

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (CUSTOMERS AND PARTNERSHIPS) held in the Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 3rd October 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Mrs A Dickinson – Chairman.

Councillors B S Banks, R E Bellamy, S Bywater, S J Criswell, Ms A Diaz, K I Prentice and Mrs J Tavener.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors T D Alban, Mrs S Conboy and D A Giles.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors J W Davies, R Fuller, J M Palmer and Mrs S R Wilson.

30 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

that Councillor Mrs A Dickinson be elected Chairman of the Panel on an interim basis.

31 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12th September 2019 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

32 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor S Bywater declared a non-statutory disclosable interest in relation to Minute Number 37 as a Member of Cambridgeshire County Council.

Councillor S Criswell declared a non-statutory disclosable interest in relation to Minute Number 37 as a Member of Cambridgeshire County Council.

33 APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN

RESOLVED

that Councillor S Bywater be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Panel on an interim basis.

34 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 October 2019 to 31st January 2020.

35 TREE STRATEGY WORKING GROUP FINAL REPORT

With the aid of a presentation and an executive summary (copies of which are appended in the Minute Book) the Panel received a final update on the work of the Tree Strategy Working Group. Councillors Mrs J Tavener and J W Davies of the Working Group gave a verbal update of the Group's work to the Panel. The Arboricultural Officer, Ms T Miles, presented the slides to Members.

The Executive Councillor for Housing, Planning and Economic Development was also in attendance. In introducing the item, the Executive Councillor thanked the Working Group for the work they have done in assisting with the revision of the Tree Strategy. He also added that he is keen for Overview and Scrutiny Members to get involved in policy development and that this Working Group is a good example of that.

Councillor Tavener informed Members that the Working Group met with Arboricultural Officers, Ms T Miles and Mr A Sargeant, on a regular basis. In addition, the Working Group's observations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) were read out to the Panel.

Councillor Davies added that due to recent events, people are realising the importance and benefits of trees. He added that the original reason for the Tree Strategy was because too many trees were being cut down. However the strategy has evolved to include other elements, including recognising the need for dead or rotten trees in order to support wildlife and tree canopies. Councillor Davies added that the Working Group is pleased with the work Ms T Miles and Mr A Sargeant have been doing.

In presenting to Members, Ms T Miles highlighted the need for review including internal factors and external influences. The revised strategy will highlight the fact that there are two services responsible but only one tree population and it will cover the aims of the strategy.

The Panel was informed of the principle alterations to the Tree Strategy including: moving from a five year plan to a ten year plan but with a five year review and annual reporting; a single document that encompasses all elements; a document that reflects government and industry best practice; revised policies and an action plan.

The next steps were outlined and Members were informed that it is planned the revised Tree Strategy will be adopted in June 2020.

Councillor S Bywater expressed concern over the management and maintenance of extra trees, although Ms T Miles stated that this will be considered when planting additional trees.

Councillor B Banks stated that as many trees as possible should be planted and that the Council should consider planting on the small parcels of land it owns. In response the Panel was informed that there is currently a push on local authorities to plant more trees but that the right balance needs to be struck.

The Panel welcomed the Working Group's verbal report and the presentation by Ms T Miles and thanked the Members of the Working Group for their hard work. The Panel,

RESOLVED

to dissolve the Tree Strategy Working Group and regain oversight of the Tree Strategy. Reviewing the strategy as and when required.

36 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

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

(At 7.34pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor Mrs S R Wilson left the meeting and did not return.)

37 ONE LEISURE SAWTRY - OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

With the aid of a report by the Head of Leisure and Health (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel received information on the operational management of One Leisure Sawtry.

Members were informed of the changes to the proposal since the original proposal was presented to the Panel in April 2019. In addition, legal advice was presented which clarified the position of the 1993 tripartite legal agreement.

The Panel discussed the proposal, the impact it would have upon the operational hours of the facility and the potential transfer date. Whilst Members were not content with some aspects of the proposal, it was recognised that the proposal would ensure that the village of Sawtry would have a leisure centre for, at least, the next two years.

The Panel supported the proposal and advised that Cabinet endorse the recommendations.

38 RE-ADMITTANCE OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the press and public be re-admitted to the meeting.

(At 8.03pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillors J W Davies, R Fuller and J M Palmer left the meeting and did not return.)

39 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.

Chairman