

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

14 OCTOBER 2013 - 2.30PM



PRESENT: Councillor Chambers (Chairman), Councillor Mrs French (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Archer, Broker, Cornwell, Sutton, and Swan

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Butcher, Jolley, King, Melton, Murphy, Oliver and Seaton

OBSERVING: Councillor Skoulding and representatives from the LGA Peer Review Team.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Mrs Bucknor, Hodgson, Miss Hoy and Stebbing

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jane Bailey, Charlotte Boast, Rob Bridge, Richard Cassidy, Gary Garford, Anna Goodall, Paul Medd, Alan Pain and Carol Pilson

OSC15/13 TO SIGN AND CONFIRM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF 2 SEPTEMBER 2013

The minutes of the meeting of 2 September 2013 were agreed and signed.

Councillor Mrs French stated that she is disappointed that the Overview and Scrutiny Review Group Report on Outside Bodies has not yet gone to Cabinet. Councillor Melton confirmed that the Outside Bodies Report will be on the agenda for the next meeting on 24 October 2013.

*** FOR INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL ***

OSC16/13 ANNUAL MEETING WITH THE LEADER, DEPUTY LEADER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE AND PROGRESS OF QUALITY ORGANISATION CORPORATE PRIORITY INCLUDING PAPERLESS OFFICE AND 3C'S UPDATES

Councillor Chambers - Chairman, welcomed the Leader, Deputy Leader, Chief Executive, Cabinet members, CMT members and the representatives from the LGA Peer Review Team.

Members considered the Progress of the Council's Corporate Priorities.

Members asked questions, made comments and received responses as follows:

1. Councillor Chambers informed members that he has received several questions relating to the report from Councillor Mrs Bucknor, as she is unable to attend the meeting today, and suggested that the questions are put forward by Councillor Archer;
2. Councillor Mrs French stated that she is concerned about the performance of Planning and suggested that the process requires scrutiny. Councillor Melton confirmed that performance and capacity within the team has also been a cause for concern. The Planning Team has been subject to restructure along with many of the other teams within Fenland, but the economy is picking up and this team in particular are over-stretched and are not hitting the performance targets that they would like. He added that although the Overview and Scrutiny Panel are not able to scrutinise planning, they can scrutinise the process, and confirmed that he supports this way forward;

3. Councillor Cornwell stated that the report is looking at targets and asked how FDC set internal targets. Councillor Melton stated that the internal targets set by FDC are as rigorous as they can be ensuring that services are performing well against the targets set. We need to use these targets as a benchmark or consider whether we could perform better sharing services with someone else;
4. Councillor Cornwell stated that the development plan for the Nene Waterfront Project was agreed in 2004 and suggested that this is likely to require renewing. He asked if there is a timescale in place. Councillor Melton stated that there was a timescale in place but this was abandoned due to the economic situation, however is due to be revisited;
5. Councillor Archer, on behalf of Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked with regard to the Nene Waterfront Project, the project has only carried out a soft marketing exercise, how is the Council going to promote the remainder of this development moving forward. Councillor Seaton stated that there has been interest in the other two lots and a meeting has taken place with a developer. He informed members that he has a friendship with this developer, and from today will have no further involvement in this project and is handing over to Councillor Oliver. He added that as hoped the GB Construction proposal has been a catalyst for further development in the area;
6. Councillor Mrs French asked why the design competition winner will not be announced until the end of the year. Councillor Melton confirmed that the dates have been set by the sponsors;
7. Councillor Cornwell stated that the report says there has been a good response to the competition; he asked how many have shown a serious interest in entering. Councillor Melton confirmed that there have been 13 very positive enquiries nationally;
8. Councillor Archer, on behalf of Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked how the successful applicant will be identified. Councillor Melton stated that applicants will be independently judged by a panel which will include representatives from English Heritage and Wisbech Town Council, there will also be a young person to represent the youth in the area;
9. Councillor Archer, on behalf of Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated, this report is very light on detail with generalised statements and is lacking in detail. Councillor Melton stated that the finer details have been subject to a full and rigorous debate at Cabinet, which all members are welcome to attend and observe;
10. Councillor Cornwell congratulated everybody involved in the Centenary Garden project, but is concerned that the area is a magnet for street drinkers, he stated that he hopes the situation is being monitored closely. Councillor Melton confirmed that this issue was anticipated; he stated that this was set up as a memorial to Roger Green and we owe it to his friends and family to ensure that the area is monitored. Councillor Oliver confirmed that costing's for CCTV have been obtained for this area;
11. Councillor Sutton stated that he has raised the issue previously, but is it possible to take before and after pictures from the same position. Councillor Melton agreed;
12. Councillor Archer, on behalf of Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that with regards to Wisbech Dilapidated Buildings, (a)The reports says that close liaison has taken place, but her understanding is that the only liaison with King's Lynn had been a trip last year to another town with them. She asked why following that trip King's Lynn chose to put in a bid but Fenland chose not to; (b) Additionally she is amazed to read that anyone could consider 30 years of neglect a proactive approach and asked what other close liaison has taken place; (c) Why was there no submission to English Heritage Lottery this year? Councillor King (a) confirmed that there has been extensive contact with King's Lynn, and one of the issues is that there are substantial differences between the areas. One of the major differences was that of land values, and really the approach was not directly transferable; (b) He agreed that it is a shame that we did not address some of the issues before, the longest standing dilapidated building is approximately 24 years and not 30 years, but the new approach to this will be an introduction of an early intervention policy, all 4 market towns will have a Civic Society and will be working to ensure that these matters will be addressed before we get into this type of situation again. (c)The Lottery Fund advised us that we do not have enough time to submit a successful bid for this year, but we are working hard on a

