



East Cambridgeshire District Council

Meeting: Finance & Assets Committee

Time: 4:30pm

Date: Thursday 28 November 2024

Venue: Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE

Enquiries regarding this agenda: Jane Webb – Democratic Services & Elections Manager

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Committee membership

Quorum: 5 members

Conservative members

Cllr Ian Bovingdon (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Mark Goldsack
Cllr Bill Hunt
Cllr Anna Bailey
Cllr David Miller
Cllr Alan Sharp (Chair)

Conservative substitutes

Cllr Christine Ambrose-Smith
Cllr Martin Goodearl
Cllr Julia Huffer

Liberal Democrat members

Cllr Lorna Dupré
Cllr John Trapp
Cllr Mary Wade
Cllr Alison Whelan (Lead Member)
Cllr Christine Whelan

Liberal Democrat substitutes

Cllr Charlotte Cane
Cllr Christine Colbert
Cllr Kathrin Holtzmann

Lead Officer: Sally Bonnett, Director, Community

Agenda

1. **Public question time** [oral]
The meeting will commence with up to 15 minutes of public question time.
2. **Apologies and substitutions** [oral]
3. **Declarations of interests** [oral]

To receive declarations of interests from Members for any items on the agenda in accordance with the Members Code of Conduct.

4. Minutes **Page 5**

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Assets Committee held on 26 September 2024

5. Chair's announcements **[oral]**

6. Service Delivery Plans – 6-Month Performance Update **Page 15**

7. Economic Development Funding Update **Page 53**

8. Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme Policy Review **Page 55**

9. Finance Report **Page 61**

10. Treasury Operations Mid-Year Review 2024/25 **Page 71**

11. Assets Update **Page 87**

12. Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement **Page 91**

13. Whistleblowing Policy Update **Page 105**

14. Forward Agenda Plan **Page 149**

Exclusion of the public including representatives of the press

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the remaining items because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Categories 1 and 3 of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

15. ECTC Management Accounts **Page 153**

16. Exempt Minutes **Page 161**

To confirm as a correct record the Exempt Minutes of the meeting of the Finance & Assets Committee held on 27 June 2024

Notes

1. Members of the public are welcome to attend this meeting. If you are visiting The Grange during normal working hours you should report to the main reception desk. If you come to an evening meeting please enter via the door in the glass atrium at the back of the building.

Admittance is on a "first come, first served" basis and public access will be from 30 minutes before the start time of the meeting. Due to room capacity restrictions, members of the public are asked, where possible, to notify Democratic Services (democratic.services@eastcambs.gov.uk or 01353 665555) of their intention to attend a meeting.

The livestream of this meeting will be available on [the committee meeting's webpage](https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/meetings/finance-assets-committee-260924) (<https://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/meetings/finance-assets-committee-260924>). Please be aware that all attendees, including those in the public gallery, will be visible on the livestream.

2. Public Questions/Statements are welcomed on any topic related to the Committee's functions as long as there is no suspicion that it is improper (for example, offensive, slanderous or might lead to disclosures of Exempt or Confidential information). Up to 15 minutes is allocated for this at the start of the meeting.

[Further details about the Public Question Time scheme](http://www.eastcambs.gov.uk/committees/public-question-time-scheme)

(www.eastcambs.gov.uk/committees/public-question-time-scheme).

3. The Council has adopted a 'Purge on Plastics' strategy and is working towards the removal of all consumer single-use plastics in our workplace. Therefore, we do not provide disposable cups in our building or at our meetings and would ask members of the public to bring their own drink to the meeting if required.
4. Fire instructions for meetings:
 - if the fire alarm sounds, please make your way out of the building by the nearest available exit, which is usually the back staircase or the fire escape in the Chamber and do not attempt to use the lifts
 - the fire assembly point is in the front staff car park by the exit barrier
 - the building has an auto-call system to the fire services so there is no need for anyone to call the fire services

The Committee Officer will sweep the area to ensure that everyone is out.

5. Reports are attached for each agenda item unless marked "oral".
6. If required, all items on the agenda can be provided in different formats (such as large type, Braille or audio tape, or translated into other languages), on request, by calling main reception on (01353) 665555 or e-mail: translate@eastcambs.gov.uk
7. If the Committee wishes to exclude the public and press from the meeting, a resolution in the following terms will need to be passed:

"That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the remaining item no(s). X because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the item(s) there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Category X of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."



East Cambridgeshire District Council

Minutes of a Meeting of the Finance & Assets Committee

Held at The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely, CB7 4EE at 4:30pm on
Thursday 26 September 2024

Present:

Cllr Ian Bovingdon (Vice-Chair)
Cllr Charlotte Cane
Cllr Lorna Dupré
Cllr Anna Bailey
Cllr Mark Goldsack
Cllr Bill Hunt
Cllr David Miller (*from 4:35pm*)
Cllr Alan Sharp (Chair)
Cllr John Trapp
Cllr Alison Whelan
Cllr Christine Whelan

Officers:

Sally Bonnett – Director Community
Isabel Edgar – Director Operations
Maggie Camp – Director Legal Services
Kieran Carr – Economic Development Manager
Spencer Clark – Open Spaces & Facilities Manager
Richard Kay – Strategic Planning Manager
Jane Webb – Democratic Services and Elections Manager
Nicole Pema – HR Manager
Ian Smith – Director Finance

In attendance:

Nigel Ankers – ECTC Finance Manager
Emma Grima – Director Commercial ECTC

18. Public Questions

The Chair confirmed there were no public questions for the meeting.

19. Apologies and substitutions

It was noted that several changes had been made to the committee membership since the last meeting:

- Cllr Christine Whelan replaced Cllr Charlotte Cane as a main member.
- Cllr Charlotte Cane had replaced Cllr Caroline Shepherd as a substitute.
- Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith has been removed as a substitute.

Apologies were received from Cllr Bill Hunt and Cllr Mary Wade.

Cllr Martin Goodearl and Cllr Charlotte Cane were in attendance as substitutes.

20. Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were made.

21. Minutes

The Committee received the Minutes of the meeting held on 27 June 2024.

Members unanimously resolved:

That the Minutes of the Finance & Assets Committee meeting held on 27 June 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chair.

22. Chair's Announcements

The Chair explained that the page numbers in the agenda pack were not correct therefore, he would ensure that the correct page number was stated before each item.

23. ECTC Financial Statements 2023/24 and Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

The Committee considered a report, Z62 previously circulated, that detailed the East Cambs Trading Company Finance Statements and Annual Governance Statement for 2023/24. The report was presented by the Finance Manager of ECTC who ran through the financial statements, and the Director Commercial ECTC also ran through the Annual Governance Statement.

In response to a question from Cllr Dupré, the Director Commercial ECTC explained that the contribution for in lieu affordable housing was paid in 2017/18. The Director Community confirmed that the contribution had not been spent to date. The Director Commercial ECTC offered to give a more detailed answer in the exempt session.

It was noted that Cllr Cane had requested that future reports contain a paragraph covering the Directors' thoughts on the statements.

Members resolved to **NOTE:**

1. The East Cambs Trading Company Financial statements 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.
2. The East Cambs Trading Company Annual Governance Statement as set out in Appendix 2 of the Report.

24. Medium Term Financial Strategy Update

The Committee considered a report, Z63 previously circulated, that provided an update on the Medium-Term Finance Strategy (MTFS) since the 2024/25 budget was approved in February 2024.

The Finance Director presented the report and Members made comments and asked questions.

In response to a question from Cllr Goodearl, the Director Finance believed the £70 would be cost neutral but this would be checked and reported back on.

A discussion took place about those who found themselves unintentionally in debt with no access to independent advice; it was suggested that ARP would help where needed and that the fines would be used only where necessary.

The recommendations as stated in the report were proposed by the Chair and seconded by Councillor Goodearl.

It was unanimously resolved:

Members resolved to **NOTE:**

1. The information within the report.

Members resolved to **APPROVE:**

1. The introduction of a £70 civil fine to those residents that disclose incorrect information regarding their circumstances around Council Tax discounts as detailed within section 5.4 of the report.

25. Finance Report

The Committee considered a report, Z64 previously circulated, that provided budget monitoring information for services under the Finance & Assets Committee and then, as part of its corporate remit, for the Council as a whole. The Director, Community further explained that there had been no impact on services from the vacancies currently held in the Housing Strategic team.

Members resolved to **NOTE:**

1. A projected yearend underspend of £197,000 for the Finance and Assets Committee when compared to its approved revenue budget of £7,016,768.
2. A projected yearend underspend of £12,718 for the Council when compared to its approved revenue budget of £18,840,342.
3. The overall position for the Council on Capital is a projected outturn of £5,680,541, which is an underspend of £2m when compared to the revised budget.

26. Hedgehog Recovery Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document

The Committee considered a report, Z65, previously circulated, to determine whether to adopt the Hedgehog Recovery Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). If so, this SPD would become a material consideration when making planning decisions.

The Leader, Cllr Bailey proposed the recommendations in the report. In doing so, she thanked officers for their work as this was an opportunity to make a considerable difference to wildlife while making a minimal difference to planning. Councillor Bovingdon seconded the recommendation.

In response to a question from Cllr Dupré, the Strategic Planning Manager confirmed that a workshop had been set up with Parks and Open Spaces team concerning hedgehog management, and he would make sure this also covered the use of pesticides; he would be happy to relay the outcomes from this to Members.

The Committee unanimous resolved to **APPROVE**.

1. The adoption of the Hedgehog Recovery Design Guidance Supplementary Planning Document as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.

27. Environmental Policy

The Committee considered a report, Z66 previously circulated, that requested Members to approve the updated Environmental Policy as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

Cllr Dupré felt it would be helpful to have an over-arching diagram to show the different policies and a timeline of when these would be implemented or reviewed.

The Chair, Cllr Sharp, proposed the recommendations in the report and Cllr Bovingdon seconded the recommendation.

Members resolved to unanimously **APPROVE**:

The updated Environment Policy as set in Appendix 1 of the report.

28. Net Zero Villages Grant Scheme

The Committee considered a report, Z67 previously circulated, to agree the arrangements for distributing to our communities the Net Zero Villages grant of £167,737 from the Cambridgeshire Peterborough Combined Authority

In response to questions from Members, it was confirmed that the scheme would be promoted across all parishes, and all applications would be treated equally and assessed by officers.

Cllr Bovingdon proposed the recommendations in the report, adding he felt it was a good scheme. Cllr Goodearl seconded the recommendations.

Members unanimously resolved to:

1. **AGREE** to accept the Net Zero Villages grant of £167,737 from the Cambridgeshire Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA)
2. **APPROVE** the East Cambridgeshire-specific onward community grant scheme criteria as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report.
3. **AGREE** to delegate authority to the Strategic Planning Manager, in consultation with the Chair of the Finance & Assets Committee, to finalise the detailed arrangements and opening of the grant scheme, likely in October 2024, following the signing of the CPCA Grant Funding Agreement.

29. Assets Update

The Committee considered a report, Z68 (previously circulated), to receive an update on Council-owned assets. The Open Spaces and Facilities Manager presented the report.

Members resolved to **NOTE**:

1. The update on Council-owned assets.
2. The expenditure tracking sheet in Appendix 1 to the report.

30. Health and Safety Annual Report 2023/24

The Committee considered a report, Z69 (previously circulated), to receive an update on Council-owned assets. The Open Spaces and Facilities Manager presented the report.

Members resolved to **NOTE**:

1. The Health and Safety Annual Report 2023/24 as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

31. Economic Development Funding Update

The Committee considered a report, Z70 (previously circulated), to receive an update on Council-owned assets. The Economic Development Manager presented the report and explained that E-space North in Littleport was successful and was running at a 95% occupancy rate. Due to high demand, limited parking space, and the cost of modular buildings, this made extending expensive. Members asked if the Council had any further funding that could be used to fill the gap and encourage start-up businesses.

The Chair proposed an amendment, to drop 2.1 from the recommendations in the report and to propose recommendations 2.2 and 2.3 in the report; this was seconded by Cllr Bovingdon.

Members resolved to **APPROVE**:

1. To delegate authority to the Economic Development Manager in consultation with the Chair of Finance and Assets Committee, to finalise the detailed arrangements and opening of the grant scheme, following approval of the reallocation of the RDPE funding from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA).

32. Gender Pay Reporting 2023/24

The Committee considered a report, Z71 (previously circulated), providing some measurable data on gender pay at the Council. The HR Manager presented the report.

Cllr Cane queried at 4.6 of the report, whether there was evidence of good promotion practices when the percentage of females in the upper quartile (55%) was less than the total number of females at 70%. Cllr Trapp suggested that table 1 include salary bandings for each of the quartiles in future papers.

Members resolved to **NOTE**:

1. The content of information within the report.

33. Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy 2025-2028

The Committee considered a report, Z72 (previously circulated), to present the first draft of the Council's updated Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2025-2028 for further consultation. The HR Manager presented the report.

Cllr Alison Whelan thanked the HR Manager for the positive changes this policy and made reference to the difference between equality and equity. Cllr Whelan asked for 'equity' to be added to the updated policy. Cllr Anna Bailey queried the wording about civil partnerships in Appendix 1 and them also being available for married couples. The HR Manager will correct this.

The Chair, Cllr Sharp, proposed the recommendations in the report and Cllr Bovingdon seconded the recommendations.

Members unanimously resolved to **APPROVE**:

1. The first draft of the updated Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy 2025-2028 for further consultation, and enable a final draft to be presented to the Finance and Assets Committee in January 2025.

34. ECDC Bereavement Centre Project Quarter 2 Update

The Committee considered a report, Z73 (previously circulated), to receive an update on the Bereavement Centre Project. The Director Operations presented the report.

In response to a query raised by Cllr Cane concerning the tight deadlines for construction and the restrictions on when ecology surveys could take place, the Director Operations explained that the surveys were required pre commencement and any further ecology work required would take not impact construction work, although timelines would be tight ahead of commencing construction. The Council continued to work with the Wildlife Trust and Planning to ensure a way forward.

Cllr Dupré proposed adding an amendment:

- 2.2 In view of the size of the gap in the projects contingency budget and increase in build costs reported in 4.4 of the report, which have substantial implications for the project, members are requested to refer this item to the meeting of the Full Council on 17 October 2024.

Proposer: Cllr Lorna Dupré
Seconder: Cllr Alison Whelan

Speaking as proposer of the amendment, Cllr Dupré believed that it was not appropriate to 'note' the report when it was likely that further work and costs would be incurred, it was her opinion that the item should be brought back to Full Council for consideration and discussion by all Members, therefore she proposed the item should be discussed at Full Council in October, in an exempt session. Cllr Alison Whelan seconded the amendment.

Members believed that although it was likely that costs had increased, these figures would remain unknown until they were put out to tender and therefore it was suggested that it would be more appropriate for the item to be brought to Full Council at that point when the full costs would be known.

Cllr Cane agreed that costs would have increased but believed it should be all Members at the Council discussing if it would be worth the money to continue to pursue the project.

Speaking as seconder of the amendment, Cllr Alison Whelan stated that construction costs were rising, and Finance & Assets Committee was not the correct place to consider the item; she felt all Members should be informed and able to debate and discuss at Full Council.

Cllr Dupré added that there was a need to discuss these issues early and to reflect on the issues raised.

At the request of Cllr Cane, a recorded vote was taken on the amended recommendation:

FOR: (5) – Cllrs Cane, Dupré, Trapp, Alison Whelan, Christine Whelan

AGAINST: (6) – Cllrs Bailey, Bovingdon, Goldsack, Goodearl, Miller, Sharp

ABSTENTIONS: (0) –

The Amendment was declared to have fallen.

Members resolved to **NOTE:**

1. The information provided in the Bereavement Centre Build Project Dashboard Appendix 1 (Exempt Agenda Item 20) and Strategic Plan Appendix 2 of the report.

35. Appointment of a Substitute Representative on the Rural Services Network

The proposed Julia Huffer be appointed as substitute representative on the Rural Services Network, this was seconded by Cllr Bailey.

Members resolved to **APPROVE:**

That Cllr Julia Huffer be appointed as substitute representative on the Rural Services Network.

36. Forward Agenda Plan

The Committee considered its forward plan of items to be considered.

It was noted that Economic Development Funding Update be added to the November meeting and the Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy 2025-28 be added to the January meeting.

37. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC INCLUDING REPRESENTATIVES OF THE PRESS

It was resolved unanimously:

That the press and public be excluded during the consideration of the remaining items because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during the item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information of Categories 1, 2 & 3 of Part I Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

(A short break was taken from 6:20pm to 6:27pm.)

38. **EXCLUSION BEREAVEMENT CENTRE UPDATE – EXEMPT APPENDIX**

Members resolved to **NOTE** the contents of the Exempt Appendix.

39. **ECTC Management Accounts Q1 2024/25**

The Committee considered a report, Z25 previously circulated, that detailed the management accounts.

Members resolved to **NOTE** the Management Accounts covering Q1 2024/25.

40. **Write Off of Unrecoverable Debt**

The Committee considered a report, Z26 previously circulated, that detailed the current Business Rate and general debt that the Council no longer felt was recoverable and as such, needed to be written off. The Director Finance presented the report.

The Chair, Cllr Sharp, proposed the recommendations in the report and Cllr Bovingdon seconded the recommendations.

Members resolved to:

- 1. **APPROVE** the write-off of Business Rate debt to a total value of £109,732.17 and general debt of £3,900.00.
- 2. **NOTE** the Business Rate debt to a total value of 101,916.49 and two general debts to a value of £1,045.00 have been written off using delegated powers.

41. **Exempt Minutes**

The Committee unanimously **RESOLVED** that the exempt Minutes of the Finance & Assets Committee meeting held on 27 June 2024 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chair.

The meeting concluded at 6:50pm

Chair.....

Date.....

Title: Service Delivery Plans 2024/25 – Six Month Performance Update

Committee: Finance & Assets Committee

Date: 28 November 2024

Author: Director Community

Report number: Z104

Contact officer:

Sally Bonnett, Director Community, sally.bonnett@eastcambs.gov.uk 01353 616451, Room 105, The Grange, Ely

1.0 Issue

1.1. To receive an update on the Service Delivery Plans 2024/25.

2.0 Recommendations

2.1. Members are requested to note this update report.

3.0 Background/Options

3.1. The Service Delivery Plans for 2024/25 were approved by Finance & Assets Committee on 28 March 2024 (agenda item 7) for the following services:

- Democratic Services
- Economic Development
- Financial Services
- Human Resources
- Information and Communication Technology
- Infrastructure and Strategic Housing
- Legal Services
- Open Spaces and Facilities
- Reprographics
- Strategic Planning

4.0 Arguments/Conclusions

4.1. An update is provided against performance targets for each service area reporting to the Finance and Assets Committee. Where a service is performing above or below target, a narrative has been provided.

5.0 Additional Implications Assessment

5.1 In the table below, please put Yes or No in each box:

Financial Implications	Legal Implications	Human Resources (HR) Implications
No	No	No

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)	Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA)	Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)
No	No	No

6.0 Appendices

Appendix A: Democratic Services half year report 2024 to 2025
 Appendix B: Economic Development Service half year report 2024 to 2025
 Appendix C: Financial Services half year report 2024 to 2025
 Appendix D: Human Resources half year report 2024 to 2025
 Appendix E: Information and Communication Technology
 Appendix F: Infrastructure and Strategic Housing half year report 2024 to 2025
 Appendix G: Legal Services half year report 2024 to 2025
 Appendix H: Open Spaces and Facilities half year report 2024 to 2025
 Appendix I: Reprographics Service half year report 2024 to 2025
 Appendix J: Strategic Planning half year report 2024 to 2025

7.0 Background documents

Service Delivery Plans 2024/25



Democratic Services half year report 2024 to 2025

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Publish agenda for Regulatory Committees within 5 clear days of a meeting (statutory) Publish agenda for Council, Policy Committees and Audit Committee within 7 clear days of a meeting	100%, annually	Target on track 100%
Publish decision lists for Council/Committees within 3 working days of a meeting	100%, annually	Target on track 100%
Publish draft minutes for Council/Committees within 14 working days of a meeting	85%, annually	Target on track 100%
Review customer feedback forms/information from election and resolve, as far as practicable, issues by commencement of next election period	90% of all customer feedback actioned (where possible) by commencement of next Election period, annually	Target on track 100%
Achieve at least an 85% registration rate for Route 2 forms	85%, annually	Target on track 84.26%

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Number of electors registering electronically via government portal	At least 6,000 to be registered, annually	Target on track 3479
Publication of agendas on website on day of despatch	100%, annually	Target on track 100%
Prepare, agree and implement member Induction, training and development programmes and member seminar sessions to provide members with the required knowledge and skills to effectively perform their role as a district councillor	10 Member seminar/training sessions, annually	Target on track 1 Member Induction session held; 4 Member seminars already run; 3 more seminars booked. 5 Member training sessions already run; 2 more training sessions booked.
Regularly review higher level corporate risks, including: • changes to the political composition of the Council affecting the democratic decision-making processes • local, regional and national legislative and policy changes affecting the democratic process, both in terms of electoral administration/elections and democratic decision-making • impact of corporate initiatives such as shared services, commercialisation, on the working practices of the team	100%, annually	Ongoing Conducted an unprecedented total of 7 Elections (District and Parish Council elections, Neighbourhood Planning Referendums and a General Elections). Clerking services provided on a commercial basis to ECTC and ECSS boards

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Encourage and facilitate new intake of councillors' usage of electronic means to access and receive Council information/agendas	25% of councillors to receive agendas via electronic means, annually	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>11% receive all papers electronically. 18% receive electronically if they are a substitute. 4% have a bespoke electronic request (paper for Council only) Paper usage reduction: 32.14%</p>
Encourage greater usage of electronic means of response/communication by/with electors, canvass and elections staff on electoral registration and elections matters, where possible	<p>% Elector communications via electronic means, annually:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Route 2 Canvass/Electoral Registration - 75% • Using E-mail as preferred method of contact for Elections correspondence - 60% 	<p>Target on track</p> <p>Electors with email – 91.7%</p> <p>Staff with email – 88.3%</p>
Democratic Services staff to actively seek to reduce paper usage via electronic solutions	Corporate Target, annually: 10% paper reduction per Service Area 2023/24	<p>Target off track</p> <p>Paper usage has increased by 20.03%.</p> <p>Democratic Services will seek to reduce this figure in the following 6 months.</p>



Economic Development half year report 2024 to 2025

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Maintain direct contact with key businesses and relevant stakeholders by collecting business data	Complete data verification and testing stage of system by Sept 2024.	Target on track Data verification and testing stage of system completed before Sept 2024.
	Establish the new functioning Business Information System that is producing quarterly analysis/reporting from Dec 2024.	Target on track New Functioning Business Information System established and producing quarterly analysis/reporting from Dec 2024 completed.
	Target two stakeholder mailouts, each a minimum of 1000 recipients, Sept 2024 and March 2025.	Ongoing 1 mailout with 5000 recipients completed, second targeted for March 2025
	Utilise new social media channels with a minimum of 12 posts over the year.	Ongoing Posted on social media channels once a month on track for a minimum of 12 posts over the year.
	Maintain contact with a minimum of 4 business parks in the district which will	Ongoing Contact maintained with 4 business parks in the district, including Lancaster Way and Potters Space, throughout the

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
	include Lancaster Way, and Potters Space throughout the year.	year.
Deliver business support programmes and investment initiatives	Implement agreed UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Business Grant Scheme. Complete by March 25 by awarding total available funds (£310,511).	Target on track Implemented agreed UK Shared Prosperity and Rural England Prosperity Business Grant Scheme. Completed awarded total available funds (£310,511).
	Monitor with successful applicants agreed businesses outputs to March 2025.	Ongoing Monitoring with 20 successful applicants agreed businesses outputs by March 2025.
	Monitor policy and evaluate potential new funding streams throughout the year.	Ongoing Monitored policy and evaluated potential new funding streams throughout the year.
Work with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority to help them/stakeholders deliver East Cambridgeshire's skills and employment actions for short, medium, and long-term interventions	Provide Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and stakeholders with local expertise across the district,	Target on track Provided Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority and stakeholders with local expertise across the district. Also worked on specific projects for the year, prioritizing the Further Education Coldspots feasibility

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
	in addition to working on specific projects for the year, prioritising Further Education Coldspots feasibility study – report due Summer 2024 and the Digital Inclusion Project by March 2025	study and the Digital Inclusion Project (due by March 2025).
Attend and contribute to the Connecting Cambridgeshire project board (quarterly) and Camb-Wifi governance board and further develop and monitor local policy/strategic plans for East Cambridgeshire	Attend, contribute and champion East Cambridgeshire at Quarterly meetings throughout the year.	Target on track Attended and contributed to the Connecting Cambridgeshire project board (quarterly)
Manage the e-space serviced business centres and two business units ensuring that remains above 80% viability level.	Ensure E-Space and business units maintain occupancy levels above 80% by retaining existing customers, effective marketing of vacancies and budgetary control.	Target on track Sustainably managed the E Space serviced business centres in addition to the council's business units (2) on the Cambridgeshire Business Park, Ely Occupancy levels April 2024 to September 20224 North = 90.53 % South = 92.04 %

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Deliver e-space North extension project	By June 2024 Confirm project design against agreed budget. By Sept 2024 complete procurement. October 2024 to March 2025 commence build and completion.	Target off track Not possible to achieve a value for money project that meets the car parking and biodiversity net gain requirements on site. Fund to be reappropriated to Littleport Business Community project. Approval from CPCA Investment Board planned December 2024
Regularly review higher level corporate risks including: contractual and regulatory compliance, such as procurement and grant funding <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H&S at our external sites 	Monthly, annually	Target on track Carried out all necessary fire drills at E-space. Reviewed all contractual/Legal agreements connected with funding programmes, procurement, leases, and service provision.
Monitor the net impact/improvement of fitting solar PV to E-space North in order to help inform:	Provide quarterly reports on energy savings against pre-installation benchmark.	Target on track 2023/24 energy consumption showed a 40% reduction and established saving benchmark figure. Comparative reduction for six months 2024/2025 37% when factoring higher occupancy rate.



