

**Operational Services Committee**  
**31 January 2024**  
**Questions from Members of Committee**

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**Item 6 - ECSS Statutory Accounts**

**Note: All questions requiring ECSS Board of Director responses are provided by the Managing Director ECSS**

<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>Response</b>
Cllr Vellacott	Does the second paragraph of 1.2 of the Notes to the Financial Statements relate to the remit of the Waste Service Review Working Party?	The statement relates to the review that was undertaken by the Chief Executive and reported to the Audit Committee and subsequently to Council whereby changes to the MoA were agreed.
	What are the 'group entities' referred to under 8 and 10?	The group entities are East Cambridgeshire District Council, East Cambs Trading Company and East Cambs Street Scene
Cllr Inskip	Can you provide a breakdown of the items and individual costs that make up 'Revenue from contracts' in 2023 and in 2022?	This is solely the management fee income from ECDC
	Can you provide a breakdown of the items and individual costs that make up 'Other income' in 2023 and 2022?	Other income 2022/23 Sales of Wheelie Bins- £22,193 Garden Waste 2 <sup>nd</sup> Bin- £45,946 Bulky Collections- £43,540 External Income- £17,3567 Cost recharges £85,485 Insurance claim- £19,800 Other income 2021/22 Sale of wheelie bins- £34,791 Garden waste 2 <sup>nd</sup> bin- £25,654 Bulky collections- £62,337 External income- £19,556

## Item 7 – ECSS Finance Report

Cllr Inskip	If the projected overspend is £165,000, why is an increase of £200,000 being requested?	The request is for an 'up to £200,000' because fuel costs and income from the sale of recycling is unpredictable due to the volatile market and are outside of ECSS control.
	In section 3.20 it states "Additional income from scrapping the old vehicles was higher than anticipated and this was due to extensive market research to achieve best return.". Which vehicles are being scrapped?	ECSS is now operating 10 new RCV's. The old fleet has been scrapped.
Cllr Colbert	Agenda item 7: Para 3.19 commences with the statement "A review is being undertaken to establish what work is being done for customers who are not the District and whether any of this work should be charged for." Can we have an explanation, please?	ECSS is compiling a list of properties/areas where waste collection and/or litter/dog bin emptying is occurring outside of the MoA agreement and is not recovering the costs.
Cllr Pettitt	Will committee be updated in relation to sections 3.16 (daily vehicle checks) and 3.19 (customers who are not the Council) of the report?	It is not intended that committee will be formally updated on the progress of these reviews. The first is a review to understand possible fleet management efficiency savings and the second review is to inform future cost recovery decisions. The ECSS Director Commercial will liaise with the ECDC Director Operations to determine if there is information that could be provided to assist the Working Party.

**Item 8 – Waste Performance Monitoring Report Q3 and Street Smart Highlights Report**

Cllr Vellacott	Does the Facebook page post its campaigns/messages in community Facebook groups, where practical to do so? (This might also increase the number of followers)	Yes. Over Christmas ECSS posted directly into the village groups that were affected by the day change being brought forward. We have posted some campaigns into these groups as well as vacancy adverts, and we will consider doing more of this for future campaigns where resource allows. The Council’s Communications team reshares our posts on the ECDC Facebook page where relevant and we do pick up additional followers this way also.
	Does the KPI for removal of fly tips refer to 2 days after Environmental Health tell ECSS, or 2 days after the fly tip occurring?	It refers to two days after Environmental Services pass the CRM to ECSS to arrange removal.
Cllr Inskip	“The integration of the new digital incab system (Bartec) has been more complex than expected.” – can more details be provided as to the issues encountered with the integration of the new digital incab system?	The integration required more assistance from the Council’s CRM provider than assumed. The integration builds pathways between the two systems to enable them to ‘talk to each other’ without involvement from a person. The Council is responsible for building the integration from the CRM side which was not clear in the initial scoping of the project.
	Is the digital incab system now fully operational across all vehicles?	No. It has been softly launched in refuse and will be in the green waste and recycling vehicles this week. It is expected to be fully integrated with the Council’s CRM system by the end of February.
Cllr Pettitt	How quickly are roads found to below the Grade A standard revisited?	A crew is sent the next working day.
	How does ECSS work with Environmental Health and Enforcement to identify repeat fly-tipping offenders?	Fly tip reports that are more than 3 black bags or a single item are always sent to Environmental Services before ECSS receive the request to remove. They will check for evidence of offenders.

