

HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY PANEL

held at

The Council Chamber

Symington Building, Adam & Eve Street, Market Harborough, LE16 7AG

on

17th November 2022

Commencing at 7.00 p.m.

Present:

Councillor Rickman, Chairman

Councillors: Critchley, Graves, Nunn, Mrs Page (ex-Officio) and Mrs Wood

Officers present: S. Hamilton, V. Jessop and C. Mason and D. Wright

Remotely: L. Elliott and C. Pattinson

The Chairman apologised for the technical difficulties which had caused a delay to the start of the meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATIONS OF SUBSTITUTION

Apologies were received from Councillor Frenchman.

DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

There were none.

MINUTES OF THE SCRUTINY PERFORMANCE PANEL

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Panel held on the 12th October 2022 be signed by the Chairman as a true record.

REPORT 1: SCRUTINY REVIEW REPORT

Due to further technical difficulties, both the Interim Chief Executive and Director for Governance and Law were unable to join the meeting.

RESOLVED that the Scrutiny Review Report be deferred.

REPORT 2: UPDATE ON HARBOROUGH DISTRICT COUNCIL BUSINESS CENTRES

The report was presented by the Economy & Business Service Manager and highlighted the progress of occupancy over the previous twelve months at the two business centres, the Harborough Innovation Centre, and the Grow-on Centre. The Chairman invited questions and comments from those present as follows: -

- The marketing approach in relation to the Centres both to increase tenants and raise their profile, and how is success monitored.
- How the improvements to both Centres are being financed.
- The need for additional Business Centres within the District including Lutterworth and other rural areas, and how these can be financed for example via partnership arrangements.
- New EV charging points – how long would it take to charge a vehicle?
- The return on investment and the success of the HIC from a financial aspect.

It was NOTED that the Interim Chief Executive would provide the information to the Committee after the meeting.

- The benefits of shorter-term leases and how this attracts businesses to the HIC
- The statutory requirements for disabled user-friendly premises and whether these are met by the business centres
- Who would be held responsible if there was an industrial accident at one of the premises.

The second part of the report was presented by the Economy & Business Service Manager where he introduced the lay-out of the Grow-on Centre and informed the panel of the occupancy of the office space and how this has increased since 2021. He outlined the 'future focus' objectives of the Grow-on Centre and how these will be met. The Panel discussed the following points: -

- How and when the Business Centres operational and facilities management will come into effect.
- The impact of a lower capacity and lesser tenanted income at the Grow-on Centre.

- Where the revenue 'break even' point will be, and when the Council are likely to make a return on their investment.
- As a council there needs to be confidence that the Council's part of the investment will make financial gains.

REPORT 6: RIPA MONITORING REPORT

The Interim Deputy Chief Executive and S.151 Officer presented the report. The Panel was asked to note that the Council has not used its RIPA powers in the municipal year to date. Those present commented as follows: -

- Whether it would have been beneficial to the Council to have used RIPA to date and the possibility of it being implemented in the future

The Panel CONSIDERED the report.

ANY URGENT BUSINESS

There was none.

The Meeting ended at 8:16pm