

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERSHIPS) held in Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Thursday, 2 December 2021.

PRESENT: Councillor D M Tysoe – Chairman.
Councillors T D Alban, B S Banks, I D Gardener, Mrs M Kadewere, H V Masson, C Smith and Mrs S R Wilson.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors R D'Souza, D A Giles and Mrs S Smith.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Mrs M L Beutell and S J Criswell.

26. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7th October 2021 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

27. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

28. 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 December 2021 to 31st March 2022.

29. LITTER MINIMISATION STRATEGY

By means of a report by the Operations Manager Environmental Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Litter Minimisation Strategy was presented to the Panel.

Following a question from Councillor Gardener, the Panel heard that there were plans to roll out bin sensors in bins beyond town centres and that it was hoped that grants would be available to fund this. The Panel also heard that the Council were working together with National Highways to find a solution to littering in laybys along major routes across the district.

Having heard concerns from Councillor Alban regarding the low number of prosecutions for fly tipping offences despite the hard work from the Enforcement Team, the Panel were assured that the team continues to work diligently to ensure fly-tippers are held to account. Members also heard that intelligence was shared with neighbouring authorities and that a revised enforcement policy would be developed

next year.

Following a comment from Councillor Gardener regarding human waste being thrown from HGVs into residential land, the Panel were advised that such acts could be reported on the Council's website.

Councillor Banks enquired if there were known littering hotspots across the district and the Panel heard that the team were aware of hotspots and continued to share intelligence to monitor this situation.

Councillor Wilson observed that education and changing behaviours would be key to successfully reducing waste across the district. The Panel heard that the team currently work with schools to help educate young people but that this needs to extend to adults and that several schemes are being developed to assist with the implementation of this. Members heard that plans to reduce litter bins were being developed with the onus on the public to take rubbish home with them and allow for more efficient recycling due to a reduction in contamination of recyclable waste.

Councillor Tysoe praised the hard work of Officers and the associated teams for all their efforts in minimising litter across the district.

It was thereupon

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet endorse the recommendations contained within the report.

30. COVID 19 DISTRICT IMPACT ASSESSMENT

By means of a report by the Assistant Director Recovery and the Recovery Programme Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the COVID-19 District Impact Assessment was presented to the Panel.

The Panel heard that the impact assessment underpins the focus of the Council, its communities and partners in achieving an environment, within which, Huntingdonshire and its residents can thrive, protecting and enhancing the natural beauty of the area and ensuring the creation of sustainable places where people want to live. It was also acknowledged that many of the issues identified could not be addressed purely by the Council as some are the responsibility of partners. The impact assessment will allow the Council to take a lead with partners and communities with an evidence base to support a safe and healthy environment, deliver economic growth and create opportunities for the people of Huntingdonshire.

Councillor Alban queried whether the statistics in the report related to Huntingdonshire or Cambridgeshire. The Panel were advised that there was a mixture of district, county and national level statistics. The Panel also heard that some data was not readily available and that due to its nature, may quickly become out of date, however positive relationships were being developed with other local authorities to enable the sharing of and better quality of data. Councillor Alban

requested clarity in future reports around data origination.

The Panel heard from Executive Councillor Criswell that the positive relationships developed with town and parish councils during the pandemic would be built on. The intention of the Impact Assessment was to integrate the work into existing strategies not to create a separate recovery plan thus ensuring business as usual is maintained.

Concerns were raised by Councillor Wilson over the overwhelming amount of data in the report, and also regarding hospital waiting times for non COVID related health concerns. The Panel heard that whilst the Council were very much mindful of such concerns, the focus would remain on what could be influenced and affected by the Council so as to make a positive impact where possible.

Following a question from Councillor Banks on available funding for this work, the Panel heard that this work will become business as usual and integrated into all existing strategies as a future way of working, in order to minimise future pressures on budgets.

Councillor Gardener raised the issue of cycle route improvements, which would have positive benefits on health, active travel and the environment. The Panel heard that an active travel map was being investigated.

The Panel praised the excellent piece of work and thanked the officers involved.

It was thereupon

RESOLVED

that the Panel endorse the recommendations contained within the report.

31. 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.

Chairman