

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE 0.1B, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 8 MARCH 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 - 8)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings held on 2nd February and 28th February 2012 **(TO FOLLOW)**.

**Mrs C Bulman
388234**

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

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

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

A copy of the current Forward Plan is attached. Members are invited to note the Plan and to comment as appropriate on any items contained therein.

**Mrs H Taylor
388006**

4. CASTLE HILL HOUSE

To note that under Section 16 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution, the Chairman agreed to the inclusion of an urgent item of business on the Cabinet Agenda for 16th February 2012 relating to the sale of Castle Hill House.

5. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

To resolve that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

6. **LOCATION OF THE CALL CENTRE** (Pages 13 - 18)

To consider a report by the Managing Director, Communities, Partnerships and Projects.

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

To resolve:-

to readmit the public to the meeting.

8. **BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT - HUNTINGDON** (Pages 19 - 20)

To consider a report by the Economic Development Manager.

**S Bedlow
387096**

9. **ONE LEISURE WORKING GROUP**

To consider the report of a meeting of the Working Group held on 28th February 2012 **(TO FOLLOW)**.

**A Roberts
388015**

10. **BUDGET 2012/13 AND MTP - FEEDBACK** (Pages 21 - 22)

To consider a report by the Cabinet outlining their deliberations on the 2012/13 Budget & MTP.

**Mrs H Taylor
388008**

11. **WORKPLAN STUDIES** (Pages 23 - 26)

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

**Mrs C Bulman
388234**

12. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS** (Pages 27 - 32)

To consider a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

**Mrs C Bulman
388234**

13. **SCRUTINY** (Pages 33 - 40)

To scrutinise decisions taken since the last meeting as set out in the Decision Digest and to raise any other matters for scrutiny that sit within the remit of the Panel.

Dated this 29 day of February
2012



Head of Paid Service

Notes

1. *A personal interest exists where a decision on a matter would affect to a greater extent than other people in the District –*
 - (a) *the well-being, financial position, employment or business of the Councillor, their family or any person with whom they had a close association;*
 - (b) *a body employing those persons, any firm in which they are a partner and any company of which they are directors;*
 - (c) *any corporate body in which those persons have a beneficial interest in a class of securities exceeding the nominal value of £25,000; or*
 - (d) *the Councillor's registerable financial and other interests.*
2. *A personal interest becomes a prejudicial interest where a member of the public (who has knowledge of the circumstances) would reasonably regard the Member's personal interest as being so significant that it is likely to prejudice the Councillor's judgement of the public interest.*

Please contact Mrs Claire Bulman, Democratic Services Officer, Tel 01480 388234 / email Claire.Bulman@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 Committee/Panel.

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

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

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

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

Emergency Procedure

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

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Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) held in CVSO1.A, CIVIC SUITE, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN on Thursday, 2 February 2012.

PRESENT: Councillor T V Rogers – Chairman.

Councillors G J Bull, S Greenall, R Harrison, R B Howe, A J Mackender-Lawrence, P G Mitchell, and M F Shellens.

Mr R Hall and Mrs H Roberts.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors E R Butler and A H Williams.

82. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5th January 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

83. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor R Harrison declared a personal interest in Minute No. 88 as an employee of the Highways Agency.

84. 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). It was noted that the reports on "Community Infrastructure Levy Governance Principles" and the "Location of the Call Centre" would be considered by the Panel at its meeting in March 2012.

85. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains information relating to the financial or business affairs relating to the authority.

86. FUNDING FOR CCTV

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel received an update on the future operation of the CCTV Service. By way of background, the Executive Councillor reminded the Panel that the Cabinet had previously agreed in principle a budget of £222k to provide a reduced hours CCTV service.

Having been acquainted with the progress of negotiations with partner organisations on how they might contribute towards the cost of the service and the terms of the agreements that might be reached with them, the Panel discussed the implications of changes to the service. Members requested the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) to monitor the effect of the changes. They also discussed the options available to provide cover in the CCTV Control Room during periods when staff were absent.

With regard to the terms on which contributions might be received from partner organisations, the Panel was informed that they might be affected by the establishment of a Business Improvement District. Members requested a briefing on the Business Improvement District at a future meeting.

In response to a question regarding the progress which was being made to outsource the CCTV service, the Head of Operations explained that work was ongoing but it was too early to report to Members at this stage. Members were also advised that those Councils who had already outsourced their service had not seen a significant saving in their CCTV Budgets.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted;
- (b) that the Panel should reiterate its support for the future of the CCTV service and the inclusion of £222k in the District Council's Budget; and
- (c) that the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) be invited to give further consideration to the implications of potential changes arising from future budget arrangements / service plans.

87. RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be re-admitted to the meeting.

88. BUDGET 2012/13 AND MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2013 TO 2017

(Councillor J A Gray, Executive Councillor for Resources, was in attendance for this item).

With the aid of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel reviewed the Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2013 – 2017) and the Budget and level of Council Tax for 2012/13 in advance of their consideration by Cabinet and final determination by the Council.

By way of introduction to the report, the Executive Councillor for

Resources drew attention to the changes which had been made to the Budget and MTP since the Panel's deliberations in December 2011. He also drew attention to the proposal to increase Council Tax in 2012/13 and the rationale behind this.

