

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING)** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE 1A, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, CAMBS, PE29 3TN** on **TUESDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2012** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

**Contact
(01480)**

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on September 11th 2012.

**Mrs J Walker
387049**

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

A copy of the current Forward Plan, which was published on 17th September 2012 is attached. Members are invited to note the Plan and to comment as appropriate on any items contained therein.

**Mrs H Taylor
388008**

4. CHARGING FOR A SECOND GREEN BIN (Pages 11 - 20)

To consider a report by the Head of Operations setting out the case for reducing the cost of the refuse and recycling service by introducing a charge for second green bins.

**E Kendall
388635**

5. CORPORATE TRAVEL PLAN UPDATE (Pages 21 - 56)

To consider a report by the Head of Environmental Management on the updated Council Corporate Travel Plan.

**P Jose
388332**

6. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL PROGRESS (Pages 57 - 62)

To consider a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on decisions taken by the Panel.

**Mrs J Walker
387049**

7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT (Pages 63 - 78)

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

**Dr Roberts
388015**

8. JAPANESE KNOTWEED (Pages 79 - 82)

In response to a request for information, to receive a scoping report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on Japanese Knotweed.

**Dr Roberts
388015**

9. DRAINAGE (Pages 83 - 86)

To receive a report by the Drainage Working Group.

**Mrs J Walker
387049**

10. WORK PLAN STUDIES (Pages 87 - 92)

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

**Mrs J Walker
387049**

11. SCRUTINY (Pages 93 - 102)

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

Dated this 1 day of October 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 J Walker, Trainee Democratic Services Officer, Telephone: 01480 387049, email: jessica.walker@huntingdonshire.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Committee/Panel.

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

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

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

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

Emergency Procedure

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

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Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) held in Civic Suite 1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 11 September 2012.

PRESENT: Councillor D Harty – Chairman.

Councillors M G Baker, Mrs M Banerjee,
I J Curtis, J W Davies, G J Harlock,
C R Hyams and Mrs D C Reynolds.

Co-opted Members Messrs D Hopkins and M Phillips.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors I C Bates and D A Giles.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor D M Tysoe

23. MINUTES

Subject to the deletion of the last sentence of the fifth paragraph of Minute No. 12/15, to be replaced by 'Consequently the use of heat from the power station would not currently be possible because of the very high rates of return required, however a financially viable scheme would still be possible. Such a scheme could deliver a 7-10% rate of return which would benefit local businesses and deliver both cheaper heat and electricity', the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 10th July 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

24. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

25. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN

The Panel considered and noted the current Forward Plan of key decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which had been prepared by the Executive Leader of the Council for the period 1st September to 31st December 2012. Members were advised that a report on charging for a second green bin would be presented to the Panel for consideration in November.

26. FIXED PENALTY NOTICES FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME

(Councillor D M Tysoe, Executive Councillor for the Environment, was in attendance for this Item)

Councillor D M Tysoe introduced a report by the Head of Environmental Management (a copy of which is appended in the

Minute Book) seeking approval for a change in the fine level for Fixed Penalty Notices issued under Sections 46 and 47 of the Environment Protection Act. The change was required by an Amendment Order 2012.

Given that the Council already offered a reduced fine for payment within a certain timescale, combined with the facts that Section 46 notices were rarely issued and no section 47 notices had been issued by the Council, the Panel endorsed the report for submission to the Cabinet.

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

(Councillor D M Tysoe, Executive Councillor for the Environment, was in attendance for this item)

Councillor D M Tysoe introduced a report by the Head of Environmental Management (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 and the delivery of the Green Deal in Huntingdonshire. He emphasised the importance of the Green Deal and that the preferred option to deliver it locally would enable the Council to offer its expertise and the data it held on premises that could benefit from home energy efficiency measures to commercial providers.

Members expressed the view that the Council had a good reputation which could be tarnished if work undertaken as part of a scheme it supported was not of an adequate standard. To this end the Panel suggested that safeguards should be put in place to guarantee the standard of work by suppliers. Furthermore, on the basis of recent experiences reported by Councillor C R Hyams, Members emphasised that the Council's partner companies should employ acceptable sales practices. The Panel was assured that these matters would be addressed through a procurement exercise to identify partners, which would establish a single scheme for Cambridgeshire with acceptable sales methods and effective products.

Members recommended that option two of those identified in paragraph 3.3 of the report was adopted. This meant that the Council would work in partnership with Green Deal providers and community partners to deliver and facilitate the delivery of the Green Deal. The Council's role in this arrangement would be to provide leads for potential customers to be followed up by providers. The Council would benefit through the receipt of referral fees. It was estimated that this could produce an income in the order of £150k per annum. Attention was also drawn to the potential to bring in top-up grant funding through the Energy Company Obligation (ECO), which equated to £1.3bn per annum to be invested by the major energy companies to cover a combination of more expensive measures and the delivery of affordable warmth to priority householders who might be suffering from fuel poverty.

The Panel further recommended that once the scheme started to operate, details of accredited partners should be published on the

Council's website. It was also suggested that feedback on providers was sought and monitored to ensure satisfactory services were maintained. This would ensure that members of the public received acceptable services and would protect the Council's reputation.

Having regard to the County Council's involvement in the scheme, Members noted that although it would operate County-wide, only District Councils, being authorities with housing responsibilities, would be party to the scheme. However, the County Council would be involved by providing procurement expertise. Furthermore, the Green Deal was most appropriate for housing and not suitable for County Council assets, such as schools. This position would be confirmed at the forthcoming meeting of the Making Assets Count Board.

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended

- (a) to authorise Officers of the Environment Team (in conjunction with Officers from other Cambridgeshire authorities) to undertake further work to develop an outline business case for an action plan to deliver the procurement of a joint local authority Green Deal offering for Cambridgeshire, and
- (b) request that, when completed, the outline business case is presented to Members for consideration including a full appraisal of the work streams and resources required to procure and deliver a Green Deal scheme for Cambridgeshire.

28. JOINT STRATEGIC PLANNING

Consideration was given to a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) by the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy on the Joint Statement on the Development Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by the Local Authorities. The Planning Service Manager (Policy) informed Members that the Joint Statement represented a formalised way of working that took into account the National Planning Policy Framework, localism and strategic cross-border matters such as the A14 and the Enterprise Zone.

In response to a question by Councillor G J Harlock on what evidence existed to support the Statement's claim that 'major developments, essential regeneration and infrastructure provision in Cambridgeshire's market towns continue to make positive progress' Members were advised that the Statement covered the whole County in which many examples could be found and that the purpose of the Statement was to balance future infrastructure requirements to allow developments to take place.

Given the need for joint working on cross border issues, Members questioned why the Statement made no reference to neighbouring authorities other than those in Cambridgeshire. They were informed that two meetings had been held with partners including Northamptonshire, Bedfordshire and Peterborough Councils. This would enable them to comply with the 'duty to co-operate'. Having

regard to the joint working arrangements, Councillor C R Hyams stated that historically Huntingdonshire District Council had delivered on its regional strategic objectives but that not all neighbouring authorities had done so. In response, Members were assured that the joint working arrangements would establish the causes of this and were intended to prevent undue development being forced upon Huntingdonshire District Council. It should ensure that the right development targets would be set for each authority.

Councillor Mrs M Bannerjee expressed the view that the District Council should try to ensure that developments in neighbouring districts did not impact negatively on Huntingdonshire. Having specific regard to the Great Haddon development within Peterborough City Council's jurisdiction, the Planning Service Manager (Policy) advised that the District Council's Planning Officers were working with Officers at Peterborough City Council to mitigate its impact on the northern fringes of Huntingdonshire. It was noted that the development of more than 5000 homes was in Peterborough City Council's Core Strategy; however, at the time it was approved, Peterborough City Council were not involved in the joint working arrangements.

RESOLVED

that the Joint Statement on the Development Strategy for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough by the local authorities be endorsed for submission to the Cabinet.

Owing to their importance for the Council's planning function, the Panel received an update on recent Government announcements on temporary changes to the planning system. The Planning Service Manager (Policy) informed Members that there was likely to be a relaxation of planning policy and guidance. At the same time the Planning Inspectorate would have an enhanced role and be instructed to direct resources to appeals that had major economic implications. Consultation was also planned on extending Permitted Development rights, the idea being that this would allow Development Management Officers to process major applications. Finally, other initiatives being planned included allowing offices that were not used to become residential properties and allowing developers to re-negotiate S106 agreements that were not viable.

29. DESIGN PRINCIPLES FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

Further to Minute No.11/50 and with the assistance of a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) Councillor Mrs M Banerjee acquainted the Panel with the outcome of the deliberations to date of the Working Group which had been established to examine concerns raised over the Loves Farm development in St Neots and to make recommendations to inform future developments. Members' attention was drawn to the fact that the Building for Life assessments, undertaken by the Working Group during a site visit to Loves Farm, had established that the site had been developed to a silver (good) standard.

The Panel was informed that lessons from Loves Farm would inform

future developments, particularly relating to phasing development and road construction. Having regard to road adoption, Members were advised that the District Council was hoping to engage more effectively with the County Council to ensure that roads on future developments were acceptable to residents in terms of their design and standards. Further to this, it was confirmed that standards relating to car parking allocations had changed. The Planning Service Manager (Policy) reported that these standards together with those for dwelling sizes would be contained in the new Local Plan. However, the Secretary of State had recently announced an urgent review into local and national standards with a view to rationalising them, which could affect the Council's ability to influence such matters.

It was reported that a further meeting would 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.

30. THE CONTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURE TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF PLANNING POLICIES

Further to Minute No.11/70 and with the assistance of a report by the Working Group (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) Councillor Mrs M Banerjee advised of the findings to date of the study into how agriculture and its environmental work was reflected in the Council's policy framework. The Working Group had formed the view that the importance of rural areas and agriculture should be reflected to a greater extent in the Council's planning policy framework.

The Planning Service Manager (Policy) advised Members that the new Local Plan would address some of the issues raised by the Working Group, specifically the protection of high quality agricultural land. Furthermore, Planning Officers would be looking at 'enabled exceptions' whereby communities would be able to safeguard their own sustainability via community development.

In light of concerns raised by the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy regarding the Working Group's recommendations, it was agreed that the Working Group would meet with Planning Officers to discuss the issues raised and determine a way forward for the study.

31. JAPANESE KNOTWEED

Owing to Councillor D A Giles' absence from the meeting, it was agreed that the consideration of a report on Japanese Knotweed, which had been produced at his suggestion, would be deferred until the next meeting of the Panel.

32. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel considered and noted a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) informing them of studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

33. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL PROGRESS

With the aid of a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel was advised of progress on issues that had been previously discussed. Councillor J W Davies advised Members that there had been a delay in the production of the Tree Strategy, principally due to the voluntary redundancy of administrative staff within the Tree and Landscape Planning Team. It was anticipated that the Strategy would be completed by the end of 2012, at which time consultation would take place.

Councillor M G Baker reported that the Waste Collection Working Group had made good progress against its aim to educate residents as to what items could be placed in which bin.

Councillor Mrs M Banerjee informed Members that two meetings had been held with Anglian Water and the Environment Agency regarding ongoing drainage problems within the District. The Panel noted that County Council Officers would meet with representatives from Anglian Water in order to resolve these issues.

34. SCRUTINY

The Panel received and noted the latest edition of the Council's Decision Digest (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), which summarised recent decisions by the Council. In so doing, the Scrutiny and Review Manager clarified the current position in relation to voluntary sector funding.

Having regard to Members' deliberations on Waste Collection Policies at the previous meeting, Councillor G J Harlock requested further information at a future meeting on the Council's policy on stickers on wheeled bins.

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: Jason.Ablewhite@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
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: Nick.Guyatt@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor B S Chapman	- Executive Councillor for Customer Services	6 Kipling Place St. Neots Huntingdon PE19 7RG Tel: 01480 212540 E-mail: Barry.Chapman@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor J A Gray	- Executive Councillor for Resources	Shufflewick Cottage Station Row Tilbrook PE28 OJY Tel: 01480 861941 E-mail: Jonathan.Gray@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor D M Tysoe	- Executive Councillor for Environment	Grove Cottage Maltings Lane Ellington Huntingdon PE28 0AA Tel: 01480 388310 E-mail: Darren.Tysoe@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor T D Sanderson	- Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities	29 Burmoor Close Stukeley Meadows Huntingdon PE29 6GE Tel: (01480) 412135 E-mail: Tom.Sanderson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Any person who wishes to make representations to the decision maker about a decision which is to be made 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 not less than 14 days prior to the date when the decision is to be made.

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

Colin Meadowcroft
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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

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

∞ Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Charging for Second Green Bin	Cabinet	18 Oct 2012	None	Eric Kendall, Head of Operations Tel No. 01480 388635 or email Eric.Kendall@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	None	D M Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being
Bearscroft Farm Urban Design Framework	Cabinet	18 Oct 2012	None.	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Adopt as Council policy.	N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Community Right to Challenge	Cabinet	18 Oct 2012	None.	Colin Meadowcroft, Head of Legal and Democratic Services Tel No. 01480 388021 or email Colin.Meadowcroft@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Economic Well-Being

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
<i>Risk Based Verification in Housing Benefits##</i>	<i>Cabinet</i>	<i>18 Oct 2012</i>	<i>None.</i>	<i>Julia Barber, Head of Customer Services Tel No. 01480 388105 or email Julia.Barber@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</i>		<i>J A Gray</i>	<i>Economic Well-Being</i>
Town and Parish Council Charter	Cabinet	18 Oct 2012	None.	Dan Smith, Community Health Manager Tel No. 01480 388377 or email Dan.Smith@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Social Well-Being
Houghton & Wyton Conservation Area Boundary Review	Cabinet	18 Oct 2012	Consultation Outcomes	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Approve new Conservation Area Boundary	N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Housing Strategy 2012-2015	Cabinet	18 Oct 2012	Previous Housing Strategy 2006-2012 and Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)	Jo Emmerton, Housing Strategy Manager Tel No. 01480 388203 or email Jo.Emmerton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Housing Associations and Partners	N J Guyatt	Social Well-Being
A14	Cabinet	18 Oct 2012	None.	Steve Ingram, Head of Planning Services 01480 388400 or email Steve.Ingram@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
CIL Governance Principles	Cabinet	18 Oct 2012	None.	Steve Ingram, Head of Planning Services Tel No. 01480 388400 or email Steve.Ingram@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Endorse Governance Principles.	N J Guyatt	Economic Well-Being
Tenancy Strategy	Cabinet	18 Oct 2012	None.	Jo Emmerton, Housing Strategy Manager Tel No 01480 388203 or email Jo.Emmerton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Housing Associations and Partners	N J Guyatt	Social Well-Being

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Review of Lettings Policy***	Cabinet	22 Nov 2012	Overview and Scrutiny Report - 4th September 2012	Julia Barber, Head of Customer Services Tel No 01480 388105 or email Julia.Barber@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B S Chapman	Social Well-Being
<i>Business Plan One Leisure - Quarterly Performance Reports##</i>	<i>Cabinet</i>	<i>22 Nov 2012</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Simon Bell, General Manager, One Leisure Tel No. 01480 388049 or email Simon.Bell@huntingdonshire.gov.uk</i>	<i>Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being).</i>	<i>T D Sanderson</i>	<i>Economic Well-Being</i>
Gambling Act - Revised Statement of Principles	Cabinet	22 Nov 2012	None	Christine Allison, Licensing Manager Tel No 01480 388010 or email Christine.Allison@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	None	T D Sanderson	Social Well-Being
Planning for Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDs)	Cabinet	13 Dec 2012	Consultation Outcomes	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Approve new Conservation Area Boundary.	N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being

COMT

17th August 2012

**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
(ENVIRONMENTAL WELL BEING)**

9th October 2012

CABINET

18th October 2012

**Charging for 2nd Green Bin
(Report by the Head of Operations)**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To set out the case for reducing the cost of the refuse and recycling service by introducing a charge for second green bins.
- 1.2 The report identifies the potential net incomes from a range of charges and seeks Cabinet approval to introduce a charge for new customers from April 2013 and for existing customers from June 2013.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council introduced an alternate weekly wheeled bin collection system in July 2004 in response to the EU Landfill Directive which required that a high proportion, by weight, of waste collected should be recycled or composted. As a result the service introduced sought to address that by having an alternate weekly collection system, whereby one week the residual bin was collected and the next week a garden waste bin was collected.
- 2.2 The policy in regard of bin provision allows for residents on request to be provided with a second green bin and currently 7,865 properties are benefitting from that policy. The green waste collection now accounts for 31% of the total waste collected by the Council which is a significant cost to this Council in collecting that waste and to the County Council who pay the treatment costs.
- 2.3 The charging for green waste collection is allowed under the Controlled Waste Regulations 1992 (as amended) and a growing number of councils have taken opportunity to charge for green waste collection. However, as far as I have been able to ascertain only one other council is seeking to charge for the second green bin only.
- 2.4 Following the introduction of the in vessel composters in 2010 food waste was allowed to be put in with the garden waste. As a consequence the Council was able to provide a weekly collection of food waste in that it can be placed in the residual bin one week and the

green waste bin the next. The residual waste is treated by the Microbiological Treatment plant (MBT) at Waterbeach and therefore food waste is treated whichever way it is disposed of.

