

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

1 SEPTEMBER 2014 - 2.30PM



PRESENT: Councillor Mrs French (Chairman), Councillor Swan (Vice-Chairman), Councillors Broker, S Clark, Hodgson, Skoulding and Stebbing

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Butcher, Clark, Seaton, Sutton, Tanfield and Yeulett

Paul Corney - Head of Anglian Revenue Partnership (ARP) attended for the ARP Update

Mr Clayton and Mrs Wright – Fenland Tourism Board (FTB) members attended for the FTB Update.

APOLOGIES: Councillors Mrs Bucknor and Miss Hoy

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jane Bailey, Rob Bridge, John Carey, Anna Goodall, Geoff Kent, Wendy Otter, Alan Pain, Amy Wilson, Justin Wingfield and Vicki Whittingstall

Councillor Mrs French opened the meeting stating the following:

Since the introduction of The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 came into force on the 6 August 2014, FDC are required to allow any member of the public to take photographs, film and audio-record the proceedings, and report on all public meetings. I therefore suspend the Standing Orders within the Council's Constitution entitled "PHOTOGRAPHY AND AUDIO/VISUAL RECORDING OF MEETINGS" as it does not accord with the new law.

OSC9/14 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 14 July 2014 were agreed and signed.

Councillor Mrs French asked the Leader if it would be possible to replace Councillor Archer on the Overview and Scrutiny Panel as he has not attended for some time now. Councillor Clark agreed to investigate the timescales further and feedback to Councillor Mrs French.

*** FOR INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL ***

OSC10/14 ANGLIAN REVENUE PARTNERSHIP (ARP) UPDATE - REVIEWING PERFORMANCE

Members considered a performance update of the Council's Revenues and Benefits service since it became part of The Anglian Revenues Partnership (ARP) on 1 April 2014 presented by Councillor Seaton, Portfolio Holder for Finance.

Councillor Clark informed members that he had attended the first Board Meeting and that this had been very interesting. Adding that he felt that the board had a very positive approach, addressing issues before they become big problems. He updated members with ARP's proposal to implement an in house bailiff service next year which Fenland would be part of, generating further savings above our current bailiff arrangements and has the potential to generate further income for ARP going forward.

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

1. Councillor Mrs French asked for clarification on costs for the in house bailiff proposals. Paul Corney stated that ARP have a business case which gives the details, but he confirmed that staff would need to be employed and their salaries would be covered by the fees generated;
2. Rob Bridge added that the business case is currently being considered by the joint committee, but it will come to Cabinet and Council here for approval. This proposal will generate some income and may even lead to us being able to offer the service to other local authorities;
3. Councillor Skoulding asked approximately how many people will be recruited. Paul Corney stated that these are details that will need to be agreed, but the business case at this moment recommends that 8 people will be recruited;
4. Councillor Broker stated that with regards to the Board, there were two representatives from each of the District Councils, however with new authorities joining the representative numbers are going to be reduced to just one for each Council. He asked for clarification on this. Rob Bridge confirmed that this has been debated at length and that currently there are ten representatives from Councils, and with the prospect of more joining ARP these numbers will increase, it is important that the meetings are manageable and that these numbers do not become too large. It is important to remember that everyone is still equal, no council has less voting rights, everybody will have one. If this is agreed the substitute member or members will be very important, we will need to be able to ensure that someone is available to attend. He confirmed that to finalise these proposals they would need to be agreed by Cabinet and Council here;
5. Councillor Broker asked if the first delegate is not in attendance what happens. Rob Bridge reiterated the importance of having a substitute member if not two to ensure that Fenland have representation at the meetings;
6. Councillor Swan stated that the update is very positive, he asked if there has been any difficulties so far. Rob Bridge stated that it has been a very good 6 months, there are always challenges but we are learning and sharing knowledge with each other. We were able to put all the details forward to the staff involved and we were able to reassure them and this has led to only 1 voluntary redundancy in Fenland, and from next week those staff members officially start their new roles. What is really important is that the public are seeing no difference in the service provided.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel noted the Anglian Revenues Partnership (ARP) Update Report.

