

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND CUSTOMERS) held in Civic Suite 0.1B, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 7th September 2016.

- PRESENT: Councillor M F Shellens – Chairman.
- Councillors Mrs A Dickinson, Mrs L A Duffy,
S Greenall, Mrs R E Mathews,
Mrs D C Reynolds, Mrs S L Taylor,
R G Tuplin, R J West and J E White.
- APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors P L E Bucknell and D Harty.
- IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors R C Carter, S Cawley, J A Gray, J M Palmer, P D Reeve and D M Tysoe.

16. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance and Customers) held on 6th June 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

18. 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 September 2016 to 31st December 2016.

19. RE:FIT PROGRAMME - ENERGY CONSERVATION MEASURES FOR ONE LEISURE

With the aid of a report by the Interim Head of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Re:Fit Programme – Energy Conservation Measures for One Leisure report was presented to the Panel. Members were informed that a study has been carried out and identified that carrying out the scheme would produce a significant energy savings with a rate of return on the investment of 9 years.

The Panel was informed that the Council is in negotiation to renew the leases of One Leisure Huntingdon, One Leisure St Neots and One Leisure Ramsey. It is recommended that the scheme should only proceed once those leases have been secured.

Following a query on why shouldn't the Council proceed without

securing the leases, the Panel was informed that in order to maximise the savings the Council receives the scheme needs to be completed as a complete package as the Council will benefit from the economies of scale.

In response to a question on who are the Council negotiating with, the Panel were informed that negotiations for One Leisure Huntingdon are with Huntingdon Town Council and negotiations for One Leisure St Neots and One Leisure Ramsey are with academies.

A conversation ensued regarding training on the building energy management system and Members were informed that training will be thorough and ongoing and will be given to the appropriate members of staff which will increase resilience within the service.

Following a question regarding the breakdown of equipment, it was confirmed that if the equipment breaks during the warranty period then there won't be any cost to the Council. However the Council does have the responsibility to properly maintain equipment.

In terms of the leases, Members were informed that the Council have a long enough lease on four of the seven leisure centres so that the works would be paid back in energy savings. The Council are close to an agreement for the One Leisure St Neots lease for a period of 25 years with the agreement expected in six to eight weeks. In regards to One Leisure Huntingdon there is an agreement on the terms of discussion. The Council are no closer to an agreement on the lease for One Leisure Ramsey.

Members were informed that the scheme was a capital programme with a spend spread over the course of two years. The Panel would receive regular update reports monitoring the progress of the scheme and the savings achieved.

Following a discussion over the footfall, the benefit of upgrading facilities and the rate of return, some Members expressed concern that the rate of return on One Leisure St Ives Outdoor was not sufficient and stated that they would like the project figures reworked to not include facility. The Panel,

RESOLVED

- 1) to recommend to Cabinet that the Council should commit £107,889 to the scheme in order to realise the full potential of the programme however this should be subject to securing the renewal of leases on One Leisure Huntingdon, One Leisure St Neots and One Leisure Ramsey and,
- 2) that the Cabinet should consider the benefits of the scheme without One Leisure St Ives Outdoor.

20. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT 2016/17 - QUARTER 1

With the aid of a report by the Head of Resources and the Corporate Team Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Integrated Performance Report 2016/17 Quarter 1 was presented to the Panel. Members noted that currently 33 out of 39 Key Actions are

rated green which was recognised as a good performance.

In light of updates regarding the status of 3C IT projects, Members were given the up to date information in relation to the Corporate project status which includes 15 projects (39%) rated as green, 5 projects (13%) rated as amber and 7 projects (18%) rated as red.

Following a comment highlighting the increasing level of homelessness as a result of private landlords evicting tenants on benefits, the Executive Councillor for Strategic Resources stated that the Cabinet are eager to find the right solution to the issue.

In response to a question regarding the amount of resources allocated to the commercial investment strategy instead of finding a solution to homelessness, Members were reminded that the commercial investment strategy generates revenue which helps pay for the provision of Council services.

The Panel noted that there was threat to Coneygear Court (homeless shelter), however the Council are reviewing solutions. The Panel were reminded that the Council need to find a solution in the medium to longer term which involved the supply of affordable housing. Members thought that there needs to be a short term solution too and that Members are also responsible in the search for a solution.

Members were reminded that the District is not unique when it comes to the causes of homelessness as private landlords ending tenancies is the biggest cause of homelessness in England. In addition high rents mean that it is difficult for low earners or people on benefits to pay the rent.

Following a comment regarding the Housing Act, the Panel were informed that the Government have placed an emphasis on the creation of starter homes and as a result not enough social housing is being built. The Council do work with around 20 housing associations throughout the District to assist people who find themselves homeless.

The Panel were reminded that the key to finding a solution to homelessness is preventing homelessness to begin with. Members are encouraged to urge residents who find themselves in a situation where they could end up homeless to seek advice.

In response to a question regarding the use of mobile homes as temporary accommodation the Panel was thanked for the suggestion however the Council would face an issue of where to put the mobile homes.

Regarding the financial projections for the commercial investment strategy Members were reminded that property rental income only reflects what has been collected in quarter one.

