AGENDA ITEM 4(i)

Committee:	**Community & Leisure**
Date:	**7 September 2004**
Agenda Item No:	
Title:	**Museum Resource Centre Project**
Author:	**Carolyn Wingfield (01799) 510333 and Sarah McLagan (01799) 510560**

Summary

1   This report advises members of progress and estimated costs for the project to replace the Museum's existing off-site store with a purpose-built Resource Centre, improve access to all collections and develop an outreach programme for new audiences, as outlined in the previous report to this Committee on 23 February 2004. It requests that the Committee decide whether to allocate capital funding as the Council's contribution to matching funding.

Background

2   Provision of adequate space to house all the collections has long been an issue for the Museum Service. The current off-site store at the Newport Depot was acquired in 1993 as a short-term solution when collections had to be removed from the Town Hall Attics and Audley End Stables, however lack of capacity and other problems now make its replacement a matter of priority for the continued functioning of the Museum Service. At the same time, pressure has been growing both within the museum sector and from rising public expectations, that *all* collections should be more accessible and used to better effect.

3   Development of the Resource Centre project was central to the *Museum Service Strategic Plan 2001-2004*, following from extensive discussion and analysis of the Service's position, needs and opportunities for development. A purpose-built Resource Centre on the Council's depot has been identified as the only feasible solution, and also the most cost-effective. Preliminary discussions with the Heritage Lottery Fund have assisted with the evolution and refinement of the project, in anticipation of an application for a significant grant early in 2005.

The Need for the Resource Centre

4   The new building is described as a Resource Centre, not a store, because the collections are there to be actively used and consulted as a heritage resource. The need to replace the off-site store at Newport is due to several factors:

    (a)   Lack of capacity and environmental control, and poor levels of facilities and access for staff and researchers. Its construction (asbestos cladding) is not up to the standards recommended for museum premises (condemned by Museums & Galleries Commission's Museums Security Advisor in 1997). Three floods in 2001-02 have added to the problems, the last having cost £2,000 in staff time to clear up.

    (b)   Recent and ongoing developments in the district, from Stansted Airport, road, schemes, gas pipeline and housing, are producing large and important archaeological archives, which need to be housed and made available to the public. Local history and natural history collections also need updating to reflect changes in the district and its environment.

    (c)   Rising standards in museums and in expectations from the public require all collections to be made more accessible, either through direct contact (research or outreach) or remotely, through the internet. Physical access in the current store is generally poor and most of its contents need cataloguing on computer.

    (d)   Some rationalising of collections between the Museum and Resource Centre, and the ability to reduce congestion in some awkward storage spaces at the Museum, would facilitate more efficient working arrangements and collections management.

Choice of Site

5   Extensive investigation of possible sites for the Resource Centre during 2001-03 led to the re-evaluation of Newport Depot and a purpose-built building there as the most cost-effective and only viable option (see Appendix). A new building with higher floor level and better standard of construction would overcome the risk of flooding, and moving the site of the Resource Centre to the front of the Depot would solve other problems associated with its location, as well as benefiting Depot operations and improving the view for local residents.

6   Discussions with BAA failed to identify a suitable site near Stansted Airport. This was due principally to publication of the government's proposals for the Airport's expansion, which meant that no sites in the vicinity of the Airport had guaranteed tenure long enough to meet the Museum's and funding bodies' requirements.

7   A warehouse-type building such as the Resource Centre would be incompatible with the historic character and scheduled monument status of the Museum site. Any space available for a sensitive extension to the Museum (grade 2 listed building) needs to be reserved for improvements to visitor facilities.

Project Planning

8   Discussions with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) from November 2003 have established that the Resource Centre project with associated outreach programme to develop new audiences would be eligible for HLF funding. At present it seems that if successful, an application to HLF could secure up to 50% of the total project costs.

9   The Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded the Museum Service a Project Planning Grant of £24,500 (August 2004) to cover 90% of the costs of audience development study to be undertaken by consultants during the autumn 2004. This indicates that HLF sees the Resource Centre project as an initiative worthy of further development (though it does not guarantee further grants).

10   Members of Newport Parish Council have made a site visit to discuss the proposed Resource Centre with Council staff and are supportive of the proposals.

Anticipated Outcomes of the Project

11   If achieved, the project will provide a building capable of housing and preserving archaeological, historical and natural history collections, including archaeology from anticipated developments, to a high standard, in accordance with maintaining the Museum's registered status and promoting Uttlesford as a 'centre of excellence' for heritage.

12   Collections at the Resource Centre will be catalogued on computer for access via the internet, development of on-line learning materials and more efficient management of collections and research enquiries.

13   The Resource Centre will provide better physical access, compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act (2000), to all collections housed there for researchers, students and local residents by appointment. A well-equipped and flexible research room will enable some activities, e.g. study sessions for parish history projects or archaeology evening classes, to be delivered at the Resource Centre, reducing staff time spent transferring collections to and from the Museum site.

14   The Centre will provide the opportunity to develop new audiences and greater involvement with Uttlesford's heritage through an outreach programme designed to target young people, family learners and rural

communities in Uttlesford. This may include taking exhibits, activities and learning materials out to other venues.

Resources Required and Estimated Costs

15   The Resource Centre will consist of a purpose-built two-storey building providing a total area of approximately 600 square metres (footprint approximately 300 square metres), with loading bay and floor loadings capable of taking space-efficient mobile shelving where required.

16   It is anticipated that the project funding will enable the employment of two full-time staff for three years - an Outreach Officer and a Collections Officer - and a minimum of two short-term Documentation Assistants.

17   The total project cost is estimated at £1.1 million (detail in the Appendix).

18   The current timetable for the project is planed to last 3 years, from autumn 2005 – 2008. This assumes that the application to HLF is made early in 2005 and the outcome (if successful) allows the project to start towards the end of 2005.

Ongoing Revenue Implications

19   The ongoing revenue implications should be negligible, as relinquishing the current store to Contract Services will largely offset the costs of running the Resource Centre. The budget for operating the current store 2004-05 is £5,380. Of this, the rate element (£2,000 for current store) may be expected to increase due to the larger size of the Resource Centre. Against this, the hidden costs of continuing to run a sub-standard store should be considered (flood risks, less efficient working, inability to update collections leading to stagnation of service).

20   After the three-year project is completed in 2008, the Resource Centre will continue to operate at current (2004) levels of staffing.

21   The outreach programme will be planned so that after 2008 it can be maintained by current levels of staffing. It may be desirable to free curatorial staff from security cover at the Museum occasionally in order to deliver some activities at other venues round the district – if so, a small increase in the use of existing Casual Assistants to cover this (cost around £25 per half day) can be dealt with through the annual budgetary process. If other opportunities to extend the outreach programme are identified, grants, sponsorship or partnerships would be sought to meet costs. The Resource Centre project would place the Service in a stronger position to attract other sources of funding for outreach work.

Proposed Funding of Project

22   The total project is estimated to cost £1.1m. If the HLF application is successful a maximum of £550k could be secured towards this total. The Council has a commitment through the planning agreement with BAA for £32k. The shortfall of £518k would need to be met from a mixture of Capital funding from the Council and funding from various grant-giving heritage charities and bodies. The Museum Society has agreed to contribute a figure of £10,000 towards the project.

23   The HLF requires the Council to make a minimum contribution of 5% of the total project costs (£60k). It also requires it to have identified how it is to fund the project through matching funding to make up any shortfall.   The financial breakdowns of the project costs, therefore, are as follows -

Estimated total project cost	<u>1,100,000</u>
Less application to HLF for 50%	(550,000)
Less funding already secured from BAA	(32,000)
Less donation from Saffron Walden Museum Society	(10,000)
Less Minimum Capital contribution from UDC	<u>(60,000)</u>
Total shortfall	<u>£498,000</u>

24   The Council has been advised that it should make a HLF application in January 2005. This will mean that consideration of whether the grant should be given should take place in March 2005. HLF officers have advised that this time frame will give the Museum the optimum opportunity to receive funding as HLF criteria and funding is continually being reviewed.

