

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 3rd November 2015.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.

Councillors D Brown, M Francis, R Fuller, T Hayward, P Kadewere, D J Mead, M C Oliver and Mrs D C Reynolds.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors Mrs P A Jordan and Mrs R E Mathews.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors J Ablewhite, D Dew, R Harrison, R Howe and J Morris.

40. URGENT ITEM - CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HEALTH COMMITTEE

Due to the imminent meeting of Cambridgeshire Council's Health Committee, the Chairman announced that he proposed to admit the following urgent item in accordance with Section 100B (3) and (4) of the Local Government Act 1972. Having been informed that Councillor Mrs R Mathews was unwell and had decided to step down from her external appointments, it was

RESOLVED

- a) that Councillor D Brown be appointed to the Cambridgeshire County Council Health Committee for the ensuing Municipal Year; and
- b) that Councillor Mrs D Reynolds should remain as the substitute.

41. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 8th October 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

42. MEMBER'S INTERESTS

Councillor S J Criswell declared a non-statutory disclosable interest in Minute Number 45 by virtue of his Membership of Cambridgeshire County Council.

Councillor D Brown declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute Number 44 as a Member of the Council of Governors at the Cambridge University Hospitals.

43. NOTICE OF KEY EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Panel received and noted the current Notice of Key Executive Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which has been prepared by the Executive Leader for the period 1st November 2015 to 29th February 2016.

44. HINCHINGBROOKE HEALTH CAMPUS PRESENTATION

Mr M Cammies, Estates and Facilities Director, Trust Board, Hinchingsbrooke Healthcare NHS Trust presented the Hinchingsbrooke Health Campus Development Plans to the Panel. Mr Cammies informed the Panel that the current site was 40 acres in size with the potential for development on an additional 12 acres of land currently owned by Cambridgeshire Constabulary. Members were informed that up to 2012 there was a lack of investment in Hinchingsbrooke Hospital infrastructure, however since then £20m had been invested in the site including patient facing areas.

A number of development plans have been proposed, including: the building of staff residencies, medical student accommodation, the creation of a dementia and elderly care village, a health and well-being facility, private patient unit, support function building and a GP Surgery. In addition, the plan is to rationalise the size of the acute hospital element in order to have these additional care facilities.

In summary, Mr Cammies highlighted the following points:

- The Hinchingsbrooke site was of strategic and locational importance for patients in the Cambridgeshire Health system;
- the demographic data profile clearly showed a need for investment in Older People's services and facilities;
- Hinchingsbrooke needed to adapt for future Health needs and to be economically sustainable;
- the site offers great opportunities for innovative models of care;
- the Health Campus opportunity has already showed the potential of various public bodies working together in a more collective and cohesive way; and
- this fits in with many of the national objectives and initiatives recently announced from the NHS England Chief Executive, Lord Carter and the Department of Health.

The Panel asked a question in relation to the aim of reducing the size of the acute hospital and what services will be reduced. In response, Mr Cammies stated that there was no agreement on what acute services would be impacted, although he confirmed bed numbers would be reduced. It was hoped that by focussing on specific acute services, the hospital would be in a form that was more sustainable.

A Member followed up by asking why Hinchingsbrooke was reducing bed numbers when Huntingdonshire was a growing District. The Panel heard how the Treatment Centre was currently running at 65% capacity so there was room for efficiencies. The Panel continued to question whether the ageing population would have an impact on the number of beds in use. Mr Cammies responded by advising the Panel that the Trust and the patients themselves, did not want elderly people in acute beds where possible, but rather a different type of bed more suited to their clinical and social needs.

Following a question regarding the location of a GP surgery at Hinchingsbrooke, Mr Cammies stated that the idea was in response to a suggestion from GPs, where they are reviewing "GP at scale" options.

In response to a question, the Panel were advised that the Trust was not in an ongoing partnership with the developers of the new residential development, but have had significant input with regards to the quality of the design of the buildings.

The Chairman requested that Mr Cammies provide regular updates to the Panel as and when progress was made.

45. SPORT AND ACTIVE LIFESTYLES ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15

With the benefit of an introduction by the Deputy Executive Leader of the Council with responsibility for Commercial Activities, Councillor R Howe, the Sport and Active Lifestyles Manager introduced the Sport and Active Lifestyles (SALT) Annual Report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) to the Panel.

The Panel, had been informed that in addition to 10 paid members of staff SALT used 50 part time volunteers to help deliver the service. The cost of SALT was £1.50 per head per annum. The Panel noted that even though the service carried out positive work there was still room for improvement as adult obesity in the District was above the national average and childhood obesity was at the national average. The year 2014/15 was the highest achieving in terms of attendance and the service continues to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction.

In response to a question about referrals, the Sport and Active Lifestyles Manager confirmed that the service received referrals from a wide variety of sources and these are managed by SALT with the desire to convert customers to One Leisure members.

The Panel highlighted their concerns of the changing financial circumstances at Cambridgeshire County Council resulting in funding withdrawn from SALT and the subsequent impact on service. Members were advised that funding had not been withdrawn at the time of the meeting and SALT would be able to continue to offer a free Exercise Referral service for the ensuing year. However, if funding was withdrawn the service would in all probability revert to a chargeable service.

The Panel was informed in response to questions regarding the lack of identity SALT would raise its profile in the wider community by launching a communications campaign. The introduction of clothing/merchandise for some activities had the advantage of increasing income and advertising the service.

A Member highlighted their concern about the level of physical inactivity and questioned if SALT had given thought to introducing a cycling programme. In response, the Panel was advised that SALT had considered cycling as the activity and already included this in their service provision.

