

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, 3 APRIL 2014** at **7:00 PM** and you are requested to attend for the transaction of the following business:-

**Contact  
(01480)**

## **APOLOGIES**

**1. MINUTES** (Pages 1 - 6)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 March 2014.

**C Bulman  
388234**

**2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

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

**3. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS** (Pages 7 - 10)

A copy of the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions is attached. Members are invited to comment as appropriate on any items contained therein.

**H Taylor  
388008**

**4. MEMBERS IT**

To receive a presentation by the IMD Service Manager on IT for Members and proposed changes to the current arrangements.

*(All Members of the Council have been invited to attend and partake in the discussion on this item).*

**A Howes  
388190  
C Hall  
388116**

**5. NATIONAL NON DOMESTIC RATING - CHANGES TO DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY FROM 1 APRIL 2014**  
(Pages 11 - 16)

To consider a report by the Head of Customer Services.

**J Barber  
388105**

**6. INTERNAL AUDIT REVIEW - ELECTRONIC DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT** (Pages 17 - 24)

The Internal Audit Manager to present the findings of the Audit of Electronic Document Management (EDM).

**D Harwood  
388115**

7. **FACING THE FUTURE** (Pages 25 - 30)

Following a request at the last meeting, to receive a report on the progress of those items deemed to have "Limited Service Impact".

**A Roberts**  
**388015**  
**C Mason**  
**388157**

8. **WORKPLAN STUDIES** (Pages 31 - 34)

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

**C Bulman**  
**388234**

9. **OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY (ECONOMIC WELL\_BEING) - PROGRESS** (Pages 35 - 40)

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

**C Bulman**  
**388234**

10. **SCRUTINY** (Pages 41 - 44)

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 March 2014



Head of Paid Service

**Notes**

**1. 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.

### **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.

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**Please contact Mrs Claire Bulman, Democratic Services Officer, Tel 01480 388234 / email [Claire.Bulman@huntingdonshire.gov.uk](mailto: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.**

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

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## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) held in the CIVIC SUITE 0.1A, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON PE29 3TN on Thursday, 6 March 2014.

PRESENT: Councillor T V Rogers – Chairman.

Councillors P L E Bucknell, G J Bull,  
E R Butler, S Cawley, K J Churchill, Eacott,  
S Greenall, R Harrison, P G Mitchell,  
M F Shellens and A H Williams.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors J A Gray (Item 89), B S Chapman (Items 91 and 92) and R B Howe (Item 91).

### **85. MR S COUPER AND MS J BARBER**

The Chairman reminded Members that the Assistant Director (Finance and Resources) would be retiring at the end of the month. The Panel expressed their appreciation of the assistance Mr S Couper had provided to them which had helped them to address the financial issues facing the Authority and wished him well for the future.

In noting that this was likely to be the last meeting that the Head of Customer Services would attend, the Panel also thanked Ms Julia Barber for her help and work for the Panel during her employment with the Council.

### **86. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6th February 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **87. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

No declarations were received.

### **88. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Panel considered and noted the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). Members were reminded that if they were interested in particular items they were able to attend the relevant meetings of the Social and Environmental Well-Being Panels at which they were considered.

The Scrutiny and Review Manager undertook to provide a copy of the Wind Turbines Supplementary Planning Document to Councillors P L E Bucknell and E R Butler directly when it became available.

**89. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of a particular person (including the authority holding that information).

**90. TRANSFER OF CREATIVEXCHANGE, LONGSANDS CAMPUS**

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

With the assistance of a report by the Corporate Office (Estates) (a copy of which is appended in the annex to the Minute Book) the Panel considered a number of options for the future use and ownership of the Creativexchange in the Longsands Academy Campus. Following a brief introduction by the Executive Councillor for Resources and the Estates Strategic Assessment Manager, Members were informed that the current arrangements for the management of the building had now expired, which meant that consideration could be given to its future use and ownership.

The Panel discussed the original reasons for building the Creativexchange, occupancy levels and trends, the potential terms of a new arrangement with the existing management company, other options for the building and the Council's land within which the car park was sited. Reference was also made to the ongoing inefficiencies associated with continuing to operate the facility. In recognition of the fact that there were lessons which could be learnt from this exercise, Members suggested that a post project appraisal should be undertaken.

At the conclusion of the deliberations, the Panel agreed on its recommendations to the Cabinet and requested that a review be carried out on the lessons which had been learned from the Creativexchange project including the expenditure which had been incurred.

**91. RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PUBLIC**

RESOLVED

that the public be re-admitted to the meeting.

**92. LOVES FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE - UPDATE**

*(Councillors R B Howe, Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities, and B S Chapman, elected Member for St Neots Priory Park, were in attendance for this item).*

Councillor R B Howe, Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities, addressed the Panel on the development of the Loves Farm Community Centre. He also referred to a number of the issues that the project had faced. A report on progress had been included on

the Agenda (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). Members were informed that an agreement had been made with Cambridgeshire County Council for the provision of a combined Community Building and a pre-school playgroup facility.

As part of the presentation, Members were provided with details of the site for the facility together with the proposed elevations and floor plans. Having been acquainted with the financial position of the original scheme, it was reported that £56K had been spent by the District Council on the initial proposal. Members were informed that the County Council would contribute £670K to the amended scheme. Attention was then drawn to the timetable for the completion of the facility, the next steps and the lessons which had been learnt from the exercise to-date.

Councillor B S Chapman, a local Member for Priory Park, thanked the Executive Councillor for drawing this project to a near conclusion. He stated that it would be an essential facility for the local community and the local Community Group, which would be managing the building, was keen to start running it. He expressed his appreciation of the County Council's financial contribution.

The Panel discussed the financial resources available to the Community Group, the opportunities available to it for securing grant funding and its framework and operating structure. Members were informed that it had recently adopted a more commercial approach.

In terms of the use of the facility, Members were informed that the building would be owned by the District Council and sub-let in two distinct parts: one to the Community Group and the other to the County Council and then to the playgroup. Having been advised that the Community Group would be responsible for generating income from the community part of the building, Members drew attention to the potential financial risk to the District Council if the Group was unsuccessful in generating sufficient income from the facility. A Member suggested that steps should be taken to ensure that it maintained sufficient reserves. With this in mind and having noted the views of the local Member that there was already demand for this type of facility in St Neots, Members suggested that the Community Group should be required to prepare a Business Plan and submit it to the District Council prior to any agreement being finalised.

