

Operational Services Committee
25 March 2024
Questions from Members of Committee

Questioner	Question	Response
Agenda Item 7 – End of Year Reports 2023/24 and Service Delivery Plans 2024/25		
Cllr Charlotte Cane	1. Why no equality impact assessments?	An EIA is carried out at a service change/project/ new policy level. Rather than at a global level for all services reporting to Operations Committee
Cllr Charlotte Cane	2. Why no carbon impact assessments?	A CIA is carried out at a service change/project/ new policy level. Rather than at a global level for all services reporting to Operations Committee
Cllr Vellacott	Can we have a breakdown of the colour coding used in the document?	The colours align to the colours of the New Corporate Plan (2023 – 2027) Themes: Blue: Sound financial Management Green: Cleaner Greener East Cambridgeshire Burgandy: Sustainable Communities
2.1a Building Control		
Cllr Charlotte Cane	3. What lessons were learnt from the end of year Performance report for this service?	The whole Building Control Industry has underestimated the seismic changes it is currently going through. We are at the forefront of change, and Government are looking to us to implement better and safer ways of working across the construction industry. Our overall performance is better than most of the Local Authorities across the country. We must not rest on our laurels – we must continue improving to make Building Control the exemplar department of ECDC.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	4. What contribution did Building Control make to the Sustainable Communities Corporate Priority?	Building Control delivers statutory requirements that contribute to sustainable and safe homes for our residents through the Building Regulations. We

		advise/suggest further upgrades and improvements where possible but anything above and over Building Regs requirements are not enforceable.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	5. How has the budget been adjusted to cover training costs and staff time to meet new requirements, ways of working and reporting?	Training costs are covered under SR21 New Burdens Funding from Government, free online seminar and CPD sessions or through the overall main Council training budget.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	6. How have filing/archiving procedures been updated to reflect digitisation of service?	Procedures are in the process of being reviewed and adjusted accordingly to take these, and other BSR (Building Safety Regulator) requirements into account. A new QMS (Quality Management System) policies and procedures manual will be created over the coming year aligned to new requirements.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	7. What has been the impact of not replacing the member of staff who left in 2023?	Other staff have had to pick up some aspects of work, but this has been balanced by a slight decrease in application numbers. We also have a fully funded trainee through LABC national office who is helping with workload.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	8. Does Building Control consider that it has a role in protecting people's health and safety in the built environment?	Yes. The integral facet of Building Control and the Building regs is to ensure the health and well-being of people who live in and/or use buildings. It underpins all that we do.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	9. Why is it important to maintain market share?	Market share can be a useful barometer as to current and future potential workloads. It is one way, but not the only way to measure performance, but the less percentage we have the less people are using our service. ECDC has one of the highest market shares in the country and this is due to the positive reputation we have and quality service we deliver.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	10. Should the market share target be increased from 80% as we have achieved that for at least 2 years?	This is extremely high already for a Local Authority. It is unrealistic to think we can obtain much more due to competitors and National Contracts already in place. 80% is our minimum target. Getting all the market share is not realistic or workable.

Cllr Charlotte Cane	11. How can the Building Control Manager and Management Accountant ensure a break-even budget when it is heavily dependent on the number of planning applications?	To “ensure” is not possible, as borne out of COVID and cost of living. There are no certainties, it is an unpredictable industry that we always strive to keep on top of. Planning applications alone is not a driver towards Building Control income. There are applications which do not require Planning. We work together to look at ways to increase revenue streams and create savings.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	12. How will improvements to the website be measured?	Through social media departments stats on usage and visitors. Satisfaction feedback survey.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	13. How do the prompt registering of applications, compliance checks within timescales, delivering KPIs within timescales and carrying out inspections within timescales deliver Sustainable Communities?	Some of these individually do not deliver but overall meeting all timescales means buildings are checked, inspected, and completed in a timely manner and help with planning targets and Government requirements on new builds.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	14. All the Sustainable Communities performance measures are about timescales, why are there no measures of quality of the work?	The performance measures were set in line with Building Regs reporting requirements on statutory functions. These will be refined during 2024/25 to meet new BSR guidelines, and there are some quality-based items within the new OSR’s.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	15. Is the digitisation to save money or to be greener? If the latter, why is there no measurement of the environmental net savings?	Neither – it is being done to improve our customer experience and offer as effective and efficient service as we can. “Savings” and “greener” will be positive outcomes from this – expenditure on folders, printing etc.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	16. Why no target for the mileage reduction?	Impossible to set a reduction figure as we have no way of knowing how many inspections we will have to do. We are led by customer requirements. Efficiencies will be through streamlining inspection routes and matching up inspections (ie 2 visits to same village in a day rather than 1 each day where practical or possible).
Cllr Charlotte Cane	17. Why no reference to the Health & Wellbeing Strategy, e.g. “Implement government initiatives which promote a better, energy efficient way of building”p159?	No reference because that is precisely what Building Control do – we ensure compliance with the Building Regulations and contents of Approved Documents in