Finance Services half year report 2024/25

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
<p>Deliver the agreed Internal Audit Plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ensure that the annual Internal Audit Plan is risk based and adds value to the organisation consult with Corporate Management Team to assist in the preparation of the annual Internal Audit Plan before gaining approval from Audit Committee 	By 31 March 2025, annually	<p>Target on track</p> <p>Delivery is on track to be completed by March 2025</p>
<p>Produce a Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) with balanced budgets for two years, that is the budget year and the subsequent year, with a trajectory which will allow the Council to remain financially secure.</p> <p>Regularly review high level corporate risks, including public sector funding and major income streams such as council tax and business rates for 2025/26 and 2026/27 including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Government's Fair Funding review for local government East Cambs Trading Company's financial health and potential financial 	As identified, annually	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>MTFS update report discussed at Finance and Assets Committee in September, showing a forecast balanced budget for 2025/26 only (at this point)</p>

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
transactions between it and the Council		
Produce the detailed budget for 2025/26 to a time frame that allows the Council to set a legal budget	To be presented to the Full Council meeting in February 2025, annually	Not yet started N/A
Produce quarterly budget monitoring reports to committees, (both revenue and capital) and an outturn report at yearend	Reports to meet committee deadlines, quarterly	Target on track Reports have been produced for the first two quarters
Provide a co-ordinated approach to tackling fraud; Involvement in the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) data sharing exercise	As required, ongoing	Completed Data uploads for 2024/25 completed in October 2024
Raise awareness of fraud and corruption across the organisation; review of counter fraud procedures, hot line and poster campaign	As identified, ongoing	Not yet started Fraud awareness activity planned for November 2024
Pay 99% of undisputed invoices within 30 days	99%, annually	Target on track 99.86% to-date
Average time taken to collect income in relation to external invoices (this indicator does not include council tax and business rates)	Below 25 days, annually	Target on track 17.21 days to-date

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
With the current payroll contract coming to an end in May 2025, look at service delivery options after this point and start progressing the chosen route	As required, annually	Ongoing Discussions both internally and with the current provider are taking place with the objective of getting the most appropriate package to meet our needs moving forward
Pay 99.8% of staff the correct amount and on time	99.8%, annually	Target on track 99.9% achieved at half year point
Improve the process for the production of the Statement of Accounts; prepare the draft Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 by the statutory deadline of the end of May 2024 and ensure that a further version is approved by Audit Committee and published on the Council website as soon as the external audit is completed	End of May 2024, annually	Ongoing The draft Statement of Accounts for 2023/24 was published on the Council's website by the end of May deadline Ongoing We still await the conclusion of the Audit of both the 2022/23 and 2023/24 Statements
Manage the Council's surplus cash through the Treasury Management Strategy to maintain the security and liquidity of the funds and to prevent the need for external borrowing	As required, annually	Target on track No external borrowing has been needed and interest receipts have been in excess of budget – see Treasury Management Report also on today's agenda
Deal with 98% of insurance claims within a fortnight of being notified.	98%, annually	Target on track 100%, All Insurance claims have been submitted within this timeframe

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Support the continued development of members of the Financial Services team to ensure that they are given personal and professional career development opportunities; provide training to staff in line with their personal training and development plan as detailed in their appraisal document	90% of training needs to be met, annually	Ongoing All staff are provided with on-the-job and external training in line with their job role on a need to have basis
Regularly review higher level corporate risks, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public sector funding • loss of major income streams 	As required, annually	Ongoing This is linked to the MTFS update as above
Contribute to the implementation of the Council's Climate and Environment Action Plan, through the allocation of funding to "green" projects and a review of printing to reduce paper usage	As identified, annually	Ongoing These are on-going projects, with the use of paper now being actively reviewed through statistics produced by the Reprographics Team



HR half year report 2024 to 2025

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Provide support to managers and staff to deliver the actions set out in the Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	Ongoing, annually	<p>Target on track</p> <p>Members can view the Council's progress against the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2021 to 2024 in the Annual Equality Monitoring Report.</p>
Update the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy for 2025-2028	Draft policy to be presented to committee in July 2024 to commence public consultation and proposed implementation date of 1 January 2025	<p>Target on track</p> <p>Draft policy presented to committee in September and public consultation has commenced. Feedback and updated policy will be presented back to Committee in January 2025.</p>
Publish the annual equality monitoring report for the period 1 April to 31 March each year	As required, annually	<p>Target exceeded</p> <p>The Annual Equality Monitoring Report for 2023 to 2024 has been published on the Council's website.</p>
Calculate the Council's gender pay gap for the period 1 April to 31 March each year and report to committee	As required, annually	<p>Target exceeded</p> <p>The gender pay gap for 2023 to 2024 was reported to committee in September. The mean gender pay gap was 9% and the median gender pay gap was 10.3%.</p>

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Promote initiatives to raise awareness of health and wellbeing, and support employees who are experiencing mental ill health to access sources of support	As identified, annually	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>HR fund 6 sessions of counselling or Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) for employees who are experiencing mental ill-health problems. Since 1 April 2024, 5 people have requested and been offered support plans.</p> <p>HR also coordinated 6 sessions of health checks with approximately 40 people seen and checked for auditory, respiratory, skin and vision with advice provided to both staff and the Council.</p> <p>HR provide ad-hoc reimbursement for flu vaccinations for front line staff.</p>
By 30 September 2024, introduce a Menopause at Work policy to develop understanding and support of menopause at work issues	By 30 September 2024, following consultation with Unison	<p>Target on track</p> <p>The draft Menopause at Work Policy was presented to Unison on 27 September to commence consultation.</p>
Maintain the low level of short-term sickness absence, that is, number of days lost per full-time equivalent employee (FTE)	3.4 days per FTE recurring target, annually	<p>Target on track</p> <p>At the 6-month review period, the short-term sickness absence is at 1.86 days lost per FTE.</p>
Once the negotiations with the trade unions have ended, make the necessary changes to the Council's pay scale to meet the requirements of the National Joint Council (NJC)	As required, annually	<p>Target on track</p> <p>The pay award has just been agreed and arrangements will be made to pay this to staff with their November pay.</p>

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
pay award from 1 April 2024, re-modelling the pay spine if required		
Following the appraisal deadline, establish the Performance Related Increment Panel to consider the ratings of 'outstanding' and determine final ratings	As required, annually	Target exceeded PRI Moderation Panel held in May 2024. 15 people were awarded 'outstanding', 153 'excellent', 22 'good', 6 'no official rating and 1 'needs improvement'.
Coordinate Job Evaluation Panels to ensure that all new and significantly changed jobs have been evaluated fairly and systematically	As required, annually	Ongoing Job Evaluation panels continue to be arranged promptly when a new request is received. 17 carried out since 1 April 2024.
Update the Council's Pay Policy Statement and present to Full Council in February each year	February 2025, annually	Not yet started Will be presented to Full Council in February 2025.
Continue to create new, and update existing, HR policies and procedures following changes in legislation or best practice	As required, annually	Ongoing The following policies have been created or updated since April 2024: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agency and Off payroll working 2. Family Leave and Flexible Working 3. Menopause at Work 4. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
By 30 September 2024, review the Performance management (appraisal) scheme and look at	By 30 September 2024	Target on track Exploring options to automate the appraisal process.

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
options for making the process more efficient		
Appraisals undertaken by 31 March each year	100%, annually	<p>Not yet started</p> <p>There has been no progress on this target yet because the appraisal deadline is 31 March 2025.</p>
<p>Regularly review risks associated with Human Resources as detailed within the Corporate Risk Register:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • non-compliance with employment legislation, resulting in costly litigation and/or employment tribunal claims and reputational damage • increased sickness levels impacting on team capacity and morale 	As required, annually	Ongoing
By 31 March 2025, implement a volunteering policy which supports staff to do a range of volunteering opportunities that positively impact the community, helps vulnerable people in our society and/or helps to improve the environment in East Cambridgeshire.	By 31 March 2025	<p>Target on track</p> <p>The HR Administrator has carried out a benchmarking exercise to ascertain what other local authorities are doing in terms of employer supported volunteering. There has been no progress on the policy yet because the target date is 31 March 2025.</p>



Information and Communication Technology (ICT) half year report 2024 to 2025

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Install, configure and implement Core Network Switch, replacing existing reaching end of life.	By end of May 2024	Target completed Core Network switch replaced and configured. Completed by 2 nd June. Delayed caused to original date of work clashing with payroll run (where staff needed to work out of hours)
Install, configure and implement Storage Access Network (SAN), replacing existing reaching end of life	By end of October 2024	Target exceeded Storage access Network installed, configured and data migrated both at The Grange and DR Site August 2024
Install, configure and Implement 4No Virtual Host servers for the virtual environment, replacing existing servers reaching end of life.	By end of October 2024	Target on track Replacement of Virtual Hosts programmed to commence 1 st – 18 th October 2024.
Regularly review higher corporate risks, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • security and infiltration of the ECDC network • Disaster Recovery Plan • backup of ECDC data • Incident Management Plan • Monitoring Strategy 		Target on track Hardware and Infrastructure Renewal Plan reviewed and published May 2024. Mobile Phone Acceptable Use Protocol published June 2024 Patching Policy Reviewed – and software changes currently being updated to reflect. Password Protocol reviewed and published July 2024 Incident Management Plan

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
		currently being reviewed.
Ensure the Council is awarded an annual PSN compliance certificate to maintain access to secured services – ensuring all servers remain in support with Microsoft for security	Annual PSN compliance certificate, annually	Target on track PSN Health check programmed for November 2024. Submission to be made March 2025.
Review disaster recovery plans with planned testing dates, providing feedback and lessons learnt and update the Disaster Recovery Plan following the test	By end of September 2024, annually	Target completed Disaster Recovery Test took place 6 th – 8 th September 2024. Disaster Recovery Documents updated.
To work on the delivery of the Digital Planning Government funded project, by reviewing, cleansing and updating GIS data held on the corporate system managed by ICT, and create plans as needed . To support use of GIS and mapping corporately, and specifically in Planning in the medium term, by identifying corporate spatial layers and layer owners across all services and provide ongoing technical support to refresh and update GIS mapping	By end of March 2025	Target on track 2 of the 4 layers required to be published as part of the terms of the ODP funding were published by end of May 2024. Work on-going with the Planning Department for the remaining 2 layers to be published.
Close service desk incidents and service requests within the service level agreement (SLA): Incidents Priority 1 – resolution target 4 hours Priority 2 – resolution target 4 hours+ Priority 3 – resolution target 1 day	90% Annually	Target exceeded End of September shows 97.8% completed within SLA

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Priority 3 – resolution target 3 days Service Requests Minor – resolution target 3 days Standard – resolution target 5 days Major – resolution target 10 days Bespoke – agreed with user		
Ensure that internal and external networks and systems are stable and reliable and fit for purpose	Network 99% uptime and systems 99% uptime, annually	Target exceeded 100% Uptime on software 99.9005% Uptime on hardware - A total of 6 working hours were lost by two incidents caused by the VPN and DNS
Notifications to Royal Mail to be made with 5 working days of receipt of valid street naming and numbering applications	75%, annually	Target off track 71% - this is due to the workload of street naming and numbering requests
Street Naming and Numbering schemes to be sent to customers within 5 working days of receipt of postcode from Royal Mail	95% annually	Target off track 71% - this is due to the workload of street naming and numbering requests
New street names to be adopted/formally objected within 1 month (in accordance with Street Naming and Numbering Legislation and policy) of valid application	100% annually	Target on track All new street names have been formally adopted or objected to within 1 calendar month
Donate decommissioned useable laptops (hard drive removed) to local schools and charities	100% of reuseable laptops, annually	Target on track 3 useable laptops have been donated to a local charity. Work ongoing to identify further useable laptops and charities.

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Disposal of redundant ICT Equipment in accordance with the WEEE regulations including recycling and no land fill discarding	100% of redundant equipment, annually	Not yet started Work to begin on disposal shortly.



Infrastructure and Strategic Housing Service half year report 2024 to 2025

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
<p>Monitor development for compliance with requirement of either CIL or S106 and ensure collection of financial and monitoring of public open space transfers.</p>	<p>100% compliant. Reporting of all outstanding payments 6 monthly</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>No S106 payments overdue</p> <p>10% (2) of CIL payments due 1 April – 30 September 2024 are overdue.</p> <p>5 older CIL payments are overdue. Enforcement action is ongoing.</p>
<p>Produce the Infrastructure and Funding Statement annually which will be published by 31 December 2024</p>		<p>On track to be published before the deadline</p>
<p>Continue the parish council liaison programme to educate and provide guidance to local councils on the community infrastructure levy and the meaningful proportion. Engage and support local parish councils and key stakeholders on the CIL Infrastructure List and CIL</p>	<p>Review the CIL guidance note for Parish and Town Councils and circulate to all Parishes by November 2024</p> <p>Attend 1 parish</p>	<p>Target on track</p> <p>Guidance notes updated and circulated to Parish and Town Councils</p> <p>ECDC Parish Forum scheduled for February 2025</p>

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Governance Plan which sets out what infrastructure may benefit from CIL funding and how the funding may be allocated	forum/event to provide information about CIL by March 2025	
Provide funding to Parish Councils to produce Parish Walks Leaflets to support healthy living and encourage residents to learn more about their area.	Launch scheme by May 2024, funding ends 31st March 2025	Not yet started Scheme to launch December/January to align with SPF Tourism project
Regularly review risks associated with infrastructure and Strategic Housing including: • Monitoring CIL and S106 income	Review monthly, Report 6 monthly	Ongoing Risks reviewed – CIL and S106 income monitored
Provide technical advice and support to new and existing Community Led Development projects across East Cambridgeshire; assess grant applications against the approved criteria as received	100% of requests for assistance to be met, annually	Ongoing 100% of requests for assistance met No grant applications received
Provide an ongoing affordable housing S106 service to the planning team, negotiating and securing affordable housing on developments in line with strategic requirements and planning policy through S106 agreements, community land trusts, rural exception sites and other means of provision where appropriate	Launch Eden Square £100k Homes Scheme summer 2024 100% of requests for assistance to be met, annually	Target on track Scheme launched July 2024, and 4 purchasers identified 100% of requests for assistance met

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Working with Sustrans to encourage active travel across the district. Provide Council Members with regular updates on reports.	<p>Hold a Seminar to brief Members and Parish Councils about the 5 new feasibility reports produced by Sustrans by July 2024</p> <p>Publish the 5 new feasibility reports on the Council's website by July 2024</p>	<p>Completed Seminar held in September 2024</p> <p>Feasibility reports published on Council's website in September 2024</p>
Work with the Cambridgeshire County Council to produce their Transport Strategy for East Cambridgeshire	<p>Provide advice and guidance to the CCC Transport Strategy & Funding Team to inform the development of a new Transport Strategy for East Cambridgeshire by March 2025</p>	<p>Not yet started The Strategy is not being updated this year. CCC are reviewing their approach to strategy development.</p>

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Assist with the Local Area Energy Planning (LAEP) Project to facilitate energy system transformation and deliver Climate and Net Zero ambitions for East Cambridgeshire.	Attend monthly stakeholder meetings, expected contract start date April/May 2024	Target on track Meetings attended until September 2024. This area of work has now passed to the Strategic Planning Team as the team responsible for the Council's Climate Change activity



Legal Services half year report 2024 to 2025

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Maximise recovery of legal costs and fees; court costs and fees, contribution to legal costs and disbursements	As identified, annually	Target on track
Ensure the recovery of court costs and fees attributable to car parking – summons issued and costs recovered in £'s (costs recovered are dependent on the Magistrates Court choosing to award the full amount of costs requested, fewer costs or no costs at all – ECDC are unable to influence this decision as we can only request full costs are awarded)	100% annually	Ongoing £1,585 requested and £1,345 awarded to the Council. 2 cases not awarded costs due to the defendant's financial circumstances.
Ensure the recovery of outstanding debts owed to the Council	100% instructions for recovery in £, annually	Ongoing Value of invoices referred to legal between April and September £206,937.79. Value of invoices recovered between April and September £191,709.19 – 92.69%. Aged debt (2021-2023) reduced by £3,495.20. £39,244.80 referred to management. £23,000 referred to Central Government for incorrectly paid COVID grants.

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Provide legal support for committees where necessary	100% attendance at committees where necessary, annually	Target on track
Ensure car parking appeals and enforcement comply with the following timescales: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 80% of appeals responded to within 10 working days 100% within 20 working days 	As identified, annually	Target on track 100% within 5 days
Ensure that the timescales set out in the Transparency Code are complied with and manage information data on the Council's website; open date, FOI disclosure log and officer decisions log	100% annually or quarterly for datasets. As soon as received for the FOI disclosure log and officer decisions, annually	Target on track 100% annually or quarterly for datasets. Target on track As soon as received for FOI/EIR disclosure log and officer decisions.
Deliver an effective, accurate and transparent FOI/EIR service	100% of responses within 20 working days (unless the FOI request involves further	Ongoing 93% responses in 20 working days. 98% responses in 10 working days. Requests: 246 from 1 April to 30 September 2024.

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
	research, but the service will ensure the customer is kept informed) annually	Days to respond: 0-5 days = 59% 6 to 10 days = 14% 11 to 15 days – 10% 16 to 20 days = 15% 20+ = 1% Clarification = 1%
Deliver a comprehensive Data Protection request service ensuring full legal compliance and accurate responses	100% within one calendar month, annually	Ongoing 98% responses within one calendar month
Proactively assist all services across the Council with issues related to legal requirements	90% within 10 working days, 100% within 20 working days, annually	Ongoing 93% within 10 working days. 3% within 20 working days. 6% over 20 working days.
Ensure continuous service delivery for the Local Land Charge service	100% of Local Land Charge searches within 10 working days, 95% within 5 working days, annually	Ongoing 99.7% within 10 days, 88.80% within 5 days. Average turn around 4.66 days
Support the continued professional development of the team to ensure that they are meeting with personal and professional career development opportunities	As identified, annually	Target on track

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
<p>Regularly review corporate risks associated with the Council's legal requirements; the current risks to the Authority area as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with the General Data Protection Regulations • Data Protection Act 2018 	Minimum monthly, annually	Ongoing
Undertake activities which help to mitigate/adapt to climate change	As identified, annually	Ongoing Cross Council activity. 75% of all legal services staff have undertaken carbon literacy training.
Legal Services staff to actively seek to reduce paper usage via electronic solutions	10% paper reduction by March 2025	Target off track 4.73% reduction



Open Spaces and Facilities half year report 2024 to 2025

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Maximise the Council's income by offering services to partners / agencies as part of the Council's commercialism agenda	To maintain contact with all parishes and schools within Cambridgeshire, continuing to offer grounds maintenance/tree services.	Ongoing Grounds maintenance works carried out and scheduled for Parishes/schools
Maintain ECDC Assets to a safe, usable and legal standard for our customers' enjoyment	Ensure that ECDC buildings portfolio and assets are maintained to the correct legal standards through the Council's assets maintenance programme	Ongoing No issues to report Note- Thorough induction programme and review process in place for the new Health & Safety Advisor
Ensure that the Council's corporate risks are managed effectively and mitigations are put in place to reduce impact	To regularly review risks associated with Open Spaces and Facilities, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emergency Planning- • Business Continuity 	Ongoing Business continuity plans are being reviewed currently. The new Health & Safety Advisor is reviewing all Health & Safety policies and procedures

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and safety 	
Wherever possible protect our environment keeping Biodiversity at the forefront of our operations	Work with external partners, including The Wildlife Trust and Ely Wildlife Space, to support and protect the biodiversity of East Cambridgeshire. Activities will include ensuring rare plant species and animal habitats are protected	Ongoing Working with the Council's ecologist, we have identified areas of importance that will then require a bespoke management plan for grounds maintenance
Use Green Flag grounds maintenance standards for all the districts parks and open spaces	<p>Ensure that Green flag standards are used across all parks and open spaces in the district</p> <p>Carry out monthly quality checks on public open spaces to ensure they meet the Green Flag standard.</p> <p>(Welcoming, clean, safe, free usable green space)</p>	Target on track Regular inspections carried out by Open Spaces Team Leader, reported back to Open Spaces & Facilities Manager
Retain Green Flag accreditation for the Country Park and Jubilee Garden	Annually produce a desk top assessment for both the Country Park and Jubilee gardens, to be	Not yet started Scheduled for December 2024/January 2025

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
	inspected annually by Green Flag judges.	