2.5 The charges levied by other councils vary considerably but the mean is around £40 per annum.

2.6 There are currently 7865 households with 2 bins, 40 with 3 bins.

3. PROPOSAL

3.1 The proposal is that the first green bin collection will continue to be collected free of charge but for the 2nd green bin an annual charge of £40 is applied.

3.2 The introduction of this charge will present difficulties in a number of different areas such as identification of the charge for bins, shared bins at multiple properties, the payment and debt collection systems, and users such as churchyards and village halls.

3.3 In respect of bin identification it is proposed that either the lids are replaced with brown lids (Option 1) or brown bins are used (Option 2). There are advantages and disadvantages of both of these as the first would take more time but would reduce the capital cost by nearly 75% as a lid costs £5.20 as opposed to a new bin at £19.15. The replacement with a different coloured bin would be quicker to do and therefore save on revenue but would require more capital (£100,000 as opposed to £41,080 for the new lids). If the bins were replaced then we would return the old bins to the depot and clean them to enable them to be reissued either for new properties or as replacement bins.

3.4 Due to the time it would take to either replace the lids or change the bins it is proposed that the charge would be applied from the 1st April 2013 for extra bins issued to all new customers. In relation to existing customers it would be impossible to introduce the identification measures by the 1st April 2013, so it is intended the charging of these customers be delayed until the 1st June 2013. However existing customers will be notified to enable bin recoveries to be start from April. Additional resources will be needed to enable the work to be completed within 2 months. In respect of the replacement bins a vehicle, driver and 2 operatives would be required and 3 extra men to replace the lids. The cost of these resources is set out in the financial considerations in this report.

3.5 The payment system needs to tie in with the current system, Capita, and as a consequence there will be a one off charge of approximately £10k (this has yet to be agreed with Capita) to set up the new payment mechanism. In addition there will need to be a link to the new CRM system and the Operations division and currently this is being

investigated by ICT. In addition there would be a continuing revenue charge of £7k per annum.

- 3.6 The other side of charging is what we will do if someone signs up for the service but does not pay when invoiced. In normal circumstances we would seek to recover the debt but as this is an upfront payment it is proposed that a more simpler system is used where we remove the bin instead. This would require Operational Services to send out a first reminder letter and then failure to pay will result in a second letter informing the resident that the bin will be removed if the charge isn't paid.
- 3.7 The payment could be made in a number of different ways but it is considered that an annual payment running from June to June, with new customers paying a pro rata charge for 14 months would be the best way of collecting the charge. The reason for suggesting June is to stagger the work. Currently it would not be possible to provide Direct Debit facilities as the payments could not be reconciled with who made the payment. However, the charge could be paid by credit card with the charge for using the credit being passed onto the customer, which is currently 1.6% dependant on the card used. To reduce handling costs it is proposed to incentivise on-line payments.
- 3.8 The other aspect of charging for the second green bin is how it will apply to certain premises such as churchyards, village halls and schools. If exemptions are to be applied it is worth noting that there has been a recent change to the Control of Waste Regulations 1992 which means the classification of some of these premises has changed, from household to commercial and consequently they are now charged for the collection and disposal of their waste. The exception to this are schools who are collected by local councils where they will be exempt still from the disposal charge. Those schools who switched to a private company will not be exempt. There is an argument that as part of our drive to educate the children we should continue to provide a free green waste service to schools where we have already provided bins for their garden waste but this adds complexity to the new system. It is proposed therefore that there is no exemption for these premises for the second green bin.
- 3.9 Residents who have a second green bin currently will be informed of the charge to be imposed in June 2013 and invited to opt in, those who decline will have their second green bin recovered as soon as possible after the 1st April but so that if 40% of residents decide not to take up the service the bins would be removed prior to the start of charging for existing customers in June.
- 3.10 There would be an increased administrative burden associated with this proposal as in addition to the management of the system there will be the extra cost of invoicing, collecting the payments, dealing with the enquiries via the Call Centre, issuing new bins and chasing of

payments or organising the removal of the bin. It is estimated that this will require the equivalent of 1 full time post in the Operational Administrative team. This has been assessed by comparing with the trade waste service and the time required administering that. The administrative work associated with this should not be underestimated because the experience of other authorities is that when you start to charge residents expect a good standard of service to be provided and for their enquiries to be dealt with quickly and efficiently.

4. RISKS

- 4.1 Introducing a charge for the second bin does present a risk that the composting performance could be affected due to residents with 2nd bins not wanting to participate. However, this drop in performance would be approximately 3.4%, even if no residents with 2nd bins took up the scheme.
- 4.2 A more realistic assumption would be that a proportion would not pay the charge but this is mitigated by introducing the charge in June when there is demand for the service. The alternatives available to residents are either to start home composting or to transport the green waste themselves. The growth in fuel costs will make the latter an expensive option and therefore it is considered that a significant proportion of the residents with a need for 2 or more bins will eventually subscribe to the scheme. The evidence from other areas is that there is a significant drift back in the following year when residents have had time to trial alternatives. However, there is no doubt there will initially be resistance and so a conservative estimate based on others experience is that on average there may be a 40% drop out rate.
- 4.3 There is a political risk in introducing this charge but this is mitigated to some extent by the fact that the majority of households do only have one or no green bins. These residents may actually support the introduction of the charge as they perceive it to be a fairer way of paying for green waste collection. The spread of location of second green bins is quite concentrated in that 8 wards have 71% of the bins. It can be expected therefore that the main opposition will come from those wards where there is a high percentage of 2nd green bins such as the Hemingfords.
- 4.4 The environmental risk is that more residents could start using their cars to take their green waste to the household waste recycling centres which would result in a lot more carbon being released to the atmosphere. It has been calculated that if none of the residents with the extra bins chose to take up the new service 120 tonnes of CO₂ would be produced in people travelling to the household waste recycling centres to dispose of their green waste. If the number of second green bins reduced there would be very little saving because the vehicle would still have to go the same route and the number of tips would in the main be the same. The round reorganisation will balance

the rounds to ensure the rounds were being collected efficiently but if residents subsequently decide they want the service it will require further round reorganisation in respect of the green if there are a large number returning.

- 4.5 The costs in relation to the implications for IMD are only estimated and it maybe that these could be higher once all the investigation and modelling has been completed.
- 4.6 This scheme does not cause any risk to the food waste collection as it can be placed either in the residual waste bin or the primary green waste bin, which will remain free of charge.
- 4.7 The introduction of the charge will lead to an increase in calls to the Call Centre, many of which it is envisaged will be quite difficult calls and therefore the welfare of the advisors at the call centre need to be taken into consideration.
- 4.8 The impact of introducing this change in April 2013 for new customers may impact on other Projects currently being managed by the IMD team but by delaying the application of the charge to existing residents this will be mitigated.
- 4.9 There is a risk that residents may put extra green waste in their residual waste bins which could affect the recycling performance and diversion targets but any extra will be limited by the bin size and an enforcement of the non removal of side waste.
- 4.10 The investigation of missed bins will inevitably be a problem initially and this will lead to an increased workload for supervisors and team leaders. Once the system has settled down there is it envisaged that this pressure will not be as great.

5. EQUALITY

- 5.1 A full Equalities Impact Analysis will be required to assess the effect on various groups, but it is clear from the analysis to date that 8.8% of those residents who have a second green bin are on benefits. In urban wards the percentage of second green bins is much lower than the rural wards. Only Huntingdon East (11%) having a high number of second bins but an issue here is the high number of customers (14%) who are on benefits. This could be an extra burden on those people who are already facing benefit payment reductions next year and it is suggested that there could be an exemption for those on Council Tax and Housing Benefits. In addition consideration there are other groups, such as the old and disabled, and should they be exempted, in that it is more difficult for them to lift and transport the green waste themselves. If we were to allow exemptions the complexities of the administering the system would be significant and lead to an increase in the

administrative costs, whilst at the same time losing the income. Therefore it is proposed that there are no exemptions for these groups.

- 5.2 In respect of the rural wards the distance away from a household waste recycling centre can mean a greater distance to travel if they decide to dispose of their own green waste from the 2nd bin, but conversely a number of the properties have quite large gardens which could accommodate a compost bin(s).
- 5.3 A further argument is that a lot of rural properties have a high council tax banding and that the second green bin is some compensation for that.

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The refuse collection service, which includes residual and green waste collection, has a cost of £3,074k per annum and the collection of green waste accounts for 42.5% of that budget, i.e. £1,306k per annum.
- 6.2 If a charge of £40 per annum was introduced for the 2nd green bin and there was a 40% drop off in residents subscribing to the new service the Council would still receive an income of £192,000 but this would be offset by the setup costs and the extra revenue costs including 1 full time equivalent post.

Provision of Different Coloured Bin Lids/Bins

	2012/13 £000	2012/13 £000	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000
	Option 1	Option 2				
	Replace lids	New bins				
Income from charges						
Based on 40% returns	-192	-192	-198	-203	-210	-216
Set up costs						
Admin costs – postage etc	6	6	4	4	4	4
Collection of returns	16	16				
Delivery of new bins		9				
Change bin lids	14					
Admin staff 1FTE	23	23	23	23	23	23
IMD costs – payments, CRM	20	20	35	7	7	7

development, support Capital Cost						
New bins		100				
Replace bin lids	41					
Net saving/cost						
Based on 40% returns	-72	-18	-158	-173	-185	-191
Sensitivity						
20% returns	-132	-78	-255	-232	-240	-248
60% returns	-6	48	-70	-100	-102	-107

The Council does not receive any recycling credit from the County Council for green or for food waste collected in the green or residual waste streams. Therefore there would be no detrimental effect on recycling credits if a reduced tonnage of green waste were collected.

- 6.3 The set up costs are significant but the sensitivity analysis shows that even if 60% of the current customers declined the service the scheme, dependant on which option was chosen could either realise a small income in year 1 or payback in year 2 with a small income. Therefore as an income generating scheme for the council this is a low risk scheme.
- 6.4 The costs provided by IMD are only estimates and when it is clearer exactly what is required they may increase. In addition until the cost of the mobile working solution is known the cost could change.


7. CONCLUSION

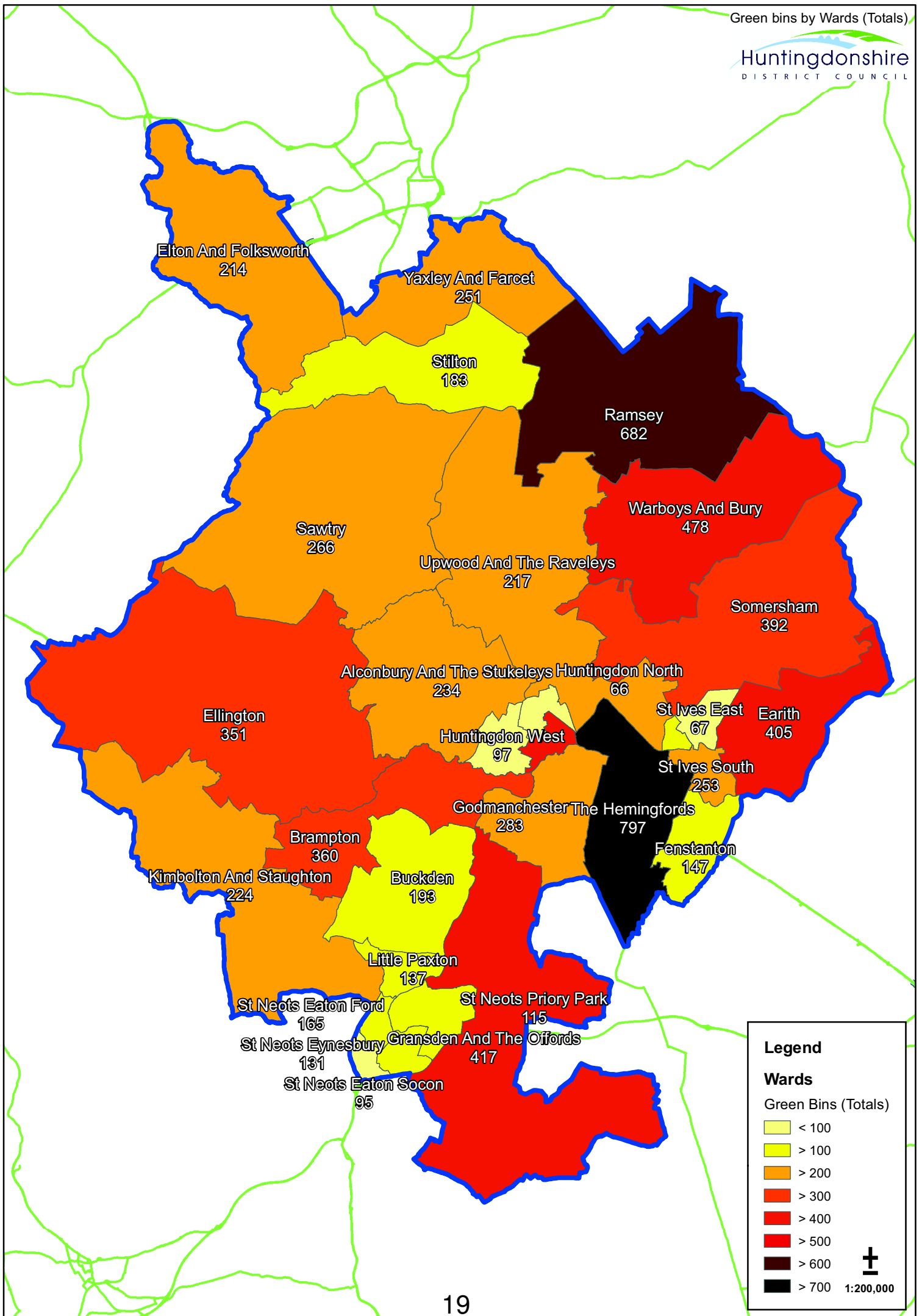
- 7.1 It is opportune to consider this charge now before the round optimisation is completed so this variable can be included in the analysis.
- 7.2 The imposition of a charge for a 2nd green bin on a small proportion of residents is a fairer system in that the majority of residents do not benefit from this extra bin.
- 7.3 The concentration of the majority of second green bins in a small number of wards is a concern and from a political point of view could be a significant risk.
- 7.4 The presence of a large number of these bins 9% being in households where benefits are paid could have an impact as with impending changes to benefits they will have less income.

