

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY) held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 5 February 2008.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.

Councillors J D Ablewhite, Mrs M Banerjee, E R Butler, K J Churchill, Mrs K E Cooper, J E Garner, D A Giles, Mrs C A Godley, Mrs P A Jordan, P G Mitchell and J S Watt.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J M Sadler and P K Ursell.

### **65. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **66. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, K J Churchill and Mrs C A Godley declared personal interests in respect of Minute No. 7 by virtue of being members of the board of directors of Luminus.

### **67. DISABILITY ACCESS STUDY**

The Panel were advised that the presentation by Mrs G Bird Forum Manager, Directions Plus, on access for those with disabilities would not go ahead due to Mrs Bird's sickness. It was hoped to rearrange this for the March meeting.

### **68. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 - FORWARD PLAN**

The Panel considered the current Forward Plan of key decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which had been prepared by the Leader for the period 1<sup>st</sup> February to 31<sup>st</sup> May 2008. Members were acquainted with the various strategies that would be submitted to future Overview and Scrutiny meetings. The Panel expressed concern at the lack of items for the Service Delivery Panel. In response to a question submitted by Councillor Mitchell, the Chairman asked A Roberts to look at the remit of the Panel. The Panel expressed their concern over the lack of consultation given to their parishes on the allocation of Section 106 money in their localities.

## **69. STATE OF THE DISTRICT CONSULTATION WORKING GROUP**

The Panel gave consideration to the final report by the Working Group (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). In introducing the report Councillor Churchill referred to the difficulties in engaging the public particularly on a district level. He informed the Panel that it was recommended that four area events be held in various formats and felt that it would be cost effective if organised efficiently. Councillor Churchill advised the Panel that the cost of the four events would be £5,020 with the majority of that cost staying the same whether one or four events were to be held.

Mrs H Gilling – Communications and Marketing Manager, was then invited to speak to the Panel. Mrs Gilling agreed that these events were a good idea to engage the public, she agreed with a suggestion from Councillor Ablewhite that local leisure centre open days could be used as an opportunity to hold conferences and attract the visiting public. She explained that the bulk of the costs incurred would be for her or her teams' time but that the message would be the same for one or four events. She advised the Panel that the principal marketing channel would be District Wide, starting with the March publication and continuing with the June and September publications. Mrs Gilling felt that it was important to make it clear to the public that the Council wanted to talk and listen to the local community and felt confident that she could persuade The Hunts Post to give the events maximum publicity. Radio Cambridgeshire would also be informed of events and would be invited to attend.

It was agreed by the Panel that the events go ahead and that there would be a need for Parish, District and County Councils to be involved in them, it was felt that strong chairmanship would be needed for any meetings held at these events. It was stressed by the Panel that the overall aim was to listen, react and feedback.

## **70. LOCAL PETITIONS AND CALLS FOR ACTION**

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of legislative changes affecting overview and on consultations on local petitions and calls for action. It was noted that the powers of overview and scrutiny committees would be enhanced and that they would have the power to require information from the County Council and certain partner authorities. It was also noted that there would be duty for the executive to respond in writing to an overview and scrutiny report and recommendation within two months. The Panel were advised that Fenland District Council would be holding a scrutiny seminar to discuss the proposals and several Members expressed an interest in attending. The Panel noted that the legislative changes would enable Councillors to refer a local government matter to the relevant overview and scrutiny committee and a crime and disorder matter to a local crime and disorder committee and that this would amount to a "call for action".

Whereupon, the Panel

RESOLVED

- (a) that the contents of the report be received and noted;  
and
- (b) that the responses to the consultation paper as set out in Annex A to the report now submitted be endorsed.

**71. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY) - PROGRESS**

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which has been appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of actions taken in response to recent discussions and decisions and reviewing the programme of studies. Members noted that the town centre cleaning regimes report would not be available until April, the recycling credits report was due to be submitted to the meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March and were hopeful that Mrs Bird would be able to rearrange her presentation for the March meeting. The Panel were informed that procedures were in place for parish councils to request the installation of dropped kerbs.

Councillor C A Godley informed the Panel of her involvement with the Adoption of Road and Sewers Working Group. She reported on her meeting of the 30<sup>th</sup> January 2008 where the responsibility for sewers under various roads in the Kings Estate in St Neots and Christy Drive in Huntingdon were discussed. The Panel were concerned that the adoption of roads was being delayed because the sewers beneath were below standard. It was suggested that the Head of Planning Services and the Principle Building Control Officer be invited along to a meeting along with representatives from the County Council and Anglia Water to discuss the issues.

The Grant Aid schemes were discussed and it was proposed that a meeting with those responsible be arranged.

**72. SCRUTINY**

The 80<sup>th</sup> edition of the Decision Digest was received and noted.

Chairman