

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE 0.1A, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 4 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 held on 6<sup>th</sup> September 2012.

**Mrs C Bulman  
388234**

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

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

### **3. LOCALISATION OF BUSINESS RATES**

To note that under Section 16 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution, the Chairman of the Council had agreed to the inclusion of an urgent item of business on the Cabinet Agenda for 13<sup>th</sup> December 2012 relating to the localisation of Business Rates.

Decisions taken as a matter of urgency must be reported to the next available meeting of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel, together with the reasons for urgency.

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

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

**Mrs H Taylor  
388006**

### **5. THE CORPORATE OFFICE**

To receive a presentation by Mrs H Donnellan on the role and function of the District Council's Corporate Office.

*(Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels for (Social Well-Being))*

*and (Environmental Well-Being) have been invited to attend for the discussion on this item).*

**6. COMMUNITY RIGHT TO CHALLENGE (Pages 11 - 16)**

To consider a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services setting proposed arrangements for the Council to operate the new Community Right to Challenge.

**C Meadowcroft  
388021**

**7. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

That the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of a crime.

**8. HOUSING BENEFIT - INTRODUCTION OF RISK BASED VERIFICATION (Pages 17 - 34)**

To receive a report from the Head of Customer Services on the introduction of risk based verification in housing benefits for 2012/13.

**Mrs A Burns  
388122**

*(Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) have been invited to attend for the discussion on this item).*

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

To resolve:-

to readmit the public to the meeting.

**10. PROPOSED CIL GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES (Pages 35 - 40)**

To receive an update on the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy for Huntingdonshire and to comment on an initial draft framework for the 'governance' of CIL receipts and its related spending.

**S Ingram  
388400**

*(Members of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels for (Social Well-Being) and Environmental Well-Being) have been invited to attend for the discussion on this item).*

**11. THE RATIONALE FOR RESERVES (Pages 41 - 44)**

To consider a report by the Panel's Working Group.

**A Roberts  
388015**

**12. 2011/12 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT** (Pages 45 - 60)

To consider and comment on the draft 2011/12 Overview and Scrutiny Annual report.

**A Roberts  
388015**

**13. WORKPLAN STUDIES** (Pages 61 - 66)

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

**Mrs C Bulman  
388234**

**14. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS** (Pages 67 - 72)

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

**Mrs C Bulman  
388234**

**15. SCRUTINY** (Pages 73 - 82)

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

Dated this 26 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 Mrs Claire Bulman, Democratic Services Officer, Tel 01480 388234 / email [Claire.Bulman@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.Bulman@huntingdonshire.gov.uk) if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Committee/Panel.**

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

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

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

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

**Emergency Procedure**

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

# Agenda Item 1

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) held in CIVIC SUITE 0.1A, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN on Thursday, 6 September 2012.

PRESENT: Councillors E R Butler, Mrs L A Duffy, S Greenall, P G Mitchell, M F Shellens and A H Williams.

Mr R Hall and Mrs H Roberts.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors G J Bull, R Harrison, R B Howe and T V Rogers.

### **27. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

In the absence of the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman, it was

RESOLVED

that Councillor E R Butler be elected Chairman of the Panel for the duration of the meeting.

### **28. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> July 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **29. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

No declarations were received.

### **30. 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). Members noted that they would have a chance to consider the Business Plan for One Leisure and the Governance Principles for the Community Infrastructure Levy would be considered at their next meeting. They then requested that the reports on the Community Right to Challenge and Risk Based Verification in Housing Benefit were submitted to a future meeting.

The Head of Financial Services informed the Panel that a report would be submitted to the Cabinet meeting on the 13<sup>th</sup> September 2012 under the Special Urgency provisions set out in the Council's Constitution, seeking endorsement of a proposal for business rate pooling. Members were reminded that there would still be an opportunity to withdraw from the pooling arrangements when the

Local Governance Finance Report was published.

## **31. FINANCIAL FORECAST**

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

*(During the discussion on this item (7.20pm) Councillor S Greenall took his seat at the meeting).*

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Financial Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) in relation to the Council's financial forecast. By way of introduction, Councillor J A Gray explained that at present the Council was in a better position than had previously been anticipated but this could change. He drew attention to the progress which had been made in achieving planned savings and explained that further work was being undertaken by Cabinet Members to identify additional savings and efficiencies, the details of which would be made available in due course. He explained that the Cabinet wanted to achieve a balanced revenue budget and ultimately reach a position in which borrowing was only undertaken for investment in physical assets.

The Head of Financial Service drew attention to the significant level of outstanding risks in the current forecast and explained that the risks and unknown factors facing the Council were of a greater magnitude than in previous years. It was hoped that some of these factors would be resolved before the Council set its budget in February 2013. He then acquainted Members with detailed aspects of the report. In considering the risks which had been identified, specific attention was drawn to the assumed continued growth in the New Homes Bonus and the Council's potential liability arising from the insolvency of Municipal Mutual Insurance in 1992.

In considering the contents of the report, Councillor P G Mitchell outlined his concerns with regard to the growth in forecast spending. Although Councillor Mitchell was of the opinion that the increase in cumulative borrowing in the medium term meant that the repayments would have an unacceptable effect on the Council's revenue budget, the Executive Councillor was of the view that borrowing should be undertaken if it was for appropriate capital purposes. In this case the Panel noted that, the Council needed to retain the flexibility to borrow when the most advantageous terms were available and hence it would not be appropriate to set an absolute borrowing limit. With this in mind, Members concluded that the Panel needed to debate what the Council's policy ought to be and agreed that a Working Group should be established to identify the terms of this debate and develop an understanding of the District Council's approach to borrowing. A report would then be requested from officers on the Council's current and future borrowing requirements and the Council's assets.

In considering the Council's level of reserves, Mrs H Roberts queried whether any consideration had been given to the pooling of reserves between local authorities. However, the Head of Financial Services indicated that this would not meet the full requirements of reserves as their purpose included covering Countywide and national events. In

terms of the references within the report to the belief of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) that there may be argument for higher levels of reserves, Councillors M F Shellens and P G Mitchell indicated that they wished to disassociate themselves from this statement. Members noted that the Working Group would be reporting on its findings to the next meeting of the Panel and would not recommend that the minimum level of reserves was increased.

Councillor M F Shellens raised a number of specific questions and comments regarding the savings and unknown factors, which were identified within the report. These related to the provision in the reserves for Municipal Mutual Insurance, the savings from the rental of office space in Pathfinder House, the provision for doubtful debts in the current climate of changes to Council Tax benefit and car parking charges during the pre Christmas period. Reference was also made to the significant financial impact which might result from an increase in the number of individuals with housing and financial difficulties. Whereupon, it was

#### RESOLVED

- a) that the contents of the report be noted;
- b) that the recommendations that the Council should continue to use the annuity basis for the calculation of Minimum Revenue Provision as outlined in Annex b to the report now submitted be endorsed;
- c) that a working group be established comprising Councillors P G Mitchell, M F Shellens, A H Williams and Mrs L Duffy to develop an understanding of the District Council's approach to borrowing.

## **32. THE TECHNICAL REFORM OF COUNCIL TAX**

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

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Customer Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel was acquainted with details of Government proposals to reform Council Tax, which would come into effect in April 2013. The proposals would provide Billing Authorities with a number of discretionary powers, which would allow the Council to make a number of changes to the existing Council Tax discounts / exemptions.

Members' attention was drawn to a series of proposals for changes to Council Tax that would enable the Council to collect an additional £724k per annum in Council Tax from 2013. This sum would be used to reduce the impact on the Council of the changes to Council Tax support. However, because the legislation had not yet been passed, the Cabinet would only be able to approve the proposals in principle at that stage. Those affected included those who had inherited property and private landlords.

In considering the contents of the report, Members discussed the social consequences of the proposals and concluded that they would result in housing being occupied more quickly. This view was endorsed by the Chairman of the Social Well-Being Panel.

With regard to the proposal to reduce the exemption for unoccupied and substantially unfurnished properties from six months to one month, the Panel was assured that testing had been undertaken to maximise the cost-effectiveness of the change. In terms of the proposals for Uninhabitable properties (Class A), Members queried whether it would be viable to reduce the discount period to 6 months but officers explained that the Government would only permit a variation to the size of the discount in this category.

#### RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to express their support in principle for the recommendations set out in paragraph 8 of the report now submitted.

