

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING)** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE 0.1A, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN** on **TUESDAY, 2 OCTOBER 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 4th September 2012.

**Miss H Ali  
388006**

**2 Minutes.**

### **2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary, non-disclosable pecuniary or non-pecuniary interests in relation to any Agenda Items. See Notes below.

**2 Minutes.**

### **3. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN (Pages 7 - 10)**

A copy of the current Forward Plan, which was published on 17th September 2012 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. HOUSING STRATEGY 2012-15 (Pages 11 - 46)**

To receive a report from the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy on the Council's Housing Strategy 2012-15.

**Mrs J Emmerton  
388203**

**20 Minutes.**

### **5. DRAFT TENANCY STRATEGY (Pages 47 - 68)**

To receive a report from the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy on the Draft Tenancy Strategy.

**Mrs J Emmerton  
388203**

**20 Minutes.**

### **6. HUNTINGDONSHIRE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU**

At the request of the Chairman, this item has been included on the Agenda. Councillor T D Sanderson, Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities has been invited to attend to discuss recent developments with the Citizens Advice Bureau in Huntingdonshire.

**20 Minutes.**

**7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12 (Pages 69 - 84)**

The draft Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2011/12 is attached. Members are requested to consider and comment upon it before it is finalised.

**A Roberts  
388015**

**15 Minutes.**

**8. CAMBRIDGESHIRE ADULTS, WELLBEING 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, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**5 Minutes.**

**9. WORK PLAN STUDIES (Pages 85 - 90)**

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**

**10 Minutes.**

**10. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS (Pages 91 - 98)**

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.**

**11. SCRUTINY**

To scrutinise decisions as set out in the Decision Digest (**TO FOLLOW**) and to raise any other matters for scrutiny that fall within the remit of the Panel.

**5 Minutes.**

Dated this 24 day of September  
2012



Head of Paid Service

## **Notes**

### **A. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

- (1) *Members are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and unless you have obtained dispensation, cannot discuss or vote on the matter at the meeting and must also leave the room whilst the matter is being debated or voted on.*
- (2) *A Member has a disclosable pecuniary interest if it*
- (a) relates to you, or*
  - (b) is an interest of -*
    - (i) your spouse or civil partner; or*
    - (ii) a person with whom you are living as husband and wife; or*
    - (iii) a person with whom you are living as if you were civil partners*
- and you are aware that the other person has the interest.*
- (3) *Disclosable pecuniary interests includes -*
- (a) any employment or profession carried out for profit or gain;*
  - (b) any financial benefit received by the Member in respect of expenses incurred carrying out his or her duties as a Member (except from the Council);*
  - (c) any current contracts with the Council;*
  - (d) any beneficial interest in land/property within the Council's area;*
  - (e) any licence for a month or longer to occupy land in the Council's area;*
  - (f) any tenancy where the Council is landlord and the Member (or person in (2)(b) above) has a beneficial interest; or*
  - (g) a beneficial interest (above the specified level) in the shares of any body which has a place of business or land in the Council's area.*

### **B. Other Interests**

- (4) *If a Member has a non-disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest then you are required to declare that interest, but may remain to discuss and vote.*
- (5) *A Member has a non-disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest where -*
- (a) a decision in relation to the business being considered might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing of you or a member of your family or a person with whom you have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the council tax payers, rate payers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the authority's administrative area, or*
  - (b) it relates to or is likely to affect any of the descriptions referred to above, but in respect of a member of your family (other than specified in (2)(b) above) or a person with whom you have a close association*

*and that interest is not a disclosable pecuniary interest.*

**Please contact Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer, Tel No: (01480) 388006 / email: [Habbiba.Ali@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto: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](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk) (*under Councils and Democracy*).

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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 Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 4 September 2012.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.

Councillors R C Carter, Mrs P A Jordan,  
P Kadewere, Ms L Kadic, M C Oliver,  
J W G Pethard and R J West.

Mrs M Nicholas – Coopted Member.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S Akthar and K M Baker and Mr R Coxhead.

### 27. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 3rd July 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 28. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors S J Criswell, Mrs L Kadic and R J West declared disclosable pecuniary interests in Minute No. 12/33 by virtue of their membership of Cambridgeshire County Council's Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

### 29. 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 September to 31st December 2012. Members were reminded that the Town and Parish Council Charter and Housing Strategy 2012-15 – to include the Tenancy Strategy would be submitted to the Panel's October meeting. It was further noted that details of the Gambling Act 2005 – Revised Statement of Principles had been circulated around electronically to the Panel for information purposes.

### 30. HOUSING BENEFIT CHANGES AND THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON HUNTINGDONSHIRE

*(Councillor B S Chapman, Executive Councillor for Customer Services, was in attendance for consideration of this item).*

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Customer Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the effects of Government changes to the Housing Benefits system arising from the Welfare Reform Act.

The Executive Councillor for Customer Services reported that the changes were Government led and that they would not benefit the Council in anyway. The Head of Customer Services then informed Members that there appeared to be a general acceptance amongst claimants that they would experience a reduction in their Housing Benefit and that there had been little contact from claimants on the changes made to date. Customers falling into arrears as a result of the reforms were encouraged to contact the Council immediately for assistance and assurances were delivered to Members that efforts would continue to be made to contact those who were now reaching the end of their transitional protection arrangements.

A question was raised by Councillor Mrs L Kadic querying whether the letters which had been sent out to those affected by the proposals had been written in plain English. In response, the Head of Customer Services reported that she personally had reviewed the letters prior to their dispatch to ensure that recipients would understand the extent of the changes.

Having commended the Customer Services Team for their work in engaging with Housing Benefit claimants to advise them of the impact of the Welfare Reforms, the Panel

RESOLVED

that the content of the report now submitted be noted.

### **31. REVIEW OF COUNCIL'S LETTINGS POLICY**

*(Councillor B S Chapman, Executive Councillor for Customer Services, was in attendance for consideration of this item).*

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Customer Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) detailing the outcome of a review of the Council's Lettings Policy. By way of background, the Executive Councillor for Customer Services reported that the review had been prompted by legislative change arising from the Localism Act and the Welfare Reform Act. The Housing Needs and Resources Manager then explained that the Policy was currently undergoing consultation with Members, current housing register applicants and a wide range of stakeholder organisations. It was noted that all partners within the sub-regional Home-Link Choice Based Lettings scheme were also consulting upon their own Lettings Policies as it had been necessary to review these policies together to ensure that a consistent approach to the legislative changes was being adopted across the sub-region area.

Members' attention was drawn to the changes introduced by the Localism Act and other welfare reforms together with proposed revisions to the Policy. They were advised that it would be a challenge for Officers to determine priorities between households with similar levels of need, particularly if additional categories were introduced. The most significant proposal, which would affect a majority of Housing Benefit claimants, related to occupancy levels. It meant that households with spare bedrooms would be regarded as under-occupying their homes and that consideration would also be

given to the age and sex of children in the household. Children of the same sex would be expected to share bedrooms. Members were advised that work had commenced, in conjunction with Housing Providers, to identify affected households and to put in place an incentive scheme to assist with moving costs.

Other matters discussed by the Panel included the impact that the proposals would have upon homelessness, environmental health regulations relating to the sharing of rooms and the methods utilised to generate awareness of the consultation. Following a suggestion made by the Chairman, it was agreed that an Executive Summary would be incorporated within the Lettings Policy document. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the content of the report now submitted be noted.

**32. ANNUAL REPORT ON ORGANISATIONS SUPPORTED BY GRANTS THROUGH SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS - 2011/12**

*(Councillor T D Sanderson, Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities, was in attendance for consideration of this item).*

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) containing details of the performance of voluntary organisations in Huntingdonshire who received funding from the Council via service level agreements. The Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities reported that the agreements would end in March 2013. The Community Health Manager then outlined the background to the current performance framework and apprised Members of how the agreements were managed by the Council. In so doing, he reported that all organisations were monitored against a set of agreed performance indicators and other organisational criteria on a quarterly basis. Members' attention was drawn to the five indicators where the performance targets had not been achieved in the previous year and the reasons for the performance reported.

In response to a question by the Chairman, it was confirmed that once the Council had transferred from the present commissioning model to a grants based system, future reports would include evidence of need and demand for voluntary services. Organisations that applied for grant funding to the Council would be asked to demonstrate how their services were able to meet demand. Members requested that the Council was mindful of the need to keep to a minimum the demands it placed upon voluntary organisations. Having expressed their satisfaction with the content of the report, the Panel

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

**33. DOMESTIC ABUSE JOINT MEMBER LED REVIEW: FINAL REPORT**

*(Mr R Jakeman, Scrutiny and Improvement Officer for Cambridgeshire County Council, was in attendance for consideration of this item).*

With the aid of a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the findings of a joint Member-led review on domestic abuse by Cambridgeshire County Council and Huntingdonshire and Fenland District Councils were received and noted by the Panel.

In introducing the report, the Scrutiny and Improvement Officer drew the Panel's attention to a number of statistics which had been collated as evidence to assist with the study. It was encouraging to note that the County Council's Cabinet had fully or partially accepted all the recommendations, with the exception of one which related to the stricter regulation of incidents categorised as "Level 3" by appropriately trained staff. It was however reported that this issue was currently under review by the Lead Member, Councillor Ms S Hoy. It was further reported that one of the main outcomes of the investigation was that the County Council now collected data on domestic abuse in a consistent way which could be utilised to influence the budget setting process.

Members discussed the under-reporting of domestic abuse incidents and expressed the view that communication in this respect should be improved. Furthermore, across Cambridgeshire, local authorities and partner agencies had different systems and data collection practices, which it was felt should be harmonised. This would facilitate better understanding of this matter and joint working. Some progress had already been made to improve these systems.

In noting that Huntingdonshire District Council's responsibilities in respect of domestic abuse rested with the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership, it was reported that the Partnership would consider the report at its October 2012 meeting. In so doing, Members requested that a feedback report was submitted to them at a future meeting.

**RESOLVED**

- (a) that the content of the report now submitted be noted; and
- (b) that a report on the outcome of the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership's discussions on the report be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel.

**34. LEADERSHIP DIRECTION**

With the assistance of a report by the Executive Leader and Deputy Executive Leader (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel gave consideration to the Council's Leadership Direction, which set out the intended direction of travel and key milestones for the Council. The Chairman reported that the Corporate Plan Working



Group was currently in the process of producing the Council Delivery Plan, which would sit beneath the Leadership Direction. Work was yet to commence on the development of a performance monitoring reporting system; however, it was reported that the Overview and Scrutiny Panels would play a part in monitoring the Council's performance.

Councillor Mrs P A Jordan drew Members' attention to the findings of the recent Employee Opinion Survey. She was particularly concerned that only 75% of respondents felt that they were treated with dignity and respect at work by Councillors. The Scrutiny and Review Manager reported that in response to the findings of the survey Managing Directors had held a series of meetings with Heads of Service and Team Managers with a view to resolving any identified areas of concern. Furthermore, it was reported that the survey would now be undertaken on an annual basis, whereas previously it had been undertaken biannually. In discussing the way forward, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman undertook to raise these matters at the next meeting of the Corporate Plan Working Group.

**35. DRAFT CAMBRIDGESHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY 2012-17- CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

Pursuant to Minute No. 12/20, the Panel received a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking the Panel's endorsement of a response to the consultation on the Draft Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-17. The Working Group appointed by the Panel at the last meeting had met on 25th July 2012 to formulate the response. Members' attention was also drawn to a series of Officer comments which had been included within the report since the Working Group's meeting. In noting the wish to ensure that a corporate response was made to the consultation, the Panel

**RESOLVED**

- (a) that Sections 2 and 3 of the report now submitted be endorsed as the basis for the Council's response to the consultation on the Draft Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-17;
- (b) that the Cabinet be invited to comment on and endorse the draft response; and
- (c) that Officers be authorised to submit the response directly to the Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Board.

**36. REPORT OF THE CABINET**

The Panel received and noted a report from the Cabinet (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining their deliberations on the Panel's studies into the Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire and on Voluntary Sector Funding 2013/14 onwards. With regard to the former, it was noted that a pilot scheme would be trialled in the Norman Cross County Division for a twelve month period and that the existing Neighbourhood Forums would be subject

to urgent review by the Deputy Executive Leader. The Chairman reported that it had been agreed with the Deputy Executive Leader that the Neighbourhood Forums Working Group would be involved with the pilot. Having been informed by Councillor M Oliver that the pilot would commence on 20th September 2012, the Panel requested that a meeting with the existing Neighbourhood Forum Chairmen be held imminently. Members also noted the Cabinet's request that the Panel undertook a review of the Norman Cross pilot during its twelve months of operation.

Having regard to Voluntary Sector Funding 2013/14 onwards, Members noted that the Cabinet had agreed to move to a three year period for funding with future financial support being tapered to ensure voluntary organisations found match funding for any grant that they received from the Council in the final year of the three year period.

**37. CAMBRIDGESHIRE ADULTS, WELLBEING AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Panel received and noted the Minutes of the meeting of the Cambridgeshire Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 19th July 2012 (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). Councillor R J West reported that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on 12th September 2012 when consideration would be given to Clinical Commissioning Groups and the Adult Social Care Integrated Plan.

**38. WORK PLAN 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) which contained details of studies being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Economic Well-Being and for Environmental Well-Being.

**39. 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. Brief updates were delivered on recent meetings of the One Leisure (Social) Sub-Group and the Equality Working Group. Members agreed to remove the Scrutiny of Council Budgets within the Panel's Remit from the work programme.

Following a question by Councillor P Kadewere on the membership of the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership, Officers undertook to circulate this information electronically to the Panel.

**40. SCRUTINY**

The 126th Edition of the Decision Digest was received and noted.

Chairman

### FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

**Prepared by**  
**Date of Publication:**  
**For Period:**

**Councillor J D Ablewhite**  
**17 September 2012**  
**1 October 2012 to 31 January 2013**

Membership of the Cabinet is as follows:-

Councillor J D Ablewhite	- Leader of the Council, with responsibility for Strategic Economic Development	3 Pettis Road St. Ives Huntingdon PE27 6SR  Tel: 01480 466941 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Jason.Ablewhite@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Jason.Ablewhite@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>
Councillor N J Guyatt	- Deputy Leader of the Council with responsibility for Strategic Planning and Housing	6 Church Lane Stibbington Cambs PE8 6LP  Tel: 01780 782827 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Nick.Guyatt@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Nick.Guyatt@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>
Councillor B S Chapman	- Executive Councillor for Customer Services	6 Kipling Place St. Neots Huntingdon PE19 7RG  Tel: 01480 212540 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Barry.Chapman@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Barry.Chapman@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>
Councillor J A Gray	- Executive Councillor for Resources	Shufflewick Cottage Station Row Tilbrook PE28 OJY  Tel: 01480 861941 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Jonathan.Gray@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Jonathan.Gray@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>
Councillor D M Tysoe	- Executive Councillor for Environment	Grove Cottage Maltings Lane Ellington Huntingdon PE28 0AA  Tel: 01480 388310 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Darren.Tysoe@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Darren.Tysoe@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>
Councillor T D Sanderson	- Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities	29 Burmoor Close Stukeley Meadows Huntingdon PE29 6GE  Tel: (01480) 412135 E-mail: <a href="mailto:Tom.Sanderson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk">Tom.Sanderson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</a>

Any person who wishes to make representations to the decision maker about a decision which is to be made or wishes to object to an item being considered in private may do so by contacting Mrs Helen Taylor, Senior Democratic Services Officer on 01480 388008 or E-mail: [Helen.Taylor@huntsdc.gov.uk](mailto: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

Huntingdonshire District Council  
Pathfinder House  
St Mary's Street  
Huntingdon PE29 3TN.

- Notes:- (i) Additions/significant changes from the previous Forward Plan 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  
(iii) Part II confidential items which will be considered in private are annotated ## and shown in italic.

