
Cabinet

Report of the meeting held on 17th March 2016

Matters for Decision

60. CORPORATE PLAN 2016/18

By way of a report from the Corporate Team Manager (this item appears separately on the Council Agenda as an item for decision, Item No.6 refers), the Cabinet has considered the Corporate Plan 2016/18.

The Council's Corporate Plan was reviewed in 2015 when it was agreed that a full refresh would take place in early 2016. The Plan is a two year document that outlines the Vision, Strategic Priorities and Objectives for Huntingdonshire. The Plan also establishes what the Council aims to achieve in addition to the core statutory services.

The review has been timed to coincide with the development of Service Plans and where appropriate, actions or performance indicators in Service Plans for 2016/17 have been included in the Corporate Plan.

The Cabinet has been informed that the feedback received from the quarterly update reports has been incorporated in the revised Plan and that the objectives, key actions and performance measures are still being finalised.

The condensed version of the Plan has been welcomed by the Cabinet as has the reduction in the number of Strategic Priorities from four to three. However, the Cabinet has agreed that the wording within the Plan should be bolder with active titles that provide more clarity about what the Council is trying to deliver and the its role for example 'Ensuring sustainable growth' rather than 'Sustainable growth...'

The Cabinet has agreed that the document should relate to both officers and Members. The Cabinet also thought the Plan should be more explicit in terms of how it translates to officers and the delivery of services.

In considering the comments from all of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels (Item No.s 12, 11 and 14 of their Reports refer) the Cabinet discussed the proposed performance measures relating to sickness absence and the impact of long term sickness on the overall average. It was agreed that there is value in understanding this and it was noted that this is reported separately to the Employment Panel. However, for the purposes of the Corporate Plan the Cabinet has

agreed to retain the current measure, of reducing the days lost per full time employee to 9 days per person, as this is a standard measure used across the public and private sector and it allows for performance to be compared with others. The Cabinet has emphasised the importance of addressing and changing the current culture in relation to sickness absence and that Heads of Service must take action to address current sickness levels.

The Cabinet has agreed that Executive Councillors should take ownership of Corporate Plan and be instrumental in the development of the objectives. However, the Cabinet has stated the importance of the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels in taking ownership of the Corporate Plan and challenging on delivery of the corporate objectives.

The Cabinet has congratulated the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for their in-depth comments and contribution. Whereupon the Cabinet,

RECOMMENDS

that the Council adopt the Corporate Plan 2016/18, subject to the inclusion of the comments made by the Cabinet.

Matters for Information

61. HUNTINGDONSHIRE LOCAL PLAN TO 2036 QUARTERLY UPDATE

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) (Item No. 15 of their Report refers) the Cabinet has noted progress on preparation of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036 (HLP2036) and its supporting evidence base in the light of recent government announcements relating to the timescale for the production of local plans.

The government has announced that it expects new local plans ‘to be written’ by early 2017 although there has been no clarification of what statutory stage of preparation this refers to. The next stage of the preparation process for the HLP2036 will be the proposed submission stage, which is the first statutory stage. This involves a 6 week public consultation period, specifically inviting representations on issues of soundness and legal compliance.

When the Cabinet received an update in the previous quarter, the highest priority was the brief for a Strategic Transport Study. The Cabinet has been informed that this has now been prepared and is being processed by Cambridgeshire County Council’s procurement team, with the intention that the contract is awarded in May 2016.

Revalidation work of the Cambridge Sub-Regional Model is currently being undertaken on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council by

Atkins. This work is necessary to ensure that the model holds the most up-to-date data on traffic demand, is updated with all recently completed transport infrastructure schemes and the public transport, walking and cycling assignments are correct. Due to the complexity and volume of data in the model the revalidation work will not commence until the end of May/early June.

At the Cabinet meeting on 19 November 2015 it was resolved that 'as a priority, infrastructure requirements for Wyton Airfield are further scoped with a view they can be identified and fully costed'. The Cabinet were referred to the four potential development scenarios that have subsequently been prepared to test impacts of growth.

Following appointment of JBA Consulting, work on the first element of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has commenced and is scheduled for receipt by the Council in late April 2016. This is later than originally scheduled due to delays in provision of extensive datasets by the Environment Agency. Completion of the second element of the SFRA is now anticipated in July 2016, subject to availability of Environment Agency inputs.

