

# **ELECTORAL REVIEW OF HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

## **Huntingdonshire District Council's Submission on Council Size**

### **Introduction**

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body established by Parliament in April 2010. One of its objectives is to work with principal local authorities to help them deliver effective and convenient local government to citizens. Every year, the LGBCE assesses electorate data for each local authority in England with the intention to intervene where "significant" electoral inequality exists. There are well established criteria against which to gauge electoral inequality. Huntingdonshire District Council's current electoral arrangements have triggered a review.

An electoral review is an examination of a council's electoral arrangements. This means:

- the total number of members to be elected to the council;
- the number and boundaries of electoral areas (wards / divisions) for the purposes of the election of councillors;
- the number of councillors for any electoral area of a local authority; and
- the name of any electoral area.

The LGBCE will aim to ensure its recommendations remain relevant for the long term and recommend a number that delivers effective and convenient local government well after the completion of the review.

The purpose of this phase of the Huntingdonshire District review is to determine the size of the Council. The number of Councillors will be assessed against three broad areas:

- the governance arrangements of the council and how it takes decisions across the broad range of its responsibilities;
- the council's scrutiny functions relating to its own decision making and the council's responsibilities to outside bodies, and
- the representational role of councillors in the local community and how they engage with people, conduct casework and represent the council on local partner organisations.

This document is the Council's submission. It has been informed by:

- briefings given by the LGBCE to the full Council, group leaders and key officers;
- meetings with representatives of all political groups;
- consideration by the Standards Committee, and
- debate at full Council.

### **Huntingdonshire District Council's Submission**

Huntingdonshire District Council is of the view that it needs to retain 52 Members in order to maintain effective and convenient local government. The following paragraphs constitute the rationale, backed up with evidence, for this proposal.

#### *Huntingdonshire District Council*

Of the 201 two-tier District Councils in England, Huntingdonshire is the eighth largest by electorate and 26th largest by area. The electorate at 1st December 2014 was 128,358. Cambridgeshire County Council's Research Team, using POPGROUP (the standard

population forecasting methodology, as used, for instance, by the ONS), predict the electorate will increase by 24,242 (19%) to 152,420 by 2021. It is widely recognised that there are significant development pressures in the area, with large scale developments planned for Alconbury Weald, the urban extension to Wintringham Park, St Neots and Wyton Airfield. Some of this development will take place after the review period, but it demonstrates the ongoing pressures on the District.

The Council presently has 52 Members who are elected from 29 wards. Of these, nine are in the more urban town locations of Godmanchester, Huntingdon, Ramsey, St Ives and St Neots. Although, the remaining 20 wards are characterised as being more rural, the settlements within their boundaries range in size up to in excess of 7,000 residents, making them comparable with the towns. Four of the wards are represented by three Councillors each, 15 are represented by two Councillors each and ten are single-member wards.

Huntingdonshire District Council currently elects by thirds. The LGBCE advises that elections by thirds should only take place if a local authority submits a council size proposal that is divisible by three. The assumption is that all wards will be represented by three Members, thereby requiring an election in every ward each year an election is held. The proposal to retain 52 Members means the Council would move to all-out elections from 2018.

### *Leadership*

The Council has operated a Leader and Cabinet system of governance since 2000, with a trial having operated for two years prior to that. The Council, in 2009, completed a comprehensive review of its democratic and decision making arrangements to verify their effectiveness and ensure they were fit for purpose.

The review in 2009 concluded that the Cabinet should comprise a maximum of ten Councillors including the Leader. This was adopted and ten Members were duly appointed to the Cabinet. With the appointment of a new Executive Leader, from the start of the 2011 Municipal Year, the Cabinet comprised only six Members. The following year, however, owing to demands on individuals' time, it was deemed necessary to appoint an additional Member to the Cabinet. Subsequently, the particular circumstances of the organisation following the complete replacement of the Senior Management Team and the introduction of new working practices, an additional Member of the Cabinet was required, specifically to be responsible for organisational change and development. The current composition of the Cabinet is as follows:

Councillor J D Ablewhite, Executive Leader	Strategic and Delivery Partnerships
Councillor R S Carter	Operations and Environment
Councillor S Cawley	Organisational Change and Development
Councillor D B Dew	Strategic Planning and Housing
Councillor J A Gray	Resources
Councillor R Harrison	Strategic Economic Development and Legal
Councillor R B Howe, Deputy Executive Leader	Commercial Activities
Councillor D M Tysoe	Customer Services

A detailed breakdown of each Executive Councillor's area of responsibility appears at Appendix A. Appendix B contains general role descriptions for Executive Councillors.

None of the Executive Councillors are considered to have a full-time role but considerable demands are placed on them. The Executive Leader's Role Description (Appendix C) was adopted in 2009 and, from 2011, was augmented in accordance with the requirements of the

Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 to include the appointment of the Cabinet and being responsible for all of the authority's Executive functions. There also is a Role Description for the Deputy Executive Leader (Appendix D).

Executive Members serve on other decision making partnerships, sub-regional, regional and national bodies. Appointments are considered on an annual basis. In addition to the roles listed in the General Description, the Executive Leader represents the Council on the board of the Greater Cambridge and Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership, is a substitute on the Local Government Association's Environment, Economy, Housing and Transport Board, is the Chairman of the East of England Local Government Association and represents the Council on the Shared Services Joint Committee (Member Board) along with the Leaders of the two partner authorities. The Chairman of the Members' Allowances Independent Review Panel referred to below is of the view that "local government devolution will in all likelihood place more demands on the post of Leader".

The Cabinet meets every month. With the exception of the annual determination of grants to voluntary organisations, which is delegated to the Executive Councillors for Resources and Strategic Economic Development and Legal, all decisions are taken collectively by the Cabinet.

### *Regulatory*

The Council has a Development Management Panel to determine planning matters that cannot be dealt with through the scheme of delegation. It comprises 16 Members. The Development Management Panel has a high profile reflecting the development pressures across the District and, on occasion, the decisions it is required to take can be contentious.

Meetings are held monthly and although there is extensive delegation of decisions to Officers, they are often very lengthy. Experience has shown that providing interested parties with the opportunity to address the Panel on applications prolongs the process but Panel Members, and the Chairman in particular, strongly support the retention of this facility to aid their decision-making.

