

STATE OF THE DISTRICT CONFERENCE

I propose that every two years there should be a 'State of the District' half-day conference on the second Saturday in September. The public would be invited to come and it would be made clear that they would be able to speak during the morning. Specific invitations to be sent to Parish Councils, local business and various representative bodies, including those for Young People.

The structure of this Conference could be as follows:

- 9.30 Welcome from Council Leader and general outline of the key issues facing the District at this time
- 9.45 Three minute presentations from each Portfolio holder outlining the major topics on the work programme for each area of the District's functions
- 10.20 Brief statement from the Leader of the Opposition, again highlighting the key issues for consideration from an Opposition perspective.
- 10.30 Coffee break
- 10.50 Conference splits into working groups, each one containing a Portfolio holder and at least two members of each Scrutiny Panel. Public choose which one they wish to attend and take a full part in the questions and discussion. A scribe to take notes of the main issues emerging.
- 11.40 Re-convene in plenary to receive a succinct report from each working group
- 12.10 Open forum for any member of the public to raise any other issue which has not arisen during the working groups
- 12.25 Final comments and thanks from Leader
- 12.30 End of Conference

The Hinchingsbrooke Performing Arts Centre would make an ideal venue as there is a good auditorium for the plenary sessions, catering facilities for coffee and there are plenty of nearby rooms for the break-out session.

The following Council meeting, at the end of September, would then have an item during which the Leader and Councillors could respond to what has been heard at the SOTD Conference, having had time to reflect on it for a couple of weeks. This would be early enough in the cycle for important matters to be taken into consideration before the budget cycle and MTP process is too far gone. The Conference might also generate issues for the Scrutiny Panels to consider in greater detail.