

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) held in the Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 7 September 2010.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.

Councillors P L E Bucknell, S Cawley,  
Mrs K E Cooper, J J Dutton, Mrs P A Jordan,  
P G Mitchell and R J West.

Mrs M Nicholas and R Coxhead.

APOLOGY: An Apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor A Monk.

### **26. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **27. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor J J Dutton declared a personal interest in Minute No. 31 by virtue of his membership of Cambridgeshire County Council and of the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents.

### **28. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN**

The Panel considered and noted 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 1<sup>st</sup> September to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010.

### **29. UPDATE REPORT WITH REGARD TO ISSUES RAISED IN RELATION TO HILL RISE PARK, ST IVES**

Pursuant to Minute No. 09/88, the Panel gave consideration to a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on the action taken to address nuisance caused by anti-social drivers late at night in Hill Rise Park, St Ives.

By way of background, Members were reminded that the matter had originally been raised through a petition signed by local residents, which had been presented to the Panel at its February 2010 meeting. Members noted that a series of actions taken following reference of this matter to the local Neighbourhood Forum had resulted in a very low number of nuisances occurring in the intervening period. Having expressed satisfaction with the outcome that had been achieved, the Panel

RESOLVED

- (a) that the actions taken and the outcome be reported to the next meeting of the St Ives Neighbourhood Forum; and
- (b) that Officers be requested to continue to monitor activity at Hill Rise Park, St Ives over the next six months.

**30. ENHANCED CLEANSING SERVICES - PROPOSALS FOR MARKET TOWNS**

*(Councillor C R Hyams, Executive Councillor for Operational and Countryside Services was in attendance for this item).*

With the aid of a report by the Operations Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel were updated on the latest position with regard to proposals for enhanced Sunday cleansing services in St Ives, Huntingdon, St Neots, Ramsey and Godmanchester. Members were advised that a cleansing service was now provided on Sundays in the four market towns covering the main shopping centres and that very few complaints had been received about their cleanliness. In that context, the Panel concluded that there was no need to expand further the current Sunday cleansing regime.

In light of the Council's current financial position and anticipated budget announcements, the Panel were advised by the Director of Environmental and Community Services that the Council would, in the future, consider Sunday cleaning as part of a review of the whole cleansing service. As a result, Members commented that they would not wish to see any reductions in cleaning services in the future as this would be detrimental to the vibrancy of the town centres. The Panel received assurances that, in the event that a review took place, appropriate discussions would be held with the Town Councils.

RESOLVED

- (a) that postponement of work on the recommendations endorsed by the Cabinet on 4<sup>th</sup> September 2008 until a decision is taken on any likely reduction on cleansing services be noted; and
- (b) that any future review of the cleansing service be recommended to take into account opportunities to provide the cleansing service with contributions negotiated from the Town Councils.

**31. PROVISION OF PLAY FACILITIES IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE**

*(Councillor C R Hyams, Executive Councillor for Operational and Countryside Services was in attendance for this item).*

*(See Minute No. 37).*

*(Councillor S Cawley took his seat at 7.20pm during discussions on*

*this item).*

Pursuant to Minute No. 10/11, the Panel considered a report by the Service Development Manager (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) on recommendations endorsed by the Cabinet in respect of their study into the co-ordination of a group insurance scheme on behalf of Parish Councils and combined safety inspections. Having been apprised of the outcome of investigations into group insurance schemes, the Panel were advised that for legal reasons it would not be possible for the District Council to organise group insurance for third tier authorities. Furthermore, it was reported that following an analysis of the costs involved and the potential savings that might be achieved, it would not be possible to offer any significant reductions in cost to Town or Parish Councils for safety inspections.

The Panel discussed whether to revisit their previous recommendations relating to the maintenance of outdoor youth facilities. Members were mindful of the current financial constraints placed on the Council and suggested that this matter should be reconsidered during the budget setting process. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

- (a) that the content of the report now submitted be noted; and
- (b) that the Cabinet be recommended to reconsider the Panel's recommendations relating to a proposed formula for funding the maintenance of play equipment as part of the budget setting process.

## **32. SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME**

*(Councillor K J Churchill, Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy was in attendance for this item).*

With the aid of a report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) Members were acquainted with progress towards the achievement of the Corporate Equality Policy Action Plan together with a proposal to introduce a new Single Equality Scheme.

In introducing the report, the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy reported on achievements made against the Action Plan. Of the 18 actions contained in the Action Plan, 12 had been completed and 6 were currently ongoing. The Policy identified two outcomes and associated measures relating to the diverse needs of local people, the way the Council's services met those needs and whether they were provided in a fair and accessible way. Members discussed trends in residents' perceptions in these respects. In so doing, they were mindful that the data captured reflected individuals' perceptions of all local public services and not just those provided by the District Council. In response to a question on how this information would be captured in the future following the Government's decision not to continue with the Place Survey, Members were informed that this could be done through District-Wide.

Members were informed that the Single Equality Scheme had been prompted by the Equality Act 2010. The Act placed a duty on public bodies to tackle discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and encourage good community relations. The new duty covered race, disability, gender, age, sexual orientation, gender reassignment and religion or belief. This meant that the new Scheme brought together all equalities matters in a single framework. In addition, it was reported that, following external assessment, the Council had attained Level 3 of the Equality Framework for Local Government which was introduced in April 2009 and replaced the Equality Standard.