### **33. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT FROM 1ST APRIL 2013**

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

The Panel gave consideration to a report by the Head of Customer Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) providing an update on the progress made on the implementation of a new Council Tax Support Scheme. Members were informed that the new scheme had to be in place by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2013 and that a consultation exercise with customers and stakeholders was scheduled to finish on 14 October 2012. Members' attention was drawn to the principles which had been adopted towards the design of the new scheme and an analysis of the Council Tax Benefit caseload which gave a breakdown of where the changes were likely to be experienced.

Although the legislation had not yet been passed, Members were informed that the Government would reduce the funding which it provided to Councils to meet the cost of Council Tax support and it was estimated that this would equate to approximately £1.3m in 2013/14. Whilst some of the recipients were protected, Members were of the opinion that the whole reduction should not be passed on to the remaining recipients of support and that the Council should make up part of the difference.

Having been advised of the responses which had been received during the consultation to date, comment was made on the fact that not all Council Tax payers' views had been actively sought and it might have been more widely distributed. In response, Members were advised of the efforts which had been made to promote the consultation and the Head of Customer Services emphasised the need to ensure that those affected were consulted to enable the Council to complete an impact assessment. Officers were requested to take these comments into account when the responses were analysed.



On behalf of the Social Well-Being Panel, Councillor S Criswell expressed the view that he was satisfied that the Council was taking steps to minimise the effects of the changes as far as possible and that if the Council was to make up the whole of the short-fall it would have to find an extra £1m in savings. In terms of the consultation exercise, he reiterated that the Council would have to take a decision of behalf of all Council Tax payers on the basis of the consultation responses received.

During the course of the ensuing discussion it was suggested that the Council might take steps to help those affected to move to properties in a lower Council Tax band. However, Members were informed that this already took place through the housing list and that Registered Social Landlords had a number of schemes to help their tenants to move. Comment was also made about the potential impact of the changes on the staffing resources within the Housing Team and Members noted that provision for additional resources to meet the additional demand had been included within the Financial Forecast.

Having noted that under the new scheme payments would be made on a monthly basis rather than weekly as had been the case in the past, comment was made that this could cause budgetary difficulties for some recipients. The Panel was assured that the facility would be made available for some payers to pay their Council Tax over twelve months and that this would not cause the Council any cash flow problems. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

#### **34. WORKPLAN STUDIES**

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) containing details of studies that were being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Social and Environmental Well-Being.

#### **35. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS**

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) reviewing progress on matters that had been previously discussed. In considering the contents of the report, Councillor P G Mitchell provided an update on his recent attendance at a meeting on the Great Fen project.

It was reported that the Corporate Governance Panel had established a working group to investigate the fraud risks faced by the Council and the resources that the Fraud Team would require in the future. A copy of the report would be considered by the Panel in due course.

**36. SCRUTINY**

The Panel considered and noted the latest edition of the Council's Decision Digest (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). Following a question by Mrs H Roberts, the Scrutiny and Review Manager undertook to provide her with a copy of the report on the Risk Register which was considered by the Cabinet at their meeting in July 2012.

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
Bearcroft 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

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

**4TH OCTOBER 2012**

**18TH OCTOBER 2012**

## **COMMUNITY RIGHT TO CHALLENGE Report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 From 27th June 2012, the Localism Act 2011 introduced a right for defined organisations and persons to submit an Expression of Interest in taking over the provision of a service on behalf of the Council. Where a valid expression of interest is received, the Council is required to undertake a procurement exercise for that service, which may lead to the Council awarding a contract for the provision of that service. This report recommends the arrangements which the Council should adopt in order to operate the new Community Right to Challenge.

### **2. WHO CAN SUBMIT AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST?**

- 2.1 An expression of interests can be submitted by a “relevant body”, comprising –

- ◆ a Parish Council, but not limited to services or facilities within its area;
- ◆ a Voluntary Body – a body, other than a local authority, the activities of which are not carried on for a profit;
- ◆ a Community Body – a body, other than a local authority, which carries on activities primarily for the benefit of the community;
- ◆ a body or trust established for charitable purposes;
- ◆ two or more employees of the Council, whether or not they have formed themselves into a body for this purpose, or
- ◆ such other persons or bodies as may be specified by the Secretary of State by regulations.

- 2.2 There is no requirement for a Voluntary or Community Body to have any local connection and any of these bodies can submit an expression of interest in partnership with any other organisation, including a commercial organisation, or propose to sub-contract the work to a commercial organisation. Providing that this is done, there is no requirement for the relevant body to undertake the majority of, or any particular share of the work.

### **3. WHAT SERVICES CAN AN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST RELATE TO?**

- 3.1 The expression of interest must relate to the provision of, or assisting in the provision of, a “relevant service”, which means any service which is currently provided by or on behalf of the Council. However, the following services are “excluded services” which cannot be the subject of an expression of interest –

- ◆ services provided in partnership with NHS bodies, or by an NHS body on behalf of the Council;
- ◆ a service provided to a named person with complex individual health or social care needs; or
- ◆ a service which includes the exercise of a statutory power which cannot be delegated. So, the setting of Council Tax or the determination of a planning application is not legally capable of being undertaken by anyone other than the local authority, and so cannot be the subject of an expression of interest.

3.2 So, an expression of interest can relate to services such as management and maintenance of playing fields or parks, refuse collection and re-cycling, running a leisure centre, the operation of off-street car parks, or the provision of a back office activity.

#### **4. THE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

4.1 The Expression of Interest must be in writing and meet certain requirements. These include the provision of -

- (a) information about the financial resources of the relevant body which is submitting the expression of interest;
- (b) evidence that demonstrates that by the time of any procurement exercise the relevant body submitting the expression of interest will be capable of providing or assisting in providing the relevant service. This is particularly important when dealing with an emergent staff mutual or voluntary body, which may not be fully operational at the date of submitting an expression of interest;
- (c) information about the relevant service sufficient to identify it and the geographical area to which the expression of interest relates;
- (d) information about the outcomes to be achieved by the relevant body or, where appropriate, the consortium of which it is a part, in providing or assisting in the provision of the relevant service, in particular -
  - ◆ how the provision or assistance will promote or improve the social, economic or environmental well-being of the relevant authority's area; and
  - ◆ how it will meet the needs of the users of the relevant service; and
- (e) where the relevant body consists of two or more employees, details of how they propose to engage other employees of the relevant authority who are affected by the expression of interest.



## **5. VALIDATION OF EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST**

- 5.1 When an expression of interest is received, the Council needs to check that it is submitted by a “relevant body” for a “relevant service” which is not an “excluded service”. If it fails to meet these requirements, the Council notifies the person who submitted the expression of interest that it is not a valid expression of interest, but need take no further action.
- 5.2 There are ten grounds on which the Council may reject a valid expression of interest –
- (i) that the expression of interest does not meet the statutory requirements, because it is not from a relevant body or is not for a relevant service;
  - (ii) that the supporting information is inadequate or incorrect;
  - (iii) that any member of the body making the bid, or of their consortium, is not suitable to provide the service. This would cover absence of a necessary qualification, or past conduct;
  - (iv) that the Council has already taken a formal decision to cease to provide the service. So an expression of interest cannot be used as a means to challenge an authority’s decision to close a facility or cease a service;
  - (v) that taking this service in isolation would result in a loss of integration with NHS services to the detriment of users of the integrated service;
  - (vi) that the service is already the subject of a procurement exercise;
  - (vii) that the Council is already in negotiations in writing with a third party for the provision of the service;
  - (viii) that the Council has already published its intention to consider the provision of the service by a body to be set up by 2 or more employees;
  - (ix) that the expression of interest is vexatious or trivial; and
  - (x) that the acceptance of the expression of interest is likely to lead to a breach of law or statutory duty. This would cover an expression of interest which would require delegation of statutory powers which cannot be delegated.
- 5.3 In addition, the Localism Act provides that a Council may define services and set periods during which expressions of interest may be submitted for those services, and may then refuse to consider an expression of interest which is submitted at the wrong time. This enables the Council to ensure that, for example, it receives any expressions of interest for different parts of the waste collection and disposal and recycling services at the same time so that it can deal

with them in a co-ordinated manner. Consequently the Procurement Manager, where appropriate and after consultation with appropriate officers, will propose to Cabinet timescales for consideration of expressions of interest in specific services.

5.4 The Act also requires the Council, in considering an expression of interest, to consider whether the acceptance of the expression of interest would promote or improve the social, economic or environmental well-being of the area, over and above the provision of the service, e.g. creating local jobs, improving local skills or improving environmental conditions.

