

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERSHIPS) held in Countryside Centre, Chapel Road, Ramsey Heights, Cambridgeshire, PE26 2RS on Thursday, 12th July 2018.

PRESENT: Councillor T D Alban – Chairman.

Councillors B S Banks, R E Bellamy,
S Bywater, S J Criswell, J W Davies,
Ms A Diaz, K I Prentice, Mrs J Tavener and
D R Underwood.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor B S Chapman.

12. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6th June 2018 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

13. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor D Underwood declared a non-statutory disclosable interest in relation to Minute Number 16 as the Chair of Disability Huntingdonshire (DISH).

14. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel received and noted the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions (a copy of which has been appended in the Minute Book) which has been prepared by the Executive Leader for the period 1st July 2018 to 31st October 2018.

15. GREAT FEN PROJECT

The Great Fen Project Manager was unable to attend the meeting, therefore this item was deferred. The Panel formally thanked Henry Stanier for the guided tour of Woodwalton Fen.

16. ONE LEISURE ACTIVE LIFESTYLES ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18

With the aid of a report by the Sports Development Manager and the Active Lifestyles and Health Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the One Leisure Active Lifestyles Annual Report 2017/18 was presented to the Panel.

Members were informed that the Delivering Activity and Sport in Huntingdonshire (DASH) project lasted for three years and that the funding ended on the conclusion of the project. However, Active Lifestyles have since been commissioned by some partners to deliver a number of related sessions.

Concern was raised regarding engagement with residents who can't afford to attend leisure centres. In response, the Panel was informed that Active Lifestyles run projects which target those residents who can't afford leisure centre fees. It was noted Active Lifestyles are constrained by the challenges of reducing the net expenditure of the service.

Examples of where Active Lifestyles have delivered a service as a result of partnership work were given to the Panel. Members were informed that the value of partnership working to Active Lifestyles was £20k in 2017/18 and that the team are constantly looking for available opportunities.

The Panel was informed that as the Huntingdonshire Football Association, a number of professional clubs and amateur youth football clubs are highly active in the District, Active Lifestyles do not intend to provide anything extra as a result of the World Cup. The service will however continue to offer some provision in holiday activities such as working alongside the leisure centres where football is needed, as well as mini dribblers and street sports sessions that include football. The service will continue to target the limited resources it has to tackle health inequalities.

When asked about involvement in the Tour of Cambridgeshire and cycling, Members were informed that the main benefit to Huntingdonshire is economic development through increased tourism. Having been involved in previous years' events there isn't a direct benefit to Active Lifestyles for deploying resources to the event however, the Leisure Centres may benefit through selling Cyclone memberships.

A concern was raised that the Active Lifestyles service is spread too thinly and that it needs to ensure that it can adequately deliver the service. In response, Members were informed that Active Lifestyles has a level of staffing to be able to deliver the services they provide but there are capacity issues covering leave, sickness and any new opportunities. There has been an increase in staff this year to meet an increase in demand and this will be monitored throughout the year.

It was confirmed that Active Lifestyles pay for room hire at One Leisure for some of the existing bookings but generally not for new bookings if the team are utilising 'dead space'. Although if Active Lifestyles has secured external funding for a class then a contribution is made towards room hire.

The Panel has decided to revisit Active Lifestyles through their work programme.

17. TREE STRATEGY WORKING GROUP UPDATE

With the aid of a report by Councillor Mrs J Tavener, on behalf of the Tree Strategy Working Group, (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Tree Strategy Working Group Update was presented to the Panel.

In summarising the report, Councillor Mrs J Tavener informed Members that some tree wardens are unsure who, at the Council,

they should contact if they have a problem. To alleviate this issue, the Working Group are proposing that at the next Parish Forum there is a segment for tree wardens. In addition, the Working Group are proposing that there should be a second stage of the Tree Strategy to replace the existing Tree Strategy, when it expires in 2019, and that this should be accompanied with a review after 18 months.

It was confirmed, following a question, that tree wardens are appointed by Parish and Town Councils however, the Working Group identified the issue that some areas do not have a tree warden. The Working Group believes that these areas should have a tree warden as they are the eyes and ears on the ground.

Concern was raised that the Council are not holding developers to account in regards to planting the number of trees they said they would. Although the Working Group are unsure whether the Landscape Officer is checking on developers, they would like to reiterate that the Landscape Officer should do.

The Working Group stated that there should be an audit of trees in the District, if one isn't already available. They also stated that tree wardens require adequate training to carry out their duties. A discussion was had regarding the merits of planting more mature trees however, it was noted that mature trees are harder to establish than saplings.

The Panel recommended that:

- the Council has a Tree Strategy ready to replace the existing Tree Strategy when it expires in 2019;
- there is a segment on Tree Wardens at the next Parish Forum;
- Parish and Town Councils who do not have a tree warden should be encouraged to appoint one, and
- it should be reiterated to the Landscape Officer that he should be checking that the developers are planting the trees they said they would be in their plans.

18. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Panel was informed that the Working Programming Sub-group had attempted to arrange a date for a meeting however a date wasn't agreed.

Chairman