In terms of the design and location of the proposed new building, the Panel suggested that the provision of only ten parking spaces was inadequate and could result in parking problems on the estate and also deter larger organisations from using the facility. In response, the local Member explained that the Community Centre was located in a strategic position within the development and the majority of users would have access to it on foot. However, Members were of the view that the facility could not be sustained by business generated solely from within the local community and parking should be considered as part of the Community Group's business plan. Having agreed that the Council could learn lessons from the project, it was

RESOLVED

It is recommended

(a) that the Community Group, which will be responsible for the management of the Loves Farm Community Centre, be requested to prepare a Business Plan and submit it to the Council prior to any agreement being entered into; and

(b) that, to enable lessons to be learnt, the project is audited.

### **93. CUSTOMER SERVICES MONITORING**

*(Councillor B S Chapman, Executive Councillor for Customer Services, was in attendance for this item).*

The Panel gave consideration to the Customer Services Performance report for the period July to December 2013 (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). In introducing the report, Councillor Chapman reported that the Service was moving forward with the delivery of the new Customer Services Strategy and that the efforts which were being made to 'migrate' customers to alternative self-service options were starting to be successful. The Head of Customer Services explained that this was borne out by the data for the last quarter, which appeared to demonstrate that 'quick and easy' transactions were being completed through self-service and the more difficult transactions were being handled by Customer Services staff.

In considering the contents of the report, Members enquired why customers could on occasion be waiting up to 40 minutes at the Huntingdon Customer Services Centre. In response, the Customer Services Manager explained that this had occurred very infrequently and she undertook to circulate further details outside of the meeting. Whilst it was not always possible to control waiting times, management information was used to forecast when increases in demand might occur.

In discussing a possible future move of the Call Centre Team to Pathfinder House, the Panel queried what impact this might have on staff retention. Members were informed that initial enquiries had elicited positive responses with the majority of employees understanding the benefits of making this move. Having noted that two experienced members of the team had left to take up positions at a neighbouring authority, Members were informed that the differences in salaries between the Authorities had been addressed by the Pay Review Project. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

### **94. BRIEFING ON NATIONAL NON DOMESTIC RATES**

Pursuant to Minute No.13/61, the Panel received a presentation from the Head of Customer Services on National Non Domestic Rates (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). As part of the



presentation information was provided on the property valuation process, rateable values, empty property rates, the award of 'Mandatory' and 'Discretionary' reliefs and the rules relating to the Greater Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Enterprise Zone. Members were then advised of the budgetary impact of changes to the finance regime from April 2013 and the implications of the 2013 Autumn Statement on National Non Domestic Rates. The Head of Customer Services explained that the avoidance of payment of business rates was becoming a national issue.

Members asked a number of detailed questions, which were responded to by the Head of Customer Services. The Panel was reminded that a copy of the Rural Settlements list, which defined those areas where rural rate relief applied, could be found on the Council's website.

Members thanked the Head of Customer Services for an informative and useful presentation.

**95. 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.

**96. OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS**

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) reviewing progress on matters that had been previously discussed. Councillor P G Mitchell reported that he had received information on the Authority's gross expenditure in 2010/11 to 2013/14. A meeting of the Working Group looking at gross expenditure shortly would be convened.

With reference to the Facing the Future exercise, the Chairman suggested that the Panel should receive a monitoring report on those items which had been categorised as having 'limited service impact'. This suggestions was endorsed.

**97. SCRUTINY**

The Panel considered and noted the latest edition of the Decision Digest (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). With reference to the recent review of Fraud Investigation activity by the Corporate Governance Panel, Councillor E R Butler was asked to report back to the next meeting on the future of the Fraud Team within the Authority.

Chairman



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	Reasons for the report to be considered in private.	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Service Delivery Options###	Cabinet	10 Apr 2014		Steve Couper, Assistant Director of Finance and Resources Tel No 01480 388103 or email Steve.Couper@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J D Ablewhite	Economic Well-Being
Corporate Plan***	Cabinet	10 Apr 2014		Howard Thackray, Policy and Strategic Services Manager Tel No. 01480 388035 or email Howard.Thackray@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J D Ablewhite	All
Civil Parking Enforcements***	Cabinet	19 Jun 2014		Stuart Bell, Transportation Team Leader Tel No. 01480 388387 or email Stuart.Bell@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Green Deal	Cabinet	19 Jun 2014		Chris Jablonski, Environment Team Leader Tel No. 01480 388368 or email Chris.Jablonski@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		D M Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Consultation and Engagement Strategy	Cabinet	19 Jun 2014		Louise Sboui, Senior Policy Officer Tel No. 01480 388032 or email Louise.Sboui@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J D Ablewhite	Social Well-Being
A14	Cabinet	19 Jun 2014		Steve Ingram, Assistant Director, Environment, Growth and Planning Tel No. 01480 388400 or email Steve.Ingram@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Wind Turbines SPD	Cabinet	19 Jun 2014	Draft SPD	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Huntingdon and Godmanchester Market Town Transport Strategy	Cabinet	17 Jul 2014	Market Town Transport Strategy	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Cambs Home Improvement Agency - 2 Year Review	Cabinet	17 Jul 2014		Trish Reed, Housing Strategy Manager Tel No. 01480 388203 or email Trish.Reed@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Social Well-Being
Cambridgeshire Long-Term Transport Strategy	Cabinet	17 Jul 2014		Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being

Subject/Matter for Decision	Decision/ recommendation to be made by	Date decision to be taken	Documents Available	How relevant Officer can be contacted	Reasons for the report to be considered in private	Relevant Executive Councillor	Relevant Overview & Scrutiny Panel
Huntingdon West Masterplan	Cabinet	11 Sep 2014	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
Huntingdonshire Infrastructure Business Plan	Cabinet	23 Oct 2014		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	20 Nov 2014	Submission - Draft Local Plan	Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being

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**Public**  
**Key Decision - Yes**

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>Title/Subject Matter:</b>	National Non Domestic Rating - Changes to Discretionary Rate Relief Policy from 1 April 2014.
<b>Meeting/Date:</b>	Cabinet – 10 April 2014 O&S (Economic) - 3 April 2014 COMT – 31 March 2014
<b>Executive Portfolio:</b>	Customer Services
<b>Report by:</b>	Head of Customer Services
<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	All

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### **Executive Summary:**

The Chancellor announced at the Autumn Statement of 5 December 2013 a package of business rates measures, two of which are to be temporary discounts:

- A discount of £1,000 (subject to state aid limits) for all occupied retail properties with a rateable value not exceeding £50,000. These are generally described as shops, restaurants, cafes and drinking establishments.
- A 50% business rate relief for 18 months for businesses that move into retail premises that have been empty for a year or more.

