

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ENVIRONMENTAL WELL-BEING) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, Cambs, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 8th December 2015.

- PRESENT: Councillor T D Sanderson – Chairman.
- Councillors Mrs B E Boddington,
Mrs S Conboy, J W Davies, Mrs A Dickinson,
Mrs L A Duffy, I D Gardener, D A Giles,
P Kadewere, K D Wainwright and R J West.
- APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillors I C Bates.
- IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors R C Carter, D B Dew, R S Farrer, R B Howe and P D Reeve.

44. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 10th November 2015 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

45. MEMBER'S INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

46. 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 had been prepared by the Executive Leader for the period 1st December 2015 to 31st March 2016.

47. REVIEW OF PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

With aid of a report by the Development Management Team Leader (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Review of Planning Enforcement was presented to the Panel. Members were informed that the service needed clear objectives to enable to use the resources available in the most effective and efficient way. In addition the service needed to set and adhere to priorities and to be fair and open in case outcomes.

The recommendations were presented to the Panel, they were:

- Delegating decision-making on cases to Area Enforcement Officers and Team Leader;
- Reducing the number of planning applications dealt with by the Enforcement Team Leader;
- Enhancing the enforcement team's capacity to deal with planning applications arising from enforcement cases by using

- Development Management officers;
- Introducing new time targets for enforcement case milestones and closure;
- Closing old cases;
- Setting targets for carrying out the first site visit;
- Prioritising cases after the first site visit;
- Managing the expectations of stakeholders;
- Improving communication with stakeholders;
- Updating the Council's Enforcement Policy; and
- A series of process improvements.

The Panel were advised that the current working policies had been established in 2010 and the requirement for them to be updated had been identified. Members were informed that this was to enable Officers in the field to act in a timely manner. Officers reminded Members that the Council wanted to effectively manage the expectations of stakeholders and not state that an outcome would occur if it could not be delivered.

Following a query regarding the recommendation of a series of process improvements, the Panel was informed that the improvements related to making the processes and procedures of planning enforcement more efficient.

With regards to the communication with Town and Parish Council, Members were informed that Officers would investigate how they, Town Councillors and Parish Councillor would be able to access up to date enforcement action information for their area.

A concern was expressed in regards to developers who leave a site without fulfilling their obligations. In response the Panel was informed that the software package 'Obligation Tracker' would track the obligations of developers. If a developer does leave a site without fulfilling their obligations then the Council could insert a note with the land charge. As this could affect the developer's house sales the aim is to encourage the developer to fulfil their obligations.

After a discussion concerning IT costs, Members had been informed that the Council had contacted the supplier to enquire the cost of running the software but had not received a response.

(At 7.03pm during discussion on this item, Councillor K Wainwright took his seat at the meeting.)

(At 7.23pm during discussion on this item, Councillor D A Giles left the meeting).

(At 7.25pm during discussion on this item, Councillor D A Giles returned to the meeting).

48. HUNTINGDONSHIRE INFRASTRUCTURE BUSINESS PLANNING

With the aid of a report by the Planning Service Manager (Policy) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Huntingdonshire Infrastructure Planning update was presented to the Panel. Members noted that the Panel would receive future update reports in June and December of each year; in addition the Panel would receive an

update report on the progress of the Local Plan in March 2016.

Members were informed of the infrastructure projects in progress. They are:

- A14 Trunk Road;
- A428;
- A1;
- Oxford to Cambridge Expressway;
- East West Rail; and
- A141 Huntingdon to St Ives

The Panel noted that the projects could not be delivered by the Council alone and recognised the requirement to work with partners. In response to a query regarding potential funding and increased partner cooperation Members were informed that the Government's drive to devolve powers and funding to local areas presents an opportunity for the Council to work more closely with partners to enable to deliver the infrastructure to support growth.

In response to a query with regards to the timescales of the current infrastructure projects, Members was informed that the A14, A428, A1 and A141 projects was currently subject to a Development Order Process. The Panel had been advised that timescales can be difficult to establish however the projects were more likely to be completed in collaboration with partners.

With regards to the Local Plan, the Panel had expressed concerns that Cambridgeshire County Council's traffic modelling was not up to the required standard however Officers were confident that the traffic modelling would be completed in time for the Local Plan to be submitted.

