

A meeting of **HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL** will be held in the **CIVIC SUITE, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **WEDNESDAY, 30 SEPTEMBER 2015** 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
The Reverend A Milton, Vicar of St Mary's and All Saints, Huntingdon will open the meeting with prayer.	
APOLOGIES	2 minutes
CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS	10 minutes
1. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 14)	2 minutes
To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 29th July 2015.	
2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS	2 minutes
To receive from Members, declarations as to disclosable pecuniary or other interests in relation to any Agenda item. See Notes below.	
3. COUNCIL DEBATE	40 Minutes
To invite the Chief Constable of Cambridgeshire Constabulary Alec Wood, accompanied by Chief Inspector Laura Hunt, to address the Council.	
Mr Wood has been requested to comment on (<i>in no particular order</i>) -	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">❖ the working relationship between the Chief Constable and the Police and Crime Commissioner;❖ policing levels across Huntingdonshire;❖ the Strategic Plan for Cambridgeshire;❖ the relationship between the Police and Speedwatch; and❖ action against rural crime.	
Chief Inspector Laura Hunt has been asked to address the Council on closer working arrangements with the Police.	
4. ELECTORAL BOUNDARY REVIEW (Pages 15 - 60)	15 Minutes
To consider the Council's submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on Council size.	



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 Council Meeting

Wednesday 30th September 2015 at 7pm

Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, Huntingdon

SUMMARY OF RULES OF DEBATE

No Speeches until Motion is Moved and Seconded

No speeches to be made after the mover has moved a proposal and explained the purpose of it until the motion has been seconded.

The Chairman has Right to Require Motion in Writing before it is discussed

When seconding a motion or amendment, a member may reserve their speech until later in the debate

Content and Length of Speeches

Speeches must be directed to the question under discussion or to a personal explanation or point of order and not exceed 10 minutes for the mover of a motion or 5 minutes in all other cases with the exception of the presenter of the Annual Budget Statement. At the Chairman's discretion an extra 5 minutes may be allowed for speakers.

When a Member May Speak Again

A member who has spoken on a motion may not speak again whilst it is the subject of debate, except to speak once on an amendment moved by another member, to move a further amendment if the motion has been amended since he/she last spoke, if his/her first speech was on an amendment moved by another member, to speak on the main issue, in exercise of a right of reply, on a point of order and by way of personal explanation.

Amendments to Motions

An amendment to a motion must be relevant to a motion and will either be to refer a subject of debate to the Cabinet, Overview and Scrutiny Panel, committee or panel, to leave out words, to leave out words and insert or add others; or to insert or add words, as long as do not have the effect of negating the motion before the Council.

Only one amendment may be moved and discussed at any one time.

If an amendment is not carried, other amendments to the original motion may be moved.

If an amendment is carried, the motion as amended takes the place of the original motion. This becomes the substantive motion to which any further amendments are moved.

If an amendment has been carried, the Chairman will read out the amended motion before accepting any further amendments, or if there is none, put it to the vote.

Alteration of Motion

A member may alter a motion of which he/she has given notice with the consent of the meeting, signified without discussion, and for one without notice with the consent of the seconder and meeting.

Withdrawal of Motion

A member may withdraw a motion which he/she has moved with the consent of both the meeting and the seconder.

Right of Reply

The mover of a motion has a right to reply at the end of the debate on the motion, immediately before it is put to the vote. If an amendment is moved, the mover of the original motion has the right of reply at the close of the debate on the amendment, but may not otherwise speak on it. The mover of the amendment has no right of reply to the debate on his or her amendment.

Motions which may be moved during debate

When a motion is under debate, no other motion may be moved except the following procedural motions: withdraw a motion, amend a motion, proceed to the next business, that the question be now put, adjourn a debate, adjourn a meeting, exclude the public and press in accordance with the Access to Information Rules; and not hear further a member named under Rule 18.3 or to exclude them from the meeting under Rule 18.4.

Closure Motions

A member may move, without comment, the following motions at the end of a speech of another member: proceed to the next business, that the question be now put, to adjourn a debate, or adjourn a meeting.

Point of Order - A member may raise a point of order at any time. The Chairman will hear them immediately. A point of order may only relate to an alleged breach of these Council Rules of Procedure or the law.

Personal Explanation

A member may make a personal explanation at any time to resolve any apparent misunderstanding in the present debate.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the COUNCIL held in Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 29 July 2015.

PRESENT: Councillor P L E Bucknell – Chairman.

Councillors J D Ablewhite, K M Baker, Mrs B E Boddington, D Brown, E R Butler, R C Carter, S Cawley, B S Chapman, S J Criswell, Mrs A D Curtis, J W Davies, D B Dew, Mrs A Dickinson, Mrs L A Duffy, R S Farrer, M Francis, R Fuller, I D Gardener, L George, D A Giles, A Hansard, R Harrison, D Harty, T Hayward, R B Howe, P Kadewere, Ms L Kadic, Mrs R E Mathews, J P Morris, M C Oliver, J M Palmer, P D Reeve, Mrs D C Reynolds, T D Sanderson, M F Shellens, R G Tuplin, D M Tysoe, K D Wainwright, R J West and J E White.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors T D Alban, I C Bates, G J Bull, K J Churchill, Mrs S Conboy, J A Gray, A J Hardy, B Hyland, Mrs P A Jordan, S M Van De Kerkhove and D J Mead.

14. PRAYER

The Venerable Hugh McCurdy, Archdeacon of Huntingdon and Wisbech opened the meeting with Prayer.

15. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman presented to Council an account of the activities both he and the Vice-Chairman, Councillor West had attended since the last meeting. The Chairman was particularly delighted to confirm that they had fulfilled every event that they had been invited to and thanked Members and Officers for their attendance at the Armed Forces Day. Members were also advised of attendance at forthcoming events, including the Queens Award for Industry at Anglian Water on 24th September 2015.

16. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 20th May 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the inclusion of Councillors D Brown, Mrs A D Curtis and J M Palmer in the list of attendees.

17. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were received.

18. PRESENTATION BY THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND

The Council received a presentation from Professor C Mellors, Lead Commissioner and Richard Buck, Review Manager of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on a review of the Council's electoral arrangements. Members were advised of their primary objective to work with local authorities to assist them with delivering effective and convenient local government. The last review was conducted some 13 years previously and since that time electoral imbalances had emerged in certain wards of the District.

The Council was acquainted with details of the electoral review by way of an examination of the Council's electoral arrangements and would be looking at the total number of members to be elected to the Council, the number and names of the wards and the boundaries of the wards. Members were advised of the review process, including the various stages and timetable for implementation. The preliminary stage would be addressing the council size followed by proposals for new ward boundaries, ensuring that each Councillor represented a similar number of electors, reflecting the interests and identities of local communities and ensuring effective and convenient local government in accordance with their statutory criteria.

Members were advised that as the Council currently elected by thirds there would be an assumption of a clear pattern of three member wards and should Members want to move away from this pattern there would need to be evidence to support such a proposal.

Councillor S Criswell suggested that multi-member wards often confused the electorate as there was uncertainty as to who to contact for the respective ward. This view was shared by Councillor D A Giles and in response Professor Mellors explained that some local authorities had moved to whole Council elections with uniform single members wards.

The Executive Leader reported to the Council of the recent meetings that had been held with the LGBCE and explained that he was keen to work with them to their timescales but was disappointed that contact had only been made at the latter part of the preliminary period unlike neighbouring authorities also undertaking a review. In response Professor Mellors reassured Members that the decision to be taken at the next Council meeting on Council size was still within the appropriate timescale and it was not necessary to submit a lengthy argument to support any proposals.

Councillor Mrs B E Boddington referred to the large rural size of her ward and questioned whether this would be taken into account in the warding patterns. In response, Professor Mellors explained that this did not form part of the criteria and was based upon the size of the electorate. He also explained that it was not possible create a difference between urban and rural areas.

In relation to the evidence to support the decision on Council size, Councillor M F Shellens commented that there was little support for a decrease in the number of Councillors with the continuing pressures on the Council's budget and more demands on Members. Councillor Shellens also referred to the future growth in the District and the

potential for the variance in the ratio of electors to councillors in some wards to become obsolete soon after the conclusion of the review. Professor Mellors explained that the 10% variance rule could be extended to some degree to allow for such instances in certain wards. In concluding Professor Mellors advised Members of the consultative exercise that would follow the decision on Council size and urged Members to use their knowledge base to participate in shaping the future warding patterns.

19. STATE OF THE DISTRICT 2015

In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 12, the Chairman invited the Executive Leader, Councillor J D Ablewhite to address the Council on the State of the District. In support of his presentation, a summary of the Annual Report 2014/15 and salient facts had been laid on the table (a copy of which is reproduced in the Minute Book).

Councillor Ablewhite reminded Members of the continuing challenge facing local government with reductions in budgets and the difficulties with delivering services. The Council had reacted well to these difficulties and had reviewed service delivery by identifying efficiency savings for the Council's residents and customers.

Councillor Ablewhite added that the Medium Term Financial Strategy had been developed to reduce reliance on Central Government funding, whilst minimising the impact on residents. Councillor Ablewhite proceeded to remind Members of the savings achieved to date through the Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB) processes, creating reserves to be invested in a Commercial Investment Strategy fund to generate a source of income for future years.

The Council's attention was also drawn to the successful securing of grant funding of £500k as part of the Transformation Challenge Award working with partners for the shared services projects being undertaken with South Cambridgeshire District Council and Cambridge City Council.

Looking forward, the Council were advised of future developments involving the empowerment of managers and utilising business intelligence and information technology to ensure budgets are being met. Members further were acquainted with proposals to ensure One Leisure makes a surplus in the future and the capital costs are covered by the end of this financial year. (A copy of Councillor Ablewhite's full address is reproduced in the Minute Book.)

The Leader of the Principal Opposition, Councillor Ms L A Duffy was invited to respond. Councillor Ms Duffy commended the Council on how well it was working and moving forward, including cross party working. She welcomed the continuing strive to maintain a zero rise in Council Tax and the impact of ZBB. Councillor Ms Duffy praised Mrs J Lancaster, Managing Director and her Officers for their professional nature of improving and maintaining staff. She proceeded to encourage Members to attend training sessions and commended Mr C Mason on the recent training on the budget.

Whilst welcoming the need for further housing development in the District, Councillor Ms Duffy expressed concern at the impact of such developments in the rural areas but felt that there needed to be a

balance with the requirement for more affordable housing.

Councillor R G Tuplin concurred with the sentiments raised by Councillor Ms Duffy and the positive working relationship that currently existed within the Council amongst Members.

Councillor M F Shellens suggested that attention needed to be focussed on those residents with limited wealth, particularly the younger generation in the District and supported the comments in relation to the requirement for more affordable housing.

In congratulating the Executive Leader on the contents of the Annual Report, Councillor P Kadewere highlighted his concerns with the welfare reform and the impact on some of our communities and indicated his desire to assist with improving the situation for those affected.

In response to the comments from Members, Councillor Ablewhite welcomed the collaborative working amongst the Council and shared the same concerns regarding the vulnerable in the District and explained that they continued to be a priority and would be addressed through regular communication to focus on the areas that needed assistance. In response to the developments in rural areas, Councillor Ablewhite explained that the District was a high growth area and many of the allocated housing sites were on Brownfield land, minimising the impact on such rural locations.

In concluding, Councillor Ablewhite indicated his aspiration to achieve further funding to deliver projects to benefit the residents in the District through collaborative working amongst strategic partner agencies.

20. EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR PRESENTATIONS

(a) Councillor R C Carter, Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment

Councillor R C Carter, Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment addressed the Council on the Operations Review. A copy of Councillor Carter's PowerPoint presentation is appended in the Minute Book.

Members were acquainted with the background to the review of the Operations Division and advised that details had been previously presented to a Special Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) on 16th June 2015. The Council were informed of the concerns that had been expressed from the Corporate Management Team and Members regarding the pace of change and delivery in the Division and the lack performance monitoring data available. In noting the important role of Overview and Scrutiny in the monitoring of performance, Members were advised that a programme of reports had been scheduled for future meetings of the Panel and a further update on the restructuring would be presented to their meeting in September 2015.

The focus of future developments had been highlighted to

the Council with an emphasis on customer service and delivering value for money. Councillor Carter explained that although there was a strong core of committed staff, the Division lacked leadership and vision. He proceeded to explain that the staffing structure in the Division was outdated and the service had been reactive rather than proactive, with no service improvement plans to take the Division forward. Members also noted further findings from the Review, which included a desire to address lack of political awareness amongst key managers and tackling the unacceptable levels of sickness absence, resulting in improved productivity and a decreasing reliance on agency workers.

The proposed new operating model was presented to the Council by Mr A Merrick, Interim Head of Operations. The principles of the new operating model were highlighted to Members, which included the integration of the grounds maintenance and street cleansing teams, the identification of clearer team leader roles to monitor productivity and work schedules and creation of a new team to tackle non-routine works such as fly tipping and graffiti removal.

In response to a question from Councillor B S Chapman on problems he had been experiencing with the maintenance of verges in Loves Farm, St Neots following the transfer of responsibility to Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC), Councillor Carter requested that he be provided with further detail in order that specific areas can be added to the weed spraying programme.

Councillor P Kadewere highlighted problems he had been experiencing with the lack of maintenance of the bridges over Coneygear Road, Huntingdon, whereby Councillor Carter undertook to arrange a visit with Councillor Kadewere to investigate this issue further.

Councillor P D Reeve raised a question on the feasibility of working with other authorities to share the costs and queried the working arrangement with CCC in the maintenance arrangements. In response Councillor Carter explained that work was being undertaken with Town and Parish Councils to identify responsibility for grounds maintenance.

The Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being), Councillor T D Sanderson, reported on the presentation at their Panel in June 2015 indicated his support for the proposals. In response to his comment on the ability to feedback to residents' progress on a complaint or service request, Councillor Carter explained that all Members issues were now being logged to ensure progress can be fed back to the originator.

(b) Questions to Other Members of the Cabinet

In response to a question from Councillor T Hayward on the misinformation that had been presented to Highways

England on the Borrow Pits around Brampton, the Executive Leader undertook to follow up the matter outside of the meeting.

In response to a question from Councillor J White on the future of the RAF bases at Alconbury and Molesworth, the Executive Leader updated Members on the progress at both bases and had been advised that the American Forces would not be vacating any time before 2023. The Ministry of Defence was undertaking fundamental review of its estates and the Executive Councillor reported that one of the forces had already indicated an interest in RAF Molesworth. It was anticipated that the review would be completed in February 2016.