8. RECOMMENDATION

- 8.1 It is recommended that members agree to the introduction of a charge for the collection of the second green bin based on option 1.

Contact Officer: Eric Kendall, Head of Operations

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UPDATE OF THE COUNCIL'S CORPORATE TRAVEL PLAN

(Report by Head of Environmental Management)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report accompanies a revision of the Council's Corporate Travel Plan (Annexe A attached). The updated plan replaces the Council's existing Travel Plan 2006/07 to 2011/12 and is designed to build on work already undertaken to reduce single occupant car use by employees travelling to and for work and to encourage a modal shift towards more sustainable forms of transport.
- 1.2 The updated plan will cover the period 2012/13 to 2017/18. It provides an overview of progress to date, objectives and targets going forward and an action plan of measures some corporate and some specific to the Council's main sites at Pathfinder House and Eastfield House. Travel associated with Huntingdonshire District Council's call centre located at Speke House is covered under the remit of Cambridgeshire County Council, and therefore does not feature in this plan.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Work related travel whether for commuting or business accounts for around 27% of the total distance travelled in the UK every year. As a local authority responsible for a wide range of services across the district, travel is essential for the Council to function successfully and convenient travel has the potential to promote economic development and improve the quality of life for employees and residents of the district.
- 2.2 However, it has been estimated that road congestion costs the UK economy £20 billion annually and this figure is expected to rise as traffic volumes increase by over 40% to 2035. Furthermore transport is a large contributor to carbon emissions, responsible for 20% of the UK's total emissions in 2009. At a local level, particularly in a district that will see considerable growth in the coming years, further road congestion and traffic pollution will have a significant detrimental impact on the lives of residents and potential economic prosperity of the district as a whole.
- 2.3 Travel planning has the ability to reduce car use, increase public transport and active travel, enhance social inclusion, improve staff recruitment and retention, bring financial savings and reduce noise congestion and pollution. As a major employer Huntingdonshire District Council has a responsibility to promote good practice in travel behaviour and must lead by example through adopting and maintaining a comprehensive travel plan.
- 2.4 Significant progress was made in changing employee travel behaviour during the period covered by the Councils existing Corporate Travel Plan. Employees travelling to work alone by car fell by 14% from 64% to 50% and there was a

notable increase in the number of employees cycling to work (up from 4% to 14%) walking to work and working from home on a regular basis. Despite the many improvements made, considerable challenges remain, and these will be tackled through the measures set out in the updated Travel Plan attached.

2.5 The travel plan has four main objectives:

- To reduce local traffic and road congestion
- To reduce the Councils transport related carbon emissions
- To improve the health and wellbeing of Council employees
- To deliver financial savings through a reduction in business mileage

2.6 The Travel Plan contains a concise set of indicators to monitor the progress of the four objectives and these will be regularly reviewed, as part of the annual review of our Environment Strategy, reflecting a focus on continuous monitoring and improvement.

3. FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

3.1 With the public sector facing considerable ongoing financial pressure, it will be essential to work with partners in both the public and private sectors to make the most of opportunities and available funding to meet the objectives of the Travel Plan. To this end the Council will continue to work co-operatively with the Huntingdon Travel for Work Cluster organising joint events and sharing best practice. Members of the Huntingdon Cluster include a range of major local employers including the Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the Environment Agency, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue, Hinchingsbrooke Hospital and School and Huntingdon Regional College amongst others.

3.2 The Council is also a Member of the Cambridgeshire Travel for work Partnership benefiting from a range of services offered including Travel planning assistance and advice on sustainable travel promotions. The Council's membership of the partnership will also enable us to benefit directly from Local Sustainable Transport Funding (LSTF), £5 million of which was recently awarded to Cambridgeshire County Council to support the implementation of a range of transport measures focusing on the A14 and M11 transport corridors. As a result services including adult cycle training, business grant funding, event organisation and subsidised electric vehicle charging points will be made available to the Council over the three year funding period.

3.3 Aside from partnership working and external grant funding, resources to implement the measures included within the Corporate Travel Plan will come predominantly from the existing budgets. Where larger scale projects are proposed such as any replacement of the Councils Pool Car fleet, they will be subject to approval through the Medium Term Plan (MTP) process in the usual manner.

4. CONCLUSIONS

4.1 As a major employer, Huntingdonshire District Council has a responsibility to promote good practice in travel behaviour by adopting and maintaining a comprehensive travel plan.

4.2 This update to the Corporate Travel Plan will ensure that the Council continues to lead by example and make measurable improvements to its travel footprint.

- 4.3 The actions contained within the plan will result in reduced costs for the Council, reduced traffic congestion in the district and improvements to the health and well-being of the Council's employees.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- 6.1 Members support the adoption of this updated Corporate Travel Plan (2012/13 to 2017/18) supporting the objectives, targets and action plan contained within it.
- 6.2 That the targets are regularly reviewed, as part of the annual review of the Council's Environment Strategy, reflecting our focus on continuous monitoring and improvement.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

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Huntingdonshire District Council
Corporate Travel Plan
2012/13 – 2017/18

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Introduction

A travel plan is a management strategy for an organisation seeking to deliver sustainable transport objectives through action and is articulated in a document that is regularly reviewed. Developing a travel plan involves the identification of a package of appropriate measures aimed at reducing dependency on sole occupancy car use and encouraging the uptake of more sustainable modes of travel.

According to Cambridgeshire's Third Local Transport Plan, a comprehensive travel plan has the ability to reduce car use, increase public transport and active travel, enhance social inclusion, improve staff recruitment and retention, bring financial savings and reduce noise, congestion and pollution.

As a major employer, Huntingdonshire District Council has a responsibility to promote good practice in travel behaviour and must therefore lead by example in adopting a comprehensive travel plan.

1.2 This Travel Plan

This travel plan will replace the Council's existing Travel Plan (2006/07 to 2011/12) which detailed key objectives and introduced a number of measures aimed at reducing car dependency, promoting and facilitating walking and cycling and increasing the use of public transport. Significant progress has been made in the period covered by the existing Travel Plan (2006/07 to 2011/12), however, existing challenges remain, many of which will be tackled through the measures set out in this document.

The reasons for the development of the Travel Plan are as follows:

- Reduce reliance on single occupancy car travel and encourage the use of more sustainable travel modes
- Reduce localised congestion and greenhouse gas emissions associated with Huntingdonshire District Council's transport footprint
- Improve the health and wellbeing of our workforce and encourage a healthy work-life balance
- Meet our goal of managing a resource-efficient council as set out in 'Growing Awareness – A Plan for Our Environment'

This Travel Plan will cover the period 2012/13 to 2017/18 and provide an overview of objectives, targets and measures for our main sites at Pathfinder House and Eastfield House. Travel associated with Huntingdonshire District Council's call centre located at Speke House is covered under the remit of Cambridgeshire County Council, and therefore will not feature in this travel plan.

The Travel Plan will be regularly reviewed, as part of the annual review of our Environment Strategy, reflecting our focus on continuous monitoring and improvement.

1.3 Policy context

Travel is an essential part of our daily lives enabling mobility, promoting economic development and improving the quality of our social interactions. Nevertheless, despite the opportunities created by increased mobility, rising car dependency, coupled with ever-increasing journey distances, is creating a transport crisis, with a range of economic, social and environmental implications.

Road congestion costs the UK economy £20 billion annually, and is expected to increase further as traffic volumes rise by up to 43% to 2035. In Huntingdonshire, host to one of the most congested sections of the A14 and the A1 (M), frequent congestion-related delays cause severe disruption to employees either travelling to and from work, or travelling on the course of business.

Transport is also a significant contributor to greenhouse gas emissions, responsible for 26% of the UK's CO₂ emissions in 2011, rises in which are exacerbating global climate change (Figure 1.1). At the local level, localised congestion has increased the concentrations of a variety of air pollutants and led to the designation of four Air Quality Management Areas across the District.

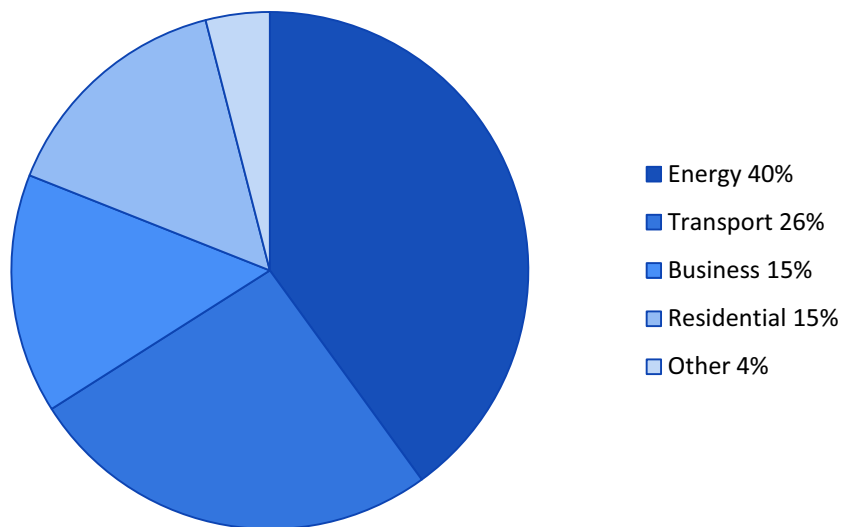


Figure 1.1: Sources of UK Carbon Dioxide Emissions (2011)

Car travel in particular is a major contributor to the emission of greenhouse gases, compared with alternative motorised modes. As Figure 1.2 suggests, the emission of CO₂ over a distance of 100 miles is significantly higher for large cars, compared with equivalent travel by train or bus.

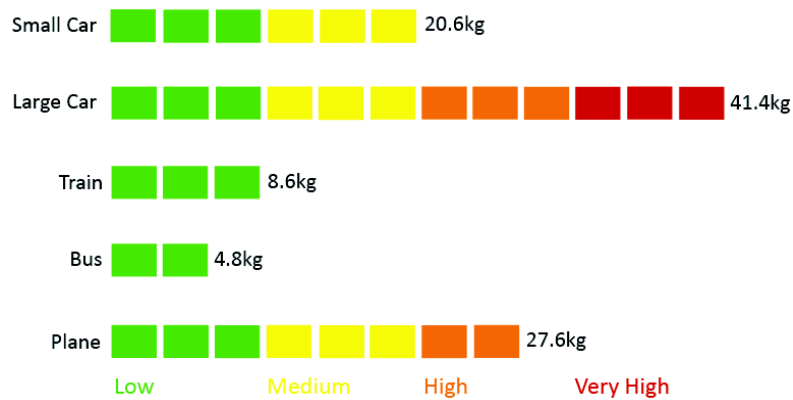


Figure 1.2: Amount of CO₂ per passenger over a distance of 100 miles

Furthermore, rising car dependency, and the resulting congestion and pollution, has a harmful impact on public health, a result of road casualties, which rose for the first time in a decade in 2011, pollution-related deaths, estimated to be in excess of 13,000 each year, and the detrimental impact of more sedentary lifestyles; only 40% of men and 28% of women meet the minimum recommendations for physical activity.

The wide ranging implications of unsustainable transport have led policymakers to highlight the importance of reducing car dependency, encouraging the participation in walking and cycling and making public transport a more attractive option. The Government's most recent policy publication, *Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon: Making Sustainable Local Transport Happen* (2011), set out the Government's priority to 'encourage sustainable local travel and economic growth by making public transport, cycling and walking more attractive and effective, promoting lower carbon transport and tackling local road congestion'. It also saw the creation of the Government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund, a £560 million fund over four years to enable local authorities to deliver local solutions.

At the local level, Cambridgeshire's *Local Transport Plan* (2011-2026) has identified 'making sustainable modes of transport a viable and attractive alternative to the private car' as a key challenge and aims to improve the environment for pedestrians, cyclists and public transport users and reduce the transport impact on the natural environment. A successful bid to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund has seen Cambridgeshire receive £5 million to promote and facilitate sustainable travel, a clear indication of the counties commitment to facilitating a sustainable transport future for Cambridgeshire as a whole.

Work-related travel, whether for commuting or business, forms a significant proportion of personal travel, accounting for 27% of the total distance travelled in the UK. Consequently, reducing the number of work-related journeys and encouraging modal shift for work-related journeys, has significant potential to contribute to the greening of our transport system. Huntingdonshire District Council recognises the crucial role employers have in encouraging modal shift to reduce congestion, improve air quality and contribute to the healthier lives of residents of the District. As such, this

Travel Plan will aim to reduce the car dependency of the organisation by encouraging the uptake of more sustainable alternative modes of transport.

2.0 Existing Travel Situation

2.1 Introduction

This section provides an overview of our organisation and the current travel situation at both our sites at Pathfinder House and Eastfield House.

2.2 Our Organisation

Huntingdonshire District Council is located in Huntingdon in the south west of the county of Cambridgeshire. Situated alongside the A14, a major strategic route for international heavy goods vehicles and local traffic and with rail links to the surrounding area via the East Coast Mainline, the organisation is well connected to the wider District and beyond.

Huntingdonshire District Council is a large employer in the District with approximately 1,100 employees. Around 573 employees are based at our two main sites in Huntingdon, at Pathfinder House (372) and Eastfield House (201). The remainder are based at outlying sites including the five One Leisure sites at St Ives (129), Huntingdon (96), St Neots (123), Ramsey (45) and Sawtry (44), our Customer Service Centre at Speke House (22) and smaller offices in Ramsey, Yaxley and the other market towns.

As a Local Authority, Huntingdonshire District Council is responsible for a wide range of service areas within the District, some of which require regular work journeys, often by car, to the surrounding areas. Furthermore, as a result of the largely rural characteristic of the District, employees are widely dispersed, car dependency is high and the feasibility of walking and cycling for many is limited.

However, a flexible working framework has enabled employees to balance their work-life commitments while maintaining an acceptable level of service. This arrangement has the added benefit of making public transport more feasible.

Nevertheless, there remain a range of transport issues for the organisation which can be summarised as follows:

- High car dependency associated with travel within a rural District
- Poor perceptions of public transport availability and feasibility
- Limited take-up of walking and cycling
- Traffic congestion in the historic market towns and on major routes such as the A14
- The cost of essential business travel by employees
- The environmental impact and financial cost of fleet vehicle operation

2.3 Current Trends in Staff Travel Behaviour

2.3.1 Travel to Work Survey

The annual Travel to Work survey provides a snapshot of how Huntingdonshire District Council employees are travelling to work. Respondents are asked to complete the survey, based on their travel behaviour over a specified one week period, and the results are thereafter used to inform a range of promotional campaigns undertaken throughout the year by Huntingdonshire District Council's Environment Team.

