

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING)** will be held in the **CIVIC SUITE 0.1A, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN** on **TUESDAY, 3 JANUARY 2012 at 7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

**Contact
(01480)**

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 6th December 2011.

**Miss H Ali
388006**

2 Minutes.

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.

2 Minutes.

3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN (Pages 7 - 12)

A copy of the current Forward Plan, which was published on 15th December 2011, is attached. Members are invited to note the Plan and to comment as appropriate on any items contained therein.

**Mrs H Taylor
388008**

10 Minutes.

4. NHS CONSULTATION - PROPOSED REDESIGN OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACROSS CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH (Pages 13 - 14)

To receive a report outlining the Panel's preliminary views on NHS Cambridgeshire's current consultation on the proposed redesign of mental health services across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

**Miss H Ali
388006**

Mr John Ellis, Head of Mental Health, Learning Disability and Substance Misuse Commissioning for NHS Cambridgeshire and Ms Annette Newton, Director of Operations for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust will be in attendance at the meeting.

30 Minutes.

5. **VOLUNTARY SECTOR REVIEW (INDICATIVE FUNDING)** (Pages 15 - 18)

To receive a report from the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services on voluntary sector support for 2013/14.

**D Smith
388377**

20 Minutes.

6. **CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN** (Pages 19 - 22)

To receive a report from the Head of Housing Services on the implications of the Cambridgeshire Local Investment Plan upon local housing.

**S Plant
388240**

20 Minutes.

7. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

To resolve:-

to exclude the press and public from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to the financial affairs of particular persons (including the authority holding that information).

2 Minutes.

8. **ONE LEISURE WORKING GROUP** (Pages 23 - 30)

To receive a report from the One Leisure Working Group.

**A Roberts
388015**

15 Minutes.

9. **RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PUBLIC**

To resolve:-

to readmit the public to the meeting.

2 Minutes.

10. **NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS WORKING GROUP**

To receive an update on a recent meeting of the Neighbourhood Forums Working Group.

15 Minutes.

11. **CAMBRIDGESHIRE ADULTS WELL-BEING AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

To receive an update from Councillor R J West on the outcome of recent meetings of the Cambridgeshire Adults, Well-Being and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5 Minutes.

12. WORK PLAN STUDIES (Pages 31 - 36)

To consider, with the aid of a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the current programme of Overview and Scrutiny studies.

**Miss H Ali
388006**

15 Minutes.

13. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS (Pages 37 - 46)

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

**Miss H Ali
388006**

15 Minutes.

14. SCRUTINY (Pages 47 - 56)

To scrutinise decisions as set out in the Decisions Digest and to raise any other matters for scrutiny that fall within the remit of the Panel.

5 Minutes.

Dated this 21 day of December
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 Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer, Tel No: (01480) 388006 / email: Habbiba.Ali@huntingdonshire.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Panel.

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

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

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the District Council's website – www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk (*under Councils and Democracy*).

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

Emergency Procedure

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

Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) held in the Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 6 December 2011.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.

Councillors S Akthar, K M Baker,
Mrs J A Dew, J J Dutton, Mrs P A Jordan,
S M Van De Kerkhove, Mrs D C Reynolds
and R J West.

Co-opted Members – Mr R Coxhead and Mrs
M Nicholas.

APOLOGY: An Apology for absence from the meeting
was submitted on behalf of Councillor
I C Bates.

65. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 1st November 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

66. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Mrs P A Jordan declared a personal interest in Minute No. 69 by virtue of her employment with the NHS.

Councillor K M Baker declared a personal interest in Minute No. 70 by virtue of being a Trustee of Shopmobility, Huntingdon.

67. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN

The Panel considered and noted the current Forward Plan of Key Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which had been prepared by the Executive Leader of the Council for the period 1st December 2011 to 31st March 2012.

68. HOUSING BENEFIT CHANGES AND THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON HUNTINGDONSHIRE

(Councillor B S Chapman, Executive Councillor for Customer Services and Councillor N J Guyatt, Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing, were in attendance for consideration of this item).

With the aid of a joint report by the Heads of Customer Services and of Housing Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel gave consideration to the impact of changes to the Housing Benefit system upon Huntingdonshire residents. The Executive Councillor for Customer Services reported that the changes

were part of the Government's Welfare Reform programme. They largely affected the Local Housing Allowance paid to households that were assessed as being eligible for help with their rent in the private sector. Members were advised that the effect of the changes to the Housing Benefits system had resulted in a reduction of £370,000 per annum, in the amount that was paid to existing benefit claimants renting in the private sector. This equated to a reduction in benefit entitlement of between £3 and £70 per week. The changes were likely to have an impact on existing claimants from January 2012, which could potentially result in households falling into rent arrears, facing the threat of eviction and/or possible homelessness.

In response to a question by a Member, the Panel was advised that a majority of claimants would lose less than £10 per week. Members were however concerned at the greater impact that the changes would have on larger households in properties with 4 or more bedrooms. These households would experience a significant reduction in their entitlement and consequently were likely to turn to the Council for assistance. Given the shortage in the availability of social rented housing, it was likely that there would be an increase in the number of households facing homelessness. This could result in more use being made of temporary accommodation with the associated additional costs being incurred by the Council. In response to a subsequent question by a Member, the Panel was informed that additional provision to meet demands on Council services as a result of an increase in the level of homelessness had been made within the budget.

The Panel discussed a number of ways in which the changes would have an impact locally. These included landlords potentially having to sell their properties, thereby reducing the number of homes available for rent in the private sector, the relocation of households into the District from other local authority areas in their search for more affordable housing, whether certain areas within the District would be affected more than others, utilising empty properties in the District to assist with meeting the shortfall in housing and other ways of increasing the stock of social rented housing.

Having been advised that other welfare benefit reforms through the introduction of the Universal Credit system contained within the Welfare Reform Bill were expected to have further impact on Huntingdonshire residents, the Panel

RESOLVED

- (a) that the report now submitted be noted; and
- (b) that a further report drawing together the wider housing policy implications for the Council arising from the Government's Welfare Reform Bill be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel.

(At this point (7.30pm) Councillor J J Dutton left the meeting).

69. NHS CONSULTATION - PROPOSED REDESIGN OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACROSS CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel was acquainted with details of a consultation exercise being undertaken by NHS Cambridgeshire on its plans to transform mental health services in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The purpose of the consultation was to seek views on the proposals which were designed to improve access to the service and its responsiveness, ensure that all facilities were modernised and purpose built and to establish the delivery of more effective and efficient services.

Councillor R J West reported on the work of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee, which had been specifically established to respond to the consultation. The Panel's attention was drawn to the Committee's concerns about the absence of medical aims from the proposals, the travel and support arrangements available to patients and their visitors, changes to admission thresholds to mental health facilities and staffing levels on acute wards. The Committee was next due to meet on 19th December 2011, when consideration would be given to a number of other matters which had been raised and its final response would be formulated.

Members of the Panel recalled their previous discussions on the proposals formally to relocate the current mental health facility in Acer Ward at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital to Peterborough. The facility had been temporarily closed earlier on in the year and the Panel expressed concerns over the adverse impact that the formalisation of this decision would continue to have on patients and visitors. Councillor R J West commented that the Hinchingsbrooke facility had been closed following an assessment by the National Clinical Advisory Team, which had concluded that the facility was not adequately staffed to cope with the level of patients admitted. He undertook to circulate to Panel Members details of a briefing note which had been prepared for the County Council's Adults, Well-Being and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

In discussing the proposals further, the Panel formed the view that there was a risk associated with the Care in the Community approach proposed by NHS Cambridgeshire as it relied on patients taking medication. Members also questioned the adequacy of the transportation system to Peterborough for relatives and friends. The latter might, moreover, deter potential patients from self admitting themselves to hospital.

Having regard to the proposals to establish a new 24/7 Advice and Brief Intervention Centre, Members concluded that, given the absence of face to face contact with patients, the Centre could make flawed diagnoses. The view was further expressed that the Centre could act as a potential barrier to acute services for those in urgent need of care.

On the grounds of the conclusions reached, the Panel expressed strong views that the mental health services previously provided at

Hinchingbrooke Hospital should not be permanently transferred to the Lucille Van Geest Centre in Peterborough. It was held that the proposals would continue to have an adverse impact on patients and visitors. Other matters that were discussed included modernising the facility at Hinchingbrooke Hospital, the ongoing trend for health services to be transferred from Huntingdonshire to Peterborough and Cambridge and whether Circle Healthcare had been consulted upon the proposals.