The Development Management Panel's work is augmented by the Section 106 Agreement Advisory Group, the Tree Preservation Orders Sub-Group and the Development Plan Policy Advisory Group. While the last two meet infrequently, the Section 106 Agreement Advisory Group has scheduled monthly meetings to review the terms of S106 Agreements prior to their submission to the Panel.

The Council has two further regulatory forums; that is, the Licensing and Protection Panel (taxis, charitable collections and environmental health) and the Licensing Committee (Licensing Act 2003 and Gambling Act 2005). These have identical memberships of 12 Members. Main meetings are held on the same day but, for legal reasons, they are held separately. Each meets quarterly but also has a significant number of hearings to determine individual licensing matters.

The Licensing Sub-Committee held ten meetings in 2014/15 and the Licensing and Protection Applications Sub-Group met on 11 occasions. The number of individual cases considered at each meeting varies.

Before they take their seats on the Development Management Panel or the Licensing and Protection Panel / Licensing Committee, Members attend specialist training. The external expert on licensing, who provided training for Members in June 2015, does not foresee any changes in this area, which will significantly affect workloads. With regard to planning, the Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for adoption. This is likely to take

place in 2016. However, the expectation is that completion of this work will not result in a diminution of activity in this area as there will still be a need to develop the supplementary planning policy framework.

### *Demands on Time*

The Council commissioned an Independent Review Panel (IRP) to review its Members' Allowances in April 2015. The IRP was chaired by a national expert in the field, Dr Declan Hall. The IRP's report on its findings notes that Members':

“expected time input in 2002 was 55 days per year. The evidence strongly suggests that this original estimation is now out of date particularly relating to the increased contact with constituents and the time spent on reading and preparation - all boosted by the now common place reliance on electronic means of communication and working that was not in place in 2002. The 2013 Census of Councillors shows that on average district councillors, who hold no positions of responsibility, put in up to 14 hours per week (equivalent to 90 days per year on an 8 hour day)”.

The IRP heard submissions from Members that the Census findings were replicated in Huntingdonshire. This represents a significant increase in demand on Members' time.

During the Review, all party group Leaders commented on the difficulties they experienced recruiting candidates to stand for election to the District Council. Three Members chose not to stand for re-election in May 2015. This figure is consistent with previous years. There were no uncontested seats at the District Council elections in 2015.

There are nine main Council committees with a total of 96 seats, which are allocated in proportion to the size of each of the political groups, plus a number of smaller sub-groups. The Constitution provides that every Member of the Council shall be appointed to serve on a minimum of one Overview and Scrutiny Panel, Committee or Panel of the Council or the Cabinet. The quorum for committee meetings is one quarter of the whole number of members but not less than three Members. Attendance levels by Members are good. Meetings of full Council, Cabinet, Development Management Panel, Corporate Governance Panel and Overview and Scrutiny Committees take place in the evening. Other meetings are held during the day.

Members have General Role Descriptions (Appendix E) and there are Role Descriptions for the Executive Leader, Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Councillors. In addition to those appended to this submission, there are Role Descriptions for the Chairman of the Council, the Chairmen of all of the Committees and Panels, the Vice-Chairmen and Group Leaders.

The Council appoints Members as its representatives on a range of outside bodies. The list of bodies appears in the Constitution (see Appendix F).

With regard to Members' representative role towards their constituents, the role description emphasises that a Member should:

- ensure that constituents have access to him/her by way of surgeries, use of modern technology, letter and telephone,
- develop and maintain links as required with the local MP, MEPs, county councillors and the towns or parishes situated in his/her electoral ward,
- participate in any political group to which he/she belongs, and
- devote as much time as is necessary and reasonable to fulfil the requirements of the role effectively.

Appendix G contains the complete Protocol for Community Leadership by Members from the Constitution.

At the time of the review in 2002, the electorate was 116,117 (2001) with each Councillor representing an average of 2,234 electors. Based on current electorate figures of 128,358, with 52 Councillors, each Councillor would represent an average of 2,468 electors, rising to 2,935 in 2021 (152,420 electors). The projection for future electorate levels has been provided by Cambridgeshire County Council's Research Team.

The Council places strong emphasis on "channel migration" with the aim of encouraging its customers to obtain information and services for themselves through electronic means. Councillors, however, believe that while this has realised benefits in terms of reduced transaction costs for the Council as an organisation, it has not decreased their levels of constituent casework. On the contrary, it is commonly found that technology has contributed to increased contact with Councillors because they are readily available via email and mobile telephone there is an expectation of a quick response.

Many Huntingdonshire District Councillors also are Town / Parish and / or County Councillors.

### *Scrutiny Functions*

The Local Government Act 2000 (S 21) required a local authority operating under executive arrangements to appoint one or more overview and scrutiny committees and defines the functions of that committee(s) as:

- to review or scrutinise decisions made or action taken by the executive in discharging its functions;
- to make reports and recommendations to the authority or the executive about the discharge of executive functions;
- to review or scrutinise decisions made or action taken in the discharge of non-executive functions;
- to make reports and recommendations to the authority or the executive about the discharge of non-executive functions;
- to make reports and recommendations to the authority or the executive on matters that affect the authority's area or its inhabitants, and
- to conduct best value reviews if included within its terms of reference by the authority.

Having tried various structures for the Overview and Scrutiny Panels since 2000, the present arrangements comprising three Panels were adopted in 2009. Detailed remits and responsibilities appear in the Constitution (see Appendix H). The Constitution allows for the appointment of up to 16 Members to each of the Panels. In practice, this number has never been necessary and 12 Members sit on each Panel. The Panels have the same full complement of roles but have developed their focus in different directions. The Social Well-Being Panel has, for example, in response to particular local circumstances, undertaken a considerable amount of work on external health services; while the Economic Well-Being Panel has concentrated on the Council's internal finances and governance. The Environmental Well-Being Panel has been occupied with local strategic planning and the range of associated policy provisions.

The Panels meet on a monthly basis, with task and finish groups also convening on an ad hoc basis. At the same time, the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen variously meet together to

co-ordinate and manage the Panels' work programmes. There is a dedicated Support Officer. There is also a nominated member of the Officer Corporate Management Team for each Panel.

The Panels do not generally cancel meetings from lack of business; indeed, they have in the past been criticised for having Agenda that are too congested. The Panels have a Work Programme report at every meeting to enable Members to monitor progress and plan ahead. The work programme also is monitored by the Corporate Management Team so that the flow of internally generated reports is profiled. That said, because they are not able to compel them to attend meetings, Panels are reliant on the goodwill and co-operation of external witnesses. This can mean that Agenda can sometimes be lengthy.