∞ 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
Charging for Second Green Bin	Cabinet	18 Oct 2012	None	Eric Kendall, Head of Operations Tel No. 01480 388635 or email Eric.Kendall@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	None	D M Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being
Bearscroft Farm Urban Design Framework	Cabinet	18 Oct 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
Community Right to Challenge	Cabinet	18 Oct 2012	None.	Colin Meadowcroft, Head of Legal and Democratic Services Tel No. 01480 388021 or email Colin.Meadowcroft@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	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
<i>Risk Based Verification in Housing Benefits##</i>	<i>Cabinet</i>	<i>18 Oct 2012</i>	<i>None.</i>	<i>Julia Barber, Head of Customer Services Tel No. 01480 388105 or email Julia.Barber@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</i>		<i>J A Gray</i>	<i>Economic Well-Being</i>
Town and Parish Council Charter	Cabinet	18 Oct 2012	None.	Dan Smith, Community Health Manager Tel No. 01480 388377 or email Dan.Smith@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Social Well-Being
Houghton & Wyton Conservation Area Boundary Review	Cabinet	18 Oct 2012	Consultation Outcomes	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Approve new Conservation Area Boundary	N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Housing Strategy 2012-2015	Cabinet	18 Oct 2012	Previous Housing Strategy 2006-2012 and Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	Jo Emmerton, Housing Strategy Manager Tel No. 01480 388203 or email Jo.Emmerton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Housing Associations and Partners	N J Guyatt	Social Well-Being
A14	Cabinet	18 Oct 2012	None.	Steve Ingram, Head of Planning Services 01480 388400 or email Steve.Ingram@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
CIL Governance Principles	Cabinet	18 Oct 2012	None.	Steve Ingram, Head of Planning Services Tel No. 01480 388400 or email Steve.Ingram@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Endorse Governance Principles.	N J Guyatt	Economic Well-Being
Tenancy Strategy	Cabinet	18 Oct 2012	None.	Jo Emmerton, Housing Strategy Manager Tel No 01480 388203 or email Jo.Emmerton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Housing Associations and Partners	N J Guyatt	Social 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
Review of Lettings Policy***	Cabinet	22 Nov 2012	Overview and Scrutiny Report - 4th September 2012	Julia Barber, Head of Customer Services Tel No 01480 388105 or email Julia.Barber@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B S Chapman	Social Well-Being
<i>Business Plan One Leisure - Quarterly Performance Reports##</i>	<i>Cabinet</i>	<i>22 Nov 2012</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Simon Bell, General Manager, One Leisure Tel No. 01480 388049 or email Simon.Bell@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</i>	<i>Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being).</i>	<i>T D Sanderson</i>	<i>Economic Well-Being</i>
Gambling Act - Revised Statement of Principles	Cabinet	22 Nov 2012	None	Christine Allison, Licensing Manager Tel No 01480 388010 or email Christine.Allison@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	None	T D Sanderson	Social Well-Being
Planning for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)	Cabinet	13 Dec 2012	Consultation Outcomes	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Approve new Conservation Area Boundary.	N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being

# Agenda Item 4

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL  
(SOCIAL WELL BEING)

2ND OCTOBER 2012

CABINET

18TH OCTOBER 2012

## HOUSING STRATEGY 2012-15 (Report by the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy)

### 1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 For Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet to consider the Housing Strategy 2012-15.

### 2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 2.1 The previous Housing Strategy has expired and the action plan that was agreed at that time has been mostly achieved. This revised document sets out how housing and related initiatives contribute towards the Council's new Corporate Aims.
- 2.2 The Housing Strategy spans the period 2012-15. This is a shorter time frame than previous documents because it is being developed at a time of rapid change, most notably resulting from National Planning Policy Framework; Welfare Reform Act; Localism Act and the national Housing Strategy. Given the significant amount of change that the Council is responding to at the current time it was thought appropriate for the document to focus on the next 3 years.
- 2.3 The draft document has been the subject of consultation with housing association partners. This included a briefing session held in July 2012. Feedback has been positive.

### 3. RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The Housing Strategy 2012-15 be approved.

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Huntingdonshire's Housing Strategy 2006-11

<http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/Housing/Pages/HousingStrategy.aspx>

National Planning Policy Framework; CLG; March 2012

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116950.pdf>

Laying the Foundations; CLG; November 2011

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/housingstrategy2011>

Welfare Reform Act; DWP; March 2012

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/welfare-reform/legislation-and-key-documents/welfare-reform-act-2012/>

Localism Act 2011; CLG; November 2011

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/decentralisation/localismbill/>

**Contact Officer: Jo Emmerton, Housing Strategy Manager  
01480 388203**



# Housing Strategy

2012 - 2015

Planning and Strategic Housing Service  
September 2012



new housing  
**support**  
future growth  
local economy  
growing population



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## Foreword

There has been a significant change in our local housing market since the production of the last Housing Strategy. The impact of the economic downturn has been felt in Huntingdonshire – like other districts we have seen a slight drop in house prices; a significant drop in the number of homes selling; and an increase in the amount of time it takes to sell a property. Whilst the development of new housing has continued we have noticed that the large strategic sites have not progressed as quickly as we would like. Therefore we will continue to support initiatives to keep the momentum in the house building industry going. We will respond positively to the significant challenges set out in the National Planning Policy Framework through the development of our new Local Plan.

The Government has outlined a renewed direction for housing and planning and we are in an era where public services and finances are under extreme pressure. We are concerned about the impact of the Government's Welfare Reforms on housing and the potential increase in homelessness. We have made a commitment to offer 'support for the disadvantaged' and will honour our commitment through our work to support people at risk of homelessness; by enabling new supported housing where funding allows; and responding positively to the challenges presented by our ageing population including the high demand for Disabled Facilities Grants.

As ever, affordable housing remains in very high demand and at the end of March 2012 there were over 2,700 households on our housing register. We remain under pressure to enable as many new affordable homes to be built as possible. On a positive note we saw an uplift in our affordable housing programme in recent years to approximately 300 new homes per year. However for the next two years at least, this is due to drop down, reflecting (at least in part) the completions of the major affordable

housing sites at Loves Farm St Neots but also the lack of progress on other large strategic sites.

Looking to the future the availability of affordable housing will continue to be a critical issue. There will be delivery complexities if we recover from recession but there will be greater challenges if the recovery stalls. There are delivery pressures arising from the absence of HCA grant and we need to encourage communities to embrace their new powers in the Localism Act. Our challenge is to continue to find innovative ways to deliver new homes and we will continue to work in partnership to achieve our objectives.

This updated Strategy sets out our proposed direction for the next few years during which time, with the involvement of partners, we will develop a longer term strategic vision for the use of existing housing stock and the delivery of new housing. The Council is committed to enabling housing which meets local needs. I am proud of what we have done so far and I look forward to more successes over coming years.



**Councillor Nick Guyatt**  
Deputy Executive Leader and Executive  
Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing

## Key Messages

### Huntingdonshire needs housing growth

We need new housing to meet the needs of our growing population and to support the growth of our local economy. We know that Huntingdonshire has seen significant growth in recent years. The future scale of growth is yet to be determined but forecasting models suggest a need for between 16,375 to 20,250 new homes for the period 2011-2036. We will review our Local Plan, taking it up to 2036, including our response to the challenges set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Along with housing growth comes the challenges of infrastructure and through our new CIL charging regime we will raise funds to help support the essential infrastructure provisions.

### Huntingdonshire needs more affordable housing

The disparity between average house prices and average incomes has increased the pressure on the scant affordable housing resource. There were over 2,700 households on the housing register in March 2012. According to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment<sup>1</sup>, there is a need to build 1,002 new affordable homes every year for the next five years in order to meet need (source: 2011 SHMA update). On a strategic level, the Council must maximise all opportunities to deliver new affordable homes. In addition to seeking a target of 40% affordable housing on eligible development sites, we want to increase the supply on rural exceptions sites. We will actively explore innovative ways to fund the delivery of new affordable housing including new powers in the Localism Act applicable to rural exception sites.



Loves Farm, St Neots (2009)

### We will prevent and tackle homelessness in Huntingdonshire

We continue to see significant numbers of people who are either homeless or at risk of homelessness (over 2,100 homelessness interviews conducted in 2011/12). We accepted a housing duty towards 173 homeless households in 2011/12. We will prevent homelessness wherever possible, through a range of interventions including court advocacy; landlord liaison, and help with accessing the private rented sector. We are concerned that homelessness levels will rise further as a result of the Welfare Reform Act which reduces the amount of housing benefit that certain groups of people are entitled to claim.

We need to ensure that we make the best use of the existing housing stock, working with providers to facilitate people who are under occupying social housing to move to accommodation that is better suited to their needs. We also support the use flexible tenancies, especially on larger homes and we will, review our Lettings Policy in 2012 in light of the changes in the Localism Act 2011.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/our\\_challenge/housing/shma.aspx](http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/our_challenge/housing/shma.aspx)

**We will work in partnership to help meet the needs of our ageing population**

The 65+ age group is projected to increase from 13% in 2001 to 27% in 2031. People are living for longer and are getting frailer. Rates of dementia are on the increase. Half of people aged over 65 live alone and this increases in later age groups. The ratio of people aged 65+ to those aged 0-64 is due to increase presenting challenges for future workforce planning. Housing related services to help people remain independent in their own homes continue to be important. We intend to increase the provision of extra care housing for frail older people and to continue our support for Disabled Facilities Grants and other services that support people in their own homes, thereby preventing the need for more expensive institutional forms of care.



Golf Course, St Ives (Sept 2012)



Loves Farm, St Neots (2009)



Loves Farm, St Neots

# Introduction

This document is written at a time of enormous change in the housing sector. The Government's plans as set out in Laying the Foundations – the National Housing Strategy; the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF); the Welfare Reform Act and the Localism Act all contribute to our work plan over the next few years. This document provides a short analysis of the key housing and related issues facing our district and sets out the Council's plans for working in partnership over the next few years to meet identified needs.

Feedback on achievements since production of the previous Strategy 2006-11 are at Annex 1.





## Corporate Context

The Council's Vision is:

*Huntingdonshire District Council will continue to improve the quality of life in Huntingdonshire by working with our communities and partners to achieve sustainable economic growth whilst providing excellent value for money services that meet local needs within a balanced budget.*

We have four themes and a number of corporate aims. This Housing Strategy enables delivery of a number of corporate aims. To achieve the 'golden thread' through our performance management framework, we have adopted these aims in this Housing Strategy and they will be used to inform Service Plans and individual staff Key Performance Areas (KPA's).

<p><b>Enabling sustainable growth</b></p>	<p><b>Working with our communities</b></p>
<p><b>Corporate Aim Direct Impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enable an adequate supply and mix of new housing to meet future needs.</li> <li>▪ Maximise benefits to the community from new developments</li> <li>▪ Enable the provision of affordable housing</li> <li>▪ Protect and improve our environment</li> </ul> <p><b>Indirect Impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Promote sustainable development opportunities in and around the market towns</li> <li>▪ Enable and encourage Community energy projects</li> </ul>	<p><b>Direct Impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop a Localist approach (develop the Localism agenda)</li> </ul> <p><b>Indirect Impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Build constructive relationships with other public sector organisations, Parishes &amp; Towns, business community and 'not for profit' sector</li> <li>▪ Adopt multi agency problem solving approaches</li> <li>▪ Being open, transparent and accessible (value of consultation)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Improve the quality of life in Huntingdonshire</b></p>	<p><b>Strong local economy</b></p>
<p><b>Direct Impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Support opportunities for the vulnerable to live independently</li> <li>▪ Achieve a low level of homelessness</li> <li>▪ Ensure benefits reform is implemented as smoothly and as effectively as possible</li> <li>▪ Protect the health of individuals and reduce health inequalities</li> </ul> <p><b>Indirect Impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Process Housing and Council Tax benefit claims in a timely and efficient way</li> <li>▪ Make our services accessible to all</li> <li>▪ Work with partners to minimise</li> </ul>	<p><b>Indirect Impact:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Successful delivery of the Alconbury Enterprise zone</li> <li>▪ Support partners to improve strategic infrastructure, including broadband</li> <li>▪ Support the development of town centres and key settlements to become economically viable and vibrant</li> <li>▪ Support enterprise</li> <li>▪ Encourage the provision of a wide range of jobs appropriate for existing and future residents</li> <li>▪ Support the skills levels that aid economic prosperity</li> </ul>

# Our Local Context

## Geography

Huntingdonshire lies within the designated London/ Stansted/ Cambridge/ Peterborough Growth Area. Huntingdonshire is still predominantly rural in character with an area of approximately 350 square miles.

## Population Growth

The Census figures<sup>2</sup> state that the population grew from 156,954 in 2001 to 169,500 in 2011 representing growth of 8%. The Cambridgeshire County Council Research Group (CCCRG) mid-2010 population estimate for Huntingdonshire<sup>3</sup> was 165,300. This is low given the Census figure that has since been released but based on their 2010-estimate, the CCRG forecast our population will increase by a further 9% by 2031 (CCCRG November 2011 forecasts). Given the actual figures released from the 2011 Census in July 2012, this forecast is likely to increase further.

The Census figures show that the number of households has increased from 63,062 in 2001 to 69,600 in 2011 representing an increase of 10.4%. CCCRG estimated the number of households in 2009 as 69,300 and forecasts further growth in households of 18% by 2031. This forecast will also increase slightly now that actual Census figures have been released.

Population growth presents a challenge for the Council in ensuring public services are able to cope with increased demand. This also reflects the significant levels of house building expected in our district.

## Population Structure<sup>4</sup>

The structure of the district's population is changing. In the near future there are expected to fewer younger people and more older people. In 2001 54% of the population was younger than 40, but this is expected to drop to 42% by 2031. The biggest proportional decline will occur in the 25-39 age group, dropping from 23% in 2001 to approximately 17% in 2021. Similarly, the proportion of under-20s is expected to decline from 26% of the population in 2001 to 21% in 2031. However, recent experience has demonstrated that new housing developments attract younger residents and as a result, over time, we expect an increase in children on new housing developments with the associated requirement for educational, nursery and other family facilities.



<sup>2</sup> <http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/guide-method/census/2011/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/B939D1D7-7804-4F22-8FE5-4A3BDF29B47E/0/Report10.pdf>

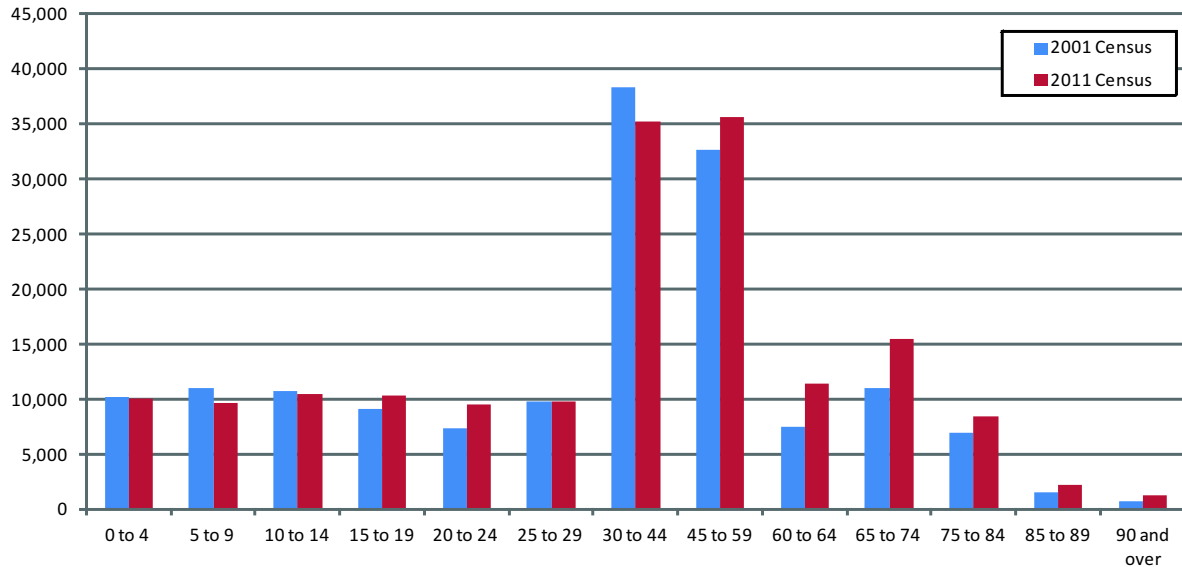
<sup>4</sup> <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/D0E67CC5-F3AF-4DB0-8D6C-7FE336C5A7ED/0/HuntingdonshireDistrictReport2011.pdf>

## Ageing population

Proportional increases will occur in the 65+ age group, from 13% in 2001 to 27% in 2031. People are living for longer and are getting frailer. Rates of dementia are on the increase. Half of people aged over 65 live alone and this increases in later age groups. The ratio of people aged 65+ to those aged 0-64 is due to increase. This presents challenges for future workforce planning and for housing related services to help people remain independent in their own homes.



## Huntingdonshire Population by Age Group



### Ethnicity

2.85% of the district's residents described themselves as non-white in the 2001 Census with relatively high levels in Alconbury and The Stukeleys and the towns of St Ives and Huntingdon. This is low when compared to 9.08% nationally and 4.88% in the East of England. The Cambridge Area Travellers Needs Assessment 2005 estimated that in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough there were 6,080 Gypsy/Travellers, making them one of the largest minority ethnic groups in the area.

### Housing Stock<sup>5</sup>

There are an estimated 71,035 dwellings in Huntingdonshire (April 2010). The dominant tenure type is owner occupation (76%), followed by social renting (13%), then renting privately (11%). The stock is generally in good condition, more modern than the position for England as a whole. To help the Council

understand the condition of stock in the private sector and inform its investment plans, a comprehensive stock condition survey was completed in 2010. This survey found that although there are properties which are unfit or in substantial disrepair, these are few in number and the survey has confirmed the Council's belief that an area renewal strategy for the private sector is not necessary as there is no spatial concentration of properties in poor repair. Overall, 12,860 private sector dwellings failed the Decent Homes Standard in Huntingdonshire. A total of 13.8% (7,910 dwellings) failed due to the presence of a category 1 hazard and 10.8% (6,210 dwellings) due to thermal comfort failure. The Council's interventions in these areas remain important.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/Housing/Private%20rented%20property/Private%20Sector%20Housing%20Enforcement/Pages/default.aspx>

## House prices and Affordability

The average price (March 2012 sales and valuations) was £211,786<sup>6</sup> (source: Hometrack). Affordability remains a serious problem with average house prices 5 times average incomes (Hometrack, March 2012). When looking at the poorest households, affordability is even more of a problem as lower quartile house prices were 6.3 times lower quartile incomes in March 2012. The development of new affordable housing to meet a range of income groups therefore remains a priority.



