

A meeting of the **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING)** will be held in **CIVIC SUITE 0.1A, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, CAMBS, PE29 3TN** on **TUESDAY, 14 JANUARY 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 - 4)

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meetings of the Panel held on 4th and 10th December 2013.

**Miss H Ali
388006**

2. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

To receive from Members declarations as to disclosable pecuniary or other interests in relation to any Agenda Item. Please see Notes below.

3. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS (Pages 5 - 10)

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

**Mrs H Taylor
388008**

4. RENEWAL OF GREAT FEN PROJECT COLLABORATION AGREEMENT (Pages 11 - 14)

To receive a report from the Assistant Director for Environment, Growth and Planning on the renewal of the Great Fen Project Collaboration Agreement.

**S Ingram
388400**

5. HUNTINGDONSHIRE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE THEMATIC GROUP (Pages 15 - 22)

To consider a report by the Planning Service Manager (Policy) on the work of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership Growth and Infrastructure Thematic Group.

**Mrs C Burton
388274**

6. FACING THE FUTURE

To receive an update from the Chairman on the Facing the Future process.

7. WORK PLAN STUDIES (Pages 23 - 24)

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

Miss H Ali
388006

8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS (Pages 25 - 30)

To consider a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services on the Panel's programme of studies.

Miss H Ali
388006

9. SCRUTINY (Pages 31 - 34)

To scrutinise decisions 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 6 day of January 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.

2. Filming, Photography and Recording at Council Meetings

The District Council supports the principles of openness and transparency in its decision making and permits filming, recording and the taking of photographs at its meetings that are open to the public. It also welcomes the use of social networking and micro-blogging websites (such as Twitter and Facebook) to communicate with people about what is happening at meetings. Arrangements for these activities should operate in accordance with guidelines agreed by the Council and available via the following link - [filming, photography-and-recording-at-council-meetings.pdf](#) or on request from the Democratic Services Team. The Council understands that some members of the public attending its meetings may not wish to be filmed. The Chairman of the meeting will facilitate this preference by ensuring that any such request not to be recorded is respected.

Please contact Miss H Ali, Democratic Services Officer, Tel No: (01480) 388006/email: Habbiba.Ali@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 Panel.

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

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

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

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

Emergency Procedure

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

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Agenda Item 1

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) held in Meeting Rooms 0.1A and 0.1B, Ground Floor, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 4 December 2013.

PRESENT: Councillor G J Bull – Chairman.

Councillors M G Baker, K M Baker,
Mrs M Banerjee, I C Bates, R S Farrer,
D A Giles, G J Harlock, D Harty and
Mrs D C Reynolds.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J W Davies and Ms L Kadic.

52. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

53. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to

- (a) the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information); and
- (b) consultation or negotiations in connection with labour relations between the Council and its employees.

54. FACING THE FUTURE 2013

(Councillor D M Tysoe, Executive Councillor for Environment, was in attendance for consideration of this item).

(Councillors S J Criswell, T V Rogers and R J West were also in attendance for this item).

The Panel considered the strategic service review templates for the Parks, Open Spaces and Countryside and Car Parking and Street Rangers services (copies of which are appended in the Minute Book). Following discussion, Members agreed upon their recommendations to the Cabinet on the services' priority areas for implementation or further investigation.

Chairman

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HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 10 December 2013.

PRESENT: Councillor G J Bull – Chairman.

Councillors M G Baker, K M Baker,
Mrs M Banerjee, J W Davies, D A Giles,
G J Harlock, D Harty, Ms L Kadic and
Mrs D C Reynolds.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors I C Bates and R S Farrer.

55. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Panel held on 12th and 20th November 2013 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

56. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

57. 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) which had been prepared by the Leader of the Council for the period 1st December 2013 to 31st March 2014.

58. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to

(a) the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information); and

(b) consultation or negotiations in connection with labour relations between the Council and its employees.

59. FACING THE FUTURE 2013

(Councillors J D Ablewhite, Executive Leader of the Council, and J A

Gray, Executive Councillor for Resources, were in attendance for consideration of this item).

(T V Rogers and R J West were also in attendance for this item).

The Panel considered the strategic service review templates for the Corporate Office, Communications and Commercial and Industrial Estates services (copies of which are appended in the annex to the Minute Book). Following discussion, Members agreed upon their recommendations to the Cabinet on the services' priority areas for implementation or further investigation.

At the conclusion of the discussion, Councillor J A Gray placed on record his appreciation of the work of the Estates Team and made particular mention of the completion by Mr C Luscombe, Estates Strategic Assessment Officer, of a strategic review of the Council's Estates function.

Members expressed their gratitude for the contribution to the Council made by Mrs H Donnellan, Corporate Team Manager, who would be leaving the authority the next day and extended their best wishes to her for the future.

