

## 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 December 2010.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.

Councillors P L E Bucknell, S Cawley,  
B S Chapman, Mrs K E Cooper, Coxhead,  
Mrs P A Jordan, P G Mitchell, Nicholas,  
P D Reeve and R J West.

Co-opted Members – Mr R Coxhead and Mrs M Nicholas.

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

### **62. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2010 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **63. MEMBERS' INTERESTS**

Councillor Mrs P A Jordan declared a personal interest in Minute No. 65 by virtue of her employment in the NHS.

Councillor P G Mitchell declared a personal interest in Minute No. 67 by virtue of his involvement in the installation of CCTV cameras in Stilton.

### **64. 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> December 2010 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.

### **65. CAR PARKING AT HINCHINGBROOKE HOSPITAL**

The Chairman welcomed Mr P Risi, Facilities Business Manager at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital who delivered a presentation reviewing the revised car parking pricing structure at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital since it came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2009. By way of background, Mr P Risi informed the Panel that the Hospital site had 750 public parking spaces, 39 of which were dedicated disabled spaces. The prices charged for parking had previously been revised because of concerns that the previous fee structure was not appropriate for the needs of patients and visitors. The three pricing bands offered at the time were perceived to have limited flexibility. A lack of concessionary rates for long-term patients and visitors and the provision of only a small amount of short-term and disabled parking spaces had added to the

need for the Hospital's parking arrangements to be revised.

The Panel were advised that since the introduction of the new changes in July, a number of other improvements had been undertaken at the site, which included the installation of new payment machines with credit card readers, the provision of improved signage, a review of staff and public spaces had been undertaken, improved short-term parking facilities had been created and an enhanced concessionary rates scheme introduced. Members were advised that the Hospital was now proposing to introduce new parking charges with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2011 as follows:-

- Up to 2 hours - £2.50
- Up to 4 hours - £4.00
- Up to 24 hours - £6.00

In describing the rationale behind the proposed charges, Mr Risi informed Members that they had been modelled around average times for visits to clinics and visiting hours and incorporated new concessionary rates. The Panel questioned the need for the proposed 4 hour rate and were informed that this would apply to those visiting the Hospital who did not qualify for concessionary rates, including those travelling from outside the local area. Without this charge, such visitors would be liable to pay the 24 hour rate.

Members discussed a number of aspects of the proposals, including the principle of charging for parking at Hospitals, the pricing structure at Addenbrookes Hospital, the level of income generated from the car park compared with the revenue costs associated with maintaining and administering the facility and the contribution it made towards running the Hospital's services, the possibility of charging blue badge permit holders and the potential for the franchisee that took over the management of the Hospital to use parking fees to raise additional income for the Hospital. Other matters discussed included staff and commuter parking on site.

Having noted that a comprehensive Communications Plan had been developed through which the proposals would be discussed, which included consultation with patients liaison groups, staff briefings and use of the internet and intranet, the Panel expressed their support for the new rates proposed by the Hospital.

## **66. STUDY: CONSULTATION PROCESS**

In pursuit of its study on the Council's consultation processes, 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) summarising those matters that had been raised to date.

Members discussed the timing of consultations, interpretation of data at Ward level together with the potential implications of this for statistical reliability, the role of Councillors in communicating with their constituents on consultations, the information provided to the public before and following consultation exercises and utilisation of the internal consultation calendar and database resource.

Discussion ensued on the validity of the methods employed by the

Council to undertake the recent budget consultation exercise and in so doing, the Policy and Strategic Services Manager reported that questionnaire surveys had been used to augment qualitative research and that the decisions subsequently reached by the Council reflected the responses provided by the public during the consultation.

Having decided to review the Council's guidance on consultation methodology and to evaluate examples of previous consultations, it was agreed that a Working Group should be appointed to undertake this work. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that Councillors B S Chapman, Mrs P A Jordan, P G Mitchell, P D Reeve and R J West and Mr R Coxhead be appointed on to a Working Group to investigate the Council's consultation processes and to make recommendations to the Panel on possible improvements to the process.

#### **67. 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> September 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.