In response to a question from Councillor D A Giles on car parking charges, Councillor R B Howe reported that there were no plans for an increase in car parking charges or applying a charge for Sunday parking.

In response to a question from Councillor B S Chapman on the timescale for preparation of a Development Plan for St Neots, Councillor D B Dew undertook to establish the period for completion.

Arising from a question from Councillor P D Reeve on a strategy for gypsy and traveller sites in the District, Councillor Dew explained that further details would emerge as part of production of the new Local Plan.

21. SERVICE PLAN FOR FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT 2015/16

By reference to a report by the Head of Community to which was appended the Service Plan for Food Law Enforcement 2015/16 (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) Councillor R Fuller, Chairman of the Licensing & Protection Panel reminded Members that the Food Standards Agency required the Council to prepare a Food Enforcement Service Plan annually in accordance with an agreed framework.

Councillor Fuller explained that the Council had to demonstrate how it proposed to fulfil the duty placed upon it to deliver official food controls, national priorities and standards in the District. The Service Plan sets out how these arrangements have been made, how the enforcement function will be delivered, describes the resources required to deliver it and reviews the previous years' performance.

Whereupon, after noting the support for the Plan on the part of the Licensing & Protection Panel, the Council

RESOLVED

that the Food Safety Service Plan 2015/16 be adopted.

22. STATUTORY DISMISSAL PROCEDURES FOR HEADS OF PAID SERVICE, MONITORING OFFICERS AND THE RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

The Executive Leader, Councillor J D Ablewhite presented a report on changes to the statutory disciplinary and dismissal procedures (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) detailing arrangements necessary for an amendment to the Council's Constitution to reflect the new regulations and to incorporate the requirements of the new Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.

The Regulations amend the statutory disciplinary and dismissal procedures of English Local Authorities' Heads of Paid Service, Monitoring Officers and Chief Financial Officers and replace the statutory Designated Independent Person (DIP) process, outlined in the current Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001.

The Regulations state that before an Authority considers whether to dismiss an officer, it must convene a Panel made up of Councillors and at least two Independent Persons.

Having confirmed the support of the Employment Panel and the Corporate Governance Panel, it was moved, seconded and

RESOLVED

that District Council's Constitution be amended to reflect the new regulations and to incorporate the requirements of the new Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015 as attached to the Officer's report.

23. REPORTS OF THE CABINET, PANELS AND COMMITTEES

(a) Corporate Governance Panel

Councillor M Francis presented the Report of the meetings of the Corporate Governance Panel held on 3rd June and 15th July 2015.

.....
In connection with Item No. 1 and upon being moved by Councillor Francis, and seconded by Councillor G J Bull, the recommendation was declared to be CARRIED.

.....
In connection with Item No. 2, Councillor M F Shellens moved and was duly seconded the inclusion of the following recommendation –

that the Executive Leader and Executive Councillor be kept informed of the negotiation process for the disposals and acquisitions and the relevant Ward Councillor be informed prior to the sale.

Subject to the inclusion of the additional recommendation outlined above, it was duly moved by Councillor Francis and seconded by Councillor G J Bull and the recommendations were declared to be CARRIED.

.....
Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that, subject to the foregoing paragraphs, the Report of the meetings of the Corporate Governance Panel held on 3rd June and 15th July 2015 be received and adopted.

(b) Cabinet

Councillor J D Ablewhite, Executive Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Cabinet presented the Reports of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 20th May, 18th June and 16th July 2014.

.....
Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Reports of the meetings of the Cabinet held on 20th May, 18th June and 16th July 2014 be received and adopted.

(c) Licensing and Protection Panel

Councillor R Fuller presented the Report of the meeting of the Licensing and Protection Panel held on 23rd June 2015.

.....
Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Licensing and Protection Panel held on 23rd June 2015 be received and adopted.

(d) Licensing Committee

Councillor R Fuller presented the Report of the meeting of the Licensing and Protection Panel held on 23rd June 2015.

.....
Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Licensing and Protection Panel held on 23rd June 2015 be received and adopted.

(e) Development Management Panel

Councillor Mrs B E Boddington presented the Report of the meetings of the Development Management Panel held on 27th May, 15th June and 20th July 2015.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Development Management Panel held on 27th May, 15th June and 20th July 2015 be received and adopted.

(f) Employment Panel

Councillor J W Davies presented the Report of the meeting of the Employment Panel held on 17th June 2015.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Employment Panel held on 17th June 2015 be received and adopted.

(g) Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being)

Councillor S J Criswell presented the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) held on 2nd June and 7th July 2015.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) held on 2nd June and 7th July 2015 be received and adopted.

(h) Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being)

Councillor T D Sanderson presented the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) held on 9th June, 16th June and 14th July 2015.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) held on 9th June, 16th June and 14th July 2015 be received and adopted.

(i) Overview & Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being)

Councillor D Harty presented the Report of the meetings of the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) held on 4th June and 9th July 2015.

.....

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) held on 4th June and 9th July 2015 be received and adopted.

(j) Standards Committee

Councillor A Hansard presented the Report of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 25th June 2015.

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Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Report of the meeting of the Standards Committee held on 25th June 2015 be received and adopted.

24. VARIATION TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEES AND PANELS, ETC

Arising from the vacancy that still existed on the Development Plan Policy Advisory Group, the Council

RESOLVED

that Councillor R S Farrer be appointed to the membership of the Development Plan Policy Advisory Group.

The meeting ended at 9.42pm.

Chairman

Public

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Electoral Boundary Review of Huntingdonshire

Meeting/Date: Council – 30th September 2015

Executive Portfolio: Executive Leader

Report by: Managing Director

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) has recently announced it intends to undertake an electoral review of Huntingdonshire District Council. The first phase of the review is for the Council to produce a submission to the LGBCE, which provides a rationale, backed up with evidence, for a proposed Council size.

The timescale for completion of this phase is very short. The Managing Director has convened a working group comprising representatives from the political groups to make recommendations on the number of Councillors the Council needs.

The Working Group has met on three occasions and concluded, on the basis of relevant information, that the Council should retain 52 Councillors in order to secure effective and convenient local government.

The Working Group's findings have been endorsed by the Standards Committee.

Recommendation:

To approve Huntingdonshire District Council's submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on Council size.

1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT/PURPOSE?

- 1.1 This report provides Members with an opportunity to consider the Council's submission on the first phase of the review by the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) of the number of Huntingdonshire District Council elected Members and its Wards. It also contains information on the process and timescale leading to completion of the review.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The LGBCE has recently announced it intends to undertake an electoral review of Huntingdonshire District Council. The first phase of the review is for the Council to produce a submission to the LGBCE, which provides a rationale, backed up with evidence, for a proposed Council size.
- 2.3 The timescale for completion of this phase is very short. The Managing Director has convened a working group comprising representatives from the political groups to make recommendations on the number of councillors the Council needs.
- 2.4 The Council's submission will need to be approved by the full Council. The Standards Committee has been consulted on the draft submission and has endorsed it. The Committee will be involved in subsequent phases of the review, which will lead to the adoption of revised Ward boundaries for the District.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS

- 3.1 With regard to the Council's size, the LGBCE will seek to put the Council's proposal into context by comparing it with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy *Nearest Neighbours* model. This is to ascertain whether an authority's proposal would mean its council size differs to a significant extent from similar authorities. Various pieces of information about the Council's *Nearest Neighbours* and the other districts in Cambridgeshire have been examined for this purpose.
- 3.2 As the Council's submission states, Huntingdonshire's proposal for 52 Members is mid-way between the upper and lower figures for the *Nearest Neighbours* and, with an electorate of 128,353, has strong similarities with the areas of a comparable size; namely Aylesbury Vale, Colchester, Braintree and South Cambridgeshire. There should be no objection to the Council's proposal on this ground.
- 3.3 Based on current electorate figures of 128,358, with 52 Councillors, each Councillor would represent an average of 2,468 electors, rising to 2,935 in 2021 (152,600 electors). Of the Councils in the *Nearest Neighbours* list that have completed a review since the start of 2014, Huntingdonshire has the highest councillor:elector ratio both now and at the end of the period covered by the review (in Huntingdonshire's case 2021).
- 3.4 As its primary consideration at this stage is effective and convenient local government rather than representation ratios, the Council's submission has taken into account various aspects of the *Nearest Neighbours'* structures, such as the size of the Cabinet, the Scrutiny function and working with external partners. As the Council has regularly reviewed its democratic structure, it has a close understanding of its requirements of the structure and

the size of the components of that structure. This point is emphasised in the Council's submission.

- 3.5 One of the key reasons for proposing to retain 52 Councillors is the magnitude of the growth predicted for the area. Demands on councillors have increased significantly since the last review in 2002. It has already been pointed out that Huntingdonshire councillors serve a greater number of electors than those at comparison authorities. Based primarily on the Council's own Housing Trajectory estimates, growth is likely to be greater in this area than many others. The demands on councillors will only increase further still. All parties are aware of the difficulties that currently exist in finding individuals to stand for election. It is argued that this should not be exacerbated as it would diminish the options available at elections.
- 3.6 These points are expanded on in the Council's submission, which is attached as an Annex.
- 3.7 When it comes to phase 2, options are generated through the review process. The LGBCE aims to build as many of its recommendations as possible on locally-generated proposals and, to that end, will gather as much information and undertake consultation. It will publicise the review and will ask local authorities, political parties, parish and town councils, community groups, residents' associations, other main stakeholders and local people to engage in the process.

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

- 4.1 The risks are that equality of representation will not exist, that Members will not reflect the identities and interests of local communities and that the Council will not operate effectively. The purpose of the review is to reduce the likelihood of these risks occurring. To ensure the review is effective, it is carried out in accordance with prescribed procedures with an emphasis on consultation, reliance on evidence, openness, transparency and proportionality.

5. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 5.1 The Council's submission as part of the first phase of the review relating to Council size has to be completed by the end of September 2015. It is intended that in the second phase there will be public consultation between 27th October 2015 and 11th January 2016 on new electoral ward boundaries and further public consultation on the LGBCE's draft recommendations between 5th April and 31st May 2016. Once the recommendations have been finalised, a draft Order will be laid in Parliament for a period of 40 sitting days. Parliament can either accept or reject the recommendations. If accepted, the new electoral arrangements will be implemented at the next scheduled elections in 2018.

6. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN

- 6.1 Working with our communities - we want our communities to get involved with local decision making. In particular the objectives to:
- create stronger and more resilient communities, and
 - empower local communities.

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 Consultation on electoral reviews is prescribed in legislation. In the case of Huntingdonshire, there will be public consultation between 27th October 2015 and 11th January 2016 on new electoral ward boundaries and further public consultation on the draft recommendations between 5th April and 31st May 2016.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The primary legislation in this area is the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, which consolidates and amends legislation previously contained in the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Government Act 1992 and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. This legislation specifies the requirement to undertake electoral reviews and prescribes their procedures and parameters.

9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The cost of the review will be met from existing resources.

10. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The review is required to have regard to:
- the need to secure equality of representation;
 - the need to reflect the identities and interests of local communities; and
 - the need to secure effective and convenient local government.

11 RECOMMENDATION

It is RECOMMENDED

that the Huntingdonshire District Council's submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England on Council size is approved.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Local Government Boundary Commission for England – [Technical Guidance](#)

Local Government Boundary Commission for England – [Taking part in the Electoral review of Huntingdonshire District Council – A guide for councillors](#)

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ELECTORAL REVIEW OF HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Huntingdonshire District Council's Submission on Council Size

Introduction

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body established by Parliament in April 2010. One of its objectives is to work with principal local authorities to help them deliver effective and convenient local government to citizens. Every year, the LGBCE assesses electorate data for each local authority in England with the intention to intervene where "significant" electoral inequality exists. There are well established criteria against which to gauge electoral inequality. Huntingdonshire District Council's current electoral arrangements have triggered a review.

An electoral review is an examination of a council's electoral arrangements. This means:

- the total number of members to be elected to the council;
- the number and boundaries of electoral areas (wards / divisions) for the purposes of the election of councillors;
- the number of councillors for any electoral area of a local authority; and
- the name of any electoral area.

The LGBCE will aim to ensure its recommendations remain relevant for the long term and recommend a number that delivers effective and convenient local government well after the completion of the review.

The purpose of this phase of the Huntingdonshire District review is to determine the size of the Council. The number of Councillors will be assessed against three broad areas:

- the governance arrangements of the council and how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities;
- the council's scrutiny functions relating to its own decision making and the council's responsibilities to outside bodies, and
- the representational role of councillors in the local community and how they engage with people, conduct casework and represent the council on local partner organisations.

This document is the Council's submission. It has been informed by:

- briefings given by the LGBCE to the full Council, group leaders and key officers;
- meetings with representatives of all political groups;
- consideration by the Standards Committee, and
- debate at full Council.

Huntingdonshire District Council's Submission

Huntingdonshire District Council is of the view that it needs to retain 52 Members in order to maintain effective and convenient local government. The following paragraphs constitute the rationale, backed up with evidence, for this proposal.

Huntingdonshire District Council

Of the 201 two-tier District Councils in England, Huntingdonshire is the eighth largest by electorate and 26th largest by area. The electorate at 1st December 2014 was 128,358. Cambridgeshire County Council's Research Team, using POPGROUP (the standard

population forecasting methodology, as used, for instance, by the ONS), predict the electorate will increase by 24,242 (19%) to 152,600 by 2021. It is widely recognised that there are significant development pressures in the area, with large scale developments planned for Alconbury Weald, the urban extension to Wintringham Park, St Neots and Wyton Airfield. Some of this development will take place after the review period, but it demonstrates the ongoing pressures on the District.

The Council presently has 52 Members who are elected from 29 wards. Of these, nine are in the more urban town locations of Godmanchester, Huntingdon, Ramsey, St Ives and St Neots. Although, the remaining 20 wards are characterised as being more rural, the settlements within their boundaries range in size up to in excess of 7,000 residents, making them comparable with the towns. Four of the wards are represented by three Councillors each, 15 are represented by two Councillors each and ten are single-member wards.

Huntingdonshire District Council currently elects by thirds. The LGBCE advises that elections by thirds should only take place if a local authority submits a council size proposal that is divisible by three. The assumption is that all wards will be represented by three Members, thereby requiring an election in every ward each year an election is held. The proposal to retain 52 Members means the Council would move to all-out elections from 2018.

Leadership

The Council has operated a Leader and Cabinet system of governance since 2000, with a trial having operated for two years prior to that. The Council, in 2009, completed a comprehensive review of its democratic and decision making arrangements to verify their effectiveness and ensure they were fit for purpose.

