

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL



31 JULY 2017 - 2:30PM.

PRESENT: Councillor F H Yeulett (Chairman), Councillor Mrs A Hay (Vice-Chairman), Councillor G G R Booth, Councillor S Clark, Councillor D Hodgson, Councillor D Mason and Councillor A Pugh

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Councillor Clark and Councillor Sutton

OBSERVING: Councillor Butcher and Councillor Oliver

APOLOGIES: Councillor S Count, Councillor Mrs M Davis, Councillor Mrs D Laws and Councillor Mrs K F Mayor

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Jane Bailey (Member Services, Governance), Richard Cassidy (Corporate Director), Gary Garford (Corporate Director), Anna Goodall (Head of Legal and Governance) and Carol Pilson (Corporate Director)

OSC8/17 PREVIOUS MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of 17 May 2017 were agreed and signed subject to the following:

- Councillor Booth, referring to Theme 3: Infrastructure, 5th Bullet point, which says 'At times, when using Network Rail criteria, you're not getting value for money.' He stated that this should read that we are not meeting their criteria for value for money.
- Councillor Yeulett asked for an update on the LEP Meeting Actions. Anna Goodall agreed to circulate the LEP Actions with members.

The minutes of the meeting of 5 June 2017 were agreed and signed subject to the following:

- Councillor Sutton stated that a comment was made within the minutes, Councillor Buckton mentioned an issue with regards to a Planning Meeting that took place, and he suggested that the figures that were given at that time may not have been correct. He stated that this concerns him as he feels that there needs to be a trust between us in these situations. He suggested that the figures be checked for clarification. Councillor Yeulett agreed.
- Councillor Yeulett asked for an update on the general Recommendations Log for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel, the status and the action that has been taken. Anna Goodall agreed to update the recommendations.

OSC9/17 WISBECH 2020 VISION UPDATE

Gary Garford introduced Ross Ingham from Ingham Pinnock Associates who have assisted FDC with the project. Gary Garford and Ross Ingham made a presentation to members which covered:

- Introduction to the Wisbech 2020 Vision;
- Key Achievements;
- Summary of Baseline Data;
- Refreshed Wisbech 2020 Vision Strategy.

He informed members that this is a refreshed strategy a shorter document which includes a 1 page charter at the front which will be signed by Councillor Clark and other Leaders to sign to say that

their organisations are committed supporting Wisbech 2020 and working towards the challenges. He added that this a symbolic page that shows those organisations support the vision moving forward. This is supported by a delivery matrix, where themes and actions have been identified, and some of the delivery actions are aimed a partners to lead on.

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

1. Councillor Yeulett stated that we all recognise that resources should go to the greatest need. Historically there have been a lot of initiatives directed at Wisbech without the greatest of success and that he hopes that this will be taken forward and is pleased that Wisbech Town Council are signed up to this too, and that it has been fully involved;
2. Councillor Pugh stated that he likes this strategy and we know that Wisbech is a deprived area, but asked why this could not be the Fenland 2020 Vision and learn lessons from all of the other towns to help Wisbech overcome these issues. Councillor Clark stated that Councillor Pugh makes a very good point, but that we have to have a focus and Wisbech comes out higher with regards to deprivation than any of the other towns. There is often a challenge around 'what about the other towns and villages', but as Councillor Yeulett says, resources should follow need. He added that he understands that money has been spent on Wisbech in the past that has not really made any difference. There is real hope that this will make a difference and this work will benefit the rest of the area too, but the focus is on Wisbech;
3. Councillor Pugh stated that there are other towns in the area that are doing well at certain things, and asked why we are not learning from those towns. He stated that he is not concerned about the resources going to Wisbech but feels we should be looking for lessons learnt in those other areas. Councillor Clark stated that is what the 2020 Vision is about, we are not only looking at what we are doing well in Fenland but looking and asking partners to come forward to look at the bigger picture at Cambridgeshire as an area. Gary Garford stated that the agencies we are dealing with are not just based in Wisbech they work across Fenland or across Cambridgeshire and they are bringing forward the ideas that are working in other places;
4. Councillor Mrs Hay asked if we are looking at what works in places outside of the County as parts of Wisbech are in Norfolk. Gary Garford stated that we recognise that part of Wisbech is in Norfolk and from a planning side we engage with Kings Lynn and West Norfolk so we are not ignoring the boundary in terms of planning for the whole catchment of Wisbech. Where it is appropriate we are engaging with our colleagues in the Borough of King's Lynn and West Norfolk;
5. Councillor Mrs Hay referred to the data on the table at page 64 of the agenda pack with regards to the GP Practices in Cambridgeshire with the highest percentage patients registered under 'white other' ethnicity. She stated that Wisbech is number 11, 18 and 19, which does not accord with the perception that there is a higher percentage of 'white other' residents living in Wisbech than anywhere else in Cambridgeshire. She added that the data in the table on page 66 shows that the Thomas Clarkson is one of the highest ranked by percentage of speaking an EU A8 Language at home, and stated that she feels that these tables contradict one and other. Gary Garford stated that the table only shows the top 20 practices and there are only Wisbech and Cambridge Wards that are in that top 20. Ross Ingham explained that the challenge is greater in Wisbech as a lot of the residents that are registered with the Wisbech Surgery's' are probably non English speaking compared to Cambridge where they are probably multi-lingual;
6. Councillor Booth stated that there could be the issue that people are not all registered at a GP Surgery, the statistics are only as good as the information that goes in. Gary Garford confirmed that the non-registration for the migrant population is high in the Wisbech area. Richard Cassidy stated that the graph on page 65 shows that more people have registered for National Insurance than with a GP in the Fenland area, and that tells us that people are moving into Wisbech as migrants and are not registering with a GP, this results in people becoming unwell and seeking treatment at Accident and Emergency. The people registering