submission for August 2014;

13. Councillor Cornwell stated that the figures with regards to the housing benefits and Council tax benefits processing are challenging, he suggested that this was not an area that staffing should be reduced. Rob Bridge informed members that the reports shows that our service in this area has improved and confirmed that we are not looking to reduce staff in this area;
14. Councillor Archer, on behalf of Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that with regard to Operation Pheasant, the police, FDC and other agencies must be congratulated for this excellent proactive approach to tackling this severe problem, which seems most prevalent in Wisbech. She asked if the panel can have a breakdown from April to September so that we can make accurate comparisons moving forward. **Councillor Melton confirmed that the breakdown of information would be circulated to the panel;**
15. Councillor Cornwell stated that it is pleasing to see Operation Pheasant in operation, and it is clear from the results that not one single agency can address the issues. He asked for clarification of the figures which are detailed on the report, i.e. 961 voluntary questionnaires have been completed, but how many were asked? Councillor Melton stated that we should be proud of this project, we have been proactive when tackling the issues that migrant populations face, and he added that reports in the media have been very positive. **He confirmed that clarification of the figures within the report would be circulated to the panel;**
16. Councillor Cornwell stated that there has been lots of publicity with regards to the take up of free school meals, but that there are still a large number of people missing out. Paul Medd stated that there was a big issue around data sharing, which has now been resolved. There is still to some extent a stigma attached to claiming free school meals but this is something we need to educate people better about. The uptake is improving but with an unclaimed amount approaching £600,000 in this area, that is a big hit for local people. **Officers agreed to circulate data with regards to additional uptake to the panel;**
17. Councillor Cornwell asked if the pupil premium is payable to all schools including academies. Paul Medd confirmed that the pupil premium applies to all schools;
18. Councillor Archer, on behalf of Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that she viewed the Redmoor Lane operation and was extremely impressed by the sensitive, intelligent and smooth way this was handled. Councillor Melton agreed and congratulated all officers involved. He added that there was a resource involved, and this was a concern, but by taking the action we have sent out a strong message. Councillor King agreed stating that it is often overlooked what a good job we do in these situation, often resolving problems before they become big issues;
19. Councillor Swan stated that there is no information in the report with regards to FDC managed travellers sites; he asked what the income is from these sites and what the costs are to the Council. **Councillor King confirmed that he would circulate the costs and income to the panel, and will ensure that this information is included in future reports.** Paul Medd confirmed that the travellers sites managed by FDC pay a fee to the Council, and that this service is cost neutral;
20. Councillor Chambers asked if Fenland have their full complement of travellers sites. Councillor King stated that the majority of travellers sites are private sites and that FDC are only responsible for a small number of sites;
21. Councillor Cornwell stated that with regard to the making money count project, does any part of that project help to support the credit unions. Councillor Butcher confirmed that to his knowledge there was no help from the making money count project for the setting up of the credit unions as the projects work separately;
22. Councillor Cornwell stated that with regard to Golden Age, this is a very successful programme, meeting lots of the older residents across Fenland, increasing benefits and offering advice, he asked if the approach was going to change. Councillor Butcher confirmed that the Golden Age Programme is very successful and is going forward. Paul Medd stated that like anything the Council do we continually review and monitor, we are always looking for the most effective ways to engage with our residents and the Golden Age Programme has proven to be a successful formula;