London Road, St Ives (Sept 2012)

## Impact of economic downturn

The local housing market has undoubtedly been affected by the economic downturn. The percentage of turnover of homes has dropped significantly from a high of 6.1% in 2007 to 3.9% in 2011. The number of property sales has dropped with 898 sales in the six months Sept 2011-March 2012 compared to 1,400 in the preceding six months (source: Hometrack<sup>7</sup>). In terms of new house building, to date, housebuilders have continued to deliver. We remain on course to achieve the Core Strategy requirement by 2026 but welcome development of the large strategic sites to boost housing supply.

## Demand for affordable housing

The provision of affordable housing is insufficient to meet the local need. There are particular challenges for people dependent upon welfare benefits in accessing the private rented sector. There were over 2,700 households on the housing register in March 2012. Homelessness levels have increased and according to the Strategic Housing Market Assessment<sup>8</sup>, there is a need to build 1,002 new affordable homes every year for the next five years in order to meet need (source: 2011 SHMA update). This number exceeds total house building across the district across all tenures and is therefore unachievable. On a strategic level, it means that the Council must maximise all opportunities to deliver new affordable homes.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/docs/housing-market-bulletin-july-2012.pdf>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/public/docs/housing-market-bulletin-july-2012.pdf>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/our\\_challenge/housing/shma.aspx](http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/our_challenge/housing/shma.aspx)

## Cambridge sub-region

The Council works in partnership with other Councils in the Cambridge sub-region to co-ordinate work and share learning. The outcomes of this are set out in the sub-regional Housing Statement 2012<sup>9</sup>, with the two most significant achievements being the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) and the Homelink choice based lettings system for the allocation of social housing across the sub-region.

## Health and well-being Board Cambridgeshire<sup>10</sup>

The Health and Wellbeing board (HWB) started Shadow meetings in October 2011. The purpose of the HWB is to promote the health and wellbeing of Cambridgeshire's communities, focusing on securing the best possible outcomes for all residents. The Board is responsible for the Joint Strategic Needs Assessments (JSNAs); a Health and Well Being Strategy which is being produced during 2012; and for approving the Clinical Commissioning Plans for health services in the County. Housing has a key role to play in providing and supporting preventative services and contributing to good health outcomes.

The Huntingdonshire Health and Well Being Group is part of the Cambridgeshire Network for Health & Wellbeing. This group includes public health professionals, GPs, social-care professionals, representatives from the voluntary sector, etc.. The group meets to consider the health and well-being priorities for Huntingdonshire and seek specialist input from health researchers and statisticians in reviewing

the evidence of need. The latest review (June 2012) has indicated that the priorities for Huntingdonshire from the upcoming national local authority health profiles will be:

- Reducing health inequalities within the district
- Supporting individuals to choose healthy lifestyles - addressing smoking, obesity, sexual health and mental health
- Increased opportunities for vulnerable people to live independently - promoting independence of older people and increasing provision for the homeless and for vulnerable young people.

These priorities are consistent with the existing priorities of the Huntingdonshire Health and Well Being Group and housing services and policies play an important role in affecting both health inequalities and the potential for independent living in accommodation suitable for the needs of the individual.

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<sup>9</sup> <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/content/housing/housing-strategy-and-research/cambridge-sub-regional-housing-board/crhb-publications-and-documents.en>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/council/partnerships/Health+and+Wellbeing+Board.htm>

## Current and Emerging National Influences

### Laying the Foundations - A National Housing Strategy<sup>11</sup> (November 2011)

In broad terms, the strategy aims to tackle housing shortage, get the market moving, support choice and quality for tenants, boost the economy, improve environmental standards and design quality, bring empty homes back to use and provide support for vulnerable people.

### National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPF)<sup>12</sup> (March 2012)

Aims to make the planning system less complicated, more accessible and to encourage sustainable development. It removes vast amounts of national planning policy, leaving responsibility for new planning policies at the local level.

### Localism Act (Enacted Nov 2011)<sup>13</sup>

This sets out Government's radical shift in the balance of power away from the centre to the lowest practicable level, including neighbourhoods, professionals and communities as well as local councils and other local institutions. Housing is one of the five key measures that underpin the Government's approach to decentralisation, giving Councils the power to decide how best to help homeless people; how to manage their housing waiting lists; and the length of tenancy that best fits a household's needs. Neighbourhood planning is another of the five key measures. This increases the influence that neighbourhoods have over decisions that make a big difference to their lives, for example where new homes and

businesses should go and what they should look like. With the support of the Council, neighbourhoods can have the power to create 'neighbourhood plans' which, once independently examined, could be put to a referendum of local people for approval.

### The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) investment policy<sup>14</sup>

The HCA is the Government's delivery agency for housing. It sets out the policy parameters for Government investment in housing. At the current time, 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. HCA is now working with a smaller number of Registered Providers (RPs – formerly known as housing associations) on a programme management approach. The HCA has confirmed that it does not generally intend to invest in section 106 sites because it considers that these should be delivered entirely from planning gain. The majority of the Council's new sites for affordable housing are on s106 land. Whilst we will work closely with the HCA and RPs to maximise investment in affordable housing in the district, it is likely to be a modest HCA-funded programme.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/housing/housingstrategy2011>

<sup>12</sup> <http://www.communities.gov.uk/planningandbuilding/planningsystem/planningpolicy/planningpolicyframework/>

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/20/contents/enacted>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/>

## Welfare Reform Act<sup>15</sup>

The Government consider that the current welfare benefit system needs reform because at present, they consider that work incentives are poor and the system is too complicated. The Act aims to create the right incentives to get more people into work by ensuring work always pays; protect the most vulnerable in our society and deliver fairness to those claiming benefit and to the tax payer. The introduction of Universal credit, bringing a number of former benefits and credits into one system and the changes to Local Housing Allowance together have a significant impact on the lowest income households in the district, (see chapter on 'Improving the quality of life in Huntingdonshire' for more information).



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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2012/5/contents/enacted>



## Housing Growth and Affordable Housing

**Corporate Theme:** Enabling Sustainable Growth

**Corporate Aims:** To enable an appropriate supply and mix of new housing to meet future needs  
To enable the provision of affordable housing  
Maximise benefits to the community from new developments

Housing Strategy objectives	Over the next three years we intend to
Facilitate new housing development to meet the growth needs of the district.	Prepare a new Local Plan for the period up to 2036 including our response to the National Planning Policy Framework (released March 2012) and to meeting the need for Gypsies and Travellers following the PPS (released March 2012). Update our affordable housing policies in the Local Plan. Encourage development of the large strategic sites by pro-active advice, policy guidance and site specific requirements.
Facilitate the delivery of infrastructure to support housing growth.	Implement CIL Charging Schedule on new developments and target the income from CIL on infrastructure priorities. Where opportunities exist, support RP bids for external resources to support housing and related infrastructure. Encourage community development on all new strategic sites. Where opportunities exist, support RP bids for external resources to support housing and related infrastructure.
Regenerate less popular areas or those in need of physical, social or economic regeneration.	Implement the action plans for regeneration West of Huntingdon and Oxmoor.
Increase the provision of affordable housing.	Negotiate new s106 with applicable target and mix for affordable housing. Develop a Guidance Note to advise developers on the Council's approach to the negotiation of affordable housing contributions and viability assessments.
Encourage owner occupation where appropriate and support existing owners.	Increase the provision of shared ownership housing and review the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme as a way to help first time buyers access the housing market.
Meet the identified needs of Gypsies and Travellers.	To be included within the Council's Local Plan.
Work in partnership to meet the housing needs of the Cambridge Sub-Region.	Together with other authorities in the Cambridge sub-region, implement the sub-regional Housing Statement action Plan.
Understand our local housing market(s).	Annual refresh of SHMA statistical data and context to be completed.

## Huntingdonshire's Housing Growth Requirements

Our adopted Local Development Framework covers the period up to 2026. It now needs to be updated and rolled forward revised in light of the designation of the Enterprise Zone at Alconbury and the requirements of the NPPF. The SHMA and other local evidence bases will need to be reviewed and new housing related policies prepared.

The target for future housing development in Huntingdonshire up to 2036 will be determined through the Local Plan process. The East of England Forecasting Model (June 2012) assessed various growth scenarios reflecting differing rates of economic growth and migration resulting in potential housing development targets of between 16,375 and 20,250 for the period 2011-2036. The results of the 2011 Census have yet to be reflected in the modelling so the target numbers are subject to further refinement. As the Local Plan is prepared the most sustainable housing growth target will be explored and agreed through a public examination by an independent Planning Inspector.

### Facilitating new development

Of the large strategic development sites in our district, only Loves Farm has developed at any pace and is now practically complete. This site has made a significant contribution to our annual affordable housing completions over recent years and completion levels are predicted to dip in 2012/13 onwards because other large strategic sites have not yet come forward. There are a number of other large strategic sites to be brought forward through the planning process. The Council encourages development activity to commence as these will make a significant contribution to future year's affordable housing provision. These are:

- St Neots East
- St Ives West
- RAF Brampton
- Godmanchester (Bearscroft Farm)
- Huntingdon West Area
- Northbridge Huntingdon
- Alconbury –The site has secured 'Enterprise Zone' status. It is estimated that 8000 new jobs will be created. The site is not currently an allocated site but it will be considered in respect of the new Local Plan and it is considered that it has the potential to provide approximately 5,000 new homes.

### Facilitating infrastructure

The Council introduced the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) with effect from May 2012. The CIL will be used to support the delivery of new housing and infrastructure and the priorities for the expenditure of CIL monies will be decided by Cabinet in consultation with other partners.

### Regeneration

Proposals for sustainable regeneration will be supported within all of our market towns.

### Increasing affordable housing

We currently have over 2,700 households on the housing register (March 2012) and the SHMA indicates a need to build over 1,000 new affordable homes per year (over the next 5 years) to meet the need<sup>16</sup>. Completions levels fall well below this level and therefore affordable housing will continue to be in short supply in the near future. Maximising resources to deliver new affordable housing is critical. This includes the land we can secure through developer

16.

contributions, a pro active approach to rural exception sites and other land sources in addition to considering ways in which affordable housing can be financed/delivered.

Delivery of new affordable housing has become more complex. The Council's Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) leaves affordable housing as one of the few developer contributions to be negotiated and secured by section 106. These are predicted to become subject of increasing scrutiny. In preparation for the CIL, the Council's consultants, Drivers Jonas Deloitte (DJD) assessed the development viability of housing sites across the district. For affordable housing, it was assumed that a target of 40% on eligible sites would apply; that no social housing grant would be available; and that the tenure balance would be 70% social rent and 30% shared ownership. The adopted CIL charging schedule rates were set at levels which DJD consider are viable to deliver affordable housing at this tenure split.

The relative viability of development will differ from site to site and the Council may have to be flexible in amending the tenure or dwelling mix of the affordable homes to enable otherwise unviable development to proceed. The development of Affordable Rent will be considered if it is proved through a site specific viability assessment that the provision of social rented housing is not viable. We are developing a Guidance Note to support the Developer Contributions DPD. This will be produced in Autumn 2012.

## Accommodation for Gypsies and Travellers

The Council started a Development Plan Document (DPD) which has been on hold pending the national policy stance in NPPF. In the meantime a number of permissions have been given through the Development Management process. Appropriate policy will now emerge through the new Local Plan process.

## Supporting Owner Occupation

In pursuit of a balanced housing market with a range of products to meet the needs of a range of incomes, the Council enables owner occupation through the development of shared ownership on new Section 106 sites; and supporting the HCA's Homebuy product range on new sites where the developer applies. The Local Authority Mortgage Scheme (LAMS)<sup>17</sup> which provides mortgage indemnity for first time buyers has now been operational for one year. We want to review the scheme and consider the possible benefits to joining and helping first time buyers in our district.



London Road, St Ives (Sept 2012)

<sup>16</sup> 2011 SHMA based on 2009/10 data sets. [http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/our\\_challenge/housing/shma.aspx](http://www.cambridgeshirehorizons.co.uk/our_challenge/housing/shma.aspx)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.sector-group.com/our-services-local-authority-mortgage-scheme.htm>

## Cambridge sub-region<sup>18</sup>

We remain committed to working in partnership to meet the needs of the Cambridge sub-region. The sub-regional Housing Statement and action plan sets out this work plan for the next year.

## Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)

The SHMA is a body of research into the housing and related needs of an area. Covering the whole Cambridge housing sub-region, the assessment was created through a project team including district housing and planning colleagues, English Partnerships, the Homes and Communities Agency, developers and land owners representatives. This is the evidence base that is used to inform this Housing Strategy and the supporting policies. The SHMA is part of the evidence base for the Local Plan review and is an on-going project.

## Energy Efficiency

We work in partnership with the energy companies and installers to enable people to improve the thermal efficiency of their homes. This helps to save the householder money on their fuel costs and reduces CO2 emissions thereby reducing housing's impact on the environment. Over the next two years we will:

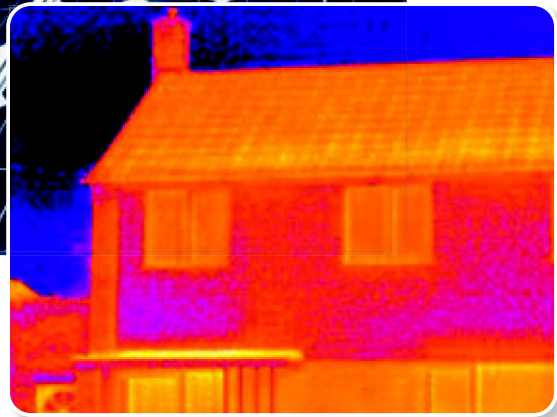
- Promote the District Council's CO2Y Homes scheme which offers free cavity wall and loft insulation to vulnerable homeowners or those living in privately rented properties
- Work with Aran Services to promote a free or reduced cost (depending of fuel type) external wall insulation scheme to vulnerable households off the gas network

- Promote existing CERT schemes offering free cavity wall and loft insulation to 'Priority Groups' and 'Able to Pay' in the owner occupied and private rented sector. When appropriate, we will take advantage and promote other insulation schemes as they become available

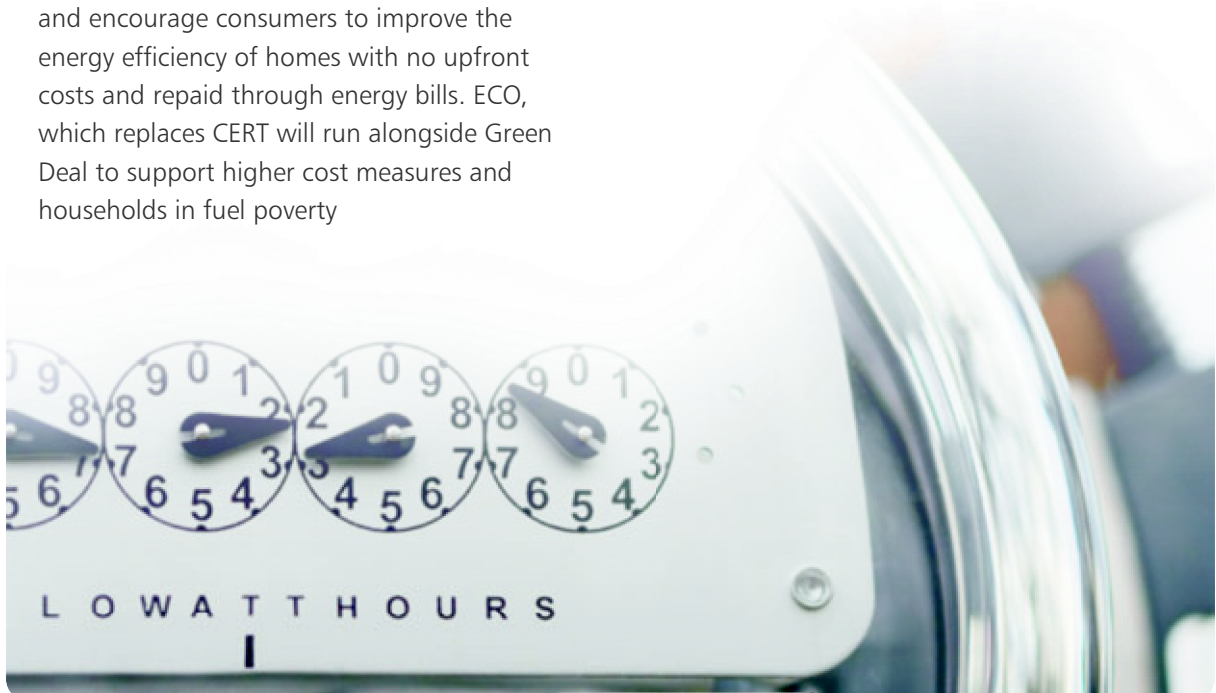


- Use the Green House (sustainable refurbishment demonstration property) in St Ives to encourage householders to make improvement to their homes, focussing on energy efficiency, renewables, water efficiency and biodiversity. Provide advice and information on the technology and grants that are available such as the 'Feed In Tariff' and Renewable Heat Incentive, by guided tours, demonstrations and 'Ask the Expert' days. Encourage local businesses to see how they can deliver low carbon services to householders and businesses

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.cambridge.gov.uk/ccm/navigation/housing/housing-strategy-and-research/cambridge-sub-regional-housing-board/>



- Work with regional partners to deliver the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation (ECO) when introduced in late 2012/early 2013. Green Deal is a national framework providing a funding mechanism to enable and encourage consumers to improve the energy efficiency of homes with no upfront costs and repaid through energy bills. ECO, which replaces CERT will run alongside Green Deal to support higher cost measures and households in fuel poverty



# Rural Housing

**Corporate Theme:** Working with our communities

**Corporate Aims:** Develop a local approach (develop the localism agenda through rural housing opportunities)

Housing Strategy objectives	Over the next three years we intend to
Support vibrant rural communities	<p>Develop a policy to encourage rural exceptions sites following the provisions set out in NPPF.</p> <p>Engage with communities in order to enable rural exceptions homes to be built.</p> <p>Increase the number of rural exception sites in the programme.</p>

## Rural Housing

The provision of rural housing is essential to support the vitality and sustainability of our rural communities. We have a rural housing programme and we support ACRE's Rural Housing Enabler. We recently signed up to the National Housing Federation's Save Our Villages campaign<sup>19</sup>. We would like to increase the number of affordable homes built in smaller but

sustainable villages on rural exceptions sites. The NPPF enables a small percentage of homes to be delivered as private housing if this helps deliver the affordable homes and provides a sufficient incentive for the landowner to release the land. We will review our Rural Exceptions Policy in our forthcoming new Local Plan in order to encourage communities to facilitate development that meets their needs.