in Cambridge are mostly a transient student population, where people are not registering for National Insurance but are registering with the GP. He stated that it is important to note that 'white other' does not mean Eastern European, we collect ethnicity data and not nationality data and therefore it is hard to be sure where people are from;

7. Councillor Booth asked that with regards to Wisbech 2020 does it just cover Wisbech Town area and not the surrounding villages. A lot of these villages also fall into the category of areas of deprivation, and all resources are being allocated to Wisbech when the villages are being missed out, everyone is talking about towns and not the villages, but a quarter of the population lives in the villages. Councillor Sutton stated that this is a good point, but Wisbech 2020 has got to hone in on that specific area and if we can get issues solved there it will spread out to the villages. If we spread ourselves out at this stage across a bigger area we have a greater chance of failure than if we concentrate on the Wisbech area;
8. Councillor Booth stated that the areas of deprivation are in the North of the District and this does include the villages. Ross Ingham stated that trying to pinpoint the precise geography for the Wisbech 2020 project is almost impossible, under the skills and education theme we are talking to all of the Wisbech Head Teachers and the catchment for those schools is vast, and under the theme of health services the boundary for GP surgeries does not stop at the town. Gary Garford stated that we are including the villages, the Head Teacher of Parson Drove School is on the Steering Group representing schools and she is representing all of the primary schools in the Wisbech catchment. The Wisbech catchment for Health Services includes the villages, he confirmed that some of the statistics are Wisbech based but we are including the villages in 2 of those major themes of Education and Skills and Health;
9. Councillor Booth stated that he still feels that the whole focus of the document is around Wisbech and does not mention the villages. Gary Garford agreed to take that message back to the Steering Group;
10. Councillor Yeulett stated that the feeling from the Committee is that if there are good practices developing through the 2020 Vision and there are challenges in other parts of the district the good practices should be rolled out. Gary Garford agreed and stated that a good example of that is with regards to recruitment of teachers in schools, that is not just common to Wisbech but across the district and if we can find a solution to that it can be rolled out across Fenland;
11. Councillor Mason stated that we all understand the issues faced by Wisbech and that he feels the core of the issues are with the economy followed by infrastructure. He stated that in a previous role as an employment consultant in Wisbech the identified areas for jobs were agriculture, food distribution and retail, and that has not changed. Most people found that opportunities for work were very difficult and job prospects were low. He asked how much thought goes into what is included in the enterprise zones by the LEP when they are set up. Councillor Clark stated that we have to look wider than the LEP for the answer to some of these questions, we are linked to Opportunity Peterborough and they are exploring leads with companies for the Enterprise Zones too. The Enterprise Zones have to go through the LEP and they will bring businesses in with a 5 year business rate relief, this is to get more employers into the area. There are lots of people looking for the lower paid jobs but there is a shortage of people to fill the higher skilled job vacancies. That is part of the Government funding which is currently targeting the social care careers and encouraging people to be trained further;
12. Councillor Mason stated that the aspirations of the people in Wisbech are to work in the lower paid jobs, and so in the short term we should concentrate on people working in the lower paid jobs to increase productivity, but in the long term we should to look to raise people's aspirations and raise people's skill levels. Councillor Clark stated that we have got to try to raise the aspirations of the people in Wisbech, recently it has been asked why do Peterborough want a University. The people in this area might not have the resources to pay for their children to go away to University and if we can connect Wisbech to Cambridge and Peterborough those people can have the opportunity to get to a University. This is a long term project but will give us the opportunity to start to get skilled people to fill those jobs in this area as there are too many people looking for the low paid jobs;