23. Councillor Sutton stated that as a member of the Golden Age Team at the last meeting it was decided that the visits had been concentrated on the towns at the expense of the rural areas, and that more effort will be made to arrange visits in the rural areas. Councillor Butcher agreed that this was a good idea stating that the Golden Age Team are visiting Benwick for the first time in quite some time;
24. Councillor Broker asked if there was a contingency plan for the potential influx of travellers from Romania and Bulgaria. Paul Medd confirmed that the traveller community in this area are a stable population, we do get new entrants to the district and have a range of approaches in place when they arrive to work with them, the welcome pack sign posts people to the support offered by FDC;
25. Councillor Cornwell left the room;
26. Councillor Mrs French asked if the panel could have a breakdown for attendance and swimming pool admissions for each leisure centre as it would be good to see the difference between them. **Councillor Jolley agreed that it important to know the detail and agreed to circulate the figures to the panel;**
27. Councillor Mrs French stated that with regard to the refurbishment at the Manor Leisure Centre the report says that in the first years trading the service exceed income targets and asked what the targets were. The Sportivate Workshop information within the report lacks detail and asked if the panel can have further data about this project. **Councillor Jolley agreed to circulate data as requested to the panel;**
28. Councillor Mrs French asked what plans are in place for leisure services in March. Councillor Melton confirmed that he is not happy with the pool or the venue at the George Campbell Leisure Centre in March and have learnt lessons when updating other venues. There are a number of options for the Council to consider, but basically we are looking at a make do and mend refurbishment or putting up a suite similar to Chatteris. He confirmed that he has asked officers and Portfolio Holders to look at the finances and to come up with a business plan. There is significant development taking place in March and we need to ensure that through the development process we procure the infrastructure and leisure, it may be that we look at a mechanism such as reverse borrowing. Councillor Jolley confirmed that we are very proactively looking at this project and although we are in difficult financial times we must ensure that what-ever we choose for this site, it is done right. If we are in a position where we are looking to go out to tender then we have to ensure that what we are offering is good enough for them to be interested to bid on. Councillor Melton confirmed that the proposal will be sent out to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and that their recommendations will be taken into account as part of the decision making process;
29. Councillor Mrs French asked if local residents are going to be involved in the consultation. Councillor Jolley confirmed that there will be a public consultation;
30. Councillor Swan stated that he has had various complaints with regards to pre pay options and pricing at the leisure centres. Councillor Jolley stated that it is difficult to strike a balance but we need to make sure that we can get the money back in income. He confirmed that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel will get the chance to scrutinise the leisure fees and charges and make recommendations at that point;
31. Councillor Swan stated that the report says that exercise class admissions are 6% below the 5 month target and asked if we are providing what the customer wants. Councillor Jolley stated that it is expected that the numbers will be on target at the end of the period. There are some new classes being launched and underperforming classes are being removed from the programme to reflect what the customer wants;
32. Councillor Archer, on behalf of Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked that with regard to leisure service finance, given that income is slightly below target and there will be significant increased energy costs, this would appear to indicate a shortfall rather than on target. Councillor Jolley stated that we do not believe that we will end up with a shortfall, we are expecting targets to balance, there are efforts being made all the time to reduce energy costs;
33. Councillor Archer, on behalf of Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that there is a small strip of car parking at the Hudson accommodating around 20 vehicles which is in desperate need of

repair. When Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked about the work on this area she was informed that the job was in hand at costs of £30,000. Please can the panel be provided with further information how we tender for this work, and were other works to be included in this price as the costs for this work seem to be very high? **Officers agreed to investigate further and feedback to the panel;**

