

**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS WORKING GROUP
(Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being))**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Members will be aware of the ongoing review of the Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire which is being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). The review had been prompted by the Cabinet at their meeting on 19th May 2011. At its meeting held on 1st November 2011, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) decided to establish a Working Group comprising Councillors S J Criswell, J J Dutton, S M Van De Kerkhove and R J West, together with Mr R Coxhead, to undertake the review. Councillor S J Criswell was appointed as the Working Group's *rapporteur*. To date, the Working Group has met on five occasions.
- 1.2 The last meeting of the Neighbourhood Forums Working Group took place on 27th February 2012 when Councillors S J Criswell and R J West and Mr R Coxhead were present. Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J J Dutton and S M Van De Kerkhove.
- 1.3 The Working Group has been reviewing the boundaries, elected Member representation for each area and the constitutional terms for new Neighbourhood Forum arrangements. This work has taken a significant amount of time to complete, but takes into account the consultation responses received from Town and Parish Councils which were presented to the Panel in November 2011, the preliminary views of the existing Neighbourhood Forums and the outcome of initial discussions with the Police and Cambridgeshire County Council. The Working Group has now completed this work and has sought the Panel's views on its recommendations to date. These were discussed and endorsed by the Panel at their meeting on 6th March 2012. Additionally, the views of the Corporate Governance Panel were obtained at their meeting on 28th March 2012. A few minor suggestions were made to the proposed terms of the Constitution which have been included within the draft.
- 1.4 During the course of their investigations, the Working Group spent a considerable amount of time taking into account a number of factors and variables relating to any governance model that might be introduced within the District. It has been a challenge for the Working Group to address all these points and, having deliberated at some length on a number of these issues, the Working Group formed the view that a balance had to be struck to ensure that any new model introduced within the District would meet and address the issues raised. These are discussed further in the preceding sections of this report.
- 1.5 It is proposed that any new model is to be introduced in the next Municipal Year and reviewed after it has been in operation for a period of 12 months. Members of the Cabinet are invited to comment on the proposals prior to the Panel undertaking a consultation exercise with the Town and Parish Councils and Partners on the proposals thus far.

2. PROPOSED BOUNDARY AREAS AND ELECTED MEMBER REPRESENTATION

- 2.1 A map defining the proposed boundary areas for the Local Joint Committees (LJC) is attached as **Appendix A**. An attempt has been made to identify areas that are smaller and more localised than the existing Neighbourhood Forums. Members of the Working Group have been mindful of localism and the opportunities that the LJCs would present in this respect and are therefore proposing nine new areas within the District. Under the present arrangements, there are five Neighbourhood Forums. As has been said, the areas reflect the views of Town and Parish Councils on whom they considered to be part of their local communities.
- 2.2 At their meeting in December 2011, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) endorsed a recommendation that the Cabinet should adopt the Shape Your Place initiative within Huntingdonshire. The initiative seeks to promote community engagement by enabling local public bodies to establish dialogue with a sector of local residents that might not utilise the existing Neighbourhood Forums. This was subsequently endorsed by the Cabinet at its January 2012 meeting. The initiative will be launched on 1st July 2012 and a drop in session for Members will be held prior to the April meeting of the Council on the 25th April 2012 to introduce it. It is intended that the boundaries for Shape Your Place will, as far as possible, be co-terminus with those proposed for the LJCs. This has been achieved, though some Shape Your Place areas will cover more than one LJC. There is a need to finalise the boundaries for the LJCs to enable Cambridgeshire County Council to commence designing the Huntingdonshire Shape Your Place website.
- 2.3 The boundary areas could not be considered in isolation from the elected Member representation for each proposed area. **Appendix B** provides a breakdown highlighting the Towns and Parishes which fall in each area together with the District Wards and relevant County Council Divisions. It has been difficult for the Working Group to ensure a consistent split in Member representation, however, the view has been taken that localism and the geographical identities of settlements should be the overriding factor in determining the boundaries for the proposed Local Joint Committees.

3. LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEES – CONSTITUTIONAL TERMS

- 3.1 Members of the Working Group have considered at some length the constitutional terms for the LJCs which are attached as **Appendix C**. These have been subject to review by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services and the Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) has had prior sight of them.
- 3.2 The Constitution has been designed in such a way that it will be flexible enough to allow the LJCs to operate as they see fit. The Committees do not have to undertake all of the functions proposed, and they can adapt their own arrangements in accordance with local need.
- 3.3 The likely business to be discussed at LJC meetings might include the following:-
- community liaison between the three tiers of local government, NHS, Police, Fire and other Partners;
 - matters for decision;
 - budget monitoring;
 - open public form – for members of the public to raise issues of local concern;
 - potential duties that might be devolved down from Area Joint Committees;

- management of funds that might be devolved down through the Community Infrastructure Levy, New Homes Bonus and Community Energy Fund;
 - neighbourhood planning; and
 - local authority and partner consultations.
- 3.4 Members will be aware that Cambridgeshire County Council are currently in the process of reviewing Area Joint Committees (AJC) given their view that they are no longer fit for purpose. Whilst AJC meetings have been diarised for the ensuing Municipal Year, County Council have advised that these meetings will end as soon as possible, once alternative arrangements have been made. Options that are currently being explored include looking at how some decisions can be delegated to Service Directors, following consultation with the relevant County Portfolio Holder and the local Ward Member(s). The County Council have indicated that other potential decisions could be devolved down to the proposed LJCs as and when appropriate.
- 3.5 Given the possibility that the LJCs might have decision making responsibilities delegated to them, consideration has been given to a range of options relating to representation, voting and decision making. Section 7 of the Constitution covers voting arrangements. The options considered by the Working Group include:-
- Various models of appointment to the LJCs;
 - Differential voting rights through weighting or veto;
 - Differential voting rights by restricting the items on which Members may vote;
 - Conditioning the way matters are delegated to the Local Joint Committee;
 - Insisting on unanimous decisions; and
 - Insisting on a minimum percentage on decisions – for e.g. 75%.
- 3.6 Each of the options has been considered and it has been concluded that Town and Parish Councils should be entitled to one seat each. The relevant District and County Members will make up the rest of the LJC membership.
- 3.7 The Working Group proposes that Town and Parish Council nominations should be Councillors who are not also the relevant District or County Member for that area. Additionally, it is suggested that the Town and Parish Councils should be requested to nominate a substitute as it is felt that they should be represented at all times, particularly if any budgetary or financial decisions are to be made.
- 3.8 In terms of voting, the Working Group has concluded that all of those with a seat on the LJC should be entitled to one vote each. “Twin-hatters” (i.e. Members who are both the relevant District Councillor and County Councillor) should receive two votes each.
- 3.9 Voting will be determined by way of a simple majority of votes either for or against a proposal, with the Chairman having a casting vote if necessary. The Working Group has considered whether votes should be weighted for each local authority tier, but has concluded that this option might prove to be too complex in practice given that views could be divided within a local authority tier. In addition, it is felt that the chosen option demonstrates commitment to localism.
- 3.10 The Working Group suggests that, when necessary, voting could be conditioned when a matter is delegated to LJCs. For example, if a decision is delegated it might be that it is taken by an Executive Councillor after consultation with an LJC. There

need to be clear rules on what decisions can be made by the Committees. Work in this respect will follow at a later stage in the Working Group's investigations.

4. CURRENT AND PROJECTED FUTURE COSTS

- 4.1 It is proposed that the LJsCs should meet at least two times a year, with other meetings being called as necessary (Section 5 of the Constitution). The Working Group has discussed the servicing of the meetings (Section 10 of the Constitution) and has suggested that, in the spirit of localism, secretarial functions should be shared with the Town and Parish Councils within the area, perhaps on a rota basis. Officer support from both the District and County Councils are further being proposed, the duties of which are outlined within Section 11 of the Constitution.
- 4.2 A Neighbourhood Forum Co-ordinator was employed in January 2009, appointed jointly by the County and District Councils and managed by the District. Following resignation of the post holder partway through that year, support for the Neighbourhood Forums has been provided by the District Council (Democratic Services), partly by absorbing the work and partly by extending the hours of an existing Officer who currently is employed on a part-time basis. The funding is utilised to meet the latter costs as well as meeting the costs of venue hire.
- 4.3 The table below provides a comparison of the existing number of meetings compared to those which are proposed for the future:-

Existing Arrangements		
5 Forum Areas	4 Meetings Per Year	20 Meetings Per Annum

Planned Arrangements		
9 Forum Areas	2 Meetings Per Year	18 Meetings Per Annum

This reflects a 10% reduction in the number of meetings proposed.

