

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, 4 JULY 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 6th June 2013.

**Mrs 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. LOAN TO HUNTINGDONSHIRE REGIONAL COLLEGE

To note that under Section 16 of the Access to Information Procedure Rules contained in the Council's Constitution, 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.

Decisions taken as a matter of urgent must be reported to the next available meeting of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel, together with the reasons for urgency.

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

A copy of the current Notice of Executive Decisions, which was published on 19 June 2013 is attached. Members are invited to comment as appropriate on any items contained therein.

**5. HUNTINGDONSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH PLAN 2013 - 23
(Pages 13 - 48)**

To consider a report by the Economic Development Manager.

**Mrs S Bedlow
387096**

6. USE OF CONSULTANTS, HIRED STAFF AND TEMPORARY STAFF (Pages 49 - 54)

To consider the annual report by the Assistant Director (Finance and Resources) detailing expenditure on consultants, hired and temporary staff.

**S Couper
388103**

7. PRIVATE SECTOR RENT LEVELS (Pages 55 - 58)

To receive the six monthly update on rent levels in Huntingdonshire.

**J Barber
388105**

8. CUSTOMER SERVICES MONITORING REPORT (Pages 59 - 68)

To receive a report by the Head of Customer Services on the performance of customer services during the period January to June 2013.

**J Barber
388105**

9. WORKPLAN STUDIES (Pages 69 - 74)

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

**Mrs C Bulman
388234**

10. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS (Pages 75 - 80)

To consider a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

**Mrs C Bulman
388234**

11. SCRUTINY (Pages 81 - 88)

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 26 day of June 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).

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or would like a large text version or an audio version
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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.

Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) held in CIVIC SUITE 0.1A, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 6 June 2013.

PRESENT: Councillor T V Rogers – Chairman.

Councillors S Akthar, P L E Bucknell,
G J Bull, S Greenall, R Harrison,
P G Mitchell, P D Reeve and M F Shellens.

Mr R Eacott and Mr R Hall.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S Cawley and A H Williams.

5. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 4th April and 15th May 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor M F Shellens declared a non pecuniary interest in Minute No. 8 by virtue of his membership of Brampton Parish Council.

7. 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, the Chairman reported on his attendance at the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social-Well Being) for the discussions on the Home Improvement Agency Shared Service Review and Disabled Facilities Grant Budget. Clarification was also sought by a Co-Opted Member of the meaning of the term 'Financial Strategy' and an answer was provided by the Director for Finance and Resources.

8. HUNTINGDONSHIRE REGULATION 123 AND INFRASTRUCTURE BUSINESS PLAN 2013/14 LIST

(Councillor N J Guyatt, Deputy Executive Leader and Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing, was in attendance for this item).

With the assistance of a report by the Assistant Director for Environment, Growth and Planning (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Panel received an update on the outcome of the public consultation on the Draft Huntingdonshire CIL Regulation 123 List. The List defined the types of infrastructure that would be funded in whole or in part by the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)

to ensure that there was no duplication between contributions from CIL and Section 106 Agreements. A copy of the List was tabled at the meeting and it is appended in the Minute Book.

By way of introduction, Councillor N J Guyatt explained that the report set out the position for 2013/14 and that the Government was continuing to change the regulations surrounding the Levy. It was currently considering proposals to exempt self-build properties from the Levy. The Deputy Executive Leader reported that the Council had responded to the consultation on this proposal on the basis that this should not be permitted because small sites constituted a significant proportion of development within the District, and it would make delivering strategic infrastructure more difficult. Furthermore, it could create a mechanism through which CIL was not payable and affect the meaningful proportion which was allocated to town and parish councils.

The Planning Service Manager (Policy) explained that the preparation of an Infrastructure Business Plan for 2013/14 was the first stage of a longer process. Work had already started on the next iteration of the Business Plan and one of the major challenges would be to find alternative sources of funding to meet the shortfall in the resources available for strategic infrastructure. Work would also be required to develop the way in which the District Council worked with town and parish councils on how their contributions would be spent. With this in mind, a series of briefings for parish and town councils had already been held and the Planning Service Manager had also attended a number of parish council meetings to talk about the way in which shared priorities might be achieved. Members welcomed the dialogue which had been opened with town and parish councils, particularly in view of the concerns which they had previously expressed about the absence of local community representatives from the CIL governance structure.

In considering the contents of the report and having noted that the District Council would be the collecting body for CIL contributions, Members questioned whether there would be an audit trail to demonstrate how monies were distributed and spent. In response, Members were assured that partner agencies would be required to provide details of how the funds were spent. Although town and parish councils would have autonomy to spend their contributions in the way in which they saw fit, they would be required to provide an audit trail. Monies would be paid to town and parish councils in line with the phasing of developments.

Councillor M F Shellens expressed concern that infrastructure negotiated by communities through already existing Urban Design Frameworks might not now be delivered. He referred specifically to the Urban Design Framework for the former RAF Brampton site, and the Parish Council's acceptance of development, which had been predicated on the delivery of the infrastructure outlined in it. In response, Councillor N J Guyatt explained that whilst it was not possible to provide any guarantees, best endeavours would be made to meet the commitments already made.

In response to a question by a Member, it was explained that the fact that a number of responses to the consultation were made before the

announcement of proposals for the new Local Plan should not cause a problem because the Business Plan would be updated on an annual basis. It was also noted that developments of 200 dwellings or more would be liable to pay both S106 contributions and CIL. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to approve the revised Regulation 123 List incorporating the Huntingdonshire Infrastructure Business Plan 2013/14.

9. COMMUNICATIONS

Further to Minute No. 44, the Panel received a presentation by the Corporate Team Manager, Mrs H Donnellan, on the Council's communications function. The aim of the function was to achieve a cross Council, unified approach to communications and secure value for money. As part of the presentation, the Panel was provided with details of the work which was on-going with regard to external and internal communications and to develop these areas going forward. Information on the work undertaken by the Press Office was also provided, together with details of the 'Team Brief' and 'Members' Brief' newsletters which were produced on a regular basis.

The Panel was advised of the work which was being undertaken to develop an external communications strategy. Local consultants were conducting a survey with residents and Councillors for this purpose. Once this had been completed, it would be possible to adopt the most appropriate public communications mechanisms. It was suggested that local Members could provide a useful communications tool for the Council and they should be utilised to a greater extent than they currently were.

A discussion then ensued on the Council's use of 'Twitter' and 'Facebook' facilities. Members noted that the Council primarily used these facilities to communicate in an emergency. Having noted that the Corporate Team had studied the practices of those organisations which employed best practice, Members' attention was drawn to the successful use of Twitter by Coventry City Council whose approach focussed on the community and had required a change in organisational culture. Members were of the opinion that the District Council should adopt a more strategic approach towards the use of the facility. It was also suggested that it might be useful to segment twitter feeds for different groups of customers.

In considering the Council's current use of Twitter, Members were informed that tweets were 're-tweeted' in accordance with the guidelines contained in the Council's Social Media Policy by a restricted number of individuals. In response to questions about the Council's list of Twitter followers and the ways in which the Council intended to improve on the current numbers, the Corporate Team Manager undertook to respond directly to Councillor S Greenall.

Enquiries were made about the current budget for communications compared to the three previous years and the efforts which had been taken to measure the benefits of the work of the Communications

team. Whilst it was difficult to measure some areas of activity, Members noted that the Local Government Communications Group measured reputation and trust, which the Council could use. Furthermore the Council's bi-annual employee opinion survey provided an indication of the effectiveness of the Council's internal communications. The Corporate Team Manager agreed to provide details of the budget directly to Panel Members.

10. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

(Councillor J A Gray, Executive Councillor for Resources, was in attendance for this item).

In accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Strategy and with the assistance of a report by the Accountancy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel considered the Council's treasury management performance for the year ending 31st March 2013. The Accountancy Manager reported that the funds had performed well in 2012/13, significantly exceeding both the benchmark and the budgeted investment interest. He drew attention to Sections 3.2 to 3.5 of the report and Members noted that the actual net investment interest was more than three times the estimated credit budget of £11,000 for the year. Whilst it might have been expected that income from long term investments could be predicted relatively accurately, this had not been the case because some investments had ended during the year and new arrangements had to be made.

In terms of the Management of VAT, the Panel noted that the Council's liability in this respect was reviewed annually by HMRC. A question having been raised as to whether there might be a benefit for the Council from transferring the leisure centres to a trust, it was explained that the Council's VAT liability was not wholly attributable to the leisure centres as VAT was also payable on other land and property. This and other factors meant that there would not be a total saving of the VAT sum, though there was the potential that it might lower the cost.

In response to a comment about the difficulties being experienced by the Co-operative Bank, the Panel's attention was drawn to Annex B of the report which indicated that the Co-operative Bank was not one of the Council's counterparties. Members were assured that the counterparty list was reviewed on a monthly basis with the assistance of the Council's advisors.

Members were informed that the Economic Review of 2012/13 contained in Annex A had been obtained from the Council's Treasury Management Advisors. In terms of current economic trends, it was explained that the Treasury Management Advisory Group met on an ad hoc basis throughout the year and there were a number of unknown factors which might have an impact on the economy, such as the appointment of a new Governor at the Bank of England. The Accountancy Manager was asked to circulate to Panel Members further information on the estimated credit budget for the forthcoming year. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

11. WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which provided Members with an opportunity to establish their work priorities for 2013/14. Their attention was drawn to the functions and responsibilities of the Corporate Governance and Employment Panels and the service areas which had been allocated to each Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

The Panel discussed the membership of its existing working groups and noted that Councillor R Harrison had been appointed to the Corporate Plan Working Group to replace the former vice-chairman. Having thanked Councillor R B Howe for his contribution to the work of the Customer Services Working Group, it was agreed that Councillor R Harrison should be appointed as his replacement. It was also agreed to establish a small team to follow-up on the recommendations arising from the review of the Document Centre and Councillors A H Williams, S Greenall and P D Reeve were appointed for this purpose.

Whilst reviewing the existing programme of studies, the Panel received updates on the work which was being undertaken to develop a new Council Customer Services Strategy and on the discussions which were taking place as a consequence of the review of the Document Centre.

With regard to the recent review of the effectiveness of overview and scrutiny, reference was made to the fact that it had been agreed with the Executive Leader that the scrutiny of policy proposals should take place early in the policy development process. The Panel also endorsed the contents of an Overview and Scrutiny Protocol, which provided a framework for the conduct of Overview and Scrutiny by the Council.

In considering possible future studies, a number of suggestions were made including communications and marketing, shared services for treasury management, the A14 (including the impact of development at the former RAF Wyton airfield site) and Estates. It was suggested that this list should be reviewed at the next meeting. However in the interim and having received a brief update on the current position, the Chairman undertook to raise the issue of the A14 at the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice Chairmen to establish whether there was any potential for a joint study on this matter. Given that there appeared to be little enthusiasm for scrutinising the Local Enterprise Partnership on a co-ordinated Countywide basis, the Chairman also undertook to discuss with the Managing Director the Panel's engagement with the Partnership.

Other suggestions for future investigation included a review of the high cost services provided by the Council, but it was decided that this might be premature pending the publication of the Executive's budget plans. It was also suggested that consideration could be

given to the way in which the Council's objectives were translated into specific actions. However this was considered to fall within the remit of the Corporate Plan Working Group, of which the Chairman and Vice Chairman were both members.

In response to a proposal that the Panel should request a breakdown of statutory and non-statutory services, some Members expressed doubts at the practicalities of achieving this. With this in mind, it was suggested that there should be a pilot exercise on a small service area to assess the practicalities and value of establishing the extent to which it met or exceeded the minimum statutory requirements. Members were asked to think of suggestions for potential service areas for the next meeting.

In response to a question about the Council's performance in the collection of Council Tax receipts, the Panel was informed that there were plans to develop a range of performance indicators in relation to this and other the Council service areas. Members were also reminded that although changes in Housing Benefit had been allocated to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being), Members of the Economic Well-Being Panel would be invited to attend and partake in the discussion on this subject matter.

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted;
- (b) that Councillor R Harrison be appointed as a Member of the Customer Services Working Group;
- (c) that Councillors A H Williams, S Greenall, P D Reeve be appointed to a Working Group for the purpose of following up the Panel's recommendations on the Document Centre; and
- (d) that the Overview and Scrutiny Protocol as appended to the report now submitted be endorsed.

12. 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.

13. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY (ECONOMIC WELLBEING) - 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.

14. SCRUTINY

The Panel considered and noted the latest edition of the Decision

Digest (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book).

Chairman

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Colin Meadowcroft
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

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
6 CCTV Operations - Shared Service Proposal***##	Cabinet	18 Jul 2013		Eric Kendall, Head of Operations Tel No. 01480 388635 or email Eric.Kendall@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		R Howe	Social Well-Being
Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013 - 2023	Cabinet	18 Jul 2013		Sue Bedlow, Economic Development Manager Tel No. 01480 3887096 or email Sue.Bedlow@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		T D Sanderson	Economic Well-Being
Loves Farm - Request for Supplementary Estimate	Cabinet	18 Jul 2013		Chris Allen, Project and Assets Manager Tel No. 01480 388380 or e-mail Chris.Allen@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
Draft Revised Supplementary Planning Document - Land Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development	Cabinet	18 Jul 2013	Draft revised SPD	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Financial Strategy	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
Town and Parish Council Charter	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	19 Sep 2013		Kathryn Sexton, Customer Services Manager Tel No. 01480 387040 or e-mail Kathryn.Sexton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B S Chapman	Economic Well-Being
Affordable Housing Policy - Update	Cabinet	19 Sep 2013		Jo Emmerton, Housing Strategy Manager Tel No. 01480 388203 or email Jo.Emmerton@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Social 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

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
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 consultation	Steve Ingram, Assistant Director, Environment, Growth and Planning 01480 388400 or email Steve.Ingram@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Huntingdon West Masterplan	Cabinet	17 Oct 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
Cumulative Impact of Wind Turbines SPD***	Cabinet	21 Nov 2013		Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Local Plan to 2036 - Proposed Submission	Cabinet	12 Dec 2013		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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Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan Economic Development Manager

1. INTRODUCTION

Supporting economic growth is a key focus for the Council as detailed in adopted Leadership Direction Document.

