

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) held in the Wren Room, Countryside Centre, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park, Brampton Road, Huntingdon, PE29 6DB on Tuesday, 1 September 2009.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.

Councillors Mrs K E Cooper, J E Garner, Mrs P A Jordan, A Monk, J M Sadler and R J West.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors P L E Bucknell, J W Davies and P G Mitchell.

29. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 7th July 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

30. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor Mrs P A Jordan declared personal interests in Minute Nos. 34 and 35 by virtue of her employment in the NHS. She also declared a prejudicial interest in Minute No. 35 and left the meeting during consideration of this item.

Councillors S J Criswell and R J West declared personal interests in Minute No. 36 by virtue of being Members of Cambridgeshire County Council.

31. 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 of the Council for the period 1st September to 31st December 2009. Members were advised that the item entitled St Ivo Leisure Centre – Proposals for Development had been deferred and would appear at the Panel's meeting in December 2009. In noting the addition to the Plan of an item entitled Handyperson Scheme, the Scrutiny and Review Manager reported that this would no longer be presented to the Cabinet as a separate item and would, instead, be dealt with through the MTP process. Councillor R J West undertook to investigate the background to the Scheme and, if necessary, forward details on to Panel Members.

It was reported that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) would be considering the Great Fen Masterplan at their meeting on 8th September 2009, and that an invitation had been extended to all Overview and Scrutiny Panel Members to attend and participate in the discussion on this item.

32. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Panel considered a report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) containing details of the Council's performance against its priority objectives in the quarter to 30th June 2009. Having endorsed the comments of the Corporate Plan Working Group, particularly with regard to objectives where targets had not been achieved, Members noted that work on the budgets associated to each of the priority objectives was currently being undertaken by the Working Group.

In light of the forthcoming introduction of the scrutiny of partnerships, and having discussed the Council's approach to partnership working, the Panel endorsed the view that the Council should take every opportunity to engage with partners. Furthermore, Members concurred with a suggestion that the Overview and Scrutiny Panels should encourage other organisations to participate in greater levels of partnership working.

33. CARE QUALITY COMMISSION

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel gave consideration to the content of a draft letter to the Care Quality Commission requesting responses to a number of issues previously raised by the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) on the Commission's Enforcement Policy (Minute No. 09/69 refers). The letter referred to the regulation of care services, the planned imposition of financial penalties on failing services and the Commission's relationship with the Local Involvement Network. Members' attention was also drawn to a publication entitled "About the Care Quality Commission" and, following discussion on its contents, clarification also was requested of the Commission's procedures for assessing health services and facilities.

RESOLVED

that, subject to the inclusion of a request for clarification of the Commission's procedures for assessing health services and facilities, the letter contained in Appendix B to the report now submitted be endorsed for submission to the Care Quality Commission.

34. NHS CONSTITUTION

Consideration was given to a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the terms of the NHS Constitution. Guidance appended to the report outlined the principles and values that guided how NHS staff should act and make decisions in the future. It also highlighted the rights and responsibilities of staff, patients and the public.

In discussing the content of the NHS Constitution, the Panel commented on the principles and pledges contained in it and, particularly, the means by which they would be achieved and how they would be monitored. In addition, comment was made on the

Constitution's lack of flexibility and an apparent absence of receptiveness to change. In this respect, it was suggested by a Member that patients should be able to pay for their own treatment without compromising their right to receive treatment through the NHS. In noting that the NHS Constitution had yet to gain approval from Parliament, the Panel

RESOLVED

the Secretary of State for Health together with local Members of Parliament be informed of the Panel's concerns about the NHS Constitution.

35. PARKING AT HINCHINGBROOKE HOSPITAL

(See Minute No. 30 for Members' interests).

In pursuit of its study into car parking at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, the Panel received a presentation by the Scrutiny and Review Manager on a number of issues, which had previously been identified for investigation in the course of the study, including current parking provision on the Hinchingsbrooke site, the scope available to increase the level of provision, other potential charging options, parking enforcement, the availability of public transport and the impact of parking on the surrounding area. Comparative information also was provided on the car parking scheme in operation at Addenbrookes Hospital.

Further information was presented on the Hospital's Green Transport Plan and, following discussion on it, Members requested details of progress with the Plan's implementation. It was also agreed to include the terms of the car parking management contract for the site as a further area for investigation. Members then decided that public views on parking in and around the Hospital should be sought at a later date and that a representative of the Hospital would be invited to attend a future Panel meeting to discuss the study.

The Panel was acquainted with details of a consultation currently being undertaken by the British Parking Association on a draft Hospital Parking Charter. In noting that the Charter aimed to counter criticism of unfair and disproportionate parking enforcement and charging in hospital car parks, Members agreed to respond to the consultation by expressing their agreement with all eight consultation statements.

36. DISABILITY ACCESS STUDY - FOLLOW UP

Pursuant to Minute No. 09/24, the Panel gave consideration to a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which provided an update on the status of each of the Disability Access study's recommendations that Members had previously identified as requiring further work.

The Panel was informed that a joint agreement with Cambridgeshire County Council and Disability Information Services Huntingdonshire had been introduced and that a bi-annual monitoring report on the agreement would be available for consideration by Members in

November 2009. In noting that Sense, a charitable organisation for deaf people, had organised a national campaign to obtain free bus travel for carers, Members concurred with a suggestion that the Panel should lend its support to the campaign.

37. WORKPLAN STUDIES

The Panel considered and noted a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) reviewing the Panel's programme of studies and informing Members of studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

38. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of actions taken in response to Members' recent discussions and decisions.

The Chairman reported that he had been appointed as the District Council's representative on the Stakeholder Panel which had been established by NHS East of England to brief, involve and consult with interested groups and parties on the future governance of Hinchingbrooke Hospital.

39. SCRUTINY

The 96th Edition of the Decision Digest was received and noted.

Chairman