

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE 0.1A, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN** on **THURSDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 2013** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

**Contact
(01480)**

APOLOGIES

1. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 8)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2013.

**C Bulman
388234**

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary, non disclosable pecuniary or non pecuniary interests in relation to any Agenda Item.

3. NOTICE OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS (Pages 9 - 12)

A copy of the current Notice of Executive Decisions, which was published on 21 August 2013 is attached. Members are invited to comment as appropriate on any items contained therein.

**H Taylor
388008**

4. MAKING ASSETS COUNT - CAMBRIDGESHIRE'S PROPOSED APPROACH TO STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT (Pages 13 - 16)

To consider a report by the Assistant Director Environment, Growth & Planning.

**S Ingram
388400**

5. FINANCIAL FORECAST TO 2019 (Pages 17 - 30)

To consider and comment on a report by the Assistant Director, Finance & Resources prior its submission to the Cabinet.

**S Couper
388103**

6. WORKPLAN STUDIES (Pages 31 - 36)

To consider with the aid of a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services, the programme of studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

**C Bulman
388234**

7. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY (ECONOMIC WELL_BEING) - PROGRESS (Pages 37 - 40)

To consider a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services detailing progress on the Panel's activities.

C Bulman
388234

8. SCRUTINY (Pages 41 - 48)

To scrutinise decisions taken since the last meeting as set out in the Decision Digest and to raise any other matters for scrutiny that fall within the remit of the Panel.

Dated this 28 day of August 2013



Head of Paid Service

Notes

A. Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

- (1) *Members are required to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and unless you have obtained dispensation, cannot discuss or vote on the matter at the meeting and must also leave the room whilst the matter is being debated or voted on.*
- (2) *A Member has a disclosable pecuniary interest if it*
 - (a) *relates to you, or*
 - (b) *is an interest of -*
 - (i) *your spouse or civil partner; or*
 - (ii) *a person with whom you are living as husband and wife; or*
 - (iii) *a person with whom you are living as if you were civil partners*

and you are aware that the other person has the interest.
- (3) *Disclosable pecuniary interests includes -*
 - (a) *any employment or profession carried out for profit or gain;*
 - (b) *any financial benefit received by the Member in respect of expenses incurred carrying out his or her duties as a Member (except from the Council);*
 - (c) *any current contracts with the Council;*
 - (d) *any beneficial interest in land/property within the Council's area;*
 - (e) *any licence for a month or longer to occupy land in the Council's area;*
 - (f) *any tenancy where the Council is landlord and the Member (or person in (2)(b) above) has a beneficial interest; or*
 - (g) *a beneficial interest (above the specified level) in the shares of any body which has a place of business or land in the Council's area.*

B. Other Interests

- (4) *If a Member has a non-disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest then you are required to declare that interest, but may remain to discuss and vote.*
- (5) *A Member has a non-disclosable pecuniary interest or a non-pecuniary interest where -*

- (a) a decision in relation to the business being considered might reasonably be regarded as affecting the well-being or financial standing of you or a member of your family or a person with whom you have a close association to a greater extent than it would affect the majority of the council tax payers, rate payers or inhabitants of the ward or electoral area for which you have been elected or otherwise of the authority's administrative area, or
- (b) it relates to or is likely to affect any of the descriptions referred to above, but in respect of a member of your family (other than specified in (2)(b) above) or a person with whom you have a close association

and that interest is not a disclosable pecuniary interest.

Please contact Mrs Claire Bulman, Democratic Services Officer, Tel 01480 388234 / email Claire.Bulman@huntingdonshire.gov.uk if you have a general query on any Agenda Item, wish to tender your apologies for absence from the meeting, or would like information on any decision taken by the Committee/Panel.

Specific enquiries with regard to items on the Agenda should be directed towards the Contact Officer.

Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting as observers except during consideration of confidential or exempt items of business.

Agenda and enclosures can be viewed on the District Council's website – www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk (under Councils and Democracy).

If you would like a translation of Agenda/Minutes/Reports or would like a large text version or an audio version please contact the Democratic Services Manager and we will try to accommodate your needs.

Emergency Procedure

In the event of the fire alarm being sounded and on the instruction of the Meeting Administrator, all attendees are requested to vacate the building via the closest emergency exit.

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HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) held in the CIVIC SUITE 0.1A, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN on Thursday, 4 July 2013.

PRESENT: Councillor T V Rogers – Chairman.

Councillors P L E Bucknell, G J Bull,
E R Butler, S Cawley, S Greenall, R Harrison,
P G Mitchell, P D Reeve and A H Williams.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S Akthar, and M F Shellens, Mr R Eacott and Mr R Hall.

15. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6 June 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

17. LOAN TO HUNTINGDONSHIRE REGIONAL COLLEGE

Members were advised that this item had been included on the Agenda to comply with Section 16 of the Access to Information Rules contained within the Council's Constitution. In this respect it was reported that the Chairman had agreed to the inclusion of an urgent item of business on the Cabinet Agenda for 20th June 2013 regarding a proposed loan to Huntingdonshire Regional College. The Cabinet had endorsed the principle of the loan and authorised the Assistant Director, Finance and Resources, after consultation with the Executive Leader and Executive Councillor for Finance, to approve the detailed agreement.

18. NOTICE OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel considered and noted the current Notice of Executive Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). In doing so, it was reported that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) had endorsed a proposal to establish a joint CCTV shared service with Cambridge City Council and that a report on the Loves Farm Community Centre would not be appearing on the Agenda for the Cabinet meeting on 18 July 2013. Members were reminded that reports on the Financial Strategy and the Customer Services Strategy would appear on the Agenda for their September meeting.

In response to a question regarding the financial impact of the new proposals for the A14 for the District Council, the Assistant Director (Finance and Resources) explained that this would be included within the forthcoming Financial Strategy. It was envisaged that sufficient provision had been made within the current Medium Term Plan for this purpose.

19. HUNTINGDONSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH PLAN 2013 - 23

(Councillor T D Sanderson, Executive Councillor for Strategic Development and Legal, was in attendance for this item).

With the assistance of a report by the Economic Development Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Panel considered the contents of the draft Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013 to 2023. The Plan set out a vision for Huntingdonshire and aimed to deliver economic growth by focusing on achieving a set of key ambitions called the '2023 Objectives'.

Members were reminded that an economic assessment had been undertaken in 2012 to provide an evidence base for the Economic Growth Plan and the new Local Plan. This was the first time that a shared evidence base had been used to prepare these documents and Members were reminded that a presentation on the outcome of the assessment had been given to their November 2012 meeting. Members' attention was then drawn to the eight action priorities which had emerged from the economic assessment, which had subsequently formed the basis of the Growth Plan. A number of challenges had also been identified through the assessment process. These were outlined in Section 2.1 of the report and included a reduction in the proportion of the people who are of working age and the polarisation of the business base in Huntingdonshire.

Members were advised that the Economic Growth Plan contained three main themes: People, Place and Business. Their attention was drawn to a number of the key actions to demonstrate the variety of ways in which work was undertaken to deliver economic growth within the District. These included a District-wide approach to careers advice and apprenticeships and the delivery of strategic development and housing. Following the approval of the Economic Growth Plan, an action plan would be prepared through which the aims identified within the Plan would be delivered.

In considering the contents of the report, Members recognised the importance of the Economic Growth Plan for the District and for the Council and commended the work which had been undertaken to prepare it. The view was expressed that the Council should make adequate resources available to ensure the actions associated with it were delivered.

In response to Members' concerns that the Plan appeared to contain few references to rural areas, the Panel was reminded that it was based upon the current assets within Huntingdonshire and that the Enterprise Zone was the best opportunity the District had to raise its profile at a national level. It was explained that the successful development of key strategic sites should produce a 'trickle down'

effect from economic activity centres to rural areas. Members were of the opinion that a more explicit explanation of this effect should be provided. With regard to specific comments relating to the Industrial Estate in Warboys and the plans for its extension, it was agreed that this should be taken up by the local Member with Planning Officers.

The Panel was of the opinion that the Growth Vision should be more ambitious. Members recommended that it should be amended to refer to Huntingdonshire as being one of the best places to live in England. It was also suggested that this should form the Vision for the entire District Council. This would necessitate a change to the Council's Leadership Direction.

Members made a number of suggestions relating to the content of the draft Plan. These included the need to avoid the repetition of the Vision on the first page, provide contact details for interested parties who wished to contact the Council, remove the picture of the Silvaco premises and improve the closing paragraph so that it was more dynamic and contained links back to the opening vision. Members also expressed the view that the wording in parts of the document could be more positive, in particular reference was made to page 7 of the document. In this respect, the Panel was reminded that marketing materials would be developed at a later date, which would address most of these suggestions.

Councillor P D Reeve questioned whether the ability to achieve economic growth through housing growth had been overemphasised, whether there was sufficient emphasis on infrastructure and the drivers of tourism and the absence of any reference to attracting a greater number small to medium sized enterprises to the area. He also suggested that there should be a stronger focus on the market towns and the Great Fen and that the Plan appeared to emulate the activities which were taking place in the surrounding areas. With regard to the latter, the Economic Development Manager explained that the opportunity had been taken to complement the innovation and research which was emerging from the Cambridge cluster.