Having been informed of the experiences of Members' friends and families who had utilised the mental health service and in noting the consultation period would close on 16th January 2012, the Panel concurred with a suggestion that the views of service users should be sought prior to the next meeting. This would ensure that the Panel submitted a fully informed response to the consultation. In addition, the Panel requested a representative of NHS Cambridgeshire to be invited to the January 2012 meeting.

70. VOLUNTARY SECTOR WORKING GROUP

Pursuant to Minute No. 11/54, the Panel gave consideration to a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) detailing the outcome of the Voluntary Sector Working Group's investigations into the potential impact on demand for District Council services of reductions in the services currently procured from voluntary organisations through Service Level Agreements. The report also included an outline of the functions that the Working Group believed should be undertaken by the voluntary sector in Huntingdonshire.

The Panel considered the Working Group's findings in respect of the potential future demand for District Council services. The Huntingdonshire Citizens Advice Bureau was the only organisation the Council currently commissioned that undertook functions that were also the responsibility of the Council. It was anticipated that any budgetary proposals that would impact on the future viability of the organisation would result in approximately 9,000 additional customers seeking assistance from the Council. It was stressed that this figure did not include additional services that were provided by the CAB such as debt, immigration and unemployment. Members were advised that an increase in customers could potentially require the Council to provide additional resources in the region of £60,000 which equated to an additional 2.5 (full time equivalent) employees.

The Panel was informed of potential financial liabilities that the Council might incur if the Hunts Forum for Voluntary Organisations' funding was reduced. Responsibility for the management of the Maple Centre would transfer back to the District Council, resulting in additional costs to the Council, which were estimated to be around £25,000 per annum.

The Panel endorsed the Working Group's suggestions that when deciding how the Council would engage with voluntary organisations in the future the Council should adopt the priorities listed below:-

- service providers that were able to provide evidence of financial sustainability for example by actively searching for

- external and/or match funding opportunities;
- advice services for debt, benefits and unemployment;
- activities and services that facilitated a level of independence for those people otherwise dependent on the service and support of carers and others;
- services and activities that increased the chances of young people obtaining and/or maintaining paid unemployment; and
- services that supported the growth of the voluntary and community sector in Huntingdonshire and provided support mechanisms by which that growth could be achieved, including sourcing funding by other voluntary bodies.

In addition, it was suggested that the services provided should be accessible to all residents across the District. It was further suggested that a combination of both grant aid and commissioning models should be employed by the Council to fund future voluntary activity within the District, together with a community chest through which other voluntary organisations could apply for small grants. It was noted that the views of the Working Group had been taken into account by the Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities and would form the basis of the Voluntary Sector Support item due for consideration by the Panel at its next meeting.

71. NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS WORKING GROUP

With the aid of a report prepared by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel received an update on a recent meeting of the Neighbourhood Forums Working Group. In noting the investigations undertaken to date, Members were advised of the Shape My Place initiative. The initiative sought to promote community engagement by enabling local public bodies to establish dialogue with a sector of local residents that might not utilise the Forums. It was reported that Cambridgeshire County Council was leading on the scheme, with a pilot currently being held in Fenland. Having noted that the next meeting of the Working Group would be held on 12th December 2011, the Panel

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to adopt the Shape My Place initiative within Huntingdonshire.

72. CAMBRIDGESHIRE ADULTS WELLBEING AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor R J West delivered an update on matters that were due to be considered by the Cambridgeshire Adults Well-Being and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee at their meeting on the 9th December 2011, which would included an update on clinical commissioning in Cambridgeshire, progress against the Adult Social Care Services Work Plan and Integrated Plan and the emerging findings of the Home Care Services Working Group.

73. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel received and noted the content of a report by the Head of

Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) containing details of studies being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Economic Well-Being and for Environmental Well-Being.

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

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of actions taken in response to recent discussions and decisions. A brief update was delivered by Councillor R J West on the Cambridgeshire Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee's investigations into domestic abuse.

75. SCRUTINY

The 119th Edition of the Decision Digest was received and noted.

Chairman

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

Prepared by Councillor J D Ablewhite
Date of Publication: 15 December 2011
For Period: 1st January to 30th April 2012

Membership of the Cabinet is as follows:-

Councillor J D Ablewhite	- Executive Leader of the Council, with responsibility for Strategic Economic Development	3 Pettis Road St. Ives Huntingdon PE27 6SR Tel: 01480 466941 E-mail: Jason.Ablewhite@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor N J Guyatt	- Deputy Executive Leader of the Council with responsibility for Strategic Planning and Housing	6 Church Lane Stibbington Cambs PE8 6LP Tel: 01780 782827 E-mail: Nick.Guyatt@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor B S Chapman	- Executive Councillor for Organisational Development	6 Kipling Place St. Neots Huntingdon PE19 7RG Tel: 01480 212540 E-mail: Barry.Chapman@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor J A Gray	- Executive Councillor for Resources	Shufflewick Cottage Station Row Tilbrook PE28 OJY Tel: 01480 861941 E-mail: Jonathan.Gray@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor D M Tysoe	- Executive Councillor for Environment	Grove Cottage Maltings Lane Ellington Huntingdon PE28 OAA Tel: 01480 388310 E-mail: Darren.Tysoe@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor T D Sanderson	- Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities	29 Burmoor Close Stukeley Meadows Huntingdon PE29 6GE Tel: 01480 412135 E-mail: Tom.Sanderson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

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

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

Colin Meadowcroft
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Advanced Waste Partnership*** ∞	Cabinet	19 Jan 2012	None.	Eric Kendall, Head of Operations Tel No. 01480 388635 or email Eric.Kendall@huntindonshire.gov.uk		D Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being
CIL Charging Schedule	Cabinet	19 Jan 2012	Local Investment Framework Viability Reports	Steve Ingram, Head of Planning Services Tel No. 01480 388400 or email Steve.Ingram@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy	Cabinet	19 Jan 2012	Cambs County Council-Led Project	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388340 or email Paul.Bland@huntsdc.gov.uk	Endorse as Council Policy (subject to County Council progress).	N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Cambridgeshire Future Transport - Transport for Cambridgeshire	Cabinet	19 Jan 2012	None.	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Update on emerging options and recommendations.	N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Voluntary Sector Support	Cabinet	19 Jan 2012	None.	Dan Smith, Community Health Manager Tel No 01480 388377 or email Dan.Smith@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		T D Sanderson	Social Well-Being
Thermal Imaging of Private Homes In Huntingdonshire through the Heatseekers Scheme***	Cabinet	19 Jan 2012	None.	Chris Jablonski, Environment Team Leader Tel No. 01480 388368 or email Chris.Jablonski@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being).	D Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being
Roll Forward of Core Strategy - Local Plan Project Plan***	Cabinet	16 Feb 2012	None.	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Budget and MTP	Cabinet	16 Feb 2012	Draft MTP, Previous Year's budget report, Various Annexes	Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services Tel No. 01480 388103 or email Steve.Couper@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being). 2nd February 2012.	J A Gray	Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being)
Waste Collection Policies	Cabinet	16 Feb 2012	None.	Eric Kendall, Head of Operations Tel No. 01480 388635 or email Eric.Kendall@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		D Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being
Location of the Call Centre	Cabinet	16 Feb 2012	Previous Cabinet Papers	Julia Barber, Head of Customer Services Tel No 01480 388105 or email Julia.Barber@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J A Gray	Economic Well-Being

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators	Cabinet	16 Feb 2012	Previous year's Strategy	Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services Tel No. 01480 388103 or email Steve.Couper@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being). 2nd February 2012.	J A Gray	Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being)
Cambs Renewable Infrastructure Framework***	Cabinet	22 Mar 2012	CCC - Cambs Renewable Infrastructure Framework Strategy	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Endorse as Council Policy	N Guyatt D Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being
Funding for CCTV***	Cabinet	22 Mar 2012	None.	Eric Kendall, Head of Operations Tel No. 01480 388635 or email Eric.Kendall@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		D Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being
Cambs Community Energy Fund***	Cabinet	22 Mar 2012	CCC - Community Energy Fund Strategy	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Endorse as Council Policy	N J Guyatt D Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being
Huntingdon West Master Plan	Cabinet	22 Mar 2012	Huntingdon West Action Plan	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Cambridgeshire Future Transport - 'Transport for Cambridgeshire'***	Cabinet	19 Apr 2012	Cambs Future Transport Programme	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Update on emerging options and recommendations.	N Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)***	Cabinet	19 Apr 2012	Examination in Public Report	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 - or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Outcome of Examination and recommend adoption to Council		
Planning for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)	Cabinet	19 Apr 2012	CCC SuDs Options Paper	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Consider options.	N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING)