34. Councillor Archer, on behalf of Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked for more information with regards to the exercise referral scheme. **Officers agreed to circulate more detailed data to the panel;**
35. Councillor Cornwell returned to the meeting;
36. Councillor Archer, on behalf of Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that it is noted that Councillor Butcher has been appointed to represent FDC on the Health and Well Being Board, and asked if he will receive an allowance for this role and how he is going to report to FDC. Councillor Butcher confirmed that he will not receive an additional allowance for this role and that he presents a report to the quarterly partnership meetings;
37. Councillor Archer, on behalf of Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked for clarification on a paragraph in the report referring to headline information. Councillor Butcher stated that we were part of the warm home front programme, and received a small grant from Government. Paul Medd stated that this also refers to a specific procurement exercise and how we can better profile the district council, putting together a template of information;
38. Councillor Swan asked if the British Heart Foundation - Hearty Lives Project could be introduced to younger people, anyone using leisure centres, or into local businesses. Councillor Butcher stated that this project is coming to an end now, the uptake was not as good as was hoped but the project was successful. Councillor Murphy confirmed that we run similar projects within local businesses;
39. Councillor Cornwell noted that Thomas Clarkson Academy are not included in the schools attending the Youth District Council (YDC) Annual General Meeting (AGM), and asked if they are engaged with the YDC. Paul Medd confirmed that Thomas Clarkson Academy support the YDC however due to other commitments were not represented at the AGM. The team are working hard to encourage representation from all Fenland schools;
40. Councillor Mrs French asked for a breakdown of data for the percentage of those asked who are satisfied with FDC Leisure Centres; **Officers agreed to circulate this data to the panel;**
41. Councillor Mrs French asked how much the income is since the introduction of the new public toilets. Councillor Murphy confirmed that the income has been approximately £1600 this year. Councillor Melton stated that it was never the intention that there would be a revenue income from the new public toilets, there is not a lot of income from these toilets but that is out-weighed by the money that has been saved on repairs. Councillor Murphy confirmed that the repairs this year are down to £285, this is well below what it would have been in the past. Councillor Melton stated that this has been another success story that we have not publicised, a lot of money was spent on the refurbishment of the public toilets as we knew that there would be significant savings on repairs, and this has been proved to be correct;
42. Councillor Swan stated that with regards to the refuse and cleansing service, the results have been impressive, he asked how this has been achieved. Councillor Murphy stated that the process started with the round reviews in 2009 which produced efficiency savings, there is a system in place to minimise and monitor the issue of missed bins and this has dramatically reduced the number of the collections missed. The team now work on a 4 days on, 4 days off shift pattern and although this took some time for everybody to get used to, is working well now and along with weekend working, no overtime and 7 day rapid response service have all contributed to keep redundancies down to a minimum. The introduction of a split lorry enabling collections from rural locations in one trip has reduced costs. This team have been making changes to working practices and have found improved ways of working since the round review and this has reduced the net budget;
43. Councillor Sutton congratulated Councillor Murphy and the Refuse and Cleansing Team for a first class service;

