

POLICY AND PROJECT ADVISORY BOARD

Remote Meeting held on Wednesday, 22nd September, 2021 at 7.00 pm.

Voting Members

Cllr J.B. Canty (Chairman)
Cllr P.I.C. Crerar (Vice-Chairman)
Cllr P.J. Cullum (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr Gaynor Austin
Cllr Jessica Auton
Cllr Sophia Choudhary
Cllr Michael Hope
Cllr Prabesh KC
Cllr Sophie Porter
Cllr M.J. Roberts

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Cllr Mara Makunura.

13. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14th July 2021 were agreed as a correct record.

14. STRATEGIC ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK

The Board welcomed Mr Lee McQuade, Economy and Growth Manager who was in attendance to give a briefing on the Council's Strategic Economic Framework (SEF). The purpose of the briefing was to provide some background information on the SEF and to gather Members' views on the consultation process and principles.

The Board noted the uncertainty around economic growth, particularly policy uncertainty from the imminent Levelling Up White Paper, the net zero strategy and future funding. The impacts of the pandemic had also led to economic uncertainty. Considering the uncertainty, changes to the document were being made which would determine the best way to consult on the framework. It was felt that a soft approach, both internally and externally, would be taken. External partners would include Hampshire County Council, the EM3 LEP and business representative groups. It was also proposed that a business survey could be carried out with outcomes presented to the Cabinet in early 2022.

The purpose of the SEF was to offer a consistent vision and provide a framework, over the short to medium term, on how the Borough's economy could recover, to identify mechanisms for delivery and establish how the Council will measure and evaluate the performance of the SEF.

To allow effective consultation on the SEF, a process was underway to capture key information. A SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis of the Borough had been undertaken; this data would be used within the consultation

process to ensure all key areas were covered. The Board was apprised of some of the high level data and analysis that had been carried out, including labour force (claimant/age/furlough) statistics, business grants and impacts after withdrawal of funding support, changes to working patterns, sectoral impacts and inward investment/expansion. With regard to the town centres, data had been collected on, vacancy rates, footfall data and retail profile changes.

The Board noted the vision, “Rushmoor the Premier Place for Business to Thrive”. Comments were welcomed on the content of the vision, which included key driving forces and target outcomes.

The Board discussed the presentation and raised a number of issues, including:

- The importance providing flexibility within the framework to allow for adjustments following the pending papers from Government.
- How can the messages in the North Hampshire Narrative be reflected in the SEF? – it was advised that these two documents would be cross referenced to align together.
- Understanding vacancies/requirements and to ensure skills matching – conversations would be initiated with the Sixth Form College and FCOT to address this issue
- Ensuring more diverse businesses are incorporated into the SEF, such as co-operatives etc.
- Enabling community wealth building
- Addressing employment in the future, colleges keen to improve the status of the mental health of their students before leaving college and entering the workforce

It was advised that Mr. McQuade would pick up, in more detail, on comments and queries with individual Members outside the meeting and a further report on the SEF would be given to the Board as the consultation process progressed and the Levelling Up White Paper had been reviewed.

The Chairman thanked Mr. McQuade for his presentation.

15. **BUSINESS PLAN**

The Board welcomed Rachel Barker, Assistant Chief Executive, who was in attendance to give a presentation on the proposed timetable of the development of the 2022/23 Council Business Plan. The formal meeting was followed by an informal Member workshop.

The Board was apprised of the processes taken to develop the business plan. Previously the Board had been involved in the process of developing policy at the approval stages. However, this had been raised as an issue at a previous meeting and engagement with the Board was now timetabled to take place much sooner in the process, at the initial policy development stage.

The timeline for the business plan had been revised to bring it more in line with the budget setting process. Throughout October, Officers would be undertaking a review

of the 2021/23 Council Business Plan and identifying the strategic context moving forward. This work would be complemented by service workshops and wider engagement before coming back to the Board for review, at its November, 2021 meeting. The draft plan would then be developed and brought to the Board in January, 2022 followed by the approval process.

During the development of the business plan, a number of key issues would need to be considered, these included:

- The Levelling Up White Paper
- The Strategic Economic Framework
- Council enablers i.e. Climate Change Strategy, EDI, Supporting Communities Strategy and ICE Programme
- Budget setting
- Service planning
- Residents survey feedback
- North Hampshire Narrative
- Hampshire Budget consultations

The Board discussed the presentation and it was suggested that consideration could be given to imminent planning reforms and NHS reforms.

The Board **ENDORSED** the approach to the development of the business plan.

16. **WORK PLAN**

The Board **NOTED** the current Work Plan.

The meeting closed at 8.35 pm.

CLLR J.B. CANTY (CHAIRMAN)
