

A meeting of the **CABINET** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE 0.1A, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 20 JANUARY 2011** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

**Contact  
(01480)**

## **APOLOGIES**

**1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 4)**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 15<sup>th</sup> December 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. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING - 2010/11 (Pages 5 - 8)**

To consider a report by the Head of Financial Services on progress of the 2010/11 programme.

**S Couper  
388103**

**4. FINANCIAL MONITORING - REVENUE BUDGET 2010/11 (Pages 9 - 14)**

To consider a report by the Head of Financial Services outlining spending variations.

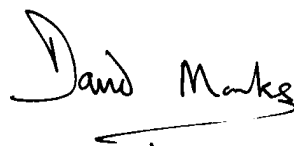
**S Couper  
388103**

**5. SAFER HOMES SCHEME (Pages 15 - 18)**

By way of a report by the Head of Housing Services to consider a request for the release of funding for a Safer Homes (Handyperson) Scheme in Huntingdonshire.

**S Plant  
388240**

Dated this 12 day of January 2011



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](mailto:Helen.Taylor@huntsdc.gov.uk) if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the 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](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk) (under Councils and Democracy).

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

### **Emergency Procedure**

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

# Agenda Item 1

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the Meeting room 0.1A, Ground Floor, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 15 December 2010.

PRESENT: Councillor I C Bates – Chairman.

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

### **62. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 18th November 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **63. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

No declarations were received.

### **64. LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE ACT 1988 (AS AMENDED) PUBLICATION OF RURAL SETTLEMENT LISTS**

The Cabinet considered a report by the Head of Customer Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the boundaries of rural settlements for the purposes of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997.

In considering an amended draft rural settlement list for Huntingdonshire, Members were advised that changes had been necessary as a result of the growth and expansion experienced in some rural areas.

RESOLVED

that the revised rural settlement list, as appended to the report now submitted, be approved and made available for inspection as required.

### **65. ENVIRONMENT STRATEGY REVIEW**

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Environmental Management (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered a mid-way review of the Council's Environment Strategy for Huntingdonshire – "A Plan for our Environment". The strategy sets out a series of aims to overcome the following three main environmental challenges:-

- ◆ tackling climate change;
- ◆ using resources efficiently;
- ◆ protecting and improving the environment.

Members were advised that the recent budget consultation had

highlighted that environmental projects were perceived as a low priority to the District's residents. However, the Environment Management Team remained committed to delivering the aims set out in the Strategy with the implementation of environmental projects including energy saving schemes for council-owned buildings, a staff-led (green force) environmental awareness initiative, the "green house" project properties in St Ives and St Neots and invest to save schemes in line with the Council's Carbon Management Plan.

Having noted the views expressed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) on the document and in congratulating Officers for their work to date on the Environment Strategy, the Cabinet

#### RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report and the assessment of current performance against the aims and objectives of the Council's Environment Strategy be noted;
- (b) that the current and future priorities outlined in the review document for the remainder of the strategy be endorsed, specifically the focus on carbon management and the implementation of spend to save projects in the area to enable further significant reductions in cost-savings to the Council; and
- (c) that the publication of the strategy review document be supported and greater participation by communities encouraged to promote the strategy's aims and objectives.

#### **66. ST IVES WEST TOWN DEVELOPMENT**

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining governance arrangements required to support the master planning process for the sustainable development of the St. Ives West Area.

Members were advised that a Working Group would be developed to manage progress of a draft urban design framework and would include representatives of the County Council, St. Ives Town Council, Houghton and Wyton and Wyton-on-the Hill Parish Councils and the District Council. Having considered Member involvement, the Cabinet

#### RESOLVED

that Councillors D B Dew, Mrs J Dew, J W Davies and C J Stephens be appointed to the St. Ives West Working Group and the County, Town and appropriate Parish Councils invited to nominate representatives to the Group.

**67. RAF BRAMPTON**

By way of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) consideration was given to governance arrangements to support the master planning process for the sustainable development of the RAF Brampton site.

It was reported that a Working Group would be developed to manage the progress of an urban design framework and would include representatives from the District Council, County Council, Brampton Parish Council and Huntingdon Parish Council. Having considered District Council involvement, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the appointment of four Members to the RAF Brampton Working Group be delegated to the Chief Executive, after consultation with the Deputy Leader of the Council and the County, Town and appropriate Parish Councils invited to nominate representatives to the Group.

