

HUNTINGDONSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of the OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) held in the Wren Room, Countryside Centre, Hinchingsbrooke Country Park, Brampton Road, Huntingdon, PE29 6DB on Tuesday, 7 July 2009.

PRESENT: Councillor S J Criswell – Chairman.

Councillors Mrs K E Cooper, J W Davies, J E Garner, P G Mitchell and R J West.

APOLOGIES: Apologies for absence from the meeting were submitted on behalf of Councillors P L E Bucknell, Mrs P A Jordan, A Monk and J M Sadler.

19. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 2nd June 2009 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

20. MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Councillors S J Criswell and R J West declared personal interests in Minutes Nos. 23 and 24 by virtue of being Members of Cambridgeshire County Council.

21. 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 of the Council for the period 1st July to 31st October 2009. Members were reminded that the item entitled St Ivo Leisure Centre – Proposals for Development would appear before the Panel at their September meeting.

22. LEISURE CENTRES - PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Panel gave consideration to the Huntingdonshire Leisure Centres Annual Report 2008/09 (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book), which contained a summary of the activities of the Leisure Centres in Huntingdonshire during the preceding twelve months.

The General Manager, Leisure Centres drew the Panel's attention to a number of financial and service achievements at the Centres during the previous financial year. In so doing, Members were advised that total admissions to the Centres had exceeded 1.74 million for the first time, with an increase of 4.8% in admissions in 2008/09 in comparison with the previous year. In addition, a saving of £569,000 had been achieved against the budget across the Centres as a whole.

In response to a question by a Member on the level of expenditure at the Centres on employees, it was reported that expenditure levels

had increased as a proportion of the total budget owing to savings elsewhere being achieved and to an increase in the overall number of employees in accordance with the requirements of the services provided. Following a request by a Member, the General Manager, Leisure Centres undertook to incorporate employee full-time equivalent figures in future reports.

In response to a further question by a Member, it was confirmed that efforts had been made to contact “non-live” users of the Centres. In discussing the decline in hospitality income experienced at some of the Centres, a suggestion was made by the Chairman that increased marketing of the café facilities should be undertaken. In response, the General Manager, Leisure Centres explained that, in the case of St Ivo, consideration currently was being given to developing the site so that the café facility could be in a more visible and central location within the Centre. These development proposals would be considered by the Panel at a future meeting.

It was reported that the implementation of a Marketing Plan and a Business Plan for the Impressions Fitness Suites would enable the Centres to achieve a savings target of £1m by the end of the current financial year. Members also discussed marketing the high needs facility at Sawtry Leisure Centre. Having congratulated the General Manager, Leisure Centres and his staff for achieving the levels of performance represented in the Report, the Panel

RESOLVED

that the Leisure Centres Annual Report 2008/09 be received and noted.

23. SCRUTINY OF HUNTINGDONSHIRE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which provided the Panel with details of the areas that fell within its responsibility when scrutinising the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership (HSP).

Members noted that the Panel would be responsible for scrutinising the Children and Young People, Health and Well-Being and Inclusive, Safe and Cohesive Communities thematic groups, which had been established under the HSP. In addition, it was reported that a joint event involving representatives of Overview and Scrutiny and the Strategic Partnership would be held to enable both parties to formulate a means of working together.

Finally, the Panel received details of a County-wide conference which would be held on 7th September 2009 on the scrutiny of partnerships. Attention was also drawn to the current HSP structure; however, Members were reminded that this would be augmented by the establishment of Neighbourhood Panels across the District.

24. DISABILITY ACCESS STUDY - FOLLOW UP

With the assistance of a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book)

the Panel was acquainted with the outcome of a previous study into disability access. The report had been prepared to provide Members with an opportunity to plan their follow up work.

Having been reminded of the recommendations which had been previously endorsed by the Cabinet at their meeting on 29th January 2009, the Panel identified a number of aspects to the study that they wished to pursue. These included requesting updates from the County Council and the Police on matters that had been identified during the course of the study and informing Town and Parish Councils of the outcome of the study. Other matters to pursue included seeking the views of Town and Parish Councils on whether improvements had been made to footpaths and parking enforcement and the progress of discussions on the provision of joint advocacy/advice services by organisations supporting those with disabilities. Additionally, a request was made for information to be submitted to a future meeting on progress against those actions that had been referred by the Panel to the Growth and Infrastructure and the Health and Well-Being thematic groups of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership.

25. STUDY - PARKING AT HINCHINGBROOKE HOSPITAL

By means of a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) the Panel discussed the scope of its study on parking at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, Huntingdon. The suggestion for the study had emerged following the receipt of representations from members of the public by District Councillors concerning the level of charges being levied for parking at the Hospital, restrictions on parking and the impact of the introduction of charges on the surrounding area.

Members identified a number of potential areas for investigation, which included the management of the car park, the effectiveness of the Hospital's travel plan, the availability of public transport and parking practices nearby. Members also concurred with a suggestion that representatives of the Hospital should be invited to attend a Panel meeting. Having discussed a number of other avenues of study, a range of further information was requested for submission to a future meeting.

26. WORKPLAN STUDIES

The Panel considered and noted a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) reviewing the Panel's programme of studies and informing Members of studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

The Scrutiny and Review Manager reported that the Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Environmental Well-Being) would be considering the Great Fen Collaboration Agreement at their meeting on 14th July 2009, and that an invitation had been extended to all Overview and Scrutiny Panel Members to attend the meeting during discussion on this item.

27. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (SOCIAL WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS

The Panel received and noted a report by the Head of Democratic and Central Services (a copy of which is appended in the Minute Book) which contained details of actions taken in response to Members' recent discussions and decisions.

28. SCRUTINY

The 95th Edition of the Decision Digest was received and noted.

Chairman