		areas like Energy efficiency – our job is to oversee these initiatives.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	18. What are the 3 top risks for delivery of this service plan?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Change of National Government leading to further amendments/changes in legislation. 2. Competition from Private companies 3. Resilience being tested through sickness/retirement/staff leaving.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	19. What improvements will residents see as a result of this service plan?	Our service delivery to our customers is extremely good and consistently commented on positively. Over the next 12-24 months electronic working will streamline our processes and customers will benefit in many ways (expedited processes etc).
2.1b Communications		
Cllr Charlotte Cane	20. What lessons were learnt from the end of year Performance report for this service?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) There is a need to adopt an agile approach when it comes to the delivery of comms at the council. Large projects can dramatically impact the ability of the team to deliver business as usual 2) While the comms team is ever mindful of the need to reach all user groups (using digital and traditional methods of communication) how we use social media will be reviewed in light of performance over the previous year to ensure we are maximising opportunities for interactive engagement 3) There is a fine balance between delivering comms ourselves and working with service leads who are increasingly able to deliver their own comms. We need to continue to work in collaboration, so the public messages and branding is consistent.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	21. Why does Comms provide a monthly newsletter from Anna Bailey?	This is something the comms team has been producing for a number of years and is an opportunity for the council to share with community groups and residents who request it, the work the council has been and is undertaking, therefore it is appropriate to include a short foreword from the Leader of the Council updating

		residents, businesses and partners on corporate priorities.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	22. What has the Council put in place to ensure community engagement while the residents surveys, focus groups and residents panel are on hold?	Please refer to the new Community Engagement Strategy. In addition to this the comms team regularly engages with residents and community representatives at public events, via social media and from ad-hoc enquires. It invites comments and feedback on all its newsletters and toolkits.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	23. What is the evidence that “only 14 people were unable to vote due to not having voter ID”?	This is the number of people who were reported to having been turned away by Presiding Officers from polling stations due to not having Voter ID
Cllr Charlotte Cane	24. Why no targets or reporting timescales?	It is challenging to assign reporting targets and timescales to the comms Service Delivery Plan outside of a specific project campaign. * Comms plans need to be agile to reflect decisions made by committees, central government, the workload of service leads, the wider news and community agenda and pre-election periods. It is therefore challenging to attribute meaningful targets or timescales to the workloads. * The comms teams has assigned targets where appropriate, such as a desire to increase social media followers, attend engagement events and hold Twitter (X) takeover days.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	25. Why aren't residents surveys, focus groups and residents panel in the Service Plan?	The Council's updated Community Engagement Strategy sets out how the Council will engage with residents. The facilitation of resident's surveys, focus groups and resident's panels would require significant additional resource, and although they are not in the Strategy, if a specific need arises, they could be considered. The Communications team is working with Service leads to run smaller surveys as part of its Business-as-Usual approach.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	26. Why isn't LinkedIn in the Service Plan?	In 2023 the Comms team worked with the Economic Development team to launch LinkedIn. This was

		achieved, albeit at a later date than was originally planned. The comms team continues to work closely with Econ Dev to promote the channel however, this has largely been handed over to the Econ Dev team
Cllr Charlotte Cane	27. Why no reference in the Service Plan to the Community Engagement Strategy?	The Community Engagement Strategy is owned and managed by the Communities and Partnerships team. The comms team supports this team, and therefore the plan, as part of its Business as Usual. Indeed the comms team has been assigned tasks as part of this plan and will be working with the Communities and Partnerships Team to deliver these as required.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	28. Will comms attend 6 engagement events as per their Service Plan p24 or 2 as per the Community Engagement Action Plan p123?	The comms team will always strive to deliver what appears in its own Service Delivery Plan, so on this basis we expect to attend a minimum of 6 events.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	29. What are the 3 top risks for delivery of this service plan?	The top three risks are: 1) Unforeseen circumstances - the comms team is required to focus its efforts on something it is unable to predict, eg emergency incident. (risk Medium) 2)* Resource - being a team of two means if one member is sick or unable to work this can dramatically affect the output of the team 3) Messaging control - clear consistent comms is vital. Limited resource means the team is reliant on other officers to deliver their own comms messaging. Ensuring this messaging is consistent and branding is aligned is a constant challenge for the comms team (risk Medium)
Cllr Charlotte Cane	30. What improvements will residents see as a result of this service plan?	This Service Delivery Plan focuses on delivering business as usual and providing supporting comms for the Corporate Plan alongside the known projects the council has planned for this year. For example, the new website, changes to waste collection, greener East Cambs, the bereavement centre and ECDC@50. The comms team's aim is to assist with the successful delivery of all these projects which in turn will have notable and multiple benefits for residents.

