

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH) held as a Remote Meeting via Zoom on Tuesday, 23rd February 2021

PRESENT: Councillor S J Corney – Chairman.

Councillors E R Butler, B S Chapman, J C Cooper-Marsh, D B Dew, I D Gardener, J P Morris, A Roberts and S Wakeford.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Dr P L R Gaskin, M S Grice and D J Wells.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Mrs M L Beuttell, S Bywater, R Fuller, J A Gray, J Neish and K I Prentice.

64 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

65 FUTURE HIGH STREET FUND

By means of a report by the Service Manager (Growth) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) proposals were presented to the Panel. The Executive Leader stated in his opening remarks that the Council had received 69% of the bid that was submitted to the Fund by 31st July 2020. This left the project with a shortfall of £1.7m and it was proposed that the Council would provide the additional funds from Community Infrastructure Levy funding. This would bring the total contribution of the Council towards the project up to £5.25m. Members were informed that the alternative option would be to reduce the scheme but that the consequence could be that such an approach would adversely affect the Benefit Cost Ratio and therefore jeopardise the funding from the FHSF.

In response to a question from Councillor Roberts, the Executive Leader confirmed that the Council was actively exploring funding options with partners. However, owing to the timescales involved, it was important to commit the extra funding to demonstrate to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) that funding was available.

Councillor Chapman asked whether all details had been shared with the Town Council and the Masterplan Group. In response, the Executive Leader confirmed that all the publicly available information has been shared with those groups and the only information that had not been shared was commercially sensitive.

Following a further question by Councillor Chapman regarding the proposed Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) in relation to the Falcon, the Executive

Leader explained that phase one would be to demonstrate to MHCLG that that it was feasible for the Council to use a CPO for this purpose. Phase two would be to undertake the CPO process and at that stage that the Council would decide what the purpose of the Falcon should be.

In response to a question from Councillor Cooper-Marsh, reassurance was given that the Council had already initiated conversations with existing tenants and stakeholders and that this included the Rowing Club.

Councillor Morris questioned what improvements would be made to the Riverside Park. In response the Executive Leader confirmed that these included the replacement of existing footpaths to create a better leisure experience.

The Panel thanked Councillors Prentice and Wells for their Chairmanship of the St Neots Masterplan Group and recognised their role in producing the project. Members welcomed the scheme and supported the proposals. Accordingly, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be encouraged to approve the recommendations contained in the Future High Street Fund report.

(At 6.02pm, during the discussion of this item, Councillor D B Dew joined the meeting.)

(At 6.08pm, during the discussion of this item, Councillor B S Chapman joined the meeting.)

(At 6.14pm, during the discussion of this item, Councillor J P Morris joined the meeting.)

Chairman