The results from the Travel to Work Survey's covering the period of the previous Travel Plan (2006/07 to 2011/12) can be seen below in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Huntingdonshire District Council Staff Mode Share (Percentage)

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Car	64.1	62.8	50.7	50.5	50.3
Car Share	18.5	12.1	17.5	18.5	15.8
Motorcycle	0.7	0.7	1.2	2	2.1
Bus	1.6	1.1	1.5	1.9	3.4
Train	1.3	3.7	3.3	3.6	1.1
Cycle	4	6.5	0.7	10.8	14.5
Walk	7	8.4	10.1	8.4	8.3
Home	1.2	3.1	2.9	2	3.4

Table 1 demonstrates the progress made on a variety of modes with the implementation of the previous Travel Plan (2006/07 to 2011/12). For instance, since 2006, sole occupancy car travel saw a 14% reduction, while the percentage of employees cycling to work has increased by 10%. However, less significant progress has been made with other transport modes. While car sharing amongst staff has decreased by 2.7%, the number of staff travelling by bus has increased by only 1.8% and the number walking by only 1.3%.

In order to set challenging yet achievable objectives for the period of the Travel Plan (2012/13 to 2017/18), the baseline year for data was established as 2011. Correspondingly, the results from the most recent Travel to Work survey (2011) can be seen in Figure 2.1.

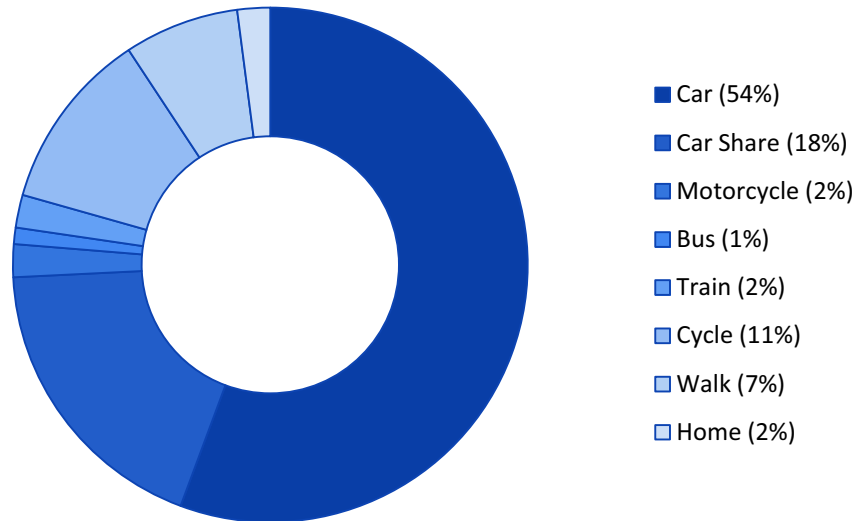


Figure 2.1: Huntingdonshire District Council Employee Mode share (2011)

2.3.2 Business Travel

Business travel forms a significant part of the daily working of the Council and also contributes substantially to our environmental impact. The majority of employees at Huntingdonshire District Council undertake business journeys throughout the year; however, some employees are more regular business travellers and therefore pose an essential target group for modal shift.

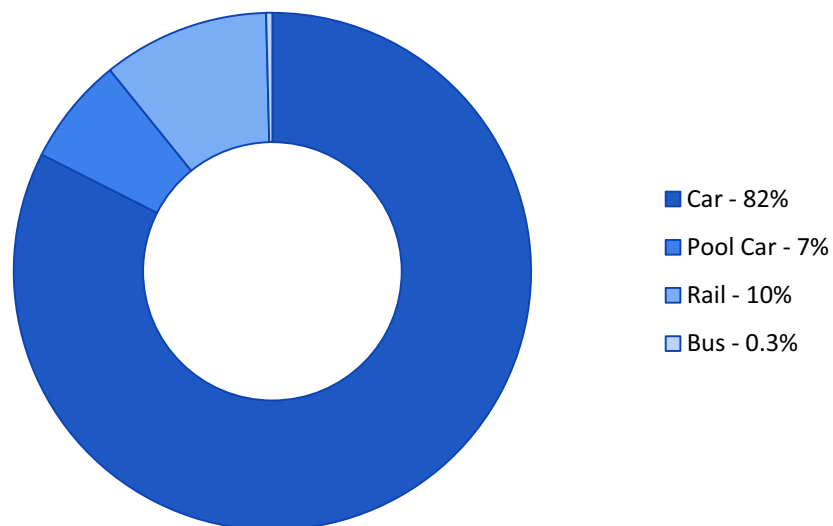


Figure 2.2: Business Mileage by Mode (2011)

As data from Figure 2.2 suggests, employees travelled 435,465 miles by private car for business travel in 2011/12 producing 142 tonnes of CO₂e. In contrast, employees travelled 35,561 miles by pool car (producing 7 tonnes of CO₂e), 55,018 miles by rail (producing 5 tonnes of CO₂e) and 2054 miles by bus (producing 0.6 tonnes of CO₂e).

There is evidently considerable scope to encourage modal shift for business travel towards more sustainable forms of transport which produce fewer greenhouse gas emissions and reduce road congestion on local routes. In particular, and with 12% of business journeys conducted by pool car less than 5 miles in length, there are significant gains to be made by increasing the number of employees travelling by cycle. Furthermore, with pool car availability in 2011/12 at 49%, there is sufficient availability to encourage more employees to travel by pool car, freeing up their commute to be taken by other modes besides the car.

2.3.3 Postcode Mapping

As part of the Council's involvement in the Travel for Work Partnership, a mapping exercise was undertaken to identify the distribution of employee home addresses. The aims of the exercise were twofold: to provide a tool to assist in the more accurate targeting of Travel Plan actions by the Environment Team, and to provide a visual aid to easily inform employees of their most feasible transport options.

The postcode mapping exercise has revealed the feasibility of three key travel options for a large proportion of our employees:

- **Walking** – Up to 10% of Huntingdonshire District Council employees live within 1 mile of their workplace, a distance easily reachable on foot.
- **Cycling** - Over 41% of employees live less than 5 miles from their workplace, a distance widely considered to be easily cycle-able in around 30 minutes.
- **Car Sharing** – Maps demonstrate clustering of employee's home postcodes with large clusters in St Ives and St Neots, and smaller clusters in Ramsey, Peterborough, Cambridge and March. A high concentration of employees living within close proximity of one another is extremely conducive to encouraging car sharing.

The information gathered as part of the postcode mapping exercise was also able to provide a useful insight into the potential carbon and financial savings from various mode shift options. For instance, if 50% of the employees travelling from the six car share cluster areas shared their journey with one other employee, up to 167 tonnes of CO₂ could be saved annually, saving employees up to £150,895 in commute-related expenditure. Similarly, if employees living within 5 miles of their workplace commute by either cycle or on foot, between 221-382 tonnes of CO₂, depending on the car engine size and fuel type, could be saved.

3.0 Objectives, Targets and Indicators

3.1 Introduction

This section outlines the overarching objectives for our Travel Plan alongside the targets we will seek to meet over the period covered by the Travel Plan.

3.2 Objectives, Targets and Indicators

Objective	Target	Baseline	Five Year Target
To reduce local traffic and road congestion	Reduce the proportion of journeys to work undertaken by single occupancy car	54%	45%
	Increase the proportion of journeys to work undertaken by car sharing	18%	20%
	Increase the proportion of journeys to work undertaken by public transport	3%	4%
To reduce transport-related greenhouse gas emissions	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from fleet vehicle operation	1,320 tonnes CO ₂ e	925 tonnes CO ₂ e
	Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from business travel	148 tonnes CO ₂ e	104 tonnes CO ₂ e
To improve the wellbeing of Council employees	Increase the proportion of journeys to work undertaken by cycle	11%	14%
	Increase the proportion of journeys to work undertaken on foot	7%	8%
	Increase the proportion of business journeys undertaken by cycle	*	1%
To deliver financial savings through a reduction in business mileage	Increase the proportion of employees routinely working from home	2%	4%
	Reduce miles travelled on business	528,099 miles	475,289 miles
	Increase the proportion of business mileage undertaken by pool car	7%	12%
	Increase the proportion of business mileage undertaken by public transport	10.3%	15%
	Decrease the proportion of business mileage undertaken by private car	82%	72%

*Data Unavailable

4.0 Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Introduction

This section identifies the employees and departments responsible for coordinating, implementing and overseeing the Travel Plan and its measures.

4.2 Travel Plan Co-ordination

The responsibility for Travel Plan development and coordination will fall to the Council's Environment Team, based within the Environmental Management section. In conjunction with other services, the team will be responsible for overseeing and implementing many of the measures outlined in the Travel Plan, which will include:

- Encouraging commitment and support from staff
- Implementing an effective marketing campaign of the Plan and its measures
- Coordinating data collection and monitoring

4.3 Employee Involvement

Consultation on the issues contained within the Travel Plan has taken place through discussions with our internal Environmental Resource Efficiency Group (EREG). EREG consists of a group of employees from a range of service areas who meet quarterly to analyse, monitor and target the Council's energy, water and fuel consumption in order to reduce the Council's carbon emissions and expenditure. The key issues, objectives and measures identified by the Travel Plan have been presented to the group, and feedback, ideas and comments fed back into the Travel Plan itself.

Throughout the Travel Plan period, employees from a range of service areas will be involved in the implementation of many of the measures outlined through the Council's environmental group Green Force. Green Force is made up of representatives from teams across the Council who work in partnership to plan and coordinate a series of environmental campaigns and projects to change behaviour within the organisation. The Environment Team will work closely with Green Force Reps to raise awareness of the initiatives, campaigns and measures outlined in the Travel Plan.

4.4 Member Involvement

The updated Travel Plan will be presented to the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environment and Well Being) and Cabinet for final approval.

4.5 Support from Partners

Huntingdonshire District Council is a member of the Cambridgeshire Travel for Work Partnership, a county-wide not-for-profit partnership dedicated to working with employers to deliver sustainable travel to work solutions. With over 100 members from the public and private sectors across

Cambridgeshire, our involvement in the partnership provides access to a wide range of resources and assistance in the implementation of our Travel Plan. Further, and as part of our work with the Cambridgeshire Travel for Work Partnership, the Council is also a member of the Huntingdon Travel for Work Cluster, working with large employers in the more local area. We will continue to work with both Cambridgeshire Travel for Work and within the Huntingdon Travel for Work Cluster to develop local transport solutions for our employees and in the implementation of the Travel Plan.

4.6 Communication

Ensuring the Travel Plan is communicated effectively will be essential in influencing a change in travel behaviour. As such, the Travel Plan will be promoted in the following ways:

- **Summary Leaflet** – An outline the key objectives and measures of the Travel Plan to be sent to all employees and councillors.
- **Intranet Site**– Publish the Travel Plan, including news and updates, on a dedicated Travel Plan webpage.
- **News** – Feature Travel Plan news in external publications including the Council’s Green News page in the News & Crier.
- **Website** – Publish the Travel Plan on the public website www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk to enable employees and members of the public to consider their travel options to site.
- **Induction** – Provide Travel Plan information during the induction stage for new employees.
- **Events** – Hold regular profile-raising events at appropriate times to coincide with national campaigns.

5.0 Package of Measures

5.1 Introduction

This section sets out the package of measures which we will introduce in order to change behaviour and encourage more sustainable travel to and from our sites, both for commuting, and during the course of business.

5.2 Walking

With 16% of Huntingdonshire District Council employees living within 2 miles of their workplace, walking is a healthy and feasible alternative to the use of motorised transport. Not only will increasing the proportion of employees walking to work reduce congestion on local roads, it will also reduce transport-related greenhouse gas emissions. For instance, if all 160 employees living in Huntingdon walked to work, the emission of 42-74 tonnes of CO₂ could be avoided each year.

In order to encourage more employees to walk to work, the following initiatives will be undertaken:

- **Route Maps** – Provide links to and make employees aware of walking route maps identifying walking routes to and from our sites at Pathfinder and Eastfield House.
- **Campaigns** - Implement ‘Walk to Work’ campaigns to engage staff.
- **Buddying** - Promote a ‘buddying’ scheme so staff have company on their journey to work.
- **Organised Walks** - Organise lunchtime walks to improve health amongst employees.

5.3 Cycling

It is widely agreed that cycling provides a range of benefits which include financial savings combined with improvements in health and wellbeing. Cycling is already a relatively popular mode of transport for employees at Huntingdonshire District Council with 11% of employees cycling to work in 2011. Nevertheless, with 41% of employees living within 5 miles of their workplace, there is significant scope and infrastructure to increase cycling to work further.

For instance, Huntingdon is well connected to the surrounding areas via a series of National Cycle Routes leading through Alconbury, St Neots, Buckden, Brampton, Godmanchester and Fenstanton and Cycleways leading through Sapley, Hartford, Hinchingsbrooke and St Ives (Appendix 1). Furthermore, with planned route upgrades to improve the connection between Huntingdon and St Ives, a major cluster of residence for our employees, increasing the mode share of cycling amongst Huntingdonshire District Council employees has been an ongoing priority, with measures to facilitate cycling already embedded within the organisation:

- Secure and covered cycle parking at Pathfinder House and Eastfield House.
- Shower, changing room and locker facilities at Pathfinder House and Eastfield House.
- Bicycle allowance of 20p per mile for staff using their own cycle for business trips.

- Cycle to Work salary sacrifice scheme available to employees.

Nevertheless, with significant scope for increasing the number of employees travelling to work by bicycle, Huntingdonshire District Council will continue to support cycling through the following measures:

- **Route Improvements** – Continue to upgrade local cycle networks to improve connections throughout the District.
- **Procure** – Procure a new cycle to work salary sacrifice scheme provider to increase the level of service and cycle availability to employees.
- **Cycle Scheme** - Continue to offer employees the opportunity to purchase a cycle through a salary sacrifice cycle to work scheme.
- **Mileage Allowance** – Raise awareness of and encourage employees to claim bicycle mileage allowance.
- **Cycle Training** - Offer the opportunity for employees to undertake cycle training.
- **Buddying** - Promote a ‘buddying’ scheme to encourage new cyclists.
- **Cycle Maps** – Provide cycle route maps for the local area and promote cycle route planning websites including www.cyclestreets.net.
- **Maintenance** – Promote the availability of an onsite Bike Doctor as part of the annual National Bike Week promotion.
- **Promotional Events** - Highlight the feasibility of cycling to relevant employees via a series of promotional events and campaigns.

5.4 Public Transport

Both Pathfinder House and Eastfield House are situated within easy reach of both Huntingdon’s railway station and bus station with links to the surrounding areas (Appendix 2). However, as the previous Travel to Work surveys have demonstrated, the use of public transport by Huntingdonshire District Council employees is extremely low. While a range of bus services are available serving the areas surrounding Huntingdon, the rural, low density character of the District means services are often infrequent and indirect. Train travel is also underused by employees, despite fast links to Peterborough (17 minutes) and St Neots (8 minutes) from Huntingdon Railway Station.

Nevertheless, with the recent extension of busway services to Hinchingsbrooke, and with the planned route improvements to develop the pedestrian and cycle connection between Huntingdon town centre and the railway station, the potential to increase usage of public transport modes in the area is encouraging.

Accordingly, the following measures will be implemented with the aim of increasing the proportion of employees travelling to work by public transport:

- **Lobbying** - Work with the Huntingdon Travel for Work Cluster to lobby for improved bus services to Huntingdon from the surrounding towns.
- **Route and Timetable Information** - Provide up-to-date public transport route and timetable information to employees via a dedicated travel plan page on the staff intranet.
- **Journey Planning** - Publicise journey planning websites, such as transportdirect.info, via the Council's website and staff intranet.
- **Discount** – Explore the possibility of providing discounts and/or loans for public transport season ticket purchase via our membership with Travel for Work.
- **Rail Warrants** – Raise awareness of the ability to pre-book rail travel through the Council in advance of travel.
- **Interchange Improvements** – Continue to invest in infrastructural improvements to enable effective inter-modal travel.