Chairman

NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS INCLUDING THOSE TO BE CONSIDERED IN PRIVATE

Prepared by Councillor J D Ablewhite
Date of Publication: 19 December 2013
For Period: 1 January 2014 to 30 April 2014

Membership of the Cabinet is as follows:-

Councillor J D Ablewhite	- Executive Leader of the Council, with responsibility for Strategic and Delivery Partnerships	3 Pettis Road St. Ives Huntingdon PE27 6SR Tel: 01480 466941 E-mail: Jason.Ablewhite@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor N J Guyatt 5	- Deputy Executive Leader of the Council with responsibility for Strategic Planning and Housing	6 Church Lane Stibbington Cams PE8 6LP Tel: 01780 782827 E-mail: Nick.Guyatt@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor B S Chapman	- Executive Councillor for Customer Services	6 Kipling Place St. Neots Huntingdon PE19 7RG Tel: 01480 212540 E-mail: Barry.Chapman@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor J A Gray	- Executive Councillor for Resources	Shufflewick Cottage Station Row Tilbrook PE28 OJY Tel: 01480 861941 E-mail: Jonathan.Gray@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor R Howe	- Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities	The Old Barn High Street Upwood PE26 2QE Tel: 01487 814393 E-mail: Robin.Howe@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Councillor T D Sanderson - Executive Councillor for Economic Development and Legal	29 Burmoor Close Stukeley Meadows Huntingdon PE29 6GE Tel: 01480 412135 E-mail: Tom.Sanderson@huntingdonshire.gov.uk
Councillor D M Tysoe - Executive Councillor for Environment	Grove Cottage Maltings Lane Ellington Huntingdon PE28 0AA Tel: 01480 388310 E-mail: Darren.Tysoe@huntingdonshire.gov.uk

Notice is hereby given of:

- Key decisions that will be taken by the Cabinet (or other decision maker)
- Confidential or exempt executive decisions that will be taken in a meeting from which the public will be excluded (for whole or part).

A notice/agenda together with reports and supporting documents for each meeting will be published at least five working days before the date of the meeting. In order to enquire about the availability of documents and subject to any restrictions on their disclosure, copies may be requested by contacting Mrs Helen Taylor, Senior Democratic Services Officer on 01480 388008 or E-mail Helen.Taylor@huntingdonshire.gov.uk.

Agendas may be accessed electronically at www.huntingdonshire.gov.uk.

OP Normal notice is hereby given under The Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements) (Meetings and Access to Information) (England) Regulations 2012 that, where indicated part of the meetings listed in this notice will be held in private because the agenda and reports for the meeting will contain confidential or exempt information under Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosing it. See the relevant paragraphs below.

Any person who wishes to make representations to the decision maker about a decision which is to be made or wishes to object to an item being considered in private may do so by emailing Legal&DemServDemocratic@huntingdonshire.gov.uk or by writing to the Senior Democratic Services Officer. If representations are received at least eight working days before the date of the meeting, they will be published with the agenda together with a statement of the District Council's response. Any representations received after this time will be verbally reported and considered at the meeting.

Paragraphs of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended) (Reason for the report to be considered in private)

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the Financial and Business Affairs of any particular person (including the Authority holding that information)
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations that are arising between the Authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of or office holders under the Authority
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
6. Information which reveals that the Authority proposes:-
 - (a) To give under any announcement a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) To make an Order or Direction under any enactment
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.


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
Discharging a homelessness duty in the Private Rented Sector Policy***	Cabinet	23 Jan 2014		Jon Collen, Housing Needs and Resources Manager Tel No 01480 388220 or email Jon.Collen@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B S Chapman	Social Well-Being
Pay Review Framework	Cabinet	23 Jan 2014		Mrs Joanne Lancaster, Managing Director Tel No. 01480 388301 or email Jo.Lancaster@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J D Ablewhite	Economic Well-Being
Street Naming and Numbering Report	Cabinet	23 Jan 2014		Chris Allen, Project and Assets Manager Tel No. 01480 388380 or email Chris.Allen@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		D M Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being
Reconnections Policy	Cabinet	23 Jan 2014		Julia Barber, Head of Customer Services Tel No. 01480 388105 or email Julia.Barber@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		B S Chapman	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
Renewal of Great Fen Project Collaboration Agreement	Cabinet	23 Jan 2014	Collaboration Agreement	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
Service Delivery Options***/###	Cabinet	13 Feb 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
Facing the Future - Suggested Priorities	Cabinet	13 Feb 2014		Steve Couper, Assistant Director of Finance and Resources Tel No 01480 388103 or email Steve.Couper@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J A Gray	All
Budget & MTP	Cabinet	13 Feb 2014		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
Treasury Management Strategy	Cabinet	13 Feb 2014		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
Corporate Plan	Cabinet	13 Feb 2014		Howard Thackray, Policy and Strategic Services Manager Tel No 01480 388035 or email Howard.Thackray@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J D Ablewhite	All

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
Consultation and Engagement Strategy	Cabinet	13 Feb 2014		Louise Sboui, Senior Policy Officer Tel No. 01480 388032 or email Louise.Sboui@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		J D Ablewhite	Social Well-Being
Local Plan to 2036 - Proposed Submission	Cabinet	13 Feb 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
Carbon Management Plan	Cabinet	20 Mar 2014		Chris Jablonski, Environment Team Leader Tel No. 01480 388368 or email Chris.Jablonski@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		D M Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being
 Green Deal	Cabinet	20 Mar 2014		Chris Jablonski, Environment Team Leader Tel No. 01480 388368 or email Chris.Jablonski@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		D M Tysoe	Environmental Well-Being
Huntingdonshire Infrastructure Business Plan	Cabinet	20 Mar 2014		Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy) Tel No. 01480 388430 or email Paul.Bland@huntingdonshire.gov.uk		N J Guyatt	Environmental Well-Being
Huntingdon West Masterplan	Cabinet	20 Mar 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
Wind Turbines SPD	Cabinet	20 Mar 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

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
Huntingdon and Godmanchester Market Town Transport Strategy	Cabinet	20 Mar 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
A14	Cabinet	10 Apr 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

Public*

Key Decision - No*

* Delete as applicable

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter:	Renewal of Great Fen Project Collaboration Agreement
Meeting/Date:	Overview & Scrutiny (Env Well Being) – 14 th January 2014 Cabinet – 23 rd January 2014
Executive Portfolio:	Strategic Planning & Housing
Report by:	Assistant Director Environment, Growth and Planning
Ward(s) affected:	Ramsey, Sawtry, Stilton, Yaxley and Farcet, Upwood & The Raveleys

Executive Summary:

The Great Fen Project is a strategic landscape scale restoration project of national and international importance.