Reprographics service half year report 2024 to 2025

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Graphic design, web design and photography: complete all requests to agreed deadlines.	100%, annually	Target on track 1,735 requests (up to 30 September 2024) completed to agreed deadlines. 100%
Specialist printing and finishing service: complete all requests to agreed deadlines.	100%, annually	Target on track 1,638 requests (up to 30 September 2024) completed to agreed deadlines. 100%
Meet revenue target of £52,546 through provision of graphic design, web design, photography, printing and finishing service to external customers.	100%, annually	Target on track £24,987 commercial revenue (up to 30 September 2024). 47.6%
Document Management System (DMS): index Planning and Building Control documents into EDRMS system within prescribed deadline of 3 working days or 24 hours for invalid planning applications and print all relevant documentation within 3 days from receipt.	100%, annually	Target on track 15,043 documents indexed (up to 30 September 2024) indexed within prescribed deadlines. 100% 6,199 jobs; 37,562 pages (up to 30 September 2024) printed within agreed deadlines. 100%
Print and post agendas for Council and Committee meetings within	100%, annually	Target on track 848 agenda papers (up to 30 September 2024) printed and

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
prescribed 5 or 7 working days deadline.		posted within prescribed deadlines. 100%
Mail service: sort all incoming post at the agreed times during the day ensuring the confidentiality of documents and compliance with finance and audit regulations. Operate a cost-effective outgoing mail service by ensuring every item meets strict criteria for Royal Mail automated sorting process and by completing MailMark franking by 3.30pm every day.	100%, annually	<p>Target on track</p> <p>25,118 incoming mail items (until 30 September 2024) sorted and distributed. 100%</p> <p>27,160 outgoing mail items (up to 30 September 2024) inspected and posted. 91.21% of mail sent by 2nd class and Business Advance Mail (BMA) class. 100%</p>
Procurement: procure all paper, envelopes, consumables and office stationery items to agreed stock levels for all staff. Fulfil all online stationery requests within 24 hours of receipt.	100%, annually	<p>Target on track</p> <p>183 stationery and consumables orders placed and completed until 30 September 2024. 100%</p> <p>161 online stationery requests (up to 30 September 2024). Walk-in requests for stationery are not monitored. All requests completed.</p>
<p>Regularly review corporate risks associated with Reprographics service, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> health and safety measures in common areas Security Threats Code of Practice – ensure all parcels received at the Grange are processed for suspect content to mitigate an associated risk of injury or loss of human life Service Delivery Plan 	Ongoing, annually	<p>Target on track</p> <p>Health and Safety and Reprographics risk assessments are formally reviewed at a team meeting (October 2024) and monitored throughout the year. Security Threats Code of Practice: actions mitigating the risks are reviewed constantly and improvements implemented immediately, raising awareness and educating all ECDC staff at the induction stage and via email campaigns, all parcels are X-rayed</p>

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • business continuity and resilience to breakdown of supply chains (paper, stationery, inks, toners and other consumables) 		<p>for suspicious content without exception. Business continuity and resilience to breakdown of supply chains: actions mitigating the risk are taken daily.</p>
<p>Produce ECDC paper usage reports to support and monitor the paper reduction culture; promote a culture of reuse-reduce-recycle of all ECDC resources.</p>	<p>Monthly reports, ongoing, annually</p>	<p>Target on track Monthly paper usage reports produced as an executive summary, departmental breakdown and departmental environmental impact data sets. Purchasing products with sustainability certifications through our procurement accounts for office stationery and consumables. Reuse-recycle-reduce exchange point within the Reprographics office for the office stationery and consumables promoted to all council officers. Recycling scheme for all toner and ink cartridges.</p>



Strategic Planning half year report 2024 to 2025

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Subject to legislative arrangements being put in place, commence early stages of a new Local Plan for East Cambridgeshire	Local Development Scheme (LDS) Updated Council approval to commence new Local Plan granted March 2025	Ongoing Full Council 17 October 2024 agreed to commence new Local Plan and approved a timetable (LDS) for its production. Early stages of preparing plan commenced.
Work with those communities wishing to undertake Neighbourhood Planning, ensure ECDC meets its statutory requirements (timing and demand uncertain, due to lead being parish councils)	At least three parishes anticipated to reach referendum stage by March 2025. Up to a further four other parishes anticipated to make progress towards a referendum.	Ongoing Four parishes progressed to referendum in first half of year: Mepal (June); Sutton (July); Cheveley (September) and Soham & Barway (October), ahead of expectations. Up to six further parish councils continue to work on neighbourhood plans, with our ongoing support, though unlikely any will reach referendum stage in second half of 2024/25.
Publication of an Authority's Monitoring Report (AMR) and Five Year Land Supply Report covering period to 31 March 2024, which reports on the performance of the previous year in terms of planning matters	AMR and Five Year Land Supply Reports published by 31 December 2024	Target on track Five Year Land Supply Report published 30.10.24. AMR on track to be published shortly, and before 31 December 2024

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
Present to Finance and Assets Committee an updated 'Environment Plan', with a new set of Top 20 actions for 2024/25, in June 2024; undertake activities to deliver those actions	2024/25 Environment Plan produced by June 2024 Deliver new Top 20 Actions by June 2025	Completed Performance measure achieved in June 2024
Successfully put in place arrangements to validate, assess, negotiate, monitor and enforce 'Biodiversity Net Gain' (BNG) proposals for all planning applications except for those very small planning applications which are exempt from BNG. This includes clear and up to date guidance on our website.	100% of relevant planning applications to meet mandatory minimum BNG requirements. March 2025	Ongoing 'BNG' successfully operating within the council, though the full extent of BNG duties will continue to increase over time. 100% of relevant processed applications have, to date, met their minimum requirements
Play an active part in influencing the emerging Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) for Cambridgeshire	Attend monthly (apx) LNRS steering group meetings. Respond to two formal LNRS consultations (due Summer 2024 and Winter 2024/25)	Target off track Actively attended a large volume of LNRS related meetings. LNRS preparation led by Cambridgeshire County Council on behalf of the Combined Authority. No consultations have taken place in first half of the year. Uncertain when consultation will take place.
Oversee delivery of the new statutory duty (s40/s40A of the NERC Act) to conserve and enhance the natural environment	Publish a report(s) by March 2025 setting out what actions the Council will take to meet its duty.	Ongoing Climate and Nature Strategy 2024-2028, and our environment 'Top 20 Actions' agreed in June 2024. Further activity on this performance measure on-

Performance measure	Target and reporting timescale	Half year update
		going for second half of year.
<p>Regularly review higher level corporate risks including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • new legislation, impacting on work in progress. • new legislation, resulting in a resource pressure to implement. • status of policies within the Local Plan, • adaptation to climate change 	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>March 2025</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>For this service area, measures in the Environment Act 2021 and Regeneration and Levelling Up Act 2023 are particularly relevant and continue to be brought into force by Government. A consultation draft NPPF also issued. These are regularly monitored, responded to and implemented where applicable.</p> <p>Status of Local Plan reviewed and brought to Members attention at Full Council on 17 October 2024.</p> <p>Climate change added to corporate risk register over summer 2024.</p>

Title: Economic Development Funding Update

Committee: Finance & Assets Committee

Date: 28 November 2024

Author: Economic Development Manager

Report number: Z105

Contact officer:

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1.0 Issue

- 1.1 To consider the allocation of the £867,822 Littleport Market Town Fund towards the delivery of a new community building in Littleport.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are requested to approve the allocation of £867,822 Littleport Market Town Fund towards the delivery of a new community building in Littleport.

3.0 Background/Options

- 3.1 The e-space North extension project cannot be delivered as it is not possible to achieve a value for money project that meets the car parking and biodiversity net gain requirements on the site.
- 3.2 Since the September meeting of this Committee, Littleport Town Council have revised the plans for their new community building and now have a project that can be delivered with the funding available.
- 3.3 Officers have submitted a project closure form to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) and a proposal to repurpose the funding towards the new Littleport Community Building, subject to the approval of this Committee.

4.0 Arguments/Conclusions

- 4.1 The proposed community building will offer a flexible space that can accommodate a range of facilities and activities. This will include office space for short term hire, desk space for hire for home workers with limited space at home, a meeting and training venue as well as a facility for providing outreach services in the town for the local community.
- 4.2 If the reallocation of the funding is approved by this Committee and the CPCA Investment Board, the new building is scheduled to open by the end of 2026.

Additional funding is being provided via a S106 Agreement and the Town Council's CIL Meaningful Proportion income.

5.0 Additional Implications Assessment

5.1 In the table below, please put Yes or No in each box:

Financial Implications No	Legal Implications No	Human Resources (HR) Implications No
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) No	Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) No	Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) No

6.0 Appendices

None.

7.0 Background documents

None.

Title: Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS) update for 2025/26 and changes to Council Tax on Long-Term Empty and Second Homes

Committee: Finance and Assets Committee

Date: 28th November 2024

Author: Director, Finance

Report No: Z106

Contact Officer:

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1.0 Issue

- 1.1 Each year the Council is required to review its Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme (LCTRS). This report provides an annual review of the 2024 scheme and provides options to consider in relation to recommendations for scheme amendments for 2025/26.
- 1.2 To review and amend the Council's rules around Council Tax Premiums for long-term empty properties and Second Homes.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Committee is asked to consider and approve

(1) the annual review of the LCTRS scheme for the 2025/26 year, making one change to the scheme, that being, that DWP passported benefit status for LCTRS assessments will be disregarded where the Local Authority is satisfied that the LCTRS assessment is incorrect because of information obtained by the Local Authority Fraud Investigation Team.

(2) the changes in Council Tax Premiums on Long-Term Empty Properties and Second Homes as detailed in section 4.5 to 4.7 and the exemptions to these premiums as detailed in sections 4.8 and 4.9.

3.0 Background / Option

Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

- 3.1. We are now in the twelfth year of LCTRS; a locally set scheme that replaced the previous nationally set Council Tax Benefit (CTB) scheme from April 2013.

- 3.2. In 2013/14 the Council took advantage of a one-off Government grant that compensated in part for the reduction in Government funding for the Working Age scheme. This meant that the maximum LCTRS awarded was 91.5%.
- 3.3. For 2014/15 to 2017/18 the Council retained the original scheme, except that allowances and premiums (the amounts of income from state-administered benefits such as Jobseekers' Allowance) were increased in line with other benefits such as Housing Benefit.
- 3.4. For the 2018/19 scheme the Council harmonised the scheme with DWP welfare reforms introduced for Housing Benefit and LCTRS for Pensioners and introduced closer links to Universal Credit data share for claims, thereby removing the requirement to make a separate claim.
- 3.5. For 2019/20 the Council made no changes to the scheme.
- 3.6. For 2020/21 the Council introduced a fluctuating earnings rule to the treatment of Universal Credit (UC). A weekly tolerance level of £15 (£65 monthly) was introduced to reduce the number of monthly reassessments impacting customers every time a revised Universal Credit notification is received.
- 3.7. For 2021/22 there were no changes implemented.
- 3.8. For 2022/23 there were four amendments made to the scheme. Reducing the capital threshold from £16,000 to £10,000 and abolishing tariff income for those with under £10,000. Applying a fixed rate non-dependent deduction of £7.40 per week. Streamlining the Council Tax Support application process by signposting customers to claim Universal Credit and Council Tax Support at the same time. Increasing the Universal Credit income variation rule from £65 to £100 each month.
- 3.9. For 2023/24 and 2024/25 the 8.5% minimum contribution scheme was retained for working age residents with no changes.

Long-Term Empty and Second Homes

- 3.10 Long Term Empty (LTE) properties currently attract a Council Tax Premium of 100% additional charge after two years of being unoccupied empty and unfurnished.
- 3.11 Second Homes, properties which are unoccupied but furnished, currently attract a full Council Tax charge.
- 3.12 Following the enactment of the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023, councils have discretion to alter the LTE Premium and impose a Premium on Second Homes. Councils can specify if they want any particular type of property to be excluded.

- 3.13 LTE properties – From 1 April 2024 LTE properties can attract the Council Tax Premium after one year rather than two years. The Act requires this determination to be set prior to the start of the financial year.
- 3.14 Second Home Properties can now attract a Council Tax premium. In order to implement the Premium, a clear 12 month period and a full financial year's notice is required. Therefore, the earliest a Second Home Premium could be charged is the 1 April 2026.

4.0 Arguments / Conclusions

Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme

- 4.1. Options for the 2025/26 Scheme are around the level of discount offered (options 1 and 2) and responses to fraud (option 3):
- 4.2. **Option 1.** Do nothing and retain the current scheme with 8.5% minimum contribution.

Option 2. Decreasing the contribution rate from 8.5% to 0% to support low-income households during the cost-of-living crisis.

Options	Cost to District Council	Cost to County Council
1. Maintain current scheme with 8.5% minimum contribution.	None	None
2. Decrease minimum contribution to 0%	14,115.80	153,221.08

- 4.3. It is recommended to go with option 1 and retain the current scheme with the 8.5% minimum contribution level.
- To ensure that the principle of everyone making at least a small contribution towards their Council Tax charge is maintained.
 - To maintain a level of Council Tax income to continue to provide funding for services at district and county level.
 - There is other support available for those on low incomes and impacted by the cost-of-living crisis within the Housing Team and those affected should also be signposting to maximise benefit take-up, reviewing discounts and exemptions and providing Exceptional Hardship Payments where there is a need.
- 4.4 **Option 3.** The proposed change is to amend the LCTRS scheme to enable cases to be re-assessed where evidence has been obtained by the Fraud Team relating to cases with a DWP passported benefit in payment. The current LCTRS Scheme prevents the re-assessment of LCTRS entitlement for passported cases where a Council Fraud investigation has been completed, unless the DWP have confirmed the case is also under investigation with the DWP. The DWP rarely confirm an investigation is underway which prevents the Council from re-assessing customers' LCTRS entitlement. The proposal is to continue with the current

process of requesting the DWP to join Council's investigations but to permit the Council, based on the evidence gathered, to re-assess LCTRS for those customers in receipt of passported benefit without the requirement for DWP confirming an investigation is in progress.

This amendment to the scheme will clarify that DWP passported benefit status for LCTRS assessments will be disregarded where the Council is satisfied that the LCTRS assessment is incorrect because of information obtained by the Fraud Investigations Team.

Long-Term Empty and Second Homes

- 4.5 It is recommended to make the changes now allowed under the new Legislation, i.e. to allow Long-Term Empty premiums to be applied after one year as opposed to two, this coming into effect on the 1st April 2025.
- 4.6 To apply a premium of 100% to Second Homes from the 1st April 2026.
- 4.7 For Long Term Empty properties – should the decision made to alter the period before Premium is applied from two years to one – 186 properties will get an extra charge.

That charge in 2024/25 Council Tax values would have been £392,836.08.

For Second Homes – should Premium be agreed before 31st March 2025, the extra charge can be applied from 1 April 2026. As it stands now – 274 properties are affected with an extra £587,213.73 charged at 2024/25 levels.

- 4.8 The Government recognises that there may be instances where it would be inappropriate for the Council Tax premiums to apply and has therefore made regulations to provide mandatory exceptions to these premiums which will come into effect from 1st April 2025.

The regulations prescribe nine classes of dwellings which are excluded from the Council Tax premiums as follows:

Long-term empty and second homes

- Dwelling which is or would be someone's sole or main residence if they were not residing in job-related armed forces accommodation
- Annexes forming part of, or being treated as part of, the main dwelling
- Dwellings being actively marketed for sale (12 months limit)
- Dwellings being actively marketed for let (12 months limit)
- Unoccupied dwellings which fell within exempt Class F and where probate has recently been granted (12 months from grant of probate/letters of administration)

Second Homes Only

- Job-related dwellings
- Occupied caravan pitches and boat moorings

- Seasonal homes where year-round permanent occupation is prohibited, specified for use as holiday accommodation or planning condition preventing occupancy for more than 28 days continuously.

Long-Term Empty Homes Only

- Empty dwellings requiring or undergoing major repairs or structural alterations (12 months limit)

4.9 In addition to the above Government proposed exceptions, it is proposed that specific local exceptions apply in relation to:

Long-Term Empty and Second Homes

- Dwellings actively being marketed for sale – extend for up to 24 months
- The Section 151 Officers retain discretion to override the empty homes and second homes premium in exceptional circumstances in individual cases, for example where vulnerability or hardship is identified.

Long-Term Empty Homes Only

- Where a property has been sold, there can be an exception for the new owner from being charged the empty homes premium for up to 24 months.
- Where a property has been purchased through Land Registry at market value and the new owners are unable to reside due to its condition, there can be an exception for the new owner from being charged the empty homes premium for up to 12 months from date of purchase.
- Where a property has been inherited and the new owners are unable to reside due to its condition, there can be an exception from the empty homes premium for up to 12 months.

5.0 Additional Implications Assessment

5.1 In the table below, please put Yes or No in each box:

Financial Implications	Legal Implications	Human Resources (HR) Implications
Yes	No	No
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)	Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA)	Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA)
No	No	No

6.0 Appendices

None

7.0 Background Documents

None

Title: Finance Report

Committee: Finance and Assets Committee

Date: 28th November 2024

Author: Director, Finance

Report No: Z107

Contact Officer: Ian Smith

Director, Finance

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Room 104. The Grange, Ely

1.0 Issue

- 1.1 This report provides Members with budget monitoring information for services under the Finance & Assets Committee and then, as part of its corporate remit, for the Council as a whole.

2.0 Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Members are requested to note:

- this Committee has a projected yearend underspend of £746,000 when compared to its approved revenue budget of £7,016,768.
- that overall, the Council has a projected yearend underspend of £477,000 when compared to its approved revenue budget of £18,840,342.
- that the overall position for the Council on Capital is a projected outturn of £5,708,033, which is an underspend of £1,972,508 when compared to the revised budget.

3.0 Budget Monitoring

- 3.1 Under Financial Regulations, each policy committee is required to consider projections of financial performance against both its revenue and capital budget on a quarterly basis, with this Committee further considering the overall Council position.
- 3.2 This is the second report for the 2024/25 financial year and details actual expenditure incurred and income received as of 30th September 2024 and projections as to the yearend position at this time.

Revenue

- 3.3 Appendix 1 details the overall revenue position for both this Committee and the Council overall. In appendix 1 the budgets under the stewardship of this

Committee are shown in detail, with then, the position for the Operational Services Committee and the funding lines shown in summary.

- 3.4 The detailed revenue position for the Operational Services Committee is shown in appendix 2. There are currently three forecast yearend variances being reported, with the net position being that the Committee is forecast to come in £325,000 overspent at yearend. There are two overspends; £300,000 in Planning and £70,000 in Building Control where both cases, income levels are significantly lower than budgeted. Licensing is forecasting an underspend of £45,000. Further details are included in the budget monitoring report presented to Operational Services Committee on the 18th November 2024.
- 3.5 With regard to the Finance and Assets Committee, the significant variances of actual spend compared to profiled budgeted spend at the end of September 2024, where no variance is forecast at yearend, are detailed in the table below:

Service	Variance £	Explanation
Corporate Management	(£118,658)	Accruals for External Audit for 2022/23 and 2023/24 remain unpaid while work continues.
Cost of other Elections	(£33,003)	Roll forward of income from external elections in previous years, will be refunded or put in reserve during 2024/25.
Local Elections	(£18,847)	Roll forward of MHCLG grant into 2024/25 – ring fenced expenditure rules applicable
Parks & Gardens	(£14,369)	Month 6 management fee invoices weren't received and paid until month 7.
Registration of Electors	(£37,478)	Roll forward of grant income from 2023/24 will be used to fund work in the current year.
Sport & Recreation	(£51,128)	Roll forward of unspent grants for Healthy you and Older Adults exercise.

- 3.6 The total forecast yearend underspend for Committee is £746,000. This covers a number of service areas, explanations for which are detailed in the table below:

Service	Variance £	Explanation
Economic Development	(£30,000)	Occupancy rates at the e-space centres were in advance of the level projected in the budget during the first quarter of the year, levels have reverted nearer to budget in the

		<p>second quarter, therefore a prudent forecast has been made for the whole year.</p> <p>The £494,000 expenditure variance at the end of quarter two relates to expenditure on UKPSF Pride of place and Business Growth Grant Fund projects which will be recouped from the Combined Authority.</p>
General Gang	(£20,000)	This results from a staff vacancy in the first six months of the year. The current staffing requirement is being reviewed.
Housing Benefits	(£6,000)	When the 2024/25 budget was prepared we only had the August 2023 Housing Benefit Subsidy return to calculate the budget. This latest forecast is calculated based on more up to date information.
Housing Strategic	(£60,000)	<p>There are currently staff vacancies in the Housing Strategic team.</p> <p>The expenditure variance at the end of quarter 2 relates to costs that will be matched against Section 106 income as part of the closedown process.</p>
Interest & Financial Transactions	(£350,000)	Interest received on investments is in advance of budget for the first half of the year, but is countered, to some extent, by additional credit card charges.
Land Charges Admin	(£6,000)	Saving in staff over the first six months of this financial year
Legal Services	(£38,000)	This forecast position is the result of savings in staff salaries during the first six months of the year.
Local Plans	(£150,000)	<p>Higher than anticipated neighbourhood planning grants have been received from government in the past year, this reflects the high volume of neighbourhood planning activity in the District.</p> <p>The full budget allocation made for the Local Plan in 2024/25 will not be needed, but additional budget resource will be built into the MTFS in future</p>

		years as the overall cost forecast remains the same.
Management Team	(£40,000)	The Chief Executive's reduction in working hours has resulted in this forecast saving.
Member & Committee Support	(£60,000)	Due to changes in staffing in Democratic Services in the first half of the year, underspends have occurred. This will be reviewed in quarter 3 now there is a full complement of staff.
Misc Finance	£14,000	Early retirement unfunded pensions have a £7,000 overspent due to a prior year adjustment and a 6.7% inflation increase. MRP has cost an additional £7,000 this year.
Office Accommodation	(£20,000)	This is a result of savings on staff salaries during the first six months of the year.
Parking of Vehicles	£10,000	Income is down for the first half of the year at our commuter car parks.
Public Conveniences	£10,000	Holiday and sickness absences have had to be covered by external contractors this year, due to current staff being unavailable.
Internal Drainage Boards	(£56,000)	The Internal Drainage Boards (IDB) prepare their budgets at the same time as the Council, so assumptions need to be made as to the actual levy to be charged and charges have proved to be higher than budgeted. However, we have received MHCLG grant (provided to a small number of councils worse impacted by the increase in IDB levies) which more than compensates us in year.

Capital

- 3.7 The Council's revised capital budget stands at £7,680,541; including £1,105,576 of slippage brought forward from 2023/24.
- 3.8 The outturn position is forecast to be £5,708,033, an underspend of £1,972,508. The forecast underspend relates to four schemes. Three underspends; Waste

bins (£1,000,000) where it is now thought that the new bins will be purchased in 2025/26 at the same point as the other Waste Services Review costs; the Bereavement Centre where the revised timeline, no longer expects any work on the ground to take place in 2024/25 and so costs in this year will be lower than in the original budget and the loan to EC CLT where some buyers have put in more equity than expected in the original business case which has resulted in the CLT needing to drawdown less of its loan facility.

- 3.9 The overspend relates to vehicle replacement where a road sweeper was purchased for use by ECTC (this will be funded by S106 at yearend).

4.0 Arguments/Conclusions

- 4.1 The projected net revenue expenditure for the Council is forecast to be a £477,000 underspend compared to the Council's approved budget. This will be moved to the Surplus Savings Reserve at yearend.

5.0 Additional Implications Assessment

- 5.1 In the table below, please put Yes or No in each box:

Financial Implications Yes	Legal Implications No	Human Resources (HR) Implications No
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) No	Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) No	Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) No

5.2 Financial Implications

The forecast underspend reported in this report has been added to the Council's Surplus Savings Reserve and will become available to balance the budget in future years.