The review in 2009 concluded that the Cabinet should comprise a maximum of ten Councillors including the Leader. This was adopted and ten Members were duly appointed to the Cabinet. With the appointment of a new Executive Leader, from the start of the 2011 Municipal Year, the Cabinet comprised only six Members. The following year, however, owing to demands on individuals' time, it was deemed necessary to appoint an additional Member to the Cabinet. Subsequently, the particular circumstances of the organisation following the complete replacement of the Senior Management Team and the introduction of new working practices, an additional Member of the Cabinet was required, specifically to be responsible for organisational change and development. The current composition of the Cabinet is as follows:

Councillor J D Ablewhite, Executive Leader	Strategic and Delivery Partnerships
Councillor R S Carter	Operations and Environment
Councillor S Cawley	Organisational Change and Development
Councillor D B Dew	Strategic Planning and Housing
Councillor J A Gray	Resources
Councillor R Harrison	Strategic Economic Development and Legal
Councillor R B Howe, Deputy Executive Leader	Commercial Activities
Councillor D M Tysoe	Customer Services

A detailed breakdown of each Executive Councillor's area of responsibility appears at Appendix A. Appendix B contains general role descriptions for Executive Councillors.

None of the Executive Councillors are considered to have a full-time role but considerable demands are placed on them. The Executive Leader's Role Description (Appendix C) was

adopted in 2009 and, from 2011, was augmented in accordance with the requirements of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to include the appointment of the Cabinet and being responsible for all of the authority's Executive functions. There also is a Role Description for the Deputy Executive Leader (Appendix D).

Executive Members serve on other decision making partnerships, sub-regional, regional and national bodies. Appointments are considered on an annual basis. In addition to the roles listed in the General Description, the Executive Leader represents the Council on the board of the Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership, is a substitute on the Local Government Association's Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, is the Chairman of the East of England Local Government Association and represents the Council on the Shared Services Joint Committee (Member Board) along with the Leaders of the two partner authorities. The Chairman of the Members' Allowances Independent Review Panel referred to below is of the view that "local government devolution will in all likelihood place more demands on the post of Leader".

The Cabinet meets every month. With the exception of the annual determination of grants to voluntary organisations, which is delegated to the Executive Councillors for Resources and Strategic Economic Development and Legal, all decisions are taken collectively by the Cabinet.

Regulatory

The Council has a Development Management Panel to determine planning matters that cannot be dealt with through the scheme of delegation. It comprises 16 Members. The Development Management Panel has a high profile reflecting the development pressures across the District and, on occasion, the decisions it is required to take can be contentious.

Meetings are held monthly and although there is extensive delegation of decisions to Officers, they are often very lengthy. Experience has shown that providing interested parties with the opportunity to address the Panel on applications prolongs the process but Panel Members, and the Chairman in particular, strongly support the retention of this facility to aid their decision-making.

The Development Management Panel's work is augmented by the Section 106 Agreement Advisory Group, the Tree Preservation Orders Sub-Group and the Development Plan Policy Advisory Group. While the last two meet infrequently, the Section 106 Agreement Advisory Group has scheduled monthly meetings to review the terms of S106 Agreements prior to their submission to the Panel.

The Council has two further regulatory forums; that is, the Licensing and Protection Panel (taxis, charitable collections and environmental health) and the Licensing Committee (Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005). These have identical memberships of 12 Members. Main meetings are held on the same day but, for legal reasons, they are held separately. Each meets quarterly but also has a significant number of hearings to determine individual licensing matters.

The Licensing Sub-Committee held ten meetings in 2014/15 and the Licensing and Protection Applications Sub-Group met on 11 occasions. The number of individual cases considered at each meeting varies.

Before they take their seats on the Development Management Panel or the Licensing and Protection Panel / Licensing Committee, Members attend specialist training. The external expert on licensing, who provided training for Members in June 2015, does not foresee any changes in this area, which will significantly affect workloads. With regard to planning, the

Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for adoption. This is likely to take place in 2016. However, the expectation is that completion of this work will not result in a diminution of activity in this area as there will still be a need to develop the supplementary planning policy framework.

Demands on Time

The Council commissioned an Independent Review Panel (IRP) to review its Members' Allowances in April 2015. The IRP was chaired by a national expert in the field, Dr Declan Hall. The IRP's report on its findings notes that Members':

“expected time input in 2002 was 55 days per year. The evidence strongly suggests that this original estimation is now out of date particularly relating to the increased contact with constituents and the time spent on reading and preparation - all boosted by the now common place reliance on electronic means of communication and working that was not in place in 2002. The 2013 Census of Councillors shows that on average district councillors, who hold no positions of responsibility, put in up to 14 hours per week (equivalent to 90 days per year on an 8 hour day)”.

The IRP heard submissions from Members that the Census findings were replicated in Huntingdonshire. This represents a significant increase in demand on Members' time.

During the Review, all party group Leaders commented on the difficulties they experienced recruiting candidates to stand for election to the District Council. Three Members chose not to stand for re-election in May 2015. This figure is consistent with previous years. There were no uncontested seats at the District Council elections in 2015.

There are nine main Council committees with a total of 96 seats, which are allocated in proportion to the size of each of the political groups, plus a number of smaller sub-groups. 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. The quorum for committee meetings is one quarter of the whole number of members but not less than three Members. Attendance levels by Members are good. Meetings of full Council, Cabinet, Development Management Panel, Corporate Governance Panel and Overview and Scrutiny Committees take place in the evening. Other meetings are held during the day.

Members have General Role Descriptions (Appendix E) and there are Role Descriptions for the Executive Leader, Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Councillors. In addition to those appended to this submission, there are Role Descriptions for the Chairman of the Council, the Chairmen of all of the Committees and Panels, the Vice-Chairmen and Group Leaders.

The Council appoints Members as its representatives on a range of outside bodies. The list of bodies appears in the Constitution (see Appendix F).

With regard to Members' representative role towards their constituents, the role description emphasises that a Member should:

- ensure that constituents have access to him/her by way of surgeries, use of modern technology, letter and telephone,
- develop and maintain links as required with the local MP, MEPs, county councillors and the towns or parishes situated in his/her electoral ward,
- participate in any political group to which he/she belongs, and

- devote as much time as is necessary and reasonable to fulfil the requirements of the role effectively.

Appendix G contains the complete Protocol for Community Leadership by Members from the Constitution.

At the time of the review in 2002, the electorate was 116,117 (2001) with each Councillor representing an average of 2,234 electors. Based on current electorate figures of 128,358, with 52 Councillors, each Councillor would represent an average of 2,468 electors, rising to 2,935 in 2021 (152,600 electors). The projection for future electorate levels has been provided by Cambridgeshire County Council's Research Team.

The Council places strong emphasis on "channel migration" with the aim of encouraging its customers to obtain information and services for themselves through electronic means. Councillors, however, believe that while this has realised benefits in terms of reduced transaction costs for the Council as an organisation, it has not decreased their levels of constituent casework. On the contrary, it is commonly found that technology has contributed to increased contact with Councillors because they are readily available via email and mobile telephone there is an expectation of a quick response.

Many Huntingdonshire District Councillors also are Town / Parish and / or County Councillors.

Scrutiny Functions

The Local Government Act 2000 (S 21) required a local authority operating under executive arrangements to appoint one or more overview and scrutiny committees and defines the functions of that committee(s) as:

- to review or scrutinise decisions made or action taken by the executive in discharging its functions;
- to make reports and recommendations to the authority or the executive about the discharge of executive functions;
- to review or scrutinise decisions made or action taken in the discharge of non-executive functions;
- to make reports and recommendations to the authority or the executive about the discharge of non-executive functions;
- to make reports and recommendations to the authority or the executive on matters that affect the authority's area or its inhabitants, and
- to conduct best value reviews if included within its terms of reference by the authority.

Having tried various structures for the Overview and Scrutiny Panels since 2000, the present arrangements comprising three Panels were adopted in 2009. Detailed remits and responsibilities appear in the Constitution (see Appendix H). The Constitution allows for the appointment of up to 16 Members to each of the Panels. In practice, this number has never been necessary and 12 Members sit on each Panel. The Panels have the same full complement of roles but have developed their focus in different directions. The Social Well-Being Panel has, for example, in response to particular local circumstances, undertaken a considerable amount of work on external health services; while the Economic Well-Being Panel has concentrated on the Council's internal finances and governance. The

Environmental Well-Being Panel has been occupied with local strategic planning and the range of associated policy provisions.

The Panels meet on a monthly basis, with task and finish groups also convening on an ad hoc basis. At the same time, the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen variously meet together to co-ordinate and manage the Panels' work programmes. There is a dedicated Support Officer. There is also a nominated member of the Officer Corporate Management Team for each Panel.

The Panels do not generally cancel meetings from lack of business; indeed, they have in the past been criticised for having Agenda that are too congested. The Panels have a Work Programme report at every meeting to enable Members to monitor progress and plan ahead. The work programme also is monitored by the Corporate Management Team so that the flow of internally generated reports is profiled. That said, because they are not able to compel them to attend meetings, Panels are reliant on the goodwill and co-operation of external witnesses. This can mean that Agenda can sometimes be lengthy.

In an attempt to improve outputs, different ways of working have been adopted. The Economic Panel has employed a Select Committee approach to one particular study. In a similar vein, the Chairmen of task and finish groups are now expected to take responsibility for drafting reports on their findings.

In addition, the Council recently has completed a review of the Overview and Scrutiny function and found that it needs to adhere to the present arrangements. There will continue to be three Overview and Scrutiny Panels, each comprising 12 Members.

The future

Constant change has always been a feature of the environment in which local government and its Members operate, and this will continue to for the next few years. The first reason for this change is the continuing financial constraints that are pushing councils in different directions regarding their service provision and delivery models. Secondly, the implementation of the various provisions of the Localism Act 2011 affords them greater scope to undertake a wider range of activities than they have in the past. Thirdly, the emergence of regional and local devolution on the political agenda looks set to take local government into uncharted territory. Although the specific proposals on how local government devolution will take place are not known, what is known is that all the major political parties are committed to moving it forward in some form. As a result, Huntingdonshire District Council and its Members will be operating in a different fashion in five years' time.

The Corporate Plan sets out an ambitious programme of activity for the Council to drive growth and investment in the local economy whilst at the same time challenging itself to deliver good services for a lower cost. A key strand of the future strategic approach is to generate income to meet the funding challenges through the adoption of a Commercial Investment Strategy. This will place additional demands on Members in terms of governance.

Another important element is the development of shared services. In July 2015, the Council formally resolved to enter into a shared service partnership with two neighbouring authorities. Businesses cases for individual shared services are already starting to come forward and others are anticipated in the near future.

One of the Council's four Strategic Priorities is to work with communities to enable them to thrive and get involved with local decision making. This will require Members to maintain

democratic engagement levels. The ability to do this would be impaired if the Council had fewer Members.

Conclusion

The *Technical Guidance* states that the LGBCE will seek to put the Council's proposal on size into context by comparing it with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) *Nearest Neighbours* model. The purpose of this is to ascertain whether an authority's proposal would mean its council size differs to a significant extent from similar authorities (paras. 4.25 – 4.26)

Data on the Council's *Nearest Neighbours* shows that the following have completed a boundary review in the last two years:

- Aylesbury Vale (electorate 135,888) – 59 Members;
- South Kesteven (electorate 105,504) – 56 Members;
- Colchester (electorate 119,851) – 51 Members;
- Braintree (electorate 111,365) – 49 Members;
- Cherwell (electorate - 107,336) – 48 Members; and
- Stafford (electorate - 95,826) – 40 Members.

For completeness, Huntingdonshire's geographical neighbours have also been taken into account. Their figures are as follows:

- Cambridge City (electorate 91,173) – 42 Members;
- East Cambridgeshire (electorate 63,016) – 39 Members;
- Fenland (electorate 73,656) – 39 Members; and
- South Cambridgeshire (electorate 114,298) – 57 Members.

Huntingdonshire's proposal for 52 Members is mid-way between the upper and lower figures for the *Nearest Neighbours* and, with an electorate of 128,353, has strong similarities with the areas of a comparable size; namely Aylesbury Vale, Colchester, Braintree and South Cambridgeshire. There should be no objection to the Council's proposal on this ground.

The Constitution was adopted in 2000 with annual and subsequently biennial reviews of it having been undertaken ever since. It is currently the subject of a fundamental review by external legal experts.

In line with the Council's Auditor's recommendation, the Council has adopted Zero Based Budgeting together with a "Star Chamber". Starting in 2014, all services now will be subject to a fundamental review on a three-yearly cycle.

It is stressed that the Council has continually kept the democratic structure under review to ensure it is adequate. It will be seen, therefore, that the Council has a good understanding of what arrangements are required to secure effective and convenient local government.

The Council does not believe there will be a reduction in the development pressures on the District but it is confident efficiencies can be achieved in most of its areas of activity. The Council further believes that only by retaining the number of 52 Councillors will it be able to ensure that the governance, decision making and scrutiny functions will not be compromised and will remain effective, whilst still ensuring Councillors are able to fulfil their representational role within their communities.

