

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 on Thursday, 5 March 2015.

PRESENT: Councillor R Harrison – Chairman.

Councillors P L E Bucknell, G J Bull,
E R Butler, Mrs A Dickinson, I D Gardener,
T Hayward, B Hyland and P G Mitchell.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors D Harty and P D Reeve.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor S Cawley.

87. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 5th February 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

88. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interests were received.

89. 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). Having been reminded by the Chairman of the purpose of the document, Members were advised that the Estates Strategy would be submitted to their meeting in June.

90. REQUEST FOR DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO PROCURE A NEW SOFTWARE SYSTEM FOR THE HOME-LINK SCHEME AND HOUSING ADVICE AND OPTIONS SERVICE

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Customer Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking authorisation to proceed with the procurement of a new software system for the Home-Link scheme and Housing Advice and Options service. Members noted there was no option but to procure a new system and the revenue and capital costs associated with it. Having expressed support for the recommendations contained in the report, it was decided that the Panel should carry out further work on the associated costs and savings.

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to approve the recommendations contained in the report now submitted.

91. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

92. PATHFINDER HOUSE - USE OF SPACE AND LETTINGS

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Resources (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book). Having been informed of the responsibilities of each party for maintenance and for infrastructure and furniture, the provisions for adjusting the terms of the agreements and access and security matters, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to approve the recommendations contained in the report now submitted.

93. RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be re-admitted to the meeting.

94. EXECUTIVE PORTFOLIO FOR ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

Pursuant to Minute No. 83/14, the Chairman welcomed Councillor S Cawley, Executive Councillor for Organisational Change and Development, who had been invited to the meeting to discuss his plans for his portfolio.

Councillor Cawley informed the Panel that the Leader of the Council was of the view that the organisation needed to improve its robustness and employees' morale and that employees were key to the delivery of services. The introduction of the new portfolio demonstrated the Cabinet's commitment to these issues. Councillor Cawley's role would be to:

- Give strategic support to the Corporate Management Team;
- Embed the Workforce Development Strategy into the organisation;
- Introduce a new appraisal process;
- Promote talent management and succession planning;
- Oversee the Council's relationship with LGSS;
- Support the Staff Council
- Improve the staff survey and make use of its results, and
- Ensure the "people agenda" was considered in every debate that took place.

The Panel discussed the effect of the new portfolio on existing

Executive Councillors' responsibilities for staff matters and on the Employment Panel. Members also considered LGSS, the staff survey, the First Contact counselling service, the role of the union and the use of 360° appraisals. Councillor Cawley invited Members to establish a dialogue on staff matters.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Cawley for attending the meeting and offered the Panel's assistance with the Executive Councillor's work.

95. WORKPLAN STUDIES

A report containing details of studies, which were being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Social and Environmental Well-Being was received and noted. A copy of the report is appended in the Minute Book.

In response to a question by Councillor P L E Bucknell about the Environmental Well-Being Panel's work on Waste Collection Policies, Councillor G J Bull reported that he would be pursuing this matter with the Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment.

96. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROGRESS

The Panel received and noted a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) outlining the progress that had been made on matters, which had previously been discussed. Members discussed the forthcoming Investment Strategy. It was suggested that the Panel should have an input into the Strategy at an early stage and that a workshop should be held immediately prior to the next meeting for this purpose. To start their discussions off, the Panel asked for brief statements from Cllr J A Gray on what he was considering and from the Head of Resources on treasury management.

Councillor T Hayward reported that he would provide an update on the Budget Working Group at the next meeting.

97. SCRUTINY

The Panel received the latest edition of the Decision Digest (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book).

Chairman