
Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery and Resources)

Report of the meetings held on 7th December 2004,
4th January and 1st February 2005

Matters for Information

31. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

The Panel has received a presentation on its role monitoring the Council's performance and as a result has requested that at each of its meetings a report is submitted containing the Council's performance against nationally prescribed indicators and local performance data relating to -

- ◆ low crime;
- ◆ low fear of crime – includes graffiti and anti-social behaviour;
- ◆ personal/public health and safety – includes food safety and risks to public from pests;
- ◆ healthy lifestyles – relates to participation in healthy activities (cultural and physical);
- ◆ streetscene – includes street cleaning, graffiti removal, dog fouling and abandoned cars;
- ◆ competitive market towns – including vibrant markets;
- ◆ tourism;
- ◆ sufficient affordable housing;
- ◆ low level of homelessness – includes discretionary housing payments and benefits take up;
- ◆ access to services - includes telephone system, payments system and out of hours contact; and
- ◆ transport opportunities that meet local needs.

32. SMOKING IN LEISURE CENTRES

Further to Item No 1(b) of their Report to the meeting of the Council held on 21st July 2004, the Panel has been informed of the current position with regard to smoking at each of the Council's Leisure Centres and the deliberations of the Leisure Centre Management Committees on the suggestion by the Director of Public Health that the Council should consider prohibiting smoking at its premises.

The Panel has discussed the options available to the Council including standardising the hours in which smoking is permitted in social areas in all centres and permitting smoking only during private events at the request of the organiser. However, a decision on a recommended course of action has been deferred pending receipt of

further information on the advice of the Director of Public Health, the Council's Health and Safety Adviser and the Head of Environmental Health Services. In addition, information has been requested on the financial implications for the Council of the various courses of action available on practices at other local authorities and private sports facilities in relation to the prohibition of smoking.

33. BUSINESS GENERATION AT LEISURE CENTRES

At its meeting in January, the Panel considered a report on the impact of the introduction of the Business Generation Team on the Council's Leisure Centres. In the absence of the Executive Councillor with responsibility for Leisure, the Panel compiled a number of questions of clarification and requested the Executive Councillor and Head of Community Services to provide responses to them. In addition, historical information over a 3-5 year period was requested.

All the information requested and answers to the questions were submitted to the February meeting of the Panel for information and the Head of Community Services and Executive Councillor with responsibility for Leisure were present to respond to any further issues raised.

34. THE HUNTINGDONSHIRE BIG GIG

Following a request at an earlier meeting, the Panel has received information on the Huntingdonshire Big Gig 2004, including the background to the event, the justification for the event against the Council's Medium Term Objectives at the time it was planned, the budgetary provision that had been made in the Medium Term Plan and the subsequent withdrawal of the budget. The Panel also has been informed of the outcomes of the events provided in terms of the achievement of the Council's objectives and of participation by members of the public.

The Panel has discussed the cost of the Big Gig, including the possibility of obtaining grant aid and charging for future events to offset the cost to the Council. However, it has been pointed out that these options would have to be balanced against the additional costs the Council would incur providing staffing and security infrastructure and the likely effect of preventing disadvantaged groups from attending. Nevertheless, the Panel has recognised that in the absence of any budgetary provision, unless these and other avenues to raise revenue such as charging for car parking, are investigated, future events are unlikely to take place. A further report containing an appraisal of options for future Huntingdonshire Big Gig events has, therefore, been requested.

35. REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION

In conjunction with the Council's other Committees and Panels, the Panel has discussed the annual review of the Council's Constitution and present constitutional arrangements. In so doing, the Panel has deferred making suggestions for amendments to the Council's Constitution as part of the annual review until a visit to Maidstone

Borough Council to investigate alternative ways of working has been undertaken and further discussions held at the scrutiny training day scheduled for 18th February 2005.

**36. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
(SERVICE DELIVERY AND RESOURCES) – PROGRESS**

The Panel has been apprised of the progress of actions and reviewed the progress of its studies. Members have also discussed various ways of improving their effectiveness, including limiting Officers input only to answering questions and receiving reports on matters of interest outside meetings. However, in order to interrogate items fully it has been agreed to continue with the existing arrangements for carrying out studies and impose time limits on each item on the Agenda for meetings to assist with Agenda management. In discussing the study on the Council's health and related services, the Panel has selected elderly persons public health needs and has appointed a working group comprising Councillors A Hansard, D Harty and Mrs M Banerjee to pursue the study.

Other Matters of Interest

**37. CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HEALTH AND
SOCIAL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

The Panel has received and noted the Minutes of meetings of Cambridgeshire County Council's Health and Social Care Scrutiny Committee held on 9th and 16th November 2004.

38. FORWARD PLAN

The Panel has been acquainted with details of Forward Plans of forthcoming key decisions which have been prepared by the Leader of the Council.

**39. REPORT OF THE DISTRICT COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS OFFICE
ACCOMMODATION MEMBERS' ADVISORY GROUP**

The Panel has received and noted the report of the meeting of the District Council Headquarters Office Accommodation Members' Advisory Group held on 21st December 2004.

40. SCRUTINY

The Panel has considered the latest editions of the Decision Digest. A number of queries raised with regard to items appearing in the Digest have been answered to Members' satisfaction.

K Reynolds
Chairman