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EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR – RESPONSIBILITIES 2015/2016

Councillor Doug Dew – Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing

Conservation/Listed Buildings
 Development Management/Planning Enforcement
 Disabled Facilities Grants
 Home Improvement Agency
 Housing Grants
 Housing Providers/Associations
 Housing Strategy/Policies
 Neighbourhood Plans
 Planning Policy/Development Plans
 Planning Studies/Monitoring
 Private Sector Housing
 Site and Area Planning Briefs/Masterplans
 Transportation
 Trees and Footpaths

Councillor Roger Harrison – Executive Councillor for Strategic Economic Development & Legal

Air Quality/Noise/Pollution
 Animal Welfare/Pest Control
 Caravan Sites
 Commercial: Health & Safety Promotion/Food Safety
 Community & Voluntary Groups
 Community Initiatives
 Community Safety
 Contracts
 Conveyancing
 Corporate Health & Safety
 Data Protection/Regulation of Investigatory Powers
 Diversity & Equalities
 Economic Development
 Healthy Communities
 Infectious Diseases
 Legal Advice
 Licensing & Protection
 Planning Advocacy
 Prosecutions & Litigation
 Safeguarding
 Smoke Free Initiatives

Councillor Darren Tysoe – Executive Councillor for Customer Services

Benefits Assessments/Payments/Fraud
 Business Analysis/Improvement
 Call Centre
 Customer Service Centre
 Freedom of Information
 Homelessness
 Housing Register/Nominations
 ICT Network & Systems
 Local Land & Property Gazetteer
 Local Taxation
 National Non-Domestic Rates
 Revenue Collection
 Website/Intranet

Councillor Robin Carter – Executive Councillor for Operations & Environment
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Abandoned Vehicles
 Building Control/Dangerous Structures/Access for Disabled People
 Business Energy Conservation
 Cleansing
 Emergency Planning
 Environmental Strategy
 Grounds Maintenance/Grass Cutting
 Home Energy Conservation
 Land Drainage
 Parks & Countryside
 Recycling
 Refuse Collection
 Renewable Energy
 Residual Highways Responsibilities/Public Utilities
 Street Naming & Numbering
 Streetscene
 Vehicle Fleet Management
 Waste Stream Policy
 Water Strategy

Councillor Jonathan Gray – Executive Councillor for Resources

Audit
 Budget Preparation & Monitoring
 Capital Projects
 Corporate Estates
 Debt Recovery
 Engineering and Architectural Design
 Facilities Management
 Final Accounts/Financial Advice
 Financial Forecasting
 Operational Estate
 Payment of Creditors
 Procurement
 Project/Contractual Management
 Risk Management
 Treasury Management (borrowing and investments)

**Councillor Jason Ablewhite – Executive Leader, Chairman of the Cabinet
 (Strategic and Delivery Partnership)**

Communication & Marketing
 Corporate Performance Management
 Corporate Policy/Research
 Democratic Services
 Elections/Electoral Registration
 Land Charges
 Localism
 Member Support
 Strategic & Delivery Partnerships

Councillor Robin Howe – Deputy Executive Leader, Executive Councillor for Commercial Activities

Car Parking (Operational & Policy)
 CCTV
 Document Centre
 One Leisure: Huntingdon, St. Neots, St. Ives, Ramsey & Sawtry
 Sport & Active Lifestyles

Councillor Stephen Cawley – Executive Councillor for Organisational Change and Development

Organisational Change and Development
 Organisational Transformation
 Change Management
 Skills Development
 Knowledge Training
 Personal Development and Reward.

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EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET

Each member of the Executive shall be referred to as an executive councillor and shall be allocated by the Leader a specific area of responsibility known as his portfolio.

The executive councillor will take the leading role in the development and implementation of the policies covered by his portfolio.

Shared Responsibility as a Member of the Cabinet

Each executive councillor has shared responsibility for:

- the co-ordination, promotion and implementation of the Council's statutory plans and strategies and for the setting of the Council's objectives, and priorities,
- the oversight, development, monitoring and promotion of all services provided by the Council within the appropriate performance management framework,
- ensuring that suitable and proper arrangements are made for the procurement, development, monitoring and promotion of all services relating to executive functions which are provided by or under contract to the Council,
- the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of Huntingdonshire, its residents, businesses and other organisations,
- promoting the Council as a community leadership within the public, voluntary and business sectors, including the development of good and effective working links and partnerships with all sectors,
- the promotion and implementation of an effective equal opportunity policy in relation both to the Council's employees and the delivery of services by the Council and other agencies,
- the promotion of services which:
 - improve the safety and well being of the community,
 - secure a sustainable and attractive environment,
 - create a prosperous local economy,
 - raise corporate standards and efficiency, and
- improving arrangements for communicating, consulting and maintaining a dialogue with residents and service users.

Responsibilities as an Executive Councillor

- to represent the Council or arrange for it to be represented in all national, regional and local forums relevant to the duties of the portfolio,
- to liaise with other executive councillors as required,
- advising the Council, Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny Panels on matters concerning the implementation, monitoring and performance of services, initiatives and projects relating to the executive councillor's portfolio,

- to bring forward revenue and capital budget proposals relevant to the responsibilities of the portfolio,
- to monitor the performance of portfolio functions and activities to ensure corporate objectives and targets are achieved,
- to represent the Council's views relating to the executive councillor's portfolio to other agencies, community interests and local media,
- to attend and answer questions at meetings of the Overview and Security Panel relative to the executive councillor's portfolio,
- liaising with other Members and officers on strategic matters to ensure proper co-ordination, consistency and seamless delivery of services within Council policy,
- to chair, when required, meetings of Members and officers and Council partners,
- to assist in the development of work programmes, forward plans and the setting of agenda,
- to be consulted as part of any decision-making processes within the portfolio which have been delegated to Officers,
- reporting on the portfolio responsibilities to Council and responding to questions by Members in that forum,
- to be aware of the best practice of other leading authorities and to promote best practice and best value in the areas covered by the portfolio,
- to carry out duties set out in the job description for a Councillor.

Profile

An executive councillor should:

- comply with any legislative provisions, best practice and good governance arrangements with regard to his portfolio,
- Keep abreast of national best practice and new initiatives relating to the executive councillor's portfolio, and
- devote as much time as is necessary and reasonable to fulfil the requirements of the role effectively.

An executive councillor should have:

- an ability to prioritise workloads effectively,
- an ability to work to deadlines,
- effective communication skills including listening, spoken, written and ICT,

- a keen knowledge and interest in the areas of his own portfolio,
- effective chairmanship skills,
- an ability to read and assimilate information quickly and effectively,
- an ability to discuss financial matters and the Council's budget with confidence, and
- an ability to engage effectively with the media.

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LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader of the Council will be appointed by the District Council in accordance with its Constitution and current legislation.

The Leader of the Council will represent the Council at all levels and will be an ambassador and principal spokesman, representing the views of the Council at local, regional and Government forums.

Responsibilities

- chairing meetings of the Cabinet;
- determining the portfolios of executive councillors;
- acting as lead member on the Council's overall strategy;
- having overall responsibility for:
 - policy development,
 - the Council's budget and its expenditure,
 - effective and efficient delivery of the Council's corporate plan
- promoting corporate membership of any appropriate body or organisation whose objectives are considered to be beneficial to the pursuit of the Council's own priorities;
- ensuring the work of the Cabinet is co-ordinated and progressed effectively;
- reporting on the work of the Cabinet to Council and responding to questions by Members in that forum,
- maintaining a cordial, effective and efficient working relationship with leaders of opposition groups, other Members and Council officers;
- ensuring that the Executive responds to reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels;
- chairing the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership;
- representing the Council at partnership meetings as appropriate; and
- carrying out the duties set out in the job description of a councillor.

Profile

The Leader of the Council should:

- lead by example in accordance with the highest standards of probity in public life in all matters relating to the Council's Code of Conduct, related protocols and supporting guidance;
- comply with any relative legislative provisions, best practice and good governance arrangements with regard to local government'

- be aware of any personal training needs and of other executive councillors and liaise with the relevant officers to ensure those needs are addressed'
- keep abreast of national best practice and new initiatives relating to local government so ensuring the continuous improvement of Council services.
- devote as much time as is necessary and reasonable to fulfil the requirements of the role effectively.

The Leader of the Council should have:

- an ability to manage and prioritise workloads effectively,
- an ability to work to deadlines,
- effective communication skills, including listening, written, spoken and ICT,
- effective leadership skills,
- effective chairmanship skills,
- an ability to engage with the media including television, radio and press to promote the Council's profile,
- an ability to act as a mentor to other executive councillors,
- an ability to think analytically and make effective decisions, and
- an ability to read and assimilate copious amounts of information.

DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

Responsibilities

In addition to his shared responsibility as an executive councillor, the Deputy Leader shall have the following specific responsibilities

- to deputise for the Leader of the Council in the latter's absence,
- to undertake the individual responsibilities of any executive councillor in his absence,
- to organise the appointment of representatives to external organisations and bodies within the remit of the Cabinet,
- to liaise with the Leaders of opposition parties on the choice of representatives to external organisations and bodies,
- to be a member of the Appointments Panel for the appointment of directors and heads of service, and
- to ensure that a Member mentoring and training programme is provided for all Members of the District Council.

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HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

ROLE DESCRIPTIONS FOR DISTRICT COUNCILLORS (APPROVED BY COUNCIL ON 22ND APRIL 2009)

All Councillors, during the course of their term of office, will aim to acquire the following knowledge and skills which they will develop as their experience grows:

Knowledge – General

Huntingdonshire District Council

- An introduction to the Council, its democratic and Directorate structures and relevant strategies and plans.

Code of Conduct

- The current Members' Code of Conduct and the role of the Standards Committee in ensuring that the Code is adhered to.

The Constitution

- The Council's rule book of protocols and procedures.

Scrutiny

- The scrutiny procedure and the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

Partnerships

Partnership working through the Local Strategic Partnership and Neighbourhood Forums.

Notice of Executive Decisions

- The Cabinet's agenda for the ensuing four months.

Equalities, Customer Care and Risk Management

- Policies implemented by the Council.

Knowledge – Specific

Budgets and Finances

- Members should have a working knowledge of the Council's finances as they collectively have responsibility for approving the budget.

Planning

- Members should have a working knowledge of planning legislation, policies and procedures with Development Management Panel Members having a more extensive and detailed knowledge. Specialised training is mandatory for Members who wish to serve on the Development Management Panel.

Licensing

- Members should have a working knowledge of licensing legislation, policies and procedures and knowledge of the various licensing functions that the Council is responsible for. Specialised training is mandatory for Members who wish to serve on the Licensing Committee and Licensing and Protection Panel.

SKILLS*ICT – Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Email and Internet*

- All Members should be able to make full use of technology, not only as a tool for preparing reports, researching topics of interest or making presentations but also for contacting their constituents, colleagues and officers. Members should be encouraged to develop their own web pages through Modern.Gov.

Communication – Presentational Skills, Questioning Skills and Listening Skills

- Communication is used in every aspect of Members' roles and they should have the skills necessary to put across their point of view, the wishes of their constituents and information generally in a clear, concise and well planned manner that will make it easy to understand.

Written – Report Writing

- All Members should be able to prepare reports in a clear, concise and well planned format.

Media

- The ability to make use of the various forms of media, how to react to approaches from the media and when to encourage or discourage media interest.

Officers within the Democratic Services Section will assist Members to develop their abilities to meet the demands of their individual roles.

Desirable Skills and Abilities

Members should have the necessary attributes and skills -

- to represent the District Council and explain the policies and decisions affecting the individuals and communities in their Ward,
- to represent their Ward and the District Council on a range of external bodies,
- to communicate effectively with the local community, other Councillors and Council Officers,
- to be aware of the nature, scale and scope of the District Council and to develop and maintain a knowledge of its services, management arrangements, powers, duties and constraints,

- to develop good working relationships with other Councillors and relevant Officers of the Council,
- to participate in meetings of the Council and Committees/Panels as required, so ensuring the effective and efficient operation of the Council,
- to act as Ward representative and advocate for people resident in the Ward and to undertake a Councillor's Call for Action to bring forward issues on behalf of their constituents,
- to undertake casework for Ward residents,
- to contribute to policy and strategy review and development,
- to act as a community leader,
- to support local partnerships and organisations,
- to campaign on local issues,
- to work in collaboration with Officers to achieve solutions to local issues, and
- to use ICT effectively to communicate with Officers and others.

Profile

A Member should:

- ensure that constituents have access to him/her by way of surgeries, use of modern technology, letter and telephone,
- develop and maintain links as required with the local MP, MEPs, County Councillors and the Towns or Parishes situated in his/her electoral Ward,
- participate in any political group to which he/she belongs, and
- devote as much time as is necessary and reasonable to fulfil the requirements of the role effectively.

A Member should have:

- an ability to manage and prioritise workloads effectively,
- an ability to work to deadlines,
- effective communication skills including written, spoken and ICT, and
- an ability to network and develop relationships within the Council, Ward and wider community.

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SCHEDULE TO TABLE 1

APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS

The Council/Cabinet will appoint members and officers to relevant organisations which are considered to contribute towards the economic, social and environmental well-being of the District or whose aims will promote the interests of the area and its inhabitants. Any decision to appoint to an organisation will be made by the Cabinet, committee or panel whose responsibilities include the Council functions relevant to the aims or activities of the organisation in question. Those members appointed may or may not be a member of the appointing Cabinet, committee or panel.

The current organisations to which appointments are made and the Cabinet, committee and panels which make the appointments are listed below:-

PARTNERSHIPS	Nominating/ Appointing Panel
Cambridgeshire Community Safety Strategic Board	Cabinet
Cambridgeshire Future Transport – Cross Party Working Party	Cabinet
Cambridgeshire Health and Well-Being Board	Cabinet
Cambridgeshire Horizons	Cabinet
Cambridgeshire Older People's Partnership Board	Cabinet
Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel	Cabinet
Consultation on Treasury Matters	Cabinet
East of England Local Government Association	Cabinet
Great Fen Project Steering Committee	Cabinet
Huntingdonshire Local Strategic Partnership – Children and Young People	Cabinet
Growth & Infrastructure	
Health and Well-Being	
Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership	
Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership Board	Cabinet
Joint Strategic Planning Member Board	Cabinet
Neighbourhood Management Group - Eynesbury	Cabinet
Recycling in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Board	Cabinet

ORGANISATION	Nominating/ Appointing Panel
Cambridgeshire Armed Forces Community Covenant Board	Cabinet
Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce – Huntingdonshire Area	Cabinet
Cromwell Museum Management Committee	Cabinet
Envar Ltd, St Ives Composting Facility – Site Liaison Forum	Cabinet
Huntingdon Association of Community Transport	Cabinet
Huntingdon Freeman's' Trust	Cabinet
Huntingdonshire Flood Forum	Cabinet
Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre – District	Cabinet
Internal Drainage Boards – Alconbury and Ellington	Cabinet
Benwick	
Bluntisham	
Conington and Holme	
Holmewood & District	
Ramsey First (Hollow)	
Ramsey Fourth (Middle Moor)	
Ramsey, Upwood and Great Raveley	
Sawtry	
Sutton and Mepal	
The Ramsey	
Warboys, Somersham and Pidley	
Whittlesey	
Woodwalton Drainage Commissioners	
Little Gransden Aerodrome Consultative Committee	Cabinet
Local Water Forum	Cabinet
Luminus Homes Luminus Group (parent)	Cabinet
Oak Foundation (sheltered/charitable)	
Middle Level Commissioners	Cabinet
Oxmoor Community Action Group (OCAG)	Cabinet
Pensions Consultative Group	Cabinet
Red Tile Wind Farm Trust Fund Ltd (formerly Red Tile Wind Farm Community Fund)	Cabinet
St Ives Road Safety Committee	Cabinet
Stilton Children and Young People's Facilities Association	Cabinet

ORGANISATION (cont'd)	Nominating/ Appointing Panel
Town Centre Management Initiatives/ Partnerships/Management Team – Huntingdon BID	Cabinet
St Ives Town Initiative	
Trustees of Kimbolton School Foundation	Cabinet
Cams Consultative Group for the Fletton Brickworks Industry	Licensing and Protection Panel
Little Barford Power Station Liaison Committee	Licensing and Protection Panel
Needingworth Quarry Local Liaison Committee	Licensing and Protection Panel
Warboys Landfill Local Liaison Committee	Licensing and Protection Panel

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PROTOCOL FOR COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP BY MEMBERS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Members' work within their constituencies forms an integral part of their role as elected representatives and places them in the forefront of providing community leadership within their respective wards. This can be one of the most rewarding aspects of their membership of the Council but this is dependent upon a number of factors, not least the time that a Member is able to devote to his/her constituency work.
- 1.2 Members' attention is drawn to those aspects of the Council's constitution and the 'Signpost' handbook which apply to their work within the community and particularly –
- The Members Code of Conduct
The Member/Employee Protocol
Members Planning Code of Good Practice
The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity
- 1.3 This protocol is designed to draw together the relevant information contained in those codes and protocols, together with other advice and guidance provided to Members.