Since then, on 17 February 2014 and in response to recent atrocious weather conditions causing major flooding in some areas, the Government has also now announced 100% rate relief for 3 months for any day between 1 December 2013 and 31 March 2014 where non domestic properties have been flooded and meet other qualifying criteria.

As these are temporary measures the government do not propose to change the relevant regulations, but instead will provide the discounts by reimbursing billing authorities that use their discretionary rate relief powers (under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988) for the local share of the discretionary relief (by providing a grant under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003).

Through this mechanism, central government will guarantee to reimburse local authorities (both billing authorities and those major precepting authorities within the rates retention system) for the cost to them under these specific circumstances.

### **Recommendation:**

**It is recommended that:**

- **Cabinet approve the award of (Section 47) Discretionary Rate Relief where all qualifying conditions are satisfied for the reliefs intended as listed above, provided the government makes 100% reimbursement by grant(s).**
- **Delegated Authority is given to the Head of Customer Services and the Local Taxation Manager to award these discounts.**





## **1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT/PURPOSE?**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable Members to make an informed decision on the proposed use of discretionary rate relief in essence to deliver the new temporary reliefs announced in the Chancellor's 2013 Autumn Statement, and following the recent floods in some areas. (No reports have been received of flooded business premises in Huntingdonshire at this time).

## **2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Central Government do not propose to change the existing regulations because they say this is a temporary measure only.
- 2.2 Instead they are asking that local authorities use their discretionary rate relief powers under Section 47 of the Local Government Act 1988, and that requires a change to the Council's discretionary policy.
- 2.3 A similar report was considered and approved by Cabinet on 12 December 2013 for a temporary relief on newly built non domestic properties following a consultation exercise conducted by the Government and announced separately in advance of the Autumn Statement.

## **3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS**

- 3.1 Other options could be to either decline to grant the intended discounts by way of discretionary rate relief, or vary the level of the relief but this would not provide the help and financial support to the local "Retail" ratepayers nor encourage new occupations. Most importantly, if the council does not grant the relief to the full extent of the Governments intention it will not be 100% reimbursed by way of grant.

## **4. KEY IMPACTS/RISKS HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?**

- 4.1 It will be for individual billing authorities to grant relief and to ensure that each application fully meets the qualifying criteria, and obviously the payment of the grant, paid in arrears by the government, will be subject to full external audit. Accordingly there will be an administrative and cost burden to the council which should be also be met by an administrative grant although no specific details are available at this time. Nor does it recognise or compensate for the cash flow impact for the council.
- 4.2 The biggest risk is the unlikely outcome that the government does not honour its guarantee of 100% reimbursement or problems with the auditing of the claims (rather than relying on the legal definition of "retail" the government has issued specific guidance on what it considers to be retail and what it does not).
- 4.3 This position is further complicated by the fact that billing authorities must also ensure that the rules on the maximum amount of "state aid" are not breached.

## **5. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 5.1 If agreed, a comprehensive checklist of all the relevant circumstances matching the qualifying criteria will be prepared for each application; awards will be separately identified in the accounts and reimbursement claimed as part of the

non domestic rates year-end reconciliations (and again subject to external audit certification).

5.2 No application for a temporary discount will be considered without the necessary accompanying statement on State Aid so as to mitigate any financial risk to the Council in that particular regard. (A practice that has become essential when considering discounts in the Enterprise Zone).

5.3 The government amended the relevant demand notice regulations in time for annual billing in March 2014, and every ratepayer has notice of the new reliefs in pages 35 to 38 of the Council Tax Booklet (which must also go to all ratepayers as the prescribed “Non-Domestic Rates Explanatory Notes”).

## **6. LINK TO THE LEADERSHIP DIRECTION**

6.1 This policy change will meet the aim of generating business growth in the district by encouraging re-occupation of empty properties and supporting the Retail Sector. Whilst retail relief was heralded as help for the High Street, it is not exclusively prescribed that way in the guidance and so rural retail businesses and pubs for example could also benefit.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

7.1 There is no requirement for any consultation exercise on policy changes on discretionary rate relief

## **8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

8.1 There is no legal implication other than for the decision to be formally resolved in order to amend the Discretionary Relief policy. The Head of Customer Services and Local Taxation Manager already hold Delegated Authority to grant discretionary relief under the Council’s policy.

## **9. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 As outlined above there is a significant burden for the business rates team, and in terms of accounting and completing external audit (which may also increase audit fees), it would have certainly been simpler and less of a financial risk had the government amended the appropriate regulations albeit for a temporary period.

9.2 The cost of reliefs awarded by the Council will ultimately be reimbursed by the government; therefore there is no direct net cost to the Council other than in terms of (unfunded) administration, resource, and cash flow.

9.3 As outlined previously, the “Retail” relief is likely to be extensive and certainly, in the short/medium term, more resource intensive. This includes the uploading, testing and implementation of a software module (Discounts are normally calculated as a percentage rather than the monetary value of the new “retail discount”) from Northgate Information Systems.

## **10 REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

10.1 The recommendation will encourage, it is hoped, reoccupation of buildings left empty for some time and thus re-generation but perhaps most immediately it will give some financial support directly to retail businesses already facing difficult times.

**Recommendation:**

Based on the information contained within this report, it is recommended that Cabinet agrees :

- **To include 100% discretionary rate relief for all qualifying new (temporary) reliefs as listed above.**
- **Awards to be made under delegated powers to Head of Customer Services and Local Taxation Manager**

**11. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

None

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Business Rates Information Letter (9/2013) - dated 6 December 2013.
- Business Rates Retail Relief Guidance- dated 29 January 2014.
- Business Rates Information Letter (2/2014) - dated 6 February 2014.
- Business Rates Information Letter (3/2014) - dated 17 February 2014.