Members were advised that, further to their previous discussions, it was now possible to set the level of reserves at £4.5M. Their attention was drawn to the graph at Annex C to the report, which contained forecasts of the level of reserves that would be held by District Councils at March 2012. It was suggested that the graph could be updated and reviewed in September 2012 as part of the financial forecast. Councillor Gray then reiterated that although efficiency savings had been higher than anticipated in the current year, the Cabinet was not complacent and was mindful of the need to achieve further savings throughout the year ahead.

The Managing Director (Resources) outlined the context within which the draft Budget and MTP had been prepared and the Head of Financial Services provided a detailed explanation of the content of the report. Having welcomed the inclusion of a number of their previous recommendations, the Panel proceeded to examine each section of the report.

During discussion on the spending variations that had been identified since the draft budget had been prepared, a Member asked whether it was possible to breakdown the figure of £221,000 which had been allocated to the heading 2011/12 Forecast Outturn. In response, the Head of Financial Services explained that further details could be found in the revenue and capital monitoring reports which were prepared for the Cabinet on a quarterly basis and that copies of the reports could be provided to Members on request. With regard to the significant savings which had been generated by the agreement with employees that they would accept a pay freeze in April 2012, the Panel expressed their appreciation of employees' contribution towards improving the Council's budget position.

Councillor M F Shellens queried whether it was premature to include budgetary provision for the A14 inquiry, but was advised that the inquiry was likely to commence in March. Having noted that, owing to the Council's success in collecting Council Tax, there would be a surplus of £464k on the Collection Fund, the Panel congratulated the Head of Customer Services on the performance of the Council Tax team.

The Panel discussed the additional £188,000 which had been allocated for Voluntary Sector Grants in 2012/13 and the process that would be put into place to distribute this money. The Executive Councillor stated that the Cabinet wished to ensure that the District Council obtained value for money from voluntary sector organisations and that they would be required to prepared a business case to secure funding. Councillor B S Chapman reported that he, along with the Executive Leader, was in the process of arranging a meeting with the Huntingdonshire Citizens Advice Bureaux to discuss opportunities for securing efficiency savings in its operation. A suggestion having been made that Members should be informed of the next steps that would be taken to finalise future arrangements between the Council and the voluntary sector, it was agreed that the

Social Well-Being Panel should be invited to examine in detail the policies and mechanisms that were proposed for this purpose.

In considering the "Risks and Sensitivities" that were identified in the report, Councillor M F Shellens suggested that it might be prudent for the Council to consider its strategic approach if its financial position and the economy generally were better than expected. While there could be a danger of creating expectations that could not be met if such plans were developed, it was suggested that there was value in planning for the full range of changes that might affect the Council's financial position in the future. However, a number of members commented that the District Council faced a number of challenges and it was, therefore, right to maintain a degree of caution. The Head of Financial Services suggested that this matter might be considered further as part of the discussions on the financial forecast in September 2012.

The Panel welcomed the Cabinet's decision to increase revenue reserves to £4.5M and noted that this would remain a live issue for some time. Members were of the opinion that the Council should seek to increase its reserves and that, if it was reasonable, reserves should be increased to £5M. In doing this, Members acknowledged that these sums would not be used to provide services. However, the Panel's view which was partly informed by the fact that it was only possible to use reserves for one-off projects. Members recommended that the Council's level of reserves and its position in terms of reserves compared with overall spending relative to other district council's was regularly reviewed.

In considering the contents of the graph at Annex C showing the level of reserves forecast to be held by District Councils at March 2012, comment was made that it was difficult to establish how the graph would change in future years; however, over time it would be a useful monitoring tool. Members were advised that the figures for council spending included parish precepts and there would be very few local authorities who collected as many precepts as Huntingdonshire District Council.

Members unanimously agreed that Council Tax should be increased by £4.34 per year for a band D property in 2012/13. The level of increase would generate approximately £100k and it was noted that this might, for example, contribute towards the indicative budget for the voluntary sector, which was approved at the Cabinet's last meeting, instead of requiring alternative savings to be found.

Consideration was then given to the proposed Budget and MTP. Following reference to a recent example, which had emerged during the study on support services, comment was made on the need to ensure that previously identified savings were rigorously applied to ensure each section's budget was accurate at the start of the year. The Head of Financial Services explained that issues such as the one referred to would normally identified as part of routine budget discussions with Activity Managers; however, he undertook to convey this message to the Financial Service Team.

While the 2012/13 Budget contained no unidentified savings,

Members reiterated the view that the feasibility of achieving some future years' savings in 2012/13 should be investigated.

Members welcomed the inclusion in the report a summary of budgets controllable by each senior manager. Reference was made to the reduction in the revenue budget for the Head of Planning Services over the MTP period and Members were advised that this reflected the transfer of car parking to Operations. With regard to the inclusion of interest within the revenue budget for the Head of Financial Services, it was suggested that it might be better to list this figure as a separate item. As the Council's reserves reduced and its borrowings increased, Members were of the opinion that it was important to identify clearly interest costs. With this in mind it was suggested that interest rates and other such "corporate" items should be identified separately. The Executive Councillor was invited to review the presentation of corporate items in future reports.

