

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING)** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE 0.1A, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, CAMBS, PE29 3TN** on **TUESDAY, 13 NOVEMBER 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 9th October 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 - 12)

A copy of the current Forward Plan, which was published on 19th October 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. THE HOUGHTON AND WYTON CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER ASSESSMENT AND BOUNDARY REVIEW (Pages 13 - 38)

To consider a report by the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy on the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area Character Assessment and Boundary Review.

**P Bland
388430**

Hardcopies of the Area Character Assessment and Boundary Review have been circulated to Members of the Panel only.

5. CONTROLLED WASTE REGULATIONS (Pages 39 - 48)

To consider a report by the Head of Operations on Controlled Waste Regulations.

**Mrs B Gordon /
E Kendall**

6. THE CONTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURE TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF PLANNING POLICIES (Pages 49 - 56)

To receive the final report of the Working Group.

Dr A Roberts/

Mrs J Walker
388015/387049

7. **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS** (Pages 57 - 62)

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

Mrs J Walker
387049

8. **WORK PLAN STUDIES** (Pages 63 - 68)

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

9. **SCRUTINY** (Pages 69 - 76)

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 5 day of November
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, 9 October 2012.

- PRESENT: Councillor D Harty – Chairman.
- Councillors M G Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, I C Bates, I J Curtis, J W Davies, G J Harlock 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 D A Giles and C R Hyams.
- IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors P L E Bucknell and D M Tysoe.

35. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 11th September 2012 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

36. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

37. 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 October 2012 to 31st January 2013. Having questioned why a report on CIL Governance Principles had been considered by the Economic rather than Environmental Well-Being Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the Scrutiny and Review Manager advised Members that as the report concentrated on the management of finances generated through the CIL scheme it fell within the Economic Panel's remit. Members were reminded that they had been invited to the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) Panel for consideration of this Item. In light of Members' concerns, the Scrutiny and Review Manager undertook to circulate the report to the Panel to enable Members to convey comments to Cabinet if necessary.

38. CHARGING FOR A SECOND GREEN BIN

(Councillor P L E Bucknell, Ward Member for Warboys and Bury, and Councillor D M Tysoe, Executive Councillor for the Environment, were in attendance for this Item.)

Councillor D M Tysoe introduced a report by the Head of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on charging for a second green bin. He advised the Panel that the Council was looking at ways to reduce its costs while maintaining service standards and raising revenue. He also stated that some London Borough Councils charged for all green waste collections. Huntingdonshire District Council proposed to provide free collection of the first green bin for all residents but the collection of the second green bin should be regarded as a premium service and, therefore, should attract a charge. Councillor Tysoe expressed the view that this would be fairer to all residents as currently the majority of additional green bins were in seven wards and other wards were effectively subsidising their service.

Having regard to the practicalities of the proposals, Members were advised of the need for additional green bins to be easy to distinguish as operatives should not be tasked with responding to complaints and arbitration in questions of eligibility when going about their rounds. For reasons of cost the preferred approach was to fit new lids to additional green bins so that they could be easily identified by operatives and residents.

At the invitation of the Chairman, Councillor P L E Bucknell, Ward Member for Warboys and Bury, addressed the Panel. Councillor Bucknell informed Members that he acknowledged the Council needed to generate revenue but, in his opinion, this was not the right way to do it. He expressed the view that residents would not pay the charge for a second green bin and would put green waste in household waste bins instead, which would have an adverse effect on the waste service budget. He also expected that implementation of the proposal would lead to an increase in fly-tipping. The proposed charge amounted to a significant sum compared to the District Council's portion of the Council Tax. Furthermore, in Councillor Bucknell's opinion, properties with additional green bins tended to pay higher levels of Council Tax, which should afford them collection of a second green waste bin without having to pay an additional charge. He suggested that VAT would apply because the charge being incurred was for a service. Finally, Councillor Bucknell reported on his discussions with a Cabinet Member of a London Council that had introduced such a charge who had expressed the view that it was a mistake to do so.

A Member highlighted the fact that it was not just properties in the higher Council Tax band which benefited from the enhanced service. Further to this, the experiences of a London Borough Council were not comparable with this Council and a comparison with a rural area would have been preferable.

The view was expressed that the waste collection service was one of the most highly valued services provided by the Council. Attention was drawn to the fact that it was a universal service and was one of the best performing in the Country. Concerns were raised that the performance of the waste collection service would worsen if the proposal was adopted and that public perception of the Council might be damaged. It was argued that the Council should instead promote recycling. In this respect, the Council could take steps to encourage

composting of green waste. Furthermore, it was suggested that the Council should focus on non-statutory services when looking to make savings rather than on services such as waste collection, which were a statutory requirement. In response, Councillor Tysoe stressed that the proposed charge would not affect the majority of residents and that if every second green bin was returned there would be a 3.4% reduction in the waste collected. Moreover the Council had recently extended the range of material it collected, which would increase recycling.

Having specific regard to fly-tipping, it was established that the additional cost of enforcement had not been factored into the business case presented in the report. Experience at other authorities had suggested that adoption of the proposal would result in an initial increase in fly-tipping which would decline over time. Councillor Tysoe assured Members that as fly-tipping was a criminal offence enforcement action would be undertaken where necessary. If fly tipping continued to be a problem then there would be a need for additional resources.

Councillor Tysoe advised Members that in the current economic climate, imaginative ways of raising income were needed. It was anticipated that implementation of the proposal would lead to an increase in complaints to the call centre, the majority of which would come from the seven wards which had the most additional green bins. This had been allowed for in the business case. Members were reminded that the proposed charges did not represent an increase to residents' Council Tax bills; it was a charge for an additional service which residents could choose not to receive. The Head of Operations pointed out that the Council could opt to charge for all green waste collected; however, the proposals only related to an enhanced service and as such would not affect the majority of residents. It was expected that adoption of the proposals would lead to many residents returning their second green bins, but it was felt that the practicalities of finding alternative means of disposing of green waste would result in residents choosing to take back their additional green bin. It was also noted that, if the proposal was adopted, a communication strategy would be devised and implemented to educate residents about waste disposal.

In response to a question, the Head of Operations informed Members that Cambridgeshire County Council did not pay recycling credits for green waste. It was reiterated that the scheme was intended to raise additional revenue for the Council, and while it was difficult to give accurate marginal costs, the calculations within the report were accurate. Having specific regard to payback period, the Panel was advised that this was expected to be achieved in year two.

It was agreed that representatives of the Panel would attend the Cabinet meeting for consideration of this Item.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the proposal to introduce a charge for the collection of a second green bin be not supported; and
- (b) that the Cabinet be requested to take into

consideration the views of the Panel when considering this item.

39. JAPANESE KNOTWEED

Pursuant to Minute No. 11/20, the Panel considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on Japanese Knotweed. Given that there was a very limited occurrence of Japanese Knotweed in Huntingdonshire and where the Council was responsible action had been taken to deal with it, the Panel decided not to pursue a study on this matter.

40. CORPORATE TRAVEL PLAN UPDATE

(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 updated Corporate Travel Plan. The new Plan was designed to build on work already undertaken to reduce single occupant car use by employees travelling to and for work, and to encourage a model shift towards more sustainable forms of transport. Having questioned how the updated Plan differed from the original, the Panel was advised there had been a number of minor modifications, most notably relating to the incentives offered for owners of low carbon vehicles who were able to purchase car parking permits at a reduced rate.

Members' attention was drawn to a mapping exercise undertaken to show where Council employees lived. A Member suggested that the District Council should use this information to explore the possibility of providing a staff bus service from the main settlements to Pathfinder House. The Head of Environmental Management undertook to determine whether this suggestion would be cost-effective and subsequently a viable option.

A Member stressed the effectiveness of car sharing as a means of meeting the Travel Plan's objectives and questioned whether the Council offered any incentives to employees choosing to car share. In response, Members were informed that car sharing was actively encouraged but no incentives were provided.

Having discussed the increase in the percentage of employees cycling to work from 2006 to 2010, Members requested an analysis of the usage of cycling routes. The Head of Environmental Management agreed to liaise with colleagues at the County Council in order to provide the requested information. Having commented on the lack of information relating to staff travel in 2011, Members also requested 2011 statistics for staff travel behaviour.

With reference to the Council's objectives, targets and indicators and particularly the objective 'to reduce local traffic and road congestion', the Panel questioned whether the targets were sufficiently challenging for a five-year period. Having recognised that an increase in home working could be a means of delivering the Travel Plan's objectives, it was suggested that the Council should place more emphasis on

home working and that there should be a systematic analysis of posts for which home working was appropriate.

RESOLVED

that, subject to the inclusion of more challenging targets, the Cabinet be recommended to adopt the updated Corporate Travel Plan (2012/2013 to 2017/2018) and support the objectives, targets and action plan contained within it.

41. 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.

Following a request for information at the Panel's previous meeting, Councillor D M Tysoe clarified the Cabinet's position regarding stickers on wheeled bins. Members were advised that Speedwatch had approached Councillor Tysoe in his capacity as Executive Councillor for the Environment, regarding sticking speed limit notices on wheeled bins across the District. Following this request, a trial had been agreed whereby Speedwatch could place stickers on wheeled bins. Councillor Tysoe was awaiting the findings from the pilot initiative so that an informed decision could be made regarding the approach to be taken for the remainder of the District. At present he was concerned that stickers could be distracting to drivers and have an impact on road safety. In this light, Councillor Tysoe needed to be assured that the scheme would be well thought out, managed and policed. A Member expressed the view that as wheeled bins were only on the road side sporadically, little would be achieved from using them to convey messages. In response, Councillor Curtis informed Members that in the opinion of the Police and the County Council, residents took more notice of features which were not a permanent fixture.

Councillor Bates suggested that contact ought to be made with representatives of Speedwatch in order to determine the pilot's findings. In response, Councillor Tysoe emphasised that he required firm evidence from Speedwatch before making any further decisions regarding the Council's policy on stickers on wheeled bins.

Councillor Mrs M Banerjee reported that a further meeting of the Design Principles for Future Developments Working Group had been held at which the Urban Design, Trees and Landscape Team Leader had agreed to provide Working Group Members with sight of a detailed design guide in December.

42. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

The Panel approved for publication the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for 2010/2011 (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book).

43. DRAINAGE

With the aid of a report by the Drainage Working Group (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) Councillor Mrs M Banerjee informed Members of the successful outcome of the Working Group's investigations into Anglian Water's general powers and responsibilities and the limitations on its ability to prevent flooding. Following discussions with representatives of Anglian Water and the Environment Agency, Anglian Water and the County Council were working together to find a solution to the drainage issues in Yaxley.

44. 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.

45. SCRUTINY

The Panel received and noted the latest edition the Council's Decision Digest (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), which summarised recent decisions by the Council. In response to a question by Councillor G J Harlock, the Panel was informed that testing of proposals for changes to Council Tax discounts and exemptions had been undertaken to ensure they could be implemented and would increase the Council's income.

Chairman

NOTICE OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS INCLUDING THOSE TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

Prepared by Councillor J D Ablewhite
Date of Publication: 19 October 2012
For Period: 1 November 2012 to 28 February 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

Notice is hereby given of:

- Key decisions that will be taken by the Cabinet (or other decision maker)
- Confidential or exempt executive decisions that will be taken in a meeting from which the public will be excluded (for whole or part).

A notice/agenda together with reports and supporting documents for each meeting will be published at least five working days before the date of the meeting. In order to enquire about the availability of documents and subject to any restrictions on their disclosure, copies may be requested by contacting Mrs Helen Taylor, Senior Democratic Services Officer on 01480 388008 or E-mail Helen.Taylor@huntingdonshire.gov.uk.

Agendas may be accessed electronically at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk.

Formal notice is hereby given under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 that, where indicated part of the meetings listed in this notice will be held in private because the agenda and reports for the meeting will contain confidential or exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. See the relevant paragraphs below.

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 emailing Legal&DemServDemocratic@huntingdonshire.gov.uk or by writing to the Senior Democratic Services Officer. If representations are received at least eight working days before the date of the meeting, they will be published with the agenda together with a statement of the District Council's response. Any representations received after this time will be verbally reported and considered at the meeting.

Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) (Reason for the report to be considered in private)

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the Financial and Business Affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information)
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations that are arising between the Authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of or office holders under the Authority
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
6. Information which reveals that the Authority proposes:-
 - (a) To give under any announcement a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) To make an Order or Direction under any enactment
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.

