

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 2nd October 2018.

- PRESENT: Councillor D B Dew – Chairman.
- Councillors S J Corney, Dr P L R Gaskin, M S Grice, K P Gulson, J P Morris, J Neish and S Wakeford.
- APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J C Cooper-Marsh, D A Giles and D J Wells.
- IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Mrs M L Beuttell, Mrs A Dickinson, J A Gray, T D Sanderson and J E White.

25. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11th September 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

26. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

27. 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 October 2018 to 31st January 2019.

28. STRATEGIC REVIEW OF PARKING - OFF-STREET CAR PARKING STRATEGY 2018-2023

With the aid of a report by the Parking Services Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Strategic Review of Parking – Off-street Car Parking Strategy 2018-2023 was presented to the Panel.

The Executive Councillor for Regulation and Operations introduced the report. Members were informed that the strategy covers off-street car parking as the Council only has the responsibility for managing off-street car parks. The responsibility for on-street parking management resides with the Police.

It was noted that if the on-street parking enforcement was to be decriminalised then Cambridgeshire County Council, as the Highway Authority, would have to apply to the Department of Transport. In addition, the Highway Authority would also have to upgrade the signs

and lines, however they have stated that they would not do so.

A Member commented that events in off-street car parks can affect behaviour on-street and believes that on-street parking should be considered as well. It was noted that the Council reviewed Civil Parking Enforcement three years ago and the Task and Finish Group refreshed the work last year. In reviewing Civil Parking Enforcement, the Task and Finish Group decided, based on the evidence received, not to pursue the option.

With a query on commuter parking arising, the Panel was informed that the occupancy study found that the Council has enough capacity until 2030. The proposed strategy has a lifespan of five years after which there would be an opportunity to review the situation and refresh the strategy as appropriate. As the study found that there was enough capacity until 2030, the Task and Finish Group decided not to look further into relocating car parks. In addition, it was confirmed following a query that the reduced capacity of Bridge Place Car Park was factored into the occupancy survey.

A discussion on charging points ensued and it was stated that the strategy will allow Officers to undertake feasibility studies on electric charging points. One study will involve whether there is the electrical capacity to provide enough charge to meet potential demand.

The suggestion was made that the Council could extend the period it charges for, however it was stated that the aim of the strategy is to state the principles of off-street car parking management. In addition, the Panel was informed that the Task and Finish Group agreed that decisions on fees and charges would follow the strategy. It was noted that the Panel agreed with the important principle that the users pay for what they use.

The methodology and some of the conclusions of the survey were questioned, in particular whether the respondents were representative of car park users and the statement that low usage of mobile phone payment is down to a lack of knowledge. Regarding the former, the Panel was informed that the Task and Finish Group agreed the survey questions and how to conduct the survey. As for the mobile phone payment statement, the survey asked a question about this and therefore conclusions were drawn from the responses received.

In response to a question regarding bay sizes, Members were informed that the strategy will cover car park management. Officers are to review the design of all car parks and will look at opportunities to expand bay sizes where possible.

One Member expressed their disappointment that the strategy doesn't promote sustainable travel. However, it was stated that the strategy does support sustainable travel although it is not explicit. The timetable attached to the report states that in year two of the strategy Officers will assess demand and incorporate support for alternative sustainable travel methods within the car parks.

It was noted that the evidence for the strategy is in the public domain and can be reviewed. Members were reminded that the strategy is 'the beginning' and will allow Officers to develop solutions. In addition,

attached to the report is a timetable proposing a body of work to be carried out.

Park and ride was suggested as a possible option, however the Panel was informed that the level of investment for a park and ride was considerable and that the size of the District's market towns wouldn't sustain a park and ride. The survey showed that customers wanted a conveniently located car park that is easy to use.

A query was raised that Appendix Three of the strategy, regarding on-street parking, does not reflect the views of all Members. It was explained that Appendix Three states background information and existing Council Policy. It also accurately states that on-street parking enforcement is the responsibility of the police.

It was noted that the strategy outlines the principles which will guide Members when reviewing fees and charges. As for the effect of fees and charges upon footfall, the Panel was informed that a consultant concluded that fees and charges does not affect footfall inside a town centre.

The Panel,

RESOLVED

to recommend that the Cabinet endorses the Off-street Car Parking Strategy 2018-2023.

29. USE OF SPECIAL URGENCY PROVISIONS VERBAL UPDATE - BUSINESS RATE PILOT

The Panel was informed that the Chairman of the Panel was asked to approve that an urgent item could be considered at Cabinet without prior Overview and Scrutiny. The Cabinet considered the Council's participation in the 2019/20 Business Rate Pilot for the Peterborough and Cambridgeshire area.

It was explained to Members what the Business Rate Pilot is and how the potential windfall will benefit the Council.

(At 8.27pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillors Mrs M L Beuttell, Mrs A Dickinson and J White left the meeting and did not return.)

30. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Chairman updated Members on the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme. The Panel was informed that the Work Programme Working Group have decided to focus on housing, in particular how to get more affordable properties completed and the viability of community land trusts. In addition to this, it was decided that the Panel should also focus on skills and ensuring that residents have the right skills going forward.

The Panel was informed that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships) would be working on leisure and health.

The Panel,

RESOLVED

- 1) To accept the topics selected by the Work Programme Working Group
- 2) To appoint Councillors Corney, Dew, Morris and Wakeford to work on housing and skills.
- 3) To appoint Councillors Gulson and Neish to work with the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Customers and Partnerships) on leisure and health.

Chairman