Cllr Mark Inskip	Why does the 2024 – 2025 miss measurable performance targets? Will these be developed and added?	The two missed KPI's are : X – When twitter moved to the new X platform they changed the way posts would appear in the feed, due to a change in prioritisation in the algorithms (e.g any posts with links external to X were downgraded) , therefore the target was not achievable. A 2% increase target is included for next year. LinkedIn – Since launch this has now been passed to Economic Development for further development, due to resource capacity in the comms team.
2.1c Communities & Partnerships		
Cllr Charlotte Cane	31. What lessons were learnt from the end of year Performance report for this service?	Improved forward planning with additional consideration of 'pinch points'. Last year's three youth events were resource heavy and came at a time when the team were busy managing other projects.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	32. What are the 3 top risks for delivery of this service plan?	Unforeseen staff absence. Unforeseen additional work requiring prioritisation e.g. increase in criminality and anti-social behaviour which may require urgent attention. Unforeseen issues with external organisations impacting their ability to deliver services, including those which we work in partnership with and those which ECDC provide funding towards, which may require intervention.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	33. What improvements will residents see as a result of this service plan?	Improved engagement (benefits to communities are set out in the Community Engagement Strategy). Vulnerable Community Strategy provides a point of reference to inform communities of support available. Reduction in crime and anti-social behaviour. Funding awarded for local community projects.
2.1d Customer Services		
Cllr Charlotte Cane	34. What lessons were learnt from the end of year Performance report for this service?	Transferring our website Domain Name System to another provider may take 24 – 48 hours to take complete and can result in the website, council email

		<p>and remote access being unavailable during this time. A managed plan agreed by all parties involved will minimise any downtime.</p> <p>Being a frontline service it is essential to test our contingency plans at least twice a year as well as before any major system upgrade. When the phone lines went down, we experienced an issue with the signal within the customer services back office ICT enabled calling over wi-fi which resolved the issue.</p>
Cllr Charlotte Cane	35. Good that customer satisfaction is improving. What were the main reasons given by the unsatisfied?	Poor communication, response times or lack of response to service requests.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	36. What are the 3 top risks for delivery of this service plan?	<p>Lack of trained staff to maintain frontline service.</p> <p>Unplanned website downtime or website cyber security attack.</p> <p>Loss of customer contact method i.e. phones, email.</p>
Cllr Charlotte Cane	37. What improvements will residents see as a result of this service plan?	A new high-quality website that is both well designed and functional, easy to use, accessible to all and appealing to all customers.
Cllr Mark Inskip	In the "Customer Services end of the year report 2023 to 2024" for the performance for answering calls it states, "September figures unavailable due to problem with telephone line". What was the problem? And did this mean that the telephone line was unavailable to callers?	A BT fault caused an intermittent problem with the council's telephone system. It affected internal and external calls. Customers who experienced problems advised that they were unable to hear anything once they got through or picked up the phone or were getting cut off mid conversation.
Cllr Vellacott	Can we have a progress update towards the new website?	The project is in 'discovery phase,' and we have completed some preliminary work i.e. issued a staff survey, spoken to other councils re: content management and provider experience and are still

		evaluating our options. The formal project kick off will be in late April.
Cllr Vellacott	Could you summarise the telephone line issue in September?	9 Sept 23 – 2 October 23. A BT fault caused an intermittent problem with the council's telephone system. It affected internal and external calls. Customers who experienced problems advised that they were unable to hear anything once they got through or picked up the phone or were getting cut off mid conversation
2.1e Environmental Services		
Cllr Charlotte Cane	38. What lessons were learnt from the end of year Performance report for this service?	Partnership working across both internal departments and external organisations leads to joined up outcomes delivering benefits for the council and our residents, a good example of this is the health and wellbeing Strategy.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	39. What is the 3 rd performance measure on p63	Certain industrial processes must hold an environmental permit from the local authority, termed either a Part A (2) or Part B permit. The permit requires measures to be in place to control emissions of pollutants to the air. The legislation requires LAs to risk assess their permitted processes and undertake an inspection regime as a result of the risk assessment. 6 of our permitted sites were identified by their risk assessment to need an inspection this year.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	40. What are the 3 top risks for delivery of this service plan?	Not being able to recruit to deliver home improvement Agency service for Fenland. Deliver on take up of HUG2 funding through the Cambs retrofit partnership consortium Impact on service delivery around new legislation
Cllr Charlotte Cane	41. What improvements will residents see as a result of this service plan?	Delivery of Health and Wellbeing Action plan should lead to improved health outcomes for residents. Continued implementation on the Environmental Crime Action plan will lead to raised awareness and better compliance, and an improvement in the environment