In considering the budgets by service area, a question was raised regarding the reduction in the recycling budget for 2012/13. The Head of Financial Services explained that this was a result of a change to the way in which the Council was charged for recycled material. Whereupon, and having noted that it was no longer necessary to require the Managing Director (Resources) to make adjustments to revenue reserves, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the Panel's comments be conveyed to the Cabinet for their consideration; and
- (b) that the Cabinet be informed of the Panel's support for
 - ❖ the proposed MTP, Budget and Financial Plan as submitted; and
 - ❖ a £4.34 per year increase in the Council Tax for 2012/13.

In concluding this discussion, the Panel expressed their appreciation of the work undertaken by the Financial Services section to prepare the MTP, budget and Financial Plan.

89. 2012/13 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

(Councillor J A Gray, Executive Councillor for Resources, was in attendance for this item).

In accordance with its responsibility for scrutinising Treasury Management and with the assistance of a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel reviewed the Treasury Management Policy for 2012/13 and the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators for the same period.

Members were advised that the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy formed part of the Council's governance arrangements. The Head of Financial Services explained that the Policy Statement was not significantly different from that prepared for the previous year and reminded the Panel that the Treasury Management Advisory Group met to discuss issues relating to Treasury Management on a regular basis. In considering the contents of the Policy Statement, Members' attention was drawn to the Council's Investment Policy which stated that all investment decisions must take into account a number of factors, including the security of the investment.

In reviewing the 2012/13 Strategy, Members were informed that in January 2011 the Treasury Management Advisory Group had agreed to retain the Council's existing Treasury Management Advisors and their advice was used by officers on a regular basis. Attention was then drawn to the expected levels of reserves and the need for borrowing to fund capital expenditure over the MTP period. The 'May Borrow' figures had been produced following agreement with the Council's previous external auditors that it was legitimate to borrow in advance to fund the five year published programme. Having endorsed the criteria and limits for making investments and the proposed Prudential and Treasury Management Indicators for 2012/13, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to endorse the Treasury Management Policy and the Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators for 2012/13 for submission to the Council.

90. CUSTOMER SERVICES MONITORING REPORT

The Panel gave consideration to the Customer Service Quarterly Performance Report for the period October to December 2011 (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which outlined the levels of performance and standards achieved by the Service. Attention was drawn to the significant issues, which had emerged since the last report and the issues that the service would face in the forthcoming quarter.

In response to a question regarding the service's speed of response, the Head of Customer Services explained that a recruitment freeze meant that a number of posts had been held vacant, which had affected performance. Having been informed that customer satisfaction levels remained high, it was suggested that it might be useful to display information to customers about those times during which there was a high demand for the service.

Following lower than targeted performance at the Call Centre on a particular day because of the failure of an IT system, a question was asked about the business continuity arrangements for the service. In response, the Head of Customer Services informed Members that the business continuity arrangements for the service included reference to suppliers of IT systems and that all IMD contracts were covered by service recovery standards.

Having noted that that the results of a recent employee satisfaction survey had demonstrated a satisfaction level of 97% compared to a target of 75%, a Member queried whether the target was realistic. The Head of Customer Services reported that targets had been set to reflect the need to achieve budgetary savings and reduced staffing levels. A reduction in public transport enquiries was the result of the fact that the administration of free bus passes had now been transferred to the County Council. Having noted that there would be a further report in six months time, it was

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

91. CABINET FEEDBACK - ONE LEISURE FINANCE

The Panel received and noted a report from the Cabinet (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining their response to the findings of the Panel's study into the financial performance of One Leisure. The Vice Chairman reported that a further meeting of the Working Group had been arranged to discuss the development of a methodology for the quantification of "social value" and alternative business models for the One Leisure service.

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

92. WORKPLAN STUDIES

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) containing details of studies that were being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Social and Environmental Well-Being. The Scrutiny and Review Manager reported that an update had been circulated outlining developments relating to travellers' sites.

93. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (ECONOMIC 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) reviewing progress on matters that had previously been discussed by the Panel. Members indicated that they wished to continue to receive updates on the A14 Improvements. An update was then provided by the Chairman on the activities of the working group which had been established to review the District Council's Document Centre.

Councillor M F Shellens raised the issue of the enforcement of HGV weight limits. Whilst this was not a matter which fell within the remit of the Economic Well-Being Panel, the Scrutiny and Review Manager undertook to establish how investigations might be undertaken into this matter.

94. SCRUTINY

The Panel considered and noted the latest edition of the Council's Decision Digest (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book).

