

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

APOLOGIES


Contact
(01480)

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 4)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 22nd September 2011.

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 MONITORING CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2011/12
(Pages 5 - 8)

To consider a report by the Head of Financial Services outlining spending variations for 2011/12.

S Couper
388103

4. FINANCIAL MONITORING - REVENUE BUDGET 2011/12
(Pages 9 - 14)

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

S Couper
388103

5. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS AND CHARGES ON PROPERTIES (Pages 15 - 20)

To consider a report by the Head of Housing Services on the possible introduction of charges on properties adapted through Disabled Facilities Grants.

S Plant
388430

6. CAMBRIDGESHIRE PUBLIC SECTOR ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY (Pages 21 - 28)

To receive a report by the Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships & Project) summarising the draft Cambridgeshire Public Sector Asset Management Strategy.

P Bland
388340

7. VOLUNTARY SECTOR REVIEW (Pages 29 - 44)

To receive a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services detailing the outcome of a review

D Smith
388377

of the Voluntary Sector Organisations.

8. GREEN HOUSE PROJECT UPDATE (Pages 45 - 56)

To receive a report by the Head of Environmental Management regarding the Green House Project.

C Jablonski
388368

9. ST. IVES WEST URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK (Pages 57 - 68)

To consider a report by the Head of Planning Services on consultation responses received in respect of the draft Urban Design Framework for St Ives West.

P Bland
388430

10. SAFETY ADVISORY PANEL (Pages 69 - 74)

To receive the report of the meeting of the Safety Advisory Panel held on 7th September 2011.

Mrs A Jerrom
388009

Dated this 12 day of October 2011



Head of Paid Service

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@huntingdonshire.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 the Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 22 September 2011.

PRESENT: Councillor J D Ablewhite – Chairman.
Councillors B S Chapman, J A Gray,
N J Guyatt, T V Rogers and T D Sanderson.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor D Tysoe .

37. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 21st July 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

38. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

39. COUNCILLOR T V ROGERS

In view of Councillor T V Rogers decision to resign from the position of Executive Councillor for Resources, Members acknowledged the contribution made by him during his 9 years on the Cabinet and his commitment to Huntingdonshire. At the same time, Executive Councillors noted the intention to appoint Councillor J A Gray as Executive Councillor for Resources and Councillor D Tysoe as Executive Councillor for Environment.

40. FINANCIAL FORECAST

By way of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the present position in relation to the Council's financial forecast for the period up to 2024/25 together with the deliberations of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) thereon.

In considering the information contained in the report, Members have been acquainted with progress to date in the achievement of savings and has acknowledged the uncertainty surrounding the forecast and a number of assumptions which will be clarified over the next few months. Particular mention was made of a number of options being investigated for preserving a CCTV service and to a report on the potential impact of grant reductions to the voluntary sector organisations to be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) and Cabinet in October.

In noting that there had not yet been any announcement by the Government as to the limit for Council tax increase in the current year, Members discussed the approach the Council might take and

the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) thereon. The Cabinet were of the opinion that the implications of not increasing Council Tax next year should not be included in the options under consideration given the impact on services of the additional budget cuts that would be necessary. Whereupon, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted;
- (b) that the annuity basis for the calculation of Minimum Revenue Position as set out in Annex E to the report submitted be approved; and
- (c) that Council be requested to approve the contents of the report now submitted.

41. CAMBRIDGESHIRE TRAVEL PLAN GUIDANCE

By way of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Cabinet was invited to consider the content of draft Cambridgeshire Residential Travel Plan (RTP) Guidance, together with a consultation plan, which had been developed by the County Council in discussion with the City and District Councils in Cambridgeshire.

Members were advised that the document was intended to clarify the process for RTPs which would require developers to introduce a package of measures that promote sustainable travel within new residential developments by encouraging the use of more sustainable travel options such as walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing and thus assist in improving health and community well-being. It was explained that all developments which could potentially generate significant amounts of movement would have to be accompanied by a RTP.

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

RESOLVED

- that the draft Cambridgeshire Residential Travel Plan Guidance be endorsed as a basis for public consultation.

42. DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT BUDGET

By way of a report by the Head of Housing Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were acquainted with the implications for the Council's 2011/12 budget provision of an increase in the take up of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG's) and options available to address the situation.

Executive Councillors were advised that there was insufficient funds to progress a number of cases in the current year and in order to maintain the present level of service, an increase of £1.116m would

be required. In considering the reasons for the increased demand and cost, Executive Councillors were advised of an option for authorities to defer payment of approved cases for up to 12 months so long as it is not used to limit demand or reduce expenditure. In noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being), Members acknowledged that any delay in providing such grants would have a detrimental impact on the quality of life of those requiring adaptations to their home. Having expressed the need for the Government to recognise the cost to authorities of providing these grants when considering any new funding systems, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

that the current level of service for Disabled Facilities Grants be maintained and a supplementary capital estimate approved immediately to meet the increase in demand.

43. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to individuals/organisations and is likely to reveal the identity of those organisations.

44. CALL CENTRE OPTIONS BEYOND 2012

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Information Management (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) outlining a range of options for managing the District Council's Call following the expiry of the main IT contracts in December and the lease for the Speke House premises in June 2013. The report had been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) whose comments were relayed to the Cabinet.

Particular reference was drawn to the future location of the Call Centre, Members concurred with the Panel that given the potential for sub-letting was likely to be reduced in the current economic climate, further consideration should be given to utilising the District Council's own property portfolio and that further information should be provided with regard to the options available.

Having concurred with the Panel that the Call Centre continued to provide an excellent service and that the Council should retain a District Council operated and staffed Call Centre beyond December 2012, the Cabinet

RESOLVED

- (a) that an Huntingdonshire District Council operated and staffed Call Centre be retained beyond 2012;
- (b) that a further report on the location of the Call Centre, including a more robust risk assessment and a detailed comparison of options available and costs involved, be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel

(Economic Well-Being) and Cabinet in January 2012;

- (c) that the Project Team be authorised to commence a formal procurement process for a replacement Customer Relationship Management System (CRM) to include discussions with South Cambridgeshire and Fenland District Councils regarding the possible collaboration on procurement or sharing of technology;
- (d) that the Project Team be requested to continue to communicate and monitor Cambridgeshire County Council's position in relation to the CRM technology prior to any final decision;
- (e) that, on the basis that the cost of the CRM system will be cost neutral, the Managing Director (Resources), after consultation with the relevant Executive Councillor, be authorised to approve the final decision on the CRM; and
- (f) that the current Avaya System Automated Call Distribution System used by the Call Centre be retained and negotiations initiated with Cambridgeshire County Council to extend the current agreement.

45. OFFICER EMPLOYMENT PROCEDURE RULES

Having been acquainted with the requirements of paragraph 4(e) of the Officer Employment Procedure Rules, the Cabinet confirmed that there was no material or well-founded objection to the proposals to establish a Corporate Support Office and the consequential impact on the People, Performance and Partnerships Division and Central Services Directorate.

Chairman

CABINET

20 October 2011

FINANCIAL MONITORING - CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2011/12 (Report by the Head of Financial Services)

1. PURPOSE

1.1 This report highlights the forecast variations from the 2011/12 Capital Programme approved in February 2011. It includes any member or officer decisions already taken in accordance with the Code of Financial Management.

2. MONITORING OF THE 2011/12 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

2.1 The Budget approved in February 2011 was £11.9m after allowing for a provision for schemes brought forward from 2010/11 and carried forward to 2012/13. Subsequent adjustments are summarised below:-

Capital Programme	2011/12 Capital Expenditure		
	Gross Budget	External Contributions	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000
Approved Total Budget (February 2011)	15,366	3,433	11,933
Actual brought forward from 2010/11	6,284	5,189	1,095
Less provision	-1,444	0	-1,444
	20,206	8,622	11,584
Supplementary Estimate			
Disabled Facilities Grant (September Cabinet)	1,116	-148	1,264
Forecast Cost Variations (Annex A)	-13	456	-469
Forecast Timing Changes (Annex B)	-11,652	-5,070	-6,582
Revenue to Capital Variations (Annex A)	107	0	107
Current Forecast	9,764	3,860	5,904

2.2 The revenue impact on the MTP of the 2010/11 outturn and subsequent variations is shown below.

Revenue Impact	2011/ 2012	2012/ 2013	2013/ 2014	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Timing Changes 2010/11 to 2011/12	12	0	0	0	0
Cost Variations	4	77	88	99	109
Timing Changes 2011/12 to 2012/13	-33	-144	0	0	0
Revenue/Capital Transfers	0	5	6	7	8
Revenue variations re timing changes	-38	63	-159	-251	-291
TOTAL FORECAST VARIATION	-55	1	-65	-145	-174

N.B. This table is based on a simplified basis for identifying the revenue impact of capital expenditure. Allowance has also been made for any revenue elements of the

changes as identified in the relevant MTP bid proposals. More accurate calculations will be included in the Draft Budget/MTP in December.

3. SIGNIFICANT ITEMS

- 3.1 Mortgage Redemption** Whilst the redemption of the mortgage has provided us with a capital receipt than can be used to fund other schemes there is a significant loss of interest as the rate was 7.25%.
- 3.2 Greenhouse Project** Some reduction in grant funding and revised sale values for properties. There will be a proposal to defer sale so promotion can be extended.
- 3.3 Invest to Save Schemes** A number of schemes have emerged as part of MTP review and they will only be progressed, in accordance with the Code of Financial Management, if a robust risk analysis demonstrates that they will at least break-even in revenue impact terms.
- 3.4 Revenue to Capital Transfer** Where appropriate, such transfers will be undertaken as they provide a beneficial revenue impact. One transfer is from a revenue grant received last year.
- 3.5 Additional Costs** The MTP review has identified some schemes with proposals for increases in the total capital or revenue impact. This report does not seek approval to those increases which will be considered as part of the draft budget in December. They are identified with \$\$.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1** 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

Forecast Cost Variations	Gross Budget	External Contributions	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000
Savings			
Building Efficiency Improvements \$\$	-17	0	-17
Wheeled Bin Replacements	-99	0	-99
Alconbury Flood Scheme	-31	-31	0
Town Centre Developments	-5	0	-5
Mortgage Redemption	0	549	-549
Vehicles	11	0	11
HQ Project	-2	0	-2
ICT Replacement & Server Virtualisation	-35	0	-35
Business Systems \$\$	-110	0	-110
Public Conveniences	-150	-150	0
Multi-Functional Devices	-35	0	-35
	-473	368	-841
Extra Cost			
Sustainable Homes Retrofit	85	15	70
	85	15	70
Invest To Save Schemes			
South Street Toilets	5	0	5
Mobile Home Park	0	73	-73
PV Panels – Eastfield House	111	0	111
PV Panels – Other locations	174	0	174
Call Centre CRM	20	0	20
	310	73	237
Technical			
Rule Change to Capital Overheads	117	0	117
Brought Forward Adjustment	-52	0	-52
	65	0	65
TOTAL COST VARIATIONS	-13	456	-469
Revenue to Capital			
E-forms	52	0	52
One Leisure Huntingdon Pure Spa Conversion	13	0	13
One Leisure St Ives - Outdoor Centre Car Park	42	0	42
	107	0	107

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

ANNEX B

Timing Changes to 2012/13 and beyond	2011/12 Capital Expenditure		
	Gross Budget	External Contributions	Net Budget
	£000	£000	£000
Heart of Oxmoor \$\$	0	-1,366	1,366
Huntingdon West Development	-7,153	-2,430	-4,723
One Leisure St Ives Redevelopment \$\$	-2,950	0	-2,950
One Leisure Future Maintenance	-453	0	-453
Replacement Fitness Equipment	-77	0	-77
One Leisure Ramsey Development	-560	0	-560
CCTV Camera Replacements	-139	0	-139
Decent Homes	-148	-212	64
Social Housing Grant	-237	0	-237
Sustainable Homes Retrofit	0	-415	415
HQ Project	0	-150	150
ICT Replacement & Server Virtualisation	-7	0	-7
Working Smarter	-23	0	-23
Replacement Equipment Document Centre	-76	0	-76
One Leisure St Ives Football Improvements	-254	-497	243
Ramsey Rural Developments	-62	0	-62
Multi-Functional Devices	-13	0	-13
Reduction in provision for further slippage	500	0	500
	-11,652	-5,070	-6,582

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

FINANCIAL MONITORING – REVENUE BUDGET 2011/12 (Report by the Head of Financial Services)

1. Previous Position

- 1.1 Cabinet received a report at their July meeting which gave a forecast of the revenue outturn of £22.5M, just £80k less than the approved budget.

2. Latest Position

- 2.1 The forecast has improved despite some unfavourable variations. Most of the changes are one-off with some reflecting the current economic situation and some the continued pressure to deliver savings. It is now forecast that the outturn will be £22.2m, an overall saving on the approved budget of £398k. £3M of general fund reserves will be needed to meet this forecast deficit.
- 2.2 The variations are summarised in Annex A and the key points are referred to below:

- **Development management**
New items relate to a decrease in applications (£150k), costs relating to the Alconbury Enterprise Zone development (£50k), and the cost of consultants for the Wooley Hill wind farm appeal (£50k). The July report included a forecast reduction in salary costs of £172k in the Planning Team depending on workload.
- **Reduction in Building control applications**
This reduction (£80k) is partly offset by a contribution from the building control reserve fund of £37k.
- **One Leisure**
Forecast increase in income of £40k, staff savings of £45k and general savings of £100k across the five leisure centres. This is partly offset by a reduction of income at Ramsey (£60k) due to slippage of the capital scheme to remodel the centre and an increased NNDR valuation at St Neots (£32k).
- **Recycling gate fees**
Latest forecast of the saving of £240k which is based on indices reflecting the values of selling recycled materials.
- **Turnover Allowance**
The provision has been exceeded by due to a variety of factors including holding of vacancies resulting in a saving of £172k.

