

**COMMENTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (COMMUNITIES AND CUSTOMERS) – 1st March 2016**

**COMMENTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE) – 3rd March 2016**

**COMMENTS FROM OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMY AND GROWTH) – 8th March 2016**

**CORPORATE PLAN**

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Communities and Customers) was presented the Corporate Plan. The Panel was informed that the Corporate Plan follows the expiry of the old Plan and aims to set out what the Council would like to achieve under the three corporate priorities.

A Member raised the point underneath the Enabling Communities Section that there is no reference to Public Rights of Way. It was noted that the last point in section 1b states that the work programme includes providing accessible leisure, green spaces, countryside and culture opportunities which could cover Public Rights of Way however following further discussion it was agreed to look at expanding the point to include Public Rights of Way.

Members would like the inclusion of the A1 and A428 improvement schemes within the Sustainable Growth section however the Panel was informed that those schemes were not be included as they would not be at the delivery stage within the lifetime of the Corporate Plan.

The Panel thought that underneath the Enabling Communities Section Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) should be included but noted that DFGs is a moveable fund. Members were informed that it would be looked into.

A Member requested that licences should be monitored under the Corporate Plan as the Council issue a high volume of licences and each licence is linked to business growth. The Panel noted that any measure would be an end to end measure from receipt to approval to ensure licences would be dealt with in a timely manner.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Finance and Performance) was presented the Corporate Plan. When discussing the options for the vision and strategic priorities and objectives the Panel expressed a preference for the first vision statement of 'we want to continue to improve the quality of life for the people of Huntingdonshire and work towards sustainable economic growth whilst providing value for money services'. Members noted that the number of priorities has been cut from four to three.

The Panel agreed that there should be some preamble however not too wordy as Members felt that the document should remain a clean strategic document.

Under Enabling Communities Section Members were concerned that the discrepancies between the market towns and villages would mean that the objective of 'ensuring that our streets and open spaces are clean and safe' would be difficult to achieve.

Concerns were raised that the action point within the Enabling Communities Section of 'reduce incidences of littering' would be difficult to measure.

Members questioned whether the objective of 'supporting economic growth in rural areas' within the Sustainable Growth Section was achievable as rural areas suffer from slow broadband and they are competing with the enterprise zones.

The Panel did not believe the action within the Sustainable Growth Section of 'continue to work with partners and influence the Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategy, to secure resource to facilitate delivery and mitigate the impact of new housing and to drive economic growth' was realistic as Members believe that the Local Enterprise Partnership can't be influenced.

In reference to the action of 'facilitate delivery of new housing on the large strategic site at Wyton' underneath the Sustainable Growth Section a Member wanted to emphasise the requirement for infrastructure in particular road infrastructure. Members were also keen to include Molesworth underneath the same action point.

Under the Efficient and Effective Council Section the action of 'collecting money that is saved?' was noted as particularly confusing however Members were advised that this was an error and the action should have read 'collecting money that is owed'.

Concerns were raised regarding the measurement of 'accelerate business growth and investment' underneath Sustainable Growth. Members emphasised that they would like this to continue especially the measure of 'processing of planning applications on target – major (within 13 weeks or agreed extended period)'.

After a discussion concerning the elements within the Corporate Plan beyond the Council's control, the Panel was reminded that the Council should try to influence those elements if it is important to Huntingdonshire as the Council has a responsibility to look after the District and its residents. In response a Member suggested adding a section on the interdependencies with other agencies and authorities that the Council relies upon to help deliver the Corporate Plan.

A Member raised a concern that the measure of number of days to process Housing Benefit changes of circumstances underneath Efficient and Effective Council would be adversely affected by the level of zero hours contracts. In response Members were informed that there would be new online housing benefits form which would make the process quicker.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) was presented the Corporate Plan. A Member emphasised that it is important to include open spaces within the Corporate Plan as it reinforces the Council's commitment to open spaces as there had been issues in the past where residents had tried to claim open space as their own.

The point of reduce incidences of littering underneath the Enabling Communities Section had been noted as being difficult to measure by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Finance and Performance) however the Panel thought the action was important and it should be kept in. In response Members were informed that the issue was whether the action showed a reduction of litter or just a reduction of complaints.

Following a Member's insistence of including an action of reducing fly posting and graffiti the Panel were advised that one of the measures included is the National Indicator (NI) 195 which measures the reduction of fly posting and graffiti as well as litter.

Members would like the point of 'prevent homelessness where possible by helping households either remain in their current home or find alternative housing' within the Enabling Communities Section to include within a reasonable distance from key services.

The Panel was informed that the action concerning business rates supporting local businesses underneath the Sustainable Growth Section was not finalised when the report was written. Members thought that using business rates to support local businesses was an option that the Council could be doing to unlock growth however were not sure on whether this should be supporting new businesses in the area or the growth of existing local businesses.

The Panel thought that accelerate business growth and investment underneath the Sustainable Growth Section was crucial for the Council and should remain in the Corporate Plan.

Members questioned the influence the Council has in regards to the Local Enterprise Partnership however the Panel were informed that the influence comes as a result of the inclusion of the Executive Leader on the LEP board.

The Panel were acquainted with the idea of amending the measure of 'number of missed bins per 100,000 households' within the Efficient and Effective Council section to a measure which resolved the issue of missed bins. Members were supportive of a more customer focused measure.

A Member has stated that they would like the measure of 'staff sickness days lost per full time employee (reduce to 9 days per person)' underneath the Efficient and Effective Council reduced further as they thought that this was too high. The Panel were informed that according to the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) the public sector average is 9 days and this was why the target was chosen.

Following the discussion of sickness the Panel was informed that the Council has a sickness rate of between 11 and 12 days however this is adversely affected by long term sickness absence. Members thought splitting the measure between long term and short term sickness would give a better reflection of sickness within the Council.

The Panel were advised of the option to include a measure of paying local suppliers within 10 working days however Members felt that as long as the Council has a reputation for paying invoices within 30 days and that suppliers are happy with the arrangement then there is little point or benefit of committing to pay invoices within 10 days.

A Member noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Communities and Customers) was informed that the A1 and A428 was not included within the action of 'continue to provide active input into the delivery stage of the A14 to deliver the specific requirements of the Council' underneath the Sustainable Growth Section because the schemes would not be at the delivery stage within the lifetime of the Corporate Plan. Despite this the Member would still like the inclusion of the A1 and A428 as it would reinforce the Council's commitment to those schemes.