25   This time scale will mean, however, that officers will be required to secure funding to cover the shortfall of £498k between now and the January submission date. Although the officers will be able to do some work to secure funding from grant making bodies, the amount time that can be made available to this task by the Museum Curator and her staff will be limited if current standards of service are to be maintained. Officers are concerned that the level of shortfall will be unlikely to be achieved. Consequently, the Council would be faced with a decision as to whether to fund the shortfall in total, or to withdraw from making the application.

26   Alternatively, the Council could agree at this stage to making a greater contribution to the total project costs. This would provide officers with the opportunity to show the commitment of the Council to the project when seeking funding.

27   Officers would provide the Committee with a report at its January meeting about the level of funding secured in the intervening months

and enable it to make a final decision about the level of funding that it is prepared to ask the Council to commit to.

28   Therefore, the three options for the Committee to consider and select from are -

(a) To agree to make a capital contribution of the minimum amount of £60k (5%) and ask officers to report to its meeting in January with details of any funds that have been secured from other sources, and enable it to make a decision about whether a HLF funding application should be made,

(b) To agree a capital contribution of a sum between £60k and the shortfall figure (£498k) and ask officers to report to its meeting in January with details of any funds that have been secured from other sources and enable it to make a decision about whether a HLF funding application should be made,

(c) Decide not to support the Museum Resource Centre with a capital contribution and advise officers not to make a HLF funding application. Consequently, receive a report from officers detailing the effects and options for addressing the need for increased capacity, standard of storage and access to collections.

Recommended that the Committee select its preferred option and, if necessary, make a recommendation to the Resources Committee to allocate a defined sum in its Capital Programme for 2005/06 towards the funding of a Resource Centre

Background Papers:
Museum Service Strategic Plan 2001 – 2004
Report on Site Options
Location Plan, Newport Depot and sketches of proposed Resource Centre
Proposed Costs and Timetable (details)

Museum Resource Centre Project
Appendix : Site Options

This table summarises the results of investigations 2001-03 into identifying options for siting the proposed Resource Centre

SITE	✓ PROS	✘ CONS	VIABILITY
Museum Grade 2 listed building built 1835, on scheduled site (Saffron Walden Castle) *Would require New-build extension*	• Advantages of everything on one site, no travel • Small amount of land owned by Museum Society on east side of Museum – no purchase costs	• Resource Centre too large a block, cannot be integrated into site • Planning non-starter - inappropriate development for listed 1835 building on scheduled site • Available space needed for improved visitor facilities	Not viable - over-riding issues re. size, type of construction and planning
Newport Depot Uttlesford District Council Depot, site of current off-site store *Would require New-build*	• Land Council-owned – no purchase costs • Sufficient space available and access for vans, low-loaders to loading bay • Security of Depot curtilage • Within development limits – no significant obstacles to planning permission • Staff travel 3.5 miles, same as at present • Build next to old store – costs and risks of moving collections minimised	• Flooding of old off-site store (low floor, poor build) but new building would overcome this • Not a public site – but could accommodate visitors by appointment and occasional public event (not a public building like Museum)	Viable
Stansted Airport Sites on North side of Airport, looked at with BAA *New-build with BAA Visitor Centre or adapt existing hangar + outbuildings*	• Potential partnership – site lease by BAA as matching funding • If with BAA Visitor Centre, share public facilities • Museum presence in Stansted area might assist Service to reach another part of the district	• Government report on development of Airport means no security of lease (sites may be needed for Airport extension) • BAA plans for visitor centre not so developed or urgent – will delay Resource Centre too much • Further away for staff to travel (8 miles) • Hangar large but may not have been cost-effective to alter	Not viable - inability of BAA to offer security of tenure for any site or proceed with plans within an acceptable time-scale
Other UDC Sites			*No sites available*
ECC Sites			*No sites in Uttlesford district available*

SITE	✓ PROS	✗ CONS	VIABILITY
Agricultural Buildings Various sites considered, three visited (Hempstead, Clavering, White Roding) *Adapt existing buildings*	• Potential to adapt large, basic low-cost buildings	• Offered lease only - need to negotiate purchase or long-term lease • Costs to adapt unlikely to be as cost-effective as new-build (poor build-quality) • Rural locations might be problematic for users, and issues of change of use • Lone working issues for staff at isolated rural locations • Distance from Museum for staff travel (8 – 30 miles and 2 sites peripheral to district)	No viable options identified (Clavering nearest in mileage and size of building, but lease/purchase + conversion costs and isolation of site made this significantly less attractive than Newport)
Business Units Various, including Saffron Walden Shire Hill estate *Adapt existing buildings*	• Potentially large buildings could provide low-cost shells which could be adapted	• Most had inadequate space; one site was too large to consider and not cost-effective to adapt • Insufficient security of tenure (rent or lease only)	No viable options identified (rural district, limited amount of business units available)
Audley End: Braybrooke Estate and English Heritage *Outbuildings available to adapt or extend?*	• Near Saffron Walden (about 2 miles) • House and surrounding area in care of English Heritage	• No available sites on either Braybrooke Estate or at English Heritage property • English Heritage policies and priorities on storage changing – not compatible with seeking a local partnership project	No viable options
Miscellaneous *Various local options investigated*	• Premises in or near Saffron Walden (Carver Barracks, private school, basements in Almshouses and a High Street premises)	• Premises on offer did not meet capacity and access criteria • Carver Barracks had nothing to offer	No viable options

Carolyn Wingfield, Museum Curator   August 2004

Timetable and Costings, August 2004

Timetable

Shortest timetable possible – depends on making application in late January 2005 and 6-month turn-around for decision from HLF

Date	Event	Comments and Outcome
January 2005	Submit application to HLF	Allow time for queries before HLF Trustees meet in March
Late 2005	Result of HLF application	If successful – proceed with contracts, tenders, preparations
2006	Build and equip Resource Centre Collections: documentation & packing Outreach: planning and beginning audience development programme	
2007-08	Resource Centre commissioned, collections transferred, opening and use Collections: developing on-line services Outreach: delivering programme	

Estimated Costing for Project

Resource Centre building and basic fitting out	650,000
Mobile racking and specialist equipment	100,000
IT provision	10,000
Employment of 2 project staff for 3 years	150,000
(Project Outreach Officer and Project Collections Officer)	
Employment of short-term documentation/packing assistants	30,000
(2 FTEs for one year)	
Outreach and Audience Development budget	
(materials, marketing etc)	20,000
Collections budget	
(packing materials, supplies, equipment to move)	5,000
Miscellaneous: fees, expenses etc not covered by above	15,000
	£980,000

Say approx. total project cost is approximately	**£1,000,000**
Add contingency of 10% (HLF min. requirement)	100,000
TOTAL PROJECT COST ANTICIPATED	**£1,100,000**

Committee:	**Resources Committee**
Date:	**23 September 2004**
Agenda Item:	**5**
Title:	**Capital Programme**
Author:	**Philip O'Dell (01799 510670)**

Introduction

1   This report outlines the process for the review of the Council's Capital Programme and associated funding requirements. The aim is to prepare a revised multi-year Programme for agreement at the Council meeting on 15 February 2005.

Expenditure and Funding of the Capital Programme

2   The Capital Programme for the current year was agreed at a total cost of £5,126,300, with capital receipts being the main source of funding. The Programme is being monitored and no significant variances or slippage are apparent. There are signs however of a slowdown in capital receipts being received. This does not cause a problem in the current year as the Council has a significant level of unused receipts. The Capital Programme assumes a balance of receipts still available at 31 March 2008 of £7.4m, meaning that even a significant fall in receipts will not threaten schemes currently in the Programme. It could be however that any new schemes identified by either the Corporate Plan review or the Service Planning process will require evaluation against a revised view of resources available and/or schemes in the Capital Programme and not yet committed.

