

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (CORPORATE AND STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK) held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 6th February 2008.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.

Councillors K M Baker, M G Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, P J Downes, J A Gray, Mrs P A Jordan, M F Newman and R J West.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J W Davies and D Harty.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor L M Simpson.

22. MINUTES

It was agreed to defer this Item to the next meeting of the Panel.

23. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

24. GROWING SUCCESS: CUSTOMER SERVICE, COMMUNICATIONS & MARKETING AND CONSULTATION & ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

With the aid of a report by the Chief Officers' Management Team (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel considered the Customer Service, Communications and Marketing and Consultation and Engagement Strategies, which had been reviewed following the adoption of a revised version of Growing Success, the Council's Corporate Plan, in June 2007.

Members were informed that the Strategies were mutually supportive and inherently connected in terms of the objectives that they were seeking to promote. The Panel was advised that the Strategies would be reviewed every three years, and the respective action plans revised on an annual basis.

With regard to the revised Customer Service Strategy, the Panel was acquainted with details of the "Customer Insight" concept which would be adopted across the Council and which sought to identify the needs of customers thereby enabling the Council to provide services in a way that met those needs. The Panel was advised that the formation of a Customer Services Team under the responsibility of a single Head of Service together with the effective use of resources would support the delivery of the Strategy. The action plan for the Strategy had yet to be finalised but would be presented to the Cabinet at its February meeting.

The Panel was informed of the background to the decision to expand and strengthen the former Communications and Consultation Strategy by creating two separate strategies for Communications and Marketing and for Consultation and Engagement. Members were acquainted with the measures contained in the Communications and Marketing Strategy to tailor information on services to the needs of individuals and to market services, particularly those that were subject to competition.

In discussing the Consultation and Engagement Strategy, Members were advised that it had been informed by new requirements on the Council to engage with communities. As part of this, the Strategy was intended to support Councillors in their roles. Members commented on the need to improve the way they were involved in the Council's consultation process.

In response to a question by a Member, it was reported that the Strategies were intended primarily for internal use but that an executive summary of each would be made available for public use via the website. Having noted that the Council's performance against the Strategies would be reported through the performance management system, it was

RESOLVED

that the Customer Service, Communications and Marketing and Consultation and Engagement Strategies be endorsed for submission to the Cabinet.

Chairman