Following a question on the Sport England investment into One Leisure St Neots 3G Artificial Pitch in relation to the delivery of Key Action 7, the Panel was informed that the funding won't be spent until the lease for One Leisure St Neots has been resolved.

In response to a question regarding why Performance Indicators 6 and 16 are annual measures instead of quarterly measures, Members were informed that Officers would clarify the reason and an explanation will be circulated.

It was highlighted that Performance Indicator 8 was not possible to measure however it was explained that a Housing Needs Analysis is completed once a site comes forward.

The Panel thought that the red status on Performance Indicator 10 was disappointing considering that the target between referral of Disabled Facilities Grants (DFGs) and completion of work is 28 weeks.

Members were concerned about the inclusion of Performance Indicator 17 when it appears the Council have little control over it. In response the Panel were informed that the Performance Indicator relates to the Corporate Priority of Enabling Communities and is designed to show how much support the Council gives to the community.

The Panel was keen to receive an update from those people who attended the EDGE event which assisted with the promotion of Apprenticeships however whilst it is not possible to obtain an update from attendees it is possible to share the feedback ratings that were received.

Following a question in relation to Key Action 22 and specifically the Wintringham Park application, Members were informed that the developer was offering 3% affordable housing so subsequently the Council's Development Management Committee rejected the application. The developer appealed and the planning inspector reviews the application and the decision on 9th May 2017.

In response to a question regarding Key Action 23 and the 5.3 years housing supply, the Panel was informed that the Council can't report sooner than December as the planning department writes to everyone who has planning permission and that is a process that take up to four months. Members were reminded that the Council is required to have a 5 year land supply.

Members believe that Performance Indicator 20 should be amended to only include food businesses that are open for business otherwise the indicator would be more difficult to turn green.

It was clarified to Members that Performance Indicator 26 only relates to grounds maintenance of Council owned land and not County Council land.

The Panel thought that the emphasis of Performance Indicator 28 was incorrect and the indicator should emphasis the successful collection of bins first time around.

In response to a question on why the In CAB Systems project has seen little progress, the Panel was informed that the project has been halted however the site has not been updated.

In response to a question on how long the Council has to spend the funding for the One Leisure St Neots 3G Pitches, Members were informed that the deadline is Christmas otherwise the funding will be lost.

Following a question on the opening of One Leisure Alconbury Weald Club Members were informed that the contract is being finalised and Urban and Civic hope to have it open in the next four weeks.

(At 8.12pm, during the discussion of this item, Councillor J M Palmer left the meeting.)

(At 8.17pm, during the discussion of this item, Councillor J M Palmer joined the meeting.)

(At 8.17pm, during the discussion of this item, Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds left the meeting.)

(At 8.48pm, during the discussion of this item, Councillor J M Palmer left the meeting.)

(At 8.53pm, during the discussion of this item, Councillor J M Palmer joined the meeting.)

(At 9.04pm, after the consideration of this item, Councillors R C Carter, S Cawley, Mrs A Dickinson, J M Palmer and D M Tysoe left the meeting.)

21. RISK STRATEGY

With the aid of a report by the Internal Audit and Risk Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Risk Strategy was presented to the Panel. Members were informed that with the exception of allowing managers the freedom to decide if a risk should be classified as a corporate or operational risk, the Strategy remained largely unchanged from that agreed in 2015.

In response to a question regarding the identification of risk it was confirmed that Members are able to identify risks that they feel need to be addressed via the Internal Audit and Risk Manager.

Following a question on how does the Council interact with other councils to help identify risks, the Panel was informed that the Internal Audit and Risk Manager works with other Councils to identify risk.

(At 9.12pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillors Mrs A Dickinson, J M Palmer and P D Reeve joined the meeting.)

22. AMENDMENT TO DISPOSALS AND ACQUISITIONS POLICY - RECOMMENDATION FROM CORPORATE GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

With the aid of a report by the Head of Resources (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Amendment to Disposals and Acquisitions Policy – Recommendation from the Corporate Governance Committee was presented to the Panel.

Members were informed that if the Council sells a piece of land within a Town or Parish Council and no Community Infrastructure Levy or Section 106 would be received then the Town or Parish Council will receive 10% of the revenue from the sale.

During the consideration of the matter, the Panel thought the suggestion from the Corporate Governance Committee to replicate a map of assets from the Cambridgeshire County Council website onto the District Council Website would be useful and Members indicated that would like it actioned on.

Members expressed that they wanted reassurance that the full maintenance costs had been considered by the Cabinet when deciding to acquiring assets. The Panel,

RESOLVED

that it supports the revision of the policy and encourages the Cabinet to endorse the continuation of the thresholds and approve the revision to the Policy.

(At 9.16pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillors J A Gray and J M Palmer left the meeting.)

23. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the press and 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).

(At 9.20pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor P D Reeve left the meeting.)

24. USE OF SPECIAL URGENCY PROVISIONS

Consideration was given to a report by the Democratic Services Officer on behalf of the Cabinet regarding the use of the special urgency provision.

25. RE-ADMITTANCE OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the press and public be re-admitted to the meeting.

26. 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 contains details of studies being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Communities and Environment.

27. 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. During the discussion of this item, Members agreed that they are keen to have the Cambridgeshire County Council Budget meetings again.

Chairman