

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, 8th October 2015.

PRESENT: Councillor G J Bull – Chairman.

Councillors T D Alban, Mrs A D Curtis, L George, D Harty, B Hyland, M F Shellens and J E White.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors P L E Bucknell, R S Farrer and J M Palmer.

36. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 3rd September 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

37. MEMBER'S INTERESTS

Councillor T Alban declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to item 8, as an employee of NHS Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

38. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel received 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 for the period 1st October 2015 to 31st January 2016.

The Corporate Director (Services) advised Members that there has been cause to request authorisation from the Chairman of the Panel for a decision to be taken by Cabinet to be treated as a matter of urgency and therefore not be considered by the Panel. This decision relates to procurement of a new financial management system, with a proposal that this is undertaken jointly with Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils. These Councils have already made decisions in principle to procure a new system. The new financial management system will enable improved and more efficient financial reporting. Cabinet will be requested to agree to procurement activity at their October meeting as the process is due to begin soon.

The Panel queried the costs involved, the implementation date and how the new system will be financed. Members were informed that exact costs cannot be confirmed until after the procurement exercise but that the new system can be funded from the Capital budget. The target for implementing a new system is October 2016.

39. PROJECT MANAGEMENT SELECT COMMITTEE - 6 MONTH REVIEW

The Programme and Project Manager and the Executive Councillor for Resources presented a six month review report on projects at the delivery stage, as requested by the Project Management Select Committee.

The Select Committee had requested an update on the In-Cab Technology project however this project had been placed on hold until a review of the core processes and systems of the Waste Service has been completed. Members were informed that the Operations Database containing all details of the collections service (property details, bins and routing and rounding schedules) needs to be replaced as soon as possible as it is now an unsupported system. The replacement database will enable links to the Council's CRM (customer relationship management) system and In-Cab Technology. Procurement of In-Cab Technology is therefore now expected to commence in early 2016, with the technology likely to be introduced around the autumn of 2016.

Members were then given an update on project activity over the last six months, including an overview of compliance with corporate project management guidance such as recording information on Sharepoint project sites. The Customer Service Manager then gave a demonstration on how the Sharepoint site for the new website project has been used to manage the project and to share information:

- The site provides an overview on the status of projects and who is involved as project managers and membership of project teams and project boards;
- The site provides tools and templates to assist in managing projects;
- Project team members can store everything that they are using on the site so that the whole team are working on the same versions of documents and documents can be accessed when individual officers are not available;
- Project board and team meeting agendas and notes can be recorded;
- Details saved are easily exportable to Excel if necessary;
- Lists are set up for logging of issues, risks or areas that will need additional work or to be followed-up after the project is completed;
- The site can be used to share links to other projects or websites.

The Customer Service Manager was asked about security for the Sharepoint site and informed the Members that anyone on the Council's network can access the site but that access to individual project sites, libraries and even individual documents can be restricted by amending permission settings. All information related to a specific project will generally be viewable and editable by members of the project team and there is also a clear audit trail which can be used to identify who has made changes and when.

The Panel were informed that staff have access to the network but Councillors do not due to public sector network restrictions, which require the Council to follow a code of compliance which prevents this. Information for Members is included on the extranet site and performance reports also serve to provide information to Councillors. Officers can provide information on request.

The Panel noted the report, with the Chairman commenting that there had been an improvement in how projects are now being managed.

40. SHARED SERVICES UPDATE

The Corporate Director (Services) presented an update on Shared Services to the Panel. The timing of the presentation was considered to be opportune following the completion of the TUPE consultation and the TUPE transfer of staff on 1st October 2015. The partnership with Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire District Councils is now branded as “3C Shared Services”.

The Corporate Director (Services) described the transition planning that had taken place and the next steps planned in integrating services. Information on the Governance model, the role of Members and the sovereignty guarantee was also covered in the presentation.

The Panel questioned whether a March 2016 target for ICT was too ambitious. Members were informed that the transition target is March–May 2016, when a new structure to deliver ICT services should be in place but that delivery of items in the service catalogue would take longer. There are around 60 posts in the new ICT shared services.

The flexibility for withdrawing from or adding other local authorities into shared services arrangements was discussed. The Panel was informed that the partnership agreement was for five years with a review in year three and an exit strategy would be included. Flexibility already exists so the scope of shared services could be widened relatively easily. Others could be involved on either a partnership or a contractual basis, as appropriate. A disagreement resolution process will be included in the partnership agreement.

Members queried whether the sovereignty guarantee would only run for the five year life of the partnership or if it could be extended to cover the whole life of the partnership, if longer. The Panel was told that this suggestion for the guarantee to last the entire term would be considered in setting governance arrangements, although changes need to be agreed by all authorities.

The Panel thanked the Corporate Director (Services) for her comprehensive presentation.

41. WORKPLAN STUDIES

The Panel received and noted a report (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 Environmental Well-Being.

42. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROGRESS

With the aid of a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel reviewed the progress of its activities since the last meeting.

43. SCRUTINY

The 158th Edition of the Decision Digest was received and noted by the Panel.

Chairman