The Project is rapidly becoming much more of a reality 'on the ground' as positive changes are now happening - and it is considered that the next stages in its delivery will be fundamental in terms of maximising its local economic development potential.

The current Project Collaboration Agreement, which dates from 2009, is time limited and it is due for renewal before March 2014.

The Council is one of the five core Project Partners (in association with the Environment Agency, the Middle Level Commissioners, Natural England and the Wildlife Trust).

Whilst we have the ability to consider all our options at this point in time it is generally recognised that the Great Fen Project is now positively moving forward and delivering benefits for the people of Huntingdonshire. Whilst we could consider reducing our support it is considered important that the Council continues to be an active Project partner in order that we can sustain our essential inputs into the formulation and on-going delivery of the project. In that way we can continue to ensure that an appropriate emphasis is placed upon the delivery of tangible economic, social and environmental benefits.

The Project Partners all financially support the delivery of the project (HDC via both a contribution of £20k pa and by utilising appropriate Officer time) and the approved Council budget and MTP already includes provision for this to continue.

Recommendation(s):

That the Cabinet approves the renewal of the Great Fen Project Collaboration Agreement for a further 5 year period.

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1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT/PURPOSE?

- 1.1 The current Great Fen Project Collaboration Agreement, which dates from 2009, is time limited - and therefore it now needs to be renewed before the current agreement expires in March 2014.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY/BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Great Fen Project is a landscape scale restoration project of growing national and international repute. The Council is one of the five core Project Partners (in association with the Environment Agency, the Middle Level Commissioners, Natural England and the Wildlife Trust).
- 2.2 The positive impacts of the Project are now becoming much more of a reality 'on the ground' and its economic benefits are starting to be realised. It is considered that the next key stages in its planned delivery, which will include the main visitor facilities, will be fundamental in terms of maximising its local economic development potential.
- 2.3 However this requirement to renew the collaboration agreement gives the Council the opportunity to appropriately consider its ongoing role and whether it wants to continue to be an active Project partner.

3. OPTIONS CONSIDERED/ANALYSIS

- 3.1 The Council now has the opportunity to consider the basis of its on-going support for the Great Fen Project. We could consider reducing our commitment to, and level of participation in, the Project but it is considered that undertaking such a course of action would have clear negative consequences for the future wellbeing of the District.
- 3.2 The Council's active involvement and its positive and pro-active contributions to the on-going delivery of the Great Fen Project allow us to appropriately influence the form of, and shape the delivery of, the project. This allows the Council to look to effectively utilise the projects assets and direct its proposals in order to help us deliver our defined corporate economic, social and environmental aims. It is considered that currently we are deriving good value from our contributions.

4. COMMENTS OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL

- 4.1 The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) will be considering and commenting upon this report.

5. KEY IMPACTS/RISKS? HOW WILL THEY BE ADDRESSED?

- 5.1 It is considered that the Great Fen Project will continue to become much more of a reality over the next 5 years – with it being anticipated that the Projects main visitor centre and other key facilities will be delivered within that projected time period.
- 5.2 If the Council was not to be as actively involved in shaping the development of the project then our ability to positively direct and appropriately influence that delivery would be diminished. The Project would continue to be delivered but there would be obvious risks in relation to its future community focus.

6. WHAT ACTIONS WILL BE TAKEN/TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- 6.1 The Assistant Director Environment, Growth and Planning will be liaising with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services in order to finalise the renewal of the collaboration agreement within the applicable timescale.

7. LINK TO THE LEADERSHIP DIRECTION

- 7.1 The continued successful delivery of the Great Fen Project is a key element of our committed growth strategy. The on-going successful delivery of the project will significantly contribute to sustainable local economic growth within the wider Ramsey area, support continued farm diversification and the development of new business opportunities; it will continue to support local community and educational initiatives; and it will also help us meet our environmental objectives. Fundamentally the Great Fen Project will increasingly become one of the strategic 'green lungs' that help us meet the needs of our growing population.

8. CONSULTATION

- 8.1 All of the Project Partners are currently undertaking similar collaboration agreement renewal processes.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

(Comments from the Head of Legal & Democratic Services)

- 9.1 The Council has the necessary legal authority to enter in to the proposed agreement renewal process.

10. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

(Comments from the Assistant Director, Finance & Resources)

- 10.1 The Project Partners financially support the delivery of the project (HDC via both a contribution of £20k pa and appropriate Officer time) and the approved Council budget and MTP include provision for this to continue.

11. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 11.1 It is considered that this upcoming time period will be crucial for the successful delivery of the Great Fen Project.
- 11.2 It is considered imperative that HDC maintains its role as an active partner in order that we can ensure that the Project continues to help us positively deliver our corporate aims.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Report to Cabinet – Great Fen Project Governance July 2009
Existing Great Fen Project Collaboration Agreement 2009

CONTACT OFFICER

Steve Ingram, Assistant Director Environment, Growth and Planning
Tel No. 01480 388400

Public
Key Decision - No

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Title/Subject Matter: Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership – Growth and Infrastructure Thematic Group

Meeting/Date: Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Wellbeing)
14th January 2014

Executive Portfolio: Planning and Housing Strategy

Report by: Paul Bland, Planning Service Manager (Policy)

Ward(s) affected: All

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to update the Panel on the work of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership – Growth and Infrastructure Thematic Group. The Group has a role in identifying key infrastructure projects and recommending priorities for the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy funds to infrastructure projects that support the District's growth.