- 4.4 The secretarial functions include preparing for the venue, time spent at meetings and the production of Minutes. They currently take an average of 9 hours per meeting to complete.
- 4.5 It will be necessary for some support functions to continue to be provided by the District Council. They currently require an average of 12.5 hours per meeting in Officer time and is the equivalent of 13% of one FTE. The functions are outlined within Section 11 of the Constitution.
- 4.6 The total existing cost for the Neighbourhood Forums is £26,000 per annum, inclusive of room hire, catering, printing and Officer support. A reduction in the hours spent servicing the meetings will produce a saving of £10,920 per annum, reflecting the 42% reduction in resources required. This will bring the total cost of the planned arrangements to £15,080 a year.
- 4.7 The table below details the contributions received from Partners:-

	CCC	Police	Fire	NHS	Total
2009/10	£5,000	£5,000	£1,200	£5,000	£16,200
2010/11	£5,000	£5,000	£1,200	£5,000	£16,200

Given that the District Council initiated its review early on in the 2011/12 financial year and the uncertainty surrounding the future of the existing Neighbourhood Forums, invoices for 2011/12 were issued to Partners at the end of March 2012.

5. CORPORATE GOVERNANCE PANEL COMMENTS

- 5.1 Members of the Corporate Governance Panel have welcomed the work undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). Minor suggestions were proposed to the draft Constitution (at 2.1, 2.2 and 12.3) to provide clarification on the proposed terms. These have now been included within the draft.
- 5.2 The Corporate Governance Panel questioned a number of matters including the proposals for “twin hatters” to have two votes each, Town and Parish Council representation at meetings and the level of public attendance hoped to be generated at meetings. The Panel also expressed some reservations over the likely take up of Town and Parish Councils assisting with the servicing of LJC meetings and made comment that the setting of policing priorities should remain at these meetings.

6. TIMESCALES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 The table below is an indication of the likely timescales for the implementation of any new model introduced within the District.



Corporate Governance Panel	28th March 2012
Cabinet	19th April 2012
Consultation period with Town and Parish Councils and Partners	30th April to 8th June 2012 (6 weeks)
Working Group to meet to analyse responses received	Meeting to take place between 11th and 22nd June 2012
Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being)	3rd July 2012
Cabinet	19th July 2012
Launch of LJC Meetings	September 2012

7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Working Group has spent a significant amount of time reviewing the boundaries for the proposed LJCs whilst being mindful of elected Member representation for each area and their constitutional terms. There is a need to consult the Town and Parish Councils on the LJCs to gain their views on the proposals and, if they are to be introduced, all the local authorities who are to be represented on them will have to complete various formalities. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has had an opportunity to consider and comment on the proposals thus far and

endorsed the Working Group's recommendations at their meeting on the 6th March 2012. Similarly, the Corporate Governance Panel has endorsed these proposals.

- 7.2 The Cabinet is therefore requested to consider and comment on the proposed boundaries, composition, voting and Constitution for Local Joint Committees prior to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) undertaking a consultation exercise with the Town and Parish Councils and Partners on the proposals thus far.

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Minutes and Reports of Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) held on 6th September, 1st November and 6th December 2011 and 3rd January, 7th February and 6th March 2012.



Neighbourhood Forums Working File held by Democratic Services Section.

