

A meeting of **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL** will be held in the **CIVIC SUITE, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **WEDNESDAY, 17 DECEMBER 2014** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

A G E N D A

	Time Allocation
PRAYER	2 minutes
<p>Reverend Brian Atling, Rector of St Mary the Virgin, Houghton and Wyton will open the meeting with prayer.</p>	
APOLOGIES	2 minutes
CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS	10 minutes
<p>1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 4)</p> <p>To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th October 2014.</p>	2 minutes
<p>2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS</p> <p>To receive from Members, declarations as to disclosable pecuniary or other interests in relation to any Agenda item. See Notes below.</p>	2 minutes
<p>3. BY ELECTION - ST NEOTS, PRIORY PARK WARD</p> <p>To report that Mr Ian Derek Gardener was elected to the Office of District Councillor for the St Neots, Priory Park Ward at a by election held on 27th November 2014.</p>	2 minutes
<p>4. PLAN ON A PAGE</p> <p>Presentation by the Executive Councillor Resources, Councillor J A Gray.</p>	15 minutes
<p>5. EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR PRESENTATIONS</p> <p>(a) Councillor D B Dew, Executive Councillor Planning and Housing Strategy</p> <p>(b) Councillor D M Tysoe, Executive Councillor Operations and the Environment</p> <p><i>(Notes -</i> <i>Executive Councillor presentations - 10 minutes each</i> <i>Questions to each presenting Councillor - 5 minutes each</i> <i>[10 minutes in total]</i> <i>Period for questions to other Members of the Cabinet - 20 minutes in total)</i></p>	50 minutes

**6. GREEN PAPER ITEM: CUSTOMER SERVICES STRATEGY - 30 minutes
WHAT NEXT?**

*(Notes -
Head of Customer Services presentation - 10 minutes
Council discussion - 20 minutes)*

7. REPORTS OF THE CABINET AND PANELS 20 minutes

FOR DECISION

- (a) Cabinet (Pages 5 - 16)

Report of the meeting held on 11th December 2014 – to follow.

- (b) Corporate Governance Panel (Pages 17 - 44)

A copy of the Annual Governance Statement is enclosed with Members copies only.

FOR INFORMATION

- (c) Development Management Panel (Pages 45 - 46)

- (d) Employment Panel (Pages 47 - 52)

- (e) Licensing and Protection Panel (Pages 53 - 54)

- (f) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Pages 55 - 62)

- (g) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) (Pages 63 - 66)

Report of the meeting held on 9th December 2014 – to follow

- (h) Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) (Pages 67 - 74)

(The Chairmen of the Cabinet and respective Panels to present their Reports and invite questions.)

8. REPRESENTATION OF POLITICAL GROUPS ON DISTRICT COUNCIL PANELS, ETC (Pages 75 - 80) 5 minutes

To consider a report by the Corporate Team Manager on the representation of political groups on Panels, etc in accordance with Section 15 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the District Council's Constitution.

9. **VARIATION TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS, ETC** 2 minutes

Group Leaders to report, if necessary.

Dated this 9th day of December 2014



Head of Paid Service

Notes

1. 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.*

Non-Statutory Disclosable Interests

- (4) *If a Member has a non-statutory disclosable interest then you are required to declare that interest, but may remain to discuss and vote providing you do not breach the overall Nolan principles.*
- (5) *A Member has a non-statutory disclosable 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 a disclosable pecuniary interest, 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, or*
 - (c) *it relates to or is likely to affect any body –*

- (i) exercising functions of a public nature; or
- (ii) directed to charitable purposes; or
- (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union) of which you are a Member or in a position of control or management.

and that interest is not a disclosable pecuniary interest.

2. Filming, Photography and Recording at Council Meetings

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

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Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the COUNCIL held in the Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 29 October 2014.

PRESENT: Councillor A J Mackender-Lawrence – Chairman.

Councillors J D Ablewhite, M G Baker, K M Baker, I C Bates, Mrs B E Boddington, P L E Bucknell, R C Carter, B S Chapman, I J Curtis, J W Davies, D B Dew, Mrs A Dickinson, Mrs L A Duffy, R S Farrer, M Francis, D A Giles, J A Gray, A Hansard, G J Harlock, R Harrison, D Harty, T Hayward, R B Howe, B Hyland, P Kadewere, Ms L Kadic, S M Van De Kerkhove, Mrs R E Mathews, P G Mitchell, J P Morris, M C Oliver, P D Reeve, T D Sanderson, M F Shellens, R G Tuplin, D M Tysoe, P K Ursell and R J West.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors G J Bull, S Cawley, K J Churchill, Mrs S Conboy, S J Criswell, Mrs A D Curtis, R Fuller and Mrs D C Reynolds.

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs M Banerjee and Messrs W T Clough, P J Downes, N J Guyatt and M F Newman.

41. PRAYER

The Reverend A Milton, Vicar of All Saints and St. Mary's, Huntingdon opened the meeting with prayer.

42. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman thanked Members for their kind thoughts and support to him during his recent ill-health. Special thanks were reserved for the Vice-Chairman, Councillor P L E Bucknell who had undertaken civic functions on his behalf.

Having received an account of the events that both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman had attended on the Council's behalf since the last meeting, Members noted details of the Carol Service to be held at 7pm on 8th December in All Saints Church, Huntingdon and later in December, an evening with the USAF Swing Band at the Burgess Hall.

43. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 24th September 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

44. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor M F Shellens declared a non-statutory disclosable interest in Minute No. 46 as a Member of the Huntingdon Freemasons' Trust. It was understood that the Trust held an interest in the Black Cat Roundabout on the A1.

45. CONFERMENT OF THE TITLES OF HONORARY ALDERMAN/ALDERWOMAN: SECTION 249, LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

By way of a report by the Corporate Team Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Council was reminded that they had agreed to introduce titles of Honorary Aldermen and Honorary Alderwomen for current and future Members of the Council who cumulatively had served a minimum of 12 years' service as an elected Councillor on the District Council.

Following tributes by the Executive Leader, Councillor J D Ablewhite and Leaders of the Opposition Groups, Councillor M G Baker and I Curtis for the contribution each nominee had made to public life and the community of Huntingdonshire, it was moved by the Chairman, Councillor A J Mackender-Lawrence and seconded by the Executive Leader, Councillor J D Ablewhite and

RESOLVED

that in sincere appreciation of distinguished public service to the District and people of Huntingdonshire and to the wards of Yaxley and Farcet, Buckden, Brampton and Elton and Folksworth, the titles of Honorary Alderwoman and Alderman be conferred upon former Councillors Mrs Madhabi Banerjee, William Clough, Peter Downes and Nicholas Guyatt in accordance with Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972.

Having each been presented with a scroll and brooch/badge in recognition of their new titles, Mrs Banerjee and Messrs Clough, Downes and Guyatt expressed their appreciation to the Council for the warmth of their reception and the honour which had been granted to them.

46. MOTION ON NOTICE

Before proceeding to the Motion on the Agenda, the Chairman announced his intention to invoke the discretion awarded to him under paragraph 9.5 (iii) of the Council Procedure Rules and to rule that the Motion submitted by Councillor Mrs B E Boddington on being moved and seconded will be dealt with at the meeting in the interests of the convenient and conducive despatch of the Council's business.

Accordingly, it was moved by Councillor Mrs B E Boddington and duly seconded that –

“This Council notes that:

The A428 is a route of significant national importance as well as a key strategic route in Cambridgeshire.

The A428 is experiencing some of the highest traffic growth in the country, and further significant growth is planned along the length of the corridor.

At peak time there are often long delays which lead to 'rat running' on to local roads with associated negative impacts.

There are concerns that without improvements, the A428 will not be able to cope with the growth planned from Bedfordshire, through to St Neots and onto Cambridge where some 20,000 homes are planned to 2031. Some 10,000 homes alone are planned on the corridor, with significant growth planned for Cambourne and Bourn.

The average number of vehicles using the single carriageway section per day is 18,000 rising to 25,000 on the dual carriageway between the A1198 at Caxton and the A1303 at Madingley.

This Council believes:

Early commitment is needed from Government for an improvement scheme on the A428 between A1 Black Cat roundabout and the Caxton Gibbet roundabout. This section of the A428 is the only remaining single carriageway part of this important east west route. It lacks the capacity to support current travel demands, and with planned growth it won't be able to function effectively as a strategic link without a comprehensive improvement scheme.

A comprehensive approach is needed as piecemeal improvement schemes which only deal with congestion problems at key hotspots run the risk of relocating the congestion to the next pinch point on the route and would not offer a satisfactory solution.

Given the strategic nature and volume of traffic, modelling work carried out for the Draft Cambridgeshire Long Term Transport Strategy is showing that additional new capacity is needed to facilitate growth.

It is important that improvements on this section of the A428 are brought forward as soon as possible so that the route does not act as a barrier to the future growth and prosperity of the area.

Therefore, this Council calls on the Executive Leader and Executive Councillor for Planning & Housing Strategy to work with their fellow Members to:

- ◆ seek a commitment from Government and the Highways Agency that comprehensive improvements will be prioritised for the A428 to enable it to perform effectively as a strategic east west link; and

- ◆ develop an A428 alliance to work with our key partners including neighboring authorities, the Highways Agency and local Members of Parliament to lobby government for early investment and improvements on the A428 to support the continued growth and prosperity of this area.”

Following debate and having been put to the vote, the Motion was declared to be CARRIED.

The meeting concluded at 6.52pm.

Chairman

Cabinet

Report of the meetings held on 23rd October and 20th November 2014

Matters for Decision

25. TREASURY MANAGEMENT: 6 MONTHLY REVIEW

By way of a report by the Head of Resources (a copy of which is reproduced as an Appendix) the Cabinet has been updated on the extent of treasury management activity, including investment, borrowing and performance over the period April to September 2014.

Although operating in difficult market conditions, Executive Councillors were pleased to note that the Council had achieved a 0.43% return on short term investment against a national performance benchmark of 0.23%. **Having noted the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) on the matter (Item No.24 of their Report refers),** the Cabinet

RECOMMEND

that the Council notes the treasury management activity over the period April to September 2014.

Matters for Information

26. DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

The Cabinet has appointed Councillor Mrs L Kadic to the membership of the Development Plan Policy Advisory Group in place of former Councillor Mrs P J Longford.

27. SHARED SERVICES GENERALLY

Executive Councillors have noted progress of the project to work in partnership with Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils to deliver shared services. The Cabinet has agreed a number of general principles for taking the project forward. These relate, for instance, to location and cost sharing and to the selection of a lead or host authority who will take responsibility for progressing the business case for each new shared service. Huntingdonshire has assumed the project lead for ICT although this might not necessarily indicate the location of the service in the future.

Having regard to the views of the **Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Item No. 21 of their Report refers)** and to the timescale for achievement of each shared service project, the Cabinet has endorsed an approach whereby interim project support will be appointed to help develop the full business cases and a post of Business and Legal Practice Manager established to assist with the transformation programme and development of the legal shared service.

28. BUDGET MONITORING 2014/15 (REVENUE & CAPITAL) AND AN UPDATE ON ZERO BASED BUDGETING

In conjunction with the **Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Item No 22 of their Report refers)**, the Cabinet has received an update on the present position with regard to the 2014/15 revenue and capital budget and progress on the zero based budgeting exercise. In terms of budget monitoring, Executive Members have noted an estimated variation or underspend of £171,000 and £689,000 in the revenue and capital budgets respectively and a projected increase in New Homes Bonus arising from the completion of 137 additional properties more than originally forecast.

Executive Councillors have discussed the methodology for the ZBB exercise and have expressed concern at the timescale for its completion given how intrinsically it is linked to the Shared Services and 'Facing the Future' projects. In response, the Managing Director has undertaken to consider ways and the capacity of the organisation to expedite the process. Accordingly, a budgetary plan, which will assign a timescale to the completion of the ZBB exercise, will be submitted to a future meeting.

29. OPTIONS FOR FRAUD INVESTIGATION POST SFIS

(The following item was considered as a confidential item under paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

The Cabinet has considered the future of the District Council's fraud team in view of the establishment by the Government of a Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) designed to investigate all welfare fraud under the control of the Department of Work and Pensions. On the recommendation of the **Corporate Governance and Overview & Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) Panels (Item Nos. 24 and 23 respectively of their Reports refer)**, Executive Councillors have agreed to retain a fraud presence post SFIS but have asked that Officers continue to pursue consideration of shared service options with partner authorities by 2016.

**30. CORPORATE PLAN – PERFORMANCE MONITORING/
QUARTER 2**

Having carefully considered the comments of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels relevant to the remits of the respective Panels, the Cabinet has reviewed and noted progress achieved against key activities and performance data contained in the Council's Corporate Plan over the period 1st July to 30th September 2014.

In general, the Cabinet acknowledged that the performance management framework will continue to evolve over time and that indicators might vary to reflect changes to corporate priorities and to achieve value for money objectives.

In terms of specific comments, the Cabinet noted that an updated customer engagement/services strategy will be submitted to a future meeting, that in view of the increase in staff sickness, managers will be further trained and supported to ensure consistent implementation of the sickness absence policy and that Officers are looking at ways under new and existing legislation to respond to fly tipping and litter nuisance.