5.5 **Acceptance or rejection of an Expression of Interest**

Once an expression has been validated, it is necessary for the proper officer to conduct a review of the expression of interest to determine whether it falls within any of these criteria. This is partly a matter of fact and law, and partly a question of collecting information from the officer currently responsible for the running of the service. It is also a question of policy, because, where an expression of interest falls within one of these grounds for rejection, the Council still has a discretion and may decide to accept the expression of interest anyway. It must then notify the persons or body who submitted the expression of interest of its decision and of the reasons for that decision.

5.6 If the Council acts unreasonably in rejecting an expression of interest, that decision would be open to judicial review.

**6. THE PROCUREMENT EXERCISE**

6.1 Once a valid expression of interest has been accepted, the Council must conduct an appropriate procurement exercise, complying with the relevant statutory or Code of Procurement requirements, dependent upon the nature and value of the service concerned. The relevant Head of Service will be the project lead for any procurement exercise, but in close consultation with the Procurement Manager.

6.2 **Specifying the service**

The range of the service (in terms of the service and the geographical area) to be subject to a procurement exercise will be set by the expression of interest. The Council may only vary the range of services with the agreement of the body or persons who submitted it. But the specification to which the service is to be provided, the contract terms and conditions, and the criteria for evaluation of tenders are for the Council to determine.

6.3 **Tenders**

Although an expression of interest may be submitted by a genuine community or voluntary organisation, and the Council may wish to encourage such community involvement in service provision, once the Council goes out to open tender, it cannot prevent tenders being

submitted by purely commercial organisations, and will be required to evaluate all tenders received on the same evaluation criteria.

#### **6.4 In-house bids**

There is nothing in the legislation to prevent the Council submitting an in-house “tender” for the provision of the service, on the basis of its own employees. Such an in-house “tender” would not be a part of the statutory procurement exercise, but should be evaluated on exactly the same criteria as any third party bids, and can lead to the Council determining on best value grounds not to accept any of the third party tenders. However, it will be necessary for reasons of propriety to ensure that the team preparing any in-house “tender” are treated in exactly the same way as external tenderers and, as far as possible, do not improperly influence the manner in which the procurement exercise is conducted and do not receive any information which is not made available to all other bidders and which might give the in-house bid team an unfair advantage in the preparation of their bid. Where it is decided, therefore, that an in-house bid will be prepared and submitted, the relevant Head of Service must agree with the relevant Managing Director arrangements for the identification of separate commissioning and bid preparation teams.

#### **6.5 Timescale**

The Council must set a minimum and a maximum time from the acceptance of an expression of interest to the start of the procurement exercise. This allows time for the preparation of a specification for the service and for the invitation to bidders. Where the expression of interest comes from two or more staff, it could allow time for them to form a staff mutual as a separate legal entity to prepare and submit the bid. Consequently, the Procurement Manager, after consultation with appropriate officers, will propose to Cabinet timescales for the period between acceptance of an expression of interest and start of the procurement exercise.

#### **6.6 Acceptance of Tenders**

This phase of the process is essentially a procurement exercise which will be led by the appropriate Head of Service (or Managing Director where the Head of Service will head up an in-house or staff mutual bid team), assisted by the procurement Manager and with appropriate legal, financial, HR and other support.

#### **6.7 Resources**

It is uncertain at present as to the amount of time and resources that will be involved in dealing with the ‘community right to challenge’. If expressions of interest are few, then it is likely they can be handled within existing resources. If, however, there are a larger number or they involve major services, then additional resource is likely to be required, as a procurement process is a significant exercise. The need for any additional resource will only become apparent in the light of experience and may be the subject of an MTP bid.

## **7. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**It is RECOMMENDED that –**

- (i) the Managing Directors be authorised, after consultation with appropriate Head(s) of Service, to determine whether grounds exist to reject an expression of interest, and, to accept or reject an expression of interest on behalf of the Council, with the discretion to consult with the relevant Cabinet member where appropriate;**

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- ◆ Sections 81 - 86 of the Localism Act 2011
- ◆ The Community Right to Challenge (Expressions of Interest and Excluded Services) (England) Regulations 2012 [SI 2012 No. 1313]
- ◆ The Community Right to Challenge (Fire Services and Rejection of Expressions of Interest) (England) Regulations 2012 [SI 2012 No. 1647 -
- ◆ DCLG Statutory Guidance

**Contact Officer:** Colin Meadowcroft,  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services, ☎ 01480 388021

# Agenda Item 8

By virtue of paragraph(s) 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

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COMT  
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY (ECO)  
(ALL O & S MEMBERS INVITED)  
CABINET

24 September 2012  
4 October 2012

18 October 2012

## PROPOSED CIL GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS ( Report by Head of Planning Services )

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Members on the progress being made regarding the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy for Huntingdonshire and to put forward an initial draft framework for the 'governance' of CIL receipts and its related spending for comment.

### 2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a mechanism, introduced by Government in 2010, to allow local planning authorities to seek to raise funds from development in order to pay for the infrastructure that is, or will be, needed as a result of new development.
- 2.2 The Huntingdonshire CIL Charging Schedule 2012, which was approved and adopted by Cabinet and Council in April 2012 (Minute109 and Minute 70 refer respectively) is as follows:

Charge for development types	CIL rate (per square metre)
All development types unless stated otherwise in this table	£85 (standard rate)
All A Class Uses 500 sq m or less	£40
All A Class Uses > 500 sq m	£100
All Class C1 Uses	£60
All Class C2 Uses	£45
Health (D1)	£65
Business (B1), General Industrial, Storage & Distribution (B2 and B8), Community Uses <sup>(1)</sup> (within D1 - except Health Uses - and D2), and Agricultural <i>(1. Community uses are ones provided by the public, not-for-profit or charitable sectors)</i>	£0

- 2.3 The CIL is based on the need to finance identified community infrastructure needs, and it is payable per net additional square metre of floorspace. The identified community infrastructure needs are contained within Draft Charging Schedule Infrastructure Project List, November 2011, which was submitted as evidence with the Draft CIL Charging Schedule and can also be viewed on the CIL Examination page of the HDC website.
- 2.4 The CIL charge is payable on commencement of development and will be registered as a Land Charge until final payment, or beyond if relief granted. Further details on the administration processes of CIL can be found on the HDC website.

- 2.5 The CIL Charging Schedule is complementary to the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) which was approved by Cabinet in December 2011. The SPD and the CIL now operate in conjunction with each other.
- 2.6 Affordable housing development, certain development by charities and a limited range of minor ancillary development are exempt from CIL. All new dwellings, irrespective of size, are liable to pay CIL. Domestic household extensions under 100 square metres of net additional floorspace are not liable for CIL. All other development is liable for CIL if 100 square metres or above and is charged on a scale of rates based on viability testing that has been carried out. The outcome of the viability testing means that some types of new development, such as new business space, are subject to a nil charge, whilst other types of new development, including all new dwellings (houses and flats), are subject to a viability tested charge.

### **3. PROPOSED GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

- 3.1 Breaking the link between specific contributions and the delivery of specific related infrastructure provision, as is the case within existing S106 Agreements, whilst adding welcome flexibility to spending priorities presents a significant governance challenge. Clearly, it will be important to ensure that additional infrastructure capacity is timed to coincide with the expected delivery of new development in a particular area. The spending of CIL will therefore need to be carefully planned and managed. Given that even on the most optimistic assumptions of the availability of other sources of funding there is still very likely to be a significant funding gap, priorities will need to be agreed between the various infrastructure providers, although it will be the District Council which will be responsible for making the final decisions in this regard.
- 3.2 It is important to recognise that CIL receipts can only be spent on capital projects, although associated revenue spending to maintain those capital items is also permissible. There is a further requirement for a robust monitoring and reporting mechanism to account for all CIL funding which must be published annually.
- 3.3 The proposed governance structure for dealing with CIL spend is set out in Annex 1 to this report and it contains the following features:
- Infrastructure partners working together through the Growth & Infrastructure Group of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership (HSP) to create a business plan.
  - This plan will need to be a 'living document' responding to the emerging development proposals coming forward to implementation phase.
  - The plan will allocate a proportion of CIL incomes to an infrastructure pot a 'meaningful proportion' pot (see para. 3.4), a contingency pot and administration/management pot.
  - The plan would be endorsed by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership Board and recommended to HDC Cabinet for sign off or sent back for renegotiation.
  - Infrastructure providers could then bid for funding as infrastructure proposals come forward.