6.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Summary Budget Monitoring Report – 30th September 2024

Appendix 2 – Operational Services Budget Monitoring Report – 30th September 2024

Appendix 3 – Capital Budget Monitoring Report – 30th September 2024

Appendix 4 – Reserve Balances – 30th September 2024

7.0 Background Documents:

Council Budget approved by Full Council on the 20th February 2024

							Appendix 1
FINANCE & ASSETS COMMITTEE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - 30th September 2024							
Revenue	Total Budget 2024-25	Profiled Budget to 30 September 2024	Actual to 30 September 2024	Variance	Forecast Outturn	Variance between Total Budget & Projected Outturn	Variance between Total Budget & Projected Outturn June 2024 £
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Asset Management	203,442	--	(383)	(383)	203,442		
Award Ditches	10,521	5,261	5,984	723	10,521		
Civic Relations	24,592	12,303	6,707	(5,596)	24,592		
Climate Change	100,000	38,006	41,987	3,981	100,000		
Closed Churchyards	34,658	17,329	17,954	625	34,658		
Community Transport	15,000	--	--	--	15,000		
Corp.Man.Policy Research/Review	332,935	39,146	(79,512)	(118,658)	332,935		
Cost of Other Elections	--	--	(33,003)	(33,003)	--		
Council Tax Collection costs	575,211	284,843	281,757	(3,086)	575,211		
Crematorium		--	1,289	1,289	--		
Data Management	125,638	62,874	62,033	(841)	125,638		
Depot	(74,241)	(27,931)	(33,792)	(5,861)	(74,241)		
Economic Development	113,586	31,341	526,156	494,815	83,586	(30,000)	(30,000)
Finance	316,402	144,387	141,055	(3,332)	316,402		
General Gang	104,993	53,111	22,388	(30,723)	84,993	(20,000)	(15,000)
Health & Safety (Work)	27,390	10,066	10,985	919	27,390		
Housing Benefits	466,496	227,944	592,721	364,777	460,496	(6,000)	55,000
Housing Strategic	197,532	94,775	1,004,714	909,939	137,532	(60,000)	(60,000)
Human Resources(including Training)	278,805	166,082	161,555	(4,527)	278,805		
Interest & Financial Transactions	(1,157,289)	(517,895)	(762,234)	(244,339)	(1,507,289)	(350,000)	(40,000)
Internal Audit	82,797	21,423	19,504	(1,919)	82,797		
Information Technology	1,031,982	462,873	983,161	520,288	1,031,982		
Land Charges Admin	(14,506)	(16,665)	(77,134)	(60,469)	(20,506)	(6,000)	
Legal Services	170,843	92,307	76,163	(16,144)	132,843	(38,000)	
Local Elections	25,000	--	(18,847)	(18,847)	25,000		
Local Plans	299,250	144,625	(42,184)	(186,809)	149,250	(150,000)	(50,000)
Management Team	703,800	372,994	375,435	2,441	663,800	(40,000)	(40,000)
Ely Markets	--	--	--	0	--		
Member & Committee Support	704,665	349,938	310,388	(39,550)	644,665	(60,000)	(25,000)
Misc Finance	607,896	634,332	655,458	21,126	621,896	14,000	
Miscellaneous Properties	(52,189)	(23,049)	(25,928)	(2,879)	(52,189)		
NNDR Collection Costs	53,057	76,403	75,707	(696)	53,057		
Office Accommodation	584,838	425,408	402,045	(23,363)	564,838	(20,000)	
Out Of Hours call out Service	14,560	7,280	3,135	(4,145)	14,560		
Parking Of Vehicles	36,117	82,912	57,499	(25,413)	46,117	10,000	
Parks And Gardens Team	462,071	434,281	419,912	(14,369)	462,071		
Payroll	97,621	64,095	63,863	(232)	97,621		
Public Conveniences	197,865	95,863	132,895	37,032	207,865	10,000	8,000
Registration of Electors	51,794	25,897	(11,581)	(37,478)	51,794		
Reprographics	183,677	91,939	84,121	(7,818)	183,677		
Sport & Recreation Admin	79,959	49,156	(1,972)	(51,128)	79,959		
Finance & Assets Committee Total	7,016,768	4,033,654	5,450,001	1,416,347	6,270,768	(746,000)	(197,000)
Operational Services Committee	7,134,292	3,001,338	1,969,651	(1,031,687)	7,459,292	325,000	135,000
Other Spend							
Parish Precepts	3,271,303	1,635,651	1,635,637	(14)	3,271,303	--	--
Internal Drainage Boards	729,762	364,881	389,528	24,647	673,762	(56,000)	49,282
Movement in Corporate Reserves	688,217	91,000	(149,273)	(240,273)	688,217		
Revenue Budget Total	18,840,342	9,126,524	9,295,544	169,020	18,363,342	(477,000)	(12,718)
Funding							
Council Tax	(8,111,593)	--	--	--	(8,111,593)	--	--
Revenue Support Grant	(108,851)	(56,603)	(56,603)	--	(108,851)	--	--
Business Rates	(7,490,290)	--	--	--	(7,490,290)		
Other Government Grants (NHB / RSG etc.)	(1,562,221)	(781,111)	(781,111)	--	(1,562,221)	--	--
Budgeted draw from Surplus Savings Reserve	(1,567,387)	(1,567,387)	(1,567,387)	--	(1,567,387)	--	--
	(18,840,342)	(2,405,101)	(2,405,101)	--	(18,840,342)	--	--
Revenue Total	--	6,721,423	6,890,443	169,020	(477,000)	(477,000)	(12,718)

							Appendix 2
OPERATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT - 30th September 2024							
Revenue	Total Budget 2024-25	Profiled Budget to 30th September 2024	Actual to 30th September 2024	Variance	Forecast Outturn	Variance between Total Budget & Projected Outturn	Variance between Total Budget & Projected Outturn June 2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Building Regulations	43,806	(28,533)	44,928	73,461	113,806	70,000	30,000
CIL	-.	9,690	(595,214)	(604,904)	-.		
Community Projects & Grants	200,040	78,190	182,222	104,032	200,040		
Community Safety	66,776	54,812	32,790	(22,022)	66,776		
Cons.Area & Listed Buildings	74,073	37,037	36,608	(429)	74,073		
Customer Services	703,762	302,728	294,864	(7,864)	703,762		
Dog Warden Scheme	46,469	23,370	25,319	1,949	46,469		
Emergency Planning	30,661	10,279	11,765	1,486	30,661		
Environmental	162,973	81,487	117,374	35,887	162,973		
Environmental Health	563,292	277,095	150,970	(126,125)	563,292		
Homelessness	237,091	(193,368)	(636,426)	(443,058)	237,091		
Leisure Centre	(447,030)	6,757	10,024	3,267	(447,030)		
Licencing-Env Services	34,487	16,794	(80,278)	(97,072)	(10,513)	(45,000)	
Marketing & Grants	43,469	16,838	9,138	(7,700)	43,469		
Parish Forums	1,530	-.	-.	-.	1,530		
Nuisances	114,748	57,374	54,427	(2,947)	114,748		
Pest Control	11,959	5,980	4,159	(1,821)	11,959		
Planning	373,328	277,358	315,389	38,031	673,328	300,000	105,000
Public Relations	124,199	62,100	57,454	(4,646)	124,199		
Recycling	1,929,496	744,666	745,869	1,203	1,929,496		
Refuse Collection	1,756,517	751,697	750,961	(736)	1,756,517		
Street Cleansing	1,016,706	423,627	414,249	(9,378)	1,016,706		
Street Naming & Numbering	23,663	2,332	10,166	7,834	23,663		
Travellers Sites	22,277	(16,972)	12,893	29,865	22,277		
Revenue Total	7,134,292	3,001,338	1,969,651	(1,031,687)	7,459,292	325,000	135,000

CAPITAL BUDGET MONITORING 2024/25

Capital	Published Budget 2024-25 £	Slippage from 2023-24 £	Approved Additions £	Revised Budget 2024-25 £	Actual at 30th September 2024 £	Forecast Outturn £	Variance between Revised Budget & Forecast £
OPERATIONAL SERVICES							
Conservation Area Schemes - 2nd round		27,506		27,506		27,506	0
Refuse & Cleansing Vehicles	862,666	(35,136)		827,530		827,530	0
Waste - Wheelie Bins	1,040,000			1,040,000	17,202	40,000	(1,000,000)
Mandatory Disabled Facilities Grants	697,299	388,864		1,086,163	300,476	1,086,163	0
Empty Properties, Discretionary DFGs, Minor Works, Home Repair Asst.	75,000			75,000	14,834	75,000	0
Vehicle Etc. Replacements	100,000			100,000	161,317	161,317	61,317
Bereavement Centre	1,500,000			1,500,000	91,413	500,000	(1,000,000)
Leisure Centre				0	(18,038)	0	0
Operational Services Total	4,274,965	381,234	0	4,656,199	567,204	2,717,516	(1,938,683)
FINANCE & ASSETS							
Solar Panels on Council Buildings		100,100		100,100		100,100	0
Depot		347,892		347,892	20,049	347,892	0
Loan to EC CLT		76,350		76,350	42,525	42,525	(33,825)
New Loan Agreement with ECTC	2,300,000	200,000		2,500,000	1,575,000	2,500,000	0
Finance & Assets Total	2,300,000	724,342	0	3,024,342	1,637,574	2,990,517	(33,825)
Total	6,574,965	1,105,576	0	7,680,541	2,204,778	5,708,033	(1,972,508)

SOURCES OF FINANCING	Published Budget 2024-25 £	Slippage from 2023-24 £	Approved Additions £	Revised Budget 2024-25 £	Variances £	Forecast Outturn £
Operational Services						
Grants / Contributions (DFG)	602,678	388,864		991,542		991,542
Capital Receipts	209,621	27,506		237,127		237,127
Borrowing	1,862,666	(35,136)		1,827,530	(1,250,000)	577,530
Section 106 / CIL	1,600,000	0		1,600,000	(688,683)	911,317
Operational Services Total	4,274,965	381,234	0	4,656,199	(1,938,683)	2,717,516
Finance & Assets						
Revenue Contributions	0	0		0		0
Capital Receipts	0	100,100		100,100		100,100
Section 106 / CIL	0	0		0		0
Borrowing	2,300,000	624,242		2,924,242	(33,825)	2,890,417
Finance & Assets Total	2,300,000	724,342	0	3,024,342	(33,825)	2,990,517
Capital Funding Total	6,574,965	1,105,576	0	7,680,541	(1,972,508)	5,708,033

Capital Resources Forecast	Published Budget 2024-25 £	Slippage from 2023-24 £	Approved Additions £	Revised Budget 2024-25 £	Variances £	Outturn £
Balance Brought Forward	987,672	798,030		1,785,702		1,785,702
Add receipts from Sales of Assets	50,000			50,000		50,000
Less Capital Receipts Applied	(209,621)	(127,606)		(337,227)		(337,227)
Capital Reserves Carried Forward	828,051	670,424	0	1,498,475	0	1,498,475

Borrowing	Published Budget 2024-25 £	Slippage from 2023-24 £	Approved Additions £	Revised Budget 2024-25 £	Variances £	Outturn £
Balance Brought Forward	10,832,603	(180,424)		10,652,179		10,652,179
Less MRP Applied	(586,037)			(586,037)	(7,451)	(593,488)
Repayment from ECTC	(500,000)			(500,000)		(1,125,000)
Add additional Borrowing Applied	4,162,666	589,106		4,751,772	(1,283,825)	3,467,947
Borrowing Carried Forward	13,909,232	408,682	0	14,317,914	(1,291,276)	12,401,638

Reserve Accounts

Description	2024/25			
	Opening Balance 1 April	Transfers to Reserve	Contributions from Reserve	Forecast Balance 31 March
	£	£	£	£
District Elections	25,397	25,000		50,397
Housing Conditions Survey	30,000	5,000		35,000
Change Management	57,301		(57,301)	0
Major Project Development	100,000			100,000
Surplus Savings Reserve	9,175,353	477,000	(1,567,387)	8,084,966
Vehicle Replacements	74,240			74,240
Sports Facilities Funding Reserve	58,000			58,000
IT	160,000	40,000		200,000
CIL Admin	206,620	70,000	(100,000)	176,620
Asset Management	0			0
Community Fund Reserves	26,384			26,384
Housing	69,926	472,823		542,749
Affordable Housing	131,165			131,165
General Fund Balance	1,237,551	148,301		1,385,852
Commercial Invest to Save	20,000			20,000
CLT Grant Applications	20,000			20,000
Travellers' Sites	0	56,959		56,959
Enterprise Zone NNDR	955,929	287,642	(23,252)	1,220,319
Growth and Infrastructure Fund	2,536,974		(1,207,216)	1,329,758
Exceptional Hardship Fund	8,803			8,803
Climate Change	78,488			78,488
Other				
CIL	12,452,704	1,400,000	(2,500,000)	11,352,704
Section 106 Agreements	3,716,182		(500,000)	3,216,182
Internal Borrowing	(10,652,179)	(3,467,947)	1,718,488	(12,401,638)
Total Reserves	20,488,838	(485,222)	(4,236,668)	15,766,948

Total Reserves	14,972,132	1,582,725	(2,955,156)	13,599,701
General Fund	1,237,551	148,301	0	1,385,852
Earmarked Reserves	13,734,581	1,434,424	(2,955,156)	12,213,849

Increase / (decrease) in Earmarked Reserves **(1,520,732)**

Title: Treasury Operations Mid-Year Review 2024/25

Committee: Finance and Assets Committee

Date: 28th November 2024

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Report No: Z108

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1.0 Issue

- 1.1 To provide Members with an update on the Council's 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy.

2.0 Recommendation

- 2.1. Members are asked to recommend to Full Council that the mid-year review of the Council's Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25, as set out in Appendix 1, be noted.

3.0 Background / Options

- 3.1 The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (C.I.P.F.A.) Revised Code of Practice on Treasury Management requires councils to adopt the revised Code and fully comply with its requirements.
- 3.2 This report complies with the requirement for a mid-year review.
- 3.3 The size of the Council's investment portfolio is relatively small and often short-term meaning that investment decisions are made so liquidity and cash flow requirements are the priority, this rather than returns. Despite this position, opportunities for proactive investment decisions are taken where appropriate.
- 3.4 The loan that the Council has made to East Cambs Trading Company (ECTC) is not technically an investment, but has been included in this covering report for completeness. ECTC is paying a commercial rate of interest on its loan from the Council – this to avoid breaking State-Aid rules.
- 3.5 The Council's 2024/25 Treasury Management Strategy and budget detailed an expected return on investments of £1,058,335, with then a further £243,000 of interest on the loan to ECTC.

4.0 Results

- 4.1 During 2024/25 the Council has operated within its approved treasury limits and Prudential Indicators; no changes have been made or proposed in relation to the counterparty values detailed in the Annual Treasury Management Strategy.
- 4.2 Interest rates on offer to the Council from Money Market Investment Deposit Accounts or fixed term deposits have remained relatively steady during the year, our average interest rate when the budget was built in February 2024 was 5.18% and this has reduced to 4.85% as at 30th September 2024. The interest receipts generated on these investments to the end of September 2024 were £801,667 significantly above that forecast in the budget.
- 4.3 As at 30th September 2024, the Council had cash investments of £36.327 million (£38.599 million in 2023), details of these investments are included in Appendix 1. With a further £6.575 million (£6.0 million in 2023) loan to ECTC.
- 4.4 While the loan to the Company is not specifically an investment, it generated the Council interest receipts, £128,272 up until 30th September 2024.
- 4.5 In total, the combination of interest receipts on both general investments and the loan to ECTC, are forecast to come in around £390,000 above budget at yearend.

5.0 Interest Payments

- 5.1 The Council has remained external debt free during the first six months of the financial year, and with the healthy cash balance at the end of September, it is expected to remain so for the remainder of the year.

6.0 Conclusion

- 6.1 The Council's Treasury Management Strategy, as approved on 20th February 2024, continues to offer the Council the best approach to Treasury Management and the policies contained within it will continue to be followed for the remainder of the financial year.
- 6.2 It should be noted that the economic and interest rate forecasts detailed in appendix 1 were those in place as at the 30th September 2024.

7.0 Additional Implications Assessment

- 7.1 In the table below, please put Yes or No in each box:

Financial Implications Yes	Legal Implications No	Human Resources (HR) Implications No
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) No	Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) No	Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) No

- 7.2 Financial Implications - It is forecast that the Treasury Management function will provide additional income of £390,000 when compared to the approved budget,

this is recorded in the overall Finance Report for the Council (also on Committee's agenda this evening).

8.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 - Mid-year Review report 2024/25

9.0 Background Documents:

Treasury Management Strategy as approved by Full Council on the 20th February 2024.

Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy

East Cambridgeshire District Council

Mid-Year Review Report 2024/25

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1. Background

1.1 Capital Strategy

In December 2021, the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy, (CIPFA), issued revised Prudential and Treasury Management Codes. These require all local authorities to prepare a Capital Strategy which is to provide the following: -

- a high-level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services;
- an overview of how the associated risk is managed;
- the implications for future financial sustainability.

1.2 Treasury Management

The Council operates a balanced budget, which broadly means cash raised during the year will meet its cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operations ensure this cash flow is adequately planned, with surplus monies being invested in low-risk counterparties, providing adequate liquidity initially before considering optimising investment return.

The second main function of the treasury management service is the funding of the Council's capital plans. These capital plans provide a guide to the borrowing need of the Council, essentially the longer-term cash flow planning to ensure the Council can meet its capital spending operations. This management of longer-term cash may involve arranging long or short-term loans, or using longer term cash flow surpluses, and on occasion any debt previously drawn may be restructured to meet Council's risk or cost objectives.

Accordingly, treasury management is defined as:

"The management of the local authority's borrowing, investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks."

2. Introduction

This report has been written in accordance with the requirements of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Code of Practice on Treasury Management (revised 2021). The primary requirements of the Code are as follows:

1. Creation and maintenance of a Treasury Management Policy Statement which sets out the policies and objectives of the Council's treasury management activities.
2. Creation and maintenance of Treasury Management Practices which set out the manner in which the Council will seek to achieve those policies and objectives.
3. Receipt by the Full Council of an annual Treasury Management Strategy Statement - including the Annual Investment Strategy and Minimum Revenue Provision Policy - for the year ahead, a Mid-year Review Report and an Annual Report, (stewardship report), covering activities during the previous year. (Quarterly reports are also required for the periods ending April to June and October to December but may be assigned to a designated committee as deemed appropriate to meet the Treasury Management governance and scrutiny aspects of the Council.)

4. Delegation by the Council of responsibilities for implementing and monitoring treasury management policies and practices and for the execution and administration of treasury management decisions.
5. Delegation by the Council of the role of scrutiny of treasury management strategy and policies to a specific named body. For this Council, the delegated body is the Finance & Assets Committee.

This mid-year report has been prepared in compliance with CIPFA's Code of Practice on Treasury Management, and covers the following:

- An economic update for the first half of the 2024/25 financial year;
- A review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy;
- The Council's capital expenditure, as set out in the Capital Strategy, and prudential indicators;
- A review of the Council's investment portfolio for 2024/25;
- A review of the Council's borrowing strategy for 2024/25;
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2024/25.

3. Economics and Interest Rates

3.1 Economics Update

- The third quarter of 2024 (July to September) saw:
 - GDP growth stagnating in July following downwardly revised Q2 figures (0.5% q/q)
 - A further easing in wage growth as the headline 3myy rate (including bonuses) fell from 4.6% in June to 4.0% in July;
 - CPI inflation hitting its target in June before edging above it to 2.2% in July and August;
 - Core CPI inflation increasing from 3.3% in July to 3.6% in August;
 - The Bank of England initiating its easing cycle by lowering interest rates from 5.25% to 5.0% in August and holding them steady in its September meeting;
 - 10-year gilt yields falling to 4.0% in September.
- The economy's stagnation in June and July points more to a mild slowdown in GDP growth than a sudden drop back into a recession. Moreover, the drop in September's composite activity Purchasing Managers Index, from 53.8 in August to 52.9, was still consistent with GDP growth of 0.3%-0.4% for the summer months. This is in line with the Bank of England's view, and it was encouraging that an improvement in manufacturing output growth could be detected, whilst the services PMI balance suggests non-retail services output grew by 0.5% q/q in Q3. Additionally, the services PMI future activity balance showed an uptick in September, although readings after the Chancellor's announcements at the Budget on 30th October will be more meaningful.
- The 1.0% m/m jump in retail sales in August was stronger than the consensus forecast for a 0.4% m/m increase. The rise was reasonably broad based, with six of the seven main sub sectors recording monthly increases, though the biggest gains came from clothing stores and supermarkets, which the ONS reported was driven by the warmer-than-usual weather and end of season sales. As a result, some of that strength is probably temporary.
- The government's plans to raise public spending by around £16bn a year (0.6% GDP) have caused concerns that a big rise in taxes will be announced in the Budget, which could weaken GDP growth in the medium-term. However, if taxes are raised in line with spending (i.e., by £16bn) that would mean the overall stance of fiscal policy would be similar to the previous government's plan to reduce the budget deficit. Additionally, rises in public spending tend to

boost GDP by more than increases in taxes reduce it. Our colleagues at Capital Economics suggest GDP growth will hit 1.2% in 2024 before reaching 1.5% for both 2025 and 2026.

- The further easing in wage growth will be welcomed by the Bank of England as a sign that labour market conditions are continuing to cool. The 3myy growth rate of average earnings fell from 4.6% in June to 4.0% in July. On a three-month annualised basis, average earnings growth eased from 3.0% to 1.8%, its lowest rate since December 2023. Excluding bonuses, the 3myy rate fell from 5.4% to 5.1%.
- Other labour market indicators also point to a further loosening in the labour market. The 59,000 fall in the alternative PAYE measure of the number of employees in August marked the fourth fall in the past five months. And the 77,000 decline in the three months to August was the biggest drop since November 2020. Moreover, the number of workforce jobs fell by 28,000 in Q2. The downward trend in job vacancies continued too. The number of job vacancies fell from 872,000 in the three months to July to 857,000 in the three months to August. That leaves it 34% below its peak in May 2022, and just 5% above its pre-pandemic level. Nonetheless, the Bank of England is still more concerned about the inflationary influence of the labour market rather than the risk of a major slowdown in labour market activity.
- CPI inflation stayed at 2.2% in August, but services inflation rose from a two-year low of 5.2% in July to 5.6%, significantly above its long-run average of 3.5%. Food and fuel price inflation exerted some downward pressure on CPI inflation, but these were offset by the upward effects from rising furniture/household equipment inflation, recreation/culture inflation and a surprisingly large rise in airfares inflation from -10.4% in July to +11.9% in August. As a result, core inflation crept back up from 3.3% to 3.6%. CPI inflation is also expected to rise in the coming months, potentially reaching 2.9% in November, before declining to around 2.0% by mid-2025.
- The Bank initiated its loosening cycle in August with a 25bps rate cut, lowering rates from 5.25% to 5.0%. In its September meeting, the Bank, resembling the ECB more than the Fed, opted to hold rates steady at 5.0%, signalling a preference for a more gradual approach to rate cuts. Notably, one Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) member (Swati Dhingra) voted for a consecutive 25bps cut, while four members swung back to voting to leave rates unchanged. That meant the slim 5-4 vote in favour of a cut in August shifted to a solid 8-1 vote in favour of no change.
- Looking ahead, CPI inflation will likely rise in the coming months before it falls back to its target of 2.0% in mid-2025. The increasing uncertainties of the Middle East may also exert an upward pressure on inflation, with oil prices rising in the aftermath of Iran's missile attack on Israel on 1 October. China's recent outpouring of new fiscal support measures in the latter stages of September has also added to the upshift in broader commodity prices, which, in turn, may impact on global inflation levels and thus monetary policy decisions. Despite these recent developments, our central forecast is still for rates to fall to 4.5% by the end of 2024 with further cuts likely throughout 2025. This is in line with market expectations, however, although a November rate cut still looks likely, December may be more problematic for the Bank if CPI inflation spikes towards 3%. In the second half of 2025, though, we think a more marked easing in inflation will prompt the Bank to speed up, resulting in rates eventually reaching 3.0%, rather than the 3.25-3.50% currently priced in by financial markets.
- Our forecast is next due to be updated around mid-November following the 30 October Budget, 5 November US presidential election and the 7 November MPC meeting and the release of the Bank of England Quarterly Monetary Policy Report.
- Looking at gilt movements in the first half of 2024/25, and you will note the 10-year gilt yield declined from 4.32% in May to 4.02% in August as the Bank's August rate cut signalled the start of its loosening cycle. Following the decision to hold the Bank Rate at 5.0% in September, the market response was muted, with the 10-year yield rising by only 5bps after the announcement. This likely reflected the fact that money markets had priced in a 25% chance of a rate cut prior to the meeting. The yield had already increased by about 10bps in the days leading up to the meeting, driven in part by the Fed's "hawkish cut" on 18 September. There is a possibility that

gilt yields will rise near-term as UK policymakers remain cautious due to persistent inflation concerns, before declining in the longer term as rates fall to 3.0%.

- The FTSE 100 reached a peak of 8,380 in the third quarter of 2024, but its performance is firmly in the shade of the US S&P500, which has breached the 5,700 threshold on several occasions recently. Its progress, however, may pause for the time being whilst investors wait to see who is elected the next US President, and how events in the Middle East (and Ukraine) unfold. The catalyst for any further rally (or not) is likely to be the degree of investors' faith in AI.

MPC meetings: 9 May, 20 June, 1 August, 19 September 2024

- On 9 May, the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted 7-2 to keep Bank Rate at 5.25%. This outcome was repeated on 20th June.
- However, by the time of the August meeting, there was a 5-4 vote in place for rates to be cut by 25bps to 5%. However, subsequent speeches from MPC members have supported Governor Bailey's tone with its emphasis on "gradual" reductions over time.
- Markets thought there may be an outside chance of a further Bank Rate reduction in September, following the 50bps cut by the FOMC, but this came to nothing.
- Nonetheless, November still looks most likely to be the next month to see a rate cut to 4.75% but, thereafter, inflation and employment data releases, as well as geo-political events, are likely to be the determinant for what happens in the remainder of 2024/25 and into 2025/26.