- 1.1 The council's current Local Economic Strategy expires in 2015 and was produced before the proposed redevelopment of the Alconbury airfield, the allocation of Enterprise Zone status and before the onset of the current and prolonged recession. A local economic strategy is vital to a district facing significant growth pressures and for this reason, and to support the production of the new Local Plan, the council requires a revised, evidence based economic strategy.
- 1.3 During 2012 a full local economic assessment was undertaken in order to provide the evidence base for the new economic strategy and contribute to the evidence base for the new Local Plan. This assessment also serves as a comprehensive base-line profile of the district in advance of significant anticipated developments.

2. CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED BY ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT

- 2.1 The key challenges identified by the economic assessment are:
 - The proportion of the population who are of working age in Huntingdonshire is reducing.
 - Huntingdonshire has a number of strategic development plans. However, development will not just 'happen'. A targeted approach, which differentiates the Huntingdonshire 'offer' is needed.
 - There is a polarisation in the business base of Huntingdonshire in terms of the size of enterprise as well as a tendency towards more traditional industry sectors.

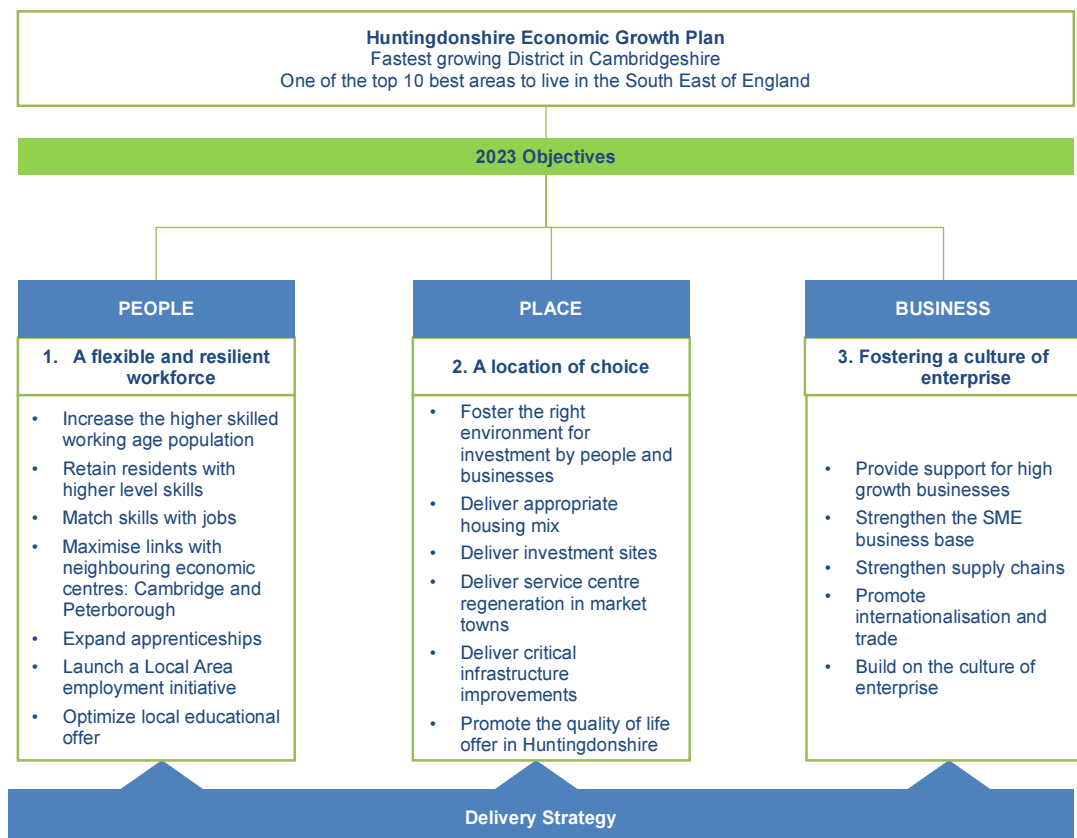
3. ECONOMIC ASSESSMENT ACTION PRIORITIES

- 3.1 Eight action priorities emerged from the economic assessment are summarised in the table below:
 - **Improve the match of skills to future job growth** - improve links between employers and education providers
 - **Rebalancing the population structure** - delivering sufficient residential development to encourage in-migration and of a quality that would appeal to higher skilled residents. Simultaneously create new and sustainable employment opportunities on strategic employment sites

- **Raising Huntingdonshire’s profile** - the need to determine the districts comparative advantage, it’s ‘offer’ or uniqueness
- **Unlock infrastructure constraints** - utility, transport, digital and appropriate commercial provision for growth industries.
- **Maximise the impact of strategic sites** such as Alconbury Weald while minimizing the impact of displacement and supporting those companies that will be displaced from the site during development.
- **Build on business strengths** - support business start-ups and SMEs to grow the micro and small business base whilst encouraging inward investment to address the lack of medium sized businesses in the economy.
- **Diversify the economy** - introduce sector based business development strategies focusing on the professional and scientific sectors
- **Develop public sector governance** structures to facilitate economic growth

4. HUNTINGDONSHIRE ECONOMIC GROWTH PLAN 2013-2023

4.1 The strategy for addressing these action priorities is set out within the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013 – 2023 (A copy of the Plan is appended hereto). The Plan sets out a vision for Huntingdonshire and 2023 Objectives which fall into three main streams or themes of work. These are represented below:



4.2 An overview of the delivery programme with some key actions is provided below. This gives a broad indication of the proposed phasing of delivery actions.

	People	Place	Business
Short Term Delivery Actions (1-3 years)	<p>District wide approach to careers advice and apprenticeships</p> <p>Enterprise Strategy for young people</p> <p>Marketing programme To attract high skilled working families</p> <p>Promotion of Science Technology Engineering and Maths (STEM) in education</p>	<p>Targeted promotion to high value sectors</p> <p>Re-launch Developer's Forum</p> <p>Investment Portfolio (inward investment promotion)</p> <p>Internationalisation programme (Export promotion)</p> <p>Delivery of strategic development including Alconbury Enterprise Zone, Huntingdon West, St Neot's and key service centres</p>	<p>Links with Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce</p> <p>Dragons Den competition</p> <p>Improve relationship between the Council and business</p> <p>Link schools with employers</p>
Medium Term Delivery Actions (3-5 years)	<p>Local Area Skills initiative (Oxmoor – Alconbury)</p> <p>Community Organising</p> <p>Visitor Economy Strategy</p> <p>University capability</p>	<p>SME business accommodation</p> <p>Links with Cambridge University</p> <p>Delivery of strategic development including Alconbury Enterprise Zone, Huntingdon West, St Neot's and key service centres</p>	<p>High growth SME programme</p> <p>Supply Chain Strategy</p> <p>Business mentoring/coaching</p> <p>Innovation and R&D in manufacturing</p>
Longer Term Delivery Actions (5-10 years)	<p>Community Budgeting in areas of high need</p>	<p>Critical infrastructure</p> <p>Housing targets, with additional demand from Alconbury Enterprise Zone</p> <p>Delivery of strategic development including Alconbury Enterprise Zone, Huntingdon West, St Neot's and key service centres</p>	<p>Huntingdonshire Alumni Network</p>

4.3 A more detailed breakdown of the above will form the basis of an economic development service delivery plan.

5. CONCLUSION

- 5.1 This is an aspirational but deliverable strategy. Delivery will require closer and more joined up working across services internally and with partners externally, a process which is already well underway.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 That Cabinet approve the content of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013 – 2023.

Contact Officer: Sue Bedlow, Economic Development Manager
☎ 01480 387096

Draft
Huntingdonshire District Council
Huntingdonshire Economic
Growth Plan 2013 – 2023



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Foreword

Huntingdonshire: 'Going for Growth'

Huntingdonshire is a great place to live, work and invest. By 2023 it will be one of the best places to live in the South East of England. Huntingdonshire will 'go for growth'.



Jason Ablewhite
Executive Leader
Huntingdonshire District Council

In the last 10 years, 8,000 new jobs have been created in Huntingdonshire across a range of different industries. The house building industry remains healthy, with more homes being built in Huntingdonshire than in all other areas in Cambridgeshire. New business accommodation has also been built, in the context of a very difficult development market.

Our well educated workforce lives and works locally and also travels further afield to Cambridge, Peterborough and London.

Our strong, stable economy has rallied the recession. However, we know we have more work to do. We want Huntingdonshire to be one of the most attractive places to live, work and invest in the South East of England and to do that we need a vision for economic growth.

We have worked hard throughout 2012 to prepare our plan, which sets out our vision:

"By 2023, Huntingdonshire will be the fastest growing District in Cambridgeshire and one of the top 10 best places to live in the South East of England."

This Economic Growth Plan is about ambition. It is about working to a common goal and a shared purpose. Huntingdonshire has a clear plan for the future. I am pleased to present the Huntingdonshire Growth Plan.

A strong, growing economy, which is also stable is needed to achieve our vision. The Huntingdonshire economy must be supported by skilled people, strong sectors, vibrant service centres and strategic development sites, which together will support the growth and development of the economy in the next decade and beyond.

The only way we can achieve our vision is by working together. I look forward to working with our partners, residents and business community to make this District an exemplary place to live, work and to invest. Together, let's 'go for growth!'

July 2013

By 2023, Huntingdonshire will be the fastest growing District in Cambridgeshire and one of the top 10 best places to live in the South East of England.

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

The UK economy has experienced a deep, long recession. The fabric of the UK economy has changed as a result. There are fewer private sector investors in the marketplace and less public money available to stimulate economic growth. The government's austerity programme has reduced the amount of public funding available for economic development and the result is an increasingly competitive global market.

However, Huntingdonshire's economy remains strong and stable, having suffered less and recovered quicker from the recession than other areas of the country. The evidence points to a number of opportunities to 'go for growth' and to further develop the economy of Huntingdonshire. Huntingdonshire is:

- An attractive place to live, with a strong and relatively affordable housing market;
- Well connected, with excellent road and rail links and significant plans for improving highways and rail infrastructure further;
- Economically stable, with a strong small business sector and many well established companies;
- Home to a well educated, highly skilled population, with a high proportion of residents in managerial and professional occupations;
- Well placed to create new jobs and deliver economic growth, with key growth opportunities, such as Alconbury Weald and new development continuing apace in strategic locations such as St Neots; and
- Continuing to deliver housing growth ahead of schedule.

Huntingdonshire has a number of strategic opportunities that can facilitate economic growth. However, there are a number of structural challenges within the economy that must be resolved if Huntingdonshire is to compete for and win investment, attract and retain talent and create the number of new jobs that economic forecasts suggest is possible.

These challenges include:

- 1. People.** The proportion of the population who are of working age in Huntingdonshire is reducing. This means that there are fewer economically active people living in the District.
- 2. Place.** Huntingdonshire has planned a number of key strategic developments. However, development will not just 'happen'. A targeted approach, which differentiates the Huntingdonshire 'offer' is needed.
- 3. Business.** There is a polarisation in the business base of Huntingdonshire and a tendency towards more traditional industry sectors.

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan

This Economic Growth Plan has been written in response to the strengths and challenges of Huntingdonshire's economy. It has been written at a time of great economic uncertainty. However, the evidence gathered has demonstrated that it is clear that Huntingdonshire, with the right strategy in place, shows the potential to adapt successfully to the changes in the UK economy and build its profile and competitive position, in order to compete for investment, talent and jobs.

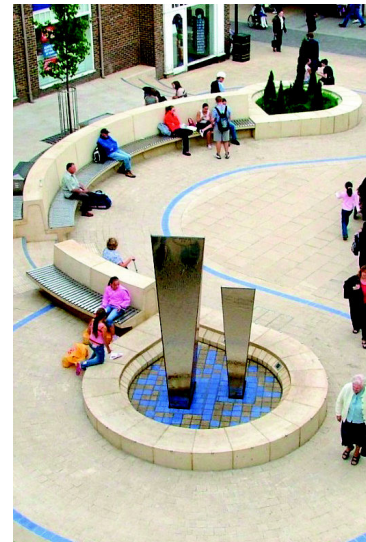
The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan is 'going for growth'. The Plan aims to deliver economic growth by focusing on achieving a set of key ambitions, the '2023 Objectives':

1. To create a flexible and resilient workforce.
2. To make Huntingdonshire a location of choice.
3. To foster a culture of enterprise.

Delivery

The Huntingdonshire Growth Plan will deliver its strategy over the next 10 years via the following framework themes:

- People;
- Place; and
- Business.



Huntingdonshire's economy remains strong and stable, having suffered less and recovered quicker from the recession than other areas of the country. The evidence points to a number of opportunities to 'go for growth' and to further develop the economy of Huntingdonshire.

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan

Huntingdonshire's Economic Growth Potential

Huntingdonshire: 'The People'

Huntingdonshire is the largest District by population in Cambridgeshire. New Census data suggests that the population increased by an additional 1,300 more than estimated in the East of England Forecasting Model (the forecasting model for the East of England, which projects economic, demographic and housing trends). This suggests that future population growth may also exceed expectations. If this faster than anticipated population growth continues, it could lead to improved economic outcomes for Huntingdonshire.

Huntingdonshire's population is skilled and highly motivated. The proportion of the population with higher level qualifications is high and the unemployment rate is lower than in many other Districts in Cambridgeshire.

Huntingdonshire residents have benefited from increasingly higher salaries in recent years, with the salaries of people who both live and work in Huntingdonshire increasing to closer match those of Cambridge City.

Huntingdonshire residents are entrepreneurial and a significant proportion of the population is self employed. Residents also have excellent qualifications and many are employed in managerial and professional occupations.

Many Huntingdonshire residents work within the District, a substantial number also travel to well paid jobs in Cambridge City and many travel further afield to work in London. The planned new rail improvements will decrease the travel time to London further and key strategic development areas such as Huntingdon West, St Neots and Alconbury Weald will benefit as a result.

