

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 4th June 2019.

PRESENT: Councillor D B Dew – Chairman.

Councillors B S Chapman, J C Cooper-Marsh, S J Corney, J W Davies, Mrs A Dickinson, Dr P L R Gaskin, M S Grice, S Wakeford and J E White.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J P Morris and D J Wells.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 2nd April 2019 and 15th May 2019 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

5. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

6. 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 June 2019 to 30th September 2019.

7. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT 2018/19, QUARTER 4

With the aid of a report by the Business Intelligence and Performance Manager and the Finance Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Integrated Performance for 2018/19, Quarter 4 was presented to the Panel.

In presenting the performance aspect of the report the Business Intelligence and Performance Manager informed Members that progress has been good. Key points made included: One Leisure performance has improved over the year but targets were not met by the end of quarter four; sickness has improved and the Council had its best performance since 2014; all the red-rated performance indicators are better than 2017/18 performance but still remain below target and the two projects rated red are shared service projects, however the HDC element has not been rated red for either.

In regards to the red rated shared service projects, a Member expressed concern at the fact they were rated red. They were informed that the governance arrangement requires the project to be scrutinised by the Council's project management board. A general

point was made that project managers have been over optimistic in stating the completion date of the project which has resulted in the project receiving a red rating when deadlines are missed.

The Finance Manager addressed the Panel and outlined the key points of the financial aspect of the report including a £0.2m underspend on the revenue budget and a £2.9m underspend on the capital budget.

It was noted that there were some areas which overspent and in response to a question, it was confirmed that in some cases corrective action was taken during the 2019/20 budget process.

Discussion on the Commercial Investment Strategy ensued and a Member expressed concern that there was no indication within the paperwork that capital appreciation or depreciation had been considered. In response, the Member was informed that the Estates team have a robust process for capital investment which is regularly scrutinised.

When questioned on the underspend in Development due to staff vacancies, the Panel was informed that the required level of staffing for Development includes the vacancies and that during 2018/19 the service have been unable to recruit to those vacancies.

A Member asked about the repurposing of the apprentice budget. It was confirmed that the budget will be repurposed for staff training opportunities and that this was agreed during the 2018/19 budget process.

(At 7.06pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor P L R Gaskin entered the meeting.)

8. TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19

With the aid of a report by the Head of Resources (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Council's treasury management activity for 2018/19 was presented to the Panel.

A question was asked in regards to the loan made to Luminus. It was explained that the loan has been transferred to the parent company, Places to People, and that they are paying the loan off with no issues. In addition, Brook House (Luminus' Offices) acts as security for the loan.

In response to a query on the loans the Council has provided, the Panel was informed that the Council do not push loans but where there are established links and projects which would benefit the Council and help it achieve its corporate priorities and objectives then a loan would be considered.

Referencing the Commercial Investment Strategy part of the report, a Member stated that there was no information of the capital appreciation or depreciation. In response, the Panel was informed that the information could be added to future reports as the properties are valued annually.

**9. USE OF SPECIAL URGENCY PROVISIONS VERBAL UPDATE -
COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT STRATEGY ASSET**

The Panel was informed that the Chairman of the Panel approved that an urgent item, regarding a Commercial Investment Strategy, could be considered at Cabinet without prior Overview and Scrutiny.

10. 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.

Councillor S J Corney updated Members on the Delivery of Affordable Housing Task and Finish Group. He stated that the Group had met with Housing Associations and that a final report has been drafted, which will be considered by the Group before being presented to the Panel. Fellow Group Member, Councillor S Wakeford added that the Group have been investigating the Rural Exception Site mechanism as a way of fulfilling the Council's affordable housing targets.

Chairman