
Overview & Scrutiny Panel (Service Support)

**Report of the meetings held on 8th July and
9th September 2008**

Matters for Information

11. SEWERAGE PROBLEMS, ST AUDREY'S LANE, ST IVES

Following the consideration of a petition signed by 26 people at its February meeting, the Panel has met with representatives of Anglian Water to discuss the problems being experienced by residents of St Audrey Lane, Warren Road and Pig Lane, St Ives arising from flooding of the foul sewerage system.

In doing so, the Panel has discussed a number of issues which had been identified from their previous meetings with local residents and the Council's Asset and Project Manager. The Panel was also acquainted with the information obtained from their working group which had been established to gather further information on site from local residents.

The Panel is pleased to report that a helpful and frank meeting was held with Anglian Water representatives, that the company would be investigating the matter further and that a CCTV investigation of the surface water drain in Pig Lane would now be undertaken to see if this required cleansing. The Panel has asked representatives of Anglian Water to provide details of their investigations to the local residents and to provide an update on progress to the Council in six months time.

12. REVIEW OF PUBLIC SPEAKING IN DEVELOPMENT CONTROL PANEL MEETINGS

With the assistance of the results of a recent survey of Members and those members of the public who had addressed the Development Control Panel on a planning application within the past year, the Panel has considered whether to recommend any changes to the current arrangements for public speaking at meetings of the Development Control Panel at the end of the 12 month trial following its introduction.

Overall, the Panel has concluded that the current arrangements were working satisfactorily and that the Chairman of the Development Control Panel is able to exercise sufficient discretion/flexibility to

address any issues which arose from the questionnaire. Although there were no changes that the Panel wished to raise directly with the Development Control Panel, Members have noted the intention of the Chairman of the latter Panel to seek to address the comments made by members of the public in relation to the intimidating and daunting nature of the Panel proceedings.

The Panel has also discussed the situation with regard to the recent presentation of two petitions to full Council under the Council Procedure Rules when an associated planning application was to be determined. In doing so, the Panel has agreed that it would be preferable for future petitions relating to planning applications to be dealt with as part of the public speaking arrangements. This will be dealt with in the next biennial review of the Council's Constitution in Spring 2009.

The Panel's report has subsequently been considered by the Development Control Panel. Item No. 11 of their Report refers.

13. PARISH CHARTER FOR HUNTINGDONSHIRE

The Panel has received the final report of its Working Group which was established to consider the possible preparation of a Parish Charter for the Council's relationship with town and parish councils in the District.

The Panel has agreed that there is little value in proceeding with a Parish Charter with the towns and parishes at the present time. However, in recognition of the disappointment which is likely to be expressed by some councils if a charter were not to proceed, the Panel suggested that the reasons for its conclusion be explained to those councils, together with an assurance that the matter will be kept under review as the powers and responsibilities of the various tiers of local government alter with changing legislation.

The Panel's report has subsequently been considered by the Cabinet. Item No. 34 of their Report refers.

14. THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY IN HUNTINGDONSHIRE

Following a suggestion that the night time economy in Huntingdonshire in the context of the Licensing Act 2003 might be a suitable subject for study, the Panel has received further information on the Licensing Act 2003, the situation in Huntingdonshire and national research into the impact of the Act.

In doing so, the Panel has acknowledged the limitations placed on the licensing authority by the legislation when imposing conditions and initiating reviews of licences. Nevertheless concerns remain on the part of Members about the problems being experienced currently in St Ives.

Overall, the Panel concluded that there was little that could be achieved in undertaking a review of the technicalities of the Act and

that the majority of establishments within the District in the main were well managed. However, having regard to Member's concerns about the social consequences of alcohol abuse, the Panel has agreed to establish a working group to address the matter. Councillors J T Bell, P M D Godfrey and Ms S L Kemp have been appointed to a working group for this purpose.

15. MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS – PLANNING OBLIGATIONS

The Panel has been updated on the receipt and expenditure of money negotiated under Section 106 Agreements by the Council.

16. FORWARD PLAN

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the Forward Plan of forthcoming key decisions prepared by the Leader of the Council, arising from which, Members have identified a number of items for consideration at future meetings.

17. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel has been advised of progress to date on its study into the negotiation and expenditure of Section 106 Agreements. The Panel has also discussed a number of potential future studies and it has been agreed that the Director of Environmental and Community Services should be invited to a meeting in November to make a presentation on the Great Fen Project.

Councillors P J Downes, L W McGuire and R J West have been appointed to a working group to ensure that the Council is maximising its income opportunities and grant availability.

18. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE SUPPORT) - PROGRESS

The Panel has been apprised of progress on actions required as a result of recent decisions.

In doing so, the Panel has noted that following discussion with their Panel Chairmen, a realignment of Executive Councillors between the two Overview and Scrutiny Panels has been agreed to reflect revised Cabinet responsibilities.

The Panel has also asked the Head of Administration to report back in the Autumn on the implications of the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 on the Council.

J A Gray
Chairman