Chairman

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

Prepared by
Date of Publication:
For Period:

Councillor J D Ablewhite
10 February 2012
1st March to 30 June 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
Review of HR Service***	Cabinet	22 Mar 2012	None.	Helen Donnellan, Corporate Team Manager Tel No. 01480 388263 or email Helen.Donnellan@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J D Ablewhite	Economic Well-Being
Community Infrastructure Levy Governance Principles	Cabinet	22 Mar 2012	CIL Evidence Base	Steve Ingram, Head of Planning Services Tel No. 01480 388400 or email Steve.Ingram@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Waste Collection Policies	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
Location of the Call Centre	Cabinet	22 Mar 2012	Previous Cabinet Papers	Julia Barber, Head of Customer Services Tel No 01480 388105or 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
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 J Guyatt 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
One Leisure, St. Ives - Outcome of Tender Exercise***	Cabinet	19 Apr 2012	None.	Simon Bell, General Manager, One Leisure Tel No. 01480 388049 or email Simon.Bell@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		T D Sanderson	Economic Well-Being
Statement of Community Involvement***	Cabinet	19 Apr 2012	None.	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk			
Waste Collection - Round Optimisation***	Cabinet	19 Apr 2012	None.	Eric Kendall, Head of Operations Tel No. 01480 388635 or email Eric.Kendall@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		D Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being
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	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
Bearscroft Farm Urban Design Framework	Cabinet	17 May 2012	None.	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Adopt as Council policy.	N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Planning for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)	Cabinet	17 May 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

Agenda Item 6

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
(ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)**

8TH MARCH 2012

CABINET

22ND MARCH 2012

BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT - HUNTINGDON
(Report by the Economic Development Manager)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 A BID is an arrangement whereby business get together, decide what additional improvements they want to make, how they are going to manage and deliver those improvements and what it will cost them. This all goes into a business plan which is voted on by all those who would have to pay. The BID can last for a maximum of 5 years and must be able to demonstrate how it has benefited businesses who have funded it.

1.2 There are currently about 140 BIDs in the UK, 30 of which have been to a re-ballot (2nd BID term) - of these 30 all have had successful 'yes' votes. Turnout in the ballot is an average 46% and on average 74% of those who vote in favour. Some 75,000 businesses are involved in BIDs in the UK.

2. BID Huntingdon

2.1 Huntingdon Town Partnership (HTP) completed a feasibility study last year which indicated that a BID would be possible in Huntingdon. It suggested a levy of 1.5% of Rateable Value for the 369 businesses in the study area. This would raise approximately £200,000 per annum, £1m over the term of the BID. The study indicated that businesses key priority areas for BID activities were: safety and security; marketing and promotion; events; graffiti and gum; central procurement; and, car parking.

2.2 The HTP have recently launched the development phase of the BID. During this phase consultation with potential levy payers determines a business plan which will be produced by 24th May, 2012. The 30 day ballot period is intended to close on 12th July, 2012.

2.3 HDC' s Economic Development team supported HTP during the feasibility study phase and continue to do so during the development phase with an officer and our Executive Leader sitting on the Task Group leading the project.

3. Key Issues for HDC

3.1 The ballot
The returning officer is responsible for instructing the ballot holder to hold a BID ballot. Full costs can be recovered from BID Huntingdon.

- 3.2 Operating agreement
If the ballot is successful the BID Regulations requires that we collect the BID levy into a ring-fenced account (called the BID Revenue Account).

The operating agreement relates to the arrangements for the setting, collection, enforcement and monitoring of the levy, the accounting for it and reimbursement of costs relating to collection.

- 3.3 As a levy payer
If the ballot is successful, and if the levy and boundaries are established as per feasibility report (1.5%) HDC's annual levy will be approximately £11,320, an approximate total of £56,600 over the 5 year BID period. We have provided funding of £27,000 for the development phase of the BID on the understanding that this is offset against our levy liability. That would leave a potential additional levy payable of about £29,600 over the five year period. This will come from existing budgets.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 If the ballot is successful the Huntingdon BID is likely to secure approximately £1m over a 5 year period which will be invested in improving vibrancy and vitality of the town centre. 90% of this funding will come from the private sector.
- 4.2 The BID mechanism is wholly aligned with the principals of Localism.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That members note the report and recommend that:
- The Head of Customer Service be authorised to enter into the BID levy Operating Agreement required in order to meet the Council's obligations under the Local Government Act 2003.
 - The Managing Director responsible for Communities, Partnerships & Projects be authorised to cast any votes to which HDC is entitled in the ballot after consultation with the Executive Leader

Contact Officer: Sue Bedlow, Economic Development Manager
☎ 01480 387096

**BUDGET 2012/2013 AND MTP – FEEDBACK
(REPORT BY THE CABINET)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 16th February 2012, the Cabinet considered a report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) on the Budget 2012/13 and the Medium Term Plan 2013/17.

2. DELIBERATIONS

- 2.1 In recommending approval of the proposed Medium Term Plan, Budget and Financial Plan and an increase in the Council Tax for 2012/13 to Council, the Cabinet has considered the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) thereon.
- 2.3 Members concurred with the Panel that Council Tax levels should be increased by 3.5% in order to meet unavoidable inflation and preserve valued services as far as possible both this year and in the future.
- 2.4 On the subject of funding for the voluntary sector, the Cabinet has confirmed that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) will be examining in detail the policies and mechanisms proposed between the sector and the Council given that it falls under their remit.
- 2.5 In discussing the Council's level of revenue reserves, including its relativity to other District Councils, the Cabinet noted that the level will be reviewed as part of the Council's financial forecast each September.
- 2.6 With regard to the Overview and Scrutiny's comments that a saving had not been included in a section's budget, Members have been advised by the Head of Financial Services that the issue related to confusion as to whether a saving had been achieved, rather than to whether the budget had been reduced by the relevant savings target. The Cabinet were reassured that the final phase of the annual budget process, when budgets are disaggregated to a lower level, will clarify and resolve such issues.
- 2.7 In discussing the presentation of corporate budgets, Members have been advised that the Executive Councillor for Finance will discuss the inclusion of interest figures and other such "corporate" items in the summary budget with the Managing Director (Resources).
- 2.8 Having thanked the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for their input and in acknowledging the work of the staff in achieving the budget outcomes, the Cabinet has recommended approval of the budget, MTP and Financial Plan to Council and an increase of £4.34 (3.5%) in Council Tax, representing a level of £128.51 for a Band D property for 2012/13.