5.5 Car Use

As part of the Council's objective to reduce single occupancy car use, a range of measures have been undertaken since the previous Travel Plan (2006/07 to 2011/12). Huntingdonshire District Council will continue to discourage single occupancy car use via the promotion of alternative modes and the restriction of car parking availability.

5.5.1 Car Parking

In 2009, the construction of the new Council headquarters at Pathfinder House, Huntingdon, was completed. As part of the building's design, and with the advantage of easing congestion on the Huntingdon ring road and discouraging car use, all onsite car parking for employees was removed, reducing car parking capacity by up to 200 spaces.

The provision of free car parking in Huntingdon's out of town car parks, at Bridge Place and Riverside, has also been removed and replaced with pay and display parking. A season parking permit scheme has also been introduced to enable employees and members of the public to purchase a parking permit covering four car parks in Huntingdon for a period of either 6 or 12 months. To incentivise the purchase of low carbon vehicles, cars with emissions of 119g/km of CO₂ or less are able to purchase the permit at a discounted rate.

5.5.2 Car Sharing

In 2006, Huntingdonshire District Council joined the Cambridgeshire-wide Camshare, a car sharing website matching potential car sharers from across the county. Increasing the proportion of employee's car sharing on their commute to work can provide a range of benefits, both private and public. For instance, individuals can reduce their expenditure on fuel and parking by sharing these costs with one or more passengers while reducing congestion and pollution on some of the Counties most overcrowded roads.

Currently, Huntingdonshire District Council has 22 registered Camshare users of which 20 have registered journeys. It is estimated that these users have saved up to 65,933 miles since 2009, saving 21.7 tonnes of CO₂. Increasing the number of registered users of Camshare is an essential measure to reduce the number of single occupancy car journeys by the Council's employees. As the postcode mapping exercise identified (Appendix 3), employee home postcodes are largely clustered in six areas, making car sharing to work a feasible option for a large proportion of Huntingdonshire District Council employees.

Various initiatives will aim to increase the number of employees both registering to Camshare, and car sharing with fellow users:

- **Intranet** – Communicate the benefits and opportunities provided by car sharing via the staff intranet facility.
- **Staff Induction** – Work with the HR Department to ensure all new employees are made aware of the scheme.
- **Postcode Events** – Organise a postcode coffee morning to bring together potential car sharers.
- **Promotion** – Organise a range of events to raise awareness and encourage participation.
- **Guaranteed Ride Home** – Provide a guaranteed free ride home for employees in case of emergencies.
- **Parking** – Explore the possibility of providing dedicated car sharing spaces in privileged areas of our car parks.
- **Incentives** – Develop a range of incentives to persuade car sharing on a more regular basis.
- **Permits** – Offer employees the opportunity to share the cost and use of car parking permits.

5.5.3 Smarter Driving

Encouraging smarter driving is one of the cheapest and easiest ways to improve fuel consumption to reduce carbon, save money and decrease accident rates. Not only will encouraging employees to drive smart reduce the carbon footprint of the organisation, it will also save our employees money in both fuel and wear and tear. By limiting engine idling, reducing excessive gear changes and harsh braking and properly inflating tyres, employees can reduce their fuel consumption, whilst commuting and during the course of business, by up to 15%.

At Huntingdonshire District Council, we will encourage smarter driving techniques in the following ways:

- **Training** – Build on the success of previous eco-driver training events to offer access to training to a wider range of employees.
- **Online Training** – Encourage employees to access the online training portal and take part in the eco-driver training constructed by the Information Management Department.
- **Campaigns** – Raise awareness of smarter driving techniques with information provided through promotional campaigns.

5.5.4 Low Carbon Vehicles

As part of the Council's commitment to reducing transport-related greenhouse gas emissions, we will seek to encourage a shift towards low carbon and alternative fuel vehicles amongst our employees in the following ways:

- **Parking Permit Scheme** – Raise awareness of the Council's car parking permit scheme which offers a discount to employees and members of the public driving cars emitting less than 120g/km of CO₂.
- **Electric Vehicle Charging Points** – Explore the possibility of installing electric vehicle charging points at our main sites at Pathfinder House and Eastfield House, and at selected Council car parks across the District, in line with available government funding.

5.6 Reducing the need to travel

5.6.1 Home Working

As part of Huntingdonshire District Council's commitment to reduce the impact of our transport-related activities and promote a healthy work-life balance, home-working was introduced for relevant employees prior to 2005. As part of this arrangement, staff are able to work from home during agreed periods, with the benefit of reducing their work-related travel.

To increase security, the Council have successfully implemented the appropriate technology to support effective home-working in the form of Citrix, a secure way for staff to work from home.

5.6.2 Flexible Working

Flexible working is actively encouraged, as set out in the Flexible Working Hours Framework available on the staff intranet, with employees able to work flexibly to accommodate childcare and other arrangements. Not only does flexible working encourage a healthy work-life balance, it also increases the feasibility of various sustainable travel options including car sharing and public transport. Adjusting the timing of essential journeys can also significantly reduce congestion on major roads during peak periods. The Council will continue to actively encourage and promote the option of flexible working amongst its employees.

5.6.3 Alternative Ways of Working - Tele-conferencing

In order to reduce the need to travel on the course of business, the Council have implemented a range of technologies to enable conference calling, available on any telephone throughout the organisation, including in bookable meeting rooms.

In order to further facilitate the uptake of alternative ways of working, the Council will:

- **Awareness** – Raise awareness of the availability of conference calling through information available on the staff intranet.

- **Information** – Provide a link to guidance and user information on the Travel Plan intranet site.
- **Improvements** – Continue to improve tele-conferencing facilities in line with advances in technology

5.6.4 Recruitment and Relocation

The recruitment of new employees presents an opportunity to encourage the use of sustainable transport modes to the workplace, and, to reduce the need to travel altogether through encouraging local relocation.

- **Local Information** – Provide new starters with information on the local residential areas to encourage local relocation.
- **Sustainable Transport Information** – Provide new starters with information on options for sustainable travel throughout Huntingdonshire.
- **Corporate Travel Plan** – Direct new starters towards the Corporate Travel Plan page on the Huntingdonshire District Council website.

5.7 Business Travel

As a Local Authority providing services in a range of different areas, business travel is often essential. Carefully managing and monitoring our business travel is therefore a crucial aspect of the Travel Plan. A variety of measures have been implemented to influence business travel behaviour across the organisation:

5.7.1 Pool Cars

In 2007, the Council introduced a fleet of pool cars for use by members of staff on business journeys. The fleet are available to book by staff through the Council's internal intranet and journeys are charged at 50p per mile. The fleet consists of:

- Three Toyota Yaris' with CO₂ emissions of 119g/km
- One Toyota Pruis Hybrid with CO₂ emissions of 104g/km

The current fleet of pool cars has proven popular amongst employees with all four cars used at least once on 126 out of 249 standard working days.

The management of the pool car fleet has now been transferred to the Operations Division who will explore the options for upgrading the current fleet.

5.7.2 Pool Bikes

Alongside the Council's fleet of pool cars, we also supply seven pool bikes for use by employees on shorter business journeys, two located at Pathfinder House and five at Eastfield House. The management of the pool bike fleet at Pathfinder House has now been transferred to the

Environmental Management division who are responsible for bike maintenance, safety and servicing, with inspections carried out on a monthly basis. At Eastfield House, the management of the pool bike fleet remains with the Operations Division who book and maintain the bike fleet. The availability of the pool bikes for business journeys will be reinforced among Huntingdonshire District Council employees along with the following measures:

- **Maintenance** – Maintain and potentially expand the pool bike fleet where appropriate
- **Promote** – Promote the availability of the pool bikes for short business journeys on the staff intranet and through travel-related events throughout the year.
- **Guidance** – Provide guidance on road safety and etiquette to pool bike users.
- **Monitor** – Monitor pool bike use via an employee log book to record journey distance and destination.

5.7.3 Employee Car Allowances

In September 2011, a review of the arrangements for employee travel allowances was carried out. The changes made are as follows:

- **Mileage Rates** - Mileage rates for both Essential and Casual car users were changed to the HM Revenue and Customs approved mileage rate of 45p per mile and 25p per mile above 10,000 miles. The mileage rate has therefore been standardised across all engine sizes and no longer favours larger vehicles.
- **Lump Sum Payments** - From September 2012, lump sum payments for Essential car users, paid when users drive over 1,500 miles, will be phased out with users receiving 50% of the sum until April 2013, when thereafter, payments will be completely withdrawn. Hereafter, there will be no distinction between Essential and Casual users.
- **Lease Cars** - From September 2012, no further cars will be leased to staff and those currently leased will continue until the leases expire; the last expiry date is in 2015.

5.8 Fleet Vehicles

As a Local Authority providing services to residents over 350 square miles, the operation of fleet vehicles ranging from refuse trucks to gardening and grounds maintenance vehicles, is an essential part of service provision. As such, reducing the environmental impact of fleet vehicle operation will be essential in achieving our objectives of reducing the Council's greenhouse gas emissions and in reducing the cost associated with daily service provision.

Already significant progress has been made, with a 35% reduction in CO₂e emissions since 2008/09. Nevertheless, with increasingly constrained resources, and significant growth expected across the District in the coming years, behaviour change and ongoing savings, both environmental and financial, will be crucial to ensure effective service provision continues.

With the aim of reducing the environmental impact of the Council's fleet operation, the following measures will be explored:

- **Round Rescheduling** – Rescheduling the rounds undertaken by the Council’s refuse truck fleet to achieve both cost and emissions savings.
- **Smarter Driving** – Explore the possibility of introducing compulsory smarter driver training as part of driver induction.
- **Procurement** – Encourage the procurement of low-carbon and fuel-efficient vehicles in fleet vehicle renewal.

6.0 Monitoring and Review

6.1 Introduction

The Travel Plan is an ongoing process for improvement in our travel behaviour and therefore requires regular monitoring and review of progress. This section sets out the plan for monitoring and review of the Travel Plan over the next five years.

6.2 Monitoring

In order to effectively monitor progress towards the objectives and targets set out in this Travel Plan, various data collection exercises will be carried out throughout the year in order for an annual review to be conducted.

Firstly, the majority of the targets set out in the Travel Plan will be monitored through an annual Travel to Work survey conducted by Travel for Work. The survey monitors employee travel over a one week period in October and will provide up to date information on changes in employee travel behaviour over the Travel Plan period.

Secondly, with respect to the monitoring of business journeys, the Environment Team will continue to collect data on business journey details to include transport mode and journey distance. Pool car usage data will also be collected from the in-car log book to record journey distance and pool bike journeys will be recorded via a dedicated log book.

The monitoring data collected will be analysed and reviewed as part of the annual Environment Strategy Review.

6.3 Review

As stated previously, the Travel Plan covers a period of five years from 2012/13 to 2017/18 and will be reviewed annually. In order to streamline the review process in line with other relevant documentation, the Travel Plan will be reviewed each year as part of the Environment Strategy Review. The completion of an annual review of this kind will allow those responsible to monitor progress towards the targets set out in the Travel Plan and produce an action plan for its implementation for the year ahead.

7.0 Financial Issues

7.1 Introduction

This section outlines the financial implications of the Travel Plan and the sources of finance required to implement the measures identified.

7.2 Financial Issues

As local government is currently facing a testing time financially, we need to work hard with fewer resources to overcome the challenges we face. In this light, it will be essential to work with partners in both the public and private sector to make the most of the opportunities and funding available.

As such, Huntingdonshire District Council will continue to work with the Huntingdon Travel for Work Cluster as part of the Cambridgeshire Travel for Work Partnership. Established in 2011, the Huntingdon Cluster features a range of large local employers including the Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the Environment Agency, Huntingdon Regional College and Hinchingsbrooke Hospital are working together to develop sustainable travel options for their employees. In working with the Huntingdon Cluster, the Council will partner to deliver improvements in local public transport provision, share best practice in active travel promotion and organise events to encourage widespread involvement.

Alongside benefiting from a range of services offered including travel planning assistance, travel-related discounts and advice on sustainable travel promotions, the Council's membership of the Cambridgeshire Travel for Work Partnership will enable us to benefit from Local Sustainable Transport Funding, £5 million of which was recently awarded to Cambridgeshire County Council to support the implementation of a range of transport measures within the A14/A10 corridors over a three year period to 2015 (Appendix 4). As a result, Huntingdonshire District Council will have access to the following services:

- Up to £3,000 match funding to finance cycle stands, pool bikes, improving on-site access, lighting, signs, car drop zones, lockers and showers.
- Free cycle training sessions.
- Free cycle maintenance training sessions.
- Free electric pool bike loans.
- Partial funding for the installation of electric vehicle charging points.
- Event organisation.

Aside from partnership working and external grant funding, resources to implement the measures identified within the Travel Plan will come predominantly from the existing budgets. Where larger scale projects are proposed, such as the replacement of the Council's pool car fleet, they will be subject to approval through the Medium Term Plan (MTP) process in the usual manner.

8.0 Action Plan

8.1 Introduction

This section sets out the action plan for the implementation of the measures identified in the Travel Plan, and the timescales for data collection, monitoring and review.

8.2 Action Plan

Action	When	Who
Walking		
Provide links to, and make employees aware of, walking route maps	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Implement 'Walk to Work' campaigns	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Promote a 'buddying' scheme to staff	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Organise lunchtime walks	Quarterly	Leisure Services
Cycling		
Upgrade local cycle networks to improve connections	Ongoing	Planning Services/ Environmental Management
Procure a new cycle to work salary sacrifice scheme provider	April 2013	Environmental Management
Offer employees cycle purchase via a salary sacrifice scheme	Annually	Environmental Management
Offer cycle training to employees	June Annually	Environmental Management/TfW Funding
Promote a 'buddying' scheme to staff	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Provide cycle route maps of the local area	April 2013	Planning Services
Promote the availability of an onsite Bike Doctor	June Annually	Environmental Management
Highlight the feasibility of cycling via promotional events and campaigns	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Raise awareness of, and encourage employees to claim, bicycle mileage allowance	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Public Transport		
Work with Huntingdon Travel for Work Cluster to lobby for improved bus services	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Provide up-to-date public transport route and timetable information	April 2013	Planning Services
Publicise journey planning websites	April 2013	Planning Services
Explore possibility of providing discounts/loans for season ticket purchase	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Raise awareness of rail warrants	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Car Sharing		
Communicate the benefits of car sharing via	Ongoing	Environmental Management

the staff intranet facility		
Work with HR to ensure all new employees are made aware of Camshare	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Hold postcode coffee morning to partner potential car sharers	January 2013	Environmental Management
Raise awareness of car sharing via series of events	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Develop a range of incentives to encourage car sharing	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Smarter Driving		
Offer employees access to eco-driver training	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Encourage employees to access online eco-driver training portal	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Raise awareness of smarter driving techniques	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Low Carbon Vehicles		
Raise awareness of permit parking discounts for low emissions vehicles	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Explore possibility of installing electric vehicle charging points in Council-owned car parks	April 2013	Environmental Management /Planning Services
Home Working		
Raise awareness and improve attitudes towards home working	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Flexible Working		
Raise awareness of the Council's Flexible Working Policy	Ongoing	Human Resources/ Environmental Management
Tele-Conferencing		
Raise awareness of tele-conferencing via the staff intranet	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Provide a link to guidance and user information on the Travel Plan intranet site	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Improve tele-conferencing facilities in line with advances in technology	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Relocation and Recruitment		
Encourage local relocation to new starters	Ongoing	Human Resources
Provide new starters with information on options for sustainable travel	Ongoing	Human Resources
Direct new starters towards the Travel Plan page on the website	Ongoing	Human Resources
Pool Cars		
Continue to promote the availability of the pool car fleet for business journeys	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Maximise the use of the pool car fleet to minimise the unit cost per mile	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Pool Bikes		
Maintain the pool bike fleet	Ongoing	Environmental Management

