

## **COMMENTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH)**

### **MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME SUMMER UPDATE**

- 6.1 The Panel discussed the Market Towns Programme Summer Update at its meeting on 8th June 2022.
- 6.2 Councillors Cawley and Gardener queried the involvement of residents living in rural areas surrounding Huntingdonshire's market towns as they did not appear to have been consulted during the process so far. It was noted that these residents are users of the market towns and important in their continued growth. The Panel heard that the new administration would be taking a proactive approach and welcome input and feedback on the process so far and would take this point into consideration and assess the feasibility of including this.
- 6.3 Following a further enquiry from Councillor Gardener, the Panel were assured that the new administration would be assessing the progress to date and would communicate with members and residents as this develops and moves forward.
- 6.4 Following a question from Councillor Cawley, the Panel heard that there were recognised deadlines surrounding funding that had been secured to date but that forward momentum was being maintained to ensure the effectiveness of and maximise these opportunities for residents. The Panel were further assured that there would be a planned stepping up of stakeholder engagement to ensure residents be included rather than excluded.
- 6.5 Having heard further concerns be expressed over the timescales involved, the Panel heard that despite having inherited an ambitious timescale, the administration planned to continue to work towards deadlines already set and maximise funding opportunities for the benefit of the district and its residents.
- 6.6 Councillor Corney observed that stakeholders within communities are constantly changing and the Panel were advised that officers monitored this regularly. The Panel heard that a summer of engagement was planned to further increase engagement with stakeholders and that further detail on this would be brought to the Panel at a future meeting. The Panel were encouraged to share feedback with officers on identified stakeholders within the communities they represent.
- 6.7 Councillor Cawley questioned why point 11.1 of the report stated that the recently approved Environmental Principles were to be reviewed as these had been agreed to be very robust when agreed by the Council only six months prior. The Panel were assured that the administration wished to ensure that the points were as ambitious and practical as possible and any updates on this matter would flow through the democratic cycle of meetings.
- 6.8 Councillor Gray enquired on the thoughts and priorities of the newly appointed Executive Councillor in moving this body of work forward. The Panel heard that a balance would be struck between delivering new opportunities which aligned with the current administrations principles and maximising advantages and funding of the work already obtained. It was noted that the new Cabinet were grateful to the

previous administration for the positive position achieved to date and would build upon this good work.

- 6.9 The Panel welcomed the report and thanked the officers for their diligence and hard work in bringing these opportunities forward for the district. The Panel encourage the Cabinet to endorse the recommendations within the report.