Process for Review of the Capital Programme

3   It is proposed that the officer Capital Programme Group meet to discuss the current and proposed schemes in the Programme, together with funding capacity and possibilities. Reports will be taken to relevant committees in November with an overview to this Committee on 18 November.

Recommended that

Members note the reduced flow of capital receipts

Members agree the process outlined to review the Capital Programme

Committee:	Resources
Date:	23 September 2004
Agenda Item No:	6
Title:	Saffron Walden Initiative Healthcheck
Author:	Sarah McLagan (01799) 510560

Summary

1   This report gives details of the work that has been carried out by the Saffron Walden Initiative to produce a Healthcheck Action Plan for Saffron Walden. It recommends the Council act as employer for the Saffron Walden Project Officer and support the funding of the post.

Background

2   The Saffron Walden Initiative is an independent, non-political group made up of local residents, businesses and non-commercial organisations. Its aim is to improve Saffron Walden for residents and visitors to the town by working in partnership with the community and public agencies to facilitate and promote initiatives, including enhancing the town's appearance, promoting the town and area and developing community spirit

3   The Initiative was started in April 2000 by a small group of local people. Since Spring 2002 the Initiative has focussed on engaging a wider range of people, and has now established the organisation as a legal entity and set up a membership structure, with over 100 subscribing members.

4   The Initiative, in partnership with Uttlesford District Council and Saffron Walden Town Council, and supported by local businesses, has been carrying out a "Healthcheck" of the town and its surrounding areas. Significantly, the Healthcheck covers over 40% of Uttlesford as a whole.

Saffron Walden Healthcheck

5   The Healthcheck is an intensive programme of research and consultation on social, economic and environmental issues. It follows a methodology promoted by the Countryside Agency, whose support has enabled the appointment of a Healthcheck Coordinator to carry out the

work. This official sponsorship, and the depth of research, means that the Healthcheck carries weight with the East of England Development Agency and other funding bodies.

6   The "Healthcheck" is essentially an auditing process which looks at all the things that are good and bad about an area, and asks local people what they think needs to be done to improve it. This has been done through the establishment of four Working Groups, who have worked through specially designed work sheets of questions; by holding public meeting and consultation exercises; by sending out a questionnaire to relevant people and organisations and holding face to face interviews with key officers, partners and business representatives. Over 350 people have made contributions to this process.

7   As a result of the above, a number of key issues and findings have emerged which have lead to the development of a comprehensive Report and Action Plan. The work of the Healthcheck is now complete and key information from the Action Plan is appended to this report.

Delivering the Healthcheck's Action Plan

8   The actions that have emerged from the Healthcheck exercise have relevance to a number of key service providers in the area. For the actions to be delivered, there needs to be a concentrated and enthusiastic effort put into their coordination and implementation. This would need to be achieved through working with partners and strategic authorities to secure resources and funding to enable delivery and maintenance of the actions.

9   The volunteers of Saffron Walden Initiative cannot carry out the work in question. It is of sufficient significance and breadth to warrant the appointment of a Project Officer who can work with relevant partners and secure their commitment to enable the coordination and implementation of the actions.

10   Saffron Walden Initiative has been advised by the Countryside Agency that it can provide 50% of the funding towards the appointment of a Project Officer who would deliver the Action Plan. This funding is time limited until end March 2006 when the Countryside Agency, together with other rural agencies, is to be re-organised.

11   The Initiative is currently seeking to secure match funding to meet the remaining employment costs for such a post. It has been in contact with local business and is waiting to hear if it has obtained a commitment from Saffron Walden Town Council. It also plans to seek funding from other statutory agencies, including the Uttlesford PCT and Essex County Council.
(Officers will provide a verbal update on the funding position at the meeting.)

12   The costs associated with the implementation and delivery of the actions will have to be met from funding and partnership sources. It will be the Project Officer's responsibility to secure this by making funding applications, establishing joint working agreements with partner and strategic organisations and through other initiatives.

District Council Commitment

13   The Council has a commitment to working more effectively with Towns and Parishes in its Quality of Life Corporate Plan. Examples include encouraging them to create plans or appraisals of their town/village, encouraging achievement of quality awards and negotiating local service agreements with town and parishes. In addition, the Healthcheck makes an important contribution to the work of Uttlesford Futures and the Council's own Strategic Planning forum.

14   Given the impact that the airport, additional housing and other pressures are to have on the area it is important that towns and villages appreciate and act on the views and concerns of their residents. A Healthcheck/Village Appraisal is a means of gauging opinion and support for change and improvement in an area. It provides the evidence that is required to initiate projects and obtain commitment to pursuing solutions to identified problems. The work that has been carried out in Saffron Walden should be applauded as an example for other towns and villages in the district to follow. In addition, acknowledgement of this by the Council helps to enforce the appreciation of the voluntary effort that has been given by the community to this work.

15   It is important that the Council considers what commitment it can make to enable the work to implement the Action Plan to be progressed. Officers believe that the Council should be offering Saffron Walden Initiative support for the appointment of a Project Officer. This can be done on two fronts. Officers believe that the significance of this work warrants the Council providing financial support for the employment of the Project Officer.

16   To fund the Project Officer post, with on-costs, expenses, travel etc., Saffron Walden Initiative needs to secure 50% of the costs as follows -

> £4,750 for 2004/05 (on the basis that the officer would be in post
> from 1 January 2005)
> £16,500 for 2005/06

17   As stated previously, funding from the Countryside Agency will cease on 31 March 2006, so the Project Officer position would be offered on a temporary basis.

18   The Initiative believes that it can secure 50% of the funding shortfall (detailed in para. 16 above) from the various sources that it has been in

contact with. The Council, therefore, is asked to consider making a contribution from Reserves towards the deficit figures of £2,375 in 2004/05 and £8,250 in 2005/06.

19   The voluntary status of Saffron Walden Initiative means that it would have difficulty employing and managing the Project Officer. This could be addressed with the Council acting as the employer (all funding would be passed to and held by the Council) with the Project Officer reporting to the Executive Programme Manager (Quality of Life). Support would also include the provision of office accommodation, telephone, etc. The Council would have Member and Officer representation on a Project Board, together with Saffron Walden Town Council representatives, and this would oversee the work of the Project Officer.

20   The support described in para. 19 above would not provide match funding towards the employment costs of the Project Officer, although it would be acknowledge as being support-in-kind.

Conclusions

21   The Saffron Walden Initiative has provided Saffron Walden, its hinterland villages and those organisations and authorities that provide it with services with the evidence to help support a sustainable and successful future for the town.

22   Clearly, a number of the Actions emerging from the Healthcheck report are relevant to and require ownership by the District Council and, therefore, officers would be engaged in discussion and involved in the implementation of many of the actions. However, the voluntary nature of Saffron Walden Initiative means that there is not sufficient capacity for it to deliver the Action Plan itself. Therefore, to ensure the continued momentum of the excellent work that has taken place, and to hold on to the enthusiasm and commitment of local people that have been involved in the process, there needs to be a dedicated officer to take this the project forward.

23   The Initiative has secured the commitment from the Countryside Agency of 50% of the required funding for the appointment of a Project Officer. A large proportion of the remaining shortfall will be met by contributions from local business and the Town Council. A contribution from the District Council will enable the Healthcheck report and Action Plan to move from being a broadly based plan to implementing specific action on the ground.

Recommended that the Committee

1   Subject to the remaining funding shortfall being achieved by Saffron Walden Initiative, provide the funding as set out in para.18 of the

report to enable the employment of the Saffron Walden Project Officer,

2   Subject to the remaining funding shortfall being achieved, agree that the Council should act as employer (as set out in para.19 of the report) for a Saffron Walden Project Officer.