Colin Meadowcroft
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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

- Notes:- (i) Additions changes from the previous Forward Plan are annotated ***
(ii) Part II confidential items which will be considered in private are annotated ##

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Assets of Community Value***	Cabinet	22 Nov 2012	None.	Colin Meadowcroft, Head of Legal and Democratic Services Tel No. 01480 388021 or email Colin.Meadowcroft@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J D Ablewhite	Economic Well-Being
Controlled Waste Regulations***	Cabinet	22 Nov 2012	None.	Eric Kendall, Head of Operations Tel No. 01480 388635 or email Eric.Kendall@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		D M Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being
Waste Collection - Round Optimisation***	Cabinet	22 Nov 2012	None	Eric Kendall, Head of Operations Tel No. 01480 388635 or e-mail Eric.Kendall@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		D M Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being
Charging for Second Green Bin	Cabinet	22 Nov 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
Town and Parish Council Charter	Cabinet	22 Nov 2012	None.	Dan Smith, Community Health Manager Tel No. 01480 388377 or email Dan.Smith@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Social Well-Being
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
Houghton & Wyton Conservation Area Boundary Review	Cabinet	22 Nov 2012	Consultation Outcomes	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private	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
Council Tax Support***	Cabinet	13 Dec 2012	None.	Julia Barber, Head of Customer Services Tel No. 01480 388105 or email Julia.Barber@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B S Chapman	Economic and Social Well-Being
Local Government Finance Act 2012 NNDRI Approval***	Cabinet	13 Dec 2012	None.	Julia Barber, Head of Customer Services Tel No. 01480 388105 or email Julia.Barber@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J A Gray	Economic Well-Being
Ratification of Technical Reforms of Council Tax***	Cabinet	13 Dec 2012	None.	Julia Barber, Head of Customer Services Tel No. 01480 388105 or email Julia.Barber@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B S Chapman	Economic Well-Being
Carbon Management***	Cabinet	13 Dec 2012	None.	Chris Jablonski, Environment Team Leader Tel No. 01480 388368 or e-mail Chris.Jablonski@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		D M Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being
Draft MTP***	Cabinet	13 Dec 2012	None	Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services Tel No. 01480 388103 or e-mail Steve.Couper@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J A Gray	Economic Well-Being
Business Plan One Leisure - Quarterly Performance Reports##	Cabinet	13 Dec 2012	None	Simon Bell, General Manager, One Leisure Tel No. 01480 388049 or email Simon.Bell@huntingdonshire.gov.uk	Exempt under paragraph 4.	T D Sanderson	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	Reasons for the report to be considered in private	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Bearcroft Farm Urban Design Framework	Cabinet	13 Dec 2012	None.	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
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		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
A14	Cabinet	24 Jan 2013	None.	Steve Ingram, Head of Planning Services 01480 388400 or email Steve.Ingram@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Budget and MTP***	Cabinet	14 Feb 2013	Draft MTP - previous year's budget report - various annexes	Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services Tel No. 01480 388103 or e-mail Steve.Couper@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		Jonathan Gray	Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being)
Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators***	Cabinet	14 Feb 2013	Previous year's Strategy	Steve Couper, Head of Financial Services Tel No. 01480 388103 or e-mail Steve.Couper@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		Jonathan Gray	Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being)

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL
(ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING)
DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PANEL
CABINET

13 NOVEMBER 2012

19 NOVEMBER 2012

22 NOVEMBER 2012

THE HOUGHTON AND WYTON CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER ASSESSMENT AND BOUNDARY REVIEW

(Report by Head of Planning & Housing Strategy)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to describe the technical and consultation processes that have informed the proposed Boundary Review and Character Assessment of the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area, and recommend to Cabinet that both documents are supported for formal adoption.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The key current legislative and policy background that underpins the process of undertaking a Conservation Area boundary review are set out in:

- The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990
- The National Planning Policy Framework (2012)

- 2.2 Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 places duties on local planning authorities:

- To designate as Conservation Areas any “*areas of special architectural or historic interest the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance*” (Section 69).
- To “*from time to time to review the past exercise of functions under this section and to determine whether parts or any further parts of their area should be designated as conservation areas.*” (Section 69 (2)).
- To formulate and publish proposals for the preservation and enhancement of its Conservation Areas (Section 71).

- 2.3 Paragraph 127 of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) states that “*when considering the designation of Conservation Areas, local planning authorities should ensure that an area justifies such status because of its special architectural or historic interest, and that the concept of conservation is not devalued through the designation of areas that lack special interest.*”

2.4 In 2011 Huntingdonshire District Council received a request from Houghton and Wyton Parish Council to undertake a review of the existing Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area (see Appendix 1). This review required an analysis to identify the extent and special interest of the area, which was considered through the preparation of a Conservation Area Character Assessment and related Boundary Review proposals.

2.5 The analysis considered the whole of the existing Conservation Area, and also included additional areas, particularly in the context of St Ives West strategic direction of growth identified in the Core Strategy (adopted 2009).

3. THE CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER ASSESSMENT AND BOUNDARY REVIEW

3.1 The Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area was originally designated on 14 October 1974. The boundary of the area was drawn tightly around building groups and did not reflect a thorough or justified examination of the wider area's historic merit or development. It was consequently amended on 18 February 1980.

3.2 In 2003, the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area boundary was considered as a case study under criteria established within the District Council's adopted "*The Review of Conservation Area Boundaries in Huntingdonshire*" document. The case study concluded that the Conservation Area boundary could be amended to include areas of special interest to the north of the A1123 to include historic fields to the south of Thicket Road and parts of Houghton Hill to the north of Thicket Road.

3.3 In 2011, at the request of Houghton and Wyton Parish Council, the case study was re-examined in reference to current best practice, and to take account of potential new development in the area. A thorough re-examination of the earlier Conservation Area boundary review concluded that the 2003 case study had accurately identified the special interest of areas intended for inclusion within any revised boundary. The case study was therefore taken forward through a formal boundary review process, leading to the creation of the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area Boundary Review document which has been subject to public consultation.

3.4 The enlarged area proposed within the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area Boundary Review document (see Appendix 2) reflects the findings of an updated Conservation Area Character Assessment that was prepared as part of the boundary review process. A Conservation Area is defined as a 'Designated Heritage Asset' and the policies related to these are a material consideration which must be taken into account in development management decisions. The Conservation Area Character Assessment describes the nature, extent and importance of the historic environment. It provides guidance to residents, developers and agents to assist them to prepare development proposals that seek to sustain and enhance the Conservation Area.

- 3.5 The content of the Character Assessment complies with the 2011 English Heritage guidance and seeks to convey the special architectural and historical interest of the Conservation Area through maps, photographic illustrations and written text. Specific references are made to:
- The essential characteristics of the Conservation Area including settlement pattern, important views, focal points and landmark buildings.
 - Detailed assessments of the character of distinct areas or zones within the conservation area.
 - The historic development of the villages and their listed buildings.
 - The contribution of green open spaces, trees and gardens to the special interest of the Conservation Area.
- 3.6 The amended Conservation Area boundary addresses the historic interest of the settlement, as well as reflecting the setting of the villages and significant views and vistas. It is proposed that some areas of more recent development within the village should be excluded from the Conservation Area as these do not meet the criteria for continued inclusion. The proposed new Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area boundary is shown in Appendix 2.

4. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 4.1 The District Council consulted on the draft Conservation Area Character Statement and Boundary Review proposals for 8 weeks from 6 July to 31 August 2012. The consultation commenced with a staffed exhibition at the Houghton and Wyton Village Fete on Saturday 7 July 2012. Consultation letters were sent to the residents at 65 addresses affected by the proposed boundary changes, and 13 stakeholder consultees including local Members.
- 4.2 The District Council's Conservation Team ran two public exhibitions in the Houghton Memorial Hall on 17 and 18 of July 2012. These were advertised by the Parish Council and through the HDC website. The events were based on the consultation documents, and also exhibited historic maps and other relevant information.
- 4.3 The consultation documents were advertised and posted on the HDC website, and responses could be made through the District Council's website based consultation portal, which further advertised the consultation documents to some 3,500 correspondents and statutory consultees. Hard copies of the draft documents and consultation response forms were placed in the Huntingdon Customer Service Centre, Huntingdon and St Ives Libraries.

5. CONSULTATION RESPONSES

- 5.1 The consultation process generated 26 responses which were received via telephone, letter, email and through the Councils' website consultation portal. A summary of all the feedback received may be found as Appendix 3 at the back of this report. A Map indicating the areas suggested by respondents for addition or omission from the revised conservation area is Appendix 4. All the responses have been reviewed and suggested amendments to the proposed boundary assessed against the criteria for inclusion within a conservation area:
- 5.2 Many respondents suggested more than one amendment to the conservation area boundary. Ten additional areas and two lanes (see Appendix 2) were put forward for inclusion within the conservation area. These areas were once again re-assessed to establish whether they met the criteria for inclusion within a conservation area, the test being whether those areas possess special historic or architectural interest or contribute to the special historic or architectural interest of the Conservation Area.

Proposed Additional Areas – results of re-assessment

Area One: The How, St Ives

- 5.3 One response proposed that The How and its grounds be included within the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area. The How is a small country house set within extensive grounds just north of what were previously the clay quarries of The How Brick Works.

Response to Representation

- 5.4 The building is not listed and was previously determined to have insufficient special interest for inclusion within the St Ives Conservation Area. No special historic relationship between The How and Houghton and Wyton could be found and therefore it shall not be included within the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area.

Area Two: Field to the east of Houghton Grange (BBSRC field)

- 5.5 Eight responses proposed that the former BBSRC field should be included within the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area. This field was formerly located within the St Ives town boundary and was assessed in 2007 in respect of inclusion within the St Ives Conservation Area. Although it was proposed for inclusion in the draft proposals, this was challenged during the consultation phase of the St Ives boundary review because respondents argued that it did not have special interest or make a significant contribution to the setting of St Ives. Upon re-assessment at that time it was agreed that there was insufficient special interest and therefore the decision was made not to include this field within the St Ives Conservation Area.

Response to Representations

- 5.6 The significance of this field has been re-assessed for inclusion within the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area. The field now lies within the Houghton and Wyton parish boundary as a result of a change in the parish boundaries following the creation of the Wyton on the Hill administrative area in 2009. The field has historically been farmland in the parish of St Ives but was developed in part as a Poultry Research Station in the late 1950s.
- 5.7 No new evidence to support an assessment of special interest has been put forward by respondents, or revealed in the investigations of District Council's Conservation team. The question is therefore whether the land makes a significant contribution to the setting of the Conservation Area, which is one of the key criteria in assessing whether boundary changes can be justified. This is principally assessed by identifying views from within the Conservation Area which include the land under consideration. The BBSRC field is shielded from the Conservation Area by The Thicket to the south and by the deep hedgerows of the Houghton Grange estate. The land is not visible from the Great Ouse valley or from Thicket Road.
- 5.8 It is therefore considered that, under the criteria required within the Conservation Area boundary review process, the field does not contribute to the special interest of the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area and should not therefore be included within the boundary.

Area Three: The Thicket

- 5.9 Three responses suggested that The Thicket be included within the Conservation Area.

Response to Representations

- 5.10 The Thicket is already included within the St Ives Conservation Area reflecting its historic connection with St Ives. It is considered that The Thicket should remain a part of St Ives Conservation Area.

Area Four: Field north of Houghton Grange

- 5.11 One response suggested that the field located opposite Houghton Grange should be included in the Conservation Area. This field is now situated within the parish of Wyton on the Hill; the eastern boundary of this field marks the historic boundary between Houghton and Wyton and St Ives. The western boundary is characterised by the trackway and approaches to Houghton Hill Farm.

Response to Representation

- 5.12 Historic map evidence suggests that the field, which was previously sub divided into three, has been farmland since the late 1700s. Crop marks indicate the presence of former ridge and furrow earthworks in the south eastern corner but these have long since been ploughed out. The field has

no special interest that would justify its inclusion within the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area.

Area Five: Triangle of land centred on the site of the former Black Eagle Windmill

- 5.13 Five responses suggested that the site of the former Black Eagle Mill and surrounding fields bounded by the A1123, B1090 and Cottage Lane be included within the Conservation Area. The Black Eagle Windmill was a post mill situated on the crest of Houghton Hill. One door lock from the Black Eagle Windmill bearing the date of demolition (1902) is kept in the National Mills Archive reference collection and a second lock and key is held in the Norris Museum post-medieval collection. The mill was painted by the artists Henry Woods and David Woodlock.