The recession caused the Huntingdonshire economy to contract and unemployment levels did rise as a result. However, the economy of Huntingdonshire has returned to pre-recession levels very quickly, which shows that the population and local economy are resilient and able to withstand economic shocks.

Huntingdonshire's population is well placed to contribute to and benefit from future economic growth. The population of strategic development areas such as St Neots, is already increasing. The framework for economic growth is set to deliver substantial new development over the next 10 years.

However, there are key issues that must be addressed if Huntingdonshire population is to benefit from the potential for economic growth and if it is to compete in the ever increasingly competitive environment of Cambridgeshire.

The primary issue is that the proportion of the population of working age in Huntingdonshire is contracting. The population is ageing, economic activity rates are declining and recent figures suggest better qualified residents may be moving out of the District.

For this reason, it is important that there is a significant boost in new housing development. Housing appropriate to attract those with higher level skills who are economically active is important for the future prosperity of the district, alongside other initiatives to increase the provision of affordable housing as identified in the strategic Housing Market Assessment.

Meanwhile there are also areas of deprivation within the District, which are experiencing increasing issues with barriers to employment, accessing public services and housing. It is important that residents within less affluent areas are able to participate equitably in the economy and that they are able to share the benefits of economic growth.

Timing is critical. It is imperative that these issues are addressed early through the delivery of the Huntingdonshire Growth Plan. This is so the Huntingdonshire economy can achieve its potential and that, most importantly, the benefits of economic growth can be spread across the District fairly and equally for all residents.



Huntingdonshire's population is well placed to contribute to and benefit from future economic growth. The population of strategic development areas such as St Neots, is already increasing. The framework for economic growth is set to deliver substantial new development over the next 10 years.



Huntingdonshire: 'The Place'

Huntingdonshire is strategically located within the London/Stansted/Cambridge/Peterborough growth area. It is the largest district by area within Cambridgeshire and is well connected by road and rail to the rest of the UK.

The economy of Huntingdonshire is closely linked to Cambridgeshire and in terms of out-commuting, the District looks particularly to Cambridge and Peterborough. The recently completed guided bus-way to Cambridge has improved access through key Cambridgeshire employment corridors. With regards to rail links, Huntingdon and St Neots are currently connected with London Kings Cross by a frequent 50 minute rail service.

Huntingdonshire is an attractive place to live, featuring a network of market towns, including Huntingdon, St Ives, St Neots and Ramsey and key natural assets, including the river, the Great Ouse. Huntingdon is the primary service centre and an important employment area. However, St Neots is the largest centre by population in the District and is also home to an established business base, with a number of major employers and a specialism in manufacturing.

The housing market in Huntingdonshire is relatively affordable and buoyant and has remained so throughout the recession. There are established business parks in Huntingdonshire, with Huntingdon and St Neots hosting the bulk of the commercial accommodation in the District.

Huntingdonshire 'the place' will look very different in years to come. Three of Huntingdonshire's market towns and their environs are set to grow, with ambitious plans over the next 20 years to build new homes and create new job opportunities.

Development is already underway in areas such as St Neots. It has also commenced at Alconbury Weald where the key growth catalyst is to create a new Enterprise Campus.

Although there is considerable growth potential in Huntingdonshire, it is by no means a given that this growth will occur. This Economic Growth Plan recognises the economic potential of Huntingdonshire and provides the framework for Huntingdonshire to develop as a location of choice, marketing itself as an investment location and selling its proposition to the investment marketplace.



It is critically important that Huntingdonshire leverages its strategic location to develop closer links with partners across the sub region. Cambridge City is a globally recognised leader in the knowledge economy, with high value sectors contributing substantially to the local economy. The potential for further growth is clear and Huntingdonshire's proximity to this key growth pole is seen as a major opportunity to develop complementary sector specialisms, supply chains and business accommodation.

Critical infrastructure is also required to unlock growth. Road and rail improvements must be delivered and perhaps most importantly, digital connectivity must be maximised if the District is to achieve its full potential and become a destination of choice to live, work, visit and to invest.

Huntingdonshire is strategically located within the London/Stansted/Cambridge/Peterborough growth area. It is the largest district by area within Cambridgeshire and is well connected to the rest of the UK by road and rail.

Huntingdonshire: 'The Business'

Huntingdonshire has a strong, stable, established business base. Once established, businesses survive well and many businesses are aged 5 years and over. There are a number of key employers in Huntingdonshire, which employ upwards of 200 people. This includes Huntingdon Life Sciences, which is a global player in the life science sector, employing highly skilled people and supporting an established supply chain base.

The majority of the business base of Huntingdonshire consists of small to medium enterprises, a high proportion of which employ between 0 and 4 people. Many of these businesses are owned by residents working in skilled trades occupations.

The business base of Huntingdonshire was hit by the recession, with unemployment increasing early on in the recessionary cycle. This suggests that the impact was felt by the private sector, rather than by losses in the public sector, which came later. The quick recovery of the economy to pre recession levels points to a resilience within the private sector and therefore the business base of Huntingdonshire.

Although the manufacturing sector has contracted in recent years, in line with national trends, it remains important to the Huntingdonshire economy and the latest figures available suggest that 13.7% of employment in the District remains geared towards manufacturing. However, Huntingdonshire's business base is diversifying, with the number of business units operating in the professional and scientific sector increasing considerably in recent years, as well as an increase in employment in the financial and professional services sector.

St Neots is home to a well established network of businesses, many of which employ substantial numbers and are focused on the manufacturing sector or are part of well established supply chains.

There is a key opportunity for these businesses to explore new markets, develop trade and investment capability, invest in R&D and continue to advance working practices to adapt to an increasingly competitive marketplace.

Alconbury Enterprise Campus, one of the Government's new 'breed' of Enterprise Zones, is a strategic development site that will act as a key investment proposition for the next 2 decades. It is a vast site, in one ownership, with the potential to act as an economic growth catalyst. The enterprise Campus has the capacity to accommodate 8,000 new jobs. It could also have an added value effect of creating new jobs throughout the District. If the new jobs accommodated on the Enterprise Campus are focused in target sectors, there is the potential to generate additional employment of 4,600 elsewhere in Huntingdonshire. This is a total of 12,600 jobs over and above the East of England Forecasting Model baseline.

It is a positive sign that the first occupier on the Enterprise Campus is a 'clean tech' company, an advanced, high value business in a growing sector. There is clear potential for growing businesses at Alconbury Weald, bringing in new investment and to benefit from the proximity to the major knowledge and investment hub of Cambridge.





Although the Huntingdonshire economy recovered quickly from recession and there are clearly genuine economic growth opportunities, to ensure resilience in the future and to grow the business base of the District, a number of areas must be addressed in order to capitalise on future economic growth.

These include:

- **Building on business strengths.** Small businesses must be supported to grow and established businesses must be encouraged to invest in technology, processes and research and development;
- **Prioritising industry sectors.** The sector profile of Huntingdonshire must be diversified to include a greater range of businesses that can provide additional 'value' to the economy. Building closer links with Cambridge City and exploring new, high value sectors, including green technology and renewables is a key opportunity for accelerated growth; and
- **Delivering economic growth.** Ensuring that critical infrastructure is delivered to support economic growth, including improvements to the A14, rail improvements, superfast broadband and site specific infrastructure, such as at Alconbury Enterprise Campus.

Huntingdonshire has a strong, stable, established business base. Once established, businesses survive well and many businesses are aged 5 years and over.

The majority of the business base of Huntingdonshire consists of small to medium enterprises, a high proportion of which employ between 0 and 4 people.



The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan

Huntingdonshire: Going for Growth

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan is informed by a set of guiding principles, which have been identified through consultation and which ensure that the Plan is as ambitious as possible, whilst also being deliverable.

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan

This Economic Growth Plan has been prepared by Huntingdonshire District Council and has been informed by the needs and aspirations of local businesses, residents and key public sector partners, including the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership. This strategy is owned by Huntingdonshire District Council and sets out how the Vision for Huntingdonshire to 'go for growth' will be achieved.

The Vision

The Vision for the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan is that:

'By 2023, Huntingdonshire will be the fastest growing District in Cambridgeshire and one of the top 10 best places to live in the South East of England.'

The Vision for Huntingdonshire is simple. Achieving the vision will be challenging. It will require all partners to work together, across boundaries, in order to ensure that Huntingdonshire realises its growth potential.

The Evidence Base

This Economic Growth Plan has been informed by a Local Economic Assessment (LEA) for Huntingdonshire District, which presents an analysis of:

- The structure of the local economy;
- The historic and future predicted trends in key sectors of the economy; and
- The implications of these trends on the people and businesses that interact within the local economy.

This Economic Growth Plan has also contributed to the preparation of a new Local Plan for Huntingdonshire; the new Development Planning Document for the District.

The Guiding Principles

The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan is informed by a set of guiding principles, which have been identified through consultation and which ensure that the Plan is as ambitious as possible, whilst also being deliverable. The guiding principles are as follows:

- The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan will play to the strengths of the District and focus on its key assets;
- The approach of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan is open and non-protectionist. Closer links with the Cambridge economy and working in partnership across the County are key growth opportunities; and
- The Huntingdonshire 'offer' will complement other areas, however its offer will also be distinctive and will raise the profile of the District as an investment location.



Achieving the Vision

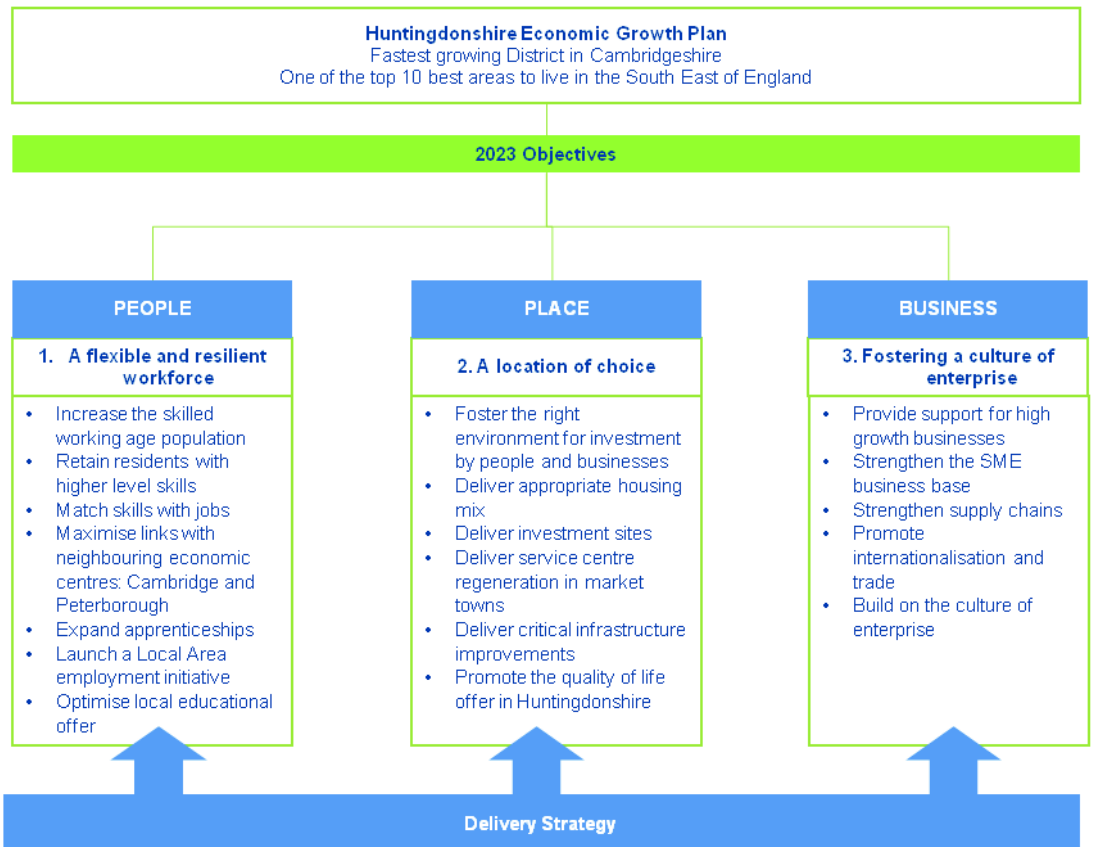
In order to unlock the true potential of Huntingdonshire’s ‘going for growth’ vision, the District will achieve three key ‘2023 Objectives’:

- | 2023 Objectives |
|---|
| 1. We will build a flexible and resilient workforce , by attracting skilled, working people into Huntingdonshire to meet the needs of business and by supporting all existing Huntingdonshire communities so that they can benefit from economic growth. |
| 2. Huntingdonshire will be a location of choice . By fostering the right environment for investment, by people and business, Huntingdonshire will take its place in the top 10 best places to live in the South East of England by 2023. |
| 3. We will foster a culture of enterprise , by supporting the existing business base, encouraging investment from businesses in high value sectors into the District and by encouraging entrepreneurship at an early age. |

Delivery of these three key ‘2023 Objectives’ will be achieved through a partnership approach to investment and will be underpinned by a detailed delivery strategy.

Achieving the 2023 Objectives

The following diagram sets out the components of each of the ‘2023 Objectives’:



Delivery

Making this Economic Growth Plan a success and delivering the 2023 Objectives will require all partners to work together. This strategy will be delivered under the umbrella of three framework themes:

- **People.** Partnerships working on this theme will focus on understanding and responding to the development of the workforce;
- **Place.** A co-ordinated inward investment strategy, aiming to raise the profile of Huntingdonshire, deliver strategic development and attract and retain investment in the District, thereby creating new, sustainable jobs; and
- **Business.** A network of businesses, and partners focused on growing the existing business base in the District and helping to make it more competitive.

