

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMY AND GROWTH) held in Meeting Room 0.1a and 0.1b, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 12th December 2017.

PRESENT: Councillor D B Dew – Chairman.
Councillors C E Bober, E R Butler,
Mrs S Conboy, I D Gardener, Mrs J Tavener,
D R Underwood and K D Wainwright.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors R Harrison and B Hyland.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors R C Carter and R Fuller.

33. MINUTES

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

34. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

35. 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 December 2017 to 31st March 2018.

36. LOCAL PLAN: PROPOSED SUBMISSION CONSULTATION

With the aid of a report by the Planning Service Manager (Growth) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Local Plan: Proposed Submission Consultation was presented to the Panel.

The Executive Councillor for Housing and Planning explained to Members that the Regulation 18 consultation concluded in August 2017, as well as the Call for Sites consultation which ran alongside it. The Executive Councillor is proposing that the Council agrees that the Local Plan proceeds to the Regulation 19 stage of the process, which tests the soundness and legality of the Local Plan.

The Panel was informed of the key differences between Consultation Draft 2017 and the Proposed Submission Draft, which were: a revision to definition of built-up; changes to Renewable Energy Policy as the previous policy position to restrict wind farms received no support from Parishes, companies or residents. The new position is that all areas in the District, with the exception of Great Fen, is available for wind farm applications; in the proposed submission draft

there are an extra 12 sites allocated totalling 898 additional dwellings.

Members were asked to consider whether they wanted a Local Plan which updated previous policies and improves the ability for the Council to plan for development. The Executive Councillor reminded the Panel that if there was a delay to the submission of the Local Plan then the Council would have to plan for an additional 5000 houses.

The Executive Councillor wanted to put on record his thanks to the planning team for producing the Local Plan.

In response to the question, what are the risks to the Council in terms of challenge, the Executive Councillor informed Members that there is always a risk however, if the Council can demonstrate that it has a five year land supply, then it is in a better position to defend planning refusals. The Panel was informed that in terms of, has the Council gone through the right process, then yes. The Executive Councillor added that developers might be less than happy that their site wasn't allocated and that he won't be surprised to receive challenge in the next stage. The Planning Services Manager added that if the inspector states that a modification is required then they will invite the Council to make the modification.

The Panel was informed that through the Local Plan, the Council are stating that the site allocations are suitable for development however it isn't giving permission for development. Each planning application would have to come before the Council's Development Management Committee.

Following a question regarding Local Service Centres and has the Council made a robust check to ensure that they have made the right decision, the Panel was informed that the Members of Development Plan Policy Advisory Group (DPPAG) had looked into the issue thoroughly and are content with the outcome.

In regards to the two additional sites in Bluntisham, the Panel was informed that those sites have already been subject to planning applications and have therefore been included in the Local Plan. However it was emphasised that the sites had been put forward to the Council before inclusion.

Members were informed that the Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessment (HELAA) process is the principle that a site is suitable for development whereas the Planning Application takes the HELAA into account as well as the specifics.

In response to the question, is there any links between the Council's local plan and the plans of the Combined Authority, the Panel was informed that the Combined Authority are developing a non-statutory spatial plan which is a high level document and does not affect local plans.

Members were informed that the Members of DPPAG have thoroughly reviewed the Local Plan.

The Panel recommends to Cabinet that the recommendations made to Council are endorsed.

(At 7.02pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor K D Wainwright entered the meeting.)

(At 7.08pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor Mrs J Tavener entered the meeting.)

37. REPRESENTATIVES ON EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS - ANNUAL UPDATE REPORT

With the aid of a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Representatives on External Organisations – Annual Update Report was presented to the Panel.

A Member informed the Panel that they are the Council's representative on an external organisation however they no longer receive an invite to their meetings which led the Member to state that some representatives may not receive invites to meetings or the organisation no longer meets.

A Member noted that some representatives have full time employment and may not be available to attend meetings of external organisations.

The Panel agreed with the comment that if Members are representing the Council on external organisations then Overview and Scrutiny do expect an update.

A discussion ensued regarding the Great Fen Project and it was noted that the Council provide £20k of funding to the organisation per year. The Panel agreed to invite Kate Carver to attend a Panel meeting to discuss the project in greater detail.

(At 7.40pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor R C Carter left the meeting and did not return.)

38. 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 Panels' work programmes since the last meeting.

It was noted that at the Panel meeting in January 2018, Members will receive a presentation on Civil Parking Enforcement. The Panel agreed to formally invite the Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Communities and Environment) to the meeting.

Chairman