Recommendation(s):

It is recommended that the report be noted.

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1. WHAT IS THIS REPORT ABOUT / PURPOSE?

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Panel on the work of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership – Growth and Infrastructure Thematic Group. The Group has a role in identifying key infrastructure projects and recommending priorities for the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy funds to infrastructure projects that support the District's growth.

2. WHY IS THIS REPORT NECESSARY / BACKGROUND

- 2.1 This report is necessary as part of the Panel's ongoing programme of scrutinising work areas within its remit.

3. THE ROLE OF THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE THEMATIC GROUP

- 3.1 The role of the Group is important as it provides a formal interface and discussion forum for all of the main physical infrastructure providers that have responsibilities within the District, including senior elected Members from the District Council and County Council. The Group then makes informed recommendations to the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership on the prioritisation, in the short and medium term, of capital projects that require an element of Community Infrastructure Levy funding. Prioritisation is required because the Community Infrastructure Levy can only provide a proportion of the funds necessary to deliver the identified infrastructure projects. The outcomes of the Group's ongoing work are also reported to HDC's Cabinet.
- 3.2 The current membership of the Group is set out in Table 1 below. The Group membership reflects the broad range of infrastructure providers that operate within the District. Other organisations, such as Network Rail, are involved in infrastructure planning in the District through the Local Plan Duty to Co-operate Group.

Table 1: Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership – Growth and Infrastructure Thematic Group – Current Membership

Name	Organisation
Councillor Nick Guyatt (Chair)	Huntingdonshire District Council
Councillor Ian Bates	Cambridgeshire County Council
Cameron Adams	Environment Agency
Alan Kirkdale	Highways Agency
Ian Burns	National Health Service Property Services Limited
Adrian Cannard	Greater Cambridgeshire / Greater Peterborough Local Enterprise Partnership
TBC	Town / Parish Council Representative
Dearbhla Lawson	Cambridgeshire County Council
Paul Bland	Huntingdonshire District Council
Claire Burton	Huntingdonshire District Council

- 3.3 At present there is no Town and Parish council representation on the Group. It is intended to seek appropriate representation from this sector, particularly to ensure that the Group can consider the most suitable ways of handling the proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy (15% to 25%) that local councils are now able to receive by right in relation to new development activity within their area.

3.4 The Group influences a range of strategies and plans (as can be seen from the Group's Terms of Reference detailed in Table 2). In addition, the Group is responsible for co-ordinating the production of the Infrastructure Business Plan which comprehensively identifies, analyses, and prioritises the key infrastructure projects that need to be considered for delivery across the District in the period up to 2036. This in itself is an important part of the evidence base that supports the emerging Local Plan.

3.5 Table 2 summarises the Group's current activities in relation to its Terms of Reference:

Table 2: Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership – Growth and Infrastructure Thematic Group – Terms of Reference, Actions and Comments	
Terms of Reference	Actions / Comments
<p>To support and co-ordinate, as appropriate, the strategic growth and infrastructure development for Huntingdonshire, through the delivery of actions relating to key plans including the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Strategy/ emerging Local Plan and associated planning documents and briefs • Local Transport Plan and associated strategies • Housing Strategy • Local Economy Strategy • Environment Strategy • LEP Strategy 	<p>Members of the Group are involved in the preparation and co-ordination of all of the key plans that have relationships to growth and infrastructure.</p>
<p>To act as Project Board for the delivery of the Infrastructure needs for the District to match projected growth as outlined in the Core Strategy / emerging Local Plan</p>	<p>As development projects and planning applications arise, the Group is able to use the Infrastructure Business Plan and its collective knowledge to identify the key infrastructure projects that need to be developed and resourced.</p>
<p>To develop an Infrastructure Business Plan</p>	<p>The Group co-ordinates the production of the Infrastructure Business Plan, which is led by HDC Planning Services. The Infrastructure Business Plan is a key strategic document that enables the Group to consider infrastructure priorities and make recommendations accordingly.</p>
<p>To assess / review infrastructure priorities for the spending of Community Infrastructure Levy and other available funding through an agreed process</p>	<p>The Group identifies priorities for the allocation of Community Infrastructure Levy Funding, and recommends these to the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership Board. The current single priority for this funding is the Huntingdon West Relief Road, which is under construction.</p>
<p>To ensure the co-ordination and delivery of the growth and infrastructure elements of the Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy</p>	<p>This is essentially the role of the Group.</p>
<p>To co-ordinate and deliver other work required by the LSP</p>	<p>No other work is currently required of this Group by the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership.</p>

To ensure stakeholders have engaged in the process of strategy development and implementation on growth and infrastructure related issues	The Infrastructure Business Plan is subject to comprehensive development processes that involve the key stakeholders throughout its preparation. Updates of the document are presented to HDC's Cabinet at appropriate times, and it will be subject to scrutiny as part of the forthcoming Local Plan Examination (later in 2014).
To disseminate good practice	As a partnership based Group, good practice is disseminated between the organisations involved. It is anticipated that this will be extremely useful in future years as infrastructure projects are developed in detail.
To anticipate and co-ordinate the implementation of new legislation	The Group's members are able to respond and think through practical ways of implementing new legislation. For example, there have been many changes to the Community Infrastructure Levy regulations and the Group has helped to identify ways of ensuring these are understood and co-ordinated effectively.
To provide the LSP with performance management information	This is done as and when the Group reports to the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership Board.
To support the LSP in development of the Sustainable Community Strategy	This will be done as and when the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership reviews the Sustainable Community Strategy.
To ensure smooth working between agencies and other Sustainable Community Strategy thematic groups	This is done through representation as required at meetings and events organised by other thematic groups.

