

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH) held as a remote meeting via Zoom on Wednesday, 9th December 2020

PRESENT: Councillor S J Corney – Chairman.

Councillors E R Butler, B S Chapman, I D Gardener, J P Morris, A Roberts and S Wakeford.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J C Cooper-Marsh, D B Dew, Dr P L R Gaskin, M S Grice and D J Wells.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor J Neish.

43 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4th November 2020 were approved as a correct record by the Panel.

44 MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor S Wakeford declared a non-statutory disclosable interest in relation to Minute Number 46 by virtue of his wife being employed as a Partner at the Buckden and Little Paxton Surgeries.

45 NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel received and noted the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which had been prepared by the Executive Leader for the period 1st December 2020 to 31st March 2021.

46 BUCKDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN: EXAMINATION OUTCOME AND PROGRESSION TO REFERENDUM

By means of a report by the Service Manager Growth (Policy, Infrastructure and Strategic Development) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Buckden Neighbourhood Plan was presented to the Panel.

During the introduction of the report, Members were informed that if the Neighbourhood Plan proceeded to referendum then the earliest date a referendum could take place was on 6th May 2021. It was noted that once the Cabinet accepted the recommended modifications, then the Neighbourhood Plan would carry significant weight in the planning process up until the referendum.

Following the introduction, the Chairman expressed a positive view of the Neighbourhood Plan. In particular, he stated that it was pleasing to view that the Parish Council had prioritised a list of projects.

A comment was made by Councillor Chapman regarding the references within the Neighbourhood Plan to the fact that it conformed to European Union (EU) regulations in the context of the United Kingdom's departure from the EU. The Panel was informed that as things stood, the Neighbourhood Plan must conform to EU regulations until the regulations no longer apply.

The deletions the Examiner had made also was raised by Councillor Chapman. It was confirmed that the Parish Council had agreed to the deletions and that the amended version had been presented to Members.

Councillor Chapman made a further comment about the possibility that the Localism Act allowed local communities to develop a Neighbourhood Plan which conflicted with the District Council's Local Plan. However, the Panel was informed that, according to legislation, Neighbourhood Plans must be consistent with the District Council's Local Plan.

Attention is drawn to a cycle route shown to be in Grafham Parish by Councillor Gardener. It was confirmed to Members that the cycle route referenced only showed an indicative route and that policies could only be applied within the Neighbourhood Plan area.

In response to Councillor Roberts asking about the Neighbourhood Plan process, Members were informed that the Neighbourhood Plan was a collaborative effort between the District Council and the Parish Council and that it proceeded through several stages before it was presented to Members at the meeting.

Councillor Morris asked about the long-term plans to address the traffic egress issues from Buckden. Members were reminded that the Neighbourhood Plan did not address those concerns and that this was an issue for the Highway Authority and Highways England.

The Panel

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to act upon the Examiner's report and accept the modifications and progress the Neighbourhood Plan to referendum.

47 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 Chapman referred to his previous suggestion that a review should be undertaken into the Council's car parking charges; however the consensus was that it would not be appropriate to conduct such a review at the current time. The Chairman committed to enquire with the Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment and Officers when the Council would have the necessary data for this purpose.

A discussion ensued regarding the steps the Council had been taking to support the high street in the market towns. It was noted that the Council had undertaken a lot of work in order to promote thriving high streets and had supported the Combined Authority's Prospectus' for Growth for each of the market towns.

Chairman