Proposed Local Joint Committee

March 2012



Key

-  County Ward
-  District Ward



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APPENDIX B

DIVISION, WARD AND PARISH BREAKDOWN FOR PROPOSED LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEES

AREA	PARISHES	DISTRICT WARDS	COUNTY WARD(S)
1	Sibson-cum Stibbington	Elton and Folksworth (1) Yaxley and Farcet (3) Stilton (1)	Norman Cross (2)
	Water Newton		
	Alwalton		
	Chesterton		
	Elton		
	Haddon		
	Morborne		
	Folksworth and Washingley		
	Stilton		
20 Seats	Denton and Caldecote		
	Holme		
% Split	Yaxley		
Parish - 65%	Farcet		
District - 25%			
County - 10%			
	13 PARISHES	5 DISTRICT MEMBERS	2 COUNTY MEMBERS
		Guyatt	Guyatt
		Banerjee, Butler and Watt	McGuire, M
		Mitchell	
2	Sawtry	Sawtry (2)	Sawtry and Ellington (1)
	Glatton		
	Conington		
	Little Gidding		
	Great Gidding		
	Winwick		
11 Seats	Hamerton and Steeple Gidding		
	Upton and Coppingford		
% Split			
Parish - 73%			
District - 18%			
County - 9%			
	8 PARISHES	2 DISTRICT MEMBERS	1 COUNTY MEMBER

APPENDIX B

DIVISION, WARD AND PARISH BREAKDOWN FOR PROPOSED LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEES

		Tuplin and Tysoe	McGuire, V
3	Bythorn and Keyston Brington and Molesworth Old Weston Leighton Catworth Buckworth Barham and Woolley Spaldwick Stow Longa Easton Ellington Grafham Perry	Ellington (1) Brampton (2) Kimbolton and Staughton (1)	Brampton and Kimbolton (1) Sawtry and Ellington (1)
23 Seats	Covington		
	Kimbolton and Stonely		
% Split	Great Staughton		
Parish - 74%	Tilbrook		
District - 17%		4 DISTRICT MEMBERS	2 COUNTY MEMBERS
County - 9%	17 PARISHES	Baker, M Downes and Jordan Gray	Downes McGuire, V

APPENDIX B

DIVISION, WARD AND PARISH BREAKDOWN FOR PROPOSED LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEES

4	Godmanchester Brampton	Godmanchester (2) Brampton (2)	Huntingdon (2) Godmanchester and Huntingdon East (2)
23 Seats	Huntingdon	Huntingdon East (3)	Brampton and Kimbolton (1)
<u>% Split</u> Parish - 26% District - 52% County - 22%	Alconbury Alconbury Weston The Stukeleys <p style="text-align: center;">6 PARISHES</p>	Huntingdon North (2) Huntingdon West (2) Alconbury and The Stukeleys (1) <p style="text-align: center;">12 DISTRICT MEMBERS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5 COUNTY MEMBERS</p>
		Hyams and Godley Downes and Jordan Akthar, Greenall and Shellens Dutton and Mackender-Lawrence Cawley and Sanderson Baker, K	Brown and Kadic Dutton and Wilson Downes
5	Little Paxton St Neots	Little Paxton (1) Kimbolton and Staughton (1)	Little Paxton and St Neots North (2) Brampton and Kimbolton (1)
19 Seats	Hail Weston	St Neots Eaton Ford (2)	St Neots Eaton Socon and Eynesbury (2)
<u>% Split</u> Parish - 16% District - 58% County - 26%	<p style="text-align: center;">3 PARISHES</p>	St Neots Eaton Socon (2) St Neots Priory Park (2) St Neots Eynesbury (3) <p style="text-align: center;">11 DISTRICT MEMBERS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">5 COUNTY MEMBERS</p>
		Churchill Gray Farrer and Harty Harrison and Jennings Chapman and Longford Hansard, Ursell and Van De Kerkhove	Harty and Churchill Downes Hutton and Farrer

