

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (COMMUNITIES AND ENVIRONMENT) held in Civic Suite 0.1A, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 12th July 2016.

PRESENT: Councillor T D Alban – Chairman.

Councillors J W Davies, Mrs A Dickinson, Mrs A Donaldson, D Harty, T Hayward, Mrs P A Jordan, P Kadewere, L R Swain and Mrs J Tavener.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors B S Chapman and M Francis.

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors R C Carter and Mrs L A Duffy.

14. MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Communities and Environment) held on 7th and 28th June 2016 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

15. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillor T Alban declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Minute Number 20 as an employee of a company that engage in commercial activities with Peterborough Hospital.

Councillor Mrs P A Jordan declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Minute Number 20 as an employee of Cambridgeshire Community Service based at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.

16. 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 July 2016 and 31st October 2016.

17. WASTE ROUND RECONFIGURATION UPDATE

With the aid of a report by the Waste Minimisation Officer (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Waste Round Reconfiguration Update was presented to the Panel. Members were informed that that the Waste Round Reconfiguration was last carried out in 2011. The project is an important piece of work to get right as the service visits every property within the District. The reconfigured rounds are expected to go live on 21st November 2016.

As the reconfiguration project is progressing, Officers will provide the Panel with regular updates. A progress report schedule and

consultation timetable has been produced in order to assist the management of the project both of which will be made available to all Members.

In response to a question on would the service manage waste by putting it all in the same place, Members were informed that there is residential waste and trade waste and these would be managed differently.

Following a concern from a Member that there has been a lot of miscommunication and how would everyone be kept up to date, the Panel was informed that consultation timetable states how progress would be communicated to the residents.

The Panel was informed, following a question in regards to the realistic implementation of the timetable, that a substantial amount of work has already been completed.

In regards to a change of collection day, Members were advised it is difficult to predict how many residents would experience a change of collection day. The last time the reconfiguration was completed, 90% of the days had been changed however under this reconfiguration officers will endeavour to keep as many collection days the same. In addition Members were informed that once the scenario model had been completed, officers would have more of an idea how many collection days would be changed.

A Member was confused with the mentioning of different dates, however it was confirmed that: the 'as is' model will be created by the end of July 2016, the scenario modelling for the new round will be established by mid-August 2016 and the new round will be implement week commencing 21st November 2016.

The Panel noted the report with thanks and noted that officers will attend the September 2016 meeting of the Panel to present Members a further update.

18. VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANT FUNDING WORKING GROUP FINAL REPORT

With the aid of a report by the Head of Community Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Voluntary Sector Grant Funding Working Group Final Report was presented to the Panel. The background information which subsequently led to the formation of the Working Group was outlined.

Members were informed that the Working Group had reviewed the existing funding arrangement and considered the following four options: option one is the termination of funding, option two is the continuation of existing arrangements, option three is a single contract award and option four is the award of two contracts.

The Panel was informed of the Working Groups opinions on each of the options and recommend that the Panel should recommend that Cabinet adopt option four of awarding two contracts along the lines of advice based services and infrastructure based services.

The Working Group recognises the value of the voluntary sector and did not support option one. Option two was rejected as it does not fit the commissioning and outcomes model and is not in line with National Association for Voluntary and Community Action guidance. Option three was found not to be cost effective as it would necessitate significant changes in the sector, which could prove costly; however it remains an option for future funding arrangements. The Working Group therefore decided that option four was the best option.

Members were pleased with the option presented as the report shows that the Working Group had carried out a lot of research and that the conclusions reached are well thought through.

Following a question regarding option one, Members were informed that option one still remains a possibility as the decision is Cabinet's however the Working Group had considered other options but are recommending option four.

In response to a question regarding the funding of Shopmobility, the Panel was advised that the Working Group did not review funding arrangements with individual charities but reviewed the problems the voluntary sector are currently facing. In addition a procurement exercise would follow from the report and it is important not to show favour by naming individual organisations.

The Working Group informed Members of the three options they considered in relation to the duration of the contract. Option A is funding to 31st March 2020, Option B is alignment with the County Council contract which runs until 31st August 2017 and Option C is extending funding until 31st March 2021. The Panel was informed that the Working Group recommend Option C as the decision for awarding of funding beyond 2021 would be removed from the election timetable. Consequently this would mean that the voluntary sector funding could be considered and awarded apolitically.

