

# 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, 6th January 2021

PRESENT: Councillor S J Corney – Chairman.

Councillors E R Butler, B S Chapman, J C Cooper-Marsh, D B Dew, I D Gardener, Dr P L R Gaskin, M S Grice, J P Morris, A Roberts and S Wakeford.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor D J Wells.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor R Fuller.

## **48 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th December 2020 were approved as a correct record by the Panel.

## **49 MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

No declarations of interest were received.

## **50 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 January 2021 to 30th April 2021.

Following a question from Councillor Morris, the Executive Leader confirmed that a report on Decriminalised Parking would be presented to Overview and Scrutiny in February 2021 and that a decision would be made by the Cabinet on 11th February 2021.

## **51 ECONOMIC GROWTH STRATEGY**

By means of a report by the Economic Development Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Economic Growth Strategy was presented to the Panel. During the introduction the Executive Councillor for Housing and Economic Development reminded Members that the Strategy set out the Council's priorities for Economic Growth within Huntingdonshire for the next five years.

Councillor Chapman questioned the digital ambition of the Strategy and suggested that it should contain a bolder aim, such as a commitment to ultra-speed broadband. Councillor Chapman stated that he wanted to ensure that the Strategy promoted the conditions to enable technological industries to be located in the District. In response, the Executive Councillor stated that because technological

developments advanced quickly, it would be better not to commit the Council to one solution over another. The Strategy aspired to deliver the best digital solution for Huntingdonshire.

Following a query from Councillor Cooper-Marsh regarding a reference to the preferred location of the railway station for the east-west rail link, it was confirmed that Network Rail had not made a decision on this matter.

Attention was drawn to the actions for the next 12 months by Councillor Wakeford. He stated that it would be beneficial if the actions could be prioritised and the priorities clearly highlighted within the Strategy.

Councillor Roberts asked if the Strategy could have a section on emerging industries and the gig economy. In response, Members were informed that the Strategy focused on supporting the industries that had the biggest impact upon the economy of Huntingdonshire.

The Chairman was encouraged that the Strategy emphasised the requirement for construction skills, as well as promoting apprenticeship schemes. The Panel then

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to endorse the Economic Growth Strategy 2020-25 and the associated actions.

## **52 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