**CONTACT OFFICER**

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Tel No. 01480 388138

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Public  
Key Decision – No

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**Title/Subject Matter:** Internal Audit Review  
Electronic Document Management

**Meeting/Date:** Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being)  
3 April 2014

**Executive Portfolio:** Resources: Councillor J A Gray

**Report by:** Internal Audit & Risk Manager

**Ward(s) affected:** All Wards

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### Executive Summary:

In November 2011, the Panel established a Working Group to review the costs of the District Council's Document Centre with the aim of forming a view on its efficiency and cost effectiveness. The Working Group reported its findings to the Panel in February 2013 who subsequently made 10 recommendations to the March 2013 Cabinet.

One of the recommendations was to investigate the progress of electronic document management (EDM – Information@Work) across the Council. The Internal Audit Service had a similar review included in its 2013/14 audit plan. The Panel therefore decided to await the outcome of the internal audit review before deciding what further work they should undertake.

### Internal Audit review:

The Internal Audit review had intended to be conducted as a post implementation review of the EDM project – comparing the original project objectives to identify if they have been delivered, what benefits have been realised and if the project had been delivered within budget. This piece of work was not possible to undertake, as much of the material had been archived or could not be accessed easily due to the fact that EDM project commenced in 2004.

Consequently, the focus of the audit was changed. Whilst 20 service areas use the Information@Work system in one way or another (e.g. scanning, storing or workflow management), the review concentrated on those six services that use the Document Centre for their initial scanning of documents into the EDM system for workflow management purposes:

Licensing	Planning
Housing Benefits	Council Tax
Housing	Environmental Health (testing revealed not used for workflow)

The internal audit review concluded that the systems in place to manage EDM across these six areas was adequate. Four actions were suggested for improving the

current system, all were accepted. The final version of the internal audit report is attached at Annex A.

Agreed action one (to investigate the volume of scanning completed by four sections who undertake some scanning away from the Document Centre to understand if it is being done in the most effective and efficient way) has been completed by the Document Centre Manager who concluded that there were inefficiencies in the current scanning procedures and that these areas should be further reviewed to realise efficiency savings.

The implementation dates for the remaining three agreed actions have not yet been reached. Agreed action three (reviewing the application of the Information@Work system to ensure that electronic data is stored efficiently, effectively and consistently) requires a substantial piece of work to be undertaken, if the full benefits of Information@Work and its use for documentation retention are to be realised.

***Financial implications***

There are no financial implications.

***Legal implications***

There are no legal implications.

**Recommendation:**

It is recommended that Panel note the internal audit report into EDM and decide what, if any, further review work they wish to undertake into this area.

**Background papers**

None

**Contact Officer**

David Harwood. Internal Audit & Risk Manager  
Tel No. 01480 388115

**Internal Audit Report**  
**Electronic Document**  
**Management (EDM)**

Colin Meadowcroft,  
Head of Legal and Democratic  
Services

October 2013  
v.1

**Summary**

This audit reviewed the management of the Electronic Document Management system that has been fully implemented within 6 of the Councils services and is also used for scanning and retaining documents for other services. The review looked at the original project objectives to identify if they have been delivered, what benefits have been realised, licences and the costs involved.

However, after the audit brief was issued, the emphasis concentrated on the use of the Information@Work system (Anite) within the 6 services rather than the review of the original EDM project objectives.

Information@Work is only one part of the Councils EDM systems which also includes MS SharePoint, the NAS 1 server and Express (Electoral role). These systems were not reviewed. The Housing, Planning, Benefits, Council Tax and Licensing sections were chosen as they use the Information@Work system to process documents in a work flow, not just as a storage facility. Environmental and Community Services do not use the Information@Work system for work flow, just for storage.

Prior to the audit commencing the following ‘key’ risks were identified and agreed with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

- The objectives set out in the original EDM project have not been realised
- There may be missed efficiency opportunities from services implementing EDM
- Opportunities from EDM may be missed from lack of funding for the project
- Resources may not be used effectively and efficiently

After undertaking the audit and reviewing the controls that are in place to mitigate the risks the main issues that have emerged are as follows:

- There are apparent inefficiencies in document scanning.
- Licensing remain reliant on paper documents to drive their work flow.
- User expertise is not being fully utilised.
- The document retention policy is not being complied with.
- Scanned documents from the Customer Services centres are sent to PFH for storage.
- Electronic documents are being used by planning, but paper copies still require to be issued to consultees. There is the opportunity for further savings to be made in this area.

**Audit Opinion**

The audit has consequently identified 4 risk areas (0 ‘red’, 4 ‘amber’). The report explains those risks, details the suggested action to deal with them and the order of their priority.

Based on the audit work undertaken it is my opinion that the inherent risks are generally well managed although there are some control weaknesses which have been identified

Consequently, if the existing approach is maintained I am able to provide adequate assurance that the system risks are being properly managed.

**David Harwood**  
**Internal Audit & Risk Manager**

If you wish to discuss any matters contained in the report, please contact Rebecca Maxwell, extension 8117, within my Internal Audit Service.



HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – DRAFT INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Audit Findings

	Residual Risk	Agreed Action	By Who	By When
1.	<p><b>Medium</b> It was found during the review that staff within the Housing, Benefits and Local Taxation are undertaking document scan on a regular basis.</p> <p><i>Possible inefficient use of resources</i></p>	<p>The Housing, Benefits, Local Taxation and Planning Team Managers in conjunction with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to investigate the volume of scanning completed in their sections to understand if it is the most effective and efficient way.</p>	<p>Colin Meadowcroft, Head of Legal and Democratic Services</p>	<p>30 November 2013</p>
2.	<p><b>Medium</b> During the review it was found that certain Users and sections had a lot of knowledge of the system and the benefits of the system. However this was not consistent throughout the Council. The Corporate ICT Support Officer provides drop in sessions but if Users are not aware of a more efficient way of carrying out a process then they would not know to take advantage of these drop in sessions.</p> <p>The Benefit and Local Taxation sections had numerous procedure notes for the Information@Work system while other sections did not have any. The intranet site that was set up to provide a way of sharing data and information has not been uploaded with this information, so users are not aware of potential aids to assist them.</p>	<p>Each of the 5 services that use Information@Work for workflow management to nominate a user to become a Super User for that section.</p> <p>The Super Users to meet on a regular basis to share knowledge, to be trained in the system to enable them to provide assistance to other users in their section. To promote the system within the council, to share procedures on the Information@Work site.</p> <p>The Corporate ICT support officer to facilitate the super user group, to update and manage the</p>	<p>John Taylor, IMD Development Manager</p>	<p>31 August 2014</p>
<p>Additional information that explains the risk and action categories is available via <a href="#">this hyperlink</a> or directly from the Audit Manager.</p>				