In an attempt to improve outputs, different ways of working have been adopted. The Economic Panel has employed a Select Committee approach to one particular study. In a similar vein, the Chairmen of task and finish groups are now expected to take responsibility for drafting reports on their findings.

In addition, the Council recently has completed a review of the Overview and Scrutiny function and found that it needs to adhere to the present arrangements. There will continue to be three Overview and Scrutiny Panels, each comprising 12 Members.

### *The future*

Constant change has always been a feature of the environment in which local government and its Members operate, and this will continue to for the next few years. The first reason for this change is the continuing financial constraints that are pushing councils in different directions regarding their service provision and delivery models. Secondly, the implementation of the various provisions of the Localism Act 2011 affords them greater scope to undertake a wider range of activities than they have in the past. Thirdly, the emergence of regional and local devolution on the political agenda looks set to take local government into uncharted territory. Although the specific proposals on how local government devolution will take place are not known, what is known is that all the major political parties are committed to moving it forward in some form. As a result, Huntingdonshire District Council and its Members will be operating in a different fashion in five years' time.

The Corporate Plan sets out an ambitious programme of activity for the Council to drive growth and investment in the local economy whilst at the same time challenging itself to deliver good services for a lower cost. A key strand of the future strategic approach is to generate income to meet the funding challenges through the adoption of a Commercial Investment Strategy. This will place additional demands on Members in terms of governance.

Another important element is the development of shared services. In July 2015, the Council formally resolved to enter into a shared service partnership with two neighbouring authorities. Businesses cases for individual shared services are already starting to come forward and others are anticipated in the near future.

One of the Council's four Strategic Priorities is to work with communities to enable them to thrive and get involved with local decision making. This will require Members to maintain democratic engagement levels. The ability to do this would be impaired if the Council had fewer Members.

## Conclusion

The *Technical Guidance* states that the LGBCE will seek to put the Council's proposal on size into context by comparing it with the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) *Nearest Neighbours* model. The purpose of this is to ascertain whether an authority's proposal would mean its council size differs to a significant extent from similar authorities (paras. 4.25 – 4.26)

Data on the Council's *Nearest Neighbours* shows that the following have completed a boundary review in the last two years:

- Aylesbury Vale (electorate 135,888) – 59 Members;
- South Kesteven (electorate 105,504) – 56 Members;
- Colchester (electorate 119,851) – 51 Members;
- Braintree (electorate 111,365) – 49 Members;
- Cherwell (electorate - 107,336) – 48 Members; and
- Stafford (electorate - 95,826) – 40 Members.

For completeness, Huntingdonshire's geographical neighbours have also been taken into account. Their figures are as follows:

- Cambridge City (electorate 91,173) – 42 Members;
- East Cambridgeshire (electorate 63,016) – 39 Members;
- Fenland (electorate 73,656) – 39 Members; and
- South Cambridgeshire (electorate 114,298) – 57 Members.

Huntingdonshire's proposal for 52 Members is mid-way between the upper and lower figures for the *Nearest Neighbours* and, with an electorate of 128,353, has strong similarities with the areas of a comparable size; namely Aylesbury Vale, Colchester, Braintree and South Cambridgeshire. There should be no objection to the Council's proposal on this ground.

The Constitution was adopted in 2000 with annual and subsequently biennial reviews of it having been undertaken ever since. It is currently the subject of a fundamental review by external legal experts.

In line with the Council's Auditor's recommendation, the Council has adopted Zero Based Budgeting together with a "Star Chamber". Starting in 2014, all services now will be subject to a fundamental review on a three-yearly cycle.

It is stressed that the Council has continually kept the democratic structure under review to ensure it is adequate. It will be seen, therefore, that the Council has a good understanding of what arrangements are required to secure effective and convenient local government.

Retention of 52 Councillors does not represent a "stand still" proposal. The predicted electorate increase means the councillor:elector ratio will increase from 2,468 electors at present to 2,935 in 2021. This is the equivalent of a net reduction of eight Councillors or 15% of the current total number of Councillors. Owing to the concentration of development in a number of Wards, there also will need to be a radical overhaul of the existing boundaries. The Council does not believe there will be a reduction in the development pressures on the District but it is confident efficiencies can be achieved in most of its areas of activity. The Council further believes that only by retaining the number of 52 Councillors will it be able to ensure that the governance, decision making and scrutiny functions will not be compromised and will remain effective, whilst still ensuring Councillors are able to fulfil their representational role within their communities.

## EXECUTIVE COUNCILLOR – RESPONSIBILITIES 2015/2016

<b>Councillor Doug Dew – Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing</b>
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Conservation/Listed Buildings  
 Development Management/Planning Enforcement  
 Disabled Facilities Grants  
 Home Improvement Agency  
 Housing Grants  
 Housing Providers/Associations  
 Housing Strategy/Policies  
 Neighbourhood Plans  
 Planning Policy/Development Plans  
 Planning Studies/Monitoring  
 Private Sector Housing  
 Site and Area Planning Briefs/Masterplans  
 Transportation  
 Trees and Footpaths

<b>Councillor Roger Harrison – Executive Councillor for Strategic Economic Development &amp; Legal</b>
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Air Quality/Noise/Pollution  
 Animal Welfare/Pest Control  
 Caravan Sites  
 Commercial: Health & Safety Promotion/Food Safety  
 Community & Voluntary Groups  
 Community Initiatives  
 Community Safety  
 Contracts  
 Conveyancing  
 Corporate Health & Safety  
 Data Protection/Regulation of Investigatory Powers  
 Diversity & Equalities  
 Economic Development  
 Healthy Communities  
 Infectious Diseases  
 Legal Advice  
 Licensing & Protection  
 Planning Advocacy  
 Prosecutions & Litigation  
 Safeguarding  
 Smoke Free Initiatives

**Councillor Darren Tysoe – Executive Councillor for Customer Services**

Benefits Assessments/Payments/Fraud  
Business Analysis/Improvement  
Call Centre  
Customer Service Centre  
Freedom of Information  
Homelessness  
Housing Register/Nominations  
ICT Network & Systems  
Local Land & Property Gazetteer  
Local Taxation  
National Non-Domestic Rates  
Revenue Collection  
Website/Intranet

