

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (PERFORMANCE AND CUSTOMERS) held in Meeting Room 0.1a and 0.1b, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Wednesday, 31st January 2018.

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

50. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th January 2018 was approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

(At 7.00pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor S Greenall entered the meeting.)

51. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

52. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel received and noted the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions (a copy of which has been appended in the Minute Book) which has been prepared by the Executive Leader for the period 1st February 2018 to 31st May 2018.

53. FINAL REVENUE BUDGET 2018/19 AND MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2019/20 TO 2022/23

With the aid of a report by the Head of Resources (a copy of which has been appended in the Minute Book) the Final Revenue Budget 2018/19 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 to 2022/23 was presented to the Panel. The Executive Councillor for Strategic Resources updated Members on the developments and changes to the budget since it was last presented to the Panel.

Members were informed that Cabinet has endorsed the proposal to increase Council Tax by 2%. In addition, the income from a closed churchyard levy and bus departure levy has been taken out of the budget for 2018/19. The Executive Councillor explained that the Council would require to develop a policy for the maintenance of the closed churchyards. Regarding the bus departure levy, the Cabinet decided that the Council would have to discuss the proposal with the

bus companies before deciding to implement it.

The Executive Councillor explained that the budget now outlines the income of the Commercial Investment Strategy (CIS) and the cost of the strategy. Members were informed of shortfall in income if the Council did not have CIS.

The Head of Resources informed the Panel of the 4 year efficiency plan and, as the Section 151 Officer, stated that the budget is sound.

In response to a question on the removal of the Closed Churchyard Levy, Members were informed that the Council intends to consult with affected Parishes before including the levy in the 2019/20 budget.

Following a question, the Panel were informed that the Council has committed to maintain a reserve at 15%.

A Member expressed concern that as the Council moves into a commercial area, incomes can become less secure.

In response to a concern expressed regarding the level of general reserves, the Executive Councillor explained that the CIS generates an income however, the Council are a little way off where the Executive Councillor would like to be.

When asked about the funding allocated to the 'to be acquired' section, it was explained that the Council intends to make further commercial investments and that the delivery of CIS will be sporadic.

A Member stated that they were concerned about the discussion of transfer of duties as this isn't matched with transfer of funds.

54. INTEGRATED PERFORMANCE REPORT 2017/18 - QUARTER 3

With the aid of a report by the Corporate Team Manager and the Finance Manager (a copy of which has been appended in the Minute Book) the Integrated Performance Report 2017/18 – Quarter 3 was presented to the Panel.

The Panel was informed that performance in several areas has improved in quarter three however, as the performance of those areas were not good in quarters one and two, the end of year rating is likely to remain red.

It was confirmed that the number of missed bins per 1000 households includes those bins missed as a result of refuse vehicles being unable to traverse down streets, and collect the bin, due to poorly parked vehicles. The Panel was informed that this indicator has seen an improvement this quarter. A Member added that the poor performance is partly due to the waste round reconfiguration.

In response to a concern expressed, the Panel was assured that homelessness is a pressing concern for the Council.

The Head of Resources informed Members that the Council is still forecasting an overspend however this has decreased by £100k this quarter. In addition the Panel was informed that the lease for One

Leisure St Neots has been signed. Members expressed their 'delight' at the signing of the lease.

Regarding the Bridge Place Car Park project, a Member stated that if the project progresses it would be positive however, added that it can be difficult when dealing with common rights issues.

55. TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY 2018/19

With the aid of a report by the Head of Resources (a copy of which has been appended in the Minute Book) the Treasury Management Strategy 2018/19 was presented to the Panel.

The Head of Resources stated that developing a Treasury Management Strategy is a responsibility of the Council. The report on the Strategy has changed very little since last year, although this year's report does reflect the current economic cycle.

The Panel was informed of the changes to the report and the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy was explained.

56. CORPORATE RISK REGISTER

With the aid of a report by the Internal Audit and Risk Manager (a copy of which has been appended in the Minute Book) the Corporate Risk Register was presented to the Panel.

The Panel were informed that there were 10 corporate risks recorded on the risk register as of 15th January 2018 and that three exceeded the agreed risk appetite.

In response to a question about the completion of safeguarding training, the Panel was informed that the training is planned to be completed by the end of June 2018.

Some concern was expressed regarding the Commercial Investment Strategy and the potential for the Government to legislate in this area and curtail the Council's ability to purchase commercial investments outside the District. The Panel was reassured that, in that eventuality, the Council is able to refocus and look for investment opportunities within the District. The Executive Councillor reminded Members that underpinning the CIS is a document that states that the Council should also invest in commercial properties outside of the District.

A Member expressed concern that the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulations was not listed as a corporate risk within the report.

57. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

58. COMMERCIALISATION - BUSINESS CASE

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Community regarding the Commercialisation Business Case.

The Panel was informed of the business case, the details of the contract and the finances of the commercialisation project. In addition, Members were given information on the procurement process involved and the preferred bidder.

Members expressed that they had concerns regarding the project, which were forwarded on to the Cabinet for their consideration. One concern was that the business case was 'incomplete' with key financial figures missing. They recommended that the report and business case is amended before it is approved by Cabinet.

(At 8.27pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor J A Gray left the meeting and did not return.)

(At 8.44pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor Mrs B E Boddington left the meeting and did not return.)

(At 8.44pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds left the meeting.)

(At 8.46pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds returned to the meeting.)

59. RE-ADMITTANCE OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED

That the press and public be re-admitted to the meeting.

60. 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 Panel's work programmes since the last meeting.

Councillor R C Carter gave Members a brief update on the work of the One Leisure Value For Money Task and Finish Group and stated that the final report will be present to Members at the Panel meeting in March 2018.

(At 9.28pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor D Brown left the meeting and did not return.)

Chairman