<sup>19</sup> [http://www.housing.org.uk/campaigns/save\\_our\\_villages.aspx](http://www.housing.org.uk/campaigns/save_our_villages.aspx)

## Improving the Environment

**Corporate Theme:** Enabling Sustainable Growth

**Corporate Aims:** To protect and improve our environment

Housing Strategy objectives	Over the next three years we intend to
Reduce the impact of housing on the environment through initiatives to improve energy efficiency.	<p>Promotion and publicity of energy efficiency, renewables, water efficiency and biodiversity through the Green House project</p> <p>Promote the district council's own insulation scheme (CO2Y Homes), along with CERT funded schemes with external partners.</p> <p>Measures include free cavity wall and loft insulation to vulnerable householders and free/low cost insulation measures to the 'able to pay' sector. Also includes 'external wall insulation' scheme, free or low cost to vulnerable households off the gas network in solid wall properties.</p> <p>Agree an implementation plan for delivery of the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation (ECO) enabling the energy efficiency of homes to be improved with no up front costs from the occupier (repaid through energy bills).</p>
Bring empty homes back into use.	Support Cross Keys Homes' project to bring empty homes back into use.

### Energy Efficiency

We work in partnership with the energy companies and installers to enable people to improve the thermal efficiency of their homes. This helps to save the householder money on their fuel costs and reduces CO2 emissions thereby reducing housing's impact on the environment. Over the next two years we will:

- Promote the District Council's CO2Y Homes scheme which offers free cavity wall and loft insulation to vulnerable homeowners or those living in privately rented properties
- Work with Aran Services to promote a free or reduced cost (depending of fuel type) external wall insulation scheme to vulnerable households off the gas network
- Promote existing CERT schemes offering free cavity wall and loft insulation to 'Priority Groups' and 'Able to Pay' in the owner occupied and private rented sector. When

appropriate, we will take advantage and promote other insulation schemes as they become available

- Use the Green House (sustainable refurbishment demonstration property) in St Ives to encourage householders to make improvement to their homes, focussing on energy efficiency, renewables, water efficiency and biodiversity. Provide advice and information on the technology and grants that are available such as the 'Feed In Tariff' and Renewable Heat Incentive, by guided tours, demonstrations and 'Ask the Expert' days. Encourage local businesses to see how they can deliver low carbon services to householders and businesses
- Work with regional partners to deliver the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation (ECO) when introduced in late 2012/early 2013. Green Deal is a national framework providing a funding mechanism to enable

and encourage consumers to improve the energy efficiency of homes with no upfront costs and repaid through energy bills. ECO, which replaces CERT will run alongside Green Deal to support higher cost measures and households in fuel poverty.

- Work with Health Authority partners to support health improvement programmes which promote warm, healthy homes.

### Tackling empty homes

Empty homes is not our highest priority because it is not a significant problem locally but nonetheless any empty home represents a wasted resource, especially in a district with high housing need like Huntingdonshire. We supported a bid from Cross Keys Homes to bring 20 empty homes back into use and we will support Cross Keys in targeting their activity appropriately, learning lessons along the way that we can use to encourage further occupation of empty property.



23/24 Great Northern Street, (Before)



23/24 Great Northern Street, (After)



## Housing Options and Welfare Reform

**Corporate Theme:** Improve the quality of life in Huntingdonshire

**Corporate Aims:** To achieve a low level of homelessness  
Ensure benefits reform is implemented as smoothly and as effectively as possible

Housing Strategy objectives	Over the next three years we intend to
Prevent homelessness including those new households at risk of homelessness as a result of Welfare Reforms.	Prevent homelessness through a range of interventions including advice and assistance / landlord liaison / court advocacy / rent deposit schemes etc. Quantify and target action on the households worst affected by the changes to LHA.
Make best use of existing housing stock and reduce under occupation of social housing.	Implement under occupation partnership agreement (success dependent upon providers). Increase the provision of smaller homes to facilitate people moving from larger family sized homes who are under occupying. Work with Luminus to increase provision of 4bed+ sized homes for large families.
Ensure the types of tenancies offered by RPs and the corresponding rent levels are appropriate for local people.	Produce a Tenancy Strategy for providers to 'have regard to' when drafting their Tenancy Policies. Present information on affordability to enable rents to be set at levels appropriate for local people's incomes (presented in Tenancy Strategy).
Increase housing options in a variety of tenures including access to the private rented sector for homeless households.	Investigate the feasibility of a social lettings agency. Expand the Private sector lease scheme.
Revise and implement our Homelessness Strategy.	Review the Lettings Policy. Review and implement the Homelessness Strategy.
Encourage well maintained stock and enable people to repair or improve their home to meet their needs.	Enable people on low incomes to repair or improve their home per year through Repairs Assistance. Review the Council's Housing Renewal Assistance Policy annually.
Seek to maintain the quality and accessibility of existing housing stock, educate the private rented sector to improve the general quality of the private rented housing stock and take enforcement action where necessary.	Investigate and report on housing conditions within the private rented sector. Facilitate improvements to the private rented housing stock, tackling category 1 and 2 hazards in the home; advising landlords of HMOs and licensing those where applicable. Licence and maintain standards within mobile home parks. Investigate illegal eviction and promote good standards within the private rented housing stock through the private landlords forum.

## Homeless prevention

We are facing rising demand for housing advice / homelessness services. The number of housing options / advice interviews conducted by our staff increased from 1777 in 2010/11 to 2182 in 2011/12. Additional staff resources have been brought in to help manage the demand. The Council's approach is to prevent homelessness from arising wherever possible and to help people access the private rented sector. Homelessness cannot be prevented in every case and in 2011/12 we accepted a duty towards 173 households.

## Impact of Welfare Reform Act

We are concerned that homelessness levels will rise further as a result of the Welfare Reform Act. Among other issues, this Act implements significant changes to Local Housing Allowance (LHA) including:

- increasing the age for the single room rent from 25 to 35 years;
- reducing local housing allowance from the 50th percentile of private sector rents down to the 30th percentile (leaving people with a potential shortfall in their LHA);
- scrapping the 5 bedroom rate meaning that people in larger houses only receive LHA at 4 bedroom rate regardless of whether they occupy a larger home; and
- reducing the HB of under occupying social rented tenants of working age.

We need to undertake an impact analysis of these proposals and to take targeted action to help people who will be most affected. An internal action group has been established to quantify the numbers of people affected by these changes and co-ordinate and target our response, including monitoring overcrowding in HMOs and taking action against illegal eviction where necessary.

## Making best use of stock

We have two initiatives underway to help make the best use of the existing housing stock:

1. A project with Luminus to secure a number of larger properties to accommodate large households from the housing register (either acquisition or extensions to existing homes).
2. The under occupation project – facilitating moves of existing tenants within the social sector who are under occupying accommodation to move to housing that suits their household size. This is a partnership with all RPs in the district and has been used as a model in recent CIH publicity and good practice material. This strategic approach will help make best use of housing stock as well as forming part of a response to Welfare Reforms.

## Rent Levels and Tenancy Types

The HCA has launched a new product called 'Affordable Rent'. This is similar to social rent but more expensive as rents are pegged at up to 80% of market level rents whereas social rents in our district generally equate to about 60% of market rents. The new tenure has been developed as a revenue subsidy for new affordable housing in light of the national budget cuts to the HCA's capital programme. The impact of Affordable Rents within our district needs to be kept under review as it will have a negative impact on affordability for individual households as well as potentially changing the tenure (and affordability) profile of the district's housing stock over time. Through section 106 negotiations the Council's policy continues to be to seek a target of 40% affordable on eligible sites to a tenure distribution of 70% social rent and 30% shared ownership. Where sites are not viable to proceed in this manner then the tenure will be reviewed. Our response to Affordable Rents

will be included in our forthcoming Tenancy Strategy alongside our advice to Registered Providers about the use of flexible tenancies. This will be produced during 2012 as a response to the Localism Act 2011.

### Support Services

The majority of services available to help support households who are homeless or at risk of homelessness are funded by Supporting People. We are concerned at the impact of cuts in the Supporting People budget and will continue to work in partnership with other commissioning agencies to protect services for vulnerable people in Huntingdonshire. We have identified a need for additional supported housing for chaotic young homeless people and would like to work in partnership with housing / social care / probation partners to investigate ways to address this need. In the current funding climate we are concerned that the capital and revenue costs involved in establishing new services may prove prohibitive at the current time but we will ensure that the need is considered in the appropriate partnership fora.

### Housing Options

We generally have 2,500-3,000 households on the register at any one time (over 2,700 at March 2012). The high levels of need and demand for social housing mean that the provision of new affordable housing is critical. Our ability to discharge statutory homelessness duties is reliant on a healthy supply of affordable homes which in turn is generated from two sources: 1. re-lets from existing stock and 2. new build opportunities. We are concerned that our new build programme is likely to reduce from about 300 new affordable homes per year to 64 in 2012/13 (projections

estimated in May 2012). The programme in subsequent years is far less certain but is due to pick up. The decline in the new build programme reflects the lack of development in the district including on large strategic sites and this will impact on the Council's ability to meet statutory homelessness duties. We are therefore keen to prevent homelessness and to assist homeless households into the private rented sector as an alternative to social housing. Over the next two years we will:

- Investigate the feasibility of establishing a social lettings agency which will improve access to the private rented sector for the Council's Housing Advice Service customers;
- Continue to offer the Rent Deposit Scheme as a tool to help those households threatened with homelessness into private rented tenancies; and
- Expand our Private Sector Leasing partnership with Kings Street Housing Society.

Our Lettings Policy sets out which categories of people are prioritised for affordable housing. This needs to be reviewed in light of the changes in the Localism Act 2011 and the anticipated changes in the Government's Code of Guidance. We now have greater discretion about who should be eligible for housing in the area including the relative priority that should be given to people in employment, local people, and people leaving the armed forces. The Lettings Policy review commenced in 2012 and the new Policy will be implemented in April 2013.

### Well maintained housing stock and the private rented sector

We want to support people to keep their homes in good, safe, and healthy condition. The provision of well maintained housing is

important to people's health and well being, as well as to the vitality of neighbourhoods. We assist people to keep their homes in good repair in a number of ways:

- Our Repairs Assistance policy enables home owners on low incomes to repair or maintain their homes by providing interest free loans for which a charge is placed on their property;
- Through property inspections we work with home owners and landlords to tackle any hazards in the home. Advice is freely available and for vulnerable people, small grants are available to help eliminate hazards;
- We review, licence, maintain standards and prevent overcrowding in HMOs and provide advice and guidance to landlords of HMOs that do not require a licence; and
- We operate a Private Landlords Forum which meets at least twice a year and has regular newsletters. The Forum is important to inform landlords of new legislation, highlight and promote good management practice and raise awareness of issues affecting the sector e.g. welfare reform.

## Services for Vulnerable People

**Corporate Theme:** Improve the quality of life in Huntingdonshire

**Corporate Aims:** To support opportunities for the vulnerable to live independently  
Protect the health of individuals and reduce health inequalities

Housing Strategy objectives	Over the next three years we intend to
Identify and meet supported housing needs.	Investigate the feasibility of a new supported housing scheme for vulnerable single homeless people (possible supported lodgings).
Meet the housing and support needs of our ageing population.	Enable a new extra care scheme in St Ives (and North Hunts as a second priority area and longer term priority).
Enable people to live independently through the provision of adaptations, accessible housing, or support.	Ensure smooth transition to the new HIA shared service. Maintain support for the DFG programme, reviewing the budget, and monitoring OT waiting times to ensure the timely provision of adaptations. Work in partnership across housing / health / social care and with AgeUK to develop a sustainable long term Business Plan for the Handyperson scheme.
Highlight the priorities of housing and related services in Huntingdonshire to new commissioning fora and GPs.	Demonstrate the impact of the Handyperson scheme to GPs and the Health and Well Being Commissioning Fora to influence future commissioning plans.

### Implications of the ageing population

Our population is ageing. The proportion of people aged 65+ is projected to increase from 13% in 2001 to 27% in 2031 (source: Cambs County Research Group 2011). This brings challenges for housing and related services. We need additional extra care schemes in St Ives (as a priority) and also in the Northern part of the district. This is a shared priority across the housing / health / social care partners and is reflected in their plans also.

### Adaptations, accessible housing, and support

The Council has demonstrated a strong commitment to enabling vulnerable people to live independently. Over the last two years we

have worked with NHS Cambridgeshire to reduce the waiting list for Occupational Therapist assessments (this is the statutory responsibility of NHS Cambridgeshire rather than this Council). In response to this, we have significantly increased the budget to enable DFG applications to be processed as quickly as possible. The DFG budget is £1.2m in 2012/13 and is expected to provide disabled facilities for over 200 households.

We have worked in partnership with Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Council to form a new shared service for Home Improvement Agencies (HIAs). The new HIA shared service went live in April 2012. In the short term the new service is expected to increase the capacity of staff to cover for staff absences (e.g. staff would work across

boundaries to cover for holiday / sickness and even-out case loads). It should generate some cost savings arising from a reduction in management and associated costs and in the longer term it should generate some economies of scale with increased purchasing power of adaptations and equipment like stairlifts. The priority for 2012/13 is for the new Manager to be inducted into post and for the service to be bed down. A shared management board will be established of which we will be a member.

Other initiatives to help people remain independent in their own homes for as long as possible and therefore reduce the cost of other more expensive institutional forms of care are important. We offer to visit vulnerable households in their home to rectify issues in the home that may result in harm and hospitalisation of the occupant.

Over the last few years we have worked in partnership to commission a Handyperson service providing small repairs to people's homes to make them safer to live in, tackling issues that may cause slips trips and falls. The scheme is provided by Age UK Cambridgeshire and we want to work in partnership to secure the long term funding for the scheme seeking contributions from other partners.

### Health and Well-being Commissioning

The health / social care commissioning environment is changing with the future abolition of NHS Cambridgeshire as commissioning transfers to Local Commissioning Groups (groups of GP's), the Cambridgeshire Health & Well-being Board, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Central Commissioning Group, Cambridgeshire County Council and PH England. Our task is to ensure that the needs of Huntingdonshire are understood within the county-wide Health and Well-being Network and particularly by the

Board; and that the role and importance of housing and related preventative services (e.g. community alarms, DFG, HIA, Handyperson, extra care, prevention of overcrowding, maintenance of good quality accommodation, etc) are recognised within our Local Commissioning Groups and by other commissioners.



## Annex 1. Achievements: Housing Strategy 2006-2011

### Aims 1 and 2

Enable housing which meets local needs and maximise the provision of good quality affordable housing for local people:

- Completed a sub-regional Strategic Housing Market Assessment in partnership with the other local authorities in the Cambridge sub-region
- Increased the resources available to the Cambridge-sub-region by creating a dedicated sub-regional Housing Strategy Co-ordinator post.
- Prepared a Housing Strategy for the Cambridge sub-region 2008-11.
- Commenced work on a Development Plan Document for Gypsy and Traveller sites in the district with site options being considered through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment
- Adopted the Core Strategy for the Local Development Framework following an Examination in Public increasing the target for affordable housing to 40% and reducing the site threshold upon which affordable housing is sought
- Developed Development Management Policies
- Substantial development on a large extension to St Neots at Loves Farm where the Council has jointly funded with BPHA, a new community development worker to help establish this community.
- Commissioned consultants to assess the infrastructure requirements of the planned housing and population growth
- Considered the viability of the proposed LDF targets for affordable housing
- Completed 1,205 new affordable homes (between 1/4/06 – 31/3/11) using £33m grant from the Homes and Communities Agency, £4.7m of HDC's capital grant funding and £4.3m from other sources.
- Worked in partnership to fund the Rural Housing Enabler, completing 83 affordable homes in rural areas (between 1/4/06 – 31/3/11)
- Given Council owned land for affordable housing on Mayfield Road Huntingdon
- A total of £1.35m has been secured from the Housing Growth Fund to pay for an eco-home development in Mayfield Road Huntingdon reaching Code for Sustainable Homes level 5; and a further £3m for the Huntingdon Link Road to open up the development and regeneration of Huntingdon West Area;
- Secured funding from the Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) pot of £517k to provide move-on accommodation linked to the Paines Mill Foyer in St Neots.