**Councillor Robin Carter – Executive Councillor for Operations & Environment**

Abandoned Vehicles  
Building Control/Dangerous Structures/Access for Disabled People  
Business Energy Conservation  
Cleansing  
Emergency Planning  
Environmental Strategy  
Grounds Maintenance/Grass Cutting  
Home Energy Conservation  
Land Drainage  
Parks & Countryside  
Recycling  
Refuse Collection  
Renewable Energy  
Residual Highways Responsibilities/Public Utilities  
Street Naming & Numbering  
Streetscene  
Vehicle Fleet Management  
Waste Stream Policy  
Water Strategy

**Councillor Jonathan Gray – Executive Councillor for Resources**

Audit  
Budget Preparation & Monitoring  
Capital Projects  
Corporate Estates  
Debt Recovery  
Engineering and Architectural Design  
Facilities Management  
Final Accounts/Financial Advice  
Financial Forecasting  
Operational Estate  
Payment of Creditors  
Procurement  
Project/Contractual Management  
Risk Management  
Treasury Management (borrowing and investments)

**Councillor Jason Ablewhite – Executive Leader, Chairman of the Cabinet  
(Strategic and Delivery Partnership)**

Communication & Marketing  
Corporate Performance Management  
Corporate Policy/Research  
Democratic Services  
Elections/Electoral Registration  
Land Charges  
Localism  
Member Support  
Strategic & Delivery Partnerships

**Councillor Robin Howe – Deputy Executive Leader, Executive Councillor for Commercial Activities**

Car Parking (Operational & Policy)  
CCTV  
Document Centre  
One Leisure: Huntingdon, St. Neots, St. Ives, Ramsey & Sawtry  
Sport & Active Lifestyles

**Councillor Stephen Cawley – Executive Councillor for Organisational Change and Development**

Organisational Change and Development  
Organisational Transformation  
Change Management  
Skills Development  
Knowledge Training  
Personal Development and Reward.

## **EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET**

Each member of the Executive shall be referred to as an executive councillor and shall be allocated by the Leader a specific area of responsibility known as his portfolio.

The executive councillor will take the leading role in the development and implementation of the policies covered by his portfolio.

### **Shared Responsibility as a Member of the Cabinet**

Each executive councillor has shared responsibility for:

- the co-ordination, promotion and implementation of the Council's statutory plans and strategies and for the setting of the Council's objectives, and priorities,
- the oversight, development, monitoring and promotion of all services provided by the Council within the appropriate performance management framework,
- ensuring that suitable and proper arrangements are made for the procurement, development, monitoring and promotion of all services relating to executive functions which are provided by or under contract to the Council,
- the promotion of the economic, social and environmental well-being of Huntingdonshire, its residents, businesses and other organisations,
- promoting the Council as a community leadership within the public, voluntary and business sectors, including the development of good and effective working links and partnerships with all sectors,
- the promotion and implementation of an effective equal opportunity policy in relation both to the Council's employees and the delivery of services by the Council and other agencies,
- the promotion of services which:
  - improve the safety and well being of the community,
  - secure a sustainable and attractive environment,
  - create a prosperous local economy,
  - raise corporate standards and efficiency, and
- improving arrangements for communicating, consulting and maintaining a dialogue with residents and service users.

### **Responsibilities as an Executive Councillor**

- to represent the Council or arrange for it to be represented in all national, regional and local forums relevant to the duties of the portfolio,
- to liaise with other executive councillors as required,
- advising the Council, Cabinet or Overview and Scrutiny Panels on matters concerning the implementation, monitoring and performance of services, initiatives and projects relating to the executive councillor's portfolio,

- to bring forward revenue and capital budget proposals relevant to the responsibilities of the portfolio,
- to monitor the performance of portfolio functions and activities to ensure corporate objectives and targets are achieved,
- to represent the Council's views relating to the executive councillor's portfolio to other agencies, community interests and local media,
- to attend and answer questions at meetings of the Overview and Security Panel relative to the executive councillor's portfolio,
- liaising with other Members and officers on strategic matters to ensure proper co-ordination, consistency and seamless delivery of services within Council policy,
- to chair, when required, meetings of Members and officers and Council partners,
- to assist in the development of work programmes, forward plans and the setting of agenda,
- to be consulted as part of any decision-making processes within the portfolio which have been delegated to Officers,
- reporting on the portfolio responsibilities to Council and responding to questions by Members in that forum,
- to be aware of the best practice of other leading authorities and to promote best practice and best value in the areas covered by the portfolio,
- to carry out duties set out in the job description for a Councillor.

## **Profile**

An executive councillor should:

- comply with any legislative provisions, best practice and good governance arrangements with regard to his portfolio,
- Keep abreast of national best practice and new initiatives relating to the executive councillor's portfolio, and
- devote as much time as is necessary and reasonable to fulfil the requirements of the role effectively.

An executive councillor should have:

- an ability to prioritise workloads effectively,
- an ability to work to deadlines,
- effective communication skills including listening, spoken, written and ICT,

- a keen knowledge and interest in the areas of his own portfolio,
- effective chairmanship skills,
- an ability to read and assimilate information quickly and effectively,
- an ability to discuss financial matters and the Council's budget with confidence, and
- an ability to engage effectively with the media.

## **LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

The Leader of the Council will be appointed by the District Council in accordance with its Constitution and current legislation.

The Leader of the Council will represent the Council at all levels and will be an ambassador and principal spokesman, representing the views of the Council at local, regional and Government forums.

### **Responsibilities**

- chairing meetings of the Cabinet;
- determining the portfolios of executive councillors;
- acting as lead member on the Council's overall strategy;
- having overall responsibility for:
  - policy development,
  - the Council's budget and its expenditure,
  - effective and efficient delivery of the Council's corporate plan
- promoting corporate membership of any appropriate body or organisation whose objectives are considered to be beneficial to the pursuit of the Council's own priorities;
- ensuring the work of the Cabinet is co-ordinated and progressed effectively;
- reporting on the work of the Cabinet to Council and responding to questions by Members in that forum,
- maintaining a cordial, effective and efficient working relationship with leaders of opposition groups, other Members and Council officers;
- ensuring that the Executive responds to reports of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels;
- chairing the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership;
- representing the Council at partnership meetings as appropriate; and
- carrying out the duties set out in the job description of a councillor.