OSC11/14 PROGRESS IN DELIVERING THE ECONOMY CORPORATE OBJECTIVES - APRIL 2013 TO JULY 2014

Members considered the Progress in Delivering the Economy Corporate Objectives April 2013 to July 2014, presented by Councillor Yeulett, Portfolio Holder for Growth. He informed members that this is a wide ranging report, but that some of the highlights are that while the South Fens Business Centre is under pressure at the moment the Boathouse is doing very well. He confirmed that with regards to the challenges faced by staff at Moy Park, FDC are working closely with them, and have a meeting set up on 9 September. He added that he and the Leader, Paul Medd, met with the Leader of the LEP following and the Agri-Tech centre bid, the understanding now is that we have an opportunity to bid again, so we will sharpen up the bid for resubmission. It was apparent at the LEP meeting that many applicants had 'oven ready bids' these are bids that are put together and ready to submit when required. He informed members that a meeting had been set up in Wisbech to explain the bidding process for LEP funding.

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

1. Councillor Mrs French asked why the business funding meeting was being held in Wisbech. Alan Pain stated that we have found in the past that the Boathouse has a good image with businesses and past event held there have been successful, he confirmed that we would certainly not be against holding this type of event in other locations within Fenland;
2. Councillor Mrs French asked if the completion and adoption of March Market Town Transport Strategy has been agreed. Councillor Yeulett confirmed that it has been agreed, but stated that since then there has been further development and work is ongoing;
3. Councillor Skoulding asked for an update on Nene Parade following the flooding. Councillor Yeulett confirmed that he had been assured that the road is stable, and informed members that work starts tomorrow;
4. Councillor Broker asked for clarification with regards to the funding of Delamore Horticultural Skills Centre. Councillor Yeulett confirmed that we had some funding with the LEP to help to support the training there;
5. Councillor Mrs French asked how much that bid was for. Councillor Yeulett confirmed that it was a capital bid for an overall programme cost of around £200,000;
6. Councillor Broker asked if members could have a breakdown of costings for that project. Councillor Yeulett agreed to circulate the details to the Panel;
7. Councillor Hodgson asked for clarification with regards to the income from wind turbines in the Wash, he asked if the income was all from section 106 agreements. Councillor Yeulett stated that it was income generated by port fees etc. Alan Pain confirmed that it was income from operators laying cables etc.
8. Councillor Hodgson stated that effectively the only way of making more money in this way is to have more wind turbines. Councillor Yeulett stated that there will also be servicing and maintenance of the turbines already in place;
9. Councillor Hodgson asked with regards to the number of ships down 2%, do we have any idea why. Councillor Yeulett stated that there is no way of knowing at this time;
10. Councillor Mrs French stated that previously there had been mention of an issue with regards to turning space for large vessels and asked if this could be an issue contributing to the fall. Councillor Yeulett stated that he was not aware that this had been an issue;
11. Councillor Broker asked what progress has been made with regards to the Coalwharf Road Design Competition. Councillor Yeulett agreed to investigate and feedback to members;
12. Councillor Stebbing asked for an update with regards to the moving of the bus station in Whittlesey. Councillor Butcher confirmed that the consultation has been done and that there is a meeting this week to discuss the way forward;
13. Councillor Skoulding stated that with regard to the A47 proposals, he understands that there had been a meeting and that nobody from Fenland attended. Councillor Butcher confirmed that there was a meeting, and that Fenland did not get an invitation. He added that we did receive an apology and an explanation with regards to an issue with emails, but that we have been invited to the next meeting;
14. Councillor Hodgson asked for an update with regards to the Wisbech junctions. Councillor Butcher stated that looking at the report it states that the Wisbech junctions works are not going ahead at this time and that Atkins will be going back to look at these again for a suitable solution;
15. Councillor Mrs French asked with regards to the service at Manea Train Station why there is no service there on Sundays. Wendy Otter confirmed that we are in discussions with the train operator, and this can be investigated further with them;
16. Councillor French asked for clarification with regards to the Wind Turbine Policy that was recently agreed by this Council, as another appeal has been submitted. Councillor Sutton confirmed that we have lost an appeal, but that we have also won one, he stated that generally speaking that wind turbine appeal is the only one we have lost and this shows that the SPD is being taken notice of.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel noted the Progress in Delivering the Economy Corporate Objectives - April 2013 to July 2014.