3RD JANUARY 2012

NHS CONSULTATION – PROPOSED REDESIGN OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACROSS CAMBRIDESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH (Report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the Panel's last meeting, Members gave consideration to the content of NHS Cambridgeshire's current consultation on the Proposed Redesign of Mental Health Services across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- 1.2 In light of the fact that the consultation closes on 16th January 2012, it was agreed to defer finalising the Panel's response to its January 2012 meeting. Members requested a representative of NHS Cambridgeshire to be in attendance at the meeting and an invitation has since been extended to that organisation.
- 1.3 In addition, the Panel was keen to ensure that an informed response to the consultation was submitted and requested the views of service users to be sought on the proposals. Members recalled that letters in the press had appeared in the local paper and requested Officers to make contact with those individuals to enquire whether they would be able to assist the Panel with its investigations. In addition, a press release was issued on 12th December 2011. Enquiries were also made by Councillor Mrs J A Dew, on behalf of the Panel, to gain the views of a service user. All views obtained will be conveyed to the Panel at its meeting.
- 1.4 The purpose of this report therefore is to remind Members of the preliminary views expressed by the Panel at its December 2011 meeting.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the Panel's December 2011 meeting, Councillor R J West delivered a brief update on the work of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee which had been established to respond to the consultation proposals. Their view was that the proposals had been designed to generate efficiencies within the existing service, ensure effective use of NHS finances and to improve access to services. However, some concerns existed amongst the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee about the absence of medical aims from the proposals, the travel and support arrangements available to patients and their visitors, admission thresholds to the proposed mental health facilities and staffing levels on acute wards. The Committee has since met on 19th December 2011, when consideration was given to a number of other matters together with their final response to the consultation.

3. PRELIMINARY VIEWS

- 3.1 Acer Ward at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital was temporarily closed following a review by the National Clinical Advisory Team on 2nd September 2011 which concluded that staff shortages presented serious clinical risk. The facility has been closed to new admissions since 8th September 2011 pending the outcome of the current consultation. A briefing note to this effect has been circulated around electronically to Panel Members for background purposes.



- 3.2 Members of the Panel expressed strong concerns over the proposed loss of a local facility within Huntingdonshire. The Panel commented on the risks associated with the Care in the Community approach suggested by NHS Cambridgeshire given that it is reliant on patients taking their medication. This concern might have greater currency if the changes result in patients who have more severe conditions being cared for in this way rather than in wards as was previously the case. Members also questioned the adequacy of the transportation system to Peterborough for relatives and friends. This might deter potential patients from self admitting themselves to hospital.
- 3.3 In terms of the proposals to establish a new 24/7 Advice and Brief Intervention Centre, the Panel commented that this could lead to flawed diagnosis given that patients would not be receiving a face to face service. In addition, Members formed the view that the Centre could act as a potential barrier to acute services for those in urgent need of care.
- 3.4 A Member stated that Acer Ward had not been open for long and the Ward was already designated as a purpose built facility for mental health patients. It was suggested that the existing facility could be modernised to meet the accommodation standards now required.
- 3.5 The Panel received details of the experiences of Members whose friends and families have utilised the mental health service. The request for additional service users' views arose from the Panel's discussions in this respect.
- 3.6 Finally, the Panel drew attention to the ongoing trend for local NHS facilities to be transferred from Huntingdonshire to Cambridge and Peterborough.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Panel has already made a series of comments on NHS Cambridgeshire's current consultation on the Proposed Redesign of Mental Health Services across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The Panel expressed a wish to ensure that an informed response to the consultation was submitted and in that light, representatives of NHS Cambridgeshire have been invited to attend the Panel's meeting with service users. Any other views received will be conveyed to Members at the meeting.
- 4.2 The Panel is requested to endorse the preliminary views as outlined in section 3 of the report above and to consider whether it wishes to make any further comments on the consultation for submission to NHS Cambridgeshire by 16th January 2012.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

Contact Officer: Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer
 01480 388006
 Habbiba.Ali@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Overview & Scrutiny (Social Wellbeing)	3 January 2012
Overview & Scrutiny (Economic Wellbeing)	5 January 2012
Cabinet	19 January 2012

VOLUNTARY SECTOR REVIEW (INDICATIVE FUNDING)
(Report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is a request to Members to both offer an indicative gross budget for voluntary sector support for 2013-14 and agree the method(s) for distributing funds to the voluntary sector.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 An extensive review of voluntary sector funding and its impacts has been undertaken during 2011 and a special Member-working group was set up by the Overview and Scrutiny (Social Wellbeing) Panel. The outputs of both the officer and Member-led reviews have been seriously considered in the preparation of this report.

- 2.2 The following general priority areas, for funding voluntary organisations, have emerged:-

- Service providers that are able to provide evidence of financial sustainability; evidence may include signs of actively searching for external and/or match funding opportunities;
- Services that provide advice on debt, benefits and unemployment were particularly valued during the review;
- Activities and services that facilitate a level of independence for those people otherwise dependent on the service and support of carers and others, were also identified as worthy of consideration for financial contribution within the review;
- Services and activities that could increase the chances of young people obtaining and/or maintaining paid employment, were an emerging area that were considered important; and
- Services that support the growth of the voluntary and community sector in Huntingdonshire and provide support mechanisms by which that growth could be achieved, including sourcing funding for other voluntary bodies, were considered important in developing and supporting the sector more widely than just by direct financial contributions to a few organisations.

3. POTENTIAL MODELS FOR DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS

3.1 During the review it became clear that some Members were keen to see minimal bureaucratic barriers facing those organisations seeking funding; while being mindful of both the limited financial resources that could be made available and the need to ensure the appropriate use of public funds. To this end it became clear that one solution may not fit all circumstances; different levels of assessment or 'control' should probably be applied according to financial, and or reputational, risk arising for the Council.

3.2 Various delivery methods for providing financial support to the voluntary sector were considered:-

- a) Grants – A gift of a grant restricts the opportunity for comparison between organisations' bids (only like for like are able to be compared) and does not permit ongoing monitoring of activity after grant has been awarded. There is no possibility of demonstrating good value and some grant-funded activities may be open to community challenge under a new 'Localism Act'.
- b) Commissioning- a competitive process where any 'bid' must be evaluated almost objectively against criteria and real competition is a possibility. There is a risk this process may disrupt continuity of practice and cause local disruption in cases where established groups/organisations are unsuccessful in their bid for funding.

3.2 Following discussions with Members from the working group a mixed grant system was considered potentially beneficial. The choice of method to be related directly to the potential sums required in any one year:

Grants - a grant could be for 1 to 3-years; but could include an option for the organisation to renew a 1-year bid on two further occasions in successive years. Grants do not allow for performance monitoring but the financial risk to HDC can be limited both by amount and by the duration of the grant. It is intended that a 3-year grant will likely be offered on a tapering basis to actively encourage the search for alternative, sustainable, funding. It is also intended there will be only one bidding window each year.

3.3 As part of a mixed system of awards it is also proposed that consideration be given to establishing a:

Community Chest – This would be fund for voluntary and community organisations and town/parish councils; who require a small injection of revenue. The fund could manage requests, throughout the year, for awards of up to £5k to help very local community projects.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The relevant MTP line has stated, most recently (September 2011) that reductions in Community Grants are predicted to be:

	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16
Community Grants reductions	-51	-294	-294	-294

The prediction has included a qualification: "£51k expected to be achieved 12/13; 2013 onwards subject to Member decision Feb 2012 (Study in hand)". The reduction of £51k in the next financial year can be delivered. The second reduction of £243k in 2013-14 would represent a significant reduction in funding available to the voluntary sector from this source.