In response to a number of questions from Panel Members, information was provided on a range of matters including the reasons for the reduction in the 'labour pool' and the ways in which university capability might be enticed into the area. An explanation was also provided of those factors which differentiated the 'Huntingdonshire offer' from those of other areas and the Panel noted that the District already had in place partnerships to deliver the key actions which had been identified within the Plan. Whilst the cost of delivering the Plan had not been calculated over its 10 year lifespan, a number of actions would be completed by accessing various independent funding streams.

Following a question by a Member, the Panel was informed that the District Council had little influence on commercial rent levels. Members were mindful that as an area became successful, rental costs would inevitably rise. Having noted that an action plan had already been drafted and that a marketing plan was expected to be completed in the Spring, it was agreed that the Economic Development Manager should be invited to provide an update on

progress to the Meeting in February 2014. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to approve the draft Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013 – 2023.

20. USE OF CONSULTANTS, HIRED STAFF AND TEMPORARY STAFF

The Panel considered the annual report by the Assistant Director (Finance and Resources) containing details of expenditure by the Council on consultants, hired and temporary staff. Members were reminded that the Cabinet had asked the Employment Panel to review the use of consultants and agency staff as part of their deliberations on the Panel's proposals for budgetary savings. With this in mind, it was proposed that the Panel's comments on the report should be conveyed to the Employment Panel who would consider any changes to Council policy as part of their new terms of reference.

Having noted that revenue expenditure in this area had increased significantly in 2012/13 in comparison with the preceding year, Members considered a number of aspects of the report. They were advised that all staffing costs had to be met from an overall staffing budget and that the number of consultants, hired and temporary staff would fluctuate depending on the schemes or initiatives which were being pursued in a particular year or the availability of additional funding to employ such staff. The Operations Division required the flexibility that hired and temporary staff provided to meet the needs of this service. The Assistant Director (Finance and Resources) then agreed to provide Members with further details of the £77k spent on investigations in the Corporate Office.

In response to a question by a Member, the Panel was assured that it was unlikely that a consultant would become a permanent member of the establishment as they tended to be used for one off projects. Temporary staff might be employed on a short term basis to enable consideration to be given to more permanent staffing arrangements or to reflect the fact that additional Government funding had been made available to meet particular requirements, for example the Benefits caseload.

Members then enquired about the mechanisms which were in place to review the use of hired staff and were advised that there was an onus on Heads of Service to manage their staffing budgets to avoid creating financial pressures in other areas. Reference having been made to a specific instance in which a member of hired staff had been retained for a prolonged period, the Head of Customer Services assured the Panel that she had recently reviewed the position and found that the post was funded by the Government.

Having noted a suggestion that in future it might be useful to identify those instances where the appointment of temporary staff had been necessary to keep the service going, Members discussed the levels of stress related absence within the organisation and noted that the Employment Panel was monitoring this issue. The employment of

temporary staff was one of the tools used to deal with this problem.

On the understanding that any future reviews in this area would be undertaken by the Employment Panel, that Panel was requested to consider:-

- ❖ the mechanisms by which the employment of temporary, hired and agency staff were reviewed to ensure that they were cost effective;
- ❖ the impact of stress related absence on the appointment of these staff; and
- ❖ whether there was an opportunity to reduce revenue expenditure in this respect for the forthcoming year.

Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted; and
- (b) the Panel's comments be conveyed to the Employment Panel for further consideration.

21. PRIVATE SECTOR RENT LEVELS

Further to Minute Number 11/74, the Panel considered a report by the Head of Customer Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) providing an update on rent levels in Huntingdonshire. Members were informed that there was little evidence to suggest that landlords were adjusting their rents downwards in line with the reduction in Housing Benefit Local Allowance rates and in some cases rent levels were still increasing. The average rent levels for almost all property sizes in June 2013 (with the exception of 4 bedroom properties) exceeded the maximum amount of Housing Benefit payable.

In considering the contents of the report, Members received an explanation of the four broad rental market areas which covered the District. The Head of Customer Services explained that thus far the welfare reforms had not caused any significant problems within the District; however the introduction of under-occupancy changes was now starting to have an effect.

In response to a question regarding the use of temporary accommodation and the number of households that had been assisted into social rented housing, the Head of Customer Services explained that detailed figures were available in the report submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) on 2nd July 2013.

Attention having been drawn to the costs to the Council of dealing with cases of homelessness, the Panel was informed that work was ongoing with local Housing Associations to provide temporary accommodation as it was a cheaper alternative to bed and breakfast. In this regard, six units in Huntingdon had recently been made available by Stonham Housing Association. The Head of Customer

Services referred to a previous suggestion that the Council might reduce its homelessness costs by building its own accommodation and explained that officers would continue to work with Local Housing Associations to seek opportunities for funding and mutually beneficial partnership arrangements that might deliver this accommodation.

In response to a question from Councillor P D Reeve, the Head of Customer Services undertook to establish whether there was any capacity to accommodate additional tenants on an emergency basis within Luminus properties in Ramsey. Having then been reminded that the Head of Customer Services would be holding a seminar on housing and benefits in October, it was

RESOLVED

(a) that the contents of the report be noted; and

(b) that further reports be submitted if circumstances changed.

22. CUSTOMER SERVICES MONITORING REPORT

The Panel gave consideration to the Customer Services Monitoring Report for the period January to June 2013 (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which outlined the performance and standards achieved by the Service. Members' attention was drawn to the highlights and significant issues which had emerged since the last report and the forthcoming issues and risks for the next period.

In considering the contents of the report, Members referred to the service standards which had not been achieved. The Panel was informed that the standards had been in place since 2005 and the failure to meet them reflected the reduction in staff and the increase in workload at the Call Centre. Councillor P D Reeve requested details of the costs incurred as a result of the implementation of the Green Bin project and the Head of Customer Services undertook to send them directly to Members.

Members expressed concern that the average absence as a result of sickness per Full Time Employee at the Call Centre had increased to 18.6 days which was higher than the industry benchmark for the public sector. The Panel was assured by the Chairman of the Employment Panel that the Council's Sickness absence policies had been recently reviewed and he was confident that they represented best practice. Further work was required to adopt a more proactive approach to tackle potential issues before they emerged. It was reported that it was not possible to employ temporary staff to cover sickness absence because of the length of time required to train new starters.

The Chairman expressed the view that given the recent changes to their systems and procedures, further consideration should be given to co-locating the Call Centre with the Huntingdon Customer Services Centre. In response, the Head of Customer Services explained that a three year lease had been secured for the current premises, however when this expired a further review would be undertaken and the outcome presented to the Cabinet.

Having noted that performance levels were reported to employees within the Customer Services division on a quarterly basis, it was

RESOLVED

(a) that the contents of the report be noted; and

(b) that further reports continue to be submitted on a bi-annual basis.

23. WORKPLAN STUDIES

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) containing details of studies that were being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Social and Environmental Well-Being.

24. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) reviewing progress of matters that had previously been discussed. The Chairman reported that Customer Services monitoring reports would continue to be presented to the Panel on a bi-annual basis and the Customer Services Strategy would be submitted to the Panel's September meeting. A further meeting of the Corporate Plan Working Group would be held on 17th July 2013 and the review of consultants had now been transferred to the Employment Panel.

With regard to the Making Assets Count initiative, the Assistant Director (Finance and Resources) explained that a report seeking authority to work towards the creation of a publicly-owned joint venture to deliver the programme would be submitted to the Cabinet Meeting on 18th July 2013. However decision would be taken at this stage on whether to transfer any assets to the new organisation.

In terms of the Panel's review of the Document Centre, Members' attention was drawn to the briefing note which had been circulated on Electronic Document Management (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). It was reported that Officers were in the process of formulating a response to the Panel's other recommendations, the outcome of which would then be reported to the Working Group.

In considering the list of possible future studies it was agreed to establish two working groups to consider communications and shared services. The Chairman undertook to circulate a request for volunteers for the latter by email. Members were then informed that an update on Making Assets Count would be presented to the Meeting in September. Estates would be reviewed at a later date and it was agreed to delete the A14 and Statutory and Non Statutory services from the list.

In response to a suggestion by Councillor P G Mitchell that a review

should be undertaken of the presentation of budgetary information to Members, it was agreed that this matter should be re-considered after the Financial Strategy had been submitted to the Panel's September meeting.

RESOLVED

that Councillors P G Mitchell, P D Reeve, T V Rogers and Mr R Hall be appointed to the Communications and Marketing Working Group.

25. SCRUTINY

The Panel considered and noted the latest edition of the Decision Digest (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book).

Chairman

Huntingdonshire District Council
 Pathfinder House
 St Mary's Street
 Huntingdon PE29 3TN.

Notes:- (i) Additions changes from the previous Forward Plan are annotated ***
 (ii) Part II confidential items which will be considered in private are annotated ## and shown in italic.