Partnership Working

Partnership working is not new in Huntingdonshire. It is a well established practice and the framework for delivering this Growth Plan will build upon and strengthen existing relationships across the Greater Cambridge Greater Peterborough Enterprise Partnership. These partnerships will include, inter alia:

- Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership;
- Education providers;
- Chambers of Commerce;
- Huntingdonshire Manufacturing Association;
- Cambridgeshire County Council;
- Greater Cambridge and Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership; and
- Private sector partners and their representative groups.



2023 Objective – People: a Flexible and Resilient Workforce

The Call to Action

Huntingdonshire’s population is larger than any other District in Cambridgeshire and is projected to grow to 209,000 by 2036. Its population is skilled, healthy and productive. The unemployment rate and the proportion of the population claiming benefits is lower in Huntingdonshire than the UK average. The way that the economy recovered from recession was driven by an increase in productivity, which shows positive signs in respect of the productivity levels of the local labour force.

However, the proportion of the population of working age in Huntingdonshire is contracting. This strategy seeks to address the contraction in the workforce by implementing a set of projects that will encourage new people to live in Huntingdonshire, as well as connecting people who live in Huntingdonshire who are not economically active with the benefits of economic growth and new job opportunities.

Creating a Flexible and Resilient Workforce

This is the first key pillar of the Huntingdonshire Growth Plan. The interventions set out in the following table help to fulfil this fundamental requirement and also act as ways of differentiating Huntingdonshire and producing opportunities to accelerate economic growth.

The 2023 People Objective: to create a flexible and resilient workforce will focus on the following key areas:

2023 Objective	Key areas of focus
People: A Flexible and Resilient Workforce	Increase the working age population in Huntingdonshire by attracting new people to live in the District.
	Retain residents with higher level skills, in order to maintain the excellent skills levels of the workforce.
	Work with schools and employers to ensure that the future skills needs of the Huntingdonshire economy are met and that local people can benefit from opportunities.
	Maximise links with the Cambridge economy and with other GCGP districts, in order to encourage further up skilling of the workforce and to share the benefits of economic growth.
	Launch a Local Area Initiative, to create a better connection between employment opportunities and residents in areas of deprivation and high unemployment.

Huntingdonshire’s population is larger than any other District in Cambridgeshire. Its population is skilled, healthy and productive.



The 2023 People Objective: to create a flexible and resilient workforce in Huntingdonshire will be achieved through the following interventions:

Ambitions	Delivery Actions	Delivery Theme
Increase the working age population	Prioritise the delivery of new homes, including new housing development at Alconbury Enterprise Zone, with a priority placed on quality family homes, in order to attract new working families to live in Huntingdonshire.	Place
	Deliver Alconbury Enterprise Zone in a 'high growth' scenario, accommodating up to 8,000 additional jobs in target sectors, with the potential to create an additional 4,600 jobs elsewhere in Huntingdonshire, in order to accelerate economic growth and bring investment into the District.	Place
	Deliver proposed development in Huntingdon West, St Neots and St Ives and support the regeneration of these key service centres, in order to improve the quality of life offer of Huntingdonshire, to encourage in-migration and to provide services to a growing population.	Place
	Deliver critical infrastructure improvements, including improvements to the A14, planned rail improvements and super fast broadband, in order to improve the quality of life offer of Huntingdonshire, to encourage in-migration and to provide the infrastructure to support a growing population.	Place
	Launch a marketing programme, in order to attract high-skilled, working families to relocate to Huntingdonshire.	Place
Retain residents with higher level skills	Develop university-level qualification capability in Huntingdonshire, with the aim of establishing a partnership between an already established university and a local education provider, in order to encourage people to study in Huntingdonshire. This will retain young people of university age in the District to study and provide local opportunities for mature students to study locally.	People
	Launch Huntingdonshire alumni network, a virtual network of people originating from Huntingdonshire, who can work together with partners promote the area as a place to live, work, visit and invest.	Business
	Prioritise high value sectors for investment in Huntingdonshire, particularly advanced manufacturing, chemicals, health and care and green technologies, in order to provide high value employment opportunities for a skilled workforce.	Place
	Promote innovation and R&D within the existing business base, with a particular focus on the manufacturing sector, in order to increase the productivity of the sector and support its competitiveness.	Business
Match skills with jobs	Identify and promote the skills needs of the current and future business base, by working with schools, employers and private sector recruitment agencies, in order to proactively develop the labour market in Huntingdonshire.	Business
	Develop a District-wide approach to early stage careers advice and apprenticeships, in order to prepare young people for the labour market, matching skills with future jobs within the business base and thereby encouraging young people to stay in the District as they reach working age.	People
	Develop 14-19 capability and vocational training.	
Maximise links with Cambridge City	Work closely with Cambridge University, particularly in respect of R&D and spin-outs, to encourage mutual exchange of knowledge and ideas and to potentially provide more affordable accommodation at Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus for spin-out companies.	Place
	Promote the studying of STEM subjects at school, so as to encourage qualifications in subjects that will lead to employment in high value sectors.	People
	Work closely with Cambridge Chamber of Commerce, in order to grow links between the business base in Huntingdonshire and Cambridge, potentially identifying opportunities to grow supply chains and facilitate two way investment.	Business
Launch a Local Area Employment Initiative	Explore the opportunities for community budgeting in deprived areas, so as to join together support for employment and skills development in areas of high unemployment, to create a neighbourhood 'offer', in order to connect local people better with employment opportunities.	People
	Adopt a community organising approach for Huntingdonshire, particularly in areas of high deprivation, in order to empower local communities and nurture community leaders.	People

2023 Objective – Place: Huntingdonshire – a Location of Choice



The Call to Action

Huntingdonshire is an attractive place to live. Well connected to the rest of Cambridgeshire, London and the rest of the UK and home to many market towns, it also remains a relatively affordable location, particularly when compared with Cambridge City.

The economic potential of Huntingdonshire is clear. However, the profile of Huntingdonshire as a location to live, work and invest must be distinct enough to capture this economic potential.

Making Huntingdonshire a Location of Choice

This Economic Growth Plan seeks to promote Huntingdonshire as a place to visit, live, work and invest in order to make a significant contribution to the delivery of the vision and to ensure that in 2023, Huntingdonshire is one of the top 10 places to live in the South East of England.

This is the second key pillar of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan. Delivering this objective will transform the way that Huntingdonshire looks and is viewed by potential investors, as well as those looking to move into the District. It will also provide the platform to accommodate future economic growth potential, as well as putting steps in place so that the 'offer' of Huntingdonshire is communicated to potential residents, investors and visitors on a global scale.

The 2023 Place Objective: to make Huntingdonshire a location of choice will focus on the following key areas:

The economic potential of Huntingdonshire is clear. The profile of Huntingdonshire as a location to live, work and invest must be distinct enough to capture this economic potential.

2023 Objective	Key areas of focus
Place: a Destination of Choice	Foster the right environment for investment by delivering strategic development in Huntingdonshire, making a success of Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus and improving key service centres in market towns.
	Unlock economic growth potential by delivering critical infrastructure to support the economic growth potential of Huntingdonshire, including improvements to the A14, rail improvements and digital connectivity, in the form of superfast broadband.
	Improve and promote the profile of Huntingdonshire as a place to visit, live, work and invest, by promoting the attractiveness of the District as an investment location to key partners, potential investors and residents looking to relocate.



The 2023 Place Objective: Huntingdonshire – a location of choice will be achieved through the following interventions:

Ambitions	Delivery Actions	Delivery Theme
Foster the right environment for investment	Promote Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus as a key inward investment location and employment driver. Adopt a target sector model, with the aim of contributing an additional 8.000 new jobs in target sectors as a result of the delivery of the Enterprise Campus.	Place
	Deliver new mixed use development, including new homes, business accommodation, retail and leisure space, new strategic open space and other recreation opportunities in defined spatial planning areas, including Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus, Huntingdon Spatial Planning Area (Huntingdon, West Brampton and Godmanchester) and St Neots Spatial Planning Area. Seek to deliver this development through a network of developer partners.	Place
	Co-ordinate a programme of regeneration in service centres as part of a physical regeneration programme to complement the Local Area Initiative. Deliver this regeneration through partnerships with the public sector and also through an approach focused on community ownership and empowerment.	Place
	Deliver housing targets as set out in the high growth scenario option of the emerging Local Plan, including additional new homes at Alconbury, owing to additional demand from the successful delivery of the Enterprise Campus.	Place
	Launch a community organising initiative, focused on fostering local leadership and community cohesion, particularly in more deprived areas.	People
	Re-launch the developer’s forum, with representation from housebuilders and commercial developers active in Huntingdonshire.	Place
Unlock economic growth potential	Deliver improvements to the A14, by playing an active role in securing approval from central government to deliver a revised scheme. These improvements will support further economic growth in Huntingdonshire by improving connectivity, helping small to medium businesses to move goods and people in and out of the District quickly and easily and the improvements will also help to unlock the development potential of Huntingdonshire West, delivering new homes and mixed use development.	Place
	Deliver strategic rail improvements, particularly at Huntingdon and St Neots, in order to support the ambitious development plans in those areas and further improve the profile of Huntingdonshire as a place to live, work and invest.	Place
	Deliver superfast broadband across Huntingdonshire District, by working in partnership with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough councils to deliver the Connecting Cambridgeshire programme, thereby supporting further economic growth and giving comfort to potential investors in terms of future connectivity.	Place
Improve and promote the profile Huntingdonshire as a place to visit, live, work and invest	Prepare a Visitor Economy Strategy, working with the LEP and Cambridgeshire County Council, in order to raise the profile of Huntingdonshire as a place to visit and to complement the marketing campaign encouraging working families to relocate to the District.	People
	Prepare an investment Portfolio, incorporating Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus, key strategic development sites across the District and sector-based inward investment strategies for sectors including health and care, advanced manufacturing and green technologies.	Place
	Launch a Huntingdonshire Alumni Network of key business leaders, community champions, leaders and political figures. This network could be called upon to provide insight into Huntingdonshire for potential investors and can be used as a sounding board to prepare and promote the Huntingdonshire Investment Portfolio.	Place

2023 Objective – Business: Fostering a Culture of Enterprise

This Economic Growth Plan will build on the strengths of the business base in Huntingdonshire, in order to create a more resilient economy that can capture future economic growth potential.

The Call to Action

Huntingdonshire is home to a well established business base, with businesses operating in key locations across the District. Key employers include Huntingdon Life Sciences and Solo Cup Europe, each with upwards of 450 staff, but the majority of businesses in the District employ between 0 and 4 people.

However; there remains a polarisation in the business base a need for businesses to adopt more advanced techniques and break into new markets in order to survive as well as to grow.

Fostering a Culture of Enterprise

This Economic Growth Plan will build on the strengths of the business base in Huntingdonshire, in order to create a more resilient economy that can capture future economic growth potential. In this, the third pillar of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan, partners will work together to attract new investment into Huntingdonshire, to invest in high value sectors, to grow supply chains and to bring schools and employers closer together to foster a culture of enterprise across the District.

In addition to supporting and growing the business base, Huntingdonshire District Council will seek to improve the way it works with businesses, paying particular attention to procurement practices and the experience of businesses in working with the council.

The 2023 Business Objective: fostering a culture of enterprise will focus on the following key areas:

2023 Objective	Key areas of focus
Business: Fostering a Culture of Enterprise	Strengthen the SME business base, by proactively engaging with SMEs across a range of sectors with growth potential, to accelerate business growth.
	Strengthen supply chains, by mapping current supply chains and identifying opportunities to grow and develop these in the future.
	Promote internationalisation, by working with existing businesses in Huntingdonshire to encourage them to leverage new trade and investment opportunities.
	Build on the culture of enterprise in Huntingdonshire, by bringing schools and employers closer together and encouraging greater entrepreneurship across a range of sectors.



The 2023 Business Objective: fostering a culture of enterprise will be achieved through the following interventions:

Ambitions	Delivery Actions	Delivery Themes
Strengthen the SME business base	Launch a high growth business support programme, to provide support across industry sectors for businesses with growth capacity. Support to include mentoring, coaching and supply chain development opportunities, delivered by businesses, to Huntingdonshire businesses, with the aim of providing a kick-start to businesses with the potential to grow and create new employment opportunities.	Business
	Encourage support for SMEs by engaging larger employers in Huntingdonshire with the SME business base to provide mentoring / coaching opportunities, thereby creating an inclusive business network and opportunities for business growth, new job creation and supply chain development.	Business
	Ensure that appropriate business accommodation is delivered to meet demand from SMEs in respect of future business investment, by launching a developer's forum and encouraging two way dialogue between Huntingdonshire, the LEP and developers, thereby mapping current and future demand for business accommodation and SMEs.	Place
	Review the relationship between Huntingdonshire District Council and businesses, particularly in respect of the planning applications process, as well as conducting a review of corporate procurement processes.	Business
Strengthen supply chains	Map Huntingdonshire's supply chains, in relation to manufacturing, advanced manufacturing, chemicals, bioscience, pharmaceuticals, health and care, green technologies, professional services, tourism/visitor economy, so as to understand how supply chains function in Huntingdonshire and spot linkages, opportunities and gaps.	Business
	Prepare supply chain development strategy, prioritising sectors that show potential for growth and development through the mapping process. Reflect in the Huntingdonshire Investment Portfolio, to be prepared as part of the 'location of choice' theme.	Business
Promote internationalisation	Launch an internationalisation programme, in order to develop trade and investment capability within the existing business base in Huntingdonshire and to inform the preparation of a Huntingdonshire Investment Portfolio, to be prepared as part of the 'location of choice' theme.	Place
	By working with Urban & Civic, the owners of Alconbury Weald and the LEP, Huntingdonshire Council to promote Alconbury nationally and internationally as the primary inward investment location in Huntingdonshire, in order to prioritise international investment.	Place
Build on the culture of enterprise	Co-ordinate enterprise development in schools at a District level, through the preparation and implementation of an enterprise strategy, focused on encouraging enterprising behaviour in children and young adults.	People
	Bringing schools and employers closer together, by linking partners in this theme, providing opportunities for businesses to mentor and coach schools and schoolchildren, encouraging enterprising behaviour from an early age.	Business
	Re-launch a Huntingdonshire 'Dragons Den', in order to generate interest in entrepreneurship and encourage schools, residents and employers to take part in the programme.	Business

Huntingdonshire in 2023

Delivering the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan

The 10 Year Delivery Programme

This Economic Growth Plan sets out the 10 year Vision for Huntingdonshire. Achievement of the Vision hinges upon the successful delivery of the '2023 Objectives' through a range of ambitious interventions.