- 4.2 Officer research indicates that the current recipients of funding believe that a 50% cut in the funding available from HDC, to any one of the organisations currently benefiting from support, could be catastrophic for them. It was also identified that at this level there are risks arising of some additional costs arising to HDC which would negate some of the overall savings potential. Most of the current recipients of funding offered coping strategies for a reduction of HDC funding up to 20%.
- 4.3 In 2011-12 the budget for Voluntary sector contributions was £ 379,120
In 2012-13 the budget [including a £51k reduction] would be £ 328,120
If the 2013-14 budget were to be of the order of £ 273,000
This would allow:

Commissioning and Grant fund	£ 246,000
Community Chest fund	£ 27,000

Potential savings **£ 55,120**

When taking into consideration the savings already identified in the 2012/13 budget and the proposed saving for 2013/14 they total £106,120 this equates to <28% saving on the original 2011/12 voluntary sector budget.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Huntingdonshire District Council has assumed a reduction in funds to be made available to the voluntary sector as part of their own Medium-term Financial Planning. An extensive review of voluntary sector funding and its impacts has been undertaken during 2011; looking at both financial and wider social impacts.
- 5.2 The final Council budget for 2013-14 is not due to be set by Council until February 2013. However, the relevant service level agreements 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. An indication of the maximum voluntary sector budget Members may wish to see provided from 2013-14 would facilitate both negotiations and forward planning.

- 5.3 Research suggests a 50% cut in the funding available from HDC, to any one of the organisations currently benefiting from support, could be catastrophic for them. At this level additional financial risks arise to HDC which could negate some of the overall savings potential. Most of the current recipients of funding offered coping strategies for a reduction of HDC funding up to 20%. If Members wished to have regard to these findings a level of reduction less than 50% would be desirable for the potential recipients.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

- 6.1 Suggest an indicative voluntary sector budget for 2013/14 of £273,000
- 6.2 Agree to adoption of a mix of methods of allocating funds, the method to involve a level of bureaucracy proportionate to the level of funding required.
- 6.3 Agree to the establishment of a modest 'Community Chest' to create an 'accessible' source of funds to help very local community projects.

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"

- 19 September 2011: Voluntary Sector Review report to COMT
- 4 October 2011: Voluntary Sector Review report to Overview & Scrutiny (Social Wellbeing) Panel
- 20 October 2011: Voluntary Sector Review report to Cabinet
- 1 November 2011: Report of Voluntary Sector Working Group to Overview & Scrutiny (Social Wellbeing) Panel
- 6 December 2011: Report of Voluntary Sector Working Group to Overview & Scrutiny Social Wellbeing Panel

Contact Officer: Dan Smith – Healthy Communities Manager
☎ 01480 388377

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN
(Report by the Head of Housing Services)**

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 At their meeting on 2 November 2010 Overview and Scrutiny (Social Well-being) considered the Cambridgeshire Local Investment Plan (CLIP) in advance of its submission to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). The Panel requested a further report on the outcome of the CLIP.

2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The CLIP was developed jointly between the HCA and Cambridgeshire Horizons, with LAs feeding their information into the process using current evidence including the Huntingdonshire Core Strategy, Housing Strategy and Local Investment Framework. The purpose of the CLIP was to capture all the infrastructure projects and related costs including affordable housing. The document was originally intended to guide the HCA's investment decisions. The CLIP had a long period of approval by all the partners listed above. It was then submitted to the HCA.
- 2.2 Since then, the HCA's budget has been slashed nationally and for the 2011-15 funding period they have £6.8bn. £4.5bn is to pay for new affordable housing (compared to £8.4bn on new affordable housing in 2008-11) but £2.3bn was already committed before 2011. Therefore only £2.2bn is available nationally and the HCA have adopted a different approach to keep a programme going when funding is so tight (see below).
- 2.3 The HCA's new approach is to work with Registered Providers (RPs - previously called housing associations) to deliver a portfolio of schemes in return for a lump sum of HCA investment. The benefit of this approach is that it places responsibility with the RP to deliver a portfolio of schemes and if some schemes slip then others can be brought forward to substitute it. The down side to this approach is that it reduces the transparency in the HCA investment system because it is not possible to easily pin point how much investment has been allocated to which homes and in turn how much investment each district benefits from.
- 2.4 To make the funding pot go further, the HCA announced a new product called 'Affordable Rent' whereby rents are charged at up to 80% of market level rents (analysis in the SHMA¹ suggests that in general, social rents are up to 60% of market level rents). In addition to increased rent levels on new housing, those RPs who have an HCA funded programme are expected to convert a % of their existing stock from social rent to affordable rents to generate more income to

¹ Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) for Cambridge sub-region, Cambs County Council Research Group.

support increased borrowing. The HCA have also said that unless there are exceptional circumstances, they will not be funding s106 sites because they believe that affordable housing can be delivered entirely through planning gain.

2.5 At the current time for the 2011-15 funding period, the HCA are in the process of negotiating formal contracts with RPs. Whilst these negotiations are under way the HCA will not disclose any information about whether or not Huntingdonshire schemes will be considered for funding. However, Huntingdonshire relies heavily on s106 sites with in excess of 90% of the pipeline of schemes coming under this category. Since the HCA have confirmed that there should be no funding for s106 unless in exceptional circumstances, officers are assuming that none of the schemes within the district are funded.

2.6 If this transpires to be the case, the implications of this are:

- New s106 sites will need to be negotiated on the basis of nil grant. This may result in complex viability assessments/negotiations with developers and could result in a reduction from our 40% target for affordable housing and a change in tenure split from our policy target of 70% social rent and 30% shared ownership, depending on site economics (which will change from site to site).
- It is likely that we will build less social rented housing in future with more forms of intermediate housing including shared ownership and Affordable Rented housing (where rents are set at 80% of the market rent level).
- To help fund the development portfolio RPs have to commit to convert a % of their properties to affordable rent when they become available for re-letting so over time, more of the social rented housing in the district will change to 'Affordable Rent'.
- Any sites that have been negotiated anticipating capital subsidy may have to be renegotiated in line with the above.

2.7 The HCA have stated that the CLIP has been a useful tool to help them in making the case for investment both nationally and within the region and sub-region. They have asked that the data be refreshed so that it remains relevant for them in considering the investment needs of the area and as a reference point for negotiations with RPs. The Council will contribute to a refresh of the CLIP in early 2012.

3. CONCLUSIONS

3.1 The CLIP process was useful in capturing and quantifying housing and related infrastructure costs across Cambridgeshire. It has limited impact in Huntingdonshire in terms of attracting HCA investment because the HCA's national pot has been cut and to manage the investment programme they decided not to fund s106 sites unless in exceptional circumstances. As in excess of 90% of Huntingdonshire's development sites are on s106 we do not expect any of them to be funded although we will not hear confirmation of this fact until early 2012 because the HCA are still negotiating contracts with RPs and will not disclose information in the meantime.

3.2 The HCA has asked the CLIP to be revised and updated within the Cambridge sub-region in early 2012 to inform future investment and the HCA's negotiations with DCLG. The revised document is unlikely

to include significant detail on infrastructure projects since HCA have indicated that they are not in a position to fund these. The council will explore the potential to attract HCA investment for exceptional affordable housing developments such as housing in rural areas, supported housing and housing for older people.

4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 The Panel note this report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- CLIP
- Housing Strategy 2006-11
- Huntingdonshire Local Development Framework

Contact Officer: Steve Plant, Head of Housing Services 01480 388240

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS

(SOCIAL WELL-BEING)
(ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)
(ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING)

3RD JANUARY 2012
5TH JANUARY 2012
10TH JANUARY 2012

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

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

2. STUDIES

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

2.2 Studies are allocated according to the Overview and Scrutiny remits. Details of ongoing studies being undertaken by the two other Panels are set out in the attached Appendix.