13. Councillor Mason stated that the focus for this area is in agriculture which is the lower paid work and that is why people still need to be encouraged to work in this area. Councillor Clark stated that you have to have aspirations to raise the attainment;
14. Gary Garford stated that we cannot look at things in isolation, social, economy and environment needs to be considered comprehensively as, each one affects the others. Unemployment is not a key issue in Wisbech, but what we do not have is supervisory and management staff coming out of the factories and therefore we want to raise those aspirations and we need to see if there might be research industry opportunities in this area;
15. Councillor Hodgson thanked the officers involved with the project since 2012. He raised a point with regards to brown signs for tourism. Gary Garford agreed to meet and look at the specific brown sign issues raised by Councillor Hodgson following the meeting;
16. Councillor Pugh stated that 6 years ago the High School in March was not doing well, but the school has been turned around by the new Head Teacher and he suggested that we should be asking them for ideas about why it is now doing so well. He added that education not only comes from schools but from the parents, and we need to change the way that those parents engage with education, change the culture. He asked what plans are in place to start to make these things happen. Gary Garford agreed that the engagement of parents with their children's education is not high, with a low level attending parents evening. Those same families are not engaged with Health Care professionals and Social Workers etc, and we need to look at how we might get the trust of that community, and that has been recognised in the Action Plan. There is an idea to make schools more of a hub for the community, making use of the school building and facilities at weekends and during holidays when they are usually closed. This is a model that we want to look at, so that schools become the centre of the community and we start to break down the barriers of engaging with parents. There are also ideas to take parents evenings out into the community and look at different ways of engaging those parents, in the same way that we take health out into the community. We have recognised these are issues and are looking at ways of coming up with solutions;
17. Councillor Pugh stated that we need to look at qualifications available, as the Isle College in Wisbech does not offer the qualifications that Wisbech needs. Gary Garford stated that the funding follows the pupils and therefore if you can fill a classroom the subject will be funded whether there are jobs in the area or not. We are trying to align business to skills needs, because we need to join this up and give a clear career path for young people which will have local job opportunities moving forward;
18. Councillor Mrs Hay stated that to make Wisbech a better place they need better connectivity, we should be referring to the Wisbech to Cambridge Line and not the Wisbech to March Line, as the local population would understand the wider opportunities available to them with regards to employment, training and social connections. We need to be pushing for more services from March to Cambridge as currently services are not regular and finish early, and these need to be improved. Councillor Clark agreed that the terminology could be changed. With regards to late night services there is an issue at the Ely Junction which hopefully will be resolved and that will make a difference and we are looking to try to address this problem;
19. Councillor Pugh asked about a scheme where areas who are offering places to live are putting people through their scooter licence and loaning scooters to enable people to be able to take a job outside the area. He asked if we have looked at this type of initiative. Councillor Sutton stated that we have had a similar initiative in this area previously. Councillor Booth stated that it did not run for very long as the funding was redirected elsewhere after around 6 months, a short term initiative;
20. Councillor Yeulett stated that the improvements to the railway line will not only benefit Wisbech but the whole of the Fenland economy. Councillor Clark agreed and stated that we need to supply a business case and the more we can justify it the more that people will start to listen;