Having drawn attention to the fact that 90% of Equality Impact Assessments had been completed in 2009/10, Members were advised that the outstanding Assessments would be completed over the course of the current year. Following a question on the impact potential service reductions would have on equalities issues, Members were reminded of the statutory duty to comply with legislation in this area. In discussing employees' attitudes towards equalities matters, comments were made on the need for equalities matters to be embedded across the Council and that individuals were responsible for ensuring that they complied with their equalities responsibilities. The Action Plan appended to the Policy would assist with achieving these objectives.

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to

- (a) endorse the new Single Equality Scheme and Action Plan; and
- (b) note progress and the findings from the Equality Impact Assessments conducted during 2009/10.

### **33. STUDY: CONSULTATION PROCESS**

*(Councillor K J Churchill, Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy was in attendance for this item).*

Pursuant to Minute No. 10/23, the Panel received a presentation by the Executive Councillor for Resources and Policy and the Policy and Strategic Services Manager on the role of the Policy and Research Team in offering advice and guidance to internal service departments on consultation and research methodologies.

By way of background, the Panel were reminded that the Council had adopted a Consultation and Engagement Strategy and accompanying Guidance. Members then received details of the consultation calendar and database which were available on the Council's intranet and enabled Officers to view past and present consultations. Officers were encouraged wherever possible to use these resources during any consultations that they undertook. The Panel requested that the link to the consultation area on Council's intranet be circulated to them for information.

Discussion ensued on a number of matters including the cost and role of Market Research UK in assisting the Council with its various consultations, the level of responses to postal surveys together with the cost of different survey methods and how these results were interpreted, the value of undertaking consultation exercises and public perceptions of the consultation process. At the conclusion of the discussions, Members requested further information on the matters on which the Council undertook consultations together with the reasons for doing so, the methods of communication for consultations and the Council's procedures following a consultation exercise.

#### **34. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

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 30<sup>th</sup> June 2010. Members endorsed for submission to the Cabinet the comments of the Corporate Plan Working Group, particularly with regard to the objectives where targets had not been achieved.

Members received clarification on a number of matters raised by the Corporate Plan Working Group relating to the number of users visiting Leisure Centres, exercise classes for older people and alternative types of affordable housing. Having considered the recommendations of the Corporate Plan Working Group which had been designed to enhance the Council's approach to its strategic budget planning and performance management, it was

#### **RESOLVED**

that the Cabinet be invited

- (a) to consider the Panel's comments as part of its deliberations on the report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships;
- (b) to seek contributions from opposition groups, all Members, employees and the public in the search for the necessary financial savings;
- (c) to take into account fully the views expressed as a result of recommendation (b) above and review the Council's priorities, aims and objectives in the Corporate Plan with the Overview and Scrutiny Panels being involved in the review process;
- (d) to develop a clear vision of what services should be retained, delivered differently or withdrawn as a result of recommendation (c) above and use this as a guide in the application of the Council's Redundancy Policy; and
- (e) to review all internal and external performance indicators to ensure that they remain appropriate to services delivered by or in

partnership with the Council and to involve the Corporate Plan Working Group in the review process.

**35. CAMBRIDGESHIRE ADULTS WELLBEING AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Councillor R J West updated the Panel on matters currently being considered by the Cambridgeshire Adults Well-Being and Health Scrutiny Committee, which included Addenbrooke's Hospital nursing staff, the future closure of day services for older people, proposed changes to dermatology services and the Scrutiny Annual Report for 2009/10.

**36. WORK PLAN STUDIES**

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) reviewing their programme of studies and informing Members of the studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels. Members were advised that Councillor R J West had been co-opted on to the Environmental Well-Being Panel's study on Planning Conservation. In noting the addition to the programme of the Panel's study on Gypsy and Traveller Welfare, the Panel were advised that Officers were currently undertaking background work in this respect.

**37. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (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 recent discussions and decisions. The Chairman reported that the Hinchingsbrooke Hospital Stakeholder Panel Sub-Group would be interviewing the remaining two bidders who wished to take on the Hospital's management contract on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2010. The Sub-Group would assess the bidders against pre-determined criteria and the results would be used by the Strategic Health Authority to assist them with their deliberations on which organisation would be awarded the contract.

Pursuant to Minute No. 10/31 ante, the Panel resumed their discussions on the Provision of Play Facilities study. It was decided that prior to a report being submitted to the Cabinet, the Panel should consider details of what the Council spent on the maintenance of outdoor youth facilities together with details of where the funds were allocated.

With regard to the monitoring of Section 106 Agreements, Councillor P G Mitchell reported that he had met with the Chairman of the Section 106 Advisory Group to discuss the monitoring process. Arising from their discussion, it was suggested that a project plan should be developed for each scheme to include the scheme's objectives, total cost, developer contributor(s), other funding sources and its trigger points. Having endorsed the suggestion, the Panel were advised that the proposal would be submitted to the next

meeting of the Section 106 Agreement Advisory Group for their consideration.

**38. SCRUTINY**

The 106<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Digest of Decisions was received and noted.

Chairman