3.2 Interest Rate Forecasts

The Council has appointed Link Group as its treasury advisors and part of their service is to assist the Council to formulate a view on interest rates. The PWLB rate forecasts below are based on the Certainty Rate (the standard rate minus 20 bps) which has been accessible to most authorities since 1 November 2012.

Our latest forecast on 28 May sets out a view that short, medium and long-dated interest rates will fall back over the next year or two, although there are upside risks in respect of the stickiness of inflation and a continuing tight labour market, as well as the size of gilt issuance.

Our PWLB rate forecasts below are based on the Certainty Rate (the standard rate minus 20 bps, calculated as gilts plus 80bps) which has been accessible to most authorities since 1 November 2012.

Link Group Interest Rate View 28.05.24										
	Dec-24	Mar-25	Jun-25	Sep-25	Dec-25	Mar-26	Jun-26	Sep-26	Dec-26	Mar-27
BANK RATE	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.25	3.00	3.00	3.00
3 month ave earnings	4.50	4.00	3.50	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.00	3.00	3.00
6 month ave earnings	4.40	3.90	3.50	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.30	3.10	3.10	3.20
12 month ave earnings	4.30	3.80	3.50	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.40	3.20	3.30	3.40
5 yr PWLB	4.50	4.30	4.10	4.00	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.90	3.80
10 yr PWLB	4.60	4.40	4.30	4.10	4.10	4.10	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.90
25 yr PWLB	5.00	4.80	4.70	4.50	4.50	4.40	4.40	4.40	4.30	4.30
50 yr PWLB	4.80	4.60	4.50	4.30	4.30	4.20	4.20	4.20	4.10	4.10

4. Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy Update

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement, (TMSS), for 2024/25 was approved by this Full Council on 20th February 2024.

There are no policy changes to the TMSS; the details in this report update the position in the light of the updated economic position and budgetary changes already approved.

Prudential Indicator 2024/25	Original £000	Revised Prudential Indicator £000
Authorised Limit	10,000	10,000
Operational Boundary for External Debt	0	0
Capital Financing Requirement	13,909	12,402

5. The Council's Capital Position (Prudential Indicators)

This part of the report is structured to update:

- The Council's capital expenditure plans;
- How these plans are being financed;
- The impact of the changes in the capital expenditure plans on the prudential indicators and the underlying need to borrow; and
- Compliance with the limits in place for borrowing activity.

5.1 Prudential Indicator for Capital Expenditure

This table shows the revised estimates for capital expenditure and the changes since the capital programme was agreed at the Budget.

Capital Expenditure by Service	2024/25 Original Budget £000	Current Position £000	2024/25 Revised Estimate £000
Operational Services	4,275	567	2,718
Finance & Assets	2,300	1,638	2,990
Total capital Expenditure	6,575	2,205	5,708

The updated figures in the above table reflect the following changes.

- £1.105 million of slippage from 2023/24 has been added to the budget.
- Two projects are showing a forecast underspend of £1 million, these are the purchase of Waste bins (to replace black sacks), which will now happen in 2025/26 and costs of the Bereavement Centre where the timetable is now behind that built into the original budget, with work on the ground not now expected until 2025/26.

5.2 Changes to the Financing of the Capital Programme

The table below draws together the main strategy elements of the capital expenditure plans (above), highlighting the original supported and unsupported elements of the capital programme, and the expected financing arrangements of this capital expenditure. The borrowing element of the table increases the underlying indebtedness of the Council by way of the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), although this will be reduced in part by revenue charges for the repayment of debt (the Minimum Revenue Provision).

Capital Expenditure	2024/25 Original Budget £000	2024/25 Revised Estimate £000
Total capital expenditure	6,575	5,708
Financed by:		
Capital receipts	209	337
Capital grants	603	992
Section 106 / CIL	1,600	911
Revenue		
Total financing	2,413	2,250
Borrowing requirement	4,163	3,468

5.3 Changes to the Prudential Indicators for the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR), External Debt and the Operational Boundary

The table below shows the CFR, which is the underlying need to incur borrowing for a capital purpose. It also shows the expected debt position over the period, which is termed the Operational Boundary.

Prudential Indicator – Capital Financing Requirement

The revised Capital expenditure position has reduced the forecast Capital Financing Requirement as at the 31st March 2025.

Prudential Indicator – the Operational Boundary for external debt

The Council's Operational Boundary for external debt is £0, as the intention is that all debt over the MTFS timeline will be met from internal borrowing. The calculation of the CFR is as detailed in the below table, this is all funded from internal borrowing.

	2024/25 Original Estimate £000	2024/25 Revised Estimate £000
CFR – Brought forward	10,832	10,652
CFR – New borrowing	4,163	3,468
CFR – Repayment from ECTC	(500)	(1,125)
CFR – Minimum Revenue Provision	(586)	(593)
Total CFR	13,909	12,402
Net movement in CFR	3,077	1,750
External Borrowing	0	0
Internal Borrowing	13,909	12,402
Total debt (year end position)	13,909	12,402

5.4 Limits to Borrowing Activity

The first key control over the treasury activity is a prudential indicator to ensure that over the medium term, net borrowing (borrowings less investments) will only be for a capital purpose. **Gross external borrowing** should not, except in the short term, exceed the total of CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2024/25 and next two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years. The Council has approved a policy for borrowing in advance of need which will be adhered to if this proves prudent.

	2024/25 Original Estimate £000	2024/25 Revised Estimate £000
External Borrowing	0	0
Total External debt	0	0
CFR (year end position)	13,909	12,402

A further prudential indicator controls the overall level of borrowing. This is **the Authorised Limit** which represents the limit beyond which borrowing is prohibited and needs to be set and revised by Members. It reflects the level of borrowing which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term. It is the expected maximum borrowing need with some headroom for unexpected movements. This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (1) of the Local Government Act 2003.

Authorised limit for external debt	2024/25 Original Indicator	2024/25 Revised Indicator
Borrowing	10,000	10,000
Other long-term liabilities	0	0
Total	10,000	10,000

6. Borrowing

The Council's revised capital financing requirement (CFR) for 2024/25 is £12.402 million. The CFR denotes the Council's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes. If the CFR is positive the Council may borrow from the PWLB or the market (external borrowing), or from internal balances (internal borrowing). The balance of external and internal borrowing is generally driven by market conditions. Table 5.3 shows the Council has no external borrowing and is forecast to have utilised £12.402 million of cash flow funds in lieu of borrowing on 31st March 2025. This is a prudent and cost-effective approach in the current economic climate but will require ongoing monitoring if gilt yields remain elevated, particularly at the longer-end of the yield curve (25 to 50 years).

The capital programme is being kept under regular review due to the effects of on-going budgetary pressures. Our borrowing strategy will, therefore, also be regularly reviewed and then revised, if necessary, to achieve optimum value and risk exposure in the long-term.

It is anticipated that no borrowing will be undertaken during this financial year and throughout the MTFS period.

7. Compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits

It is a statutory duty for the Council to determine and keep under review the affordable borrowing limits. During the half year ended 30th September 2024, the Council has operated within the treasury and prudential indicators set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2024/25. The Director, Finance reports that no difficulties are envisaged for the current or future years in complying with these indicators.

All treasury management operations have also been conducted in full compliance with the Council's Treasury Management Practices.

8. Annual Investment Strategy

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) for 2024/25, which includes the Annual Investment Strategy, was approved by the Council on 20th February 2024. In accordance with the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice, it sets out the Council's investment priorities as being:

- Security of capital
- Liquidity
- Yield

The Council will aim to achieve the optimum return (yield) on its investments commensurate with proper levels of security and liquidity and with the Council's risk appetite. In the current economic climate, it is considered appropriate to keep investments short term to cover cash flow needs, but also to seek out value available in periods up to 12 months with high credit quality financial institutions, using the Link suggested creditworthiness approach, including a minimum sovereign credit rating and Credit Default Swap (CDS) overlay information.

Creditworthiness

The UK's sovereign rating has proven robust through the first half of 2024/25. The new Labour Government is expected to outline in detail its future fiscal proposals in the Budget scheduled for 30 October 2024.

Investment Counterparty criteria

The current investment counterparty criteria selection approved in the TMSS is meeting the requirement of the treasury management function.

CDS prices

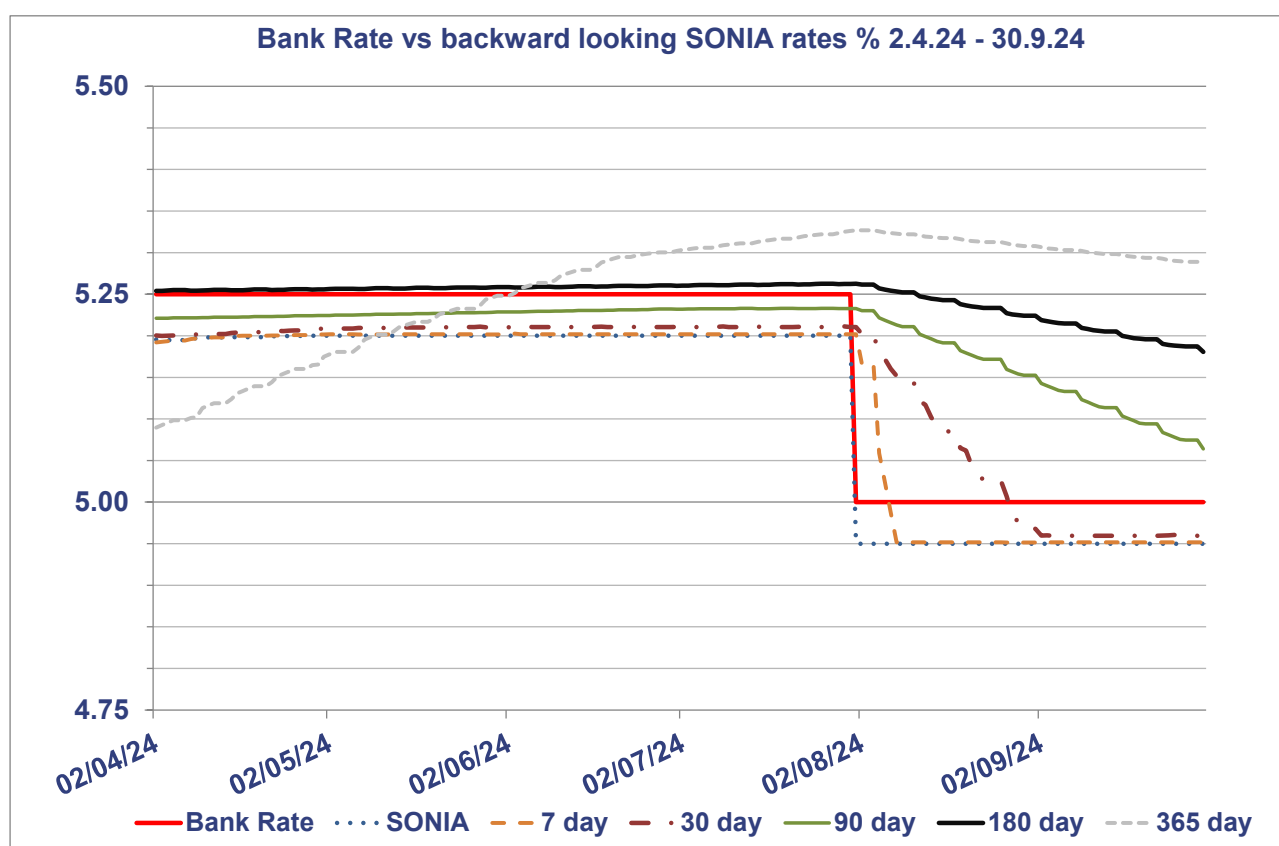
It is noted that sentiment in the current economic climate can easily shift, so it remains important to undertake continual monitoring of all aspects of risk and return in the current circumstances.

Investment balances

The average level of funds available for investment purposes during the first half of the financial year was £32.545 million. These funds were available on a temporary basis, and the level of funds available was mainly dependent on the timing of Council Tax and Business Rate receipts, the payment of precepts to our precepting authorities, receipt of grants and progress on the capital programme.

Investment performance year to date as of 30 September 2024

The table below covers the first half of 2024/25.



	Bank Rate	SONIA	7 day	30 day	90 day	180 day	365 day
High	5.25	5.20	5.20	5.21	5.23	5.26	5.33
High Date	02/04/2024	03/05/2024	13/05/2024	26/06/2024	26/07/2024	26/07/2024	01/08/2024
Low	5.00	4.95	4.95	4.96	5.06	5.18	5.09
Low Date	01/08/2024	01/08/2024	27/08/2024	04/09/2024	30/09/2024	30/09/2024	02/04/2024
Average	5.17	5.12	5.12	5.15	5.20	5.25	5.26
Spread	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.17	0.08	0.24

Investment performance year to date as of 30 September 2024

The Council's Annual Investment Strategy details that we will benchmark against the 7-day SONIA (Sterling Overnight Index Average) Compound Rate. As per the table above, the average 7-day rate

at the 30th September 2023 was 5.12%. Our calculated average interest rate received in the year to-date was 4.93%.

The Council's budgeted investment return for 2024/25 is £1.058 million with performance for the year to date being £270,000 above budget (as at 30th September 2024).

Fund investments at 30th September 2024

Investments	Amount	Interest Rate %
MMF Aberdeen	£5,000,000	5.02
MMF Blackrock	£5,000,000	4.97
MMF Insight	£3,500,000	5.02
Standard Chartered	£6,000,000	5.07
Lloyds Bank	£5,000,000	4.86
Santander	£5,000,000	4.00
SMBC	£6,000,000	5.22
NatWest (RFB)	£827,136	3.25
Total	£36,327,136	

Approved limits

Officers can confirm that the approved limits within the Annual Investment Strategy were not breached during the period ended 30th September 2024.

Title: Assets Update

Committee: Finance & Assets

Date: 28 November 2024

Author: Open Spaces & Facilities Manager

Report number: Z109

Contact officer:

Spencer Clark, Open Spaces & Facilities Manager

Spencer.clark@eastcambs.gov.uk, 01354 665555, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely.

1.0 Issue

- 1.1. To receive an update on Council owned assets.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. Members are requested to:
- i) Note the update on Council owned assets, and
 - ii) Note the expenditure tracking sheet at Appendix 1.

3.0 Background/Options

- 3.1. On 28 March 2024 (Agenda Item 10) Finance & Assets Committee received a report detailing Council owned assets which provided a summary of each asset. This report provides an update to assets contained within that report.
- 3.2. The Asset Management budget expenditure sheet at Appendix 1 identifies areas of planned spend and provides an update on actual spend to date. Members will continue to receive the expenditure tracking sheet as part of the Asset Update.

4.0 Council Assets Update

- 4.1. Depot Improvement Project- The scope of works for the parking area has now been agreed with East Cambs Street Scene. Quotes for works are being obtained.
- 4.2. The Grange- Members will recall from a previous update that the lift in the Annexe is currently out of commission. The tendering process is now complete, and the bids have now been assessed. Further input is required by Procurement prior to the award of contract.
- 4.3. Ship Lane, Ely Public Conveniences- Works to improve the water pressure has now been completed at a cost of £1,656. The works were necessary and negate the need to keep closing the facilities during peak periods due to lack of pressure in the system. Following a recent incident a deep clean of the facilities has been scheduled.
- 4.4. Inclusive Play Audit- Parish Councils have now responded to the invitation to have their play areas audited. 19 Parish Councils responded to the invitation and collectively submitted 36 play areas. The District Council has 18 play areas.

The number of play areas and the location has now been provided to Plan Inclusive Play (PiPA) and Officers are now awaiting the final scope, cost and programme for the audit. Members will continue to receive an update on this matter through this Asset Update report.

5.0 Additional Implications Assessment

5.1

Financial Implications No	Legal Implications No	Human Resources (HR) Implications No
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) No	Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) No	Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) No

6.0 Appendices

Appendix 1- Asset Spend Tracker

7.0 Background documents

Finance & Assets Committee- 27 March 2024- Agenda Item 10- Assets Update and Asset Management Plan

Asset	Budgeted Expenditure	Nature of Work	Actual Expenditure	Notes
Public Car Parks				
	50,000.00	Replacement Drainage Gullies Newnham Street		Temporary repair works are completed. Scope of work now agreed and quotes are being obtained
	25,000.00	Resurfacing of Roadway at Newnham Street		Temporary repair works are completed. Scope of work now agreed and quotes are being obtained
Total Public Car Parks	75,000.00		0.00	
Closed Churchyards				
	£4,000.00	Burwell Church Lower section Limewash		In Progress
	42,000.00	Cheveley Closed Churchyard wall repairs b/fwd	41,000.00	Works Complete
Total Closed Churchyards	46,000.00		41,000.00	
Littleport Depot				
	543,500.00	Depot Improvement Plan	480,549.00	Scope of works agreed and quotes are being obtained
Total Littleport Depot	543,500.00		480,549.00	
Play Areas/Open Space				
		New flagpole in Country Park	820.47	Completed
Total Play Areas	0.00		820.47	
Public Conveniences				
	5,000.00	Annual Deep Cleaning of all Public Toilets	4,800.00	Completed
	15,000.00	Refurbishment of Cloisters		Not commenced
		Ship Lane, Ely- Pressure Improvement	1,656.00	Completed
		Roller door shutter replacement, Barton Road, Ely	872.00	Completed
		Collapsed sewage pipe, Littleport	6,321.00	Completed
Total Public Conveniences	20,000.00		13,649.00	
Public Footpaths/Open Spaces				
	5,000.00	Reactive work budget for street lighting		Inspection complete and no major works identified
Total Public Footpaths/Open Space	5,000.00		0.00	
The Grange				
		Install shower	2,844.00	Complete
		The annexe lift		Bids assessed and awaiting procurement feedback
Total The Grange	0.00		2,844.00	

70 Market Street, Ely				
	9,000.00	Installtion of secondary double glazing		On hold while an asessment is completed as to whether replacement windows with double glazing is a more appropriate solution
Total 70 Market Street, Ely	9,000.00		0.00	
72 and 74 Market Street, Ely				
	15,000.00	Installation of secondary double glazing		On hold while an asessment is completed as to whether replacement windows with double glazing is a more appropriate solution
		Replacement Fire Alarms	9,600.00	Completed
Total 72 Market Street, Ely	15,000.00		9,600.00	
Cemetery Lodge				
Total Cemetery Lodge	0.00		0.00	
Ely Museum				
	1,000	Annual Gutter Cleaning		Works to be carried out imminently
Total Ely Museum	1,000.00		0.00	
St Johns Road Garages				
	5,000.00	Budget for reactive works where necessary		None identified to date
Total St Johns Road Garages	5,000.00		0.00	
The Old Barn, Littleport				
Total The Old Barn, Littleport	0.00		0.00	
Mepal Outdoor Centre				
	11,471.40	Site security cameras		
Total Mepal Outdoor Centre	11,471.40		0.00	
Other				
Total Other	0.00		0.00	

Total Budgeted Expenditure	730,971.40	Spend to Date	548,462.47
Asset Management Budget	170,194.00		
Depot Reserve	543,500.00		
Contribution from S106/Other	30,000.00		

Title: Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement

Committee: Finance & Assets Committee

Date: 28 November 2024

Author: Director Community

Report number: Z110

Contact officer:

Sally Bonnett, Director Community

Sally.bonnett@eastcambs.gov.uk, 01353 616451, Room No. 105, The Grange, Ely

1.0 Issue

- 1.1. To receive information relating to Community Infrastructure Levy and Section 106 income and expenditure.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. Members are requested to note the Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement 2023/24 as detailed in Appendix 1, which will be published in December 2024.

3.0 Background/Options

- 3.1. The Infrastructure Funding Statement is an annual report required to be published by December each year, which provides a summary of the financial and non-financial developer contributions relating to Section 106 (S106) and the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) within East Cambridgeshire District Council for a given financial year.

4.0 Arguments/Conclusions

- 4.1. The Council will publish, on its website, the Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement for 2023/24 in December 2024. This is provided at Appendix 1. This is to provide clarity and transparency to local communities and developers on the infrastructure and expenditure and in aligning this to planned development, as envisaged in the Local Plan.

5.0 Additional Implications Assessment

5.1

Financial Implications No	Legal Implications No	Human Resources (HR) Implications No
Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) No	Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) No	Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) No

6.0 Appendices

Appendix 1- Annual Infrastructure Funding Statement 2023/24.

7.0 Background documents

None

**East Cambridgeshire
District Council
Annual Infrastructure
Funding Statement
For
Community Infrastructure Levy and
Section 106**

**Reporting Period:
From 01 April 2023 to 31 March 2024**

Community Infrastructure Levy Matters

Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (2019 Amendment) Regulation 121A Schedule 2 Section 1

- a) The total value of demand notices issued in the reported period is £6,737,594.36. This value is of demand notices issued within the reported period that have not been suspended or superseded by new demand notices outside of the reported period.

Of total value the amount from Liability Notices (liable floorspace after any relief that has been granted) is £6,733,257.80. The total value is from surcharges imposed due to breaches of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations is £4,336.56 and the total value of the late payment interest accrued is £0.00.

- b) The total amount of CIL collected within the reported period totals £3,913,721.41.
- c) The amount of CIL collected prior to the reported period totals £31,436,441.74. Of this total the following amount was collected in Cash and as Land Transactions (including payments in kind and infrastructure payments) and the following amounts remain unallocated:

Type	Received	Unallocated
Cash	£31,436,441.74	£9,076,521.05
Land Payment	£0.00	£0.00

- d) The total amount of CIL collected prior to the reported period allocated in the reported period in relation to cash received is £19,737,823.42 and in relation to land payments (including payments in kind and infrastructure payments) is £0.00.
- e) The total CIL expenditure recorded for the reported period is as follows:

Type	Expenditure
Admin CIL	£150,000.00
Neighbourhood CIL	£959,135.93
CIL Land Payments	£0.00
Other CIL Cash	£882,078.72
Total Value	£1,991,214.65

- f) The total amount of CIL allocated and not spent during the reported period is as follows, this does not include allocations made within the reported year that have been fully spent:

Type	Allocated	Spent	Remaining
Admin CIL	£150,000.00	£150,000.00	£0.00
Neighbourhood CIL	£959,135.93	£959,135.93	£0.00
CIL Land Payments	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Other CIL Cash	£1,512,961.34	£877,961.34	£635,000.00

- g) i) The items of infrastructure on which CIL (including land payments) has been spent within the reported year, and the amount of CIL spent on each item is as follows:

Infrastructure	Date	Amount	Description
New Littleport Secondary	18 April 2023	£572,961.34	*Includes Third Party spending
Burwell PC Rec Ground Improvement Project	05 May 2023 to 13 November 2023	£4,117.38	*Includes Third Party spending
Haddenham Recreation Ground	17 July 2023 to 05 December 2023	£305,000.00	*Includes Third Party spending

Of this money spent within the reported year, the number of affordable housing units provisioned via the spend of CIL money is 0.

Of this money spent within the reported year, the following number of education places have been provisioned:

Education Type	Number of school places
N/A	N/A

- ii) The amount of CIL spent on repaying money borrowed, including any interest, and details of the items of infrastructure which that money was used to provide (wholly or in part) is as follows:

Date	Amount Used	Loan/Interest	Infrastructure Funded
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

- iii) The amount of CIL collected towards administration expenses is £97,843.04. This was 2.5% of the total CIL receipts collected (£3,913,721.41) in the reported period.

East Cambridgeshire District Council has set a collection percentage of 2.5%. The percentage taken may differ due to Land payments (including payments in kind and infrastructure payments) not being allocated to administration expenses and Surcharges not being split with Neighbourhood Areas.

The amount of CIL spent on administration expenses during the reported year was £150,000.00.