Members supported the recommendation of Option C as a sensible idea as it means that the voluntary sector won't be treated politically.

The Working Group considered how the funding should be allocated annually. Following the submission of the Voluntary Sector Grant Funding 2016/17 to 2019/2020 report at the Cabinet meeting in January 2016 the Cabinet adopted option two. However the Working Group thought this should be amended to option three of reducing the budget in year 1, but then providing an equal annual payment equivalent to the same total amount of spend as option 2 as they thought that this would allow organisations to better prepare and plan services if their income was consistent year on year.

Members were informed that the Working Group had considered the split of the funding and recommend that it should be split of 65% to 35% in favour of advice based services but with the flexibility for 10% either way. The reasoning for this was that the Working Group recognised the need for voluntary sector organisations to know how much they are bidding for but allow for the Council to award a greater or lesser proportion of the contract to an organisation based on the strength of their bid.

The timetable for implementation was outlined to Members with the recommendation that the existing Working Group is retained in order to develop the contract terms including performance metrics and reporting frameworks. The Panel was in favour of retaining the Working Group with the inclusion of Councillor P Kadewere.

In response to a question regarding how realistic is the timetable, Members were informed that the report will progress to Cabinet at its meeting in July 2016 and subject to their endorsement the timetable can be met.

Following concerns that the organisations won't be able to fulfil the criteria in order to be awarded with a contract, Members were advised that it is up to the organisations to ensure that they are able to fulfil the criteria otherwise they won't be awarded the contract.

Members were informed that the organisations that are allocated funding would be required to submit a biannual report and attend an Overview and Scrutiny Panel meeting so that Members can ensure that the funding is spent correctly and that the Council has value for money.

The Panel was advised that as the Working Group had recommended that the contracts should be four years in length this meant that there was a shortfall of £69k. The options considered were the following: option one was to reduce the scheme to £172k per annum from 2017/18, option two was reduce the Community Chest budget to meet the shortfall and option three was agree a growth item of £69k.

After some deliberation the Panel agreed to recommend to Cabinet that the budget for the scheme should grow by £69k, this is because Members recognise the valuable contribution the voluntary sector has upon the District. The Panel,

RESOLVED

- 1) to recommend to Cabinet that the VCS Grant scheme should be awarded as two contracts. One contract for advice based services and the other for infrastructure based services.
- 2) to recommend that Cabinet should extend funding until 31st March 2021.
- 3) to recommend that Cabinet should amend the preferred overall budget model, as highlighted in the Voluntary Sector Grant Funding 2016/17 to 2019/2020 report submitted to Cabinet at its meeting in January 2016 to Option 3.
- 4) to recommend to Cabinet that the funding split for the contracts should be 65% to 35% in favour of advice based services but with the flexibility through negotiated contract award of 10% either way.
- 5) to recommend that Cabinet should retain the existing Working Group, with the inclusion of Councillor P Kadewere, in order to develop the contract terms including performance metrics and reporting frameworks.

- 6) to recommend that Cabinet agree a growth item of £69k over the period of 2017 to 2021.

(At 8.30pm, after the consideration of this item, Councillor Mrs L A Duffy left the meeting.)

19. CORPORATE ENFORCEMENT REPORT

With the aid of a report by the Head of Community Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Corporate Enforcement Report was presented to the Panel. In introducing the report Members were informed that Community Services are delivering three environmental campaigns in 2016/17: dog fouling, fly tipping and littering and graffiti and fly posting.

The Panel was informed that there had been three incidents of graffiti in June 2016 and two of them had been post EU referendum, with one incident taking place in Godmanchester and the other in Huntingdon.

Members were informed that all of the Council's enforcement regime, with the exception of Planning Enforcement, fall within the remit of Community Services. The Council has adopted a fixed penalty approach instead of a criminal conviction approach which removes the criminal conviction liability and makes the process quicker. The Panel was informed that a report on the Council's enforcement strategy will be submitted at the Panel's meeting in October 2016.