2.3 Savings to be found

The forecast is based on the management proposal that there will be no cost of living pay increase for 2011/12. The Pay and Allowances savings target will not be achieved this year as some of the savings on changes to allowances will only feed through in future years.

3. Amounts collected and debts written off

3.1 The position as at 30 September 2011 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)

REVENUE BUDGETARY CONTROL 2011/12	Original	Reported to Cabinet July 2011	Changes	Forecast outturn
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Approved budget	22,615	22,615		22,615
Spending Delayed from 2010/11	370	559		559
Spending Delayed to 2012/13	-370	-370		-370
	22,615	22,804		22,804
Savings				
Pay and Allowances Review #		80	14	94
Bulky Waste income #		20	20	40
Customer Services changes #		40		40
Software Licences extra provision #		20		20
Savings in audit salaries			-40	-40
Income				
Delay in increase in car park fees		124		124
Car park income			40	40
Home improvement agency fee income		-17		-17
One Leisure income			-40	-40
Market income			30	30
Development management fees			150	150
Building control fee income			80	80
Building efficiency improvements grant			17	17
NNDR administration grant			17	17
Other				
Planning employee costs **		-172		-172
One Leisure St Neots fitness suite		-147	32	-115
General savings on One Leisure			-100	-100
One Leisure Staff Savings			-45	-45
Revenue impact of the One Leisure Ramsey development slipping in the capital programme			60	60
Insurance retendering		-70		-70
Reduction in number of Cabinet Members		-28		-28
NNDR revaluations		-20		-20
Neighbourhood forum partnership contribution		-18		-18
Recycling gate fees			-240	-240
Operations division staffing		-17	-20	-37
Operations business processing			20	20
Diesel			23	23
Agency Staff-refuse, recycling and street cleansing			30	30
Environmental projects			-40	-40
Benefits caseload changes			-25	-25
IMD Helpdesk			-21	-21
Emergency planning			-20	-20
Chewing gum removal			-18	-18
Developers' contributions			-16	-16
Pathfinder House running costs			-15	-15
Building Control staff			-15	-15
Pension fund contributions			-31	-31

	Original	Reported to Cabinet July 2011	Changes	Forecast outturn
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Turnover allowance			-127	-127
Community infrastructure levy preparation			35	35
Agency worker regulations			30	30
RAF Alconbury development			50	50
Wooley Hill Wind Farm appeal			60	60
Other variations (individually less than £15k)			-146	-146
Technical				
Provision for debt repayment (MRP)		-64		-64
Transfer from revenue to capital spending			-34	-34
Interest			-23	-23
Rental deposit bad debt provision			-40	-40
Loss of interest from housing association loan redemption			30	30
Total variations		-269	-318	-588
Total Net Spending	22,615	22,535	-318	22,217
Financed from				
Government support	-11,538	-11,538		-11,538
Collection fund adjustment	-105	-105		-105
Council tax	-7,383	-7,383		-7,383
General Reserves				
Use of delayed projects reserve	-370	-559		-559
Contribution to delayed projects reserve	370	370		370
Building control reserve			-37	-37
General reserves	-3,589	-3,320	355	-2,965
Total use of reserves	-3,589	-3,509	318	-3,191
Total Funding	-22,615	-22,535	318	-22,217

Potential variations or slower achievement of savings items

** Subject to assumed workloads

CONTINGENCIES INCLUDED IN THE BUDGET				
	Budget	Estimated outturn	Variation	
	£000	£000	£000	
Turnover	-40	-167	-127	Managers are holding more vacancies
Transfer of revenue to capital including employees	-50	-84	-34	Additional salaries charged to capital
Savings to be found	-471	-377	94	Not all the pay and allowances savings target will be achieved until next year
	-561	-628	67	

AMOUNTS COLLECTED AND DEBTS WRITTEN OFF

Collected

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

	April to June 2011	July to Sept 2011	Total
	£000	£000	£000
Type of Debt			
Council Tax	24,011	23,877	47,888
NNDR	18,385	16,118	34,503
Sundry Debtors	1,759	2,654	4,413
Excess Charges	40	37	77

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.

	Up to £5k			Over £5k			TOTAL
	April to June 2011	July to Sept 2011	Total	April to June 2011	July to Sept 2011	Total	Total
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Type of Debt							
Council Tax	23.0	52.7	75.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	75.7
NNDR	21.3	3.3	24.6	16.5	23.2	39.7	64.3
Sundry Debtors	45.0	31.1	76.1	36.5	0.0	36.5	112.6
Excess Charges	5.6	2.5	8.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	8.1

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

4 OCTOBER 2011

6 OCTOBER 2011

20 OCTOBER 2011

DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS AND CHARGES ON PROPERTIES (Report by the Head of Housing Services)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report informs Cabinet of the Council's discretion to put charges on properties to recover certain costs of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and seeks a decision on whether or not charges should be placed on properties in certain circumstances.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996 sets out the Council's duties to provide Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs). The Council must award a DFG for work to achieve one or more of a set of purposes defined by statute. DFGs are awarded on the recommendation of an Occupational Therapist (OT) and funds aids and adaptations like ramps, stair lifts and level access showers. DFGs enable elderly and disabled people to live independently and therefore contribute towards the quality of life for vulnerable people. The Council must be satisfied that a DFG is necessary and appropriate and that to carry it out is reasonable and practicable.
- 2.2 An amendment to the legislation in 2008 gave local authorities the discretion to impose a limited charge on adapted properties of owner occupiers for repayment if their property is sold within ten years and if the DFG costs more than £5k. The maximum that can be reclaimed is capped at £10k.
- 2.3 Repayment can only be sought from owner occupiers as the charge cannot be levied on properties occupied by tenants, when the grant awarded is to the tenant or a member of their family. Normally, circa 50% of the workload is for tenants.
- 2.4 Charges could be placed on a property via the local land charges system or at the Land Registry. Investigations are ongoing into the most appropriate route in terms of processes, risks, costs and timescales.
- 2.5 When seeking repayment from grant recipients, the DFG General Consent Order 2008 requires the Council to consider:
- The extent to which repayment would result in hardship;
 - Whether disposal of the property is to enable the grant recipient to take up employment, or to change employment;
 - Whether the disposal is made for reasons connected to physical or mental health or well being; and

- Whether the disposal is made to enable the recipient of the grant to move house to give care; or to receive care.
- 2.6 Analysis of the DFGs completed in 2010/11 shows that 96 (34%) were to owner occupiers. Of these:
- 55 were below £5k so the charge would not apply.
 - 22 were valued between £5k and £10k where partial repayment could apply but the average within this band was £7k and the first £5k cannot be reclaimed.
 - 11 were valued £10k - £20k where the part of the grant over the initial £5k could be reclaimed. The average grant being £12k.
 - 8 were over £20k where the full £10k repayment could be sought.
- 2.7 The analysis above means that if all of the properties were sold within ten years of the DFG, based on completed DFGs in 2010/11, the Council may recover in the region of £200k. There is no evidence base to forecast how many properties will be sold.
- 2.8 Many of the works carried out do not add value to a property when it comes to the point of sale. In fact they detract from their value or marketability eg stair lifts, through floor lifts, replacing bath rooms with shower rooms, ramps, hoisting equipment etc. The works that would normally add value to a property would be garage and outbuilding conversions and extensions. These types of works would normally be in excess of £10k. Some garage conversions may also deter some purchasers if a garage is their priority.
- 2.9 If charges on properties were to be restricted to garage or outbuilding conversions, or extensions, then, from an analysis of the works in the pipeline, £95k of charges could be placed on properties (10 cases).

3. SUMMARY

- 3.1 There is discretion to impose a charge on adapted properties of owner occupiers for repayment if their property is sold within ten years and if the DFG costs more than £5k. The maximum that can be reclaimed is capped at £10k.
- 3.2 It is thought that homeowners benefit from an increase in the capital value, and therefore resale value, of their home following the award of public money to carry out disabled facilities adaptations. However, in the absence of an adapted homes 'market place' it is thought that most adaptations do not add to the home's capital value with the exception of conversions of garages and outbuildings and extensions to homes. These adaptations usually cost in excess of £10k.
- 3.3 If charges are to be levied and repayment is challenged then due regard needs to be given by HDC to the circumstances described at paragraph 2.5.

4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) agree that charges be placed on properties where owner occupiers receive a disabled facilities grant in excess of £10,000 (excluding HIA fees) where the grant is for a garage or outbuilding conversion, or extension or any combination of these.
- b) subject to a) above, agree that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services together with the Head of Housing Services, in consultation with the Executive Member for Strategic Planning and Housing, determine the most effective and efficient procedure for placing charges on properties; and
- c) delegate authority to decide on seeking repayment, as set out at paragraph 2.5, to the Head of Housing Services.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996: Disabled Facilities Grant (Condition relating to approval or payment of Grant) General Consent 2008
- Disabled Facilities Grants (Maximum Amounts and Additional Purposes) (England) Order 2008 (SI 2008/1189)
- Housing Renewal Grants (amendment) (England) Regulations 2008 (SI 2008/2290)

Contact Officer: Steve Plant, Head of Housing Services

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**DISABLED FACILITIES GRANTS AND CHARGES ON PROPERTIES
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Social Well-Being) and
(Economic Well-Being)).**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At meetings held on 4th and 6th October 2011, the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Social Well-Being) and (Economic Well-Being) considered a report by the Head of Housing Services on the possible introduction of charges on properties adapted through Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG). This report summarises their discussions.
- 1.3 The Panels were addressed by the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing and the Head of Housing Services who provided background to the proposal to introduce charges on properties to recover DFGs for certain defined purposes.

2. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (SOCIAL WELL-BEING)

- 2.1 The Panel has discussed a number of matters including the resources that the proposal would require to implement, the anticipated level of charges that could be placed on properties together with the criteria utilised to claim repayments. Having questioned when applicants would be notified of charges, assurances were received that they would be alerted by Officers during the application process. The Panel also discussed the market value of properties that had been adapted with DFGs and noted the reasons why the proposed charges would only be levied on grants in excess of £10,000 for garage/outbuilding conversions and/or an extension to a property. The Panel has expressed their satisfaction with the proposals.

3. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)

- 3.1 The Economic Well-Being Panel has also endorsed the proposals to introduce a charge on properties to recover the cost of DFG in certain circumstances. Members have referred to the likely impact of the proposals on property values, the cost of imposing charges and the length of time occupiers will remain in their properties. They have also queried whether there would be a sliding scale for repayments over time and have been informed that if the property is sold within a ten year period the full amount would be claimed up to a maximum limit of £10,000.
- 3.2 With regard to adaptations undertaken at properties owned by Registered Social Landlords, it is hoped that Landlords will manage their housing stock to ensure that tenants who require adaptations are allocated to properties where works have already been undertaken, thus reducing future demand for Grants.
- 3.2 The Panel has commented on the limited funding which is provided by Central Government for DFGs and has suggested that the District Council, in conjunction with other local authorities in the region should make representations to Government requesting additional support. Members have also commented that the maximum amount that could be reclaimed by local

authorities has been capped at £10,000 for several years and that representations should also be made that the figure should be index linked.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 The Cabinet is requested to take into consideration the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Social Well-Being) and (Economic Well-Being) as set out above when considering this item.

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

Mrs C Bulman, Democratic Services Officer
☎ 01480 388234

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
(ECONOMIC WELL BEING)
CABINET**

6 OCTOBER 2011

20 OCTOBER 2011

CAMBRIDGESHIRE PUBLIC SECTOR ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Since the economic downturn began in 2008, all sectors have been required to re-think income expectations and expenditure commitments. The Comprehensive Spending Review has confirmed that the public sector will take a significant cut in revenue and capital funding over the next four years.
- 1.2 Careful asset management including disposals, using lease break clauses, maximisation of facilities in use, minimisation of expenditure on facilities in use, etc will form part of the solution to minimise the impact of reduced income. Sharing facilities with other public sector partners has the potential to generate significant financial benefits through reduced costs and enhanced returns which can lessen the impact of the cuts for Cambridgeshire public sector and critically for the residents of Cambridgeshire. In short, the Making Assets Count Project (MAC) provides opportunities from managing public assets more effectively which would allow us to protect public services in a period of austerity: “sweat assets – save services”.
- 1.3 With a joined-up approach to the management of asset portfolios of the public sector, all can benefit from the property expertise brought to the partnership by each partner.
- 1.4 In the last few years, public sector partners have increasingly worked together to provide accommodation for the delivery of services. With the expected reduction in accommodation requirements over the next few years, this is the optimum moment to cement an approach that accelerates the number of projects delivered as joint ventures and to drive value from the remaining estate through further sharing of both the facilities themselves and the management services associated.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 A current Asset Management Strategy and/or Plan is recognised as essential for efficient Strategic Asset Management. The majority of public sector organisations have developed and used these strategies / plans for a number of years on an individual basis

2.2 The prevailing economic situation in the UK has been the catalyst for public sector organisation in a geographic area to consider the joint use and management of property assets. For this to occur in a structured and transparent way there needs to be a robust policy basis agreed by all partners. An Asset Management Strategy is proposed to provide such a basis.

