

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND CUSTOMERS) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Monday, 6th March 2017.

PRESENT: Councillor M F Shellens – Chairman.
Councillors R C Carter, S Greenall,
Mrs R E Mathews, Mrs S L Taylor and
R J West.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs B E Boddington, P L E Bucknell, Mrs L A Duffy and D M Tysoe.

64. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

65. 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 March 2017 to 30th June 2017.

66. PROVISIONAL AGREEMENT FOR TRANSFER OF LOAN

With the aid of a report by the Head of Resources (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the provisional agreement for the transfer of a loan, previously made to Huntingdonshire Regional College, to Cambridge Regional College as a consequence of the merger of the two colleges was presented to the Panel.

It was explained to Members that any merger would legally be a default on the loan to Huntingdonshire Regional College (HRC). As a part of the process Cambridge Regional College (CRC) has asked the Council if the loan could be transferred in the event of a merger.

A Member commented that they thought the Council are profiteering from further education as the loan was provided to HRC at a higher rate than was borrowed at. However it was explained that this had to be done due to State Aid Rules, otherwise the Council would be unable to provide the college with a loan.

In response to a query from a Member, it was confirmed that the legal charge on the college site at California Road, Huntingdon would remain.

The Panel agreed that Cabinet should give provisional agreement that the loan given to HRC be transferred to CRC following a formal merger.

(At 6.03pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor S Greenall entered the meeting.)

67. 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 of studies being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels' Communities and Environment and Economy and Growth.

68. 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.

The Chairman informed Members that the request that was made, at the Panel meeting in December 2016, for financial outturn performance to be presented in an alternative format is being considered by Officers provided that workloads don't significantly increase.

The Panel discussed the issue of homelessness, mobile homes and the potential for further scrutiny work. Whilst Members agreed that the Council would not make savings with the use of mobile homes, a Member argued that the option should be explored particularly if there is a chance of bringing normality to families and individuals who find themselves homeless.

The Chairman and Councillor R J West informed Members of the outcomes from the Corporate Plan Task and Finish Group.

Members are keen to carry out further scrutiny work on the Combined Authority and how will it impact upon the Council.

With confusion amongst Members over the role of the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and how they will work alongside the Combined Authority, the Panel decided that the role of the LEP requires greater scrutiny. The Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) noted that another Panel is already carrying out this work and in addition, Officers are working on a Memorandum of Understanding with the LEP.

The Panel agreed that the following topics should be included on the Panel's work programme: Planning Budget, Homelessness, the Combined Authority, Shared Services and the LEP.

Chairman