide but does not have the right to attend meetings of the Council, other than as a member of the public, nor to receive any financial allowances.

3.4 The conferment of the title would be a very public way of recognising the contribution of a former Member to public life. This could be for long service

(service with pre-reorganisation authorities before 1974 also would apply), for leadership or chairmanship or for any significant act on behalf of the Council. The honorary title grants no specific rights to an individual, other than to be able to use the title and to attend civic ceremonies by invitation of the Council. The latter are limited in number in Huntingdonshire, but could include the Chairman's Ball, Reception, Civic Carol Service, etc. to which former Chairmen are usually invited at the moment.

- 3.5 The Working Group has expressed its support for the proposal and suggests that the titles of Honorary Aldermen and Alderwomen be introduced by the Council. In discussing the criteria to be established to assess the qualifying length of service, the Working Group felt that four terms of office might be appropriate which would equate to a period of say 15 years to allow for by-elections. The Working Group recognised that the honour should be used sparingly. In the context of the Council's current membership, only 3 Councillors currently have attained this length of service, with a further 2 having achieved 14 years.
- 3.6 The option of offering recognition for length of service for chairmanship and leadership has also been discussed but the Working Group felt that such criteria should not be set to avoid any complexity with the scheme. This would not preclude the Council from honouring a retired Member in exceptional circumstances on an ad hoc basis where this was considered appropriate.
- 3.7 The Working Group has also considered whether the titles should be awarded to Councillors who have already left the authority. On balance, the Working Group decided against retrospective awards, having been informed that 5 former Members had in excess of 20 years service each with probably more being eligible if the term was set at 15 years.
- 3.8 **The Working Group therefore recommends that the titles of Honorary Aldermen and Honorary Alderwoman be introduced for current and future Members of the Council who cumulatively have served a minimum of 15 years as an elected Councillor on the District Council.**
- 3.9 With regard to the idea of Honorary Freemen and Freewomen, the Council could confer the honours on such persons of distinction who have, in the opinion of the Council, rendered eminent public service in Huntingdonshire. The criteria for admission would need to be reasonably objective, although clearly some subjectivity would be involved in assessing the eligibility of the person or service. Such titles are distinct from the hereditary rights of other freemen and freewomen that derive from a charter and can be passed on to dependents, such as the Huntingdon Freemen. As with Honorary Aldermen and Alderwomen, the same principles apply in that there is no right for Honorary Freemen and Freewomen to attend meetings of the Council or receive any financial allowances. **In the absence of any formal recognition currently for the Council to demonstrate its appreciation publicly to persons who have contributed to public life or the community in Huntingdonshire, the Working Group therefore recommends the introduction of Honorary Freeman and Honorary Freewoman titles.**

- 3.10 A resolution to confer the title of Honorary Alderman and Alderwoman and Honorary Freeman and Freewoman must be passed by not less than two-thirds of the Members voting at a special meeting of the Council specifically convened for that purpose. This must be the only item on the agenda but such a meeting could be convened either immediately before or after another scheduled Council meeting. To enable this to happen effectively, it is suggested that a cross party group or the leaders of the political parties would need to agree informally the identification of suitable individuals to ensure the necessary two-thirds majority at the specially convened meeting of the Council. **The Working Group suggests that the Council Programme meeting, which was introduced as part of the Working's Group's initial proposals for the democratic structure review and comprises representatives of all political parties, would currently serve this purpose and therefore recommends accordingly.**
- 3.11 The legislation makes provision for the Council to spend such reasonable sum as it thinks fit for the purpose of presenting an address or a casket containing an address to a person on whom a title is conferred. The Working Group has discussed the form of memento to be awarded to qualifying individuals. Formal addresses and caskets produced by companies supplying civic regalia are expensive, but the Working Group are conscious of the need to avoid what could be conceived as excessive expenditure in the current financial climate. Although such awards would not occur frequently if the system is introduced and would need to be measured against the contribution to public life that past Members and individuals have made to the authority and the District, **the Working Group recommends that a more modest address or memento should be awarded which can be produced in house by the authority.**

4. REVIEW OF DEMOCRATIC STRUCTURE - IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 The Working Group is currently in the process of reviewing the changes to the democratic structure since its implementation in May 2009. Members' views on the changes have already been sought via an electronic survey conducted over the August period. The Working Group has met on two occasions in September to consider the feedback received, the findings of which will be submitted to the Council's October meeting.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 At the request of the Council, the Working Group has undertaken a review of the membership of the Employment Panel, whilst also taking into account the present arrangements in respect of Panel Members meeting with Employee Side representatives. Whilst the Working Group has expressed their satisfaction with the membership of the Employment Panel, Members have expressed their opinion that some changes would be required in respect of the membership and scheduling of ELAG meetings.
- 5.2 Additionally, the Working Group proposes the introduction of honorary titles which would create a very public recognition of the contribution that recipients have played in public service in Huntingdonshire whilst also helping to promote the profile of the District.

The Working Group therefore

RECOMMENDS

- (a) that no change be made be made to the terms of reference, composition, etc of the Employment Panel;
- (b) that the Employment Liaison Advisory Group comprises 4 Members of the Employment Panel, with meetings of ELAG being held approximately 4 weeks before meetings of the Employment Panel;
- (c) that the titles of Honorary Aldermen and Honorary Alderwomen be introduced for current and future Members of the Council who cumulatively have served a minimum of 15 years as an elected Councillor on the District Council;
- (d) that, in the absence of any formal recognition currently for the Council to demonstrate its appreciation publicly to persons who have contributed to public life or the community in Huntingdonshire, the titles of Honorary Freemen and Honorary Freewoman be introduced by the Council;
- (e) that the Council Programme meeting, which was introduced as part of the Working's Group's initial proposals for the democratic structure review and comprises representatives of all political parties, be responsible for the identification of suitable individuals to the honorary titles referred to in recommendations (c) and (d) above; and
- (f) that a modest address or memento be awarded to qualifying individuals of honorary titles and produced in house by the authority.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Agenda and Reports of the Democratic Structure Working Group held on 6th July 2010.

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