2. Background

- 2.1 The Government's modernising agenda for local government envisaged an increasingly important role for the Council and its Members in terms of community leadership and governance. The Council is charged with promoting the economic, social and environmental well-being of Huntingdonshire and with working with partner organisations through the Huntingdonshire Local Strategic Partnership.
- 2.2 Community leadership is about operating in this environment. It is about working in partnership with the wider community and creating alliances to make things happen.
- 2.3 At a local level, Members may
- consult with and represent the views of their constituents;
 - pursue and resolve issues brought to their attention by their constituents;
 - actively promote issues on behalf of their local communities both within the District Council and with other agencies;
 - explain the impact and implications of Council decisions in their wards;
 - sit on other bodies or groups within their wards, either as a representative of the Council or in a personal capacity.

When they do so, they should have regard to the advice in this protocol.

3. Characteristics of Effective Community Leadership

Characteristic	Definition
Listening to and involving local communities	To be an effective leader, you must be in touch with your community, e.g. geographical communities (such as parishes and neighbourhoods) and communities of interest (such as young people, the elderly and ethnic minority communities)
Building vision and direction	Local communities face a complex and diverse set of problems and challenges. They want to know that all of the relevant organisations in their area – public, private and voluntary – are working together in a common direction. Councillors have to work with all local organisations and interests in shaping a long term vision for the areas that they serve.
Working effectively In partnership	No person acting alone can respond effectively to the needs of localities. Effective community leadership involves securing the commitment of partners to deliver a shared vision for their area as well as helping to shape it.
Making things happen	Community leadership involves more than having a sense of direction. It is also making things happen on the ground – about delivering outcomes for local people. Vision, direction and effective partnership are only of value if they deliver actual change on the ground
Standing up for communities	Local people want to know that the people that they elected to represent them are doing so. This advocacy role can involve speaking out for local people on major issues that impact on the community and acting on behalf of specific groups of individuals.
Empowering local communities	Community leadership is not about exerting power as the elected representative of the community. It is more about creating the environment in which other leadership roles can develop and fostering the development of active citizenship. A councillor has to both be able to lead in the community and know when to step back to enable others to develop and grow in confidence.

Accountability to Communities	Community leadership involves being accountable to local people, both through the ballot box and through the development of active on-going relationships with local people.
Using community resources	Communities, councils and partners have a wide range of resources they can make available. Community leadership is about ensuring that those resources are used effectively to meet local priorities and needs. Community leadership is also about delivering the best outcomes for local people and actively seeking new ways to promote the well-being of an area.

4. Understanding Your Ward

- 4.1 Information about your ward is key to understanding the needs of your constituents and any business or commercial interests with premises locally. The Council holds census data at both ward and parish level from the 10 year census undertaken by the Office for National Statistics. Also available from the ONS is the index of multiple deprivation which summarises information at ward level based upon socio-economic indices. As well as being available from the Corporate Office, the information can be obtained from the ONS website on www.statistics.gov.uk <http://www.statistics.gov.uk>.
- 4.2 As a Member, you may wish to carry out your own assessment of local needs and issues and there are various ways in which this can be undertaken. Perhaps the most extensive method is to arrange or assist in the preparation of a Parish Plan. Although these are essentially parish based, they do not have to be undertaken by a parish council and grant is available from The Countryside Agency towards the cost. Plans involve the commissioning of a questionnaire distributed to and collected from all households and an analysis of the results to provide information on local needs and aspirations. The results offer a useful source of information to the District Council towards compiling Local Plans for the District as a whole.
- 4.3 Parish councils can be a useful source of information about topical subjects and issues of concern. As a district councillor you are not obliged to attend parish council meetings and it may be difficult for you to attend if your ward contains a number of parishes. You also cannot speak at parish council meetings unless invited to do so by that council. Nevertheless you may feel that your attendance provides a useful way of hearing about issues of local concern and passing on information from the District Council if this is requested by the parish.
- 4.4 If you also are an elected councillor for a parish in the ward that you represent at District level, you should remember to be careful not to fetter your discretion when a subject is to be discussed by both authorities. Advice is contained in the Members Code of Practice about the need to declare potential interests in such circumstances.

There is also reference in the Members Planning Code of Good Practice as to how to deal with applications for planning permission when they appear before the District Council and a parish council when you are a member of both. You should also remember that you have been elected to represent the interests of the District as a whole and not as a spokesperson for a view expressed by your local parish council or another local organisation.

- 4.5 As part of your duties as a councillor, you may also be appointed by the Council to one or more external bodies. The range of organisations is broad – some are statutory bodies with substantial annual expenditure, whilst others may be advisory with no budget. Whilst it is difficult to generalise about your role as a member of external organisations, there are some basic principles that you should apply when acting in that capacity. When you become a member of a board or management committee or similar of an external organisation, you become accountable to that body rather than the Council and liable either jointly or personally for its decisions, dependent upon the structure of the organisation. If an organisation has its own codes of conduct, you should follow these but you should always apply the values and principles that apply to you in your position as a councillor. If codes of conduct have not been adopted by an organisation, you should apply the principles contained in the Council's Members Code of Conduct.
- 4.6 You may feel that a public meeting would be a useful method of gauging public opinion. Advice on attending and convening public meetings is contained in Signpost – a guide to support services for members.

5. Your Constituents

- 5.1 In national surveys, members have said they regard constituency work as one of the most rewarding and enjoyable parts of their role as an elected councillor. However you should always try to establish a distinction between your private life and your work as a councillor – otherwise your constituents will expect you to be available 24 hours per day and 7 days per week. One method of doing is to make it known within your ward when and where you can be contacted to speak to constituents. You may decide to hold surgeries at regular intervals so that your constituents are aware when you are available. You may also think that it would be useful to do so with other members if you represent a multi-member ward or jointly with the local county councillor or parish councillors if they hold surgeries.
- 5.2 Do exercise care when speaking to your constituents. Often they will ask you for advice, not only about District Council services but about the actions of other organisations that have affect them, their families or homes. Although the District Council does have a duty to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the District which places a community leadership responsibility upon members, this does not mean that you are obliged to always make enquiries or pursue matters on behalf of your constituents, especially if this involves the

actions of another body. You should especially avoid offering an opinion or advice on matters whether before or after you have spoken to a relevant officer. You are not insured to offer advice and you may be liable to damages by a disaffected constituent if he has acted upon or spent money based upon advice that you have given which subsequently is shown not to be correct. When you have received advice that you passing on to a constituent, you should preface your remarks by stating that you are relaying information that has provided to you by an officer.

- 5.3 Often you may find when talking to colleagues that the issues that your constituents have raised with you are not unique to your ward. There are a number of avenues open to you to pursue those issues further. Officers of the Council have a responsibility to give impartial advice to all councillors and often can provide information or resolve issues that are brought to their attention. However you can also ask for matters to be raised at meetings of the Council. Overview and Scrutiny Panels provide an appropriate mechanism for subjects to be discussed which can result in recommendations for change. You don't have to be a member of a Panel to ask for an item to be placed on an agenda and with the Chairman's prior consent you can address the Panel about the issue that you wish to raise. If they decide to pursue a matter further, a Panel may co-opt you on to the working group established to investigate and report back.
- 5.4 You can also draw your community's attention to the opportunity to present petitions to meetings of the full Council where these have been signed by 50 people.
- 5.5 Although violence by a constituent against a councillor is extremely rare, this can occur and you should take precautions if you hold surgeries or visit constituents in their own homes. Advice on safety can be obtained from Democratic Services and is included in the induction training provided to all members when they are first elected.

6. Access to Information

- 6.1 As a councillor, you have access to a huge amount of information about the Council and its activities. Much of this is available to you on the Council's extranet and web site. You will also receive copies of agenda and reports for meetings of Panels etc. of which you are a member and the agenda for other meetings. You can ask for the supporting reports for the latter meetings to be sent to you on a regular basis if you wish. You also have access to background papers, executive decision records, minutes, decision digests and press releases. Your rights are explained in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in the Council's constitution but you are not entitled to access to exempt or confidential information, unless you are a member of an overview and scrutiny panel that is investigating a particular matter. In particular you do not have a 'roving commission' to call for all documents in the Council's possession, unless you can demonstrate a 'need to know', or to inspect land or property that is in the Council's ownership. You should also remember that some

information is confidential and should not be divulged to the public until it becomes public in the normal course of the Council's business.

- 6.2 Any equipment that is provided to you by the Council to assist you in your work as a councillor should be used only for Council or domestic use. It should not be used for other business purposes, although it can be used for county or parish council work where a member is elected to other local authorities. If you use a computer in connection with your constituency work, whether this has been provided by the Council or is your own personal equipment, you need to be registered with the Information Commission under the Data Protection Act as a data handler. Registration has to be updated annually but the Council will contact you to arrange this on your behalf if you wish them to. Explanatory information, together with an electronic mail protocol is supplied to members which you are required to sign before equipment is delivered.

7. Members Reimbursement

- 7.1 A Members Allowances Scheme has been adopted by the Council, having regard to the recommendations of an independent panel. This comprises a basic allowance for all members and special responsibility allowances for the holders of various named positions of responsibility within the Council. Travelling and subsistence and care allowances can also be claimed but these must relate to the performance of specific duties that are listed in the Scheme. As a general rule, the duty being undertaken by a member must have been authorised in advance by the Council or under the Scheme and members must not claim for other journeys or subsistence that they may have incurred, for example in carrying out investigations on behalf of their constituents. Payments are made on a monthly basis by the Council by BACS transfer to a member's personal bank account.
- 7.2 Care should always be exercised to avoid claiming for attendance or travel to a specific meeting from more than one source if a councillor is a member of more than one local authority or other public body. Such action is illegal and the penalties imposed by the courts can be severe.
- 7.3 You should also remember that, unless authorised to do so, you should not commit the Council to any expenditure or incur any costs for which the Council may be liable.

8. Publicity

- 8.1 The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity issued by the former Department of the Environment points out that it would be inappropriate for public resources to be used to publicise individual councillors. However in the interests of public accountability it may be appropriate to publicise the views or activities of individual members when they are representing the views of the Council as a whole, for example when the Chairman of the Council is carrying out an official duty as first citizen of the community or an executive councillor launches a policy approved by the Cabinet.
- 8.2 For the same reason, the Council may justifiably in certain circumstances issue press releases reporting statements made by individual members. Examples of cases where such press releases may be appropriate are as reports of discussions at meetings or quotations or comments are made by leading members of the Council in response to particular events which call for a speedy response from the Council.
- 8.3 It follows therefore that the Council should not publicise the work of members in their constituency role unless this is in the interests of the Council as a whole. This does not prevent members from speaking to the media but they should not use Council resources to promote a particular course of action that they might be pursuing.
- 8.4 Particular care is needed to ensure that where publicity is issued immediately prior to an election or by-election affecting the area to ensure that this could not be perceived as seeking to influence public opinion or promote the public image of a particular candidate. The Code states that between the time of publication of a notice of an election and polling day, publicity should not be issued which deals with controversial issues or which reports views or policies in a way that identifies them with individual members or groups of members.
- 8.5 Members may often be approached by the media for comments on matters affecting their wards. It is important not to underestimate the interest that there may be in a local issue. If you need assistance when approached for a response, this can be obtained from the Corporate Team Manager.

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ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING	<p>Abandoned vehicles Cleansing Emergency planning Grounds maintenance/grass cutting Parks and countryside Recycling Refuse collection Streetscene Vehicle fleet management Waste stream policy</p> <p>Building Control/dangerous structures/accesses for disabled people Business energy conservation Environmental Strategy Home energy conservation Land drainage Renewable energy Residual highways responsibilities/public utilities Street naming and numbering Water Strategy</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plans Planning Policy/Development Plans Planning studies/monitoring Site and area planning briefs/master plans</p> <p>Conservation/Listed Buildings Development Management/ Planning enforcement Transportation Trees and footpaths</p> <p>Car Parking (Operations and Policy)</p>	<p>Operations and Environment</p> <p>Strategic Planning and Housing</p> <p>Supported by Development Management Panel Chairman</p> <p>Commercial Activities</p>
ECONOMIC WELL-BEING	<p>Business analysis/improvement Freedom of Information ICT Network & Systems Local Land and Property Gazetteer Website/intranet</p> <p>Benefits assessments/payments/fraud Call Centre Customer Service Centre Local Taxation National Non Domestic Rates Revenue collection</p> <p>Economic Development</p>	<p>Customer Services</p>

	Contracts Conveyancing Data protection/Regulation of Investigatory Powers Land Charges Legal advice Planning advocacy Prosecutions and litigation Document Centre	Commercial Activities Resources
	Audit Budget preparation and Debt recovery Final accounts/financial advice Financial forecasting monitoring Payment of creditors Procurement Risk management Treasury Management (borrowing and investments)	
	Engineering and architectural design Facilities Management Corporate and Operational Estate Project /Contractual management Capital Projects	
	Communication & marketing Corporate performance Corporate policy/research Investment Estate Localism management Strategic and delivery Partnerships	Executive Leader & Deputy Executive Leader
	Democratic Services Elections/Electoral Registration Member Support	Strategic Economic Development Legal and Healthy Communities

2. GENERAL ROLE

Within their terms of reference, the Overview and Scrutiny Panels will:-

- (i) review and/or scrutinise decisions made or actions taken in connection with the discharge of any of the Council's functions;
- (ii) make reports and/or recommendations to the full Council and/or the Executive Leader and/or any joint committee in connection with the discharge of any functions;

- (iii) review the performance of the Council and the achievement of performance indicators and targets;
- (iv) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants; and
- (v) exercise the right of call-in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive Leader, the Cabinet, an individual member of the Cabinet, a committee of the Cabinet or a key decision made by an officer.