### Aim 3

Improve housing conditions in the private sector:

- Updated the stock condition survey in 2010 using physical inspection and the BRE desktop method
- Undertaken publicity to promote the Repairs Assistance Policy through the Council's magazine and Landlords Forum
- Completed remedial work to de-contaminate the land on which the Council's mobile homes site is located

- Introduced a process for improving non-decent homes in the private housing sector occupied by vulnerable people. This process commences with energy efficiency grants and concludes with inspection by Environmental Health Officers to ensure that the property has been made decent
- Removed HHSRS Category 1 and Category 2 hazards from 137 properties through enforcement and other interventions
- Brought 50 empty homes back into use through advice; grants; and advertising on the Council's web site (between 1/4/06-/31/3/10)
- Helped 97 people (between 1/4/06-/31/3/10) on low incomes to repair or maintain their homes through Repairs Assistance loans
- Over 4000 households have been referred to Warm Front for energy efficiency improvements to their homes since April 05. A large proportion of the Households assisted were pensioner households
- Purchased and renovated two properties on the private market and undertaken retrofit to improve the thermal efficiency and act as a demonstration project for the rest of the district

#### Aim 4

Maximise the benefits of multi-agency working and meet the housing needs of vulnerable people:

Implemented the Housing Health and Social Care Strategy for Older People in Huntingdonshire and refreshed the document in 2009

- Completed a desk top assessment of supported housing need across 21 client groups for the whole of Cambridgeshire to inform future service planning (led by Supporting People Cambridgeshire)
- Supported Luminus and NHS Cambridgeshire to develop a 34 bed extra care scheme in Huntingdon which opened in 2011
- Jointly commissioned (in sub-region) a Sanctuary Scheme for victims of domestic violence, helping 18 people since 2006 (Luminus contractor)
- In partnership with Muir and Granta developed a new scheme for 14 adults with mental health problems in Huntingdon
- In partnership with BPHA opened a schemes for adults with learning disabilities in St Neots
- Completed the LPSA aiming to improve the quality of life for older people and increased the range of preventative services available to older people including 88 new community alarms and 13 people supported by the Ramsey warden scheme
- Led on a countywide Supporting People review of HIA services in Huntingdonshire including assessing the value for money of the service and associated works. The HIA shared service went live from April 2012
- Helped 1,162 vulnerable people to remain in their own homes through provision of Disabled Facilities Grants between 2006/7 and 2010/11 by providing vital adaptations for example stairlifts and level access showers. These cost in excess of £5m and have been funded mostly by the Council with a contribution from the Government
- Removed HHSRS Category 1 and Category 2 Hazards from 13 properties occupied by vulnerable persons, through the provision of 'decent homes grants,' over the period April 2010 to December 2011.



## Aim 5

Prevent homelessness and reduce its detrimental effects:

- Agreed a protocol with the Children and Young People's Service to ensure that young people and families are appropriately supported when they become at risk of homelessness
- Successfully bid for government funding to implement a choice based lettings scheme across the sub region. Developed and implemented this scheme (Home-Link) in partnership with the other councils and housing associations in the sub region enabling greater choice and mobility
- Developed the Home-link system to facilitate mutual exchanges across the Cambridge sub-region and shared nominations on large strategic sites
- Completed a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) on homelessness in Cambridgeshire (led by NHS Cambridgeshire)
- Introduced a more proactive homelessness prevention service including providing a range of options to help households find alternative housing
- Introduced a homelessness prevention budget to allow small grant or loan payments to prevent a homelessness situation arising
- Increased the number of households helped into privately rented tenancies via the Rent Deposit Scheme from 65 in 2005/06 to a peak of 211 in 2008/09
- Reduced the number of households in temporary housing from 124 in June 2006 to 76 in March 2011
- Worked in partnership with Granta Housing Society to extend Coneygear Court and provide 6 self contained temporary flats as an alternative to units with shared facilities
- Introduced a Court Desk service for mortgage repossession and rent arrears cases in light of the increase in number of possession claims due to mortgage and rent arrears
- Increased the grant funding available to support Citizens Advice Bureau in Huntingdon to provide more help with debt advice and mortgage rescue casework
- Successfully bid for LAA funding to purchase a house to facilitate move-on from Axiom's Foyer in St Neots, freeing up room in the Foyer for crash beds for emergency use for vulnerable young people
- Retendered the contract for floating support and services for people fleeing domestic violence (led by Supporting People)

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**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL  
(SOCIAL WELL BEING)**

**2ND OCTOBER 2012**

**CABINET**

**18TH OCTOBER 2012**

**DRAFT TENANCY STRATEGY  
(Report by the Head of Planning and Housing Services)**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 For Overview and Scrutiny and Cabinet to consider the Council's draft Tenancy Strategy.

**2. BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The requirement to adopt a Tenancy Strategy within 12 months of the Act coming into force was contained within the Localism Act 2011.
- 2.2 The Tenancy Strategy sets out the Council's view on the type of tenancies we would like social housing providers to grant, the circumstances in which they should grant a tenancy of a particular type, our view on fixed term tenancies and the circumstances to be considered on the review and possible renewal of any fixed term tenancies.
- 2.3 While there is a legal requirement to have a Tenancy Strategy, social housing providers only need to have 'regard' to it so it is not legally binding on them when setting their own Tenancy Policies.
- 2.4 The Strategy has been drafted to include seven principles which we encourage providers to support within their policies. These include support for the use of fixed term tenancies of five years rather than the current assured tenancies which give 'homes for life'. The use of fixed term tenancies is encouraged as a way to help make best use of the existing housing stock.
- 2.5 The document also supports social housing providers setting rents at Social Rents rather than Affordable Rents, unless Affordable Rents are found to be necessary to facilitate development to proceed. Luminus, the main provider of social housing do not anticipate charging Affordable Rents in the district although they are planning to introduce fixed term tenancies from April 2012. Therefore their approach broadly aligns with our strategic principles.
- 2.6 The Tenancy Strategy and the principles proposed within it were considered by social housing providers attending a consultation event on 24 July 2012, and through a consultation exercise via email to all providers. Apart from Luminus who supported our strategy no other providers have responded formally, indicating that they do not strongly oppose our principles and adopted approach.

**3. RECOMMENDATION**

- 3.1 The Tenancy Strategy 2012 be approved.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Localism Act 2011; CLG; November 2011

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/localgovernment/decentralisation/localismbill/>

**Contact Officer: Jo Emmerton / Trish Reed  
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# Tenancy Strategy

2012 - 2015

Planning and Strategic Housing Service  
September 2012



new housing  
**support**  
future growth  
local economy  
growing population



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## Introduction and Purpose of this Strategy

The Government as part of the Localism Act 2012 requires each local authority to produce a Tenancy Strategy. The Act specifically states that:

'A local housing authority in England must prepare and publish a strategy (a "tenancy strategy") setting out the matters to which the registered providers of social housing for its district are to have regard in formulating policies relating to:

- the kinds of tenancies they grant,
- the circumstances in which they will grant a tenancy of a particular kind,
- where they grant tenancies for a term certain, the lengths of the terms, and
- the circumstances in which they will grant a further tenancy on the coming to an end of an existing tenancy.<sup>1</sup>

Tenancy Strategies are integral to the Government's social housing reforms in that they concern the nature and length of tenancies being offered by Registered Providers (RPs) in the area. Our strategy must determine how a number of particular factors are to be dealt with in Huntingdonshire, including the use of short-term "flexible" tenancies and issues on affordability as they relate to rents applied to new homes and plans to convert existing homes to Affordable Rent rather than Social Rent levels.

This policy operates on the basis of broad principles. The principles are intended to act as guidance for RPs working with the Council in the form of a framework and it is hoped that those we work closely with will support our principles.

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<sup>1</sup> See Glossary

# Huntingdonshire District Council's Strategic Objectives

The primary objective of the Tenancy Strategy is to support the delivery of Council's Housing Strategy and the wider Corporate Vision.

The Council's Vision is:

*Huntingdonshire District Council will continue to improve the quality of life in Huntingdonshire by working with our communities and partners to achieve sustainable economic growth whilst providing excellent value for money services that meet local needs within a balanced budget.*

We have four themes and a number of corporate aims. This Tenancy Strategy supports the delivery of a number of corporate aims.

This Strategy should be read alongside the following housing documents:

- Housing Strategy 2012-15
- Homelessness Strategy June 2011
- Affordable Housing Guidance Note 2012
- Developer Contribution Supplementary Planning Document

Corporate Theme	Corporate aims this tenancy strategy supports
Enabling Sustainable Growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Enable an adequate supply and mix of new housing to meet future needs.</li> <li>■ Maximise benefits to the community from new developments</li> <li>■ Enable the provision of affordable housing</li> </ul>
Working with our Communities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Develop a Localist approach (develop the Localism agenda)</li> <li>■ Build constructive relationships with other public sector organisations, Parishes &amp; Towns, business community and 'not for profit' sector</li> <li>■ Adopt multi agency problem solving approaches</li> </ul>
Improve the quality of life in Huntingdonshire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Support opportunities for the vulnerable to live independently</li> <li>■ Achieve a low level of homelessness</li> <li>■ Ensure benefits reform is implemented as smoothly and as effectively as possible</li> <li>■ Protect the health of individuals and reduce health inequalities</li> </ul>
Strong local economy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Successful delivery of the Alconbury Enterprise zone.</li> <li>■ Support the development of town centres and key settlements to become economically viable and vibrant</li> <li>■ Support enterprise</li> <li>■ Encourage the provision of a wide range of jobs appropriate for existing and future residents</li> </ul>

## The Position in Huntingdonshire

### Housing Market

Huntingdonshire has a strong local economy and low unemployment; however house prices are relatively high compared to average income levels especially for first time buyers. Average prices July – December 2011 were £217,463<sup>2</sup>. Median average incomes are £35,600<sup>3</sup>. Affordability remains a serious problem with average house prices 5.2 times average incomes. When looking at the poorest households, affordability is even more of a problem as lower quartile house prices were 6.4 times lower quartile incomes in Sept 2011.

Housing has an important part to play in supporting both the local economy, as well as being critical in promoting well-being, positive health outcomes and community stability.

### Social Housing Stock

There are over 9,000 homes within Huntingdonshire owned and managed by RPs with around 8,000 of those belonging to our LSVT partner Luminus Group. There were 7,784 general needs properties in March 2011<sup>4</sup>. The district has been fortunate over the last four years in being able to facilitate the development of around 300 homes each year. Completions in the new affordable housing programme are predicted to dip in 2012-13 as larger developments are not yet on site. We are committed to making best use of our housing stock and have worked closely with our housing partners and the voluntary sector to develop an Under Occupation Partnership during 2011/12. It is especially important that we make the best use of larger homes with three or more bedrooms as we have high demand for these with 682 households on the Housing Register<sup>5</sup> and 3345 homes within our housing stock<sup>6</sup>.

### Affordable rents and conversions

Luminus Group, our main provider of social housing in Huntingdonshire, is not currently contracted with the HCA to receive development grant so we are not expecting conversions to Affordable Rent of their existing homes. Conversions to Affordable Rent by other RPs in the district will have some impact but as their stock numbers are low this will have a limited impact.

No RPs currently have confirmed allocations for sites in the district, however should such resources be secured by RPs, they are expected to liaise with the Council to agree appropriate provisions for specific sites. The Council is committed to monitoring the occupation of Affordable Rent and fixed term tenancies over the coming years in order to identify any issues or trends.

### Affordability

Analysis of household incomes and new tenancy data shows us that approximately 90% of households moving into the Social rented sector in the three year period between 2007 and 2010 had a net household income of less than £20,000<sup>7</sup>. Furthermore, only 37% of tenants were in paid employment (full or part time) with a further 63% unemployed; retired or otherwise not in work. The Council is keen to encourage people into work and out of the poverty trap where possible. Low paid households are reliant on low rent levels within social housing to avoid dependency on housing and welfare benefits. Through this Tenancy Strategy we therefore seek to keep rents low to keep housing as affordable as possible to people in housing need.

<sup>1</sup> Source: Hometrack | <sup>2</sup> CACI 2010 Data | <sup>3</sup> See Appendix 2, Table 1 | <sup>4</sup> See Appendix 2, Table 11 | <sup>5</sup> See Appendix 2, Table 11 | <sup>6</sup> As at 31st March 2011  
<sup>7</sup> See Appendix 2, Table 8

## Providers Tenancy Policies

In addition to the requirement for the local authority to develop a Tenancy Strategy, there is also a requirement on RPs to develop a Tenancy Policy. This outlines:

- What type of tenancies they will use
- The period(s) of any fixed term
- The conditions that would lead to a further term being granted
- How reviews of tenancies will be carried out
- Their policy on conversion of existing social rented homes to Affordable Rent in future vacancies

RPs cannot convert existing social rent tenancies to affordable rent without approval from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). Approval can only be granted where the RP has 'signed up' to a contract with the HCA to receive grant and build a given number of new affordable homes. As part of this contract an RP will have agreed a rate of conversion of existing properties to affordable rents when they become available for re-letting. At the current time, other RPs will not be able to convert their properties to Affordable Rent tenure outside of the HCA's investment framework.

## Fixed Term Tenancies

From April 2012 the links between rent levels and tenure have been separated. An RP taking part in the investment programme with a contract with the HCA will have four options for the tenancies it offers namely:

- Full assured Social Rent
- Full assured Affordable Rent
- Fixed term Social Rent
- Fixed term Affordable Rent

Rps not involved in the investment programme will have a choice between:

- Full assured Social Rent
- Fixed term Social Rent

All RPs will continue to be able to offer introductory tenancies and the Council supports this approach as an effective tool in enabling swift action to be taken against perpetrators of anti-social behaviour.

There is a balance to be struck between providing short term housing solutions for people in housing need, the role of social housing in aiding social mobility, making the best use of our housing stock, promoting sustainable communities and supporting vulnerable households. This includes an element of personal stability that the grant of a minimum five year tenancy period brings to individual households. In line with the Directions on Regulatory Standards, tenancies of a minimum of no less than two years may be granted in exceptional circumstances.

### Principle 1:

The Council supports the use of fixed term tenancies, and positively encourages their use on larger homes to make the best use of existing stock. Where fixed-term tenancies are offered they should be for a minimum period of five years after any probationary period ends.

To make best use of housing stock, fixed term tenancies should especially be used for:

- For larger (3/4/5 Bed) homes
- For homes with adaptations

### Principle 2:

RPs should consider a household's circumstances prior to granting a fixed term tenancy.

The Council encourages RPs to be flexible in their approach and to consider a number of factors including:

- The size, location and type of property being offered
- The likely situation a household may be facing five years hence
- Whether dependent children are attending a local school and will still be in five years time
- Any particular special needs of the household i.e. relating to age or disability
- Whether the household has long term support needs

### Principle 3:

The Council supports the use of lifetime tenancies for people with an enduring need for support.

Some types of housing are designed to provide long term support. The Council considers that applicants over 60 years of age being considered for the following types of housing should be offered a lifetime tenancy:

- Sheltered housing
- Extra care housing
- Some adapted housing stock

#### Principle 4:

Decisions whether or not to renew a fixed term tenancy should be comprehensive and be carried out in a timely fashion.

Any decision not to renew will cause major disruption for the household. If a tenancy is not renewed the household will need to find alternative housing so the review process should commence at least six months ahead of the end of the tenancy term. In deciding whether to renew a tenancy or not the following factors should be taken into account:

- The need for a property of the type and size that they presently occupy
- Any under-occupation of the property and whether suitable smaller accommodation is available
- The conduct of the tenancy, especially in relation to any evidence of anti-social behaviour which may have a detrimental impact on local neighbourhoods
- Any adaptations to the property and any ongoing need for those adaptations
- Any support needs of the household and how these are currently being met.
- The financial circumstances of the household and the capacity of the household to secure alternative housing solutions outside of social housing.

In some cases (e.g. under occupation of larger homes) it may be appropriate to end the tenancy of the current home and offer alternative more appropriate accommodation from within other social rented stock.

#### Principle 5:

A decision not to renew should be accompanied by comprehensive housing advice provided by the landlord.

It is expected that RPs will work very closely with any household whose tenancy is not being renewed and in the lead up to that decision. This should be set out clearly in information made available to the tenant including the right to appeal the decision not to renew their tenancy, and the procedure to be followed. Tenants should be provided with a named officer who is dealing with their case.

