
Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Social Well-Being)

**Report of the meetings held on 7th July and
1st September 2009**

Matters for Information

9. LEISURE CENTRES – PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Panel has reviewed the Huntingdonshire Leisure Centres Annual Report 2008/09 which contains a summary of the activities of the Leisure Centres in Huntingdonshire during the preceding twelve months. Attention has been drawn to a number of financial and service achievements at the Centres during the previous year. Total admissions to the Centres have exceeded 1.74 million for the first time, which represents an increase of 4.8% on the previous year. At the same time savings of £569,000 have been achieved across the Centres as a whole.

The Panel has discussed the level of expenditure on employees, which has increased as a proportion of the total budget. This is the result of savings being achieved elsewhere and of an increase in the overall number of employees in accordance with the requirements of the services provided. Details of expenditure per full-time equivalent employee will be included in future reports.

Discussion also has been held on the efforts being made to contact “non-live” users and the decline in hospitality income. Regarding the latter, a suggestion has been made that increased marketing of the café facilities should be undertaken. In the case of St Ivo, consideration currently is being given to developing the site so that the café facility is in a more visible and central location within the Centre. These development proposals will be considered by the Panel at a future meeting.

Having referred to the potential benefits of promoting the high needs facility located at Sawtry Leisure Centre, the Panel has been advised that the implementation of a Marketing Plan and Business Plan should enable the Centres to achieve their £1 million savings target by the end of the current financial year.

10. SCRUTINY OF HUNTINGDONSHIRE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Members have been acquainted with the areas that fall within their responsibility when scrutinising the Huntingdonshire Strategic

Partnership. These relate to the work of the Children and Young People, Health and Well-Being and Inclusive, Safe and Cohesive Communities Thematic Groups.

Members have been informed of a County-wide conference on the scrutiny of partnerships. It is also planned to hold a joint event involving representatives of Overview and Scrutiny and the Strategic Partnership.

11. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

In conjunction with the Cabinet and the Overview and Scrutiny Panels for Environmental Well-Being and for Economic Well-Being, the Panel for Social Well-Being has reviewed the Council's performance against its priority objectives, which are contained in "Growing Success" - the Corporate Plan. The Panel has endorsed the views of the Corporate Plan Working Group, particularly with regard to the red actions identified within the report and noted that work in respect of the budgets associated with each of the priority objectives currently is being undertaken by the Working Group.

In light of the forthcoming introduction of the scrutiny of partnerships, the Panel has discussed the Council's approach to partnership working. The view has been expressed that the Council should take every opportunity to engage with partners and that Overview and Scrutiny should encourage other organisations to participate in greater levels of partnership working.

12. CARE QUALITY COMMISSION

The Panel has endorsed for submission to the Care Quality Commission a letter requesting responses to a number of issues previously raised by the former Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Service Delivery) on the content of the Commission's Enforcement Policy. The questions relate to the regulation of care services, the planned imposition of financial penalties on failing services and the Commission's relationship to the Local Involvement Network (LiNK). Consideration also has been given to the Commission's publication entitled "About the Care Quality Commission". As a result, clarification has also been sought on the Commission's procedures for assessing health services and facilities.

13. NHS CONSTITUTION

The Panel has been acquainted with the contents of the NHS Constitution, which sets out the principles and values that guide how the NHS should act and make decisions in the future. The Constitution also specifies the rights and responsibilities of staff, patients and the public. Comment has been made on particular principles and pledges contained within the Constitution, particularly with regard to the means by which they will be achieved and how they will be monitored. Further comment has been made on the Constitution's lack of flexibility and an apparent absence of receptiveness to change. The discussion concluded with a

suggestion that patients should be able to pay for their own treatment without compromising their right to receive treatment through the NHS.

The Panel has decided that, in advance of the Constitution gaining Parliamentary approval, the concerns raised should be drawn to the attention of the Secretary of State for Health and that the representations made should be drawn to the attention of local Members of Parliament.

14. DISABILITY ACCESS STUDY – FOLLOW UP

The Panel has discussed the work it will undertake to follow up on a previous study into disability access. From the actions identified for implementation in the study's final report, Members have requested updates from the County Council and Police on matters that were referred to them together with details of progress on a number of actions referred to the Growth and Infrastructure and Health and Well-Being Thematic Groups of the Huntingdonshire Strategic Partnership. The views of the Town and Parish Councils on whether improvements have been made to footpaths and parking enforcement will be sought following the receipt of information from the Police and County Council.

The Panel has noted that a joint commissioning agreement with Cambridgeshire County Council and Disability Information Services Huntingdonshire has been introduced. Joint targets have been agreed by partners and the first bi-annual monitoring report will be presented to Members at their meeting in November. In addition, the Panel has decided to lobby the government by expressing support for a campaign being led by Sense, a charitable organisation for deaf people, for carers of those with disabilities to be provided with free bus travel.

15. STUDY – PARKING AT HINCHINGBROOKE HOSPITAL

The Panel has commenced a study into car parking at Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. The need for the study emerged from public representations received by Members on the level of charges levied for parking, the restrictions placed on parking at the Hospital and the impact that the parking arrangements has had upon the surrounding area.

Members have received background information relating to current parking provision on the Hinchingsbrooke site, the scope to increase the level of provision, other potential charging options, parking enforcement, the availability of public transport and the impact of parking on the surrounding area. Having also received information on the Hospital's Green Transport Plan, the Panel has requested details of progress with the Plan's implementation. Other potential areas for investigation include the terms of the car parking management contract. Public views will be sought by the Panel at a later date and a representative of the Hospital will be invited to a future Panel meeting.

Details of a consultation currently being undertaken by the British Parking Association on a draft Hospital Parking Charter have been received and a response has been submitted by the Panel.

Other Matters of Interest

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

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies at each of its meetings. Members have been informed that Councillor S J Criswell has been appointed as the District Council representative on the Stakeholder Panel established by NHS East of England (formerly the East of England Strategic Health Authority) whose purpose is to brief, involve and consult interested groups and parties on the future governance of Hinchingsbrooke Hospital.

17. WORK PLAN STUDIES

The Panel has reviewed its work plan and received details of studies being undertaken by the other Overview and Scrutiny Panels.

18. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 – FORWARD PLAN

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the current Forward Plan of Key Decisions. Items entitled Older Persons Housing Strategy Update and St Ivo Leisure Centre – Proposals for Development will be considered at the Panel's meetings in November and December respectively.

19. SCRUTINY

The Panel considered the latest editions of the Decision Digest and discussed matters contained therein.

S J Criswell
Chairman