- Where bids were in line with the business plan monies would be granted and handed over (providers would need to report back on money spent for the annual monitoring report.)
  - Where a development emerged outside of the business plan, arrangements would be needed to amend the business plan through the process.
  - A specific framework for working with partners would need to be drawn up and agreed.
- 3.4 A particular feature of CIL is that 'a meaningful amount' of the receipts will be allocated to the area in which the development is occurring. The extent of the amount has been the subject of an outstanding government consultation. This also may only be spent on capital items at the discretion of the relevant Parish/Town. The business plan would therefore not necessarily include local provision which could be provided locally from the 'pot' allocated in accordance with the emerging regulations.
- 3.5 A report on this proposal was taken to the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership Board and approved on 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011 (item 14) and an update given on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2012 (item 7). Meetings are now being held with partners to start the business plan development.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATION(S)**

- 4.1 It is recommended that Cabinet:
- (a) Approve the proposed CIL governance structure;
  - (b) Authorises that work progresses with partners through the HSP to further develop the framework and draft business plan to take forward the next stages required in the governance process;
  - (c) Requests the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy to liaise with the Head of Finance and the Head of Legal to agree draft procedural and management protocols; and
  - (d) Authorise a further report to come forward to Cabinet in due course.

#### **Background Papers:**

- Huntingdonshire Local Investment Framework 2009
- Core Strategy 2009
- CIL Examination documents, which can be found on the HDC website at <http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/Planning/Community%20Infrastructure%20Levy/Pages/CommunityInfrastructureLevyExamination.aspx>
- Huntingdonshire Community Infrastructure Levy Charging Schedule 2012

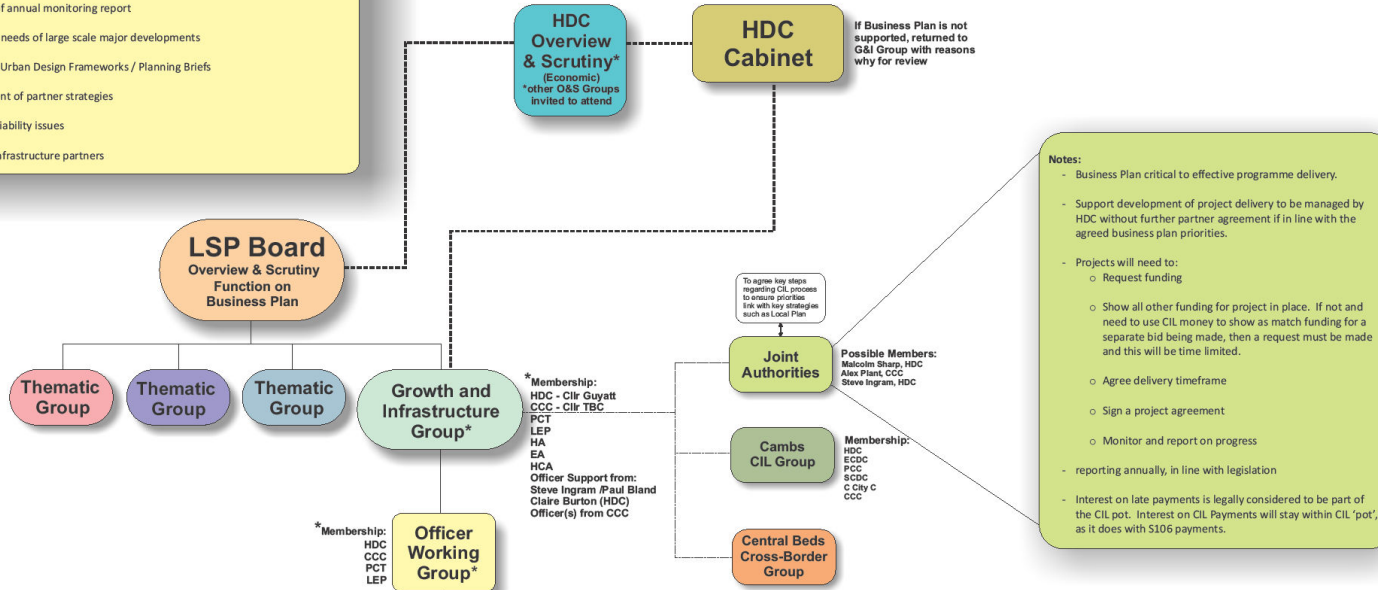
**Contact Officer: Steve Ingram, Head of Planning and Housing Strategy**

 **01480 388400**



**Purpose**  
The purpose of the Growth and Infrastructure Group, supported by an Officer Working Group is to:

- Support the delivery of housing growth & economic priorities
- Develop Business Infrastructure Plan, including funding strategy
- Consider changes in infrastructure delivery trajectory
- Support development of annual monitoring report
- Consider infrastructure needs of large scale major developments
- Comment on emerging Urban Design Frameworks / Planning Briefs
- Support the development of partner strategies
- Consider and monitor viability issues
- Liaise with associated infrastructure partners



All groups to utilise basis of transport agreement and develops for their specific area

**Purpose**  
The purpose of the groups meetings is to update:

- Infrastructure project need
- Development trajectory
- Alternative funding options
- Priority projects for consideration

The groups are task and finish groups and have been set up to more easily consider needs in appropriately sized categories.

**Communities**  
HDC Lead

**Potential Projects:**

- Community facilities
- Health /sports projects
- Education
- Making Assets Count
- Community Safety

**Potential Partners:**

- Town / Parish Councils
- Local Area Committees
- Voluntary and Community Sector
- HDC
- HRC
- CCC
- Police

**Health**  
PCT Lead

**Potential Projects:**

- Surgery Development
- Mental Health
- Community Care

**Potential Partners:**

- GP Commissioners
- Hinchingbrooke Hospital
- CCC
- HDC
- Voluntary sector

**Utilities**  
HDC Lead

**Potential Projects:**

- Grid enforcement
- Water quality
- Sewage works
- Superfast Broadband

**Potential Partners:**

- EDF
- Anglia Water
- Cambridge Water
- British Gas
- \*could be managed through a forum or event

**Education**  
CCC Lead

**Potential Projects:**

- Early Years Provision
- Junior Schools
- Children's Centres
- Secondary Schools
- Academies
- Post 16 / Colleges

**Potential Partners:**

- HRC
- Academies
- HDC

**Strategic\***  
HDC Lead

**Potential Projects:**

- Roads / transport
- Strategic green infrastructure
- Sports provision

**Potential Partners:**

- CCC
- Highways Agency
- LEP
- Local Nature Partnership

\*Could be managed through a forum or event

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**THE RATIONALE FOR RESERVES  
(Report of the Working Group).**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 On 12<sup>th</sup> July 2012, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) considered a briefing paper which had been prepared by Councillor M F Shellens to facilitate a discussion on the Council's approach to the setting of its reserves. As a consequence, the Panel decided to establish a Working Group to:-
- identify the combination of co-incident risks against which the Council wishes to insure by having reserves; and
  - benchmark the Council's level of reserves against other appropriate authorities.
- 1.2 Councillors R B Howe, P G Mitchell, T V Rogers and M F Shellens were appointed to the Working Group and this report contains a summary of the resulting deliberations.

**2. THE WORKING GROUP'S DISCUSSIONS**

- 2.1 The Working Group met on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2012. Councillors P G Mitchell and M F Shellens were in attendance. The Head of Financial Services, Accountancy Manager, Scrutiny & Review Manager and the Democratic Services Officer were also present.
- 2.2 The Working Group has been reminded that the District Council at April 2012 held £12M in revenue reserves which would reduce to £9.5M by March 2013 in order to support revenue spending. As part of the 2012/13 Budget deliberations the Council had decided that these should not fall below £4.5M.
- 2.3 With the assistance of a briefing note prepared by the Local Authority Accounting Panel and the 2012/2013 Council Budget Report, the Working Group has been acquainted with the Legislative and Regulatory requirement for Local Authorities to hold financial reserves and the factors which should be considered when setting a level of reserves. The Working Group's discussion has focussed on general reserves.
- 2.4 The Working Group has discussed in detail the purposes to which reserves might be put and are of the opinion that this should be to give Council the opportunity to make necessary changes in response to events occurring for which reserves are established. Members have also considered the principles that are considered when setting the level of general reserves for the Authority and the likely impact and probability of various defined significant events occurring within a short period of time. These include:-

- sudden, externally imposed increases in expenditure (e.g. government delay in approving increases in planning fees);
- a reduction in income (e.g. from car parks, leisure centres, planning fees);
- Treasury Management;
- emergencies (e.g. flooding);
- Inflation (both general and pay inflation);
- changes in Interest rates;
- a reduction in government funding; and
- the elimination / reduction of Government Grants (e.g. the New Homes Bonus).