### **Profile**

The Leader of the Council should:

- lead by example in accordance with the highest standards of probity in public life in all matters relating to the Council's Code of Conduct, related protocols and supporting guidance;
- comply with any relative legislative provisions, best practice and good governance arrangements with regard to local government'

- be aware of any personal training needs and of other executive councillors and liaise with the relevant officers to ensure those needs are addressed'
- keep abreast of national best practice and new initiatives relating to local government so ensuring the continuous improvement of Council services.
- devote as much time as is necessary and reasonable to fulfil the requirements of the role effectively.

The Leader of the Council should have:

- an ability to manage and prioritise workloads effectively,
- an ability to work to deadlines,
- effective communication skills, including listening, written, spoken and ICT,
- effective leadership skills,
- effective chairmanship skills,
- an ability to engage with the media including television, radio and press to promote the Council's profile,
- an ability to act as a mentor to other executive councillors,
- an ability to think analytically and make effective decisions, and
- an ability to read and assimilate copious amounts of information.

## **DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL**

### **Responsibilities**

In addition to his shared responsibility as an executive councillor, the Deputy Leader shall have the following specific responsibilities

- to deputise for the Leader of the Council in the latter's absence,
- to undertake the individual responsibilities of any executive councillor in his absence,
- to organise the appointment of representatives to external organisations and bodies within the remit of the Cabinet,
- to liaise with the Leaders of opposition parties on the choice of representatives to external organisations and bodies,
- to be a member of the Appointments Panel for the appointment of directors and heads of service, and
- to ensure that a Member mentoring and training programme is provided for all Members of the District Council.

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

### ROLE DESCRIPTIONS FOR DISTRICT COUNCILLORS (APPROVED BY COUNCIL ON 22<sup>ND</sup> APRIL 2009)

**All Councillors**, during the course of their term of office, will aim to acquire the following knowledge and skills which they will develop as their experience grows:

#### **Knowledge – General**

##### *Huntingdonshire District Council*

- An introduction to the Council, its democratic and Directorate structures and relevant strategies and plans.

##### *Code of Conduct*

- The current Members' Code of Conduct and the role of the Standards Committee in ensuring that the Code is adhered to.

##### *The Constitution*

- The Council's rule book of protocols and procedures.

##### *Scrutiny*

- The scrutiny procedure and the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

##### *Partnerships*

Partnership working through the Local Strategic Partnership and Neighbourhood Forums.

##### *Notice of Executive Decisions*

- The Cabinet's agenda for the ensuing four months.

##### *Equalities, Customer Care and Risk Management*

- Policies implemented by the Council.

#### **Knowledge – Specific**

##### *Budgets and Finances*

- Members should have a working knowledge of the Council's finances as they collectively have responsibility for approving the budget.

##### *Planning*

- Members should have a working knowledge of planning legislation, policies and procedures with Development Management Panel Members having a more extensive and detailed knowledge. Specialised training is mandatory for Members who wish to serve on the Development Management Panel.

### *Licensing*

- Members should have a working knowledge of licensing legislation, policies and procedures and knowledge of the various licensing functions that the Council is responsible for. Specialised training is mandatory for Members who wish to serve on the Licensing Committee and Licensing and Protection Panel.

### **SKILLS**

#### *ICT – Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Email and Internet*

- All Members should be able to make full use of technology, not only as a tool for preparing reports, researching topics of interest or making presentations but also for contacting their constituents, colleagues and officers. Members should be encouraged to develop their own web pages through Modern.Gov.

#### *Communication – Presentational Skills, Questioning Skills and Listening Skills*

- Communication is used in every aspect of Members' roles and they should have the skills necessary to put across their point of view, the wishes of their constituents and information generally in a clear, concise and well planned manner that will make it easy to understand.

#### *Written – Report Writing*

- All Members should be able to prepare reports in a clear, concise and well planned format.

#### *Media*

- The ability to make use of the various forms of media, how to react to approaches from the media and when to encourage or discourage media interest.

Officers within the Democratic Services Section will assist Members to develop their abilities to meet the demands of their individual roles.

### **Desirable Skills and Abilities**

Members should have the necessary attributes and skills -

- to represent the District Council and explain the policies and decisions affecting the individuals and communities in their Ward,
- to represent their Ward and the District Council on a range of external bodies,
- to communicate effectively with the local community, other Councillors and Council Officers,
- to be aware of the nature, scale and scope of the District Council and to develop and maintain a knowledge of its services, management arrangements, powers, duties and constraints,

- to develop good working relationships with other Councillors and relevant Officers of the Council,
- to participate in meetings of the Council and Committees/Panels as required, so ensuring the effective and efficient operation of the Council,
- to act as Ward representative and advocate for people resident in the Ward and to undertake a Councillor's Call for Action to bring forward issues on behalf of their constituents,
- to undertake casework for Ward residents,
- to contribute to policy and strategy review and development,
- to act as a community leader,
- to support local partnerships and organisations,
- to campaign on local issues,
- to work in collaboration with Officers to achieve solutions to local issues, and
- to use ICT effectively to communicate with Officers and others.

## **Profile**

A Member should:

- ensure that constituents have access to him/her by way of surgeries, use of modern technology, letter and telephone,
- develop and maintain links as required with the local MP, MEPs, County Councillors and the Towns or Parishes situated in his/her electoral Ward,
- participate in any political group to which he/she belongs, and
- devote as much time as is necessary and reasonable to fulfil the requirements of the role effectively.

A Member should have:

- an ability to manage and prioritise workloads effectively,
- an ability to work to deadlines,
- effective communication skills including written, spoken and ICT, and
- an ability to network and develop relationships within the Council, Ward and wider community.

**SCHEDULE TO TABLE 1****APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS**

The Council/Cabinet will appoint members and officers to relevant organisations which are considered to contribute towards the economic, social and environmental well-being of the District or whose aims will promote the interests of the area and its inhabitants. Any decision to appoint to an organisation will be made by the Cabinet, committee or panel whose responsibilities include the Council functions relevant to the aims or activities of the organisation in question. Those members appointed may or may not be a member of the appointing Cabinet, committee or panel.

