

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, 4 September 2007.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.

Councillors K J Churchill, Mrs K E Cooper, J E Garner, D A Giles, Mrs C A Godley, Mrs P A Jordan, J M Sadler, P K Ursell and J S Watt.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J D Ablewhite, Mrs M Banerjee, E R Butler, D Harty and P G Mitchell.

20. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3rd July 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

21. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor D A Giles declared a personal interest in Minute No. 25 by virtue of the fact that his employer scrutinised the National Health Service.

Councillors Mrs C A Godley and Mrs P A Jordan declared personal interests in Minute No. 25 by virtue of their employment by the National Health Service.

Councillor K J Churchill declared a personal interest in Minute No. 25 by virtue of being a Member of Cambridgeshire County Council's Health and Adult Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

22. 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 1st September to 31st December 2007. Members were informed of the matters that appeared on the Plan, which would be submitted to their next meeting.

23. CULTURAL STRATEGY UPDATE REPORT

(Councillor L M Simpson was in attendance for this item).

Consideration was given to a report by the Lifestyle Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to which was attached the draft Cultural Strategy and an Executive Summary of the Strategy. Members were informed that the Strategy incorporated much of the

Council's existing work, reflected the realignment of a number of the Council's Sections and formed a key objective of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership and the Huntingdonshire Children and Young People's Plan 2006-07. The Strategy took account of existing policies and strategies, contained the findings of an audit of existing provision and identified cultural needs in the District. It also contained a three year Action Plan to deliver the identified Vision and Principles.

The Panel discussed the Priory Centre, St. Neots, the Godmanchester Nurse Project and the 2012 Olympics. Members also commented on the aspirational character of the Strategy and the risk involved in its reliance on obtaining external funding. Furthermore, they endorsed the intention to use the Strategy to influence negotiations for Section 106 Agreements and to support bids to outside bodies for funding.

Councillor J S Watt outlined his perceptions of the need for play facilities that had an element of risk and for government guidance in this respect. Having noted that the Strategy took into account recent government initiatives that provided funding for young people, it was

RESOLVED

that the draft Cultural Strategy be endorsed for submission to the Cabinet.

24. MARKETS SERVICE

Pursuant to Minute No. 06/52 (b), the Panel gave consideration to a report by the Head of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) containing details of the availability and uptake of pitches at the District's markets in 2006 and 2007. Having discussed the need to improve the viability of markets, it was agreed to defer this item to enable Councillor J D Ablewhite, the original proposer of the study, to attend in order that a remit and areas for further investigation could be identified.

25. NHS FOUNDATION TRUST CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

The Panel considered a Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust Consultation Document (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on proposals by the Trust to develop their local services.

With regard to the Trusts' suggested vision and values, Members outlined their concerns at the transfer of care to the community because of the need to ensure that there was sufficient funding available to provide an adequate level of care, particularly for the elderly and those with mental health illnesses. Further concern stemmed from the transfer of responsibility for care from the Trust to Social Services, which meant that patients were means tested for eligibility for services.

On the question of the Trusts' strategic objectives and service development plans, Members stressed the need for a comprehensive performance management framework to be adopted which included actions, targets and performance monitoring. In addition, Members

were of the view that plans to work in partnership with local authorities and other agencies should identify agreed and clearly defined roles to ensure effective service delivery.

Having endorsed proposals to make young people eligible to become Members of the Trust, Members suggested that this could be best achieved by engaging them through schools and existing youth groups run by partner organisations. Public involvement in membership of the Trust was welcomed as a way to facilitate an exchange of views. The Panel formed the opinion that the Trust should take every opportunity to engage with its members; however, to help maintain their long-term commitment the Trust should demonstrate that their contribution was valued and meaningful.

Members drew attention to the adverse effect of jointly providing services for those with learning disabilities and mental health problems when trying to reduce the stigma associated with each of these conditions. A preferred approach would be for them to be addressed by separate bodies or, at the very least, at separate facilities. To combat stigma effectively this should be accompanied by the means to disseminate and publicise information to educate the wider community.

The Panel expressed the view that carers should have greater representation amongst the Board of Governors and that the business community and commercial sector also should be represented in order to enhance its ability to manage the Trust's finances. Having recommended that the Trust's name should as far as possible resemble the existing name, so as to minimise the cost of re-branding, it was

RESOLVED

that in response to the consultation the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust should be informed of the Panel's views as set out above.

26. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY) - PROGRESS

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 actions taken in response to recent discussions and decisions and reviewing the programme of studies.

Having noted the current position of each of the Panel's studies, Councillor J S Watt informed Members that the Youth Forum Working Group, at a meeting the previous week, had decided to speak to various key individuals in the field of youth service provision as part of its study.

27. SCRUTINY

The 75th Edition of the Decision Digest was received and noted.

Chairman