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

3. RECOMMENDATION

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

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

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

Mrs J Walker, Trainee Democratic Services Officer
01480 387049

Mrs C Bulman, Democratic Services Officer
01480 388234

ONGOING STUDIES

STUDY	OBJECTIVES	PANEL	STATUS	TYPE
Visitor Development & Town Centre Vibrancy	To consider issues relating to Visitor Development & Town Centre Vibrancy.	Economic Well-Being	<p>Further information requested on the cost of the tourism service and the benefits it brings to both the Council and to the District.</p> <p>Noted that Tourism activity is not currently being undertaken. Study is on hold until circumstances change.</p>	Whole Panel Study
Leisure Centre Financial Performance and Employment Structure	<p>To review the overall financial performance and monitoring arrangements. To consider the current / future business structure.</p> <p>To consider whether an increase in income might be made by charging non-residents of the District a higher rate to use the Council's leisure centres.</p>	Economic Well-Being and Social Well-Being	<p>Interim report submitted to Cabinet on 23rd June 2011. Cabinet requested the Executive Councillor for Organisational Development to review the Council's IT costs, including the basis upon which the IT network service is re-charged to users.</p> <p>Meetings of the Working Group held on 3rd March, 28th April, 23rd June, 1st September, 7th November and 8th December 2011.</p> <p>Report to be submitted to January Panel meetings.</p>	Joint Working Group

			Further meeting to be held in due course to discuss the future strategic direction of the service.	
A14 improvements.	To review the implications to the local economy of the decision not to proceed with the A14 improvements.	Economic Well-Being	<p>Agreed to invite a representative of the Highways Agency to a future meeting to discuss their plans in the event of an interruption to traffic flow.</p> <p>Department for Transport is currently undertaking a consultation on the programme of improvements – A14 Challenge. Closing date for comments is the end of January 2012.</p>	Whole Panel Study.
Tree Strategy	To form a strategy in conjunction with the Tree Officers for the retention and planting of trees.	Environmental Well-Being	Working Group met on 27 July 2011. Draft Tree Strategy circulated to officers for comment. Councillor Davies reported to September meeting. It is hoped that the Strategy will be available for the Working Group to view in February 2012.	Working Group.

Land Use for Agricultural Purpose in the context of planning policies and its contribution to the local economy.	To review the lack of promotion and protection of land for this purpose.	Environmental Well-Being	Scoping report to be submitted to a future meeting.	To be determined.
Rural Transport	To review the provision of transportation in rural areas.	Environmental Well-Being	Transport for Cambridgeshire report received in July 2011. Comments conveyed to Cabinet. Final report expected in April 2012.	To be determined.
Maintenance of Water Courses	To receive a presentation on the maintenance arrangements in place for Water Courses within the District.	Environmental Well-Being	The County Council's Flood and Water Manager will attend the February meeting to advise of the County's growing responsibilities. SUDs report due in April 2012.	To be determined.
Waste Collection and Recycling Policies	To investigate the Council's waste collection and recycling policies.	Environmental Well-Being	Waste Collection Policies being prepared by Eric Kendall to be presented to the Working Group for comment prior to submission to the Panel. A meeting is scheduled for 4 th January to discuss communication and public satisfaction.	Working Group

District Council Support Services	To review the services provided by the District Councils Document Centre to form a view on its efficiency and cost effectiveness.	Economic Well-Being	<p>First meeting of working group held on 15th December 2011.</p> <p>Working Group has formed two sub groups to consider:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) the financial cost of the service; and b) the operation of the service <p>Background meetings currently being arranged for January 2012.</p>	Working Group
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FUTURE STUDIES

Design Principles for Future Developments	To be determined.	Environmental Well-Being	Working Group to be established in January 2012. Councillors Banerjee, Curtis, Godfrey, Harlock appointed.	To be determined.
Business Rates	To consider the implications to the Authority from changes to Business Rates.	Economic Well-Being	Report to be prepared when further information is available.	To be determined.

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Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
<p>13/05/09</p> <p>01/09/09</p> <p>07/12/10</p> <p>5/04/11</p>	<p><u>Future Governance of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital: Consultation Arrangements</u></p> <p>This item was transferred over from the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery). Dr Stephen Dunn, Hinchingsbrooke Next Steps Project Co-ordinator and Ms Jessica Bawden, NHS Cambridgeshire attended the Panel's January meeting to provide background to the consultation on the future governance arrangements for Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. Advised the Panel that the consultation was likely to commence at some point in the middle of the current calendar year.</p> <p>Panel advised that Councillor S J Criswell had been appointed as the District Council representative on the Stakeholder Panel.</p> <p>Subject to approval from the Department of Health and other regulators, Chairman announced that Circle has been appointed to take over the management contract of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital with effect from 1st June 2011.</p> <p>Representatives of Circle presented details of their operating model and vision to be employed once they have assumed responsibility for the governance of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. Agreed to come back to the Panel to update Members on progress with the mobilisation phase of the project.</p>	<p>Panel to partake in the consultation when it emerges. Matter to be raised at a future Panel meeting.</p>	<p>Circle to take over the management of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital on 1st February 2012.</p>	<p>4/09/12</p>

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
<p>18/05/11</p> <p>7/06/11</p>	<p><u>Corporate Plan – Growing Success</u></p> <p>Councillors S J Criswell and R J West appointed to Corporate Plan Working Group.</p> <p>The Panel expressed their wish for continued involvement by overview and scrutiny in monitoring the performance of the new Council Plan.</p>	<p>Process of monitoring yet to be determined.</p>		<p>TBC</p>
<p>6/7/10</p> <p>7/12/10</p>	<p><u>Consultation Processes</u></p> <p>Panel requested a scoping report on the Council's current consultation processes to be submitted to a future meeting. Members questioned whether the Council's approach to consultation was consistent across the authority and wished to be informed of what the current process was, what methods were used and how materials were prepared for this purpose.</p> <p>Councillor B S Chapman, Mr R Coxhead and Councillors Mrs P A Jordan, P G Mitchell, P D Reeve and R J West have been appointed onto a Working Group to pursue investigations further. The Working Group has been tasked with reviewing the Council's guidance on consultation methodology and to evaluate examples of previous consultations.</p>	<p>Working Group met on 15th December 2010, 18th January, 16th February 2011 and 1st April 2011. Further meetings held on 21st April and 2nd June 2011.</p>	<p>Final report submitted to Cabinet in July. Managing Director (Resources) to undertake investigations as to how the current process can be improved and to report to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) and Executive Councillors on the outcomes.</p>	<p>6/03/12</p>

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
	<p><u>One Leisure Performance</u></p>			
4/01/11	Panel received a presentation on the performance of One Leisure. This presentation was also delivered to the January meeting of the Economic Well-Being Panel.			
1/02/11	Advised that the Economic Well-Being Panel established a joint working group to review the information presented to both Panels in greater depth. Councillors B S Chapman and J J Dutton and Mr R Coxhead were subsequently appointed on to the Working Group.	Meetings held on 3 rd March and 28 th April 2011.	Interim report submitted to the Panel and Cabinet at their meetings in June 2011.	
07/06/11	Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds appointed to the Working Group.	Meetings held on 23 rd June, 1 st September and 7 th November 2011. Next meeting to be held on 8 th December.	This item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.	3/01/12
7/12/10	<p><u>Voluntary Sector</u></p> <p>Noted that an approach had been made by the Voluntary Sector to raise this item at a future Panel meeting. The matter was debated at the Council meeting in December 2010. The Chief Executive of the Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisation will also be addressing the Panel at its February meeting.</p>			

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
1/02/11	Presentation received. Panel agreed to investigate the full impact of the Council's budgetary proposals (which would take effect from 2013/14) and alternative ways of supporting the Voluntary Sector, to include Localism and the Big Society, at its March meeting.			
1/03/11	Working Group appointed comprising Councillors S Cawley, Mrs K E Cooper, P G Mitchell and R J West and Mrs M Nicholas who have been tasked with investigating matters raised during the course of the meeting.	First meeting held on 28 th March 2011 at the Maple Centre, Huntingdon.		
7/06/11	Councillors Mrs P A Jordan and K M Baker appointed to the Working Group.	Further meetings held 22 nd July and 23 rd August 2011. Site visits undertaken in September.		
1/11/11 & 6/12/11	Findings of the Working Group's investigations considered. Agreed that further investigations be undertaken into the potential financial impact of the proposed budgetary cuts upon demand for Council services and to undertake a prioritisation exercise of what voluntary services were needed to meet current and future demands for services in Huntingdonshire.	Workings Group meetings held on 9 th and 23 rd November 2011. Panel endorsed the conclusions reached by the Working Group at their meeting in December.	This item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.	3/01/12