Background Papers: Draft Healthcheck Report and Action Plan

Saffron Walden Healthcheck Draft Action Plan

Aim 1 - Create a robust, effective, cross-sector partnership to support community involvement in planning Saffron Walden's future

Individual Objective	Project(s)	Resources and Partners (people, information, finance, advice)
a) Create a framework for delivery of the Healthcheck Action Plan	i) Create Project Board involving key partners ii) Appoint Market Town Project Officer to March 2006 iii) SW Initiative to become formally involved in Uttlesford Futures, Tourism Forum, Public and Patient Involvement Forum	CA, EEDA, EEP, UDC, SWTC, SWI Possible project leader: SWI

Aim 2 - Provide for the accommodation needs of young people, key workers and those on modest incomes

Individual Objective	Project(s)	Resources and Partners (people, information, finance, advice)
a) Create a mechanism to address the concerns of local people regarding design, quality, infrastructure and environmental sensitivity of housing development	i) Identify all potential sites, providers and sources of support ii) Develop strategy to consult and influence key bodies iii) Obtain clarification of central government plans; development of coherent housing strategy iv) Formulate proposals	UDC, SWEHBS (SWI to act as active consultee in housing and planning debates)
b) Provide additional affordable housing	i) Implement housing proposals	

16 September 2004

Aim 3 - Better engage and provide for the needs of children, teenagers and young adults

Individual Objective	Project(s)	Resources and Partners (people, information, finance, advice)
a) Further develop current programmes of support, consultation and advocacy for young people	i) SW Initiative to agree areas for joint working with Essex Youth Service, UDC Youth Forum and UDC/UPCT Youth Strategy Group, Skate Park Group ii) Implement project programme iii) Develop advocacy project to counter local hostility to young people iv) Transport scheme for the young as above	
b) Further advance leisure/culture provision and informal learning opportunities	i) Arts/civic centre feasibility study as above ii) Events programme as below iii) Work placements and entrepreneurship training as above/below iv) Play areas as below	

Aim 4 - Address growing congestion problems and local concerns about weak public transport

Individual Objective	Project(s)	Resources and Partners (people, information, finance, advice)
a) Develop and implement traffic management plan	i) Establish traffic management group and undertake detailed traffic study ii) Research new public transport plan; identify local opportunities and sources of additional support for public transport improvements, inc. those for young people & access to town from villages iii) Develop and implement 'visionary' transport solutions in conjunction with key partners iv) Agree improvements with major agencies v) New transport scheme for young people vi) Unified ticketing scheme	

16 September 2004

b) Resolve current parking debates	i) Traffic study as below ii) Identify resources to support findings/solutions iii) Agree projects e.g. parking solutions such as minibus shuttle from Swan Meadow iv) Implement parking projects	
c) Plan incremental changes to traffic movements	i) Improved signage both within the town and on approaches to it, including from M11 ii) New signage at Audley End station and promote train access to town iii) Develop and launch car-share schemes iv) Develop or improve unified, reliable information resource for public transport v) Develop and implement new school/youth transport pilot vi) Foot and cycle path to Audley End station vii) Research shuttle bus option to Audley End Station Implement shuttle bus	DoT ECC, UDC

Aim 5 - Support and improve the long-term economic vitality of the town

Individual Objective	Project(s)	Resources and Partners (people, information, finance, advice)
a) Create incentives for people to use the town centre	i) Create a new, high quality, unified, attractive, comprehensive and accessible information resource ii) Free lunchtime buses from research parks iii) Enhance markets, inc. possible relocation of farmers' market to site adjacent to existing Tues/Sat market iv) Include review of town hall use in arts centre feasibility study as	Saffron Walden Directory, What's On, Saffire etc CA, Sustainable Communities
b) Create a pilot 'green tourism' plan to promote the town in sustainable ways	i) Agree resourcing, partners & support for new 'attractors' /projects ii) Implement pilot scheme iii) Evaluate pilot scheme and agree next steps iv) Cross-promotion scheme with Audley End House and Duxford Imperial	

	War Museum v) Cross-promotion scheme with public transport providers vi) Introduce vintage bus scheme between Audley End Station, AE House and the town centre vii) Agree pilot compulsory inspection/promotion scheme for tourist accommodation providers viii) Evaluate inspection scheme	
c) Make parking schemes easier and more attractive to access and use	i) Identify resources to support parking improvements based on traffic study as above ii) Assess/implement other actions from Transport working group iii) Implement enhancements to access between Swan Meadow and town centre iv) ? Implement pay on exit parking v) Assess/implement other actions from Transport WG	
d) Extend the economically active hours of the town centre	i) Address 'anti-social' behaviour in the town centre (see also providing entertainment below), e.g. review licensing arrangements; implement staggered opening hours; make CCTV more conspicuous; support initiatives to reduce fear of crime; learn from other towns ii) Develop and implement Sunday and evening opening strategy in conjunction with traders and town centre management group iii) Improve access and quality of public spaces as above, inc. town hall and market square	
e) Provide better ongoing support for local business, esp. women and young entrepreneurs	i) Establish a sustainable and inclusive business networking forum (inc. identify key partners, organisational support) ii) Launch forum iii) Hold a business fair iv) Identify and provide new work placement opportunities for young people v) Develop and implement in-school training in entrepreneurship	Prowess, DTI, BusinessLink for Essex, SWTC, Young Enterprise Learning and Skills Council, local employers, BusinessLink for Essex

Aim 6 - Enhance the appearance and accessibility of the town centre and public spaces

Individual Objective	Project(s)	Resources and Partners (people, information, finance, advice)
a) Expand the town centre management partnership	i) Agree new partners and shared objectives – SW Town Council, UDC, market traders etc. ii) Develop town centre management philosophy iii) Agree integrated town centre improvement plan based on identified need and local priorities iv) Develop and implement town centre management plan v) Implement town centre improvements	
b) Maintain and improve the built environment of the town centre	i) Undertake Feasibility Study for town centre improvements, including accessibility audit ii) Public tender for town centre design improvements iii) Project example – new, better and more appropriate street furniture, including on the Common iv) Assess/implement actions from Environment working group v) Complete refurbishment of Jubilee Gardens public toilets, and redesign of exterior to allow view through to gardens	Uttlesford Futures, CIBA UDC, EEDA Sustainable Communities
c) Create pedestrian friendly town centre	i) Full feasibility study for pedestrianisation inc. economic and aesthetic impacts and cost/benefit analysis ii) Introduce pedestrian friendly zones, possibly inc. market square iii) Launch a new programme of public events (see below) iv) Survey of pavements and implement programme of repairs v) Identify resourcing for a street inspector. vi) Appoint street inspector vii) Improve River Slade watercourse viii) New signage, information resources and publicity for footpath network ix) Create outdoor eating and drinking areas	Essex CC, Sustainable Communities

d) Improve quality of children's play areas	i) Identify improvements needed to play areas and necessary resources ii) Implement improvements to play areas	
e) Implement new management plan for town centre horticulture	i) Agree new approach to manage trees in town centre and other plants/planting schemes ii) Continue with annual flowering baskets scheme	SWI/Business Forum

Aim 7 - Promote a sense of community and belonging

Individual Objective	Project(s)	Resources and Partners (people, information, finance, advice)
a) Create new culture/leisure /entertainment opportunities	i) Full feasibility study for new arts/leisure/civic space to include cost/benefit, traffic, economic, cultural impacts and to consider in relation to alternatives ii) Identify new resources and promoter(s) to develop a programme of community events; ?create promoter network iii) Implement programme of events iv) Provide enhanced support for existing provision and initiatives e.g. publicity and information as above, greater frequency v) affordable housing as above vi) transport as above vii) Implement recommendations of feasibility study viii) Maintain and support new networks/programmes of events ix) Information resource as above to promote and celebrate the town x) Develop enhanced support for UDC's 'good citizen awards'	
b) Take services & activities to people in rural locations, esp. the old and the young	? To be considered as part of transport and culture proposals? ? Rural touring scheme cf. Norfolk, Cambs	ECC, ACEE, UDC, SWTC
c) Better promotion of local history	i) Develop an enhanced programme of walks, events and publications ii) Create history trails for residents and visitors	SWI, Museum, TIC, English Heritage

d) Enhance the working relationship between the Saffron Walden Initiative and UDC/SWTC, and between SWI and parishes	i) Identify, formalise and support new areas for co-operation ii) Undertake training needs assessment iii) Develop programme of joint activities iv) Develop and promote benefits of hinterland parish involvement in SWI	