Response to Representations

- 5.14 Apart from the mill mound, nothing remains of the windmill itself. The miller's house and a small barn survive, the house being Grade II listed. The surrounding land is farmland of no special interest. The building is listed and therefore has special interest in itself, but the loss of the windmill has removed the special interest of its historic context to the conservation area and therefore, on balance, the mill house should not be included within the Conservation Area.

Area Six: Hill Estate

- 5.15 One response suggested that The Hill Estate should be included within the Conservation Area due to historic interest, trees and green space worthy of protecting. The estate was built between 1949 and 1965 and is of a typical post war character and appearance. The grassy central area and mature trees are a valuable amenity resource for residents.

Response to Representation

- 5.16 The Hill Estate is an interesting survival from the post war period but it stands separate from the principal historic area of Houghton and does not have the special interest that would contribute to the character and appearance of the wider conservation area. The area is not suitable for inclusion within the Conservation Area boundary.

Area Seven: Former gravel quarries, now lakes, to north of A1123

- 5.17 Two responses suggested that these ponds should be included within the Conservation Area for their landscape value.

Response to Representations

- 5.18 Although the lakes provide general habitat and landscape value they were created from gravel workings less than 5 years ago and have no special

historic interest that would justify their inclusion within the Conservation Area.

Area Eight: Common land to the south west of Houghton Hall

- 5.19 One response suggested that the area of common land to the south west of Houghton Hall should be included within the Conservation Area. The common land and meadows to the south east of Houghton Hall are already proposed for inclusion within the Conservation Area due to their contribution to the special interest of Houghton and Wyton.

Response to Representation

- 5.20 Upon re-assessing this area it became apparent that the land corresponds to a shared 'common' marking the convergence of Ware Lane, St Ives Road, Ruddles Lane, Mere Way and Meadow Lane. This important historic gateway to Houghton and Wyton, and the associated meadows to the south, remain identifiable to travellers along the A1123 as an area of green space incorporating wide grassy verges and mature hedgerows. The common land contributes to the special interest of the Conservation Area and is therefore proposed for inclusion within the Conservation Area boundary.

Area Nine: Common Land to west of Splash Lane

- 5.21 One response suggested the inclusion of a small area of common land to the west of Splash Lane which has an historic link with the villages but which has been separated from Wyton by the A1123.

Response to Representation

- 5.22 Unfortunately, the historic and physical relationship to the village has been lost and there is not a justification for it to be included within the Conservation Area.

Area Ten: North bank of the River Great Ouse, west of Wyton

- 5.23 Five responses suggested that the north bank of the River Great Ouse west of Wyton should be included within the Conservation Area. The southern bank and water meadows are included within The Hemingfords Conservation Area.

Response to Representations

- 5.24 There are long views across the meadows from The Hemingfords but from the southern bank of the river the character of the land beyond the north bank is of arable land mostly screened by willow trees and natural vegetation. The river bank landscape forms part of the setting to the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area but it has insufficient special interest in its own right to be included in the Conservation Area.

Ruddles Lane and Splash Lane

- 5.25 One response suggested that Ruddles Lane and Splash Lane should be included within the Conservation Area.

Response to representation

- 5.26 Splash Lane is an historic trackway which has been separated from Wyton by the A1123 and its physical and contextual relationship to the village has been lost. Ruddles Lane is also an ancient trackway that has also been severed from its historic context by the A1123. However, it retains a physical relationship with the common land north of Houghton and contributes to an understanding of the significance of Ware Lane which makes an important contribution to the historic development of Houghton and Wyton. Due to this significance, a 60m length of Ruddles Lane which abuts the common land north of Houghton is proposed to be included within the Conservation Area.

Areas Proposed For Exclusion – results of re-assessment

- 5.27 Two responses suggested that the proposed Conservation Area boundary should be reduced in size to exclude Houghton Grange, and Houghton Hill in its entirety.

Houghton Grange

- 5.28 One respondent suggested that Houghton Grange and its grounds should not be included for the following reasons:
- The site adds no appreciable spatial quality from a longer distance due to screening from belts of trees on three sides
 - The site does not form part of a key settlement edge
 - The existing trees are already protected with Tree Preservation Orders
 - Much of the historic quality of the site has been lost through the piecemeal development of outbuildings and laboratories which are now in disrepair
 - The site has no archaeological significance
 - Opportunities for economic regeneration and character enhancement are already fully covered by the approved residential development

Response to Representation

- 5.29 Having re-assessed Houghton Grange and its grounds it has been concluded that it should remain as part of the proposed Conservation Area for the following reasons:
- The belts of trees surrounding Houghton Grange are part of a planned landscape which defines an historic estate and contributes to the special interest of the Conservation Area.
 - The site marks the furthest eastward expansion of Houghton when wealthy Victorian and Edwardian patrons bought large parts of Houghton Hill to establish their country houses and estates. This makes an important contribution to the special interest of the Conservation Area.
 - The Conservation Area designation is not being made solely to protect veteran trees. The protection afforded by the designation will allow future management of the site to better reveal the significance of surviving heritage assets.
 - A recent Archaeological Evaluation Report¹ suggests limited survival of cut features due to landscaping for the Houghton Grange gardens and due to later BBSRC activity. This does not lessen the special interest of the estate as a whole.
 - Designation will continue protection of the character and appearance of the historic environment after the approved development is complete.

Houghton Hill

Response to representation

- 5.30 Houghton Hill has been shaped by the eastward expansion of Houghton in the 19th Century when wealthy Victorian and Edwardian patrons bought large parts of Houghton Hill to establish their country houses and estates. The estate grounds were planned and modified to enhance the natural landscape. This makes an important contribution to the special interest of the Conservation Area and therefore the proposed part of Houghton Hill shall be included.

¹ Oxford Archaeology East, unpublished archaeological evaluation report No 1046. HER Event No.ECB 2283 (2008).

Consultation feedback - other matters for consideration

County Wildlife Sites

- 5.31 The Wildlife Trust expressed concern that including Wildlife Trust managed land in the Conservation Area would result in unnecessary bureaucracy and disrupt day to day running of the sites, due to the additional protections afforded to trees by the designation of a Conservation Area. The Wildlife Trust asked the Local Authority to consider whether there were any additional benefits to having the County Wildlife Sites included within the Conservation Area.

Response to Representation

- 5.32 The District Council's Trees and Landscape Team confirms that long term agreements which allow for a five year management plan for coppicing tree works would be acceptable. The Wildlife Trust land proposed for inclusion within the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area has special interest in its own right but is also important in providing the historic landscape setting for the built environment. It shall therefore be included within the Conservation Area as proposed.

General feedback

- 5.33 Invaluable feedback was provided by local historians and other consultees who made suggestions regarding aspects of the historical content of the draft Conservation Area Character Statement and Boundary Review documents, which have been amended and refined as a result.

6. CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The production of the Character Assessment and Boundary Review documents for the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area contributes to the legal obligations of Huntingdonshire District Council as the local planning authority, and reflects the Authority's support for local heritage assets and their contribution to the quality of life of this and future generations.

7. RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 That Cabinet endorses the revised Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area Character Assessment and Conservation Area Boundary Review and recommends that both documents are supported for formal adoption.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Huntingdonshire Design Guide SPG 2007

Huntingdonshire Landscape and Townscape Assessment SPG 2007

Conservation Area Boundary Review Policy Document, Huntingdonshire District Council, January 2003.

National Planning Policies Framework, DCLG, 2012.

Understanding Place: Conservation Area Designation Appraisal and Management, English Heritage, 2011.

HDC Internal Conservation Team Document: Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area Review Ranging Survey, 2003. (Full text in Boundary Review document, annex 1).

HDC Internal Conservation Team Document: Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area Review Site Survey, 2003, revised 2011. (Full text in Boundary Review document, annex 2)

CONTACT OFFICER

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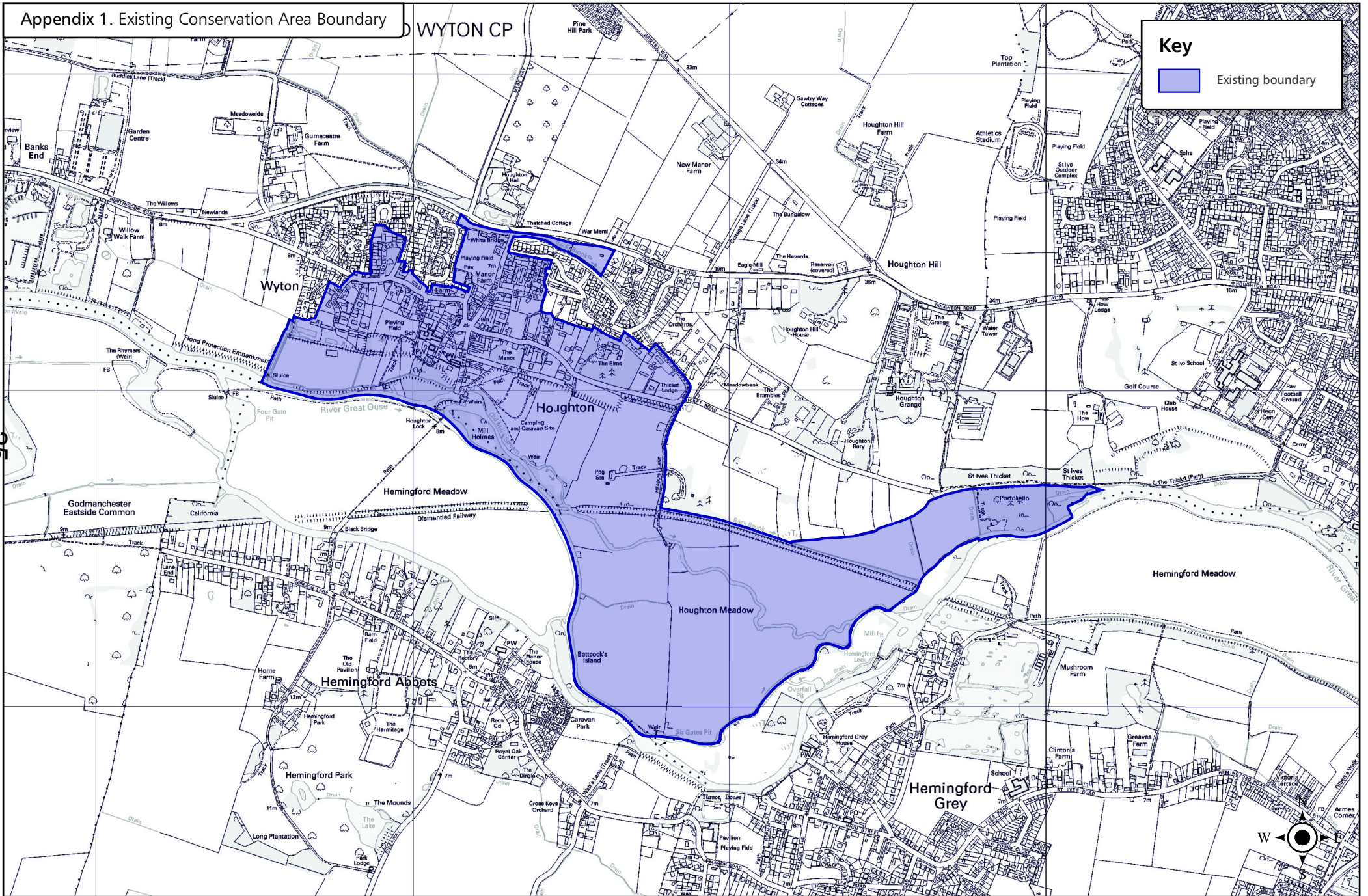
Appendix 1. Existing Conservation Area Boundary

