

**CAMBRIDGESHIRE PUBLIC SECTOR ASSET MANAGEMENT STRATEGY
(Report by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being))**

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 At its meeting held on 6th October 2011, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) considered the report by the Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships & Projects) on proposals to establish a Cambridgeshire Asset Management Strategy and a Making Assets Count Board for Huntingdonshire. The following paragraphs contain a summary of the Panel's discussions.

2. THE PANEL'S DISCUSSIONS

- 2.1 The Panel has welcomed the suggestion that public sector organisations should develop a joined-up approach to the management and use of their property assets. Sharing facilities with other public sector partners has the potential to generate significant financial benefits through reduced costs and enhanced returns. However given that the proposal is expected to yield financial benefits, Members have commented that the report should include financial data. It has also been suggested that the project should have a more broadly defined commercial objective. Furthermore, Members have queried whether there is any potential to involve the voluntary sector in the proposals. They have been informed that there is likely to be some cross over with the voluntary sector support project which is currently ongoing and with the ongoing efforts to let parts of the Council's Headquarters to other organisations
- 2.2 The Panel has discussed the proposals to establish a Project Board in each of the District areas to focus on specific projects where there appears to be potential for sharing accommodation and improving service delivery. It has been noted that Huntingdon Town Centre, Huntingdon Operations Centre, St Neots Town Centre, Training Facilities and the development of community hubs for service delivery at Yaxley, Ramsey and Sawtry have been identified as priorities for Huntingdonshire. Members have commented that further consideration should be given to the aims and objectives of the Huntingdonshire Board to ensure that the District Council achieves the best value and outcome from the Board.
- 2.3 On a more general note, the Panel has questioned what will be the likely impact on the local economy if public sector organisations are to lease fewer properties in the future. Although it has been noted that it could provide development opportunities, attention has been drawn to the fact that there will be an impact. With regard to the potential for future changes to the structure of local government, the Panel has noted that the local authority property portfolio should be flexible to suit the circumstances of the time and the local area. Members have suggested that in the longer term public sector employee numbers could go up as well as down.

2.4 The Panel has asked the Managing Director (Communities, Partnerships and Projects) to submit a further report outlining progress made with regard to the projects in Huntingdonshire in six months time.

3. CONCLUSION

3.1 The Cabinet is recommended to

- a) note the contents of the report;
- b) confirm their support for the Making Assets Count Programme and the establishment of a Huntingdonshire 'MAC' Board; and
- c) endorse the Cambridgeshire Public Sector Asset Management Strategy

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Background Documents

Report and Minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) held on 6th October 2011.