

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS) held in Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Thursday, 5 September 2024.

PRESENT: Councillor J E Kerr – Chair.

Councillors T Alban, S Bywater, M A Hassall, N J Hunt, M Kadewere, C Lowe, D J Shaw and C H Tevlin.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S J Criswell and S R McAdam.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor B Pitt.

### 19. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11th July 2024 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 20. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

### 21. 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 and the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions which had been prepared by the Leader for the period 1st September 2024 to 31st December 2024 were presented to the Panel.

### 22. PRIORITY ONE DELIVERY UPDATE QUARTER 1

***19:09 Councillor Alban entered the meeting.***

By means of a report and presentation by the Corporate Director People (copies of which were appended in the Minute Book) the Priority One Delivery Update Quarter One Report was presented to the Panel.

Following a question from Councillor Lowe, the Panel heard that there were lots of activities and agencies engaging with the local communities to address loneliness within elderly residents. It was further observed that the Warm Spaces Hubs which the Council had initiated within communities were now self funding and played a part in addressing this issue.

In response to a question from Councillor Tevlin, the Panel were

advised that the Council was working with neighbouring authorities and agencies to benefit from shared experiences. It was further advised that the Community Chest fund could help to establish a community hub and that the team would then work with the community to establish their long term vision and signpost towards available funding to enable that.

The Panel heard, following a question from Councillor Hassall in relation to the work and fit note grant, that there was funding available across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and that it was anticipated this would be over several years. The Council would be looking to work with partners to ensure that the money be spent correctly in supporting residents and that barriers to employment be removed to ensure that the right opportunities be available to the right people.

Following a question from Councillor Hunt, the Panel heard that the Citizens Advice Bureau moved to Pathfinder House in July and that this had created an empty office space within Eastfield House which had not yet been filled.

In response to an enquiry from Councillor Bywater on the numbers of residents successfully completing the ESCAPE pain programme, the Panel heard that these were extensive sessions with small cohorts, work was ongoing with local GPs to ensure that the right residents are benefitting from these programmes and that they deliver the most effective outcomes. It was also noted that work was being undertaken to support veterans within the district and that further details on this would be added to a future report.

Following several questions from Councillor Alban, the Panel heard that colleagues from the Primary Care Network were located at the Pathfinder House site and this was a huge benefit to partnership working. The Panel also heard that whilst the team were aware of the opportunities to advertise within local community magazines, the message could often be lost within them and so focus was directed towards there being one point of contact who could signpost residents to the most appropriate service.

In response to a query from Councillor Hassall, the Panel heard that the Council strives to signpost the community and voluntary sectors to appropriate funding to ensure the longevity of projects.

## **23. COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WEALTH BUILDING STRATEGY**

By means of a report and presentation by the Corporate Director (People) (copies of which were appended in the Minute Book), the Community Health and Wealth Building Strategy was presented to the Panel.

Councillor Hassall expressed his view that he believed the money reserved for the fund would be better invested into Business As Usual operations within the Council. He felt that prioritising and getting the basics right, residents and communities would both benefit and that third party funding would be better placed to fund the ambitions of the Strategy. The Panel heard that the Strategy and Fund would be fulfilling a recommendation identified by the Corporate Peer

Challenge, to properly appropriately resource the delivery of the Hunts Futures Strategy and it was observed that the available money would be used as seed funding to create a lasting legacy for the district and would be a good investment for the funds.

Councillor Hunt expressed his support for the Strategy and felt that it could have a meaningful impact on local communities. The Panel heard that following the approval of the Strategy, a programme would be developed to add more detail and criteria and that this would be presented back to the Panel in the new year.

Councillor Shaw also expressed his support for the Strategy and observed that if the Council were aiming to use local suppliers and businesses whether those businesses were also required to source locally to ensure investment remained within the district where possible. The Panel heard that the Council were aiming to maximise opportunities with local businesses and would be influencing their partners to do the same, with the example of the redevelopment of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital being give as an example which could bring huge benefits for the local economy both during redevelopment and also once established. Following a further question from Councillor Shaw, the Panel heard that the Council were working with partners to encourage local recruitment for local jobs.

Councillor Bywater, welcomed the approach and the progress that has been made over recent years, observing that the kind of adaptability and change this will support are positives, and expressed his support for the Strategy.

Whereupon it was

RESOLVED

that the Panel's comments would be communicated to the Cabinet in order for an informed decision to be made on the report recommendations.

Chair