

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, 9th July 2019.

PRESENT: Councillor D B Dew – Chairman.

Councillors S J Corney, J W Davies,
M S Grice, J P Morris and J E White.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J C Cooper-Marsh, Mrs A Dickinson, Dr P L R Gaskin, S Wakeford and D J Wells.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors R Fuller, K I Prentice and T D Sanderson.

11. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4th June 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

12. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

13. 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 2019 to 31st October 2019.

14. CORPORATE PLAN REFRESH 2019/20

With the aid of a report by the Business Intelligence and Performance Manager and the Finance Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Corporate Plan Refresh 2019/20 was presented to the Panel.

Members were informed that the Key Actions and Performance Indicators have been streamlined. The reporting should be more timely and the data presented more accurate as more will be done using system generated data which will remove the manual calculation. The Panel noted a further proposed change to a Leisure and Health Performance Indicator on the number of service users which will now be split between One Card

Members and Active Lifestyles users to ensure more accurate data.

A Member welcomed the report and stated that they thought it was clear, succinct and to the point.

Following a query, it was clarified that the target for maintaining a five year land supply does not conflict with the Housing Delivery Test.

The point was raised as to whether the report could explain which items have been deleted. In response, Members were informed that, if the report is viewed electronically, there is a link to the previous Corporate Plan which shows last year's Key Actions and Performance Indicators.

The terminology 'Prospectuses for Growth' in addition to 'Masterplan' was raised as an area for potential confusion. It was explained that, as Masterplan had planning connotations, it was decided to rebrand the next versions as Prospectuses for Growth. Members were reassured that their production will follow similar processes and aim to deliver similar outcomes to Masterplans.

A Member highlighted their concern that the Corporate Plan does not measure the amount of recycling refused due to contamination, however they were reassured that this is an issue measured at service plan level, Officers are closely monitoring it and actions are being taken to improve performance.

15. SHARED SERVICES' 2018/19 ANNUAL REPORT

With the aid of a report by the Corporate Director – Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the progress the Shared Services' have made against the 2018/19 business plans was presented to the Panel.

Members were informed that during the lifetime of the Shared Services arrangement the service has been standardised and there have been savings of around 15% on pre-Shared Services budgets.

A Member noted that the report recognised how hard Officers have worked in modernising the Shared Services.

Reassurance was sought that the Public Services Network (PSN), Environmental Health System Procurement and the Waste Services Implementation projects were complete. The Panel was informed that all three Councils are now PSN compliant. In regards to the procurement, that project is not complete but there is a preferred supplier. The Waste Services

Implementation is currently on hold until a new solution is found.

Concern was raised that the Building Control service could do more in securing new business. In response, the Panel was informed that one of the key objectives for building control is market share and that officers are working hard in securing a greater share of the market. Members were reassured that if there is more the service can do to attract business, it will do.

A Member questioned if something could be done in acquiring Lexcel accreditation for the Legal service. It was highlighted that the issue was that accreditation would only be given to a single organisation, therefore there would have to be three lots of accreditation and the cost of that is prohibitive. What the service has done to mitigate this is seek alternative opportunities to win work from other authorities, this has included positioning themselves to make use of the emerging Local Government Association trading platform that would enable the service to trade with others.

Following a query on the shared services arrangement, the Corporate Director – Services stated that the partner organisations have had further to progress in the modernisation of their services. Although Members were reassured that there is a general appreciation of the shared services and that the Council is likely to look to proceed with the shared services arrangement.

In response to the question when would the consolidation of the server room and Council Anywhere projects be complete, Members were informed that the server room is all but complete. In regards to Council Anywhere, devices are being rolled out from August through to the New Year.

16. HUNTINGDON NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN EXAMINATION OUTCOME AND PROGRESSION TO REFERENDUM

With the aid of a report by the Planning Service Manager (Growth) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Huntingdon Neighbourhood Plan Examination Outcome and Progression to Referendum was presented to the Panel.

It was noted that Officers and Huntingdon Town Council have mutually accepted the examiners suggested modifications.

Members welcomed the Neighbourhood Plan and recognised that it is a community led document and that the role of the District Council in the process is to support communities in the development of their Neighbourhood Plans.

The Panel supported the recommendation outlined in the Cabinet report.

17. A428 BLACK CAT TO CAXTON GIBBET IMPROVEMENTS

With the aid of a report by the Planning Service Manager (Growth) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the A428 Back Cat to Caxton Gibbet Improvement consultation was presented to the Panel.

Members noted that Officers had already reviewed the consultation document and will submit a joint response with neighbouring authorities. In addition, Members were keen that Officers are given the freedom to proactively complete this stage of the process.

The Panel supported the recommendation outlined in the Cabinet report.

18. HOUSING DELIVERY TEST

With the aid of a report by the Planning Service Manager (Growth) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Housing Delivery Test was presented to the Panel.

The Executive Councillor for Housing, Planning and Economic Development informed the Panel that, as the Council only achieved a delivery target of 92% against the statutory target of 95%, the Council is required to produce an Action Plan. The reason the target was missed was because the target was altered and then applied retrospectively. Members were informed that Officers are confident of reaching the target by November 2019 and that the Council will not need to produce an Action Plan for 2020/21.

Members recognised that the delivery of housing is beyond the control of the Council and asked if there is anything the Council can do to ensure developers build out the houses approved. In response, the Panel was informed that the Council do not have any legal mechanisms available to ensure developers deliver housing in a timely manner after the grant of planning permission. It was noted that the Development Management Panel could take into account 'past behaviours' when considering applications however, as permission is given to the land as opposed to the developer, there is little understanding how this would work in practice.

19. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY SPEND

With the aid of a report by the Planning Service Manager (Growth) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Spend was presented to the Panel.

The Executive Councillor for Housing, Planning and Economic Development stated that the Executive have adopted a view of supporting communities by providing CIL funds for projects that develops infrastructure or supports growth.

It was noted that the request for the Alconbury Special School was £15m which exceeded the total CIL funds that have been raised. The Executive Councillor reassured Members that, whilst it has been accepted that the school is required, the Council will only commit to a certain level of spend as the school would also accommodate pupils from outside of Huntingdonshire.

A Member raised a query on how the bids were sourced and the role of the Growth and Infrastructure Group. The Panel was informed that Parish Councils approached the Council at their own volition and submitted their bids. Regarding the Growth and Infrastructure Group, the Group received bids and then decided which ones should proceed to the next stage. It was noted that the Growth and Infrastructure Group can meet as and when required. The Panel was reminded that the Executive are the final decision makers on CIL spend.

The Panel asked about the process for the submission of bids, in particular the deadline for bids to come forward and the timescale in which those bids would be considered and a decision made. In response, it was explained that the process is not bureaucratic and that there will not be any formal timescales. In addition, Members were reassured that there will be numerous opportunities for projects to apply for CIL funds. In addition, the Executive Councillor added that the Executive will not limit the number of bids from each Parish Council and would consider any project that enhances infrastructure, supports growth and improves the lives of the residents.

It was suggested that for clarity, particularly on the rejected projects, the Council states a sum of money that it would be willing to contribute if the project is altered to meet all requirements.

The Panel supported the ethos adopted in the managing CIL funds and suggested that Cabinet approves the recommendation of the report.

(At 8.32pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor K I Prentice left the meeting.)

(At 8.33pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor K I Prentice entered the meeting.)

20. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

With the aid of a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Overview and Scrutiny Work Programme was presented to the Panel.

Members were informed that the Delivery of Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group would meet and discuss the final report. In addition, before work on the area of skills formally commences, engagement with the Combined Authority would be carried out.

Chairman