4. LINK TO THE LEADERSHIP DIRECTION

4.1 The work of the Group contributes to the Leadership Direction, as set out in Table 3:

Table 3: Huntingdonshire District Council – Leadership Direction	
Vision	
Huntingdonshire District Council will continue to improve the quality of life in Huntingdonshire by working with our communities and partners to achieve sustainable economic growth whilst providing excellent value for money services that meet local needs within a balanced budget.	
Themes	Actions / Comments
Strong local economy	The Group supports the development of a strong local economy by providing a transparent mechanism for recommending the prioritisation of infrastructure projects.
Enable sustainable growth	The Group identifies the key infrastructure projects that will be required to enable the delivery of sustainable development and growth.
Improve the quality of life in Huntingdonshire	The Group considers a broad range of infrastructure to support sustainable

	growth, including green infrastructure.
Working with our communities	The Group has identified the need to seek further representation from local councils (Town and Parish Councils).

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Group's work is an essential part of the process of ensuring realism, transparency and accountability in the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership's prioritisation of infrastructure projects that may receive elements of Community Infrastructure Levy funding.

6. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Group is primarily resourced by Planning Services staff, with the Planning Service Manager (Policy) and the Implementation Team Leader taking a lead role. Group meetings are organised by Democratic Services. The outcomes of the Group's recommendations enable the District Council to consider the most appropriate way of deploying staff resources over time to ensure that prioritised infrastructure projects are properly managed and implemented. Some projects will be directly delivered by the District Council, and others will require oversight from the District Council as they will be delivered by others.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The work of the Group is currently considered to be important as it brings the right partners together to consider growth and infrastructure projects in a comprehensive manner. The Group's work also provides practical direction to planning for project development, management and implementation.

8. REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDED DECISIONS

- 8.1 The work of the Growth and Infrastructure Thematic Group is ongoing, and will continue to be important as the receipts from the Community Infrastructure Levy increase over time. The Group's work has a strong relationship with the preparation of the emerging Huntingdonshire Local Plan and the implementation of growth related capital projects. The Group will also need to work with the Town and Parish Councils in the District that commit to preparing Neighbourhood Plans.

9. LIST OF APPENDICES INCLUDED

Appendix 1 – Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership – Growth and Infrastructure Thematic Group - Terms of Reference

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

CONTACT OFFICER

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Tel No. 01480 388430

Appendix 1

Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership – Growth and Infrastructure Thematic Group

Terms of Reference

- To support and co-ordinate, as appropriate, the strategic growth and infrastructure development for Huntingdonshire, through the delivery of actions relating to key plans including the:
 - Core Strategy/ emerging Local Plan and associated planning documents and briefs
 - Local Transport Plan and associated strategies
 - Housing Strategy
 - Local Economy Strategy
 - Environment Strategy
 - LEP Strategy
- To act as Project Board for the delivery of the Infrastructure needs for the District to match projected growth as outlined in the Core Strategy / emerging Local Plan.
- To develop an Infrastructure Business Plan.
- To assess/review infrastructure priorities for the spending of Community Infrastructure Levy and other available funding through an agreed process.
- To ensure the co-ordination and delivery of the growth and infrastructure elements of the Huntingdonshire Sustainable Community Strategy.
- To co-ordinate and deliver other work required by the LSP.
- To ensure stakeholders have engaged in the process of strategy development and implementation on growth and infrastructure related issues.
- To disseminate good practice.
- To anticipate and co-ordinate the implementation of new legislation.
- To provide the LSP with performance management information.
- To support the LSP in development of the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- To ensure smooth working between agencies and other Sustainable Community Strategy thematic groups.

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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 being updated by the Corporate Office to incorporate comments suggested by the Working Group which met on 28th August 2013 and Chief Officers Management Team. Due to be presented to the Panel and Cabinet in February 2014.	Working Group
Economic Development	To be determined.	Economic Well-Being	The Huntingdonshire Economic Growth Plan 2013 to 2023 was considered by the Panel in July 2013. The Economic Development Manager will attend a future meeting to provide an update on the marketing and implementation plans.	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 has met with 5 out of the 6 voluntary organisations to monitor their progress against acceptance agreements. Working Group to meet with the final voluntary organisation – meeting to be arranged. A further 6 monthly round of meetings will be held in due course.	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. Meetings held on 18th July and 11th November 2013. Further meeting will be held to consider the End of Life Pathway. Meeting to be arranged.	Working Group
Communications & Marketing	To be determined.	Economic Well-Being	This review has been put on hold to enable the Panel to undertake its work as part of 'Facing the Future 2013'.	Working Group
Shared Services	To be determined.	Economic Well-Being	This review has been put on hold to enable the Panel to undertake its work as part of 'Facing the Future 2013'.	Working Group
Estates	To be determined.	Economic Well-Being	Executive Councillor for Resources has been asked to report back to the Panel at an appropriate time. The Chairman has attended the Facing the Future discussions and will report back to the next meeting.	To be confirmed.