31. SHARED SERVICE – BUILDING CONTROL

The Cabinet has been acquainted with progress achieved towards an agreement with South Cambridgeshire District Council on the implementation of a shared service arrangement for the Building Control function and the potential to extend the arrangement to Cambridge City Council. Executive Councillors have noted the potential for savings of £100,000 which could result by bringing the two services together and the opportunity that existed, by strengthening the quality and resilience of the service, to generate additional income of £60,000 per annum. However, Executive Councillors have requested that a full business case for the proposal and that involving Cambridge City Council should be further developed with detailed budgetary implications for presentation to their meeting in March 2015. Having commended the positive views and the support of the **Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Environmental-Well Being) (Item No. 22 of the Report of their meeting refers)**, the Cabinet has

- agreed the formation of a shared Building Control Service between South Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire with South Cambridgeshire acting as Lead Authority for the first phase of the implementation and authorised the Corporate Director (Delivery), after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Planning & Housing Strategy, to implement the service between the two Councils on the basis of an approach described as Option 1;
- noted the intention to use the Transformation Challenge Award to fund the short term costs necessary to implement the shared service as determined by the Shared Service Board;

- requested that appropriate action be taken to progress a business case with Cambridge City Council and reporting on an eventual shared service involving all three partners by Spring 2015; and
- authorised South Cambridgeshire District Council to act as lead authority, to attend the Shadow Regional Board for Building Control on behalf of the District and Cambridge City Council and to explore the potential for a regional partnership on the understanding that any such future organisational arrangements be mutually agreed by all three authorities as appropriate.

J D Ablewhite
Chairman

Public
Key Decision – No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title: Treasury Management
Review of Performance: 6 Monthly Review

Meeting/Date: Cabinet
20 November 2014

Executive Portfolio: Resources: Councillor J A Gray

Report by: Head of Resources

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

Executive Summary:

In February 2014 the Council adopted the 2014/15 Treasury Management Strategy. Best Practice and Prescribed Treasury Management Guidance requires Members to be kept up to date in respect of treasury management activity for the first half of the year, including investment and borrowing activity and treasury performance.

Recommendation:

It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny notes the report and recommends the report to Cabinet and then to Council.

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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To update members, in line with best practice and prescribed Treasury Management guidance, on treasury management activity for the first half of the year, including investment and borrowing activity and treasury performance.

2. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

- 2.1 The Council approved the 2014/15 Treasury Management Strategy at its meeting on 13 February 2014.
- 2.2 All treasury management activity undertaken during the period complied with the CIPFA Code of Practice and relevant legislative provisions.
- 2.3 The investment strategy is to invest any surplus funds in a manner that balances low risk of default by the borrower with a fair rate of interest. The Council's borrowing strategy permits borrowing for cash flow purposes and funding current and future capital expenditure over whatever periods are in the Council's best interests.

3. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY

Cash Flow Management

- 3.1 The vast majority of activity over the past 6 months has been in managing short term fluctuations in cash flow by borrowing or investing for periods that ensure sustainable cash liquidity and at cost that is the most economically advantageous for the Council.
- 3.2 Much of the investment activity has been in call accounts and Money Market Funds. These accounts offer two clear advantages considering the current investment market:
- One of the primary Treasury Management objectives is the security of funds invested; because these accounts allow immediate access to funds this reduces the risk of default.
 - These accounts provide a fair return on amounts invested.
- 3.3 There have also been deficits at various times over the period which has required the council to borrow temporarily from other Local Authorities at low rates (typically between 0.27% and 0.40%), the maximum period of borrowing has been 35 days.

Long Term Borrowing and Investments

- 3.4 During the period the council has made available the following investment facilities:
- £1.371m to Huntingdon Regional College, which has been back-to-back funded by long-term borrowing for the same amount from the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB).
 - £0.071m to Huntingdon Gym.
 - £0.010m to Alconbury Parish Council.

With regard to the investments in Huntingdon Gym and Alconbury Parish Council, these are currently being financed from within the Councils own working capital.

- 3.5 As at the 30 September the Council had short and long term external investments of £9.2m and borrowing of £16.4m. The following table summarises the transactions during the period and further detailed analysis is shown in Appendix 1.

2013/14 £m			2014/15 £m
6.4	Investments	- as at 31 st March	3.5
(58.9)		- matured in period	(100.8)
65.8		- arranged in period	106.5
13.3		- as at 30 th September	9.2
(16.0)	Borrowing	- as at 31 st March	(17.4)
20.5		- matured/repaid in period	20.0
(22.0)		- arranged in period	(19.0)
(17.5)		- as at 30 th September	(16.4)
(9.6)	Net investments at 31st March		(13.9)
(4.2)	Net investments at 30th September		(7.2)

4. PERFORMANCE – INTEREST RETURN

- 4.1 As noted in para 3.4 the Council borrowed a further £1.5m from the PWLB for 10 years, this was borrowed in August 2013 at 2.24% (2.44% less the 0.2% certainty rate). The investment with Huntingdonshire Regional College allows the Council to make a small return on the cost of borrowing over the life of the investment.
- 4.2 To give an indication of net investment performance, the summary below excludes the above long-term investments and borrowing to give a fairer comparison with the current benchmark of the 7 day rate.

SHORT-TERM PERFORMANCE FOR THE 6 MONTHS APRIL 2014 – SEPTEMBER 2014					
Net investments	Performance	Benchmark	Variation from benchmark	Managed Funds	
				1 April £m	30 Sept £m
Excluding Huntingdon Regional College, Huntingdon Gym and Alconbury Parish Council	0.43%	0.23%	+0.20%	4.1	(2.7)
Note: The Benchmark performance is based on the local authority seven day deposit rate, this is the rate that a local authority can expect to earn on an investment. This rate is published on the Financial Times website.					

5. PERFORMANCE – AGAINST BUDGET IN 2013/14

- 5.1 The latest forecast outturn is for the net cost of interest to be under budget by £39,000 (net cost of £0.361m against a budget of £0.400m). The small saving is attributable to a combination of low borrowing interest rates (especially between local authorities), reduction in revenue spending, delays in capital expenditure and higher than expected revenue reserves.

6. TREASURY MANAGEMENT INDICATORS

- 6.1 The Council measures its exposures to certain treasury management risks with the following indicators which generally relate to the position as at 30 September.

6.2 Interest rate exposures

It is therefore proposed to replace it with the following indicators which better illustrate the position:

		Limits		Actual Sept 2014
		Max.	Min.	
Borrowing: longer than 1 year	Fixed	100%	75%	100%
	Variable	25%	0%	0%
Investments: longer than 1 year	Fixed	100%	100%	100%
	Variable	0%	0%	0%

All borrowing and investing for less than one year is variable by definition. Control over the Council's exposure to interest rates will be achieved as follows:

6.3 Maturity structure of borrowing

This indicator prescribes the limits within which the Council can borrow to either maintain effective cash flow or to cover capital expenditure.

Borrowing	Upper	Lower	Actual
Under 12 months	92%	0%	30%
12 months and within 24 months	92%	0%	0%
24 months and within five years	92%	0%	0%
Five years and within 10 years	93%	1%	9%
10 years and above	100%	7%	61%

6.4 **Investment repayment profile – limit on the value of investments that cannot be redeemed within 364 days**

The purpose of this indicator is to control the Council's exposure to the risk of incurring losses by seeking early repayment of its investments. The total principal sums invested to final maturities beyond the period end were:

	2014/15 £m	2015/16 £m	2016/17 £m
Limit on investments over 364 days as at 31 March each year.	32.7	34.0	37.7
Actual principal invested beyond year end as at 30 September 2013	1.3	1.2	1.0

7. **COMMENTS OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL**

7.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has reviewed the contents of the report at their meeting on 6 November 2014. Members have endorsed the recommendations set out at Section 8 of the report.

8. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

8.1 It is recommended that Overview and Scrutiny notes the report and recommends the report to Cabinet and then to Council.

9. **LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

Appendix 1 – Investments and Borrowing as at 30 September 2014

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Working papers in Financial Services

CONTACT OFFICERS

Clive Mason, Head of Resources

(01480 388157/

David Ablett, Interim Accountancy Manager

(01480 388026

Investments as at 30 September 2014

	£m	Investment date	Rate %	Repayment date
Term Deposits				
Alconbury Parish Council	0.010	08/07/13	0.50	08/07/16
Huntingdonshire Regional College	1.371	05/08/13	3.34	05/08/23
Huntingdon Gym	0.071	2/10/13	5.13	30/09/23
	1.452			
Liquidity Accounts				
NatWest	0.060	01/04/13	0.25	Call
Cambridge Building Society	0.100	09/10/13	0.50	Call
Santander	1.620	30/09/14	0.50	Call
Handelsbanken	2.000	22/09/14	0.40	Call
Barclays	0.950	23/09/14	0.45	Call
Ignis Liquidity Fund	2.000	15/09/14	0.40	Call
PSDF	1.000	15/09/14	0.36	Call
TOTAL	7.730			

Borrowing as at 30 September 2014

	£m	Borrowing date	Rate %	Repayment date
Long Term				
PWLB	1.433	07/08/13	2.44	07/08/23
PWLB	5.000	19/12/08	3.91	19/12/57
PWLB	5.000	19/12/08	3.90	19/12/58
Short Term				
Middlesbrough Council	5.000	11/09/14	0.29	03/10/14
TOTAL	16.433			

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Corporate Governance Panel

Report of the meetings held on 25th September and 26th November 2014

Matters for Decision

11. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PANEL

By way of a report by the Internal Audit & Risk Manager (a copy of which is reproduced as Appendix A hereto), the Panel has been acquainted with the outcome of a review undertaken by Councillors E R Butler, G Harlock and R West on the effectiveness of the Panel. The review has concluded that the Panel was generally acting effectively and fulfilling its terms of reference. In discussing opportunities to improve its effectiveness, it was understood that Member effectiveness was not routinely appraised. The Panel was of the view that the performance of all Members of the Council should be evaluated and they supported a suggestion that the matter be referred to the Member Development Group. In the absence of an update on this suggestion at their November meeting of the Panel, members have asked for clarification on the current position.

The Panel discussed also the advantages and disadvantages of receiving draft accounts prior to audit and whether receiving them in September was sufficient to allow the Panel to discharge their governance responsibilities. The Panel felt that it would be beneficial to receive the draft accounts during the course of the audit at an informal meeting and that further training on the accounts be arranged.

Members have supported a number of changes to the Panel's Terms of Reference to reflect the suggested terms of reference for an audit committee as contained in the "Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police 2013". Given that the changes will require amendments to be made to the Council's Constitution, the Panel

RECOMMEND

that the Panel's new Terms of Reference, as outlined in the Appendix A to the Report, be approved.

12. ANNUAL REVIEW OF WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY AND PROCEEDURE

By reference to the enclosed report, a copy of which is attached at Appendix B, the Panel has endorsed changes to the Council's Whistleblowing Policy and Guidance which have been revised to reflect recent changes to the Authorities Management Structure.

Members have been advised that Public Concern at Work has issued a code of practice which provides practical guidance to employers, workers and their representatives and sets out arrangements for raising, handling, training and reviewing whistleblowing in the workplace. To demonstrate that the Council is supportive of those who wish to raise concerns and that harassment, bullying or victimisation of a whistle blower will not be tolerated, the Panel is of the opinion that the Council should sign up to the principles of the code and be one of the first 100 signatories. The Panel therefore

RECOMMEND

that the Council become a signatory to the Public Concern at Work, 'The First 100 Campaign'.

Matters for Information

13. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PANEL

The Panel has received and adopted the contents of the draft annual report of the Panel in respect of the year ending 30th September 2014. The report provides an overview of the key issues considered by the Panel during this period and demonstrates the importance of good governance. Having regard to the content of the report, the Panel has agreed that the Council's governance and internal control procedures are generally sound. A copy of the Annual Report is available on the District Council's website.

14. PROGRESS REPORT

Details of actions taken in response to recent discussions and decisions were noted by the Panel.

15. RISK REGISTER

Changes made to the Risk Register between the period 6th March to 2nd September 2014 were noted by the Panel. Members questioned their role in risk management given the level of detail presented to them and the recent appointment of a Risk Management Champion. Reference also was made of the involvement of the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being). Having agreed that the Panel should be considering the effectiveness of arrangements around risk management Members requested that

clarification over the responsibility for managing risk be referred to the Corporate Management Team.

16. APPROVAL FOR PUBLICATION OF THE 2013/14 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

The Panel was apprised of the process required to be undertaken prior to the publication of the 2013/14 final accounts. This includes receiving the auditor's report on the audit of the accounts, together with their Letter of Representation, the production of the Annual Governance Statement and the draft Annual Financial Report for the year ended 31st March.

In approving the contents of the Governance Statement, delegated authority has been given to the Executive Leader and Managing Director to sign the Statement on behalf of the Council. At the same time, the Head of Resources has been authorised to sign the Letter of Representation.

Having received the Auditor's final changes to the Annual Financial Report, the Panel has approved its contents and has authorised the Chairman of the Panel to sign the accounts on behalf of the Council.

17. EXTERNAL AUDITORS: ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2013/14

The Panel has formally received the Annual Audit Letter from the Council's External Auditors, PricewaterhouseCooper for 2013/14. The letter outlines the Auditor's findings, recommendations and fees for the work which has been undertaken during the year.

Having noted that the Auditors Final Fees have yet to be agreed with the Authority and the Audit Commission, Panel Members have received an explanation of the charging process and have been assured that, if appropriate the final level of fees will be challenged by the Head of Resources.

18. VALUE FOR MONEY AT HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

The Panel has considered the content of the first annual report prepared by the Head of Resources on the Council's achievement of Value for Money (VfM). Value for Money is a term which is used to assess whether or not an organisation has obtained the maximum benefit from the goods and services which it acquires and provides, within the resources available to it. On this occasion the report has been divided into two sections to identify value for money at the service delivery level and value for money in corporate activity.

In terms of the corporate activities which are undertaken to secure value for money for the Authority, Members have drawn attention to the failings which have been identified in the delivery of the Huntingdon Multi-Storey Car Park and the re-development of facilities at One Leisure, St Ives. The Panel has been reminded that following the 2012/13 external audit a number of measures had been put in

place to improve the Council's approach to project management and that the projects referred to had commenced prior to these new arrangements being put into place. Members are firmly of the opinion that this situation should not be allowed to re-occur.

Having noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel has established a Select Committee to investigate the Council's approach to project management and the issues which had emerged from the two specific projects outlined above, Members are of the opinion that the resulting report should be presented to the Corporate Governance Panel to enable Members to make an informed comment on the Annual Governance Statement. It has also been suggested that the Council's Procurement Manager should be invited to attend a future meeting of the Panel to provide his comments on the extent to which Council Officers are following procurement recommendations and the effectiveness of his role within the organisation.

