

**PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE AND METHOD OF OPERATION –  
COUNTRYSIDE JOINT GROUP  
(Report by Head of Administration)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 At their meeting on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2006, the District Council's Cabinet agreed to reconstitute the former Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Joint Liaison Group as the Countryside Joint Group. The terms of reference of the Group were extended to include all matters relating to countryside and riverside and other parks and open spaces across the District.
- 1.2 Since then, Members have expressed uncertainty as to the new remit and status of the Group given that Hinchingsbrooke Country Park originally was a joint initiative between the District and County Councils.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report, therefore, is to respond to the Group's request for guidance, to confirm a terms of reference and method of operation and to propose a work programme which will more adequately reflect the new wider remit of the Group. Given the involvement of the County Council in the former Liaison Group and the continuation of their membership in the new Group, their views on the proposed new arrangements are reported in Section 3 of the report.
- 1.4 A copy of the former Liaison Group's Terms of Reference is appended hereto as Appendix A.

**2. THE PROPOSAL**

- 2.1 Bearing in mind the concept of the original Liaison Group and having regard now to its broader remit, it is proposed that the new Group should meet on 4 occasions each calendar year. Two of the four meetings should operate as formal meetings and the other two informally.
- 2.2 The formal meetings will continue in a similar way to that of the former Joint Liaison Group, with biannual reports to be submitted to Members by the Countryside Services and Service Development Managers of the District Council. Meetings will continue to take place at 10:00am on Fridays in March and October each year and be administered by the Democratic Services Team. Both reports will provide an overview of countryside, parks and open space areas with items relating to Hinchingsbrooke Country Park featuring within the Countryside Services Manager's report. It is suggested that these meetings take place in meeting rooms at the Country Park and Paxton Pits Nature Reserve.

- 2.3 Informal meetings will only require the presence of District Council representatives and will be delivered in the form of site visits across the District. This will enable the Group to embrace their wider remit without conflicting the County Council's ongoing freehold interests in the Country Park. The District Council's Countryside Services Manager and Service Development Manager will be required to produce an itinerary of places to visit for District Council Members. Arrangements for these events will be made centrally by the Democratic Services Team. An informal tour of Countryside Services already has taken place.
- 2.4 The following programme of meetings is envisaged:-

<b>PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS</b>		
<b>FORMAL MEETING SCHEDULE</b>	<b>MONTH</b>	<b>VENUE</b>
		March
	October	Paxton Pits Nature Reserve
<b>INFORMAL MEETING SCHEDULE</b>	January	Itinerary to be set by the District Council's Service Development Manager
	June	Itinerary to be set by the Countryside Services Manager

- 2.5 As part of the Group's new remit, newsletters and information on what is happening across the District will be circulated electronically to District Council Members for information purposes only.

### **3. CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S COMMENTS**

- 3.1 A letter was sent to the County Council seeking their views on the proposed new arrangements.
- 3.2 No objections had been received to the proposal and no further comments had been made.

### **4. AMENDMENTS TO THE GROUP'S TERMS OF REFERENCE**

- 4.1 To reflect these new arrangements and the wider remit of the Joint Group, a revised terms of reference and a method of operation have been proposed. These are reflected in Appendix B hereto. The draft proposal is based on the agreement previously made with the County

Council and operating practices since the Joint Liaison Group was first constituted.

#### **4. RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 The Joint Group are requested to endorse the proposed new approach to the work and responsibilities of the Countryside Joint Group as set out in paragraphs 2.1 – 2.5 of this report and recommend approval to the District and County Councils of the proposed terms of reference and new method of operation for a trial period of 12 months duration commencing in October 2007 after which time the success or otherwise of the arrangements will be reviewed.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

Hinchingbrooke Country Park Joint Liaison Group – Terms of Reference  
Cabinet Minutes – 18<sup>th</sup> May 2006  
File LA/H/1 held by the Administration Division of the Central Services Directorate.

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