2.5 The Working Group has been satisfied that the factors identified within the LAAP briefing to assess the adequacy of reserves have all been covered by the Council's current approach. Members have undertaken an exercise to test the parameters of the Council's approach to the setting of general reserves and have examined a range of potential scenarios. This has led them to conclude that the current figure for revenue reserves is reasonable. In doing so, the Working Group has recognised the difficulties that identifying a reliable figure present and those which would be encountered if the Council wanted to increase or restore its reserves at some point in the future. In this respect, Members have been mindful that to increase revenue reserves by £1M would cost the Council taxpayer an extra £16 in Council Tax.

2.6 Members have also discussed the potential impact of future changes to the benefits regime on the Council's budget and the New Homes Bonus, which at £6.5M is significantly greater than the current minimum level of reserves. In response, the Head of Financial Services has explained that current indications appear to demonstrate that development has been progressing in line with the previous assumptions. Members have also been mindful that the building programme may increase faster than previously forecast.

2.7 In terms of benchmarking with other local authorities, the Working Group has received an updated and refined comparison of district councils' projected revenue reserves at April 2013. In doing so, Members have noted that the majority of Councils' reserves are below £5M but they have been mindful of the need to adopt a cautious approach to the reliability of the data that authorities have provided. Having examined the principles that underpin the Council's approach to the setting of reserves, the Working Group do not believe there is anything to be gained from pursuing this comparison in any more detail.

2.8 In response to comments made by the Working Group, the Head of Financial Services has undertaken to develop the section of the budget report that deals with reserves to assist members in understanding the risks and related costs that support the recommended level of reserves (see paragraph 2.4 above).

### **3. CONCLUSION**

3.1 The Working Group has a better understanding of the purpose of revenue reserves which is to give the Council up to a year to make any necessary changes in response to events.

3.2 The Working Group has examined the principles, which are used by the District Council to establish the Council's level of revenue reserves and have indicated that they are comfortable with the current approach. Members are also of the opinion that

the figure for revenue reserves provided for in the 2012/13 Budget is reasonable, though they recognise that there may also be positive variations which may not have been taken into account.

3.3 The Panel is asked to note the contents of the report.

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

The Rationale for Reserves – Briefing Paper prepared by Councillor M F Shellens  
LAAP Bulletin 77 November 2008 – Local Authority Reserves and Balances  
2012/13 Net Revenue Budgets compared with Forecast Reserves at April 2013  
District Council 2012/13 Budget & MTP

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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 past 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 was investigated by a Working Group appointed to undertake this work. It also undertook 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 had not

been operating as effectively as they might and that they covered too wide a geographic area and generally were not as successful at attracting public attendees. During the review, the Panel was 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 could work together better.

The Working Group that was established to complete the review undertook two consultation exercises with interested parties and stakeholders. The views elicited assisted with the development of the final proposals, which were 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 their proposals to redesign mental health services in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. The proposals sought the permanent closure of Acer Ward in Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, which have since been agreed by the NHS Board. An informed view of the consultation was taken, with the views of both service users and carers of mental health patients being obtained at the time. The Panel unanimously agreed that the case for the closure of the Ward had 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 the development proposals of 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 on the forthcoming introduction of the Police and Crime Commissioner in November 2012. Owing to their previous involvement in the future governance arrangements of Hinchingsbrooke 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. Specific 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 included 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 contributed 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 Peoples Thematic Group was 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 at St.Neots. The Panel's attention was 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, the lack of footpaths and the absence of street names.

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

The Working Group is satisfied that the Council is taking significant steps to deal effectively with concerns raised over the Loves Farm development and that lessons learnt from this site will influence the design of 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 raised concern at the lack of mention of agriculture within the Strategy. A Working Group was established to undertake a study on this subject. Given that, according to the National Farmers' Union estimation, up

to 80% of land in Huntingdonshire is used in farming, the Working Group judged that the importance of rural areas and agriculture should be reflected to a greater extent in the Council's planning policy framework. A number of recommendations have been made to this effect, and the Working Group intends to conduct further investigations into the Council's procedure for dealing with applications where agriculture is a factor.

### ***Waste Collection***

A Working Group has been appointed to look into the Council's waste collection procedures. The Working Group 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 was agreed that the work of the Partnership could overtake the findings of the Working Group and the study was postponed. It will resume in 2012/13.

### ***Drainage***

A petition was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny (Environmental Well-Being) Panel in December 2011 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 had written to Anglian Water expressing his concerns over the flooding problems in Yaxley and a response had been received. Although Anglian Water's response addressed the particular instance of flooding referred to in the petition, Members were not 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 had experienced similar problems. Other problems when the drainage system had proved inadequate were also reported. It was suggested that the Environment Agency had enforcement powers that it might use in such situations. As a result of their discussions, the Panel agreed that, as drainage problems within the District appeared to be widespread, a Working Group should be convened to engage with Anglian Water in order to establish their general powers, responsibilities and limitations on its ability to prevent flooding.

### ***Other Matters***

The Panel has contributed to ongoing discussions on Transport for Cambridgeshire, CCTV Provision, St Ives West Urban Design Framework, the Great Fen Project, the Carbon Management Plan 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 of changes to the Housing Benefit System which are being introduced as part of the Government's welfare reform programme on residents in Huntingdonshire and the District Council's Budget. 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 was, therefore, established to review the services' financial performance and make recommendations on the future strategic direction of the Service. This Group completed its investigations in the New Year and a number of recommendations were 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***

Following their previous interest in the practice of re-charging between Council 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 was 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 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 were accepted by the Cabinet and the Panel was 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, 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 received both in-house and externally provided training to improve their scrutiny skills.

Cross-County events entitled 'Basic Scrutiny Skills' and 'Questioning Skills for Better Scrutiny' were held. They were delivered by officers from the Cambridgeshire Scrutiny Network and members from five councils attended. The feedback from the event was 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 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;
- The Maintenance of Water Courses; and
- Rural Transportation.

The Panels will also following up on the studies they concluded in 2011/12 and oversee the development of the Council's Delivery Plan which 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
Gypsy & Traveller Welfare	To examine existing gypsy and traveller sites in the District with a view to informing any future Planning Policy on sites.	Social Well-Being	Report requested for submission to a future meeting. Following consultation with the Chairman, agreed that the study would proceed once Government guidance has been issued on future provision requirements.	To be determined.
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	Working Group met on 28 <sup>th</sup> February 2012. Agreed to split into two sub groups to investigate each area.  Sub-Group looking at the 'Social Methodology' met on 2nd August 2012. Research being undertaken by Officers at the moment.  The whole Working Group will receive the Business Plan prior to its submission to the Panel and the Cabinet.	Joint Working Group
CCTV Provision within the District	To review the impact of the Council's proposal to cease the CCTV service with effect from April 2012.	Social Well-Being	A report on changes to the CCTV service in 2012/13 will be submitted to the Panel in November 2012.	Whole Panel Study.