44. Councillor Cornwell stated that Street Scene Officers are our main presence in communities and their work is admirable, he asked if they carry out work such as grounds maintenance and contract maintenance monitoring. Councillor Murphy stated that Street Scene Officers are a vital link with residents. The public speak to them and they report back, they are proactive themselves acting on and reacting to issues and situations;
45. The members of the Peer review team left the room;
46. Councillor Cornwell stated that if Street Scene Officers are proactive this indicates that they will address other service issues that they are faced with, but this does not always seem to be the case. Councillor Murphy agreed that they will address issues if they see them or are notified about them. Councillor Melton stated that this maybe something that we can look into, to ensure that we are making the best use of the service;
47. Councillor Mrs French stated that the report refers to Wisbech Open Spaces, and asked why there is no report on the other 3 towns. Councillor Murphy stated that the report refers to Wisbech as it is feeding back on the Wisbech 2020 project. Councillor Mrs French asked if the 568 enforcement hours referred to in the report are focussed on Wisbech or across Fenland. Councillor Murphy confirmed that this represents the enforcement hours which have been undertaken in key areas across Fenland;
48. Councillor Mrs French stated that she was disappointed that March Town Council were not invited or indeed knew that the walkabout was taking place with Councillors and Officers from FDC. Local Councillors know that area and the issues better than anyone else and should have had the opportunity to be involved. Councillor King apologised stating that the plan is to involve all of the town councils at a later stage, this was an initial piece of work and the main focus was the derelict buildings;
49. Councillor Swan stated that he understands that the group are planning a walkabout in Whittlesey, but that the Town Council have not been invited to take part. Councillor King confirmed that the walkabout has already taken place in Whittlesey and that the Chairman of the Whittlesey Society was present. Councillor Mrs French stated that the Chairman of the March or Whittlesey Society is not linked with the Town Council. Councillor King confirmed that we are proposing to engage with the Town Councils, and have been invited to a Wisbech Town Council Meeting, we would be very happy to attend other Town Council Meetings too;
50. Councillor Archer reiterated Councillor Sutton's comments and congratulated the Refuse and Cleansing Team;
51. Councillor Archer, on behalf of Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked for more information with regards to the Streets Ahead Hot Spot Initiative. Councillor Murphy stated that data is yet to come out from this initiative, but it was included in the report to inform the panel that it has been set up;
52. Councillor Swan stated that the report refers to fixed penalties, but there is no mention of fixed penalties for dog fouling and asked if this is something that the Street Scene Officers could manage. Councillor Murphy stated that Street Scene Officers can try to manage this, but it is a very difficult to catch someone and prove the case, this is a notoriously difficult offence to manage;
53. Councillor Mrs French stated that the report refers to working with nearly 30 local community groups and asked if a list could be circulated to the panel. **Councillor Murphy agreed to circulate a list of Community Groups;**
54. Councillor Cornwell asked if we are marketing the Green Deal Programme. Councillor Murphy stated that the Green Deal was set up some time ago, but there has been little or no take up. Councillor Melton confirmed that to his knowledge there has been no take up;
55. Councillor Mrs French congratulated the Markets/Events Team involved with the organisation of the St. Georges Day Fair in March this was a very successful event. It is also very good news that March will be holding its own Christmas Market this year;
56. Councillor Murphy updated the panel with regards to the Anglia in Bloom Competition, he informed members that Wisbech has been awarded the Silver Guild for Britain in Bloom, this means that Wisbech came third in the whole country;