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
6/7/10	<p><u>Gypsy and Traveller Welfare</u></p> <p>Agreed that gypsy and traveller welfare should be included within the Panel's work programme, with a view to informing any future Council policy on the identification of sites.</p>	<p>Report requested for submission to a future meeting. Following consultation with the Chairman, agreed that the study would proceed once Government guidance has been issued on future provision requirements.</p>		TBC
18/05/11	<p><u>Grant Aid</u></p> <p>This item was transferred over from the Economic Well-Being Panel in light of changes made to the Cabinet Portfolio responsibilities. Annual Report on organisations supported by grants through Service Level Agreements to be received by Panel.</p>		Report anticipated July 2012.	3/07/12
1/11/11	<p><u>Future of the CCTV Service</u></p> <p>Update received on the options for the future operation of the CCTV service. Efforts made to reduce the cost of the service to the Council was noted by the Panel.</p>		Further update anticipated after the budget is set by the Council in February.	6/03/12 or 3/04/12

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
2/11/10	<p><u>Cambridgeshire Local Investment Plan</u></p> <p>Panel has requested for a separate report on the implications of the Investment Plan upon local housing, to include the potential shortfalls in the delivery of affordable housing within the District, identify what housing is due to come forward and to include reference to the underlying links between housing and planning.</p>	Request submitted to the Head of Housing Services. Advised that the Investment Agreement was due to be signed off in March 2011.	This item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.	3/01/12
7/06/11	<p><u>Review of Neighbourhood Forums In Huntingdonshire</u></p> <p>The Cabinet, at its meeting on 19th May 2011, requested the Panel to undertake a review of the Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire.</p>			
6/09/11	Background report considered. Councillors S J Criswell, J J Dutton and R J West appointed onto a Working Group to initiate the Panel's investigations. County and District Council Members and Town and Parish Councils views on the Neighbourhood Forums will initially be sought and reported back to the Panel in November.	Working Group meeting held on 19 th September 2011. Letter sent to all those with an interest in the Forum on 21 st September 2011.		
1/11/11	Views of interested parties reported at meeting. Chairmen of the Neighbourhood Forums for Huntingdon and Ramsey were in attendance for this	Meeting of Working Group held on 23 rd November and 12 th	This item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.	3/01/12

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
	item. Working Group established comprising Councillors S J Criswell, J J Dutton, S M Van De Kerkhove and R J West, together with Mr R Coxhead to pursue investigations.	December 2011.		
<p data-bbox="215 552 315 579">7/06/11</p> <p data-bbox="215 722 315 750">6/12/11</p>	<p data-bbox="371 453 1066 515"><u>Housing Benefit Changes and the Potential Implication on Huntingdonshire</u></p> <p data-bbox="371 555 1066 651">Requested a background report to be provided on the emerging issue of homelessness arising as a result of changes to the Housing Benefit system.</p> <p data-bbox="371 722 1066 850">Report considered by the Panel. Further report on the wider housing policy implications arising from the Government's Welfare Reform Bill to be submitted to the Panel at a future meeting.</p>	Request submitted to the Heads of Housing and Customer Services.		TBC
4/10/11	<p data-bbox="371 932 909 959"><u>Monitoring of Section 106 Agreements</u></p> <p data-bbox="371 999 1066 1094">Panel agreed to reinstate the Monitoring of Section 106 Agreements that provide leisure/play equipment within its work plan.</p>	Section 106 Agreement Advisory Group due to meet on 9 th January 2012.	Report anticipated at the Panel's February 2012 meeting.	6/02/12

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
4/10/11	<p><u>Scrutiny of Council Budgets within the Panel's Remit</u></p> <p>Panel agreed to scrutinise the budgets associated with the Council functions that fall within the remit of the Panel on an annual basis.</p>			TBC
7/06/11	<p><u>Cambridgeshire Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee Study – Domestic Abuse</u></p> <p>Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds appointed as the Panel's representative on the study being undertaken by the County Council.</p>		Study shortly due to conclude.	
05/04/11	<p><u>Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership (HSP)</u></p> <p>The Panel has a legal duty to scrutinise the work of the HSP, with three thematic groups of the HSP falling within its remit.</p> <p>Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership</p> <p>Annual review of the work of the Partnership undertaken. Members have expressed their satisfaction that appropriate accountability and reporting mechanisms are in place.</p>			03/04/12
1/11/11	<p>Background information on the health implications of the night-time economy considered by Panel. Owing to a lack of data available, agreed to monitor the</p>			

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
05/10/10	<p>situation via the Community Safety Partnership on an annual basis.</p> <p>Children and Young People</p> <p>Details of the thematic group's outcomes and objectives have been received together with the latest report of the group, outlining its terms of reference, membership and current matters being discussed.</p>	<p>Invitation extended to the Chairman and Lead Officer of the thematic group.</p>	<p>Thematic Group is currently undergoing significant changes and in the process of re-establishing its priorities. Agreed to address the Panel once these changes have been implemented within their work.</p>	06/06/12
1/01/11	<p>Health and Well-Being</p> <p>Background information received on the thematic group's outcome and objectives, terms of reference, membership and current matters being discussed.</p>			

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Decision Digest

Edition 120

Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 28th November to 21st December 2011.

EMPLOYMENT REPORT

The Employment Panel has considered a range of information relating to the management of the Council's workforce and the workload of the Human Resources Team. This has included the latest position and trends relating to:-

- ❖ Employee Numbers;
- ❖ Salary Costs;
- ❖ Employee Turnover;
- ❖ Retention of new starters;
- ❖ Sickness Absence reporting; and
- ❖ The Human Resources Caseload.

In considering the information, the Panel's attention was drawn to the number of days lost to sickness per full time employee. Whilst the figure remains below the average for local government, the Panel noted that the Council was taking action to manage and address short and long term sickness absence. In this respect, a new Sickness Absence Policy had been adopted in February 2011 and Heads of Service had been set a specific target regarding absence management. The caseload undertaken by the Human Resources team also reflected the efforts which were being taken to address long term sickness.

With regard to the presentation of future reports, it was suggested that it would be useful to receive a breakdown of sickness absence by department.

ANNUAL EQUALITY PROGRESS REPORT

The Employment Panel has been updated on progress made on the delivery of actions and targets set out in the Council's Single Equality Action Scheme (SES) Action Plan and the findings from the Equality Impact Assessments conducted during 2010/11. Members have noted that of the 51 actions contained within the Plan, 47 had been completed or were ongoing.

The Panel's attention was drawn to the requirement for an external assessment to be undertaken in February 2012. The assessment will seek to validate the Council's current status as an "Achieving" Council and Panel Members were invited to attend the discussion Forum, established as part of the process.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES EMPLOYMENT MONITORING

Having noted that the 2010 Equality Act requires the Council to publish information relating to the characteristics of its employees, the Employment Panel has received and noted the results of the equal opportunities monitoring of its workforce over the period 1st April 2010 to 31st March 2011. In reviewing the statistics, the Panel has noted that the composition of the workforce remained broadly similar to the previous year and that the analysis of HR practices and procedures suggest there was no

evidence of discrimination within the Council during the year.

Having noted that there may be more that the Council could do to make a contribution towards reducing youth unemployment in the District, the Panel has been informed of the exploratory work which had been undertaken on the potential to offer apprentice and work experience schemes. Having indicated their support in principle to these types of initiatives, the Panel has agreed that further reports on the actions that the Council could take to address youth unemployment and the rehabilitation of offenders should be presented at an appropriate time

SAFEGUARDING POLICY & CRB REVIEW

Following the approval of the Council's Safeguarding Policy in June 2011, recent changes to the Employees' Code of Conduct and a review of practices in neighbouring Local Education Authorities, the Employment Panel has endorsed a number of changes to the procedure for renewing Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) disclosures for District Council employees.

REVIEW OF HDC REDUNDANCY POLICY

At the request of Employees' Side representatives, the Panel has endorsed a minor amendment to the Council's Redundancy Policy. The amendment clarifies the point at which employees are placed at risk of redundancy and will reflect current practice within the Council.

PAY REVIEW

The Employment Panel has considered the outcome of negotiations with Employees' side representatives on the

cost of living awards for 2011/12 and 12/13, the formal consultation on proposals to amend the District Council's pay structure and other changes to appraisal and incentive schemes. To inform the Panel's discussions, Members were provided with the results of the employee survey which had been undertaken on the consultation proposals.

