

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMY AND GROWTH) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 3TN on Thursday, 2nd February 2017.

- PRESENT: Councillor D B Dew – Chairman.
- Councillors Mrs B E Boddington, E R Butler, L George, D J Mead, T D Sanderson and Mrs J Tavener.
- APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors I D Gardener, K D Wainwright and D Watt.
- IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors G J Bull, Mrs A Dickinson, R Fuller and R Harrison.

57. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 5th January 2017 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

58. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

59. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel received and noted the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which has been prepared by the Executive Leader for the period 1st February 2017 to 31st May 2017.

Members were given an update on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). Members were told that Officers are hoping to bring the MOU to the Panel as soon they can but they are currently waiting for meetings with the LEP.

60. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID) HUNTINGDON

The Panel welcomed Sue Bradshaw, Business Improvement District (BID) Huntingdon Manager, Jon Kerby, Chairman of the BID and Mo Aswat, Mosaic Partnership. Mr Aswat of the Mosaic Partnership, who have been employed as consultants to the BID, gave Members a presentation on the BID and the renewal process.

As background, Members were informed that the Mosaic Partnership have developed 86 BIDs in the UK and helped develop the BID Stage 1 in Huntingdon. Legislation establishing BIDs was passed in 2004, since then there have been around 250 successful BID ballots and 42 unsuccessful BID ballots. In terms of the Stage 2 ballots, 9 out of 10

are successful.

It was explained that the BID is an arrangement whereby businesses get together, decide what additional improvements they want to make, how they are going to manage and deliver those improvements and what it will cost them. This all goes into a business plan which is voted on by all those who would have to pay the BID levy. The BID can last for a maximum of five years and must be able to demonstrate how it has benefited businesses who have funded it. In addition, the BID can only fund services above and beyond the statutory services.

For a BID to have a successful ballot there has to be two majority 'Yes' votes, the first is that the majority of businesses have to vote yes and the second is that the majority of business by rateable value have to vote yes.

The Panel were informed that there are three stages to the renewal of the BID which are: the Foundation Phase, the Development Phase and the Campaign Phase. There are several key dates for the BID renewal including: the issuing of the Full Business Plan in March 2017 and the ballot, which is conducted by post through June 2017. It was clarified that the BID Stage 1 ends on 30th September 2017 with the BID Stage 2 commencing on 1st October 2017 if the ballot is successful.

In response to a question regarding what services the BID can provide the Panel were informed that BIDs can provide a range of services including: Marketing and Promotion, Events and Activations, Cleansing and Maintenance, Facilities and Asset Management, Access, Safety and Security, improvements to the physical environment, Business Support and Lobbying and Advocacy.

In addition, Mr Aswat listed the following achievements of the BID:

- The Huntingdon BID has saved costs for businesses through Business Support initiatives;
- Huntingdon Town Centre is safer and more welcoming for businesses and visitors;
- It is easier to find details of business locations in Huntingdon Town Centre now;
- Huntingdon Town Rangers are an effective support for businesses;
- There are more activities happening in Huntingdon Town Centre now;
- More people know about what is happening in Huntingdon Town Centre now;
- Huntingdon BID liaise effectively with other parties to help support businesses;
- The Huntingdon BID is an effective voice for Huntingdon Town Centre;
- Town centre footfall has been maintained in line with national and local trends;
- Vacant units continue to be below average and new businesses continue to be drawn to the Town centre; and
- Closer links with CCTV and more Huntingdon Businesses Against Crime members have resulted in better awareness and information sharing leading to reduced criminal and

antisocial activity.

In response to a question, the Chairman of the BID explained that he thought that the BID makes Huntingdon a nice place to trade and that the levy payment represents good value for money. He added that he thought the Rangers do a fantastic job, particularly speaking with customers. He added that Huntingdon businesses have a difficult task in attracting customers as they are competing with the internet, Cambridge and Peterborough, however businesses are getting together and attracting people to the town.

A Member stated that he thought that although the BID turnover is only £165k per year the money has been used well in the town. In response to his question regarding the input Members have into the Business Plan, the Panel were told that Members can suggest ideas through the Member representative on the Board of Directors. In addition the Board asks levy payers for ideas they have for the Business Plan.

Following a question about the role of the Rangers, Ms Bradshaw informed the Panel that their role going forward won't be different to their role currently. They fulfil a whole range of tasks including finding lost children to clearing up small spills. The businesses want the Rangers to be the friendly face of Huntingdon who greet customers.

In response to a question regarding the kiosks, the Panel were informed that the Corporate Team is currently reviewing the kiosks.

61. BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT (BID) HUNTINGDON RENEWAL BALLOT - DELEGATION OF POWERS

With the aid of a report by Economic Development Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Business Improvement District (BID) Huntingdon Renewal Ballot – Delegation of Powers was presented to the Panel.

Members were informed that as the Council are a member of the BID, if the BID was renewed the Council would be obliged to pay approximately £10,680 (current levy). The Panel were asked to comment on whether the Head of Development should cast a positive vote at the ballot and whether the Head of Customer Services be authorised to meet the Council's obligations to issue invoices and collect the levy.

Following a question in regards to the BID's Business Plan, the Panel was reminded that the report presented focuses on the process of the Council's role in the ballot and not the Business Plan of the BID. Members were informed that there will be a consultation process in which the BID is to invite ideas for the Business Plan.

The Panel recommended that Cabinet should remove the word 'positively' from the recommendation to give the Head of Development authorisation to vote either way at the BID renewal ballot as Members believe that there should be an option to vote negatively depending on the strength of the BID Business Plan.

62. REPRESENTATION ON EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS - QUARTERLY UPDATE REPORT

With the aid of a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Representation On External Organisations – Quarterly Update Report was presented to the Panel.

The Chairman introduced the report by informing Members that the Cabinet decided at its meeting on 21st July 2016 to require appointed Members to report on a quarterly basis, in writing, to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

In response to the question from the Chairman to does the update report needs to be quarterly, the Panel agreed that they don't see the merit of the report presented quarterly and it could be viewed as a waste of officer time. The Chairman, on behalf of the Panel, thanked the Cabinet for their suggestion but stated that the Panel agrees that the Members on external organisations do not need to report back quarterly.

(At 7.55pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillors G J Bull, Mrs A Dickinson, R Fuller and R Harrison left the meeting and did not return.)

63. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel received and noted a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Communities and Environment and Performance and Customers.

64. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROGRESS

With the aid of a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Panel reviewed the progress of its activities since the last meeting.

In regards to the Car Parking Strategy, the Chairman stated that he is due to meet the Corporate Director (Delivery) to discuss the topic. The Chairman noted that one of the original volunteers to the group, Councillor R Fuller, has since ceased to be a Member of Overview and Scrutiny and has suggested filling the vacancy created as a consequence at the next Panel meeting in March.

The Panel agreed to wait for the Housing Strategy to decide whether Members would like to continue the Housing Working Group.

Chairman