3. SPECIFIC FUNCTIONS

(a) Policy Development and Review -

Overview and Scrutiny Panels may:-

- (i) assist the Council, the Executive Leader and the Cabinet in the development of its budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues;
- (ii) conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options;
- (iii) consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options;
- (iv) question the Executive Leader, members of the Cabinet and/or committees and panels and senior officers* about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area; and
- (v) liaise with other external organisations operating within the area whether national, regional or local to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working.

(b) Scrutiny

Overview and Scrutiny Panels may:-

- (i) scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the Executive Leader, the Cabinet and/or committees and panels and senior officers* both in relation to individual decisions and over a period of time;
- (ii) review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
- (iii) question the Executive Leader, members of the Cabinet and/or committees and panels and senior officers* about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period

of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects;

- (iv) make recommendations to the Executive Leader, the Cabinet and/or appropriate committees and panels and/or the Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
- (v) review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and local people about their activities and performance; and
- (vi) question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent).

(c) **Finance**

Overview and Scrutiny Panels may exercise overall responsibility for the finances made available to them.

(d) **Annual Report**

Overview and Scrutiny Panels must report at least annually to the full Council on their workings and working methods if appropriate.

4. PROCEEDINGS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS

Overview and Scrutiny Panels will conduct their proceedings in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

5. CO-ORDINATION OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS

An advisory group, comprising the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels shall co-ordinate and monitor the overview and scrutiny process and in particular shall determine the arrangements for matters within the remit of more than one overview and scrutiny panel in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules contained in Part 4 of this Constitution.

(* Note: *For the purposes of this Article, senior officer means the Head of Paid Service, Managing Director and Heads of Service as defined in Part 4 (Officer Employment Procedure Rules of this Constitution.)*

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Cabinet

Report of the meeting held on 17th September 2015.

Matters for Information

18. ONE LEISURE – SIX MONTH UPDATE REPORT

At the Cabinet meeting in March a report was presented on the performance of One Leisure and having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) (Item No. 13 of their report refers) at the request of the Cabinet a further report has been presented to provide an update on the progress made to date.

The progress made is as follows:

- The financial performance has improved significantly. The 2014/15 final outturn for One Leisure has a deficit of £61k which is an improvement of £314k compared to the previous financial year;
- One Leisure has been in profit for the final quarter of last year and once the expenses and income has been correctly profiled, remains in monthly profit to date;
- 2014/15 admissions have showed an increase in attendance of 9% against the previous year and is currently showing a year to date improvement of 2%;
- The outcome of Phase I management restructure has been implemented and Phase II is currently in progress;
- Following a review of financial performance and usage patterns at One Leisure Sawtry and a consultation exercise with current users, a rationalisation of opening times is being implemented;
- The implementation of the new membership packages was introduced in April, this has shown a net growth in the membership base to July of 427 members compared to a net loss of 391 member for the same period in 2014;
- The latest forecast suggests the Group is on target to reach the annual budget surplus of £343k (before capital charges of £165k).

Although the management restructuring is in its early stages, the lines for reporting and accountability have become clearer which assists with each individual member of staff being able to understand how they contribute to the drive and deliverability of a customer focussed service.

The new membership packages introduced in April 2015 means that Members are now only paying for the services they use at a fairer and more competitive price. Currently 5.5% of Members cancel their

membership each month which is better than the industry standard. A key future focus is to retain Members beyond the average length of membership of 9 months.

The Cabinet recognises that the two smaller sites at Ramsey and Sawtry operate at a loss. However, with the various changes to opening times, management structure and other proposals the annual deficit will reduce to an acceptable level. The Cabinet were pleased to note that the value these two sites have to the local community has been recognised as they will remain operational albeit at a rationalised level.

It has been explained that the staffing structure at Sawtry and Ramsey will be combined. Relations between One Leisure Ramsey and the Abbey College have improved as there is an agreement in place to enable the College to use the facilities. Discussions with Sawtry Academy have commenced regarding relations between One Leisure and the Academy Management Team, with a view to increasing the access for the Academy to use the facilities when they are not open to the public, specifically the swimming pool and sports hall.

Before the opening times of Sawtry were rationalised, a comprehensive review of usage patterns was undertaken, along with a consultation process with users to ascertain current and future usage patterns. It is intended that customer focus groups will be introduced throughout all of the sites.

The Cabinet has commended the Executive Councillor and all Officers for the significant progress made as improvements have been remarkable.

19. CORPORATE PLAN & FINANCE – INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Social Well-Being), (Economic Well-Being), (Environmental Well-Being) (Item No's. 11, 16 and 16 of their reports respectively refer), the Cabinet has considered and commented on progress against the Key Activities and Corporate Indicators listed in the Council's Corporate Plan for 2015/16 for the period 1st April to 30th June 2015 and progress on the current projects being undertaken at the Council.

The Cabinet has also considered and commented on the Council's financial performance on revenue and capital spend as at the end of June 2015.

It was noted that as at the end of June 2015 the majority of capital projects have not commenced. Following the Cabinet meeting in February 2015 where it was approved, as recommended by the Finance Governance Board, that the capital programme be reduced by £1.428m, the revised process now requires business plans to be submitted to the Finance Governance Board before funds are

released. In future the only capital programmes that are automatically carried forward from the previous financial year and approved is where a contractual obligation exists.

It was further noted that the Council is not on target to deliver against the New Homes Bonus. There was a level of frustration amongst the Cabinet as the three large sites identified within the Local Plan for development all have received planning permission yet there is no sign of significant development on any of the sites in the near future.

The report has been well received by all three Overview and Scrutiny Panels and a Project Management Select Committee – 6 Month Review report is due to be presented to the Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Well-Being) Panel in October 2015.

The report presented to the Cabinet includes a breakdown of projects including the purpose of the project and comments from the Programme Office as to the current status of each project, allowing for greater transparency and ensures visibility on how the project is progressing.

There is now greater consistency in the quality of the Performance Indicator data which has been collected in accordance with standardised procedures.

The Cabinet acknowledged that the Council is in a challenging position. However, financially it is in a much better position than many other Authorities. Members and Officers should be proud of the achievements and the progress made against the Council's ambition of not being reliant on Central Government Funding.

20. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) (Item No.14 of their report refers) the Cabinet has been provided with the outcome of the review into the desirability of the Council supporting the County Council to adopt Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) powers.

The Cabinet has endorsed the outcome of the review and has agreed that the Council should not commit to being the County Council's agent for CPE in Huntingdonshire on the basis that the case for such powers has not yet been made and such powers are not financially viable.

The Cabinet has agreed that the Parking Service should engage with the County Council about the development of a comprehensive traffic management strategy for Huntingdonshire that includes funding by the County for the infrastructure costs if the strategy proposes a Civil Enforcement Area (CEA) for the District.

Although the creation of a CEA in Huntingdonshire is operationally desirable it is not financially viable. In order for the Council and County Council to adopt the powers required for CPE there are initial

set-up costs with an on-going net operating cost per annum, increasing year on year with inflation.

Although the Police will support the application they have deprioritised on-street parking enforcement because of the pressure on their resources and this would suggest that they have evaluated that illegal street parking is not a substantial issue. No resources would transfer from the Police to the Council to support the CEA.

It was noted to the Cabinet that during the discussions at the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-being) some Members had expressed concerns about parking issues within their wards. Further work is to be undertaken to establish the nature and extent of such issue. However, it was noted that CPE would not necessarily resolve these issues.

The Cabinet have fully supported further engagement with the County Council to investigate whether there is a desire to develop a more holistic traffic management strategy for Huntingdonshire.

21. IMPLEMENTATION OF AUDIT ACTIONS

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Item No. 19 of their report refers) the Cabinet has considered, via a recommendation from Council at their meeting on 29th July 2015, the 13 Internal Audit Actions outstanding as at the 30th April 2015.

The Corporate Governance Panel at its meeting on 3rd June 2015 expressed concern at the outstanding audit actions and wanted these issues to be highlighted to the Cabinet. Subsequently the Panel recommended to the Council that it requests the Cabinet take appropriate action to address their concerns.

Of the 13 recommendations that were not implemented when reported to the Corporate Governance Panel:

- 4 recommendations are now fully implemented;
- 4 recommendations are partially implemented; and
- 5 recommendations are not implemented.

By the end of October 2015 all recommendations, with the exception of one, are scheduled to be fully implemented.

The Cabinet have requested that the relevant Executive Councillors ensure that recommendations are implemented where appropriate in line with the revised deadlines (as detailed in Appendix 1 of the Officer's report) and report to the Cabinet if the revised deadlines are not achieved.

22. COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Item No. 17 of their report refers) the Cabinet has approved the Commercial Investment Strategy (CIS) and the 'as is' model of governance arrangements.

In order to achieve the Council's ambition to reduce reliance on Central Government funding, a funding gap of £8.2m must be addressed by 2019/20. Income generation is one business activity that will assist to address the funding gap.

The Council's current commercial estate generates a net return of £1.5m (7.2% of the £20.8m value of the estate) and the Council has established a 'Capital Investment Earmarked Reserve' to provide a source of funding for further investment in assets generating a revenue cash flow. The CIS establishes the parameters and governance arrangements for managing this investment.

A Business Plan is currently being drafted to be presented to the Cabinet for approval. The Business Plan will establish the parameters for the Loan to Value of each type of investment to ensure that additional borrowing is affordable and that there is adequate security over direct capital investment in assets.

The governance structure for the CIS must allow the Council to trade on a commercial basis and also recognise the statutory and political boundaries. The report to the Cabinet advised of the two options available to the Council. The preferred option approved by the Cabinet is for the 'as is' position which will make use of existing resources and will ensure Members are involved in relevant decisions through the Treasury and Capital Management Group. The governance structure will ensure regular reporting to Members

At the Council meeting in July 2015 amendments to the Constitution were approved to reflect the Disposal and Acquisitions Policy to provide new financial thresholds for the disposal and acquisition of land and property and subsequently a greater delegated decision making powers to allow Senior Officers and Members to act and take decisions on disposals and acquisitions of land and property.

The issue of risk was discussed amongst the Cabinet and it was explained that this was considered within the CIS. It is not proposed that the Council concentrates on one type investment, for instance commercial property. The CIS identifies a range of investment strategies with different financial, risk and timing profiles. Initial investment will focus on lower risk investments, with potential risk and reward to be increased over time. The Business Plan will set out risks and mitigation for the types of investments planned each year.

The amount of savings that the Council is required to generate will be impossible to deliver without an impact on services, therefore the Cabinet considers that there is a bigger risk in doing nothing. The Cabinet are in agreement that they want to make Huntingdonshire a

better place and are mindful that in implementing the CIS risks must be mitigated appropriately.

23. ZERO BASED BUDGETING UPDATE: PREPARATION FOR THE 2016/17 BUDGET AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Item No. 18 of their report refers) the Cabinet has been provided with an update on the Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB) process in preparation for the 2016/17 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

As part of the budget setting cycle for 2016/17, the Council is continuing the ZBB exercise that started during the last financial year in preparation for the 2015/16 budget. The ZBB process is split into a number of Tranches, with Tranche 1 having been undertaken during the Autumn of 2014 (in which £1.8m was removed from the Council's 2015/16 budget) and Tranches 2 and 3 are being undertaken during 2015/16.

In preparation for 2016/17 budget setting, Tranche 2 commenced in April 2015 and concluded with a Cabinet led Star Chamber in mid-July 2015. Tranche 3 commenced in August and the associated Star Chamber is scheduled for November 2015

In addition to the above ZBB reviews, other budget activity is being undertaken including a:

- series of ZBB 'light' reviews for those services that were 'heavy' reviewed during Tranche 1 in the last financial year; and
- two cross-cutting ZBB review's, namely administration support and design-service.

The confirmed 2019/20 savings accumulated from Tranche 2 of the ZBB process that can be included in the budget savings for 2016/17 are £1.372m. However, there is a potential further £12,000 which may be able to be secured once a LEAN review is completed within the Licensing Service (this would give a total ZBB Tranche 2 saving of £1.384m). The conclusion of this review will be reported to the November 2015 Star Chamber and Cabinet thereafter. The detailed service changes as a result of Tranche 2 are detailed in Appendix 1 of the Officer's report.

The Cabinet has agreed that the benchmarking information provided by Pixel Financial Consulting has been useful in the process as a comparison against other Authorities.

The Cabinet has expressed appreciation to the Executive Councillors and Officers that had been involved in the ZBB process.

24. LANGLEY COURT – LOAN TO LUMINUS

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) (Item No. 20 of their report refers) the Cabinet has agreed:

1. to the transfer of the grassed area (as identified in Appendix 1 of the Officer's report) at the front of Langley Court to Luminus, subject to a clawback arrangement as per paragraph 3.5 of the Officer's report; and
2. to the continued support of the Langley Court development by the provision of loan finance at nil cost to the Council;
3. that the Head of Resources, as the Section 151 Officer, be authorised to make the loan following consultation with the Executive Councillor for Resources (and a satisfactory Due Diligence report from the Council's Treasury Management Advisors).

The need for extra care for older people in St Ives is a priority in the Council's Housing Strategy 2012-15. Luminus had an outdated sheltered scheme in Langley Close, Ramsey Road, St Ives and planned to demolish the scheme and redevelop a new extra care scheme in its place consisting of 55 one and two bedroom flats. Luminus has supported residents to move out of the original building, the new building has planning permission and ground works have commenced.

There is a grassed area to the front of the site, bordering the car park which is owned by the Council. To make best use of the site, Luminus would like to use this space to form part of the car park and green space for the scheme. To enable this to happen, this Council would need to transfer ownership of the green space to Luminus. Any potential transfer will be subject to a clawback arrangement so that if the site is ever sold in the future, the monetary equivalent of the land value reverts to this Council. The grassed area does not have any standalone development potential, given its proximity to the street and the surrounding buildings, and therefore transferring it to Luminus would be in line with the Council's forthcoming Asset Strategy.

Legal advice has been obtained to give assurance of the Council's legal position in relation to the loan. A specialist consultant has been appointed by this Council to help arrange the loan facility for Luminus. The heads of terms for the legal agreement have been drafted and the due diligence is underway. These fees will be reimbursed by Luminus.

At the time of drafting the report the specific loan details are yet to be finalised. However, the loan will not have a negative financial impact on the Council as Luminus will be repaying the loan in full including a margin of 1.5% over the 30 year term of the loan. The net loan finance to be arranged by the Council in respect of the development itself is £5m. It is anticipated that Luminus will draw down their loan

at various stages of the development process, consequently the Council will draw down the loan from the Public Works Loan Board in similar tranches.