Having been acquainted with the outcome of discussions between the Employees' and Employers' Side representatives, and having understood that the proposals were expected to generate budgetary savings of £244,000 in 2011/12 and £695,000 in 2012/13, provide a good basis for securing long term improvements in the Council's pay systems and that they had addressed a number of issues which had been raised during the formal consultation, the Panel agreed the following:-

- ❖ that there be no cost of living award for employees in 2011/12 and 2012/13;
- ❖ that no increments be awarded to employees for the year April 2011 – March 2012, although some non consolidated (taxable and non pensionable) awards would be made following the performance appraisals for this year to all staff on the incremental pay system who satisfied the specified conditions; and
- ❖ that eligible staff should receive an increase in salary of at least 2% from 1st April 2013, subject to there being 'no substantial shocks' to the Council's finances.

To address a number of problems associated with the current system for Sanctionable Pay which is in place in

the Operations Division for waste, recycling, street cleaners, grounds maintenance and vehicle fitters, the Panel endorsed a proposal to introduce an Attendance Allowance with effect from 1st April 2012. This will be reviewed in April 2013 to determine the impact that it may have had on sickness levels during the year. The Panel has also agreed to revise the basic pay for operational staff with effect from 1st April 2012 and reduce the overtime rate for some employees so that it is standardised after 30th June 2012.

Having recognised that there remained a need to address a number of issues relating to the District Council's pay systems, the Panel has also endorsed a suggestion that a working group should be established to review the Council's pay grades and bands with a view to implementing a revised pay structure from 1st April 2013. Reports on progress will be submitted to future meetings of the Panel.

DRAFT BUDGET AND MTP

The Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has reviewed the draft Budget 2012/13 and MTP. The Executive Councillor for Resources has informed Members that the Council will have to operate under financial constraints for a number of years and many of the Council's decisions would be influenced by external events. He also presented an outline on the current situation, including:

- ◆ the progress that has been made towards achieving the current and next year's targets, helped in part by efficiency savings being higher than expected;
- ◆ some of the significant variations in the Financial Plan

including the introduction of the New Homes Bonus, and

- ◆ the savings that still need to be made over the MTP period.

In considering the contents of the report, the view has been expressed that the format could be clearer and more detail should be provided on explicit changes to revenue variations as the year has progressed. It has been agreed that a group of Members will meet with the Head of Financial Services to discuss these points and report back to the Panel in due course.

The Panel has accepted the proposed spending variations and congratulated the Cabinet and Officers on the significant progress that has been made in both the efficiency and savings measures that have been identified for the next two financial years. However, appreciating the current economic climate and the many unknown factors, it has been recommended that further investigation be undertaken to determine the feasibility of achieving some savings earlier than planned.

With regard to the supplementary capital estimate for Huntingdon multi storey car park, the Panel has noted that the project had already been approved and that the only change is that Trinity Place Car Park will now not be sold thereby leaving a £300K deficit. In view of the urgency to meet the necessary legal agreements so that the project can proceed to the agreed timescale, a proposed supplementary capital estimate of £300K has been supported. However, the Panel has requested an updated analysis on the project and Members are to notify the Chairman of the Panel and the Executive Councillor for Resources if there are any matters they want the Cabinet to take into account when the final decision is made.

The Panel has noted the possible relationship between the New Homes Bonus (NHB) and Formula Grant (FG), especially the lack of sufficient government funding for the former. Members have sought reassurance that the planning projections for future years are accurate. It has been noted that the retention of Business Rates might possibly replace the FG in future years and the possible implications of this.

The Panel has also recommended that the Council does not accept the proposed Council Tax Freeze Grant. It has been noted that £210K of additional savings will need to be identified as a result of accepting the 4 Year Reward Grant and that the acceptance of the second tranche would require the Council to find further savings in excess of £200k by 2015/16. It is understood that a significant number of other local authorities are unlikely to accept the Council Tax Freeze Grant.

The Panel has been informed that the Council Tax base is £25K better than forecast and that the Government is expected shortly to announce the Council's grant for 2012/13 and the level of Council Tax increase that will trigger a referendum. There are clear indications that the referendum legislation will replace capping and is likely to be enacted by February 2012. This will put the Council in a more informed position on which to make a decision on next year's Council Tax than has been the case in previous years. Before the Council Tax is set for 2012/13, the Panel has recommended that the Cabinet should identify those services that might be retained for a range of increases in Council Tax within the referendum limit.

The Panel has discussed the proposal to increase the minimum level of General reserves from £3M to £4M. Several Panel Members have questioned whether the new proposed

level is adequate in light of the unknown factors. For example, the NHB represents 25% of the Council's predicted income in 2015/16 and a reduction in home building is already included in the Risks and Unknowns assessment. This could, therefore, be a significant risk and the Panel is of the view that the Council should make greater provision to protect itself. Although in the past the Auditor has effectively required the Council to reduce its reserves, the general consensus is that it is desirable for the Council in the current economic climate to hold greater reserves. However, the Panel has recognised that such action would place an insurmountable burden on the savings programme in the short term. The Panel has, therefore, recommended that the minimum level of reserves should be £4M for now but that this should be reviewed in 2 years and if it is reasonable should be increased to £5M. This should be tested and considered in the forecast report each year and built into the draft budget if deemed necessary.

The Panel has noted that the Low End Assumptions have already been built into the MTP. However, Members have questioned if the pay award assumptions should be included as they raise expectations, particularly as actual pay awards have been negotiated for the next few years. As regards the Risks and Unknowns contained with the report, the Panel has recommended that the following should be included:

- ◆ the implications of planning fees from the Enterprise Zone should be assessed and either included in the financial plan or identified as a risk/unknown; and
- ◆ the Panel are concerned about the projected levels of homelessness

and the increased demand for Disabled Facilities Grants. The Cabinet has been requested to verify that the figures on which the respective budgets have been prepared are reliable.

At the conclusion of their deliberations, the Panel invited the Cabinet to consider its discussions as part of their deliberations on this item.

GREAT FEN SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Cabinet has considered the content of the Great Fen Masterplan: Statement of Consultation which has been compiled by project partners to accompany planning guidance for the area. In recognising its importance when determining forthcoming planning applications within the Great Fen, the Cabinet has agreed to adopt the Masterplan as Supplementary Planning Guidance to be used to inform Council policy and guide development management decisions. At the same time, the Cabinet has approved a Statement of Recognition which explains the document's status and will be included as a preface text with the final document.

RAF BRAMPTON URBAN DESIGN FRAMEWORK (UDF)

The Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel has endorsed for submission to Cabinet, a report on the RAF Brampton Urban Design Framework.

Having regard to the responses received during the recent consultation, the Cabinet has authorised the Head of Planning Services, after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing and the

Chairman of the Development Management Panel, to finalise the content of the UDF.

The UDF will inform Council Policy and development management decisions on potential planning applications for the area. The Cabinet has requested that the final document should make reference to potential options for the retention of the Brampton Park Theatre as a community building.

DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

The Cabinet has agreed to adopt the Developer Contributions SPD as supplementary planning guidance. It has been necessary to update the SPD to complement the Draft Charging Schedule for the Huntingdonshire CIL which also was subject to preliminary consultation in November/December 2011.

UPDATE ON THE COUNCIL'S CORE STRATEGY – ITS LOCAL PLAN.

The Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel has approved for submission to Cabinet a report on the need for the Council to consider updating its Core Strategy. The work is necessary in order to provide Huntingdonshire with a robust ongoing local planning policy and development framework.

With regard to the proposal to use the existing Core Strategy as a basis for the work to be undertaken, some Members have expressed a view that the work will need to be started from scratch. In light of the constraints on the Council in terms of planning conditions for the completion of infrastructure works when granting permission for development, the Panel has recommended that an updated local infrastructure strategy should be

developed. Furthermore the Panel has recommended that the Council should establish and maintain an ongoing dialogue with the Highways Agency and the County Council on road provision and the local infrastructure generally.

Subsequently arrangements for the review and update of the Council's Core Strategy have been approved by the Cabinet. Its approval will result in a new Local Plan for the area and the Cabinet has requested the Head of Planning Services to bring forward an update of the Local Development Scheme to include a timetable for preparing and delivering this new local plan.

In the interim, the Cabinet has supported the continued use of the Core Strategy for defining sustainable development needs.

