

Monthly summary of the decisions taken at meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Overview & Scrutiny and other Panels for the period 1st June to 30th June 2014.

MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE USER GROUPS

Representatives of Mind in Cambridgeshire and the Mental Health Service User Network have addressed the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) on the implications of the mental health service redesign upon Huntingdonshire's service users. A further consultation has been launched seeking views on the future of community personality disorder services across the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough area.

A number of points were raised and noted by Members in relation to the availability of acute beds, the Crisis Resolution Home Treatment Team, Advice and Referral Centre, impact of budgetary reductions upon voluntary services and the increasing levels of demand for services.

2013/14 REVIEW OF VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS IN RECEIPT OF THREE YEAR FUNDING AWARDS

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has considered the performance of voluntary organisations in receipt of three year funding arrangements with the Council. With the exception of Rural Cambs CAB, all organisations have met their agreed performance targets. Failure to achieve targets is attributed to the delay in the opening of the organisation's St Neots office from June to November 2013. Matters discussed include the uncertainty of future funding from

Cambridgeshire County Council, the current review of new monitoring requirements for funding from April 2015 onwards and the opportunity to amalgamate some voluntary organisations as a means of generating efficiencies.

CORPORATE CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The content of an updated Corporate Consultation and Engagement Strategy, action plan and supporting appendices was endorsed by the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being). The documents have been subject to prior review by the Panel's Consultation Processes Working Group. Subject to the Strategy making reference to the Council also consulting with public sector Partners on matters which can have an impact upon their services, the Panel has endorsed the Strategy, action plan and guidance appendices for submission to the Cabinet.

Subsequently, the Cabinet has approved the contents of the Strategy and its supporting papers.

HOUSING BENEFIT AND COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT CHANGES AND THE IMPACT ON HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has been updated on the effects of the Government's Welfare Reform programme and how it has impacted upon households in Huntingdonshire in relation to Housing

Benefits, Council Tax Support and homelessness. Updates were received on changes which had taken place during 2014 in respect of local housing allowance, social sector size criteria rules, Council Tax Support, benefit cap and discretionary housing payments. The Panel will continue to receive reports on a six monthly basis.

PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE OLDER PEOPLES HEALTHCARE AND ADULT COMMUNITY SERVICES – CONSULTATION RESPONSE

The Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) has endorsed the content of a response to the current consultation being undertaken by Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Clinical Commissioning Group on proposals to improve older people's healthcare and adult community services. Members have requested the need to emphasise previous concerns over the lack of elected Member involvement from the procurement exercise.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) – PROGRESS

A review of the memberships of each of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel's (Social Well-Being) Working Groups has been undertaken. Changes have been made as necessary.

The Panel has requested that an invitation be extended to the Cambridgeshire Police and Crime Commissioner's Office for a representative to attend a future meeting.

SCRUTINY

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) have requested an update on Members' IT to be provided to all Members as there appears to be problems with accessing and receiving emails. There is also some confusion over the cost of purchasing electronic

devices and the requirements for participating in the Council's loan scheme established for this purpose.

POTENTIAL SALE OF DISTRICT COUNCIL LAND AT HERMITAGE ROAD, EARITH

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has considered a proposal for the sale of Council owned land at Hermitage Road, Earith for affordable housing development.

Having regard to the alternative use value of the site and the views of the Executive Councillor who suggested that the proposal struck a good balance between addressing the need for social housing and generating a capital receipt for the Authority, the Panel has recommended that the Cabinet should dispose of the site on the terms set out in the report.

Subsequently, the Cabinet has considered the comments of the Panel and has approved the disposal of the land to BPHA.

SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS FOR LEGAL AND IMD

The outcome of discussions with LGSS on opportunities to develop a shared service arrangement for selected services, initially Legal and ICT services, have been reported to the both the Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being). Following the Council's announcement on 10th April 2014 of the intention to explore a new strategic framework with South Cambridgeshire District Council, Members have noted that the LGSS option is no longer being pursued and have endorsed the continuation of discussions with South Cambridgeshire District Council.

**PROVISIONAL 2013/14 OUTTURN
(REVENUE AND CAPITAL)**

Both the Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) have reviewed the provisional revenue and capital Outturn for 2013/14. Members have noted that the provisional revenue outturn reveals expenditure was £2.2m below the level expected and have been advised of the likely reasons for this. The Panel has welcomed the presentation of the financial information in the new format.