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
RECAP Advanced Partnership Recyclate Procurement***	Cabinet	19 Sep 2013	Partnership Agreement	Eric Kendall, Head of Operations Tel No. 01480 388635 or email Eric.Kendall@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		D M Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being
9 Making Assets Count - Cambridgeshire's Proposed Approach to Strategic Asset Management	Cabinet	19 Sep 2013	Cambridgeshire County Council - Cabinet Report 2013	Steve Ingram, Assistant Director, Environment, Growth and Planning Tel No 01480 388400 or email Steve.Ingram@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J A Gray	Economic Well-Being
Financial Forecast to 2019	Cabinet	19 Sep 2013		Steve Couper, Assistant Director of Finance and Resources Tel No. 01480 388103 or email Steve.Couper@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J A Gray	Economic Well-Being

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Huntingdonshire Town and Parish Council Charter and Voluntary Sector Compact	Cabinet	19 Sep 2013		Dan Smith, Community Health Manager Tel No. 01480 388377 or e-mail Dan.Smith@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Social Well-Being
Customer Services Strategy	Cabinet	17 Oct 2013		Kathryn Sexton, Customer Services Manager Tel No. 01480 387040 or e-mail Kathryn.Sexton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B S Chapman	Economic Well-Being
Consultation and Engagement Strategy	Cabinet	17 Oct 2013		Louise Sboui, Senior Policy Officer Tel No. 01480 388032 or email Louise.Sboui@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J D Ablewhite	Social Well-Being
Whole Waste System Approach	Cabinet	17 Oct 2013		Eric Kendall, Head of Operations Tel No. 01480 388635 or email Eric.Kendall@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		D M Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being
A14	Cabinet	17 Oct 2013	Preferred option for public engagement	Steve Ingram, Assistant Director, Environment, Growth and Planning Tel No 01480 388400 or email Steve.Ingram@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Carbon Management Plan***	Cabinet	21 Nov 2013		Chris Jablonski, Environment Team Leader Tel No. 01480 388368 or email Chris.Jablonski@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		D M Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Consultation	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Council Tax Reforms***	Cabinet	21 Nov 2013		Julia Barber, Head of Customer Services Tel No. 01480 388105 or email Julia.Barber@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B S Chapman	Economic Well-Being
Huntingdon West Masterplan	Cabinet	21 Nov 2013	Following consultation. Preferred option.	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Wind Turbines SPD	Cabinet	21 Nov 2013	Draft SPD	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Approval of Council Tax Base***	COMT (Chief Officers Management Team)	25 Nov 2013		Julia Barber, Head of Customer Services Tel No. 01480 388105 or email Julia.Barber@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J A Gray	Economic Well-Being
Green Deal***	Cabinet	12 Dec 2013		Chris Jablonski, Environment Team Leader Tel No. 01480 388368 or email Chris.Jablonski@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		D M Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being
Local Plan to 2036 - Proposed Submission	Cabinet	12 Dec 2013	Submission - Draft Local Plan	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Draft Budget & MTP	Cabinet	12 Dec 2013		Steve Couper, Assistant Director of Finance and Resources Tel No. 01480 388103 or email Steve.Couper@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J A Gray	Economic Well-Being

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**OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
(ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)**

5 SEPTEMBER 2013

CABINET

19 SEPTEMBER 2013

**MAKING ASSETS COUNT – CAMBRIDGESHIRE'S PROPOSED
APPROACH TO STRATEGIC ASSET MANAGEMENT
(Report by the Assistant Director, Environment, Growth and Planning)**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update Cabinet regarding the on-going joint working that is taking place between the Council and the other Council's in Cambridgeshire, and with other public sector organisations, in order to try and re-shape, and make more efficient use of, their property portfolios.
- 1.2 This collaborative work aims to try and ensure that, wherever possible, appropriate opportunities for delivering savings are fully explored - via both reducing the overall operating costs of our property holdings and through the potential co-location of key services in order to facilitate more efficient lower cost service delivery. It is also potentially a mechanism that could generate further capital returns and revenue savings from the potential sale and/or development of sites to enable re-investment in new community focussed service hubs - particularly as many of our existing facilities come to the end of their useful life.
- 1.3 The findings to date indicate that there are potential revenue savings and potential capital receipts to be gained from the further investigation and development of a joint public sector approach to asset use, redevelopment and management. However approaches under the MAC umbrella are obviously not the only options available to this Council, and other partners, in terms of determining the future use of their assets, and further detailed work will be required in order to determine the full implications of all the other available options.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The overarching MAC principles are aimed at trying to:
 - generate an improvement in public service delivery from a coordinated partnership approach - thus maximising best practice, efficiencies and benefits to both the public sector and to our customers.
 - identify opportunities and challenge decisions relating to the use and disposal of assets across Cambridgeshire.
 - act as an exemplar of best practice in terms of the creative cross-organisational management of property issues.
- 2.2 The Making Assets Count (MAC) partnership currently comprises all 5 District Councils, the County Council, the Police Service, the Fire Service and some of the local Health Providers. Assets included in the project

include those where joint services are currently provided or where they are being investigated for future delivery of co-located services. In the case of this Council initial investigations have related to potentially making the best use of our assets in St Neots, St Ives, Yaxley and Huntingdon.

- 2.3 To date there has been some limited initial successes, in terms of facilitating and delivering logical sharing arrangements, for the whole partnership – with the County Council and South Cambridgeshire District working on a shared depot facility and with HDC being able to let out office space to accommodate health service requirements at Pathfinder House.
- 2.4 Various potential ‘delivery models’ for the elaboration of a joint public sector approach have been investigated by consultants appointed to provide property advice to the partnership. These consultants have suggested that one potential way forward is for the MAC partners to consider forming a property owning ‘joint venture’ and to consider transferring relevant assets into that structure. It is suggested that this MAC ‘public property partnership’ could deliver projects, manage transferred assets and potentially pay dividends to the MAC partners (who would become share holders in any JV). The structure and governance for such a potential vehicle is outlined further in the County Council Cabinet report of 9th July 2013 (forward plan ref 2013/039) and these future governance arrangements would most likely reflect a one member one vote arrangement with any dividends returned to partners in proportion to assets invested in the JV.

3. POTENTIAL NEXT STEPS FOR HDC

- 3.1 MAC partners have been requested, through their respective organisational procedures, to agree to the continuation of this effective partnership working and to consider the principle of forming a publicly-owned Joint Venture vehicle.
- 3.2 It makes sense for the Council to look to continue to deliver logical ‘sharing’ solutions and to support the principle of such a vehicle it is considered that further work, analysis and Cabinet approval would be required before this Council could make any commitment to transfer or encumber any specific assets to any such vehicle.

4. CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 HDC led ‘sharing work’ indicates that in principle there could be further opportunities for the ‘common sense’ approach, to the co-location of services and the effective sharing of buildings and premises within the wider public sector estate, to deliver real efficiencies and savings.
- 4.2 Given the Council’s enhanced ‘budget challenge’, it is considered vitally important that all such further sharing and partnership opportunities should be appropriately and fully investigated with potential related savings delivered wherever possible.

5. RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 Therefore it is recommended that the Cabinet:

- a. endorses the MAC principles and the creation of a countywide publicly-owned joint venture (the MAC Public Property Partnership); and
- b. endorses the pragmatic approach that HDC has taken to date in respect of maximising the use of our own assets and that all further 'common sense' sharing opportunities should be fully explored wherever that may be possible.
- c. notes that none of our assets will be committed to or encumbered by any joint venture proposal without further reference to Cabinet.

Background Papers:

Localism Act 2011 – Duty to Co-operate - Local Planning Authorities

Making Assets Count: Cambridgeshire CC Cabinet Report – July 2013

CONTACT OFFICER

Enquiries about this report to Steve Ingram, Assistant Director, Environment, Growth and Planning on 01480 388400.

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**Public
Key Decision**

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title **FINANCIAL FORECAST TO 2019**
 Meeting **Cabinet - 19 September 2013**
 Executive Portfolio **Resources**
 Author **Assistant Director , Finance and Resources**
 Wards Affected **All**

SUMMARY

INCREASED UNCERTAINTY MAJOR EXTRA SAVINGS REQUIRED

The Government's Spending Review has implications for allowable increases in Council Tax, reductions in formula grant (RSG) and the proposal to pass a significant portion of New Homes Bonus to the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). (Section 5)

The Budget/MTP approved by Council in February has now been updated to reflect the latest information available to the Council to give the new Forecast (Section 7). This includes the 2012/13 outturn, 2013/14 latest forecast, a review of inflation and interest assumptions, changes to the risk assumptions (Sections 2,3,4 and 6) and the impact of the Government's Spending Review.

