

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, 1 February 2011.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.

Councillors S Cawley, B S Chapman, Mrs K E Cooper, J J Dutton, P D Reeve and R J West.

Co-opted Member – R Coxhead.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors P L E Bucknell, Mrs P A Jordan, P G Mitchell and Mrs M Nicholas.

88. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 4th January 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

89. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor J J Dutton declared a personal interest in Minute No. 91 by virtue of his membership of Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations.

Councillor B S Chapman declared a personal interest in Minute No. 91 by virtue of his association with the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillor S J Criswell declared a personal interest in Minute No. 95 by virtue of being a Cabinet Member for Cambridgeshire County Council.

90. 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 1st February to 31st May 2011.

91. VOLUNTARY SECTOR

(At this point during the meeting (7.10pm) Councillor S Cawley took his seat at the meeting.)

(Mrs J Farrow, Chief Executive of Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations was in attendance for this item)

With the aid of a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) and a presentation by the Chief Executive of the Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations, the Panel were acquainted with the work

of the Forum and the role of the voluntary sector in Huntingdonshire. As part of the presentation, attention was drawn to the impact on third sector organisations of the Council's proposals in the future to reduce the funding it currently awarded to community organisations.

Having acknowledged the extent of the work undertaken by volunteers and its value to local communities, Members discussed alternative ways in which support could be provided to the voluntary sector and in so doing, they referred to the possibility that the Forum might seek support for its work from Town and Parish Councils. It was however accepted by Members that, to date, these authorities had been reluctant to engage with functions that did not operate within their areas. They were of the view that work should be undertaken to resolve this matter. It was suggested that an approach might be adopted that sought to coordinate functions in smaller villages around larger ones. The concepts of Localism and the Big Society would be employed during this work.

Should the Council's proposals be approved, the changes would not take effect until 2013/14. With this point in mind, the Panel decided to investigate the full impact of the proposals and alternative ways of supporting the voluntary sector. The possibility of charging for services and the structure of voluntary organisations would form part of the study. The scope of the study would be discussed at the March meeting.

92. OPEN SPACE STRATEGY FOR HUNTINGDONSHIRE 2011-16

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

With the aid of a report by the Head of Operations (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel gave consideration to the content of a draft Open Space Strategy for Huntingdonshire. Members were advised that the Strategy aimed to provide an overarching vision of what the District's parks, open spaces and other public spaces would look like over the next 10-15 years and would primarily be used to aid the planning process, in particular, as a tool to lever Section 106 funding into the District.

The Chairman commented that the adoption of the Strategy could encourage the perception that the Council would take responsibility for or assist with the maintenance or development of all the sites identified within the document. Additionally, the Panel has recommended that the Strategy should incorporate a detailed analysis of the implications of Localism for the achievement of its aims. In response, Members were informed that work on the Strategy commenced in 2009, at a time when the Council was operating under different political and budgetary conditions. The Panel received assurances that the ongoing process to update the Strategy would include an appreciation of recent developments, including Localism.

The Panel discussed the terminology used to classify the different types of open spaces that exist together with the classes of open space that had been included within the Strategy. Members endorsed the decision to adopt an approach that was consistent with Planning

Policy Guidance No 17. Having suggested that the Strategy should differentiate between sites that the public would visit free of charge and those that required payment for their use, the Panel noted that the Strategy would be regularly be updated and revised editions published. Having been encouraged to provide Officers with information on the open spaces identified within the Strategy, the Panel

RESOLVED

that, subject to the comments outlined above, the Cabinet be recommended to endorse the content of the Open Space Strategy for Huntingdonshire.

93. MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS (PLANNING OBLIGATIONS)

The Panel gave consideration to a report by the Head of People, Performance and Partnerships (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which provided an update on the receipt and expenditure by the Council of money negotiated under Section 106 Agreements. In the course of their deliberations, Members were informed that Councillors S J Criswell and P G Mitchell had attended a recent meeting of the Section 106 Agreement Advisory Group to discuss the Panel's previous recommendations on the way monitoring was carried out. It was agreed at the Advisory Group meeting that a database would be set up to assist with the monitoring process. It would take approximately six months to introduce the system, which would be available through the Council's Intranet. In the interim, Members were encouraged to raise any queries relating to specific schemes directly with the Service Development Manager. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the contents of the report be noted.

94. ONE LEISURE WORKING GROUP

Pursuant to Minute No. 10/81, the Panel were advised that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being) had established a joint Working Group to review the information presented to both Panels on One Leisure in greater depth. The Panel therefore

RESOLVED

that Councillors B S Chapman and J J Dutton and Mr R Coxhead be appointed to the One Leisure Working Group.

95. 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 30th November 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 earlier that day when consideration had been given to

the Adult Support Services Action Plan and Integrated Plan for 2011, NHS Cambridgeshire's Plans for 2011/12, consultations on Improving Older People's Mental Health Services in Huntingdonshire and Fenland, Cambridgeshire Community Services' proposals to become a Foundation Trust and membership of the Neonatal Intensive Care Joint Scrutiny Committee.

(At this point during the meeting (8.30pm) Councillor Mrs K E Cooper left the meeting.)

96. 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.

97. 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 he would be attending a forthcoming meeting organised by the County Council for crime and disorder Scrutiny Chairmen to discuss opportunities for joint scrutiny working.

The Scrutiny and Review Manager reported that the Consultation Processes Working had met and agreed that its next task would be to consider case studies of previous consultations and policies and practices adopted by other local authorities.

98. SCRUTINY

The 111th Edition of the Digest of Decisions was received and noted.

Chairman