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date
15/05/13	<u>Leadership Direction</u> Councillors G J Bull and Mrs L Kadić have been appointed to the Corporate Plan Working Group.	Number of meetings of the Corporate Plan Working Group held to develop the Delivery Plan.	Council Delivery Plan to be launched on 1st April 2014. Working Group met on 18th December 2013 to discuss further the content of the Plan.	11/04/14
13/7/10 8/3/11 12/10/11 8/11/11 12/03/13	<u>Great Fen Project</u> The Panel attended tours of the Great Fen. Latest visit undertaken on 1st October 2012. Copy of the Socio-Economic study presented to Panel. The Panel has challenged the figures relating to the number of new jobs created since the Project came into being and has sought clarification on what the real economic benefits of the Project are. These were circulated around to Panel Members on 25th March 2013 via email.	Updates on the progress of the project to be presented to the Panel at 6 monthly intervals. Site visits and information reports will be provided to the Panel as the Great Fen Project develops.	Site visit held on 17th September 2013. The Great Fen Project Collaboration Agreement is due for Renewal. This item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.	14/02/14
14/09/10 11/09/12	<u>Tree Strategy</u> To form a strategy in conjunction with the Tree Officers for the retention and planting of trees. Councillor J W Davies updated the Panel on progress made towards completion of the Tree Strategy.	A series of Working Group meetings have been held comprising Councillors M G Baker, Mrs M Banerjee and J W Davies. A draft policy is being drawn up by the Arboricultural Officer for submission to the Working Group for comment. Ways of finalising the Tree Strategy are being considered. Arboricultural Officer advised that he is working with consultants to finalise the document and that the first	At their September meeting, the Panel requested the Tree Strategy Working Group to reconvene to consider the	TBC

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date
		draft is with him for review.	draft. Request submitted to Planning Services who advised that they are not yet in a position to involve the Working Group at this stage.	
<p>9/04/13</p> <p>11/06/13</p> <p>10/09/13 & 8/10/13</p>	<p><u>Whole Waste System Approach</u></p> <p>Panel received an update on progress with the RECAP Waste Partnership. The Panel has endorsed, in principle, the whole system approach, a business case for which is expected to be delivered to the Panel in the Autumn.</p> <p>In considering the Panel's work programme, Panel agreed that it may be necessary to reconvene the Waste Collection Working Group when consideration is given to the whole waste system approach. The Working Group comprises Councillors M G Baker, G J Harlock and C R Hyams.</p> <p>Reports on Joint Materials Recycling Facility Procurement were considered by the Panel which forms part of the whole waste project. Further reports are expected to be submitted to the Panel in due course.</p>	<p>Head of Operations acknowledged the Panel's request for the report prior to its submission to the Cabinet.</p>		
<p>6/01/12</p> <p>11/09/12</p>	<p><u>Design Principles for Future Developments</u></p> <p>First meeting of the Working Group held where Councillor Mrs M Banerjee was appointed rapporteur. It was agreed that the Working Group needed an overview of the site from a Planning Officer, followed thereafter by a site visit.</p> <p>The Panel considered the report of the Working Group</p>	<p>Working Group met with the Assistant Director for Environment, Growth and Planning on 26th January 2012 to receive an overview of the Loves Farm site. Site visit held on 2nd March 2012 followed by a de-brief on 21st March 2012 and a meeting on 1st June 2012.</p> <p>Meeting with the Urban Design, Trees and</p>	<p>The Working Group has considered a report by the Urban Design, Trees and Landscape Team Leader analysing the results of the 'Building for Life' assessments which were completed on the site visit. The Working Group will begin to draft their final report.</p> <p>Planning Officers are yet to</p>	<p>TBC</p>

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date
	which outlined its findings to date.	Landscape Team Leader was held on 5th October 2012 to discuss aspects of the Design Guide in more detail. Officers met with consultants in January 2013 to discuss the matter further.	establish a timetable for consultation on this document – details awaited.	
<p data-bbox="152 536 255 560">15/01/13</p> <p data-bbox="152 967 255 991">18/07/13</p>	<p data-bbox="300 443 999 504"><u>Landscape Sensitivity to Wind Turbine Development Draft Revised Supplementary Planning Document</u></p> <p data-bbox="300 539 999 935">Panel were provided with an opportunity to comment on the draft revised Wind Power SPD which was undergoing consultation. The Panel has expressed their concerns over a number of matters including the impact of cumulative developments upon the District, the absence of any limits set on the proximity of turbines to dwellings and the group size proposed for large scale developments. With regard to the latter, the Panel is of the view that 24 turbines on one site is not an appropriate policy to adopt for Huntingdonshire. Additionally, the Panel has requested for point (e) of the guidance to be reconsidered in respect of Ouse Valley area's landscape as it was felt that this required further clarification.</p> <p data-bbox="300 967 999 1302">A further opportunity to comment on the Wind Turbine Development Draft Revised SPD was provided. The Panel is still concerned over the group sizes proposed. Concerns also remain over the absence of separation distances between developments and made a suggestion that explicit reference to the terms "adverse visual impact" and "material harm" is incorporated within the planning policy framework. The Panel also has suggested that the Cumulative Landscape and Visual Impacts of Wind Turbines in Huntingdonshire document should be subjected to a separate public consultation exercise.</p>	<p data-bbox="1039 539 1547 687">Comments have been forwarded to the Assistant Director for Environment, Growth and Planning who advised that he would include Members views as part of the consultation.</p> <p data-bbox="1039 967 1547 1086">Panel's views were conveyed to the Cabinet at their meeting in July 2013. Cabinet agreed with the Panel's recommendations.</p>	<p data-bbox="1581 967 1984 1086">A further report on Wind Turbines Supplementary Planning Document will be submitted to the Panel in March 2014.</p>	<p data-bbox="2040 967 2152 991">11/03/14</p>

