

AGENDA ITEM NO.

Minutes of a meeting of the Operational Services Committee
held in the Council Chamber, The Grange, Nutholt Lane, Ely on
Monday 15th November 2021 at 4:30pm

P R E S E N T

Cllr Julia Huffer (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr Christine Ambrose Smith
Cllr David Ambrose Smith
Cllr Lis Every
Cllr Mark Inskip
Cllr Alec Jones
Cllr Joshua Schumann
Cllr John Trapp
Cllr Paola Trimarco
Cllr Jo Webber
Cllr Christine Whelan

OFFICERS

Lewis Bage – Communities & Partnerships Manager
Tracy Couper - Democratic Services Manager
Emma Grima – Director, Commercial
Richard Kay – Strategic Planning Manager
James Khan – Head of Street Scene
Angela Parmenter – Housing & Community Safety Manager
Rebecca Saunt – Planning Manager
Anne Wareham – Senior Accountant
Kerrie Wall – Covid-19 Recovery Co-Ordinator

I N A T T E N D A N C E

Nigel Ankers – Finance Manager, East Cambs Street Scene

32. **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

33. **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN**

Following the resignation of the Chairman, nominations were invited for Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the Municipal year. Councillor Julia Huffer was duly proposed and seconded and there being no other nominations,

It was resolved:

That Councillor Julia Huffer be appointed as Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the Municipal year.

34. **ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN**

Following the appointment of the current Vice-Chairman as Chairman of the Committee, there was now a vacancy for Vice-Chairman of the Committee. Therefore, under Section 100B 4(b) of the Local Government Act 1972, the Chairman stated that she was willing to take Election of Vice-Chairman as an urgent item of business, on the grounds that the vacancy should be filled as quickly as possible, to ensure that there was a Vice-Chairman able to act in that capacity.

Nominations were invited for Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the Municipal year. Councillor David Ambrose Smith was duly proposed and seconded and there being no other nominations,

It was resolved:

That Councillor David Ambrose-Smith be appointed as Vice-Chairman of the Committee for the remainder of the Municipal year.

35. **APOLOGIES AND SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no apologies or substitutions.

36. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Lis Every declared an interest in agenda item 15, as she was the Chairman of Trustees of the VCAEC.

37. **MINUTES**

It was resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13th September 2021 be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

38. **CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

39. **SERVICE PRESENTATION – HOUSING ADVICE SERVICE**

The Committee received a presentation by the Housing and Community Advice Manager on the work of the Housing Advice Team, a copy of which has been circulated to Members of the Committee.

The presentation covered the following areas:

- Roles within the Team
- Reasons why people approach the service
- Owing a main duty
- Joint working partner agencies

- Projects
- Covid-19
- Interdepartmental working
- Community Advice Service
- Two case studies

Members commended the range of services provided by the Team and welcomed the launch of the new Community Hub Bus. In response to a question by a Member, Ms Parmenter explained proposed arrangements for supported accommodation for people with drug/alcohol issues in collaboration with a HMO provider.

The Chairman thanked Ms Parmenter for her presentation.

40. **HOUSING & COMMUNITY ADVICE SERVICE – UPDATE ON IMPACT OF COVID-19**

The Committee considered a report, W98 previously circulated, which provided an update on the impacts arising from Covid-19 on the Housing & Community Advice Service for the period 23 March 2020 to 1 October 2021.

The Housing and Community Advice Manager highlighted that the Courts had been re-opened to allowing S21 eviction notices, but as yet the service had not seen a significant increase in clients needing support as a result of this. However, longer void times on social housing properties was being experienced due to the backlog of repairs. Ms Parmenter highlighted leaflets giving details of the times of the new Community Hub Bus visits to particular Town/Village locations, tabled at the meeting. A schedule also was included on the Council's website.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, were set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

A Member highlighted the issues experienced both locally and nationally to recruit people to vacancies following lockdown/furlough and asked if the service worked with private sector agencies to try to place vulnerable people requiring employment. Ms Parmenter stated that staff worked closely with the Job Centre and would be looking to work with the private sector moving forward Post-Covid.