In order for Huntingdonshire to 'go for growth', this Economic Growth Plan presents a phased programme of delivery which builds momentum in the short, medium and long term and will provide evidence of economic development and growth that will be visible and real to residents, businesses and potential investors. The phased programme is presented below, according to short term actions (1-3 years), medium term actions (3-5 years) and longer term actions (5 years+):

	People	Place	Business
Short Term Delivery Actions	District wide approach to careers advice and apprenticeships. Enterprise Strategy – young people. Working families marketing programme. Promotion of STEM subjects.	High value sectors. Developer's Forum. Huntingdonshire Investment Portfolio. Internationalisation programme. Delivery of strategic development, including Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus, Huntingdon West, St Neots and key service centres.	Links with Cambridgeshire Chamber of Commerce. Dragons Den competition. Improve relationship between the Council and business. Link schools with employers.
Medium Term Delivery Actions	Local Area Initiative. Community Organising. Visitor Economy Strategy. University capability.	SME business accommodation. Links with Cambridge University. Delivery of strategic development, including Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus, Huntingdon West, St Neots and key service centres.	High growth SME programme. Supply Chain Strategy. Business mentoring/coaching. Innovation and R&D in manufacturing.
Longer Term Delivery Actions	Community Budgeting in areas of high need.	Critical infrastructure. Housing targets, with additional demand from Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus. Delivery of strategic development, including Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus, Huntingdon West, St Neots and key service centres.	Huntingdonshire Alumni Network.

In order for Huntingdonshire to 'go for growth', this Economic Growth Plan presents a phased programme of delivery which builds momentum in the short, medium and long term and will provide evidence of economic development and growth that will be visible and real to residents, businesses and potential investors.

Huntingdonshire in 2023

Huntingdonshire: Going for Growth

Huntingdonshire is 'going for growth'. The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan will:

- Build on the strengths of Huntingdonshire;
- Build resilience within the economy;
- Unlock the economic potential of the District; and
- Share the benefits of economic growth throughout the Huntingdonshire population.

In 2023, Huntingdonshire will be a different place. The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan will have been delivered successfully. Huntingdonshire will be the fastest growing District in Cambridgeshire and one of the top 10 best places to live in the South East of England.

New jobs will have been created, new homes will have been built and Huntingdonshire will have built on its strengths to become a location of choice to live, work and invest.

Alconbury Weald Enterprise Campus will have delivered a significant amount of new development and strategic development schemes at Huntingdon West and St Neots will be almost complete. Service centre regeneration in market towns will also be underway and the District will have raised its profile and built on its strengths to become an even more attractive place to live. The working age population will have increased in proportion to the rest of the population and the business base will be starting to shift, with small businesses growing and moving into new markets, as well as working more efficiently and effectively with local supply chains.

Public sector partners and private sector investors will have worked together over a decade to deliver transformational goals across the three 2023 Objectives – People, Place and Business.

The following diagram illustrates the outcomes that will be achieved through working with partners to deliver the 2023 Objectives.





Measuring Success

Achieving the Vision

Measuring the Success of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan

The success of the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan will be measured according to the following criteria:

1. **Statistical analysis** to assess on-going progress towards achieving the Vision.
2. **Monitoring progress** towards the delivery of actions within each 2023 Objective, by updating a delivery plan on a biannual basis.
3. **Regular engagement** with partners to gauge qualitative opinion on the progress towards achieving the Vision.

Statistical Analysis

The first part of the Vision, that Huntingdonshire will be the fastest growing District in Cambridgeshire by 2023, will be measured by per capita GVA growth. This is a measure of economic, scale, output and activity. GVA growth will be measured on a biennial basis and progress will be reported to partners and the Huntingdonshire resident and business community.

The second part of the Vision, that Huntingdonshire will be one of the top 10 places to live in the South East of England, will be measured according to a combination of factors, based upon a combination of quality of life factors. Progress will be tested biennially with a sample of Districts in the South East of England. The factors are as follows:



Monitoring Progress

The delivery plan which accompanies this Economic Growth Plan will be updated on a biannual basis by Huntingdonshire District Council and the update published in a public document, for consultation and comment.

Regular Engagement

A programme of regular engagement with partners, residents and businesses will be conducted in order to monitor progress towards achieving the Vision and in order to modify or shift the focus of the proposed interventions, where appropriate.

The delivery plan which accompanies this Economic Growth Plan will be updated on a biannual basis by Huntingdonshire District Council and the update published in a public document, for consultation and comment.

Notes

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)

12 JULY 2013

USE OF CONSULTANTS, HIRED STAFF AND TEMPORARY STAFF (Report by the Assistant Director – Finance and Resources)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In 2011/12 Panel undertook a review of the use of Consultants and it was agreed that:

a consultant would be defined as ***“someone who brings expertise into the organisation where it is lacking”***, that is where the Council lacks the skills rather than the manpower, and

an annual report detailing expenditure on consultants, hired and temporary staff be submitted to the panel including a breakdown between revenue and capital expenditure.

2. SPENDING IN 2012/13

- 2.1 Annex A sets out the **capital** expenditure and Annex B the **revenue** expenditure for 2012/13 on consultants, hired and temporary staff together with brief notes on the higher value items (shaded in grey).
- 2.2 Capital Expenditure reduced by £383k from £540k in 2011/12 to £157k in 2012/13. The higher spending in the previous year mainly related to the Huntingdon West, Local Plan, One Leisure St Ives and ICT schemes.
- 2.3 Revenue expenditure increased by £125k from £1,487k in 2011/12 to £1,612k in 2012/13. Project work particularly in Planning (e.g. Local Plan) increased spending on consultants. Continued high volumes of benefit applications and potential homeless cases required additional temporary staff to process these cases in a timely manner.

3. EMPLOYMENT PANEL

- 3.1 When the Cabinet considered this Panel's savings proposals at their April meeting it referred the area of consultants and agency staff to the Employment Panel as it is clearly within their new terms of reference.

4. RECOMMENDATION

4.1 The Panel are recommended to:

- Pass any comments on this report to the Employment Panel for their consideration.
- Note that future review of this area will be undertaken by the Employment Panel as it is now within their terms of reference.

ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT 1985

Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic well-being) reports and minutes
Working papers in accountancy section

Contact Officer:

Steve Couper, Assistant Director – Finance and Resources ☎ 01480 388103

**CONSULTANTS, HIRED STAFF AND TEMPORARY STAFF
CAPITAL EXPENDITURE 2012-13 AND 2011-12**

	Consultants		Hired Staff		Temporary Staff	
	2011/12 £000s	2012/13 £000s	2011/12 £000s	2012/13 £000s	2011/12 £000s	2012/13 £000s
Customer Services	0	1	0	0	0	0
Environmental & Community Health	1	15	0	0	0	0
Environmental Management	14	0	0	0	0	0
IMD	82	2	3	0	22	0
Leisure	239	86	0	0	0	0
Planning	179	53	0	0	0	0
Total Capital Expenditure	515	157	3	0	22	0

Consultants

IMD

2011/12 schemes included electronic document management £41k and server virtualisation £32k.

Leisure

One Leisure St Ives redevelopment both years.

Planning

2012/13 Huntingdon West Development £50k.

2011/12 Huntingdon West Development £147k, Huntingdon multi-storey car park £32k.

**CONSULTANTS, HIRED STAFF AND TEMPORARY STAFF
REVENUE EXPENDITURE 2012-13 AND 2011-12**

	Consultants		Hired Staff		Temporary Staff	
	2011/12 £000s	2012/13 £000s	2011/12 £000s	2012/13 £000s	2011/12 £000s	2012/13 £000s
Corporate Office	140	124	0	1	14	19
Customer Services	3	2	56	101	130	123
Environmental & Community Health	23	23	22	3	159	145
Environmental Management	58	44	0	0	0	25
Financial Services	15	21	3	20	31	14
IMD	0	3	51	111	80	0
Legal & Democratic Services	9	13	13	0	10	18
Leisure	5	0	11	11	66	75
Operations	21	0	342	376	82	26
Planning	121	289	0	17	22	8
Total	395	519	498	640	594	453

Consultants

Corporate Office

2012/13 investigations £77k, HR advice £19k, interim estates support £22k.
2011/12 HR advice including voluntary redundancy scheme advice £80k, investigations £49k.

Environmental Management

2012/13 water use audits and strategy £17k, Building Control £14k, environmental projects £11k.

2011/12 water cycle strategy £17k, NNDR appeals £14k, Building Control structural engineering £12k, environmental projects £12k.

Planning

2012/13 local plan £233k, St Neots Town Centre £21k, Huntingdon West £16k, Alconbury £16k.

2011/12 Community Infrastructure Levy £97k, appeals £20k.

Hired Staff

Customer Services

2012/13 Benefits caseload £59k, homeless prevention £38k.

2011/12 Benefits caseload £18k, homeless prevention £37k.

IMD

2012/13 planned additional temporary technical support.

2011/12 maternity cover £40k.

Operations

Hired staff are used deliberately to cope with seasonal variations in work load, holidays and sickness to ensure that the Council never has too many permanent staff yet can always deliver the required level of service. Main services are refuse and recycling £299k (2011/12 £241k), street cleansing £43k (2011/12 £55k). Changes in the statutory regulations for paying hired staff have increased costs. The balance between using permanent and hired staff is regularly reviewed and further review will take place once the new refuse and recycling rounds have settled in.

Temporary Staff

Note The temporary staff figure includes all staff paid on temporary post numbers.

Customer Services

Externally funded posts from DWP extra grant £67k (2011/12 £95k).

Environmental and Community Health

Externally funded posts for community safety, sport and active lifestyles projects.

IMD

Business Analyst posts made permanent 2012/13.

Funded from MTP development schemes 2011/12.

Leisure

Temporary contracts issued until business case for long term need justified.

Operations

2012/13 externally funded projects £25k.

2011/12 Hinchingsbrooke Cafe staff cover £41k. Externally funded projects £37k.

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OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING)

4 JULY 2013

PRIVATE SECTOR RENT LEVELS (Report by the Head of Customer Services)

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Government's policy on the welfare reforms relating to the Housing Benefit system is partly based on the belief that Housing Benefit has driven private sector rent increases in recent years.
- 1.2 The Economic Well-Being Panel requested 6 monthly updates on rent levels within Huntingdonshire, in particular whether the rent levels charged by landlords are reducing in light of the changes within the Housing Benefit system.

2. RENT LEVELS FOR HOUSING BENEFIT CLAIMANTS

- 2.1 The welfare reforms relating to Housing Benefit offered a period of 'transitional protection' for existing claimants. This means that although changes were introduced to private sector Housing Benefit claimants in April 2011 most existing claimants did not experience a reduction in their entitlement until nine months after the review date of their claim (which in reality means these took effect sometime between January and December 2012).
- 2.2 Anecdotal evidence on the rent levels that landlords are charging on properties coming to the market suggests that there has been little movement in market rent levels on re-lets, and in some cases rent levels are still increasing.
- 2.3 The table below shows the average rent levels charged to Housing Benefit claimants, by size of property, since April 2011. These show that for claimants in shared housing, and one and two bedroom properties the contractual rents have continued to increase since the Government introduced the reforms. The contractual rents for 3 and 4 bedroom properties have, however, shown a slight reduction.
- 2.4 The average rent levels for almost all property sizes in June 2013 exceeded the maximum amount of Housing Benefit payable under the Local Housing Allowance rates. The LHA rates for the current year are shown at Appendix A.


Average Contractual Rent in Benefit Calculation					
	Shared	1 Room	2 Rooms	3 Rooms	4 Rooms
Apr-11	73.36	113.16	133.09	153.72	194.85
May-11	72.00	113.40	133.37	154.49	186.10
Jun-11	71.58	113.34	133.05	153.75	187.38
Jul-11	73.04	113.63	133.13	154.25	187.38
Aug-11	72.19	113.17	133.08	154.25	190.97
Sep-11	73.12	113.24	132.93	154.28	193.87
Oct-11	72.15	113.65	133.66	153.90	191.24
Nov-11	72.02	113.15	133.87	153.68	198.49
Dec-11	73.88	112.92	134.12	153.07	198.44
Jan-12	72.51	113.76	134.46	152.00	200.09
Feb-12	73.59	114.05	134.09	151.75	200.18
Mar-12	72.83	113.65	134.59	152.57	200.84
Apr-12	73.37	113.67	134.42	151.91	202.28
May-12	75.46	115.20	135.40	151.98	198.89
Jun-12	74.46	115.54	135.52	152.35	191.11
Jul-12	74.95	115.38	135.75	151.98	189.96
Aug-12	77.35	115.74	134.53	156.48	189.52
Sep-12	78.27	116.94	134.52	154.50	187.86
Oct-12	78.57	116.82	134.64	155.11	188.39
Nov-12	78.76	116.36	135.34	155.95	188.07
Jun-13	80.10	117.89	138.13	152.25	188.82

3. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 There is little evidence to suggest that landlords are adjusting their rents downwards in line with the reduced Housing Benefit Local Housing Allowance rates as a result of the welfare reforms. This has reduced the number of households the council has been able to work proactively with to prevent homelessness by assisting them into a private sector tenancy through the Rent Deposit scheme. This in turn has contributed to an increased use in temporary accommodation and the number of households that have to be assisted into social rented housing as a result of the council's duties under the homelessness legislation.

4. RECOMMENDATION

- 4.1 The Panel is asked to:
- a) receive annual reports in future comparing the average contractual rents against the annually revised LHA rates in order to monitor trends.

Contact Officer: **Julia Barber**
 **01480 388105**

Local Housing Allowance Rates

For the period 1 April 2013 – 31 March 2014

The rates below apply to Housing Benefit claims when renting from a private landlord and making a new claim or moving into a new home.