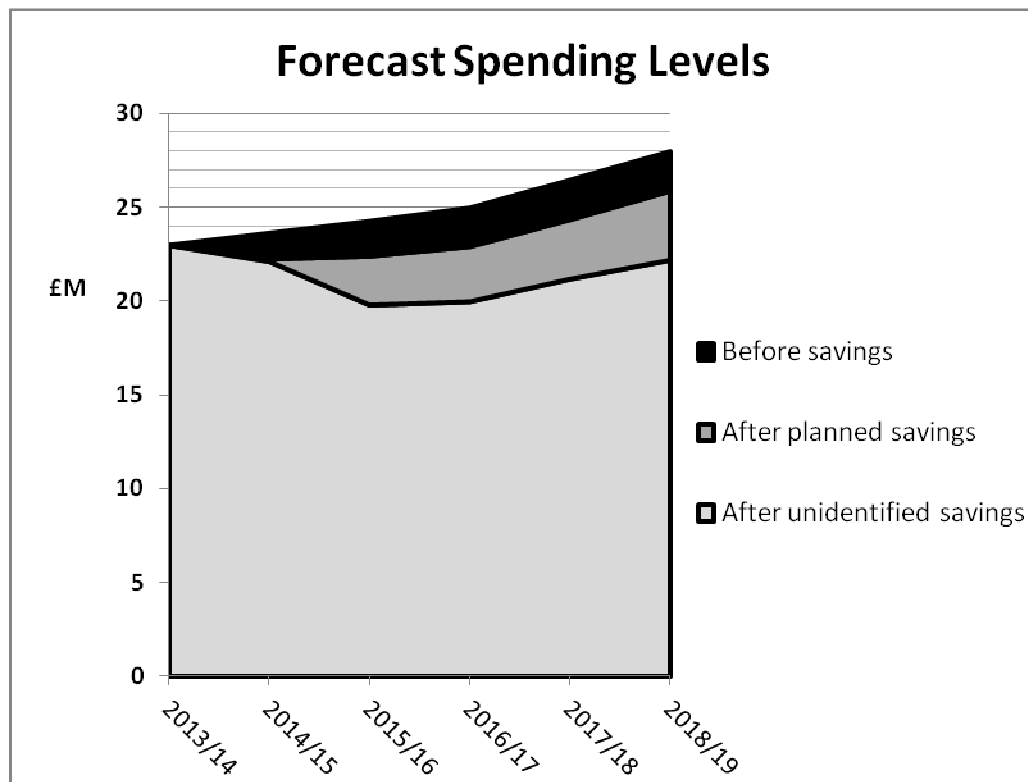
The report considers progress on the achievement of the previous target for unidentified savings (Section 8), and highlights the need to urgently identify how the necessary additional savings will be achieved. (Section 9)

The table below summarises the resulting position:

FORECAST	FORECAST	BUDGET	MTP			
	2013/14 £000	2014/15 £000	2015/16 £000	2016/17 £000	2017/18 £000	2018/19 £000
NET SPENDING	22,962	22,090	19,768	19,950	21,159	22,166
FUNDING						
Use of revenue reserves	-2,752	-2,386	-1,435			
Remaining EOY	8,821	6,435	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
New Homes Grant	-2,905	-3,505	-3,142	-4,175	-4,782	-5,182
Formula Grant (RSG)	-6,019	-4,500	-2,995	-2,995	-2,995	-2,995
Retained Business Rates	-3,704	-3,817	-3,913	-4,011	-4,111	-4,214
Collection Fund Deficit	-76					
Council Tax	-7,506	-7,882	-8,323	-8,810	-9,311	-9,816
COUNCIL TAX LEVEL	£133.18	£137.85	£142.67	£147.67	£152.84	£158.19
% increase	3.63%	3.51%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.5%
£ increase	£4.67	£4.67	£4.82	£4.99	£5.17	£5.35

Savings Required:

• Targetted		1,377	1,852	2,050	2,090	2,090
• Unidentified		138	2,620	2,948	3,181	3,694



Whilst progress is being made on achieving the previously identified savings requirement, the Government's Spending Review creates additional major financial challenges for the Council and its ability to deliver its current portfolio of services.

Whilst uncertainty about the final figures remains there is no alternative to assuming, for the time being, that **extra savings** of around £2.6M need to be found for 2015/16 increasing to £3.7M by 2018/19. There is uncertainty about what will happen to Government support for Councils after the 2015 General Election and this forecast assumes a fall of 2.5% per year.

The major challenge is to identify how these savings can be achieved in time. The report "Facing the Future 2013" later on the agenda begins this process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet recommend to the Council that it:

- confirms that there will be no grants relating to the impact of Council Tax Support to Town and Parish Councils in 2014/15 and subsequent years.
- recognises the significant financial uncertainty for local authorities.
- accepts the Forecast Report in order to estimate the potential level of savings required.
- requests the Chief Officers' Management Team to identify proposals for additional major savings for 2015/16.
-

1 BACKGROUND

1.1 The Budget/MTP approved by Council in February

APPROVED BUDGET and MTP	FORECAST	BUDGET	MTP		
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
BUDGET/MTP	22,764	22,198	22,755	23,046	24,227
Special and Specific Grants adjustment	-126	-100			
APPROVED BUDGET/MTP	22,638	22,098	22,755	23,046	24,227
FUNDING					
Use of revenue reserves	-2,128	-1,984	-1,458	0	0
Remaining EOY	8,668	6,684	5,226	5,226	5,226
New Homes Grant	-2,905	-3,505	-4,489	-5,964	-6,832
Formula Grant (RSG)	-6,019	-4,600	-4,255	-3,936	-3,641
Retained Business Rates	-4,004	-4,127	-4,230	-4,336	-4,444
Collection Fund Deficit	-76				
Council Tax	-7,506	-7,882	-8,323	-8,810	-9,311
COUNCIL TAX LEVEL	£133.18	£137.85	£142.67	£147.67	£152.84
% increase	3.63%	3.51%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%
£ increase	£4.67	£4.67	£4.82	£4.99	£5.17

Unidentified Spending Adjustments still required	0	-1,500	-1,856	-2,687	-2,637
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2. 2012/13 ACTUALS

2.1 The table below summarises the impact of the 2012/13 outturn:

2012/13 ACTUALS	FORECAST 2012/13 £000	ACTUAL 2012/13 £000	VARIATION £000
REVENUE			
Spending	22,028	20,398	-1,630
Provision for Delayed Projects 12/13 to 13/14	398	750	352
Contribution to Special Reserve	0	1,000	1,000
	22,426	22,148	-278
Reserves EOY			
General Reserve	10,398	10,587	189
Delayed Projects			
Carried Forward 12/13 to 13/14	398	750	352
Carried Forward 11/12 to 13/14	0	236	236
Special Reserve	260	1,260	1,260
CAPITAL			
Net Capital Spending	7,278	6,510	-768
Spending delayed to 2013/14	500	1,207	707

3 INFLATION AND INTEREST

3.1 The only change to inflation rates at this stage of the financial cycle is to reduce the provision for Pay Awards as shown below:

PAY INFLATION	<i>for Apr 2014</i>	<i>for Apr 2015</i>	<i>for Apr 2016</i>	<i>for Apr 2017</i>	<i>for Apr 2018</i>
<i>Approved Budget/MTP</i>	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%	2.0%
<i>Forecast</i>	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%	1.0%

3.2 Interest rates have been changed as shown below:

Approved Budget/MTP

INTEREST RATES	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018 2019
Temporary Borrowing	0.4%	0.4%	0.76%	1.2%	1.7%
Temporary Investments	0.6%	0.6%	0.86%	1.3%	1.8%
PWLB 20 year borrowing	3.73%	3.80%	4.05%	4.30%	4.5%

Forecast

INTEREST RATES	2014/ 2015	2015/ 2016	2016/ 2017	2017/ 2018	2018 2019
Temporary Borrowing	0.40%	0.50%	0.75%	1.15%	1.50%
Temporary Investments	0.55%	0.65%	0.90%	1.30%	1.65%
PWLB 20 year borrowing	4.00%	4.15%	4.30%	4.40%	4.50%

4. LATEST FORECAST FOR CURRENT YEAR

4.1 After allowing for additional spending brought forward from 2012/13 (£588k) and the expected slippage of Local Plan Funding (£223k) to 2014/15, there is a forecast need to take a further £258k from reserves. This “overspend” is due to changes in net service spending (-£42k) and a forecast reduction in Business Rates income (+£300k) as a result of successful appeals. The service variations are mainly due to lower estate’s rents (£100k) and delayed savings on One Leisure (£167k) offset by a reduced provision for debt repayments due to capital programme slippage last year (-£137k) and a variety of savings primarily from not filling vacancies. At present the only significant item that is assumed to be ongoing is estate’s rents.

4.2 Obviously every effort will continue to be made to identify compensating savings.

5. GOVERNMENT SPENDING REVIEW

5.1 There were three elements covered in the Spending Review which are explained in the following sections.

5.2 Council Tax Limitation

The Government has indicated that Council Tax rises will be limited to 2% unless a positive referendum result is obtained. Last year there was a similar limit but there was a dispensation for District Council's who had Council Tax levels below the average which allowed a rise of 3.63%. It is not yet clear whether this will be permitted in the future and so the Risk Provision has been adjusted to provide for the difference between the previously planned increases and 2%.

5.3 Formula Grant (RSG)

The Government have issued the control totals for changes to their support for local government but there are still some areas of uncertainty including how the totals will be apportioned to the various classes of authority and then between individual authorities in each class. This will remain uncertain until draft settlement figures are published in November/December.

The current best estimate is that this Council will lose around a further £1.3m per year in 2015/16.

5.4 New Home Bonus

The Government have proposed that local authorities be required to pass on a total of £400m of New Homes Bonus to their Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). This will be converted into a standard percentage of the Bonus received but there is uncertainty about what the national total that will be payable and hence what percentage the £400m will represent.