Members expressed their approval that the Council was working with external partners in order to deliver large infrastructure projects. In addition the Panel emphasised that they would like the Cabinet to investigate whether devolved powers and funding could be used by the Council to work more closely with partners to enable the delivery of infrastructure to support growth.

(At 8.00pm during the discussion on this item, Councillor J W Davies left the meeting).

(At 8.03pm during the discussion on this item, Councillor J W Davies returned to the meeting).

49. COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY GOVERNANCE

With aid of a report by the Planning Policy Team Leader (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the report on the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Governance was presented to the Panel.

Members noted that the Growth and Infrastructure Group had been responsible for directing the preparation of the draft Huntingdonshire Infrastructure Business Plan and project development for the delivery of major sites. The Panel had viewed the proposed changes with regards to the governance of CIL, they included:

- removal of the Growth and Infrastructure Group from the Local Strategic Partnership framework;
- a revised Terms of Reference for the Growth and Infrastructure Group; and
- revised Membership of the Growth and Infrastructure Group to include three District Councillors in addition to the Executive Councillor for Strategic Planning and Housing.

Members recognised that appointments to the Growth and Infrastructure Group are a Cabinet decision however the Panel had a preference for the inclusion of the Chairman of the Development Management Panel (DMP), as well as a Member each from the Social Well-Being and Economic Well-Being Panels. As the Chairman of DMP was currently a Member of the Environmental Well-Being Panel it was not thought necessary to appoint an additional Member from the Panel. In addition Members expressed a preference for the inclusion of a Member who was not from the majority Conservative Group.

Following a concern regarding the lack of knowledge Members had on CIL and the progress, the Panel was informed that the Implementation Team Leader would attend a future meeting of the Panel to update Members of the CIL process.

A concern was expressed regarding Town and Parish Councils spending of CIL. The Panel was informed that every Town and Parish Council that had spent CIL had a responsibility to report to the Council about how they spent the CIL funding. In addition Members had been advised that any Town and Parish Council who had spent CIL in the year 2014/15 would have to report to the Council by 31st December 2015.

With regards to concerns that CIL funding had been committed to a single infrastructure project, Huntingdon West Link Road, the Panel was advised that as the CIL funding pot grows in the future there would be opportunities to prioritise the use of CIL funds towards other infrastructure projects. The majority of the Panel supported Cabinet in approving further investment in the Link Road.

50. NEIGHBOURHOOD AND COMMUNITY PLANNING GUIDANCE

With aid of a report by the Planning Policy Team Leader (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel received the Neighbourhood and Community Planning Guide. Members were informed that the Neighbourhood and Community Planning Guide clarified how the Council would support local communities that wished to embark upon planning initiatives. The Panel were advised that when viewing the Neighbourhood and Community Planning Guide electronically the customer would be able to access various hyperlinks which would guide them to further planning information.

Following a discussion regarding parishes working with each other in the creation of a joint Neighbourhood Plan, the Panel had been advised that the Neighbourhood and Community Planning Guide sets out the process for this eventuality. Members found clarification with regards that the District Council runs the Neighbourhood Plan

referendum and the Town or Parish promotes the Neighbourhood Plan useful.

Further clarification over who should produce a clean copy of the Neighbourhood Plan following the examination would be sought. This was after a Member had stated that they had been briefed at Town Council level by an external consultant who stated that the responsibility for producing a clean copy lied with the District Council.

Members have expressed to Officers that they believed the Neighbourhood and Community Planning Guide was a good piece of work and that communities across the District would find it useful when embarking upon planning initiatives. The Panel recommended to Cabinet that they should approve the Neighbourhood and Community Planning Guide.

51. WORKPLAN STUDIES

The Panel received and noted a report by the Democratic Services Team (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 Social Well-Being.

Members had been informed that the Chief Executive of Cambridgeshire County Council was surprised at how the budget proposals were communicated and Cambridgeshire County Council would be recommunicating the information.

Members were advised that a date for the Impact of Cambridgeshire County Council Budget Proposals on Huntingdonshire and its residents Task and Finish Group would be set in due course and that Members of the Group would be informed of the date.

52. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROGRESS

With the aid of a report by the Democratic Services Team (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel reviewed the progress of its activities since the last meeting. Following a discussion on graffiti, Councillors Mrs L A Duffy and D A Giles were invited to attend a meeting with Councillor T A Sanderson, the Executive Councillor for Operations and Environment and the Interim Head of Operations to discuss the issue.

Chairman