Consultation Processes	To assist the Corporate Team with its review of the Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy.	Social Well-Being	Meeting of the Working Group held on 5th September 2012.	Working Group.
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.
Review of Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire	To undertake a review of the Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire.	Social Well-Being	Consultation summary report presented to Cabinet in July. Cabinet agreed to hold a pilot in the Norman Cross County Division. Panel requested to undertake a review of the pilot during its 12 months of operation.	Working Group

Maintenance of Water Courses	To receive a presentation on the maintenance arrangements in place for Water Courses within the District.	Environmental Well-Being	<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
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.
Equality Framework for Local Government	To review the action plan arising from the Equality Framework for Local Government peer assessment.	Social Well-Being	Working Group met on 29th August 2012 to review the Action Plan.	Working Group

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
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

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## Progress Report

<b>13/05/09</b>	<p><b><u>Customer Services</u></b></p> <p>Quarterly performance reports to be circulated informally to the Panel twice per year and formally twice per year.</p>	<p>Latest report considered in July 2012.</p>	<p>Next report due January 2013.</p>	<b>04/01/13</b>
<b>16/05/12</b>	<p><b><u>Corporate Plan</u></b></p> <p>Councillors T V Rogers and G J Bull have been appointed to the Corporate Plan Working Group.</p>	<p>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</p>		<b>TBC</b>
<b>02/11/11</b>	<p><b><u>Scrutiny of Partnerships</u></b></p> <p>Following a review of the Strategic Partnership, the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice Chairman agreed that responsibilities should be divided as follows:-</p> <p>Social Well Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Community Safety</li> <li>❖ Children &amp; Young People</li> <li>❖ Health &amp; Well-Being</li> </ul> <p>Environmental Well Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Growth &amp; Infrastructure</li> </ul> <p>Economic Well Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Local Enterprise Partnership</li> </ul>		<p>The Panel has already received two presentations on the Local Enterprise Partnership. A presentation on the Local Enterprise Zone was given to the Panel's November meeting.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to develop a LEP wide scrutiny function. It is envisaged that a Countywide seminar will be arranged shortly.</p>	

<p><b>05/01/12</b></p>	<p><b><u>Leisure Centres</u></b></p> <p>Working Group's report approved for submission to the Cabinet meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012.</p>	<p>Endorsed by the Cabinet at their meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2012. Working Group to continue its investigations into the future business model and a methodology for the quantification of social value.</p>	<p>Working Group met on 28<sup>th</sup> February 2012. Agreed to divide their work between two sub-groups. Members of the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Panel (Social Well Being) are investigating the development of a methodology for the quantification of social value.</p> <p>The Working Group investigating the development of a methodology for the quantification of social value met on 2<sup>nd</sup> August.</p> <p>The whole Working Group will receive the Business Plan prior to its submission to the Panel and the Cabinet.</p>	
<p><b>07/07/11</b></p> <p><b>02/02/11</b></p>	<p><b><u>A14 Improvements</u></b></p> <p>Agreed that a representative of the Highways Agency should be invited to a future meeting to discuss their plans in the event of an interruption to traffic flow.</p> <p>Agreed to receive further updates on progress by email.</p> <p>In view of the difficulties in obtaining a representative from the Highways Agency to attend a future meeting, agreed that a presentation on A14 developments should be given to the whole Council, when this is appropriate.</p>	<p>Invitation sent to Highways Agency.</p>	<p>The Secretary of State for Transport has recently announced plans to improve the A14 between Milton and Huntingdon as part of a major drive on infrastructure investment</p> <p>Matter has been raised with Head of Planning Services and Transportation Team Leader and a presentation will be arranged at an appropriate time.</p>	



<p><b>07/07/11</b></p>	<p><b><u>District Council Support Services</u></b></p> <p>Agreed to establish a Working Group to review the Document Centre and its costs to form a view on its efficiency and cost effectiveness.</p> <p>Councillors Bull, Greenall, Howe, Mackender-Lawrence, Rogers and Williams volunteered for the Group.</p>		<p>Working Group has formed two sub groups to consider:-</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a) the financial cost of the service; and b) the operation of the service.</p> <p>Last meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> April 2012.</p> <p>Final Report is awaited.</p>	
<p><b>06/10/11</b></p>	<p><b><u>Cambridgeshire Public Sector Asset Management Strategy</u></b></p> <p>Requested a report outlining the progress made on the Huntingdonshire projects in six months time.</p>	<p>Progress report submitted to June 2012 meeting.</p>	<p>Managing Director (CPP) to report back at a future meeting on the development of the business case methodology.</p>	
<p><b>03/11/11</b></p> <p><b>08/03/12</b></p> <p><b>05/04/12</b></p>	<p><b><u>Community Infrastructure Levy</u></b></p> <p>Informal Discussion held at the conclusion of the meeting. Agreed that Managing Director (CPP) would report back when it was appropriate.</p> <p>Councillor M F Shellens suggested that the Panel should discuss</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ the priorities for CIL funding at a future meeting.</li> <li>❖ the implications of planning social housing requirements on Community Infrastructure Levy Income and the housing waiting list.</li> </ul>		<p>Report on future governance and spending arrangements to be submitted to a future meeting. Members of the Social and Environmental Well-Being Panels will be invited to attend.</p> <p>Added to the Work Programme for the forthcoming year. Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships &amp; Projects) to discuss the issue with Councillor M F Shellens directly.</p>	<p><b>04/10/12</b></p>

## Progress Report

<p><b>05/01/12</b></p> <p><b>12/07/12</b></p>	<p><b><u>Housing Benefit Changes</u></b></p> <p>Agreed to receive a further report drawing together the wider housing policy implications for the Council arising from the Government's Welfare Reform Bill be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel.</p> <p>Requested that a report on rental rates and rent costs be submitted to the Panel on a quarterly basis.</p>	<p>First quarterly report submitted to July meeting.</p>	<p>Report considered by the Overview &amp; Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) at their meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2012. Further reports to be submitted on a quarterly basis and Members of the Panel will be invited to attend.</p> <p>Agreed that future reports should be presented every six months.</p>	<p><b>04/12/12</b></p> <p><b>08/01/13</b></p>
<p><b>01/12/11</b></p>	<p><b><u>Great Fen Project</u></b></p> <p>Councillor P G Mitchell suggested that it would be useful to see the details of the Commercial Plan which was being developed for the Great Fen Project.</p>		<p>A draft report on the socio – economic impact of the Great Fen Project has been produced. This will be considered at a workshop in September with a view to establishing an Action Plan. This will be delivered by the partners of the Great Fen Project.</p>	<p><b>09/12</b></p>
<p><b>08/03/12</b></p>	<p><b><u>Council's Use of Reserves</u></b></p> <p>Agreed that a discussion on the level and use of the Council's reserves should be held at their June meeting. Councillors Mitchell and Shellens asked to prepare a short introduction for consideration at this time.</p>		<p>Agreed to establish a working group comprising Councillors R B Howe, P G Mitchell, T V Rogers and M F Shellens 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> <p>First meeting held on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> September 2012. Report appears elsewhere on the Agenda.</p>	<p><b>04/10/12</b></p>

## Progress Report

<p><b>14/06/12</b></p>	<p><b><u>Economic Development</u></b></p> <p>Agreed that the update of the Council's Economic Strategy should be submitted to a future meeting and Mrs H Roberts be invited to provide details of those particular aspects which she felt ought to be considered.</p> <p>Agreed that a briefing paper on the Supporting People Back to Work programme should be submitted to a future meeting.</p>		<p>The new 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. The Economic Development Manager will attend the November Panel meeting.</p> <p>Information will be provided as part of a briefing by the Corporate Team Manager on the function of the Corporate Office. Item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.</p>	<p><b>08/11/12</b></p> <p><b>04/10/12</b></p>
<p><b>14/06/12</b></p>	<p><b><u>Fraud Prevention</u></b></p> <p>Agreed that this should be added to the work programme for the forthcoming year.</p>	<p>Corporate Governance Panel have agreed to establish a working group to consider fraud risks, current and future approach and single fraud issues. Councillors Mitchell, Butler and Churchill have been appointed to this group.</p>	<p>The report of the Working Group is expected to be available for the Panel's January meeting.</p>	<p><b>10/01/13</b></p>

## Progress Report

<b>12/07/12</b>	<p><b><u>Use of Consultants</u></b></p> <p>Received a report outlining the progress which had been made on agreeing, modifying and implementing the Panel's previous recommendations.</p>	<p>Agreed that further reports detailing expenditure on consultants, hired and temporary staff should be submitted to the Panel on an annual basis. This report should include a breakdown of revenue and capital.</p>	<p>Next report due July 2013.</p>	<b>07/13</b>
<b>06/09/12</b>	<p><b><u>Borrowing</u></b></p> <p>In considering the Financial Forecast, agreed to establish a Working Group to develop an understanding of the District Council's approach to borrowing and to identify the terms of a Panel debate.</p>	<p>Working Group to comprise Councillors L Duffy, P G Mitchell, M F Shellens and A H Williams.</p>	<p>Arrangements are currently being made for the first meeting.</p>	

## Decision Digest

Edition 127

**Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 1st August to 21st September 2012.**

### **HOUSING BENEFIT CHANGES AND THE POTENTIAL IMPACT ON HUNTINGDONSHIRE**

The quarterly report on the effect of Government changes to the Housing Benefits system arising from the Welfare Reform Act has been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). There appears to be general acceptance amongst claimants that they will experience a reduction in their housing benefit. Customers falling into arrears as a result of the reforms have been encouraged to contact the Council immediately for assistance should this be the case. Efforts continue to be made to contact those who are now coming to an end of their transitional protection arrangements.