16 September 2004

Committee:	Resources Committee
Date:	23 September 2004
Agenda Item No:	7
Title:	Member involvement in the Recruitment of Chief and Deputy Chief Officers
Author:	Carole Hughes (01799) 510407

Background

1   The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Regulations 2001 relate to the appointment of senior staff. Briefly the Regulations provide that Councillors may take part in the appointment in respect of:

   a. The head of the paid service;
   b. Statutory chief officers (eg s.151 finance officer);
   c. Non-statutory chief officers (being officers who report directly to the head of the paid service or to the council or any committee or sub-committee of the authority for all or the majority of their duties but whose duties are not in the nature of secretarial, clerical or support services);
   d. Deputy chief officers (being officers who report directly to a chief officer for all or most of their duties, but whose duties are not in the nature of secretarial, clerical or support services);
   e. Political assistants.

2   According to the Regulations all appointments of staff below the level of deputy chief officer should be conducted at officer level.

3   The Local Authorities (Standing Orders) Regulations 1993 (SI No. 202) established that the appointment of statutory chief officers shall be made by the authority or may be delegated to a committee or sub-committee.

4   The approval of the appointment of the Head of Paid Service has to be made by Council although the selection process can be delegated to a committee or sub committee. The appointment of a statutory chief officer can be made by Council or delegated to a committee or sub-committee.

5   Under the new Regulations the position of deputy chief officers is now similar to non-statutory chief officers, i.e. they may be made by elected members or delegated to officers. Due to the flatter management structures that are being developed many authorities choose to delegate recruitment decisions to officers. The Regulations provide that the matter of appointments of senior officers (chief officers and deputy chief officers but see above for S151 officer) may involve

Members if the authority wishes, they do not require Members to make the appointments to c and d above.

6   Section 2 of the Local Government Housing Act 1989 provides the definitions for chief officer and deputy chief officer:

Statutory chief officer for our purposes means:

(a) An officer having responsibility, for the purposes of section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972, for the administration of the authority's financial affairs.

Non-statutory chief officer means:

(a) A person for whom the head of paid service is directly responsible;
(b) A person who, in respect of all or most of the duties of the post, reports directly or is directly accountable to the head of paid service; and
(c) Any person who, as respects all or most of the duties of the post, is required to report directly or is directly accountable to the local authority themselves or any committee or sub-committee of the authority.

This definition excludes people whose duties are solely secretarial or clerical or are otherwise in the nature of support services.

Deputy chief officer means:

A person who, as respects all or most of the duties of the post, is required to report directly or is directly accountable to one or more of the statutory or non statutory chief officers'. This does not include support staff, e.g. a personal assistant.

7   Due to the flatter management structure approved by Members December 2003 there is a vastly increased number of 3rd tier officers who could be classed as deputy chief officers because they now report directly to an Executive Manager. In the original structure members were involved in the recruitment of the Chief Executive, Directors and Heads of Service, thirteen posts. In the flatter structure there are now forty eight members of staff on a wide spread of grades who could be classed as chief officers and deputy chief officers.

8   In the previous structure Member interview panels were convened when vacancies arose and it has always been the practice to have the Leader and to invite, through the chairs of each party, one representative to sit on the panel. The Executive Manager has been contacted by some Members querying why a formal panel is not agreed on a yearly basis in line with other Committees of the Council and asked to make a recommendation to Members.

It is Recommended that:

1   Annual Council create a Chief Officer Recruitment Panel to
        recruit any vacancies at Chief Executive and Chief Officer level.
        If agreed Members may wish consider how previous ad hoc
        panels have been successfully created in the past.

2   Due to the flatter management structure Members agree the
        recruitment of deputy chief officers is delegated to the Head of
        Paid Service and Executive Managers or their representatives
        as allowed by the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England)
        Regulations.

Background Papers: Previous minutes concerning Chief Executive
                     Recruitment Panels.

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Committee:	Resources Committee
Date:	23 September 2004
Agenda Item:	8
Title:	Resources Committee Budgetary Control Report
Author:	Philip O'Dell (01799 510670)

Introduction

1   This is the first budgetary control report to this committee for 2004/05.

Basis of Report

2   This report is based on data held within the Council's Financial Management Systems for the period ending 31 July 2004. The Council's new Financial Management Information System (FMIS) went live from the 1 July 2004 and this report merges data from both the old and new systems to give the total position for the first four months of the financial year. Relevant Executive Managers have been asked if they are aware of any significant variations, including any that may not be in the figures produced to date.

The table in the attached Appendix 1 to this report shows the following data;

- 2003/04 Actual spend (subject to Audit)
- 2004/05 Budget
- 2004/05 Profiled budget ('expected ' spending or income to date)
- 2004/05 Expenditure and Income to 31 July 2004
- Over/underspend between profiled budget and actual to date
- Actual expressed as a % of the profiled budget
- Projected outturn (a judgement as to what the year end position will be)
- Current Status of projected spend compared with budget (on line/under
    or heading for an overspend, as depicted by a smiling or sad face)
- Notes to explain any apparent variances

Analysis of Variation

3   It can be seen from the data in the table that at this stage there is a variation between the spend at month 4 compared to the profiled budget for the same period of an overspend of £8,785 (0.32% of profiled budget). At this early stage in the financial year officers do not consider this variation will impact on the projected outturn. These variations will continue to be monitored and any savings/underspend

that are confirmed will be built into the revised estimates for consideration by Members at the meeting of this committee on 18 November 2004.

New FMIS

4   The introduction of FMIS from the 1 July gives greater scope for reporting purposes and officers will be developing this over the coming months. Members may like to give consideration to what information they would like to see in future budget monitoring reports. The report attached at Appendix 1 has been compiled from data held on the new system, rather than being a report from the system itself, which is still being refined. In future, reports will be produced direct from the system and can include, for example, graphical analysis of spending.

Recommended that

Members note the budgetary control position at 31 July 2004.

Members consider what information they would like included in future budgetary control reports.

Background Papers: FMIS budget reports

Committee: Resources Committee

Date: 23 September 2004

Agenda Item: 9

Title: Corporate Budgetary Control Report

Author: Philip O'Dell (01799 510670)

Introduction

1   This is the first budgetary control report covering all committees for
        2004/05.It includes information that policy committees have already
        considered in this committee cycle and this Committee's own position
        considered earlier on the agenda of this meeting.

Basis of Report

2   The report is based on data held within the Council's Financial
        Management Systems for the period ending 31 July 2004. The
        Council's new Financial Management Information System (FMIS) went
        live from the 1 July 2004 and this report merges data from both the old
        and new systems to give the total position for the first four months of
        the financial year. Relevant Executive Managers have been asked if
        they are aware of any significant variations, including any that may not
        be in the figures produced to date.

3   Appendices 1- 6 attached contain information on each committee's
        budgets in the following format:

        -   2003/04 Actual spend (subject to Audit)
        -   2004/05 Budget
        -   2004/05 Profiled budget ('expected ' spending or income to date)
        -   2004/05 Expenditure and Income to 31 July 2004
        -   Over/underspend between profiled budget and actual to date
        -   Actual expressed as a % of the profiled budget
        -   Projected outturn (a judgement as to what the year end position will
            be)
        -   Current Status of projected spend compared with budget (on
            line/under or heading for an overspend, as depicted by a smiling or
            sad face)
        -   Notes to explain any significant variances

4   The Transport and Highways Committee did not receive a budgetary
        control report at their meeting on 8 September, due to issues relating to
        the Committee agenda deadline and the new Financial Management
        System. Members of that Committee have however been informed that

there are no significant variations on the budgets of their services.