OSC12/14 PROGRESS IN DELIVERING OF THE FENLAND TOURISM BOARD

Members considered the Progress in Delivering of the Fenland Tourism Board (FTB) presented by Councillor Tanfield.

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

1. Councillor Mrs French stated that some members had been removed from the FTB without their knowledge, she asked for clarification on this. Councillor Tanfield stated that she has not removed any member and confirmed that any member that is no longer a member of the Board has removed themselves. She added that Councillor Hodgson had been asked if he would become an Ambassador for Wisbech;
2. Councillor Swan asked why only Wisbech has an Ambassador. Councillor Tanfield explained that the role of Ambassador for Wisbech was for a trial period to see if it would work;
3. Councillor Mrs French stated that the board members are listed at page 42 of the report and that Councillor Stebbing is on that list but that he is no longer part of that board, she asked who would be replacing him. Councillor Tanfield stated that a replacement has not yet been confirmed;
4. Councillor Mrs French stated that this means that the board has Councillor Tanfield and just one other Councillor. Councillor Tanfield confirmed that at present there are just the two District Councillors on the board, she explained that she does not want to pick someone to join, and has approached councillors who she thought might be interested, she would like Councillors to come forward to join who are interested in Tourism in Fenland. Councillor Mrs French suggested that Councillor Tanfield should circulate an email to members so that they are aware that there is a vacancy. Councillor Tanfield agreed;
5. Councillor Swan stated that there are many Town Councillors who are interested in Tourism and work hard to promote it within their own towns, they would be valuable members to consider. Councillor Tanfield agreed that the board would like to utilise this type of skill;
6. Councillor Mrs French stated that previously the March Society were included in the FTB but they are no longer, she added that she feels they are key and should be included. Councillor Tanfield confirmed that since joining the FTB she has not changed the membership and does not know why that change happened;
7. Councillor Mrs French stated that The Fenland Heritage Open Day is approaching, she asked what the Tourism Board have done to promote this event and other events like it. Councillor Tanfield stated that the FTB is an enabler, we want people to come to us so that we can help, when the information comes to us we will share and promote;
8. Councillor Mrs French asked what the Ambassador of Wisbech is going to do. Councillor Tanfield stated that he will attend meetings in Wisbech with regards to Tourism and events and will come back to the FTB to feedback. The board are looking at being far more prepared in the future, we want to be looking and working on projects and events 6 months in advance, and build these into our diary so that we are ready to help in good time;
9. Councillor French asked for clarification, the Ambassador would just attend meetings in Wisbech. Councillor Tanfield agreed stating that FTB have no problem with March attending the meetings too. Councillor French stated that as a Fenland Councillor she is interested in promoting the whole of Fenland. She added that March Town Council has not been invited to attend or input to the FTB and stated that she gets concerned when all she hears about is Wisbech;
10. Councillor Stebbing stated that the FTB was first set up one of the main concerns from officers was that each market towns should have a representative, so that they can bring their information and knowledge together and cover the whole of Fenland. Councillor Mrs French asked officers to circulate the Terms of Reference for the FTB;
11. Councillor Swan stated that he thinks it is important to have representatives from each of the market towns and that we also look into ways of involving the villages too. Councillor

Tanfield stated that the FTB want to have members who have an interest in tourism, she added that Councillor Sam Clark was invited to join to help to represent villages;