**68. FRAUD INVESTIGATION ACTIVITY**

Having considered a report by the Head of Customer Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) regarding the recovery of housing benefit debt through civil court action, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) that the Director of Commerce and Technology, Head of Customer Services, Benefits Manager and Housing Benefits Credit Controller be authorised to act in the courts to recover debt.

**69. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

The Cabinet received and noted a report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which reviewed the Council's performance against the targets within the Corporate Plan. The report which included data and narrative on the achievements against targets for each of the Council's priority objectives had been considered also by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

Chairman

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CABINET

20 JANUARY 2011

**CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING  
2010/11 BUDGET  
(Report by the Head of Financial Services)**

**1. PURPOSE**

1.1 This report highlights the variations from the 2010/11 Capital Programme approved in February 2010 including any member or officer decisions already taken in accordance with the Code of Financial Management.

**2. MONITORING OF THE 2010/11 CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

2.1 The Budget approved in February 2010 of £9.81m assumed schemes brought forward of £0.7m and a similar sum carried forward to 2010/11. The actual sum brought forward was £2.7m. The latest forecast is summarised below:-

Capital Programme	2010/11 Capital Expenditure		
	Gross Budget	External Contributions	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000
<b>Approved Total Budget (February 2010)</b>	<b>17,629</b>	<b>7,819</b>	<b>9,810</b>
Add brought forward from 2009/10	3,615	909	2,706
	<b>21,244</b>	<b>8,728</b>	<b>12,516</b>
<b>Forecast Cost Variations (Annex A)</b>	-2,350	-1,333	-1,017
<b>Forecast Timing Changes (Annex B)</b>	-6,436	-1,998	-4,438
<b>Capital from Revenue Variations (Annex A)</b>	-112	-184	72
<b>Current Forecast</b>	<b>12,346</b>	<b>5,213</b>	<b>7,133</b>

2.2 The draft budget considered by Council in December was based on net capital spending of £7.4M so virtually all of the forecast variations have already been taken account of in the Council's financial planning.

2.3 In reviewing the future capital programme for the draft MTP a number of schemes were deleted as they were no longer regarded as such a high priority given the Council's financial position. The preliminary costs on these projects for which had already been charged to capital thus became abortive costs, as no asset will result, and have to be charged to revenue. The relevant schemes are shown in Annex A.

2.4 The revenue impact of the variations is to reduce the net revenue expenditure by £240k in 2010/11, with further decreases in the following years, as shown below.

Revenue Impact	2010/ 2011	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Timing Changes 2009/10 to 2010/11	-146				
Cost Variations	-4	-63	-81	-93	-96
Timing Changes 2010/11 to 2011/12	-18	-250			
Revenue/Capital Transfers	-72	4	6	7	7
<b>TOTAL FORECAST VARIATION</b>	<b>-240</b>	<b>-309</b>	<b>-75</b>	<b>-86</b>	<b>-89</b>

*N.B. Based on an assumed average asset life of 15 years and forecast interest rates*

2.4 The significant impact of timing changes results from the deferral of the annual revenue cost to provide for the repayment of debt over the life of the asset.

### 3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 It is **RECOMMENDED** that Cabinet note the contents of this report.

### BACKGROUND PAPERS

Capital programme and monitoring working papers.  
Previous Cabinet reports on capital expenditure.