2.3 One such Strategy exists between two public sector organisations, however, it appears that Cambridgeshire's approach to include nine Cambridgeshire based organisations and the local partnerships in to a single strategy is at the leading edge in this field.

2.4 The Asset Management Strategy aims to identify at a high level:

- The vision for the combined public sector portfolio
- The key drivers
- The Cambridgeshire context
- The final context
- Case studies to demonstrate innovation
- Key asset management principles including a delivery approach
- An action plan
- Risks and issues
- Resources

Supported by key data in a number of appendices.

2.5 The strategy covers the direction that the combined property estate will take over a ten year period and the approach to be adopted in getting there and the policies that will be applied to decision making.

3. PROPOSALS – HUNTINGDONSHIRE

3.1 District wide MAC workshops (including Huntingdonshire) were held over the summer and were attended by a broad range of partner organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors. Delegates reviewed and identified opportunities relating to the property portfolio in the districts. The next phase of the MAC process is to establish a Project Board in each of the District Areas to focus on specific projects where there appears to be potential for rationalising the accommodation and improving service delivery. The terms of reference of the Huntingdonshire Board are attached at Annex A.

3.2 Relevant projects for Huntingdonshire are:

- Huntingdon Town Centre
- Huntingdon Operations Centre
- St Neots Town Centre
- Training Facilities

- Development of community hubs for service delivery at Yaxley, Ramsey and Sawtry (to be progressed through the County's community hubs project).

3.3 The priority is to begin work in Huntingdon to maximise the potential of 'central hubs' and to co-locate partners in buildings such as Pathfinder House (HDC), Scott House (CCC) and Huntingdon library (CCC), where frontline services can be delivered to ensure the most efficient use of available floorspace and help realise savings.

4. SUMMARY

4.1 The benefits of joining-up asset management include:

- rationalising/consolidating the combined property estate
- better utilisation of existing property assets to deliver savings in revenue costs and for better use by the public sector
- a far more effective way of managing the estate through a joint property function
- better use of the emerging, new property estate
- maximisation of returns from revenue generating activities
- realising synergies that are currently missed
- using publicly-owned assets to draw in significant levels of investment which would help deliver wider policy goals
- sharing of premises should open up new possibilities for delivering a more joined-up approach to service delivery

The above should lead to:

- financial returns over the medium-long term for each partner and the group as a whole above current achievable.
- Significant community benefits.

A (conservative) expectation is that the joint management and use of the portfolio would lead to:

- 20% rationalisation of the current estate
- 20% disposals (increase compared to current expected profile)
- 20% revenue saving

The above would be minimum targets of the partnership and would apply to the partnership portfolio as a whole.

4.2 It is expected that, beyond this, further capital and revenue benefits could be derived from:

- combining sites to yield an uplifted development value
- inclusion of the civil estate


- reductions in employee levels required to managed the combined estate and a more consistent and professional approach to asset management

5. RECOMMENDATION

5.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:

- a) Note the contents of the report
- b) Confirm support for the Making Assets Count Programme and the establishment of a Huntingdonshire 'MAC' Board
- c) Endorse the Cambridgeshire Public Sector Asset Management Strategy.

Contact Officer Malcolm Sharp, Managing Director (CPP)

 (01480) 388300

MAKING ASSETS COUNT

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Meeting / Group

Making Assets Count (MAC) – Huntingdonshire

Purpose

Within the context of the Countywide MAC initiative, this sub-group aims to bring together public sector organisations across the district to seek and implement a co-ordinated and more efficient and effective use of property assets to enable allocated improvements in Service Delivery.

Aims and Objectives

- Support the Mapping and Public Realm (MPR) process in the Huntingdonshire area.
- Act as an exemplar of best practice and creative cross-organisational management of property issues in line with the Making Assets Count (MAC) programme.
- Generate an improvement in public service redesign from a coordinated partnership approach thus maximising best practice, efficiencies and benefits to the public sector and the customer.
- Identifies opportunities and challenges decisions relating to assets across Huntingdonshire.

Interdependencies

- The Making Assets Count (MAC) Programme – This project aims to deliver high quality and effective management of public sector assets in Cambridgeshire. This group offers the potential to act as an exemplar for this in the Huntingdonshire area.
- Growth and Infrastructure – Thematic Group of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership – acting in an advisory capacity and ensuring, as far as possible, housing and employment growth is matched by appropriate infrastructure

Membership List (Attendees required at meetings)

Name	Post
Malcolm Sharp	Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships & Projects) - HDC
Gerry Ryan	Facilities and Admin Manager - HDC
Tobin Stephenson	MAC Programme Manager
Alistair Dunsdon	MAC – Hunts Project Manager
TBA	CCC
TBA	Police
TBA	Fire
TBA	PCT

Distribution List (Minutes, agendas and related paperwork to be circulated to this group)

To follow

Chair

This group will be chaired by Malcolm Sharp, Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships & Projects) HDC

Frequency of Meetings

To meet every 6 weeks if possible in Huntingdonshire.

Planning Review of Meeting / Group

The next review of the Terms of Reference for this group will be April 2012.

Other Support Arrangements

Item	Who
Agenda	Gerry Ryan
Room Bookings	Andrea Lucken
Action Points / Minutes	Andrea Lucken

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE PUBLIC SECTOR ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being))**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 6th October 2011, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) considered the report by the Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships & Projects) on proposals to establish a Cambridgeshire Asset Management Strategy and a Making Assets Count Board for Huntingdonshire. The following paragraphs contain a summary of the Panel's discussions.

2. THE PANEL'S DISCUSSIONS

- 2.1 The Panel has welcomed the suggestion that public sector organisations should develop a joined-up approach to the management and use of their property assets. Sharing facilities with other public sector partners has the potential to generate significant financial benefits through reduced costs and enhanced returns. However given that the proposal is expected to yield financial benefits, Members have commented that the report should include financial data. It has also been suggested that the project should have a more broadly defined commercial objective. Furthermore, Members have queried whether there is any potential to involve the voluntary sector in the proposals. They have been informed that there is likely to be some cross over with the voluntary sector support project which is currently ongoing and with the ongoing efforts to let parts of the Council's Headquarters to other organisations
- 2.2 The Panel has discussed the proposals to establish a Project Board in each of the District areas to focus on specific projects where there appears to be potential for sharing accommodation and improving service delivery. It has been noted that Huntingdon Town Centre, Huntingdon Operations Centre, St Neots Town Centre, Training Facilities and the development of community hubs for service delivery at Yaxley, Ramsey and Sawtry have been identified as priorities for Huntingdonshire. Members have commented that further consideration should be given to the aims and objectives of the Huntingdonshire Board to ensure that the District Council achieves the best value and outcome from the Board.
- 2.3 On a more general note, the Panel has questioned what will be the likely impact on the local economy if public sector organisations are to lease fewer properties in the future. Although it has been noted that it could provide development opportunities, attention has been drawn to the fact that there will be an impact. With regard to the potential for future changes to the structure of local government, the Panel has noted that the local authority property portfolio should be flexible to suit the circumstances of the time and the local area. Members have suggested that in the longer term public sector employee numbers could go up as well as down.

- 2.4 The Panel has asked the Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) to submit a further report outlining progress made with regard to the projects in Huntingdonshire in six months time.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The Cabinet is recommended to

- a) note the contents of the report;
- b) confirm their support for the Making Assets Count Programme and the establishment of a Huntingdonshire 'MAC' Board; and
- c) endorse the Cambridgeshire Public Sector Asset Management Strategy

Contact Officer: A Roberts, Scrutiny and Review Manager
 **01480 388015**

Background Documents

Report and Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) held on 6th October 2011.

COMT
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (SOCIAL WELLBEING)
CABINET
COUNCIL

19 September 2011
4 October 2011
20 October 2011
2 November 2011

Voluntary Sector Review
(Report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with background information on the potential impact of reductions in the Community Development commissioning budget on the voluntary sector organisations which are currently under contract. This information is provided now to allow Members to consider the implications prior to the natural end of the existing arrangement. The present service-level agreements (SLA's) run to 31/3/2013.
- 1.2 The officer-review that generated this information arose from discussions at the Full Council meeting (3 November 2010). Members requested that officers undertake a review of those voluntary organisations that receive revenue funding from the authority via service level agreements (SLA's).
- 1.3 The preliminary proposal, in November 2010 was to reduce the present Community Development commissioning (revenue) budget to £75,000 from 1/4/2013 generating an annual saving to Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) of £277k.
- 1.4 Officers were requested to provide members with a report to the November 2011 Full Council that outlined how the savings in this area could be achieved.
- 1.5 The final Council budget for 2013-14 is not due to be set by Council until February 2013. However, the current service level agreements for community development come to a natural end in March 2013. Each agreement includes a requirement that negotiations associated with termination/follow-on agreements should start no later than 1 October 2012, and be concluded by 31 December 2012.

2. BACKGROUND TO REVIEW

- 2.1 The review has involved officers meeting with representatives of the affected organisations to discuss the implications of reductions. Meetings have been held with all organisations with existing arrangements with HDC.'s. These organisations are listed below, also shown is the 2011/12 allocations from the community development budget:-

• Huntingdonshire Citizens Advice Bureaux	£162,250
• Hunts Forum for Voluntary Organisations	£ 42,200
• Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centres	£ 37,140
• Huntingdon Shopmobility	£ 26,430
• St Barnabas Learning Centre	£ 26,370
• Disability Information Service Huntingdonshire	<u>£ 7,070</u>

£301,460

2.2 Those organisations currently benefiting from funding are of differing sizes and have differing operating budgets. The impact of reductions in funding from HDC will vary between organisations. Generally, the higher the contribution HDC makes to an organisation's overall spending the greater the potential impact of a reduction. (However, there are some organisations that have such limited operating funds that even a slight reduction in revenue may render them unsustainable.) Listed below is the percentage contribution that HDC will have made to each organisation's operating costs this year (2011/12):-

• Huntingdonshire Citizens Advice Bureaux	88%
• Hunts Forum for Voluntary Organisations	25%
• Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centres	58%
• Huntingdon Shopmobility	91%
• St Barnabas Learning Centre	46%
• Disability Information Service Huntingdonshire	11%

2.3 This year HDC has provided some financial support to Bedford Pilgrims Housing Association (£37,140) and Natural High (£4,000). The arrangements with both Bedford Pilgrims Housing Association and Natural High are short-term and are due to come to a natural end in March 2012. These funds, together with some unallocated this year account for the £51k reduction to the budget anticipated in 2012-13.

3. THE REVIEW

3.1 During June and July (2011) meetings have been held with all the organisations involved in the review, full transcripts of these meetings can be made available to Members. All the organisations have had an opportunity to amend and add comments to ensure the records fully represent the issues covered. Appendix 'A' attached provides a tabulated summary of the meeting notes.

3.2 The meetings with the organisations covered the following:-

- What efficiency savings did organisations consider they could achieve;
- What would be the implications of a 20% budget reduction on both the organisation and the organisations service users;
- What would be the implications of a 50% budget reduction on both the organisation and the organisations service users;
- The ability of organisations to attract external funding; and
- The ability and willingness of organisations to use their financial reserves to offset any budget reductions proposed by HDC.

In addition the organisations were asked to identify how they considered the services they provide assist HDC to address its strategic priorities.

4. REVIEW FINDINGS

- 4.1 Some of the organisations outlined their own proposals to drive down costs, a number of organisations stated they had already made efficiency savings and did not believe they could make any more. Overall the savings identified by the organisations will not make any significant impact to reducing the overall budget. All organisations have indicated a desire to continue to provide services. However, in almost every case if funding was reduced the services provided would be reduced.
- 4.2 The details of the impact of a 20% reduction, applied across the board, on each organisation and their service-users is set out in Appendix 'A' of this report. A reduction of this level would threaten the sustainability of some organisations. While the survival of organisations is not universally threatened there is likely to be a significant reduction in services delivered.
- 4.3 If a 50% budget reduction were applied a number of organisations have indicated they would have to give serious consideration to their continued ability to operate and if they were to persist they would have to make major changes to how services would be provided. Reductions at this level leave most of the organisations very vulnerable.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF 20% REDUCTONS BY ORGANISATION

- 5.1 Huntingdonshire Citizens' Advice Bureaux: A budget reduction at this level would save HDC £33,850 pa. but impact on both the organisation and service users; as follows: Reduction to a 3 day per week service at its Huntingdon and St Neots offices; outreach services at Yaxley, Ramsey and St Ives would cease. A 33% reduction in the number of clients seen [from 7100 to 4700 (based on 10/11 figures)]; fewer service- options available for face to face support and volunteer-recruitment curtailed.
- 5.2 Hunts Forum for Voluntary Organisations: A budget reduction at this level would save HDC £8,440 pa. but reduction at this level would impact on the organisation and service users as follows: fewer staffing- hours and longer response times; minimal service; fewer service- options available, less partnership work with statutory agencies.
- 5.3 Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre: A budget reduction at this level would save HDC £7,428 pa. but reduction at this level would impact on the organisation and service users as follows: HVC would need to find c£14,000 to maintain services; staff cuts a reduction of 22 hours pw to 65 hours pw (- 25%); fewer volunteers placed in local organisations so that they may struggle to maintain their services. The Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre has seen income in 2011 fall; the medium-term survival of the organisation looks less secure.
- 5.4 Huntingdon Shopmobility: A budget reduction at this level would save HDC £5236 pa. but opening hours would be reduced from 32 hrs per week to 25hrs per week with 448 fewer individuals per annum using service (22% fewer, based on 2010/11figures).