WYTON CP

Key

 Existing boundary

25




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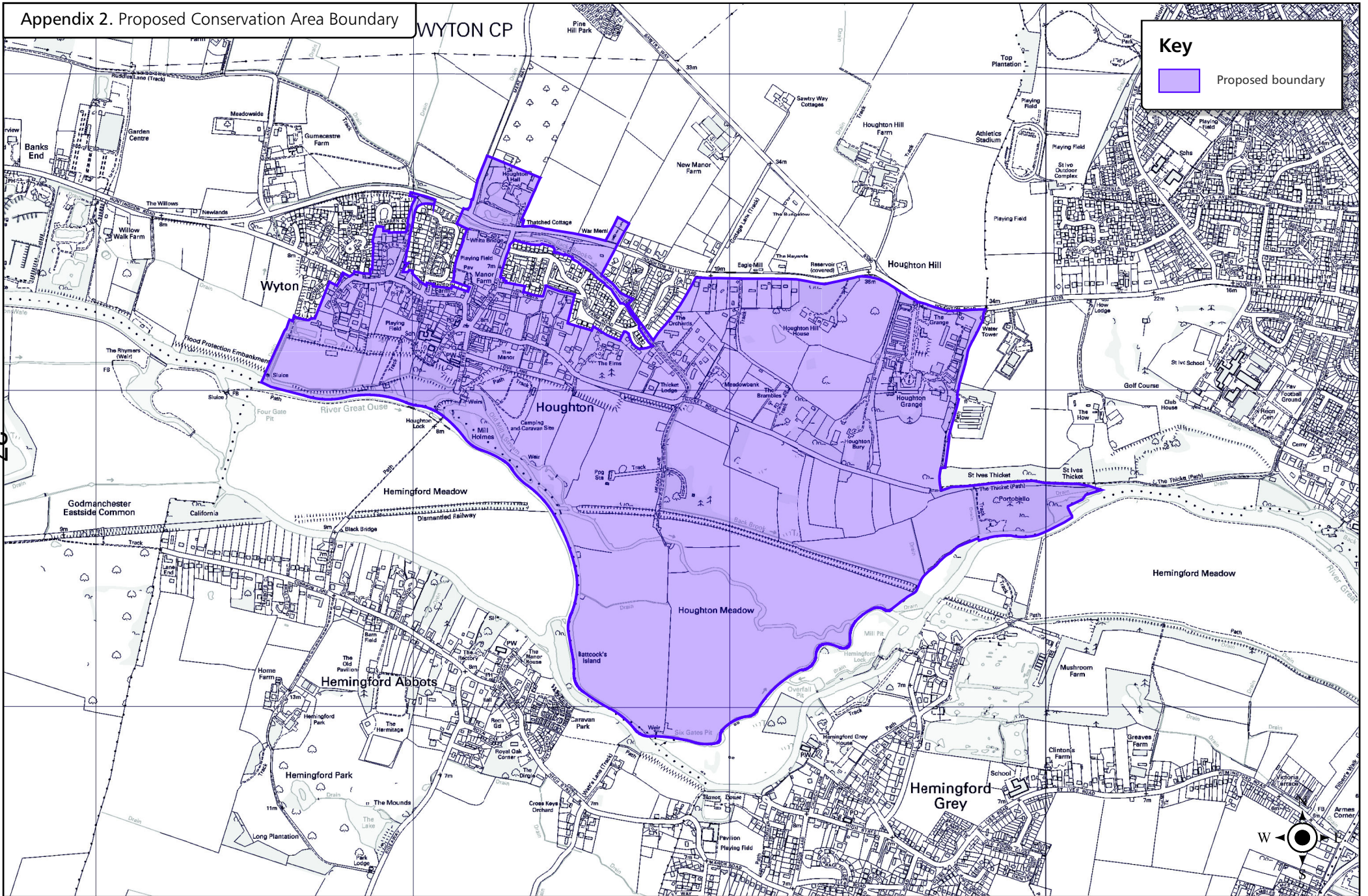
Appendix 2. Proposed Conservation Area Boundary

WYTON CP

Key

 Proposed boundary

27



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Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area review consultation

APPENDIX THREE - RESPONSES SUMMARY

Action Summary:

1 – Amendment to document made.

2 – Amendment to document not made.

Respondent	Ref. no.	Address	Summary of Issues Arising	Action
Resident	1	Telephone Caller – Wyton Village	Caller has trouble differentiating colours of areas to be included and excluded on Boundary Review maps 8 and 9. Key shows incorrect line colours.	1
Comments Form	2	N/A	1) Supports boundary change. 2) Does not think proposed boundary is correct. 3) Should be larger. 4) Finds CA documents useful. 5) Will send in more comments. 6) Include river frontage to west and landscape to east.	2
Comments Form	3	N/A	1) Supports boundary change. 2) Thinks proposed boundary is correct. 3) Could include Ruddles Lane but understands why this is not proposed. 4) Finds CA documents useful. 5) No comments on content. 6) No other issues.	2
Comments Form	4	N/A	1) Supports boundary change. 2) Does not think proposed boundary is correct. 3) Include The Thicket. 4) No comment. 5) No comment. 6) No other issues.	2

Comments Form	5	N/A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Supports boundary change as a means to giving greater protection to H&W parish. 2) Thinks proposed boundary is correct. 3) No comment. 4) Finds CA documents readable and informative. 5) No comments on content. 6) Ensure implementation of S.106 improvements to Thicket Road. 	2
Comments Form	6	N/A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Does not support proposed boundary changes as it is big enough already. 2) Does not think proposed boundary is correct. 3) The area to the east of Houghton should be omitted. 4) Finds CA documents useful. 5) No comment. 6) Character assessment should address proposed development of St Ives. <p>Additional map showing revision to subdivision of area L.</p>	2
Mr and Mrs Lucking (Residents, Ward Close)	7	via email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have no objection to exclusion of Ward Close from CA. • Agrees with most boundary changes. • Would like to see inclusion of field to east of Houghton Grange to provide protection of 'Green Gap'. • Has concerns about new development increasing traffic along A1123. 	2

Alastair Price (Resident Houghton Hill)	8	via email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suggests that Hill Estate be included as it has historic interest, trees and green space worthy of protection. • Eagle Mill and surrounding fields should be included to reflect historic relationship with the Houghton Hill House estate. • The field east of Houghton Grange should be included as it is visible from meadows, is historically linked to Houghton Grange, had a fair and is an important landscape setting to the conservation area. • Notes that very little land north of the A1123 has been proposed for inclusion and indicates the presence of historic droves, paths and trackways that cross the fields there. • Notes that Ruddles Lane is historic. • Splash Lane should be included as a historic track with Romano-British associations. • Suggests including the northern bank of the Great Ouse to match the Hemingfords CA. • Proposes widening the CA boundary to include all areas noted above in order to control further development and avoid adverse impacts upon the countryside and local tourism. 	2
Mr G. Sykes	9	Consultation Portal H+WCABR1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Supports CA boundary review as a way of assisting in the protection of buildings of local interest. 2) Supports proposed boundary changes. 3) Thinks boundary is correct. 4) Finds CA documents useful. 	2
Mr G. Ridewood Campaign for the Protection of the Rural Environment (Cambs)	10	Consultation Portal H+WCABR2	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) CPRE supports changing the CA boundary. 2) Supports proposed changes. 3) Thinks proposed boundary is incorrect as the three lakes located to the north of the A1123 should be included for landscape value. 4) Finds CA documents useful. 	2

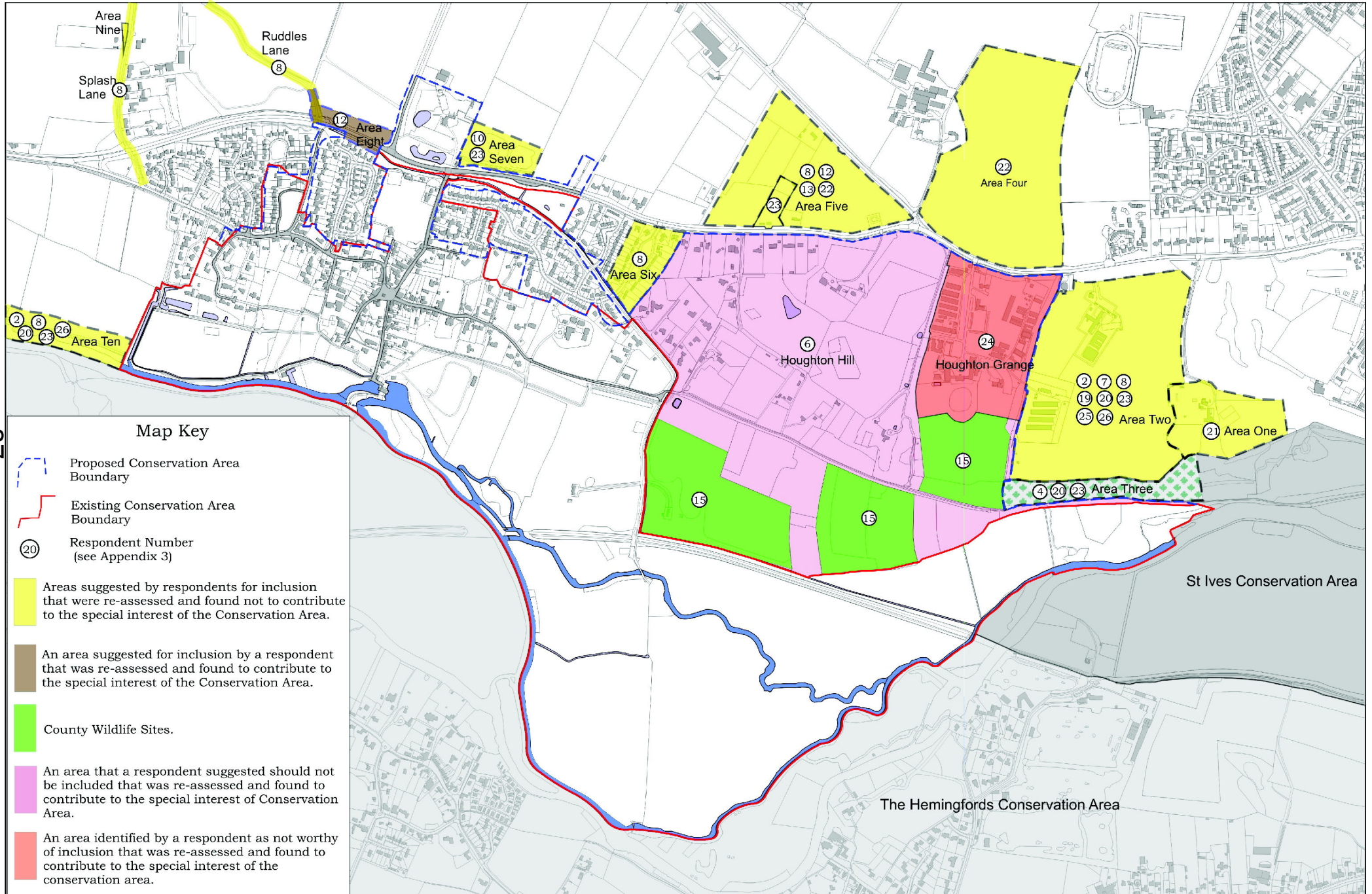
Mrs H. Merryweather	11	Consultation Portal H+WCABR3	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Supports changing the CA boundary - long overdue for an update. 2) Does not think the proposed boundary is correct. 3) Further comments to follow. 4) Finds CA documents useful. 	2
Mrs L Craig	12	Consultation Portal H+WCABR4	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Supports changing the CA boundary - long overdue. 2) Thinks the proposed boundary is correct. 3) Suggests the inclusion of common land to the north of the A1123, Splash Lane and Eagle Mill area. 4) Finds CA documents useful. 	2 1
Cllr A. H. Williams	13	via email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies an error in house numbering (annex 3) page 17. • Suggests including a triangle of land centred on former Eagle Mill bounded by B1090, A1123 and Cottage Lane. 	2
Mr and Mrs Feakes Houghton and Wyton Local History Society.	14	via email	Proposes a number of changes regarding factual and interpretive elements of the historic content in the Character Statement.	2
Sian Williams Conservation Officer The Wildlife Trusts	15	via email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Wildlife Trusts understand the interest in including the Wildlife Trust sites for historic landscape and wildlife reasons. • Expresses concerns that including the Wildlife Trust land in area L would result in unnecessary bureaucracy and disrupt day to day running of the sites. • Requests further consideration be given to reasons for including the nature reserves within the CA and what further benefits this would confer. 	2
Mr Jamie Robert Melvin Land Use Operations Team Natural England	16	via email	Can see nothing that causes concern and therefore makes 'no comment'.	2