3. CONCLUSIONS

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

**Contact Officer: Helen Taylor – Senior Democratic Services Officer –
01480 388008.**

Background Documents

Report of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) –
2nd February 2012.

Minutes and Report of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 16th February 2012.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS

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

6TH MARCH 2012
8TH MARCH 2012
13TH MARCH 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
Gypsy & Traveller Welfare	To examine existing gypsy and traveller sites in the District with a view to informing any future Planning Policy on sites.	Social Well-Being	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. Expected March/April 2012.	To be determined.
CCTV Provision within the District	To review the impact of the Council's proposal to cease the CCTV service with effect from April 2012.	Social Well-Being	A report on changes to the CCTV service in 2012/13 has been requested for submission to a future meeting.	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 April 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	Initial meeting held on 9 th February and way forward identified. Next meeting due to be held on 12 th March when Paul Bland will give an overview of relevant planning policies.	Working Group.

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 due course.	To be determined.
Review of Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire	To undertake a review of the Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire.	Social Well-Being	Working Group still reviewing proposed boundaries and elected Member representation for each area. Working Group meeting arranged for 27th February 2012.	Working Group
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 attended the February meeting to present on flood risk management activities. SUDs report due in June 2012.	To be determined.
Design Principles for Future Developments	To examine issues that have arisen at Loves Farm, St Neots and to make recommendations to inform future developments.	Environmental Well-Being	Meetings of the Working Group held on 6 th and 26 th January 2012. A site visit is scheduled for 2 nd March 2012.	Working Group.

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Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date For Future Action
	<u>Customer Services</u>			
13/05/09	Quarterly performance reports to be circulated informally to the Panel twice per year and formally twice per year.	Latest report considered in February 2012.	Next report due in July 2012.	02/02/12
10/02/11	Head of Customer Services to submit a report after a 12 month period reviewing the impact of the changes to Customer Services.	Report to be considered in June 2012.	Report due in June 2012.	14/06/12
08/09/11	Asked the Head of Customer Services to submit a further report on the location of the Call Centre to a future meeting.	Report to be submitted to a future meeting.	Report appears elsewhere on the agenda.	08/03/12
	<u>Corporate Plan Working Group</u>			
18/05/11	Councillors D M Tysoe and S Greenall have been appointed to the Corporate Plan Working Group.	Quarterly performance reports to be submitted to all Overview and Scrutiny Panels.	Performance Management / Monitoring is currently under review.	05/12
06/10/11	Councillor T V Rogers appointed to replace Councillor D M Tysoe.			

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date For Future Action
02/11/11	<p><u>Scrutiny of Partnerships</u></p> <p>Following a review of the Strategic Partnership, the Overview & Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice Chairman agreed that responsibilities should be divided as follows:-</p> <p>Social Well Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Community Safety ❖ Children & Young People ❖ Health & Well-Being <p>Environmental Well Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Growth & Infrastructure <p>Economic Well Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Local Enterprise Partnership 		The Panel has already received two presentations on the Local Enterprise Partnership. A presentation on the Local Enterprise Zone was given to the Panel's November meeting.	
05/01/12	<p><u>Leisure Centres</u></p> <p>Working Group's report approved for submission to the Cabinet meeting on 19th January 2012.</p>	Endorsed by the Cabinet at their meeting on 19 th January 2012. Working Group to continue its investigations into the future business model and a methodology for the quantification of social value.	Working Group met on 28 th February 2012. Update to be presented to the meeting.	

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date For Future Action
06/10/11	<p><u>Cambridgeshire Public Sector Asset Management Strategy</u></p> <p>Requested a report outlining the progress made on the Huntingdonshire projects in six months time.</p>		Further report / presentation to be submitted to a future meeting.	05/04/12
07/07/11 02/02/11	<p><u>A14 Improvements</u></p> <p>Agreed that a representative of the Highways Agency should be invited to a future meeting to discuss their plans in the event of an interruption to traffic flow.</p> <p>Agreed to receive further updates on progress by email.</p>	Invitation sent to Highways Agency.	<p>Awaiting confirmation that a representative will attend. Members may wish to discuss the way forward.</p> <p>Update circulated to all Members by email. A Joint Statement that has been submitted by the District Councils, with the County Council, to the DfT's A14 Challenge. A new 'A14 Project' page has also been created under the Transport & Roads section of the HDC website and this will be updated as matters progress</p>	
07/07/11	<p><u>District Council Support Services</u></p> <p>Agreed to establish a Working Group to review the Document Centre and its costs to form a view on its efficiency and cost effectiveness.</p> <p>Councillors Bull, Greenall, Howe, Mackender-Lawrence, Rogers and Williams volunteered for the Group.</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>Meetings of the sub groups were held in early January and February 2012. Working Group met on Tuesday 21st February 2012.</p> <p>Operations Group to meet with Document Centre Customers in February / March 2012 and Corporate Team Manager / Head of IMD.</p>	