57. Councillor Mrs French asked why the markets are under the Leisure heading and not Tourism. Councillor Jolley confirmed that this is being looked at by the Tourism Board at the moment;
58. Councillor Swan asked if the panel can have a breakdown of the crime figures referred to in the report, it would be helpful to know what was happening and where. **Councillor Oliver agreed to circulate a breakdown of the crime figures to the panel;**
59. Councillor Mrs French stated that there is no data in relation to the Nene Port and asked if the stabilisation in shipping numbers is due to the current economic situation. Councillor Seaton confirmed that we are virtually on target but stated that that the current economic situation along with the size of the area prevents it from taking on new shipping contracts as there are less and less operators that have that size vessel;
60. Councillor Sutton asked for clarification with regards to engaging the services of marketing experts Tinfish Creative. Councillor Seaton confirmed that Tinfish have been working on various promotional projects and materials, and circulated an example of the promotional material;
61. Councillor Archer, on behalf of Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked why we are not ensuring that through planning conditions any future wind farm schemes benefit the local community financially. Councillor Seaton confirmed that this is a measure already in place;
62. Councillor Mrs French asked why the paperless office project has taken so long to move forward. Councillor Melton confirmed that he has asked Councillor Oliver to put together a report for Cabinet, so that Cabinet can agree in principle the plans. He added that it is his plan that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel are also involved and will advise Cabinet of their findings and recommendations moving forward;
63. Councillor Cornwell stated that he did not feel that it was the duty of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel to advise Cabinet. Councillor Melton stated that this is a fundamental change, Cabinet will look at it first and agree the plans in principle, The Overview and Scrutiny Panel will then be asked for their input. Councillor Seaton stated that this is to ensure transparency and openness;
64. Councillor Cornwell asked if there are plans to duplicate the Community Hub launched in Chatteris into other areas. Councillor Melton confirmed that the Chatteris Community Hub has been successful and the next is planned for Whittlesey, this will be rolled out across the district when the opportunity arises;
65. Councillor Swan stated that with regards to emergency planning and the flooding in the Whittlesey Washes, a great deal of partnership work has taken place between the Town Council and FDC;
66. Councillor Cornwell asked what the financial implications are in respect of the LGA Peer Review that is currently taking place. Councillor Melton confirmed that there will be a small cost, mostly by the way of officer time and accommodation. The LGA have set up the peer review to look at policies and procedures as a critical friend, the resulting report will be published and debated at full Council. Paul Medd stated that the Peer Review is a lighter touch inspection than the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), we are mindful of resources and this style of review will add value, as well as telling us what we are doing well it can give us pointers for improvements;
67. Councillor Archer, on behalf of Councillor Mrs Bucknor stated that in the 1990's we had an emergency flood system in place for Wisbech which was held by the Chief Executive. There was a siren on top of the police station. She asked what we currently have in place in conjunction with the other services. Paul Medd confirmed that we work closely with the Environment Agency, we have had some issues getting information through, but this is improving, the quicker we can get the information, the quicker we can respond. In order to interpret that information locally we have a Fenland District Plan;
68. Councillor Archer asked if the sirens are still in place. Councillor Oliver stated that as far as he is aware the sirens have all been removed;
69. Councillor Swan stated that anybody can register with the Environment Agency, and if you are in an area that is at risk they will alert you by email or text message, this is a very good service;

70. Councillor Cornwell stated that the report indicates that the complaints received have increased and asked are we learning from these. Councillor Melton confirmed that we take all complaints seriously and use the feedback from our customers to improve the services we deliver;
71. Councillor Cornwell asked what the most common type of complaint received is. **Councillor Seaton agreed to circulate a breakdown to the panel;**
72. Councillor Archer, on behalf of Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked that whilst we must congratulate all those involved in the progress of the budget, how many officers were made redundant and is there any plans for more redundancies, and have any been taken back on in another capacity since? Councillor Melton stated that he is unable to give exact numbers, and unable to predict how many people will lose their job in the future, our staff have been under a lot of pressure and times are very uncertain for them. This is something that the Chief Executive and I have discussed at great lengths as the financial pressures continue, and we will be looking across the whole of the organisation at capacity, job sharing and re-training opportunities and making every effort to ensure that jobs are secure. Paul Medd confirmed that we have looked for natural wastage and where possible frozen posts when people have resigned but despite this we have had to make a number of redundancies and are continuing to look for savings;
73. Councillor Cornwell stated that the organisation cannot continue to cut resources as at some point we will be unable to provide services. He asked if any consideration has been made to the levies that we pay the drainage boards, we pay £1.3 million, a 10% reduction would make a significant difference to this authority. Councillor Melton agreed that there seems to be certain areas of the public sector that have been immune to these pressures, and it feels like it is time that they shared some of the burden too;
74. Councillor Sutton stated that when previously we would receive a 100% rebate on drainage board levies, this has been reduced to approximately 70%. Rob Bridge stated that if figures adjust significantly it is this Council that is subject to referendum, and the costs incurred, not the drainage boards. Councillor Melton confirmed this stating that it is this Council that would have to run and fund a referendum. Councillor Cornwell agreed and stated that this is why the members who represent FDC on these boards have such an important role;
75. Councillor Cornwell asked what happens if an individual refuses to provide their personal information for the Individual Electoral Registration (IER). Paul Medd confirmed that ultimately they will be unable to vote. Councillor Melton stated that it is a civil offence not to and therefore there is a process to take should an individual refuse. Councillor Cornwell asked if the introduction of the IER will require extra resources. Councillor Melton confirmed that the process is fully funded by central government;
76. Councillor Cornwell stated that the 'What's on in Fenland' has not been included in the communications paragraph in the report. Councillor Melton agreed that this should have been included and will be added;
77. Councillor Archer, on behalf of Councillor Mrs Bucknor asked that when staff completed the questionnaire about whether they felt proud to work for FDC, was this question done anonymously. Paul Medd confirmed that the questionnaire was completed anonymously;
78. Councillor Mrs French stated that there have been some very robust discussions with Roddons with regards to a lack of progress and asked if they are on track to deliver. Councillor Seaton confirmed that at a recent meeting Roddons confirmed that they are committed to the target of 500 and have land and procurement for 542 on target, as long as they get through the planning process without any difficulties;
79. Councillor Mrs French stated that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel are keen to have more involvement in policy setting as part of the Overview role. Councillor Melton agreed stating that he is asking the Panel to become part of the decision making process with regards to the paperless office project and the A14 project and therefore should not get to a call-in situation as they will have been fully briefed and involved in the process;

