

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, 3 January 2012.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.
Councillors K M Baker, I C Bates, J J Dutton, Mrs P A Jordan, Mrs D C Reynolds and R J West.

Mr R Coxhead and Mrs M Nicholas.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors S Akthar, Mrs J A Dew and S M Van De Kerkhove.

76. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 6th December 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

77. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor J J Dutton declared a personal interest in Minute No. 80 by virtue of being a Director of the Huntingdonshire Citizens Advice Bureau and his membership of the Hunts Forum of Voluntary Organisations.

Councillor K M Baker declared a personal interest in Minute No. 80 by virtue of being a Trustee of Shopmobility, Huntingdon.

Councillor Mrs P A Jordan declared a personal interest in Minute No. 79 by virtue of being an employee of the National Health Service.

78. 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 Executive Leader of the Council for the period 1st January to 30th April 2012.

79. NHS CONSULTATION - PROPOSED REDESIGN OF MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES ACROSS CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH

(Mr J Ellis, Head of Mental Health, Learning Disability and Substance Misuse Commissioning for NHS Cambridgeshire, Ms A Newton, Director of Operations for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust and Dr J Richmond, Lead Member of Hunts Health Commissioning Consortium, were in attendance for consideration of this item).

Pursuant to Minute No. 11/69, the Panel received a presentation by Mr J Ellis, Head of Substance Misuse Commissioning for NHS Cambridgeshire on NHS Cambridgeshire's consultation on the Proposed Redesign of Mental Health Services across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. He outlined how and why the proposals had been developed, what the main proposals were, the public engagement methods that had been employed, emerging themes arising from feedback received to date together with the issues raised at public meetings and by the Joint Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Mental Health Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Members of the public were then invited to address the Panel on their views on the content of the consultation document. Six members of the public addressed the Panel, comprising service users, their carers and family members. In addition, six letters of correspondence had been received, summaries of which were tabled at the meeting and are appended in the Minute Book. The views expressed were largely concerned with the proposed closure of Acer Ward at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital and the impact that the closure would have on both patients and their visitors. The representations which had been received referred to the valuable service that Acer Ward provided to Huntingdonshire residents and the impact that the proposals would have on patients and visitors who would be required to travel to and from Peterborough and Cambridge.

With the aid of a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Panel were reminded of their initial comments on the proposals. Prior to opening up the Panel's discussions the Chairman sought clarification from representatives in attendance at the meeting on the clinical reasons for the proposed closure of Acer Ward together with details of what support services were currently not available at the Hinchingsbrooke site. Dr J Richmond stated that "Care in the Community" methods would be employed to assist those patients undergoing rehabilitation and that only a reduction in the number of rehabilitation beds was being proposed. The same number of acute beds would remain available in Cambridgeshire, which were well equipped with the latest technology to support acute admissions.

The Panel expressed concerns over the travel implications of the proposals in terms of their effects on the health of patients and the practical difficulties that would be created and costs that would be incurred. In addition, the Panel raised a number of questions relating to the costs of upgrading Acer Ward, whether better outcomes would be produced at the Peterborough site, had a Community Impact Assessment been undertaken and if the findings of the Public Health Joint Strategic Health Needs Assessment had been taken into account. Questions were also raised about the level of engagement with Circle Healthcare on the proposals, the effectiveness of the new 24/7 Advice and Brief Intervention Centre, the availability of community staff together with their ability to attend crisis situations.

Having received responses to the questions which had been raised, the Panel unanimously agreed that the case for the closure of Acer Ward had not been satisfactorily justified. Sufficient evidence had not been provided that mental health facilities in Peterborough would

produce better outcomes than those achieved at Acer Ward. In addition, Members were not satisfied that the proposals had taken into account anticipated population growth projections in both Cambridgeshire and Peterborough or that adequate consideration had been given to the travel implications of the proposals. Furthermore, Members concluded that the formal closure of Acer Ward could be detrimental to the health and well-being of patients thereby impacting on their rehabilitation. However, the Panel supported the proposals to strengthen and further enhance the primary community services available to mental health patients, their carers and their families.

The value of the service to Huntingdonshire was recognised by Members. They expressed strong views that mental health services should be retained in Acer Ward at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital and suggested that NHS Cambridgeshire should undertake a thorough exploration of all options through which mental health services could be retained at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. This included investigating the joint appointment of clinical physicians across Hospitals. Having expressed their concerns at the lack of engagement with Circle Healthcare on the proposals, and owing to their wish to retain the facility at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, the Panel agreed to meet with representatives of Circle to discuss the options to preserve the facility within the Hospital.

In noting that responses to the consultation would be required by 16th January 2012 and following a suggestion made by a Member to obtain the Cabinet's support on the Panel's response, it was

RESOLVED

- a) that a response to the consultation on the Proposed Redesign of Mental Health Services across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough be submitted to NHS Cambridgeshire to include the Panel's comments as set out above;
- b) that the Panel's response be circulated to the Cabinet for their endorsement prior to its submission to NHS Cambridgeshire; and
- c) that a meeting with Circle Healthcare be established to discuss the options to preserve the mental health facility within Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.

80. VOLUNTARY SECTOR REVIEW (INDICATIVE FUNDING)

(Councillor T D Sanderson, Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities was in attendance for consideration of this item).

Pursuant to Minute No. 11/70, consideration was given to a report by the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) seeking an indicative budget from the Cabinet for voluntary sector support for the 2013/14 financial year. The report also identified options for the distribution of future funding.

The Head of Environmental and Community Health Services outlined the background to the funding review conducted by Officers and the work of the Voluntary Sector Working Group. The level of indicative funding requested represented a 28% reduction on that already received by the voluntary sector. The figure of £273,000 included £27,000 from savings generated by the Executive Leader in May 2011 through a reduction in the number of Cabinet Members.