Contact Officer – Steve Couper ☎ 01480 388103



## ANNEX A

Expected Cost Variations	2010/11 Capital Expenditure		
	Gross Budget	External Contributions	Net Budget
<b>COST VARIATIONS</b>	£000	£000	£000
Air Quality Monitoring Equipment	7	7	0
Alconbury / Alconbury Weston Flood Works	428	428	0
St Ives Town Centre – Phase 2	-12	0	-12
Public Conveniences	-93	0	-93
Wheeled Bins for Recycling	11	0	11
Mobile Home Park	0	-168	168
Sustainable Homes	60	60	0
Housing Private Sector Grants	-30	0	-30
Disabled Facilities Grants	-48	-48	0
Decent Homes Grant	-88	-24	-64
Crime and Disorder Lighting	-50	0	-50
Ramsey Library Development	-70	-120	50
St Neots Green Corridor	130	130	0
One Leisure – St Ives – Outdoor Energy Generation	-127	0	-127
Play Equipment & Safety Surface Renewal	108	108	0
Headquarters	90	0	90
Replacement Printing Equipment	-106	0	-106
Multi-Functional Devices	-18	0	-18
Business Systems	-50	0	-50
Server Virtualisation & Network Storage	-77	0	-77
ICT for New Accommodation	-31	0	-31
Government Connect	104	0	104
ICT Replacement	-175	0	-175
Vehicles and Plant	-35	0	-35
Heart of Oxmoor	0	-294	294
Creative Enterprise Centre St Neots	10	0	10
Huntingdon West Development	-1,400	-1,409	9
Huntingdon Bus Station	-885	0	-885
Perry Cycleway	60	60	0
	<b>-2,350</b>	<b>-1,333</b>	<b>-1,017</b>
<b>CAPITAL/REVENUE VARIATIONS</b>			
Wheeled Bins for Recycling	-13	0	-13
St Neots Green Corridor	102	0	102
Huntingdon Riverside Improvements	30	0	30
Headquarters	0	-184	184
Elections System	-19		-19
<i>Abortive Costs from Previous Years</i>			
St Ives Town Centre Improvements – Ph 2	-88	0	-88
Elections Replacement System	-33	0	-33
Huntingdon Marina improvements	-46	0	-46
Huntingdon Bus Station	-45	0	-45
	<b>-112</b>	<b>-184</b>	<b>72</b>

New item this time
Adjusted value this time
No change from previous report

## ANNEX B

Timing Changes to 2011/12 and beyond	2010/11 Capital Expenditure		
	Gross Budget	External Contributions	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000
Building Efficiency Improvements (Salix Grant)	16	-29	45
Public Conveniences	-150	-150	0
CCTV – Camera Replacements	-159	0	-159
Community Information Project	-11	0	-11
Loves Farm Community Centre	3	0	3
One Leisure – St Ives - Redevelopment	-2,500	0	-2,500
One Leisure – St Neots - Development	-60	0	-60
One Leisure – Ramsey – Fitness Equipment	-190	0	-190
One Leisure – CCTV Improvements	-10	0	-10
One Leisure – Future Maintenance	-850	-284	-566
Play Equipment & Safety Surface Renewal	-39	0	-39
Replacement Printing Equipment	-70	0	-70
Multi-Functional Devices	-8	0	-8
Replacement Document Centre Equipment	-28	0	-28
Replacement Scanning Equipment – Customer Services	-33	0	-33
Working Smarter	-40	0	-40
Wireless Working (Benefits and Revenues)	-24	0	-24
Server Virtualisation and Network Storage	-27	0	-27
VOIP Telephony for Leisure Centres	-30	0	-30
Town Centre Developments	-16	0	-16
Ramsey Rural Renewal	-62	0	-62
Industrial Estate Repairs	-16	0	-16
Huntingdon Marina Improvements	-62	0	-62
Huntingdon Town Centre Development	13	0	13
Heart of Oxmoor	0	-1,535	1,535
St Neots Cambridge Road Car Park	-80	0	-80
Safe Cycle Routes	-194	0	-194
St Neots Pedestrian Bridge	-525	0	-525
Ramsey Transport Strategy	-35	0	-35
Railway Stations Improvements	-26	0	-26
VAT Partial Exemption	-33	0	-33
Assumed additional deferment to later years	-1,200	0	-1,200
	<b>-6,436</b>	<b>-1,998</b>	<b>-4,438</b>

New item this time
Adjusted value this time
No change from previous report

## FINANCIAL MONITORING – REVENUE BUDGET 2010/11 (Report by the Head of Financial Services)

### 1. Previous Position

- 1.1 Cabinet received a report on 21 October 2010, which gave a forecast of the revenue outturn of £23.9M which was £1.0M less than the approved budget. This was modified to £23.8M for the draft budget but it was also proposed that £0.3M of these forecast savings be transferred, via a savings reserve, to help achieve the savings identified as necessary in 2011/12.

### 2. Latest Position

- 2.1 The position has subsequently improved partly fortuitously and partly due to service managers taking steps to introduce savings ready for next year. It is now forecast that the outturn will be £23.1M and it is no longer proposed that there will be a transfer of savings as the latest projections suggest that the necessary savings for 2011/12 can be achieved. £3M of reserves will still need to be used to cover this year's deficit.