APPENDIX B

DIVISION, WARD AND PARISH BREAKDOWN FOR PROPOSED LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEES

<p>6</p>	<p>Buckden Diddington Southoe and Midloe Offord Cluny Offord Darcy Great Paxton Toseland</p>	<p>Gransden and The Offords (2) Buckden (1)</p>	<p>Buckden, Gransden and The Offords (1)</p>
<p>15 Seats</p>	<p>Yelling Abbotsley</p>		
<p>% Split Parish - 73% District - 20% County - 7%</p>	<p>Great Gransden Waresley-cum-Tetworth</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11 PARISHES</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">3 DISTRICT MEMBERS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 COUNTY MEMBER</p>
		<p style="text-align: center;">Boddington and West Clough</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">West</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>Ramsey Warboys Bury Wistow</p>	<p>Ramsey (3) Warboys and Bury (2) Upwood and The Raveleys (1)</p>	<p>Warboys and Upwood (1) Ramsey (1)</p>
<p>16 Seats</p>	<p>Upwood and The Raveleys Abbots Ripton</p>		
<p>% Split Parish - 50% District - 37% County - 13%</p>	<p>Kings Ripton Woodwalton</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8 PARISHES</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">6 DISTRICT MEMBERS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">2 COUNTY MEMBERS</p>
		<p style="text-align: center;">Curtis, Reeve and Swales Bucknell and Ward Howe</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Lucas Reeve</p>

APPENDIX B

DIVISION, WARD AND PARISH BREAKDOWN FOR PROPOSED LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEES

<p>8</p>	<p>Fenstanton Hilton Hemingford Abbots Hemingford Grey</p>	<p>The Hemingfords (2) St Ives West (1) St Ives South (2) St Ives East (2)</p>	<p>The Hemingfords and Fenstanton (1) St Ives (2) Warboys and Upwood (1)</p>
<p>23 Seats</p>	<p>Houghton and Wyton</p>	<p>Fenstanton (1)</p>	
	<p>St Ives</p>	<p>Upwood and The Raveleys (1)</p>	
<p><u>% Split</u> Parish - 35% District - 48% County - 17%</p>	<p>Holywell-cum-Needingworth Wyton-on-the-Hill</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8 PARISHES</p>	<p>Earith (2)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">11 DISTRICT MEMBERS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4 COUNTY MEMBERS</p>
		<p style="text-align: center;">Bates and Williams Dew, J Davies and Dew, D Ablewhite and Reynolds, D Harlock Howe Godfrey and Rogers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Bates Pegram and Reynolds, K Lucas</p>
<p>9</p>	<p>Old Hurst Woodhurst Pidley-cum-Fenton</p>	<p>Somersham (2) Earith (2)</p>	<p>Somersham and Earith (1)</p>
<p>13 Seats</p>	<p>Somersham</p>		
	<p>Colne</p>		
<p><u>% Split</u> Parish - 61% District - 31% County - 8%</p>	<p>Earith Bluntisham Broughton</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8 PARISHES</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">4 DISTRICT MEMBERS</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">1 COUNTY MEMBER</p>
		<p style="text-align: center;">Criswell and Bull Godfrey and Rogers</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Criswell</p>

APPENDIX B

DIVISION, WARD AND PARISH BREAKDOWN FOR PROPOSED LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEES

NB - Those in red denote "twin-hatters"

District Wards Covering Duplicate Areas:	Upwood and The Raveleys x 2 Brampton x 2 Kimbolton and Staughton x 2 Earith x 2
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County Wards Covering Duplicate Areas:	Sawtry and Ellington x 2 Warboys and Upwood x 2 Brampton and Kimbolton x 3
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HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL JOINT COMMITTEES

CONSTITUTION

1. Composition

- 1.1 The Local Joint Committees (LJCs) will be constituted in accordance with Sections 101 and 102 of the Local Government Act 1972 and will be Joint Committees for decision making.
- 1.2 Committees will be established across the District on the boundaries delineated in Appendix 1. The boundaries will be kept under regular review.

2. Membership

- 2.1 Membership will comprise Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) and Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) Members for the LJC area. Town and Parish Councils within the LJC area will appoint one representative each. Membership will cease if, for whatever reason, Membership of the nominating authority ceases.
- 2.2 Town and Parish Councils will appoint a representative on an annual basis prior to the LJCs first meeting in each Municipal Year. A Town and Parish Council shall not appoint, as a voting Member or substitute, a person who is not a Member of that authority.
- 2.3 Each representative will have equal voting rights.
- 2.4 Town and Parish Council substitutes at meetings will be allowed provided the Secretary is informed at least 3 working days prior to a meeting.
- 2.5 Substitutes should be nominated at the same time as the Town and Parish Council representatives and will have the same voting rights as the Member that they replace and will count towards the establishment of a quorum.