- 5.5 St Barnabas Community Learning Centre: A budget reduction at this level would save HDC £5274 pa but the 2011/12 budget already shows a potential operating deficit of £11K; the organisation plan to meet this deficit via use of reserves. The existing operating deficit c£11k plus a £5k funding reduction from HDC would represent a reduction to the Centre of £16k p.a. overall (60% annual reduction in operating funds) so services could be maintained using reserves but only for 2 years. Therefore reduction by 20% could allow this organisation to fold with the consequent loss of all services. However, the annual saving to HDC per year would then be £26, 370.
- 5.6 Disability Information Service Huntingdonshire (DISH): HDC funding together with funds from the County Council are the cornerstone that enables the organisation to attract external funding. A budget reduction at this level would save HDC £1414 pa. but reduction at this level would impact on the organisation and service users as follows: the hours the advice line operates reduced (to 15 hrs per week from 20) and fewer home visits (3 to 4 per month from 12). DISH is already drawing on reserves their reserves will no longer be available for drawing on after 31st March 2012. This organisation seems very vulnerable. Therefore reduction by 20% could allow this organisation to fold with the consequent loss of all services. However, the annual saving to HDC per year would then be £7, 070.

6. IMPLICATIONS OF 50% REDUCTONS BY ORGANISATION

- 6.1 Huntingdonshire Citizens' Advice Bureaux: A budget reduction at this level would save HDC £84,625 pa. but impact on both the organisation and service users; as follows: close the St Neots office and 3 days per week service at Huntingdon and no outreach services at Yaxley, Ramsey and St Ives. A reduction of this magnitude would prompt serious consideration of the organisation's viability. If Huntingdonshire Citizens Advice Bureaux ceased to operate there is a strong possibility that a significant number of the organisation's service-users (approximately 9000 p a) might present themselves to HDC for assistance. It is estimated such an increase in customers could require additional financial resource in the region of £60k. Therefore reduction by 50% could allow this organisation to fold with the consequent loss of all services. However, the net annual saving to HDC per year would then be £102,250.
- 6.2 Hunts Forum for Voluntary Organisations: A budget reduction at this level could theoretically save HDC £21,100 pa but impact on both the organisation and service users as follows: a very limited service for member organisations and statutory agencies. Serious consideration would have to be given to HFVO's ability to continue to manage the Maple Centre, on behalf of HDC; responsibility would revert to the District Council and the resulting costs to HDC have been estimated to be c£25k p a. Therefore a reduction by 50% towards the service-level agreement could actually increase costs to HDC by £3,900 pa.
- 6.3 Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre: A budget reduction at this level would save HDC £18,570 pa but impact on both the organisation and service users; as follows: staff reductions; possible closure of two area offices. Remaining reserves represent around 8-months expenditure. Therefore reduction by 50% could allow this organisation to fold with the consequent loss of all services. However, the annual saving to HDC per year would then be £37,140.

- 6.4 Huntingdon Shopmobility: A budget reduction at this level would save HDC £13,215 pa. but Shopmobility would close in 2014. Therefore reduction by 50% will cause this organisation to fold with the consequent loss of all services to 2038 users. However, the annual saving to HDC per year would then be £38,430.
- 6.5 St Barnabas Community Learning Centre: A budget reduction at this level would save HDC £13,185 pa. but the community learning centre would close within 12 months. Therefore reduction by 50% could allow this organisation to fold with the consequent loss of all services. All skills training programmes would stop (1,854 service users 2010/11). However, the annual saving to HDC per year would then be £26,370.
- 6.6 Disability Information Service Huntingdonshire (DISH): HDC funding together with funds from the County Council are the cornerstone that enables the organisation to attract external funding. A budget reduction at this level would save HDC £3,535 pa. but impact on both the organisation and service users; as follows: reduction in staff hours and redundancies; termination of advice line and reduction to home visit service. However, the annual saving to HDC per year would then be £7,070.

7. OPORTUNITIES FOR REDUCING COSTS

- 7.1 **Re-organisations**: There is potential for savings to be driven out of the system in the longer term. Additional savings may be achieved by encouraging mergers between organisations. Mergers or amalgamations should reduce management costs. However, changes like these would require the agreement not only of the individual organisations but also the other agencies that presently provide financial support and, where appropriate, the Charity Commission. If savings were achieved any corresponding reduction in the funding provided may be possible without putting an organisation at risk.
- 7.2 **Reallocations**: Where an organisation folds or chooses to reduce its range of services it may be cost effective to commission other providers, in line with HDC's normal commissioning arrangements.
- 7.3 **Accommodation**: Accommodation costs are significant for some, but not all, organisations. For example: CABx annual office-rental in Huntingdon is £26,000 pa and Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre have identified that they need free office accommodation for the organisation's four offices; in the four market towns in order to reduce their operating costs significantly. There are statutory organisation with vacant accommodation, particularly in Huntingdon. However, the needs and wishes of organisation in relation to accommodation and the suitability of potential locations (for issues such as disability access) have yet to be fully explored. Preliminary scoping has shown the potential savings to be in the order of £38,000 pa. in total; without allowance for investment costs.

8 IMPACT OF ANY CHANGES ON EQUALITY OF ACCESS

- 8.1 In addition to generating this report the information gathered during the consultation process was used to assess any bias in impact on any sectors or groups of people within Huntingdonshire. The Equality Impact Assessment is part of the bundle of information that will be made available to Members. The conclusion from the assessment is that a pro-rata reduction across all organisations should not be attempted. It should also be noted that some organisations are very vulnerable and the amount of reduction is of less importance than the threat of any reduction; they may have already reached the tipping point. Most of the services were designed originally to meet a specific need so any loss of those services will be felt. The greatest impacts are likely to arise from:
- Economies that lead to a centralisation of services and the resultant worsening of rural exclusion, or
 - Reduction of those services that were specifically designed to assist those with disabilities- because those services rest with 3/6 of the funded organisations.

9. CONCLUSIONS

- 9.1 The Council's own budgetary controls rely on reducing outgoings and at £350,000+ the funding provided to the voluntary sector for community development is a significant proportion of the total. The current budgetary predictions have assumed a reduction of £277k p.a. from 2013-14. A reduction of this magnitude is likely to have a significant impact on the six organisations who currently benefit from funding- and through them a significant number of Huntingdonshire residents.
- 9.2 Some organisations are very vulnerable; they may have already reached the tipping point. The greatest impacts are likely to arise from rural exclusion or reduction of those services that are specifically designed to assist those with disabilities.
- 9.3 There is potential for savings to be driven out of the system in the longer term; by encouraging organisational change. However, changes like these would require detailed and wide ranging negotiations.
- 9.4 The current agreements with voluntary sector organisations run for 5-years. This is considered good practice and allows organisations to plan. Should any follow-on or new agreements be successfully negotiated during 2012 they are likely to be for 5-years from 1 April 2013, which represents a significant medium-term commitment for HDC.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet are requested to consider:

- 10.1 The impact of reducing funding on organisations within the paper.
- 10.2 Requesting officers to start negotiations with appropriate organisations and other statutory partners in an attempt to facilitate organisational change.

- 10.3 Requesting officers to start investigating savings potential of alternative accommodation arrangements.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Huntingdonshire District Council, Community Development's Voluntary-sector Performance report 2010/11.

Huntingdonshire District Council's Voluntary-sector (officer) review: interview summaries.

The financial accounts and business plans 2010/11 or 2011/12 (as submitted by organisations participating in the 2011 review).

Huntingdonshire District Council's Equality Impact Assessment 2 (Sep 2011): "Cuts in voluntary sector funding phased in after 2012/13"

Contact Officer: Dan Smith – Healthy Communities Manager
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Huntingdonshire Citizens Advice Bureaux

2011/12 HDC funds to CAB = £162,250; CAB's total 2011/12 operating budget = £192,409

HDC contribution represents 88% of total annual budget

Identified efficiency savings	Implications of a 20% budget reduction (- £33,850)	Implications of a 50% budget reduction (- £84,625)	Other information
<p>CAB currently in discussions to merge with the CAB in Fenland and East Cambs. to form a new single organisation with consolidation of back-office support without impacting on front line advice services. Huntingdonshire CAB estimates an efficiency saving of 7% on overall budget (£11,847).</p> <p>There is an issue with pension liabilities that must be resolved before any merger (See Appendix B)</p>	<p>A budget reduction at this level would impact on both the organisation and service users; as follows:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduction to a 3 day per week service at its Huntingdon and St Neots offices. 2. Outreach services at Yaxley, Ramsey and St Ives no longer provided. 3. A 33% reduction in the number of clients accessing services, from 7100 to 4700 (based on 10/11 figures). 4. Fewer service- options available for face to face support. 5. Volunteer recruitment curtailed. 	<p>Serious consideration to the organisation's viability + legal liabilities</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Move to a single site operation and close the St Neots office (3 days per week service at Huntingdon.) 2. No outreach services at Yaxley, Ramsey and St Ives. 3. A further reduction in the number of clients accessing services*, below 4700 +service users having to travel further and wait longer for appointments. 5.A significant number approaching HDC for assistance; previously seen by the CAB. 	<p>External funding CAB considers it would be very difficult to attract financial support for core activities; aware of some potential national initiatives for financial assistance but programmes have long run-in and no guarantees.</p> <p>Financial reserves Reserves approximately 4 months operating costs. BUT there are liabilities to resolve.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Helping vulnerable people to live independently Core work: free access to advice and information e.g. benefits, employment debt and housing etc. (2010/ saw in excess of 14,000 people). 2. Preventing & dealing with homelessness CAB early intervention work to prevent homelessness: housing advice, affordable budget plans and debt advice (2010/111 - dealt with 332 debt advice cases + approx. 1000 housing -related enquiries. 3. Supporting strong communities 70+ volunteers, organisation's management board all local resident volunteers. 4. Encourage new homes, etc. to meet local needs Member of the national CAB movement so directly linked into national social policy; e.g. issues: rent deposit schemes for private tenants.

*Denotes additional cost implication for HDC

Hunts Forum for Voluntary Organisations

2011/12 HDC funds to HFVO = £42,200; HFVO's total 2011/12 operating budget = £170,171
HDC contribution represents 25% of total annual budget

Identified efficiency savings	Implications of a 20% budget reduction (- £8,440)	Implications of a 50% budget reduction(- £21,100)	Other information
<p>HFVO (10/11) renegotiated contracts to get better value for money + further efficiency savings c£2,500.</p> <p>Also HFVO reviewing staffing levels and in negotiations to establish joint cleaning & caretaking contracts, etc.</p>	<p>Reduction at this level would impact on the organisation and service users as follows:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduction in staffing-hours so response times would be longer. 2. Only deliver agreed targets- minimal service. 3. Reduced number of services available to member organisations. 4. Less responsive to change. 5. Less partnership work with statutory agencies. 	<p>The organisation would have no option other than to:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Reduced staffing + a very limited service been offered to member organisations and statutory agencies. 2. Serious consideration to HFVO's ability to manage the Maple Centre, on behalf of HDC*. 3. HFVO no longer able to meet the needs or expectations of voluntary & community organisations in district. 	<p>External funding Vast majority of external funding acquired is for member organisations (£316K 2010/11). HFVO management fee to all funding applications. Looking for ways to better market the use of the Maple Centre.</p> <p>Financial reserves Min. level of reserves req. for: Charity Commission's lower guideline of 3 months operating costs, i.e. £27,800; winding-up-fund £36,100 + property fund £46,500. Reluctant to reduce reserves permanently, Charity Commission advice needed.</p> <p>1. Help vulnerable people to live independently Not directly but number of organisations supported by HFVO work directly with disadvantaged people.</p> <p>2. Managing the impact of growth HFVO actively involved in ensuring needs & requirements of the voluntary sector are considered by developers when major developments are planned.</p> <p>3. Supporting strong communities Promoting the localism agenda, Big Society and the GP Commissioning agenda are major areas of work for HFVO. HFVO is the main conduit in Huntingdonshire for the dissemination of information, advice, guidance and good practice for the voluntary and community sector + represents the interests of the voluntary sector on the HSP.</p>

*Denotes additional cost implication for HDC

Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre

2011/12 HDC funds to HVC = £37,140; HVC's total 2011/12 operating budget = £63,949

HDC contribution represents 58% of total annual budget

Identified efficiency savings	Implications of a 20% budget reduction (- £7,428)	Implications of a 50% budget reduction (- £18,570)	Other information
<p>HVC made £4,000 savings in 2010-11 and have budgeted for another £3,000+ savings this financial year.</p> <p>HVC believe only other area of saving: accommodation. Would need free office accommodation for the organisation's four offices; in the four market towns; saving HVC £5,500 per annum.</p> <p>Savings from staff time would have the greatest service impact. Currently exponential growth in demand and would like to be increasing staff hours rather than reducing them.</p> <p><i>Above based on unlikely assumption that CCC funding will remain at the current level.</i></p>	<p>Reduction at this level would impact on the organisation and service users as follows:-</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. HVC's income fallen >£7,000 in 2011. 20% less from HDC would mean the HVC would need to find c£14,000 to maintain services. 2. 20% savings require significant staff cuts. Current level: 87 hrs pw; saving £14,000 would need a reduction of 22 hours pw (25%). 3. The consequence of staffing reductions: fewer volunteers placed in local organisations, many may struggle to maintain their service. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Result in total reduction approx. £25,000, (c40%HVC's total budget). Could only be achieved via staff reductions. 2. Possibly closing two area offices leaving 58.5 staff hours a week 3. 100 volunteers (13,000 hours last year) requires approx. 30 hrs pw paid staff time leaving only 28.5 hrs pw for policy changes, recruit/ placing volunteers etc. 4. They would not be able to meet their core functions, and lose their accreditation with Volunteering England & could lose their right to engage with other volunteer centres 	<p>External funding HVC received lottery funding - not eligible for more. Town & parish councils contribute.</p> <p>Financial reserves 2011/12 Income down c£7,000; £3,000 from reserves. Remaining reserves represent around 8-months expenditure. The HVC could allocate £5k pa for 2 years from reserves to offset reductions.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Helping vulnerable people to live independently The main aim of the organisation is to recruit volunteers to assist the most vulnerable residents to remain in their own homes: 813 volunteers recruited 10/11. HVC operate /manage a social car scheme [not funded by HDC]: transport to hospital, GP, etc. for people with mobility problems. Significant support to rural communities. 2. Preventing & dealing with homelessness HVC recruits volunteers placed with organisations that provide direct services for homeless people. 3. Keep district clean & tidy HVC recruits volunteers to undertake litter picks. 4. Safeguarding the environment Volunteers are recruited to support HDC programmes at country parks & Godmanchester Community Nursery. 5. Supporting strong communities Significant impact on the Big Society agenda. 6. Encourage new jobs, etc. Volunteers have used the experience to enable them to gain employment. Volunteers support local back-to-work clubs.

