

**GREAT FEN COLLABORATION AGREEMENT
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being))**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting on 14th July 2009, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) considered a report by the Director of Environmental and Community Services summarising the proposal for the Council to enter with other organisations a Great Fen Collaboration Agreement. Item No 6 of the Cabinet agenda refers.

2. DELIBERATIONS

- 2.1 The Panel has accepted that a collaboration agreement offers the most appropriate arrangement between the various partners at the present stage of the development of the Great Fen Project. The Panel also has reiterated its support for the Council's involvement in the project to represent the views of the local community and provide democratic input into the project.
- 2.2 With regard to the collaboration agreement itself, the Panel raised two issues where it was felt that greater clarity was required, i.e,
- While the content of section 7.1 appears intended to cover all of the salary costs of the Project Manager which will be the responsibility of the local Wildlife Trust, it does not refer explicitly to all potential costs such as severance or personal injury claims. The Panel felt that the wording could be more precise to avoid future ambiguity.
 - Concern was expressed that the confidentiality provisions in section 14 might prevent future scrutiny and transparency in the management of the project. The Panel suggests that the section should be redrafted to ensure that scrutiny is not precluded.
- 2.3 Having regard to the significance of the project and its potential impact on both the local community and the environment, the Panel also felt that an annual report should be compiled and presented to the partners on progress towards the achievement of the project aims and objectives. The Panel recommends that Cabinet seek the preparation of an annual report which the Panel would wish to scrutinise.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 The Cabinet is invited to consider the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) as part of its deliberations on the Great Fen Collaboration Agreement.

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