- h) Regarding CIL collected and allocated within the reported year that has not been spent, summary details of what has been allocated, is remaining to be spent and what it has been allocated towards is as follows:

Infrastructure	Amount Allocated	Amount Unspent	Allocation Dated
Stretham and Wilburton Community Land Trust Link	£510,000.00	£510,000.00	31 January 2024
CIL Soham 3G	£125,000.00	£125,000.00	31 January 2024

- i) i) The total amount of CIL passed to a neighbourhood zone under Regulation 59A (collected on behalf of the neighbourhood zone in cash), cash collected and allocated towards Neighbourhood CIL, and 59B (cash provided by the Charging Authority to Neighbourhood Zones equivalent to what they would have received on a payment in kind), are as follows:

Zone	Date	Amount Passed
Burwell	17 May 2023	£1,677.15
Burwell	01 November 2023	£917.23
Chippenham	17 May 2023	£9,028.23
Chippenham	01 November 2023	£14,689.90
Dullingham	17 May 2023	£1,127.25
Dullingham	01 November 2023	£5,260.75
Ely	17 May 2023	£104,093.84
Ely	01 November 2023	£89,948.91
Fordham	17 May 2023	£31,301.90
Fordham	01 November 2023	£86,430.40
Haddenham	17 May 2023	£35,868.09
Haddenham	01 November 2023	£5,857.17
Isleham	17 May 2023	£15,915.43
Isleham	01 November 2023	£10,237.13
Kennett	01 November 2023	£88,927.14
Kirtling	17 May 2023	£3,754.04
Kirtling	01 November 2023	£7,508.08
Little Downham	17 May 2023	£8,242.55
Little Downham	01 November 2023	£1,414.69
Little Thetford	17 May 2023	£2,507.72
Little Thetford	01 November 2023	£7,171.49
Littleport	17 May 2023	£124,982.54
Littleport	01 November 2023	£90,470.38
Lode	01 November 2023	£1,976.92
Mepal	17 May 2023	£633.73
Soham	17 May 2023	£2,750.59
Soham	01 November 2023	£2,430.90
Stretham	17 May 2023	£8,050.31
Stretham	01 November 2023	£16,100.62
Swaffham Bulbeck	17 May 2023	£228.90
Wicken	17 May 2023	£26,966.27
Wicken	01 November 2023	£4,627.36
Wilburton	01 November 2023	£8,415.36
Witcham	17 May 2023	£4,480.38
Witcham	01 November 2023	£2,072.04
Witchford	17 May 2023	£65,500.33
Witchford	01 November 2023	£50,476.18
Woodditton	17 May 2023	£17,094.03

The following amounts were allocated towards neighbourhood zones under Regulation 59B, cash provided by the Charging Authority to Neighbourhood Zones equivalent to what they would have received on a payment in kind, during the reported year:

Zone	Amount	Date	Re-allocated from
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

ii) The following spends within the reported year have been passed to a third party to spend on the provision, improvement, replacement, operation or maintenance of infrastructure under Regulation 59(4):

Infrastructure	Amount	Date	Spend Description
Burwell PC Rec Ground Improvement Project	£3,722.00	05 May 2023	Invoice for works
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£1,677.15	17 May 2023	Burwell
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£9,028.23	17 May 2023	Chippenham
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£1,127.25	17 May 2023	Dullingham
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£104,093.84	17 May 2023	Ely
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£31,301.90	17 May 2023	Fordham
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£35,868.09	17 May 2023	Haddenham
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£15,915.43	17 May 2023	Isleham
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£3,754.04	17 May 2023	Kirtling
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£8,242.55	17 May 2023	Little Downham
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£2,507.72	17 May 2023	Little Thetford
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£124,982.54	17 May 2023	Littleport
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£633.73	17 May 2023	Mepal
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£2,750.59	17 May 2023	Soham
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£8,050.31	17 May 2023	Stretham
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£228.90	17 May 2023	Swaffham Bulbeck
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£26,966.27	17 May 2023	Wicken
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£4,480.38	17 May 2023	Witcham
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£65,500.33	17 May 2023	Witchford
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£17,094.03	17 May 2023	Woodditton
Haddenham Recreation Ground	£50,000.00	17 July 2023	For land purchase

Infrastructure	Amount	Date	Spend Description
Haddenham Recreation Ground	£82,000.00	11 September 2023	For recreation ground
Haddenham Recreation Ground	£110,000.00	27 October 2023	For recreation ground
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£917.23	01 November 2023	Burwell
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£14,689.90	01 November 2023	Chippenham
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£5,260.75	01 November 2023	Dullingham
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£89,948.91	01 November 2023	Ely
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£86,430.40	01 November 2023	Fordham
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£5,857.17	01 November 2023	Haddenham
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£10,237.13	01 November 2023	Isleham
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£88,927.14	01 November 2023	Kennett
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£7,508.08	01 November 2023	Kirtling
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£1,414.69	01 November 2023	Little Downham
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£7,171.49	01 November 2023	Little Thetford
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£90,470.38	01 November 2023	Littleport
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£1,976.92	01 November 2023	Lode
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£2,430.90	01 November 2023	Soham
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£16,100.62	01 November 2023	Stretham
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£4,627.36	01 November 2023	Wicken
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£8,415.36	01 November 2023	Wilburton
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£2,072.04	01 November 2023	Witcham
CIL Meaningful Proportion	£50,476.18	01 November 2023	Witchford
Burwell PC Rec Ground Improvement Project	£395.38	13 November 2023	For two benches
New Littleport Secondary	£572,961.34	18 April 2023	
Haddenham Recreation Ground	£63,000.00	05 December 2023	Final Invoice 106

Note that the Meaningful Proportion transfers correlate to the transfers set out in Table li) above.

- j) i) The total collected by East Cambridgeshire District Council for the reported year under Regulation 59E (CIL returned to the Charging Authority after 5 years if not spent) was £0.00 and under Regulation 59F, CIL collected and retained by the Charging Authority for areas that are not designated Neighbourhood Zones, was £0.00.

ii) The amount of CIL allocated during the reported year under Regulation 59E, CIL returned to the Charging Authority that had been passed to a Neighbourhood Zone and had not been applied to infrastructure after a 5 year period, during the reported year is as follows:

Infrastructure	Neighbourhood Zone	Amount	Date
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

The amount of CIL spent under Regulation 59E during the reported year is as follows:

Infrastructure	Amount	Date	Spend Description
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

The amount of CIL allocated during the reported year under Regulation 59F during the reported year is as follows:

Infrastructure	Neighbourhood Zone	Amount	Date
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

The amount of CIL spent under Regulation 59F during the reported year is as follows:

Infrastructure	Amount	Date	Spend Description
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

- k) i) The amount of CIL requested under Regulation 59E for the reported year is as follows per neighbourhood zone:

Neighbourhood Zone	Amount Requested
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ii) The amount of CIL still outstanding for recovery under Regulation 59E at the end of the reported year for all years is as follows for each neighbourhood zone:

Neighbourhood Zone	Amount Outstanding
--------------------	--------------------

- l) i) The amount of CIL collected, not assigned for Neighbourhood CIL or CIL Administration, for the reported year and that had not been spent is £2,175,580.58.
- ii) The amount of CIL collected, not assigned for Neighbourhood CIL or CIL Administration, from 01 February 2013 to the end of the reported year that had not been spent is £12,701,213.91.

iii) The amount CIL collected and that had not been spent under Regulations 59E and 59F during the reported year are as follows:

Type	Retained
Regulation 59E	£0.00
Regulation 59F	£0.00

iv) The amount of CIL collected from 01 February 2013 to the end of the reported year under Regulations 59E and 59F that has not been spent is as follows:

Type	Retained
Regulation 59E	£0.00
Regulation 59F	£0.00

Section 106 Matters

Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (2019 Amendment) Regulation 121A Schedule 2 Section 3

- a) The total amount of money to be provided under any planning obligations which were entered during the reported year is £644,261.23. This figure does not consider indexation (inflation/deflation) that may be applied when the money becomes due.
- b) The total amount of money received from planning obligations during the reported year was £743,957.70.
- c) The total amount of money received prior to the reported year that has not been allocated is £2,986,530.90.
- d) During the reported year the following non-monetary contributions have been agreed under planning obligations:
- i) The total number of affordable housing units to be provided as on-site provision agreed under planning obligations is 119.

The total number of affordable housing units to be provided by S106 off site funding allocations made within the reported period is 0.

- ii) The following education provisions have been agreed under S106 agreements:

Education Type	Number of school places
N/A	N/A

The following education provisions have been funded by offsite S106 and other funding sources allocated during the reported year:

Education Type	Number of school places
N/A	N/A

Summary details of all non-monetary obligations agreed within the reported year are as follows:

Covenant Type/Service	Deed Date	Clause	Planning Application
Occupation Restriction	24/04/2023	Schedule 1	21/01525/FUL
Restrictive Covenant	19/03/2024	Schedule 1	23/00906/FUL
Garage/Annexe Link to Main Dwelling	04/03/2024	Schedule 1 Point 1	23/01148/FUL
Public Open Space Provision	23/11/2023	2.1	23/00712/OUM
SUDS Provision	23/11/2023	3	23/00712/OUM
Public Open Space Provision	27/10/2023	8	21/00291/OUM
Community Facilities Provision	27/10/2023	9	21/00291/OUM
SUDS Provision	27/10/2023	10	21/00291/OUM
Public Open Space Provision	11/05/2023	2	20/01332/OUM

SUDS Provision	11/05/2023	3	20/01332/OUM
Biodiversity Net Gain Contribution	18/04/2023	Schedule 6-1	21/00535/FUM

e) The total amount of money from planning obligations allocated towards infrastructure during the reported year was £529,743.84. Of this amount £73,265.50 was not spent during the reported year.

f) The total amount of money from planning obligations spent during the reported year was £505,171.39. Of this amount £58,161.48 was spent by a third party on behalf of East Cambridgeshire District Council.

g) The following items have had money allocated towards them during the reported year with unspent allocations:

Infrastructure	Allocated	Date Allocated	Unspent
Public Open Space Maintenance	£201,258.81	31 March 2024	£73,265.50

h) In relation to money which was spent by East Cambridgeshire District Council during the reported year:

i) The items of infrastructure that planning obligation money has been spent on and the amount spent are as follows:

Infrastructure	Spent	Date Spent	Spend Description
Local Project Burwell Public Open Space	£20,115.00	01 December 2014 to 29 September 2023	Westhorpe Play area
Local Project Witchford Public Open Space	£31,995.00	01 December 2014 to 08 December 2023	Church Extension Play equipment in Witchford Witchford Community Garden *Includes Third Party spending
Local Project Littleport Community Infrastructure	£11,232.62	01 December 2014 to 28 March 2024	Littleport Paddocks Littleport Changing Places facility *Includes Third Party spending
Country Park	£6,255.00	01 January 2015 to 18 September 2023	Toilets in CP Toilets Rubber Matting to play area
Public Open Space Maintenance	£407,917.91	07 January 2015 to 31 March 2024	Open space maintenance and vehicles
Community Infrastructure	£2,655.36	13 June 2016 to 25 April 2023	Dullingham village hall improvement *Includes Third Party spending

Infrastructure	Spent	Date Spent	Spend Description
Public Open Space	£4,837.06	07 June 2016 to 28 March 2024	Newnham Street Public Realm Improvements *Includes Third Party spending
Transport	£10,163.44	13 June 2016 to 14 October 2023	Fordham Bus Shelter to CCC transfer *Includes Third Party spending
SPD Strategic Waste	£10,000.00	14 June 2016 to 24 April 2023	Wheeled Bin Contributions

ii) The amount of planning obligation money spent on repaying money borrowed, including any interest, with details of the items of infrastructure which that money was used to provide are as follows:

Date	Amount Used	Loan/Interest	Infrastructure Funded
N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

iii) The amount of planning obligation money spent in respect of administration of planning obligations and monitoring in relation to the delivery of planning obligations during the reported year was £0.00.

i) The total amount of money retained at the end of the reported year is £3,751,614.49. Of this amount retained an amount of £0.00 has been retained for long term maintenance. Please see the below table for a breakdown of the retained maintenance amount.

Description	Amount
Total collected for long term maintenance	£0.00
Total allocated towards maintenance	£0.00
Total spent on maintenance	£0.00

Section 278 Matters
Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations (2019 Amendment) Regulation 121A
Schedule 2 Section 4

The following matters are agreements entered into during the reported year in respect to Highways Agreements under Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980. The financial values of these are not included in the matters under **Schedule 2 Section 3** of this report.

Date	Application/Deed/Clause/Covenant	Amount
N/A	N/A	N/A
	N/A	
	N/A	

Title: Whistleblowing Policy

Committee: Finance & Assets Committee

Date: 28th November 2024

Author: Director Legal & Monitoring Officer

Report number: Z111

Contact Officer: Maggie Camp, Director Legal & Monitoring Officer
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1.0 Issue

To consider and approve the Council's revised Whistleblowing Policy.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1. Members are requested to approve the revised Whistleblowing Policy.

3.0 Background/Options

- 3.1. A report was presented to the Finance & Assets Committee in March 2024 with a revised Whistleblowing Policy for approval. At the meeting, it was resolved unanimously that the Whistleblowing Policy was approved, subject to the Director Legal & Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair, be authorised to make minor textual amendments in the interests of clarity. Further, the Director Legal & Monitoring Officer and Internal Audit be requested to undertake an investigation into the possible facilitation of an assessment of the Policy by the independent charity Protect and a report on the outcome be submitted to the June meeting of the Committee.
- 3.2. The Director Legal approached Protect to enquire what services they offer, and which services would be more suitable for the Council. The Director Legal provided a verbal report to the June committee that she had ascertained that the Scanner procedure would be more suitable for the Council, given that the Council has less than 250 employees. The purpose of the Scanner is to provide smaller organisations with a convenient and efficient way to assess their whistleblowing culture and ensure they are doing enough to support whistleblowing.
- 3.3. At the time of the verbal report at June committee, the fee for the Scanner had been paid and the link received, but the Director Legal had not completed the Scanner procedure. The Director Legal therefore confirmed that a report would be brought to a later committee.
- 3.4. The Scanner procedure consisted of a series of 50 questions, which were answered by the Director Legal, and the Council scored a total of 81%. The purpose of the Scanner is to identify areas for improvement across the areas of governance, engagement and operations that aligns with best practices and EU Whistleblowing Directive.

- 3.5. Once the Scanner had been completed and the results received, it was felt that, without seeking a proper review of the Council's Whistleblowing Policy by Protect, the results of the Scanner could be viewed as meaningless. Therefore, the Director Legal requested Protect to carry out a review of the Whistleblowing Policy in order that both the Scanner results and the outcome of the review of the Whistleblowing Policy could be considered together.
- 3.6. The review has been received and several key recommendations for revisions to the Council's Whistleblowing Policy have been made with proposed improvements (Appendix 4). The comments on the results of the Scanner procedure were that the Council should concentrate on those areas of the scanner where the Council answered "no". Protect also highlighted a few key points, particularly around staff awareness, confidence and manager training. They were of the view that it is essential to regularly check that staff understand and trust the whistleblowing process, as this can significantly impact their willingness to raise concerns and enhancing and testing staff confidence will help ensure they feel supported and safe when coming forward.
- 3.7. In addition, Protect advised that managers, as first point of contact in most whistleblowing cases, are crucial in determining how concerns are handled. If they are not adequately trained or supported, there is a risk of mishandling concerns, which could lead to breaches of confidentiality or a loss of trust in the process. Protect recommend reviewing and enforcing these areas to maintain a strong and trusted whistleblowing framework. Accordingly, the Director Legal will be working with HR to roll out some training for Service Leads in the next few months on whistleblowing.
- 3.8. The options are therefore to approve the further revised Whistleblowing Policy attached which has been revised to incorporate the comments and advice provided by Protect, or alternatively, not to approve the revised policy. If Members resolve not to approve the revised Policy, the Policy approved in March 2024 by the committee would remain as the approved policy.

4.0 Arguments/Conclusions

- 4.1. Arguments for making the amendments suggested by Protect are that the Council has sought the advice of a specialist external charity for whistleblowing, taken their advice and amended our policy accordingly.
- 4.2. Arguments against changing it are that Members already resolved to adopt a revised policy at the Finance & Assets Committee in March 2024.

5.0 Additional Implications Assessment

- 5.1 In the table below, please put Yes or No in each box:

Financial Implications	Legal Implications	Human Resources (HR) Implications
No – the fees for the Scanner and policy review have already been met from the Legal Services budget	No	No

Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) No	Carbon Impact Assessment (CIA) No	Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) No
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6.0 Appendices

Appendix 1 – Revised Whistleblowing Policy

Appendix 2 – Clean copy revised Whistleblowing Policy

Appendix 3 – Protect Benchmarking/Scanner Report

Appendix 4 – East Cambridgeshire District Council Policy Review with key recommendations and overview of proposed improvement

7.0 Background documents

Whistleblowing Policy approved on 28th March 2024 – Report Y179

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

1. Introduction to whistleblowing

- 1.1 East Cambridgeshire District Council ("the Council") is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service and the highest possible ethical standards in public life in all-of-all its practices. Employees play an important role in achieving this goal and we expect everyone to be committed to our high standards of service based on the principles of honesty, openness and accountability.
- 1.2 The Council expects all its employees (including any agency staff) to maintain these high standards and to help achieve these standards, it encourages speaking up to prevent harm~~freedom of speech~~.
- 1.3 In this policy, 'Whistleblowing' means a worker raising a concern with someone in authority – internally and/or externally (e.g. to regulators, members, the media) – about wrongdoing, risk or malpractice that affects others. ~~the reporting by people who work in or for or on behalf of an organisation of suspected misconduct, illegal acts or failure to act within the Council.~~ This could be concern about a possible fraud, illegal activity, dangerous or other serious risk that may threaten colleagues, service users, customers, members of the public or the success and reputation of the organisation. It is important to note that concerns can be raised about a risk that may not have happened yet.
- 1.4 Whistleblowing can make a valuable contribution to the Council's efficiency and long-term success because employees are often best placed to know when the interests of the public are being put at risk, or to act as an early warning system on matters of health and safety, or to help uncover fraud and mismanagement. Employees and others that we deal with (including suppliers and those providing services to the Council) are therefore encouraged to report any wrongdoing by the Council or its employees that falls short of these principles (i.e. they are encouraged to 'whistleblow').
- 1.5 To help achieve these standards of honesty, openness and accountability, "speaking up" or whistleblowing ~~freedom of speech~~ is vital. The Council takes malpractice and wrongdoing in relation to the organisation's procedures and actions very seriously. It is our aim to ensure that as far as possible, our employees can whistleblow and tell



us about any wrongdoing at work which they believe has occurred or is likely to occur.

- 1.6 We appreciate ~~that~~ deciding to raise a concern is difficult and the Council is sensitive to this. ~~However, there should be no reason to remain silent because any employee or worker who makes a report under this Whistleblowing Policy who does so in the reasonable belief that the disclosure they are making is in the 'public interest' will not be subject to any detriment. Employees or workers can be assured that the Council will not tolerate retaliation against whistleblowers and victimising a whistleblower will result in disciplinary action.~~ Further, employees who report wrongdoing within the workplace are also protected by the Employment Rights Act 1996 ~~(as amended by the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 and the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013)~~. Please see the following link which explains the law in simple terms - <https://protect-advice.org.uk/pida/>

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2. ~~Purpose~~The aims of this policy

- 2.1 The Council aims to provide a safe and effective working environment in which individuals can safely speak up about wrongdoing, risk or malpractice without fear of retribution. The Policy is intended to encourage and empower employees and others to disclose concerns about serious wrongdoing or unlawful conduct without fear of victimisation.

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- 2.2 The Council aims to investigate disclosures fairly, properly and promptly and to protect the confidentiality of whistleblowers as far as possible.

- 2.3 The Council will not tolerate retaliation against whistleblowers and will treat victimisation as a serious disciplinary matter. We recognise that employees may not always feel comfortable about discussing their concerns within the Council, especially if they believe the Council itself is responsible for the wrongdoing.

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- ~~2.2~~ The aim of this policy is therefore to:

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- ensure that the Council investigates and deals with disclosures fairly, promptly and properly;
- employees feel confident in raising serious concerns and to question and act upon any concerns about Council practices;
- employees feel safe with the knowledge that their concerns will be taken seriously and treated as confidential;
- reassure employees that they will be protected from possible reprisals or victimisation, subsequent discrimination or disadvantage, for whistleblowing in good faith, irrespective of the outcome; and
- ensure that concerns are dealt with and that employees are aware of how to take the matter further if they are dissatisfied with the Council's response.

3. The scope of this policy

3.1 This policy is intended to enable those who become aware of wrongdoing in the Council affecting some other person or service, to report their concerns (i.e. whistleblow) at the earliest opportunity so that they can be properly investigated.

2.43.2 This policy does not apply to concerns of a personal or professional nature that relate to the individual treatment of an employee, or the application of an employment policy to them as an individual. These should be handled through the Council's Grievance Policy and Procedure. Personal issues relating to terms and conditions of employment are not covered by this policy. Complaints and grievances are also dealt with differently. The Council has several internal policies and procedures which allow employees to raise concerns about employment related and other issues. For guidance on the difference between whistleblowing and grievances, please see the following link for more guidance:



<https://protect-advice.org.uk/what-is-whistleblowing/#:~:text=What%20is%20the%20difference%20between%20whistleblowing%20and%20raising%20a%20grievance%3F>

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~~3.3 Employees should use existing provisions where appropriate (see the list at paragraph 3.4). However, if using one of these options may cause problems at work, the whistleblowing service provides an alternative channel through which concerns can be raised with or without being identified (see paragraph 5.).~~

~~3.4 This policy is not intended to replace existing procedures:~~

- ~~• Employee Code of Conduct;~~
- ~~• Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy;~~
- ~~• Disciplinary Policy and Procedure;~~
- ~~• Grievance Policy and Procedure;~~
- ~~• Protocol on Member/Officer relations;~~
- ~~• Anti-Fraud and Corruption Strategy;~~
- ~~• Dignity at Work Policy and Procedure;~~
- ~~• Responding to Customer Comments, Compliments and Complaints~~
- ~~• Members' Code of Conduct;~~
- ~~• Data Breach Information and Procedures; and~~
- ~~• Child and Adults at Risk Safeguarding Policy.~~

4.3. Concerns that should be reported

34.1 Any serious concerns about service provision or the conduct of Officers or Members of the Council or others acting on behalf of the Council that:

- make you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards
- are not in keeping with the Council's Constitution and Policies
- fall below established standards of practice or
- are improper behaviour

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34.2 These serious concerns might relate to:

- conduct which is an offence or a breach of the law;
- a criminal offence which has been, is being or is likely to be committed;
- suspected fraudulent activity;
- ~~miscarriages of justice;~~

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- health and safety risk to either employees or the public;
- racial, sexual, disability or other discrimination
- dangerous issues or working practices
- conduct which has led or could lead to damage to the environment (i.e. inappropriate disposal of waste);
- showing undue favour over a contractual or employment matter;
- sexual, physical or verbal abuse of clients, employees and others;
- breach of standing orders or financial regulations;
- breach of codes of conduct;
- possible fraud/bribery or corruption;
- unauthorised use of public funds or other assets
- improper and unethical conduct
- concealment of any of the above

(This list is not exhaustive but intended to illustrate the range of issues which could be raised under this policy)

5.4. Anonymous ~~or untrue~~ allegations

~~4.5.1~~ Although allegations can be raised anonymously, whistleblowers are encouraged to put their name to any allegations whenever possible, as this adds greater weight and makes it easier to protect them and give feedback.

~~4.2~~ Anonymously raising concerns means that no one knows who you are. This may seem like an appealing option, but there are some downsides. The person who receives your concern will be unable to ask you follow up questions for further information. It will also make it harder for the Council to protect you from victimisation, as the Council will struggle to confirm your identity as the whistleblower.