**Item 9 – Budget Monitoring Report**

<p>Cllr Vellacott</p>	<p>What is the value of the terminated Planning agency contract referred to in the report, and how many full-time agency staff are employed in Planning at present?</p>	<p>The annualised cost of the contract terminated in December 2023 was c£80k per annum.</p> <p>There are two further Agency staff. One is in part covered by vacancy underspend. The other is funded through a Planning Performance Agreement (PPA's) on the Soham Eastern Gateway application.</p>
	<p>Could members have a summary of other efficiencies in determination of planning applications which are being made, and how these correspond to increased fee income or other cost mitigations?</p>	<p>The planning review is considering areas of efficiencies and streamlining such as better use of digital tools and more automation , improved customer contact channels, reductions in printing etc, as well as reviews of locally fees and charges (PPA and Pre apps)</p> <p>General service efficiencies include improved use of PPAs and pre-apps advice across major projects. Reduced use of external specialist advice (e.g ecologist, urban design)</p> <p>These are either being covered in house or via PPAs</p> <p>The mandatory increase in planning application fees introduced on 6 December 2023 (25% for non major planning applications and 35% for major applications), together with the abolition of the 'free go' for new applications for the same development on the same site within 1 year, will increase fee income considerably but only when activity picks up.</p>

Cllr Inskip	<p>At the end of the first quarter of the financial year the full year overspend on planning was forecast to be £200,000. By the last meeting it had risen to £400,000. In answer to a question about the confidence in this forecast it was stated it "...we can be reasonably confident that the end of year income gap will be in the region of £400,000.". The latest reported figure is £500,000. What is the explanation for the further £100,000 increase?</p>	<p>The Q2 estimate of overspend of £400,000 included an anticipated submission of a major housing application for North Ely Phase 5 (approximately 280 dwellings) during Q3, the accompanying fee for this scheme and already signed PPA would have generated circa £70,000 income. Latest estimates suggests this and other large scale projects are significantly delayed and cannot be relied upon to be received in this financial year. Ever changing legislation such as delay and implementation of new guidance for BNG net gain also seems to have delayed activity even further. It is the slow down in the submission of major planning applications that is worsening the over spend estimate at Q3 income review. At the end of Q3 planning fee income was just under £400,000 for the first three quarters of the financial year. We will need to receive over £100,000 fee income during Q4 to reach the £500,000 over spend estimate.</p>
	<p>Is a full or partial recovery being forecast for the next financial year and what figure is being used?</p>	<p>A partial recovery is predicted. Therefore the budget is based on a median forecast of around £1.1m fee income. This includes all uplifts related to the fee increases (25% for minor applications and 35% for major applications that came into effect in December 2023) and an improved use of PPA's</p>

### Item 10 – Community Safety Partnership Update

Cllr Vellacott	Does the CSP have any action planned in relation to Soham, specifically in relation to engagement with young people in the town?	Students from schools in Soham will continue to be invited to attend future CSP Court Experience Days. The CSP is seeking to identify current issues for young people and develop further training packages to be delivered into schools and therefore plans are being developed to engage with local schools and young people to shape this. The Fire Service and other CSP partners are planning a talk around fire and water safety, and anti-social behaviour before end of summer school term, which will be offered to schools in Soham.
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### Item 11 – Youth Action Plan Update

Cllr Vellacott	What external funding sources are being explored to recuperate costs?	We will be exploring the same sources of funding obtained last year which were the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner’s Safer Communities fund and youth fund. We will also explore other sources of potential funding that become apparent. If Members are aware of any potential relevant funding sources then please do let officers know.
	What action will be taken to help connect young residents in Soham to the Town Council and other bodies responsible for youth provision, like has occurred in Burwell?	The Council will continue to keep its youth webpages up to date with information on topics such as careers, engagement opportunities, health and wellbeing, volunteering, safety, climate change, transport, and local groups, clubs and activities. The engagement activity and remedial works carried out in Burwell in 2023 were in response to reports received about specific issues on ECDC land in the parish. The Community Engagement Strategy that is currently being updated will set out what will be done to engage with residents, including local young people going forwards. ECDC shared its Youth

		<p>Strategy and youth consultation findings with Soham Town Council and asked Soham Town Council to provide details of any work they are doing to address the consultation findings/support local young people and we asked them if they need any support from the Council. In the past 3 years, no requests for support from Soham Town Council have been received. If Soham Town Council would like any specific support to address local youth related matters, the council would be happy to engage and explore opportunities.</p>
	<p>What is the 'Sussing it Out' project at The Weatheralls and how is the Council engaging with it?</p>	<p>Sussing It Out is a part of a project funded by the CSP and led by the East Cambridgeshire Integrated Neighbourhood Team aimed at supporting young people in identifying risk taking behaviours, changing mindsets, and encouraging positive choices. Sessions cover elements of team building, online safety, risk-taking behaviour, peer pressure, drug awareness, anger and county lines. Most of the project is mental health/wellbeing focused which the NHS is leading on, however the Sussing It Out part of the project is being delivered by officers at CCC and ECDC due to their expertise and knowledge of the subjects being delivered. Weatherall's Primary School was selected as the school to deliver this due to a number of partners identifying higher levels of anti-social behaviour at the time of the application.</p>
Cllr Pettitt	<p>What engagement is/will be available to young people living in the smaller villages of East Cambs, who may not have easy transport access to events?</p>	<p>It is proposed that two Youth Fusion events will take place in 2024/25. The locations of these events are yet to be determined. The Community Engagement Strategy that is currently being updated will set out what will be done to engage with residents, including local young people going forwards. The Council's youth webpages contain details of the ways in which local young people can engage and have their say, as well as containing information on local transport and a directory of parish specific activities and clubs.</p>
	<p>What engagement events do officers plan to attend in the next few months?</p>	<p>The Community Engagement Strategy that is currently being updated will set out what will be done to engage with residents, including local young people going forwards. Officers are kept updated on engagement activities and</p>

