

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH) held in Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 6 December 2023.

PRESENT: Councillor C M Gleadow – Chair.

Councillors A M Blackwell, S J Corney,
I D Gardener, J E Harvey, S A Howell,
A R Jennings, Dr M Pickering, R A Slade,
N Wells and G J Welton.

APOLOGIES: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor R Martin.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors T Sanderson and S Wakeford.

46. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 1st November 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

47. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor S Howell declared a non-registerable interest in Minute 23/49 as a ward member for Yaxley.

Councillor R Slade declared an other registerable interest in Minute 23/50 as a Town Councillor for St Neots.

Councillor A Blackwell declared an other registerable interest in Minute 23/51 as a Town Councillor for Huntingdon.

Councillor C Gleadow declared a non-registerable interest in Minute 23/51 as a ward member for St Ives.

Councillor R Slade declared an other registerable interest in Minute 23/51 as a Town Councillor for St Neots.

Councillor N Wells declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Minute 23/51 as a resident of The Broadway, St Ives.

Councillor A Blackwell declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in Minute 23/53 as an employee of Carter Jonas.

Councillor S Corney declared a non-registerable interest in Minute 23/53 as a member of the Building Development Group for the Priory Centre.

Councillor A Jennings declared a non-registerable interest in Minute 23/53 as a member of the Building Development Group for the Priory

Centre.

Councillor R Slade declared a non-registerable interest in Minute 23/53 as a member of the Building Development Group for the Priory Centre.

48. 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 and the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions which had been prepared by the Executive Leader for the period 1st December 2023 to 31st March 2024 was noted.

49. INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT

By means of a report by the Chief Planning Officer (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book) the Infrastructure Funding Statement was presented to the Panel.

Following a question from Councillor Pickering regarding monies allocated to the Loves Farm development, it was clarified to the Panel that all monies were allocated to projects. It was further noted that the NHS and Allotments projects were outstanding and in addition that the allotments project related to the second phase of development. It was requested that a more detailed breakdown of these funds be provided to Councillor Pickering within the next week.

Councillor Gardener queried money allocated to a project in Spaldwick and whether or not this had received planning permission ahead of the funding decision. The Panel heard that details would be circulated to Councillor Gardener after further investigation.

Further to questions from Councillors Harvey and Gleadow, the Panel heard that the in kind payments referenced would be projects which would deliver infrastructure or other beneficial schemes in place of cash payments to the benefit of local residents.

In response to a question from Councillor Wells, the Panel heard that Cambridgeshire County Council, as signatories in their own right within many S106 legal agreements, were not required to provide S106 figures to the District Council but, under the legislation, were required to publish their own statement on their website. Members would be able to view this direct once published by Cambridgeshire County Council.

Following a question from Councillor Slade, the Panel were advised that dates mentioned on page 43 of the agenda pack illustrated when funding was allocated to projects and that whilst end dates would be specified within project contract details, there was not requirement on the Council as the Charging Authority to spend the funds within a given timescale.

In response to questions from Councillors Pickering and Harvey relating to CIL receipts, the Panel heard that the majority of the money as highlighted on page 39 of the agenda pack was accounted

for by virtue of being allocated to projects, however a further CIL funding round was currently ongoing which would deal with some of the surplus funds.

Following the discussion, it was

RESOLVED

that the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel be passed to Cabinet for their consideration when making a decision upon the recommendations contained within the report.

50. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY UPDATE

By means of a report by the Chief Planning Officer (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book) the Community Infrastructure Levy Update was presented to the Panel.

Councillor Gardener commented that it was positive to see that works would be beginning on the Wheatsheaf junction project.

Following the discussion, it was

RESOLVED

that the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel be passed to Cabinet for their consideration when making a decision upon the recommendations contained within the report.

51. MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME WINTER UPDATE 2023-2024

By means of a report by the Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book) the Market Towns Programme – Winter Update 2023/2024 was presented to the Panel.

Following an enquiry from Councillor Corney, the Panel heard that where possible common sense would be applied to project delivery to allow for a joined up approach and avoid duplication of works across projects.

Concerns were expressed by councillors Slade and Gardener surrounding the works to trees planned for the St Neots market square. The Panel were reassured that a robust communications plan was in place and would be ramped up closer to the project start. It was also noted that the County Council would be leading on this project. It was further advised that the trees removed from the square would be reutilised as nature habitats, whilst the new planting would increase the tree canopy and biodiversity in the square. Councillor Jennings raised a concern regarding the impact of the project on the Christmas lights in St Neots, the Panel heard that every attempt would be made to minimise impact on the 2024 Christmas lights within the square.

In response to a question from Councillor Jennings on the figures within Table 1 section 3, the Panel heard that more detail on budgets was anticipated within the next quarterly report due to the project start

date, however this would be investigated and further clarified to members.

In answer to a question from Councillor Howell, the Panel heard that whilst it was planned to expand the shopfront scheme across the market towns of the district, further discussions were in progress to extend this into rural key service areas. It was noted that the funding for this scheme was specific to towns at this point however further updates would be advised should they develop. Following a further question from Councillor, Harvey, it was confirmed that BID Huntingdon would continue to process the shopfront grants.

Further to a question from Councillor Pickering surrounding the retention of blue badge car parking spaces, the Panel were advised that whilst this was currently to maintain the availability of these bays, work was being undertaken by Parking Services to assess the ongoing need for these spaces within St Neots, allowing for an appropriate provision of these bays in the future.

Following an observation from Councillor Slade, it was confirmed that section 1.9 should read policy compliant planning application.

Councillor Gleadow congratulated the team on the obvious hard work which had been undertaken, a sentiment which was echoed by the Panel. Following which, it was

RESOLVED

that the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel be passed to Cabinet for their consideration when making a decision upon the recommendations contained within the report.

52. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

53. MARKET TOWNS PROGRAMME - WINTER UPDATE PART TWO

The Panel gave consideration to an exempt report by the Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager (a copy of which was appended in the annex to the Minute Book) on Market Towns Programme Winter Update 2023-24 (Part Two) which was presented to the Panel.

The Panel heard from the Regeneration and Housing Delivery Manager and Executive Councillor for Jobs, Economy and Housing, who introduced the report and answered Members questions.

Following the discussion, it was thereupon

RESOLVED

that the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel be passed to Cabinet for their consideration when making a decision upon the recommendations contained within the report.

Chair