

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 Tuesday, 20th June 2017.

- PRESENT: Councillor D B Dew – Chairman.
Councillors C E Bober, E R Butler, D J Mead, T D Sanderson and Mrs J Tavener.
- APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors K M Baker, I D Gardener and K D Wainwright.
- IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors G J Bull, R Fuller and R Harrison.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 6th April 2017 and 17th May 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

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 June 2017 to 30th September 2017.

7. HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL PLAN TO 2036 - APPROVAL FOR CONSULTATION

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, the Local Plan Quarterly Update and the Infrastructure Planning Update were presented to the Panel.

The Chairman reminded Members that they are reviewing the proposed approach and not the content. The Local Plan will be out for consultation and the Members will have the opportunity to comment upon the content then.

Members were informed that this is the second public consultation on the Local Plan and that alongside the public consultation there will be a call for sites and consultation on the Sustainability Appraisal and Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA).

The Panel were informed that the timeline is as follows: the public consultation will run for eight weeks from July until August 2017, the statutory consultation on the proposed submission will be December

2017 with the final submission to the Secretary of State in March 2018.

It was noted that the Local Plan has 70% of proposed housing growth centred in four Spatial Planning Areas and 30% of housing growth in seven Key Service Centres and Small Settlements to support sustainable rural growth. Members were informed that the Local Plan includes some sites that the Council have already given permission on.

In response to the question why is there a second consultation, the Panel was informed that the second consultation is a full non-statutory consultation where respondents can comment on any of the sites or propose sites. The Consultation is over eight weeks as oppose to the standard six as the consultation extends over the summer. An additional question was asked in regards to the receipt of new sites to which Members were informed that when new sites are received they are subject to the same process as previous sites. There is a potential for delaying the submission of the Local Plan if a large number of sites are put forward.

Following the concern expressed that without Wyton there would not be enough sites coming forward, it was explained that there will be enough housing supplied with the existing sites that have been identified.

The Panel recommends that the Cabinet endorses the proposed approach and approves for consultation the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036, Consultation Draft 2017 and accompanying Sustainability Appraisal and a Housing and Economy Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) June 2017 and issues a call for sites.

Members would also like the Cabinet to encourage Members to champion the Local Plan and ask Members to encourage Parish and Town Councils to get involved in the consultation.

8. HOUSING STRATEGY

With the aid of a report by the Housing Strategy Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Huntingdonshire Housing Strategy 2017-2020 was presented to the Panel.

The Executive Councillor for Housing and Regulatory Services stated that in addition to the Housing Strategy, a Housing Strategy Action Plan had been prepared and will be in place for one year during 2017-18. Members were informed that the Council has placed an emphasis on dealing with the housing needs of the growing population.

Members were reminded of the Registered Social Providers Workshop that took place last year to investigate the potential effect of the rent cap. The two outcomes from the workshop was to review the Band D on the Housing Register and the submission of a letter to the Housing Minister. In response to the question of the progression of those action points, the Panel was informed that the letter was submitted to the Housing Minister and a reply was received. The Band D work is progressing with the Customer Services team with the focus on managing residents on Band D more effectively.

Following the concern that was expressed regarding the stated housing trajectory the Executive Councillor stated that he is confident that the amount of housing completions can be delivered. Members were informed that the housing trajectory graph comes from the annual monitoring report in which developers told the Council how many sites they are intending to build out and when.

A discussion ensued regarding Rural Exception Sites and the promotion of them. The Panel was informed that whilst in the Action Plan, the Council are providing a myth busting tour and a half day workshop to raise awareness, Members were told that they are best placed to advocate rural exception sites to their Parish Councils and the wider community.

A Member raised a concern that there are not the resources for priorities seven to twelve however clarification was given that it is not the case that resources are not available but rather the results don't warrant the resource.

In response to a question regarding empty homes clarification was given that the Council can encourage empty homes to be occupied through a few measures. Members were encouraged that if they are aware of specific circumstances then they can raise them with the Housing Strategy Manager,

The Panel endorsed the Housing Strategy 2017-20 and the Housing Strategy Action Plan 2017-18 and recommend to Cabinet that it be adopted.

In addition the Panel would like the Housing Strategy and the Action Plan to return to a future Panel meeting to assess whether the Council are meeting the targets set out.

(At 7.29pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor R Harrison left the meeting and did not return.)

9. 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 all the Panels' work programmes since the last meeting.

Concern was expressed that the Strategic Review of Car Parking was not progressing quickly enough.

The Panel agreed to remove the Housing work stream from the work programme and dissolve the Working Group.

(At 7.59pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillors G J Bull and R Fuller left the meeting and did not return.)

Chairman