The advice and assistance provided should include:

- Advice on home ownership, low-cost home ownership and other alternative housing tenures
- Advice on renting in the private rented sector, assistance in identifying and securing a suitable property and advice on deposit sources
- Specialist housing and or welfare-benefit advice and/or signposting to appropriate advice services
- Whether they can be considered for alternative RP accommodation or a different type of property

## Affordable Rents and Conversions

The Homes and Communities Agency has determined that it does not expect to grant fund future Section 106 developments. In Huntingdonshire as most of our planned new affordable housing will be delivered through Section 106 Planning agreements the HCA position means these should generally be delivered without recourse to grant. In these circumstances the Council's expectation is that most new affordable housing in Huntingdonshire will continue to be Social Rent in accordance with our Planning Policy<sup>8</sup>, unless development site viability appraisals suggest that an alternative tenure is required in order to facilitate the development proceeding. The viability studies conducted prior to the Council adopting a Community Infrastructure Levy policy in May 2012 suggest it will be viable to deliver Social Rented housing in the majority of cases but the Council will be willing to negotiate to enable otherwise unviable development to proceed.

It is likely that any properties built on other sites (e.g. rural exceptions) could be let at Affordable Rent levels. Where a percentage of Affordable Rent is used on sites for deliverability reasons, it is best applied to smaller properties rather than larger homes because of the affordability of housing of this size, taking into account the income levels of people on the Housing Register<sup>9</sup>.

Conversions to Affordable Rent levels for a proportion of existing properties becoming vacant (void) in future will be required by RPs with contracts with the HCA in order to create robust funding mechanisms for future new affordable homes. However, the outcomes of such policy decisions impact directly on levels of affordability for customers and are therefore

important in terms of the delivery of sustainable communities. Decisions over the rates of conversions to affordable rents are likely to be taken by RPs at a corporate business planning level and be included in the RP's Tenancy Policy. The Council will monitor the number and location of properties where rents have been converted, in order to assess the impact on communities, especially in rural areas.

### Principle 6:

Rents should remain at social rent levels wherever possible and therefore affordable to the majority of Huntingdonshire residents. Affordable Rents will be supported where these are found to be necessary to facilitate new housing development.

The Council supports the delivery of social rents on new build sites. Where delivery at social rent levels is found to be unviable the provision of Affordable Rents may be considered. In any case the Council will not support rents charged in excess of the relevant Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate that is applicable for that property size at the time of rent setting. The LHA should therefore be regarded as a ceiling..

<sup>8</sup> See Affordable Housing Guidance Note 2012

<sup>9</sup> See Appendix 2, Table 14

# Housing Management

The delivery of housing management services is core business for RPs. Housing management includes the allocation and letting of accommodation; addressing tenants' concerns; helping families at risk of homelessness; responding to complaints; and involving tenants in the running of the organisation and supporting them to take active involvement in their local communities (for example through residents associations). Resident involvement is a key part of establishing and maintaining settled inclusive and viable communities. RPs also play an important role in tackling anti-social behaviour which could otherwise have a significant detrimental impact on neighbours and local communities. The use of introductory tenancies are supported to enable swift action to be taken where tenants are found to be guilty of serious anti social behaviour. Any evidence of anti social behaviour should also be considered when reviewing the continuation of a fixed term tenancy.

## **Principle 7:**

The Council will expect all RPs with housing stock in the district to take a pro-active approach to tackling anti social behaviour that could otherwise have a detrimental impact on local communities' quality of life.

## **Monitoring and Review**

The Council will monitor the impact of affordable rents and fixed term tenancies both locally and across the Cambridge Sub-region, working with local authority and Register Provider partners. The feedback from the Sub-regional Home-link Choice Based Lettings system informing us of who is accessing the different tenure types will be crucial to informing future policy and strategic direction on this issue.

This strategy will be reviewed periodically.



## Appendix 1.

Term	Definition
Affordable Housing	<p>Affordable housing includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing, provided to eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable housing should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices</li> <li>▪ Include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision</li> </ul>
Affordable Rent	<p>Affordable Rent homes are allocated in the same way as social rent properties. Affordable Rents are set at no more than 80% of the local market rent. Some new homes built from 2012 onwards will be let at Affordable Rent.</p>
Conversion	<p>Some existing social rent homes can be 'converted' by RPs to Affordable Rent when they become empty. This can only take place where a contract is in place between the RP and the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA).</p>
Fixed Term Tenancy	<p>Formerly housing associations could not generally offer fixed term tenancies at a social rent, as regulations require that they 'offered and issued the most secure form of tenancy compatible with the purpose of the housing and the sustainability of the community'. This meant providers granted 'lifetime tenancies' to the majority of new tenants in general needs, social rented housing. However housing associations can now also offer fixed term tenancies although they should be for a minimum of five years.</p>
Local Housing Allowance (LHA) Rates	<p>The maximum amount of rent payable by housing benefit for properties in the private sector. These will apply to social rented stock from April 2013.</p>
Registered Provider	<p>Providers of social housing. Includes Private Registered Providers (housing associations) and Councils who still own housing stock.</p>
Social Rent	<p>Before the Localism Act all social rents were set at a level arrived at through a nationally agreed rent formula. Rent levels equated to around 60% of market rents in Huntingdonshire.</p>
Tenancy Policy	<p>A policy which, under the Regulatory Framework for Social Housing in England, Registered Providers are required to have in place showing various information including the types of tenancy they will grant, the length of any fixed terms, circumstances in which fixed terms will or will not be renewed, etc.</p>
Tenancy Strategy	<p>A document required by the Localism Act produced by local authorities setting out matters to which Registered Providers operating in their area are to have regard when setting their own policies.</p>

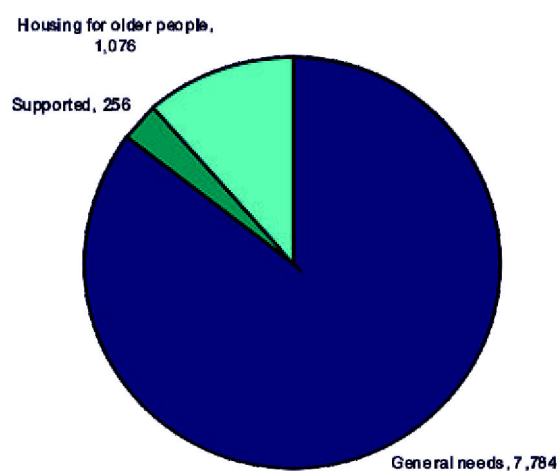
## Appendix 2. Stock and Turnover

Table 1: Total RP stock

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
RP Stock	8,588	8,632	8,815	8,985	9,116

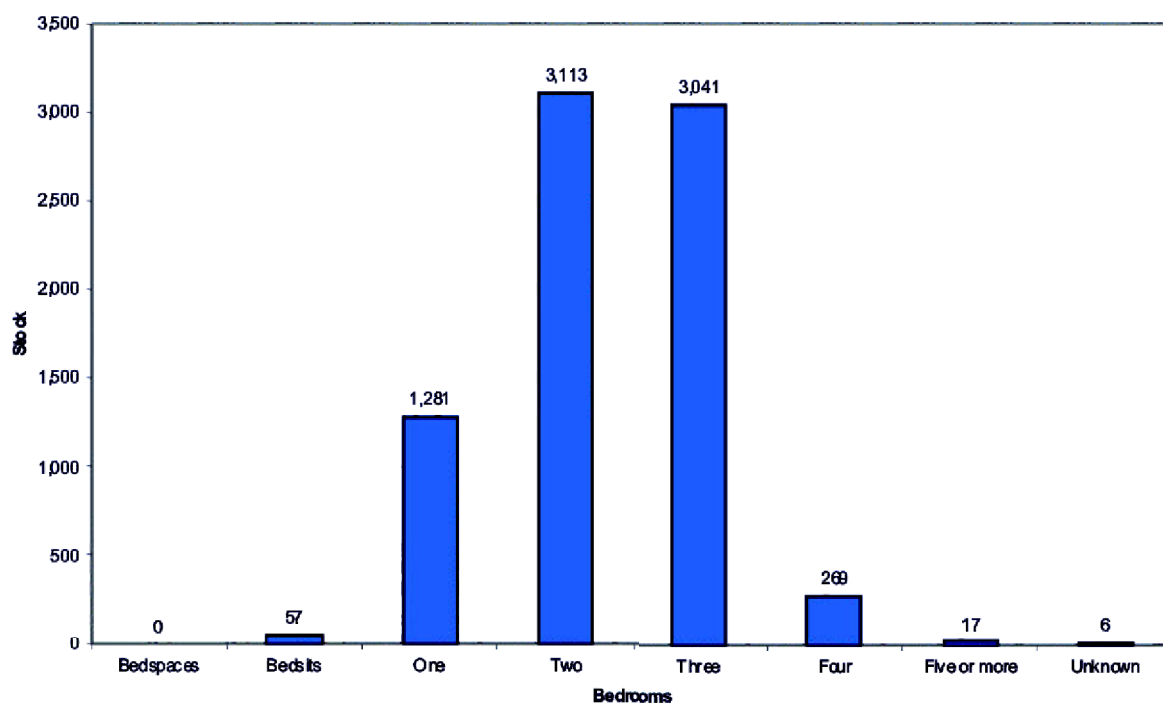
CLG Table 115

Table 2: RP stock by type (March 2011)



RSR (2011)

Table 3: General needs RP stock by size (March 2011)



RSR (2011)

Table 4: General needs lettings and turnover (2007-2011)

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Lettings per year	722	532	633	705	674
Turnover	10%	7%	8%	9%	9%

RSR (2011)

Table 5: General needs lettings and turnover (2007-2011)

	Number	Percentage
First let	290	19%
Vacant due to transfers	268	17%
Vacant for other reasons	975	64%

CORE (2007/8-2009/10)

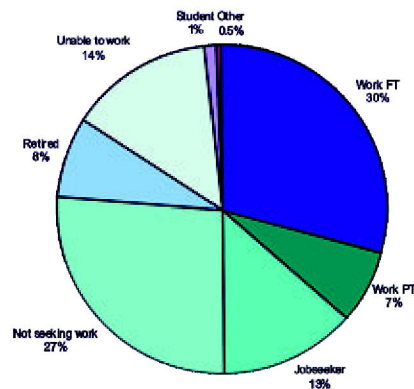
## Households Moving into Social Rented Homes

Table 6: Total records of households moving into social rented homes (2007/8-2009/10)

	2007/8	2009/8	2009/10	Total
RP Tenants	440	562	531	1,533

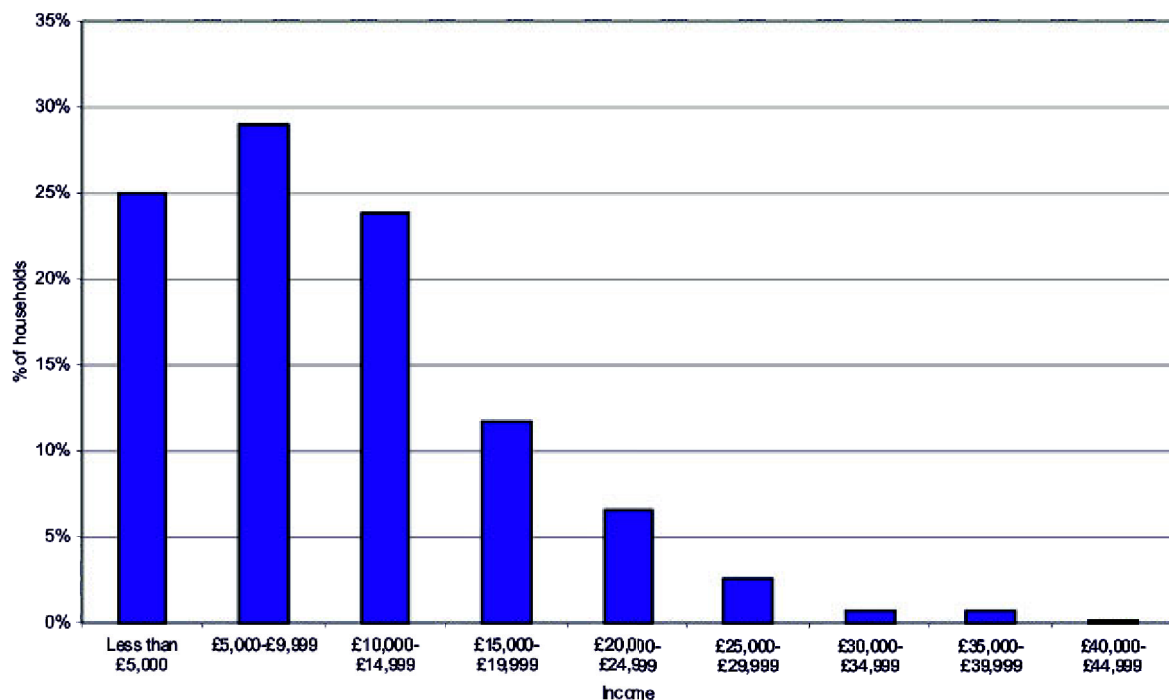
CORE (2007/8-2009/10)

Table 7: Economic status of households moving into social rented homes (2007/8-2009/10)



CORE (2007/8-2009/10)

Table 8: Net annual income of households moving into social rented homes (2007/8-2009/10)



CORE (2007/8-2009/10)

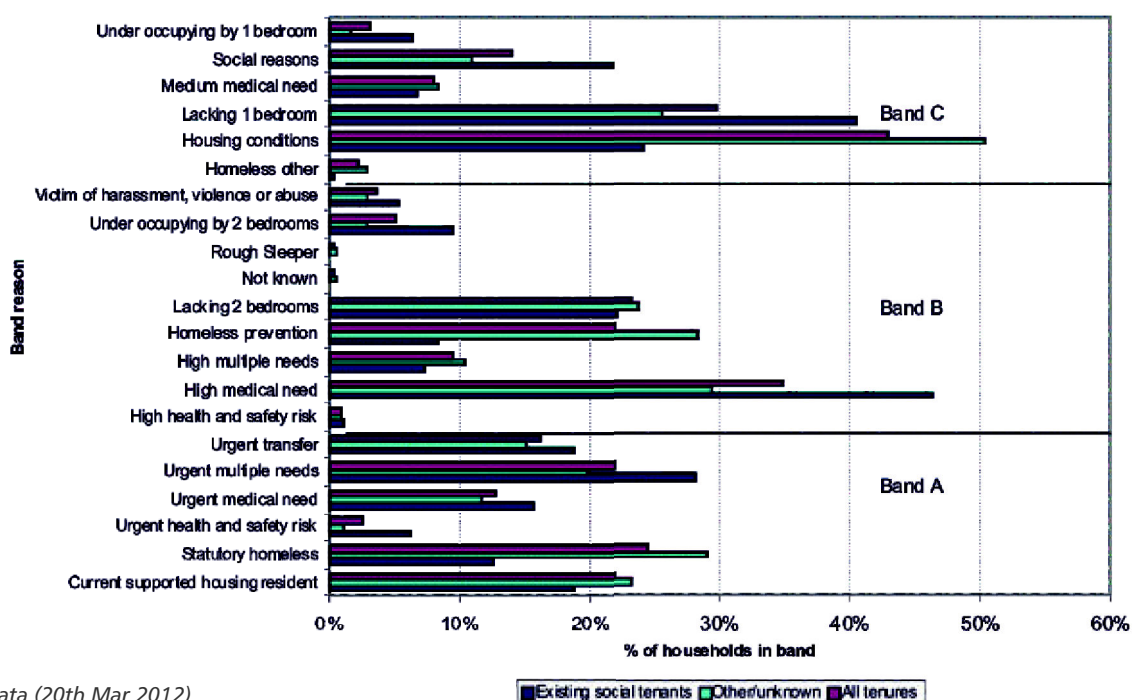
## Housing Needs Register

Table 9: District housing needs register by band and existing tenure (20th March 2012)

	Existing Social Tenant	Other	Unknown	Total	Percentage
Band A	31	84	3	118	5%
Band B	109	185	2	296	12%
Band C	338	810	7	1,155	47%
Band D	215	668	9	892	36%
All bands	693	1,747	21	2,461	100%

Locata (20th Mar 2012)

Table 10: Households by tenure and primary band reason (Bands A-C, Band D = Low housing need) (20th March 2012)



Locata (20th Mar 2012)

Table 11: Household Need by bedroom size (larger homes) at 3rd July 2012

	3 Bedrooms	4 Bedrooms	5+ Bedrooms	Total
Households	430	178	74	682

# Costs and Affordability

Table 12: Rent per month (RP, median market rent and estimated affordable rents)