The current organisations to which appointments are made and the Cabinet, committee and panels which make the appointments are listed below:-

<b>PARTNERSHIPS</b>	<b>Nominating/ Appointing Panel</b>
Cambridgeshire Community Safety Strategic Board	Cabinet
Cambridgeshire Future Transport – Cross Party Working Party	Cabinet
Cambridgeshire Health and Well-Being Board	Cabinet
Cambridgeshire Horizons	Cabinet
Cambridgeshire Older People's Partnership Board	Cabinet
Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel	Cabinet
Consultation on Treasury Matters	Cabinet
East of England Local Government Association	Cabinet
Great Fen Project Steering Committee	Cabinet
Huntingdonshire Local Strategic Partnership – Children and Young People	Cabinet
Growth & Infrastructure	
Health and Well-Being	
Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership	
Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership Board	Cabinet
Joint Strategic Planning Member Board	Cabinet
Neighbourhood Management Group - Eynesbury	Cabinet
Recycling in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Board	Cabinet

<b>ORGANISATION</b>	<b>Nominating/ Appointing Panel</b>
Cambridgeshire Armed Forces Community Covenant Board	Cabinet
Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce – Huntingdonshire Area	Cabinet
Cromwell Museum Management Committee	Cabinet
Envar Ltd, St Ives Composting Facility – Site Liaison Forum	Cabinet
Huntingdon Association of Community Transport	Cabinet
Huntingdon Freeman's' Trust	Cabinet
Huntingdonshire Flood Forum	Cabinet
Huntingdonshire Volunteer Centre – District	Cabinet
Internal Drainage Boards – Alconbury and Ellington	Cabinet
Benwick	
Bluntisham	
Conington and Holme	
Holmewood & District	
Ramsey First (Hollow)	
Ramsey Fourth (Middle Moor)	
Ramsey, Upwood and Great Raveley	
Sawtry	
Sutton and Mepal	
The Ramsey	
Warboys, Somersham and Pidley	
Whittlesey	
Woodwalton Drainage Commissioners	
Little Gransden Aerodrome Consultative Committee	Cabinet
Local Water Forum	Cabinet
Luminus Homes Luminus Group (parent)	Cabinet
Oak Foundation (sheltered/charitable)	
Middle Level Commissioners	Cabinet
Oxmoor Community Action Group (OCAG)	Cabinet
Pensions Consultative Group	Cabinet
Red Tile Wind Farm Trust Fund Ltd (formerly Red Tile Wind Farm Community Fund)	Cabinet
St Ives Road Safety Committee	Cabinet
Stilton Children and Young People's Facilities Association	Cabinet

<b>ORGANISATION (cont'd)</b>	<b>Nominating/ Appointing Panel</b>
Town Centre Management Initiatives/ Partnerships/Management Team – Huntingdon BID	Cabinet
St Ives Town Initiative	
Trustees of Kimbolton School Foundation	Cabinet
Cambs Consultative Group for the Fletton Brickworks Industry	Licensing and Protection Panel
Little Barford Power Station Liaison Committee	Licensing and Protection Panel
Needingworth Quarry Local Liaison Committee	Licensing and Protection Panel
Warboys Landfill Local Liaison Committee	Licensing and Protection Panel

## PROTOCOL FOR COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP BY MEMBERS

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Members' work within their constituencies forms an integral part of their role as elected representatives and places them in the forefront of providing community leadership within their respective wards. This can be one of the most rewarding aspects of their membership of the Council but this is dependent upon a number of factors, not least the time that a Member is able to devote to his/her constituency work.
- 1.2 Members' attention is drawn to those aspects of the Council's constitution and the 'Signpost' handbook which apply to their work within the community and particularly –
- The Members Code of Conduct  
The Member/Employee Protocol  
Members Planning Code of Good Practice  
The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity
- 1.3 This protocol is designed to draw together the relevant information contained in those codes and protocols, together with other advice and guidance provided to Members.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 The Government's modernising agenda for local government envisaged an increasingly important role for the Council and its Members in terms of community leadership and governance. The Council is charged with promoting the economic, social and environmental well-being of Huntingdonshire and with working with partner organisations through the Huntingdonshire Local Strategic Partnership.
- 2.2 Community leadership is about operating in this environment. It is about working in partnership with the wider community and creating alliances to make things happen.
- 2.3 At a local level, Members may
- consult with and represent the views of their constituents;
  - pursue and resolve issues brought to their attention by their constituents;
  - actively promote issues on behalf of their local communities both within the District Council and with other agencies;
  - explain the impact and implications of Council decisions in their wards;
  - sit on other bodies or groups within their wards, either as a representative of the Council or in a personal capacity.

When they do so, they should have regard to the advice in this protocol.

### 3. Characteristics of Effective Community Leadership

<b>Characteristic</b>	<b>Definition</b>
Listening to and involving local communities	To be an effective leader, you must be in touch with your community, e.g. geographical communities (such as parishes and neighbourhoods) and communities of interest (such as young people, the elderly and ethnic minority communities)
Building vision and direction	Local communities face a complex and diverse set of problems and challenges. They want to know that all of the relevant organisations in their area – public, private and voluntary – are working together in a common direction. Councillors have to work with all local organisations and interests in shaping a long term vision for the areas that they serve.
Working effectively In partnership	No person acting alone can respond effectively to the needs of localities. Effective community leadership involves securing the commitment of partners to deliver a shared vision for their area as well as helping to shape it.
Making things happen	Community leadership involves more than having a sense of direction. It is also making things happen on the ground – about delivering outcomes for local people. Vision, direction and effective partnership are only of value if they deliver actual change on the ground
Standing up for communities	Local people want to know that the people that they elected to represent them are doing so. This advocacy role can involve speaking out for local people on major issues that impact on the community and acting on behalf of specific groups of individuals.
Empowering local communities	Community leadership is not about exerting power as the elected representative of the community. It is more about creating the environment in which other leadership roles can develop and fostering the development of active citizenship. A councillor has to both be able to lead in the community and know when to step back to enable others to develop and grow in confidence.

Accountability to Communities      Community leadership involves being accountable to local people, both through the ballot box and through the development of active on-going relationships with local people.

Using community resources      Communities, councils and partners have a wide range of resources they can make available. Community leadership is about ensuring that those resources are used effectively to meet local priorities and needs. Community leadership is also about delivering the best outcomes for local people and actively seeking new ways to promote the well-being of an area.

#### **4. Understanding Your Ward**

4.1 Information about your ward is key to understanding the needs of your constituents and any business or commercial interests with premises locally. The Council holds census data at both ward and parish level from the 10 year census undertaken by the Office for National Statistics. Also available from the ONS is the index of multiple deprivation which summarises information at ward level based upon socio-economic indices. As well as being available from the Corporate Office, the information can be obtained from the ONS website on [www.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.statistics.gov.uk) <http://www.statistics.gov.uk>.