~~4.5.32~~ Anonymous allegations are more difficult to investigate and are generally less ~~powerful~~powerful. Further, the Council cannot provide protection to a person whose identity they do not know, as the protection is based on an ability to demonstrate who it is that has blown the whistle. If the recipient of the concerns does not know who the whistleblower is, it becomes impossible to establish. It also becomes difficult to judge whether the individual raised the concern in the public interest or maliciously.

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4.45.3 Openly raising concerns means that the whistleblower is not concerned about being identified. Concerns raised in confidence is where the person receiving the whistleblower's concerns undertakes not to reveal their identity. Raising concerns openly or confidentially are more effective ways to raise concerns. Both methods mean follow up questions can be asked, and action can be taken against any victimisation of the whistleblower.

4.5 All information is held in the strictest confidence and the Council will seek to protect the identity of any employee as far as possible.

The Council will decide whether to consider anonymous allegations depending on:

- the seriousness of the issue;
- the credibility of the concern; and
- whether based on the information provided, it can sufficiently investigate the concern.

4.55.4 Action will not be taken against an employee if they make an allegation which they genuinely believed to be true but is not confirmed by investigation.

4.65.5 Appropriate disciplinary or legal action may be taken if an employee makes a false or malicious allegation that they know is untrue.

6.5. Safeguarding and confidentiality

56.1 The Employment Rights Act 1996 (as amended by the Public Interest Disclosure Act and the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013), protects employees who report wrongdoing within the workplace. The Council is required to have a Whistleblowing Policy and to ensure its employees are not victimised or dismissed for raising their concerns internally.

56.2 Any concerns raised will be treated in the strictest confidence. The Council will do its best to protect the identity of staff who whistleblow and respect their confidentiality so far as possible, however, there may be times when we cannot guarantee this, for example, where a criminal

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offence is involved or if there are child protection or adult safeguarding issues.

56.3 The Council will also do its best to ensure the whistleblower's identity is not disclosed to third parties. Information will not be disclosed unless the law allows or compels the Council to do so (for example, in order to comply with a Court Order). The Council is unable to guarantee that others will not try to deduce (correctly or otherwise) a person's identity.

56.4 In line with the Employment Rights Act 1996 ~~(as amended by the Public Interest Disclosure Act and the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013)~~, the Council ~~undertakes that no employee who makes a report under this procedure and who has a reasonable belief that the disclosure they are making is in the 'public interest', will be subjected to any detriment as a result. The fact that there needs to be 'reasonable belief' does not mean that their belief must be correct for the protection to apply.~~

6.5 ~~This means the Council~~ will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including any informal pressures) nor any attempt to apply a sanction, or any other detriment, to a person who has reported any serious and genuine concern that they have of any apparent malpractice. If an employee does suffer detrimental treatment because they 'blew the whistle', they can complain to the Employment Tribunal and seek compensation for the loss suffered.

56.56 In the event that a whistleblower believes they are being subjected to a detriment by any person within the Council as a result of their decision to invoke the procedure, they must inform the Monitoring Officer or their Line Manager immediately and appropriate action will be taken to protect them from any reprisals.

6.7 ~~The Council encourages whistleblowers to put their name to their allegation as this gives weight to the case and helps with the investigation of the issue. However, they may seek to remain anonymous if they wish. All information is held in the strictest confidence and the Council will seek to protect the identity of any employee as far as possible.~~

56.68 It is important to note that for allegations of such a serious nature, it may be necessary for the whistleblower's identity to be revealed. This may be because of the need for the identity to be revealed as part of the evidence. Moreover, if the matter is brought to Court, a Judge may

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order a name is divulged. The Council will do everything possible to protect anonymity before this stage is reached and will discuss with the whistleblower before embarking on any course of action whereby their identity will be disclosed. Please note though that once action is initiated, notwithstanding a desire for anonymity and the Council's aim of protecting that anonymity, it may simply not be possible to achieve this.

56.79 A whistleblower may bring a friend or colleague to any meeting arranged in connection with the concern raised as long as the friend or colleague is not involved in the matter and agrees to maintain confidentiality. Additionally, a whistleblower may be accompanied by a trade union representative. It will be up to the whistleblower to arrange this.

56.810 ~~It is emphasised that whistleblowers have nothing to fear by raising their concerns.~~ Provided whistleblowers ~~they~~ are acting in reasonable belief that they are acting in the public interest, it does not matter if they are mistaken. However, disciplinary action may be taken against any member of staff who is discovered to have made allegations frivolously, falsely or maliciously, for example, to pursue a personal grudge against another employee.

56.911 —The Council will try to ensure that any negative impact of either a malicious or unfounded allegation about a person is minimised.

7.6. Raising a concern

Appendix 1 consists of the whistleblowing process with further guidance provided at Appendices 2 and 3 of this policy

67.1 As a first step, your concerns should normally be raised with your line manager.

67.2 However, depending on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and if management is thought to be involved in the wrongdoing, you may prefer (for whatever reason) to approach one of the following:

- The Monitoring Officer (Maggie Camp)
- The Chief Executive (John Hill)

67.3 Concerns can be raised:



- in writing addressed to “The Monitoring Officer”
- in writing addressed to “Confidential Whistleblowing” at the Council Offices;
- using the online form on the Council’s Intranet; [\(link to be created and included\)](#)
- by ~~telephoning~~ ~~ringing~~ Maggie Camp, the Monitoring Officer (01353 616277)
- by secure internal email (WhistleBlowing@eastcambs.gov.uk)
- in writing to Internal audit – Rachel Ashley-Caunt, Chief Internal Auditor, Rachel.Ashley-Caunt@northnorthants.gov.uk or 07799 217378
- in writing to External audit – Mark Hodgson, Partner, Ernst & Young LLP, MHodgson@uk.ey.com or 07541 346507

67.4 Remember the earlier you express your concern, the easier it is for the Council to act. You should not wait until you have proof. Although you are not expected to prove the truth of the allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are grounds for your concern.

67.5 Any personal interest in the matter should be disclosed at the outset.

67.6 An informal approach to any of the above Officers will be treated as completely confidential and will not result in any report to anyone within the Council, unless you agree.

67.7 ~~If you know that the matter you wish to raise is also of concern to your colleagues you can discuss the matter with them first.~~ A concern raised by two or more employees ~~can~~ **will** add weight to allegations that may be made.

67.8 Although the matter may be raised directly with a specific person or group, they may need to refer the matter onto a more appropriate person, specialist, or organisation.

67.9 Employees have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative, any other professional representative or friends during any meetings or interviews.

67.10 Initial concerns may be raised orally or in writing, although normally it is preferable to put your concern in writing. You should give as much detail as possible which should include the background and history of

the concern, giving names, dates, and places where possible, and the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation.

8.7. Response from the Council

- 78.1** In order to protect the individual and the Council, the Monitoring Officer, who has the authority to act independently, will deal with the initial investigation to decide whether a full investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.
- 78.2** If the concern raised involves the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Executive will initially deal with the allegation and will nominate a responsible employee (i.e. alternative Investigating Officer) to conduct initial enquiries with the same authority that the Monitoring Officer would have.
- 78.3** During the initial enquiry, the Monitoring Officer or Investigating Officer will:
- determine the factors that gave rise to the suspicion;
 - examine factors to determine whether any irregularity has occurred (i.e. any incident of action that is not part of the normal operation of the system or the expected course of events); and
 - where necessary, carry out discreet enquiries with staff and/or review documents.
- 78.4** Following the initial investigation, it may be that some concerns can be resolved by agreed action without the need for a full investigation. If urgent action is required, this would be taken before any full investigation is completed.
- 78.5** Within 10 working days of a concern being raised, and following the initial investigation, the Monitoring Officer or Investigating Officer will write to the person raising the concern:
- acknowledging that the concern has been received
 - indicating the initial findings and how he/she proposes to deal with the matter; and giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response.
- 78.6** If it is impossible for the initial investigation to be completed within 10 working days, or where urgent action is required, the situation will be explained in the letter of acknowledgement. Where a decision is made



that a full investigation will take place, the reasons for this will be provided. The Council will aim to complete the full investigation within 28 working days.

78.7 If a full investigation is required, this will be carried out by the Council internally or the Council may ask another body to carry it out. Following the full investigation, the Council will either resolve by agreed action or take appropriate further action. This further action could be:

- Agreed steps such as disciplinary process
- Referral to the Police
- An independent enquiry

78.8 The amount of contact between the Officers considering the issues and the employee raising the concern will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved, and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information may be sought from the person raising the concern but anyone raising a concern can also request not to be contacted for further information. However, this might hinder the success of an investigation. Notwithstanding the initial acknowledgement, you will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the action and reasons for any decisions, subject to any legal constraints.

78.9 The Council will take appropriate steps to minimise any difficulties, which an employee may experience due to raising a concern. For example, if employees are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the Council will need to inform them and consider what steps are required to provide support.

78.10 The Council recognises that there may be matters that cannot be dealt with internally and external authorities will need to become involved. Where this is necessary, the Council reserves the right to make such a referral without your consent.

78.11. In dealing with any allegations, the Monitoring Officer or Investigating Officer will ensure that those officers involved in the allegation who would usually respond to allegations of malpractice are not involved in any enquiries or investigations.

78.12 The Monitoring Officer or Investigating Officer can decide to take no further action if a complaint appears to be trivial or malicious.

- 78.13. Any meetings arranged will normally take place at the Council's ~~offices~~[offices](#), but the Council can agree to have the meeting elsewhere. However, the whistleblower may elect to have correspondence and such like forwarded to their home address.
- 78.14 The Council accepts that in the working environment members of staff need assurance that the Council has properly addressed the matter raised. Thus, subject to legal constraints, the Council will provide information about the outcome of any investigation.
- 78.15 If the case was passed to an alternative Investigating Officer, the Investigating Officer will inform the Monitoring Officer of the outcome of the case to enable the Monitoring Officer to fulfil their reporting responsibilities under this policy.
- 78.16 The Monitoring Officer will report, as necessary, all concerns raised and the outcomes (in an anonymous format) in accordance with the statutory functions relating to Prescribed Persons.

9.8. Taking the matter further

- 89.1 This policy is intended to provide an avenue to raise concerns within the Council and [to avoid possible prejudice to any internal investigation process, a disclosure should not normally be made to external bodies before it is raised through the internal mechanisms set out in this Policy. However, under legislation in certain limited circumstances, an individual making a disclosure to an external body relating to any matters contained in legislation may be protected from detriment or dismissal.](#) ~~The~~ Council hopes you will be satisfied with any action taken ~~but if~~ ~~—If~~ you are not satisfied with the outcome of your confidential allegation, you can write to the Chief Executive and ask for the investigation and outcome to be reviewed.
- 89.2 If you remain dissatisfied and you feel it is right to take the matter outside the Council, you need to ensure that you do not disclose information where you owe a duty of confidentiality to persons other than the Council (e.g. service users) or where you would commit an offence by making such disclosures. This is something that you would need to check with the Monitoring Officer.
- 89.3 Before taking a matter to an external body, the Council advises individuals [check the list of prescribed bodies, who can advise you on](#)



what falls under their regulatory remit, but which may be unable to advise you on your legal rights. A link to the Gov UK list of prescribed people and bodies can be found below:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies>

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seek independent legal advice. The following are possible contact points:

- National Audit Office
- the Council's External Auditor (details for which can be obtained from Public Sector Audit Appointments Ltd)
- Relevant professional bodies or regulatory organisations
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Environment Agency
- Health and Safety Executive
- Police (if a criminal matter)
- relevant voluntary organisation
- Trade Union
- Local Government Ombudsman
- Information Commissioner's Office
- Equality and Human Rights Commission

89.4 The Council would encourage you to contact the Charity Protect's (formerly Public Concern at Work) provides free confidential advice line before raising a concern internally or externally if you to workers who have concerns about wrongdoing in the workplace. Protect advise callers how to whistleblow safely and in accordance with the law.

Advice Line page: <https://protect-advice.org.uk/advice-line/>

Their dedicated hotline is 020 3117 2520.

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89.5 Another option is to rely on your rights under the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. This Act gives you protection from victimisation if you make certain disclosures of information in the public interest. The provisions are quite complex and include a list of Prescribed Persons outside of the Council (under The Public Interest Disclosure (Prescribed Persons) Order 2014) who can be contacted in certain

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~~circumstances. You should seek advice on the effect of this Act from the Monitoring Officer.~~

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~~10. Independent Advice~~

~~10.1 The aim of this policy is to reassure employees to raise concern internally, however, the Council accepts that employees may prefer to contact an appropriate external body.~~

~~10.2 If you are unsure whether to use this procedure or you would like independent advice at any stage, you may contact:~~

- ~~• your Trade Union;~~
- ~~• the independent charity Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work). Their lawyers can give you free confidential advice at any stage about how to raise a concern about serious malpractice at work – telephone 020 3117 2520 (* option 1) or e-mail enquiries: whistle@protect-advice.org.uk or visit their website www.pcaw.co.uk.~~
- ~~• the National Audit Office – telephone 020 7798 7999 or visit their website www.nao.org.uk.~~
- ~~• Any of the other bodies listed in 9.3 above.~~

9.14. Summary

~~9.14.1~~ The whistleblowing service provides staff with a confidential service to protect them from any harassment and victimisation when raising concerns within the Council. The service aims to work alongside existing procedures in place that promote ethics, honesty and the highest possible standards of openness and accountability.

~~9.213.2~~ The Council does not tolerate any reprisal against an employee because he or she has raised a concern under this policy and will treat any such reprisal as a disciplinary matter which could lead to dismissal. This assurance is not extended to those who maliciously raise concern which they know to be false.

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APPENDIX 1**Whistleblowing Process**

1. Concern is identified and you are unable to report using existing procedures.
2. “Blow the whistle”. You can do this in writing, telephoning or emailing. Please provide names, dates, places, background and details relating to your concern to:
 - your line manager
 - the Monitoring Officer
 - the Chief Executive
3. The initial enquiry will take place within 10 working days. The Investigating Officer will report to the whistleblower their initial findings and confirm how the matter will proceed and provide an estimated timescale.
4. The matter will then be (one of the following):
 - Resolved by agreed action without a full investigation
 - Full investigated either internally or referred to the appropriate external organisation (to be undertaken within 28 working days if possible; outcome with reasons reported where appropriate)
5. Whistleblower is provided with feedback on outcome and next steps.

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APPENDIX 2**Guidance for employees****Reacting to concerns or inappropriate behaviour**

The action taken when first suspecting inappropriate behaviour may be crucial. This guidance explains what to do and what not to do on suspicion of inappropriate behaviour.

Acting upon suspicions, the do's and don'ts

If suspecting inappropriate behaviour affecting the Council, there are a few simple rules to follow to help the Council with subsequent enquiries:

Do make an immediate note of concerns and note as many relevant details as possible, ideally:

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- the background details and nature of the suspicions (including relevant names, dates and locations)
- details of the job and responsibilities of the individuals involved;
- action taken to date (if any) before raising the concern.

Do communicate suspicions to someone with the appropriate authority and experience in accordance with this Whistleblowing Policy.

Do deal with the matter promptly if the concerns are warranted.

Any delay may result in accidents, cause the Council to suffer loss or make further enquiries more difficult.

Don't do nothing.

Don't be afraid to raise concerns.

An individual will not suffer any recrimination from the Council because of voicing reasonably held concerns. The Council will treat the matter sensitively and confidentially if it is able to take reasonable steps to protect the individual.

Don't approach or accuse any individuals directly.

Don't try to investigate the matter.

There are special rules about gathering evidence. Any attempt to gather evidence by people who are unfamiliar with these rules may weaken or destroy any future prosecution.

Don't convey suspicions to anyone other than those indicated in this Whistleblowing Policy.

[The Employment Rights Act 1996 provides whistleblowers with the right not to be victimised or dismissed for making a Protected Disclosure.](#)

[A disclosure must satisfy the following criteria to be protected legally:](#)

[Provide specific information about a wrongdoing;](#)

[Fall under the six categories of wrongdoing: legal breach, criminal offence, health and safety endangerment, miscarriage of justice, environmental damage or a cover up of any of the above; and](#)

[Be in the public interest \(have or risk having an impact on others\).](#)

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~~The Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998 (as amended) will protect individuals from any reprisals as long as the requirements of the Act are met.~~

~~These are that the individual:-~~

- ~~• discloses the information in the public interest.~~
- ~~• reasonably believes it to be substantially true.~~
- ~~• must not seek any personal gain.~~

Protect (formerly Public Concern at Work, www.pcaw.org.uk; 020 3117 2520) can offer free, confidential advice to people concerned about crime, danger, or wrongdoing at work.

APPENDIX 3

Guidance for Managers

Reacting to inappropriate behaviours

The action taken when first identifying, or becoming aware of suspected inappropriate behaviour, may be crucial in determining the success of any Subsequent investigation.

Managers should familiarise themselves with the Council's anti-fraud and corruption Policies and Whistleblowing Policy to equip themselves to deal with allegations if they arise.

Acting upon suspicions, the do's and don'ts

The following simple rules should help to ensure that matters are properly handled:

Do be responsive to employees' concerns.

Encourage employees to voice any reasonably held concerns or suspicions. As a manager, treat them seriously, confidentially, and sensitively. Reassure the individual that they will not suffer because of concerns raised in the public interest.

Do note all relevant details.

Details should ideally include:

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- the background details and nature of the suspicions (including relevant names, dates and locations)
- details of the job and responsibilities of the individuals involved
- the reasons why the person is raising the concerns
- action (if any) taken to date before this concern was raised

Get as much information as possible from the employee reporting the suspicion and encourage them to record this in writing.

If the employee has made any notes, obtain a copy of them.

In addition, note any documentary evidence that may exist to support the allegations, but do not interfere with this evidence in any way. Thereafter, contact the Monitoring Officer to discuss the report received.

If in doubt, report suspicions anyway.

If deciding that no further action is necessary, record the decision and inform the Monitoring Officer of the original notification details and the reasons why no further action is considered necessary. In recommending that no further action is necessary, be objective when evaluating the issue. Consider the facts as they appear based on the information to hand. The Monitoring Officer will then help to determine if further action is necessary.

Deal with the matter promptly, particularly if the concerns are considered warranted, and bearing in mind the 10-day deadline that the Council has set to respond to the whistleblower.

Any delay may cause the Council to suffer financial or reputational loss or make enquiries more difficult.

Don't ridicule or belittle any suspicions raised by employees.

The Council cannot operate an effective anti-fraud and corruption culture or whistleblowing policy if employees are reluctant to pass on their concerns to management out of fear of ridicule or recrimination.

Give all employees' concerns a fair hearing and reassure employees that they will not suffer recrimination by raising any reasonably held suspicion in the public interest.

Don't approach the suspect or accuse any individuals directly.

Don't communicate suspicions to anyone other than those indicated in the Councils' Whistleblowing Policy.

Don't try to investigate the matter.

Remember that investigations by employees who are unfamiliar with the requirements of evidence are highly likely to jeopardise a successful outcome. They may also alert the suspect and result in the destruction of evidence. Remember that the primary responsibility is to report the issue and all associated facts to the appropriate employee, wherever possible.

WHISTLEBLOWING POLICY

1. Introduction to whistleblowing

- 1.1 East Cambridgeshire District Council (“the Council”) is committed to achieving the highest possible standards of service and the highest possible ethical standards in public life in all its practices. Employees play an important role in achieving this goal and we expect everyone to be committed to our high standards of service based on the principles of honesty, openness and accountability.
- 1.2 The Council expects all its employees (including any agency staff) to maintain these high standards and to help achieve these standards, it encourages speaking up to prevent harm.
- 1.3 In this policy, ‘Whistleblowing’ means a worker raising a concern with someone in authority – internally and/or externally (e.g. to regulators, members, the media) – about wrongdoing, risk or malpractice that affects others. This could be concern about a possible fraud, illegal activity, dangerous or other serious risk that may threaten colleagues, service users, customers, members of the public or the success and reputation of the organisation. It is important to note that concerns can be raised about a risk that may not have happened yet.
- 1.4 Whistleblowing can make a valuable contribution to the Council’s efficiency and long-term success because employees are often best placed to know when the interests of the public are being put at risk, or to act as an early warning system on matters of health and safety, or to help uncover fraud and mismanagement. Employees and others that we deal with (including suppliers and those providing services to the Council) are therefore encouraged to report any wrongdoing by the Council or its employees that falls short of these principles (i.e. they are encouraged to ‘whistleblow’).
- 1.5 To help achieve these standards of honesty, openness and accountability, “speaking up” or whistleblowing is vital. The Council takes malpractice and wrongdoing in relation to the organisation’s procedures and actions very seriously. It is our aim to ensure that as far as possible, our employees can whistleblow and tell us about any wrongdoing at work which they believe has occurred or is likely to occur.

- 1.6 We appreciate that deciding to raise a concern is difficult and the Council is sensitive to this and employees or workers can be assured that the Council will not tolerate retaliation against whistleblowers and victimising a whistleblower will result in disciplinary action. Further, employees who report wrongdoing within the workplace are also protected by the Employment Rights Act 1996.

Please see the following link which explains the law in simple terms - <https://protect-advice.org.uk/pida/>

2. Purpose

- 2.1 The Council aims to provide a safe and effective working environment in which individuals can safely speak up about wrongdoing, risk or malpractice without fear of retribution. The Policy is intended to encourage and empower employees and others to disclose concerns about serious wrongdoing or unlawful conduct without fear of victimisation.
- 2.2 The Council aims to investigate disclosures fairly, properly and promptly and to protect the confidentiality of whistleblowers as far as possible.
- 2.3 The Council will not tolerate retaliation against whistleblowers and will treat victimisation as a serious disciplinary matter.
- 2.4 This policy does not apply to concerns of a personal or professional nature that relate to the individual treatment of an employee, or the application of an employment policy to them as an individual. These should be handled through the Council's Grievance Policy and Procedure. For guidance on the difference between whistleblowing and grievances, please see the following link for more guidance:

<https://protect-advice.org.uk/what-is-whistleblowing/#:~:text=What%20is%20the%20difference%20between%20whistleblowing%20and%20raising%20a%20grievance%3F>

3. Concerns that should be reported

- 3.1 Any serious concerns about service provision or the conduct of Officers or Members of the Council or others acting on behalf of the Council that:
- make you feel uncomfortable in terms of known standards
 - are not in keeping with the Council's Constitution and Policies
 - fall below established standards of practice or
 - are improper behaviour

3.2 These serious concerns might relate to:

- conduct which is an offence or a breach of the law;
- a criminal offence which has been, is being or is likely to be committed;
- suspected fraudulent activity;
- health and safety risk to either employees or the public;
- racial, sexual, disability or other discrimination
- dangerous issues or working practices
- conduct which has led or could lead to damage to the environment (i.e. inappropriate disposal of waste);
- showing undue favour over a contractual or employment matter;
- sexual, physical or verbal abuse of clients, employees and others;
- breach of standing orders or financial regulations;
- breach of codes of conduct;
- possible fraud/bribery or corruption;
- unauthorised use of public funds or other assets
- improper and unethical conduct
- concealment of any of the above

(This list is not exhaustive but intended to illustrate the range of issues which could be raised under this policy)

4. Anonymous allegations

- 4.1 Although allegations can be raised anonymously, whistleblowers are encouraged to put their name to any allegations whenever possible, as this adds greater weight and makes it easier to protect them and give feedback.
- 4.2 Anonymously raising concerns means that no one knows who you are. This may seem like an appealing option, but there are some downsides. The person who receives your concern will be unable to ask you follow up questions for further information. It will also make it harder for the Council to protect you from victimisation, as the Council will struggle to confirm your identity as the whistleblower.
- 4.3 Anonymous allegations are more difficult to investigate and are generally less powerful. Further, the Council cannot provide protection to a person whose identity they do not know, as the protection is based on an ability to demonstrate who it is that has blown the whistle. If the recipient of the concerns does not know who the whistleblower is, it becomes impossible to establish. It also becomes difficult to judge whether the individual raised the concern in the public interest or maliciously.
- 4.4 Openly raising concerns means that the whistleblower is not concerned about being identified. Concerns raised in confidence is where the person receiving

the whistleblower's concerns undertakes not to reveal their identity. Raising concerns openly or confidentially are more effective ways to raise concerns. Both methods mean follow up questions can be asked, and action can be taken against any victimisation of the whistleblower.