### **REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S LETTINGS POLICY**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has taken the opportunity to comment on the Council's draft Lettings Policy. The policy was revised following legislative changes outlined in the Localism and Welfare Reform Acts.

The most significant proposals relate to overcrowding, under-occupancy and allocation of properties and the resultant proposed changes to the priority banding levels. This means that a number of households will be regarded as under-occupied and that consideration will need to be given to

same sex children sharing bedrooms. Work has 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 include the impact of the proposals on homelessness, the level of press attention generated on the reforms, environmental health regulations relating to same sex children sharing rooms together with the methods utilised to generate awareness of the consultation.

### **ANNUAL REPORT ON ORGANISATIONS SUPPORTED BY GRANTS THROUGH SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS – 2011 - 12**

A report on the performance of voluntary organisations in receipt of funding from the Council through service level agreements has been received by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). All organisations that have a service level agreement with the Council are monitored against a set of agreed performance indicators and other organisational criteria on a quarterly basis. These agreements are due to end in March 2013.

The Panel has expressed their satisfaction with the performance of the voluntary organisations.

### **DOMESTIC ABUSE JOINT MEMBER LED REVIEW: FINAL REPORT**

The findings of a joint Member-led review on domestic abuse by Cambridgeshire County Council and Huntingdonshire and Fenland District Councils has been reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). The County Council's Cabinet has fully or partially accepted all the recommendations, with the exception of one which relates to the stricter regulation of incidents categorised as "Level 3" by appropriately trained staff. One of the main outcomes of the investigation is the way in which the County Council will now collect data that influences the budget setting process.

The report will be considered at the next meeting of the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership. A feedback report will be submitted to a future Panel meeting.

### **LEADERSHIP DIRECTION**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has considered the content of the Council's Leadership Direction which has been prepared by the Executive and Deputy Executive Leader and sets out their intended direction of travel and key milestones for the Council. The Corporate Plan Working Group is currently working with Officers to produce the Council Delivery Plan, which will sit beneath the Leadership Direction. A performance monitoring reporting system is yet to be developed but it is intended that the Overview and Scrutiny Panels will play a part in monitoring the Council's performance.

The Panel has discussed the outcome of the recent Employee Opinion Survey and are concerned with some of the findings. Councillors S J Criswell and R

J West have undertaken to raise these matters at the next Corporate Plan Working Group meeting.

### **DRAFT CAMBRIDGESHIRE HEALTH AND WELLBEING STRATEGY 2012 - 17 – CONSULTATION RESPONSE**

Further to their last meeting, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has considered a draft response formulated by a Working Group appointed by the Panel on the draft Cambridgeshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2012-17.

Subsequently the Cabinet has endorsed the paper which will enable a corporate response to be submitted. The response includes comments made by Officers from Housing Services and Environmental and Community Health Services.

### **NEW GUIDANCE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON THE HOME ENERGY CONSERVATION ACT 1995 (HECA) AND DELIVERY OF THE GREEN DEAL IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE**

Both the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) have considered new guidance for local authorities on the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 and the delivery of the Green Deal in Huntingdonshire. Members have noted the benefits of working in partnership with commercial Green Deal providers and community partners to facilitate and deliver a local scheme. The Council's role in this arrangement will be to provide leads for potential customers to be followed up by providers. The Council will benefit through the receipt of referral fees. It is estimated that this could produce an income in the order of £150k per annum.

The Panel have expressed a view that safeguards should be put in place to guarantee the standards of work by providers and emphasised that the Council's partner companies should employ acceptable sales practices. Members have been assured that these matters will be addressed through a procurement exercise to identify partners which will realise a single scheme for Cambridgeshire with acceptable sales methods and quality products.

Having been advised of the Panel's views, the Cabinet has authorised Officers to develop an outline business case for an action plan to deliver the procurement of a joint local authority Green Deal for Cambridgeshire. When completed the outline business case will be presented to Members for consideration.

### **JOINT STATEMENT ON THE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES**

The Cabinet has endorsed the contents of a Joint Statement on the Development Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by the local authorities. The strategy will provide a basis for the authorities to continue to work together at a strategic level to ensure the right development targets are set. Prior to the Cabinet meeting the Statement was noted by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being).

### **DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) has received the interim report of its Working Group which has been established to examine concerns raised over the Loves Farm development in St

Neots and to make recommendations to inform future developments. Members have been assured that lessons have been learnt from the Loves Farm scheme, specifically the importance of phasing and road construction. The Panel has been advised that a further meeting will be arranged between the Working Group and the Council's Urban Design, Trees and Landscape Team Leader to discuss aspects of the Design Guide in more detail.

### **THE CONTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURE TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF PLANNING POLICIES**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) has received the findings, to date, of its Working Group which was established to examine how agriculture and its environmental work is reflected in the Council's policy framework. Given its significance to the local, regional and national economy, the Working Group has formed the view that this should have greater prominence in the Council's policies.

The Planning Service Manager (Policy) has advised Members that the new Local Plan will address some of the issues raised by the Working Group, specifically the protection of high quality agricultural land.

In light of the Head of Planning & Housing Strategy's response to the Working Group's recommendations, it has been agreed that the Working Group will meet with Planning Officers to discuss the issues raised and agree a way forward for the study.

**COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> APRIL 2013**

The Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has received an update on progress being made towards the implementation of a new local Council Tax Support Scheme for the District, which must be in place by 31 January 2013. The Local Government Finance Bill stipulates that before adopting a scheme, the Council must consult their major precepting authorities, publish a draft scheme and carry out a consultation exercise with stakeholders and interested parties.

The Panel has noted that the District Council currently awards approximately £8.1m (net of adjustments) in Council Tax Benefit. The Government is to reduce the funding it provides to Councils to meet the cost of Council Tax support. Whilst some of those who could have been affected are protected from any reduction in the support they receive, the Panel has concurred with the view that the whole reduction should not be passed on to the remaining recipients of support and that the Council should make up part of the difference. Members are also of the view that when changes are being developed and implemented, the Council should make clear that the Government has imposed the reduction and that the Council will not benefit from any savings.

Having been advised of the responses, which have been received as part of the current consultation to-date, Members have commented on the fact that the consultation has not targeted all Council Tax payers. It has been suggested that it might have been more widely distributed. Although it is important that those affected are consulted to enable the Council to complete an impact assessment, these comments will be taken into account when the responses are analysed.

On behalf of the Social Well-Being Panel, Councillor S Criswell has expressed the view that the Council is minimising the effects of the changes as far as possible and that if the Council made up the whole of the shortfall it would have to find an extra £1m in savings. The Council will need to take a decision on behalf of all Council Tax payers on the basis of the consultation responses received.

Finally, Members have suggested that the Council might assist those affected to move to properties in a lower Council Tax band and they have been assured that the facility for some payers to pay their Council Tax over twelve months will not cause the Council any cash flow problems.

In considering the key components of the new arrangements, the Cabinet has reiterated the Panel's view that the funding shortfall should not be passed onto the remaining recipients and that the scope of the consultation exercise be taken into account when analysing the responses.

**THE TECHNICAL REFORM OF COUNCIL TAX**

The Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has received an update on the Government's proposals to reform Council Tax from 1st April 2013 which will enable the Council to use certain discretionary powers.

Members have reviewed proposals for a number of changes to Council Tax discounts and exemptions, which will generate extra income for the Council and will be used to reduce the impact on the Council of forthcoming changes to Council Tax Support. Having considered the three types of discounts /exemptions and noting that those affected will include individuals who inherit property and private landlords,



the Panel has expressed their support for the proposals to:-

- grant unoccupied and unfurnished (Class C) properties 100% discount for 1 month and 0% thereafter;
- reduce Second Home Discount to 0%;
- grant uninhabitable properties (Class A) 100% discount for a maximum of 12 months;
- levy Empty Homes Premium after two years at 50% in addition to the 100% charge currently made;
- continue to require monthly instalments to be made on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of each month; and
- continue to work in Partnership with other Cambridgeshire local authorities to publish the 48 page Council Tax Booklet.

With regard to the proposal to reduce the exemption for unoccupied and substantially furnished properties from six months to one month, the Panel has been assured that testing has been undertaken to maximise the cost effectiveness of the change.

The Panel has also discussed the social consequences of the proposals and has concluded that overall they will result in houses being occupied more quickly. This has been endorsed by the Chairman of the Social-Well Being Panel.

