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## **Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery)**

**Report of the meetings held on 4th December 2007,  
8th January and 5th February 2008**

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### **Matters for Information**

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#### **21. MIGRANT WORKERS IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE**

The Panel has discussed the subject of migrant workers in Huntingdonshire. In noting the recent increase in migrant workers arriving in the District, Members have acknowledged that the information presented should be treated cautiously as accurate data has been difficult to obtain. The Panel's attention has been drawn to the financial implications for the Council of migrant workers in a number of service areas, for which no additional funding is available.

The Panel has been acquainted with the remit and work of the Cambridgeshire Migrant Workers Network which comprises agencies that engage with migrant workers. Members also have discussed migrants' entitlement to benefits.

The Panel has discussed a number of issues such as the language and accommodation problems migrant workers experience and the cessation of funding for the Regional College for language courses. Members have suggested that the Strategic Partnership should lobby the government for Cambridgeshire to become an English for Speakers of Other Languages targeted area. Comments have also been made on the need for improved recognition of migrant workers qualifications and for partner organisations to refer unregistered workers to other appropriate agencies.

The Panel has acknowledged the work of the Citizens Advice Bureau in proactively engaging with migrant workers and noted the additional resource implications for the Bureau caused by language difficulties, which prolong client interviews. In that context, the Panel has been informed of the role of the Migrant Gateway which includes providing interpreters for employers.

**22. ENHANCED CLEANSING SERVICES: PILOT STUDY**

*(The following report was considered as a confidential item under paragraph 1, 7A of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)*

In pursuit of the Panel's current study on Town Centre Cleaning Regimes, the Panel has received a report on the current arrangements for street cleansing in the District, which contains details of options to increase service levels in St Ives. Members have been informed of the street cleansing standards that have been adopted by the Council and the financial constraints on the Council.

The Panel has commented on the cleanliness of the District's town centres as a result of the Saturday night time economy and the effect of litter on Sunday trade and tourism. The financial implications for the Council of providing a full cleansing service on Sundays have been highlighted to the Panel.

The Panel has considered alternative ways of achieving enhanced levels of street cleansing but has expressed support for the introduction of a full cleansing service every day of the week. A report on this will be presented to a future meeting of the Panel.

**23. PATIENT AND PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FORUMS – ANNUAL REPORT**

The Panel has received and noted the Patient and Public Involvement Forums Annual Report 2006/07 National Summary. Members have decided to await the establishment of Local Involvement Networks before deciding whether to undertake any work on health matters.

**24. LOCAL PETITIONS AND CALLS FOR ACTION**

The Panel has been acquainted with legislative changes affecting Overview and Scrutiny and with government consultation on local petitions and calls for action. The Panel has noted that the changes are intended to enhance the powers of the Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Having expressed support for the principle of holding a Countywide Scrutiny Seminar, the Panel has endorsed responses to specific questions raised on the consultation document.

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

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies at each of its meetings. Clarification is currently being sought on the timetable for future consideration of the Environment Strategy and information is being collated on the schemes administered by the Council as part of the study on grant aid.

## 26. WORKING GROUPS

### (a) Promoting Health in Older People through Physical Exercise

The Panel has been 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. The Panel has decided to reconvene the Working Group to address the issues that required further attention.

### (b) Disability Access Study

The Panel has received progress reports on the study on Disability Access. 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 has been considered. The Panel has agreed 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 will be forwarded to the County Council either for action or identification of those areas that do not fall within its remit. A similar exercise will be carried out on parking practices within the District, with the findings being forwarded to the Police for comment.

Investigations are currently being made into the existence of a Disability "Blue" Route Scheme that was implemented by the Council in previous years.

The Panel has reviewed access to public transport services and has agreed to put to bus operators comments on the need for more low level buses and for training for public transport employees on the needs of those with disabilities. It has further been agreed to refer to the County Council a suggestion that those who care for individuals with disabilities should be provided with free bus travel.

Details of potential organisations to consult on the Council's policies with regards to disability access have also been presented to the Panel. Each organisation is to be consulted on whether it would be prepared to assist the Council in this way.

A presentation by the Forum Manager of Directions Plus is to be delivered to the Panel at a future meeting.

### (c) State of the District Consultation Working Group

The final report of the State of the District Consultation Working Group has been submitted to the Panel, containing recommendations arising from the study. Having reviewed

the Working Group's recommendations, the Panel has recommended to the Cabinet that four area consultation events should be held across the District to encourage public engagement with the Council. The Communications and Marketing Manager and her team will help to market the events. The Panel has endorsed a suggestion that Town and Parish Councils and the County Council should be involved.

**(d) Adoption of Roads and Sewers**

The Panel has received an update on the work of the Adoption of Roads and Sewers Working Group.

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**Other Matters of Interest**

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**27. GROWING SUCCESS**

The Panel has been acquainted with a decision made by the Cabinet requesting the views of the Corporate Plan Working Group to be incorporated into future performance reports under Growing Success. As the Working Group's role is to identify matters for consideration, Members have expressed the view that the whole Panel's comments should be forwarded to the Cabinet.

**28. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 – FORWARD PLAN**

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the relevant Forward Plan of Key Decisions at its meetings. Members have been informed that an item on kerbside recycling will be incorporated into the Environment Strategy for consideration at a future meeting.

**29. SCRUTINY**

The Panel has considered the latest editions of the Decision Digest and received answers to queries on matters contained therein.

S J Criswell  
Chairman