

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMY AND GROWTH) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 9th March 2017.

PRESENT: Councillor D B Dew – Chairman.
Councillors Mrs B E Boddington,
I D Gardener, L George, B Hyland,
T D Sanderson, Mrs J Tavener,
D R Underwood and K D Wainwright.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors E R Butler, D J Mead and D Watt.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor R Harrison.

65. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 2nd February 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

66. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

67. 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 March 2017 to 30th June 2017.

68. HUNTINGDONSHIRE DESIGN GUIDE

With the aid of a report by the Planning Service Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Huntingdonshire Design Guide was considered by the Panel. Accompanying the report was a PowerPoint presentation on the Design Guide.

The Panel was informed that the existing Design Guide is ten years old, however as Planning legislation and guidance has altered the Council has decided to update the guide. The document has been developed over the course of four years and sets out the reasons why development should be designed in a particular way.

A consultation on the Design Guide took place over a six week period between October 2016 and December 2016. A total of 42 comments were received from 21 consultees which has led to a number of amendments within the Design Guide. The Panel was given full details of what sections had been amended as a result of the consultation.

Members were informed that once the document has been adopted by Cabinet, the interactive version will be produced and uploaded online for use by Officers, Members, customers and the public.

A concern was raised that the only town not to be mentioned within the Design Guide was Godmanchester. In response, the Panel was assured that a reference to Godmanchester would be inserted into the Design Guide before it is presented at Cabinet on 16th March 2017.

In response to a question, how do you envisage that the documents will be used by Parish and Town Council Planning Committees, Members were informed that the Design Guide will be an interactive document intended to be used online. The document will lead the user through the proposal interactively and will take them through to the pages that are required.

Several Members raised concerns regarding perforated garage doors and in particular the security risk and the homeowner's ability to change the doors. In response the Panel was informed that the purpose of the perforated garage doors is to encourage homeowners to park their vehicle in the garage and not use it for storage, in terms of security the doors would be secure. The ability of the homeowner to alter the door would depend on permitted development rights and conditions attached to the planning applications.

A further concern was raised that when a vehicle was not parked within the garage it would be a sign that the homeowner was not at home however in response the Member was informed that this would not be any more of a sign than a vehicle not parked on the drive.

Members were informed that in regards to parking the Council has seen what has worked and what hasn't and that has been considered in the development of the Design Guide.

Following a question about the use of the Design Guide by developers and planning applicants, the Panel was informed that as soon as the Cabinet has decided to adopt the Design Guide developers and planning applicants would have to consider and use the document.

In response to a question asked in regards to the relationship of the Design Guide, Neighbourhood Plan and Local Plan with each other the Panel was informed that the idea is that all the policies are applied and work together, however in terms of any conflict the most recently adopted of either the Local Plan or a Neighbourhood Plan would take precedence.

The Panel welcomed the Design Guide but have asked the Cabinet to consider Members' comments in respect to garage doors.

(At 7.05pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor L George entered the meeting.)

69. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel received and noted a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of studies being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels Communities and Environment and Performance and Customers.

(At 7.43pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor R Harrison left the meeting and did not return.)

70. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROGRESS

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

The Chairman has informed the Panel that he has been in contact with the Executive Councillor for Operations regarding the issue of car parking fees and asked if the issue could be brought back to the Panel before deciding to go out to consultation. A Member raised the point that the Cabinet have not yet rescinded the decision to consult on the fees presented to the Panel at its meeting in October 2016.

Members have decided to invite the Executive Leader to a meeting of the Panel to discuss devolution after the election of the Combined Authority Mayor.

The Panel has appointed Councillor I D Gardener to the Housing Working Group. The Head of Development has stated that he and the Executive Councillor for Housing and Regulatory Services will work with Housing Working Group on the Housing Strategy before it is presented to the Panel in June 2017.

Chairman