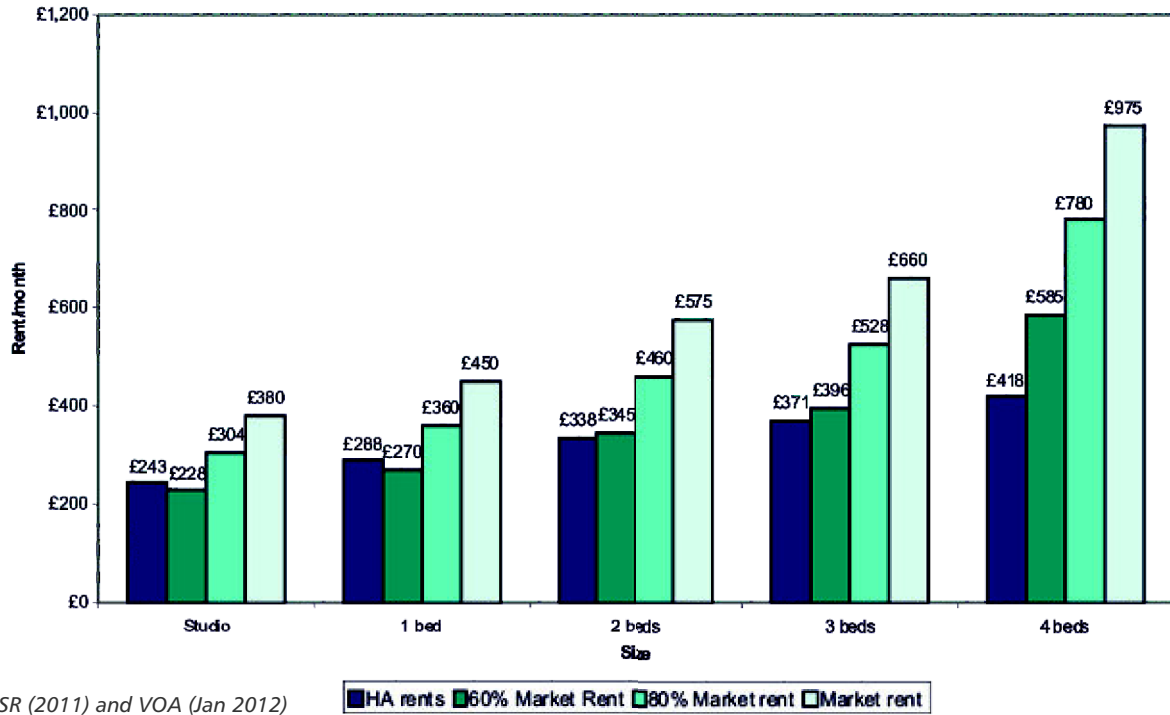


Table 13: Gross annual income by household type

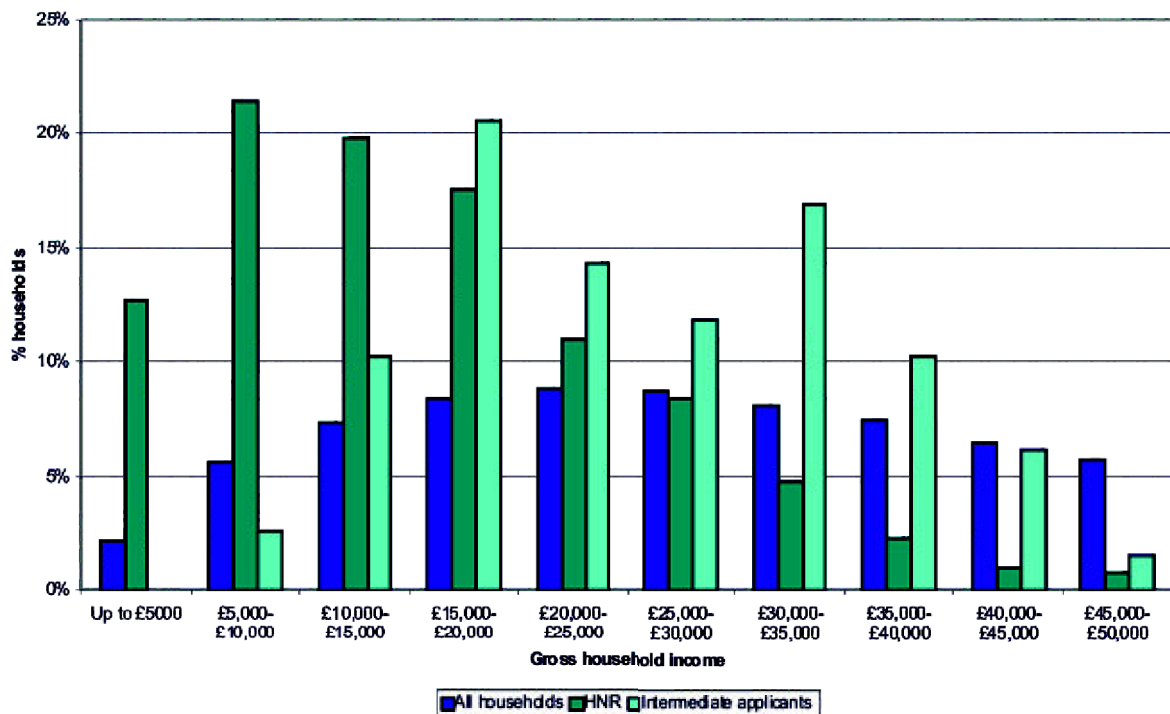


Table 14: Percentage of HNR applicant households able to afford different rented tenures

	Social Rents	60% Market Rent	80% Market Rent	Market Rent
Studio	70%	74%	60%	49%
1 bed	66%	66%	50%	40%
2 beds	57%	57%	37%	23%
3 beds	50%	49%	32%	19%
4 beds	46%	23%	13%	4%

*RSR (2011), VOA (Jan 2012) and Locata (Mar 2012)*

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**HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12**



## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12**

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## INTRODUCTION

Overview and Scrutiny in Huntingdonshire is overseen by a Management Group, which comprises the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Panels who in 2011/12 were:



Councillor Steve Criswell

Chairman of the Social Well-Being Panel



Councillor Philip Godfrey

Chairman of the Environmental Well-Being Panel



Councillor Terry Rogers

Chairman of the Economic Well-Being Panel



Councillor Richard West

Vice - Chairman of the Social Well-Being Panel



Councillor David Harty

Vice - Chairman of the Environmental Well-Being Panel



Councillor Steve Greenall

Vice - Chairman of the Economic Well-Being Panel

This Report summarises the Panels' activities over the year and contains illustrations of their impact through the outcomes and results they have achieved.

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

**Overview and Scrutiny is the mechanism by which Councils can achieve community leadership, good governance and by which Councillors can become powerful and influential politicians."**

### **Office of the Deputy Prime Minister - 2002**

The Centre for Public Scrutiny has defined four principles for effective scrutiny:-

- ❖ Providing 'critical friend' challenge to executive policy-makers and decision-makers;
- ❖ Enabling the voice and concerns of the public and its communities;
- ❖ Being carried out by 'independent minded governors' who lead and own the scrutiny process, and
- ❖ Driving improvement in public services

The Overview and Scrutiny Panels have endeavoured to apply these principles since they were first defined in 2007. They do this through:

- ❖ holding the Cabinet to account;
- ❖ scrutinising decisions, both prior to and after they are made;
- ❖ developing and reviewing policies;
- ❖ monitoring performance; and
- ❖ investigating matters affecting the District.

Overview and Scrutiny provides a forum for Members to exercise active community leadership and governance. As will be seen it also enables them to address the needs of local residents.

Members set their own agenda and are able to work in innovative ways. In this way they can address issues of public concern. Examples of this appear later on.

The Council continues to operate three Overview and Scrutiny Panels, with remits that reflect the Council's duty to promote the social, economic and environmental well-being of the District. This means the Panels are able to scrutinise the Council's collaborative working and any other matters affecting the area as well as the Council's internal operation.

The Panels each have two co-opted Members, who play a full part in their work.

The next few pages highlight the achievements of the individual Panels.

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING)**

- Councillor Steve Criswell - Chairman
- Councillor Richard West – Vice-Chairman
- Councillor Sid Akthar
- Councillor Keith Baker
- Councillor Ian Bates
- Mr Roger Coxhead
- Councillor Mrs Julie Dew
- Councillor Jeff Dutton
- Councillor Ms Patricia Jordan
- Councillor Mrs Deborah Reynolds
- Mrs Moira Nicholas
- Councillor Steve Van De Kerkhove

### ***Supporting the Voluntary Sector***

The Panel has continued its investigations into identifying alternative ways of supporting the voluntary sector in Huntingdonshire which arose from the Council's budgetary proposals not to renew current Service Level Agreements with them. These Agreements are due to expire in 2013/14. The value of services provided by the voluntary sector on behalf of the Council has been investigated by a Working Group appointed to undertake this work. It has also undertaken a prioritisation exercise of what voluntary services are needed to meet current and future demand for services in Huntingdonshire.

The Panel receives a report monitoring the performance of the organisations with Service Level Agreements with the Council on an annual basis. The Panel is satisfied with the performance levels that have been achieved.

### ***The Social Implications of the Council's Budget Proposals for CCTV***

The Panel has previously expressed the view that the CCTV service should be preserved by the Council, particularly in light of the level of investment already made by the Council in it. Various ways of maintaining the service have been investigated, including receiving contributions from partner organisations. A report on service changes for 2012/13 is due to be reported to the Panel during the course of the ensuing year.

### ***Review of Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire***

A study has been concluded reviewing the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire. The need for the study emerged following expressions of concern by some Members that the Forums have not

been operating as effectively as they might, that they cover too wide a geographical area and generally have not been successful at attracting public attendees. During the review, the Panel has been mindful of the duties placed upon the Council to deliver the localism agenda, and the opportunities presented by enhancing the existing Neighbourhood Forums by enabling them to take decisions on matters of local concern and by creating a forum through which all levels of local authorities can better work together.

The Working Group that has been established to complete the review has undertaken two consultation exercises with interested parties and stakeholders. The views elicited assisted with the development of the final proposals, which have been designed to build upon and enhance the existing arrangements.

### ***Housing Benefit Changes and the Potential Impact on Huntingdonshire***

Arising from the Government's Welfare Reform Bill, the Panel has been in receipt of reports on the implications of the changes for the District. Of particular concern is the impact that the proposals will have upon homelessness and subsequent demand for Council services. The Panel will continue to receive monitoring reports on a quarterly basis.

### ***Redesign of Mental Health Services in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough***

The Panel has submitted a response to NHS Cambridgeshire on proposals to redesign mental health services in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The proposals sought the permanent closure of Acer Ward in Hinchingbrooke Hospital, which have since been agreed by the NHS Board. An informed view of the consultation has been taken, with the views of both service users and carers of mental health patients being obtained at the time. The Panel has unanimously agreed that the case for the closure of the Ward has not been satisfactorily justified. Other areas of concern included the transportation arrangements for Huntingdonshire patients and visitors to acute wards and the need for the Crisis Resolution Home Treatment Team to remain available within the Huntingdonshire vicinity.

### ***Other Matters***

The Panel has contributed to discussions on the performance of the Leisure Centres together with development proposals for One Leisure, St Ives, the Council's Shared Home Improvement Agency Service, Monitoring of Section 106 Agreements, Disabled Facilities Grants and charges on properties, the health implications of the night-time economy in Huntingdonshire, the Cambridgeshire Local Investment Plan and the forthcoming introduction of the Police and Crime Commissioner in November 2012. Owing to their previous involvement in the future governance arrangements of Hinchingbrooke Hospital, the Panel has also received an update from Circle Healthcare on the delivery of the Hospital's Business Plan. Additionally, the Panel has received the annual equality progress report and revisited a former study on the



Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy, work on which will commence in 2012/13.

### ***Health Scrutiny***

The Council is involved in the scrutiny of health matters in a number of ways. Responsibility for scrutinising health rests with the Social Well-Being Panel. Councillor Richard West has been a member of Cambridgeshire County Council's Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in 2011/12, and Councillor Mrs Deborah Reynolds has been his named substitute.

Over the year, the Adults, Wellbeing and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee:-

- scrutinised the County Council's adult social care budget and plans for 2011/12;
- scrutinised the performance against the 2011/12 Adult Social Care Plan;
- considered aspects of the County Council's Integrated Plan relating to adult social care, including integrated health and social care;
- responded to a number of national developments which include consultancy support for Members to establish their relationship with the emerging Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board, examining the Annual Public Health Report and the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, contributing views to the Department of Health on the content of forthcoming scrutiny regulations and guidance, considering the emerging clinical commissioning arrangements and examining the County Council's plans to set up a local Healthwatch initiative; and
- considered NHS Cambridgeshire's forward plan and made contributions towards proposals for major changes in adult mental health services through a Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee with Peterborough City Council.

### ***Partnership / Joint Scrutiny***

Finally, the Panel has scrutinised the work of the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership and the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership's Health and Well-Being Thematic Group. This work is undertaken on an annual basis. Whilst some preliminary work on scrutinising the role and performance of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership's Children and Young People Thematic Group had been undertaken the previous year, further work in this respect is programmed in for the ensuing year. Councillor Mrs Deborah Reynolds has also participated in a joint scrutiny study with the Cambridgeshire Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee on domestic abuse.

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING)

- Councillor Philip Godfrey - Chairman
- Councillor David Harty – Vice-Chairman
- Councillor Michael Baker
- Councillor Mrs Madhabi Banerjee
- Councillor Ian Curtis
- Councillor John Davies
- Councillor Peter Godley
- Councillor Greg Harlock
- Mr David Hopkins
- Councillor Colin Hyams
- Mr Mike Phillips
- Councillor John Watt

### ***Design Principles for Future Developments***

Councillors Mrs B E Boddington and R J West have attended a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel to address Members on their concerns over the appearance of the Loves Farm development in St. Neots. The Panel's attention has been drawn to the high density of housing within the development and problems associated with this. Residents had complained about the poor appearance of the extremities of the development as well as the narrowness of the roads, a lack of footpaths and the absence of street names.

The Panel has acknowledged that there can often be tensions and differences in priorities between developers and the planning authority. In response to the concerns raised, the Panel has established a Working Group to examine the issues brought to their attention and to make recommendations to inform future developments.

### ***Land Use for Agricultural Purposes in the Context of Planning Policies and its Contribution to the Local Economy***

Following consideration of the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy, Members have expressed concern at the lack of mention of agriculture within the Strategy. A Working Group has been established to undertake a study on this subject. Given that, according to a National Farmers' Union estimate, up to 80% of land in Huntingdonshire is used in farming, the Working Group has judged that that the importance of rural areas and agriculture should be reflected to a greater extent in the Council's planning policy framework. This work will be completed in 2012/13.

### ***Waste Collection***

A Working Group has been appointed to look into the Council's waste collection procedures. The Working Group has visited the Ameycespa site at Waterbeach to instigate their investigations. However, following the Panel's consideration of the Advanced Waste Partnership report in January 2012 it has been agreed that the work of the Partnership could overtake any findings of the Working Group and the study has been postponed. It will resume in 2012/13.

### ***Drainage***

A petition has been presented to the Panel by Parish Councillor Mrs A Rees, 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 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2011. The Executive Leader of the Council has written to Anglian Water expressing his concerns over the flooding problems in Yaxley and a response has been received. Although Anglian Water's response has addressed the particular instance of flooding referred to in the petition, Members have not been satisfied with Anglian Water's programme generally to prevent problems with the drainage system in the District from occurring and with their response to sewerage system failures. Residents in Hemingford Abbots have experienced similar problems. Other problems when the drainage system have proved inadequate have also been identified. It has been suggested that the Environment Agency has enforcement powers that it might use in such situations. As a result of their discussions, the Panel has decided to undertake detailed work in this respect.

### ***The Great Fen Project***

The Panel has continued to monitor the Project. Representatives of the Project have delivered a presentation on various aspects of it, recent developments and future plans. Members have supported the adoption of the Great Fen Masterplan as Huntingdonshire District Council Planning Guidance to inform Council policy and guide Development Management decisions and welcomed the decision to carry out a new socioeconomic study.

### ***Other Matters***

The Panel has contributed to ongoing discussions on Transport for Cambridgeshire, CCTV, the Residential Travel Plan, the Green House Project, the St Ives West and RAF Brampton Urban Design Frameworks, the Carbon Management Plan, the Advanced Waste Partnership, the Cambridgeshire Renewables Infrastructure Framework and Cambridgeshire Community Energy Fund, the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy and the new Local Plan.

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

- Councillor Terry Rogers - Chairman
- Councillor Steve Greenall - Vice-Chairman
- Councillor Graham Bull
- Councillor Eric Butler
- Mr Roger Hall
- Councillor Roger Harrison
- Councillor Robin Howe
- Councillor Alan MacKender-Lawrence
- Councillor Peter Mitchell
- Mrs Helen Roberts
- Councillor Michael Shellens
- Councillor Alan Williams

### ***The Council's Budget and Future Financial Planning***

The Economic Well-Being Panel has primarily been occupied with scrutinising the Council's budget and future financial planning. This has been vital work given local and national economic circumstances. The Panel has received several reports and hosted Council-wide debates on the Budget 2012/13 and the MTP. As a result a number of challenges have been made to the Council's financial plans. In addition, Members of the Panel have been working with Officers on the best way to present financial information.

As part of their deliberations, the Panel has contributed to discussions on voluntary sector support for 2012/13 and have asked the Social Well-Being Panel to examine in detail the proposed policies and mechanisms for the distribution of voluntary sector funding. The Panel has recognised the importance of supporting the voluntary sector service but have been mindful of the continuing need to address the Council's budgetary deficit.

The Panel has given particular attention to the financial position of the CCTV Service. In the preceding year, there had been a suggestion that the Service would be mothballed and the Panel has been pleased to support an allocation of funding to maintain the service in 2012/13. They have asked the Social Well-Being Panel to give further consideration to the implications of potential changes arising from future budget arrangements and service plans.