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – DRAFT INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

	Residual Risk	Agreed Action	By Who	By When
	<i>Not maximising the most of the internal knowledge and resource available</i>	Information@Work intranet site so that there is current information shared within the Council		
3.	<p><b>Medium</b> At present electronic documents are stored in various different formats and systems thorough out the Council. Scanning electronic data onto the NAS 1 server can be time consuming and is not the most efficient method of storing data. Documents stored on the NAS 1 drive are also not regulated in their naming which means that searching for documents can be lengthy.</p> <p><i>Data is not held consistently which leads to inefficient storage</i></p>	<p>To review the application of the Information@Work system to ensure that electronic data is stored efficiently, effectively and consistently.</p> <p>To document, communicate and implement the findings so that the Information@Work system is fully utilised within the Council.</p>	John Taylor, IMD Development Manager	31 December 2014
4.	<p><b>Medium</b> During the review it was noted that new planning applications and plans are printed and posted to the appropriate parish councils, even though they are freely available on the planning portal.</p> <p><i>Unnecessary expenditure is being incurred by printing and posting information to parish councils which is freely available in the public domain.</i></p>	<p>To identify the scope of the potential savings that could be achieved if information and to understand if there are other consequences /limitations to this change.</p>	Andy Moffat, Development Manager	31 March 2014

Additional information that explains the risk and action categories is available via [this hyperlink](#) or directly from the Audit Manager.

**ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

Consideration should be given to:

- 1 The next upgrade of the Information@Work system includes the facility to remove documents once a date has been reached. This will enable the system to comply with the Councils document retention policy.
- 2 Documents scanned at Customer Service Centres to be sent to the Document Centre for inclusion in their storage and disposal system.

Additional information that explains the risk and action categories is available via [this hyperlink](#) or directly from the Audit Manager.

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Key Decision - No

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

<b>Title/Subject Matter:</b>	Facing the Future
<b>Meeting/Date:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) – 3rd April 2014
<b>Executive Portfolio:</b>	Executive Councillor for Resources
<b>Report by:</b>	Assistant Director (Finance and Resources)
<b>Wards affected:</b>	All

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### **Executive Summary:**

In response to reductions in government funding, the Facing the Future process commenced in September 2013. Its purpose was to find significant ongoing savings in the period to 2018/19. The Overview and Scrutiny Panels put considerable effort into assessing all the Council's areas of activity and made recommendations on suggestions that should be taken forward for implementation or more detailed evaluation.

The Panels' recommendations were submitted to the Cabinet. The Cabinet decided that:

- (a) the list of suggestions would be categorised into service areas and cascaded down to the Heads of Service to create an implementation plan, in consultation with Executive Leader, Managing Director and Portfolio Holders;
- (b) priority would be given to those suggestions that resulted in "quick wins" or gave the best returns within a shortest timescale; and
- (c) those suggestions deemed to have most impact on services to the public should be held in abeyance until the financial impact of the items in list 1 and 2 have been fully investigated.

The Scrutiny Panels expressed a willingness to assist the Cabinet with specific tasks on Facing the Future proposals and requested future reports on progress of the overall Facing the Future Project, the effect of the Project on the performance of the Council against the Corporate Plan and on individual savings proposals.

The Economic Well-Being Panel has requested a report on progress of those items deemed to have "Limited Service Impact". This report contains the information that was requested.

### **Recommendation:**

To note the work that has been undertaken to implement the "Limited Service Impact" savings suggestions, which were identified through the Facing the Future process and the arrangements that are being put in place to manage the remaining

suggestions made through Facing the Future.

## **1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT/PURPOSE?**

- 1.1 This report contains a summary of the “Limited Service Impact” savings suggestions, which were identified through the Facing the Future process and have been implemented. It also refers to the effect on the Council’s financial position.

## **2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 This report enables the Panel to commence its role monitoring the progress of the Facing the Future process and its impact on the Council.

## **3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS**

- 3.1 The Panels have considered every area of Council activity, including the statutory duties, performance standards, manpower, other financial information and options for the future.

- 3.2 The full list of suggestions will be maintained so it can be checked that every item has been addressed. In addition, Overview and Scrutiny will:

- monitor progress of the overall FTF Project;
- monitor the effect of Facing the Future on the performance of the Council against the Corporate Plan, and
- review individual savings proposals.

## **4. KEY IMPACTS/RISKS? HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?**

- 4.1 The items that have an impact on the public have been identified. Impacts and risks will be assessed when assessment of specific proposals takes place.

## **5. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

- 5.1 The “Limited Service Impact” suggestions, which are being taken forward immediately, will be incorporated into the budget from 2014/15.

- 5.2 A Corporate Programme and Project Management Governance Group has been established whose remit will include overseeing the delivery of the Facing the Future project. Dedicated project management resources will be made available and a project plan is being devised through which the remainder of the suggestions will be managed. Monitoring reports will be submitted to Members as part of the usual budget management cycle.

## **6. LINK TO THE LEADERSHIP DIRECTION**

- 6.1 The Council’s Corporate Plan will inform future budget decisions that will be made during the Facing the Future process.

## **7. CONSULTATION**

- 7.1 Consultation will be undertaken on the Council’s budget and on specific proposals being considered for implementation, which have been identified by Facing the Future.

## **8. IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 Legal, Financial, IT and other implications will be considered as part of each individual proposal.

## **9. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS**

- 9.1 The Council needs to make significant ongoing savings at least in the period to 2018/19. Facing the Future is a structured process that forms part of a systematic assessment of the Council's options for making the savings it needs to find in a prioritised order. This report provides information in accordance with Overview and Scrutiny's role monitoring progress of the overall FTF Project.