	Huntingdon Area	Cambridge Area	Peterborough Area	Northampton Central Area
Shared Accommodation Weekly Rate	£63.50	£76.65	£57.50	£57.00
1 Bedroom Weekly Rate	£103.85	£120.00	£91.15	£80.77
2 Bedroom Weekly Rate	£126.92	£137.97	£114.23	£103.85
3 Bedroom Weekly Rate	£150.00	£160.37	£129.71	£121.15
4 Bedroom Weekly Rate	£212.26	£207.69	£165.09	£161.54

These rates apply from 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014.

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CUSTOMER SERVICES MONITORING REPORT

REPORT BY HEAD OF CUSTOMER SERVICES

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This is the monitoring report for the Customer Services team for January 2013 to June 2013. The latest statistical graphs are at Appendix A.

2 Significant highlights and issues since last report

- 2.1 The new Microsoft CRM system was rolled out to the Call Centre and Operations Division on the 15th March with 80% of the high volume requests enabled. The remaining 20% of service requests will be released in due course. Enhancements to the system needed due to the 2nd green bin charge has delayed work on the remaining requests. Many processes have been streamlined and requests do not need re-keying into different systems. IMD and Customer Service are working together with the supplier to correct issues with the system and make enhancements based on the experience of the call centre advisors.
- 2.2 Call Centre service level was reached in January but has not been met for all other months in this period. We have not met the service target in nine out of the past 12 months. We intend to review the current standard and replace it with something more achievable.
- 2.3 A Members working group formed to help the Customer Service Manager with the Customer Service strategy has proved to be a very positive and helpful initiative. The group visited Newport City Council in May and learned a great deal about how that authority has made great progress with channel migration and has made savings for the authority by working together with back offices to improve customer experience.
- 2.4 The bin round review & improvement project was a great success in February 2013. Customer Services worked hard with the Operations Division to ensure that the communication was thorough, timely and well publicised to ensure that customers were aware of the changes and how they would affect them. We had little contact from the public considering it affected every single household in the district.
- 2.5 Many welfare reform changes came into effect in April this year including the Council Tax Support Scheme and the Under-occupancy changes to the social rented sector. We believe avoidable contact increased as customers were calling the call centre to try and get through to Benefits –who were

extremely busy due to the changes. We do not have accurate figures to prove this due to the change in systems and changing the way we log avoidable contact. The Customer Service Centres experienced busy times but were well prepared for the changes with extra resource and training in place.

- 2.6 The Call Centre moved from Speke House to Amundsen House (a different CCC building on the same business park in St Ives) successfully in January and moved onto the HDC computer network at the same time. This incorporated two major changes at one time so a lot of time and effort was spent from IMD and Customer Service planning the moves to mitigate the inevitable risks. The move was performed over a weekend with no downtime for the customer whatsoever and we were back up and running on Monday morning.
- 2.7 Spectrum, our old payments system was replaced with the newer Capita product, ACR, in February. Internet Payments was also upgraded and further improvements will be implemented in the next few months.
- 2.9 Customer Services staffing levels are such that we are unable to open Ramsey and Yaxley during sickness and leave. Constituents have recently complained to their local councillor about unexpected office closures. Members will recall that during the budget savings exercise in 2011, it was agreed that rather than close these offices completely, they should remain open for two days per week. However, staffing reductions would mean that no cover would be provided. We have covered the office for one day a week each for two weeks in June as the member of staff needed special time off due to exceptional circumstances.
- 2.10 The Charging for 2nd Green Bin project has had a significant effect on the call centre. Many customers receiving letters and invoices have been angry, so the staff have had to deal with many unhappy customers. This has been exacerbated by the tight project timescales.
- 2.11 The Call Centre in particular has been affected by the heavy workload and significant projects. Staff are under pressure and sickness levels for 2012/13 are as follows;

Average FTEs over year = 16.4. Sickness per FTE = **18.6** days/FTE.
16 out of 27 (**59%**) employed in this section had any sickness absence in 2012/13.

6 employees had long-term sickness absence.

At least **8** employees (**30%** of all employed in the section in 2012/13) hit at least one absence trigger under the sickness absence policy.

This compares to the sickness levels at the Customer Service centres as follows;

Average FTEs over year = 14.6. Sickness per FTE = **8.8** days/FTE.

14 out of 20 (**70%**) employed in this section had any sickness absence in 2012/13.

1 employee had long-term sickness absence.

At least **5** employees (**25%** of all employed in the section in 2012/13) hit at least one absence trigger.

This compares to an HDC average of **8.9** days sick per FTE. The Employment Panel received a report on sickness levels which was reported to Council on 26 June (agenda item 8f, minute 3). Employment Panel will deal with this issue via this process. [This link](#) shows the relevant page.

3 Forthcoming issues and risks

3.1 We are currently undertaking an analysis of the opening hours and staffing levels at St Neots to ensure that we are running the service as effectively as we can.

3.3 Customer Services is improving the way we gather feedback from customers and the questions we ask. This is to ensure that we are gaining meaningful information from our customers and use this to enable us to continually improve. We are aiming to make our feedback mechanism more timely and personal to improve the number of responses we get and also to utilise customer feedback into performance management of staff. This may mean that our future satisfaction scores will be affected.

3.4 We are undertaking channel migration exercises at our face to face centres to try to encourage customers to pay for services using non-mediated methods. Our first exercise at St Neots on the 14th June was met with resistance from customers, so we are re-thinking our approach before the next attempt.

3.5 The latest round of the budget review will be undertaken in the next quarter, but, even allowing for reductions in service level, it may be that further budget savings are not achievable.

3.6 The Customer Service Strategy is planned to go to Cabinet in September 2013.

4 Statistics

4.1 Customer numbers for October 2012 to May 2013

The Call Centre was offered 91,191 calls and 12,488 emails.
The Customer Service Centres processed 37,142 enquiries.

4.2 Customer satisfaction levels

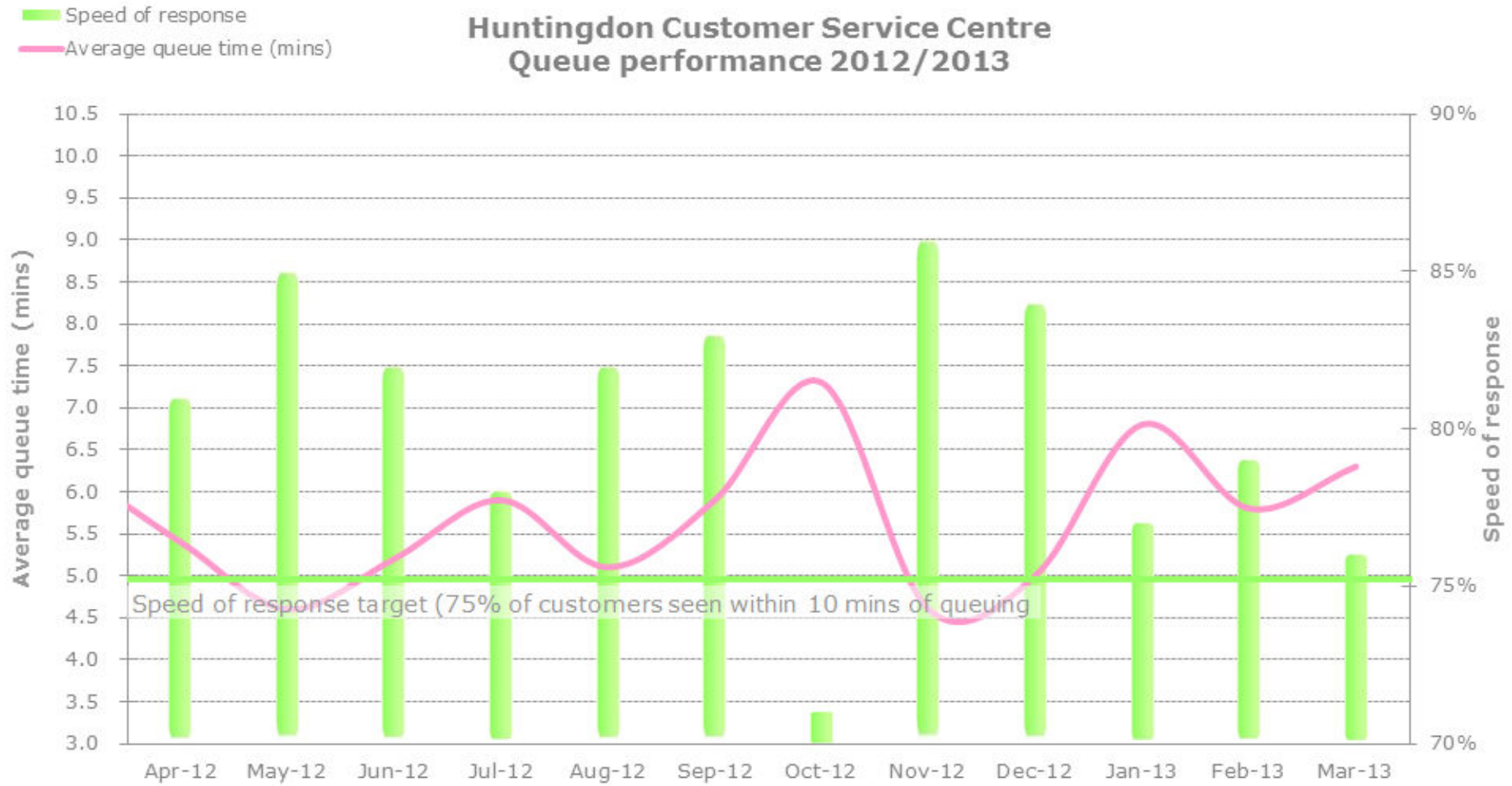
Call Centre Customer Satisfaction was 96.5%.
Customer Service Centre satisfaction was 99%.

4.3 Green bin project impact: We received 2000 more calls than forecast in May 2013. (This equated to 13,257 in total. We received 12,336 calls during May last year). Also received 1000 emails about this.

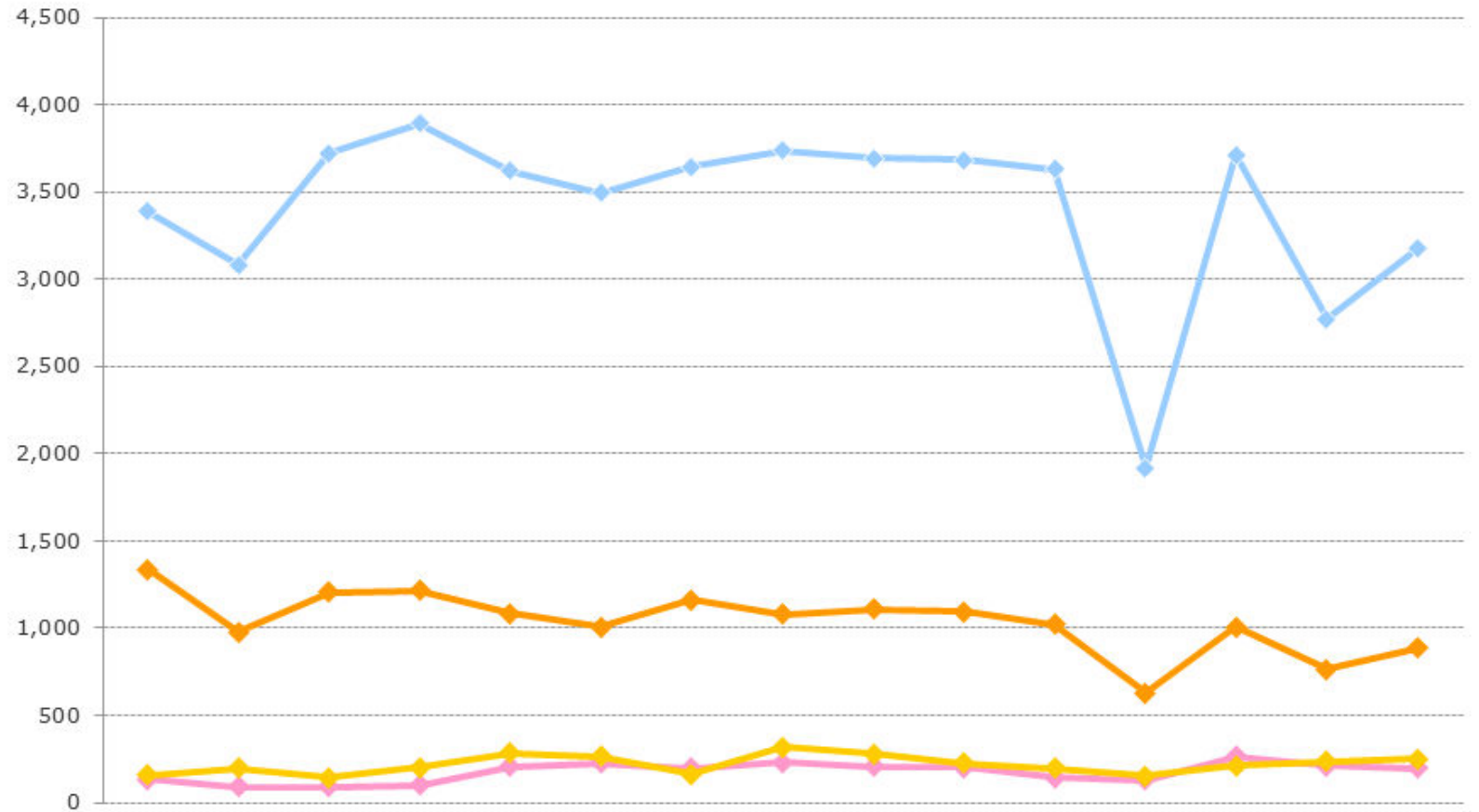
Recommendation

The Panel is asked to note the contents of this report

Contact officer – Kathryn Sexton, Customer Service Manager. 01480 387040
Julia Barber, Head of Customer Services. 01480 388105



