

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 Wednesday, 6th September 2017.

- PRESENT: Councillor D M Tysoe – Chairman.
- Councillors Mrs B E Boddington, R C Carter, S Greenall, J M Palmer, Mrs D C Reynolds, Mrs S L Taylor and R J West.
- APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors K M Baker, Mrs L A Duffy, Mrs R E Mathews and M F Shellens.
- IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors D Brown, S Cawley, M Francis and J A Gray.

26. MINUTES

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

Further to Minute Number 21 the Executive Councillor for Commercial and Shared Services and the Head of Community gave a verbal update on CCTV/Security Services – Business Case for Commercialisation. The Panel was informed that the scoring of tender bids will be 40% for finance and 60% for quality. Currently four companies have expressed an interest in submitting a tender however the Head of Community stated that he wouldn't know the final number of interested companies until the deadline for tenders had past and bids are being received. In addition, Members were informed that it is the intention to bring before the Panel a full business case by January 2018.

In response to a question, the Panel was informed that the commercialisation venture will create a standalone company independent from the CCTV shared service however the Executive Councillor stated that he is expecting the two interact and trade with each other.

Members were informed that there have been a couple of changes to the timetable however the milestone events remain the same.

A Member raised a concern that if commercialisation does not occur how would the Council deal with the spare capacity in the system. In response, the Panel was informed that currently there is the optimum number of staff and that the extra capacity is within the infrastructure.

Following a question regarding stakeholders who contribute to the CCTV service, the Panel was informed that Parish and Town Councils do contribute to the cost of the CCTV service in return for

CCTV coverage in their area. The Council reassured partners that the venture won't adversely affect the current CCTV coverage.

Further to Minute Number 23 it was confirmed that the loan to Luminus was secured against Luminus' property.

27. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds declared a disclosable pecuniary interest in relation to Minute Number 30 as she has been attempting to secure the purchase of a piece of land from the Council.

28. 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 September 2017 to 31st December 2017.

(At 7.20pm, during the discussion of this item, Councillor D Brown left the meeting and did not return.)

29. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017/18 - QUARTER 1

With the aid of a report by the Corporate Team Manager and the Head of Resources (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Integrated Performance Report 2017/18 – Quarter 1 was presented to the Panel. In summarising the report, the Corporate Team Manager stated that this quarter one key action has been rated red and nine performance indicators are red.

In response to the question, how the Council can measure weeds, litter, detritus and graffiti, Members were informed that the Council's Development Team carry out independent inspections against the set standards. Moving forward the Council is a member of the Association for Public Service Excellence, who offer benchmarking across all its Members. The Council are focusing on the areas of waste and street scene.

In regards to maintenance of land, the Panel was informed that the Council has a responsibility to maintain every piece of land it owns.

Following a question regarding recycling, Members were informed that there has been an issue with the recycling contractor and that the Council does not have confidence that the contractor has done everything they stated they would do. The Council has withheld payment from the contractor. There is currently an audit of the contractor and that all Councils involved are taking action.

A query was raised regarding One Leisure with Members asking how is income increasing when visitor numbers are falling. The question could not be answered at the meeting however the relevant Head of Service will be contacted for a reply.

In response to a question regarding Council policy on empty properties, the Panel was informed that the Council encourage home owners to make their empty properties available for occupation. In

addition home owners have been discouraging people leaving their properties empty by cutting the months that the property is eligible for no Council Tax from six months to one.

The Panel was updated on Operations costs and the potential to save costs by reviewing how the service removes weeds. It was suggested that it would be more cost effective by spraying weed killer after the road sweeper has cleared the weeds instead of employing contractors to carry out the spraying.

Following concerns expressed regarding Disabled Facility Grants (DFG), Members were informed that DFGs are managed by the Cambridgeshire Home Improvement Agency (CHIA) which is a shared service that carries out DFG work across Cambridgeshire. Due to the demand for DFGs, the amount of money that is required is going up. Demand is outstripping the funds budgeted however the Council are not withholding payment. Concern was expressed that it takes the CHIA 44.7 weeks to complete minor DFG work, however it was noted that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Communities and Environment) would scrutinise this in greater detail.

In response to a question regarding the CCLA Property Fund, Members were informed that the reason the Council has invested in the property is the yield. It was noted that the Council has earned £172k from the fund whereas if the money had not been invested than the Council would have paid £27k.

Members had questioned why the Council had not achieved the target of delivering bins within 9 to 10 working days. In response, the Panel was informed that the Council had been prioritising the successful implementation of the waste round reconfiguration. Currently there are 1000 bins to be delivered and that there is an action plan in place in order to deliver those bins, however there is an option for the resident to collect the bin. The Head of Operations stated that the Council is not resourced to deliver 1000 bins in one to two working days.

A Member asked in response a question regarding the number of missed bin collections per week, the Panel was informed that there are regular missed bin collections, particularly in the rural round, however these currently equate to 0.08% of total bins. The Corporate Team have handled missed bin complaints and that most issues have been resolved.

Following a question regarding the £1m budgeted for the Transformation scheme, Members were informed that the budget is to update the IT systems which may or may not be needed.

In response to a query regarding the 3G Pitch at St Neots, the Panel was informed that as the lease has not be signed then the Council are not prepared to invest in the property. The Head of Resources will have more information on the situation at a future meeting.

30. DISPOSAL OF SMALL LAND PARCELS POLICY

With the aid of a report by the Head of Resources (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Disposal of Small Land Parcels

Policy was presented to the Panel. The Panel was informed that the report also covers updates to the Disposal and Acquisitions Policy.

The Small Land Parcels Policy covers land that is less than 0.25 acres and has a limit of £10k. It was noted that the Council has a number of such sites which cost the Council money in order to maintain them.

Concern was raised that there was not sufficient commitment to public engagement in the policy, in particular there was concern that Ward Members would only be informed once the decision to sell had been made. The Head of Resources stated that he would revise the section to ensure Ward Members are consulted prior to disposal.

Members were informed that the Council's small parcels of land won't be for sale unless it is economically unviable to keep and maintain the land. The Head of Resources confirmed that the Policy is not a commitment to sell. The Council will add a charge to reflect the work and effort it takes Officers to dispose of the land.

In response to a question regarding the value of land and development, the Panel was informed that most of the land won't be developed on however some may have extensions built. There is a potential that some properties could increase in value considerably.

(At 8.36pm, during the discussion of this item, Councillor S Cawley left the meeting and did not return.)

31. ONE LEISURE VALUE FOR MONEY TASK AND FINISH GROUP SCOPING DOCUMENT

The Panel reviewed a copy of the One Leisure Value For Money Task and Finish Group Scoping Document (a copy of which has been appended in the Minute Book). Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds confirmed her membership of the task and finish group. It was confirmed that Officers are currently gathering publically available budgetary information for the Group.

(At 8.54pm, during the discussion of this item, Councillor J A Gray left the meeting and did not return.)

32. 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 all the Panel's work programmes since the last meeting.

(At 8.57pm, during the discussion of this item, Councillor Mrs B E Boddington left the meeting and did not return.)