

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) held in Civic Suite 1a, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 13 September 2011.

PRESENT: Councillor D Harty – Vice Chairman in the Chair.

Councillors M G Baker, Mrs M Banerjee, I J Curtis, J W Davies, P Godley, G J Harlock, Hopkins, C R Hyams, Phillips and J S Watt.

Co-opted Members Messrs. D Hopkins and M Phillips.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor P M D Godfrey.

24. MINUTES

Subject to the deletion from the first sentence of the fourth paragraph of Minute No. 11/18 of the words 'it would have been useful to have been able to discuss this matter with an Executive Councillor' to be replaced by 'Executive Councillors should attend Overview and Scrutiny Panel meetings that had remits which covered their portfolios' and the inclusion of Co-opted Member Mr D Hopkins in place of Mr M Phillips in the list of attendees, the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 12th July 2011 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

25. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

26. 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 September to 31st December 2011. Members were advised that the item on nuisance vehicles had been removed from the Forward Plan. They were also informed that several items had been delayed but they would be presented to the Panel before being submitted to the Cabinet.

27. RESIDENTIAL TRAVEL PLAN

With the aid of a report by the Head of Planning Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel gave consideration

to the draft Cambridgeshire Residential Travel Plan Guidance. The Guidance contained a package of measures designed to increase sustainable travel within new residential developments by promoting walking, cycling, public transport, car sharing and car clubs. This in turn would help to reduce air pollution and traffic congestion.

Members noted that the Guidance had been developed by the County Council in discussion with the City and District planning authorities. In the past, national and regional guidance and policies had not required local planning authorities to request Residential Travel Plans (RTPs). However, the draft National Planning Policy Framework, on which the Government was currently consulting, made clear that travel plans were a key tool in facilitating the use of sustainable modes of travel. It was explained that planning applications for all developments which generated significant amounts of movement, as determined by local criteria, would have to be accompanied by a travel plan.

Members were advised that the timetable for the development of the Guidance included a six week public consultation period. It would then be presented for adoption by all Cambridgeshire local authorities as supplementary planning guidance. This would make the County Council's current policy position more robust.

In answer to questions from the Panel, the Head of Planning stated that, on the basis of specialist advice, it was proposed that in Huntingdonshire the threshold above which a travel plan would be required should be set at 80 dwellings. It would be expensive for developers to compile and implement a travel plan and this figure allowed them sufficient scope to find for economies of scale. It was argued that the new requirements would be too costly for smaller developments.

Councillor M G Baker commented on the apparent inconsistency demonstrated by the County Council in introducing the requirement for developers to produce RTPs when it was reducing its support for public transport. Having endorsed a suggestion by Councillor G J Harlock that social housing groups should be consulted on the Guidance, it was

RESOLVED

that the Cabinet be recommended to approve the draft Residential Travel Plan as a basis for public consultation.

At 7.20pm Councillor P Godley joined the meeting and Councillor C R Hyams left the meeting.

28. PETITIONS - CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION

(Mr G Millbank, Neighbourhood Co-ordinator for the Ingram Street/Ouse Walk area of Huntingdon was in attendance for consideration of this item).

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 was advised that the Council had received two petitions on the

subject of Closed Circuit Television (CCTV). Neither of the petitions had sufficient signatories to be submitted to full Council and they had, therefore, been referred to the Panel for formal receipt.

The Chairman invited Councillor J Davies to present the first petition which had been organised following the annual St Ives town meeting when a resident had raised concerns over an incident involving a knife the vicinity of the Chubb Stream. Other residents also had expressed concerns over street drinking and associated crime in the area. As a result it was decided to organise a petition to request that a CCTV camera was installed in the area. Councillor Davies expressed the view that the petition should be taken into consideration during the decision making process on the future of CCTV provision in the District. Owing to the financial constraints on the Council, he suggested that a portable camera might be employed. Members were advised that the Council's Community Safety Team might provide advice on the matters raised by the petition.

Following questions, the Panel received an assurance that they would have an opportunity to discuss CCTV further as part of the budget process. Whereupon, it was

RESOLVED

that the petition be received and noted.

The Chairman then invited Mr Millbank to present his petition.

Mr Millbank explained that 41 signatories had supported his petition objecting to the removal of the CCTV camera in Ingram Street car park, Huntingdon. Whilst the residents recognised the financial pressures on local government, they were disappointed that the camera's cover had been removed as they considered that this would have served as a crime deterrent while the wider issue of CCTV provision was under consideration. They also felt that they should have been consulted prior to the camera's removal.

In response to a question from a Member, Mr Millbank stated that it was too early to gauge the result of the camera's removal as it had only recently taken place. The Panel was advised that the decision to remove the camera had been taken by the Head of Operations. Members requested that he arrange for the camera's cover to be reinstated as it would deter criminals.

The Chairman thanked Mr Millbank for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED

that the petition be received and noted and the Head of Operations requested to reinstate the cover on the CCTV post in Ingram Street car park, Huntingdon.

29. WORKPLAN STUDIES

The Panel considered and noted a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic 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.

The Panel received an update from Councillor Davies on the meeting of the Tree Strategy Working Group that had taken place on 27th July 2011. The Panel was advised that the Group had received a presentation on a very successful tree planting scheme in Great Stukeley which had been supported by the Council's Tree Warden Co-ordinator. Members were informed that a draft Tree Strategy, which included a package of guidance and best practice leaflets, was currently being compiled for public consultation. In discussing the Panel's involvement in tree issues, Members commented on the planning process and the impact on trees of improvements to the local infrastructure carried out as part of the St Ives West development. Councillor Watt suggested that the Strategy should include reference to hedgerows.

Members were advised that a report on the maintenance of water courses would be submitted to a future meeting.

Having requested information on the planning implications of the successful bid for an Enterprise Zone at the Alconbury Airfield site, Members were invited to attend a meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic wellbeing) when it received a presentation on the subject.

Having reiterated their interest in undertaking a study on waste management, it was decided to establish a working group for this purpose.

30. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROGRESS

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 was advised of progress on issues that had previously been discussed. With regard to the update on flooding at St Audrey's Lane St Ives, an email response from Anglian Water was tabled, which explained that a new pump had been installed at the Broadleas Pumping Station. An existing pump had also been refurbished. Councillor Davies was optimistic that the work would bring about a resolution to the problems that had been encountered and undertook to report the outcome to local residents whose original petition had led to the issue being investigated by the Panel.

Members noted that the Transport Team Leader had confirmed that cycling schemes in both Yaxley and Perry were on schedule to be completed within the current financial year.

The Panel was advised that Councillor Godfrey had attended a recent meeting with the Wildlife Trust. Several questions regarding the Great Fen Masterplan posed by Councillor Godfrey had not been answered and had, therefore, submitted them in writing to the Head of Planning Services. Members were reminded that Councillor Godfrey had requested Members of the Panel to make every effort to attend a meeting of the Great Fen Community Forum at 7pm on 11 October 2011. The date of the meeting, which would be held at the Countryside Classroom at the Great Fen site, had led to the October

Panel meeting being rescheduled. It would now be held on 12th October 2011 when further consideration would be given to the Great Fen Project.

Members agreed that future progress reports would be edited to include only ongoing or unresolved issues.

31. SCRUTINY

The 116th Edition of the Decision Digest was received and noted. Councillor I J Curtis commented that Ramsey Town Council had not yet received a meeting request from the Head of Operations to discuss CCTV provision in the town.

Chairman