A Member queried the reasons for the refusal of 160 out of 260 applications for discretionary Covid isolation payments detailed in the report and Ms Parmenter explained that these were not eligible, usually due to substantial savings or not actually having received a reduction in salary, but that she would circulate a breakdown to Committee Members.

A member commented that the BAME community only constituted a third of protected characteristics and queried how other groups had been impacted by Covid-19. The Housing and Community Advice Manager stated that this was being investigated in conjunction with the Communities & Partnerships Manager.

A Member commended the report and the fact that this Council had no people in temporary B&B accommodation, but queried the position on the Council offering accommodation to refugees/asylum seekers from Afghanistan. Ms Parmenter reported that Cambridge City Council was acting a Lead Authority for this County on re-settlement and that this Council was working with them following approaches from 2 private landlords to provide housing units for refugees.

In response to questions on void properties, the Housing and Community Advice Manager asked Members to forward her details of any properties vacant for prolonged periods and she would raise them with the Social Housing provider.

Councillor Webber referred to the fact that herself and Councillor Every were representatives on Sanctuary HA and stated that the HA was prioritising repairs on void properties in the greatest demand. Sanctuary also had offered to undertake a Member Seminar in the New Year and this should be timetabled by officers. A Member queried the properties that were harder to let and it was reported that specialist older people's properties tended to be in less demand in this District. Another Member commented that these could be actively advertised to older people in family-sized properties, to encourage them to be released to house local families.

It was resolved:

That the update report be noted.

41. **12 MONTH REVIEW OF COMMUNITY ADVICE SERVICE**

The Committee considered a report, W99 previously circulated, which contained the annual update on the performance and capacity of the Community Advice Service.

The Housing and Community Advice Manager highlighted two particular cases where the Team had assisted a man over 65 with complex issues referred to them by the Lighthouse Centre and a woman with children suffering abuse. The Chairman and Members of the Committee commended the commitment of the Team to solving such complex cases.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, were set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

Members commended the introduction of the Community Hub Bus but commented that the schedule was difficult to find on the Council's website and requested that this be located in a prominent location on the Home Page. The Director Commercial agreed to investigate. Members also referred to the need to widely circulate the leaflets in the community, as many vulnerable groups did not have ready access to the internet. A Member suggested that details could be included in the Council Tax bills and the Director Commercial agreed to raise this with the relevant parties. A Member also suggested that the colour scheme of the leaflet be reviewed in relation to colour-blindness.

In response to a point raised by a Member, the Housing and Community Advice Manager agreed to provide Members of the Committee with a summary of the Customer Satisfaction Survey results.

It was resolved:

That the annual update report be noted.

42. **SERVICE PRESENTATION – PLANNING SERVICE**

The Committee received a presentation by the Planning Manager giving an update on the work of the Planning Team, a copy of which has been circulated to Members of the Committee.

The presentation covered the following areas:

- Staffing
- Applications statistics & trends

The Planning Manger highlighted that, although the Team had been fully staffed since 1 December 2019, one officer was leaving in the forthcoming week and another had been recruited, but with a lower level of experience.

The level of Planning applications had been high in 2021 compared to the 2 preceding years and the Planning Manager was examining caseloads and patterns of applications to help with assessing resourcing requirements.

A Member stated that they had a number of statistical questions that they would submit to the Planning Manager and asked for the responses to be circulated to Members of the Committee.

In response to a question by a Member regarding tree works applications, the Planning Manager explained the process and criteria for action.

A Member raised a question on the qualifications required by Planning Officers, the current issues with recruitment nationally due to a shortage of qualified/experienced officers and asked whether the Council still had a programme to 'grow its own' staff. Ms Saunt stated that there still was a rolling programme of training and 2 Officers in the Team were currently doing their Masters, but that the recruitment issues nationally were focussed on the middle management level of Senior and Team Leader posts. Therefore, the position was kept under review and alternatives such as agency workers were considered, where necessary, to fill vacancies and meet resourcing requirements.

The Chairman thanked Ms Saunt for her presentation

43. **BUDGET MONITORING REPORT**

The Committee considered a report, W100 previously circulated, which provided details of the financial position for services under the remit of the Operational Services Committee.