Indications of between 35% and 40% have been suggested but the Government has also suggested an alternative whereby County Council's have to pass on 100% and then the District percentage would reduce to 19% to 25%. 30% has been used for this forecast.

Whichever approach is taken this is a very sizeable amount as can be seen in the table below:

SPENDING REVIEW	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Loss of Formula Grant (RSG)	100	1,300	1,333	1,366	1,400
Council Tax Limitation at 2%##	80	149	190	236	285
Loss of New Homes Bonus at:					
40%		1,796	2,386	2,733	2,961
35%		1,571	2,087	2,391	2,591
30%		1,347	1,789	2,050	2,221
25%		1,122	1,491	1,708	1,851
19%		853	1,133	1,298	1,407
Total impact based on 30%	180	2,796	3,312	3,652	3,906

net of risk provision provided in approved budget/MTP which assumed the Council might face some restriction in achieving its planned Council Tax increases.

- 5.5 This will have a major impact on the Council's financial position and ability to maintain services. A response has therefore been made to the Government's consultation on New Homes Bonus highlighting the disproportionate impact on those authorities that have achieved high housing growth.
- 5.6 There is uncertainty about what will happen to Government support for Councils after the 2015 General Election and so there is provision in the risk contingency for a fall of 2.5% per year in cash terms – potentially 5% in real terms.

6. RISK PROVISION

6.1 The Risk Provision contained in the existing Budget/MTP is the "Low End" assumption shown at Annex A.

6.2 Annex B shows the revised proposal and the difference is highlighted below:

RISK PROVISION	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
Current Risk Provision (Annex A)	1,078	1,598	2,567	3,085	3,831
Proposed Risk Provision (Annex B)	998	1,583	2,321	3,112	3,933
Variation	-79	-16	-245	+27	+102

6.3 As mentioned earlier, an allowance is included in case there is no relaxation of the proposed limit of 2% for Council Tax rises for those Districts currently taxing at below average levels.

7 RESULTING FORECAST

PROPOSED BUDGET/MTP	FORECAST	BUDGET	MTP			
	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
2013/14 BUDGET/MTP	22,638	22,098	22,755	23,046	24,227	25,141
Proposed variations	324	-8	-2,987	-3,096	-3,068	-2,975
NEW FORECAST	22,962	22,090	19,768	19,950	21,159	22,166
FUNDING						
Use of revenue reserves	-2,752	-2,386	-1,435			
Remaining reserves EOY	8,821	6,435	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
New Homes Bonus	-2,905	-3,505	-3,142	-4,175	-4,782	-5,182
Formula Grant (RSG)	-6,019	-4,500	-2,995	-2,995	-2,995	-2,995
Retained Business Rates	-3,704	-3,817	-3,913	-4,011	-4,111	-4,214
Collection Fund Deficit	-76					
Council Tax	-7,506	-7,882	-8,323	-8,810	-9,311	-9,816
COUNCIL TAX LEVEL	£133.18	£137.85	£142.67	£147.67	£152.84	£158.19
% increase	3.63%	3.51%	3.50%	3.50%	3.50%	3.5%
£ increase	£4.67	£4.67	£4.82	£4.99	£5.17	£5.35

Savings Required:						
• Targetted		1,377	1,852	2,050	2,090	2,090
• Unidentified		138	2,620	2,948	3,181	3,694

Forecast Capital Spending	9,570	2,789	3,647	3,866	3,967	3,347
Net Interest and Borrowing Costs						
- total	1,358	2,008	2,409	2,738	3,235	3,812
- as % of total net spending	5.9%	9.1%	12.2%	13.7%	15.3%	17.2%

7.1 It was agreed during the 2013/14 budget/MTP process that Council approval would be required before the net cost of interest and borrowing could exceed 15% of net spending. The above table indicates that 15% may be exceeded from 2017/18. The increase is not due to any change in capital spending but the variation in interest rates and, much more significantly, the proposed reduction in net spending. If net spending in 2018/19 was retained at last year's level of £25.1M then the percentage would be 15.2% rather than the 17.2% shown above. This issue will be included in the draft budget/MTP report in December.

8 EXISTING SAVINGS PROPOSALS – Required by approved budget/MTP

- 8.1** Annex C provides a list of costed items and items under active consideration. The costed items are a mixture of specific (some definite) and targets. It is currently anticipated that the “active consideration” items will be sufficient to cover any shortfall in the costed items but will not provide any significant excess.
- 8.2** Work has started on confirming and achieving these savings and the December draft budget report will make any necessary adjustments to reflect the latest view of any under/over achievements in the current and future years. An estimate of the impact of the Pay Review will also be available to feed into the process.
- 8.3** The Government introduced a new localised Council Tax support system from April this year. Their original proposal was to completely protect Town and Parish Councils from the impact but they revised the final arrangements resulting in the Towns and Parishes receiving a lower taxbase and hence a higher level of precept (Council Tax) to achieve the same spending level. As this change was made late in the process and some Councils had already agreed their precept for 2013/14 this Council decided to provide a grant to compensate for this change. It is not proposed to continue this grant beyond the current financial year but, in order to give the Towns and Parishes adequate notice, this will need to be formally confirmed.

9. ADDITIONAL SAVINGS REQUIREMENT

- 9.1** As shown in this report, additional savings of £2.6m for 2015/16 rising to £3.7m by 2018/19, on top of the currently targeted level, will be an extremely challenging task for officers and Members to achieve.
- 9.2** No organisation can ever say that no further efficiency improvements can be found but Members will be aware of the significant savings that have been achieved in previous years which, when coupled with the existing savings plan, will dramatically reduce any significant further opportunities.
- 9.3** The Managing Director is currently developing a performance management framework to link the Leadership Direction with the Budget/MTP. This will enable Members to consider the relative importance of the Council's services and ensure that available funding is focussed on the highest priorities. A service challenge process is also planned which will explore any further efficiencies and new service delivery options.

- 9.4 Once a savings plan has been identified, Members will need to consider whether it is likely that Huntingdonshire residents would support a Council Tax increase as an alternative to the service cuts proposed. To put this in context, a 20% increase in Council Tax (£23 more than the Forecast assumption) would generate an additional £1.3M.
- 9.5 This would require majority support via a referendum and might be a high risk strategy as there is the cost of a referendum, the cost of re-billing and the delay in introducing the savings to be taken into consideration if support was not obtained.

10. CONSULTATION AND COMMENTS

- 10.1 This report will be considered at a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny (Economic Wellbeing) Panel on the 4 September and their comments will be reported to Cabinet.

11. CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1 Whilst progress is being made on achieving the previously identified savings requirement the Government's Spending Review creates additional major difficulties for the Council and its ability to deliver its current portfolio of services.
- 11.2 There is also uncertainty about what will happen to Government financial support for Councils after the 2015 General Election.
- 11.3 Reserves will be at planned minimum levels by 2015/16 and so there is no alternative but to urgently identify options for savings that can be introduced in time - this will be a major challenge.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985

Government Spending Review
Working Papers - Files in Financial Services
2013/14 Budget/MTP
Budget Monitoring Reports

Contact Officer: Steve Couper

Assistant Director, Finance and Resources ☎ 01480 388103

ANNEXS

- A Existing Risk Provision
- B Proposed Risk Provision
- C Existing Savings Proposals

APPROVED RISK PROVISION - The Low End Assumption is included in the Budget/MTP.

LOW END ASSUMPTION Risk Provision in MTP	Extra savings needed (+):					HIGH END ASSUMPTION	Extra savings needed (+)				
	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18		13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18
	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M		£M	£M	£M	£M	£M
Reduction in New Homes Bonus grant due to slower housing completions from 2014/15											
10% lower		0.050	0.150	0.300	0.450	20% lower		0.100	0.300	0.600	0.900
Reduction in Government Grant due to insufficient New Homes Bonus funding											
All bodies share loss			0.100	0.200	0.200	Local Authorities share loss			0.200	0.300	0.400
Financial Contribution to A14											
£5M over 25 years				0.200	0.200	£8M over 25 years				0.320	0.320
						Further reduction in Government Grant					
						1% per year for 3 years			0.400	0.800	1.200
Increase in net spending every year to cover cost of increased population. There is no provision for demographic growth in the forecast.											
0.425% #		0.090	0.180	0.270	0.240	0.85% #		0.180	0.360	0.540	0.600
						Change to NI Contributions re new Old Age Pension Proposals					0.300
Homelessness											
		0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100			0.200	0.200	0.200	0.200
Pay Protection and Performance pay @											
	0.320	0.640	0.960	1.300	1.600		0.320	0.640	0.960	1.300	1.600
MMI Drawdown											
		0.140						0.140			
Proposed Council Tax increases not permitted by Government											
£4 in 14/15 and 15/16 then 2.5%		0.038	0.088	0.177	0.275	£3 in 14/15 and 15/16 then 2%		0.096	0.204	0.341	0.489
						Increase in Business Rates retained					
						1% growth per year		-0.110	-0.220	-0.330	-0.440
						Loss of income in 2014/15 and 2015/16 excluding leisure and some other areas\$					
						2.5%		0.110	0.110		
						No leisure price increase					
						in 2014/15		0.170	0.170	0.170	0.170
Partial non-achievement of 2013 increase in car park charges											
10%	0.020	0.020	0.020	0.020	0.020	20%	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.040	0.040
PROPOSED RANGE FROM . .	0.340	1.078	1.598	2.567	3.085	TO....	0.360	1.566	2.724	4.281	5.779
						Extra cost of high end assumption	0.020	0.488	1.126	1.717	2.694

Cost of extra refuse round included in MTP for 2017/18 set-off

\$ Excludes Car parks (separate provision) Planning (no price rise) and Rents (based on leases)

@ Past budgets included 3.5% to cover cost of living and performance pay. 2% for potential cost of living increases is included in inflation. This Provision is the balance pending the results of a Pay Review which is underway. The Review will clarify what provision will be needed for future performance payments, transition costs and any protection that may need to be paid to staff.

