
Overview and Scrutiny Panel (Economic Well-Being)

Report of the meeting held on 15th October 2009

Matters for Information

20. HUNTINGDON TOWN HALL – THE WAY FORWARD

The Panel has been acquainted with the conclusions reached by E W Consultancy Ltd following investigations into the future use of Huntingdon Town Hall. In so doing, Members have made reference to the ownership of the building, current leasing arrangements for its occupation and liability for its maintenance.

Members have concurred with the suggestion that the Town Hall should be used for public good but, at the same time, generate revenue to meet the ongoing cost of maintenance. In noting the financial implications of the proposals, potential sources of funding and possible transfer of the building to a Building Preservation Trust, the Panel has raised the possibility of a potential transfer of the Town Hall to Huntingdon Town Council in the form of an asset swap. In that respect the Cabinet has been requested to accept the recommendations made in the report in principle subject to this option being fully investigated.

21. THE PLACE SURVEY

In conjunction with the Panels for Social Well-Being and Economic Well-Being, the Panel for Economic Well-Being has reviewed the findings of The Place Survey. Members have been informed of the particular results that are relevant to their remit. While the Survey presents a positive picture compared with the results for Cambridgeshire and nationally, the focus of the discussion has been on the areas where the public feel improvements are required.

The provision of activities for teenagers is one area where the Council might be able to contribute towards improvements. The need for better shopping facilities is another area for improvement, which Members have expressed an interest in pursuing as a study area. A scoping report has been requested for this purpose.

Links have been made between the Survey results and the Cambridgeshire Local Area Agreement improvement targets. The Panel will monitor progress in these respects as part of its extended remit to scrutinise the Council's partnership working.

21. LOCAL PROCUREMENT

Pursuant to Item 16 of the Report to the meeting of the Council on 23rd September 2009, the Panel has referred two reports of meetings of the Local Procurement Working Group to the Local Strategic Partnership's Economic Prosperity and Skills Thematic Group.

22. APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANELS

The Panel has authorised the Head of Democratic and Central Services to convene a Panel from amongst its Membership to sit on an Appointments Panel to select potential candidates to be co-opted on to the Panel in the capacity of independent members. Having noted the contents of a Scheme of Co-option, Members have been acquainted with the interest that has been received in becoming independent members following initial efforts to promote the initiative locally and agreed that publication in Districtwide was essential in order to reach a wider audience.

Other Matters of Interest

23. LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000 – FORWARD PLAN

The Panel has been acquainted with details of the current Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

24. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL (ECONOMIC WELL-BEING) - PROGRESS

The Panel has reviewed its programme of studies.

25. WORK PLAN STUDIES

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

27. SCRUTINY

In considering the latest edition of the Decision Digest Members noted that lessons had been learned from the recent Neighbourhood Forum pilot held in St Neots that would help shape future forums.

J D Ablewhite
Chairman