Finally, the Panel has reviewed the outcome of a table top review of value for money which had been conducted at service delivery level. Members have suggested that there may be potential to standardise the activities which are being undertaken in different service areas.

19. ANNUAL REPORT ON THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION (FOI) AND ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS ACTS

The Panel has received a report on the number of requests received by the Council under the Freedom of Information (FOI) and Environment Regulations Acts.

Having noted that the number of requests has continued to rise in 2014 and that staffing vacancies within the Division has impacted on the target time for responses, Members have congratulated Officers on only receiving 3 complaints about the handling of FOI requests during this time. The Panel has been pleased to note that performance is now meeting targets.

20. WHISTLEBLOWING CONCERNS RECEIVED

The Panel has received and noted a summary of the 22 allegations received under the Council's Whistleblowing Policy during the period 1st January to 31st October 2014. Whilst one allegation with regard to personal social care has been referred to the County Council, the remaining concerns have all been appropriately investigated.

21. INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE: INTERNAL PROGRESS REPORT

The Panel was apprised of the work of the Internal Audit Service during the period 1st April to 31st October 2014, together with associated performance issues. Members have congratulated the Internal Audit and Risk Manager on his qualification as a Chartered Member of the Institute of Internal Auditors.

In terms of the key issues which will have an impact on the work of the service for the remainder of the year, Members have been

informed of the secondment of one of the Team to the post of Accountancy Manager and the decision which had been taken not to retender the IT audit service immediately following the expiration of the current contract, pending the introduction of a shared service arrangement for the Council's IT services.

The Panel has discussed the impact of recent staffing changes in the Audit Team on the delivery of the Audit Plan for the remainder of the year. Having been advised that the Plan has been recast for the remainder of the year based upon the current risks and the availability of resources, Members have been assured that should the Internal Audit and Risk Manager consider that he was not going to be in a position to provide an adequate annual internal audit, he will raise the matter with the Chief Finance Officer and report back to the Panel. The Chairman will continue to be updated on progress with the delivery of the Plan and any further adjustments which may be required.

Disappointment was expressed that only 49% of audit actions have been introduced on time against the target which had been set by the Corporate Management Team of 100%. Further discussion on this matter appears at Item No. 22 of this Report.

The Panel has also queried why the Service Delivery targets for the Internal Audit Team have not been met. Whilst there had been an improvement since March 2014, Members have been reminded that responsibility for these actions was outside of the direct control of the Internal Audit Manager and lay with service managers. The Panel will continue to monitor progress in this area.

22. IMPLEMENTATION OF AUDIT ACTIONS

The Panel has received a report outlining the performance of Heads of Service in implementing agreed audit actions for the year ending 31st October 2014. Having noted that only 49% of actions had been introduced on time, Members have expressed their continuing disappointment that, despite previous assurances which had been given, this remained an issue for the Authority. In view of the fact that there appeared to have been little progress made to address the issue, the Panel has agreed that their concerns should be brought to the attention of the Managing Director.

Having noted the intention of the Council's Chief Finance Officer to give further consideration to the establishment of a mechanism by which Heads of Service will be more accountable for the implementation of audit actions, the Members have discussed the action which can be taken by the Panel to improve the situation. Accordingly, the Internal Audit and Risk Manager has been asked to submit a further report to the Panel's next meeting, to provide an update on the current position and to identify trends in the implementation of actions. In the event of there being no improvement in performance, a further discussion on the action which the Panel wishes to take to address the situation will be held at the next meeting.

23. WORK PROGRAMME AND TRAINING

Members of the Panel have received details of their anticipated work programme over the ensuing year. The Panel is of the view that training for Members of the Panel should be mandatory at the start of each municipal year and have asked Officers to give further consideration to the best means of taking this suggestion forward.

24. OPTIONS FOR FRAUD INVESTIGATION POST SINGLE FRAUD INVESTIGATION SERVICE.

(The following item was considered as a confidential item under paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

Along with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well Being) (Item No 23 of their Report refers), the Panel has considered various options available to the authority once its housing benefit fraud function has been transferred to a Single Fraud Investigation Service in May 2015.

In recognising the potential impact on fraud risk that the transfer will have and the benefits of maintaining a level of fraud prevention and detection, the Panel has recommended to the Cabinet that a smaller fraud team be retained with the aim of being cost neutral.

G J Harlock
Chairman

Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title: Review of the Effectiveness of the Corporate Governance Panel

Meeting/Date: Corporate Governance Panel – 25 September 2014

Executive Portfolio: Resources: Councillor J A Gray

Report by: Internal Audit & Risk Manager

Ward(s) affected: All Wards

Executive Summary

All members of the Panel were invited to a meeting on the 26 August to participate in the review of their own effectiveness. Councillor's E Butler, G Harlock and R West attended. After undertaking the review they concluded that the Panel was generally acting effectively and fulfilling its terms of reference.

A number of opportunities to further improve the effectiveness of the Panel were identified and are listed below.

1. A number of changes are required to the Panel's terms of reference (see Appendix 1) to take into account the audit committee guidance issued by CIPFA in December 2013. The most significant changes are:
 - a. Formalising the responsibility to review the arrangements for securing value for money;
 - b. Building upon the functional reporting role of the Panel by requiring to be formally consulted on proposals for the appointment of external providers of internal audit services;
 - c. Considering the governance arrangements within any shared service; and
 - d. Formalising the initiative introduced last year to meet privately with the external auditor when it is considered necessary.
2. The progress report that is considered at each Panel meeting should be amended to show the actions that have been completed in the previous year. This will allow Panel to refer back to previously agreed actions and if necessary, request update reports to assure themselves that the issues identified have been actioned.
3. A report detailing the progress that is being made with the introduction of agreed audit actions should be presented to each Panel meeting, starting November 2014. The 2015 effectiveness review will consider if the report should continue to be received.
4. The Panel is still largely reactive, rather than proactive in seeking assurance upon key governance areas. So that they can gain assurance upon areas of

concern, the Panel (either individually or collectively) should contribute more to the development of the internal audit plan.

5. The dates of the Panel meetings should be reviewed and where possible, after taking into account statutory reporting dates, be timetabled so that they are held two weeks prior to Council meetings.

Last year's review recommended that Panel Members should undertake a skills assessment and that a formal induction training plan for new Panel Members should be devised. Neither has been introduced. Both areas have been included in the action plan (Appendix 2) that has been prepared to address the issues noted in the report.

Issues for consideration by the Panel

When undertaking the review, there were two matters identified that it was felt appropriate to refer to the Panel for further consideration. These are:

6. Improving the effectiveness of Members; and
7. The Panel receiving the draft Annual Financial Report prior to audit.

Financial implications

If any decisions are taken that require external consultants to be appointed, the costs and budget will have to be identified. There are no other financial implications.

Legal implications

There are no legal implications arising from the report.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Panel:

1. Note the results of the outcome of the review of the effectiveness of the Panel;
2. Recommend to Council the adoption of the Panels terms of reference as detailed in Appendix 1;
3. Note and endorse the opportunities that have been identified to further improve effectiveness as contained in the Executive Summary (points 2, 3, 4 and 5) and Action Plan (Appendix 2); and
4. Determine what action, if any, they wish take in respect of points 6 and 7.

1. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 1.1 Whilst it is not a statutory requirement, it is considered best practice (both in the public and private sectors) that the 'audit committee' review their own effectiveness. The Panel has undertaken such a review in six of the last seven years. This report summarises the outcome of the review of the effectiveness of the Panel, undertaken on 26 August 2014.
- 1.2 The Internal Audit & Risk Manager reviewed the previous checklist of questions and issues that had been used to assess effectiveness to ensure they remained appropriate and covered all areas of the Panel's terms of reference.
- 1.3 The questions have been compiled over a number of years and are based upon the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and the National Audit Office good practice documentation supplemented by best practice within the private sector. This year's review has also taken into account the CIPFA audit committee guidance issued in December 2013. The review considered 74 questions together with a range of supplementary information.

2. OUTCOME OF THE REVIEW

- 2.1 The Members who attended the review meeting were of the opinion that a checklist type approach to reviewing effectiveness is not able to assess some of the most important features of the relationship that exists between the Panel and those who support and report to it, namely:
- A frank, open working relationship
 - A high level of mutual respect
 - A willingness to share information freely
 - A readiness to listen to each other's views and discuss issues openly.

They consider that the four attributes listed above are present.

- 2.2 After completing their review, it was the view of the meeting that the Panel was generally acting effectively and fulfilling its terms of reference.
- 2.3 In conducting the review, a number of opportunities to further improve the effectiveness of the Panel were identified. These are listed below.

Issue	Changes proposed
a. The terms of reference of the Panel need to be amended to take into account a number of areas that are included within the CIPFA suggested terms of reference for an audit committee, as contained in the publication 'Audit Committees: Practical Guidance for Local Authorities and Police 2013'.	The changes proposed are listed in full in Appendix 1.

Issue	Changes proposed
<p>b. During the review a comparison was made between the actions agreed by the Panel and the information subsequently included in the Progress Report. It was discovered that two recommendations arising from a report on improving internal controls from September 2013 were not carried forward from one Progress Report to another and subsequently the agreed recommendations have not been introduced.</p>	<p>The Progress Report considered at each Panel meeting should be amended to show both the outstanding actions and a summary of the actions that have been completed during the previous 12 months.</p> <p>This will allow Panel to refer back to previously agreed actions and if necessary, request update reports to assure themselves that the issues identified have been properly addressed.</p>
<p>c. The continued poor performance with the introduction of agreed internal audit actions remains a matter of concern. Whilst the Managing Director has reported to the Panel that delivery of the actions would be priority for the new Management Team, the Panel need to take positive action to support them in improving performance.</p>	<p>A report detailing the progress that is being made with the introduction of agreed audit actions should be presented to each Panel meeting, starting November 2014. (The report will support the Panel's decision of May 2014, that the relevant Corporate Director attend the Panel to explain the reasons for the non-introduction of agreed actions).</p> <p>The 2015 effectiveness review to consider if the progress made is sufficient and whether the report should continue to be received.</p>
<p>d. The Panel is still largely reactive, rather than proactive in seeking assurance upon key governance issues. The initiative introduced in 2012 of commissioning reviews has not continued.</p>	<p>The Panel Members currently have the opportunity to contribute to the preparation of the Internal Audit plan. More should be made of this and governance areas of concern discussed with the Internal Audit & Risk Manager. Areas identified for inclusion in future audit plans were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The operation of the scheme of delegation; ii. Public communication is undertaken in a meaningful way on service performance, finances and governance arrangements; iii. Service risks arising from the Facing the Future programme are being identified and properly managed; and iv. The Officer Governance Board and Working Groups are improving governance, risk and internal control arrangements across the Council.

Issue	Changes proposed
e. The current timetable of meetings is such that the Panel, on average, meets some 30 days prior to full Council. Following the Council decision to not meet in November, it will be over 80 days before issues considered at the September Panel meeting (Annual Financial Report, Annual Governance Statement, Annual report on the work of the Panel) are referred to Council.	The dates of the Panel meetings should be reviewed and where possible, after taking into account statutory reporting dates, be timetabled so that they are held two weeks prior to Council meetings to allow recommendations and issues to be reported in a timely manner.

3. OTHER AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION

Evaluating Member effectiveness

- 3.1 The meeting had a wide ranging discussion on how Panel Members skills and experience could be effectively identified and assessed and what procedures were in place to improve the performance of Members (both of those who sit on the Panel and across the Council). Unlike employees, Members performance is not routinely appraised or evaluated. A small number of Members have personal development plans.
- 3.2 Within the private sector, it is considered 'best practice that the performance of the board as a whole, of its committees and of its members, is evaluated at least once a year' (Higgs Review 2003). Given the responsibilities of Members to ensure that the Council is working effectively and that Cabinet in particular have even greater responsibilities for financial and human resources, the review group wished the Panel to consider whether it should support the evaluation of Member performance; and if so, suggests that the matter is referred to the Member Development Panel for further consideration.

Draft Annual Financial Report

- 3.3 The Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011 removed the requirement that the Annual Financial Report (statement of accounts) had to be formally approved by Members before the 30 June immediately following the end of the financial year. The Annual Financial Report for 2012/13 was therefore only presented to the September 2013 Panel meeting and the 2013/14 Report will be presented to this meeting.
- 3.4 Notwithstanding the statutory requirements, the review meeting discussed the advantages and disadvantages in receiving draft accounts prior to audit and whether only receiving them after audit, in September, was sufficient to allow the Panel to discharge their governance responsibilities.
- 3.5 The review group felt that the Panel as a whole should consider this matter. This would also give the Panel the opportunity to hear the views of the Responsible Financial Officer and External Audit.

4. ACTIONS AGREED FROM THE 2013 REVIEW

- 4.1 There were seven actions agreed as a result of the 2013 review. Five have been introduced:

<u>Agreed Action</u>	<u>Action Taken</u>
The approval of the risk management strategy should become a responsibility of the Cabinet.	Change to terms of reference agreed by Council in November 2013.
The Panel's terms of reference be amended.	Change to terms of reference agreed by Council in November 2013.
The terminology associated with individual and annual audit assurance opinions and risk register control assurance statements to be explained.	Report presented to Panel in January 2014.
Internal audit reports are circulated to Panel members.	Reports emailed in September 2013 and then on a quarterly basis.
The Panel to prepare a formal annual report.	Presented to Council in November 2013.

- 4.2 The two outstanding actions both relate to the identification of skills and training needs of Panel Members and are listed below. They have both been included in the action plan arising from this review.

Agreed Action

Members of the Panel to complete a skills assessment to identify training needs.

A formal induction training plan should be developed. The training plan be delivered to Members within 3 months of their appointment to the Panel.

5. TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 5.1 Appendix 2 contains an action plan based upon the outcome of the review. A report will be presented to Panel in March 2015 outlining the progress that has been made.

LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Proposed terms of reference
Appendix 2 – Action plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Notes of 26 August 2014 meeting, effectiveness of the Corporate Governance Panel.

CONTACT OFFICER

David Harwood. Internal Audit & Risk Manager
Tel No. 01480 388115

Corporate Governance Panel Proposed Terms of Reference

The Corporate Governance Panel ~~To~~ discharges the functions of the Council in relation to ~~the C~~ corporate ~~G~~ governance matters of the Council and acts as to be the Council's "Audit" Committee.

The Panel supports the Council and Managing Director by reviewing the comprehensiveness and reliability of assurances on governance, risk management, the control environment and the integrity of financial statements. It provides this support ~~by~~ across the following areas:

GOVERNANCE

1. Regularly reviewing the Council's Code of Corporate Governance and recommending any changes to the Council.
2. Ensuring that there are systems in place so that all decisions take appropriate account of any significant impact on the Council's system of corporate governance.
3. Review the effectiveness of the governance arrangements within any outsourced and/or shared service.
4. To consider the arrangements to secure value for money and review assurances and assessments on the effectiveness of these arrangements.
5. Review and approve ~~Approving~~ the annual governance statement and reviewing the achievement of any outstanding improvements.
6. Considering proposals to change the Council's Constitutional arrangements and making appropriate recommendations to the Council.

RISK MANAGEMENT

7. Ensuring there are effective arrangements for the management of risk across the Council.

INTERNAL AUDIT

8. Ensuring there are effective arrangements for the system of internal audit of the Council including:
 - reviewing and approving the internal audit charter;
 - approving internal audit plans, significant changes to the plan and/or its resourcing requirements and receiving the internal audit annual (and interim) reports on progress in delivery;
 - monitoring the introduction of agreed audit actions;
 - considering upon request, specific internal audit reports;
 - considering a regular review of its effectiveness annually reviewing internal audit effectiveness including contributing to the quality assurance and improvement programme and the external review.
9. To be consulted by the Responsible Financial Officer on proposals for the appointment of external providers of internal audit services and/or shared internal audit services.

EXTERNAL AUDIT

10. Receiving and considering external audit reports including the adequacy of management response to issues identified; meeting privately with external audit when necessary.

FINAL ACCOUNTS

11. Approving the accounting policies, statement of accounts, and considering any matters arising from the audit.

**Corporate Governance Panel
Proposed Terms of Reference**

FRAUD AND CORRUPTION

12. Reviewing and monitoring the policy, procedure and arrangements for investigating disclosures under the Public Interests Disclosure Act 1998 (whistleblowing).
13. Monitoring the Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy and receive annual updates on countering fraud.

ANNUAL REPORT

14. Through the Chairman, the Panel will provide the Council with an annual report, timed to support finalisation of the financial statements and the Governance Statement, on how it has discharged its responsibilities.

RESOURCES

The Panel may:

15. Request relevant Executive Councillors, Panel Chairmen, Managing Directors, and Heads of Service to attend Panel meetings in order to assist the Panel in reaching its conclusions.
16. Within budgetary constraints request information or advice from third parties to assist the Panel in reaching its conclusions.

End

**Corporate Governance Panel
Action Plan arising from 2014 effectiveness review**

Ref	Issue	Action Proposed	To be completed by
1	The Panel's terms of reference to be amended as set out in Appendix 1.	Amending the terms of reference of the Corporate Governance Panel.	Report to be presented to Council in December 2014.
2	The Progress Report is amended to show those actions that have been completed in the previous year as well as those that are due.	The Democratic Services Manager amends the format of the Progress Report.	The 26 November 2014 Panel meeting.
3	A report detailing the progress that is being made with the introduction of agreed audit actions should be presented to each Panel meeting.	The Internal Audit & Risk Manager reports progress to the Corporate Governance Panel.	The 26 November 2014 Panel meeting.
4	The Panel is still largely reactive, rather than proactive in seeking assurance upon key governance areas. The Panel should contribute more to the development of the internal audit plan.	In addition to requesting Panel Members input, (prior to preparing the audit plan) the Internal Audit & Risk Manager should meet with the Chairman of the Panel to discuss/identify any specific areas of governance concern.	March 2015..
5	Panel meetings be timetabled (after taking into account statutory reporting dates) so that they are held two weeks prior to Council meetings.	Request the Democratic Services Manager to consider changing the Panel's meeting dates for the 2015/16 municipal year and onwards.	May 2015.
6	Members of the Panel to complete a skills assessment to identify training needs.	The Head of Resources to circulate to Panel a skills assessment questionnaire based upon the CIPFA knowledge & skills framework.	December 2014.
7	A formal induction training plan should be developed. The training plan to be delivered to Members within 3 months of their appointment to the Panel.	The Head of Resources to develop a training plan that covers the areas outlined in the terms of reference.	April 2015.
8	The two recommendations arising from the report on improving internal controls (September 2013) are introduced. 1. Introduce a procurement strategy; and 2. The Council becomes a signatory to the Prompt Payment Code.	The Head of Resources ensures that the two outstanding recommendations are introduced.	1. March 2015 2. March 2015

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Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title: Annual Review of Whistleblowing Policy and Guidance
Meeting/Date: Corporate Governance Panel – 26 November 2014
Executive Portfolio: Resources: Councillor J A Gray
Report by: Internal Audit & Risk Manager
Ward(s) affected: All Wards

Executive Summary

The whistleblowing policy and guidance is reviewed annually.

The purpose of whistleblowing law is to protect individuals who make disclosures of wrongdoings in the public interest without fear of reprisals from their employer.

The review of the policy and guidance has been completed by the Internal Audit & Risk Manager. A number of changes are being proposed to both the policy and guidance to reflect the new management structure. No other substantial changes are proposed. The policy and guidance can be found at Appendix 1 and 2.

Public Concern at Work (PCaW), the leading independent supporter of whistleblowers and provider of guidance and advice, has issued a code of practice (Appendix 3) that it encourages organisations across all sectors to sign up to. Promotion of the code by the PCaW is through 'The First 100 Campaign'. It is recommended that the Council supports the campaign and becomes a signatory to it. This will send a strong message to employees that it is supportive of those who wish to raise a concern via whistleblowing and that harassment, bullying or victimisation of a whistleblower will not be tolerated.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Panel :

1. Approve the revised whistleblowing policy and guidance.
2. Agree the Council becomes a signatory to the Public Concern at Work, 'The First 100 Campaign'.

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1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT/PURPOSE?

- 1.1 This report deals with the review of the whistleblowing policy and guidance.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The whistleblowing policy and guidance was introduced in 2000 in response to the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (PIDA). Both documents are reviewed annually to ensure they continue to be fit for purpose. Consequently both documents mirror best practice requirements. This year's review has been conducted by the Internal Audit & Risk Manager.
- 2.2 The policy allows any employee, contractor or member of the public the opportunity to report, without fear or victimisation, a serious or sensitive concern. (e.g. a potential fraud or corrupt act, any danger to health and safety or the mistreatment or abuse of any customers, particularly children).

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS

- 3.1 Panel last reviewed the policy and guidance in November 2013, shortly before Public Concern at Work (PCaW), the leading independent supporter of whistleblowers, issued their 'Whistleblowing Commission' Report on the effectiveness of existing arrangements for workplace whistleblowing in the UK.
- 3.2 The Report recommended that the PIDA be amended to allow the Government to issue a whistleblowing code of practice that would be taken into account by courts and tribunals when issues of whistleblowing arise. The Government has not amended the PIDA as suggested, but it does support the code of practice.
- 3.3 The code of practice provides practical guidance on the raising, handling, training and reviewing of workplace whistleblowing procedures and practices. It has been compared to our own policy and guidance. There are a few differences in phrasing and terminology but these are not considered sufficient enough to require the policy and guidance to be amended.
- 3.4 To support the code of practice, PCaW has started 'The First 100 Campaign'. An appeal to organisations across all sectors to sign up to the principles of the code and work towards compliance with it. It is recommended that the Council supports this, and becomes a signatory to it. This will show employees that we wish to support them in speaking up about wrongdoing and listen to them when they do.
- 3.5 There are a number of changes being proposed to both the current policy and guidance to reflect the new management structure. No other substantial changes are proposed. All the changes are clearly marked on the policy and guidance which are attached, as appendices, to this report. Once approved, they will be made available on the Council's website and intranet.

**4. KEY IMPACTS/RISKS?
HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?**

- 4.1 The Council is not required by statute to have a whistleblowing policy in place although it is considered to be best practice.
- 4.2 It is important the employees, service users and contractors etc., have the ability to report, in confidence, issues of concern to the Council. The whistleblowing policy introduces a framework in which this can be done and importantly, sets out the protection that will be afforded to a whistleblower. Dealing effectively with a whistleblowing allegation is important to protect the Council from potentially significant reputation, commercial and financial risks.
- 4.3 Not having a reporting mechanism in place, may lead people to report matters outside of the Council with consequential impacts upon the reputation of the Council.
- 4.4 Having a policy and guidance in place is of limited use if it is not publicised or made known. Raising the profile of whistleblowing internally has been done through the use of posters, intranet and notes on the employee bulletins etc. The challenge is to raise the profile externally, with service users and contractors etc. In previous years the Council Tax leaflet, and posters in Post Offices, Doctors and Dentists surgeries have all been used to raise the profile of whistleblowing.

5. LINK TO THE LEADERSHIP DIRECTION

- 5.1 The whistleblowing policy sits within the corporate aim of ensuring we are a customer focused and service led council, which has the aims of delivering value for money services, becoming more business-like and efficient in the way we deliver services and ensuring customer engagement drives service priorities and improvement.

6. CONSULTATION

- 6.1 Not applicable.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

(Comments from the Head of Legal & Democratic Services)

- 7.1 There are no legal implications arising from this report.

8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

(Comments from the Assistant Director, Finance & Resources)

- 8.1 There are no resource implications arising from this report. If a decision is taken to join the '100 First Campaign' then resources may need to be spent to publicise that decision both within and outside the Council. The cost of doing this will be funded from current resources.

9 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 9.1 Changes are required to the whistleblowing policy and guidance to reflect the managerial changes that have been introduced.
- 9.2 Supporting the 'The First 100 Campaign' organised by PCaW will show all employees and those we provide services to and undertake business with, that the Council is committed to properly investigate all whistleblowing allegations.

10. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

- Appendix 1 – Whistleblowing Policy
- Appendix 2 – Whistleblowing Guidance
- Appendix 3 – Public Concern at Work – Code of Practice

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Public Concern at Work, Whistleblowing Commission report

CONTACT OFFICER

David Harwood. Internal Audit & Risk Manager
Tel No. 01480 388115



Huntingdonshire District Council Whistleblowing Policy

Introduction

Huntingdonshire District Council recognises that those that it employs and provides services to are often in the best position to know when the interests of the public are being put at risk. They can act as an early warning system on matters of health and safety or help to uncover fraud and mismanagement.

The Council also recognises that these people may not wish to express their concerns for a number of reasons. They may think it is disloyal to do so or they may fear reprisals, or they may not expect any action to be taken, or they may not know the best way to proceed. They may therefore find it easier to ignore their own concerns, or to “blow the whistle” to someone outside the Council.

The Council wants to build an environment of trust and openness so that people are prepared to whistle blow knowing that their concern will be treated confidentially and investigated appropriately. This Policy has been prepared in response to the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and other legislation¹ and has been formally adopted by the Corporate Governance Panel on behalf of the Council.

Policy Statement

The Council is committed to the highest possible standards of openness, probity and accountability and to dealing with all fraud and other forms of malpractice reported.

Any employee, contractor, member of the public or any other organisation with serious or sensitive concerns about any aspect of the Council’s work shall be encouraged to come forward and voice those concerns at an early stage without fear of victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage. These concerns may relate to issues that are occurring now, took place in the past, or are likely to happen in the future.

All concerns received will be treated in confidence, examined and investigated in accordance with this policy.

Any employee or contractor who raises a concern shall be treated as though they are making a ‘protected disclosure’ (within the meaning of employment legislation)², if the concern is connected with any of the areas listed under the following section and been raised in the public interest.

¹ Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013

² Employment Rights Act 1996

Concerns covered by the Policy

The policy is intended to deal with genuine concerns of a serious or sensitive nature about wrongdoings in the following areas:-

- fraud and corruption
- any customers that we deal with, particularly children, being mistreated or abused
- an unlawful act
- the health and safety of any individual has been, or is likely to be endangered
- damage to the environment
- discrimination of any kind; or the
- deliberate concealment of any information that falls into any of the areas above.

Concerns not covered by the Policy

The Council wants all serious or sensitive concerns to be raised.

Any concern that falls under another Council policy or procedure will be investigated in accordance with that policy, for example the grievance or dignity at work policy if the issue is raised by an employee, or the complaints procedure if the issue is raised by a service user or contractor. Concerns involving Councillors will be referred to the Council's Monitoring Officer.

If the concern refers to an issue that is not in the public interest, not covered by this policy or any other Council policy or procedures (e.g. an employee not performing their duties correctly whilst under the influence of alcohol or non-prescribed drugs) it will be investigated as though it was received under this policy.

Implementing the Policy

The Council shall take appropriate action to publicise the policy so that all potential whistleblowers:

- feel confident that they are able to contact the Council and raise their concerns about Council practices
- realise that concerns should be raised about any employee, councillor, supplier or anyone who provides services to the public on the Council's behalf
- are aware of the different ways they can inform the Council of their concerns
- understand that concerns will be received in good faith and taken seriously
- are aware that anonymous concerns may not be investigated
- understand that they will receive a response to their concerns and are aware of how to pursue them further if they are not satisfied with the response
- are reassured that they will be protected from victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage

A guidance note shall be made available setting out the actions that will normally be taken when a concern is received.