12. Councillor Mrs French asked how members have been approached with regards to joining the FTB. Councillor Tanfield stated that at this stage she has spoken to members as she is keen to ensure that anyone joining have a genuine interest;
13. Councillor Mrs French asked what budget the FTB have. Councillor Tanfield stated that the budget is £13,000;
14. Councillor Mrs French asked for clarification of the number of website hits. Councillor Stebbing stated that members were going to get data of hits from businesses through our site too so that we could measure how effective the website was. Councillor Tanfield confirmed that year on year the hits to the website had been increasing as follows: June 2012 - 383, June 2013 - 833 and in June 2014 - 1956;
15. Councillor Skoulding asked if the FTB meetings are still held in various locations around the district. Councillor Tanfield confirmed that presently the meetings are being held at Fenland Hall, she explained that previously the meetings were taking place around the district however there is a cost involved to travel to meetings and the FTB has a small budget. By meeting at Fenland Hall we are saving the cost of travel and feel that this is a central location for all who attend;
16. Councillor Skoulding asked where the leaflet and booklets are distributed. Councillor Tanfield stated that the large books are distributed nationally and the smaller booklets are distributed more locally, catching people before they come into the area;
17. Councillor Mrs French asked if all the members involved attend the FTB meetings. Councillor Tanfield stated that some board members do not attend consistently as businesses have busy period preventing them from doing so, but there are always a good number at each meeting;
18. Councillor Swan asked about the interest on social media, stating that there are 123 likes on Facebook and 105 followers on Twitter, he asked about the maintenance of these. He added that the Straw Bear Festival in Whittlesey is heavily promoted by Peterborough City Council as an event coming to Peterborough, likewise with the cycle race, but neither of these events took place in Peterborough, they were in Fenland. Councillor Tanfield agreed stating that these are exactly the type of events we want to have in our diary with enough time to promote; we need the information months in advance so that planning is in place. She added that as well as promoting events within Fenland we want to start to think about encouraging people from outside of the area into the Fens;
19. Councillor Swan stated that the Circuit of the Fens cycle race was televised on Euro Sport and was watched by 58,000 people, this just goes to show that if we get the right events and publicise them in the right way they can be a big success for Fenland;
20. Councillor Swan explained that he had signed up to email updates with regards to Tour De France, and regularly gets cycling related updates this way. He explained that on a small budget social media and email is a great way of keeping in touch, it is 'young and trendy' and people will take notice;
21. Councillor Mrs French asked Mrs Wright if she is still working with the board with regards to promotions. Mrs Wright confirmed that she is. She stated that she feels that she has learnt a lot and that the members of the board have improved as they have shared experiences and ideas with each other. She agreed that social media is a great way of getting messages out to many people but suggested that more people, including the business representatives on the Board, need to be responsible for the maintenance and updating of these.

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel note the progress made by the Fenland Tourism Board in delivering the Tourism Strategy and Action Plan for Fenland.

Councillor Sam Clark expressed a non-pecuniary interest in this item by virtue of the fact that she is a member of the Fenland Tourism Board and left the room for the duration of this item.

Councillors Hodgson, Skoulding and Stebbing expressed a non-pecuniary in this item by virtue of the fact that they were previously members of the Fenland Tourism Board.

OSC13/14 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Future Work Programme 2014/15 for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor Hodgson asked why the Wisbech 2020 Vision Update is scheduled for January 2015 when there is a Wisbech 2020 Vision summit on Friday. Councillor Mrs French confirmed that the item in January 2015 is a general update and is separate from the summit.

Members agreed the Future Work Programme 2014/15 for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

OSC14/14 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL REVIEWS

Review of Grounds Maintenance Grass Cutting in Fenland

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel agreed the Terms of Reference for the Review of Grounds Maintenance Grass Cutting in Fenland, and confirmed that the review team would include the following members:

- Councillor Mrs French - Overview and Scrutiny Panel Chairman
- Councillor Sam Clark
- Councillor David Broker
- Councillor Robert Skoulding

Councillor Mrs French stated that the first meeting of this review group will take place on Thursday 11 September 2014.

Review of Footpath

Councillor Mrs French stated that the footbridge from the High Street in March is one of the most important footpaths in the area and that the proposal to close this footpath needs to be reviewed.

Members agreed and the Panel decided to keep the same review team substituting Councillor Robert Skoulding with Councillor Derek Stebbing. The first meeting will take place on Thursday 11 September following the Grounds Maintenance Grass Cutting Review meeting. Councillor Mrs French asked Anna Goodall to prepare a Terms of Reference for this review, which could be circulated at the first meeting.

4.00pm

Chairman