In response to the question, could more signs be placed at the well know areas for fly tipping and dog fouling, the Panel were informed that the Council plan to resticker the lamp columns with dog fouling signs. This is because the County Council have been removing lamp post columns and replacing them. With regards to fly tipping, signs have an impact but not a significant impact.

Following the question of what can be done about estate agents using boards to advertise houses located streets away on the main road. The Panel were advised that if the sign is on highway then it is County Council issue however there are also specific exemptions in relation to estate agents. If the sign is causing an obstruction then the Council will pull it down.

The Panel was informed that cameras can be used to catch fly tippers, dog fouling and littering. The use of cameras is effective for fly tipping as usually people use a vehicle which can be traced. With regards to other offences, incidents can be reported and the Council will act upon any littering intelligence received. The link for reporting littering offences online is:

https://applications.huntingdonshire.gov.uk/forms/Operations/New_Street_Cleaning_1.html

Members were informed that Community Services is currently undergoing a restructure, however after it has taken place the service will have four officers who can carry out all types of corporate enforcement, with the exception of planning enforcement.

20. HDC'S RESPONSE TO THE HINCHINGBROOKE AND PETERBOROUGH HOSPITALS MERGER PROPOSAL

With the aid of a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) a report outlining Huntingdonshire District Council's response to the Hinchingsbrooke and Peterborough Hospitals merger proposal was presented to the Panel.

In regards to the £9m savings that both hospitals are expected to make, Members were informed that approximately £4m would be saved at Hinchingsbrooke and £5m would be saved at Peterborough.

The Panel recognised that it was important for the Trust Board to review all the options and that Members had to let the process take its course. There was frustration expressed as Mr McCarthy is one of a number of Chief Executives over the course of 10 years and that he failed to provide information of any substance to the Panel.

There was a suggestion that as the full business case was not going to be fully developed until September 2016, the Panel should not submit a response before then, however Members were reminded that the response represents the current observations of the Council in respect to the process the Trust Boards have adopted for the development of the full business case. If the response was not sent until September then it would be rendered irrelevant.

In response to the questions regarding the effect of the letter and could the Trust Boards carry on with their plans, Members were informed that the letter would inform the Trust Boards whilst they are developing the full business case. If the full business case highlighted that merger was the best option then the Trust Boards would implement the option which was best for them.

A minority of Members were concerned that the letter had already been published and questioned why. The Panel was informed that at its special meeting on 28th June 2016, Members agreed that a response would be drafted for the Panel to review at its meeting in July 2016. In addition there is no provision, under section 12a of the Local Government Act 1972, to exempt the letter from publication. Members were reminded that as the letter is a draft, it is not the final version that could be sent as the Council's response.

A couple of Members expressed that they were pleased with the content of the draft letter as it flagged up the concerns expressed by the Panel at the special meeting held on 28th June 2016 and that they would be pleased to see the letter sent to the Chairman of the Hinchingsbrooke Health Care NHS Trust.

The Panel discussed the sentence '*welcome the strong action being taken to explore options and the clear commitment to continuity of ongoing provision of healthcare services at Hinchingsbrooke*'. Members thought that this sentence should be deleted as they thought it misrepresented their views and could be interpreted as support for the proposed merger.

Members agreed to recommend to Cabinet that the letter at Appendix

A should be sent subject to the following amendments:

- 1) that the sentence '*welcome the strong action being taken to explore options and the clear commitment to continuity of ongoing provision of healthcare services at Hinchingsbrooke*' be deleted.
- 2) that the word '*faithfully*' be deleted and replaced with '*sincerely*'.
- 3) that the letter is sent out by the Executive Leader as a Council response therefore Councillor T Alban's details are deleted and replace with those of the Executive Leader.

The Panel

RESOLVED

to recommend that Cabinet considers the letter at Appendix A and endorse this as the Council's current observations to the proposed merger.

(At 9.08pm, during the consideration of this item, Councillor Mrs P A Jordan left the meeting.)

21. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel received and noted a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of studies being undertaken by the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Economy and Growth and Performance and Customers.

22. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PROGRESS

With the aid of a report by the Democratic Services Officer (Scrutiny) (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel reviewed the progress of its activities since the last meeting.

Chairman