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## **Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth)**

**Report of the meeting held on 8th March 2016.**

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### **Matters for Information**

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#### **14. CORPORATE PLAN 2016/18**

Members have been acquainted with the draft Corporate Plan for 2016/18 and how it links in with the Service Plans. The Panel has noted that the actions and targets in the Corporate Plan will enable Overview and Scrutiny to hold Portfolio Holders to account.

With regard to the objectives and action points, the Panel has made the following observations:

- that it is important to include open spaces within the Plan as it reinforces the Council's commitment to open spaces, especially as there have been issues in the past where residents had tried to claim open space as their own;
- although the action to 'reduce incidences of littering' had been noted as being difficult to measure by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Finance and Performance), the Panel thought the action was important and it should be kept in;
- following discussion around the inclusion of an action on reducing fly posting and graffiti, the Panel has been advised that the National Indicator 195 measure assesses the reduction of fly posting and graffiti as well as litter;
- Members would like the action to 'prevent homelessness where possible by helping households either remain in their current home or find alternative housing' to include a reference to distance from key services as the Panel has concluded that the current location for temporary accommodation for homeless people is too far away from any amenities;
- the Panel thought that using business rates to support local businesses was an option that the Council could be doing to unlock growth and an action should be included within the Plan. However, Members were not sure whether this should be supporting new businesses in the area or the growth of existing local businesses;
- the influence the Council has on the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) was questioned and the Panel has been informed that this influence is through the inclusion of the Executive Leader on the LEP Board;
- Members have emphasised that 'affordability and value for money are at the core of the Council's decision making

processes' is an important action to include within the Corporate Plan;

- the Panel has been acquainted with the idea of amending the measure of 'number of missed bins per 100,000 households' to measure the recovery of missed bins. Members supported this more customer focused measure;
- regarding the recycling measure, Members have been informed that this would be amended to focus on reducing waste as this was deemed a more meaningful target;
- the target for 'staff sickness days lost per full time employee (reduce to 9 days per person)' should be reduced further as the Panel thought that it was too high. The Panel has been informed that the Council currently has a sickness rate of between 11 and 12 days due to a high level of long term sickness absence. Members have suggested splitting the measure between long term and short term sickness would give a better reflection of sickness within the Council;
- the Panel considered an option to measure payments to 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 suppliers are happy with the arrangement then there would be little benefit from committing to pay invoices within 10 days; and,
- despite the schemes not being at the delivery stage within the lifetime of the Corporate Plan, the Panel would like to see A1 and A428 improvement schemes included as this would reinforce the Council's commitment to those schemes.

## **15. LOCAL PLAN TO 2036 PROGRESS REPORT**

The Panel has received an update on progress with the preparation of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036. Members have been informed that there has been progress on the Environment Agency's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment however there has been little progress on the County Council's Strategic Transport Study.

With regard to the Strategic Transport Study, the Panel has been informed that the Cambridge Sub-Regional Model (CSRM) traffic model was flawed and requires revalidation. This will not be complete until the end of May 2016 and that would in turn put the submission of the Local Plan back to the summer of 2017.

Members have noted that there will be an earmarked fund for the development of the Local Plan but have been advised that the money will be met from existing funds.

Following a question on the County Council's contribution towards the costs of developing the Local Plan, Members were informed that the County Council would fund the work they will undertake, but no additional funding will be provided.

Concerns have been raised in relation to the resources available to carry out work on the Local Plan, however the Panel has been informed that the resources needed would be acquired.

Four potential development scenarios have been produced to be tested using the CSRM. The Panel will not indicate a preference on the preferred scenario until they have all been tested.

The Panel are content with the overall progress made with the Local Plan but are concerned that the CSRM is not correct. Members have endorsed a proposal to set up a single planning policy earmarked reserve to support the work programme.

#### **16. LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

The Panel has considered the contents of a revised Local Development Scheme which sets out the scope and timetable for the production of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036. The scheme is being developed to satisfy legal compliance checks when the Local Plan reaches the examination stage and is important as the Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report is published by the Council each December and reports in relation to the Local Development Scheme in place at the end of March.

In response to comments regarding to the environmental assessment, Members have been informed that this assessment is completed early in the Neighbourhood Plan process and that the St Neots Neighbourhood Plan did have an environmental assessment.

The Panel has recommended that the new Local Development Scheme (March 2016) should be approved for publication and commencement on 24th March 2016.

#### **17. GODMANCHESTER AND ST NEOTS NEEDS ANALYSIS OF OPEN SPACE AND PLAY FACILITIES**

The Panel has been provided with an opportunity to scrutinise the needs analysis for green spaces and play facilities in Godmanchester and St Neots. Overall, Members have been informed that provision in both towns is sufficient with the exception of parks and allotments.

With regards to Godmanchester, the Panel have been advised that provision is good and the Bearscroft Farm development will further enhance the provision. In relation to the development of open space and play facilities, Members have been informed that the Council has a schedule of projects ready to be funded through Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy contributions from new developments.

A Member has expressed concern that allotments could look unsightly and highlighted a specific allotment area in the Stukeleys that could be used as a model when such developments faced residential complaints about untidiness.

With regards to St Neots, the Panel has been informed that there is a good level of provision with the exception of allotments and community gardens. Members have been advised that there is a scheme to provide allotments within the green space between the A1 and the west of Eaton Socon. The Panel thought this allotment scheme would be a good use of land.

**18. UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF OPEN SPACE AND PLAY FACILITIES FUNDED FROM SECTION 106 CONTRIBUTIONS**

The Panel has received an update on the implementation of open space and play facilities funded from Section 106 (S106) contributions with the aim of explaining how the S106 monies are being dealt with. Members have been informed that regular updates would be presented to the Panel and that those updates would include Community Infrastructure Levy contributions.

In response to a question regarding St Neots S106 monies, Members have been informed that, with the exception of the monies from Loves Farm, the S106 money is ready to spend. The Town Council will need to contact the Council with proposed schemes so that the money can be released.

Following a question regarding the process of using S106 monies, Members have been informed that if the needs analysis identifies a need then the Town or Parish Council would speak to manufacturers about the construction or development of a facility. The Town or Parish Council would then submit a proposal to the Council with complete costings and the Council would then release the money for the scheme.

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**Other Matters of Interest**

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**19. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Panel has been acquainted with the contents of the Notices of Key Executive Decisions which has been prepared by the Executive Leader.

**20. WORKPLAN STUDIES**

The Panel has received details of the studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels. Members have been informed that the Voluntary Sector Grant Funding Working Group would not be reviewing the Community Chest arrangements.

The Panel has been informed that the Registered Social Providers Working Group would remain within the remit of the Communities and Customers Panel. Members have been updated on the work of the Working Group, including the meeting held on 29th February 2016.

**21. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) – PROGRESS**

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies. Members have been informed that the Corporate Enforcement Policy will be included within its Work Programme.

T D Sanderson  
Chairman