

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, 1 December 2022.

PRESENT: Councillor J E Kerr – Chair

Councillors T Alban, M J Burke,
S Bywater, S J Criswell, J E Harvey,
N J Hunt, M Kadewere, C Lowe,
S R McAdam and D J Shaw.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor G J Welton.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor S W Ferguson.

18. MINUTES

The final paragraph of Minute 22/15 was amended to read;

Following the discussion, the panel were informed that their comments would be added to the cabinet report in order for the cabinet to make the decision on the recommendations.

after which the Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd November 2022 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

19. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

20. 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 2022 to 31st March 2023.

21. BUSINESS RATES RURAL SETTLEMENT LIST

By means of a report by the Revenues and Benefits Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Business Rates Rural Settlement List Report was presented to the Panel.

Following an enquiry from Councillor Criswell, the Panel were advised that whilst the list could only be amended once annually, there was scope to reverse amends or adapt as circumstances change.

Councillor Shaw questioned how the population figures had been established, citing the specific example of Buckden. The Panel heard that the County Council had provided the figures, with a population of 2,758 being given for Buckden. It was also advised that the 2021 Census figures were still being processed so were not yet available.

The report was praised by Councillor Alban whose ward is comprised of villages who all fall within the parameters of the report. Following a question from Councillor Alban about how businesses apply for relief, the Panel heard that the Business Rates team were proactive. The team work closely with businesses to ensure that they receive support that they are entitled to and are signposted to further support as applicable.

Having welcomed the report, it was thereupon

RESOLVED

that Cabinet be encouraged to endorse the recommendations within the report.

22. CHANGE TO PANEL NAME

Following recent discussions it had been proposed to change the name of the Panel to Environment, Communities and Partnerships.

Councillor Alban observed that the proposed name may be considered unwieldy but did encompass all aspects of the Panel's Roles and Remits.

Councillor Hunt stated that encompassing Environment within the Panel name, strengthened the importance of the topic and it's role within the Panels Remits for the future.

It was observed by Councillor Criswell that Environment holds importance in everything the Council does and questioned whether having this within the Panel name blurred the remits between the two Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

Having discussed the change to the Panel name, the Panel unanimously

RESOLVED

to adopt the new name of Overview and Scrutiny (Environment,

Communities and Partnerships).

23. 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.

Following discussion from the Panel, it was agreed that future agenda planning be added to the agenda of the January meeting of the Panel.

Chair