Investigating Officer

All whistleblowing concerns received under this policy shall be reported immediately to the Audit & Risk Manager. He will be responsible for reviewing the concern, deciding upon the action to take, leading and directing investigations, preparing any subsequent reports and liaising with the person raising the concern.

Safeguards

The identity of the person raising the concern will remain confidential. If disclosure is required for any reason then this will be discussed with the person concerned.

The Council will not tolerate the harassment or victimisation (including informal pressures) of any person who has raised a concern. The Council's disciplinary procedures will be used against any employee who is found to be harassing or victimising the person raising the concern or who has disclosed the name of a whistleblower to any person other than the Council's Managing Director, the Corporate Director (Services) or the Audit & Risk Manager.

Whistleblowing Externally

Whilst the Council would like all concerns to be raised with it initially, it recognises that the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 allows for concerns to be made to "prescribed persons". The guidance note will provide information on external whistleblowing.

Monitoring and Review

The ~~Head of Legal and Democratic Services~~ Corporate Director (Services) will be responsible for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the Policy and the guidance note. This will include an annual review and an annual report to the ~~Chief Officers'~~ Corporate Management Team and the Corporate Governance Panel.

End.

Huntingdonshire District Council Guidance for Whistleblowers

Introduction

This guidance explains how the Council will react when it receives a concern under its whistleblowing policy. You can read the Council's whistleblowing policy on its website or request a copy from the Head of Legal and Democratic Services. His telephone number is listed at the end of this note.

We realise that for some individuals it will take a great deal of courage to raise a concern. Please be assured that your concern will be treated in confidence at all times and that we will not tolerate the victimisation of anyone who reports an issue to us.

Concerns received will probably require different responses. This guidance is intended to provide you with an idea of the steps we will generally follow when a concern is received.

The guidance applies to all employees, suppliers, contractors and members of the public who wish to raise a serious or sensitive concern about a potential criminal offence, breach of the law, health and safety or environmental issue.

What you need to tell us

If you have a concern then please raise it with us sooner rather than later. We would much rather be told about a concern and investigate it, even if the investigation shows your concern was unfounded, than not know about the matter in the first place.

It is best if your concern is raised in writing and that you provide your name and some contact information. A telephone number is sufficient.

When you first raise your concern we will treat it in good faith and accept that it is true. You should however try and avoid making your concern anonymously. If your concern is justified, but made anonymously, we may still be unable to investigate it if we can't contact you to obtain further information. Please think carefully about remaining anonymous.

You need to tell us as much as you can about your concern. Please try and provide some background information and all the names, dates and places that are relevant. If you have any documentary evidence to support your concern then please tell us about that as well. The more information you are able to provide the easier it will be for us to investigate your concern.

If you are uneasy about putting your concern in writing then contact us using one of the methods below and ask for a meeting, which doesn't have to be at

the Council's offices. If you wish you can bring other people to the meeting if that will reassure you.

How to contact us

There are a number of ways you can contact us.

Complete the electronic form that is available on the Council's web pages at <http://www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk>. Type whistleblowing into the search engine or go to W on the A to Z listing, and then select whistleblowing

Send an email to whistleblower@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Leave a message on the 24 hour telephone hotline, 01480 387080.

Write a letter, clearly marking the envelope Strictly Private & Confidential to:

Internal Audit & Risk Manager
Huntingdonshire District Council
Pathfinder House
St Mary's Street
Huntingdon
PE29 3TN

No matter which method you use to contact us, all the information you provide will be treated in confidence.

Who will investigate your concern?

All concerns are passed to the Council's Internal Audit & Risk Manager as soon as they are received. All electronic forms and emails together with the telephone hotline are accessible only by him. Post that is marked 'strictly private and confidential' will be passed unopened to him.

What we will do?

Once you have told us of your concern the Internal Audit & Risk Manager will look into it to assess initially what action should be taken.

The initial assessment may involve an internal inquiry or a more formal investigation. Please be assured that the number of people who are made aware of the concern will be kept to a minimum.

If he believes that your concern is valid, but should not be classed as a whistleblowing concern, e.g. a potential breach of planning consent, then he may pass your concern to a member of staff in the relevant department to investigate. Your concern will be passed on anonymously, your details will remain confidential.

Depending on the outcome of the initial assessment we may decide that your concern is valid but that we have insufficient information to continue with the investigation. If this happens we will try and obtain further information to allow us to continue with the investigation. If this is not possible and no other option is available to us, we may request you to gather additional information on our behalf. You are under no obligation to do this however.

Once we have validated your concern and have sufficient information to continue, your concern will be investigated.

All meetings, decisions and actions taken in dealing with the concern will be recorded in writing.

Letting you know what we're doing

If you have provided contact information you will be told who is handling the matter, how you can contact them and whether your further assistance may be needed. If you request it, we will write to you summarising your concern and setting out how we propose to handle it.

When the investigation has been completed we will contact you again with as much detail about the investigation as we are able to provide. Please note that we may not be able to tell you the precise action we have taken, as this may infringe a duty of confidence owed by us to someone else.

What if we take no action?

If after undertaking the initial assessment and speaking with you, we feel that we do not have sufficient information to undertake an investigation into your concern then we will tell you. If you are unhappy about this, you should contact the Council's Managing Director or ~~Head of Legal & Democratic Services~~ Corporate Director (Services) who will decide if any further action needs to be taken.

Maintaining confidentiality

We will do our utmost to protect your identity. If it has to be disclosed to allow us to undertake disciplinary or other more serious action against any wrongdoer, then we will discuss this with you. In some circumstances, especially if the Police are involved, we may be legally obliged to disclose your identity without your consent. Again, we will discuss this with you.

If you feel that you are being harassed or victimised because you have raised a concern then you must let us know. We will take action to protect you as long as we believe that your concern was raised in the public interest.

Who to report to externally

If you sincerely believe that, by raising your concern with us, you will be subject to victimisation or reprisals of whatever sort, or that evidence to support your concern will be destroyed, then you should raise the matter with an external organisation, known as a “prescribed person”.

If you wish to take this course of action, but are unsure of what to do then please contact either the Internal Audit & Risk Manager or the ~~Head of Legal and Democratic Services~~ Corporate Director (Services). They will be able to advise you on what you need to do, without asking for details of your concern.

Alternatively you could contact the Council’s external auditors, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, on 0207 213 5497.

When raising a concern externally remember to make it clear that you are raising the issue as a whistleblower. This gives you additional statutory rights.

Further information and advice

If you want further information or advice about whistleblowing then please contact either:

David Harwood, Internal Audit & Risk Manager (01480 388115

or

~~Colin Meadowcroft, Head of Legal and Democratic Services (01480 388021~~

Julie Slatter, Corporate Director (Services) (01480 388103

End.

Development Management Panel

Report of the meetings held on 20th October and 17th November 2014

Matters for Information

7. DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

Over two meetings, the Panel has considered twenty nine applications of which twenty one were approved, seven refused and one deferred.

Following strong representations from local Councillors and objectors, the Panel deferred an application for 43 dwellings and associated matters on land between St Andrew's Way and Chapel End, Sawtry. This decision was taken to enable the Head of Development to obtain definitive advice from the relevant agencies – Anglian Water Authority, Environment Agency and the Middle Level Commissioners on flooding and drainage matters and to clarify with the applicant the position in respect of the adoption by the relevant authorities of estate roads and drainage. The Panel will reconsider the application at its December meeting.

Although the remainder of the Panel's work largely dealt with proposals for minor residential development, there were several of wider interest for the District as follows –

- subject to completion of a Section 106 Agreement to delete a requirement for affordable housing but to secure a contribution for open space and wheeled bins, the Panel approved an application for a mixed used development comprising 21 houses, 3 flats, one retained retail unit, two workshops and conversion of listed buildings into residential units on land at the Old Forge, 22 High Street, St Neots. The Panel welcomed the scheme which complies with the relevant Urban Design Framework, is a good solution for a sensitive central location and secures a viable use for a listed building;
- the Panel was pleased to approve the erection of a new scout hut/community building at the One Leisure Outdoor Complex, California Road, St Ives to provide a base for the Gateway Scout Group. Conditions will limit the number of users of the building to 60 persons at any given time and restrict use to scouts and beavers only; and

- subject to conditions and satisfactory resolution of matters relating to surface water drainage, works to High Lode, ecology and minor adjustments to the layout, the Panel has authorised the Head of Development, after consultation with the Chairman, the Executive Councillor for Planning and Housing Strategy and a ward Councillor for Ramsey to determine a reserved matters application for the residential phase of the development at Stocking Fen Road and St Mary's Road, Ramsey. This will provide 110 flats and houses.

8. ENFORCEMENT ACTION: MANOR FARM HOUSE, 15 HIGH STREET, SPALDWICK

In accordance with its scheme of delegation, the Panel has commended action taken to secure an injunction order under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to prevent any further works to a Grade II listed building known as Manor Farm House, on the High Street in Spaldwick. The Farm House has also been included on the Council's Buildings at Risk register. The injunction will prevent the owner from carrying out any works of extension or alteration to the building which would affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest without first obtaining listed building consent or prior written authorisation from the local planning authority.

The owner is bound by these undertakings until further order of the Court and was asked to pay the Council's costs which amounted to £3,852.60.

Mrs B E Boddington
Chairman

Employment Panel

Report of the meetings held on 8th October and 19th November 2014

Matters for Information

9. EXPENSES AND ALLOWANCES POLICY

The Panel has reviewed and endorsed the contents of a new Expenses and Allowances Policy. The Policy has been developed to provide a transparent and consistent framework for allowances within the Authority, to provide guidance and a process for employees to claim expenses and to recognise changes as a result of moves to share services with neighbouring authorities. The new Policy applies to all those employed on the District Council's terms and conditions and to non-employees (i.e. student placements and volunteers) where appropriate.

10. JOB EVALUATION POLICY

The Panel has endorsed, for implementation, a revised Job Evaluation Policy for use by the District Council. The Policy has been refreshed to draw on experience gained during the pay review, to clarify the job evaluation process, reflect best practice and provide an equitable framework for the Authority.

11. STAFF COUNCIL

The Panel has received an update on the four day training programme which has been arranged by the East of England Local Government Association to help Staff Council representatives to fulfil their roles and responsibilities and to better support the Council's employees. Having noted that the provision of additional specialist employment support is being considered, Panel Members have welcomed the steps which are being taken to support the Staff Council in their roles and have suggested that the provision of training should become an annual event.

12. EMPLOYEE OPINION SURVEY 2014

The results of the 2014 Employee Opinion Survey have been presented to the Panel. Members were reminded that the survey was undertaken during a period of significant change within the Council and that the period of transition in senior management and the outcome of the pay review had had an impact on the results. It is hoped that many of the outcomes will improve over time as the new Senior Management

Team gain the trust of employees and the Council is seen to be more open and honest in engaging and communicating with staff.

Members were informed that the results of the survey had been presented to staff, together with the actions proposed to address the issues which had been raised. The Panel has welcomed the preparation of a comprehensive action plan to respond to the issues / areas of concern which had been identified and the intention to repeat the exercise in 2015.

In reviewing the specific actions within the action plan, Panel Members have welcomed the commitment which has been made to fill vacant posts as soon as approval is granted to help reduce time pressure on existing staff and the introduction of a 'back to the floor' programme to enable the Senior Management Team to spend time experiencing what teams do. Panel Members have also expressed reservations with regard to the proposal to introduce an 'employee of the month' scheme to recognise success within the organisation and it has been suggested that this should be given further consideration.

In response to Member concerns about communications with staff, the Panel has been assured that the Council is committed to improving the way in which the Authority communicates and to work with staff to come up with ideas for improvement. The Chairman has suggested that, notwithstanding the responsibilities of District Council Managers, he would like to have sight of plans for engaging the Staff Council as a channel of communication in their own right.

In discussion it was suggested that it was important not to draw too many hard conclusions from the survey results given that different questions and answers could be interpreted as meaning different things to different individuals. Given the challenging and volatile environment in which the District Council is currently operating it was of no surprise that employees did not have a clear understanding of the Council's vision and objectives. Following the appointment of a new Senior Management Team, it was hoped that employee perceptions of the management of change will also improve.

Finally the Panel has been encouraged to see that employees generally have a positive perception of their line managers. However Members were concerned to identify a number of inconsistencies in the figures for those staff who receive performance development reviews and those who receive feedback on their performance.

13. WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Further to Item No.3 of their Report to the meeting held on 30th July 2014, the Panel has received an update on progress to develop a Workforce Development Strategy for the District Council.

The Panel has endorsed the content of an outline project plan which sets out the stages of work for the development of the Strategy and a timetable for their completion. Having noted that Stage 1 – the background research is nearing conclusion, it is now intended to consult with key stakeholders to ensure that the draft Strategy reflects

the views of a range of interested groups. The draft Strategy will be presented to the next meeting of the Panel for consideration.

14. WORKFORCE REPORT (QUARTER 1 AND 2)

The Panel has received quarterly reports on Human Resource matters impacting on the performance of the organisation during the periods 1st April to 30th June and 1st July to 30th September 2014. The reports included the latest position and trends relating to:-

- ◆ employee numbers;
- ◆ salary costs;
- ◆ sickness absence reporting; and
- ◆ the Human Resources caseload.

In reviewing the workforce information, Members have been informed that the number of Full Time Equivalent (FTE) posts within the establishment has continued to decrease and that monthly wage salaries have decreased by £90k from the first quarter. Members have also been informed that it is the intention to include a breakdown of the reasons for voluntary resignations and to review the historical trends in terms of the average age of the workforce for future reports.

In terms of sickness absence, the Panel has noted that the average annual day's sickness per FTE has increased to 10.1 days in the second quarter which is above the CIPD Public Sector Average and the EELGA Authority Average. Members have been assured that the HR Team are working with Managers and Heads of Service to manage sickness and progress cases to the formal stages of the sickness absence procedure as appropriate. To further support managers, additional training on managing sickness absence will shortly be provided.