Councillor Alison Whelan left the meeting at 5.48pm

The Senior Accountant advised the Committee that the projected underspending on the revenue budget was £157,500.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, were set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

In response to a follow-up question by Councillor Inskip to that listed in Appendix 1, it was reported that the Depot had been transferred to Finance & Assets Committee since it was a physical building and so constituted an asset, as compared to refuse vehicles which were operational plant and equipment related to the delivery of the service.

It was resolved:

- ii) That the Committee's projected yearend underspend of £157,500 when compared to its approved revenue budget of £5,558,994, be noted.
- ii) That the Committee's overall position on Capital as a projected outturn of £1,321,294, which is £2,000,000 lower than its revised budget, be noted.

Councillor Alison Whelan returned to the meeting at 5.50pm

44. **EAST CAMBS STREET SCENE (ECSS) ACCOUNTS 2020/21**

The Committee considered a report, W101 previously circulated, containing the East Cambs Street Scene Ltd (ECSS) Accounts for 2020/21.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, were set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

In response to a follow-up question by Councillors Trapp and Inskip to question 1 on this item listed in Appendix 1, the Director Commercial agreed to clarify the position regarding the treatment of refuse vehicles for accounting purposes and provide a written response to Members of the Committee.

It was resolved:

That the East Cambs Street Scene (ECSS) accounts 2020/21, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be noted.

45. **ECDC ENVIRONMENT PLAN – UPDATE AND RENEWABLE ENERGY PROPOSED WAY FORWARD**

The Committee considered a report, W102 previously circulated, detailing progress on the 'Top 20' actions in the Council's Environment Plan and a proposed approach in relation to Action 8 relating to renewables.

The Strategic Planning Manager explained the outcome of investigations into the possible installation of solar panels on Council-owned assets. These had concluded that the quickest form of installation on a reasonable scale, combined with the likely highest return on investment, would be solar PV roof top installations on our own properties. The two most suitable properties identified were E-Space North, at Littleport, and the ECSS Depot south of Littleport. Of these, E-Space North was considered to offer the best option in terms of return on investment/payback period.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, were set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

In response to a follow-up question by Councillor Inskip to question 1 listed in Appendix 1 regarding the level and type of provision, financing and charging arrangements for Electric Vehicle Charging Points (ECVPs) in car parks, the Strategic Planning Manager reported that Nick Lancaster was leading on this action, so Councillor Inskip was asked to set out the detailed questions and direct them to the Infrastructure and Strategy Manager to obtain a response which would be provided to all Members of the Committee. A Member commented that car parks were not necessarily the best location for EVCPs and suggested other locations such as town centres and leisure centres. However, other Members highlighted the need for a balance approach to EVCP provision and locations and that the County Council had been commended for its policy of installing them in car parks at the Park and Ride sites.

With regard to question 4 in Appendix 1, Councillor Inskip queried the target for home working by Council staff. The Strategic Planning Manager reported that no specific target had been set, but that the Council's policy now allowed for a greater level and more flexible arrangements for home working. In response to a request, the Director Commercial agreed to provide details of the number and type of Council staff homeworking applications.

In response to a follow-up question by Councillor Inskip to question 5 listed in Appendix 1 regarding inclusion of requirements in Neighbourhood Plans for energy efficiency measures on new building developments, the Strategic Planning Manager reported that it was still intended to encourage this approach when Neighbourhood Plans were being prepared/reviewed.

A Member commented that the Council still had a long way to go to reach its targets on reducing emissions.

It was resolved (unanimously):

- i. To support, in principle, the potential to install PV solar panels on the roof of E-Space North, and agree that steps be taken to further investigate such potential, including, in due course, the seeking of quotes to implement such panels.
- ii. That the findings of such an investigation be reported to the appropriate Committee(s) and/or full Council, in order to make a decision on whether to proceed with such installation and to determine whether to make provision in our budgets for 2022/23 to do so.

46. **REVIEW OF GRANT TO CITIZENS ADVICE WEST SUFFOLK (CAWS)**

The Committee considered a report, W103 previously circulated, detailing the outcome of a review of the grant awarded to Citizens Advice West Suffolk (CAWS) for 2021/22 and determine whether the grant be awarded for 2022/23.