Jennifer Dean Planning Liaison Manager Anglian Water Asset Management	17	via email	Has no comment to make.	2
Mrs Dawn Porter Planning Liaison Officer Environment Agency	18	via email	Has no objection to the Character Statement and Boundary review.	2
Sinead O Donoghue Planning Policy Officer Cambs County Council	19	Development Strategy Team, Box No. CC1216, Castle Court, Shire Hall, Castle Hill, Cambridge. CB23 0AP and H&WCABR5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambs County Council welcomes proposals to include the medieval field systems and grounds of country house estates on Houghton Hill as this will strengthen landscape-scale biodiversity benefits within the three contiguous conservation areas of Houghton and Wyton, St Ives and The Hemingfords thereby helping fulfil biodiversity duties under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. • Recommends including the former BBSRC field east of Houghton Grange in order to strengthen landscape connectivity across this part of Huntingdonshire. • Identifies various possible typographical errors and failure to map River Great Ouse County Wildlife Site. • Welcomes the inclusion of various public rights of way and their associated historic hedgerows within the CA. 	2

Houghton and Wyton Neighbourhood Working Party	20	via email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recommends that the farmland to the east of Houghton Grange is included on the grounds of historic landscape characterisation. • The Thicket Bird Sanctuary should be transferred from the St Ives Conservation Area to the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area. • Extend the CA boundary to include the northern bank of the Great Ouse up to and including Hartford Marina. 	2
Mrs C. Pollock Parish Clerk Hemingford Abbots Parish Council	21	5, Gore Tree Road, Hemingford Grey, Cambs. PE28 9BP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Parish Council welcomes the inclusion of large parts of Houghton Hill and the historic farmland bordering Thicket Road as they are an important landscape backdrop to Hemingford Abbots parish. • It is strongly recommended that the field to the east of Houghton Grange and the land associated with The How be included within the CA to maintain landscape continuity in the Great Ouse valley. 	2
Ann Enticknap Deputy Town Clerk St Ives Town Council	22	via email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Ives Town Council Members wish to see additional areas included within the conservation area (indicated on submitted map). • Area A consists of a large field directly north of Houghton Grange across the A1123 which is bounded on the east by the parish boundary and on the west by Houghton Hill Farm. • Area B consist of a triangle of land centred on the former Eagle Mill, bounded by the B1090, A1123 and Cottage Lane. 	2

<p>Mrs H. Merryweather Parish Clerk Houghton and Wyton Parish Council</p>	23	via email	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Houghton and Wyton Parish Council applaud the work undertaken so far but believe the proposed area should be further expanded. • The BBRSC field to the east of Houghton Grange should be included as a vital part of the landscape setting to Houghton Village. The field has an historic landscape characterisation. • Eagle Mill and historic curtilage should be included. • The river frontage should be included to mirror the designated area of the Hemingfords Conservation Area. • The Thicket Bird Sanctuary should be transferred from the St Ives Conservation Area to the Houghton and Wyton Conservation Area and renamed. • The Parish Council endorse the recommendation of the CPRE to include the lakes adjacent to the Houghton Manor site within the CA. 	2
<p>Mr. Martin Page D H Barford & Co. Chartered Surveyors and Planning Consultants On behalf of the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council</p>	24	Howard House, 17 Church Street, St Neots, Cambs. PE19 2BU	<p>The Agents for the BBSRC suggest that the northern half of the Houghton Grange property is not included within the conservation area for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The site adds no appreciable spatial quality from a longer distance due to screening from belts of trees on three sides. • The site does not form part of a key settlement edge. • The existing trees are already protected with Tree Preservation Orders. • Much of the historic quality of the site has been lost through the piecemeal development of outbuildings and laboratories which are now in disrepair. • The site has no archaeological significance. • Opportunities for economic regeneration and character enhancement are already fully covered by the approved residential development. 	2
<p>Mr J Page</p>	25	<p>Consultation Portal Via email H&WCABR6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend the conservation area to include eastern part of Houghton and Wyton parish land. • This will preserve the gap between the parish and St Ives by preventing development. 	2

Ms Boothman	26	Consultation Portal H&WCABR7	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Supports changing the CA boundary – it's always good to review. 2) Thinks the proposed boundary is incorrect. 3) Suggests the inclusion of the farmland to the east of Houghton Grange as it is important to the overall character of the area of Houghton Hill, providing views for the Hemingfords and from the meadows. The riverscape i.e. full river and banks are historically important as are its wildlife and and leisure value to the village. 4) Finds CA documents useful – well researched and thought through. 5) Further Issues – The CA cannot be seen in isolation from The Hemmingfords and St Ives CAs and it would be good to see the documents illustrate this. 	2
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COMT

29th October 2012

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

13th November 2012

CABINET

22nd November 2012

Controlled Waste Regulations 2012 (Report by the Head of Operations)

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform members of the changes introduced in the Controlled Waste Regulations 2012 and seek approval for recovering the full cost of the imposed disposal charge from those organisations affected.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Controlled Waste Regulations 1992 as amended set out previously how household waste from different types of premises would be treated. As a result a number of premises, in Schedule 2 of those regulations, were exempt from a charge for disposal but a charge could be made for the collection of the waste.

- 2.2 The Controlled Waste Regulations 2012 have revised the exempt premises and as a result a number of premises, i.e. Universities, can now be charged for disposal. This is very much in keeping with philosophy of the “polluter pays” principle. The new charging regime will take effect from April 2013.

- 2.3 This Council collect waste from a number of the previously exempt premises and consequently we will now be charged by the County Council for the disposal of that waste. To ease the burden on the premises previously exempt the County Council have approved a local policy (Annex A) to provide clarification as to who will be required to pay and who will receive transitional relief. As a lot of the premises are County Council run services they have in the policy had regard to those services and sought not to increase service costs unnecessarily in specific areas.

- 2.4 The new regulations do provide some leeway for disposal authorities to prescribe whether a charge should be made or not. Appendix 1 of the Local Policy lists those premises/ organisations where a charge will be made and Section 4 sets out a list of those premises where the local policy will apply and this is in respect of :-

1. Residential, nursing and Care homes
2. Universities and colleges (Higher Educational Establishments)
3. Hospitals

4. Premises used wholly or mainly for public meetings (51% of the lettings are in relation to public meetings)
- 2.5 This Council collect very little trade waste but do collect from a considerable number of premises which will be subject, in future, for the disposal cost. However, the Local Policy does allow for free disposal of waste from residential, nursing and care homes where the collection authority collected prior to April 2012. Any new customers will be charged the disposal cost. In respect of the other premises above the local policy does clarify where the charge will be made i.e halls of residence will continue to be exempt.

3. PROPOSAL

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Council recover the full cost of the disposal charged by the County Council from any customers subject to the new charge. In doing this it means that there is no longer any advantage for most of the premises, apart from those subject to the local policy, remaining with this Council. Consequently, we are already seeing private collection companies aggressively targeting this previously exempt group of premises.

4. RISKS

- 4.1 In recovering the full cost it is highly likely that we will lose customers to the private sector. If this proves to be the case then we will need to factor it into the round optimisation because we collect this waste as part of the household residual waste collections.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 If all the customers continue to receive the service from the council then there would be no financial implications for the Council as we would be recovering the disposal charge from the customer.
- 5.2 If customers choose to migrate to a private contractor then we will lose income which we currently get from charging for the collection from these premises. Unfortunately the trade waste database is not sufficiently developed in this Council to provide a breakdown of the customers to ascertain how much income is generated from these premises. We will be manually interrogating the system and I hope to be able to provide further detail at the Scrutiny meeting.


6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The discretion under these regulations lies with the County Council and in setting their local policy they have clearly spelt out where the additional disposal charges will be levied. Therefore as the collection authority the only decision necessary is whether we recover all or part of the increased charge.

7. RECOMMENDATION

- 7.1 It is recommended that approval be given for the recovery of the full cost of disposal from those premises previously exempt from the charge, except where they continue to be exempt under the County Council's local policy.

Contact Officer: Eric Kendall, Head of Operations

 01480 388635

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Waste Partnership local policy on the implementation of the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 as amended by the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2012

1. Overview and principles

- 1.1 The Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012¹ came into force on 6 April 2012. These Regulations were slightly amended by the Controlled Waste (England and Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 which come into force on 9th October 2012. These two Regulations are collectively referred to in this policy document as the CWR 2012. Whilst Government were seeking to clarify the previous regulations (CWR 1992) there remains some ambiguity in the new Regulations, in particular around local discretion on charging so that decisions can be made by local authorities that are best suited to local circumstances. The purpose of this document is to set out the local policy to be adopted by the RECAP Partners in the Cambridgeshire area.
- 1.2 The CWR 2012 will be applied unless an organisation is affected by a specific policy listed in Section 4 of this document. The organisations where the CWR 2012 will be applied are listed in Appendix 1.
- 1.3 Based on the results of the national consultation², which included representation from all stakeholders, a local consultation with RECAP Operations Panel and the local priorities of Cambridgeshire authorities the following principles were agreed: -
- 1) The Councils support the polluter pays principle.
 - 2) Council tax payers' money should not be used to offset / subsidise public/private sector commercial waste collection and disposal costs.
 - 3) Care needs to be taken when imposing charging which impacts on services that are commissioned by Cambridgeshire County Council (County Council) and results in higher cost for those services.
 - 4) Care should be taken where facilities directly support local communities or are owned or controlled by that community within the County.
 - 5) Consideration should be given to the impact decisions would have on the County Council and the District Councils in the area.

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/811/contents/made>

² <http://archive.defra.gov.uk/corporate/consult/controlled-waste-regs/120315-controlled-waste-regs-summary-responses.pdf>

- 1.4 The national and local consultation, the five principles above and the Government Response to the Consultation³ were used to reach the decisions contained in section 3 and 4 of this policy.

2. Legislative context

- 2.1 The CWR 2012⁴ prescribes how certain types of household, commercial and industrial waste must be treated. This includes defining when a collection charge for household waste may be made. It also defines when household waste must be classified as commercial waste for the purposes of charging for disposal of the waste collected subject to the exemptions provided by the CWR 2012.⁵
- 2.2 The CWR 2012 are not therefore totally prescriptive and leave the decision on whether to charge or not to each local authority for some property types.
- 2.3 The District Councils as Waste Collection Authorities (WCAs) have a duty to arrange for the collection of commercial waste when requested to do so⁶. The authority can make a reasonable charge for the collection and disposal of commercial and industrial waste collected.⁷
- 2.4 The County Council has a duty to make arrangements for the disposal of waste collected by the WCAs⁸ and the County Council is entitled to reimbursement for the disposal charges from the Districts for their collection of commercial and industrial waste⁹.

3. Overarching Policy:

- 3.1 Organisations will be identified to the best of the Local Authorities ability so that the appropriate charging policy may be applied. Where there is ambiguity in the CWR 2012 and in this policy, the Operations Panel will reach a decision on how to class that premise type so that a joint approach can be adopted across Cambridgeshire on the charging policy.
- 3.2 Payment of council tax is used as criteria to distinguish those organisations that may be classed as a non-chargeable under the CWR 2012.
- 3.3 A District Council may choose not to apply a charge for collection because of the principles set out in section 1.3 of this policy. The District will inform the County Council of such decisions and a disposal charge will not be applied. These decisions will be taken back to Operations Panel so that a joint approach can be adopted across Cambridgeshire.
- 3.4 Cambridgeshire County Council may decide not to apply a disposal charge to those wastes classified as commercial waste because of the principles set out in section 1.3 of this policy. These decisions will be taken back to Operations Panel so that a joint approach can be adopted across Cambridgeshire.
- 3.4 Disposal charging will be implemented from 1 April 2013.
- 3.5 This policy will be reviewed as required or at least every 5 years.

³ <http://www.defra.gov.uk/publications/2012/03/15/pb13727-controlled-waste-regulations/>

⁴ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/811/contents/made>

⁵ CWR 2012 Schedule 1 subparagraph 4(8) and CWR (Amended) 2012 section 4A

⁶ Environmental Protection Act, Part II Section 45

⁷ EPA, Part II Section 45 (4)

⁸ EPA, Part II Section 51 (1)

⁹ EPA Part II Section 52 (9)

4 Policy on waste types from specific premises

As previously mentioned, there remain some property types where the District Councils and the County Council can use their discretion whether or not to make a charge. In deciding whether a charge should or should not apply, the relevant principles in paragraph 1.3 above are shown in italics for each case.