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date
<p>10/07/12 & 9/04/13</p> <p>11/06/13</p>	<p><u>Rural Transport</u></p> <p>Report received on Transport for Cambridgeshire. A number of comments have been made and were conveyed to the Cabinet. The Panel wishes to review the provision of transportation in rural areas and has requested sight of the final report to be submitted to them at a future meeting.</p> <p>Councillor Mrs L Kadić appointed as the Panel's representative on the Cambridgeshire Future Transport Initiative.</p>	<p>Outcome of the County Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27th March 2013 reported to Members where discussion took place on Cambridgeshire Future Transport.</p>	<p>Further updates to be delivered in due course.</p>	<p>TBC</p>
<p>11/06/13</p>	<p><u>Recycling in Flats</u></p> <p>Panel agreed to include Recycling in Flats to their work programme.</p>	<p>Members requested for a position statement to be submitted to a future meeting. Request submitted to the Head of Operations.</p>	<p>Report anticipated February 2014.</p>	<p>11/02/14</p>
	<p><u>Notice of Key Executive Decisions</u></p> <p>A14</p> <p>Awaiting Government announcement. Update expected in shortly.</p> <p>Huntingdon West Masterplan</p> <p>Panel requested sight of the report prior to its submission to the Cabinet.</p> <p>Local Plan to 2036 – Proposed Submission</p> <p>Panel will have sight of the report prior to its submission to the Cabinet.</p>	<p>Assistant Director for Environment, Growth and Planning aware of Panel's interest in subject matter.</p> <p>Request submitted to the Assistant Director for Environment, Growth and Planning.</p> <p>Request submitted to the Assistant Director for Environment, Growth and Planning.</p>	<p>Update expected in April 2014.</p> <p>Report expected March 2014.</p> <p>Report expected February 2014.</p>	<p>1/04/14</p> <p>11/03/14</p> <p>11/02/14</p>

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date
	<p>Carbon Management Plan</p> <p>Panel will have sight of the report prior to its submission to the Cabinet.</p> <p>Green Deal</p> <p>Panel will have sight of the report prior to its submission to the Cabinet.</p> <p>Huntingdonshire Infrastructure Business Plan</p> <p>Panel will have sight of the report prior to its submission to the Cabinet.</p> <p>Huntingdon and Godmanchester Market Town Transport Strategy</p> <p>Panel will have sight of the report prior to its submission to the Cabinet.</p>	<p>Request submitted to the Service Manager, Environmental Manager.</p> <p>Request submitted to the Service Manager, Environmental Manager.</p> <p>Request submitted to the Assistant Director for Environment, Growth and Planning.</p> <p>Request submitted to the Assistant Director for Environment, Growth and Planning.</p>	<p>Report expected March 2014.</p> <p>Report expected March 2014.</p> <p>Report expected March 2014.</p> <p>Report expected March 2014.</p>	<p>11/03/14</p> <p>11/03/14</p> <p>11/03/14</p> <p>11/03/14</p>
	<p><u>Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership (HSP)</u></p> <p>The Panel has a legal duty to scrutinise the work of the HSP, with the following thematic group falling within the Panel's remit:-</p> <p>Growth and Infrastructure</p> <p>Panel is yet to undertake some scrutiny of this thematic group.</p>	<p>The item will be programmed in for a future Panel meeting as appropriate.</p>	<p>Due to appear before the Panel in January 2014. This item appears elsewhere on the Agenda.</p>	<p>14/1/14</p>

Panel Date	Decision	Action	Response	Date
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ACTION LOG
 (Requests for information/other actions other than those covered within the Progress Report)

<u>Date of Request</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Response</u>
	<i>None identified at present.</i>	



Decision Digest

Edition 140

Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 27th November to 20th December 2013.

FACING THE FUTURE 2013

The Overview and Scrutiny Panels have met on seven occasions in November and December to undertake the "Facing the Future" service reviews. Reviews have been carried out on the following areas:-

- ❖ Procurement
- ❖ Audit & Risk Management
- ❖ Accountancy
- ❖ Legal
- ❖ Democratic Services
- ❖ Elections & Land Charges;
- ❖ Licensing
- ❖ Document Centre
- ❖ Parks, Open Spaces and Countryside
- ❖ Car Parking and Street Rangers
- ❖ Environmental Health
- ❖ Estates
- ❖ Communications
- ❖ Corporate Office
- ❖ Community Health; and
- ❖ One Leisure.

The Panels have considered proposed priority areas for each service area and made a number of suggestions for further investigation.

Following the completion of the reviews, there will then be a process to organise the identified actions into a priority order. The priority list will be submitted to the Overview & Scrutiny Panels in February before being

presented to the Cabinet. It is intended that the Cabinet's decision will initiate a series of reports back to the Panels containing more detailed proposals for implementation.

EXTERNAL AUDITORS: ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2012/13

The Annual Audit Letter from the Council's External Auditors, Pricewaterhouse Cooper for 2012/13 has been formally received by the Corporate Governance Panel. As the report lacked any Officer response to the External Auditor's recommendations for strengthening the budgetary and financial planning process, the Panel has asked Officers to circulate information to them on the actions taken and planned by email.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT, ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION REGULATIONS AND DATA PROTECTION ACT

Details of the number of requests received by the Council under the Freedom of Information Act, Environmental Information Regulations and Data Protection Act were noted by the Corporate Governance Panel. A high level of requests were for general information and alternative methods of making such data available to the public is being considered by Officers, including making maximum possible use of the Council's website.