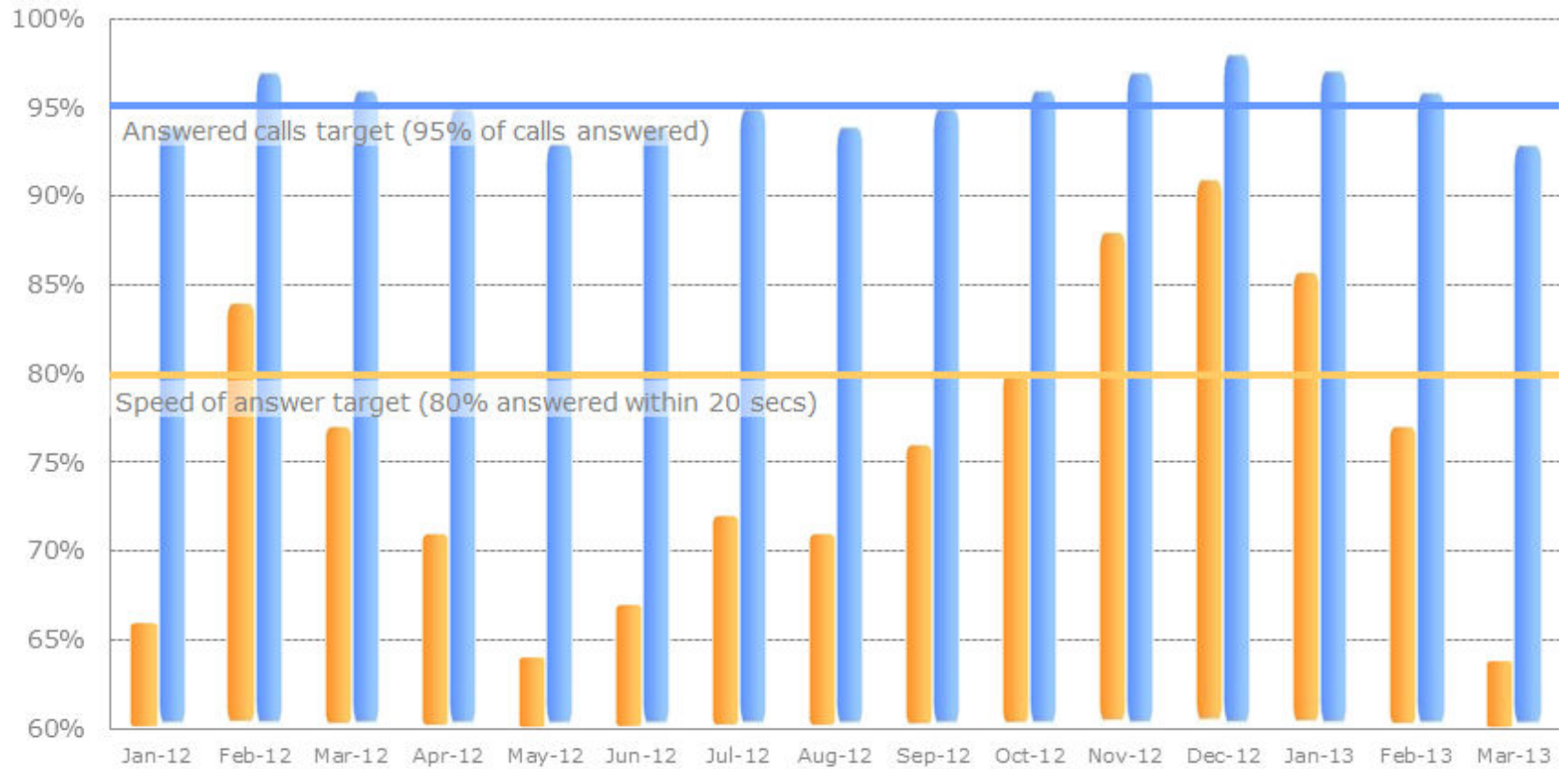
Customer Service Centres' enquiries per month



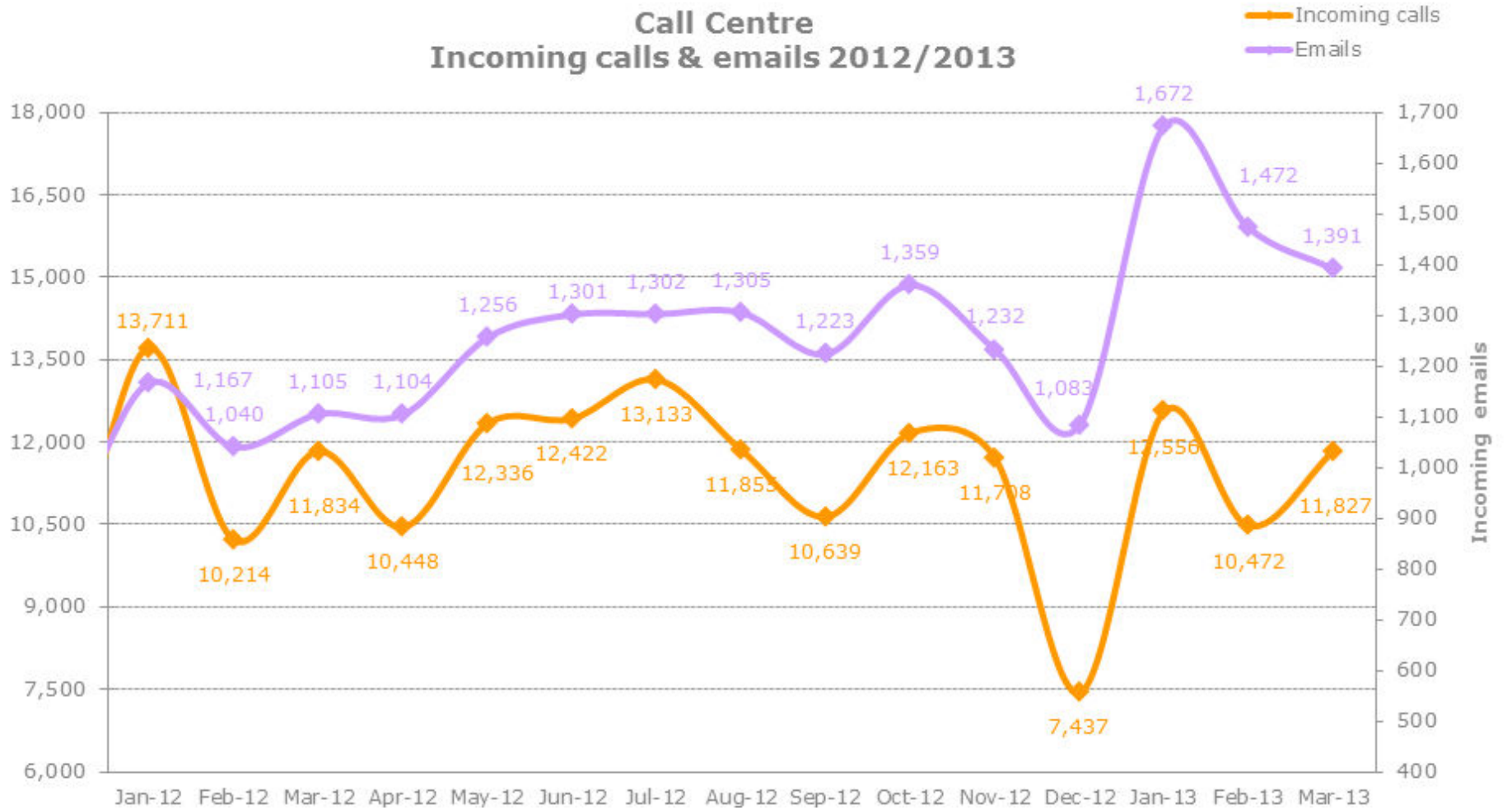
	Jan-12	Feb-12	Mar-12	Apr-12	May-12	Jun-12	Jul-12	Aug-12	Sep-12	Oct-12	Nov-12	Dec-12	Jan-13	Feb-13	Mar-13
Huntingdon CSC	3,385	3,080	3,723	3,893	3,622	3,493	3,642	3,736	3,691	3,683	3,628	1,919	3,712	2,773	3,172
Ramsey CIC	131	91	90	100	205	226	198	228	208	203	145	128	266	210	198
St Neots CSC	1,338	978	1,206	1,216	1,083	1,005	1,160	1,079	1,108	1,095	1,019	630	1,006	762	884
Yaxley CIC	159	194	145	201	285	265	162	319	280	225	197	152	212	237	249

Call Centre Call performance 2012/2013

Speed of answer
Answered calls



Call Centre Incoming calls & emails 2012/2013



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

2ND JULY 2013
4TH JULY 2013
9TH JULY 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 to be held on 18th July 2013.	Working Group
CCTV Provision within the District	To review the impact of the Council's proposal to cease the CCTV service with effect from April 2012.	Social Well-Being	A report on changes to the CCTV service in 2012/13 will be submitted to the Panel in July 2013.	Whole Panel Study.
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. Expected to be presented to the Panel and Cabinet at their October 2013 meetings. Meeting of Working Group being arranged.	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	Whole Panel.

			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.	
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 in due course.	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 July 2013 – to be confirmed.	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 in August 2013 to review their progress with a further meeting to be arranged 6 months thereafter.	Working Group.

			Annual Report on organisations supported by grants through Service Level Agreements to be presented to Panel in November 2013.	
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 July 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 September 2013. Panel agreed in June 2013 to widen the scope of its work to include supported housing.	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 in the Autumn.	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. Chairman awaiting information from the Franchise Manager at the Hospital to determine how the study should proceed. Public views will be elicited as part of the study.	Working Group
Review of Ambulance Service Provision	To undertake a review of Ambulance Service provision within the District.	Social Well-Being	Background information on Ambulance Service provision to be submitted to the Panel at a future meeting.	To be determined

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Progress Report

<p>13/05/09</p> <p>10/01/13</p>	<p><u>Customer Services</u></p> <p>Quarterly performance reports to be circulated informally to the Panel twice per year and formally twice per 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>Latest report considered in January 2013. Next report due in July 2013.</p>	<p>Report appears elsewhere on the Agenda.</p> <p>Meetings of the Working Group have been held on 13th February, 26th March and 21st May 2013. Representatives of the Working Group have also visited the Customer Services Centre at Newport. Officers will now undertake further work and the Group will reconvene once a draft proposal has been developed prior to its consideration by Overview & Scrutiny and the Cabinet.</p>	<p>04/07/13</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 Thursday 13th June 2013. An update on the outcome of this meeting will be delivered at the meeting. Further meeting to be held in July 2013.</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>Managing Director (CPP) to report back at a future meeting on the development of the business case methodology. A report on the Strategic Way Forward will be submitted to the Panel's September meeting.</p>	<p>05/09/13</p>

<p>06/06/13</p>	<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>02/11/11</p>	<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>	

Progress Report

<p>14/06/12</p>	<p><u>Economic Development</u></p> <p>Agreed that the update of the Council's Economic Strategy should be submitted to a future meeting</p>		<p>The findings from the local economic assessment were presented to the Panel's November meeting. A presentation on the Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013-2023 will be given to the Panel's July meeting. Item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.</p>	<p>04/07/12</p>
<p>05/01/12</p> <p>12/07/12</p>	<p><u>Housing Benefit Changes</u></p> <p>Agreed to receive a further report drawing together the wider housing policy implications for the Council arising from the Government's Welfare Reform Bill be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel.</p> <p>Requested that a report on rental rates and rent costs be submitted to the Panel on a quarterly basis.</p>	<p>Second report submitted to January meeting.</p>	<p>Report to be considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) at their meeting on 2nd July 2013. Members of the Panel have been invited to attend.</p> <p>Agreed that future reports should be presented every six months. Item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.</p>	<p>02/07/13</p> <p>04/07/13</p>
<p>12/07/12</p>	<p><u>Use of Consultants</u></p> <p>Received a report outlining the progress which had been made on agreeing, modifying and implementing the Panel's previous recommendations.</p>	<p>Agreed that further reports detailing expenditure on consultants, hired and temporary staff should be submitted to the Panel on an annual basis. This report should include a breakdown of revenue and capital.</p>	<p>Annual report appears elsewhere on the Agenda.</p>	<p>04/07/13</p>

<p>04/04/13</p>	<p><u>Budget</u> 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> 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>		<p>Discussions are taking place with Cambridgeshire County Council about joint use of the site. St Neots Town Council have requested the transfer of the land and Section 106 money so that they can provide the facility themselves. No decisions will be taken until a response has been received from the County Council.</p>	

<p>06/06/13</p>	<p><u>List of Areas for Potential Future Studies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Communications & Marketing ❖ Making Assets Count ❖ Shared Services for Treasury Management ❖ The A14 (including the impact of development at the former RAF Wyton airfield site) ❖ Estates ❖ Statutory & Non Statutory Services 		<p>Report already scheduled for September meeting.</p> <p>Issue raised at a recent meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen.it was agreed that this study should not be pursued as it would duplicate the work being undertaken as part of the Local Plan.</p> <p>To be considered at a later date, following the appointment of 2 new Members of Staff.</p> <p>Members to consider whether there were any specific service areas where this could be further examined.</p>	
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ACTION LOG
REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION OTHER THAN THOSE COVERED WITHIN THE PROGRESS REPORT

QUESTION	RESPONSE
Communications – Requested details of the current budget for communications (compared to 2010) from the Corporate Team Manager.	Information circulated by email.
Treasury Management – Accountancy Manager to confirm the figure for VAT Accountancy Manager was asked to provide further information on the estimated credit budget for the forthcoming year.	

Decision Digest

Edition 135

Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 22nd May to 26th June 2013.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE TOWN AND PARISH CHARTER AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR COMPACT

A copy of the final version of the Huntingdonshire Town and Parish Charter and Voluntary Sector Compact for Huntingdonshire was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). The compact seeks to achieve the objectives of the Localism Act 2011 by providing a framework within which the County, District, Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary and community sector can work in partnership to improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of Huntingdonshire for the benefit of the local community.

Huntingdonshire currently is the only Cambridgeshire authority to have a Charter and Compact document in place. The level of engagement in drafting the documents with both the Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary and community sector has been encouraging.