Cllr Vellacott	Do the figures at the top of page 63 represent 40% of the cost of disabled adaptations?	The total cost of the works plus our fee (inc vat) makes up the total cost. Sanctuary Housing pay 40% of this total cost
Cllr Vellacott	Please note a typo on page 67 'disabeld' should read 'disabled'	Noted
Cllr Vellacott	What is the remit of the fees and charges review, and when will Members be notified about it?	The council is required to review its fees and charges on an annual basis. The review considers any increases to the level that needs to be set for the following year to take into consideration any uplift in cost associated with administering the fees and charges. This would usually relate to increased hourly rate due to wage increase for officers involved with enforcement or the administration of an application. Members are notified of any changes to the fees and charges within the budget report taken to Full Council in February.
2.1f Housing and Community Advice		
Cllr Charlotte Cane	42. What lessons were learnt from the end of year Performance report for this service?	That advice and assistance to all of our residents needs to be accessible and to continue to ensure a fully holistic service is available.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	43. P87 why prevent a fixed number, of households becoming homeless rather that a percentage?	It shows the exact number of residents that have had their homelessness prevented or relieved
Cllr Charlotte Cane	44. How do we help tenants with housing quality issues, e.g. damp?	There is the new leaflet which has been produced and placed on the website as of start of this year, which is easier to read and accessible to all. Telephone advice is provided and/or inspections are undertaken of rented properties where there is a complaint of damp and mould. We request evidence in the form of photos, if possible, to make a judgement and to help prioritise inspections. Advice is provided to tenants and to landlords on how to treat and help prevent damp and mould, and formal action is taken against the landlord where applicable.

Cllr Charlotte Cane	45. What are the 3 top risks for delivery of this service plan?	<p>Changes in legislation resulting in new policy and procedures</p> <p>Increased demand including refuge/asylum schemes and having to use B&B accommodation for families</p> <p>Lack of properties available in the private rented sector</p>
Cllr Charlotte Cane	46. What improvements will residents see as a result of this service plan?	Ongoing monitoring that the service is fit for purpose, can cope with the increase in demand and that it remains fully accessible for all of our residents.
2.1g Leisure Services		
Cllr Charlotte Cane	47. What lessons were learnt from the end of year Performance report for this service?	<p>Some mapping is required across the district to determine physical activity offers, particularly for older adults, to ensure focus is in right areas of need and to avoid duplication from providers.</p> <p>Collaboration is key to achieve shared goals in schemes such as the new Active for health programme. Without the joined-up approach it is unlikely the scheme would have run.</p>
Cllr Charlotte Cane	48. What are the 3 top risks for delivery of this service plan?	<p>Staffing – with only a team of two any changes to the team will significantly impact delivery of the service.</p> <p>Buy in from partners – a collaborative approach is required to deliver physical activity programmes so if we don't have the partners to support it is a risk against the delivery targets.</p> <p>Funding – suitable funding opportunities being available for leisure facility improvements.</p>
Cllr Charlotte Cane	49. What improvements will residents see as a result of this service plan?	<p>Increase in opportunities and access to be physically active, supporting health inequalities and health outcomes. As well as social inclusion and mental health.</p> <p>Good quality leisure provision and services offered across the district.</p>

Cllr Vellacott	What plans are on the horizon in relation to Ross Peers Sports Centre in the next 2 years?	Support is currently being provided to try and attract new members whilst addressing health issues. The Active for Health scheme started at Ross Peers in March and runs for 12 weeks. As part of the Healthy You programme older adult activities are being reviewed and this may provide opportunity at the centre. The centre is looking at options to refurbish or replace the sports hall floor and applying for funding to do so. This will be a key facility improvement project for them.
2.1h Licensing		
Cllr Charlotte Cane	50. What lessons were learnt from the end of year Performance report for this service?	Whilst all performance measures were met, the recording of accurate data remains critical to every aspect of what the licensing authority does, especially at a time of expansion. Work on improving the recording of complaints and inspections has begun, as this is an area which is not as streamlined as it could be.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	51. What are the 3 top risks for delivery of this service plan?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) IT systems, delays due to system outages or ineffective software cause officers and the trade business continuity problems. 2) Resourcing – licensing is an expanding service with no control over how quick or slow this occurs. Predicting future resource needs can be very difficult. 3) The on-going and continual changes to licensing legislation.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	52. What improvements will residents see as a result of this service plan?	Residents who are conducting licensable activities will see more transparency in how officers enforce matters, and less-able bodied residents will see improvements in the way they can interact with taxi services as a result of the planned introduction of a taxi inclusivity service plan.
Cllr Vellacott	What are the required animal welfare inspections?	All new and renewal applications must be inspected, and periodic unannounced inspections should be carried out, the frequency of which is determined by the star rating of the premises.

