

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 16 June 2015.

PRESENT: Councillor T D Sanderson – Chairman.

Councillors Mrs S Conboy, J W Davies, Mrs A Dickinson, Mrs L A Duffy, D A Giles and P Kadewere.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors I C Bates, Mrs B E Boddington, I D Gardener and K D Wainwright.

IN ATTENDANCE: .

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No interests were received from Members present.

11. OPERATIONS REVIEW

The interim Head of Operations introduced himself to Members of the Panel, providing background to the role. The presentation began by looking at current strengths within Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) identified throughout the review, and then focused further on specific points of interest including:

- Formal consultation has begun, starting on 16th June 2015.
- Individual meetings with those whose positions within HDC that may be affected due to the Operations review have already been held.
- HDC are now looking to understand the service that is required rather than investing further money on areas that are not effective.
- There is a strong core of highly valued members of the current workforce.
- Avoidance of false economy; key roles should remain in place, particularly front-line members of staff.
- Changes in Terms and Conditions will address Bank Holiday waste collection issues and shortfalls in car park staffing.

The Corporate Director for Service then addressed the Panel, making it clear that the intention is that the relationship between Scrutiny and Operations to be improved and maintained. It was then requested that all Task and Finish/Working Groups for the Environmental Wellbeing Panel are disbanded while the Operations review and restructure is ongoing, giving the department time to implement any changes as identified in the review. In order for the Panel to remain involved and updated in changes which are taking place, the Corporate Director for Service has made a commitment to the Panel that they will receive regular reports on progress; quarterly reports to the Scrutiny Panel alongside monthly updates for the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Panel.

The Chairman praised the presentation, and also suggested that a greater sense of clarity within the Operations department is needed; and that monitoring and tracking of jobs is important so it is simple to determine whether work is being done or is completed. In reply, the interim Head of Operations told the Panel that a change in culture at HDC needs to happen alongside the restructure, which will involve being more clear about the organisation's values as there are currently no processes in place to provide efficient answers to queries regarding work being carried out. There is a new understanding that there needs to be a follow-through process, which makes use of customer feedback and provides relevant information.

The Panel asked for some more details on sickness levels within the Operations Department. The Interim Head of Operations assured the Members that sickness is one area that requires investigation and that this topic is being addressed, featuring greater responsibilities for line managers in the future.

It was agreed that the Panel will receive regular updates regarding the Operations Review; through quarterly updates directly to the Panel, and further monthly meetings to update the Chair/Vice Chair of the Panel to feedback to Members when appropriate.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel for Environmental Well-Being responded positively towards the presentation, and look forward to seeing the results of the Operations Review.

12. RECAP UPDATE

The Panel noted the Recycling in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough (RECAP) update provided. It was raised by one Member that the benefits from working with RECAP as it is configured presently need to be clear moving forward.

It was agreed that RECAP updates will be reported to the Panel as and when they are received.

Chairman