- 2.2 The variations from the Draft Budget to this latest forecast are summarised in Annex A and the key points are referred to below:

- **A14 enquiry (-£146k)**  
As a result of the scheme being abandoned there is no need to provide for the costs of an enquiry
- **Additional saving from holding vacancies (-£60k)**  
In the budget there was a provision of £155k for turnover allowance. In October it was reported that this had been exceeded by £193k by managers holding vacancies in preparation for the savings required; this has now increased to £253k
- **Reduction in forecast extra income (£21k)**  
Reduction from £99k to £78k as a result of reduced building control fees and reduced refund of car parking fees from Sainsbury's, Huntingdon
- **Savings at One Leisure (-£203k)**  
Savings on expenditure have been identified at all 5 centres
- **NNDR appeals (-£165k)**  
Backdated saving on NNDR from revaluation appeals giving a saving for leisure centres of £123k and car parks of £42k

- **Concessionary fares (-£117k)**  
The County has finally provided figures for the cost of concessionary fares
- **Abortive capital costs (£212k)**  
In reviewing the future capital programme for the draft MTP a number of schemes were deleted as they were no longer regarded as such a high priority given the Council's financial position. The preliminary costs on these projects which had already been charged to capital thus became abortive costs, as no asset will result, and have to be charged to revenue.
- **Transfer of spending to capital (-£29k)**  
The budget assumed that during the year £100k additional salaries and other costs would be transferred to capital spending. In the draft budget £65k has been identified and this report shows a further £29k. The majority of this is IMD salaries
- **Other variations**  
Other variations are listed in Annex A.

2.3 There are some areas of spending where there is some uncertainty about the forecast. This draft budget assumes a loss of income from planning fees of £105k, however there is uncertainty over the timing of large applications. If these do not arrive promptly there could be a further loss of fee income of up to £150k in this financial year.

2.4 This latest forecast will be incorporated in the Council's final Budget/MTP report.

### **3. Amounts collected and debts written off**

3.1 The position as at 31 December 2010 is shown in Annex B.

### **4 Recommendation**

It is recommended that Cabinet note this report.

### **ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985**

#### **Source Documents:**

1. Cabinet and Council Reports
2. Budgetary control files.

**Contact Officers:** Eleanor Smith, Accountancy Manager (01480 388157)  
Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services (01480 388103)

<b>REVENUE BUDGETARY CONTROL 2010/11</b>		<b>Original budget</b>	<b>Draft Budget</b>	<b>Changes</b>	<b>Cabinet January</b>
		<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Approved budget</b>		<b>24,848</b>	<b>24,848</b>		<b>24,848</b>
<b>Spending Delayed from 2009/10</b>		<b>274</b>	<b>370</b>		<b>370</b>
<b>Spending Delayed to 2011/12</b>		<b>-274</b>	<b>-370</b>		<b>-370</b>
Government changes	Non-achievement of £255k contingency for unbudgeted government grants		255		255
	LPSA		100		100
	Area based grant		18	-7	11
	Land charges income		34	20	54
	A14 enquiry		-100	-146	-246
Savings	Reduced pay award		-157		-157
	Arts development savings		-39		-39
	Planning enforcement - staff savings		-38		-38
	Review of the Internal Audit Service		-24		-24
	Delay in transfer of public conveniences		25		25
	NNDR revaluation appeals leisure centres			-123	-123
	NNDR revaluation appeals car parks			-42	-42
	Savings at One Leisure			-203	-203
	Physical activity initiatives			-20	-20
Supplementary estimate	NNDR		20		20
Income	Licence income		-35		-35
	Recycling credits		-22		-22
	Glass recycling income		34		34
	Recovery of election costs		-25	-19	-44
	Housing benefits & council tax subsidy		-56		-56
	Delay in introducing car park charges		55		55
	Increased car parking income in St Ives due to delay of guided bus		-50		-50
	Sale of vehicles			-31	-31
	Refund of Sainsbury's car park income			20	20
	Car park income general			16	16
	Building control fees			35	35
	Planning Fees		105		105
Other	Recycling gate fees		-192		-192
	Internal drainage levy		15		15
	Customer Services Centre relief cover		-21	-17	-38
	Variations in staff costs		-67	-67	-134
	Pavilion - refund of NNDR			-15	-15
	Offices - refund of NNDR			-34	-34
	Vehicle maintenance		-30		-30
	Telephone tariff change		-22		-22
	IMD - Working Smarter		-21		-21
	St Neots Sustainable Urban Extension		-20		-20
	Operations Division overtime		30		30
	Huntingdon town centre - retail strategy support		-30		-30
	Concessionary fares			-117	-117
	Development management appeals costs		50	40	90
	Disposal of residual waste from recycling			54	54
	Printing machine			-23	-23