2.1i Planning		
Cllr Charlotte Cane	53. What lessons were learnt from the end of year Performance report for this service?	The Planning Review has noted that there are cultural lessons to be learned around the way that planning applications are handled by the department. A negotiation protocol has been drafted to ensure clear guidelines for officers and customers and to ensure efficient decision making.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	54. When will the review of the Planning Services be reported to members?	The review undertaken by an external consultant was signed off in February. Staff have had the opportunity to look at the findings and a briefing note is currently being drafted. This will be with members in the next couple of weeks.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	55. What are the 3 top risks for delivery of this service plan?	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The ongoing and continual changes to planning legislation 2) The current economy meaning that housebuilding slows down and therefore the Councils ability to meet its statutory targets in that regard and therefore being at risk of speculative development in inappropriate locations. 3) That application fee income continues to drop therefore making funding the service more challenging.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	56. What improvements will residents see as a result of this service plan?	<p>A further reduction in the backlog which will mean that officers are able to get to newer applications quicker and rely on extensions of time less.</p> <p>A change in culture where applications are assessed and determined earlier and where significant changes are required applicants will be guided through the pre-app process allowing officers to deliver the statutory function inline with government targets (current and proposed).</p>

Cllr Vellacott	Can we have a progress update on the local heritage project?	<p>Cambridgeshire Local Heritage List Project (all ECDC figures as of 21/3/24)</p> <p>Total entries = 698 Locally listed = 89 (2017 adoptions) Ready for adoption = 264 Rejected = 12 Candidates in progress = 333</p> <p>Parishes ready for consultation = 15 (out of 35)</p> <p>At the 2023 parish forum several PCs (Swaffham Prior, Haddenham & Stretham) expressed an interest in being 'guinea pigs' for the adoption consultations, and priority has been given to vetting these. Coveney has also since come forward and its assessment has been completed. It should be emphasised that the CLHLP is a county-wide project and the vetting panel has to divide its time currently between East Cambs, South Cambs & Fenland, and with approaching 2000 candidates to work through, it is necessarily a slow process. However ECDC is much further forward as the survey for the district is now effectively complete, so the focus of effort can shift to adoption.</p>
2.1j Waste Collection & Street Cleansing		
Cllr Charlotte Cane	57. What lessons were learnt from the end of year Performance report for this service?	<p>The market for recyclables remains volatile due to changes in legislation. This has increased risk around procurement for the provision of Transfer stations and Material Recycling Facilities (MRF)</p> <p>By working effectively with ECSS and other external organisations and undertaking effective awareness campaigns the desired outcomes can be achieved e.g. reduction in fly tipping</p>

Cllr Charlotte Cane	58. What are the 3 top risks for delivery of this service plan?	Procurement of the Materials Recycling Facility. Planning for the changes to service delivery in line with requirements of the Environment Act 2021 Ensuring that the review of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough aligns with the ambitions of ECDC
Cllr Charlotte Cane	59. What improvements will residents see as a result of this service plan?	Continued improvements in waste and street cleansing services, increase in the amount of waste sent for recycling.
Cllr Christine Whelan	Has a planned works document been produced yet for street cleaning and when will communications be put out to the public on when their street will be cleaned?	Members were provided with the Street Cleansing Schedule as set out in the MoA which provides information on the frequency of street cleansing in the different zones. There are currently no plans to produce a schedule that identifies when individual streets will be cleaned.
Cllr Mark Inskip	In the "Waste and Street cleansing services end of the year report 2023 to 2024" there is a performance measure "To provide best value services through East Cambridgeshire Street Scene Ltd". The outcome listed is "Reports submitted as required to Operational Services Committee." There have been reports on ECSS service performance and on unplanned overspends. Where has Best Value been addressed?	Best Value is not independently measured. The Council has a contract with East Cambs Street Scene until 31 March 2025.
Agenda Item 8 - ECSS Business Plan 2024/25		
Cllr Charlotte Cane	60. Why is an Equality Impact Assessment not required?	The Business Plan 2024/25 does not seek to change any of the services that are being delivered to residents therefore it was not necessary to complete an Equality Impact Assessment.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	61. Why is a Carbon Impact Assessment not required?	The Carbon Impact Assessment was completed at the time the Council took the decision to use HVO fuel and therefore it was not necessary to complete one as part of the Business Plan.