The Communities & Partnerships Manager highlighted that the recommendation to award a grant for a 2 year period would give stability to the organisation in the post-Covid recovery period.

A number of questions relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, were set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

In response to questions by Members regarding the review process in 2 years time, the Communities & Partnerships Manager stated that this was likely to follow the same process and a grant was never guaranteed to any organisation.

A Member questioned why CAWS was subject to a grant review process, whilst VCAEC, referred to in the next item, was subject to a tender process. Mr Bage reported that this was due to the fact that there was greater duplication of services being offered by other organisations similar to those delivered by VCAEC.

Members expressed their support for the award of a 2 year grant in the light of the current position with regard to Covid.

It was resolved (unanimously):

- i. That the findings of the review be noted.
- ii. That a grant of £46,332.06 be awarded to CAWS for a Service Level Agreement from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2024.

47. **REVIEW OF GRANT TO VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ACTION EAST CAMBRIDGESHIRE (VCAEC)**

Councillor Every took no part in the discussions and voting on this item.

The Committee considered a report, W104 previously circulated, detailing the outcome of a review of the grant awarded to Voluntary and Community Action East Cambridgeshire (VCAEC) and a procurement exercise for the provision of Voluntary Sector Support Services.

Members expressed their support for the work of the organisation which provided a good range of services covering the District.

It was resolved:

- i That the findings of the review and procurement exercise be noted.
- ii That £39,530 be awarded to VCAEC for a new Service Level Agreement from 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2024.

48. **ANGLIA REVENUES PARTNERSHIP JOINT COMMITTEE MINUTES**

The Committee considered the minutes of the Anglia Revenues and Benefits Partnership (ARP) Joint Committee of 21 September 2021.

A number of questions/comments relating to this item had been provided prior to the meeting from Members and these, along with answers provided by officers, were set out in Appendix 1 to these minutes.

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the ARP Joint Committee meeting held on 21 September 2021 be noted.

49. **FORWARD AGENDA PLAN**

The Committee received its Forward Agenda Plan. Members were reminded of the cancellation of the 17 January 2022 Committee meeting and transfer of the items to the 21 March meeting, following a Member Seminar on the Youth Strategy on 10 March.

A query had been received relating to this item prior to the meeting and it was confirmed that there was a typographical error which would be corrected.

It was resolved:

That the Forward Agenda Plan and cancellation of 17 January 2022 Committee meeting be noted.

The meeting concluded at 6:47pm.

**OPERATIONAL SERVICES COMMITTEE
15 NOVEMBER 2021
QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF COMMITTEE**

Item 8 – Housing and Community Service – Update on Impact of COVID-19

Questions Councillor Inskip:

<p>1. Are all seven members of staff who have passed parts 1 and 2 of the level 3 Award in Generalist Debt Advice (MAS Accredited) on track to complete part 3 and achieve full accreditation by December 2021?</p>	<p>Four Officers have successfully passed Level 3. One Officer is waiting to take the Level 3 exam.</p> <p>All Community Advice Service Officers will be Part 3 qualified.</p>
<p>2. On what grounds were the 260 applicants who were refused discretionary £500 isolation payments (out of 451 applications) deemed not eligible?</p>	<p>This is a discretionary fund for extreme financial hardship for applicants that do not meet the criteria for the national scheme.</p> <p>Financial hardships include not being able to afford rent, food or utility bill payments.</p> <p>Applications can be refused where they have not provided all the requested documents, for having sufficient funds and where there is no reduction in income from their employers.</p>
<p>3. Given the very high number of unsuccessful applications for discretionary £500 isolation payments, has a review been conducted to determine whether eligibility criteria are being appropriately applied or could be adjusted?</p>	<p>The criteria is set by government.</p>
<p>4. Has the impact of the £20 weekly reduction in Universal Credit been seen yet in approaches to the Advice Service?</p>	<p>The Service has not been approached by affected individuals.</p> <p>ARP included Community Advice contact details and drop in times in the letters that were sent to all affected residents.</p>

Comments/Questions Councillor Trapp:

<p>1. Page 1, table and associated comments: would have been more informative if the data on outcomes (at the bottom of the page) were broken down for each case type according to outcome? Is there a pattern in that some case types have a majority of outcomes?</p>	<p>This will be considered for future reporting.</p>
<p>2. Page 4, paragraph below bar chart: no data given to back up assertion that there is an increase in demand over the last 6 months.</p>	<p>This report reflects the demand on the service from 23 March 2020.</p>
<p>3. Page 6: unallocated funds seem to be quite high; what will happen to the remaining money?</p>	<p>The Service continues to support residents in need and will do so throughout the winter months.</p>
<p>4. Page 7: no financial implications, EIA, CIA? On page 7 of the report you mention . . . over the last 18 months has been that residents have experienced either social or digital isolation, and in some cases it has been both . . . so one would imagine that Equality or Inequality does play a part; furthermore the Community Hub bus must have a carbon impact, either for the good or bad. The unallocated funds have financial implications, as does the possibility of more evictions.</p>	<p>EIA and CIA assessments are not required for noting reports. These are required where the committee is making decisions.</p>

Questions/comments Councillor Christine Whelan:

<p>Page 7- It is stated that there was no equality impact assessment was not required for this report.</p>	<p>EIA's are not required for noting reports. An EIA is only required where the committee is making a decision.</p>
<p>Do we know what impact Covid has had on the protected characteristics?</p>	<p>The COVID Recovery Group conducted BAME and older people surveys and one is currently being carried out for young people.</p>
<p>The impact of Covid, especially on the LGBT community has been high as I am aware that this particular protected group has struggled with the Covid situation and in many cases were not able to remain in the places where they were living.</p>	<p>VCAEC are also carrying out a survey for all community groups registered to them</p>

<p>The operation of this service varies tremendously with the different protected characteristics so therefore I am somewhat surprised that the EIA has not been included in the report.</p>	<p>to better understand the impacts of COVID.</p>
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Item 9 – 12 Month Review of Community Advice Service

Questions Councillor Inskip:

<p>1. What KPIs or other objective metrics are available to support the conclusion in paragraph 5.1 of the report that the Community Advice Service is managing well both the level and nature of enquiries?</p>	<p>100% of enquiries are dealt with. Where it is not possible to deal with at first point of contact, Officers continue to work with clients until issue(s) are resolved.</p>
<p>2. What is the average waiting time from a resident contacting the Advice Service and how has this changed over the past year?</p>	<p>Face to face appointments (via drop in)- No more than 10 minutes.</p> <p>Phone calls are transferred directly to the relevant officer, if the Officer is not available at the time of the call then there is a same day call back.</p> <p>Prior to reception reopening residents would have contact immediately or a call back the same day.</p>
<p>3. What is the average time to resolve issues being handled by the Advice Service and how has this changed over the past year?</p>	<p>Average first appointments are a minimum of 1 hour depending on the issue(s). This has not changed over the past year. The same advice is provided whether it is face-to-face or on the phone.</p>
<p>4. What customer satisfaction metrics are collected from users of the service and can that data be shared?</p>	<p>There is a customer satisfaction survey and regular case studies.</p> <p>This can be shared via email with Members of the Committee.</p>
<p>5. How frequently does the Community Bus visit each of the locations listed in Appendix 3?</p>	<p>The schedule is available on the Council's website</p>
<p>6. Are there plans to add any additional locations for the bus to serve communities geographically remote from the existing locations?</p>	<p>There will be a 6 month review on the demand, location and frequency of locations and any changes can be made at that point.</p>

7. How are the visits of the Community Bus publicised by the council?	Communications Team- Social Media Posts. Posters and leaflets sent to all locations for local advertising.
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Comments/Questions Councillor Trapp:

1. Page 2 table: do we have any data on the types of enquiry that CAB provided?	ECDC does not hold CAB data. This can be requested.
2. Page 2 penultimate paragraph: how many requests from outside of East Cambs?	40 requests from outside of East Cambridgeshire including settled status and issues arising from when clients were previously residents of East Cambridgeshire.
3. Page 3: we have had more than one month of operation of the Community Hub Bus; any data on take up, and type of resident? Not easy to find the schedule on the Council web-site, but then the search engine is not very good. I think that we ought to have a report on how many have used the Community Hub Bus at each Operational Services Committee meeting, as it is a new venture.	Data is being collected from every location which will inform the 6 months review.
4. Page 4: no financial implications, EIA, CIA? Again	EIA and CIA assessments are not required for noting reports. These are required where the committee is making decisions.
5. Appendix 1: would be interesting to have data on number of enquiries per 100 residents (for ECDC residents only) to show which parishes are in more need of advice, and for this to be reflected in the frequency of the Community Bus to those parishes.	This will be considered for future reporting.

Questions/comments Councillor Christine Whelan:

No equality impact assessment provided on this report.	EIA not required for a noting report. EIA is required when the committee is making a decision.
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With the launch of the community bus hub there needs to be one.	
What provision is there for those people requiring advice with limited or no mobility to access the bus?	The Community Bus has a wheelchair lift. If clients cannot access the Community Bus or Drop in Service then home visits are conducted.
What privacy (soundproof cubicles) has been provided for people with protected characteristics to discuss their issues without giving away their personal situations where they do not want their personal details known to other people in the near vicinity of them?	All clients are spoken to in private and in complete confidence. Home visits can be conducted.
Why is there not a Carbon impact assessment? What impact is the bus having on this?	CIA not required for a noting report. CIA is required when the committee is making a decision.
Does the bus vary its times and days that it goes to the locations stated in Appendix 3?	The schedule is available on the Council's website and paper copies can be made available on request.
How are these advertised and are these locations accessible to everyone who needs to access it?	Social media posts. Local Communities and Parish Council's all have literature to promote the Community Bus.

Item 11 – Budget Monitoring Report

Questions Councillor Inskip:

1. In Appendix 2 why is the £845,950 previously listed for the Depot no longer included?	This is now being treated as an assets issue and has been moved to Finance and Assets Committee.
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Comments/Questions Councillor Trapp:

1. Point 2.2 on page 1 (also taken up in point 5 below): This seems brilliant, but it is only because the revised budget still included the capital for refuse and cleaning vehicle replacement.	Yes, as detailed in 3.7 this is a delay in spending as opposed to a reduction in spending.
2. Planning on page 3: increased number of applications, but has there been an increase in Planning Officers to match? The default email reply from Rebecca Saunt is	The Planning Team is currently fully staffed and has an additional agency worker to try to assist with the large workload.

<p>Thank you for your email. I am currently unavailable. Please note we are currently experiencing high volumes of work and this may have an impact on the time taken to respond.</p> <p>I know of one case where a pre-app has had a reply a couple of days shy of three months, instead of the three weeks that it is supposed to be; reasons cited for delay were 'we are currently experiencing high volumes of work', and the email outage in the summer.</p>	<p>Auto replies and messages are on the website to manage customer expectations.</p>
<p>3. Page 6: table has new entry (compared to previous budget) of Leisure Centre with a receipt of £241,113, and no explanation.</p>	<p>The Leisure Centre has been moved from Finance and Assets Committee to the Operational Services Committee.</p>
<p>4. Page 6: the line for Tree Preservation, and many others, mystifies me; I have picked on this line as it is easiest to see. The budget is £55,717; the profiled budget is £21,387 and I would have said that it should be half, i.e. £27,857; so far £16,584 has been spent, so the forecast spend at year end should be double that, i.e. £33,168. There are no notes why the projected outturn should be that given in the budget column. What am I missing?</p>	<p>The profiled budget is calculated on individual spend lines, you are correct that salaries are split equally throughout the year, but in this example, much of the tree management work is done in the winter months, so the profile reflects this, i.e. more expenditure being expected in the second half of the year.</p> <p>The current underspend relates to a creditor that has not yet been paid, which is expected to be resolved by yearend. Thus the yearend forecast is that costs will come in in-line with the original budget.</p>
<p>5. Page 7: I find this kind of accounting very strange; a revised budget that mirrors the actual forecast expenditure, except that £2M for vehicles is left in, and all indication that it won't be spent. Hence showing an underspend on capital.</p>	<p>The budget is only changed where approved, so the revised budget remains the same as that in the budget report. Spend in 2021/22 is now forecast to be zero, hence the underspend. Although as acknowledged earlier this is a delay in spending, as opposed to a reduction in spending.</p>