Financial security during the development phase will be Brook House, which is owned by Luminus Finance Limited. As the development comes to practical completion the intention will be to transfer this to the Langley Court development itself.

The Cabinet were keen to support the proposals as a need for additional care for older people in the area had been identified as a priority in the Council's Housing Strategy. The Cabinet were satisfied that the risks regarding the loan to Luminus were well mitigated.

25. SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP

The Cabinet has received the report of the Safety Advisory Group meeting held on 3rd June 2015.

J D Ablewhite
Chairman

Corporate Governance Panel

Report of the meeting held on 16th September 2015.

Matters for Information

14. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PANEL PROGRESS REPORT

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

15. APPROVAL FOR PUBLICATION OF THE 2014/15 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT AND THE ANNUAL FINANCIAL REPORT

The Panel has received the Annual Governance Statement (AGS) and Annual Financial Report (AFR), both of which are required by statute and must be approved and published by the 30th September.

The Panel have been apprised of the process required to be undertaken prior to the approval and publication of the 2014/15 final accounts.

As a consequence of the Corporate Governance Panel meeting being held a week earlier than in previous years, the final validation checks by the External Auditors of both the AGS and the AFR were incomplete by the date of the meeting. Consequently the Panel has agreed:

- i. in principal to both the AGS and the AFR, as well as the Letter of Representation; and
- ii. that following confirmation by the External Auditor (deadline of the 23rd September) that both documents are unqualified, delegate authority to the:
 - Executive Leader and the Managing Director to sign the AGS;
 - Head of Resources to sign the Letter of Representation; and
 - Corporate Governance Panel Chairman to sign the AFR.

The Council's External Auditors, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC), have presented their draft ISA 260 report to the Panel. The areas where matters remained outstanding were highlighted throughout the report in yellow. However, the Panel were specifically referred to the following areas:

- Page 9 - Pension's liability – the figure contained within the Statement of Accounts is a significant estimate and the External Auditors requested evidence for assurance that this figure is appropriate;
- Page 9 - Valuation of property, plant and equipment - the Authority operates a 3 year cycle of revaluation and Leisure Centres represent the largest element of the Council's estate. As the Leisure Centres have not been valued during 2014/15 (as they were revalued in 2013/14) and given their significant value the External Auditors have requested that the Authority obtain assurances from the expert valuers that there are no material revaluation during the course of the year. Since publication of the Agenda the External Auditors have received the valuation report from the Council's expert valuers, Barker Storey Matthews, and are satisfied with the response;
- Page 10 - Non-Domestic Rates safety net calculation - in August the Department for Communities and Local Government have released a revised calculation template for the non-domestic rates safety net calculation. The External Auditors consider the revised calculation is appropriate. However, it is yet to be agreed with the Council whether this should be recorded as an adjustment to the 2014/15 accounts, increasing the reported income, or reported as a non-adjusting event in the 2015/16 accounts;
- Page 10 - Provision against Non Domestic Rate (NDR) Appeals – the External Auditors are of the opinion that the estimate regarding appeals made against NDR assessments might be overly prudent and therefore the Authority is required to provide an additional explanation to support the appropriateness of the level of provision; and
- Pages 39 - 40 – Internal Controls – The External Auditors have identified four areas where internal financial controls require improvement relating to:
 - No formal authorisation process for journals;
 - Bank reconciliations;
 - No formal authorisation process for fixed asset disposals; and
 - Depreciation Policy.

It has been explained to the Panel that where an accountant below Principal Accountant level generates a journal of more than £850,000, this is reviewed by either a Principal Accountant or the Accountancy Manager. For journals below £850,000 produced by an Accountant below Principal Accountant, a new process is to be introduced whereby a random 10% sample of journals will be reviewed by either a Principal Accountant or the Accountancy Manager.

Currently fixed assets are not depreciated in the first year of purchase so depreciation on newly purchased assets is understated. As a result the Council has agreed that the Depreciation Policy will be updated for the 2015/16 Annual Financial Report.

The External Auditors have referred the Panel to page 41 of the report regarding the risk of fraud. At the Panel's meeting in March the Panel were asked whether it was aware or had any concerns regarding fraud.

In presenting the draft ISA 260 report to the Panel the External Auditors received confirmation from the Panel that there have been no changes to its view of fraud risk and that no additional matters have arisen that should be brought to the attention of External Audit.

Appendix 1 - page 45 of the draft report refers to a summary of uncorrected misstatements. The Panel has been informed by the External Auditors that there are no uncorrected financial misstatements or disclosure misstatements to report and it is not envisaged there will be once the final ISA 260 report is issued.

The Annual Governance Statement has been prepared in consultation with the Panel and their comments have been incorporated. One amendment required to the document has related to the Lead Officer listed on the last page of the report. The Lead Officer responsible for Improve project management practices, including Officer compliance with the project management toolkit, is the Corporate Team Manager, not the Corporate Director (Services).

External Audit have commended the Annual Governance Statement and have confirmed to the Panel that it incorporates all requirements as per the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy guidance and also accords with their audit.

The Letter of Representation from the External Auditors is required to support all audits in order to confirm that the audit has been completed to the best of their knowledge and belief. It has been noted to the Panel that a new addition to the letter is the requirement to provide a complete list of the Authority's related party transactions as attached as Appendix 2 of the letter.

The Panel has expressed appreciation to the Officers involved in producing the AGS and AFS and also to the External Auditors for their work over the years and have hoped that the new Auditors will be able to replicate their high standards.

A copy of the Annual Governance Statement 2014/2015 has been circulated to all Members separate to the Council agenda.

16. CHANGE IN EXTERNAL AUDITOR AND AUDIT FEES 2015/16

The Panel has received and noted a report in respect of the change in Auditor and the audit fees for 2015/16.

As a consequence of:

- the abolition of the Audit Commission's public audit responsibility;
- the re-tendering of the Audit Commission 'private sector provider' external audit contracts on the 31st March 2015; and
- the transfer of responsibility for the appointment of external auditors to each local authority from 2017,

the Audit Commission has appointed Ernst & Young as the Council's External Auditor for the two financial years 2015/16 and 2016/17.

There is a two-year gap (financial years 2015/16 and 2016/17) before an Authority can appoint its own Auditor. Until this time, as PwC did not bid for the contract, the Council's appointed auditors for the two intervening years will be Ernst & Young. As a consequence of the new local authority audit regulations, all local authorities will be permitted to appoint their own auditor from 2017/18 onwards.

Due to changes in financial regulations, the completion dates of audits and of the accounts will change and will need to be implemented as of 31 May 2018. In preparation for this the Council has been working towards the revised dates when completing its audits and the accounts.

The Panel were satisfied with the service provided by PwC and would prefer not to change its External Auditor. The Panel has accepted the enforced position, but strongly suspect that the fee for the External Audit service will increase to that quoted.

17. IMPLEMENTATION OF AUDIT ACTIONS

Performance information regarding the implementation of agreed internal audit actions for the year ending 31st August 2015 has been presented to the Panel. Five actions have not been introduced, all of which have been considered previously by the Panel at its meeting in June 2015 and via a recommendation from Council at their meeting on 29th July 2015, will be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 17th September 2015.

The Corporate Management Team has set a target that 100% of agreed internal audit actions should be introduced on time. There were 78 actions due to be introduced in the year ending 31 August 2015. 77% (60 in number) of agreed audit actions were introduced on time. A further 17% (13 in number) of the agreed audit actions have been introduced, but late, which have remained 6% (5 in number) outstanding. The current position in respect of the 5 outstanding audit actions were summarised in Appendix 2 of the Officer's report.

18. REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PANEL

The Panel has been acquainted with the outcome of the Annual Review on the effectiveness of the Panel undertaken by the Internal Audit and Risk Manager. The review has concluded that the Panel is acting effectively and fulfilling its Terms of Reference.

Due to five of the eight Panel Members being newly appointed in May 2015, it has been agreed that the Internal Audit and Risk Manager should conduct the review and share the findings with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

A number of opportunities to further improve the effectiveness of the Panel were identified within the review as follows:

1. Five new Members were appointed to the Panel in May 2015. In order to get a clear idea of all Panel Members current knowledge of governance matters, a skills assessment should be completed so that training needs can be identified and addressed.
2. Whilst Cabinet are responsible for approving the Risk Management Strategy and ensuring that risk management procedures are in place across the Council, the Panel require assurance that these arrangements are working effectively.
3. The Panel are aware that a review of the Council's Constitution is underway. They would like early sight of any proposed changes so that they are able to adequately deliberate and consider the changes before making any recommendation to the Council.
4. A wide breadth of governance related knowledge is required by Members of the Panel. To ensure that the Panel remains effective, the number of new Members appointed to the Panel each year by the Council should be restricted.
5. As recommended by the Panel in September 2013 and last year's report, the Council should introduce a Procurement Strategy and become a signatory to the Prompt Payment Code (PPC)

Seven of the ten actions agreed as a result of the 2014 review have been introduced. The remaining three actions were listed within Appendix 1 the Officer's report under items 8 – 10 with information on how these matters will be addressed.

The Panel were informed that the Council has not become a signatory to the PPC as the voluntary PPC has been superseded by two pieces of legislation that requires all valid and correct invoices to be paid within 30 days of receipt and that the Council's Terms and Conditions requires its prime contractors to pay all subcontractors to the contract within 30 days for each valid invoice. The latter was the issue that the Council wanted to address and the reason that the PPC had been initially required.

In considering the outcome of the annual review, the Panel has endorsed the opportunities to further improve the effectiveness of the Panel with the exception that the Council become a signatory to the PPC.

19. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE PANEL

The Panel has been presented with the draft Annual Report of the Panel in respect of the year ending 30th September 2015 which provides a summary of its work regarding the Council's internal control and governance environment.

Given that a finalised draft of the External Auditor's ISA 260 report had not been received prior to the Agenda dispatch, and part of the Annual Report incorporates the External Auditors opinion on the financial statements and achievement of value for money, the Panel has

delegated authority to the Chairman to approve any amendments required to the Annual Report prior to it being presented to the Council meeting on 30th September 2015.

As a wide breadth of governance related knowledge is required by Members of the Panel, one opportunity identified in the Annual report to further improve the effectiveness of the Panel is that the 2016 Constitution review should consider options for restricting the number of changes to Panel membership each year or the appointment of Members for longer than one year. The Panel has emphasised that this is not a deterrent for any Member to express a wish to join the Panel, but to assist with the retention of knowledge on the Panel.

The Panel has expressed concern at the level of declining attendance by the Panel Members over recent meetings and the Chairman will be considering this matter.

At the request of the Panel a copy of the Annual Report has been circulated to all Members separately to the Council agenda.

20. CONSULTATION PAPER: DELIVERING GOOD GOVERNANCE IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: A FRAMEWORK

A consultation paper has been issued by The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) and Society of Local Authority Chief Executives and Senior Managers (SOLACE) on planned revisions to the Delivering Good Governance in Local Government: Framework. The Framework underpins the Council's own local Code of Corporate Governance and any changes to the Framework will be required to be reflected in the local Code.

The Council's Code of Corporate Governance is based on a previous version of the framework. There is no timetable for the publication of the final document. However, the consultation suggests that the Framework will be published during the current financial year, and therefore the Council's Code of Corporate Governance will require amendments as appropriate and the 2015/2016 Annual Governance Statement will need to take account of the updated Code.

One of the consultation responses relates to the relationship between Members and Officers. The Panel has discussed the response to this as the Panel has recently considered how individual member performance should be evaluated. Within the consultation response it suggested that senior management should be concerned with how an individual member performs and make training available to help them improve in that role but it would be inappropriate for senior management to review an elected Members overall performance. The Panel has accepted this, however is keen for Officers to act as a 'critical friend' role and feel able to suggest training as appropriate to individual Members if necessary.

The Panel has considered the Council's proposed response to the consultation as attached to the Officer's report and has delegated to the Chairman of the Corporate Governance Panel to finalise the

Council's response in consultation with the Internal Audit and Risk Manager.

21. WORK PROGRAMME AND TRAINING

Members of the Panel have received and approved details of their anticipated work programme over the ensuing year and the future training proposed.

A short information session on Procurement will be delivered to the Panel prior to the December meeting. A training session on the Council's Constitution, which is currently under review, is scheduled prior to the Panel meeting in March.

Following discussions between the Chairman and the Managing Director it has been agreed that a report will be presented to the Panel in December that discusses the future role for the Panel and the possible focus for their future work programme. The Panel has noted that there is some significant issues coming forward which the Panel should have some involvement in such as Shared Services, Project Management and the Constitution.

M Francis
Chairman

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Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being)

Report of the meeting held on 3rd September 2015.

Matters for Information

16. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT (QUARTER 1)

In conjunction with the Panels for Social and Environmental Well-Being, the Panel has received an update on progress against the Key Activities and Corporate Indicators listed in the Council's Corporate Plan for 2015/16 for the period 1 April to 30 June 2015. The report now also incorporates progress reporting for current projects being undertaken at the Council.

In presenting the report to the Panel, the Executive Leader has emphasised the achievements made which have contributed to Huntingdonshire District Council being one of the best placed Councils financially in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area.

The Panel has been informed that the success of the programme of themed business information clinics and events hosted by the Economic Development Team will be measured by attendance and feedback. In the future the Council will be cutting back on this type of scheme and will work alongside other agencies collaboratively to make such events more targeted and they will continue as long as there is some value and that it is contributing to the local economy.

Councillors have queried whether the decline in employee expenditure for One Leisure is a permanent reduction and whether that leaves the service short staffed. Councillor Robin Howe, Executive Councillor for Commercial Activities, has explained that the reduction in staff levels and operational costs will continue. In terms of staffing, the majority of the savings have come from a management restructure, rather than reducing the number of staff.

It has been confirmed that reductions in wage costs will be impacted minimally by further minimum wage increases and that the appetite for change within the Council means that One Leisure aim to be as competitive as possible.

In response to a question about business rate collection, the Executive Councillor for Resources has stated that the Council is capable of achieving the target by the end of the year.

It has been confirmed that income from the sale of land on St Mary's Street will be invested through the Commercial Investment Strategy in order to generate additional revenue for the Council.

17. COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY

The Panel has noted a report on the Commercial Investment Strategy (CIS) for the Council. The report has set out the high level strategic approach taken in terms of investments, the approach to risk and a balance in the Council's portfolio. The Panel has been informed that the information will be broken down further and that a Business Plan will follow on from this report.

