

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 2nd June 2015.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.

Councillors D Brown, R Fuller, T Hayward, P Kadewere, Mrs R E Mathews, D J Mead, M C Oliver and Mrs D C Reynolds.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors M Francis, A J Hardy and Mrs P A Jordan.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of the Panel held on 7th April and 20th May 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest received from those Members that were present.

6. 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 has been prepared by the Executive Leader for the period 1st April 2015 to 31st July 2015.

The Chairman welcomed new Members to the Panel and reminded those present that Officer contacts are available should Members require additional information regarding subject matter or decisions included in the Notice of Key Executive Decisions.

7. CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE MONITORING (QUARTER 4)

The Corporate Team Manager presented the Corporate Plan Performance Monitoring Report (Quarter 4) to the Panel. It was explained to Members that the Key Actions and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will remain relatively unchanged throughout the year, allowing Members to clearly see any progress that is made on a consistent basis. The only exception would occur if the Corporate Plan is altered; in that case, some KPIs and Key Actions may be changed. Members were also informed that the report for Quarter 4 as presented, may also be viewed as an end of year report.

The Corporate Team Manager then talked the Panel through a new colour-coding system which has been used for the Summary of Key Actions as included in Appendix A. The colour-coding system used throughout the Appendices shows progress made in a simple and

clear manner.

Turning the Panel's attention to Appendix B, the Corporate Team Manager went through the information in the Report, explaining that the tables included depict the Status, Definition, Date, Portfolio Holder and the Heads of Service for each Key Action, and also acts as a progress update. Narratives within the report provide more detailed information on progress, and the Key Performance Indicators are also marked with the Green, Amber and Red colour-coding system.

A Member of the Panel asked about the colour-coding system and questioned whether the criteria against which performance is monitored are consistent, and what those criteria are measured against. The Corporate Team Manager explained that the Key Actions listed act as a narrative and a more subjective than the KPIs, which are clear and fixed goals.

The Corporate Director for Services informed the Panel that the Key Actions originate from the Corporate Plan, and Objectives from the Council. It was also noted that the Officer route for each Key Action (Appendix B), allows the targets to be challenged to see if they are a fair reflection of performance before they are submitted for Scrutiny.

The Panel queried the "Empower Local Communities" section of the report (page 22) asking whether the targets here are realistic in relation to the support Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) provides Parish Councils when preparing Local Plans. The Head of Community informed the Panel that the support provided by HDC for Local Plans is engaged on request from the Parishes themselves, and that the targets are achievable.

Members moved on to the section within the report entitled "Food Establishments" (page 23) and the Panel were informed that the figure relating to whether those establishments within the District are "Broadly compliant" is the percentage of food establishments in total. The Head of Community agreed to make the report clearer in relation to these figures.

Members of the Panel agreed that the report is very clear and is useful as a 'snapshot' of the Council's performance.

8. CUSTOMER SERVICES MONITORING REPORT

Councillor Tysoe introduced the Customer Services Monitoring Report to the Panel. It was explained to Members that the report is very much a legacy report, questioning whether current policies and practices are fit for purpose as in the future senior officers will be asked to do more with less.

The Head of Customer Services addressed the Panel to provide further background information on the report. It was noted by the Panel that the report also highlighted issues, such as recruitment and problems faced when more experienced staff leave Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC).

It was suggested by the Panel that terms used within the document,

for example, 'LEAN' working, be explained and made clearer within the text. It was agreed that the text would be altered to reflect this feedback.

A Member of the Panel asked the Head of Customer Service whether plans are being developed to minimise the impact of experienced staff leaving HDC on the department. The Panel were informed that there are new training plans in place for new starters so as to avoid service provision interruptions.

The Chairman of the Panel queried the regularity of the report, suggesting that it would be more effective for the report to come to the Panel annually. Members were in agreement; going forward the report will be received every twelve months.

The Panel requested an update on the development of the new HDC website and the proposed autumn relaunch early in 2016; The Head of Customer Service confirmed that this would be possible.

9. CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY

It was noted by Members that the report on the Customer Service Strategy looks at the whole Council rather than the Customer Service Department alone, and it is intended that the information included is clear and useful. The new strategy is being constructed by revisiting the Corporate Plan, the Code of Conduct and development within the Council (including savings that need to be achieved).

Members were made aware that Appendix 1 of the report is a first draft of what the developing plan will look like, and that the authors of the report have worked to make the language as simple as possible, making the strategy accessible to those both inside and outside of the Council.

Positive comments were made by members regarding the strategy 'on a page' and the Corporate Director of Services talked through the different areas of change for this report, including:

- A clear understanding of what works in terms of customer service
- Stakeholder engagement within the development of the strategy
- Service developments – how we do what we do
- Working with various external groups during development, using every opportunity to get customer feedback.

The Panel questioned how the 135 Action Plans from the previous Corporate Plan will be incorporated into the strategy. Members noted that rather than appearing on the strategy itself, all Customer Service actions are available within separate Service Plans and can be accessed by Heads of Service if required.

The Head of Customer Services addressed a question from the Panel regarding possible timescales for the completion of the Customer Service Strategy, informing Members that the team are looking at the document being ready in the next financial year (April 2016).

10. PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS, INCLUDING FACING THE FUTURE

The report on Programmes and Projects was presented to the Panel. The report is intended as an update for Members on changes to the way projects are managed within Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC), including the new role of the Programmes and Projects Manager.

The Panel were informed that all existing projects have been and then allocated to the most appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

It was explained to the Panel that project documents will now be held within the SharePoint site, and Councillors can request documents from Officers.

Following comments from the Members, the Programmes and Projects Manager explained the diagram within Appendix B, which is intended to show the clear processes that projects need to adhere to before and after authorisation.

Councillors queried how the role of Programmes and Projects Manager will be benchmarked as it is a new position. The Panel were informed that one measure of the post will be project delivery, which itself will be more visible making project management easier to understand.

11. 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 Economic Well-Being and Environmental Well-Being.

Members queried Waste Collection Policy, asking the Corporate Director of Service whether lessons have been learnt from previous issues. Members were informed that the current restructure of the Operations department is taking place, with comprehensive proposals being out forward. A formal consultation will follow. The Panel noted that the working groups for Waste Collection policy will be put on hold until the restructure is complete.

Members of the Panel requested an update on the Delivery of Advisory Services across the district. It was noted by Members that there may be the opportunity in the future to receive a presentation from voluntary organisations that have received grants, with the chance to question them on where the funds are being spent.

12. 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.

It was confirmed that the Children's Mental Health representative will attend the next Panel meeting on 7th July 2015.

13. SCRUTINY

The 155th Edition of the Decision Digest was received and noted.

Chairman