PROPOSED LOW END RISK PROVISION INCLUDED IN FORECAST

LOW END ASSUMPTION INCLUDED IN FORECAST	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18	18/19
	£M	£M	£M	£M	£M
Financial Contribution to A14					
£5M over 25 years				0.200	0.200
Reduction in New Homes Bonus grant due to slower housing completions from 2014/15					
10% lower (assumes 30% to LEP)	0.050	0.105	0.210	0.315	0.420
Increase in net spending every year to cover cost of increased population.					
0.425% per year less extra refuse round in 2017/18	0.090	0.180	0.270	0.240	0.330
Homelessness					
Provision	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100	0.100
Proposed Council Tax increases that may not be permitted by Government					
Increase above 2% per year	0.118	0.237	0.367	0.511	0.667
Pay Protection and Performance Pay					
Provision to be adjusted in light of Pay Review	0.640	0.960	1.300	1.600	2.000
Reductions in Formula Grant post 2015/16					
2.5% cash per year (circa 5% real terms)			0.074	0.146	0.216
TOTAL INCLUDED	0.998	1.583	2.321	3.112	3.933

EXISTING SAVINGS PROPOSALS				
	2014	2015	2016	2017
	2015	2016	2017	2018
	£000	£000	£000	£000
IMD - Chris Hall				
COSTED PROPOSALS				
Mobile Phones lower tariffs	20	20	20	20
Outsourced/Shared IT	50	100	100	100
FOR ACTIVE INVESTIGATION				
Reduce travelling and journey time through video conferencing				
Channel Migration				
Legal & Democratic Services - Colin Meadowcroft				
COSTED PROPOSALS				
Extra income from Document Centre	10	15	20	20
Democratic/Central Services target saving from extra income, cost savings or restructuring	20	20	20	20
Outsourced/Shared Legal Service	25	25	25	25
FOR ACTIVE INVESTIGATION				
Investigate integration of Licensing into Environmental Health				
Not give day off for elections				
Operations - Eric Kendall				
COSTED PROPOSALS				
Ops Management and admin budget savings	80	80	80	80
Outsourced/Shared CCTV Service with Cambridge City	20	100	100	100
Lower R&R contributions	25	25	25	25
Investigate savings in Street Cleansing	70	70	70	70
FOR ACTIVE INVESTIGATION				
RECAP (County wide project investigating Waste/Refuse options)				
Investigate reduction in Grounds Maintenance budget re. litter picking				
Investigate outsource of catering at Hinchingsbrooke Park				
Corporate Office - Helen Donnellan				
COSTED PROPOSALS				
Give up Performance Management budget	18	23	23	23
Corporate Office target saving from extra income, cost savings or restructuring	40	40	40	40
Increased income from proactive management of commercial estate	20	40	50	50
Review of contracts			20	30
Investigate integration of FM and Estates (part of Environmental Management target)				

	2014	2015	2016	2017
	2015	2016	2017	2018
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Customer Services - Julia Barber				
COSTED PROPOSALS				
Call Centre target saving from extra income, cost savings or restructuring		25	25	25
Outsourced/Shared Revs and Bens	50	150	150	100
FOR ACTIVE INVESTIGATION				
Channel Migration				
Investigate Shared Housing Register				
Investigate Shared Fraud				
Environmental Management - Paul José				
COSTED PROPOSALS				
Environmental Management - Combination of	200	250	250	250
Integration of FM and Estates				
Sharing				
Revenue generation activities/additional income				
Reduced energy and maintenance costs PFH and EFH				
Savings in Street naming and numbering and other budgets				
FOR ACTIVE INVESTIGATION				
Reduce office space, more hot desking and rent space out				
One Leisure - Simon Bell				
COSTED PROPOSALS				
Staff restructuring and increases in income				
<i>already included in MTP</i>				
FOR ACTIVE INVESTIGATION				
Investigate outsource of catering at Leisure Centres				
Finance & Resources - Steve Couper				
COSTED PROPOSALS				
Reduce Audit Fees budget	40	40	40	40
Identify and remove other spare budgets across the Council	50	50	50	50
Advertising opportunities	20	25	25	25
Reduce training budgets to focus on priorities	20	20	20	20
Outsourced/Shared Debtors	25	25	25	25
Margin on Loans to RSLs etc.	30	75	125	175
Other emerging minor staffing adjustments	25	50	75	100
No Grants to Towns/Parishes re Housing Support	357	357	357	357
FOR ACTIVE INVESTIGATION				
Further budget reviews				

	2014	2015	2016	2017
	2015	2016	2017	2018
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Environment, Growth & Planning - Steve Ingram				
COSTED PROPOSALS				
CIL related staff reorganisation	30	30	30	30
Selling planning expertise to other authorities (target)	20	20	20	20
Planning staff savings (existing vacancies)	50	50	50	50
Investigate integrating Housing Strategy with Planning Policy	25	50	50	50
FOR ACTIVE INVESTIGATION				
Further potential increase in car park charges				
Development Control Fees increase in excess of MTP assumption				
Environmental & Community Health - Sue Lammin				
COSTED PROPOSALS				
Deletion of post in Commercial Team		35	35	35
Give up Arts Development budget	11	11	11	11
Voluntary Grants reduction			50	50
Primary Authority Scheme	10	10	10	10
Premises Permitting Scheme	4	4	4	4
Community Safety work for others	5	10	15	20
Reduce DASH Team budget	7	7	7	7
Review Community Development			33	33
FOR ACTIVE INVESTIGATION				
Investigate shared Environmental Health with Cambridge City				
HSE Enforcement interventions income				
Investigate Outsource/Share Pest Control and Animal Warden				
Investigate Sports and Active Lifestyle business development				
Investigate integration of Licensing into Environmental Health				

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS
(SOCIAL WELL-BEING)
(ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)
(ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING)

3 SEPTEMBER 2013
5 SEPTEMBER 2013
10 SEPTEMBER 2013

WORK PLAN STUDIES
(Report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

2. STUDIES

2.1 The Council has a duty to improve the social, environmental and economic well-being of the District. This gives the Overview and Scrutiny Panels a wide remit to examine any issues that affect the District by conducting in-depth studies.

2.2 Studies are allocated according to the Overview and Scrutiny remits. Details of ongoing studies being undertaken by the two other Panels are set out in the attached Appendix.

2.3 Members are reminded that if they have a specific interest in any study area which is not being considered by their Panel there are opportunities for involvement in all the studies being undertaken.

3. RECOMMENDATION

3.1 The Panel is requested to note the progress of the studies selected.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Minutes and Reports from previous meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

Contact Officers: Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer
01480 388006

Mrs C Bulman, Democratic Services Officer
01480 388234

ONGOING STUDIES

STUDY	OBJECTIVES	PANEL	STATUS	TYPE
Social Value	To consider the development of a methodology for the quantification of Social Value.	Social Well-Being	Working Group will focus on three key areas; namely social, health and financial benefits of the Council's activities. Officers have been tasked with attaching financial values to these benefits. Meeting held on 18th July 2013.	Working Group
Consultation Processes	To assist the Corporate Team with its review of the Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy.	Social Well-Being	Strategy and Guidance being updated by the Corporate Office to incorporate comments suggested by the Working Group. To be presented to the Panel and Cabinet at their October 2013 meetings. Meeting of Working Group held on 28th August 2013.	Working Group.
Great Fen	To monitor the latest developments in respect of the Great Fen.	Environmental Well-Being	Site visits undertaken by the Panel in July 2010 and October 2012. A Socio-Economic Study was presented to the Panel at its March 2013 meeting. Further updates will continue to be provided to the Panel at appropriate times. Site visit to be held on 17th September 2013.	Whole Panel.

Review of Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire	To undertake a review of the Neighbourhood Forums in Huntingdonshire.	Social Well-Being	At a recent meeting of ELSG, the Cabinet agreed to review their decision on Local Joint Committees (LJCs) on the understanding that they will be permissive on local communities' part and that groups of Parishes will organise, pay for and service the meetings themselves. A report to this effect will appear before the Cabinet at its September 2013 meeting.	Working Group
Maintenance of Water Courses	To receive a presentation on the maintenance arrangements in place for Water Courses within the District.	Environmental Well-Being	Panel requested for an update on the drainage problems experienced at Yaxley. Update to be delivered to Panel in September 2013.	Working Group
Delivery of Advisory Services Across the District	To monitor the performance of the voluntary organisations awarded grant aid by the Council in 2013-2015.	Social Well-Being	Working Group will meet with each voluntary organisation shortly to review their progress with a further meeting to be arranged 6 months thereafter. Annual Report on organisations supported by grants through Service Level Agreements to be presented to Panel in November 2013.	Working Group.