21. Councillor Yeulett stated that we need the support of the Chamber of Commerce. Councillor Clark stated that the Combined Authority fully supports the rail link, Fenland's voice is at long last being listened too. Gary Garford stated that we have funding allocated by the Combined Authority to undertake a connectivity study, road, rail and digital, this is the first time that we have had this funding which will improve the business case moving forward;
22. Councillor Hodgson asked for clarification referring to page 89 which says 'Good Central Bus Station but no Rail Link'. Gary Garford explained that was a summary of what the public were saying as part of the consultation;
23. Councillor Mason stated that the report does not mention reducing anti-social behaviour or reducing crime, he asked for reassurance that the police and partners are engaged. Gary Garford stated that we have focussed on the 4 themes, and that is not to say that we cannot also engage the police in this. It is not part of the action plan but it is recognised that anti-social behaviour across Wisbech is being dealt with separately. Councillor Oliver stated that through the Fenland Community Safety Partnership crime and disorder across Fenland is dealt with, he confirmed that there are priorities within Wisbech as part of the core business. Ross Ingham stated that what is in the Wisbech 2020 Strategy is not everything that is going on in Wisbech, clearly there is more. This is a strategy looking at transformational things, but that is not to say other things are not being picked up elsewhere;
24. Councillor Booth referred to the engagement event that took place in the Market Place over 2 days, he asked how many people gave feedback and was the event during the week. Gary Garford confirmed that the consultation exercise took place on a Friday and Saturday, but was also available for 4 weeks online and 168 responses were received. Councillor Booth stated that he does not feel that enough public engagement has taken place. There were only 168 responses to the questionnaire and we are using some of that feedback on the 2020 Vision. He added that it has been said that responses around Health were high, and stated that the reason for that would have been around concern about the Minor Injury Unit being closed and so that would have been in the forefront of people's minds at that time;
25. Councillor Hodgson stated that the response to the public consultation was very good, and asked if Councillor Booth was suggesting that the Council should go out to consult again. Councillor Booth stated that we have to do more, we only had 168 people responses and the population of Wisbech and surrounding areas is about 40,000, therefore it is not representative. Councillor Clark stated that the initial steer was that the general public were in favour to try to address some of the issues, but we will need to carry out more public consultation along the journey. There will be so much more as we move forward, so many questions to be asked and that will involve more public engagement;
26. Councillor Booth suggested that some of the language is changed in the Action Plan and some deadlines and measures should be added. Councillor Clark stated that it is a broad document, a 2020 Vision of engaging all the partners, there is lots of work that has to be done to underline that, but to start putting firm dates in at this stage is impossible as there are so many partners involved and so much work to bring together that it is too early to set deadlines;
27. Gary Garford stated that we have got an Action Plan that sits underneath what we have here today that identifies precise actions and we have targets for those, so it does go to that next level beyond what is in this document. Councillor Yeulett thanked Gary Garford for making that point and explaining the planning behind the document. Councillor Clark stated that we only received the £6.5m funding for Wisbech Garden Town from the Combined Authority 10 days ago and it is early days;
28. Councillor Booth asked if that funding would have happened anyway without the 2020 Vision. Gary Garford stated that the 2020 Vision covers the Garden Town, if we are going to have a successful Garden Town they will want high levels of education and attainment and good health. There is a big section in the Garden Town Project around raising the profile of the town. It takes a long time to make these changes and we are looking at ways to address this;

29. Councillor Booth suggested social media is a good way to get the message out to people. Gary Garford agreed;
30. Councillor Yeulett asked for an update with regards to the former Phoenix Hotel in Wisbech. Gary Garford confirmed that Cabinet have agreed an approach with regards to that. We were left with a building that was fire damaged, we cannot locate the owner, and are left with a shell of a structure. We have discharged the statutory requirements to make the area safe and are exploring other initiatives. We have to take into account the financial resources as we do not own the building and are owed money by the errant owner but will continue to look at options. Councillor Clark confirmed that we are always looking for solutions with regards to the Phoenix Hotel.

Anna Goodall outlined the recommendations from the Panel as follows:

- Recognising and learning best practices from our own Market Towns and outside the area that could have a positive influence on Wisbech;
- To ensure that the vision is representative of the wider Wisbech catchment area and that it is recognised as having that wider remit;
- There is further publicity and promotion of the Vision, so there is greater engagement at all levels;
- There is rebranding of the rail link to 'Wisbech to Cambridge and Peterborough';
- That we are addressing the wider connectivity issues and having influence around increased rail links and frequency of trains so that job opportunities are accessible;
- Clarification and measurable outcomes moving forward.

Councillor Booth added that the language used in the document should be in plain English to ensure that everybody understands it.

Councillor Mason added that there should also be an emphasis that it is a long term strategy, as the public perception is that it is 2020 vision and that it will all be solved by 2020, but it is a longer term project. Gary Garford agreed.

Councillor Clark thanked the panel for their overview of the document today. He thanked Gary Garford, Ross Ingham and the Officers involved stating that there has been a lot of work involved to get to this stage, and if we are going to the Combined Authority for funding they will want to see full justification behind any request. There is a momentum at the moment for us, finally people are listening to Fenland, which never happened before, and we are looking forward to the future.

Councillor Yeulett thanked everybody for their attendance today.

OSC10/17 FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

Members considered the Future Work Programme 2017/18 for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor Yeulett confirmed the Additional meeting on the 21 August 2017 and a Panel Pre-Meeting on the 14 August 2017.

Members agreed the Future Work Programme 2017/18 for the Overview and Scrutiny Panel.

4:22pm

Chairman