Members attention has also been drawn to the comparison which has been undertaken of the sickness figures of a neighbouring authority during their pay review. Whilst sickness levels had peaked on the launch of the pay consultation, there had been a steady decrease in the numbers of days lost following the implementation of the review.

Having noted that there has been a significant increase in sickness in the Operations Division, the Panel has noted that work is being undertaken within the Division to address this with the support of managers from other divisions and the occupational health service. It is envisaged that the removal of the attendance allowance may have had an impact in this area.

In reviewing the reasons for absence the Panel has noted that during the course of the last year there has been a marked shift between the numbers of long term and short term cases of sickness absence, such that the majority of cases are now of a long term nature. It has been suggested that the discrepancies in long term sickness absence between different divisions within the Authority may raise a broader management question. Members have been pleased to note that recent changes to sickness reporting categories have meant that

there is no longer any sickness classified as 'other' which will provide the Authority with more meaningful information going forward.

Members have discussed absences relating to stress, anxiety, mental health and depression during the period. Having noted that the majority of these related to personal related stress, the Panel has been informed that work is ongoing with Managers to help support personal as well as work related stress within the Authority. The Panel has also discussed the mechanisms which are in place to help employees suffering from stress and has noted that the Stress Management Toolkit and the First Contact Service are an integral part of the Council's absence management arrangements. In response to concerns raised by Staff Council representatives regarding the First Contact Service, the Managing Director undertook to give these matters further consideration outside the meeting.

Finally, the Panel has placed on record its recognition of, and gratitude for the excellent contributions made by Ms J Elliott, Ms M Evans, Ms M Lloyd, Ms M O'Hare and Messrs J Davies, C Lewis and P Hall during their employment in the local government service and has conveyed its best wishes to them for a long and happy retirement. The Panel has paid special tribute to the 40 years local government service achieved by Mr Peter Hall who had recently retired from the Local Taxation division.

15. LGSS PERFORMANCE

The Panel has considered the performance of LGSS Human Resources, Payroll and Organisational Workforce Development services across the key service measures agreed under the current contract during the period 1st April to 30th September 2014. LGSS performance is measured in four areas namely:

- ◆ General Service Standards;
- ◆ HR Strategic and Advisory;
- ◆ Recruitment and Payroll; and
- ◆ Organisational workforce development.

To assist the Panel in monitoring performance levels, feedback from Council employees on the service delivered by LGSS has also been provided to Panel Members.

Members have been pleased to note that there are no issues to report for the Strategic and Advisory, Transactional Human Resources, Payroll or Organisational Workforce Development elements of the contract. It is anticipated that the District Council's use of Strategic HR advice will increase during the course of the year.

With regard to the recruitment element of the contract, the Panel has noted that problems continued with the E-Recruitment system and has asked LGSS to prepare an action plan to address the issues which have been raised by Council employees. This has been presented to, and reviewed by the Panel at their November meeting. Members have been pleased to note that all the issues raised have now been addressed.

To assist Panel Members in understanding the system and to aid the discussions on the subject, the Panel has also received a presentation on the operation and functionality of the LGSS E-Recruitment system. This is a full e-recruitment system offering an end-to-end recruitment process which can be securely accessed from any internet enabled device. The Panel has also sought and obtained the views of those Managers who were in attendance at their meetings and had had cause to use the system.

Having noted that the Council will continue to utilise the issues log to bring service issues to the attention of LGSS, the Executive Leader has drawn attention to the absence of any formal mechanisms to scrutinise the Council's contract with LGSS to ensure that the Authority is receiving good value for money. This will be of particular importance as the Council begins to enter into shared service arrangements for the delivery of other Council services.

S Cawley
Chairman

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Licensing and Protection Panel

Report of the meeting held on 6th November 2014

Matters for Information

8. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014 – PUBLIC SPACE PROTECTION ORDERS

The Panel has noted that, under the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, Designated Public Places Orders (DPPOs) have been replaced by Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs), one of six new powers dealing with anti-social behaviour as a result of the Act. The Panel has authorised the Head of Community after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Economic Development and Legal to create and maintain policies and procedures arising from the new orders.

A comprehensive report on the Act will be presented to both the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) and Cabinet during December.

9. FOOD INFORMATION REGULATIONS 2014 - DELEGATIONS

Details of new powers contained within the Food Information Regulations 2014 have been considered by the Panel and appropriate Officers have been authorised to initiate legal proceedings, as appropriate, under the Regulations. The Regulations, which come into force on 13 December 2014, include a requirement for food business operators to provide allergen information to customers and associated information and training to staff. Officers will also be required to respond to related enquiries from residents and customers of the District's food businesses.

10. LICENSING AND PROTECTION APPLICATIONS SUB-GROUP

The Panel has noted details of the five meetings of the Applications Sub-Group that had taken place between 20th June and 8th October 2014.

J W Davies
Chairman

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Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being)

**Report of the meetings held on 9th October,
6th November and 4th December 2014**

Matters for Information

21. SHARED SERVICES

The Panel has received an update on the progress which has been made by Huntingdonshire District Council, South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council to work in partnership to deliver shared services. Members have been informed that a number of general principles have been agreed which will help to ensure coherence and consistency across all shared services moving forward. Specific details regarding the development of a shared service for ICT and Legal Services have also been provided and Members have been informed that it is proposed to adopt a phased approach to the development and implementation of these services. Interim project support will be appointed to assist with the process and develop full business cases.

The Panel has received assurances that the District Council has the required expertise to lead on the development of a shared ICT service and has sought clarification on a number of aspects of the proposals for Legal and ICT services including the arrangements for the management and funding of the proposed Business and Legal Practice Manager and the future of the Monitoring Officer role. As part of the discussion, Members have queried the reasons for deciding not to pursue an agreement with Local Government Shared Services for the provision of Legal and ICT Services, whether any consideration had been given to obtaining project management experience from Cambridgeshire County Council and the impact that sharing services at this stage might have upon the establishment of any future Greater Cambridgeshire Partnership. The Executive Leader and the Corporate Director (Services) have responded to these points in turn and have stressed that such unknown factors have not been taken into account in the preparation of the current report and that the Government is encouraging Councils to enter into shared services agreements as evidenced by the Transformation Challenge Fund grant.

Having been informed that the arrangements for scrutinising the shared services arrangements had yet to be established, Members have expressed an interest in being involved in their development in

due course. In terms of the management of the shared service arrangements, it is envisaged that legal agreements will be developed on a service-by-service basis and will incorporate performance measures.

Finally, the Panel has drawn attention to the importance of engaging with staff and carrying them with the Council on this journey. Members have been assured that communication planning will be a key part of the development of shared services and that there is a detailed communications plan in place for this purpose.

Having endorsed the approach outlined within the report and the need to maintain momentum moving forward, Members have conveyed their appreciation to those Officers within the District Council who have been involved with the successful bid to the Transformation Challenge Fund for £0.5m. This will be used for overall project management/co-ordination and to fund interim and permanent support to ensure that the impetus of the partnership is maintained.

22. BUDGET MONITORING 2014/15 (REVENUE & CAPITAL) AND AN UPDATE ON ZERO BASED BUDGETING

The Panel has reviewed the emerging variations to the 2014/15 approved revenue and capital budgets at its meeting in October. Members have been pleased to note that the variations in the net revenue budget thus far represent a saving of £0.172m, although it is still early in the year. The position with regard to the net capital budget reflects a slippage of £1.945m, which had been carried over from 2013/14, and a number of forecast variations. Arising from the report, the Head of Resources has been asked to clarify the position with regard to a number of specific items within the savings forecast, details of which have subsequently been circulated by email.

The Panel has also received an update on the Zero Based Budgeting review which is being undertaken of Council services in preparation for the Budget setting process. Members have been provided with an opportunity to ask questions on the operation of the process and have emphasised that the outcome will only be as good as the managers' commitment to it and Members' appetite for changes in the way in which the Council currently operates. In noting that an external specialist expertise has been brought in to lead the process at this stage, Members have been pleased to note that it is hoped to develop and transfer a number of these skills in-house as the process progresses.

Having been informed that consideration has also been given to those areas within the budget where more immediate benefits could be achieved, a Member has emphasised the need not to avoid filling vacancies within the establishment only to meet savings targets.

23. OPTIONS FOR FRAUD INVESTIGATION POST SINGLE FRAUD INVESTIGATION SERVICE (SFIS)

(The following item was considered as a confidential item under paragraph 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

In conjunction with the Corporate Governance Panel (Item No 17 of their Report refers), the Panel has considered various options available to the authority once its housing benefit fraud function has been transferred to a Single Fraud Investigation Service (SFIS) in May 2015. In recognising the potential impact on fraud risk that the transfer could have and the benefits of maintaining a level of fraud prevention and detection, the Panel has recommended to the Cabinet that a smaller fraud team should be retained, which can work in partnership with neighbours and other agencies. Members are also of the opinion that the opportunities to establish a shared service with neighbouring authorities should be explored once the formation of the SFIS has been completed.

24. CORPORATE PLAN: PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Panel has been acquainted with progress on the key activities identified in the Corporate Plan during the period 1st July to 30th September 2014. In so doing, Members have been provided with the opportunity to ask Cabinet Members questions on activities within their specific areas of responsibility.

In general terms, Panel Members have welcomed the progress that has been made in developing the format of the report to incorporate the comments which had been made in the first quarter. Work is now being undertaken to introduce a more rigorous internal quality assurance approach. Members have also been assured that the development of the Council's performance information is an ongoing piece of work and that the identification of outcomes will be the next part of this process.

In reviewing those activities within the 'Strong Local Economy theme', Members have discussed the efforts that are being made to encourage local businesses to attend themed business information events, the expected outcome from the action to commit to the Enterprise Zone Skills Strategy and the impact of the number of vacancies within the Development Management Team on their ability to provide fast track pre-application advice. In response to Members' comments regarding the absence of any clear measureable targets within this theme which can be used to demonstrate progress, the Executive Councillor for Strategic Economic Development and Legal has been asked to give further consideration to this in advance of the preparation of the report for the third quarter.

In terms of the key actions within the 'Ensuring we are a Customer Focused and Service Led Council' theme, the Panel has discussed the outcome of the Employee Opinion Survey and noted that the new Corporate Management Team will be working to address the issues

which have been raised. In view of the level of response to the consultation with local residents on the 2015/16 Budget process, Members have queried whether this is a worthwhile exercise and have noted the intention of the Executive Councillor for Resources to make the consultation more effective in future years. It has also been agreed that a copy of the full list of Facing the Future items will be provided to Panel Members in due course.

In terms of the development of the Council's website for consultation and engagement, having noted that the issues relating to the links between the calendar, database and the website have now been resolved, the Executive Councillor for Customer Services has been asked to provide details of the timeframe for the completion of this action. Members have also asked the Corporate Director (Services) to provide further information as to how the sample will be selected for the twice yearly postal survey of customers using the Council's Call Centre.

Finally, the Panel has discussed the mechanisms for removing actions from the performance report once they have been completed. Members are of the opinion that items should not be removed from the report until it has been agreed by the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

25. TREASURY MANAGEMENT REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE: 6 MONTHLY REVIEW

In order to fulfil its role of overseeing the management of the Council's financial investments and borrowing, the Panel has reviewed the Council's treasury management activity for the period 1st April to 30th September 2014. The report has been considered by the Cabinet and appears elsewhere on the Council Agenda.

26. GROWTH DEAL ROUND 2 (STRATEGIC ECONOMIC PLAN UPDATE)

The Panel has received an update on the preparation of a response to the second round bidding process for Government Growth Deal funding. Following the disappointing outcome from the submission of bids in round 1, a collaborative approach led by the District Council has been adopted for the second round bid. The Panel has congratulated District Council Officers on their achievements in preparing a bid in the time frame which was available.

Having been advised of the specific projects relating to Huntingdonshire which form part of the bid, Panel Members have noted that it had been difficult to predict the likely award of funding from the exercise as the Government's priority themes and the size of the funding pot are unknown

In considering the contents of the report, Members have acknowledged the positive benefits which have been achieved from the collaborative approach in terms of improved future working relationships with the Local Enterprise Partnership. Members have

also discussed the accountability and transparency of the Local Enterprise Partnership and future development at the Ramsey Northern Gateway. The Executive Leader has reiterated the importance of promoting growth in this area in a positive way when the opportunities emerge.

Having noted that the outcome of the second round bidding process is expected to be announced in December, the Panel has requested a further up-date in due course.

27. PROJECT CLOSURE REPORTS

The Panel has reviewed the closedown report for the development of the Multi-Storey Car Park in Huntingdon and the re-development of facilities at One Leisure, St Ives. The report outlines the lessons which have been learned from the roll-out of the schemes and also outlines improvements to the Council's project management arrangements going forward. These are designed to ensure that capital projects are subject to appropriate appraisal and governance procedures in the future.

Having welcomed the candour of the report, the Panel has discussed a number of the issues emerging therefrom with the Executive Leader, the Council's Managing Director, Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer. These include Members previous reservations about the projections incorporated within the business plans for both projects and the extent to which these had been taken into account during the decision making process, the responsibility and accountability for authorising schemes to proceed, the reasons for the problems which had emerged, the role of the multi-story car park in the overall investment programme for the town centre and recent media coverage on the subject. Members have been advised that whilst both schemes had been considered by Overview and Scrutiny, the Cabinet and the full Council, on these occasions there had been a clear failure in process. The Overview and Scrutiny Panels will have an important role pre-scrutinising future schemes.

To enable Panel Members to give further consideration to the issues emerging from the report, to obtain assurances that improvements have been made to Council processes and to test the robustness of the Council's approach, the Panel has agreed to establish a Select Committee to review the issue of project management in the New Year. It is envisaged that the Select Committee will report its findings, together with any proposed recommendations, to the Cabinet and to full Council in April 2014.