80. Councillor Chambers asked what the Leader considers to have been a success for the Council this year. Councillor Melton stated that to have been able to deliver a balanced budget despite everything that this authority has faced, we have never faced anything like the financial situation that we have been confronted with in the past three years, but I am proud to say that we have still managed to provide a first class service. A personal triumph is the introduction of an apprentice school at Delamore, I am very proud to have been involved in this and it goes to show that the private and public sector can work together with outstanding results. He added that the Leader's discretionary fund has been a successful programme;
81. Councillor Chambers asked what the plans are there moving forward with regards to shared services. Councillor Melton confirmed that he has set up meetings with fellow leaders in the area to see if there are synergies in some services, there are significant savings to be found this way and I will be putting a report together for Cabinet to explain this further. He stated that over the next four to five years finances will be squeezed tighter and I hope that I will be able to stand before you and reassure you that we are still delivering the excellent services that are of most importance to the residents of Fenland;
82. Councillor Swan asked what this Council could have done better this year. Councillor Melton stated that we have made mistakes with some Planning matters, we have learnt a lot this year and we move on. Another area that we have not been so good at this year in some ways is communication, there has not been enough communication between Cabinet and other members, we need to make better use of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel and involve them when making big decisions;
83. Councillor Swan stated that the Council need to get better at communicating our successes, let local people know what we have done well;
84. Councillor Sutton stated that time after time this panel have asked that reports contain more detailed data. We do not have enough data to scrutinise issues properly and it is frustrating for members of this panel. He added that it is pleasing to hear that the overview role of the panel is to be utilised better and that he is looking forward this as up until now Scrutiny has been the main role of this panel. Councillor Melton confirmed that there will be greater engagement and the projects detailed earlier will fully engage the Overview and Scrutiny Panel. He stated that this panel should not have to wait for 12 months to invite Cabinet back again, as they would be happy to attend at any time to discuss issues as they come up;
85. Councillor Archer asked if the Leader's discretionary fund is something that will be rolled out to wards. Councillor Melton confirmed that this is being piloted in other Councils and is something that is being considered in Fenland at the moment. This has been a successful programme and people care about this type of fund as they can see the results for themselves;

Councillor Chambers thanked everybody for attending the meeting today, and stated that he looks forward to receiving some more detailed answers and data as agreed during the meeting. He added that he hopes that the Leader and Cabinet have noted the comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel today.

(Councillor Cornwell declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item and retired from the meeting for the duration of the discussion with regards to the Leisure Services by virtue of the fact that his son is employed by FDC Leisure Services)

OSC17/13 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Future Work Programme 2013/14 for the overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Following discussion the panel agreed to move the Crime Disorder and Reduction Partnership from February 2014 to May 2014.

Members agreed the Future Work Programme 2013/14 for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel subject to the amendment above.

5.00pm

Chairman