

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	Development Plans Policy Advisory Group (DPPAG) Terms of Reference.
Meeting/Date:	Cabinet – 9 February 2017
Executive Portfolio:	Executive Councillor for Growth, Councillor R Harrison
Report by:	Planning Service Manager (Policy, Implementation & Strategic Development)
Ward(s) affected:	All

Executive Summary:

The Development Plans Policy Advisory Group (DPPAG) is a formally constituted group of the Council. The Advisory Group was established by the Cabinet in May 2000, with the Terms of Reference established in December 2001. The planning system has changed significantly since then, rendering most of the existing terms obsolete. Members of the Group have raised concerns that the Terms of Reference for this Group are out dated and this report proposes replacement Terms of Reference, which were presented to the DPPG group on the 12 December 2016.

Recommendation:

That the Cabinet agree to the revised Terms of Reference for the DPPAG as set out below:

Name
The group is to be called Development Plans Policy Advisory Group (DPPAG).
Purpose
To advise on preparation of the Council's statutory development plan and supplementary planning documents. DPPAG is the key advisory and recommendation Group to the Cabinet on all Local Plan Policy Matters.
Membership
Membership will consist of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Executive Member for Growth• up to six other Members• at least two Members from outside the leading political group• at the discretion of the Chairman other Members may be invited to attend an individual meeting of DPPAG
Chairman
The Chairman and Vice Chairman will be elected at the first meeting of DPPAG within each municipal year.
Responsibilities
DPPAG will have the following primary responsibilities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• to understand and advise on the significant issues relating to planning for development and growth in the district.• to make recommendations to officers in relation to the content of any draft

development plan document or supplementary planning document covering all or any part of Huntingdonshire.

- to guide the public engagement process for preparation of any development plan document or supplementary planning document.
- to support effective communication with local communities or stakeholders to facilitate successful preparation of any development plan document or supplementary planning document.

Frequency of Meetings

There will be no set schedule of meetings for DPPAG. Meetings will be called in response to preparation of draft material for any development plan document or supplementary planning document.

Confidentiality

All information received by Members arising from participation in DPPAG shall be deemed confidential.

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 It was originally envisaged that the Advisory Group could provide an initial Member-level "sounding board" for issues associated with the Local Plan, Structure Plan and Regional Planning Guidance. Emerging policy materials were to be presented to the Advisory Group at an early stage of their development. It was not the intention that the Advisory Group would present any formal reports or recommendations to the Cabinet; their views were to be reflected in reports by officers for presentation to the Cabinet in the normal way.

1.2 The current approved Terms of Reference are:

To discuss content and procedural issues arising in the course of preparing:

- the Huntingdonshire Local Plan;
- the Cambridgeshire Structure Plan;
- Regional Planning Guidance; and
- any other policies, processes and procedures associated with the formulation of the Development Plan.

1.3 The Terms of Reference for the Advisory Group were established in December 2001 and have not yet, to date, been updated to reflect the changes to the Council's Development Plan and changes within wider Planning Legislation and Government Guidance. It is for this reason it is considered timely to revisit those terms.

1.4 The current Membership of the DPPAG for the Municipal Year comprises:

Cllrs Bucknell; Butler; Mrs S Conboy; Dew; Gardener; Harrison and Tuplin

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

2.1 The Development Plans Policy Advisory Group (DPPAG) is a very useful forum/group for Members to be fully engaged with the development of planning policies. Currently this group is considering chapters of the Local Plan and these meetings provide useful feedback from members to officers, while also allowing officers to update members on changes to planning legislation and/ or Government Guidance.

2.2 This is a formally constituted group of the Council and any changes to the Terms of Reference need to be ratified by the Cabinet.

3. LINK TO THE CORPORATE PLAN, STRATEGIC PRIORITIES AND / OR CORPORATE OBJECTIVES

3.1 The preparation of the Local Plan is a key action for 2016-18 in the Corporate Plan to improve the supply of new and affordable housing, jobs and community facilities to meet future need.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 On 12 December 2016 a report was presented to the DPPAG regarding the Terms of Reference and the comments on this matter by the DPPAG are included within paragraph 5 of this report

5. **COMMENTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PLANS POLICY ADVISORY GROUP FROM THE MEETING ON 12 DECEMBER 2016**

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

2.1 With the aid of a report by the Planning Policy Team Leader, the Advisory Group has given consideration to proposed changes to its Terms of Reference. The Group had originally been established in 2001 and the planning policy context has significantly changed since that time. In addition, the Group is expected to be more active in the period leading to the adoption of the new Local Plan.

2.2 Members are of the view that the Group should comprise up to a total of seven Councillors, including the Executive Councillor responsible for Planning Policy, and should be politically balanced. It is not considered that Membership of the Group should be restricted to Councillors who have experience of sitting on the Development Management Committee. In addition to the discretion afforded to the Chairman to invite other Members to attend meetings, an individual Member who is not a Member of the Group may address a meeting of the Group where written notice has been given to and prior permission obtained from the Chairman.

2.3 With regard to the Group's Responsibilities, Members have suggested that these should be amended to refer to making recommendations to the Executive Councillor with responsibility for Planning Policy and Officers in relation to the content of any draft development plan document or supplementary planning document covering all or part of Huntingdonshire. Furthermore, it has been suggested that bringing forward for discussion key issues of concern relating to the preparation of any development plan or supplementary planning document raised by local communities or stakeholders should be removed because this should be dealt with through separate arrangements available to all Members. On the basis of these comments, the Advisory Group has

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to approve the revised Terms of Reference for the Development Plans Policy Advisory Group and to vary the Membership of the Group accordingly

6. **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- Current Terms of Reference have not been updated since 2001.
- Revised Terms of Reference would ensure DPPAG is consistent with the Government's planning guidance and current planning legislation.
- Ensure Members are engaged in the evolution of planning policies, including public engagement.
- Improve communication with local communities thus providing better customer engagement.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

DPPG Report – Confidential.

Huntingdonshire District Council Constitution 2016

Development Service Plan 2016/17

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