*Denotes additional cost implication for HDC

Huntingdon Shopmobility

2011/12 HDC funds to Shopmobility = £26,430; Shopmobility's 2011/12 operating budget £28,991
HDC contribution represents 91% of total annual budget

Identified efficiency savings	Implications of a 20% budget reduction (- £5,236)	Implications of a 50% budget reduction (- £13,215)	Other information
<p>Renegotiation of Portacabin rental contract £7,000 saving to HDC over 3 years from 1/4/11.</p> <p>Manager's hours have reduced from 28 to 25 hrs per week in 2011</p>	<p>1. Opening hours would be reduced from 32 hrs per week to 25hrs per week with 448 fewer individuals per annum using service (based on 2010/11 figures).</p>	<p>1. Shopmobility would close in 2014. A 25 hr. pw service may operate until Dec. 2014.</p>	<p>External funding Increasing in annual membership charge (£10) from: Nov. 2011 = £20; Nov 2012 = £25. [Schemes in Cambridge & Peterborough are free]</p> <p>Financial reserves Willingness to use reserves.</p> <p>1. Helping vulnerable people to live independently The service enables individuals with mobility needs to move independently around Huntingdon. In the first 6 months of 2011 year: 1,143 people assisted.</p> <p>2. Supporting strong communities Actively involved in representing the views of disabled service users re. the development of Huntingdon Town Centre.</p>

*Denotes additional cost implication for HDC

St Barnabas Community Learning Centre

2011/12 HDC funds to St Barnabas LC= £26,370; St Barnabas' total 2011/12 operating budget £57,384
 HDC contribution represents 46% of total annual budget

Identified efficiency savings	Implications of a 20% budget reduction (- £5,274)	Implications of a 50% budget reduction (- £13,185)	Other information
<p>Limited savings in 2011/12 by changing energy and stationary suppliers. In discussions with HFVO re: savings from sharing costs for caretaking and cleaning, etc.</p> <p>Only other area for savings: staff hours this would have a major impact on service provision.</p> <p>The organisation's 2011/12 budget shows a potential operating deficit of £11K the organisation plan to meet this deficit via use of reserves.</p> <p>THE LOCATION OF THESE IS SIGNIFICANT AND ANY CHANGE COULD BE DETRIMENTAL.</p>	<p>1. Existing operating deficit c£11k plus £5k funding reduction = £16k overall (60% annual reduction in operating funds).</p>	<p>1. A reduction of this size would mean the community learning centre would close within 12 months. And the buildings would revert back to the Church of England.</p> <p>2. All skills training programmes would stop (1,854 service users 2010/11).</p>	<p>External funding External funding for project work but not for core funds.</p> <p>Financial reserves <i>Services maintained using reserves to cover 20% reduction: only for 2 years.</i></p> <p>1. Helping vulnerable people to live independently Specific courses: life skills, employment and IT skills for adults with learning difficulties; and takes direct referrals from Job Centre plus. Supports the Migrant Family Support programme (10hrs pw) ESOL for non English speakers (30hrs pw). Direct links with Children's Centres + classes for vulnerable families.</p> <p>2. Preventing & dealing with homelessness Work with homeless individuals to assist them gain employment.</p> <p>3. Supporting strong communities Supports a variety of agencies; hosts the Learning Champions programme to recruit volunteer support for those on skills training courses. During school holiday periods the centre operates family learning activities for families with special needs referred by OC&YPS.</p> <p>4. Encourage new jobs Recently established direct links with local recruitment agencies and has assisted 160 individuals gain employment (since June 2011). One to one employment skills support, etc.</p>

*Denotes additional cost implication for HDC

Disability Information Service Huntingdonshire

2011/12 HDC funds to DISH = £7,070; DISH's total 2011/12 operating budget £63,564

HDC contribution represents 11% of total annual budget

Identified efficiency savings	Implications of a 20% budget reduction (- £1,414)	Implications of a 50% budget reduction (- £3,535)	Other information
<p>Low level of reserves to offset potential funding reductions; 2 main projects: RADAR project (£34K) and Family support project (£12K) funding due to end 31/3/12. The organisation is proposing to use all their available reserves to continue in some form these projects.</p> <p>DISH already made savings in office costs, to offset inflationary pressures, by sharing space and services with Disability Cambridgeshire.</p>	<p>HDC + CCC funding = cornerstone to enable the organisation to attract external funding.</p> <p>1. If <u>HDC funding only</u> reduced: the hours the advice line operates reduced (to 15 hrs per week from 20) and fewer home visits (3 to 4 per month from 12).</p>	<p>1. Serious consideration to future viability of DISH.</p> <p>2. Inevitable reduction in staff hours and redundancies.</p> <p>3. Advice line service terminated.</p> <p>4. Home visit service limited.</p> <p>5. CAB referrals to DISH for specialist home visits stop.</p>	<p>External funding Successful in funding for specialist projects-match funding. Reduction in core funding: could attract less external support.</p> <p>Financial reserves £12,324 from reserves used (2010–11) to maintain services. Further £14,846 needed for 2011–12; so reserves at 31st March 2012 equivalent to 3 months running costs [c£16k] (minimum recommended by Charity Commission). Should closure be necessary redundancy costs would be just over £5000. Redressing this situation is a high priority.</p> <p>1. Help vulnerable people to live independently The DISH service assists disabled people to achieve independent living by: maximising central government grants, benefits and services; signposting to other organisations/charities ; aiding disabled children to achieve the best quality of life / education possible; supporting disabled children and their parents so that the parents and their siblings have a better chance of employment.</p> <p>2. Preventing homelessness Assisting disabled people and carers with financial problems significantly reduce their risks of becoming homeless.</p>

*Denotes additional cost implication for HDC

VOLUNTARY SECTOR REVIEW
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being))

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 4th October 2011, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) considered a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services detailing the outcome of a review of the Voluntary Sector Organisations that hold commissioning agreements with the Council.
- 1.2 The Executive Leader and Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities were in attendance at the meeting together with Councillors P J Downes and T W Clough. This report summarises the Panel's discussions.

2. THE PANEL'S DISCUSSIONS

- 2.1 The Panel have been reminded of the background to the review, which had been prompted by Members at the November 2010 meeting of full Council. A series of review meetings has been held with the organisations concerned to assess the potential impact of a reduction in grant funding upon service users, their ability to attract external funding and their willingness to utilise their financial reserves to offset any grant reductions proposed by the Council.
- 2.2 The Panel has questioned whether the true value of the social impact of grant reductions to voluntary organisations can be assessed given that they have a number of functions beyond those specified in their service level agreements that affect the wider social environment. The review findings indicate that a majority of the voluntary organisations could be placed in a vulnerable situation if a significant reduction was agreed. Members have expressed the view that the cost would, in fact, exceed any grant reductions. As a result there would be greater pressures on the Council, public service providers and voluntary organisations operating within the District.
- 2.3 The Panel has concluded that the availability of funding to these organisations has developed over time. Comment was made that future budget deliberations should start by identifying needs the services offered by the organisations. Furthermore, the Council should take into account whether services are offered on a District-wide basis. Huntingdon Shopmobility and St Barnabas Community Learning Centre are they only organisations that provide services to a specific sector of the District's community.
- 2.4 Members have noted the outcome of the Equality Impact Assessment and expressed some concern at the effect of any grant changes on those in isolated rural areas.
- 2.5 The Panel has taken into account the fact that financial support is also provided to the voluntary organisations by other funders such as Cambridgeshire County Council, the Primary Care Trust, Police and Town and Parish Councils. Members have acknowledged the difficulties faced by some organisations when other funders withdraw their contributions and noted that the District Council has in the past frequently made up the shortfall in funding.

- 2.6 Members have commented on the contributions made by each of the organisations and have expressed the view that any grant adjustments should be assessed on an individual basis. It is felt that a blanket reduction across all organisations would not be appropriate given the varying levels of funding currently received by the organisations and the contributions that the grants make overall towards their operating costs.
- 2.7 The Panel has acknowledged the valuable contribution made by the organisations and identified that they each have their own links with other voluntary organisations across the District. Members support the close working practices that they currently employ and they would encourage them to explore further opportunities for closer working in order to generate greater efficiency savings.
- 2.8 The Panel has suggested that the Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities should investigate alternative accommodation options for the voluntary organisations with a view to achieving efficiencies. The options include approaching Churchmanor Estates and Huntingdon Town Council, utilising accommodation space available at Pathfinder House and the Bargrove Centre in Eynesbury, St Neots.
- 2.9 A suggestion has been made that the Council should offer support to the organisations that it currently commissions in their search for external and/or match funding opportunities. Additionally, it has been suggested that a more holistic approach to the review with other voluntary sector organisations should be undertaken. The point has been made that future large scale developments such as the St Neots Eastern Expansion could potentially add to demand for voluntary services. The Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities has indicated that he will bear these points in mind and thanked the Panel for its contributions.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 The Cabinet is requested to take into consideration the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) as set out above when considering this item.

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 **01480 388006**

COMT
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
(ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING)
CABINET

26 SEPTEMBER 2011

12 OCTOBER 2011

20 OCTOBER 2011

GREEN HOUSE PROJECT UPDATE (Report by Head of Environmental Management)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides an update on the Council's Green House Project (see Annexe A for full progress review) which demonstrates how typical family homes can be sustainably refurbished to make them cheaper, more comfortable and more efficient to run, against a backdrop of ever increasing fossil fuel prices and UK Government targets to reduce carbon emissions.
- 1.2 Recommendations for the further development of the project are outlined, including options for the retention of the properties until 2014 as the Council's delivery vehicle for the Government's 'Green Deal' finance initiative which will allow consumers to pay for energy efficiency measures through their energy bills (See ANNEXE B for further information on the Green Deal).

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The UK Government is committed to reducing carbon emissions by 80% by 2050. Home energy use in the UK is currently responsible for around 30% of all emissions and this is the largest single area that the council can significantly influence.
- 2.2 Prior to refurbishment the Green House properties received a SAP (Standard Assessment Procedure for energy efficiency) rating of 'E'. The ratings of both properties were increased to a 'B' following completion of the work. Carbon emissions for both houses have been reduced by 75%. The fuel costs for St Ives have been reduced by £633 a year and St Neots by £478.
- 2.3 In addition to assisting householders cut their fuel bills the established Green House 'brand' developed through the project will enable the council to lead a local economic transformation in the construction/business sector and is already seen nationally as a case study of best practice in this area (See ANNEXE C attached).

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 This section outlines three possible options for the future of the Green House properties, the first of which is for the sale of both properties in line with the current Medium Term Plan and two further options to enable the retention of the St Ives Green House as a showcase property until the end of the financial year 2013/14.

3.2 The three options are outlined in detail (ANNEXE D attached) and the table below summarises the financial impact of the three options with the variation in each case from the current MTP:

EXISTING MTP – Sale Impact Only	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	TOTAL
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
CAPITAL	-470				-470
REVENUE					
Reduction in borrowing costs		-18	-21	-26	-65
Net running costs		0	0	0	0
Total		-18	-21	-26	-65

Opt. 1 - SELL BOTH NOW	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	TOTAL
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
CAPITAL	-415				-415
REVENUE					
Reduction in borrowing costs		-16	-19	-23	-58
Net running costs					
Total		-16	-19	-23	-58
VARIATION TO MTP					
Capital	55				55
Revenue		2	2	3	7

Opt. 2 - KEEP BOTH 2 YEARS Renting St Neots	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	TOTAL
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
CAPITAL			-415		-415
REVENUE					
Reduction in borrowing costs		0	0	-23	-23
Net running costs		1	1	0	2
Total		1	1	-23	-21
VARIATION TO MTP					
Capital	470	0	-415	0	55
Revenue		19	22	3	44

Opt. 3 - KEEP ST IVES 2 YEARS Sell St Neots now	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	TOTAL
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
CAPITAL	-170		-245		-415
REVENUE					
Reduction in borrowing costs		-7	-8	--23	-38
Net running costs		8	8		16
Total		1	0	-23	-22
VARIATION TO MTP					
Capital	300	0	--245	0	55
Revenue		19	21	3	43

3.3 If both properties are sold now (Option 1) the Council will have to meet the modest (7k) revenue impact of the lower estimated sale proceeds. In addition as promoting energy efficiency is a key objective within the Council's Corporate Plan and a requirement

for the Council under the Energy Bill 2010, the sale of the Green Houses, will compromise the Council's ability to deliver against this agenda and in particular the scope for promoting the Green Deal locally.