4.2 As a Member, you may wish to carry out your own assessment of local needs and issues and there are various ways in which this can be undertaken. Perhaps the most extensive method is to arrange or assist in the preparation of a Parish Plan. Although these are essentially parish based, they do not have to be undertaken by a parish council and grant is available from The Countryside Agency towards the cost. Plans involve the commissioning of a questionnaire distributed to and collected from all households and an analysis of the results to provide information on local needs and aspirations. The results offer a useful source of information to the District Council towards compiling Local Plans for the District as a whole.

4.3 Parish councils can be a useful source of information about topical subjects and issues of concern. As a district councillor you are not obliged to attend parish council meetings and it may be difficult for you to attend if your ward contains a number of parishes. You also cannot speak at parish council meetings unless invited to do so by that council. Nevertheless you may feel that your attendance provides a useful way of hearing about issues of local concern and passing on information from the District Council if this is requested by the parish.

4.4 If you also are an elected councillor for a parish in the ward that you represent at District level, you should remember to be careful not to fetter your discretion when a subject is to be discussed by both authorities. Advice is contained in the Members Code of Practice about the need to declare potential interests in such circumstances.

There is also reference in the Members Planning Code of Good Practice as to how to deal with applications for planning permission when they appear before the District Council and a parish council when you are a member of both. You should also remember that you have been elected to represent the interests of the District as a whole and not as a spokesperson for a view expressed by your local parish council or another local organisation.

- 4.5 As part of your duties as a councillor, you may also be appointed by the Council to one or more external bodies. The range of organisations is broad – some are statutory bodies with substantial annual expenditure, whilst others may be advisory with no budget. Whilst it is difficult to generalise about your role as a member of external organisations, there are some basic principles that you should apply when acting in that capacity. When you become a member of a board or management committee or similar of an external organisation, you become accountable to that body rather than the Council and liable either jointly or personally for its decisions, dependent upon the structure of the organisation. If an organisation has its own codes of conduct, you should follow these but you should always apply the values and principles that apply to you in your position as a councillor. If codes of conduct have not been adopted by an organisation, you should apply the principles contained in the Council's Members Code of Conduct.
- 4.6 You may feel that a public meeting would be a useful method of gauging public opinion. Advice on attending and convening public meetings is contained in Signpost – a guide to support services for members.

## **5. Your Constituents**

- 5.1 In national surveys, members have said they regard constituency work as one of the most rewarding and enjoyable parts of their role as an elected councillor. However you should always try to establish a distinction between your private life and your work as a councillor – otherwise your constituents will expect you to be available 24 hours per day and 7 days per week. One method of doing is to make it known within your ward when and where you can be contacted to speak to constituents. You may decide to hold surgeries at regular intervals so that your constituents are aware when you are available. You may also think that it would be useful to do so with other members if you represent a multi-member ward or jointly with the local county councillor or parish councillors if they hold surgeries.
- 5.2 Do exercise care when speaking to your constituents. Often they will ask you for advice, not only about District Council services but about the actions of other organisations that have affect them, their families or homes. Although the District Council does have a duty to promote the economic, social and environmental well-being of the District which places a community leadership responsibility upon members, this does not mean that you are obliged to always make enquiries or pursue matters on behalf of your constituents, especially if this involves the

actions of another body. You should especially avoid offering an opinion or advice on matters whether before or after you have spoken to a relevant officer. You are not insured to offer advice and you may be liable to damages by a disaffected constituent if he has acted upon or spent money based upon advice that you have given which subsequently is shown not to be correct. When you have received advice that you passing on to a constituent, you should preface your remarks by stating that you are relaying information that has provided to you by an officer.

- 5.3 Often you may find when talking to colleagues that the issues that your constituents have raised with you are not unique to your ward. There are a number of avenues open to you to pursue those issues further. Officers of the Council have a responsibility to give impartial advice to all councillors and often can provide information or resolve issues that are brought to their attention. However you can also ask for matters to be raised at meetings of the Council. Overview and Scrutiny Panels provide an appropriate mechanism for subjects to be discussed which can result in recommendations for change. You don't have to be a member of a Panel to ask for an item to be placed on an agenda and with the Chairman's prior consent you can address the Panel about the issue that you wish to raise. If they decide to pursue a matter further, a Panel may co-opt you on to the working group established to investigate and report back.
- 5.4 You can also draw your community's attention to the opportunity to present petitions to meetings of the full Council where these have been signed by 50 people.
- 5.5 Although violence by a constituent against a councillor is extremely rare, this can occur and you should take precautions if you hold surgeries or visit constituents in their own homes. Advice on safety can be obtained from Democratic Services and is included in the induction training provided to all members when they are first elected.

## **6. Access to Information**

- 6.1 As a councillor, you have access to a huge amount of information about the Council and its activities. Much of this is available to you on the Council's extranet and web site. You will also receive copies of agenda and reports for meetings of Panels etc. of which you are a member and the agenda for other meetings. You can ask for the supporting reports for the latter meetings to be sent to you on a regular basis if you wish. You also have access to background papers, executive decision records, minutes, decision digests and press releases. Your rights are explained in the Access to Information Procedure Rules in the Council's constitution but you are not entitled to access to exempt or confidential information, unless you are a member of an overview and scrutiny panel that is investigating a particular matter. In particular you do not have a 'roving commission' to call for all documents in the Council's possession, unless you can demonstrate a 'need to know', or to inspect land or property that is in the Council's ownership. You should also remember that some

information is confidential and should not be divulged to the public until it becomes public in the normal course of the Council's business.

- 6.2 Any equipment that is provided to you by the Council to assist you in your work as a councillor should be used only for Council or domestic use. It should not be used for other business purposes, although it can be used for county or parish council work where a member is elected to other local authorities. If you use a computer in connection with your constituency work, whether this has been provided by the Council or is your own personal equipment, you need to be registered with the Information Commission under the Data Protection Act as a data handler. Registration has to be updated annually but the Council will contact you to arrange this on your behalf if you wish them to. Explanatory information, together with an electronic mail protocol is supplied to members which you are required to sign before equipment is delivered.