3. Functions

- 3.1 The purpose of the LJCs is to enable transparent strategic decision making at a localised level but not to detract from public engagement with Town and Parish Councils who should be the normal point of engagement. In doing so, it will also:
 - (a) engage the public at a more strategic level than Town or Parish Councils;
 - (b) promote and enhance local democracy;
 - (c) facilitate closer working between the three tiers of local government and other public and community services within the LJC area;
 - (d) enable Town and Parish Councils, the County Council, the District Council and the Police and public sector and voluntary sector Partners (including interested Community Groups), where appropriate, to discuss and address issues of current or future concern to the LJC area;

APPENDIX C

- (e) make plans and related decisions for the LJC area (or constituent parts of the LJC area) based on need/evidence, including community views represented and captured through existing or additional work and virtual social mediums such as 'Shape Your Place';
- (f) undertake or enable consultations (outside of the LJC meeting) to ensure the community is consulted as widely as possible, including organising special public meetings where these are indicated/agreed as being needed in the LJC area (or constituent parts of the LJC area);
- (g) determine expenditure of any delegated budget. This must be spent within policy to improve service standards. It could also be used to support the delivery of service improvements identified in Parish plans or to provide grants to local voluntary organisations;
- (h) provide a reporting mechanism to the Town and Parish Councils in paragraph 2.1 above by requesting them to attend local meetings and scrutinise service delivery within the LJC area - i.e. the LJC will have a strong role in the performance management of services in local communities;
- (i) act as a decision maker with regard to the local delivery of a range of services and to prioritise resource allocation in their area within existing standards and policy;
- (j) where they cannot be resolved by the LJC, refer matters of concern regarding service to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee/Panel or of policy to Cabinet and for the Chairman to have the right to speak at those bodies of CCC and HDC in order to represent the views of the LJC;
- (k) act as a formal consultation mechanism for CCC, HDC and other public and community services over and above that undertaken with individual Town and Parish Councils;
- (l) facilitate partnership working between the County, District, Town and Parish Councils within an LJC area;
- (m) assist with neighbourhood planning/preparation of community plans/liaison on Parish plans;
- (n) liaise with the Police, Fire, NHS, other public bodies and community groups;
- (o) provide a mechanism to enable Councils to pursue the localism agenda – in the wider sense of organising communities into action as well as acting as a conduit for the upward transmission of views;
- (p) consult on and prioritise any funds that might be devolved relating to the Community Infrastructure Levy and the New Homes Bonus; and
- (q) carry out any functions delegated by CCC and HDC.

In addition to this framework, each LJC will have the freedom to customise or develop their activities according to local need.

4. Budgets

- 4.1 Where the LJC has a delegated budget, its administration will be subject to local authority audit procedures.

5. Meetings and Chairing of Meetings

- 5.1 Each LJC will meet at least two times each year with other meetings being called as necessary with the prior agreement of the Chairman or if more than half the Members of the Committee are in favour.
- 5.2 The Chairman and Vice-Chairman of an LJC will be appointed annually. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will be from amongst the membership of the LJC – preferably from a Town and Parish Council.
- 5.3 Ordinary meetings will take place in the local area.
- 5.4 An invitation to attend together with the Agenda for each meeting and the Minutes of the previous meeting will be sent to each Member no less than five working days before each meeting.
- 5.5 At least ten working days notice will also be given to the public of the time and place of each meeting by posting details at HDC's offices and on its website. Copies of such notice will also be sent to CCC and each Town and Parish Council in the area and will be widely publicised.
- 5.6 All meetings of the LJC will normally be open to the press and public.
- 5.7 Members of the public are encouraged to attend LJC meetings, to contribute to discussions and raise issues of local concern. There will be a separate item on the Agenda for each meeting for this purpose. Members of the public who are speaking will be encouraged to be concise and avoid repetition, thereby ensuring sufficient opportunity for others to contribute.
- 5.8 The Chairman of the LJC may invite any person to attend a meeting for the purpose of making a presentation or participating in discussion on any item relevant to that body's functions.
- 5.9 Town and Parish Councils are encouraged to receive reports on the work of the LJC.