It has been explained to the Panel that the investments the Council have at the moment are both high touch and high risk; diversification will reduce the risk and in the process will allow the Council to find other ways of delivering services rather than cutting them.

In terms of locality in future investments, the Panel has heard that the location of potential property investments is not restricted to Huntingdonshire. Diversification of investments is important and allows the Council to expand the commercial portfolio. The Council consider this to be investing in the UK economy and there will be no overseas element.

Subject to Cabinet agreeing that a quarterly report on CIS performance be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny, the Panel has endorsed the recommendations for Cabinet to approve the Commercial Investment Strategy and the "enhanced as is" model of governance arrangements set out in the report.

18. ZERO BASED BUDGETING

The Panel has received and endorsed an update on the Zero Based Budgeting (ZBB) process in preparation for the 2016/17 Budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy. The Executive Councillor for Resources has briefly provided a background to explain the basics of ZBB to the Panel, informing Members that the process has been broken down into three different strands (Tranches). By the conclusion of Tranche 3 in November 2015, all services will have been subject to the detailed ZBB process.

The Head of Resources, Mr Mason, has referred the Panel to the lists the service changes proposed by the 'Star Chamber'. The 'Star Chamber' involves the Executive Leader, Deputy Executive Leader and the Executive Portfolio Holder for Resources (Chairman), who considers various options for changes to services. The Panel has been advised of a range of innovative projects such as:

- Relocation of the Call Centre;
- 'One Stop Shop multi-agency customer service' hub; and
- Procurement of IT systems.

The Panel has been informed that Officers have endeavoured to create progressive plans to deliver savings. There is more work to do to identify savings but the Council is moving in the right direction.

Panel members have queried the reductions in repairs and maintenance and have been advised that these charges will now be payable by tenants as additional charges in their current terms and conditions. This means additional income rather than a reduction in expenditure.

The Panel have been informed that consultancy costs in Planning Services would be reduced through a wider range of expertise as a result of sharing services.

19. IMPLEMENTATION OF AUDIT ACTIONS

The Panel has endorsed the contents of a report on the implementation of outstanding audit actions prior to its consideration by Cabinet and has questioned the need for Overview and Scrutiny to consider this matter in the future.

20. LANGLEY COURT – LOAN TO LUMINUS

The Panel has received a report on the redevelopment of Langley Court, St Ives, introduced by the Executive Councillor for Resources. The report has proposed the transfer of a piece of land to Luminus to enable the redevelopment of Langley Court to proceed and has updated Members on the terms of a loan to Luminus.

The Executive Leader has explained that a housing needs assessment has been the driver in this project, as there is a clear need in the area for additional care facilities. It has been explained that as adult social care becomes a wider issue, the Council need to work with strategic partners to deliver solutions. The fundamental need is the driver behind the loan, rather than commercial interest or requirement.

The Chairman has commented that the decision to complete this plan has been long awaited and the Panel has endorsed the recommendations prior to its consideration by the Cabinet.

Other Matters of Interest

21. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel has been acquainted with the contents of the Notice of Key Executive Decisions which has been prepared by the Executive Leader.

22. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) – PROGRESS

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies.

23. WORKPLAN STUDIES

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

24. SCRUTINY

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

G J Bull
Chairman

Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being)

Report of the meeting held on 8th September 2015.

Matters for Information

14. CIVIL PARKING ENFORCEMENT

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the Civil Parking Enforcement in the District. The Executive Councillor for Commercial Activities has highlighted details of the parking enforcement issue and makes the case for a more lenient view in the interests of economic development; a stricter regime could be seen to penalise local business owners. The Panel has been informed that in practical terms the costs of Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) far out-weigh any benefits; therefore it has been suggested that the Council does not commit to becoming the agent for CPE in Huntingdonshire.

The Interim Head of Operations has added that following a lengthy consultancy report it has become clear that although the powers of enforcement and the revenue that it has the potential to generate are desirable, a whole new regime of regulations and extensive set up costs would be required. With a limited business case to support CPE, it has been advised that the Council do not adopt the scheme and that the Council works with Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) on a broader traffic management plan which has the potential to positively affect parking issues locally.

Members of the Panel have questioned whether issues faced locally for residential parking have been taken into account. The Panel have been advised that although residential parking is a separate issue at this stage there are alternative ways of dealing with these issues other than heavy enforcement. Working with CCC and the Planning Department to ensure residents are provided with parking can be more effective in the long term.

A Panel Member has asserted that with a lack of Police statistics on unlawful parking the issues of local parking has not been considered in full. In response, the Executive Councillor for Commercial Activities has informed Members that they acknowledge that further information from the Police would have been useful but the cost justification of CPE remains inadequate with the annual overheads being unbearable by the Council in the current economic position.

Members have suggested that a further report be presented to the Panel with additional information from the Police regarding parking so

that the issue can be considered with further clarity and consideration can also be given that to the CPE decision in the future.

The Panel has endorsed the recommendations prior to their consideration by the Cabinet.

15. OPERATIONS REVIEW QUARTERLY UPDATE

The Operations Review Quarterly Update has been presented to the Panel by the Interim Head of Operations and the Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment. The report has provided an opportunity for Members to scrutinise the St. Ives green spaces and play needs analysis and the new Garden Waste Contamination Policy prior to their adoption by the Council.

Members of the Panel have discussed issues regarding graffiti removal and problems surrounding bin collections. The Panel has been informed that particular area problems with graffiti are monitored by the Police and that the Council are working with the Police to identify repeat offenders. A Panel Member has suggested that reporting of incidents at particular geographical areas would assist in these investigations; the Interim Head of Operations has informed the Members that there is a new Members Contact Form which will help to gain some control over the issue with this type of feedback from Members providing trackable progress.

The Council are working to specifically target the requirements of local areas and projects that will help that need. Information has also been presented on the current green spaces provision and any gaps in that provision.

When considering the information on play provision in the area, Members have been informed that the needs analysis has indicated that there is a good level of provision and that these sites need to be maintained and expanded to other areas. A targeted investment approach is favoured, which will allow for affordable future proofing of these sites.

Members of the Panel have discussed the Council's Garden Waste Policy which has been amended to include a more customer focused approach, which includes answers to residents regarding why their bin may have not been collected. This will take the form of digital photography evidence, reasoning and education for those residents who may be repeat offenders.

16. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE MONITORING (Q1)

In conjunction with the Panels for Economic and Social Well-Being, the Panel has received an update on progress against the Key Activities and Corporate Indicators listed in the Council's Corporate Plan for 2015/16 for the period 1 April 2015 to 30 June 2015. The report now also incorporates progress reporting for current projects being undertaken at the Council.

The Panel's discussions have centred on the planning application performance indicators. The Head of Development has informed Members that staffing issues have had an impact on the Team's ability to meet targets. Vacancies have now been filled, with a permanent Planning Services Manager (Development Management) recently recruited, and new processes have been put in place to improve performance and resilience. These measures are expected to rapidly improve over the coming months.

Other Matters of Interest

17. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies.

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

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies.

19. WORKPLAN STUDIES

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

20. SCRUTINY

The Panel has considered the latest editions of the Decision Digest.

T D Sanderson
Chairman

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Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being)

Report of the meeting held on 1st September 2015.

Matters for Information

11. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT (QUARTER 1)

In conjunction with the Panels for Economic and Environmental Well-Being, the Panel has received an update on progress against the Key Activities and Corporate Indicators listed in the Council's Corporate Plan for 2015/16 for the period 1 April to 30 June 2015. The report now also incorporates progress reporting for current projects being undertaken at the Council.

The Corporate Team Manager has explained that the new format of the report is in response to previous feedback to make the information clearer and simpler to understand.

The Panel has queried the targets that have been set for Disabled Facilities Grants. The Corporate Team Manager has confirmed that this information will be provided to the Panel in due course.

12. CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Panel has received a report on performance of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). Mr I Weller and Mr J Kerrin, presented the performance data to the Panel.

The Panel has been informed that:

- A&E performance targets are national; these were not reached for April/May 2015 but were on target for June;
- the Breast Pathway service was overloaded in June 2015 so extra plans to deal with capacity are now in place and July saw exceptional performance in this area;
- the waiting times from diagnosis to treatment are being looked at regionally. Responses can be up to six weeks and there is now an action plan for the Trust and the company who provides results to look at this; and
- same sex accommodation and finding the capacity within the Intensive Care Unit at Hinchingbrooke Hospital was difficult.

Plans have been put in place to reduce the risk of this happening again.

Members of the Panel have been informed that the current 62 day wait for cancer patients to receive results is being monitored and has improved. The CCG understand that timely treatments are essential, and are looking at these times being improved by October 2015 rather than 2016 which is the current national target.

With regards to the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Report from 2014, Members have been assured that the CCG are confident that the follow-up report (which was completed in January) has given the Trust the footing for real improvement which will be developed further in time for the upcoming CQC visit. It is expected that the outcomes from this visit (21 October 2015) will be positive.

It has been confirmed to Members that there are several schemes that will be implemented to deal with capacity issues during the winter months; performance over this time is expected to drop but it will be monitored daily. In order to increase capacity, the CCG is also working with nursing homes to achieve greater resources for care that does not require hospital treatment. Morning discharges are also being recommended to assist further with the amount of beds that are available as they provide a steady flow of discharges throughout the day rather than all at once in the evening.

Members have been informed that the issues with e-referral are technical and were due to the system not being prepared sufficiently for the new data. The CCG are entirely dependent on the external systems to collate information which in itself creates further delay. The indications are that e-referral should be on track for November 2015, but as it's a national system, December may be a more realistic target.

The Chairman of the Panel has requested performance data on the CCG itself, including internal metric data and GP waiting times; it has been confirmed by Mr Weller that this will be possible and the CCG will aim to share this with the Panel in 6 months' time.

13. ONE LEISURE SIX MONTH UPDATE REPORT

The Head of Leisure and Health and Councillor Robin Howe, Executive Councillor for Commercial Activities, have presented the One Leisure Six Month Update Report to the Panel. It has been explained that the One Leisure Group is currently undergoing a transformation, which includes changes to management. A large part of this change comes from devolving responsibility to the local centres (e.g. marketing) with an overarching Strategy. This places the power for change with those best-placed to make those changes.

The Head of Leisure and Health has apprised the Panel with the report, highlighting the following:

- The service is currently creating an average surplus of £25k per month;
- accountability sits within each of the sites;
- there has been a 9% increase in attendance;
- marketing and promotion is now concentrating on new clients, without relying on what has always been done in the past;
- phase II of the management restructure is now active. The current consultation stage will end in mid-September;
- £140k savings are visualised (not achievable in this financial year);
- there has been a significant review of One Leisure in Sawtry, including data searches and customer consultations to consider the issues and deficit at this site;
- opening times at Sawtry have been revised to align more closely with the changing behaviour of visitors; and
- membership packages are being altered to make them more affordable and competitive.

Members have been informed that there is an ambition to have a simple management structure, which will be able to make quick decisions. Once stable, One Leisure may consider focus groups with input from Members but are currently concentrating on getting One Leisure into a functional commercial state. The Strategic Plan for the next 5 years will be looked at in September 2015 and further consultations may be considered.

A customer satisfaction survey is sent out to 1000 residents per month to ask for feedback on One Leisure. Improvement plans largely come from this invaluable information. One Leisure has also introduced a new “Communicate” programme, communicating directly with clients directly to ensure if they require further support, amongst other things which in turns involves in decision making.

The relationship between membership prices and income has been discussed by the Panel, who have been advised that modelling and forensic work is informing the review of membership options. It has been confirmed that marketing will also include local villages.

Other Matters of Interest

14. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel has been acquainted with the contents of the Notice of Key Executive Decisions which had been prepared by the Executive Leader.

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

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies.

16. WORKPLAN STUDIES

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

17. SCRUTINY

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

S J Criswell
Chairman

Standards Committee

Report of the meeting held on 10th September 2015.

Matters for Information

5. UPDATE ON CODE OF CONDUCT AND REGISTER OF DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

The Monitoring Officer has updated the Committee on the adoption of a Code of Conduct by Town and Parish Councils and the receipt and publication of register of interests forms on behalf of District and Town and Parish Councillors. The Monitoring Officer has a duty to establish and maintain a register of disclosable pecuniary interests.

The Committee has noted that all of the 71 Town and Parish Councils have adopted a Code of Conduct, with 55 based on that adopted by the District Council, 12 have opted for the Code promoted by the National Association of Local Councils and the remaining four Councils have adopted their own version of the Code. Of the 71 Town and Parish Councils, 60 have had their full Register published (which comprise the Disclosable Pecuniary Interests (DPI) forms of all Councillors). Clerks from the remaining 11 Parish Councils have been reminded to send in outstanding DPI forms as soon as possible.

In terms of individual DPis, 586 of a total of 650 have been received from Parish Councillors, 26 are outstanding and 38 are vacancies. The forms of all District Councillors are published.

The Committee has considered how to ensure the outstanding DPis are received. Although the Monitoring Officer has no enforcement powers, owing to the legal nature of the duty to publish DPis, it is felt that primary responsibility should remain with the Monitoring Officer, with support from relevant Ward Members.

6. COMPLAINTS

The Committee has been informed of complaints submitted to the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) in 2013/14 and 2014/15. Responsibility for complaints transferred to the Committee in April 2014 but the LGO does not report until July each year. The Committee had not since had an opportunity to consider the previous year's letter.

The Committee has been informed that in 2013/14, of the 15 complaints that were the subject of investigations, three were upheld.

Brief explanations of the three cases have been received. No complaints were upheld in 2014/15.

With regard to internal complaints handling, the Committee has been acquainted with trends over the last six years. There has been a reduction in the number of complaints investigated in the period but the significant decline in complaints in the last year suggests there has been under-reporting. For this reason and because a review is now due, a revised policy and internal guidance will be submitted to the Committee for approval in the autumn.

7. ELECTORAL BOUNDARY REVIEW

The Committee has been acquainted with the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's (LGBCE) process for the electoral review of Huntingdonshire. The first phase of the review is for the Council to produce a submission to the LGBC, which provides a rationale, backed up with evidence, for a proposed Council size. The timescale for completion of this work is very short, so a working group comprising representatives from political groups has been convened to make a recommendation on the number of councillors the Council needs.

The Committee has reviewed the detailed submission, which has been prepared to support the retention of 52 Members. The submission appears elsewhere on the Council Agenda. Subject to strengthening the Council's case through the inclusion of sources for the figures provided, the Committee has recommended the Council to approve the submission on Council size.

The Committee will continue to be involved in the remaining stages of the review.

A Hansard
Chairman