The Panel questioned the process through which targets had been set relating to the number of admissions to the Leisure Centres and in so doing, it was noted that the target figure took into account the receipt of external funding, which subsequently had not been awarded to the Council. The Panel endorsed a suggestion by the Corporate Plan Working Group that, in order for underlying trends to be monitored, changes in admissions/participants attributable to such developments should in future be reported separately.

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be invited to consider the Panel's comments as part of its deliberations on the report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships.

#### **68. HUNTINGDONSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP VIEWS ON CCTV**

With the aid of a report by the Chairman of the Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel were acquainted with the views of the Partnership on the value of CCTV in the District. The report had been requested to enable Members to ascertain the likely effect of the Council's budget plans in respect of CCTV.

Members noted that the Partnership had no immediate concerns about the anticipated service reductions in 2011/12 but that they would prefer to maintain a basic service thereafter. The Partnership

would be undertaking a full impact assessment of the proposals next year and would investigate alternative methods of maintaining CCTV surveillance in Huntingdonshire.

Members commented on the likely increase in crime levels if the Council ceased to provide a CCTV service. They suggested that the views of the Police on the proposals including those of front line Police Officers should be sought as part of the Partnership's impact assessment.

The Executive Councillor for Operational and Countryside Services advised the Panel that efforts were being made to preserve the service through alternative mechanisms. Having noted that the Panel's comments would be submitted to the Partnership's next meeting in December, Members requested a further report from the Partnership on this matter at their meeting in January 2011.

**69. CONSULTATION: EAST OF ENGLAND AMBULANCE SERVICE NHS TRUST**

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 a consultation by the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust on its plans to become an NHS Foundation Trust. The purpose of the consultation was to seek views on the proposals, which were designed to give local people a greater say on the Ambulance Service and how it developed in the future.

The Panel discussed a number of matters raised within the consultation document. In particular, Members suggested that the Ambulance Service should clarify its relationship with MAGPAS and how the service currently provided by MAGPAS would be maintained in the future.

Members questioned whether Ambulance Service employees were able to make accurate assessments of patients' needs over the telephone, why other Counties would have proportionally more governor representatives than Cambridgeshire and how patients would be referred to other organisations. They also were of the view that employees' membership of the Trust should be clarified. Having noted that responses to the consultation would be required by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2010, it was

RESOLVED

that the Panel's responses to the consultation on plans for the Ambulance Service to become an NHS Foundation Trust be submitted to the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

**70. REPORT OF THE CABINET**

With the aid of a report by the Cabinet (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel were acquainted with Executive Members' deliberations and decisions in respect of the Panel's reports on the Cambridgeshire Local Investment Plan and on the Homelessness Strategy.

**71. CAMBRIDGESHIRE ADULTS WELL-BEING AND HEALTH SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Panel received and noted the Minutes of the meeting of the Adults, Well-Being and Health Scrutiny Committee held on 21<sup>st</sup> October 2010 (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). Councillor R J West reported that a further meeting of the Committee had been held on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2010 at which consideration had been given to Older People's Mental Health Services in Huntingdonshire and Fenland, a Member led review of access to services and support for people with dementia and their carers following diagnosis, rehabilitation services in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire, the adult support services integrated plan and day care services in Cambridgeshire.

**72. 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) containing details of studies currently being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels. Members were reminded of the opportunity they had to participate in any of the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels' studies.

Councillor P D Reeve raised a query concerning maintenance of trees and in response, the Scrutiny and Review Manager reported that the County Council were responsible for trees overhanging the Highway and that advice on this subject could be obtained from the District Council's Arboricultural Officer.

**73. 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 Scrutiny and Review Manager reported that a response to the Panel's comments on NHS Cambridgeshire's consultation in respect of pharmaceutical services in Cambridgeshire had been received. Details of the response would be circulated to Members outside of the meeting.

The Chairman reported that Circle had been appointed to take over management of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> June 2011. This was subject to approval from the Department of Health and other regulatory bodies. It was agreed that an invitation would be extended to Circle to attend a Panel meeting in June/July 2011 to discuss their plans for the Hospital.

Attention was drawn to matters which had been raised since the last meeting of the Panel in respect of the voluntary sector and on the Council's Customer Service Centres. Work in these respects would be undertaken by the Panel at future meetings and were intended to inform the Council's future decisions on the budget.

**74. SCRUTINY**

The 109<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Digest of Decisions was received and noted.

Chairman