6. Public Participation

- 6.1 So as to encourage public participation and engagement in the business of the LJC, Members and Officers shall ensure local people are informed, involved and consulted about any issues relevant to the LJC (excluding regulatory matters).
- 6.2 Each LJC meeting will decide how best to achieve this objective.

7. Voting

- 7.1 Any matter will be decided by a simple majority of all voting members of the LJC present at the time the question is put. Any elected Members are entitled to vote at LJC meetings.
- 7.2 In the event of an equality of votes for and against, the Chairman will have a casting vote, but there will be no restriction on how he/she chooses to exercise this right.
- 7.3 Members who are both the relevant District Councillor and County Councillor will have two votes each.
- 7.4 Some decisions will be delegated to an Executive Member of CCC or HDC. In these instances the delegation will remain but the decision maker will take into account the views expressed by the LJC.

8. Quorum

- 8.1 The quorum for all meetings will be at least one third of voting Members to include representatives from more than one tier of local government.

9. Minutes

- 9.1 The Minutes of all meetings will take the form of a decision list. This will be presented to the Chairman to sign at the next scheduled meeting.
- 9.2 The Chairman will move that the Minutes of the previous meeting be signed as a correct record and no discussion shall take place on their content except with regard to their accuracy.

10. Secretary

- 10.1 Secretarial functions will be shared between the Members of the LJC.
- 10.2 The responsibilities of the Secretary in respect of the business of the LJC's will be to ensure meetings are serviced and also specifically:
 - (a) to provide advice and support to Members in relation to the conduct of meetings;
 - (b) to liaise with the Chairman, other Members and District and County support Officers to identify the matters to be included on the Agenda for each meeting; and
 - (c) to produce a decision list following the deliberations of each meeting and circulate this to all participants within ten working days of the meeting.

11. Officer Support

11.1 CCC and HDC will both provide Officer support for each LJC.

11.2 The duties of the Officers in respect of the business of LJCs will be:

- (a) to assist the Chairman to set the Agenda for each meeting;
- (b) to collate and dispatch all relevant papers and publicise the date, time and venue for each meeting;
- (c) to ensure that, where appropriate, reports are produced and that all Members, Officers and Partners who are invited to meetings are aware of the purpose of their attendance;
- (d) to provide general advice and support to Members;
- (e) to support the Chairman and Members in engaging and consulting local residents;
- (f) to ensure that all necessary actions are taken promptly to implement decisions;
- (g) to monitor the implementation of decisions and report back to the community and, where appropriate, refer any decision to CCC, HDC, Partner or Town and Parish Council bodies for further consideration;
- (h) to circulate details of actions taken in advance of the next meeting; and
- (i) to produce a schedule of dates and venues for meetings.

12. Conduct at Meetings

12.1 High standards of conduct are expected from the representatives of public sector and voluntary sector organisations at LJC meetings. Elected Members must abide by the Members Code of Conduct of their respective authority when engaged in the business of the LJCs. They should apply the rules concerning the declaration of interests at LJC meetings.

12.2 Where it is clear that a decision in which a Town or Parish representative has such an interest in a matter likely to arise at a particular meeting, the substitute Member (with no interest to declare) may attend that LJC meeting or a part of the meeting in his/her place.

12.3 Where a Town or Parish Council Member of the LJC, or a substitute Member, has failed to attend 2 consecutive LJC meetings, the seat will be declared vacant. In the event of the vacancy occurring in respect of a Town or Parish Council, another representative will be appointed to sit on the LJC by the relevant authority.

12.4 Members of the public speaking at LJC meetings should not engage in personal criticism or slanderous comment or use the LJC as a means of pursuing personal objectives.

13. Expenses

- 13.1 Voting Members and substitutes shall be entitled to recover from the nominating authority by which they are appointed any expenses they incur in connection with the discharge of the LJC's functions (for example travel expenses) according to their authority's own policy.

14. Review

- 14.1 This Constitution will be reviewed after 12 months at a meeting to which all Members of all LJC's in Huntingdonshire will be invited.

15. Interpretation

- 15.1 The decision of the Chairman on the interpretation of this Constitution shall be final.