The Panel was reminded of the extensive work undertaken by the Voluntary Sector Working Group on the social value of the functions performed by voluntary sector organisations with Service Level Agreements with the Council. Members placed on record their gratitude for the Working Group's efforts and their contributions to this work.

In response to questions by Councillor J J Dutton, the Head of Environmental and Community Health Services delivered assurances to the Panel that sound governance arrangements would be in place when determining applications for grants and the community chest. It was intended that the determination of applications would continue to be the responsibility of the Executive Councillors for Healthy and Active Communities and for Resources. All Members would have sight of the applications prior to the approval process. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to

- a) suggest an indicative voluntary sector budget of £273,000 for the 2013/14 financial year;
- b) agree to the adoption of a mixed method of allocating funds with the method to involve a level of bureaucracy proportionate to the level of funding required; and
- c) agree to the establishment of a modest "Community Chest" to create an accessible source of funds to help local community projects.

81. CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL INVESTMENT PLAN

(Councillor N J Guyatt, Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing, was in attendance for consideration of this item).

With the aid of a report by the Head of Housing Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel was informed of the implications of the Cambridgeshire Local Investment Plan (CLIP) for the delivery of local housing.

Councillor N J Guyatt, Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing, reported that the CLIP was produced in November 2010. The Coalition Government had since reduced the Homes and Communities Agency's (HCA) funding, leaving a sum of only £2.2bn available nationally for the delivery of infrastructure projects. The reduction in funding had prompted the HCA to review the way it

allocated funding. It would now work with Registered Providers (formerly known as Housing Associations) to deliver a portfolio of schemes in return for a lump sum of HCA investment. In addition, a new "Affordable Rent" product would be introduced whereby rents were charged at up to 80% of market level rents. Those Registered Providers who had a HCA funded programme were expected to convert a percentage of their existing stock from social rent to affordable rents to generate more income.

In noting the implications of these changes for the District, the Panel discussed whether the CLIP would be effective in releasing planned developments and whether it would affect the delivery of affordable housing. Furthermore, the Head of Housing Services clarified the process by which the Council's priorities were captured and incorporated into the priority setting process for planned developments within the District. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the report be received and noted.

82. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be excluded from the meeting because the business to be transacted contains exempt information relating to the financial affairs of particular persons (including the authority holding that information).

83. ONE LEISURE WORKING GROUP

(Councillor T D Sanderson, Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities, was in attendance for consideration this item).

With the assistance of a report by the One Leisure Working Group (a copy of which is appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) the Panel was acquainted with the outcome of the deliberations of the Working Group which had been established to review the financial performance of One Leisure and to make recommendations on the service's future strategic direction. Attention was drawn to an update that was circulated at the meeting (a copy of which is also appended in the Annex to the Minute Book) which incorporated the latest financial position reflected in the Council's Medium Term Plan.

As Members of the Working Group, Mr R Coxhead and Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds reported on the extent of the work undertaken by the Working Group and thanked Officers for their contributions to their investigations.

Having reminded the Panel of the Council's current budgetary position, Councillor I C Bates commented that the Council was not statutorily required to provide leisure services and that the service was only utilised by a small proportion of the District's residents. He placed on record his disappointment that admissions to the Ramsey and Sawtry Centres had declined between April 2009 and July 2011 and that the decision had been taken not to increase One Leisure

prices in January 2012. In concluding, Councillor I C Bates stated that the One Leisure service should adopt a more business-like approach to its operations, with more challenging targets being set to reduce the cost of the service to the Council. In response, Members of the Working Group reported there were areas within the One Leisure service that were successful at generating income and that it was planned to investigate whether the service should employ a new business model.

Councillor T D Sanderson, Executive Councillor for Healthy and Active Communities, confirmed that efforts were being made to reduce One Leisure's costs. Options that were currently being explored included the possibility of "zero basing" staff, reviewing the Centres' crèche facilities and working with Circle Healthcare as to how it might utilise the Leisure Centres in the future.

RESOLVED

that the One Leisure Working Group's report and recommendations, as amended, be endorsed for submission to the Cabinet.

84. RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED

that the public be readmitted to the meeting.

85. NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUMS WORKING GROUP

Councillor S J Criswell provided an update on the outcome of a meeting of the Neighbourhood Forums Working Group held on 12th December 2011. With the aid of a map tabled at the meeting (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel was apprised of proposed boundaries for an alternative Forum model. The areas were based on the responses received to the consultation that the Panel had undertaken in September 2011 and would be presented to the January/February round of Neighbourhood Forum meetings. The constitution of the new Forums and electoral representation for each area were currently under review. The Working Group would be meeting again on 19th January 2012 to discuss these matters further and to meet with the new Huntingdonshire Area Commander for the Police.

86. CAMBRIDGESHIRE ADULTS WELL-BEING AND HEALTH OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Councillor Mrs D C Reynolds reported upon a recent meeting of the Cambridgeshire Adults, Well-Being and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 9th December 2011. The meeting had been adjourned and a further update on the outcome of the reconvened meeting would be provided to the Panel at its next meeting.

87. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel received and noted the content of a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the

Minute Book) which contained details of studies being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Economic Well-Being and for Environmental Well-Being.

88. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of actions taken in response to recent discussions and decisions. It was agreed that work to scrutinise the budgets of those services falling within the remit of the Panel would be undertaken as part of the existing budget setting process. Councillor R J West agreed to bring the final report of the Cambridgeshire Safer and Stronger Overview and Scrutiny Committee's study into domestic abuse to a future meeting of the Panel.

89. SCRUTINY

The 120th Edition of the Decision Digest was received and noted.

Chairman