## **7. Members Reimbursement**

- 7.1 A Members Allowances Scheme has been adopted by the Council, having regard to the recommendations of an independent panel. This comprises a basic allowance for all members and special responsibility allowances for the holders of various named positions of responsibility within the Council. Travelling and subsistence and care allowances can also be claimed but these must relate to the performance of specific duties that are listed in the Scheme. As a general rule, the duty being undertaken by a member must have been authorised in advance by the Council or under the Scheme and members must not claim for other journeys or subsistence that they may have incurred, for example in carrying out investigations on behalf of their constituents. Payments are made on a monthly basis by the Council by BACS transfer to a member's personal bank account.
- 7.2 Care should always be exercised to avoid claiming for attendance or travel to a specific meeting from more than one source if a councillor is a member of more than one local authority or other public body. Such action is illegal and the penalties imposed by the courts can be severe.
- 7.3 You should also remember that, unless authorised to do so, you should not commit the Council to any expenditure or incur any costs for which the Council may be liable.

## **8. Publicity**

- 8.1 The Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity issued by the former Department of the Environment points out that it would be inappropriate for public resources to be used to publicise individual councillors. However in the interests of public accountability it may be appropriate to publicise the views or activities of individual members when they are representing the views of the Council as a whole, for example when the Chairman of the Council is carrying out an official duty as first citizen of the community or an executive councillor launches a policy approved by the Cabinet.
- 8.2 For the same reason, the Council may justifiably in certain circumstances issue press releases reporting statements made by individual members. Examples of cases where such press releases may be appropriate are as reports of discussions at meetings or quotations or comments are made by leading members of the Council in response to particular events which call for a speedy response from the Council.
- 8.3 It follows therefore that the Council should not publicise the work of members in their constituency role unless this is in the interests of the Council as a whole. This does not prevent members from speaking to the media but they should not use Council resources to promote a particular course of action that they might be pursuing.
- 8.4 Particular care is needed to ensure that where publicity is issued immediately prior to an election or by-election affecting the area to ensure that this could not be perceived as seeking to influence public opinion or promote the public image of a particular candidate. The Code states that between the time of publication of a notice of an election and polling day, publicity should not be issued which deals with controversial issues or which reports views or policies in a way that identifies them with individual members or groups of members.
- 8.5 Members may often be approached by the media for comments on matters affecting their wards. It is important not to underestimate the interest that there may be in a local issue. If you need assistance when approached for a response, this can be obtained from the Corporate Team Manager.



<b>ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING</b>	<p>Abandoned vehicles  Cleansing  Emergency planning  Grounds maintenance/grass cutting  Parks and countryside  Recycling  Refuse collection  Streetscene  Vehicle fleet management  Waste stream policy</p> <p>Building  Control/dangerous structures/accesses for disabled people  Business energy conservation  Environmental Strategy  Home energy conservation  Land drainage  Renewable energy  Residual highways responsibilities/public utilities  Street naming and numbering  Water Strategy</p> <p>Neighbourhood Plans  Planning Policy/Development Plans  Planning studies/monitoring  Site and area planning briefs/master plans</p> <p>Conservation/Listed Buildings  Development Management/  Planning enforcement  Transportation  Trees and footpaths</p> <p>Car Parking (Operations and Policy)</p>	<p>Operations and Environment</p> <p>Strategic Planning and Housing</p> <p>Supported by Development Management Panel Chairman</p> <p>Commercial Activities</p>
<b>ECONOMIC WELL-BEING</b>	<p>Business analysis/improvement  Freedom of Information  ICT Network &amp; Systems  Local Land and Property Gazetteer  Website/intranet</p> <p>Benefits assessments/payments/fraud  Call Centre  Customer Service Centre  Local Taxation  National Non Domestic Rates  Revenue collection</p> <p>Economic Development</p>	<p>Customer Services</p>



- (iii) review the performance of the Council and the achievement of performance indicators and targets;
- (iv) consider any matter affecting the area or its inhabitants; and
- (v) exercise the right of call-in, for reconsideration, decisions made but not yet implemented by the Executive Leader, the Cabinet, an individual member of the Cabinet, a committee of the Cabinet or a key decision made by an officer.

### **3. SPECIFIC FUNCTIONS**

#### **(a) Policy Development and Review -**

Overview and Scrutiny Panels may:-

- (i) assist the Council, the Executive Leader and the Cabinet in the development of its budget and policy framework by in-depth analysis of policy issues;
- (ii) conduct research, community and other consultation in the analysis of policy issues and possible options;
- (iii) consider and implement mechanisms to encourage and enhance community participation in the development of policy options;
- (iv) question the Executive Leader, members of the Cabinet and/or committees and panels and senior officers\* about their views on issues and proposals affecting the area; and
- (v) liaise with other external organisations operating within the area whether national, regional or local to ensure that the interests of local people are enhanced by collaborative working.

#### **(b) Scrutiny**

Overview and Scrutiny Panels may:-

- (i) scrutinise the decisions made by and performance of the Executive Leader, the Cabinet and/or committees and panels and senior officers\* both in relation to individual decisions and over a period of time;
- (ii) review and scrutinise the performance of the Council in relation to its policy objectives, performance targets and/or particular service areas;
- (iii) question the Executive Leader, members of the Cabinet and/or committees and panels and senior officers\* about their decisions and performance, whether generally in comparison with service plans and targets over a period

of time, or in relation to particular decisions, initiatives or projects;

- (iv) make recommendations to the Executive Leader, the Cabinet and/or appropriate committees and panels and/or the Council arising from the outcome of the scrutiny process;
- (v) review and scrutinise the performance of other public bodies in the area and invite reports from them by requesting them to address the Overview and Scrutiny Panels and local people about their activities and performance; and
- (vi) question and gather evidence from any person (with their consent).

(c) **Finance**

Overview and Scrutiny Panels may exercise overall responsibility for the finances made available to them.

(d) **Annual Report**

Overview and Scrutiny Panels must report at least annually to the full Council on their workings and working methods if appropriate.

**4. PROCEEDINGS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS**

Overview and Scrutiny Panels will conduct their proceedings in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

**5. CO-ORDINATION OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS**

An advisory group, comprising the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels shall co-ordinate and monitor the overview and scrutiny process and in particular shall determine the arrangements for matters within the remit of more than one overview and scrutiny panel in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules contained in Part 4 of this Constitution.

(\* Note: *For the purposes of this Article, senior officer means the Head of Paid Service, Managing Director and Heads of Service as defined in Part 4 (Officer Employment Procedure Rules of this Constitution.)*