Analysis of Variations

5   There are no variations significant enough to cause concerns regarding the Council's overall 2004/05 budget. The Revised Budget process is now underway and any variations with a potentially permanent effect on the current year budget will be highlighted in the November committee cycle. Further budgetary control reports will go to all committees during the remainder of the financial year.

New FMIS

6   The introduction of FMIS which went live from the 1 July gives greater scope for reporting purposes and officers will be developing this over the coming months. Members may like to give consideration to what information they would like to see in future corporate budget monitoring reports. The reports attached as appendices have been compiled from data held on the new system, rather than being a report from the system itself, which is still being refined. In future, reports will be produced direct from the system and can include, for example, graphical analysis of spending.

Recommended that

Members note the budgetary control position for all committees at 31 July 2004.

Members consider what information they would like included in future corporate budgetary control reports

Background Papers

FMIS budget reports

Reports to policy committees on budgetary control, September 2004

Committee:	Resources Committee
Date:	23 September 2004
Agenda Item No:	10
Title:	Financial Strategy and Service Planning process
Author	Philip O'Dell (01799) 510670

Summary

1   This report provides an update on external and internal factors affecting the Council's General Fund Budget for 2005/06 and beyond. It covers the Chancellor's Public Spending Review, the Government's Balance of Funding Review, the Council's Service Planning process, the ongoing Service Prioritisation process and the latest forecast position for the 2005/06 Base Budget. It describes the early stages of preparation of the 2005/06 General Fund Budget, including public consultation, and the preparation of a multi-year budget.

Public Spending Review

2   This was published on 12 July 2004 and contained disappointing news for district councils. The key element of the Government's spending formula, which determines grant allocation to councils, assumes only a 0.6% increase for district councils. Even that level of increase is uncertain for this Council, due to other aspects of the funding regime. On this basis, it is recommended that the projected 2% increase in external funding for 2005/06 included in this Council's previous forecast be now deleted. This reduces the previously forecast external support for 2005/06 by £75,000. The effect of this reduction will be put into full context in paragraph 4 below.

Balance of Funding Review

3   The Balance of Funding Review report was published on 20 July 2004. It concluded that the Council Tax should be retained in a reformed fashion, with a further report to be prepared by the end of 2005 following an inquiry to be lead by Sir Michael Lyons. The Balance of Funding report also concluded that there are strong arguments for shifting the balance of funding towards more local funding, but that this depends on the feasibility and desirability of any measures, which might be used to achieve it. The only way identified by the Review to achieve a major shift in the balance between central and local funding

is to supplement a reformed council tax with either re-localised business rates or a local income tax or a combination of both. The report notes that none of these options would be easy and that further work would be required. The independent inquiry, which will now take place, will examine in detail the case for pursuing any of those options.

General Fund Budget forecast 2005/06

4   The report on Financial Strategy and Service Planning considered by this Committee on 24 June included forecasts of savings required to keep the potential council tax increases for 2005/06 and beyond within a 3-5% per annum range. The savings/additional income required for a 3% council tax increase in 2005/06 was quantified as £75,000. This now requires adding to by a further £75,000 based on the Council's likely decrease in forecast external support outlined in paragraph 2 above, making a total saving requirement of £150,000 to achieve a 3% council tax increase. A 4% council tax increase would now require savings of £114,000, and a 5% increase (the targeted maximum figure agreed by this Committee on 24 June) would require savings of £78,000. Savings required for the following two years rise quite steeply if council tax increases at similar levels are to be maintained.

5   It must be emphasised that the figures contained in paragraph 4 include no provision for new spending pressures, are subject to refinement as base budgets are reviewed in the coming months, and are ahead of receipt of any detailed figures on external support.

Service Planning Process

6   Service Plans based on Executive Manager responsibilities have recently been completed. They cover the years 2005-2008.Full versions of these Plans   will be provided to relevant committees in the November committee cycle. A key element of these Service Plans will be resource requirements, and the Executive Management Team is currently analysing the Plans to put forward a collective view on resource needs.

Service Prioritisation Process

7   The joint Member and officer working group set up by this Committee on 24 June 2004 is nearing completion of the initial work to prioritise Council services. The Member / officer Away day on 9 October will receive feedback on the progress made and be asked to contribute to the process. Reports on implications for committees will then be taken to the November committee cycle as part of consideration of base budgets and service plans. The next meeting of this Committee on November 18 will receive a report, which uses the outcomes of the prioritisation process to propose a strategy to prepare the General Fund budget for 2005/06 and beyond.

Budget Consultation

8   Both the Service Prioritisation process and the Council's budget proposals will be subjected to public consultation, probably on a joint basis. Officers are considering appropriate mechanisms with a view to informing this Committee's deliberations on 18 November.

Recommended that:

The Committee notes the latest position on the Council's General Fund Budget for 2005/06 and the proposed approach to the early stages of the budget process.

Background Papers: Public Spending Review
                          Balance of Funding Review
                          Report to Resources Committee of 24 June
                          2004 on Financial Strategy and Service
                          Planning process

Committee:	Resources Committee
Date:	23 September 2004
Agenda Item:	11
Title:	TREASURY MANAGEMENT
Author:	Nick Harris (01799-510313)

Introduction

1   At the meeting of this Committee on 21 March 2002 Members formally adopted the key recommendations of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice (The Code). One of the provisions of The Code is that a report on Treasury Management be made to Members after the year end.

2   This report sets out details of the Council's borrowing and investments for the financial year 2003/04 and also provides monitoring information in respect of the Council's performance against the performance indicators.

Long Term Borrowing

3   At 31 March 1996 all Long Term Borrowing had been repaid and the Council became debt free. No new long term borrowing was undertaken in 2003/04 and the Council's debt free status was maintained.

Short Term Borrowing

4   No short term borrowing was undertaken in 2003/04. One loan was undertaken on the 23 April 2004 and repaid on the 4 May 2004.

Investments

5   At the 31 March 2003 the Council had £17.9 million invested in a number of Building Societies and Banks. This had fallen to £15.8million by 31 March 2004, in line with expectations. Currently the total sum invested is approximately £21.6 million. All institutions used continue to meet the Council's approved lending criteria.

Performance Measurement of Investments

6   The Code recommends that Councils review the performance of their investments. The Council's average equated interest rate for 2003/04 was 3.86% compared with previous year of 4.31%.

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Interest Rate Changes

7   Base rates commenced the financial year at 3.75% following a cut from 4% in February 2003. The Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) announced a further cut in July 2003, to 3.5%. Base rates were raised in November, for the first time in almost four years, to 3.75% with a second increase to 4% in February 2004. Further increases have moved the Base rate to its is current level of 4.75%.

Maturity Structure of Borrowings

8   The Council remains debt free.

Introduction of the Prudential Capital Finance System

9   The Local Government Act 2003 made major changes in control of local authority borrowing which take effect from 1 April 2004. Previous controls on capital expenditure and borrowing are removed, and all authorities must comply with CIPFA's Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities. At its Extraordinary meeting on 3 February this committee approved the majority of prudential indicators required under The Code; the remainder specifically related to Treasury Management were approved at the meeting held on 11 March. The provisions of the Prudential Code came into force with effect from 1 April 2004 and as such it is early days with regard to monitoring the indicators approved by this Committee. However, an examination of the Council's treasury management activities during the year to date reveals that performance is within the approved limits. Specifically, the Treasury Management indicators are

Net Borrowings at Variable Interest Rates

The approved limit for 2004-05 is –£2m. It is negative because it was not intended that the Council should undertake any borrowing at variable rates and the -£2m represented the limit on investment at variable rates. As indicated in the previous report, apart from £250,000 held in an Abbey National account no variable rate investments have been undertaken to date in 2004-05.