Cllr Charlotte Cane	62. What is the evidence that ECSS has been delivering high quality services since 2018?	It is widely recognised and accepted that there was a period of time since 2018 that service delivery fell below the stated high-quality service. Prior to and since ECSS has been delivering a high-quality service. Members will note through performance reports that performance continues to improve and ECSS remain committed to delivering a high-quality service.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	63. Why are Management & Administration costs increasing by £212k (58%) since 2023/24?	Compared with the 2023/24 business plan there are 3 additional staff in the 2024/25 business plan for management & administration, two of which are senior management. There is also a sum allocated for increased overtime for supervisors to cover weekend working. Finally, actual increases for 2023/24 were higher than budgeted.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	64. Why are overtime and Agency costs increasing despite increased core staff costs?	As has been previously documented, overtime in last year's business plan was understated as overtime was calculated at the incorrect rate. Compared with 2023/24 forecast a £16k increase has been budgeted for, 8%. The budget pay increase is 6.8%. Last year's plan was based on 2.5 agency staff per week but given that the 2023/24 average has been 6.5 agency staff per week it was felt prudent to budget for 5.8 agency staff per week in 2024/25. (The number has fallen from 8.5 in Q1 23-24 to just under 5 in the last quarter) Compared with 2023/24 latest forecast, it is expected to spend less on agency staff in 2024/25.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	65. Why are fuel costs increasing over budget when actual costs in 2023/24 were well below budget and were sufficient to cover the additional costs of HVO?	The 2023/24 Business Plan was 22k litres per month at £1.36 per litre plus 20p uplift for HVO. The price for HVO is now 35p per litre higher than diesel. The 2024/25 Business Plan is based on 17k litres per month of HVO at £1.67 per litre and 7k litres per month of diesel at £1.32 per litre.

Cllr Charlotte Cane	66. Why have supplies and services costs for street cleansing increased to £21k from £0.75k?	A budget of £20k has been allocated for cleaning the verges on the A11 & A14 by a specialist contractor.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	67. How does the section on Governance reflect the recent review by ECDC's internal auditor?	Some of the recommendations made by Internal Audit will need to be approved by Council (as there will be a need to amend the shareholder agreement and the Memorandum of Agreement.) If approved, these will be reflected in the Governance section. The arrangements in place presently do not conflict with the recommendations from the Internal Audit process.
Cllr Mark Inskip	1. Has the Depot improvement now been finished? And in summary what has been improved?	The internal works have now completed and include improved staff welfare facilities & changing rooms, improved and additional office/meeting space. Some external works have completed, i.e. drainage and security. The next phase is to improve the car parking areas across the site. This will be completed within the pre agreed budget allocation.
Cllr Mark Inskip	2. What is the status of the integration of the new Bartec in cab digital system with the council's CRM system?	Multiple integrations have been created, we are awaiting confirmation from Bartec that the resolution codes are available for final testing.
Cllr Mark Inskip	3. Street Cleansing review stage 1 has been completed. How many stages are remaining and when will the review be complete and implemented?	It is envisaged that there will be 1 more stage in the review which is likely to conclude in the next few weeks. The implementation date will depend on the outcome of the review.
Cllr Vellacott	What fuel price per litre has been used to calculate the 16 RCVs on HVO?	The 2024/25 Business Plan is based on 17k litres per month of HVO at £1.67 per litre and 7k litres per month of diesel at £1.32 per litre.
Cllr Vellacott	How do risks in this document correspond to the risk numbers on the ECDC risk register?	The risks in the ECSS Business Plan 2024/25 are the risk associated with ECSS as a business. The risks in the Council's Risk Register are a matter for the Council.
Cllr Vellacott	Why is the impact of the Environment Act rated 5 for risk?	At this moment in time ECSS should keep this risk at the highest rating as the Council continues to develop the specification for the Waste, Recycling & Street