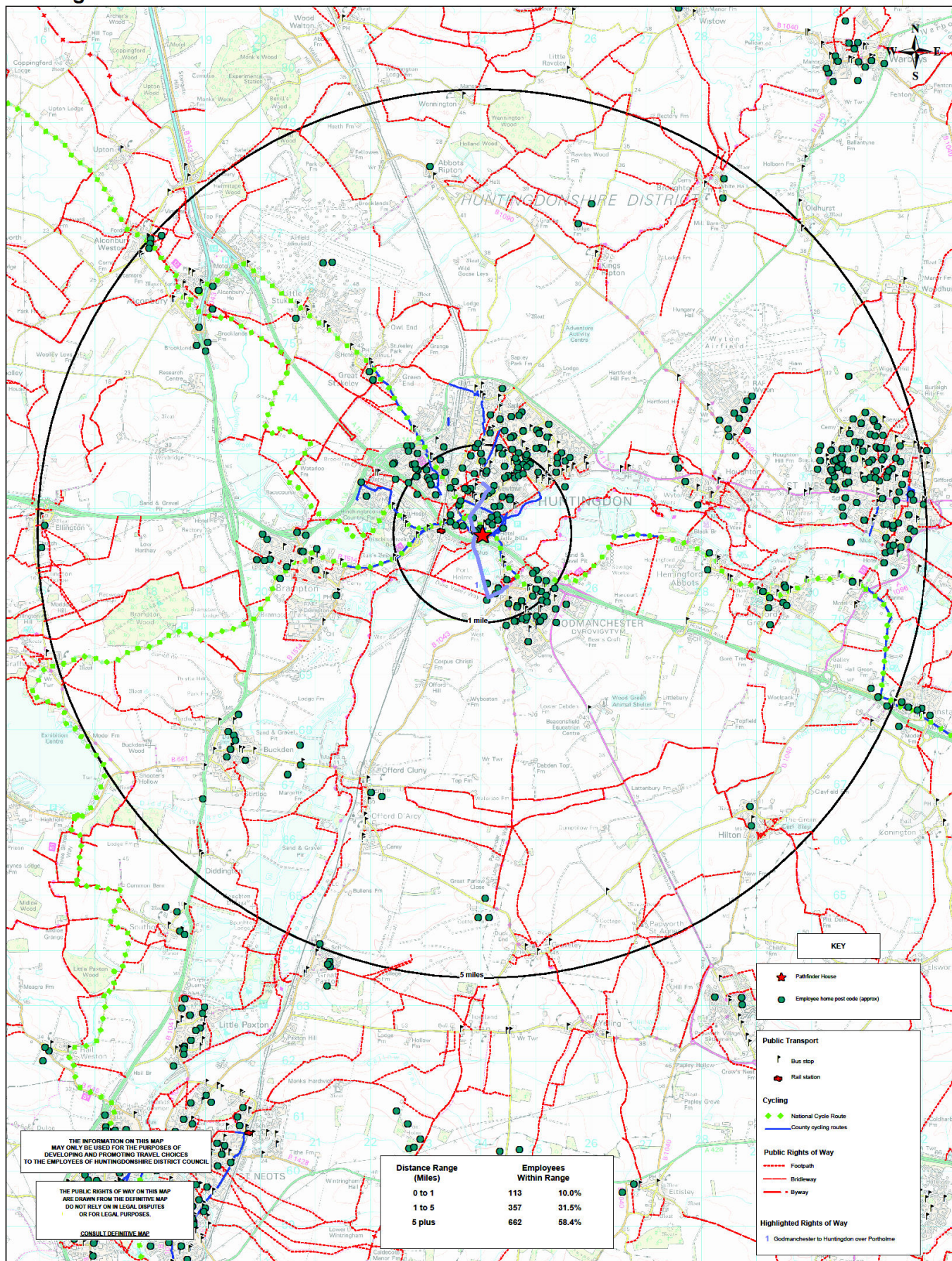
Promote the availability of the pool bikes for short business journeys	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Provide guidance on road safety and etiquette to pool bike users	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Monitor pool bike use via an employee log book	Annually	Environmental Management
Fleet		
Undertake a round rescheduling exercise	February 2013	Operations Division
Explore the possibility of introducing compulsory smarter driver training	Ongoing	Operations Division
Encourage the procurement of low carbon and fuel-efficient vehicles	Ongoing	Operations Division
Communications		
Summary leaflet of the key Travel Plan measures to all employees and councillors	November 2012	Environmental Management
Publish Travel Plan on dedicated staff intranet page	November 2013	Environmental Management
Travel Plan news published on staff intranet and external publications	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Travel Plan made available on public website	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Present new employees with link to Travel Plan website	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Hold regular profile-raising events to align with national campaigns	Ongoing	Environmental Management
Monitoring and Review		
Conduct Travel to Work survey	Annually October	Environmental Management
Collect pool car and pool bike usage data	Annually	Operations Division
Collect business mileage claim data	Annually	Human Resources
Review Travel Plan as part of the Environment Strategy Review	Annually June	Environmental Management

9.0 Appendices

Appendix 1: Local cycle routes and bus stops

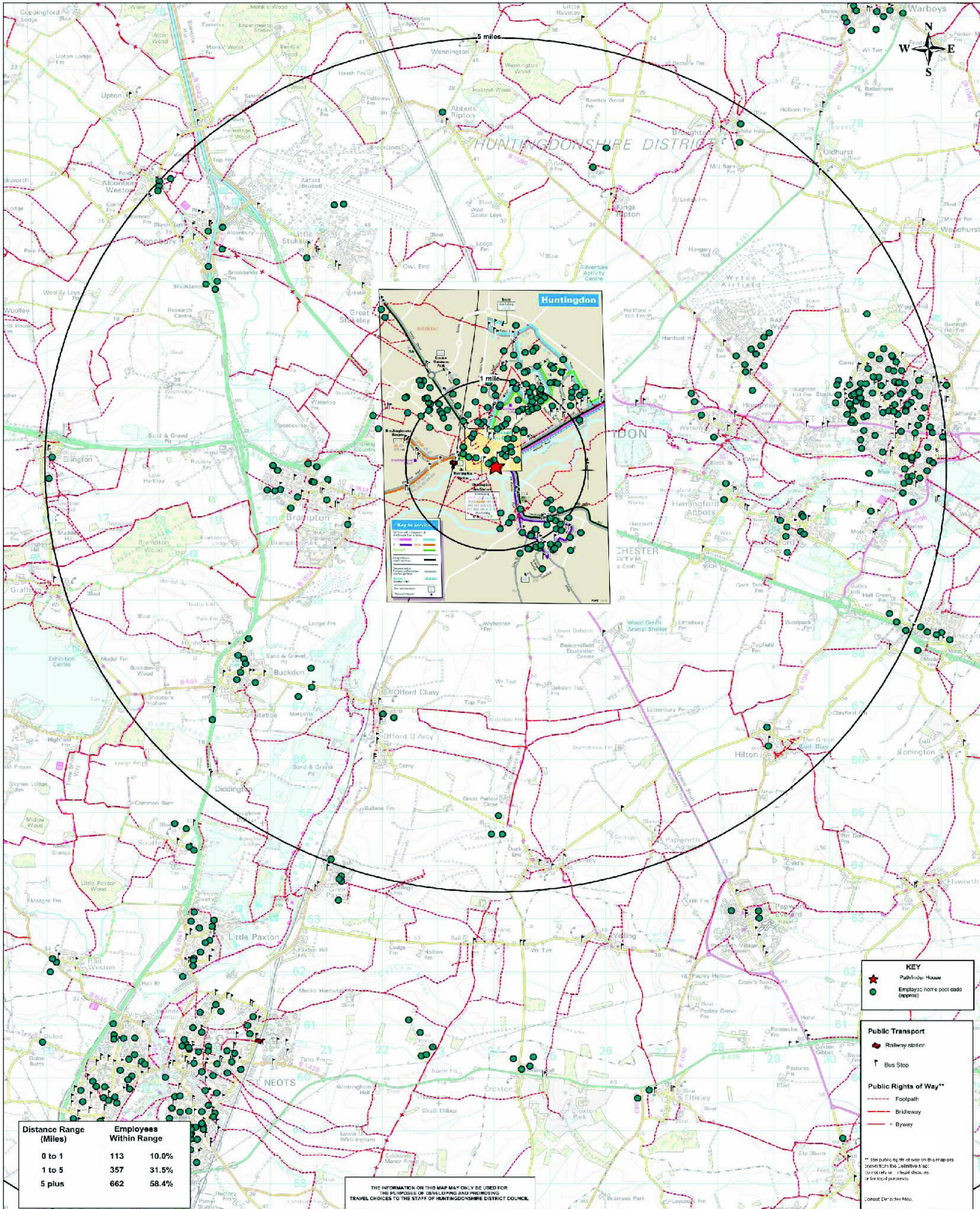
Huntingdonshire District Council

Cambridgeshire County Council



Appendix 2: Bus stops within 5 mile radius

Huntingdonshire District Council

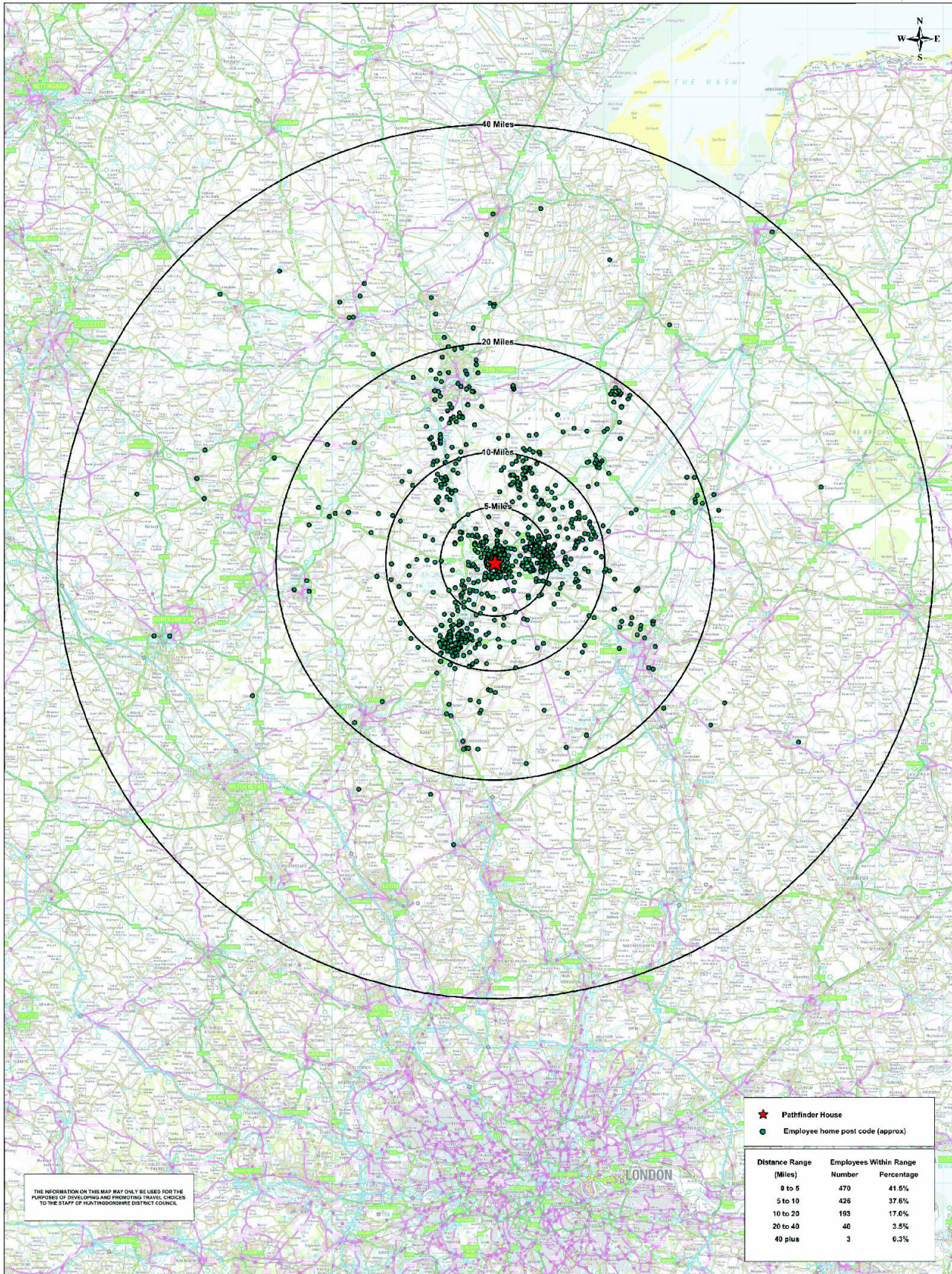


Travel for Work, working in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council.

Title: TFW Project
 Andy Davison
 Date: 24/01/2012
 Dwg No: Map 2
 Scale: 1:30000
 © Crown copyright and database right 2012
 Data from Ordnance Survey 10002500

Appendix 3: Huntingdonshire District Council employee home postcodes

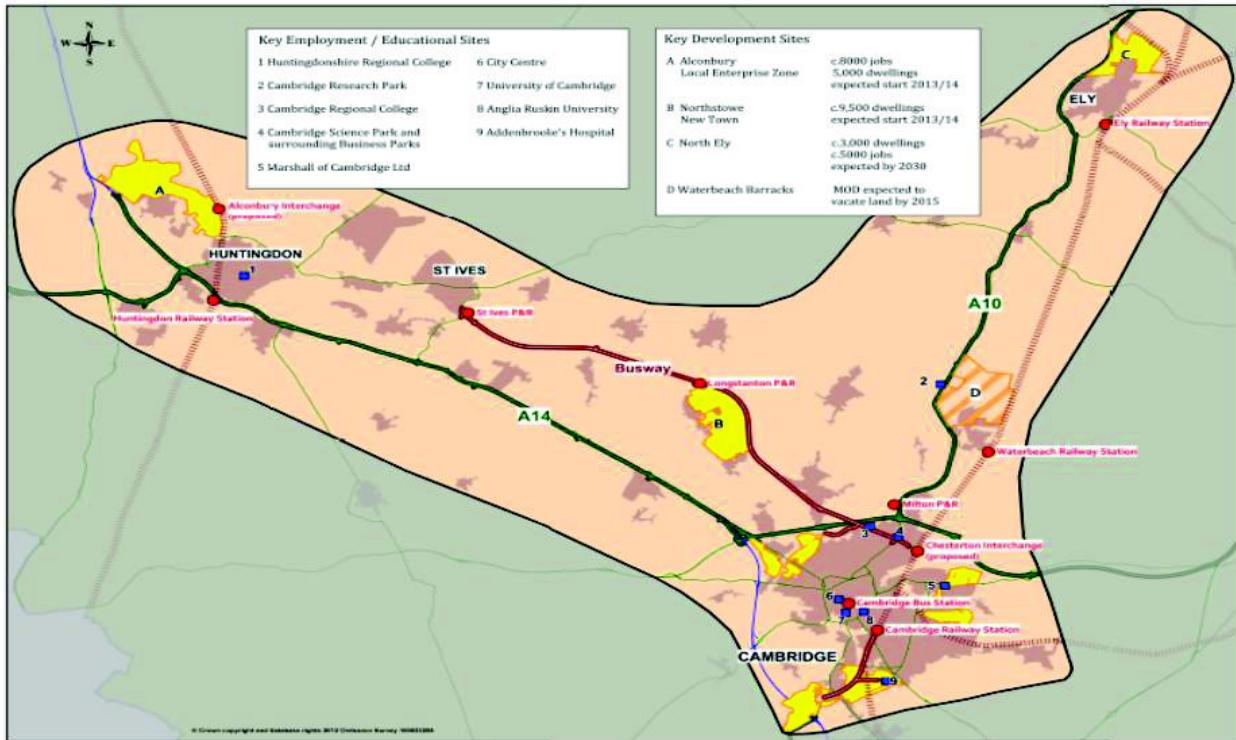
Huntingdonshire District Council



Travel for Work, working in partnership with Cambridgeshire County Council.