- 3.4 If the houses are retained it is possible that revenue costs can be obtained from project partners in return for using the houses to promote Green Deal initiatives in conjunction with the Council. If revenue costs cannot be met in this manner it is proposed that they are met from the existing Environmental Projects revenue budget.
- 3.5 The choice of moving to options 2 or 3 is affected by:
- a recognition that the project is currently the best method for the council to promote energy efficiency and renewables.
 - whether the benefits of retaining the St Ives property for two years is the best use of £37k (the additional cost compared with Option 1) of the Environmental Projects budget over that period.
 - whether sale prices are likely to rise or fall over the next two years (A 10% rise in property prices will produce a revenue benefit in 2014/15 of an extra £2k per year).
- 3.6 There is little difference between the revenue impact of options 2 and 3 and the decision between them rests on the strength of the view of whether the sale price of the St Neots property will rise or fall over the next 2 years and the value of 'cost in use data' gathered if the St Neots house is rented as in option 2.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The Green House Project is a unique resource which has been extremely successful in demonstrating energy saving and renewable technologies. It has reached a very large and increasing audience and is a national example of best practice in sustainable refurbishment.
- 4.2 The retention of the Green Houses can be achieved at relatively little additional revenue cost to the Council, which can be taken from the existing Environmental Projects revenue budget making the proposal effectively cost neutral. It also has the added benefit that capital losses from the immediate sale of the houses may be reduced if the housing market improves to 2014.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Cabinet is recommended to:
- Approve the retention of the St Ives Green House until March 2014 and the rental of the St Neots property (Option 2) with

the additional revenue costs being met from the existing Environmental Projects revenue budget.

- Support the development of the project to be the main mechanism for the Council to deliver Government's Green Deal initiative in conjunction with project partners.
- Receive an update on the progress of the project in October 2012.

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Background Information

The Energy Bill 2010

Growing Awareness; Our Plan for the Environment

THE GREEN HOUSE PROJECT – PROGRESS REVIEW

Since opening in October 2010 the Green Houses in St Ives and St Neots have received over 2,000 visitors. They provide easy access to advice, products, technologies and information for those planning improvements to their own properties.

The project has generated a significant amount of positive publicity for the Council highlighting its role as a leader promoting practical cost effective carbon saving technologies. The project has been nominated for public sector and industry awards and has been recognised as an exemplar in the region, as part of the nationwide ‘Super Homes’ network of eco-homes across the UK.

The project links well the growth agenda and the expansion of the ‘Green Tech’ sector in Cambridgeshire. The development of a skills base capable of manufacturing, designing and installing of a wide variety of renewable energy technologies has the potential to create jobs and increase prosperity in the district.

As a major project within the Councils Environment Strategy ‘Growing Awareness – Our Plan for the Environment’, the Green House Project aims to demonstrate and influence sustainable refurbishment and encourage a ‘step-change’ in attitudes amongst home owners, housing providers, trades’ people, local suppliers and educational establishments.

In delivering the Project the Council worked closely with the Building Research Establishment (BRE) as part of their national Rethinking Refurbishment program and the Energy Saving Trust (EST). The BRE provided the specifications for the improvements to the house and the EST has assisted with the marketing and promotion of the homes. An additional 32 project sponsors contributed products and expertise, some of whom are using the houses for training purposes.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

The Green Houses are an outstanding educational resource, encouraging people to engage with energy efficiency and the opportunities in their own homes at first hand and they have attracted a diverse range of visitors.

The Green houses have been opened regularly since November 2010 with all visitors receiving a guided tour from a member of the Council’s Environmental Team. Advice on the technologies demonstrated is provided with up to date information on grants and Government incentives such as the ‘Feed-in-Tariff’ (FIT) for renewable electricity and the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI).

As well as the general public the houses have been visited by:

- trades' people seeking to increase their understanding of the whole house approach to retro-fitting properties
- businesses looking to improve environmental performance and reduce fuel costs
- local Primary and Secondary schools with activity sheets provided, tying in with the national curriculum
- students from further education colleges and several universities
- a wide variety of community organisations
- A large number of local authorities many of which wishing to replicate the project
- Government departments and professional Bodies including The Society of Chief Architects for Local Authorities (SCALA), Renewables East and the Ministry of Defence (MOD) Estates Team

In addition to bookable visits and an open day format, the houses are increasingly hosting specific 'business led' sessions and targeted events which have been very well received and have included;

- Renewable energy
- Grow your Business – Smart Advice
- Water Efficiency and Rainwater Harvesting
- Insulation
- Energy efficient lighting
- Biodiversity/Wildlife Gardening

COMMUNICATION AND MARKETING

A key means of communicating the project has been through the use of a dedicated website www.greenhouseproject.co.uk detailing the project from start to finish. The site contains a wealth of information, including video footage of the refurbishment process, a blog and full information of forthcoming events and how to book.

Extensive use of social media pages has also been made to promote the project which now has over 200 Facebook friends and 180 followers on Twitter. Recognition of the project is also demonstrated with St Ives property featuring on the home page of the BRE's new National Refurbishment Centre website.

As partner publicity has grown this in turn has increased the projects on-line presence with quality links to our website. Following TV coverage of the successful launch there is now a BBC link to our website, which is considered a 'high authority' site helping the Green House Project to rise in the listings of internet search engines and reach a wider audience.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROJECT

The success of the project to date indicates that there will be a significant benefit to the Council and to the residents of Huntingdonshire in retaining the Greenhouses beyond the timescale outlined in the

current Medium Term Plan, which proposes their sale at the end of the current financial year (2011/12).

Options for retaining the houses until the end of the financial year 2013/14 are considered in the financial implications section of this report; such a decision will deliver the following benefits:

- The project will continue as the primary means for the council to promote energy efficiency and demonstrate a wide range of renewable technologies within the district.
- To continue to promote the benefits of current government incentives such as the Feed in tariff and the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) which is also planned to become fully operational in 2012.
- To facilitate the delivery of the government's 'Green Deal' initiative, due to come into operation in autumn 2012.

If the Green House project ends now it will be necessary for the Council's Environment Team to use the Environmental Projects revenue budget to promote energy efficiency in the district via alternative means. The advantage of the Green House Project is that it is already an established 'brand' and successful delivery mechanism targeting the needs of business and the community. It has also achieved national recognition through partnership with the EST and BRE enabling Huntingdonshire to be seen as a leading authority on this expanding subject.

The project is the ideal vehicle for the Council to continue to provide impartial advice and information about grants and incentives provided by government, the power companies and local schemes such as the Councils own Co2y Homes scheme for loft and cavity wall insulation.

In the light of the continued interest by householders in the Feed-in-tariff (FIT), the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) and with the advent of the governments Green Deal initiative in autumn 2012 it will be of great benefit for the Council to retain the houses as a demonstration resource until the end of 2013/14.

GREEN DEAL

The Energy Bill was introduced to Parliament in December 2010 and included a provision to develop a national energy efficiency retro-fit scheme called Green Deal.

Although the Energy Bill has not yet passed through the parliamentary process, it is expected to become law in the Autumn 2011.

Green Deal will not be a 'top-down' Government-led scheme but a national framework providing the 'rules' upon which the private sector, Local Authorities and the local community can develop their own schemes.

Effectively, Green Deal is a financing mechanism to enable and encourage consumers to improve the energy efficiency of their properties with no up-front costs and paid back through their energy bills.

Uniquely, Green Deal payments are 'tied' to the property rather than the occupier which means that if they move out and cease to be the bill-payer at that property, the financial obligation remains with the property and the subsequent bill-payer.

Green Deal is a market mechanism, funded entirely by private capital.

The scheme requires a number of legislation changes to take place, including changes to the Energy Performance Certificate process and the Consumer Credit Act.

An equally important new piece of legislation is the development of the Energy Company Obligation which replaces the existing CERT and CESP obligations and will run alongside Green Deal to support higher cost measures and households in fuel poverty.

Green Deal is due to be launched in October 2012 but already many national, regional and local schemes are being developed. Many Local Authorities are already fairly advanced in the development of regional schemes many being in partnership with neighbouring Authorities and some going it alone.

Many of the larger national retailers (e.g. Tesco, M&S, B&Q, Sainsbury) have also announced their intention to launch national Green Deal schemes through their retail outlets.

There are no rules or limits to the size of Green Deal schemes but regionally this may depend on the scope and potential for energy efficiency retro-fit.

Hub of Ideas

With the Government developing the Green Deal finance package, allowing consumers to pay for insulation through their energy bills, energy efficiency is firmly in the refurbishment spotlight says Anna Scothern, housing enterprise director at BRE.



The minds of policy makers were no doubt sharpened by the cold weather that gripped parts of the country last winter, causing gas consumption to soar to an all-time record, along with fears of fuel shortages and a spike in fuel poverty. But the spectre of fuel poverty has been present with us for a number of years now because of steadily rising energy bills.

Add to this the UK's commitment to reduce its overall CO₂ levels by 80% against 1990 levels by 2050, and the race is on to make existing houses, which contribute 27% of overall carbon emissions, more energy efficient.

At first glance, 40 years may seem like enough time to complete the race until you consider the age and condition of the UK's houses, which are among the oldest in Europe and 75% of which will still be in use by the middle of the century. With the Energy Saving Trust estimating that 13,400 homes will need to be refurbished every week to make them more energy efficient, the task is as challenging as any gruelling marathon.

The first challenge to overcome is understanding which green refurbishment solutions — whether insulation and double glazing or air-source heat pumps and renewable — are best for which house-type.

To that end, BRE started the Rethinking Refurbishment project in 2008; teaming up with local authorities such as Huntingdonshire District Council to trial the most cost-effective and efficient retrofit solutions in 300 refurbishment exemplars. Last year these were combined with other national exemplars, to create a network of 500 demonstration projects under the National Refurbishment Centre, a joint initiative between BRE partnered and the Energy Saving Trust.

Energy performance benchmark

The remit of the National Refurbishment Centre, whose industry partners includes the Building Research Housing Group and the Local Authority Building Control, is simple — to act as the evidence hub for industry. The National Refurbishment Centre is therefore developing the Refurbishment Portal database to provide live data and case studies from the 500 exemplars so industry can find practical solutions to the mass delivery of green refurbishment. Evidence will also be critical for social housing providers who need to start setting in place or bedding down their refurbishment strategy.

Evidence will help them identify the housing stock and benchmark current energy performance. The results from this along with evidence from demonstration

homes will then allow them to assess the most appropriate and effective solutions, only on energy efficiency performance but also the cost and hassle to install and maintain. From this local authorities can identify appropriate funding mechanisms and decide whether to go for a room-by-room, house-by-house or even street-by-street approach, taking into account disruption. They can also assess whether local supply chains have the skills to implement refurbishment and begin engaging with residents about changing behaviours and using new technologies.

In short, robust evidence is fundamental to developing energy-efficiency strategies for existing homes, which avoid quick fixes and enable social housing providers to reduce CO₂ emissions and energy bills, while improving resident comfort.

"The first challenge to overcome is understanding which green refurbishment solutions are best for which house-type."



One of two properties acquired by Huntingdonshire District Council as part of BRE's Rethinking Refurbishment project

OPTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF THE GREEN HOUSE PROJECT

The Green Houses were purchased by the council in 2008 at a total cost of £329k. The Medium Term Plan estimates that the properties will be sold on the open market for £470k. An independent valuation (31 March 2011) gives a current market valuation of the properties of £415k.

The revenue cost of maintaining the properties, including Non-Domestic Rates, gas/electricity bills, general maintenance and other associated project costs amounts to £11k per annum.

Option 1 - Sale of both properties at the end of the current financial year - If the project finishes at the end of the current financial year and the houses are sold, there is likely to be a capital loss of £55k against their original projected sale price of £470k in the Medium Term Plan.

Revenue Impact: £7k in total over next 3 years and continuing at about £3k per year thereafter.

Option 2 - Retaining the St Ives Green House as a showcase until the end of 2013/14 and renting the St Neots Green House until 2013/14 - The St Ives property is the main showcase house with more potential for education and training. Renting the St Neots property would allow 'cost in use' to be assessed and the rental agreement would make allowance for periodic viewing of the property.

This option will cost the council £8k per annum in running costs (business rates and other associated project costs for the St Ives property) offset by (-£7k) per annum, recouped from renting the St Neots property as a private let.

Revenue Impact: £44k in total over the next 3 years then falling to about £3k per year thereafter.

It is proposed that the additional cost compared with Option 1 of £37k is taken from within the existing Environmental Projects revenue budget.

Option 3 - Retaining the St Ives Green House until the end of 2013/14 and selling the St Neots Green House at the end of the current financial year - The sale of the St Neots property at the end of the current financial year will reduce capital liability but will not provide rental income to offset the running costs of the St Ives property.