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date For Future Action
07/07/11	<u>Changes to Business Rates</u> Requested further information with regard to the likely impact on the Council from the Government's Statement on Business Rates.		Information on the localisation of Business Rates has been circulated to Panel Members. Formal report on the potential implications to be submitted to the Panel later in the year.	06/12
03/11/11	<u>Community Infrastructure Levy</u> Informal Discussion held at the conclusion of the meeting. Agreed that Managing Director (CPP) would report back when it was appropriate.		Report on future governance and spending arrangements to be submitted to a future meeting.	06/12
05/01/12	<u>Waste Collection and Recycling Policies</u> Queried whether the review of Waste Collection and Recycling Policies would include the financial performance of the service.		Interested Members of Overview & Scrutiny will be invited to attend meetings of the Environmental Well-Being Panel when future reports are discussed.	05/04/12 14/06/12
05/01/12	<u>Housing Benefit Changes</u> Agreed to receive 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. Requested that a report on rental rates and rent costs are submitted to the Panel on a quarterly basis.		To be considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) and Members of the Economic Well-Being Panel invited to attend. Report due in April 2012.	TBC 05/04/12

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date For Future Action
01/12/11	<p><u>Great Fen Project</u></p> <p>Councillor P G Mitchell suggested that it would be useful to see the details of the Commercial Plan which was being developed for the Great Fen Project.</p>		<p>A tender is currently being drafted for an economic impact study relating to the project. Further information will be forthcoming.</p>	TBC
02/02/11	<p><u>Business Improvement District</u></p> <p>Agreed that a briefing should be requested for a future Panel meeting.</p>		<p>This item appears elsewhere on the agenda</p>	08/03/12

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Decision Digest

Edition 122

Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 1st to 24th February 2012.

BUDGET 2012/13 AND MEDIUM TERM PLAN 2013 TO 2017

The Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) and the Cabinet have reviewed the Medium Term Plan (MTP) 2013 -2017 and the Budget and level of Council Tax for 2012/13. The Panel has thanked the Cabinet for its positive response to its previous recommendations on the draft Budget and MTP.

In considering the proposed level of Council Tax for 2012/13, Members supported an increase of £4.34 for a band D property in order to meet unavoidable inflation and preserve valued services as far as possible both this year and in the future.

The Panel previously has recommended that the Council should identify what services might be retained for any additional income. The proposed increase in Council Tax will generate £100k. Members have suggested that this might, for example, contribute towards the indicative budget for the voluntary sector, which was approved at the Cabinet's last meeting, instead of finding alternative savings.

On the subject of funding for the voluntary sector, the Panel has asked that Overview and Scrutiny be informed of the next steps that will be taken to finalise future arrangements between the sector and the Council. The Cabinet has confirmed that the Social Well-Being Panel will be examining in detail

the policies and mechanisms for the distribution of the funds.

The Panel has discussed at length the Council's future levels of reserves. Members are of the opinion that the Council should seek to increase its reserves and have restated their position that if it is reasonable to do so reserves should be increased to £5M. This position is partly informed by the fact that it is only possible to use reserves for one-off projects. It is acknowledged that the sums put into reserves will not be used to provide services. The Cabinet has confirmed that the level will be reviewed as part of the Council's financial forecast each September.

Having noted that the 2012/13 Budget contains no unidentified savings, the Panel has restated its view that the feasibility of achieving some future years' savings in 2012/13 should be investigated. With reference to a recent example from their study on support services, the Panel has reiterated the need to ensure that previously identified savings are rigorously applied to each section's budget to ensure they are accurate at the start of the year. The Head of Financial Services informed the Cabinet that the latter related to confusion as to whether a saving had been achieved, rather than to whether the budget had been reduced by the relevant savings target. The Cabinet has also been advised that the final phase of the annual budget process, when budgets are disaggregated to a

lower level, will clarify and resolve such issues.

The Panel has discussed whether it is necessary for the Council to consider its strategic approach if its financial position and the economy generally are better than is represented in the report by the Head of Financial Services. While there may be a danger of creating expectations that cannot be met if such plans are developed, it is argued that there is value in preparing for the full range of future changes. The Panel will revisit this matter in September when the forecast is produced.

As the Council's reserves reduce and its borrowings increase, it will be more important to identify clearly interest costs. With this in mind the Panel has suggested that that interest figures and other such "corporate" items should be included separately in the Summary Budget. The Executive Councillor for Resources will discuss this further with the Managing Director (Resources).