	Other		-202	-12	-214
Technical	Interest		-100	-30	-130
	Minimum revenue provision		-61		-61
	Transfer of R&R funds to capital		-295	-7	-302
	Transfer of spending to capital		-65	-29	-94
	Turnover allowance - holding vacancies		-193	-60	-253
	Increase in provision for doubtful debts		50		50
	Irrecoverable VAT			-20	-20
	Capital abortive costs charged to revenue			212	212
<b>Total variations</b>			<b>-1,009</b>	<b>-625</b>	<b>-1,699</b>
<b>Total before contributions to reserves</b>			<b>23,774</b>	<b>-625</b>	<b>23,149</b>
Contributions to Reserves	Deferred Spending Reserve		<b>335</b>	<b>-335</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Net Spending</b>			<b>24,848</b>	<b>24,109</b>	<b>-960</b>
<b>Financed by:</b>					
	Government support		<b>-12,940</b>	<b>-12,940</b>	<b>-12,940</b>
	Collection fund adjustment		<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>35</b>
	Council tax		<b>-7,273</b>	<b>-7,273</b>	<b>-7,273</b>
<b>General Reserve</b>					
	delayed projects from 2009/10		-274	-370	-370
	delayed projects to 2011/12		274	370	370
	revenue deficit		-4,670	-3,931	960
	<b>total General reserve</b>		<b>-4,670</b>	<b>-3,931</b>	<b>960</b>
<b>Total Funding</b>			<b>-24,848</b>	<b>-24,109</b>	<b>960</b>

<b>CONTINGENCIES INCLUDED IN THE BUDGET</b>				
	Budget	Estimated	Variation	
	£000	outturn	£000	
	£000	£000	£000	
Turnover	-155	-408	-253	Managers are holding more vacancies
Government grants	-255	0	255	The Government will not be allocating LABGI and housing and planning delivery grant
Transfer of revenue to capital including employees	-100	-211	-111	Additional salaries charged to capital
Other	26	26	0	
	<b>-484</b>	<b>-593</b>	<b>-109</b>	

**AMOUNTS COLLECTED AND DEBTS WRITTEN OFF****Collected**

The total amount of payments received, less customer refunds and transfers to other debts:

	<b>April to Sept 2010</b>	<b>Oct to Dec 2010</b>	<b>Total</b>
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Type of Debt</b>			
Council Tax	46,737	23,287	70,024
NNDR	33,867	14,671	48,538
Sundry Debtors	5,093	2,138	7,231
Excess Charges	97	48	145

**Amounts written off**

Whilst the amounts have been written-off in this financial year, much of the original debt would have been raised in previous financial years.

	<b>Up to £5k</b>			<b>Over £5k</b>			<b>TOTAL</b>
	April to Sept 2010	Oct to Dec 2010	Total	April to Sept 2010	Oct to Dec 2010	Total	Total
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Type of Debt</b>							
Council Tax	114.2	29.3	143.5	0.0	5.5	5.5	149.0
NNDR	47.2	35.5	82.7	56.0	13.5	69.5	152.2
Sundry Debtors	41.7	26.1	67.8	0.0	0.0	0.0	67.8
Excess Charges	10.4	6.8	17.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	17.2

**Authority to write off debts**

The Head of Customer Services is authorised to write-off debts of up to £5,000, or more after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Finance, if she is satisfied that the debts are irrecoverable or cannot be recovered without incurring disproportionate costs. The Head of Financial Services deputises in her absence.