Subsequently, the Cabinet has agreed the proposals in principle, subject to the enactment of the relevant legislation.

### FINANCIAL FORECAST

In conjunction with the Cabinet, the Overview & Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) Panel has been acquainted with the present position in relation to the Council's financial forecast and details of the progress made to-date in the achievement of planned savings. Although the financial forecast reveals that at present the Council is in a better position than had been anticipated, the Panel has acknowledged that the risks and unknown factors facing the Council are of a greater magnitude this year than they have been in previous years. Members have also recognised that future Government grant levels present a further risk given the success the Council has had in obtaining income from the New Homes Bonus. A number of these factors will have been resolved by the time the Council sets its budget in February and Members have been advised that further work is being undertaken by the Cabinet to identify further efficiencies to ensure that the Council will have a sound plan to achieve a balanced budget whilst maintaining an acceptable minimal level of reserves.

The Panel has discussed the Council's approach to borrowing and the effect of repayments on the revenue budget. The view has been expressed that cumulative borrowing will increase in the medium term and the repayments will have an effect on the Council's revenue budget. It has equally been argued that borrowing should be undertaken if it is for appropriate capital purposes and that, in this case, the Council needs to retain the flexibility to borrow when the most advantageous terms are available. Members have concluded that the Panel needs to debate what the Council's approach

should be and has established a Working Group to identify the terms of this debate. A report will then be received on the Council's current and future borrowing and its assets.

Members also have expressed a particular interest in the Council's level of reserves, having formed a working group to examine this matter and the Council's provisions in this respect. For the purposes of the Financial Forecast, the Working Group does not recommend that the minimum level of reserves is increased and this view has been endorsed by the Panel. The Panel has also been advised of the Council's potential liability arising from the insolvency of Municipal Mutual Insurance (MMI) in 1992 and has noted that the External Auditors are of the opinion that the current provision in the Accounts for this purpose should be reduced.

In terms of the risks and uncertainties listed within the Forecast, a Panel Member has raised a number of specific questions which have been responded to at the meeting. This has drawn attention to the increasing volumes of people with housing and financial difficulties, and to ensure they receive an adequate service, extra spending will be required. In concluding their discussions, the Panel has supported the recommendation that the annuity basis is used for the calculation of Minimum Revenue Provision.

Subsequently, the Cabinet has also approved the annuity basis for the calculation of Minimum Revenue Provision and having requested Officers to review the level and predictions for New Homes Bonus on a quarterly basis, made appropriate recommendations to Council.

## LOCALISATION OF BUSINESS RATES

The Cabinet has been updated on progress to date on the establishment of a local business rates pool as part of the Government's rates retention scheme. An expression of interest on behalf of the Cambridgeshire authorities has been submitted to the Government by Cambridgeshire County Council and work has progressed to agree management proposals for the scheme. In endorsing a proposed scheme for Cambridgeshire, the Cabinet has requested the Managing Directors, after consultation with the Executive Leader, to make any minor consequential amendments to the scheme as necessary. All partners will be able to review the final scheme annually.

## FIXED PENALTY NOTICES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) has endorsed a proposal for a change in fine level for Fixed Penalty Notices issued under sections 46 and 47 of the Environment Protection Act. The change is required by an Amendment Order. As the Council offers a reduced fine for swift payment, as Section 46 notices have rarely been used and no Section 47 notices ever issued by the Council, the Panel has recommended that the change is made.

Subsequently, the Cabinet has approved a charge of £80 reduced to £60 if paid within 10 days for such offences.

## MANAGING ABSENCE & ATTENDANCE WITHIN THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Employment Panel has received a presentation on the management of

absence and attendance within the Authority.

It is well recognised that the effective management of absence is key to the well being and cost of an organisation. During 2011/12, the average sickness per employee was 8.5 days and the Panel has noted that this was reasonable compared to other local authorities within the area and remains well below the average for local government. Having received information on the national picture, the Panel has noted details of the Council's existing absence management process, the challenges which face Managers in dealing with sickness within their teams and the support provided from human resources to assist them.

Information on the way in which the Human Resources Team deals with stress related absence also has been presented and the Panel has noted that further work is to be undertaken shortly by LGSS to review the existing caseload. Members also have requested that future reports should include information on the number of individuals who are hitting the prescribed trigger points within the absence monitoring process.

### EMPLOYMENT REPORT

The Employment Panel has received a quarterly report on the Human Resource matters impacting on the performance of the organisation. The report includes the latest position and trends relating to:-

- ◆ employee numbers;
- ◆ salary costs;
- ◆ employee turnover;
- ◆ retention of new starters;
- ◆ sickness absence reporting; and
- ◆ the Human Resources caseload.

In future, Members considered that it would be useful to be able to make comparisons with other public sector organisations. Further information also has been requested on employee turnover and the number of days lost to sickness per quarter.

Comment also was made on stress related absences and the need to manage information to ease any perception of uncertainty amongst employees. The Panel also have noted that the various services will experience different types of absence depending on the nature of their work.

Having received clarification on a number of aspects, the Panel has endorsed a series of measures which have been designed to improve the Council's existing absence policies and procedures. A review of the District Council's Sickness Absence Policy will be undertaken shortly and considered by the Panel at a future meeting.

The Chairman congratulated LGSS on their recent showcase event to demonstrate the training and development opportunities which would be made available to District Council employees.

### ARRANGEMENTS FOR CORPORATE HEALTH & SAFETY

In order to fulfil the Council's statutory responsibilities and to ensure consistency in health and safety across the organisation, the Employment Panel has adopted a new set of arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of District Council employees which will be incorporated within the Council's existing Health and Safety Policy. These arrangements set out the way in which specific issues are to be dealt with and collate individual service based standards into a single document, which will be easier to

access and maintain. It was envisaged that performance standards will be developed for the specific arrangements detailed in the policy in due course.

Having regard to the disadvantages which had been highlighted in terms of the potential isolation of those individuals who were regularly working from home, the Panel was assured that these employees were receiving adequate support.

Having noted a request from Employees' Side representatives that a representative should be appointed to the Council's Safety Advisory Group to help with consultation on health and safety matters, it has been suggested that this request could be considered as part of a review of the operation of the Employment Panel and Employee Liaison Advisory Group.

### **EMPLOYEE OPINION SURVEY RESULTS**

The responses to an opinion survey undertaken during April 2012 to find out how employees felt about working for the Council have been presented to the Employment Panel. Where possible, the findings have been used as benchmarks for comparisons with survey results in previous years.

In considering the results, Members were mindful that the effect of recent reductions in local government funding, the general economic climate and a number of significant changes within the Council would have had an impact on the survey outcome. Their attention having been drawn to the responses by Management to the issues highlighted, the Panel has noted that the findings will now be used by the Senior Management Group in conjunction with LGSS and Team Managers to develop local action plans. In order to ensure that those issues highlighted by

employees are addressed the survey will now be run on an annual basis.

Concern has been expressed that only 75% of employees felt that they were treated with dignity and respect at work by District Councillors. The Panel noted that arrangements were being made for a meeting of Group Leaders to discuss this matter further. Members also identified a need to address some of the longer term issues which had been identified by the survey.

The Panel also has discussed the views expressed by employees on the adequacy of information available to them on the Council and, having been reminded of the context in which the survey was undertaken, has made a number of comments concerning the need to supply key concise information to staff. Having commented that it was difficult for Members to interpret the general information which had been presented to them, the Panel noted that this had been analysed by Division for use by Heads of Service.

A copy of the full report is available from the Corporate Office on request.

### **PAY REVIEW PROJECT**

The Employment Panel has received an update on the progress being made on the Council's Pay Review project. Phase 1 has now been completed and 38 core posts (which equated to 218 staff) within the organisation had been evaluated and moderated using a revised Job Evaluation Scheme. Phase 2 is expected to start shortly and the outcome will enable work to commence on the modelling of a new District Council pay structure early in the New Year.

The Panel also has authorised the Managing Director (Resources) after consultation with the Chairman of the Panel and the Executive Leader to

agree and offer a pay award to District Council employees in the 2013/14 financial year.

## **BEARSCROFT FARM, GODMANCHESTER**

Having endorsed the observations that it had previously made on the Draft Urban Development Framework for land at Bearscroft Farm, Godmanchester, the Development Management Panel also have requested that the Cabinet be advised of its concern at the impact of additional traffic likely to be generated by the development on the medieval bridge in Huntingdon.