The Cabinet agreed that a county-wide approach to the replacement Gypsy and Traveller Needs Assessment (GTANA) being coordinated by the Joint Strategic Planning Unit on behalf of Huntingdonshire District Council, in partnership with a number of other Councils, was the best approach. The Cabinet also discussed the difficulties in allocating sites and was informed that a criteria based approach to guide site selection continues to be proposed. The Cabinet has noted the difficulties that can be presented for schools when gypsy and travellers sites are granted at appeal. The Cabinet has been informed that the GTANA will take account of the new, more restrictive definition of gypsy and traveller which has been published and is expected to result in less of a demand on accommodation needs.

Currently the budgets for consultants and related costs to support the HLP2036 and other Planning Policy initiatives are agreed for each financial year. Dependencies on others such as the County Council for transport modelling, means that timescales can be outside the District Council's control and budgets not spent as planned. Rather than continue with the status quo, the Cabinet has agreed that a single Planning Policy earmarked reserve is established with money used from the reserve to support the work programme.

62. **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) (Item No. 16 of their Report refers) the Cabinet has approved the new Local Development Scheme for publication and commencement as of 31 March 2016.

The previous Local Development Scheme was published in April 2014. It is essential that the Council has an up to date Local Development Scheme to ensure the Local Plan meets the legal compliance checks as part of its statutory examination. It is also important that the

Scheme is up to date as the Local Plan Annual Monitoring Report, which the Council publishes each December, reports in relation to the Local Development Scheme in place at the end of March that year.

The Local Development Scheme provides a timetable identifying all the key stages in the preparation of the Local Plan. Once the remainder of the evidence base documents are complete the intention is to undertake the statutory six week consultation on the proposed submission version of the Local Plan during January and February 2017.

Formal submission of the Local Plan to the Secretary of State for examination is expected in July 2017. Once submitted the timetable is then dependent on the Planning Inspectorate and the duration of the examination will be determined on the availability of an appropriate Inspector, the scope and complexity of issues raised and the need for further consultation on modifications arising out of the examination.

63. **REVIEW OF WASTE POLICIES**

The Cabinet has endorsed the revised waste policies and approved the consultation on the options for waste minimisation and potential charges for bin replacements, subject to consultations not commencing until the new Municipal Year.

The Cabinet were informed of a correction to Policy 3 – Number of Wheeled Bins and Sacks Provided, and it was confirmed that up to two additional 240litre bins for green and food waste can be provided on request subject to an annual charge, not one bin as detailed in the Policy.

The waste collection policies have been reviewed to ensure they are fully customer focused and represent the best practice for top performing local authorities.

A new Policy for lane end collection arrangements has been developed based on the results of a detailed survey of individual locations. Bespoke collection arrangements have been identified for implementation along with the operational policies and procedures against which these arrangements will be managed.

A rejections policy is also included in respect of repeated contamination of recycling and garden waste bins. Residents will be provided with details of the ongoing contamination and allowed time to resolve the issues, which will be deemed as the 'first yellow card warning'. If further contamination incidents occur a 'second yellow card warning' will be issued, followed by a 'red card' concluding with the removal of the bin. No additional capacity will be provided for waste collection if a bin is removed. The Cabinet has emphasised that the yellow and red card warning system only applies to recycling and garden waste bins.

The Cabinet has approved public consultation on the following three options for reducing the grey bin capacity on domestic collection to reduce the waste produced by households:

- **Option 1:** Issuing 140 litre bins to all new properties unless they have been built to accommodate 6 plus residents and providing an additional 240 litre blue bin for recyclates on request. A 140 litre bin would be provided to any resident requesting a smaller bin.
- **Option 2:** Issuing 140 litre bins to all new properties unless they have been built to accommodate 6 plus residents and providing an additional 240 litre blue bin for recyclates on request. A 140 litre bin would be provided to any property requesting a replacement bin.
- **Option 3:** Issuing 140 litre bins to all new properties unless they have been built to accommodate 6 plus residents and providing an additional 240 litre blue bin for recyclates on request. All bins at existing properties throughout the District will be replaced with 140 litre bins.