## **10. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED**

**Appendix – Facing the Future – Limited Service Impact.**

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Report and Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 13th February 2014.

Report and Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) held on 11th February 2014.

## **CONTACT OFFICER**

Clive Mason, Accountancy Manager

☎ 01480 388157

Tony Roberts, Scrutiny and Review Manager

☎ 01480 388015



FACING THE FUTURE - LIMITED SERVICES IMPACT

Scheme	REVENUE												NET CAPITAL													
	FCAST		MTP		MTP		MTP		Forecast		Forecast		FCAST		MTP		Forecast									
	2014 £000	2015 £000	2016 £000	2017 £000	2018 £000	2019 £001	2020 £002	2021 £003	2022 £004	2023 £005	2024 £006	2025 £007	2013 £000	2014 £000	2015 £000	2016 £000	2017 £000	2018 £000	2019 £000	2020 £000	2021 £000	2022 £000	2023 £000	2024 £000	2025 £000	
Economic Development Other	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20
Economic Development project savings																										
Corporate Management																										
COMT support costs & training saving	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28	-28
Communications remove town centre kiosks	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13	-13
Corporate Office MU																										
Office costs saving	-28	-28	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23
Estates																										
Increased income from proactive management of commercial estate	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20
Licensing																										
Review attribution of costs	-8	-8	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6	-6
Central Services																										
Land Charges market service, review fees & costs	-13	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23	-23
Elections: efficiency savings & improved cost recovery	-2	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3
Democratic Representation																										
Committee savings: reduced catering, charged/discontinue support for	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5
Town Centres	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8
Member support: training and office savings																										
Document Centre																										
Reduction in cost of print: to be allocated across all relevant service budgets	-27	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30	-30
Office costs and post room savings	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10
Environmental Health																										
Environmental Health																										
PC Pest Control Service	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38	-38
PC & Safety Contract	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9	-9
Diets House Condition Survey	-55																									
Relax Collection & Recycling																										
Nightclub service no longer required	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11	-11
Street Cleaning & Litter																										
Fixed penalty notices for dog fouling & littering	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5
Withdraw graffiti removal & fly posting service	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3	-3
Management Unit																										
Operations Management efficiency saving	-13	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26	-26
Development Management																										
Implement E-Consultation	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2
Recover Consultants Costs	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1	-1
Housing Services																										
Review Housing Renewal Assistance Policy	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8	-8
Mobile Home Park Income																										
Environmental Health (Energy Efficiency)																										
DECC Communities Funding	-16																									
Referral Fees Action on Energy Scheme	-10	-10																								
Mobilising Local Energy Investment Funding	-15	-15																								
Energy Saving Equipment	-10	-20	-30																							
Office																										
Energy & Water Use Audits	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2	-2
Housing Services																										
Efficiency Savings	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5



## ONGOING STUDIES

STUDY	OBJECTIVES	PANEL	STATUS	TYPE
Consultation Processes	To assist the Corporate Team with its review of the Council's Consultation and Engagement Strategy.	Social Well-Being	Strategy and Guidance referred back from Chief Officers Management for further refinement. Meeting of the Working Group to be held on 29th April 2014 with a view to it being considered by the Panel and the Cabinet at their June 2014 meetings.	Working Group
Great Fen	To monitor the latest developments in respect of the Great Fen.	Environmental Well-Being	The Project Collaboration Agreement has been renewed for a further 5 year period. Further updates will continue to be provided in due course.	Whole Panel.
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 to meet with voluntary organisations at end of 2013/14 financial year to review annual performance.	Working Group.
Housing and Council Tax 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	Six monthly reports to be presented to the Panel. Members of the Economic Well-Being Panel will be invited to attend. Next report to be submitted to the Panel's June 2014 meeting.	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. A number of meetings have been held. The general care and support provided to elderly patients at the Hospital will be the focus of discussions at the next meeting.	Working Group
Review of Overview & Scrutiny Panels.		All	The Chairmen & Vice-Chairmen have met with the Deputy Executive Leader to discuss his thoughts on the future of Overview & Scrutiny. A further meeting was held on Thursday 20 March 2014.	Working Group
Registered Landlords	Social To establish a common policy/procedure for Registered Social Landlords in their dealings with the Council.	Social Well-Being	Scoping report to be submitted to June/July 2014 meeting.	Working Group.
Tree Strategy	To develop a Tree Strategy for Huntingdonshire.	Environmental Well-Being	Briefing note submitted to April 2014 meeting. Working Group to meet prior to the Strategy's submission to the Panel's June 2014 meeting.	Working Group

<p>Flood Prevention within the District</p>	<p>To investigate flood prevention arrangements in the District and the impact of flooding on associated local policy developments.</p>	<p>Environmental Well-Being</p>	<p>Representatives from the Environment Agency delivered a presentation on flood risk management within Huntingdonshire. A scoping report will be submitted to the Panel in April 2014. The Clerk to the Middle Level Commissioners and Internal Drainage Board will attend the Panel's June 2014 meeting to outline their role in dealing with flood alleviation within the District.</p>	<p>Whole Panel.</p>
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## Progress Report

<u>Panel Date</u>	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Date for future action</u>
04/07/13	<p><b><u>Customer Services</u></b></p> <p>Performance reports to be submitted to the Panel twice a year (February &amp; October).</p>		The next report is due in October.	09/10/14
16/05/13	<p><b><u>Corporate Plan</u></b></p> <p>Councillors Rogers and Harrison have been appointed to the Corporate Plan Working Group.</p>		<p>The Huntingdonshire District Council Corporate Plan 2014-16 was considered by the Panel at their February meeting.</p> <p>Work is ongoing to develop the Plan and a Performance Management Framework for the Council. Efforts are being made to identify the key activities for the coming year which will form part of the agreed work programme. The new performance management framework will outline the responsibilities of Members and Officers for the delivery of this work programme.</p> <p>The draft Plan and Performance Management Framework will be discussed at Cabinet and full Council in April.</p>	
05/09/13	<p><b><u>Cambridgeshire Public Sector Asset Management Strategy</u></b></p> <p>The Panel recommended that the Cabinet should note the creation of a countywide publicly-owned joint venture and agreed that if any proposals were forthcoming, they should be fully 'costed' for consideration by the Panel.</p>			