4.1 Residential, nursing and care homes

Aligned to principles 1 to 5

Waste from a residential, care and nursing home is classified as household waste.

- a) These premises will be charged for waste collection and disposal when more than 50% of their residents are non-council tax payers.
- b) Premises receiving a District Council Collection with free disposal prior to 6 April 2012 will continue to do so providing there is no break in contract. Returning customers to District Services would be charged disposal as in paragraph 4.1 (a).

4.2 University and Colleges (Higher Educational Establishments)

Aligned to principles 1, 2 and 5

Waste from a University and Colleges (Higher Educational Establishments) is classified as household waste.

- a) These premises will be charged for waste collection and disposal, unless otherwise exempt, for all waste from its business that is carried out on site, for example lecture /seminar rooms, staff offices, libraries. This will include Halls of Residence that are part of the establishments that carries out business on behalf of the University/College and is subject to University/College Rules and Regulations.
- b) Clarification on this definition was sought from Defra and was used to decide the above.

4.3 Hospitals

Aligned to principles 1, 2 and 5

Waste from a hospital is classified as household waste.

- a) These premises will be charged for waste collection and disposal, unless otherwise exempt, for all waste from its business that is carried out on site, including waste from business, health care facilities and some accommodation.
- b) These premises will not be charged for disposal for accommodation that is occupied by council tax payers or accommodation is provided for persons with no other permanent address and the waste is collected separately from other waste collected on site, for example, multi-occupancy residential buildings.

4.4 Premises used wholly or mainly for public meetings

Aligned to principles 1, 3, 4

Waste from a premises used wholly or mainly for public meetings is classified as household waste for which a collection charge may be made. For

purposes of assessing wholly or mainly, this will apply if 51% or more of the lettings are for public meetings. For clarity, premises not used for public meetings can be classed as commercial waste.

5. Clarification of premise types

5.1 Waste from premises used for charitable purposes is dealt with in three places within the Regulations and can be either commercial or household waste. The following provides clarification:

- a) Waste from premises occupied by a charity, for example headquarters and offices, is to be regarded as commercial waste (Schedule 1 paragraph 2 row 13 of the Regulations).
- b) For charity shops selling donated goods originating from a domestic property, waste will be regarded as household waste for which a collection charge can be made. Where waste originates from a non-domestic property a collection and disposal charge can apply (Schedule 1 paragraph 4 row 11).
- c) Waste from a community interest company or charity or other non for profit company which collects goods for re-use or waste to prepare for re-use from domestic property is household waste for which a collection charge can be made. Where waste originates from a non-domestic property a collection and disposal charge can apply (paragraph 4 row 12).

Appendix 1

Below lists organisations where there is no local policy and the CWR 2012 will be applied. This list is not exhaustive and the CWR 2012 will be consulted when making any decision.

The CWR 2012 provides the following exemptions: -

- (i) The exemption will be for those premises which are (i) currently – i.e. immediately before the Regulations came into force – receiving free disposal **and** (ii) receiving Small Business Rate Relief as defined in section 43(1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1998, calculated in accordance with section 43 (4A)(a).
- (ii) Publicly funded schools and Further Educational colleges who currently benefit from free disposal immediately prior to Regulations coming into force will continue to be exempt from waste disposal charges.

Household waste

- Places of worship – *no collection or disposal charge applied (Schedule 1 para 2, row 5)*
- Residential hostel – *A collection charge can be applied. No disposal charge can be applied. (Schedule 1 para 2, row 10)*
- Publically funded schools and Further Education Colleges or other education establishments (publically funded as defined in Schedule 1 subparagraph 4 (8)) benefitting from a District Council collection with free disposal prior to 6 April 2012. *A collection charge can be applied. (Schedule 1 para 2, row 15)*
- Non-publicly funded schools, nursery and preschools – *A collection charge can be applied. A disposal charge may be applied, unless they qualify for an exemption as per (i) and (ii) above. (Schedule 1 para 2, row 15)*
- Penal institution – *A collection charge can be applied. A disposal charge may be applied, unless they qualify for an exemption. (Schedule 1 para 2, row 17)*

Commercial waste (all must be charged, collection and disposal, unless they qualify for an exemption as per (i) above)

- Self catering accommodation, campsites and caravan sites used as holiday accommodation
- Premises occupied by a clubs, societies or any association of persons in which activities are conducted for the benefit of members.
- Premises occupied by a court, government department, local authority, persons appointed to discharge public functions and body incorporated by Royal Charter.
- Hotel
- Trade or commercial business

- General Practitioners

Industrial waste (*all must be charged collection and disposal*)

- Workshop Laboratory waste
- Science research association
- Premises used for the breeding, boarding or stabling of animals

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

13TH NOVEMBER 2012

CABINET

22ND NOVEMBER 2012

**THE CONTRIBUTION OF AGRICULTURE TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND
ECONOMY IN THE CONTEXT OF PLANNING POLICIES
(Report by the Working Group)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) held on 10th January 2012, one of the Agenda items was the Cambridgeshire Green Infrastructure Strategy. Members raised concern that there was no mention of agriculture and its environmental work in the Strategy. A Working Group was established to undertake a study on this subject. Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, P M D Godfrey, G J Harlock and D Harty and Mr D Hopkins agreed to join the Working Group.

2. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

- 2.1 According to The National Farmers' Union (NFU) estimations, up to 80% of land in Huntingdonshire is used in farming and Cambridgeshire County Council data reveals that 51% of people live in villages. Farmers are keepers of the rural environment and they are supported by the Common Agricultural Policy of the European Union. The Working Group judged that the importance of rural areas and agriculture should be reflected to a greater extent in the Council's planning policy framework.

- 2.2 Food security is a national and international concern. The NFU core policy states:

“Farming in the Fens is nationally important and makes a significant contribution to the regional economy. It is essential that all stakeholders continue to support the sustainable growth of the farming and food industries to guarantee the future prosperity of the Fens.”

Agriculture in the Fens earns £1.7bn for the Gross Domestic Product.

- 2.3 Given that the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) removes the detailed planning guidance set out in Planning Policy Statements, Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Circulars it was particularly timely to conduct the review. Through the NPPF the Government's intention is that local planning authorities will be free to develop planning policies which are suitable for their areas. Detailed guidance will be encapsulated in new 'Local Plans' so there is an opportunity to influence the terms of the Plan framework.

- 2.4 The study's terms of reference are:-

- to make recommendations on terms for inclusion in the Local Plan regarding land use and economic development outside the market towns with a view to giving equal value to land use from economic, food security and environmental perspectives;

- to review detailed planning policies relating to planning and conservation in rural areas;
- to investigate the Council's procedure for dealing with applications where agriculture is a factor;
- to examine abuses of conditions and consents for agricultural use and diversification.

The Working Group is keen to examine how the Council treats planning applications where agriculture is a factor and what happens once such applications have been determined. However, given the timetable for the Local Plan production, Members have decided to focus initially on terms that might be included in the Plan.

- 2.5 The Environmental Well-Being Panel has also discussed the fact that the Great Fen project occupies high quality agricultural land. This suggests there may be a need to look at how agriculture is taken into account when other policies and strategies are developed.

3. EVIDENCE AND INVESTIGATIONS

- 3.1 The Working Group has met on five occasions. During these meetings, Members have interviewed:

- Mr David Felce – Farmer at Midloe Grange farm and LEAF (Linking Environment and Farming) member;
- Mr Paul Hammett – Environmental Adviser, NFU – East Anglia region, and
- Mr Paul Bland – Huntingdonshire District Council's Planning Service Manager (Policy).

Following the interview with Mr Felce, a visit to Midloe Grange Farm was undertaken. In addition to being a demonstration farm for LEAF, Midloe Grange Farm has been in the Countryside Stewardship Scheme since 1992.

4. FINDINGS

- 4.1 The Planning Service Manager (Policy) has advised the working group that, in the past, there has been no need to develop specific local planning policy to protect agricultural land. This position is changing. The pressures for development in this area are well known. Detailed guidance will be required to ensure there is balanced growth across the District.
- 4.2 Population forecasts indicate that Huntingdonshire needs to provide 5,000 to 10,000 new homes plus associated employment, shopping and other facilities in the period up to 2036. Guidance will have to take account of demographic trends and environmental capacity. One of the tools that the Council can use to inform this guidance is an environmental capacity study. An environmental capacity study assesses the quality of the environment and landscape in an area. It factors in agricultural land classifications around each of the main settlements and also the interface with Peterborough along the boundary with Huntingdonshire. The environmental capacity study will enable the Council to identify environmental and landscape constraints to development across Huntingdonshire and, ultimately, define the developable limits of the settlements in the Plan period. This should minimise the pressure for

development on agricultural land around settlements. **The Working Group supports the use of an environmental capacity study to ensure that preference will be given to development on lower quality agricultural land before development on higher quality land is considered. Furthermore, the Working Group recommends the new Local Plan should consider the need for community led growth in rural villages to contribute towards their sustainability.**

- 4.3 Large development sites on the edge of towns and villages have tended to be on Greenfield land, which is also former agricultural land. Changes in employment patterns and the industrial/business base of the District mean that there may be further Brownfield land development opportunities at some older employment areas, thereby reducing the need to use Greenfield land to meet identified development needs. The NPPF recognises the need for a vibrant rural economy to be nurtured through the planning process. It focuses on supporting economic growth within the context of sustainable development. The widely accepted definition of sustainable development refers to development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. There is a strong national and local policy stance on development on Brownfield and Greenfield sites. It holds that Brownfield land should be developed first, in preference to Greenfield land. **The Working Group recommends that definitions of Greenfield and Brownfield sites should be consistently applied.**
- 4.4 Existing policy generally prevents development in the open countryside, unless it is justifiable and directly linked to agriculture and rural life or other 'land hungry' activities such as new road building, quarrying and minerals extraction. The latter are covered, in planning terms, by the Minerals and Waste Plan that is prepared by the County Council. The allocations made in that Plan may be shown on the proposals map which will accompany the new Local Plan.
- 4.5 The NPPF's core planning principles seek to recognise 'the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside' and support 'thriving rural communities within it'. Furthermore, Section 3 of the NPPF guides local planning authorities to take account of the rural economy:

'Supporting a prosperous rural economy

Planning policies should support economic growth in rural areas in order to create jobs and prosperity by taking a positive approach to sustainable new development. To promote a strong rural economy, Local and Neighbourhood Plans should:-

- Support the sustainable growth and expansion of all types of business and enterprise in rural areas, both through conversion of existing buildings and well designed new buildings;
- Promote the development and diversification of agricultural and other land-based rural businesses;
- Support sustainable rural tourism and leisure developments that benefit businesses in rural areas, communities and visitors, and which respect the character of the countryside. This should include supporting the provision and expansion of

tourist and visitor facilities in appropriate locations where identified needs are not met by existing facilities in rural service centres; and

- Promote the retention and development of local services and community facilities in villages, such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship.'

4.6 The only reference in the NPPF to agricultural land is in paragraph 112. It states that:-

'Local planning authorities should take into account the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land. Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, local planning authorities should seek to use areas of poorer quality land in preference to that of a higher quality.'

4.7 In the opinion of the Planning Service Manager (Policy) a policy protecting agricultural land is unnecessary as adequate protections are already in place. However, it is suggested that local green space policy designations might be identified, which could include farm land, giving additional protection against other uses of the land. This will be pursued in the next phase of the study.