		<p>opportunities through its partners such as CCC and can determine if attendance would add value. It is proposed that two Youth Fusion events will take place in 2024/25. The locations of these events are yet to be determined. Officers are happy to support and attend parish council-led community safety forums. Plans are currently being developed for future court experience events which provide an opportunity for young people to engage with a variety of local agencies.</p>
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**Item 12 – Citizens Advice West Suffolk (CAWS) Grant**

<p>Cllr Inskip</p>	<p>What are the figures “No. of unique clients provided with advice by ECDC’s Housing and Community Advice department in 2022/23*” for all wards in the district?</p>	<p>Ely, 646  Soham, 268  Littleport, 187  Witchford, 67  Haddenham, 62  Sutton , 46  Fordham, 42  Burwell, 29  Wilburton , 29  Isleham, 25  Stetham , 23  Wicken , 23  Little Downham, 22  Cheveley , 12  Pymoor, 12  Mepal, 10  S Prior, 10  Barway, 9  Newmarket, 8  S bulbeck, 6</p>
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Cllr Pettitt	Is the increase in client numbers of 16% amongst East Cambs residents, or overall service users?	This information has been requested from CAWS and can be shared with Members once available.
	What events in East Cambs have the CAWS team attended in 2023?	Attending events isn't a target of the SLA between ECDC and CAWS however this information has been requested from CAWS and can be shared with Members once available.

	<p>What methodologies were used to work out the cost per client for both ECDC and CAWS?</p>	<p>In 2022/23, ECDC provided CAWS with £23,166.03. CAWS were able to assist 360 East Cambs unique clients during this period, with an average cost to ECDC per client totalling £64.35.</p> <p>The cost of the Council's Community Advice Service per client is estimated at £54 per hour. The average client requires 1.5 hours of support, therefore the average cost per client is £81. This is an estimated Figure (ranging from 1 hour to several hours) assuming annual salary costs of Community Advice Officer plus estimated support cost, for example, admin officer costs.</p> <p>As stated in the Options Appraisal, different methodologies were used to work out the average cost per client.</p>
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**Item 13 – VCAEC Grant**

Cllr Pettitt	Approximately how many volunteers does VCAEC have at this moment in time?	VCAEC currently have 45 volunteers.
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#### Item 14 Community Sports Facility Grant Application – Littleport Leisure

Cllr Colbert	Agenda item 14 Appendix 1. I note that on page 1 the Anticipated total cost is stated as £17,000. The figures quoted in the application, exclusive of VAT, total £16,962. Is the intention to seek approval of a grant for the actual cost, up to £17,000 maximum?	The grant of up to £11,400 is based on a total project cost of up to £17,000.
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#### Item 15 – Information Security Policy Review

Cllr Vellacott	What is ‘third party data’ for the purposes of 12.1?	This would be any identifiable personal information such as name, telephone numbers, address details, email address for any third party individual, such as members of the public
	What form will the cyber security training for members take?	Training is provided by online course, email sent out from Legal once a year with link to course “Cyber Ninja for Councillors”, course covers GDPR, Data Protection and Cyber awareness. This was last sent to Councillors to complete 11 <sup>th</sup> December 2023.
	Editorial: 11.3 numbering is incorrect, 19.2 ‘report by’ should read ‘reported to’, 24.1 ‘offender are liable’ should read ‘offenders are liable’.	These have been amended in the policy.
Cllr Inskip	The policy states “Removable media must not be plugged into Council’s devices unless authorised by the ICT Team” – does this rely on the user adhering to the policy or is this	Currently this relies on users adhering to the policy. This will be addressed in 2024/2025, when security configuration will be implemented to control the use of removeable media and associated policy drawn up.

	enforced for example from MDM configuration to prevent access to removable media?	
	“removable media (for example, CD, DVDs and USB pens/sticks/drives) should be kept in lockable cupboards or drawers and information deleted or media destroyed (e.g. CD) when no longer required. – would it not be more secure to prevent the use of removable media for data storage?	As the Council, still receive data via removeable media for its business, import data from work phone mobiles (i.e. Photos), and on occasion provide data to third parties via removeable media (i.e CCTV Footage to the Police), it is not currently feasible to prevent the use of all removeable media.
Cllr Pettitt	Who is the Council’s Senior Information Risk Officer?	The Councils Senior Information Risk Owner (title has been amended in the policy) is Director Legal.
	Is information about visitors using the Council’s IT systems recorded?	Third Parties (Contractors) requiring access to the Councils Systems, are required to request the access, these requests are recorded within the Councils Helpdesk Software.

**Item 16 – ARP Joint Committee Minutes: 5 December 2023**

Cllr Vellacott	Under 39/23, what are the ‘approved shares’ between the member authorities for the overspend to be split out into?	The ARP budget is allocated to partners based on their respective sizes and their use of the partnership resources. The forecast overspend will be allocated out on the same basis.
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