The Cabinet has also approved public consultation on options for charging for replacement bins that have been damaged, lost or stolen.

Whilst considering the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) (Item No. 10 of their previous Report to Council in February 2016 refers) the Cabinet has suggested that it would be difficult to monitor the policy if the Council replaces the first bin for free and charges for a second replacement. However, that we should also consider a charge levied on those that remove their bin when moving properties.

The Cabinet has noted that a Waste Minimisation Officer is in post to assist with increasing recycling rates. The Cabinet has acknowledged that the Corporate Plan includes a measure relating to recovery of missed bins and to reducing the level of household waste sent to landfill. The Cabinet has suggested that the measure should be about increasing recycling levels.

64. **ANNUAL MANAGEMENT PLANS FOR COUNTRYSIDE ASSETS**

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) (Item No. 8 of their previous Report to Council in February 2016 refers) the Cabinet has approved the structure of annual management plans for countryside assets and the proposed programme for the development of management plans for all countryside assets.

The purpose of the management plans is to better direct the management, development and maintenance of countryside assets over the short and medium term. This is to ensure there is a clear strategic framework for the Countryside Service going forward. The management plans will be developed with the input from existing voluntary groups involved with the Countryside Service as their expertise and contributions are essential in order to progress the self-management of selected assets by these groups.

The draft management plan for Barford Road Pocket Park, Eynesbury, will be used as the template for the development of future management plans for all countryside assets.

The Cabinet has commended the comprehensive report and commented that it could be shared with Town and Parish Councils. The Cabinet has further noted the fantastic countryside assets within the district.

65. **GROUNDS MAINTENANCE - SERVICE SPECIFICATION**

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) (Item No. 9 of their previous Report to Council in February 2016 refers) the Cabinet has approved the Grounds Maintenance Service Specification as the primary document to direct the future delivery of the service. The Service Specification will be subject to review and refinement based on performance monitoring results and customer satisfaction findings.

Along with waste and recycling collections and the street cleansing service, the grounds maintenance service is one of the most visible services delivered by the Council and impacts directly on residents and businesses in the District.

The Grounds Maintenance Service Specification has been developed to better direct the grounds maintenance activities delivered by the Operations Service and to make maintenance frequencies and standards more transparent for residents. The service availability details and maintenance frequencies will form the core information on the Council's website regarding the grounds maintenance service provided by the Council.

The grounds maintenance service includes grass maintenance; amenity shrub beds; pruning of roses; seasonal bedding displays; maintenance of dykes, ditches and watercourses; and minor tree works.

66. **EVENTS POLICY FOR PARKS AND OPEN SPACES**

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economy and Growth) (Item No. 7 of their previous Report to Council in February 2016 refers) the Cabinet has approved the Policy for events in the Council's parks and open spaces and the introduction of fees and charges for events from 1st April 2016, subject to amendments.

There is a requirement for an appropriate policy framework that establishes clear guidelines for the consideration of applications and the staging of events, to provide greater control and to deliver objectives within the Corporate Plan.

Previously events in Council parks and open spaces were agreed outside of any policy framework, with no coherent structure of fees and

charges to ensure the Council recovers the costs incurred with accommodating the events.

The Cabinet has agreed that it is important for the Operations Team and Licensing Team to work in partnership so that the applicant receives a seamless service.

Whilst discussing the schedule of charges and deposits the Cabinet has noted that there should be some flexibility in the fees and deposits as there should be a balance between financial protection for the Council, so that it does not forfeit clean-up costs after an event, and not being a deterrent to groups of volunteers. The Cabinet has agreed that local non-commercial, charitable and community organisations are exempt from the charging scheme and that the finalised wording of the Policy be delegated to the Interim Head of Service (Operations) in consultation with the Executive Councillor for Operations and the Environment.

68. **SAFETY ADVISORY GROUP**

The Cabinet has received the report of the Safety Advisory Group meeting held on 24th February 2015.