## Progress Report

<u>Panel Date</u>	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Date for future action</u>
05/07/13	<p><b><u>Economic Development</u></b></p> <p>The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013 to 23 was considered by the Panel. The Economic Development Manager was asked to give a further update on the marketing and implementation plans in due course.</p>		This is expected to be in June time.	12/06/14
03/10/13	<p><b><u>Audit of EDM</u></b></p> <p>Agreed that the Panel should consider the outcome of this Audit when it is concluded.</p>		The Chairman has invited the Internal Audit Manager to attend a future meeting to present his findings. This item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.	03/04/14
02/11/11	<p><b><u>Scrutiny of Partnerships</u></b></p> <p>Following a review of the Strategic Partnership, the Overview &amp; 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"> <li>❖ Community Safety</li> <li>❖ Children &amp; Young People</li> <li>❖ Health &amp; Well-Being</li> </ul> <p>Environmental Well Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Growth &amp; Infrastructure</li> </ul> <p>Economic Well Being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Local Enterprise Partnership</li> </ul>		<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>The Panel has suggested that the Chairman and the Chief Executive of the Local Enterprise Partnership should be invited to a future meeting of the Council to give a presentation on their business plan.</p> <p>At a recent meeting of the Council Programme Board, it was suggested that it might be more appropriate for the Panel to receive this presentation. An approach has been made to the Local Enterprise Partnership and a response is currently awaited.</p>	



Panel Date	<u>Decision</u>	Action	Response	Date for future action
04/03/14	<p><b><u>Facing the Future</u></b></p> <p>The Panels' recommendations were submitted to the Cabinet in February 2014. The Cabinet decided that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) the list of suggestions would be categorised into service areas and cascaded down to the Heads of Service to create an implementation plan, in consultation with Executive Leader, Managing Director and Portfolio Holders;</li> <li>(b) priority would be given to those suggestions that resulted in "quick wins" or gave the best returns within a shortest timescale; and</li> <li>(c) those suggestions deemed to have most impact on services to the public should be held in abeyance until the financial impact of the items in list 1 and 2 have been fully investigated.</li> </ul> <p>The Panel requested a report on the progress of those items deemed to have "Limited Service Impact"</p>		<p><b>A number of the 'Limited Service Impact' suggestions have been incorporated into the budget 2014/15. A report on this appears elsewhere on the Agenda.</b></p> <p><b>A project plan is being devised through which the remainder of the suggestions will be managed.</b></p>	

## Progress Report

<u>Panel Date</u>	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Date for future action</u>
06/02/14	<p><b><u>Gross Costs</u></b></p> <p>Agreed to establish a Working Group to consider the Gross Costs of Capital. Councillors S Greenall, P G Mitchell, T V Rogers and A H Williams have been appointed for this purpose.</p>		A meeting of this Group was held on 26th March 2014. An update will be provided at the meeting.	
06/03/14	<p><b><u>Capital and Revenue Monitoring</u></b></p> <p>The Chairman suggested that the Panel should have sight of the Capital &amp; Revenue Monitoring reports which are prepared for the Cabinet.</p>		The Accountancy Manager has agreed that reports can be circulated on a monthly basis to Panel Members. The Panel will need to consider how they wish to discuss these issues on a formal basis.	
04/03/14	<p><b><u>Review of Fraud Investigation Activity</u></b></p> <p>Councillor E R Butler was asked to report back to the next meeting on the future of the Fraud Team within the Authority.</p>			
04/03/14	<p><b><u>Transfer of CreativeExchange, Longsands Campus</u></b></p> <p>The recommendations of the Panel were reported to the Cabinet at their meeting on 20th March 2014.</p> <p>The Panel has requested that a review be undertaken out on the lessons which have been learned from the project, including the expenditure which had been incurred.</p>		<p>An update will be provided at the meeting.</p> <p>A summary of expenditure has been circulated to Members by email.</p>	

## Progress Report

<u>Panel Date</u>	<u>Decision</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Response</u>	<u>Date for future action</u>
<b>04/03/14</b>	<p><b><u>Loves Farm Community Centre</u></b></p> <p>The Panel received an update on progress with this project from the Executive Councillor. Members were informed that an agreement has now been made with Cambridgeshire County Council for the provision of a joint building to deliver a Community Building and a pre-school playgroup facility.</p> <p>Arising from their discussions, the Panel suggested that the Community Group should be requested to prepare a Business Plan for the Centre, prior to any sub-letting arrangement being agreed. It was also suggested that to enable lessons to be learnt from this experience, a post event audit should be undertaken.</p>		<p><b>The Executive Councillor for Healthy &amp; Active Communities was in attendance for this discussion and the comments have also been passed on to the Community Manager.</b></p>	

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## Decision Digest

Edition 143

**Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 1st to 21st March 2014.**

### **TRANSFER OF CREATIVEXCHANGE, LONGSANDS CAMPUS**

Together with the Cabinet, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has discussed a number of options for the future use and ownership of the Creativexchange building in St Neots. The Panel has made a recommendation to the Cabinet and requested that a review be carried out on the lessons which could be learned from the Creativexchange project, including the expenditure which had been incurred.

Having been advised of the Panel's views, the Cabinet concurred with the Scrutiny Panel and agreed to surrender the lease for the building to Longsands Academy authorising the Strategic Assessment Estates Officer to negotiate a lease for the land (which the District Council owns) including the car parking spaces, with the Academy for a peppercorn rent.

### **LOVES FARM COMMUNITY CENTRE**

An update on the development of the Loves Farm Community Centre has been presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being). An agreement has now been made with Cambridgeshire County Council for the provision of a joint building to deliver a community and pre-school facility.

Having been reminded that this will be an essential facility for the local community, the Panel discussed a number of related issues including the financing of the scheme, use of the new building and parking arrangements. Members also discussed the potential financial risk to the District Council should the local community group be unable to generate sufficient income from the facility.

With this in mind, the Panel has suggested that the Loves Farm Community Group should be asked to prepare a Business Plan for the operation of the Centre, prior to any sub-letting arrangement being entered into with the District Council. To enable lessons to be learnt from this experience, Members have also suggested that a post event audit should be undertaken to enable lessons to be learnt from this exercise.

