

**HOUSING STRATEGY 2012-15
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being))**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 2nd October 2012, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) considered a report by the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy seeking the Panel's endorsement of a new Housing Strategy 2012-15.
- 1.2 The Head of Planning and Housing Strategy and the Housing Strategy Manager were in attendance at the meeting. This report summarises the Panel's discussions.

2. THE PANEL'S DISCUSSIONS

- 2.1 In introducing the report, the Housing Strategy Manager has drawn the Panel's attention to a number of achievements under the previous Housing Strategy 2006-11 and outlined some statistics about the Huntingdonshire area making reference to anticipated population projections, average house prices and the need to maximise opportunities for affordable housing. He has advised Members that the revised Strategy focuses upon the Council's new priorities. The Housing Strategy Manager then drew the Panel's attention to the key messages arising from the document.
- 2.2 The Panel has questioned the impact of infrastructure planning upon an individual's quality of life. In response, the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy has reported that it is a question of ensuring that the right balance is achieved and that due process has been followed. He then went on to state that Huntingdonshire as a whole is regarded as having an infrastructure deficit and that attempts are being made to ensure that large scale developments are in the least harmful areas. The role and importance of communication has then been discussed. The view has been formed that this is important in terms of challenging negative attitudes towards such developments.
- 2.3 Councillor R Carter has queried whether there have been changes in private sector rental rates and how this compared with the public sector. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has been pursuing this matter and a recent report to that Panel has revealed that there has been little change in rent levels.
- 2.4 Other matters that have been discussed include homelessness levels within the District and the role and importance of community planning within Parishes. In terms of the latter, the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy advised that some communities have identified older people's homes as one of their community priorities. These views are being used to shape local planning policy for future years.

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 The Cabinet is invited to take into account the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) as part of its deliberations on the report by the Head of Planning and Housing Strategy.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Minutes and Reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) held on 2nd October 2012.

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