

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY) held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 4th December 2007.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.

Councillors Mrs M Banerjee, E R Butler,
Mrs K E Cooper, J E Garner,
Mrs C A Godley, D Harty, Mrs P A Jordan,
P G Mitchell, J M Sadler, P K Ursell and
J S Watt.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors J D Ablewhite, K J Churchill and D A Giles.

44. PROPOSED STUKELEY MEADOWS SKATE PARK

The Chairman reported that, in accordance with Article 16 of the Access to Information Procedures contained in the Council's Constitution, consent had been given for the Proposed Stukeley Meadows Skate Park to be submitted as an item of urgency to the meeting of the Cabinet held on 22nd November 2007. Members were reminded that Article 16 required the Chairman to report on his action to the next ensuing meeting of the Panel.

45. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6th November 2007 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

46. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

No declarations were received.

47. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 - FORWARD PLAN

The Panel considered the current Forward Plan of Key Decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which had been prepared by the Leader for the period 1st December 2007 to 31st March 2008. Members were informed that the Chairmen of the Overview and Scrutiny Panels would determine the best way to deal with the Consultation and Engagement, Marketing and Communications and Customer Service Strategies. An item on kerbside recycling would be incorporated into the Environment Strategy for consideration at a future meeting.

48. DISABILITY ACCESS STUDY

The Panel considered a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), which contained an analysis of responses received from Town and Parish Councils to a

questionnaire on access for those with disabilities to premises, facilities and other sites in the District.

Having discussed the information provided by Town and Parish Councils, the Panel decided that the precise location of defective dropped kerbs and areas where dropped kerbs should be installed and their priority should be obtained from those who had responded to the survey. Once obtained they would be forwarded to the County Council either for action or identification of those areas that did not fall within its remit. On receipt of the latter, Town and Parish Councils would be informed accordingly. It also was decided that a similar exercise should be carried out on parking practices within the District, with the findings being forwarded to the Police for comment.

With regard to a comment from Councillor P K Ursell, the Central Services Manager undertook to investigate further the existence of the Disability 'Blue' Route Scheme that was implemented by the Council in previous years.

With regard to public transport services, Members agreed to forward to bus operators, comments concerning the need for more low level buses and issues surrounding training for public transport employees on the needs of those with disabilities. In addition, it was agreed to refer to the County Council a suggestion that those who cared for individuals with disabilities should be provided with free bus travel.

To inform Members future discussions on establishing a list of individuals and bodies to consult on Council practices and services, details of potential consultees representing local disability groups were requested for consideration at a future meeting.

Finally, Members requested that a representative of Directions Plus be invited to a future meeting to assist the discussions on the study.

49. STATE OF THE DISTRICT CONSULTATION WORKING GROUP

A report on progress by the State of the District Consultation Working Group (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) was received and noted. Members expressed concern that significant numbers of members of the public were unlikely to attend four meetings, especially given the associated costs of advertising and hiring venues. It was felt that initially only one of the area consultation events should be held in order to determine the level of public interest in such an event. Members requested that the Working Group was informed of their views.

50. PROMOTING HEALTH IN OLDER PEOPLE THROUGH PHYSICAL EXERCISE

By means of a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which was appended in the Minute Book) the Panel was acquainted with the Cabinet's decisions in response to recommendations following completion of the study on Promoting Better Health in Older People Through Physical Exercise. Arising from the Cabinet's request for further information, a number of anomalies in the report and the Vice-Chairman's interest in pursuing further a number of matters raised in the course of the study, the Working Group were requested to hold a

further meeting with a view to concluding the study.

51. GROWING SUCCESS

With the aid of a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Panel was informed of a decision by the Cabinet to request that the views of the Corporate Plan Working Group be incorporated into future reports on the Council's performance under Growing Success. Members concurred with a suggestion that the Panel's own comments should be forwarded to the Cabinet rather than those of the Corporate Plan Working Group.

52. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE DELIVERY) - PROGRESS

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of actions taken in response to recent discussions and decisions and reviewing the programme of studies.

The Central Services Manager undertook to clarify the timetable for future consideration of the Environment Strategy. Councillor Mrs C A Godley reported that the Roads and Sewers Working Group would be meeting with the Head of Planning Services and the Principal Building Control Officer to discuss its study.

Councillor P G Mitchell informed Members that the Grants Working Group had concluded its review of the Small Scale Environmental Improvements Scheme and that information was currently being collated on other grant schemes administered by the Council.

53. SCRUTINY

In receiving and noting the 78th edition of the Decision Digest, Councillor P G Mitchell reported that the Development Control Panel would be considering the Core Strategy: Preferred Options at its next meeting.

Councillor Mitchell went on to outline his views on the need to match the provisions of plans for future housing and employment levels in the District. It was pointed out that there would be an opportunity to discuss this matter in more detail at a future meeting of the Panel when the Sustainable Local Economy Strategy Action Plan would be considered.

Chairman