### **CUSTOMER SERVICES MONITORING**

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

In considering the report, the Panel has discussed a range of matters including the delivery of the new Customer

Services Strategy and that the data appeared to demonstrate that the 'quick and easy' transactions were moving to self-service methods. A number of questions were raised by Panel Members with regard to waiting times at the Huntingdon Customer Service Centre, the possible future move of the Call Centre Team to Pathfinder House and staff retention.

### **BRIEFING ON NATIONAL NON DOMESTIC RATES**

The Head of Customer Services briefed the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) on National Non Domestic Rates. Members were able to ask a number of detailed question which were responded to at the meeting.

### **SIX MONTH MONITORING REPORT ON ORGANISATIONS IN RECEIPT OF THREE YEAR GRANT AID AWARDS**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has been apprised of the outcome of the Voluntary Sector Working Group's meetings with each of the Voluntary Organisations in October 2013. The Group reviewed their performance of the organisations in the first six months of the 2013/14 financial year.

It was evident to the Panel that the Working Group needs to continue its investigations as a number of issues were raised during the Panel's discussions. These included - how the organisations could work under a common structure in the future and that further review meetings with each should take place at the end of the financial year.

### **CENTRE FOR PUBLIC SCRUTINY – POLICE AND CRIME PANELS: THE FIRST YEAR**

The Centre for Public Scrutiny's report on Police and Crime Panels was

received by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). Members also received an update on the work of the Panel from Councillor J D Ablewhite, the Council's representative.

Owing to concerns that exist over the Police and Crime Commissioner's lack of engagement with the public, the Panel has asked Officers to submit questions on behalf of the Panel to the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Panel at its meeting on 19th March 2014.

### **LOCALISM**

Further to the Parish Conference held back in December 2013, the Panel has considered how the Council should respond to the issues which had been raised.

A suggestion was made that the Council should encourage Parishes to engage in Community Planning, a view which is strongly supported by Councillor R B Howe, Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities. A number of views were expressed and after much discussion, the Panel agreed that the Cabinet should be requested to develop the work initiated at the Parish Conference and to consider the establishment of a scheme for funding for Parishes, including grants, as a means of encouraging and supporting them in developing Community Plans.

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

Councillors R C Carter, S J Criswell, Mrs P A Jordan, J W G Pethard and S M Van De Kerkhove have been appointed to a Working Group tasked with formulating a draft response to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group's public

consultation on the Commissioning of the Older Peoples Programme.

A further Working Group has been established to investigate the policies and procedures of Registered Social Landlords with a view to establishing a common policy/procedure when dealing with the District Council. Councillors I J Curtis, R Fuller, P Kadewere and S M Van De Kerkhove comprise the membership of the Working Group.

### **RECAP OVERVIEW AND PROGRESS TOWARDS A WHOLE WASTE SYSTEMS APPROACH**

A detailed presentation was delivered by the RECAP Partnership Manager to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being). The presentation included details of the current outcomes achieved and ongoing delivery of projects and efficiencies across the Partnership.

Matters discussed include the role of the Panel in the Partnership's work, the risks associated with the joint procurement of services for the bulking, sorting and onward processing of recyclable materials, the differing waste practices employed by Partner authorities and the need to generate awareness amongst Members and the public over what happens to recyclable and residual waste after it is collected from households.

A report from RECAP is expected in the summer on cross border route optimisation. The Panel will have sight of this report when it is available.

### **FLOOD PREVENTION**

Representatives of the Environment Agency delivered a presentation on the Flood Risk Management activities undertaken by the organisation in respect of Huntingdonshire.

The Panel received details of the Risk Management Authorities in Huntingdonshire, the roles of the Lead Local Flood Authority and Environment Agency, the various flood management schemes in Huntingdonshire, future areas of work, details of Internal Drainage Board schemes and the types of maintenance work undertaken by the Agency within the District.

Matters discussed by the Panel include the dredging of rivers, the role of the Agency in responding to planning applications, the differences between fluvial flooding and surface water flooding, the powers of the Agency in undertaking enforcement and prosecution action and the insurance related support that could be provided to homeowners who have been affected by flooding.

A scoping report on how the Panel will pursue the study further will be submitted to the April 2014 meeting.

### **CABINET FEEDBACK: FACING THE FUTURE**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) has noted the deliberations of the Cabinet on the first phase of the Facing the Future process.

### **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) – PROGRESS**

In order to enhance their understanding of what happens to both recyclable and residual waste, the Panel has agreed to undertake a site visit to Waterbeach Waste Management Plant.

### **HACKNEY CARRIAGE FARES**

In accordance with the provisions of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations

2000, the Cabinet has approved a table of fares for hackney carriages.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services has been authorised, after consultation with the relevant Executive Portfolio Holder, to approve future hackney carriage fare tables and to consider any objections arising from these.

#### **ADDITION OF INFORMATION ON CIL TO 'LOCAL LIST' VALIDATION REQUIREMENTS**

Following a period of public consultation and mindful of the benefit to both applicants and the Council, the Development Management Panel has agreed that a 'CIL planning application additional information requirement form' be submitted as a validation requirement for certain categories of planning application with effect from 1st July 2014.

For expediency, the Planning Service Manager (Development Management) has been authorised to make any necessary changes to the 'local list of requirements' in the future in response to Government guidance and changes in local policy or circumstances.

#### **DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS**

The Development Management Panel determined eight applications at its March meeting and, of these, seven were approved and one refused. One of the applications supported involved a proposal for residential development of 41 dwellings on 1.03 hectares of land accessed from Dramsell Rise, off Cambridge Road, St. Neots. The site is located in the south-western corner of the wider Loves Farm Development. To make the development acceptable in planning terms, a Section 106 Agreement will provide a footbridge and adjacent works to a sum of £25,315, affordable housing at the target percentage appropriate at the time when

the Decision Notice is issued, a contribution per dwelling for wheeled bins and the distribution of a welcome pack with travel information.

#### **DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT PERFORMANCE**

The Development Management Panel has undertaken its regular review of the activities of the Development Management Services over the period 1st October to 31st December 2013. Applications and fees received have increased in comparison with the corresponding period in 2012 and despite staffing concerns the service has continued to determine 84% of major, minor and other applications within the prescribed targets.