46. AFFORDABLE HOUSING WORKING GROUP REPORT

The Affordable Housing Working Group Report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) was presented to the Panel. Members were informed that the Working Group had covered everything within their remit and made recommendations in Item 6.2 of the report (as listed below):

- The Council should actively promote the provision of affordable housing on exception sites to town and parish councils.
- Where a parish council does not support an exceptions site, the Council should continue to fulfil its duty to meet identified affordable housing need.
- A systematic assessment should be carried out of all land to identify potential sites for affordable housing to then be matched to needs (strategic housing land availability assessment).
- The threshold for developments on which affordable housing can be sought should be lowered from 15 to 10.

The Chairman of the Working Group, Councillor Fuller, gave the Panel more background detail on the recommendations. Members were informed that the Strategic Housing Market Assessment identified a need for a further 8,000 affordable houses in Huntingdonshire over the Local Plan period however as almost two thirds of those on the Housing Register are in bands C and D/D* it was highly unlikely that Huntingdonshire would need to build 8,000 affordable houses.

The Working Group believed that rural exception sites was one way of providing affordable housing required within the villages for local residents.

The Working Group considered Community Land Trusts as promoted in East Cambridgeshire. However, the Working Group believed that this was not appropriate for Huntingdonshire as it would involve the input of a high level of resource for little progression. In conclusion the Working Group believed that the Council was doing well in providing affordable housing.

A Member was concerned that the second recommendation was too 'dictatorial' and should be written in a way which wasn't dictatorial. In response the Panel was told that exception sites are put forward by the local community and only progressed where the Council had identified a need and there are residents on the Housing Register who requires the housing. The second recommendation was designed to capture those Parish Councils who despite identifying the site and the need for the site decide to withdraw from the process.

The Panel identified that the affordable housing threshold the Working Group proposed appeared to be different to Government policy. The reference to Government policy stated that on-site affordable housing can be sought on developments over 10 homes meaning on developments sized 11 homes and above. The Working Group had suggested that affordable housing provision should be sought on

developments sized 10 homes and above. Members were told that this would be clarified before the recommendations go forward to Cabinet for consideration. It has since been confirmed that the Government had proposed a policy restricting on-site provision to sites of 10 homes and above but this has been quashed in the courts, subject to the Government appealing. The Cabinet report submitted reflects the current position.

In response to a question the Panel was informed that there are some villages where rural exception sites are not required. In villages where there was a demand Members can play a crucial role by finding out who owns which pieces of land and persuading residents that affordable housing is required.

One Member explained that there needs to be more information about affordable housing. In the Member's home village there was 5,000 residents but only 33 houses was social rented, although there was a further 153 social rented bungalows or flats. In addition, around eight social rented houses had been sold under the right to buy since 2000, with only one new social rented house built in replacement. In response, the Panel were told that education amongst Members was important in helping to find and secure affordable housing sites. The Panel,

RESOLVED

to endorse the Working Group's findings and the recommended actions in 6.2 for consideration by the Cabinet.

47. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL STRUCTURE

With the aid of a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), a proposed new Overview and Scrutiny Panel Structure was presented to the Panel. At the Scrutiny Away Day in February 2015, the structure of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Panels had been reviewed and alternative arrangements had been explored. The Panel was asked to endorse Option 2 which included the following:

- Replace the 'Social Well-Being' Panel with a scrutiny panel focussing on 'Communities and Customers'
- Replace the 'Economic Well-Being' Panel with a scrutiny panel focussing on 'Finance and Performance'
- Replace the 'Environmental Well-Being' Panel with a scrutiny panel focussing on 'Economy and Growth'

The Panel was informed that the option was considered to have the clearest links to the Corporate Plan's strategic priorities and objectives. It was also expected that the preferred option would result in a more balanced workload for the Panels with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman meeting regularly to agenda plan. It was anticipated that once the option had been reviewed by Corporate Governance Panel and Council the change would be implemented in January 2016 with the membership of each panel remaining until Annual Council.

Members were told that the Chairmen of the Panels were keen to see greater use of the Task and Finish Groups with two new Task and

Finish Groups proposed. The first would investigate Cambridgeshire County Council Budget Cuts and how this would affect Huntingdonshire and where could the Council may be able to act to preserve services. The second group would investigate Registered Social Providers and the challenges faced by them in the future.

A Member was concerned that when the meetings are reconstituted then Council would have to reaffirm the membership and re-elect the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. The Policy, Performance and Transformation Manager (Scrutiny) confirmed that clarification would be sought before the report moves onto Corporate Governance Panel.

The Panel asked about assessing the skills and strengths of each Member to ensure that they would be on the correct panel in order to maximise their skills. The Managing Director had indicated that a skills audit would be useful to carry out. The Panel,

RESOLVED

to

- a) endorse Option 2 as a new structure for Overview and Scrutiny panels,
- b) request that amendments to the Constitution to allow the new structure to be adopted to be referred to Corporate Governance Panel and full Council meetings in December.
- c) appoint Councillors Brown, Criswell, Francis, Hayward and Kadewere to the County Council Cuts Task and Finish Group.
- d) appoint Councillors Fuller, Kadewere, Oliver and Mrs Reynolds to the Registered Social Providers Task and Finish Group.

48. WORKPLAN STUDIES

The Panel received and noted a report (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 Environment Well-Being.

49. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROGRESS

Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being) Work Programme

With the aid of a report (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel reviewed the progress of its activities since the last meeting. The Panel asked to receive the statistics on the number young men aged 16 to 23 who had been receiving treatment for a mental health issue.

Decision Digest

The 159th Edition of the Decision Digest was received by the Panel. In so doing, the Panel,

RESOLVED

that the Decision Digest not be submitted to the Panel with the Agenda at future meetings.

Chairman