		Cleansing Service. Once received the implications can be assessed and factored into risk management.
Cllr Vellacott	What potential for commercialisation reasonably exists in the current MTFS period?	ECSS is focused on improving the performance of the service provided to the Council. At this moment in time, it is too early to provide any indication of a timeframe as to future commercial opportunities.
Agenda Item 9 – Housing Adaptations and Repair Policy 2019		
Cllr Charlotte Cane	68. How many households are waiting for adaptations, as per para 3.6?	Currently all adaptations of this nature, where a compromised scheme could not be achieved, have been closed.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	69. Are officers confident that a £30k top-up will be sufficient to allow those works to go ahead?	Yes
Cllr Vellacott	Is the £30k value sufficient to cover all the needs described in section 3.6?	Yes
Agenda Item 10 – Community Engagement Strategy 2024-2028		
Cllr Charlotte Cane	70. Why does it take to March 2027 to identify registered HOMs when we already have the register (Service Plans p67)	We will target HMO's that are on the register immediately, this was very successful in getting COVID messages out during the pandemic. We will continue to identify potential HMO that are not yet licensed to increase opportunities to engage tenants.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	71. Why only attend 2 community events and which team(s) will attend?	As part of the delivery of the action plan, the Communities and Partnerships team will coordinate an exercise to map and categorise local events by end of April 2024. Once done, relevant teams will be identified to potentially attend events that are relevant to them. Consideration will be given to linking the engagement activities of specific teams with events taking place that are relevant and fit with engagement timescales. The target is 2 however more could be attended, if appropriate and where capacity allows. Examples of public facing teams are Communities and Partnerships, and Housing and Community Advice.

Cllr Mark Inskip	Why does it take so long to “Identify the most common non-English languages spoken in the district to inform translation services” with a target date of December 2025?	The Council is aware of common non-English languages spoken in the district and already uses translation services to meet the needs of non-English speakers, however this will be reviewed and updated by December 2025. This target date was selected with consideration of the Housing and Community Advice team's other priorities and workloads. Targets may be achieved before the target date.
Cllr Mark Inskip	In general, why are many of the target dates for relatively straightforward actions so far in the future?	Target dates have been agreed by the individual teams that are leading on the particular target, and consideration has been given to the other priorities and workloads of each service. Targets may be achieved before the target date.
Cllr Christine Whelan	Appendix 1 p123 The target is to attend 2 community events to engage with the public. Is this ambitious enough as there are more than 2 events in Ely and other events in other parts of the district. Do you think more events should be attended?	The target is 2 however more could be attended, if appropriate and where capacity allows.
Cllr Christine Whelan	Which public facing teams will attend? this is not clear in the document but is in other parts of the document.	As part of the delivery of the action plan, the Communities and Partnerships team will coordinate an exercise to map and categorise local events by end April 2024. Once done, relevant teams will be identified to potentially attends events that are relevant to them. Consideration will be given to linking the engagement activities of specific teams with events taking place that are relevant and fit with engagement timescales. Examples of public facing teams are Communities and Partnerships, and Housing and Community Advice.
Cllr Vellacott	Will a press release accompany this strategy to boost engagement?	An action in the Action Plan is to “Create a community engagement Communication Plan to promote the strategy and the council’s engagement activities” The Communities and Partnerships team will liaise with the

		Communications team to discuss the most effective ways of publicising this strategy in advance of the production of the Communication Plan.
Cllr Vellacott	P.3 of Appendix 1: What is 'quarterly detached youth engagement' and can we have a breakdown of it?	Detached youth engagement is engagement that takes place in areas where young people feel most comfortable such as on the street, in parks and around their neighbourhood. Detached engagement can provide informal education by bringing information to young people, listening and hearing their needs. A plan setting out the locations for detached youth engagement is to be worked up.
Agenda Item 11 – Vulnerable Community Strategy 2024-2029		
Cllr Charlotte Cane	72. Have ECDC assessed whether there are sufficient disabled parking spaces in Ely and across the district?	No formal assessment is carried out. There is continuous monitoring through feedback from Car Parking Wardens and customer comments through the CRM system.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	73. Why do the restrictions finish in the evening, leaving disabled people without priority parking?	Disabled parking bays are marked out so that it is clear that the space is a disabled parking bay. There are no complaints or concerns raised to the Council which identify this a need to extend the restrictions.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	74. How does ECDC enforce the restrictions to ensure that the priority parking is available for disabled residents?	The Council employs car parking wardens who patrol all Council owned car parks. Where vehicles are parked in contravention of the parking order a fixed penalty notice is issued.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	75. How do ECDC define 'genuinely affordable housing'?	Homes that are available for less than the market price and can be offered by renting, part-ownership, buying or self-build. Generally: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mortgage repayments are lower than 20% of the household disposable income, or • rent is lower than 25% of the household disposable income