Net Borrowings at Fixed Rates

The approved limit is -£25m (again it is negative because no borrowing was envisaged). As indicated above the Council's investments currently total £21.6m and have not breached the limit during the year so far. Net fixed rate borrowing is therefore within the approved limit.

Long Term Investments

This limits the amount of funds invested over a period of more than one year and is intended to contain a council's exposure to the possibility of losses arising from having to seek early redemption of an investment. The approved limit is £10m but currently the Council has no long term investments.

Recommendation

That the report be accepted.

Background Papers: Treasury Management Files

Committee:	Resources
Date:	23 September 2004
Agenda Item No:	12
Title:	Bank Tender
Author:	Nick Harris (01799) 510313

Summary

1   This report is to inform the Committee of the current position regarding the procurement of banking services. It also recommends a way forward designed to ensure that the Council obtains best value for the services it requires.

Background

2   At its meeting on 24 June this Committee received a report outlining a possible partnership with Essex County Council regarding the new contract for banking arrangements which need to be in place by 1 April 2005. The following questions were put to the County Council:

- What assurances can you give that Uttlesford's interests will not be subjugated to those of ECC?

- Will tenders be evaluated purely on price or will qualitative factors be considered?

- Will there be provision in the tender evaluation for the cost of changing banks?

- Will paper statements be required and if so at what frequency? If not, what alternative arrangements are envisaged particularly for the return of credit slips?

- Uttlesford employs a company to collect, count and bank all of its cash. Will the contract accommodate this?

- Will there be any requirement for the successful tenderer to maintain a branch network and what specifically would the tender include?

- What if any ethical requirements will be written into the tender?

3　　During these discussions it became apparent that the County Council have not yet made decisions on these issues. There has also been only limited interest from other district councils, making the possibility of significant savings unlikely.

4　　It is therefore proposed to progress the procurement process independent of the County Council and employ the services of consultants to assist in preparing the tender documents to ensure that best value for money is achieved. This was one of the options considered in the 24 June report. It is likely that the cost of employing a consultant for this work will be £2,000, which can be met from within existing budgets.

RECOMMENDED that the Council procure banking services on its own behalf after the current contract expires in March 2005.

Background Papers: None

Planning for organisational development – the October 9 awayday

Introduction

Over recent months there have been a number of streams of activity which have been designed to enable various elements of the organisation – both political and professional – to identify areas in which improvements are necessary if Uttlesford is to achieve the excellence to which the whole organisation aspires.

This period has been characterised by a large volume of activity, and no shortage of ideas about how things could improve. However, if we are to deliver and gain benefit from these ideas, we now need to pull them together into a coherent picture, which is capable of commanding the support of all key sections of the council organisation.

Focus

The external agenda for the council – our ambitions for how we impact on the community – is clear. It is set by the Quality of Life statement, that was adopted as policy following the May 2003 elections, by the subsequent Quality of Life Plan and by any successor corporate plans that are agreed by council. These documents set out nine key themes which are an expression of the policy priorities of the district council:

- To provide strong community leadership and openness
- Protecting and enhancing the environment & character of the district
- Protecting and enhancing the environment & character of the district whilst improving Rural Transport
- Protecting and enhancing the environment & character of the district whilst encouraging appropriate Economic Development
- Protecting and enhancing the environment & character of the district whilst improving the supply of Good Affordable Housing to meet the needs of the local community
- Tourism, Culture and Leisure Opportunities
- Improving access to value for money services
- Improving Community Safety and the Health of the Population
- Supporting Lifelong Learning

These are the policy priorities of the council and nothing in this report suggest any change in that position.

However, as a series of priorities for the internal management of the council these themes have some weaknesses: they say little about how the organisation should develop and they are of doubtful relevance to many

services – particularly those which are delivering secure, but perhaps unexciting, functions which underpin much of our activity.

Our corporate planning process needs to have some guiding ambitions: both in terms of the impact we wish to have on the district, but also in terms of the internal development of the organisation. These two sets of ambitions need to be such that they are consistent with each other, but we need to recognise that they serve different purposes.

The focus of this paper is on organisational development: improving the capacity of the organisation to deliver the services we deliver to a level of excellence, to deliver the QLP, and to track progress and make necessary adjustments as we do so.

Key activities

I do not intend to attempt an exhaustive list of the activities which underlie this report – but some of the key events and processes include:

Comprehensive Performance Assessment	We were inspected in February; the report was published in June and the consequent improvement plan agreed as part of the Best Value Performance Plan
Joint Management Team	JMT consists of those managers in the organisation who report directly to the Executive Managers – as well as the Executive Management Team themselves. Approximately the 'top 50' staff in the organisation. They met in May, with follow-up sessions every six weeks since then, having identified seven key areas for improvement.
Leadership/EMT joint awayday	The two groups of senior individuals met jointly at an awayday on 25-26 June 2004. An action plan was devised around five key areas of activity. The plan is appended to this paper.
Staff group meetings	I have been meeting staff in small groups during the August-September period, to discuss with them how things feel from the front line perspective. A number of meetings have yet to take place, but themes are emerging around the need for increased communication, a feeling that more is being asked of staff and that promises of greater opportunities for progress and reward have yet to be honoured.

The total effect of these activities is that we have a large number of commitments to action. The actions are not inconsistent with each other and the organisation is capable of addressing them all, but to do so it needs to

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place them within a framework that staff and members find coherent and memorable.

Themes

The sets of themes that emerge from JMT and from the Leadership/EMT sessions are set out below:

JMT	Leadership/EMT
• Understand where we are now, as a basis from which to build. • Improve communication with staff, customers, members etc • Change the culture / Introduce a 'feel good' factor • Overcoming resistance to change • Develop staff • Develop Joint Management Team • Define and focus on priorities and key plans	• Customer focus • Delivering excellent services • Value for money • Developing our people • Community leadership

While there is clear overlap between the two sets of themes, one message which emerges from the JMT session is the need to have a clearer framework in which to set our other plans (this has also been a theme in the staff group meetings).

There are – in terms of organisational development – five key themes into which all of the activities of the council can be set:

Excellence	Delivering high quality services, which meet the needs of the recipients and the wider community and represent value for money.
People	Ensuring that we enable the people in the organisation to deliver excellence through appropriate rewards, development and empowerment
Customers	Exceeding the expectations of our customers in our ability to tackle the issues that matter to them effectively, responsively and speedily
Community	Leading and representing the community at all levels, maximising our ability as a council to secure the best available future for Uttlesford
Communication	Increasing our ability as an organisation to deliver all of the above by effective two-way communication between UDC as a whole, members, managers, staff, partners, stakeholders and government at all levels.

In order to make the five themes memorable and easily repeated, they can be captured in the diagram in Appendix 1.

Plans and progress

These five themes will be used to structure this year's service plans – each element giving rise to certain key questions for managers and members to consider in developing those plans. For example, some key questions are:

Excellence	• What standard of service should we deliver?
	• At what cost??
	• How can we deliver what we want at a cost that is acceptable?
Customers	• How do we know what people want?
	• How do we know if they are getting it?
People	• What skills do people need to deliver the service to the standard required?
Community	• What issues are coming up?
	• How will we handle them?
Communication	• Who needs to know?
	• What do they need to know?
	• How will we tell them?
	• How will we find out what they think, want, need?

And the underpinning questions to all themes being firstly, "Where are we now?" and then "How do we get from where we are, to where we want to be?" The action plan suggested from the EMT/Leadership awayday is a good example of how we can fit existing plans in to this model. The appended version of the plan sets out which theme or themes each action addresses.

