

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 9 September 2014.

PRESENT: Councillor G J Bull – Chairman.

Councillors M G Baker, Mrs B E Boddington, J W Davies, G J Harlock, B Hyland, Ms L Kadic, M C Oliver and R J West.

APOLOGY: An Apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor I C Bates.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors J D Ablewhite, Mrs A D Curtis, D B Dew and D M Tysoe.

29. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 15th July 2014 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

30. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

31. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel considered and noted the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which had been prepared by the Executive Leader of the Council for the period 1st September 2014 to 31st January 2015. At the request of the Chairman, the Executive member for Strategic Planning and Housing updated the Panel on the current position with forthcoming items from the Planning division. It was also reported that the Carbon Management Plan had been delayed to December 2014.

32. GREEN HOUSE PROJECT - SALE OF HOUSES

(Councillor D M Tysoe, Executive Member for Operations and Environment, was in attendance for this item).

With the assistance of a report by the Environmental Team Leader (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Panel considered the future of the Green House properties located in St Ives and St Neots. By way of background, Members were reminded that the Council had bought the properties to demonstrate home energy saving measures and to provide a mechanism to deliver the Green Deal initiative. However, it was reported that the properties had now served their purpose and there was less demand for the educational service they provided. With this in mind it was proposed to market the

properties and seek the best offers for their sale.

Having been advised that the properties had provided an excellent educational resource and had received a lot of positive media coverage, Members were informed that it was the intention to market the St Neots property as soon as possible. However, given that further educational visits were planned for the St Ives property for several months it was recommended that the marketing of the house should be planning to achieve a completion date of March / April 2015. Details of the likely total cost of the properties to the Council over the lifetime of the project were provided.

In considering the contents of the report, Members questioned whether consideration had been given to retaining the Green Houses as part of the Council's forthcoming strategy to invest in capital assets in order to achieve a return. However, it was reported that the properties were not purchased for a commercial objective, that the rates of return on market housing were not comparable with those that could be obtained from commercial property and any capital receipts received from the sale would be reinvested in the latter. Members also discussed the change in building regulations relating to energy efficiency standards since the properties had first been built. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to:

- (a) agree to the sale of the two Green Houses with the St Neots property being sold as soon as possible and the St Ives Green House early next year, using a local agent and the best price sought; and
- (b) authorise the Head of Operations after consultation with the Executive Councillor for Resources, to accept the best offers for the sale of the properties

(At 19.20pm at the conclusion of the discussion on this item, Councillor B Hyland took his seat at the meeting).

33. CORPORATE PLAN 2014-16: PERFORMANCE MONITORING

(Councillors J D Ablewhite, Executive Leader of the Council and Councillor D B Dew, Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing, were in attendance for this item).

With the assistance of a report by the Policy and Performance Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Executive Leader, Councillor J D Ablewhite, presented the performance framework which would be used to measure progress against key activities and performance targets identified in the Council's Corporate Plan. Members' attention was drawn to the new data presentation format, which in due course would include an action column for each key action. It was hoped that this format would be easier for elected Members and members of the public to understand.

It was explained that the performance information had been split by

Strategic Themes and allocated as appropriate to the Overview and Scrutiny Panels. The Environmental Well-Being Panel would be responsible for monitoring the 'Enable Sustainable Growth' theme. It was anticipated that performance reports for quarter two would be submitted in November 2014. Members were informed that it was the intention that Executive Councillors would attend future Panel meetings to respond to questions that might arise on services within their respective portfolios. It was also expected that further information would be available regarding the forecast and predicted outturns at this time.

In welcoming the new format of the report, Members commented that it was easy to understand and could be readily traced back to the Corporate Plan. However, it was recommended that future reports should identify where targets had not been achieved and include comments on what was to be done to make improvements, whether the level of performance was to be accepted and the implications of not achieving the target.

In terms of the actions within the Panel's Strategic Theme, Members noted that work to update the Buildings at Risk Register was scheduled to commence in October and that the update to the Council's Design Guide was nearing conclusion. In response to a question by Councillor Mrs B E Boddington, the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing outlined the steps he had taken to encourage the provision of affordable housing through the development of rural exception sites. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

34. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel received and noted a report by the Scrutiny and Review Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), which contained details of studies being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Social Well-Being and Economic Well-Being. The Chairman reported that arrangements had been made for an Overview and Scrutiny 'Away Day' on 13th October 2014 at Hinchingsbrooke Country Park, which all Panel Members were encouraged to attend.

35. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS

The Panel received and noted a report by the Scrutiny and Review Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of actions taken in response to recent discussions and decisions. Members were informed that the Scrutiny and Review Manager shortly would be circulating possible dates for the Panel's site visits to the Great Fen and to the Alconbury Transfer Station and Waterbeach Waste Management Plant.

In terms of the Panel's work programme, it was reported that a further meeting of the Waste Collection Working Group would be convened once the survey work undertaken by the Head of Operations had

been completed. Dates for a meeting of the Flood Prevention Working Group would also be circulated.

With regard to the Panel's ongoing work on Rural Transport, Councillor Ms L Kadic drew attention to the consultation, which was currently being undertaken and was scheduled to conclude on 30th September 2014. Members were encouraged to respond where possible.

Following a suggestion by a Member, it was agreed that the impact of Facing the Future on the Council's licensing function should be added to the programme of studies. Given the current remits and responsibilities of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels, the Social Well-Being Panel could be involved with this work.

36. SCRUTINY

The Panel considered and noted the latest edition of the Decision Digest (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). The Chairman reported that it was planned to provide an update on the Shared Service for Building Control at the Panel's next meeting.

Chairman