Questions/comments Councillor Christine Whelan:

<p>How or why is there a saving on this? Are there less people who are now homeless or are there less people now using hotels or hostels? How many do we currently have who are being homed in hostels and hotels and how many have been permanently homed?</p>	<p>This is the result of savings on the use of hotel and hostel costs. We have had a saving on these for a number of years, but the lines are kept within the budget as a contingency, in case any requirement is identified during the year.</p> <p>We permanently re-housed 278 applicants and 43 remained in their existing homes.</p> <p>We currently have 16 applicants in temporary accommodation, no applicants in B&B or hotel accommodation.</p>
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Agenda Item 12 – ECSS Accounts

Comments/Questions Councillor Trapp:

<p>1. Note 6 on page 15 of accounts: rubbish lorries are not considered part of the plant and equipment; are they owned by ECDC, and lent out for free to ECSS?</p>	<p>All refuse vehicles are owned by ECDC. A charge is levied by ECDC to cover the cost of the vehicles.</p>
<p>2. Item 3 on page 14: Wages and salaries have increased by £150,442, but two directors and three administrators have been shed.</p>	<p>The increase is caused by a combination of a cost of living increase for staff plus any increases for staff moving up a point on their salary scale. There was also a £54k accrual for unused holiday pay at the end of the financial year.</p> <p>The Directors who resigned did not receive any remuneration from the Company for their employment.</p> <p>The figure of 9 staff in administration included 3 staff who are actually employed by ECDC and seconded to ECSS and so there were not included in this year's calculation.</p>
<p>3. Pages 16 and 17: one of the As 31 March 2020 should be As 31 March 2021?</p>	<p>Thank you, yes. The heading at the top of page 17 should read 31 March 2021. We will have this amended on the version that is filed at Companies House.</p>

Questions from Councillor Trimarco and responses from Richard Kay, Strategic Planning Manager:

<p>1. You are asking the committee to agree to ‘steps to be taken to further investigate such potential, including in due course, the seeking of quotes to implement such panels...’. Yet it appears as though from sections 3.5 and 3.6 that the investigations have already taken place and that we could move on to getting quotes. What other ‘investigations’ are you referring to in the recommendations (2.1. a)?</p>	<p>1. I agree we have done quite a lot of preliminary investigation already. The main two steps to take are (a) getting formal quotes and (b) interrogating those quotes to be sure not only of value for money etc, but to be certain that E-Space N infrastructure is suitable for installing the equipment. So far, the investigations have been mostly desktop and analysing electrical demands of the building. We haven’t done much on-the-ground investigations to make sure physically the equipment can be installed (not just the panels, but all the associated equipment). There’s no known reason why it shouldn’t, but we need to check...and check if any additional costs arise as a result.</p>
<p>2. Could you please provide us with a timeframe for the delivery of this renewable energy infrastructure? (You mention in 4.1 that it is going to be delivered earlier than envisaged.)</p>	<p>2. Very provisionally, we are putting finances in place to actually deliver this in 2022/23 (subject to member approval, of course). I’d hope to have power being generated from 1 April 2023 at the latest, but there’s quite a few steps to go yet, and capacity of suppliers is an issue (there’s a big demand for panels worldwide!). Overall, I’m targeting what Ctee agreed in June as its first interim target: <i>“A 20-33% reduction in our net CO2e emissions by year 2025/26. That will be achieved via: reduced energy use in our buildings; a lower carbon conversion factor for the energy we do use, due to the broader national decarbonisation of the electricity grid; maximising the efficiency and performance of our existing fleet vehicles;</i></p>

	<i>investment in our own renewable energy infrastructure; and minimising the use of business miles of our staff.”</i>
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Questions Councillor Inskip and responses from Richard Kay, Strategic Planning Manager:

1. What progress has been made on the action to deliver of Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) and is it still expected that the EVCPs will be installed in at least one of the council's car parks before the end of the financial year?	Yes, it is. We are working with BP Pulse on a number of car park sites, and our expectation is that these will commence deployment on the ground in Q1 2022, and will be operational late Q1. Subject to final feasibility work during 2021, we expect such operational sites to be between one and six, and we are hopeful of it being to the upper end of that range.
2. What progress has been made on the action to establish a programme of engagement activities with schools together with ECSS?	Our new Environment Officer – Emma-Jane Danielsson – has now commenced, and this is one of her key tasks. To date, Emma-Jane is exploring an accreditation scheme for schools to join, with the intention of engaging schools from the new year, and seeking schools to 'sign up'. ECDC would help with both the sign up process and subsequent programme. The accreditation scheme has a pick-and-choose set of options for schools to become more eco-friendly. Separately, schools are being encouraged to apply for free apple trees as part of our recently launched Community Orchard Programme.
3. What progress has been made to improve the council's 'Carbon Impact Assessment' procedure?	Updated ECDC guidance and CIA template forms circulated to all service leads in June 2021. Moving forward, we are working with CPCA* and partners on Recommendation 2 of the Climate Commission report, which recommends: <i>“A climate change assessment should be undertaken and taken into account for every CPCA and Council policy, development, procurement, action”</i> Ideally, a consistent assessment procedure across Cambridgeshire would be ideal, but in the meantime we continue to use the ECDC June 2021 version.

	<i>*CPCA – Cambridgeshire-Peterborough Combined Authority</i>
4. What progress has been to encourage more home working (to reduce commuting) and reduce business travel (e.g. for site visits)?	In July 2021, the Council’s staff ‘remote working policy’ was updated, which enables staff to apply for permanent or occasional home working. Individual applications from staff are considered by service leads to accommodate these requests where possible whilst ensuring the needs of each individual service are met. We are still very much learning from the pandemic experience of what works well or not so well from working from home. It is clearly evident that a significant number of staff still undertake at least some work from home (and to a degree much greater than pre-pandemic). This has been aided by the considerable IT investment. Business miles over 2020/21 were around 50% down on 2019/20, and staff are encouraged to maintain such behaviour where possible. This is being monitored through 2021/22, though so far this financial year there has only been a margin increase in staff business miles compared with 2020/21, and it remains significantly less compared with 2019/20.
5. What progress has been made in establishing an active role in encouraging /lobbying for the highest energy efficiency standards in new developments?	ECDCs response (Oct 2021) to Government’s Oxford-Cambridge Arc Spatial Strategy made a number of requests for such a strategy to have a strong emphasis on energy efficiency and boosting nature, and sought such energy efficiency standards in the Arc to go beyond Building Regulations. In addition, one of the talks due at the Parish Council conference on 1 November 2021 was in relation to the role Neighbourhood Plans could take on requiring energy efficiency measures in new builds – unfortunately, due to covid-restrictions, the conference has been delayed to (probably) the new year.

Item 14 – Review of Grant to Citizens Advice West Suffolk

Questions Councillor Inskip:

<p>Is it the council's long-term goal of the expansion of the Housing and Community Advice Service in the south of the district to complement or to replace the service provided by Citizens Advice West Suffolk?</p>	<p>As stated at 6.3, a review of the Service Level Agreement is to be carried out during 2023/24 which will also consider the impacts of the Council's evolving outreach advice and support service.</p> <p>Once the 2023/24 review has been undertaken, the findings of it will be presented to Members along with a recommendation.</p>
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Agenda Item 16 – ARP Minutes

Comments/Questions Councillor Trapp:

<p>30/21: interesting that they collect parking cases for West and East Suffolk. 31/21: disappointing to note that ECDC is not supporting CAB, even though Cllr Cook believed that they were doing a sterling job. 32/21: Good to see that Breckland have a Director of finance. 33/21: What is meant by OIB and IOB?</p>	<p>OIB is Operational Improvement Board, (IOB, I think is a typo)</p>
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Agenda Item 17 – Forward Agenda Plan

Comments/Questions Councillor Trapp:

<p>Report Deadline for June 2022 meeting to be three months in advance?</p>	<p>This is a typo and will be amended in the next draft.</p>
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