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**CABINET**

**20 JANUARY 2011**

## **SAFER HOMES SCHEME (Report by the Head of Housing Services)**

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To seek Cabinet to agree to the release of £25,000 agreed in the medium term financial plan, but subject to COMT and the Cabinet release, to pick up mainstream funding for a Safer Homes (Handyperson) Scheme in Huntingdonshire.

### **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 The provision of a Safer Homes Scheme was a jointly agreed LPSA (Reward Grant) priority for Huntingdonshire. Huntingdonshire was the only district in Cambridgeshire without access to such a service. The provision of a Safer Homes/Handyperson scheme ensures that older and vulnerable households have access to a service to carry out small repair jobs free of charge or at low cost in order to maintain safety within the home.
- 2.2 The scheme is available to owner occupiers and private tenants. It consists of an initial telephone assessment by the Scheme Coordinator to take details and establish the type of repair and whether it is something that the scheme can assist with. If not and other issues are identified the client will be signposted to other agencies, for example whether all eligible benefits are being claimed, to the falls prevention co-ordinator or whether there may be a need for a larger adaptation to the home.
- 2.3 If relevant works are identified a home visit is made to agree what work will be undertaken. Examples of the type of works the scheme carries out include:
- Fitting of grab rails and banisters
  - Securing loose carpets and flooring
  - Door bells
  - Key Safes
  - Light bulbs/Security lights
  - Fitting curtain rails
  - Moving furniture
  - Fixing door chains, locks, spy holes.

- 2.4 Key benefits and outcomes of the scheme include:
- A reduction in the number of accidents in the home
  - A reduction in the number of admissions to hospital
  - An improvement in hospital discharge rates
  - Reduction in the fear of falling
  - Decrease in the disrepair of properties
  - Decrease in the number of vulnerable households falling prey to fraudulent contractors and cold callers.
- 2.5 During the LPSA process in 2009 the Government announced a bidding opportunity to ensure nationwide access to a handy person service. The Huntingdonshire bid was successful but funding was limited to £50,000 per year for a two-year period to cover establishment and running costs. The LPSA grant would have been for a three-year period, reverting to mainstreamed funding thereafter. An MTP bid was made and agreed in order to mainstream £25,000 of funding to continue with a scheme from 2011/12 onwards.
- 2.6 A scheme was established with Luminus and Age Concern (now Age UK) in February 2010. This has taken a holistic approach with 200 assessments being undertaken and 160 jobs completed since the scheme started. There is clearly a demand for a service of this type in Huntingdonshire.

### **3.0 Considerations**

- 3.1 The scheme has delivered good outcomes and has proved that there is a demand for this type of scheme.
- 3.2 Officers consider that there is significant potential to build the capacity of the scheme, drive up the outcomes and reduce costs while improving value for money if a scheme continues.
- 3.3 The Safer Homes scheme clearly meets the Council's priority to support vulnerable households to remain living independently.
- 3.4 The MTP bid was for £25,000 which will enable a scheme to continue providing assessments and repairs. Officers are seeking additional funding from NHS Cambridgeshire and Supporting People to extend the scheme. Both organisations acknowledge that this types of service provides excellent value for money and contributes to their objectives.
- 3.5 These external partners are more likely to provide funding if the service continues and can be seen to be delivering the expected outcomes with reduced costs. Regular monitoring and evaluation of the scheme would be carried out.

#### **4.0 Implications**

- 4.1 Financial – Potentially in excess of 200 vulnerable households each year would benefit from the scheme. Not to fund the scheme would make a saving in the MTP but in real terms is likely to increase costs in other areas, i.e. housing disrepair, hospital admissions, health and social care costs.
- 4.2 Legal – There is no legal obligation to run a Safer Homes Scheme.
- 4.3 Staffing – No HDC staff are directly employed by the scheme.

#### **5.0 Conclusions**

- 5.1 A clear need exists for this type of scheme to support vulnerable people and it has delivered the expected outcomes.
- 5.2 In order to improve value for money it is proposed to build capacity while reducing costs and to bring our scheme in line with the scheme in Cambridge and South Cambs.
- 5.3 It is hoped that a commitment to this scheme by the district council will result in match funding being obtained from partner agencies.

#### **6. Recommendation**

**It is recommended that Cabinet agree to release funding to continue with a Safer Homes scheme as a contribution towards the Council's priority to support vulnerable households to live independently.**

#### **Background Papers:**

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