- 4.5 All information is held in the strictest confidence and the Council will seek to protect the identity of any employee as far as possible.
- 4.6 Action will not be taken against an employee if they make an allegation which they genuinely believed to be true but is not confirmed by investigation.
- 4.7 Appropriate disciplinary or legal action may be taken if an employee makes a false or malicious allegation that they know is untrue.

5. Safeguarding and confidentiality

- 5.1 The Employment Rights Act 1996 protects employees who report wrongdoing within the workplace. The Council is required to have a Whistleblowing Policy and to ensure its employees are not victimised or dismissed for raising their concerns internally.
- 5.2 Any concerns raised will be treated in the strictest confidence. The Council will do its best to protect the identity of staff who whistleblow and respect their confidentiality so far as possible, however, there may be times when we cannot guarantee this, for example, where a criminal offence is involved or if there are child protection or adult safeguarding issues.
- 5.3 The Council will also do its best to ensure the whistleblower's identity is not disclosed to third parties. Information will not be disclosed unless the law allows or compels the Council to do so (for example, in order to comply with a Court Order). The Council is unable to guarantee that others will not try to deduce (correctly or otherwise) a person's identity.
- 5.4 In line with the Employment Rights Act 1996 the Council will not tolerate any harassment or victimisation (including any informal pressures) nor any attempt to apply a sanction, or any other detriment, to a person who has reported any serious and genuine concern that they have of any apparent malpractice. If an employee does suffer detrimental treatment because they 'blew the whistle', they can complain to the Employment Tribunal and seek compensation for the loss suffered.
- 5.5 In the event that a whistleblower believes they are being subjected to a detriment by any person within the Council as a result of their decision to invoke

the procedure, they must inform the Monitoring Officer or their Line Manager immediately and appropriate action will be taken to protect them from any reprisals.

- 5.6 It is important to note that for allegations of such a serious nature, it may be necessary for the whistleblower's identity to be revealed. This may be because of the need for the identity to be revealed as part of the evidence. Moreover, if the matter is brought to Court, a Judge may order a name is divulged. The Council will do everything possible to protect anonymity before this stage is reached and will discuss with the whistleblower before embarking on any course of action whereby their identity will be disclosed. Please note though that once action is initiated, notwithstanding a desire for anonymity and the Council's aim of protecting that anonymity, it may simply not be possible to achieve this.
- 5.7 A whistleblower may bring a friend or colleague to any meeting arranged in connection with the concern raised as long as the friend or colleague is not involved in the matter and agrees to maintain confidentiality. Additionally, a whistleblower may be accompanied by a trade union representative. It will be up to the whistleblower to arrange this.
- 5.8 Provided whistleblowers are acting in reasonable belief that they are acting in the public interest, it does not matter if they are mistaken. However, disciplinary action may be taken against any member of staff who is discovered to have made allegations frivolously, falsely or maliciously, for example, to pursue a personal grudge against another employee.
- 5.9 The Council will try to ensure that any negative impact of either a malicious or unfounded allegation about a person is minimised.

6. Raising a concern

Appendix 1 consists of the whistleblowing process with further guidance provided at Appendices 2 and 3 of this policy

- 6.1 As a first step, your concerns should normally be raised with your line manager.
- 6.2 However, depending on the seriousness and sensitivity of the issues involved and if management is thought to be involved in the wrongdoing, you may prefer (for whatever reason) to approach one of the following:
- The Monitoring Officer (Maggie Camp)
 - The Chief Executive (John Hill)

6.3 Concerns can be raised:

- in writing addressed to “The Monitoring Officer”
- in writing addressed to “Confidential Whistleblowing” at the Council Offices;
- using the online form on the Council’s Intranet; (*link to be created and included*)
- by telephoning Maggie Camp, the Monitoring Officer (01353 616277)
- by secure internal email (WhistleBlowing@eastcambs.gov.uk)
- in writing to Internal audit – Rachel Ashley-Caunt, Chief Internal Auditor, Rachel.Ashley-Caunt@northnorthants.gov.uk or 07799 217378
- in writing to External audit – Mark Hodgson, Partner, Ernst & Young LLP, MHodgson@uk.ey.com or 07541 346507

6.4 Remember the earlier you express your concern, the easier it is for the Council to act. You should not wait until you have proof. Although you are not expected to prove the truth of the allegation, you will need to demonstrate to the person contacted that there are grounds for your concern.

6.5 Any personal interest in the matter should be disclosed at the outset.

6.6 An informal approach to any of the above Officers will be treated as completely confidential and will not result in any report to anyone within the Council, unless you agree.

6.7 A concern raised by two or more employees can add weight to allegations that may be made.

6.8 Although the matter may be raised directly with a specific person or group, they may need to refer the matter onto a more appropriate person, specialist, or organisation.

6.9 Employees have the right to be accompanied by a trade union representative, any other professional representative or friends during any meetings or interviews.

6.10 Initial concerns may be raised orally or in writing, although normally it is preferable to put your concern in writing. You should give as much detail as possible which should include the background and history of the concern, giving names, dates, and places where possible, and the reason why you are particularly concerned about the situation.

7. Response from the Council

- 7.1 In order to protect the individual and the Council, the Monitoring Officer, who has the authority to act independently, will deal with the initial investigation to decide whether a full investigation is appropriate and, if so, what form it should take.
- 7.2 If the concern raised involves the Monitoring Officer, the Chief Executive will initially deal with the allegation and will nominate a responsible employee (i.e. alternative Investigating Officer) to conduct initial enquiries with the same authority that the Monitoring Officer would have.
- 7.3 During the initial enquiry, the Monitoring Officer or Investigating Officer will:
- determine the factors that gave rise to the suspicion;
 - examine factors to determine whether any irregularity has occurred (i.e. any incident of action that is not part of the normal operation of the system or the expected course of events); and
 - where necessary, carry out discreet enquiries with staff and/or review documents.
- 7.4 Following the initial investigation, it may be that some concerns can be resolved by agreed action without the need for a full investigation. If urgent action is required, this would be taken before any full investigation is completed.
- 7.5 Within 10 working days of a concern being raised, and following the initial investigation, the Monitoring Officer or Investigating Officer will write to the person raising the concern:
- acknowledging that the concern has been received
 - indicating the initial findings and how he/she proposes to deal with the matter; and giving an estimate of how long it will take to provide a final response.
- 7.6 If it is impossible for the initial investigation to be completed within 10 working days, or where urgent action is required, the situation will be explained in the letter of acknowledgement. Where a decision is made that a full investigation will take place, the reasons for this will be provided. The Council will aim to complete the full investigation within 28 working days.
- 7.7 If a full investigation is required, this will be carried out by the Council internally or the Council may ask another body to carry it out. Following the full

investigation, the Council will either resolve by agreed action or take appropriate further action. This further action could be:

- Agreed steps such as disciplinary process
- Referral to the Police
- An independent enquiry

- 7.8 The amount of contact between the Officers considering the issues and the employee raising the concern will depend on the nature of the matters raised, the potential difficulties involved, and the clarity of the information provided. If necessary, further information may be sought from the person raising the concern but anyone raising a concern can also request not to be contacted for further information. However, this might hinder the success of an investigation. Notwithstanding the initial acknowledgement, you will be kept informed of the progress and outcome of the action and reasons for any decisions, subject to any legal constraints.
- 7.9 The Council will take appropriate steps to minimise any difficulties, which an employee may experience due to raising a concern. For example, if employees are required to give evidence in criminal or disciplinary proceedings, the Council will need to inform them and consider what steps are required to provide support.
- 7.10 The Council recognises that there may be matters that cannot be dealt with internally and external authorities will need to become involved. Where this is necessary, the Council reserves the right to make such a referral without your consent.
- 7.11. In dealing with any allegations, the Monitoring Officer or Investigating Officer will ensure that those officers involved in the allegation who would usually respond to allegations of malpractice are not involved in any enquiries or investigations.
- 7.12 The Monitoring Officer or Investigating Officer can decide to take no further action if a complaint appears to be trivial or malicious.
- 7.13. Any meetings arranged will normally take place at the Council's offices, but the Council can agree to have the meeting elsewhere. However, the whistleblower may elect to have correspondence and such like forwarded to their home address.
- 7.14 The Council accepts that in the working environment members of staff need assurance that the Council has properly addressed the matter raised. Thus,

subject to legal constraints, the Council will provide information about the outcome of any investigation.

- 7.15 If the case was passed to an alternative Investigating Officer, the Investigating Officer will inform the Monitoring Officer of the outcome of the case to enable the Monitoring Officer to fulfil their reporting responsibilities under this policy.
- 7.16 The Monitoring Officer will report, as necessary, all concerns raised and the outcomes (in an anonymous format) in accordance with the statutory functions relating to Prescribed Persons.

8. Taking the matter further

- 8.1 This policy is intended to provide an avenue to raise concerns within the Council and to avoid possible prejudice to any internal investigation process, a disclosure should not normally be made to external bodies before it is raised through the internal mechanisms set out in this Policy. However, under legislation, in certain limited circumstances, an individual making a disclosure to an external body relating to any matters contained in legislation may be protected from detriment or dismissal. The Council hopes you will be satisfied with any action taken but if you are not satisfied with the outcome of your confidential allegation, you can write to the Chief Executive and ask for the investigation and outcome to be reviewed.
- 8.2 If you remain dissatisfied and you feel it is right to take the matter outside the Council, you need to ensure that you do not disclose information where you owe a duty of confidentiality to persons other than the Council (e.g. service users) or where you would commit an offence by making such disclosures. This is something that you would need to check with the Monitoring Officer.
- 8.3 Before taking a matter to an external body, the Council advises individuals check the list of prescribed bodies, who can advise you on what falls under their regulatory remit, but which may be unable to advise you on your legal rights. A link to the Gov UK list of prescribed people and bodies can be found below:
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/blowing-the-whistle-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies--2/whistleblowing-list-of-prescribed-people-and-bodies>
- 8.4 The Council would encourage you to contact the Charity Protect's (formerly Public Concern at Work) free confidential advice line before raising a concern internally or externally if you have concerns about wrongdoing in the workplace. Protect advise callers how to whistleblow safely and in accordance with the law.

Advice Line page: <https://protect-advice.org.uk/advice-line/>

Their dedicated hotline is 020 3117 2520.

11. Summary

- 11.1 The whistleblowing service provides staff with a confidential service to protect them from any harassment and victimisation when raising concerns within the Council. The service aims to work alongside existing procedures in place that promote ethics, honesty and the highest possible standards of openness and accountability.
- 11.2 The Council does not tolerate any reprisal against an employee because he or she has raised a concern under this policy and will treat any such reprisal as a disciplinary matter which could lead to dismissal. This assurance is not extended to those who maliciously raise concerns which they know to be false.

APPENDIX 1**Whistleblowing Process**

1. Concern is identified and you are unable to report using existing procedures.
2. “Blow the whistle”. You can do this in writing, telephoning or emailing. Please provide names, dates, places, background and details relating to your concern to:
 - your line manager
 - the Monitoring Officer
 - the Chief Executive
3. The initial enquiry will take place within 10 working days. The Investigating Officer will report to the whistleblower their initial findings and confirm how the matter will proceed and provide an estimated timescale.
4. The matter will then be (one of the following):
 - Resolved by agreed action without a full investigation
 - Full investigated either internally or referred to the appropriate external organisation (to be undertaken within 28 working days if possible; outcome with reasons reported where appropriate)
5. Whistleblower is provided with feedback on outcome and next steps.

APPENDIX 2**Guidance for employees****Reacting to concerns or inappropriate behaviour**

The action taken when first suspecting inappropriate behaviour may be crucial. This guidance explains what to do and what not to do on suspicion of inappropriate behaviour.

Acting upon suspicions, the do's and don'ts

If suspecting inappropriate behaviour affecting the Council, there are a few simple rules to follow to help the Council with subsequent enquiries:

Do make an immediate note of concerns and note as many relevant details as possible, ideally:

- the background details and nature of the suspicions (including relevant names, dates and locations)

- details of the job and responsibilities of the individuals involved;
- action taken to date (if any) before raising the concern.

Do communicate suspicions to someone with the appropriate authority and experience in accordance with this Whistleblowing Policy.

Do deal with the matter promptly if the concerns are warranted.

Any delay may result in accidents, cause the Council to suffer loss or make further enquiries more difficult.

Don't do nothing.

Don't be afraid to raise concerns.

An individual will not suffer any recrimination from the Council because of voicing reasonably held concerns. The Council will treat the matter sensitively and confidentially if it is able to take reasonable steps to protect the individual.

Don't approach or accuse any individuals directly.

Don't try to investigate the matter.

There are special rules about gathering evidence. Any attempt to gather evidence by people who are unfamiliar with these rules may weaken or destroy any future prosecution.

Don't convey suspicions to anyone other than those indicated in this Whistleblowing Policy.

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Acting upon suspicions, the do's and don'ts

The following simple rules should help to ensure that matters are properly handled:

Do be responsive to employees' concerns.

Encourage employees to voice any reasonably held concerns or suspicions. As a manager, treat them seriously, confidentially, and sensitively. Reassure the individual that they will not suffer because of concerns raised in the public interest.

Do note all relevant details.

Details should ideally include:

- the background details and nature of the suspicions (including relevant names, dates and locations)
- details of the job and responsibilities of the individuals involved
- the reasons why the person is raising the concerns
- action (if any) taken to date before this concern was raised

Get as much information as possible from the employee reporting the suspicion and encourage them to record this in writing.

If the employee has made any notes, obtain a copy of them.

In addition, note any documentary evidence that may exist to support the allegations, but do not interfere with this evidence in any way. Thereafter, contact the Monitoring Officer to discuss the report received.

If in doubt, report suspicions anyway.

If deciding that no further action is necessary, record the decision and inform the Monitoring Officer of the original notification details and the reasons why no further action is considered necessary. In recommending that no further action is necessary, be objective when evaluating the issue. Consider the facts as they appear based on the information to hand. The Monitoring Officer will then help to determine if further action is necessary.

Deal with the matter promptly, particularly if the concerns are considered warranted, and bearing in mind the 10-day deadline that the Council has set to respond to the whistleblower.

Any delay may cause the Council to suffer financial or reputational loss or make enquiries more difficult.

Don't ridicule or belittle any suspicions raised by employees.

The Council cannot operate an effective anti-fraud and corruption culture or whistleblowing policy if employees are reluctant to pass on their concerns to management out of fear of ridicule or recrimination.

Give all employees' concerns a fair hearing and reassure employees that they will not suffer recrimination by raising any reasonably held suspicion in the public interest.

Don't approach the suspect or accuse any individuals directly.

Don't communicate suspicions to anyone other than those indicated in the Councils' Whistleblowing Policy.

Don't try to investigate the matter.

Remember that investigations by employees who are unfamiliar with the requirements of evidence are highly likely to jeopardise a successful outcome. They may also alert the suspect and result in the destruction of evidence. Remember that the primary responsibility is to report the issue and all associated facts to the appropriate employee, wherever possible.

BENCHMARKING REPORTResponse ID: [1117](#)

Submitted Date: 2024-08-22 14:04:56

Completion Time: 27 sec.



Please ensure you click 'Send to Email' at the bottom of this page in order to retain a digital copy of this report.

Organisation:

East Cambridgeshire District Council

Date:

22/08/24

Report on your whistleblowing arrangements

Submitted by:

maggie.camp@eastcambs.gov.uk

About your Whistleblowing Scanner report

This report incorporates landmark regulatory requirements, current industry best practice and Protect's expertise on effective whistleblowing arrangements.

The report scores are divided into three key areas:

1. Governance

Ensuring the structure and oversight of whistleblowing arrangements meets best practice

2. Engagement

How you engage with staff to encourage them to whistleblow, and with your managers to help them handle concerns

3. Operations

How whistleblowing works in practice in your organisation; from how staff are supported on

the ground, to providing feedback, and how you record and investigate concerns



Your Whistleblowing Scanner score is:
81%

Breakdown of your score:

	Score
Governance	100%
Engagement	82%
Operations	62%

Recommendations

1. Governance

It's important that there is a leader (eg 'Champion') that is a figurehead for speaking up, and who can drive forward the culture where staff feel comfortable in raising concerns internally with you, their employer. It's also vital to have a well written, easily understandable Whistleblowing Policy.

Congratulations, this is a good score for Governance. To continue to improve:

- If not already doing so, consider incorporating an overview of management information on whistleblowing in published data eg your website or annual reports.
- Make sure whistleblowing is discussed regularly at senior level. Are your arrangements effective?
- Conducting regular reviews of your whistleblowing arrangements - for example via this Whistleblowing Scanner tool - will help you identify strengths and weaknesses and help give you a workplan moving forwards.

2. Engagement

Communicating and engaging with staff and managers on your whistleblowing arrangements is essential to building a culture where staff feel confident raising their concerns and managers feel confident in handling concerns effectively.

Congratulations, this is a good score for Engagement. To continue to improve:

- Make sure all staff groups, including those typically marginalised or vulnerable, are consulted

and included

- Regular communications is vital, and consider the staff member's employment life cycle, from induction to exit interview
- Communicating information to external stakeholders will help demonstrate you're an accountable and transparent organisation
- Don't forget to focus on feedback

Protect can help you through our Membership support, which provides a Best Practice Guide including sample survey questions, and we also have a range of regular and bespoke training options.

3. Operations

It's vital that your arrangement work in practice: it's no good having a well written policy if processes aren't followed, managers are not trained to receive concerns appropriately and investigations are ineffective. Providing feedback to the whistleblower is an essential stage of the whistleblowing process. Doing these well will lead to better trust and confidence in the arrangements overall.

Well done, this is a good score for Operations but there is room for improvement. Check where your gaps were to help focus future work.

- Think about how you review cases to ensure that any breaches of confidentiality or complaints of victimisation have been appropriately acted upon.
- Try to obtain feedback in a systematic way from whistleblower's who have used your arrangements, to ensure they feel supported through the process of raising concerns.
- We recommend that you periodically review management information to ensure consistency of processes in recording concerns.
- Ensure that investigation guidance is clear and that an independent internal function conducts periodic reviews of your investigations, to ensure that the principles have been followed.

Next steps

We hope that this Whistleblowing Scanner report proves valuable in your efforts to strengthen the whistleblowing culture in your organisation.

Protect is a leading authority on whistleblowing in the UK. Since 1993, we have been supporting organisations like yours in a number of ways:

- providing support developing whistleblowing policies and procedures
- helping to establish whistleblowing arrangements from scratch
- providing comprehensive training on receiving and handling whistleblowing concerns, investigations and victimisation
- providing expertise through our Membership packages, with nearly 300 organisations currently benefiting from one of the three Membership packages
- offering bespoke support and consultancy

For more information, please visit our website or get in touch with us via **business@protect-advice.org.uk** or by calling us on **(+44) (0)20 3117 2520**.

Protect Team

www.protect-advice.org.uk

East Cambridgeshire District Council Policy Review

Introduction to Protect

Protect has been the UK's foremost expert on whistleblowing in the UK since its inception in 1993. The charity is unique in its approach to the topic: it provides a free legal advice service to would-be whistleblowers, and has advised more than 50,000 people in the course of its history; it provides consultancy and training to businesses and has almost 300 member clients. Some of the organisations it has supported include Aviva, KPMG, HSBC, ITV, Lloyd's Banking Group, Prudential plc, Portsmouth City Council, Birmingham City Council, The Prince's Trust, and St John Ambulance. Finally, it is an active campaigner and policy adviser on the law which impacts whistleblowing. All our work with whistleblowers informs our work with organisations. Indeed, it is our unique approach and experience that attracts organisations across different sectors.

Whistleblowing Policies

A well drafted whistleblowing policy helps to provide staff with a clear understanding of what whistleblowing is and the processes by which an individual can raise and/or escalate a concern. It will also provide staff with assurances about victimization and confidentiality.

The most effective whistleblowing policies are short, concise and clear. They can be picked up by staff in need of quick and clear information and easily acted upon.

It is our view that East Cambridgeshire District Council's ("the Council") whistleblowing policy is thorough and well thought through. There is, however, room for improvement.

Key Recommendations

1. Reduce the length of the Whistleblowing Policy

Protect recommends that the Council significantly reduce the length of their whistleblowing policy. Our Model Policy for example, available as part of our [Member's](#) Toolkit, is five pages long and includes all of the elements of a successful and accessible whistleblowing policy.

2. Revise the structure of the Whistleblowing Policy

Protect recommend that the Council combine and condense Sections 1, 2 and 3.

We suggest that Section 4 should be about the Council's assurances to whistleblowers, such as on protecting confidentiality and adopting a zero-tolerance approach to whistleblower victimisation.

Protect suggests that Section 5 should outline how to raise a concern internally. It is important that this section appears nearer the beginning of the policy, so it is easy to locate.

This should be followed by a section on how the Council will handle concerns.

Next, the policy should set out where staff can access independent advice and provide external points of contact to report concerns to, such as the relevant Prescribed Bodies.

3. Ensure that the Whistleblowing Policy accurately reflects the law

Whilst whistleblowing policies should not be written legalistically, it is crucial that the information that they provide accurately mirrors what the law says.

Protect suggests that the Council check that their explanations of whistleblowing law are accurate, in order to avoid misleading staff on their legal rights.

4. Avoid providing guarantees that a whistleblower will not be identified or victimised

Protect commends the Council for wanting to provide staff with concrete assurances that they will not be victimised. However, the Council cannot guarantee this.

Protect suggests removing concrete promises and replacing them with assurances that the Council will do everything within their powers to protect the confidentiality of a whistleblower and that they adopt a strict zero-tolerance policy to whistleblower victimisation.

5. Review and expand the section on open, confidential and anonymous concern raising

Protect recommends that the Council explain the difference between open, confidential and anonymous concern raising.

This section should also include a specific assurance that anonymous concerns will be taken seriously and investigated as far as is reasonably practicable. We know anecdotally from our Advice Line that would-be whistleblowers wanting to make anonymous reports are often deterred because they do not think that their concerns will be taken seriously or investigated at all.

Further, we recommend reframing why anonymous concerns can cause challenges. What matters for an investigation into the concern is the detail of the disclosure, not whether a name is attached. The Council should consider explaining that, if a whistleblower does not include enough detail in an anonymous report, it may be more difficult to investigate. However, this will not influence their assessment of the credibility of a concern or impact their perception of the gravity of a disclosure.

**Lead Officer: Sally Bonnett, Director Communities
Democratic Services Officer: Jane Webb**

Thurs 30 January 2025	4:30pm
Chair's Announcements	Chair
Write-Off of Unrecoverable Debt (if any)	Director Finance and S151 Officer
Assets Update	Open Spaces & Facilities Manager
2025/26 Annual Treasury Management Strategy MRP & AIS	Director Finance and S151 Officer
Finance Monitoring	Director Finance and S151 Officer
Revenue Budget 2025/26	Director Finance and S151 Officer
Bereavement Centre Update	Director Operations
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy	HR Manager
Actions Taken by the Chief Executive on the grounds of Urgency (if any)	DSO
Forward Agenda Plan	DSO
EXEMPT – Appointments, Transfers, Resignations	HR Manager
Thurs 27 March 2025	4:30pm
Chair's Announcements	Chair
Service Delivery Plans 2025/26	Service Leads
Write-Off of Unrecoverable Debt (if any)	Director Finance and S151 Officer
Assets Update	Open Spaces & Facilities Manager
Assets Management Plan 2025/26	Open Spaces & Facilities Manager
Bereavement Centre Update	Director Operations
Annual Review RIPA Policies	Director Legal
ECTC Annual Business Plan 2025/26	ECTC Finance Manager
EXEMPT - ECTC Management Accounts	ECTC Finance Manager
Actions Taken by the Chief Executive on the grounds of Urgency (if any)	DSO
Forward Agenda Plan	DSO

Notes:

- 1. Agenda items which are likely to be “urgent” and therefore not subject to call-in are marked ***
- 2. Agenda items in italics are provisional items / possible items for future meeting**