Sound evidence will need to be gathered to demonstrate the local need for additional economic growth, associated housing development and related infrastructure. The Cabinet has endorsed the commencement of this work with colleagues across Cambridgeshire and the LEP area.

HOUSING BENEFIT CHANGES AND THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The effect of Government changes to the Housing Benefits system has been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) which results in a reduction in Benefit entitlement of between £3 and £70 per week by existing claimants. The Panel is particularly concerned over larger households that will experience a significant reduction in their entitlement, such as those living in four bedroom properties. It is anticipated that these households will turn to the Council for assistance. However, with a shortage in the availability of social rented housing,

it is likely that there will be an increase in the number of households facing homelessness. This could result in additional costs incurred by the Council. Additional provision has however been made in the budget for this purpose.

An additional report on the wider housing policy implications arising from further proposals in the Welfare Reform Bill will be presented to a future meeting of the Panel.

NHS CONSULTATION – PROPOSED REDESIGN OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACROSS CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH

Before submitting a response to NHS Cambridgeshire's current consultation on the proposed redesign of mental health services across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has decided to seek service users' views on the proposals and requested that a representative from NHS Cambridgeshire attend the Panel's January meeting. Preliminary views have been expressed over the proposed closure of Acer Ward at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, the risks associated with the Care in the Community approach proposed by NHS Cambridgeshire, the adequacy of the transportation system to Peterborough and the establishment of the new 24/7 Advice and Brief Intervention Centre.

VOLUNTARY SECTOR WORKING GROUP

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) have considered the Voluntary Sector Working Group's investigations into the potential impact on demand for District Council services of reductions in the services currently procured from voluntary organisations through Service Level Agreements. In addition, the

Panel has received details of potential financial liabilities relating to the Maple Centre, which is currently managed by the Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations.

The Panel has endorsed a list of priority areas for future voluntary activity in Huntingdonshire and has suggested that the services procured should be accessible to all residents across the District. These priorities will inform a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services on voluntary sector support which will be considered by the Panel in January. This report will also propose options on what future funding methods are to be employed by the Council.

NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS WORKING GROUP

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has endorsed a suggestion to adopt the Shape My Place initiative within Huntingdonshire. A recommendation to this effect will be submitted to the Cabinet at its January meeting.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE ADULTS WELLBEING AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Matters due for consideration by the Cambridgeshire Adults Well-Being and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee have been noted by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being).

REVIEW OF REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT (RIPA) POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Amendments to the existing RIPA Covert Surveillance Policy and Procedure and the content of a new Communications Data Policy and

Procedure have been endorsed for submission to the Council. These changes had been prompted following the outcome of an inspection by the Office of the Surveillance Commissioner, guidance issued by the Home Office and changes in the operational structure of the Council.

REVIEW OF HOUSING BENEFIT FRAUD INVESTIGATION ACTIVITY AND THE COUNCIL'S WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

The Corporate Governance Panel has been acquainted with the activity of the Benefits Fraud Investigation Team over 2010/11 and has received details of new work areas undertaken by the Team which include the collection of debts arising from benefit overpayments, partnership working with recruitment agencies and the recovery of social housing.

In terms of the annual review of the whistleblowing policy and guidance, the Panel has been advised that only minor changes have been required and that 23 incidents were received through the various whistleblowing channels over the past year.

REVIEW OF THE ANTI-FRAUD AND CORRUPTION STRATEGY

The outcome of a review of the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy has been noted by the Corporate Governance Panel and minor changes have been endorsed. The Panel has agreed to review the Strategy on a triennial basis.

NATIONAL FRAUD INITIATIVE

The work undertaken by the Council on the potentially fraudulent matches in data provided by the Audit Commission has been noted by Members of the Corporate Governance Panel. Two thirds of these cases relate to the

concessionary fares scheme and have been referred to Cambridgeshire County Council for investigation. A total of 55 days has been spent across the authority reviewing and investigating the matches identified.

APPROVAL FOR PUBLICATION OF THE 2010/11 ACCOUNTS

The efforts made by the Head of Financial Services and the Council's External Auditors to complete the process for finalising and publishing the Council's accounts for 2010/11 have been noted by the Corporate Governance Panel. It is hoped that this work will be completed early in the New Year. Delays to the process are attributed to the implementation of the new International Financial Reporting Standards, an underestimation of the time spent with the Council's new auditors explaining the Council's systems and practices, together with the introduction of new more onerous auditing standards, and unforeseen staff issues.

The Panel has received the External Auditor's draft report relating to the 2010/11 audit and agreed to amend the Annual Governance Statement to reflect the delay in publication of the Council's accounts.

It has been acknowledged that changes to the draft statement of accounts will be required. The Panel has delegated approval of any further amendments to the Managing Director (Resources), following consultation with the Chairman of the Panel and the external auditor, subject to there being no "material" change. The Panel has also authorised the Managing Director (Resources) and the Chairman of the Panel to sign the Letter of Representation on behalf of the Council when the accounts are completed. It is not anticipated that any changes will be required, but if they are, any changes to

the Letter of Representation have been delegated to the Managing Director (Resources) following consultation with the Chairman of the Panel and the external auditor.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE RISK MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Corporate Governance Panel has endorsed changes to the Risk Management Strategy. The Strategy was amended to reflect the current working practices employed by the Council.

POLICY ON THE MANAGEMENT OF UNREASONABLE COMPLAINANT BEHAVIOUR

The content of a policy on the management of unreasonable complainant behaviour has been endorsed by the Corporate Governance Panel.

TRAINING OF PANEL MEMBERS

In receiving their anticipated work programme for 2012, the Corporate Governance Panel has agreed to address any future training requirements on a meeting by meeting basis.

DRAINAGE ISSUES

The Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel has considered a petition in respect of sewage overflow at Windsor Road and Main Street, Yaxley. The petition had been referred to the Panel from the Council meeting on 2nd November 2011.

The Panel was advised that the Executive Leader had written to Anglian Water expressing his concerns over the flooding problems in Yaxley and that a response has been received. Although Anglian Water's response had

addressed the particular instance of flooding, Members still were not satisfied with their programme to prevent problems occurring with the drainage system in the District and with their response to sewerage system failures. It has been suggested to the Panel that the Environment Agency has enforcement powers to deal with such situations. Given the lack of powers that the Council has to influence Anglian Water, the Panel requested the Executive Leader to write to the Environment Agency highlighting the Panel's concerns and asking them to use their enforcement powers.

LOCALISM ACT AND NEW STANDARDS REGIME

The Standards Committee has considered the provisions of the Localism Act and specifically those sections which relate to standards and the Code of Conduct. It is expected that the Act will come into force on 1st April 2012.

Interestingly, the Act still requires each authority to 'promote and maintain high standards of conduct' and to adopt a Code of Conduct which should provide for the registration of disclosable pecuniary interests. The Monitoring Officer still has a duty to maintain and publish a Members Register of Interests and Councillors will still be required to declare disclosable pecuniary interests although these have yet to be defined.

Rather surprisingly, the Council also will be required to have in place arrangements to deal with complaints of breaches of the Code about both District and Parish Councillors.

There are a number of other matters in the Act which will need to be looked at in detail and the Committee is hopeful that the Statutory Instruments which should follow will help in this task.

QUICK GUIDE TO BLOGGING

The outcome of a recent case considered in the Upper Tribunal could have implications for Member activity on blogs, twitter and other internet sites. Depending on circumstances, such communications might be regarded as conducting the business of the office of Member or 'acting as a representative of your authority' as set out in the Code of Conduct. As Standards for England have revised their quick guide to blogging to take account of this judgement, the Standards Committee has asked that this be circulated to Parish Councils for information and made available on the Members Homepage.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

At its December meeting, the Development Management Panel determined ten applications. Amongst the eight applications approved and two items refused by the Panel was the proposal for the provision of a six screen cinema and four restaurant buildings and associated infrastructure on the site of the former fire station and household waste recycling centre off Huntingdon Street, St Neots. Having received representations from a number of District Councillors, an objector and the applicant, the Panel concluded that the application represented an opportunity to significantly improve leisure facilities in the town for all age groups and encourage and support the vitality and viability of St Neots town centre. The application was therefore approved subject to a number of conditions and a S106 agreement to secure a contribution from the applicant towards the upgrading of the traffic lights at the Cambridge Road/Tebbutts Road junction.

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