Housing Benefit Changes and the Potential Impact Upon Huntingdonshire	To monitor the effect of Government changes to the Housing Benefit System arising from the Welfare Reform Act.	Social Well-Being	Quarterly reports presented to the Panel. Members of the Economic Well-Being Panel will be invited to attend. Next report expected in October 2013.	Whole Panel
Local Plan 2036 – Provision of Social, Affordable and Supported Housing and Impact Upon Homelessness	To explore how the new Local Plan would help to address housing and homelessness needs within the District.	Social Well-Being	An outline of how the new Local Plan will help to address housing and homelessness needs within the District was delivered to the Panel. Regular updates to be provided. Next update expected October 2013 as part of the Affordable Housing Policy report.	Whole Panel.
Grounds Maintenance - Service Standards	To review the Council's expenditure on grounds maintenance.	Environmental Well-Being	Report submitted to the Panel at its June 2013 meeting. Further report to be submitted to the Panel in October 2013.	Whole Panel.
Review of Elderly Patient Care at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital	To undertake a review of elderly patient care at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.	Social Well-Being	Working Group appointed to undertake a review which will be undertaken in conjunction with the Hospital. First meeting held on 18th July 2013. Member and Officer views on their experiences of patient care at the Hospital will be sought as part of investigations. A presentation on the	Working Group

			procurement of the Older Peoples Programme will be delivered to the Panel in December 2013.	
Recycling in Flats	To receive details of areas within the District where household recycling was not taking place.	Environmental Well-Being	A position statement will be submitted to the Panel's September 2013 meeting.	Whole Panel.

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Progress Report

<p>04/07/13</p> <p>10/01/13</p>	<p><u>Customer Services</u></p> <p>Performance reports to be submitted to the Panel twice a year.</p> <p>Agreed to establish a working group to assist with the development of a new Customer Services Strategy and interrelated Strategy for Channel Migration.</p>	<p>Next report due in January 2014.</p>	<p>Meetings of the Working Group have been held on 13th February, 26th March and 21st May 2013. Representatives have also visited the Customer Services Centre at Newport. The draft Strategy has been circulated to the Working Group who will meet on 12 September to discuss it further.</p>	<p>09/01/14</p>
<p>16/05/13</p>	<p><u>Corporate Plan</u></p> <p>Councillors Rogers and Harrison have been appointed to the Corporate Plan Working Group.</p>		<p>The Corporate Plan Working Group met on Wednesday 17 July 2013. A further meeting will be held with the new Managing Director once further work has been undertaken to refine the Delivery Plan. The Working Group will then give further consideration to developing a programme of meetings to discuss with Cabinet Members their particular areas of responsibility.</p> <p>The Working Group will also discuss the Managing Director's perceptions of the role of overview and scrutiny at this time.</p>	
<p>06/10/11</p>	<p><u>Cambridgeshire Public Sector Asset Management Strategy</u></p> <p>Requested a report outlining the progress made on the Huntingdonshire projects in six months time.</p>	<p>Progress report submitted to June 2012 meeting.</p>	<p>A report seeking authority to progress work towards the creation of a publicly-owned Joint Venture to deliver the Making Assets Count Programme appears elsewhere on the Agenda.</p>	<p>05/09/13</p>

06/06/13	<p><u>Document Centre</u></p> <p>Agreed to establish a small team to follow-up on the recommendations arising from the Panel's review of the Document Centre. Councillors A H Williams, S Greenall and P D Reeve were appointed for this purpose.</p>		<p>A meeting of the Group will be held on 11 September 2013 to discuss the Management's response to the Panel's recommendations and outstanding issues relating to Electronic Document Management.</p>	
02/11/11	<p><u>Scrutiny of Partnerships</u></p> <p>Following a review of the Strategic Partnership, the Overview & Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice Chairman agreed that responsibilities should be divided as follows:-</p> <p>Social Well Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Community Safety ❖ Children & Young People ❖ Health & Well-Being <p>Environmental Well Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Growth & Infrastructure <p>Economic Well Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Local Enterprise Partnership 		<p>The Panel has already received two presentations on the Local Enterprise Partnership. A presentation on the Local Enterprise Zone was given to the Panel's meeting in November 2011.</p> <p>Little appears to be being done to develop a area approach to scrutinise the Local Enterprise Partnership. The Chairman will discuss with the Managing Director whether it is appropriate for the Panel to undertake its own review.</p>	

<p>05/07/13</p>	<p><u>Economic Development</u></p> <p>The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013 to 23 was considered by the Panel. The Economic Development Manager was asked to give a further update on the marketing and implementation plans in due course.</p>			<p>06/02/14</p>
<p>04/04/13</p>	<p><u>Budget</u></p> <p>Reviewed the suggestions that had been made as part of their informal discussions to enable Members to identify potential budgetary savings. Identified a number of priority areas for consideration by the Cabinet.</p>		<p>The Panel's report was considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 18 April 2013. In response, the Cabinet has:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ requested the Employment Panel to review the use of consultants and agency staff; ▪ referred the issue of training to the Member Development Working Group; ▪ agreed to convene an informal meeting of Executive Councillors, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) and the Managing Director to discuss shared services, the Council's electoral arrangements and improved procurement. 	
<p>07/03/13</p>	<p><u>Loves Farm Community Centre</u></p> <p>Received an update on the current position regarding funding for the Centre. Made a number of comments which have been forwarded to the Managing Director.</p>			

Progress Report

04/07/13	<u>Communications and Marketing</u> Agreed to establish a working group to undertake a study of marketing and communications. Councillors P G Mitchell, P D Reeve and T V Rogers have been appointed.		The first meeting of this Group will be held on 11 September 2013.	
04/07/13	<u>Shared Services</u> Agreed to establish a working group to undertake a review of Shared Services.		Councillors T V Rogers, S Cawley, P D Reeve and Mr R Hall have volunteered to join this Group. Membership will be confirmed at the next meeting and arrangements will then be made to meet with the Assistant Director (Finances & Resources).	
04/07/13	<u>Estates</u> A review of Estates will be pursued at a later date.		No further action at this time.	



Decision Digest

Edition 136

Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 1st July to 31st July 2013.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP: FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE REPORTS

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) received a presentation from representatives of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group on the financial and operational performance of the Group, with particular mention made of Hinchingbrooke Hospital. It was reported that the Hospital was achieving its performance targets but that there were some areas of concern relating to diagnostic waiting times and Ambulance handover times. These matters were in the process of being addressed. Constructive responses were given to the numerous questions asked by the Panel. A further update will be delivered in 6 months time.

HOUSING AND COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT CHANGES AND THE POTENTIAL IMPACT UPON HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has been updated on the effect of Government changes to the Housing Benefits system arising from the Welfare Reform Act. A number of changes came into effect on 1st April with the Benefit Cap introduced on 15th July. Only 44 households in Huntingdonshire will be affected by the latter.

The Panel discussed a number of matters including discretionary housing payments, the availability of one and two bedroom properties across the District, property exchanges undertaken by housing associations, the level of budget available to assist with homelessness together with the range of preventative work undertaken and the recent acquisition of additional temporary accommodation in Huntingdon.

CCTV OPERATIONS – SHARED SERVICE PROPOSAL

Together with the Cabinet, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has endorsed a proposal to establish a joint CCTV shared service with Cambridge City Council. The service is likely to operate from Eastfield House and the proposals are expected to generate savings of around £200,000 per year. There is also potential for the service to improve its financial performance once the shared service is established.

The Panel is concerned over the financial implications of the transfer of staff from the City to the District Council and has sought assurances that its true impact should be incorporated fully into the proposed business plan. Other matters that were discussed included the potential redundancies that might arise from the proposals and the reconfiguration of the CCTV Control Room.

In considering the Panel's recommendations, the Cabinet has authorised the Head of Operations to approve the establishment of the shared service, based in Huntingdon, on the basis of a detailed business case.

LANDSCAPE SENSITIVITY TO WIND TURBINE DEVELOPMENT DRAFT REVISED SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) has commented on the Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). To add extra weight and to strengthen the support for the proposed SPD, the Panel has suggested that the Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire (CLVI) document should undergo separate public consultation as it is felt that this would make the SPD better able to withstand the rigours of an appeal. The Panel agreed that explicit reference to the terms "adverse visual impact" and "material harm" should be incorporated within the planning policy framework.

Concerns remained over the group sizes proposed within the SPD. The Panel has recommended to the Cabinet that further work is undertaken to revise the downward size of the groups as it is felt that those proposed are not reflective of the landscape characteristics of the District. The absence of a separation distance is a further area of concern and the Panel has suggested that a minimum distance of 2km is introduced.

The Panel has also discussed the concerns raised by the Molesworth Action Group over various aspects of the SPD.

Subsequently, the Cabinet has requested the Planning Service Manager (Policy) to further review the content of the SPD and to proceed with a public consultation exercise for the CLVI document.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH PLAN 2013 – 23

Both the Cabinet and the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) have reviewed the content of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan.