Members have also welcomed the intention to commence a programme of Zero Based Budgeting in preparation for the formulation of the draft Budget in December 2014. Members have been advised of the likely methodology for the review and have noted that updates on progress would be received on a regular basis. The Head of Resources has been authorised by the Cabinet to commence the programme, to be funded from the Special Reserves.

In terms of the variations in revenue spending from the 2013/14 Budget and the Provisional Revenue Outturn, the Panel has sought clarification of a number of matters. Members have enquired about the income profile for One Leisure, St Ives and will invite the Executive Councillor for Commercial activities to attend a future meeting to discuss this further. Referring to an application on the Agenda for the Development Management Panel, the Panel was of the opinion that the Council needed to ensure that the arrangements for entering into Section 106 Agreements were robust.

Given the service transformation that the Council is facing over the medium term and the proposal to provide additional investment in “revenue generating” capital projects, the Cabinet has agreed to increase the Special Reserve to £2.2m (a contribution of £0.9m) and to establish

a new “Capital Investment” Earmarked Reserve with a balance of £1.5m. The Head of Resources has been given delegated authority to adjust these revenue contributions, after consultation with the Executive Councillor and the Managing Director, in the event that the actual outturn figure varies by more than 2.5%.

**2013/14 TREASURY MANAGEMENT
ANNUAL REPORT**

In accordance with the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Best Practice and the Council’s Treasury Management Strategy, the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has reviewed and noted the Council’s treasury management performance for the year ending 31 March 2013.

**OUR ROLE IN SUPPORTING THE
PROSPERITY AND VITALITY OF THE
MARKET TOWNS**

Following a suggestion by the Council Programme Meeting that the content of the Council debate on ‘the prosperity and vitality of the Market Towns’, could be used to take forward a potential overview and scrutiny study, the Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) has agreed to invite Mr William Grimsey to a future meeting to give his views on the future of the High Street. In the light of the content of the presentation, the Panel will then develop and scope its study.

**FLOOD RISK IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE
– PRESENTATION FROM MIDDLE
LEVEL COMMISSIONERS**

A presentation was delivered to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) on flood risk in Huntingdonshire. Details were received on the background to the Middle Level Commissioner’s work, its relationship with the nine Internal Drainage Boards within the District,

how funding was proportioned across the Middle Level area, the significance of the St Germans pumping station, planned works at Bevills Leam pumping station and Salters Lode Lock and the extent of work undertaken with partners including the Great Fen. The Flooding Working Group will pursue further investigations on the Panel's behalf. Councillor R J West has been appointed on to the Working Group.

ACTION ON ENERGY SCHEME

An update on progress of the Action on Energy scheme within the District was reported to the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being). £7.8 million of grant funding has been made available to the Cambridgeshire area to assist residents with meeting the costs of the installation of solid wall insulation. Some funding will also be used within the private rented sector. The Council also receives £26,000 of revenue funding to assist with the cost of Officer time spent distributing the funding.

Matters discussed include the disposal of the Council's green house properties, publicity of the Action on Energy scheme, the level of take up from businesses undertaking the relevant training to become an accredited installer and the trial scheme being undertaken to insulate park homes in St Neots.

WASTE POLICIES

Following a number of concerns raised by Members, the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) has reconvened the Waste Collections Working Group, comprising Councillors M G Baker, G J Bull, D A Giles and G J Harlock to assist the Head of Operations and Executive Member for Operations with reviewing the policies in relation to the collection point for wheeled bins/sacks and remote properties (farms and lodges). A number of concerns were raised relating to the absence of any

prior communication with Members and the impact of the proposals upon those residing within private roads/unadopted estates and new housing developments.

In supporting the reconvening of the Working Group, the Cabinet has approved the policy amendments proposed in respect of additional green bins which will increase the number of chargeable bins allowed to two per property.

WIND ENERGY DEVELOPMENT IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE 2014 SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) has endorsed the revised Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for Wind Energy Development in Huntingdonshire 2014. It is felt that the SPD is now sufficiently robust to assist the Council to withstand any future appeals. The Panel has received confirmation that the matter of separation distances is now addressed within the SPD.

Having also raised questions in respect of the scale of turbine development, turbine group sizes and separation distances and been satisfied with responses received to representations made by the 'Stop Molesworth Windfarm Action Group', The Development Management Panel endorsed the content of the proposed SPD and recommended to the Cabinet that it be adopted as Council policy.