Cllr Charlotte Cane	76. How many affordable houses do ECDC plan to provide each year?	None. ECDC do not directly deliver affordable homes. However, we facilitate the delivery through areas such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Plan Policy to deliver 30% affordable houses across the district • Direct support and policies to encourage CLT development • Our wholly owned company Palace Green Homes
Cllr Charlotte Cane	77. How have officers ensured that this policy follows Plain English advice?	Written, reviewed and checked by officers that have received accessibility training.
Cllr Mark Inskip	1. 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?	Bottisham – 24 Burwell – 29 Downham – 25 Ely – 651 Fordham and Isleham – 72 Haddenham – 62 Littleport – 208 Soham – 301 Stretham – 121 Wooditton – 1 Misc (address not given) - 163
Cllr Christine Whelan	P 135 Supporting Vulnerabilities It states in the document that there will be a free drop in services at ECDC offices Monday to Friday. What provision is there for vulnerable people seeking advice outside these office hours?	Housing & Community Advice drop in Monday to Friday 10am-4pm. We have an out of hours emergency number for all other times as per our website.
Cllr Vellacott	Why is this strategy to 2029 where other items are to 2028 or 2027 (end of current administration)?	This is to balance the workload of the team.
Cllr Vellacott	Will updates be provided on this strategy (and on Item 10)?	Progress made against the strategies will be reported back to Members through the Service Delivery Plan process.

Cllr Vellacott	What signposting methods does the Council use in relation to preventing homelessness?	All aspects of preventing homelessness are dealt with within the Housing & Community Advice team, if a client has additional support needs, we work with all of our partner agencies to provide wrap around support for the client. Our website offers advice and support, leaflets etc and we use social media through the comms team to promote our services and partner agencies. Food banks, doctors surgery's, parish councils all have our drop in posters promoting this service.
Agenda Item 12 – Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Action Plan		
Cllr Charlotte Cane	78. How does asking Parishes to sign pledges support them to enable their residents to access health and wellbeing services?	The aim is for the strategy to be collaborative. Parishes may have a better understanding of local need and therefore supports a bottom up approach in addressing the health and wellbeing agenda. Buy in from partners such as parish councils will enable suitable service delivery at a local level.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	79. Why are we only aiming to support 100 residents to have safe, warm affordable housing by March 2025, and is that 100 residents or 100 households?	The target of 100 refers to the number of households we want to have accessed the HUG2 funding for residential retrofits.
Cllr Vellacott	Please note a typo on page 2 'Annna Bailey' should read 'Anna Bailey' (other questions have been asked under Item 11)	Noted
Agenda Item 13 – ARP Joint Committee Minutes: 5 March 2024		
Cllr Charlotte Cane	80. Is ARP targeting charities for NNDR?	ARP does not target charities in terms of registering them for Non-Domestic Rates. When a firm registers for Rates, ARP establishes the type of business they are to ensure that the billing name is correct, for example a Ltd or PLC, a private partnership, sole trader, members club, charity or other. Should it be established that the liable party is a charity then the organisation will be

		directed to fill in the appropriate application form for Mandatory and/or Discretionary relief.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	81. How does it work with cross border charities?	Discretionary and Mandatory relief is based on the activity taking place within each individual property. Therefore, it is not necessary to consider properties outside East Cambridgeshire when assessing relief within the council area.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	82. How does it assist small charities in applying for mandatory and discretionary rate relief?	Reference is made on the individual bills issued to all ratepayers. This invites customers to visit the East Cambridgeshire DC website that links to Anglia Revenues Partnership where full details of the reliefs available, including how to apply are provided. Furthermore, we have a team of specialist NDR officers within ARP whom answer telephone enquires and correspondence giving professional advice.
Agenda Item 14 – Minutes of the Waste Service Review Working Party: 8 January 2024 and 6 February 2024		
Cllr Charlotte Cane	83. Why was a member of staff from our current waste services contractor present at the Waste Services Review Working Party Meetings?	The Waste Development and Support Manager has been seconded 2.5 days per week to the Council to support in the development of the new Waste Service options
Cllr Charlotte Cane	84. Why should a Parish Council with a lot of public footpaths pay extra for dog bins which are mainly used by visitors to the Parish?	Many Local Authorities charge for the provision and emptying of dog waste bins and/or street litter bins, where there is a request for optional or additional bins by a Parish. The cost of the bin is already covered by the Parish Council, whereas the collection costs sit with the district. As a Litter Authority, ECDC are required to keep certain land free of litter as is practical and empty bins. Any optional/additional bins that are requested can be charged back to the requestee, to prevent the issue of revenue costs rising for ECDC without check.
Cllr Charlotte Cane	85. Why is there a lack of equipment to collect fly tipped waste?	Depending on the nature of the fly tip, it may require specialist equipment (e.g. grab lorry) to remove it from the land. This is not equipment that a waste collection

		authority would routinely own simply due to cost of purchasing this equipment and the sporadic nature of fly tipping. Therefore, it is generally hired in as and when required.