A study template has been agreed, which identifies the Select Committee's terms of reference and other parameters of the investigation. Specifically, the Committee will:

- review the Council's project management arrangements in the wake of the issues highlighted by the One Leisure St Ives and Huntingdon Multi-Storey Car Park Close Down report;

- test the robustness of the Council's new project management toolkit and governance arrangements;
- consider how lessons learned have been addressed, and
- determine whether any further improvements are required.

At the meeting in December, the Panel has received a demonstration of the Council's programme and project management toolkit and various aspects of it have been examined. Members have received assurances that the tools contain safeguards to prevent unauthorised amendments to projects. These are augmented by the fact that project boards and the Programme and Project Governance Group will oversee projects at different levels. The toolkit creates an audit trail, which will enable those who are responsible for decisions to be held to account. Having commented on the need for the toolkit to be flexible and emphasis to be placed on the financial implications of projects and of not completing them as planned, the Panel has welcomed the appointment of Laura Lock as Programme and Project Manager.

The Select Committee will refer to the information presented during the demonstration. It will also make recommendations on Members' involvement in project management.

28. ZERO BASED BUDGETING

The Panel has received a detailed description of the Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB) process in preparation for setting the 2015/16 Budget and the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Through ZBB eventually every service area will be examined. To date, savings of £0.916m have been identified; however, this reduces to £0.196m when corporate costs are taken into account. The Panel has examined when these costs include and how they appear in the financial information they receive. Members also have discussed the discrepancy between the Establishment List maintained by Human Resources and the Salaries Budget. This is the result of posts being held vacant. Measures will be put in place to ensure the two are "in balance" in the future.

The Panel has discussed in detail the ZBB process in respect of One Leisure. A strategy has been developed for the service to breakeven next year and a target has been set to achieve a return of 5% by 2016. An important part of this is creating sound turnover and expenditure predictions. Members have been assured that there will be no loss of leisure service provision. On that subject, it is generally agreed that the Council cannot continue to do everything it always has and the way it does things also will change.

The Cabinet has decided to expedite the ZBB process. It will now be completed two years earlier than originally planned. Additional temporary external resources will be required to achieve this. The Executive Councillor for Resources is confident that this will be cost effective as it will bring forward the efficiencies.

The Executive Councillor for Resources also has expressed the view that the ZBB process is robust, the Executive Councillors have been engaged and that it will help them better to understand their services. Overview and Scrutiny will then be in a position to scrutinise them on their services' operational and financial performance. The outputs and outcomes that will result from the ZBB process will be reported to the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels as appropriate.

The Panel has noted that some services have put considerable work into their star chamber appearances and have achieved savings that are reflected in budgets that will be put forward for adoption. Other services have been asked to carry out additional work and re-submit their budget proposals.

The main issue that has arisen during the process is the inability of the Council's information systems to produce management information. An action has been identified to address this.

In conclusion, Members are content with the ZBB process. They have noted the variance in the Establishment from the Salaries Budget and are satisfied that it has been recognised. The Employment Panel will monitor this going forward. The Panel looks forward to scrutinising Executive Councillors on ZBB shortly and will focus on the weaker areas.

The Panel supports the revised timetable and has requested information on whether the decision to recruit additional temporary external resources achieves value for money.

29. FACING THE FUTURE – UPDATE

The Panel has been acquainted with the status of the ideas identified through Facing the Future. Financial information on the ideas will be presented to Members in February/March 2015.

Other Matters of Interest

30. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel has received the current Notice of forthcoming Key Executive Decisions, which has been prepared by the Executive Leader. In recognition of the Panel's interest in the Huntingdon West Masterplan and the Huntingdonshire Infrastructure Business Plan, it has been agreed that Panel Members should be invited to attend the Environmental Well-Being Panel when these items are discussed.

31. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) – PROGRESS

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies. In terms of the future work programme, Members have noted that a presentation will

be received on the prosperity and vitality of the Market Towns. An update on the Facing the Future programme will also be presented and Members are of the opinion that there is a role for the Panel in monitoring where savings have or have not been made. The Panel will also invite the new Chief Executive of the Local Enterprise Partnership to give a presentation on its Business Plan once s/he has been appointed.

32. SCRUTINY

The Panel has received the latest editions of the Decision Digest and discussed matters contained therein. Having discussed whether the Digest adds value to the Panel's discussions, it has been agreed that it should be retained as an Agenda item but dealt with 'by exception' rather than being considered in its entirety.

R Harrison
Chairman

Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being)

Report of the meeting held on 11th November 2014

Matters for Information

21. CORPORATE PLAN - PERFORMANCE MONITORING (QUARTER 2)

In conjunction with the Panels for Social and Economic Well-Being, the Panel has reviewed data on the Council's progress against the key actions and performance indicators contained in the Corporate Plan. The data covers the period 1st July to 30th September 2014 and includes the position in the previous period for comparison. The production of performance monitoring reports represents a significant step forward in the management of the Authority. It has been suggested that there is a need to align more closely the reporting of performance with the remits of the Scrutiny Panels.

During the deliberations, it has been established that Luminus has not requested a further amount in addition to the loan that has already been agreed for development of a site in St. Ives. It has also been confirmed that negotiation is taking place on new infrastructure in connection with potential development at Wyton and that conditions will be applied to the planning permission for proposed developments in St Neots that will limit development until improvements have been completed to the A428 and other roads.

The Panel has examined progress of the update to the Buildings at Risk Register and the processing of planning applications. The Planning Section had been operating significantly below establishment for some time but the Executive Councillor for Planning and Housing Strategy has assured Members that both areas of activity will be 'on-track' by the end of the year. In addition to having a full complement of staff, other measures to improve the processing of planning applications include reviewing the Scheme of Delegation and the way it is interpreted. The Executive Councillor expects next year's target for processing planning applications to correspond with national levels of performance.

With regard to the number of households living in temporary accommodation, Members have been informed of a specific scheme to provide four additional dwellings intended for this type of tenure in Abbots Ripton Road, Huntingdon. More generally, analysis is being undertaken of demand and the location of temporary accommodation

and, once this work has been completed, other schemes will come forward.

22. SHARED SERVICES - BUILDING CONTROL

The Panel has been acquainted with a proposal to form a shared Building Control service between Huntingdonshire and South Cambridgeshire District Councils. The associated option of adopting South Norfolk District Council's IT solution has been thoroughly investigated but is not currently being taken forward.

Members have received assurances that service standards will be maintained and that the evidence that supports the business plan to generate an additional £60,000 per annum in income is robust. It has been further clarified that the net benefit of the savings and additional income will be shared between the partners.

Having welcomed the opportunities the shared service could provide for employees in terms of career progression, the Panel has recommended the Cabinet to make the necessary authorisations to allow the shared service to proceed. In addition, it has been recommended that, to promote good governance, scrutiny arrangements should be developed for the shared service.

23. LITTER POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Pursuant to Item No. 11 of the Report to the meeting of the Council held on 30th July 2014, the Panel has received information on the Council's litter policies and practices. In-depth figures for every area of work have not yet been compiled. These will be requested as required for any detailed study work to be undertaken. Members' attention has been drawn to various issues relating to the service including the differing standards applied in towns compared with rural areas for litter removal and the financial pressures on it.

The Panel has discussed the likely impact of potential areas for savings and, in particular, their implications for the resilience of the service. The Panel will examine the options for savings taking into account residents' appetite for change and make recommendations for future service scope and standards. It is generally agreed that the Council should encourage greater involvement of parishes in collecting litter. However, the Council will retain the statutory responsibility for standards of cleanliness. It should be noted that current standards could be lowered without minimum standards being breached.

Following discussion on waste collection from flats, it has been agreed that Council representatives on the Board of a local Registered Provider should be asked to use their influence to encourage the organisation to make the necessary structural changes to such buildings to make collections possible. On the question of responding to reports of graffiti, there is agreement that there should be a single point of contact, but more work is needed on the details of how the Council's responsibilities are met.

In response to questions on weed spraying and street sweeping, the Panel has been informed that there is a standards based contract for the District Council to carry out this work on behalf of the County Council, but there is some disagreement on how the standards are interpreted. There is a need for clarification and agreement to be reached between the two parties on the terms of the contract. The Panel has also discussed enforcement of fly-tipping.

At the conclusion of the deliberations on this subject, Councillors M G Baker, G J Bull, D A Giles and R J West have been appointed to a Working Group to consider and make recommendations on the future scope and standards of the litter and graffiti services and on public appetite for changes.

Other Matters of Interest

24. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies. In doing so, clarification has been requested of the status of the Tree Strategy. It has also been noted that survey findings will be made available to the Waste Collection Working Group in February.

In order to provide Member input into a planned water and flooding Supplementary Planning Document for Cambridgeshire, a meeting of the Flood Prevention Working Group shortly will be held.

On the proposed study into the Licensing Service, as the Cabinet has held informal discussions on the Council's general enforcement role, the Panel will monitor developments and undertake a study if the circumstances merit it.

25. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel has received details of the studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

26. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel has been acquainted with the contents of the Notice of Key Executive Decisions and has confirmed the matters on which it wishes to be consulted before they are submitted to the Cabinet for determination.

27. SCRUTINY

The Panel has considered the latest edition of the Decision Digest and discussed matters contained therein. Comment has been made that it would be useful if a distinction is made between decisions

made by the Development Management Panel, which are in accordance with Officers' recommendations and those that are not.

G J Bull
Chairman

Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being)

**Report of the meetings held on 7th October, 4th
November and 2nd December 2014**

Matters for Information

22. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP – ANNUAL REPORT

The Panel has been acquainted with the activities of and outcomes achieved by the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership in 2013/14. The Partnership had been established in accordance with Sections 5–7 and 11 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998, which requires responsible authorities to work together to protect their local communities from crime, to help people feel safe and to do all that is reasonable to prevent crime and disorder in the area. The Partnership comprises representatives from the District and County Councils, Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridgeshire Fire & Rescue Service, Cambridgeshire & Peterborough CCG and the Probation Service. Other organisations participate as appropriate.

Members have been advised of the costs associated with supporting and chairing the Partnership and of the challenges presented by the new Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Funding for the Partnership is now allocated from the Safer, Stronger Community Fund by the Police and Crime Commissioner and in 2013/14 this amounted to £28,000. Members have noted details of the projects towards which funding was allocated in 2013/14. The Chairmanship has now transferred from the District Council to the Chief Inspector thus reducing the costs previously incurred by the Council. Members have been advised of the estimated cost of the District Council's future support for the Partnership.

Having been acquainted with the composition of the Community Safety Team and the priorities of the service over the period 2014-17, the delivery and cost effectiveness of the service have been scrutinised. Community Service Grant of £24,000 has been allocated by the Police and Crime Commissioner for 2014/15 and the Panel has questioned whether any cost analysis of the service has been undertaken to demonstrate the value and cost effectiveness of the Partnership. The Executive Councillor and Communities Manager have agreed to undertake this exercise in the future.

It is understood that the priorities of the Partnership over the period 2014-17 reflect those set by the police. Prevention of crime generally

is the overriding and continuing priority for the Partnership although it is not listed specifically as a priority.

The Panel has recognised the valuable contribution made by the CCTV service as a deterrent to anti-social behaviour. As the service has transferred to the Community Division, the impact of CCTV will be reflected in future reports.

Having been briefed on the implications for the Partnership of the new Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 and noted that the Partnership was currently seeking to secure efficiencies and savings, the Panel has agreed to consider whether it wishes to have the opportunity to engage in the outcome of this review at a future meeting.

23. CUSTOMER SERVICES MONITORING

The Panel has received information on the performance and activities of the Customer Services Team over the period January to June 2014. Although the report has previously been submitted to the Economic Panel, the view has been taken that it is more appropriate if performance monitoring of customer services is undertaken by the Social Well-Being Panel. The timeliness of the management information presented will be adjusted to reflect the work programme of the Panel in future. A review of progress on the Customer Services Strategy shortly will be submitted to the Panel.

Looking at the detailed performance information, it has been recognized that speed of response and quality of service (based on feedback received) arising from day to day operation of the service are the key measures.

With regard to the rationale for the potential transfer of the Call Centre to Pathfinder House which appears to be contrary to the shared service approach currently favoured by the District Council, it has been confirmed that there are still opportunities to establish the Call Centre as part of the Strategic Partnership with South Cambridgeshire/Cambridge City but in the short term, the likelihood is that the service will be relocated to Pathfinder House. On the suggestion that joint services might be established with the Town Councils, the Panel has noted that there is little advantage in a partnership of this nature.

The Panel understands that it is the Council's intention to encourage the public to make greater use of online services rather than rely on the telephone or face to face contact. A smartphone app is already used extensively by visitors to One Leisure and it is hoped to extend this type of facility to other parts of the organisation.

Regarding speed of response to enquiries at the Call Centre, it has been accepted that resilience to sickness absence requires improvement and that there might be an opportunity to call on Customer Services staff in these circumstances should the team be located on the same site. It has, however, been made clear that any

temporary staff exchange would not be to the detriment of customer services. There would also be an opportunity to call in additional staff as cover. Further on the transfer of the team to Pathfinder House, the Panel has been informed that staff have welcomed the opportunity to have closer contact with their colleagues and other services.

The Panel will receive future reports on the opportunities there might be to encourage increased visitors to the Council's website

24. AFFORDABLE HOUSING STUDY

The Panel has been updated on progress of the study on affordable housing. The Working Group has had the opportunity to discuss that part of the new Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 relating to affordable housing provision at a meeting when the Executive Councillor for Planning and Housing Strategy also was present.

The Working Group is keen to examine opportunities to deliver additional affordable housing, reduce the number of families waiting for affordable housing and question why individuals appear to remain on the waiting list without any potential to secure a housing offer.

The Working Group's proposed study programme and its conclusions on relevant policies in the draft new Local Plan have been endorsed by the Panel.

