

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND GROWTH) held in Drama Studio, Burgess Hall, Westwood Road, St Ives PE27 6WU on Wednesday, 1 September 2021.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Corney – Chairman.
Councillors E R Butler, Dr P L R Gaskin, M Haines and A Roberts.

APOLOGY(IES): Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors B S Chapman, D B Dew, M S Grice, J P Morris, T D Sanderson, S Wakeford and D J Wells.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors J Gray and J Neish.

21. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 7th July 2021 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

22. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

23. 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 September 2021 to 31st December 2021.

24. CREATING A VISION FOR THE OXFORD-CAMBRIDGE ARC - CONSULTATION RESPONSE

By means of a report by the Strategic Growth Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Creating a Vision for the Oxford-Cambridge Arc – Consultation Response was presented to the Panel.

The Panel noted that as the consultation was aimed at members of the public, it was difficult for a Local Authority to frame a response. It was also noted that this was the first of three expected consultations and that both Councillors and residents are encouraged to submit their own responses to the consultation.

Executive Councillor Neish advised that additional comments had been added throughout the report. The simplicity of the report and the issues of green spaces and biodiversity being addressed within the consultation were both praised by Councillor Roberts.

The Panel thereupon

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be encouraged to endorse the recommendations contained within the report.

25. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021/22 (QUARTER 1)

By means of a report by the Chief Finance Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Financial Performance Report 2021/22 (Quarter 1) was presented to the Panel.

The Panel welcomed the report and placed their thanks on record to the Chief Finance Officer for her hard work, guidance and diligence over the course of the challenging year.

Following a question by Councillor Roberts on whether the Art Centre development in St Neots was a problematic investment for the Council, Councillor Gray reassured that although the commercial potential of this development has not yet been achieved, Huntingdonshire District Council is committed to supporting the repurposing and regeneration of this centre to fully benefit the residents and businesses of St Neots. The Panel were also reassured that overall the Council's commercial estate contributed positively towards the budget.

The Chief Finance Office clarified that the 70% of outstanding miscellaneous debt overdue for payment identified within the report showed the more significant debts and that the remaining 30% was made up of much smaller debts.

Having commented upon the report, the Panel

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be encouraged to endorse the recommendations contained within the report.

26. CORPORATE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2021/22(QUARTER 1)

By means of a report by the Business Intelligence and Performance Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Corporate Performance Report 2021/22(Quarter 1) was presented to the Panel.

The reduction in staff sickness absence was again noted. Following a question from Councillor Gaskin regarding if there were links between the low rates of staff sickness and Huntingdonshire District Council being a desirable place to work, it was assured that this was being further investigated by the Council.

Following a question from Councillor Corney regarding how the Council were addressing the amount of invoices outstanding after 30 days, the Chief Finance Officer advised that this is being addressed

and that the importance of purchase orders prior to invoices being received has been reiterated to staff to help minimise processing delays.

The Panel therefore

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet endorse the recommendations contained within the report.

27. 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.

Following the recent Overview and Scrutiny away day, Members were advised that potential workstreams had been identified and that their viability was currently being assessed.

Chairman

This page is intentionally left blank