CORPORATE BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING

As part of a review of the Council's corporate business continuity arrangements, an exercise to test the robustness of the plan has been undertaken. The day was a great success and will become an annual event to help ensure that the Plan remains a "living" document.

In discussing the Council's continuity arrangements, the Panel has noted that agreement in principle has been reached with Huntingdon Library to provide alternative accommodation for face to face services if Pathfinder House Customer Services Centre was inaccessible.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Changes to the Council's Whistleblowing Policy and Guidance have been endorsed by the Corporate Governance Panel. The changes have arisen as a result of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013 and relate to the definition of 'protected disclosure', 'personal liability' and 'good faith'.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS CO-OPTED MEMBERS

The Corporate Governance Panel has received a report detailing the outcome of a review of the involvement of external co-optees on the Overview and Scrutiny Panels. The review had concluded that instead of making permanent appointments to the Scrutiny Panels, there was merit in inviting individuals who had specialist knowledge or expertise to contribute to particular study areas. Having been advised that the proposal had received the support of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chairmen, the Panel

has recommended to Council that the requirement for the appointment of co-optees be removed from the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules contained in the Constitution.

INTERNAL AUDIT – PAY REVIEW

The Corporate Governance Panel has noted the conclusions of the Internal Audit Manager on the job evaluation and pay review process. It is his view that the job evaluation and moderation process has been undertaken thoroughly. However, the Panel has expressed concern about the basis for Inbucon's assertion that their scheme was equality compliant. In response, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services explained that Inbucon had considerable experience in such matters and had been engaged by the authority to provide a legally compliant scheme. In the event of any successful challenge to the adopted scheme, the Council would be able to seek redress from Inbucon.

OFFICER GOVERNANCE WORKING GROUPS

A proposal to introduce Officer Governance Working Groups to raise awareness of the importance of good governance throughout the authority was reported to the Corporate Governance Panel. The approach has been prepared by Chief Officer Management Team following concerns raised in the External Auditor's report over the lack of compliance in some areas.

In considering the main elements to be considered by the groups, the Panel has commented on the level of commitment expected from Officers and expressed concern that the groups will be led by a Head of Service or Service Manager who does not have responsibility for that service area as part of their normal role.

TRAINING OF PANEL MEMBERS

Suggestions for training for Members of the Corporate Governance Panel based on the anticipated work programme over the ensuing year have been noted. A presentation was requested on the various sections of the Council's Constitution.

NATIONAL NON DOMESTIC RATING – CHANGES TO DISCRETIONARY POLICY

The Government has introduced a temporary scheme to encourage local authorities to provide rate relief on certain newly-built empty properties for up to 18 months after they are completed.

Having considered the details of the proposals, the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has recommended that the Council's existing Discretionary Relief Policy should be amended so that fully qualifying newly built and unoccupied non domestic properties completed from 1st October 2013 to 30th September 2016 will be eligible for 100% discretionary rate relief for a maximum period of up to 18 months. The cost of any relief awarded by the Council will be reimbursed by the Government.

Having been advised of the Panel's view, the Cabinet has authorised the Head of Customer Services to award the rate relief.

TREASURY MANAGEMENT: 6 MONTHLY REVIEW OF PERFORMANCE

In order to fulfil its role of overseeing the management of the Council's financial investments and borrowing, both the Cabinet and the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) have reviewed the Council's treasury

management for the period 1st April to 30th September 2013. The Panel has recommended that the Cabinet should endorse the report for submission to the Council.

The Cabinet has, subsequently, approved the content of the report.

BUDGET UPDATE

The Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has reviewed the proposed variations to be included within the new Budget and MTP. And subject to:

- confirmation being received of the requirements in the stated timescale for item 1072 in Annex E – New Extra Costs; and
- the inclusion of information on the pay review, the senior management review and the Chancellors Autumn Statement;

the Panel has endorsed the report by the Assistant Director (Finance and Resources).

Having been advised of the Panel's views, the Cabinet has confirmed that provision will need to be made in the MTP for the potential redevelopment of the Wyton Airfield and that the outcome of the pay review and senior management review will need to be reflected in the final budget report to Council in February 2014. Having also referred to the need to explore ideas to recoup the cost of providing new wheeled bins and stressed the importance of all levels of authorities making efficiencies, the Cabinet has recommended the report to Council, as the basis for the development of the budget for 2014/15 and the revised Medium Term Plan 2015/2019.

DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT – APPLICATIONS AND ISSUES

At its December meeting, the Development Management Panel considered seven applications and of those, four were approved, two refused and one deferred for further clarification. Outline consent was given for the development of 160 dwellings and 2 hectares of employment land on the southern part of the former RAF Upwood site which currently is occupied by a derelict barracks area and Upwood Hill House (the former Station Commander's dwelling). The development will be subject to completion of a S106 Agreement which will secure affordable housing, open space and wheeled bins.

A Panel training day will be held early in the New Year and it was suggested that together with discussion on several pertinent and current issues, the opportunity could be taken to invite representatives of the statutory consultees to the session to better understand their approach to the planning process.

Looking ahead, the Panel has been advised that there will be several vacancies in the development management team at the end of March. Whilst details of the way in which the Team will adapt to the changes will be reported in January, the Panel has been assured that its Chairman and Vice Chairman and the Executive Councillor will continue to monitor the situation in the meantime.