25. CORPORATE PLAN (PERFORMANCE REPORT)

In conjunction with the Panels for Economic and Environmental Well-Being, the Panel has received an update on progress achieved against key activities identified in the Council's Corporate Plan in the period 1st July to 30th September 2014. Members have reviewed the key actions under each strategic theme and asked questions about the use of fixed penalty notices (FPNs) and fly tipping. Eight FPNs have been issued by the District Council in the year to date by a small team of two who also are required to respond to other issues. For comparison, Fenland District Council maintains a team of five Officers for this purpose who have issued 14 FPNs over the same period. Prosecutions for fly tipping have been undertaken and further information has been provided on any cases currently under investigation.

The Head of Operations has been asked to look at options to prevent litter arising from a supermarket and fast food outlets at Brampton Hut. Having been advised of the opportunity to establish litter control zones under the Environmental Protection Act to prevent this nuisance and whilst accepting that these zones might require enforcement, an undertaking has been received that this opportunity will be investigated. It also has been proposed that the Operations Division might engage local schools in litter prevention programmes.

Referring to diversionary activities for young people, it is accepted that the current measure is crude but that this is outweighed by the health benefit and diversionary activities provided to young people at

minimal cost to the District Council. It has then been confirmed that an analysis of partnership arrangements is currently underway to establish those to whom further commitment should be made having regard to value for money and corporate priorities.

Regarding arrangements for temporary accommodation and given concern that accommodation should be maintained as temporary, the Panel has received assurances that use of short term accommodation and bed and breakfast is resisted with greater reliance placed on Registered Providers to locate suitable properties for those occupying temporary accommodation to move into. Whilst the Housing Team enjoys a good working relationship with Registered Providers, turnaround times for lettings could be improved. Furthermore, it has been confirmed that the District Council will seek, by design, to provide a mix of new properties to meet the needs of the elderly and disabled. In addition, subject to consideration of amended plans, the proposed extra care scheme at Langley Court, St Ives is on target for opening in late 2016.

It is acknowledged that strategic targeting using a variety of communication methods is required to ensure the target of 400 assessments for take up of the grant funded 'Action on Energy' is met. As a first step to increase take up and to improve understanding, a briefing note will be produced for Members and Parish Councils on the 'Action on Energy' scheme.

Whilst noting the performance indicators for refuse collection that have been selected, a suggestion has been made that the District Council should be seeking to comply with best practice by minimizing waste and setting targets to reduce the amount of refuse collected going to landfill. It has been further suggested that a review should be carried out of the performance of the street cleansing service to establish whether the service is better in towns compared to rural areas. The cost of refuse collection per household compares favourably with other Cambridgeshire authorities. The performance indicator can be varied in future but contamination is an issue which will need to be investigated before the Council commits to any alternative approach. Street cleansing and the potential for service level agreements will be discussed by the Cabinet.

The next quarter's report will include details of how food establishments are being measured and the parameters used to conclude that establishments are 'broadly compliant'. Lastly, the Panel has drawn attention to the fact that the annual target for disabled facilities grants (DFGs) has reduced from 238 to 200. The target reflects the terms of the shared service agreement, and whilst it will remain the aspiration of the Council to deliver DFGs, there is a limited budget with which to do so.

26. PETITION

The Panel has received a petition relating to the Octagon, Station Road, St Ives containing 266 signatures. The organiser has presented the petition to the Panel. Officers have been asked to

prepare a report for a future meeting on the issues raised by the petition and the organiser of the petition has been invited to make a submission to the same meeting on suitable uses for the Octagon.

27. WELFARE REFORM AND THE IMPACT ON HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The Panel has been acquainted with the effects of the Government's Welfare Reform programme and how it impacts upon households in Huntingdonshire in relation to Housing Benefits, Council Tax Support and homelessness. Members have examined the changes that are taking place in respect of social sector size criteria rules, Council Tax Support, the benefit cap, Universal Credit, Migrants and discretionary housing payments.

The Panel has paid close attention to the position of tenants of Registered Providers who have rent arrears and the interventions undertaken by the District Council as a means of preventing them from becoming homeless. Members have discussed the approach adopted to making discretionary housing payments and the affordability of private sector rented accommodation.

A further update will be provided when circumstances require it.

28. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2015/16

The Panel has recommended the Cabinet to approve a change to the local Council Tax Support scheme with effect from 1st April 2015. The change means the Council will disregard all child maintenance in its calculations, which will result in greater levels of Council Tax Support entitlement to those customers in receipt of this type of income.

29. ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014

The Panel has recommended the Cabinet to delegate new powers to Officers to tackle anti-social behaviour. As previous legislation has been repealed, the Council currently has no powers in this area.

The Panel has commented that the introduction of the new Act is likely to create interest amongst the public in using the new powers, thereby placing greater demands on the Council. This could be exacerbated by the fact that the "test" of anti-social behaviour has been lowered, meaning that a larger range of activities can be classed as such. Furthermore, the Crown Prosecution Service will be able to refer cases directly to Councils to carry out enforcement. While the level of demand placed on the Council is not yet known, the Scrutiny Panel has highlighted that, for these reasons, the service may need more resources.

30. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) - PROJECT MANAGEMENT SELECT COMMITTEE

At the request of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) the Panel has appointed its Chairman together with

Councillors R Fuller and S M Van De Kerkhove to the Select Committee on Project Management.

31. ELDERLY PATIENT WORKING GROUP

The Chairman has updated the Panel on matters raised at a meeting of the Elderly Patient Working Group which took place on 21st October 2014

32. CAMBRIDGESHIRE HEALTH COMMITTEE

Councillor R Carter, the Panel's appointed representative on the Cambridgeshire Health Committee, has reported to the Panel that Uniting Care Partnership has been selected as the Preferred Bidder to improve older people's healthcare and adult community services across Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and parts of Northamptonshire and Hertfordshire. The services will provide urgent care for adults aged over 65 including inpatients as well as A&E services, Mental Health Services for people aged over 65, community health services for adults over 18 and other health services which support the care of people aged over 65. It is understood that the Partnership will spend the next six months preparing and putting everything in place to be able to start delivering services on 1st April 2015.

Members are hopeful that Uniting Care Partnership will be able to give a presentation to the Panel on how the new services will be delivered in Huntingdonshire.

Other Matters of Interest

33. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) – PROGRESS

The Panel has reviewed its work programme at each of its meetings. As the responsible Housing Authority, the District Council will investigate a recent report by Radio Cambridgeshire on complaints made by tenants about Luminus Homes and has appointed an independent investigator to establish whether there is evidence to substantiate the allegations that have been made. Subject to the outcome of the review, the Panel could become involved if it is apparent that Luminus needs to be held to account.

In terms of the annual update to the Panel on the management of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, it has been acknowledged that Circle perhaps provides a more positive picture than might in practice be the case. Members have discussed whether they could begin to use select committee practices to undertake a more meaningful review of hospital operations. It is envisaged that this could involve inviting representations and evidence from former patients, employees and members of the public to enable the Panel to challenge Circle on issues raised more vigorously. Having accepted that this type of work

could improve the role of the Panel, the Chairman has agreed to liaise with Officers to produce a methodology for undertaking a more comprehensive review. The Panel will also look at whether use can be made of the report on the recent Care Quality Commission inspection of the Hospital.

34. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel has received details of studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels. The Cabinet is looking at how to manage the 'Facing the Future' programme going forward and has been asked to consider how to make the monitoring/review process as inclusive as possible.

35. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel has been acquainted with the contents of the Notices of Key Executive Decisions.

36. SCRUTINY

The Panel has considered the latest editions of the Decision Digest and discussed matters contained therein.

S J Criswell
Chairman

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Representation of Political Groups on District Council Panels, etc.

Report by the Corporate Team Manager

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members may recall that the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and associated Regulations describe arrangements for achieving a balance on Panels etc, to reflect the representation of political groups and independent Members on the District Council. The Act requires the District Council to review the representation of different political groups at the time when the Authority holds its Annual Meeting and as soon as practicable and over one month after the last review if the Proper Officer receives a request to undertake a further review of the allocation of seats given a change to membership of a political group. Following the by election in St Neots, Priory Park Ward on 27th November 2014, the Executive Leader and newly elected Councillor have requested a review of the allocation of seats.

2. PRINCIPLES OF PROPORTIONALITY

- 2.1 Members are reminded that in performing the duty to review representation, the Council must, so far as reasonably practicable, only determine the allocation of seats having regard to the following principles -

- ◆ that not all the seats are allocated to the same political group;
- ◆ that the majority of seats are allocated to the political group which forms a majority of the Council's membership; and
- ◆ that the number of seats allocated is in the same proportion as is borne by the number of Members of a political group to the membership of the Council.

- 2.2 Currently it is open to the Council to approve alternative arrangements otherwise than in accordance with the principles of proportionality providing that the alternative arrangements are approved without any Member voting against them.

3. CONSTITUTION OF POLITICAL GROUPS

- 3.1 After the by election in the St Neots, Priory Park Ward, the constitution of political groups on the Council remains as follows:-

Name of Group	No. of Members
Conservative	35
UKIP	7
Liberal Democrat	5
Labour	1

There are now four Members of the Council who are not aligned to a political group.

- 3.2 The membership of groups in proportion to the total membership of the Council is therefore as follows:-

	%
Conservative	67.30
UKIP	13.46
Liberal Democrat	9.61
Labour	1.92

The 'Independent' Members represent 7.69% of the membership of the Council.

- 3.3 As the former incumbent of the office of Councillor for Priory Park Ward also was a member of the Conservative Group, there is no change in the proportion of groups to the total membership of the Council since it was last reported to the meeting on September 24th 2014.

4. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000

- 4.1 The Council are reminded that under the Local Government Act 2000, the proportionality requirements do not apply to the Cabinet or to any Sub-Groups or Sub-Committees, which the Cabinet may appoint. Appointment of the Cabinet also lies with the Executive Leader of the Council. Recent changes to the Constitution and the impact of the Localism Act 2011 on the standards regime have varied and increased to 88, the number of seats to which the Council can appoint.

- 4.2 The following requirements of the Act also need to be adhered to by the Council in determining the membership of Panels, etc. -

- ◆ the Cabinet may not include either the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Council;
- ◆ Overview and Scrutiny Panels may not comprise any Member of the Cabinet;
- ◆ the Executive Leader, Deputy Executive Leader and any Member of the Cabinet shall not be elected as Chairman of any Committee or Panel other than any that may be appointed by the Cabinet.

- 4.3 The Constitution also provides for the Development Management Panel, Licensing and Protection Panel, the Employment Panel and the Licensing Committee to include the relevant Executive Councillor within their respective membership. The Council has previously appointed the Standards Committee to include one Member of the Executive.

Currently the Constitution provides that every Member of the Council shall be appointed to serve on a minimum of one Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Committee or Panel of the Council or the Cabinet.

5. PROPORTIONALITY

- 5.1 Excluding the Cabinet, the aggregate number of seats on Panels is 88. Using the proportionality percentage referred to in paragraph 3.2 and rounding up or down as appropriate, produces the following entitlement remains –

	Seats
Conservative Group	59
UKIP	12
Liberal Democrat Group	8
Independent Members	7
Labour	2

- 5.2 Applying the principles of the Act and, similarly, rounding the figures as necessary, gives the distribution as set out in the Appendix.

- 5.3 For information the principles of proportionality apply similarly to advisory/sub-groups appointed or nominated by panels and regard must be given to the impact of the review on the following examples of entitlements to seats:-

No. of Members on Sub-Group, etc	Proportion of Members from Political Groups				
	Cons	UKIP	Lib Dem	Non aligned – 'Indep'	Lab
3	2	1	0	0	0
4	3	1	0	0	0
5	3	1	1	0	0
6	4	1	1	0	0
7	5	1	1	0	0
8	5	1	1	1	0
9	6	1	1	1	0
10	7	1	1	1	0

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Council is invited to confirm the allocation of seats on District Council Panels to political groups and to the non-aligned Members in accordance with the distribution illustrated in the attached Appendix and to note the requirements for appointments to advisory/sub groups etc, in paragraph 5.3. The proportionality requirements do not apply to the Cabinet and its membership will be determined by the Executive Leader
- 6.2 The opportunity otherwise is available currently to allocate seats in accordance with an alternative arrangement, with the exception of the

Cabinet, provided this arrangement is approved by the Council with no Member voting against.

- 6.3 As a consequence of the review, the Conservative Group are invited to nominate to the vacancy on the Development Management Panel either at this point or under Agenda Item No. 9.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Government and Housing Act 1989

Local Government Act 2000

Localism Act 2011

District Council Constitution

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APPENDIX

Panel/ Committee	No. of Seats*	No. of Ex-officio	Title of Ex-officio	Cons	UKIP	Lib Dem	Indep	Lab	Cons	UKIP	Lib Dem	Indep	Lab
Corporate Governance Panel	8	0		5.38	1.07	0.76	0.61	0.15	5	1	0/1	0/1	0
Development Management Panel	16	1	Not defined	10.76	2.15	1.53	1.23	0.30	11	2	2	1	0/1
Employment Panel	8	1	Not defined	5.38	1.07	0.76	0.61	0	5	1	0/1	0/1	0
Licensing & Protection Panel/ Committee	12	1		8.07	1.61	1.15	0.92	0.23	8	2	1	1	0/1
Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being)**	12	0		8.07	1.61	1.15	0.92	0.23	8	1/2	1	1	0/1
Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being)**	12	0		8.07	1.61	1.15	0.92	0.23	8	1/2	1	1	0/1
Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being)**	12	0		8.07	1.61	1.15	0.92	0.23	8	1/2	1	1	0/1
Standards	8	1	Not defined	5.38	1.07	0.76	0.61	0.15	5	1	0/1	0/1	0
TOTAL	88			59	12	8	7	2	***59	12	8	7	2

* The allocation of these seats must be balanced so that the total entitlement to seats on each group is not exceeded.

** Across all Overview & Scrutiny Panels, the total entitlement to seats is as follows-

Conservative - 24, UKIP - 5, Liberal Democrat - 3, Independent – 3 and Labour - 1

*** The Conservative Group are entitled to 59 seats. However, rounding up and down, as appropriate, reduces the entitlement of seats available to 58.

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