

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the CABINET held in MEETING ROOMS 0.1A AND 0.1B, GROUND FLOOR, PATHFINDER HOUSE, ST MARY'S STREET, HUNTINGDON, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 16 September 2021

PRESENT: Councillor R Fuller – Chairman.

Councillors Mrs M L Beuttell, S Bywater, J A Gray, D N Keane and K I Prentice.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J Neish and J M Palmer (Cabinet Assistant).

24 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15th July 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

26 CREATING A VISION FOR THE OXFORD-CAMBRIDGE ARC - CONSULTATION RESPONSE

A report by the Strategic Growth Manager was submitted (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) providing an outline of the Oxford-Cambridge Arc spatial framework consultation document – “Creating a vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc” and summarising the Council’s response to the consultation.

In noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth), it was

RESOLVED

that delegated authority to submit the Council’s final comments via the Oxford-Cambridge Arc digital engagement platform be given to the Strategic Growth Manager, in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning.

27 CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021/22 (QUARTER 1)

Consideration was given to a report by the Business Intelligence & Performance Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) presenting details of delivery of the Corporate Plan 2018/22 and project delivery.

Following a brief introduction by the Assistant Director (Corporate Services) and in noting the views of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth), the Cabinet

RESOLVED

to note progress made against the Key Actions and Corporate Indicators in the Corporate Plan and current projects, as summarised in Appendix A and detailed in Appendices B and C of the report now submitted.

28 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021/22 (QUARTER 1)

With the aid of a report by the Chief Finance Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Cabinet were presented with details of the Council's projected financial performance for 2021/22.

In introducing the report, the Executive Councillor for Strategic Finance reported that there had been an estimated revenue outturn overspend of £0.227, an estimated capital outturn underspend of £17.077m and that the Commercial Investment Strategy was contributing positively towards the budget. The Chief Finance Officer then reported that work had been undertaken to realign some budgets with movements and corrections having been approved. She then delivered an outline of the financial profile for the Future High Streets Fund and drew attention to other aspects of the budget including Council Tax and National Non Domestic Rates and the position with arrears and sundry debts.

In drawing the Cabinet's attention to the overspend relating to Development Management, the Managing Director reported that this was largely attributable to salary costs. The service was currently in stabilisation phase and that recruitment campaigns were being finalised. Assurances were delivered to Members that a plan was in place to address the issues currently being experienced within the service.

The Executive Leader then drew attention to the position with regards to Leisure, Markets and Car Parking and commented that recovery plans for these areas needed to be in place imminently to improve the current financial position. The Chief Finance Officer commented that the Quarter 1 forecast, particularly for One Leisure, had been very pessimistic with improvements due to be reported in the next quarter. The Managing Director and the Executive Councillor for Leisure and Regulatory Services agreed to discuss the position with the One Leisure service outside of the meeting.

The Executive Councillor for Strategic Finance reminded Executive Councillors of the importance of scrutinising the financial aspects of their portfolios with their Officers. The Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment responded to the comments made in respect of car parking and markets and advised that she would query their position with Officers. In respect of the former, the Managing Director reported that preliminary discussions had been held earlier that day reviewing car park usage and patterns with a view to considering strategies to improve the value of the space in the future.

The Executive Leader reminded Cabinet Members that there was a £1.4m budget gap to close. He then drew the Cabinet's attention to the comments of the of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Performance & Growth).

In concluding their discussions, the Cabinet placed on record their thanks to Mrs C Edwards for her hard work, advice, guidance and support during her time as Section 151 Officer and Chief Finance Officer for the Council. Members expressed their best wishes to her for the future and in her new role. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet has:

- (a) considered and commented on the financial performance at the end of June 2021 as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report now submitted;
- (b) considered and approved the proposed budget changes as outlined in paragraph 3.2 to the Revenue Budget to accommodate reclassification of budget and in year activity not included within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy; and
- (c) considered and approved the proposed budget changes outlined in paragraph 3.3 to the Capital Budget to accommodate reclassification of budget and in year activity not included within the Medium-Term Financial Strategy.

Chairman