This option will cost the council £8k per annum - business rates and other associated project costs for the St Ives property.

Revenue Impact: £43k in total over the next 3 years then falling to about £3k per year thereafter.

It is proposed that the additional cost compared with Option 1 of £36k is taken from within the existing Environmental Projects revenue budget.

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1. COMT	3 RD OCTOBER 2011
2. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (ENVIRONMENTAL WELLBEING)	12 TH OCTOBER 2011
3. DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PANEL	17 TH OCTOBER 2011
4. CABINET	20 TH OCTOBER 2011

ST IVES WEST URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK (Report by Head of Planning Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet regarding the recent consultation about the draft St Ives West Urban Design Framework (Draft UDF) and, taking any appropriate additional comments from the Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Wellbeing) Panel and the Development Management Panel into account, recommend its approval as planning guidance to inform the development of Council policy and the consideration of potential planning applications.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The Draft UDF seeks to establish positive planning, urban design, and development principles for the potential development at the St Ives West area in line with the principles established in the adopted Huntingdonshire Core Strategy (2009). In particular, the Draft UDF provides a framework to enable the delivery of high quality new housing and an opportunity to create a substantial area of accessible strategic green space.
- 2.2 At the Core Strategy Examination in Public, an independent Planning Inspector examined the principle of development in this area and found it to be sound. The following extract from the Planning Inspector's report, dated 29th July 2009, confirms the basis on which the St Ives West area was selected from a range of other potential development areas at St Ives:

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

- 2.3 The Draft UDF was subject to extensive public consultation between 29th July 2011 and 23rd September 2011. The consultation was well publicised in the local press, on posters, and through the District Council's website. Consultation exhibitions were held at Houghton Pavilion and at St Ives Library. These were staffed by Planning Services officers on 1st and 2nd September 2011. As a result of the consultation, 126 respondents made a range of comments on the Draft UDF.
- 2.4 For planning purposes, within the adopted Core Strategy, the whole St Ives West area is identified as a strategic direction of growth (area for development) within the St Ives Spatial Planning Area. This is not based on individual Parish or Town Council administrative boundaries and was identified through rigorous testing of the most appropriate locations for new development at the Core Strategy Examination in Public. The draft UDF (page 2, paragraph 1.2) states that the St Ives West Area is partly within both St Ives Town Council and Houghton and Wyton Parish Council boundaries.
- 2.5 The Draft UDF preferred option sets out urban design principles, highlights the size of a green separation area between St Ives and Houghton and Wyton, identifies a large area of accessible strategic green space, and enables the introduction of additional measures to strengthen conservation designations in the area. It is considered that these principles will ensure that development at St Ives West will be of the highest quality and will not erode the character of Houghton and Wyton.
- 2.6 With regard to the capacity of development at St Ives West, as identified in the Draft UDF, some 300 dwellings would be within the Parish boundary of Houghton and Wyton (including 90 dwellings at Houghton Grange), and some 190 dwellings within the town boundary of St Ives. Two housing development sites in the vicinity at Slepe Meadow and Green Acres (part of the former golf course) are currently under construction and the combined capacity of these is some 230 dwellings.
- 2.7 The Draft UDF preferred option does not promote development related to the built-up area of Houghton village and a substantial physical green separation area will remain, between Houghton and Wyton and St Ives.
- 2.8 Other parallel processes are ongoing to formally allocate land through the emerging Planning Proposals Development Plan Document. The Draft UDF informs this emerging policy and provides a framework to enable consideration of any planning applications that may be submitted prior to the adoption of formal planning allocations.

3. CONSULTATION THEMES

- 3.1 A summary of the consultation comments and the District Council responses can be found at Appendix 1. The main consultation themes that emerged were as follows:
- Principle, scale and location of proposed development
 - Traffic and transport
 - Maintaining the separation of St Ives and Houghton
 - Affordable housing

- Landscape and green space
- Social infrastructure
- Environmental infrastructure
- Proposed shop
- Process issues

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 A range of comments were received on the proposals set out in the Draft UDF. It is clear that there is both support for and objection to the proposals. The main objections derive from the residents of Houghton Village and have been voiced by individuals, members of the local SHED action group, Houghton and Wyton Parish Council, and some of the Parish, District and County Councillors on the St Ives West Working Group. In part, these objections have questioned the legitimacy of the District Council's approach to preparing the Draft UDF, and also its legality.
- 4.2 On balance, it is considered that the principles set out in the Draft UDF continue to establish a robust framework for the delivery of the District Council's adopted Core Strategy policies for new housing in this area. The Draft UDF secures the opportunity to create a high quality of development set within a large and accessible area of strategic green space, and a substantial separation area which will continue to effectively separate the settlements of St Ives and Houghton and Wyton.
- 4.3 It is intended that the UDF will be used to inform the emerging Planning Proposals Development Plan Document as it moves through its formal processes through to adoption, and to provide a robust framework for the consideration of any planning applications received in the interim.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 It is recommended that Cabinet authorises the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing, in conjunction with the Chairman of the Development Management Panel and the Head of Planning Services, to finalise and approve the St Ives West Urban Design Framework to inform Council policy and Development Management decisions on potential planning applications.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Draft St Ives West Urban Design Framework August 2011
 Adopted Huntingdonshire Core Strategy 2009

Contact Officer: Paul Bland – Planning Services Manager (Policy)

☎ 01480 388430

APPENDIX 1

St Ives West Urban Design Framework Summary of Consultation Comments and District Council Responses

Principle, scale and location of proposed development	
Summary of Consultation Comments	District Council Responses
<p>There is general support from respondents from St Ives relating to the proposed development, safeguarding the amenity of those living along Westwood Road in particular, and helping to link all of the housing with the town centre. Conversely there is general opposition from respondents from Houghton and Wyton who consider this location to be unsustainable and are opposed to the principle, scale and location of the proposed development.</p> <p>The proposals would double the size of the Houghton village.</p> <p>There are some suggestions that the development should instead take place to the north and north east of the town, close to the Rainbow Store and employment areas, and some suggest a more limited amount of development in this current location.</p> <p>Ribbon development will be created along the A1123.</p> <p>Support for principle of no development on the 9th fairway of the former golf course and for limited development in the garden of The How. Conversely, representations from the representations of specific landowners seeking inclusion of the 9th Fairway and related land within the Draft UDF.</p> <p>The driveway to the How and How Lodge contribute greatly to character of this part of Houghton Road and should be retained.</p>	<p>The District Council must deliver its adopted Core Strategy, which seeks to provide 400 new dwellings on a sustainable green field site to the west of St Ives. The principle, scale and location are set out in the Core Strategy. This Draft UDF has no policy making role in relation to principle, scale and location of development.</p> <p>This is a western extension to the town of St Ives, not an eastern extension to the village of Houghton.</p> <p>These options were dismissed at the Core Strategy Examination.</p> <p>This will not be ribbon development. It is relatively compact and will be screened by a deep landscape corridor along the A1123 and set within an extensive area of strategic green space.</p> <p>The Draft UDF seeks to protect the 9th Fairway area as an important part of the new area of accessible strategic green space for the benefit of local communities. Development on this area would therefore be inappropriate.</p> <p>The Draft UDF seeks to achieve this as a positive outcome.</p>

<p>Some support for lower density housing on western edge, others would like lower density facing onto Houghton Road.</p> <p>Concern that the housing should meet the needs of all age groups, especially the elderly.</p> <p>The capacity of sewage and storm water infrastructure will need to be upgraded for a development of this size.</p> <p>Some members of the St Ives West Working Group propose that the number of houses in the development area should be reduced by approximately 200 and a strategic gap created at 'C' on the plan at page 15 of the UDF – this will also reduce the traffic exiting on to the A1123 Houghton Road.</p>	<p>The deep landscaped buffer along Houghton Road will effectively screen development in this location.</p> <p>This will be addressed in the finalised UDF and in the consideration of future planning applications.</p> <p>Upgrades will be needed to the foul water infrastructure. Storm water will be discharged by sustainable drainage systems. This will be dealt with in conjunction with relevant infrastructure providers at planning application stage.</p> <p>This proposal by some members of the Working Group does not enable the delivery of the adopted Core Strategy that has already established the principle of the scale of development for this area, as set out in Core Strategy Policy CS2. The draft UDF sets out a framework for delivering a high quality development in this area, along with large areas of accessible green space. The principle of this scale of development, and its potential impacts on the A1123, was accepted by CCC as highways authority as part of the EiP into the Core Strategy. Such a departure from established principles could lead to the District Council having to determine a set of planning applications for the full scale of development established in the Core Strategy that may fail to deliver the qualities and facilities set out in the UDF.</p>
Traffic and transport	
Summary of Consultation Comments	District Council Responses
<p>Not enough information provided relating to whether the plans will improve, worsen or be neutral for the existing traffic.</p>	<p>It will be responsibility of developers to undertake transport assessments of their scheme at planning application stage. If these are not to the satisfaction of the local planning authority, then a planning application could be refused.</p> <p>Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), as highways authority, has been involved in the development of the Draft UDF and has commenced the provision of improved highways infrastructure including a new junction serving the area from the A1123.</p>

<p>Concern over the effect of the development on highways access to Houghton and Wyton, and the A1123 is at full capacity.</p> <p>Impact of cancellation of proposed new A14, and the role of the A1123 as a relief road when the A14 is closed due to accidents.</p> <p>Assertion by some that development will increase traffic along A1123 by 30%.</p> <p>Some concerns from new residents of Green Leas development in St Ives about the potential loop road and effect on their amenity, not knowing about this when they bought their houses this year, and some concerns and alternative suggestions over proposals to close off High Leys.</p> <p>How can bus services be improved to be more beneficial to residents of Houghton and Wyton?</p> <p>Useful contributions reminding HDC and CCC of other junctions improvements that will need to be made, such as Wyton on the Hill / Houghton Road</p>	<p>The transport assessments that accompany any future planning applications may take into account and enable improvements to highways access to Houghton and Wyton. CCC has confirmed that the A1123 is not at full capacity.</p> <p>The A1123 already partially serves this function through dissipation and diversion across the wider highways network. The proposed development will not affect this and the principles of development at this location were accepted following the Core Strategy EiP. Amended proposals are being developed by the DfT and the HA for improvements to the A14.</p> <p>This is incorrect. A 30% increase in traffic does not relate to this proposal. A 30% increase is the CCC assessment of increase over time other things being equal.</p> <p>The alternatives suggested by local residents will be investigated in conjunction with CCC as highways authority.</p> <p>This will be investigated with CCC as highways authority.</p> <p>Welcome these suggestions, and will be made clearer on the framework document.</p>
Maintaining the separation of St Ives and Houghton	
Summary of Consultation Comments	District Council Responses
<p>Concern from those in Houghton and Wyton about green separation between St Ives and Houghton and Wyton, and the village and town merging.</p>	<p>They will not merge. There is a significant green separation between the two settlements west of Houghton Grange. There will also be a significant green backdrop along Houghton Road, and this will provide a softer edge along this road. The whole development will also be set within an accessible area of strategic green infrastructure. Conservation designations within these areas will be strengthened.</p>

<p>Concern that HDC is proposing to build on strategic green space.</p> <p>Concern that part of this development will lie within Houghton and Wyton, therefore not separating the town and village, and land is precious to people of Houghton and Wyton.</p> <p>Concern that proposed green gap in the grounds of Houghton Hill House is insufficient in scale and will be difficult to enforce. Perceptions that the proposed green gap is just houses and gardens and not an obvious gap.</p> <p>The rural nature when driving through Houghton Hill will be lost forever.</p>	<p>To the contrary, the District Council is seeking to create a large accessible area of strategic green infrastructure as part of the wider community benefit of this proposal.</p> <p>For planning purposes, the scale and location of the St Ives West development area have been established as part of the St Ives Spatial Planning Area identified in the adopted Core Strategy. This relates to land partly in St Ives and partly in Houghton and Wyton.</p> <p>The proposed green gap is a significant area (340-425 metres wide), and has the full weight of planning policy that prevents building in the countryside. Proposals to extend the Conservation Area will further protect this area by reducing the amount of extensions and other domestic building work that homeowners will be able to undertake and will also protect significant trees not currently protected by TPO from being removed. In planning terms, the few properties that lie within extensive grounds in the green gap are houses in the countryside, that lie outside of the built-up settlement area of Houghton and Wyton.</p> <p>A significant landscaping belt along the A1123 will prevent views of the housing development from the road, and will help to provide a more landscaped entrance to the town.</p>
Affordable housing	
Summary of Consultation Comments	District Council Responses
<p>Concern over the amount and percentage of social housing that will be delivered by the development, and that this will increase crime, vandalism and anti social behaviour and the risk of creating a sink estate.</p>	<p>The target of 40% affordable housing is established with the adopted Core Strategy (Policy CS4). The District Council fundamentally disagrees with comments relating to the potential anti social impact of affordable housing on an area.</p>
Landscape and green space	
Summary of Consultation Comments	District Council Responses
<p>Support for increased landscaping screen along A1123 and creation of areas of public green space.</p>	<p>Support welcomes as this is considered to be an important element in the quality design required for this area.</p>