69. **HUNTINGDONSHIRE SPORTS AND LEISURE FACILITY STRATEGY**

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Communities and Customers) (Item No. 13 of their Report refers) the Cabinet has endorsed the Huntingdonshire Sports and Leisure Facility Strategy 2016 – 2021 which contains the following nine recommendations:

- i. Encourage investment in projects where the most significant impact can be made on participation levels to address both health and social wellbeing;
- ii. Commit to the retention of all strategically important sports facilities as highlighted in section 5.2 of the Strategy, in particular given the current shortfall of indoor sports hall provision.
- iii. Support projects identified as priority projects to refurbish/upgrade existing sites as identified in section 5.3 of the Strategy;
- iv. Support projects identified as sites planning new facilities to increase the sport and leisure stock as identified in section 5.4 of the Strategy;
- v. Ensure that significant identified gaps in provision are addressed as opportunities permit as identified in section 5.5 of the Strategy;
- vi. Work with partners and stakeholders including other operators to develop and deliver new facilities in areas of identified strategic need as identified in section 5.6 of the Strategy and in correlation with the new major housing sites;

- vii. Seek to maximise all funding opportunities including Section 106, Community Infrastructure Levy, external grants or sponsorship contributions;
- viii. Seek to ensure all sports facilities are fit for purpose, of good quality and with excellent access with Huntingdonshire District Council's own stock being the exemplar for others to follow (including sports pitches and built facilities); and
- ix. Work with other sports and leisure providers to seek improvements in sports provision and encourage participation in sport and active leisure.

70. ONE LEISURE - SIX MONTHLY UPDATE REPORT

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Communities and Customers) (Item No. 14 of their Report refers) the Cabinet has received a six month update report on the progress of One Leisure, following the Cabinet meeting in September 2015.

The progress made includes:

- The Group is on target to achieve annual sales of £6.85m (Budget £6.97m) with an operating surplus of £350K (Budget £343k). This represents a turn-round of £420k in comparison to 2014/15.
- Management has controlled monthly trading with each month still remaining in profit, with the exception of October where several significant maintenance issues were resolved. Due to busier periods, expenditure has risen in accordance with increases in revenue;
- 2014/15 admissions show an increase in attendance of 9% against the previous year and are currently showing a year to date improvement of just under 2%;
- Phase II of the management restructure is complete and all sites now have a new structure in place and operating effectively;
- Following the review of One Leisure Sawtry a new operating model with reduced times and staffing resources has been implemented successfully which has reduced the operating deficit by circa £50k in this financial year with further savings expected. This review has also renewed a productive partnership with the on-site college as part of a strategy to re-engage with the local community;
- Ramsey is now trading at near breakeven levels with strong performances from St Neots and St Ives; and
- Following the delivery of a new membership model in June, pre-paid memberships have increased by over 300 members, which when coupled with a pricing restructure has increased revenue in Impressions memberships by £155k.

Whilst discussing memberships the Cabinet has agreed to extend the Armed Forces Discounted membership to include Active Reservists. It was noted to the Cabinet that take up of the Armed Forces Discounted

membership is low mainly due to the facilities that are accessible at RAF Wyton.

The Cabinet has commended the Executive Councillor for Commercial Activities and all of the One Leisure Team for the significant financial achievements. Previously income and expenditure were converging. However, this financial year income is tracking above expenditure. The Cabinet has also expressed its appreciation for the retention of the smaller Leisure Centres throughout the district.

71. **ONE LEISURE STRATEGIC PLAN**

(Appendix 2 - One Leisure Strategic Plan 2016-21 was considered as an exempt item under paragraphs 3 and 4 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972).

Having considered the comments of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Communities and Customers) (Item No. 16 of their Report refers) the Cabinet has endorsed the exempt Strategic Plan for One Leisure 'Growing a healthy business'.

The strategic plan has been devised to guide the facility operations, development and identify strategic facility investment for One Leisure over the next five years.

The three key strategic themes that the strategy has been developed upon are:

- To care about our PEOPLE;
- To be a CUSTOMER focused organisation; and
- To provide the FACILITIES and SERVICES that meets and exceeds customers' expectations.

Although One Leisure has significant successes in attracting some of the segmented groups, there are specific under-represented facility users groups or area of potential for significant growth that the Strategy aims to target, particularly:

- Children under 19;
- Families with young children;
- Young adults 19 to 30; and
- Older people [over 55]

Efforts will also be focused on retaining existing customers and seeking to target new markets which include niche segments like cycling.

J D Ablewhite
Chairman