October 9 awayday

We have an opportunity now to bring the whole picture together, making necessary changes and incorporating them into a revised set of actions. This will be the focus of the October 9 awayday for all members and JMT. Support has been offered to political groups in advance of those sessions to enable the range of political opinions to consider their views on the issues before us, and there have been ongoing discussions in officer forums which will enable JMT members to share their views at the October 9 event.
The expected outcomes from October 9 are:

- Agreement on the five themes;
- Endorsement of an action plan;
- An agreed mechanism to take the whole agenda forward in a way which supports wide member and officer involvement but is consistent with effective management of the plan and a focus on delivery.
- An identification of how we prioritise resources to ensure we are delivering on what is most important.

Members and officers have already been invited to the event, a facilitator has been engaged to ensure that all of us have the opportunity to participate fully and effectively in the discussions.
Recommendation

That the Committee note the contents of the report and the arrangements for the awayday on October 9 and agree the expected outcomes from that day.

Appendix 1: The Uttlesford Excellence Model
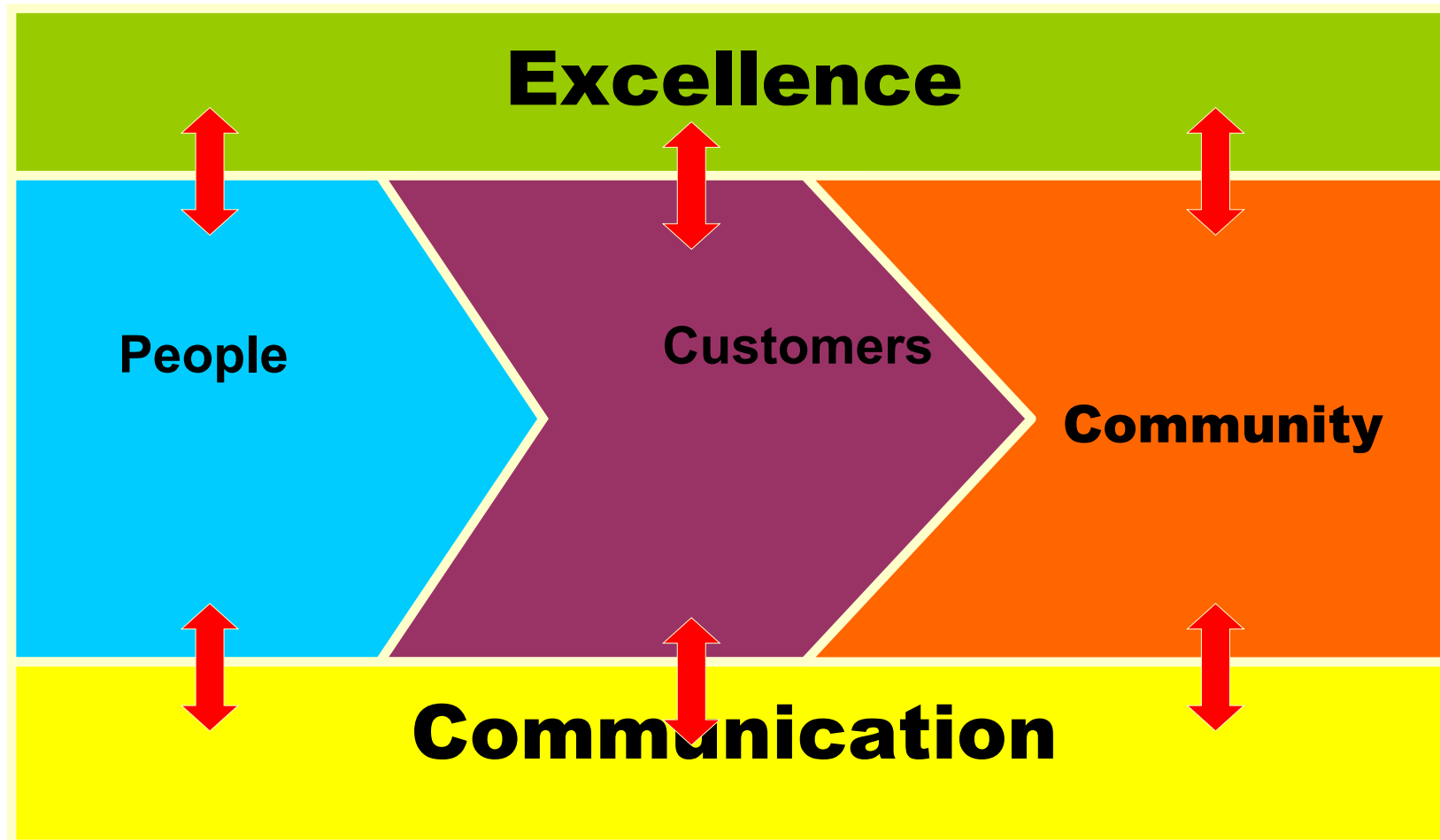
Appendix 2: Action Plan from Leadership/EMT Awayday

The actions listed below (with those who volunteered for lead responsibilities) are the product of the joint awayday. Many have been progressing over the last three months and were already in plans, others require further action. They are presented here in the themes set out in the report above, clustered by issues with associated actions. The list is not a comprehensive action plan and will be further refined on October 9.

Excellence

Defining and identifying excellence

- Define our standards (Michael Perry)
- Undertake gap analysis (Cllr Morson, Michael Perry)
- Appropriate people development and reward systems (See under people)

Promoting value for money by eliminating wasteful practices

- Undertake business process engineering with full involvement of staff (Cllr Jones, Mike Brean, John Mercer)
- Promote a model of excellence such as EFQM in a simplified form (Alasdair Bovaird)

Increase understanding of money management within the council

- More education on the issue for all staff and members (Cllr Gayler, Phil O'Dell)
- Implement new financial management system (Phil O'Dell)
- Undertake prioritisation exercise

Promote greater clarity as to who is responsible for financial planning decisions

- Move to longer term financial planning (Phil O'Dell)
- Greater challenge to existing resource use
- Increased flexibility in use of staff resources through secondment, release to project work etc. (Cllr Gayler, Phil O'Dell, Carole Hughes)

People

Encourage team involvement in the big picture

- Review the induction programme for both members and staff (JMT Sub-group)

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- Design, create and resource a coherent member and staff development programme (JMT Sub-group)

Improve levels of trust within the organisation

- Manage change processes to ensure understanding (Cllr A Dean, Alasdair Bovaird)
- Empower staff by ensuring greater scope for decision-making at lower levels in the organisation (Alasdair Bovaird)

Identify and increase skill levels within the organisation

- Carry out a skills audit of staff and members (Carole Hughes, Sarah MacLagan)
- Promote people development through dedicated training and recruitment of trainees (Carole Hughes, JMT)

Reward culture

- Review systems to acknowledge and reward staff for performance (Carole Hughes, JMT)

Customer

Learn from best practice

- Target local authorities and private sector for comparators(Mike Brean, Diane Burridge)

Ensure understanding that the customer ethos applies to everyone

- Encourage greater customer contact (Cllr Morson, Mike Brean, Diane Burridge)
- Hold customer workshops (Mike Brean, Diane Burridge)
- Obtain external validation through government schemes such as charter mark (Mike Brean, Diane Burridge)
- Improve our practices and procedures to deliver customer service (Cllr Gayler, Mike Brean, Diane Burridge, John Mercer)
- Equip staff to deliver bad news as well as good (JMT group, Carole Hughes)

Community

- Define and present a vision for the community (Cllr A Dean)
- Communicate that vision clearly and effectively (Cllr Morson, Cllr Thawley, Sarah McLagan)

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- Develop ability to convey hard decisions (John Mitchell)
- Develop greater understanding of what we mean by 'leadership' (as part of development programme)

Communication

- Revive and promote internal communication through 'Grapevine'/Team briefings etc (Cllr Sell, Cllr Jones, Carole Hughes)
- Officer and members updates on local issues (Cllr Savage, John Mitchell)