4.8 The working group has discussed these principles in detail with David Felce (LEAF) and Paul Hammett (NFU). As a result of their discussions, **it is recommended that the new Local Plan adopts the National Planning Policy Framework's principles relating to the rural economy and agricultural land (see paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6 above).**

4.9 In the course of the study various aspects of detailed planning policies and processes have been identified as meriting close investigation (see Appendix hereto). Specifically, Members have discussed the advice received from consultants engaged by the Council on planning applications where agriculture is a factor. The Working Group has been advised that the consultants have a strong independent position which could not be offered by a local firm. Further to this, the use of one firm has ensured a consistent approach, and, due to the number of applications they have dealt with, they have acquired a good knowledge of both the local area and the District Council's policies. It is obviously imperative that the Council, acting as the Local Planning Authority, takes on board independent expert advice in order to appropriately inform its decisions. In response to Members' concerns, the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy has undertaken to submit a report to the Development Management Panel, on the engagement of consultants and the possibility of expanding the pool of specialists employed by the Council, albeit on the proviso that applicants would be expected to contribute towards the cost of engaging specialists where their advice is required. The Working Group has also drawn attention to the fact that the consultants do not undertake site visits before submitting their reports. This is because it would cost significantly more. It has been suggested that applicants should be given the opportunity to pay for consultants to visit their sites if they deem this to be of benefit. **Further investigations will now be undertaken into the Council's procedure for analysing and dealing with applications where agriculture is a factor and a report will be submitted to the Development Management Panel on the outcome.**

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Working Group

RECOMMENDS

- (a) that the new Local Plan should consider the need for community led growth in rural villages to contribute towards their sustainability (para. 4.2);
- (b) that definitions of Greenfield and Brownfield sites should be consistently applied (para. 4.3);
- (c) that the new Local Plan takes account of the National Planning Policy Framework's principles relating to the rural economy and agricultural land as set out in paragraphs 4.5 and 4.6 above (para. 4.8);
- (d) that further investigation is undertaken into the Council's procedure for analysing and dealing with applications where agriculture is a factor and a report is submitted to the Development Management Panel on the outcome (para. 4.9).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Notes of the Land Use for Agricultural Purposes in the Context of Planning Policies Working Group.

Why Farming Matters in the Fens – NFU Online

National Planning Policy Framework

Contact Officer: Mrs J Walker, Democratic Services
☎ 01480 387049

Issues Identified by the Local Agriculture Working Group.

Resource Protection

- Renewable energy initiatives need to be in the right place.
- Planning policy should be sympathetic to initiatives that operate within a single site.
- Agricultural land is increasingly being used for environmental purposes.

Pasture

- Unimproved pasture is scarce – there is an EU requirement that each country maintains the same level of cropped pasture as a baseline.
- Permanent pasture is under threat. Ridge and furrow is one of the most threatened features of local farms. There needs to be clarity within planning policies on how building on such land would be regarded.

Planning Policy

- Policy needs to be consistent e.g. wind turbines are granted permission where housing would be refused.
- Where permission is granted for construction of operational buildings, the buildings should only be used for the purpose for which permission was granted. A condition might be imposed to this effect, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Agricultural buildings should have regard to their location. Planning conditions might be imposed on the appearance of buildings.
- The Council should be flexible and willing to enter into a dialogue with the agricultural industry. Similarly, the agricultural industry should be flexible in its requirements.
- There is a need for greater agricultural expertise in the planning process. This would help to assess the viability of applications. It has been suggested that a review Working Group might be established, comprising individuals with an in-depth knowledge of the agricultural industry, to advise on applications and negotiate with applicants on acceptable developments. The Working Group should be confined to considering applications for development that has an agricultural purpose or is sought on the grounds of agricultural exceptions.
- A question has been raised over the quality of advice received from consultants for agricultural applications. This should be reviewed.
- Workplace homes in rural communities are viewed positively as they bring benefits to the communities in terms of income and employment.
- Some rural villages would benefit from low levels of development.
- Agricultural policy needs to be taken into account when house building targets are set. Villages need more houses to continue to be viable.
- Diversification needs to be defined. It should not have an adverse effect on the environment.
- Planning permission for developments that have agricultural purposes might be assessed against a range of criteria.
- The criteria need to cover the broad perspectives of the economy, land use and farming.

- Planning permission for development with agricultural purposes might have off-setting conditions attached to them that promote the environment e.g. allow development if wood land is planted or a pond is built.
- There should be a policy for storing run-off water.
- Does the designation of green-field and brown-field sites apply only to buildings or does it include the surrounding land?
- Agricultural development needs to be of the right kind.
- Farmers need to make green areas viable.
- Development should not result in pollution.
- Guidance is required on how the effects of development on the environment might be mitigated.
- No new agricultural planning permission should be granted or permitted development take place if the applicant has existing similar buildings used for non-agricultural purposes with or without planning permission.
- Change of use for non-agricultural purposes should only be approved on condition that, if needed in the future, the premises will revert back to agriculture and there will not simply be a new building.

Housing

- Diversification enables farmers' families to stay in villages where the farm is not big enough to provide an income for all descendants. This helps to maintain the viability of villages.

Enforcement

- It is suspected that the agricultural justification for development might sometimes have been abused; such as using barns for warehousing and selling their houses and applying to build new homes.
- There should be follow up enforcement, for example, if a house is built using agricultural justification and the business is discontinued.
- Planning Officers should have mobile technology that will provide them with data on planning permissions for use when visiting sites.

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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>Corporate Plan Working Group to meet on 12th November to consider the delivery plan and monitoring arrangements.</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>	
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>		

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date
11/9/12	Councillor J W Davies updated the Panel on progress made towards completion of the Tree Strategy.	Due to the voluntary redundancy of administrative staff within the division there has been a delay in the production of the Tree Strategy.	The Strategy should be completed by the end of 2012, at which time consultation will take place.	December 2012
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.	
	Having considered the Waste Collection Policies at their		The Executive Councillor for the Environment has agreed to provide the Panel with an update at its October meeting.	

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date
11/9/12	<p>previous meeting, Members expressed a view that bin stickers could be used to convey messages with community benefits, such as speed restrictions.</p> <p>The Panel has asked for further information on the pilot by Speedwatch into the effectiveness of displaying speed limit signs on wheeled bins.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Councillor Tysoe has discussed the Cabinet's views with the Panel.</p> <p>Information has been received from Mr D McCandless. Hilton PC has yet to fund the trial of wheelie bin stickers so they have not been issued 'globally' within the village. Consequently, an assessment was carried out. Further information to be provided at the meeting.</p>		November 2012
8/11/11 6/1/12	<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> <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>Site visit held on 2nd March followed by a debrief on 21st March and a meeting on 1st June.</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>	

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date
11/9/12	The Panel considered the report of the Working Group which outlined its findings to date.	<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> <p>The meeting with the Urban Design, Trees and Landscape Team Leader was held on 5th October. The Working Group will next consider the draft revised Design Guide.</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 failures.</p>	
9/2/12	<p>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.</p>	<p>The Project and Assets Manager has met with Anglian Water to discuss issues and will continue to pursue this matter.</p>		
13/3/12	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) to be asked to pursue this issue further.</p>	
10/4/12	<p>The Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) has suggested that a Working Group be convened</p>	<p>It was agreed that appointment to the Working Group would be delayed until after</p>		

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date
<p>19/06/12</p> <p>11/9/12</p> <p>9/10/12</p>	<p>to examine Yaxley drainage issues in detail.</p> <p>Having considered the St Neots Surface Water Management Plan, Members acknowledged that drainage problems within the district are widespread.</p> <p>Two meetings have been held with representatives from Anglian Water and the Environment Agency.</p> <p>Report of the Working Group considered at the meeting. The outcome of negotiations between Anglian Water and the County Council on drainage in Yaxley is awaited.</p>	<p>the Annual Council Meeting.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>A meeting was held on Thursday, 28th June so that Members could set out their terms of reference and establish the way forward for the study.</p>	
<p>10/1/12</p> <p>19/6/12</p>	<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>The Working Group has met on numerous occasions and have visited Mr Felce's farm.</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>The Working Group wish to meet with Paul Hammett, NFU, Environmental Adviser.</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>The Working Group met with Paul Hammett to discuss the importance of farming in Huntingdonshire.</p> <p>The Working Group has begun</p>	

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date
11/9/12	The Panel has considered the findings to date of the Working Group.	<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>A meeting between the Working Group, the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy and the Planning Service Manager (Development Management) was held on 4th October.</p>	<p>summarising its findings to date in order to influence the new Local Plan.</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>The report appears elsewhere on the Agenda.</p>	November 2012

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

6TH NOVEMBER 2012
8TH NOVEMBER 2012
13TH NOVEMBER 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
<p>Leisure Centre Financial Performance and Employment Structure</p>	<p>To consider the future business model for “One Leisure” and the development of a methodology for the quantification of Social Value.</p>	<p>Economic Well-Being and Social Well-Being</p>	<p>Working Group met on 28th February 2012. Agreed to split into two sub groups to investigate each area.</p> <p>Sub-Group looking at the ‘Social Methodology’ met in August 2012. Research being undertaken by Officers. Pending its completion, a meeting of the Working Group will be arranged.</p> <p>The whole Working Group will receive the Business Plan prior to its submission to the Panel and the Cabinet in December.</p> <p>Having noted that the review of the Business Model has come to a standstill, the Economic Well-Being Panel has asked their Chairman to speak to the Executive Leader about this, about prioritising the Council’s services and more generally about the role of scrutiny.</p>	<p>Joint Working Group</p>

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 February 2013.	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	Strategy and Guidance being updated by the Corporate Office to incorporate comments suggested by the Working Group. First draft expected to be made available to the Working Group end of November/early December.	Working Group.
Review of Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire	To undertake a review of the Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire.	Social Well-Being	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. Pilot meeting arranged for 7th November 2012 – however, this meeting will not be open to the public.	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 The Working Group will meet on 14 th November to draw together the conclusions from their review.	Working Group
Equality Framework for Local Government	To review the action plan arising from the Equality Framework for Local Government peer assessment.	Social Well-Being	Working Group met on 29th August 2012 to review the Action Plan. Councillor Mrs P A Jordan to attend the Equality Framework Steering Group. Action Plan revised since the Working Group last met. Further meeting of the Working Group to be arranged in the future.	Working Group
Economic Development	To be determined.	Economic Well-Being	The Local Economy Strategy is scheduled for completion at the end of the year. Work is currently taking place to develop a robust evidence base for the new Strategy. As part of this process all members were given the opportunity to participate in the	To be determined.

			<p>consultation on the initial report. A seminar was held on 18th October for this purpose.</p> <p>The Economic Development Manager will also attend the Panel's November meeting.</p>	
Corporate Plan	To assist the Corporate Office with the development of a new Corporate Plan.	All O&S Panels	Meeting of the Working Group arranged for 12th November 2012 to further refine the Council Delivery Plan and consider future monitoring arrangements.	Working Group
Fraud Prevention	To consider the implications from forthcoming changes to the Housing Benefits system.	Economic Well-Being	The Corporate Governance Panel have agreed to establish a working group to consider fraud risks, current and future approaches and single fraud issues. Their report will be considered by the Panel at their meeting in January.	To be determined.
Huntingdonshire Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	To consider the social implications of the announcement made by the Huntingdonshire CAB to go into voluntary liquidisation.	Social Well-Being	Executive Leader provided an update to the Panel in October. Further update on recent developments will be provided in November. Mr M Mealing, Chairman of the CAB will also be present at the meeting.	Whole Panel Study.

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 Borrowing	Agreed to establish a working group to develop an understanding of the District Council's approach to borrowing.	Economic Well-Being.	First meeting held on 17 th October 2012. The Group discussed various aspects of general approaches to borrowing and have asked for a report on a number of matters relating to the Council's borrowing.	Working Group.

Decision Digest

Edition 128

Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 24th September to 31st October 2012.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT, ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION REGULATIONS AND DATA PROTECTION ACT

Details of the number of requests received by the Council under the Freedom of Information Act, Environmental Information Regulations and Data Protection Act were noted by the Corporate Governance Panel. Future reports will include the previous year's statistics for comparative purposes.

AUDITORS REPORT – FINAL ACCOUNTS 2010/11

The Corporate Governance Panel has received a report by the external auditors outlining the findings of their audit of the Council's 2010/11 accounts.

INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE: ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST AUGUST 2012

The Corporate Governance Panel has noted the conclusions of the Audit and Risk Manager on the Council's internal control and governance processes. It is his view that the Council does have in place adequate controls to manage risks identified by the Council. However, the Panel expressed concern over the implementation of agreed audit actions and the target set for their achievement. The Executive Councillor for Resources will be advised of the Panel's concerns.

REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE

The Corporate Governance Panel has considered the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of the Internal Audit Service as required under the provisions of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011. The Panel has noted that the service was generally effective and that an action plan had been developed to address the areas for improvement identified as a result of the review.

REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PANEL

The Corporate Governance Panel has received a report detailing the outcome of a review undertaken by the Chairman on the effectiveness of the Panel. The Panel will begin to receive a series of information briefings via email to enable them to become more proactively aware of relevant legal and regulatory issues and best practice developments. In addition, reports on the governance of the pay review, business continuity and the Local Plan will be submitted to future Panel meetings.