Finally, the Panel has commended employees for their contribution to improving the Council's financial position. In particular, Members have expressed their appreciation of:

- the high rates of Council Tax collection that have been achieved;
- the decision by employees to accept no pay increase again in April 2012;
- the continuation of the trend for the budget to be underspent rather than for any spare sums to be used on low priority items; and
- the work undertaken by the Financial Services section to prepare the

MTP, Budget and Financial Plan.

At the conclusion of their deliberations, the Panel has endorsed the report to Cabinet. Subsequently, the Cabinet has recommended to Council that the proposed Budget, Medium Term Plan and Financial Plan be approved and that Council Tax for 2012/13 be increased by £4.34 per year (a Band D charge of £128.51).

TREASURY STRATEGY

MANAGEMENT

In accordance with its responsibility for scrutinising Treasury Management, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has reviewed and endorsed the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy for 2012/13 and the Prudential Indicators for submission to the Cabinet and Council.

Subsequently, the Cabinet has recommended the adoption of the Strategy to Council.

CUSTOMER MONITORING REPORT

SERVICES

The Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has considered the Customer Service Quarterly Performance Report for the period October to December 2011, on the levels and standards of service that have been achieved. In response to a comment on the service's 'speed of response', Members have been informed that a recruitment freeze has meant that a number of posts have been held vacant, which has had an impact on performance. However, customer satisfaction remains high. In the circumstances, the Panel has commended the performance of the Customer Services managers.

Following a dip in performance on a particular day because of a failure of an IT system, the Panel has been assured that the business continuity arrangements for the service includes reference to suppliers to ensure all IMD contracts are covered by service recovery standards. It has been suggested that it might benefit customers and ease pressure at peak times if information about those times during which there is high demand for service is displayed in customer service areas.

The Panel has been pleased to note the results of a recent survey which records employee satisfaction levels at both the Call Centre and the Customer Services Centre at 97%. Despite the challenges faced by the service, this represents a significant increase since the previous survey was conducted. Generally, the service's targets take account of the need to achieve budgetary savings and reflect a reduction in staffing levels.

A further report will be considered by the Panel in six months time.

FUNDING FOR CCTV

The Overview and Scrutiny Panels for (Economic Well-Being) and (Social Well-Being) have received an update on the future operation of the CCTV service. Members have been acquainted with the progress made in negotiations with partner organisations on how they might contribute towards the cost of the service and the terms of the agreements that might be reached with them.

The Panels have discussed the implications for the future budget and operation of the service. With these in mind, Members of the Economic Well-Being Panel have asked the Social Well-Being Panel to give further consideration to these matters.

Members of the Social Well-Being Panel have subsequently agreed to include this within their work programme. The Economic Well-Being Panel has also requested a presentation on the Business Improvement District for Huntingdon at a future meeting.

Members have noted that investigations are continuing into whether there would be any benefit in outsourcing the service. However, it has been reported that those Councils who have outsourced their service have not seen a significant saving in their CCTV budget.

A report on service changes in 2012/13 has been requested for submission to a future meeting of the Social Well-Being Panel.

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 which was provided, the Panel has discussed in detail the statistics relating to sickness absence. Members have noted that the annual average days sickness per FTE employee has reduced from 8.5 to 8.4 days in the year to 31st December 2011 and remains well below the average for local government. The Panel also has noted

that the Human Resources Team has modified the categories in which sickness is recorded which should produce a better picture of the reasons for sickness absence in the next quarterly report. Members have emphasised the need for Heads of Service and Activity Managers to record information accurately so that appropriate interventions can be introduced.

In considering the statistics for sickness in the category 'stress, depression, mental health and fatigue', Members have noted that a number of Mental Health Awareness sessions had been arranged for employees. The Panel has discussed the need to engage managers in these type of programmes and have been reminded that all Heads of Service have a Key Performance Indicator for staff management.

The Panel has discussed whether there was a need to establish a corporate performance indicator for sickness management. Although the need for targets was discussed, the Panel agreed that it was sufficient to report and monitor progress at future meetings.

A copy of the full report is available from Democratic Services on request and has been published on the District Council's website.

REVIEW OF EMPLOYEE CAR LOAN SCHEME

Following recent review, the Employment Panel has endorsed a number of changes to the existing Car Loan Scheme. The changes will ensure that individual employees are not encouraged to borrow more than is affordable and to simplify the administration of the scheme, by bringing interest rates into line with those used by the HMRC.

Having noted concerns about whether the Council should continue to offer the option of a car loan scheme to its staff, the Panel has agreed that the longer term retention of the scheme should be considered as part of the discussions with employees on the review of pay and the pay structure.

PAY POLICY STATEMENT

The Employment Panel has given preliminary consideration to the content of a proposed Statement of Pay Policy for 2012/13. The Pay Policy Statement provides information about the Council's policies relating to the pay and reward of chief officers and other employees, as required by sections 38 – 43 of the Localism Act 2011.

In considering the content of the statement, Members have sought clarification on a number of matters and commented on the presentation of some of the information within the report. As there were still several matters which required further clarification, the Executive Leader requested that the paper be updated before being submitted to the Council for approval.

PAY REVIEW PROJECT

The Employment Panel has received an update on the discussions between Employees' Side representatives in advance of the review of the Council's pay grades and bands.