Title: TFW Project
 Andy Davison
 Date: 20/07/2012
 Dwg.No.: Map 1
 Scale: 1:250000
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Appendix 4: Local Sustainable Transport Fund Area



Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date
16/05/12	<p><u>Leadership Direction</u></p> <p>Councillors D Harty and Mrs D C Reynolds have been appointed to the Corporate Plan Working Group.</p>	<p>Leadership Direction document considered at the Panel's July meeting.</p> <p>A draft document was considered by the Executive Leaders Strategy Group on 10th September 2012.</p>	<p>The Corporate Plan Working Group has been meeting throughout the summer to help the Corporate Office to produce the Council Service Plan which will outline the key activities that contribute to the aims in the Leadership Direction.</p> <p>A brief update to be delivered on the outcome of the Executive Leaders Strategy Group meeting.</p>	October 2012
13/07/10	<p><u>Great Fen Project</u></p> <p>The Panel attended a tour of the Great Fen.</p>		<p>The Director of Environmental and Community Services advised that updates on the progress of the project would be presented to the Panel at 6 monthly intervals.</p>	
9/10/12	<p>The Panel were invited to attend a tour of the Great Fen on 1st October 2012.</p>			
14/09/10	<p><u>Tree Strategy Working Group</u></p> <p>To form a strategy in conjunction with the Tree Officers for the retention and planting of trees.</p>	<p>A series of Working Group meetings have been held. A draft policy is being drawn up by the Arboricultural Officer for submission to the group for comment.</p>		
11/9/12	<p>Councillor J W Davies updated the Panel on progress made towards completion of the Tree Strategy.</p>	<p>Due to the voluntary redundancy of administrative staff within the division there has been a delay in the production of the Tree Strategy.</p>	<p>The Strategy should be completed by the end of 2012, at which time consultation will take place.</p>	December 2012

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date
13/9/11	<p><u>Waste Collection Working Group</u></p> <p>A Working Group appointed to look into waste collection policies. The Working Group comprises of Councillors Baker, Godfrey, Harlock and Hyams, and Mr M Phillips.</p>	First meeting held on 6/10/11 with Mr E Kendall – Head of Operations.	The Group established their terms of reference and a way forward for their study.	
10/1/12	Following consideration of the Advanced Waste Partnership report it was agreed that the work of the partnership could overtake the findings of the working group, therefore the Working Group study should be put on hold.	The study of the Waste Collection Working Group has been postponed and will be reviewed in due course.		
19/06/12	Following a change in the Council's approach to dealing with 'contaminated' bins, Councillor M G Baker has stressed the need to educate residents as to what can be placed in recycling bins.	A meeting between the Working Group and the Head of Operations was held on Thursday, 28 th June 2012.	Members requested that a further meeting be held on 2 nd August with a representative from South Cambridgeshire District Council present.	
11/9/12	The Working Group has decided to focus on how best to engage with residents to educate them as to what should be placed in which bin.	A meeting was held to discuss ideas.	The Working Group met with Eric Kendall, Chris Jablonski and Heidi Field to discuss publicity material. Members have provided feedback on the material devised by the Environmental Team. If necessary the Waste Collection Working Group will resume its study once the work of RECAP is complete.	
11/9/12	Having considered the Waste Collection Policies at their previous meeting, Members expressed a view that bin stickers could be used to convey messages with community benefits, such as speed restrictions.	In considering the Decision Digest, Members were disappointed to note that the Cabinet had stressed that they were not in favour of notices being attached to bins. In light of the pilot initiative being undertaken in Hilton, Scrutiny Members requested an update on the pilot's findings.	The Executive Councillor for the Environment has agreed to provide the Panel with an update at its October meeting.	October 2012

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date
8/11/11	<p><u>Design Principles for Future Developments Working Group</u></p> <p>A Working Group appointed to examine the matters raised during the Panel's discussions on Loves Farms, St Neots. The Working Group comprising of Councillors Banerjee, Curtis, Godfrey and Harlock will make recommendations to inform future developments.</p>			
6/1/12	<p>First meeting of the Working Group held. Councillor Mrs M Banerjee appointed rapporteur. It was agreed that the Working Group needed an overview of the site from a planning officer and this should be followed by a site visit.</p>	<p>Working Group met with the Head of Planning Services on 26th January to receive an overview of the Loves Farm site.</p>	<p>The working group has considered a report by the Urban Design, Trees and Landscape Team Leader analysing the results of the 'building for life' assessments which were completed on the site visit. The working group will begin to draft their final report.</p>	<p>July 2012</p>
11/9/12	<p>The Panel considered the report of the Working Group which outlined its findings to date.</p>	<p>Site visit held on 2nd March followed by a debrief on 21st March and a meeting on 1st June.</p> <p>It was agreed that a further meeting would be arranged with the Urban Design, Trees and Landscape Team Leader to discuss aspects of the design guide in more detail.</p>		
5/12/11	<p><u>Drainage Issues</u></p> <p>Consideration was given to a petition in respect of sewage overflow at Windsor Road and Main Street, Yaxley. Members were advised that the Executive Leader had written to Anglian Water expressing his concern over flooding issues in Yaxley and a response had been received. Although Anglian Water's response addressed the specific flooding incident, Members were not satisfied with Anglian Water's programme to prevent problems from occurring and their response to sewerage system failures.</p>	<p>Given the lack of powers that the Council has to influence Anglian Water, Members requested that the Leader of the Council writes to the Environment Agency to highlight their concerns and to ask it to ensure it used its enforcement powers where merited.</p>	<p>The Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) will follow this concern up with the Environment Agency. The Executive Leader has responded to Anglian Water to state that he is not satisfied with their programme to prevent problems from occurring and their response to sewerage system</p>	

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date
9/2/12	The Panel received a presentation from the County Council's Flood and Water Manager on Flood Risk Management. During the presentation the issue of flooding in Yaxley was raised by Members. Officers undertook to investigate this matter further.	The Project and Assets Manager has met with Anglian Water to discuss issues and will continue to pursue this matter.	failures.	
13/3/12	Ward Members attended an onsite meeting with the Project and Assets Manager who subsequently alerted Anglian Water to a problem with the surface and foul water sewerage system.	Having reiterated concerns over the long running nature of the problem, Members suggested that a letter be sent to the Environment Agency to highlight the ongoing issues.	The Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) to be asked to pursue this issue further.	
10/4/12	The Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) has suggested that a Working Group be convened to examine Yaxley drainage issues in detail.	It was agreed that appointment to the Working Group would be delayed until after the Annual Council Meeting.		June 2012
19/06/12	Having considered the St Neots Surface Water Management Plan, Members acknowledged that drainage problems within the district are widespread.	A Working Group comprising Councillors Mrs M Banerjee and J W Davies has been convened to engage with Anglian Water in order to establish their general powers, responsibilities and limitations on its ability to prevent flooding.	A meeting was held on Thursday, 28 th June so that Members could set out their terms of reference and establish the way forward for the study.	
11/9/12	Two meetings have been held with representatives from Anglian Water and the Environment Agency.	A report of the meetings is being produced and the District Council will continue to work with Anglian Water in an effort to resolve the drainage problems which exist in the District.		October 2012
9/10/12	The report of the Working Group appears elsewhere on the Agenda.			

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date
10/1/12	<p><u>Land Use for Agricultural Purposes in the Context of Planning Policies and its Contribution to the Local Economy.</u></p> <p>The Panel considered the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy and raised concerns over the lack of reference to local agriculture in planning policies.</p>	<p>A Working Group comprising of Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, P M D Godfrey, G J Harlock, D Harty and Mr D Hopkins has been appointed to review the lack of promotion and protection of land for agricultural purposes and to ensure that local agriculture is included in the new local plan.</p>	<p>A meeting will be held with the Planning Service (Policy) Manager on 9th February to discuss issues and establish a way forward for the Working Group.</p>	<p>February 2012</p>
19/6/12	<p>The Working Group has met on numerous occasions and have visited Mr Felce's farm.</p>	<p>The Working Group wish to meet with Paul Hammett, NFU, Environmental Adviser.</p>	<p>The Working Group met with Paul Hammett to discuss the importance of farming in Huntingdonshire.</p> <p>The Working Group has begun summarising its findings to date in order to influence the new Local Plan.</p>	
11/9/12	<p>The Panel has considered the findings to date of the Working Group.</p>	<p>The Planning Service Manager (Policy) has advised Members that the new Local Plan would address some of the issues raised by the Working Group.</p>	<p>In light of concerns raised by the Head of Planning regarding the Working Group's recommendations, it was agreed that the Working Group would meet with Planning Officers to discuss the issues raised and to determine a way forward for the study.</p>	<p>October 2012</p>

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HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2011/12

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INTRODUCTION

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



Councillor Steve Criswell

Chairman of the Social Well-Being Panel



Councillor Philip Godfrey

Chairman of the Environmental Well-Being Panel



Councillor Terry Rogers

Chairman of the Economic Well-Being Panel



Councillor Richard West

Vice - Chairman of the Social Well-Being Panel



Councillor David Harty

Vice - Chairman of the Environmental Well-Being Panel



Councillor Steve Greenall

Vice - Chairman of the Economic Well-Being Panel

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

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

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

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister - 2002

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING)

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

Supporting the Voluntary Sector

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

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

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

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

Review of Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire

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

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

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

Housing Benefit Changes and the Potential Impact on Huntingdonshire

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

Redesign of Mental Health Services in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

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

Other Matters

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

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

Health Scrutiny

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

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

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

Partnership / Joint Scrutiny

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

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING)

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

Design Principles for Future Developments

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

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

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

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

Waste Collection

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

Drainage

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

The Great Fen Project

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

Other Matters

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

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)

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

The Council's Budget and Future Financial Planning

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

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

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

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

The Leisure Centres' Financial Performance

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

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

The Council's Support Services

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

Redevelopment of St Ivo Leisure Centre

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

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

Other Matters

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

TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

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

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

NETWORKING

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

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

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE IN 2012/13

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

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

Studies will be completed on:

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

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

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

PARTICIPATING IN THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROCESS

Further information on the work of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels can be found on the Council's Website – www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk.

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

Telephone: 01480 388015.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING)

9th OCTOBER 2012

JAPANESE KNOTWEED (Report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report contains scoping information on Japanese Knotweed, which will enable the Panel to determine whether to undertake a study on this subject.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At meeting on 10th July 2012, the Panel requested information on Japanese Knotweed. The request was made because there exist concerns that Japanese Knotweed might be growing on Council owned land and that there could be legal implications for the Council if it is disposed of by the Council and private land owners through the waste collection service.
- 2.2 Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia Japonica*) is native to Japan, Taiwan and China, and was introduced to Europe as an ornamental plant in the early 19th century. It is a large vigorous weed that appears to have no natural enemies in Britain. It grows to a height of about 3 metres in the midsummer with bamboo-like stems, and produces large masses of white flowers. It can colonise most habitats and is regarded as a troublesome pest in many parts of the Country because of its rapid invasion and domination of habitats, which results in the exclusion of other plants. It can damage property (for example by growing through tarmac or even the floors of houses) and therefore needs to be cleared from development sites. The species also causes problems in terms of flood management. It increases the risk of riverbank erosion when the dense growth of the plant dies back in the autumn exposing bare soil. It can create a flooding hazard if the dead stems are washed into the streams and clog up the channel.
- 2.3 Japanese knotweed is listed by the World Conservation Union as one of the world's 100 worst invasive species. A fragment of root as small as 0.8 grams can grow to form a new plant.

3. LEGISLATION

- 3.1 Managing Japanese knotweed is the responsibility of the owner/occupier of a site. It is not an offence to have it on your land and there is no specific legal requirement to control it if it is. It is not a notifiable weed so there is no need to report its presence on your land. Allowing Japanese knotweed to grow onto other people's property may be regarded as a private nuisance under common law, but this would be a civil matter.
- 3.2 Legislation covering the handling and disposal of knotweed includes the following:

The Control of Pesticides Regulations 1986 require any person who uses a pesticide to take all reasonable precautions to protect the health of human beings, creatures and plants, safeguard the environment and in particular avoid the pollution

of water. For application of pesticides in or near water approval from the Environment Agency should be sought before use.

Section 14(2) of the **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (WCA 1981)** states that “if any person plants or otherwise causes to grow in the wild any plant which is included in Part II of Schedule 9, he shall be guilty of an offence.” Japanese knotweed is one of the plants listed in the Schedule. Both the Police and local authorities have enforcement functions under the Act. Anyone convicted of an offence under Section 14 of the WCA 1981 may face a fine of £5,000 and/or 6 months imprisonment, or 2 years and/or an unlimited fine on indictment.

The **Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA 1990)** contains a number of legal provisions concerning “controlled waste”, which are set out in Part II. Any Japanese knotweed contaminated soil or plant material that an individual discards, intends to discard or is required to discard is considered to have the potential to cause ecological harm and is likely to be classified as controlled waste (Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994). The most relevant provisions are in:

Section 33 (1a) and (1b) which create offences to do with the deposit, treating, keeping or disposing of controlled waste without a licence. Exemptions from licensing are available in some circumstances, and are set out in Schedule 3 to the Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994 as amended (the WMLR 1994).

S.33 (1c) which makes it an offence to keep, treat or dispose of controlled waste in a manner likely to cause pollution of the environment or harm to human health. For offences a magistrates’ court can impose a maximum fine of £20,000 or a maximum prison sentence of 6 months, or both. A Crown Court can impose an unlimited fine or a maximum prison sentence of 2 years, or both.

Section 34 places duties on any person who imports, produces, carries, keeps, treats or disposes of controlled waste. Waste must be handled responsibly and in accordance with the law at all stages between its production and final recovery or disposal. Waste must be transferred to an authorised person, in other words a person who is either a registered carrier or exempted from registration by the **Controlled Waste (Registration of Carriers and Seizure of Vehicles) Regulations 1991**. A waste transfer note must be completed and signed giving a written description of the waste, which is sufficient to enable the receiver of the waste to handle it in accordance with their own duty of care. The provisions concerning waste transfer notes are set out in the **Environmental Protection (Duty of Care) Regulations 1991** (as amended). Failure to comply with these provisions is a criminal offence. The Environment Agency is responsible for enforcement and a person found guilty of an offence under this section is liable to a fine not exceeding £5000 in the magistrates’ court and to a fine in the Crown Court. Japanese knotweed must be safely disposed of at an appropriately licensed landfill site in accordance with the **Environmental Protection (Duty of Care) Regulations 1991**. To ensure safe disposal, contaminated soils must be buried to a depth of at least 5 metres.

