

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH) held in Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 6 April 2022.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Corney – Chairman.
Councillors E R Butler, D B Dew, J P Morris, A Roberts and S Wakeford.

APOLOGY(IES): Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors B S Chapman, I D Gardener, Dr P L R Gaskin, M Haines, T D Sanderson and M Shellens.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors R Fuller and J Neish.

66. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd March 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

67. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

68. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel received and noted the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions (a copy of which has been appended in the Minute Book) which has been prepared by the Executive Leader for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st July 2022.

69. PROPOSED CAMBRIDGE CONGESTION CHARGE

By means of a report by the Strategic Growth Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Proposed Cambridge Congestion Charge was presented to the Panel.

Councillor Dew expressed concerns over the proposal due to the area of authority of the Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) and that were this to be presented as part of a bigger package from a County wide authority it would be easier to express support.

Following a question from Councillor Roberts, who agreed with Councillor Dew's comments, it was confirmed that the Council did not have prior knowledge of these proposals. Further to this, Councillor Roberts felt that a stronger tone should be expressed

in the proposed response to GCP in order to establish clarity in how this would affect the district and its residents.

Councillor Morris agreed with the previous comments but felt that the letter could be more balanced, with the two following inclusions:

- If a charge was to be introduced, public transport improvements would need to be made first so that people had an attractive alternative to driving.
- Emissions in Huntingdonshire would also be reduced, thus improving health by encouraging active travel, and bringing about improvements to the public transport network in the district.

The Panel agreed that these were sensible points and although already covered by the proposed letter could add clarity and were noted.

In response to Councillor Wakeford, who queried the purpose of sending the letter at this time, the Panel heard that by sending the letter the voice of Huntingdonshire would be heard and future dialogue and engagement would be encouraged for the future.

Councillor Wakeford further queried the content of the letter as it was felt that these were points that the GCP should already be aware of. The Panel were assured that by sending the letter, the Council would be ensuring that the GCP are aware of the issues facing Huntingdonshire residents and that the Council be consulted as the project progresses.

Following concerns from the Panel over the authority of the GCP and the geographical reach of the partnerships authority, the Panel heard that constitutionally the GCP do not have authority in the district and that the proposed letter looks to seek clarity on this point.

Although there was wide support from the Panel on the theme of active travel within the district, doubts and concerns were expressed that this was something which the GCP could deliver.

Having welcomed the report, the Panel thereupon
RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be encouraged to endorse the recommendations contained within the report.

70. MARKET TOWNS TASK & FINISH STUDY

By means of a report by the Democratic Services Officer (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book) the Market Towns Task & Finish study was presented to the Panel.

Councillor Roberts highlighted points 5.4, and 5.7 to 5.10 from the report as the real standout points of the study and thanked both the Ramsey Neighbourhood Trust and the Officers involved for their help and support throughout the study.

Following a query from Councillor Wakeford regarding recommendation g, the Panel heard that this related to a Department Store from Cambridge advertising in the windows of an empty unit in St Neots, encouraging residents to shop in Cambridge.

Following a question by Councillor Morris, the Panel heard that the study hadn't looked at the pedestrianised town centre of Huntingdon and cycle access to the town.

Having widely praised and expressed support for the report, the Panel thereupon

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to endorse the recommendations contained within the Report.

71. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

With the aid of a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme was presented to the Panel.

In noting the end of the municipal year and the forthcoming elections, the Panel expressed its gratitude to both the Chairman and Vice Chairman for their leadership and support over the course of their tenure.

Chairman

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