In considering the principles and objectives which had been agreed for the project, Members have made a number of comments and suggestions for consideration during the review. Further updates on progress will be submitted to future meetings.

UPDATE ON HR REVIEW OF HR SERVICES

The Employment Panel has received an update on current discussions regarding the future of the District Council's Human Resources and Payroll function. Members have been informed that there was still a significant amount of work to be undertaken to determine whether the Council wished to pursue a proposal to outsource the function. Officers are making strenuous efforts to enable the Cabinet to reach a conclusion at their meeting on 22 March 2012, although it was noted that this is a matter not to be rushed and consequently may be addressed by a later Cabinet meeting.

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

Following on from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel's (Social Well-being) submission of a response to the consultation on the Proposed Redesign of Mental Health Services Across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, representatives of NHS Cambridgeshire were in attendance at the Panel's meeting to respond to the concerns raised. Members of the Panel are still not satisfied that the case for the closure of Acer Ward at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital has been justified. Whilst the Panel has expressed support for the proposals to strengthen and enhance community services and welcomed the decision to relocate the Crisis Resolution Home Team back to Huntingdon, Members are of the view that an acute facility in Hinchingsbrooke Hospital forms an integral part of the redesign of services. Assurances have also been sought that if Acer Ward is closed, a budget should be established on an ongoing basis to assist patients travelling to and from alternative facilities.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP: HEALTH AND WELL-BEING THEMATIC GROUP

Details of the Huntingdonshire Health and Well-Being Group were presented to Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) including its outcomes, membership, terms of reference and action plan. New strategic governance arrangements are in the process of being established. The draft Joint Health and Well-Being Strategy will be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel once approved for consultation by the Shadow Health and Well-Being Board. The Panel will continue to have sight of the Group's action plan on an annual basis.

MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS (PLANNING OBLIGATIONS)

The receipt and expenditure by the Council of money negotiated under Section 106 Agreements was noted by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Social Well-Being) and (Environmental Well-Being).

NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS WORKING GROUP

An update on the outcome of a recent meeting of the Neighbourhood Forums Working Group was delivered to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). Members had met with the Huntingdonshire Area Commander for the Police to discuss the Working Group's proposals thus far. Proposed boundaries and elected Member representation for each area are currently under review by the Working Group.

ROLL FORWARD OF CORE STRATEGY – LOCAL PLAN PROJECT PLAN

The Cabinet has approved the new Local Development Scheme for Huntingdonshire for publication and commencement on 24th February 2012. The scheme sets out the proposed programme for the production of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 and includes key milestones to inform people about opportunities to be involved in the process. It has arisen as a result of amendments to the plan-making process in the Localism Act, the publication of a new National Planning Policy Framework and consultation on the Local Planning Regulations.

The document was considered also by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) who, having noted that the Plan should be “prepared based on a strategy which seeks to meet objectively assessed development and infrastructure requirements” reiterated its previously expressed concerns regarding the Council’s lack of influence over the implementation of infrastructure works.

Members have been advised that contingency plans have been developed in relation to travellers’ sites and wind farms that will be used until the necessary policies have been adopted.

CASTLE HILL HOUSE – FORMER HUNTINGDONSHIRE COUNCIL OFFICES – HIGH STREET, HUNTINGDON

An update on progress to market Castle Hill, House, Huntingdon has been reported to Cabinet. In considering the contents of the report, Members were disappointed that the Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) had not been given an opportunity to consider details of an offer received for the

former Council offices. In that respect and having requested further information on the options available to the Council, Executive Councillors have deferred the item to a special meeting of the Panel and Cabinet to be held on 28th February 2012.

FLOOD RISK MANAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

The Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel has received a presentation from Cambridgeshire County Council’s Flood and Water Manager on flood risk management activities. Members have been advised that the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Strategy is the product of a series of reviews and Acts that have been passed following nationwide flooding in 2007. The Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership is made up of local District Councils, Cambridgeshire County Council, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Anglian Water, the Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and 3 of 63 local internal drainage boards (IDBs). The Strategy considers the impact of climate change and specifies how the County Council will exercise a strategic oversight role over flood risk management. As part of this, the County Council has to maintain a register of assets for flood risk management, adopt, approve and maintain sustainable drainage systems in new developments, regulate flows of ordinary water courses outside IDBs and plan for and manage any flood emergencies. It also investigates instances of flooding in order to establish responsibility and find solutions to problems. The new arrangements strongly emphasise joint working and the partner organisations have concurrent powers. Under the legal framework that has been established, a single authority usually has statutory responsibilities for

particular aspects of flood management with others having permissive powers. The District Council largely has permissive powers.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE FUTURE TRANSPORT STRATEGY

The Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel has been advised of a joint scrutiny review of the Cambridgeshire Future Transport Project which had been planned by the County Council and District Councils within Cambridgeshire. Owing to uncertainty over the future of the project, it has been decided to defer appointing a representative to the review group.

FEES AND CHARGES

The Licensing and Protection Panel has noted a new schedule of fees and charges for licenses issued by the District Council. The charges, which will come into effect from 1st April 2012, have been increased by 7.5%, with the exception of street trading licences which are limited to an inflationary increase of 2.5%, in an effort to move towards full cost recovery of the licensing service.

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