

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENT, COMMUNITIES AND PARTNERSHIPS) held in Civic Suite, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon PE29 3TN on Thursday, 7 September 2023.

PRESENT: Councillor J E Kerr – Chair.

Councillors M J Burke, S Bywater, S Cawley, S J Criswell, N J Hunt, M Kadewere, C Lowe and D J Shaw.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors T Alban and J E Harvey.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor S W Ferguson.

17. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6th July 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair. The Minutes of the Joint Overview and Scrutiny Panel meetings held on 6th July 2023 and 10th August 2023 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

18. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

19. 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 2023 to 31st December 2023.

20. ENGAGEMENT PRINCIPLES

By means of a report and presentation by the Strategic Communications Manager (copies of which were appended in the Minute Book) the Engagement Principles Report was presented to the Panel.

Councillor Criswell observed, that although a great piece of work, the principles within the report were very generic and could be applied to many Councils across the Country. He felt that further development could be undertaken to make this more relevant to the Council and District, which would also enable residents to better understand the aims and ideals of the Joint Administration. The Panel heard that the generic style of the Principles had been developed from the Government's best practice guidelines on this subject.

The flowchart was praised for its clarity by Councillor Shaw, who requested that this be developed to show specific consultees to provide better signposting within the community.

Following a question from Councillor Hunt, it was acknowledged that engagement across all demographics within the community can be challenging, however this communication would continue to be developed to ensure as wide a reach as possible.

The Panel praised an excellent piece of work and in general felt that this area of work was being developed in the right direction.

Following the discussion, it was

RESOLVED

that the comments would be passed back to the team for their consideration and for the report to progress to Cabinet.

21. 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.

The Panel advised that there were several areas where they would like to receive an update at a future meeting and it was agreed that the Work Programme would be updated to reflect these topics.

Members expressed interest in the following areas, which are to be added to the Programme along with detail of how these can be progressed;

- GP waiting times;
- The issue of concrete affecting public buildings, can an update be provided on how the affects the building at Hinchbrook Hospital;
- Lack of NHS Dentists in the District;
- Hydrogen Vehicles;
- Green Bin Subscription service implementation;
- Alternative Land Management follow up report;
- Environmental side of planning – such as requirements for renewable energy, green spaces;
- Corporate quarterly performance reports;
- Engagement with Parish Councils and development of that relationship – example given that no statutory obligation to advise Parishes of licencing applications within the Parish; and
- Great Fen project update.

7.25pm Cllr M Burke entered the meeting.

Chair