The **Hazardous Waste Regulations 2005 (HWR 2005)** contain provisions about the handling and movement of hazardous waste. Consignment notes must be completed when any hazardous waste is transferred, which include details about the hazardous properties and any special handling requirements. If a consignment note is completed, a waste transfer note is not necessary. Untreated Japanese knotweed is not classed as hazardous waste, but material containing knotweed which has been treated with certain herbicides, may be classified as hazardous waste.

The **Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994** describe 'waste relevant objectives' in Paragraph 4 of Schedule 4. These objectives require that waste is recovered or disposed of "without endangering human health and without using processes or methods which could harm the environment and in particular without – risk to water, air, soil, plants or animals; or causing nuisance through noise or odours; or adversely affecting the countryside or places of special interest"

4. GOVERNMENT ACTION

- 4.1 The Government is aware of the problems of invasive non-native plants such as Japanese knotweed. The cost of a national eradication programme using current techniques is prohibitively expensive, estimated in the Defra Review of Non-native Species Policy to be in the region of £1.56 billion. However, the Environment Agency does take local measures if flood defences are compromised (using risk assessment and local knowledge).
- 4.2 Defra has contributed funding to scientific research into the natural control of Japanese knotweed, commissioned in collaboration with Cornwall Council, the Environment Agency, the Welsh Assembly Government and others. This study has been undertaking the necessary research to establish whether natural control is a feasible method for the long-term, sustainable management of Japanese knotweed in Great Britain. The project has identified a potential control agent, an insect which is highly specific to Japanese knotweed. The research is currently undergoing rigorous scientific and regulatory examination, and consideration of any risks, which will form the basis of a decision on whether any release of the control agent can go ahead.
- 4.3 The Environment Agency (in partnership with Defra and Network Rail) has published [the knotweed code of practice](#) for those involved in the development industry, which faces the problem on a large scale. Much of the advice holds good for householders and private landowners. The code also gives practical advice on the use of herbicides and other control methods. The Non Native Species Secretariat (NNSS) has produced the [Horticultural Code of Practice](#).
- 4.4 In Cornwall, in response to particular problems, a proactive programme has been implemented by the Environment Agency in association with the Cornwall Knotweed Forum. A considerable amount of information is available on the Cornwall County Council website (see <http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/default.aspx?page=13789>).

5. THE LOCAL POSITION

- 5.1 In Huntingdonshire Japanese Knotweed cannot be disposed of through the green waste collection service. The advice is that there are a number of routes for treatment including removal, burning, spraying or disposal by a specialist firm.
- 5.2 There are three locations where Japanese Knotweed has been found on land for which the District Council is responsible. They are already being managed. One occurrence is in St Neots on open space land that it is believed has come from a neighbouring property. It is being sprayed regularly with herbicides to kill it. The Council will write to the properties affected and advise them of their responsibilities. There is also some at Paxton Pits which the Countryside section is dealing with. It is being cut and burnt. The third occurrence is in a car park site and is similarly being treated. The Council is not aware of any other cases on its land at the current time.
- 5.3 Cambridgeshire County Council provides the following advice:

“When taking down this plant do not flail mow. You should ensure that the plant is cut with simple blades with no fragments. It would be beneficial to ensure that it has been treated with an appropriate chemical beforehand.

All cutting and shoots should be burnt to avoid further infestation.

- Do not take this to a recycling centre.
- Do not place it in the compost waste collected by your district council.
- Do not try to compost this at home.”

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 A potential area of study has been identified relating to the District's environment and the Council's waste collection service. A survey of available information has been undertaken and the findings have been presented above. There is a very limited occurrence of Japanese Knotweed in Huntingdonshire and, where the Council is responsible, action has been taken to deal with it. Members are invited to decide whether to commence a study.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Environment Agency Website
Environment Agency - [the knotweed code of practice](#)
Cornwall County Council Website
Natural England Website
Cambridgeshire County Council Website
Cornwall County Council Website
Non-Native Species Secretariat Website

Contact Officer: A Roberts (01480) 388015

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING)

9TH OCTOBER 2012

DRAINAGE (Report by the Working Group)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At their meeting held on 19th June 2012, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) decided to establish a working group to engage with Anglian Water to establish their general powers, responsibilities and limitations on its ability to prevent flooding. The working group comprised Councillors Mrs M Banerjee and J W Davies.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Panel's interest in this matter has been prompted by a particular drainage problem within the District and a lack of progress towards achieving a resolution to it. A petition had been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) on 5th 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 2nd November 2011. Members had been advised that the Executive Leader of the Council had written to Anglian Water expressing his concerns over this matter 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 it and with Anglian Water's programme generally to prevent problems with the drainage system in the District from occurring and their response to sewerage system failures.
- 2.2 At this same meeting, Members had been advised that residents in Hemingford Abbots had experienced similar problems. Other instances when the drainage system had proved inadequate have also been reported. It has been suggested that the Environment Agency had enforcement powers that it might use in such situations.
- 2.3 Mrs S Pledger, Cambridgeshire County Council's Flood and Water Manager, has attended the Panel meeting on 9th February 2012 to discuss flood risk management in Cambridgeshire. At this meeting, Members have been advised that the Cambridgeshire Flood Risk Management Partnership is made up of local District Councils, Cambridgeshire County Council, Anglian Water, Environment Agency, Middle Level Commissioners and three of the sixty-three Internal Drainage Boards (IDBs). As part of the new arrangements, the County Council has to maintain a register of assets for flood risk management, adopt, approve and maintain sustainable drainage systems in new developments, regulate flows of ordinary watercourses outside IDBs and plan for, and manage, any flood emergencies. The County Council has also been tasked with investigating instances of flooding in order to establish responsibility and identify solutions to problems.
- 2.4 Members have noted that the new arrangements strongly emphasise joint working and that partner organisations have concurrent powers. Members have queried whether this disperses responsibility for preventing and

responding to flooding. In response, it has been stated that, under the legal framework that has been established, a single authority usually has statutory responsibilities for particular aspects of flood management with others having permissive powers. The District Council largely has permissive powers.

- 2.5 On 19th June 2012, the Panel considered the St Neots Surface Water Management Plan. In so doing, Members have questioned why steps are only being taken to alleviate flood risk in St Neots when other areas of the District have also suffered from significant flooding. In response, it has been explained that the Surface Water Management Plan contains a prioritised list of areas that have been identified as being susceptible to surface water flooding through a multi-factor analysis. St Neots has the highest priority on the list and, therefore, most in need of flood risk alleviation measures.

3. DISCUSSIONS

- 3.1 The Working Group has been addressed by Anglian Water's Mr Steve Langlois, Planning and Equivalence Manager, Asset Planning, Mr Pete Duell, Economic Regulation Analyst, and Mr Richard Farrow, Wastewater Infrastructure Manager, Asset Planning. Members have been advised how under capacity issues within the sewerage system are dealt with and funded. It has been explained that if flooding occurs under normal weather conditions, checks are undertaken to verify whether it has been caused by pipes being too small or the water flow being too great. If a property floods, either internally or externally, then it is added to the DG5 'at risk' register. Within Huntingdonshire, the register currently has five properties at risk of internal flooding and thirty-six properties at risk of external flooding. Every five years Anglian Water has to submit a business plan to OFWAT, which sets out how much customers' bills will need to increase by in order to fund improvements to the system. It has been emphasised that a thorough cost benefit analysis of each improvement scheme is undertaken to ensure the maximum benefit to customers. OFWAT is charged with approving the plan case, it has been noted that the total amount of requested funding has never been granted in the past. Once funding has been received, Anglian Water carries out the works. These are prioritised according to their cost-benefit score up to the value allowed by OFWAT. Where no solution to a problem is possible given the cost-benefit analysis and allowance from OFWAT, mitigation works are undertaken. Where a permanent solution is found, usually in the form of bigger pipes, properties are removed from the DG5 'at risk' register.

- 3.2 Anglian Water has acknowledged that problems exist with the current approach; these being:-

- Most high risk internal cost beneficial schemes have been funded, therefore they are left with problems which affect few properties and/or have high cost solutions;
- Internal flooding is a higher priority than external flooding, regardless of the consequence;
- The allowance set by OFWAT is tied to reductions on specific registers;
- Solutions are not permitted to give less than 1 in 30 year protections, even if they will benefit customers; and
- Expensive solutions, such as bigger pipes, tended to be favoured.

- 3.3 The Working Group has been pleased to note that from 2015, OFWAT will focus on alternative solutions such as mitigation, less than 1 in 30 year solutions, SuDs and a risk based approach to flooding (frequency as well as impact).
- 3.4 Having questioned the impact of new developments on the capacity of drains and sewers, it has been reported that Anglian Water are not statutory consultees on applications, however, generally they are consulted. Anglian Water are not able to refuse connections and have a statutory requirement to accept new developments. Where pipes need to be made bigger to serve a development, Anglian Water works with the planning authority to implement conditions. Anglian Water looks to developers to contribute to the upgrading of pipes. Plans for an area are assessed at a strategic level to determine the infrastructure required to serve a new development.
- 3.5 Having questioned how representative the 'at risk' register of properties is, Mr Farrow has explained to Members that, in order to be added to the register, a property has to meet specific under capacity criteria, that is, the pipes have to be too small or the flow too great. It has been emphasised that all reports of flooding are investigated. However, some homeowners are reluctant to have flooding issues thoroughly investigated as they do not want to have their homes placed on the 'at risk' register because it could affect their insurance. This reluctance to co-operate had a negative impact as Anglian Water need a thorough understanding of the extent of flooding incidents in order to justify funding of improvement works.
- 3.6 Ms Lucy Freeman, Partnerships and Strategic Overview Officer, Environment Agency, has explained that the Environment Agency has a responsibility to investigate flood sources, however their main concern is flooding from rivers and reservoirs.
- 3.7 Mr Tim Blackmore, Tactical Support Manager, Wastewater Services, Anglian Water, has outlined how Anglian Water responds to reports of sewer flooding. When reporting issues to the call centre, a reference number should always be taken, this ensures that the progress of the issue can be traced. It has been noted that Anglian Water is focusing on improving customer service and customer satisfaction. The Customer Liaison Manager is the link between the customer and Anglian Water. However, he cannot be contacted directly and all calls have to go through Anglian Water's call centre.
- 3.8 As all calls are recorded it is possible for problems such as recurring blocked sewers to be identified. Anglian Water has sought to improve customer behaviour that causes drainage problems by mounting campaigns in areas where recurring problems have been identified. Blockages in Peterborough have been reduced by 50% as a result of a campaign. Proactive letter drops have been undertaken which are linked to the 'keep it clear' campaign.
- 3.9 Members have been advised that Anglian Water contacts customers periodically to assess their satisfaction with its service. However, if a customer wishes to complain about Anglian Water they could do so via phone, letter or email to Anglian Water. Alternatively, complaints can be escalated by the customer to the Consumer Council for Water, an independent body that represents water customers.

- 3.10 Having regard to causes of local flooding, Members have been advised that many capacity issues are caused by surface water inputs. Water companies have limited powers to remove surface water. Lead Local Flood Authorities have been established that have a duty to investigate local flooding.
- 3.11 Mr Adam Basham of the Environment Agency has advised that the Agency works closely with Anglian Water. Having specific regard to the sewage overflow into Yaxley Lode on 23rd September 2011, Mr Basham has confirmed that this had been an emergency overflow which had consent. An emergency overflow only applies where there is a mechanical breakdown and where this causes less impact than raw sewage in people's homes. It has been acknowledged that some permits, which give consent to such overflows are quite old and may not have notification conditions within them. It has been reported that notification alarms exist within Anglian Water, whereby Anglian Water are alerted when levels are rising in the sewers and the pumping station. This is designed to minimise the chance of effluent discharge. The permit also allows Anglian Water to discharge effluent as long as conditions are met. If they are not met the Environment Agency can take enforcement action ranging from a caution letter to prosecution.
- 3.12 Mr Basham has acknowledged that the incident at Yaxley Lode on 23rd September 2011, had established that the Environment Agency needed to communicate with residents to notify them of the consents that are in place.
- 3.13 It has been reported that investigations into drainage issues in Yaxley are ongoing. It has been acknowledged that an authority needed to take responsibility for the balancing pond as it is an important feature of the surface water drainage base.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Attention has been drawn to the fact that only one property in Yaxley features on the 'at risk' register. This conflicts with reports of sewage flooding at a number of properties in the village. It has been agreed that this will be scrutinised as part of the ongoing investigations into drainage issues in Yaxley. Mr C Allen, Huntingdonshire District Council's Projects and Asset Manager has undertaken to contact Anglian Water's Operations Officers and Customer Liaison Manager to take this forward. Mr Allen has also agreed to bring these ongoing problems to the attention of relevant County Council Officers.
- 4.2 Having noted that drainage problems still exist in St Ives, Councillor Davies has agreed to co-ordinate information on flooding within the town over the past six months.
- 4.3 Mr Langlois and Mr Blackmore have undertaken to gain further information on the Yaxley issues from Mr Dunlop of Anglian Water and the Customer Liaison Manager and feedback information to Mr Allen.
- 4.4 Members have thanked the representatives from Anglian Water and the Environment Agency for their attendance and co-operation with their investigations.

Chairman

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 th 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.

A14 improvements.	To review the implications to the local economy of the decision not to proceed with the A14 improvements.	Economic Well-Being	Panel has requested a presentation on developments relating to the A14 for all Members of the Council at an appropriate time. Updates on recent developments to continue to be provided by email.	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.
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
District Council Support Services	To review the services provided by the District Councils Document Centre to form a view on its efficiency and cost effectiveness.	Economic Well-Being	Working Group has formed two sub groups to consider:- a) the financial cost of the service; and b) the operation of the service Final report awaited.	Working Group
Equality Framework for	To review the action plan	Social Well-Being	Working Group met on 29th	Working Group

Local Government	arising from the Equality Framework for Local Government peer assessment.		August 2012 to review the Action Plan.	
Economic Development	To be determined.	Economic Well-Being	The Local Economy Strategy is scheduled for completion at the end of the year. Work is currently taking place to develop a robust evidence base for the new Strategy. As part of this process all members will be given the opportunity to participate in the consultation on the initial report and the Economic Development Manager will attend the November meeting.	To be determined.
Corporate Plan	To assist the Corporate Office with the development of a new Corporate Plan.	All O&S Panels	Meetings held on 1st and 28th August 2012. Draft Council Delivery Plan submitted to Executive Leaders Strategy Group on 10th September 2012.	Working Group
Fraud Prevention	To consider the implications from forthcoming changes to the Housing Benefits system.	Economic Well-Being	The Corporate Governance Panel have agreed to establish a working group to consider fraud risks, current and future approaches and single fraud issues. Their report will be considered by the Panel at their meeting in	To be determined.

			January.	
Supporting People Back to Work	To be determined.	Economic Well-Being	Corporate Team Manager to attend October Panel Meeting to talk about the work of the Corporate Office. This will include information on Supporting People Back to Work.	To be determined.
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	To consider the implications of planning social housing requirements on Community Infrastructure Levy income and the housing waiting list.	Economic Well-Being	Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships & Projects) to discuss with Councillor M F Shellens directly.	To be determined.
Council Reserves	<p>Agreed to establish a working group to:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ identify the combination of co-incident risks against which the Council wishes to insure by having reserves; ❖ benchmark the Council's level of reserves against other appropriate Authorities. 	Economic Well-Being	Meeting held on Tuesday 4 th September 2012. Report to be submitted to Panel's October meeting.	Working Group

Council Borrowing	Agreed to establish a working group to develop an understanding of the District Council's approach to borrowing.	Economic Well-Being.	Arrangements currently being made for first meeting.	Working Group.
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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 1ST 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 15th 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.