As both documents are still subject to final agreement with the Town and Parish Councils and the voluntary and community sector, the Panel will have sight of them again September prior to their submission to the Cabinet.

HOME IMPROVEMENT AGENCY SHARED SERVICE REVIEW AND DISABLED FACILITIES GRANT BUDGET

The outcome of a review of the Home Improvement Agency (HIA) shared

service after its first year of operation was reported to both the Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). Details of the ongoing demand for Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) were also noted by the Panel.

Despite improvements made to reduce Occupational Therapy (OT) waiting times, the Panel is keen to see further reductions in the future. The Panel is also concerned over the dissolution of Cambridgeshire Community Services and the future OT service provision. An additional Surveyor has been appointed on a temporary basis to assist with the current backlog of casework in Huntingdonshire.

The Panel has noted the HIA's work plan for 2013/14 and suggested that the option of bringing contractors in house should be explored. A number of questions were raised relating to DFGs and a response to each was given to Members. In terms of the budgetary side of DFGs, the Panel suggested that the Council should review its commitment to financing these adaptations in the future.

Having been advised of the Panel's views, the Cabinet has requested Officers to undertake additional modelling of current and future demand for DFG's to feed into the Medium Term Plan process in September 2013.

WORK PROGRAMME

The Overview and Scrutiny Panels have reviewed their work priorities for

2013/14 and the memberships of their respective Working Groups. All three Panels endorsed the content of an Overview and Scrutiny Protocol which provides a framework for the Council's Overview and Scrutiny function.

The Social Well-Being Panel has established a Working Group to undertake a review of elderly patient care at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. The Panel also has agreed to include a review of Ambulance Service provision within its work programme. Given the Panel has developed its health scrutiny role over the previous few years, the Panel has also requested a report to be submitted to a future meeting on health trends within the District.

The Economic Well-Being Panel has identified a number of potential areas for future investigation which will be discussed further at its next meeting. These include –

- communications and marketing;
- treasury management – shared services;
- the A14;
- the Making Assets Count programme;
- estates; and
- the Local Enterprise Partnership.

The Panel has also agreed to establish a small team to follow-up on the recommendations arising from the review of the Document Centre.

The Environmental Well-Being Panel has identified the following areas as potential future study areas and will discuss how this work will proceed at its July 2013 meeting:-

- car parking management;
- the impact of large scale housing development upon the A428;
- the A14;

- local bus services within Towns; and
- recycling in flats.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) – PROGRESS

The outcome of a recent meeting of the Executive Leader's Strategy Group was reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). The Panel's proposals relating to Local Joint Committees (LJCs) will be reviewed again by the Cabinet. Whilst there is support for the proposals, the Executive Leader has stressed that it will be permissive on local communities' part and that it will be up to groups of Parishes to organise, pay for and service the LJCs themselves. A report to this effect will be submitted to the Cabinet in due course.

The Panel has also agreed to widen its scope of work relating to the Local Plan 2036 in respect of social and affordable housing to include supported housing.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE REGULATION 123 AND INFRASTRUCTURE BUSINESS PLAN 2013/14 LIST

The outcome of the public consultation on the Draft Huntingdonshire CIL Regulation 123 List has been reported to both the Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being). The List defines the types of infrastructure that the Council intends to fund from the Levy to ensure that there is no duplication between contributions from CIL and Section 106 Agreements.

Members have been informed that the Government continues to change the Regulations surrounding the Levy and is currently considering proposals to exempt self-build properties. The Council has responded to the consultation on this proposal on the basis that it should not be permitted

because small sites constitute a significant proportion of development within the District.

In view of the concerns which they had previously expressed the Panel has welcomed the work which has now started with town and parish councils to develop the way in which the District Council works with them on how their contributions will be spent.

In considering the contents of the report, a Panel Member has expressed concern that infrastructure previously negotiated by communities through already existing Urban Design Frameworks might not now be delivered. Whilst it is not possible to give any guarantees, the Deputy Executive Leader has explained that best endeavours will be made to meet existing commitments.

The Panel has asked a number of questions on a range of matters, which included the audit trail for the distribution of CIL monies and the publication of proposals for the new Local Plan after the consultation.

In approving the List, the Cabinet has stressed the need to work with Town and Parish Councils to identify their priorities as part of the next stage of the Business Plan process.

COMMUNICATIONS

A presentation on the Council's communications function has been given to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) by the Corporate Team Manager. The aim of the function is to achieve a cross Council, unified approach to communications and secure value for money.

As part of the presentation, the Panel has been advised of the work which is currently being undertaken to develop

an external communications strategy. It has been suggested that local Members could be a useful communications tool for the Council and they should be utilised more than they presently are.

The Panel has discussed the use that is made by the Council of Twitter and Facebook. Their attention having been drawn to the successful use of Twitter by Coventry City Council, Members have expressed the opinion that a more strategic approach should be adopted towards use of the facility. It has also been suggested that it may be useful to segment the twitter feeds for different groups of customers.

Members have also asked about the Council's list of Twitter followers and the ways in which the Council intends to improve on the current number of them.

Information on the budget for communications and the outcome of efforts being taken to measure the benefits of the work which the communications team does also was requested.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13

The Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has reviewed the Council's treasury management performance for the year ending 31st March 2013. Members were pleased to note that the funds had performed well, significantly exceeding both the benchmark and the budgeted investment interest figure.

The Panel has commented on a range of issues including current economic trends and the problems being experienced by the Co-Operative Bank. The Accountancy Manager has been asked to provide the Panel with further

information on the estimated credit budget for the forthcoming year.

Members have noted that the Council's liability for VAT is reviewed annually by HMRC. The Panel has discussed whether there might be a benefit for the Council of transferring the leisure centres to a trust. However given that the Council's VAT liability is not wholly attributable to the leisure centres there would not be a total saving of the VAT sum.

Subsequently, the Cabinet has noted the contents of the report and has recommended to Council that they receive the Treasury Management Annual Report 2012/13.

REVIEW OF GROUNDS MAINTENANCE SERVICE STANDARDS

The first stage of a review of grounds maintenance service standards was reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being). The Panel agrees that the standards in respect of grass cutting should be retained at the current levels. The service has already been streamlined following a review undertaken back in 2011 and it is difficult to achieve further efficiency savings. There is however an opportunity to create efficiencies in respect of litter picking. A report outlining proposals to this effect will be submitted to the Panel in the autumn. The Executive Councillor for Environment has undertaken to investigate a number of suggestions made to him by the Panel once senior management's plans for savings have been published.

MEETING OUR OBJECTIVELY ASSESSED NEED FOR HOUSING: MEMORANDUM OF COOPERATION – SUPPORTING THE SPATIAL APPROACH 2011-2031

In conjunction with the Cabinet, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) has endorsed the content of a Memorandum of Co operation on the assessment of future housing needs. The Memorandum refers to the Council's joint working with partner authorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and demonstrated the Council's compliance with the Duty to Co-operate as contained within the Localism Act 2011.

Huntingdonshire will be contributing 21,000 homes within the Cambridge Sub-Region Housing Market Area by 2036 and it is expected that this figure will be achieved.

Matters discussed by the Panel include the methodology employed to determine housing allocations across each local authority area and the factors likely to cause an increase in demand for housing such as fluctuations in birth rates, the ageing population and local economic pressures.

The Cabinet has stressed the need to be mindful of the plans of neighbouring authorities outside the strategic housing area which may have considerable impact on the district.

HOUSING NEEDS COMPLAINT AWARD OF COMPENSATION

The Corporate Governance Panel has approved a compensation payment of £250. The payment relates to a complaint to the Ombudsman regarding a homelessness matter and will be set against a debt owed to the Council by the complainant relating to a bond

granted under the Rent Deposit scheme.

REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS

All three Panels have noted the outcome of an exercise undertaken by a Working Group established to review the effectiveness of Overview and Scrutiny. The report concluded that the Panels were generally acting effectively in terms of the discharge of their responsibilities and fulfilling their terms of reference.

Concerns continue to be expressed that the North West Huntingdonshire pilot Local Joint Committee had not materialized as expected in the last year. The Social Well-Being Panel referred to the lack of any forum whereby the three tiers of local government and partners can meet to discuss issues of local concern for the benefit of the community. With this in mind, the Chairman suggested that the Deputy Executive Leader be asked to update the Panel on the progress being made with the pilot scheme.

REVIEW OF THE EFFECTIVENES OF INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICE

In accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2011, the Corporate Governance Panel has reviewed the effectiveness of the system of internal audit and is satisfied with the Audit and Risk Manager's opinion that the areas of non-conformance were of a minor nature and not considered significant enough to warrant inclusion in the Annual Governance Statement.

FRAUD WORKING GROUP

Councillors E R Butler, K J Churchill, G J Harlock and P G Mitchell have been re appointed to the Fraud Working Group for the ensuing year.

ROLE OF THE EMPLOYMENT PANEL

Following review of the arrangements for the consideration of employment matters which were approved earlier in the year, the Employment Panel has been reminded about their new role and terms of reference.

In considering potential areas for investigation, Members have suggested a number of ideas which might form the basis of a work programme for the year. These included the culture of the organisation and the ways in which Managers managed their teams and staff grievances.

In terms of their future relationship with the Staff Council, the Panel has noted that the Chairman and Vice Chairman will continue to meet informally with employee representatives and that there would be opportunities for the Staff Council to raise issues with the Panel. Democratic Services undertook to clarify the process by which representatives could present directly to the Panel.

MANAGING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE

As part of LGSS' commitment to review five policies and procedures per year, the Panel has reviewed and endorsed the content of a new policy for Managing Employee Performance.

The new Policy provides guidance to managers on how to help employees achieve and maintain good performance levels and where this falls below acceptable standards ensures that any potential issue is dealt with promptly, sensitively and consistently. It also provides guidance to employees where performance standards are not reached and the potential consequences for their continued employment.

Training on the application of the new policy will be extended to all managers across the organisation.

EMPLOYMENT REPORT – QUARTER 3

The Employment Panel received a quarterly report on Human Resource matters impacting on the performance of the organisation. The report included the latest position and trends relating to:-

- employee numbers;
- salary costs;
- employee turnover;
- sickness absence reporting; and
- Human Resources caseload.

The Panel noted that the average days sickness per FTE employee had increased to 8.9 days during the last quarter, which is higher than the corresponding period in the previous year. The Panel also received information on sickness levels being experienced by other public sector organisations and noted that there was a general upward trend.

Having noted that work was being undertaken to investigate a workplace based support service for staff that were experiencing stress at work, the Panel discussed the support which was currently available to staff from First Contact and Occupational Health services. Members were assured that these proposals would provide an additional work based service and that there was no desire to change the existing arrangements. The Panel requested further information on the existing services and an update on the proposals for work based counselling at a future meeting.

QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR HR, PAYROLL AND ORGANISATION AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The Employment Panel considered the performance of LGSS Human Resources, Payroll and Organisational Workforce Development services across the key service measures put in place at the start of the contract over the period May 2012 to end of March 2013.

Whilst general service standards had been met, the Panel noted that there was further work to be done in Organisational & Workforce Development to encourage a greater take-up of training courses (only 304 places had been delivered out of a target of 500 in an 11 month period). LGSS will be working with Managers to help address this issue.

The Panel was assured that feedback on the LGSS contract is requested from managers and staff and been reminded that the LGSS contract represented a change in culture for many Managers and an expectation that managers are required to be more self sufficient. Further work is required to help staff understand their new roles and responsibilities, and this will be addressed as part of the training on new policies. The reinvigoration of the Council's Leadership programme also would help in this respect.

PAY REVIEW PROJECT

The Employment Panel has received an update on the progress being made on the Council's Pay Review project. It was noted that Stage 1, the evaluation and moderation process was nearing conclusion and was expected to be completed by mid July. LGSS will then commence work on the next stage of the project (Stage 2), which includes:-

- pay modelling / development of a new pay & grading framework;
- benchmarking;
- pay policy review;
- the consultation process; and
- the appeals procedure.

In response to comments made by representatives of the Staff Council and Members regarding the need to improve communications on the subject and to bring the process to a close as quickly as possible, the Panel was informed that the current timetable for the remainder of the project was to be considered by the new Managing Director. In this regard, the Panel has agreed that the Chairman and Vice Chairman should meet with the new Managing Director to seek to progress the matter further and that in the interim staff should be updated as to the current position.

REPRESENTATIONS ON ORGANISATIONS

The Cabinet has appointed representatives to serve on a variety of organisations for the ensuing year. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services, after consultation with the Deputy Executive Leader, has been authorised to make any changes to the schedule that may arise throughout the year.

COMMUNITY RIGHT TO CHALLENGE

A timetable for the acceptance of expressions of interests (EOI's) under the new Community Right to Challenge Initiative has been approved by the Cabinet.

The Right to Challenge was created by the Localism Act and introduces a right

for defined organisations and persons to submit an Expression of Interest in taking over the provision of a service on behalf of the Council. Where a valid expression is received, the Council will be required to undertake a procurement exercise for that service which may lead to the authority awarding a contract for the service provision. The timetable identifies when services will be open for receiving EOI's.

LOAN TO HUNTINGDONSHIRE REGIONAL COLLEGE

The Cabinet has approved, in principle the provision of a loan to Huntingdonshire Regional College to fund the expansion of their facilities. The College will provide security in the form of a charge against an area of land, the valuation of which exceeds the value of the loan. The Assistant Director, Finance and Resources has been requested to finalise the details of the loan, after consultation with the Executive Leader and the Executive Councillor for Resources.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

At its June meeting, the Development Management Panel considered nine development applications of which six were approved, three refused and one deferred. These included consent for a scheme of eight dwellings on a site in Holme which would provide two affordable homes via a related S106 Agreement.

Having regard to two appeals against non determination, the Panel has indicated to the Planning Inspector that it would have been minded to refuse applications for a proposed food store and residential development on Stukeley Road, Hartford and 6 wind turbines and associated infrastructure, south west of RAF Molesworth, Bythorn.

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