Members have also considered the impact on residents in Huntingdonshire and the District Council's Budget of changes to the Housing Benefit System, which are being introduced as part of the Government's welfare reform programme. The Panel will continue to monitor the situation and have asked for further information on private sector rent levels on a regular basis.

### ***The Leisure Centres' Financial Performance***

This work began with an investigation into the Council's Leisure Centres' future plans and the performance of the hospitality function. It quickly became apparent that extensive and detailed work would be required on this subject. A Working Group has, therefore, been established to review the services' financial performance and make recommendations on the future strategic direction of the Service. This Group has completed its investigations and a number of recommendations have been accepted by the Cabinet, who have now asked the General Manager to draft a Business Plan for the Service.

Work is currently ongoing to investigate the most appropriate business model for the service and to develop a methodology to value the social benefit the service provides. It is hoped that this work will conclude in during 2012/13.

### ***The Council's Support Services***

The Panel has commenced a review of the Council's support services to form a view on their efficiency and cost effectiveness. To start the review the Panel has selected the District Council's Document Centre and appointed a working group to undertake this work on their behalf. This review is expected to conclude shortly.

### ***Redevelopment of St Ivo Leisure Centre***

The Panel has reviewed proposals to redevelop the St Ivo Leisure Centre during the course of the year. This significant development is intended to reduce the Centre's net operating costs and to increase admissions and participation levels to meet both Government and Council health agenda targets.

Prior to indicating their support for the proposals the Panel has made a number of recommendations about the need for additional information and suggested that the Cabinet should undertake a review of the tenders received to assess the building costs involved and economic conditions at the time. These have been accepted by the Cabinet and the Panel has been given the opportunity to review the outcome of the tender exercise at the end of the year.

### ***Other Matters***

The Panel has had an input into the development of the Alconbury Enterprise Zone, the future location of the District Council's Call Centre, the review of the District Council's Human Resources service, the sale of Castle Hill House and Disabled Facilities Grants. The Panel has also continued to monitor the performance of the District Council's Customer Services Centre, the development of a Countywide Asset Management Strategy and the performance achieved in investing the Council's capital receipts.

## **TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT**

During 2011/12 Panel Members have received training to improve their scrutiny skills.

Cross-County events entitled 'Basic Scrutiny Skills' and 'Questioning Skills for Better Scrutiny' have been held. They have been delivered by officers from the Cambridgeshire Scrutiny Network and Members from five councils have attended. The feedback from the event has been very positive.

## **NETWORKING**

Overview and Scrutiny continues to benefit from an officer-led scrutiny network in Cambridgeshire, which has been extended to Members. During 2011/12 this has enabled officers and Members to share the learning from various training sessions, as well as good practice and experience.

Officers also belong to a scrutiny network for the whole of the Eastern Region. Links have been established at the national level with the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE IN 2012/13

Between them, the three Panels have begun to develop a programme of work for 2012/13. Topics already identified for possible inclusion are:

- the Council's consultation processes;
- the Council's relationship with the voluntary sector;
- the Council's waste collection and recycling arrangements;
- the Community Infrastructure Levy;
- the Council's levels of Reserves;
- Fraud Prevention;
- Drainage Problems within the District and
- Economic Development.

Studies will be completed on:

- One Leisure;
- The Tree Strategy;
- Land Use for Agricultural Purposes;
- Neighbourhood Forums;
- Design Principles for Future Developments;
- The Council's Document Centre; and
- The Maintenance of Water Courses.

The Panels will also follow up on the studies they concluded in 2011/12 and oversee the development of the Council's Delivery Plan. The latter will establish the key activities and performance measures that will contribute to the Council's overall aims and objectives. Performance against the Plan will be monitored by the Panels on a regular basis.

At the suggestion of the Corporate Governance Panel, the Panels will undertake a review of their effectiveness.

## PARTICIPATING IN THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCESS

Further information on the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels can be found on the Council's Website – [www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk](http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk).

Overview and Scrutiny needs your help to make sure the Council delivers effective, value for money services. There are a number of ways you can be involved:

1. Come along to a Panel meeting. Dates, venues and agendas of all forthcoming Overview and Scrutiny Panels are posted on the District Council website (use the [Modern.Gov link](#) in Councils and Democracy). These meetings are open to the public.
  
2. Suggest a topic for inquiry. The Panels welcome ideas for study, provided they:
  - affect a group of people living within the Huntingdonshire District;
  - relate to a service, event or issue in which the Council has a significant stake, or which the Council has an influence;
  - do not duplicate an issue which overview and scrutiny has considered during the last 12 months;
  - do not relate to an individual service complaint - these must be dealt with via the Council's complaints procedure;
  - do not relate to an individual planning or licensing decision or any other matter dealt with by one of the Council's regulatory committees.
  
3. Write, phone or email the Scrutiny and Review Manager at the District Council with your views on any of the topics that the Panels are currently looking at or issues you think should be drawn to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels' attention.

Democratic Services  
Huntingdonshire District Council  
Pathfinder House  
St Marys Street  
Huntingdon  
PE29 3TN

Email: [Anthony.Roberts@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:Anthony.Roberts@huntingdonshire.gov.uk)

Telephone: 01480 388015.



**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS**  
**(SOCIAL WELL-BEING)**  
**(ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)**  
**(ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING)**

**2ND OCTOBER 2012**  
**4TH OCTOBER 2012**  
**9TH OCTOBER 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, Democratic Services Assistant**  
**01480 387049**

**Mrs C Bulman, Democratic Services Officer**  
**01480 388234**

## ONGOING STUDIES

STUDY	OBJECTIVES	PANEL	STATUS	TYPE
Leisure Centre Financial Performance and Employment Structure	To consider the future business model for "One Leisure" and the development of a methodology for the quantification of Social Value.	Economic Well-Being and Social Well-Being	<p>Working Group met on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2012. Agreed to split into two sub groups to investigate each area.</p> <p>Sub-Group looking at the 'Social Methodology' met on 2nd August 2012. Research being undertaken by Officers at the moment.</p> <p>The whole Working Group will receive the Business Plan prior to its submission to the Panel and the Cabinet.</p>	Joint Working Group
A14 improvements.	To review the implications to the local economy of the decision not to proceed with the A14 improvements.	Economic Well-Being	<p>Panel has requested a presentation on developments relating to the A14 for all Members of the Council at an appropriate time.</p> <p>Updates on recent developments to continue to be provided by email.</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	The draft tree strategy is being prepared - it should be ready for consultation by the end of 2012.	Working Group.

Land Use for Agricultural Purposes 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	An interim report has been produced to meet the deadlines for the Local Plan production. The Working Group will go on to examine the Council's procedure for dealing with applications where agriculture is a feature of the proposals.	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.
Maintenance of Water Courses	To receive a presentation on the maintenance arrangements in place for Water Courses within the District.	Environmental Well-Being	<p>Following consideration of the St Neots Surface Water Management Plan and discussions on widespread drainage problems within the District, a working group was convened to engage with Anglian Water in order to establish their general powers, responsibilities and the limitations on its ability to prevent flooding.</p> <p>Meetings have been held with representatives from Anglian Water and the Environment Agency. The Working Group has produced a report on its findings.</p>	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	Working Group has formed two sub groups to consider:- a) the financial cost of the service; and b) the operation of the service  Final report awaited.	Working Group
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	The Working Group has produced a report detailing its findings to date. The Working Group will now focus on detailed aspects of the design guide.	Working Group.
Economic Development	To be determined.	Economic Well-Being	The Local Economy Strategy is scheduled for completion at the end of the year. Work is currently taking place to develop a robust evidence base for the new Strategy. As part of this process all members will be given the opportunity to participate in the consultation on the initial report and the Economic Development Manager will attend the November meeting.	To be determined.

Corporate Plan	To assist the Corporate Office with the development of a new Corporate Plan.	All O&S Panels	Meetings held on 1st and 28th August 2012. Draft Council Delivery Plan submitted to Executive Leaders Strategy Group on 10th September 2012.	Working Group
Fraud Prevention	To consider the implications from forthcoming changes to the Housing Benefits system.	Economic Well-Being	The Corporate Governance Panel have agreed to establish a working group to consider fraud risks, current and future approaches and single fraud issues. Their report will be considered by the Panel at their meeting in January.	To be determined.
Supporting People Back to Work	To be determined.	Economic Well-Being	Corporate Team Manager to attend October Panel Meeting to talk about the work of the Corporate Office. This will include information on Supporting People Back to Work.	To be determined.
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	To consider the implications of planning social housing requirements on Community Infrastructure Levy income and the housing waiting list.	Economic Well-Being	Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships & Projects) to discuss with Councillor M F Shellens directly.	To be determined.

Waste Collection	To identify options for improving the Council's waste collection and recycling arrangements and for enhancing public satisfaction with the service.	Environmental Well-Being	The Working Group has decided to focus on how best to engage with residents as to what should be placed in which bin. The Group may go on to study waste collection procedures in more detail, this is dependent on the work of RECAP.	Working Group
Council Reserves	<p>Agreed to establish a working group to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ identify the combination of co-incident risks against which the Council wishes to insure by having reserves;</li> <li>❖ benchmark the Council's level of reserves against other appropriate Authorities.</li> </ul>	Economic Well-Being	Meeting held on Tuesday 4 <sup>th</sup> September 2012. Report to be submitted to Panel's October meeting.	Working Group
Council Borrowing	Agreed to establish a working group to develop an understanding of the District Council's approach to borrowing.	Economic Well-Being.	Arrangements currently being made for first meeting.	Working Group.

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
5/04/11	<p><b><u>Management of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital</u></b></p> <p>With effect from 1st February 2012, Circle took over the management of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. Representatives of Circle and Hinchingsbrooke attended the Panel's meeting to deliver the Hospital's Business Plan. Agreed to come back to report on progress against the Business Plan in the future.</p> <p>At a meeting of the O&amp;S Joint Chairmen held on 10th September, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman agreed that half yearly/annual reports from PALS/Healthwatch should be submitted to the Panel.</p>			TBC
6/12/11 3/01/12 7/02/12 3/07/12	<p><b><u>Redesign of Mental Health Services Across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough</u></b></p> <p>At these meetings, the Panel considered the content of NHS Cambridgeshire's consultation on the Redesign of Mental Health Services Across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and submitted a response accordingly. Representatives of NHS Cambridgeshire have been in attendance at meetings to respond to the concerns raised.</p>	Panel wishes to monitor service redesign developments and agreed to review the matter on an ongoing basis.		TBC
16/05/12	<p><b><u>Corporate Plan</u></b></p> <p>Councillors S J Criswell and R J West appointed to Corporate Plan Working Group.</p>			

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
7/06/11	The Panel expressed their wish for continued involvement by overview and scrutiny in monitoring the performance of the new Council Plan.	Meetings of the Corporate Plan Working Group held on 1st and 28th August 2012. Draft considered by Executive Leaders Strategy Group on 10th September 2012.	Brief update to be delivered at the meeting on the outcome of the Executive Leaders Strategy Group meeting.	2/10/12
04/09/12	Concerns raised over the outcome of the recently completed Employee Opinion Survey. Councillors S J Criswell and R J West undertook to raise these matters at the next meeting of the Corporate Plan Working Group.			
	<b><u>Consultation Processes</u></b>			
6/03/12	Update received on a previous study undertaken by the Panel. Panel to partake in the review of the Consultation and Engagement Strategy.	Panel to appoint Members to undertake this work.		
12/06/12	Councillors Mrs P A Jordan, P Kadewere, J W G Pethard and R J West appointed on to the Consultation Processes Working Group.	Meeting of the Working Group held on 5th September 2012.		



Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
<p><b>03/01/12</b></p> <p><b>12/06/12</b></p> <p><b>03/07/12</b></p>	<p><b><u>Social Well-Being</u></b></p> <p>This study emerged following completion of a joint study with the Economic Well-Being Panel on One Leisure.</p> <p>Membership of the Social Well-Being Sub-Group reviewed. Mr R Coxhead is the only member of the Working Group to date.</p> <p>Councillors S J Criswell and R J West appointed to the Social Value Sub-Group.</p>			
<p><b>6/7/10</b></p>	<p><b><u>Gypsy and Traveller Welfare</u></b></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>		<p><b>TBC</b></p>

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
04/09/12	<p><b><u>Grant Aid</u></b></p> <p>Annual Report on organisations supported by grants through Service Level Agreements received and noted by the Panel. Requested future reports under the new grants system to include evidence of need and demand for voluntary services.</p>		Next monitoring report expected July 2013.	2/07/12
1/11/11	<p><b><u>Future of the CCTV Service</u></b></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>			
7/02/12	<p>Further update delivered to the Panel following discussions with Town Councils. Panel requested for a further report on service changes in 2012/13 to be submitted to a future meeting.</p>	Request submitted to the Head of Operations.	Report anticipated at the Panel's November 2012 meeting.	6/11/12
7/06/11	<p><b><u>Review of Neighbourhood Forums In Huntingdonshire</u></b></p> <p>The Cabinet, at its meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> May 2011, requested the Panel to undertake a review of the Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire.</p>			
6/09/11	<p>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.</p>	Working Group meeting held on 19 <sup>th</sup> September 2011.		

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
1/11/11	<p>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.</p> <p>Views of interested parties reported at meeting. Chairmen of the Neighbourhood Forums for Huntingdon and Ramsey were in attendance for this 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.</p>	<p>Letter sent to all those with an interest in the Forum on 21<sup>st</sup> September 2011.</p> <p>Meetings of Working Group held on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 12<sup>th</sup> December 2011 and 19th January and 27th February 2012.</p>		
6/03/12	<p>Draft proposals presented to Panel for comment prior to consultation commencing with the Town and Parish Councils and Partners.</p>	<p>Proposals considered by Executive Leaders Strategy Group and Corporate Governance Panel on 12th and 28th March 2012 respectively. Also by Cabinet on 19th April 2012.</p>	<p>Consultation launched on 30th April to 8th June 2012 inclusive. Responses considered by Panel in July. Meeting of the Working Group held on 12th June.</p>	
03/07/12 04/09/12	<p>Consultation response report endorsed for submission to the Cabinet for determination. Cabinet agreed that a pilot scheme will be trialled in the Norman Cross County Division for a twelve month period with the existing Neighbourhood Forums being subject to urgent review by the Deputy</p>			

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
	Executive Leader. Panel has been requested to undertake a review of the Norman Cross Pilot during its twelve months of operation.			
12/06/12	<p><b><u>Equality Framework for Local Government – Peer Assessment</u></b></p> <p>Noted the recent accreditation achieved by the Council as an “Achieving” authority under the Equality Framework for Local Government. Councillors Mrs P A Jordan, P Kadewere and R J West appointed on to a Working Group to review the action plan arising from the assessment.</p>	Meeting of the Working Group held on 29th August 2012.		
7/06/11  6/12/11 12/06/12	<p><b><u>Housing Benefit Changes and the Potential Impact on Huntingdonshire</u></b></p> <p>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>Report considered by the Panel. Further report on the wider housing policy implications arising from the Government’s Welfare Reform Bill submitted to the Panel in June 2012. Quarterly updates will continue to be provided.</p>	Request submitted to the Head of Customer Services.	Members of the Economic Well-Being Panel will be invited to attend for this item. Next quarterly report anticipated December 2012.	4/12/12

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
7/06/11	<p><b><u>Cambridgeshire Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee Study – Domestic Abuse</u></b></p> <p>Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds appointed as the Panel's representative on the study being undertaken by the County Council. Following membership changes in May 2012, Councillor R J West undertook to update the Panel on the study's developments.</p>	<p>Final report presented to the County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10th July 2012 and Panel on 4th September 2012.</p>	<p>Report due to be considered by the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership at its October meeting. The outcome of their discussions will be presented at a future Panel meeting.</p>	6/11/12
12/06/12	<p><b><u>Forward Plan</u></b></p> <p><b>Housing Strategy 2012-15</b> Panel requested sight of the report prior to its submission to the Cabinet.</p>	<p>Request submitted to the Head of Planning and Strategic Housing.</p>	<p>This item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.</p>	2/10/12
12/06/12	<p><b>Draft Tenancy Strategy</b> Panel requested sight of the report prior to its submission to the Cabinet.</p>	<p>Request submitted to the Head of Planning and Strategic Housing.</p>	<p>This item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.</p>	2/10/12
04/09/12	<p><b>Town and Parish Council Charter</b> Panel requested sight of the report prior to its submission to the Cabinet.</p>	<p>Request submitted to the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services.</p>	<p>Report anticipated at Panel's November meeting.</p>	6/11/12

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date for Future Action
	<p><b><u>Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership (HSP)</u></b></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>			
03/04/11	<p><b>Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership</b></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>		Due for consideration by the Panel in April 2013.	<b>2/04/13</b>
05/10/10	<p><b>Children and Young People</b></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>	Invitation extended to the Lead Officer of the thematic group.	Due to be considered by the Panel in November 2012 – awaiting confirmation.	<b>06/11/12</b>
7/02/12	<p><b>Health and Well-Being</b></p> <p>Background information received on the thematic group's outcomes, terms of reference, membership and Action Plan. In September 2012, the Panel also submitted a response to the consultation on the Draft Cambridgeshire Health and Well-Being Strategy.</p>		Due for consideration by the Panel in February 2013.	<b>05/02/13</b>