A14 CAMBRIDGE TO HUNTINGDON – RESPONSE TO HIGHWAYS AGENCY DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER PRE-APPLICATION STATUTORY CONSULTATION

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) has

endorsed the Council's response to the statutory consultation being undertaken by the Highways Agency on the Development Consent Order Pre-Application for the A14 Cambridge to Huntingdon development on the proviso that paragraph 4 (g) of Annex C is strengthened to include the words "The District Council reserves its position of matters of detail, such as the mitigation of the impact of the development on affected villages, on which it will negotiate with the Highways Agency".

Subsequently, the Cabinet has considered the Panel's concerns alongside those of Buckden Parish Council relating to the proposed demolition of the viaduct and the residents of Hilton Village regarding the project's impact on surrounding villages. Having noted that the retention of the viaduct would result in the reclassification of the existing road as a local road for which the County Council has confirmed they would not be prepared to fund the maintenance of, the Cabinet has reiterated its support for the removal of the viaduct and the creation of an improved new local road network for the town. These sentiments and those of the Panel will be reflected in the Council's response to the Highways Agency.

Construction work for the scheme is due to commence in 2016 which will take three years to complete. The removal of the Huntingdon Viaduct will take place thereafter and is likely to take around a further 18 months.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE FUTURE TRANSPORT INITIATIVE

The Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) have appointed Councillor Mrs L Kadic as their representative on the Cambridgeshire Future Transport Initiative.

THE SERVICE PLAN FOR FOOD LAW ENFORCEMENT 2014 – 15

The Licensing and Protection Panel has considered an executive summary of the proposed Service Plan for Food Law Enforcement prior to its approval by Council. The Plan complies with the requirements of the Food Standards Agency and incorporates the aims and objectives of the service, the resources available and a review of the work undertaken during the previous year. A copy of the full Service Plan is available in the Members Room.

SERVICE PLAN FOR HEALTH AND SAFETY REGULATION 2014 – 15

The Licensing and Protection Panel has approved the content of the Service Plan for Health and Safety Regulation for 2014/15. The Plan, developed in accordance with guidance issued by the Health and Safety Executive, covers the aims and objectives of the service resources available and includes a review of the work undertaken in the previous year.

A copy of the full Service Plan is available in the Members Room.

LICENSING COMMITTEE – REVIEW OF EFFECTIVENESS

The Licensing & Protection Panel has considered the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of the Licensing Panel / Committee which had been undertaken by a working group comprising the Chairman and Vice-Chairman and Councillor R West. The Panel has agreed that -

- ❖ the existing custom and practice for the involvement of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman in Licensing Sub Groups and Committees should be retained; and

- ❖ that the proportionality requirements for future meetings of the Licensing and Protection Applications Sub-Group be clarified.

FEES AND CHARGES

The Licensing and Protection Panel has been acquainted with the adjustments to fees and charges for licences issued by the District Council effective from 1st April 2014.

DELEGATIONS

In the interests of cost, speed and efficiency, the Licensing and Protection Panel has authorised the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to determine applications for the grant, renewal, variation or transfer of licences for sex shops, sex cinemas and Sexual Entertainment Venues subject to there being no objections.

REPRESENTATIONS ON EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

The Licensing and Protection Panel has appointed representatives to serve on the following organisations for the ensuing Municipal Year –

- ❖ Cambridgeshire Consultative Group for the Fletton Brickworks Industry
- ❖ Little Barford Power Station Liaison Committee
- ❖ Needingworth Quarry Local Liaison Committee
- ❖ Warboys Landfill Local Liaison Committee

RECYCLING CONTRACT AWARD

The Cabinet has been updated on the procurement process and evaluation of the tender submissions received for the bulking, transportation, sorting and onward sale for the reprocessing of recyclable materials for authorities from the RECAP partnership. Particular mention was made of the financial benefits of the new contract for the Council and the possibility that the range of items collected may increase.

DEVELOPMENT APPLICATIONS

The Development Management Panel considered nine applications at its June meeting. Of these, six were approved two refused and one deferred. Of most interest to Members will be the consent given for fourteen new flats and associated works, on land north of the Pathfinder House Car Park. It was also agreed to waive an existing S106 Agreement at Ullswater and Handcrofts Land, Huntingdon to allow an undertaking to be put in place with Administrators which would enable remedial works to proceed which had been left unfinished due to the bankruptcy of the original developer. The Head of Development was requested to gather evidence on the adequacy of car parking at Montagu Square, Eynesbury before the Panel could reconsider an application for the conversion of an existing house into four new dwellings.