The Panel has recognised the importance of the Economic Growth Plan for the District and for the Council and has recommended that the vision should replace that already contained in the Leadership Direction. It has also suggested that the Plan's vision should be amended to refer to Huntingdonshire becoming one of the best places to live in England.

Given the importance that is attached to the Plan, Members were of the view that the Council should make adequate resources available to ensure the actions associated with it can be delivered.

In terms of the contents of the Plan, the Panel has also recommended that

- reference should be made to the District's infrastructure needs;
- contact details should be clearly provided for interested parties who wish to contact the Council about it,
- a more dynamic tone should be adopted throughout, and
- a more explicit explanation should be provided of the "trickle down" effect from

economic activity centres to rural areas.

The Panel has asked to see the marketing and implementation plans in due course.

In discussing the document's key components, the Cabinet has reiterated the Panel's views that the Plan's vision is amended, that a more dynamic tone be adopted throughout and the "trickle down" effect be explained.

USE OF CONSULTANTS, HIRED STAFF AND TEMPORARY STAFF

The Panel has considered the annual report detailing expenditure by the Council on consultants, hired and temporary staff. In noting the reduction in capital expenditure compared to the previous year, concern has been expressed by the Panel at the increase in revenue expenditure. This prompted a number of pertinent questions.

Having noted that the Employment Panel had been asked by the Cabinet to review the use of consultants and agency staff, the Panel has asked the Employment Panel to look at:

- the cost effectiveness of temporary staff;
- the effect of stress within the workforce on their cost and use;
- who reviews the use of temporary staff; and
- whether the revenue costs could be reduced.

PRIVATE SECTOR RENT LEVELS

Following a request for information at a previous meeting, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has received an update on rent levels in

Huntingdonshire. There is currently no evidence to suggest that landlords are adjusting their rents downwards in line with Housing Benefit Local Allowance rates. This has reduced the number of households which the Council has been able to work proactively with to prevent homelessness and contributed to an increased use of temporary accommodation.

The Panel has discussed a number of matters including the work which was ongoing with local Housing Associations to provide temporary accommodation.

Further updates will be provided as and when there is something significant to report. A seminar on housing and benefits has also been arranged for all Members in October.

CUSTOMER SERVICES MONITORING REPORT

The Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has considered the Customer Service Performance report for the period January to June 2013. The report sets out the standards of service that have been achieved and the issues the service will face in the forthcoming period.

In considering the report, the Panel has discussed a range of matters including the reduction in service standards at the Call Centre and the increase in sickness absence. The Head of Customer Services was asked to provide details of the additional costs incurred as a result of the implementation of the Green Bin project.

Having regard to recent changes to systems and procedures within the Call Centre, Members have expressed the view that before the current lease expires, consideration should be given

to combining the call centre with customer services.

A further report will be provided in 6 months.

OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY STUDIES

The Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has established a Working Group to undertake a study on communications & marketing. Councillors P G Mitchell, P D Reeve, and T V Rogers have been appointed to this Group. A small team has also been established to follow-up on the recommendations arising from the Panel's review of the Document Centre.

In addition, a further Working Group will be established shortly to carry out a study on shared services. The membership is yet to be appointed.

DRIVING STANDARDS AGENCY – DRIVER TESTING

The Licensing and Protection Panel has been updated on the situation with regard to waiting times for Driving Standards Agency (DSA) driving tests for hackney carriage and private hire drivers following complaints from taxi operators.

The Panel had approved the transfer of in house testing by officers to the DSA with effect from January 2012, having been advised that the high and consistent standard of testing by qualified and approved examiners would remove the risk to the Council of not having officers available for testing and would leave it less open to challenge and possible legal proceedings.

The DSA originally estimated waiting times for tests to be 6 weeks and had indicated that additional staff would be employed if this was not the case. Research into the waiting times has

revealed that Cambridge and Peterborough are within these timescales although Cardington is currently taking 11.5 weeks due to the relocation of the Bedford centre. Drivers are not restricted to particular locations.

The DSA has advised that where tests cannot be arranged within 6 weeks they will be slotted into vacant appointments left by private driver tests if appropriately qualified examiners were available.

The Panel understood the concerns of operators and drivers. However, having been advised that reforms were likely to follow current consultation by the Law Commission on Regulations covering taxis and private hire vehicles, they remained of the opinion that national standards should apply to private hire services and testing.

REVENUE BUDGET AND CAPITAL MONITORING: 2012/13 OUTTURN AND 2013/14 BUDGET

The Cabinet has noted the final outturn for revenue and expenditure in 2012/13 and variations already identified in the current year. Executive Councillors noted that, as a result of under spending, the Council has been successful in saving an additional £1 million in reserves. This saving will be placed in the Special Reserve to fund one-off expenditure that will lead to ongoing savings. With regard to the New Homes Bonus Scheme, Members were advised that the grant for 2014/15 may be marginally less than that forecast but within the sum included in the risk provision.

Executive Councillors also have been apprised of variations in the capital programme in the current year and adjustments in the 2013/14 budget

FILMING AND RECORDING AT COUNCIL MEETINGS

As a result of new guidance produced by the Department of Communities and Local Government, the Corporate Governance Panel has considered an amendment to paragraph 17A of the Council's Constitution relating to filming and recording and taking of photographs at meetings that are open to the public and the use of social networking and micro-blogging websites.

The Panel has recognised that some members of the public attending meetings may not wish to be filmed. However, they were of the opinion that those making representations would normally expect to be filmed.

Whilst discussing the circumstances in which termination or suspension of filming might occur, the Panel felt that there would be no benefit in halting filming once a defamatory statement had been made. With this mind and having referred to the circumstances surrounding the filming of the Council meeting in June by a member of the public, it was suggested that future training for Chairmen be adapted to include dealing with such situations.

Members supported a proposal that filming should take place from a specific location, adding that it would be reasonable for the Chairman to direct someone to a particular place in the meeting room.

The Panel was of the view that it would be preferable for anyone proposing to film, record or take photographs of a meeting to advise the Democratic Services Team before the start of the meeting and to provide their name and contact details.

In recommending the amendment to full Council and to avoid any potential

difficulty in the interim, the Panel requested Officers to introduce the guidelines pending their formal approval in September.

REVIEW OF REGULATION OF INVESTIGATORY POWERS ACT (RIPA) POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

New RIPA Policy and Procedure Statements for Covert Surveillance and Communications have been recommended to the Council by the Corporate Governance Panel. The new documents have been prompted by recent changes in legislation, primarily the requirement for all applications to be authorised by a Justice of the Peace and the requisite that all RIPA activity only take place where serious crime was being investigated.

PREPARING THE ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

In reviewing the action taken to reassess the Code of Corporate Governance, the Corporate Governance Panel has concluded that the 'supporting principles' should refer to providing 'value for money' rather than 'excellence'. The Panel also discussed issues around the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement and concluded that the following issues be recorded in the Plan as significant:

- to develop the themes and aims in the Leadership Direction through service plans and performance measures;
- to improve budgetary control;
- to reinvigorate engagement with stakeholders;
- to introduce a project management methodology; and
- to prepare an annual report for the 2013/13 financial year.

INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT

In accordance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards, the Corporate Governance Panel has noted the Internal Audit Manager's opinion on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Council's internal control and governance processes.

Concerns continue to be expressed over the lack of compliance with the Code of Procurement. The Panel is also concerned that one no assurance and seven limited assurance audit reports have been issued. They have stressed the need to create a culture whereby actions are undertaken and any failures reported to the Chief Officers' Management Team so that they then regularly update the Panel. In the meantime, all Officers are to be reminded of the need to comply with the Code and training provided where necessary.

APPOINTMENT OF PROFESSIONAL ADVISORS

The Corporate Governance Panel has noted the outcome of a review into the procedures adopted to appoint a contractor for a major redevelopment scheme. During the review a number of concerns had been raised by Internal Audit. The Panel has been informed of a series of recommendations aimed at modifying or reinforcing the Council's processes to minimise the likelihood of such issues arising again.

It was reported that the Internal Audit Manager would be reviewing the Internal Audit Plan to ensure adequate contract reviews are undertaken in the future.

In expressing their disappointment that procedures had not been followed, the Panel has agreed that the issues

identified be taken into account when considering the Annual Governance Statement. The Panel also asked that any resulting amendments to the Employees' Code of Conduct and Code of Procurement be submitted to a future meeting.

REVIEW OF 'LOCAL LIST' APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS VALIDATION

The Development Management Panel has considered the outcome of consultation with the local community including applicants, agents, statutory consultees and town and parish councils during a review of the information necessary to validate a planning application. The existing requirements are required to be updated, in any event, to refer to the National Planning Policy Framework and specifically town centre uses, transport assessments and statements, open space and flood risk assessments and heritage statements. Having expressed their satisfaction with the responses given to the comments received during the consultation, the Panel has authorised the Planning Service Manager (Development Management) to finalise the validation check list and to make any necessary changes to the list, in the future, in response to any Government guidance, changes in local policy or circumstance. The Panel's scheme of delegation will be updated accordingly.

