

## 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, 6th April 2017.

- PRESENT: Councillor D B Dew – Chairman.
- Councillors Mrs B E Boddington, E R Butler, I D Gardener, L George, B Hyland, D J Mead and Mrs J Tavener.
- APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors T D Sanderson, K D Wainwright and D Watt.
- IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors R Harrison, R B Howe and J E White.

### **71. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th March 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **72. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

No declarations of interest were received.

### **73. 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 2017 to 31st July 2017.

Members were informed that since the publication of the Notice of Key Executive Decisions, the Local Plan has been added to the notice and it will be presented to the Panel in June 2017.

### **74. A428 BLACK CAT TO CAXTON GIBBET ROAD IMPROVEMENTS**

With the aid of a report by the Planning Service Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the A428 Black Cat to Caxton Gibbet Road Improvements was presented to the Panel. The Executive Councillor for Growth explained to Members that the decision to support a particular route and junction option will feed into the consultation by Highways England which will then inform the decision made by the Secretary of State for Transport.

The Panel was informed that Officers recommend that the Orange Route is the preferred route of the A428 and that Options A or C are the preferred options for the Black Cat roundabout. The Members support the recommendations of Officers particularly Options A or C at the Black Cat roundabout as that will allow the free flow of traffic on

both the A1 and the A428.

In response to the question will the existing A428 remain as a local road, the Panel was informed that the details haven't been published yet however the Executive Councillor for Growth expects that there will be a junction separating the new A428 from the existing A428.

A Member queried the necessity of the previous improvement work on the Black Cat roundabout and asked if it was necessary in light of the new scheme. In response the Panel was informed that the recent improvement work was a short term solution. In addition, depending on the option selected by Highways England in relation to the A1 project, the Black Cat roundabout may or may not be altered and therefore the recent improvement work could be deemed as necessary.

Following a question regarding the environmental impact of the scheme, Members were informed that by selecting options which allow for the free flow of traffic would mean that cars are polluting less.

The Panel support the recommendations however they don't want to see anything to the detriment of the A1 scheme. The Executive Councillor for Growth stated that Highways England are attempting to get the A1 study to catch up with the A428 scheme so that they can be progress concurrently.

## **75. HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL PLAN TO 2036 AND INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING UPDATES**

With the aid of a report by the Planning Service Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Huntingdonshire Local Plan To 2036 and Infrastructure Planning Updates was presented to the Panel.

The Panel was informed that all the strategic transport study scenarios have been tested to include a 'without Wyton Airfield' scenario.

In response to a question regarding the allocation of other sites in the Local Plan to offset the fact that Wyton Airfield hasn't been included, clarification was given that the Council has enough land to meet the objectively assessed need. The Panel was informed that with Wyton Airfield, the Council was over providing and that without that option the Council has other site allocations which it can include to ensure that it can meet the objectively assessed need.

Members were informed that there will be more details on other site allocations when the Local Plan is presented in June 2017. In addition all the Parish and Town Councils have previously considered the sites at an early stage.

It was confirmed that Officers are not saying that there will never be development on Wyton Airfield but that it isn't deliverable due to the cost and Members were reminded that the Local Plan has to be deliverable.

**76. CAMBRIDGESHIRE FLOOD AND WATER SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT**

With the aid of a report by the Senior Planning Policy Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cambridgeshire Flood and Water Supplementary Planning Document was presented to the Panel.

The Panel was informed that the supplementary planning document is a County Council document and that the Council are the last District Council to approve it.

Following a question from a Member, it was clarified that as the County Council carried out a consultation on the document, the Council would not need to carry out their own consultation before the supplementary planning document was adopted.

**77. STRATEGIC REVIEW OF CAR PARKING - PROJECT OVERVIEW AND TASK AND FINISH GROUP SCOPING DOCUMENT**

With the aid of a report by the Parking Services Manager (Operations) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Strategic Review of Car Parking Project Overview was presented to the Panel. In addition to this the Task and Finish Group Scoping Document (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) was presented to the Panel.

The Executive Councillor for Operations gave the Panel a brief update to the background of the project. He informed Members that the previous review only examined charging and did not review car parks holistically. It is proposed to develop a car parking strategy with the support of a task and finish group. It is hoped that the strategy will ensure that the car parks support the economic growth of towns.

The Panel was informed that the strategy will be underpinned by evidence and that the task and finish group will be required to gather evidence in order to inform them when developing the strategy.

Upon receiving the project overview and scoping document, a Member stated that they believe that the approach taken is much improvement upon the approach of the Review of Fees and Charges – Car Parks report.

The Member added that it is important for the task and finish group to review parking in neighbouring areas and understand that the provision of parking does help attract customers. In response the Panel was informed that the task and finish group will be looking at best practice in neighbouring authorities and added that the strategy will support attracting customers. In addition the Panel was informed that it was important to also review the relationship of the Council's car parks with car parks owned by other parties within the District.

In response to a request that car park charging should be simple for residents, the Panel was informed that the charges will come after the strategy. Members were reminded that there is no such thing as a free car park as NNDR is charged on each car park. It will be up to the task and finish group to establish who pays for the NNDR, the

council tax payer or the motorist.

A Member expressed appreciation that the task and finish group will consider all options including the Member's own personal opinion of making car parks free for the motorist. The Panel was informed that it is important to consider all options and to obtain the best option for the residents of Huntingdonshire.

It was commented, by a Member, that the origins of the project may have started with a report on car park charges however there is now a good opportunity for Members to look at car parks in a holistic way. The Member added that there is more to car parking than charging, there is also the environment and accessibility.

Following a question in regards to the future of the car parks, the Panel was informed that the task and finish group will look at any plans for development and the allocation of each car park.

The Panel recognised that the work will be difficult and one particular Member expressed concern that the timescale is too tight considering the amount of work the task and finish group have planned to do. In response the Executive Councillor for Operations conceded that the timescale was ambitious however the Panel will receive regular updates and Members will be informed of any changes in the timescale of the project.

The Executive Leader stated that it is important to consider how the car parks can support the residents and businesses of the District's towns. He added that all options for the car parks should be reviewed to ensure the maximum benefit for the towns.

The Panel agreed with the purpose of the task and finish group and confirmed that the Membership is as follows: Councillors D B Dew, I D Gardener, D J Mead and T D Sanderson. In addition it was noted that the Executive Councillor for Operations will support the task and finish group.

## **78. 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 8.00pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillors R Harrison, R B Howe and J White left the meeting and did not return.)*

## **79. 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 Panel decided that as the task and finish group on the strategic review of car parking covers the town centres/high street viability topic, the work stream will be removed from the work programme.

Members requested that they receive an update on Devolution from the Executive Leader in June 2017.

Chairman