

## HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE SUPPORT) held in the Council Chamber, Pathfinder House, St Mary's Street, Huntingdon, PE29 3TN on Tuesday, 9 September 2008.

PRESENT: Councillor J A Gray – Chairman.

Councillors M G Baker, J T Bell, P H Dakers, J W Davies, P J Downes, A N Gilbert, P M D Godfrey, D Harty, Ms S Kemp, L W McGuire, M F Newman, R G Tuplin and R J West.

APOLOGY: An apology for absence from the meeting was submitted on behalf of Councillor K M Baker.

### 28. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 8th July 2008 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### 29. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors J W Davies and Ms S L Kemp declared personal interests in Minute No. 31 as patrons of licensed premises in the District.

### 30. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000: FORWARD PLAN

The Panel considered and noted the current Forward Plan of key decisions (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) scheduled for consideration by the Cabinet, which had been prepared by the Leader of the Council.

The Chairman reminded Members that following discussion with the Chairman of the Service Delivery Scrutiny Panel, a realignment of portfolios between the two Overview and Scrutiny Panels had been agreed to reflect revised Cabinet responsibilities.

Members noted that arrangements had been made for reports listed in the Forward Plan to be submitted to future meetings as follows:-

- ◆ Parish Plans and Local Plan Policy;
- ◆ Proposals for Riverside Park, Huntingdon
- ◆ Development Control Policies Preferred Options;
- ◆ Huntingdon West Area Action Plan preferred options;
- ◆ Great Fen governance; and
- ◆ the Gypsy and Traveller Issues and Options Document.

### **31. 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 considered a briefing paper prepared by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book). A recent report by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport into the impact of the Act nationally, which had been considered recently by the District Council's Licensing Committee was circulated at the meeting.

By way of introduction, the Head of Administration explained the limitations placed on the Council acting as the licensing authority by the legislation when considering the determination of applications, imposition of conditions and initiation of reviews of premises licences. Reference also was made to the research and surveys which had been undertaken nationally into the impact of the Act. Whilst the current situation in Huntingdonshire was considered to largely perpetuate the conditions that pertained under the old licensing regime, Members were informed that a number of concerns were starting to emerge about problems being experienced in St. Ives. These included a review by the Service Delivery Panel into the cleansing arrangements in the town centre to deal with the litter problems arising from the Saturday night time economy and an objection by the Police to a current planning application to extend night club premises in St Ives.

In relation to St. Ives town centre, Councillor J W Davies suggested that a visible police presence would assist in resolving problems and he referred to the development and extension of the CCTV system in the town by the District Council. He expressed the view that, in his opinion, the majority of licensed establishments were well managed with the main problems being caused with patrons on their way home from licensed premises.

Councillor L W McGuire acquainted the Panel with the consideration by Cambridgeshire Together of a county-wide Alcohol Harm Reduction and a pilot scheme undertaken by the County Council's Trading Standards Service in St Neots Town Centre.

Having agreed that there was little merit in undertaking a review of the impact of the Licensing Act itself, nevertheless Members felt that there was sufficient concern over the social consequences of alcohol abuse to merit an investigation.

RESOLVED

that Councillors J T Bell, P M D Godfrey and Ms S L Kemp be appointed to a working group, to address this matter.

### **32. MONITORING OF SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS (PLANNING OBLIGATIONS)**

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Policy and Strategic Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), the Panel was updated on the receipt and expenditure of money negotiated

under Section 106 Agreements by the Council.

Having noted the inclusion within the report of non-monetary benefits received in the last two quarters, the Chairman suggested that if there were any specific queries that Members wished to raise these should be directed to the Policy and Strategic Services Division.

### **33. WORKPLAN STUDIES**

The Panel considered and noted a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) reviewing the Panel's programme of studies. In doing so, Councillor D Harty reported on the investigations being undertaken by the Section 106 Working Group.

In discussing potential future studies, and having regard to the fact that a review of any financial matters had not been undertaken for some time, it was

RESOLVED

that Councillors P J Downes, L W McGuire and R J West be appointed to a working group to investigate ways in which the Council could maximise its income opportunities and grant availability.

### **34. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SERVICE SUPPORT)**

The Panel considered and noted a report by the Head of Administration (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) reviewing the Panel's progress to date on issues that had been previously discussed.

In particular, the Head of Administration was asked to establish the current position with regard to the Panel's recommendations on lorry parking following the latter's referral to the Freight Quality Partnership. In referring to the study of the Council's Travel Plan, the Head of Administration reported that investigations were ongoing into the possible use of transferable season tickets.

The Panel was also advised that their views on the review of public speaking at the Development Control Panel had been considered by the latter at its August meeting. The Panel also noted that a report on the recently published consultation document on improving local accountability would be submitted to its next meeting.

### **35. SCRUTINY**

The Panel considered and noted the latest edition of the Council's Decision Digest, summarising the Council's decisions since the previous meeting.

Arising from matters raised by Members, the Head of Administration was asked to establish the timescale for improvement works to the

A141 Kings Ripton Road junction and to provide Councillor D Harty with statistics relating to Code of Conduct enquiries dealt with by the Council.

Chairman