

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in the CIVIC SUITE (LANCASTER/STIRLING ROOMS), PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 19 September 2023

PRESENT: Councillor S J Conboy – Chair.

Councillors L Davenport-Ray, S W Ferguson, M A Hassall, B A Mickelburgh, B M Pitt, T D Sanderson and S Wakeford.

APOLOGY: An Apology for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S L Taylor.

30 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 18th July and 24th August 2023 were approved as correct records and signed by the Chair.

31 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

32 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT, QUARTER 1 2023/24

With the aid of a report prepared by the Business Intelligence and Performance Manager and Performance and Data Analyst (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet reviewed updates on corporate project delivery, progress against Corporate Plan actions and results and forecasts of operational performance April to June 2023.

By way of background, the Executive Councillor for Customer Services introduced the report as having undergone a refresh – it now included time histories and a narrative from the Senior Leadership Team. Continued improvements would be made following suggestions from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth).

With regard to Appendix B, the Executive Councillor highlighted that PL5, 6, 12, 13, 14, 15 now had green ratings. PL3 and 4 had been resolved after high level intervention and would continue to be monitored. He reported that the Executive Councillor for Leisure, Waste and Street Scene would respond to a request for information with regard to PL2 from the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth).

Councillors Conboy, Davenport-Ray and Pitt, the Executive Leader and Executive Councillors for Climate and Environment and Community and Health, thanked staff for their efforts both in producing the report and in improving ratings. In particular, the Facilities Team were thanked for the anticipated 30% reduction in electricity and 22% reduction in gas against the baseline.

With regard to the status of PL3 and properties in Warboys, Councillor Davenport-Ray, the Executive Councillor for Climate and Environment, was informed by the Corporate Director that the Council was committed to delivering on housing needs. The application for Warboys was under review with constructive engagement with Longhurst and the community which the officer believed would be reflected in an updated planning application.

The Executive Leader, Councillor Conboy, commented that this report offered transparency and was an aid to staff as well as Councillors. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

That the Cabinet note the progress and performance during Quarter 1, as summarised in the Corporate Performance Report submitted and detailed in Appendices A, B and C.

33 SAWTRY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

With the aid of a report prepared by the Chief Planning Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet considered whether to act upon the examiner's report and accept the modifications proposed for the Sawtry Neighbourhood Plan and consequently progress to referendum.

By way of background, Councillor Sanderson, the Executive Councillor for Planning, reiterated and echoed compliments from the Ward Councillor regarding the work completed by Sawtry Parish Council. The Conservation Statement had not been produced but neighbourhood policies used landscape and townscape supplementary planning documents to guide proposals. Confirmation from landowners was still required for some development sites.

Councillor Ferguson, the Executive Councillor for Customer Services, promoted neighbourhood plans as a way for residents to influence their community.

The Executive Leader, Councillor Conboy, acknowledged that she had spoken to Sawtry Parish Council at the start of the neighbourhood planning process and was pleased to see the progression. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet agree that the District Council should act upon the Examiner's report and progress the Sawtry Neighbourhood Plan to referendum.

34 FINANCE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2023/24, QUARTER 1

With the aid of a newly formatted report prepared by the Director of Finance and Corporate Resources (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet reviewed the expenditure forecast and factors affecting expenditure and income known by the end of June 2023. The Director of Finance and Corporate Resources established that the new formatting had improved clarity of remaining resources and showed income as well as net expenditure. She recognised the increase in capital expenditure and the significant capital and revenue underspend which would be inputted into the reserve and distributed or spent prior to grant expiry.

The shortfall in commercial investment income had been driven by refurbishments at Fareham Offices, which aimed to reflect changes to demand and improve the building's energy efficiency. There was already interest in this site, which was scheduled for completion by January 2024.

The Executive Councillor for Finance and Resources, Councillor Mickelburgh, explained that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Growth) had complimented the improved transparency in the new formatting and, following input, it had been determined that some reference numbers would remain within the report, such as for the Public Work Loans Boards. The Panel had also learned the timing of the second bin charge had reduced income as it had been for a shorter period.

Councillors Davenport-Ray, Pitt and Hassall - Executive Councillors for Climate and Environment, Community and Health and Corporate and Shared Services - complimented the work of the Facilities Team in making savings on electricity and gas.

The Executive Councillor for Corporate and Shared Services, Councillor Hassall, was informed that the commercial estate in St Neots that was formerly Frankie and Benny's was open for tenants and a lease was being surrendered for the former Prezzo site. The Executive Councillor hoped this news would alleviate residents' anxiety. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet considered and noted the financial performance to the end of June 2023, as detailed in the report now submitted.

35 HINCHINGBROOKE COUNTRY PARK

The Cabinet received and noted the minutes of the Hinchingsbrooke Country Park Joint Group held on 21st July 2023.

Following its income increase, Councillor Davenport-Ray, the Executive Councillor for Climate and Environment, was optimistic for the future of the café. She also highlighted that satellite sites were common in Huntingdonshire and the park was a site for jobseeker Green Skills Projects.

The Executive Leader, Councillor Conboy, also promoted the Santa Paws event and praised the progress made at the Park.

The Executive Leader concluded the meeting, welcoming the new Chief Executive to her new role.