<p>Concern over loss of green space, green space has always existed.</p> <p>Needs to highlight allotment provision.</p> <p>Concern over views into the site from meadows and river valley to the south.</p> <p>There are some errors on the nature conservation designations map.</p> <p>Some concern that there is already significant public access in the area, and that extensive and unrestrained public access will compromise objective of preserving and enhancing the natural environment.</p> <p>Issues relating to future maintenance and management of any open space.</p>	<p>The UDF will help to deliver a large accessible area of strategic green infrastructure. Land currently in private ownership is not accessible to the public.</p> <p>The potential for allotments provision will be noted in the UDF.</p> <p>The long views out are very long distance. There are very few short views into the site from public footpaths. More evidence of protection of views into the site can be added to the UDF, and developers will be required to address this point specifically.</p> <p>These will be rectified.</p> <p>Disagree. The Core Strategy has a fundamental objective to improve access to identified areas of green space, providing opportunities for healthy and active lifestyles. The level of accessibility to particular areas of nature conservation value will be managed appropriately.</p> <p>These issues will be addressed at a later stage, and potential partners have already been identified.</p>
Social infrastructure	
Summary of Consultation Comments	District Council Responses
<p>Concern over the capacity of the schools, particularly St Ivo school.</p> <p>Needs to clarify medical provision requirements.</p> <p>No community central hub, therefore lack of community cohesion.</p>	<p>The County Council is currently undertaking a review of primary school provision in St Ives. Decisions about the investment of developer contributions and other resources will be made once the review is completed. This site will be within the catchment of St Ivo Secondary School, as students will be within easy walking distance. The County Council may look at reviewing catchment areas for St Ivo school.</p> <p>This issue will be clarified in conjunction with the PCT.</p> <p>There may be a possibility to consider linkages to / provision of community facilities relating to the proposals and the locality.</p>

Environmental infrastructure	
Summary of Consultation Comments	District Council Responses
<p>Early infrastructure should be provided, landscaping, footpaths etc.</p> <p>Some residents of Houghton and Wyton are concerned over upgrading the Thicket path to a cycleway and concern that the Thicket path floods and therefore is unsuitable for upgrading. Conversely there is support for upgrading the path to encourage increased usage for cyclists and pedestrians.</p>	<p>This will be considered in detail as part of the implementation of the proposals.</p> <p>For most of its route the Thicket path is a tarmac lane, and people cycle along this route all the time. This is the historic low road between St Ives and Houghton and Wyton and is a safe and flat route. It may need to be upgraded in places and access can be managed when it is flooded.</p>
Proposed shop	
Summary of Consultation Responses	District Council Response
<p>Some concern that a potential shop within the site will have an adverse impact on the viability of the existing village shop.</p> <p>Some support for the shop, and need to encourage early provision.</p>	<p>A site for a potential shop was identified to help reduce traffic flows in the wider St Ives area, such as Hill Rise, as these developments were not provided with shop facilities when they were built. The shop in Houghton and Wyton is some distance away from this potential development and is unlikely to be adversely affected.</p> <p>Will investigate how this can be achieved.</p>
Process issues	
Summary of Consultation Comments	District Council Responses
<p>The preparation and consultation processes for the adopted Core Strategy itself (from 2006 to 2009) were insufficient and the residents of Houghton in particular were unaware of or only partially engaged in those processes.</p>	<p>The Huntingdonshire Core Strategy was adopted in 2009 following extensive consultation, an Examination in Public, and a binding Inspectors Report. Along with the East of England Plan, the Core Strategy forms the statutory Development Plan for Huntingdonshire. The process was open, transparent, and well publicised. The District Council does not accept the suggestion from particular objectors that they did not have sufficient opportunity to be involved in the Core Strategy process. The adopted Core Strategy clearly identifies directions of growth for strategic housing and other development on a Key Diagram and describes the spatial locations of development types in its policies. The St Ives West area is identified as a strategic housing</p>

<p>The Draft UDF should not be referred to as a Supplementary Planning Document, and should have been prepared only after the formal confirmation of site allocations through the adoption of a formal district wide Planning Proposals Development Plan Document (PP DPD).</p> <p>The change to the administrative boundary of Houghton and Wyton Parish, after the adoption of the Core Strategy, should mean that the identified level of development would relate to and impact on Houghton rather than St Ives.</p>	<p>development location both on the Key Diagram and in Policy CS2 “Strategic Housing Development”, which states:</p> <p><i>In the St Ives Spatial Planning Area where at least 500 homes will be provided. Of these, at least 100 homes will be on previously developed land, about 400 homes will be on Greenfield land and about 200 will be affordable. Provision will be in the following general locations:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>In a significant Greenfield development to the west of the town;</i> • <i>In the redevelopment of previously developed land within the built-up area of the town.</i> <p>The District Council’s purpose in preparing the Draft UDF is to establish the planning, urban design, and development principles that will apply to the area described in the Core Strategy, to ensure the delivery of a high quality development. This is an important stage in the planning process as the Core Strategy has established the principle of development in this location. The adopted Core Strategy is the key element of the Local Development Framework that provides the basis for the District Council preparing focused and positive planning framework for identified strategic development areas. The Draft UDF is not being promoted as a Supplementary Planning Document, and any reference to such a definition will be removed from the final document. Once approved, the UDF will provide the District Council’s development guidance for the area. It is not necessary to delay the production of such guidance until the Planning Proposals DPD is completed. The Draft UDF informs the development of Local Development Framework policy deriving from the adopted Core Strategy, and this includes the emerging Planning Proposals DPD which deals with specific land allocations.</p> <p>The Parish boundary between Houghton and Wyton and the Town Council boundary of St Ives was amended in 2010. The nature of the objections on this matter suggest that this means an element of the</p>
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<p>The process of engaging with and informing elected councillors during the preparation of the Draft UDF was ineffective.</p>	<p>St Ives West development is proposed on green field land to the east of the built up settlement area of Houghton village and that this should not be allowed. However, the spatial strategy of the Core Strategy (adopted in 2009) and in particular Policy CS2 relates to the St Ives Spatial Planning Area. This is not based on the administrative boundaries of individual parishes and towns, and this is a consistent spatial planning approach that has been applied across the District.</p> <p>In preparing the Draft UDF the District Council has been able to engage with a range of stakeholders including the relevant landowners and developers, partner organisation such as Cambridgeshire County Council, elected Councillors, and local communities. The purpose of the St Ives West Working Group was to inform elected Councillors from the Town, Parish, District and County Councils. The Working Group has met on a number of occasions throughout the process of developing the Draft UDF, and also undertook two visits to the St Ives West area. It has been an effective group and, whilst its members have not always agreed on matters of principle, their individual views have been heard and have been formally stated through the recent consultation process.</p>
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Agenda Item 10

SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP

WEDNESDAY, 7 SEPTEMBER 2011

CIVIC SUITE 1A, PATHFINDER HOUSE

ACTION SHEET

MEMBERS PRESENT – Management Side:
Councillor A Hansard - Chairman
Councillor J Davies
Councillor Mrs P Jordan

Employee Side:
K Lawson – Vice-Chairman
Mrs T Davidson
Mrs S Mckerral
C Sneesby
Mrs G Smith
G Vince

IN ATTENDANCE:
T Bowmer
P Corley
S Howell
Mrs A Jerrom
Ms H Nicholson

APOLOGIES:
Councillor Mrs B Boddington
Councillor TV Rogers

ITEM NO.	SUBJECT	ACTION BY
1	Report of the Advisory Group The report of the meeting of the Advisory Group held on 8 th June 2011 was received and noted.	
2	Members' Interests No declarations were received.	
3	Health and Safety Policy With the assistance of a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services and with the aid of a presentation by the Corporate Health and Safety Manager, the Group was invited to comment on the proposed new Health and Safety Policy prior to its wider	

ITEM NO.	SUBJECT	ACTION BY
	<p>consideration and formal adoption by the Employment Panel.</p> <p>It was explained that the Council's current policy for managing health and safety had been in place since 2004 and it had been considered timely to review the policy in order to reflect recent organisational restructuring. The document, based on a Health and Safety Executive management model, consists of both a statement of intent and an outline of arrangements and responsibilities for both elected members and employees, and had previously been circulated to Heads of Service for comment. The Group was advised that the Policy now includes both the terms of reference of the Safety Advisory Group and the important role played by the Employee Liaison Advisory Group (ELAG), whereby H&S issues may be raised anonymously by employees.</p> <p>Having considered the organisational chart within the report it was considered appropriate that the Corporate Safety Advisor box be amended to include both the Operations Division Safety and One Leisure Co-ordinators, the latter being a managerial position which could also be placed with Service Managers. Further comment from the Group included the requirement for further indication on the chart to indicate line management and advisory roles.</p> <p>In answer to a question, the Corporate Safety Advisor advised that in the case of premises such as the call centre which are owned by Cambridgeshire County Council but leased by the District Council the landlord should take the lead in H&S matters however it was the responsibility of line managers to check the terms and conditions of tenancy.</p> <p>With regard to business continuity, as referred to on Page 19, paragraph 11, the Operations Division Health, Safety and Emergency Planning Co-ordinator requested that this be deleted from the policy as it was not a health and safety issue. In addition it was requested that the description of RIDDOR on Page 26 be amended by deleting (near miss accidents) and replacing this with (prescribed dangerous occurrences). In discussing RIDDOR as it appears on Page 17 of the report, members requested that the sentence, <i>they are also to nominate in writing a competent person to report RIDDOR incidents to the HSE</i>, be deleted from the Heads of Service responsibilities to be replaced by <i>they are also to appoint a competent person to report RIDDOR incidents</i>.</p> <p>Having discussed the responsibilities placed on both employees and elected members by the draft policy, the Group stressed the importance of ensuring that those with health and safety responsibilities are made fully aware of them, to this end it was also suggested that the membership of the Advisory Group be reconsidered to reflect the varied roles. In this respect Keith Lawson undertook to meet with Mrs A Jerrom to review the membership of the Group within its terms of reference.</p> <p>The Group was advised that the policy, once formally adopted, would be placed on the Intranet H&S pages and any future amendments would be submitted to the Group for comment.</p> <p><i>The Policy was endorsed by Employment Panel subsequent to the</i></p>	

ITEM NO.	SUBJECT	ACTION BY
	<p>meeting and the full Policy can be found at the following link: http://teams.huntsdc.gov.uk/HumanResources/health%20and%20safety/Documents/Part%201%20Statement%20of%20Safety%20Policy%202011.docx</p>	
4	<p>Framework for the Review of Risk Assessment</p> <p>With the aid of a report and presentation, the Council's Contract Safety Advisor, Mr Tony Bowmer, invited the Group to review the framework for the review of risk assessments.</p> <p>At its June meeting the terms of reference for the Group including the requirement for the Safety Advisor to evaluate risk assessments where those assessments have been called in by the Group for review, had been approved. It was intended that as a result of the inclusion of indicators and by employing set methodology a consistent process would be attained across all services. Mr Bowmer advised that in order to maintain a fair checking system, reviews would need to be planned, and suggested that the H&S sharepoint be utilised for setting up and maintaining a calendar system. The Group was invited to consider the new draft framework for such reviews and raise any suggestions or comments at the December meeting.</p> <p>In the interim, following a request for volunteers to undergo a review of their service's risk assessment, the One Leisure Quality, Facilities and Safety Manager offered to submit swimming pool management for the Group's initial review.</p>	<p>TB</p> <p>ALL</p> <p>PC/TB</p>
5	<p>Quarterly Accident/Incident Reports</p>	
	<p>(a) District Council Employees</p> <p>The Group received and noted a report by the Corporate Health and Safety Advisor. The Group was advised that there had been a total of 4 accidents or incidents reported at the Council's office based premises and during activities provided by the Sports and Active Lifestyles Team during the previous quarter. Members were advised that the majority of accidents had been of a minor nature and there had been no statutorily reportable accidents under the terms of RIDDOR.</p>	

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	<p>(b) One Leisure</p> <p>The Group received a report by the One Leisure Quality, Facilities and Safety Manager detailing accidents that have been reported at the Council's Leisure Centres during the previous quarter. Members were advised with attendance figures of 350,000 at the centres, 7 employee related accidents had been reported, no accidents had been reported under RIDDOR Regulation's requirements. A total of 195 non-employee accidents had been reported, 7 of these had not been caused as a direct result of taking part in an activity. Members were advised that preventative measures had been identified following analysis of the accidents.</p>	
	<p>(c) Operations Division</p> <p>The Group also received and noted a report by the Operation Division's Health, Safety and Emergency Planning Co-ordinator outlining details of the 15 accidents that had been reported since the last meeting of the Group. It was reported that of the 9 employee related accidents 3 had been reported under the requirements of Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) whereby following accidents, employees had been absent from work or unable to carry out their duties for more than 3 days. 6 non – employee related accidents had also been reported, 5 of which had occurred at Countryside Services Leisure Facilities.</p> <p>All accidents had been reviewed at Operations Management Team or Strategy Policy meetings and remedial action had taken place.</p>	
6	<p>Fire Evacuation - One Leisure</p> <p>With the aid of a report by the One Leisure St Ives Operations Manager, the Group was advised of a fire evacuation that had taken place at the site in July. The fire alarm had been activated by a smoke machine being used by users of the Burgess Hall, for which permission had not been sought. The Group was pleased to be informed that a full evacuation of both the Leisure Centre and the hall had been carried out swiftly and efficiently. Action has been taken to avoid a similar incident occurring in the future.</p>	
7	<p>Date of Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting of the Group was scheduled for 7 December 2011. Members were invited to participate in an ad-hoc safety inspection that would be carried out on 27 September 2011 and were advised that appropriate serviceable footwear was recommended.</p>	AJ

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