RISK REGISTER

Changes made to the Risk Register between the period 14th March to 31st August 2012 have been noted by the Corporate Governance Panel.

COMPLAINTS

Lessons learnt by the Council on the cases referred to the Local Government Ombudsman have been noted by the Corporate Governance Panel. Only two complaints had been received in 2011/12, both relating to the same matter.

GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

Subject to some minor amendment, the Corporate Governance Panel has authorised its Chairman to sign the Governance Statement on behalf of the Council. The changes required relate to the deletion of reference to the Local Area Agreement and to the date scheduled for the review of the effectiveness of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

APPROVAL FOR PUBLICATION OF THE 2011/12 ACCOUNTS

The Corporate Governance Panel has noted the process required to be undertaken prior to the publication of the 2011/12 final accounts. This includes receiving both the auditor's report on the audit of the 2011/12 accounts and their Letter of Representation and the draft Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2012. The Panel has authorised the Managing Director (Resources) to sign the Letter of Representation on behalf of the Council and, following consultation with the Chairman of the Panel to make any final non-material changes to the 2011/12 accounts. The Panel has also authorised the Chairman of the Panel to sign the accounts on behalf of the Council.

TRAINING OF PANEL MEMBERS

Suggestions for training for Members of the Corporate Governance Panel based on the anticipated work programme over the ensuing year were noted.

HOUSING BENEFIT – INTRODUCTION OF RISK BASED VERIFICATION

A proposal to introduce risk based verification on new Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims submitted through the Council's online claim facility was considered by the Cabinet, the Corporate Governance Panel and the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being). The proposal emerged following a pilot undertaken by a number of local authorities across the country enabling the Council to categorise applications into one of the three risk groups of high, medium or low.

The aim of RBV is to reduce fraud and error by concentrating resources on the type of claim where the risk of the claimant providing incorrect information or evidence was deemed to be high. The Panel has discussed the cost benefits which were presented by the proposals and has noted that it was also the intention to introduce Risk Based Verification for Council Tax Support once the Local Government Finance Act has received Royal Assent.

Having been advised of the Panel's views, the Cabinet has endorsed the content of the Policy.

CODE OF PROCUREMENT: TENDER AND QUOTATION REVIEW

Disappointment was expressed by the Corporate Governance Panel over the lack of compliance with the Council's Code of Procurement. At the request of the Panel, an education and training programme is to be developed to assist with compliance with the Code. Matters discussed will include the appointment of sub-contractors, the publicity undertaken by the Council to attract potential contractors, the role of the Internal Audit Team in opening tenders

and the importance of communication. Assurances were given that the Code is being adhered to in the case of large contracts.

LESSONS LEARNT – 2010/11 ACCOUNTS

The Corporate Governance Panel endorsed a series of recommendations, which have been accepted by the Managing Director (Resources) to improve the Council's processes to finalise the Council's financial accounts in future years. Members remain uneasy over the delay with the publication of the 2010/11 accounts.

HOUSING STRATEGY 2012-15

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has considered the adoption of a new Housing Strategy 2012-15 for Huntingdonshire. Matters discussed include the impact of infrastructure planning upon an individual's quality of life, private sector rental rates and how they compared with the public sector, homelessness levels within the District and the role and importance of community planning within Parishes.

Having emphasised the Council's commitment to enabling housing which meets local needs the Cabinet has approved the contents of the 2012-15 Housing Strategy.

DRAFT TENANCY STRATEGY

The terms of a new Tenancy Strategy for Huntingdonshire has been considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). This has arisen under the requirements of the Localism Act 2011. The most significant change within the Strategy is the introduction of 5 year fixed term tenancies which could be offered by social landlords to their tenants. The Panel has discussed the impact of the

Strategy upon tenants with existing assured tenancies, the review process leading up to the end of the fixed term period, the level of publicity undertaken on the proposals and the impact of the welfare reforms. The Strategy intends to encourage more effective utilisation of social housing and to reduce the pressures placed upon the Housing Register.

Subsequently, the Cabinet has approved the content of the Strategy.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE CITIZENS ADVICE BUREAU (CAB)

The Executive Leader has addressed the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) on the social aspects of the recent announcement made by Huntingdonshire CAB to enter into voluntary liquidisation. The service will cease in December 2012 and interim arrangements are currently being planned for the final quarter of the financial year, with consideration also being given to a long term solution for Huntingdonshire in the future. A further update will be provided to the Panel in November 2012.

THE CORPORATE OFFICE

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has received a presentation by the Corporate Team Manager on the role and function of the Corporate Office and the work which is being undertaken by the Team in partnership with other agencies to help people back into employment within the District.

With regard to the latter, Members have welcomed these joint initiatives as an indication of the successes which can be achieved from partnership working.

In considering the functions of the Corporate Office, Members have discussed the communications function

which was concentrated into two areas – internal and external. Having noted that one of the priorities for the Corporate Office had been to improve internal communications and been advised of the recent discussions at the Employment Panel, the Panel has asked the Corporate Team Manager to attend a future meeting to discuss the issues associated with communications more specifically.

COMMUNITY RIGHT TO CHALLENGE

In conjunction with the Cabinet, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has been acquainted with proposed arrangements which the Council should adopt in order to operate the new Community Right to Challenge. The Right to Challenge was created by the Localism Act and introduces a right for defined organisations and persons to submit an Expression of Interest in taking over the provision of a service on behalf of the Council.

A number of specific questions have been asked about the proposed process and it was noted that currently there is no funding within the Medium Term Plan to cover the additional costs which may be incurred by the Council in dealing with these requirements.

Subject to clarification of the matters that are to be delegated to the Managing Directors and the process leading to a decision, the Panel has endorsed the Council's proposals for submission to the Cabinet.

Subsequently, the Cabinet has authorised the Managing Directors, after consultation with the appropriate Heads of Service and relevant Executive Councillors, to accept or reject an expression of interest on behalf of the Council.

PROPOSED CIL GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has received an update on the progress being made with the implementation of the Community Infrastructure Levy for Huntingdonshire and the details of a proposed governance structure for CIL receipts and related spending.

The Panel has discussed a range of issues, including:-

- ❖ the 'meaningful amount' of CIL funding which will be allocated to the area in which the development lies;
- ❖ the processes which will be in place to monitor CIL expenditure; and
- ❖ the need for representation from the parishes and the rural areas within the Growth & Infrastructure Thematic Group.

In considering the Council's approach and the Panel's views, the Cabinet has approved the proposed CIL Governance Structure. At the same time, Executive Councillors have supported the development of the framework and business plan through the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership and requested the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy to liaise with the Heads of Finance and of Legal and Democratic Services to agree draft procedural and management protocols. The Cabinet will receive a further report as and when the procedural and management protocols become clearer.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

The Overview and Scrutiny Panels have endorsed the contents of the

2011/12 Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report for publication.

THE RATIONALE FOR RESERVES

The Overview & Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) has considered the outcome of the deliberations of its Working Group which had been established to consider the Council's approach to the setting of its reserves.

The Panel has endorsed the view that the current figure established for revenue reserves was reasonable and has also agreed that there should be further information in the Council's Budget reports to help Members understand the risks and related costs that support the recommended level of reserves.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

Amongst the ten applications determined by the Development Management Panel in October was a proposal to replace two existing gaia turbines with two new wind turbines at Hamerton Zoo Park, north east of Hamerton Village. The turbines are intended to generate electricity for consumption by the Zoo with any surplus fed back to the National Grid. The Panel agreed to approve the application having considered representations from the Ward Councillor, the Chairman of the Parish meeting and the applicant. Five other applications were approved and four refused at the same meeting.

APPEAL DECISIONS

In their regular review of the outcome of appeal cases and decisions made by the Planning Inspectorate, the Development Management Panel has been reminded how important it is to justify each term used in every reason given for refusal of an application given the likelihood of challenge by the

Inspector and the award of costs should the Council not be able to adequately substantiate a reason for refusal.

CHARGING FOR A SECOND GREEN BIN

For the purposes of increasing the Council's income, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) has discussed a proposal to charge Huntingdonshire residents for the collection of a second green bin. The first green bin will continue to be collected free of charge.

Councillor P L E Bucknell has addressed the Panel on this matter. He has expressed the view that residents will not pay for the second bin and will instead put green waste in grey bins which will have an adverse effect on the waste service budget. In addition, the change could lead to an increase in fly tipping. He has also reported on his discussions with a representative of a London Council, which has introduced such a charge, who has expressed the view that it was a mistake to do so.

In the light of further concerns about this proposal, the Panel unanimously agreed that the Council should not introduce a charge for second green bins. The main reasons for this decision were the likelihood of an adverse effect on recycling rates, the potential for damage to the public's opinion of the Council and an increase in fly tipping and the level of the charge compared with the District Council's portion of the Council Tax.

Having been advised of the Panel's views and in considering a request from the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) that the Panel be given an opportunity to consider details of the proposal, the Cabinet has agreed to defer the matter to enable this to happen.

CORPORATE TRAVEL PLAN UPDATE

Both the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) have considered the updated Corporate Travel Plan 2012/13 to 2017/18. Minor modifications have been made to the Plan, most notably relating to the incentives able to be offered to owners of low carbon vehicles enabling them to purchase car parking permits at a reduced rate.

Matters also discussed included the effectiveness of car sharing as a means of meeting the Plan's objectives and the percentage of employees cycling to work in 2006 compared to 2010. The Panel has requested an analysis of the use of cycling routes.

The Panel has also questioned whether the targets to 'reduce local traffic and road congestion' are sufficiently challenging to cover a five year period and it has been suggested that these should be revised.

The Panel has also suggested that the Council should place more emphasis on home working on the grounds that rather than using more efficient means of transport, it was preferable not to undertake a journey.

Having been advised of the Panel's views, the Cabinet has endorsed the contents of the updated Travel Plan and requested Officers to regularly scrutinise its targets as part of the annual review of the Council's Environment Strategy. At the same time, Executive Councillors have requested that in the future the data contained in the plan be consolidated into a smaller document.

LEADERSHIP DIRECTION

The Cabinet has endorsed the Council's Leadership Direction for

recommendation to the Council. The Plan promotes the following themes:

- Strong local economy
- Enable sustainable growth
- Improve the quality of life in Huntingdonshire; and
- Working with our communities.

These themes have been identified as the Council's main drivers towards improving the quality of life in Huntingdonshire by working with communities and partners to achieve sustainable economic growth and provide excellent value for money services that meet local needs within a balanced budget.

FINANCIAL MONITORING

The Head of Financial Services has drawn the Cabinet's attention to spending variations in the revenue budget for the current year and modifications to the approved capital programme. It was noted that the expected outturn of revenue expenditure was now £22m which represented a slight increase in that previously forecasted due to reductions in a number of income streams including estate properties, planning fees, car parks, markets and search fees.

JAPANESE KNOTWEED

The Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) has considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on Japanese Knotweed. Given that there was a very limited occurrence of Japanese Knotweed in Huntingdonshire and given that, where the Council was responsible, action had been taken to deal with it, the Panel has decided not to pursue a study on this matter.

GAMBLING ACT 2005 – STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES

The Licensing Committee has recommended the Council to approve a revised Gambling Act 2005 - Statement of Principles. The Statement, which in accordance with the Act must be reviewed every three years, has been amended to take into account guidance from the Gambling Commission and responses received as a result of a twelve week public consultation exercise.

Following submission to Cabinet in November the Statement will be recommended to the Council at its December meeting in order for it to come into effect on 31st January 2012.

LICENSING ACT 2003 – RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY DELEGATIONS

Certain provisions of the Police, Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 which came into effect on 25 April 2012 have resulted in amendments to the Licensing Act 2003, one of which was the inclusion of the Licensing Authority as a Responsible Authority. This will allow the Licensing Authority, in addition to Environmental Health and Planning, to make representations and initiate reviews of premises licences.

To satisfy the requirement for a clear distinction between the officer acting as the Responsible Authority and the officer preparing and presenting the report to the Licensing Sub-Committee the Licensing Committee has authorised the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to act on behalf of the Licensing Authority as a Responsible Officer.

LICENSING ACT 2003 – DELEGATION OF FUNCTIONS

The Licensing Committee has approved a schedule of delegations under the Licensing Act 2003. The delegations will allow the Committee to delegate

additional duties imposed on the Licensing Authority resulting from the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 to its Sub-Committee or appropriate Officers.

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